A HISTORY
OF
PHILOSOPHY

A HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

VOLUME I

Greece and Rome

Frederick Copleston, S.J.

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PREFACE

THERE are so many histories of philosophy already in existence that it seems necessary to give some explanation why one has added to their number. My chief motive in writing this book, which is designed to be the first volume of a complete history of philosophy, has been that of supplying Catholic ecclesiastical seminaries with a work that should be somewhat more detailed and of wider scope than the text-books commonly in use and which at the same time should endeavour to exhibit the logical development and inter-connection of philosophical systems. It is true that there are several works available in the English language which (as distinct from scientific monographs dealing with restricted topics) present an account, at once scholarly and philosophical, of the history of philosophy, but their point of view is sometimes very different from that of the present writer and of the type of student whom he had in mind when writing this book. To mention a "point of view" at all, when treating of the history of philosophy, may occasion a certain lifting of the eyebrows; but no true historian can write without some point of view, some standpoint, if for no other reason than that he must have a principle of selection, guiding his intelligent choice and arrangement of facts. Every conscientious historian, it is true, will strive to be as objective as possible and will avoid any temptation to distort the facts to fit a preconceived theory or to omit the mention of certain facts simply because they will not support his preconceived theory; but if he attempts to write history without any principle of selection, the result will be a mere chronicle and no real history, a mere concatenation of events or opinions without understanding or *motif*. What would we think of a writer on English history who set down the number of Queen Elizabeth's dresses and the defeat of the Spanish Armada as facts of equal importance, and who made no intelligent attempt to show how the Spanish venture arose, what events led to it and what its results were? Moreover, in the case of an historian of philosophy, the historian's own personal philosophical outlook is bound to influence his selection and presentation of facts or, at least, the emphasis that he lays on certain facts or aspects. To take a simple example. Of two historians of ancient philosophy, each may make an equally objective study of the facts, e.g. of the history of Platonism and Neo-Platonism; but if the one man is convinced that all "transcendentalism" is sheer folly, while the other firmly believes in the reality of the transcendental, it is hardly conceivable that their presentation of the Platonic tradition should be exactly the same. They may both narrate the opinion of the Platonists objectively and conscientiously; but the former will probably lay little emphasis on Neo-Platonic metaphysics, for instance, and will indicate the fact that he regards Neo-Platonism as a sorry ending to Greek philosophy, as a relapse into "mysticism" or "orientalism," while the other may emphasise the syncretistic aspect of Neo-Platonism and its importance for Christian thought. Neither will have distorted the facts, in the sense of attributing to philosophers opinions they did not hold or suppressing certain of their tenets or neglecting chronology or logical interconnection, but all the same their pictures of Platonism and Neo-Platonism will be unmistakably different. This being so, I have no hesitation in claiming the right to compose a work on the history of philosophy from the standpoint of the scholastic philosopher. That there may be mistakes or misinterpretations due to ignorance, it would be presumptuous folly to deny; but I do claim that I have striven after objectivity, and I claim at the same time that the fact that I have written from a definite standpoint is an advantage rather than a disadvantage. At the very least it enables one to give a fairly coherent and meaningful account of what might otherwise be a mere jumble of incoherent opinions, not as good as a fairy-tale.

From what has been said, it should be clear that I have written not for scholars or specialists, but students of a certain type, the great majority of whom are making their first acquaintance with the history of philosophy and who are studying it concomitantly with systematic scholastic philosophy, to which latter subject they are called upon to devote the greater part of their attention for the time being. For the readers I have primarily in mind (though I should be only too glad if my book should prove of any use to others as well) a series of learned and original monographs would be of less use than a book which is frankly designed as a text-book, but which may, in the case of some students, serve as an incentive to the study of the original philosophical texts and of the commentaries and treatises on those texts by celebrated scholars. I have tried to bear this in mind, while writing the present work, for *qui vult finem, vult etiam media.* Should the work, therefore, fall into the hands of any readers who are well acquainted with the literature on the history of ancient philosophy, and cause them to reflect that this idea is founded on what Burnet or Taylor say, that idea on what Ritter or Jaeger or Stenzel or Praechter have said, let me remind them that I am possibly quite well aware of this myself, and that I may not have agreed uncritically or unthinkingly with what the scholar in question says. Originality is certainly desirable when it means the discovery of a truth not hitherto revealed, but to pursue originality for the sake of originality is not the proper task of the historian. I willingly acknowledge my debt, therefore, to those men who have shed lustre on British and Continental scholarship, to men like Professor A. E. Taylor, Sir David Ross, Constantin Ritter, Werner Jaeger and others. In fact, it is one of my excuses for writing this book that some of the manuals which are in the hands of those for whom I am writing have paid but scant attention to the results of modern specialist criticism. For my own part, I should consider a charge of making insufficient use of such sources of light a more reasonable ground for adverse criticism, than a charge of making too much use of them.

Grateful thanks are due to the Encyclopaedia Britannica Co., Ltd., for permission to use diagrams taken from Sir Thomas Little Heath's article on Pythagoras (14th edit.); to Professor A. E. Taylor (and Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Ltd.) for his generous permission to utilise so freely his study on Forms and Numbers in Plato (reprinted from *Mind in Philosophical Studies*); to Sir David Ross and Messrs. Methuen & Co. for kind permission to incorporate his table of the moral virtues according to Aristotle (from *Aristotle*, p. 203); to Messrs. George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., for permission to quote a passage from the English translation of Professor Nicolai Hartmann's *Ethics* and to utilise a diagram from that work; to the same publishers and to Dr. Oscar Levy to make some quotations from the authorised English translation of Nietzsche's works (of which Dr. Levy is editor); to Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons (U.S.A.) for permission to quote the translation of Cleanthes' Hymn to Zeus by Dr. James Adam (from Hicks' *Stoic and Epicurean*); to Professor E. R. Dodds and the S.P.C.K. for permission to utilise translations found in *Select Passages Illustrating Neo-platonism* (S.P.C.K. 1923); and to

Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Ltd., for permission to quote from R. L. Nettleship's *Lectures on the Republic of Plato*.

References to the pre-Socratic philosophers are given according to the fifth edition of Diels' *Vorsokratiker* (D. in text). Some of the fragments I have translated myself, while in other cases I have (with the kind permission of Messrs. A. & C. Black, Ltd.) adopted the English translation given by Burnet in his *Early Greek Philosophy*. The title of this work is abbreviated in reference to E.G.P., and *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*, by Zeller—Nestle—Palmer, appear generally as *Outlines*. Abbreviations for the titles of Platonic dialogues and the works of Aristotle should be sufficiently obvious; for the full titles of other works referred to recourse may be had to the first Appendix at the end of the volume, where the abbreviations are explained. I have mentioned a few works, by way of recommendation, in the third Appendix, but I do so simply for the practical convenience of the type of student for whom I have primarily written; I do not dignify the short list of books with the title of bibliography and I disclaim any intention of giving a bibliography, for the simple reason that anything approaching a full bibliography (especially if it took into account, as it ought to do, valuable articles in learned periodicals) would be of such an enormous size that it would be quite impracticable to include it in this work. For a bibliography and a survey of sources, the student can turn to e.g. Ueberweg-Praechter's *Die Philosophie des Altertums*.

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD TO REVISED EDITION

My thanks are due to the Rev. T. Paine, S.J., the Rev. J. Woodlock, S.J., and the Reader of Messrs. Burns Oates and Washbourne, Ltd., for their valuable assistance in the correction of misprints and other errors of form which disfigured the first impression, and for their suggestions in regard to the improvement of the index. Some slight additions to the text have been made, as on p. 126, and for these I am entirely responsible.

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A HISTORY
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. *Why Study the History of Philosophy?*

1. WE would scarcely call anyone "educated" who had no knowledge whatsoever of history; we all recognise that a man should know something of the history of his own country, its political, social and economic development, its literary and artistic achievements—preferably indeed in the wider setting of European and, to a certain extent, even World history. But if an educated and cultured Englishman may be expected to possess some knowledge of Alfred the Great and Elizabeth, of Cromwell and Marlborough and Nelson, of the Norman invasion, the Reformation, and the Industrial Revolution, it would seem equally clear that he should know something at least of Roger Bacon and Duns Scotus, of Francis Bacon and Hobbes, of Locke, Berkeley and Hume, of J. S. Mill and Herbert Spencer. Moreover, if an educated man is expected to be not entirely ignorant of Greece and Rome, if he would be ashamed to have to confess that he had never even heard of Sophocles or Virgil, and knew nothing of the origins of European culture, he might equally be expected to know something of Plato and Aristotle, two of the greatest thinkers the world has ever known, two men who stand at the head of European philosophy. A cultured man will know a little concerning Dante and Shakespeare and Goethe, concerning St. Francis of Assisi and Fra Angelico, concerning Frederick the Great and Napoleon I: why should he not be expected also to know something of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, Descartes and Spinoza, Kant and Hegel? It would be absurd to suggest that we should inform ourselves concerning the great conquerors and destroyers, but remain ignorant of the great creators, those who have really contributed to our European culture. But it is not only the great painters and sculptors who have left us an abiding legacy and treasure: it is also the great thinkers, men like Plato and Aristotle, St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, who have enriched Europe and her culture. It belongs, therefore, to a cultured education to know something at least of the course of European philosophy, for it is our thinkers,

as well as our artists and generals, who have helped to make our time, whether for good or ill.

Now, no one would suppose that it is waste of time to read the works of Shakespeare or contemplate the creations of Michelangelo, for they have intrinsic value in themselves which is not diminished by the number of years that have elapsed between their deaths and our own time. Yet no more should it be considered a waste of time to study the thought of Plato or Aristotle or St. Augustine, for their thought-creations abide as outstanding achievements of the human spirit. Other artists have lived and painted since the time of Rubens, but that does not lessen the value of Rubens' work: other thinkers have philosophised since the time of Plato, but that does not destroy the interest and beauty of his philosophy.

But if it is desirable for all cultured men to know something of the history of philosophic thought, so far as occupation, cast of mind and need for specialisation permit, how much more is this not desirable for all avowed students of philosophy. I refer especially to students of the Scholastic Philosophy, who study it as the *philosophia perennis*. That it is the *philosophia perennis* I have no wish to dispute; but it did not drop down from Heaven, it grew out of the past; and if we really want to appreciate the work of St. Thomas Aquinas or St. Bonaventure or Duns Scotus, we should know something of Plato and Aristotle and St. Augustine. Again, if there is a *philosophia perennis*, it is only to be expected that some of its principles should be operative in the minds even of philosophers of modern times, who may seem at first sight to stand far from St. Thomas Aquinas. And even if this were not so, it would be instructive to observe what results follow from false premisses and faulty principles. Nor can it be denied that the practice of condemning thinkers whose position and meaning has not been grasped or seen in its true historic setting is greatly to be deprecated, while it might also be borne in mind that the application of true principles to all spheres of philosophy was certainly not completed in the Middle Ages, and it may well be that we have something to learn from modern thinkers, e.g. in the field of Aesthetic theory or Natural Philosophy.

2. It may be objected that the various philosophical systems of the past are merely antique relics; that the history of philosophy consists of "refuted and spiritually dead systems, since each has

killed and buried the other."[1] Did not Kant declare that Metaphysic is always "keeping the human mind in suspense with hopes that never fade, and yet are never fulfilled," that "while every other science is continually advancing," in Metaphysic men "perpetually revolve round the same point, without gaining a single step"?[2] Platonism, Aristotelianism, Scholasticism, Cartesianism, Kantianism, Hegelianism—all have had their periods of popularity and all have been challenged: European Thought may be "represented as littered with metaphysical systems, abandoned and unreconciled."[3] Why study the antiquated lumber of the chamber of history?

Now, even if all the philosophies of the past had been not only challenged (which is obvious) but also refuted (which is not at all the same thing), it still remains true that "errors are always instructive,"[4] assuming of course that philosophy is a possible science and is not *of itself* a will-o'-the-wisp. To take an example from Mediaeval Philosophy, the conclusions to which Exaggerated Realism lead on the one hand and those to which Nominalism lead on the other hand indicate that the solution of the problem of universals is to be sought in a mean between the two extremes. The history of the problem thus serves as an experimental proof of the thesis learnt in the Schools. Again, the fact that Absolute Idealism has found itself incapable of providing any adequate explanation of finite selves, should be sufficient to deter anyone from embarking on the monistic path. The insistence in modern philosophy on the theory of knowledge and the Subject-Object relation should, despite all the extravagances to which it has led, at any rate make it clear that subject can no more be reduced to object than object to subject, while Marxism, notwithstanding its fundamental errors, will teach us not to neglect the influence of technics and man's economic life on higher spheres of human culture. To him especially who does not set out to learn a given system of philosophy but aspires to philosophise *ab ovo*, as it were, the study of the history of philosophy is indispensable, otherwise he will run the risk of proceeding down blind alleys and repeating the mistakes of his predecessors, from which a serious study of past thought might perhaps have saved him.

3. That a study of the history of philosophy may tend to

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[1] Hegel, *Hist. Phil.*, I, p. 17.

[2] *Proleg.*, p. 2 (Mahaffy).

[3] A. N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, p. 18. Needless to say, the anti-historical attitude is not Professor Whitehead's own attitude.

[4] N. Hartmann, *Ethics*, I, p. 119.

induce a sceptical frame of mind is true, but it must be remembered that the fact of a succession of systems does not prove that any one philosophy is erroneous. If *X* challenges the position of *Y* and abandons it, that does not by itself prove that the position of *Y* is untenable, since *X* may have abandoned it on insufficient grounds or have adopted false premisses, the development of which involved a departure from the philosophy of *Y*. The world has seen many religions—Buddhism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Mohammedanism, etc., but that does not prove that Christianity is not the true Religion; to prove that, a thorough refutation of Christian Apologetics would be necessary. But just as it is absurd to speak as if the existence of a variety of Religions *ipso facto* disproved the claim of any one religion to be the true Religion, so it is absurd to speak as though the succession of philosophies *ipso facto* demonstrated that there is no true philosophy and can be no true philosophy. (We make this observation, of course, without meaning to imply that there is no truth or value in any other religion than Christianity. Moreover, there is this great difference between the true (revealed) Religion and the true philosophy, that whereas the former, as revealed, is necessarily true in its totality, in all that is revealed, the true philosophy may be true in its main lines and principles without reaching completion at any given moment. Philosophy, which is the work of the human spirit and not the revelation of God, grows and develops; fresh vistas may be opened up by new lines of approach or application to new problems, newly discovered facts, fresh situations, etc. The term "true philosophy" or *philosophia perennis* should not be understood to denote a static and complete body of principles and applications, insusceptible of development or modification.)

II. *Nature of the History of Philosophy*

1. The history of philosophy is certainly not a mere congeries of opinions, a narration of isolated items of thought that have no connection with one another. If the history of philosophy is treated "only as the enumeration of various opinions," and if all these opinions are considered as of equal value or disvalue, then it becomes "an idle tale, or, if you will, an erudite investigation."[1] There is continuity and connection, action and reaction, thesis and antithesis, and no philosophy can really be understood fully

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[1] Hegel, *Hist. Phil.*, I, p. 12.

unless it is seen in its historical setting and in the light of its connection with other systems. How can one really understand what Plato was getting at or what induced him to say what he did, unless one knows something of the thought of Heraclitus, Parmenides, the Pythagoreans? How can one understand why Kant adopted such an apparently extraordinary position in regard to Space, Time and the Categories, unless one knows something of British empiricism and realises the effect of Hume's sceptical conclusions on the mind of Kant?

2. But if the history of philosophy is no mere collection of isolated opinions, it cannot be regarded as a continual progress or even a spiral ascent. That one can find plausible instances in the course of philosophic speculation of the Hegelian triad of thesis, antithesis and synthesis is true, but it is scarcely the task of a scientific historian to adopt an *a priori* scheme and then to fit the facts into that scheme. Hegel supposed that the succession of philosophic systems "represent the necessary succession of stages in the development" of philosophy, but this can only be so if the philosophic thought of man is the very thinking of the "World-Spirit." That, practically speaking, any given thinker is limited as to the direction his thought will take, limited by the immediately preceding and the contemporary systems (limited also, we might add, by his personal temperament, his education, the historical and social situation, etc.) is doubtless true; none the less he is not determined to choose any particular premisses or principles, nor to react to the preceding philosophy in any particular way. Fichte believed that his system followed logically on that of Kant, and there is certainly a direct logical connection, as every student of modern philosophy is aware; but Fichte was not *determined* to develop the philosophy of Kant in the particular way he did. The succeeding philosopher to Kant might have chosen to re-examine Kant's premisses and to deny that the conclusions which Kant accepted from Hume were true conclusions; he might have gone back to other principles or excogitated new ones of his own. Logical sequence there undoubtedly is in the history of philosophy, but not *necessary* sequence in the strict sense.

We cannot, therefore, agree with Hegel when he says that "the final philosophy of a period is the result of this development, and is truth in the highest form which the self-consciousness of spirit affords of itself."[1] A good deal depends, of course, on how you divide the "periods" and what you are pleased to consider the final philosophy of any period (and here there is ample scope for arbitrary choice, in accordance with preconceived opinion and wishes); but what guarantee is there (unless we first adopt the whole Hegelian position) that the final philosophy of any period represents the highest development of thought yet attained? If one can legitimately speak of a Mediaeval period of philosophy, and if Ockhamism can be regarded as the final main philosophy of that period, the Ockhamist philosophy can certainly not be regarded as the supreme achievement of mediaeval philosophy. Mediaeval philosophy, as Professor Gilson has shown,[1] represents a *curve* rather than a straight line. And what philosophy of the present day, one might pertinently ask, represents the synthesis of all preceding philosophies?

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[1] *Hist. Phil.*, III, p. 552.

3. The history of philosophy exhibits man's search for Truth by the way of the discursive reason. A Neo-Thomist, developing St. Thomas' words, *Omnia cognoscentia cognoscunt implicite Deum in quolibet cognito,*[2] has maintained that the judgment always points beyond itself, always contains an implicit reference to Absolute Truth, Absolute Being.[3] (We are reminded of F. H. Bradley, though the term "Absolute" has not, of course, the same meaning in the two cases.) At any rate we may say that the search for truth is ultimately the search for Absolute Truth, God, and even those systems of philosophy which appear to refute this statement, e.g. Historical Materialism, are nevertheless examples of it, for they are all seeking, even if unconsciously, even if they would not recognise the fact, for the ultimate Ground, the supremely Real. Even if intellectual speculation has at times led to bizarre doctrines and monstrous conclusions, we cannot but have a certain sympathy for and interest in the struggle of the human intellect to attain Truth. Kant, who denied that Metaphysics in the traditional sense were or could be a science, none the less allowed that we cannot remain indifferent to the objects with which Metaphysics profess to deal, God, the soul, freedom;[4] and we may add that we cannot remain indifferent to the human intellect's search for the True and the Good. The ease with which mistakes are made, the fact that personal temperament, education and other apparently "fortuitous" circumstances may so often

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[1] Cf. *The Unity of Philosophical Experience.*

[2] *De Verit.*, 22, 2, ad 1.

[3] J. Maréchal, S.J., *Le Point de Départ de la Métaphysique*: *Cahier V*.

[4] Pref. to 1st Ed. of *Critique of Pure Reason.*

lead the thinker up an intellectual cul-de-sac, the fact that we are not pure intelligences, but that the processes of our minds may frequently be influenced by extraneous factors, doubtless shows the need for religious Revelation; but that should not cause us to despair altogether of human speculation nor make us despise the *bona-fide* attempts of past thinkers to attain Truth.

4. The present writer adheres to the Thomistic standpoint that there is a *philosophia perennis* and that this *philosophia perennis* is Thomism in a wide sense. But he would like to make two observations on this matter: (*a*) To say that the Thomist system is the perennial philosophy does not mean that that system is closed at any given historical epoch and is incapable of further development in any direction. (*b*) The perennial philosophy after the close of the Mediaeval period does not develop merely alongside of and apart from "modern" philosophy, but develops also in and through modern philosophy. I do not mean to suggest that the philosophy of Spinoza or Hegel, for instance, can be comprehended under the term Thomism; but rather that when philosophers, even if they would by no means call themselves "Scholastic," arrive by the employment of true principles at valuable conclusions, these conclusions must be looked on as belonging to the perennial philosophy.

St. Thomas Aquinas certainly makes some statements concerning the State, for example, and we have no inclination to question his principles; but it would be absurd to expect a developed philosophy of the modern State in the thirteenth century, and from the practical point of view it is difficult to see how a developed and articulate philosophy of the State on scholastic principles could be elaborated in the concrete, until the modern State had emerged and until modern attitudes towards the State had shown themselves. It is only when we have had experience of the Liberal State and of the Totalitarian State and of the corresponding theories of the State, that we can realise all the implications contained in the little that St. Thomas says on the State and develop an elaborated Scholastic political philosophy applicable to the modern State, which will expressly contain all the good contained in the other theories while renouncing the errors. The resultant State-philosophy will be seen to be, when looked at in the concrete, not simply a development of Scholastic principle in absolute isolation from the actual historical situation and from intervening theories, but rather a development of these principles in the light of the historical situation, a development achieved in and through opposing theories of the State. If this point of view be adopted, we shall be enabled to maintain the idea of a perennial philosophy without committing ourselves, on the one hand, to a very narrow outlook whereby the perennial philosophy is confined to a given century, or, on the other hand, to an Hegelian view of philosophy, which necessarily implies (though Hegel himself seems to have thought otherwise—inconsistently) that Truth is never attained at a given moment.

III. *How to Study the History of Philosophy*

1. The first point to be stressed is the need for seeing any philosophical system in its historical setting and connections. This point has already been mentioned and does not require further elaboration: it should be obvious that we can only grasp adequately the state of mind of a given philosopher and the *raison d'être* of his philosophy if we have first apprehended its historical *point de départ.* The example of Kant has already been given; we can understand his state of mind in developing his theory of the *a priori* only if we see him in his historical situation *vis-à-vis* the critical philosophy of Hume, the apparent bankruptcy of Continental Rationalism and the apparent certainty of mathematics and the Newtonian physics. Similarly, we are better enabled to understand the biological philosophy of Henri Bergson if we see it, for example, in its relation to preceding mechanistic theories and to preceding French "spiritualism."

2. For a profitable study of the history of philosophy there is also need for a certain "sympathy," almost the psychological approach. It is desirable that the historian should know something of the philosopher as a man (this is not possible in the case of *all* philosophers, of course), since this will help him to feel his way into the system in question, to view it, as it were, from inside, and to grasp its peculiar flavour and characteristics. We have to endeavour to put ourselves into the place of the philosopher, to try to see his thoughts from within. Moreover, this sympathy or imaginative insight is essential for the Scholastic philosopher who wishes to understand modern philosophy. If a man, for example, has the background of the Catholic Faith, the modern systems, or some of them at least, readily appear to him as mere bizarre monstrosities unworthy of serious attention, but if he succeeds, as far as he can (without, of course, surrendering

his own principles), in seeing the systems from within, he stands much more chance of understanding what the philosopher meant.

We must not, however, become so preoccupied with the psychology of the philosopher as to disregard the truth or falsity of his ideas taken in themselves, or the logical connection of his system with preceding thought. A *psychologist* may justly confine himself to the first viewpoint, but not an *historian* of philosophy. For example, a purely psychological approach might lead one to suppose that the system of Arthur Schopenhauer was the creation of an embittered, soured and disappointed man, who at the same time possessed literary power and aesthetic imagination and insight, and *nothing more*; as though his philosophy were simply the manifestation of certain psychological states. But this viewpoint would leave out of account the fact that his pessimistic Voluntaristic system is largely a reaction to the Hegelian optimistic Rationalism, as it would also leave out of account the fact that Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory may have a value of its own, independent of the *kind of man* that propounded it, and would also neglect the whole problem of evil and suffering which is raised by Schopenhauer's system and which is a very real problem, whether Schopenhauer himself was a disappointed and disillusioned man or not. Similarly, although it is a great help towards the understanding of the thought of Friedrich Nietzsche if we know something of the personal history of the man, his ideas can be looked at in themselves, apart from the man who thought them.

3. To work one's way into any thinker's system, thoroughly to understand not only the words and phrases as they stand, but also the shade of meaning that the author intended to convey (so far as this is feasible), to view the details of the system in their relation to the whole, fully to grasp its genesis and its implications, all this is not the work of a few moments. It is but natural, then, that specialisation in the field of the history of philosophy should be the general rule, as it is in the fields of the various sciences. A specialist knowledge of the philosophy of Plato, for instance, requires besides a thorough knowledge of Greek language and history, a knowledge of Greek mathematics, Greek religion, Greek science, etc. The specialist thus requires a great apparatus of scholarship; but it is essential, if he is to be a true historian of philosophy, that he should not be so overwhelmed with his scholarly equipment and the details of learning, that he fails

to penetrate the spirit of the philosophy in question and fails to make it live again in his writings or his lectures. Scholarship is indispensable but it is by no means enough.

The fact that a whole lifetime might well be devoted to the study of one great thinker and still leave much to be done, means that anyone who is so bold as to undertake the composition of a continuous history of philosophy can hardly hope to produce a work that will offer anything of much value to specialists. The author of the present work is quite conscious of this fact, and as he has already said in the preface, he is not writing for specialists but rather utilising the work of specialists. There is no need to repeat again here the author's reasons for writing this work; but he would like once more to mention that he will consider himself well repaid for his work if he can contribute in some small degree, not only to the instruction of the type of student for whom the work is primarily designed, but also to the broadening of his outlook, to the acquirement of a greater understanding of and sympathy with the intellectual struggle of mankind, and of course to a firmer and deeper hold on the principles of true philosophy.

IV. *Ancient Philosophy*

In this volume we treat of the philosophy of the Greeks and Romans. There can scarcely be much need for dwelling on the importance of Greek culture: as Hegel says, "the name of Greece strikes home to the hearts of men of education in Europe."[1] No one would attempt to deny that the Greeks left an imperishable legacy of literature and art to our European world, and the same is true in regard to philosophic speculation. After its first beginnings in Asia Minor, Greek philosophy pursued its course of development until it flowered in the two great philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, and later, through Neo-Platonism, exercised a great influence on the formation of Christian thought. Both in its character as the first period of European speculation and also for its intrinsic value, it cannot but be of interest to every student of philosophy. In Greek philosophy we watch problems come to light that have by no means lost their relevance for us, we find answers suggested that are not without value; and even though we may discern a certain *naïveté*, a certain over-confidence and precipitation, Greek philosophy remains one of the glories of European achievement. Moreover, if the philosophy of the

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[1] *Hist. Phil.*, I, p. 149.

Greeks must be of interest to every student of philosophy for its influence on subsequent speculation and for its own intrinsic value, still more should it be of interest to students of Scholastic philosophy, which owes so much to Plato and to Aristotle. And this philosophy of the Greeks was really their own achievement, the fruit of their vigour and freshness of mind, just as their literature and art were their own achievement. We must not allow the laudable desire of taking into account possible non-Greek influence to lead us to exaggerate the importance of that influence and to underestimate the originality of the Greek mind: "the truth is that we are far more likely to underrate the originality of the Greeks than to exaggerate it."[1] The tendency of the historian always to seek for "sources" is, of course, productive of much valuable critical investigation, and it would be folly to belittle it; but it remains true that the tendency can be pushed too far, even to lengths when criticism threatens to be no longer scientific. For instance, one must not assume *a priori* that every opinion of every thinker is borrowed from a predecessor: if this is assumed, then we should be logically compelled to assume the existence of some primeval Colossus or Superman, from whom all subsequent philosophic speculation is ultimately derived. Nor can we safely assume that, whenever two succeeding contemporary thinkers or bodies of thinkers hold similar doctrines, one must have borrowed from the other. If it is absurd, as it is, to suppose that if some Christian custom or rite is partially found in Asiatic Eastern religion, Christianity must have borrowed that custom or rite from Asia, so it is absurd to suppose that if Greek speculation contains some thought similar to that appearing in an Oriental philosophy, the latter must be the historical source of the former. After all, the human intellect is quite capable of interpreting similar experiences in a similar way, whether it be the intellect of a Greek or an Indian, without its being necessary to suppose that similarity of reaction is an irrefutable proof of borrowing. These remarks are not meant to depreciate historical criticism and research, but rather to point out that historical criticism must rest its conclusions on historical proofs and not deduce them from *a priori* assumptions, garnishing them with a pseudo-historical flavour. Legitimate historical criticism would not, as yet at least, seem to have seriously impaired the claim to originality made on behalf of the Greeks.

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[1] Burnet, *G.P.*, I, p. 9.

Roman philosophy, however, is but a meagre production compared with that of the Greeks, for the Romans depended in large part on the Greeks for their philosophic ideas, just as they depended on the Greeks in art and, to a great extent at least, in the field of literature. They had their own peculiar glory and achievements (we think at once of the creation of Roman Law and the achievements of Roman political genius), but their glory did not lie in the realm of philosophical speculation. Yet, though the dependence of Roman Schools of philosophy on Greek predecessors is undeniable, we cannot afford to neglect the philosophy of the Roman world, since it shows us the sort of ideas that became current among the more cultured members of the class that was Master of the European civilised world. The thought of the later Stoa, for example, the teaching of Seneca, Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus, affords in many respects an impressive and noble picture which can hardly fail to arouse admiration and esteem, even if at the same time we are conscious of much that is lacking. It is desirable too that the Christian student should know something of the best that paganism had to offer, and should acquaint himself with the various currents of thought in that Greco-Roman world in which the Revealed Religion was implanted and grew. It is to be regretted if students should be acquainted with the campaigns of Julius Caesar or Trajan, with the infamous careers of Caligula or Nero, and yet should be ignorant of the philosopher-Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, or the influence at Rome of the Greek Plotinus, who though not a Christian was a deeply religious man, and whose name was so dear to the first great figure of Christian philosophy, St. Augustine of Hippo.

PART I

PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHY

CHAPTER II

THE CRADLE OF WESTERN THOUGHT: IONIA

THE birthplace of Greek philosophy was the sea-board of Asia Minor and the early Greek philosophers were Ionians. While Greece itself was in a state of comparative chaos or barbarism, consequent on the Dorian invasions of the eleventh century B.C., which submerged the old Aegean culture, Ionia preserved the spirit of the older civilisation,[1] and it was to the Ionian world that Homer belonged, even if the Homeric poems enjoyed the patronage of the new Achaean aristocracy. While the Homeric poems cannot indeed be called a philosophical work (though they are, of course, of great value through their revelation of certain stages of the Greek outlook and way of life, while their educational influence on Greeks of later times should not be underestimated), since the isolated philosophical ideas that occur in the poems are very far from being systematised (considerably less so than in the poems of Hesiod, the epic writer of mainland Greece, who portrays in his work his pessimistic view of history, his conviction of the reign of law in the animal world and his ethical passion for justice among men), it is significant that the greatest poet of Greece and the first beginnings of systematic philosophy both belong to Ionia. But these two great productions of Ionian genius, the poems of Homer and the Ionian cosmology, did not merely follow on one another; at least, whatever view one holds of the authorship, composition and date or dates of the Homeric poems, it is clear enough that the society reflected in those poems was not that of the period of the Ionian cosmology, but belonged to a more primitive era. Again, the society depicted by Hesiod, the later of the "two" great epic poets, is a far cry from that of the Greek *Polis*, for between the two had occurred the breakdown of the power of the noble aristocracy, a breakdown that made possible the free growth of city life in mainland Greece. Neither the heroic life depicted in the *Iliad* nor the domination of the landed nobility depicted in the poems of Hesiod was the setting in which Greek philosophy grew up: on the contrary, early Greek philosophy, though naturally the work of individuals, was also the product of the City and reflected to a certain extent the reign of law and the conception of law which the pre-Socratics systematically extended to the whole universe in their cosmologies. Thus in a sense there is a certain continuity between the Homeric conception of an ultimate law or destiny or will governing gods and men, the Hesiodic picture of the world and the poet's moral demands, and the early Ionian cosmology. When social life was settled, men could turn to rational reflection, and in the period of philosophy's childhood it was Nature as a whole which first occupied their attention. From the psychological standpoint this is only what one would expect.

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[1] "It was in Ionia that the new Greek civilisation arose: Ionia in whom the old Aegean blood and spirit most survived, taught the new Greece, gave her coined money and letters, art and poesy, and her shipmen, forcing the Phoenicians from before them, carried her new culture to what were then deemed the ends of the earth." Hall, *Ancient History of the Near East*, p. 79.

Thus, although it is undeniable that Greek philosophy arose among a people whose civilisation went back to the pre-historic times of Greece, what we call early Greek philosophy was "early" only in relation to subsequent Greek philosophy and the flowering of Greek thought and culture on the mainland; in relation to the preceding centuries of Greek development it may be looked on rather as the fruit of a mature civilisation, marking the closing period of Ionian greatness on the one hand and ushering in on the other hand the splendour of Hellenic, particularly of Athenian, culture.[1]

We have represented early Greek philosophic thought as the ultimate product of the ancient Ionian civilisation; but it must be remembered that Ionia forms, as it were, the meeting-place of West and East, so that the question may be raised whether or not Greek philosophy was due to Oriental influences, whether, for instance, it was borrowed from Babylon or Egypt. This view has been maintained, but has had to be abandoned. The Greek philosophers and writers know nothing of it—even Herodotus, who was so eager to run his pet theory as to the Egyptian origins of Greek religion and civilization—and the Oriental-origin theory is due mainly to Alexandrian writers, from whom it was taken over by Christian apologists. The Egyptians of Hellenistic times, for instance, interpreted their myths according to the ideas of Greek philosophy, and then asserted that their myths were the origin of the Greek philosophy. But this is simply an instance of allegorising on the part of the Alexandrians: it has no more objective value than the Jewish notion that Plato drew his wisdom from the Old Testament. There would, of course, be difficulties in explaining *how* Egyptian thought could be transmitted to the Greeks (traders are not the sort of people we would expect to convey philosophic notions), but, as has been remarked by Burnet, it is practically waste of time to inquire whether the philosophical ideas of this or that Eastern people could be communicated to the Greeks or not, unless we have first ascertained that the people in question really possessed a philosophy.[1] That the Egyptians had a philosophy to communicate has never been shown, and it is out of the question to suppose that Greek philosophy came from India or from China.[2]

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[1] For what Julius Stenzel calls *Vortheoretische Metaphysik* cf. Zeller, *Outlines*, Introd. ss 3; Burnet, *E.G.P.*, Introd.; Ueberweg-Praechter, pp. 28–31; Jaeger, *Paideia*; Stenzel, *Metaphysik des Altertums*, I, pp. 14 ff., etc.

But there is a further point to be considered. Greek philosophy was closely bound up with mathematics, and it has been maintained that the Greeks derived their mathematics from Egypt and their astronomy from Babylonia. Now, that Greek mathematics were influenced by Egypt and Greek astronomy by Babylon is more than probable: for one thing, Greek science and philosophy began to develop in that very region where interchange with the East was most to be expected. But that is not the same as saying that Greek scientific mathematics *derive* from Egypt or their astronomy from Babylon. Detailed arguments left aside, let it suffice to point out that Egyptian mathematics consisted of empirical, rough and ready methods of obtaining a practical result. Thus Egyptian geometry largely consisted of practical methods of marking out afresh the fields after the inundation of the river Nile. Scientific geometry was not developed by them, but it was developed by the Greeks. Similarly Babylonian astronomy was pursued with a view to divination: it was mainly astrology, but among the Greeks it became a scientific pursuit. So even if we grant that the practical gardener-mathematics of the Egyptians and the astronomical observations of Babylonian astrologers influenced the Greeks and supplied them with preliminary material, this admission is in no way prejudicial to the originality of the Greek genius. Science and Thought, as distinct from mere practical calculation and astrological lore, were the result of the Greek genius and were due neither to the Egyptians nor to the Babylonians.

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[1] *E.G.P.*, pp. 17–18.

[2] *"Nel sesto secolo A.C. ci si presenta, in Grecia, uno dei fenomeni meravigliosi della coltura umana. La Scuola di Mileto crea la ricerca scientifica: e le linee fondamentali, stabilite in quei primi albori, si perpetuano attraverso le generazioni e i secoli."* Aurelio Covotti, *I Presocratici* p. 31 (Naples, 1934).

The Greeks, then, stand as the uncontested original thinkers and scientists of Europe.[1] They first sought knowledge for its own sake, and pursued knowledge in a scientific, free and unprejudiced spirit. Moreover, owing to the character of Greek religion, they were free from any priestly class that might have strong traditions and unreasoned doctrines of their own, tenaciously held and imparted only to a few, which might hamper the development of free science. Hegel, in his history of philosophy, dismisses Indian philosophy rather curtly, on the ground that it is identical with Indian religion. While admitting the presence of philosophical *notions*, he maintains that these do not take the form of *thought*, but are couched in poetical and symbolic form, and have, like religion, the practical purpose of freeing men from the illusions and unhappiness of life rather than knowledge for its own sake. Without committing oneself to agreement with Hegel's view of Indian philosophy (which has been far more clearly presented to the Western world in its purely philosophic aspects since the time of Hegel), one can agree with him that Greek philosophy was from the first *thought* pursued in the spirit of free science. It may with some have tended to take the place of religion, both from the point of view of belief and conduct; yet this was due to the inadequacy of Greek religion rather than to any mythological or mystical character in Greek philosophy. (It is not meant, of course, to belittle the place and function of "Myth" in Greek thought, nor yet the tendency of philosophy at certain times to pass into religion, e.g. with Plotinus. Indeed as regards myth, "In the earlier cosmologies of the Greek physicists the mythical and the rational elements interpenetrate in an as yet undivided unity." So Professor Werner Jaeger in *Aristotle, Fundamentals of the History of His Development*, p. 377.)

Professor Zeller emphasises the impartiality of the Greeks as they regarded the world about them, which in combination with their sense of reality and power of abstraction, "enabled them at a very early date to recognise their religious ideas for what they actually were—creations of an artistic imagination."[1] (This, of course, would scarcely hold good for the Greek people at large—the non-philosophical majority.) From the moment when the proverbial wisdom of the Wise Men and the myths of the poets were succeeded by the half-scientific, half-philosophic reflections and investigations of the Ionian cosmologists, art may be said to have been succeeded (logically, at any rate) by philosophy, which was to reach a splendid culmination in Plato and Aristotle, and at length in Plotinus to reach up to the heights where philosophy is transcended, not in mythology, but in mysticism. Yet there was no abrupt transition from "myth" to philosophy; one might even say that the Hesiodic theogony, for example, found a successor in Ionian cosmogonic speculation, the myth-element retreating before growing rationalisation yet not disappearing. Indeed it is present in Greek philosophy even in post-Socratic times.

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[1] As Dr. Praechter points out (p. 27), the religious conceptions of the Orient, even if they had been taken over by the Greeks, would not explain the peculiar characteristic of Greek philosophy, free speculation on the essence of things. As for Indian philosophy proper, it would not appear to be earlier than the Greek.

The splendid achievement of Greek thought was cradled in Ionia; and if Ionia was the cradle of Greek philosophy, Miletus was the cradle of Ionian philosophy. For it was at Miletus that Thales, the reputedly earliest Ionian philosopher, flourished. The Ionian philosophers were profoundly impressed with the fact of change, of birth and growth, decay and death. Spring and Autumn in the external world of nature, childhood and old age in the life of man, coming-into-being and passing-away—these were the obvious and inescapable facts of the universe. It is a great mistake to suppose that the Greeks were happy and careless children of the sun, who only wanted to lounge in the porticoes of the cities and gaze at the magnificent works of art or at the achievements of their athletes. They were very conscious of the dark side of our existence on this planet, for against the background of sun and joy they saw the uncertainty and insecurity of man's life, the certainty of death, the darkness of the future. "The best for man were not to have been born and not to have seen the light of the sun; but, if once born (the second best for him is) to pass through the gates of death as speedily as may be," declares Theognis,[2] reminding us of the words of Calderón (so dear to Schopenhauer), "*El mayor delito del hombre, Es haber nacido.*" And the words of Theognis are re-echoed in the words of Sophocles in the *Oedipus Coloneus*, "Not to have been born exceeds every reckoning" . . . μή φῦναι τὸν ἅπαντα νικᾷ λόγον.[1]

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[1] *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*, by Eduard Zeller, 13th edit., revised by Nestle, translated by L. R. Palmer, pp. 2-3.

[2] 425-7.

Moreover, although the Greeks certainly had their ideal of moderation, they were constantly being lured away from it by the will to power. The constant fighting of the Greek cities among themselves, even at the heyday of Greek culture, and even when it was to their obvious interest to unite together against a common foe, the constant uprisings within the cities, whether led by an ambitious oligarch or a democratic demagogue, the venality of so many public men in Greek political life—even when the safety and honour of their city was at stake—all manifest the will to power which was so strong in the Greek. The Greek admired efficiency, he admired the ideal of the strong man who knows what he wants and has the power to get it; his conception of ἀρετή was largely that of ability to achieve success. As Professor De Burgh remarks, "The Greek would have regarded Napoleon as a man of pre-eminent aretê."[2] For a very frank, or rather blatant, acknowledgment of the unscrupulous will to power, we have only to read the report that Thucydides gives of the conference between the representatives of Athens and those of Melos. The Athenians declare, "But you and we should say what we really think, and aim only at what is possible, for we both alike know that into the discussion of human affairs the question of justice only enters where the pressure of necessity is equal, and that the powerful exact what they can, and the weak grant what they must." Similarly in the celebrated words, "For of the Gods we believe, and of men we know, that by a law of their nature wherever they can rule they will. This law was not made by us, and we are not the first who have acted upon it; we did but inherit it, and shall bequeath it to all time, and we know that you and all mankind, if you were as strong as we are, would do as we do."[3] We could hardly ask for a more unashamed avowal of the will to power, and Thucydides gives no indication that he disapproved of the Athenian conduct. It is to be recalled that when the Melians eventually had to surrender, the Athenians put to death all those who were of military age, enslaved the women and children, and colonised the island with their own settlers—and all this at the zenith of Athenian splendour and artistic achievement.

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[1] 1224.

[2] *The Legacy of the Ancient World*, p. 83, note 2.

[3] From Benjamin Jowett's translation of Thucydides (Oxford Un. Press).

In close connection with the will to power stands the conception of ὕβρις. The man who goes too far, who endeavours to be and to have more than Fate destines for him, will inevitably incur divine jealousy and come to ruin. The man or the nation who is possessed by the unbridled lust for self-assertion is driven headlong into reckless self-confidence and so to destruction. Blind passion breeds self-confidence, and overweening self-confidence ends in ruin.

It is as well to realise this side of the Greek character: Plato's condemnation of the "Might is Right" theory becomes then all the more remarkable. While not agreeing, of course, with Nietzsche's valuations, we cannot but admire his perspicacity in seeing the relation between the Greek culture and the will to power. Not, of course, that the dark side of Greek culture is the only side—far from it. If the drive of the will to power is a fact so is the Greek ideal of moderation and harmony a fact. We must realise that there are two sides to the Greek character and culture: there is the side of moderation, of art, of Apollo and the Olympian deities, and there is the side of excess, unbridled self-assertion, of Dionysian frenzy, as seen portrayed in the *Bacchae* of Euripides. As beneath the splendid achievements of Greek culture we see the abyss of slavery, so beneath the dream-world of Olympian religion and Olympian art we see the abyss of Dionysian frenzy, of pessimism and of all manner of lack of moderation. It may, after all, not be entirely fanciful to suppose, inspired by the thought of Nietzsche, that there can be seen in much of the Olympian religion a self-imposed check on the part of the Dionysian Greek. Driven on by the will to power to self-destruction, the Greek creates the Olympian dream-world, the gods of which watch over him with jealousy to see that he does not transgress the limits of human endeavour. So does he express his consciousness that the tumultuous forces in his soul would be ultimately ruinous to him. (This interpretation is not of course offered as an account of the origin of the Greek Olympian religion from the scientific viewpoint of the historian of religion: it is only meant to suggest psychological factors—provisions of "Nature," if you like—that may have been operative, even if unconsciously, in the soul of the Greek.)

To return from this digression. In spite of the melancholic side of the Greek, his perception of the constant process of change, of transition from life to death and from death to life, helped to lead him, in the person of the Ionian philosophers, to a beginning of philosophy; for these wise men saw that, in spite of all the change and transition, there must be something permanent. Why? Because the change is from something into something else. There must be something which is primary, which persists, which takes various forms and undergoes this process of change. Change cannot be merely a conflict of opposites; thoughtful men were convinced that there was something behind these opposites, something that was primary. Ionian philosophy or cosmology is therefore mainly an attempt to decide what this primitive element or *Urstoff*[1] of all things is, one philosopher deciding for one element, another for another element. What particular element each philosopher decided on as his *Urstoff* is not so important as the fact that they had in common this idea of Unity. The fact of change, of motion in the Aristotelian sense, suggested to them the notion of unity, though, as Aristotle says, they did not explain motion.

The Ionians differed as to the character of their *Urstoff*, but they all held it to be material—Thales plumping for water, Anaximenes for air, Heraclitus for fire. The antithesis between spirit and matter had not yet been grasped; so that, although they were *de facto* materialists—in that they assigned a form of matter as the principle of unity and primitive stuff of all things—they can scarcely be termed materialists in our sense of the word. It is not as though they conceived a clear distinction between spirit and matter, and then denied it; they were not fully conscious of the distinction, or at least they did not realise its implications.

One might be tempted, therefore, to say that the Ionian thinkers were not philosophers so much as primitive scientists, trying to account for the material and external world. But it must be remembered that they did not stop short at *sense*, but went beyond appearance to *thought*. Whether water or air or fire be assigned as the *Urstoff*, it certainly does not *appear* as such, i.e. as the ultimate element. In order to arrive at the conception of any of these as the ultimate element of all things it is necessary to go beyond appearance and sense. And they did not arrive at their conclusions through a scientific, experimental approach, but by means of the speculative reason: the unity posited is indeed a material unity, but it is a unity posited by thought. Moreover, it is abstract—abstracting, that is to say, from the data of appearance—even if materialist. Consequently we might perhaps call the Ionian cosmologies instances of *abstract materialism*: we can already discern in them the notion of unity in difference and of difference as entering into unity: and this is a philosophic notion. In addition the Ionian thinkers were convinced of the reign of law in the universe. In the life of the individual ὕβρις, the overstepping of what is right and proper for man, brings ruin in its train, the redressing of the balance; so, by extension to the universe, cosmic law reigns, the preservation of a balance and the prevention of chaos and anarchy. This conception of a law-governed universe, a universe that is no plaything of mere caprice or lawless spontaneity, no mere field for lawless and "egoistic" domination of one element over another, formed a basis for a scientific cosmology as opposed to fanciful mythology.

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[1] The German word *Urstoff* is here employed, simply because it expresses the notion of primitive element or substrate or "stuff" of the universe in one short word.

From another point of view, however, we may say that with the Ionians science and philosophy are not yet distinguished. The early Ionian thinkers or wise men pursued all sorts of scientific considerations, astronomical for instance, and these were not clearly separated from philosophy. They were Wise Men, who might make astronomical observations for the sake of navigation, try to find out the one primary element of the universe, plan out feats of engineering, etc., and all without making any clear distinction between their various activities. Only that mixture of history and geography, which was known as ἱστορίη, was separated off from the philosophico-scientific activities, and that not always very clearly. Yet as real philosophic notions and real speculative ability appear among them, as since they form a stage in the development of the classical Greek philosophy, they cannot be omitted from the history of philosophy as though they were mere children whose innocent babblings are unworthy of serious attention. The first beginnings of European philosophy cannot be a matter of indifference to the historian.

CHAPTER III

THE PIONEERS: EARLY IONIAN PHILOSOPHERS

1. *Thales*

THE mixture of philosopher and practical scientist is seen very clearly in the case of Thales of Miletus. Thales is said to have predicted the eclipse of the sun mentioned by Herodotus[1] as occurring at the close of the war between the Lydians and the Medes. Now, according to the calculations of astronomers, an eclipse, which was probably visible in Asia Minor, took place on May 28th, 585 B.C. So if the story about Thales is true, and if the eclipse which he foretold is the eclipse of 585, then he must have flourished in the early part of the sixth century B.C. He is said to have died shortly before the fall of Sardis in 546/5 B.C. Among other scientific activities ascribed to Thales are the construction of an almanac and the introduction of the Phoenician practice of steering a ship's course by the Little Bear. Anecdotes narrated about him, which may be read in the life of Thales by Diogenes Laërtius, e.g. that he fell into a well or ditch while star-gazing, or that, foreseeing a scarcity of olives, he made a corner in oil, are probably just tales of the type easily fathered on a Sage or Wise Man.[2]

In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle asserts that according to Thales the earth is superimposed upon water (apparently regarding it as a flat floating disc). But the most important point is that Thales declared the primary stuff of all things to be water . . . indeed, that he raised the question of the One at all. Aristotle conjectures that observation may have led Thales to this conclusion, "getting the notion perhaps from seeing that the nutriment of all things is moist, and that heat itself is generated from the moist and kept alive by it (and that from which they come to be is a principle of all things). He got his notion from this fact, and from the fact that the seeds of all things have a moist nature, and water is the origin of the nature of moist things."[3] Aristotle also suggests, though with diffidence, to be sure, that Thales was influenced by the older theologies, wherein water—as the Styx of the poets—was the object of adjuration among the gods. However this may be, it is clear that the phenomenon of evaporation suggests that water may become mist or air, while the phenomenon of freezing might suggest that, if the process were carried further, water could become earth. In any case the importance of this early thinker lies in the fact that he raised the question, what is the ultimate nature of the world; and not in the answer that he actually gave to that question or in his reasons, be they what they may, for giving that answer.

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[1] *Hist.*, I, 74.

[2] Diog. Laërt, *Lives of the Philosophers*, I, 22–44.

[3] *Metaphysics* (trans. by J A. Smith and W. D. Ross)

Another statement attributed to Thales by Aristotle, that all things are full of gods, that the magnet has a soul because it moves iron,[1] cannot be interpreted with certainty. To declare that this statement asserts the existence of a world-soul, and then to identify this world-soul with God[2] or with the Platonic Demiurge[3] —as though the latter formed all things out of water—is to go too far in freedom of interpretation. The only certain and the only really important point about Thales' doctrine is that he conceived "things" as varying forms of one primary and ultimate element. That he assigns *water* as this element is his distinguishing historical characteristic, so to speak, but he earns his place as the First Greek philosopher from the fact that he first conceives the notion of Unity in Difference (even if he does not isolate the notion on to the logical plane), and, while holding fast to the idea of unity, endeavours to account for the evident diversity of the many. Philosophy naturally tries to understand the plurality that we experience, its existence and nature, and to understand in this connection means, for the philosopher, to discover an underlying unity or first principle. The complexity of the problem cannot be grasped until the radical distinction between matter and spirit has been clearly apprehended: before this has been apprehended (and indeed even after its apprehension, if, once "apprehended," it is then denied), *simpliste* solutions of the problem are bound to suggest themselves: reality will be conceived as a material unity (as in the thought of Thales) or as Idea (as in certain modern philosophies). Justice can be done to the complexity of the problem of the One and the Many only if the essential degrees of reality and the doctrine of the analogy of being are clearly understood and unambiguously maintained: otherwise the richness of the manifold will be sacrificed to a false and more or less arbitrarily conceived unity.

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[1] *De Anima*, A 5, 411 a 7; 2, 405 a 19.

[2] So Aëtius, I, 7, XI (D. 11 A 23).

[3] Cicero: *De Nat. D.*, I, 10, 25 (D *ibid.*).

It is indeed possible that the remark concerning the magnet being alive, attributed by Aristotle to Thales, represents the lingering-on of a primitive animism, in which the concept of the anima-phantasma (the shadowy double of a man that is perceived in dreams) came to be extended to sub-human organic life, and even to the forces of the inorganic world; but, even if this is so, it is but a relic, since in Thales we see clearly the transition from myth to science and philosophy, and he retains his traditional character as initiator of Greek philosophy, ἀλλὰ Θαλῆς μὲν ὁ τῆς τοιαύτης ἀρχηγὸς φιλοσοφίας.[1]

II. *Anaximander*

Another philosopher of Miletus was Anaximander. He was apparently a younger man than Thales, for he is described by Theophrastus as an "associate" of Thales.[2] Like him, Anaximander busied himself with practical scientific pursuits, and is credited with having constructed a map—probably for the Milesian sailors on the Black Sea. Participating in political life, as so many other Greek philosophers, he led a colony to Apollonia.

Anaximander composed a prose-work on his philosophical theories. This was extant in the time of Theophrastus, and we are indebted to the latter for valuable information as to the thought of Anaximander. He sought, like Thales, for the primary and ultimate element of all things; but he decided that it could not be any one particular kind of matter, such as water, since water or the moist was itself one of the "opposites," the conflicts and encroachments of which had to be explained. If change, birth and death, growth and decay, are due to conflict, to the encroachment of one element at the expense of another, then—on the supposition that everything is in reality water—it is hard to see why the other elements have not long ago been absorbed in water. Anaximander therefore arrived at the idea, the primary element, the *Urstoff*, is indeterminate. It is more primitive than the opposites, being that out of which they come and that into which they pass away.[3]

This primary element (ἀρχή) was called by Anaximander—and, according to Theophrastus, he was the first so to call it—the material cause. "It is neither water nor any other of the so-called elements, but a nature different from them and infinite, from which arise all the heavens and worlds within them." It is τὸ ἄπειρον, the substance without limits. "Eternal and ageless" it "encompasses all the worlds."[1]

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[1] *Metaph.*, 983 b 18.

[2] *Phys. Opin.*, fr. 2 (D. 12 A 9). Cf. Ps. Plut. *Strom.*, 2 (D. 12 A 10).

[3] Frag. 1.

The encroachments of one element on another are poetically represented as instances of injustice, the warm element committing an injustice in summer and the cold in winter. The determinate elements make reparation for their injustice by being absorbed again into the Indeterminate Boundless.[2] This is an instance of the extension of the conception of law from human life to the universe at large.

There is a plurality of co-existent worlds which are innumerable.[3] Each is perishable, but there seems to be an unlimited number of them in existence at the same time, the worlds coming into being through eternal motion. "And in addition there was an eternal motion in which the heavens came to be."[4] This eternal motion seems to have been an ἀπόκρισις or "separating off," a sort of sifting in a sieve, as we find in the Pythagorean doctrine represented in the *Timaeus* of Plato. Once things had been separated off, the world as we know it was formed by a vortex movement or δίνη—the heavier elements, earth and water, remaining in the centre of the vortex, fire going back to the circumference and air remaining in between. The earth is not a disc, but a short cylinder "like the drum of a pillar."[5]

Life comes from the sea, and by means of adaptation to environment the present forms of animals were evolved. Anaximander makes a clever guess as to the origin of man. ". . . he further says that in the beginning man was born from animals of another species, for while other animals quickly find nourishment for themselves, man alone needs a lengthy period of suckling, so that had he been originally as he is now, he could never have survived."[6] He does not explain—a perennial difficulty for evolutionists—how man survived in the transition stage.

The Doctrine of Anaximander shows an advance, then, on that of Thales. He proceeds beyond the assignation of any one determinate element as primary to the conception of an Indeterminate Infinite, out of which all things come. Moreover, he makes some attempt at least to answer the question *how* the world developed out of this primary element.

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[1] Frags. 1–3.

[2] Frag. 1.

[3] D. 12 A 17. Simpl. *Phys.*, 1121, 5: Aët. II, 1, 3: Cic. *De Nat. D.*, 1, 10, 25: Aug. *C.D.*, viii, 2.

[4] Cf. Hippol., *Ref.*, 16, 2 (D. 12 A 11).

[5] Frag. 5. Ps. Plut. *Strom.*, 2 (D. 12 A 10).

[6] Ps. Plut. *Strom.*, fr. 2 (D. 12 A 10).

III. *Anaximenes*

The third philosopher of the Milesian School was Anaximenes. He must have been younger than Anaximander—at least Theophrastus says that he was an "associate" of Anaximander. He wrote a book, of which a small fragment has survived. According to Diogenes Laërtius, "he wrote in the pure unmixed Ionic dialect."

The doctrine of Anaximenes appears, at first sight at any rate, to be a decided retrogression from the stage reached by Anaximander, for Anaximenes, abandoning the theory of τὸ ἄπειρον, follows Thales in assigning a determinate element as the *Urstoff*. This determinate element is not water, but *Air*. This may have been suggested to him by the fact of breathing, for man lives so long as he breathes, and it might easily appear that air is the principle of life. In fact, Anaximenes draws a parallel between man and nature in general. "Just as our soul, being air, holds us together, so do breath and air encompass the whole world."[1] Air then is the *Urstoff* of the world, from which the things that are and have been and shall be, the gods and things divine, arose, while other things come from its offspring."[2]

But there is obviously a difficulty in explaining how all things came from air, and it is in his proffered solution to this difficulty that Anaximenes shows a trace of genius. In order to explain how concrete objects are formed from the primitive element, he introduces the notion of condensation and rarefaction. Air in itself is invisible, but it becomes visible in this process of condensation and rarefaction, becoming fire as it is dilated or rarefied; wind, cloud, water, earth and finally stones, as it is condensed. And indeed this notion of condensation and rarefaction suggests another reason why Anaximenes fixed on air as the primary element. He thought that, when air becomes rarefied, it becomes warmer and so tends to fire; while when it becomes condensed, it grows colder and tends towards the solid. Air then stands midway between the circumambient ring of flame and the cold, moist mass within it, and Anaximenes fixes on air as a sort of half-way house. The important point in his doctrine, however, may be said to be his attempt to found all quality on quantity—for that is what his theory of condensation and rarefaction amounts to in modern terminology. (We are told that Anaximenes pointed out that when we breathe with the mouth open, the air is warm; while when we breathe with the mouth shut, the air is cold—an experimental proof of his position.)[1]

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[1] Frag. 2.

[2] Hippol. *Ref.*, i, 7 (D. 13 A 7).

As with Thales, the earth is conceived as flat. It floats on the air like a leaf. In the words of Professor Burnet, "Ionia was never able to accept the scientific view of the earth, and even Democritus continued to believe it was flat."[2] Anaximenes gave a curious explanation of the rainbow. It is due to the sun's rays falling on a thick cloud, which they cannot penetrate. Zeller remarks that it is a far cry from Iris, Homer's living messenger of the gods, to this "scientific" explanation.[3]

. . . . .

With the fall of Miletus in 494, the Milesian School must have come to an end. The Milesian doctrines as a whole came to be known as the philosophy of Anaximenes, as though in the eyes of the ancients he was the most important representative of the School. Doubtless his historical position as the last of the School would be sufficient to explain this, though his theory of condensation and rarefaction—the attempt to explain the properties of the concrete objects of the world by a reduction of quality to quantity—was probably also largely responsible.

In general we may once more repeat that the main importance of the Ionians lies in the fact that they raised the question as to the ultimate nature of things, rather than in any particular answer which they gave to the question raised. We may also point out that they all assume the eternity of matter: the idea of an absolute beginning of this material world does not enter into their heads. Indeed for them *this* world is the only world. It would scarcely be correct, however, to regard the Ionian cosmologists as dogmatic materialists. The distinction between matter and spirit had as yet not been conceived, and, until this happened, there could hardly be materialists in our sense. They were materialists in the sense that they tried to explain the origin of all things out of some material element: but they were not materialists in the sense of deliberately denying a distinction between matter and spirit, for the very good reason that the distinction had not been so clearly conceived that its formal denial was possible.

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[1] (Plut., *De prim. frig.*, 947 f.), Frag. 1. [2] *G.P.*, I, p. 9. [3] *Outlines*, p. 31.

It scarcely needs to be indicated that the Ionians were "dogmatists," in the sense that they did not raise the "critical problem." They assumed that we could know things as they are: they were filled with the *naïveté* of wonder and the joy of discovery.

CHAPTER IV

THE PYTHAGOREAN SOCIETY

It is important to realise that the Pythagoreans were not merely a crowd of disciples of Pythagoras, more or less independent and isolated from one another: they were members of a religious society or community, which was founded by Pythagoras, a Samian, at Kroton in South Italy in the second half of the sixth century B.C. Pythagoras himself was an Ionian, and the earlier members of the School spoke the Ionic dialect. The origins of the Pythagorean Society, like the life of the founder, are shrouded in obscurity. Iamblichus, in his life of Pythagoras, calls him "leader and father of divine philosophy," "a god, a 'demon' (i.e. a superhuman being), or a divine man." But the Lives of Pythagoras by Iamblichus, Porphyry and Diogenes Laërtius, can hardly be said to afford us reliable testimony, and it is doubtless right to call them romances.[1]

To found a school was probably not new in the Greek world. Although it cannot be proved definitely, it is highly probable that the early Milesian philosophers had what amounted pretty well to Schools about them. But the Pythagorean School had a distinguishing characteristic, namely, its ascetic and religious character. Towards the end of the Ionian civilisation there took place a religious revival, attempting to supply genuine religious elements, which were catered for neither by the Olympian mythology nor by the Milesian cosmology. Just as in the Roman Empire, a society verging towards its decline, its pristine vigour and freshness lost, we see a movement to scepticism on the one hand and to "mystery religions" on the other hand, so at the close of the rich and commercial Ionian civilisation we find the same tendencies. The Pythagorean Society represents the spirit of this religious revival, which it combined with a strongly marked scientific spirit, this latter of course being the factor which justifies the inclusion of the Pythagoreans in a history of philosophy. There is certainly common ground between Orphicism and Pythagoreanism, though it is not altogether easy to determine the precise relations of the one to the other, and the degree of influence that the teaching of the Orphic sect may have had on the Pythagoreans. In Orphicism we certainly find an organisation in communities bound together by initiation and fidelity to a common way of life, as also the doctrine of the transmigration of souls—a doctrine conspicuous in Pythagorean teaching—and it is hard to think that Pythagoras was uninfluenced by the Orphic beliefs and practices, even if it is with Delos that Pythagoras is to be connected, rather than with the Thracian Dionysian religion.[1]

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[1] *"Ben, invero, possono dirsi romanzi, le loro 'Vite.'"* Covotti, *I Presocratici*, p. 66.

The view has been held that the Pythagorean communities were *political* communities, a view, however, that cannot be maintained, at least in the sense that they were essentially political communities—which they certainly were not. Pythagoras, it is true, had to leave Kroton for Metapontum on the instance of Cylon; but it seems that this can be explained without having to suppose any specifically political activities on the part of Pythagoras in favour of any particular party. The Pythagoreans did, however, obtain political control in Kroton and other cities of Magna Graecia, and Polybius tells us that their "lodges" were burnt down and they themselves subjected to persecution —perhaps about 440–430 B.C.,[2] though this fact does not necessarily mean that they were an essentially political rather than a religious society. Calvin ruled at Geneva, but he was not primarily a politician. Professor Stace remarks: "When the plain citizen of Crotona was told not to eat beans, and that under no circumstances could he eat his own dog, this was too much"[3] (though indeed it is not certain that Pythagoras prohibited beans or even all flesh as articles of food. Aristoxenus affirms the very opposite as regards the beans.[4] Burnet, who is inclined to accept the prohibitions as Pythagorean, nevertheless admits the possibility of Aristoxenus being right about the taboo on beans).[5] The Society revived after some years and continued its activities in Italy, notably at Tarentum, where in the first half of the fourth century B.C. Archytas won for himself a reputation. Philolaus and Eurytus also worked in that city.

As to the religious-ascetic ideas and practices of the Pythagoreans, these centred round the idea of purity and purification, the doctrine of the transmigration of souls naturally leading to the promotion of soul-culture. The practice of silence, the influence of music and the study of mathematics were all looked on as valuable aids in tending the soul. Yet some of their practices were of a purely external character. If Pythagoras really did forbid the eating of flesh-meat, this may easily have been due to, or at least connected with, the doctrine of metempsychosis; but such purely external rules as are quoted by Diogenes Laërtius as having been observed by the School can by no stretch of the imagination be called philosophical doctrines. For example, to abstain from beans, not to walk in the main street, not to stand upon the parings of your nails, to efface the traces of a pot in the ashes, not to sit down on a bushel, etc. And if this were all that the Pythagorean doctrines contained, they might be of interest to the historian of religion, but would hardly merit serious attention from the historian of philosophy. However, these external rules of observance by no means comprise all that the Pythagoreans had to offer.

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[1] Cf. Diog. Laërt., 8, 8.

[2] Polybius, ii, 39 (D. 14, 16).

[3] Stace, *Critical History of Greek Philosophy*, p. 33.

[4] ap. Gell., iv, II, 5 (D. 14, 9).

[5] *E.G.P.*, p. 93, note 5.

(In discussing briefly the theories of the Pythagoreans, we cannot say how much was due to Pythagoras himself, and how much was due to later members of the School, e.g. to Philolaus. And Aristotle in the *Metaphysics* speaks of the Pythagoreans rather than of Pythagoras himself. So that if the phrase, "Pythagoras held . . ." is used, it should not be understood to refer necessarily to the founder of the School in person.)

In his life of Pythagoras, Diogenes Laërtius tells us of a poem of Xenophanes, in which the latter relates how Pythagoras, seeing somebody beating a dog, told him to stop, since he had recognised the voice of a friend in the yelping of a dog. Whether the tale be true or not, the ascription to Pythagoras of the doctrine of metempsychosis may be accepted. The religious revival had brought to fresh life the old idea of the power of the soul and its continued vigour after death—a contrast to the Homeric conception of the gibbering shades of the departed. In such a doctrine as that of the transmigration of souls, the consciousness of personal identity, self-consciousness, is not held in mind or is not regarded as bound up with soul, for in the words of Dr. Julius Stenzel: "*. . . die Seele wandert von Ichzustand zu Ichzustand, oder, was dasselbe ist, von Leib zu Leib; denn die Einsicht, dass zum Ich der Leib gehort, war dem philosophischen Instinkt der Griechen immer selbstverständlich.*"[1] The theory of the soul as the harmony of the body, which is proposed by Simmias in Plato's *Phaedo* and attacked by Plato, would hardly fit in with the Pythagorean view of the Soul as immortal and as undergoing transmigration; so the ascription of this view to the Pythagoreans (Macrobius refers expressly to Pythagoras and Philolaus)[1] is at least doubtful. Yet, as Dr. Praechter points out, it is not out of the question if the statement that the soul was harmony of the body, or *tout simple* a harmony, could be taken to mean that it was the principle of order and life in the body. This would not necessarily compromise the soul's immortality.[2]

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[1] *Metaphysik des Altertums, Teil I*, p. 42.

(The similarity in several important points between Orphicism and Pythagoreanism may be due to an influence exerted by the former on the latter; but it is very hard to determine if there actually was any direct influence, and if there was, how far it extended. Orphicism was connected with the worship of Dionysus, a worship that came to Greece from Thrace or Scythia, and was alien to the spirit of the Olympian cult, even if its "enthusiastic" and "ecstatic" character found an echo in the soul of the Greek. But it is not the "enthusiastic" character of the Dionysian religion which connects Orphicism with Pythagoreanism; rather is it the fact that the Orphic initiates, who, be it noted, were organised in communities, were taught the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, so that for them it is the soul, and not the imprisoning body, which is the important part of man; in fact, the soul is the "real" man, and is not the mere shadow-image of the body, as it appears in Homer. Hence the importance of soul-training and soul-purification, which included the observance of such precepts as avoidance of flesh-meat. Orphicism was indeed a religion rather than a philosophy—though it tended towards Pantheism, as may be seen from the famous fragment Ζεὺς κεφαλή, Ζεὺς μέσσα, Διὸς δ' ἐκ πάντα τέτυκται[3]; but, in so far as it can be called a philosophy, it was a *way of life* and not mere cosmological speculation, and in this respect Pythagoreanism was certainly an inheritor of the Orphic spirit.)

To turn now to the difficult subject of the Pythagorean mathematico-metaphysical philosophy. Aristotle tells us in the *Metaphysics* that "the Pythagoreans, as they are called, devoted themselves to mathematics, they were the first to advance this study, and having been brought up in it they thought its principles were the principles of all things . . ."[4] They had the enthusiasm of the early students of an advancing science, and they were struck by the importance of number in the world. All things are numerable, and we can express many things numerically. Thus the relation between two related things may be expressed according to numerical proportion: order between a number of ordered subjects may be numerically expressed, and so on. But what seems to have struck them particularly was the discovery that the musical intervals between the notes on the lyre may be expressed numerically. Pitch may be said to depend on number, in so far as it depends on the lengths, and the intervals on the scale may be expressed by numerical ratios.[1] Just as musical harmony is dependent on number, so it might be thought that the harmony of the universe depends on number. The Milesian cosmologists spoke of a conflict of opposites in the universe, and the musical investigations of the Pythagoreans may easily have suggested to them the idea of a solution to the problem of the "conflict" through the concept of number. Aristotle says: "since they saw that the attributes and the ratios of the musical scales were expressible in numbers; since then all other things seemed in their whole nature to be modelled after numbers, and numbers seemed to be the first things in the whole of nature, and the whole heaven to be a musical scale and a number."[2]

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[1] *Somn. Scip.*, I, 14, 19 (D. 44 A 23).

[2] Ueberweg-Praechter, p. 69.

[3] D. 21 a.

[4] *Metaph.*, 985, b 23–6.

Now Anaximander had produced everything from the Unlimited or Indeterminate, and Pythagoras combined with this notion that of the Limit, or τὸ πέρας, which gives form to the Unlimited. This is exemplified in music (in health too, where the limit is the "tempering," which results in the harmony that is health), in which proportion and harmony are arithmetically expressible. Transferring this to the world at large, the Pythagoreans spoke of the cosmical harmony. But, not content with stressing the important part played by numbers in the universe, they went further and declared that things *are* numbers.

This is clearly not an easy doctrine to understand, and it is a hard saying that all things are numbers. What did the Pythagoreans mean by this? First of all, what did they mean by numbers, or how did they think of numbers? This is an important question, for the answer to it suggests one reason why the Pythagoreans said that things are numbers. Now, Aristotle tells us that (the Pythagoreans) hold that the elements of number are the even and the odd, and of these the former is unlimited and the latter limited; and the I proceeds from both of these (for it is both even and odd), and number from the I; and the whole heaven, as has been said, is numbers."[1] Whatever precise period of Pythagorean development Aristotle may be referring to, and whatever be the precise interpretation to be put on his remarks concerning the even and the odd, it seems clear that the Pythagoreans regarded numbers spatially. One is the point, two is the line, three is the surface, four is the solid.[2] To say then that all things are numbers, would mean that "all bodies consist of points or units in space, which when taken together constitute a number."[3] That the Pythagoreans regarded numbers in this way is indicated by the "tetraktys," a figure which they regarded as sacred.

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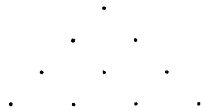
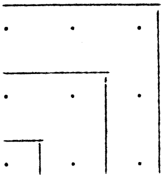
[1] It seems certain that the Pythagorean acoustic ratios were ratios of lengths and not of frequencies, which the Pythagoreans would hardly be in a position to measure. Thus the longest harpstring was called ἡ ὑπάτη, though it gave our "lowest" note and frequency, and the shortest was called ἡ νεάτη, though it gave our "highest" note and frequency.

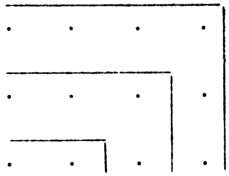
[2] *Metaph.*, 985, b 31–986 a 3.



This figure shows to the eye that ten is the sum of one, two, three and four; in other words, of the first four integers. Aristotle tells us that Eurytus used to represent numbers by pebbles, and it is in accord with such a method of representation that we get the "square" and the "oblong" numbers.[4] If we start with one and add odd numbers successively in the form of "gnomons," we get square numbers,



while if we start with two and add even numbers, we then get oblong numbers.



This use of figured numbers or connection of numbers with geometry clearly makes it easier to understand how the Pythagoreans regarded things as being numbers, and not merely as being numerable. They transferred their mathematical conceptions to the order of material reality. Thus "by the juxtaposition of several points a line is generated, not merely in the scientific imagination of the mathematician, but in external reality also; in the same way the surface is generated by the juxtaposition of several lines, and finally the body by the combination of several surfaces. Points, lines and surfaces are therefore the real units which compose all bodies in nature, and in this sense all bodies must be regarded as numbers. In fact, every material body is an expression of the number Four (τετρακτύς), since it results, as a fourth term, from three constituent elements (Points, Lines, Surfaces)."[1] But how far the identification of things with numbers is to be ascribed to the habit of representing numbers by geometrical patterns, and how far to an extension to all reality of Pythagorean discoveries in regard to music, it is extremely difficult to say. Burnet thinks that the original identification of things with numbers was due to an extension of the discovery that musical sounds can be reduced to numbers, and not to an identification of numbers with geometrical figures.[2] Yet if objects are regarded—as the Pythagoreans apparently regarded them—as sums of material quantitative points, and if, at the same time, numbers are regarded geometrically as sums of points, it is easy to see how the further step, that of identifying objects with numbers, could be taken.[3]

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[1] *Metaph.*, 986 a 17–21.

[2] Cf. art. *Pythagoras*,, Enc. Brit., 14th edit., by Sir Thos. Little Heath.

[3] Stöckl, *Hist. Phil.*, I, p. 48 (trans. by Finlay, 1887).

[4] *Metaph.*, 1092, b 10–13.

Aristotle, in the above-quoted passage, declares that the Pythagoreans held that "the elements of number are the even and the odd, and of these the former is unlimited and the latter limited." How do the limited and the unlimited come into the picture? For the Pythagoreans the limited cosmos or world is surrounded by the unlimited or boundless cosmos (air) which it "inhales." The objects of the limited cosmos are thus not pure limitation, but have an admixture of the unlimited. Now, the Pythagoreans, regarding numbers geometrically, considered that they also (composed of the even and the odd) are products of the limited and the unlimited. From this point of view too, then, it is but an easy step to the identification of numbers with things, the even being identified with the unlimited and the odd with the limited. A contributory explanation may be seen in the fact that the odd gnomons (cf. figures) conserve a fixed quadratic shape (limited), while the even gnomons present a continually changing rectangular shape (unlimited).[1]

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[1] Stöckl, *Hist. Phil.*, I, pp. 43–9.

[2] *E.G.P.*, p. 107.

[3] Philolaus (as we learn from the fragments) insisted that nothing could be known, nothing would be clear or perspicuous, unless it had or was number.

When it came to assigning definite numbers to definite things, scope was naturally allowed for all manner of arbitrary caprice and fancy. For example, although we may be able to see more or less why justice should be declared to be four, it is not so easy to see why καιρός should be seven or animation six. Five is declared to be marriage, because five is the product of three—the first masculine number, and two—the first feminine number. However, in spite of all these fanciful elements the Pythagoreans made a real contribution to mathematics. A knowledge of "Pythagoras' Theorem" as a geometrical fact is shown in Sumerian computations: the Pythagoreans, however, as Proclus remarked,[2] transcended mere arithmetical and geometrical facts, and digested them into a deductive system, though this was at first, of course, of an elementary nature. "Summing up the Pythagorean geometry, we may say that it covered the bulk of Euclid's Books i, ii, iv, vi (and probably iii), with the qualification that the Pythagorean theory of proportion was inadequate in that it did not apply to incommensurable magnitudes."[3] The theory which did solve this last arose under Eudoxus in the Academy.

To the Pythagoreans, not only was the earth spherical,[4] but it is not the centre of the universe. The earth and the planets revolve—along with the sun—round the central fire or "hearth of the Universe" (which is identified with the number One). The world inhales air from the boundless mass outside it, and the air is spoken of as the Unlimited. We see here the influence of Anaximenes. (According to Aristotle—*De Caelo*, 293, a 25–7—the Pythagoreans did not deny geocentricism in order to explain phenomena, but from arbitrary reasons of their own.)

The Pythagoreans are of interest to us, not only because of their musical and mathematical investigations; not only because of their character as a religious society; not only because through their doctrine of transmigration of souls and their mathematical metaphysic—at least in so far as they did not "materialise"

[1] Cf. Arist. *Physics*, 203 a 10–15.

[2] *In Eukleiden*, Friedlein, 65, 16–19.

[3] Heath, *art. cit.*

[4] Cf. the words of the Russian philosopher, Leo Chestov: "It has happened more than once that a truth has had to wait for recognition whole centuries after its discovery. So it was with Pythagoras' teaching of the movement of the earth. Everyone thought it false, and for more than 1,500 years men refused to accept this truth. Even after Copernicus savants were obliged to keep this new truth hidden from the champions of tradition and of sound sense." Leo Chestov, *In Job's Balances*, p. 168 (trans. by C. Coventry and Macartney).

numbers[1]—they tended to break away from the *de facto* materialism of the Milesian cosmologists; but also because of their influence on Plato, who was doubtless influenced by their conception of the soul (he probably borrowed from them the doctrine of the tripartite nature of the soul) and its destiny. The Pythagoreans were certainly impressed by the importance of the soul and its right tendance, and this was one of the most cherished convictions of Plato, to which he clung all his life. Plato was also strongly influenced by the mathematical speculations of the Pythagoreans—even if it is difficult to determine the precise extent of his debt to them in this respect. And to say of the Pythagoreans that they were one of the determining influences in the formation of the thought of Plato, is to pay them no mean tribute.

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[1] As a matter of fact the Pythagorean mathematisation of the universe cannot really be regarded as an "idealisation" of the universe, since they regarded number geometrically. Their identification of things and numbers is thus not so much an idealisation of things as a materialisation of numbers. On the other hand, in so far as "ideas," such as justice, are identified with numbers, one may perhaps speak with justice of a tendency towards idealism. The same theme recurs in the Platonic idealism.

It must, however, be admitted that the assertion that the Pythagoreans effected a geometrisation of number would scarcely hold good for the later Pythagoreans at least. Thus Archytas of Tarentum, a friend of Plato, was clearly working in the very opposite direction (cf. Diels, B 4), a tendency to which Aristotle, believing in the separation and irreducible character of both geometry and arithmetic, firmly objected. On the whole it might be better perhaps to speak of a Pythagorean discovery (even if incompletely analysed) of *isomorphisms* between arithmetic and geometry rather than of an interreduction.

CHAPTER V

THE WORD OF HERACLITUS

HERACLITUS was an Ephesian noble and flourished, according to Diogenes, about the 69th Olympiad, i.e. *c.* 504–501 B.C.; his dates cannot be accurately determined. The office of *Basileus* was hereditary in his family, but Heraclitus relinquished it in favour of his brother. He was, we gather, a melancholy man, of aloof and solitary temperament, who expressed his contempt for the common herd of citizens, as also for the eminent men of the past. "The Ephesians," he said of the citizens of his own city, "would do well to hang themselves, every grown man of them, and leave the city to beardless lads; for they have cast out Hermodorus, the best man among them, saying, "We will have none who is best among us; if there be any such, let him be so elsewhere and among others."[1] Again he comments: "In Priene lived Bias, son of Teutamas, who is of more account than the rest." (He said: "Most men are bad.")[2]

Heraclitus expresses his opinion of Homer in the saying: "Homer should be turned out of the lists and whipped, and Archilochus likewise." Similarly he observed: "The learning of many things does not teach understanding, otherwise it would have taught Hesiod and Pythagoras, and again Xenophanes and Hecataeus." As for Pythagoras, he "practised scientific inquiry beyond all other men, and making a selection of these writings, claimed for his own wisdom what was but a knowledge of many things and an imposture."[3]

Many of Heraclitus' sayings are pithy and pungent in character, if somewhat amusing on occasion. For example: "Physicians who cut, burn, stab and rack the sick, demand a fee for it which they do not deserve to get"; "Man is called a baby by God, even as a child by man"; "Asses prefer straw to gold"; "Man's character is his fate."[4] In regard to Heraclitus' attitude to religion, he had little respect for the mysteries, and even declares that "The mysteries practised among men are unholy mysteries."[5] Moreover, his attitude towards God was pantheistic, in spite of the religious language he employed.

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[1] Frag. 121. [2] Frag. 39. [3] Frags. 42, 40, 129 (latter doubtful, acc. to D). [4] Frags. 58, 79, 9, 119. [5] Frag. 14.

The style of Heraclitus seems to have been somewhat obscure for he gained in later time the nickname of ὁ σκοτεινός. This practice appears to have been not altogether unintentional: at least we find among the fragments sentences such as: "Nature loves to hide"; "The lord whose is the oracle by Delphi neither utters not hides its meaning, but shows it by a sign." And of his own message to mankind he says: "Men are as unable to understand it when they hear it for the first time, as before they have heard it at all."[1] Burnet points out that Pindar and Aeschylus possess the same prophetic tone, and attributes it in part to the contemporary religious revival.[2]

Heraclitus is known to many for the famous saying attributed to him, though apparently not his own: "All things are in a state of flux, πάντα ῥεῖ. Indeed this is all that many people know about him. This statement does not represent the kernel of his philosophic thought, though it does indeed represent an important aspect of his doctrine. Is he not responsible for the saying: "You cannot step twice into the same river, for fresh waters are ever flowing in upon you"?[3] Moreover, Plato remarks that "Heraclitus says somewhere that all things pass and nought abides; and comparing things to the current of a river, he says you cannot step twice into the same stream."[4] And Aristotle describes Heraclitus' doctrine as affirming that "All things are in motion, nothing steadfastly is."[5] In this respect Heraclitus is a Pirandello in the ancient world, crying out that nothing is stable, nothing abides, proclaiming the unreality of "Reality."

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that Heraclitus meant to teach that there is nothing which changes, for this is contradicted by the rest of his philosophy.[6] Nor is the proclamation of change even the most important and significant feature of his philosophy. Heraclitus lays stress on his "Word," i.e. on his special message to mankind, and he could scarcely feel himself justified in doing this if the message amounted to no more than the truth that things are constantly changing; a truth seen by the other Ionian philosophers and hardly bearing the character of novelty. No, Heraclitus' original contribution to philosophy is to be found elsewhere: it consists in the conception of unity in diversity, difference in unity. In the philosophy of Anaximander, as we have seen, the opposites are regarded as encroaching on one another, and then as paying in turn the penalty for this act of injustice. Anaximander regards the war of the opposites as something disorderly, something that ought not to be, something that mars the purity of the One. Heraclitus, however, does not adopt this point of view. For him the conflict of opposites, so far from being a blot on the unity of the One, is essential to the being of the One In fact, the One only exists in the tension of opposites: this tension is essential to the unity of the One.

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[1] Frags. 123, 93, 1 (cf. 17, 34). Cf. Diog. Laërt., 9, 6.

[2] *E.G.P.*, p. 132.

[3] Cf. Frags. 12 and 91.

[4] *Crat.* 402 a.

[5] *De Caelo*, 298 b 30 (III, i).

[6] Heraclitus does indeed teach that Reality is constantly changing, that it is its essential nature to change; but this should not be interpreted as meaning that for him there is no changing Reality at all. Heraclitus has often been compared to Bergson, but Bergson's thought too has, not infrequently, been grossly, if understandably, misinterpreted.

That Reality is One for Heraclitus is shown clearly enough by his saying: "It is wise to hearken, not to me, but to my Word, and to confess that all things are one."[1] On the other hand, that the conflict of opposites is essential to the existence of the One is also shown clearly by such statements as: "We must know that war is common to all and strife is justice, and that all things come into being and pass away through strife,"[2] and Homer was wrong in saying: "Would that strife might perish from among gods and men!" He did not see that he was praying for the destruction of the universe, for, if his prayer were heard, all things would pass away.[3] Again, Heraclitus says positively: "Men do not know how what is at variance agrees with itself. It is an attunement of opposite tensions, like that of the bow and the lyre."[4]

For Heraclitus, then, Reality is One; but it is many at the same time—and that not merely accidentally, but essentially. It is essential to the being and existence of the One that it should be one and many at the same time; that it should be Identity in Difference. Hegel's assignment of Heraclitus' philosophy to the category of Becoming is therefore based on a misconception—and also errs by putting Parmenides earlier than Heraclitus, for Parmenides was a critic as well as a contemporary of Heraclitus, and must be the later writer.[5] The philosophy of Heraclitus corresponds much more to the idea of the concrete universal, the One existing in the many, Identity in Difference.

But what is the One-in-many? For Heraclitus, as for the Stoics of later times, who borrowed the notion from him, the essence of all things is Fire. Now, it might seem at first sight that Heraclitus is merely ringing the changes on the old Ionian theme—as though because Thales made Reality to be Water and Anaximenes Air, Heraclitus, simply in order to find something different from his predecessors, fixed on Fire. Naturally, the wish to find a different *Urstoff* may have operated to a certain extent, but there was something more in his choice of Fire than that: he had a positive reason, and a very good reason for fixing on Fire, a reason bound up with the central thought of his philosophy.

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[1] Frag. 50.

[2] Frag. 80.

[3] Numenius. Frag. 16, apud Chalcidium, c. 297 (D. 22 A 22).

[4] Frag. 51.

[5] Hegel, *Hist. Phil.*, vol. I.

Sense-experience tells us that fire lives by feeding, by consuming and transforming into itself heterogeneous matter. Springing up, as it were, from a multitude of objects, it changes them into itself, and without this supply of material it would die down and cease to exist. The very existence of the fire depends on this "strife" and "tension." This is, of course, a sensual symbolism of a genuine philosophic notion, but it clearly bears a relation to that notion that water or air will not so easily bear. Thus Heraclitus' choice of Fire as the essential nature of Reality was not due simply to arbitrary caprice on his part, nor merely to the desire for novelty, to the necessity of differing from his predecessors, but was suggested by his main philosophic thought. "Fire," he says, "is want and surfeit"—it is, in other words, all things that are, but it is these things in a constant state of tension, of strife, of consuming, of kindling and of going out.[1] In the process of fire Heraclitus distinguished two paths—the upward and the downward paths. "He called change the upward and the downward path and said that the cosmos comes into being in virtue of this. When fire is condensed it becomes moist, and under compression it turns to water; water being congealed is turned to earth, and this he calls the downward path. And, again, the earth is itself liquefied and from it water comes, and from that everything else; for he refers almost everything to the evaporation from the sea. This is the upward path."[2]

However, if it be maintained that all things are fire, and are consequently in a constant state of flux, it is clear that some explanation must be offered of what appears at least to be the stable nature of things in the world. The explanation offered by Heraclitus is in terms of measure: the world is "an ever-living Fire, with measures of it kindling and measures going out."[3] So if Fire takes from things, transforming into itself by kindling, it also gives as much as it takes. "All things are an exchange for Fire, and Fire for all things, even as wares for gold and gold for wares."[1] Thus, while the substance of each kind of matter is always changing, the aggregate quantity of that kind of matter remains the same.

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[1] Frag. 65. [2] Diog. Laërt., 9, 8–9. [3] Frag. 30.

But it is not only the relative stability of things that Heraclitus tries to explain, but also the varying preponderance of one kind of matter over another, as seen in day and night, summer and winter. We learn from Diogenes that Heraclitus explained the preponderance of different elements as due to "the different exhalations." Thus "the bright exhalation, when ignited in the circle of the sun, produced day; and the preponderance of the opposite exhalation produced night. The increase of warmth proceeding from the bright exhalation produced summer; and the preponderance of moisture from the dark exhalation produced winter."[2]

There is, as we have seen, constant strife in the universe, and there is also a relative stability of things, due to the different measures of Fire, kindling or going out in more or less equal proportions. And it is the fact of this measure, of the balance of the upward and downward paths, which constitutes what Heraclitus calls the "hidden attunement of the Universe," and which he declares is "better than the open."[3] "Men," says Heraclitus in an already-quoted fragment, "do not know how what is at variance agrees with itself. It is an attunement of opposite tensions, like that of the bow and the lyre."[4] The One, in short, is its differences, and the differences are themselves one, they are different aspects of the one. Neither of the aspects, neither the upward nor the downward path, can cease: if they were to cease, then the One itself would no longer exist. This inseparability of opposites, the essential character of the different moments of the One, comes out in such sayings as: "The way up and the way down is the same," and "It is death to souls to become water, and death to water to become earth. But water comes from earth, and from water, soul."[5] It leads, of course, to a certain relativism, as in the statements that "Good and ill are one"; "The sea is the purest and the impurest water. Fish can drink it and it is good for them: to men it is undrinkable and destructive"; "Swine wash in the mire, and barnyard fowls in the dust."[6] However, in the One all tensions are reconciled, all differences harmonised: "To God all things are fair and good and right, but men hold some things wrong and some right."[1] This is, of course, the inevitable conclusion of a pantheistic philosophy—that everything is justified *sub specie aeternitatis.*

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[1] Frag. 90.

[2] Diog. Laërt., 9, 11.

[3] Frag. 54.

[4] Frag. 51.

[5] Frags. 60, 36.

[6] Frags. 58, 61, 37.

Heraclitus speaks of the One as God, and as wise: "The wise is one only. It is unwilling and willing to be called by the name of Zeus."[2] God is the universal Reason (Λόγος), the universal law immanent in all things, binding all things into a unity and determining the constant change in the universe according to universal law. Man's reason is a moment in this universal Reason, or a contraction and canalisation of it, and man should therefore strive to attain to the viewpoint of reason and to live by reason, realising the unity of all things and the reign of unalterable law, being content with the necessary process of the universe and not rebelling against it, inasmuch as it is the expression of the all-comprehensive, all-ordering Λόγος or Law. Reason and consciousness in man—the fiery element—are the valuable element: when the pure fire leaves the body, the water and earth which are left behind are worthless, a thought which Heraclitus expresses in the saying: "Corpses are more fit to be cast out than dung."[3] A man's interest, then, is to preserve his soul in as dry a state as possible: "The dry is the wisest and best."[4] It may be pleasure to souls to become moist, but all the same "it is death to soul to become water."[5] Souls should strive to rise above the private worlds of the 'sleeping" to the common world of the "waking," i.e. to the common world of thought and reason. This thought is of course the Word of Heraclitus. There is, then, one immanent law and Reason in the universe, of which human laws should be the embodiment, though at best they can be but its imperfect and relative embodiment. By stressing universal law and man's participation in Reason, Heraclitus helped to pave the way for the universalist ideals of Stoicism.

This conception of universal, all-ordering Reason appears in the system of the Stoics, who borrowed their cosmology from Heraclitus. But we are not entitled to suppose that Heraclitus regarded the One, Fire, as a *personal* God, any more than Thales or Anaximenes regarded Water or Air as a personal God: Heraclitus was a pantheist, just as the Stoics in later times were pantheists. It is, however, true that the conception of God as the immanent, ordering Principle of all things, together with the moral attitude of acceptance of events as the expression of divine

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[1] Frag. 102. [2] Frag. 32. [3] Frag. 96. [4] Frag. 118. [5] Frags. 77, 36.

Law, tends to produce a psychological attitude that is at variance with what would seem to be logically demanded by the theoretical identification of God with the cosmic unity. This discrepancy between psychological attitude and the strict demands of theory became very clear in the Stoic School, the members of which so often betray a mental attitude and employ language that would suggest a theistic conception of God, rather than the pantheistic conception logically demanded by the cosmological system—a discrepancy which was aggravated among the later Stoics especially, owing to their increasing concentration on ethical questions.

Did Heraclitus teach the doctrine of a universal conflagration recurring periodically? As the Stoics certainly held this doctrine, and as they borrowed from Heraclitus, the doctrine of the periodic and universal conflagration has been attributed to Heraclitus too; but, for the following reasons, it does not seem possible to accept this attribution. In the first place, Heraclitus, as we have seen, insisted on the fact that the tension or conflict of opposites is essential to the very existence of the One. Now, if all things were periodically to relapse into pure fire, the fire itself should logically cease to exist. In the second place, does not Heraclitus expressly say that the "sun will not go beyond his measures; otherwise the Erinyes, the handmaids of Justice, will find him out,"[1] and "this world was ever, is now, and ever shall be an ever-living Fire, with measures of it kindling and measures going out"? In the third place, Plato contrasts Heraclitus and Empedocles on the ground that, according to Heraclitus, the One is always Many, while, according to Empedocles, the One is many and one by turns.[2] When Professor Zeller says: "It is a contradiction which he, and probably Plato too, has not observed," he is making an unwarrantable supposition. Of course, if it were clear from certain evidence that Heraclitus actually did teach the doctrine of a periodic general conflagration, then we should indeed have to conclude that the contradiction involved was unobserved by both Heraclitus himself and by Plato; but as evidence goes to show that Heraclitus did not teach this doctrine, we cannot reasonably be called upon to attribute a mistake to Plato in this matter. Moreover, it was apparently the Stoics who first stated that Heraclitus maintained the doctrine of a general conflagration;[3] and even the Stoics are divided on the subject. Does not Plutarch make a character say: "I see the Stoic conflagration spreading over the poems of Hesiod, just as it does over the writings of Heraclitus and the verses of Orpheus"?[1]

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[1] Frag. 94. [2] *Soph.*, 242 d. [3] Cf. *E.G.P.*, pp. 159–60.

What are we to say of the doctrine of Heraclitus, the notion of unity in difference? That there is a many, a plurality, is clear enough. But at the same time the intellect constantly strives to conceive a unity, a system, to obtain a comprehensive view to link things up; and this goal of thought corresponds to a real unity in things: things *are* interdependent. Even man, with his immortal soul, depends on the rest of creation. His body depends, in a very real sense, on the whole past history of the world and of the human race: he depends on the material universe for life —bodily life through air, food, drink, sunlight, etc.—for his intellectual life too, through sensation as the starting-point of knowledge. He depends also for his cultural life on the thought and culture, the civilisation and development of the past. But though man is right in seeking a unity, it would be wrong to assert unity to the detriment of plurality. Unity, the only unity that is worth having, is a unity in difference, identity in diversity, a unity, that is to say, not of poverty, but of richness. Every material thing is a unity in diversity (consisting of molecules, atoms, electrons, etc.), every living organism also—even God Himself, as we know by Revelation, is Unity in Distinction of Persons. In Christ there is unity in diversity—unity of Person in diversity of Natures. The union of the Beatific Vision is a union in distinction—otherwise it would lose its richness (apart of course, from the impossibility of a "simple" unity of identification between God and creature).

Can we look on the created universe as a unity? The universe is certainly not a substance: it comprises a plurality of substances. It is, however, a totality in our idea of it, and if the law of the conservation of energy be valid, then it is in a sense a physical totality. The universe, then, may to a certain degree be considered a unity in diversity; but we may perhaps go further and suggest with Heraclitus that the conflict of opposites—change—is necessary to the existence of the material universe.

(i) As far as inorganic matter is concerned, change—at the very least in the sense of locomotion—is necessarily involved, at any rate if modern theories of the composition of matter, the theory of light, etc., are to be accepted.

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[1] *De def. orac.*, 415 f.

(ii) This, too, is clear, that if there is to be finite, materially-conditioned life, then change is essential. The life of a bodily organism must be sustained by respiration, assimilation, etc., all of which processes involve change, and so the "conflict of opposites." The preservation of specific life on the planet involves reproduction, and birth and death may well be termed opposites.

(iii) Would it be possible to have a material universe in which there was no conflict of opposites, absolutely no change at all? In the first place, there could be no life in such a universe, for embodied life, as we have seen, involves change. But would it be possible to have a material universe—in which there was no life—that was entirely static, entirely without change and movement? If matter be regarded in terms of energy, it is very hard to see how there could be any such purely static material universe. But, prescinding from all physical theories, even if such a universe were physically possible, could it be rationally possible? We could at least discover no possible function for such a universe—without life, without development, without change, a sort of primitive chaos.

A purely material universe seems, then, to be inconceivable not only *a posteriori* but also *a priori*. The idea of a material universe, in which organic life is present, demands change. But change means diversity on the one hand, for there must be a *terminus a quo* and a *terminus ad quem* of the change, and stability on the other hand, for there must be *something which changes*. And so there will be identity in diversity.

We conclude, then, that Heraclitus of Ephesus conceived a genuine philosophic notion, even though he pursued the same way of sensual symbolism as his Ionian predecessors, and this notion of the One as essentially many can be clearly discerned beneath all the sensual symbolism. Heraclitus did not indeed rise to the conception of substantial thought, the νόησις νοήσεως of Aristotle, nor did he sufficiently account for the element of stability in the universe as Aristotle tried to do; but, as Hegel says, "if we wish to consider fate so just as always to preserve to posterity what is best, we must at least say of what we have of Heraclitus, that it is worthy of this preservation."[1]

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[1] *Hist. Phil.*, I, pp. 297–8.

CHAPTER VI

THE ONE OF PARMENIDES AND MELISSUS

THE reputed founder of the Eleatic School was Xenophanes. However, as there is no real evidence that he ever went to Elea in Southern Italy, it is unlikely that he is to be accounted anything more than a tutelary founder, a patron of the School. It is not difficult to see why he was adopted as a patron by the School that held fast to the idea of the motionless One, when we consider some of the sayings attributed to him. Xenophanes attacks the anthropomorphic Greek deities: "If oxen and horses or lions had hands, and could paint with their hands, and produce works of art as men do, horses would paint the forms of the gods like horses, and oxen like oxen, and make their bodies in the image of their several kinds":[1] and substitutes in their place, "One god, the greatest among Gods and men, neither in form like unto mortals, nor in thought," who "abideth ever in the selfsame place, moving not at all; nor doth it befit him to go about now hither now thither."[2] Aristotle tells us in the *Metaphysics* that Xenophanes, "referring to the whole world, said the One was god."[3] Most probably, then, he was a monist and not a monotheist, and this interpretation of his "theology" would certainly be more compatible with the Eleatic attitude towards him than a theistic interpretation. A really monotheistic theology may be a familiar enough notion to us, but in the Greece of the period it would have been something exceptional.

But whatever the opinions of Xenophanes may have been, the real founder of the Eleatic School from a philosophical and historical viewpoint was undoubtedly Parmenides, a citizen of Elea. Parmenides seems to have been born towards the close of the sixth century B.C., since round about 451–449 B.C., when 65 years old, he conversed with the young Socrates at Athens. He is said to have drawn up laws for his native city of Elea, and Diogenes preserves a statement of Sotion to the effect that

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[1] Frag. 15. One might compare the words of Epicharmus (Frag. 5): "For the dog seems to the dog to be the most beautiful creature, and the ox to the ox, the donkey to the donkey, and the swine to the swine."

[2] Frags. 23 and 26.

[3] *Metaph.*, A 5, 986 b 18.

Parmenides began by being a Pythagorean, but afterwards abandoned that philosophy in favour of his own.[1]

Parmenides wrote in verse, most of the fragments we possess being preserved by Simplicius in his commentary. His doctrine in brief is to the effect that Being, the One, *is*, and that Becoming, change, is illusion. For if anything comes to be, then it comes either out of being or out of not-being. If the former, then it already is—in which case it does not come to be; if the latter, then it is nothing, since out of nothing comes nothing. Becoming is, then, illusion. Being simply *is* and Being is One, since plurality is also illusion. Now, this doctrine is obviously not the type of theory that rises immediately to the mind of the man in the street, and so it is not surprising to find Parmenides insisting on the radical distinction between the Way of Truth and the Way of Belief or Opinion. It is very probable that the Way of Opinion exposed in the second part of the poem, represents the cosmology of the Pythagoreans; and since the Pythagorean philosophy would itself scarcely occur to the man who went *merely* by sense-knowledge, it should not be maintained that Parmenides' distinction between the two Ways has all the formal generality of Plato's later distinction between Knowledge and Opinion, Thought and Sense. It is rather the rejection of one definite philosophy in favour of another definite philosophy. Yet it is true that Parmenides rejects the Pythagorean philosophy—and, indeed, every philosophy that agrees with it on the point—because it admits change and movement. Now change and movement are most certainly phenomena which appear to the senses, so that in rejecting change and movement, Parmenides is rejecting the way of sense-appearance. It is, therefore, not incorrect to say that Parmenides introduces the most important distinction between Reason and Sense, Truth and Appearance. It is true, of course, that even Thales recognised this distinction to a certain extent, for his supposed truth, that all is Water, is scarcely perceptible immediately to the senses: it needs reason, which passes beyond appearance, in order to be conceived. The central "truth" of Heraclitus is, again, a truth of reason and far exceeds the common opinion of men, who trust in everything to sense-appearance. It is also true that Heraclitus even makes the distinction partly explicit, for does he not distinguish between mere common sense and his Word? Yet it is Parmenides who first lays great and explicit stress on the distinction, and it is easy enough to understand why he does so, when we consider the conclusions to which he came. In the Platonic philosophy the distinction became of cardinal importance, as indeed it must be in all forms of idealism.

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[1] Diog. Laërt., 9, 21.

Yet though Parmenides enunciates a distinction which was to become a fundamental tenet of idealism, the temptation to speak of him as though he were himself an idealist is to be rejected. As we shall see, there is very good reason for supposing that in Parmenides' eyes the One is sensual and material, and to turn him into an objective idealist of the nineteenth-century type is to be guilty of an anachronism: it does not follow from the negation of change that the One is Idea. We may be called upon to follow the way of thought, but it does not follow that Parmenides regarded the One, at which we arrive by this way, as actually being Thought itself. If Parmenides had represented the One as self-subsistent Thought, Plato and Aristotle would hardly have failed to record the fact, and Socrates would not have found the first sober philosopher in Anaxagoras, with his concept of Mind or Nous. The truth really seems to be that though Parmenides does assert the distinction between Reason and Sense, he asserts it not to establish an idealist system, but to establish a system of Monistic Materialism, in which change and movement are dismissed as illusory. Only Reason can apprehend Reality, but the Reality which Reason apprehends is material. This is not idealism but materialism.

To turn now to the doctrine of Parmenides on the nature of the world. His first great assertion is that "It is." "It," i.e. Reality, Being, of whatever nature it may be, is, exists, and cannot not be. It is, and it is impossible for it not to be. Being can be spoken of and it can be the object of my thought. But that which I can think about and speak of can be, "for it is the same thing that can be thought and that can be." But if "It" *can* be, then it *is*. Why? Because if it could be and yet were not, then it would be nothing. Now, nothing cannot be the object of speech or thought, for to speak about nothing is not to speak, and to think about nothing is the same as not thinking at all. Besides, if it merely *could be*, then, paradoxically, it could never come to be, for it would have to come out of nothing, and out of nothing comes nothing and not something. Being, then, Reality, "It" was not first possible, i.e. nothing, and then existent: it was always existent—more accurately, "It is."

Why do we say "more accurately, It is?" For this reason: If something comes into being, it must arise either out of being or out of not-being. If it arises out of being, then there is no real arising, no coming-to-be; for if it comes out of being, it already is. If, however, it arises out of not-being, then not-being must be already something, in order for being to be able to arise out of it. But this is a contradiction. Being therefore, "It" arises neither out of being nor out of not-being: it never came into being, but simply *is*. And as this must apply to all being, nothing ever becomes. For if anything ever becomes, however trifling, the same difficulty always recurs: does it come out of being or out of not-being? If the former, then it already is; if the latter, then you fall into a contradiction, since not-being is nothing and cannot be the source of being. Change, therefore, becoming and movement are impossible. Accordingly "It is." "One path only is left for us to speak of, namely, that *It is*. In this path are very many tokens that what is, is uncreated and indestructible, for it is complete, immovable and without end."[1]

Why does Parmenides say that "It" is complete, i.e. one Reality, which cannot be added to? Because if it is not one but divided, then it must be divided by something other than itself. But Being cannot be divided by something other than itself, for besides being there is nothing. Nor can anything be added to it, since anything that was added to being would itself be being. Similarly, it is immovable and continuous, for all movement and change, forms of becoming, are excluded.

Now, of what nature is this "It," Being, according to Parmenides? That Parmenides regarded Being as material, seems to be clearly indicated by his assertion that Being, the One, is finite. Infinite for him must have meant indeterminate and indefinite, and Being, as the Real, cannot be indefinite or indeterminate, cannot change, cannot be conceived as expanding into empty space: it must be definite, determinate, complete. It is temporarily infinite, as having neither beginning nor end, but it is spatially finite. Moreover, it is equally real in all directions, and so is spherical in shape, "equally poised from the centre in every direction: for it cannot be greater or smaller in one place than in another."[2] Now, how could Parmenides possibly think of Being as spherical, unless he thought of it as material? It would seem, then, that Burnet is right when he aptly says: "Parmenides is not, as some have said, 'the father of idealism'; on the contrary, all materialism depends on his view of reality."[1] Professor Stace has to admit that "Parmenides, Melissus and the Eleatics generally did regard Being as, in some sense, material"; but he still tries to make out that Parmenides was an idealist in that he held the "cardinal thesis of idealism," "that the absolute reality, of which the world is a manifestation, consists in thought, in concepts."[2] It is perfectly true that the Being of Parmenides can be grasped only by thought, but so can the reality of Thales or Anaximenes be grasped only by thought, in concepts. But to equate "being grasped in thought" with "being thought" is surely a confusion.

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[1] Frag. 8.

[2] Frag. 8.

As an historical fact, then, it would seem that Parmenides was a materialist and nothing else. However, that does not prevent there being an unreconciled contradiction in Parmenides' philosophy, as affirmed by Professor Stace,[3] so that, though a materialist, his thought contains also the germs of idealism, or would at any rate form the *point de départ* for idealism. On the one hand Parmenides asserted the unchangeability of Being, and, in so far as he conceived of Being as material, he asserted the indestructibility of matter. Empedocles and Democritus adopted this position and used it in their atomistic doctrine. But while Parmenides felt himself compelled to dismiss change and becoming as illusion, thus adopting the very opposite position to that of Heraclitus, Democritus could not reject what appears to be an inescapable fact of experience, which needs more explanation than a curt dismissal. Democritus, therefore, while adopting Parmenides' thesis that being can neither arise nor pass away—the indestructibility of matter—interpreted change as due to the aggregation and separation of indestructible particles of matter. On the other hand, it is an historical fact that Plato seized on the thesis of Parmenides concerning the unchangeability of Being, and identified the abiding being with the subsistent and objective Idea. To that extent, therefore, Parmenides may be called the father of idealism, in that the first great idealist adopted a cardinal tenet of Parmenides and interpreted it from an idealistic standpoint. Moreover, Plato made great use of Parmenides' distinction between the world of reason and the world of sense or appearance. But if in that historical sense Parmenides may rightly be described as the father of idealism, through his undoubted influence on Plato, it must be understood at the same time that Parmenides himself taught a materialistic doctrine, and that materialists like Democritus were his legitimate children.

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[1] *E.G.P.*, p. 182. [2] *Crit. Hist.*, pp. 47 and 48. [3] *Crit. Hist.*, pp. 49–52.

Heraclitus, in his theory of the πάντα ῥεῖ, laid stress on *Becoming*. As we have seen, he did not assert Becoming to the total exclusion of Being, saying that there is becoming, but nothing which becomes. He affirmed the existence of the One—Fire, but held that change, becoming, tension, are essential to the existence of the One. Parmenides, on the other hand, asserted Being even to the exclusion of Becoming, affirming that change and movement are illusory. Sense tells us that there is change, but truth is to be sought, not in sense, but in reason and thought. We have, therefore, two tendencies exemplified in these two philosophers, the tendency to emphasise Becoming and the tendency to emphasise Being. Plato attempted a synthesis of the two, a combination of what is true in each. He adopts Parmenides' distinction between thought and sense, and declares that sense-objects, the objects of sense-perception, are not the objects of true knowledge, for they do not possess the necessary stability, being subject to the Heraclitean flux. The objects of true knowledge are stable and eternal, like the Being of Parmenides; but they are not material, like the Being of Parmenides. They are, on the contrary, ideal, subsistent and immaterial Forms, hierarchically arranged and culminating in the Form of the Good.

The synthesis may be said to have been worked out further by Aristotle. Being, in the sense of ultimate and immaterial Reality, God, is changeless, subsistent Thought, νόησις νοήσεως. As to material being, Aristotle agrees with Heraclitus that it is subject to change, and rejects the position of Parmenides, but Aristotle accounts better than Heraclitus did for the relative stability in things by making Plato's Forms or Ideas concrete, formal principles in the objects of this world. Again, Aristotle solves the dilemma of Parmenides by emphasising the notion of potentiality. He points out that it is no contradiction to say that a thing is X actually but Y potentially. It *is* X, but is going to be Y in the future in virtue of a potentiality, which is not simply nothing, yet is not actual being. Being therefore arises, not out of not-being nor out of being precisely as being *actu*, but out of being considered as being *potentia*, δυνάμει. Of the second part of the poem of Parmenides, *The Way of Belief*, it is unnecessary to say anything, but it is as well to say a few words concerning Melissus, as he supplemented the thought of his master, Parmenides.

Parmenides had declared that Being, the One, is spatially finite; but Melissus, the Samian disciple of Parmenides, would not accept this doctrine. If Being is finite, then beyond being there must be nothing: being must be bounded or limited by nothing. But if being is limited by nothing, it must be infinite and not finite. There cannot be a void outside being, "for what is empty is nothing. What is nothing cannot be."[1]

Aristotle tells us that the One of Melissus was conceived as material.[2] Now, Simplicius quotes a fragment to prove that Melissus did *not* look upon the One as corporeal, but as incorporeal. "Now, if it were to exist, it must needs to be one; but if it is one, it cannot have body; for if it had body, it would have parts, and would no longer be one."[3] The explanation seems to be indicated by the fact that Melissus is speaking of an hypothetical case. Burnet, following Zeller, points out the similarity of the fragment to an argument of Zeno, in which Zeno is saying that if the ultimate units of the Pythagoreans existed, then each would have parts and would not be one. We may suppose, therefore, that Melissus, too, is speaking of the doctrine of the Pythagoreans, is trying to disprove the existence of their ultimate units, and is not talking of the Parmenidean One at all.

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[1] Frag. 7. [2] *Metaph.*, 986 b 18–21. [3] Frag. 9. (Simplic. *Phys.*, 109, 34).

CHAPTER VII

THE DIALECTIC OF ZENO

ZENO is well known as the author of several ingenious arguments to prove the impossibility of motion, such as the riddle of Achilles and the tortoise; arguments which may tend to further the opinion that Zeno was no more than a clever riddler who delighted in using his wits in order to puzzle those who were less clever than himself. But in reality Zeno was not concerned simply to display his cleverness—though clever he undoubtedly was—but had a serious purpose in view. For the understanding of Zeno and the appreciation of his conundrums, it is therefore essential to grasp the character of this purpose, otherwise there is danger of altogether misapprehending his position and aim.

Zeno of Elea, born probably about 489 B.C., was a disciple of Parmenides, and it is from this point of view that he is to be understood. His arguments are not simply witty toys, but are calculated to prove the position of the Master. Parmenides had combated pluralism, and had declared change and motion to be illusion. Since plurality and motion seem to be such evident data of our sense-experience, this bold position was naturally such as to induce a certain amount of ridicule. Zeno, a firm adherent of the theory of Parmenides, endeavours to prove it, or at least to demonstrate that it is by no means ridiculous, by the expedient of showing that the pluralism of the Pythagoreans is involved in insoluble difficulties, and that change and motion are impossible even on their pluralistic hypothesis. The arguments of Zeno then are meant to refute the Pythagorean opponents of Parmenides by a series of clever *reductiones ad absurdum*. Plato makes this quite clear in the *Parmenides*, when he indicates the purpose of Zeno's (lost) book. "The truth is that these writings were meant to be some protection to the arguments of Parmenides against those who attack him and show the many ridiculous and contradictory results which they suppose to follow from the affirmation of the one. My writing is an answer to the partisans of the many and it returns their attack with interest, with a view to showing that the hypothesis of the many, if examined sufficiently in detail, leads to even more ridiculous results than the hypothesis of the

One."[1] And Proclus informs us that "Zeno composed forty proofs to demonstrate that being is one, thinking it a good thing to come to the help of his master."[2]

1. *Proofs against Pythagorean Pluralism*

1. Let us suppose with the Pythagoreans that Reality is made up of units. These units are either with magnitude or without magnitude. If the former, then a line for example, as made up of units possessed of magnitude, will be infinitely divisible, since, however far you divide, the units will still have magnitude and so be divisible. But in this case the line will be made up of an infinite number of units, each of which is possessed of magnitude. The line, then, must be infinitely great, as composed of an infinite number of bodies. Everything in the world, then, must be infinitely great, and *a fortiori* the world itself must be infinitely great. Suppose, on the other hand, that the units are without magnitude. In this case the whole universe will also be without magnitude, since, however many units you add together, if none of them has any magnitude, then the whole collection of them will also be without magnitude. But if the universe is without any magnitude, it must be infinitely small. Indeed, everything in the universe must be infinitely small.

The Pythagoreans are thus faced with this dilemma. Either everything in the universe is infinitely great, or everything in the universe is infinitely small. The conclusion which Zeno wishes us to draw from this argument is, of course, that the supposition from which the dilemma flows is an absurd supposition, namely, that the universe and everything in it are composed of units. If the Pythagoreans think that the hypothesis of the One is absurd and leads to ridiculous conclusions, it has now been shown that the contrary hypothesis, that of the many, is productive of equally ridiculous conclusions.[3]

2. If there is a many, then we ought to be able to say ***how many*** there are. At least, they should be numerable; if they are not numerable, how can they exist? On the other hand, they cannot possibly be numerable, but must be infinite. Why? Because between any two assigned units there will always be other units, just as a line is infinitely divisible. But it is absurd to say that the many are finite in number and infinite in number at the same time.[4]

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[1] *Parmen.*, 128 b.

[2] Procl.. *in Parmen.*, 694, 23 (D. 29 A 15).

[3] Frags. 1, 2.

[4] Frag. 3.

3. Does a bushel of corn make a noise when it falls to the ground? Clearly. But what of a grain of corn, or the thousandth part of a grain of corn? It makes no noise. But the bushel of corn is composed only of the grains of corn or of the parts of the grains of corn. If, then, the parts make no sound when they fall, how can the whole make a sound, when the whole is composed only of the parts?[1]

II. *Arguments against the Pythagorean Doctrine of Space*

Parmenides denied the existence of the void or empty space, and Zeno tries to support this denial by reducing the opposite view to absurdity. Suppose for a moment that there is a space in which things are. If it is nothing, then things cannot be in it. If, however, it is something, it will itself be in space, and *that* space will itself be in space, and so on indefinitely. But this is an absurdity. Things, therefore, are not in space or in an empty void, and Parmenides was quite right to deny the existence of a void.[2]

III. *Arguments Concerning Motion*

The most celebrated arguments of Zeno are those concerning motion. It should be remembered that what Zeno is attempting to show is this: that motion, which Parmenides denied, is equally impossible on the pluralistic theory of the Pythagoreans.

1. Let us suppose that you want to cross a stadium or race-course. In order to do so, you would have to traverse an infinite number of points—on the Pythagorean hypothesis, that is to say. Moreover, you would have to travel the distance in finite time, if you wanted to get to the other side at all. But how can you traverse an infinite number of points, and so an infinite distance, in a finite time? We must conclude that you *cannot* cross the stadium. Indeed, we must conclude that no object can traverse any distance whatsoever (for the same difficulty always recurs), and that all motion is consequently impossible.[3]

2. Let us suppose that Achilles and a tortoise are going to have a race. Since Achilles is a sportsman, he gives the tortoise a start. Now, by the time that Achilles has reached the place from which the tortoise started, the latter has again advanced to

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[1] Arist., *Phys.*, H, 5,250 a 19; Simplic., 1108, 18 (D. 29 A 29).
[2] Arist., *Phys.*, Δ 3,210 b 22; 1,209 a 23. Eudem., *Phys.*, Frag. 42 (D. 29 A 24)
[3] Arist., *Phys.*, Z 9,239 b 9; 2,233 a 21; *Top.*, Θ 8,160 b 7.

another point; and when Achilles reaches *that* point, then the tortoise will have advanced still another distance, even if very short. Thus Achilles is always coming nearer to the tortoise, but never actually overtakes it—and never *can* do so, on the supposition that a line is made up of an infinite number of points, for then Achilles would have to traverse an infinite distance. On the Pythagorean hypothesis, then, Achilles will never catch up the tortoise; and so, although they assert the reality of motion, they make it impossible on their own doctrine. For it follows that the slower moves as fast as the faster.[1]

3. Suppose a moving arrow. According to the Pythagorean theory the arrow should occupy a given position in space. But to occupy a given position in space is to be at rest. Therefore the flying arrow is at rest, which is a contradiction.[2]

4. The fourth argument of Zeno, which we know from Aristotle[3] is, as Sir David Ross says, "very difficult to follow, partly owing to use of ambiguous language by Aristotle, partly owing to doubts as to the readings."[4] We have to represent to ourselves three sets of bodies on a stadium or race-course. One set is stationary, the other two are moving in opposite directions to one another with equal velocity.

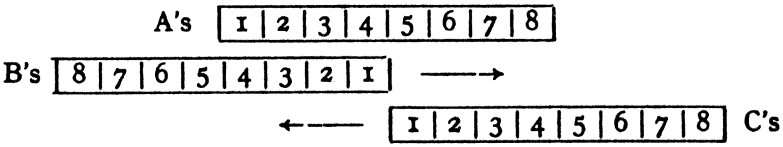

Fig. 1

The A's are stationary; the B's and C's are moving in opposite directions with the same velocity. They will come to occupy the following position:

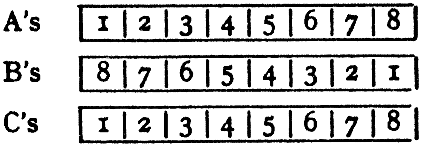

Fig. 2

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[1] Arist., *Phys.*, Z 9,239 b 14.

[2] Arist., *Phys.*, Z 9,239 b 30.

[3] Arist., *Phys.*, Z 9,239 b 33.

[4] Ross, *Physics*, p. 660.

In attaining this second position the front of B1 has passed four of the A's, while the front of C1 has passed all the B's. If a unit of length is passed in a unit of time, then the front of B1 has taken half the time taken by the front of C1 in order to reach the position of Fig. 2. On the other hand the front of B1 has passed all the C's, just as the front of C1 has passed all the B's. The time of their passage must then be *equal*. We are left then with the absurd conclusion that the half of a certain time is equal to the whole of that time.

How are we to interpret these arguments of Zeno? It is important not to let oneself think: "These are mere sophistries on the part of Zeno. They are ingenious tricks, but they err by supposing that a line is composed of points and time of discrete moments." It may be that the solution of the riddles is to be found in showing that the line and time are continuous and not discrete; but, then, Zeno was not concerned to hold that they are discrete. On the contrary, he is concerned to show the absurd consequences which flow from supposing that they are discrete. Zeno, as a disciple of Parmenides, believed that motion is an illusion and is impossible, but in the foregoing arguments his aim is to prove that even on the pluralistic hypothesis motion is equally impossible, and that the assumption of its possibility leads to contradictory and absurd conclusions. Zeno's position was as follows: "The Real is a plenum, a complete continuum and motion is impossible. Our adversaries assert motion and try to explain it by an appeal to a pluralistic hypothesis. I propose to show that this hypothesis does nothing to explain motion, but only lands one in absurdities." Zeno thus reduced the hypothesis of his adversaries to absurdity, and the real result of his dialectic was not so much to establish Parmenidean monism (which is exposed to insuperable objections), as to show the necessity of admitting the concept of continuous quantity.

The Eleatics, then, deny the reality of multiplicity and motion. There is one principle, Being, which is conceived of as material and motionless. They do not deny, of course, that we *sense* motion and multiplicity, but they declare that what we sense is illusion: it is mere appearance. True being is to be found, not by sense but by thought, and thought shows that there can be no plurality, no movement, no change.

The Eleatics thus attempt, as the earlier Greek philosophers attempted before them, to discover the one principle of the world. The world, however, as it presents itself to us, is clearly a pluralistic world. The question is, therefore, how to reconcile the one principle with the plurality and change which we find in the world, i.e. the problem of the One and the Many, which Heraclitus had tried to solve in a philosophy that professed to do justice to both elements through a doctrine of Unity in Diversity, Identity in Difference. The Pythagoreans asserted plurality to the practical exclusion of the One—there are many ones; the Eleatics asserted the One to the exclusion of the many. But if you cling to the plurality which is suggested by sense-experience, then you must also admit change; and if you admit change of one thing into another, you cannot avoid the recurring problem as to the character of the common element in the things which change. If, on the other hand, you start with the doctrine of the One, you must—unless you are going to adopt a one-sided position like that of the Eleatics, which cannot last—deduce plurality from the One, or at least show how the plurality which we observe in the world is consistent with the One. In other words, justice must be done to both factors—the One and the Many, Stability and Change. The one-sided doctrine of Parmenides was unacceptable, as also was the one-sided doctrine of the Pythagoreans. Yet the philosophy of Heraclitus was also unsatisfactory. Apart from the fact that it hardly accounted sufficiently for the stable element in things, it was bound up with materialistic monism. Ultimately it was bound to be suggested that the highest and truest being is immaterial. Meanwhile it is not surprising to find what Zeller calls "compromise-systems," trying to weld together the thought of their predecessors.

Note on "Pantheism" in pre-Socratic Greek Philosophy

(i) If a Pantheist is a man who has a subjective religious attitude towards the universe, which latter he identifies with God, then the Pre-Socratics are scarcely to be called pantheists. That Heraclitus speaks of the One as Zeus is true, but it does not appear that he adopted any religious attitude towards the One—Fire.

(ii) If a pantheist is a man who, while denying a Transcendent Principle of the universe, makes the universe to be ultimately *Thought* (unlike the materialist, who makes it Matter alone), then the Pre-Socratics again scarcely merit the name of pantheists, for they conceive or speak of the One in material terms (though it is true that the spirit-matter distinction had not yet been so clearly conceived that they could deny it in the way that the modern materialistic monist denies it).

(iii) In any case the One, the universe, could not be identified with the Greek gods. It has been remarked (by Schelling) that there is no supernatural in Homer, for the Homeric god is part of nature. This remark has its application in the present question. The Greek god was finite and anthropomorphically conceived; he could not possibly be identified with the One, nor would it occur to anyone to do so literally. The *name* of a god might be sometimes transferred to the One, e.g. Zeus, but the one is not to be thought of as identified with the "actual" Zeus of legend and mythology. The suggestion may be that the One is the only "god" there is, and that the Olympian deities are anthropomorphic fables; but even then it seems very uncertain if the philosopher ever *worshipped* the One. Stoics might with justice be called pantheists; but, as far as the early Pre-Socratics are concerned, it seems decidedly preferable to call them monists, rather than pantheists.

CHAPTER VIII

EMPEDOCLES OF AKRAGAS

EMPEDOCLES was a citizen of Akragas, or Agrigentum, in Sicily. His dates cannot be fixed, but it appears that he visited the city of Thurii shortly after its foundation in 444–43 B.C. He took part in the politics of his native city, and seems to have been the leader of the democratic party there. Stories were later circulated about Empedocles' activities as magician and wonder-worker, and there is a story that he was expelled from the Pythagorean Order for "stealing discourses."[1] Apart from thaumaturgic activities, Empedocles contributed to the growth of medicine proper. The death of the philosopher has been made the subject of several entertaining fables, the best known being that he jumped into the crater of Etna in order to make people think that he had gone up to heaven and esteem him as a god. Unfortunately, he left one of his slippers on the brink of the volcano, and, as he used to wear slippers with brazen soles, it was easily recognised.[2] Diogenes, however, who recounts this story, also informs us that "Timaeus contradicts all these stories, saying expressly that he departed into Peloponnesus, and never returned at all, on which account the manner of his death is uncertain."[3] Empedocles, like Parmenides and unlike the other Greek philosophers, expressed his philosophical ideas in poetical writings, more or less extensive fragments of which have come down to us.

Empedocles does not so much produce a new philosophy, as endeavour to weld together and reconcile the thought of his predecessors. Parmenides had held that Being is, and that being is material. Empedocles not only adopted this position, but also the fundamental thought of Parmenides, that being cannot arise or pass away, for being cannot arise from not-being, nor can being pass into not-being. Matter, then, is without beginning and without end; it is indestructible. "Fools!—for they have no far-reaching thoughts—who deem that what before was not comes into being, or that aught can perish and be utterly destroyed. For it cannot be that aught can arise from what in no way is, and it is impossible and unheard of that what *is* should perish, for it will always *be*, wherever one may keep putting it."[1] And again: "And in the All there is naught empty and naught too full," and "In the All there is naught empty. Whence, then, could aught come to increase it?"[2]

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[1] Diog. Laërt., 8, 54.

[2] Diog. Laërt., 8, 69.

[3] Diog. Laërt., 8, 71. (The great Germanic classical poet Hölderlin wrote a poem on the legendary death of Empedocles, also an unfinished poetic play.)

So far, then, Empedocles agrees with Parmenides. But on the other hand, change is a fact which cannot be denied, and the dismissal of change as illusory could not long be maintained. It remained, then, to find a way of reconciling the fact of the existence of change and motion with the principle of Parmenides, that Being—which, be it remembered, is material according to Parmenides—neither comes into being nor passes away. This reconciliation Empedocles tried to effect by means of the principle that objects as wholes begin to be and cease to be—as experience shows they do—but that they are composed of material particles, which are themselves indestructible. There is "only a mingling and interchange of what has been mingled. Substance (Φυσις) is but a name given to these things by men."[3]

Now, though Thales had believed all things to be ultimately water and Anaximenes air, they believed that one kind of matter can become another kind of matter, at least in the sense that, e.g., water becomes earth and air becomes fire. Empedocles, however, interpreting Parmenides' principle of the unchangeability of being in his own way, held that one kind of matter cannot become another kind of matter, but that there are fundamental and eternal kinds of matter or elements—earth, air, fire and water. The familiar classification of the four elements was therefore invented by Empedocles, though he speaks of them, not as elements but as "the roots of all."[4] Earth cannot become water, nor water, earth: the four kinds of matter are unchangeable and ultimate particles, which form the concrete objects of the world by their mingling. So objects come into being through the mingling of the elements, and they cease to be through the separation of the elements: but the elements themselves neither come into being nor pass away, but remain ever unchanged. Empedocles, therefore, saw the only possible way of reconciling the materialistic position of Parmenides with the evident fact of change, the way of postulating a multiplicity of ultimate material particles, and may thus be called a mediator between the system of Parmenides and the evidence of the senses.

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[1] Frag. 11.

[2] Frag. 14.

[3] Frag. 8.

[4] Frag. 7 (ἀγένητα i.e. στοιχεῖα).

Now the Ionian philosophers had failed to explain the process of Nature. If everything is composed of air, as Anaximenes thought, how do the objects of our experience come into being? What force is responsible for the cyclical process of Nature? Anaximenes assumed that air transforms itself into other kinds of matter through its own inherent power; but Empedocles saw that it is necessary to postulate active forces. These forces he found in Love and Hate, or Harmony and Discord. In spite of their names, however, the forces are conceived by Empedocles as physical and material forces, Love or Attraction bringing the particles of the four elements together and building up, Strife or Hate separating the particles and causing the cessation of the being of objects.

According to Empedocles the world-process is circular, in the sense that there are periodic world-cycles. At the commencement of a cycle the elements are all mixed up together—not separated out to form concrete objects as we know them—a general mixture of particles of earth, air, fire and water. In this primary stage of the process Love is the governing principle, and the whole is called a "blessed god." Hate, however, is round about the sphere, and when Hate penetrates within the sphere the process of separation, the disuniting of the particles, is begun. Ultimately the separation becomes complete: all the water particles are gathered together, all the fire particles, and so on. Hate reigns supreme, Love having been driven out. Yet Love in turn begins its work, and so causes gradual mingling and uniting of the various elements, this process going on until the element-particles are mixed up together as they were in the beginning. It is then the turn of Hate to start its operations anew. And so the process continues, without first beginning and without last end.[1]

As to the world as we know it, this stands at a stage half-way between the primary sphere and the stage of total separation of the elements: Hate is gradually penetrating the sphere and driving out Love as it does so. As our earth began to be formed out of the sphere, air was the first element to be separated off; this was followed by fire, and then came earth. Water is squeezed out by the rapidity with which the world rotates. The primary sphere, i.e. primary in the cyclical process, not primary in an absolute sense, is described in what appear to us somewhat amusing terms. "There" (i.e. in the sphere) "are distinguished neither the swift limbs of the sun; no, nor the shaggy earth in its might, nor the sea—so fast was the god bound in the close covering of Harmony, spherical and round, rejoicing in his circular solitude."[1] The activity of Love and Strife is illustrated in various ways. "This" (i.e. the contest between them) "is manifest in the mass of mortal limbs. At one time all the limbs that are the body's portion are brought together by Love in blooming life's high season; at another, severed by cruel Strife, they wander each alone by the breakers of life's sea. It is the same with plants and the fish that make their homes in the waters, with the beasts that have their lairs on the hills and the seabirds that sail on wings."[2]

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[1] This theme of an unending cyclic process reappears in the philosophy of Nietzsche under the name of the Eternal Recurrence.

The doctrine of transmigration of souls is taught by Empedocles in the book of the Purifications. He even declares: "For I have already been in the past a boy and a girl, a shrub and a bird and a fish which lives in the sea."[3] It can scarcely be said, however, that this doctrine fits in well with the cosmological system of Empedocles, since, if all things are composed of material particles which separate at death, and if "the blood round the heart is the thought of men,"[4] there is little room left for immortality. But Empedocles may not have realised the discrepancy between his philosophical and religious theories. (Among the latter are certainly some very Pythagorean-sounding prescriptions, such as: "Wretches, utter wretches, keep your hands from beans!")[5]

Aristotle remarks that Empedocles made no distinction between thought and perception. His actual theory of vision is given by Theophrastus, a theory used by Plato in the *Timaeus*.[6] In sense-perception there is a meeting between an element in us and a similar element outside us. All things are constantly giving off effluences, and when the pores of the sense-organs are the right size, then these effluences enter in and perception takes place. In the case of vision, for example, effluences come to the eyes from things; while, on the other hand, the fire from inside the eye (the eye is composed of fire and water, the fire being sheltered from the water by membranes provided with very small pores, which prevent water getting through, but allow fire to get out) goes out to meet the object, the two factors together producing sight.

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[1] Frag. 27. [2] Frag. 20. [3] Frag. 117. [4] Frag. 105. [5] Frag. 141.

[6] Arist., *De An.*, 427 a 21. Theoph., *de sensu*, 1 ff. Plat., *Tim.*, cf. 67 c ff. (D. 31 A 86).

In conclusion, we may remind ourselves that Empedocles tried to reconcile the thesis of Parmenides, that being can neither come to be nor pass away, with the evident fact of change by postulating ultimate particles of the four elements, the mingling of which forms the concrete objects of this world and the separation of which constitutes the passing-away of such objects. He failed, however, to explain how the material cyclic process of Nature takes place, but had recourse to mythological forces, Love and Hate. It was left to Anaxagoras to introduce the concept of Mind as the original cause of the world-process.

CHAPTER IX

THE ADVANCE OF ANAXAGORAS

ANAXAGORAS was born at Clazomenae in Asia Minor about 500 B.C., and, although a Greek, he was doubtless a Persian citizen, for Clazomenae had been reduced after the suppression of the Ionian Revolt; and it may even be said that he came to Athens in the Persian Army. If this is so, it would certainly explain why he came to Athens in the year of Salamis, 480/79 B.C. He was the first philosopher to settle in the city, which was later to become such a flourishing centre of philosophic study.[1]

From Plato[2] we learn that the young Pericles was a pupil of Anaxagoras, an association which afterwards got the philosopher into trouble, for after he had resided about thirty years in the city, Anaxagoras was brought to trial by the political opponents of Pericles, i.e. about 450 B.C. Diogenes tells us that the charges were those of impiety (he refers to Sotion) and Medism (referring to Satyros). As to the first charge, Plato relates, it was based on the fact that Anaxagoras taught that the sun is a red-hot stone and the moon is made of earth.[3] These charges were doubtless trumped up, mainly in order to get a hit at Pericles through Anaxagoras. (Pericles' other teacher, Damon, was ostracised.) Anaxagoras was condemned, but was got out of prison, probably by Pericles himself, and he retired to Ionia where he settled at Lampsacus, a colony of Miletus. Here he probably founded a school. The citizens erected a monument to his memory in the market-place (an altar dedicated to Mind and Truth), and the anniversary of his death was long observed as a holiday for school children, at his own request, it is said.

Anaxagoras expressed his philosophy in a book, but only fragments of this remain, and these appear to be confined to the first part of the work. We owe the preservation of the fragments we possess to Simplicius (A.D. sixth century).

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Anaxagoras, like Empedocles, accepted the theory of Parmenides that Being neither comes into being nor passes away, but is unchangeable. "The Hellenes do not understand rightly coming into being and passing away, for nothing comes into being or passes away, but there is a mingling and a separation of things which are" (i.e. persist).[1] Both thinkers, then, are in agreement as to the indestructibility of matter, and both reconcile this theory with the evident fact of change by positing indestructible material particles, the mingling of which forms objects, the separation of which explains the passing away of objects. But Anaxagoras will not agree with Empedocles that the ultimate units are particles corresponding to the four elements—earth, air, fire and water. He teaches that everything which has parts qualitatively the same as the whole is ultimate and underived. Aristotle calls these wholes, which have qualitatively similar parts, τὰ ὁμοιομερῆ; τὸ ὁμοιομερές being opposed to τὸ ἀνομοιομερές. This distinction is not difficult to grasp if one takes an example. If we suppose that a piece of gold is cut in half, the halves are themselves gold. The parts are thus qualitatively the same as the whole, and the whole can be said to be ὁμοιομερές. If, however, a dog, a living organism, be cut in half, the halves are not themselves two dogs. The whole is in this case therefore ἀνομοιομερές. The general notion is thus clear, and it is unnecessary to confuse the issue by introducing considerations from modern scientific experiment. Some things have qualitatively similar parts, and such things are ultimate and underived (as regards *kind*, that is to say, for no given conglomeration of particles is ultimate and underived). "How can hair come from what is not hair, or flesh from what is not flesh?" asks Anaxagoras.[2] But it does not follow that everything which seems to be ὁμοιομερές is really so. Thus it is related by Aristotle that Anaxagoras did not hold Empedocles' elements—earth, air, fire and water—to be really ultimate; on the contrary, they are mixtures composed of many qualitatively different particles.[3]

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[1] Anax. is said to have had property at Claz. which he neglected in order to follow the theoretic life. Cf. Plato, *Hipp. M.*, 283 a.

[2] *Phaedrus*, 270 a.

[3] *Apol.*, 26 d.

In the beginning, particles—there is no indivisible particle, according to Anaxagoras—of all kinds were mingled together. "All things were together, infinite both in number and in smallness; for the small too was infinite. And, when all things were together, none of them could be distinguished for their smallness."[4] "All things are in the whole." The objects of experience arise, when ultimate particles have been so brought together that in the resulting object particles of a certain kind predominate. Thus in the original mixture particles of gold were scattered about and mixed with all sorts of other particles; but when particles of gold have been so brought together—with other particles—that the resultant visible object consists predominantly of gold-particles, we have the gold of our experience. Why do we say "with other particles"? Because in concrete objects of experience there are, according to Anaxagoras, particles of *all* things; yet they are combined in such a way that one kind of particle predominates and from this fact the whole object gets its denomination. Anaxagoras held the doctrine that "in everything there is a portion of everything,"[1] apparently because he did not see how he could otherwise explain the fact of change. For instance, if grass becomes flesh, there must have been particles of flesh in the grass (for how can "flesh" come "from what is not flesh"?), while on the other hand in the grass the grass-particles must predominate. Grass, therefore, consists predominantly of grass, but it also contains other kinds of particles, for "in everything there is a portion of everything," and "the things that are in one world are not divided nor cut off from one another with a hatchet, neither the warm from the cold nor the cold from the warm."[2] In this way Anaxagoras sought to maintain the Parmenidean doctrine concerning being, while at the same time adopting a realist attitude towards change, not dismissing it as an illusion of the senses but accepting it as a fact, and then trying to reconcile it with the Eleatic theory of being. Later on Aristotle would attempt to solve the difficulties raised by the doctrine of Parmenides in regard to change by means of his distinction between potency and act.

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[1] Frag. 17.

[2] Frag. 10.

[3] *De Gen. et corr.*, Γ, 1, 314 a 24. *De Caelo*, Γ, 3, 302 a 28.

[4] Frag. 1

Burnet does not think that Anaxagoras considered, as the Epicureans supposed him to, "that there must be minute particles in bread and water which were like the particles of blood, flesh and bones."[3] In his opinion it was of the opposites, the warm and the cold, the dry and the moist, that everything contained a portion according to Anaxagoras. Burnet's view has certainly much to support it. We have already seen the fragment in which Anaxagoras declares that "the things that are in one world are not cut off from one another with a hatchet, neither the warm from the cold, nor the cold from the warm." Moreover, since according to Anaxagoras, there are no indivisible particles, there cannot be any ultimate particles in the sense of what cannot be further divided. But it would not seem to follow necessarily from the indivisibility of the particles that, in the philosopher's opinion, there were no ultimate *kinds* which could not be qualitatively resolved. And does not Anaxagoras explicitly ask how hair can come from what is not hair? In addition to this we read in fragment 4 of the mixture of all things—"of the moist and the dry, and the warm and the cold, and the bright and the dark, and of much earth that was in it, and a multitude of innumerable seeds in no way like each other. For none of the other things either is like any other. And these things being so, we must hold that all things are in the whole." This fragment scarcely gives the impression that the "opposites" stand in any peculiar position of privilege. While admitting, therefore, that Burnet's view has much to be said for it, we prefer the interpretation already given in the text.[1]

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[1] Frag. 11. [2] Frag. 8. [3] *G.P.*, I., pp. 77–8.

So far Anaxagoras' philosophy is a variant from Empedocles' interpretation and adaptation of Parmenides, and offers no particularly valuable features. But when we come to the question of the power or force that is responsible for the forming of things out of the first mass, we arrive at the peculiar contribution of Anaxagoras to philosophy. Empedocles had attributed motion in the universe to the two physical forces of Love and Strife, but Anaxagoras introduces instead the principle of Nous or Mind. 'With Anaxagoras a light, if still a weak one, begins to dawn, because the understanding is now recognised as the principle."[2] "Nous," says Anaxagoras, "has power over all things that have life, both greater and smaller. And Nous had power over the whole revolution, so that it began to revolve at the start. . . . And Nous set in order all things that were to be, and all things that were and are now and that will be, and this revolution in which now revolve the stars and the sun and the moon and the air and the aether which are separated off. And the revolution itself caused the separating off, and the dense is separated off from the rare, the warm from the cold, the bright from the dark, and the dry from the moist. And there are many portions in many things. But no thing is altogether separated off from anything else except Nous. And all Nous is alike, both the greater and the smaller; but nothing else is like anything else, but each single thing is and was most manifestly those things of which there are most in it."[1]

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[1] Cf. Zeller, *Outlines*, p. 62; Stace, *Crit. Hist.*, pp. 95 ff.; Covotti, *I Presocratici*, ch. 21.

[2] Hegel, *Hist. Phil.*, I, p. 319.

Nous "is infinite and self-ruled, and is mixed with nothing, but is alone, itself by itself."[2] How then did Anaxagoras conceive of Nous? He calls it "the finest of all things and the purest, and it has all knowledge about everything and the greatest power . . ." He also speaks of Nous being "there where everything else is, in the surrounding mass."[3] The philosopher thus speaks of Nous or Mind in material terms as being "the thinnest of all things," and as occupying space. On the strength of this Burnet declares that Anaxagoras never rose above the conception of a corporeal principle. He made Nous purer than other material things, but never reached the idea of an immaterial or incorporeal thing. Zeller will not allow this, and Stace points out how "all philosophy labours under the difficulty of having to express non-sensuous thought in language which has been evolved for the purpose of expressing sensuous ideas."[4] If we speak of a mind as "clear" or as someone's mind as being "greater" than that of another, we are not on that account to be called materialists. That Anaxagoras conceived of Nous as occupying space is not sufficient proof that he would have declared Nous to be corporeal, had he ever conceived the notion of a sharp distinction between mind and matter. The non-spatiality of the mind is a later conception. Probably the most satisfactory interpretation is that Anaxagoras, in his concept of the spiritual, did not succeed in grasping clearly the radical difference between the spiritual and the corporeal. But that is not the same as saying that he was a *dogmatic* materialist. On the contrary, he first introduces a spiritual and intellectual principle, though he fails to understand fully the essential difference between that principle and the matter which it forms or sets in motion.

Nous is present in all living things, men, animals and plants, and is the same in all. Differences between these objects are due, then, not to essential differences between their souls, but to differences between their bodies, which facilitate or handicap the fuller working of Nous. (Anaxagoras, however, does not explain the human consciousness of independent selfhood.)

Nous is not to be thought of as *creating* matter. Matter is eternal, and the function of Nous seems to be to set the rotatory movement or vortex going in part of the mixed mass, the action of the vortex itself, as it spreads, accounting for the subsequent motion. Thus Aristotle, who says in the *Metaphysics* that Anaxagoras "stood out like a sober man from the random talkers that had preceded him,"[1] also says that "Anaxagoras uses Mind as a *deus ex machina* to account for the formation of the world; and whenever he is at a loss to explain why anything necessarily is, he drags it in. But in other cases he makes anything rather than Mind the cause."[2] We can easily understand, then, the disappointment of Socrates who, thinking that he had come upon an entirely new approach when he discovered Anaxagoras, found "my extravagant expectations were all dashed to the ground when I went on and found that the man made no use of Mind at all. He ascribed no causal power whatever to it in the ordering of things, but to airs, and aethers, and waters, and a host of other strange things."[3] Nevertheless, though he failed to make full use of the principle, Anaxagoras must be credited with the introduction into Greek philosophy of a principle possessed of the greatest importance, that was to bear splendid fruit in the future.

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[1] Frag. 12.

[2] Frag. 12.

[3] Frag. 14.

[4] *Crit. Hist.*, p. 99.

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[1] *Metaph.*, A 3, 984 b 15–18.

[2] *Metaph.*, A 4, 985 a 18–21.

[3] *Phaedo*, 97 b 8.

CHAPTER X

THE ATOMISTS

The founder of the Atomist School was Leucippus of Miletus. It has been maintained that Leucippus never existed,[1] but Aristotle and Theophrastus make him to be the founder of the Atomist philosophy, and we can hardly suppose that they were mistaken. It is not possible to fix his dates, but Theophrastus declares that Leucippus had been a member of the School of Parmenides, and we read in Diogenes' *Life of Leucippus* that he was a disciple of Zeno (οὗτος ἤκουσε Ζήνωνος). It appears that the *Great Diakosmos*, subsequently incorporated in the works of Democritus of Abdera, was really the work of Leucippus, and no doubt Burnet is quite right when he compares the Democritean *corpus* with the Hippocritean, and remarks that in neither case can we distinguish the authors of the various component treatises.[2] The whole *corpus* is the work of a School, and it is most unlikely that we shall ever be in a position to assign each work to its respective author. In treating of the Atomist philosophy, therefore, we cannot pretend to distinguish between what is due to Leucippus and what is due to Democritus. But since Democritus is of considerably later date and cannot with historical accuracy be classed among the Pre-Socratics, we will leave to a later chapter his doctrine of sense-perception, by which he attempted to answer Protagoras, and his theory of human conduct. Some historians of philosophy, indeed, treat of Democritus' views on these points when dealing with the Atomist philosophy in the section devoted to the Pre-Socratics, but in view of the undoubtedly later date of Democritus, it seems preferable to follow Burnet in this matter.

The Atomist philosophy is really the logical development of the philosophy of Empedocles. The latter had tried to reconcile the Parmenidean principle of the denial of the passage of being into not-being or vice versa, with the evident fact of change by postulating four elements which, mixed together in various proportions, form the objects of our experience. He did not, however, really work out his doctrine of particles, nor did he carry the quantitative explanation of qualitative differences to its logical conclusion. The philosophy of Empedocles formed a transitional stage to the explanation of all qualitative differences by a mechanical juxtaposition of material particles in various patterns. Moreover, Empedocles' forces—Love and Strife—were metaphorical powers, which would have to be eliminated in a thorough-going mechanical philosophy. The final step to complete mechanism was attempted by the Atomists.

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[1] Epicurus, for instance, denied his existence, but it has been suggested that this denial was due to Epicurus' determination to claim originality.

[2] *E.G.P.*, p. 331.

According to Leucippus and Democritus there are an infinite number of indivisible units, which are called atoms. These are imperceptible, since they are too small to be perceived by the senses . The atoms differ in size and shape, but have no quality save that of solidity or impenetrability. Infinite in number, they move in the void. (Parmenides had denied the reality of space. The Pythagoreans had admitted a void to keep their units apart, but they identified it with the atmospheric air, which Empedocles showed to be corporeal. Leucippus, however, affirmed at the same time the non-reality of space and its existence, meaning by non-reality, non-corporeity. This position is expressed by saying that "what is not" is just as much real as "what is." Space, then, or the void, is not corporeal, but it is as real as body.) The later Epicureans held that the atoms all move downwards in the void through the force of *weight*, probably influenced by Aristotle's idea of absolute weight and lightness. (Aristotle says that none of his predecessors had held this notion.) Now Aëtius expressly says that while Democritus ascribed size and shape to the atoms, he did not ascribe to them weight, but that Epicurus added weight in order to account for the movement of the atoms.[1] Cicero relates the same, and also declares that according to Democritus there was no "top" or "bottom" or "middle" in the void.[2] If this is what Democritus held, then he was of course quite right, for there is no absolute up or down; but how in this case did he conceive the motion of the atoms? In the *De Anima*[3] Aristotle attributes to Democritus a comparison between the motions of the atoms of the soul and the motes in a sunbeam, which dart hither and thither in all directions, even when there is no wind. It may be that this was also the Democritean view of the original motion of the atoms.

However, in whatever way the atoms originally moved in the void, at some point of time collisions between atoms occurred, those of irregular shape becoming entangled with one another and forming groups of atoms. In this way the vortex (Anaxagoras) is set up, and a world is in process of formation. Whereas Anaxagoras thought that the larger bodies would be driven farthest from the centre, Leucippus said the opposite, believing, wrongly, that in an eddy of wind or water the larger bodies tend towards the centre. Another effect of the movement in the void is that atoms which are alike in size and shape are brought together as a sieve brings together the grains of millet, wheat and barley, or the waves of the sea heap up together long stones with long and round with round. In this way are formed the four "elements"—fire, air, earth and water. Thus innumerable worlds arise from the collisions among the infinite atoms moving in the void.

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[1] Aët., i, 3, 18 and 12, 6 (D. 68 A 47).

[2] *De Fato*, 20, 46 and *De Fin.*, i, 6, 17 (D. 68 A 47 and 56).

[3] *De An.*, A, 2, 403 b 28 ff.

It is at once noticeable that neither Empedocles' forces, Love and Strife, nor the Nous of Anaxagoras appear in the Atomist philosophy: Leucippus evidently did not consider any moving force to be a necessary hypothesis. In the beginning existed atoms in the void, and that was all: from that beginning arose the world of our experience, and no external Power or moving Force is assumed as a necessary cause for the primal motion. Apparently the early cosmologists did not think of motion as requiring any explanation, and in the Atomist philosophy the eternal movement of the atoms is regarded as self-sufficient. Leucippus speaks of everything happening ἐκ λόγου καὶ ὑπ' ἀνάγκης[1] and this might at first sight appear inconsistent with his doctrine of the unexplained original movement of the atoms and of the collisions of the atoms. The latter, however, occur necessarily owing to the configuration of the atoms and their irregular movements, while the former, as a self-sufficient fact, did not require further explanation. To us, indeed, it may well seem strange to deny chance and yet to posit an eternal unexplained motion—Aristotle blames the Atomists for not explaining the source of motion and the kind of motion[2]—but we ought not to conclude that Leucippus meant to ascribe the motion of the atoms to *chance*: to him the eternal motion and the continuation of motion required no explanation. In our opinion, the mind boggles at such a theory and cannot rest content with Leucippus' ultimate; but it is an interesting historical fact, that he himself was content with this ultimate and sought no "First Unmoved Mover."

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[1] Frag. 2 (Aët., 1, 25, 4).

[2] *Phys.*, Θ i, 252 a 32; *De Caelo*, Γ 2, 300 b 8; *Metaph.*, A, 4, 985 b 19–20.

It is to be noted that the atoms of Leucippus and Democritus are the Pythagorean monads endowed with the properties of Parmenidean being—for each is as the Parmenidean One. And inasmuch as the elements arise from the various arrangements and positions of the atoms, they may be likened to the Pythagorean "numbers," if the latter are to be regarded as patterns or "figurate numbers." This can be the only sense to be attached to Aristotle's dictum that "Leucippus and Democritus virtually make all things number too and produce them from numbers."[1]

In his detailed scheme of the world, Leucippus was somewhat reactionary, rejecting the Pythagorean view of the spherical character of the earth and returning, like Anaxagoras, to the view of Anaximenes, that the earth is like a tambourine floating in the air. But, though the details of the Atomist cosmology do not indicate any new advance, Leucippus and Democritus are noteworthy for having carried previous tendencies to their logical conclusion, producing a purely mechanical account and explanation of reality. The attempt to give a complete explanation of the world in terms of mechanical materialism has, as we all know, reappeared in a much more thorough form in the modern era under the influence of physical science, but the brilliant hypothesis of Leucippus and Democritus was by no means the last word in Greek philosophy: subsequent Greek philosophers were to see that the richness of the world cannot in all its spheres be reduced to the mechanical interplay of atoms.

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[1] *De Caelo*, Γ 4, 303 a 8.

CHAPTER XI

PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHY

1. It is often said that Greek philosophy centres round the problem of the One and the Many. Already in the very earliest stages of Greek philosophy we find the notion of unity: things change into one another—therefore there must be some common substratum, some ultimate principle, some unity underlying diversity. Thales declares that water is that common principle, Anaximenes air, Heraclitus fire: they choose different principles, but they all three believe in one ultimate principle. But although the fact of change—what Aristotle called "substantial" change—may have suggested to the early Cosmologists the notion of an underlying unity in the universe, it would be a mistake to reduce this notion to a conclusion of physical science. As far as strict scientific proof goes, they had not sufficient data to warrant their assertion of unity, still less to warrant the assertion of any particular ultimate principle, whether water, fire or air. The fact is, that the early Cosmologists leapt beyond the data to the intuition of universal unity: they possessed what we might call the power of metaphysical intuition, and this constitutes their glory and their claim to a place in the history of philosophy. If Thales had contented himself with saying that out of water earth is evolved, "we should," as Nietzsche observes, "only have a scientific hypothesis: a false one, though nevertheless difficult to refute." But Thales went beyond a mere scientific hypothesis: he reached out to a metaphysical doctrine, expressed in the metaphysical doctrine, that *Everything is One.*

Let me quote Nietzsche again. "Greek philosophy seems to begin with a preposterous fancy, with the proposition that *water* is the origin and mother-womb of all things. Is it really necessary to stop there and become serious? Yes, and for three reasons: Firstly, because the proposition does enunciate something about the origin of things; secondly, because it does so without figure and fable; thirdly and lastly, because in it is contained, although only in the chrysalis state, the idea—Everything is one. The first-mentioned reason leaves Thales still in the company of religious and superstitious people; the second, however, takes him out of this company and shows him to us as a natural philosopher; but by virtue of the third, Thales becomes the first Greek philosopher."[1] This holds true of the other early Cosmologists; men like Anaximenes and Heraclitus also took wing and flew above and beyond what could be verified by mere empirical observation. At the same time they were not content with any mythological assumption, for they sought a real principle of unity, the ultimate substrate of change: what they asserted, they asserted in all seriousness. They had the notion of a world that was a whole, a system, of a world governed by law. Their assertions were dictated by reason or thought, not by mere imagination or mythology; and so they deserve to count as philosophers, the first philosophers of Europe.

2. But though the early Cosmologists were inspired by the idea of cosmic unity, they were faced by the fact of the Many, of multiplicity, of diversity, and they had to attempt the theoretical reconciliation of this evident plurality with the postulated unity —in other words, they had to account for the world as we know it. While Anaximenes, for example, had recourse to the principle of condensation and rarefaction, Parmenides, in the grip of his great theory that Being is one and changeless, roundly denied the facts of change and motion and multiplicity as illusions of the senses. Empedocles postulated four ultimate elements, out of which all things are built up under the action of Love and Strife, and Anaxagoras maintained the ultimate character of the atomic theory and the quantitative explanation of qualitative difference, thus doing justice to plurality, to the many, while tending to relinquish the earlier vision of unity, in spite of the fact that each atom represents the Parmenidean One.

We may say, therefore, that while the Pre-Socratics struggled with the problem of the One and the Many, they did not succeed in solving it. The Heraclitean philosophy contains, indeed, the profound notion of unity in diversity, but it is bound up with an over-assertion of Becoming and the difficulties consequent on the doctrine of Fire. The Pre-Socratics accordingly failed to solve the problem, and it was taken up again by Plato and Aristotle, who brought to bear on it their outstanding talent and genius.

3. But if the problem of the One and the Many continued to exercise Greek philosophy in the Post-Socratic period, and received much more satisfactory solutions at the hands of Plato

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[1] *Philosophy during the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, in sect. 3.

and Aristotle, it is obvious that we cannot characterise Pre-Socratic philosophy by reference to that problem: we require some other note of characterisation and distinction. Where is it to be found? We may say that Pre-Socratic philosophy centres round the external world, the Object, the not-self. Man, the Subject, the self, is of course not excluded from consideration, but the interest in the not-self is predominant. This can be seen from the question which the successive Pre-Socratic thinkers set themselves to answer: "Of what is the world ultimately composed?" In their answers to this question the early Ionian philosophers certainly went beyond what the empirical data warranted, but, as already remarked, they tackled the question in a philosophic spirit and not in the spirit of weavers of mythological fancies. They had not differentiated between physical science and philosophy, and combined "scientific" observations of a purely practical character with philosophic speculations; but it must be remembered that a differentiation between physical science and philosophy was hardly possible at that early stage—men wanted to know something more about the world, and it was but natural that scientific questions and philosophical questions should be mingled together. Since they were concerned with the *ultimate* nature of the world, their theories rank as philosophical; but since they had not yet formed any clear distinction between spirit and matter, and since their question was largely prompted by the fact of material change, their answer was couched for the most part in terms and concepts taken from matter. They found the ultimate "stuff" of the universe to be some kind of matter—naturally enough—whether the water of Thales, the Indeterminate of Anaximander, the air of Anaximenes, the fire of Heraclitus, or the atoms of Leucippus, and so a large part of their subject-matter would be claimed by physical scientists of to-day as belonging to their province.

The early Greek philosophers are then rightly called Cosmologists, for they were concerned with the nature of the Cosmos, the object of our knowledge, and man himself is considered in his objective aspect, as one item in the Cosmos, rather than in his subjective aspect, as the subject of knowledge or as the morally willing and acting subject. In their consideration of the Cosmos, they did not reach any final conclusion accounting for all the factors involved; and this apparent bankruptcy of Cosmology, together with other causes to be considered presently, naturally led to a swing-over of interest from Object to Subject, from the Cosmos to Man himself. This change of interest, as exemplified in the Sophists, we will consider in the following section of this book.

4. Although it is true that Pre-Socratic philosophy centres round the Cosmos, the external world, and that this cosmological interest is the distinguishing mark of Pre-Socratic as contrasted with Socratic philosophy, it must also be remarked that one problem at any rate connected with man as the knowing subject was raised in Pre-Socratic philosophy, that of the relation between sense-experience and reason. Thus Parmenides, starting with the notion of the One, and finding himself unable to explain coming-to-be and passing-away—which are given in sense-experience—set aside the evidence of the senses as illusion, and proclaimed the sole validity of reason, which alone is able to attain the Real and Abiding. But the problem was not treated in any full or adequate manner, and when Parmenides denied the validity of sense-perception, he did so because of a metaphysical doctrine or assumption, rather than from any prolonged consideration of the nature of sense-perception and the nature of non-sensuous thought.

5. Since the early Greek thinkers may justly be termed philosophers, and since they proceeded largely by way of action and reaction, or thesis and antithesis (e.g. Heraclitus over-emphasising Becoming and Parmenides over-stressing Being), it was only to be expected that the germs of later philosophical tendencies and Schools would already be discernible in Pre-Socratic philosophy. Thus in the Parmenidean doctrine of the One, when coupled with the exaltation of Reason at the expense of sense-perception, we can see the germs of later idealism; while in the introduction of Nous by Anaxagoras—however restricted his actual use of Nous may have been—we may see the germs of later philosophical theism; and in the atomism of Leucippus and Democritus we may see an anticipation of later materialistic and mechanistic philosophies which would endeavour to explain all quality by quantity and to reduce everything in the universe to matter and its products.

6. From what has been said, it should be clear that Pre-Socratic philosophy is not simply a pre-philosophic stage which can be discounted in a study of Greek thought—so that we should be justified in starting immediately with Socrates and Plato. The Pre-Socratic philosophy is *not* a pre-philosophic stage, but is the

first stage of Greek philosophy: it may not be pure and unmixed philosophy, but it is philosophy, and it deserves to be studied for the sake of its own intrinsic interest as the first Greek attempt to attain a rational understanding of the world. Moreover, it is not a self-contained unit, shut off from succeeding philosophic thought in a watertight compartment; rather is it preparatory to the succeeding period, for in it we see problems raised which were to occupy the greatest of Greek philosophers. Greek thought develops, and though we can hardly over-estimate the native genius of men like Plato and Aristotle, it would be wrong to imagine that they were uninfluenced by the past. Plato was profoundly influenced by Pre-Socratic thought, by the Heraclitean, Eleatic and Pythagorean systems; Aristotle regarded his philosophy as the heir and crown of the past; and both thinkers took up philosophic problems from the hands of their predecessors, giving, it is true, original solutions, but at the same time tackling the problems in their historic setting. It would be absurd, therefore, to start a history of Greek philosophy with a discussion of Socrates and Plato without any discussion of preceding thought, for we cannot understand Socrates or Plato—or Aristotle either—without a knowledge of the past.

We must now turn to the next phase of Greek philosophy, which may be considered the antithesis to the preceding period of Cosmological speculation—the Sophistic and Socratic period.

PART II

THE SOCRATIC PERIOD

CHAPTER XII

THE SOPHISTS

THE earlier Greek philosophers had been chiefly interested in the Object, trying to determine the ultimate principle of all things. Their success, however, did not equal their philosophic sincerity, and the successive hypotheses that they advanced easily led to a certain scepticism as to the possibility of attaining any certain knowledge concerning the ultimate nature of the world. Add to this that doctrines such as those of Heraclitus and Parmenides would naturally result in a sceptical attitude in regard to the validity of sense-perception. If being is static and the perception of movement is an illusion, or if, on the other hand, all is in a state of constant change and there is no real principle of stability, our sense-perception is untrustworthy, and so the very foundations of Cosmology are undermined. The systems of philosophy hitherto proposed excluded one another: there was naturally truth to be found in the opposing theories, but no philosopher had yet arisen of sufficient stature to reconcile the antitheses in a higher synthesis, in which error should be purged away and justice done to the truth contained in rival doctrines. The result was bound to be a certain mistrust of cosmologies. And, indeed, a swing-over to the Subject as point of consideration was necessary if real advance was to be made. It was Plato's consideration of thought that made possible a truer theory in which justice should be done to the facts of both stability and mutability; but the reaction from Object to Subject, which made possible the advance, first appears among the Sophists, and was largely an effect of the bankruptcy of the older Greek philosophy. In face of the dialectic of Zeno, it might well appear doubtful if advance in the study of cosmology was really possible.

Another factor besides the scepticism consequent on the former Greek philosophy, which directed attention to the Subject, was the growing reflection on the phenomena of culture and civilisation, due in large part to extended acquaintance on the part of the Greeks with foreign peoples. Not only did they know something of the civilisations of Persia, Babylon and Egypt, but they had also come into contact with people of a much less advanced stage, such as the Scythians and Thracians. This being so, it was but natural that a highly intelligent people like the Greeks should begin to ask themselves questions; e.g. Are the various national and local ways of life, religious and ethical codes, merely conventions or not? Was Hellenic culture, as contrasted with non-Hellenic or barbarian cultures, a matter of νόμος, man-made and mutable, existing νόμῳ, or did it rest on Nature, existing Φύσει? Was it a sacred ordinance, having divine sanction, or could it be changed, modified, adapted, developed? Professor Zeller points out in this connection how Protagoras, most gifted of the Sophists, came from Abdera, "an advanced outpost of Ionic culture in the land of the Thracian barbarian."[1]

Sophism,[2] then, differed from the older Greek philosophy in regard to the matter with which it dealt, namely, man and the civilisation and customs of man: it treated of the microcosm rather than the macrocosm. Man was becoming self-conscious: as Sophocles says, "Miracles in the world are many, there is no greater miracle than man."[3] But Sophism also differed from previous Greek philosophy in its *method*. Although the method of the older Greek philosophy by no means excluded empirical observation, yet it was characteristically deductive. When a philosopher had settled on his general principle of the world, its ultimate constituent principle, it then remained to explain particular phenomena in accordance with that theory. The Sophist, however, sought to amass a wide store of particular observations and facts; they were Encyclopaedists, Polymaths. Then from these accumulated facts they proceeded to draw conclusions, partly theoretical, partly practical. Thus from the store of facts they accumulated concerning differences of opinion and belief, they might draw the conclusion that it is impossible to have any certain knowledge. Or from their knowledge of various nations and ways of life, they might form a theory as to the origin of civilisation or the beginning of language. Or again they might draw practical conclusions, e.g. that society would be most efficiently organised if it were organised in this or that manner. The method of Sophism, then, was "empirico-inductive."[1]

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[1] *Outlines*, p. 76.

[2] In using the term "Sophism" I do not mean to imply that there was any Sophistic system: the men whom we know as the Greek Sophists differed widely from one another in respect both of ability and of opinions: they represent a trend or movement, not a school.

[3] *Antigone*, 332 ff.

It is to be remembered, however, that the practical conclusions of the Sophists were not meant to establish objective norms, founded on necessary truth. And this fact points to another difference between Sophism and the older Greek philosophy, namely, difference of end. The latter was concerned with objective truth: the Cosmologists wanted to find out the objective truth about the world, they were in the main disinterested seekers after truth. The Sophists, on the other hand, were not primarily intent on objective truth: their end was practical and not speculative. And so the Sophists became instruments of instruction and training in the Greek cities, aiming at teaching the art and control of life. It has been remarked that while a band of disciples was more or less accidental for the Pre-Socratic philosophers—since their primary aim was *finding out* the truth—it was essential for the Sophists, since they aimed at *teaching*.

In Greece, after the Persian Wars, political life was naturally intensified, and this was particularly the case in democratic Athens. The free citizen played some part, at any rate, in political life, and if he wanted to get on he obviously had to have some kind of training. The old education was insufficient for the man who wished to make his way in the State; the old aristocratic ideal was, whether intrinsically superior to the new ideals or not, incapable of meeting the demands made on leaders in the developing democracy: something more was needed, and this need was met by the Sophists. Plutarch says that the Sophists put a theoretical training in the place of the older practical training, which was largely an affair of family tradition, connection with prominent statesmen, practical and experiential training by actual participation in political life. What was now required was courses of instruction, and the Sophists gave such courses in the cities. They were itinerant professors who travelled about from city to city, thus gathering a valuable store of knowledge and experience, and they gave instruction on various themes—grammar, the interpretation of poets, the philosophy of mythology and religion, and so on. But, above all, they professed to teach the art of *Rhetoric*, which was absolutely necessary for political life. In the Greek city-state, above all at Athens, no one could hope to make his mark as a politician unless he could speak, and speak well. The Sophists professed to teach him to do so, training him in the chief expression of political "virtue," the virtue of the new aristocracy of intellect and ability. There was, of course, nothing wrong in this in itself, but the obvious consequence—that the art of rhetoric might be used to "get across" a notion or policy which was not disinterested or might be definitely harmful to the city or merely calculated to promote the politician's career—helped to bring the Sophists into bad repute. This was particularly the case with regard to their teaching of Eristic. If a man wanted to make money in the Greek democracy, it had to be done mainly by lawsuits, and the Sophists professed to teach the right way of winning these lawsuits. But clearly that might easily mean in practice the art of teaching men how to make the unjust appear the just cause. Such a procedure was obviously very different from the procedure of the old truth-seeking attitude of the philosophers, and helps to explain the treatment meted out to the Sophists at the hands of Plato.

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[1] Zeller, *Outlines*, p. 77.

The Sophists carried on their work of instruction by the education of the young and by giving popular lectures in the cities; but as they were itinerant professors, men of wide experience and representative of a, as yet, somewhat sceptical and superficial reaction, the idea became current that they gathered together the young men from their homes and then pulled to pieces before them the traditional ethical code and religious beliefs. Accordingly the strict adherents of tradition regarded the Sophists with some suspicion, though the young were their enthusiastic supporters. Not that the levelling-out tendencies of the Sophists were all weakening to Greek life: their breadth of view generally made them advocates of Panhellenism, a doctrine sorely needed in the Greece of the city-state. But it was their sceptical tendencies that attracted most attention, especially as they did not put anything really new and stable in place of the old convictions which they tended to unsettle. To this should be added the fact that they took payment for the instruction which they imparted. This practice, however legitimate in itself, was at variance with the practice of the older Greek philosophers, and did not agree with the Greek opinion of what was fitting. It was abhorrent to Plato, while Xenophon says that the Sophists speak and write to deceive for their gain, and they give no help to anyone.[1]

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[1] Xen., *Cyneg.*, 13, 8 (D. 79, 2 a).

From what has been said, it is clear that Sophism does not deserve any sweeping condemnation. By turning the attention of thinkers to man himself, the thinking and willing subject, it served as a transition stage to the great Platonic-Aristotelian achievement. In affording a means of training and instruction, it fulfilled a necessary task in the political life of Greece, while its Panhellenistic tendencies certainly stand to its credit. And even its sceptical and relativist tendencies, which were, after all, largely the result of the breakdown of the older philosophy on the one hand, and of a wider experience of human life on the other, at least contributed to the raising of problems, even if Sophism itself was unable to solve these problems. It is not fanciful to discern the influence of Sophism in the Greek drama, e.g. in Sophocles' hymn to human achievement in the *Antigone* and in the theoretical discussions contained in plays of Euripides, and in the works of the Greek historians, e.g. in the celebrated Melian dialogue in the pages of Thucydides. The term Σοφιστής took some time to acquire its disparaging connotation. The name is applied by Herodotus to Solon and Pythagoras, by Androtion to the Seven Wise Men and to Socrates, by Lysias to Plato. Moreover, the older Sophists won for themselves general respect and esteem, and, as historians have pointed out, were not infrequently selected as "ambassadors" of their respective cities, a fact which hardly points to their being or being regarded as charlatans. It was only secondarily that the term "Sophist" acquired an unsavoury flavour—as in Plato; and in later times the term seems to have reacquired a good sense, being applied to the professors of rhetoric and prose writers of the Empire, without the significance of quibbler or cheat. "It is particularly through the opposition to Socrates and Plato that the Sophists have come into such disrepute that the word now usually signifies that, by false reasoning, some truth is either refuted and made dubious, or sometning false is proved and made plausible."[1]

On the other hand, the relativism of the Sophists, their encouragement of Eristic, their lack of stable norms, their acceptance of payment, and the hair-splitting tendencies of certain later Sophists, justify to a great extent the disparaging signification of the term. For Plato, they are "shopkeepers with spiritual wares";[2] and when Socrates is represented in the *Protagoras*[3] as asking Hippocrates, who wanted to receive instruction from

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[1] Hegel, *Hist. Phil.*, I, p. 354. [2] *Protag.*, 313 c 5–6. [3] *Protag.*, 312 a 4–7.

Protagoras, "Wouldn't you be ashamed to show yourself to the Greeks as a Sophist?", Hippocrates answers: "Yes, truly, Socrates, if I am to say what I think." We must, however, remember that Plato tends to bring out the bad side of the Sophists, largely because he had Socrates before his eyes, who had developed what was good in Sophism beyond all comparison with the achievements of the Sophists themselves.

CHAPTER XIII

SOME INDIVIDUAL SOPHISTS

1. *Protagoras*

PROTAGORAS was born, according to most authors, about 481 B.C., a native of Abdera in Thrace,[1] and seems to have come to Athens about the middle of the century. He enjoyed the favour of Pericles, and we are told that he was entrusted by that statesman with the task of drawing up a constitution for the Panhellenic colony of Thurii, which was founded in 444 B.C. He was again in Athens at the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 431 and during the plague in 430, which carried off two of Pericles' sons. Diogenes Laërtius relates the story that Protagoras was indicted for blasphemy because of his book on the gods, but that he escaped from the city before trial and was drowned on the crossing to Sicily, his book being burnt in the market-place. This would have taken place at the time of the oligarchic revolt of the Four Hundred in 411 B.C. Burnet is inclined to regard the story as dubious, and holds that if the indictment did take place, then it must have taken place before 411. Professor Taylor agrees with Burnet in rejecting the prosecution story, but he does so because he also agrees with Burnet in accepting a much earlier date for the birth of Protagoras, namely 500 B.C. The two writers rely on Plato's representation of Protagoras in the dialogue of that name as an elderly man, at least approaching 65, in about the year 435. Plato "must have known whether Protagoras really belonged to the generation before Socrates, and could have no motive for misrepresentation on such a point."[2] If this is correct, then we ought also to accept the statement in the *Meno* that Protagoras died in high repute.

The best-known statement of Protagoras is that contained in his work, 'Αλήθεια ἢ Καταβάλλοντες (λόγοι), to the effect that "man is the measure of all things, of those that are that they are, of those that are not that they are not."[3] There has been a considerable controversy as to the interpretation which should be put on this famous saying, some writers maintaining the view that by "man" Protagoras does not mean the individual man, but man in the specific sense. If this were so, then the meaning of the dictum would not be that "what appears to you to be true is true for you, and what appears to me to be true is true for me," but rather that the community or group or the whole human species is the criterion and standard of truth. Controversy has also turned round the question whether things—Χρήματα—should be understood exclusively of the objects of sense-perception or should be extended to cover the field of values as well.

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[1] *Protag.*, 309 c; *Rep.*, 600 c; Diog. Laërt., 9, 50 ff.

[2] *Plato*, p. 236, note.

[3] Frag. 1.

This is a difficult question and it cannot be discussed at length here, but the present writer is not prepared to disregard the testimony of Plato in the *Theaetetus*, where the Protagorean dictum, developed it is true, as Plato himself admits, is certainly interpreted in the individualistic sense in regard to sense-perception.[1] Socrates observes that when the same wind is blowing, one of us may feel chilly and the other not, or one may feel slightly chilly and the other quite cold, and asks if we should agree with Protagoras that the wind is cold to the one who feels chilly and not to the other. It is quite clear that in this passage Protagoras is interpreted as referring to the individual man, and not at all to man in the specific sense. Moreover, it is to be noted that the Sophist is not depicted as saying that the wind merely *appears* chilly to the one and not to the other. Thus if I have come in from a run in the rain on a cold day, and say that the water is warm; while you, coming from a warm room, feel the same water as cold, Protagoras would remark that neither of us is mistaken—the water *is* warm in reference to my sense-organ, and *is* cold in reference to your sense-organ. (When it was objected to the Sophist that geometrical propositions are constant for all, Protagoras replied that in actual concrete reality there are no geometrical lines or circles, so that the difficulty does not arise.[2])

Against this interpretation appeal is made to the *Protagoras* of Plato, where Protagoras is not depicted as applying the dictum in an individualistic sense to ethical values. But even granting that Protagoras must be made consistent with himself, it is surely not necessary to suppose that what is true of the objects of sense-perception is *ipso facto* true of ethical values. It may be pointed out that Protagoras declares that man is the measure of πάντων χρημάτων (*all* things), so that if the individualistic interpretation be accepted in regard to the objects of sense-perception, it should also be extended to ethical values and judgments, and

[1] *Theaet.*, 151 e, 152 a.

[2] Arist., *Metaph.*, B 2, 997 b 32–998 a 6.

that, conversely, if it is not accepted in regard to ethical values and judgments, it should not be accepted in regard to the objects of sense-perception: in other words, we are forced to choose between the *Theaetetus* and *Protagoras*, relying on the one and rejecting the other. But in the first place it is not certain that πάντων χρημάτων is meant to include ethical values, and in the second place it might be well that the objects of the special senses are of such character that they *cannot* become the subject of true and universal knowledge, while on the other hand ethical values are of such a kind that they *can* become the subject of true and universal knowledge. This was the view of Plato himself, who connected the Protagorean saying with the Heraclitean doctrine of flux, and held that true and certain knowledge can only be had of the supersensible. We are not trying to make out that Protagoras held the Platonic view on ethical values, which he did not, but to point out that sense-perception and intuition of values do not *necessarily* stand or fall together in relation to certain knowledge and truth for all.

What, then, was Protagoras' actual teaching in regard to ethical judgments and values? In the *Theaetetus* he is depicted as saying both that ethical judgments are relative ("For I hold that whatever practices seem right and laudable to any particular State are so for that State, so long as it holds by them") and that the wise man should attempt to substitute sound practices for unsound.[1] In other words, there is no question of one ethical view being true and another false, but there is question of one view being "sounder," i.e. more useful or expedient, than another. "In this way it is true both that some men are wiser than others and that no one thinks falsely." (A man who thinks that there is no absolute truth, is hardly entitled to declare absolutely that "no one thinks falsely.") Now, in the *Protagoras*, Plato depicts the Sophist as maintaining that αἰδώς and δίκη, have been bestowed on *all* men by the gods, "because cities could not exist if, as in the case of other arts, few men only were partakers of them." Is this at variance with what is said in the *Theaetetus*? It would appear that what Protagoras means is this: that Law in general is founded on certain ethical tendencies implanted in all men, but that the individual varieties of Law, as found in particular States, are relative, the law of one State, without being "truer" than that of another State, being perhaps "sounder" in the sense of more useful or expedient. The State or city-community would be the determiner of law in this case and not the individual, but the relative character of concrete ethical judgments and concrete determinations of Nomos would be maintained. As an upholder of tradition and social convention, Protagoras stresses the importance of education, of imbibing the ethical traditions of the State, while admitting that the wise man may lead the State to "better" laws. As far as the individual citizen is concerned, he should cleave to tradition, to the accepted code of the community —and that all the more because no one "way" is truer than another. αἰδώς and δίκη incline him to this, and if he has no share in these gifts of the gods and refuses to hearken to the State, the State must get rid of him. While at first sight, therefore, the "relativistic" doctrine of Protagoras might seem intentionally revolutionary, it turns out to be used in support of tradition and authority. No one code is "truer" than another, therefore do not set up your private judgment against the law of the State. Moreover, through his conception of αἰδώς and δίκη Protagoras gives at least some hints of the unwritten or natural law, and in this respect contributed to the broadening of the Greek outlook.

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[1] *Theaet.*, 166 ff.

In a work, Περὶ θεῶν, Protagoras said· "With regard to the gods, I cannot feel sure either that they are or that they are not, nor what they are like in figure; for there are many things that hinder sure knowledge, the obscurity of the subject and the shortness of human life."[1] This is the only fragment of the work that we possess. Such a sentence might seem to lend colour to the picture of Protagoras as a sceptical and destructive thinker, who turned his critical powers against all established tradition in ethics and religion; but such a view does not agree with the impression of Protagoras which we receive from Plato's dialogue of that name, and would doubtless be mistaken. Just as the moral to be drawn from the relativity of particular codes of law is that the individual should submit himself to the traditional education, so the moral to be drawn from our uncertainty concerning the gods and their nature is that we should abide by the religion of the city. If we cannot be certain of absolute truth, why throw overboard the religion that we inherit from our fathers? Moreover, Protagoras' attitude is not so extraordinary or destructive as the adherents of a dogmatic religion might naturally suppose, since, as Burnet remarks, Greek religion did not consist

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[1] Frag. 4.

"in theological affirmations or negations" but in worship.[1] The effect of the Sophists, it is true, would have been to weaken men's trust in tradition, but it would appear that Protagoras personally was conservative in temper and had no intention of educating revolutionaries; on the contrary, he professed to educate the good citizen. There are ethical tendencies in all men, but these can develop only in the organised community: if a man is to be a good citizen, therefore, he must absorb the whole social tradition of the community of which he is a member. The social tradition is not absolute truth, but it is the norm for a good citizen.

From the relativistic theory it follows that on every subject more than one opinion is possible, and Protagoras seems to have developed this point in his ’Αντιλογίαι. The dialectician and rhetorician will practise himself in the art of developing different opinions and arguments, and he will shine most brightly when he succeeds τὸν ἥττω λόγον κρείττω ποιεῖν. The enemies of the Sophists interpreted this in the sense of making the *morally worse* cause to prevail,[2] but it does not necessarily possess this morally destructive sense. A lawyer, for example, who pleaded with success the just cause of a client who was too weak to protect himself or the justice of whose cause it was difficult to substantiate, might be said to be making the "weaker argument" prevail, though he would be doing nothing immoral. In the hands of unscrupulous rhetoricians and devotees of eristic, the maxim easily acquired an unsavoury flavour, but there is no reason to father on Protagoras himself a desire to promote unscrupulous dealing. Still, it cannot be denied that the doctrine of relativism, when linked up with the practice of dialectic and eristic, very naturally produces a desire to succeed, without much regard for truth or justice.

Protagoras was a pioneer in the study and science of grammar. He is said to have classified the different kinds of sentence[3] and to have distinguished terminologically the genders of nouns.[4] In an amusing passage of the *Clouds* Aristophanes depicts the Sophist as coining the feminine ’αλεκτρύαινα from the masculine ’αλεκτρυών (cock).[5]

II. *Prodicus*

Prodicus came from the island of Ceos in the Aegean. The inhabitants of this island were said to be pessimistically inclined, and Prodicus was credited with the tendencies of his countrymen, for in the pseudo-Platonic dialogue *Axiochus* he is credited with holding that death is desirable in order to escape the evils of life. Fear of death is irrational, since death concerns neither the living nor the dead—the first, because they are still living, the second, because they are not living any more.[1] The authenticity of this quotation is not easy to establish.

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[1] *G.P.*, I, p. 117.
[2] Aristoph., *Clouds*, 112 ff., 656–7.
[3] Diog. Laërt., 9, 53 ff.
[4] Arist., *Rhet.*, 5, 1407 b 6.
[5] *Clouds*, 658 ff., 847 ff.

Prodicus is perhaps chiefly remarkable for his theory on the origin of religion. He held that in the beginning men worshipped as gods the sun, moon, rivers, lakes, fruits, etc.—in other words, the things which were useful to them and gave them food. And he gives as an example the cult of the Nile in Egypt. This primitive stage was followed by another, in which the inventors of various arts—agriculture, viniculture, metal work, and so on—were worshipped as the gods Demeter, Dionysus, Hephaestus, etc. On this view of religion prayer would, he thought, be superfluous, and he seems to have got into trouble with the authorities at Athens.[2] Prodicus, like Protagoras, was noted for linguistic studies,[3] and he wrote a treatise on synonyms. He seems to have been very pedantic in his forms of expression.[4]

(Professor Zeller says:[5] "Although Plato usually treats him with irony, it nevertheless speaks well for him that Socrates occasionally recommended pupils to him (*Theaet.*, 151b), and that his native city repeatedly entrusted him with diplomatic missions (*Hipp. Maj.*, 282 c)." As a matter of fact, Zeller seems to have missed the point in the *Theaetetus* passage, since the young men that Socrates has sent to Prodicus are those who, he has found, have not been "pregnant" with thoughts when in his company. He has accordingly sent them off to Prodicus, in whose company they have ceased to be "barren.")

III. *Hippias*

Hippias of Elis was a younger contemporary of Protagoras and was celebrated particularly for his versatility, being acquainted with mathematics, astronomy, grammar and rhetoric, rhythmics and harmony, history and literature and mythology—in short, he was a true Polymath. Not only that, but when present at a certain Olympiad, he boasted that he had made all his own clothes. His list of the Olympic victors laid the foundation for the later Greek system of dating by means of the Olympiads (first introduced by the historian Timaeus).[1] Plato, in the *Protagoras*, makes him say that "law being the tyrant of men, forces them to do many things contrary to nature."[2] The point seems to be that the law of the city-state is often narrow and tyrannical and at variance with the natural laws (ἄγραφοι νόμοι).

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[1] 366 c ff.

[2] Frag. 5.

[3] Cf. *Crat.*, 384 b.

[4] Cf. *Protag.*, 337 a f.

[5] *Outlines*, pp. 84–5.

IV. *Gorgias*

Gorgias of Leontini, in Sicily, lived from about 483 to 375 B.C., and in the year 427 he came to Athens as ambassador of Leontini, in order to ask for help against Syracuse. On his travels he did what he could to spread the spirit of Panhellenism.

Gorgias seems to have been at first a pupil of Empedocles, and to have busied himself with questions of natural science, and may have written a book on Optics. He was led, however, to scepticism by the dialectic of Zeno and published a work entitled *On Not-being or Nature* (Περὶ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος ἢ περὶ Φύσεως), the chief ideas of which can be gathered from Sextus Empiricus and from the pseudo-Aristotelian writing *On Melissus, Xenophanes and Gorgias*. From these accounts of the contents of Gorgias' work it is clear that he reacted to the Eleatic dialectic somewhat differently to Protagoras, since while the latter might be said to hold that everything is true, Gorgias maintained the very opposite. According to Gorgias, (i) Nothing exists, for if there were anything, then it would have either to be eternal or to have come into being. But it cannot have come into being, for neither out of Being nor out of Not-being can anything come to be. Nor can it be eternal, for if it were eternal, then it would have to be infinite. But the infinite is impossible for the following reason. It could not be in another, nor could it be in itself, therefore it would be nowhere. But what is nowhere, is nothing. (ii) If there were anything, then it could not be known. For if there is knowledge of being, then what is thought must be, and Not-being could not be thought at all. In which case there could be no error, which is absurd. (iii) Even if there were knowledge of being, this knowledge could not be imparted. Every sign is different from the thing signified; e.g. how could we impart knowledge of colours by word, since the ear hears tones and not colours? And how could the same representation of being be in the two persons at once, since they are different from one another?[1]

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[1] Frag. 3.

[2] 337 d, 2–3.

While some have regarded these astonishing ideas as expressing a seriously meant philosophical Nihilism, others have thought that the doctrine constitutes a joke on the part of Gorgias, or, rather, that the great rhetorician wanted to show that rhetoric or the skilful use of words was able to make plausible even the most absurd hypothesis. (*Sic* H. Gomperz.) But this latter view hardly agrees with the fact that Isocrates sets Gorgias' opinions besides those of Zeno and Melissus, nor with the writing Πρὸς τὰ Γοργίου, which treats Gorgias' opinions as worth a philosophical criticism.[2] In any case a treatise on Nature would scarcely be the place for such rhetorical *tours de force*. On the other hand, it is difficult to suppose that Gorgias held in all seriousness that nothing exists. It may be that he wished to employ the Eleatic dialectic in order to reduce the Eleatic philosophy to absurdity.[3] Afterwards, renouncing philosophy, he devoted himself to rhetoric.

Rhetorical art was regarded by Gorgias as the mastery of the art of persuasion, and this necessarily led him to a study of practical psychology. He deliberately practised the art of suggestion (ψυχαγωγία), which could be used both for practical ends, good and bad, and for artistic purposes. In connection with the latter Gorgias developed the art of justifiable deception (δικαία 'απάτη), calling a tragedy "a deception which is better to cause than not to cause; to succumb to it shows greater powers of artistic appreciation than not to."[4] Gorgias' comparison of the effects of tragedy to those of purgatives reminds us of Aristotle's much-discussed doctrine of the κάθαρσις.

The fact that Plato places the might-is-right doctrine in the mouth of Callicles,[5] while another disciple, Lycophron, asserted that nobility is a sham and that all men are equal, and that the law is a contract by which right is mutually guaranteed,[6] while yet another disciple demanded the liberation of slaves in the name of natural law,[7] we may ascribe with Zeller to Gorgias' renunciation of philosophy, which led him to decline to answer questions of truth and morality.[8]

Other Sophists whom one may briefly mention are Thrasymachus of Chalcedon, who is presented in the *Republic* as the brutal champion of the rights of the stronger,[1] and Antiphon of Athens, who asserts the equality of all men and denounces the distinction between nobles and commons, Greeks and barbarians, as itself a barbarism. He made education to be the most important thing in life, and created the literary *genre* of Τέχνη ἀλυπίας λόγοι παραμυθητικοί, declaring that he could free anyone from sorrow by oral means.[2]

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[1] Cf. Frags. 1, 3.

[2] Aristotle or Theophrastus?

[3] Cf. Zeller, *Outlines*, p. 87.

[4] Frag. 23 (Plut., *de gloria Athen.*, 5, 348 c).

[5] *Gorgias*, 482 e ff.

[6] Frags. 3 and 4.

[7] Alcidamas of Elaea. Cf. Aristot., *Rhet.*, III, 3, 1406 b; 1406 a. Schol. on I 13, 1373 b.

[8] *Outlines*, p. 88.

v. *Sophism*

In conclusion I may observe again that there is no reason for ascribing to the great Sophists the intention of overthrowing religion and morality; men like Protagoras and Gorgias had no such end in view. Indeed, the great Sophists favoured the conception of a "natural law," and tended to broaden the outlook of the ordinary Greek citizen; they were an educative force in Hellas. At the same time it is true that "in a certain sense every opinion is true, according to Protagoras; every opinion is false, according to Gorgias."[3] This tendency to deny the absolute and objective character of truth easily leads to the consequence that, instead of trying to *convince* anyone, the Sophist will try to *persuade* him or talk him over. Indeed, in the hands of lesser men Sophism soon acquired an unpleasant connotation—that of "Sophistry." While one can only respect the cosmopolitanism and broad outlook of an Antiphon of Athens, one can only condemn the "Might-is-Right" theory of a Thrasymachus on the one hand and the hair-splitting and quibbling of a Dionysodorus on the other. The great Sophists, as we have said, were an educative force in Hellas; but one of the chief factors in the Greek education which they fostered was rhetoric, and rhetoric had its obvious dangers, inasmuch as the orator might easily tend to pay more attention to the rhetorical presentation of a subject than to the subject itself. Moreover, by questioning the absolute foundations of traditional institutions, beliefs and ways of life, Sophism tended to foster a relativistic attitude, though the evil latent in Sophism lay not so much in the fact that it raised problems, as in the fact that it could not offer any satisfactory intellectual solution to the problems it raised. Against this relativism Socrates and Plato reacted, endeavouring to establish the sure foundation of true knowledge and ethical judgments.

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[1] *Rep.*, 338 c.

[2] Cf. Plut., apud Diels. Frag. 44 and 87 A 6.

[3] Ueberweg-Praechter, p. 122.

CHAPTER XIV

SOCRATES

1. *Early Life of Socrates*

THE death of Socrates fell in the year 399 B.C., and as Plato tells us that Socrates was seventy years old or a little more at the time of his death, he must have been born about 470 B.C.[1] He was the son of Sophroniscus and Phaenarete of the Antiochid tribe and the *deme* of Alopecae. Some have said that his father was a worker in stone,[2] but A. E. Taylor thinks, with Burnet, that the story was a misunderstanding which arose from a playful reference in the *Euthyphro* to Daedalus as the ancestor of Socrates.[3] In any case, Socrates does not seem to have himself followed his father's trade, if it was his father's trade, and the group of Graces on the Akropolis, which were later shown as the work of Socrates, are attributed by archaeologists to an earlier sculptor.[4] Socrates cannot, however, have come from a very poor family, as we find him later serving as a fully-armed hoplite, and he must have been left sufficient patrimony to enable him to undertake such a service. Phaenarete, Socrates' mother, is described in the *Theaetetus*[5] as a midwife, but even if she was, this should not be taken to imply that she was a professional midwife in the modern sense, as Taylor points out.[6] Socrates' early life thus fell in the great flowering of Athenian splendour. The Persians had been defeated at Plataea in 479 and Aeschylus had produced the *Persae* in 472: Sophocles and Euripides were still boys.[7] Moreover, Athens had already laid the foundation of her maritime empire.

In Plato's *Symposium* Alcibiades describes Socrates as looking like a satyr or Silenus,[8] and Aristophanes said that he strutted like a waterfowl and ridiculed his habit of rolling his eyes.[1] But we also know that he was possessed of particular robustness of body and powers of endurance. As a man he wore the same garment winter and summer, and continued his habit of going barefoot, even on a winter campaign. Although very abstemious in food and drink, he could drink a great deal without being any the worse for it. From his youth upwards he was the recipient of prohibitory messages or warnings from his mysterious "voice" or "sign" or *daimon*. The *Symposium* tells us of his prolonged fits of abstraction, one lasting the whole of a day and night—and that on a military campaign. Professor Taylor would like to interpret these abstractions as ecstasies or rapts, but it would seem more likely that they were prolonged fits of abstraction due to intense mental concentration on some problem, a phenomenon not unknown in the case of some other thinkers, even if not on so large a scale. The very length of the "ecstasy" mentioned in the *Symposium* would seem to militate against its being a real rapture in the mystico-religious sense,[2] though such a prolonged fit of abstraction would also be exceptional.

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[1] *Apol.*, 17 d.

[2] Cf. Diog. Laërt. (Thus Praechter says roundly: *Der Vater des Sokrates war Bildhauer*, p. 132.)

[3] *Euthyphro*, 10 c.

[4] Diog. Laërt. remarks that "Some say that the Graces in the Akropolis are his work."

[5] *Theaet.*, 149 a.

[6] Taylor, *Socrates*, p. 38.

[7] "All the great buildings and works of art with which Athens was enriched in the Periclean age, the Long Walls which connected the city with the port of Peiraeus, the Parthenon, the frescoes of Polygnotus, were begun and completed under his eyes." *Socr.*, p. 36.

[8] *Sympos.*, 215 b 3 ff.

When Socrates was in his early twenties, thought, as we have seen, tended to turn away from the cosmological speculations of the Ionians towards man himself, but it seems certain that Socrates began by studying the cosmological theories of East and West in the philosophies of Archelaus, Diogenes of Apollonia, Empedocles and others. Theophrastus asserts that Socrates was actually a member of the School of Archelaus, the successor of Anaxagoras at Athens.[3] In any case Socrates certainly suffered a disappointment through Anaxagoras. Perplexed by the disagreement of the various philosophical theories, Socrates received a sudden light from the passage where Anaxagoras spoke of Mind as being the cause of all natural law and order. Delighted with the passage, Socrates began to study Anaxagoras, in the hope that the latter would explain how Mind works in the universe, ordering all things for the best. What he actually found was that Anaxagoras introduced Mind merely in order to get the vortex-movement going. This disappointment set Socrates on his own line of investigation, abandoning the Natural Philosophy which seemed to lead nowhere, save to confusion and opposite opinions.[4]

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[1] *Clouds*, 362 (cf. *Sympos.*, 221).

[2] It is true, however, that the history of mysticism does record instances of prolonged ecstatic states. Cf. Poulain, *Grâces d' oraison*, p. 256.

[3] *Phys. Opin.*, fr. 4.

[4] *Phaedo*, 97–9.

A. E. Taylor conjectures that on Archelaus' death, Socrates was to all intents and purposes his successor.[1] He tries to support this contention with the aid of Aristophanes' play, *The Clouds*, where Socrates and his associates of the notion-factory or Φροντιστήριον are represented as addicted to the natural sciences and as holding the air-doctrine of Diogenes of Apollonia.[2] Socrates' disclaimer, therefore, that he ever took "pupils"[3] would, if Taylor's conjecture be correct, mean that he had taken no paying pupils. He had had ἑταῖροι, but had never had μαθηταί. Against this it may be urged that in the *Apology* Socrates expressly declares: "But the simple truth is, O Athenians, that I have nothing to do with physical speculations."[4] It is true that at the time when Socrates was depicted as speaking in the *Apology* he had long ago given up cosmological speculation, and that his words do not necessarily imply that he *never* engaged in such speculations; indeed, we know for a fact that he *did*; but it seems to the present writer that the whole tone of the passage militates against the idea that Socrates was ever the professed head of a School dedicated to this kind of speculation. What is said in the *Apology* certainly does not prove, in the strict sense, that Socrates was not the head of such a School before his "conversion," but it would seem that the natural interpretation is that he never occupied such a position.

The "conversion" of Socrates, which brought about the definite change to Socrates the ironic moral philosopher, seems to have been due to the famous incident of the Delphic Oracle. Chaerephon, a devoted friend of Socrates, asked the Oracle if there was any man living who was wiser than Socrates, and received the answer "No." This set Socrates thinking, and he came to the conclusion that the god meant that he was the wisest man because he recognised his own ignorance. He then came to conceive of his mission as being to seek for the stable and certain truth, true wisdom, and to enlist the aid of any man who would consent to listen to him.[5] However strange the story of the Oracle may appear, it most probably really happened, since it is unlikely that Plato would have put a mere invention into the mouth of Socrates in a dialogue which obviously purports to give an historical account of the trial of the philosopher, especially as the *Apology* is of early date, and many who knew the facts were still living.

Socrates' marriage with Xanthippe is best known for the stories about her shrewish character, which may or may not be true. Certainly they are scarcely borne out by the picture of Socrates' wife given in the *Phaedo*. The marriage probably took place some time in the first ten years of the Peloponnesian War. In this war Socrates distinguished himself for bravery at the siege of Potidaea, 431/30, and again at the defeat of the Athenians by the Boeotians in 424. He was also present at the action outside Amphipolis in 422.[1]

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[1] *Socr.*, p. 67. [2] *Clouds*, 94. [3] *Apol.*, 19. [4] *Apol.*, 19. [5] *Apol.*, 20 ff.

II. *Problem of Socrates*

The problem of Socrates is the problem of ascertaining exactly what his philosophical teaching was. The character of the sources at our disposal—Xenophon's Socratic works (*Memorabilia* and *Symposium*), Plato's dialogues, various statements of Aristotle, Aristophanes' *Clouds*—make this a difficult problem. For instance, were one to rely on Xenophon alone, one would have the impression of a man whose chief interest was to make good men and citizens, but who did not concern himself with problems of logic and metaphysics—a popular ethical teacher. If, on the other hand, one were to found one's conception of Socrates on the Platonic dialogues taken as a whole, one would receive the impression of a metaphysician of the highest order, a man who did not content himself with questions of daily conduct, but laid the foundations of a transcendental philosophy, distinguished by its doctrine of a metaphysical world of Forms. Statements of Aristotle, on the other hand (if given their natural interpretation), give us to understand that while Socrates was not uninterested in theory, he did not himself teach the doctrine of subsistent Forms or Ideas, which is characteristic of Platonism.

The common view has been that though Xenophon's portrayal is too "ordinary" and "trivial," mainly owing to Xenophon's lack of philosophical ability and interest (it has indeed been held, though it seems unlikely, that Xenophon deliberately tried to make Socrates appear more "ordinary" than he actually was and than he knew him to be, for apologetic purposes), we cannot reject the testimony of Aristotle, and are accordingly forced to conclude that Plato, except in the early Socratic works, e.g. the *Apology*, put his own doctrines into the mouth of Socrates. This view has the great advantage that the Xenophontic and the Platonic

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[1] *Apol.*, 28 e. Burnet suggests that the fighting at the foundation of Amphipolis (some fifteen years earlier) may be referred to.

Socrates are not placed in glaring opposition and inconsistency (for the shortcomings of Xenophon's picture can be explained as a result of Xenophon's own character and predominant interests), while the clear testimony of Aristotle is not thrown overboard. In this way a more or less consistent picture of Socrates is evolved, and no unjustified violence (so the upholders of the theory would maintain) is done to any of the sources.

This view has, however, been challenged. Karl Joel, for example, basing his conception of Socrates on the testimony of Aristotle, maintains that Socrates was an intellectualist or rationalist, representing the Attic type, and that the Xenophontic Socrates, a *Willensethiker*, representing the Spartan type, is unhistorical. According to Joel, therefore, Xenophon gave a Doric colouring to Socrates and misrepresented him.[1]

Döring, on the contrary, maintained that we must look to Xenophon in order to obtain our historical picture of Socrates. Aristotle's testimony simply comprises the summary judgment of the Old Academy on Socrates' philosophical importance, while Plato used Socrates as a peg on which to hang his own philosophical doctrines.[2] Another view has been propagated in this country by Burnet and Taylor. According to them the historic Socrates is the *Platonic* Socrates.[3] Plato no doubt elaborated the thought of Socrates, but, all the same, philosophical teaching which is put into his mouth in the dialogues substantially represents the actual teaching of Socrates. If this were correct, then Socrates would himself have been responsible for the metaphysical theory of Forms or Ideas, and the statement of Aristotle (that Socrates did not "separate" the Forms) must be either rejected, as due to ignorance, or explained away. It is most unlikely, say Burnet and Taylor, that Plato would have put his own theories into the mouth of Socrates if the latter had never held them, when people who had actually known Socrates and knew what he really taught, were still living. They point out, moreover, that in some of the later dialogues of Plato, Socrates no longer plays a leading part, while in the *Laws* he is left out altogether—the inference being that where Socrates *does* play the leading part, it is his own ideas, and not simply Plato's, that he is giving, while in the later dialogues Plato is developing independent views (independent of Socrates at least), and so Socrates is allowed to drop into the background. This last argument is undoubtedly a strong one, as is also the fact that in an "early" dialogue, such as the *Phaedo*, which deals with the death of Socrates, the theory of Forms occupies a prominent place. But, if the Platonic Socrates is the historic Socrates, we ought logically to say that in the *Timaeus*, for example, Plato is putting into the mouth of the chief speaker opinions for which he, Plato, did not take the responsibility, since, if Socrates does not stand for Plato himself, there is no compelling reason why Timaeus should do so either. A. E. Taylor indeed does not hesitate to adopt this extreme, if consistent, position; but not only is it *prima facie* extremely unlikely that we can thus free Plato from responsibility for most of what he says in the dialogues, but also, as regards the *Timaeus*, if Taylor's opinion is true, how are we to explain that this remarkable fact first became manifest in the twentieth century A.D.?[1] Again, the consistent maintenance of the Burnet-Taylor view of the Platonic Socrates involves the ascription to Socrates of elaborations, refinements and explanations of the Ideal Theory which it is most improbable that the historic Socrates really evolved, and which would lead to a complete ignoring of the testimony of Aristotle.

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[1] *Der echte und der Xenophontische Sokrates*, Berlin, 1893, 1901.

[2] *Die Lehre des Sokrates als sozialesreform system. Neuer Versuch zur Lösung des Problems der sokratischen Philosophie.* München, 1895.

[3] "While it is quite impossible to regard the Socrates of Aristophanes and the Socrates of Xenophon as the same person, there is no difficulty in regarding both as distorted images of the Socrates we know from Plato. The first is legitimately distorted for comic effect, the latter, not so legitimately, for apologetic reasons." Burnet, *G.P.*, I, p. 149.

It is true that much of the criticism levelled against the Ideal Theory by Aristotle in the *Metaphysics* is directed against the mathematical form of the theory maintained by Plato in his lectures at the Academy, and that in certain particulars there is a curious neglect of what Plato says in the dialogues, a fact which might appear to indicate that Aristotle only recognised as Platonic the unpublished theory developed in the Academy; but it certainly would not be adequate to say that there was a complete dichotomy between the version of the theory that Aristotle gives (whether fairly or unfairly) and the evolving theory of the dialogues. Moreover, the very fact that the theory undergoes evolution, modification and refinement in the dialogues would imply that it represents, in part at least, Plato's own reflections on his position. Later writers of Antiquity certainly believed that we can look to the dialogues for Plato's own philosophy, though they differ concerning the relation of the dialogues to the teaching of Socrates, the earlier among them believing that Plato introduced much of his own thought into the dialogues. Syrianus contradicts Aristotle, but Professor Field observes that his reasons appear to be "his own sense of what was fitting in the relation of teacher and disciple."[1]

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[1] Cf. pp. 245–7 of this book; *v.* also Cornford's *Plato's Cosmology*, where he discusses Professor Taylor's theory.

An argument in favour of the Burnet-Taylor hypothesis is constituted by the passage in the second Letter, where Plato affirms that what he has said in writing is nothing but Socrates "beautified and rejuvenated."[2] In the first place, however, the genuineness of the passage, or even of the whole letter, is not certain, while in the second place it could be perfectly well explained as meaning that the dialogues give what Plato considered the metaphysical superstructure legitimately elaborated by himself on the basis of what Socrates actually said. (Field suggests that it might refer to the application of the Socratic method and spirit to "modern" problems.) For no one would be so foolish as to maintain that the dialogues contain nothing of the historic Socrates. It is obvious that the early dialogues would naturally take as their point of departure the teaching of the historic Socrates, and if Plato worked out the epistemological and ontological theories of succeeding dialogues through reflection on this teaching, he might legitimately regard the results attained as a justifiable development and application of Socrates' teaching and method. His words in the Letter would gain in point from his conviction that while the Ideal Theory as elaborated in the dialogues might, without undue violence, be regarded as a continuation and development of the Socratic teaching, this would not be equally true of the mathematical form of the theory given in the Academy.

It would, of course, be ridiculous to suggest that a view sponsored by such scholars as Professor Taylor and Professor Burnet could be lightly dismissed, and to make any such suggestion is very far from the mind of the present writer; but in a general book on Greek philosophy it is impossible to treat of the question at any considerable length or to give the Burnet-Taylor theory the full and detailed consideration that it deserves. I must, however, express my agreement with what Mr. Hackforth, for example, has said[1] concerning the lack of justification for ignoring the testimony of Aristotle that Socrates did not separate the Forms. Aristotle had been for twenty years in the Academy and interested as he was in the history of philosophy, can scarcely have neglected to ascertain the origin of such an important Platonic doctrine as the theory of Forms. Add to this the fact that the extant fragments of the Dialogues of Aeschines give us no reason to differ from the view of Aristotle, and Aeschines was said to have given the most accurate portrait of Socrates. For these reasons it seems best to accept the testimony of Aristotle, and, while admitting that the Xenophontic Socrates is not the complete Socrates, to maintain the traditional view, that Plato did put his own theories into the mouth of the Master whom he so much reverenced. The short account of Socrates' philosophical activity now to be given is therefore based on the traditional view. Those who maintain the theory of Burnet and Taylor would, of course, say that violence is thereby done to Plato; but is the situation bettered by doing violence to Aristotle? If the latter had not enjoyed personal intercourse with Plato and his disciples over a long space of time, we might have allowed the possibility of a mistake on his part; but in view of his twenty years in the Academy this mistake would appear to be ruled out of court. However it is unlikely that we shall ever obtain absolute certainty as to the historically accurate picture of Socrates, and it would be most unwise to dismiss all conceptions save one's own as unworthy of consideration. One can only state one's reasons for accepting one picture of Socrates rather than another, and leave it at that.

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[1] *Plato and his Contemporaries*, p. 228, Methuen, 1930. Cf. Field's summary of the evidence on the Socratic question, pp. 61–3.

[2] 314 c, καλοῦ καὶ νέου γεγονότος.

(Use has been made of Xenophon in the following short account of Socrates' teaching: we cannot believe that Xenophon was either a nincompoop or a liar. It is perfectly true that while it is difficult—sometimes, no doubt, impossible—to distinguish between Plato and Socrates, "it is almost as hard to distinguish between Socrates and Xenophon. For the *Memorabilia* is as much a work of art as any Platonic dialogue, though the manner is as different as was Xenophon from Plato."[2] But, as Mr. Lindsay points out, Xenophon wrote much besides the *Memorabilia*, and consideration of his writings in general may often show us what is Xenophon, even if it does not always show us what is Socrates.

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[1] Cf. article by R. Hackforth on Socrates in *Philosophy* for July 1933.
[2] A. D. Lindsay in Introd. to *Socratic Discourses* (Everyman), p. viii.

The *Memorabilia* gives us the impression that Socrates made on Xenophon, and we believe that it is in the main trustworthy, even if it is always as well to remember the old scholastic adage, *Quidquid recipitur, secundum modum recipientis recipitur.*)

III. *Philosophical Activity of Socrates*

1. Aristotle declares that there are two improvements in science which we might justly ascribe to Socrates—his employment of "inductive arguments and universal definitions" (τούς τ'ἐπακτικούς λόγους καὶ τὸ ὁρίζεσθαι καθόλου).[1] The last remark should be understood in connection with the following statement, that "Socrates did not make the universals or the definitions exist apart; his successor, however, gave them separate existence, and this was the kind of thing they called Ideas."

Socrates was therefore concerned with universal definitions, i.e. with the attaining of fixed concepts. The Sophists propounded relativistic doctrines, rejecting the necessarily and universally valid. Socrates, however, was struck by the fact that the universal concept remains the same: particular instances may vary, but the definition stands fast. This idea can be made clear by an example. The Aristotelian definition of man is "rational animal." Now, individual men vary in their gifts: some are possessed of great intellectual gifts, others not. Some guide their lives according to reason: others surrender without thought to instinct and passing impulse. Some men do not enjoy the unhampered use of their reason, whether because they are asleep or because they are "mentally defective." But all animals who possess the gift of reason—whether they are actually using it or not, whether they can use it freely or are prevented by some organic defect—are men: the definition of man is fulfilled in them, and this definition remains constant, holding good for all. If "man," then "rational animal"; if "rational animal," then "man." We cannot now discuss the precise status or objective reference of our generic and specific notions: we simply want to illustrate the contrast between the particular and the universal, and to point out the constant character of the definition. Some thinkers have maintained that the universal concept is purely subjective, but it is very difficult to see how we could form such universal notions, and why we should be compelled to form them, unless there was a foundation for them in fact. We shall have to return later to the question of the objective reference and metaphysical status of universals: let it suffice at present to point out that the universal concept or definition presents us with something constant and abiding that stands out, through its possession of these characteristics, from the world of perishing particulars. Even if all men were blotted out of existence, the definition of man as "rational animal" would remain constant. Again, we may speak of a piece of gold as being "true gold," implying that the definition of gold, the standard or universal criterion, is realised in this piece of gold. Similarly we speak of things as being more or less beautiful, implying that they approach the standard of Beauty in a greater or less degree, a standard which does not vary or change like the beautiful objects of our experience, but remains constant and "rules," as it were, all particular beautiful objects. Of course, we might be mistaken in supposing that we knew the standard of Beauty, but in speaking of objects as more or less beautiful we imply that there *is* a standard. To take a final illustration. Mathematicians speak of and define the line, the circle, etc. Now, the perfect line and the perfect circle are not found among the objects of our experience: there are at best only approximations to the definitions of the line or the circle. There is a contrast, therefore, between the imperfect and changeable objects of our everyday experience on the one hand and the universal concept or definition on the other hand. It is easy to see, then, how Socrates was led to attach such importance to the universal definition. With a predominant interest in ethical conduct, he saw that the definition affords a sure rock on which men could stand amidst the sea of the Sophist relativistic doctrines. According to a relativistic ethic, justice, for example, varies from city to city, community to community: we can never say that justice is this or that, and that this definition holds good for all States, but only that justice in Athens is this and in Thrace that. But if we can once attain to a universal definition of justice, which expresses the innermost nature of justice and holds good for all men, then we have something sure to go upon, and we can judge not only individual actions, but also the moral codes of different States, in so far as they embody or recede from the universal definition of justice.

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[1] *Metaph.*, M. 1078 b 27–9.

2. To Socrates, says Aristotle, may rightly be ascribed "inductive arguments." Now, just as it is a mistake to suppose that in occupying himself with "universal definitions" Socrates was concerned to discuss the metaphysical status of the universal, so it

would be a mistake to suppose that in occupying himself with "inductive arguments" Socrates was concerned with problems of logic. Aristotle, looking back on Socrates' actual practice and method, sums it up in logical terms; but that should not be taken to imply that Socrates developed an explicit theory of Induction from the standpoint of a logician.

What was Socrates' practical method? It took the form of "dialectic" or conversation. He would get into conversation with someone and try to elicit from him his ideas on some subject. For instance, he might profess his ignorance of what courage really is, and ask the other man if he had any light on the subject. Or Socrates would lead the conversation in that direction, and when the other man had used the word "courage," Socrates would ask him what courage is, professing his own ignorance and desire to learn. His companion had used the word, therefore he must know what it meant. When some definition or description had been given him, Socrates would profess his great satisfaction, but would intimate that there were one or two little difficulties which he would like to see cleared up. Accordingly he asked questions, letting the other man do most of the talking, but keeping the course of the conversation under his control, and so would expose the inadequacy of the proposed definition of courage. The other would fall back on a fresh or modified definition, and so the process would go on, with or without final success.

The dialectic, therefore, proceeded from less adequate definitions to a more adequate definition, or from consideration of particular examples to a universal definition. Sometimes indeed no definite result would be arrived at;[1] but in any case the aim was the same, to attain a true and universal definition; and as the argument proceeded from the particular to the universal, or from the less perfect to the more perfect, it may truly be said to be a process of induction. Xenophon mentions some of the ethical phenomena which Socrates sought to investigate, and the nature of which he hoped to enshrine in definitions—e.g. piety and impiety, just and unjust, courage and cowardice.[2] (The early dialogues of Plato deal with the same ethical values—the *Euthyphron* with piety (no result); the *Charmides* with temperance (no result); the *Lysis* with friendship (no result).) The investigation is, for instance, concerning the nature of injustice. Examples are brought forward—to deceive, to injure, to enslave, and so on. It is then pointed out that it is only when these things are done to friends that they are unjust. But the difficulty arises that if one, for example, steals a friend's sword when he is in a passing state of despair and wishes to commit suicide, no injustice is committed. Nor is it unjust on a father's part if he employs deception in order to induce his sick son to take the medicine which will heal him. It appears, therefore, that actions are unjust only when they are performed *against friends with the intention of harming them.*[1]

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[1] The early dialogues of Plato, which may safely be considered "Socratic" in character, generally end without any determinate and positive result having been attained.

[2] *Mem.*, I, I, 16.

3. This dialectic might, of course, prove somewhat irritating or even disconcerting or humiliating to those whose ignorance was exposed and whose cocksureness was broken down—and it may have tickled the fancy of the young men who congregated round Socrates to hear their elders being "put in the sack"—but the aim of Socrates was not to humiliate or to disconcert. His aim was to discover the truth, not as matter of pure speculation, but with a view to the good life: in order to act well, one must know what the good life is. His "irony," then, his profession of ignorance, was sincere; he did not know, but he wanted to find out, and he wanted to induce others to reflect for themselves and to give real thought to the supremely important work of caring for their souls. Socrates was deeply convinced of the value of the soul, in the sense of the thinking and willing subject, and he saw clearly the importance of knowledge, of true wisdom, if the soul is to be properly tended. What are the true values of human life which have to be realised in conduct? Socrates called his method "midwifery," not merely by way of playful allusion to his mother, but to express his intention of getting others to produce true ideas in their minds, with a view to right action. This being so, it is easy to understand why Socrates gave so much attention to definition. He was not being pedantic, he was convinced that a clear knowledge of the truth is essential for the right control of life. He wanted to give birth to true ideas in the clear form of definition, not for a speculative but for a practical end. Hence his preoccupation with ethics.

4. I have said that Socrates' interest was predominantly ethical. Aristotle says quite clearly that Socrates "was busying himself about ethical matters."[2] And again, "Socrates occupied

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[1] *Mem.*, 4, 2, 14 ff.

[2] *Metaph.*, A 987 b 1–3.

himself with the excellences of character, and in connection with them became the first to raise the problem of universal definitions."[1] This statement of Aristotle is certainly borne out by the picture of Socrates given by Xenophon.

Plato in the *Apology* relates the profession of Socrates at his trial, that he went where he could do the greatest good to anyone, seeking "to persuade every man among you that he must look to himself, and seek virtue and wisdom before he looks to his private interests, and look to the State before he looks to the interests of the State; and that this should be the order which he observes in all his actions."[2] This was the "mission" of Socrates, which he regarded as having been imposed upon him by the god of Delphi, to stimulate men to care for their noblest possession, their soul, through the acquisition of wisdom and virtue. He was no mere pedantic logician, no mere destructive critic, but a man with a mission. If he criticised and exposed superficial views and easy-going assumptions, this was due not to a frivolous desire to display his own superior dialectical acumen, but to a desire to promote the good of his interlocutors and to learn himself.

Of course it is not to be expected in a member of a Greek City state that an ethical interest should be completely severed from a political interest, for the Greek was essentially a citizen and he had to lead the good life within the framework of the city. Thus Xenophon relates that Socrates inquired τί πόλις, τί πολιτικός τί ἀρχὴ ἀνθρώπων, τὶ ἀρχηγὸς ἀνθρώπων, and we have seen Socrates' statement in the *Apology* about looking to the State itself before looking to the interests of the State.[3] But, as the last remark implies, and as is clear from Socrates' life, he was not concerned with party politics as such, but with political life in its ethical aspect. It was of the greatest importance for the Greek who wished to lead the good life to realise what the State is and what being a citizen means, for we cannot care for the State unless we know the nature of the State and what a good State is. Knowledge is sought as a means to ethical action.

5. This last statement deserves some development, since the Socratic theory as to the relation between knowledge and virtue is characteristic of the Socratic ethic. According to Socrates knowledge and virtue are one, in the sense that the wise man, he who *knows* what is right, will also *do* what is right. In other

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[1] *Metaph.*, M 1,078 b 17–19.

[2] *Apol.*, 36.

[3] Xen., *Mem.*, 1, 1, 16; *Apol.*, 36.

words, no one does evil knowingly and of set purpose; no one chooses the evil *as such*.

This "ethical intellectualism" seems at first sight to be in blatant contradiction with the facts of everyday life. Are we not conscious that we ourselves sometimes deliberately do what we know to be wrong, and are we not convinced that other people act sometimes in the same way? When we speak of a man as being responsible for a bad action, are we not thinking of him as having done that act with knowledge of its badness? If we have reason to suppose that he was not culpably ignorant of its badness, we do not hold him to be morally responsible. We are therefore inclined to agree with Aristotle, when he criticises the identification of knowledge and virtue on the ground that Socrates forgot the irrational parts of the soul and did not take sufficient notice of the fact of moral weakness, which leads a man to do what he knows to be wrong.[1]

It has been suggested that, as Socrates was himself singularly free from the influence of the passions in regard to moral conduct, he tended to attribute the same condition to others, concluding that failure to do what is right is due to ignorance rather than to moral weakness. It has also been suggested that when Socrates identified virtue with knowledge or wisdom he had in mind not any sort of knowledge but a real personal conviction. Thus Professor Stace points out that people may go to church and say that they believe the goods of this world to be worth nothing, whereas they *act* as if they were the only goods they valued. This is not the sort of knowledge Socrates had in mind: he meant a real personal conviction.[2]

All this may well be true, but it is important to bear in mind what Socrates meant by "right." According to Socrates that action is right which serves man's true utility, in the sense of promoting his true happiness (εὐδαιμονία). Everyone seeks his own good as a matter of course. Now, it is not every kind of action, however pleasant it may appear at the time, which promotes man's true happiness. For instance, it might be pleasant to a man to get drunk constantly, especially if he is suffering from some overwhelming sorrow. But it is not to the true good of man. Besides injuring his health, it tends to enslave him to a habit, and it goes counter to the exercise of man's highest possession, that which differentiates him from the brute—his reason. If a man constantly gets drunk, believing this to be his true good, then he errs from ignorance, not realising what his true good is. Socrates would hold that if he knew that it was to his own true good and conducive to his happiness *not* to get drunk, then he would not get drunk. Of course we would remark with Aristotle that a man might well know that to contract a habit of drunkenness is not conducive to his ultimate happiness, and yet still contract the habit. This is doubtless true; it does not seem that Aristotle's criticism can be gainsaid; but at this point we might observe (with Stace) that if the man had a *real personal conviction* of the evil of the habit of drunkenness, he would not contract it. This does not dispose of Aristotle's objection, but it helps us to understand how Socrates could say what he did. And, as a matter of fact, is there not a good deal in what Socrates says, when viewed from the psychological standpoint? A man might know, intellectually, that to get drunk is not conducive to his ultimate happiness and dignity as a man, but when the impulse comes upon him, he may turn his attention away from this knowledge and fix it on the state of intoxication as seen against the background of his unhappy life, until this state and its desirability engage all his attention and take on the character of a true good. When the exhilaration has worn off, he recalls to mind the evil of drunkenness and admits: "Yes, I did wrong, knowing it to be wrong." But the fact remains, that at the moment when he surrendered to the impulse, that knowledge had slipped from the field of his mental attention, even if culpably.

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[1] *Eth. Nic.*, 1145 b.

[2] *Crit. Hist.*, pp. 147–8. Professor Stace considers, however, that "Aristotle's criticism of Socrates is unanswerable."

Of course, we must not suppose that the utilitarian standpoint of Socrates envisages the following of whatever is pleasurable. The wise man realises that it is more advantageous to be self-controlled, than to have no self-control; to be just, rather than to be unjust; courageous, rather than cowardly—"advantageous" meaning what is conducive to true health and harmony of soul. Socrates certainly considered that pleasure is a good, but he thought that true pleasure and lasting happiness attend the moral rather than the immoral man, and that happiness does not consist in having a great abundance of external goods.

While we cannot accept the over-intellectualist attitude of Socrates, and agree with Aristotle that ἀκρασία or moral weakness is a fact which Socrates tended to overlook, we willingly pay tribute to the ethic of Socrates. For a rational ethic must be founded on human nature and the good of human nature as such. Thus when Hippias allowed ἄγραφοι νόμοι, but excepted from their number laws which varied from State to State, remarking that the prohibition of sexual intercourse between parents and children is not a universal prohibition, Socrates rightly answered that racial inferiority which results from such intercourse justifies the prohibition.[1] This is tantamount to appealing to what we would call "Natural Law," which is an expression of man's nature and conduces to its harmonious development. Such an ethic is indeed *insufficient*, since the Natural Law cannot acquire a morally binding force, obligatory in conscience—at least in the sense of our modern conception of "Duty"—unless it has a metaphysical basis and is grounded in a transcendental Source, God, Whose Will for man is expressed in the Natural Law; but, although insufficient, it enshrines a most important and valuable truth which is essential to the development of a rational moral philosophy. "Duties" are not simply senseless or arbitrary commands or prohibitions, but are to be seen in relation to human nature as such: the Moral Law expresses man's true good. Greek ethics were predominantly eudaemonological in character (cf. Aristotle's ethical system), and though, we believe, they need to be completed by Theism, and seen against the background of Theism, in order to attain their true development, they remain, even in their incomplete state, a perennial glory of Greek philosophy. Human nature is constant and so ethical values are constant, and it is Socrates' undying fame that he realised the constancy of these values and sought to fix them in universal definitions which could be taken as a guide and norm in human conduct.[2]

6. From the identification of wisdom and virtue follows the unity of virtue. There is really only one virtue, insight into what is truly good for man, what really conduces to his soul's health and harmony. A more important consequence, however, is the teachability of virtue. The Sophists, of course, professed to teach the art of virtue, but Socrates differed from them, not only in the fact that he declared himself to be a learner, but also in the fact that his ethical inquiries were directed to the discovery of universal

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[1] Xen., *Mem.*, IV, 4, 19 ff.

[2] Not all thinkers have been willing to admit that human nature *is* constant. But there is no real evidence to show that "primitive" man differed essentially from modern man; nor have we justification for supposing that a type of man will arise in the future who will be *essentially* different from the man of to-day.

and constant moral norms. But though Socrates' method was dialectic and not lecturing, it necessarily follows from his identification of virtue with knowledge that virtue can be taught. We would make a distinction: intellectual knowledge of what virtue is can be imparted by instruction, but not virtue itself. However, if wisdom as real personal conviction is stressed, then *if* such wisdom can be taught, perhaps virtue could be taught too. The chief point to remark is that "teaching" for Socrates did not mean mere notional instruction, but rather leading a man to a real insight. Yet although such considerations undoubtedly render Socrates' doctrine of the teachability of virtue more intelligible, it remains true that in this doctrine the over-intellectualism of his ethic is again apparent. He insisted that as, e.g., the doctor is the man who has learnt medicine, so the just man is he who has learnt what is just.

7. This intellectualism was not likely to make Socrates particularly favourable to democracy as practised at Athens. If the doctor is the man who has learnt medicine, and if no sick man would entrust himself to the care of one who had no knowledge of medicine, it is unreasonable to choose public officials by lot or even by vote of the inexperienced multitude.[1] True rulers are those who know how to rule. If we would not appoint as pilot of a vessel a man devoid of all knowledge of the pilot's art and of the route to be traversed, why appoint as ruler of the State one who has no knowledge of ruling and who does not know what is to the good of the State?

8. In regard to religion, Socrates seems to have spoken generally of "gods" in the plural and to have meant thereby the traditional Greek deities; but one can discern a tendency towards a purer conception of Deity. Thus, according to Socrates, the knowledge of the gods is not limited, they are everywhere present and know all that is said and done. As they know best what is good, man should simply pray for the good and not for particular objects like gold.[2] Occasionally belief in one God comes to the fore,[3] but it does not appear that Socrates ever paid much attention to the question of monotheism or polytheism. (Even Plato and Aristotle find a place for the Greek gods.)

Socrates suggested that as man's body is composed of materials gathered from the material world, so man's reason is a part of the universal Reason or Mind of the world.[4] This notion was to be developed by others, as was also his teaching on teleology, anthropocentric in character. Not only are sense-organs given to man in order to enable him to exercise the corresponding senses, but anthropocentric teleology is extended to cosmic phenomena. Thus the gods give us the light without which we cannot see, and Providence is displayed in the gifts of food made to man by the earth. The sun does not approach so near the earth as to wither up or to scorch man, nor is it set so far away that he cannot be warmed thereby. These and suchlike considerations are natural in a man who studied in the School of the Cosmologists and was disappointed at the little use that Anaxagoras made of his principle of Mind; but Socrates was not a Cosmologist or a Theologian, and though he may be called "the real founder of Teleology in the consideration of the world,"[1] he was, as we have seen, primarily interested in human conduct.[2]

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[1] *Mem.*, 1, 2, 9; 3, 9, 10. [2] *Mem.*, 1, 3, 2. [3] *Mem.*, 1, 4, 5, 7. [4] *Mem.*, 1, 4, 8.

9. The picture that Aristophanes gives of Socrates in the *Clouds* need not detain us.[3] Socrates had been a pupil of the old philosophers, and he had admittedly been influenced by the teaching of Anaxagoras. As to the "Sophistic" flavouring imparted to his character in the *Clouds*, it is to be remembered that Socrates like the Sophists, concentrated his attention on the Subject, on man himself. He was a public and familiar figure, known to all the audience for his dialectical activity, and to some he undoubtedly seemed to be "rationalistic," critically destructive and anti-traditionalist in tendency. Even if it were to be assumed that Aristophanes himself realised the difference that existed between Socrates and the Sophists—which is not at all clear—it would not necessarily follow that he would express this realisation before a public audience. And Aristophanes is known to have been a traditionalist and an opponent of the Sophists.

IV. *Trial and Death of Socrates*

In 406 B.C. Socrates showed his moral courage by refusing to agree to the demand that the eight commanders who were to be impeached for their negligence at Arginusae should be tried together, this being contrary to the law and calculated to evoke a hasty sentence. He was at this time a member of the Committee of the πρυτάνεις or Committee of the Senate. His moral courage was again shown when he refused, at the demand of the Thirty in 404/3, to take part in the arrest of Leon of Salamis, whom the Oligarchs intended to murder, that they might confiscate his property. They wished to incriminate as many prominent citizens as possible in their doings, doubtless with a view to the eventual day of reckoning. Socrates, however, simply refused to take any part in their crimes, and would probably have paid for his refusal with his life, had not the Thirty fallen.

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[1] Ueb.-Praechter, p. 145; *der eigentliche Begründer der Teleologie in der Betrachtung der Welt.*

[2] Cf. e.g. *Mem.*, I, 1, 10–16.

[3] It is, as Burnet observes, a caricature which—like any caricature, if it is to have point—possesses a foundation in fact.

In the year 400/399 Socrates was brought to trial by the leaders of the restored democracy. Anytus, the politician who remained in the background, instigated Meletus to carry on the prosecution. The indictment before the court of the King Archon is recorded as follows[1]: "Meletus, son of Miletus, of the deme of Pitthus, indicts Socrates, son of Sophroniscus, of the deme of Alopecae, on his oath, to the following effect. Socrates is guilty (i) of not worshipping the gods whom the State worships, but introducing new and unfamiliar religious practices; (ii) and, further, of corrupting the young. The prosecutor demands the death penalty."

The first charge was never explicitly defined, the reason seeming to be that the prosecutor was relying on the jury's recollection of the reputation of the old Ionian cosmologists and perhaps of the profanation of the mysteries in 415, in which Alcibiades had been involved. But no reference could be made to the profanation in view of the Amnesty of 404/3, of which Anytus had himself been the chief promoter. The second charge, that of corrupting the young, is really a charge of infusing into the young a spirit of criticism in regard to the Athenian Democracy. At the back of it all was doubtless the thought that Socrates was responsible for having "educated Alcibiades and Critias—Alcibiades, who had for a time gone over to Sparta and who led Athens into such straits, Critias, who was the most violent of the Oligarchs. This again could not be explicitly mentioned because of the Amnesty of 404/3, but the audience would have grasped easily enough what was meant. That is why Aeschines could say, some fifty years later: "You put Socrates the Sophist to death, because he was shown to have educated Critias."[2]

The accusers no doubt supposed that Socrates would go into voluntary exile without awaiting trial, but he did not. He remained for trial in 399 and defended himself in court. In the trial Socrates might have made much of his military service and of his defiance of Critias in the time of the Oligarchy, but he merely brought the facts in, coupling them with his defiance of the democracy in the matter of the trial of the commanders. He was condemned to death by a majority of either 60 or 6 votes by a jury of 500 or 501.[1] It then rested with Socrates to propose an alternative penalty, and it was obviously the wisest course to propose a sufficiently substantial penalty. Thus if Socrates had proposed exile, this alternative to the death penalty would doubtless have been accepted. Socrates, however, proposed as his proper "reward" free meals in the Pryntaneum, after which he consented to propose a small fine—and all this without any attempt to influence the jury, as was usual, by bringing a weeping wife and children into court. The jury was annoyed at Socrates' cavalier behaviour, and he was sentenced to death by a larger majority than the one that had found him guilty.[2] The execution had to be delayed for about a month, to await the return of the "sacred boat" from Delos (in memory of Theseus' deliverance of the city from the tribute of seven boys and girls imposed by Minos of Knossos), and there was plenty of time to arrange an escape, which the friends of Socrates did in fact arrange. Socrates refused to avail himself of their kind offers, on the ground that such a course would be contrary to his principles. Socrates' last day on earth is recounted by Plato in the *Phaedo*, a day that was spent by Socrates in discoursing on the immortality of the soul with his Theban friends, Cebes and Simmias.[3] After he had drunk the hemlock and lay dying, his last words were: "Crito, we owe a cock to Aesculapius; pay it, therefore, and do not neglect it." When the poison reached his heart there was a convulsive movement and he died, "and Crito, perceiving it, closed his mouth and eyes. This, Echecrates, was the end of our friend, a man, we should say, who was the best of all his time that we have known, and, moreover, the most wise and just."[4]

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[1] Diog. Laërt., 2, 40.

[2] i, 173.

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[1] Cf. *Apol.*, 36 a (the reading of which is not absolutely certain), and Diog. Laërt., 2, 41. Burnet and Taylor, understanding Plato as saying that Socrates was condemned by a majority of 60 votes, suppose that the voting was 280 to 220, out of a jury of 500.

[2] Diog. Laërt (2, 42) says that the majority was 80 votes in excess of the first majority. According to Burnet and Taylor, the second voting would thus be 360 in favour of the death penalty as against 140.

[3] This remark is not meant to prejudice my view that the theory of Forms is not to be ascribed to Socrates.

[4] *Phaedo*, 118.

CHAPTER XV

MINOR SOCRATIC SCHOOLS

THE term "Minor Socratic Schools" should not be taken to indicate that Socrates founded any definite School. He hoped, no doubt, that others would be found to carry on his work of stimulating men's minds, but he did not gather round him a band of disciples to whom he left a patrimony of definite doctrine. But various thinkers, who had been disciples of Socrates to a greater or less extent, emphasised one or other point in his teaching, combining it also with elements culled from other sources. Hence Dr. Praechter calls them *Die einseitigen Sokratiker*, not in the sense that these thinkers only *reproduced* certain sides of Socrates' teaching, but in the sense that each of them was a *continuation* of Socratic thought in a particular direction, while at the same time they modified what they took from earlier philosophising, in order to harmonise it with the Socratic legacy.[1] In some ways, then, the use of a common name, Minor Socratic Schools, is unfortunate, but it may be used, if it is understood that the connection of some of these thinkers with Socrates is but slender.

1. *The School of Megara*

Euclid of Megara (not to be confused with the mathematician) seems to have been one of the earliest disciples of Socrates, as—if the story be genuine—he continued his association with Socrates in spite of the prohibition (of 431/2) of Megarian citizens entering Athens, coming into the city at dusk dressed as a woman.[2] He was present at the death of Socrates in 400/399, and after that event Plato and other Socratics took refuge with Euclid at Megara.

Euclid seems to have been early acquainted with the doctrine of the Eleatics, which he so modified under the influence of the Socratic ethic as to conceive of the One as the Good. He also regarded virtue as a unity. According to Diogenes Laërtius, Euclid asserted that the One is known by many names, identifying the One with God and with Reason.[3] The existence of a principle contrary to the Good he naturally denied, as that principle would be multiplicity, which is illusory on the Eleatic view. We may say that he remained an adherent of the Eleatic tradition, in spite of the Socratic influence that he underwent.

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[1] Ueberweg-Praechter, p. 155.

[2] Gell, *Noct. Att.*, 6, 10.

[3] Diog. Laërt., 2, 106.

The Megaric philosophy, particularly under the influence of Eubulides, developed into an Eristic which concocted various ingenious arguments, designed to disprove a position through a *reductio ad absurdum*. For example, the famous difficulty: "One grain of corn is not a heap: add a grain and there is yet no heap: when does the heap begin?" was designed to show that plurality is impossible, as Zeno wanted to show that motion was impossible. Another conundrum is that ascribed by some to Diodorus Cronus, another Megaric: "That which you have not lost, you still have; but you have not lost horns; therefore you still have horns." Or again: "Electra knows her brother, Orestes. But Electra does not know Orestes (who stands before her, disguised). Therefore Electra does not know what she knows."[1]

Another philosopher of the Megaric School, Diodorus Cronus (mentioned above), identified the actual and the possible: only the actual is possible. His argument was as follows: The possible cannot become the impossible. Now, if of two contradictories one has actually come to pass, the other is impossible. Therefore, if it had been possible before, the impossible would have come out of the possible. Therefore it was not possible before, and only the actual is possible; (e.g. "The world exists," and "The world does not exist," are contradictory propositions. But the world actually exists. Therefore it is impossible that the world does not exist. But if it were ever possible that the world should not exist a possibility has turned into an impossibility. This cannot be so. Therefore it was never possible that the world should not exist.) This proposition has been taken up in recent times by Professor Nicolai Hartmann of Berlin, who has identified the actual with the possible on the ground that what actually happens depends on the totality of given conditions, and—given those conditions—nothing else could have happened.[2]

A noted adherent of the School was Stilpo of Megara, who taught at Athens about 320, but was afterwards banished. He applied himself chiefly to ethics, developing the point of self-sufficiency in a theory of "apathy." When asked what he had lost in the plundering of Megara, he replied that he had not seen anyone carrying off wisdom or knowledge.[1] Zeno (the Stoic) was a pupil of Stilpo.

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[1] Cf. Diog. Laërt., 2, 108.

[2] *Möglichkeit und Wirklichkeit*, Berlin, 1938.

II. *The Elean-Eretrian School*

This School was named after Phaedo of Elis (the Phaedo of Plato's Dialogue) and Menedemus of Eretria. Phaedo of Elis seems to have resembled the Megarians in his use of dialectic, while Menedemus was chiefly interested in ethics, holding the unity of virtue and knowledge.

III. *The Early Cynic School*

The Cynics, or disciples of the dog, may have got their name from their unconventional mode of life or from the fact that Antisthenes, the founder of the School, taught in the gymnasium known as the *Kynosarges*. Perhaps both factors had something to do with the nickname.

Antisthenes (*c.* 445–*c.* 365) was born of an Athenian father and of a Thracian slave mother.[2] This might explain why he taught in the *Kynosarges*, which was reserved for those who were not of pure Athenian blood. The Gymnasium was dedicated to Heracles, and the Cynics took the hero as a sort of tutelary god or patron. One of Antisthenes' works was named after Heracles.[3]

At first a pupil of Gorgias, Antisthenes afterwards became an adherent of Socrates, to whom he was devoted. But what he chiefly admired in Socrates was the latter's independence of character, which led him to act in accordance with his convictions, no matter what the cost. Neglecting the fact that Socrates had been independent of earthly riches and the applause of men only in order to obtain the greater good of true wisdom, Antisthenes set up this independence and self-sufficiency as an ideal or end in itself. Virtue in his eyes was simply independence of all earthly possessions and pleasures: in fact, it was a negative concept—renunciation, self-sufficiency. Thus the negative side of Socrates' life was changed by Antisthenes into a positive goal or end. Similarly, Socrates' insistence on ethical knowledge was exaggerated by Antisthenes into a positive contempt for scientific learning and art. Virtue, he said, is sufficient by itself for happiness: nothing else is required—and virtue is the absence of desire, freedom from wants, and complete independence. Socrates, of course, had been independent of the opinion of others simply because he possessed deep convictions and principles, the surrender of which, to satisfy popular opinion, he regarded as treason to the Truth. He did not, however, set out to flout popular opinion or public convictions simply for the sake of doing so, as the Cynics, particularly Diogenes, seem to have done. The philosophy of the Cynics was thus an exaggeration of one side of Socrates' life and attitude, and that a negative one or at least one consequent on a much more positive side. Socrates was ready to disobey the Oligarchy at the risk of his life, rather than commit an act of injustice; but he would not have lived in a tub like Diogenes merely to flaunt his disregard for the ways of men.

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[1] Diog. Laërt., 2, 115. Senec., *Ep.*, 9, 3. [2] Diog. Laërt., 6, 1.

[3] It has been suggested that it was Diogenes who founded the Cynic School or "Movement," and not Antisthenes: Arist. refers to the followers of Antisthenes as 'Αντισθένειοι (*Metaph.*, 1043 b 24). But the nickname of "Cynics" seems to have been accepted, only in the time of Diogenes and Arist.'s use of the term 'Αντισθένειοι would not appear to prove anything against Antisthenes having been the real fountain-head of the Cynic School.

Antisthenes was strongly opposed to the theory of Ideas, and maintained that there are only individuals. He is said to have remarked: "O Plato, I see a horse, but I do not see horseness."[1] To each thing only its own name should be applied: e.g. we can say "Man is man" or "The good is good," but not "The man is good." No predicate should be attributed to a subject other than the subject itself.[2] With this goes the doctrine that we can only predicate of an individual its own individual nature; one cannot predicate of it membership of a class. Hence the denial of the theory of Ideas. Another logical theory of Antisthenes was that of the impossibility of self-contradiction. For if a man says different things, he is speaking of different objects.[3]

Virtue is wisdom, but this wisdom consists principally in "seeing through" the values of the majority of mankind. Riches, passions, etc., are not really good, nor are suffering, poverty, contempt, really evil: independence is the true good. Virtue, then, is wisdom and it is teachable, though there is no need of long reasoning and reflection in order to learn it. Armed with this virtue, the wise man cannot be touched by any so-called evil of life, even by slavery. He stands beyond laws and conventions, at least those of the State that does not recognise true virtue. The ideal state or condition of life in which all would live in independence and freedom from desire, is of course incompatible with wars.[1]

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[1] Simplic. in Arist., *Categ.*, 208, 29 f.; 211, 17 f.

[2] Plat., *Soph.*, 251 b; Arist., *Metaph.*, Δ 29, 1024 b 32–25 a 1.

[3] Arist., Top., A xi, 104 b 20; *Metaph.*, Δ 29, 1024 b 33–4.

Socrates had, indeed, placed himself in opposition on occasion to the authority of the Government, but he was so convinced of the rightness of the State's authority as such and of the Law, that he would not take advantage of the opportunity presented to him of escape from prison, but preferred to suffer death in accordance with the Law. Antisthenes, however, with his usual one-sided exaggeration denounced the historic and traditional State and its Law. In addition he renounced the traditional religion. There is only one God; the Greek pantheon is only a convention. Virtue is the only service of God: temples, prayers, sacrifices, etc., are condemned. "By convention there are many gods, but by nature only one."[2] On the other hand, Antisthenes interpreted the Homeric myths allegorically, trying to get moral applications and lessons out of them.

Diogenes of Sinope (d. *c.* 324 B.C.) thought that Antisthenes had not lived up to his own theories and called him a "trumpet which hears nothing but itself."[3] Banished from his country, Diogenes spent most of his life in Athens, though he died in Corinth. He called himself the "Dog," and held up the life of animals as a model for mankind. His task was the "recoining of values,"[4] and to the civilisation of the Hellenic world he opposed the life of animals and of the barbaric peoples.

We are told that he advocated community of wives and children and free love, while in the political sphere he declared himself a citizen of the world.[5] Not content with Antisthenes' "indifference" to the external goods of civilisation, Diogenes advocated a positive asceticism in order to attain freedom. Connected therewith is his deliberate flouting of convention, doing in public what it is generally considered should be done in private—and even what should not be done in private.

Disciples of Diogenes were Monimus, Onesicritus, Philiscus, Crates of Thebes. The latter presented his considerable fortune to the city, and took up the Cynic life of mendicancy, followed by his wife Hipparchia.[6]

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[1] Cf. Vita Antisth., apud Diog. Laërt.

[2] Cf. Cic., *De Nat.*, 1, 13, 32; Clem. Alex., *Protrep.*, 6, 71, 2; *Strom.*, 5, 14, 108, 4.

[3] Dion. Chrys., 8, 2.

[4] Diog. Laërt., 6, 20.

[5] Diog. Laërt., 6, 72.

[6] Diog. Laërt., *Lives of Crates and Hipparchia.*

IV. *The Cyrenaic School*

Aristippus of Cyrene, founder of the Cyrenaic School, was born about 435 B.C. From 416 he was in Athens, from 399 in Aegina, from 389/388 with Plato at the court of the elder Dionysius, and then again after 356 in Athens. But these dates and order of events cannot be regarded as beyond dispute, to say the least of it.[1] It has even been suggested that Aristippus never founded the Cyrenaic "School" at all, but was confused with his grandson, a later Aristippus. But in view of the statements of Diog. Laërt., Sotion and Panaetius (cf. D.L., 2, 84 f.), it does not seem possible to accept the statement of Sosicrates and others (D.L.) that Aristippus wrote nothing at all, while the passage in Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica* (14, 18, 31) can be explained without having to suppose that Aristippus never laid a foundation for the Cyrenaic philosophy.

In Cyrene Aristippus seems to have become acquainted with the teaching of Protagoras, while afterwards at Athens he was in relation with Socrates. The Sophist may have been largely responsible for Aristippus' doctrine, that it is our sensations alone that give us certain knowledge:[2] of things in themselves they can give us no certain information, nor about the sensations of others. Subjective sensations, then, must be the basis for practical conduct. But if my individual sensations form the norm for my practical conduct, then, thought Aristippus, it follows as a matter of course that the end of conduct is to obtain pleasurable sensations.

Aristippus declared that sensation consists in movement. When the movement is gentle, the sensation is pleasurable; when it is rough, there is pain; when movement is imperceptible or when there is no movement at all, there is neither pleasure nor pain. The rough movement cannot be the ethical end. Yet it cannot consist in the mere absence of pleasure or pain, i.e. be a purely negative end. The ethical end must, therefore, be pleasure, a positive end.[3] Socrates had indeed declared that virtue is the one path to happiness, and he held out happiness as a motive for the practice of virtue, but he did not maintain that pleasure is the end of life. Aristippus, however, seized on the one side of the Socratic teaching and disregarded all the rest.

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[1] Dates from Heinrich von Stein's *De philos. Cyrenaica*, part I, *De Vita Aristippi*, Gött, 1858.

[2] Cf. Sext. Emp. *adv. mathemat.*, 7, 191 ff.

[3] Diog. Laërt., 2, 86 ff.

Pleasure, then, according to Aristippus, is the end of life. But what kind of pleasure? Later on for Epicurus it would be rather painlessness, negative pleasure, that is the end of life; but for Aristippus it was positive and present pleasure. Thus it came about that the Cyrenaics valued bodily pleasure above intellectual pleasure, as being more intense and powerful. And it would follow from their theory of knowledge that the quality of the pleasure does not come into account. The consequential following-out of this principle would obviously lead to sensual excesses; but, as a matter of fact, the Cyrenaics, no doubt adopting the hedonistic elements in Socrates' doctrine, declared that the wise man will, in his choice of pleasure, take cognisance of the future. He will, therefore, avoid unrestrained excess, which would lead to pain, and he will avoid indulgence that would occasion punishment from the State or public condemnation. The wise man, therefore, needs judgment in order to enable him evaluate the different pleasures of life. Moreover, the wise man in his enjoyments will preserve a certain measure of independence. If he allows himself to be enslaved, then to that extent he cannot be enjoying pleasure, but rather is he in pain. Again, the wise man, in order to preserve cheerfulness and contentment, will limit his desires. Hence the saying attributed to Aristippus, ἔχω (Λαΐδα), καὶ οὐκ ἔχομαι ἐπεὶ τὸ κρατεῖν καὶ μὴ ἡττᾶσθαι ἡδονῶν ἄριστον, οὐ τὸ μὴ χρῆσθαι.[1]

This contradiction in the teaching of Aristippus between the principle of the pleasure of the moment and the principle of judgment, led to a divergence of views—or an emphasis on different sides of his doctrine—among his disciples. Thus *Theodorus the Atheist* declared indeed that judgment and justness are goods (the latter only because of the external advantages of a just life), and that individual acts of gratification are indifferent, the contentment of the mind being true happiness or pleasure, but he asserted too that the wise man will not give his life for his country and that he would steal, commit adultery, etc., if circumstances allowed it. He also denied the existence of any god at all.[2] *Hegesias* also demanded indifference towards individual acts of gratification, but he was so convinced of the miseries of life and of the impossibility of attaining happiness, that he emphasised a negative concept of the end of life, namely, absence of pain and sorrow.[3] Cicero and other sources tell us that Hegesias'

[1] Diog. Laërt., 2, 75.

[2] Diog. Laërt., 2, 97; Cic., *De Nat. D.*, 1, 1, 12.

[3] Diog. Laërt., 2, 94–6.

lectures at Alexandria led to so many suicides on the part of his hearers, that Ptolemy Lagi forbade their continuance![1] *Anniceris*, on the other hand, stressed the positive side of Cyrenaicism, making positive pleasure and, indeed, individual acts of gratification the end of life. But he limited the logical conclusions of such a view by giving great weight to love of family and country, friendship and gratitude, which afford pleasure even when they demand sacrifice.[2] In the value he placed on friendship he differed from Theodorus, who declared (D.L.) that the wise are sufficient for themselves and have no need of friends.

Diogenes Laërtius clearly implies that these philosophers had their own peculiar disciples: for example, he speaks of "Hegesiakoi," though he also classes them together as "Cyrenaics." Thus, while Aristippus the Cyrenaic laid the foundation of the "Cyrenaic" or pleasure-philosophy (*v. sup.*), he can hardly be said to have founded a closely-knit philosophical School, comprising Theodorus, Hegesias, Anniceris, etc., as members. These philosophers were part-heirs of Aristippus the elder, and represent a philosophical tendency rather than a School in the strict sense.

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[1] Cic., *Tusc.*, 1, 34, 83.

[2] Diog. Laërt., 2, 96 f.; Clem. Alex., *Strom.*, 2, 21, 130, 7 f.

CHAPTER XVI

DEMOCRITUS OF ABDERA

THIS would seem to be the right place to say something of the epistemological and ethical theories of Democritus of Abdera. Democritus was a disciple of Leucippus and, together with his Master, belongs to the Atomist School; but his peculiar interest for us lies in the fact that he gave attention to the problem of knowledge raised by Protagoras and to the problem of conduct which relativistic doctrines of the Sophists had rendered acute. Nowhere named by Plato, Democritus is frequently mentioned by Aristotle. He was head of a School at Abdera, and was still alive when Plato founded the Academy. The reports of his journeys to Egypt and Athens cannot be accepted with certainty.[1] He wrote copiously, but his writings have not been preserved.

1. The account of sensation given by Democritus was a mechanical one. Empedocles had spoken of "effluences" from objects which reach the eye, for example. The Atomists make these effluences to be atoms, images (δείκελα, εἴδωλα), which objects are constantly shedding. These images enter through the organs of sense, which are just passages (πόροι) and impinge on the soul, which is itself composed of atoms. The images, passing through the air, are subject to distortion by the air; and this is the reason why objects very far off may not be seen at all. Differences of colour were explained by differences of smoothness or roughness in the images, and hearing was given a like explanation, the stream of atoms flowing from the sounding body causing motion in the air between the body and the ear. Taste, smell and touch were all explained in the same way. (Secondary qualities would, therefore, not be objective.) We also obtain knowledge of the gods through such εἴδωλα; but gods denote for Democritus higher beings who are not immortal, though they live longer than men. They are δύσφθαρτα but not ἄφθαρτα. Strictly speaking, of course, the Atomist system would not admit of God, but only of atoms and the void.[2]

Now, Protagoras the Sophist, a fellow-citizen of Democritus, declared all sensation to be equally true for the sentient subject:

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[1] Diog. Laërt., 9, 34 f. Cf. Burnet, *G.P.*, I, p. 195.

[2] According to Diog. Laërt. (9, 35), quoting Favorinus, Democritus ridiculed the assertions of Anaxagoras concerning Mind.

thus an object might be truly sweet for X, truly bitter for Y. Democritus, however, declared that all the sensations of the special senses are false, for there is nothing real corresponding to them outside the subject. "Νόμῳ there is sweet, νόμῳ there is bitter; νόμῳ there is warm and νόμῳ there is cold; νόμῳ there is colour. But ἐτεῇ there are atoms and the void."[1] In other words, our sensations are purely subjective, though they are caused by something external and objective—the atoms, namely—which, however, cannot be apprehended by the special senses. "By the senses we in truth know nothing sure, but only something that changes according to the disposition of the body and of the things that enter into it or resist it."[2] The special senses, then, give us no information about reality. Secondary qualities, at least, are not objective. "There are two forms of knowledge (γνώμη), the trueborn (γνησίη) and the bastard (σκοτίη). To the bastard belong all these: sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch. The trueborn is quite apart from these."[3] However, as the soul is composed of atoms, and as all knowledge is caused by the immediate contact with the subject of atoms coming from the outside, it is evident that the "trueborn" knowledge is on the same footing as the "bastard," in the sense that there is no absolute separation between sense and thought. Democritus saw this, and he comments: "Poor Mind, it is from us" (i.e. from the senses), "thou hast got the proofs to throw us with. Thy throw is a fall."[4]

2. Democritus' theory of conduct, so far as we can judge from the fragments, did not stand in scientific connection with his atomism. It is dominated by the idea of happiness or εὐδαιμονίη, which consists in εὐθυμίη or εὐεστώ. Democritus wrote a treatise on cheerfulness (Περὶ εὐθυμίης), which was used by Seneca and Plutarch. He considers that happiness is the end of conduct, and that pleasures and pain determine happiness; but "happiness dwelleth not in herds nor in gold; the soul is the dwelling-place of the 'daimon.' "[5] "The best thing for a man is to pass his life so as to have as much joy and as little trouble as may be."[6] However, just as sense-knowledge is not true knowledge, so the pleasures of sense are not true pleasures. "The good and the true are the same for all men, but the pleasant is different for different people."[7] We have to strive after well-being (εὐεστώ) or cheerfulness (εὐθυμίη), which is a state of soul, and the attainment of

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[1] Frag. 9.
[2] Frag. 9.
[3] Frag. 11.
[4] Frag. 125.
[5] Frag. 171. (Almost "fortune.")
[6] Frag. 189.
[7] Frag. 69.

which requires a weighing, judging and distinguishing of various pleasures. We should be guided by the principle of "symmetry" or of "harmony." By the use of this principle we may attain to calm of body—health, and calm of soul—cheerfulness. This calm or tranquillity is to be found chiefly in the goods of the soul. "He who chooses the goods of the soul, chooses the more divine; he who chooses the goods of the tabernacle (σκῆνος), chooses the human."[1]

3. It appears that Democritus exercised an influence on later writers through a theory of the evolution of culture.[2] Civilisation arose from need (χρέια) and prosecution of the advantageous or useful (σύμφερον), while man owes his arts to the imitation of nature, learning spinning from the spider, house-building from the swallow, song from the birds, etc. Democritus also (unlike Epicurus) emphasised the importance of the State and of political life, declaring that men should consider State affairs more important than anything else and see to it that they are well managed. But that his ethical ideas postulated freedom, whereas his atomism involved determinism, apparantly did not occur to Democritus in the form of a problem.

4. It is clear from what has been said that Democritus, in carrying on the cosmological speculation of the older philosophers (in his philosophic atomism he was a follower of Leucippus), was hardly a man of his period—the Socratic period. His theories concerning perception, however, and the conduct of life, are of greater interest, as showing at least that Democritus realised that some answer was required to the difficulties raised by Protagoras. But, although he saw that some answer was required, he was personally unable to give any satisfactory solution. For an incomparably more adequate attempt to deal with epistemological and ethical problems, we have to turn to Plato.

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[1] Frag. 37.

[2] Frag. 154.

PART III

PLATO

CHAPTER XVII

LIFE OF PLATO

PLATO, one of the greatest philosophers of the world, was born at Athens (or Aegina), most probably in the year 428/7 B.C., of a distinguished Athenian family. His father was named Ariston and his mother Perictione, sister of Charmides and niece of Critias, who both figured in the Oligarchy of 404/3. He is said to have been originally called Aristocles, and to have been given the name Plato only later, on account of his robust figure,[1] though the truth of Diogenes' report may well be doubted. His two brothers, Adeimantus and Glaucon, appear in the *Republic*, and he had a sister named Potone. After the death of Ariston, Perictione married Pyrilampes, and their son Antiphon (Plato's half-brother) appears in the *Parmenides*. No doubt Plato was brought up in the home of his stepfather; but although he was of aristocratic descent and brought up in an aristocratic household, it must be remembered that Pyrilampes was a friend of Pericles, and that Plato must have been educated in the traditions of the Periclean régime. (Pericles died in 429/8.) It has been pointed out by various authors that Plato's later bias against democracy can hardly have been due, at any rate solely, to his upbringing, but was induced by the influence of Socrates and still more by the treatment which Socrates received at the hands of the democracy. On the other hand, it would seem possible that Plato's distrust of democracy dated from a period very much earlier than that of the death of Socrates. During the later course of the Peloponnesian War (it is highly probable that Plato fought at Arginusae in 406) it can hardly have failed to strike Plato that the democracy lacked a truly capable and responsible leader, and that what leaders there were were easily spoiled by the necessity of pleasing the populace. Plato's final abstention from home politics no doubt dates from the trial and condemnation of his Master; but the formulation of his conviction that the ship of State needs a firm pilot to guide her, and that he must be one who *knows* the right course to follow, and who is prepared to act conscientiously in accordance with that knowledge, can hardly fail to have been laid during the years when Athenian power was passing to its eclipse.

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[1] Diog. Laërt., 3, 4.

According to a report of Diogenes Laërtius, Plato "applied himself to the study of painting, and wrote poems, dithyrambics at first, and afterwards lyric poems and tragedies."[1] How far this is true, we cannot say; but Plato lived in the flourishing period of Athenian culture, and must have received a cultured education. Aristotle informs us that Plato had been acquainted in his youth with Cratylus, the Heraclitean philosopher.[2] From him Plato would have learnt that the world of sense-perception is a world of flux, and so not the right subject-matter for true and certain knowledge. That true and certain knowledge is attainable on the conceptual level, he would have learnt from Socrates, with whom he must have been acquainted from early years. Diogenes Laërtius indeed asserted that Plato "became a pupil of Socrates" when twenty years old,[3] but as Charmides, Plato's uncle, had made the acquaintance of Socrates in 431,[4] Plato must have known Socrates at least before he was twenty. In any case we have no reason for supposing that Plato became a "disciple" of Socrates, in the sense of devoting himself wholly and professedly to philosophy, since he tells us himself that he originally intended to embark on a political career—as was natural in a young man of his antecedents.[5] His relatives in the Oligarchy of 403–4 urged Plato to enter upon political life under their patronage; but when the Oligarchy started to pursue a policy of violence and attempted to implicate Socrates in their crimes, Plato became disgusted with them. Yet the democrats were no better, since it was they who put Socrates to death, and Plato accordingly abandoned the idea of a political career.

Plato was present at the trial of Socrates, and he was one of the friends who urged Socrates to increase his proposed fine from one to thirty *minae*, offering to stand security;[6] but he was absent from the death-scene of his friend in consequence of an illness.[7] After the death of Socrates, Plato withdrew to Megara and took shelter with the philosopher Euclid, but in all probability he soon returned to Athens. He is said by the biographers to have

[1] Diog. Laërt., 3, 5.
[2] *Metaph.*, A 6, 987 a 32–5.
[3] Diog. Laërt., 3, 6.
[4] At least, this is what the reference to Potidaea (*Charmides*, 153) implies.
[5] *Ep.*, 7, 324 b 8–326 b 4.
[6] *Apol.*, 34 a 1, 38 b 6–9.
[7] *Phaedo*, 59 b 10.

travelled to Cyrene, Italy and Egypt, but it is uncertain what truth there is in these stories. For instance, Plato himself says nothing of any visit to Egypt. It may be that his knowledge of Egyptian mathematics, and even of the games of the children, indicate an actual journey to Egypt; on the other hand, the story of the journey may have been built up as a mere conclusion from what Plato has to say about the Egyptians. Some of these stories are obviously legendary in part; e.g. some give him Euripides as a companion, although the poet died in 406. This fact makes us rather sceptical concerning the reports of the journeys in general; but all the same, we cannot say with certainty that Plato did *not* visit Egypt, and he may have done so. If he did actually go to Egypt, he may have gone about 395 and have returned to Athens at the outbreak of the Corinthian wars. Professor Ritter thinks it very probable that Plato was a member of the Athenian force in the first years of the wars (395 and 394).

What is certain, however, is that Plato visited Italy and Sicily, when he was forty years old.[1] Possibly he wished to meet and converse with members of the Pythagorean School: in any case he became acquainted with Archytas, the learned Pythagorean. (According to Diogenes Laërtius, Plato's aim in undertaking the journey was to see Sicily and the volcanoes.) Plato was invited to the court of Dionysius I, Tyrant of Syracuse, where he became a friend of Dion, the Tyrant's brother-in-law. The story goes that Plato's outspokenness excited the anger of Dionysius, who gave him into the charge of Pollis, a Lacedaemonian envoy, to sell as a slave. Pollis sold Plato at Aegina (at that time at war with Athens), and Plato was even in danger of losing his life; but eventually a man of Cyrene, a certain Anniceris, ransomed him and sent him to Athens.[2] It is difficult to know what to make of this story, as it is not mentioned in Plato's *Epistles*: if it really happened (Ritter accepts the story) it must be dated 388 B.C.

On his return to Athens, Plato seems to have founded the Academy (388/7), near the sanctuary of the hero Academus. The Academy may rightly be called the first European university, for the studies were not confined to philosophy proper, but extended over a wide range of auxiliary sciences, like mathematics, astronomy and the physical sciences, the members of the School joining in the common worship of the Muses. Youths came to the Academy, not only from Athens itself, but also from abroad;

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[1] *Ep.*, 7, 324 a 5–6.

[2] Diog. Laërt., 3, 19–20.

and it is a tribute to the scientific spirit of the Academy and a proof that it was not simply a "philosophical-mystery" society, that the celebrated mathematician Eudoxus transferred himself and his School from Cyzicus to the Academy. It is as well to lay stress on this scientific spirit of the Academy, for though it is perfectly true that Plato aimed at forming statesmen and rulers, his method did not consist in simply teaching those things which would be of immediate practical application, e.g. rhetoric (as did Isocrates in his School), but in fostering the disinterested pursuit of science. The programme of studies culminated in philosophy, but it included as preliminary subjects a study of mathematics and astronomy, and no doubt harmonics, in a disinterested and not purely utilitarian spirit. Plato was convinced that the best training for public life is not a merely practical "sophistic" training, but rather the pursuit of science for its own sake. Mathematics, apart of course from its importance for Plato's philosophy of the Ideas, offered an obvious field for disinterested study, and it had already reached a high pitch of development among the Greeks. (The studies seem also to have included biological, e.g. botanical, researches, pursued in connection with problems of logical classification.) The politician so formed will not be an opportunist time-server, but will act courageously and fearlessly in accordance with convictions founded on eternal and changeless truths. In other words, Plato aimed at producing statesmen and not demagogues.

Besides directing the studies in the Academy, Plato himself gave lectures and his hearers took notes. It is important to notice that these lectures were not published, and that they stand in contrast to the dialogues, which were published works meant for "popular" reading. If we realise this fact, then some of the sharp differences that we naturally tend to discern between Plato and Aristotle (who entered the Academy in 367) disappear, at least in part. We possess Plato's popular works, his dialogues, but not his lectures. The situation is the exact opposite in regard to Aristotle, for while the works of Aristotle that are in our hands represent his lectures, his popular works or dialogues have not come down to us—only fragments remain. We cannot, therefore, by a comparison of Plato's dialogues with Aristotle's lectures, draw conclusions, without further evidence, as to a strong opposition between the two philosophers in point of literary ability, for instance, or emotional, aesthetic and "mystical" outlook. We are told that Aristotle used to relate how those who came to hear Plato's lecture on the Good, were often astonished to hear of nothing but arithmetic and astronomy, and of the limit and the One. In *Ep.* 7, Plato repudiates the accounts that some had published of the lecture in question. In the same letter he says: "So there is not, and may there never be, any treatise by me at least on these things, for the subject is not communicable in words, as other sciences are. Rather is it that after long association in the business itself and a shared life that a light is lit in the soul, kindled, as it were, by a leaping flame, and thenceforward feeds itself." Again, in *Ep.* 2: "Therefore I have never myself written a word on these matters, and there neither is nor ever shall be any written treatise of Plato; what now bears the name belongs to Socrates, beautified and rejuvenated."[1] From such passages some draw the conclusion that Plato had not much opinion of the value of books for really educative purposes. This may well be so, but we should not put undue emphasis on this point, for Plato, after all, *did* publish books—and we must also remember that the passages in question may not be by Plato at all. Yet we must concede that the Ideal Theory, in the precise form in which it was taught in the Academy, was not given to the public in writing.

Plato's reputation as teacher and counsellor of statesmen must have contributed to bringing about his second journey to Syracuse in 367. In that year Dionysius I died, and Dion invited Plato to come to Syracuse in order to take in hand the education of Dionysius II, then about thirty years old. Plato did so, and set the Tyrant to a course of geometry. Soon, however, Dionysius' jealousy of Dion got the upper hand, and when Dion left Syracuse, the philosopher after some difficulty managed to return to Athens, whence he continued to instruct Dionysius by letter. He did not succeed in bringing about a reconciliation between the Tyrant and his uncle, who took up residence at Athens, where he consorted with Plato. In 361, however, Plato undertook a third journey to Syracuse at the earnest request of Dionysius, who wished to continue his philosophical studies. Plato apparently hoped to draft a constitution for a proposed confederation of Greek cities against the Carthaginian menace, but opposition proved too strong: moreover, he found himself unable to secure the recall of Dion, whose fortune was confiscated by his nephew.

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[1] *Ep.* 7, 341 c 4–d 2; *Ep.* 2, 314 c 1–4.

In 360, therefore, Plato returned to Athens, where he continued his activities in the Academy until his death in the year 348/7.[1] (In 357 Dion succeeded in making himself master of Syracuse, but he was murdered in 353, to the great grief of Plato, who felt that he had been disappointed in his dream of a philosopher-king.)

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[1] *Uno et octogesimo anno scribens est mortuus.* Cic., *De Senect.*, 5, 13.

CHAPTER XVIII

PLATO'S WORKS

A. *Genuineness*

In general it may be said that we possess the entire corpus of Plato's works. As Professor Taylor remarks: "Nowhere in later antiquity do we come on any reference to a Platonic work which we do not still possess."[1] We may suppose, then, that we possess all Plato's published dialogues. We do not, however, as already remarked, possess a record of the lectures that he delivered in the Academy (though we have more or less cryptic references in Aristotle), and this would be all the more to be regretted if those are right who would see in the dialogues popular work designed for the educated laymen, to be distinguished from the lectures delivered to professional students of philosophy. (It has been conjectured that Plato lectured without a manuscript. Whether this be the fact or not, we have not got the manuscript of any lectures delivered by Plato. All the same, we have no right to draw an oversharp distinction between the doctrines of the dialogues and the doctrine delivered within the precincts of the Academy. After all, not all the dialogues can easily be termed "popular" work, and certain of them in particular show evident signs that Plato is therein groping after the clarification of his opinions.) But to say that we most probably possess all the dialogues of Plato, is not the same as to say that all the dialogues that have come down to us under the name of Plato are actually by Plato himself: it still remains to sift the genuine from the spurious. The oldest Platonic MSS. belong to an arrangement attributed to a certain Thrasyllus, to be dated round about the beginning of the Christian era. In any case this arrangement, which was by "tetralogies," seems to have been based on an arrangement in "trilogies" by Aristophanes of Byzantium in the third century B.C. It would appear, then, that the thirty-six dialogues (reckoning the Epistles as one dialogue) were generally admitted by scholars of that period to be the work of Plato. The problem can thus be reduced to the question: "Are the thirty-six dialogues all genuine or are some of them spurious; and, if so, which?"

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[1] *Plato*, p. 10.

Doubts were cast upon some of the dialogues even in antiquity. Thus from Athenaeus (*flor. c.* 228 B.C.) we learn that some ascribed the *Alcibiades II* to Xenophon. Again, it would seem that Proclus not only rejected the *Epinomis* and *Epistles*, but even went so far as to reject the *Laws* and *Republic*. The assigning of spurious works was carried much further, as might be expected, in the nineteenth century, especially in Germany, the culmination of the process being reached under Ueberweg and Schaarschmidt. "If one includes the attacks of ancient and modern criticism, then of the thirty-six items of the tetralogies of Thrasyllus, only five have remained free from all attack."[1] Nowadays, however, criticism runs in a more conservative direction, and there is general agreement as to the genuineness of all the important dialogues, as also a general agreement as to the spurious character of certain of the less important dialogues, while the genuineness of a few of the dialogues remains a matter of dispute. The results of critical investigation may be summed up as follows:

(i) Dialogues which are generally rejected are: *Alcibiades II*, *Hipparchus*, *Amatores* or *Rivales*, *Theages*, *Clitophon*, *Minus*. Of this group, all except the *Alcibiades II* are probably contemporary fourth-century work, not deliberate forgeries but slighter works of the same character as the Platonic dialogues; and they may be taken, with some degree of justification, as contributing something to our knowledge of the conception of Socrates current in the fourth century. The *Alcibiades II* is probably later work.

(ii) The genuineness of the following six dialogues is disputed: *Alcibiades I*, *Ion*, *Menexenus*, *Hippias Maior*, *Epinomis*, *Epistles*. Professor Taylor thinks that the *Alcibiades I* is the work of an immediate disciple of Plato[2] and Dr. Praechter, too, thinks that it is probably not the authentic work of the Master.[3] Praechter considers the *Ion* to be genuine, and Taylor remarks that it "may reasonably be allowed to pass as genuine until some good reason for rejecting it is produced."[4] The *Menexenus* is clearly taken by Aristotle to be of Platonic origin, and modern critics are inclined to accept this view.[5] The *Hippias Maior* is most probably to be taken as the genuine work of Plato, as it seems to be alluded to, though not by name, in the *Topics* of Aristotle.[6] As to the *Epinomis*, though Professor Jaeger ascribes it to Philippus of

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[1] Ueberweg-Praechter, p. 195. Dr. Praechter's invaluable work does not, of course, represent the hypercritical fashion of the time of Ueberweg.

[2] *Plato*, p. 13.

[3] Ueberweg-Praechter, p. 199.

[4] *Plato*, p. 13.

[5] Arist., *Rhet.*, 1415 b 30.

[6] *Topics* A 5, 102 a 6; E 5, 135 a 13; Z 6, 146 a 22.

Opus,[1] Praechter and Taylor deem it authentic. Of the *Epistles*, 6, 7 and 8 are generally accepted and Professor Taylor thinks that the acceptance of these *Epistles* leads logically to the acceptance of all the rest, except 1 and possibly 2. It is true that one would not like to relinquish the *Epistles*, as they give us much valuable information concerning Plato's biography; but we must be careful not to let this very natural desire influence unduly our acceptance of *Epistles* as genuine.[2]

(iii) The genuineness of the remaining dialogues may be accepted; so that the result of criticism would seem to be that of the thirty-six dialogues of the tetralogies, six are generally rejected, six others may be accepted until proved unauthentic (except probably *Alcibiades I* and certainly *Epistle I*), while twenty-four are certainly the genuine work of Plato. We have, therefore, a very considerable body of literature on which to found our conception of the thought of Plato.

B. *Chronology of Works*

1. *Importance* of determining the chronology of the works.

It is obviously important in the case of any thinker to see how his thought developed, how it changed—if it did change—what modifications were introduced in the course of time, what fresh ideas were introduced. The customary illustration in this connection is that of the literary production of Kant. Our knowledge of Kant would scarcely be adequate, if we thought that his Critiques came in his early years and that he later reverted to a "dogmatic" position. We might also instance the case of Schelling. Schelling produced several philosophies in the course of his life, and for an understanding of his thought it is highly desirable that one should know that he began with the standpoint of Fichte, and that his theosophical flights belong to his later years.

2. Method of determining the chronology of the works.[3]

(i) The criterion that has proved of most help in determining the chronology of the works of Plato is that of *language*. The argument from language is all the surer in that, while differences of content may be ascribed to the conscious selection and purpose of the author, development of linguistic style is largely unconscious. Thus Dittenberger traces the frequent use of τί μήν; and the growing use of γε μήν and ἀλλα μήν, as formula of agreement, to the first Sicilian journey of Plato. The *Laws* certainly belong to Plato's old age,[1] while the *Republic* belongs to an earlier period. Now, not only is there a decreased vigour of dramatic power visible in the *Laws*, but we can also discern points of linguistic style which Isocrates had introduced into Attic prose and which do not appear in the *Republic*. This being so, we are helped in assessing the order of the intervening dialogues, according to the degree in which they approach the later style of writing.

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[1] *Aristotle*, e.g. p. 132. Cf. Diog. Laërt., 3, 37. Taylor (*Plato*, p. 497) thinks that Diog. only means that Philippus transcribed the *Epinomis* from wax tablets.

[2] Ritter accepts Epistles 3 and 8 and the main narrative of 7.

[3] Cf. Ueberweg-Praechter, pp. 199–218.

But while the use of linguistic style as a criterion for determining the chronology of the dialogues has proved to be the most helpful method, one cannot, of course, neglect to make use of other criteria, which may often decide the matter at issue when the linguistic indications are doubtful or even contradictory.

(ii) One obvious criterion for assessing the order of the dialogues is that afforded by the direct testimony of the ancient writers, though there is not as much help to be had from this source as might perhaps be expected. Thus while Aristotle's assertion that the *Laws* were written later than the *Republic* is a valuable piece of information, the report of Diogenes Laërtius to the effect that the *Phaedrus* is the earliest of the Platonic dialogues cannot be accepted. Diogenes himself approves of the report, but it is evident that he is arguing from the subject-matter (love—in the first part of the dialogue) and from the poetic style.[2] We cannot argue from the fact that Plato treats of love to the conclusion that the dialogue must have been written in youth, while the use of poetic style and myth is not in itself conclusive. As Taylor points out, we should go far wrong were we to argue from the poetical and "mythical" flights of the second part of Faust to the conclusion that Goethe wrote the second part before the first.[3] A similar illustration might be taken from the case of Schelling, whose theosophical flights, as already mentioned, took place in his advanced age.

(iii) As for references within the dialogues to historical persons and acts, these are not so very many, and in any case they only furnish us with a *terminus post quem*. For example, if there were a reference to the death of Socrates, as in the *Phaedo*, the dialogue must clearly have been composed after the death of Socrates, but that does not tell us *how long after*. However, critics have obtained some help from this criterion. For instance, they have argued that the *Meno* was probably written when the incident of the corruption of Ismenias of Thebes was still fresh in people's memory.[1] Again, if the *Gorgias* contains a reply to a speech of Polycrates against Socrates (393/2), the *Gorgias* would probably have been written between 393 and 389, i.e. before the first Sicilian journey. It might, naïvely, be supposed that the age ascribed to Socrates in the dialogues is an indication of the date of composition of the dialogue itself. but to apply this criterion as a universal rule is clearly going too far. For instance, a novelist might well introduce his detective-hero as a grown man and as an already experienced police officer in his first novel, and then in a later novel treat of the hero's first case. Moreover, though one may be justified in supposing that dialogues dealing with the personal fate of Socrates were composed not long after his death, it would be clearly unscientific to take it for granted that dialogues dealing with the last years of Socrates, e.g. the *Phaedo* and the *Apology*, were all published at the same time.

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[1] Arist., *Pol.*, B 6, 1264 b 27.

[2] Diog. Laërt., 3, 38.

[3] *Plato*, p. 18.

(iv) References of one dialogue to another would obviously prove a help in determining the order of the dialogues, since a dialogue that refers to another dialogue must have been written after the dialogue to which it refers; but it is not always easy to decide if an apparent reference to another dialogue really *is* a reference. However, there are some cases in which there is a clear reference, e.g. the reference to the *Republic* that is contained in the *Timaeus*.[2] Similarly, the *Politicus* is clearly the sequel to the *Sophistes* and so must be a later composition.[3]

(v) In regard to the actual content of the dialogue, we have to exercise the greatest prudence in our use of this criterion. Suppose for instance, that some philosophical doctrine is found in a short summary sentence in dialogue X, while in dialogue Y it is found treated at length. A critic might say: "Very good, in dialogue X a preliminary sketch is given, and in dialogue Y the matter is explained at length." Might it not be that a short summary is given in dialogue X precisely because the doctrine has already been treated at length in dialogue Y? One critic[4] has maintained that the negative and critical examination of problems precedes the positive and constructive exposition. If this be taken as a criterion, then the *Theaetetus*, the *Sophistes*, the *Politicus*, the

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[1] *Meno*, 90 a.

[2] 17 ff.

[3] *Polit.*, 284 b 7 ff., 286 b 10.

[4] K. Fr. Hermann.

Parmenides, should precede in date of composition the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*, but investigation has shown that this cannot be so.

However, to say that the content-criterion has to be used with prudence, is not to say that it has no use. For example, the attitude of Plato towards the doctrine of Ideas suggests, that the *Theaetetus*, *Parmenides*, *Sophistes*, *Politicus*, *Philebus*, *Timaeus*, should be grouped together, while the connection of the *Parmenides*, *Sophistes* and *Politicus* with the Eleatic dialectic suggests that these dialogues stand in a peculiarly close relation with one another.

(vi) Differences in the artistic construction of the dialogues may also be of help in determining their relation to one another in regard to order of composition. Thus in certain dialogues the setting of the dialogue, the characterisation of the personages who take part in it, are worked out with great care: there are humorous and playful allusions, vivid interludes and so on. To this group of dialogues belongs the *Symposium*. In other dialogues, however, the artistic side retreats into the background, and the author's attention is obviously wholly occupied with the philosophic content. In dialogues of this second group—to which the *Timaeus* and the *Laws* would belong—form is more or less neglected: content is everything. A probably legitimate conclusion is that the dialogues written with more attention to artistic form are earlier than the others, as artistic vigour flagged in Plato's old age and his attention was engrossed by the theoretic philosophy. (This does not mean that the use of poetic *language* necessarily becomes less frequent, but that the power of conscious artistry tends to decrease with years.)

3. Scholars vary in their estimate of the results obtained by the use of criteria such as the foregoing; but the following chronological schemes may be taken as, in the main, satisfactory (though it would hardly be acceptable to those who think that Plato did not write when he was directing the Academy in its early years).

1. *Socratic Period*

In this period Plato is still influenced by the Socratic intellectual determinism. Most of the dialogues end without any definite result having been attained. This is characteristic of Socrates' "not knowing."

i. *Apology*. Socrates' defence at his trial.

ii. *Crito*. Socrates is exhibited as the good citizen who, in spite of his unjust condemnation, is willing to give up his life in obedience to the laws of the State. Escape is suggested by Crito and others, and money is provided; but Socrates declares that he will abide by his principles.

iii. *Euthyphron*. Socrates awaits his trial for impiety. On the nature of piety. No result to the inquiry.

iv. *Laches*. On courage. No result.

v. *Ion*. Against the poets and rhapsodists.

vi. *Protagoras*. Virtue is knowledge and can be taught.

vii. *Charmides*. On temperance. No result.

viii. *Lysis*. On friendship. No result.

ix. *Republic*. Bk. I. On justice.

(The *Apology* and *Crito* must obviously have been written at an early date. Probably the other dialogues of this group were also composed before the first Sicilian journey from which Plato returned by 388/7.)

II. *Transition Period*

Plato is finding his way to his own opinions.

x. *Gorgias*. The practical politician, or the rights of the stronger versus the philosopher, or justice at all costs.

xi. *Meno*. Teachability of virtue corrected in view of ideal theory.

xii. *Euthydemus*. Against logical fallacies of later Sophists.

xiii. *Hippias* I. On the beautiful.

xiv. *Hippias* II. Is it better to do wrong voluntarily or involuntarily?

xv. *Cratylus*. On the theory of language.

xvi. *Menexenus*. A parody on rhetoric.

(The dialogues of this period were probably composed before the first Sicilian journey, though Praechter thinks that the *Menexenus* dates from after the journey.)

III. *Period of Maturity*

Plato is in possession of his own ideas.

xvii. *Symposium*. All earthly beauty is but a shadow of true Beauty, to which the soul aspires by Eros.

xviii. *Phaedo*. Ideas and Immortality.

xix. *Republic.* The State. Dualism strongly emphasised, i.e. metaphysical dualism.

xx. *Phaedrus.* Nature of love: possibility of philosophic rhetoric.

Tripartition of soul, as in *Rep.*

(These dialogues were probably composed between the first and second Sicilian journeys.)

IV. *Works of Old Age*

xxi. *Theaetetus.* (It may be that the latter part was composed *after* the *Parmenides.*) Knowledge is not sense-perception or true judgment.

xxii. *Parmenides.* Defence of ideal theory against criticism.

xxiii. *Sophistes.* Theory of Ideas again considered.

xxiv. *Politicus.* The true ruler is the *knower.* The legal State is a makeshift.

xxv. *Philebus.* Relation of pleasure to good.

xxvi. *Timaeus.* Natural science. Demiurge appears.

xxvii. *Critias.* Ideal agrarian State contrasted with imperialistic sea-power, "Atlantis."

xxviii. *Laws* and *Epinomis.* Plato makes concessions to real life, modifying the Utopianism of the *Republic.*

(Of these dialogues, some may have been written between the second and third Sicilian journeys, but the *Timaeus, Critias, Laws* and *Epinomis* were probably written after the third journey).

xxix. Letters 7 and 8 must have been written after the death of Dion in 353.

Note

Plato never published a complete, nicely rounded-off and finished philosophical system: his thought continued to develop as fresh problems, other difficulties to be considered, new aspects of his doctrine to be emphasised or elaborated, certain modifications to be introduced, occurred to his mind.[1] It would, therefore, be desirable to treat Plato's thought genetically, dealing with the different dialogues in their chronological order, so far as this can be ascertained. This is the method adopted by Professor A. E. Taylor in his outstanding work, *Plato, the Man and his Work.*

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[1] Cf. the words of Dr. Praechter, *Platon ist ein Werdender gewesen sein Leben lang.* Ueberweg-Praechter, p. 260.

In a book such as this, however, such a course is scarcely practicable, and so I have thought it necessary to divide up the thought of Plato into various compartments. None the less, in order to avoid, as much as can be, the danger of cramming together views that spring from different periods of Plato's life, I will attempt not to lose sight of the gradual genesis of the Platonic doctrines. In any case, if my treatment of Plato's philosophy leads the reader to turn his attention to the actual dialogues of Plato, the author will consider himself amply rewarded for any pains he has taken.

CHAPTER XIX

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

PLATO'S theory of knowledge cannot be found systematically expressed and completely elaborated in any one dialogue. The *Theaetetus* is indeed devoted to the consideration of problems of knowledge, but its conclusion is negative, since Plato is therein concerned to refute false theories of knowledge, especially the theory that knowledge is sense-perception. Moreover, Plato had already, by the time he came to write the *Theaetetus*, elaborated his theory of degrees of "knowledge," corresponding to the hierarchy of being in the *Republic*. We may say, then, that the positive treatment preceded the negative and critical, or that Plato, having made up his mind what knowledge is, turned later to the consideration of difficulties and to the systematic refutation of theories which he believed to be false.[1] In a book like the present one, however, it seems best to treat first of the negative and critical side of the Platonic epistemology, before proceeding to consider his positive doctrine. Accordingly, we propose first of all to summarise the argument of the *Theaetetus*, before going on to examine the doctrine of the *Republic* in regard to knowledge. This procedure would seem to be justified by the exigencies of logical treatment, as also by the fact that the *Republic* is not primarily an epistemological work at all. Positive epistemological doctrine is certainly contained in the *Republic*, but some of the *logically prior* presuppositions of that doctrine are contained in the later dialogue, the *Theaetetus*.

The task of summarising the Platonic epistemology and giving it in systematic form is complicated by the fact that it is difficult to separate Plato's epistemology from his ontology. Plato was not a critical thinker in the sense of Immanuel Kant, and though it is possible to read into his thoughts an anticipation of the Critical Philosophy (at least, this is what some writers have endeavoured to do), he is inclined to assume that we can have knowledge and to be primarily interested in the question what is the true object of knowledge. This means that ontological and epistemological themes are frequently intermingled or treated *pari passu*, as in the *Republic*. We will make an attempt to separate the epistemology from the ontology, but the attempt cannot be wholly successful, owing to the very character of the Platonic epistemology.

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[1] We do not thereby mean to imply that Plato had not made up his mind as to the status of sense-perception long before he wrote the *Theaetetus* (we have only to read the *Republic*, for instance, or consider the genesis and implications of the Ideal Theory): we refer rather to systematic consideration in published writings.

1. *Knowledge is not Sense-perception*

Socrates, interested like the Sophists in practical conduct, refused to acquiesce in the idea that truth is relative, that there is no stable norm, no abiding object of knowledge. He was convinced that ethical conduct must be founded on knowledge, and that that knowledge must be knowledge of eternal values which are not subject to the shifting and changing impressions of sense or of subjective opinion, but are the same for all men and for all peoples and all ages. Plato inherited from his Master this conviction that there can be knowledge in the sense of objective and universally valid knowledge; but he wished to demonstrate this fact theoretically, and so he came to probe deeply into the problems of knowledge, asking what knowledge is and of what.

In the *Theaetetus* Plato's first object is the refutation of false theories. Accordingly he sets himself the task of challenging the theory of Protagoras that knowledge is perception, that what appears to an individual to be true is true for that individual. His method is to elicit dialectically a clear statement of the theory of knowledge implied by the Heraclitean ontology and the epistemology of Protagoras, to exhibit its consequences and to show that the conception of "knowledge" thus attained does not fulfil the requirements of true knowledge at all, since knowledge must be, Plato assumes, (i) infallible, and (ii) of what *is*. Sense-perception is neither the one nor the other.

The young mathematical student Theaetetus enters into conversation with Socrates, and the latter asks him what he thinks knowledge to be. Theaetetus replies by mentioning geometry, the sciences and the crafts, but Socrates points out that this is no answer to his question, for he had asked, not *of* what knowledge is, but *what* knowledge is. The discussion is thus meant to be epistemological in character, though, as has been already pointed out, ontological considerations cannot be excluded, owing to the very character of the Platonic epistemology.

Moreover, it is hard to see how in any case ontological questions can be avoided in an epistemological discussion, since there is no knowledge *in vacuo*: knowledge, if it is knowledge at all, must necessarily be knowledge of something, and it may well be that knowledge is necessarily related to some particular type of object.

Theaetetus, encouraged by Socrates, makes another attempt to answer the question proposed, and suggests that "knowledge is nothing but perception,"[1] thinking no doubt primarily of vision, though in itself perception has, of course, a wider connotation. Socrates proposes to examine this idea of knowledge, and in the course of conversation elicits from Theaetetus an admission of Protagoras' view that perception means appearance, and that appearances vary with different subjects. At the same time he gets Theaetetus to agree that knowledge is always of something that *is*, and that, as being knowledge, it must be infallible.[2] This having been established, Socrates next tries to show that the objects of perception are, as Heraclitus taught, always in a state of flux: they never *are*, they are always *becoming*. (Plato does not, of course, accept Heraclitus' doctrine that *all* is becoming, though he accepts the doctrine in regard to the objects of sense-perception, drawing the conclusion that sense-perception cannot be the same as knowledge.) Since an object may appear white to one at one moment, grey at another, sometimes hot and sometimes cold, etc., "appearing to" must mean "becoming for," so that perception is always of that which is in process of becoming. My perception is true for me, and if I know what appears to me, as I obviously do, then my knowledge is infallible. So Theaetetus has said well that perception is knowledge.

This point having been reached, Socrates proposes to examine the idea more closely. He raises the objection that if knowledge is perception, then no man can be wiser than any other man, for I am the best judge of my own sense-perception as such. What, then, is Protagoras' justification for setting himself up to teach others and to take a handsome fee for doing so? And where is our ignorance that makes us sit at his feet? For is not each one of us the measure of his own wisdom? Moreover, if knowledge and perception are the same, if there is no difference between seeing and knowing, it follows that a man who has come to know (i.e. see) a thing in the past and still remembers it, does not know it—although he remembers it—since he does not see it.

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[1] 151 e 2–3.

[2] 152 c 5–7.

Conversely, granted that a man can remember something he has formerly perceived and can *know* it, even while no longer perceiving it, it follows that knowledge and perception cannot be equated (even if perception were a kind of knowledge).

Socrates then attacks Protagoras' doctrine on a broader basis, understanding "Man is the measure of all things," not merely in reference to sense-perception, but also to all truth. He points out that the majority of mankind believe in knowledge and ignorance, and believe that they themselves or others can hold something to be true which in point of fact is not true. Accordingly, anyone who holds Protagoras' doctrine to be false is, according to Protagoras himself, holding the truth (i.e. if the man who is the measure of all things is the individual man).

After these criticisms Socrates finishes the claims of perception to be knowledge by showing (i) that perception is not the whole of knowledge, and (ii) that even within its own sphere perception is not knowledge.

(i) Perception is not the whole of knowledge, for a great part of what is generally recognised to be knowledge consists of truths involving terms which are not objects of perception at all. There is much we know about sensible objects, which is known by intellectual reflection and not immediately by perception. Plato gives existence or non-existence as examples.[1] Suppose that a man sees a mirage. It is not immediate sense-perception that can inform him as to the objective existence or non-existence of the mirage perceived: it is only rational reflection that can tell him this. Again, the conclusions and arguments of mathematics are not apprehended by sense. One might add that our knowledge of a person's character is something more than can be explained by the definition, "Knowledge is perception," for our knowledge of a person's character is certainly not given in bare sensation.

(ii) Sense-perception, even within its own sphere, is not knowledge. We cannot really be said to know anything if we have not attained truth about it, e.g. concerning its existence or non-existence, its likeness to another thing or its unlikeness. But truth is given in reflection, in the judgment, not in bare sensation. The bare sensation may give, e.g. one white surface and a second white surface, but in order to judge the similarity between the two, the mind's activity is necessary. Similarly, the railway lines *appear* to converge: it is in intellectual reflection that we know that they are really parallel.

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[1] 185 c 4–e 2.

Sense-perception is not, therefore, worthy of the name of knowledge. It should be noted how much Plato is influenced by the conviction that sense-objects are not proper objects of knowledge and cannot be so, since knowledge is of what is, of the stable and abiding, whereas objects of sense cannot really be said to *be*—*qua* perceived, at least—but only to *become*. Sense-objects are objects of apprehension in some sort, of course, but they elude the mind too much to be objects of real knowledge, which must be, as we have said, (i) infallible, (ii) of what *is*.

(It is noteworthy that Plato, in disposing of the claim of perception to be the whole of knowledge, contrasts the private or peculiar objects of the special senses—e.g. colour, which is the object of vision alone—with the "common terms that apply to everything," and which are the objects of the mind, not of the senses. These "common terms" correspond to the Forms or Ideas which are, ontologically, the stable and abiding objects, as contrasted with the particulars or *sensibilia*).

II. *Knowledge is not simply "True Judgment"*

Theaetetus sees that he cannot say that judgment *tout simple* is knowledge, for the reason that false judgments are possible. He therefore suggests that knowledge is true judgment, at least as a provisional definition, until examination of it shows whether it is correct or false. (At this point a digression occurs, in which Socrates tries to find out how false judgments are possible and come to be made at all. Into this discussion I cannot enter at any length, but I will mention one or two suggestions that are made in its course. For example, it is suggested that one class of false judgments arises through the confusion of two objects of different sorts, one a present object of sense-perception, the other a memory-image. A man may judge—mistakenly—that he sees his friend some way off. There is someone there, but it is not his friend. The man has a memory-image of his friend, and something in the figure he sees recalls to him this memory-image: he then judges falsely that it is his friend who is over there. But, obviously, not all cases of false judgment are instances of the confusion of a memory-image with a present object of sense-perception: a mistake in mathematical calculation can hardly be reduced to this. The famous simile of the "aviary" is introduced, in an attempt to show how other kinds of false judgment may arise, but it is found to be unsatisfactory; and Plato concludes that the problem of false judgment cannot be advantageously treated until the nature of knowledge has been determined. The discussion of false judgment was resumed in the *Sophistes*.)

In the discussion of Theaetetus' suggestion that knowledge is true judgment, it is pointed out that a judgment may be true without the fact of its truth involving knowledge on the part of the man who makes the judgment. The relevance of this observation may be easily grasped. If I were to make at this moment the judgment, "Mr. Churchill is talking to President Truman over the telephone," it *might* be true; but it would not involve knowledge on my part. It would be a guess or random shot, as far as I am concerned, even though the judgment were objectively true. Similarly, a man might be tried on a charge of which he was actually not guilty, although the circumstantial evidence was very strong against him and he could not prove his innocence. If, now, a skilful lawyer defending the innocent man were able, for the sake of argument, so to manipulate the evidence or to play on the feelings of the jury, that they gave the verdict "Not guilty," their judgment would actually be a true judgment; but they could hardly be said to *know* the innocence of the prisoner, since *ex hypothesi* the evidence is against him. Their verdict would be a true judgment, but it would be based on persuasion rather than on knowledge. It follows, then, that knowledge is not simply true judgment, and Theaetetus is called on to make another suggestion as to the right definition of knowledge.

III. *Knowledge is not True Judgment plus an "Account"*

True judgment, as has been seen, may mean no more than true belief, and true belief is not the same thing as knowledge. Theaetetus, therefore, suggests that the addition of an "account" or explanation (λόγος) would convert true belief into knowledge. Socrates begins by pointing out that if giving an account or explanation means the enumeration of elementary parts, then these parts must be known or knowable: otherwise the absurd conclusion would follow that knowledge means adding to true belief the reduction of the complex to unknown or unknowable elements. But what does giving an account mean?

1. It cannot mean merely that a correct judgment, in the

sense of true belief, is expressed in words, since, if that were the meaning, there would be no difference between true belief and knowledge. And we have seen that there is a difference between making a judgment that happens to be correct and making a judgment that one *knows* to be correct.

2. If "giving an account" means analysis into elementary parts (i.e. knowable parts), will addition of an account in this sense suffice to convert true belief into knowledge? No, the mere process of analysing into elements does not convert true belief into knowledge, for then a man who could enumerate the parts which go to make up a wagon (wheels, axle, etc.) would have a scientific knowledge of a wagon, and a man who could tell you what letters of the alphabet go to compose a certain word would have a grammarian's scientific knowledge of the word. (N.B. We must realise that Plato is speaking of the mere enumeration of parts. For instance, the man who could recount the various steps that lead to a conclusion in geometry, simply because he had seen them in a book and had learnt them by heart, without having really grasped the necessity of the premisses and the necessary and logical sequence of the deduction, would be able to enumerate the "parts" of the theorem; but he would not have the scientific knowledge of the mathematician.)

3. Socrates suggests a third interpretation of "plus account." It may mean "being able to name some mark by which the thing one is asked about differs from everything else."[1] If this is correct, then to know something means the ability to give the distinguishing characteristic of that thing. But this interpretation too is disposed of, as being inadequate to define knowledge.

(*a*) Socrates points out that if knowledge of a thing means the addition of its distinguishing characteristic to a correct notion of that thing, we are involved in an absurd position. Suppose that I have a correct notion of Theaetetus. To convert this correct notion into knowledge I have to add some distinguishing characteristic. But unless this distinguishing characteristic were *already* contained within my correct notion, how could the latter be called a *correct* notion? I cannot be said to have a correct notion of Theaetetus, unless this correct notion includes Theaetetus' distinguishing characteristics: if these distinguishing characteristics are not included, then my "correct notion" of Theaetetus would equally well apply to all other men; in which case it would *not* be a correct notion of Theaetetus.

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[1] 208 c 7–8.

(*b*) If, on the other hand, my "correct notion" of Theaetetus includes his distinguishing characteristics, then it would also be absurd to say that I convert this correct notion into knowledge by adding the *differentia*, since this would be equivalent to saying that I convert my correct notion of Theaetetus into knowledge by adding to Theaetetus, as already apprehended in distinction from others, that which distinguishes him from others.

N.B. It is to be noted that Plato is not speaking here of *specific* differences, he is speaking of individual, sensible objects, as is clearly shown by the examples that he takes—the sun and a particular man, Theaetetus.[1] The conclusion to be drawn is not that no knowledge is attained through definition by means of a difference, but rather that the individual, sensible object is indefinable and is not really the proper object of knowledge at all. This is the real conclusion of the dialogue, namely, that true knowledge of sensible objects is unattainable, and—by implication—that true knowledge must be knowledge of the universal and abiding.

IV. *True Knowledge*

1. Plato has assumed from the outset that knowledge is attainable, and that knowledge must be (i) infallible and (ii) of the *real*. True knowledge must possess both these characteristics, and any state of mind that cannot vindicate its claim to both these characteristics cannot be true knowledge. In the *Theaetetus* he shows that neither sense-perception nor true belief are possessed of both these marks; neither, then, can be equated with true knowledge. Plato accepts from Protagoras the belief in the relativity of sense and sense-perception, but he will not accept a universal relativism: on the contrary, knowledge, absolute and infallible knowledge, is attainable, but it cannot be the same as sense-perception, which is relative, elusive and subject to the influence of all sorts of temporary influences on the part of both subject and object. Plato accepts, too, from Heraclitus the view that the objects of sense-perception, individual and sensible particular objects, are always in a state of becoming, of flux, and so are unfit to be the objects of true knowledge. They come into being and pass away, they are indefinite in number, cannot be clearly grasped in

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[1] 208 c 7–e 4.

definition and cannot become the objects of scientific knowledge. But Plato does not draw the conclusion that there are no objects that are fitted to be the objects of true knowledge, but only that sensible particulars cannot be the objects sought. The object of true knowledge must be stable and abiding, fixed, capable of being grasped in clear and scientific definition, which is of the *universal*, as Socrates saw. The consideration of different states of mind is thus indissolubly bound up with the consideration of the different objects of those states of mind.

If we examine those judgments in which we think we attain knowledge of the essentially stable and abiding, we find that they are judgments concerning *universals*. If, for example, we examine the judgment "The Athenian Constitution is good," we shall find that the essentially stable element in this judgment is the concept of goodness. After all, the Athenian Constitution might be so changed that we would no longer qualify it as good, but as bad. This implies that the concept of goodness remains the same, for if we term the changed Constitution "bad," that can only be because we judge it in reference to a fixed concept of goodness. Moreover, if it is objected that, even though the Athenian Constitution may change as an empirical and historical fact, we can still say "The Athenian Constitution is good," if we mean the particular form of the Constitution that we once called good (even though it may in point of fact have since been changed), we can point out in answer that in this case our judgment has reference, not so much to the Athenian Constitution as a given empirical fact, as to a certain *type* of constitution. That this type of constitution happens at any given historical moment to be embodied in the Athenian Constitution is more or less irrelevant: what we really mean is that this universal type of constitution (whether found at Athens or elsewhere) carries with it the universal quality of goodness. Our judgment, as far as it attains the abiding and stable, really concerns a universal.

Again, scientific knowledge, as Socrates saw (predominantly in connection with ethical valuations), aims at the definition, at crystallising and fixing knowledge in the clear and unambiguous definition. A scientific knowledge of goodness, for instance, must be enshrined in the definition "Goodness is . . . ," whereby the mind expresses the essence of goodness. But definition concerns the universal. Hence true knowledge is knowledge of the universal. Particular constitutions change, but the concept of goodness remains the same, and it is in reference to this stable concept that we judge of particular constitutions in respect of goodness. It follows, then, that it is the universal that fulfils the requirements for being an object of knowledge. Knowledge of the highest universal will be the highest kind of knowledge, while "knowledge" of the particular will be the lowest kind of "knowledge."

But does not this view imply an impassable gulf between true knowledge on the one hand and the "real" world on the other—a world that consists of particulars? And if true knowledge is knowledge of universals, does it not follow that true knowledge is knowledge of the abstract and "unreal"? In regard to the second question, I would point out that the essence of Plato's doctrine of Forms or Ideas is simply this: that the universal concept is not an abstract form devoid of objective content or references, but that to each true universal concept there corresponds an objective reality. How far Aristotle's criticism of Plato (that the latter hypostatised the objective reality of the concepts, imagining a transcendent world of "separate" universals) is justified, is a matter for discussion by itself: whether justified or unjustified, it remains true that the essence of the Platonic theory of Ideas is not to be sought in the notion of the "separate" existence of universal realities, but in the belief that universal concepts have objective reference, and that the corresponding reality is of a higher order than sense-perception as such. In regard to the first question (that of the gulf between true knowledge and the "real" world), we must admit that it was one of Plato's standing difficulties to determine the precise relation between the particular and the universal; but to this question we must return when treating of the theory of Ideas from the ontological viewpoint: at the moment one can afford to pass it over.

2. Plato's positive doctrine of knowledge, in which degrees or levels of knowledge are distinguished according to objects, is set out in the famous passage of the *Republic* that gives us the simile of the Line.[1] I give here the usual schematic diagram, which I will endeavour to explain. It must be admitted that there are several important points that remain very obscure, but doubtless Plato was feeling his way towards what he regarded as the truth; and, as far as we know, he never cleared up his precise meaning

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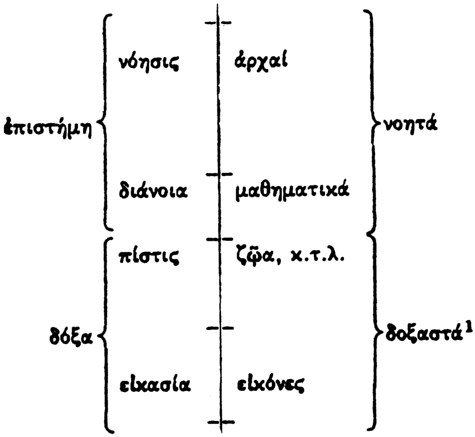
[1] *Rep.*, 509 d 6–511 e 5.

in unambiguous terms. We cannot, therefore, altogether avoid conjecture.



The development of the human mind on its way from ignorance to knowledge, lies over two main fields, that of δόξα (opinion) and that of ἐπιστήμη (knowledge). It is only the latter that can properly be termed knowledge. How are these two functions of the mind differentiated? It seems clear that the differentiation is based on a differentiation of object. δόξα (opinion), is said to be concerned with "images," while ἐπιστήμη, at least in the form of νόησις, is concerned with originals or archetypes, ἀρχαί. If a man is asked what justice is, and he points to imperfect embodiments of justice, particular instances which fall short of the universal ideal, e.g. the action of a particular man, a particular constitution or set of laws, having no inkling that there exists a principle of absolute justice, a norm and standard, then that man's state of mind is a state of δόξα: he sees the images or copies and mistakes them for the originals. But if a man has an apprehension of justice in itself, if he can rise above the images to the Form, to the Idea, to the universal, whereby all the particular instances must be judged, then his state of mind is a state of knowledge, of ἐπιστήμη or γνῶσις. Moreover, it is possible to progress from one state of mind to the other, to be "converted," as it were; and when a man comes to realise that what he formerly took to be originals are in reality only images or copies, i.e. imperfect embodiments of the ideal, imperfect realisations of the norm or standard, when he comes to apprehend in some way the original itself, then his state of mind is no longer that of δόξα, he has been converted to ἐπιστήμη.

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[1] On the left side of the line are states of mind: on the right side are corresponding objects. In both cases the "highest" are at the top. The very close connection between the Platonic epistemology and the Platonic ontology is at once apparent.

The line, however, is not simply divided into two sections; each section is subdivided. Thus there are two degrees of ἐπιστήμη and two degrees of δόξα. How are they to be interpreted? Plato tells us that the lowest degree, that of εικασία, has as its object, in the first place, "images" or "shadows", and in the second place "reflections in water and in solid, smooth, bright substances, and everything of the kind."[1] This certainly sounds rather peculiar, at least if one takes Plato to imply that any man mistakes shadow and reflections in water for the original. But one can legitimately extend the thought of Plato to cover in general images of images, imitations at second hand. Thus we said that a man whose only idea of justice is the embodied and imperfect justice of the Athenian Constitution or of some particular man, is in a state of δόξα in general. If, however, a rhetorician comes along, and with specious words and reasonings persuades him that things are just and right, which in reality are not even in accord with the empirical justice of the Athenian Constitution and its laws, then his state of mind is that of εἰκασία. What he takes for justice is but a shadow or caricature of what is itself only an image, if compared to the universal Form. The state of mind, on the other hand, of the man who takes as justice the justice of the law of Athens or the justice of a particular just man is that of πίστις.

Plato tells us that the objects of the πίστις section are the real objects corresponding to the images of the εἰκασία section of the line, and he mentions "the animals about us, and the whole world of nature and of art."[2] This implies, for instance, that the man whose only idea of a horse is that of particular real horses, and who does not see that particular horses are imperfect "imitations" of the ideal horse, i.e. of the specific type, the universal, is in a state of πίστις. He has not got knowledge of the horse, but only opinion. (Spinoza might say that he is in a state of *imagination*, of inadequate knowledge.) Similarly, the man who judges that external nature is true reality, and who does not see that it is a more or less "unreal" copy of the invisible world (i.e. who does not see that sensible objects are imperfect realisations of the specific type) has only πίστις. He is not so badly off as the dreamer who thinks that the images that he sees are the real world (εἰκασία), but he has not got ἐπιστήμη: he is devoid of real scientific knowledge.

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[1] *Rep.*, 509 e 1–510 a 3.

[2] *Rep.*, 510 a 5–6.

The mention of art in the above quotation helps us to understand the matter a little more clearly. In the tenth book of the *Republic*, Plato says that artists are at the third remove from truth. For example, there is the specific form of man, the ideal type that all individuals of the species strive to realise, and there are particular men who are copies or imitations or imperfect realisations of the specific types. The artist now comes and paints a man, the painted man being an imitation of an imitation. Anyone who took the painted man to be a real man (one might say anyone who took the wax policeman at the entrance of Madame Tussaud's to be a real policeman) would be in a state of εἰκασία, while anyone whose idea of a man is limited to the particular men he has seen, heard of or read about, and who has no real grasp of the specific type, is in a state of πίστις. But the man who apprehends the ideal man, i.e. the ideal type, the specific form of which particular men are imperfect realisations, has νόησις.[1] Again, a just man may imitate or embody in his actions, although imperfectly, the idea of justice. The tragedian then proceeds to imitate this just man on the stage, but without knowing anything of justice in itself. He merely imitates an imitation.

Now, what of the higher division of the line, which corresponds in respect of object to νοητά, and in respect of state of mind to ἐπιστήμη? In general it is connected, not with ὁρατά or sensible objects (lower part of the line), but with ἀορατά, the invisible world, νοητά. But what of the subdivision? How does νόησις in the restricted sense differ from διάνοια? Plato says that the object of διάνοια is what the soul is compelled to investigate by the aid of the imitations of the former segments, which it employs as images, starting from hypothesis and proceeding, not to a first principle, but to a conclusion.[2] Plato is here speaking of mathematics. In geometry, for instance, the mind proceeds from hypotheses, by the use of a visible diagram, to a conclusion. The geometer, says Plato, assumes the triangle, etc., as known, adopts these "materials" as hypotheses, and then, employing a visible diagram, argues to a conclusion, being interested, however, not in the diagram itself (i.e. in this or that particular triangle or particular square or particular diameter). Geometers thus employ figures and diagrams, but "they are really endeavouring to behold those objects which a person can only see with the eye of thought."[1]

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[1] Plato's theory of art is discussed in a later chapter.

[2] *Rep.*, 510 b 4-6.

One might have thought that the mathematical objects of this kind would be numbered among the Forms or ἀρχαί, and that Plato would have equated the scientific knowledge of the geometer with νόησις proper; but he expressly declined to do so, and it is impossible to suppose (as some have done) that Plato was fitting his epistemological doctrines to the exigencies of his simile of the line with its divisions. Rather must we suppose that Plato really meant to assert the existence of a class of "intermediaries," i.e. of objects which are the object of ἐπιστήμη, but which are all the same inferior to ἀρχάι, and so are the objects of διάνοια and not of νόησις.[2] It becomes quite clear from the close of the sixth book of the *Republic*[3] that the geometers have not got νοῦς or νόησις in regard to their objects; and that because they do not mount up above their hypothetical premisses, "although taken in connection with a first principle these objects come within the domain of the pure reason."[4] These last words show that the distinction between the two segments of the upper part of the line is to be referred to a distinction of state of mind and not only to a distinction of object. And it is expressly stated that understanding or διάνοια is intermediate between opinion (δόξα) and pure reason (νόησις).

This is supported by the mention of hypotheses. Nettleship thought that Plato's meaning is that the mathematician accepts his postulates and axioms as if they were self-contained truth: he does not question them himself, and if anyone else questions them, he can only say that he cannot argue the matter. Plato does not use the word "hypothesis" in the sense of a judgment which is taken as true while it *might* be untrue, but in the sense of a judgment which is treated as if it were self-conditioned, not being seen in its ground and in its necessary connection with being.[5] Against this it might be pointed out that the examples of "hypotheses" given in 510 c are all examples of entities and not of judgments, and that Plato speaks of destroying hypotheses rather than of reducing them to self-conditioned or self-evident propositions. A further suggestion on this matter is given at the close of this section.

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[1] *Rep.*, 510 e 2–511 a 1.

[2] Cf. W. R. F. Hardie, *A Study in Plato*, p. 52 (O.U.P., 1936).

[3] *Rep.*, 510 c.

[4] *Rep.*, 511 c 8–d 2.

[5] *Lectures on the Republic of Plato* (1898), pp. 252 f.

In the *Metaphysics*,[1] Aristotle tells us that Plato held that mathematical entities are "between forms and sensible things." "Further, besides sensible things and forms, he says there are the objects of mathematics, which occupy an intermediate position, differing from sensible things in being eternal and unchangeable, from Forms in that there are many alike, while the Form itself is in each case unique." In view of this statement by Aristotle, we can hardly refer the distinction between the two segments of the upper part of the line to the state of mind alone. There must be a difference of object as well. (The distinction would be drawn between the states of mind exclusively, if, while τὰ μαθηματικά belonged *in their own right* to the same segment as αἱ ἀρχαί, the mathematician, acting precisely as such, accepted his "materials" hypothetically and then argued to conclusions. He would be in the state of mind that Plato calls διάνοια, for he treats his postulates as self-conditioned, without asking further questions, and argues to a conclusion by means of visible diagrams; but his reasoning would concern, not the diagrams as such but ideal mathematical objects, so that, if he were to take his hypotheses "in connection with a first principle," he would be in a state of νόησις instead of διάνοιά, although the true object of his reasoning, the ideal mathematical objects, would remain the same. This interpretation, i.e. the interpretation that would confine the distinction between the two segments of the upper part of the line to states of mind, might well seem to be favoured by the statement of Plato that mathematical questions, when "taken in connection with a first principle, come within the domain of the pure reason"; but Aristotle's remarks on the subject, if they are a correct statement of the thought of Plato, evidently forbid this interpretation, since he clearly thought that Plato's mathematical entities were supposed to occupy a position between αἱ ἀρχαί and τὰ ὁρατά.)

If Aristotle is correct and Plato really meant τὰ μαθηματικά to constitute a class of objects on their own, distinct from other classes, in what does this distinction consist? There is no need to dwell on the distinction between τὰ μαθηματικά and the objects of the lower part of the line, τὰ ὁρατά, since it is clear enough that the geometrician is concerned with ideal and perfect objects of thought, and not with empirical circles or lines, e.g. cart-wheels or hoops or fishing-rods, or even with geometrical diagrams as such, i.e. as sensible particulars. The question, therefore, resolves itself into this: in what does the distinction between τὰ μαθηματικά, as objects of διάνοια, and αἱ ἀρχαί, as objects of νόησις, really consist?

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[1] 987 b 14 ff. Cf. 1059 b 2 ff.

A natural interpretation of Aristotle's remarks in the *Metaphysics* is that, according to Plato, the mathematician is speaking of intelligible particulars, and not of sensible particulars, nor of universals. For example, if the geometer speaks of two circles intersecting, he is not speaking of the sensible circles drawn nor yet of circularity as such—for how could circularity intersect circularity? He is speaking of intelligible circles, of which there are many alike, as Aristotle would say. Again, to say that "two and two make four" is not the same as to say what will happen if twoness be added to itself—a meaningless phrase. This view is supported by Aristotle's remark that for Plato "there must be a first 2 and 3, and the numbers must not be addable to one another."[1] For Plato, the integers, including 1, form a series in such a way that 2 is *not* made up of two 1's, but is a unique numerical form. This comes more or less to saying that the integer 2 is twoness, which is not composed of two "onenesses." These integer numbers Plato seems to have identified with the Forms. But though it cannot be said of the integer 2 that there are many alike (any more than we can speak of many circularities), it is clear that the mathematician who does not ascend to the ultimate formal principles, does in fact deal with a plurality of 2's and a plurality of circles. Now, when the geometer speaks of intersecting circles, he is not treating of sensible particulars, but of intelligible objects. Yet of these intelligible objects there are many alike, hence they are not real universals but constitute a class of intelligible particulars, "above" sensible particulars, but "below" true universals. It is reasonable, therefore, to conclude that Plato's τὰ μαθηματικά are a class of intelligible particulars.

Now, Professor A. E. Taylor,[2] if I understand him correctly, would like to confine the sphere of τὰ μαθηματικά to ideal spatial magnitudes. As he points out, the properties of e.g. curves can be studied by means of numerical equations, but they are not themselves numbers; so that they would not belong to the highest section of the line, that of αἱ ἀρχαί or Forms, which Plato identified with Numbers. On the other hand, the ideal spatial magnitudes, the objects which the geometrician studies, are not sensible objects, so that they cannot belong to the sphere of τὰ ὁρατά. They therefore occupy an intermediate position between Number-Forms and Sensible Things. That this is true of the objects with which the geometer deals (intersecting circles, etc.) I willingly admit; but is one justified in excluding from τὰ μαθηματικά the objects with which the arithmetician deals? After all, Plato, when treating of those whose state of mind is that of διάνοια, speaks not only of students of geometry, but also of students of arithmetic and the kindred sciences.[1] It would certainly not appear from this that we are justified in asserting that Plato confined τὰ μαθηματικά to ideal spatial magnitudes. Whether or not we think that Plato ought to have so confined the sphere of mathematical entities, we have to consider, not only what Plato *ought* to have said, but also what he *did* say. Most probably, therefore, he understood, as comprised in the class of τὰ μαθηματικά, the objects of the arithmetician as well as those of the geometer (and not only of these two, as can be inferred from the remark about "kindred sciences"). What, then, becomes of Aristotle's statement that for Plato numbers are not addable (ἀσυμβλητόι)? I think that it is certainly to be accepted, and that Plato saw clearly that numbers as such are unique. On the other hand, it is equally clear that we add groups or classes of objects together, and speak of the characteristic of a class as a number. These we add, but they stand for the classes of individual objects, though they are themselves the objects, not of sense but of intelligence. They may, therefore, be spoken of as intelligible particulars, and they belong to the sphere of τὰ μαθηματικά, as well as the ideal spatial magnitudes of the geometer. Aristotle's own theory of number may have been erroneous, and he may thus have misrepresented Plato's theory in some respects; but if he definitely stated, as he did, that Plato posited an intermediate class of mathematical entities, it is hard to suppose that he was mistaken, especially as Plato's own writings would seem to leave no reasonable doubt, not only that he actually posited such a class, but also that he did not mean to confine this class to ideal spatial magnitudes.

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[1] *Metaph.*, 1083 a 33–5.

[2] Cf. *Forms and Numbers*, *Mind*, Oct. 1926 and Jan. 1927. (Reprinted in *Philosophical Studies*.)

(Plato's statement that the hypotheses of the mathematicians —he mentions "the odd and the even and the figures and three kinds of angles and the cognates of these in their several branches of science"[2]—when taken in connection with a first principle, are cognisable by the higher reason, and his statement that the higher reason is concerned with first principles, which are self-evident, suggest that he would welcome the modern attempts to reduce pure mathematics to their logical foundations.)

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[1] *Rep.*, 510 c 2 ff.

[2] *Rep.*, 510 c 4–5.

It remains to consider briefly the highest segment of the line. The state of mind in question, that of νόησις, is the state of mind of the man who uses the hypotheses of the διάνοια segment as starting-points, but passes beyond them and ascends to first principles. Moreover, in this process (which is the process of Dialectic) he makes no use of "images," such as are employed in the διάνοια segment, but proceeds in and by the ideas themselves,[1] i.e. by strictly abstract reasoning. Having clearly grasped the first principles, the mind then descends to the conclusions that follow from them, again making use only of abstract reasoning and not of sensible images.[2] The objects corresponding to νόησις are αἱ ἀρχάι, the first principles or Forms. They are not merely epistemological principles, but also ontological principles, and I will consider them more in detail later; but it is as well to point out the following fact. If it were merely a question of seeing the ultimate principles of the hypotheses of the διάνοια section (as e.g. in the modern reduction of pure mathematics to their logical foundations), there might be no very great difficulty in seeing what Plato was driving at; but he speaks expressly of dialectic as "destroying the hypotheses," ἀναιροῦσα τὰς ὑποθέσεις,[3] which is a hard saying, since, though dialectic may well show that the postulates of the mathematician need revision, it is not so easy, at first sight at least, to see how it can be said to destroy the hypotheses. As a matter of fact, Plato's meaning becomes clearer if we consider one particular hypothesis he mentions—the odd and the even. It would appear that Plato recognised that there are numbers which are neither even nor odd, i.e. irrational numbers, and that in the *Epinomis*[4] he demands the recognition of quadratic and cubic "surds" as *numbers*.[5] If this is so, then it would be the task of dialectic to show that the traditional hypotheses of the mathematician, that there are no irrational numbers, but that all numbers are integers and are either even or odd, is not strictly true. Again, Plato refused to accept the Pythagorean idea of the point-unit and spoke of the point as "the beginning of a line,"[6] so that the point-unit, i.e. the point as having magnitude of its own, would be a fiction of the geometer, "a geometrical fiction,"[1] an hypothesis that needs to be "destroyed."

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[1] *Rep.*, 510 b 6–9.

[2] *Rep.*, 511 b 3–c 2.

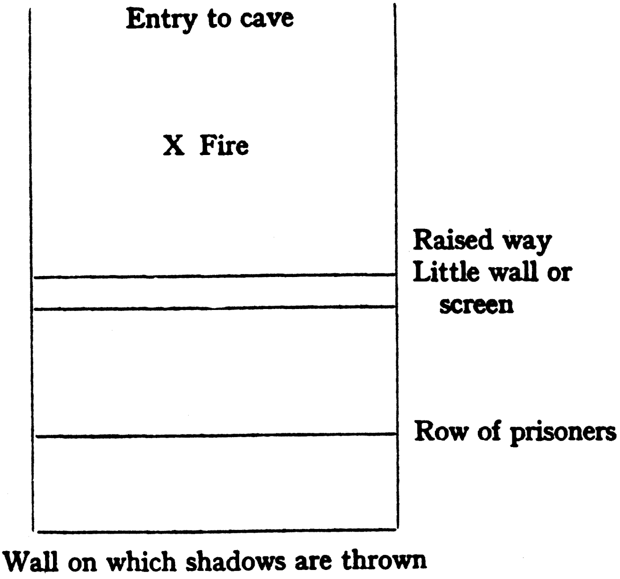
[3] *Rep.*, 533 c 8.

[4] *Epin.*, 990 c 5–991 b 4.

[5] Cf. Taylor, *Plato*, p. 501

[6] *Metaph.*, 992 a 20 ff.

3. Plato further illustrated his epistemological doctrine by the famous allegory of the Cave in the seventh book of the *Republic*.[2] I will briefly sketch the allegory, since it is valuable as showing clearly, if any further proof be needed, that the ascent of the mind from the lower sections of the line to the higher is an epistemological progress, and that Plato regarded this process, not so much as a continuous process of evolution as a series of "conversions" from a less adequate to a more adequate cognitive state.



Plato asks us to imagine an underground cave which has an opening towards the light. In this cave are living human beings, with their legs and necks chained from childhood in such a way that they face the inside wall of the cave and have never seen the light of the sun. Above and behind them, i.e. between the prisoners and the mouth of the cave, is a fire, and between them and the fire is a raised way and a low wall, like a screen. Along this raised way there pass men carrying statues and figures of animals and other objects, in such a manner that the objects they carry appear over the top of the low wall or screen. The prisoners, facing the inside wall of the cave, cannot see one another nor the objects carried behind them, but they see the shadows of themselves and of these objects thrown on to the wall they are facing. They see only shadows.

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[1] *Metaph.*, 992 a 20–1.

[2] *Rep.*, 514 a 1–518 d 1.

These prisoners represent the majority of mankind, that multitude of people who remain all their lives in a state of εἰκασία, beholding only shadows of reality and hearing only echoes of the truth. Their view of the world is most inadequate, distorted by "their own passions and prejudices, and by the passions and prejudices of other people as conveyed to them by language and rhetoric."[1] And though they are in no better case than children, they cling to their distorted views with all the tenacity of adults, and have no wish to escape from their prison-house. Moreover, if they were suddenly freed and told to look at the realities of which they had formerly seen the shadows, they would be blinded by the glare of the light, and would imagine that the shadows were far more real than the realities.

However, if one of the prisoners who has escaped grows accustomed to the light, he will after a time be able to look at the concrete sensible objects, of which he had formerly seen but the shadows. This man beholds his fellows in the light of the fire (which represents the visible sun) and is in a state of πίστις, having been "converted" from the shadow-world of εἰκόνες, prejudices and passions and sophistries, to the real world of ζῷα, though he has not yet ascended to the world of intelligible, non-sensible realities. He sees the prisoners for what they are, namely prisoners, prisoners in the bonds of passion and sophistry. Moreover, if he perseveres and comes out of the cave into the sunlight, he will see the world of sun-illumined and clear objects (which represent intelligible realities), and lastly, though only by an effort, he will be able to see the sun itself, which represents the Idea of the Good, the highest Form, "the universal cause of all things right and beautiful—the source of truth and reason."[2] He will then be in a state of νόησις. (To this Idea of the Good, as also to the political considerations that concerned Plato in the *Republic*, I shall return in later chapters.)

Plato remarks that if someone, after ascending to the sunshine, went back into the cave, he would be unable to see properly because of the darkness, and so would make himself "ridiculous"; while if he tried to free another and lead him up to the light, the prisoners, who love the darkness and consider the shadows to be true reality, would put the offender to death, if they could but catch him. Here we may understand a reference to Socrates, who endeavoured to enlighten all those who would listen and make them apprehend truth and reason, instead of letting themselves be misled by prejudice and sophistry.

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[1] Nettleship, *Lectures on the Republic of Plato*, p. 260.

[2] *Rep.*, 517 b 8–c 4.

This allegory makes it clear that the "ascent" of the line was regarded by Plato as a progress, though this progress is not a continuous and automatic process: it needs effort and mental discipline. Hence his insistence on the great importance of *education*, whereby the young may be brought gradually to behold eternal and absolute truths and values, and so saved from passing their lives in the shadow-world of error, falsehood, prejudice, sophistical persuasion, blindness to true values, etc. This education is of primary importance in the case of those who are to be statesmen. Statesmen and rulers will be blind leaders of the blind, if they dwell in the spheres of εικασία or πίστις, and the wrecking of the ship of State is a more terrible thing than the wreck of anyone's individual barque. Plato's interest in the epistemological ascent is thus no mere academic or narrowly critical interest: he is concerned with the conduct of life, tendance of the soul and with the good of the State. The man who does not realise the true good of man will not, and cannot, lead the truly good human life, and the statesman who does not realise the true good of the State, who does not view political life in the light of eternal principles, will bring ruin on his people.

The question might be raised, whether or not there are religious implications in the epistemology of Plato, as illustrated by the simile of the Line and the allegory of the Cave. That the conceptions of Plato were given a religious colouring and application by the Neo-Platonists is beyond dispute: moreover, when a Christian writer, such as the Pseudo-Dionysius, traces the mystic's ascent to God by the *via negativa*, beyond visible creatures to their invisible Source, the light of which blinds by excess of light, so that the soul is in a state of, so to speak, luminous obscurity, he certainly utilises themes which came from Plato *via* the Neo-Platonists. But it does not necessarily follow that Plato himself understood the ascent from a religious viewpoint. In any case this difficult question cannot be profitably touched on until one has considered the ontological nature and status of Plato's Idea of the Good; and even then one can scarcely reach definitive certainty.

CHAPTER XX

THE DOCTRINE OF FORMS

In this chapter I propose to discuss the theory of Forms or Ideas in its ontological aspect. We have already seen that in Plato's eyes the object of true knowledge must be stable and abiding, the object of intelligence and not of sense, and that these requirements are fulfilled by the universal, as far as the highest cognitive state, that of νόησις, is concerned. The Platonic epistemology clearly implies that the universals which we conceive in thought are not devoid of objective reference, but we have not yet examined the important question, in what this objective reference consists. There is indeed plenty of evidence that Plato continued to occupy himself throughout his years of academic and literary activity with problems arising from the theory of Forms, but there is no real evidence that he ever radically changed his doctrine, still less that he abandoned it altogether, however much he tried to clarify or modify it, in view of difficulties that occurred to him or that were suggested by others. It has sometimes been asserted that the mathematisation of the Forms, which is ascribed to Plato by Aristotle, was a doctrine of Plato's old age, a relapse into Pythagorean "mysticism,"[1] but Aristotle does not say that Plato *changed* his doctrine, and the only reasonable conclusion to be drawn from Aristotle's words would appear to be that Plato held more or less the same doctrine, at least during the time that Aristotle worked under him in the Academy. (Whether Aristotle misinterpreted Plato or not is naturally another question.) But though Plato continued to maintain the doctrine of Ideas, and though he sought to clarify his meaning and the ontological and logical implications of his thought, it does not follow that we can always clearly grasp what he actually meant. It is greatly to be regretted that we have no adequate record of his lectures in the Academy, since this would doubtless throw great light on the interpretation of his theories as put forward in the dialogues, besides conferring on us the inestimable benefit of knowing what Plato's "real" opinions were, the opinions that he transmitted only through oral teaching and never published.

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[1] Cf. Stace, *Critical History*, p. 191.

In the *Republic* it is assumed that whenever a plurality of individuals have a common name, they have also a corresponding idea or form.[1] This is the universal, the common nature or quality which is grasped in the concept, e.g. beauty. There are many beautiful things, but we form one universal concept of beauty itself: and Plato assumed that these universal concepts are not merely subjective concepts, but that in them we apprehend objective essences. At first hearing this sounds a peculiarly naïve view, perhaps, but we must recall that for Plato it is thought that grasps reality, so that the object of thought, as opposed to sense-perception, i.e. universals, must have reality. How could they be grasped and made the object of thought unless they were real? We *discover* them: they are not simply invented by us. Another point to remember is that Plato seems first to have concerned himself with moral and aesthetic universals (as also with the objects of mathematical science), as was only natural, considering the main interest of Socrates, and to think of Absolute Goodness or Absolute Beauty existing in their own right, so to speak, is not unreasonable, particularly if Plato identified them, as we believe that he did. But when Plato came to turn his attention more to natural objects than he had formerly done, and to consider class-concepts, such as those of man or horse, it was obviously rather difficult to suppose that universals corresponding to these class-concepts existed in their own right as objective essences. One may identify Absolute Goodness and Absolute Beauty, but it is not so easy to identify the objective essence of man with the objective essence of horse: in fact, to attempt to do so would be ludicrous. But some principle of unity had to be found, if the essences were not to be left in isolation one from another, and Plato came to devote attention to this principle of unity, so that all the specific essences might be unified under or subordinated to one supreme generic essence. Plato tackles this problem from the logical viewpoint, it is true, inquiring into the problem of logical classification; but there is no real evidence that he ever abandoned the view that universals have an ontological status, and he doubtless thought that in settling the problem of logical classification, he was also settling the problem of ontological unification.

To these objective essences Plato gave the name of Ideas or Forms (ἰδέαι or εἴδη), words which are used interchangeably.

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[1] *Rep.*, 596 a 6–7; cf. 507 ab.

The word εἶδος in this connection appears suddenly in the *Phaedo*.[1] But we must not be misled by this use of the term "Idea." "Idea" in ordinary parlance means a subjective concept in the mind, as when we say: "That is only an idea and nothing real"; but Plato, when he speaks of Ideas or Forms, is referring to the objective content or reference of our universal concepts. In our universal concepts we apprehend objective essences, and it is to these objective essences that Plato applied the term "Ideas." In some dialogues, e.g. in the *Symposium*, the word "Idea" is not used, but the *meaning* is there, for in that dialogue Plato speaks of essential or absolute Beauty (αὔτο ὃ ἔστι καλόν), and this is what Plato would mean by the Idea of Beauty. Thus it would be a matter of indifference, whether he spoke of the Absolute Good or of the Idea of the Good: both would refer to an objective essence, which is the source of goodness in all the particular things that are truly good.

Since by Ideas or Forms Plato meant objective essences, it becomes of paramount importance for an understanding of the Platonic ontology to determine, as far as possible, precisely how he regarded these objective essences. Have they a transcendental existence of their own, apart from particular things, and, if so, what is their relation to one another and to the concrete particular objects of this world? Does Plato duplicate the world of sense-experience by postulating a transcendental world of invisible, immaterial essences? If so, what is the relation of this world of essences to God? That Plato's language often implies the existence of a separate world of transcendental essences cannot be denied, but it must be remembered that language is primarily designed to refer to the objects of our sense-experience, and is very often found inadequate for the precise expression of metaphysical truths. Thus we speak, and cannot well help speaking, of "God foreseeing," a phrase that, as it stands, implies that God is in time, whereas we know that God is not in time but is eternal. We cannot, however, speak adequately of the eternity of God, since we have no experience of eternity ourselves, and our language is not designed to express such matters. We are human beings and have to use human language—we can use no other: and this fact should make us cautious in attaching too much weight to the mere language or phrases used by Plato in dealing with abstruse, metaphysical points. We have to endeavour to get at the meaning behind those phrases. By this I do not mean to imply that Plato did not believe in the subsistence of universal essences, but simply to point out that, if we find that he did in fact hold this doctrine, we must beware of the temptation to put that doctrine in a ludicrous light by stressing the phrases used by Plato, without due consideration of the meaning to be attached to those phrases.

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[1] *Phaedo*, 102 b 1.

Now, what we might call the "vulgar" presentation of the Platonic theory of Ideas has generally been more or less as follows. In Plato's view the objects which we apprehend in universal concepts, the objects with which science deals, the objects corresponding to universal terms of predication, are objective Ideas or subsistent Universals, existing in a transcendental world of their own—somewhere "out there"—apart from sensible things, understanding by "apart from" practically spatial separation. Sensible things are copies or participations in these universal realities, but the latter abide in an unchanging heaven of their own, while sensible things are subject to change, in fact are always becoming and can never truly be said to *be*. The Ideas exist in their heaven in a state of isolation one from another, and apart from the mind of any Thinker. Plato's theory having been thus presented, it is pointed out that the subsistent universals either *exist* (in which case the real world of our experience is unjustifiably duplicated) or they do not exist, but have independent and *essential reality* in some mysterious way (in which case a wedge is unjustifiably driven between existence and essence.) (The Thomist School of Scholastic philosophers, be it remarked in passing, admit a "real distinction" between essence and the act of existence in created being; but, for them, the distinction is *within* the creature. Uncreated Being is Absolute Existence and Absolute Essence in identity.) Of the reasons which have led to this traditional presentation of the doctrine of Plato one may enumerate three.

(i) Plato's way of speaking about the Ideas clearly supposes that they exist in a sphere apart. Thus in the *Phaedo* he teaches that the soul existed before its union with the body in a transcendental realm, where it beheld the subsistent intelligible entities or Ideas, which would seem to constitute a plurality of "detached" essences. The process of knowledge, or getting to know, consists essentially in recollection, in remembering the Ideas which the soul once beheld clearly in its state of pre-existence.

(ii) Aristotle asserts in the *Metaphysics*[1] that Plato "separated" the Ideas, whereas Socrates had not done so. In his criticism of the theory of Ideas he constantly supposes that, according to the Platonists, Ideas exist apart from sensible things. Ideas constitute the reality or "substance" of things; "how, therefore," asks Aristotle, "can the Ideas, being the substance of things, exist apart?"[2]

(iii) In the *Timaeus* Plato clearly teaches that God or the "Demiurge" forms the things of this world according to the model of the Forms. This implies that the Forms or Ideas exist apart, not only from the sensible things that are modelled on them, but also from God, Who takes them as His model. They are therefore hanging in the air, as it were.

In this way, say the critics, Plato—

(*a*) Duplicates the "real" world;
(*b*) Posits a multitude of subsistent essences with no sufficient metaphysical ground or basis (since they are independent even of God);
(*c*) Fails to explain the relation between sensible things and the Ideas (except by metaphorical phrases like "imitation" or "participation"); and
(*d*) Fails to explain the relation of the Ideas to one another, e.g. of species to genus, or to find any real principle of unity. Accordingly, if Plato was trying to solve the problem of the One and the Many, he failed lamentably and merely enriched the world with one more fantastic theory, which was exploded by the genius of Aristotle.

It must be left to an examination of Plato's thought in more detail to show what truth there is in this presentation of the theory of Ideas; but we would point out at once that these critics tend to neglect the fact that Plato saw clearly that the plurality of Ideas needs some principle of unity, and that he tried to solve this problem. They also tend to neglect the fact that we have indications not only in the dialogues themselves, but also in the allusions of Aristotle to Plato's theory and Plato's lectures, *how* Plato tried to solve the problem, namely, by a new interpretation, and application of the Eleatic doctrine of the One. Whether Plato actually solved the problems that arise out of his theories is a matter for dispute, but it will not do to speak as though he never saw any of the difficulties that Aristotle afterwards brought against him. On the contrary, Plato anticipated some of the very objections raised by Aristotle and thought that he had solved them more or less satisfactorily. Aristotle evidently thought otherwise, and he may have been right, but it is unhistorical to speak as though Aristotle raised objections which Plato had been too foolish to see. Moreover, if it is an historical fact, as it is, that Plato brought difficulties against himself, one should be careful in attributing to him an opinion that is fantastic—unless, of course, we are compelled by the evidence to believe that he held it.

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[1] *Metaph.*, A, 987 b 1–10; M, 1078 b 30–32.
[2] *Metaph.*, A, 991 b 2–3.

Before going on to consider the theory of Ideas as presented in the dialogues, we will make some preliminary observations in connection with the three reasons that we enumerated in support of the traditional presentation of Plato's Ideal Theory.

(i) It is an undeniable fact that Plato's way of speaking about the Ideas very often implies that they exist "apart from" sensible things. I believe that Plato really did hold this doctrine; but there are two cautionary observations to be made.

(*a*) If they exist "apart from" sensible things, this "apart from" can only mean that the Ideas are possessed of a reality independent of sensible things. There can be no question of the Ideas being in a place, and, strictly speaking, they would be as much "in" as "out of" sensible things, for *ex hypothesi* they are incorporeal essences and incorporeal essences cannot be in a place. As Plato had to use human language, he would naturally express the essential reality and independence of the Ideas in spatial terminology (he could not do anything else); but he would not *mean* that the Ideas were spatially separate from things. Transcendence in this connection would mean that the Ideas do not change and perish with sensible particulars: it would no more mean that they are in a heavenly place of their own than God's transcendence implies for us that God is in a place, different from the places or spaces of the sensible objects He has created. It is absurd to speak as though the Platonic Theory involved the assumption of an Ideal Man with length, breadth, depth, etc., existing in the heavenly place. To do so is to make the Platonic theory gratuitously ridiculous: whatever the transcendence of the Ideas might mean, it could not mean *that*.

(*b*) We should be careful not to place too much weight on doctrines such as that of the pre-existence of the soul and the process of "recollection." Plato sometimes, as is well known, makes use of "Myth," giving a "likely account," which he does not mean to be taken with the same exactitude and seriousness as more scientifically argued themes. Thus in the *Phaedo* "Socrates" gives an account of the soul's future life, and then expressly declares that it does not become a man of sense to affirm that these things are exactly as he has described them.[1] But while it is clear enough that the account of the soul's future life is conjectural and admittedly "mythical" in character, it appears altogether unjustifiable to extend the concept of "myth" to include the whole doctrine of immortality, as some would do, for in the passage alluded to in the *Phaedo* Socrates declares that, though the picture of the future life is not to be understood literally or positively affirmed, the soul is "certainly immortal." And, as Plato couples together immortality after death with pre-existence, it hardly seems that one is warranted in dismissing the whole conception of pre-existence as "mythical." It may possibly be that it was no more than an hypothesis in Plato's eyes (so that, as I said, we should not attach too much weight to it); but, all things considered, we are not justified in simply asserting that it actually is myth, and, unless its mythical character can be demonstrated satisfactorily, we ought to accept it as a seriously-meant doctrine. Yet even if the soul pre-existed and contemplated the Forms in that state of pre-existence, it would *not* follow that the Forms or Ideas are in any *place*, save metaphorically. Nor does it even necessarily follow that they are "detached" essences, for they might all be included in some ontological principle of unity.

(ii) In regard to the statements of Aristotle in the *Metaphysics* it is as well to point out at once that Aristotle must have known perfectly well what Plato taught in the Academy and that Aristotle was no imbecile. It is absurd to speak as though Aristotle's insufficient knowledge of contemporary mathematical developments would necessarily lead to his essentially perverting Plato's doctrine of the Forms, at least in its non-mathematical aspects. He may or may not have fully understood Plato's mathematical theories: it does not follow from this alone that he made an egregious blunder in his interpretation of the Platonic ontology. If Aristotle declares that Plato "separated" the Forms, we cannot pass over this statement as mere ignorant criticism.

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[1] *Phaedo*, 114 d 1-2.

All the same, we have to be careful not to assume *a priori* what Aristotle meant by "separation," and in the second place we have to inquire whether Aristotle's criticism of the Platonic theory necessarily implies that Plato himself drew the conclusions that Aristotle attacks. It *might* be that some of the conclusions attacked by Aristotle were conclusions that he (Aristotle) considered to be logical consequences of the Platonic theory, although Plato may not have drawn those conclusions himself. If this were the case, then we should have to inquire whether the conclusions really did flow from Plato's premisses. But as it would be impracticable to discuss Aristotle's criticism until we have seen what Plato himself said about the Ideas in his published works, it is best to reserve till later a discussion of Aristotle's criticism, although it is true that, since one has to rely largely on Aristotle for knowledge of what Plato taught in his lectures, one cannot help drawing upon him in an exposition of the Platonic doctrine. It is, however, important (and this is the burden of these preliminary remarks) that we should put out of our heads the notion that Aristotle was an incompetent fool, incapable of understanding the true thought of the Master.[1] Unjust he may have been, but he was no fool.

(iii) It can scarcely be denied that Plato in the *Timaeus* speaks as though the Demiurge, the Efficient Cause of order in the world, fashions the objects of this world after the pattern of the Forms as Exemplary Cause, thus implying that the Forms or Ideas are quite distinct from the Demiurge, so that, if we call the Demiurge "God," we should have to conclude that the Forms are not only "outside" the things of this world, but also "outside" God. But though Plato's language in the *Timaeus* certainly implies this interpretation, there is some reason, as will be seen later, to think that the Demiurge of the *Timaeus* is an *hypothesis* and that Plato's "theism" is not to be over-stressed. Moreover, and this is an important fact to remember, Plato's doctrine, as given in his lectures, was not precisely the same as that given in the dialogues: or it might be better to say that Plato developed aspects of his doctrine in his lectures that scarcely appear in the dialogues. The remarks of Aristotle concerning Plato's lecture on the Good, as recorded by Aristoxenus, would seem to indicate that in dialogues such as the *Timaeus*, Plato revealed some of his thoughts only in a pictorial and figurative way. To this question I return later: we must now endeavour to ascertain, as far as possible, what Plato's doctrine of Ideas actually was.

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[1] It is indeed the opinion of the writer that Aristotle, in his criticism of the Ideal Theory, scarcely does justice to Plato, but he would ascribe this to the polemical attitude Aristotle came to adopt towards the theory rather than to any supposed imbecility.

1. In the *Phaedo*, where the discussion centres round the problem of immortality, it is suggested that truth is not to be attained by the bodily senses, but by reason alone, which lays hold of the things that "really are."[1] What are the things that "really are," i.e. that have true being? They are the essences of things, and Socrates gives as examples justice itself, beauty itself, and goodness itself, abstract equality, etc. These essences remain always the same, while particular objects of sense do not. That there really exist such essences is assumed by Socrates: he lays it down "as an hypothesis that there is a certain abstract beauty, and goodness, and magnitude," and that a particular beautiful object, for instance, is beautiful because it partakes of that abstract beauty.[2] (In 102 b the word Idea is applied to these essences; they are termed εἴδη.) In the *Phaedo* the existence of these essences is used as an aid in the proof of immortality. It is pointed out that the fact that a man is able to judge of things as more or less equal, more or less beautiful, implies knowledge of a standard, of the essence of beauty or equality. Now, men do not come into the world and grow up with a clear knowledge of universal essences: how is it, then, that they can judge of particular things in reference to a universal standard? Is it not because the soul pre-existed before its union with the body, and had knowledge of the essences in its state of pre-existence? The process of learning would thus be a process of reminiscence, in which particular embodiments of the essence acted as reminders of the essences previously beheld. Moreover, since rational knowledge of essences in this life involves transcending the bodily senses and rising to the intellectual plane, should we not suppose that the soul of the philosopher beholds these essences after death, when he is no longer hampered and shackled by the body?

Now, the natural interpretation of the doctrine of the Ideas as given in the *Phaedo* is that the Ideas are subsistent universals; but it is to be remembered that, as already mentioned, the doctrine is put forward tentatively as an "hypothesis," i.e. as a premiss which is assumed until connection with an evident first principle either justifies it or "destroys" it, or shows that it stands in need of modification or correction. Of course, one cannot exclude the possibility that Plato put forward the doctrine tentatively because he (Plato) was not yet certain of it, but it would appear legitimate to suppose that Plato makes Socrates put forward the doctrine in a tentative fashion precisely because he knew very well that the historical Socrates had not reached the metaphysical theory of the Ideas, and that in any case he had not arrived at Plato's final Principle of the Good. It is significant that Plato allows Socrates to divine the Ideal Theory in his "swan-song," when he becomes "prophetic."[1] This might well imply that Plato allows Socrates to divine a certain amount of his (i.e. Plato's) theory, but not all. It is also to be noted that the theory of pre-existence and reminiscence is referred, in the *Meno*, to "priests and priestesses,"[2] just as the sublimest part of the *Symposium* is referred to "Diotima." Some have concluded that these passages were avowedly "Myths" in Plato's eyes, but it might equally well be the case that these hypothetical passages (hypothetical for *Socrates*) reveal something of Plato's own doctrine, as distinct from that of Socrates. (In any case we should not use the doctrine of reminiscence as an excuse for attributing to Plato an explicit anticipation of Neo-Kantian theory. The Neo-Kantians may think that the *a priori* in the Kantian sense is the truth that Plato was getting at or that underlies his words, but they cannot be justified in fathering the explicit doctrine on to Plato, without much better evidence than they can offer.) I conclude, then, that the theory of Ideas, as put forward in the *Phaedo*, represents but a part of Plato's doctrine. It should not be inferred that for Plato himself the Ideas were "*detached*" subsistent universals. Aristotle clearly stated that Plato identified the One with the Good; but this unifying principle, whether already held by Plato when he composed the *Phaedo* (as is most probable) or only later elaborated, certainly does not appear in the *Phaedo*.

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[1] *Phaedo*, 65 c 2 ff.

[2] *Phaedo*, 100 b 5-7.

2. In the *Symposium*, Socrates is represented as reporting a discourse made to him by one Diotima, a "Prophetess," concerning the soul's ascent to true Beauty under the impulse of Eros. From beautiful forms (i.e. bodies), a man ascends to the contemplation of the beauty that is in souls, and thence to science, that he may look upon the loveliness of wisdom, and turn towards the "wide ocean of beauty" and the "lovely and majestic forms

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[1] Cf. *Phaedo*, 84 e 3–85 b 7.

[2] *Meno*, 81 a 5 ff.

which it contains," until he reaches the contemplation of a Beauty that is "eternal, unproduced, indestructible; neither subject to increase nor decay; not partly beautiful and partly ugly; not at one time beautiful and at another time not; not beautiful in relation to one thing and deformed in relation to another; not here beautiful and there ugly; not beautiful in the estimation of some people and deformed in that of others. Nor can this supreme beauty be figured to the imagination like a beautiful face, or beautiful hands, or any other part of the body, nor like any discourse, nor any science. Nor does it subsist in any other thing that lives or is, either in earth, or in heaven, or in any other place; but it is eternally self-subsistent and monoeidic with itself. All other things are beautiful through a participation of it, with this condition, that although they are subject to production and decay, it never becomes more or less, or endures any change." This is the divine and pure, the monoeidic beautiful itself.[1] It is evidently the Beauty of the *Hippias Maior*, "from which all beautiful things derive their beauty."[2]

The priestess Diotima, into whose mouth Socrates puts his discourse on Absolute Beauty and the ascent thereto under the impulse of Eros, is represented as suggesting that Socrates may not be able to follow her to such sublime heights, and she urges him to strain all his attention to reach the obscure depth of the subject.[3] Professor A. E. Taylor interprets this to mean that Socrates is too modest to claim the mystical vision for himself (although he has really experienced it), and so represents himself as but reporting the words of Diotima. Taylor will have nothing to do with the suggestion that the speech of Diotima represents *Plato's* personal conviction, never attained by the historical Socrates. "Much unfortunate nonsense has been written about the meaning of Diotima's apparent doubt whether Socrates will be able to follow her as she goes on to speak of the 'full and perfect vision . . .' It has even been seriously argued that Plato is here guilty of the arrogance of professing that he has reached philosophical heights to which the 'historical' Socrates could not ascend."[4] That such a procedure would be indicative of arrogance on Plato's part might be true, if there were question of a mystical vision, as Taylor apparently thinks there is; but it is by no means certain that there is any question of religious mysticism in the speech of Socrates, and there seems no real reason why Plato should not be able to claim a greater philosophic penetration in regard to the ultimate Principle than Socrates, without thereby laying himself open to any justifiable charge of arrogance. Moreover, if, as Taylor supposes, the opinions put into the mouth of Socrates in the *Phaedo* and the *Symposium* are those of the historic Socrates, how does it come about that in the *Symposium* Socrates speaks as though he had actually grasped the ultimate Principle, the Absolute Beauty, while in the *Phaedo* the theory of Ideas (in which abstract beauty finds a place) is put forward as a tentative hypothesis, i.e. in the very dialogue that purports to give Socrates' conversation before his death? Might we not be justified in expecting that if the historic Socrates had really apprehended the final Principle for certain, some sure indication of this would have been given in his final discourse? I prefer, then, the view that in the *Symposium* the speech of Diotima does not represent the certain conviction of the historic Socrates. In any case, however, this is an academic point: whether the report of Diotima's words represents the conviction of the historic Socrates or of Plato himself, the evident fact remains that some hint (at the very least) of the existence of an Absolute is therein given.

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[1] *Sympos.*, 210 e 1–212 a 7.

[2] *Hippias Maior*, 289 d 2–5.

[3] *Sympos.*, 209 e 5–210 a 4. Cf. 210 e 1–2.

[4] *Plato*, p. 229, note i.

Is this Beauty in itself, the very essence of Beauty, a subsistent essence, "separate" from beautiful things, or is it not? It is true that Plato's words concerning science might be taken to imply a scientific appreciation of the mere universal concept of Beauty which is embodied in varying degrees in various beautiful objects; but the whole tenor of Socrates' discourse in the *Symposium* leads one to suppose that this essential Beauty is no mere concept, but has objective reality. Does this imply that it is "separate?" Beauty in itself or Absolute Beauty is "separate" in the sense that it is real, subsistent, but not in the sense that it is in a world of its own, spatially separate from things. For *ex hypothesi* Absolute Beauty is spiritual; and the categories of time and space, of local separation, simply do not apply in the case of that which is essentially spiritual. In the case of that which transcends space and time, we cannot even legitimately raise the question, *where* it is. It is nowhere, as far as local presence is concerned (though it is not nowhere in the sense of being unreal). The Χωρισμός or separation would thus seem to imply, in the case of the Platonic essence, a reality beyond the subjective reality of the abstract concept—a subsistent reality, but not a local separation. It is, therefore, just as true to say that the essence is immanent, as that it is transcendent: the great point is that it is *real* and independent of particulars, unchanged and abiding. It is foolish to remark that if the Platonic essence is real, it must be somewhere. Absolute Beauty, for instance, does not exist outside us in the sense in which a flower exists outside us—for it might just as well be said to exist inside us, inasmuch as spatial categories simply do not apply to it. On the other hand, it cannot be said to be inside us in the sense that it is purely subjective, is confined to us, comes into being with us, and perishes through our agency or with us. It is both transcendent and immanent, inaccessible to the senses, apprehensible only by the intellect.

To the means of ascent to Absolute Beauty, the signification of Eros, and the question whether a mystical approach is implied, we must return later: at the present I wish simply to point out that in the *Symposium* indications are not wanting that Absolute Beauty is the ultimate Principle of unity. The passage[1] concerning the ascent from different sciences to one science—the science of universal Beauty—suggests that "the wide ocean of intellectual beauty," containing "lovely and majestic forms," is subordinate to or even comprised in the ultimate Principle of Absolute Beauty. And if Absolute Beauty is a final and unifying Principle, it becomes necessary to identify it with the Absolute Good of the *Republic*.

3. In the *Republic* it is clearly shown that the true philosopher seeks to know the essential nature of each thing. He is not concerned to know, for example, a multiplicity of beautiful things or a multiplicity of good things, but rather to discern the essence of beauty and the essence of goodness, which are embodied in varying degrees in particular beautiful things and particular good things. Non-philosophers, who are so taken up with the multiplicity of appearances that they do not attend to the essential nature and cannot distinguish, e.g. the essence of beauty from the many beautiful phenomena, are represented as having only opinion (δόξα) and as lacking in scientific knowledge. They are not concerned with not-being, it is true, since not-being cannot be an object of "knowledge" at all, but is completely unknowable; yet they are no more concerned with true being or reality, which is stable and abiding: they are concerned with fleeting phenomena or appearances, objects which are in a state of *becoming*,

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[1] *Sympos.*, 210 a 4 ff.

constantly coming to be and passing away. Their state of mind is thus one of δόξα and the object of their δόξα is the phenomenon that stands half-way between being and not-being. The state of mind of the philosopher, on the other hand, is one of knowledge, and the object of his knowledge is Being, the fully real, the essential, the Idea or Form.

So far, indeed, there is no direct indication that the essence or Idea is regarded as subsistent or "separate" (so far as the latter term is applicable at all to non-sensual reality); but that it *is* so regarded may be seen from Plato's doctrine concerning the Idea of the Good, the Idea that occupies a peculiar position of pre-eminence in the *Republic.* The Good is there compared to the sun, the light of which makes the objects of nature visible to all and so is, in a sense, the source of their worth and value and beauty. This comparison is, of course, but a comparison, and as such should not be pressed: we are not to suppose that the Good exists as an object among objects, as the sun exists as an object among other objects. On the other hand, as Plato clearly asserts that the Good gives being to the objects of knowledge and so is, as it were, the unifying and all-comprehensive Principle of the essential order, while itself excelling even essential being in dignity and power,[1] it is impossible to conclude that the Good is a mere concept or even that it is a non-existent end, a teleological principle, as yet unreal, towards which all things are working: it is not only an epistemological principle, but also—in some, as yet, ill-defined sense—an *ontological* principle, a principle of being. It is, therefore, real in itself and subsistent.

It would seem that the Idea of the Good of the *Republic* must be regarded as identical with the essential Beauty of the *Symposium.* Both are represented as the high-peak of an intellectual ascent, while the comparison of the Idea of the Good with the sun would appear to indicate that it is the source not only of the goodness of things, but also of their beauty. The Idea of the Good gives being to the Forms or essences of the intellectual order, while science and the wide ocean of intellectual beauty is a stage on the ascent to the essentially beautiful. Plato is clearly working towards the conception of the Absolute, the absolutely Perfect and exemplary Pattern of all things, the ultimate ontological Principle. This Absolute is immanent, for phenomena embody it, "copy" it, partake in it, manifest it, in their varying degrees;

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[1] *Rep.*, 509 b 6–10.

but it is also transcendent, for it is said to transcend even being itself, while the metaphors of participation (μέθεξις) and imitation (μίμησις)[1] imply a distinction between the participation and the Partaken of, between the imitation and the Imitated or Exemplar. Any attempt to reduce the Platonic Good to a mere logical principle and to disregard the indications that it is an ontological principle, necessarily leads to a denial of the sublimity of the Platonic metaphysic—as also, of course, to the conclusion that the Middle Platonist and Neo-Platonist philosophers entirely misunderstood the essential meaning of the Master.

At this point in the discussion there are two important observations to be made:

(i) Aristotle in the *Eudemian Ethics*[2] says that Plato identifies the Good with the One, while Aristoxenus, recalling Aristotle's account of Plato's lecture on the Good, tells us that the audience, who went to the lecture expecting to hear something about human goods, such as wealth, happiness, etc., were surprised when they found themselves listening to a discourse on mathematics, astronomy, numbers and *the identity of the good and one.* In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle says that "Of those who maintain the existence of the unchangeable substances, some say that the one itself is the good itself, but they thought its substance lay mainly in its unity."[3] Plato is not mentioned by name in this passage, but elsewhere[4] Aristotle distinctly says that, for Plato, "the Forms are the cause of the essence of all other things, and the One is the cause of the essence of the Forms." Now, in the *Republic*,[5] Plato speaks of the ascent of the mind to the first principle of the whole, and asserts that the Idea of the Good is inferred to be "the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the lord of light in this world, and the *source of truth and reason* in the other." Hence it would seem only reasonable to conclude that the One, the Good and the essential Beauty are the same for Plato, and that the intelligible world of Forms owes its being in some way to the One. The word "emanation" (so dear to the Neo-Platonists) is nowhere used, and it is difficult to form any precise notion how Plato derived the Forms from the One; but it is clear enough that the One is the unifying Principle. Moreover, the One itself, though immanent in the Forms, is also transcendent, in that it cannot be simply equated with the single Forms. Plato tells us that "the good is not essence, but far exceeds essence in dignity and power," while on the other hand it is "not only the source of intelligibility in all objects of knowledge, but also of their being and essence,"[1] so that he who turns his eye towards the Good, turns it towards "that place where is the full perfection of being."[2] The implication is that the Idea of the Good may rightly be said to transcend being, since it is above all visible and intelligible objects, while on the other hand, as the Supremely Real, the true Absolute, it is the Principle of being and essence in all things.

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[1] These phrases occur in the *Phaedo*.
[2] 1218 a 24.
[3] *Metaph.*, 1091, b 13–15.
[4] *Metaph.*, 988 a 10–11.
[5] 517 b 7–c 4.

In the *Timaeus*, Plato says that "It is hard to find the maker and father of the universe, and having found him, it is impossible to speak of him to all."[3] That the position occupied by the Demiurge in the *Timaeus* suggests that these words apply to him, is true; but we must remember (*a*) that the Demiurge is probably a symbol for the operation of Reason in the universe, and (*b*) that Plato explicitly said that there were subjects on which he refused to write,[4] one of these subjects being without doubt his full doctrine of the One. The Demiurge belongs to the "likely account."[5] In his second letter, Plato says that it is a mistake to suppose that any of the predicates we are acquainted with apply to the "king of the universe,"[6] and in his sixth letter he asks his friends to swear an oath of loyalty "in the name of the God who is captain of all things present and to come, and of the Father of that captain and cause."[7] Now, if the "Captain" is the Demiurge, the "Father" cannot be the Demiurge too, but must be the One; and I think that Plotinus was right in identifying the Father with the One or Good of the *Republic*.

The One is thus Plato's ultimate Principle and the source of the world of Forms, and Plato, as we have seen, thinks that the One transcends human predicates. This implies that the *via negativa* of Neo-Platonist and Christian philosophers is a legitimate approach to the One, but it should not be immediately concluded that the approach to the One is an "ecstatic" approach, as in Plotinus. In the *Republic* it is definitely asserted that the approach is *dialectical*, and that a man attains the vision of the Good by "pure intelligence."[8] By dialectic the highest principle of the soul is raised "to the contemplation of that which is best in existence."[9] To this subject we must return later.

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[1] *Rep.*, 509 b 6–10.

[2] *Rep.*, 526 e 3–4.

[3] *Tim.*, 28 c 3–5.

[4] Cf. *Ep.* 2, 314 b 7–c 4.

[5] *Tim.*, 30 b 6–c 1.

[6] *Ep.* 2, 312 e ff.

[7] *Ep.* 6, 323 d 2–6.

[8] *Rep.* 532 a 5–b 2.

[9] *Rep.*, 532 c 5–6.

(ii) If the Forms proceed from the One—in some undefined manner—what of particular sensible objects? Does not Plato make such a rift between intelligible and visible worlds that they can be no longer interconnected? It would appear that Plato, who in the *Republic*[1] appears to condemn empirical astronomy, was forced by the progress of empirical science to modify his views, and in the *Timaeus* he himself considers nature and natural questions. (Moreover, Plato came to see that the dichotomy between an unchanging, intelligible world of reality and a changing world of unreality is hardly satisfactory. "Shall we be easily persuaded that change and life and soul and wisdom are not really present to what completely is, that it is neither living nor intelligent but is something awful and sacred in its thoughtless and static stability?")[2] In the *Sophist* and *Philebus* it is implied that διάνοια and αἴσθησις (which belong to different segments of the Line) unite together in the scientific judgment of perception. Ontologically speaking, the sensible particular can become the object of judgment and knowledge only in so far as it is really subsumed under one of the Ideas, "partaking" in the specific Form: in so far as it is a class-instance, it is real and can be known. The sensible particular *as such*, however, considered precisely in its particularity, is indefinable and unknowable, and is not truly "real." To this conviction Plato clung, and it is obviously an Eleatic legacy. The sense-world is, therefore, not wholly illusion, but it contains an element of unreality. Yet it can hardly be denied that even this position, with its sharp distinction between the formal and material elements of the particular, would leave the problem of the "separation" of the intelligible world from the sensible world really unresolved. It is this "separation" that Aristotle attacked. Aristotle thought that determinate form and the matter in which it is embodied are inseparable, both belonging to the real world, and, in his opinion, Plato simply ignored this fact and introduced an unjustifiable separation between the two elements. The real universal, according to Aristotle, is the *determined* universal, and the determined universal is an inseparable aspect of the real: it is a λόγος ἔνυλος or definition embodied in matter. Plato did not see this.

(Professor Julius Stenzel made the brilliant suggestion[3] that when Aristotle criticised Plato's "separation," he was criticising Plato for his failure to see that there is no genus alongside the species. He appeals to *Metaph.*, 1037 b 8 ff., where Aristotle attacks Plato's method of logical division for supposing that in the resulting definition the intermediate *differentiae* must be recapitulated, e.g. Plato's method of division would result in our defining man as a "two-footed animal." Aristotle objects to this on the ground that "footedness" is not something alongside "two-footedness." Now, that Aristotle objected to this method of division is true; but his criticism of the Platonic theory of Forms on the ground of the Χωρισμός it introduces, cannot be reduced to the criticism of a logical point, for Aristotle is not criticising Plato merely for putting a generic form alongside the specific form, but for putting Forms in general alongside particulars.[1] It may well be, however, that Aristotle considered that Plato's failure to see that there is no genus alongside the species, i.e. no merely determinable universal, helped to conceal from him the Χωρισμός he was introducing between Forms and particulars—and here Stenzel's suggestion is valuable; but the Χωρισμός attacked by Aristotle cannot be confined to a logical point. That is clear from the whole tenor of Aristotle's criticism.)

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[1] *Rep.*, 529–30. [2] *Sophist*, 248 e 6–249 a 2. [3] *Zahl und Gestalt*, pp. 133 ff.

4. In the *Phaedrus* Plato speaks of the soul who beholds "real existence, colourless, formless and intangible, visible only to the intelligence" (ἡ ἀχρωματός τε καὶ ἀσχημάτιστος καὶ ἀναφὴς οὐσία ὄντως οὖσα, ψυχῆς, κυβερνήτῃ μόνῳ θεατὴ νῷ);[2] and which sees distinctly "absolute justice, and absolute temperance, and absolute science; not such as they appear in creation, nor under the variety of forms to which we nowadays give the name of realities, but the justice, the temperance, the science, which exist in that which is real and essential being" (τὴν ἐν τῷ ὅ ἐστιν ὂν ὄντως ἐπιστήμην οὖσαν). This would seem to me to imply that these Forms or *Ideals* are comprised in the Principle of Being, in the One, or at least that they owe their essence to the One. Of course, if we use the imagination and try to picture to ourselves absolute justice or temperance existing on its own account in a heavenly world, we shall no doubt think Plato's words childishly naïve and ludicrous; but we should ask ourselves what Plato *meant* and should beware of attributing hastily to him such an extraordinary conception. Most probably Plato means to imply, by his figurative account, that the Ideal of Justice, the Ideal of Temperance, etc., are objectively grounded in the Absolute Principle of Value, in the Good, which "contains" within itself the ideal of human nature

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[1] Cf. Hardie, *A Study in Plato*, p. 75.

[2] *Phaedrus*, 247 c 6–8.

and so the ideal of the virtues of human nature. The Good or Absolute Principle of Value has thus the nature of a τέλος; but it is not an unrealised τέλος, a non-existent end-to-be-achieved; it is an existent τέλος, an ontological Principle, the Supremely Real, the perfect Exemplary Cause, the Absolute or One.

5. It is to be noted that at the beginning of the *Parmenides* the question is raised what Ideas Socrates is prepared to admit.[1] In reply to Parmenides, Socrates admits that there are Ideas of "likeness" and "of the one and many," and also of "the just and the beautiful and the good," etc. In answer to a further question, he says that he is often undecided, whether he should or should not include Ideas of man, fire, water, etc.; while, in answer to the question whether he admits Ideas of hair, mud, dirt, etc., Socrates answers, "Certainly not." He admits, however, that he sometimes gets disturbed and begins to think that there is nothing without an Idea, though no sooner has he taken up this position than he "runs away," afraid that he "may fall into a bottomless pit of nonsense and perish." He returns, therefore, "to the Ideas of which I was just now speaking."

Julius Stenzel uses this discussion in an attempt to prove that εἶδος had at first for Plato a definitely valuational connotation, as was but natural in the inheritor of Socrates. It was only later that the term came to be extended to cover all class-concepts. I believe that this is, in the main, correct, and that it was largely this very extension of the term Idea (i.e. *explicit* extension, since it already contained an implicit extension) which forced on Plato's attention difficulties of the type considered in the *Parmenides*. For, as long as the term εἶδος is "laden with moral and aesthetic qualities,"[2] as long as it has the nature of a valuational τέλος, drawing men under the impulse of Eros, the problem of its internal unity or multiplicity does not so obviously arise: it is the Good and the Beautiful in One. But once Ideas of man and other particular objects of our experience are explicitly admitted, the Ideal World threatens to become a Many, a reduplication of this world. What is the relation of the Ideas to one another, and what is their relation to particular things? Is there any real unity at all? The Idea of the Good is sufficiently remote from sensible particulars not to appear as an unwelcome reduplication of the latter; but if there is an Idea of man, for instance, "separate" from individual men, it might well appear as a mere reduplication of the latter. Moreover, is the Idea wholly present in every individual man, or is it only partially present in every individual man? Again, if it is legitimate to speak of a likeness between individual men and the Idea of Man, must you not postulate a τρίτος ἄνθρωπος, in order to account for this resemblance and so proceed on an infinite regress? This type of objection was brought against the Ideal Theory by Aristotle, but it was already anticipated by Plato himself. The difference is, that while Plato (as we shall see later) thought that he had answered the objections, Aristotle did not think that Plato had answered them.

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[1] 130 a 8 ff.

[2] *Plato's Method of Dialectic*, p. 55 (Trs. D. J. Allan, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1940.)

In the *Parmenides*, therefore, the question of the relation of individual objects to the Idea is discussed, objections being raised to the Socratic explanation. According to Socrates the relation may be described in two ways: (i) As a participation (μέθεξις, μετέχειν) of the particular object in the Idea; (ii) as an imitation (μίμησις) of the Idea by the particular object, the particular objects being ὁμοιώματα and μιμήματα of the Idea, the latter being the exemplar or παράδειγμα. (It does not seem possible to refer the two explanations to different periods of Plato's philosophical development—at least, not in any rigid way—since both explanations are found together in the *Parmenides*,[1] and both thoughts occur in the *Symposium*.)[2] The objections raised by Parmenides against these Socratic theories are, no doubt, intended to be serious criticism—as, indeed, they are—and not a mere *jeu d'esprit*, as has been suggested. The objections are real objections, and it would appear that Plato tried to develop his theory of Ideas in an attempt to meet some such criticisms as that which he puts into the mouths of the Eleatics in the *Parmenides*.

Do particular objects participate in the whole Idea or only in part of it? This is the dilemma proposed by Parmenides as a logical consequence of the participation-explanation of the relation between Ideas and particular objects. If the first of the alternatives be chosen, then the Idea, which is one, would be entirely in each of many individuals. If the second of the alternatives be chosen, then the Form or Idea is unitary and divisible (or many) at the same time. In either case a contradiction is involved. Moreover, if equal things are equal by the presence of a certain amount of equality, then they are equal by what is less than equality. Again, if something is big by participation in bigness it is big by possessing that which is less than bigness—which seems to be a contradiction. (It is to be noted that objections of this kind suppose that the Ideas are what amount to individual objects on their own account, and so they serve to show the impossibility of regarding the Idea in this way.)

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[1] *Parm.*, 132 d 1 ff.

[2] *Sympos.*, 211 b 2 (μετέχοντα). In 212 a 4, sense-objects are spoken of as εἴδωλα, which implies "imitation."

Socrates suggests the imitation-theory, that particular objects are copies of the Ideas, which are themselves patterns or exemplars; the resemblance of the particular objects to the Idea constitutes its participation in it. Against this Parmenides argues that, if white things are like whiteness, whiteness is also like white things. Hence, if the likeness between white things is to be explained by postulating a Form of whiteness, the likeness between whiteness and white things should also be explained by postulating an archetype, and so on indefinitely. Aristotle argued in much the same way, but all that really follows from the criticism is that the Idea is not simply another particular object, and that the relation between the particular objects and the Idea cannot be the same as that between different particular objects.[1] The objection, then, is to the point as showing the necessity for further consideration of the true relations, but this does not show that the Ideal Theory is totally untenable.

The objection is also raised that on Socrates' theory the Ideas would be unknowable. Man's knowledge is concerned with the objects of this world, and with the relations between individual objects. We can, for example, know the relation between the individual master and the individual slave, but this knowledge is insufficient to inform us as to the relationship between absolute mastership (the Idea of Mastership) and absolute slavery (the Idea of Slavery). For that purpose we should require absolute knowledge and this we do not possess. This objection, too, shows the hopelessness of regarding the Ideal World as merely parallel to this world: if we are to know the former, then there must be some objective basis in the latter which enables us to know it. If the two worlds are merely parallel, then, just as we would know the sensible world without being able to know the Ideal World, so a divine intelligence would know the Ideal World without being able to know the sensible world.

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[1] Proclus pointed out that the relation of a copy to its original is a relation not only of resemblance, but also of derivation-from, so that the relation is not symmetrical. Cf. Taylor, *Plato*, p. 358: "My reflection in the glass is a reflection of my face, but my face is not a reflection of it."

The objections raised are left unanswered in the *Parmenides*, but it is to be noticed that Parmenides was not concerned to deny the existence of an intelligible world: he freely admits that if one refuses to admit the existence of absolute Ideas at all, then philosophic thinking goes by the board. The result of the objections that Plato raises against himself in the *Parmenides* is, therefore, to impel him to further exact consideration of the nature of the Ideal World and of its relation to the sensible world. It is made clear by the difficulties raised that some principle of unity is required which will, at the same time, not annihilate the many. This is admitted in the dialogue, though the unity considered is a unity in the world of Forms, as Socrates "did not care to solve the perplexity in reference to visible objects, but only in reference to thought and to what may be called ideas."[1] The difficulties are, therefore, not solved in the *Parmenides*; but the discussion must not be regarded as a destruction of the Ideal Theory, for the difficulties simply indicate that the theory must be expounded in a more satisfactory way than Socrates has expounded it hitherto.

In the second part of the dialogue Parmenides himself leads the discussion and undertakes to exemplify his "art," the method of considering the consequences which flow from a given hypothesis and the consequences which flow from denying that hypothesis. Parmenides proposes to start from the hypothesis of the One and to examine the consequences which are seen to flow from its assertion and its denial. Subordinate distinctions are introduced, the argument is long and complicated and no satisfactory conclusion is arrived at. Into this argument one cannot enter in a book like the present one, but it is necessary to point out that this second part of the *Parmenides* is no more a refutation of the doctrine of the One than the first part was of the Ideal Theory. A real refutation of the doctrine of the One would certainly not be put into the mouth of Parmenides himself, whom Plato greatly respected. In the *Sophist* the Eleatic Stranger apologises for doing violence to "father Parmenides,"[2] but, as Mr. Hardie aptly remarks, this apology "would hardly be called for if in another dialogue father Parmenides had done violence to himself."[3] Moreover, at the end of the *Parmenides* agreement is voted as to the assertion that, "If One is not, then nothing is." The participants may not be sure of the status of the many or

[1] 135 e 1–4.

[2] 241 a.

[3] *A Study in Plato*, p. 106.

of their relation to the One or even of the precise nature of the One; but they are at least agreed that there *is* a One.

6. In the *Sophist* the object before the interlocutors is to define the Sophist. They have a notion, of course, what the Sophist is, but they wish to *define* the Sophist's nature, to pin him down, as it were, in a clear formula (λόγος). It will be remembered that in the *Theaetetus* Socrates rejected the suggestion that knowledge is true belief plus an account (λόγος); but in that dialogue the discussion concerned particular sensible objects, while in the *Sophist* the discussion turns on class-concepts. The answer which is given to the problem of the *Theaetetus* is, therefore, that knowledge consists in apprehending the class-concept by means of genus and difference, i.e. by *definition*. The method of arriving at definition is that of analysis or division (διαίρεσις, διαιρεῖν κατ' εἴδη), whereby the notion or name to be defined is subsumed under a wider genus or class, which latter is then divided into its natural components. One of these natural components will be the notion to be defined. Previous to the division a process of synthesis or collecting (συνάγειν εἰς ἕν, συναγωγή) should take place, through which terms that are at least *prima facie* interrelated are grouped together and compared, with a view to determining the genus from which the process of division is to start. The wider class chosen is divided into two mutually-exclusive sub-classes, distinguished from one another by the presence or absence of some peculiar characteristic; and the process is continued until the *definiendum* is finally tracked down and defined by means of its genus and differences. (There is an amusing fragment of Epicrates, the comic poet, describing the classification of a pumpkin in the Academy.)

There is no need to enter either upon the actual process of tracking down the Sophist, or upon Plato's preliminary example of the method of division (the definition of the angler); but it must be pointed out that the discussion makes it clear that the Ideas may be one and many at the same time. The class-concept "Animal," for example, is one; but at the same time it is many, in that it contains within itself the sub-classes of "Horse," "Fox," "Man," etc. Plato speaks as though the generic Form pervades the subordinate specific Form or is dispersed throughout them, "blending" with each of them, yet retaining its own unity. There is a communion (κοινωνία) between Forms, and one Form partakes of (μετέχειν) another (as in "Motion exists" it is implied that

Motion blends with Existence); but we should not suppose that one Form partakes of another in the same sense in which the individual partakes of the specific Form, for Plato would not speak of the individual blending with the specific Form. The Forms thus constitute a hierarchy, subordinate to the One as the highest and all-pervading Form; but it is to be remembered that for Plato the "higher" the Form is, the richer it is, so that his point of view is the opposite to that of the Aristotelian, for whom the more "abstract" the concept, the poorer it is.

There is one important point to be noticed. The process of division (Plato, of course, believed that the logical division detects the grades of real being) cannot be prolonged indefinitely, since ultimately you will arrive at the Form that admits of no further division. These are the *infimae species* or ἄτομα εἴδη. The Form of Man, for instance, is indeed "many" in this sense, that it contains the genus and all relative differences, but it is not many in the sense of containing further subordinate specific classes into which it could be divided. On the contrary, below the ἄτομον εἶδος Man there stand *individual men*. The ἄτομα εἴδη, therefore, constitute the lowest rung of the ladder or hierarchy of Forms, and Plato very probably considered that by bringing down the Forms, by the process of division, to the border of the sensible sphere, he was providing a connecting link between τὰ ἀορατά and τὰ ὁρατά. It may be that the relation between the individuals and the *infimae species* was to be elucidated in the *Philosopher*, the dialogue which, it is conjectured, was once intended by Plato to follow the *Statesman* and which was never written; but it cannot be said that the chasm was ever satisfactorily bridged, and the problem of the Χωρισμός remained. (Julius Stenzel put forward the suggestion that Plato adopted from Democritus the principle of dividing until the atom is reached, which, in Plato's hands, becomes the intelligible "atomic Form." It is certainly significant that geometrical shape was a feature of the atom of Democritus, while geometrical shapes play an important part in Plato's picture of the formation of the world in the *Timaeus*; but it would seem that the relation of Plato to Democritus must always remain conjectural and something of a puzzle.)[1]

I have mentioned the "blending" of the Forms, but it is also to be noticed that there are Forms which are incompatible, at least in their "particularity," and will not "blend," e.g. Motion and Rest. If I say: "Motion does not rest," my statement is true, since it expresses the fact that Motion and Rest are incompatible and do not blend: if, however, I say: "Motion is Rest," my statement is false, since it expresses a combination that is not objectively verified. Light is thus thrown on the nature of false judgment which perplexed Socrates in the *Theaetetus*; though more relevant to the actual problem of the *Theaetetus* is the discussion of false statement in 262 e ff. of the *Sophist*. Plato takes as an example of a true statement, "Theaetetus sits," and as an example of a false statement, "Theaetetus flies." It is pointed out that Theaetetus is an existent subject and that Flying is a real Form, so that false statement is not a statement about *nothing*. (Every significant statement is about *something*, and it would be absurd to admit non-existent facts or objective falsehoods.) The statement has a meaning, but the relation of participating between the actual "sitting" of Theaetetus and the different Form "Flying" is missing. The statement, therefore, has a meaning, but the statement as a whole does not correspond with the fact as a whole. Plato meets the objection that there can be no false statement because there is nothing for it to mean, by an appeal to the Theory of Forms (which does not appear in the *Theaetetus*, with the consequence that in that dialogue the problem could not be solved). "We can have discourse only through the weaving together of Forms."[1] It is not meant that all significant statements must concern Forms exclusively (since we can make significant statements about singular things like Theaetetus), but that every significant statement involves the use of at least one Form, e.g. "Sitting" in the true statement, "Theaetetus sits."[2]

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[1] Cf. Chapter X, *Democritus*, in *Plato's Method of Dialectic*.

The *Sophist* thus presents us with the picture of a hierarchy of Forms, combining among themselves in an articulated complex; but it does not solve the problem of the relation of the particulars to the "atomic Forms." Plato insists that there are εἴδωλα or things which are not non-existent, but which at the same time are not fully real; but in the *Sophist* he realises that it is no longer possible to insist on the completely unchanging character of all Reality. He still holds that the Forms are changeless, but somehow or other spiritual motion must be included in the Real. "Life, soul, understanding" must have a place in what is perfectly real, since, if Reality as a whole excludes all change, intelligence (which involves life) will have no real existence anywhere at all. The conclusion is that "we must admit that what changes and change itself are real things,"[1] and that "Reality or the sum of things is both at once—all that is unchangeable and all that is in change."[2] Real being must accordingly include life, soul and intelligence, and the change implied by them; but what of the εἴδωλα, the purely sensible and perpetually changing, mere becoming? What is the relation of this half-real sphere to Real Being? This question is not answered in the *Sophist*.

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[1] *Soph.*, 259 e 5–6.

[2] To postulate Forms of Sitting and Flying may be a logical application of Plato's principles, but it obviously raises great difficulties. Aristotle implies that the upholders of the Ideal Theory did not go beyond postulating Ideas of natural substances (*Met.* 1079 a). He also asserts that according to the Platonists there are no Ideas of Relations, and implies that they did not believe in Ideas of Negation.

7. In the *Sophist*[3] Plato clearly indicates that the whole complex of Forms, the hierarchy of genera and species, is comprised in an all-pervading Form, that of Being, and he certainly believed that in tracing out the structure of the hierarchy of Forms by means of διαίρεσις he was detecting, not merely the structure of logical Forms, but also the structure of ontological Forms of the Real. But whether successful or not in his division of the genera and species, was it of any help to him in overcoming the Χωρισμός, the separation between the particulars and the *infimae species*? In the *Sophist* he showed how division is to be continued until the ἄτομον εἶδος is reached, in the apprehension of which δόξα and αἴσθησις are involved, though it is λόγος alone that determines the "undetermined" plurality. The *Philebus* assumes the same, that we must be able to bring the division to an end by setting a limit to the unlimited and comprehending sense-particulars in the lowest class, so far as they can be comprehended. (In the *Philebus* Ideas are termed ἑνάδες or μονάδες). The important point to notice is that for Plato the sense-particulars *as such* are the unlimited and the undetermined: they are limited and determined only in so far as they are, as it were, brought within the ἄτομον εἶδος. This means that the sense-particulars in so far as they are not brought within the ἄτομον εἶδος and cannot be brought within it, are not true objects at all: they are not fully real. In pursuing the διαίρεσις as far as the ἄτομον εἶδος Plato was, in his own eyes, comprehending all Reality. This enables him to use the words: "But the form of the infinite must not be brought near to the many until one has observed its full number,

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[1] 249 b 2–3.

[2] 249 d 3–4.

[3] Cf. 253 b 8 ff.

the number between the one and the infinite; when this has been learnt, each several individual thing may be forgotten and dismissed into the infinite."[1] In other words, the division must be continued until particulars in their intelligible reality are comprehended in the ἄτομον εἶδος: when this has been done, the remainder, i.e. the sense-particulars, in their non-intelligible aspect, as impenetrable to λόγος, may be dismissed into the sphere of what is fleeting and only semi-real, that which cannot truly be said to *be*. From Plato's own point of view, therefore, the problem of the Χωρισμός may have been solved; but from the point of view of anyone who will not accept his doctrine of sense-particulars, it is very far from being solved.

8. But though Plato may have considered that he had solved the problem of the Χωρισμός, it still remained to show how the sense-particulars come into existence at all. Even if the whole hierarchy of Forms, the complex structure comprised in the all-embracing One, the Idea of Being, or the Good is an ultimate and self-explanatory principle, the Real and the Absolute, it is none the less necessary to show how the world of appearance, which is not simply not-being, even if it is not fully being, came into existence? Does it proceed from the One? If not, what is its cause? Plato made an attempt to answer this question in the *Timaeus*, though I can here only summarise very briefly his answer, as I shall return later to the *Timaeus* when dealing with the physical theories of Plato.

In the *Timaeus* the Demiurge is pictured as conferring geometrical shapes upon the primary qualities within the Receptacle or Space, and so introducing order into disorder, taking as his model in building up the world the intelligible realm of Forms. Plato's account of "creation" is most probably not meant to be an account of creation in time or *ex nihilo*: rather is it an analysis, by which the articulate structure of the material world, the work of a rational cause, is distinguished from the "primeval" chaos, without its being necessarily implied that the chaos was ever actual. The chaos is probably primeval only in the logical, and not in the temporal or historic sense. But if this is so, then the non-intelligible part of the material world is simply assumed: it exists "alongside of" the intelligible world. The Greeks, it would seem, never really envisaged the possibility of creation out of nothing (*ex nihilo sui et subiecti*). Just as the logical process of διαίρεσις stops at the ἄτομον εἶδος and Plato in the *Philebus* dismisses the merely particular εἰς τὸ ἄπειρον, so in the physical analysis of the *Timaeus* the merely particular, the non-intelligible element (that which, logically considered, cannot be comprehended under the ἄτομον εἶδος) is dismissed into the sphere of that which is "in discordant and unordered motion,"[1] the factor that the Demiurge "took over." Therefore, just as, from the viewpoint of the Platonic logic, the sense-particulars as such cannot be deduced, cannot be rendered fully intelligible (did not Hegel declare that Herr Krug's pen could not be deduced?), so, in the Platonic physics, the chaotic element, that into which order is "introduced" by Reason, is not explained: doubtless Plato thought that it was inexplicable. It can neither be *deduced* nor has it been *created out of nothing*. It is simply there (a fact of experience), and that is all that we can say about it. The Χωρισμός accordingly remains, for, however "unreal" the chaotic may be, it is not not-being *tout simple*: it is a factor in the world, a factor that Plato leaves unexplained.

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[1] *Philebus*, 16 d 7–e 2.

9. I have exhibited the Ideas or Forms as an ordered, intelligible structure, constituting in their totality a One in Many, in such a way that each subordinate Idea is itself one in many, as far as the ἄτομον εἶδος, below which is τὸ ἄπειρον. This complex of Forms is the Logical-Ontological Absolute. I must now raise the question, whether Plato regarded the Ideas as the Ideas of God or as independent of God. For the Neo-Platonists, the Ideas were the Thoughts of God: how far can such a theory be ascribed to Plato himself? If it could be so ascribed, it would clearly go a long way towards showing how the "Ideal World" is at once a unity and a plurality—a unity as contained in the Divine Mind, or Nous, and as subordinated to the Divine Plan, a plurality as reflecting the richness of the Divine Thought-content, and as only realisable in Nature in a multitude of existent objects.

In the tenth book of the *Republic*[2] Plato says that God is the Author (Φυτουργός) of the ideal bed. More than that, God is the Author of all other things—"things" in the context meaning other essences. From this it might appear that God created the ideal bed by *thinking* it, i.e. by comprising within His intellect the Idea of the world, and so of man and of all his requirements. (Plato did not, of course, imagine that there was a material ideal bed.) Moreover, since Plato speaks of God as "king" and "truth"

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[1] *Tim.*, 30 a 4-5.

[2] *Rep.*, 597 b 5-7.

(the tragic poet is at the third remove ἀπὸ βασιλέως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας), while he has already spoken of the Idea of the Good as κυρία ἀλήθειαν καὶ νοῦν παραχομένη[1] and as Author of being and essence in intelligible objects (Ideas),[2] it might well appear that Plato means to Identify God with the Idea of the Good.[3] Those who wish to believe that this was really Plato's thought, and who proceed to interpret "God" in a theistic sense, would naturally appeal to the *Philebus*,[4] where it is implied that the Mind that orders the universe is possessed of soul (Socrates certainly says that wisdom and mind cannot exist without soul), so that God would be a living and intelligent being. We should thus have a personal God, Whose Mind is the "place" of Ideas, and Who orders and rules the universe, "king of heaven and earth."[5]

That there is much to be said for this interpretation of Plato's thought, I would not deny: moreover, it is naturally attractive to all those who desire to discover a tidy system in Plato and a theistic system. But common honesty forces one to admit the very serious difficulties against this tidy interpretation. For example, in the *Timaeus* Plato pictures the Demiurge as introducing order into the world and forming natural objects according to the model of the Ideas or Forms. The Demiurge is probably a symbolic figure representing the Reason that Plato certainly believed to be operative in the world. In the *Laws* he proposes the institution of a Nocturnal Council or Inquisition for the correction and punishment of atheists. Now, "atheist" means, for Plato, first and foremost the man who denies the operation of Reason in the world. Plato certainly admits that soul and intelligence belong to the Real, but it does not seem possible to assert with certainty that, in Plato's view, the Divine Reason is the "place" of the Ideas. It might, indeed, be argued that the Demiurge is spoken of as desiring that "all things should come as near as possible to being like himself," and that "all things should be good"[6]—phrases which suggest that the separation of the Demiurge from the Ideas is a Myth and that, in Plato's real thought, he is the Good and the ultimate Source of the Ideas. That the *Timaeus* never says that the Demiurge created the Ideas or is their Source, but pictures them as distinct from him (the

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[1] *Rep.*, 517 c 4.

[2] *Rep.*, 509 b 6–10.

[3] The fact that Plato speaks of God as "king" and "truth," while the Idea of the Good is "the source of truth and reason," suggests that God or Reason is *not* to be identified with the Good. A Neo-Platonic interpretation is rather implied.

[4] *Phil.*, 30 c 2–e 2.

[5] *Phil.*, 28 c 6 ff.

[6] *Tim.*, 29 e 1–30 a 7.

Demiurge being depicted as Efficient Cause and the Ideas as Exemplary Cause), does not seem to be conclusive evidence that Plato did *not* bring them together; but it should at least make us beware of asserting positively that he *did* bring them together. Moreover, if the "Captain" and God of the sixth letter is the Demiurge or Divine Reason, what of the "Father"? If the "Father" is the One, then it would not look as though the One and the whole hierarchy of the Ideas can be explained as thoughts of the Demiurge.[1]

But if the Divine Reason is not the ultimate, is it possible that the One is the ultimate, not only as ultimate Exemplary Cause, but also as ultimate Productive Cause, being itself "beyond" mind and soul as it is "beyond" essence? If so, can we say that the Divine Reason proceeds in some way (timelessly, of course) from the One, and that this Reason either contains the Ideas as thoughts or exists "alongside" the Ideas (as depicted in the *Timaeus*)? In other words, can we interpret Plato on Neo-Platonic lines?[2] The remark about the "Captain" and the "Father" in the sixth letter might be understood in support of this interpretation, while the fact that the Idea of the Good is never spoken of as a *soul* might mean that the Good is beyond soul, i.e. more than soul, not less than soul. The fact that in the *Sophist* Plato says, through the mouth of the Eleatic Stranger, that "Reality or the sum of things" must include soul, intelligence and life,[3] implies that the One or total Reality (the Father of *Ep*. 6) comprises not only the Ideas but also mind. If so, what is the relation of Mind to the World-soul of the *Timaeus*? The World-soul and the Demiurge are distinct in that dialogue (for the Demiurge is depicted as "making" the World-soul); but in the *Sophist* it is said that intelligence must have life, and that both these must have soul "in which they reside."[4] It is, however, possible that the making of the World-soul by the Demiurge is not to be taken literally at all, especially as it is stated in the *Phaedrus* that soul is a beginning and uncreated,[5] and that the World-soul and the Demiurge represent together the Divine Reason immanent in the world. If this were so, then we should have the One, the Supreme Reality, embracing and in some sense the Source (though not the Creator in time) of the Divine Reason (=Demiurge=

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[1] Though in *Timaeus*, 37 c, the "Father" means the Demiurge.

[2] The Neo-Platonists held that the Divine Reason was not ultimate, but proceeded from the One.

[3] *Soph*., 248 e 6–249 d 4.

[4] 249 a 4–7.

[5] 245 c 5–246 a 2.

World-soul) and the Forms. We might then speak of the Divine Reason as the "Mind of God" (if *we* equated God with the One) and the Forms as Ideas of God; but we should have to bear in mind that such a conception would bear a closer resemblance to later Neo-Platonism than to specifically Christian philosophy.

That Plato had some idea of what he meant hardly needs to be stressed, but in view of the evidence at our disposal we must avoid dogmatic pronouncements as to what he *did* mean. Therefhre, although the present writer is inclined to think that the second interpretation bears some resemblance to what Plato actually thought, he is very far from putting it forward as certainly the authentic philosophy of Plato.

10. We must now touch briefly on the vexed question of the mathematical aspect of the Ideal Theory.[1] According to Aristotle,[2] Plato declared that:

(i) The Forms are Numbers;
(ii) Things exist by participation in Numbers;
(iii) Numbers are composed of the One and the great-and-small or "indeterminate duality" (ἀόριστος δυάς) instead of, as the Pythagoreans thought, the unlimited (ἄπειρον) and limit (πέρας);
(iv) τὰ μαθηματικά occupy an intermediate position between Forms and things.

With the subject of τὰ μαθηματικά or the "intermediates" I have already dealt when treating of the Line: it remains, therefore, to consider the following questions:

(i) Why did Plato identify Forms with Numbers and what did he mean?
(ii) Why did Plato say that things exist by participation in numbers?
(iii) What is meant by composition from the One and the great-and-small?

With these questions I can only deal very briefly. Not only would an adequate treatment require a much greater knowledge of mathematics, both ancient and modern, than the present writer possesses; but it is also doubtful if, with the material at our disposal, even the mathematically-gifted specialist could give a really adequate and definitive treatment.

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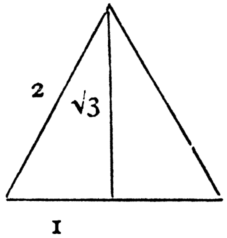
[1] My debt to Professor Taylor's treatment of the topic will be obvious to all those who have read his articles in *Mind* (Oct. 1926 and Jan. 1927). Cf. Appendix to *Plato*.

[2] *Metaph.*, A, 6, 9; M and N.

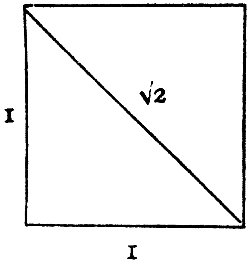
(i) Plato's motive in identifying Forms with Numbers seems to be that of rationalising or rendering intelligible the mysterious and transcendental world of Forms. To render intelligible in this case means to find the *principle of order*.

(ii) Natural objects embody the principle of order to some extent: they are, for example, instances of the logical universal and tend towards the realisation of their form: they are the handiwork of intelligence and exhibit design.

(*a*) This truth is expressed in the *Timaeus* by saying that the sensible characters of bodies are dependent on the geometrical structure of their corpuscles. This geometrical structure is determined by that of their faces, and that of their faces by the structure of the two types of triangles (isosceles right-angled and right-angled scalene) from which they are built up. The ratios of the sides of the triangles to one another may be expressed numerically.



Half-equilateral or right-angled scalene.



Half-square or right-angled isosceles.

(*b*) Another expression of the same truth is the doctrine of the *Epinomis* that the apparently mazy movements of the heavenly bodies (the primary objects of official cult) really conform to mathematical law and so express the wisdom of God.[1]

(*c*) Natural bodies, therefore, embody the principle of order and may, to a greater or less extent, be "mathematicised." On the other hand, they cannot be entirely "mathematicised"—they are not Numbers—for they embody also contingency, an irrational element, "matter." They are thus not said to *be* Numbers, but to *participate* in Numbers.

(iii) This partly irrational character of natural objects gives us the key to the understanding of the "great and the small."

(*a*) The triplet of numbers which gives the ratio of the sides to one another is, in the case of the isosceles right-angled triangle,

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[1] 990 c 5–991 b 4.

$1, 1, \sqrt{2}$, and in the case of the right-angled scalene, $1, \sqrt{3}, 2$. In either case, then, there is an irrational element which expresses the *contingency* in natural objects.

(*b*) Taylor points out that in a certain sequence of fractions—nowadays derived from a "continual fraction," but actually alluded to by Plato himself[1] and by Theo of Smyrna[2]—alternate terms converge upwards to $\sqrt{2}$ as limit and upper bound, while alternate other terms converge downwards to $\sqrt{2}$ as limit and lower bound. The terms of the whole sequence, therefore, in their original order, are in consequence alternately "greater and less" than $\sqrt{2}$, while jointly converging to $\sqrt{2}$ as their unique limit. We have, then, the characteristics of the great and the small or the indeterminate duality. The "endlessness" of the continued fraction, the "irrationality," seems to be identified with the material element, the element of non-being, *in all that becomes*. It is a mathematical expression of the Heraclitean flux-character of natural entities.

This may seem fairly clear as regards natural bodies. But what are we to make of Aristotle's dictum that "from the great and the small, by participation in the One, come the Forms, i.e. the Numbers"?[3] In other words, how can we explain the extension of the form-matter composition to the integers themselves?

If we take the series $1 + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8} + \ldots + \frac{1}{2}n + \ldots$ we have a series that converges to the number 2. It is clear, then, that an infinite series of rational fractions may converge towards a rational limit, and examples could be given in which the μέγα καὶ μικρόν are involved. Plato would seem to have extended this composition from the μέγα καὶ μικρόν to the integers themselves, passing over, however, the fact that 2 as the limit of convergence cannot be identified with the integer 2, since the integers are *presupposed* as a series from which the convergents are formed. In the Platonic Academy the integers were derived or "educed" from One by the help of the ἀόριστος δυάς, which seems to have been identified with the *integer* 2, and to have been given the function of "doubling." The result is that the integers are derived in a non-rational series. On the whole we may say that, pending new light from philologically exact mathematical history, the theory of the composition of the integers from the One and the great-and-small will continue to look like a puzzling excrescence on the Platonic theory of Ideas.

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[1] *Rep.*, 546 c. [2] *Expositio*, ed. Hiller, 43, 5–45, 8. [3] *Metaph.*, 987 b 21–2.

11. In regard to the whole tendency to pan-mathematisation I cannot but regard it as unfortunate. That the real is rational is a presupposition of all dogmatic philosophy, but it does not follow that the whole of reality can be rationalised by us. The attempt to reduce all reality to mathematics is not only an attempt to rationalise all reality—which is the task of philosophy, it may be said—but presupposes that all reality can be rationalised *by us*, which is an assumption. It is perfectly true that Plato admits an element in Nature that cannot be submitted to mathematisation, and so to rationalisation, but his attempt to rationalise reality and the extension of this attempt to the spiritual sphere has a flavour about it which may well remind us of Spinoza's deterministic and mechanistic view of reality (expressed in his *Ethica more geometrico demonstrata*) and of Hegel's attempt to comprehend the inner essence of ultimate Reality or God within the formulae of logic.

It may at first sight appear strange that the Plato who composed the *Symposium*, with its ascent to Absolute Beauty under the inspiration of Eros, should have been inclined to pan-mathematicism; and this apparent contrast might seem to support the view that the Socrates of the Platonic dialogues does not give Plato's opinions, but his own, that while Socrates invented the Ideal Theory as it appears in the dialogues, Plato "arithmetised" it. Yet, apart from the fact that the "mystical" and predominantly religious interpretation of the *Symposium* is very far from having been demonstrated as the certain interpretation, the apparent contrast between the *Symposium*—assuming for the moment that the "ascent" is a religious and mystical one—and Plato's mathematical interpretation of the Forms, as related to us by Aristotle, would hardly seem to be a compelling argument for the view that the Platonic Socrates is the historic Socrates, and that Plato reserved most of his personal views for the Academy, and, in the dialogues, for expression by other *dramatis personae* than the figure of Socrates. If we turn to Spinoza, we find a man who, on the one hand, was possessed by the vision of the unity of all things in God, and who proposed the ideal intuition of the *amor intellectualis Dei*, and who, on the other hand, sought to extend the mechanical aspect of Physics to all reality. Again, the example of Pascal should be sufficient to show us that mathematical genius and a deeply religious, even mystical, temperament are not at all incompatible.

Moreover, pan-mathematicism and idealism might even be held to lend support to one another. The more Reality is mathematicised, the more, in a sense, it is transferred on to an ideal plane, while, conversely, the thinker who desires to find the true reality and being of Nature in an ideal world might easily grasp the proffered hand of mathematics as an aid in the task. This would apply especially in the case of Plato, since he had before him the example of the Pythagoreans, who combined not only an interest in mathematics, but also a trend towards pan-mathematicism with religious and psychological interests. We are, therefore, in no way entitled to declare that Plato *could not* have combined in himself religious and transcendentalist tendencies with a tendency to pan-mathematicism, since, whether incompatible or not from the abstract viewpoint, history has shown that they are not incompatible from the psychological standpoint. If the Pythagoreans were possible, if Spinoza and Pascal were possible, then there is no reason why we should say, i.e. *a priori*, that Plato could not have written a mystical book and delivered the lecture on the Good in which, we learn, he spoke of arithmetic and astronomy and identified the One and the Good. But, though we cannot assert this *a priori*, it still remains to inquire whether in actual fact Plato meant such a passage as the speech of Socrates in the *Symposium* to be understood in a religious sense.

12. By what process does the mind arrive at the apprehension of the Ideas, according to Plato? I have already spoken briefly of the Platonic dialectic and method of διαίρεσις, and nobody will deny the importance of dialectic in the Platonic theory; but the question arises whether Plato did or did not envisage a religious, even a mystical, approach to the One or Good. *Prima facie* at least the *Symposium* contains mystical elements, and, if we come to the dialogue with our minds full of the interpretation given it by Neo-Platonist and Christian writers, we shall probably find in it what we are seeking. Nor can this interpretation be set aside *ab initio*, for certain modern scholars of great and deserved repute have lent their powerful support thereto.

Thus, referring to Socrates' speech in the *Symposium*, Professor Taylor comments: "In substance, what Socrates is describing is the same spiritual voyage which St. John of the Cross describes, for example, in the well-known song, *En una noche oscura*, which opens his treatise on the *Dark Night*, and Crashaw hints at more obscurely all through his lines on *The Flaming Heart*, and

Bonaventura charts for us with precision in the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*."[1] Others, however, will have none of this; for them Plato is no mystic at all, or if he does display any mystical leanings, it is only in the weakness of old age that he does so. Thus Professor Stace declares, that "the Ideas are rational, that is to say, they are apprehended through reason. The finding of the common element in the manifold is the work of inductive reason, and through this alone is the knowledge of the Ideas possible. This should be noted by those persons who imagine that Plato was some sort of benevolent mystic. The imperishable One, the absolute reality, is apprehended, not by intuition or in any kind of mystic ecstasy, but only by rational cognition and laborious thought."[2] Again, Professor C. Ritter says that he would like "to direct a critical remark against the recent attempts, oft repeated, to stamp Plato as a mystic. These are wholly based on forged passages of the *Epistles*, which I can only consider as inferior achievements of a spiritual poverty which seeks to take refuge in occultism. I am astonished that anyone can hail them as enlightened wisdom, as the final result of Platonic philosophising."[3] Professor Ritter is, needless to say, perfectly well aware that certain passages in the certainly authentic works of Plato lend themselves to interpretation in the mystical sense; but, in his view, such passages are not only poetical and mythical in character, but were understood as such by Plato himself. In his earlier works Plato throws out suggestions, is feeling his way, as it were, and sometimes clothes his half-formed thoughts in poetical and mythical language; but when, in later dialogues, he applies himself to a more scientific treatment of his epistemological and ontological doctrines, he no longer brings in priestesses or uses poetic symbolism.

It would seem that, if we regard the Good predominantly in its aspect as Ideal or τέλος, Eros might well be understood as simply the impulse of man's higher nature towards the good and virtue (or, in the language of the doctrine of pre-existence and reminiscence, as the natural attraction of man's higher nature towards the Ideal which he beheld in the state of pre-existence). Plato, as we have seen, would not accept a merely relativistic ethic: there are absolute standards and norms, absolute ideals. There is thus an ideal of justice, an ideal of temperance, an ideal of courage, and these ideals are real and absolute, since they do not vary but are the unchanging standards of conduct. They are not "things," for they are ideal; yet they are not merely subjective, because they "rule," as it were, man's acts. But human life is not lived out atomistically, apart from Society and the State, nor is man a being entirely apart from nature; and so we can arrive at the apprehension of an all-embracing Ideal and τέλος, to which all particular Ideals are subordinate. This universal Ideal is the Good. It is apprehended by means of dialectic, i.e. *discursively*; but in man's higher nature there is an attraction towards the truly good and beautiful. If man mistakenly takes sensible beauty and good, e.g. the beauty of physical objects, as his true good, then the impulse of attraction of Eros is directed towards these inferior goods, and we have the earthly and sensual man. A man may, however, be brought to see that the soul is higher and better than the body, and that beauty of soul is of more value than beauty of body. Similarly, he may be brought to see the beauty in the formal sciences[1] and the beauty of the Ideals: the power of Eros then attracts him "towards the wide ocean of intellectual beauty" and "the sight of the lovely and majestic forms which it contains."[2] Finally, he may come to apprehend how all the particular ideals are subordinate to one universal Ideal or τέλος, the Good-in-itself, and so to enjoy "the science" of this universal beauty and good. The rational soul is akin to the Ideal,[3] and so is able to contemplate the Ideal and to delight in its contemplation once the sensual appetite has been restrained.[4] "There is none so worthless whom Love cannot impel, as it were by a divine inspiration, towards virtue."[5] The true life for man is thus the philosophic life or the life of wisdom, since it is only the philosopher who attains true universal science and apprehends the rational character of Reality. In the *Timaeus* the Demiurge is depicted as forming the world according to the Ideal or Exemplary Pattern, and as endeavouring to make it as much like the Ideal as the refractory matter at his disposal will permit. It is for the philosopher to apprehend the Ideal and to endeavour to model his own life and that of others according to the Pattern. Hence the place accorded to the Philosopher-King in the *Republic*.

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[1] *Plato*, p. 225.

[2] *Critical Hist.*, pp. 190–1.

[3] *The Essence of Plato's Philosophy*, p. 11.

Eros or Love is pictured in the *Symposium*[6] as "a great god," holding an intermediate place between the divine and the mortal.

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[1] Cf. *Philebus*, 51 b 9–d 1.
[2] *Sympos.*, 210 d 3–5.
[3] Cf. *Phaedo*.
[4] Cf. *Phaedrus*.
[5] *Sympos.*, 179 a 7–8.
[6] 201 d 8 ff.

Eros, in other words, "the child of Poverty and plenty," is *desire*, and desire is for what is not yet possessed, but Eros, though poor, i.e. not yet possessing, is the "earnest desire for the posession of happiness and that which is good." The term "Eros" is often confined to one species of Eros—and that by no means the highest —but it is a term of wider connotation than physical desire, and is, in general, "the desire of generation in the beautiful, both with relation to the body and the soul." Moreover, since Eros is the desire that good be for ever present with us, it must of necessity be also the desire for immortality.[1] By the lower Eros men are compelled to seek immortality through the production of children: through a higher Eros poets like Homer and statesmen like Solon leave a more enduring progeny "as the pledges of that love which subsisted between them and the beautiful." Through contact with Beauty itself the human being becomes immortal and produces true virtue.

Now all this might, it seems, be understood of a purely intellectualist, in the sense of discursive, process. None the less, it is true that the Idea of the Good or the Idea of Beauty is an ontological Principle, so there can be no *a priori* reason why it should not itself be the object of Eros and be apprehended intuitively. In the *Symposium* the soul at the summit of the ascent is said to behold Beauty "on a sudden," while in the *Republic* the Good is asserted to be seen last of all and only with an effort—phrases which might imply an intuitional apprehension. What we might call the "logical" dialogues may give little indication of any mystical approach to the One; but that does not necessarily mean that Plato never envisaged any such approach, or that, if he ever envisaged it, he had rejected it by the time he came to write the *Parmenides*, the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*. These dialogues deal with definite problems, and we have no right to expect Plato to present all aspects of his thought in any one dialogue. Nor does the fact that Plato never proposes the One or the Good as the object of official religious cult necessarily militate against the possibility of his admitting an intuitional and mystical approach to the One. In any case we would scarcely expect Plato to propose the radical transformation of the popular Greek religion (though in the *Laws* he does propose its purification, and hints that true religion consists in a virtuous life and recognition of Reason's operation in the universe, e.g. in the movements of the heavenly bodies); while, if the One is "beyond" being and soul, it might never occur to him that it could be the object of a popular cult. After all, Neo-Platonists, who certainly admitted an "ecstatic" approach to the One, did not hesitate to lend their support to the traditional and popular religion.

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[1] 206 a 7–207 a 4.

In view of these considerations, it would appear that we are forced to conclude that (*a*) we are certain as to the *dialectical* approach, and (*b*) we are uncertain as to any mystical approach, while not denying that some passages of Plato's writings could be understood as implying such an approach, and may *possibly* have been meant by Plato to be so understood.

13. It is evident that the Platonic Theory of Forms constitutes an enormous advance on pre-Socratic Philosophy. He broke away from the *de facto* materialism of the pre-Socratics, asserting the existence of immaterial and invisible Being, which is not but a shadow of this world but is real in a far deeper sense than the material world is real. While agreeing with Heraclitus, that sensible things are in a state of flux, of becoming, so that they can never really be said to *be*, he saw that this is but one side of the picture: there is also true Being, a stable and abiding Reality, which can be known, which is indeed the supreme object of knowledge. On the other hand, Plato did not fall into the position of Parmenides, who by equating the universe with a static One, was forced to deny all change and becoming. For Plato the One is transcendent, so that becoming is not denied but is fully admitted in the "created" world. Moreover, Reality itself is not without Mind and life and soul, so that there is spiritual movement in the Real. Again, even the transcendent One is not without the Many, just as the objects of this world are not entirely without unity, for they participate in or imitate the Forms and so partake in order to some extent. They are not fully real, but they are not mere Not-being; they have a share in being, though true Being is not material. Mind and its effect, order, are present in the world: Mind or Reason permeates, as it were, this world and is not a mere *Deus ex machina*, like the Nous of Anaxagoras.

But if Plato represents an advance on the pre-Socratics, he represents an advance also on the Sophists and on Socrates himself. On the Sophists, since Plato, while admitting the relativism of bare αἴσθησις, refused, as Socrates had before him, to acquiesce in the relativity of science and moral values. On Socrates himself, since Plato extended his investigations beyond the sphere of ethical standards and definitions into those of logic and ontology. Moreover, while there is no certain indication that Socrates attempted any systematic unification of Reality, Plato presents us with a Real Absolute. Thus while Socrates and the Sophists represent a reaction to the foregoing systems of cosmology and to the speculations concerning the One and the Many (though in a true sense Socrates' pre-occupation with definiteness concerns the One and the Many), Plato took up again the problems of the Cosmologists, though on a much higher plane and without abandoning the position won by Socrates. He may thus be said to have attempted the synthesis of what was valuable, or appeared to him valuable, in the pre-Socratic and Socratic philosophies.

It must, of course, be admitted that the Platonic Theory of Forms is unsatisfactory. Even if the One or Good represents for him the ultimate Principle, which comprises all the other Forms, there remains the Χωρισμός between the intelligible and the purely sensible world. Plato may have thought that he had solved the problem of the Χωρισμός from the epistemological standpoint, by his doctrine of the union of λόγος, δόξα and αἴσθησις in the apprehension of the ἄτομα εἴδη; but, ontologically speaking, the sphere of pure Becoming remains unexplained. (It is, however, doubtful if the Greeks *ever* "explained" it.) Thus Plato does not appear to have cleared up satisfactorily the meaning of μέθεξις and μίμησις. In the *Timaeus*[1] he says explicitly that the Form never enters "into anything else anywhere," a statement which shows clearly that Plato did *not* regard the Form or Idea as an intrinsic constituent of the physical object. Therefore, in view of Plato's own statements, there is no point in trying to delete the difference between him and Aristotle. Plato may well have apprehended important truths to which Aristotle failed to do justice, but he certainly did not hold the same view of the universal as that held by Aristotle. Consequently, "participation" for Plato should not be taken to mean that there is an "ingredience" of "eternal objects" into "events." "Events" or physical objects are thus, for Plato, no more than imitations or mirror-images of the Ideas, and the conclusion is inescapable that the sensible world exists "alongside" the intelligible world, as the latter's shadow and fleeting image. The Platonic Idealism is a grand and sublime philosophy which contains much truth (for the purely sensible world is indeed neither the only world nor yet the highest and most "real" world); but, since Plato did not claim that the sensible world is mere illusion and not-being, his philosophy inevitably involves a Χωρισμός, and it is useless to attempt to slur over the fact. After all, Plato is not the only great philosopher whose system has landed him in difficulties in regard to "particularity," and to say that Aristotle was right in detecting the Χωρισμός in the Platonic philosophy is not to say that the Aristotelian view of the universal, when taken by itself, obviates all difficulties. It is far more probable that these two great thinkers emphasised (and perhaps over-emphasised) different aspects of reality which need to be reconciled in a more complete synthesis.

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[1] 52 a 1-4

But, whatever conclusions Plato may have arrived at, and whatever imperfections or errors there may be in his Theory of Ideas, we must never forget that Plato meant to establish ascertained truth. He firmly held that we can, and do, apprehend essences in thought, and he firmly held that these essences are not purely subjective creations of the human mind (as though the ideal of justice, for instance, were purely man's creation and relative in character): we do not create them, we discover them. We judge of things according to standards, whether moral and aesthetic standards or generic and specific types: all judgment necessarily implies such standards, and if the scientific judgment is objective, then these standards must have objective reference. But they are not found, and cannot be found, in the sense-world as such: therefore they must be transcendent of the fleeting world of sense-particulars. Plato really did not raise the "critical problem," though he undoubtedly believed that experience is inexplicable, unless the objective existence of the standards is maintained. We should not attribute to Plato the position of a Neo-Kantian, for even if (which we do not mean to admit) the truth underlying the doctrines of pre-existence and reminiscence is the Kantian *a priori*, there is no evidence that Plato himself used these "myths" as figurative expressions for the doctrine of a purely subjective *a priori*. On the contrary, all the evidence goes to show that Plato believed in the truly objective reference of concepts. Reality can be known and Reality is rational; what cannot be known is not rational, and what is not fully real is not fully rational. This Plato held to the last, and he believed that if our experience (in a wide sense) is to be explained or rendered coherent, it can only be explained on the basis of his theory. If he was no Kantian, he was, on the other hand, no mere romancer or mythologist: he was a *philosopher*, and the theory of Forms was put forward as a philosophic and rational theory (a philosophic "hypothesis" for the explanation of experience), not as an essay in mythology or popular folklore, nor as the mere expression of the longing for a better world than this one.

It is, then, a great mistake to change Plato into a poet, as though he were simply an "escapist" who desired to create a supercorporeal world, an ideal world, wherein he could dwell away from the conditions of daily experience. If Plato could have said with Mallarmé, "La chair est triste, hélas! et j'ai lu tous les livres, Fuir! là-bas fuir . . . ,"[1] it would have been because he believed in the *reality* of a supersensual and intelligible world, which it is given to the philosopher to *discover*, not to create. Plato did not seek to transmute "reality" into dream, creating his own poetical world, but to rise from this inferior world to the superior world of the pure Archetypal Ideas. Of the subsistent reality of these Ideas he was profoundly convinced. When Mallarmé says: "Je dis: une fleur, et hors de l'oubli où ma voix relègue aucun contour, en tant que quelque chose d'autre, que les calices sus, musicalement se lève, idée même et suave, l'absente de tous bouquets," he is thinking of the creation of the ideal flower, not of the discovery of the Archetypal Flower in the Platonic sense. Just as in a symphony the instruments may transmute a landscape into music, so the poet transmutes the concrete flowers of experience into idea, into the music of dream-thought. Moreover, in actual practice Mallarmé's emptying-out of particular circumstances served rather the purpose of widening the associative, evocative and allusive scope of the idea or image. (And because these were so personal, it is so difficult to understand his poetry.) In any case, however, all this is foreign to Plato, who, whatever his artistic gifts may have been, is primarily a philosopher, not a poet.

Nor are we entitled to regard Plato's aim as that of transmuting reality in the fashion of Rainer Maria Rilke. There may be truth in the contention that we build up a world of our own by clothing it, as it were, from within ourselves—the sunlight on the wall may mean more to us than it means "in itself," in terms of atoms and electrons and light-waves, because of our subjective impressions, and the allusions, associations, overtones and undertones that we supply—but Plato's effort was not to enrich, beautify and transmute this world by subjective evocations, but to pass beyond the sensible world to the world of thought, the Transcendental Reality. Of course, it still remains open to us, if we are so inclined, to discuss the psychological origins of Plato's thought (it *might* be that he was psychologically an escapist); but, if we do so, we must at the same time remember that this is not equivalent to an interpretation of what Plato meant. Whatever "subconscious" motives he may or may not have had, he certainly meant to pursue a serious, philosophic and scientific inquiry.

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[1] Stéphane Mallarmé, *Poems*. (Trans. by Roger Fry. Chatto & Windus, 1936.)

Nietzsche accused Plato of being an enemy to this world, of setting up a transcendental world out of enmity to this world, of contrasting a "There" with a "Here" out of dislike of the world of experience and of human life and out of moral presuppositions and interests. That Plato was influenced by disappointments in actual life, e.g. by the political conduct of the Athenian State or by his disappointment in Sicily, is probably true; but he was not actively hostile to this world; on the contrary, he desired to train statesmen of the true type, who would, as it were, carry on the work of the Demiurge in bringing order into disorder. He was hostile to life and this world, only in so far as they are disordered and fragmentary, out of harmony with or not expressing what he believed to be stable realities and stable norms of surpassing value and universal significance. The point is not so much what influences contributed to the formation of Plato's metaphysic, whether as causes, conditions or occasions, as the question: "Did Plato prove his position or did he not?"—and with this question a man like Nietzsche does not concern himself. But we cannot afford to dismiss *a priori* the notion that what there is of order and intelligibility in this world has an objective foundation in an invisible and transcendent Reality, and I believe that Plato not only attained a considerable measure of truth in his metaphysic, but also went a long way towards showing that it *was* the truth. If a man is going to talk at all, he is certain to make valuational judgments, judgments which presuppose objective norms and standards, values which can be apprehended with varying degrees of insight, values which do not "actualise" themselves but depend for their actualisation on the human will, co-operating with God in the realisation of value and the ideal in human life. We have, of course, no direct intuition of the Absolute, as far as natural knowledge is concerned (and in so far as the Platonic theory implies such a knowledge it is inadmissible, while in so far as it identifies true knowledge with direct apprehension of the Absolute it might seem to lead, unwittingly, to scepticism), but by rational reflection we can certainly come to the knowledge of objective (and indeed transcendentally-grounded) values, ideals and ends, and this after all is Plato's main point.

CHAPTER XXI

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PLATO

1. PLATO in no way fell a victim to the crude psychology of the former Cosmological Schools, in which the soul was reduced to air or fire or atoms: he was neither materialist nor epiphenomenalist, but an uncompromising spiritualist. The soul is clearly distinct from the body; it is man's most valuable possession, and the true tendance of the soul must be its chief concern. Thus at the close of the *Phaedrus*, Socrates prays: "Beloved Pan, and all ye other Gods who here are present, grant me to be beautiful in the inner man, and all I have of outer things to be consonant with those within. May I count the wise man only rich. And may my store of gold be such none but the temperate man can bear."[1] The reality of the soul and its pre-eminence over the body finds emphatic expression in Plato's psychological dualism, which corresponds to his metaphysical dualism. In the *Laws*[2] Plato defines the soul as "self-initiating motion" (τὴν δυναμένην αὐτὴν κινεῖν κίνησιν) or the "source of motion." This being so, the soul is prior to the body in the sense that it is superior to the body (the latter being moved without being the source of motion) and must rule the body. In the *Timaeus* Plato says that "the only existing thing which properly possesses intelligence is soul, and this is an invisible thing, whereas fire, water, earth and air are all visible bodies";[3] and in the *Phaedo* he shows that the soul cannot be a mere epiphenomenon of the body. Simmias suggests that the soul is only the harmony of the body and perishes when the body, of which it is the harmony, perishes; but Socrates points out that the soul can rule the body and its desires, whereas it is absurd to suppose that a mere harmony can rule that of which it is the harmony.[4] Again, if the soul were a mere harmony of the body, it would follow that one soul could be more of a soul than another (since a harmony will admit of increase or diminution), which is an absurd supposition.

But although Plato asserts an essential distinction between sou and body, he does not deny the influence that may be exercised on the soul by or through the body. In the *Republic* he includes

[1] 279 b 8–c 3. [2] 896 a 1–2. [3] 46 d 5–7. [4] 85 e 3–86 d 4, 93 c 3–95 a 2.

physical training among the constituents of true education, and he rejects certain types of music because of the deleterious effect they have on the soul. In the *Timaeus*, again, he admits the evil influence that can be wrought by bad physical education and by bodily habits of vice, which may even bring about an irremediable state in which the soul is enslaved,[1] and in the *Laws* he stresses the influence of heredity.[2] In fact, a defective constitution inherited from the parents and a faulty education or environment are responsible for most of the soul's ills. "No one is willingly bad; the bad man becomes bad because of some faulty habit of body and a stupid upbringing, and these are unwelcome evils that come to any man without his choice."[3] Even if, therefore, Plato speaks on occasion as though the soul merely dwelt in the body and used it, we must not represent him as denying any interaction of soul and body on one another. He may not have *explained* interaction, but this is a most difficult task in any case. Interaction is an obvious fact, and has to be accepted: the situation is certainly not bettered by denying interaction, because one cannot fully explain it, or by reducing soul to body in order to do away with the necessity of giving any explanation at all or of confessing that one has not got one to give.

2. In the *Republic* we find the doctrine of the tripartite nature of the soul,[4] a doctrine which is said to have been borrowed from the Pythagoreans.[5] The doctrine recurs in the *Timaeus*, so we can hardly be justified in supposing that Plato ever abandoned it.[6] The soul consists of three "parts"—the rational "part" (τὸ λογιστικόν), the courageous or spirited "part" (τὸ θυμοειδές) and the appetitive "part" (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν). The word "part" may justifiably be used in this connection, since Plato himself employs the term μέρος; but I put it just now in inverted commas in order to indicate that it is a metaphorical term and should not be taken to mean that the soul is extended and material. The word μέρος appears in 444 b 3 of the fourth book of the *Republic*, and before this Plato uses the word εἶδος, a word that shows that he regarded the three parts as forms or functions or principles of action, not as parts in the material sense.

τὸ λογιστικόν is what distinguishes man from the brute, and is the highest element or formality of the soul, being immortal and akin to the divine. The two other formalities, τὸ θυμοειδές and τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν, are perishable. Of these the spirited part is the nobler (in man more akin to moral courage), and is, or should be, the natural ally of reason, though is is found in animals. τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν refers to bodily desires, for the rational part of the soul has its own desires, e.g. the passion for truth, Eros, which is the rational counterpart of the physical Eros. In the *Timaeus*[1] Plato locates the rational part of the soul in the head, the spirited part in the breast, and the appetitive part below the midriff. The location of the spirited element in heart and lungs was an ancient tradition, going back to Homer; but whether or not Plato understood these locations literally, it is hard to say. He may have meant that these locations are the points of interaction on the body of the several principles of the soul: did not Descartes (who certainly believed in the spirituality of the soul) locate the point of interaction in the pineal gland? But it is difficult to believe that Plato ever worked out his psychology systematically, as may be seen from the following considerations.

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[1] *Tim.*, 86 b ff. [2] Laws, 775 b ff. [3] *Tim.*, 86 d 7–e 3. [4] Bk. 4.

[5] Cf. Cic., *Tusc. Disp.*, 4, 5, 10. (In this passage Cicero refers to *two* parts, the rational and the non-rational parts.)

[6] *Tim.*, 69 d 6–70 a 7.

Plato declared that the soul is immortal, and the *Timaeus* certainly teaches that only the rational part of the soul enjoys this privilege.[2] But if the other parts of the soul are mortal and perishable, then they must be separable from the rational part in some mysterious way or they must form a different soul or souls. The apparent insistence on the simplicity of the soul in the *Phaedo* might be referred to the rational part; but in the Myths (e.g. of the *Republic* and the *Phaedrus*) it is implied that the soul survives in its totality, at least that it preserves memory in the state of separation from the body. I do not mean to suggest that all that is contained in the Myths is to be taken literally, but only to point out that their evident supposition that the soul after death retains memory and is affected by its previous life in the body, whether for good or evil, implies the possibility of the soul surviving in its totality and retaining at least the remote potentiality of exercising the spirited and appetitive functions, even though it could not exercise them actually in the state of separation from the body. However, this remains no more than a possible interpretation, and in view of Plato's own express statements and in view of his general dualistic position, it would seem probable that for him only τὸ λογιστικόν survives, and that the other parts of the soul perish entirely. If the conception of the three elements of the souls as three μέρη conflicts with the conception of three εἴδη, then that is simply a proof that Plato never fully elaborated his psychology or worked out the implications of the statements he made.

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[1] *Tim., ibid.*

[2] *Tim.,* 69 c 2–e 4.

3. Why did Plato assert the tripartite nature of the soul? Mainly owing to the evident fact of the conflict within the soul. In the *Phaedrus* occurs the celebrated comparison in which the rational element is likened to a charioteer, and the spirited and appetitive elements to two horses.[1] The one horse is good (the spirited element, which is the natural ally of reason and "loves honour with temperance and modesty"), the other horse is bad (the appetitive element, which is "a friend to all riot and insolence"); and, while the good horse is easily driven according to the directions of the charioteer, the bad horse is unruly and tends to obey the voice of sensual passion, so that it must be restrained by the whip. Plato, therefore, takes as his *point de départ* the fact of experience that there are frequently rival springs of action within man; but he never really discusses how this fact can be reconciled with the unity of consciousness, and it is significant that he expressly admits that "to explain what the soul is, would be a long and most assuredly a godlike labour," whereas "to say what it resembles is a shorter and a human task."[2] We may conclude, then, that the tendency to regard the three principles of action as principles of one unitary soul and the tendency to regard them as separable μέρη remain unreconciled in Plato's psychology.

Plato's main interest is, however, evidently the ethical interest of insisting on the right of the rational element to rule, to act as charioteer. In the *Timaeus* the rational part of the soul, the immortal and "divine" element, is said to be made by the Demiurge out of the same ingredients as the World-Soul, while the mortal parts of the soul, together with the body, are made by the celestial gods.[3] This is doubtless a mythical expression of the fact that the rational element of the soul is the highest and is born to rule, has a natural right to rule, because it is more akin to the divine. It has a natural affinity with the invisible and intelligible world, which it is able to contemplate, whereas the other elements of the soul are bound up essentially with the body, i.e. with the phenomenal world, and have no direct part in reason and rational activity and cannot behold the world of Forms.

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[1] 246 a 6 ff.

[2] 246 a 4–6.

[3] 41 c 6–42 e 4, 69 b 8–c 8.

This dualistic conception reappears in Neo-Platonism, in St. Augustine, in Descartes, etc.[1] Moreover, in spite of the adoption of the Peripatetic doctrine of the soul by St. Thomas Aquinas and his School, the Platonic *way of speaking* remains and must always remain the "popular" way of speaking among Christians, since the *fact* that influenced Plato's thought, the fact of the interior conflict in man, naturally looms large in the minds of all those who support the Christian Ethic. It should, however, be noted that the fact that we feel this conflict *within ourselves* demands a more unified view of the soul than is afforded by the Platonic psychology. For, if there were a plurality of souls within man—the rational and irrational—then our consciousness of the conflict as taking place within ourselves and the consciousness of moral responsibility would be inexplicable. I do not mean to imply that Plato was entirely blind to the truth, but rather to suggest that he laid such stress on one aspect of the truth that he tended to neglect the other aspect, and so failed to give any really satisfactory rational psychology.

4. That Plato asserted the immortality of the soul is clear enough. From his explicit assertions it would appear, as we have seen, that this is confined to one part of the soul, τὸ λογιστικόν, though it is just possible that the soul survives in its totality, although it cannot, obviously enough, exercise its lower functions in a state of separation from the body. It is true, however, that the latter position might appear to lead to the conclusion that the soul is more imperfect and worse off in a state of separation from the body than it is in this mortal life—a conclusion which Plato would certainly refuse to accept.

Complete rejection of the Platonic Myths would seem to be prompted, to a certain extent at least, by the desire to get rid of any notion of sanctions after death, as if a doctrine of rewards and punishments were irrevelant—and even hostile—to morality. But is it fair or in accordance with principles of historical criticism to father this attitude on Plato? It is one thing to admit that the details of the Myths are not meant to be taken seriously (all admit this), and quite another thing to say that the conception of a future life, the character of which is determined by conduct in this life, is itself "mythical." There is no real evidence that Plato himself regarded the Myths in their entirety as mere moonshine:

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[1] Cf. St. Aug.: *Homo anima rationalis est mortali atque terreno utens corpore.* (*De moribus Ecc. cath.*, I, 27.)

if he did, why did he put them forward at all? It seems to the present writer that Plato was by no means indifferent to the theory of sanctions, and that this was one of the reasons why he postulated immortality. He would have agreed with Leibniz that "in order to satisfy the hope of the human race, it must be proved that the God Who governs all is just and wise, and that He will leave nothing without recompense and without punishment. These are the great foundations of ethics."[1]

How did Plato attempt to prove immortality?

(i) In the *Phaedo*[2] Socrates argues that contraries are produced from contraries, as "from stronger, weaker," or "from sleeping, awaking, and from awaking, sleeping." Now, life and death are contraries, and from life is produced death. We must, therefore, suppose that from death life is produced.

This argument rests on the unproved assumption of an eternal cyclic process: it also supposes that a contrary is produced from a contrary, as the matter out of which it proceeds or is made. The argument would hardly satisfy us: besides, it says nothing of the condition of the soul in its state of separation from the body, and would, by itself, lead to the doctrine of the wheel of rebirth. The soul in one "period" on earth might have no conscious remembrance of any former period on earth, so that all that is "proved" is that the soul survives, not that the individual survives *qua* individual.

(ii) The next argument adduced in the *Phaedo*[3] is that from the *a priori* factor in knowledge. Men have a knowledge of standards and absolute norms, as is implied in their comparative judgments of value. But these absolutes do not exist in the sense-world: therefore man must have beheld them in a state of pre-existence. Similarly, sense-perception cannot give us knowledge of the necessary and universal. But a youth, even one who has had no mathematical education, can, by a process of questioning alone, without teaching, be induced to "give out" mathematical truths. As he has not learnt them from anybody and cannot get them from sense-perception, the implication is that he apprehended them in a state of pre-existence, and that the process of "learning" is simply a process of reminiscence (cf. *Meno*, 84 ff.).

As a matter of fact, the process of questioning employed by Socrates in the *Meno* is really a way of teaching, and in any case a certain amount of mathematical knowledge is tacitly presupposed. However, even if the mathematical science cannot be accounted for by "abstraction," mathematics could still be an *a priori* science, without our being compelled to postulate pre-existence. Even supposing that mathematics could, theoretically at least, be worked out entirely *a priori* by the slave boy of *Meno*, that would not necessitate his having pre-existed: there is always an alternative on Kantian lines.[1]

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[1] Letter to unknown correspondent about 1680, Duncan, *Philosophical Works of Leibniz*, p. 9.

[2] 70 d 7–72 e 2

[3] 72 e 3–77 d 5

Simmias points out[2] that this argument proves no more than that the soul existed before its union with the body: it does not prove that the soul survives death. Socrates accordingly observes that the argument from reminiscence must be taken in conjunction with the preceding argument.

(iii) The third argument in the *Phaedo* (or second, if the two previous arguments are taken together) is from the uncompounded and deiform nature of the soul—from its spirituality, as we would say.[3] Visible things are composite and subject to dissolution and death—and the body is of their number. Now, the soul can survey the invisible and unchanging and imperishable Forms, and by coming thus into contact with the Forms, the soul shows itself to be more like them than it is to visible and corporeal things, which latter are mortal. Moreover, from the fact that the soul is naturally destined to rule the body, it appears to be more like the divine than the mortal. The soul, as we may think, is "divine"—which for the Greeks meant immortal and unchanging.

(This argument has developed into the argument from the higher activities of the soul and the spirituality of the concept to the spiritual and uncompounded nature of the soul.)

(iv) Another argument of the *Phaedo* occurs in Socrates' answer to the objections of Cebes. (To Socrates' refutation of the "epiphenomenalism" suggested by Simmias, I have referred earlier.) Cebes suggests[4] that the expenditure of energy which is undergone by the soul in its successive bodily lives may "wear it out," so that in the end it will "perish altogether in some one of the deaths." To this Socrates replies with another proof of immortality.[5] The existence of Forms is admitted. Now, the presence of one Form will not admit of the presence of a contrary

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[1] I do not mean to imply an acceptance of the Kantian Critique, but simply to point out that, even on Plato's assumption, his conclusion is not the only one possible.

[2] 77.

[3] 78 b 4–80 e 1.

[4] 86 e 6–88 b 8.

[5] 103 c 10–107 a 1.

Form, nor will a thing that is what it is by virtue of its participation in one Form admit of the simultaneous presence of a contrary Form, e.g. though we cannot say that fire is *warmth*, it is *warm*, and will not admit of the opposite predicate "cold" simultaneously. Soul is what it is by virtue of its participation in the Form of Life: therefore it will not admit of the presence of the contrary Form, "death." When, therefore, death approaches, the soul must either perish or withdraw. That it does not perish is assumed. Strictly speaking, then, this argument should not be termed an argument for the imperishability of the soul, once granted its spirituality. Cebes is understood by Socrates to accept the spirituality of the soul, but to be arguing that it might wear itself out. Socrates' answer practically comes to this, that a spiritual principle cannot wear itself out.

(v) In the *Republic*[1] Socrates assumes the principle that a thing cannot be destroyed or perish except through some evil that is inherent in it. Now, the evils of the soul are "unrighteousness, intemperance, cowardice, ignorance"; but these do not destroy it, for a thoroughly unjust man may live as long or longer than a just man. But if the soul is not destroyed by its own internal corruption, it is unreasonable to suppose that it can be destroyed by any external evil. (The argument evidently supposes dualism.)

(vi) In the *Phaedrus*[2] it is argued that a thing which moves another, and is moved by another, may cease to live as it may cease to be moved. The soul, however, is a self-moving principle,[3] a source and beginning of motion, and that which is a beginning must be uncreated, for if it were not uncreated, it would not be a beginning. But if uncreated, then indestructible, for if soul, the beginning of motion were destroyed, all the universe and creation would "collapse and come to a standstill."

Now, once granted that the soul is the principle of motion, it must always have existed (if motion is from the beginning), but obviously this does little to prove personal immortality. For all this argument shows, the individual soul might be an emanation from the World-Soul, to which it returns at bodily death. Yet on reading the *Phaedo* in general and the Myths of the *Phaedo*, *Gorgias* and *Republic*, one cannot avoid the impression that Plato believed in real personal immortality. Moreover, passages such as that in which Socrates speaks of this life as a preparation for eternity,[1] and remarks like that made by Socrates in the *Gorgias*,[2] that Euripides might be right in saying that life here is really death and death really life (a remark which has an Orphic ring about it), can hardly permit one to suppose that Plato, in teaching immortality, meant to affirm a mere persistence of τὸ λογιστικόν without any personal consciousness or continued self-identity. It is far more reasonable to suppose that he would have agreed with Leibniz when the latter asks: "Of what use would it be to you, sir, to become king of China on condition of forgetting what you have been? Would it not be the same as if God at the same time that he destroyed you, created a king in China?"[3]

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[1] 608 d 3–611 a 2. [2] 245 c 5 ff. [3] Cf. *Laws*, 896 a 1–b 3.

To consider the Myths in detail is not necessary, for they are but pictorial representations of the truth that Plato wished to convey, namely, that the soul persists after death, and that the soul's life hereafter will be in accordance with its conduct on this earth. How far Plato seriously intended the doctrine of successive reincarnations, which is put forward in the Myths, is uncertain: in any case it would appear that there is a hope for the philosophic soul of escaping from the wheel of reincarnation, while it would also appear that there may be incurable sinners who are flung for ever into Tartarus. As already mentioned, the presentation of the future life in the Myths is hardly consonant with Plato's assertion that only τὸ λογιστικόν survives, and in this sense I should agree with Ritter when he says: "It cannot be maintained with certainty that Plato was convinced of the immortality of the soul, as that is taught in the Myths of the *Gorgias*, the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*."[4]

Plato's psychological doctrine is, therefore, not a systematically elaborated and consistent body of "dogmatic" statements: his interest was undoubtedly largely ethical in character. But this is not to say that Plato did not make many acute psychological observations, which may be found scattered throughout the dialogues. We have only to think of the illustrations he gives in the *Theaetetus* of the process of forgetting and remembering, or the distinction between memory and recollection in the *Philebus*.[5]

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[1] *Rep.*, 498 b 3–d 6. [2] 492 e 8–11. [3] Duncan, p. 9. [4] *Essence*, p. 282.
[5] *Theaet.*, 191 c 8 and ff.; *Phil.*, 33 c 8–34 c 2.

CHAPTER XXII

MORAL THEORY

1. *The Summum Bonum*

PLATO'S ethic is eudaemonistic, in the sense that it is directed towards the attainment of man's highest good, in the possession of which true happiness consists. This highest good of man may be said to be the true development of man's personality as a rational and moral being, the right cultivation of his soul, the general harmonious well-being of life. When a man's soul is in the state it ought to be in, then that man is happy. At the beginning of the *Philebus* two extreme positions are taken up by Protarchus and Socrates *causa argumenti*. Though they are both agreed that the good must be a state of soul, Protarchus is prepared to maintain that the good consists in *pleasure*, while Socrates will maintain that the good consists in *wisdom*. Socrates proceeds to show that pleasure as such cannot be the true and sole human good, since a life of unmixed pleasure (bodily pleasure is understood), in which neither mind nor memory nor knowledge nor true opinion had any share, "would be, not a human life, but that of a *pulmo marinus* or an oyster."[1] Not even Protarchus can think such a life desirable for a human being. On the other hand, a life of "unmixed mind," which was destitute of pleasure, could not be the sole good of man; even if intellect is the highest part of man and intellectual activity (especially the contemplation of the Forms) is man's highest function, man is not pure intellect. Thus the good life for man must be a "mixed" life, neither exclusively the life of the mind nor yet exclusively the life of sense-pleasure. Plato, therefore, is prepared to admit those pleasures which are not preceded by pain, e.g. the intellectual pleasures,[2] but also pleasures which consist in the satisfaction of desire, provided that they are innocent and are enjoyed in moderation. Just as honey and water must be mixed in due proportion in order to make a pleasing drink, so pleasant feeling and intellectual activity must be mixed in due proportion in order to make the good life of man.[3]

First of all, Plato says, the good life must include all knowledge of the truer type, the exact knowledge of timeless objects. But the man who was acquainted only with the exact and perfect curves and lines of geometry, and had no knowledge at all of the rough approximations to them which we meet with in daily life, would not even know how to find his way home. So second-class knowledge, and not only the first-class variety, must be admitted into the mixture: it will do a man no harm, provided that he recognises the second-class objects for what they are, and does not mistake the rough approximations for the exact truth. In other words, a man need not turn his back completely on this mortal life and the material world in order to lead the truly good life, but he must recognise that this world is not the only world, nor yet the highest world, but a poor copy of the ideal. (Music, says Protarchus, must be admitted, "if human life is to be a life at all," in spite of the fact that it is, according to Socrates, "full of guesswork and imitation" and "wanting in purity."[1])

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[1] 21 c 1-8.

[2] Cf. 51.

[3] 61 b 4 ff.

All the "water" having thus been admitted to the mixing-bowl, the question arises, how much "honey" to put in. The deciding vote in this question, how much pleasure to admit, rests with knowledge. Now, knowledge, says Plato, would claim kinship with the class of "true" and "unmixed" pleasures; but, as to the rest, knowledge will accept only those which accompany health and a sober mind and any form of goodness. The pleasures of "folly and badness" are quite unfit to find a place in the blend.

The secret of the blend which forms the good life is thus measure or proportion: where this is neglected, there exists, not a genuine mixture, but a mess. The good is thus a form of the beautiful, which is constituted by measure and proportion, and συμμετρία, καλόν and ἀλήθεια will be the three forms or notes found in the good. The first place goes to "seasonableness," τὸ καίριον, the second to proportion or beauty or completeness (τὸ σύμμετρον καὶ καλόν καὶ τὸ τέλεον καὶ ἱκανον), the third to νοῦς καὶ φρόνησις, the fourth to ἐπιστῆμαι καὶ τέχναι καὶ δόξαι ὀρθαί, the fifth to the pleasures which have no pain mixed with them (whether involving actual sensation or not), and the sixth to the moderate satisfaction of appetite when, of course, this is harmless. Such, then, is man's true good, the good life, εὐδαιμονία, and the compelling motive in the search for it is Eros, the desire or longing for good or happiness.

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[1] 62 c 1–4.

Man's *summum bonum* or happiness includes, of course, knowledge of God—obviously so if the Forms are the Ideas of God; while, even if the *Timaeus* were taken literally and God were supposed to be apart from the Forms and to contemplate them, man's own contemplation of the Forms, which is an integral constituent of his happiness, would make him akin to God. Moreover, no man could be happy who did not recognise the Divine operation in the world. Plato can say, therefore, that the Divine happiness is the pattern of man's happiness.[1]

Now, happiness must be attained by the pursuit of virtue, which means becoming as like to God as it is possible for man to become. We must become "like the divine so far as we can, and that again is to become righteous with the help of wisdom."[2] "The gods have a care of anyone whose desire is to become just and to be like God, as far as man can attain to the divine likeness, by the pursuit of virtue."[3] In the *Laws* Plato declares that "God is the measure of all things, in a sense far higher than any man, as they say, can ever hope to be." (He thus answers Protagoras.) "And he who would be dear to God, must as far as possible be like Him and such as He is. Wherefore the temperate man is the friend of God, for he is like Him. . . ." He goes on to say that to offer sacrifice to the gods and pray to them is "the noblest and best of all things, and also the most conducive to a happy life," but points out that the sacrifices of the wicked and impious are unacceptable to the gods.[4] Worship and virtue belong, therefore, to happiness, so that although the pursuit of virtue and the leading of a virtuous life is the means of attaining happiness, virtue itself is not external to happiness, but is integral to it. Man's good is a condition of soul primarily, and it is only the truly virtuous man who is a truly good man and a truly happy man.

II. *Virtue*

1. In general we may say that Plato accepted the Socratic identification of virtue with knowledge. In the *Protagoras*[5] Socrates shows, as against the Sophist, that it is absurd to suggest that justice can be impious or piety unjust, so that the several virtues cannot be entirely disparate. Furthermore, the intemperate man is one who pursues what is really harmful to man while the temperate

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[1] *Theaet.*, 176 a 5–e 4.
[2] *Theaet.*, 176 b 1–3.
[3] *Rep.*, 613 a 7–b 1.
[4] *Laws*, 715 e 7–717 a 3.
[5] *Protag.*, 330 c 3 ff.

man pursues what is truly good and beneficial. Now, to pursue what is truly good and beneficial is wise, while to pursue what is harmful is foolish. Hence temperance and wisdom cannot be entirely disparate. Again, true valour or courage means, e.g. standing your ground in battle when you know the risks to which you are exposed; it does not mean mere foolhardiness. Thus courage can no more be separated from wisdom than can temperance.] Plato does not, of course, deny that there are distinct virtues, distinguished according to their objects or the parts of the soul of which they are the habits; but all these distinct virtues form a unity, inasmuch as they are the expressions of the same knowledge of good and evil. The distinct virtues are, therefore, unified in prudence or the knowledge of what is truly good for man and of the means to attain that good. [It is made clear in the *Meno* that *if* virtue is knowledge or prudence, it can be taught, and it is shown in the *Republic* that it is only the philosopher who has true knowledge of the good for man. It is not the Sophist, content with "popular" notions of virtue, who can teach virtue, but only he who has exact knowledge, i.e. the philosopher. The doctrine that virtue is knowledge is really an expression of the fact that goodness is not a merely relative term, but refers to something that is absolute and unchanging: otherwise it could not be the object of knowledge.]

To the idea that virtue is knowledge and that virtue is teachable, Plato seems to have clung, as also to the idea that no one does evil knowingly and willingly. When a man chooses that which is *de facto* evil, he chooses it *sub specie boni*: he desires something which he imagines to be good, but which is, as a matter of fact, evil. Plato certainly allowed for the headstrong character of appetite, which strives to carry all before it, sweeping the charioteer along with it in its mad onrush to attain that which appears to it as a good; but if the bad horse overpowers the resistance of the charioteer, it can, on Plato's principles, only be because either the charioteer has no knowledge of the true good or because his knowledge of the good is obscured for the time being by the onrush of passion. It might well seem that such a doctrine, inherited from Socrates, conflicts with Plato's obvious admission of moral responsibility, but it is open to Plato to reply that a man who knows what is truly good may allow his judgment to be so obscured by passion, at least temporarily, that the apparent good appears to him as a true good, although he is responsible for having allowed passion so to darken reason. If it be objected that a man may deliberately choose evil because it is evil, Plato could only answer that the man has said: "Evil, be thou my good." If he chooses what is really evil or harmful, knowing it to be ultimately such, that can only be because he, in spite of his knowledge, fixes his attention on an aspect of the object which appears to him as good. He may indeed be responsible for so fixing his attention, but, if he chooses, he can only choose *sub ratione boni.* A man might very well know that to murder his enemy will be ultimately harmful to him, but he chooses to do it all the same, since he fixes his attention on what appears to be the immediate good of satisfying his desire for revenge or of obtaining some benefit by the elimination of his enemy. (It might be remarked that the Greeks needed a clearer view of *Good* and *Right* and their relation to one another. The murderer may know very well that murder is wrong, but he chooses to commit it as being, *in some respects*, a *good.* The murderer who knew that murder was wrong might also know, of course, that "wrong" and "ultimately harmful or evil" were inseparable, but that would not take away the aspect of "goodness" (i.e. usefulness or desirability) attaching to the act. When we use the word "evil," we often mean "wrong," but when Plato said that no one willingly chooses to do what he knows to be evil, he did not mean that no one chooses to do what he knows to be wrong, but that no one deliberately chooses to do what he knows to be in all respects harmful to himself.)

[In the *Republic*[1] Plato considers four chief or cardinal virtues —wisdom (Σοφία), courage or fortitude (Ἀνδρεία), temperance (Σωφροσύνη) and justice (Δικαιοσύνη). Wisdom is the virtue of the rational part of the soul, courage of the spirited part, while temperance consists in the union of the spirited and appetitive parts under the rule of reason. Justice is a general virtue consisting in this, that every part of the soul performs its proper task in due harmony.] cpp

2. In the *Gorgias* Plato argues against the identification of good and evil with pleasure and pain, and against the "Superman" morality propounded by Callicles. Against Polus, Socrates has tried to show that to do an injustice, e.g. to play the part of the tyrant, is worse than to suffer injustice, since to do injustice makes one's soul worse, and this is the greatest evil that a man

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[1] *Rep.*, Bk. 4.

can suffer. Moreover, to do injustice and then to get off scot-free is the worst thing of all, because that only confirms the evil in the soul, whereas punishment may bring reformation. Callicles breaks in on the discussion in order to protest that Socrates is appealing "to the popular and vulgar notions of right, which are not natural, but only conventional":[1] to do evil may be disgraceful from the conventional standpoint, but this is simply herd-morality. The weak, who are the majority, club together to restrain "the stronger sort of men," and proclaim as *right* the actions that suit them, i.e. the members of the herd, and as *wrong* the actions that are harmful to them.[2] Nature, however, shows among both men and animals that "justice consists in the superior ruling and having more than the inferior."[3]

Socrates thanks Callicles for his frankness in openly stating his opinion that Might is Right, but he points out that if the weak majority do in fact tyrannise over the "strong," then they are actually the stronger and also are justified, on Callicles' own admission. This is not a mere verbal quibble, for if Callicles persists in maintaining his rejection of conventional morality, he must now show how the strong, the ruthless and unscrupulous individualist, is qualitatively "better" than the herd-man, and so has the right to rule. This Callicles tries to do by maintaining that his individualist is wiser than "the rabble of slaves and nondescripts," and so ought to rule and have more than his subjects. Irritated by Socrates' observation that, in this case, the physician should have more to eat and drink than anybody else, and the cobbler larger shoes than anybody, Callicles affirms that what he means is that those who are wise and courageous in the administration of the State ought to rule the State, and that justice consists in their having more than their subjects. Goaded by Socrates' question, whether the ruler should rule himself as well, Callicles roundly asserts that the strong man should allow his desires and passions full play. This gives Socrates his chance, and he compares Callicles' ideal man to a leaky cask: he is always filling himself with pleasure but never has enough: his life is the life of a cormorant not of a man. Callicles is prepared to admit that the scratcher who is constantly relieving his itch has a happy life, but he boggles at justifying the life of the catamite, and in the end is driven to admit a *qualitative* difference in pleasures. This leads to the conclusion that pleasure is subordinate to the good, and that reason must, therefore, be judge of pleasures and admit them only in so far as they are consonant with health and harmony and order of soul and body. It is thus not the intemperate man but the temperate man who is truly good and happy. The intemperate man does evil to himself, and Socrates drives home his point by the "Myth" of the impossibility of escaping judgment after death.[1]

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[1] *Gorgias*, 482 e 3-5.

[2] The resemblance to the opinions of Nietzsche is obvious, though Nietzsche's idea was very far from being that of the political and licentious tyrant.

[3] 483 d 5-6.

3. Plato expressly rejects the maxim that one should do good to one's friends and evil to one's enemies. To do evil can never be good. In the first Book Polemarchus puts forward the theory that "it is just to do good to our friend if he is a good man, and to hurt our enemy if he is a bad man."[2] Socrates (understanding by "to hurt" to do real harm, and not simply to punish—which he regarded as remedial) objects that to hurt is to make worse, and, in respect of human excellence, that means less just, so that, according to Polemarchus, it pertains to the just man to make the unjust man worse. But this is obviously rather the work of the unjust man than of the just man.

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[1] *Gorgias*, 523 ff.

[2] *Rep.*, 335 a 7-8.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE STATE

PLATO'S political theory is developed in close connection with his ethics. Greek life was essentially a communal life, lived out in the City-State and unthinkable apart from the City, so that it would not occur to any genuine Greek that a man could be a perfectly good man if he stood entirely apart from the State, since it is only in and through Society that the good life becomes possible for man—and Society meant the City-State. The rational analysis of this experimental fact results in the doctrine that organised Society is a "natural" institution, that man is essentially a social animal—a doctrine common to both Plato and Aristotle: the theory that Society is a necessary evil and results in the stunting of man's free development and growth would be entirely foreign to the genuine Greek. (It would, of course, be foolish to represent the Greek consciousness according to the analogy of the ant-heap or the beehive, since individualism was rife, showing itself both in the internecine wars between States and in the factions within the Cities themselves, e.g. in attempts on the part of an individual to establish himself as Tyrant; but this individualism was not a rebellion against Society as such—rather did it presuppose Society as an accepted fact.) For a philosopher like Plato, then, who concerned himself with man's happiness, with the truly good life for man, it was imperative to determine the true nature and function of the State. If the citizens were all morally bad men, it would indeed be impossible to secure a good State; but, conversely, if the State were a bad State, the individual citizens would find themselves unable to lead the good life as it should be lived.

Plato was not a man to accept the notion that there is one morality for the individual and another for the State. The State is composed of individual men and exists for the leading of the good life: there is an absolute moral code that rules all men and all States: expediency must bow the knee to Right. Plato did not look upon the State as a personality or organism that can or should develop itself without restraint, without paying any attention to the Moral Law: it is not the arbiter of right and wrong, the source of its own moral code, and the absolute justification of its own actions, be the latter what they may. This truth finds clear expression in the *Republic*. The interlocutors set out to determine the nature of justice, but at the close of the first Book Socrates declares that "I know not what justice is."[1] He then suggests in the second Book[2] that if they consider the State they will see the same letters "written larger and on a larger scale," for justice in the State "will be larger and more easily discernible." He proposes, therefore, that "we inquire into the nature of justice and injustice as appearing in the State first, and secondly in the individual, proceeding from the greater to the lesser and comparing them." The obvious implication of this is that the principles of justice are the same for individual and State. If the individual lives out his life as a member of the State, and if the justice of the one as of the other is determined by ideal justice, then clearly neither the individual nor the State can be emancipated from the eternal code of justice.

Now, it is quite obvious that not every actual Constitution or every Government embodies the ideal principle of Justice; but Plato was not concerned to determine what empirical States *are* so much as what the State *ought* to be, and so, in the *Republic*, he sets himself to discover the Ideal State, the pattern to which every actual State ought to conform itself, so far as it can. It is true that in the work of his old age, the *Laws*, he makes some concessions to practicability; but his general purpose remained that of delineating the norm or ideal, and if empirical States do not conform to the ideal, then so much the worse for the empirical States. Plato was profoundly convinced that Statesmanship is, or should be, a science; the Statesman, if he is to be truly such, must know what the State is and what its life ought to be; otherwise he runs the risk of bringing the State and its citizens to shipwreck and proves himself to be not a Statesman but a bungling "politician." Experience had taught him that actual States were faulty, and he turned his back on practical political life, though not without the hope of sowing the seeds of true statesmanship in those who entrusted themselves to his care. In the seventh Letter Plato speaks of his sad experience, first with the Oligarchy of 404 and then with the restored Democracy, and adds: "The result was that I, who had at first been full of eagerness for a public career, as I gazed upon the whirlpool of public life and saw the incessant movement of shifting currents, at last felt dizzy . . . and finally saw clearly in regard to all States now existing that without exception their system of government is bad. Their constitutions are almost without redemption, except through some miraculous plan accompanied by good luck. Hence I was forced to say in praise of the correct philosophy that it affords a vantage-point from which we can discern in all cases what is just for communities and for individuals; and that accordingly the human race will not be free of evils until either the stock of those who rightly and truly follow philosophy acquire political authority, or the class who have power in the cities be led by some dispensation of providence to become real philosophers."[1]

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[1] 354 c 1.

[2] 368 e 2–369 a 3.

I shall outline Plato's political theory, first as it appears in the *Republic*, and then as it appears in the *Statesman* and the *Laws*.

1. *The Republic*

1. The State exists in order to serve the wants of men. Men are not independent of one another, but need the aid and co-operation of others in the production of the necessaries of life. Hence they gather associates and helpers into one dwelling-place "and give this joint dwelling the name of City."[2] The original end of the city is thus an economic end, and from this follows the principle of the division and specialisation of labour. Different people have different natural endowments and talents and are fitted to serve the community in different ways: moreover, a man's work will be superior in quality and also in quantity if he works at one occupation alone, in accordance with his natural gifts. The agricultural labourer will not produce his own plough or mattock, but they will be produced for him by others, by those who specialise in the production of such instruments. Thus the existence of the State, which at present is being considered from the economic viewpoint, will require the presence of husbandmen, weavers, shoemakers, carpenters, smiths, shepherds, merchants, retail traders, hired labourers, etc. But it will be a very rude sort of life that is led by these people. If there is to be a "luxurious" city, something more will be required, and musicians, poets, tutors, nurses, barbers, cooks, confectioners, etc., will make their appearance. But with the rise of population consequent on the growing luxury of the city, the territory will be insufficient for the city's needs, and some of the neighbour's

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[1] *Ep.*, 7, 325 d 6–326 b 4.

[2] *Rep.*, 369 c 1–4.

territory will have to be annexed. Thus Plato finds the origin of war in an economic cause. (Needless to say, Plato's remarks are not to be understood as a justification of aggressive war: for his remarks on this subject see the section on war under the heading of the *Laws*.)

2. But, if war is to be pursued, then, on the principle of the division and specialisation of labour, there will have to be a special class of guardians of the State, who will devote themselves exclusively to the conduct of war. These guardians must be spirited, gifted with the θυμοειδές element; but they must also be philosophic, in the sense of knowing who the true enemies of the State are. But if the exercise of their task of guardianship is to be based on knowledge, then they must undergo some process of education. This will begin with music, including narrative. But, says Plato, we will scarcely permit the children of the State to receive into their minds at their most impressionable age opinions the reverse of those which they should entertain when they are grown to manhood.[1] It follows, then, that the legends about the gods, as retailed by Hesiod and Homer, will not be taught to children or indeed admitted into the State, since they depict the gods as indulging in gross immorality, taking various forms, etc. Similarly, to assert that the violation of oaths and treaties was brought about by the gods is intolerable and not to be admitted. God is to be represented, not as the author of all things, whether good or bad, but only of such things as are good.[2]

It is to be noted in all this how, though Socrates starts off the discussion by finding the origin of the State in the need of supplying the various natural wants of man and asserts the economic origin of the State, the interest soon shifts to the problem of education. The State does not exist simply in order to further the economic needs of men, for man is not simply "Economic Man," but for their happiness, to develop them in the good life, in accordance with the principles of justice. This renders education necessary, for the members of the State are rational beings. But it is not any kind of education that will do, but only education to the true and the good. Those who arrange the life of the State, who determine the principles of education and allot the various tasks in the State to its different members, must have knowledge of what is really true and good—in other words, they must be philosophers. It is this insistence on truth that leads Plato to the, as it appears to us, rather extraordinary proposal to exclude epic poets and dramatists from the ideal State. It is not that Plato is blind to the beauties of Homer or Sophocles: on the contrary, it is just the fact that the poets make use of beautiful language and imagery which renders them so dangerous in Plato's eyes. The beauty and charm of their words are, as it were, the sugar which obscures the poison that is imbibed by the simple. Plato's interest is primarily ethical: he objects to the way the poets speak about the gods, and the way in which they portray immoral characters, etc. In so far as the poets are to be admitted at all into the ideal State, they must set themselves to produce examples of good moral character, but, in general, epic and dramatic poetry will be banished from the State, while lyric poetry will be allowed only under the strict supervision of the State authorities. Certain harmonies (the Ionian and Lydian) will be excluded as effeminate and convivial. (We may think that Plato exaggerated the bad results that would follow from the admission of the great works of Greek literature, but the principle that animated him must be admitted by all who seriously believe in an objective moral law, even if they quarrel with his particular applications of the principle. For, granted the existence of the soul and of an absolute moral code, it is the duty of the public authorities to prevent the ruin of the morality of the members of the State so far as they can, and so far as the particular acts of prevention employed will not be productive of greater harm. To speak of the absolute rights of Art is simply nonsense, and Plato was quite justified in not letting himself be disturbed by any such trashy considerations.)

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[1] 377 a 12–c 5.

[2] 380 a 5–c 3.

Besides music, gymnastics will play a part in the education of the young citizens of the State. This care of the body, in the case of those who are to be guardians of the State and athletes of war, will be of an ascetic character, a "simple, moderate system," not calculated to produce sluggish athletes, who "sleep away their lives and are liable to most dangerous illnesses if they depart, in ever so slight a degree, from their customary regimen," but rather "warrior athletes, who should be like wakeful dogs, and should see and hear with the utmost keenness."[1] (In these proposals for the State education of the young, both physically and mentally, Plato is anticipating what we have seen realised on a great scale, and which, we recognise, may be used for bad ends as well as for good. But that, after all, is the fate of most practical proposals in the political field, that while they may be used for the benefit of the State, i.e. its true benefit, they may also be abused and applied in a way that can only bring harm to the State. Plato knew that very well, and the selection of the rulers of the State was a matter of great concern to him.)

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[1] 403 e 11–404 b 8.

3. We have then so far two great classes in the State—the inferior class of artisans and the superior class of guardians. The question arises, who are to be the rulers of the State. They will, says Plato, be carefully chosen from the class of guardians. They are not to be young: they must be the best men of their class, intelligent and powerful, and careful of the State, loving the State and regarding the State's interests as identical with their own—in the sense, needless to say, of pursuing the true interests of the State without thought of their own personal advantage or disadvantage.[1] Those, then, who from childhood up have been observed to do that which is best for the State, and never to have deserted this line of conduct, will be chosen as rulers of the State. They will be the perfect guardians, in fact the only people who are rightly entitled to the name of "guardian": the others, who have hitherto been termed guardians, will be called "auxiliaries," having it as their office to support the decisions of the rulers.[2] (Of the education of the rulers I shall treat shortly.)

The conclusion is, therefore, that the ideal State will consist of three great classes (excluding the slave class, of whom more later), the artisans at the bottom, the Auxiliaries or military class over them, and the Guardians or Guardian at the top. However, though the Auxiliaries occupy a more honourable position than the artisans, they are not to be savage animals, preying on those beneath them, but even if stronger than their fellow-citizens, they will be their friendly allies, and so it is most necessary to ensure that they should have the right education and mode of life. Plato says that they should possess no private property of their own, but should receive all necessaries from their fellow-citizens. They should have a common mess and live together like soldiers in a camp: gold and silver they should neither handle nor touch. "And this will be their salvation and the salvation of the State."[3] But if they once start amassing property, they will very soon turn into tyrants.

4. It will be remembered that Plato set out at the beginning

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[1] 412 c 9–413 c 7.

[2] 414 b 1–6.

[3] 417 a 5–6.

of the dialogue to determine the nature of justice, and that having found the task difficult, the suggestion was made that they might be able to see more clearly what justice is if they examined it as it exists in the State. At the present point of the discussion, when the different classes of the State have been outlined, it becomes possible to behold justice in the State. The wisdom of the State resides in the small class of rulers or Guardians, the courage of the State in the Auxiliaries, the temperance of the State consists in the due subordination of the governed to the governing, the justice of the State in this, that everyone attends to his own business without interfering with anyone else's. As the individual is just when all the elements of the soul function properly in harmony and with due subordination of the lower to the higher, so the State is just or righteous when all the classes, and the individuals of which they are composed, perform their due functions in the proper way. Political injustice, on the other hand, consists in a meddling and restless spirit, which leads to one class interfering with the business of another class.[1]

5. In the fifth Book of the *Republic* Plato treats of the famous proposal as to "community" of wives and children. Women are to be trained as men: in the ideal State they will not simply stay at home and mind the baby, but will be trained in music and gymnastics and military discipline just like men. The justification of this consists in the fact that men and women differ simply in respect to the parts they play in the propagation of the species. It is true that woman is weaker than man, but natural gifts are to be found in both sexes alike, and, as far as her nature is concerned, the woman is admissible to all pursuits open to man, even war. Duly qualified women will be selected to share in the life and official duties of the guardians of the State. On eugenic principles Plato thinks that the marriage relations of citizens, particularly of the higher classes of the State, should be under the control of the State. Thus the marriages of Guardians or Auxiliaries are to be under the control of the magistrates, with a view not only to the efficient discharge of their official duties, but also to the obtaining of the best possible offspring, who will be brought up in a State nursery. But be it noted that Plato does not propose any complete community of wives in the sense of promiscuous free love. The artisan class retains private property and the family: it is only in the two upper classes that

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[1] 433 a 1 and ff.

private property and family life is to be abolished, and that for the good of the State. Moreover, the marriages of Guardians and Auxiliaries are to be very strictly arranged: they will marry the women prescribed for them by the relevant magistrates, have intercourse and beget children at the prescribed times and not outside those times. If they have relations with women outside the prescribed limits and children result, it is at least hinted that such children should be put out of the way.[1] Children of the higher classes, who are not suitable for the life of those classes, but who have been "legitimately" born, will be relegated to the class of the artisans.

(Plato's proposals in this matter are abhorrent to all true Christians. His intentions were, of course, excellent, for he desired the greatest possible improvement of the human race; but his good intentions led him to the proposal of measures which are necessarily unacceptable and repugnant to all those who adhere to Christian principles concerning the value of the human personality and the sanctity of human life. Moreover, it by no means follows that what has been found successful in the breeding of animals, will also prove successful when applied to the human race, for man has a rational soul which is not intrinsically dependent on matter but is directly created by Almighty God. Does a beautiful soul always go with a beautiful body or a good character with a strong body? Again, if such measures were successful—and what does "successful" mean in this connection? —in the case of the human race, it does not follow that the Government has the right to apply such measures. Those who to-day follow, or would like to follow, in the footsteps of Plato, advocating, e.g. compulsory sterilisation of the unfit, have not, be it remembered, Plato's excuse, that he lived at a period anterior to the presentation of the Christian ideals and principles.)

6. In answer to the objection that no city can, in practice, be organised according to the plans proposed, "Socrates" replies that it is not to be expected that an ideal should be realised in practice with perfect accuracy. Nevertheless he asks, what is the smallest change that would enable a State to assume this form of Constitution? and he proceeds to mention one—which is neither small nor easy—namely, the vesting of power in the hands of the philosopher-king. The democratic principle of government is, according to Plato, absurd: the ruler must govern in virtue of

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[1] 461 c 4-7.

knowledge, and that knowledge must be knowledge of the truth. The man who has knowledge of the truth is the genuine philosopher. Plato drives home his point by the simile of the ship, its captain and crew.[1] We are asked to imagine a ship "in which there is a captain who is taller and stronger than anyone else in the ship, but he is a little deaf and is short-sighted, and his knowledge of navigation is not much better." The crew mutiny, take charge of the ship and, "drinking and feasting, they continue their voyage with such success as might be expected of them." They have, however, no idea of the pilot's art or of what a true pilot should be. Thus Plato's objection to democracy of the Athenian type is that the politicians really do not know their business at all, and that when the fancy takes the people they get rid of the politicians in office and carry on as though no special knowledge were required for the right guidance of the ship of State. For this ill-informed and happy-go-lucky way of conducting the State, he proposes to substitute rule by the philosopher-king, i.e. by the man who has real knowledge of the course that the ship of State should take, and can help it to weather the storms and surmount the difficulties that it encounters on the voyage. The philosopher will be the finest fruit of the education provided by the State: he, and he alone, can, as it were, draw the outline of the concrete sketch of the ideal State and fill up that outline, because he has acquaintance with the world of Forms and can take them as his model in forming the actual State.[2]

Those who are chosen out as candidates or possible rulers will be educated, not only in musical harmony and gymnastics, but also in mathematics and astronomy. They will not, however, be trained in mathematics merely with a view to enabling them to perform the calculations that everyone ought to learn to perform, but rather with a view to enabling them to apprehend intelligible objects—not "in the spirit of merchants or traders, with a view to buying or selling," nor only for the sake of the military use involved, but primarily that they may pass "from becoming to truth and being,"[3] that they may be drawn towards truth and acquire the spirit of philosophy.[4] But all this will merely be a prelude to Dialectic, whereby a man starts on the discovery of absolute being by the light of reason only, and without any assistance of the senses, until he "attains at last to the absolute good by intellectual vision and therein reaches the limit of the intellectual world."[1] He will thus have ascended all the steps of the "Line." The chosen rulers of the State, therefore, or rather those who are chosen as candidates for the position of Guardians, those who are "sound in limb and mind" and endowed with virtue, will be gradually put through this course of education, those who have proved themselves satisfactory by the time they have reached the age of thirty being specially selected for training in Dialectic. After five years spent in this study they will "be sent down into the den and compelled to hold any military or other office which the young are qualified to hold," in order that they may get the necessary experience of life and show whether, when confronted with various temptations, "they will stand firm or flinch."[2] After fifteen years of such probation those who have distinguished themselves (they will then be fifty years old) will have reached the time "at which they must raise the eye of the soul to the universal light which lightens all things, and behold the absolute good; for that is the pattern according to which they are to order the State and lives of individuals, and the remainder of their own lives too, making philosophy their chief pursuit; but when their turn comes, toiling also at politics and ruling for the public good, not as if they were doing some great thing, but of necessity; and when they have brought up others like themselves and left them in their place to be governors of the State, then they will depart to the Islands of the Blest and dwell there; and the city will give them public memorials and sacrifices and honour them, if the Pythian oracle consent, as demi-gods, and at any rate as blessed and divine."[3]

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[1] 488 a 1–489 a 2.

[2] Plato, like Socrates, considered the "democratic" practice of choosing magistrates, generals, etc., by lot or according to their rhetorical ability, irrational and absurd.

[3] 525 b 11–c 6.

[4] 527 b 9–11.

7. In the eighth and ninth Books of the *Republic* Plato develops a sort of philosophy of history. The perfect State is the aristocratic State; but when the two higher classes combine to divide the property of the other citizens and reduce them practically to slavery, aristocracy turns into timocracy, which represents the preponderance of the spirited element. Next the love of wealth grows, until timocracy turns into oligarchy, political power coming to depend on property qualifications. A poverty-stricken class is thus developed under the oligarchs, and in the end the poor expel the rich and establish democracy. But the

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[1] 532 a 7–b 2.

[2] 539 e 2–540 a 2.

[3] 540 a 7–c 2.

extravagant love of liberty, which is characteristic of democracy, leads by way of reaction to tyranny. At first the champion of the common people obtains a bodyguard under specious pretences; he then throws off pretence, executes a *coup d'état* and turns into a tyrant. Just as the philosopher, in whom reason rules, is the happiest of men, so the aristocratic State is the best and happiest of States; and just as the tyrannical despot, the slave of ambition and passion, is the worst and most unhappy of men, so is the State ruled by the tyrant the worst and most unhappy of States.

II. *The Statesman* (*Politicus*)

1. Towards the close of the *Statesman*, Plato shows that the science of politics, the royal and kingly science, cannot be identical with e.g. the art of the general or the art of the judge, since these arts are ministerial, the general acting as minister to the ruler, the judge giving decisions in accordance with the laws laid down by the legislator. The royal science, therefore, must be superior to all these particular arts and sciences, and may be defined as "that common science which is over them all, and guards the laws, and all things that there are in the State, and truly weaves them all into one."[1] He distinguishes this science of the monarch or ruler from tyranny, in that the latter rests merely on compulsion, whereas the rule of the true king and statesman is "the voluntary management of voluntary bipeds."[2]

2. "No great number of persons, whoever they may be, can have political knowledge or order a State wisely," but "the true government is to be found in a small body, or in an individual,"[3] and the ideal is that the ruler (or rulers) should legislate for individual instances. Plato insists that laws should be changed or modified as circumstances require, and that no superstitious regard for tradition should hamper an enlightened application to a changed condition of affairs and fresh needs. It would be just as absurd to stick to obsolete laws in the face of new circumstances, as it would be for a doctor to insist on his patient keeping to the same diet when a new one is required by the changed conditions of his health. But as this would require divine, rather than human, knowledge and competence, we must be content with the second-best, i.e. with the reign of *Law*. The ruler will administer the State in accordance with fixed Law. The Law must be

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[1] 305 e 2-4.

[2] 276 e 10-12

[3] 297 b 7-c 2.

absolute sovereign, and the public man who violates law should be put to death.[1]

3. Government may be government by one, by few, or by many. If we are speaking of well-ordered governments, then that of the one, monarchy, is the best (leaving out of account the ideal form, in which the monarch legislates for individual cases), that of the few the second-best, and that of the many the worst. If, however, we are speaking of lawless governments, then the worst is government by the one, i.e. tyranny (since that can do the most harm), the second-worst that by the few, and the least bad that by the many. Democracy is thus, according to Plato, "the worst of all lawful governments, and the best of all lawless ones," since "the government of the many is in every respect weak and unable to do either any great good or any great evil when compared with the others, because in such a State the offices are parcelled out among many people."[2]

4. What Plato would think of demagogic Dictators is clear from his remarks on tyrants, as also from his observations on the politicians who are devoid of knowledge and who should be called "partisans." These are "upholders of the most monstrous idols, and themselves idols; and, being the greatest imitators and magicians, they are also Sophists *par excellence.*"[3]

III. *The Laws*

1. In the composition of the *Laws* Plato would seem to have been influenced by personal experiences. Thus he says that perhaps the best conditions for founding the desired Constitution will be had if the enlightened Statesman meets with an enlightened and benevolent tyrant or sovereign, since the despot will be in a position to put the suggested reforms into practice.[4] Plato's (unhappy) experience at Syracuse would have shown him at least that there was a better hope of realising the desired constitutional reforms in a city ruled over by one man than in a democracy such as Athens. Again, Plato was clearly influenced by the history of Athens, its rise to the position of a commercial and maritime empire, its fall in the Peloponnesian war. For in Book Four of the *Laws* he stipulates that the city shall be about eighty stadia from the sea—although even this is too near—i.e. that the State should be an agrarian, and not a commercial State, a producing, and not an importing, community. The Greek prejudice against

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[1] 297 e 1–5.
[2] 303 a 2–8.
[3] 303 b 8–c 5.
[4] 709 d 10–710 b 9.

trade and commerce comes out in his words, that "The sea is pleasant enough as a daily companion, but has a bitter and brackish quality; for it fills the streets with merchants and shopkeepers, and begets in the souls of men unfaithful and uncertain ways—making the State unfaithful and unfriendly both to her own citizens and also towards the rest of men."[1]

2. The State must be a true Polity. Democracy, oligarchy and tyranny are all undesirable because they are class-States, and their laws are passed for the good of particular classes and not for the good of the whole State. States which have such laws are not real polities but parties, and their notion of justice is simply unmeaning.[2] The government is not to be entrusted to any one because of considerations of birth or wealth, but for personal character and fitness for ruling, and the rulers must be subject to the law. "The State in which the law is above the rulers, and the rulers are the inferior of the law, has salvation and every blessing which the gods can confer." Plato here re-emphasises what he has already said in the *Statesman.*

The State exists, then, not for the good of any one class of men, but for the leading of the good life, and in the *Laws* Plato reasserts in unambiguous terms his conviction as to the importance of the soul and the tendance of the soul. "Of all the things which a man has, next to the gods, his soul is the most divine and the most truly his own," and "all the gold which is under or upon the earth is not enough to give in exchange for virtue."[3]

3. Plato had not much use for enormous States, and he fixes the number of the citizens at the number 5,040, which "can be divided by exactly fifty-nine divisors" and "will furnish numbers for war and peace, and for all contracts and dealings, including taxes and divisions."[4] But although Plato speaks of 5,040 citizens, he also speaks of 5,040 houses, which would imply a city of 5,040 families rather than individuals. However that may be, the citizens will possess house and land, since, though Plato expressly clings to communism as an ideal, he legislates in the *Laws* for the more practical second-best. At the same time he contemplates provisions for the prevention of the growth of a wealthy and commercial State. For example, the citizens should have a currency that passes only among themselves and is not accepted by the rest of mankind.[5]

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[1] 705 a 2–7.
[2] 715 a 8–b 6.
[3] 726 a 2–3, 728 a 4–5.
[4] 737 e 1–738 b 1.
[5] 742 a 5–6.

4. Plato discusses the appointment and functions of the various magistrates at length: I will content myself with mentioning one or two points. For example, there will be thirty-seven guardians of the law (νομοφύλακες), who will be not less than fifty years old when elected and will hold office up to their seventieth year at the latest. "All those who are horse or foot soldiers, or have taken part in war during the age for military service, shall share in the election of magistrates."[1] There shall also be a Council of 360 members, also elected, ninety from each property-class, the voting being designed apparently in such a way as to render unlikely the election of partisans of extreme views. There will be a number of ministers, such as the ministers who will have care of music and gymnastics (two ministers for each, one to educate, the other to superintend the contests). The most important of the ministers, however, will be the minister of education, who will have care of the youth, male and female, and who must be at least fifty years old, "the father of children lawfully begotten, of both sexes, or of one at any rate. He who is elected, and he who is the elector, should consider that of all the great offices of the State this is the greatest"; the legislator should not allow the education of children to become a secondary or accidental matter.[2]

5. There will be a committee of women to superintend married couples for ten years after marriage. If a couple have not had any children during a period of ten years, they should seek a divorce. Men must marry between the ages of thirty and thirty-five, girls between sixteen and twenty (later eighteen). Violations of conjugal fidelity will be punishable. The men will do their military service between the ages of twenty and sixty; women after bearing children and before they are fifty. No man is to hold office before he is thirty and no woman until she is forty. The provisions concerning the superintendence of married relations by the State are hardly acceptable to us; but Plato doubtless considered them the logical consequence of his conviction that "The bride and bridegroom should consider that they are to produce for the State the best and fairest specimens of children which they can."[3]

6. In Book Seven Plato speaks of the subject of education and its methods. He applies it even to infants, who are to be rocked frequently, as this counteracts emotions in the soul and

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[1] 753 b 4–7.

[2] 765 d 5–766 a 6.

[3] 783 d 8–e 1.

produces "a peace and calm in the soul."[1] From the age of three to the age of six boys and girls will play together in the temples, supervised by ladies, while at the age of six they will be separated, and the education of the two sexes will be conducted in isolation, though Plato does not abandon his view that girls should have more or less the same education as boys. They will be educated in gymnastics and music, but the latter will be carefully watched over, and a State anthology of verse will be composed. Schools will have to be built, and paid teachers (foreigners) will be provided: children will attend daily at the schools, where they will be taught not only gymnastics and music, but also elementary arithmetic, astronomy, etc.

7. Plato legislates for the religious festivals of the State. There will be one each day, that "one magistrate at least will sacrifice daily to some god or demigod on behalf of the city and citizens and their possessions."[2] He legislates, too, on the subject of agriculture and of the penal code. In regard to the latter Plato insists that consideration should be paid to the psychological condition of the prisoner. His distinction between βλαβή and ἀδικία[3] amounts pretty well to our distinction between a civil action and a criminal action.

8. In the tenth Book Plato lays down his famous proposals for the punishment of atheism and heresy. To say that the universe is the product of the motions of corporeal elements, unendowed with intelligence, is atheism. Against this position Plato argues that there must be a source of motion, and that ultimately we must admit a self-moving principle, which is soul or mind. Hence soul or mind is the source of the cosmic movement. (Plato declares that there must be more than one soul responsible for the universe, as there is disorder and irregularity as well as order, but that there may be more than two.)

A pernicious heresy is that the gods are indifferent to man.[4] Against this Plato argues:

(*a*) The gods cannot lack the power to attend to small things.

(*b*) God cannot be too indolent or too fastidious to attend to details. Even a human artificer attends to details.

(*c*) Providence does not involve "interference" with law. Divine justice will at any rate be realised in the succession of lives.

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[1] 790 c 5–791 b 2. [2] 828 b 2–3. [3] 861 e 6 ff. [4] 899 d 5–905 d 3.

A still more pernicious heresy is the opinion that the gods are venal, that they can be induced by bribes to condone injustice.[1] Against this Plato argues that we cannot suppose that the gods are like pilots who can be induced by wine to neglect their duty and bring ship and sailors to ruin, or like charioteers who can be bribed to surrender the victory to other charioteers, or like shepherds who allow the flock to be plundered on condition that they share in the spoils. To suppose any of these things is to be guilty of blasphemy.

Plato suggests penalties to be inflicted on those proved guilty of atheism or heresy. A morally inoffensive heretic will be punished with at least five years in the House of Correction, where he will be visited by members of the "Nocturnal Council," who will reason with him on the error of his ways. (Presumably those guilty of the two graver heresies will receive a longer term of imprisonment.) A second conviction will be punished with death. But heretics who also trade on the superstition of others with a view to their own profits, or who found immoral cults, will be imprisoned for life in a most desolate part of the country and will be cast out unburied at death, their families being treated as wards of the State. As a measure of safety Plato enacts that no private shrines or private cults are to be permitted.[2] Plato observes that before proceeding to prosecute an offender for impiety, the guardians of the law should determine "whether the deed has been done in earnest or only from childish levity."

9. Among the points of law dwelt on in Books Eleven and Twelve we may mention the following as of interest:

(*a*) It would be an extraordinary thing, says Plato, if any well-behaved slave or freeman fell into the extremes of poverty in any "tolerably well-ordered city or government." There will, therefore, be a decree against beggars, and the professional beggar will be sent out of the country, "so that our country may be cleared of this sort of animal."[3]

(*b*) Litigiousness or the practice of conducting lawsuits with a view to gain, and so trying to make a court a party to injustice, will be punishable by death.[4]

(*c*) Embezzlement of public funds and property shall be punished by death if the offender is a citizen, since, if a man who has had the full benefit of the State-education behaves in this way, he is incurable. If, however, the offender is a foreigner or a slave, the courts will decide the penalty, bearing in mind that he is probably not incurable.[1]

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[1] 905 d 3–907 d 1. [2] 909 d 7–8. [3] 936 c 1–7. [4] 937 d 6–938 c 5.

(*d*) A Board of εὔθυνοι will be appointed to audit the accounts of the magistrates at the end of their terms of office.[2]

(*e*) The Nocturnal Council (which is to meet early in the morning before the business of the day begins) will be composed of the ten senior νομοφύλακες, the minister and ex-ministers of education, and ten co-opted men between the ages of thirty and forty. It will consist of men who are trained to see the One in the Many, and who know that virtue is one (i.e. they will be men trained in Dialectic) and who have also undergone training in mathematics and astronomy, that they may have a firmly-grounded conviction as to the operation of divine Reason in the world. Thus this Council, composed of men who have a knowledge of God and of the ideal pattern of goodness, will be enabled to watch over the Constitution and be "the salvation of our government and of our laws."[3]

(*f*) In order to avoid confusion, novelties and restlessness, no one will be permitted to travel abroad without sanction of the State, and then only when he is over forty years of age (except, of course, on military expeditions). Those who go abroad will, on their return, "teach the young that the institutions of other States are inferior to their own."[4] However, the State will send abroad "spectators," in order to see if there is anything admirable abroad which might with profit be adopted at home. These men will be not less than fifty or more than sixty years old, and on their return they must make a report to the Nocturnal Council. Not only will visits of citizens to foreign countries be supervised by the State, but also visits of travellers from abroad. Those who come for purely commercial reasons will not be encouraged to mix with the citizens, while those who come for purposes approved of by the Government will be honourably treated as guests of the State.[5]

10. *Slavery.* It is quite clear from the *Laws* that Plato accepted the institution of slavery, and that he regarded the slave as the property of his master, a property which may be alienated.[6] Moreover, while in contemporary Athens the children of a

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[1] 941 c 4–942 a 4. [2] 945 b 3–948 b 2. [3] 960 e 9 ff. [4] 951 a 2–4. [5] 949 e 3 ff. [6] Cf. 776 b 5–c 3.

marriage between a slave woman and a freeman seem to have been considered as free, Plato decrees that the children always belong to the master of the slave woman, whether her marriage be with a freeman or a freedman.[1] In some other respects, too, Plato shows himself severer than contemporary Athenian practice, and fails to give that protection to the slave that was accorded by Athenian law.[2] It is true that he provides for the protection of the slave in his public capacity (e.g. whoever kills a slave in order to prevent the latter giving information concerning an offence against the law, is to be treated as though he had killed a citizen),[3] and permits him to give information in murder cases without being submitted to torture; but there is no explicit mention of permission to bring a public prosecution against a man guilty of ὕβρις against his slave, which was permitted by Attic law. That Plato disliked the free-and-easy way in which the slaves behaved in democratic Athens appears from the *Republic*,[4] but he certainly did not wish to advocate a brutal treatment of the slave. Thus in the *Laws*, although he declares that "slaves ought to be punished as they deserve, and not admonished as if they were freemen, which will only make them conceited," and that "the language used to a servant ought always to be that of command, and we ought not to jest with them, whether they are females or males"; he expressly says that "we should tend them carefully, not only out of regard to them, but yet more out of respect to ourselves. And the right treatment of slaves is not to maltreat them, and to do them, if possible, even more justice than those who are our equals; for he who really and naturally reverences justice and really hates injustice, is discovered in his dealings with that class of man to whom he can easily be unjust."[5] We must, therefore, conclude that Plato simply accepted the institution of slavery, and, in regard to the treatment of slaves, that he disliked Athenian laxity on the one hand and Spartan brutality on the other.

11. *War.* In the first Book of the *Laws*, Cleinias the Cretan remarks that the regulations of Crete were designed by the legislator with a view to war. Every city is in a natural state of war with every other, "not indeed proclaimed by heralds, but everlasting."[6] Megillus, the Lacedaemonian, agrees with him. The Athenian Stranger, however, points out (*a*) that, in regard to

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[1] 930 d 1–e 2.

[2] Cf. *Plato and Greek Slavery*, Glenn R. Morrow, in *Mind*, April 1939, N.S. vol. 48, No. 190.

[3] 872 c 2–6.

[4] *Rep.*, 563.

[5] 776 d 2–718 a 5.

[6] 626 a 2–5.

civil or internal war, the best legislator will endeavour to prevent it occurring in his State, or, if it does arise, will endeavour to reconcile the warring factions in an abiding friendship, and (*b*), that in regard to external or international war, the true statesman will aim at the best. Now, the happiness of the State, secured in peace and goodwill, is the best. No sound legislator, therefore, will ever order peace for the sake of war, but rather, if he orders war it will be for the sake of peace.[1] Thus Plato is not at all of the opinion that Policy exists for the sake of War, and he would scarcely sympathise with the virulent militarists of modern times. He points out that "many a victory has been and will be suicidal to the victors, but education is never suicidal."[2]

12. When man reflects on human life, on man's good and on the good life, as Plato did, he clearly cannot pass by man's social relations. Man is born into a society, not only into that of the family but also into a wider association, and it is in that society that he must live the good life and attain his end. He cannot be treated as though he were an isolated unit, living to himself alone. Yet, although every thinker who concerns himself with the humanistic viewpoint, man's place and destiny, must form for himself some theory of man's social relations, it may be well that no theory of the State will result, unless a somewhat advanced political consciousness has gone before. If man feels himself as a passive member of some great autocratic Power—the Persian Empire, for example—in which he is not called upon to play any active role, save as taxpayer or soldier, his political consciousness is scarcely aroused: one autocrat or another, one empire or another, Persian or Babylonian, it may make very little difference to him. But when a man belongs to a political community in which he is called upon to shoulder his burden of responsibility, in which he has not only duties but also rights and activities, then he will become politically conscious. To the politically unconscious man the State may appear as some thing set over against him, alien if not oppressive, and he will tend to conceive his way of salvation as lying through individual activity and perhaps through co-operation in other societies than that of the reigning bureaucracy: he will not be immediately stimulated to form a theory of the State. To the politically conscious man, on the other hand, the State appears as a body in which he has a

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[1] 628 c 9–e 1.

[2] 641 c 2–7.

part, as an extension in some sort of himself, and so will be stimulated—the reflective thinker, that is to say—to form a theory of the State.

The Greeks had this political consciousness in a very advanced degree: the good life was to them inconceivable apart from the πόλις. What more natural, then, than that Plato, reflecting on the good life in general, i.e. the good life of man as such, should reflect also on the State as such, i.e. the ideal πόλις? He was a philosopher and was concerned, not so much with the ideal Athens or the ideal Sparta, as with the ideal City, the Form to which the empirical States are approximations. This is not, of course to deny that Plato's conception of the πόλις was influenced to a great extent by the practice of the contemporary Greek City-State—it could not be otherwise; but he discovered principles which lie at the basis of political life, and so may truly be said to have laid the foundations of a *philosophical* theory of the State. I say a "philosophical" theory of the State, because a theory of immediate reform is not general and universal, whereas Plato's treatment of the State is based on the nature of the State as such, and so it is designed to be universal, a character which is essential for a philosophic theory of the State. It is quite true that Plato dealt with reforms which he thought to be necessitated by the actual conditions of the Greek States, and that his theory was sketched on the background of the Greek πόλις; but since he meant it to be universal, answering to the very nature of political life, it must be allowed that he sketched a philosophical theory of the State.

The political theory of Plato and Aristotle has indeed formed the foundation for subsequent fruitful speculation on the nature and characteristics of the State. Many details of Plato's *Republic* may be unrealisable in practice, and also undesirable even if practicable, but his great thought is that of the State as rendering possible and as promoting the good life of man, as contributing to man's temporal end and welfare. This Greek view of the State, which is also that of St. Thomas, is superior to the view which may be known as the liberal idea of the State, i.e. the view of the State as an institution, the function of which is to preserve private property and, in general, to exhibit a negative attitude towards the members of the State. In practice, of course, even the upholders of this view of the State have had to abandon a completely *laissez-faire* policy, but their theory remains barren, empty and negative in comparison with that of the Greeks.

However, it may well be that individuality was insufficiently stressed by the Greeks, as even Hegel notes. ("Plato in his *Republic* allows the rulers to appoint individuals to their particular class, and assign to them their particular tasks. In all these relations there is lacking the principle of subjective freedom." Again, in Plato "the principle of subjective freedom does not receive its due.")[1] This was brought into strong light by the theorists of the modern era who stressed the Social Contract theory. For them men are naturally atoms, separate and disunited, if not mutually antagonistic, and the State is merely a contrivance to preserve them, so far as may be, in that condition, while at the same time providing for the maintenance of peace and the security of private property. Their view certainly embodies truth and value, so that the individualism of thinkers like Locke must be combined with the more corporate theory of the State upheld by the great Greek philosophers. Moreover, the State which combines both aspects of human life must also recognise the position and rights of the supernatural Society, the Church. Yet we have to be careful not to allow insistence on the rights of the Church and the importance of man's supernatural end to lead us to minimise or mutilate the character of the State, which is also a "perfect society," having man's temporal welfare as its end.

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[1] Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*, sect. 299 and sect. 185. Trans. Professor S. W. Dyde. (George Bell & Sons, 1896.)

CHAPTER XXIV

PHYSICS OF PLATO

1. THE physical theories of Plato are contained in the *Timaeus*, Plato's only "scientific" dialogue. It was probably written when Plato was about seventy years old, and was designed to form the first work of a trilogy, the *Timaeus*, the *Critias*, and the *Hermocrates*.[1] The *Timaeus* recounts the formation of the material world and the birth of man and the animals; the *Critias* tells how primitive Athens defeated the invaders from mythical Atlantis, and then was itself overwhelmed by flood and earthquake; and it is conjectured that the *Hermocrates* was to deal with the rebirth of culture in Greece, ending with Plato's suggestions for future reform. Thus the Utopian State or Socratic Republic[2] would be represented in the *Critias* as something realised in the past, while practical reforms for the future would be proposed in the *Hermocrates*. The *Timaeus* was actually written, the *Critias* breaks off before completion, and was left unfinished, while the *Hermocrates* was never composed at all. It has been very reasonably suggested that Plato, conscious of his advancing age, dropped the idea of completing his elaborate historical romance and incorporated in the *Laws* (Books 3 ff.) much of what he had wanted to say in the *Hermocrates*.[3]

The *Timaeus* was thus written by way of preface to two politico-ethical dialogues, so that it would be hardly correct to represent Plato as having suddenly conceived an intense interest in natural science in his old age. It is probably true that he was influenced by the growing scientific interest in the Academy, and there can be little doubt that he felt the necessity of saying something about the material world, with a view to explaining its relation to the Forms; but there is no real reason for supposing that the centre of Plato's interest underwent a radical shift from ethical, political and metaphysical themes to questions of natural science. As a matter of fact, he says expressly in the *Timaeus* that an account of the material world cannot be more than "likely," that we should not expect it to be exact or even altogether self-consistent,[1] phrases which clearly indicate that in Plato's eyes Physics could never be an exact science, a science in the true sense. Nevertheless, some account of the material universe was called for by the peculiar character of the Platonic theory of Ideas. While the Pythagoreans held that things are numbers, Plato held that they participate in numbers (retaining his dualism), so that he might justly be expected to proffer some explanation from the physical standpoint of how this participation comes to be.

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[1] Cf. *Tim.*, 27 ab.

[2] 26 c 7–e 5.

[3] See Introd. to Professor Cornford's edition of *Timaeus*.

Plato doubtless had another important reason for writing the *Timaeus*, namely to exhibit the organised Cosmos as the work of Intelligence and to show that man partakes of both worlds, the intelligible and the sensible. He is convinced that "mind orders all things," and will not agree "when an ingenious individual (Democritus?) declares that all is disorder":[2] on the contrary, soul is "the oldest and most divine of all things," and it is "mind which ordered the universe."[3] In the *Timaeus*, therefore, Plato presents a picture of the intelligent ordering of all things by Mind, and exhibits the divine origin of man's immortal soul. (Just as the entire universe comprises a dualism of the intelligible and eternal on the one hand, and the sensible and fleeting on the other, so man, the microcosm, comprises a dualism of eternal soul, belonging to the sphere of Reality, and body which passes and perishes.) This exhibition of the world as the handiwork of Mind, which forms the material world according to the ideal pattern constitutes an apt preface to the proposed extended treatment of the State, which should be rationally formed and organised according to the ideal pattern and not left to the play of irrational and "chance" causes.

2. If Plato thought of his physical theories as a "likely account" (εἰκότες λόγοι), are we thereby compelled to treat the whole work as "Myth"? First of all, the theories of Timaeus, whether myth or not, must be taken as Plato's theories: the present writer entirely agrees with Professor Cornford's rejection of Professor A. E. Taylor's notion that the *Timaeus* is a "fake" on Plato's part, a statement of "fifth-century Pythagoreanism," "a deliberate attempt to amalgamate Pythagorean religion and mathematics with Empedoclean biology,"[4] so that "Plato was not likely to feel himself responsible for the details of any of his speaker's

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[1] Cf. 27 d 5–28 a 4 and 29 b 3–d 3. This was a consequence of the epistemological and ontological dualism, which Plato never abandoned.

[2] *Philebus*, 28 c 6–29 a 5.

[3] *Laws*, 966 d 9–e 4.

[4] *A Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, pp. 18–19.

theories." Apart from the inherent improbability of such a fake on the part of a great and original philosopher, already advanced in years, how is it that Aristotle and Theophrastus and other ancients, as Cornford points out, have left us no hint as to the faked character of the work? If this was its real character, they cannot all have been ignorant of the fact; and can we suppose that, if they were aware of such an interesting fact, they would all have remained absolutely silent on the point? It is really too much to ask us to believe that the true character of the *Timaeus* was first revealed to the world in the twentieth century. Plato certainly borrowed from other philosophers (particularly the Pythagoreans), but the theories of Timaeus are Plato's own, whether borrowed or not.

In the second place, although the theories put into the mouth of Timaeus are Plato's own theories, they constitute, as we have seen, a "likely account," and should not be taken as meant to be an exact and scientific account—for the very simple fact that Plato did not consider such an exact scientific account to be possible. He not only says that we should remember that we "are only human," and so should accept "the likely story and look for nothing further"[1]—words which might imply that it is just human frailty which renders true natural science impossible; but he goes further than that, since he expressly refers this impossibility of an exact natural science to "the nature of the subject." An account of what is only a likeness "will itself be but likely": "what becoming is to being, that is belief to truth."[2] The theories are put forward, therefore, as "likely" or probable; but that does not mean that they are "mythical" in the sense of being consciously designed to symbolise a more exact theory that, for some reason or other, Plato is unwilling to impart. It may be that this or that feature of the *Timaeus* is conscious symbolism, but we have to argue each case on its own merits, and are not justified in simply dismissing the whole of the Platonic Physics as Myth. It is one thing to say: "I do not think an exact account of the material world possible, but the following account is as likely or more likely than any other"; and it is another thing to say: "I put forward the following account as a mythical, symbolic and pictorial expression of an exact account which I propose to keep to myself." Of course, if we care to call a confessedly "probable" account "Myth," then the *Timaeus* is certainly Myth; but it is not Myth (in its entirety at least) if by "Myth" you mean a symbolic and pictorial representation of a truth clearly perceived by the author but kept to himself. Plato means to do the best he can, and says so.

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[1] *Tim.*, 29 d 1-3.

[2] *Tim.*, 29 c 1-3.

3. Plato sets out to give an account of the generation of the world. The sensible world is becoming, and "that which becomes must necessarily become through the agency of some cause."[1] The agent in question is the divine Craftsman or Demiurge. He "took over"[2] all that was in discordant and unordered motion, and brought it into order, forming the material world according to an eternal and ideal pattern, and fashioning it into "a living creature with soul and reason"[3] after the model of the ideal Living Creature, i.e. the Form that contains within itself the Forms of "the heavenly race of gods, the winged things which fly through the air, all that dwells in the water, and all that goes on foot on the dry earth."[4] As there is but one ideal living Creature, the Demiurge made but one world.[5]

4. What was the motive of the Demiurge in so acting? The Demiurge is good and "desired that all things should come as near as possible to being like himself," judging that order is better than disorder, and fashioning everything for the best.[6] He was limited by the material at his disposal, but he did the best he could with it, making it "as excellent and perfect as possible."

5. How are we to regard the figure of the Demiurge? He must at least represent the divine Reason which is operative in the world; but he is not a Creator-God. It is clear from the *Timaeus* that the Demiurge "took over" a pre-existing material and did his best with it: he is certainly not said to have created it out of nothing. "The generation of this cosmos," says Plato, "was a mixed result of the combination of Necessity and Reason,"[7] Necessity being also called the Errant Cause. The word "Necessity" naturally suggests to us the reign of fixed law, but this is not precisely what Plato meant. If we take the Democritean or Epicurean view of the universe, according to which the world is built up out of atoms without the aid of Intelligence, we have an example of what Plato meant by Necessity, i.e. the *purposeless*, that which was not formed by Intelligence. If we also bear in mind that in the Atomistic System the world owes its origin to the "chance" collision of atoms, we can more easily see how Plato

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[1] 28 c 2–3.
[2] 30 a 3–4.
[3] 30 b 1–c 1.
[4] 39 e 3–40 a 2.
[5] 31 a 2–b 3.
[6] 29 e 3–30 a 6.
[7] 47 e 5–48 a 2.

could associate Necessity with Chance or the Errant Cause. For us these may seem to be opposed notions, but for Plato they were akin, since they both denote that in which Intelligence and conscious Purpose have no share. Thus it is that in the *Laws* Plato can speak of those who declare that the world originated "not by the action of mind, or of any God, or from art, but by nature and chance" (φύσει καὶ τύχη) or of necessity (ἐξ' ἀνάγκης).[1] Such a view of the universe is characterised by Aristotle[2] as the ascription of the world to Spontaneity (τὸ αὐτόματον), though inasmuch as motion is due to the previous motion of another atom, one could also say that the universe is due to Necessity. Thus the three notions of "spontaneously" and "by chance" and "of necessity" were allied notions. The elements, if considered as left to themselves, as it were, proceed spontaneously or by chance or necessarily, according to the point of view taken; but they do not subserve *purpose* unless the operation of Reason is introduced. Plato can, therefore, speak of Reason "persuading" necessity, i.e. making the "blind" elements subserve design and conscious purpose, even though the material is partly intractable and cannot be fully subordinated to the operation of Reason.

The Demiurge was, then, no Creator-God. Moreover, Plato most probably never thought of "chaos" as ever existing in actual fact, in the sense of there having been an historical period when the world was simply a disorderly chaos. At any rate this was the tradition of the Academy with but very few dissentient voices (Plutarch and Atticus). It is true that Aristotle takes the account of the world's formation in the *Timaeus* as an account of formation in time (or at least criticises it as so interpreted), but he expressly mentions that the members of the Academy declared that in describing the world's formation they were merely doing so for purposes of exposition, in order to understand the universe, without supposing that it ever really came into existence.[3] Among Neo-Platonists Proclus gave this interpretation[4] and Simplicius.[5] If this interpretation is correct, then the Demiurge is still less like a Creator-God: he is a symbol of the Intelligence operative in the world, the King of heaven and earth of the *Philebus*.[6] Moreover, it is to be noted that in the *Timaeus* itself Plato asserts that "it is hard to find the maker and father of the universe, and having found him it is impossible to speak of him to all."[1] But if the Demiurge is a symbolic figure, it may also be that the sharp distinction implied in the *Timaeus* between the Demiurge and the Forms is only a pictorial representation. In treating of the Forms I inclined towards what might be called a Neo-Platonic interpretation of the relation between Mind, the Forms and the One, but I admitted that it *might* be that the Forms were Ideas of Mind or Intelligence. In any case it is not necessary to suppose that the picture of the Demiurge as a Divine Craftsman outside the world and also entirely distinct from the Forms is to be taken literally.

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[1] *Laws*, 889 c 4–6.

[2] *Physics*, B. 4, 196 a 25.

[3] *De Caelo*, 279 b 33.

[4] i, 382; iii, 273.

[5] *Phys.*, 1122, 3.

[6] 28 c 7–8.

6. What did the Demiurge "take over"? Plato speaks of the "Receptacle—as it were, the nurse—of all Becoming."[2] Later he describes this as "Space, which is everlasting, not admitting destruction; providing a situation for all things which come into being, but itself apprehended without the senses by a sort of bastard reasoning, and hardly an object of belief."[3] It appears, therefore, that Space is not that out of which the primary elements are made, but that *in which* they appear. It is true that Plato makes a comparison with gold out of which a man moulds figures;[4] but he goes on to say that Space "never departs at all from its own character. For it is ever receiving all things, and never in any way whatsoever takes on any character which is like any of the things that enter it."[5] It is probable, then, that Space or the Receptacle is not the matter out of which the primary qualities are made, but that in which they appear.

Plato remarks that the four elements (earth, air, fire and water) cannot be spoken of as substances, since they are constantly changing: "for they slip away and do not wait to be described as 'that' or 'this' or by any phrase that exhibits them as having permanent being."[6] They are rather to be termed *qualities*, which make their appearance in the Receptacle, "in which (ἐν ᾧ) all of them are always coming to be, making their appearance and again vanishing out of it."[7] The Demiurge thus "took over" (*a*) the Receptacle, "a kind of thing invisible and characterless, all-receiving, partaking in some very puzzling way of the intelligible and very hard to apprehend,"[8] and (*b*) the primary qualities, which appear in the Receptacle and which the Demiurge fashions or builds up after the model of the Forms.

7. The Demiurge proceeds to confer geometrical shapes on the

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[1] 28 c 3–5.
[2] 49 a 5–6.
[3] 52 a 8–b 2.
[4] 50 a 5–b 5.
[5] 50 b 7–c 2.
[6] 49 e 2–4.
[7] 49 e 7–50 a 1.
[8] 51 a 7–b 1.

four primary elements. Plato only takes things as far back as triangles, choosing the right-angled isosceles (half-square) and the right-angled scalene or half-equilateral, from which are to be built up the square and equilateral faces of the solids.[1] (If anyone asks why Plato makes a beginning with triangles, he answers that "the principles yet more remote, God knows and such men as are dear to Him."[2] In the *Laws*[3] he indicates that it is only when the third dimension is reached that things become "perceptible to sense." It is sufficient, therefore, for purposes of exposition to start with the surface or second dimension, and leave the remoter principles alone.) The solids are then constructed, the cube being assigned to earth (as the most immobile or hard to move), the pyramid to fire (as the "most mobile," having "the sharpest cutting edges and the sharpest points in every direction"), the octahedron to air, and the icosahedron to water.[4] These bodies are so small that no single one of them is perceptible by us, though an aggregate mass is perceptible.

The elementary solids or particles may be, and are, transformed into one another, since water, for example, may be broken down into its constituent triangles under the action of fire, and these triangles may recombine in Space into the same figure or into different figures. Earth, however, is an exception because, although it may be broken up, its constituent triangles (isosceles or half-square, from which the cube is generated) are peculiar to it alone, so that earth-particles "can never pass into any other kind."[5] Aristotle objects to this exception made in favour of earth, on the ground that it is unreasonable and unsupported by observation.[6] (The particles are spoken of as "motions or powers,"[7] and in the state of separation they have "some vestiges of their own nature."[8] Thus Ritter says that "Matter may be defined as that which acts in space."[9]) From the primary elements come substances as we know them: e.g. copper is "one of the bright and solid kinds of water," containing a particle of earth, "which, when the two substances begin to be separated again by the action of time," appears by itself on the surface as verdigris.[10] But Plato observes that to enumerate the genesis and nature of substances is not much more than a "recreation," a "sober and sensible pastime" that affords innocent pleasure.[11]

8. The Demiurge is depicted as creating the World-Soul

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[1] Cf. 53 c 4 ff. [2] 53 d 6–7. [3] 894 a 2–5. [4] 55 d 6 ff. [5] 56 d 5–6. [6] *De Caelo*, 306 a 2. [7] 56 c 4. [8] 53 b 2. [9] *Essence*, p. 261. [10] 59 c 1–5. [11] 59 c 5–d 2.

(though it is unlikely that Plato meant this to be taken literally, for in the *Phaedrus* it is stated that soul is uncreated[1]), which is a mixture composed of (*a*) Intermediate Existence (i.e. intermediate between the Indivisible Existence of the Forms and the Divisible Existence or Becoming of purely sensible things); (*b*) Intermediate Sameness; and (*c*) Intermediate Difference.[2] As immortal souls are also fashioned by the Demiurge from the same ingredients as the World-Soul,[3] it follows that the World-Soul and all immortal souls share in both worlds—in the unchanging world, inasmuch as they are immortal and intelligible, and in the changing world, inasmuch as they are themselves living and changing. The stars and planets have intelligent souls which are the celestial gods,[4] made by the Demiurge and having assigned to them the office of fashioning the mortal parts of the human soul and the human body.[5] It would appear from the *Phaedrus* that human souls never really had a beginning, and Proclus interprets Plato in this sense, though it is true that in the *Laws* the question seems to be left open.[6]

As to the traditional Greek deities, whose genealogies were narrated by the poets, Plato remarks that "to know and to declare their generation is too high a task for us"; it is best to "follow established usage."[7] Plato seems to have been agnostic as regards the existence of the anthropomorphic deities,[8] but he does not reject them outright, and in the *Epinomis*[9] the existence of invisible spirits (who were to play a large part in post-Aristotelian Greek philosophy), in addition to that of the celestial gods, is envisaged. Plato, therefore, upholds the traditional worship, though he places little reliance on the stories of the generation and genealogy of the Greek deities, and was probably doubtful if they really existed in the form in which the Greeks popularly conceived them.

9. The Demiurge, having constructed the universe, sought to make it still more like its pattern, the Living Creature or Being. Now, the latter is eternal, but "this character it was not possible to confer completely on the generated things. But he took thought to make a certain moving likeness of eternity; and, at the same time that he ordered the Heaven, he made, of eternity that abides in unity, an everlasting likeness moving according to number—that

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[1] 246 a 1–2.
[2] 35 a 1 ff. Cf. *Proclus*, ii, 155, Cornford's *Timaeus*, pp. 59 ff.
[3] 41 d 4 ff.
[4] 39 e 10–42 a 1.
[5] Cf. 41 a 7–d 3, 42 d 5–e 4.
[6] 781 e 6–782 a 3.
[7] *Tim.*, 40 d 6–41 a 3.
[8] Cf. *Phaedrus*, 246 c 6–d 3.
[9] 984 d 8–e 3.

which we have named Time."[1] Time is the movement of the sphere, and the Demiurge gave man the bright Sun to afford him a unit of time. Its brightness, relative to that of the other celestial bodies, enables man to differentiate day and night.

10. One cannot enter into details concerning the formation of the human body and its powers, or of the animals, etc. It must suffice to point out how Plato stresses finality, as in his quaint observation that "the gods, thinking that the front is more honourable and fit to lead than the back, gave us movement for the most part in that direction."[2]

The conclusion of the whole account of the formation of the world is that "having received its full complement of living creatures, mortal and immortal, this world has thus become a visible living creature embracing all things which are visible, an image of the intelligible, a perceptible god, supreme in greatness and excellence, in beauty and perfection, this Heaven, one and single in its kind."[3]

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[1] *Tim.*, 37 d 3-7.

[2] *Tim.*, 45 a 3-5.

[3] *Tim.*, 92 c 5-9.

CHAPTER XXV

ART

1. *Beauty*

1. Had Plato any appreciation of natural beauty? There is not an abundance of material from which to form an opinion. However, there is a description of natural scenery at the beginning of the *Phaedrus*,[1] and there are some similar remarks at the beginning of the *Laws*,[2] though in both cases the beauty of the scene is appreciated rather from a utilitarian standpoint, as a place of repose or as a setting for a philosophic discussion. Plato had, of course, an appreciation of human beauty.

2. Had Plato any real appreciation of Fine Art? (This question only arises because of his dismissal of dramatists and epic poets from the Ideal State on moral grounds, which might he held to imply that he lacked any real appreciation of literature and art.) Plato dismissed most of the poets from the *Republic* owing to metaphysical and, above all, moral considerations; but there certainly are not wanting indications that Plato was quite sensible of the charm of their compositions. While the words at the beginning of *Republic* 398 would not appear to be entirely sarcastic, in No. 383 of the same dialogue Socrates affirms that "although we praise much in Homer, this we shall not praise, the sending by Zeus of a lying dream to Agamemnon." Similarly, Plato makes Socrates say: "I must speak, although the love and awe of Homer, which have possessed me from youth, deter me from doing so. He seems to be the supreme teacher and leader of this fine tragic band, but a man should not be reverenced before the truth and I must needs speak out."[3] Again, "We are ready to acknowledge that Homer is the greatest of poets and first of tragedy writers; but we must recognise that hymns to the gods and praises of the good are the only poetry which ought to be admitted into our State."[4] Plato expressly says that if only poetry and the other arts will prove their title to be admitted into a well-ordered State, "we shall be delighted to receive her, knowing that we ourselves are very susceptible of her charms; but we may not on that account betray the truth."[5]

Bearing these points in mind, it seems impossible to write Plato down as a Philistine in regard to the arts and literature. And if it be suggested that his tributes of appreciation to the poets are but the grudging tributes of convention, we may point to Plato's own artistic achievement. If Plato himself had shown in no degree the spirit of the artist, it might be possible to believe that his remarks concerning the charms of the poets were due simply to convention or were even sarcastic in tone; but when we consider that it is the author of the *Symposium* and the *Phaedo* who speaks, it is really too much to expect anyone to believe that Plato's condemnation, or at least severe restriction, of art and literature was due to aesthetic insensibility.

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[1] 230 b 2 ff. [2] 625 b 1–c 2. [3] 595 b 9–c 3. [4] 607 a 2–5. [5] 607 c 3–8.

3. What was Plato's theory of Beauty? That Plato regarded beauty as objectively real, is beyond all question. Both in the *Hippias Maior* and in the *Symposium* it is assumed that all beautiful things are beautiful in virtue of their participation in the universal Beauty, Beauty itself. So when Socrates remarks "Then beauty, too, is something real," Hippias replies, "Real, why ask?"[1]

The obvious consequence of such a doctrine is that there are degrees of beauty. For if there is a real subsistent Beauty then beautiful things will approximate more or less to this objective norm. So in the *Hippias Maior* the notion of relativity is introduced. The most beautiful ape will be ugly in comparison with a beautiful man, and a beautiful porridge-pot will be ugly in comparison with a beautiful woman. The latter in turn will be ugly in comparison with a god. Beauty itself, however, in virtue of a participation in which all beautiful things are beautiful, cannot be supposed to be something which "may just as well be called ugly as beautiful."[2] Rather is it "not partly beautiful and partly ugly; not at one time beautiful and at another time not; not beautiful in relation to one thing and deformed in relation to another; not here beautiful and there ugly, not beautiful in the estimation of some people and deformed in that of others; . . . but . . . eternally self-subsistent and monoeidic with itself."[3]

It follows also that this supreme Beauty, as being absolute and the source of all participated beauty, cannot be a beautiful *thing*, and so cannot be material: it must be supersensible and immaterial. We can see at once, then, that if true Beauty is supersensible, beautiful works of art or literature will, apart from any other consideration, necessarily occupy a comparatively low step on the ladder of beauty, since they are material, whereas Beauty itself is immaterial; they appeal to the senses, while absolute Beauty appeals to the intellect (and indeed to the rational will, if we bring into consideration the Platonic notion of Eros). Now, no one will wish to question the sublimity of Plato's idea of the ascent from the things of sense to the "divine and pure, the monoeidic beautiful itself"; but a doctrine of supersensible beauty (unless it is purely analogical) makes it very difficult to form any definition of beauty which will apply to the beautiful in all its manifestations.

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[1] *H.M.*, 287 c 8–d 2.

[2] *H.M.*, 289 c 3–5.

[3] *Sympos.*, 211 a 2–b 2.

The suggestion is offered in the *Hippias Maior*[1] that "whatever is useful is beautiful." Thus efficiency will be beauty: the efficient trireme or the efficient institution will be beautiful in virtue of its efficiency. But in what sense, then, can the Supreme Beauty be thought of as useful or efficient? It ought, if the theory is to be consistent, to be Absolute Usefulness or Efficiency—a difficult notion to accept, one might think. Socrates, however, introduces a qualification. If it is the useful or efficient which is beautiful, is it that which is useful for a good or for a bad purpose or for both? He will not accept the idea that what is efficient for an evil purpose is beautiful, and so it must be that the useful for a good purpose, the truly profitable, is the beautiful. But if the beautiful is the profitable, i.e. that which *produces* something good, then beauty and goodness cannot be the same, any more than the cause and its product can be the same. But since Socrates is unable to accept the conclusion that what is beautiful is not at the same time good, he suggests that the beautiful is that which gives pleasure to the eye or ear—e.g. beautiful men and colour-patterns and pictures and statues, beautiful voices and music and poetry and prose. This definition is, of course, not quite consistent with the characterisation of supreme Beauty as immaterial, but, quite apart from that fact, it is involved in another difficulty. That which gives pleasure through sight cannot be beautiful simply because it comes through *sight*, for then a beautiful tone would not be beautiful: nor can a tone be beautiful precisely because it gives pleasure to the sense of *hearing*, since in that case a statue, which is seen but not heard, would not be beautiful. The objects, therefore, which cause aesthetic pleasure of sight or hearing must share some common character which makes them beautiful, which belongs to them both. What is this common character? Is it perhaps "Profitable pleasure," since the pleasures of sight and hearing are "the most harmless and the best of pleasures?" If this be so, then, says Socrates, we are back in the old position that beauty cannot be good nor the good beautiful.

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[1] 295 c 1 ff.

If anything like the foregoing definition of beauty were maintained, it would be inconsistent with Plato's general metaphysical position. If Beauty is a transcendental Form, how can it possibly be that which gives pleasure to the senses of sight and hearing? In the *Phaedrus*[1] Plato declares that beauty alone, in distinction from wisdom, has the privilege of manifesting itself to the senses. But does it manifest itself through what is itself beautiful or not? If the latter, how can there be a real manifestation? If the former, then do the sensible manifesting beauty and the supersensible manifested beauty unite in a common definition or not? And if so, in what definition? Plato does not really offer any definition that will cover both types of beauty. In the *Philebus* he speaks of true pleasure as arising from beautiful shapes and colours and sounds and goes on to explain that he is referring to "straight lines and curves" and to "such sounds as are pure and smooth and yield a single pure tone." These "are not beautiful relatively to anything else but in their own proper nature."[2] In the passage in question Plato distinguishes between the pleasure attaching to the perception of beauty and beauty itself, and his words must be read in connection with his statement[3] that "measure and symmetry everywhere pass into beauty and virtue," which implies that beauty consists in μετριότης καὶ συμμετρία. Perhaps this is as near as Plato ever comes to offering a definition of beauty that would apply to sensible and to supersensible beauty (he certainly assumed that there are both, and that the one is a copy of the other); but if we take into account the remarks on beauty scattered about in the dialogues, it is probable that we must admit that Plato wanders "among so many conceptions, among which it is just possible to say that the identification of the Beautiful with the Good prevails,"[4] though the definition offered in the *Philebus* would seem to be the most promising.

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[1] 250 d 6–8. [2] 51 b 9–c 7. [3] *Phil.*, 64 e 6–7.

[4] *Aesthetic*, by Benedetto Croce, pp. 165–6. (2nd edit., trs. by Douglas Ainslie, Macmillan, 1929.)

II. *Plato's Theory of Art*

1. Plato suggests that the *origin* of art is to be sought in the natural instinct of expression.[1]

2. In its metaphysical aspect or its essence, art is *imitation.* The Form is exemplary, archetypal; the natural object is an instance of μίμησις. Now, the painting of a man, for example, is the copy or imitation of a natural, particular man. It is, therefore, the imitation of an imitation. Truth, however, is to be sought properly in the Form; the work of the artist accordingly stands at two removes from the truth. Hence Plato, who was above all things interested in truth, was bound to depreciate art, however much he might feel the beauty and charm of statues, painting or literature. This depreciatory view of art comes out strongly in the *Republic,* where he applies it to the painter and the tragic poet, etc.[2] Sometimes his remarks are a little comical, as when he observes that the painter does not even copy objects accurately, being an imitator of appearance and not of fact.[3] The painter who paints a bed, paints it only from one point of view, as it appears to the senses immediately: the poet portrays healing, war and so on, without any real knowledge of the things of which he is speaking. The conclusion is that "imitative art must be a long way from truth."[4] It is "two grades below reality, and quite easy to produce without any knowledge of the truth—for it is mere semblance and not reality."[5] The man who gives up his life to producing this shadow of reality has made a very bad bargain.

In the *Laws* there appears what is perhaps a somewhat more favourable judgment concerning art, though Plato has not altered his metaphysical position. When saying that the excellence of music is not to be estimated merely by the amount of sense-pleasure it occasions, Plato adds that the only music which has real excellence is the kind of music "which is an imitation of the good."[6] Again, "those who seek for the best kind of song and music, ought not to seek for that which is pleasant, but for that which is true; and the truth of imitation consists, as we were saying, in rendering the thing imitated according to quantity and quality."[7] He thus still clings to the concept of music as imitative ("everyone will admit that musical compositions are all imitative and representative"), but admits that imitation may be "true" if it renders the thing imitated as best as it can in its own medium. He is ready to admit music and art into the State, not only for educative purposes, but also for "innocent pleasure";[1] but he still maintains the imitation-theory of art, and that Plato's idea of imitation was somewhat narrow and literal must be clear to anyone who reads the second Book of the *Laws* (though it must be admitted, I think, that to make *music* imitative implies a widening of imitation to include symbolism. That music is imitative is, of course, a doctrine common to both the *Republic* and the *Laws*.) It is through this concept of imitation that Plato arrives at the qualities of a good critic, who must (*a*) know of what the imitation is supposed to be; (*b*) know whether it is "true" or not; and (*c*) know whether it has been well executed in words and melodies and rhythms.[2]

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[1] Cf. *Laws,* 653–4, 672 b 8–c 6.
[2] *Rep.,* 597 c 11 and ff.
[3] *Rep.,* 597 e 10 ff.
[4] *Rep.,* 598 b 6.
[5] *Rep.,* 598 e 6–599 a 3.
[6] *Laws,* 668 a 9–b 2.
[7] *Laws,* 668 b 4–7.

It is to be noted that the doctrine of μίμησις would indicate that for Plato art definitely has its own sphere. While ἐπιστήμη concerns the ideal order and δόξα the perceptible order of natural objects, εἰκασία concerns the imaginative order. The work of art is a product of imagination and addresses itself to the emotional element in man. It is not necessary to suppose that the imitative character of art maintained by Plato *essentially* denoted mere photographic reproduction, in spite of the fact that his words about "true" imitation indicate that this is what he was often thinking of. For one thing, the natural object is not a photographic copy of the Idea, since the Idea belongs to one order and the perceptible natural object belongs to another order, so that we may conclude by analogy that the work of art need not necessarily be a mere reproduction of the natural object. It is the work of imaginative creation. Again, Plato's insistence on the imitative character of music makes it very difficult, as I have mentioned, to suppose that imitation meant essentially mere photographic reproduction. It is rather imaginative symbolism, and it is precisely because of this fact that it does not assert truth or falsehood, but is imaginative and symbolic and wears the glamour of beauty, that it addresses itself to the emotional in man.

Man's emotions are varied, some being profitable, others harmful. Reason, therefore, must decide what art is to be admitted and what is to be excluded. And the fact that Plato definitely admits forms of art into the State in the *Laws* shows that art occupies a particular sphere of human activity, which is irreducible to anything else. It may not be a high sphere, but it is a sphere. This is borne out by the passage in which Plato, after referring to the stereotyped character of Egyptian art, remarks that "if a person can only find in any way the natural melodies, he should confidently embody them in a fixed and legal form."[1] It must, however, be admitted that Plato does not realise—or, if he does realise, does not sufficiently exhibit—the specifically disinterested character of aesthetic contemplation in itself. He is much more concerned with the educational and moral effects of art, effects which are irrelevant, no doubt, to aesthetic contemplation as such, but which are none the less real, and which must be taken into account by anyone who, like Plato, values moral excellence more than aesthetic sensibility.[2]

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[1] *Laws*, 670 d 6–7.

[2] *Laws*, 669 a 7–b 3.

3. Plato recognises that the popular view of art and music is that they exist to give pleasure, but it is a view with which he will not agree. A thing can only be judged by the standard of pleasure when it furnishes no utility or truth or "likeness" (reference to imitation), but exists solely for the accompanying charm.[3] Now, music, for instance, is representative and imitative, and good music will have "truth of imitation":[4] therefore music, or at least good music, furnishes a certain kind of "truth," and so cannot exist solely for the sake of the accompanying charm or be judged of by the standard of sense-pleasure alone. The same holds good for the other arts. The conclusion is that the various arts may be admitted into the State, provided that they are kept in their proper place and subordinated to their educative function, this function being that of giving *profitable* pleasure. That the arts do not, or should not, give pleasure, Plato by no means intends to assert: he allows that in the city there should be "a due regard to the instruction and amusement which the Muses give,"[5] and even declares that "every man and boy, free and slave, both sexes, and the whole city, should never cease charming themselves with the strains of which we have spoken, and that there should be every sort of change and variation of them in order to take away the effect of sameness, so that the singers may always have an appetite for their hymns and receive pleasure from them."[6]

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[1] 657 b 2–3.

[2] For further treatment of Plato's philosophy of art, see e.g. Professor R. G. Collingwood's article, "Plato's Philosophy of Art," in *Mind* for April 1925.

[3] *Laws*, 667 d 9–e 4. [4] 668 b 4–7. [5] 656 c 1–3. [6] 665 c 2–7.

But though Plato in the *Laws* allows for the pleasurable and recreative functions of art, the "innocent pleasure"[1] that it affords, he most certainly stresses its educative and moral function, its character of providing profitable pleasure. The attitude displayed towards art in the *Laws* may be more liberal than that shown in the *Republic*, but Plato's fundamental attitude has not changed. As we have seen when treating of the State, a strict supervision and censorship of art is provided for in both dialogues. In the very passage in which he says that due regard should be paid to the instruction and amusement given by the Muses, he asks if a poet is to be allowed to "train his choruses as he pleases, without reference to virtue or vice."[2] In other words, the art admitted into the State must have that remote relation to the Form ("truth of imitation" *via* the natural object) which is possible in the creations of the imagination. If it has not got that, then the art will be not only unprofitable but also bad art, since good art must have this "truth of imitation," according to Plato. Once more, then, it becomes clear that art has a function of its own, even if not a sublime one, since it constitutes a rung on the ladder of education, fulfils a need of man (expression) and affords recreation and innocent amusement, being the expression of a definite form of human activity—that of the creative imagination (though "creative" must be understood in connection with the doctrine of imitation). Plato's theory of art was doubtless sketchy and unsatisfactory, but one can hardly be justified in asserting that he had no theory at all.

Note on the Influence of Plato

1. The example of Plato is an influence by itself. His life was one of utter devotion to truth, to the attainment of abiding, eternal and absolute truth, in which he firmly and constantly believed, being ready to follow, as Socrates was, wherever reason might lead. This spirit he endeavoured to stamp upon the Academy, creating a body of men who, under the ascendency of a great teacher, would devote themselves to the attainment of Truth and Goodness. But though he was a great speculative philosopher, devoted to the attainment of truth in the intellectual sphere, Plato, as we have seen, was no mere theorist. Possessed of an intense moral earnestness and convinced of the reality of absolute moral values and standards, he urged men to take

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[1] 670 d 7.

[2] 656 c 5-7.

thought for their dearest possession, their immortal soul, and to strive after the cultivation of true virtue, which alone would make them happy. The good life, based on an eternal and absolute pattern, must be lived both in private and in public, realised both in the individual and in the State: as relativistic private morality was rejected, so was the opportunist, superficial, self-seeking attitude of the sophistic "politician" or the theory that "Might is Right."

If man's life *ought* to be lived under the dominion of reason according to an ideal pattern, in the world as a whole we must acknowledge the actual operation of Mind. Atheism is utterly rejected and the order in the world is ascribed to Divine Reason, ordering the cosmos according to the ideal pattern and plan. Thus that which is realised in the macrocosm, e.g. in the movements of heavenly bodies, should also be realised in man, the microcosm. If man does follow reason and strives to realise the ideal in his life and conduct, he becomes akin to the Divine and attains happiness in this life and the hereafter. Plato's "otherworldliness" did not spring from a hatred of this life, but was rather a consequence of his convinced belief in the reality of the Transcendent and Absolute.

2. Plato's personal influence may be seen from the impression he made on his great pupil, Aristotle. Witness the latter's verses to the memory

> Of that unique man
> Whose name is not to come from the lips of the wicked.
> Theirs is not the right to praise him—
> Him who first revealed clearly
> By word and by deed
> That he who is virtuous is happy.
> Alas, not one of us can equal him.[1]

Aristotle gradually separated himself from some of the Platonic doctrines that he had held at first; but, in spite of his growing interest in empirical science, he never abandoned metaphysics or his belief in the good life culminating in true wisdom—in other words, he never abandoned altogether the legacy of Plato, and his philosophy would be unthinkable apart from the work of his great predecessor.

3. Of the course of Platonism in the Academy and in the Neo-Platonic School I shall speak later. Through the Neo-Platonists

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[1] Arist., Frag. 623. (Rose, 1870.)

Platonism made its influence felt on St. Augustine and on the formative period of mediaeval thought. Indeed, although St. Thomas Aquinas, the greatest of the Schoolmen, adopted Aristotle as "the Philosopher," there is much in his system that can be traced back ultimately to Plato rather than to Aristotle. Moreover, at the time of the Renaissance, the Platonic Academy of Florence endeavoured to renew the Platonic tradition, while the influence of the Platonic Republic may be seen in St. Thomas More's *Utopia* and Campanella's *City of the Sun.*

4. In regard to modern times, the influence of Plato may not be at first sight so obvious as it is in Antiquity and in the Middle Ages; but in reality he is the father or grandfather of all spiritualist philosophy and of all objective idealism, and his epistemology, metaphysics and politico-ethics have exercised a profound influence on succeeding thinkers, either positively or negatively. In the contemporary world we need only think of the inspiration that Plato has afforded to thinkers like Professor A. N. Whitehead or Professor Nicolai Hartmann of Berlin.

5. Plato, who stands at the head of European philosophy, left us no rounded system. That we do not possess his lectures and a complete record of his teaching in the Academy, we naturally regret, for we would like to know the solution of many problems that have puzzled commentators ever since; but, on the other hand, we may in a real sense be thankful that no cut and dried Platonic system (if ever there was such) has come down to us, a system to be swallowed whole or rejected, for this fact has enabled us to find in him, more easily perhaps than might otherwise be the case, a supreme example of the philosophic spirit. If he has not left us a complete system, Plato has indeed left us the example of a way of philosophising and the example of a life devoted to the pursuit of the true and the good.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE OLD ACADEMY

The Platonic philosophy continued to exercise a profound influence throughout Antiquity; we must, however, distinguish various phases in the development of the Platonic School. The old Academy, which consisted of disciples and associates of Plato himself, held more or less to the dogmatic content of the Master's philosophy, though it is noticeable that it was the "Pythagorean" elements in the thought of Plato that received particular attention. In the Middle and New Academies an anti-dogmatic sceptical tendency is at first predominant, though it later gives way before a return to dogmatism of an eclectic type. This eclecticism is very apparent in Middle Platonism, which is succeeded at the close of the period of ancient philosophy by Neo-Platonism, an attempt at a complete synthesis of the original content of Platonism with those elements which had been introduced at various times, a synthesis in which those traits are stressed which are most in harmony with the general spirit of the time.

The Old Academy includes, together with men like Philippus of Opus, Heraclides Ponticus, Eudoxus of Cnidus, the following successors to Plato in the headship of the School at Athens: Speusippus (348/7–339/8), Xenocrates (339/8–315/4), Polemon (315/4–270/69) and Crates (270/69–265/4).

Speusippus, Plato's nephew and immediate successor as Scholarch, modified the Platonic dualism by abandoning the Ideas as distinct from τὰ μαθηματικά and making Reality to consist in mathematical numbers.[1] The Platonic Number-Ideas were thus dismissed, but the essential χωρισμός remained. By his admission of scientific perception (ἐπιστημονικὴ αἴσθησις) Speusippus is sometimes said to have given up the Platonic dualism of knowledge and perception,[2] but it must be remembered that Plato had himself gone some way towards admitting this, inasmuch as he allowed that λόγος and αἴσθησις co-operate in the apprehension of the atomic idea.

It is difficult to tell exactly what the members of the Old

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[1] Frag. 42, a–g.

[2] So Praechter, p. 343.

Academy taught, since (unless Philippus of Opus wrote the *Epinomis*) no whole work of theirs has come down to us, and we have only the remarks of Aristotle and the testimony of other ancient writers to rely on. But apparently Speusippus held that substances proceed from the One and the absolute Many, and he placed the Good or τελεία ἕξις at the end of the process of becoming and not at the beginning, arguing from the development of plants and animals. Among the animate beings that proceed from the One is the invisible Reason or God,[1] which he probably also identified with the World-Soul. (Possibly this might afford an argument in favour of a "Neo-Platonic" interpretation of Plato.) As for human souls, these are immortal in their entirety. We may note that Speusippus interpreted the account of "creation" in the *Timaeus* as a mere form of exposition and not as meant to be an account of an actual creation in time: the world has no beginning in time. The traditional gods he interpreted as physical forces, and thus brought upon himself a charge of atheism.[2]

Xenocrates of Chalcedon, who succeeded Speusippus as Scholarch, identified the Ideas with mathematical numbers, and derived them from the One and the Indeterminate Duality (the former being Νοῦς or Zeus, the father of the gods, the latter being the feminine principle, the mother of the gods).[3] The World-Soul, produced by the addition of the Self and the Other to number, is a self-moved number. Distinguishing three worlds—the sublunar, the heavenly, and the super-celestial—Xenocrates filled all three worlds with "demons," both good and bad. This doctrine of evil demons enabled him to explain the popular myths, in which evil actions are ascribed to "gods," and the existence of immoral cults, by saying that the evil actions were the acts of evil demons, and that the immoral cults were directed to these demons and not to the gods.[4] In company with his predecessor, Xenocrates held that even the irrational parts of the soul (which was not created in time) survive after death, and, together with his successor, Polemon, he deprecated the consumption of flesh-meat on the ground that this might lead to the dominion of the irrational over the rational. Like Speusippus and Crantor (and in opposition to Aristotle), Xenocrates understood the priority of the simple over the composite in the *Timaeus* to be a logical and not a temporal priority.[1] (The Περὶ ἀτόμων γραμμῶν, attributed to Aristotle, was directed against Xenocrates' hypothesis of tiny invisible lines, which he employed as an aid in the deduction of dimensions from numbers.)

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[1] Frag. 38–9.

[2] Cic., *De Nat. D.*, 1, 13, 32.

[3] Frag. 34 ff.

[4] Frag. 24 ff.

Heraclides Ponticus adopted from the Pythagorean Ecphantus the theory that the world is composed of particles which he called ἄναρμοι ὄγκοι, probably meaning that they are separated from one another by space. From these material particles the world was composed through the operation of God. The soul is therefore corporeal (consisting of aether, an element added to the others by Xenocrates). While asserting the diurnal revolution of the earth on its axis, Heraclides also held that Mercury and Venus revolve round the sun, and he seems to have suggested that the earth may do likewise.

One of the most celebrated mathematicians and astronomers of Antiquity is *Eudoxus* (*c.* 497–355 B.C.). Philosophically speaking, he is noteworthy for having held (*a*) that the Ideas are "mixed" with things,[2] and (*b*) that pleasure is the highest good.[3]

The first commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* was written by *Crantor* (*c.* 330–270), in which he interpreted the account of "creation" as a timeless and not as a temporal event. It is depicted as taking place in time simply for the purpose of logical schematism. In this interpretation Crantor was in accord, as we have seen, with both Speusippus and Xenocrates. In his Περὶ πένθους Crantor upheld the doctrine of the moderating of the passions (Metriopathy) in opposition to the Stoic ideal of Apathy.[4]

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[1] Frag. 54.
[2] *Metaph.*, A 9, 991 a 8–19.
[3] *Eth. Nic.*, 1101 b 27 ff.; 1172 b 9 ff.
[4] Cic., *Acad.*, 2, 44, 135; *Tusc.*, 3, 6, 12.

PART IV

ARISTOTLE

CHAPTER XXVII

LIFE AND WRITINGS OF ARISTOTLE

ARISTOTLE was born in 384/3 B.C. at Stageira in Thrace, and was the son of Nicomachus, a physician of the Macedonian king, Amyntas II. When he was about seventeen years old Aristotle went to Athens for purposes of study and became a member of the Academy in 368/7 B.C., where for over twenty years he was in constant intercourse with Plato until the latter's death in 348/7 B.C. He thus entered the Academy at the time when Plato's later dialectic was being developed and the religious tendency was gaining ground in the great philosopher's mind. Probably already at this time Aristotle was giving attention to empirical science (i.e. at the time of Plato's death), and it may be that he had already departed from the Master's teaching on various points; but there can be no question of any radical break between Master and pupil as long as the former was still alive. It is impossible to suppose that Aristotle could have remained all that time in the Academy had he already taken up a radically different philosophical position to that of his Master. Moreover, even after Plato's death Aristotle still uses the first person plural of the representatives of the Platonic doctrine of Ideas, and soon after Plato's death Aristotle eulogises him as the man "whom bad men have not even the right to praise, and who showed in his life and teachings how to be happy and good at the same time."[1] The notion that Aristotle was in any real sense an opponent of Plato in the Academy and that he was a thorn in the side of the Master, is scarcely tenable: Aristotle found in Plato a guide and friend for whom he had the greatest admiration, and though in later years his own scientific interests tended to come much more to the fore, the metaphysical and religious teaching of Plato had a lasting influence upon him. Indeed, it was this side of Plato's teaching that would have perhaps a special value for Aristotle, as offsetting his own bent towards empirical studies. "In fact, this myth of a cool, static, unchanging and purely critical Aristotle, without illusions, experiences, or history, breaks to pieces under the weight of the facts which up to now have been artificially suppressed for its sake."[1] As I shall briefly indicate, when considering Aristotle's writings, the Philosopher developed his own personal standpoint only gradually; and this is, after all, only what one would naturally expect.

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[1] Frag. 623. (Rose, *Aristotelis Fragmenta*. Berlin, 1870 edit.)

After Plato's death Aristotle left Athens with Xenocrates (Speusippus, Plato's nephew, had become head of the Academy, and with him Aristotle did not see eye to eye; in any case he may not have wished to remain in the Academy in a subordinate position under its new head), and founded a branch of the Academy at Assos in the Troad. Here he influenced Hermias, ruler of Atarneus, and married his niece and adopted daughter, Pythias. While working at Assos, Aristotle no doubt began to develop his own independent views. Three years later he went to Mitylene in Lesbos, and it was there that he was probably in intercourse with Theophrastus, a native of Eresus on the same island, who was later the most celebrated disciple of Aristotle. (Hermias entered into negotiations with Philip of Macedon, who conceived the idea of an Hellenic defeat of the Persians. The Persian general, Mentor, got hold of Hermias by treachery and carried him off to Susa, where he was tortured but kept silence. His last message was: "Tell my friends and companions that I have done nothing weak or unworthy of philosophy." Aristotle published a poem in his honour.[2])

In 343/2 Aristotle was invited to Pella by Philip of Macedon to undertake the education of his son Alexander, then thirteen years old. This period at the court of Macedon and the endeavour to exercise a real moral influence on the young prince, who was later to play so prominent a part on the political stage and to go down to posterity as Alexander the Great, should have done much to widen Aristotle's horizon and to free him from the narrow conceptions of the ordinary Greek, though the effect does not seem to have been so great as might have been expected: Aristotle never ceased to share the Greek view of the City-State as the centre of life. When Alexander ascended the throne in 336/5, Aristotle left Macedon, his pedagogical activity being now presumably at an end, and probably went for a time to Stageira, his native city, which Alexander rebuilt as payment of his debt to his teacher. After a time the connection between the philosopher and his pupil became weaker: Aristotle, though approving to a certain extent of Macedonian politics, did not approve of Alexander's tendency to regard Greeks and "barbarians" as on an equal footing. Moreover, in 327, Callisthenes, nephew of Aristotle, who had been taken into the service of Alexander on Aristotle's recommendation, was suspected of taking part in a conspiracy and was executed.

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[1] Werner Jaeger, *Aristotle. Fundamentals of the History of His Development*, p. 34. (Trans. R. Robinson. Clarendon Press, 1934.)

[2] Diog. Laërt. 5, 7 and 8.

In 335/4 Aristotle had returned to Athens, where he founded his own School. Apart from the fact of his absence from Athens for some years, the development of his own ideas no doubt precluded any return to the Athenian Academy. The new School was in the north-east of the city, at the Lyceum, the precincts of Apollo Lyceus. The School was also known as the Περίπατος, and the members as οἱ Περιπατητικοί, from their custom of carrying on their discussions while walking up and down in the covered ambulatory or simply because much of the instruction was given in the ambulatory. The School was dedicated to the Muses. Besides educational and tuitional work the Lyceum seems to have had, in a more prominent way than the Academy, the character of a union or society in which mature thinkers carried on their studies and research: it was in effect a university or scientific institute, equipped with library and teachers, in which lectures were regularly given.

In 323 B.C. Alexander the Great died, and the reaction in Greece against Macedonian suzerainty led to a charge of ἀσέβεια against Aristotle, who had been so closely connected with the great leader in his younger days. Aristotle withdrew from Athens (lest the Athenians should sin against philosophy for the second time, he is reported to have said) and went to Chalcis in Euboea, where he lived on an estate of his dead mother. Shortly afterwards, in 322/1 B.C., he died of an illness.

The Works of Aristotle

The writings of Aristotle fall into three main periods, (i) the period of his intercourse with Plato; (ii) the years of his activity at Assos and Mitylene; (iii) the time of his headship of the Lyceum at Athens. The works fall also into two groups or kinds, (i) the exoteric works—ἐξωτερικοί, ἐκδεδομένοι λόγοι—which were written for the most part in dialogue form and intended for general publication; and (ii) the pedagogical works—ἀκροαματικοὶ λόγοι, ὑπομνήματα, πραγματεῖα—which formed the basis of Aristotle's lectures in the Lyceum. The former exist only in fragments, but of the latter kind we possess a large number. These pedagogical works were first made known to the public in the edition of Andronicus of Rhodes (*c.* 60–50 B.C.), and it is these works which have earned for Aristotle a reputation for baldness of style unembellished by literary graces. It has been pointed out that, though a great inventor of philosophical terms, Aristotle was neglectful of style and of verbal beauty, while his interest in philosophy was too serious to admit of his employing metaphor instead of clear reason or of relapsing into myth. Now, this is true of the pedagogical works—that they lack the literary graces, but it is also true that the works which Aristotle himself published, and of which we possess only fragments, did not disdain the literary graces: their fluent style was praised by Cicero,[1] and even myths were occasionally introduced. They do, however, represent Aristotle's earlier work, when he was under direct Platonic influence or working his way towards his own independent position.

(i) In Aristotle's *first period* of literary activity he may be said to have adhered closely to Plato, his teacher, both in content and, in general at least, in form, though in the Dialogues Aristotle seems to have appeared himself as the leader of the conversation. "*. . . sermo ita inducitur ceterorum, ut penes ipsum sit principatus.*" (So Cic. *Ad Att.* 13, 19, 4.) It is most probable that in the Dialogues Aristotle held the Platonic philosophy, and only later changed his mind. Plutarch speaks of Aristotle as changing his mind (μετατίθεσθαι).[2] Moreover, Cephisodorus, pupil of Isocrates, saddles Aristotle with Plato's theories, e.g. concerning the Ideas.[3]

(*a*) To this period belongs the dialogue of *Eudemus*, or *On the Soul*, in which Aristotle shares Plato's doctrine of recollection and the apprehension of the Ideas in a state of pre-existence, and is in general dominated by the Master's influence. Aristotle argues for the immortality of the soul on lines suggested by the *Phaedo*—the soul is not a mere harmony of the body. Harmony has a contrary, namely, disharmony. But the soul has no contrary. Therefore the soul is not a harmony.[4] Aristotle supposes pre-existence and the substantiality of the soul—also Forms. Just as men who fall ill may lose their memories, so the soul, on entering this life, forgets the state of pre-existence; but just as those who recover health after sickness remember their suffering, so the soul after death remembers this life. Life apart from the body is the soul's normal state (κατὰ φύσιν); its inhabitation of the body is really a severe illness.[1] This is a very different view from that afterwards put forward by Aristotle when he had taken up his own independent position.

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[1] Cf. *De Orat.*, I, xi, 49.

[2] *De virt. mor.*, c. 7.

[3] Euseb. *Prep. Evang.*, XIV, 6, following Numenius.

[4] Frag. 41. (Rose.)

(*b*) The *Protrepticus* also belongs to this period of Aristotle's development. This appears to have been an epistle to Themison of Cyprus and not a dialogue. In this work the Platonic doctrine of Forms is maintained, and the philosopher is depicted as one who contemplates these Forms or Ideas and not the imitations of them (αὐτῶν γὰρ ἐστι θεατής ἀλλ'οὐ μιμημάτων).[2] Again Phronesis retains the Platonic signification, denoting metaphysical speculation, and so having a theoretical meaning and not the purely practical significance of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. In the *Protrepticus* Aristotle also emphasises the worthlessness of earthly goods, and depicts this life as the death or tomb of the soul, which enters into true and higher life only through bodily death. This view certainly indicates direct Platonic influence, for in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle insists on the necessity of earthly goods, in some degree at least, for the truly happy life, and so even for the philosopher.

(*c*) It is probable that the oldest parts of the Logical Works, of the *Physics*, and perhaps also of the *De Anima* (book Γ) date back to this period. Thus if a preliminary sketch of the *Metaphysics* (including book A) dates back to Aristotle's *second* period, it is to be supposed that *Physics* (book 2) dates back to his *first* period, since in the first book of the *Metaphysics* there is a reference to the *Physics*, or at least the setting-out of the theory of the causes is presupposed.[3] It is probable that the *Physics* fall into two groups of monographs, and the first two books and book 7 are to be ascribed to the earliest period of Aristotle's literary activity.

(ii) In his *second period* Aristotle began to diverge from his former predominantly Platonic position and to adopt a more critical attitude towards the teaching of the Academy. He still looked on himself as an Academician apparently, but it is the period of criticism or of growing criticism in regard to Platonism. The period is represented by the dialogue *On Philosophy*, Περὶ φιλοσοφίας, a work which combines clear Platonic influence with a criticism of some of Plato's most characteristic theories. Thus although Aristotle represents Plato as the culmination of previous philosophy (and indeed as regards pre-Aristotelian philosophy, Aristotle always held this idea), he criticises the Platonic theory of Forms or Ideas, at least under its later form of development at Plato's hands. "If the Ideas were another kind of number, and not the mathematical, we should have no understanding of it. For who understands another kind of number, at any rate among the majority of us?"[1] Similarly, although Aristotle adopts more or less Plato's stellar theology, the concept of the Unmoved Mover makes its appearance,[2] though Aristotle has not yet adopted the multitudinous movers of his later metaphysics. He applies the term visible god—τοσοῦτον ὁρατὸν θεόν—to the Cosmos or Heaven, a term which is of Platonic derivation.

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[1] Frag. 35. (Rose.)

[2] Iambl., *Protr.*, assuming that chapters 6–12 of Iamblichus' work consist of passages from Aristotle's *Protrepticus*. (Cf. Jaeger, *Aristotle*, pp. 60 ff.)

[3] *Metaph.*, A, 983 a 33–4.

It is interesting that the argument for the existence of the Divine drawn from the gradations of perfections is found in this dialogue. "In general, wherever there is a better there is also a best. Now, since among the things that are one is better than another, there is also a best thing, and this would be the divine." Aristotle supposes apparently the gradation of real forms.[3] The subjective belief in God's existence is derived by Aristotle from the soul's experience of ecstasies and prophecies in e.g. the state of sleep, and from the sight of the starry heavens, though such recognition of occult phenomena is really foreign to Aristotle's later development.[4] In this dialogue, then, Aristotle combines elements that can have no other source than Plato and his circle with elements of criticism of the Platonic philosophy, as when he criticises the Platonic theory of Ideas or the doctrine of "creation" as given in the *Timaeus*, asserting the eternity of the world.[5]

It appears that a first sketch of the *Metaphysics* goes back to this second period in Aristotle's development, the period of transition. This would comprise Book A (the use of the term "we" denoting the transitional period), Book B, Book K, 1–8, Book Λ (except C 8), Book M, 9–10, Book N. According to Jaeger the attack in the original *Metaphysics* was directed mainly against Speusippus.[1]

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[1] Frag. 11. (Rose.)

[2] Frag. 21. (Rose.) It must be admitted that this fragment implies that Aristotle had not yet definitely stated the existence of the First Mover or broken with his former views.

[3] Frag. 15. (Rose.) Professor Jaeger thinks that the dialogue contained also the proofs from motion and causality.

[4] Frags. 12 and 14. (Rose.) Cf. *Laws*, 966 d 9–967 a 5.

[5] Cf. Frag. 17. (Rose.)

The *Eudemian Ethics* are sometimes thought to belong to this period, and to date from Aristotle's sojourn at Assos. Aristotle still holds to the Platonic conception of Phronesis, though the object of philosophic contemplation is no longer the Ideal World of Plato but the transcendent God of the *Metaphysics*.[2] It is also probable that an original *Politics* dates from this second period, including Books 2, 3, 7, 8, which deal with the Ideal State. Utopias on the style of the Platonic Republic are criticised by Aristotle.

The writings *De Caelo* and *De Generatione et Corruptione* (Περὶ οὐρανοῦ and Περὶ γενέσεως καὶ φθορᾶς) are also ascribed to this period with probability.

(iii) Aristotle's *Third Period* (335–322) is that of his activity in the Lyceum. It is in this period that there appears Aristotle the empirical observer and scientist, who is yet concerned to raise a sure philosophical building upon a firm foundation sunk deep in the earth. We cannot but marvel at the power of organising detailed research in the provinces of nature and history that is shown by Aristotle in this last period of his life. There had, indeed, been in the Academy a practice of classification, mainly for logical purposes, that involved a certain amount of empirical observation, but there was nothing of the sustained and systematic investigation into details of nature and history that the Lyceum carried out under the direction of Aristotle. This spirit of exact research into the phenomena of nature and history really represents something new in the Greek world, and the credit for it must undoubtedly go to Aristotle. But it will not do to represent Aristotle as merely a Positivist in the last phase of his life, as is sometimes done, for there is really no evidence to show that he ever abandoned metaphysics, in spite of all his interest in exact, scientific research.

Aristotle's lectures in the School formed the basis of his "pedagogical" works, which were circulated among the members of the School, and were, as already mentioned, first given to the public by Andronicus of Rhodes. Most of the pedagogical works belong to this period, except, of course, those portions of works which are probably to be ascribed to an earlier phase. These pedagogical works have offered many difficulties to scholars, e.g. because of the unsatisfactory connections between books, sections that appear to break the logical succession of thought, and so on. It now appears probable that these works represent lectures of Aristotle which were equivalently published—so far as the School was concerned—by being given as lectures. But this does not imply that each work represents a single lecture or a continuous course of lectures: rather are they different sections or lectures which were later put together and given an external unity by means of a common title. This work of composition can have been only in part accomplished by Aristotle himself: it continued in the following generations of the School and was first completed by Andronicus of Rhodes, if not later.

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[1] Jaeger, *Aristotle*, p. 192.

[2] Cf. *Eud. Eth.*, 1249 b.

These works of Aristotle's third period may be divided into:

(*a*) *Logical Works* (combined in Byzantine times as the *Organon*). The *Categories* or κατηγορίαι (Aristotelian in content at least), the *De Interpretatione* or Περὶ ἑρμενείας (on proposition and judgment), the *Prior Analytics* or Ἀναλυτικά Πρότερα (two books on inference), the *Posterior Analytics* or Ἀναλυτικά ὕστερα (two books on proof, knowledge of principles, etc.), the *Topics* or Τοπικά (eight books on dialectic or probable proof), the Sophistical Fallacies or Περὶ σοφιστικῶν ἐλέγκων.

(*b*) *Metaphysical Works.*
The *Metaphysics*, a collection of lectures of different dates, so called from its position in the Aristotelian Corpus, probably by a Peripatetic before the time of Andronicus.

(*c*) Works on Natural Philosophy, Natural Science, Psychology, etc. The *Physics* or φυσικὴ ἀκρόασις or φυσικά or τὰ περὶ φύσεως. This work consists of eight books, of which the first two must be referred to Aristotle's Platonic period. *Metaphysics* A 983 a 32–3 refers to the *Physics*, or rather presupposes explicitly the setting-out of the theory of causes in *Physics* 2. Book 7 of the *Physics* probably belongs also to the earlier work of Aristotle, while Book 8 is really not part of the *Physics* at all, since it quotes the *Physics*, with the remark "as we have previously shown in the *Physics*."[1] The total work would then appear to have consisted originally of a number of independent monographs, a supposition borne out by the fact that the *Metaphysics* quotes as "Physics" the two works *De Caelo* and *De Generatione et Corruptione.*[1]

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[1] *Physics*, VIII, 251 a 9, 253 b 8, 267 b 21.

The *Meteorology* or Μετεωρολογικά or Περὶ μετεώρων (four books).

The *Histories of Animals* or Περὶ τὰ ζῷα ἱστορίαι (ten books on comparative anatomy and physiology, of which the last is probably post-Aristotelian).

The 'Ανατομαί in seven books, which is lost.

The *De Incessu Animalium* or Περὶ ζῴων πορείας (one book) and the *De Motu Animalium* or Περὶ ζῴων κινήσεως (one book).

The *De Generatione Animalium* or Περὶ ζῴων γενέσεως (five books).

The *De Anima* or Περὶ ψυχῆς, Aristotle's Psychology in three books.

The *Parva Naturalia*, a number of smaller treatises dealing with such subjects as perception (Περὶ αἰσθήσεως καὶ αἰσθητῶν), memory (Περὶ μνήμης καὶ ἀναμνήσεως), sleep and waking (Περὶ ὕπνου καὶ ἐγρηγόρσεως), dreams (Περὶ ἐνυπνίων), long life and short life (Περὶ μακροβιότητος καὶ βραχυβιότητος), life and death (Περὶ ζωῆς καὶ θανάτου, breathing (Περὶ ἀναπνοῆς), divination in sleep (Περὶ τῆς καθ' ὕπνον μαντικῆς).

The *Problemata* (Προβλήματα) seems to be a collection of problems, gradually formed, which grew up round a nucleus of notes or jottings made by Aristotle himself.

(*d*) *Works on Ethics and Politics.*

The *Magna Moralia* or 'Ηθικὰ μεγάλα, in two books, which would seem to be a genuine work of Aristotle, at least so far as the content is concerned.[2] Part would appear to date from a time when Aristotle was still more or less in agreement with Plato.

The *Nicomachean Ethics* ('Ηθικὰ Νικομάχεια) in ten books, a work which was edited by Aristotle's son Nicomachus after the philosopher's death.

The *Politics* (Πολιτικά), of which books 2, 3, 7, 8, would appear to date from the second period of Aristotle's literary activity. Books 4–6 were, thinks Jaeger, inserted before the first book was prefixed to the whole, for Book 4 refers to 3 as the beginning of the work—'εν τοῖς πρώτοις λόγοις. "The contents of 2 are merely negative."[3]

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[1] *Metaph.*, 989 a 24.

[2] Cf. H. von Arnim, *Die drei arist. Ethiken.* (Sitz. Wien. Ak, 2 Abl., 1924.)

[3] Jaeger, *Aristotle*, p. 273.

Collection of Constitutions of 158 States. That of Athens was found in papyrus in 1891.

(*e*) *Works on Aesthetics, History and Literature.*

The *Rhetoric* (Τέχνη ῥητορική) in three books.

The *Poetics* (Περὶ ποιητικῆς), which is incomplete, part having been lost.

Records of dramatic performances at Athens, collection of Didascalia, list of victors at Olympic and Pythian games. Aristotle was engaged on a work concerning the Homeric problem, a treatise on the territorial rights of States (Περὶ τῶν τόπων δικαιώματα πόλεων), etc.

There is no need to suppose that all these works, for example the collection of the 158 Constitutions, were by Aristotle himself, but they would have been initiated by him and carried out under his superintendence. He entrusted others with the compilation of a history of natural philosophy (Theophrastus), of mathematics and astronomy (Eudemus of Rhodes), and medicine (Meno). One can but marvel at the catholicity of his interests and the scope of his aims.

The mere list of Aristotle's works shows a rather different spirit to that of Plato, for it is obvious that Aristotle was drawn towards the empirical and scientific, and that he did not tend to treat the objects of this world as semi-illusory or as unfitted to be objects of knowledge. But this difference in tendency, a difference which was no doubt accentuated as time went on, has, when coupled with consideration of such facts as the Aristotelian opposition to the Platonic theory of Ideas and to the Platonic dualistic psychology, led to the popular conception of a radical contrast between the two great philosophers. There is, of course, truth in this view, since there are clear cases of opposition between their tenets and also a general difference in atmosphere (at least if we compare Plato's exoteric works—and we have no other—with Aristotle's pedagogical works), but it can easily be exaggerated. Aristotelianism, historically speaking, is not the opposite of Platonism, but its development, correcting one-sided theories—or trying to do so—such as the theory of Ideas, the dualistic psychology of Plato, etc., and supplying a firmer foundation in physical fact. That something of value was omitted at the same time is true, but that simply shows that the two philosophies should not be considered as two diametrically opposed systems, but as two complementary philosophical spirits and bodies of doctrine. A synthesis was later attempted in Neo-Platonism, and mediaeval philosophy shows the same synthetic spirit. St. Thomas, for instance, though speaking of Aristotle as "the Philosopher," could not, and would not have wished to, cut himself off entirely from the Platonic tradition, while in the Franciscan School even St. Bonaventure, who awarded the palm to Plato, did not disdain to make use of Peripatetic doctrines, and Duns Scotus carried much further the impregnation of the Franciscan spirit with Aristotelian elements.

And it should not be supposed that Aristotle, in his enthusiasm for facts and his desire to set a firm empirical and scientific foundation, was lacking in systematic power or ever renounced his metaphysical interest. Both Platonism and Aristotelianism culminate in metaphysics. Thus Goethe can compare Aristotle's philosophy to a pyramid rising on high in regular form from a broad basis on the earth, and that of Plato to an obelisk or a tongue of flame which shoots up to heaven. Nevertheless, I must admit that, in my opinion, the direction of Aristotle's thought was increasingly directed away from the Platonic position to which he at first adhered, while the results of his new orientation of thought do not always combine harmoniously with those elements of the Platonic legacy which he seems to have retained to the last.

CHAPTER XXVIII

LOGIC OF ARISTOTLE

1. ALTHOUGH Aristotle divides philosophy systematically in different ways on different occasions,[1] we may say that the following is his considered view of the matter.[2] (i) *Theoretical* Philosophy,[3] in which knowledge as such is the end in view and not any practical purpose, is divided into (*a*) Physics or Natural Philosophy, which has to do with material things which are subject to motion; (*b*) Mathematics, which has to do with the unmoved but unseparated (from matter); (*c*) Metaphysics, which has to do with the separated (transcendent) and unmoved. (Metaphysics would thus include what we know as Natural Theology.[4]) (ii) *Practical* Philosophy (πρακτική) deals principally with Political Science, but has as subsidiary disciplines Strategy, Economics and Rhetoric, since the ends envisaged by these disciplines are subsidiary to and depend on that of Political Science.[5] (iii) *Poetical* Philosophy (ποιητική) has to do with production and not with action as such, as in the case with Practical Philosophy (which includes ethical action in the wider or political sense), and is to all intents and purposes the Theory of Art.[6]

2. The Aristotelian Logic is often termed "formal" logic. Inasmuch as the Logic of Aristotle is an analysis of the forms of thought (hence the term *Analytic*), this is an apt characterisation; but it would be a very great mistake to suppose that for Aristotle logic concerns the forms of human thinking in such an exclusive way that it has no connection with external reality. He is chiefly concerned with the forms of proof, and he assumes that the conclusion of a scientific proof gives certain knowledge concerning reality. For example, in the syllogism "All men are mortal, Socrates is a man, therefore Socrates is mortal," it is not merely that the conclusion is deduced correctly according to the

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[1] Cf. *Top.*, A 14, 105 b 19 ff.

[2] Cf. *Top.*, Z 6, 145 a 15 ff. *Metaph.*, E 1, 1025 b 25.

[3] Cf. *Metaph.*, K 7, 1064 b 1 ff.

[4] Cf. *Metaph.*, E 1, 1026 a 10 ff.

[5] Cf. *Eth. Nic.*, A 1, 1094 a 18 ff.

[6] Determining the rank of the branches of philosophy according to the rank of their object, Aristotle gives the palm to "Theology." Cf. *Metaph.*, K 7, 1064 b 1 ff. It has been argued that the threefold division has no adequate warrant in Aristotle's own words and that he conceived the *Poetics*, not as a philosophical aesthetic theory, but simply as a practical manual.

formal laws of logic: Aristotle assumes that the conclusion is verified in reality. He presupposes, therefore, a realist theory of knowledge and for him logic, though an analysis of the forms of thought, is an analysis of the thought that thinks reality, that reproduces it conceptually within itself, and, in the true judgment, makes statements about reality which are verified in the external world. It is an analysis of human thought in its thought about reality, though Aristotle certainly admits that things do not always exist in extramental reality precisely as they are conceived by the mind, e.g. the universal.

This may be clearly seen in his doctrine of the Categories. From the logical viewpoint the Categories comprise the ways in which we think about things—for instance, predicating qualities of substances—but at the same time they are ways in which things actually exist: things are substances and actually have accidents. The Categories demand, therefore, not only a logical but also a metaphysical treatment. Aristotle's Logic, then, must not be likened to the Transcendental Logic of Kant, since it is not concerned to isolate *a priori* forms of thought which are contributed by the mind alone in its active process of knowledge. Aristotle does not raise the "Critical Problem": he assumes a realist epistemology, and assumes that the categories of thought, which we express in language, are also the objective categories of extramental reality.

3. In the *Categories* and in the *Topics* the number of Categories or Praedicamenta is given as ten: οὐσία or τί ἐστι (man or horse); ποσόν (three yards long;) ποιόν (white); πρός τι (double); ποῦ (in the market-place); πότε (last year); κεῖσθαι (lies, sits); ἔχειν (armed, with shoes); ποιεῖν (cuts); πάσχειν (is cut or burnt). But in the *Posterior Analytics* they appear as eight, κεῖσθαι or *Situs* and ἔχειν or *Habitus* being subsumed under the other categories.[1] Aristotle, therefore, can hardly have looked upon the deduction of the Categories as definitive. Nevertheless, even if the tenfold division of the Categories was not looked upon as definitive by Aristotle, there is no reason to suppose that he regarded the list of Categories as a haphazard list, devoid of structural arrangement. On the contrary, the list of the Categories constitutes an orderly arrangement, a classification of concepts, the fundamental types of concepts governing our scientific knowledge. The word κατηγορεῖν means to predicate, and in the *Topics* Aristotle considers

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[1] Cf. e.g. *Anal. Post.*, A 22, 83 a 21 ff., b 15 ff.

the Categories as a classification of predicates, the ways in which we think of being as realised. For example, we think of an object either as a substance or as a determination of substance, as falling under one of the nine categories that express the way in which we think of substance as being determined. In the *Categories* Aristotle considers the Categories rather as the classification of genera, species and individuals from the *summa genera* down to individual entities. If we examine our concepts, the ways in which we represent things mentally, we shall find, for example, that we have concepts of organic bodies, of animals (a subordinate genus), of sheep (a species of animal); but organic bodies, animals, sheep, are all included in the category of substance. Similarly, we may think of colour in general, of blueness in general, of cobalt; but colour, blueness, cobalt, all fall under the category of quality.

The Categories, however, were not in Aristotle's mind simply modes of mental representation, moulds of concepts: they represent the actual modes of being in the extramental world, and form the bridge between Logic and Metaphysics (which latter science has Substance as its chief subject).[1] They have, therefore, an ontological as well as a logical aspect, and it is perhaps in their ontological aspect that their orderly and structural arrangement appears most clearly. Thus, in order that being may exist, substance must exist: that is, as it were, the starting-point. Only singulars actually exist outside the mind, and for a singular to exist independently in this way it must be a substance. But it cannot exist merely as a substance, it must have accidental forms. For instance, a swan cannot exist unless it has some colour, while it cannot have colour unless it has quantity, extension. At once, then, we have the first three Categories—substance, quantity, quality, which are intrinsic determinations of the object. But the swan is the same in specific nature as other swans, is equal in size or unequal in size to other substances; in other words, it stands in some relation to other objects. Moreover, the swan as a physical substance, must exist in a certain *place* and at a certain *period*, must have a certain *posture*. Again, material substances, as belonging to a cosmic system, *act* and are *acted upon*. Thus some of the Categories belong to the object considered in itself, as its *intrinsic* determinations, while others belong to it as *extrinsic* determinations, affecting it as standing in relation to other material objects. It will be seen, therefore, that even if the number of the Categories could be reduced by subsuming certain Categories under others, the principle whereby the Categories are deduced is by no means merely a haphazard principle.

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[1] *Metaph.*, 1017 a 23–4. ὁσαχὼς γὰρ λέγεται, τοσαταυχῶς τὸ εἶναι σημαίνει.

In the *Posterior Analytics* (in connection with definition) and in the *Topics*, Aristotle discusses the *Predicables* or various relations in which universal terms may stand to the subjects of which they are predicated. They are *genus* (γένος), *species* (εἶδος), *difference* (διαφορά), *property* (ἴδιον), *accident* (συμβεβηκός). In the *Topics* (I, c. 8), Aristotle bases his division of the predicables on the relations between subject and predicate. Thus if the predicate is co-extensive with the subject, it either gives us the essence of the subject or a property of the subject; while if it is not co-extensive with the subject, it either forms part of the attributes comprised in the definition of the subject (when it will be either a genus or a difference) or it does not do so (in which case it will be an accident).

Essential definitions are strict definitions by genus and difference, and Aristotle considered definition as involving a process of division down to the *infimae species* (cf. Plato).[1] But it is important to remember that Aristotle, aware that we are by no means always able to attain an essential or real definition, allows for nominal or descriptive definitions,[2] even though he had no high opinion of them, regarding as he did essential definitions as the only type of definition really worthy of the name. The distinction, however, is of importance, since in point of fact, we have to be content, in regard to the natural objects studied by physical science, with distinctive or characteristic definitions, which even if they approach the ideal more closely than Aristotle's nominal or descriptive definition, do not actually attain it.

(Some writers have emphasised the influence of language on philosophy. For instance, because we speak of the rose as being red (and this is necessary for purposes of social life and communication), we are naturally inclined to think that in the actual objective order there is a quality or accident, "redness," which inheres in a thing or substance, the rose. The philosophical categories of substance and accident can thus be traced back to the influence of words, of language. But it should be remembered that language follows thought, is built up as an expression of thought, and this is especially true of philosophical terms. When Aristotle laid down the ways in which the mind thinks about things, it is true that he could not get away from language as the medium of thought, but the language follows thought and thought follows things. Language is not an *a priori* construction.)

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[1] *Anal. Post.*, B 13.

[2] *Anal. Post.*, B 8 and 10.

4. Scientific knowledge *par excellence* means for Aristotle, deducing the particular from the general or the conditioned from its cause, so that we know both the cause on which the fact depends and the necessary connection between the fact and its cause. In other words, we have scientific knowledge when we know the cause on which the fact depends, as the cause of that fact and of no other, and further, that the fact could not be other than it is."[1]

But though the premisses are prior to the conclusion from the logical viewpoint, Aristotle clearly recognises that there is a difference between logical priority or priority *in se* and epistemological priority *quoad nos.* He expressly states that " 'prior' and 'better known' are ambiguous terms, for there is a difference between what is prior and better known in the order of being and what is prior and better known to man. I mean that objects nearer to sense are prior and better known to man; objects without qualification prior and better known are those further from sense."[2] In other words, our knowledge starts from sense, i.e. from the particular, and ascends to the general or universal. "Thus it is clear that we must get to know the primary premisses by induction; for the methods by which even sense-perception implants the universal is inductive."[3] Aristotle is thus compelled to treat not only of deduction, but also of induction. For instance, in the aforementioned syllogism the major premiss, "All men are mortal," is founded on sense-perception, and Aristotle has to justify both sense-perception and memory, since both are involved. Hence we have the doctrine that the senses *as such* never err: it is only the judgment which is true or false.

Thus if a patient who is suffering from *delirium tremens* "sees" pink rats, the senses as such do not err; error arises when the patient judges that the pink rats are "out there," as real extramentally-existing objects. Similarly, the sun *appears* smaller than the earth, but this is not an error on the part of the senses; indeed if the sun appeared as *larger* than the earth, the senses would be out of order. Error arises when, through a lack of astronomical knowledge, a man *judges* that the sun is objectively smaller than the earth.

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[1] *Anal. Post.*, I 2, 71 b.

[2] *Anal. Post.*, 71 b–72 a.

[3] *Anal. Post.*, II 19, 100 b.

5. In the *Analytics*, therefore, Aristotle treats, not only of scientific proof, demonstration or deduction, but also of induction (ἐπαγωγή). Scientific induction means for him *complete* induction, and he expressly states that "induction proceeds through an enumeration of all the cases."[1] *Incomplete* induction is of use especially to the orator. Aristotle used experiment but did not elaborate a scientific methodology of induction and the use of hypothesis. Although he admits that "syllogism through induction is clearer to us,"[2] his ideal remains that of deduction, of syllogistic demonstration. The analysis of deductive processes he carried to a very high level and very completely; but he cannot be said to have done the same for induction. This was no doubt only natural in the Ancient World, where mathematics was so much more highly developed than natural science. Nevertheless, after stating that sense-perception as such cannot attain the universal, Aristotle points out that we may observe groups of singulars or watch the frequent recurrence of an event, and so, by the use of the abstract reason, attain to knowledge of a universal essence or principle.[3]

6. In the *Prior Analytics* Aristotle inquires into the forms of inference, and he defines the syllogism as "discourse in which certain things being stated, something other than what is stated follows of necessity from their being so."[4] He discusses the three figures of the syllogism, etc.:

(i) The Middle Term is Subject in one premiss and Predicate in the other. Thus: M is P, S is M, therefore S is P. Every animal is a substance. Every man is an animal. Therefore every man is a substance.

(ii) The Middle Term is Predicate in both premisses. P is M, S is not M, therefore S is not P.
Every man is risible. But no horse is risible. Therefore no horse is a man.

(iii) The Middle Term is Subject in both premisses. Thus: M is P, M is S, therefore S is P.
Every man is risible. But every man is an animal. Therefore some animals are risible.

In the *Topics*[5] Aristotle distinguishes *demonstrative* reasoning

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[1] *Anal. Priora*, II 23, 68 b. [2] *Anal. Priora*, II, 23, 68 b. [3] *Anal. Post.*, I, 31.
[4] *Anal. Priora*, I, 1, 24 b. [5] I, 100 a b.

(i.e. "when the premisses from which the reasoning starts are true and primary, or are such that our knowledge of them has originally come through premisses which are primary and true") from *dialectical* reasoning (i.e. reasoning "from opinions that are generally accepted," i.e. "by all, or by the majority, or by the most notable and illustrious of them"). He adds a third kind of reasoning, eristic or "contentious" reasoning (which "starts from opinions that seem to be generally accepted, but are not really such"). This third is dealt with at length in the *De Sophisticis Elenchis*, where Aristotle examines, classifies and solves the various kinds of fallacy.

7. Aristotle saw clearly that the premisses in deduction themselves need proof, while on the other hand if *every* principle needs proof, we shall be involved in a *processus in infinitum* and *nothing* will be proved. He held, therefore, that there are certain principles which are known intuitively and immediately without demonstration.[1] The highest of these principles is the *principle of contradiction*. Of these principles no proof can be given. For example, the logical form of the principle of contradiction—"Of two propositions, one of which affirms something and the other denies the same thing, one must be true and the other false"—is not a proof of the principle in its metaphysical form—e.g. "The same thing cannot be an attribute and not an attribute of the same subject at the same time and in the same way." It simply exhibits the fact that no thinker can question the principle which lies at the basis of all thinking and is presupposed.[2]

We have, therefore, (i) first principles, perceived by νοῦς; (ii) what is derived necessarily from first principles, perceived by ἐπιστήμη; and (iii) what is contingent and could be otherwise, the subject of δόξα. But Aristotle saw that the major premiss of a syllogism, e.g. All men are mortal, cannot be derived immediately from the first principles: it depends also on induction. This involves a realist theory of universals, and Aristotle declares that induction exhibits the universal as implicit in the clearly known particular.[3]

8. In a book of this nature it would scarcely be desirable to enter upon a detailed exposition and discussion of the Aristotelian logic, but it is necessary to emphasise the very great contribution that Aristotle made to human thought in this branch of science,

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[1] Cf. *Anal. Post.*, I 3, 72 b.

[2] Cf. *Metaph.*, 1005 b 35 ff.

[3] *Anal. Post.*, A 1, 71 a.

especially in regard to the syllogism. That logical analysis and division had been pursued in the Academy, in connection with the theory of Forms, is quite true (one has only to think of the discussions in the *Sophist*); but it was Aristotle who first constituted logic ("Analytics") as a separate science, and it was Aristotle who discovered, isolated and analysed the fundamental form of inference, namely, the syllogism. This is one of his lasting achievements, and even if it were his only positive achievement, it would still be one for which his name would rightly be held in lasting memory. One could not justifiably assert that Aristotle made a complete analysis of all deductive processes, for the classical syllogism supposes (i) three propositions, each in subject and predicate form; (ii) three terms, from which each proposition takes both subject and predicate, and, given this situation, determines the cases in which two of the propositions entail the third in virtue, either (*a*) of logical form only, or (*b*) of an adjoined existence assertion, as with *Darapti*. Aristotle, for instance, did not consider that other form of inference discussed by Cardinal Newman in his *Grammar of Assent*, when the mind derives conclusions, not from certain propositions but from certain concrete facts. The mind considers these facts and, after forming a critical estimate of them, infers a conclusion, which is not a general proposition (as in induction proper), but a particular conclusion such as, e.g. "The prisoner is innocent." It is certainly true that general propositions are implied (e.g. evidence of a certain type is compatible, or incompatible, with the innocence of an accused man), but the mind is not actually concerned to elicit the implication of presupposed propositions so much as to elicit the implications of a number of concrete facts. St. Thomas Aquinas recognised this type of reasoning, and attributed it to the *vis cogitativa*, also called *ratio particularis*.[1] Moreover, even in regard to that form of inference which Aristotle analysed, he did not really consider the question, whether these general principles from which it starts are simply formal principles or have ontological import. The latter view seems to be assumed for the most part.

But it would be absurd to criticise Aristotle adversely for not having made a complete study of all the forms of inference, and for not having clearly raised and solved all the questions that might be raised in connection with the forms of human thought:

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[1] Ia, 78, 4. Cf. IIa, IIae, 2, 1.

the task that he did undertake to accomplish, he accomplished very well, and the group of his logical treatises (later termed the *Organon*) constitute a masterpiece of the human mind. It is not without reason, we may be sure, that Aristotle represents himself as being a pioneer in logical analysis and systematisation. At the close of the *De Sophisticis Elenchis* he remarks, that while much had been said by others before him on the subject of Rhetoric, for instance, he had no anterior work to speak of on the subject of reasoning, which he might have used as a foundation, but was compelled to break what was practically new ground. It was not the case that systematic analysis of the reasoning-processes had been already completed in part: nothing at all existed in this line. The professors of rhetoric had given their pupils an empirical training in "contentious arguments," but they never worked out a scientific methodology or a systematic exposition of the subject: he had had to start from the beginning by himself. Aristotle's claim in reference to the particular subject-matter of the *De Sophisticis Elenchis* is doubtless substantially just in regard to the discovery and analysis of the syllogism in general.

Occasionally one hears people speak as though modern logical studies had deprived the traditional Aristotelian logic of all value, as though one could now relegate the traditional logic to the lumber-room of museum pieces, of interest only to the philosophical antiquarian. On the other hand, those who have been brought up according to the Aristotelian tradition may be tempted to display a mistaken loyalty to that tradition by attacking, e.g. modern symbolic logic. Either extreme is in fact unwarranted, and it is necessary to adopt a sane and balanced position, recognising indeed the incompleteness of the Aristotelian logic and the value of modern logic, but at the same time refusing to discredit the Aristotelian logic on the ground that it does not cover the whole province of logic. This sane and balanced position is the position maintained by those who have made a deep study of logic, a point that needs to be emphasised lest it be thought that it is only Scholastic philosophers, speaking *pro domo sua*, who in the present age still attach any value to the logic of Aristotle. Thus, while affirming, and rightly affirming, that "it is no longer possible to regard it as constituting the whole subject of deduction," Susan Stebbing admits that "the traditional syllogism retains its value";[1] while Heinrich Scholz declares that "the

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[1] Susan Stebbing, *A Modern Introd. to Logic*, p. 102. (London, 1933.)

Aristotelian *Organon* is to-day still the most beautiful and instructive introduction to logic ever written by man."[1] Modern symbolic logic may be an addition, and a very valuable addition, to the logic of Aristotle, but it should not be regarded as a completely opposite counter thereto: it differs from non-symbolic logic by its higher degree of formalisation, e.g. by the idea of propositional functionality.

9. This necessarily brief and curtailed treatment of the Aristotelian logic may profitably be concluded by a summary of a *few characteristic topics* discussed in the *Organon*, a summary from which will appear the wide range of the Aristotelian logical analysis. In the *Categories*, Aristotle treats of the range of variability of Subject and *Predicate*, in the *De Interpretatione* of the opposition of propositions, modal and assertoric, which leads him into an interesting discussion of excluded middle in Chapters 7 and 10. In the first book of the *Prior Analytics* he discusses the conversion of pure propositions and of necessary and contingent propositions, analyses the syllogisms in the three figures, and gives rules for constructing or discovering syllogisms dealing with, e.g. oblique inference (Ch. 36), negation (Ch. 46), proofs *per impossibile* and *ex hypothesi* (Chs. 23 and 44). In the second book Aristotle deals with the distribution of truth and falsity between premisses and conclusion, the defects in the syllogism, induction in a narrow sense, through "enumeration of all the cases" (Ch. 23), the enthymeme, etc.

The first book of the *Posterior Analytics* treats of the structure of a deductive science and its logical starting-point, the unity, diversity, distinction and logical ranking of sciences, ignorance, error and invalidity; while the second book is concerned with definitions, essential and nominal, the difference between definition and demonstration, the indemonstrability of the essential nature, the way in which basic truths become known, etc. The *Topics* is concerned with the predicables, definition, the technique of proof or the practice of dialectic, the *De Sophisticis Elenchis* with the classification of fallacies and their solutions.

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[1] *Geschichte der Logik*, p. 27. (Berlin, 1931.)

CHAPTER XXIX

THE METAPHYSICS OF ARISTOTLE

1. "ALL men by nature desire to know."[1] So does Aristotle optimistically begin the *Metaphysics*, a book, or rather collection of lectures, which is difficult to read (the Arabian philosopher Avicenna said that he had read the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle forty times without understanding it), but which is of the greatest importance for an understanding of the philosophy of Aristotle, and which has had a tremendous influence on the subsequent thought of Europe.[2] But though all men desire to know, there are different degrees of knowledge. For example, the man of *mere experience*, as Aristotle calls him, may know that a certain medicine had done good to X when he was ill, but without knowing the reason for this, whereas the man of *art* knows the reason, e.g. he knows that X was suffering from fever, and that the medicine in question has a certain property which abates fever. He knows a universal, for he knows that the medicine will tend to cure all who suffer from that complaint. Art, then, aims at production of some kind, but this is not Wisdom in Aristotle's view, for the highest Wisdom does not aim at producing anything or securing some effect—it is not utilitarian—but at apprehending the first principles of Reality, i.e. at knowledge for its own sake. Aristotle places the man who seeks for knowledge for its own sake above him who seeks for knowledge of some particular kind with a view to the attainment of some practical effect. In other words, that science stands higher which is desirable for its own sake and not merely with a view to its results.

This science, which is desirable for its own sake, is the science of first principles or first causes, a science which took its rise in wonder. Men began to wonder at things, to desire to know the explanation of the things they saw, and so philosophy arose out of the desire of understanding, and not on account of any utility that knowledge might possess. This science, then, is of all sciences to be called free or liberal, for, like a free man, it exists for its own sake and not for the sake of someone else. Metaphysics is thus, according to Aristotle, Wisdom *par excellence*, and the philosopher or lover of Wisdom is he who desires knowledge about the ultimate cause and nature of Reality, and desires that knowledge for its own sake. Aristotle is therefore a "dogmatist" in the sense that he supposes that such knowledge is attainable, though he is not of course a dogmatist in the sense of advancing theories without any attempt to prove them.

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[1] *Metaph.*, A, 980 a 1.

[2] The name *Metaphysics* simply refers to the position of the *Metaphysics* in the Aristotelian Corpus, i.e. as coming after the *Physics*. But the book is metaphysical also in the sense that it concerns the first and highest principles and causes, and so involves a higher degree of abstraction than does the *Physics*, which deals predominantly with a particular type of being—that which is subject to motion. Still, it is true to say that if we wish to know Aristotle's doctrine on the themes treated of to-day under the heading *Metaphysics*, we must consult not only the *Metaphysics* itself but also the *Physics*.

Wisdom, therefore, deals with the first principles and causes of things, and so is universal knowledge in the highest degree. This means that it is the science which is furthest removed from the senses, the most abstract science, and so is the hardest of the sciences as involving the greatest effort of thought. "Sense-perception is common to all and therefore easy and no mark of Wisdom."[1] But, though it is the most abstract of the sciences, it is, in Aristotle's view, the most *exact* of the sciences, "for those which involve fewer principles are more exact than those which involve additional principles, e.g. arithmetic than geometry."[2] Moreover, this science is in itself the most knowable, since it deals with the first principles of all things, and these principles are in themselves more truly knowable than their applications (for these depend on the first principles, and not vice versa), though it does not follow that they are the most knowable in regard *to us*, since we necessarily start with the things of sense and it requires a considerably effort of rational abstraction to proceed from what is directly known to us, sense-objects, to their ultimate principles.

2. The causes with which Wisdom or philosophy deals are enumerated in the *Physics* and are four in number: (i) the substance or essence of a thing; (ii) the matter or subject; (iii) the source of motion or the efficient cause; and (iv) the final cause or good. In the first book of the *Metaphysics* Aristotle investigates the views of his predecessors, in order, he says, to see if they discussed any other kind of cause besides the four he has enumerated. In this way he is led to give a brief sketch of the history of Greek philosophy up to his time, but he is not concerned to catalogue all their opinions, whether relevant or irrelevant to his purpose, for he wishes to trace the evolution of the notion of the

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[1] *Metaph.*, 982 a 11–12.

[2] *Metaph.*, 982 a 26–8.

four causes, and the net result of his investigation is the conclusion, not only that no philosopher has discovered any other kind of cause, but that no philosopher before himself has enumerated the four causes in a satisfactory manner. Aristotle, like Hegel, regarded previous philosophy as leading up to his own position; there is none of the paraphernalia of the dialectic in Aristotle, of course, but there is the same tendency to regard his own philosophy as a synthesis on a higher plane of the thought of his predecessors. There is certainly some truth in Aristotle's contention, yet it is by no means completely true, and he is sometimes far from just to his predecessors.

Thales and the early Greek philosophers busied themselves with the material cause, trying to discover the ultimate substratum of things, the principle that is neither generated nor destroyed, but from which particular objects arise and into which they pass away. In this way arose, e.g. the philosophies of Thales, Anaximenes, Heraclitus, who posited one material cause, or Empedocles, who postulated four elements. But even if elements are generated from one material cause, why does this happen, what is the source of the movement whereby objects are generated and destroyed? There must be some cause of the becoming in the world, even the very facts themselves must in the end impel the thinker to investigate a type of cause other than the material cause. Attempted answers to this difficulty we find in the philosophies of Empedocles and Anaxagoras. The latter saw that no material element can be the reason why objects manifest beauty and goodness, and so he asserted the activity of Mind in the material world, standing out like a sober man in contrast with the random talk of his predecessors.[1] All the same, he uses Mind only as a *deus ex machina* to explain the formation of the world, and drags it in when he is at a loss for any other explanation: when another explanation is at hand, he simply leaves Mind out.[2] In other words, Anaxagoras was accused by Aristotle of using Mind simply as a cloak for ignorance. Empedocles, indeed, postulated two active principles, Friendship and Strife, but he used them neither sufficiently nor consistently.[3] These philosophers, therefore, had succeeded in distinguishing two of Aristotle's four causes, the material cause and the source of movement; but they had not worked out their conceptions systematically or elaborated any consistent and scientific philosophy.

[1] *Metaph.*, 984 b 15–18. [2] *Metaph.*, 985 a 18–21. [3] *Metaph.*, 985 a 21–3.

After the philosophy of the Pythagoreans, who cannot be said to have contributed very much, came the philosophy of Plato, who evolved the doctrine of the Forms, but placed the Forms, which are the cause of the essence of things (and so, in a sense, the cause), apart from the things of which they are the essence. Thus Plato, according to Aristotle, used only two causes, "that of the essence and the material cause."[1] As to the final cause, this was not explicitly, or at least not satisfactorily, treated by previous philosophers, but only by the way or incidentally.[2] As a matter of fact, Aristotle is not altogether just to Plato, since the latter, in the *Timaeus*, introduces the concept of the Demiurge who serves as an efficient cause, and also makes use of the star-gods, besides maintaining a doctrine of finality, for the final cause of becoming is the realisation (in the sense of imitation) of the Good. Nevertheless, it is true that Plato, through the *chorismos*, was debarred from making the realisation of its immanent form or essence the final cause of the concrete substance.

3. After stating some of the main problems of philosophy in Book three (B) of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle declares at the beginning of Book four (Γ) that metaphysical science is concerned with being as such, is the study of being *qua* being. The special sciences isolate a particular sphere of being, and consider the attributes of being in that sphere; but the metaphysician does not consider being of this or that particular characteristic, e.g. as living or as quantitative, but rather being itself and its essential attributes as being. Now, to say that something is, is also to say that it is *one*: unity, therefore, is an essential attribute of being, and just as being itself is found in all the categories, so unity is found in all the categories. As to goodness, Aristotle remarks in the *Ethics* (*E.N.* 1096) that it also is applicable in all the categories. Unity and goodness are, therefore, transcendental attributes of being, to use the phraseology of the Scholastic philosophers, inasmuch as, applicable in all the categories, they are not confined to any one category and do not constitute genera. If the definition of man is "rational animal," animal is the genus, rational the specific difference; but one cannot predicate animality of rationality, the genus of the specific difference, though one can predicate being of both. Being, therefore, cannot be a genus, and the same holds good of unity and goodness.

The term "being," however, is not predicated of all existent things in precisely the same sense, for a substance is, possesses being, in a way that a quality, for instance, which is an affection of substance, cannot be said to be. With what category of being, then, is metaphysics especially concerned? With that of substance, which is primary, since all things are either substances or affections of substances. But there are or may be different kinds of substances, and with which kind does first philosophy or metaphysics deal? Aristotle answers that, if there is an unchangeable substance, then metaphysics studies unchangeable substance, since it is concerned with being *qua* being, and the true nature of being is shown in that which is unchangeable and self-existent, rather than in that which is subject to change. That there is at least one such unchangeable being which causes motion while remaining itself unmoved, is shown by the impossibility of an infinite series of existent sources of movement, and this motionless substance, comprising the full nature of being, will have the character of the divine, so that first philosophy is rightly to be called theology. Mathematics is a theoretical science indeed and deals with motionless objects, but these objects, *though considered in separation from matter*, do not exist separately: physics deals with things that are both inseparable from matter and are subject to movement: it is only metaphysics that treats of that which both exists in separation from matter and is motionless.[1]

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[1] *Metaph.*, 988 a 8–10.

[2] *Metaph.*, 988 b 6–16.

(In Book *E* of the *Metaphysics* Aristotle simply divides substances into changeable and unchangeable substances, but in Book Λ he distinguishes three kinds of substances, (i) sensible and perishable, (ii) sensible and eternal, i.e. the heavenly bodies, (iii) non-sensible and eternal.)

Metaphysical science is, therefore, concerned with being, and it studies being primarily in the category of substance, not "accidental being," which is the object of no science,[2] nor being as truth, since truth and falsity exist in the judgment, not in things.[3] (It also establishes the first principles or axioms, especially the principle of contradiction, which, though not of course deducible, is the ultimate principle governing all being and all knowledge.[4]) But, if metaphysics studies substance, non-sensible substance, it is obviously of importance to determine what non-sensible substances there are. Are the objects of mathematics substances, or universals, or the transcendental ideas of being and unity? No, replies Aristotle, they are not: hence his polemic against the Platonic theory of ideas, of which a summary will now be given.

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[1] *Metaph.*, 1026 a 6–32. Cf. 1064 a 28–b 6.

[2] *Metaph.*, VI (E) 2. E.g. a confectioner aims at giving pleasure; if his productions produce health, that is "accidental."

[3] *Metaph.*, VI (E), 4.

[4] *Metaph.*, IV (Γ), 3 ff.

4. (i) The argument for Plato's theory that it makes scientific knowledge possible and explains it, proves, says Aristotle, that the universal is real and no mere mental fiction; but it does not prove that the universal has a subsistence apart from individual things. And, indeed, on Plato's theory, strictly applied, there should be Ideas of negations and relations. For if, whenever we conceive a common concept in relation to a plurality of objects, it is necessary to postulate a Form, then it follows that there must be Forms even of negations and relations. "Of the ways in which we prove that the Forms exist, none is convincing, for from some no inference necessarily follows, and from some it follows that there are Forms of things of which we think there are no Forms."[1]

(ii) The doctrine of Ideas or Forms is *useless*.

(*a*) According to Aristotle, the Forms are only a purposeless doubling of visible things. They are supposed to explain why the multitude of things in the world exist. But it does not help simply to suppose the existence of another multitude of things, as Plato does. Plato is like a man who, unable to count with a small number, thinks that he will find it easier to do so if he doubles the number.[2]

(*b*) The Forms are useless for our knowledge of things. "They help in no wise towards the knowledge of the other things (for they are not even the substance of these, else they would have been in them.[3])" This seems to be an expression of Aristotle's interest in the visible universe, whereas Plato was not really concerned with the things of this world for their own sake, but as stepping-stones to the Forms; though, by getting to know the Types, at which phenomena are, as it were, aiming or which they are trying to realise, we can, inasmuch as we are efficient causes, contribute to this approximate realisation. To this consideration Plato attached very considerable importance. For example, by coming to know the ideal Type of the State, to which actual States are, in a greater or less degree, approximations, we are enabled to contribute to the elevation of the actual State—for we know the goal.

(*c*) The Forms are useless when it comes to explaining the movement of things. Even if things exist in virtue of the Forms, how do the latter account for the movement of things and for their coming-to-be and passing-away? "Above all one might discuss the question what on earth the Forms contribute to sensible things, either to those that are eternal or to those that come into being and cease to be."[1] The Forms are motionless, and the objects of this world, if they are copies of the Forms, should be motionless too; or, if they move, as they do, whence their motion?

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[1] *Metaph.*, 990 b 8–11. [2] *Metaph.*, 990 a 34–b 8. [3] *Metaph.*, 991 a 12–13.

Aristotle would not seem to be altogether just to Plato in pursuing this line of criticism, since Plato fully realised that the Forms are not moving causes, and it was precisely on this account that he introduced the concept of the Demiurge. The latter may be a more or less mythological figure, but, however that may be, it is clear that Plato never considered the Forms to be principles of motion and that he made an attempt to account for the dynamism of the world on other lines.

(*d*) The Forms are supposed to explain sensible objects. But they will themselves be sensible: the Ideal Man, for instance, will be sensible, like Socrates. The Forms will resemble the anthropomorphic gods: the latter were only eternal men, and so the Forms are only "eternal sensibles."[2]

This is not a very telling criticism. If the Ideal Man is conceived as being a replica of concrete man on the ideal plane, in the common sense of the word "ideal," as being actual man raised to the highest pitch of development, then of course Ideal Man will be sensible. But is it at all likely that Plato himself meant anything of this kind? Even if he may have implied this by the phrases he used on certain occasions, such an extravagant notion is by no means essential to the Platonic theory of Forms. The Forms are subsistent concepts or Ideal Types, and so the subsistent concept of Man will contain the idea of corporeality, for instance, but there is no reason why it should itself be corporeal: in fact, corporeality and sensibility are *ex hypothesi* excluded when it is postulated that the Ideal Man means an *Idea*. Does anybody suppose that when later Platonists placed the Idea of man in the Divine Mind, they were positing an actual concrete man in God's Mind? The objection seems really to be a debating point on Aristotle's part, i.e. so far as it is supposed to touch Plato personally, and that not a particularly fair one. It would be conclusive against a very gross rendering of the theory of

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[1] *Metaph.*, 991 a 8–10.

[2] *Metaph.*, 997 b 5–12

Forms; but it is useless to read into Plato the most gross and crude interpretation possible.

(iii) The theory of Ideas or Forms is an *impossible* theory.

(*a*) "It must be held to be impossible that the substance, and that of which it is the substance, should exist apart; how, therefore, can the Ideas, being the substance of things, exist apart?"[1] The Forms contain the essence and inner reality of sensible objects; but how can objects which exist apart from sensibles contain the essence of those sensibles? In any case, what is the relation between them? Plato tries to explain the relation by the use of terms such as "participation" and "imitation," but Aristotle retorts that "to say that they (i.e. sensible things) are patterns and the other things share in them, is to use empty words and poetical metaphors."[2]

This criticism would certainly be a very serious one if separation meant local separation. But does separation, in the case of the Forms, necessarily imply local separation? Does it not rather mean independence? Literal local separation would be impossible if the Forms are to be looked on as subsistent concepts or Ideas. It seems that Aristotle is arguing from the point of view of his own theory, according to which the form is the immanent essence of the sensible object. He argues that participation can mean nothing, unless it means that there is a real immanent form, co-constitutive of the object with matter—a conception not admitted by Plato. Aristotle rightly points out the inadequacy of the Platonic theory; but, in rejecting Platonic exemplarism, he also betrays the inadequacy of his own (Aristotle's) theory, in that he provides no real transcendental ground for the fixity of essences.

(*b*) "But, further, all things cannot come from the Forms in any of the usual senses of 'from'."[3] Here Aristotle again touches on the question of the relation of the Forms to that of which they are said to be Forms, and it is in this connection that he objects that the explanatory phrases used by Plato are merely poetical metaphors. This is of course one of the crucial points of the Platonic theory, and Plato himself seems to have felt the inadequacy of the attempted explanation. He cannot be said to have cleared up in any satisfactory manner what he actually meant by the metaphors he used and what the relation of sensible objects to the Forms really is. But it is curious that Aristotle, in his treatment of the Platonic theory in the *Metaphysics*, neglects the Demiurge altogether. One might suggest as a reason for this neglect, that the ultimate cause of motion in the world was, for Aristotle, a *Final* Cause. The notion of a super-terrestrial *efficient* Cause was for him unacceptable.

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[1] *Metaph.*, 991 b 1–3. [2] *Metaph.*, M, 1079 b 24–6; A, 991 a 20–2.
[3] *Metaph.*, A, 991 a 19–20.

(*c*) The Forms will be individual objects like those other objects of which they are the Forms, whereas they should be not individuals but *universals*. The Ideal Man, for instance, will be an individual like Socrates. Further, on the supposition that when there is a plurality of objects possessing a common name, there must be an eternal pattern or Form, we shall have to posit a third man (τρίτος ἄνθρωπος), whom not only Socrates imitates, but also the Ideal Man. The reason is that Socrates and the Ideal Man have a nature in common, therefore there must be a subsistent universal beyond them. But in this case the difficulty will always recur and we shall proceed to infinity.[1]

This criticism of Aristotle would hold good if Plato held that the Forms are things. But did he? If he held them to be subsistent concepts, they do not turn into individual objects in the same sense that Socrates is an individual object. Of course they are individual concepts, but there are signs that Plato was trying to systematise the whole world of concepts or Ideas, and that he envisaged them as forming one articulated system—the rational structure of the world, as we might say, that the world, to speak metaphorically, is always trying to embody, but which it cannot fully embody, owing to the contingency which is inevitable in all material things. (We are reminded of Hegel's doctrine of the universal Categories in relation to the contingent objects of Nature.)

(iv) Against the theory that the Forms are Numbers.

(*a*) It scarcely seems necessary to treat of Aristotle's objections and criticisms in detail, since the Form-Number theory was perhaps an unfortunate adventure on Plato's part. As Aristotle remarks, "mathematics has come to be the whole of philosophy for modern thinkers, though they say that it should be studied for the sake of other things."[2]

For Aristotle's general treatment of number and pertinent questions, one should see *Metaphysics* A, 991 b 9 to 993 a 10 and M and N.

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[1] *Metaph.*, A, 990 b 15–17; K, 1059 b 8–9.

[2] *Metaph.*, 992 a 32–b 1.

(*b*) If the Forms are Numbers, how can they be causes?[1] If it is because existing things are other numbers (e.g. "one number is man, another is Socrates, another Calliäs"), then why "are the one set of numbers causes of the other set"? If it is meant that Callias is a numerical ratio of his elements, then his Idea will also be a numerical ratio of elements, and so neither will be, properly speaking, a number. (Of course, for Plato the Forms were exemplary causes, but not efficient causes.)

(*c*) How can there be two kinds of numbers?[2] If besides the Form-numbers it is also necessary to posit another kind of numbers, which are the mathematical objects, then what is the basis of differentiation between the two kinds of numbers? We only know one kind of numbers, thinks Aristotle, and that is the kind of numbers with which the mathematician deals.

(*d*) But whether there are two classes of numbers, i.e. Forms and mathematical objects (Plato) or simply one class, i.e. mathematical numbers existing, however, apart from sensible objects (Speusippus), Aristotle objects (i) that if the Forms are numbers, then they cannot be unique, since the elements of which they are composed are the same (as a matter of fact, the Forms were not supposed to be unique in the sense that they were without inner relation to one another); and (ii) that the objects of mathematics "cannot in any way exist separately."[3] One reason for the latter assertion is that a *processus in infinitum* will be unavoidable if we accept the separate existence of mathematical objects, e.g. there must be separate solids corresponding to the sensible solids, and separate planes and lines corresponding to the sensible planes and lines. But there must also be other separate planes and lines corresponding to the planes and lines of the separate solid. Now, "the accumulation becomes absurd, for we find ourselves with one set of solids apart from the sensible solids; three sets of planes apart from the sensible planes—those which exist apart from the sensible planes, and those in the mathematical solids, and those which exist apart from those in the mathematical solids; four sets of lines; and five sets of points. With which of these, then, will the mathematical sciences deal?"[4]

(*e*) If the substance of things is mathematical, then what is the source of movement? "If the great and the small are to *be* movement, evidently the Forms will be moved; but if they are not, whence did movement come? If we cannot answer this, the whole study of Nature has been annihilated."[1] (As already remarked, Plato tried to provide a source of movement other than the Forms themselves, which are motionless.)

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[1] *Metaph.*, 991 b 9 ff.

[2] *Metaph.*, e.g. 991 b 27–31.

[3] *Metaph.*, b 1077 –1214.

Metaph., 1076 b 28–34.

(v) Some of what Aristotle has to say on the subject of Plato's mathematical objects and the Form-numbers implies a rather crude interpretation of Platonic doctrine, as though for example Plato imagined that mathematical objects or the Forms are things. Moreover, Aristotle has himself to meet the great difficulty against the abstraction theory of mathematics (for Aristotle the geometrician, for instance, considers, not separate mathematical objects but sensible things abstractly, i.e. according to one particular point of view), namely, that we cannot abstract e.g. the perfect circle from nature, since there is no perfect circle in nature which we could abstract, while on the other hand it is difficult to see how we could form the idea of a perfect circle by "correcting" the imperfect circles of nature, when we should not know that the circles of nature *were* imperfect unless we *previously* knew what a perfect circle was. To this Aristotle might answer either that, though perfect circles are not given really, i.e. as regards measurement, in nature, yet they are given *quoad visum*, and that this is sufficient for the abstraction of the idea of the perfect circle, or that mathematical figures and axioms are more or less arbitrary hypotheses, so that the cardinal requisite in mathematics is to be consistent and logical, without its being necessary to suppose that e.g. every type of geometry will fit the "real" world, or, on the other hand, that it has an ideal world corresponding to it, of which it is the mental reflection or perception.

In general, we would point out that we cannot well dispense with either Plato or Aristotle, but that the truth in both of them has to be combined. This the Neo-Platonists attempted to do. For example, Plato posited the Forms as Exemplary Causes: the later Platonists placed them in God. With due qualifications, this is the correct view, for the Divine Essence is the ultimate Exemplar of all creatures.[2] On the other hand, Plato assumes that we have, or can have, direct knowledge of the Forms. Now, we certainly have not got a direct knowledge of the Divine Ideas, as Malebranche supposed we have. We have direct knowledge only of the expressed universal, and this expressed universal exists externally, i.e. as universal, only in the particulars. We have therefore the external exemplary Idea in God, the foundation in the particular object, i.e. its specific essence, and the abstract universal in our minds. From this point of view Aristotle's criticism of Plato would seem to be justified, for the universal, of which we have direct knowledge, simply is the nature of the individual thing. It would appear, therefore, that we require both Plato and Aristotle in order to form anything like a complete philosophical view. Plato's Demiurge must be identified with the Aristotelian νόησις νοήσεως, the eternal Forms must be referred to God, and Aristotle's doctrine of the concrete universal must be accepted, together with the Aristotelian doctrine of abstraction. Neither of these two great thinkers can be accepted precisely as he stands, and while it is right to value Aristotle's criticism of the Platonic theory of Forms, it is a great mistake to suppose that that theory was a mass of crude absurdity, or that it can be dispensed with altogether. The Augustinian philosophy was, through Neo-Platonism, strongly impregnated with the thought of Plato.

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[1] *Metaph.*, A, 992 b 7–9.

[2] St. Thomas Aquinas, who quotes St. Augustine as to the Divine Ideas, teaches that there is a plurality of ideas in the Divine Mind (*S.T.*, I, 15, 2), rejecting the opinion of Plato that they are "outside" the Divine Mind (cf. *S.T.*, I, 15, 1, ad 1). He explains that he does not mean that there is a plurality of accidental *species* in God, but that God, knowing perfectly His Essence, knows it as imitable (or *participabilis*) by a plurality of creatures.

Although it has been admitted that Aristotle's fundamental criticism of the Platonic theory of Forms, that the theory involves the *chorismos*, is justified, and that the Platonic theory cannot stand by itself but needs to be supplemented by Aristotle's doctrine of the immanent Form (which we consider abstractly in its universality), we have not given an altogether sympathetic treatment of Aristotle's criticisms. "How, then," it might be asked, "can you say that Aristotle's statements concerning what Plato taught must be taken seriously? If Aristotle's account of what Plato taught is correct, then his criticisms of the Platonic theory were perfectly justified, while if his criticisms misrepresent the Platonic theory, then he either deliberately misrepresented that theory or he did not understand it."

First of all, it must be admitted that Aristotle was attacking, in his own mind at least, the theory of Plato himself, and not merely that of some Platonists as distinct from Plato: a careful reading of the *Metaphysics* hardly permits any other supposition. Secondly, it must be admitted that Aristotle, though primarily perhaps attacking the form of the Platonic theory that was taught in the Academy, was perfectly well acquainted with the content of the published dialogues, and knew that some of his own criticisms had already been raised in the *Parmenides*. Thirdly, there is no real reason for supposing that the Platonic theory as taught in the Academy involved a retraction or rejection of the theory developed in the published works of Plato: if this had been the case, we might reasonably have expected Aristotle to make some reference to the fact; while conversely, if he makes no reference to such a change of view on Plato's part, we have no right to affirm such a change without better evidence than can be offered. The mathematical form of the theory was probably meant to be a supplement to the theory, or, rather, a speculative justification and elucidation of it, an 'esoteric' version of it (if one may use a word with somewhat unfortunate associations, without at the same time wishing to imply that the mathematical version was *another* and *different* theory). Aristotle, therefore, was attacking, under both its aspects, what he regarded as the *Platonic* theory of Ideas. (It must, however, be remembered that the *Metaphysics* is not a continuous book, written for publication, and that we cannot assume without more ado that all the objections raised against the Platonic theory in Aristotle's lectures were regarded with equal seriousness by Aristotle himself. A man may say things in his lectures that he would not say, in the same form at least, in a work intended for publication.)

It would seem, then, that we are faced by an awkward dilemma. Either Plato, in spite of the difficulties that he himself saw and proposed in the *Parmenides*, held the theory in the exact form under which it was attacked by Aristotle (in which case Plato appears in a foolish light), or Aristotle grossly misunderstood the Platonic theory (in which case it is Aristotle who appears as the fool). Now, we are not willing to admit that either Plato or Aristotle was a fool, and any treatment of the problem that necessarily involves either supposition is to our mind thereby ruled out of court. That Plato on the one hand never really solved satisfactorily the problem of the *chorismos*, and that Aristotle on the other hand was not perfectly *au fait* with contemporary higher mathematics, does not show either of them to be a fool and can easily be admitted; but this admission obviously does not dispose of the difficulty involved by Aristotle's criticisms, that the Platonic theory is therein depicted as excessively naïve, and that

Aristotle makes little reference to the dialogues and is silent as to the Demiurge. But perhaps a way out of the difficulty can be found. Aristotle, well aware that Plato had not satisfactorily solved the problem of the *chorismos*, had broken away from his Master's theory and adopted a quite different standpoint. When he regarded the theory *from that standpoint*, it could not but appear to him as extravagant and bizarre under any form: he might, therefore, have easily considered himself justified in attempting to put this bizarre character of the theory in an exaggerated light for polemical purposes. One might cite as a parallel the case of Hegel. To one who believes that the Hegelian system is a mere intellectual *tour de force* or an *extravaganza*, nothing is easier than to overstate and even to misrepresent the undoubtedly weak elements in that system for polemical purposes, even though the critic, believing the system to be fundamentally false, could not be justly accused of deliberate misrepresentation. We would wish that the critic had acted otherwise in the interests of historical accuracy, but we could hardly dub him an imbecile because he had chosen to overdo the rôle of critic. While refusing to believe that Aristotle felt towards Plato any of the animus that Schelling and Schopenhauer felt towards Hegel, I would suggest that Aristotle overdid the rôle of critic and exaggerated weak points in a theory that he considered false. As to his silence concerning the Demiurge, that can be explained, in part at least, if we remember that Aristotle was criticising Plato from his own (i.e. Aristotle's) standpoint, and that the conception of the Demiurge was unacceptable to him: he did not take it seriously. If, in addition, Aristotle had reason to believe that the actual Demiurge of the *Timaeus* was largely a symbolic figure, and *if* Plato never worked out thoroughly, even in the Academy, the precise nature or status of Mind or Soul, then it is not so difficult to understand how Aristotle, who did not believe in any formation of the world *a tergo*, could neglect the figure of the Demiurge altogether in his criticism of the Ideal Theory. He may have been unjustified in neglecting it to the extent that he did, but the foregoing considerations may make it easier to understand how he could do so. The suggestions we have made may not be altogether satisfactory, and no doubt remain open to serious criticism, but they have at least this advantage, that they make it possible for us to escape from the dilemma of holding either Plato or Aristotle to have been a fool. And after all, Aristotle's root criticism of

Plato's theory is perfectly justified, for by using the terms "imitation" and "participation," Plato clearly implies that there is some formal element, some principle of comparative stability, in material things, while on the other hand, by failing to provide a theory of substantial form, he failed to explain this immanent formal element. Aristotle rightly provided this element, but, seeing (rightly again) that the Platonic Forms, being "separate," *could not* account for this element, he unfortunately went too far by rejecting the Platonic exemplarism altogether: looking on the Platonic theory from the point of view of a *biologist* primarily (with a biologist's insistence on the immanent entelechy) and from the theological standpoint envisaged in the *Metaphysics* (xii), he had no use for Platonic exemplarism, Platonic mathematicism and the Platonic Demiurge. Thus, when regarded in the light of his own system, Aristotle's attitude towards Plato's theory is quite understandable.

5. But although Aristotle passes an adverse criticism on the Platonic theory of separate Ideas or Forms, he is in full agreement with Plato that the universal is not merely a subjective concept or a mode of oral expression (*universale post rem*), for to the universal in the mind there corresponds the specific essence in the object, though this essence does not exist in any state of separation *extra mentem*: it is separated only in the mind and through the mind's activity. Aristotle was convinced, as Plato was, that the universal is the object of science: it follows, then, that if the universal is in no way real, if it has no objective reality whatsoever, there is no scientific knowledge, for science does not deal with the individual as such. The universal is real, it has reality not only in the mind but also in the things, though the existence in the thing does not entail that formal universality that it has in the mind. Individuals belonging to the same species are real substances, but they do not partake in an objective universal that is numerically the same in all members of the class. This specific essence is numerically different in each individual of the class, but, on the other hand, it is specifically the same in all the individuals of the class (i.e. they are all alike in species), and this objective similarity is the real foundation for the abstract universal, which has numerical identity in the mind and can be predicated of all the members of the class indifferently. Plato and Aristotle are, then, at one as to the character of true science, namely, that it is directed to the universal element in things, i.e.

to the specific similarity. The scientist is not concerned with individual bits of gold as individual, but with the essence of gold, with that specific similarity which is found in all individual bits of gold, i.e. supposing that gold is a species. "Socrates gave the impulse to this theory" (i.e. the Platonic theory) "by means of his definitions, but he did not separate them" (i.e. the universals) "from the particulars; and in this he thought rightly in not separating them. This is plain from the results, for without the universal it is not possible to get knowledge, but the separation is the cause of the objections that arise with regard to the Ideas."[1] *Strictly* speaking, therefore, there is no objective Universal for Aristotle, but there is an objective foundation in things for the subjective universal in the mind. The universal "horse" is a subjective concept, but it has an objective foundation in the substantial forms that inform particular horses.

The individuals are truly substance (οὐσία). Are the universals substances, i.e. is the specific element, the formal principle, that which places the individual in its specific class, to be called substance? No, says Aristotle, except in a secondary and derived sense. It is the individual alone which is the subject of predication and is itself not predicated of others. The species may, however, be called substance in a secondary sense and it has a claim to this title, since the essential element has a higher reality than the individual *qua* individual and is the object of science. Aristotle, therefore, terms the individuals πρῶται οὐσίαι and the species δεύτεραι οὐσίαι.[2] In this way Aristotle has brought upon himself the charge of contradiction. The alleged contradiction consists in this, that if only the individual is truly substance and if science is concerned with the οὐσία, it necessarily follows that the individual is the true object of science, whereas Aristotle teaches in point of fact the very opposite, namely, that science is not concerned with the individual as such but with the universal. In other words, Aristotle teaches that science is concerned with substance and that the individual is substance in the primary sense, while on the other hand he teaches that the universal is of superior quality and is the true object of science, which would seem to be the exact opposite of what he should teach on his premisses.

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[1] *Metaph.*, M, 1086 b 2–7. We may compare K, 1059 b 25–6 ("every formula and every science is of universals") and Z 1036 a 28–9 ("definition is of the universal and of the form").

[2] *Categ.* 5. It is to be noted that the terms *first* and *second* in this respect are not valuations but mean first or second *in regard to us*, πρὸς ἡμᾶς. We come to know the individuals first and the universals only secondarily by abstraction, but Aristotle does not depart from his view that the universal is an object of science and has a higher reality than the individual as such.

In answer to this accusation of self-contradiction, we might answer two things. (i) There is no real contradiction, if we consider what Aristotle *means*. When he says that the individual is truly substance and that it alone is truly substance, he means to reject Plato's doctrine that the universal is a separate substance on its own, but he does not mean to deny that the universal, in the sense of the formal or specific element in things, is real. The individual is truly substance, but that which makes it a substance of this or that kind, that which is the chief element in the thing and is the object of science, is the universal element, the form of the thing, which the mind abstracts and conceives in formal universality. So when he says that the universal is the object of science he is not contradicting himself, for he has not denied that the universal has some objective reality but only that it has a separate existence. It is real in the individual: it is not transcendent, if considered in its objective reality, but immanent, the concrete universal. The individual alone is substance in the true sense, but the individual sensible thing is compound, and the intellect, in scientific knowledge, goes straight to the universal element, which is really there, though existing only concretely, *as an element of the individual.* Aristotle was no doubt influenced by the fact that individuals perish, while the species persists. Thus individual horses perish, whereas the nature of horses remains the same (specifically, though not numerically) in the succession of horses. It is the nature of horses that the scientist considers, and not merely Black Beauty or any other individual horse. (ii) Nor does Aristotle really contradict himself even in terminology, for he expressly distinguishes the two meanings of οὐσία or substance. Substance in the primary sense is the individual substance, composed of matter *and* form: substance in the secondary sense is the formal element or specific essence that corresponds to the universal concept. πρῶται οὐσίαι are objects which are not predicated of another, but of which something else (i.e. accident or τὸ συμβεβηκός) is predicated. Substances in the secondary sense (δεύτεραι οὐσίαι) are the nature, in the sense of specific essence, that which corresponds to the universal concept, ἡ κατὰ τὸν λόγον οὐσία. Moreover, when Aristotle speaks of primary and secondary substances, he does not mean primary and secondary in nature, dignity, or time, but primary and secondary in regard to us.[1]

The individual substance, οὐσία αἰσθητή, is a compound (σύνολον) of the subject or substratum (ὑποκείμενον or ὕλη) and the essence of form. To the individual substance belong the conditions (πάθη) and the relations (πρός τι), which are distinguished according to the nine accidental categories. The universal becomes pre-eminently the object of science, because it is the essential element and so has reality in a higher sense than what is *merely* particular. The universal certainly exists only in the particular, but from this it follows, not that we are unable to make the universal an object of science in its universality, but that we cannot apprehend the universal except through apprehension of the individual.

Is it true, as Aristotle thinks it is true, that universals are necessary for science? (i) If by science is meant knowledge of the universal, the answer is obvious. (ii) If by science is meant Wisdom in the sense in which Aristotle uses the term, then it is perfectly true to say that the philosopher is not concerned with the particular as particular. If, for example, the philosopher is arguing about contingent being, he is not thinking of this or that particular contingent being as such, but with contingent being in its essential nature, even if he uses particular contingent beings as an illustration. If he were confined to the particular contingent beings that have actually been experienced, either by himself or by others whose testimony he could trust, then his conclusion would be limited to those particular beings, whereas he desires as philosopher to reach a universal conclusion which will apply to all possible contingent beings. (iii) If by science is meant "science" in the sense in which we use the term generally to-day, then we must say that, although knowledge of the true universal essence of a class of beings would certainly be desirable and remains the ideal, it is hardly *necessary*. For example, botanists can get along very well in their classification of plants without knowing the essential definition of the plants in question. It is enough for them if they can find phenomena which will suffice to delimit and define a species, irrespective of whether the real specific essence is thereby defined or not. It is significant that when Scholastic philosophers wish to give a definition which is representative they so often say "Man is a rational animal." They would scarcely take it upon themselves to give an essential definition of the cow or the buttercup. We frequently have to be content with what we might call the "nominal" essence as opposed to the real essence. Yet even in this case knowledge of *some* universal characteristics is necessary. For even if you cannot assign the difference of some species, yet you have got to define it, if you define it at all, in function of some universal characteristics possessed by the whole class. Suppose that "Rational Animal" is the real definition of man. Now, if you could not attain this definition but had to describe man as e.g. a featherless significantly-speaking biped, you imply a knowledge of the universals "featherlessness" and "significantly-speaking." So even classification or description by accidental characteristics would seem to imply a discerning of the universal in some way, for one discerns the type even if one cannot adequately define it. It is as though one had a dim realisation of the universal, but could not adequately define or grasp it clearly. Universal definition, in the sense of real essential definition, would thus remain the ideal at any rate, even if in practice empirical science can get along without attaining the ideal, and Aristotle is of course speaking of science in its ideal type. He would never agree with the empiricist and nominalist views of e.g. J. S. Mill, although he would doubtless admit that we often have to content ourselves with description instead of true definition.

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[1] Professor Zeller remarks: "It is, of course, a contradiction to attribute a higher reality to form, which is always a universal, in comparison to that which is a compound of form and matter, and at the same time to assert that only the universal is the object of knowledge which is in itself the prior and better known. The results of this contradiction are to be observed throughout the whole Aristotelian system." (*Outlines*, p. 274.) This is scarcely a fortunate statement of the alleged contradiction.

6. Aristotle, therefore, refuses to admit that the objects of mathematics or universals are substances. In the *Metaphysics*, where he wishes to refute the Platonic theory, he simply denies flatly that they are substances, though in the *Categories*, as we have seen, he called them secondary substances or substances in a secondary and derived sense. In any case, it is the individual that is truly substance, and only the individual. There is, however, this further point to be observed. According to Aristotle,[1] the sensible individuals cannot be defined owing to the material element in them, which renders them perishable and makes them obscure to our knowledge. On the other hand, substance is primarily the definable essence or form of a thing, the principle

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[1] *Metaph.*, VII (Z), 15.

in virtue of which the material element is some definite concrete object.[1] It follows from this that substance is primarily form which is, in itself, immaterial, so that if Aristotle begins by asserting that individual sensible objects are substances, the course of his thought carries him on towards the view that pure form alone is truly and primarily substance. But the only forms that are really independent of matter are God, the Intelligences of the spheres and the active intellect in man, so that it is these forms which are primarily substance. If metaphysics studies substance, then, it is easily seen that it is equivalent to "theology." It is certainly not unreasonable to discern here the influence of Platonism, since, in spite of his rejection of the Platonic theory of Ideas, Aristotle evidently continued to look on matter as the element which is impenetrable to thought and on pure form as the intelligible. It is not suggested that Aristotle was wrong in thinking this, but, right or wrong, it is clearly a legacy of Platonism.

7. Aristotle, as we have seen, gives four principles: ἡ ὕλη or matter, τὸ εἶδος or the form, τὸ ὅθεν ἡ κίνησις—the source of movement or the efficient cause, and τὸ οὗ ἕνεκα or the final cause. Change or motion (i.e. motion in the general sense of the term, which includes every passage from a *terminus a quo* to a *terminus ad quem*, such as the change of the colour of a leaf from green to brown) is a fact in the world, in spite of the dismissal of change as illusory by Parmenides, and Aristotle considered this fact of change. He saw that several factors are involved, to each of which justice must be done. There must, for example, be a substratum of change, for in every case of change which we observe there is something that changes. The oak comes from the acorn and the bed from the wood: there is something which is changed, which receives a new determination. First of all, it is in potentiality (δύναμις) to this new determination; then under the action of some efficient cause (τὸ ὅθεν ἡ κίνησις) it receives a new actualisation (ἐντελέχεια). The marble upon which the sculptor works is in potency to receiving the new form or determination which the sculptor gives it, namely, the form of the statue.

Now, when the marble receives the form of the statue, it is indeed changed, but this change is only accidental, in the sense that the substance is still marble, but the shape or figure is different. In some cases, however, the substance by no means remains the same: thus when the cow eats grass, the grass is assimilated in the process of digestion and takes on a new substantial form. And since it would seem that, absolutely speaking, anything might ultimately change into anything else, it would appear that there is an ultimate substratum which has no definite characteristics of its own, but is simply potentiality as such. This is what Aristotle means by ἡ πρώτη ἑκάστῳ ὑποκειμένη ὕλη[1]—the *materia prima* of the Scholastics—which is found in all material things and is the ultimate basis of change. Aristotle is, of course, perfectly aware that no efficient agent ever acts directly on prime matter as such: it is always some definite thing, some already actualised substratum, that is acted upon. For example, the sculptor works upon the marble; this is his matter, the substratum of the change which he initiates: he does not act upon prime matter as such. Similarly, it is grass which becomes cow, and not prime matter as such. This means that prime matter never exists precisely as such—as bare prime matter, we might say—but always exists in conjunction with form, which is the formal or characterising factor. In the sense that prime matter cannot exist by itself, apart from all form, it is only logically distinguishable from form; but in the sense that it is a real element in the material object, and the ultimate basis of the real changes that it undergoes, it is really distinguishable from form. We should not, therefore, say that prime matter is the simplest body in the material universe, for it is not a body at all, but an element of body, even of the simplest body. Aristotle teaches in the *Physics*[2] that the apparently simplest bodies of the material sublunary world, the four elements, earth, air, fire and water, themselves contain contraries and can be transmuted into one another. But if they can change, then they presuppose composition of potentiality and act. Air, for instance, *is* air, but *can become* fire. It has the form or *actuality* of air, but has also the *potentiality* of becoming fire. But it is logically necessary to presuppose, prior to the potentiality of becoming fire or any other particular and definite kind of thing, a potentiality of becoming at all, i.e. a bare potentiality.

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[1] *Ibid.*, 17.

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[1] Cf. *Physics*, 193 a 29 and 191 a 31–2. λέγω γάρ ὕλην τὸ πρῶτον ὑποκείμενον ἑκάστῳ, ἐξ οὗ γίγνεταί τι ἐνυπάρχοντος μὴ κατὰ συμβεβηκός.

One might also approach prime matter from this point of view. Take any material substance and think away all its definite characteristics, all that it possesses in common with other substances—colour, shape, etc. You are ultimately left with a substratum that is absolutely formless, characterless, that cannot exist by itself, but is logically to be presupposed. This is prime matter. Cf. Stace, *Critical History*, p. 276.

[2] Cf. e.g. *Physics*, I, 6; III, 5.

Now, change is the development of a previously existing body, not precisely as that definite body, but as a body capable of becoming something else, though as not yet that something else. It is the actualisation of a potentiality; but a potentiality involves an actual being, which is not yet that which it could be. Steam, for example, does not come from nothing, it comes from water. But it does not come from water precisely as water: water precisely as water is water and nothing else. Steam comes from water, which could be steam and "demands" to be steam, having been heated to a certain temperature, but is not yet steam, which is as yet "deprived" of the form of steam—not merely in the sense that it has not got the form of steam, but in the sense that it could have the form of steam and ought to have it but has not yet got it. There are, then, three, and not merely two, factors in change, since the product of change contains two positive elements—form and matter—and presupposes a third element—privation (στέρησις). Privation is not a positive element in the same sense that matter and form are positive elements, but it is, nevertheless, necessarily presupposed by change. Aristotle accordingly gives three presuppositions of change, matter, form and privation or exigency.[1]

8. The concrete sensible substance is thus an individual being, composed of matter and form. But the formal element in such a being, that which makes it this definite thing, is specifically the same in all the members of an *infima species.* For instance, the specific nature or essence of man is the same (though not, of course, numerically the same) in Socrates and in Plato. This being so, it cannot be that the formal element renders the concrete sensible substance this individual, i.e. form cannot be the principle of individuation in sensible objects. What is the individuating principle according to Aristotle? It is matter. Thus Callias and Socrates are the same in form (i.e. the human form or nature), but they are different in virtue of the different matter that is informed.[2] This view of the principle of individuation was adopted by St. Thomas Aquinas, but seeing the difficulty involved in holding that completely characterless prime matter is the principle of individuation, he said that it is *materia signata*

[1] *Physics,* I, 7 ff.

[2] *Metaph.,* 1034 a 5–8.

quantitate which individualises matter considered as having an anticipatory exigency for the quantity that it will afterwards actually possess in virtue of its union with form. This theory, that it is matter that individualises, would appear to be a consequence or legacy of Platonism, according to which Form is the universal.

From this theory it logically follows that each pure form must be the only member of its species, must exhaust the possibilities of its species, since there is no matter which can act as a principle of individuation within the species. St. Thomas Aquinas drew this conclusion, and did not hesitate to say (a point in which he was at variance with St. Bonaventure) that the pure intelligences or angels constitute so many species, that there cannot be a plurality of angels or immaterial forms belonging to one species. This conclusion was one that had already occurred to Aristotle himself, for, after observing that plurality depends on matter, he goes on to comment that the immovable first mover, having no matter, must be numerically one, and not only one in formula or definition.[1] It is true that the passage in question seems to be by way of objection against Aristotle's theory of a plurality of unmoved movers, but it at least clear that he was not unaware of the consequence that follows from his doctrine of matter as principle of individuation within the species.

There is a further and a more serious consequence, which would appear to follow from this doctrine. According to Aristotle, matter is at once the principle of individuation and unknowable in itself. Now, from this it appears to follow, that the individual concrete thing is not fully knowable. Moreover, Aristotle, as has been mentioned, explicitly stated that the individual cannot be defined, whereas science is concerned with the definition or essence. The individual as such, therefore, is not the object of science and is not fully knowable. Aristotle does indeed remark[2] concerning individual intelligible (i.e. mathematical circles) and sensible circles (e.g. of bronze or wood) that, though they cannot be defined, they are apprehended by intuition (μετὰ νοήσεως) or perception (αἰσθήσεως); but he did not elaborate this hint or work out any theory of the intuition of the individual. Yet such a theory is surely necessary. For example, we are fully convinced that we can and do know an individual person's character, but we do not arrive at the knowledge by discursive and scientific reasoning. In fact, one can hardly avoid the impression that Aristotle's exaltation of scientific definition, of knowledge of substance in the sense of specific essence, and his depreciation of knowledge of the sensible individual, were little more than a relic of his Platonic education.

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[1] *Metaph.*, 1074 a 33–8.

[2] *Metaph.*, 1036 a 2–6.

9. In the ninth book of the *Metaphysics* Aristotle discusses the notions of potency and act. This is an extremely important distinction, as it enables Aristotle to admit a doctrine of real development. The Megaric School had denied potentiality, but, as Aristotle remarks, it would be absurd to say that the builder who is not actually building cannot build. It is true, of course, in one sense, that he cannot build when he is not actually building, i.e. if "cannot build" be understood as "cannot be actually building" (that is an obvious application of the principle of contradiction); but he has a potentiality for building, a power to build, even when he is not actually employing that power. That potentiality is not simply the negation of actuality can be shown by a simple illustration. A man in a state of deep sleep or coma is not actually thinking, but, being a man, he has the potentiality of thinking, whereas a stone, though it is not actually thinking, has no potentiality for thinking. A natural object is in potency in regard to the full realisation of its form, e.g. an acorn or a small tree in regard to its full development. This potency may be the power to effect a change in another or it may be a power of self-realisation: in either case it is something real, something between not-being and actuality.

Actuality, says Aristotle, is prior to potency.[1] The actual is always produced from the potential, the potential is always reduced to act by the actual, that which is already in act, as man is produced by man. In this sense the actual is *temporally* prior to the potential. But the actual is also prior to the potential *logically*, in principle, since the actuality is the end, that for the sake of which the potency exists or is acquired. Thus, although a boy is temporally prior to his actualisation as man, his manhood is logically prior, since his boyhood is for the sake of his manhood. Moreover, that which is eternal is prior in substance to that which is perishable; and that which is eternal, imperishable, is in the highest sense actual. God, for example, exists necessarily, and that which exists necessarily must be fully actual: as the eternal Source of movement, of the reduction of potentiality to act, God must be full and complete actuality, the Unmoved First Mover. Eternal things, says Aristotle,[1] must be good: there can be in them no defect or badness or perversion. Badness means defect or perversion of some kind, and there can be no defect in that which is fully actual. It follows that there can be no separate bad principle, since that which is without matter is pure form. "The bad does not exist apart from bad things."[2] It is clear from this that God, in the thought of Aristotle, took on something of the character of Plato's Idea of the Good, and indeed he remarks that the cause of all goods is the good itself.[3] The First Unmoved Mover, being the source of all movement, as *final* cause, is the ultimate cause why potentiality is actualised, i.e. why goodness is realised.

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[1] *Metaph.*, 1049 b 5.

It is through the distinction between potency and act that Aristotle answers Parmenides Parmenides had said that change is impossible, because being cannot come out of not-being (out of nothing comes nothing), while equally it cannot come from being (for being already *is*). Thus fire could not come out of air, since air is air and not fire. To this Aristotle would reply that fire does not come out of air as air, but out of air which can be fire and is not yet fire, that has a potentiality to become fire. Abstractly put, a thing comes into being from its privation. If Parmenides were to object that this is tantamount to saying that a thing comes into being from not-being, Aristotle would answer that it does not come into being from its privation merely (i.e. from bare privation), but from its privation *in a subject*. Were Parmenides to retort that in this case a thing comes into being from being, which is a contradiction, Aristotle could answer that it does not come into being from being precisely as such, but from being which is also not-being, i.e. not the thing which it comes to be. He thus answers the Parmenidean difficulty by recourse to the distinction between form, matter and privation, or (better and more generally), between act, potency and privation.[4]

10. The distinction of potency and act leads to the doctrine of the hierarchy or scale of existence, for it is clear that an object which is in act as regards its own *terminus a quo* may be in potency as regards a further *terminus ad quem*. To use a hackneyed illustration, the hewn stone is in act as regards the unhewn stone—in respect to the latter's potentiality of being hewn—but in potency

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[1] *Metaph.*, 1051 a 20–1. [2] *Metaph.*, 1051 a 17–18. [3] *Metaph.*, 985 a 9–10.

[4] For a discussion of potentiality and act, cf. *Metaph.*, Δ, 12 and Θ.

as regards the house, in respect to the part it will play in the house that is yet to be built. Similarly, the soul or ψυχή, i.e. the soul in its sensitive aspect and functions, is act in regard to the body, but potency in respect to the higher function of νοῦς. At the bottom of the ladder, so to speak, is prime matter, in itself unknowable and never actually existing apart from form. In union with the contraries, with heat or cold and with dryness or wetness, it forms the four bodies—earth, air, water and fire. These relatively, though not absolutely, simple bodies form in turn inorganic bodies, such as gold, and the simple tissues of living beings (both together called homoeomerous bodies). Anomoemerous beings, organisms, are formed of homoemerous bodies as their material. Thus the rungs of the ladder are gradually ascended, until we come to the active intellect of man, unmixed with matter, the separate intelligence of the spheres and finally God. (The doctrine of the scale of existence should not, of course, be understood as involving "evolution." Pure forms do not evolve out of matter. Moreover, Aristotle held that species are eternal, though individual sensible objects perish.)

11. How is change initiated? Stone that is unhewn remains unhewn so far as the stone itself is concerned: it does not hew itself. No more does hewn stone build itself into a house. In both cases an external agent, source of the change or movement, is required. In other words, besides the formal and material causes an *efficient* cause is requisite, τὸ ὅθεν ἡ κίνησις. But this is not necessarily *external* to the thing that undergoes the change: for instance, according to Aristotle, each of the four elements has a natural movement towards its own proper place in the universe (e.g. fire goes "up"), and the element in question will move in accord with its natural motion unless it is hindered. It belongs to the form of the element to tend towards its natural region,[1] and thus the formal and efficient causes coincide. But this does not mean that the efficient cause is always identical with the formal cause: it is identical in the case of the soul, formal principle of the organism, regarded as initiator of movement; but it is not identical in the case of the builder of the house, while in that of the generation of the human being, for example, the efficient cause, the father, is only specifically, and not numerically, the same as the formal cause of the child.

12. It will be remembered that Aristotle thought of himself as

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[1] *De Caelo*, 311 a 1–6.

being the first thinker to give real consideration to the final cause, τὸ οὗ ἕνεκα. But though he lays great stress on finality, it would be a mistake to suppose that finality, for Aristotle, is equivalent to *external* finality, as though we were to say, for instance, that grass grows in order that sheep may have food. On the contrary, he insists much more on internal or immanent finality (thus the apple tree has attained its end or purpose, not when the fruit forms a healthy or pleasant food for man or has been made into cider, but when the apple tree has reached that perfection of development of which it is capable, i.e. the perfection of its form), for in his view the formal cause of the thing is normally its final cause as well.[1] Thus the formal cause of a horse is the specific form of horse, but this is also its final cause, since the individual of a species naturally strives to embody as perfectly as may be the specific form in question. This natural striving after the form means that the final, formal and efficient causes are often the same. For example, in the organic substance the soul or ψυχή is the formal cause or determining element in the *compositum*, while at the same time it is also the efficient cause, as source of movement, and final cause, since the immanent end of the organism is the individual embodiment of the specific form. Thus the acorn, in the whole process of its development into a full-grown tree, is tending towards the full realisation of its final cause. In Aristotle's view it is the final cause itself which moves, i.e. by attraction. In the case of the oak tree its final cause, which is also its formal cause, causes the development of the acorn into the oak-tree by drawing up, as it were, the acorn towards the term of its process of development. It might of course be objected that the final cause, the perfected form of the oak, does not as yet exist and so cannot cause, while on the other hand it cannot cause as conceived in the mind (as the idea of the picture in the artist's mind is said to have a causal action), since the acorn is without mind and power of reflection. He would answer, no doubt, by recalling the fact that the form of the acorn is the form of the oak in germ, that it has an innate and natural tendency towards its own full evolution. But difficulties might arise for Aristotle if one were to continue asking questions.

(Of course, in spite of the tendency to run the causes together, Aristotle does not deny that the causes may be physically distinct from one another. For instance, in the building of a house, the formal cause of the house—so far as one can talk of the formal cause of a house—is not only conceptually but also physically distinct from the final cause, the idea or plan of the house in the architect's mind, as also from the efficient cause or causes. In general, however, one can say that the efficient, final, formal and material causes tend to melt, into two, that Aristotle inclines to reduce the four causes to two, namely, the formal cause and the material cause (though in our modern use of the term "cause" we naturally think first of all of efficient causality, and then perhaps of final causes).

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[1] *Metaph.*, H, 1044 a 36–b 11. Cf. *Physics*, B, 7, 198 a 24 ff.

This emphasis on finality does not mean that Aristotle excludes all mechanical causality, and this in spite of the anthropomorphic language he uses concerning teleology in nature, e.g. in his famous saying that "Nature does nothing in vain, nothing superfluous,"[1] language which is scarcely consistent with the theology of the *Metaphysics* at least. Sometimes finality and mechanism combine as in the fact that light cannot but pass through the lantern, since its own particles are finer than those of the horn, though it thereby serves to preserve us from stumbling;[2] but in other cases there may be, he thinks, only mechanical causality at work (as in the fact that the colour of the eyes of the animal has no purpose, but is due simply to circumstances of birth).[3] Moreover, Aristotle says explicitly that we must not always look for a final cause, since some things have to be explained only by material or efficient causes.[4]

13. Every motion, every transit from potentiality to act, requires some principle in act, but if every becoming, every object in movement, requires an actual moving cause, then the world in general, the universe, requires a First Mover.[5] It is important, however, to note that the word "First" must not be understood temporally, since motion, according to Aristotle, is necessarily eternal (to initiate it or cause it to disappear would itself require motion). Rather is it to be understood as meaning *Supreme*: the First Mover is the eternal source of eternal motion. Moreover, the First Mover is not a Creator-God: the world existed from all eternity without having been created from all eternity. God forms the world, but did not create it, and He forms the world, is

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[1] *De Caelo*, A 4, 271 a 33.

[2] *Anal. Post.*, 94 b 27–31. Cf. *De Gen. An.*, 743 b 16 f.

[3] *De Gen. An.*, 778 a 16-b 19; 789 b 19 f. *De Part. An.*, 642 a 2; 677 a 17–19

[4] *Metaph.*, 1049 b 24 ff.

[5] For First Mover, see *Metaph.*, Δ and *Physics*, Θ, 6, 258 b 10 f.

the source of motion, by *drawing* it, i.e. by acting as *final* cause. In Aristotle's view, if God caused motion by efficient physical causation—"shoving" the world, as it were—then He Himself would be changed: there would be a reaction of the moved on the mover. He must act, therefore, as Final Cause, by being the object of desire. To this point we shall return in a moment.

In *Metaphysics*, Λ 6 ff., Aristotle shows that this moving Principle must be of such a kind that it is pure act, ἐνέργεια, without potentiality. Presupposing the eternity of the world (if time could come into being there would, he thinks, be a time before time was—which is contradictory—and since time is essentially connected with change, change too must be eternal) he declares that there must be a First Mover which causes change without itself being changed, without having any potentiality, for if, for instance, it could cease from causing motion, then motion or change would not be necessarily eternal—which it is. There must accordingly be a First Mover which is pure act, and if it is pure act, then it must be immaterial, for materiality involves the possibility of being acted upon and changed. Moreover, experience, which shows that there exists the ceaseless, circular motion of the heavens, confirms this argument, since there must be a First Mover to move the heavens.

As we have seen, God moves the universe as Final Cause, as being the object of desire. Apparently God is conceived as moving directly the first heaven, causing the daily rotation of the stars round the earth. He moves by inspiring love and desire (the desirable and the intelligible are the same in the immaterial sphere), and so there must be an Intelligence of the first sphere, and other Intelligences in the other spheres. The Intelligence of each sphere is spiritual, and the sphere desires to imitate the life of its Intelligence as closely as may be. Not being able to imitate it in its spirituality, it does the next best thing by performing a circular movement. In an earlier period Aristotle maintained the Platonic conception of star souls, for in the Περὶ Φιλοσοφίας the stars themselves possess souls and move themselves; but he abandoned the conception in favour of that of the Intelligences of the spheres.

It is a curious fact that Aristotle does not seem to have had any very definite conviction as to the *number* of unmoved movers. Thus in the *Physics* there are three passages which refer to a plurality of unmoved movers,[1] while in the *Metaphysics* a plurality also appears.[2] According to Jaeger, chapter eight of *Metaphysics*, Λ is a later addition on Aristotle's part. In chapters seven and nine (continuous and forming part of the "original" *Metaphysics*) Aristotle speaks of the One Unmoved Mover. But in chapter eight the fifty-five transcendent movers make their appearance. Plotinus afterwards objected that the relation of these to the First Mover is left wholly obscure. He also asks how there can be a plurality of them, if matter is the principle of individuation—as Aristotle held it to be. Now, Aristotle himself saw this last objection, for he inserts the objection in the middle of chapter eight without giving a solution.[3] Even in Theophrastus' time some Aristotelians clung to *one* Unmoved Mover—not seeing how the independent movements caused by the plurality of movers could be harmonised.

It was ultimately due to this notion of a plurality of movers that mediaeval philosophers supposed there were Intelligences or Angels that move the spheres. By making them subordinate to and dependent on the First Mover or God, they were taking up the only possible position, since, if any harmony is to be achieved, then the other movers must move in subordination to the First Mover and should be related by intelligence and desire to Him, whether directly or indirectly, i.e. hierarchically. This the Neo-Platonists saw.

The First Mover, being immaterial, cannot perform any bodily action: His activity must be purely spiritual, and so intellectual. In other words, God's activity is one of thought. But what is the object of His thought? Knowledge is intellectual participation of the object: now, God's object must be the best of all possible objects, and in any case the knowledge enjoyed by God cannot be knowledge that involves change or sensation or novelty. God therefore knows Himself in an eternal act of intuition or self-consciousness. Aristotle, then, defines God as "Thought of Thought," νόησις νοήσεως.[4] God is subsistent thought, which eternally thinks itself. Moreover, God cannot have any object of thought outside Himself, for that would mean that He had an end outside Himself. God, therefore, knows only Himself. St.

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[1] *Physics*, 258 b 11; 259 a 6–13; 259 b 28–31. (Jaeger thinks that these three passages are later additions, but as it is only in the third passage that A. assumes the actual existence of a plurality of unmoved movers, Ross (*Physics*, pp. 101–2) reasonably concludes that this passage alone was added after the completion of *Metaph*., Λ).

[2] *Metaph*., Λ 8.

[3] *Metaph*., 1074 a 31–8.

[4] *Metaph*., Λ 9, 1074 b 33–5.

Thomas[1] and others, e.g. Brentano, have tried to interpret Aristotle in such a way as not to exclude knowledge of the world and the exercise of Divine Providence; but, though St. Thomas is right as to the true view of God, it does not follow that this was the view of Aristotle. "Aristotle has no theory either of divine creation or of divine providence."[2] He does indeed speak in rather a different strain on occasion, as when he speaks of God as the captain of an army who brings about order in the army, or says that God provides for the continuance of generation in the case of those beings which, unlike the stars, are incapable of permanent existence: but such remarks should hardly be pressed in view of his treatment of the First Mover.[3]

Is the God of Aristotle a Personal God? Aristotle sometimes speaks of God as the First Unmoved Mover (τὸ πρῶτον κινοῦν ἀκίνητον), sometimes as ὁ θεός,[4] while in the *Nicomachean Ethics* he also speaks about οἱ θεοί.[5] Like most Greeks, Aristotle does not seem to have worried much about the number of the gods, but if we are to say that he was definitely and exclusively monotheist, then we would have to say that his God is personal. Aristotle may not have spoken of the First Mover as being personal, and certainly the ascription of anthropomorphic personality would be very far indeed from his thoughts, but since the First Mover is Intelligence or Thought, it follows that He is personal in the philosophic sense. The Aristotelian God may not be personal *secundum nomen*, but He is personal *secundum rem*. We should add, however, that there is no indication that Aristotle ever thought of the First Mover as an object of worship, still less as a Being to Whom prayers might profitably be addressed. And indeed, if Aristotle's God is entirely self-centred, as I believe Him to have been, then it would be out of the question for men to attempt personal intercourse with Him. In the *Magna Moralia* Aristotle says expressly that those are wrong who think that there can be a friendship towards God. For (*a*) God could not return our love, and (*b*) we could not in any case be said to *love* God.[6]

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[1] *In Met.*, xii, lect. xi: *Nec tamen sequitur quod omnia alia a se ei sunt ignota; nam intelligendo se intelligit omnia alia.*

[2] Ross, *Aristotle*, p. 184.

[3] *In De Caelo*, A 4, 271 a 33. Aristotle says that God and nature do nothing in vain, but he had not yet elaborated his theory of the Unmoved Mover.

[4] *Metaph.* Λ 7.

[5] *Eth. Nic.*, e.g. 1170 b 8 ff. and 1179 a 24–5. Cf. *Eth. Nic.*, 1179 a 24–5.

[6] *M.M.*, 1208 b 26–32.

14. Other arguments for the existence of God are found in rudimentary form in Aristotle's works. Thus in the fragments of the Περὶ Φιλοσοφίας he pictures men who behold for the first time the beauty of the earth and sea and the majesty of the heavens, and conclude that they are the work of gods. This is an adumbration of the teleological argument.[1] In the same work Aristotle hints at least at a line of argument which was later to develop into the "fourth way" of St. Thomas Aquinas (through various intermediaries, of course). Aristotle there argues that "where there is a better, there is a best; now, among existing things one is better than another, therefore there is a best, which must be the divine."[2] This line of argument leads directly only to a *relatively* best: in order to arrive at the absolutely best, or the Perfect, it is necessary to introduce the idea of causality, arguing that all finite perfections ultimately spring from or are "participations" in Absolute Perfection, which is the fount of all finite perfections. This St. Thomas does, referring to a passage in the *Metaphysics*,[3] and even making use of Aristotle's illustration of fire, which is said to be the hottest of all things, inasmuch as it is the cause of the heat of all other things.[4] As far as Aristotle himself is concerned, the use of the degrees of perfection in order to prove God's existence would seem to be confined to his earlier period, when he is still strongly under Platonic influence: in the *Metaphysics* he does not use this line of argument in reference to the existence of the divine. In general, we must say that Aristotle, when he came to compose the *Metaphysics*, had moved a good way from the popular religious conceptions that appear, for example, in the fragments of the Περὶ Φιλοσοφίας. He continued on occasion to use language that hardly fits the conceptions of *Metaphysics*, Λ; but in any case we would not expect Aristotle to avoid all popular language, expressions and notions with an absolute and rigorous consistency, while it is also extremely probable that he never really attempted any final systematisation of his doctrine concerning God or to harmonise the expressions he sometimes employs implying Divine Providence and activity in the world with the speculations of the *Metaphysics*.

15. From what has been said, it should be apparent that Aristotle's notion of God was far from satisfactory. It is true that he shows a clearer apprehension of the ultimate Godhead

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[1] Frag. 14. (Rose.)

[2] Frag. 15. (Rose.)

[3] *Metaph.*, 993 b 23–31. Cf. 1008 b 31–1009 a 5.

[4] St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, Ia, q., 2, art. 3, in corp.

than Plato does, but in Book Λ of the *Metaphysics* at least, Aristotle leaves out of account that Divine operation in the world which was so insisted on by Plato, and which is an essential element in any satisfactory rational theology. The Aristotelian God is efficient Cause *only* by being the final Cause. He does not know this world and no Divine plan is fulfilled in this world: the teleology of nature can be nothing more than unconscious teleology (at least this is the only conclusion that will really fit in with the picture of God given in the *Metaphysics*). In this respect, therefore, the Aristotelian metaphysic is inferior to that of Plato. On the other hand, while not a few of Aristotle's doctrines must be traced to a Platonic origin, he certainly succeeded, by his doctrine of immanent teleology, of the movement of all concrete sensible objects towards the full realisation of their potentialities, in establishing the reality of the sensible world on a firmer foundation than was possible for his great predecessor, and at the same time attributed a real meaning and purpose to becoming and change, even if in the process he abandoned valuable elements of Plato's thought.

CHAPTER XXX

PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE AND PSYCHOLOGY

1. NATURE is the totality of objects which are material and subject to movement. As a matter of fact, Aristotle does not really define what he means by nature, but it is clear from what he writes in the *Physics*[1] that he regards Nature as the totality of natural objects, i.e. of objects which are capable of initiating change and of bringing it to an end, of objects which have an inner tendency to change. Artificial objects, a bed for instance, have not the power of self-movement. The "simple" bodies of which the bed is composed have this power of initiating change or movement, but they do so as natural bodies, not as components of a bed as such. This position has, of course, to be qualified by the doctrine that the passage of lifeless bodies from a state of rest to a state of movement must be initiated by an external agent. But, as we have seen, when the agent removes an obstacle, e.g. makes a hole in the bottom of a cauldron, the water responds with a movement of its own, its natural downward motion. This may seem a contradiction, namely, that natural objects are spoken of as having in themselves a principle of movement; while, on the other hand, Aristotle makes use of the maxim, that whatever is moved is moved in virtue of the action of an external agent.[2] Aristotle, however, holds that the apparent initiation of movement by animals, e.g. when an animal goes for food, is not an absolute initiation, for there would be no movement were the food not an external attractive agent. Similarly, when the water falls through the hole in the cauldron, this downward movement may indeed be spoken of as though it were a natural movement of the element, yet it is incidentally caused

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[1] *Physics*, B 1, 192 b 13 ff.

[2] Aristotle's words in *Physics*, H 1, 241 b 39 ff. and Θ 4, 254 b 7 ff., may seem to be somewhat ambiguous. He says that whatever is moved is moved by something, either by itself or by something else, not that every moving thing is moved by something else; but the discussion that follows these words, when understood in the light of his principle of the priority of act to potency and in the light of his arguments for the existence of the Unmoved Mover shows clearly enough that in his eyes no moving thing can be the *absolute* initiator of motion. Whatever initiates motion *absolutely* must be itself *unmoved*. Whether there is a plurality of unmoved movers or not is, of course, another question. The principle, however, is clear.

by the external agent who makes the hole and so removes the obstacle to the natural motion of the water, while it is directly caused by that which generated the water and made it heavy, presumably by the primary contraries, hot or cold. Aristotle expresses the matter by saying that inanimate bodies have in themselves "a beginning of being moved" but not "a beginning of causing movement."[1]

2. Movement in the wider sense is divided into coming-to-be and passing-away on the one hand, and κίνησις or movement in the narrower sense on the other. This latter (κίνησις) is to be divided into its three kinds—qualitative movement (κίνησις κατὰ τὸ ποιόν or κατὰ πάθος), quantitative movement (κατὰ τὸ ποσόν or κατὰ μέγεθος) and local movement (κίνησις κατὰ τὸ ποῦ or κατὰ τόπον). The first is ἀλλοίωσις or qualitative change, the second αὔξησις καὶ φθίσις or quantitative change, the third φορά or motion in our ordinary sense of the word.[2]

3. Presuppositions of local motion, and indeed of all motion, are Place and Time. That Place (τόπος) exists is proved[3] (*a*) by the fact of displacement, e.g. by the fact that where there is water, there may come to be air; and (*b*) by the fact that the four elements have their natural places. These distinctions of natural place are not simply relative to us but exist independently: for instance "up" is the place whither fire moves and "down" the place whither earth moves. Place, therefore, exists and it is defined by Aristotle as τὸ τοῦ περιέχοντος πέρας ἀκίνητον πρῶτον,[4] the *Terminus continentis immobilis primus* of the Scholastics. Aristotle's τόπος, then, is the limit within which a body is, a limit considered as immobile. If this definition is adopted then obviously there can be no empty place nor any place outside the universe or world, for place is the inner limit of the containing body. But Aristotle distinguished between the vessel or container of a body and its place. In the case of a boat carried down by a stream, the stream—itself moving—is the vessel rather than the place of the boat. Place, then, is the first unmoved limit of the container, reckoning outwards. In the actual case in point the whole river, according to Aristotle, is the place of the boat and of whoever is in the boat, on the ground that the whole river is at rest, ὅτι ἀκίνητον ὁ πᾶς.[5] Everything in the physical universe

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[1] *Physics*, 254 b 33–256 a 3. Cf. *De Caelo*, 311 a 9–12.

[2] *Physics*, E 2, 226 a 24 ff.; Θ 7, 260 a 26 ff.

[3] *Physics*, Δ 1, 208 a 27 ff.

[4] *Physics*, Δ 4, 212 a 20 ff.

[5] *Physics*, Δ 4, 212 a 19–20.

is thus in a place, while the universe itself is not. Since, therefore, motion occurs through change of place, the universe itself cannot move *forwards*, but only by turning.

4. According to Aristotle a body can only be moved by a present mover in contact with the moved. What, then, are we to say of projectiles?[1] The original mover communicates to the medium, e.g. air or water, not only motion but also the power of moving. The first particles of air moved move other particles *and* the projectiles. But this power of moving decreases in proportion to the distance, so that in the end the projectile comes to rest irrespective of opposing forces. Aristotle is thus no believer in the law of inertia: he thought of compulsory movement as tending to decelerate, whereas "natural" movement tends to accelerate. (Cf. *Physics*, 230 a 18 ff.) In this he was followed by e.g. St. Thomas, who rejected the *impetus* theory of Philoponus, Al Bitrogi, Olivi, etc.

5. In regard to Time, Aristotle points out that it cannot be simply identified with movement or change, for movements are many, while time is one.[2] However, time is clearly connected with movement and change: if we are unaware of change, we are also unaware of time. The definition of time given by Aristotle is ὁ χρόνος ἀριθμός ἐστι κινήσεως κατὰ τὸ πρότερον καὶ ὕστερον.[3] He does not refer in this definition to pure number but to number in the sense of that which is numbered, i.e. to the numerable aspect of movement. Time, however, is a *continuum*, as movement is a continuum: it does not consist of discrete points.

Only things which are in movement or at rest in such a way that they are capable of movement, are in time: what is eternal *and* immobile is not in time. (Movement is eternal but obviously it is not immobile: therefore it is in time, and it necessarily follows that time also is eternal, in the sense that it never first began and will never end.) It is to be noted that the movement referred to is not of necessity local motion, for Aristotle expressly allows that the recognition even of a change in one's own state of mind may enable us to recognise a lapse of time. As to Aristotle's assertion that time is that in movement which is *counted*, it is not meant to be understood as though we could count the *nows* involved in change, as though the period of change were made up of discrete points of time: he means that, when one is conscious of time, one

[1] *Physics*, 215 a 14 ff.; 266 b 27 ff.

[2] *Physics*, Δ 10–11, 218 a 30 ff.

[3] *Physics*, Δ 11, 219 b 1–2 ff.; 220 a 24–5 ff.

is recognising plurality, i.e. a plurality of phases. Time, then, is that aspect of element of change or movement, which makes it possible for the mind to recognise a plurality of phases.[1]

If we are to measure time, we must have a standard of measurement. According to Aristotle, movement in a straight line is not satisfactory for this purpose, for it is not uniform. If it is natural movement, it accelerates; if it is unnatural, it decelerates. What movement, then, is both natural and uniform? In Aristotle's view movement in a circle is naturally uniform, and the rotation of the heavenly spheres is a natural movement. So it is thus the best suited for our purpose—and telling time by the sun will be justified.[2]

Aristotle raises the question,[3] though he does not treat it at length, whether there would be time if there were no mind. In other words, as time is the measure of movement or movement *qua* countable, would there be any time if there were no mind to count? He answers that there would be no time, properly speaking, though there would be the substratum of time. Professor Ross comments that this position is consistent with Aristotle's general account of the *continuum*.[4] In the continuum there are no actual parts, but only potential parts. These are brought into actual existence when some event breaks up the *continuum*. So with time or duration. The "nows" within duration are brought into actual existence by a mind which distinguishes the "nows" within that duration. The difficulty that time may have existed when there were as yet no minds in existence, is at first sight no difficulty for Aristotle, since he thought of animals and men as having always existed. But a more pertinent difficulty is that counting is not the creation of parts, but the recognition of parts already there.[5] In any case, how could there be change if there were no time? We might suggest in answer that since, according to Aristotle, time is not really distinguished from the *prius* and *posterius* of motion, time exists independently of the mind, because motion does, though it receives a complement, as it were, from mind. "Parts" of time are potential in the sense that they are not formally distinguished from one another save by the "counting" mind; but they are not potential in the sense that they have no real existence apart from mind. Aristotle's position is not that of Kant, nor does it, of itself, lead to the position of Kant.

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[1] Cf. Ross, *Physics*, p. 65.

[2] *Physics*, 223 a 29–224 a 2.

[3] *Physics*, 223 a 21–9.

[4] Ross, *Physics*, p. 68.

[5] Ross, *Physics*, p. 69.

6. Aristotle raises the question of the possibility of the infinite.

(*a*) An infinite body, he says, is impossible,[1] since every body is bounded by a surface, and no body which is bounded by a surface can be infinite. He also proves the impossibility of an existent actually infinite body by showing that it could be neither composite nor simple. For example, if it is supposed to be composite, the elements of which it is composed are themselves either infinite or finite. Now, if one element is infinite and the other element or elements finite, then the latter are deleted by the first, while it is impossible for both elements to be infinite, since one infinite element would equal the whole body. As to finite elements, composition of such elements would certainly not form one actually infinite body. Aristotle also considered that the existence of absolute "up," "down," etc., which he accepted, shows that there cannot be an existent actually infinite body, for such distinctions would be meaningless in the case of an infinite body. Nor can there be an actual infinite number, since number is that which can be numbered, whereas an infinite number could not be numbered.[2]

(*b*) On the other hand, though Aristotle rejected an existent actually infinite body or number, he admitted the infinite in another sense.[3] The infinite exists potentially. For example, no spatial extension is an actual infinite, but it is potentially infinite in the sense that it is infinitely divisible. A line does not consist of an actual infinite of points, for it is a *continuum* (it is in this way that Aristotle attempts, in the *Physics*, to meet the difficulties raised by Zeno the Eleatic), but it is infinitely divisible, though this potentially infinite division will never be completely realised in actuality. Time, again, is potentially infinite, since it can be added to indefinitely; but time never exists as an actual infinite, for it is a *successive continuum* and its parts never coexist. Time, therefore, resembles spatial extension in being infinitely divisible (though no actual infinity is ever realised), but is also potentially infinite by way of addition, and in this it differs from extension, since extension, according to Aristotle, has a maximum, even if it has no minimum. A third potential infinity is that of Number, which resembles time in being potentially infinite by way of addition, since you cannot count up to a number beyond which all counting and addition is impossible. Number, however, differs from both time and extension in being insusceptible of infinite division, for the reason that it has a minimum—the unit.

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[1] *Physics*, 5, 204 a 34–206 a 7. [2] *Physics*, 204 b 7–10. [3] *Physics*, 206 a 9 ff.

7. According to Aristotle, all natural motion is directed towards an end.[1] What is the end that is sought in nature? It is the development from a state of potentiality to one of actuality, the embodiment of form in matter. With Aristotle, as with Plato, the teleological view of nature prevails over the mechanical, even if it is difficult to see how Aristotle could logically admit any conscious teleology in regard to nature in general. The teleology is not, however, all-pervasive and all-conquering, since matter sometimes obstructs the action of teleology (as, for instance, in the production of monsters, which must be ascribed to defective matter.[2]) Thus the working of teleology in any particular instance may suffer interference from the occurrence of an event which does not serve the end in question at least, but the occurrence of which cannot be avoided owing to certain circumstances. This is τὸ αὐτόματον or the "fortuitous," consisting of those events which are "by nature," though not "according to nature," e.g. the production of a monster by generation. Such occurrences are undesirable and are distinguished by Aristotle from luck (τύχη), which denotes the occurrence of a desirable event, e.g. which might be the willed end of a purposive agent, as in the case of the finding of a treasure in a field.[3]

With what justification does Aristotle speak of "Nature" as having ends? Plato had made use of the conceptions of a World-Soul and of the Demiurge, and so was enabled to speak of ends in nature, but Aristotle talks as though there were some teleological activity inherent in nature itself. He does indeed speak on occasion of ὁ θεός, but he never gives any satisfactory treatment of the relation of nature to God, and what he says about God in the *Metaphysics* would seem to preclude any purposive activity in nature on the part of God. Probably it is true to say that Aristotle's increasing interest in empirical science led him to neglect any real systematisation of his position, and even lays him open to a justified accusation of inconsistency with his metaphysical presuppositions. While having no wish to reject or question Aristotle's view that there is teleology in nature, we are, it seems, compelled to admit that Aristotle's metaphysical system, his theology, gives him little justification for speaking of nature, as he not infrequently does, as though it were a consciously operating and organising principle. Such language bears an unmistakably Platonic flavour.

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[1] *De Caelo*, A 4, 217 a 33. ὁ θεός καὶ ἡ φύσις οὐδὲν μάτην ποιοῦσιν.

[2] *De Gen. An.*, 767 b 13–23.

[3] *Physics*, B, 4–6. Cf. *Metaph.*, E, 2–3.

8. According to Aristotle the universe consists of two distinct worlds—the superlunary and the sublunary. In the superlunary world are the stars, which are imperishable and undergo no change other than that of local motion, their motion being circular and not rectilinear, as is the natural movement of the four elements. Aristotle concludes that the stars are composed of a different material element, *aether*, which is the fifth and superior element, incapable of any change other than change of place in a circular movement.

Aristotle maintained the view that the earth, spherical in shape, is at rest in the centre of the universe, and that round it lie the layers, concentric and spherical, of water, air and fire or the warm (ὑπέκκαυμα). Beyond these lie the heavenly spheres, the outermost of which, that of the fixed stars, owes its motion to the First Mover. Accepting from Calippus the number thirty-three as the number of spheres which must be presupposed in order to explain the actual motion of the planets, Aristotle assumed also twenty-two backward-moving spheres, interposed between the other spheres, in order to counteract the tendency of a sphere to disturb the motion of the planet in the next encompassed sphere. He thus obtained fifty-five spheres, excluding the outermost sphere; and this is the explanation of his suggestion in the *Metaphysics* that there are fifty-five unmoved movers, in addition to the First Mover that moves the outermost sphere. (He remarks that if the computation of Eudoxus be accepted instead of that of Calippus, then the number will be forty-nine).[1]

9. Particular things in this world come into being and pass away, but species and genera are eternal. There is, therefore, no evolution in the modern sense to be found in the system of Aristotle. But although Aristotle cannot develop any theory of temporal evolution, an evolution of species, he can and does develop a theory of what may be called "ideal" evolution, namely, a theory concerning the structure of the universe, a theory of the scale of being, in which form is ever more predominant as the scale is ascended. At the bottom of the scale comes inorganic matter, and above this organic matter, the plants being less perfect than the animals. Nevertheless, even the plants possess

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[1] Cf. *Metaph.*, Λ, 8.

soul, which is the principle of life, and which Aristotle defines as "the entelechy of a natural body endowed with the capacity of life" or as "the first entelechy of a natural organic body." (So in *De Anima* B 1, 412 a 27–b 4, ψυχή ἐστιν ἐντελέχεια ἡ πρώτη σώματος φυσικοῦ δυνάμει ζωὴν ἔχοντος· τοιοῦτο δέ, ὃ ἂν ᾖ ὀργανικόν, or ἐντελέχεια ἡ πρώτη σώματος φυσικοῦ ὀργανικοῦ.) Being the act of the body, the soul is at the same time form, principle of movement, and end. The body is for the soul, and every organ has its purpose, that purpose being an activity.

At the beginning of the *De Anima* Aristotle points out the importance of an investigation concerning the soul, for the soul is, as it were, the vital principle in living things.[1] This problem is, however, he says, a difficult one, for it is not easy to ascertain the right method to be employed: but he insists—and how wisely—that the speculative philosopher and the naturalist have different standpoints, and so frame their definitions differently. It is not every thinker that has recognised that different sciences have their different methods, and that because a particular science cannot employ the method of the chemist or the natural scientist, it does not follow that all its conclusions must necessarily be vitiated.[2]

The composite substance, says Aristotle,[3] is a natural body endowed with life, the principle of this life being called the soul (ψυχή). Body cannot be soul, for body is not life but what has life. (In the first book of the *De Anima*, where Aristotle gives a history of Psychology, he remarks, apropos of the views of different philosophers concerning the soul, that "the most far-reaching difference is that between the philosophers who regard the elements as corporeal and those who regard them as incorporeal." Aristotle ranges himself with the Platonists as against the followers of Leucippus and Democritus.) The body, then, must be as matter to the soul, while the soul is as form or act to the body. Hence Aristotle, in his definition of the soul, speaks of it as the entelechy or act of the body that possesses life in potency—"potentiality of life," as he remarks, not referring to a thing which has become dispossessed of soul, but to that which possesses it. The soul is thus the realisation of the body and is inseparable from it (though there may be—as Aristotle held there were—parts which can be separated, because they are not precisely realisations of the body). The soul is thus the cause and principle of the living body, (*a*) as source of movement,[1] (*b*) as final cause, and (*c*) as the real substance (i.e. formal cause) of animate bodies.

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[1] *De An.*, 402 a 1–9.

[2] *De An.*, 402 a 10 ff.

[3] *De An.*, 412 a.

The different types of soul form a series of such a kind that the higher presupposes the lower, but not vice versa. The lowest form of soul is the nutritive or vegetative soul, τὸ θρεπτικόν, which exercises the activities of assimilation and reproduction. It is found, not only in plants, but also in animals; yet it can exist by itself, as it does in plants. In order that any living thing should continue to exist, these functions are necessary: they are found, therefore, in all living things, but in plants they are found alone, without the higher activities of soul. For plants sensation is not necessary, for they do not move but draw their nourishment automatically. (The same holds good, indeed, of motionless animals.) But animals endowed with the power of movement must have sensation, for it would be useless for them to move after their food, if they could not recognise it when they found it.

Animals, then, possess the higher form of soul, the sensitive soul, which exercises the three powers of sense-perception (τὸ αἰσθητικόν), desire (τὸ ὀρεκτικόν), and local motion (τὸ κινητικόν κατὰ τόπον).[2] Imagination (φαντασία) follows on the sensitive faculty, and memory is a further development of this.[3] Just as Aristotle has pointed out the necessity of nutrition for the preservation of life at all, so he shows the necessity of touch in order that an animal should be able to distinguish its food, at least when it is in contact with it.[4] Taste, whereby that which is food attracts the animal, and what is not food repels it, is also necessary. The other senses, though not strictly necessary, are for the well-being of the animal.

10. Higher in the scale than the merely animal soul is the human soul. This soul unites in itself the powers of the lower souls, τὸ θρεπτικόν, τὸ αἰσθητικόν, τὸ ὀρεκτικόν, τὸ κινητικόν κατὰ τόπον, but has a peculiar advantage in the possession of νοῦς, τὸ διανοητικόν. The latter is active in two ways, as the power of scientific thought (λόγος, νοῦς θεωρητικός = τὸ ἐπιστημονικόν) and as the power of deliberation (διάνοια πρακτική = λογιστικόν). The former has truth as its object, truth for its own sake, while the latter aims at truth, not for its

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[1] Aristotle insists that the soul is badly defined if it is assigned motion as its characteristic. The soul moves actively but does not itself move. This is against the Platonic doctrine of the soul as a self-moving entity. Cf. *De An.*, A, 3.

[2] *De An.*, B 3.

[3] *De An.*, 3, 427 b 29 ff.; *Rhet.*, A 11, 1370 a 28–31; *De Mem.*, 1; *Anal. Post.*, B 19, 99 b 36 ff.

[4] *De An.*, 3, 12. Cf. *De Sensu*, 1.

own sake but for practical and prudential purposes. All the powers of the soul, with the exception of νοῦς, are inseparable from the body and perishable: νοῦς, however, pre-exists before the body and is immortal. λείπεται δὲ τὸν νοῦν μόνον θύραθεν ἐπεισιέναι καὶ θεῖον εἶναι μόνον.[1] This νοῦς, however, which enters into the body, requires a potential principle—a *tabula rasa*, on which it may imprint forms; and so we have the distinction between the νοῦς ποιητικός and the νοῦς παθητικός. (Aristotle speaks himself of τὸ ποιοῦν: the phrase νοῦς ποιητικός is first found in Alexander Aphrodisiensis, *c.* A.D. 220). The active intellect abstracts forms from the images or *phantasmata*, which, when received in the passive intellect, are actual concepts. (Aristotle considered that the use of imagery is involved in all thinking.) Only the active intellect is immortal. οὗτος ὁ νοῦς χωριστὸς καὶ ἀπαθὴς καὶ ἀμιγὴς τῇ οὐσίᾳ ὢν ἐνέργεια, ἀεὶ γὰρ τιμιώτερον τὸ ποιοῦν τοῦ πάσχοντος καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς ὕλης . . . καὶ τοῦτο μόνον ἀθάνατον καὶ ἀΐδιον, . . . ὁ δὲ παθητικὸς νοῦς φθαρτός.[2] To this point I shall return in a moment.

11. If we leave out of account the question of the νοῦς ποιητικός, it is clear that Aristotle does not uphold the Platonic dualism in the *De Anima*, for he makes soul to be the entelechy of the body, so that the two form one substance. Altogether Aristotle allows a much closer union between soul and body than did the Platonists: the tendency to look on the body as the tomb of the soul is not that of Aristotle. Rather is it for the good of the soul to be united with the body, since only so can it exercise its faculties. This was the view adopted by the mediaeval Aristotelians, such as St. Thomas, although many great Christian thinkers had spoken and continue to speak, in language very reminiscent of the Platonic tradition—we have only to think of St. Augustine. Aristotle insisted that the Platonic School failed to give any satisfactory explanation of the soul's union with the body. They seem, he says, to suppose that any soul can fit itself into any body. This cannot be true, for every body appears to have a distinct form and character.[3] "A notion like that of Descartes, that the existence of the soul is the first certainty and the existence of matter a later inference, would have struck Aristotle as absurd. The whole self, soul and body alike, is something given and not questioned."[4] Needless to say, if Aristotle would have opposed the Cartesian view, he would also have opposed the

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[1] *De Gen. et Corrupt.*, B 3, 738 b 27 ff.

[2] *De An.*, 3, 5, 430 a 17 ff.

[3] *De An.*, 414 a 19 ff.

[4] Ross, *Aristotle*, p. 132.

position of those who would reduce the whole human soul and all its activities to the condition of an epiphenomenon of the body, making the highest activity of human thought a mere efflorescence of the brain, though the direction of Aristotle's psychology, as it developed, would seem to have been towards a position suspiciously resembling an epiphenomenalist position, especially if one is right in supposing that the active intellect of man was not, in Aristotle's eyes, an individualised principle, which persisted after death as the individual mind of, e.g. Socrates or Callias. The absence of a doctrine of historical organic evolution would, however, naturally preclude Aristotle from accepting epiphenomenalism in the modern sense.

12. The well-worn question arises, "What was Aristotle's precise doctrine as to the Active Intellect?" Aristotle's *precise* doctrine one cannot give: it is a matter of interpretation, and different interpretations have been advanced both in the ancient and in the modern world. What Aristotle says in the *De Anima* is as follows: "This Nous is separable and impassible and unmixed, being essentially an actuality. For the active is always of higher value than the passive, and the originative principle than the matter. Actual knowledge is identical with its object; potential knowledge is prior in time in the individual, but in general it is not temporally prior; but Nous does at one time function and at another not. When it has been separated it is that only which it is in essence, and this alone is immortal and eternal. We do not remember, however, because active reason is impassible, but the passive reason is perishable, and without the active reason nothing thinks."[1]

Of this much-disputed passage various interpretations have been given. Alexander of Aphrodisias (*flor. c.* A.D. 220) identified "reason," i.e. the Active Intellect, with God, being followed in this by Zabarella (end of sixteenth and early seventeenth century A.D.), who would make God's function in the soul to be the illumination of the potentially known, as the sun's light makes what is visible to be actually seen. Now, although, as Sir David Ross points out,[2] it would not be necessarily inconsistent on Aristotle's part to speak of God's immanence in the *De Anima*, while speaking of His transcendence in the *Metaphysics*, while on the other hand it might be possible for the two books to represent divergent views of God, the interpretation of Alexander of Aphrodisias and

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[1] *De An.*, 3, 5, 430 a 17 ff.

[2] *Aristotle*, p. 153.

Zabarella, as Ross allows, is most unlikely. For is it probable that Aristotle, having described God as the Unmoved Mover Whose causal activity is one of attraction—as *Finis*—and as knowing only Himself, should go on, in another book, to depict God as immanent in man in such a way as actually to impart knowledge to him?

If the Active Intellect is not to be identified with God, is it to be regarded as individual and particular in each single man or as an identical principle in all men? Aristotle's words, "We do not remember," when taken together with his assertion[1] that memory and loving and hating perish at death, as belonging to the whole man and not to Reason, which is "impassable," seem to indicate that the Active Intellect in its separate existence has no memory. Although this does not prove with certainty that the Active Intellect of each man is not individual in its state of separation, it does seem to raise a difficulty in accepting such an interpretation. Moreover, when Aristotle asserts that "potential knowledge is prior in time in the individual, but in general it is not temporally prior, but Nous does not at one time function and at another not," he seems to be drawing a distinction between the individual, who at one time knows and at another not, and the Active Intellect, which is an essentially active principle. Perhaps, then, Aristotle regarded the Active Intellect as a principle which is identical in all men, an Intelligence that has above it the hierarchy of the other separate Intelligence, that enters into man and functions within him, and that survives the death of the individual. If this were correct, then the conclusion would necessarily follow that the individualised human soul perishes with the matter it informed.[2] (Yet, even if one is inclined to such an interpretation, one must admit that there is very considerable difficulty in supposing that, in Aristotle's opinion, the active intellect of Plato was numerically the same as that of Socrates. All the same, if he believed in the individual character of the active intellect in each single man, what did he mean when he said that it came "from outside"? Was this simply a relic of Platonism?)

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[1] *De An.*, 408 b 24–30.

[2] St. Thomas Aquinas, in his Commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima* (3, lect. 10), does not interpret Aristotle in the Averroistic sense, i.e. as denying individual immortality. The active intellect is essentially and only an *active* principle: hence it is unaffected by passions and emotions and is not retentive of *species*. The separated human reason cannot, therefore, function as it does in the state of union with the body, and the mode of its functioning after death is not treated by Aristotle in the *De Anima*; but this omission does not mean that Aristotle denied individual immortality or condemned the separated intellect to a state of enforced and absolute inactivity.

CHAPTER XXXI

ARISTOTLE'S ETHICS

1. THE Ethics of Aristotle are frankly teleological. He is concerned with action, not as being right in itself irrespective of every other consideration, but with action as conducive to man's good. What conduces to the attainment of his good or end will be a "right" action on man's part: the action that is opposed to the attainment of his true good will be a "wrong" action.

"Every art and every inquiry, every action and choice, seems to aim at some good; whence the good has rightly been defined as that at which all things aim."[1] But there are different goods, corresponding to different arts or sciences. Thus the doctor's art aims at health, seamanship at a safe voyage, economy at wealth. Moreover, some ends are subordinate to other and more ultimate ends. The end of giving a certain medicine might be to produce sleep, but this immediate end is subordinate to the end of health. Similarly, the making of bits and reins for cavalry horses is the end of a certain craft, but it is subordinate to the wider and more comprehensive end of conducting warlike operations efficiently. These ends, therefore, have further ends or goods in view. But if there is an end which we desire for its own sake and for the sake of which we desire all other subordinate ends or goods, then this ultimate good will be the best good, in fact, *the* good. Aristotle sets himself to discover what this good is and what the science corresponding to it is.

As to the second question, Aristotle asserts that it is political or social science which studies the good for man. The State and the individual have the same good, though this good as found in the State is greater and nobler.[2] (Here we see an echo of the *Republic*, that in the ideal State we see justice writ large.) Ethics, then, are regarded by Aristotle as a branch of political or social science: we might say that he treats first of individual ethical science and secondly of political ethical science, in the *Politics*.

As to the question what is the good of man, Aristotle points out that it cannot be answered with the exactitude with which a mathematical problem can be answered, and that owing to the nature of the subject-matter, for human action is the subject-matter of ethics, and human action cannot be determined with mathematical exactitude.[1] There is also this big difference between mathematics and ethics, that while the former starts from general principles and argues to conclusions, the latter starts with the conclusions. In other words, in ethics we start from the actual moral judgments of man, and by comparing, contrasting and sifting them, we come to the formulation of general principles.[2] This view presupposes that there are natural tendencies implanted in man, the following of which in a general attitude of consistent harmony and proportion, i.e. recognising relative importances and unimportances, is the ethical life for man. This view affords a basis for a natural as opposed to an arbitrary ethic, but considerable difficulties arise as to the theoretical establishment of moral *obligation*, especially in a system such as that of Aristotle, who cannot link up his ethic of human action with the Eternal Law of God, as Christian philosophers of the Middle Ages, who accepted so much from Aristotle, tried to do. However, in spite of such defects, Aristotle's ethic is eminently common-sense for the most part, founded as it is on the moral judgments of the man who was generally looked upon as a good and virtuous man. Aristotle intended his ethic to be a justification and supplementation of the natural judgments of such a man, who is, he says, best qualified to judge in matters of this kind.[3] It may be thought that the taste of the intellectual and professor comes out strongly in his picture of the ideal life, but one can scarcely accuse Aristotle of attempting a purely *a priori* and deductive ethic, or an *Ethica more geometrico demonstrata*. Moreover, although we can discern evidence of contemporary Greek taste in matters of human conduct, e.g. in Aristotle's account of the moral virtues, the philosopher certainly considered himself to be dealing with human nature as such, and to be founding his ethic on the universal characteristics of human nature—in spite of his opinion of the "barbarians." If he were alive to-day and had to answer, e.g. Friedrich Nietzsche, he would no doubt insist on the basic universality and constancy of human nature and the necessity of constant valuations, which are not merely relative but are founded in nature.

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[1] *E.N.*, 1094 a 1-3. [2] *E.N.*, 1094 a 27-b 11. Cf. *M.M.*, 1181 a and b.

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[1] *E.N.*, 1094 b 11–27. Cf. *E.E.*, I, 6.

[2] In the *Eudemian Ethics* Aristotle says that we start with "true but obscure judgments" (1216 b 32 ff.) or "the first confused judgments" (1217 a 18 ff.), and go on to form clear ethical judgments. In other words Aristotle starts with the ordinary moral judgments of men as the basis of argument.

[3] *E.N.*, 1094 b 27 ff.

What do people generally view as the end of life? Happiness, says Aristotle, and he, like a true Greek, accepts this view. But obviously this does not take us very far by itself, for different people understand very different things by happiness. Some people identify it with pleasure, others with wealth, others again with honour, and so on. More than that, the same man may have different estimations of what happiness is at different times. Thus when he is ill he may regard health as happiness, and when he is in want he may regard wealth as happiness. But pleasure is rather an end for slaves than freemen, while honour cannot be the end of life, for it depends on the giver and is not really our own. Honour, moreover, seems to be aimed at assuring us of our virtue (hence, perhaps, the Victorian attachment to "respectability"); so perhaps moral virtue is the end of life. No, says Aristotle, for moral virtue can go with inactivity and misery; and happiness, which is the end of life, that at which all aim, must be an activity and excludes misery.[1]

Now, if happiness is an activity and an activity of man, we must see what activity is peculiar to man. It cannot be the activity of growth or reproduction, nor yet of sensation, since these are shared by other beings below man: it must be the activity of that which is peculiar to man among natural beings, namely, the activity of reason or activity in accordance with reason. This is indeed an activity of virtue—for Aristotle distinguished, besides the moral virtues, the intellectual virtues—but it is not what people ordinarily mean when they say that happiness consists in being virtuous, since they are generally thinking of moral virtues, such as justice, temperance, etc. In any case, happiness, as the ethical end, could not consist simply in virtue as such: it consists rather in activity according to virtue or in virtuous activity, understanding by virtue both the intellectual and the moral virtues. Moreover, says Aristotle, it must, if it really deserves the name of happiness, be manifested over a whole life and not merely for brief periods.[2]

But if happiness is essentially activity in accordance with virtue, Aristotle does not mean by this simply to exclude all the common notions about happiness. For instance, the activity to which virtue is the tendency is necessarily accompanied by pleasure, since pleasure is the natural accompaniment of an unimpeded and free activity. Again, without some external goods a man cannot well exercise that activity—an Aristotelian view to which the Cynics took exception, for the most part at least.[1] The character of happiness as an activity, and an activity peculiar to man, is therefore preserved without at the same time having to sacrifice or exclude pleasure and external prosperity. Once more Aristotle shows the common-sense character of his thought, and that he is not "over-transcendental" or hostile to this earth.

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[1] *E.N.*, A 4 and ff.

[2] *E.N.*, 1100 a 4 ff.; 1101 a 14–20.

This being established, Aristotle goes on to consider, first the general nature of good character and good action, then the leading moral virtues, the virtues of that part of man which can follow the plan laid down by reason, then the virtues of the intellect. At the end of the *Nicomachean Ethics* he considers the ideal life, or the ideal life of activity in accordance with virtue, which life will be the truly happy life for man.

2. As to goodness of character in general, Aristotle says that we start by having a capacity for it, but that it has to be developed by practice. How is it developed? By doing virtuous acts. At first sight this looks like a vicious circle. Aristotle tells us that we become virtuous by doing virtuous acts, but how can we do virtuous acts unless we are already virtuous? Aristotle answers[2] that we begin by doing acts which are objectively virtuous, without having a reflex knowledge of the acts and a deliberate choice of the acts as good, a choice resulting from an habitual disposition. For instance, a child may be told by its parents not to lie. It obeys without realising perhaps the inherent goodness of telling the truth, and without having yet formed a habit of telling the truth; but the acts of truth-telling gradually form the habit, and as the process of education goes on, the child comes to realise that truth-telling is right in itself, and to choose to tell the truth for its own sake, as being the right thing to do. It is then virtuous in this respect. The accusation of the vicious circle is thus answered by the distinction between the acts which *create* the good disposition and the acts which *flow from* the good disposition once it has been created. Virtue itself is a disposition which has been developed out of a capacity by the proper exercise

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[1] Aristotle remarks that the truly happy man must be sufficiently equipped with external goods. He thus rejects extreme Cynicism, but he warns us (cf. *E.E.*, 1214 b 25 f.) not to mistake indispensable conditions of happiness for essential elements of happiness.

[2] *E.N.*, B 1, 1103 a 14–b 26; B 4, 1105 a 17–b 18.

of that capacity. (Further difficulties might arise, of course, concerning the relation between the development of moral valuations and the influence of social environment, suggestion of parents and teachers, etc., but with these Aristotle does not deal.[1])

3. How does virtue stand to vice? It is a common characteristic of all good actions that they have a certain order or proportion, and virtue, in Aristotle's eyes, is a mean between two extremes, the extremes being vices, one being a vice through excess, the other being a vice through defect.[2] Through excess or defect of what? Either in regard to a feeling or in regard to an action. Thus, in regard to the feeling of confidence, the excess of this feeling constitutes rashness—at least when the feeling issues in action, and it is with human actions that ethics are concerned—while the defect is cowardice. The mean, then, will be a mean between rashness on the one hand and cowardice on the other hand: this mean is courage and is the virtue in respect to the feeling of confidence. Again, if we take the action of giving of money, excess in regard to this action is prodigality—and this is a vice—while defect in regard to this action is illiberality. The virtue, liberality, is the mean between the two vices, that of excess and that of defect. Aristotle, therefore, describes or defines moral virtue as "a disposition to choose, consisting essentially in a mean relatively to us determined by a rule, i.e. the rule by which a practically wise man would determine it."[3] Virtue, then, is a disposition, a disposition to choose according to a rule, namely, the rule by which a truly virtuous man possessed of moral insight would choose. Aristotle regarded the possession of practical wisdom, the ability to see what is the right thing to do in the circumstances, as essential to the truly virtuous man, and he attaches much more value to the moral judgments of the enlightened conscience than to any *a priori* and merely theoretical conclusions. This may seem somewhat naïve, but it must be remembered that for Aristotle the prudent man will be the man who sees what is truly good for a man in any set of circumstances: he is not required to enter upon any academic preserve, but to see what truly befits human nature in those circumstances.

When Aristotle speaks of virtue as a mean, he is not thinking of a mean that has to be calculated arithmetically: that is why he says in his definition "relatively to us." We cannot determine what is excess, what mean and what defect by hard-and-fast, mathematical rules: so much depends on the character of the feeling or action in question: in some cases it may be preferable to err on the side of excess rather than on that of defect, while in other cases the reverse may be true. Nor, of course, should the Aristotelian doctrine of the mean be taken as equivalent to an exaltation of mediocrity in the moral life, for as far as excellence is concerned virtue is an extreme: it is in respect of its essence and its definition that it is a mean. One may illustrate this important point by a diagram given in the *Ethics* of Professor Nicolai Hartmann of Berlin,[1] in which the horizontal line at the bottom of the figure represents the ontological dimension, and the vertical line the axiological dimension.

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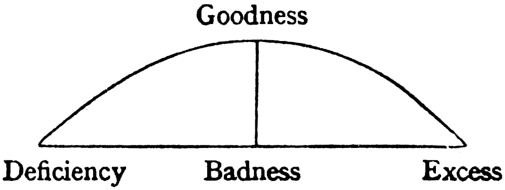
[1] Aristotle thus insists that a completely right action must be not only "externally" the right thing to do in the circumstances, but also done from a right motive, proceeding from a moral agent acting precisely as a moral agent. (Cf. *E.N.*, 1105 b 5 ff.).

[2] *E.N.*, B, 6 ff.

[3] *E.N.*, 1106 b 36–1107 a 2.



This diagram illustrates the important point that virtue (ἀρετή) has a double position. (i) As regards the ontological dimension, it is a mean (μεσότης); as regards the axiological dimension, it is an excellence or extreme (ἀκρότης). It is not as though virtue were a composition of vices from a valuational point of view, since, from this point of view, it stands in opposition to both vices; but it is nevertheless a mean from the ontological viewpoint, since it combines in itself both the good points which, run to excess, constitute vices. For example, courage is not boldness alone, nor is it cool foresight alone, but a synthesis of both—this character of a synthesis preventing courage from degenerating into the daring of the foolhardy man on the one hand or the prudence of the coward on the other hand. "What Aristotle so strongly felt in the lower moral values, without being able to formulate it, was just this, that all valuational elements, taken in isolation, have in them a point beyond which they are dangerous, that they are tyrannical, and that for the true fulfilment of their meaning in their real carrier there is always a counterweight. Because of this profoundly justified feeling, he assigned virtue to no one of these elements but to their synthesis. It is precisely in their synthesis that the danger in values is diminished, their tyranny in consciousness paralysed. In this matter Aristotle's procedure is a model for every further treatment of the problem of contrasts."[1]

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[1] *Ethics*, by Nicolai Hartmann, vol. 2, p. 256. (Trans., Dr. Stanton Coit. George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.)

One must, however, admit that Aristotle's treatment of the virtues betrays the fact that he was under the influence of the predominantly *aesthetic* attitude of the Greek towards human conduct, a fact that appears in a clear light in his treatment of the "great-souled" man. The notion of a crucified God would have been abhorrent to him: it would most probably have seemed in his eyes at once unaesthetic and irrational.

4. A presupposition of moral action is Freedom, since it is only for voluntary actions that a man incurs responsibility, i.e. voluntary in a wide sense. If a man acts under physical external compulsion or in ignorance, he cannot be held responsible. Fear may lessen the voluntary character of an action, but an action such as throwing the cargo overboard in a storm, though not one that a sane man would perform in ordinary circumstances, is yet voluntary, since it springs from the agent himself.[2]

In regard to ignorance Aristotle certainly makes some pertinent observations, as when he points out that while a man who acts in rage or under the influence of drink may be said to act *in* ignorance, he cannot be said to act *from* ignorance, for that ignorance is itself due to rage or drink.[3] However, his assertion that an action done through ignorance is involuntary if it is subsequently regretted by the agent, non-voluntary if not subsequently regretted, can scarcely be accepted, for although the agent's subsequent attitude may reveal his general character, i.e. whether he is on the whole a good or bad man, it cannot serve to differentiate between unwilling and merely involuntary acts.[4]

In regard to the Socratic position that no man acts against knowledge, Aristotle does on occasion show that he is alive to the reality of the moral struggle[5] (he was too good a psychologist to disregard the point), but when he is treating formally of the question, in reference to continence and incontinence,[6] he tends to overlook this and to emphasise the view that the man who does a wrong act does not know at the moment of action that the act is wrong. This may certainly happen sometimes, e.g. in the case of actions done under the stress of passion, but Aristotle does not allow sufficiently for the truth that a man may do deliberately what he knows to be wrong, and, moreover, what he knows to be wrong at the moment that he does it. It might be remarked that, owing to what might be called the strictly human character of Aristotle's ethic, by which "right" is explained in terms of "good," he could answer that even the incontinent man acts *sub ratione boni*. This is true, but all the same the incontinent man may know well enough that the action he performs is morally wrong. In fact, Aristotle, while professedly rejecting the Socratic theory, was none the less dominated by it to a certain extent. He lacked a proper concept of duty, though in this he seems to have been at one with other Greek theorists before the rise of the Stoics, with certain reservations in the case of Plato. An action may be good or contributory to good without thereby being strictly obligatory, a duty, and Aristotle's ethical theory does not account for this distinction.

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[1] Hartmann, *Ethics*, 2, p. 424.

[2] *E.N.*, Γ 1, 1100 a 8–19.

[3] *E.N.*, Γ1, 1110 b 24–7.

[4] *E.N.*, Γ 1110 b 18 ff.

[5] *E.N.*, e.g. 1102 b 14 ff.

[6] *E.N.*, H.

5. Aristotle, like Plato before him, had no really distinct concept of will, but his description or definition of choice as "desireful reason" or "reasonable desire"[1] or as "the deliberate desire of things in our power,"[2] shows that he had some idea of will, for he does not identify preferential choice (προαίρεσις) with either desire by itself or with reason by itself. His description of it would seem to indicate that he regarded it as substantially *sui generis*. (Aristotle does indeed declare that προαίρεσις has to do with means and not with ends, but in his use of the word, both in the *Ethics* itself and also elsewhere, he is not consistent.[3])

Aristotle's analysis of the moral process is as follows. (i) The agent desires an end. (ii) The agent deliberates, seeing that B is the means to A (the end to be obtained), C the means to B, and so on, until (iii) he perceives that some particular means near to the end or remote from it, as the case may be, is something that he can do here and now. (iv) The agent chooses this means that presents itself to him as practicable *hic et nunc*, and (v) does the act in question. Thus a man might desire happiness (in fact, he always does, Aristotle thought). He then sees that health is a means to happiness, and that exercise is a means to health. He then perceives that to go for a walk is something that he can do here and now. He chooses this act and does it, i.e. takes the walk. This analysis may be a very good statement of the way in which we fix on actions in view of an end: the difficulty is to allow for any real moral obligation in Aristotle's system, at least if considered in itself and without any of the supplementary treatment that later philosophers have given it.

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[1] *E.N.*, 1139 b 4–5.

[2] *E.N.*, 1113 a 9–11.

[3] *E.N.*, e.g. 1111 b 26 ff. But cf. e.g. 1144 a 20 ff.

From the doctrine that virtuous activity is voluntary and in accordance with choice, it follows that virtue and vice are in our power, and that Socrates' doctrine is false. True, a man may have formed a bad habit of such strength that he cannot cease to perform the intrinsically bad actions that naturally flow from that habit, but he could have refrained from contracting that habit in the first place. A man may have so blinded his conscience that he fails now to discern the right, but he is himself responsible for his blindness and for bringing about his ignorance. This may be said to be the general thought of Aristotle, though, as we have seen, in his formal treatment of the Socratic position he does not do sufficient justice to moral weakness and to sheer wickedness.

6. Aristotle's treatment of the moral virtues is often enlightening and shows his common-sense moderation and clear judgment. For example, his characterisation of courage as a mean between rashness or foolhardiness and cowardice, seems, when developed, to set the true nature of courage in relief and to distinguish it from forms of pseudo-courage. Similarly, his description of the virtue of temperance as a mean between profligacy and "insensibility," serves to bring out the truth that temperance or self-control in regard to the pleasures of touch does not of itself involve a puritanical attitude towards sense and the pleasures of sense. Again, his insistence that the mean is a mean "relatively to us" and cannot be arithmetically determined, brings out his practical, empirical and common-sense outlook. As he pertinently remarks, "If ten pounds of food are too much for a man and two are too little, the trainer in gymnastics will not order six pounds, for this may be too much or too little for the special case: for a Milo it may be too little, but for one who is beginning to train it may be too much."[1]

It can hardly be denied, however (and who would expect anything else?) that his treatment of the virtues is, to a certain extent, determined by contemporary Greek taste.[1] Thus his view that the "great-souled" and self-respecting man will be ashamed of receiving benefits and so putting himself in the position of an inferior, while on the contrary he will always pay back benefits received with greater ones in order to make his friend his debtor, may be in accordance with Greek taste (or with those of Nietzsche), but will scarcely be acceptable in all quarters. Again, Aristotle's pictures of the "great-souled" man as slow in step, deep in voice and sedate in speech is largely a matter of aesthetic taste.[2]

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[1] *E.N.*, 1106 a 36-b 4.

7. In Book Five of the *Ethics* Aristotle treats of Justice. Under Justice he understands (*a*) what is lawful and (*b*) what is fair and equal. (τὸ μὲν δίκαιον ἄρα τὸ νόμιμον καὶ τὸ ἴσον, τὸ δ' ἄδικον τὸ παράνομον καὶ τὸ ἄνισον (*E.N.*, 1129 a 34)). The first kind of justice, "universal" justice, is practically equivalent to obedience to law, but since Aristotle envisages the law of the State—ideally, at least—as extending over the whole of life and enforcing virtuous actions in the sense of materially virtuous actions (since of course law cannot enforce virtuous actions, formally or subjectively considered), universal justice is more or less coterminous with

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[1] The conception of a man claiming honour from others as a due to his "virtue" and nobility is somewhat repugnant to us, but it was a lineal descendant of the Homeric hero's expectation of honour as due to his ἀρετή.

[2] *E.N.*, 1124 b 9–1125 a 16.

Sir David Ross gives the following tabulation of the moral virtues as treated by Aristotle. (*Aristotle*, p. 203.)

Feeling	*Action*	*Excess*	*Mean*	*Defect*
Fear		Cowardice	Courage	Unnamed
Confidence		Rashness	Courage	Cowardice
Certain pleasures of touch		Profligacy	Temperance	Insensibility
(Pain arising from desire of such pleasures)	Giving of money	Prodigality	Liberality	Illiberality
	Taking of money	Illiberality	Liberality	Prodigality
	Giving of money on large scale	Vulgarity	Magnificence	Meanness
	Claiming of honour on large scale	Vanity	Self-respect	Humility
	Pursuit of honour on small scale	Ambition	Unnamed	Unambition
Anger		Irascibility	Gentleness	Unirascibility
Social Intercourse	Telling truth about oneself	Boastfulness	Truthfulness	Self-depreciation
	Giving of pleasure: By way of amusement	Buffoonery	Wittiness	Boorishness
	in life generally	Obsequiousness	Friendliness	Sulkiness
Shame		Bashfulness	Modesty	Shamelessness
Pains at good or bad fortune of others		Envy	Righteous Indignation	Malevolence

virtue, looked at in its social aspect at any rate. Aristotle, like Plato, is firmly convinced of the positive and educative function of the State. This is diametrically opposed to theories of the State, such as those of Herbert Spencer in England and Schopenhauer in Germany, who rejected the positive functions of the State and confined the functions of law to the defence of personal rights, above all the defence of private property.

"Particular" justice is divided into (*a*) Distributive Justice, whereby the State divides goods among its citizens according to geometrical proportions, i.e. according to merit (as Burnet says, the Greek citizen regarded himself as a shareholder in the State, rather than as a taxpayer), and (*b*) Remedial Justice. This latter is subdivided into two types, (i) that dealing with voluntary transactions (Civil Law), and (ii) that dealing with involuntary transactions (Criminal Law). Remedial Justice proceeds according to arithmetical proportion. Aristotle added to these two main divisions of particular justice Commercial or Commutative Justice.

According to Aristotle, Justice is a mean between acting unjustly and being unjustly treated.[1] But this is hardly acceptable and is obviously asserted merely in order to bring justice into line with the other virtues already discussed. For the business man, for instance, who is just in his dealings, is the man who chooses to give the other fellow his due and to take exactly his own share without further extortion, rather than to give the other man less than his due or to take for himself more than what is owing to him. To give the other fellow more than his share or to accept for himself less than his own due, is scarcely a vice—or even, necessarily, to be unjustly treated. However, Aristotle goes on to say, rather more happily, that justice is not really a mean as the other virtues are, but is a mean in the sense that it produces a state of affairs that stand midway between that in which A has too much and that in which B has too much.[2]

Finally[3] Aristotle draws the very valuable distinction between various types of action that are materially unjust, pointing out that to do an action which results in damage to another, when the damage was not foreseen or intended—and still more if the damage would not ordinarily result from that action—is very different from doing an action which would naturally result in damage to another, particularly if that damage was foreseen and intended. The distinctions drawn afford room for equity as a type of justice superior to legal justice, the latter being too general for application to all particular cases. καὶ ἔστιν αὕτη ἡ φύσις ἡ τοῦ ἐπιεικοῦς, ἐπανόρθωμα νόμου, ᾗ ἐλλείπει διὰ τὸ καθόλου.[1]

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[1] *E.N.*, 1133 b 30–2.

[2] *E.N.*, 1133 b 32 ff.

[3] *E.N.*, E, 8, 1135 a 15–36 a 9. Cf. *Rhet.*, 1374 a 26-b 22.

8. Discussing the intellectual virtues Aristotle divides them according to the two rational faculties, (i) the scientific faculty—τὸ ἐπιστημονικόν, by which we contemplate objects that are necessary and admit of no contingency, and (ii) the calculative faculty—τὸ λογιστικόν, or faculty of opinion, which is concerned with objects that are contingent. The intellectual virtues of the scientific faculty are ἐπιστήμη, "the disposition by virtue of which we demonstrate,"[2] and which has regard to proof, and νοῦς or intuitive reason, whereby we grasp a universal truth after experience of a certain number of particular instances and then see this truth or principle to be self-evident.[3] The union of νοῦς and ἐπιστήμη is theoretical wisdom or σοφία, and it is directed to the highest objects—probably including not only the objects of Metaphysics, but also those of Mathematics and Natural Science. The contemplation of these objects belongs to the ideal life for man. "Wisdom or philosophy may be defined as the combination of intuitive reason and science, or as scientific knowledge of the most precious things, with the crown of perfection, so to speak, upon it." Knowledge is dignified by its object, and Aristotle remarks that it would be absurd to call political science the highest type of knowledge, unless indeed men were the highest of all beings—and that he did not believe.[4] "There are other things in the universe of a nature far more divine than his, as, for example, the starry heavens of which the universe is built. From all of which it is clear that wisdom is a combination of science and the speculative reason, directed to the noblest objects in creation."[5]

The virtues of τὸ λογιστικόν are τέχνη or art, "the disposition by which we make things by the aid of a true rule,"[6] and practical wisdom or φρόνησις, "a true disposition towards action, by the aid of a rule, with regard to things good or bad for men."[7] φρόνησις is subdivided according to the objects with which it is concerned. (i) As concerned with the individual's good, it is φρόνησις in the narrow sense. (ii) As concerned with the family, with household management, it is called Economics (οἰκονομία). (iii) As concerned with the State, it is called Political Science in the wider sense. This latter, Politics in a wide sense, is again subdivided into (*a*) the Architectonic or Legislative faculty, Politics in the narrower sense, and (*b*) the Subordinate or Administrative faculty. The last again subdivides into (α) Deliberative and (β) Judicial. (It is important to note that, in spite of these divisions, it is really the same virtue that is called practical wisdom in connection with the individual and Politics in connection with the good of the State.)

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[1] *E.N.*, 1137 b 26–7. [2] *E.N.*, 1139 b 31–2. [3] *E.N.*, Z, 6, 1140 b 31–1141 a 8.
[4] *E.N.*, 1141 a 9–2. [5] *E.N.*, 1141 a 33–b 3. [6] *E.N.*, 1140 a 9–10, 20–21.
[7] *E.N.*, 1140 b 4–6.

Practical wisdom, says Aristotle, is concerned with the practical syllogism, e.g. A is the end, B is the means, therefore B should be done. (If Aristotle were confronted with the difficulty that this only gives us an hypothetical imperative and not a categorical imperative, he might answer that in ethical matters the end is happiness, and as happiness is an end that all seek and cannot help seeking, that they seek by nature, the imperative that bears on our choice of means to this end is different from the imperatives that bear on the means to some freely-chosen end, and that while the latter are hypothetical, the former is a categorical imperative.) But Aristotle, with his customary good sense, expressly recognises that some people may have knowledge of the right action to do from their experience of life, although they have not got a clear idea of the general principles. Hence it is better to know the conclusion of the practical syllogism, without the major premiss, than to know the major premiss without knowing the conclusion.[1]

In reference to Socrates' view that all virtue is a form of prudence, Aristotle declares that Socrates was partly right and partly wrong. "He was wrong in holding that all virtue is a form of prudence, but right in holding that no virtue can exist without prudence."[2] Socrates held that all the virtues were forms of reason (as being forms of knowledge), but Aristotle declares that the truth is rather that they are all *reasonable*. "Virtue is not only the right and reasonable attitude, but the attitude which leads to right and reasonable choice, and right and reasonable choice in these matters is what we mean by prudence."[3] Prudence, therefore, is necessary for the truly virtuous man, (*a*) as being "the excellence of an essential part of our nature," and (*b*) inasmuch as "there can be no right choice without both prudence and virtue, seeing that the latter secures the choice of the right end, and the former the choice of the right means to its attainment."[1] But prudence or practical wisdom is not the same thing as cleverness (δείνοτης). Cleverness is the faculty by which a man is enabled to find the right means to any particular end, and a rogue may be very clever in discovering the right means to attain his ignoble end. Mere cleverness is, then, different from prudence, which presupposes virtues and is equivalent to moral insight.[2] Prudence cannot exist without cleverness, but it cannot be reduced to cleverness, for it is a moral virtue. In other words, prudence is cleverness as dealing with the means that lead to the attainment, not of any sort of end, but of the true end of man, what is best for man, and it is moral virtue that enables us to choose the right end, so that prudence presupposes moral virtue. Aristotle is quite well aware that it is possible for a man to do what is right, what he ought to do, without being a good man. He is good only if his action proceeds from moral choice and is done because it is good.[3] For this prudence is necessary.

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[1] *E.N.*. 1141 b 14-22. [2] *E.N.*, 1144 b 19-21. [3] *E.N.*, 1144 b 26-8.

Aristotle admits that it is possible to have "natural" virtues in separation from one another (e.g. a child might be naturally courageous, without being at the same time gentle), but in order to have a moral virtue in the full sense, as a reasonable disposition, prudence is necessary. Moreover, "given the single virtues of prudence, all the virtues necessarily follow from it."[4] Socrates was then right in holding that no virtue can exist without prudence, though he was wrong in supposing that all virtues are forms of prudence. In the *Eudemian Ethics*[5] Aristotle remarks that for Socrates all the virtues were forms of knowledge, so that to know what justice is, for example, and to be just would come simultaneously, just as we are geometers from the moment we have learned geometry. In reply Aristotle says that it is necessary to distinguish between theoretical science and productive science. "We do not wish to know what bravery is but to be brave, nor what justice is but to be just." Similarly, he observes in the *Magna Moralia*[6] that "any one who knows the essence of justice is not forthwith just," while in the *Nicomachean Ethics* he compares those who think they will become good by mere theoretical knowledge, to patients who listen attentively to what the doctor says, but carry out none of his orders.[7]

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[1] *E.N.*, 1145 a 2–6.

[2] *E.N.*, 1144 a 23 ff.

[3] *E.N.*, 1144 a 13 ff.

[4] *E.N.*, 1144 b 32–45 a 2.

[5] *E.E.*, 1216 b 3–26.

[6] *M.M.*, 1183 b 15–16.

[7] *E.N.*, 1105 b 12–18.

9. Aristotle refuses to admit that pleasures as such are bad. Pleasure cannot indeed be *the* good, as Eudoxus thought, for pleasure is the natural accompaniment of an unimpeded activity (as a sort of colouring attached to the activity), and it is the activity that should be aimed at, not the accompanying pleasure. We ought to choose certain activities, even if no pleasure resulted from them.[1] Nor is it true to say that all pleasures are desirable, for the activities to which certain pleasures are attached are disgraceful.

But if pleasure is not *the* good, we must not fall into the opposite extreme and say that all pleasure is wrong because some pleasures are disgraceful. As a matter of fact, says Aristotle, we might really say that disgraceful pleasures are not really pleasant, just as what appears white to a man with bad eyes, may not be really white. This observation is perhaps not very convincing: more convincing is Aristotle's remark that the pleasures themselves may be desirable, but not when obtained in such a way: and still more convincing is his suggestion that pleasures differ specifically according to the activities from which they are derived.[2]

Aristotle will not allow that pleasure is simply a replenishment, i.e. that pain represents a falling-short in the natural state, and that pleasure is a replenishment of the deficiency. It is true, indeed, that where there is replenishment there is pleasure, and that where there is exhaustion there is pain, but we cannot say universally of pleasure that it is a replenishment after antecedent pain. "The pleasures of mathematics, among the pleasures of sense those of smell as well as many sights and sounds, lastly, hopes and memories, are instances of pleasure which involve no antecedent pain."[3]

Pleasure, then, is something positive, and its effect is to perfect the exercise of a faculty. Pleasures differ specifically according to the character of the activities to which they are attached, and the good man must be our standard as to what is truly pleasant and unpleasant. (Aristotle remarks on the importance of training children to delight in and dislike the proper things, for which purpose the educator uses pleasure and pain "as a species of rudder."[4]) Some pleasures are pleasant only to those whose nature is corrupt: the true pleasures for man are those that accompany the activities that are proper to man. "All others, like the activities which they accompany, are so only in a partial and secondary sense."[5]

[1] *E.N.*, 1174 a 7–8. [2] *E.N.*, 1173 b 20–31. [3] *E.N.*, 1173 b 16–19. [4] *E.N.*, 1172 a 19–25. [5] *E.N.*, 1176 a 22–9.

In all this discussion of Pleasure, Aristotle's good sense and psychological insight are evident. He may be thought by some to over-emphasise the pleasures of theoretical and purely intellectual activity, but he sedulously avoids all extreme positions, refusing to agree with Eudoxus on the one hand that pleasure is *the* good, or with Speusippus on the other hand that all pleasures are bad.

10. Aristotle devotes Books Eight and Nine of the *Ethics* to the subject of Friendship. Friendship, he says, "is one of the virtues, or at any rate implies virtue. Moreover, it is one of the prime necessities of life."[1] Aristotle tends to give a somewhat self-centred picture of friendship. Thus he emphasises our need for friends at different periods of our life, and suggests that in friendship a man is loving himself—at first hearing a rather egoistic viewpoint. But he attempts the reconciliation of egoism and altruism by pointing out that it is necessary to distinguish the uses of the term "self-loving." Some men seek to get as much as possible for themselves of money, honour or the pleasures of the body, and these we call self-loving by way of reproach: others, i.e. good men, are anxious to excel in virtue and noble actions, and these, though "self-loving," we do not blame as such. The latter type of man "will give away money in order that his friend may have more. For the money goes to the friend, but the noble deed to himself, and in this way he appropriates the greater good. Similarly with regard to honours and offices."[2] The picture of a man relinquishing money or office to his friend in order that he himself may have the noble action to his credit, is not altogether pleasing; but Aristotle is doubtless right in observing that there can be a good type of self-love as well as a bad type. (Indeed we are bound to love ourselves and to make ourselves as good as possible.) A happier thought is Aristotle's saying that a man's relations to his friend are the same as his relations to himself, since the friend is a second self.[3] In other words, the concept of the self is capable of extension and may grow to include friends, whose happiness or misery, success or failure, become as our own. Moreover, incidental observations, such as "friendship consists in loving rather than in being loved,"[4] or that "men wish well to their friends for their sake,"[5] show that his view of friendship was not so egoistic as his words would sometimes lead one to suppose.

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[1] *E.N.*, 1155 a 3–5.
[2] *E.N.*, 1169 a 27–30.
[3] *E.N.*, 1166 a 30–2.
[4] *E.N.*, 1159 a 27–8.
[5] *E.N.*, 1157 b 31–2.

That Aristotle's concept of friendship was a very wide one can be seen from the divisions that he makes between different types of friendship. (i) On the lowest level are friendships of utility, in which men do not love their friends for what they are in themselves, but only for the advantage which they receive from them.[1] Such friendships are necessary to man, since man is not economically self-sufficient. A business friendship would be of this type. (ii) Friendships of pleasure. These are founded on the natural delight that men take in the society of their fellow-men, and are characteristic of the young, for "young people live by feeling, and have a main eye to their own pleasure and to the present moment."[2] But both these types of friendship are unstable, for when the motive of the friendship—utility or pleasure—is gone, the friendship also is destroyed. (iii) Friendships of the good. This type of friendship is perfect friendship and endures as long as both retain their character—"and virtue," says Aristotle, "is a lasting thing."

As we would expect, Aristotle makes not a few observations on the subject of friendship, which, if not profound, are shrewd and to the point, and which are applicable not only to natural friendship, but also to supernatural friendship with Christ Our Lord. For example, he observes that friendship differs from affection in that the latter is a feeling, the former a trained habit of mind,[3] and that "the wish for friendship is of rapid growth, but friendship itself is not."[4]

11. "If happiness is activity in accordance with virtue, it is reasonable that it should be in accordance with the highest virtue, and this will be that of the best thing in us."[5] The faculty, the exercise of which constitutes perfect happiness, is, according to Aristotle, the contemplative faculty, by which he means the faculty of intellectual or philosophic activity, thus showing the intellectualist standpoint which he shared with Plato. The precise relation of moral action to the highest type of human happiness is left obscure, but of course Aristotle makes it quite clear in the *Ethics* that without moral virtue true happiness is impossible.

Aristotle gives several reasons for saying that man's highest happiness consists in τὸ θεωρῆσαι.[6] (i) Reason is the highest faculty of man, and theoretic contemplation is the highest activity of reason. (ii) We can keep up this form of activity longer than any other, e.g. than bodily exercise. (iii) Pleasure is one of the elements of happiness, and "philosophy is admittedly the pleasantest of the activities in which human excellence manifests itself." (The last remark may have seemed a trifle unusual even to Aristotle himself, for he adds, "the pleasures of philosophy at least appear to be wonderfully pure and reliable, nor indeed is it surprising if the life of him who knows is pleasanter than that of the learner.") (iv) The philosopher is more self-sufficient than any other man. He cannot indeed dispense with the necessaries of life any more than others can (and Aristotle considered that the philosopher needs external goods in moderation and friends); but all the same "the thinker is able to pursue his studies in solitude, and the more of a thinker he is, the more capable he is of doing so." The co-operation of others is a great assistance to him, but if it be wanting, the thinker is better able than other men to get along without it. (v) Philosophy is loved for its own sake and not for the sake of any results that accrue from it. In the field of practical activity, it is not the action itself that is desirable, but some result to be attained by means of the activity. Philosophy is no mere means to a further end. (vi) Happiness would seem to imply leisure. Now, "the practical virtues find the field of their exercise in war or politics, which cannot be said to be leisurely employments, least of all war."

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[1] *E.N.*, 1156 a 10–12.

[2] *E.N.*, 1156 a 31–3.

[3] *E.N.*, 1157 b 28–31.

[4] *E.N.*, 1156 b 31–2.

God, says Aristotle, does not need a friend, since "the deity is his own well-being," but we need a friend or friends, since "with us welfare involves a something beyond us." (*E.E.*, 1245 b 14–19.)

[5] *E.N.*, 1177 a 12–13.

[6] *E.N.*, K, 7.

It is in the exercise of reason, then, and in the exercise of that reason concerning the noblest objects, that man's complete happiness is found, provided that it is extended over "a complete term of years." Such a life expresses the divine element in man, but we shall refuse to listen to those who advise us, being human and mortal, to mind things that are human and mortal. On the contrary, as far as possible, we ought to try to put off our mortality and do all we can to live the life to which the highest element in us points. For though it be but a small part of us, yet in power and value it far surpasses all the others. Moreover, it would seem to be the real self in each of us, since it is sovereign over all and better than all. And accordingly it would be strange if we were not to choose the life of our own true selves, but of something other than ourselves.[1]

What objects does Aristotle include among the objects of theoretic contemplation? He certainly includes the invariable objects of metaphysics and mathematics, but does he include the objects of natural science? Probably only so far as they are non-contingent, since the highest activity of man is, as we have already seen, concerned with objects that are not contingent. In the *Metaphysics*[1] Aristotle makes physics a branch of theoretic wisdom, though in another place in the *Metaphysics*[2] he implies that it is also the study of contingent events. Physics therefore can belong to "contemplation" only in so far as it studies the invariable or necessary element in the contingent events that constitute the object of physics.

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[1] *E.N.*, 1177 b 26–1178 a 8.

The highest object of metaphysics is God, but in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle does not expressly include the religious attitude expressed in the definition of the ideal life contained in the *Eudemian Ethics*, namely, "the worship and contemplation of God."[3] Whether Aristotle meant this attitude of religious adoration to be understood in the picture of the ideal life given in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, or had come to lose sight of this earlier religious attitude, we cannot well decide. In any case his treatment of contemplation exercised a great influence on posterity, not least on Christian philosophers, who naturally found it well adapted to their purpose. The intellectualist attitude of Aristotle finds its echo in the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas, that the essence of the Beatific Vision consists in the act of the intellect rather than in the will's act, on the ground that the intellect is the faculty by which we *possess*, the will the faculty by which we enjoy the object already possessed by the intellect.[4]

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[1] *Metaph.*, 1005 b 1–2, 1026 a 18–19.

[2] Cf. e.g. *Metaph.*, 1069 a 30 ff., where Aristotle says that physics has to do not only with eternal objects, but also with perishable sensible objects.

[3] *E.E.*, 1249 b 20. I have already mentioned (when treating of Aristotle's metaphysics) the philosopher's dictum in the *Magna Moralia* (1208 b 26–32) that there can be no question of friendship towards God, since, even if it were possible for us to love Him, He could not return our love.

[4] Cf. e.g. *Summa Theologica*, Ia, q. 26, art. 2.

CHAPTER XXXII

POLITICS

1. THE State (and by State Aristotle is thinking of the Greek City-State), like every other community, exists for an end. In the case of the State this end is the supreme good of man, his moral and intellectual life. The family is the primitive community that exists for the sake of life, for the supply of men's everyday wants,[1] and when several families join together and something more than the mere supply of daily needs is aimed at, the village comes into existence. When, however, several villages are joined together to form a larger community that is "nearly or quite self-sufficing,"[2] there comes into existence the State. The State comes into existence for the bare ends of life, but it continues in existence for the sake of the good life, and Aristotle insists that the State differs from family and village, not merely quantitatively but qualitatively and specifically.[3] It is only in the State that man can live the good life in any full sense, and since the good life is man's natural end, the State must be called a natural society. (The Sophists were therefore wrong in thinking that the State is simply the creation of convention.) "It is evident that the State is a creature of nature, and that man is by nature a political animal. And he who by nature and not by mere accident is without a State, is either above humanity or below it."[4] Man's gift of speech shows clearly that nature destined him for social life, and social life in its specifically complete form is, in Aristotle's view, that of the State. The State is prior to the family and to the individual in the sense that, while the State is a self-sufficing whole, neither the individual nor the family are self-sufficient. "He who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god."[5]

The Platonic-Aristotelian view of the State as exercising the positive function of serving the end of man, the leading of the good life or the acquisition of happiness, and as being *natura prior* (to be distinguished from *tempore prior*) to the individual and the family, has been of great influence in subsequent philosophy.

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[1] *Pol.*, 1252 b 13–14.
[2] *Pol.*, 1252 b 28 ff.
[3] *Pol.*, 1252 a 8–23.
[4] *Pol.*, 1253 a 1–4.
[5] *Pol.*, 1253 a 27–9.

Among Christian mediaeval philosophers it was naturally tempered by the importance they rightly attached to individual and family, and by the fact that they accepted another "perfect society," the Church, whose end is higher than that of the State (also by the fact that the nation-State was comparatively undeveloped in the Middle Ages); but we have only to think of Hegel in Germany and of Bradley and Bosanquet in England, to realise that the Greek conception of the State did not perish along with Greek freedom. Moreover, though it is a conception that can be, and has been, exaggerated (especially where Christian truth has been absent and so unable to act as a corrective to one-sided exaggeration), it is a richer and truer conception of the State than that of, e.g. Herbert Spencer. For the State exists for the temporal well-being of its citizens, i.e. for a positive and not merely for a negative end, and this positive conception of the State can quite well be maintained without contaminating it with the exaggerations of Totalitarian State mysticism. Aristotle's horizon was more or less bounded by the confines of the Greek City-State (in spite of his contacts with Alexander), and he had little idea of nations and empires; but all the same his mind penetrated to the essence and function of the State better than did the *laissez-faire* theorists and the British School from Locke to Spencer.

2. In the *Politics*, as we have it, Aristotle's treatment of the family is practically confined to discussion of the master-slave relationship and to the acquisition of wealth. Slavery (the slave, according to Aristotle, is a living instrument of action, i.e. aid to his master's life) is founded on nature. "From the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule."[1] "It is clear that some men are by nature free, and others slaves, and that for these slavery is both expedient and right."[2] This view may well seem to us monstrous, but it must be remembered that the essence of Aristotle's doctrine is that men differ in intellectual and physical capacities and are thereby fitted for different positions in society. We regret that Aristotle canonised the contemporary institution of slavery, but this canonisation is largely an historical accident. Stripped of its historic and contemporary accidentals, what is censurable in it is not so much the recognition that men differ in ability and in adaptability (the truth of this is too obvious to need elaboration), but the over-rigid

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[1] *Pol.*, 1254 a 23-4.

[2] *Pol.*, 1255 a 1-3.

dichotomy drawn between two types of men and the tendency to regard the "slave-nature" as something almost less than human. However, Aristotle tempered his acceptance and rationalisation of slavery by insisting that the master should not abuse his authority, since the interests of master and slave are the same,[1] and by saying that all slaves should have the hope of emancipation.[2] Moreover, he admitted that the child of a natural slave need not himself be a natural slave, and rejected slavery by right of conquest on the ground that superior power and superior excellence are not equivalent, while on the other hand the war may not be a just war.[3] Nevertheless, regarded in itself, this rationalisation of slavery is regrettable and betrays a limited outlook on the part of the philosopher. In fact, Aristotle rejected the legitimacy of the historical origin of slavery (conquest), and then proceeded to give a philosophic rationalisation and justification of slavery!

3. There are, in general, two distinct modes of acquiring wealth, and an intermediate mode.[4]

(i) The "natural" mode consists in the accumulation of things needed for life by, e.g. grazing, hunting, agriculture. Man's needs set a natural limit to such accumulation.

(ii) The intermediate mode is that of barter. In barter a thing is used apart from its "proper use," but in so far as it is employed for the acquisition of the needs of life, barter may be called a natural mode of acquiring wealth.

(iii) The second, and "unnatural," mode of acquiring wealth is the use of money as a means of exchange for goods. It seems very odd to us that Aristotle should condemn retail trade, but his prejudice is largely determined by the ordinary Greek attitude towards commerce, which was regarded as illiberal and unfit for the free man. Of importance is Aristotle's condemnation of "usury," the breeding of money out of money, as he calls it. "Money was intended to be used in exchange, but not to increase at interest." This, literally taken, would condemn all taking of interest on money, but Aristotle was probably thinking of the practice of money-lenders, or usurers in our sense, who make victims of the needy, credulous and ignorant: though he certainly found a rationalisation of his attitude in his doctrine about the

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[1] *Pol.*, cf. 1255 b 9–15, 1278 b 33–8. (In 1260 b 5–7 Aristotle criticises Plato's notion that masters should not converse with their slaves.)

[2] *Pol.*, 1330 a 32–3.

[3] *Pol.*, 1254 b 32–4, 1255 a 3–28.

[4] *Pol.*, 1256 a ff. (A, 8–11).

"natural" purpose of money. Cows and sheep have a natural increase, as have fruit-trees, but money has no such natural increase: it is meant to be a means of exchange and nothing else. To serve as a means of exchange is its natural purpose, and if it is used to get more wealth merely by a process of lending it, without any exchange of goods for money and without any labour on the part of the lender, then it is being used in an unnatural way. Needless to say, Aristotle did not envisage modern finance. If he were alive to-day, we cannot say how he would react to our financial system, and whether he would reject, modify or find a way round his former views.

4. Aristotle, as one might expect, refused to allow himself to be carried away by Plato's picture of the ideal State. He did not think that such radical changes as Plato proposed were necessary; nor did he think that they would all, if feasible, be desirable. For instance, he rejected the Platonic notion of the crèche for the children of the Guardian-class, on the ground that he who is a child of all is a child of none. Better to be a real cousin than a Platonic son![1] Similarly, he criticised the notion of communism, on the ground that this would lead to disputes, inefficiency, etc. The enjoyment of property is a source of pleasure, and it is of no use for Plato to say that the State would be made happy if the Guardians were deprived of this source of happiness, for happiness is either enjoyed by individuals or it is not enjoyed at all.[2] In general, Plato aimed at excessive unification. Aristotle had no sympathy for the accumulation of wealth as such; but he saw that there is a need, not so much of equalising all property as of training citizens not to desire excessive wealth and, if any are incapable of being trained, then of preventing them acquiring it.

5. The qualifications of citizenship are taken by Aristotle from the practice of the Athenian democracy, which was not the same as the modern democracy with its representative system. In his view all the citizens should take their share in ruling and being ruled by turn,[3] and the minimum of citizen-rights is the right to participate in the Assembly and in the administration of justice. A citizen, therefore, is he ᾧ ἐξουσία ϰοινωνεῖν ἀρχῆς βουλευτιϰῆς ϰαὶ ϰριτιϰῆς.[4]

The fact that Aristotle considered it essential for the citizen to sit in the Assembly and in the Law Courts, led him to exclude

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Pol., 1262 a 13–14.

[2] Pol., 1264 b 15–23.

[3] *Pol.*, cf. 1277 b.

[4] *Pol.*, 1275 b 18–19.

the class of mechanics and artisans from the citizenship, for they had not got the necessary leisure. Another reason is that manual toil deliberalises the soul and makes it unfit for true virtue.[1]

6. Discussing various types of Constitution Aristotle divides governments into those which aim at the common interest and those which aim at their own private interest.[2] Each of these broad divisions has three subdivisions, so that there are three good types of Constitution and three wrong or deviation-types of Constitution. To the right form Kingship corresponds the deviation-form Tyranny, to Aristocracy Oligarchy, and to Polity Democracy, and in his treatment of the comparative merits of the various Constitutions appears Aristotle's political sense. For him the ideal is that one man should so transcend all the other citizens individually and in the mass in respect of excellence that he would be the natural monarch and ruler. But in point of fact the perfect man does not appear, and, in general, pre-eminent heroes are found only among primitive peoples. This being so, aristocracy, i.e. the rule of many good men, is better than monarchy. Aristocracy is the best form of government for a body of people who can be ruled as freemen by men whose excellence makes them capable of political command. However, Aristotle recognises that even Aristocracy is perhaps too high an ideal for the contemporary State, and so he advocates "Polity," in which "there naturally exists a warlike multitude able to obey and to rule in turn by a law which gives office to the well-to-do according to their desert."[3] This is practically equivalent to rule by the middle-class, and is more or less a half-way house between Oligarchy and Democracy, since in a Polity it is indeed a multitude that rules—in distinction from Oligarchy—yet it is not a propertyless mob, as in Democracy, for ability to serve as a warrior, i.e. as a heavily-armed hoplite, presupposes a certain amount of property. Aristotle is probably thinking—though he does not refer to it—of the Constitution at Athens in 411 B.C., when power rested with the Five Thousand who possessed heavy armour and the system of payment for attendance at meetings had been abolished. This was the Constitution of Theramenes.[4] Aristotle admired this type of Constitution, but his contention that the middle-class is the most stable, since both rich and poor are more likely to trust the middle-class than one another (so that the middle-class need

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[1] *Pol.*, cf. 1277 a 33–1278 a 15, 1328 b 33–1329 a 21.

[2] *Pol.*, 1279 a 17–21.

[3] *Pol.*, 1288 a 12–15.

[4] Cf. *Athen. Polit.*, 28 and 33.

fear no coalition against it) may not sound so convincing to us as it did to him, though there is doubtless some truth in the view.[1]

7. Aristotle treats acutely of the various kinds and degrees of revolution which tend to occur under different Constitutions, of their causes and the means of preventing them; and, owing to his great historical knowledge, he was able to give apt historical illustrations of the points he wished to make.[2] He points out, for instance, that the revolutionary state of mind is largely brought about by one-sided notions of justice—democrats thinking that men who are equally free should be equal in everything, oligarchs thinking that because men are unequal in wealth they should be unequal in everything. He emphasises the fact that rulers should have no opportunity of making money for themselves out of the offices they hold, and stresses the requisites for high office in the State, namely, loyalty to the Constitution, capacity for administrative work and integrity of character. Whatever be the type of Constitution, it must be careful not to go to extremes; for if either democracy or oligarchy is pushed to extremes the ensuing rise of malcontent parties will be sure to lead in the end to revolution.

8. In Books Seven and Eight of the *Politics* Aristotle discusses his positive views of what a State should be.

(i) The State must be large enough to be self-sufficing (of course Aristotle's notion of what a self-sufficing community actually is would be altogether inadequate for modern times), but not so large that order and good government are rendered impracticable. In other words, it must be large enough to fulfil the end of the State and not so large that it can no longer do so. The number of citizens requisite for this purpose cannot of course be arithmetically determined *a priori*.[3]

(ii) Similarly with the territorial extent of the State. This should not be so small that a leisured life is impossible (i.e. that culture is impracticable) nor yet so large that luxury is encouraged. The city should not aim at mere wealth, but at importing her needs and exporting her surplus.[4]

(iii) Citizens. Agricultural labourers and artisans are necessary, but they will not enjoy citizen rights. Only the third class, that of the warriors, will be citizens in the full sense. These will be warriors in youth, rulers or magistrates in middle-age and priests in old age. Each citizen will possess a plot of land near the city and another near the frontier (so that all may have an interest in the defence of the State). This land will be worked by the non-citizen labourers.[1]

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[1] *Pol.*, 1295 b 1–1296 a 21.

[2] *Pol.*, Bk. 5.

[3] Pol., 1325 b 33–1326 b 24.

[4] *Pol.*, 1326 b 25–1327 b 18.

(iv) Education. Aristotle, like Plato, attached great importance to education and, again like Plato, he considered it to be the work of the State. Education must begin with the body, since the body and its appetites develop earlier than the soul and its faculties; but the body is to be trained for the sake of the soul and the appetites for the sake of the reason. Education is therefore, first and foremost, a moral education—the more so because the citizen will never have to earn his living by work as husbandman or artisan, but will be trained to be, first a good soldier, and then a good ruler and magistrate.[2] This emphasis on moral education shows itself in Aristotle's views concerning pre-natal care and the games of the children. The Directors of Education will take all these matters very seriously, and will not consider the games of the children and the stories that are told them as things too insignificant for them to attend to. (In regard to musical education Aristotle makes the amusing remark, that "The rattle is a toy suited to the infant mind, and musical education is a rattle or toy for children of a larger growth."[3])

As the *Politics* is unfortunately incomplete—the sections dealing with education in science and philosophy being missing—we cannot say what precise directions Aristotle would have given in regard to the higher education of the citizens. One thing, however, is obvious, that both Plato and Aristotle had a lofty and noble conception of education and of the ideal of the citizen. They would have but scant sympathy with any scheme of education that laid the emphasis on technical and utilitarian training, since such a scheme leaves the higher faculties of the soul untended and so fails to fit man to attain his proper end, which is the purpose of education. For although it may sometimes look as though Aristotle wanted to educate men merely to be cogs in the State machine, this is really not the case: in his eyes the end of the State and the end of the individual coincide, not in the sense that the individual should be entirely absorbed in the State but in the sense that the State will prosper when the individual citizens are good, when they attain their own proper end. The only real guarantee of the stability and prosperity of the State is the moral goodness and integrity of the citizens, while conversely unless the State is good and the system of its education is rational, moral and healthy, the citizens will not become good. The individual attains his proper development and perfection through his concrete life, which is a life in Society, i.e. in the State, while Society attains its proper end through the perfection of its members. That Aristotle did not consider the State to be a great Leviathan beyond good and evil is clear from the criticism he passes on the Lacedaemonians. It is a great mistake, he says, to suppose that war and domination are the be-all and end-all of the State. The State exists for the good life, and it is subject to the same code of morality as the individual. As he puts it, "the same things are best for individuals and states."[1] Reason and history both show that the legislator should direct all his military and other measures to the establishment of peace. Military States are safe only in wartime: once they have acquired their empire, they rust away like iron and fall. Both Plato and Aristotle, in their preoccupation with the fostering of a truly cultural political life, set their faces against imperialist dreams of military aggrandisement.

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[1] *Pol.*, 1328 b 2–1331 b 23. [2] *Pol.*, 1332 b–1333 a 16. [3] *Pol.*, 1340 b 29–31.

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[1] *Pol.*, 1333 b 37.

CHAPTER XXXIII

AESTHETICS OF ARISTOTLE

1. *Beauty*

1. ARISTOTLE distinguishes the beautiful from the merely pleasant. For example, in the *Problemata*[1] he contrasts sexual preference with aesthetic selection, thus distinguishing real objective beauty from "beauty" that has reference only to desire. Again in the *Metaphysics*[2] he says that the mathematical sciences are not unrelated to the beautiful. The beautiful, therefore, for him cannot be the merely pleasant, that which pleasantly stimulates the senses.

2. Does Aristotle distinguish beauty from the good? He would seem not to have been very clear on this point.

(*a*) In the *Rhetoric*[3] he states that "the beautiful is that good which is pleasant because it is good," a definition which would not seem to admit of any real distinction between the beautiful and the moral. (Professor W. Rhys Roberts translates τὸ καλόν as Noble, cf. *Oxford Trans.*, Vol. XI.)

(*b*) In the *Metaphysics*, however, he expressly states that "the good and the beautiful are different (for the former always implies conduct as its subject, while the beautiful is found also in motionless things)."[4] This statement seems to differentiate between the beautiful and the moral at least, and may be taken to imply that the beautiful as such is not simply the object of desire. This should allow of a doctrine of aesthetic contemplation and of the *disinterested* character of such contemplation—as stated by e.g. Kant and Schopenhauer.

3. A further definition or description—and a more satisfactory one—is found in the *Metaphysics*[5] where Aristotle says that "the chief forms of beauty are order and symmetry and definiteness." It is the possession of these three properties that confers on mathematics a certain diagnostic value in regard to beautiful objects. (Aristotle seems to have been conscious of his obscurity, for he goes on to promise a more intelligible treatment, though, if the promise was ever fulfilled, its fulfilment is not extant.)

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[1] 896 b 10–28. [2] 1078 a 31–b 6. [3] 1366 a 33–6. [4] 1078 a 31–2. [5] 1078 a 36–b 1.

Similarly in the *Poetics*[1] Aristotle says that "beauty is a matter of size and order" or consists in size and order. Thus he declares that a living creature, in order to be beautiful, must present a certain order in its arrangement of parts and also possess a certain definite magnitude, neither too great nor too small. This would tally more or less with the definition in the *Metaphysics* and would imply that the beautiful is the object of contemplation and not of desire.

4. It is interesting to note that Aristotle in the *Poetics*[2] makes the subject-matter of Comedy to be the ridiculous, "which is a species of the ugly." (The ridiculous is "a mistake or deformity not productive of pain or harm to others.") This would imply that the ugly may be employed in a work of art, subordinated to the total effect. Aristotle does not, however, treat expressly of the relation of the ugly to the beautiful nor of the question, how far the "ugly" may become a constitutive element of the beautiful.[3]

II. *Fine Art in General*

1. Morality aims at conduct itself (πράττειν), Art at producing something, not at activity itself. But Art in general (τέχνη) must be subdivided[4] into:

(*a*) Art that aims at completing the work of nature, e.g. producing tools, since nature has provided man only with his hands.

(*b*) Art that aims at *imitating* nature. This is Fine Art, the essence of which Aristotle, like Plato, finds in imitation. In other words, in art an imaginary world is created which is an imitation of the real world.

2. But "imitation" has not, for Aristotle, the rather contemptuous colouring that it has for Plato. Not believing in Transcendental Concepts, Aristotle would naturally not make art a copy of a copy, at the third remove from truth. In fact, Aristotle inclines to the opinion that the artist goes rather to the ideal or the universal element in things, translating it into the medium of whatever art is in question. He says[5] that Tragedy makes its personages better, Comedy worse, than the "men of the present

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[1] 1450 b 40–1.

[2] 1449 a 32–4.

[3] Cf. "Beautiful art shows its superiority in this, that it describes as beautiful things which may be in nature ugly or displeasing." Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, I. 1, 48.

[4] *Physics*, B 8, 199 a 15 ff.

[5] *Poetics*, 1448 a 16–18.

day." According to Aristotle, Homer's personages are better than we are. (Homer, it will be remembered, came in for some very hard knocks at the hands of Plato.)

3. Imitation, Aristotle insists, is natural to man, and it is also natural for man to delight in works of imitation. He points out that we may delight to view artistic representations of what is, in reality, painful to us to see.[1] (Cf. Kant, in passage already quoted in footnote.) But the explanation of this fact he seems to find in the purely intellectual pleasure of recognising that this man in the picture, for example, is someone we know, e.g. Socrates. This pleasure in recognition is no doubt a fact, but it hardly goes far towards constructing a theory of art: in fact, it is really irrelevant.

4. Aristotle expressly states that poetry "is something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars."[2] He goes on to explain that by a singular statement he means what e.g. Alcibiades did or had done to him, and by an universal statement "what such or such a kind of man will probably or necessarily say or do." The poet's function is, therefore, "to describe, not the thing that has happened, but a kind of thing that might happen, i.e. what is possible as being probable or necessary." It is in this that Aristotle finds the distinction between poet and historian, not in the one writing verse and the other prose. As he remarks: "you might put the work of Herodotus into verse, and it would still be a species of history."

On this theory, then, the artist deals rather with *types*, which are akin to the universal and ideal. An historian might write the life of Napoleon, telling what the historic figure Napoleon said and did and suffered: the poet, however, though he called the hero of his epic Napoleon, would rather portray universal truth or "probability." Adherence to historic fact is of minor importance in poetry. The poet may indeed take a subject from real history, but if what he describes is in—to use Aristotle's words—"the probable and possible order of things," he is none the less a poet. Aristotle even says that it is much better for the poet to describe what is probable but impossible than what is possible but improbable. This is simply a way of emphasising the universal character of poetry.

5. It is to be noted that Aristotle says that the statements of

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[1] *Poetics*, 1448 b 10–19.

[2] *Poetics*, 1451 b 5–8.

poetry are of the nature *rather* of universals. In other words, poetry is not concerned with the abstract universal: poetry is not philosophy. Aristotle accordingly censures didactic poetry, for to give a system of philosophy in verse is to write versified philosophy; it is not to produce poetry.

6. In the *Poetics* Aristotle confines himself to a consideration of Epic, Tragedy and Comedy, particularly Tragedy: painting and sculpture and music are only mentioned incidentally, as when he tells us[1] that the painter Polygnotus portrayed personages "better than we are," Pauson worse, and Dionysius "just like ourselves." But what he does have to say on the subject of the other arts is important for his theory of imitation.

Thus *Music* (which is treated more or less as an accompaniment to the drama) was declared by Aristotle to be the most imitative of all the arts. Pictorial art only indicates mental or moral moods through external factors such as gesture or complexion, whereas musical tunes contain *in themselves* imitations of moral moods. And in the *Problemata*[2] he asks, "Why does what is heard alone of the objects of sense possess emotional import?" Aristotle would seem to be thinking of the direct stimulative effect of music which, though a fact, is hardly an aesthetic fact; yet the theory that music is the most imitative of the arts would none the less seem to extend the concept of imitation so far as to include *symbolism*, and to open the way to the romantic conception of music as a direct embodiment of spiritual emotion. (In the *Poetics* Aristotle remarks that "rhythm alone, without harmony, is the means in the dancer's imitations; for even he, by the rhythms of his attitudes, may represent men's characters, as well as what they do and suffer."[3])

7. In the *Politics*[4] Aristotle observes that drawing is useful in the education of the young, to acquire a "more correct judgment of the works of artists," and he argues also[5] that "music has a power of forming the character, and should therefore be introduced into the education of the young." It might seem, then, that Aristotle's interest in Fine Art is mainly educational and moral; but, as Bosanquet remarks, "to introduce aesthetic interest into education is not the same as to introduce educational interest into aesthetic."[6] Aristotle certainly regarded both music and the drama as having as one of their functions that of moral

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[1] 1448 a 5-6.
[2] 919 b 26.
[3] 1447 a 26-8.
[4] 1338 a 17-19.
[5] 1340 b 10-13.
[6] *A History of Aesthetic*, p. 63.

education; but it does not necessarily follow that a person who recognises this function thereby makes the moral effect of an art a characteristic of its essence.

But though Aristotle dwells on the educational and moral aspect of art, that does not mean that he was blind to its recreative nature or effect.[1] If by allowing to music and the drama a recreative function he had referred merely to sense-pleasure or a tickling of the fancy, this would have been irrelevant to aesthetic; but higher recreation might well mean something more.

III. *Tragedy*

1. Aristotle's famous definition of tragedy is as follows:[2] "A tragedy—is the imitation of an action that is serious (σπουδαίας) and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself; in language with pleasurable accessories, each kind brought in separately in the parts of the work; in a dramatic, not in a narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis (κάθαρσις) of such emotions."

I may add in explanation one or two points:

(i) "Serious," "noble," "good," indicate the character of the content of tragedy. This it shares with Epic poetry, and by it both are distinguished from Comedy and Satire, which deal with the inferior or ugly or ridiculous.

(ii) "Complete in itself," i.e. having beginning, middle and—being an organic whole. This *unity of plot* or organic unity of structure is the only unity strictly demanded by Aristotle.

In the *Poetics*[3] Aristotle does indeed observe that tragedy, in distinction from epic poetry, "endeavours to keep as far as possible within a single circuit of the sun or something near that"; but this is simply a statement of fact and he does not expressly state a demand for Unity of Time. As for Unity of Place, it is not mentioned. It is incorrect, therefore, to say that Aristotle demanded the three Unities in drama.

(iii) "Language with pleasurable accessories." Aristotle tells us himself that he means "with rhythm and harmony or song superadded."

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[1] Aristotle certainly regarded the giving of enjoyment as one of the functions of tragedy. The question is, how far was this enjoyment specifically aesthetic in character?

[2] *Poetics*, 1449 b 25–9.

[3] 1449 b 12–14.

(iv) "Each kind brought in separately," i.e. "some portions are worked out with verse only, and others in turn with song." Aristotle is naturally thinking of Greek tragedy with its alternations of spoken verse and choral songs.

(v) "In a dramatic, not in a narrative form." This distinguishes tragedy from epic poetry.

(vi) Catharsis. This states the psychological end or aim of tragedy, and I shall return to it presently.

2. Aristotle enumerates six formative elements of tragedy . . . fable or plot, characters, diction, thought, spectacle and melody.[1]

(i) The most important of these elements, in Aristotle's opinion, is the Plot, which is "the end and purpose of the tragedy." It is more important than Character, for "in a play—they do not act in order to portray the characters; they include the characters for the sake of action." Aristotle gives his reason for this somewhat strangely sounding dictum. "Tragedy is essentially an imitation not of persons but of action and life, of happiness and misery. All human happiness or misery takes the form of action; the end for which we live is a certain kind of activity, not a quality. Character gives us qualities, but it is in our actions—what we do—that we are happy or the reverse—a tragedy is impossible without action, but there may be one without Character."[2] (It is true perhaps that we can enjoy a good story in which the character-drawing is defective better than one in which the character-drawing is good but the plot is ridiculous.)

(ii) Aristotle, however, does not mean to belittle the importance of character-delineation in the drama: he admits that a tragedy without it is a defective tragedy and esteems it the most important element after the Plot.

(iii) "Thirdly comes the element of Thought, i.e. the power of saying whatever can be said, or what is appropriate to the occasion." Aristotle is thinking here, not of speech as revealing character directly but of speech "on a purely indifferent subject," i.e. Thought shown "in all they say when proving or disproving some particular point, or enunciating some universal proposition." Euripides certainly used tragedy as an opportunity for discussions on various topics; but we may well feel that the drama is scarcely the place for Socratic disquisitions.

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[1] *Poetics*, 1450 a 4–16.

[2] *Poetics*, 1450 a 17–26.

(iv) Diction, i.e. the verse and prose. This is important, but, as Aristotle wisely remarks, "one may string together a series of characteristic speeches of the utmost finish as regards Diction and Thought, and yet fail to produce the true tragic effect."

(v) Melody is "the greatest of the pleasurable accessories of Tragedy."

(vi) The Spectacle is indeed an attraction; but it is "the least of all the parts, and has least to do with the art of poetry." The getting-up of the ***mise en scène*** is "more a matter for the costumier than for the poet." It is a pity that Aristotle's words on this matter have not been heeded in later times. Elaborate scenery and spectacular effect are poor substitutes for plot and character-drawing.

3. Aristotle demands, as we have seen, unity of plot, in the sense of organic, structural unity. The plot must be neither so vast that it cannot be taken in at once by the memory nor so short that it is small and insignificant. But he points out that unity of plot "does not consist, as some suppose, in its having one man as its subject," nor in describing everything that happens to the hero. The ideal is that the several incidents of the plot should be so connected "that the transposal or withdrawal of any one of them will disjoin and dislocate the whole. For that which makes no perceptible difference by its presence or absence is no real part of the whole." The incidents must follow one another, not "episodically" but with probability or necessity. As Aristotle observes, "there is a great difference between a thing happening *propter hoc* and *post hoc*" (διὰ τάδε ἢ μετὰ τάδε).

4. Aristotle thought of Tragedy (complex, at least) as involving Peripety or Discovery, or both: (i) Περιπέτεια is the change from one state of things to the opposite, e.g. when the Messenger reveals the secret of Oedipus' birth, the whole state of affairs is changed within the play, for Oedipus realises that he has, unwittingly committed incest, (ii) Αναγνώρισις is "a change from ignorance to knowledge, and thus to either love or hate, in the personages marked for good or evil fortune."[1] In the case of Oedipus the Discovery is of course attended by Peripety, and this is, according to Aristotle, the finest form of Discovery.

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[1] *Poetics*, 1451 b 32–5.

Thus is attained the tragic effect, the arousing of pity and fear.

5. Since tragedy is an imitation of actions arousing pity and fear, there are three forms of plot that must be avoided:

(i) A good man must not be seen passing from happiness to misery, as this is, in Aristotle's opinion, simply odious and will distract our minds by such disgust and horror that the tragic effect will not be realised.

(ii) A bad man must not be seen passing from misery to happiness. This is quite "untragic," appealing neither to our pity nor to our fear.

(iii) An extremely bad man must not be seen falling from happiness to misery. This may arouse human feeling but neither pity nor fear, for pity is occasioned by undeserved misfortune and fear by the misfortune of one like ourselves.

It remains, then, that tragedy should portray an "intermediate" type of person passing through misfortune, brought about by some error of judgment and not by vice or depravity. Aristotle accordingly refuses to agree with critics who censured Euripides for giving an unhappy ending to many of his plays, for this is the proper thing for tragedy, though not for Comedy. (Though there were occasional comic interludes in Greek tragedies, the tendency was to have unmixed tragedy or unmixed comedy, and Aristotle's views rather reflect this tendency.)

6. Tragic pity and fear should be aroused by the plot itself, and not by extraneous elements, e.g. by the portrayal of a brutal murder on the stage. (Aristotle would of course thoroughly approve of the way in which the murder of Agamemnon took place behind the scenes. Presumably he would censure the murder of Desdemona on the stage.)

7. We come now to the consideration of the psychological aim of tragedy, the arousing of pity and fear for the κάθαρσις of these emotions. The exact meaning to be attached to this famous doctrine of the κάθαρσις has been a subject of constant discussion: as Professor Ross says, "a whole library has been written on this famous doctrine."[1] The solution of the difficulty is rendered all the harder by the fact that the second book of the *Poetics* is missing—in which, it is conjectured, Aristotle explained what he meant by *catharsis* (and probably also treated of Comedy).

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[1] Ross, *Aristotle*, p. 282. On this subject see e.g. *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, by S. H. Butcher (Macmillan); *Aristotle on the Art of Poetry*, by Ingram Bywater (Oxford).

Two main lines of explanation have been defended. (i) The catharsis in question is a *purification* of the emotions of pity and fear, the metaphor being drawn from ceremonial purification (the view of Lessing); (ii) the catharsis is a *temporary elimination* of the emotions of pity and fear, the metaphor being drawn from medicine (the view of Bernays). This latter view is the one that is most acceptable, i.e. from the exegetic standpoint, and now generally holds the field. According to this view the proximate object of tragedy, in Aristotle's eyes, is to arouse the emotions of pity and fear, i.e. pity for the past and actual sufferings of the hero, fear for those which loom before him. The ulterior object of tragedy then would be to relieve or purge the soul of these emotions through the harmless and pleasurable outlet afforded by the medium of art. The implication is that these emotions are undesirable, or rather that they are undesirable when in excess, but that all men, or at any rate most men, are subject to them, some in an excessive degree, so that it is a healthy and beneficial practice for all—necessary in the case of some—to give them a periodic opportunity of excitation and outlet through the medium of art, the process being at the same time a pleasurable one. This would be Aristotle's answer to Plato's criticism of tragedy in the *Republic*: tragedy has not a demoralising effect but is a harmless pleasure. How far Aristotle recognised an intellectual element in this recreation, is a question we cannot answer with only a truncated *Poetics* before us.

That Aristotle had in mind a purgative effect and not a moral purificative effect seems to be borne out by the *Politics*.

(i) According to Aristotle the flute has an exciting, and not an ethical effect, and should be left to professionals and kept for times when the hearing of music is a κάθαρσις rather than a form of education.[1] The inference is that catharsis is connected, not with ethical effect but with emotional effect.

(ii) Aristotle admits the "enthusiastic" harmonies in a well-ordered State, because they restore those who are subject to fits of enthusiasm to the normal condition. He then goes on to enumerate three purposes for which music should be studied: (*a*) "education," (*b*) "purification" ("the word 'purification' we use at present without explanation, but when hereafter we speak of poetry, we will treat the subject

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[1] *Pol.*, 1341 a 17 ff.

> with more precision"), (*c*) "for intellectual enjoyment, for relaxation and for recreation after exertion." From this enumeration alone one might suppose, applying what is said to tragedy, that the tragic effect might be ethical and purgative at the same time. But Aristotle proceeds to make a distinction. "In education ethical melodies are to be performed, but we may listen to the melodies of action and passion when they are performed by others. For feelings such as pity and fear, or again, enthusiasm, exist very strongly in some souls, and have more or less influence over all. Some persons fall into a religious frenzy whom we see disenthralled by the use of mystic melodies, which bring healing and purification to the soul. Those who are influenced by pity or fear and every emotional nature have a like experience, others in their degree are stirred by something which specially affects them, and all are in a manner purified and their souls lightened and delighted. The melodies of purification likewise give an innocent pleasure to mankind."[1] From this it would appear that the catharsis of pity and fear, though an "innocent pleasure," is not looked upon by Aristotle as ethical in character; and if it is not ethical in character, then "purification" should not be interpreted as purification in an ethical sense, but in a non-ethical sense, i.e. as a metaphor from medicine.

This interpretation is not acceptable to all. Thus Professor Stace declares that "The theory of certain scholars, based upon etymological grounds, that it means that the soul is purged, not *through*, but *of* pity and terror, that by means of a diarrhoea of these unpleasant emotions we get rid of them and are left happy, is the thought of men whose scholarship may be great, but whose understanding of art is limited. Such a theory would reduce Aristotle's great and illuminating criticism to the meaningless babble of a philistine."[2] The question, however, is not what is the *right* view of tragedy, but what was *Aristotle's* view. In any case, even the upholders of the "diarrhoea" theory could agree with Stace's own interpretation of Aristotle's meaning ("the representation of truly great and tragic sufferings arouses in the beholder pity and terror which purge his spirit, and render it serene and pure"), provided that "pure" is not understood as the term of an educational process.

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[1] *Pol.*, 1342 a 1–16.

[2] *Crit. Hist.*, p. 331.

IV. *Origins of Tragedy and Comedy*

1. According to Aristotle,[1] tragedy began with "improvisation" on the part of the leader of the Dithyramb, no doubt between the two halves of the chorus. In origin, therefore, it would be connected with the worship of Dionysus, just as the renaissance of the drama in Europe was connected with the mediaeval mystery plays.

2. Comedy began in a parallel manner, from the phallic songs, "which still survive as institutions in many of our cities." He thought no doubt of the leader coming to improvise some scurrilous piece.

3. The most significant thing in the development of the drama is for Aristotle the increasing importance of the actor. Aeschylus first increased the number of actors to two, curtailing the business of the Chorus. Sophocles added a third actor and scenery.

4. When spoken parts were introduced, the iambic metre was brought in as "the most speakable of metres." ("The reason for their original use of the trochaic tetrameter was that their poetry was satyric and more connected with dancing than it now is.")

Discussion of the highly problematic question of the origins of tragedy and comedy scarcely belongs to the history of philosophy; so I will content myself with the foregoing brief indication of the view of Aristotle, which bristles with difficulties (i) as to interpretation, (ii) as to its correctness.

Note on the Older Peripatetics

The old Academy continued the mathematical speculation of Plato: the older Peripatetics continued Aristotle's empirical trend, while adhering closely to the general philosophical position of their Master, though they made slight modifications and developments, e.g. in the field of logic. Thus both Theophrastus and Eudemus of Rhodes adhered pretty faithfully to the metaphysical and ethical tenets of Aristotle, this being especially true of Eudemus who was termed by Simplicius the γνησιώτατος of Aristotle's disciples.[2] Theophrastus ardently defended the Aristotelian doctrine of the eternity of the world against Zeno the Stoic.

Theophrastus of Eresus in Lesbos succeeded Aristotle as head of the Peripatetic School in 322/1 and continued in that office until his death in 288/7 or 287/6.[3] He is chiefly remarkable for his continuation of Aristotle's work in the field of empirical science. Applying himself particularly to Botany, he left works on that subject which made him the botanical authority up to the end of the Middle Ages, while through his zoological studies he seemed to have grasped the fact that changes of colour in the animal world are partly due to "adaptation to environment." A scholar of wide interests, like Aristotle himself, Theophrastus also composed a history of philosophy (the famous φυσικῶν δόξαι) and works on the history and nature of religion, Περὶ θεῶν, Περὶ εὐσεβείας and Περὶ τὸ θεῖον ἱστορία.. Of these works only part of the history of philosophy has come down to us, while Porphyry has preserved some of the Περὶ εὐσεβείας.[1] Believing that all living beings are akin, Theophrastus rejected animal-sacrifices and the eating of flesh-meat and declared that *all* men are related to one another and not merely the fellow-members of a nation. One may also mention his celebrated work, the *Characters*, a study of thirty types of character.

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[1] *Poetics*, 1449 a 9–30.

[2] Simplic. *Phys.*, 411, 14.

[3] Diog. Laërt., 5, 36.

Aristoxenus of Tarentum brought with him into the Peripatetic School certain of the later Pythagorean theories, e.g. the doctrine that the soul is the harmony of the body, a doctrine that led Aristoxenus to deny the soul's immortality.[2] He thus championed the view suggested by Simmias in the *Phaedo* of Plato. But he followed in the footsteps of Aristotle by his empirical work on the nature and history of music.

Aristoxenus' theory of the soul was shared by Dicaearchus of Messene,[3] who composed a βίος Ἑλλάδος, in which he traced the civilisation of Greece through the stages of primitive savagery, nomadic life and agriculture. He differed from Aristotle in that he accorded the practical life the preference over the theoretical.[4] In his Τριπολιτικός he declared that the best constitution is a mixture of the three types of government, monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, and considered that this type of mixed constitution was realised at Sparta.

Demetrius of Phaleron, a pupil of Theophrastus, and a prolific writer[5] is remarkable for his political activity (he was head of the government at Athens from 317 until 307) and for having urged Ptolemy Soter to found the library and School of Alexandria (whither Demetrius betook himself about 297). As this project was realised by Ptolemy Philadelphus, the successor of Ptolemy Soter, shortly after 285, Demetrius furnished the link between the work of the Peripatos at Athens and the scientific and research work of the Greeks at Alexandria, the city which was to become a celebrated centre of scholarship and learning.

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[1] Porph., Περὶ ἀποχῆς ἐμψύχων.

[2] Cic., *Tusc.*, 1, 10, 19.

[3] Cic., *Tusc.*, 1, 10, 21; 31, 77.

[4] Cic., *Ad Att.*, 2, 16, 3

[5] Diog. Laërt., 5, 80–1.

CHAPTER XXXIV

PLATO AND ARISTOTLE

PLATO and Aristotle are, without a shadow of doubt, not only the two greatest Greek philosophers, but also two of the greatest philosophers the world has seen. They had much in common with one another (how should it not be so, when Aristotle was for many years a pupil of Plato and began from the Platonic standpoint?); but there is also a marked difference of outlook between them, which, if one prescinds from the very considerable common element, enables one to characterise their respective philosophies as standing to one another in the relation of thesis (Platonism) to antithesis (Aristotelianism), a thesis and an antithesis which need to be reconciled in a higher synthesis, in the sense that the valuable and true elements in both need to be harmoniously developed in a more complete and adequate system than the single system of either philosopher taken in isolation. Platonism may be characterised by reference to the idea of Being, in the sense of abiding and steadfast reality, Aristotelianism by reference to the idea of Becoming; but, if unchanging being is real, so also are change and becoming real, and to both aspects of reality must justice be done by any adequate system of philosophy.

To characterise the philosophy of Plato by reference to the idea of Being and that of Aristotle by reference to the idea of Becoming, is to be guilty of a generalisation, a generalisation which does not, of course, represent the whole truth. Did not Plato treat of Becoming, did he not propound a theory of teleology, it may be asked with justice; did he not recognise the material world as the sphere of change and did he not even explicitly admit that change or movement (so far as this is involved by the nature of life or soul) must belong to the sphere of the real? On the other hand, did not Aristotle find a place, and a very important place, for unchanging being, did he not, even in the changing, material world, discover an element of stability, of fixity, did he not declare that the sublimest occupation of man is the contemplation of unchanging objects? One cannot but give an affirmative answer to these questions; yet the truth of the generalisation is not disposed of, since it refers to what is peculiarly characteristic in each system, to its general tone or flavour, to the general orientation of the philosopher's thought. I will attempt briefly to justify this generalisation, or at least to indicate the lines along which I should attempt to justify it in detail, did space permit.

Plato, like Socrates, assumed the validity of ethical judgments; like Socrates again, he attempted to reach a clear apprehension of ethical values dialectically, to enshrine their nature in definition, to crystallise the ethical idea. He came to see, however, that if ethical concepts and ethical judgments are objective and universally valid, these concepts must possess some objective foundation. Obviously enough moral values are ideals, in the sense that they are not concrete things like sheep or dogs: they are what ought to be realised in the concrete world, or what it is desirable to realise in the concrete world, through human conduct: hence the objectivity attaching to values cannot be the same kind of objectivity that attaches to sheep or dogs, but must be an ideal objectivity or an objectivity in the ideal order. Moreover, material things in this world change and perish, whereas moral values, Plato was convinced, are unchanging. He concluded, therefore, that moral values are ideal, yet objective, essences, apprehended intuitively at the end of a process of dialectic. These moral values, however, have a common share in goodness or perfection, so that they are rightly said to participate in, to derive their goodness or perfection from, the supreme ideal essence, absolute goodness or perfection, the Idea of the Good, the "sun" of the ideal world.

In this way Plato elaborated a metaphysic on the basis of the Socratic ethic, and, being based on the thought of Socrates, it could, without undue propriety, be put into the mouth of Socrates. But, in the course of time, Plato came to apply his dialectic, not only to moral and aesthetic values, but to the common concept in general, maintaining that, just as good things participate in goodness, so individual substances participate in the specific essence. This new viewpoint cannot be said to constitute a radical break in Plato's thought, inasmuch as the theory of values itself rested to a certain extent on a logical foundation (that the common name must have an objective reference), it is rather an extension of the theory; but the new viewpoint forced Plato to consider more closely, not only the relation between the Ideas themselves, but also between sensible objects and the Ideas or exemplary essences. He thus developed his theory of the hierarchic noetic structure and the "communion" between the Ideas and explained participation as imitation, with the result that, in place of pure values on the one hand and bearers of values on the other, there was substituted the dichotomy between true essential Reality, the objective noetic structure and sensible particulars, between the original and the mirrored or "copy." This division came to have the force of a division between Being on the one hand and Becoming on the other, and there can be no question on which side of the dividing line Plato's chief interest lay.

It may be objected that Plato regarded the specific essence of e.g. man as an ideal and that the true meaning of Becoming is to be sought in the gradual approximation to and realisation of the ideal in the material world, in human personality and society, a realisation which is the task of God and of God's human co-operators. This is perfectly true, and I have not the slightest wish to belittle the importance of teleology in the Platonic philosophy; but none the less, the emphasis was most decidedly placed by Plato on the sphere of Being, of true Reality. Through his doctrine of teleology he certainly admitted some relation between the changing world and the unchanging world of Being; but becoming as such and particularity as such were to him the irrational, the factor that must be dismissed into the sphere of the indeterminate. How could it be otherwise for a thinker to whom logic and ontology are one, or at least parallel? Thought is concerned with the universal and thought apprehends Being: the universal, then, is Being and the particular as such is not Being. The universal is unchanging, so that Being is unchanging, the particular changes, becomes, perishes, and in so far as it changes, becomes, perishes, it is not Being. Philosophical activity or dialectic is an activity of thought and is thus concerned with Being primarily and only secondarily with Becoming, in so far as it "imitates" Being, so that Plato, as philosopher, was primarily interested in essential and unchanging Being. He was also interested, it is true, in the moulding of the world according to the pattern of Being; but the emphasis is placed unmistakably on Being rather than on Becoming.

It might seem that much of what I have said in regard to Plato would apply equally well, perhaps even better, to Aristotle, who asserted that the metaphysician is concerned with being as being, who referred change and becoming to the final causality of the unmoved First Mover, who taught that man's highest activity is the theoretic contemplation of unchanging objects, of those beings which are *par excellence* being, actuality, form. Nevertheless, this very real side of the Aristotelian philosophy represents rather the Platonic legacy, even if elaborated and developed by Aristotle himself. I do not intend for a moment to question the fact that Aristotle attributed great importance to this aspect of his philosophy or the fact that Aristotle accomplished a great deal in this line of speculation, e.g. by bringing out clearly the intellectual and immaterial nature of pure form and so making a contribution of tremendous value to natural theology; but I wish to inquire into the character of Aristotle's peculiar contribution to philosophy in so far as he deviated from Platonism, to ask what was the antithesis that Aristotle set over against the Platonic thesis.

What was Aristotle's chief objection against the Platonic theory of Ideas? That it left an unbridged chasm between sensible objects and the Ideas. As the sensible objects were said to imitate or participate in the Ideas, one would expect to find Plato admitting some internal essential principle, some formal cause within the object itself, placing it in its class, constituting it in its essence, whereas in point of fact Plato did not allow for an interior formal principle of this sort, but left a dualism of pure universal and pure particular, a dualism which resulted in depriving the sensible world of most of its reality and meaning. What was Aristotle's answer to this objection? While admitting the general Platonic position that the universal element, or essential form, is the object of science, of rational knowledge, he identified this universal element with the immanent essential form of the sensible object, which, together with its matter, constitutes the object and which is the intelligible principle in the object. This formal principle realises itself in the activity of the object, e.g. the formal principle in an organism, its entelechy, expresses itself in organic functions, unfolds itself in matter, organises, moulds and shapes matter, tends towards an end, which is the adequate manifestation of the essence, of the "idea," in the phenomenon. All nature is conceived as a hierarchy of species, in each of which the essence tends towards its full actualisation in a series of phenomena, drawn, in some rather mysterious way, by the ultimate final causality of the supreme Unmoved Mover, which is itself complete actuality, pure immaterial Being or Thought, self-subsistent and self-contained. Nature is thus a dynamical process of self-perfection or self-development, and the series of phenomena has meaning and value.

From this brief statement of Aristotle's position it should be quite clear that his philosophy is not simply a philosophy of Becoming. Being may truly be predicated of something in so far as it is actual, and that which is *par excellence* Being is also *par excellence* Actuality, unmixed with potency; the world of becoming, being a world of realisation, of reduction of potency to act, is a world in which actuality or being is being constantly realised in matter, in phenomena, under the final attraction of ultimate Actuality or Being; so that the explanation of Becoming is to be found in Being, for Becoming is for the sake of Being, which is always logically, even when it is not temporally, prior. If I say, then, that Aristotle was possessed by the concept of Becoming, that his philosophy, as peculiarly his, may justly be characterised by reference to his doctrine of Becoming, I do not mean to deny that Being was, for him as for Plato, of supreme importance or that he gave a metaphysic of Being which was, in some respects, greatly superior to that of Plato: what I mean is, that Aristotle, through his theory of the entelechy, the immanent substantial form, which tends to its realisation in the processes of nature, was enabled to attach a meaning and reality to the sensible world which are missing in the philosophy of Plato and that this particular contribution to philosophy gives a characteristic tone and flavour to Aristotelianism as distinct from Platonism. Aristotle said that the end of man is an activity, not a quality, whereas one has the impression that for Plato quality would take precedence of activity: Plato's "Absolute" was not the immanent activity of Aristotle's "self-thinking Thought" and Plato's "Absolute" was the supreme Exemplar. (That Aristotle's characterisation of matter tended to diminish the reality and intelligibility of the material world is no objection against my main thesis, since his doctrine of matter was very largely an effect of his Platonic education, and my main thesis is concerned with Aristotle's *peculiar* contribution to the philosophy of nature.)

Aristotle thus made a most important contribution to the philosophy of nature and he certainly regarded himself as having broken fresh ground. In the first place, he regarded his doctrine of the *immanent* essence as an antithesis to, or correction of, Plato's doctrine of the transcendental essence, and, in the second place, his remarks concerning the emergence of the idea of finality in philosophy, even if those remarks are to some extent patently unjust to Plato, show clearly that he regarded his theory of immanent teleology as something new. But though Aristotle provided a needed correction or antithesis to Platonism in this respect, he discarded much that was of value in the process of correcting his predecessor. Not only was Plato's conception of Providence, of Divine Reason immanent in the world and operating in the world, discarded by Aristotle, but also Plato's conception of exemplary causality. Plato may have failed to work out a systematised view of Absolute Being as exemplary Cause of essences, as Ground of value; he may have failed to realise, as Aristotle realised, that the immaterial form is intelligent, that supreme Actuality is supreme Intelligence; he may have failed to bring together and identify the supreme Efficient, Exemplary and Final Causes; but, in his opposition to Plato's inadequate view of the concrete object of this world, Aristotle allowed himself to miss and pass over the profound truth in the Platonic theory. Each thinker, then, has his high-points, each made an invaluable contribution to philosophy, but neither thinker gave the complete truth, even so far as that is attainable. One may be drawn towards either Plato or Aristotle by temperamental affinity, but one would not be justified in rejecting Aristotle for Plato or Plato for Aristotle: the truths contained in their respective philosophies have to be integrated and harmoniously combined in a complete synthesis, a synthesis which must incorporate and build upon that cardinal tenet, which was held in common by both Plato and Aristotle, namely, the conviction that the fully real is the fully intelligible and the fully good, while utilising also the peculiar contributions of each philosopher, in so far as these contributions are true and so compatible.

In the pages devoted to Neo-Platonism we shall witness an attempt, successful or unsuccessful as the case may be, to accomplish such a synthesis, an attempt which has been repeated in the course of both mediaeval and modern philosophy; but it might be as well to point out that, if such a synthesis is possible, it is made possible largely through the Platonic elements which are contained in Aristotelianism. Let me give one example, to illustrate my meaning. If Aristotle, in correcting what he considered to be the excessively dualistic character of the Platonic anthropology (I refer to the soul-body relationship), had explicitly rejected the supersensible character of the rational principle in man and had reduced thought, for example, to matter in motion, he would indeed have posited an antithesis to the Platonic theory, but this antithesis would have been of such a character that it could not combine with the thesis in a higher synthesis. As it was, however, Aristotle never, as far as we know, rejected the presence of a supersensible principle in man—he affirms it in his *De Anima* —even though he insisted that the soul cannot inhabit *any* body but is the entelechy of a particular body. A synthesis was, therefore, rendered possible, which would include the Aristotelian idea of the soul as the form of the body, while allowing, with Plato, that the *individual* soul is more than the body and survives death in individual self-identity.

Again, it might appear perhaps at first sight that the Aristotelian God, the Thought of Thought, constitutes an incompatible antithesis to the Platonic Idea of the Good, which, though intelligible, is not depicted as intelligent. Yet, since pure form is not only the intelligible but also the intelligent, the Platonic Absolute Good cried out, as it were, to be identified with the Aristotelian God, an identification which was accomplished in the Christian synthesis at least, so that both Plato and Aristotle contributed different, though complementary, facets of theism.

(In the foregoing remarks I have spoken of a synthesis of Platonism and Aristotelianism; but one is entitled to speak of he necessity of a synthesis only when there is question of two 'antithetical" theories, each of them being more or less true in what it affirms and false in what it denies. For example, Plato was correct in affirming exemplarism, wrong in neglecting immanent substantial form, while Aristotle was correct in asserting his theory of the immanent substantial form, wrong in neglecting exemplarism. But there are other aspects of their philosophies in regard to which one can hardly speak of the necessity for a synthesis, since Aristotle himself accomplished the synthesis. For instance, the Aristotelian logic, that marvellous creation of genius, does not need to be synthesised with the Platonic logic, owing to the simple fact that it was a tremendous advance on Plato's logic (or what we know of it, at least) and itself comprised what was valuable in the Platonic logic).

PART V

POST-ARISTOTELIAN PHILOSOPHY

CHAPTER XXXV

INTRODUCTORY

1. WITH the reign of Alexander the Great the day of the free and independent Greek City-State had really passed away. During his reign and that of his successors, who fought with one another for political power, any freedom that the Greek cities possessed was but nominal—at least it depended on the goodwill of the paramount sovereign. After the death of the great Conqueror in 323 B.C. we must speak rather of Hellenistic (i.e. in opposition tc National-Hellenic) than of Hellenic civilisation. To Alexander the sharp distinction between Greek and "Barbarian" was unreal: he thought in terms of Empire, not in terms of the City: and the result was, that while the East was opened up to the influence of the West, Greek culture on its side could not remain uninfluenced by the new state of affairs. Athens, Sparta, Corinth, etc.—these were no longer free and independent units, united in a common feeling of cultural superiority to the barbarian darkness round about them: they were merged in a larger whole, and the day was not far distant when Greece was to become but a Province of the Roman Empire.

The new political situation could not be without its reaction on philosophy. Both Plato and Aristotle had been men of the Greek City, and for them the individual was inconceivable apart from the City and the life of the City: it was in the City that the individual attained his end, lived the good life. But when the free City was merged in a greater cosmopolitan whole, it was but natural that not only cosmopolitanism, with its ideal of citizenship of the world, as we see it in Stoicism, but also individualism should come to the fore. In fact these two elements, cosmopolitanism and individualism, were closely bound together. For when the life of the City-State, compact and all-embracing, as Plato and Aristotle had conceived it, had broken down and citizens were merged in a much greater whole, the individual was inevitably cast adrift by himself, loosed from his moorings in the City-State. It w but to be expected, then, that in a cosmopolitan society philosopl should centre its interest in the individual, endeavouring to me his demand for guidance in life, which he had to live out in great society and no longer in a comparatively small City-family and so displaying a predominantly ethical and practical trend—as in Stoicism and Epicureanism. Metaphysical and physical speculation tend to drop into the background: they are of interest not for their own sake but as providing a basis and preparation for ethics. This concentration on the ethical makes it easy to understand why the new Schools borrowed their metaphysical notions from other thinkers, without attempting fresh speculation on their own. Indeed it is to the pre-Socratics that they return in this respect, Stoicism having recourse to the Physics of Heraclitus and Epicureanism to the Atomism of Democritus. More than that, the post-Aristotelian Schools returned to the pre-Socratics, at least in part, even for their ethical ideas or tendencies, the Stoics borrowing from Cynic ethics and the Epicureans from the Cyrenaics.

This ethical and practical interest is particularly marked in the development of the post-Aristotelian Schools in the Roman period, for the Romans were not, like the Greeks, speculative and metaphysical thinkers; they were predominantly men of practice. The old Romans had insisted on *character*—speculation was somewhat foreign to them—and in the Roman Empire, when the former ideals and traditions of the Republic had been swamped, it was precisely the philosopher's task to provide the individual with a code of conduct which would enable him to pilot his way through the sea of life, maintaining a consistency of principle and action based on a certain spiritual and moral independence. Hence the phenomenon of philosopher-directors, who performed a task somewhat analogous to that of the spiritual director as known to the Christian world.

This concentration on the practical, the fact that philosophy took as its office the provision of standards of life, naturally led to a wide diffusion of philosophy among the cultured classes of the Hellenistic-Roman world and so to a kind of Popular Philosophy. Philosophy in the Roman period became more and more part of the regular course of education (a fact which demanded its presentation in an easily apprehended form), and it was in this way that philosophy became a rival to Christianity, when the new Religion began to lay claim to the allegiance of the Empire. Indeed one may say that philosophy, to a certain extent at least, offered to satisfy the religious needs and aspirations of man. Disbelief in the popular mythology was common, and where this disbelief reigned—among the educated classes—those who were not content to live without religion at all had either to attach themselves to one of the many cults that were introduced into the Empire from the East and which were definitely more calculated to satisfy man's spiritual aspirations than the official State religion with its businesslike attitude, or to turn to philosophy for the satisfaction of those needs. And so it is that we can discern religious elements in such a predominantly ethical system as Stoicism, while in Neo-Platonism, the last flower of Ancient Philosophy, the syncretism of religion and philosophy reaches its culmination. More than that, we may say that in Plotinian Neo-Platonism, in which the mystical flight of the spirit or ecstasy is made the final and highest point of intellectual activity, philosophy tends to pass over into religion.

Insistence on ethics alone leads to an ideal of spiritual independence and self-sufficiency such as we find in both Stoicism and Epicureanism, while insistence on religion tends rather to assert dependence on a Transcendental Principle and to ascribe the purification of the self to the action of the Divine, an attitude that we find in a mystery-cult like that of Mithras. It is to be noted, however, that both tendencies, the tendency to insist on the ethical, the self-sufficient perfection of the personality or the acquisition of a true moral personality, and the tendency to insist on the attitude of the worshipper towards the Divine or the need of the non-self-sufficient human being to unite himself with God, contributed to meet the same want, the want of the individual in the Greco-Roman world to find a sure basis for his individual life, since the religious attitude too brought with it a certain independence *vis-à-vis* the secular Empire. In practice, of course, the two attitudes tended to coalesce, the emphasis being placed sometimes on the ethical (as in Stoicism), sometimes on the religious factor (as in the mystery-cults), while in Neo-Platonism there was an attempt at a comprehensive synthesis, the ethical being subordinated to the religious, but without losing its importance.

2. In the development of the Hellenistic-Roman philosophy it is usual to distinguish several phases:[1]

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[1] Cf. Ueberweg-Praechter, pp. 32–3.

(i) The first phase or period extends from about the end of the fourth century B.C. to the middle of the first century B.C. This period is characterised by the founding of the Stoic and Epicurean philosophies, which place the emphasis on conduct and the attainment of personal happiness, while harking back to pre-Socratic thought for the cosmological bases of their systems. Over against these "dogmatic" systems stands the Scepticism of Pyrrho and his followers, to which must be added the sceptical vein in the Middle and New Academies. The interaction between these philosophies led to a certain Eclecticism, which showed itself in a tendency on the part of the Middle Stoa, the Peripatetic School and the Academy to eclectic assimilation of one another's doctrines.

(ii) Eclecticism on the one hand and Scepticism on the other hand continue into the second period (from about the middle of the first century B.C. to the middle of the third century A.D.), but this period is characterised by a return to philosophical "orthodoxy." Great interest is taken in the founders of the Schools, their lives, works and doctrines, and this tendency to philosophical "orthodoxy" is a counterpart to the continuing eclecticism. But the interest in the past was also fruitful in scientific investigation, e.g. in editing the works of the old philosophers, commenting on them and interpreting them. In such work the pre-eminence belongs to the Alexandrians.

This scientific interest is not, however, the sole characteristic of the second period. Over against the scientific interest we find the tendency to religious mysticism, which becomes ever stronger. It has been pointed out (e.g. Praechter, p. 36) that this tendency has a common root with the scientific tendency, namely, the disappearance of productive speculation. While the latter factor might lead to scepticism or to devotion to scientific pursuits, it might equally result in a tendency to religious mysticism. This tendency was of course favoured by the growing religious consciousness of the time and by acquaintance with religions of eastern origin. Western philosophers, e.g. the Neo-Pythagoreans, endeavoured to incorporate these religious-mystical elements into their speculative systems, while eastern thinkers, e.g. Philo of Alexandria, tried to systematise their religious conceptions in a philosophic framework. (Thinkers like Philo were, of course, also influenced by the desire to win over the Greeks for their un-Greek doctrines by presenting the latter in philosophic guise.)

(iii) The third period (from about the middle of the third century A.D. to the middle of the sixth century A.D.—or, in Alexandria, to the middle of the seventh century) is that of Neo-Platonism. This final speculative effort of Ancient Philosophy attempted to combine all the valuable elements in the philosophic and religious doctrines of East and West in one comprehensive system, practically absorbing all the philosophic Schools and dominating philosophical development for a number of centuries, so that it cannot justifiably be overlooked in a history of philosophy or be relegated to the dustbin of esoteric mysticism. Moreover, Neo-Platonism exercised a great influence on Christian speculation: we have only to think of names like those of St. Augustine and the Pseudo-Dionysius.

3. A feature of the Hellenistic world that must not be passed over is the increased cultivation of the special sciences. We have seen how philosophy and religion tended to become united: with regard to philosophy and the special sciences the opposite holds good. Not only had the domain of philosophy become more sharply delineated than it was in the early days of Greek thought, but the different sciences had themselves reached such a pitch of development that they required special treatment. Moreover, the improvement in the external conditions for research and study, though itself largely an outcome of specialisation, reacted in turn on the cultivation of the sciences, promoting an intensification of departmental work and research. The Lyceum had, of course, greatly contributed to the growth and development of the sciences, but in the Hellenistic age there arose scientific Institutes, Museums and Libraries in the great capital cities of Alexandria, Antioch, and Pergamon, with the result that philological and literary research, mathematical, medical and physical studies, were enabled to make great strides. Thus according to Tzetzes, the "outer" library at Alexandria contained 42,800 volumes, while the main library in the Palace contained some 400,000 "mixed" and some 90,000 "unmixed" or "simple" volumes, the latter being probably small papyrus rolls while the former were bigger rolls. Later on the larger volumes, divided into books, were reduced to "simple" volumes. We are told that when Antony presented Cleopatra with the Pergamene library, he gave her 200,000 "simple" volumes.

It may be, of course, that the influence of philosophy on the special sciences was not always favourable to their advance, for speculative assumptions sometimes took a place which did not belong to them and led to hasty and precipitate conclusions, when experiment and exact observation should have exercised the decisive rôle. On the other hand, however, the special sciences were helped by being given a philosophical foundation, for they were thereby rescued from crude empiricism and from an exclusively practical and utilitarian orientation.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE EARLY STOA

1. THE founder of the Stoic School was Zeno, who was born about 336/5 B.C. at Citium in Cyprus and died about 264/3 at Athens. He seems to have at first followed his father in commercial activity.[1] Coming to Athens about 315–313 he read the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon and the *Apology* of Plato and was filled with admiration for Socrates' strength of character. Thinking that Crates the Cynic was the man who most resembled Socrates, he became his disciple. From the Cynics he seemed to have turned to Stilpo,[2] though Zeno is also reported to have listened to Xenocrates and, after Xenocrates' death, to Polemon. About the year 300 B.C. he founded his own philosophic School, which takes its name from the Στοὰ Ποικίλη, where he lectured. He is said to have taken his own life. Of his writings we possess only fragments.

Zeno was succeeded in the leadership of the School by Cleanthes of Assos (331/30–233/2 or 231) and Cleanthes by Chrysippus of Soloi in Cilicia (281/278–208/205), who was called the second founder of the School because of his systematisation of the Stoic doctrines. Εἰ μὴ γὰρ ἦ Χρύσιππος, οὐκ ἂν ἦν Στόα.[3] He is said to have written more than 705 books and was famed for his dialectic, though not for his style of composition.

Among Zeno's pupils were Ariston of Chios, Herillus of Carthage, Dionysius of Heracleia, Persion of Citium. A pupil of Cleanthes was Sphairus of the Bosphorus. Chrysippus was succeeded by two pupils, Zeno of Tarsus and Diogenes of Seleucia. The latter came to Rome in 156/5 B.C., together with other philosophers, as ambassadors of Athens in an attempt to obtain remission of the fine. The philosophers gave lectures in Rome, which excited admiration among the youth of the City, though Cato thought that such philosophical interests were not consonant with the military virtues and he advised the Senate to get rid of the embassy as soon as possible.[4] Diogenes was succeeded by Antipater of Tarsus.

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[1] Diog. Laërt., 7, 2 and 31.
[2] Diog. Laërt., 7, 2.
[3] Diog. Laërt., 7, 183.
[4] Plut., *Cat. Mai.*, 22.

II. *Logic of the Stoa*

Logic was divided by the Stoics into Dialectic and Rhetoric, to which some added the Theory of Definitions and the Theory of the Criteria of Truth.[1] Something will be said here of the Stoic epistemology, omitting their account of formal logic, though we may note the fact that the Stoics reduced the ten Categories of Aristotle to four, namely, the substrate (τὸ ὑποκείμενον), the essential constitution (τὸ ποιόν or τὸ ποιὸν ὑποκείμενον), the accidental constitution (τὸ πῶς ἔχον or τὸ πῶς ἔχον ποιὸν ὑποκείμενον) and the relative accidental constitution (τὸ πρός τι πῶς ἔχον, τὸ πρός τι πῶς ἔχον ποιὸν ὑποκείμενον). A further feature of the formal logic of the Stoa may also be mentioned. Propositions are simple if their terms are non-propositions, otherwise compound. The compound proposition, "if X, then Y" (τὸ συνημμένον), is declared to be (i) true, if X and Y are both true; (ii) false, if X is true and Y is false; (iii) true, if X is false and Y is true; (iv) true, if X and Y are both false. Thus our "material" implication is separated from our "formal" implication and our "strict" implication, and from entailment by ontological necessitation.[2]

The Stoics rejected not only the Platonic doctrine of the transcendental universal, but also Aristotle's doctrine of the concrete universal. Only the individual exists and our knowledge is knowledge of particular objects. These particulars make an impression on the soul (τύπωσις—Zeno and Cleanthes—or ἑτεροίωσις—Chrysippus), and knowledge is primarily knowledge of this impression. The Stoics adopted, therefore, the opposite position to that of Plato, for, while Plato depreciated sense-perception, the Stoics founded all knowledge on sense-perception. They would doubtless re-echo the words of Antisthenes, to the effect that he saw a horse but not "horseness." (Zeno, as we have seen, became a pupil of Crates the Cynic.) The soul is originally a *tabula rasa*, and, in order for it to know, there is need of perception. The Stoics did not of course deny that we have knowledge of our interior states and activities, but Chrysippus reduced this knowledge, too, to perception, which was rendered all the easier in that these states and activities were considered to consist of material processes. After the act of perception a memory (μνήμη) remains behind, when the actual object is no longer there, and experience arises from a plurality of similar recollections (ἐμπειρία).

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[1] Diog. Laërt., 7, 41–2. [2] Sext. Emp., *Pyrr. Hyp.*, 2, 105; *Adv. Math.*, 8, 449.

The Stoics were therefore Empiricists, even "Sensualists"; but they also maintained a Rationalism which was scarcely consistent with a thoroughly empiricist and nominalist position. For although they asserted that reason (λόγος, νοῦς) is a product of development, in that it grows up gradually out of perceptions and is formed only about the fourteenth year, they also held, not only that there are deliberately-formed general ideas, but also that there are general ideas (κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι or προλήψεις), which are apparently antecedent to experience (ἔμφυτοι προλήψεις) in that we have a natural predisposition to form them—virtually innate ideas, we might call them. What is more, it is only through Reason that the system of Reality can be known.

The Stoics devoted a good deal of attention to the question of the criterion of truth. This they declared to be the φαντασία καταληπτική, the apprehensive perception or representation. The criterion of truth lies, therefore, in the perception itself, namely, in the perception that compels the assent of the soul, i.e. to all intents and purposes in clear perception. (This is scarcely consistent with the view that it is science alone that gives us certain knowledge of Reality.) However, the difficulty arose that the soul can withhold assent from what is objectively a true perception. Thus when the dead Alcestis appeared to Admetus from the underworld, her husband had a clear perception of her, yet he did not assent to this clear perception because of subjective hindrances, namely, the belief that dead people do not rise again, while on the other hand there may be deceptive apparitions of the dead. In view of this sort of objection the later Stoics, as Sextus Empiricus tells us, added to the criterion of truth, "which has no hindrance." Objectively speaking, the perception of the dead Alcestis has the value of a criterion of truth—for it is objectively a καταληπτικὴ φαντασία—but subjectively speaking, it cannot act as such, because of a belief which acts as a subjective hindrance.[1] This is all very well, but the difficulty still remains of ascertaining when there is such a hindrance and when there is not.

III. *Cosmology of the Stoa*

In their cosmology the Stoics had recourse to Heraclitus for the doctrine of the Logos and of Fire as the world-substance; but elements are also present which are borrowed from Plato and

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[1] Sext. Emp., *Adv. Math.*, 7, 254 ff.

Aristotle. Thus the λόγοι σπερματικοί seem to be a transposition on to the material plane of the ideal theory.

According to the Stoics there are two principles in Reality, τὸ ποιοῦν and τὸ πάσχον. But this is not dualism as we find it in Plato, since the active principle, τὸ ποιοῦν, is not spiritual but material. In fact it is hardly dualism at all, since the two principles are both material and together form one Whole. The Stoic doctrine is therefore a monistic materialism, even if this position is not consistently maintained. It is uncertain what Zeno's view was, but Cleanthes and Chrysippus would seem to have regarded the two factors as ultimately one and the same.

> "All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
> Whose body Nature is and God the soul,"[1]

The passive principle is matter devoid of qualities, while the active principle is immanent Reason or God. Natural beauty or finality in Nature point to the existence of a principle of thought in the universe, God, Who, in His Providence, has arranged everything for the good of man. Moreover, since the highest phenomenon of nature, man, is possessed of consciousness, we cannot suppose that the whole world is devoid of consciousness, for the whole cannot be less perfect than the part. God, therefore, is the Consciousness of the world. Nevertheless God, like the substrate on which He works, is material. "(Zeno) *Nullo modo arbitrabatur quidquam effici posse ab ea (natura) quae expers esset corporis—nec vero aut quod efficeret aut quod efficeretur, posse esse non corpus.*"[2] ὄντα γὰρ μόνα τὰ σώματα καλοῦσιν.[3] Like Heraclitus the Stoics make Fire to be the stuff of all things. God is the active Fire (πῦρ τεχνικόν), which is immanent in the universe (πνεῦμα διῆκον δι' ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου), but He is at the same time the primal Source from which the crasser elements, that make the corporeal world, come forth. These crasser elements proceed from God and are at length resolved into Him again, so that all that exists is either the primal Fire—God in Himself—or God in His different states. When the world is in existence God stands to it as soul to body, being the soul of the world. He is not something entirely different from the stuff of the world, His Body, but is a finer stuff, the moving and forming principle—the crasser stuff, of which the world is formed, being itself motionless and unformed, though capable of receiving all sorts of movement and form.

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[1] Pope, *Essay on Man*, I, 267.

[2] Cic., *Acad. Post.*, I, 11, 39.

[3] Plut., *De Comm. Notit.*, 1073 E.

"*Zenoni et reliquis fere Stoicis aether videtur summus deus, mente praeditus, qua omnia reguntur.*"[1]

God therefore, ὁ Λόγος, is the Active Principle which contains within itself the active forms of all the things that are to be, these forms being the λόγοι σπερματικοί. These active forms—but material—are as it were "seeds," through the activity of which individual things come into being as the world develops; or rather they are seeds which unfold themselves in the forms of individual things. (The conception of λόγοι σπρερματικοί is found in Neo-Platonism and in St. Augustine, under the name of *rationes seminales*.) In the actual development of the world part of the fiery vapour, of which God consists, is transformed into air and from air is formed water. From part of the water comes earth, while a second part remains water and a third part is transformed into air, which through rarefaction becomes the elementary fire. Thus does the "body" of God come into being.

Now Heraclitus, as we have seen, most probably never taught the doctrine of the universal conflagration, in which the whole world returns to the primeval fire, from which it was born. The Stoics, however, certainly added this doctrine of the ἐκπύρωσις, according to which God forms the world and then takes it back into Himself through a universal conflagration, so that there is an unending series of world-constructions and world-destructions. Moreover, each new world resembles its predecessor in all particulars, every individual man, for example, occurring in each successive world and performing the identical actions that he performed in his previous existence. (Cf. Nietzsche's idea of the "Eternal Recurrence.") Consistently with this belief the Stoics denied human freedom, or rather liberty for them meant doing consciously, with assent, what one will do in any case. (We are reminded somewhat of Spinoza.) This reign of necessity the Stoics expressed under the concept of Fate (Εἱμαρμένη), but Fate is not something different from God and universal reason, nor is it different from Providence (Πρόνοια) which orders all things for the best. Fate and Providence are but different aspects of God. But this cosmological determinism is modified by their insistence on interior freedom, in the sense that a man can alter his judgment on events and his attitude towards events, seeing them and welcoming them as the expression of "God's Will." In this sense man is free.

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[1] Cic., *Acad. Prior.*, 2, 41, 126.

Since the Stoics held that God orders all things for the best, they had to explain the evil in the world or at least to bring it into harmony with their "optimism." Chrysippus especially undertook the perennial difficulty of formulating a theodicy, taking as his fundamental tenet the theory that the imperfection of individuals subserves the perfection of the whole. It would follow that there is really no evil when things are looked at *sub specie aeternitatis*. (If we are reminded here of Spinoza, we are reminded also of Leibniz, not only by Stoic optimism, but also by their doctrine that no two individual phenomena of Nature are completely alike.) Chrysippus, in his fourth book on Providence, argues that goods could not have existed without evils, on the ground that of a pair of contraries neither can exist without the other, so that if you take away the one, you take away both.[1] There is certainly a great deal of truth in this contention. For instance, the existence of a sensible creature capable of pleasure implies also the capacity for feeling pain—unless, of course, God determines otherwise; but we are now speaking of the natural state of affairs and not of preternatural Divine ordinances. Moreover, pain, though spoken of as an evil, would seem to be—in a certain aspect—a good. For example, given the possibility of our teeth decaying, toothache would seem to be a definite good or benefit. The privation of right order in the teeth is certainly an evil, but—given the possibility of decay—we should be worse off if toothache were impossible, since it serves as a danger-signal, warning us that it is time that we had our teeth examined by a dentist. Similarly, if we never felt hungry—a pain—we might ruin our health by insufficient nourishment. Chrysippus saw this clearly and argued that it is good for man to have his head of delicate construction, though the very fact of its delicate construction involves at the same time the possibility of danger from a comparatively slight blow.

But though physical evil is not so great a difficulty, what of moral evil? According to the Stoics no act is evil and reprehensible *in itself*: it is the intention, the moral condition of the agent from whom the act proceeds, that makes the act evil: the act as a physical entity is indifferent. (If this were taken to mean that a good intention justifies any act, then such an act is in the moral order and will be either good or bad—though if the agent performs a bad act with a sincerely good intention in a state of inculpable ignorance of the fact that the act is contrary to right reason, the action is only *materialiter* evil and the agent is not guilty of formal sin.[1] However, if the act be considered merely in itself, as a positive entity, apart from its character as a human act, then Chrysippus is right in saying that the act as such is not evil —in fact, it is good. That it cannot of itself be evil, can easily be shown by an example. The physical action, the positive element, is precisely the same when a man is murderously shot as when he is shot in battle during a just war: it is not the positive element in the murder, the action considered merely abstractly, that is the *moral* evil. Moral evil, considered precisely as such, cannot be a positive entity, since this would reflect on the goodness of the Creator, the Source of all being. Moral evil consists essentially in a privation of right order in the human will, which, in the human bad act, is out of harmony with right reason.) Now, if a man can have a right intention, he can also have a wrong intention; hence, in the moral sphere, no less than in the physical sphere, contraries involve one another. How, asked Chrysippus, can courage be understood apart from cowardice or justice apart from injustice? Just as the capacity of feeling pleasure implies the capacity of feeling pain, so the capacity of being just implies the capacity of being unjust.

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[1] Apud Gellium, *Noctes Atticae*, 6, 1.

In so far as Chrysippus simply meant that the capacity for virtue implies *de facto* the capacity for vice, he was enunciating a truth, since for man in his present state in this world, with his limited apprehension of the *Summum Bonum*, freedom to be virtuous implies also freedom to commit sin, so that, if the possession of moral freedom is a good thing for man and if it is better to be able to choose virtue freely (even though this implies the possibility of vice) than to have no freedom at all, no valid argument against Divine Providence can be drawn from the possibility, or even the existence, of moral evil in the world. But in so far as Chrysippus implies that the presence of virtue in the universe necessarily implies the presence of its contrary, on the ground that opposites always involve one another, he is implying what is false, since human moral freedom, while involving the *possibility* of vice in this life, does not necessarily involve its actuality. (The apology for moral evil, as also for physical evil, which consists in saying that the good is thrown into higher relief through the presence of the bad, might, if pressed, imply the same false view. Given this present order of the world, it is certainly better that man should be free, and so *able* to sin, than that he should be without freedom; but it is better that man should use his freedom to choose virtuous actions, and the best condition of the world would be that all men should always do what is right, however much the presence of vice may set the good in high relief.)

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[1] An act, i.e. a human act, one proceeding from the free will of the human agent, is *materialiter* (or *objectively*) good or evil, in so far as it is objectively in conformity with, or not in conformity with, right reason, with the objective Natural Law. The agent's conscious intention cannot alter the objective or material character of a human act, even though, in the case of an objectively evil act, it may excuse him from formal moral fault.

Chrysippus was not so happy when he speculated whether external misfortunes might not be due to oversight on the part of Providence, as when trifling accidents occur in a large household that is, in general, well administered, through neglect of some kind;[1] but he rightly saw that those physical evils that befall the good may be turned into a blessing, both through the individual (through his interior attitude towards them) or for mankind at large (e.g. by stimulating medical investigation and progress). Further, it is interesting to notice, that Chrysippus gives an argument which recurs later in, e.g. Neo-Platonism, St. Augustine, Berkeley and Leibniz, to the effect that evil in the universe throws the good into greater relief, just as the contrast of light and shadow is pleasing in a picture or, to use an actual example employed by Chrysippus, as "Comedies have in them ludicrous verses which, though bad in themselves, nevertheless lend a certain grace to the whole play."[2]

In inorganic objects the Universal Reason or πνεῦμα operates as a ἕξις or principle of cohesion, and this holds good also for plants—which have no soul—though in them the ἕξις has the power of movement and has risen to the rank of φύσις. In animals there is soul (ψυχή), which shows itself in the powers of φαντασία and ὁρμή, and in human beings there is reason. The soul of man is therefore the noblest of souls: indeed it is part of the divine Fire which descended into men at their creation and is then passed on at generation, for, like all else, it is material. τὸ ἡγεμονικόν the dominant part of the soul, has its seat in the heart according to Chrysippus, apparently on the ground that the voice, which is the expression of thought, proceeds from the heart. (Some other Stoics placed τὸ ἡγεμονικόν in the head.) Personal immortality was scarcely possible in the Stoic system, and the Stoics admitted that all souls return to the primeval Fire at the conflagration. The only dispute was on the subject of what souls persist after death until the conflagration; and while Cleanthes considered that this held good for all human souls, Chrysippus admitted it only in regard to the souls of the wise.

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[1] Plut., *De Stoic. Repugn.*, 1051 c.

[2] Plut., *De Comm. Notit.*, 1065 d; Marcus Aurel., *To Himself*, VI, 42.

In a monistic system such as that of the Stoics we would hardly expect to find any attitude of personal devotion towards the Divine Principle; but in point of fact such a tendency is indubitably visible. This tendency is particularly observable in the celebrated hymn to Zeus by Cleanthes:

O God most glorious, called by many a name,
Nature's great King, through endless years the same;
Omnipotence, who by thy just decree
Controllest all, hail, Zeus, for unto thee
Behoves thy creatures in all lands to call.
We are thy children, we alone, of all
On earth's broad ways that wander to and fro,
Bearing thy image wheresoe'er we go.
Wherefore with songs of praise thy power I will forth show.
Lo! yonder heaven, that round the earth is wheeled,
Follows thy guidance, still to thee doth yield
Glad homage; thine unconquerable hand
Such flaming minister, the levin-brand,
Wieldeth, a sword two-edged, whose deathless might
Pulsates through all that Nature brings to light;
Vehicle of the universal Word, that flows
Through all, and in the light celestial glows
Of stars both great and small. O King of Kings
Through ceaseless ages, God, whose purpose brings
To birth, whate'er on land or in the sea
Is wrought, or in high heaven's immensity;
Save what the sinner works infatuate.
Nay, but thou knowest to make the crooked straight:
Chaos to thee is order: in thine eyes
The unloved is lovely, who did'st harmonise
Things evil with things good, that there should be
One Word through all things everlastingly.
One Word—whose voice alas! the wicked spurn;
Insatiate for the good their spirits yearn:
Yet seeing see not, neither hearing hear
God's universal law, which those revere,
By reason guided, happiness who win.
The rest, unreasoning, diverse shapes of sin
Self-prompted follow: for an idle name
Vainly they wrestle in the lists of fame:

Others inordinately Riches woo,
Or dissolute, the joys of flesh pursue.
Now here, now there they wander, fruitless still,
For ever seeking good and finding ill.
Zeus the all-beautiful, whom darkness shrouds,
Whose lightning lightens in the thunder clouds;
Thy children save from error's deadly sway:
Turn thou the darkness from their souls away:
Vouchsafe that unto knowledge they attain;
For thou by knowledge art made strong to reign
O'er all, and all things rulest righteously.
So by thee honoured, we will honour thee,
Praising thy works continuously with songs,
As mortals should; nor higher meed belongs
E'en to the gods, than justly to adore
The universal law for evermore.[1]

But this attitude of personal devotion towards the Supreme Principle on the part of some of the Stoics does not mean that they rejected the popular religion; on the contrary, they took it under their protection. Zeno did indeed declare that prayers and sacrifices are of no avail, but polytheism was nevertheless justified by the Stoics on the ground that the one Principle or Zeus manifests itself in phenomena, e.g. the heavenly bodies, so that divine reverence is due to these manifestations—a reverence which is also to be extended to deified man or "heroes." Moreover, Stoicism found a place for divination and oracles. This fact need really cause no great surprise, if we reflect that the Stoics maintained a deterministic doctrine and held that all the parts and events of the universe are mutually interconnected.

IV. *The Stoic Ethic*

The importance of the ethical part of philosophy for the Stoics may be exemplified by the description of philosophy given by Seneca. Seneca belongs, of course, to the later Stoa, yet the emphasis laid by him on philosophy as the science of conduct was common to the early Stoa as well. *Philosophia nihil aliud est quam recta vivendi ratio vel honeste vivendi scientia vel ars rectae vitae agendae. non errabimus, si dixerimus philosophiam esse legem bene honesteque vivendi, et qui dixerit illam regulam vitae, suum illi nomen reddidit.*[2] Philosophy, therefore, is primarily concerned with conduct. Now the end of life, happiness, εὐδαιμονία, consists in Virtue (in the Stoic sense of the term), i.e. in the natural life or life according to nature (ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει ζῆν), the agreement of human action with the law of nature, or of the human will with the divine Will. Hence the famous Stoic maxim, "Live according to nature." For man to conform himself to the laws of the universe in the wide sense, and for man to conform his conduct to his own essential nature, reason, is the same thing, since the universe is governed by the law of nature. While earlier Stoics thought of "Nature," the Φύσις which man should follow, rather as the nature of the universe, later Stoics—from Chrysippus—tended to conceive nature from a more anthropological point of view.

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[1] Trans. by Dr. James Adam, quoted in Hicks' *Stoic and Epicurean*, pp. 14–16 (Longmans, 1910).
[2] Seneca, Frag. 17.

The Stoic conception of life according to nature differs therefore from the old Cynic conception, as exemplified in the conduct and teaching of Diogenes. For the Cynics "nature" meant rather the primitive and instinctive, and so life according to nature implied a deliberate flouting of the conventions and traditions of civilised society, a flouting that externalised itself in conduct that was eccentric and not infrequently indecent. For the Stoics on the other hand, life according to nature meant life according to the principle that is active in nature, λόγος, the principle shared in by the human soul. The ethical end, therefore, according to the Stoics, consists essentially in submission to the divinely appointed order of the world, and Plutarch informs us that it was a general principle of Chrysippus to begin all ethical inquiries with a consideration of the order and arrangement of the universe.[1]

The fundamental instinct implanted in the animal by nature is the instinct of self-preservation, which means for the Stoics pretty well what we would call self-perfection or self-development. Now, man is endowed with reason, the faculty which gives him his superiority over the brute: therefore for man "life in accordance with nature is rightly understood to mean life in accordance with reason. Hence Zeno's definition of the end is to live in conformity with nature, which means to live a life of virtue, since it is to virtue that nature leads. On the other hand, a virtuous life is a life which conforms to our experience of the course of nature, our human natures being but parts of universal nature. Thus the end is a life which follows nature, whereby is meant not only our own nature, but the nature of the universe, a life wherein we do nothing that is forbidden by the universal, i.e. by right reason, which pervades all things and is identical with Zeus, the guide and governor of the universe."[1] Diogenes Laërtius' account of the ethical teaching of the Stoics thus declares that virtue is a life in accordance with nature, while a life in conformity with nature is, i.e. for man, life in accordance with right reason. (As has been pointed out by others, this does not tell us very much, since the statements that it is reasonable to live in accordance with nature and natural to live in accordance with reason do not give much help to determining the content of virtue.)

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[1] Plut., *De Stoic. Repugn.*, c. 9 (1035 a 1–f 22).

Since the Stoics held that everything necessarily obeys the laws of nature, the objection was bound to be raised: "What is the good in telling man to obey the laws of nature, if he cannot help doing so in any case?" The Stoics answered that man is rational and so, though he will follow the laws of nature in any case, he has the privilege of knowing these laws and of assenting to them consciously. Hence there is a purpose in moral exhortation: man is free to change his interior attitude. (This involves, of course, a modification of the deterministic position, to say the least of it —but then no determinists are or can be really consistent, and the Stoics are no exception to the rule.) The consequence is that, strictly speaking, no action is in itself right or wrong, for determinism leaves no place for voluntary action and moral responsibility, while in a monistic system evil is really only evil when seen from some particular standpoint—*sub specie aeternitatis* all is right and good. The Stoics seem to have accepted—theoretically at least—the notion that no actions are wrong in themselves, as when Zeno admitted that not even cannibalism, incest or homosexuality are wrong in themselves.[2] Zeno did not, of course, mean to commend such actions: he meant that the physical act is indifferent, moral evil pertaining to the human will and intention.[3] Cleanthes declared that the human being necessarily follows the path of Destiny: "—if, to evil prone, my will rebelled, I needs must follow still."[4] And the same thought occurs in the celebrated dictum of Seneca, *Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt.*[5] However, the determinism of the Stoics was greatly modified in practice, since the doctrine that the wise man is he who *consciously* follows the path of Destiny (a doctrine brought out in the dictum of Seneca just quoted), when coupled with their exhortatory ethic, implies liberty to a certain extent, as we have already remarked—a man is free to change his inner attitude and to adopt one of submission and resignation rather than of rebellion. Moreover, they admitted a scale of values, as we shall see, and it is at least tacitly implied that the wise man is free to choose the higher values and eschew the lower. But no deterministic system can be consistent in practice, a fact which need cause no surprise, since freedom is an actuality of which we are conscious, and even if it be theoretically denied, it creeps in again through the back door.

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[1] Diog. Laërt., 7, 86 ff.

[2] Von Arnim, *Stoic. Vet. Frag.*, Vol. I, pp. 59–60. (Pearson, pp. 210 ff.)

[3] Cf. Origen, *c. Cels*, 4, 45 (*P.G.*, 11, 1101).

[4] Frag. 91. (Pearson, *The Fragments of Zeno and Cleanthes*, 1891.)

[5] Seneca, *Ep.*, 107, 11.

According to the Stoics virtue alone is a good in the full sense of the word: everything which is neither virtue nor vice is also neither good nor evil but indifferent (ἀδιάφορον). "Virtue is a disposition conformable to reason, desirable in and for itself and not because of any hope or fear or any external motive."[1] It was in accord with this view of the self-sufficiency and self-desirability of virtue that the Platonic myths concerning rewards and punishments in the next life were ridiculed by Chrysippus. (We may compare therewith the doctrine of Kant.) However, in regard to this middle realm of the indifferent the Stoics admitted that some things are preferable (προηγμένα) and others to be rejected (ἀποπροηγμένα), while others again are indifferent in a narrower sense. This was a concession to practice, perhaps at the expense of theory, but it was doubtless demanded by the Stoic doctrine, that virtue consists in conformity to nature. Hence among the morally indifferent things the Stoics introduced a division into (i) those things which are in accordance with nature and to which a value may therefore be ascribed (τὰ προηγμένα); (ii) those things which are contrary to nature and so valueless (τὰ ἀποπροηγμένα); and (iii) those things which possess neither value nor "disvalue" (τὰ ἀπαξία). In this way they constructed a scale of values. Pleasure is a result or accompaniment of activity and may never be made into an end. On this all the Stoics were agreed, though they did not all go so far as Cleanthes, who held that pleasure is not according to nature.

The Cardinal Virtues are Moral Insight (φρόνησις), Courage, Self-control or Temperance, and Justice. These virtues stand or fall together, in the sense that he who possesses one possesses all. Zeno found the common source of all virtues in φρόνησις, while for Cleanthes it was self-mastery, φρόνησις being replaced by ἐγκράτεια.

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[1] Diog. Laërt., 7, 89.

In spite of differences, however, the Stoics in general adhered to the principle that the Virtues are indissolubly connected as expressions of one and the same character, so that the presence of one virtue implies the presence of all. Conversely, they thought that when one vice is present, all the vices must be present. Character, then, is the chief point stressed and truly virtuous conduct—which is fulfilment of duty (τὸ καθῆκον, a term apparently invented by Zeno, but denoting rather what is suitable than duty in our sense) in the right spirit—is performed only by the wise man. The wise man is without passions, and in respect of his interior worth he takes second place to none, not even to Zeus. Moreover, he is lord over his own life, and may commit suicide.

If all the virtues are so bound up with one another that he who possesses the one must possess the others, it is an easy step to supposing that there are no degrees in virtue. Either a man is virtuous, i.e. completely virtuous, or he is not virtuous at all. And this would seem to have been the position of the early Stoics. Thus, according to Chrysippus, a man who has *almost* completed the path of moral progress is not yet virtuous, has not yet that virtue which is true happiness. A consequence of this doctrine is that very few attain to virtue and then only late in life. "Man walks in wickedness all his life, or, at any rate, for the greater part of it. If he ever attains to virtue, it is late and at the very sunset of his days."[1] But while this strict moral idealism is characteristic of the earlier Stoicism, later Stoics emphasised much more the conception of progress, devoting their attention to encouraging man to begin and continue in the path of virtue. Admitting that no individual actually corresponds to the ideal of the wise man, they divided mankind into fools and those who are progressing towards virtue or wisdom.

Characteristic of the Stoic ethic is their doctrine in regard to the passions and affections. These—pleasure (ἡδονή), sorrow or depression (λύπη), desire (ἐπιθυμία) and fear (φόβος) are irrational and unnatural; and so it is not so much a question of moderating and regulating them as of getting rid of them and inducing a state of Apathy. At least when the passions or affections become habits (νόσοι ψυχῆς) they have to be eliminated. Hence the Stoic ethic is in practice largely a fight against the "affections," an endeavour to attain to a state of moral freedom and sovereignty. (The Stoics tended, however, to moderate somewhat this extreme position, and we find some admitting rational emotions—εὐπάθειαι—in the wise man.) A quotation from Seneca well illustrates the Stoic attitude in regard to self-conquest.

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[1] Von Arnim, I, 529, p. 119 (i.e. Sext. Empir., *Adv. Math.*, 9, 90, of Cleanthes).

> *"Quid praecipuum in rebus humanis est ? non classibus maria complesse nec in rubri maris litore signa fixisse nec deficiente ad iniurias terra errasse in oceano ignota quaerentem, sed animo omnia vidisse et, qua maior nulla victoria est, vitia domuisse. Innumerabiles sunt, qui populos, qui urbes habuerunt in potestate, paucissimi qui se. quid est praecipuum ? erigere animum supra minas et promissa fortunae, nihil dignam illam habere putare, quod speres: quid enim habet dignum, quod concupiscas ? qui a divinorum conversatione, quotiens ad humana recideris, non aliter caligabis, quam quorum oculi in densam umbram ex claro sole redierunt. quid est praecipuum ? posse laeto animo tolerare adversa. quidquid acciderit, sic ferre, quasi volueris tibi accidere. debuisses enim velle, si scires omnia ex decreto dei fieri: flere, queri, gemere desciscere est.quid est praecipuum ? in primis labris animam habere. haec res efficit non e iure Quirium liberum, sed e iure naturae. liber enim est, qui servitutem effugit. haec est assidua et ineluctabilis et per diem et per noctem aequaliter premens. sine intervallo, sine commeatu. sibi servire gravissima est servitus: quam discutere facile est, si desieris multa te posceris, si desieris tibi referre mercedem, si ante oculos et naturam tuam et aetatem posueris, licet prima sit, ac tibi ipsi dixeris: quid insanio ? quid anhelo ? quid sudo ? Quid terram, quid forum verso ? nec multo opus est, nec diu."*[1]

This side of the Stoic ethic—namely the endeavour to acquire complete independence of all externals—represents its Cynic heritage; but it has another side, whereby it passes beyond Cynicism and that is its Cosmopolitanism. Every man is naturally a social being, and to live in society is a dictate of reason. But reason is the common essential nature of all men: hence there is but one Law for all men and one Fatherland. The division of mankind into warring States is absurd: the wise man is a citizen, not of this or that particular State, but of the World. From this foundation it follows that all men have a claim to our goodwill, even slaves having their rights and even enemies having a right to our mercy and forgiveness. Now, this transcendence of narrow social limits was obviously favoured by the monism of the Stoic system, but an ethical basis for the Stoic Cosmopolitanism was found in the fundamental instinct or tendency of self-preservation or self-love (οἰκείωσις). In the first place, of course, this instinctive tendency to self-preservation shows itself in the form of self-love, i.e. the individual's self-love. But it extends beyond self-love in the narrow sense to embrace all that belongs to the individual, family, friends, fellow-citizens and, finally, the whole of humanity. It is naturally stronger in regard to what stands closer to the individual, and grows weaker in proportion as the object is more remote, so that the individual's task, from the ethical viewpoint, is to raise the οἰκείωσις to the same pitch of intensity in regard to the remote objects as it manifests in regard to the nearer objects. In other words, the ethical ideal is attained when we love all men as we love ourselves or when our self-love embraces all that is connected with the self, including humanity at large, with an equal intensity.

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[1] Seneca, *Nat. Quaest.*, III, Praef., 10–17.

CHAPTER XXXVII

EPICUREANISM

1. THE founder of the Epicurean School, Epicurus, was born at Samos in 342/1 B.C. At Samos he listened to Pamphilus, a Platonist,[1] and then at Teos to Nausiphanes, a follower of Democritus, who exercised considerable influence upon him, in spite of Epicurus' later contentions.[2] When eighteen, Epicurus came to Athens for his military service, and then seems to have given himself to study at Colophon. In 310 he taught at Mitylene—though he afterwards transferred to Lampsacus—and in 307/6 he moved to Athens and there opened his School.[3] This School was instituted in Epicurus' own garden, and we learn from Diogenes Laërtius that the philosopher in his will bequeathed the house and garden to his disciples. From the situation of the School the Epicureans got the name of οἱ ἀπὸ τῶν κήπων. Almost divine honours were paid to Epicurus even in his lifetime, and this cult of the founder is no doubt responsible for the fact that philosophic orthodoxy was maintained among the Epicureans more than in any other School. The chief doctrines were given the pupils to learn by heart.[4]

Epicurus was a voluminous writer (according to Diog. Laërt. he wrote about 300 works), but most of his writings are lost. However, Diogenes Laërtius has given us three didactic letters, of which the letters to Herodotus and Menoeceus are considered authentic while that to Pythocles is considered to be an extract from Epicurus' writing made by a pupil. Fragments have also been preserved of his chief work, Περὶ Φύσεως, from the library of the Epicurean Piso (thought to be L. Piso, Consul in 58 B.C.).

Epicurus was succeeded as Scholarch by Hermarchus of Mitylene, who was in turn succeeded by Polystratus. An immediate disciple of Epicurus, together with Hermarchus and Polyaenus, was Metrodorus of Lampsacus. Cicero heard Phaedrus (Scholarch at Athens about 78–70) at Rome about 90 B.C But the best-known disciple of the School is the Latin poet, T. Lucretius Carus (91–51 B.C.), who expressed the Epicurean philosophy in

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Diog. Laërt., 10, 14.

[2] Cic., *De Nat. D.*, I, 26, 73; Diog. Laërt., 10, 8.

[3] Diog. Laërt., 10, 2.

[4] Diog. Laërt., 10, 12.

his poem *De Rerum Natura*, having as his chief aim the liberation of men from the fear of the gods and of death and the leading of them to peace of soul.

II. *The Canonic*

Epicurus was not interested in dialectic or logic as such, and the only part of logic to which he paid any attention was that dealing with the criterion of truth. That is to say, he was interested in dialectic only in so far as it directly subserved Physics. But Physics again interested him only in so far as it subserved Ethics. Epicurus therefore concentrated on Ethics even more than did the Stoics, depreciating all purely scientific pursuits and declaring mathematics useless, since it has no connection with the conduct of life. (Metrodorus declared that "It need not trouble any one, if he had never read a line of Homer and did not know whether Hector was a Trojan or a Greek.")[1] One of Epicurus' reasons for objecting to mathematics was that it is not substantiated by sense-knowledge, since in the real world the geometer's points, lines and surfaces are nowhere to be found. Now, sense-knowledge is the fundamental basis of all knowledge. "If you fight against all your sensations, you will have no standard to which to refer and thus no means of judging even those sensations which you pronounce false."[2] Lucretius asks what can be accounted of higher certainty than sense. Reason, by which we judge of sense-data, is itself wholly founded on the senses, and if the senses are untrue, then all reason as well is rendered false.[3] Moreover, the Epicureans pointed out that in astronomical questions, for instance, we cannot attain certainty, as we can argue for this position just as well as for that position, e.g. "For the heavenly phenomena may depend for their production on many different causes."[4] (It must be remembered that the Greeks lacked our modern scientific appliances, and that their opinions on scientific subjects were, very largely, of the nature of guesses, unsubstantiated by exact observation.)

Epicurus' Logic or Canonic deals with the norms or canons of knowledge and the criteria of truth. The fundamental criterion of truth is Perception (ἡ αἴσθησις), in which we attain what is clear (ἡ ἐνάργεια). Perception takes place when images (εἴδωλα) of objects penetrate the sense-organs (cf. Democritus and Empedocles), and is always true. It is to be noted that the Epicureans included under perception imaginative representations (φανταστικαὶ ἐπιβολαὶ τῆς διανοίας), *all* perception taking place through the reception of εἴδωλα. When these images stream continuously from the same object and enter by the sense-organs, we have perception in the narrower sense: when, however, individual images enter through the pores of the body they become, as it were, mixed up and imaginative pictures arise, e.g. of a centaur. In either case we have "perception," and, as both sorts of images arise from objective causes, both types of perception are true. How then does error arise? Only through *judgment*. If, for instance, we judge that an image corresponds exactly to an external object, when in point of fact it does not so correspond, we are in error. (The difficulty, of course, is to know when the image corresponds to an external object and when it does not, and when it corresponds perfectly or imperfectly; and on this point the Epicureans give us no help.)

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[1] Frag. 24. (Metrodori Epicurei Fragmenta, A. Körte, 1890.) But cf. Sext. Emp., *Adv. Math.*, I, 49.

[2] Diog. Laërt., 10, 146.

[3] Cf. *De Rerum Nat.*, IV, 478–99.

[4] Diog. Laërt., 10, 86.

The first criterion is therefore Perception. A second criterion is afforded by Concepts (προλήψεις). The concept, according to the Epicureans, is simply a memory image (μνήμη τοῦ πολλάκις ἔξωθεν φανέντος).[1] After we have had perception of an object, e.g. of a man, the memory image or general image of man arises when we hear the word "man." These προλήψεις are always true, and it is only when we proceed to form opinions or judgments that the question of truth or falsity arises. If the opinion or judgment (ὑπόληψις) has reference to the future, then it must be confirmed by experience, while if it has reference to hidden and unperceived causes (e.g. the atoms) it must at least not contradict experience.

There is yet a third criterion, namely feelings or πάθη, which are criteria for conduct. Thus the feeling of pleasure is the criterion of what we should choose, while the feeling of pain shows us what we should avoid. Hence Epicurus could say that "the criteria of truth are the senses, and the preconceptions, and the passions."[2]

III. *The Physics*

Epicurus' choice of a physical theory was determined by a practical end, that of freeing man from the fear of the gods and of the afterworld and so giving them peace of soul. While not

[1] Diog. Laërt., 10, 33.

[2] Diog. Laërt., 10, 31.

denying the existence of the gods he wished to show that they do not interfere in human affairs and that man need not therefore occupy himself with propitiation and petition and "superstition" in general. Moreover, by rejecting immortality he hoped to free man from fear of death—for what reason is there to fear death when it is mere extinction, absence of all consciousness and feeling, when there is no judgment and when no punishment awaits one in the afterworld? "Death is nothing to us; for that which is dissolved is devoid of sensation, and that which is devoid of sensation is nothing to us."[1] Moved by these considerations Epicurus chose the system of Democritus (which he adopted with but slight modifications), since this system seemed best calculated to serve his end. Did it not explain all phenomena by the mechanical motions of atoms, thus rendering any recourse to divine intervention superfluous and did it not afford an easy handle for the rejection of immortality—the soul, as well as the body, being composed of atoms? This practical aim of the Epicurean Physics appears in a marked manner in Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, clothed in the splendid language and imagery of the poet.

Nothing proceeds from nothing, nothing passes into nothingness, declared Epicurus, re-echoing the thought of the old Cosmologists. "And, first of all, we must admit that nothing can come out of that which does not exist; for, were the fact otherwise, everything would be produced from everything and there would be no need of any seed. And if that which disappeared were so absolutely destroyed as to become non-existent, then everything would soon perish, as the things with which they would be dissolved would have no existence."[2] We may compare the lines of Lucretius, *Nunc age, res quoniam docui non posse creari de nilo neque item genitas ad nil revocari.*[3] The bodies of our experience are composed of pre-existing material entities—atoms—and their perishing is but a resolution into the entities of which they are composed. The ultimate constituents of the universe are therefore atoms, Atoms and the Void. "Now the universal whole is a body; for our senses bear us witness in every case that bodies have a real existence; and the evidence of the senses, as I have said before, ought to be the rule of our reasonings about everything which is not directly perceived. Otherwise, if that which we call the vacuum, or space, or intangible nature, had not a real existence, there would be nothing in which the bodies could be contained, or across which they could move, as we see that they really do move. Let us add to this reflection that one cannot conceive, either in virtue of perception, or of any analogy founded on perception, any general quality peculiar to all beings which is not either an attribute, or an accident of the body, or of the vacuum."[1] These atoms vary in size, form and weight (the Epicureans certainly attributed weight to the atoms, whatever the earlier atomists may have done) and are indivisible and infinite in number. In the beginning they rained down through the void or empty space, though Lucretius compares their motion to that of motes in a sunbeam, and it may be that the Epicureans did not think of the atoms as ever in actuality raining down in parallel straight lines—a conception which would make the "collision" very much of a *deus ex machina*.

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[1] Diog. Laërt., 10, 139. [2] Diog. Laërt., 10, 38–9. [3] *De Rerum Nat.*, I, 265–6.

In order to account for the origin of the world, Epicurus had to allow for a collision of atoms: moreover he wished at the same time to afford some explanation of human freedom (which the School maintained). He postulated, therefore, a spontaneous oblique movement or declination from the straight line of descent on the part of individual atoms. Thus occurred the first collision of atoms, and from the collision and the entanglements consequent on the deviation the rotary movements were set up which led to the formation of innumerable worlds, separated from one another by empty spaces (the μεταϰόσμια or *intermundia*). The human soul is also composed of atoms, smooth and round, but in distinction to the animals it possesses a rational part which is seated in the breast, as is shown by the emotions of fear and joy. The irrational part, the principle of life, is spread throughout the whole body. At death the atoms of the soul are separated, and there can be no more perception: death is the privation of perception (στέρησις αἰσθήσεως).

The world is, therefore, due to mechanical causes and there is no need to postulate teleology. On the contrary, the Epicureans entirely rejected the anthropocentric teleology of the Stoics and would have nothing to do with the Stoic theodicy. The evil with which human life is afflicted is irreconcilable with any idea of divine guidance in the universe. The gods dwell in the *intermundia*, beautiful and happy and without thought of human affairs, eating and drinking and speaking Greek!

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[1] Diog. Laërt., 10, 39–40.

Apparet divinum numen sedesque quietae
Quas neque concutiunt venti nec nubila nimbis
Aspergunt neque nix acri concreta pruina
Cana cadens violat semperque innubilus aether
Integit, et largo diffuso lumine rident.[1]

The gods are anthropomorphically conceived, for they too are composed of atoms—even if of the finest atoms and possessing only ethereal or quasi-bodies—and are divided sexually: they are like to mankind in appearance and breathe and eat as we do. Epicurus not only needed the gods in order to present them as an embodiment of his ethical ideal of calm tranquillity, but he also considered that the universality of belief in the gods can only be explained on the hypothesis of their objective existence. εἴδωλα come to us from the gods, especially in sleep, but perception presents us only with the existence and anthropomorphic character of the gods: knowledge of their happy condition is attained by reason or λόγος. Men may honour the gods for their excellence and may even take part in the customary ceremonial worship, but all fear of them is out of place and also all attempts to win their favour by sacrifices. True piety consists in right thought.

nec pietas ullast velatum saepe videri
vertier ad lapidem atque omnis accedere ad aras
nec procumbere humi prostratum et pandere palmas
ante deum delubra nec aras sanguine multo
spargere quadrupedum nec votis nectere vota,
sed mage pacata posse omnia mente tueri.'[2]

The wise man, therefore, does not fear death—for death is mere extinction—nor the gods—for they are unconcerned with human affairs and exact no retribution. We may recall the celebrated lines of Virgil:

felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas:
atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
subiecit pedibus strepitumque Acherontis avari.[3]

IV. *The Epicurean Ethic*

Like the Cyrenaics Epicurus made *pleasure* the end of life. Every being strives after pleasure, and it is in pleasure that happiness consists. "... we affirm that pleasure is the beginning and end of living happily; for we have recognised this as the first good, being connate with us; and it is with reference to it that we begin every choice and avoidance; and to this we come as if we judged of all good by passion as the standard . . ."[1] The question then arises what Epicurus understands by pleasure, when he makes it the end of life. Two facts are to be noted: first, that Epicurus meant, not the pleasures of the moment, individual sensations, but the pleasure which endures throughout a lifetime; and secondly, that pleasure for Epicurus consisted rather in the absence of pain than in positive satisfaction. This pleasure is to be found pre-eminently in serenity of soul (ἡ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀταραξία). With this serenity of soul Epicurus conjoined also health of body, but the emphasis is rather on intellectual pleasure, for, while very severe bodily pains are of short duration, less severe pains may be overcome or rendered endurable by intellectual pleasures. ". . . a correct theory . . . can refer all choice and avoidance to the health of the body and the freedom from disquietude of the soul." ". . . at times we pass over many pleasures when any difficulty is likely to ensue from them; and we think many pains better than pleasures when a greater pleasure follows them, if we endure the pain for a time."[2] When Epicurus speaks of choice among pleasures and rejects certain pleasures, it is to the permanence of pleasure that he is looking, and to the presence or absence of subsequent pain, for there is really no room in his ethic for a discrimination between pleasures that is based on a difference of moral value. (Though we may well discern a differentiation of pleasures on grounds of moral value creeping in unawares—as it is bound to do in any hedonistic ethic, unless the hedonist is prepared to admit that the "basest" pleasures are on the same level as the more refined pleasures. And what serious moral philosopher has ever been prepared to admit that, without introducing qualifications that suggest another criterion beside pleasure?) "Every pleasure is therefore a good on account of its own nature, but it does not follow that every pleasure is worthy of being chosen; just as every pain is an evil, and yet every pain must not be avoided." "When, therefore, we say that pleasure is a chief good, we are not speaking of the pleasures of the debauched man, or those which lie in sensual enjoyment, as some think who are ignorant, and who do not entertain our opinions, or else interpret them perversely; but we mean the freedom of the body from pain

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[1] *De Rerum Nat.*, III, 18–22.
[2] *De Rerum Nat.*, V, 1198–1203.
[3] *Georgics*, II, 490–2.

[1] Diog. Laërt., 10, 129.

[2] Diog. Laërt., 10, 128 and 129.

and of the soul from confusion. For it is not continued drinkings and revels . . . that make life pleasant, but sober contemplations, which examine into the reasons for all choice and avoidance, and which put to flight the vain opinions from which the greater part of the confusion arises which troubles the soul."[1] "No pleasure is intrinsically bad: but the efficient causes of some pleasures bring with them a great many perturbations of pleasure."[2]

In practice we have to consider whether any individual pleasure may not be productive of greater pain and any individual pain may not be productive of greater pleasure. For instance, an individual pleasure might be very intense for the moment but might lead to ill-health or to enslavement to a habit; in which case it would be productive of greater pain. Conversely, a pain might be intense for the moment—as in an operation—and yet be productive of a greater good, health. Therefore, although every pain, abstractly considered, is an evil, and every pleasure is a good, we must in practice look to the future and endeavour to attain the maximum of durable pleasure—in Epicurus' opinion, health of body and tranquillity of soul. Epicurean hedonism would not then result in libertinism and excess, but in a calm and tranquil life; for a man is unhappy either from fear or from unlimited and vain desires, and if he but bridle these he may secure for himself the blessings of reason. The wise man will not multiply his needs, since that is to multiply sources of pain: he will rather reduce his needs to a minimum. (The Epicureans even went so far as to say that the wise man can be perfectly happy even when undergoing bodily torture. Thus Epicurus declared that, "Though he is being tortured on the rack, the wise man is still happy."[3] An extreme statement of this position is found in the saying: "If the wise man is being burned, if he is being tortured—nay, within the very bull of Phalaris, he will say: 'How delightful this is! How little I care for it'!"[4]) Hence the Epicurean ethic leads to a moderate asceticism, self-control and independence. "To accustom one's self, therefore, to simple and inexpensive habits is a great ingredient in the perfecting of health, and makes a man free from hesitation with respect to the necessary uses of life."[5]

Virtue is a condition of ἀταραξία or tranquillity of soul, though of course its value is estimated by Epicurus according to its power of producing pleasure. Virtues such as simplicity, moderation, temperance, cheerfulness, are much more conducive to pleasure and happiness than are unbridled luxury, feverish ambition and so on. "It is not possible to live pleasantly without living prudently, and honourably, and justly; nor to live prudently, and honourably, and justly, without living pleasantly. But he to whom it does not happen to live prudently, honourably, and justly, cannot possibly live pleasantly." "The just man is the freest of all men from disquietude; but the unjust man is a perpetual prey to it." "Injustice is not intrinsically bad; it has this character only because there is joined with it a fear of not escaping those who are appointed to punish actions marked with that character." "When, without any fresh circumstances arising, a thing which has been declared just in practice does not agree with the impressions of reason, that is a proof that the thing was not really just. In the same way, when in consequence of new circumstances, a thing which has been pronounced just does not any longer appear to agree with utility, the thing which was just, inasmuch as it was useful to the social relations and intercourse of mankind, ceases to be just at the moment when it ceases to be useful."[1] Moreover, in spite of the fact that the ethic of the Epicureans is fundamentally selfish or egocentric, in that it is based on the individual's pleasure, it was not in practice so selfish as it might sound. Thus the Epicureans thought that it is really pleasanter to do a kindness than to receive one, and the founder himself was commended for his contented and kind character. "He who desires to live tranquilly without having anything to fear from other men, ought to make himself friends; those whom he cannot make friends of, he should, at least, avoid rendering enemies; and if that is not in his power, he should, as far as possible, avoid all intercourse with them, and keep them aloof, as far as it is for his interest to do so." "The happiest men are they who have arrived at the point of having nothing to fear from those who surround them. Such men live with one another most agreeably, having the firmest grounds of confidence in one another, enjoying the advantages of friendship in all their fullness, and not lamenting, as a pitiable circumstance, the premature death of their friends."[2] It is probably true to say that Epicurus' practical moral judgment was sounder than the theoretical foundations of his ethic, an ethic which could obviously give little account of moral obligation.

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[1] Diog. Laërt., 10, 129 and 131-2.

[2] Diog. Laërt., 10, 141.

[3] Diog. Laërt., 10, 118.

[4] Cic., *Tusc.*, 2, 7, 17.

[5] Diog. Laërt., 10, 131.

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[1] Diog. Laërt., 10; Maxims, 5, 17, 37, 42.

[2] Diog. Laërt., 10, 154.

Owing to the fact that man should not pursue heedlessly the first pleasure that offers itself, there is need of an art of calculation or mensuration in the conduct of life. We must therefore practise συμμέτρησις, and it is in the right mensuration of pleasures and pains, in the ability to take into account and balance one against another present or future happiness and unhappiness, that the essence of insight or φρόνησις, the highest virtue, consists. If a man is to live a truly happy, pleasurable and contented life, he must possess this insight, he must be φρόνιμος. "Now, the beginning and the greatest good of all these things is prudence, on which account prudence is something more valuable than even philosophy, inasmuch as all the other virtues spring from it, teaching us that it is not possible to live pleasantly unless one also lives prudently, and honourably, and justly; and that one cannot live prudently, and honourably, and justly, without living pleasantly; for the virtues are connate with living agreeably, and living agreeably is inseparable from the virtues."[1] When a man is φρόνιμος, he is virtuous, for the virtuous man is not so much the person who is actually enjoying pleasure at any given moment as the man who knows how to conduct himself in the search for pleasure. Once virtue has been thus defined, it is obvious that it is an absolutely necessary condition for lasting happiness.

Epicurus laid great stress on *Friendship*. "Of all the things which wisdom provides for the happiness of the whole life, by far the most important is the acquisition of friendship."[2] This may seem strange in a fundamentally egoistic ethic, but the emphasis on friendship is itself based on egoistic considerations, namely that without friendship a man cannot live a secure and tranquil life, while on the other hand friendship gives pleasure. Friendship rests, therefore, on an egoistic basis, the thought of personal advantage. This egoism was, however, modified through the Epicurean doctrine that an unselfish affection arises in the course of the friendship and that in a friendship a wise man loves the friend as he does himself. Nevertheless it remains true that the social theory of the Epicureans is egoistic in character, a fact that comes out clearly in their teaching that the wise man will not mix himself up in politics, as this disturbs tranquillity of soul. There are, however, two exceptions: the first, that of the man who needs to take part in politics in order to ensure his own personal security, the second, that of a man who has such an urge towards a political career that ἀταραξία would be quite impossible for him, were he to remain in retirement.

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[1] Diog. Laërt., 10, 132.

[2] Diog. Laërt., 10, 148.

Pleasure and personal advantage are again decisive for the Epicurean theory of law. It is pleasanter to live in a society where law reigns and "rights" are respected than in a condition of *bellum omnium contra omnes*. The latter condition would be by no means favourable to tranquillity of soul or to ἀταραξία.

The Epicureans, as we have seen, went back to the School of Leucippus and Democritus for their Physics, as the Stoa went back to the Cosmology of Heraclitus. The Epicurean ethics, on the other hand, are more or less in agreement with that of the Cyrenaics. Both Aristippus and Epicurus make pleasure the end of life, and in both Schools attention is paid to the future, to calculation, to the "measuring" of pleasures and pains. There are, however, differences between the Epicureans and the Cyrenaics. For while the latter—in general, that is to say—considered *positive* pleasure (the smooth movement or λεία κίνησις) to be the end, the Epicureans stressed more the negative side, calm and tranquillity, ἡ καταστηματικὴ ἡδονή. Again, while the Cyrenaics considered bodily suffering worse than mental suffering, the Epicureans accounted mental suffering worse than bodily suffering, on the ground that the body suffers only from present evil whereas the soul can suffer also from the recollection of past evil and the expectation or fear of future evil. All the came it can be truly said that Cyrenaicism was absorbed in Epicureanism. Did not Epicurus agree with the Cyrenaic Hegesias in laying the emphasis on absence of suffering and with Anniceris in recommending to the wise the cultivation of friendship?

The Epicurean philosophy is, therefore, not a philosophy of heroes, nor has it the moral grandeur of the Stoic creed. Yet it is neither so selfish nor so "immoral" as its fundamental tenet might at first sight imply, and its attraction for certain types of men is easily understandable. It is certainly not a heroic creed or philosophy; but it was not meant by its author to be an incentive to base living, whatever its tenets might lead to in popular application to practice.

Note on Cynicism in the First Period of the Hellenistic Epoch

Cynicism in this period tended to lose its serious character of emphasis on independence, suppression of desire and physical endurance, and to give itself rather to mockery of convention and tradition and prevailing beliefs and modes of behaviour. Not of course that this tendency was absent from the earlier Cynicism —we have only to think of Diogenes—but it showed itself in this period through the new literary genre of the satire or σπουδογέλοιον. In the first half of the third century B.C., *Bion of Borysthenes*, influenced by Cyrenaicism (he had listened to the Cyrenaic Theodorus at Athens), propagated the so-called "hedonistic Cynicism" in his "diatribes," dwelling on the happiness and pleasurable character of the simple Cynic life. *Teles*, who taught at Megara about 240 B.C., followed Bion in the composition of such "diatribes"—popular and anecdotal pieces—dealing with appearance and reality, poverty and riches, cynical "apathy," etc.

Menippus of Gadara (about 250 B.C.) created the Satire, in which he combined poetry with prose, criticised under various forms—e.g. journeys to Hades, letters to the gods—natural philosophy and specialist learning, and mocked at the idolatrous honour paid to Epicurus by his followers. He was imitated by Varro, Seneca in his *Apocolocyntosis*, and Lucian.

Cercides of Megalopolis, composer of meliambs, displayed the same satyric tone, declaring, for example, that he would leave to the μετεωροσκόποι the solution of the ticklish question, why Cronus showed himself a father to some people and a stepfather to others.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE OLDER SCEPTICS, THE MIDDLE AND NEW ACADEMIES

1. *The Older Sceptics*

JUST as in the Stoa and in the Garden of Epicurus theory was subordinated to practice, so in the School of Pyrrho, the founder of Scepticism, though there is of course this big difference, that whereas the Stoics and Epicureans looked to science or positive knowledge as a means to peace of soul, the Sceptics sought to attain the same end by the disavowal of knowledge, i.e. by scepticism, the opposite of science.

Pyrrho of Elis (*c*. 360–*c*. 270), who is said to have accompanied Alexander on his march to India,[1] was apparently influenced by the Democritean theory of the sense-qualities, the relativism of the Sophists and the Cyrenaic epistemology. He taught that the human reason cannot penetrate to the inner substance of things (things are ἀκατάληπτα in our regard):[2] we can only know how things appear to us. The same things appear differently to different people, and we cannot know which is right: to any assertion we could oppose the contradictory assertion with equally good grounds (ἰσοθένεια τῶν λόγων). We cannot, therefore, be certain of anything and the wise man will withhold his judgment (ἐπέχειν). Rather than say, "This is so," we should say, "So it appears to me" or "It may be so."

The same scepticism and consequent suspension of judgment is extended to the practical sphere. Nothing is in itself ugly or beautiful, right or wrong, or at least we cannot be sure of it: all external things in our lives are indifferent and the wise man will aim simply at tranquillity of soul and endeavour to preserve his soul in that condition. It is true that even the wise man cannot avoid acting and taking part in practical life, but he will follow in practice probable opinion, custom and law, conscious that absolute truth is unattainable.

Diogenes Laërtius informs us that Pyrrho expressed his philosophical views only by word of mouth,[3] but his views are known through those of his pupil *Timon of Phlius* (*c*. 320–230 B.C.), who is called by Sextus Empiricus ὁ προφήτης τῶν Πύρρωνος λόγων.[1] Timon composed Σίλλοι or mocking verses, in which he parodied Homer and Hesiod and made fun of the Greek philosophers, with the exception of Xenophanes and Pyrrho himself. According to Timon we can trust neither sense-perception nor reason. We must accordingly suspend all judgment, not allowing ourselves to be caught in any theoretical assertion, and then we shall attain to true ἀταραξία or tranquillity of soul.

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[1] Diog. Laërt., 9, 61.

[2] Diog. Laërt., Proem., 16.

[3] Diog. Laërt., Proem., 16; 9, 102.

(Cicero apparently did not know of Pyrrho as a Sceptic, but considered him rather as a moralist who preached and practised indifference towards external things. It may be, then, that Pyrrho did not personally develop the Sceptic position. But as he left no writings, we can hardly attain certainty on this point.)

II. *The Middle Academy*

Plato had held that the objects of sense-perception are not the objects of true knowledge, but he was very far from being a Sceptic, the whole point of his Dialectic being the attainment of true and certain knowledge of the eternal and abiding. A sceptical current of thought manifests itself, however, in what is known as the Second or Middle Academy, a scepticism directed principally against the Stoic dogmatism but also expressed in universal terms. Thus *Arcesilaus* (315/14–241/40), the founder of the Middle Academy, is reputed to have said that he was certain of nothing—not even of the fact that he was certain of nothing,[2] thus going further than Socrates, who knew that he knew nothing. He practised therefore a similar suspension of judgment or ἐποχή to that of the Pyrrhonists.[3] While trying to support his position by the example and practice of Socrates, Arcesilaus made the Stoic epistemology a special object of attack. No representation is given that might not be false: none of our sense-perceptions or presentations possess the guarantee of their own objective validity, for we may feel an equally intense subjective certainty even when the presentation is objectively false. We can therefore never be certain.

III. *The New Academy*

1. The founder of the Third or New Academy was *Carneades of Cyrene* (214/12–129/8 B.C.), who accompanied the Stoic

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[1] *Adv. Math.*, I, 53. [2] Cic., *Acad. Post* I, 12, 45. [3] Cic., *de Orat.*, 3, 18, 67.

Diogenes on the embassy to Rome in 156/5. Following the scepticism of Arcesilaus, Carneades taught that knowledge is impossible and that there is no criterion of truth. Against the Stoics he maintained that there is no sense-presentation by the side of which we could not place a false presentation that is indistinguishable from the true, appealing to the influence upon us of presentations in e.g. dreams, presentations which are, however, unreal, and to the facts of hallucination and delusion. Impressions of sense are, therefore, not infallible, and the Stoics cannot look to reason as a remedy, since they themselves admit that concepts are founded on experience.[1]

We are unable to prove anything, since any proof rests on assumptions which must themselves be proved. But this latter proof will itself rest on assumptions, and so on indefinitely. All dogmatic philosophy is accordingly out of the question: for either side in a question equally good—or equally bad—reasons can be adduced. Carneades attacked the Stoic theology, trying to show that their proofs for God's existence are not conclusive and that their doctrine as to God's Nature contained antinomies.[2] For example, the Stoics appealed to the *consensus gentium* as an argument for the divine existence. Now, if they can prove this *consensus gentium*, then they have proved a universal *belief* in the divine existence, but that does not prove that there *are* gods. And on what grounds do the Stoics assert that the Universe is wise and rational? It must first be proved to be *animate*, and this they have not proved. If they argue that there must be a universal Reason, from which man's reason proceeds, they have first to prove that the human mind cannot be the spontaneous product of nature. Again, the argument from design is not conclusive. If the universe is a designed product, then there must be a Designer; but the whole point at issue is, whether the universe is a designed product or not. Might it not be the undesigned product of natural forces?

The Stoic God is animate and so must be possessed of feeling. But if he can feel and receive impressions, then he can suffer from impressions and is ultimately liable to disintegration. Moreover, if God is rational and perfect, as the Stoics suppose Him to be, He cannot be "virtuous," as the Stoics also suppose Him to be. How, for example, can God be brave or courageous? What dangers or pains or labours affect Him, in respect of which He can show courage?

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[1] Cf. Sext. Emp., *Adv. Math.*, 7, 159 and 166 ff.; Civ., *Acad. Prior.*, 2, 30, 98 ff.

[2] Cf. Sext. Emp., *Adv. Math.*, 9, 13 ff.; Cic., *De Nat. D.*, 3, 17, 44; 3, 29 ff.

The Stoics maintain a doctrine of Divine Providence. But if this be so, how can they explain the presence of e.g. poisonous snakes? The Stoics say that God's Providence is manifested in His gift of reason to man. Now, the great majority of men use this reason to degrade themselves, so that to such men the possession of reason is an injury and not a benefit. If God really exercised Providence over all men, He should have made all men good and given all *right* reason. Moreover, it is useless for Chrysippus to speak of "neglect" on the part of God—i.e. in regard to "little" matters. In the first place what Providence has neglected to provide for, is not a little matter: in the second place, the neglect could not be intentional in God (for intentional neglect is a fault even in an earthly ruler); while in the third place unintentional neglect is inconceivable in respect of the Infinite Reason.

These and other criticisms of Carneades are directed against the Stoic doctrines, and so they are, in part, of but academic interest. By maintaining a materialistic doctrine of God the Stoics involved themselves in insurmountable difficulties, for if God were material He could disintegrate, and if He were the Soul of the world—possessed of a body—He could feel pleasure and pain. Criticisms against such a conception of the Deity can have for us no more than academic interest. Moreover, we would not dream of ascribing virtues to God in the anthropomorphic manner that the line of criticism adopted by Carneades presupposes. Nor would we undertake to prove in philosophy that everything is created for the good of man. Yet some of the difficulties raised by Carneades are of lasting interest, and an attempt must be made to meet them in every Theodicy, e.g. the presence of physical suffering and of moral evil in the world. I have already made some remarks on this subject when treating of the Stoic theodicy, and I hope to show later on, how other philosophers, mediaeval and modern, tried to answer these questions; but it must always be remembered that, even if the human reason is unable to answer fully and with complete satisfaction all the difficulties that can be raised against a position, that does not compel us to abandon that position, if it rests on valid argument.

Carneades saw that complete suspension of judgment is impossible, and so he elaborated a theory of Probability (πιθανότης). Probability has various grades and is both necessary and sufficient for action. He showed, for example, how we may approximate to the truth—even if we can never attain certainty—by the accumulation of reasons for accepting some position. If I merely saw the shape of someone I knew, it might be an hallucination, but if I hear the person speak, if I touch him, if he eats, I may for all practical purposes accept the presentation as true. It enjoys a very high degree of probability, especially if it is also intrinsically probable that the person should be in that place at that time. If a man leaves his wife in England and goes to India on business, he might well doubt the objective validity of the presentation, if he seems to see his wife on the quay when he disembarks at Bombay. But if, on returning to England, he finds his wife waiting for him on the landing-stage, the validity of the presentation bears its own inherent probability.

2. The Academy returned to dogmatism under *Antiochus* of Ascalon (d. *c.* 68 B.C.), who apparently started as an agnostic but later came to abandon this position,[1] and whose lectures were heard by Cicero in the winter of 79/8. He pointed out the contradiction involved in asserting that nothing is knowable or that all is doubtful; for, in asserting that all is doubtful, I am at any rate asserting my knowledge that all is doubtful. His own criterion of truth he apparently found in the agreement of eminent philosophers and endeavoured to show that the Academic, Peripatetic and Stoic systems were in essential agreement with each other. In fact he openly taught Stoic doctrines, shamelessly asserting that Zeno had borrowed them from the old Academy. He thus tried to deprive the Sceptics of one of their principal arguments, namely, the contradiction between the various philosophic systems. He shows himself at the same time to be an Eclectic.

This eclectic tendency comes out in his moral teaching. For, while holding with the Stoics that virtue is sufficient for happiness, he also taught with Aristotle that for happiness in its highest degree external goods and health of the body are also necessary. In spite of the fact, then, that Cicero declares him to have been more of a Stoic than an Academician,[2] Antiochus was undoubtedly an Eclectic.

3. A Roman Eclectic was *M. Terentius Varro* (116–27 B.C.),

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[1] Cic., *Acad. Prior.*, 2, 22, 69; Numenius cited by Euseb., *Prep. Evang.*, 614, 9, 2 (*P.G.* 21, 1216–17); Aug., *contra Acad.*, 2, 6, 15; 3, 18, 41.

[2] Cic., *Acad. Prior.*, 2, 43, 132.

scholar and philosopher. The only true theology in Varro's opinion is that which recognises *one* God, Who is the Soul of the world, which He governs according to reason. The mythical theology of the poets is to be rejected on the ground that it attributed unworthy characteristics and actions to the gods, while the physical theologies of the natural philosophers contradict one another. We must not, however, neglect the official cult of the State, since this has a practical and popular value. Varro even suggested that the popular religion was the work of earlier statesmen, and that if the work had to be done over again, it might be done better in the light of philosophy.[1]

Varro seems to have been greatly influenced by Poseidonius. From the latter he accepted many theories concerning the origin and development of culture, geography, hydrology, etc., and by his exposition of these theories he influenced later Romans such as Vitruvius and Pliny. Varro's tendency to Pythagorean "number-mysticism" also derives from the thought of Poseidonius and thereby he influenced later writers like Gellius, Macrobius and Martianus Capella. Cynic influence is visible in Varro's *Saturae Menippeae*, of which we possess only fragments. Therein he opposed Cynic simplicity to the luxury of the rich, whose gluttony he subjected to mockery, and he made fun of the philosophers' squabbles.

4. The most celebrated of all Roman eclectics is *M. Tullius Cicero*, the great orator (Jan. 3rd 106–Dec. 7, 43 B.C.). In his youth Cicero was a pupil of Phaedrus the Epicurean, Philon the Academician, Diodotus the Stoic, Antiochus of Ascalon, and Zeno the Epicurean. In Rhodes he listened to the teaching of Poseidonius the Stoic. To the philosophic studies of his youth at Athens and Rhodes there succeeded years spent in public life and official activity, but in the last three years of his life Cicero returned to philosophy. The majority of his philosophic writings date from these later years (e.g. the *Paradoxa*, the *Consolatio*, the *Hortensius*, the *Academica*, the *De Finibus*, the *Tusculana*, the *De Natura Deorum*, the *De Senectute*, the *De Divinatione*, the *De Fato*, the *De Amicitia*, the *De Virtutibus*). The *De Republica* (54 B.C. seq.) and the *De Legibus* (*c.* 52 seq.) are earlier compositions. The writings of Cicero are scarcely to be called original in content, as Cicero himself openly admits—"*ἀπόγραφα sunt, minore labore fiunt, verba tantum affero, quibus abundo.*"[2] He had,

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[1] *De Civit. Dei*, 6, 4.

[2] *Ad. Att.*, 12, 52, 3.

however, the gift of presenting the doctrine of the Greeks to Roman readers in a clear style.

While Cicero was unable to effect a scientific refutation of Scepticism (he was inclined to the latter, owing to the conflict of opposing philosophical Schools and doctrines), he found a refuge in the intuitions of the moral consciousness, which are immediate and certain. Realising the danger of Scepticism for morality, he sought to place the moral judgment beyond its corroding influence and speaks of *notiones innatae, natura nobis insitae.* These moral concepts proceed therefore from our nature, and they are confirmed by general agreement—*consensus gentium.*

In his ethical doctrine Cicero was inclined to agree with the Stoics that virtue is sufficient for happiness, but he could not bring himself to reject altogether the Peripatetic teaching, which attributed value to external goods as well, though he seems to have hesitated somewhat in his opinion on this matter.[1] He agreed with the Stoics that the wise man should be without πάθη[2] and combated the Peripatetic teaching that virtue is a mean between opposite πάθη. (But it is to be noted that Cicero's notion of πάθος or *perturbatio* is that of *aversa a recta ratione contra naturam animi commotio.*[3]) For Cicero again, as for the Stoics, practical, and not speculative, virtue is the higher.[4]

In the sphere of natural philosophy Cicero was inclined to scepticism, though he by no means despised this province of human thought.[5] He was particularly interested in the proof of God's existence from nature and rejected the doctrine of atheistic atomism. "*Hoc* (i.e. the formation of the world from the chance collision of atoms) *qui existimat fieri potuisse non intelligo cur non idem putet, si innumerabiles unius et viginti formae litterarum vel aureae vel qualesilibet aliquo coiciantur, posse ex iis in terram excussis annales Enni ut deinceps legi possint, effici.*"[6]

Cicero considered that the popular religion should be preserved in the interests of the community at large, while at the same time it should be purified from gross superstition and the practice of attributing immorality to the gods (e.g. the story of the rape of Ganymede).[7] Especially should we preserve belief in Providence and the immortality of the soul.[8]

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[1] *De Fin.*, 5, 32, 95; *De Off.*, 3, 3, 11; cf. *De Fin.*, 5, 26, 77 ff. and *Tusc.*, 5, 13, 39 ff.

[2] *Tusc.*, 4, 18, 41 ff.

[3] *Tusc.*, 4, 6, 11; 4, 21, 47.

[4] *De Off.*, 1, 44, 158.

[5] *Acad. Prior.*, 2, 41, 127.

[6] *De Nat. D*, 2, 37, 93.

[7] *Tusc.*, 1, 26, 65; 4, 33, 71.

[8] *Tusc.*, 1, 12, 26 ff.; 1, 49, 117 ff.

Cicero stressed the ideal of human fellowship (cf. the Stoa), and appealed to the ninth letter of Plato. "*—ut profectus a caritate domesticorum ac suorum serpat longius et se implicet primum civium, deinde omnium mortalium societate atque, ut ad Archytam scripsit Plato, non sibi se solum natum meminerit sed patriae, sed suis, ut perexigua pars ipsi relinquatur.*"[1]

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[1] *De Fin.*, 2, 14. 45.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE MIDDLE STOA

IN the second and third centuries before Christ the Stoic philosophers show a marked tendency to Eclecticism, admitting Platonic and Aristotelian elements into the School and departing from orthodox Stoicism. They were impelled to this course, not only by the attacks levelled against the Stoic dogmatism by the Academicians, but also by their contact with the Roman world, which was much more interested in the practical application of philosophic doctrines than in speculation. The dominant names of the Middle Stoa are those of Panaetius and Poseidonius.

1. *Panaetius of Rhodes* (*c.* 185–110/9 B.C.) lived for some time in Rome, where he interested the younger Scipio and Laelius in Greek philosophy and greatly influenced the Roman historian Q. Mucius Scaevola and the Greek historian Polybius. Cicero made use of his works, especially in the first two books of the *De Officiis.*[1] In 129 B.C. he succeeded Antipater of Tarsus as Scholarch at Athens.

While Panaetius modified certain Stoic doctrines on the one hand, he did not hesitate on the other hand to jettison altogether some of the cargo of Stoic orthodoxy. Thus he modified Stoic "puritanism" by allowing that the end of life in the case of ordinary men is simply the rational perfection of their individual nature. Stoicism thus became rather less "idealistic" in the hands of Panaetius, especially as he seems to have denied the existence of the truly wise man, the old Stoic ideal, and to have set the proficient (προκόπτων) to all intents and purposes in the first place. Moreover, he attached more value to external goods than did the early Stoa and rejected the ideal of "Apathy."

While thus modifying the Stoic ethic Panaetius cast overboard the Stoic theory of divination (which the early Stoics maintained on a philosophical basis of determinism), rejected astrology and jettisoned the doctrines of the world-conflagration and of the relative "immortality" of the soul.[2] He had little sympathy with popular theology.[3] In his political teaching he appears to have been influenced by Plato and Aristotle, though he advocated a wider ideal, in accordance with Stoic doctrine, than that of the two Greek philosophers.

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[1] *Ad. Att.*, 16, 11, 4.
[2] Cic., *Tusc.*, 1, 32, 79.
[3] Cic., *De Div.*, 1, 3, 6.

It was apparently from Panaetius that Scaevola got his threefold division of theology (cf. Varro). He distinguished (i) the theology of the poets, which is anthropomorphic and false, (ii) the theology of the philosophers, which is rational and true, but unfitted for popular use, and (iii) the theology of the statesmen, which maintains the traditional cult and is indispensable for public education.[1]

2. The greatest of the disciples of Panaetius was *Poseidonius of Apamaea* (*c.* 135–51 B.C.). At first a pupil of Panaetius at Athens, Poseidonius then made extensive journeys, to Egypt, for example, and to Spain, after which he opened a School at Rhodes in 97 B.C. It was here that Cicero came to hear him in 78 B.C., and he was twice visited by Pompey. His works have disappeared and it is only recently, through the critical analysis of the literature that was indebted to his influence, that some idea has been obtained—even if not in all points a very clear idea—of the greatness of Poseidonius. Historian and geographer, rationalist and mystic, he bound together various philosophic currents in a framework of Stoic monism, tried to support his speculative doctrines by a wealth of empirical knowledge, and infused into the whole the warmth of religious inspiration. Indeed Zeller does not hesitate to call him "the most universal mind that Greece had seen since the time of Aristotle."[2] Proclus (*in Eukleiden*) mentions Poseidonius and his School seven times in connection with the philosophy of mathematics, e.g. on parallels, on the distinction between theorems and problems, and on existence theorems.

Stoic monism is fundamental to the philosophy of Poseidonius, and he tries to display the articulated unity of Nature in detail. The phenomenon of the tide's ebb and flow, as caused by the moon, revealed to him the "sympathy" that prevails between all parts of the cosmic system. The world is a hierarchy of grades of being, from inorganic entities, as in the mineral kingdom, through plants and animals up to man, and so to the superorganic sphere of the Divine, the whole being bound together in one great system and every detail being arranged by Divine Providence. This universal harmony and structural ordering of the universe postulates Absolute Reason, God, at the summit of the hierarchy and as the all-pervading Rational Activity.[1] The world is permeated by a vital force (ζωτικὴ δύναμις) which proceeds from the sun, and God Himself is represented by Poseidonius, following in the footsteps of the orthodox Stoicism, as a rational, fiery breath. Moreover, in contradistinction to his teacher Panaetius, Poseidonius reaffirmed the Stoic doctrine of the conflagration or ἐκπύρωσις, a doctrine which emphasises the monistic character of the universe.

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[1] *St. Aug., De Civit. Dei*, 4, 27.

[2] *Outlines*, p. 249.

But, though his philosophy was monistic, Poseidonius admitted a dualism, apparently under the influence of Platonism. There are two divisions of the Cosmos, the supralunar world and the infralunar world. While the latter world is earthly and perishable, the former is heavenly and "imperishable" and sustains the lower world through the forces which it imparts. These two worlds are, however, bound together in man, who is the bond (δεσμός) between them.[2] Composed of body and spirit, he stands on the borderline between the perishable and the imperishable or the earthly and the heavenly; and as man is the ontological bond, so is knowledge of man the epistemological bond, binding together in itself all knowledge, knowledge of the heavenly and knowledge of the earthly. Moreover, just as man from the *corporeal* viewpoint is the *highest* grade, so, conversely, from the *spiritual* viewpoint he is the *lowest* grade. In other words, between man and the Supreme Godhead there exist "demons" or higher spiritual beings, who form an intermediate gradation between man and God. The hierarchical character of the universe is thus uninterrupted, though the dualism remains. This dualism is emphasised in the psychology of Poseidonius, for, although with the older Stoics he makes the soul a fiery πνεῦμα—and so material like the body—he then proceeds to emphasise the dualism of soul and body in a manner reminiscent of Plato. Thus the body is a hindrance to the soul, impeding the free development of its knowledge.[3] Further than that, Poseidonius readopted the Platonic theory of the pre-existence of the soul, which naturally underlined the dualism, and also admitted—against Panaetius—the immortality of the soul. This immortality, however, could be no more than a relative immortality (i.e. relative to the body) in the philosophy of Poseidonius, since he had reaffirmed the Stoic world-conflagration. His teaching on "immortality" thus followed that of the older Stoics.

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[1] Cic., *De Nat. D.*, 2, 33 ff.

[2] Cf. *Plat. Tim.*, 31 b c.

[3] Cic., *De Div.*, 1, 49, 110; 1, 57, 129-30.

In spite of this dualism in his psychology of man Poseidonius' influenced by Plato and Aristotle, emphasised the gradation-aspect in his general psychology. Thus the plants, which in the earlier Stoic view possess only φύσις and not ψυχή, enjoy τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν, and also the θρεπτική and αὐξητικὴ δύναμεις, while the animals possess in addition τὸ θυμοειδές, ἡ αἴσθησις, τὸ ὀρεκτικόν, and τὸ κινητικὸν κατὰ τόπον. Man, higher than the animals, possesses τὸ λογιστικόν and so the capacity of λόγος, νοῦς and διάνοια.

Thus, although Poseidonius admits the Platonic dualism, he subordinates it to an ultimate monism, influenced by the Heraclitean theory of opposition in harmony or unity in difference. In this attempt at a synthesis of dualism and monism he marks a stage on the way to Neo-Platonism.

In contrast to Panaetius, Poseidonius reaffirmed the Stoic theory of divination. Because of the universal harmony of the Cosmos and the reign of Fate the future can be divined in the present: moreover, the Providence of God would not have withheld from men the means of divining future events.[1] In states like sleep and ecstasy the soul, free from the body's hindrance, may see the underlying connection of events and divine the future. We have already mentioned that Poseidonius admitted the existence of "demons": he believed too that man can enter into communication with them.

Poseidonius propounded a theory of history or of cultural development. In the primitive golden age the wise, i.e. the philosophers, ruled (corresponding in mankind to the natural leadership of the strongest beast in the herd within the animal kingdom), and it was they who made those inventions which raised man from his primitive way of life to more refined conditions of material civilisation. Thus the wise discovered metals and founded the art of making tools, etc.[2] In the moral sphere the primitive stage of innocence was followed by decadence, and the prevalence of violence necessitated the institution of laws. The philosophers accordingly, leaving to others the elaboration of technical appliances, set themselves to the task of raising the moral condition of mankind, first of all through practical and political activity and later by a self-dedication to the life of speculation or θεωρία. Yet all these activities, from the lowest to the highest, were but different grades of one and the same wisdom or σοφία.

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[1] Cic., *De Div.*, 1, 49, 110; 1, 55, 125.

[2] Cf. Seneca, *Epist.*, 90; Lucr., *De Rerum Nat.*, V

Poseidonius also interested himself in ethnographical questions, stressing the influence of climate and natural conditions on the character and way of life of a people, his travels affording him material for observation on this matter. In addition, his empirical bent led him to extend his activity over a wide field in the domain of the special sciences, e.g. in mathematics, astronomy, history and literature. But his outstanding characteristic is his ability for reducing all this wealth of empirical knowledge to the unity of a philosophical system, discovering everywhere connections, interactions and harmonies, trying to penetrate and exhibit the rational structure of the universe and the rational development of history.

Note on the Peripatetic School in the Hellenistic-Roman Period

1. *Strato of Lampsacus*, ὁ φυσικός, succeeded Theophrastus as head of the Peripatetic School at Athens and occupied that position from about 287–269 B.C. His philosophic teaching betrays the influence of Democritus, which impelled him towards a monistic view of the universe. The world consists of particles, between which there is empty space. These particles, however, are endlessly divisible, and appear to possess qualities, since Strato assumes ultimate characteristics or qualities, namely the Warm and the Cold. The world was formed by natural necessity or the laws of nature, and can be ascribed to God only so far as God is to be identified with the unconscious forces of Nature itself. Thus, although Strato does not follow Democritus in matters of detail, the inspiration of his materialistic monism and his denial of the Aristotelian dualism must be attributed to the influence of the Democritean philosophy. This transformation of the Peripatetic system in the hands of Strato is consonant with the latter's special interest in physical science—it was this that won him the title of ὁ φυσικός. He appears to have influenced the medicine, astronomy and mechanics of the Alexandrian period.

In Strato's eyes all psychical activities, such as thought and feeling, are reducible to *motion*, and they are activities of the one rational soul, which is situated between the eyebrows. We can have as objects of our thought only that which has been the cause of a previous sense-impression,[1] and, conversely, every perception involves intellectual activity.[2] This might seem at first sight to be but a repetition of Aristotelian epistemology, but Strato seems to have meant it in a sense which involves the denial of a rational principle in man, essentially distinct from the animal soul. His denial of immortality was, therefore, a logical conclusion, for, if all thinking is essentially dependent on sense, there can be no question of a principle of thought surviving independently of the body.

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[1] Simplic., *Phys.*, 965, 16 a.

[2] Plut., *de sol. animal.*, 3 (961 a).

2. Under Strato's successors—Lycon of Troas, Ariston of Chios, Critolaus of Phaselis, Diodorus of Tyre and Erymneus—the Peripatetic School does not seem to have made any real contribution to philosophy. Moreover, an eclectic tendency made itself visible in the School. Thus although Critolaus defended Aristotle's doctrine of the eternity of the world against the Stoics, he accepted the Stoics' reduction of God and the human soul to matter (Aether) and adopted the Cynic attitude in regard to pleasure.

3. With *Andronicus of Rhodes* the School took a new turn. Andronicus was the tenth Scholarch at Athens (i.e. excluding Aristotle himself) and occupied the post from about 70 B.C. to 50 B.C. He published the "pedagogical" works of Aristotle, investigated their authenticity, and commented on many of the works, giving special attention to logic. The line of commentators culminated in *Alexander of Aphrodisias*, who lectured on the Peripatetic philosophy at Athens between A.D. 198 and 211. Alexander was the most celebrated of the commentators of Aristotle, but he did not hesitate to depart from the latter's teaching. For instance, he adopted a nominalist position in regard to universals and denied anthropocentric teleology. Moreover, he identified the νοῦς ποιητικὸς with τὸ πρῶτον αἴτιον. Man possesses at birth only the νοῦς φυσικός or ὑλικός and later acquires the νοῦς ἐπίκτητος under the influence of the νοῦς ποιητικός. A consequence of this is the denial of the human soul's immortality. While in denying the immortality of the human soul Alexander is probably at one with Aristotle, it must be admitted that the denial follows much more obviously from Alexander's teaching than it does from the somewhat ambiguous remarks of Aristotle.

4. Alexander's eloquent defence of the study of logic in his commentary on the *Prior Analytics* is worthy of mention. He there declares that logic is not less deserving of our attention and study owing to the fact that it is an instrument of philosophy rather than an actual part of philosophy. For if man's greatest good is to become like to God, and if this likeness is attained through contemplation and knowledge of truth, and the knowledge

of truth through demonstration, then we should hold demonstration in the greatest honour and esteem, and so syllogistic reasoning also, inasmuch as demonstration is a form of syllogistic reasoning.[1] Together with this scholarly tendency grew the tendency to eclecticism. Thus the famous physician *Galen* (A.D. 129 to about A.D. 199) and *Aristocles* of Messana (*c*. A.D. 180) inclined to Stoicism with their doctrine of the immanent and active Nous, that pervades all nature.

5. The Peripatetics of the latest period can indeed hardly be called Peripatetics—certainly not without qualification: to all intents and purposes the School was absorbed in Neo-Platonism, the last great effort of Greek philosophy, and the late Peripatetics either inclined to eclecticism or contented themselves with commenting on the works of Aristotle. Thus Anatolius of Alexandria, who became bishop of Laodicea about A.D. 268 and may be identical with the Anatolius who was the teacher of Iamblichus,[2] combined, in his treatise on the numbers one to ten, consideration of the real properties of numbers with Pythagorean "number-mysticism."

Themistius (*c*. A.D. 320–*c*. 390), who taught at Constantinople and other places in the East and never became a Christian, affirmed indeed that he had chosen Aristotle as his guide to wisdom, and either paraphrased or commented on some of Aristotle's works, but was in fact much influenced by Platonism. With the later Platonism he defined philosophy as ὁμοίωσις θεοῦ κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἀνθρώπῳ. (Cf. Plat. *Theaet.* 176 b.)

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[1] *C.A.G.*, 11/1, 4; 30 and 6 : 8.

[2] Eunap., *Vit. Soph.*, II.

CHAPTER XL

THE LATER STOA

In the early Roman Empire the chief characteristic of the Stoa is its insistence on the practical and moral principles of the School, which take on a religious colouring, being bound up with the doctrine of man's kinship with God and his duty of love towards his fellow-men. The noble morality of the Stoa is strikingly displayed in the teaching of the great Stoics of the period, Seneca, Epictetus and the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. At the same time a certain tendency to eclecticism is visible in the Stoa as in other Schools. Nor was the contemporary scientific interest absent from the Stoa: we may think, for example, of the geographer Strabo. We are fortunate in possessing an extensive Stoic literature from this period, which enables us to form a clear idea of the teaching of the School and the characteristics of its great personalities. Thus we are well provided in regard to Seneca's writings and we have four of the eight books in which Flavius Arrianus reported the lectures of Epictetus, while the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius show us the Stoic philosopher on the Roman throne.

1. *L. Annaeus Seneca* of Córdoba was tutor and minister to the Emperor Nero, and it was in obedience to the latter's command that the philosopher opened his veins in A.D. 65.

As we would expect of a Roman, Seneca emphasises the practical side of philosophy, ethics, and—within the sphere of ethics—is more concerned with the practice of virtue than with theoretical investigations into its nature. He does not seek intellectual knowledge for its own sake, but pursues philosophy as a means to the acquirement of virtue. Philosophy is necessary, but it is to be pursued with a practical end in view. *Non delectent, verba nostra, sed prosint—non quaerit aeger medicum eloquentem.*[1] His words on this topic not infrequently recall those of Thomas à Kempis, e.g. *plus scire quam sit satis, intemperantiae genus est.*[2] To spend one's time in the so-called liberal studies without having a practical end in view is waste of time—*unum studium vere liberale est quod liberum facit.*[3] and he calls on Lucilius to abandon the literary game of reducing sublime themes to grammatical and dialectical jugglery.[1] Seneca is interested to a certain extent in physical theories, but he insists that it is the conquest of the passions that is the really important point and which makes man equal to God,[2] and he often uses physical subjects simply as an opportunity for moralising conclusions, as when he makes use of the earthquakes in Campania (A.D. 63) to furnish matter for a moral discourse.[3] However, he certainly praises the study of Nature (under the influence of Poseidonius) and even declares that knowledge of Nature is to be sought for its own sake,[4] but even here the practical and human interest is visible.

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[1] *Ep.*, 75, 5

[2] *Ep.*, 88, 36.

[3] *Ep.*, 88, 2.

Seneca adheres theoretically to the old Stoic materialism,[5] but in practice he certainly tends to regard God as transcending matter. This tendency to metaphysical dualism was a natural consequence or accompaniment of his marked tendency to psychological dualism. True, he affirms the materiality of the soul, but he proceeds to speak in Platonic strain of the conflict between soul and body, between the aspirations of the higher man and the doctrines of the flesh. *Nam corpus hoc animi pondus ac poena est, premente illo urgetur, in vinculis est.*[6] True virtue and true worth rest within: external goods do not confer true happiness but are transitory gifts of Fortune in which it would be foolish to place our trust. *Brevissima ad divitias per contemptum divitiarum via est.*[7] Seneca, as courtier of Caligula and Claudius and the wealthy tutor and minister of the young Nero, has been accused of practical inconsistency and hypocrisy, but it must be remembered that his very experience of the contrast between great wealth and splendour on the one hand and the constant fear of death on the other would very much help a man of his temperament to realise the ephemeral character of wealth, position and power. Moreover, he had unrivalled opportunities of observing human degradation, lust and debauchery at close quarters. Some ancient writers accumulated gossip about Seneca's private life, calculated to show that he did not live up to his own principles.[8] But, even if, allowing for the exaggeration and gossip of opponents, he did not pass through life without falls from his moral ideal—as is indeed only too likely in a man of his position and connections, attached to a depraved Court[1]—that does not mean that he was insincere in his teaching and preaching. His knowledge of the force of temptation and of the degradation to which avarice, ambition and lust could lead—to a certain extent perhaps from personal experience, but far more from his observation of others—lent power and force to his pen and to his moral exhortation. In spite of all rhetoric Seneca knew what he was talking about.

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[1] *Ep.*, 71, 6. [2] *Ep.*, 73, 13. [3] *Nat. Q.*, 6, 32. [4] *Nat. Q.*, 6, 4.

[5] *Ep.*, 66, 12; 117, 2; 57, 8.

[6] *Ep.*, 120, 14; 65, 16. Cf. *Dies iste, quem tamquam extremum reformidas, aeterni natalis est.* *Ep.*, 102, 26.

[7] *Ep.*, 62, 3. [8] Cf. Dion Cassius, 61, 10.

Although theoretically adhering to the traditional Stoic determinism, Seneca maintained that, as rational, every man has the power to take the path of virtue if he will only *will* to do so. *Satis natura dedit roboris si illo utamur.*[2] Moreover, God will help those who strive to help themselves. *Non sunt di fastidiosi: adscendentibus manum porrigunt,* and *O te miserum si contemnis hunc testem.*[3] The man who does help himself, conquer his passions and lead a life in accordance with right reason, is better off than our ancestors of the Golden Age, for, if they were innocent, they were innocent from ignorance and absence of temptation. *Non fuere sapientes—ignorantia rerum innocentes erant.*[4]

Since he aimed at encouraging men to set their feet upon the path of virtue and to continue therein in spite of temptation and fall, Seneca was naturally forced to temper the strict moral idealism of the earlier Stoics. He knew too much about the moral struggle to suppose that man can become virtuous by sudden conversion. And so we find him distinguishing three classes of *proficientes.* (i) Those who have abandoned some of their sins, but not all; (ii) those who have formed the resolution to renounce evil passions in general, even if still liable to occasional relapse; (iii) those who have got beyond possibility of relapse, but still lack confidence in themselves and the consciousness of their own wisdom. They *approximate*, therefore, to wisdom and perfect virtue.[5] Moreover, Seneca admits that external goods, e.g. wealth, may be used for good ends. The wise man will be the master of his wealth and not its slave. He gives practical counsel as to how to secure moral progress, e.g. by the use of the daily self-examination, which he himself practised.[6] It is useless to retire into solitude, if you do not attempt at the same time to change yourself: change of place does not necessarily mean change of heart, and wherever you go, you will still have to struggle with yourself. It is easy to understand, how the legend of Seneca's correspondence with St. Paul could grow up, when we read such phrases as *Nos quoque evincamus omnia, quorum praemium non corona nec palma est.*[1]

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[1] Does he not himself admit, *Non de me loquor, qui multum ab homine tolerabili nedum a perfecto absum? Ep.* 57, 3.

[2] *Ep.*, 116, 7.

[3] *Ep.*, 73, 15; 43, 5.

[4] *Ep.*, 90, 46.

[5] *Ep.*, 75, 8.

[6] *De Ira*, 3, 36, 3.

Seneca lays emphasis on the Stoic doctrine of the relationship that exists among all human beings, and instead of the self-sufficiency of the wise man—a self-sufficiency tinged with contempt for others—he calls on us to help our fellow-men and to forgive those who have injured us. *Alteri vivas oportet, si vis tibi vivere.*[2] He stresses the necessity of active benevolence. "Nature bids me to be of use to men whether they are slave or free, freedmen or free born. Wherever there is a human being there is room for benevolence."[3] "See that you are beloved by all while you live and regretted when you die."

Yet punishment of evil-doers is necessary. *Bonis nocet qui malis parcet.*[4] The most effective punishment, however, for the purpose of reformation is the mildest. Punishment should not be inflicted out of rage or the desire of revenge (cf. *De Ira* and *De Clementia*).

2. *Epictetus of Hierapolis* (*c.* A.D. 50–138) was at first a slave belonging to a member of Nero's bodyguard, and, when he became a freedman, continued to live in Rome until the expulsion of the philosophers by the Emperor Domitian (A.D. 89 or 93). He then founded a School at Nicopolis in Epirus and probably continued at its head until his death. It was at Nicopolis that his lectures were attended by Flavius Arrianus, who composed eight books of Διατριβαί on the basis of the lectures. Of these eight books we possess four. Arrian also published a small catechism or handbook of his master's doctrines, the Ἐγχειρίδιον.

Epictetus insists that all men have the capacity for virtue and that God has given to all men the means of becoming happy, of becoming men of steadfast character and self-control. "What then is a man's nature? To bite, to kick, to throw into prison, and to behead? No, but to do good, to co-operate with others, to wish them well."[5] All men have the sufficient initial moral intuitions on which they can build up the moral life. "Observe whom you yourself praise when you praise without partiality? Do you praise the just or the unjust, the moderate or the immoderate, the temperate or the intemperate?"[6] "There are certain things which men who are not altogether perverted see by the common notions which all possess."[1]

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[1] *Ep.*, 78, 16, 4. [2] *Ep.*, 48, 2. [3] *De Vita Beata*, 24, 3. [4] Fr. 114.
[5] *Disc.*, 4, 1, 22. [6] *Disc.*, 3, 1, 8.

Yet, though all men possess sufficient basis for the building-up of the moral life, philosophic instruction is necessary for all, in order that they may be able to apply their primary conceptions (προλήψεις) of good and evil to particular circumstances. "Primary conceptions are common to all men,"[2] but a conflict or difficulty may arise in the application of these primary conceptions to particular facts. It is this which explains the diversity of ethical notions, in the sense of applied notions, among different peoples and between various individuals.[3] Education is, therefore, necessary and, inasmuch as the right application of principles depends on reasoning and reasoning on logic, a knowledge of logic is not to be despised. The important thing, however, is not that a man should possess a knowledge of formal dialectic, but that he should be able to apply his principles to practice and, above all, that he should actually carry them into practice in his conduct. There are two factors in which education chiefly consists: (i) in learning to apply the natural primary conceptions to particular circumstances in accordance with "nature", and (ii) in learning to distinguish between things in our power and things not in our power.[4] Epictetus, in common with the Stoic School in general, makes a great deal of this latter distinction. To acquire honours and wealth, to enjoy continual health, to avoid physical maltreatment or the disfavour of the Emperor, to ward off death or disaster from himself or his friends and relatives, all this does not depend solely on the efforts of any individual man: he must be careful, then, not to set his heart on any of these things, but to accept all that happens to himself or his relatives and friends as Fate, as the will of God: he must accept all events of this kind without rebellion or discontent, as being the expression of the Divine Will. What, then, is in man's power? His judgments on events and his will: these he can control, and his self-education consists in attaining true judgment and a right will. "The essence of good and evil lies in an attitude of the will,"[5] and this will lies within a man's power, for "the will may conquer itself, but nothing else can conquer it."[6] That which is really necessary for man is, therefore, to *will* virtue, to *will* victory over sin. "Be well assured that nothing is more tractable than the human soul. You must exercise your will and the thing is done, it is set right;

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[1] *Disc.*, 3, 6, 8. [2] *Disc.*, 1, 22. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.* [5] *Disc.*, 1, 29. [6] *Ibid.*

as on the other hand relax your vigilance and all is lost, for from within comes ruin and from within comes help."[1] Sins differ from the material standpoint, but from the moral standpoint they are equal in that they all involve a perverted will. To overcome and set right this perverted will is within the power of all. "Now will you not help yourself? And how much easier is this help? There is no need to kill or imprison any man or to treat him with contumely or to go into the law-courts. You must just talk to yourself. You will be most easily persuaded; no one has more power to persuade you than you yourself."[2]

As practical means to moral progress Epictetus advises the daily examination of conscience (the faithful use of which leads to the substitution of good habits for bad ones), avoidance of bad companions and occasions of sin, constant self-vigilance, etc. We must not be discouraged by falls but must persevere, setting before our eyes some ideal of virtue, e.g. Socrates or Zeno. Again, ". . . remember that Another looks from above on what is happening and that you must please Him rather than this man."[3] In the course of moral progress he distinguishes three stages:

(i) A man is taught to order his *desires* in accordance with right reason, freeing himself from morbid emotions and attaining to tranquillity of soul.

(ii) A man is trained to action, to performance of his duty (τὸ καθῆκον), coming to act as a true son, brother, citizen, etc.

(iii) The third stage relates to judgment and assent, and "its aim is to make the other two secure, so that even in sleep, intoxication, or hypochondria we may not let any presentation pass untested."[4] An unerring moral judgment is produced.

Duties towards oneself must begin with cleanliness of the body. "I indeed would rather that a young man, when first moved to philosophy, should come to me with his hair carefully trimmed, than with it dirty and rough."[5] That is to say, if a man has a feeling for natural cleanliness and beauty there is more hope of elevating him to the perception of moral beauty. Epictetus inculcates temperance, modesty, and chastity, censuring, for example, the adulterer. Simplicity is to be cultivated, though there is no harm in pursuing wealth, if this is done for good ends. "If I can acquire money, and also keep myself modest and faithful and magnanimous, point out the way and I will acquire it. But if you ask me to lose the things which are good and my own, in order that you may gain the things which are not good, see how unfair and silly you are."[1] (This to people who urge a friend to acquire money that they also may have some.) Like all the Stoics, Epictetus lauded veracity and loyalty.

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[1] *Disc.*, 4, 9, 16.
[2] *Disc.*, 4, 9, 13.
[3] *Disc.*, 1, 30.
[4] *Disc.*, 3, 2; cf. 1, ch. 18 (end).
[5] *Disc.*, 4, 11, 25.

True piety is to be encouraged. "Of religion towards the Gods, know that the chief element is to have right opinions concerning them, as existing and governing the whole in fair order and justice, and then to set thyself to obey them, and to yield to them in each event, and submit to it willingly, as accomplished under the highest counsels."[2] Atheism and denial of Divine Providence, both general and particular, are condemned. "Concerning the Gods, there are some who say that a Divine Being does not exist; and others, that it exists indeed, but is idle and uncaring, and hath no forethought for anything; and a third class say that there is such a Being, and he taketh forethought also, but only in respect of great and heavenly things, but of nothing that is on the earth; and a fourth class, that he taketh thought of things both in heaven and earth, but only in general, and not of each thing severally. And there is a fifth class, whereof are Odysseus and Socrates, who say, 'Nor can I move without thy knowledge.' "[3]

Marriage and the family are in accordance with right reason, though the "missionary" may remain celibate in order to be free for his work.[4] The child must always obey the father, unless the latter commands something immoral. Patriotism and active sharing in public life are encouraged—somewhat inconsistently—but war is condemned and the ruler should win the allegiance of his subjects by his example and by his self-sacrificing care for them.

Yet cosmopolitanism and the love of humanity transcend narrow patriotism. All men have God for their Father and are brothers by nature. "Will you not remember who you are and whom you rule? That they are kinsmen, that they are brethren by nature, that they are the offspring of Zeus?"[5] To all men we owe love and should not return evil for evil. "To suppose that we shall be easily despised by others unless in every possible way we do injury to those who first show us hostility, is the work of very ignoble and foolish men, for this implies that inability to do injury is the reason why we are thought contemptible, whereas the really contemptible man is not he who cannot do injury but he who cannot do benefit."[1] Epictetus does not, however, reject punishment any more than the other Stoics. They insist that violation of law must be punished, but that this punishment must proceed from mature deliberation and not from hasty anger, and that it should be tempered with mercy, calculated to be, not merely a deterrent, but also a remedy for the offender.

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[1] *Ench.*, 24.
[2] *Ench.*, 31.
[3] *Disc.*, 1, 12.
[4] Cf. *Disc.*, 3, 22; 3, 26, 67.
[5] *Disc.*, 1, 13.

In *Disc.* 3, 22, Epictetus devotes a chapter to Cynicism, in which the Cynic philosopher appears as the preacher of the truth concerning good and evil, as the ambassador of God. Without sharing the Cynic contempt for science, Epictetus seems to have admired the Cynic's indifference towards external goods. This is all the more natural in that for Epictetus happiness depends on that which alone is in our power and independent of external conditions —namely, our will, our ideas concerning things, and the use that we make of our ideas. If we seek our happiness in goods which do not depend entirely on ourselves for attainment or continued possession, we invite unhappiness: we must practise abstinence therefore—ἀνέχου καὶ ἀπέχου—and seek our happiness within.

(Dr. Praechter tells of the Director of a Swiss sanatorium, who was accustomed to hand to his neurasthenic and psychasthenic patients a copy of the Enchiridion in a German translation, and who found it to be a valuable aid in effecting a cure.[2])

3. *Marcus Aurelius*, Roman Emperor from A.D. 161 to 180, composed his Meditations (in the Greek language) in twelve books in aphoristic form. For Epictetus he had a lively admiration,[3] and he was at one with Epictetus and Seneca in giving a religious colouring to his philosophy. With Marcus Aurelius, too, we find stress laid on Divine Providence and a wise ordering of the universe, the close relationship between man and God, the duty of love towards one's fellow-men. Thus the Emperor teaches compassion for human infirmity. "When any one does you a wrong, set yourself at once to consider what was the point of view, good or bad, that led him wrong. As soon as you perceive it you will be sorry for him, not surprised or angry. For your own view of good is either the same as his or something like in kind, and you will make allowance. Or, supposing your own view of good and bad has altered, you will find charity for his mistake

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[1] Stob., *Flor.*, 20, 61.

[2] Ueberweg-Praechter, p. 498, Note.

[3] *Med.*, 1, 7.

comes easier."[1] "It is man's special gift to love even those who fall into blunders; this takes effect the moment we realise that men are our brothers, that sin is ignorance and unintentional, that in a little while we shall both be dead, that, above all, no injury is done us; our inner self is not made worse than it was before."[2] Active benevolence is stressed. "Does the eye demand a recompense for seeing, or the feet for walking? Just as this is the end for which they exist, and just as they find their reward in realising the law of their being, so, too, man is made for kindness, and whenever he does an act of kindness or otherwise helps forward the common good, he thereby fulfils the law of his being and comes by his own."[3] "Love mankind, follow God."[4]

Marcus Aurelius shows a decided tendency to break through the Stoic materialism. He adheres indeed to the Stoic monism, as in the following passage: "All harmonises with me which is in harmony with thee, O universe. Nothing for me is too early nor too late which is in due season for thee. For thee are all things, in thee are all things, to thee all things return. The poet says, Dear City of Cecrops; and wilt not thou say, Dear City of Zeus?"[5] Moreover, the Emperor was punctiliously observant of the forms of polytheistic worship, a fact which will partly explain the persecution of Christians during his reign, since he clearly looked upon the fulfilment of the requirements of State-worship as implied in good citizenship. But although Marcus Aurelius adheres to the Stoic monism, he tends to transcend materialism by his division of man into three parts—σῶμα, ψυχή and νοῦς, ψυχή being material but νοῦς being expressly distinguished from all four elements, and so—logically speaking at least—from matter. The human νοῦς or τὸ νοερόν comes from the νοερόν of the Universe, it is an ἀπόσπασμα of God,[6] it is τὸ ἡγεμονικόν.[7] The influence of Platonism is clear, but it is possible that the Emperor, who had Claudius Severus, a Peripatetic, as one of his teachers,[8] was influenced also by the doctrine of Aristotle.

The νοῦς is the δαίμων which God has given to every man to be his guide, and this δαίμων is an emanation of the Divinity. It follows, then, that whoever disobeys the commands of the δαίμων which are the commands of reason, acts not only irrationally but also impiously. Immorality is thus impiety.[9] "Live with the gods, And he lives with the gods whoever presents to them his soul accepting their dispensations and busied about the will of God, even that particle of Zeus which Zeus gives to every man for his controller and governor—to wit, his mind and reason."[1] Man has it in his power to avoid wickedness. "As for those things which are truly evil, as vice and wickedness, such things they (the gods) have put in a man's own power, that he might avoid them if he would."[2]

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[1] *Med.*, 7, 26. [2] *Med.*, 7, 22. [3] *Med.*, 9, 42. [4] *Med.*, 7, 31. [5] *Med.*, 4, 23.
[6] *Med.*, 5, 27. [7] *Med.*, 12, 1. [8] Capitol, *Vit. M. Ant.*, 3, 3.
[9] *Med.*, 2, 13 : 11, 20; 9, 1

Marcus Aurelius, after the Stoic tradition, admits only limited immortality. Although he stresses, as Seneca did, the dualism between soul and body and depicts death as a liberation,[3] he allows not only the possibility of the soul's "reabsorption" at the world-conflagration, but also the possibility that the soul is reabsorbed in the Cosmic Reason in virtue of the constant change in nature—a theme dwelt upon by the Emperor, who compares the flow of phenomena to a river.[4] In any case the soul enjoys but a limited persistence after death.[5]

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[1] *Med.*, 5, 27.
[2] *Med.*, 2, 11.
[3] *Med.*, 9, 3; 11, 3.
[4] *Med.*, 4, 14; 4, 43; 5, 23.
[5] *Med.*, 4, 21.

CHAPTER XLI

CYNICS, ECLECTICS, SCEPTICS

1. *Cynics*

THE moral corruption in the Roman Empire not unnaturally prompted a revival of Cynicism, and the writing of letters under the names of ancient Cynics seems to have been calculated to forward this revival. Thus we have 51 letters under the name of Diogenes and 36 under that of Crates.

Roman Stoics of the type of Seneca addressed themselves mainly to members of the highest classes in society, to men who belonged to that circle which was naturally drawn into court-life, to men, above all, who possessed some hankering after virtue and tranquillity of soul, but who were at the same time bewildered by the luxurious and sensation-loving life of the aristocracy, who felt the power of the flesh and the attractions of sin and yet were also weary of self-indulgence and ready to grasp and hold the helping hand that might be held out to them. But beside the aristocracy and the men of wealth there were the masses, who may have benefited to a certain extent by the humanitarian ideals propagated among their masters by the Stoics, but who were not directly touched by men like Seneca. To meet the spiritual and moral needs of the masses there grew up a different type of "apostle," that of the Cynic preacher or missionary. These men led the life of itinerant preachers, poor and self-denying, aiming at the "conversion" of the masses who came to listen to them—as when the celebrated Apollonius of Tyana (who belongs rather to the story of Neo-Pythagoreanism), mystic and reported miracle-worker, preached a rivalry of public spirit to the inhabitants of Smyrna, who were torn apart by faction, or discoursed on virtue to the crowd gathered at Olympia to witness the games and races[1]—as when Musonius (who, in spite of his affinity with Cynicism, actually belonged to the Stoic School and was the teacher of Epictetus), harangued the troops of Vespasian and Vitellius on the blessings of peace and the horrors of civil war at the risk of his own life[2] or denounced impiety and demanded virtue from men and women alike. They were often men of undaunted courage, as may be seen from the example of Musonius, just described, or from Demetrius' defiance of Nero: "You threaten me with death, but nature threatens you."[1] Demetrius, praised by Seneca in his writings, consoled the last hours of Thrasea by discoursing on the soul and its destiny.[2]

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[1] Philostr., *Apoll. Tyan.*, 4, 8; 4, 31.

[2] Tac., *Hist.*, 3, 81

Lucian criticises the Cynic preachers unmercifully, particularly for their bad manners, their lack of culture, their coarseness and buffoonery, their vulgarity and obscenity. Lucian was a foe to all enthusiasm, and religious fervour and "mystic" exaltation were repugnant to him, so that he often doubtless does an injustice to the Cynics owing to his lack of sympathy and understanding; but it must be remembered that Lucian was not alone in his criticism, for Martial, Petronius, Seneca, Epictetus, Dion Chrysostom and others are agreed in condemning abuses which were undoubtedly real. Some of the Cynics were certainly impostors and buffoons who brought the name of philosophy into contempt, as Dion Chrysostom states plainly.[3] Moreover, some of them betrayed a repulsive egoism and lack of good taste and proper respect, as when that same Demetrius, who had denounced Nero, took it upon himself to insult the Emperor Vespasian—who was no Nero—or as when Peregrinus attacked the Emperor Antoninus Pius.[4] (Vespasian took no notice of Demetrius, while Peregrinus was merely told by the Prefect to leave the city. The Cynic who publicly attacked Titus in the theatre for his intercourse with Berenice was scourged, however, while Heros, who repeated the performance, was beheaded.[5]) Lucian is inclined to put the worst interpretation on the conduct of the Cynics. Thus, when Peregrinus—called Proteus—who had become a Christian in Palestine, but who had subsequently joined the ranks of the Cynics, publicly burnt himself to death at Olympia in order to give an example of contempt for death, to imitate the Cynic patron Heracles and to unite himself with the divine element, Lucian assumes that his action was due simply to a love of notoriety—κενοδοξία.[6] The motive of vainglory may very well have entered in, but it may not have been the sole motive operative with Peregrinus.

Nevertheless, in spite of extravagance and in spite of the existence of impostors and buffoons, Cynicism cannot be condemned root and branch. *Demonax* (*c.* A.D. 50–150) was universally honoured at Athens for his goodness,[7] and when the Athenians proposed to institute gladiatorial shows in the city he advised them first of all to demolish the altar of Pity. Though simple and frugal in his ways he seems to have avoided ostentatious singularity. Brought before the Athenian courts on a charge of impiety, since he declined to offer sacrifice and refused to seek initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries, he replied that God has no need of sacrifices, while, as for the Mysteries, if they contained a revelation of good tidings to man, he would have to publish it, whereas, if they were of no value, he would feel bound to warn the people against them.[1] *Oenomaus* of Gadara dismissed the pagan anthropomorphic fables concerning the gods and fiercely attacked the revival of belief in divination and oracles. The oracles, he said, were mere deception, while in any case man is possessed of free will and man alone is responsible for his actions. Julian the Apostate, champion of paganism, was aroused to indignation by the very memory of such a man as Oenomaus, who had attacked the pagan oracles.[2]

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[1] Epict., *Disc.*, 1, 25.
[2] Tac., *Ann.*, 16, 34.
[3] e.g. *Or.*, 32, 9.
[4] Suet., *Vesp.*, 13; Dion Cass., 66, 13; Luc., *De morte Peregr.*, c. 18.
[5] Cf. Dio. Cass., 66, 15.
[6] *De Morte Peregr.*, 4; 20 ff.
[7] Cf. *Demonax* (Lucian).

A celebrated and honourable Cynic preacher was *Dion Chrysostom,* who was born about A.D. 40 and lived, at any rate, well into the reign of the Emperor Trajan. He came of an aristocratic family of Prusa (Bithynia) and was at first a rhetorician and Sophist. Condemned to banishment from Bithynia and Italy in A.D. 82 during the reign of the Emperor Domitian, he led a wandering life of poverty. During the period of exile he underwent a sort of "conversion" and became an itinerant Cynic preacher with a mission to the submerged masses of the Empire. Dion retained his rhetorical manner and liked, in his Orations, to clothe the moral truths he expressed in an attractive and elegant form; but though true to the rhetorical tradition, he insisted in his preaching on living in conformity with the Divine Will, on the moral ideal, on the practice of true virtue and on the insufficiency of purely material civilisation. In the 'Ευβοϊκός he depicts the life of the poor countryman as being more natural, freer and happier than that of the rich town-dweller; but he occupies himself also with the question, how the poor in the cities can most satisfactorily live their lives without hankering after luxury or involving themselves in what is harmful to soul or body. He warned the people of Tarsus that they had a wrong sense of values. Happiness is to be found, not in stately buildings, wealth and delicate living, but in temperance, justice and true piety. The great materialistic civilisations of the past—Assyria, for example—have perished, while the great Empire of Alexander is gone and Pella is a heap of bricks.[1] He harangues the people of Alexandria on their vices and lust for sensation, on their lack of dignity and their trivial interests.[2]

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[1] *Demonax,* 11.

[2] Julian, *Or.*, 7, 209.

Dion's social interests led him towards Stoicism and he made use of the Stoic doctrines of world-harmony and of cosmopolitanism. As God rules over the world, so should the Monarch rule over the State, and as the world is a harmony of many phenomena, so should individual States be preserved, but in such a way that they live in peace and harmony and free intercourse with one another. Besides the influence of Stoicism Dion seems to have undergone the influence of Poseidonius, taking from him, the division of a threefold theology, that of the philosophers, that of the poets and that of the official or State cult. He became, after the end of his period of banishment under Domitian, a favourite of Trajan, who used to invite the philosopher to his table and take him as a companion in his carriage, though he did not pretend to understand Dion's rhetoric. τί μὲν λέγεις, οὐκ οἶδα. φιλῶ δε σε ὡς ἐμαυτόν.[3] It was before the court of Trajan that Dion delivered some of his orations, contrasting the ideal monarch with the tyrant. The true monarch is the shepherd of his people, appointed by God for the good of his subjects. He must be a truly religious[4] and virtuous man, the father of his people, a hard worker, hostile to flatterers.

For Dion Chrysostom the idea of God is innate and universal among all men, brought into full consciousness by the contemplation of the design and providence in the universe. Yet God is hidden from us, and we are like little children stretching out their hands for father or mother.[5] Yet though God in Himself is veiled from us, we naturally try to imagine Him as best we can, and this is best accomplished by the poets. Artists, too, attempt the same task, though more inadequately, for no sculptor or painter can portray the Nature of God. All the same, in portraying God in human form they do not do wrong, since it is only natural to have recourse to the highest being of which we have direct experience as an image of the Divine.

Later we find evidence of a Christianised Cynicism, e.g. in the person of Maximus of Alexandria, who came to Constantinople in A.D. 379 or 380 and formed an intimate friendship with St. Gregory Nazianzen, though he afterwards had himself consecrated bishop behind St. Gregory's back. Maximus imitated the ways of the Stoics, though there does not seem to have been much consistency in his behaviour.[1]

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[1] *Or.* 33. [2] *Or.* 32. [3] Philostr., *Vit. Soph.*, 1, 7. [4] Cf. *Or.* 1–4.

[5] *Or.* 12, 61. ὥσπερ νήπιοι παῖδες πατρὸς ἢ μητρὸς ἀπεσπασμένοι δεινὸν ἵμερον ἔχοντες καὶ πόθον ὀρέγουσι χεῖρας . . .

II. *Eclectics*

A professedly Eclectic School was founded by *Potamon* of Alexandria in the time of the Emperor Augustus. According to Diogenes Laërtius the School was named ’Εκλεκτικὴ αἵρεσις[2] and it seems to have combined Stoic and Peripatetic elements, though Potamon also wrote a commentary on Plato's *Republic*.

Eclectic tendencies were also shown by the School of *Q. Sextius* (b. *c.* 70 B.C.). They adopted Stoic and Cynic principles, with which they combined Pythagorean and Platonico-Aristotelian elements. Thus Sextius adopted the Pythagorean customs of self-examination and abstinence from flesh-meat, while his disciple Sotion of Alexandria took over from the Pythagoreans the theory of metempsychosis. The School does not appear to have been of any great consequence, though Seneca was a disciple of Sotion.[3]

III. *Sceptics*

Although the Academy before the time of Antiochus of Ascalon had shown, as we have seen, a marked sceptical tendency, it was to the School of Pyrrho that the revived Scepticism looked as its ancestor rather than to the Academy. Thus the founder of the revived School, Aenesidemus of Knossos, wrote eight books Πυρρωνείων λόγων. The members of the School attempted to show the relative character of all judgments and opinions, embodying their arguments for this position in what they called Τρόποι. However, though they naturally opposed philosophic dogmatism, they did not fail to recognise the claims of practical life, and stated norms according to which man should act in practice. This was not alien to the spirit of Pyrrho who, in spite of his scepticism, declared that custom, tradition, State law, afforded a norm for practical life.

Aenesidemus of Knossos (who taught at Alexandria and probably composed his work round about 43 B.C.) gave ten Τρόποι or arguments for the sceptical position.[4] They were:

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[1] Greg., *Adv. Maxim.*, *P.G.*, 37, 1339 ff.

[2] Diog. Laërt., *Proem.*, 21.

[3] Sen., *Ep.*, 108, 17.

[4] Sext. Emp., *Pyrr. Hyp.*, 1, 36 ff.

(1) Difference between types of living beings imply different—and so relative—"ideas" of same object.
(2) Differences between individual men imply the same.
(3) The different structure and presentation of our various senses (e.g. there is an eastern fruit that smells unpleasant but tastes delicious).
(4) The difference between our various states, e.g. waking or sleeping, youth or age. For example, a current of air may seem a pleasant breeze to a young man, while to an old man it is a detestable draught.
(5) Differences of perspective, e.g. the stick immersed in water appears bent, the square tower appears round from a distance.
(6) The objects of perception are never presented in their purity, but a medium is always involved, such as air. Hence the mixing or ἐπιμιξία. For example, grass appears green at noon, golden in the evening light. A lady's dress looks different in sunlight to what it looks in electric light.
(7) Differences in perception due to differences of quality, e.g. one grain of sand appears rough, while if sand is allowed to slip through the fingers it appears smooth and soft.
(8) Relativity in general, ὁ ἀπὸ τοῦ πρός τι.
(9) Difference in impression due to frequency or infrequency of perception, e.g. the comet, seldom seen, makes more impression than the sun.
(10) Different ways of life, moral codes, laws, myths, philosophic systems, etc. (cf. Sophists).

These ten Τρόποι of Aenesidemus were reduced to five by Agrippa.[1]

(1) The variation of views concerning the same objects.
(2) The infinite process involved in proving anything (i.e. the proof rests on assumptions that require to be proved, and so on indefinitely).
(3) The relativity involved in the fact that objects appear differently to people according to the temperament, etc., of the percipient and according to their relation with other objects.
(4) The arbitrary character of dogmatic assumptions, assumed as starting-points, in order to escape the *regressus in infinitum*.

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[1] Sext. Emp., *Pyrr. Hyp.*, 1, 164 ff.

(5) The vicious circle or the necessity of assuming in the proof of anything the very conclusion that has to be proved.

Other Sceptics meanwhile reduced the Τρόποι to two:[1]

(1) Nothing can be rendered certain through itself. Witness the variety of opinions, between which no choice can be made with certainty.
(2) Nothing can be rendered certain through anything else, since the attempt to do so involves either the *regressus in infinitum* or the vicious circle.

(It is clear that these arguments for relativism have, for the most part at least, to do with perception. But perception does not err, since perception does not judge, and error lies in the false judgment. Moreover, it is in the power of reason to prevent error by avoiding precipitate judgment, by considering the matter more closely, by suspending judgment in certain cases, etc.)

Sextus Empiricus (*c.* A.D. 250), who is our main source for the details of Sceptic doctrine, argued against the possibility of proving any conclusion syllogistically.[2] The major premiss—for instance, "All men are mortal"—can be proved only by a complete induction. But the complete induction involves a knowledge of the conclusion—"Socrates is a mortal." For we cannot say, that *all* men are mortal unless we already know that Socrates is mortal. The Syllogism is, therefore, an instance of a vicious circle. (We may note that this objection against the syllogism, which was revived by John Stuart Mill in the nineteenth century, would only be valid if the Aristotelian doctrine of the specific essence were rejected in favour of Nominalism. It is in virtue of our perception of the essence or universal nature of man that we are entitled to assert that all men are mortal and not because we lay claim to any perfect and complete enumeration of particulars through actual observation, which in the case in point would be out of the question. The major premiss is founded, therefore, on the nature of man, and does not require explicit knowledge of the conclusion of the syllogism. The conclusion is contained *implicitly* in the major premiss, and the syllogistic process renders this implicit knowledge clear and explicit. The nominalist standpoint demands, of course, a new logic, and this Mill attempted to supply.) The Sceptics also argued against the validity of the notion of Cause, but they do not seem to have anticipated the epistemological difficulties raised by David Hume.[1] Cause is essentially *relative*, but the relative is not objective but is attributed extrinsically by the mind. Again, the cause must be either simultaneous with the effect or prior or posterior. It cannot be simultaneous, since then B might just as well be called the cause of A as A of B. Nor could the cause be prior to the effect, since then it would first exist without relation to its effect, and cause is essentially relative to the effect. Nor could the cause be posterior to the effect—for obvious reasons.

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[1] Sext. Emp., *Pyrr. Hyp.*, 1, 178 ff.

[2] Sext. Emp., *Pyrr. Hyp.*, 2, 193 ff.

The Sceptics also attempted to prove the existence of antinomies in theology. For instance, God must be either infinite or finite.[2] Not the former, for He would then be unmoved and so without life or soul: not the latter, as He would then be less perfect than the Whole, whereas God is *ex hypothesi* perfect. (This is an argument against the Stoics for whom God is material: it does not affect those for whom God is Infinite Spirit. Infinite Spirit cannot move, but is living, or rather is Infinite Life.) Again, the Stoic doctrine of Providence is necessarily involved in a dilemma. There is much evil and suffering in the world. Now, either God has the will and power to stop this evil and suffering or He has not. The latter supposition is incompatible with the notion of God (though J. S. Mill arrived at the strange notion of a finite God, with Whom we co-operate). He has, therefore, the will and power to stop the evil and suffering in the world. But this He obviously does not do. It follows that there is at least no *universal* Providence on the part of God. But we can give no explanation why Divine Providence should extend to this being and not to that. We are forced, therefore, to conclude that there is *no* Providence at all.[3]

In regard to practical life the Sceptics taught that we should follow the presentations of perception and thought, satisfy our natural instincts, adhere to law and tradition, and pursue science. We can never indeed attain to certainty in science, but we can go on *seeking*.[4]

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[1] Sext. Emp., *Adv. Matn.*, 9, 207 ff. Cf. 8, 453 ff.

[2] Sext. Emp., *Adv. Math.*, 9, 148 ff.

[3] Sext. Emp., *Pyrr. Hyp.*, 3, 9 ff.

[4] Sext. Emp., *Pyrr. Hyp.*, 1, 3; 1, 226; *Adv. Math.*, 7, 435 ff.

CHAPTER XLII

NEO-PYTHAGOREANISM

THE old Pythagorean School seems to have become extinct in the fourth century B.C.: if it did continue, we have certainly no evidence of effective and vigorous life. But in the first century B.C. the School came to life again under the form of what is known as Neo-Pythagoreanism. It was related to the old School, not only by reverence for the Founder, but also by a certain interest in scientific pursuits and, above all, by its religious colouring. Much of the old Pythagorean asceticism was adopted by the new School, which naturally adhered to the soul-body dualism—a salient feature, as we have seen, of the Platonic philosophy—and to this it added mystical elements, which answered the contemporary demand for a purer and more personal religion. Direct intuition of the Deity was claimed, and revelation—so much so that the philosopher is sometimes depicted as prophet and wonder-worker, e.g. Apollonius of Tyana.[1] The new School was very far, however, from being a mere reproduction of the former Pythagorean system, for it followed the current tendency to Eclecticism, and we find the Neo-Pythagoreans drawing widely on the Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic philosophies. These borrowed elements were not fused together into one synthesis, common to all the members of the School, for the various members constructed their different syntheses, in one of which Stoic themes might predominate, in another themes from the Platonic philosophy. Neo-Pythagoreanism is of some historical importance, however, not only because it stands in close relation to the religious life of the time (it seems to have originated in Alexandria, the meeting-point of Hellenistic philosophy, special science and Oriental religion), but also because it marks a step on the way to Neo-Platonism. Thus Numenius taught the doctrine of the Divine Hierarchy—the first god, the πρῶτος θεός, being the οὐσίας ἀρχή or πατήρ, the second god being the Demiurge and the third god being the World, τὸ ποίημα.

Sextus Empiricus tells us of various tendencies within Neo-Pythagoreanism. Thus in one form of Neo-Pythagoreanism everything is derived from the monad or point (ἐξ ἑνὸς σημείου). The point generates the line in its flow, while from lines are generated surfaces, and from surfaces three-dimensional bodies. Here we have a monistic system, though obviously influenced by older mathematical conceptions. In another form of Neo-Pythagoreanism, although everything is derived ultimately from the point or μονάς, the greatest emphasis is laid on the dualism of the μονάς, and the ἀόριστος δυάς. All "unities" participate in the μονάς and all dualities in the ἀόριστος δυάς.[1] There is nothing particularly original in these forms of Neo-Pythagoreanism, but the notion of "emanation" is clearly present, which was to play a leading rôle in Neo-Platonism.

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[1] See Note on Apoll. Tyana, pp. 449-50.

One of the motives that prompted the Neo-Platonic theory of emanation and the assertion of beings intermediary between the corporeal world and the supreme God was the desire of maintaining God's purity free from all contact with the things of sense. God's utter transcendence, His position "beyond being," is brought into sharp relief. Now, this theme of the transcendence of God is already discernible in Neo-Pythagoreanism. It may have been influenced by the Judaeo-Alexandrian philosophy and by Oriental tradition, though we may discern its latent germs within the thought of Plato himself. The noted wonder-worker Apollonius of Tyana (who flourished about the end of the first century A.D.), whose "life" was written by Philostratus, distinguished the first god from the other gods. To this first god men should not offer any material sacrifice, since all material things are tainted with impurity. We should sacrifice to the other gods, but not to the first god, to whom we should offer none but the service of our reason, without outward speech or offering.

An interesting figure is that of *Nicomachus of Gerasa* (in Arabia), who lived about A.D. 140, and was author of an ἀριθμητικὴ εἰσαγωγή. In his system the Ideas existed before the formation of the world (Plato), and the Ideas are numbers (Plato again). But the Number-Ideas did not exist in a transcendental world of their own: rather were they Ideas in the Divine Mind, and so patterns or archetypes according to which the things of this world were formed (cf. Philo the Jew, Middle Platonism and Neo-Platonism). The transposition of the Ideas into the Mind of God had, therefore, taken place before the rise of Neo-Platonism, from which it passed over into the Christian tradition.

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[1] *Adv. Math.*, 10, 281 ff.

A similar transposition is to be observed in the philosophy of *Numenius of Apamea* (Syria), who lived in the second half of the second century A.D. and seems to have been well acquainted with the Jewish philosophy of Alexandria. According to Clement he spoke of Plato as Μωϋσῆς ἀττικίζων.[1] In Numenius' philosophy the πρῶτος θεός is the Principle of Being (οὐσίας ἀρχή) and the βασιλεύς.[2] He is also the activity of Pure Thought (νοῦς), and has no direct share in the formation of the world. Moreover, He is the Good. Numenius thus seems to have identified the Platonic Form of the Good with the Aristotelian God or νόησις νοήσεως. The second god is the Demiurge (*Timaeus*), who is good by participation in the being of the First God and who, as γενέσεως ἀρχή, forms the world. He does this by working on matter and forming it on the pattern of the archetypal Ideas. The world itself, the production of the Demiurge, is the third god. These three gods are also characterised by Numenius as πατήρ, ποιητής and ποίημα respectively, or as πάππος, ἔγγονος and ἀπόγονος.[3]

Dualism is very apparent in the psychology of Numenius, since he postulates two souls in man, a rational soul and an irrational soul, and declares the entry of the soul into the body as something evil, as a "fall." He seems also to have taught the existence of a good and a bad world-soul.[4]

The philosophy of Numenius was thus a syncretism or harmonisation of elements taken from preceding thinkers, a philosophy which laid great emphasis on the divine transcendence and which, in general, asserted a sharp antithesis between "higher" and "lower," both in reality as a whole and in human nature in particular.

In connection with Neo-Pythagoreanism stand the so-called *Hermetic Literature* and the *Chaldaic Oracles*. The former is the name given to a type of "mystical" literature that arose in the first century A.D. and that may, or may not, owe a debt to previous Egyptian writings. The Greeks found in Hermes the Egyptian god Thoth, and their appellation "Hermes Trismegistos" is derived from the Egyptian "Great Thoth." But whatever be the truth concerning the supposed influence of Egyptian tradition on the Hermetic literature, the latter owes its main contents to earlier Greek philosophy, and seems to have been indebted particularly to Poseidonius. The fundamental notion expressed in this literature is that of *salvation through knowledge of God*—γνῶσις—a notion that played a great part in "Gnosticism." A similar doctrine of salvation formed the content of the Chaldaic Oracles, a poem that was composed about A.D. 200, and which, like the Hermetic literature, combines Orphic-Pythagorean, Platonic and Stoic elements.

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[1] Clem. Alex., *Strom.*, 1, 22, 148. (*P.G.*, 8, 895.)

[2] Cf. Plato, *Ep.*, 2.

[3] Procl. *in Tim.*, I, 303, 27 ff.

[4] Chalcid., *in Tim.*, c. 295.

In its close relation to the religious interest and needs of the time, and in the work of preparing the ground for Neo-Platonism, Neo-Pythagoreanism resembles Middle Platonism, to which we must now turn.

Note on Apollonius of Tyana

The rhetorician Philostratus undertook the composition of the life of Apollonius at the request of Julia Domna, second wife of Septimius Severus. The book was composed about A.D. 200. The story given by Philostratus about the Memoirs of Apollonius by his disciple Damis, an Assyrian, which are said to have been given to Julia Domna by a relative of Damis, is probably a literary fiction.[1] In any case the motive of Philostratus seems to have been that of representing Apollonius as a wise man, as a true servant of the gods and a miracle-worker, instead of the magician or conjurer depicted by Moeragenes in his *Memorabilia* of Apollonius.[2] There are indications that Philostratus knew and utilised the Gospels, Acts of the Apostles and Lives of the Saints, but it remains uncertain how far it was his conscious intention to substitute the ideal of a "Hellenistic Christ" for the Christian Christ: resemblances have been greatly exaggerated. If the intention of Philostratus remains obscure, so does the foundation of truth at the base of his narrative: it is practically impossible to say exactly what sort of a man the historic Apollonius actually was.

The work of Philostratus had a great success and led to a cult of Apollonius. Thus Caracalla raised a shrine to the wonder-worker,[3] while Alexander Severus included him in his *Lararium* along with his Penates, Abraham, Orpheus and Christ.[4] Aurelian spared the city of Tyana, which he had vowed to destroy, out of respect for the birthplace of Apollonius.[5] Eunapius honours him in his Lives of the Sophists,[6] while Ammianus Marcellinus, companion of the Emperor Julian, cites him along with Plotinus as one of the privileged mortals who were visited by the *familiares genii.*[1]

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[1] Cf. Ed. Meyer, *Hermes*, 197, pp. 371 ff.

[2] Orig., *Contra Celsum*, 6, 41 (*P.G.*, 11, 1357).

[3] Dion Cass., 77, 18.

[4] Lamprid., *Alex.*, 29.

[5] Lamprid., *Aurel.*, 24.

[6] Ed. Boissonade, p. 500, Didot.

Whatever the intention of Philostratus himself may have been, it is certain that the pagan apologists made use of the figure of Apollonius in their fight against Christianity. Thus Hierocles, Governor of Lower Egypt under Diocletian and a ferocious enemy of Christianity, tried to lessen the importance of the miracles of Christ by citing the "miracles" of Apollonius and tried to show the superiority of pagan wisdom in that they refrained from elevating Apollonius to the rank of God because of these miracles.[2] Porphyry also made use of Apollonius, citing his miracles and opposing his bold defiance of Domitian to the humiliations of Christ in His Passion.[3] St. Augustine bears testimony to this sort of apologetic exploitation of Apollonius on the part of the pagans.[4]

Towards the end of the fourth century Virius Nicomachus Flavianus, a pagan, translated Philostratus' book into Latin, and it was repolished by the grammarian Tascius Victorinus. It seems to have excited some interest in Christian circles, since Sidonius Apollinaris revised it also and speaks of Apollonius with great deference.[5]

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[1] *Rerum gest.*, 21, 14, 5.

[2] Lact., *Div. Inst.*, V, 3; *P.L.* 6, 556 ff.

[3] St. Jerome, in Ps. 81 (*P.L.* 26, 1130).

[4] Cf. *Ep.*, 136, I; 102, 32; 138, 18.

[5] *Ep.*, 8, 3; ed. Mohr, p. 173.

CHAPTER XLIII

MIDDLE PLATONISM

We have already seen how the Middle and New Academies inclined to scepticism, and how, when the Academy returned to dogmatism under Antiochus of Ascalon, the latter maintained the theory of the fundamental unity of the Platonic and Peripatetic philosophies. It is, therefore, not surprising to find Eclecticism as one of the leading characteristics of Middle Platonism. Platonists did not possess the lectures of Plato, but the more popular dialogues, and this fact made it more difficult for any rigid orthodoxy to assert itself: it was not as though the founder had left a systematised and carefully-articulated philosophic deposit, which could be passed on as the norm and canon of Platonism. There is no reason, then, to be astonished that Middle Platonism took over the Peripatetic logic, for example, since the Peripatetics had a more carefully-elaborated logical foundation than the Platonists possessed.

Platonism, no less than Neo-Pythagoreanism, felt the influence of contemporary religious interests and demands and the result was that Platonism borrowed from Neo-Pythagoreanism or developed germs latent in itself under the influence of the latter School. Hence we find in Middle Platonism the same insistence on the divine transcendence that we have already observed in Neo-Pythagoreanism, together with the theory of intermediary beings and a belief in mysticism.

On the other hand—and here again Middle Platonism was in line with the contemporary tendencies—much attention was devoted to the work of studying and commenting on the Platonic dialogues.[1] The result of this was a more intense reverence for the person and actual *dicta* of the founder and, consequently, a tendency to stress the differences between Platonism and the other philosophical systems. Thus we find writings directed against the Peripatetics and the Stoics. These two movements, the one towards philosophic "orthodoxy" and the other towards eclecticism, were obviously in conflict, and the consequence is that Middle Platonism does not present the character of a unitary whole: different thinkers amalgamated the various elements in different ways. Middle Platonism is accordingly *Middle* Platonism; that is to say, it bears the mark of a transition-stage: it is only in Neo-Platonism that anything like a real synthesis and fusion of the various currents and tendencies can be found. Neo-Platonism is thus like the sea, to which the various contributing rivers are flowing and in which their waters are at length mingled.

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[1] The tetralogic arrangement of the Platonic Dialogues was attached to the name of Thrasyllus, the court-astronomer of Tiberius, who joined the Platonic School.

1. The eclectic tendency of Middle Platonism and the orthodox tendency of the same School may be observed together in the thought of *Eudorus of Alexandria* (about 25 B.C.). In accordance with the *Theaetetus* (176 b) Eudorus affirmed that the end of philosophy is ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν. In this conception of the end of philosophy Socrates, Plato and Pythagoras are in agreement, said Eudorus. This shows the eclectic side of Eudorus' thought and, in particular, the influence of Neo-Pythagoreanism, in accordance with which he distinguished a threefold One or ἕν. The first is the supreme Godhead and is the ultimate source of being, and from Him proceeds the second ἕν (also called μονάς,, together with the ἀόριστος δυάς, the second ἕν being τεταγμένο), περιττόν, φῶς, etc., the ἀόριστος δυάς being ἄτακτον, ἄρτιον, σκότους etc. But though Eudorus obviously felt the influence of Neo-Pythagoreanism and to this extent was eclectic, we learn that he composed a work against the Aristotelian κατηγορίαι, thus showing the "orthodox" as over against the eclectic tendency.

2. A prominent figure of Middle Platonism is the author of the celebrated lives of Greek and Roman worthies, *Plutarch of Chaeronea*. This distinguished man was born about A.D. 45 and was educated at Athens, where he was stimulated to mathematical studies by the Platonist Ammonius. He often visited Rome and was on terms of friendship with important personages in the imperial city. According to Suidas[1] the Emperor Trajan gave him the consular dignity and told the officials of Achaea to ask for Plutarch's approval for all their measures. Plutarch also became Archon Eponymos of his native city and was for some years priest to the Delphic Apollo. Besides the *Lives* and the *Moralia* Plutarch wrote commentaries on Plato (e.g. Πλατωνικὰ ζητήματα), books against the Stoics and the Epicureans (e.g. Περὶ Στοικῶν ἐναντιωμάτων and Ὅτι οὐδὲ ζῆν ἔστιν ἡδέως κατ' Ἐπίκουρον), works

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[1] Suid., Πλούταρχος.

on psychology and astronomy, on ethics and on politics. To these must be added compositions on family life, on pedagogy and on religion (e.g. Περὶ τῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ θείου βραδέως τιμωρουένων and Περὶ δεισιδαιμονίας). A number of works that pass under his name are not by Plutarch (e.g. the *Placita* and the Περὶ εἱμαρμένης).

Plutarch's thought was decidedly eclectic in character, for he was influenced not only by Plato but also by the Peripatetics, the Stoics and especially the Neo-Pythagoreans. Moreover, while on the one hand the scepticism of the Middle and New Academies led him to adopt a somewhat distrustful attitude towards theoretical speculation and a strong opposition to superstition (the latter due more, perhaps, to his desire for a purer conception of the Deity), he combined therewith a belief in prophecy and "revelation" and "enthusiasm." He speaks of an immediate intuition or contact with the Transcendental, which doubtless helped to prepare the way for the Plotinian doctrine of ecstasy.[1]

Plutarch aimed at a purer conception of God. "While we are here below, encumbered by bodily affections, we can have no intercourse with God save as in philosophic thought we may faintly touch Him, as in a dream. But when our souls are released, and have passed into the region of the pure, invisible, and changeless, this God will be the guide and king of those who depend on Him and gaze with insatiable longing on the beauty which may not be spoken of by the lips of man."[2] This desire for a purer conception of God led him to deny God's authorship of evil. Some other cause had to be found for the evil in the world, and this Plutarch found in the World-Soul. This is postulated as the cause of evil and imperfection in the world and is set over against God as the pure Good, so that a dualism is asserted of two principles, the good and the bad. The evil principle, however, seems to have become the divine World-Soul at creation by participating in, or being filled with, reason, which is an emanation from the Godhead. The World-Soul is therefore not destitute of reason and harmony, but on the other hand it continues to act as the evil principle and thus the dualism is maintained.

Since God, freed from all responsibility for evil, is elevated far above the world, it is but natural that Plutarch should introduce intermediary beings below God. Thus he accepted the star-gods and followed Xenocrates and Poseidonius in postulating a number of "Demons" who form the connecting link between God and man. Some of these are more akin to God, others are tainted by the evil of the lower world.[1] Extravagant rites, barbarous and obscene sacrifices are really offered to the evil demons. The good demons are the instruments of Providence (on which Plutarch lays great stress). Plutarch, as I have already mentioned, professed himself a foe to superstition and condemned myths that were unworthy of God (like Poseidonius, he distinguished a threefold theology); but that did not prevent him from showing considerable sympathy for the popular religion. Thus according to him the various religions of mankind all worship the same God under different names, and he makes use of allegorical interpretation, in order to justify popular beliefs. For instance, in his *De Iside et Osiride* he tries to show that Osiris represents the good principle and Tryphon the bad principle, while Isis represents matter, which is not evil in Plutarch's view but, though neutral in itself, has a natural tendency and love for the Good.

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[1] *De Is. et Osir.*, 77.

[2] *De Is. et Osir.*, 78.

Plutarch's psychology gives evidence of mythological and fantastic notions of the origin of the soul and its relation with the Demons, into which it is unnecessary to enter. One may, however, point out the dualism asserted between ψυχή and νοῦς, that is superimposed upon the soul-body dualism. Just as ψυχή is better and more divine than the body, so is νοῦς better and more divine than ψυχή, the latter being subject to passions, the former being the "Demon" in man and the element which should rule. Immortality is affirmed by Plutarch and he depicts the happiness of the after-life, when the soul not only attains to a knowledge of the truth but also enjoys once more the company of relatives and friends.[2] In his ethic the philosopher was clearly influenced by the Peripatetic tradition, since he emphasises the need of attaining the happy mean between ὑπερβολή and ἔλλειψις, excess and defect. To get rid of the affections is neither possible nor desirable; we should aim rather at moderation and the golden mean. Plutarch, however, follows the Stoics in permitting suicide, and he was influenced too by their Cosmopolitanism, especially when seen under the light of his experience of the Roman Empire. The ruler represents God.

The world was created in time, for this is necessitated by the principle of the soul's priority over the body and of God's priority in regard to the world.[1] There are five elements (adding aether) and five worlds.[2]

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[1] *De Is. et Osir.*, 26.

[2] *Non p. suav.*, 28 ff.; *De ser. num. vind.*, 18.

3. *Albinus* (A.D. second century), a disciple of Gaius the Middle Platonist, distinguished the πρῶτος θεός, νοῦς and ψυχή. The πρῶτος θεός is unmoved (Aristotle) but is not mover, and he would appear to be identical with the ὑπερουράνιος θεός. The first god does not operate immediately—since he is unmoved but not mover—but operates through the Νοῦς or World-Intellect.[3] Between God and the world are the star-gods and others, οἱ γεννητοὶ θεοί. The Platonic Ideas are made eternal ideas of God and are patterns or exemplary causes of things: the Aristotelian εἴδη are subordinated to them as copies.[4] The conception of God as unmoved and as not acting through efficient causality is, of course, Aristotelian in origin, though elements in the conception of God are developments of Platonic doctrine, e.g. the transposition of the Ideas into Ideas of God, a doctrine which we have already met in Neo-Pythagoreanism. Albinus also makes use of the gradual elevation to God through the various degrees of beauty, an ascent suggested by Plato's *Symposium*, while the conception of the World-Soul is obviously to be connected with the *Timaeus*.[5] In this fusion of Platonic and Aristotelian elements Albinus, like Numenius the Neo-Pythagorean, helped to prepare the way for Neo-Platonism. His distinction of πρῶτος θεός, νοῦς and ψυχή was also a direct step on the way to the Neo-Platonic distinction of τὸ ἕν, νοῦς and ψυχή. (In his psychology and ethics Albinus combined Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic elements, e.g. identifying the Stoic ἡγεμονικόν with the Platonic λογιστικόν, introducing the Aristotelian παθητικόν over against the λογιστικόν, distinguishing with Plato τὸ θυμικόν (Plat. θυμοειδές) and τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν, making use of the Stoic οἰκείωσις, declaring the end of ethics to be the Platonic end of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν, following the Stoics in making φρόνησις the first of the cardinal virtues and Plato in making δικαιοσύνη the general virtue, opposing the Stoic "Apathy" in favour of the Platonic- Aristotelian "Metriopathy." An eclectic indeed!)

4. Among other Middle Platonists we may mention *Apuleius* (b. *c.* A.D. 125), *Atticus* (*c.* A.D. 176), *Celsus* and *Maximus of Tyre* (*c.* A.D. 180). Atticus represented the more orthodox Platonic tradition in contrast to the eclectic tendency, as we have observed

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[1] *De anim. procr.*, 4 ff.

[2] *De def. orac.*, 32 ff., 37; cf. Plat., *Tim.*, 31 a b, 34 b, 55 cd, where Plato opts for one world.

[3] *Didaskalikos*, 164, 21 ff.

Didask., 163–4.

[5] *Didask.*, 169, 26 ff.

it in Albinus. Thus he attacked Aristotle for neglecting Divine Providence, teaching the eternity of the world, and for denying immortality or not expressing it clearly. But he seems to have been influenced by Stoic doctrine, as he emphasises the Divine Immanence and stresses the all-sufficiency of virtue, in contrast to the Peripatetic doctrine that corporeal and external goods are necessary for happiness. He naturally maintained the Platonic Ideas, but, characteristically of his time, made them thoughts or ideas of God. In addition he identified the Demiurge of the *Timaeus* with the Form of the Good, and he attributed to matter an evil soul as its principle.

Celsus is best known to us as a determined opponent of Christianity: we are acquainted with the content of his 'Αληθὴς λόγος (written about A.D. 179) through Origen's reply to it. He emphasised God's utter transcendence and would not allow that the corporeal is the work of God. To bridge the gulf between God and the world he admitted "Demons," angels and heroes. God's Providence has the universe as its object and is not, as the Christians believe, anthropocentric.

A similar emphasis on the Divine Transcendence, together with the admission of inferior gods and demons, as also the referring of evil to matter, is found in the case of Maximus of Tyre (*c.* A.D. 180). Maximus speaks of the vision of the transcendent God. "Thou shalt see Him fully only when He calls thee, in age or death, but meantime glimpses of the Beauty which eye hath not seen nor can tongue speak of, may be won, if the veils and wrappings which hide His splendour be torn away. But do not thou profane Him by offering vain prayers for earthly things which belong to the world of chance or which may be obtained by human effort, things for which the worthy need not pray, and which the unworthy will not obtain. The only prayer which is answered is the prayer for goodness, peace, and hope in death."[1] The angels are servants of God and helpers of men; "thrice ten thousand are they upon the fruitful earth, immortal, ministers of Zeus."[2]

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[1] *Diss.*, 17, 11: 11, 2 and 7.

[2] *Diss.*, 14, 8.

CHAPTER XLIV

JEWISH-HELLENISTIC PHILOSOPHY

It was at Alexandria particularly that the influence of Greek speculation on the Jewish mind became most apparent, although traces of such influence may be seen in Palestine itself, as in the doctrine of the sect of the Essenes (mentioned by Josephus for the first time in his picture of the period of Jonathan the Hasmonaean, about 160 B.C.),[1] which shows Orphic-Pythagorean traits. For example, the Essenes maintained a clear dualism of soul and body, with which they coupled a belief, not only in the soul's survival after death but also in its pre-existence before birth. Blood-offerings and the consumption of flesh and wine were banned, and great importance was attached to the belief in angels or intermediary beings. Moreover it is a significant feature—even if not to be overstressed—that when Antiochus Epiphanes attempted a forcible Hellenisation of the Palestinian Jews, he was able to rely on a certain amount of support among the Jews themselves, though he encountered a determined opposition on the part of the more orthodox, who resolutely adhered to the tradition of their fathers and were naturally irreconcilable enemies of the moral abuses that they considered accompaniments of Hellenism. However, Alexandria, that great cosmopolitan city set on the confines of East and West, became the real centre of the Jewish-Hellenistic philosophy, which culminated in the thought of Philo. Away from their native home the Jews were naturally more prone to accept Greek influence, and this showed itself largely in an attempt to reconcile Greek philosophy with Jewish theology, an attempt that led on the one hand to the selection of those elements in Greek speculation that harmonised best with Jewish religion and on the other hand to the practice of allegorising the Jewish Scriptures and interpreting them in such a way that they would harmonise with Greek thought. Thus we even find Jews asserting that the great Greek philosophers were indebted to the Scriptures for their leading ideas. This notion is of course void of historical foundation as it concerns Plato, for instance, but it is symptomatic of the syncretistic tendencies of the Hellenised Jews of the Empire.[1]

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[1] *Ant. Jud.*, 13, 5, 9.

The chief figure of the Jewish-Hellenistic philosophy is *Philo of Alexandria*, who was born about 25 B.C. and died some time after A.D. 40, the year in which he was at Rome as ambassador of the Alexandrian Jews to the Emperor Gaius. We possess a large number of his works, though some have perished.[2]

Filled with admiration for the Greek philosophers Philo maintained that the same truth is to be found in both the Greek philosophy and Jewish Scriptures and tradition. While believing that the philosophers had made use of the Sacred Scriptures, he at the same time did not hesitate to interpret the Scriptures allegorically when he deemed it necessary. Thus in his work Ὅτι ἄτρεπτον τὸ θεῖον he shows that God cannot properly be said to move, since He is in no way corporeal. We must accordingly recognise two senses in the anthropomorphic passages of the Scriptures, a higher and non-anthropomorphic sense and a lower or anthropomorphic sense, which is suited to ordinary people. It might be supposed that this work of allegorisation and of discerning "higher" meanings would, if pushed far enough, lead to a denial of the necessity of observing literally the ceremonial precepts of the Law, at least for those who are capable of discerning the higher sense. But this Philo would not allow. Soul is above body, yet body is part of man; and though the allegorical sense is higher than the literal, we are not entitled to disregard the literal sense—rather should we pay heed to both letter and spirit. His intention was therefore not that of destroying or superseding Jewish orthodoxy but rather that of reconciling it with philosophy, while at the same time preserving the observance of the Law intact.[3]

God is personal, as the Jewish theology teaches, but He is at the same time Pure Being (τὸ ὄντως ὄν), absolutely simple (φύσις ἁπλῆ), free and self-sufficient.[4] He does not occupy space or place but rather contains all things within Himself.[5] Yet He is absolutely transcendent, transcending even the Idea of the Good and the Idea of Beauty (αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν).[1] Man attains to God, not through scientific understanding (λόγων ἀποδείξει)—"In order to comprehend God we must first become God, which is impossible"[2]—but in immediate intuition (ἐναργείᾳ).[3] God is thus ineffable Being, Who is above thought and can be attained only through ecstasy or intuition. We see how Philo was influenced by the contemporary tendency to exalt the Divine Transcendence—though we must not forget that the transcendence of the Divine Being was clearly maintained in Jewish scriptural theology, even if not expressed in philosophic terminology.

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[1] Consideration of the question, What influence was exercised by Greek speculation on Jewish Apocryphal writings and even on certain books of the O.T. itself, is here omitted.

[2] Cf. Euseb., *Hist. Eccles.*, 2, 18. References to the works of Philo are given according to the edition of Leopold Cohen and Paul Wendland, Berlin (Vol. 6, Cohen and Reiter).

[3] Cf. *De migrat. Abrah.*, 16, 92.

[4] Cf. *De post. Caini*, 48, 167; *Leg. alleg.*, 2, 1, 2 f.; *De Mutat nom.*, 4, 27.

[5] *De conf. ling.*, 27, 136; *De somniis*, I, 11; 63.

This insistence on the Divine Transcendence and on God's elevation above everything material not unnaturally led, as later on, for example, in Albinus the Middle Platonist and Numenius the Neo-Pythagorean, to the conception of intermediary beings, in order to bridge the gulf between God Himself and the material cosmos. The highest of these intermediary beings is the Logos or Nous. The Logos is spoken of as the first-born of God, being πρεσβύτατος καὶ γενικώτατος τῶν ὅσα γέγονε.[4] The Logos is for Philo definitely inferior to God and is to be placed in the rank of ὅσα γέγονε, which includes many other beings besides the Logos, even if the latter has the primacy. The Philonic conception of the Logos is therefore not identical with the dogma of the Logos as maintained in Christian theology, even if it influenced early Christian thinkers. Sometimes indeed the Logos seems to be conceived as an aspect of God, but even in this case there would still be a clear distinction between the Philonic and the Christian idea of the Logos. It has been well said, that Philo wavered between "Monarchianism" and "Arianism" but never asserted "Athanasianism"—provided, of course, that it is understood that in the Philonic doctrine of the Logos there is no reference to an historic Man. The Platonic Ideas are placed in the Logos, so that the Logos is the Τόπος or place in which the ideal world (ὁ ἐκ τῶν ἰδεῶν κόσμος) is situated.[5] In this conception Philo is at one with Neo-Pythagoreanism, which placed the Ideas in Nous. (Numenius was influenced by the Philonic philosophy.) Generally speaking Philo speaks simply of the Logos, though he distinguishes two aspects or functions of Logos, ὁ λόγος ἐνδιάθετος and ὁ λόγος προφορικός, the first consisting in the immaterial world of the

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[1] *De opif. mundi.*, 2, 8. [2] Frag. a 654. [3] *De post. Caini*, 48, 167.
[4] *Leg. alleg.*, 3, 61, 175. [5] *De opif. mundi.*, 4, 17 ff.

Ideas, the second in the visible things of this world, in so far as they are copies of the immaterial Ideas.[1] This division of the Logos corresponds to the vision in man between the λόγος ἐνδιάθετος or faculty of reason itself and the λόγος προφορικός or spoken word, which proceeds from the λόγος ἐνδιάθετος as the stream from its source. An example of Philo's allegorising is to be found in the fact that he discovers a symbol of this twofold Logos in the double breastplate of the High Priest. The Logos is God's instrument in the formation of the world, and Philo found a reference to this in the words of the Pentateuch, καὶ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον κατ εἰκόνα θεοῦ.[2]

It is to be noted that, when the Old Testament mentions the angel of God in describing the theophanies, Philo identifies the angel with the Logos, just as, when several angels are mentioned, he identifies them with the Powers (see below). This Logos is an incorporeal substance, the immaterial Word or Voice of God; but, in so far as it is conceived as really distinct from God, it is conceived as subordinate to God, as God's instrument. Philo utilised, not only the conception of the Divine Wisdom, as found in the Sapiential Books, but also Platonic exemplarism (the Logos is the image, the shadow, of God and is itself the exemplar of creation) and Stoic themes (the Logos is the immanent, yet at the same time, transcendent, principle of law in the world and organising bond of creatures); but the general conception seems to be that of a descending scale of being. In other words, the Philonic Logos, so far as it is really distinct from the ultimate Godhead, Yahweh, is a subordinate and intermediary being, through which God expresses Himself and acts: it is not the consubstantial Word of the Father, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. The Philonic philosophy, in respect to the Logos, is more akin to Neo-Platonism than to Christian Trinitarianism.[3]

Besides the Logos there are other Powers (δύναμεις) or intermediary beings subordinate to God, such as ἡ ποιητική and ἡ βαοσλική or κύριος (sometimes named ἀγαθότης and ἐξουσία), ἡ προνοητική, ἡ νομοθετική, etc. But just as Philo seems to have wavered between conceiving the Logos as an aspect of God and conceiving it as an independent being, so he wavered between conceiving the other Powers as attributes or powers of God, corresponding to the Ideas (i.e. as operative functions of the Ideas) and conceiving them as relatively independent beings. They all appear to be comprehended in the Logos, but this does not help much in settling the question as to their personality or lack of it. If the Logos is conceived as an aspect of God, then the Powers will be qualities or ideas of God, while if the Logos is conceived as a relatively independent being, subordinate to God, then the Powers may be minor subordinate beings or forces; but it does not appear that Philo ever came to a settled or clear decision on the matter. Dr. Praechter can thus say, that "Philo wavers between two conceptions, the 'Analoga' of which recur in the Christian Church as Monarchianism and Arianism; but a doctrine analogous to that of Athanasius is wholly foreign to him and would contradict both his religious and his philosophic consciousness."[1] Moreover, it does not require much thought to recognise that the Philonic philosophy could never admit the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation—at least if Philonism were to remain self-consistent—since it lays such stress on the Divine Transcendence that direct "contact" with matter is excluded. It is indeed perfectly true that Christianity itself insists on the Divine Transcendence and that the Incarnation is a mystery; but on the other hand the spirit of the Christian attitude towards matter is not that of the Philonic or Neo-Platonic philosophies.

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[1] *Quod Deus sit immut.*, 7, 34; cf. *De vita Mos.*, 2 (3), 13, 127.

[2] *De opif. mundi.*, 6, 25.

[3] On this subject, cf. Jules Lebreton, S.J., *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité.* (Beauchesne, 1910.)

Influenced by Platonism, Philo maintains a sharp dualism of soul and body or of the rational and sensual elements in man, and insists on the necessity of man's liberating himself from the power of the sensual.[2] Virtue is the only true good, and in regard to the passions apathy is to be aimed at. But though Philo was influenced by Stoic and Cynic ethical teaching, he emphasised trust in God rather than trust in oneself. Virtue then is to be pursued and man's task is to attain the greatest possible likeness to God.[3] This is an interior task and so public life is discouraged because of its distracting influence, while science is to be pursued only so far as it is an aid to the soul's inner life. In this development there are stages, for above conceptual knowledge of God is to be ranked heavenly wisdom or the immediate intuition of the ineffable Godhead. The passive state of ecstasy thus becomes the highest stage of the soul's life on earth, as it was later to be in the Neo-Platonic philosophy.[4]

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[1] Ueb.-P., p. 577.

[2] E.g. *De somn.*, 123, 149.

[3] *De opif. mundi.*, 50, 144; *De human.*, 23, 168.

[4] Cf. *Quis rer. div. her.*, 14, 68 ff.; *De gigant.*, II, 52 f.

While Philo's influence on early Christian thought has doubtless been exaggerated,[1] it will be recognised that Philonism helped to prepare the way for Neo-Platonism through its insistence on the utter Transcendence of God, the existence of intermediary beings, and the soul's ascent to God culminating in ecstasy.

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[1] It is probable, however, that Origen's habit of allegorising is due in large measure to Philo.

CHAPTER XLV

PLOTINIAN NEO-PLATONISM

1. *Life of Plotinus*

THE birthplace of Plotinus is uncertain, since it is given as Lycon by Eunapius and as Lycopolis by Suidas.[1] In any case he was born in Egypt about A.D. 203 or 204 (Porphyry gives 205/6). Plotinus, we are told by Porphyry, attended the lectures of various professors at Alexandria in turn, but did not find what he was looking for until he came upon Ammonius Saccas, when he was about twenty-eight. He remained a pupil of Ammonius until the year 242 when he joined the Persian expedition of the Emperor Gordian, in order to make the acquaintance of Persian philosophy. However, the expedition came to grief when Gordian was assassinated in Mesopotamia, and Plotinus made his way to Rome where he arrived in his fortieth year. At Rome he opened a school and soon came to enjoy the favour of the highest officials, even of the Emperor Gallienus and his wife. Plotinus conceived the notion of founding a city, Platonopolis, in the Campagna, which was to be the concrete realisation of Plato's Republic, and he seems to have obtained the Emperor's consent to the project; but for some reason or other the Emperor withdrew his consent after a while and so the plan fell through.

When Plotinus was about sixty years old he received as a pupil the celebrated Porphyry, who afterwards wrote the life of the Master whom he so greatly admired. It was Porphyry who attempted to arrange the writings of Plotinus in systematic form, dividing them into six books, each of which contained nine chapters. Hence the name *Enneads*, which is applied to the works of Plotinus. Although the philosopher is said to have had a pleasant and eloquent oral style, his written composition was somewhat difficult and the difficulty was not lessened by the fact that his weak eyesight prevented him from correcting the manuscript. Porphyry had therefore no easy task to start with, and as he made a point of preserving the style of the writer, Plotinus' treatises have always been a source of difficulty to later editors.

At Rome, Plotinus was frequently approached for help and advice, and so exercised the office of a sort of "spiritual director." Moreover he took into his house orphaned children and acted as their guardian—an example of his kindness and amiability. He made many friends and no enemies, and though his personal life was ascetic, he was gentle and affectionate in character. We are told that he was somewhat diffident and nervous, a fact that tended to show itself in his lectures. He led a deep spiritual life and Porphyry relates that his Master experienced ecstatic union with God four times in the six years in which he was his disciple.[1] Plotinus did not enjoy strong health, and his infirmities had a fatal termination in A.D. 269/70, when he died at a country-house in the Campagna. Porphyry was at that time in Sicily, whither he had gone on Plotinus' advice, in order to recover from a state of melancholy and depression into which he had fallen; but a friend of Plotinus, the physician Eustochius, arrived from Puteoli in time to hear the philosopher's last words: "I was waiting for you, before that which is divine in me departs to unite itself with the Divine in the universe."

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[1] Eunap., *Vit. Soph.*, 6; Porph., *Isag.*, 12b; Suid., *Plot.*

Although Plotinus attacked the Gnostics, he is silent about Christianity, which he must have known to some extent. But though he never became a Christian, he was a resolute witness to spiritual and moral ideals, not only in his writings but also in his own life, and it was the spiritual idealism of his philosophy that enabled it to exercise such an influence on the great Latin doctor, St. Augustine of Hippo.

II. *Doctrine of Plotinus*

God is absolutely transcendent: He is the One, beyond all thought and all being, ineffable and incomprehensible, οὗ μὴ λόγος, μηδὲ ἐπιστήμη, ὃ δὴ καὶ ἐπέκεινα λέγεται εἶναι οὐσίας.[2] Neither essence nor being nor life can be predicated of the One, not of course that it is less than any of these things but because it is *more*, τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντα ταῦτα εἶναι.[3] The One cannot be identical with the sum of individual things, for it is these individual things which require a Source or Principle, and this Principle must be distinct from them and logically prior to them. (We might say that, however much you increase the number of contingent things, you cannot thus arrive at a Necessary Being.)

[1] Ἔτυχε δὲ τετράκις που, ὅτε συνήμην αὐτῷ, τοῦ σκόπου, ἐνεργείᾳ ἀρρήτῳ, καὶ οὐ δυνάμει. *Plotini Vita*, 23, 138

[2] *Enn.*, 5 4, 1 (516 b–c).

[3] *Enn.*, 3, 8, 9 (352 b).

Moreover, if the One were identical with each individual thing taken separately, then each thing would be identical with every other and the distinction of things, which is an obvious fact, would be illusion. "Thus the One cannot be any existing thing, but is prior to all existents."[1] The One of Plotinus is not, therefore, the One of Parmenides, a monistic principle, but is the One, whose transcendence we have seen emphasised in Neo-Pythagoreanism and Middle Platonism. Indeed, just as Albinus had set the πρῶτος θεός above νοῦς and distinguished the ὑπερουράνιος θεός from the ἐπουράνιος θεός, and as Numenius had set the πρῶτος θεός above the Demiurge, and as Philo had set God above the world-forming Powers, so Plotinus sets the ultimate Deity, the One or πρῶτος θεός,, beyond being, ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας.[2] This does not mean, however, that the One is nothing or non-existent; rather does it mean that the One transcends all being of which we have experience. The concept of being is drawn from the objects of our experience, but the One transcends all those objects and consequently transcends also the concept that is founded on those objects.

Since God is one, without any multiplicity or division, there can be in the One no duality of substance and accident, and Plotinus is accordingly unwilling to ascribe to God any positive attributes. We should not say that the One is "thus" or "not thus," for if we say this we thereby delimit it and make it a particular thing, whereas in reality, it is beyond all things which can be delimited by such predication, ἄλλο τοίνυν παῤ ἅπαντα τὸ οὕτως.[3] Nevertheless, Goodness may be attributed to the One, provided that it is not attributed as an inhering quality. God is accordingly *The Good* rather than "good."[4] Moreover, we can legitimately ascribe to the One neither thought nor will nor activity. Not thought, since thought implies a distinction between the thinker and the object of his thought;[5] not will, since this also implies distinction: not activity, for then there would be a distinction between the agent and the object on which he acts. God is the One, beyond all distinctions whatsoever: He cannot even distinguish Himself from Himself, and so is beyond self-consciousness. Plotinus allows, as we have seen, the predicates of unity and goodness to be ascribed to God (in the sense that God is the

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[1] *Enn.*, 3, 8, 8 (351 d). [2] Cf. *Rep.*, 509 b 9. [3] *Enn.*, 6, 8, 9 (743 e).

[4] *Enn.*, 6, 7, 38.

[5] *Enn.*, 3, 8, 8. Ἐι οὖν τοῦτο νοῦν ἐγγένησεν, ἁπλούστερον νοῦ δεῖ αὐτὸ εἶναι (351 c).

One and the Good); yet he stresses the fact that even these predicates are inadequate and can be applied to God only analogously. For unity expresses the denial of plurality and goodness expresses an effect on something else. All we can say is that the One is—though, indeed, God is beyond being, One, indivisible, unchanging, eternal, without past or future, a constant self-identity.

On this view of God, the ultimate Principle, how can Plotinus account for the multiplicity of finite things? God cannot limit Himself to finite things, as though they were part of Him; nor can He create the world by a free act of His Will, since creation is an activity and we are not justified in ascribing activity to God and so impairing His unchangeability. Plotinus, therefore, had recourse to the metaphor of emanation. But although he makes use of metaphorical terms like ῥεῖν and ἀπορρεῖν, Plotinus expressly rejects the notion that God becomes in any way less through the process of emanation: He remains untouched, undiminished, unmoved. A free creative act would imply that God issues forth from His state of tranquil self-containedness, and this Plotinus would not admit: he maintained, then, that the world issues from God or proceeds from God by necessity, there being a principle of necessity that the less perfect should issue from the more perfect. It is a principle that every nature should make that which is immediately subordinate to it (τὸ μετ' αὐτὴν ποιεῖν), unfolding itself, as a seed unfolds itself, the procession being from an undivided source or principle to a goal in the universe of sense. The prior Principle, however, remains always in its own place (μένοντος μὲν ἀεὶ τοῦ προτέρου ἐν τῇ οἰκείᾳ ἕδρᾳ), the consequent being engendered out of an ineffable power (ἐκ δυνάμεως ἀφάτου) which is in the prior Principles, it being unfitting that this power should be stayed in its operation by any jealousy or selfishness.[1] (Plotinus also uses the metaphors περίλαμψις, ἔλλαμψις; likening the One to the sun, which illuminates, itself undiminished. He also employs the comparison of the mirror, since the object which is mirrored is reduplicated, yet without itself undergoing any change or any loss.)

We have, therefore, to be careful, if we wish to make the statement that the process of emanation in Plotinus is pantheistic in character. It is quite true that for Plotinus the world proceeds from God *secundum necessitatem naturae* and that he rejects free creation *ex nihilo*; but it should also be remembered that for him the prior Principle remains "in its own place," undiminished and unimpaired, always transcending the subordinate being. The truth of the matter would seem to be that, while rejecting free creation out of nothing on the ground that this would involve change in God, Plotinus equally rejects a fully pantheistic self-canalisation of the Deity in individual creatures, a self-diremption of God. In other words he tries to steer a middle course between theistic creation on the one hand and a fully pantheistic or monistic theory on the other hand. We may well think that (since an ultimate dualism does not enter into the question) no such compromise is possible; but that is no reason for calling Plotinus a pantheist without due qualification.

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[1] *Enn.*, 4, 8, 6 (474 b–c). The assertion that the prior Principle is not stayed by jealousy is an echo of Plato's words in the *Timaeus*. Plotinus' comparison of the One or the Good with the sun is a development of the comparison already given by Plato in the *Republic*. The view of God as the uncreated Light and of creatures as participated lights, hierarchically ordered according to their degree of luminosity, which we find in some Christian philosophers comes from Neo-Platonism.

The first emanation from the One is Thought or Mind, Νοῦς, which is intuition or immediate apprehension, having a twofold object, (*a*) the One, (*b*) itself. In Nous exist the Ideas, not only of classes but also of individuals,[1] though the whole multitude of Ideas is contained indivisibly in Nous. (τὴν δὲ ἐν τῷ νοητῷ ἀπειρίαν, οὐ δεῖ δεδιέναι . πᾶσα γὰρ ἐν ἀμερεῖ, καὶ οἷον προείσιν, ὅταν ἐνεργῇ.) Nous is identified with the Demiurge of the Platonic *Timaeus*, and Plotinus uses the phrase πατὴρ τοῦ αἰτίου of the One, identifying the αἴτιον with the Nous and the Demiurge. That Nous is itself ὁ κόσμος νοητός[2] is a point insisted on by Plotinus against Longinus, who had made the Ideas to be apart from Nous, appealing to the *Timaeus* of Plato, where the Ideas are depicted as being distinct from the Demiurge. (Porphyry held the same opinion as Longinus, until Plotinus persuaded him to change it.) It is in Nous, therefore, that multiplicity first appears, since the One is above all multiplicity, above even the distinction of νοεῖν and νοητόν; yet the distinction in Nous is not to be understood absolutely, for it is one and the same Nous that is both τὸ νοοῦν and τὸ νούμενον. The Demiurge of Plato and the νόησις νοήσεως of Aristotle thus come together in the Plotinian Nous. Nous is eternal and beyond time, its state of blessedness being not an acquired state but an eternal possession. Nous enjoys, therefore, that eternity which time does but mimic.[1] In the case of Soul its objects are successive, now Socrates, now a horse, now some other thing; but Nous knows all things together, having neither past nor future but seeing all in an eternal present.

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[1] *Enn.*, 5, 7, 1 ff.

[2] *Enn.*, 5, 9, 9. ἀναγκαῖον καὶ ἐν νῷ τὸ ἀρχέτυπον πᾶν εἶναι, καὶ κόσμον νοητὸν τοῦτον τὸν νοῦν εἶναι, ὃν φησὶν ὁ Πλάτων, ἐν τῷ ὅ ἐστι ζῷον.

From Nous, which is Beauty, proceeds Soul, corresponding to the World-Soul of the *Timaeus*. This World-Soul is incorporeal and indivisible, but it forms the connecting-link between the super-sensual world and the sensual world, and so looks not only upwards to the Nous but also downwards towards the world of nature. Whereas Plato, however, had posited only one World-Soul, Plotinus posited two, a higher and a lower, the former standing nearer to Nous and being in no immediate contact with the material world, the latter (γέννημα ψυχῆς προτέρας) being the real soul of the phenomenal world. This second soul Plotinus termed nature or φύσις.[2] Moreover, although the phenomenal world owes all the reality it possesses to its participation in the Ideas, which are in Nous, these Ideas do not operate in the sensible world and have no direct connection with it, so that Plotinus posited reflections of the Ideas in the World-Soul, calling them λόγοι σπερματικοί and saying that they are comprised within the λόγος—an obvious adoption of Stoic doctrine. In order to fit in this conception with his distinction of two World-Souls, he further distinguished πρῶτοι λόγοι, comprised within the higher Soul, from the derivate λόγοι, comprised within the lower Soul.[3]

Individual human souls proceed from the World-Soul, and, like the World-Soul, they are subdivided into two elements (in accordance with the Pythagorean-Platonic tripartition Plotinus admits also a third and mediating element), a higher element which belongs to the sphere of Nous (cf. the Aristotelian Nous) and a lower element, which is directly connected with the body. The soul pre-existed before its union with the body, which is represented as a fall, and survives the death of the body, though apparently without memory of the period of earthly existence. (Transmigration is also admitted.) But although Plotinus speaks of individual souls as bound together in the unity of the World-Soul,[4] he is not prepared to deny personal immortality: the soul is real and nothing that is real will perish. Can we suppose that Socrates, who existed as Socrates on this earth, will cease to be

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[1] *Enn.*, 5, 1, 4. ὁ ὄντως αἰὼν ὃ μιμεῖται χρόνος περιθέων ψυχὴν (485 b).

[2] *Enn.*, 3, 8, 3. ἡ λεγομένη φύσις ψυχὴ οὖσα γέννημα ψυχῆς προτέρας (345 e).

[3] *Enn.*, 4, 3, 10; 5, 9, 3; 5, 9, 9; 2, 3, 17.

[4] *Enn.*, 3, 5, 4. οὐκ ἀποτετμημένη, ἐμπεριεχομένη δὲ, ὡς εἶναι πάσας μίαν.

Socrates, just because he has reached the best of all abodes? In the after-life, therefore, each individual soul will persist, each remaining one, yet all being one together.[1]

Below the sphere of Soul is that of the material world. In accord with his conception of the emanative process as radiation of light, Plotinus pictures light as proceeding from the centre and passing outwards, growing gradually dimmer, until it shades off into that total darkness which is matter-in-itself, conceived as the privation of light, as στέρησις.[2] Matter, then, proceeds from the One (ultimately), in the sense that it becomes a factor in creation only through the process of emanation from the One; but in itself, at its lowest limit, it forms the lowest stage of the universe and is the antithesis to the One. In so far as it is illumined by form and enters into the composition of material objects (Aristotle's ὕλη) it cannot be said to be complete darkness; but in so far as it stands over against the intelligible and represents the ἀνάγκη of the *Timaeus*, it is unilluminated, darkness. Plotinus thus combined Platonic with Aristotelian themes, for though he adopted the Platonic conception of matter as ἀνάγκη, as the antithesis to the intelligible, as the privation of light, he also adopted the Aristotelian conception of matter as the substrate of form, as an integral component of material objects. The transmutation of one element into another shows that there must be some substrate of bodies, which is distinct from the bodies themselves.[3] If we consider bodies and make complete abstraction of form, then the residuum is what we mean by matter.[4] Matter is thus partially illuminated by its information and does not exist separately in the concrete as complete darkness, the principle of not-being. Moreover, just as the phenomenal world in general has its pattern in the intelligible, so does matter in nature correspond to a νοητὴ ὕλη.[5]

In addition to this fusion of Platonic and Aristotelian cosmological themes Plotinus asserts the Orphic and Neo-Pythagorean view of matter as the principle of evil. At its lowest grade, as devoid of quality, as unilluminated privation, it is evil itself (not, however, having evil as an inhering quality any more than the Good has goodness as an inhering quality), and so stands over against the Good as its radical antithesis. (The evil of matter does not, of course, pertain to the νοητὴ ὕλη.) Plotinus thus comes perilously near to asserting a dualism which would be opposed to the real character of his system, though it must be remembered that matter itself is privation and not a positive principle. In any case we might suppose that Plotinus would be led logically to depreciate the visible universe, though in point of fact he does not do so. It is true that a certain tendency to depreciate the visible universe does show itself in his psychological and ethical teaching; but this is offset, so far as his cosmology is concerned, by his insistence on the unity and harmony of the cosmos. Plotinus opposed the Gnostic contempt for the world and praised the latter as the work of the Demiurge and the World-Soul: it is an eternal and unified creature, bound together in a harmony of parts, governed by Divine Providence. He expressly says that we must not allow that the universe is an evil creation, in spite of all the vexatious things that are in it. It is the image of the intelligible, but it is too much to demand that it should be the precise counterpart of the intelligible. What cosmos, he asks, could be better than the one we know, with the exception of the intelligible cosmos?[1] The material world is the exteriorisation of the intelligible, and the sensible and the intelligible are bound together for ever, the former reproducing the latter according to the measure of its capacity.[2] This universal harmony and cosmic unity form the rational basis for prophecy and for the magical influencing of superhuman powers. (Besides the star-gods Plotinus admitted other "gods" and "demons," which are invisible to man.)

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[1] *Enn.*, 4, 3, 5 (375 c–f).

[2] *Enn.*, 2, 4, 6 (162 c–e).

[3] *Enn.*, 2, 4; 3, 67; 6, 3, 7

[4] *Enn.*, 1, 8, 9 (79 a b)

[5] *Enn.*, 2, 4, 4–5; 3, 5, 6 (ὕλην δεῖ νοητὴν ὑποθέσθαι, 296 e).

In his psychology Plotinus assigns three parts to the individual soul. The highest of these (corresponding to the Nous of Aristotle) is uncontaminated by matter and remains rooted in the intelligible world,[3] but in so far as the soul enters into real union with the body, to form the compositum (τὸ κοινόν), it is contaminated by matter, and so there follows the necessity of an ethical ascent, with the θεῷ ὁμοιωθῆναι as the proximate goal and union with the One as the ultimate goal. In this ascent the ethical element (πρᾶξις) is subservient to the theoretical or intellectual element (θεωρία), as in Aristotle. The first stage of the ascent, undertaken under the impulse of Eros (cf. Plato's *Symposium*) consists in κάθαρσις, the process of purification by which man frees himself from the dominion of the body and the senses

[1] *Enn.*, 2, 9, 4 (202 d–e). [2] *Enn.*, 4, 8, 6 (474 d–e). [3] *Enn.*, 4, 8, 8 (476 a–d).

and rises to the practice of the πολιτικαὶ ἀρεταί, by which Plotinus means the four cardinal virtues. (The highest of these is Φρόνησις.[1]) Secondly the soul must rise above sense-perception, turning towards Nous and occupying herself with philosophy and science.[2] A higher stage, however, carries the soul beyond discursive thought to union with Nous which Plotinus characterises as πρώτως καλός. In this union the soul retains her self-consciousness. But all these stages are but a preparation for the final stage, that of mystical union with God or the One (Who transcends beauty) in an ecstasy characterised by the absence of all duality. In thought *of* God or *about* God the Subject is separated from the Object; but in ecstatic union there is no such separation. "There shall a man see, as seeing may be in Heaven, both God and himself: himself made radiant, filled with the intelligible light, or rather grown one with that light in its purity, without burden or any heaviness, transfigured to godhead, nay, being in essence God. For that hour he is enkindled; but when once more he is become heavy, it is as though the fire were quenched." "That sight is hard to put into words. For how should a man bring back report of the Divine, as of a thing distinct, when in the seeing he knew it not distinct but one with his own consciousness?"[3] (Needless to say, the ascent to God is not meant to imply that God is spatially present "out there." In meditation on God it is not necessary to cast one's thought outwards, as though God were present in any one place in such a way that He leaves other places destitute of Himself.[4] On the contrary, God is everywhere present. He is "outside" no one but is present to all, even if they know it not.[5]) This ecstatic union is, however, of brief duration so far as this life is concerned: we look for its complete and permanent possession in the future state, when we are freed from the hindrance of the body. "He will lapse again from the vision: but let him again awaken the virtue which is in him, again know himself made perfect in splendour; and he shall again be lightened of his burden, ascending through virtue to the Intelligence, and thence through wisdom to the Supreme. This is the life of gods and of the godlike and happy among men; a quittance from things alien and earthly, a life beyond earthly pleasure, a flight of the alone to the Alone."[6]

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[1] *Enn.*, 1, 2, 1.

[2] *Enn.*, 1, 3, 4.

[3] *Enn.*, 6, 9, 9 (768 f–769 a); 6, 9, 10 (769 d). (Professor Dodds' translation.)

[4] *Enn.*, 6, 9, 7 (765 c).

[5] *Enn.*, 6, 9, 7 (766 a).

[6] *Enn.*, 6, 9, 11 (771 b). (Professor Dodds' translation.)

In the system of Plotinus, then, the Orphic-Platonic-Pythagorean strain of "otherworldliness," intellectual ascent, salvation through assimilation to and knowledge of God, reach their most complete and systematic expression. Philosophy now includes, not only logic, cosmology, psychology, metaphysics and ethics, but also the theory of religion and mysticism: in fact, since the highest type of knowledge is the mystical knowledge of God and since Plotinus, who most probably based his theory of mysticism on his own experience as well as on past speculation, evidently regards mystical experience as the supreme attainment of the true philosopher, we may say that in Plotinian Neo-Platonism philosophy tends to pass into religion—at least it points beyond itself: speculation does not set itself up as the ultimate goal to be achieved. This made it possible for Neo-Platonism to act as a rival to Christianity, though on the other hand its complicated philosophic system and its "anhistorical" spirit prevented it from proving the rival that it might have been: it lacked the popular appeal exercised by the mystery religions, for instance. Neo-Platonism was really the intellectualist reply to the contemporary yearning for personal salvation, those spiritual aspirations of the individual, which are so marked a feature of the period. "Truly the words of counsel 'Let us flee to our own fatherland,'[1] might be uttered with a deep meaning. The Fatherland to us is that place from whence we came; and in that place is the Father."[2] Christianity, rooted in history, combining popular appeal with a growing speculative background, insistence on the Beyond with a sense of a mission to be accomplished in the Here, mystical communion with ethical probity, asceticism with a consecration of the natural, would have a far wider and deeper appeal than the transcendental philosophy of the Neo-Platonists or the fashionable devotions of the mystery cults. Yet, from the point of view of Christianity itself, Neo-Platonism had an important function to fulfil, that of contributing to the intellectual statement of the Revealed Religion, and so the convinced Christian cannot but look with sympathy, and a certain reverence, on the figure of Plotinus, to whom the greatest of the Latin Fathers (and so the Universal Church) owed no inconsiderable debt.

III. *School of Plotinus*

The tendency to increase the intermediary beings between

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[1] *Iliad*, 2, 140. [2] *Enn.*, 1, 6, 8 (56 g). (Professor Dodds' translation.)

God and corporeal objects is already observable in Plotinus' disciple *Amelius*, who distinguished three hypostases in Nous, namely τὸν ὄντα, τὸν ἔχοντα, and τὸν ὁρωντα.[1] A more important philosopher, however, was *Porphyry of Tyre* (A.D. 232/3—after 301), who joined Plotinus in Rome in 262/3. Porphyry's life of his master I have already mentioned: in addition to this he wrote a great number of other works and on a great variety of subjects, his most celebrated book being his *Isagoge* or introduction to the *Categories* of Aristotle. This was translated into Latin (e.g. by Boethius), Syrian, Arabic and Armenian and exercised great influence, not only in Antiquity but on into the Middle Ages, being itself made the subject of many commentaries. The work treats of 'Αι πέντε φωναί—genus (γένος), species (εἶδος), difference (διαφορά), property (ἴδιον) and accident (συμβεβηκός). Porphyry composed many other commentaries both on Plato (e.g. on the *Timaeus*) and on Aristotle (mainly on his logical works), and tried to show—in his Περὶ τοὺ μίαν εἶναι τὴν Πλάτωνος 'Αριστοτέλους αἵρεσιν—that the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies are in essential agreement.

Porphyry set himself to propound the doctrine of Plotinus in a clear and comprehensible manner, but he laid more stress on the practical and religious sides than even Plotinus had done. The end of philosophy is salvation (ἡ τῆς ψυχῆς σωτερία), and the soul must purify itself by turning its attention from what is lower to what is higher, a purification to be accomplished by asceticism and knowledge of God. The lowest stage of virtue consists in the practice of the πολιτικαὶ ἀρεταί, which are essentially "metriopathic" virtues, i.e. consisting in the reduction of the affections of the soul to the golden mean under the dominion of reason, and concerning man's intercourse with his fellow men. Above these virtues stand the cathartic or purifying virtues, which aim rather at "Apathy." This is realised in the πρὸς θεὸν ὁμοίωσις. In the third stage of virtue the soul turns towards Nous (for Porphyry evil does not lie in the body as such but rather in the soul's conversion to inferior objects of desire),[2] while the highest stage of virtue, that of the παραδειγματικαὶ ἀρεταί, belongs to the νοῦς as such. The four cardinal virtues recur at each stage, but of course at different degrees of elevation. In order to facilitate the soul's ascent Porphyry stresses the need for ascetic practices, such as abstinence from flesh-meat, celibacy, abstinence from theatrical performances, etc. Positive religion occupies an important place in his philosophy. While issuing a warning against the misuse of divination and other such superstitions (which he, however, accepted and permitted in themselves, since he believed in demonology), Porphyry at the same time lent his support to the popular and traditional religion, making the pagan myths allegorical representations of philosophic truth. He insisted on the importance of works, affirming that God does not prize the wise man's words, but his deeds.[1] The truly pious man is not for ever at prayer and sacrifice, but practises his piety in works: God does not accept a man for his reputation or for the empty formulae he employs, but for a life in accordance with his professions.[2]

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[1] Procl., *in Plat. Tim.*, I, 306, 1 ff.

[2] *Ad Marcellam*, 29.

During his residence in Sicily Porphyry composed fifteen books against the Christians. These polemical works were burnt in the year A.D. 448 under the Emperors Valentinian III and Theodosius II, and only fragments have come down to us: we have to rely largely on the writings of Christians for testimony as to the line of attack adopted by Porphyry. (Answers were composed by, among others, Methodius and Eusebius of Caesarea.) St. Augustine says that if Porphyry had ever had a true love of wisdom and had known Jesus Christ "... *nec ab eius saluberrima humilitate resiluisses*."[3] This phrase would not seem to be conclusive evidence that Porphyry was ever actually a Christian or even a catechumen, for the Saint gives no further evidence that he looked on Porphyry as an apostate, though it is true that the historian Socrates affirms that Porphyry abandoned Christianity (τὸν χριστιανισμὸν ἀπέλειτε) and attributed the apostasy to the philosopher's indignation at being assaulted by some Christians at Caesarea in Palestine.[4] It seems that we cannot attain absolute certainty on the question whether or not Porphyry ever was a Christian: he is not quoted as saying himself that he ever adhered to the Christian religion. Porphyry wanted to prevent the conversion of cultured people to Christianity, and he endeavoured to show that the Christian religion was illogical, ignoble, involved in contradictions, etc. He made a special point of attacking the Bible and the Christian exegesis, and it is interesting to observe his anticipation of Higher Criticism, e.g. by denying the authenticity of the book of Daniel and declaring the prophecies therein contained to be *vaticinia ex eventu*, denying that the Pentateuch was by Moses, pointing out apparent inconsistencies and contradictions in the Gospels, etc. The Divinity of Christ was a particular point of attack, and he brought many arguments against the Divinity of Christ and the doctrines of Christ.[1]

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[1] *Ad Marc.*, 16.

[2] *Ad Marc.*, 17.

[3] *De Civit. Dei.*, 10, 28. (P. knew Origen while a youth. Euseb., *Hist. Ecc.*, 6, 19, 5.)

[4] *Hist. Eccl.*, 3, 23, (*P.G.*, 67, 445).

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[1] "Obscurity, incoherence, illogicality, lying, abuse of confidence and stupidity, Porphyry saw scarcely anything else in Christianity, to judge by the *membra disiecta* of his work." (Pierre de Labriolle, *La Réaction Païenne*, p. 286, 1934.)

CHAPTER XLVI

OTHER NEO-PLATONIC SCHOOLS

1. *The Syrian School*

THE chief figure of the Syrian School of Neo-Platonism is Iamblichus (d. *c.* A.D. 330), a pupil of Porphyry. Iamblichus carried much further the Neo-Platonic tendency to multiply the members of the hierarchy of beings, which he combined with an insistence on the importance of theurgy and occultism in general.

1. The tendency to multiply the members of the hierarchy of being was present in Neo-Platonism from the very beginning, as a consequence of the desire to emphasise the transcendence of the Supreme Godhead and remove God from all contact with the world of sense. But while Plotinus had restrained this tendency within reasonable bounds, Iamblichus gave it wings. Thus above the One of Plotinus he asserted yet another One, which exceeds all qualifications whatsoever and stands beyond the good.[1] This One, which transcends all predicates or indeed any statements on our part—except that of unity—is therefore superior to the One of Plotinus, which is identical with the Good. From the One proceeds the world of ideas or intelligible objects—ὁ κόσμος νοητός—and from this again the world of intellectual beings—ὁ κόσμος νοερός[2]—consisting of Νοῦς, an intermediary hypostasis and the Demiurge, though Iamblichus seems not to have been content with this complication, but to have distinguished further the members of the κόσμος νοερός.[3] Below the κόσμος νοερός is the Super-terrestrial Soul, and from this Soul proceeds two others. As for the gods of the popular religion and the "heroes," these—together with a host of angels and demons—belong to the world, and Iamblichus tried to arrange them according to numbers. But while endeavouring to establish this fantastic scheme by means of the speculative reason, Iamblichus insisted on the immediate and innate character of our knowledge of the gods, which is given us together with our innate psychical impulse towards the Good.

2. The religious interest of Iamblichus is apparent in his

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[1] ἡ πάντῃ ἄρρητος ἀρχή Damasc., *Dubit.*, 43.

[2] Procl., *in Tim.*, 1308, 21 d.

[3] Procl., *in Tim.*, 1308, 21 ff. d. Damasc., *Dubit.*, 54.

ethical doctrine. Accepting Porphyry's distinction of the political, cathartic and paradigmatic virtues he then proceeds to introduce, between the two last, the *theoretical* virtues, by which the soul contemplates Nous as its object and views the procession of the orders from the final Principle. By the paradigmatic virtues the soul identifies herself with Nous, the place of ideas and παραδείγμα of all things. Finally, above these four types of virtue stand the *priestly* virtues, in the exercise of which the soul is ecstatically united to the One. (These virtues are therefore also called ἑνιαῖαι). As we must look to divine revelation in order to ascertain the means of entering upon union with God, the priest is superior to the philosopher. Purification from the sensual, theurgy, miracles, divination, play an important part in the system of Iamblichus.

II. *The School of Pergamon*

The Pergamene School was founded by *Aedesius*, a pupil of Iamblichus, and is characterised mainly by its interest in theurgy and in the restoration of polytheism. Thus while *Maximus*, one of the Emperor Julian's tutors, gave particular attention to theurgy, Sallustius wrote a work *On the gods and the world* as propaganda for polytheism, while the rhetorician Libonius, another of Julian's tutors, wrote against Christianity, as did also *Eunapius* of Sardes. *Julian* (322–363) was brought up as a Christian but became a pagan. In his short reign (361–363), Julian showed himself to be a fanatical opponent of Christianity and adherent of polytheism, combining this with Neo-Platonic doctrines, for which he relied largely on Iamblichus. He interpreted, for example, the worship of the sun according to the Neo-Platonic philosophy, by making the sun the intermediary between the intelligible and the sensible realms.[1]

III. *The Athenian School*

In the Athenian School of Neo-Platonism there flourished a lively interest in the writings of Aristotle, as well of course as in those of Plato, an interest that showed itself in the commentary on the *De Anima* composed by Plutarch of Athens, the son of Nestorius and Athenian Scholarch (d. A.D. 431/2) and in the commentaries on the *Metaphysics* by Syrianus (d. *c.* 430), the successor of Plutarch in the headship of the School at Athens.

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[1] Julian, *Or.*, 4.

But Syrianus was no believer in the agreement of Plato and Aristotle: on the contrary not only did he account the study of the philosophy of Aristotle merely a preparation for the study of Plato, but—in his commentary on the *Metaphysics*—he defended the Platonic ideal theory against Aristotle's attacks, clearly recognising the difference between the two philosophers on this point. Yet that did not prevent him from trying to show the agreement between Plato, the Pythagoreans, the Orphics and the "Chaldaic" literature. He was succeeded by *Domninus*, a Syrian of Jewish origin, who wrote on mathematics.

Much more important, however, than any of these men is the celebrated *Proclus* (410–485), who was born at Constantinople and was Athenian Scholarch for many years. He was a man of untiring diligence, and though much of his work has perished, we still possess his commentaries on the *Timaeus*, *Republic*, *Parmenides*, *Alcibiades I* and *Cratylus*, in addition to his works Στοιχείωσις Θεολογική, 'Εἰς τὴν Πλάτωνος Θεολογίαν and the *De decem dubitationibus circa providentiam*, the *De providentia et fato et eo quod in nobis* and the *De malorum subsistentia*—the last three works being preserved in the Latin translation of William of Moerbeke. Possessed of a wide knowledge concerning the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle and of his Neo-Platonic predecessors, Proclus combined with this knowledge a great interest in and enthusiasm for all sorts of religious beliefs, superstitions and practices, even believing that he received revelations and was the reincarnation of the Neo-Pythagorean Nicomachus. He had, therefore, an immense wealth of information and learning at his disposal, and he attempted to combine all these elements in one carefully articulated system, a task rendered all the easier by his dialectical ability. This has won for him the reputation of being the greatest Scholastic of Antiquity, in that he brought his dialectical ability and genius for subtle systematisation to bear on the doctrines that he had received from others.[1]

The main *motif* of Proclus' dialectical systematisation is that of triadic development. This principle was certainly used by Iamblichus, but Proclus employed it with considerable dialectical subtlety and made it the dominant principle in the procession of beings from the One, i.e. in the emanation of the orders of being from the highest 'Αρχή down to the most inferior stage. The effect, or being that proceeds, is partly similar to the cause or source of emanation and partly dissimilar. In so far as the being that proceeds is similar to its origin, it is regarded as being in some degree identical with its principle, for it is only in virtue of the self-communication of the latter that the procession takes place. On the other hand, since there *is* a procession, there must be something in the proceeding being that is not identical with, but different from, the principle. We have, therefore, at once two moments of development, the first being that of remaining in the principle (μονή), in virtue of partial identity, the second being that of difference, in virtue of external procession (πρόοδος). In every being that proceeds, however, there is a natural tendency towards the Good, and, in virtue of the strictly hierarchical character of the development of beings, this natural tendency towards the Good means a turning-back towards the immediate source of emanation on the part of the being that emanates or proceeds. Proclus thus distinguishes three moments of development, (i) μονή or remaining in the principle; (ii) πρόοδος or proceeding out of the principle, and (iii) ἐπιστροφή or turning-back towards the principle. This triadic development, or development in three moments dominates the whole series of emanations.[1]

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[1] In his commentary on Euclid I Proclus gives much valuable information concerning Platonic, Aristotelian, Neo-Platonic and other positions in mathematical philosophy (ed. Friedlein, Leipzig, 1873).

The original principle of the whole process of development is the primary one, τὸ αὐτὸ ἕν.[2] Beings must have a cause, and cause is not the same as effect. Yet we cannot admit a *regressus ad infinitum*. There must be, therefore, a First Cause, whence the multiplicity of beings proceed "as branches from a root," some being nearer to the First Cause, others more remote. Moreover, there can be only one such First Cause, for the existence of a multiplicity is always secondary to unity.[3] This must exist since we are logically compelled to refer all multiplicity back to unity, all effects to an ultimate Cause and all participated good to an Absolute Good; yet as a matter of fact the primary Principle transcends the predicates of Unity, Cause and Good, just as it transcends Being. It follows that we are really not entitled to predicate anything positively of the ultimate Principle: we can only say what it is *not*, realising that it stands above all discursive thought and positive predication, ineffable and incomprehensible.

From the primary One proceed the Units or ἑνάδες, which are nevertheless looked on as super-essential and incomprehensible gods, the source of providence, and of which goodness is to be predicated. From the Henads proceeds the sphere of Nous, which subdivides into the spheres of the νοητοί, the νοητοὶ καὶ νοεροί and the νοεροί (cf. Iamblichus), the spheres corresponding respectively to the concepts of Being, Life and Thought.[1] Not content with these divisions Proclus introduces further subdivisions in each of the three spheres of Nous, the first two being sub-divided into three triads, the third into seven hebdomads, and so on.

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[1] *Instit. Theol.*. 30 ff.; *Theol. Plat.*, 2, 4; 3, 14; 4, 1.

[2] *Instit. Theol.*, 4, 6; *Theol. Plat.*, 2, 4.

[3] *Instit. Theol.*, 11.

Below the general sphere of Nous is the sphere of the Soul, which is the intermediary between the supersensible and the sensible worlds, mirroring the former as a copy (εἰκονικῶς) and serving as a pattern for the latter (παραδειγματικῶς). This sphere of soul is subdivided into three sub-spheres, that of divine souls, that of "demonic" souls, and that of ψυχαί or human souls. Each sub-sphere is again sub-divided. The Greek gods appear in the sphere of divine souls, but the same name is found in different groups according to the different aspect or function of the god in question. For instance, Proclus seems to have posited a threefold Zeus. The sphere of demonic souls, which serves as a bridge between gods and men, is subdivided into angels, demons and heroes.

The world, a living creature, is formed and guided by the divine souls. It cannot be evil—nor can matter itself be evil—since we cannot refer evil to the divine. Rather is evil to be thought of as imperfection, which is inseparable from the lower strata of the hierarchy of being.[2]

In this process of emanation the productive cause, Proclus insists, remains itself unaltered. It brings into actuality the subordinate sphere of being, but it does so without movement or loss, preserving its own essence, "neither transmuted into its consequents nor suffering any diminution." The product, therefore, does not arise through the self-diremption of the producer, nor by its transformation. In this way Proclus tries, like Plotinus, to steer a middle course between *creatio ex nihilo* on the one hand and true monism or pantheism on the other hand, for, while the productive being is neither altered nor diminished through the production of the subordinate being, it nevertheless furnishes the subordinate being out of its own being.[3]

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[1] *Theol. Plat.*, 3, 14; 4, 1.

[2] *Theol. Plat.*, 1, 17; in *Remp.*, I, 37, 27 ff.

[3] *Instit. Theol.*, 27.

On the principle that like can only be attained by like, Proclus attributed to the human soul a faculty above thought, by which it can attain the One.[1] This is the unitary faculty, which attains the ultimate Principle in ecstasy. Like Porphyry, Iamblichus, Syrianus and others, Proclus also attributed to the soul an ethereal body composed of light, which is midway between the material and the immaterial and is imperishable. It is with the eyes of this ethereal body that the soul can perceive theophanies. The soul ascends through the different grades of virtue (as in Iamblichus) to ecstatic union with the primary One. Proclus distinguishes three general stages in the soul's ascent, Eros, Truth and Faith. Truth leads the soul beyond love of the beautiful and fills it with knowledge of true reality, while Faith consists in the mystical silence before the Incomprehensible and Ineffable.

Proclus was succeeded in the headship of the School by *Marinus*, a native of Samaria. Marinus distinguished himself in mathematics and through his sober and restrained interpretation of Plato. For instance, in his commentary on the *Parmenides* he insisted that the One and so on denote *ideas* and not gods. However, that did not prevent him from following the contemporary fashion of attributing great importance to religious superstitions, and at the summit of the scale of virtues he placed the θεουργικαὶ ἀρεταί. Marinus was succeeded as Scholarch by Isidorus.

The last of the Athenian Scholarchs was Damascius (Sch. from *c*. A.D. 520), whom Marinus had instructed in mathematics. Having been forced to the conclusion that the human reason cannot understand the relation of the One to the proceeding beings, Damascius seems to have considered that human speculation cannot really attain the truth. All the words we employ in this connection, "cause" and "effect," "processions," etc., are but analogies and do not properly represent the actuality.[2] Since on the other hand he was not prepared to abandon speculation, he gave full rein to theosophy, "Mysticism" and superstition.

A well-known disciple of Damascius is *Simplicius*, who wrote valuable commentaries on the *Categories*, *Physics*, *De Caelo* and *De Anima* of Aristotle. That on the *Physics* is particularly valuable because of the fragments of the pre-Socratics therein contained.

In the year 529 the Emperor Justinian forbade the teaching of philosophy at Athens, and Damascius, together with Simplicius and five other members of the Neo-Platonic School, went to Persia, where they were received by king Chosroes. In 533, however, they returned to Athens, apparently disappointed with the cultural state of Persia. It does not appear that there were any more pagan Neo-Platonists surviving shortly after the middle of the century.

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[1] *In Alcib.*, III; *de Prov.*, 24.

[2] *Dubit.*, 38, I 79, 20 ff.; 41, I 83, 26 ff.; 42 I 85, 8 ff.; 107 I 278, 24 f.

IV. *The Alexandrian School*

1. The Alexandrian School of Neo-Platonism was a centre for investigation in the department of the special sciences and for the labour of commenting on the works of Plato and Aristotle. Thus *Hypatia* (best known for her murder in A.D. 415 by a fanatical mob of Christians) wrote on mathematics and astronomy and is said to have lectured on Plato and Aristotle, while *Asclepiodotus* of Alexandria (second half of A.D. fifth century), who later resided at Aphrodisias in Caria, studied science and medicine, mathematics and music. *Ammonius*, *Ioannes Philoponus*, *Olympiodorus* and others commented on works of Plato and Aristotle. In the commentaries of the School special attention was paid to the logical works of Aristotle, and in general it may be said of these commentaries that they show moderation and a desire on the part of their authors to give the natural interpretation of the works on which they are commenting. Metaphysical and religious interests tend to retreat from the foreground, the multiplication of intermediary beings, so characteristic of Iamblichus and Proclus, being abandoned and little attention being paid to the doctrine of ecstasy. Even the pious and somewhat mystically inclined Asclepiodotus, who was a pupil of Proclus, avoided the latter's complicated and highly speculative metaphysic.

2. Characteristic of Alexandrian Neo-Platonism is its relation to Christianity and the thinkers of the celebrated Catechetical School. The result of the abandonment of the speculative extravagancies of Iamblichus and Proclus was that the Neo-Platonic School at Alexandria gradually lost its specifically pagan character and became rather a "neutral" philosophical institute: logic and science were obviously subjects on which Christians and pagans could meet on more or less common ground. It was this growing association of the School with Christianity which made possible the continuation of Hellenic thought at Constantinople. (Stephanus of Alexandria migrated to Constantinople and there

expounded Plato and Aristotle in the university in the first half of the seventh century, during the reign of the Emperor Heraclius, i.e. a century after Justinian had closed the School at Athens.) An instance of the close relation between Neo-Platonists and Christians at Alexandria is the life of Hypatia's disciple, Synesius of Cyrene, who became bishop of Ptolemais in A.D. 411. Another striking instance is the conversion of Ioannes Philoponus to Christianity. As a convert he wrote a book against Proclus' conception of the eternity of the world and supported his own view by an appeal to Plato's *Timaeus* which he interpreted as teaching creation in time. Philoponus also held the view that Plato drew his wisdom from the Pentateuch. One may mention also *Nemesius*, bishop of Emesa in Phoenicia, who was influenced by the Alexandrian School.

3. But if Neo-Platonism exercised a profound influence on Christian thinkers at Alexandria, it is also true that Christian thinkers were not without influence on non-Christian philosophers. This can be seen in the case of *Hierocles of Alexandria*, who lectured at Alexandria from about A.D. 420. Hierocles shows affinity with Middle Platonism rather than with his Neo-Platonist predecessors, for, neglecting the Plotinian hierarchy of beings which had been so exaggerated by Iamblichus and Proclus, he admits only one super-terrestrial being, the Demiurge. But what is particularly striking is that Hierocles asserts *voluntary creation out of nothing* by the Demiurge.[1] He rejects indeed creation in time, but that does not militate against the very great probability of Christian influence, especially as Fate or ‘Αιμαρμένη denotes for Hierocles, not mechanical determinism, but the apportioning of certain effects to man's free actions. Thus petitionary prayer and providential ‘Αιμαρμένη are not mutually exclusive,[2] and the doctrine of Necessity or Fate is brought more into harmony with the Christian insistence on human freedom on the one hand and Divine Providence on the other.

v. *Neo-Platonists of the Latin West*

One would scarcely be justified in speaking of a "School" of Neo-Platonism in the Latin West. However, there is a characteristic common to those thinkers who are usually classed as "Neo-Platonists of the Latin West" and that is, that the speculative side of Neo-Platonism is no longer in evidence while the learned side is very much to the fore. By their translation of Greek works into Latin and by their commentaries on Platonic and Aristotelian writings, as well as on writings of Latin philosophers, they helped to spread the study of philosophy in the Roman world and at the same time constructed a bridge whereby Ancient Philosophy passed to the Middle Ages. Thus in the first half of the fourth century A.D. *Chalcidius* (who probably was or became a Christian) made a Latin translation of Plato's *Timaeus* and wrote a Latin commentary on it—apparently in dependence on Poseidonius' commentary (with the possible use of intermediate writings). This translation and its commentary were much used in the Middle Ages.[1] In the same century *Marius Victorinus* (who became a Christian when of advanced years) translated into Latin Aristotle's *Categories* and *De Interpretatione*, Porphyry's *Isagoge* and some Neo-Platonist works. He also wrote commentaries on Cicero's *Topics* and *De Inventione* and composed original works *De Definitionibus* and *De Syllogismis Hypotheticis*. As a Christian he also composed some theological works, of which a great part are still extant. (St. Augustine was influenced by Marius Victorinus.) One may also mention *Vettius Agonius Praetextatus* (d. 384), who translated Themistius' paraphrase of Aristotle's *Analytics*, and *Macrobius* (he seems to have become a Christian in later years), who wrote the *Saturnalia* and also a commentary on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* about A.D. 400. In this commentary the Neo-Platonist theories of emanation appear and it seems that Macrobius made use of Porphyry's commentary on the *Timaeus*, which itself made use of that of Poseidonius.[2] Fairly early in the fifth century *Martianus Capella* composed his (still extant) *De Nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae*, which was much read in the Middle Ages. (For instance, it was commented on by Remigius of Auxerre.) This work, which is a kind of Encyclopaedia, treats of each of the seven liberal arts, books three to nine being each devoted to one of the arts. This was of importance for the Middle Ages, which made the seven liberal arts the basis of education as the *Trivium* and *Quadrivium*.

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[1] Phot., 460 b 23 ff.; 461 b 6 ff.

[2] Phot., 465 a 16 ff.

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[1] As this work contains extracts from other dialogues of Plato, as well as extracts and texts and opinions from other Greek philosophers, it came about that up to the twelfth century A.D. Chalcidius was regarded as one of the chief sources for a knowledge of Greek philosophy.

[2] As Macrobius introduces into his Commentary ideas on number-symbolism, emanation, the Plotinian gradation of virtues, and even polytheism, the work is "really a syncretic product of Neo-Platonist paganism." (Maurice De Wulf, *Hist. Med. Phil.*, I, p. 79. Trans. E. Messenger, Ph.D., Longmans, 3rd Eng. edit., 1935.)

More important, however, than any of the afore-mentioned writers is the Christian *Boethius* (*c.* A.D. 480–524/5), who studied at Athens, held high office under Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, and was finally executed on a charge of treason after a term of imprisonment, during which he composed the famous *De Consolatione Philosophiae.* As it is more convenient to treat of the philosophy of Boethius by way of introduction to Mediaeval Philosophy, I shall content myself here with mentioning some of his works.

Although it was the aim of Boethius to translate into Latin, and to furnish with commentaries, all the works of Aristotle (*De Interpret.* 1, 2), he did not succeed in carrying his project to completion. He did, however, translate into Latin the *Categories*, the *De Interpretatione*, the *Topics*, both *Analytics* and the *Sophistical Arguments.* It may be that Boethius translated other works of Aristotle besides the *Organon*, in accordance with his original plan; but this is uncertain. He translated Porphyry's *Isagoge*, and the dispute concerning universals which so agitated the early Middle Ages took its *point de départ* in remarks of Porphyry and Boethius.

Besides furnishing the *Isagoge* (in the translation of Marius Victorinus) with a double commentary, Boethius also commented on the *Categories*, the *De Interpretatione*, the *Topics*, the *Analytics* and *Sophistical Arguments* (probably) and on Cicero's *Topics.* In addition to these commentaries he composed original treatises, the *Introductio ad categoricos syllogismos*, *De categoricis syllogismis*, *De hypotheticis syllogismis*, *De divisione*, *De topicis differentiis*, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, *De Institutione arithmetica*, etc. In the last period of his life several theological opuscula came from his pen.

On account of this extensive labour expended on translation and commenting, Boethius may be called the principal mediator between Antiquity and the Middle Ages, "the last Roman and the first Scholastic," as he has been called. "Down to the end of the twelfth century he was the principal channel by which Aristotelianism was transmitted to the West."[1]

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[1] M. De Wulf, *Hist. Med. Phil.*, I, p. 109

CHAPTER XLVII

CONCLUDING REVIEW

When we look back at the philosophy of Greece and of the Greco-Roman world, as we watch its naïve beginnings on the shore of Asia Minor, as we see the intellectual power and comprehensive mind of a Heraclitus or a Parmenides struggling with a crippling poverty of philosophic language, as we trace the development of two of the greatest philosophies the world has ever seen, the philosophies of Plato and of Aristotle, as we see the broadening influence of the Stoic School and witness the evolution of the final creative effort of ancient thought, the system of Plotinian Neo-Platonism, we cannot but acknowledge that we have before us one of the supreme achievements of the human race. If we gaze with admiration at the Greek temples of Sicily, at the Gothic cathedrals of the Middle Ages, at the work of a Fra Angelico or a Michelangelo, a Rubens or a Velasquez, if we treasure the writings of a Homer or a Dante, a Shakespeare or a Goethe, we should pay the tribute of a like admiration to what is great in the realm of pure thought and count it as one of the greatest treasures of our European heritage. Mental effort and perseverance are no doubt required in order to penetrate the riches of Greek thought, but any effort that is expended in the attempt to understand and appreciate the philosophy of those two men of genius, Plato and Aristotle, is amply rewarded: it can no more be wasted than the effort we expend to appreciate at its full value the music of Beethoven or Mozart or the beauty of the cathedral at Chartres Greek drama, Greek architecture, Greek sculpture, are imperishable memorials of the Greek genius and culture, of the glory of Hellas; but that glory would be incomplete without Greek philosophy and we cannot appreciate fully the culture of the Greeks unless we know something of Greek philosophy. It may be of help towards the appreciation of that philosophy if, in these concluding remarks, I make a few suggestions (some of them already touched upon) concerning different ways in which we may regard Greek philosophy as a whole.

1. I have already mentioned, particularly in connection with the Pre-Socratic philosophers, the problem of the One and the

Many; but the theme of the relation between the One and the Many and of the character of both may be discerned running through the whole of Greek philosophy, just as it runs indeed through the whole of philosophy, owing to the fact that while the Many are given in experience, the philosopher strives to see the Many with a synoptic vision, to arrive, so far as is possible, at a comprehensive view of Reality, i.e. to see the Many in the light of the One or in some sense to reduce the Many to the One. This attempt at a synoptic vision is very clear in the case of the pre-Socratic cosmologists and there is no need to dwell on this point again, beyond recalling to mind that their attempt to reconcile the Many of experience with the One demanded by thought was pursued predominantly on the material plane; the Many are material and the One also, the Unity-in-difference is material, water or the indeterminate or air or fire. Sometimes the aspect of Unity is predominant, as in the Eleatic system, sometimes the Many are triumphant, as in the atomistic philosophy of Leucippus and Democritus; but mind, partly no doubt owing to poverty of language, hardly rises above the material plane, though in Pythagoreanism we see, for example, a much clearer distinction between soul and body, while with Anaxagoras the concept of Nous tends to liberation from materialism.

So far as we can speak of the Sophists as occupying themselves at all with this problem, it is rather the aspect of multiplicity that is stressed (the multiplicity of ways of life, of ethical judgments, of opinions), while with Socrates the aspect of unity is stressed, inasmuch as the basic unity of true judgments of value is set in clear light; but it is Plato who really develops the complexity and richness of the problem. The fleeting multiplicity of phenomena, the data of experience, is seen against the background of the unitary realities of the exemplary Ideas, apprehended by the human mind in the concept, and this assertion of the Ideal realm of reality forces the philosopher to consider the problem of the One and the Many not only in the logical sphere, but also in the ontological sphere of immaterial being. The result is that the immaterial unities (themselves a multiplicity) are viewed in function of the One, the synthesising reality of the transcendental sphere and the ultimate Exemplar. Moreover, although the particulars of sense-experience, the Many of the older Cosmologists, are "dismissed," precisely in regard to their particularity considered as impenetrable by conceptual thought, into the infinite or indeterminate, the whole material world is regarded as ordered and informed by Mind or Soul. On the other hand a "chorismos" is left between exemplary Reality and the fleeting particulars, while—apparently at least—no satisfactory answer is given as to the precise relation between the Exemplary and Efficient Causes, so that, although Plato brings the complexity of the problem into greater relief and definitely transcends the pre-Socratic materialism, he fails to give any adequate solution to the problem and leaves us with a dualism, the sphere of Reality on the one hand and the sphere of semi-reality or Becoming on the other hand. Not even his assertion of the immaterial, which sets him above both Parmenides and Heraclitus, can suffice to explain the relation of Being and Becoming or of the One and the Many.

With Aristotle we find a greater realisation of the wealth and richness of the material world and he attempts, through his doctrine of immanent substantial form, to effect some synthesis of the realities of the One and the Many, the multiplicity of members within a species being united in the possession of a similar specific form, though there is no numerical identity. Again, the doctrine of hylomorphism enabled Aristotle to assert a real unifying principle in the terrestrial world, while at the same time he avoided any over-emphasis of unity, such as would conflict with the evident multiplicity given in experience: he thus provided a principle of stability and a principle of change and so did justice to both Being and Becoming. Moreover, Aristotle's Unmoved Mover, the ultimate Final Cause of the universe, served in some degree as a unifying and harmonising Principle, drawing the multiplicity of phenomena into an intelligible unity. On the other hand, however, Aristotle's dissatisfaction with the Ideal Theory of Plato and his perception of its weaknesses led him into an unfortunate rejection of the Platonic Exemplarism as a whole, while his insistence on final causality to the apparent exclusion of cosmic efficient causality meant the assertion of an ultimate dualism between God and an *independent* world.

In post-Aristotelian philosophy it is perhaps not fanciful to see in Stoicism an over-stressing of the One, resulting in cosmic pantheism (which has its noble reflection in ethical cosmopolitanism), and in Epicureanism an over-assertion of the Many, appearing in a cosmology built on an atomistic basis and in a (theoretically at least) egoistic ethic. In Neo-Pythagoreanism and Middle

Platonism we see that growing syncretism of Pythagorean, Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic elements which culminated in the Neo-Platonic system. In that system the only possible way of settling the problem of the One and the Many is apprehended, namely that the Many must issue in some way from the One, the dualism between God and an independent world being avoided on the one hand and monism being avoided on the other hand, so that justice could be done to the reality of the One and the Many, to the supreme reality of the One and the dependent reality of the Many. But, while the Neo-Platonists rejected cosmic monism through their doctrine of the hierarchy of being and rejected any self-diremption of the transcendent One and while they admitted a "manifold Many" and did not attempt to dismiss the cosmos and the subordinate degrees of Being as illusory, they failed to see the unsatisfactory character of their attempt to steer a middle way between a true creation and monism and that their theory of "emanation," given their denial of creation out of nothing on the one hand and their denial of the self-diremption of God on the other hand, could possess no intelligible significance, but remained a mere metaphor. It was left for Christian philosophy to assert the true solution of *creatio ex nihilo sui et subiecti*.

2. Under a slightly different aspect we might regard Greek philosophy in its totality as an attempt to discover the ultimate cause or causes of the world. The pre-Socratics in general, as Aristotle observes, were concerned with the material cause, the *Urstoff* of the world, that which remains permanent beneath the constant changes. Plato, however, gave special emphasis to the Exemplary Cause, ideal and supra-material Reality, while he also asserted the Efficient operative Cause, Mind and Soul, developing the first steps of the pre-Socratic Anaxagoras. Nor did he, in spite of what Aristotle says, neglect final causality, since the exemplary causes are also final causes: they are not only Ideas, but also Ideals. God acts in the world with a view to an end, as is clearly stated in the *Timaeus*. But Plato seems to have left a dichotomy between the Exemplary Cause and the Efficient Cause (at least this is suggested by what he actually says and we have not sufficient warrant to state categorically that he brought the two ultimate Causes together), while in the terrestrial world he does not give that clear place to the immanent formal cause that Aristotle supplied. Yet while Aristotle developed a clear theory concerning the immanent formal and material causes in the

terrestrial world, his system is sadly deficient in relation to the ultimate Efficient and Exemplary Causes. The Aristotelian God works as ultimate Final Cause, but, since the philosopher did not see how God's changelessness and self-sufficiency could be reconciled with the exercise of efficient causality, he neglected to provide an ultimate Efficient Cause. He thought, no doubt, that the exercise of final causality by the Unmoved Mover was also all the ultimate efficient causality that was requisite; but this meant that for Aristotle the world was not only eternal, but also ontologically independent of God: the Unmoved Mover could scarcely be regarded as drawing the world into existence through the unconscious exercise of final causality.

A synthesis of Plato and Aristotle was, therefore, necessary, and in Neo-Platonism (as also, to a greater or less extent, in the intermediate philosophies leading up to it) the God of Aristotle and the Exemplary and Efficient Causes of Plato were brought more or less together, even if not in a thoroughly satisfactory manner. In Christian philosophy on the other hand the ultimate Efficient, Exemplary and Final Causes are explicitly identified in the one spiritual God, supreme Being and Reality and the Source of all created and dependent being.

3. Again, we might look on Greek philosophy as a whole from the humanistic viewpoint, according to the position attributed to man in the individual systems. The pre-Socratic cosmology, as I pointed out earlier, was particularly concerned with the Object, the material cosmos and man was regarded as an item in that cosmos, his soul being, for example, a contraction of the primal Fire (Heraclitus) or composed of a particular type of atoms (Leucippus). On the other hand, the doctrine of transmigration of souls, as found for instance in the Pythagorean philosophy and in the teaching of Empedocles, implied that there was in man a principle superior to matter, an idea which bore splendid fruit in the philosophy of Plato.

With the Sophists and with Socrates we find a swing-over, due to various causes, from the Object to the Subject, from the material cosmos as such to man. But it is in the Platonic philosophy that the first real attempt is made to combine both realities in a comprehensive synthesis. Man appears as the knowing and willing subject, the being who realises, or should realise, true values in his individual life and in the life of society, the being endowed with an immortal soul; and human knowledge, human nature, human conduct and human society, are made the subject of profound and penetrating analyses and considerations. On the other hand man appears as a being set between two worlds, the full immaterial world of Reality above him and the merely material limit below him: he thus appears, in his dual character of embodied spirit, as what Poseidonius, the outstanding thinker of the Middle Stoa, was later to term the δεσμός or bond between the two worlds of the immaterial and the material.

In Aristotle's philosophy man is again a midway being. as it were, for neither Plato nor Aristotle considered man to be the highest being: the founder of the Lyceum, no less than the founder of the Academy, was convinced that above men there is unchanging Being and that contemplation of unchanging Being is the exercise of man's highest faculty. Again, Aristotle, no less than Plato, gave profound consideration to human psychology, human conduct and human society. Yet of Aristotle's philosophy we may perhaps say that it was at once more and also less human than that of Plato: more human in that, for example, he knits together soul and body more closely than does Plato and so produces a more "realistic" epistemology, attributes a greater value to human aesthetic experience and artistic production, and is more "commonsense" in his treatment of political society, less human in that his identification of the active intellect in all man (according to what seems the more probable interpretation of the *De Anima*) would result in denial of personal immortality. Moreover, there is nothing in Aristotle to suggest that man can ever become united to God in any real sense.

Yet, although it is true that Plato and Aristotle attribute an important position to the study of man and his conduct, as individual and as a member of society, it is also true that both of them (notwithstanding Aristotle's trend towards empirical science) are great metaphysicians and speculative philosophers and of neither of them could we say that he fixes his attention exclusively in man. In the Hellenistic and Roman periods, however, man comes to occupy more and more the centre of the picture: cosmological speculation tends to flag and is unoriginal in character, while in Epicureanism and the developed Stoa the philosopher is concerned above all with human conduct. This preoccupation with man produces the noble doctrine of the later Stoa, of Seneca, Marcus Aurelius and—most strikingly perhaps—of Epictetus, in which all men, as rational beings, appear as brethren, children of "Zeus." But if it is man's moral conduct that is most insisted on in the Stoic School, it is man's religious capacity, need and yearning that come to occupy a prominent position in the Schools and thinkers that are influenced by the Platonic tradition: a doctrine of "salvation," of knowledge of God and assimilation to God, culminates in the Plotinian doctrine of ecstatic union with the One. If Epicureanism and Stoicism (the latter with some qualification perhaps) concern themselves with man on what we might call the horizontal level, Neo-Platonism concerns itself rather with the vertical, with man's ascent to God.

4. Epistemology or the theory of knowledge is generally regarded as a branch of philosophy, the study of which is peculiar to our modern era, and for some modern thinkers it has constituted practically the whole of philosophy. There is, of course, a good deal of truth in the assertion that it was modern philosophy that first made epistemology a really serious and critical study, but it is not a completely true statement, if asserted without qualification. Leaving out of account the philosophy of the Middle Ages, which also dealt with epistemological themes, it can scarcely be denied that the great thinkers of Antiquity concerned themselves to some extent with epistemological questions, even if it was not recognised as a separate branch of philosophy or accorded that critical importance which has generally been attributed to it in modern times, since the time of Immanuel Kant at least. Without attempting to give anything like a complete survey of the development of epistemology in ancient philosophy, I will suggest one or two points which may help to throw into relief the fact that important epistemological problems at least raised their heads above the ground in the ancient world, even if they did not emerge into full light of day and receive that close attention which they deserve.

The pre-Socratic philosophers were, in the main, "dogmatists," in the sense that they assumed that man can know reality objectively. It is true that the Eleatic philosophy made a distinction between the way of truth and the way of belief or opinion or appearance; but the Eleatics themselves did not realise the importance of the problems involved in their philosophy. They adopted a monistic position on rationalistic grounds and, since this position conflicted with the data of sense-experience, cavalierly denied the objective reality of phenomena: they did not question their general philosophical position or the power of the human mind to transcend phenomena, but rather assumed this power. Nor did they realise apparently that, by rejecting the objective reality of appearance, they were undermining their metaphysic. In general, therefore, the thinkers of the Eleatic School cannot be termed exceptions to the generally uncritical attitude of the pre-Socratics, in spite of the dialectical ability of a man like Zeno.

The Sophists did indeed assert relativism to a greater or less extent, and the assertion of relativism involved an implicit epistemology. If Protagoras' dictum that man is the measure of all things is to be taken in a broad sense, it is tantamount to an assertion, not only of the independence of man in the ethical sphere, as a creator of moral values, but also of the inability of man to attain metaphysical truth. Did not Protagoras adopt a sceptical attitude in regard to theology and did not the Sophists in general regard cosmological speculation as little more than waste of time? Now, if the Sophists had gone on to institute a critique of human knowledge and had attempted to show why human knowledge is necessarily confined to phenomena, they would have been epistemologists; but in point of fact their interests were, for the most part, other than philosophical and their relativistic theories do not seem to have been based on any profound consideration either of the nature of the subject or of that of the object. The epistemology involved in their general position remained, therefore, implicit and was not elaborated into an explicit theory of knowledge. *We*, of course, can discern the germs of epistemological theories or problems, not only in Sophism but also in pre-Socratic philosophy; but that is not to say that either the Sophists or the pre-Socratic cosmologists had a reflective realisation of these problems.

When we turn to Plato and Aristotle, however, we find explicit theories of knowledge. Plato had a clear notion what he meant by knowledge and sharply distinguished the nature of true knowledge from the nature of opinion and of imagination, he possessed a clear reflective knowledge of the relativistic and variable elements in sense-perception and he discussed the question, how error of judgment takes place and in what it consists. His whole theory of the ascending degrees of knowledge and the corresponding objects of knowledge entitles him without a doubt to rank as an epistemologist. The same is true of Aristotle, who asserted a theory of abstraction, of the function of the image, of the active and passive principle in cognition, of the distinction between sense-perception and conceptual thought, of the different functions of reason. Of course, if we wished to restrict the scope of epistemology to consideration of the question, "*Can* we attain knowledge?", then the Aristotelian epistemology would belong rather to psychology, since it purports to answer the question, "*How* do we come to know?", rather than the question, "*Can* we know?"; but if we are willing to extend the scope of epistemology to cover the nature of the process of coming to know, then we must certainly reckon Aristotle an epistemologist. He may have treated the questions he raises in his psychology and we might to-day include most of them under the heading of psychology, but, labels apart, it remains an undoubted fact that Aristotle had a theory of knowledge.

On the other hand, though both Plato and Aristotle elaborated theories of knowledge, there is no use in pretending that they were not "dogmatists." Plato, as I have said, had a clear idea of what he meant by knowledge; but that such knowledge was possible for man, he assumed. If he accepted from Heraclitus his insistence on the changing character of the material world and from the Sophists the relativity of sense-perception, he accepted also from the Eleatics and the Pythagoreans the rationalistic assumption that the human mind can transcend phenomena and from Socrates the starting-point of his metaphysics of essence. Moreover, it was essential for Plato's ethical and political aims that the possibility of knowing the unchanging values and exemplary essences should be admitted: he never really questioned this possibility nor did he ever seriously raise the question of a purely subjective *a priori* element in human cognition: he attributed the *a priori* element (which he admitted) to "reminiscence," i.e. to previous objective knowledge. Nor did Aristotle ever raise the "critical problem": he assumed that the human mind can transcend phenomena and attain to a certain knowledge of unchanging and necessary objects, the objects of theoretic contemplation. Plato was an untiring dialectician, Aristotle was always ready to consider fresh problems and was careful in the statement of his own theories, even if not in that of other people's theories; but of neither the one nor the other can we say that he was the Kant or the anti-Kantian of the ancient world, for Kant's problem was not considered by them. Nor is this really surprising, since both men were dominated by the problem of Being (whereas in modern philosophy so many thinkers have started from *Consciousness*), so that their theories of knowledge were elaborated in function of their metaphysics and general philosophic positions rather than as a necessary *prolegomenon* to any metaphysic.

In the post-Aristotelian philosophy, if we except the Sceptics, we find in general the same "dogmatic" attitude, though it is also true that considerable attention was devoted to the question of the criteria of truth, e.g. by the Stoics and Epicureans. In other words, thinkers were alive to the difficulty that arises through the variability of sense-perception and attempted to meet this difficulty; in fact they had to meet it, in order to be able to erect their several philosophical structures. They were much more critical than the pre-Socratics; but that does not mean that they were critical philosophers in the Kantian sense, for they confined themselves more or less to a particular problem and tried to differentiate between, e.g. objective sense-perception, imagination and hallucination. In the New Academy, however, a radical scepticism showed itself, as when Carneades taught that there is no criterion of truth and that knowledge is impossible, on the ground that no sense-presentation is certainly true and that conceptual reasoning, since it is founded on sense-experience, is no more reliable than the latter, and the later Sceptics elaborated a systematic criticism of dogmatism and argued the relative character of both sensation and judgment, so that they were determined anti-metaphysicians. Dogmatism indeed won the final victory in ancient philosophy; but in view of the attacks of the Sceptics it cannot be said that ancient philosophy was altogether uncritical or that epistemology had no place in the consideration of Greek philosophers. This is the point I want to make: I am not concerned to admit that the attacks on metaphysics were justified, for I believe that they can be answered. I only wish to point out that not all Greek philosophers were naïve "dogmatists" and that, even if this can be legitimately asserted of the pre-Socratics, it would be a far too sweeping assertion in regard to Greek philosophers in general.

5. Closely allied with epistemology is psychology, and it may be as well to make a few remarks on the development of psychology in ancient philosophy. It is the Pythagorean School which stands out among the pre-Socratics as possessing a definite concept of the soul as a permanent principle, persisting in its individuality,

even after death. The philosophy of Heraclitus recognised, of course, a part of man which is more akin to the ultimate Principle of the universe than the body, and Anaxagoras asserted that Nous is present in man; but the latter did not succeed in transcending, *verbally* at least, the materialism of the pre-Socratic system, while for Heraclitus the rational element in man was but a purer manifestation of the fiery Principle. The Pythagorean psychology, however, by its distinction between soul and body at least implied a distinction between the spiritual and corporeal. Indeed, the doctrine of metempsychosis over-emphasised the distinction between soul and body, since it involved the conclusion that the soul stands in no intrinsic relation to any particular body. Moreover, acceptance of metempsychosis involves the acceptance of the theory that memory and reflective consciousness of continued self-identity are not essential to individual persistence. (If Aristotle held that there is a separate active intellect in each man and that the active intellect persists in its individuality, his notion that memory perishes with death may have been due not only to his own psychology and physiology, but to relics of the Pythagorean doctrine and its implication.) As to the Pythagorean theory of the tripartite nature of the soul, this was doubtless ultimately due to empirical observation of man's rational and emotional functions and of the conflict between reason and passion.

The Pythagorean conception of the soul exercised a very considerable influence on the thought of Plato. Rejecting epiphenomenalism, he made the soul the principle of life and movement in man, a principle that does not depend essentially on the body for the exercise of its highest intellectual functions, a principle that comes from "without" and survives the death of the body. Tripartite in nature, the soul has various functions or "parts," the hierarchy of which was fitted by Plato into his general metaphysical position. The lower parts or functions depend essentially on the body, but the rational soul belongs to the sphere of abiding Reality: in its proper dialectical and intuitive processes its activity is on a higher plane than that of phenomena and demonstrates the "divine" or immortal character of the soul. But Plato was not primarily interested in the soul from the strictly psychological aspect, still less from the point of view of the biologist: he was interested first and foremost in the soul as apprehending values and as realising values, in its ethical aspect. Hence the tremendous importance that he attached to education and culture of the soul.

If he sharpened, as he did, the antithesis between soul and body and spoke of the soul as inhabiting the body, as being lodged in the body like a captain in a ship, destined to rule the body, it was mainly his ethical interest that led him to do so. It is true that he attempted to prove the soul's pre-existence, intrinsic independence of the body and immortality, with epistemological arguments, arguing, e.g. from the *a priori* element in human knowledge; but all the time he was under the sway of ethical, and to a certain extent religious interests, and at the close of his life we find him still insisting that the soul is man's dearest possession and tendance of the soul man's highest task and duty. This is what we might call the characteristic side of Plato's psychology, for, though he certainly attributed a biological function to the soul, i.e. as source of movement and vital principle, he placed the emphasis on ethical and metaphysical aspects to such a degree that it may well be doubted if his treatment of these aspects really squares with his treatment of the soul in its biological function.

Aristotle began with the Platonic conception of the soul and the Platonic metaphysico-ethical picture of the soul and features of this conception are salient features of his psychology as represented in the pedagogical works. Thus, according to Aristotle, the highest part of man's soul, the active intellect, comes from without and survives death, while insistence on education and on moral culture is prominent in the philosophy of Aristotle as in that of Plato. Nevertheless, one can hardly avoid the impression that this aspect of his doctrine of the soul is not the really characteristic aspect of the Aristotelian psychology. However much he may have insisted on education and however prominent his intellectualist attitude may be in the picture of the ideal life for man as given in the *Ethics*, it would seem true to say that Aristotle's characteristic contribution to psychology is to be found rather in his treatment of the soul in its biological aspects. The sharp antithesis drawn by Plato between soul and body tends to retreat into the background, to give place to the conception of the soul as the immanent form of the body, as wedded to this particular body. The active intellect (whether monistically conceived or not) survives death, but the soul in its generality, including the passive intellect and including the functions of memory, etc., depends on the bodily organism and perishes at death. Where does it come from, this soul of man (excluding the active intellect)? It does not come from "without," it is not "made" by any Demiurge: is it perhaps a function of the body, little more than an epiphenomenon? Aristotle gave an extensive empirical treatment of such psychical functions as memory, imagination, dreams, sensations, and it would appear that his realisation of the dependence of so many of these functions on physiological factors and conditions was leading him towards an epiphenomenalist view of the soul, even if he never explicitly repudiated the totality of his Platonic inheritance or realised the tension between what he had retained of the Platonic psychology and that view of the soul to which his own researches and bent of mind were leading him.

The most important contribution of post-Aristotelian philosophy to psychology in a broad sense was perhaps the emphasis it laid on the religious aspect of the human soul: this is true at least of Neo-Platonism and of the Schools that led up to Neo-Platonism, though not, of course, of all post-Aristotelian Schools. The thinkers of the movement which culminated in Neo-Platonism working from the viewpoint of the Platonic tradition, set in clear relief man's kinship to the Divine, the soul's transcendental orientation and destiny. In other words, it was the characteristically Platonic attitude that triumphed in ancient philosophy rather than the characteristically Aristotelian attitude. As for the Stoics and Epicureans, the former could not achieve a really unified psychology owing to the simple fact that their dogmatic materialism demanded one psychology and their ethic another. Moreover, they did not investigate the nature and function of the psyche for their own sake and endeavour to establish a rational psychology on sure empirical foundations; but, adopting and adapting a pre-Socratic cosmology and centering their attention on ethical conduct, fitted a rationalist psychology, as best they could, to a hybrid system. Nevertheless, the tendency of Stoic doctrine and the effect of its influence was certainly to increase the direction of interest to the ethical and religious aspects of the soul rather than to its biological aspects. The Epicureans denied the immortality of the soul and asserted its atomic character; but they did so in the interest of their own ethic and not, of course, because they had discovered that the soul is in reality composed of atoms, though it must be admitted that the Epicurean psychology fits in better with their banal ethic than the Stoic psychology with the Stoic idealist ethic. Both Stoic psychology and Stoic ethic were constantly striving, as it were, to break the bonds of the traditional materialistic monism in which they were bound, and the Stoics could no more explain rational thought in terms of their system than the Epicureans could explain thought in terms of the motion of atoms. The Epicureans may have anticipated to some extent the psychology of Hobbes or of thinkers of the French Enlightenment, but neither in the ancient world nor in eighteenth-century France, nor even in the twentieth century, can the psychical be satisfactorily explained in terms of the corporeal, the rational in terms of irrational, the conscious in terms of the unconscious. On the other hand, if the psychical cannot be reduced to the corporeal, no more can the corporeal be reduced to the psychical: the two remain distinct, though in man, the bond between the purely spiritual and the purely material spheres, the two elements are intimately related. Plato laid the emphasis on the fact of distinction, Aristotle on that of the intimate relationship: both factors need to be borne in mind if one would avoid occasionalism or modern idealism on the one hand and epiphenomenalism on the other hand.

6. A few remarks on the development of ethics in ancient philosophy, particularly in regard to the relationship between ethical norms and a transcendental foundation of morality. I am quite aware that the question of the relation between ethics and metaphysics is hotly debated, and I do not propose to discuss the problem on its own merits: I wish to do no more than indicate what I consider one of the main trends in Greek ethical thought.

We have to distinguish between moral philosophy as such and the unsystematised moral judgments of mankind. Moral judgments had been made by Greeks long before the Sophists, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, etc., reflected on them, and the fact that the ordinary moral judgments of man formed the material for their reflection meant that the theories of the philosophers mirrored to a greater or less extent the ordinary moral consciousness of the time. These moral judgments, however, are in turn dependent, in part at least, on education, social tradition and environment, are moulded by the community, so that it is only natural that they should differ somewhat from community to community, nation to nation. Now, in face of this difference two ways of reaction at any rate lie open to the philosopher.

(i) Perceiving that a given community holds fast to its own traditional code and considers it the only one, the "natural" one, while on the other hand not all communities have exactly the same code, he may react by drawing the conclusion that morals are relative, that though one code may be more useful, more expedient, than another, there exists no absolute code of morals. This was the line taken by the Sophists.

(ii) The philosopher may attribute a good deal of the observed differences to *error* and assert a sure standard and norm of morality. This was the way taken by Plato and Aristotle. In fact the ethical intellectualism, particularly characteristic of Socrates, though also of Plato to a less extent, bears witness to the fact that they ascribed differences in moral judgment to mistake, to error. Thus to the man who thinks, or professes to think, that the natural and proper procedure is to injure one's enemies or to pursue a career of unabashed egoism, Plato attempts to show that he is quite mistaken in his notion. He may at times appeal to self-interest, even if only in *argumentum ad hominem*; but, whatever he appeals to in order to prove his view, Plato was certainly no relativist in ethics: he believed in abiding standards, objectively true and universally valid.

Now, if we look at the moral philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, this fact is apparent, that in either case the standard of conduct is measured by their conception of human nature. The ideal was regarded by Plato as something fixed, eternal and transcendent, not subject to relativity and variation. The different faculties of man are faculties of activity according to certain habits or virtues, and of each virtue there is an ideal pattern, comprised in the all-embracing ideal, the Ideal of the Good. There is an ideal of man and ideals of man's virtues, and it is man's moral function to conform himself to those ideals. When he does so, when his nature is harmoniously developed and perfected according to the ideal, he is a "just" or good man, he is a true example of a man and has attained true well-being. Moreover, for Plato God is constantly operative in the world, striving to realise the ideal in the concrete and actual world. God Himself never departs from the ideal, but always has the ideal, the best, in view: He is the Reason, Divine Providence, operative in the cosmos. God is also the source of the human reason and is depicted symbolically in the *Timaeus* as forming the human reason Himself, so that man's rational soul is akin to the Divine and has as its task the same task as the Deity, the realisation of the ideal, of value, in the world. Man is thus by nature a co-operator with God: in that consists his vocation, to work towards the realisation of the ideal, of value, in his personal life and in that of society or the State. It is God Who sets the standard, not man, says Plato against Protagoras, and man's end is the greatest possible likeness to God. Plato says little of moral obligation, it is true, but he evidently considered, even if without a fully reflective consciousness of the fact, that man is under an obligation to act as truly befits a man. The ethical intellectualism which he inherited from Socrates, was doubtless a hindrance in the way of a clear realisation of moral obligation and responsibility; but do not the myths of the future life, of reward and punishment, clearly imply some realisation of moral obligation? Plato certainly gave a transcendental foundation to the *content* of the moral law and, though the same cannot be said in regard to the *form* of the moral law, the categorical imperative, he does seem to have had a dim awareness of the fact that a moral law, if its morally binding and universally valid character is to be substantiated, must be given a transcendental foundation, not only in regard to its content, but also in regard to its form.

When we turn to Aristotle, we find a very fine analysis of the good life, of the moral and intellectual virtues, which were analysed by Aristotle much more completely and systematically than by Plato; but the transcendental values of Plato have been swept away or been replaced by the immanent form. It is true that Aristotle calls on man to think divine things, to imitate, as far as he can, God's contemplation of the highest object, so that in a sense there is, even for Aristotle, an eternal pattern of human life; but the theoretic life is inaccessible to most men, while on the other hand Aristotle affords no ground for a man thinking that he is called upon to co-operate with the Divine, since the God of the *Metaphysics* at least does not operate consciously and efficiently in the world. Aristotle never really synthesised satisfactorily the life of the moral virtues and the theoretic life, and the moral law for Aristotle is, it would seem, devoid of any real transcendental foundation, in regard to both content and form. What could he say to anyone who questioned the obligation of living in the manner proposed in the *Ethics*? He could appeal to aesthetic standards, to good form, to "fairness," and he could reply that to act otherwise is to miss the goal of happiness, which all necessarily seek, with the consequence that one would be acting irrationally; but he left no place for an appeal to a specifically moral obligation with a firm foundation in absolute Reality.

Later Greek philosophers, if we except, e.g. the Epicureans, seem to have seen the necessity of founding a standard morality on an absolute basis. The Stoics insist on duty, on the Divine Will, on the life of reason which is life in accordance with nature, since man's rational nature proceeds from God, the all-pervasive Reason, and returns to Him. Their pantheism certainly involved them in ethical difficulties; but, none the less, they viewed morality as ultimately the expression of the Divine in man and in human life. As God is one, as human nature is constant, there can be but one morality. It would be an anachronism to read into their expression for "duty" all the meaning that the term has acquired in modern times; but at least they had some conception of duty and of moral obligation, even if the clear statement of this conception was hampered by the determinism consequent on their pantheism. In the Neo-Platonic system or systems ethics proper was subordinated to insistence on the religious aspect of human life and man's ascent to God; but the practice of the moral life was regarded as an integral part of that ascent and, in practising it, man conforms himself to transcendentally-grounded standards. Moreover, the fact that those Romans who aspired to a moral life and attached importance to moral values, saw the necessity of purifying the idea of God and of emphasising Divine Providence serves to illustrate the practical benefit of founding ethics ultimately on metaphysics and so serves as an empirical confirmation of the theoretical assertion of that foundation.

7. The mention of ethics and of an ascription to morality of a transcendental foundation naturally leads one on to a brief consideration of Greek philosophy viewed as a preparatory intellectual instrument for Christianity, as a *preparatio evangelica*. Only a few suggestions can be made, however: any adequate treatment of the subject would require more space than I can devote to it in this concluding chapter. (Consideration of the doctrines actually borrowed directly or indirectly by Christian philosophy from Greek thinkers is best reserved for the next volume, that dealing with mediaeval philosophy.)

In the philosophy of Heraclitus we find the beginnings of the doctrine of an immanent Reason operative in the world, though the Logos is conceived on the material plane, as identical with the primal Fire (a conception that was elaborated in later times by the Stoics), while Anaxagoras contributes the theory of Nous as the primary moving Principle. But in both cases there is but a hint of the developments that were to come later, and it is not until Plato that we find anything like a natural theology. But, if among the pre-Socratics we find little more than hints of the doctrine of (what we would call) God, as First Efficient Cause (Anaxagoras) and as Providence or immanent Reason (Heraclitus), we find in Pythagoreanism a somewhat clearer enunciation of the distinction between soul and body, the superiority of soul to body and the necessity of tending the former and preserving it from contamination. However, in regard to pre-Socratic philosophy as a whole, it is the search for the ultimate nature of the world and its conception of the world as a law-ordered world, rather than any specific doctrines (with the exception perhaps of the Orphic-Pythagorean psychology), which entitles it to be regarded in any sense as a remote *preparatio evangelica*, a preparation of the pagan mind for the reception of the revealed religion. For it is the conception of a law-ordered world that naturally leads on to the conception of a Lawgiver and Orderer. Before this further step could be taken, however, it was necessary to arrive at a clear distinction between soul and body, the immaterial and the material, and for the apprehension of this distinction the Orphics and Pythagoreans paved the way, though it was really Plato who extended the Pythagorean anthropological distinction between the transcendental and the phenomenal, the immaterial and the material.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of Plato in the intellectual *preparatio evangelica* of the pagan world. By his doctrine of exemplarism, his theory of the transcendental Exemplary Cause, by his doctrine of Reason or Mind operative in the world and forming the world for the best, he obviously remotely paved the way for the ultimate acceptance of the one Transcendent-Immanent God. Again, by his doctrine of the immortal and rational soul of man, of retribution, of moral purification, he made easier the intellectual acceptance of Christian psychology and asceticism, while his insistence on absolute moral standards in accordance with the teaching of his great Master, Socrates, and the hints he drops as to the assimilation with God were a remote preparation for the acceptance of the Christian ethic. Nor must we forget that in the *Laws* Plato gave reasons why we should admit the existence of Mind operative in the universe, thus foreshadowing the later natural theologies. But it is rather the total attitude fostered by the Platonic philosophy—I refer to the belief in transcendental Reality, eternal values, immortality, righteousness, Providence, etc., and the characteristic mental and emotional attitude that is logically fostered by such belief—rather than any specific arguments which helped to lead up to the acceptance of Christianity. It is true that the doctrine of the Transcendental, as developed in Middle and Neo-Platonism, was used *against* Christianity, under the plea that the dogma of the Incarnation is incompatible with the transcendent character of God: but the transcendent character of God is an integral doctrine of Christianity and it can scarcely be denied that the Platonic ascent above pre-Socratic materialism was a predisposing factor towards the acceptance of a religion which insists on the supreme reality of the transcendental and on the abiding character of spiritual values. Early Christian thinkers certainly recognised in Platonism a certain kinship, even if more or less remote, with their own *Weltanschauung* and, though Aristotle was later to become the philosopher *par excellence* of Scholasticism, Augustinianism stands rather in the line of the Platonic tradition. Moreover, Platonic-Augustinian elements are very far from being entirely absent in the philosophy of that very Scholastic who adopted—and adapted—Aristotelianism, St. Thomas Aquinas. Thus, if Platonism helped in some degree to prepare the way for Christianity, even if largely through succeeding Schools that developed the Platonic tradition, Christianity may also be said to have borrowed some of its philosophic "outfit" from Platonism.

By mediaeval philosophers of the Augustinian tradition, such as St. Bonaventure (one of whose main objections against Aristotle was that he rejected exemplarism), Aristotelianism tended to be regarded as inimical to the Christian religion, largely because he became known to the West principally through the Arabian commentators. (Thus Averroes interpreted Aristotle—probably rightly—as denying, for example, the *personal* immortality of the human soul.) But though it is true, for instance, that the conception of God in the *Metaphysics* as entirely self-engrossed and caring nought for the world and man, is not that of Christianity, it must surely be admitted that the natural theology of Aristotle was a preparation for the acceptance of Christianity. God appears as transcendent, immaterial Thought, the absolute Final Cause, and when the Platonic Ideas came later to be placed in the Mind of God and a certain syncretism of Platonism and Aristotelianism took place, the ultimate Efficient, Exemplary and Final Causes tending to coalesce, a conception of reality was provided that made it easier than it might otherwise have been to accept Christianity from the intellectual standpoint.

Of the post-Aristotelian philosophy much might be said in the present connection; I can but select a few points for mention. Stoicism, with its doctrine of the immanent Logos and its "providential" operation in the world, with its noble ethic, was an important factor in the world in which Christianity was implanted and grew. It is quite true that the Stoic philosophy remained theoretically materialist and more or less determinist; but, from the practical viewpoint, the insistence on man's kinship with God, on purification of the soul by self-control and moral education, on submission to the "Divine Will," together with the broadening influence of its cosmopolitanism, served as a preparation in some minds for the acceptance of the universal religion which, while transcending the materialism of the Stoics, insisted on the brotherhood of men as children of God and introduced a dynamic influence which was wanting in the Stoic system. Moreover, in so far as ethical Stoicism was an answer to the contemporary need for moral guidance and direction as to the right course to be pursued by the individual, swamped in the great cosmopolitan Empire, this need was far better met by the Christian doctrine, which could appeal to the uneducated and simple in a way that Stoicism could hardly do and which held out the prospect of complete happiness in the future life as the term of moral endeavour in a way that Stoicism, by its very system, was debarred from doing.

Besides the strictly ethical needs of man there were also his religious capacity and need to be satisfied. While the State cult was unable to meet this need, the mystery-religions and even philosophy (in a far less popular form, e.g. in Neo-Platonism) catered for its satisfaction. By attempting to cater for man's deeper spiritual aspirations they at the same time tended to develop and intensify those aspirations, with the result that Christianity fell on an already prepared ground. Christianity, with its doctrine of salvation, its sacramental system, its dogmas, its doctrine of incorporation with Christ through membership of the Church and of the final vision of God, its offer of supernatural life, was *the* "mystery-religion"; but it had the inestimable advantage over all pagan mystery-religions that it was an *historical* religion, based on the Life, Death and Resurrection of the God-Man, Jesus Christ, Who lived and suffered in Palestine in a certain historical period: it was based on historical fact, not on myth. As to the doctrine of "salvation" as found in philosophical Schools and the doctrine of ecstatic union with God as developed in Neo-Platonism, this was far too intellectualist in character to admit of its having a popular appeal. Through the Sacraments and the reception of the supernatural life Christianity offered to *all* men, educated and uneducated alike, union with God, imperfect in this life, perfect in the next, and so, even from the purely natural viewpoint, was obviously destined to exercise a far wider influence than philosophy as such could ever exercise, even a philosophy that was strongly tinctured with religious elements. Moreover, the Neo-Platonic philosophy was unhistorical, in the sense that a doctrine like that of the Incarnation was alien to its spirit, and an historical religion is bound to have a wider popular appeal than a metaphysical philosophy. Nevertheless, in spite of the shocked and scandalised attitude that some early Christian writers adopted (very naturally) in regard to the mystery-religions, particularly that of Mithras, with its quasi-sacramental rites, both the more or less popular mystery-religions and intellectualist Neo-Platonism served the purpose of preparing men's minds for the acceptance of Christianity. They may have tended to set themselves up as rivals to Christianity and they may have kept some individuals from embracing Christianity who would otherwise have done so; but that does not mean that they could not and did not serve as a way to Christianity. Porphyry attacked Christianity, but was not St. Augustine brought to Christianity by way of Plotinus? Neo-Platonism was the last breath, the last flower, of ancient pagan philosophy; but in the thought of St. Augustine it became the first stage of Christian philosophy. Christianity was not, of course, in any sense the outcome of ancient philosophy, nor can it be called a philosophic system, for it is the revealed religion and its historical antecedents are to be found in Judaism; but when Christians began to philosophise, they found ready at hand a rich material, a store of dialectical instruments and metaphysical concepts and terms, and those who believe that divine Providence is operative in history will hardly suppose that the provision of that material and its elaboration through the centuries was simply and solely an accident.

APPENDIX I

SOME ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS VOLUME

AËTIUS. Collectio placitorum (philosophorum).
ALBINUS. Didask. (Didaskalikos).
AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS. Rerum gest. (Rerum gestarum libri 18).
AUGUSTINE. Contra Acad. (Contra Academicos).
C.D. (De Civitate Dei).
BURNET. E.G.P. (Early Greek Philosophy).
G.P., I. (Greek Philosophy. Part I, Thales to Plato).
CAPITOLINUS, JULIUS.. Vit. M. Ant. (Vita Marci Antonini Pii).
CHALCIDIUS. In Tim. (Commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*).
CICERO. Acad. Prior. (Academica Priora).
Acad. Post. (Academica Posteriora).
Ad Att. (Letters to Atticus).
De Div. (De Divinatione).
De Fin. (De Finibus).
De Nat. D. (De Natura Deorum).
De Off. (De Officiis).
De Orat. (De Oratore).
De Senect. (De Senectute).
Somn. Scip. (Somnium Scipionis).
Tusc. (Tusculanae Disputationes).
CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS. Protrep. (Protrepticus).
Strom. (Stromata).
DAMASCIUS. Dubit. (Dubitationes et solutiones de primis principiis).
DIOGENES LAËRTIUS. Lives of the Philosophers.
EPICTETUS. Disc. (Discourses).
Ench. (Enchiridion).
EUDEMUS. Phys. (*Physics*, of which only fragments remain).
EUNAPIUS. Vit. Soph. (Lives of the Sophists).
EUSEBIUS. Hist. Eccl. (Historia Ecclesiastica).
Prep. Evan. (Preparatio Evangelica).
GELLIUS, AULUS. Noct. Att. (Noctes Atticae).
GREGORY OF NAZIANZEN. adv. Max. (adversus Maximum).
HIPPOLYTUS. Ref. (Refutationis omnium haeresium libri X).
JOSEPHUS. Ant. Jud. (Jewish Antiquities).
LACTANTIUS. Div. Inst. (Institutiones divinae).
LAMPRIDIUS. Alex. (Life of Alexander Severus).
Aurel. (Life of Aurelian).
LUCIAN. De morte Peregr. (De morte Peregrini).

MARCUS AURELIUS. Med. (Meditations or To Himself).
MAXIMUS OF TYRE. Diss. (Dissertationes).
ORIGEN. *c.* Cels. (Contra Celsum).
P.G. Patrologia Graeca (ed. Migne).
P.L. Patrologia Latina (ed. Migne).
PHILO. De conf. ling. (De confusione linguarum).
  De gigant. (De gigantibus).
  De human. (De humanitate).
  De migrat. Abrah. (De migratione Abrahami).
  De mutat. nom. (De mutatione nominum).
  De opif. mundi (De opificio mundi).
  De post. Caini (De posteritate Caini).
  De somn. (De somniis).
  De vita Mos. (De vita Moysis).
  Leg. alleg. (Legum allegoriarum libri).
  Quis rer. div. her. (Quis rerum divinarum heres sit).
  Quod Deus sit immut. (Quod Deus sit immutabilis).
PHOTIUS. Bibliotheca (about A.D. 857).
PLUTARCH. Cat. Mai. (Cato Maior).
  De anim. proc. (De animae procreatione in Timaeo).
  De comm. notit. (De communibus notitiis adversus Stoicos).
  De def. orac. (De defectu oraculorum).
  De gloria Athen. (Bellone an pace clariores fuerint Athenienses).
  De Is. et Osir. (De Iside et Osiride).
  De prim. frig. (De primo frigido).
  De ser. num. vind. (De sera numinis vindicta).
  De sol. animal. (De sollertia animalium).
  De Stoic repug. (De repugnantiis Stoicis).
  Non p. suav. (Ne suaviter quidem vivi posse secundum Epicurum).
PSEUDO-PLUTARCH. Strom. (Fragments of the stromateis conserved in Eusebius' *Preparatio Evangelica*).
PORPHYRY. Isag. (Isagoge, i.e. introd. to Aristotle's *Categories*).
PROCLUS. De Prov. (De providentia et fato et eo quod in nobis).
  In Alcib. (Commentary on *Alcibiades* I of "Plato").
  In Remp. (Commentary on *Republic* of Plato).
  In Parmen. (Commentary on *Parmenides* of Plato).
  In Tim. (Commentary on *Timaeus* of Plato).
  Instit. Theol. (Institutio Theologica).
  Theol. Plat. (In Platonis Theologiam).
SENECA. Nat. Quaest. (Naturalium Quaestionum libri VII).
SEXTUS EMPIRICUS. adv. math. (Adversus mathematicos).
  Pyrr. Hyp. (Pyrrhonenses Hypotyposes).

SIMPLICIUS. In Arist. Categ. (Commentary on Aristotle's *Categories*).
Phys. (Commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*).
STACE, W. T. Crit. Hist. (A Critical History of Greek Philosophy).
STOBAEUS. Flor. (Florilegium).
TACITUS. Ann. (Annales).
Hist. (Historiae).
THEOPHRASTUS. Phys. Opin. (Physicorum Opiniones).
XENOPHON. Cyneg. (Cynegeticus).
Mem. (Memorabilia).

APPENDIX II

A NOTE ON SOURCES

Since on the one hand some philosophers did not write at all, while on the other hand the works of many philosophers who did write have been lost, we have to rely in very many cases on the testimony of later writers for information as to the course of Greek philosophy.

The chief source of knowledge in the ancient world concerning the pre-Socratic philosophy was the work of Theophrastus entitled *Physicorum Opiniones*, a work which, unfortunately, we possess only in fragmentary form. Theophrastus' work became the source of various other compilations, epitomes or "doxographies," in some of which the opinions of the philosophers were arranged according to theme, while in others the opinions were set forth under the names of the respective philosophers. Of the former type were the *Vetusta Placita*, written by an unknown disciple of Poseidonius in the first half of the first century A.D. We do not possess this work, but that it existed and that it was based on Theophrastus' work, has been shown by Diels. The *Vetusta Placita* in turn formed the main source of the so-called *Aëtii Placita* or Συναγωγὴ τῶν Ἀρεσκόντων (about A.D. 100). Aetiüs' work in turn served as a basis for the *Placita philosophorum* of the Pseudo-Plutarch (compiled about A.D. 150) and the doxographical extracts given by John Stobaeus (A.D. fifth century) in the first book of his *Eclogae*. These two last works are the most important doxographical compilations which we possess, and it has become evident that the main ultimate source for both was the work of Theophrastus, which was also ultimately the chief, though not the only, source for the first book of Hippolytus' *Refutation of all heresies* (in which the subject-matter is arranged under the names of the respective philosophers concerned), and for the fragments, falsely attributed to Plutarch, which are quoted in the *Preparatio Evangelica* of Eusebius.

Further information on the opinions of Greek philosophers is provided by such works as the *Noctes Atticae* of Aulus Gellius (about A.D. 150), the writings of philosophers like Plutarch, Cicero and Sextus Empiricus, and the works of the Christian Fathers and early Christian writers. (Care must be exercised, however, in the use of such historical sources, since, for example, Cicero drew his knowledge of early Greek philosophers from intermediate sources, while Sextus Empiricus was mainly concerned to support his own sceptical position by drawing attention to the contradictory opinions of the dogmatic philosophers. In regard to Aristotle's testimony as to the opinions of his predecessors we must not forget that Aristotle tended to look on earlier philosophies simply from the viewpoint of his own system and to see in them preparatory work for his own achievement. His attitude on this matter was doubtless largely justified, but it does mean that he was not always concerned to give what we should consider a purely objective and scientific account of the course of philosophic thought.) The commentaries composed by authors of Antiquity on the works of eminent philosophers are also of considerable importance, for instance, the commentary by Simplicius on the Physics of *Aristotle*.

In regard to the lives of the philosophers the most important work which we possess is that of Diogenes Laërtius (A.D. third century). This work is a compilation of material taken from various sources and is of very unequal merit, much of the biographical material being anecdotal, legendary and valueless in character, "tall stories" and different, sometimes contradictory, accounts of an event being included by the author, accounts which he had collected from previous writers and compilers. On the other hand it would be a great mistake to allow the unscientific character of the work to obscure its importance and very real value. The indices of the works of the philosophers are important, and we are indebted to Diogenes for a considerable amount of valuable information on the opinions and lives of the Greek philosophers. In assessing the historical value of Diogenes' statements it is obviously necessary to know (as far as this is possible) the particular source to which he was indebted on any given occasion, and no little painstaking and fruitful labour has been expended by scholars, in order to attain this knowledge.

For the chronology of the Greek philosophers the chief source is the *Chronica* of Apollodorus, who based the first part of his chronicle on the *Chronographia* of Eratosthenes of Cyrene (third century before Christ), but added a supplement, carrying it down to about the year 110 B.C. Apollodorus had not, of course, exact material at his disposal, and he had recourse to the arbitrary method of linking up some event of importance which was supposed to have occurred during the period of a philosopher's life, with the philosopher's prime or ἀκμή (taken as the fortieth year) and then reckoning backward to the date of the philosopher's birth. Similarly, it was taken as a general rule that a disciple was forty years younger than his master. Accuracy, therefore, was not to be expected.

(On the general subject of sources see e.g. Ueberweg-Praechter, *Die Philosophie des Altertums*, pp. 10–26 (Apollodorus' Chronicle is given on pp. 667–71), A. Fairbanks, *The First Philosophers of Greece*, pp. 263–88, L. Robin, *Greek Thought and the Origins of the Scientific Spirit*, pp. 7–16, and the *Stellenregister* to Diels' *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*.

APPENDIX III

A FEW BOOKS

1. *General Histories of Greek Philosophy*

ADAMSON, R. (ed. Sorley and Hardie). The Development of Greek Philosophy. London, 1908.

ARMSTRONG, A. H. An Introduction to Ancient Philosophy. Methuen, 1947.

BENN, A. W. The Greek Philosophers. London, 1914.

BRÉHIER, E. Histoire de la philosophie. Tome I. Paris, 1943.

BURNET, J. Greek Philosophy, Part I. Thales to Plato. Macmillan.
(This scholarly work is indispensable to the student).

ERDMANN, J. E. A History of Philosophy, vol. I. Swan Sonnenschein, 1910.
(Erdmann was an eminent historian of the Hegelian School.)

GOMPERZ, TH. Greek Thinkers, 4 vols. (Trs. L. Magnus.) John Murray.

ROBIN, L. La pensée grecque et les origines de l'esprit scientifique. Paris, 1923.
Greek Thought and the Origins of the Scientific Spirit. London, 1928.

RUGGIERO, G. DE. La filosofia greca. 2 vols. Bari, 1917.
(Professor de Ruggiero writes from the viewpoint of an Italian Neo-Hegelian.)

STACE, W. T. A Critical History of Greek Philosophy. Macmillan, 1920.

STENZEL, J. Metaphysik des Altertums. Berlin, Oldenbourg, 1929.
(Particularly valuable for the treatment of Plato.)

STOCKL, A. A Handbook of the History of Philosophy. Part I. Pre-Scholastic Philosophy. Trs. by T. A. Finlay, S.J. Dublin, 1887.

UEBERWEG-PRAECHTER. Die Philosophie des Altertums. Berlin, Mittler, 1926.

WERNER, C. La philosophie grecque. Paris, Payot, 1938.

ZELLER, E. Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy. Kegan Paul, 1931.
(Revised by W. Nestle, translated by L. R. Palmer.)

2. *Pre-Socratic Philosophy*

The best collection of the fragments of the Pre-Socratics is to be found in Hermann Diels' *Vorsokratiker*, fifth edition. Berlin, 1934-5.

BURNET, J. Early Greek Philosophy. Black, 3rd edition, 1920; 4th edition, 1930. (This extremely useful work includes very many fragments.)

COVOTTI, A. I Presocratici. Naples, 1934.

FAIRBANKS, A. The First Philosophers of Greece. London, 1898.

FREEMAN, K. Companion to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers. Blackwell, 1949 (2nd edition).

JAEGER, WERNER. The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers. Oxford, 1947.

ZELLER, E. A History of Greek Philosophy from the earliest period to the time of Socrates. Trs. S. F. Alleyne. 2 vols. Longmans, 1881.

3. *Plato*

The Works of Plato are published, under the editorship of J. Burnet, in the *Oxford Classical Texts*. A well-known translation, in five volumes, is that by B. Jowett, O.U.P., 3rd edition, 1892. There are also more literal translations.

ARCHER-HIND, R. D. The Timaeus of Plato. Macmillan, 1888.

CORNFORD, F. M. Plato's Theory of Knowledge. Kegan Paul, 1935. (A translation of the *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*, with commentary.)

Plato's Cosmology. Kegan Paul, 1937. (A translation of the *Timaeus*, with running commentary.)

Plato and Parmenides. Kegan Paul, 1939. (Translation of the *Parmenides*, with commentary and discussion.)

The Republic of Plato. Translated with Introduction and Notes. O.U.P.

DEMOS, R. The Philosophy of Plato. Scribners, 1939.

DIÈS, AUGUSTE. Autour de Platon. Beauchesne, 1927.

Platon. Flammarion, 1930.

FIELD, G. C. Plato and his Contemporaries. Methuen, 1930.

The Philosophy of Plato. Oxford, 1949.

GROTE, C. Plato and the other Companions of Socrates. John Murray, 2nd edition, 1867.

HARDIE, W. F. R. A Study in Plato. O.U.P., 1936.

HARTMANN, N. Platons Logik des Seins. Giessen, 1909.

LODGE, R. C. Plato's Theory of Ethics. Kegan Paul, 1928.

LUTOSLAWSKI, W. The Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic. London, 1905.

MILHAUD, G. Les philosophes-géomètres de la Grèce. 2nd edition, Paris, 1934.

NATORP, P. Platons Ideenlehre. Leipzig, 1903.

NETTLESHIP, R. L. Lectures on the Republic of Plato. Macmillan, 1898.

RITTER, C. The Essence of Plato's Philosophy. George Allen & Unwin, 1933. (Translated by Adam Alles.)
Platon, sein Leben, seine Schriften, seine Lehre. 2 vols. Munich, 1910 and 1923.

ROBIN, L. La théorie Platonicienne des idées et des nombres. Paris, 1933.
Platon. Paris, 1936.
La physique de Platon. Paris, 1919.

SHOREY, P. The Unity of Plato's Thought. Chicago, 1903.

STENZEL, J. Plato's Method of Dialectic. O.U.P., 1940. (Translated by D. G. Allan.)
Zahl und Gestalt bei Platon und Aristoteles. 2nd edition. Leipzig, 1933.
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MEDIAEVAL PHILOSOPHY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. IN this second volume of my history of philosophy I had originally hoped to give an account of the development of philosophy throughout the whole period of the Middle Ages, understanding by mediaeval philosophy the philosophic thought and systems which were elaborated between the Carolingian renaissance in the last part of the eighth century A.D. (John Scotus Eriugena, the first outstanding mediaeval philosopher was born about 810) and the end of the fourteenth century. Reflection has convinced me, however, of the advisability of devoting two volumes to mediaeval philosophy. As my first volume[1] ended with an account of neo-Platonism and contained no treatment of the philosophic ideas to be found in the early Christian writers, I considered it desirable to say something of these ideas in the present volume. It is true that men like St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Augustine belonged to the period of the Roman Empire, that their philosophic affiliations were with Platonism, understood in the widest sense, and that they cannot be termed mediaevals; but the fact remains that they were Christian thinkers and exercised a great influence on the Middle Ages. One could hardly understand St. Anselm or St. Bonaventure without knowing something of St. Augustine, nor could one understand the thought of John Scotus Eriugena without knowing something of the thought of St. Gregory of Nyssa and of the Pseudo-Dionysius. There is scarcely any need, then, to apologise for beginning a history of mediaeval philosophy with a consideration of thinkers who belong, so far as chronology is concerned, to the period of the Roman Empire.

The present volume, then, begins with the early Christian period and carries the history of mediaeval philosophy up to the end of the thirteenth century, including Duns Scotus (about 1265–1308). In my third volume I propose to treat of the philosophy of the fourteenth century, laying special emphasis on Ockhamism. In that volume I shall also include a treatment of the philosophies of the Renaissance, of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and of the 'Silver Age' of Scholastic thought, even though Francis Suarez did not die until the year 1617, twenty-one years after the birth of Descartes. This arrangement may appear to be an arbitrary one, and to some extent it is. But it is extremely doubtful if it is possible to make any hard and fast dividing line between mediaeval and modern philosophy, and a good case could be made out for including Descartes with the later Scholastics, contrary to tradition as this would be. I do not propose, however, to adopt this course, and if I include in the next volume, the third, some philosophers who might seem to belong properly to the 'modern period', my reason is largely one of convenience, to clear the decks, so that in the fourth volume I may develop in a systematic manner the interconnection between the leading philosophical systems from Francis Bacon in England and Descartes in France up to and including Kant. Nevertheless, whatever method of division be adopted, one has to remember that the compartments into which one divides the history of philosophic thought are not watertight, that transitions are gradual, not abrupt, that there is overlapping and interconnection, that succeeding systems are not cut off from one another with a hatchet.

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[1] *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. I, Greece and Rome, London, 1946.

2. There was a time when mediaeval philosophy was considered as unworthy of serious study, when it was taken for granted that the philosophy of the Middle Ages was so subservient to theology that it was practically indistinguishable therefrom and that, in so far as it was distinguishable, it amounted to little more than a barren logic-chopping and word-play. In other words, it was taken for granted that European philosophy contained two main periods, the ancient period, which to all intents and purposes meant the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, and the modern period, when the speculative reason once more began to enjoy freedom after the dark night of the Middle Ages when ecclesiastical authority reigned supreme and the human reason, chained by heavy fetters, was compelled to confine itself to the useless and fanciful study of theology, until a thinker like Descartes at length broke the chains and gave reason its freedom. In the ancient period and the modern period philosophy may be considered a free man, whereas in the mediaeval period it was a slave.

Apart from the fact that mediaeval philosophy naturally shared in the disesteem with which the Middle Ages in general were commonly regarded, one factor which was partly responsible for the attitude adopted towards mediaeval thinkers was doubtless the language used concerning Scholasticism by men like Francis Bacon and René Descartes. Just as Aristotelians are prone to evaluate Platonism in terms of Aristotle's criticism, so admirers of the movement apparently initiated by Bacon and Descartes were prone to look on mediaeval philosophy through their eyes, unaware of the fact that much of what Francis Bacon, for instance, has to say against the Scholastics could not legitimately be applied to the great figures of mediaeval thought, however applicable it may have been to later and 'decadent' Scholastics, who worshipped the letter at the expense of the spirit. Looking on mediaeval philosophy from the very start in this light historians could perhaps scarcely be expected to seek a closer and first-hand acquaintance with it: they condemned it unseen and unheard, without knowledge either of the rich variety of mediaeval thought or of its profundity: to them it was all of a piece, an arid playing with words and a slavish dependence on theologians. Moreover, insufficiently critical, they failed to realise the fact that, if mediaeval philosophers were influenced by an external factor, theology, modern philosophers were also influenced by external factors, even if by other external factors than theology. It would have seemed to most of these historians a nonsensical proposition were one to suggest to them that Duns Scotus, for example, had a claim to be considered as a great British philosopher, at least as great as John Locke, while in their praise of the acumen of David Hume they were unaware that certain thinkers of the late Middle Ages had already anticipated a great deal of the criticism which used to be considered the peculiar contribution to philosophy of the eminent Scotsman.

I shall cite one example, the treatment accorded to mediaeval philosophy and philosophers by a man who was himself a great philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. It is an interesting example, since Hegel's dialectical idea of the history of philosophy obviously demanded that mediaeval philosophy should be portrayed as making an essential contribution to the development of philosophic thought, while Hegel personally was no mere vulgar antagonist of mediaeval philosophy. Now, Hegel does indeed admit that mediaeval philosophy performed one useful function, that of expressing in philosophic terms the 'absolute content' of Christianity, but he insists that it is only formalistic repetition of the content of faith, in which God is represented as something 'external', and if one remembers that for Hegel faith is the mode of religious consciousness and is definitely inferior to the philosophic or speculative standpoint, the standpoint of pure reason, it is clear that in his eyes mediaeval philosophy can be philosophy only in name. Accordingly he declares that Scholastic philosophy is really theology. By this Hegel does not mean that God is not the object of philosophy as well as of theology: he means that mediaeval philosophy considered the same object as is considered by philosophy proper but that it treated that object according to the categories of theology instead of substituting for the external connections of theology (for example, the relation of the world to God as external effect to free creative Cause) the systematic, scientific, rational and necessary categories and connections of philosophy. Mediaeval philosophy was thus philosophy according to content, but theology according to form, and in Hegel's eyes the history of mediaeval philosophy is a monotonous one, in which men have tried in vain to discern any distinct stages of real progress and development of thought.

In so far as Hegel's view of mediaeval philosophy is dependent on his own particular system, on his view of the relation of religion to philosophy, of faith to reason, of immediacy to mediacy, I cannot discuss it in this volume; but I wish to point out how Hegel's treatment of mediaeval philosophy is accompanied by a very real ignorance of the course of its history. It would be possible no doubt for an Hegelian to have a real knowledge of the development of mediaeval philosophy and yet to adopt, precisely because he was an Hegelian, Hegel's general standpoint in regard to it; but there can be no shadow of doubt, even allowing for the fact that the philosopher did not himself edit and publish his lectures on the history of philosophy, that Hegel did not possess the real knowledge in question. How could one, for instance, attribute a real knowledge of mediaeval philosophy to a writer who includes Roger Bacon under the heading 'Mystics' and simply remarks 'Roger Bacon treated more especially of physics, but remained without influence. He invented gunpowder, mirrors, telescopes, and died in 1297'? The fact of the matter is that Hegel relied on authors like Tennemann and Brucker for his information concerning mediaeval philosophy, whereas the first valuable studies on mediaeval philosophy do not antedate the middle of the nineteenth century.

In adducing the instance of Hegel I am not, of course, concerned to blame the philosopher: I am rather trying to throw into relief the great change that has taken place in our knowledge of mediaeval philosophy through the work of modern scholars since about 1880. Whereas one can easily understand and pardon the misrepresentations of which a man like Hegel was unconsciously guilty, one would have little patience with similar misrepresentations to-day, after the work of scholars like Baeumker, Ehrle, Grabmann, De Wulf, Pelster, Geyer, Mandonnet, Pelzer, etc. After the light that has been thrown on mediaeval philosophy by the publication of texts and the critical editing of already published works, after the splendid volumes brought out by the Franciscan Fathers of Quaracchi, after the publications of so many numbers of the *Beiträge* series, after the production of histories like that of Maurice De Wulf, after the lucid studies of Etienne Gilson, after the patient work done by the Mediaeval Academy of America, it should no longer be possible to think that mediaeval philosophers were 'all of a piece', that mediaeval philosophy lacked richness and variety, that mediaeval thinkers were uniformly men of low stature and of mean attainments. Moreover, writers like Gilson have helped us to realise the continuity between mediaeval and modern philosophy. Gilson has shown how Cartesianism was more dependent on mediaeval thought than was formerly supposed. A good deal still remains to be done in the way of edition and interpretation of texts (one needs only to mention William of Ockham's Commentary on the *Sentences*), but it has now become possible to see the currents and development, the pattern and texture, the high lights and low lights of mediaeval philosophy with a synoptic eye.

3. But even if mediaeval philosophy was in fact richer and more varied than has been sometimes supposed, is it not true to say that it stood in such a close relation to theology that it is practically indistinguishable therefrom? Is it not, for example, a fact that the great majority of mediaeval philosophers were priests and theologians, pursuing philosophic studies in the spirit of a theologian or even an apologist?

In the first place it is necessary to point out that the relation of theology to philosophy was itself an important theme of mediaeval thought and that different thinkers adopted different attitudes in regard to this question. Starting with the endeavour to understand the data of revelation, so far as this is possible to human reason, early mediaevals, in accordance with the maxim *Credo, ut intelligam*, applied rational dialectic to the mysteries of faith in an attempt to understand them. In this way they laid the foundations of Scholastic theology, since the application of reason to theological data, in the sense of the data of revelation, is and remains theology: it does not become philosophy. Some thinkers indeed, in their enthusiastic desire to penetrate mysteries by reason to the utmost degree possible, appear at first sight to be rationalists, to be what one might call Hegelians before Hegel. Yet it is really an anachronism to regard such men as 'rationalists' in the modern sense, since when St. Anselm, for example, or Richard of St. Victor, attempted to prove the mystery of the Blessed Trinity by 'necessary reasons' they had no intention of acquiescing in any reduction of the dogma or of impairing the integrity of divine revelation. (To this subject I shall return in the course of the work.) So far they were certainly acting as theologians, but such men, who did not make, it is true, any very clear delimitation of the spheres of philosophy and theology, certainly pursued philosophical themes and developed philosophical arguments. For instance, even if St. Anselm is primarily important as one of the founders of Scholastic theology, he also contributed to the growth of Scholastic philosophy, for example, by his rational proofs of God's existence. It would be inadequate to dub Abelard a philosopher and St. Anselm a theologian without qualification. In any case in the thirteenth century we find a clear distinction made by St. Thomas Aquinas between theology, which takes as its premisses the data of revelation, and philosophy (including, of course, what we call 'natural theology'), which is the work of the human reason unaided positively by revelation. It is true that in the same century St. Bonaventure was a conscious and determined upholder of what one might call the integralist, Augustinian view; but, though the Franciscan Doctor may have believed that a purely philosophical knowledge of God is vitiated by its very incompleteness, he was perfectly well aware that there are philosophical truths which are ascertainable by reason alone. The difference between him and St. Thomas has been stated thus.[1] St. Thomas held that it would be possible, *in principle*, to excogitate a satisfactory philosophical system, which, in respect of knowledge of God for instance, would be incomplete but not false, whereas St. Bonaventure maintained that this very incompleteness or inadequacy has the character of a falsification, so that, though a true natural philosophy would be possible without the light of faith, a true metaphysic would not be possible. If a philosopher, thought St. Bonaventure, proves by reason and maintains the unity of God, without at the same time knowing that God is Three Persons in One Nature, he is attributing to God a unity which is not the divine Unity.

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[1] This bald statement, however, though sponsored by M. Gilson, requires a certain modification. See pp. 245–9.

In the second place, St. Thomas was perfectly serious when he gave philosophy its 'charter'. To a superficial observer it might appear that when St. Thomas asserted a clear distinction between dogmatic theology and philosophy, he was merely asserting a formalistic distinction, which had no influence on his thought and which he did not take seriously in practice; but such a view would be far from the truth, as can be seen by one example. St. Thomas believed that revelation teaches the creation of the world in time, the world's non-eternity; but he maintained and argued stoutly that the philosopher as such can prove neither that the world was created from eternity nor that it was created in time, although he can show that it depends on God as Creator. In holding to this point of view he was at variance with, for example, St. Bonaventure, and the fact that he maintained the point of view in question shows clearly that he seriously accepted in practice his theoretical delimitation of the provinces of philosophy and dogmatic theology.

In the third place, if it were really true to say that mediaeval philosophy was no more than theology, we should expect to find that thinkers who accepted the same faith would accept the same philosophy or that the differences between them would be confined to differences in the way in which they applied dialectic to the data of revelation. In point of fact, however, this is very far from being the case. St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Duns Scotus, Giles of Rome, and, one may pretty safely say, William of Ockham accepted the same faith, but their philosophical ideas were by no means the same on all points. Whether or not their philosophies were equally compatible with the exigencies of theology is, of course, another question (William of Ockham's philosophy could scarcely be considered as altogether compatible with these exigencies); but that question is irrelevant to the point at issue, since, whether they were all compatible with orthodox theology or not, these philosophies existed and were not the same.

The historian can trace the lines of development and divergence in mediaeval philosophy, and, if he can do this, there must clearly be such a thing as mediaeval philosophy: without existence it could not have a history.

We shall have to consider different views on the relation between philosophy and theology in the course of this work, and I do not want to dwell any more on the matter at present; but it may be as well to admit from the very start that, owing to the common background of the Christian faith, the world presented itself for interpretation to the mediaeval thinker more or less in a common light. Whether a thinker held or denied a clear distinction between the provinces of theology and philosophy, in either case he looked on the world as a Christian and could hardly avoid doing so. In his philosophic arguments he might prescind from Christian revelation, but the Christian outlook and faith were none the less there at the back of his mind. Yet that does not mean that his philosophic arguments were not philosophic arguments or that his rational proofs were not rational proofs: one would have to take each argument or proof on its own merits or demerits and not dismiss them as concealed theology on the ground that the writer was a Christian.

4. Having argued that there really was such a thing as mediaeval philosophy or at any rate that there could be such a thing, even if the great majority of mediaeval philosophers were Christians and most of them theologians into the bargain, I want finally to say something about the aim of this book (and of the succeeding volume) and the way in which it treats its subject.

I certainly do not intend to attempt the task of narrating all the known opinions of all known mediaeval philosophers. In other words, the second and third volumes of my history are not designed to constitute an encyclopaedia of mediaeval philosophy. On the other hand, it is not my intention to give simply a sketch or series of impressions of mediaeval philosophy. I have endeavoured to give an intelligible and coherent account of the development of mediaeval philosophy and of the phases through which it passed, omitting many names altogether and choosing out for consideration those thinkers who are of special importance and interest for the content of their thought or who represent and illustrate some particular type of philosophy or stage of development. To certain of these thinkers I have devoted a considerable amount of space, discussing their opinions at some length. This fact may possibly tend to obscure the general lines of connection and development, but, as I have said, it was not my intention to provide simply a sketch of mediaeval philosophy, and it is probably only through a somewhat detailed treatment of the leading philosophical systems that one can bring out the rich variety of mediaeval thought. To place in clear relief the main lines of connection and development and at the same time to develop at some length the ideas of selected philosophers is certainly not an easy task, and it would be foolish to suppose that my inclusions and omissions or proportional allotment of space will be acceptable to everybody: to miss the trees for the wood or the wood for the trees is easy enough, but to see both clearly at the same time is not so easy. However, I consider it a task worth attempting, and while I have not hesitated to consider at some length the philosophies of St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas, Duns Scotus and Ockham, I have tried to make intelligible the general development of mediaeval philosophy from its early struggles, through its splendid maturity, to its eventual decline.

If one speaks of a 'decline', it may be objected that one is speaking as philosopher and not as historian. True enough, but if one is to discern an intelligible pattern in mediaeval philosophy, one must have a principle of selection and to that extent at least one must be a philosopher. The word 'decline' has indeed a valuational colouring and flavour, so that to use such a word may seem to constitute an overstepping of the legitimate territory of the historian. Possibly it is, in a sense; but what historian of philosophy was or is *merely* an historian in the narrowest meaning of the term? No Hegelian, no Marxist, no Positivist, no Kantian writes history without a philosophic viewpoint, and is the Thomist alone to be condemned for a practice which is really necessary, unless the history of philosophy is to be rendered unintelligible by being made a mere string of opinions?

By 'decline', then, I mean decline, since I frankly regard mediaeval philosophy as falling into three main phases. First comes the preparatory phase, up to and including the twelfth century, then comes the period of constructive synthesis, the thirteenth century, and finally, in the fourteenth century, the period of destructive criticism, undermining and decline. Yet from another point of view I should not hesitate to admit that the last phase was an inevitable phase and, in the long run, may be of benefit, as stimulating Scholastic philosophers to develop and establish their principles more firmly in face of criticism and, moreover, to utilise all that subsequent philosophy may have to offer of positive value. From one point of view the Sophistic phase in ancient philosophy (using the term 'Sophist' in more or less the Platonic sense) constituted a decline, since it was characterised by, among other things, a flagging of constructive thought; but it was none the less an inevitable phase in Greek philosophy, and, in the long run, may be regarded as having produced results of positive value. No one at least who values the thought of Plato and Aristotle can regard the activity and criticism of the Sophists as an unmitigated disaster for philosophy.

The general plan of this volume and of its successor is thus the exhibition of the main phases and lines of development in mediaeval philosophy. First of all I treat briefly of the Patristic period, going on to speak of those Christian thinkers who had a real influence on the Middle Ages: Boethius, the Pseudo-Dionysius and, above all, St. Augustine of Hippo. After this more or less introductory part of the volume I proceed to the preparatory phase of mediaeval thought proper, the Carolingian renaissance, the establishment of the Schools, the controversy concerning universal concepts and the growing use of dialectic, the positive work of St. Anselm in the eleventh century, the schools of the twelfth century, particularly those of Chartres and St. Victor. It is then necessary to say something of Arabian and Jewish philosophy, not so much for its own sake, since I am primarily concerned with the philosophy of mediaeval Christendom, as for the fact that the Arabs and Jews constituted an important channel whereby the Aristotelian system in its fullness became known to the Christian West. The second phase is that of the great syntheses of the thirteenth century, the philosophies of St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus in particular. The succeeding phase, that of the fourteenth century, contains the new directions and the destructive criticism of the Ockhamist School in a wide sense. Finally, I have given a treatment of the thought which belongs to the period of transition between mediaeval and modern philosophy. The way will then be clear to start a consideration of what is generally called 'modern philosophy' in the fourth volume of this history.

In conclusion it may be as well to mention two points. The first is that I do not conceive it to be the task of the historian of philosophy to substitute his own ideas or those of recent or contemporary philosophers for the ideas of past thinkers, as though the thinkers in question did not know what they meant. When Plato stated the doctrine of reminiscence, he was not asserting neo-Kantianism, and though St. Augustine anticipated Descartes by saying *Si fallor, sum*, it would be a great mistake to try to force his philosophy into the Cartesian mould. On the other hand, some problems which have been raised by modern philosophers were also raised in the Middle Ages, even if in a different setting, and it is legitimate to draw attention to similarity of question or answer. Again, it is not illegitimate to ask if a given mediaeval philosopher could, out of the resources of his own system, meet this or that difficulty which a later philosopher has raised. Therefore, although I have tried to avoid the multiplication of references to modern philosophy, I have on occasion permitted myself to make comparisons with later philosophies and to discuss the ability of a mediaeval system of philosophy to meet a difficulty which is likely to occur to a student of modern thought. But I have strictly rationed my indulgence in such comparisons and discussions, not only out of considerations of space but also out of regard for historical propriety.

The second point to be mentioned is this. Largely owing to the influence of Marxism there is a certain demand that an historian of philosophy should draw attention to the social and political background of his period and throw light on the influence of social and political factors on philosophic development and thought. But apart from the fact that to keep one's history within a reasonable compass one must concentrate on philosophy itself and not on social and political events and developments, it is ridiculous to suppose that all philosophies or all parts of any given philosophy are equally influenced by the social and political *milieu*. To understand a philosopher's political thought it is obviously desirable to have some knowledge of the actual political background, but in order to discuss St. Thomas's doctrine on the relation of essence to existence or Scotus's theory of the univocal character of the concept of being, there is no need at all to introduce references to the political or economic background. Moreover, philosophy is influenced by other factors as well as politics and economics. Plato was influenced by the advance of Greek mathematics; mediaeval philosophy, though distinguishable from theology, was certainly influenced by it; consideration of the development of physics is relevant to Descartes's view of the material world; biology was not without influence on Bergson, and so on. I regard it, therefore, as a great mistake to dwell so exclusively on economics and political development, and to explain the advance of other sciences ultimately by economic history, that one implies the truth of the Marxist theory of philosophy. Apart, then, from the fact that considerations of space have not permitted me to say much of the political, social and economic background of mediaeval philosophy, I have deliberately disregarded the unjustifiable demand that one should interpret the 'ideological superstructure' in terms of the economic situation. This book is a history of a certain period of mediaeval philosophy: it is not a political history nor a history of mediaeval economics.

PART I

PRE-MEDIAEVAL INFLUENCES

CHAPTER II

THE PATRISTIC PERIOD

Christianity and Greek philosophy—Greek Apologists (Aristides, St. Justin Martyr, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus)—Gnosticism and writers against Gnosticism (St. Irenaeus, Hippolytus) —Latin Apologists (Minucius Felix, Tertullian, Arnobius, Lactantius)—Catechetical School of Alexandria (Clement, Origen) —Greek Fathers (St. Basil, Eusebius, St. Gregory of Nyssa)— Latin Fathers (St. Ambrose)—St. John Damascene—Summary.

1. CHRISTIANITY came into the world as a revealed religion: it was given to the world by Christ as a doctrine of redemption and salvation and love, not as an abstract and theoretical system, and He sent His Apostles to preach, not to occupy professors' chairs. Christianity was 'the Way', a road to God to be trodden in practice, not one more philosophical system added to the systems and schools of antiquity. The Apostles and their successors were bent on converting the world, not on excogitating a philosophical system. Moreover, so far as their message was directed to the Jews, the Apostles had to meet theological rather than philosophical attacks, while, in regard to the non-Jews, we are not told, apart from the account of St. Paul's famous sermon at Athens, of their being confronted with, or of their approaching, Greek philosophers in the academic sense.

However, as Christianity made fast its roots and grew, it aroused the suspicion and hostility, not merely of the Jews and the political authorities, but also of pagan intellectuals and writers. Some of the attacks levelled against Christianity were due simply to ignorance, credulous suspicion, fear of what was unknown, misrepresentation; but other attacks were delivered on the theoretical plane, on philosophical grounds, and these attacks had to be met. This meant that philosophical as well as theological arguments had to be used. There are, then, philosophical elements in the writings of early Christian apologists and Fathers; but it would obviously be idle to look for a philosophical system, since the interest of these writers was primarily theological, to defend the Faith. Yet, as Christianity became more firmly established and better known and as it became possible for Christian scholars to develop thought and learning, the philosophical element tended to become more strongly marked, especially when there was question of meeting the attacks of pagan professional philosophers.

The influence of apologetic on the growth of Christian philosophy was clearly due primarily to a cause external to Christianity, namely hostile attack; but there was also another reason for this growth which was internal, independent of attacks from outside. The more intellectual Christians naturally felt the desire to penetrate, as far as it was open to them to do so, the data of revelation and also to form a comprehensive view of the world and human life in the light of faith. This last reason operated in a systematic way perhaps later than the first and, so far as the Fathers are concerned, reached the zenith of its influence in the thought of St. Augustine; but the first reason, the desire to penetrate the dogmas of the Faith (an anticipation of the *Credo, ut intelligam* attitude), was operative in some way from the beginning. Partly through a simple desire to understand and appreciate, partly through the need of further clearer definition of dogma in face of heresy, the original data of revelation were rendered more explicit, 'developed', in the sense of the implicit being made explicit. From the beginning, for instance, Christians accepted the fact that Christ was both God and Man, but it was only in the course of time that the implications of this fact were made clear and were enshrined in theological definitions, for example, that the perfect human Nature of Christ implied His possession of a human will. Now, these definitions were of course theological, and the advance from the implicit to the explicit was an advance in theological science; but in the process of argument and definition concepts and categories were employed which were borrowed from philosophy. Moreover, as the Christians had no philosophy of their own to start with (i.e. in the academic sense of philosophy), they very naturally turned to the prevailing philosophy, which was derived from Platonism but was strongly impregnated with other elements. As a rough generalisation, therefore, one may say that the philosophic ideas of the early Christian writers were Platonic or neo-Platonic in character (with an admixture of Stoicism) and that the Platonic tradition continued for long to dominate Christian thought from the philosophic viewpoint. In saying this, however, one must remember that the Christian writers did not make any clear distinction between theology and philosophy: they aimed rather at presenting the Christian wisdom or 'philosophy' in a very wide sense, which was primarily theological, though it contained philosophical elements in the strict sense. The task of the historian of philosophy is to isolate these philosophic elements: he cannot reasonably be expected to present an adequate picture of early Christian thought, for the very good reason that he is not, *ex hypothesi*, an historian of dogmatic theology or of exegesis.

Since on the one hand pagan philosophers were inclined to attack the Church and her doctrine, while on the other hand Christian apologists and theologians were inclined to borrow the weapons of their adversaries when they thought that these weapons could serve their purpose, it is only to be expected that the Christian writers should show a divergence of attitude in regard to ancient philosophy, according as they chose to regard it as a foe and rival of Christianity or as a useful arsenal and store-house or even as a providential preparation for Christianity. Thus while in Tertullian's eyes pagan philosophy was little more than the foolishness of this world, Clement of Alexandria regarded philosophy as a gift of God, a means of educating the pagan world for Christ, as the Jews' means of education had been the Law. He thought indeed, as Justin thought before him, that Plato had borrowed his wisdom from Moses and the Prophets (a Philonic contention); but just as Philo had tried to reconcile Greek philosophy with the Old Testament, so Clement tried to reconcile Greek philosophy with the Christian religion. In the end, of course, it was the attitude of Clement, not that of Tertullian, which triumphed, since St. Augustine made abundant use of neo-Platonic ideas when presenting the Christian *Weltanschauung*.

2. As the first group of those Christian writers whose works contain philosophic elements one can count the early apologists who were particularly concerned to defend the Christian faith against pagan attack (or rather to show to the Imperial authorities that Christianity had a right to exist), men like Aristides, Justin, Melito, Tatian, Athenagoras and Theophilus of Antioch. In a brief sketch of Patristic philosophy, a sketch which is admittedly only included by way of preparation for the main theme of the book, one can treat neither of all the apologists nor of any one of them fully: my intention is rather to indicate the sort of philosophical elements which their works contain.

(i) *Marcianus Aristides*, styled a 'philosopher of Athens', wrote an Apology, which is to be dated about A.D. 140 and is addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius.[1] A good deal of this work is devoted to an attack on the pagan deities of Greece and Egypt, with some animadversions on the morals of the Greeks; but at the beginning Aristides declares that 'amazed at the arrangement of the world', and understanding that 'the world and all that is therein are moved by the impulse of another', and seeing that 'that which moveth is more powerful than that which is moved', he concludes that the Mover of the world 'is God of all, who made all for the sake of man'. Aristides thus gives in a very compendious form arguments drawn from the design and order in the world and from the fact of motion, and identifies the designer and mover with the Christian God, of whom he proceeds to predicate the attributes of eternity, perfection, incomprehensibility, wisdom, goodness. We have here, then, a very rudimentary natural theology presented, not for purely philosophic reasons, but in defence of the Christian religion.

(ii) A much more explicit attitude towards philosophy is to be found in the writings of *Flavius Justinus* (St. Justin Martyr), who was born at Neapolis (Nablus) of pagan parents about A.D. 100, became a Christian, and was martyred at Rome about 164. In his Dialogue with Trypho he declares that philosophy is a most precious gift of God, designed to lead man to God, though its true nature and its unity have not been recognised by most people, as is clear from the existence of so many philosophical schools.[2] As to himself, he went first for instruction to a Stoic, but, finding the Stoic doctrine of God unsatisfactory, betook himself to a Peripatetic, whose company he soon forsook, as he turned out to be a grasping fellow.[3] From the Peripatetic he went, with zeal still unabated, to a Pythagorean of repute, but his own lack of acquaintance with music, geometry and astronomy unfitted him for philosophy in his prospective teacher's eyes, and as he did not wish to spend a lot of time in acquiring knowledge of these sciences, he turned to the Platonists and was so delighted with the doctrine of the immaterial Ideas that he began to expect a clear vision of God, which, says Justin, is the aim of Plato's philosophy.[4] Shortly afterwards, however, he fell in with a Christian, who showed him the insufficiency of pagan philosophy, even of that of

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[1] Quotations from the edition published in *Texts and Studies*, Vol. I.
[2] 2, 1. [3] 2, 3. [4] 2, 4-6.

Plato.[1] Justin is thus an example of the cultured convert from paganism, who, feeling his conversion as the term of a process, could not adopt a merely negative and hostile attitude to Greek philosophy.

Justin's words concerning Platonism in the *Dialogue* show clearly enough the esteem in which he held the Platonic philosophy. He prized its doctrine of the immaterial world and of the being beyond essence, which he identified with God, though he became convinced that the sure and safe and certain knowledge of God, the true 'philosophy', is to be attained only through the acceptance of revelation. In his two *Apologies* he makes frequent use of Platonic terms, as when he speaks of God as the 'Demiurge'.[2] I am not suggesting that when Justin makes use of Platonic or neo-Platonic words and phrases he is understanding the words in precisely the Platonic sense: the use of them is rather the effect of his philosophic training and of the sympathy which he retained for Platonism. Thus he does not hesitate on occasion to point out analogies between Christian and Platonic doctrine, in regard, for example, to reward and punishment after death,[3] and his admiration for Socrates is evident. When Socrates, in the power of *logos*, or as its instrument, tried to lead men away from falsehood into truth, evil men put him to death as an impious atheist: so Christians, who follow and obey the incarnate Logos itself and who denounce the false gods, are termed atheists.[4] In other words, just as the work of Socrates, which was a service of truth, was a preparation for the complete work of Christ, so the condemnation of Socrates was, as it were, a rehearsal or anticipation of the condemnation of Christ and His followers. Again, the actions of men are not determined, as the Stoics thought, but they act rightly or wrongly according to their free choice, while it is owing to the activity of the evil demons that Socrates and those like him are persecuted, while Epicurus and those like him are held in honour.[5]

Justin thus made no clear distinction between theology and philosophy in the strict sense: there is one wisdom, one 'philosophy', which is revealed fully in and through Christ, but for which the best elements in pagan philosophy, especially Platonism, were a preparation. In so far as the pagan philosophers divined the truth, they did so only in the power of *logos*: Christ, however, is the Logos itself, incarnate. This view of Greek philosophy and of its relation to Christianity was of considerable influence on later writers.

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[1] 3, 1 ff.

[2] E.g. *Apol.*, I, 8, 2.

[3] *Ibid.*, I, 8, 4.

[4] *Ibid.*, I, 5, 3 ff.

[5] *Ibid.*, II, 6 (7), 3.

(iii) According to Irenaeus,[1] *Tatian* was a pupil of Justin. He was of Syrian nationality, was educated in Greek literature and philosophy, and became a Christian. There is no real reason for doubting the truth of the statement that Tatian was in some sense a pupil of Justin Martyr, but it is quite clear from his *Address to the Greeks* that he did not share Justin's sympathy for Greek philosophy in its more spiritual aspects. Tatian declares that we know God from His works; he has a doctrine of the Logos, distinguishes soul (ψυχή) from spirit (πνεῦμα), teaches creation in time and insists on free-will; but all these points he could have got from the Scriptures and Christian teaching: he had little use for Greek learning and Greek thought, though he can hardly have escaped its influence altogether. He was in fact inclined to excessive rigorism, and we learn from St. Irenaeus and St. Jerome[2] that after Justin's martyrdom Tatian fell away from the Church into Valentinian Gnosticism, subsequently founding the sect of the Encratites, denouncing not only the drinking of wine and the use of ornaments by women but even marriage as such, which he said was defilement and fornication.[3]

Tatian certainly recognised the human mind's ability to prove God's existence from creatures and he made use of philosophical notions and categories in the development of theology, as when he maintains that the Word, proceeding from the simple essence of God, does not 'fall into the void', as human words do, but remains in its subsistence and is the divine instrument of creation. He thus uses the analogy of the formation of human thought and speech to illustrate the procession of the Word, and, while holding to the doctrine of creation, he uses language reminiscent of the *Timaeus* in respect of the Demiurge. But, if he made use of terms and ideas taken from pagan philosophy, he did not do so in any spirit of sympathy, but rather with the notion that the Greek philosophers had taken from the Scriptures whatever truth they possessed and that whatever they added thereto was nothing but falsity and perversion. The Stoics, for instance, perverted the doctrine of providence by the diabolic theory of fatalistic determinism. It is indeed something of an historical irony that a writer who betrayed so pronounced an hostility towards Greek thought and who drew so sharp a distinction between pagan 'sophistry' and Christian wisdom should himself end in heresy.

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[1] *Against the Heresies*, I, 28.

[2] E.g. *Adv. Jovin.*, 1, 3; *Comm. in Amos.*

[3] Iren., *Against the Heresies*, I, 28.

(iv) A more tactful approach to the Greeks, and one in harmony with that of Justin Martyr, was the approach of *Athenagoras*, who addressed to the Emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, 'conquerors of Armenia and Sarmatia, and above all philosophers', a *Plea for the Christians* (πρεσβεία περὶ χριστιανῶν) about the year A.D. 177. In this book the author is concerned to defend the Christians against the three accusations of atheism, cannibalistic feasts and incest, and in answering the first accusation he gives a reasoned defence of the Christian belief in one eternal and spiritual God. First of all he cites various Greek philosophers themselves, for instance Philolaus, Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics. He quotes Plato in the *Timaeus* to the effect that it is difficult to find the Maker and Father of the universe and impossible, even when He is found, to declare Him to all, and asks why Christians, believing in one God, should be called atheists, when Plato is not so called because of his doctrine of the Demiurge. The poets and philosophers, moved by a divine impulse, have striven to find God and men pay heed to their conclusions: how foolish it would be, then, to refuse to listen to the very Spirit of God, speaking through the mouths of the Prophets.

Athenagoras then goes on to show that there cannot be a multitude of material gods, that God, who forms matter, must transcend matter (though he scarcely succeeds in conceiving God without relation to space), that the Cause of perishable things must be imperishable and spiritual, and he appeals especially to the testimony of Plato. He thus adopts the same attitude as that of Justin Martyr. There is one true 'philosophy' or wisdom, which is attained adequately only through the Christian revelation, though Greek philosophers divined something of the truth. In other words, their very respect for the Greek thinkers and poets should lead thoughtful men like Marcus Aurelius to appreciate and esteem, even if not to embrace, Christianity. His primary purpose is theological and apologetic, but he utilises philosophic arguments and themes in his pursuit of that purpose. For instance, in his attempt to prove the reasonable character of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, he makes clear his conviction, as against the Platonic view, that the body belongs to the integral man, that man is not simply a soul using a body.[1]

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[1] *On the Resurrection.*

(v) A similar appeal to the intelligent pagan was made by *Theophilus of Antioch* in his *Ad Autolycum*, written about A.D. 180. After emphasising the fact that moral purity is necessary for anyone who would know God, he proceeds to speak of the divine attributes, God's incomprehensibility, power, wisdom, eternity, immutability. As the soul of man, itself invisible, is perceived through the movements of the body, so God, Himself invisible, is known through His providence and works. He is not always accurate in his account of the opinions of Greek philosophers, but he clearly had some esteem for Plato, whom he considered 'the most respectable philosopher among them',[1] though Plato erred in not teaching creation out of nothing (which Theophilus clearly affirms) and in his doctrine concerning marriage (which Theophilus does not give correctly).

3. The foregoing Apologists, who wrote in Greek, were mainly concerned with answering pagan attacks on Christianity. We can now consider briefly the great opponent of Gnosticism, St. Irenaeus, to whom we add, for the sake of convenience, Hippolytus. Both men wrote in Greek and both combated the Gnosticism which flourished in the second century A.D., though Hippolytus's work has a wider interest, containing, as it does, many references to Greek philosophy and philosophers.

Of Gnosticism suffice it to say here that, in general, it was a monstrous conflation of Scriptural and Christian, Greek and Oriental elements, which, professing to substitute knowledge (*gnosis*) for faith, offered a doctrine of God, creation, the origin of evil, salvation, to those who liked to look upon themselves as superior persons in comparison with the ordinary run of Christians. There was a Jewish Gnosticism before the 'Christian' form, and the latter itself can be looked on as a Christian heresy only in so far as the Gnostics borrowed certain specifically Christian themes: the Oriental and Hellenic elements are far too conspicuous for it to be possible to call Gnosticism a Christian heresy in the ordinary sense, although it was a real danger in the second century and seduced those Christians who were attracted by the bizarre theosophical speculations which the Gnostics offered as 'knowledge'. As a matter of fact, there were a number of Gnostic systems, such as those of Cerinthus, Marcion, the Ophites, Basilides, Valentinus. We know that Marcion was a Christian who suffered excommunication; but the Ophites were probably of Jewish-Alexandrian origin, while in regard to famous Gnostics like Basilides and Valentinus (second century) we do not know that they were ever Christians.

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[1] *Ad Autol.*, 3, 6.

Characteristic of Gnosticism in general was a dualism between God and matter, which, though not absolute, approached that of the later Manichaean system. The resulting gulf between God and matter was filled up by the Gnostics with a series of emanations or intermediary beings in which Christ found a place. The complement of the process of emanation was the return to God by way of salvation.

In the system of Marcion, as one would expect, the Christian element was to the fore. The God of the Old Testament, the Demiurge, is inferior to the God of the New Testament, who remained unknown until He revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. In the systems of Basilides and Valentinus, however, the Christian element is less important: Christ is depicted as an inferior being (an Eon) in a fantastic hierarchy of divine and semi-divine emanations, and His mission is simply that of transmitting to man the salvific knowledge or *gnosis*. As matter is evil, it cannot be the work of the Supreme God, but it is due to the 'great Archon', who was worshipped by the Jews and who gave himself out as the one Supreme God. The Gnostic systems were thus not dualistic in the full Manichaean sense, since the Demiurge, identified with the God of the Old Testament, was not made an independent and original principle of evil (the neo-Platonic element was too prominent to admit of absolute dualism), and their main common characteristic was not so much the tendency to dualism as the insistence on *gnosis* as the means of salvation. The adoption of Christian elements was largely due to the desire to absorb Christianity, to substitute *gnosis* for faith. To enter further upon the differentiating features of the various Gnostic systems and to detail the series of emanations would be a tiresome and profitless task: it is enough to point out that the general framework was a mixture of Oriental and Greek (e.g. neo-Pythagorean and neo-Platonic) themes, with a varying dosage of Christian elements, taken both from Christianity proper and from apocryphal and spurious documents. To us to-day it is difficult to understand how Gnosticism could ever have been a danger to the Church or an attraction to any sane mind; but we have to remember that it arose at a time when a welter of philosophical schools and mystery-religions was seeking to cater for the spiritual needs of men. Moreover, esoteric and theosophical systems, surrounded with the pseudo-glamour of 'eastern wisdom', have not entirely lost their attraction for some minds even in much more recent times.

(i) *St. Irenaeus* (born about A.D. 137 or 140), writing against the Gnostics in his *Adversus Haereses*, affirms that there is one God, who made all things, Creator of heaven and earth. He appeals, for example, to the argument from design and to that from universal consent, observing that the very heathen have learnt from creation itself, by the use of reason, the existence of God as Creator.[1] God created the world freely, and not by necessity.[2] Moreover, He created the world out of nothing and not out of previously existing matter, as the Gnostics pretend relying on 'Anaxagoras, Empedocles and Plato'.[3] But, though the human mind can come to know God through reason and revelation, it cannot comprehend God, whose essence transcends the human intelligence: to pretend to know the ineffable mysteries of God and to go beyond humble faith and love, as the Gnostics do, is mere conceit and pride. The doctrine of reincarnation is false, while the revealed moral law does not abrogate, but fulfils and extends, the natural law. In fine, 'the teaching of the Apostles is the true *gnosis*'.[4]

According to Irenaeus the Gnostics borrowed most of their notions from Greek philosophers. Thus he accuses them of borrowing their morals from Epicurus and the Cynics, their doctrine of reincarnation from Plato. In this tendency to attach Gnostic theories to Greek philosophies Irenaeus was closely followed by

(ii) *Hippolytus* (died probably about A.D. 236), who was a disciple of Irenaeus, according to Photius,[5] and certainly utilised his teaching and writing. In the *Proemium* to his *Philosophumena* (now generally attributed to Hippolytus) he declares his intention, only imperfectly fulfilled, of exposing the plagiarism of the Gnostics by showing how their various opinions were taken from Greek philosophers, though they were made worse by the Gnostics, and, in order to do this more easily, he first recounts the opinions of the philosophers, relying for his information mainly, if not entirely, on the doxography of Theophrastus. The information, however, is not always accurate. His main accusation against the Greeks is that they glorified the parts of the creation with dainty phrases, but were ignorant of the Creator of all things, who made them freely out of nothing according to His wisdom and foreknowledge.

[1] 2, 9, 1. [2] 2, 1, 1; 2, 5, 3. [3] 2, 14, 4. [4] 4, 33, 8. [5] *Bibl.* cod. 121.

4. The foregoing authors wrote in Greek; but there was also a group of Latin Apologists, Minucius Felix, Tertullian, Arnobius and Lactantius, of whom the most important is Tertullian.

(i) It is uncertain whether *Minucius Felix* wrote before or after Tertullian, but in any case his attitude towards Greek philosophy, as shown in his *Octavius*, was more favourable than Tertullian's. Arguing that God's existence can be known with certainty from the order of nature and the design involved in the organism, particularly in the human body, and that the unity of God can be inferred from the unity of the cosmic order, he affirmed that Greek philosophers, too, recognised these truths. Thus Aristotle recognised one Godhead and the Stoics had a doctrine of divine providence, while Plato speaks in almost Christian terms when he talks in the *Timaeus* of the Maker and Father of the universe.

(ii) *Tertullian*, however, speaks in a rather different way of Greek philosophy. Born about A.D. 160 of pagan parents and educated as a jurist (he practised in Rome), he became a Christian, only to fall into the Montanist heresy, a form of rigorous and excessive Puritanism. He was the first outstanding Christian Latin writer, and in his works his contempt for paganism and pagan learning is made clear and explicit. What have the philosopher and the Christian in common, the disciple of Greece, the friend of error, and the pupil of heaven, the foe of error and friend of truth?[1] Even Socrates' wisdom did not amount to much, since no one can really know God apart from Christ, nor Christ apart from the Holy Spirit. Moreover, Socrates was, self-confessedly, guided by a demon![2] As to Plato, he said that it was hard to find the Maker and Father of the universe, whereas the simplest Christian has already found Him.[3] Moreover, the Greek philosophers are the patriarchs of the heretics,[4] inasmuch as Valentinus borrowed from the Platonists, Marcion from the Stoics, while the philosophers themselves borrowed ideas from the Old Testament and then distorted them and claimed them as their own.[5]

However, in spite of the antithesis he makes between Christian wisdom and Greek philosophy, Tertullian himself developed philosophical themes and was influenced by the Stoics. He affirms that the existence of God is known with certainty from His works,[6] and also that from the uncreatedness of God we can argue to His perfection (*Imperfectum non potest esse, nisi quod factum est*);[7] but he makes the astounding statement that everything, including God, is corporeal, bodily. 'Everything which exists is a bodily existence *sui generis.* Nothing lacks bodily existence but that which is non-existent':[1] 'for who will deny that God is a body, although "God is a Spirit"? For Spirit has a bodily substance of its own kind, in its own form.'[2] Many writers have concluded from these statements that Tertullian maintained a materialistic doctrine and held God to be really a material being, just as the Stoics considered God to be material: some, however, have suggested that by 'body' Tertullian often meant simply substance and that when he attributes materiality to God, he is really simply attributing substantiality to God. On this explanation, when Tertullian says that God is a *corpus sui generis*, that He is *corpus* and yet *spiritus*, he would mean that God is a spiritual substance: his language would be at fault, while his thought would be acceptable. One is certainly not entitled to exclude this explanation as impossible, but it is true that Tertullian, speaking of the human soul, says that it must be a bodily substance since it can suffer.[3] However, he speaks ambiguously even on the nature of the soul, and in his *Apology*[4] he gives as a reason for the resurrection of the bodies of the wicked that 'the soul is not capable of suffering without the solid substance, that is, the flesh'. It is probably best to say, then, that, while Tertullian's language often implies materialism of a rather crass sort, his meaning *may* not have been that which his language would often imply. When he teaches that the soul of the infant is derived from the father's seed like a kind of sprout (*surculus, tradux*),[5] he would seem to be teaching a clearly materialistic doctrine; but this 'traducianism' was adopted partly for a theological reason, to explain the transmission of original sin, and some later writers who inclined to the same view, did so for the same theological reason, without apparently realising the materialistic implications of the doctrine. This does not show, of course, that Tertullian was *not* a materialist; but it should at least lead one to hesitate before forming the conviction that his general meaning always coincided with the words he used. His assertion of the freedom of the will and of the natural immortality of the soul will scarcely fit in, from the logical viewpoint, with sheer materialism; but that again would not justify one in flatly denying that he was a materialist, since he may have held a materialistic theory without realising the fact that some of the attributes he ascribed to the soul were incompatible with a fully materialist position.

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[1] *Apol.*, 46. [2] *De Anima*, 1. [3] *Apol.*, 46. [4] *De Anima*, 3.
[5] *Apol.*, 47. [6] *De Resurrect.*, 2–3. [7] *Herm.*, 28.

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[1] *De Carne Christi*, 11.

[2] *Adv. Prax.*, 7.

[3] *De Anima*, 7; cf. 8.

[4] 48.

[5] Cf. *De Anima*, 19.

One of the great services rendered by Tertullian to Christian thought was his development of theological and, to some extent, of philosophical terminology in the Latin language. Thus the technical use of the word *persona* is found for the first time in his writings: the divine Persons are distinct as *Personae*, but they are not different, divided, *substantiae*.[1] In his doctrine of the Word[2] he appeals explicitly to the Stoics, to Zeno and Cleanthes.[3] However, of Tertullian's theological developments and of his orthodoxy or unorthodoxy it is not our concern to speak.

(iii) In his *Adversus Gentes* (about 303) *Arnobius* makes some curious observations concerning the soul. Thus, although he affirms creationism, as against the Platonic doctrine of pre-existence, he makes the creating agent a being inferior to God, and he also asserts the *gratuitous* character of the soul's immortality, denying a natural immortality. One motive was evidently that of using the gratuitous character of immortality as an argument for becoming a Christian and leading a moral life. Again, while combating the Platonic theory of reminiscence, he asserts the experiential origin of all our ideas with one exception, the idea of God. He depicts a child brought up in solitude, silence and ignorance throughout his youth and declares that, as a result, he would know nothing: he would certainly not have any knowledge by 'reminiscence'. Plato's proof for his doctrine in the *Meno* is not cogent.[4]

(iv) The origin of the soul by God's direct creation, in opposition to any form of traducianism, was clearly affirmed by *Lactantius* (about 250 to about 325) in his *De opificio Dei*.[5]

5. Gnosticism, as combated by St. Irenaeus and Hippolytus, was, so far as it can reasonably be connected with Christianity, an heretical speculative system, or, more accurately, set of systems, which, in addition to Oriental and Christian elements, incorporated elements of Hellenic thought. One of its effects, therefore, was to arouse a determined opposition to Hellenic philosophy on the part of those Christian writers who exaggerated the connections between Gnosticism and Greek philosophy, which they considered to be the seed-ground of heresy; but another effect was to contribute to the effort to construct a non-heretical 'gnosis', a Christian

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[1] *Adv. Prax.*, 12. [2] *Sermo, Ratio.* [3] *Apol.*, 21. [4] 2, 20 ff. [5] 19.

theologico-philosophical system. This effort was characteristic of the Catechetical School at Alexandria, of which the two most famous names are Clement and Origen.

(i) *Titus Flavius Clemens* (*Clement of Alexandria*) was born about 150, perhaps at Athens, came to Alexandria in 202 or 203 and died there about 219. Animated by the attitude which was later summed up in the formula, *Credo, ut intelligam,* he sought to develop the systematic presentation of the Christian wisdom in a true, as opposed to a false *gnosis*. In the process he followed the spirit of Justin Martyr's treatment of the Greek philosophers, looking on their work rather as a preparation for Christianity, an education of the Hellenic world for the revealed religion, than as a folly and delusion. The divine Logos has always illumined souls; but whereas the Jews were enlightened by Moses and the Prophets, the Greeks had their wise men, their philosophers, so that philosophy was to the Greeks what the Law was to the Hebrews.[1] It is true that Clement thought, following Justin again, that the Greeks borrowed from the Old Testament and distorted, from vainglorious motives, what they borrowed; but he was also firmly convinced that the light of the Logos enabled the Greek philosophers to attain many truths, and that philosophy is in reality simply that body of truths which are not the prerogative of any one Greek School but are found, in different measure and degree, in different Schools, though Plato was indeed the greatest of all the philosophers.[2]

But not only was philosophy a preparation for Christianity: it is also an aid in understanding Christianity. Indeed, the person who merely believes and makes no effort to understand is like a child in comparison with a man: blind faith, passive acceptance, is not the ideal, though science, speculation, reasoning, cannot be true if they do not harmonise with revelation. In other words, Clement of Alexandria, as the first Christian man of learning, wanted to see Christianity in its relation to philosophy and to use the speculative reason in the systematisation and development of theology. Incidentally it is interesting to note that he rejects any real *positive* knowledge of God: we know in truth only what God is not, for example, that He is not a genus, not a species, that He is beyond anything of which we have had experience or which we can conceive. We are justified in predicating perfections of God, but at the same time we must remember that all names we apply to God are inadequate—and so, in another sense, inapplicable. In dependence, then, on some remarks of Plato in the *Republic* concerning the Good and in dependence on Philo Clement asserted the *via negativa*, so dear to the mystics, which reached its classical expression in the writings of the Pseudo-Dionysius.

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[1] *Strom.*, 1, 5.

[2] *Paedagogus*, 3, 11.

(ii) *Origen*, foremost member of the Catechetical School at Alexandria, was born in A.D. 185 or 186. He studied the works of Greek philosophers and is said to have attended the lectures of Ammonius Saccas, teacher of Plotinus. He had to abandon the headship of the Alexandrian School because of a synodical process (231 and 232) directed against certain features of his doctrine and also against his ordination (he had, it was said, been ordained priest in Palestine in spite of his act of self-mutilation), and subsequently founded a school at Caesarea in Palestine, where St. Gregory Thaumaturge was one of his pupils. He died in 254 or 255, his death being the consequence of the torture he had had to endure in the persecution of Decius.

Origen was the most prolific and learned of all Christian writers before the Council of Nicaea, and there is no doubt that he had every intention of being and remaining an orthodox Christian; but his desire to reconcile the Platonic philosophy with Christianity and his enthusiasm for the allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures led him into some heterodox opinions. Thus, under the influence of Platonism or rather of neo-Platonism, he held that God, who is purely spiritual, the μονάς or ἑνάς[1] and who transcends truth and reason, essence and being (in his book against the pagan philosopher Celsus[2] he says, following the mind of Plato, that God is ἐπέκεινα νοῦ καὶ οὐσίας), created the world from eternity and by a necessity of His Nature. God, who is goodness, could never have been 'inactive', since goodness always tends to self-communication, self-diffusion. Moreover, if God had created the world in time, if there was ever a 'time' when the world was not, God's immutability would be impaired, which is an impossibility.[3] Both these reasons are conceived in dependence on neo-Platonism. God is indeed the creator of matter and is thus Creator in the strict and Christian sense,[4] but there is an infinity of worlds, one succeeding the other and all different from one another.[5] As evil is privation, and not something positive, God cannot be accused of being the author of evil.[6] The Logos or Word is the exemplar of creation, the ἰδέα ἰδεῶν,[1] and by the Logos all things are created, the Logos acting as mediator of God and creatures.[2] The final procession within the Godhead is the Holy Spirit, and immediately below the Holy Spirit are the created spirits, who, through the power of the Holy Spirit, are lifted up to become sons of God, in union with the Son, and are finally participants in the divine life of the Father.[3]

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[1] *De principiis*, 1, 1, 6.
[2] 7, 38.
[3] *De principiis*, 1, 2, 10; 3, 4, 3.
[4] *Ibid.*, 2, 1, 4.
[5] *Ibid.*, 3, 5, 3; 2, 3, 4–5.
[6] *In Joann.*, 2, 7.

Souls were created by God exactly like to one another in quality, but sin in a state of pre-existence led to their being clothed with bodies, and the qualitative difference between souls is thus due to their behaviour before their entry into this world. They enjoy freedom of will on earth, but their acts depend not merely on their free choice but also on the grace of God, which is apportioned according to their conduct in the pre-embodied state. Nevertheless, all souls, and even the devil and demons, too, will at length, through purificatory suffering, arrive at union with God. This is the doctrine of the restoration of all things (ἐπανόρθωσις, ἀποκατάστασις πάντων) whereby all things will return to their ultimate principle and God will be all in all.[4] This involves, of course, a denial of the orthodox doctrine of hell.

From even the little which has been said concerning Origen's thought it should be clear that he attempted a fusion of Christian doctrine with Platonic and neo-Platonic philosophy. The Son and the Holy Ghost in the Blessed Trinity, though within the Godhead, are spoken of in a manner which indicates the influence of the emanationism of Philonic and neo-Platonic thought. The theory of the Logos as 'Idea of ideas' and that of eternal and necessary creation come from the same source, while the theory of pre-existence is Platonic. Of course, the philosophical ideas which Origen adopted were incorporated by him in a Christian setting and framework, so that he may rightly be considered the first great synthetic thinker of Christianity, but although he attached them to Scriptural passages freely interpreted, his enthusiasm for Greek thought led him sometimes into heterodoxy.

6. The Greek Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries were occupied mainly with theological questions. Thus *St. Athanasius*, who died in 373, was the great foe of Arianism; *St. Gregory Nazianzen*, who died in 390 and was known as the Theologian, is particularly remarkable for his work on Trinitarian and Christological

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[1] *Contra Celsum*, 6, 64.
[2] *De principiis*, 2, 6, 1.
[3] *Ibid.*, 6, 1–3.
[4] Cf. *ibid.*, 3, 6, 1 ff.; 1, 6, 3.

theology; *St. John Chrysostom* (died 406) is celebrated as one of the greatest orators of the Church and for his work on the Scriptures. In treating of dogmas like those of the Blessed Trinity and the Hypostatic Union the Fathers naturally made use of philosophical terms and expressions; but their application of reasoning in theology does not make them philosophers in the strict sense and we must pass them over here. One may point out, however, that *St. Basil* (died 379) studied in the University of Athens, together with St. Gregory Nazianzen, and that in his *Ad Adolescentes* he recommends a study of the Greek poets, orators, historians and philosophers, though a selection should be made from their writings which would exclude immoral passages: Greek literature and learning are a potent instrument of education, but moral education is more important than literary and philosophic formation. (St. Basil himself in his descriptions of animals apparently depended almost entirely on the relevant works of Aristotle.)

But, though we cannot consider here the theological speculations of the Greek Fathers, something must be said of two eminent figures of the period, the historian Eusebius and St. Gregory of Nyssa.

(i) *Eusebius of Caesarea* was born in Palestine about 265, became Bishop of Caesarea, his birthplace, in 313, and died there in 339 or 340. Best known as a great Church historian, he is also of importance for his Christian apologetic, and under this heading comes his attitude towards Greek philosophy, since, in general, he regarded Greek philosophy, especially Platonism, as a preparation of the heathen world for Christianity, though he was fully alive to the errors of Greek philosophers and to the contradictions between the many philosophical Schools. Yet, though he speaks sharply on occasion, his general attitude is sympathetic and appreciative, an attitude which comes out most clearly in his *Praeparatio evangelica* in fifteen books. It is greatly to be regretted that we have not got the twenty-five books of the work which Eusebius wrote in answer to Porphyry's attack on Christianity, as his reply to the eminent neo-Platonist and pupil of Plotinus would doubtless throw much light on his philosophical ideas; but the *Praeparatio evangelica* is sufficient to show, not only that Eusebius shared the general outlook of Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria and Origen, but also that he had read widely in the literature of the Greeks. He was in fact an extremely learned man, and his work is one of the sources for our knowledge of the philosophy of those thinkers whose works have perished.

One would probably only expect, given the attitude of his predecessors, to find Eusebius especially appreciative of Plato: in fact he devotes to Platonism three books (11–13) of the *Praeparatio*. Clement had spoken of Plato as Moses writing in Greek, and Eusebius, agreeing with Clement, considered that Plato and Moses were in agreement,[1] that Plato may be called a prophet of the economy of salvation.[2] Like Clement and Origen, and like Philo also, Eusebius thought that Plato had borrowed the truths he exposes from the Old Testament;[3] but at the same time he is willing to admit the possibility of Plato having discovered the truth for himself or of his having been enlightened by God.[4] In any case, not only does Plato agree with the sacred literature of the Hebrews in his idea of God, but he also suggests, in his Letters, the idea of the Blessed Trinity. On this point Eusebius is, of course, interpreting Plato in a neo-Platonic sense and is referring to the three principles of the One or Good, the *Nous* or Mind, and the World-Soul.[5] The Ideas are the ideas of God, of the Logos, the exemplar patterns of creation, and the picture of creation in the *Timaeus* is similar to that contained in Genesis.[6] Again, Plato agrees with the Scriptures in his doctrine of immortality,[7] while the moral teaching of the *Phaedrus* reminds Eusebius of St. Paul.[8] Even Plato's political ideal found its realisation in the Jewish theocracy.[9]

Nevertheless, it remains true that Plato did not affirm these truths without an admixture of error.[10] His doctrine of God and of creation is contaminated by his doctrine of emanation and by his acceptance of the eternity of matter, his doctrine of the soul and of immortality by his theory of pre-existence and of reincarnation, and so on. Thus Plato, even if he was a 'prophet', was no more than a prophet: he did not himself enter into the promised land of truth, though he approached near to it: it is Christianity alone which is the true philosophy. Moreover, Plato's philosophy was highly intellectualist, caviar for the multitude, whereas Christianity is for all, so that men and women, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, can be 'philosophers'.

To discuss Eusebius's interpretation of Plato would be out of place here: it is sufficient to note that he, in common with most

[1] 11, 28. [2] 13,13. [3] 10, 1; 10, 8; 10, 14. [4] 11, 8. [5] 11, 16; 11, 20.
[6] 11, 23; 11, 29; 11, 31. [7] 11, 27. [8] 12, 27. [9] 13, 12; 12, 16. [10] 13, 19.

other Christian Greek writers, gives the palm to Plato among Hellenic thinkers, and that, in common with all the early Christian writers, he makes no real distinction between theology in a strict sense and philosophy in a strict sense. There is one wisdom, which is found adequately and completely only in Christianity: Greek thinkers attained to true philosophy or wisdom in so far as they anticipated Christianity. Among those who anticipated the true philosophy Plato is the most outstanding; but even he stood only on the threshold of truth. Naturally the notion that Plato and other Hellenic thinkers borrowed from the Old Testament, although itself partly a consequence of their understanding of 'philosophy', helped also to confirm Christian writers like Eusebius in their very wide interpretation of 'philosophy', as including not only the result of human speculation but also the data of revelation. In fact, in spite of his very favourable judgement on Plato, the logical conclusion from Eusebius's and others' conviction that the Greek philosophers borrowed from the Old Testament would inevitably be that human speculation unaided by direct illumination from God is not of any great avail in the attainment of truth. For what are the errors with which even Plato contaminated the truth but the result of human speculation? If you say that the truth contained in Greek philosophy came from the Old Testament, that is to say, from revelation, you can hardly avoid the conclusion that the errors in Greek philosophy came from human speculation, with a consequently unfavourable judgement as to the power of that speculation. This attitude was very common among the Fathers and, in the Middle Ages, it was to be clearly expressed by St. Bonaventure in the thirteenth century, though it was not to be the view that ultimately prevailed in Scholasticism, the view of St. Thomas Aquinas and of Duns Scotus.

(ii) One of the most learned of the Greek Fathers and one of the most interesting from the philosophic standpoint was the brother of St. Basil, *St. Gregory of Nyssa*, who was born in Caesarea (in Cappadocia, not Palestine) about A.D. 335 and, after having been a teacher of rhetoric, became Bishop of Nyssa, dying about the year 395.

Gregory of Nyssa realised clearly that the data of revelation are accepted on faith and are not the result of a logical process of reasoning, that the mysteries of faith are not philosophical and scientific conclusions: if they were, then supernatural faith, as exercised by Christians, and Hellenic philosophising would be indistinguishable. On the other hand, the Faith has a rational basis, in that, logically speaking, the acceptance of mysteries on authority presupposes the ascertainability by natural reasoning of certain preliminary truths, especially the existence of God, which are capable of philosophic demonstration. Accordingly, though the superiority of faith must be maintained, it is only right to invoke the aid of philosophy. Ethics, natural philosophy, logic, mathematics, are not only ornaments in the temple of truth but may also contribute to the life of wisdom and virtue: they are, therefore, not to be despised or rejected,[1] though divine revelation must be accepted as a touchstone and criterion of truth since human reasoning must be judged by the word of God, not the word of God by human reasoning.[2] Again, it is right to employ human speculation and human reasoning in regard to dogma; but the conclusions will not be valid unless they agree with the Scriptures.[3]

The cosmic order proves the existence of God, and from the necessary perfection of God we can argue to His unity, that there is one God. Gregory went on to attempt to give reasons for the Trinity of Persons in the one Godhead.[4] For instance, God must have a Logos, a word, a reason. He cannot be less than man, who also has a reason, a word. But the divine Logos cannot be something of fleeting duration. it must be eternal, just as it must be living. The internal word in man is a fleeting accident, but in God there can be no such thing: the Logos is one in Nature with the Father, for there is but one God, the distinction between the Logos and the Father, the Word and the Speaker, being a distinction of relation. To enter into Gregory's Trinitarian doctrine as such is not our concern here; but the fact that he tries, in some sense, to 'prove' the doctrine is of interest, since it afforded a precedent for the later attempts of St. Anselm and Richard of St. Victor to deduce the Trinity, to prove it *rationibus necessariis*.

Obviously, however, St. Gregory's intention, like that of St. Anselm, was to render the mystery more intelligible by the application of dialectic, not to 'rationalise' the mystery in the sense of departing from dogmatic orthodoxy. Similarly, his theory that the word 'man' is primarily applicable to the universal and only secondarily to the individual man was an attempt to render the mystery more intelligible, the application of the illustration being this, that the word 'God' refers primarily to the divine essence, which is one, and only secondarily to the divine Persons, who are Three, so that the Christian cannot be rightly accused of tritheism. But, though the illustration was introduced to defeat the charge of tritheism and make the mystery more intelligible, it was an unfortunate illustration, since it implied a hyperrealist view of universals.

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[1] *De Vita Moysis*; *P.G.*, 44, 336 DG, 360 BC.

[2] Cf. *De anima et resurrectione*; *P.G.*, 46, 49 C.

[3] Cf. *Contra Eunom.*; *P.G.*, 45, 341 B.

[4] Cf. *Oratio Catechetica*; *P.G.*, 45.

St. Gregory's 'Platonism' in regard to universals comes out clearly in his *De hominis opificio*, where he distinguishes the heavenly man, the ideal man, the universal, from the earthly man, the object of experience. The former, the ideal man or rather ideal human being, exists only in the divine idea and is without sexual determination, being neither male nor female: the latter, the human being of experience, is an expression of the ideal and is sexually determined, the ideal being, as it were, 'splintered' or partially expressed in many single individuals. Thus, according to Gregory, individual creatures proceed by creation, not by emanation, from the ideal in the divine Logos. This theory clearly goes back to neo-Platonism and to Philonism, and it was adopted by the first outstanding philosopher of the Middle Ages, John Scotus Eriugena, who was much influenced by the writings of St. Gregory of Nyssa. It must be remembered, however, that Gregory never meant to imply that there was ever an historic ideal man, sexually undetermined; God's idea of man will be realised only eschatologically, when (according to St. Paul's words as interpreted by Gregory) there will be neither male nor female, since in heaven there will be no marriage

God created the world out of an abundance of goodness and love, in order that there might be creatures who could participate in the divine goodness; but though God is goodness and created the world out of goodness, He did not create the world from necessity, but freely. A share in this freedom God has given to man, and God respects this freedom, permitting man to choose evil if he so wills. Evil is the result of man's free choice, God is not responsible. It is true that God foresaw evil and that He permits it, but in spite of this foreknowledge He created man, for He knew also that He would in the end bring all men to Himself. Gregory thus accepted the Origenist theory of the 'restoration of all things': every human being, even Satan and the fallen angels, will at length turn to God, at least through the purifying sufferings of the hereafter. In a sense, then, every human being will at length return to the Ideal and be therein contained, though Gregory certainly accepted individual immortality. This notion of the return of all things to God, to the Principle from whom they sprang, and of the attainment of a state in which God is 'all in all', was also borrowed by John Scotus Eriugena from St. Gregory, and in interpreting the somewhat ambiguous language of John Scotus one should at least bear in mind the thought of St. Gregory, even while admitting the possibility of John Scotus having attached a different meaning to similar words.

But, though St. Gregory of Nyssa shared Origen's theory of the restoration of all things, he did not share Origen's acceptance of the Platonic notion of pre-existence, and in the *De hominis opificio*[1] he says that the author of the *De Principiis* was led astray by Hellenic theories. The soul, which is not confined to any one portion of the body, is 'a created essence (οὐσία γεννητή), a living essence, intellectual, with an organic and sensitive body, an essence that has the power of giving life and perceiving sensible objects, so long as the bodily instruments endure'.[2] As simple and uncompounded (ἁπλῆν καὶ ἀσύνθετον), the soul has the power of surviving the body,[3] with which, however, it will in the end be reunited. The soul is thus spiritual and incorporeal; but how is it different from body, for body, i.e. a concrete material object, is composed, according to Gregory, of qualities which in themselves are incorporeal? In the *De hominis opificio*[4] he says that the union of qualities like colour, solidity, quantity, weight, results in body, whereas their dissolution spells the perishing of the body. In the preceding chapter he has proposed a dilemma: either material things proceed from God, in which case God, as their Source, would contain matter in Himself, would be material, or, if God is not material, then material things do not proceed from Him and matter is eternal. Gregory, however, rejects both the materiality of God and dualism, and the natural conclusion of this would be that the qualities of which bodily things are composed are not material. It is true that, while asserting creation *ex nihilo*, Gregory asserts that we cannot comprehend how God creates the qualities out of nothing; but it is reasonable to suppose that in his eyes the qualities which form body are not themselves bodies: in fact they could not be, since there is no concrete body at all except in and through their *union*. Presumably he was influenced by Plato's doctrine of the qualities in the *Timaeus*. How, then, are they not spiritual? And, if they are spiritual, how does soul differ essentially from body? The reply would doubtless be that, though the qualities unite to *form* body and cannot, considered in abstraction, be called 'bodies', yet they have an essential relation to matter, since it is their function to form matter. An analogous difficulty recurs in regard to the Aristotelian-Thomistic doctrine of matter and form. Prime matter is not in itself body, but it is one of the principles of body: how, then, considered in *itself*, does it differ from the immaterial and spiritual? Thomistic philosophers answer that prime matter never *exists* by itself alone and that it has an exigency for quantity, an essential ordination to concrete body, and presumably Gregory of Nyssa would have to say something of the same sort in regard to his primary qualities. In passing, one may note that similar difficulties might be raised in regard to certain modern theories concerning the constitution of matter. Plato, one might reasonably suppose, would welcome these theories, were he alive to-day, and it is not improbable that St. Gregory of Nyssa would follow suit.

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[1] *P.G.*, 44, 229ff. [2] *De anima et res.*; *P.G.* 46, 29. [3] *Ibid.*, 44. [4] Ch. 24.

From what has been said it is clear that Gregory of Nyssa was much influenced by Platonism, neo-Platonism, and the writings of Philo (he speaks, for example, of the ὁμοίωσις θεῷ as being the purpose of man, of the 'flight of the alone to the Alone', of justice-in-itself, of *eros* and the ascent to the ideal Beauty); but it must be emphasised that, although Gregory undeniably employed Plotinian themes and expressions, as also to a less extent those of Philo, he did not by any means always understand them in a Plotinian or Philonic sense. On the contrary, he utilised expressions of Plotinus or Plato to expose and state Christian doctrines. For example, the 'likeness to God' is the work of grace, a development under the activity of God, with man's free co-operation, of the image or εἰκών of God implanted in the soul at baptism. Again, justice-in-itself is not an abstract virtue nor even an idea in *Nous*; it is the Logos indwelling in the soul, the effect of this inhabitation being the participated virtue. This Logos, moreover, is not the *Nous* of Plotinus, nor is it the Logos of Philo: it is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, and between God and creatures there is no intermediary procession of subordinate hypostases.

Finally, it is noteworthy that St. Gregory of Nyssa was the first real founder of systematic mystical theology. Here again he utilised Plotinian and Philonic themes, but he employed them in a Christian sense and within a Christocentric framework of thought. Naturally speaking man's mind is fitted to know sensible objects, and contemplating these objects the mind can come to know something of God and His attributes (symbolic theology, which is partly equivalent to natural theology in the modern sense). On the other hand, though man by nature has as his proper object of knowledge sensible things, these things are not fully real, they are mirage and illusion except as symbols or manifestations of immaterial reality, that reality towards which man is spiritually drawn. The consequent tension in the soul leads to a state of ἀνελπιστία or 'despair', which is the birth of mysticism, since the soul, drawn by God, leaves its natural object of knowledge, without, however, being able to see the God to whom it is drawn by love: it enters into the darkness, what the mediaeval treatise calls the Cloud of Unknowing. (To this stage corresponds the negative theology, which so influenced the Pseudo-Dionysius.) In the soul's advance there are, as it were, two movements, that of the indwelling of the Triune God and that of the soul's reaching out beyond itself, culminating in 'ecstasy'. Origen had interpreted the Philonic ecstasy intellectually, as any other form of 'ecstasy' was then suspect, owing to Montanist extravagances; but Gregory set ecstasy at the summit of the soul's endeavour, interpreting it first and foremost as ecstatic *love.*

The 'darkness' which envelops God is due primarily to the utter transcendence of the divine essence, and Gregory drew the conclusion that even in heaven the soul is always pressing forward, drawn by love, to penetrate further into God. A static condition would mean either satiety or death: spiritual life demands constant progress and the nature of the divine transcendence involves the same progress, since the human mind can never comprehend God. In a sense, then, the 'divine darkness' *always* persists, and it is true to say that Gregory gave to this knowledge in darkness a priority over intellectual knowledge, not because he despised the human intellect but because he realised the transcendence of God.

St. Gregory's scheme of the soul's ascent certainly bears some resemblance to that of Plotinus; but at the same time it is thoroughly Christocentric. The advance of the soul is the work of the Divine Logos, Christ. Moreover, his ideal is not that of a solitary union with God, but rather of a realisation of the *Pleroma* of Christ: the advance of one soul brings grace and blessing to others and the indwelling of God in the individual affects the whole Body. His mysticism is also thoroughly sacramental in character: the εἰκών is restored by Baptism, union with God is fostered by the Eucharist. In fine, the writings of St. Gregory of Nyssa are the source from which not only the Pseudo-Dionysius and mystics down to St. John of the Cross drew, directly or indirectly, much of their inspiration; but they are also the fountain-head of those Christian philosophical systems which trace out the soul's advance through different stages of knowledge and love up to the mystical life and the Beatific Vision. If a purely spiritual writer like St. John of the Cross stands in the line that goes back to Gregory, so does the mystical philosopher St. Bonaventure.

7. Of the Latin Fathers the greatest, without a shadow of doubt, is St. Augustine of Hippo; but, because of the importance of his thought for the Middle Ages, I shall consider his philosophy separately and rather more at length. In this section it is sufficient to mention very briefly *St. Ambrose* (about 333 to 397), Bishop of Milan.

St. Ambrose shared the typically Roman attitude towards philosophy, i.e. an interest in practical and ethical matters, coupled with little facility or taste for metaphysical speculation. In his dogmatic and Scriptural work he depended mainly on the Greek Fathers; but in ethics he was influenced by Cicero, and in his *De officiis ministrorum*, composed about 391 and addressed to the clergy of Milan, he provided a Christian counterpart to the *De officiis* of the great Roman orator. In his book the Saint follows Cicero closely in his divisions and treatment of the virtues, but the whole treatment is naturally infused with the Christian ethos, and the Stoic ideal of happiness, found in the possession of virtue, is complemented by the final ideal of eternal happiness in God. It is not that St. Ambrose makes any particularly new contributions to Christian ethic: the importance of his work lies rather in its influence on succeeding thought, in the use made of it by later writers on ethics.

8. The Greek Fathers, as has been seen, were mainly influenced by the Platonic tradition; but one of the factors which helped to prepare the way for the favourable reception eventually accorded to Aristotelianism in the Latin West was the work of the last of the Greek Fathers, St. John Damascene.

St. John Damascene, who died probably at the end of the year

A.D. 749, was not only a resolute opponent of the 'Iconoclasts' but also a great systematiser in the field of theology, so that he can be looked on as the Scholastic of the Orient. He explicitly says that he does not intend to give new and personal opinions, but to preserve and hand on the thoughts of holy and learned men, so that it would be useless to seek in his writings for novelty of content; yet in his systematic and ordered presentation of the ideas of his predecessors a certain originality may be ascribed to him. His chief work is the *Fount of Wisdom*, in the first part of which he gives a sketch of the Aristotelian logic and ontology, though he draws on other writers besides Aristotle, e.g. Porphyry. In this first part, the *Dialectica*, he makes clear his opinion that philosophy and profane science are the instruments or handmaids of theology, adopting the view of Clement of Alexandria and the two Gregories, a view which goes back to Philo the Alexandrian Jew and was often repeated in the Middle Ages.[1] In the second part of his great work he gives a history of heresies, using material supplied by former writers, and in the third part, the *De Fide Orthodoxa*, he gives, in four books, an orderly treatment of orthodox Patristic theology. This third part was translated into Latin by Burgundius of Pisa in 1151 and was used by, among others, Peter Lombard, St. Albert the Great and St. Thomas Aquinas. In the East, St. John Damascene enjoys almost as much esteem as St. Thomas Aquinas in the West.

9. From even the brief survey given above it is evident that one would look in vain for a systematic philosophical synthesis in the works of any of the Greek Fathers or indeed in any of the Latin Fathers save Augustine. The Greek Fathers, making no very clear distinction between the provinces of philosophy and theology, regarded Christianity as the one true wisdom or 'philosophy'. Hellenic philosophy they tended to regard as a propaedeutic to Christianity, so that their main interest in treating of it was to point out the anticipation of Christian truth which they saw therein contained and the aberrations from truth which were also clear to them. The former they frequently attributed to borrowing from the Old Testament, the latter to the weakness of human speculation and to the perverse desire of originality, the vainglory, of the philosophers themselves. When they adopted ideas from Hellenic philosophy they generally accepted them because they thought that they would help in the exposition and presentation

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[1] *P.G.*, 94, 532 AB.

of the Christian wisdom, not in order to incorporate them in a philosophic system in the strict sense.

Nevertheless, there are, as we have seen, philosophic elements in the writings of the Fathers. For instance, they make use of rational arguments for God's existence, particularly the argument from order and design; they speculate about the origin and nature of the soul; St. Gregory of Nyssa even had some ideas which fall under the heading of philosophy of nature or cosmology. Still, since their arguments, the arguments for God's existence, for example, are not really worked out in any developed, systematic and strict manner, it may appear out of place to have considered them at all. I think, however, that this would be a mistake, as even a brief treatment of Patristic thought is sufficient to bring out one point which may tend to be forgotten by those who know little of Christian philosophic thought. Owing to the fact that St. Thomas Aquinas, who has in recent times been accorded a peculiar status among Catholic philosophers, adopted a great deal of the Aristotelian system, and owing to the fact that early thinkers of the 'modern era', e.g. Descartes and Francis Bacon, fulminate against Scholastic Aristotelianism, it is sometimes taken for granted that Christian philosophy, or at least Catholic philosophy, means Aristotelianism and nothing else. Yet, leaving out of account for the present later centuries, a survey of Patristic thought is sufficient to show that Plato, and not Aristotle, was the Greek thinker who won the greatest esteem from the Fathers of the Church. This may have been due in great part to the fact that neo-Platonism was the dominant and vigorous contemporary philosophy and to the fact that the Fathers not only saw Plato more or less in the light of neo-Platonic interpretation and development but also knew comparatively little about Aristotle, in most cases at least; but it also remains true that, whatever may have been the cause or causes, the Fathers tended to see in Plato a forerunner of Christianity and that the philosophic elements they adopted were adopted, for the most part, from the Platonic tradition. If one adds to this the further consideration that Patristic thought, especially that of Augustine, profoundly influenced, not only the early Middle Ages, not only such eminent thinkers as St. Anselm and St. Bonaventure, but even St. Thomas Aquinas himself, it will be seen that, from the historical viewpoint at least, some knowledge of Patristic thought is both desirable and valuable.

CHAPTER III

ST. AUGUSTINE—I

Life and writings—St. Augustine and Philosophy.

1. In Latin Christendom the name of Augustine stands out as that of the greatest of the Fathers both from a literary and from a theological standpoint, a name that dominated Western thought until the thirteenth century and which can never lose its lustre, notwithstanding the Aristotelianism of St. Thomas Aquinas and his School, especially as this Aristotelianism was very far from disregarding and still further from belittling the great African Doctor. Indeed, in order to understand the currents of thought in the Middle Ages, a knowledge of Augustinianism is essential. In the present work the thought of Augustine cannot be treated with the fullness which it merits, but treated it must be, even if summarily.

Born at Tagaste in the Province of Numidia on November 13th, A.D. 354, Augustine came of a pagan father, Patricius, and a Christian mother, St. Monica. His mother brought up her child as a Christian, but Augustine's baptism was deferred, in accordance with a common, if undesirable, custom of the time.[1] The child learnt the rudiments of Latin and arithmetic from a schoolmaster of Tagaste, but play, at which he wished always to be the winner, was more attractive to him than study, and Greek, which he began after a time, he hated, though he was attracted by the Homeric poems considered as a story. That Augustine knew practically no Greek is untrue; but he never learned to read the language with ease.

In about A.D. 365 Augustine went to the town of Madaura, where he laid the foundation of his knowledge of Latin literature and grammar. Madaura was still largely a pagan place, and the effect of the general atmosphere and of his study of the Latin classics was evidently to detach the boy from the faith of his mother, a detachment which his year of idleness at Tagaste (369–70) did nothing to mitigate. In 370, the year in which his father died after having become a Catholic, Augustine began the study of rhetoric at Carthage, the largest city he had yet seen. The licentious ways of the great port and centre of government, the sight of the obscene rites connected with cults imported from the East, combined with the fact that Augustine, the southerner, was already a man, with passions alive and vehement, led to his practical break with the moral ideals of Christianity and before long he took a mistress, with whom he lived for over ten years and by whom he had a son in his second year at Carthage. In spite, however, of his irregular life Augustine was a very successful student of rhetoric and by no means neglected his studies.

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[1] *Conf.*, 1, 11, 17.

It was soon after reading the *Hortensius* of Cicero, which turned the youth's mind to the search for truth, that Augustine accepted the teaching of the Manichaeans,[1] which seemed to offer him a rational presentation of truth, in distinction from the barbaric ideas and illogical doctrines of Christianity. Thus Christians maintained that God created the whole world and that God is good: how, then, could they explain the existence of evil and suffering? The Manichaeans, however, maintained a dualistic theory, according to which there are two ultimate principles, a good principle, that of light, God or Ormuzd, and an evil principle, that of darkness, Ahriman. These principles are both eternal and their strife is eternal, a strife reflected in the world which is the production of the two principles in mutual conflict. In man the soul, composed of light, is the work of the good principle, while the body, composed of grosser matter, is the work of the evil principle. This system commended itself in Augustine's eyes because it seemed to explain the problem of evil and because of its fundamental materialism, for he could not yet conceive how there could be an immaterial reality, imperceptible to the senses. Conscious of his own passions and sensual desires, he felt that he could now attribute them to an evil cause outside himself. Moreover, although the Manichaeans condemned sexual intercourse and the eating of flesh-meat and prescribed ascetic practices such as fasting, these practices obliged only the elect, not the 'hearers', to which level Augustine belonged.

Augustine, now detached from Christianity both morally and intellectually, returned to Tagaste in 374 and there taught grammar and Latin literature for a year, after which he opened a school of rhetoric at Carthage in the autumn of 374. He lived with his mistress and their child, Adeodatus, and it was during this period that he won a prize for poetry (a dramatic piece, not now extant) and published his first prose work, *De pulchro et apto*. The sojourn at Carthage lasted until 383 and it was shortly before Augustine's departure for Rome that an event of some importance occurred. Augustine had been troubled by difficulties and problems which the Manichaeans could not answer; for example, the problem of the source of certitude in human thought, the reason why the two principles were in eternal conflict, etc. It happened that a noted Manichaean bishop, Faustus by name, came to Carthage, and Augustine resolved to seek from him a satisfactory solution of his difficulties; but, though he found Faustus agreeable and friendly, he did not find in his words the intellectual satisfaction which he sought. It was, therefore, with his faith in Manichaeism already somewhat shaken that he set out for Rome. He made the journey partly because the students at Carthage were ill-mannered and difficult to control, whereas he had heard good reports of the students' behaviour at Rome, partly because he hoped for greater success in his career in the imperial metropolis. Arrived at Rome, Augustine opened a school in rhetoric, but, though the students were well behaved in class, they had the inconvenient habit of changing their school just before the payment of fees was due. He accordingly sought for and obtained a position at Milan as municipal professor of rhetoric in 384; but he did not leave Rome without having lost most of his belief in Manichaeanism and having been consequently attracted towards Academic scepticism, though he retained a nominal adherence to Manichaeanism and still accepted some of the Manichaean positions, for example their materialism.

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[1] Manichaeanism, founded by Manes or Mani in the third century, originated in Persia and was a mixture of Persian and Christian elements.

At Milan, Augustine came to think a little better of Christianity owing to the sermons on the Scriptures delivered by St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan; but though he was ready to become a catechumen again, he was not yet convinced of the truth of Christianity. Moreover, his passions were still too strong for him. His mother wished him to marry a certain girl, hoping that marriage would help to reform his life; but, being unable to wait the necessary time for the girl in question, he took another mistress in place of the mother of Adeodatus, from whom he had parted in sorrow in view of the proposed marriage. At this time Augustine read certain 'Platonic treatises in the Latin translation of Victorinus, these treatises being most probably the *Enneads* of Plotinus. The effect of neo-Platonism was to free him from the shackles of materialism and to facilitate his acceptance of the idea of immaterial reality. In addition, the Plotinian conception of evil as privation rather than as something positive showed him how the problem of evil could be met without having to have recourse to the dualism of the Manichaeans. In other words, the function of neo-Platonism at this period was to render it possible for Augustine to see the reasonableness of Christianity, and he began to read the New Testament again, particularly the writings of St. Paul. If neo-Platonism suggested to him the idea of the contemplation of spiritual things, of wisdom in the intellectual sense, the New Testament showed him that it was also necessary to lead a life in accordance with wisdom.

These impressions were confirmed by his meeting with two men, Simplicianus and Pontitianus. The former, an old priest, gave Augustine an account of the conversion of Victorinus, the neo-Platonist, to Christianity, with the result that the young man 'burned with the desire to do likewise',[1] while the latter spoke of the life of St. Anthony of Egypt, which made Augustine disgusted with his own moral state.[2] There followed that intense moral struggle, which culminated in the famous scene enacted in the garden of his house, when Augustine hearing a child's voice over a wall crying repeatedly the refrain *Tolle lege! Tolle lege!* opened the New Testament at random and lighted on the words of St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans,[3] which sealed his moral conversion.[4] It is perfectly clear that the conversion which then took place was a moral conversion, a conversion of will, a conversion which followed the intellectual conversion. His reading of neo-Platonic works was an instrument in the intellectual conversion of Augustine, while his moral conversion, from the human viewpoint, was prepared by the sermons of Ambrose and the words of Simplicianus and Pontitianus, and confirmed and sealed by the New Testament. The agony of his second or moral conversion was intensified by the fact that he already knew what he ought to do, though on the other hand he felt himself without the power to accomplish it: to the words of St. Paul, however, which he read in the garden, he gave, under the impulse of grace, a 'real assent' and his life was changed. This conversion occurred in the summer of 386.

A lung ailment from which he was suffering gave Augustine the excuse he wanted to retire from his professorship and at Cassiciacum, through reading and reflection and discussions with friends, he endeavoured to obtain a better understanding of the Christian religion, using as an instrument concepts and themes taken from

[1] *Conf.*, 8, 5, 10. [2] *Ibid.*, 8, 7, 16. [3] *Rom.*, 13, 13–14. [4] *Conf.* 8, 8–12.

neo-Platonic philosophy, his idea of Christianity being still very incomplete and tinctured, more than it was to be later, by neo-Platonism. From this period of retirement date his works *Contra Academicos, De Beata Vita* and *De Ordine.* Returning to Milan Augustine wrote the *De Immortalitate Animae* (the *Soliloquia* were also written about this time) and began the *De Musica.* On Holy Saturday of 387 Augustine was baptised by St. Ambrose, soon after which event he set out to return to Africa. His mother, who had come over to Italy, died at Ostia, while they were waiting for a boat. (It was at Ostia that there occurred the celebrated scene described in the *Confessions.*[1]) Augustine delayed his return to Africa and while residing at Rome wrote the *De libero arbitrio,* the *De Quantitate Animae* and the *De moribus ecclesiae Catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum.* In the autumn of 388 he set sail for Africa.

Back at Tagaste, Augustine established a small monastic community. From this period (388–91) date his *De Genesi contra Manichaeos, De Magistro* and *De Vera Religione,* while he completed the *De Musica.* It is probable that he also polished up or completed the *De moribus,* mentioned above. At Cassiciacum Augustine had resolved never to marry, but he did not apparently intend to seek ordination, for it was contrary to his own wishes that the Bishop of Hippo ordained him priest in 391, when he was on a visit to that seaport town, about a hundred and fifty miles due west of Carthage. The bishop desired Augustine's help, and the latter settled down at Hippo and established a monastery. Engaged in controversy with the Manichaeans he composed the *De utilitate credendi,* the *De duabus animabus,* the *Disputatio contra Fortunatum,* the *De Fide et Symbolo,* a lecture on the Creed delivered before a synod of African bishops, and, against the Donatists, the *Psalmus contra partem Donati.* He started a literal commentary on *Genesis,* but, as its name implies (*De Genesi ad litteram liber imperfectus*), left it unfinished. The *De diversis quaestionibus* (389–96), the *Contra Adimantum Manichaeum, De sermone Domini in monte,* the *De Mendacio* and *De Continentia,* as well as various Commentaries (on *Romans* and *Galatians*) also date from the early period of Augustine's priestly life.

In the year 395–6 Augustine was consecrated auxiliary Bishop of Hippo, setting up another monastic establishment within his residence very shortly after his consecration. When Valerius,

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[1] 9, 10, 23–6.

Bishop of Hippo, died in 396, within a year of Augustine's consecration, he became ruling Bishop of Hippo in Valerius's place, and remained in that post until his death. This meant that he had to face the task of governing a diocese in which the Donatist schism was well entrenched instead of being able to devote himself to a life of quiet prayer and study. However, whatever his personal inclinations, Augustine threw himself into the anti-Donatist struggle with ardour, preaching, disputing, publishing anti-Donatist controversy. Nevertheless, in spite of this activity, he found time for composing such works as the *De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum* (397), part of the *De Doctrina Christiana* (the fourth book being added in 426), part of the *Confessions* (the whole work being published by 400), and the *Annotationes in Job.* Augustine also exchanged controversial letters with the great scholar St. Jerome, on Scriptural matters.

In the year 400 St. Augustine started on one of his greatest treatises, the fifteen books *De Trinitate,* which were completed in 417, and in 401 began the twelve books of the *De Genesi ad litteram,* completed in 415. In the same year (400) appeared the *De catechizandis rudibus,* the *De Consensu Evangelistarum,* the *De Opera Monachorum,* the *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* (thirty-three books), the first book of the *Contra litteras Petiliani* (Donatist Bishop of Cirta), the second book dating from 401–2 and the third from 402–3. These were followed by other anti-Donatist works, such as the *Contra Cresconium grammaticum partis Donati* (402), though various publications have not been preserved, and several writings against the Manichaeans. In addition to this controversial activity Augustine was constantly preaching and writing letters: thus the letter to Dioscorus,[1] in which, in answer to certain questions about Cicero, Augustine develops his views on pagan philosophy, still showing a strong predilection for neo-Platonism, dates from 410.

Imperial edicts were issued in the course of time against the Donatists, and about the year 411, after the conference that then took place, Augustine was able to turn his attention to another set of opponents, the Pelagians. Pelagius, who exaggerated the rôle of human volition in man's salvation and minimised that of grace, denying original sin, visited Carthage in 410 accompanied by Coelestius. In 411, after Pelagius had left for the East, Coelestius was excommunicated by a Council at Carthage. Pelagius

[1] *Epist.*, 118.

had tried to use texts from Augustine's *De libero arbitrio* in support of his own heresy, but the bishop made his position quite clear in his *De peccatorum meritis et remissione, et de baptismo parvulorum, ad Marcellinum,* following it up in the same year (412) by the *De spiritu et littera,* and later by the *De fide et operibus* (413), the *De natura et gratia contra Pelagium* (415) and the *De perfectione iustitiae hominis* (415). However, not content with his anti-Pelagian polemic, Augustine began, in 413, the twenty-two books of the *De Civitate Dei* (completed in 426), one of his greatest and most famous works, written against the background of the barbarian invasion of the Empire, and prepared many of his *Enarrationes in Psalmos.* In addition he published (415) the *Ad Orosium, contra Priscillianistas et Origenistas,* a book against the heresy started by the Spanish bishop, Priscillian, and in the course of further anti-Pelagian polemic the *De Gestis Pelagii* (417) and the *De Gratia Christi et peccato originali* (418). As if all this were not enough, Augustine finished the *De Trinitate,* and wrote his *In Joannis Evangelium* (416–17) and *In Epistolas Joannis ad Parthos* (416), not to speak of numerous letters and sermons.

In 418 Pelagianism was condemned, first by a Council of African bishops, then by the Emperor Honorius, and finally by Pope Zosimus, but the controversy was not yet over, and when Augustine was accused by Julian, heretical Bishop of Eclanum, of having invented the concept of original sin, the Saint replied in the work *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* (419–20), while in 420 he addressed two books, *Contra duas epistolas Pelagianorum ad Bonifatium Papam,* to the Pope, and followed them up by his *Contra Iulianum haeresis Pelagianae defensorem* (six books) in 421. The *De anima et eius origine* (419), the *Contra mendacium ad Consentium* (420), the *Contra adversarium Legis et Prophetarum* (420), the *Enchiridion ad Laurentium, De fide, spe, caritate* (421), the *De cura pro mortuis gerenda, ad Paulinum Nolanum* (420–1), also date from this period.

In 426 Augustine, feeling that he would not live very much longer, provided for the future of his diocese by nominating his successor, the priest Eraclius, the nomination being acclaimed by the people; but the Saint's literary activity was by no means over, and in 426–7 he published the *De gratia et libero arbitrio ad Valentinum,* the *De correptione et gratia* and the two books of *Retractiones,* which contain a critical survey of his works and are of great value for establishing their chronology. All this time the situation of the Empire was going from bad to worse, and in 429

Genseric led the Vandals from Spain into Africa; but Augustine continued writing. In 427 he published the *Speculum de Scriptura Sacra*, a selection of texts from the Bible, and in 428 his *De haeresibus ad Quodvultdeum*, followed by the *De praedestinatione sanctorum ad Prosperum* and the *De dono perseverantiae ad Prosperum* in 428–9. In addition, Augustine began the *Opus imperfectum contra Julianum* in 429, a refutation of an anti-Augustinian treatise by the Pelagian Julian which had been written some time previously but had come into the Saint's hands only in 428; but he did not live to finish the work (hence its name). Augustine also came into contact with Arianism, and in 428 appeared his *Collatio cum Maximino Arianorum episcopo* and his *Contra Maximinum haereticum.*

In the late spring or early summer of 430 the Vandals laid siege to Hippo, and it was during the siege that Augustine died on August 28th, 430, as he was reciting the Penitential Psalms. Possidius remarks that he left no will, since, as one of God's paupers, he had nothing to leave. The Vandals subsequently burnt the city, though the cathedral and the library of Augustine were left intact. Possidius wrote the Life of Augustine, which is to be found in the Latin Patrology. 'Those who read what he (Augustine) has written on divine things can profit much; but I think that they would profit more were they able to hear and see him preaching in the church, and especially those who were privileged to enjoy intimate conversation with him.'[1]

2. It may perhaps seem strange that I have spoken of St. Augustine's theological controversies and listed a large number of theological treatises; but a sketch of his life and activity will suffice to make it plain that, with a few exceptions, Augustine did not compose purely philosophical works in our sense. In a book like this, one does not, of course, intend to treat of Augustine's purely theological doctrine, but, in order to elicit his philosophical teaching one has to have frequent recourse to what are primarily theological treatises. Thus, in order to obtain light on Augustine's theory of knowledge, it is necessary to consult the relevant texts of the *De Trinitate*, while the *De Genesi ad litteram* expounds the theory of *rationes seminales* and the *Confessions* contain a treatment of time. This mingling of theological and philosophical themes may appear odd and unmethodical to us to-day, used as we are to a clear distinction between the provinces of dogmatic

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[1] *Vita S. Aug.*, 31.

theology and philosophy; but one must remember that Augustine, in common with other Fathers and early Christian writers, made no such clear distinction. It is not that Augustine failed to recognise, still less that he denied, the intellect's power of attaining truth without revelation; it is rather that he regarded the Christian wisdom as one whole, that he tried to penetrate by his understanding the Christian faith and to see the world and human life in the light of the Christian wisdom. He knew quite well that rational arguments can be adduced for God's existence, for example, but it was not so much the mere intellectual assent to God's existence that interested him as the real assent, the positive adhesion of the will to God, and he knew that in the concrete such an adhesion to God requires divine grace. In short, Augustine did not play two parts, the part of the theologian and the part of the philosopher who considers the 'natural man'; he thought rather of man as he is in the concrete, fallen and redeemed mankind, man who is able indeed to attain truth but who is constantly solicited by God's grace and who requires grace in order to appropriate the truth that saves. If there was question of convincing someone that God exists, Augustine would see the proof as a stage or as an instrument in the total process of the man's conversion and salvation: he would recognise the proof as *in itself* rational, but he would be acutely conscious, not only of the moral preparation necessary to give a real and living assent to the proof, but also of the fact that, according to God's intention for man in the concrete, recognition of God's existence is not enough, but should lead on, under the impulse of grace, to supernatural faith in God's revelation and to a life in accordance with Christ's teaching. Reason has its part to play in bringing a man to faith, and, once a man has the faith, reason has its part to play in penetrating the data of faith; but it is the total relation of the soul to God which primarily interests Augustine. Reason, as we have seen, had its part to play in the intellectual stage of his own conversion and reason had its part to play after his conversion: generalising his own experience, then, he would consider the fullness of wisdom to consist in a penetration of what is believed, though in the approach to wisdom reason helps to prepare a man for faith. 'The medicine for the soul, which is effected by the divine providence and ineffable beneficence, is perfectly beautiful in degree and distinction. For it is divided between Authority and Reason. Authority demands of us faith, and prepares man for reason. Reason leads to perception and cognition, although authority also does not leave reason wholly out of sight, when the question of who may be believed is being considered.'[1]

This attitude was characteristic of the Augustinian tradition. St. Anselm's aim is expressed in his words *Credo ut intelligam*, while St. Bonaventure, in the thirteenth century, explicitly rejected the sharp delimitation of the spheres of theology and philosophy. The Thomist distinction between the sciences of dogmatic theology and philosophy, with the accompanying distinction of the modes of procedure to be employed in the two sciences, no doubt evolved inevitably out of the earlier attitude, though, quite apart from that consideration, it obviously enjoys this very great advantage that it corresponds to an actual and real distinction between revelation and the data of the 'unaided' reason, between the supernatural and natural spheres. It is at once a safeguard of the doctrine of the supernatural and also of the powers of man in the natural order. Yet the Augustinian attitude on the other hand enjoys this advantage, that it contemplates always man *as he is*, man in the concrete, for *de facto* man has only one final end, a supernatural end, and, as far as actual existence is concerned, there is but man fallen and redeemed: there never has been, is not, and never will be a purely 'natural man' without a supernatural vocation and end. If Thomism, without of course neglecting the fact that man in the concrete has but a supernatural end, places emphasis on the distinction between the supernatural and the natural, between faith and reason, Augustinianism, without in the least neglecting the gratuitous character of supernatural faith and grace, always envisages man in the concrete and is primarily interested in his actual relation to God.

This being so, it is only natural that we should have to unravel Augustine's 'purely philosophical' ideas from the total fabric of his thought. To do this is, of course, to survey Augustinianism more or less from a Thomist viewpoint, but that does not mean that it is an illegitimate approach: it means that one is asking what ideas of Augustine are philosophical in the academic understanding of the term. It does indeed mean tearing his ideas from their full context, but in a history of philosophy, which presupposes a certain idea of what philosophy is, one can do nothing else. It must, however, be admitted that a concentration of this sort on Augustine's philosophical ideas, using the word in the Thomist

[1] *De vera relig.*, 24, 45.

sense, tends to give a rather poor idea of the Saint's intellectual achievement, at least to one who is trained in the academic and objective atmosphere of Thomism, since he never elaborated a philosophical system as such, nor did he develop, define and substantiate his philosophical ideas in the manner to which a Thomist is accustomed. The result is that it is not infrequently difficult to say precisely what Augustine meant by this or that idea or statement, how precisely he understood it: there is often an aura of vagueness, allusion, lack of definition about his ideas which leaves one dissatisfied, perplexed and curious. The rigid type of Thomist would, I suppose, maintain that Augustine's philosophy contains nothing of value which was not much better said by St. Thomas, more clearly delineated and defined; but the fact remains that the Augustinian tradition is not dead even to-day, and it may be that the very incompleteness and lack of systematisation in Augustine's thought, its very 'suggestiveness', is a positive help towards the longevity of his tradition, for the 'Augustinian' is not faced by a complete system to be accepted, rejected or mutilated: he is faced by an approach, an inspiration, certain basic ideas which are capable of considerable development, so that he can remain perfectly faithful to the Augustinian spirit even though he departs from what the historic Augustine actually said.

CHAPTER IV

ST. AUGUSTINE—II: KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge with a view to beatitude—Against scepticism—Experiential knowledge—Nature of sensation—Divine ideas—Illumination and Abstraction.

1. To start with the 'epistemology' of St. Augustine is perhaps to give the impression that Augustine was concerned with elaborating a theory of knowledge for its own sake or as a methodological propaedeutic to metaphysics. This would be a wrong impression, however, since Augustine never sat down, as it were, to develop a theory of knowledge and then, on the basis of a realist theory of knowledge, to construct a systematic metaphysic. If Spinoza, according to his own words,[1] aimed at developing the philosophy of God or Substance because it is only contemplation of an infinite and eternal Object which can fully satisfy mind and heart and bring happiness to the soul, far more could an analogous statement be made of Augustine, who emphasised the fact that knowledge of the truth is to be sought, not for purely academic purposes, but as bringing true happiness, true beatitude. Man feels his insufficiency, he reaches out to an object greater than himself, an object which can bring peace and happiness, and knowledge of that object is an essential condition of its attainment; but he sees knowledge in function of an end, beatitude. Only the wise man can be happy and wisdom postulates knowledge of the truth; but there is no question in Augustine's thought of speculation as an end in itself. When the young man Licentius, in the *Contra Academicos*, maintains that wisdom consists in seeking for the truth and declares, like Lessing, that happiness is to be found rather in the pursuit of truth than in the actual attainment and possession of truth, Augustine retorts that it is absurd to predicate wisdom of a man who has no knowledge of truth. In the *De Beata Vita*[2] he says that no one is happy who does not possess what he strives to possess, so that the man who is seeking for truth but has not yet found it, cannot be said to be truly happy. Augustine himself sought for truth because he felt a need for it, and looking back on his development in the light of attainment, he interpreted this as

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[1] *De Intellectus Emendatione.*

[2] 2, 10 and 14; 4, 27ff.

a search for Christ and Christian wisdom, as the attraction of the divine beauty, and this experience he universalised. This universalisation of his own experience, however, does not mean that his ideas were purely subjective: his psychological introspection enabled him to lay bare the dynamism of the human soul.

Yet to say that Augustine was not an 'intellectualist' in an academic sense and that his philosophy is eudaemonistic is not to say that he was not acutely conscious of the problem of certitude. It would, however, be a mistake to think that Augustine was preoccupied with the question, '*Can* we attain certainty?' As we shall see shortly, he did answer this question, but the question that occupied his attention in the mature period of his thought was rather this, '*How* is it that we can attain certainty?' That we do attain certainty being assumed as a datum, the problem remains: 'How does the finite, changing human mind attain certain knowledge of eternal truths, truths which rule and govern the mind and so transcend it?' After the breakdown of his faith in Manichaeism, Augustine was tempted to relapse into Academic scepticism: his victory over this temptation he expressed in the *Contra Academicos*, where he shows that we indubitably do attain certainty of some facts at least. This granted, his reading of 'Platonic works' suggested to him the problem, how it is that we are able not only to know with certainty eternal and necessary truths, but also to know them as eternal and necessary truths. Plato explained this fact by the theory of reminiscence; how was Augustine to explain it? The discussion of the problem no doubt interested him in itself, for its own sake; but he also saw in what he considered to be the right answer a clear proof of God's existence and operation. The knowledge of eternal truth should thus bring the soul, by reflection on that knowledge, to knowledge of God Himself and God's activity.

2. As I have already said, in the *Contra Academicos* Augustine is primarily concerned to show that wisdom pertains to happiness, and knowledge of truth to wisdom; but he also makes it clear that even the Sceptics are certain of some truths, for example, that of two disjunctive propositions one is true and the other false. 'I am certain that there is either one world or more than one world, and, if more than one, then that there is either a finite or an infinite number of worlds.' Similarly I know that the world either has no beginning or end or has a beginning but no end or had no beginning but will have an end or has both a beginning and an end. In other

words, I am at least certain of the principle of contradiction.[1] Again, even if I am sometimes deceived in thinking that appearance and reality always correspond, I am at least certain of my subjective impression. 'I have no complaint to make of the senses, for it is unjust to demand of them more than they can give: whatever the eyes can see they see truly. Then is that true which they see in the case of the oar in the water? Quite true. For, granted the cause why it appears in that way (i.e. bent), if the oar, when plunged into the water, appeared straight, I should rather accuse my eyes of playing me false. For they would not see what, granted the circumstances, they ought to see. . . . But I am deceived, if I give my assent, someone will say. Then don't give assent to more than the fact of appearance, and you won't be deceived. For I do not see how the sceptic can refute the man who says, "I know that this object seems white to me, I know that this sound gives me pleasure, I know this smell is pleasant to me, I know that this tastes sweet to me, I know that this feels cold to my touch." '[2] St. Augustine refers in the above passage to the Epicureans and it is clear that what he means is that the senses as such never lie or deceive us, even if we may deceive ourselves in judging that things exist objectively in the same way that they appear. The mere appearance of the bent oar is not deception, for there would be something wrong with my eyes were it to appear straight. If I go on to judge that the oar is really bent in itself, I am wrong, but as long as I simply say, 'It appears to me bent', I am speaking the truth and I know that I am speaking the truth. Similarly, if I come out of a hot room and put my hand in tepid water, it may seem to me cold, but as long as I merely say, 'This water *seems* cold to me', I am saying something the truth of which I am certain of, and no sceptic can refute me.

Again, everyone who doubts knows that he is doubting, so that he is certain of this truth at least, namely the fact that he doubts. Thus every one who doubts whether there is such a thing as truth, knows at least one truth, so that his very capacity to doubt should convince him that there is such a thing as truth.[3] We are certain, too, of mathematical truths. When anyone says that seven and three make ten, he does not say that they ought to make ten, but knows that they do make ten.[4]

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[1] *C. Acad.*, 3, 10, 23.

[2] *Ibid.*, 3, 11, 26.

[3] *De vera relig.*, 39, 73.

[4] *De lib. arbit.*, 12, 34.

3. But what of real existences? Are we certain of the existence of any real object or are we confined to certain knowledge of abstract principles and mathematical truths? Augustine answers that a man is at least certain of his existence. Even supposing that he doubts of the existence of other created objects or of God, the very fact of his doubt shows that he exists, for he could not doubt, did he not exist. Nor is it of any use to suggest that one might be deceived into thinking that one exists, for 'if you did not exist, you could not be deceived in anything.'[1] In this way St. Augustine anticipates Descartes: *Si fallor, sum.*

With existence Augustine couples life and understanding. In the *De libero arbitrio*[2] he points out that it is clear to a man that he exists, and that this fact would not and could not be clear, unless he were alive. Moreover, it is clear to him that he understands both the fact of his existence and the fact that he is living. Accordingly he is certain of three things, that he exists, that he lives and that he understands. Similarly, in the *De Trinitate*,[3] he observes that it is useless for the sceptic to insinuate that the man is asleep and sees these things in his dreams, for the man is affirming not that he is awake but that he lives: 'whether he be asleep or awake he lives.' Even if he were mad, he would still be alive. Again, a man is certainly conscious of what he wills. If someone says that he wills to be happy, it is mere impudence to suggest to him that he is deceived. Sceptical philosophers may babble about the bodily senses and the way in which they deceive us, but they cannot invalidate that certain knowledge which the mind has by itself, without the intervention of the sense.[4] 'We exist and we know that we exist and we love that fact and our knowledge of it; in these three things which I have enumerated no fear of deception disturbs us; for we do not attain them by any bodily sense, as we do external objects.'[5]

Augustine thus claims certainty for what we know by inner experience, by self-consciousness: what does he think of our knowledge of external objects, the things we know by the senses? Have we certainty in their regard? That we can deceive ourselves in our judgements concerning the objects of the senses Augustine was well aware, and some of his remarks show that he was conscious of the relativity of sense-impressions, in the sense that a judgement as to hot or cold, for example, depends to a certain extent on the condition of the sense-organs: moreover, he did not consider that the objects apprehensible by the senses constitute the proper object of the human intellect. Being chiefly interested in the soul's orientation to God, corporeal objects appeared to him as a starting-point in the mind's ascent to God, though even in this respect the soul itself is a more adequate starting-point: we should return within ourselves, where truth abides, and use the soul, the image of God, as a stepping-stone to Him.[1] Nevertheless, even if corporeal things, the objects of the senses, are essentially mutable and are far less adequate manifestations of God than is the soul, even if it is through concentration on the things of sense that the most harmful errors arise, we are dependent on the senses for a great deal of our knowledge and Augustine had no intention of maintaining a purely sceptical attitude in regard to the objects of the senses. It is one thing to admit the possibility of error in sense-knowledge and quite another to refuse any credence at all to the senses. Thus, after saying that philosophers may speak against the senses but cannot refute the consciousness of self-existence, Augustine goes on at once to say, 'far be it from us to doubt the truth of what we have learned by the bodily senses; since by them we have learned to know the heaven and the earth.' We learn much on the testimony of others, and the fact that we are sometimes deceived is no warrant for disbelieving all testimony: so the fact that we are sometimes deceived in regard to the objects of our senses is no warrant for complete scepticism. 'We must acknowledge that not only our own senses, but those of other persons too, have added very much to our knowledge.'[2] For practical life it is necessary to give credence to the senses,[3] and the man who thinks that we should never believe the senses falls into a worse error than any error he may fall into through believing them. Augustine thus says that we 'believe' the senses, that we give credence to them, as we give credence to the testimony of others, but he often uses the word 'believe' in opposition to direct inner knowledge, without meaning to imply that such 'belief' is void of adequate motive. Thus when someone tells me a fact about his own mental state, for example, that he understands or wishes this or that, I 'believe': when he says something that is true of the human mind itself, not simply of his own mind in particular, 'I recognise and give my assent, for I know by self-consciousness and introspection that what he says is true.'[4] In fine, Augustine may have anticipated Descartes by his '*Si fallor, sum*', but he was not occupied with the question whether the external world really exists or not. That it exists, he felt no doubt, though he saw clearly enough that we sometimes make erroneous judgements about it and that testimony is not always reliable, whether it be testimony of our own senses or of other people. As he was especially interested in the knowledge of eternal truths and in the relation of that knowledge to God, it would hardly occur to him to devote very much time to a consideration of our knowledge of the mutable things of sense. The fact of the matter is that his 'Platonism', coupled with his spiritual interest and outlook, led him to look on corporeal objects as not being the proper object of knowledge, owing to their mutability and to the fact that our knowledge of them is dependent on bodily organs of sense which are no more always in the same state than the objects themselves. If we have not got 'true knowledge' of sense-objects, that is due, not merely to any deficiency in the subject but also to a radical deficiency in the object. In other words, Augustine's attitude to sense-knowledge is much more Platonic than Cartesian.[1]

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[1] *De lib. arbit.*, 2, 3, 7. [2] 2, 3, 7. [3] 15, 12, 21. [4] *Ibid.* [5] *De Civit. Dei*, 11, 26.

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[1] Cf. *De vera relig.*, 39, 72; *Serm.*, 330, 3; *Retract.*, 1, 8, 3; etc.

[2] *De Trinit.*, 15, 12, 21.

[3] *Conf.*, 6, 5, 7.

[4] *De Trinit.*, 9, 6, 9.

4. The lowest level of knowledge is, therefore, that of sense-knowledge, dependent on sensation, sensation being regarded by Augustine, in accordance with his Platonic psychology, as an act of the soul using the organs of sense as its instruments. *Sentire non est corporis sed animae per corpus.* The soul animates the whole body, but when it increases or intensifies its activity in a particular part, i.e. in a particular sense-organ, it exercises the power of sensation.[2] From this theory it would seem to follow that any deficiency in sense-knowledge must proceed from the mutability both of the instrument of sensation, the sense-organ, and of the object of sensation, and this is indeed what Augustine thought. The rational soul of man exercises true knowledge and attains true certainty when it contemplates eternal truths in and through itself: when it turns towards the material world and uses corporeal instruments it cannot attain true knowledge. Augustine assumed, with Plato, that the objects of true knowledge are unchanging, from which it necessarily follows that knowledge of changing objects is not true knowledge. It is a type of knowledge or grade of knowledge which is indispensable for practical life; but

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[1] Scotus repeated St. Augustine's suggestion that the status of sense-knowledge may be connected with original sin.

[2] Cf. *De Musica*, 6-5, 9, 10; *De Trinit.*, 11, 2, 2-5.

the man who concentrates on the sphere of the mutable thereby neglects the sphere of the immutable, which is the correlative object of the human soul in regard to knowledge in the full sense.

Sensation in the strict sense is common, of course, to men and brutes; but men can have and do have a rational knowledge of corporeal things. In the *De Trinitate*[1] St. Augustine points out that the beasts are able to sense corporeal things and remember them and to seek after what is helpful, avoiding what is harmful, but that they cannot commit things to memory deliberately nor recall them at will nor perform any other operation which involves the use of reason; so that, in regard to knowledge of sense-objects, human knowledge is essentially superior to that of the brute. Moreover, man is able to make rational judgements concerning corporeal things and to perceive them as approximations to eternal standards. For instance, if a man judges that one object is more beautiful than another, his comparative judgement (granted the objective character of the beautiful) implies a reference to an eternal standard of beauty, while a judgement that this or that line is more or less straight, that this figure is a well-drawn circle, implies a reference to ideal straightness and the perfect geometrical circle. In other words, such comparative judgements involve a reference to 'ideas' (not to be understood as purely subjective). 'It is the part of the higher reason to judge of these corporeal things according to incorporeal and eternal considerations, which, if they were not above the human mind, would certainly not be immutable. And yet, unless something of our own were subjoined to them, we should not be able to employ them as standards by which to judge of corporeal things. . . . But that faculty of our own which is thus concerned with the treatment of corporeal and temporal things, is indeed rational, in that it is not common to us and the beasts, but is drawn, as it were, out of the rational substance of our mind, by which we depend upon and adhere to the intelligible and immutable truth and which is deputed to handle and direct the inferior things.'[2]

What St. Augustine means is this. The lowest level of knowledge, so far as it can be called knowledge, is sensation, which is common to men and brutes; and the highest level of knowledge, peculiar to man, is the contemplation of eternal things (wisdom) by the mind alone, without the intervention of sensation; but between these two levels is a kind of half-way house, in which mind judges of corporeal objects according to eternal and incorporeal standards. This level of knowledge is a rational level, so that it is peculiar to man and is not shared by brutes; but it involves the use of the senses and concerns sensible objects, so that it is a lower level than that of direct contemplation of eternal and incorporeal objects. Moreover, this lower use of reason is directed towards action, whereas wisdom is contemplative not practical. 'The action by which we make good use of temporal things differs from the contemplation of eternal things, and the former is classed as knowledge, the latter as wisdom. . . . In this distinction it must be understood that wisdom pertains to contemplation, knowledge to action.'[1] The ideal is that contemplative wisdom should increase, but at the same time our reason has to be partly directed to the good use of mutable and corporeal things, 'without which this life does not go on', provided that in our attention to temporal things we make it subserve the attainment of eternal things, 'passing lightly over the former, but cleaving to the latter'.[2]

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[1] 12, 2, 2.

[2] *Ibid.*

This outlook is markedly Platonic in character. There is the same depreciation of sense-objects in comparison with eternal and immaterial realities, the same almost grudging admission of practical knowledge as a necessity of life, the same insistence on 'theoretic' contemplation, the same insistence on increasing purification of soul and liberation from the slavery of the senses to accompany the epistemological ascent. Yet it would be a mistake to see in Augustine's attitude a mere adoption of Platonism and nothing more. Platonic and neo-Platonic themes are certainly utilised, but Augustine's interest is always first and foremost that of the attainment of man's supernatural end, beatitude, in the possession and vision of God, and in spite of the intellectualist way of speaking which he sometimes uses and which he adopted from the Platonic tradition, in the total scheme of his thought the primacy is always given to love: *Pondus meum, amor meus*.[3] It is true that even this has its analogy in Platonism, but it must be remembered that for Augustine the goal is the attainment, not of an impersonal Good but of a personal God. The truth of the matter is that he found in Platonism doctrines which he considered admirably adapted for the exposition of a fundamentally Christian philosophy of life.

5. The objects of sense, corporeal things, are inferior to the human intellect, which judges of them in relation to a standard in

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[1] *De Trinit.*, 12, 14, 22.

[2] *Ibid.*, 12, 13, 21.

[3] *Conf.*, 13, 9, 10.

reference to which they fall short; but there are other objects of knowledge which are above the human mind, in the sense that they are discovered by the mind, which necessarily assents to them and does not think of amending them or judging that they should be otherwise than they are. For example, I see some work of art and I judge it to be more or less beautiful, a judgement which implies not only the existence of a standard of beauty, an objective standard, but also my knowledge of the standard, for how could I judge that this arch or that picture is imperfect, deficient in beauty, unless I had some knowledge of the standard of beauty, of beauty itself, the idea of beauty? How could my supposedly objective judgement be justified unless there were an objective standard, not mutable and imperfect, like beautiful *things*, but immutable, constant, perfect and eternal?[1] Again, the geometer considers perfect circles and lines, and judges of the approximate circles and lines according to that perfect standard. Circular things are temporal and pass away, but the nature of circularity in itself, the idea of the circle, its essence, does not change. Again, we may add seven apples and three apples and make ten apples, and the apples which we count are sensible and mutable objects, are temporal and pass away; but the numbers seven and three considered in themselves and apart from things are discerned by the arithmetician to make ten by addition, a truth which he discovers to be necessary and eternal, not dependent on the sensible world or on the human mind.[2] These eternal truths are common to all. Whereas sensations are private, in the sense that, e.g., what seems cold to one man does not necessarily seem cold to another, mathematical truths are common to all and the individual mind has to accept them and recognise their possession of an absolute truth and validity which is independent of its own reactions.

Augustine's attitude in this matter is obviously Platonic. The standards of goodness and beauty, for example, correspond to Plato's first principles or ἀρχαί the exemplary ideas, while the ideal geometrical figures correspond to Plato's mathematical objects, τὰ μαθηματικά the objects of διάνοια. The same question which could be raised in regard to the Platonic theory recurs again, therefore, in regard to the Augustinian theory, namely, 'Where are these ideas?' (Of course, one must remember, in regard to both thinkers, that the 'ideas' in question are not subjective ideas but objective essences, and that the query 'where?' does not refer to locality, since the 'ideas' are *ex hypothesi* immaterial, but rather to what one might call ontological situation or status.) Neo-Platonists, seeing the difficulty in accepting a sphere of impersonal immaterial essences, i.e. the condition *apparently* at least assigned to the essences in Plato's published works, interpreted the Platonic ideas as thoughts of God and 'placed' them in *Nous*, the divine mind, which emanates from the One as the first proceeding hypostasis. (Compare Philo's theory of the ideas as contained within the Logos.) We may say that Augustine accepted this position, if we allow for the fact that he did not accept the emanation theory of neo-Platonism. The exemplar ideas and eternal truths are in God. 'The ideas are certain archetypal forms or stable and immutable essences of things, which have not themselves been formed but, existing eternally and without change, are contained in the divine intelligence.'[1] This theory must be accepted if one wishes to avoid having to say that God created the world unintelligently.[2]

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[1] Cf. *De Trinit.*, 9, 6, 9–11.

[2] Cf. *ibid.*, 12, 14, 22–3; 12, 15, 24; *De lib. arbit.*, 2, 13, 35; 2, 8, 20–4.

6. A difficulty, however, immediately arises. If the human mind beholds the exemplar ideas and eternal truths, and if these ideas and truths are in the mind of God, does it not follow that the human mind beholds the essence of God, since the divine mind, with all that it contains, is ontologically identical with the divine essence? Some writers have believed that Augustine actually meant this. Among philosophers, Malebranche claimed the support of Augustine for his theory that the mind beholds the eternal ideas in God, and he tried to escape from the seemingly logical conclusion that in this case the human mind beholds the essence of God, by saying that the mind sees, not the divine essence as it is in itself (the supernatural vision of the blessed) but the divine essence as participable *ad extra*, as exemplar of creation. The ontologists too claim the support of Augustine for their theory of the soul's immediate intuition of God.

Now, it is impossible to deny that some texts of Augustine taken by themselves favour such an interpretation. But, granting that Augustine seems on occasion to teach ontologism, it seems clear to me that, if one takes into account the totality of his thought, such an interpretation is inadmissible. I should certainly not be so bold as to suggest that Augustine was never inconsistent, but what I do believe is that the ontologistic interpretation of

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[1] *De Ideis*, 2.

[2] Cf. *Retract.*, 1, 3, 2.

Augustine fits in so badly with his spiritual doctrine that, if there are other texts which favour a non-ontologistic interpretation (and there are such texts), one should attribute a secondary position and a subordinate value to the apparently ontologistic texts. Augustine was perfectly well aware that a man may discern eternal and necessary truths, mathematical principles, for example, without being a good man at all: such a man may not see these truths in their ultimate Ground, but he undoubtedly discerns the truths. Now, how can Augustine possibly have supposed that such a man beholds the essence of God, when in his spiritual doctrine he insists so much on the need of moral purification in order to draw near to God and is well aware that the vision of God is reserved to the saved in the next life? Again, a man who is spiritually and morally far from God can quite well appreciate the fact that Canterbury Cathedral is more beautiful than a Nissen hut, just as St. Augustine himself could discern degrees of sensible beauty before his conversion. In a famous passage of the *Confessions* he exclaims: 'Too late am I come to love Thee, O thou Beauty, so ancient and withal so new; too late am I come to love Thee . . . in a deformed manner I cast myself upon the things of Thy creation, which yet Thou hadst made fair.'[1] Similarly, in the *De quantitate animae*[2] he clearly affirms that the contemplation of Beauty comes at the end of the soul's ascent. In view of this teaching, then, it seems to me inconceivable that Augustine thought that the soul, in apprehending eternal and necessary truths, actually apprehends the very content of the divine mind. The passages which appear to show that he did so think can be explained as due to his adoption of Platonic or neo-Platonic expressions which do not, literally taken, fit in with the general direction of his thought. It does not seem possible to state exactly how Augustine conceived of the status of the eternal truths as apprehended by the human mind (the ontological side of the question he probably never worked out); but, rather than accept a purely neo-Platonic or an ontologistic interpretation, it seems to me preferable to suppose that the eternal truths and ideas, as they are in God, perform an ideogenetic function; that it is rather that the 'light' which comes from God to the human mind enables the mind to see the characteristics of changelessness and necessity in the eternal truths.

One may add, however, a further consideration against an ontologistic interpretation of Augustine. The Saint utilised the apprehension of eternal and necessary truths as a proof for the existence of God, arguing that these truths require an immutable and eternal Ground. Without going any further into this argument at the moment it is worth pointing out that, if the argument is to have any sense, it clearly presupposes the possibility of the mind's perceiving these truths without at the same time perceiving God, perhaps while doubting or even denying God's existence. If Augustine is prepared to say to a man, 'You doubt or deny God's existence, but you must admit that you recognise absolute truths, and I shall prove to you that the recognition of such truths implies God's existence,' he can scarcely have supposed that the doubter or atheist had any vision of God or of the actual contents of the divine mind. This consideration seems to me to rule out the ontologistic interpretation. But before pursuing this subject any further it is necessary to say something of Augustine's theory of illumination, as this may make it easier to understand his position, though it must be admitted that the interpretation of this theory is itself somewhat uncertain.

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[1] *Conf.*, 10, 27, 38.

[2] 35, 79.

7. We cannot, says Augustine, perceive the immutable truth of things unless they are illuminated as by a sun.[1] This divine light, which illumines the mind, comes from God, who is the 'intelligible light', in whom and by whom and through whom all those things which are luminous to the intellect become luminous.[2] In this doctrine of light, common to the Augustinian School, Augustine makes use of a neo-Platonic theme which goes back to Plato's comparison of the Idea of the Good with the sun,[3] the Idea of the Good irradiating the subordinate intelligible objects or Ideas. For Plotinus the One or God is the sun, the transcendent light. The use of the light-metaphor, however, does not by itself tell us very clearly what Augustine meant. Happily we have to help us such texts as the passage of the *De Trinitate*[4] where the Saint says that the nature of the mind is such that, 'when directed to intelligible things in the natural order, according to the disposition of the Creator, it sees them in a certain incorporeal light which is *sui generis*, just as the corporeal eye sees adjacent objects in the corporeal light'. These words seem to show that the illumination in question is a spiritual illumination which performs the same function for the objects of the mind as the sun's light performs for the objects of the eye: in other words, as the sunlight makes corporeal things visible to the eye, so the divine illumination makes

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[1] *Solil.*, 1, 8, 15. [2] *Ibid.*, 1, 1, 3. [3] *Rep.*, 514–18. [4] 12, 15, 24.

the eternal truths visible to the mind. From this it would appear to follow that it is not the illumination itself which is seen by the mind, nor the intelligible Sun, God, but that the characteristics of necessity and eternity in the necessary and eternal truths are made visible to the mind by the activity of God. This is certainly not an ontologistic theory.

But why did St. Augustine postulate such an illumination; why did he think it necessary? Because the human mind is changeable and temporal, so that what is unchangeable and eternal transcends it and seems to be beyond its capacity. 'When the human mind knows and loves itself, it does not know and love anything immutable,'[1] and if truth 'were equal to our minds, it also would be mutable', for our minds see the truth, now more now less, and by this very fact show themselves to be mutable. In fact, truth is neither inferior nor equal to our minds, but 'superior and more excellent'.[2] We need, therefore, a divine illumination, in order to enable us to apprehend what transcends our minds, 'for no creature, howsoever rational and intellectual, is lighted of itself, but is lighted by participation of eternal Truth'.[3] 'God hath created man's mind rational and intellectual, whereby he may take in His light . . . and He so enlighteneth it of Himself, that not only those things which are displayed by the truth, but even truth itself may be perceived by the mind's eye.'[4] This light shines upon the truths and renders visible to the mutable and temporal human mind their characteristics of changelessness and eternity.

That the divine illumination is something imparted and *sui generis* is explicitly stated by St. Augustine, as we have seen. It hardly seems possible, therefore, to reduce the illumination-theory to nothing more than a statement of the truth that God conserves and creates the human intellect and that the natural light of the intellect is a participated light. Thomists, who wish to show St. Augustine the same reverence that St. Thomas showed him, are naturally reluctant to admit a radical difference of opinion between the two great theologians and philosophers and are inclined to interpret St. Augustine in a way that would attenuate the difference between his thought and that of St. Thomas; but St. Augustine most emphatically did not mean by 'light' the intellect itself or its activity, even with the ordinary concurrence of God, since it is precisely because of the deficiencies of the human intellect that he postulated the existence and activity of the divine illumination. To say that St. Augustine was wrong in postulating a special divine illumination and that St. Thomas was right in denying the necessity of such an illumination is an understandable attitude; but it seems to be carrying conciliation too far, if one attempts to maintain that both thinkers were saying the same thing, even if one affirms that St. Thomas was saying clearly and unambiguously what St. Augustine had said obscurely and with the aid of metaphor.

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[1] *De Trinit.*, 9, 6, 9.

[2] *De lib. arbit.*, 2, 13, 35.

[3] *In. Ps.* 119; *Serm.*, 23, 1.

[4] *In Ps.* 118; *Serm.*, 18, 4.

I have already indicated that I accept the interpretation of Augustine's thought, according to which the function of the divine illumination is to render visible to the mind the element of necessity in the eternal truths, and that I reject the ontologistic interpretation in any form. This rejection obviously involves the rejection of the view that according to Augustine the mind beholds directly the idea of beauty, for example, as it is in God; but I am also unwilling to accept the view that according to Augustine God actually infuses the idea of beauty or any other normative idea (i.e. in reference to which we make comparative judgements of degree, such as that this object is more beautiful than that, this action juster than that, etc.) ready-made into the mind. This extreme ideogenetic view would make the function of divine illumination that of a kind of separate active intellect: in fact, God would Himself be an ontologically separate active intellect which infuses ideas into the human mind without any part being played by the human sensibility or intellect other than the mind's purely passive rôle. (This reference to an active intellect is not, of course, meant to imply that Augustine thought or spoke in terms of the Aristotelian psychology.) It does not seem to me that such an interpretation, although doubtless much can be said for it,[1] is altogether satisfactory. According to St. Augustine, the activity of the divine illumination in regard to the mind is analogous to the function of the sun's light in regard to vision, and though the sunlight renders corporeal objects visible, Augustine certainly did not think of it as creating images of the objects in the human subject. Again, although the divine illumination takes the place in Augustine's thought of reminiscence in the Platonic philosophy, so that the illumination would seem to fulfil some ideogenetic function, it must be remembered that Augustine's problem is one concerning *certitude,* not one concerning the content of our concepts or ideas: it concerns far more the form of the certain judgement and the form of the normative idea than the actual content of the judgement or the idea. In the *De Trinitate*[1] Augustine remarks that the mind 'gathers the knowledge of corporeal things through the senses of the body', and, so far as he deals at all with the formation of the concept, he would seem to consider that the human mind discerns the intelligible in the sensible, performing what is in some way at least equivalent to abstraction. But when it comes to discerning that a corporeal thing is, for example, more or less beautiful, to judging the object according to a changeless standard, the mind judges under the light of the regulative action of the eternal Idea, which is not itself visible to the mind. Beauty itself illuminates the mind's activity in such a way that it can discern the greater or less approximation of the object to the standard, though the mind does not behold Beauty itself directly. It is in this sense that the illumination of Augustine supplies the function of Plato's reminiscence. Again, though Augustine does not clearly indicate *how we obtain* the notions of seven and three and ten, the function of illumination is not to infuse the notions of these numbers but so to illuminate the judgement that seven and three make ten that we discern the necessity and eternity of the judgement. From a passage already referred to,[2] as from other passages,[3] it seems to follow that, while we obtain the concept of corporeal objects, a horse, for example, in dependence on the senses, and of an immaterial object like the soul through self-consciousness and interpretation, our certain judgements concerning these objects are made in the light of 'illumination' under the regulative action of the eternal Ideas. If the illumination has an ideogenetic function, as I believe it to have in Augustine's view, then this function has reference not to the content of the concept, as if it infused that content, but to the quality of our judgement concerning the concept or to our discernment of a character in the object, its relation to the norm or standard, which is not contained in the bare notion of the thing. If this is so, then the difference between St. Augustine and St. Thomas does not so much consist in their respective attitudes towards abstraction (since, whether Augustine explicitly says so or not, his view, as interpreted above, would at least *demand* abstraction in some form) as in the fact that Augustine thought it necessary to postulate a special illuminative action of God, beyond His creative and conserving activity, in the mind's realisation of eternal and necessary truths, whereas St. Thomas did not.

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[1] See, for example, the article on Augustine by Portalié in the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*.

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[1] 9, 3, 3.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Solil.*, 1, 8, 15; *In Joann. Evang.*, 35, 8, 3; *De Trinit.*, 9, 15, 24; etc.

On this view of illumination one can understand how it was that St. Augustine regarded the qualities of necessity and unchangeability in the eternal truths as constituting a proof of God's existence, whereas it would be inexplicable on the ontologistic interpretation, since, if the mind perceives God or the divine ideas directly, it can need no proof of God's existence. That Augustine did not explain in detail how the content of the concept is formed, may be regrettable, but it is none the less understandable, since, though interested in psychological observation, he was interested therein, not from an academic motive, but rather from spiritual and religious motives: it was the soul's relation to God which concerned him primarily and, while the necessity and unchangeability of the eternal truths (as contrasted with the contingency and changeability of the human mind) and the doctrine of illumination helped to set this relation in a clear light and to stimulate the soul in its Godward direction, an investigation concerning the formation of the concept as such would not have had such a clear relation to the *Noverim me, noverim Te.*

To sum up. St. Augustine asks himself the question, How is it that we attain knowledge of truths which are necessary, immutable and eternal? That we do attain such knowledge is clear to him from experience. We cannot gain such knowledge simply from sense-experience, since corporeal objects are contingent, changeable and temporal. Nor can we produce the truths from our minds, which are also contingent and changeable. Moreover, such truths rule and dominate our minds, impose themselves upon our minds, and they would not do this if they depended on us. It follows that we are enabled to perceive such truths under the action of the Being who alone is necessary, changeless and eternal, God. God is like a sun which illumines our minds or a master who teaches us. At this point the difficulty in interpretation begins. The present writer inclines to the interpretation that, while the content of our concepts of corporeal objects is derived from sense-experience and reflection thereon, the regulative influence of the divine ideas (which means the influence of God) enables man to see the relation of created things to eternal supersensible realities, of which there is no direct vision in this life, and that God's light enables the mind to discern the elements of necessity, immutability and eternity in that relation between concepts which is expressed in the necessary judgement. Owing, however, to St. Augustine's use of metaphor and to the fact that he was not primarily interested in giving a systematic and carefully defined 'scholastic' account of the process of knowledge, it does not seem possible to obtain a definitive interpretation of his thought which would adequately explain all the statements he made.

CHAPTER V

ST. AUGUSTINE—III: GOD

Proof of God from eternal truths—Proofs from creatures and from universal consent—The various proofs as stages in one process—Attributes of God—Exemplarism.

1. It is probably true to say that the central and favourite proof of God's existence given by St. Augustine is that from thought, i.e. a proof from within. The starting-point of this proof is the mind's apprehension of necessary and changeless truths, of a truth 'which thou canst not call thine, or mine, or any man's, but which is present to all and gives itself to all alike.'[1] This truth is superior to the mind, inasmuch as the mind has to bow before it and accept it: the mind did not constitute it, nor can it amend it: the mind recognises that this truth transcends it and rules its thought rather than the other way round. If it were inferior to the mind, the mind could change it or amend it, while if it were equal to the mind, of the same character, it would itself be changeable, as the mind is changeable. The mind varies in its apprehension of truth, apprehending it now more clearly now less clearly, whereas truth remains ever the same. 'Hence if truth is neither inferior nor equal to our minds, nothing remains but that it should be superior and more excellent.'[2]

But the eternal truths must be founded on being, reflecting the Ground of all truth. Just as human imaginations reflect the imperfection and changeable character of the human mind in which they are grounded, and as the impressions of sense reflect the corporeal objects in which they are grounded, so the eternal truths reveal their Ground, Truth itself, reflecting the necessity and immutability of God. This refers to all essential standards. If we judge of an action that it is more or less just, for example, we judge of it according to an essential and invariable standard, essence or 'idea': human actions in the concrete may vary, but the standard remains the same. It is in the light of the eternal and perfect standard that we judge of concrete acts, and this standard must be grounded in the eternal and all-perfect Being. If there is an intelligible sphere of absolute truths, this cannot be conceived without a Ground of truth, 'the Truth, in whom, and by whom, and through whom those things are true which are true in every respect'.[1]

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[1] *De lib. arbit.*, 2, 12, 33.

[2] *Ibid.*

This argument to God as the Ground of eternal and necessary truth was not only accepted by the 'Augustinian School', but reappears in the thought of several eminent philosophers, like Leibniz.

2. St. Augustine does indeed prove the existence of God from the external, corporeal world; but his words on the subject are rather of the nature of hints or reminders or summary statements than developed proofs in the academic sense: he was not so much concerned to prove to the atheist that God exists as to show how all creation proclaims the God whom the soul can experience in itself, the living God. It was the dynamic attitude of the soul towards God which interested him, not the construction of dialectical arguments with a purely theoretical conclusion. To acknowledge with a purely intellectual assent that a supreme Being exists is one thing; to bring that truth home to oneself is something more. The soul seeks happiness and many are inclined to seek it outside themselves: St. Augustine tries to show that creation cannot give the soul the perfect happiness it seeks, but points upwards to the living God who must be sought within. This basically religious and spiritual attitude must be borne in mind, if one is to avoid first looking on Augustine's proofs as dialectical proofs in a theoretic sense and then belittling them as inadequate and trifling statements of what St. Thomas was to express much better. The purposes of the two men were not precisely the same.

Thus when Augustine, commenting on Psalm 73, remarks, 'How do I know that thou art alive, whose soul I see not? How do I know? Thou wilt answer, Because I speak, because I walk, because I work. Fool! by the operations of the body I know thee to be living, canst thou not by the works of creation know the Creator?' he is indeed stating the proof of God's existence from His effects; but he is not setting out to develop the proof for its own sake, as it were: he brings it in by way of commentary in the course of his Scriptural exegesis. Similarly, when he asserts in the *De Civitate Dei*[2] that 'the very order, disposition, beauty, change and motion of the world and of all visible things silently proclaim that it could only have been made by God, the ineffably and invisibly great and the ineffably and invisibly beautiful', he is rather reminding Christians of a fact than attempting to give a systematic proof of God's existence. Again, when Augustine, commenting on Genesis,[1] states that 'the power of the Creator and His omnipotent and all-swaying strength is for each and every creature the cause of its continued existence, and if this strength were at any time to cease from directing the things which have been created, at one and the same time both their species would cease to be and their whole nature would perish . . . ', he is stating the fact and necessity of divine conservation, reminding his readers of an acknowledged fact, rather than proving it philosophically.

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[1] *Solil.*, 1, 1, 3.

[2] 11, 4, 2.

Augustine gives, again in very brief form, what is known as the argument from universal consent. 'Such', he says, 'is the power of true Godhead that it cannot be altogether and utterly hidden from the rational creature, once it makes use of its reason. For, with the exception of a few in whom nature is excessively depraved, the whole human race confesses God to be the author of the world.'[2] Even if a man thinks that a plurality of gods exists, he still attempts to conceive 'the one God of gods' as 'something than which nothing more excellent or more sublime exists. . . . All concur in believing God to be that which excels in dignity all other objects.'[3] No doubt St. Anselm was influenced by these words of Augustine when he took as the universal idea of God in the 'ontological argument' 'that than which no greater can be conceived'.

3. Professor Gilson, in his *Introduction à l'étude de Saint Augustin,*[4] remarks that in the thought of St. Augustine there is really one long proof of God's existence, a proof which consists of various stages.[5] Thus from the stage of initial doubt and its refutation through the *Si fallor, sum,* which is a kind of methodical preliminary to the search for truth, assuring the mind of the attainability of truth, the soul proceeds to consider the world of sense. In this world, however, it does not discover the truth which it seeks and so it turns inwards, where, after considering its own fallibility and changeableness, it discovers immutable truth which transcends the soul and does not depend on the soul. It is thus led to the apprehension of God as the Ground of all truth.

The picture of Augustine's total proof of the existence of God given by M. Gilson is doubtless representative of the Saint's mind and it has the great advantage not only of bringing into prominence the proof from thought, from the eternal truths, but also of linking up the 'proof' with the soul's search for God as the source of happiness, as objective beatitude, in such a way that the proof does not remain a mere academic and theoretic string or chain of syllogisms. This picture is confirmed by a passage such as that contained in Augustine's two hundred and forty-first sermon,[1] where the Saint depicts the human soul questioning the things of sense and hearing them confess that the beauty of the visible world, of mutable things, is the creation and reflection of immutable Beauty, after which the soul proceeds inwards, discovers itself and realises the superiority of soul to body. 'Men saw these two things, pondered them, investigated both of them, and found that each is mutable in man.' The mind, therefore, finding both body and soul to be mutable goes in search of what is immutable. 'And thus they arrived at a knowledge of God the Creator by means of the things which He created.' St. Augustine, then, in no way denies what we call a 'natural' or 'rational' knowledge of God ; but this rational knowledge of God is viewed in close connection with the soul's search for beatifying Truth and is seen as itself a kind of self-revelation of God to the soul, a revelation which is completed in the full revelation through Christ and confirmed in the Christian life of prayer. Augustine would thus make no sharp dichotomy between the spheres of natural and revealed theology, not because he failed to see the distinction between reason and faith, but rather because he viewed the soul's cognition of God in close connection with its spiritual search for God as the one Object and Source of beatitude. When Harnack reproaches Augustine with not having made clear the relation of faith to science,[2] he fails to realise that the Saint is primarily concerned with the spiritual experience of God and that in his eyes faith and reason each have their part to play in an experience which is an organic unity.

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[1] *De Gen. ad litt.*, 4, 22, 22.

[2] *In Joann. Evang.*, 106, 4.

[3] *De doct. Christ.*, 1, 7, 7.

[4] Ch. 2.

[5] Cf. also G. Grunwald: *Geschichte der Gottesbeweise im Mittelalter*, in *Beiträge*, 6, 3, p. 6.

4. Augustine insists that the world of creatures reflects and manifests God, even if it does so in a very inadequate manner, and that 'if any thing worthy of praise is noticed in the nature of things, whether it be judged worthy of slight praise or of great, it must be applied to the most excellent and ineffable praise of

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[1] *Serm.*, 241, 2, 2 and 3, 3.

[2] *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 3rd edit., t. 3, p. 119.

the Creator.' Creatures tend indeed to not-being, but as long as they are, they possess some form, and this is a reflection of the Form which can neither decline nor pass away.[1] Thus the order and unity of Nature proclaims the unity of the Creator,[2] just as the goodness of creatures, their positive reality, reveals the goodness of God[3] and the order and stability of the universe manifest the wisdom of God.[4] On the other hand, God, as the self-existent, eternal and immutable Being, is infinite, and, as infinite, incomprehensible. God is His own Perfection, is 'simple', so that His wisdom and knowledge, His goodness and power, are His own essence, which is without accidents.[5] God, therefore, transcends space in virtue of His spirituality and infinity and simplicity, as He transcends time in virtue of His eternity: 'God is Himself in no interval nor extension of place, but in His immutable and pre-eminent might is both interior to everything because all things are in Him and exterior to everything because He is above all things. So too He is in no interval nor extension of time, but in His immutable eternity is older than all things because He is before all things and younger than all things because the same He is after all things.'[6]

5. From all eternity God knew all things which He was to make: He does not know them because He has made them, but rather the other way round: God first knew the things of creation though they came into being only in time. The species of created things have their ideas or *rationes* in God, and God from all eternity saw in Himself, as possible reflections of Himself, the things which He could create and would create. He knew them before creation as they are in Him, as Exemplar, but He made them as they exist, i.e. as external and finite reflections of His divine essence.[7] God did nothing without knowledge, He foresaw all that He would make, but His knowledge is not distinct acts of knowledge, but 'one eternal, immutable and ineffable vision'.[8] It is in virtue of this eternal act of knowledge, of vision, to which nothing is past or future, that God sees, 'foresees', even the free acts of men, knowing 'beforehand', for example, 'what we should ask of Him and when, and to whom He would listen or not listen, and on what subjects'.[9] An adequate discussion of this last point, which would

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[1] *De lib. arbit.*, 2, 17, 46. [2] *Ibid.*, 3, 23, 70. [3] *De Trinit.*, 11, 5, 8.

[4] *De Civit. Dei*, 11, 28.

[5] *De Trinit.*, 5, 2, 3; 5, 11, 12; 6, 4, 6; 6, 10, 11; 15, 43, 22; *In Joann. Evang.*, 99, 4; etc.

[6] *De Gen. ad litt.*, 8, 26, 48. [7] Cf. *ibid.*, 5, 15, 33; *Ad Orosium*, 8, 9.

[8] *De Trinit.*, 15, 7, 13. [9] *Ibid.*, 15, 13, 22.

necessitate consideration of the Augustinian theory of grace, cannot be attempted here.

Contemplating His own essence from eternity God sees in Himself all possible limited essences, the finite reflections of His infinite perfection, so that the essences or *rationes* of things are present in the divine mind from all eternity as the divine ideas, though, in view of Augustine's teaching on the divine simplicity previously mentioned, this should not be taken to mean that there are 'accidents' in God, ideas which are ontologically distinct from His essence. In the *Confessions*[1] the Saint exclaims that the eternal 'reasons' of created things remain unchangeably in God, and in the *De Ideis*[2] he explains that the divine ideas are 'certain archetypal forms or stable and unchangeable reasons of things, which were not themselves formed but are contained in the divine mind eternally and are always the same. They neither arise nor pass away, but whatever arises and passes away is formed according to them.' The corollary of this is that creatures have ontological truth in so far as they embody or exemplify the model in the divine mind, and that God Himself is the standard of truth. This exemplarist doctrine was, of course, influenced by neo-Platonic theory, according to which the Platonic exemplary ideas are contained in *Nous*, though for Augustine the ideas are contained in the Word, who is not a subordinate hypostasis, like the neo-Platonic *Nous*, but the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, consubstantial with the Father.[3] From Augustine the doctrine of exemplarism passed to the Middle Ages. It may be thought of as characteristic of the Augustinian School; but it must be remembered that St. Thomas Aquinas did not deny it, though he was careful to state it in such a way as not to imply that there are ontologically separate ideas in God, a doctrine which would impair the divine simplicity, for in God there is no real distinction save that between the three divine Persons.[4] Still, though Aquinas was in this respect a follower of Augustine, it was St. Bonaventure who most insisted in the thirteenth century on the doctrine of exemplarism and on the presence of the divine Ideas in the Word of God, an insistence which contributed to his hostile attitude to Aristotle the metaphysician, who threw overboard the ideas of Plato.

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[1] 1, 6, 9.

[2] 2.

[3] *De Trinit.*, 4, 1, 3.

[4] *Cf.* e.g. *Summa Theol.*, Ia, 15, 2 and 3.

CHAPTER VI

ST. AUGUSTINE—IV: THE WORLD

*Free creation out of nothing—Matter—*Rationes seminales—*Numbers—Soul and body—Immortality—Origin of soul.*

ONE would hardly expect, once given the general attitude and complexion of Augustine's thought, to find the Saint showing very much interest in the material world for its own sake: his thought centred round the soul's relation to God; but his general philosophy involved a theory of the corporeal world, a theory consisting of elements taken from former thinkers and set in a Christian framework. It would be a mistake, however, to think that Augustine drew purely mechanically on previous thinkers for his theories: he emphasised those lines which seemed to him best calculated to underline nature's relation to and dependence on God.

1. A doctrine which was not developed by pagan thinkers, but which was held by Augustine in common with other Christian writers, was that of the creation of the world out of nothing by God's free act. In the Plotinian emanation-theory the world is depicted as proceeding in some way from God without God becoming in any way diminished or altered thereby, but for Plotinus God does not act freely (since such activity would, he thought, postulate change in God) but rather *necessitate naturae*, the Good necessarily diffusing itself. The doctrine of free creation out of nothing is not to be found in neo-Platonism, if we except one or two pagan thinkers who had most probably been influenced by Christian teaching. Augustine may have thought that Plato had taught creation out of nothing in time, but it is improbable, in spite of Aristotle's interpretation of the *Timaeus*, that Plato really meant to imply this. However, whatever Augustine may have thought about Plato's views on the matter, he himself clearly states the doctrine of free creation out of nothing and it is essential to his insistence on the utter supremacy of God and the world's entire dependence on Him. All things owe their being to God.[1]

2. But suppose that things were made out of some formless matter? Would not this formless matter be independent of God? First of all, says Augustine, are you speaking of a matter which is

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[1] *De lib. arbit.*, 3, 15, 42.

absolutely formless or of a matter which is formless only in comparison with completely formed? If the former, then you are speaking of what is equivalent to nothingness. 'That out of which God has created all things is what possesses neither species nor form; and this is nothing other than nothing.' If, however, you are speaking of the latter, of matter which has no completed form, but which has inchoate form, in the sense of possessing the capacity to receive form, then such matter is not altogether nothing indeed, but, as something, it has what being it has only from God. 'Wherefore, even if the universe was created out of some formless matter, this very matter was created from something which was wholly nothing.'[1] In the *Confessions*[2] Augustine identifies this matter with the mutability of bodies (which is equivalent to saying that it is the potential element) and observes that if he could call it 'nothing' or assert that it does not exist, he would do so; but if it is the capacity of receiving forms, it cannot be called absolutely nothing. Again, he remarks in the *De vera religione*[3] that not only the possession of form but even the capacity to receive form is a good, and what is a good cannot be absolute nothing. Yet this matter, which is not absolutely nothing, is itself the creation of God, not preceding formed things in time but concreated with form,[4] and he identified the 'unformed matter which God made out of nothing' with the heaven and earth mentioned in the first verse of the first chapter of Genesis as the primary creation of God.[5] In other words, St. Augustine is stating in rudimentary form the Scholastic doctrine that God created out of nothing not absolutely formless 'prime matter', apart from all form, but form and matter together, though, if we choose to think of Augustine's statements as a rudimentary expression of the more elaborate Scholastic doctrine, we should also remember that the Saint is not so concerned with developing a philosophical doctrine for its own sake as with emphasising the essential dependence of all creatures on God and the perishable nature of all corporeal creatures, even when once constituted in existence. They have their being from God, but their being is bound up with their mutability.

3. A theory which was dear to Augustine himself and to his followers, though it was rejected by St. Thomas, and which was calculated to exalt the divine agency at the expense of the causal

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[1] Cf. *De vera relig.*, 18, 35–6.
[2] 12, 6, 6.
[3] *Loc. cit.*
[4] *De Gen. ad litt.*, 1, 15, 29.
[5] *De Gen. contra Manich.*, 1, 17, 11.

activity of creatures, was that of the *rationes seminales* or 'seminal reasons', the germs of those things which were to develop in the course of time. Thus even man, as regards his body at least, to leave the origin of the soul out of account for the moment, was created in the *rationes seminales*, 'invisibly, potentially, causally, in the way that things are made which are to be but have not yet been made'.[1] The *rationes seminales* are germs of things or invisible powers or potentialities, created by God in the beginning in the humid element and developing into the objects of various species by their temporal unfolding. The idea of these germinal potentialities was to be found, and doubtless was found by Augustine, in the philosophy of Plotinus and ultimately it goes back to the *rationes seminales* or λόγοι σπερματικοί of Stoicism, but it is an idea of rather vague content. Indeed, St. Augustine never supposed that they were the object of experience, that they could be seen or touched: they are invisible, having inchoate form or a potentiality to the development of form according to the divine plan. The seminal reasons are not purely passive, but tend to self-development, though the absence of the requisite conditions and circumstances and of other external agencies may hinder or prevent their development.[2] St. Bonaventure, who maintained the theory of St. Augustine on this point, compared the *ratio seminalis* to the rosebud, which is not yet actually the rose but will develop into the rose, given the presence of the necessary positive agencies and the absence of negative or preventive agencies.

That St. Augustine asserted a rather vague theory regarding objects which are not the term of direct experience will appear less surprising if one considers *why* he asserted it. The assertion was the result of an exegetic, not a scientific problem, and the problem arose in this way. According to the book of Ecclesiasticus[3] 'He that liveth for ever created all things together', while on the other hand according to the book of Genesis the fishes and birds, for instance, appeared only on the fifth 'day' of creation, while the cattle and beasts of the earth appeared only on the sixth 'day'. (Augustine did not interpret 'day' as our day of twenty-four hours, since the sun was made only on the fourth 'day'.) How then can these two statements be reconciled, that God created all things together and that some things were made after others, that is to say, that *not* all things were created together? St. Augustine's way of solving the problem was to say that God did indeed create all things together in the beginning, but that He did not create them all in the same condition: many things, all plants, fishes, birds, animals, and man himself, He created invisibly, latently, potentially, in germ, in their *rationes seminales*. In this way God created in the beginning all the vegetation of the earth before it was actually growing on the earth,[1] and even man himself. He would thus solve the apparent contradiction between Ecclesiasticus and Genesis by making a distinction. If you are speaking of actual formal completion, then Ecclesiasticus is not referring to this, whereas Genesis is: if you are including germinal or seminal creation, then this is what Ecclesiasticus refers to.

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[1] *De Gen. ad litt.*, 6, 5, 8.

[2] *De Trinit.*, 3, 8, 13.

[3] 18, 1.

Why did not Augustine content himself with 'seeds' in the ordinary sense, the visible seeds of plants, the grain and so on? Because in the book of Genesis it is implied that the earth brought forth the green herb *before* its seed,[2] and the same thing is implied in regard to the other living things which reproduce their kind. He found himself compelled, therefore, to have recourse to a different kind of seed. For example, God created in the beginning the *ratio seminalis* of wheat, which, according to God's plan and activity, unfolded itself at the appointed time as actual wheat, which then contained seed in the ordinary sense.[3] Moreover, God did not create all seeds or all eggs in act at the beginning, so that they too require a *ratio seminalis*. Each species, then, with all its future developments and particular members, was created at the beginning in the appropriate seminal reason.

From what has been said it should be clear that the Saint was not considering primarily a scientific problem but rather an exegetic problem, so that it is really beside the point to adduce him either as a protagonist or as an opponent of evolution in the Lamarckian or Darwinian sense.

4. St. Augustine made use of the Platonic number-theme, which goes back to Pythagoreanism. Naturally his treatment of number sometimes appears to us as fanciful and even fantastic, as when he speaks of perfect and imperfect numbers or interprets references to numbers in the Scriptures; but, speaking generally, he looks on number as the principle of order and form, of beauty and perfection, of proportion and law. Thus the Ideas are the eternal numbers, while bodies are temporal numbers, which unfold themselves in

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[1] *De Gen. ad litt.*, 5, 4, 7–9.

[2] Gen. 1. 11.

[3] *De Gen. ad litt.*, 5, 4, 9.

time. Bodies indeed can be considered as numbers in various ways, as being wholes consisting of a number of ordered and related parts, as unfolding themselves in successive stages (the plant, for example, germinates, breaks into leaf, produces flower and fruit, seminates), or as consisting of a number of parts well disposed in space; in other words, as exemplifying intrinsic number, local or spatial number, and temporal number. The 'seminal reasons' are hidden numbers, whereas bodies are manifest numbers. Again, just as mathematical number begins from one and ends in a number which is itself an integer, so the hierarchy of beings begins with the supreme One, God, which brings into existence and is reflected in more or less perfect unities. This comparison or parallel between mathematical number and metaphysical number was derived, of course, from Plotinus, and in general Augustine's treatment of number adds nothing of substance to the treatment already accorded it in the Pythagorean-Platonic tradition.

5. The peak of the material creation is man, who consists of body and immortal soul. Augustine is quite clear about the fact that man does consist of soul and body, as when he says that 'a soul in possession of a body does not constitute two persons but one man'.[1] Why is it necessary to mention such an obvious point? Because Augustine speaks of the soul as a substance in its own right (*substantia quaedam rationis particeps, regendo corpori accomodata*)[2] and even defines man as 'a rational soul using a mortal and earthly body'.[3] This Platonic attitude towards the soul has its repercussions, as we have already seen, in Augustine's doctrine of sensation, which he represents as an activity of the soul using the body as an instrument, rather than as an activity of the total psycho-physical organism: it is, in fact, a temporary increase of intensity in the action by which the soul animates a certain part of the body. The soul, being superior to the body, cannot be acted on by the body, but it perceives the changes in the body due to an external stimulus.

6. The human soul is an immaterial principle, though, like the souls of brutes, it animates the body. A man may say or even think that his soul is composed of air, for example, but he can never know that it is composed of air. On the other hand he knows very well that he is intelligent, that he thinks, and he has no reason to suppose that air can think.[4] Moreover, the soul's

[1] *In Joann. Evang.*, 19, 5, 15.

[2] *De quant. animae*, 13, 21.

[3] *De moribus eccl.*, 1, 27, 52; *In Joann. Evang.*, 19, 5, 15.

[4] *De Gen. ad litt.*, 7, 21, 28; *De Trinit.*, 10, 10, 14.

immateriality and its substantiality assure it of immortality. On this point Augustine uses arguments which go back to Plato.[1] For example, Augustine utilises the argument of the *Phaedo* that, as the soul is the principle of life and as two contraries are incompatible, the soul cannot die. Apart from the fact that this argument is not very convincing in any case, it could not be acceptable to Augustine without modification, since it would seem to imply that the soul exists of itself or is a part of God. He adapted the argument, therefore, by saying that the soul participates in Life, holding its being and essence from a Principle which admits of no contrary, and by arguing that, as the being which the soul receives from this Principle (which admits no contrary) is precisely *life*, it cannot die. The argument, however, might clearly be taken to imply that the animal soul is immortal also, since it too is a principle of life, and so would prove too much. It must, then, be taken in conjunction with another argument, also derived from Plato, to the effect that the soul apprehends indestructible truth, which shows that it is itself indestructible. In the *De quantitate animae*[2] Augustine distinguishes the souls of beasts, which possess the power of sensation but not that of reasoning and knowing, from human souls, which possess both, so that this argument applies only to human souls. Plato had argued that the human soul, as capable of apprehending the Ideas, which are eternal and indestructible, shows itself to be akin to them, to be 'divine', that is to say, indestructible and eternal, and Augustine, without affirming pre-existence, proves the immortality of the soul in an analogous manner. In addition, he argues from the desire of beatitude, the desire for perfect happiness, and this became a favourite argument among Augustinians, with St. Bonaventure, for example.

7. Augustine clearly held that the soul is created by God,[3] but does not seem to have made up his mind as to the precise time and mode of its origin. He seems to have toyed with some form of the Platonic pre-existence theory while refusing to allow that the soul was put into the body as a punishment for faults committed in a pre-earthly condition, but the chief question for him was whether God creates each individual soul separately or created all other souls in Adam's, so that the soul is 'handed on' by the parents (Traducianism). This second opinion would appear logically to

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[1] Cf. *Solil.*, 2, 19, 33; *Ep.*, 3, 4; *De Immortal. An.*, ch. 1-6.

[2] 28, 54 ff.

[3] *De anima et eius origine*, 1, 4, 4.

involve a materialistic view of the soul, whereas in fact Augustine certainly did not hold any such view and insisted that the soul is not present in the body by local diffusion;[1] but it was for theological, not philosophical, reasons that he inclined towards traducianism, as he thought that in this way original sin could be explained as a transmitted stain on the soul. If original sin is looked on as something positive and not as in itself a privation, there is indeed a difficulty, even if not an insuperable difficulty, in affirming individual creation by God of each single human soul, but even apart from that it does not alter the fact that traducianism is inconsistent with a clear affirmation of the soul's spiritual and immaterial character.

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[1] *Ep.*, 156.

CHAPTER VII

ST. AUGUSTINE—V: MORAL THEORY

Happiness and God—Freedom and Obligation—Need of grace—Evil—the two Cities.

1. St. Augustine's ethic has this in common with what one might call the typical Greek ethic, that it is eudaemonistic in character, that it proposes an end for human conduct, namely happiness; but this happiness is to be found only in God. 'The Epicurean who places man's supreme good in the body, places his hope in himself,'[1] but 'the rational creature . . . has been so made that it cannot itself be the good by which it is made happy':[2] the human being is mutable and insufficient to itself, it can find its happiness only in the possession of what is more than itself, in the possession of an immutable object. Not even virtue itself can be the end: 'it is not the virtue of thy soul that maketh thee happy, but He who hath given thee the virtue, who hath inspired thee to will, and hath given thee the power to do.'[3] It is not the ideal of the Epicurean that can bring happiness to man, nor even that of the Stoic, but God Himself: 'the striving after God is, therefore, the desire of beatitude, the attainment of God is beatitude itself.'[4] That the human being strives after beatitude or happiness, and that beatitude means the attainment of an object, Augustine knew well from his own experience, even if he found confirmation of this fact in philosophy; that this object is God, he learnt also from his personal experience, even if he had been helped to realise the fact by the philosophy of Plotinus. But when he said that happiness is to be found in the attainment and possession of the eternal and immutable Object, God, he was thinking, not of a purely philosophic and theoretic contemplation of God, but of a loving union with and possession of God, and indeed of the supernatural union with God held up to the Christian as the term of his grace-aided endeavour: one cannot well separate out in Augustine's thought a natural and a supernatural ethic, since he deals with man in the concrete, and man in the concrete has a supernatural vocation: he regarded the neo-Platonists as discerning something of that which

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[1] *Serm.*, 150, 7, 8.

[2] *Ep.*, 140, 23, 56.

[3] *Serm.*, 150, 8, 9.

[4] *De moribus eccl.*, 1, 11, 18.

was revealed by Christ, neo-Platonism as an inadequate and partial realisation of the truth.

The ethic of Augustine is, then, primarily an ethic of love: it is by the will that man reaches out towards God and finally takes possession of and enjoys Him. 'When therefore the will, which is the intermediate good, cleaves to the immutable good . . . , man finds therein the blessed life';[1] 'for if God is man's supreme good . . . it clearly follows, since to seek the supreme good is to live well, that to live well is nothing else but to love God with all the heart, with all the soul, with all the mind.'[2] Indeed, after quoting the words of Christ, as recorded by St. Matthew,[3] 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind' and 'thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself', Augustine asserts that 'Natural philosophy is here, since all the causes of all natural things are in God the Creator', and that, 'Ethics are here, since a good and honest life is not formed otherwise than by loving as they should be loved those things which we ought to love, namely, God and our neighbour.'[4] Augustine's ethic thus centres round the dynamism of the will, which is a dynamism of love (*pondus meum, amor meus*),[5] though the attainment of beatitude, 'participation in the immutable good', is not possible for man unless he be aided by grace, unless he receives 'the gratuitous mercy of the Creator'.[6]

2. The will, however, is free, and the free will is subject to moral obligation. The Greek philosophers had a conception of happiness as the end of conduct, and one cannot say that they had no idea of obligation; but owing to his clearer notion of God and of divine creation Augustine was able to give to moral obligation a firmer metaphysical basis than the Greeks had been able to give it.

The necessary basis of obligation is freedom. The will is free to turn away from the immutable Good and to attach itself to mutable goods, taking as its object either the goods of the soul, without reference to God, or the goods of the body. The will necessarily seeks happiness, satisfaction, and *de facto* this happiness can be found only in God, the immutable Good, but man has not the vision of God in this life, he can turn his attention to and cling to mutable goods in place of God, and 'this turning away and this turning to are not forced but voluntary actions'.[7]

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[1] *De lib. arbit.*, 2, 19, 52.

[2] *De moribus eccl.*, 1, 25, 46.

[3] 22. 37–9.

[4] *Ep.*, 137, 5, 17.

[5] *Conf.*, 13, 9, 10.

[6] *Ep.*, 140, 21, 14.

[7] *De lib. arbit.*, 2, 19, 35.

The human will is, then, free to turn to God or away from God, but at the same time the human mind must recognise the truth, not only that what it seeks, happiness, can be found only in the possession of the immutable Good, God, but also that the direction of the will to that good is implanted by God and willed by God, who is the Creator. By turning away from God the will runs counter to the divine law, which is expressed in human nature, made by God for Himself. All men are conscious to some extent of moral standards and laws: 'even the ungodly . . . rightly blame and rightly praise many things in the conduct of men.' How are they enabled to do so, save by seeing the rules according to which men ought to live, even if they do not personally obey these laws in their own conduct? Where do they see these rules? Not in their own minds, since their minds are mutable, whereas the 'rules of justice' are immutable; not in their characters, since they are *ex hypothesi* unjust. They see the moral rules, says Augustine, using his customary, if obscure, manner of speaking, 'in the book of that light which is called Truth'. The eternal laws of morality are impressed in the heart of man, 'as the impression of a ring passes into the wax, yet does not leave the ring'. There are indeed some men who are more or less blind to the law, but even they are 'sometimes touched by the splendour of the omnipresent truth'.[1] Thus, just as the human mind perceives eternal theoretic truths in the light of God, so it perceives, in the same light, practical truths or principles which should direct the free will. Man is by his nature, his nature considered in the concrete, set towards God; but he can fulfil the dynamism of that nature only by observing the moral laws which reflect the eternal law of God, and which are not arbitrary rules but follow from the Nature of God and the relationship of man to God. The laws are not arbitrary caprices of God, but their observance is willed by God, for He would not have created man without willing that man should be what He meant him to be. The will is free, but it is at the same time subject to moral obligations, and to love God is a duty.

3. The relationship of man to God, however, is the relationship of a finite creature to the infinite Being, and the result is that the gulf cannot be bridged without the divine aid, without grace: grace is necessary even to begin to will to love God. 'When man tries to live justly by his own strength without the help of the liberating grace of God, he is then conquered by sins; but in free will he has

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[1] *De Trinit.*, 14, 15, 21.

it in his power to believe in the Liberator and to receive grace.'[1] 'The law was therefore given that grace might be sought; grace was given that the law might be fulfilled.'[2] 'Our will is by the law shown to be weak, that grace may heal its infirmity.'[3] 'The law of teaching and commanding that which cannot be fulfilled without grace demonstrates to man his weakness, in order that the weakness thus proved may resort to the Saviour, by whose healing the will may be able to do what in its feebleness it found impossible.'[4]

It would be out of place here to enter on the question of Augustine's doctrine of grace and its relation to the free will, which is in any case a difficult question; but it is necessary to grasp the fact that when Augustine makes the love of God the essence of the moral law, he is referring to that union of the will with God which requires the elevation effected by grace. This is only natural, once given the fact that he is considering and treating man in the concrete, man endowed with a supernatural vocation, and it means that he supplements and completes the wisdom of philosophy with the wisdom of the Scriptures. One can, for purposes of schematism, try to separate Augustine the philosopher and Augustine the theologian; but in his own eyes the true philosopher is a man who surveys reality in the concrete, as it is, and it cannot be seen as it is without taking into account the economy of redemption and of grace.

4. If moral perfection consists in loving God, in directing the will to God and bringing all other powers, e.g. the senses, into harmony with this direction, evil will consist in turning the will away from God. But what is evil in itself, moral evil? Is it something positive? It cannot, first of all, be something positive in the sense of something created by God: the cause of moral evil is not the Creator but the created will. The cause of good things is the divine goodness, whereas the cause of evil is the created will which turns away from the immutable Good:[5] evil is a turning-away of the created will from the immutable and infinite Good.[6] But evil cannot strictly be termed a 'thing', since this word implies a positive reality, and if moral evil were a positive reality, it would have to be ascribed to the Creator, unless one were willing to attribute to the creature the power of positive creation out of nothing. Evil, then, is 'that which falls away from essence and tends to non-being. . . . It tends to make that which is cease to be.'[7]

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[1] *Expos. quarumdam prop. ex epist. ad Rom.*, 44.

[2] *De spir. et litt.*, 19, 34.

[3] *Ibid.*, 9, 15.

[4] *Ep.*, 145, 3, 4.

[5] *Enchirid.*, 23.

[6] *De lib. arbit.*, 1, 16, 35.

[7] *De moribus eccl.*, 2, 2, 2.

Everything in which there is order and measure is to be ascribed to God, but in the will which turns away from God there is disorder. The will itself is good, but the absence of right order, or rather the privation of right order, for which the human agent is responsible, is evil. Moral evil is thus a privation of right order in the created will.

This doctrine of evil as a privation was the doctrine of Plotinus, and in it Augustine found the answer to the Manichees. For if evil is a privation and not a positive thing, one is no longer faced with the choice of either ascribing moral evil to the good Creator or of inventing an ultimate evil principle responsible for evil. This doctrine was adopted by the Scholastics generally from Augustine and finds adherents among several modern philosophers of note, Leibniz, for example.

5. If the principle of morality is love of God and the essence of evil is a falling-away from God, it follows that the human race can be divided into two great camps, that of those who love God and prefer God to self and that of those who prefer self to God: it is by the character of their wills, by the character of their dominant love, that men are ultimately marked. Augustine sees the history of the human race as the history of the dialectic of these two principles, the one in forming the City of Jerusalem, the other the City of Babylon. 'Let each one question himself as to what he loveth; and he shall find of which (city) he is a citizen.'[1] 'There are two kinds of love; . . . These two kinds of love distinguish the two cities established in the human race . . . in the so to speak commingling of which the ages are passed.'[2] 'You have heard and know that there are two cities, for the present mingled together in body, but in heart separated.'[3]

To the Christian history is necessarily of profound importance. It was in history that man fell, in history that he was redeemed: it is in history, progressively, that the Body of Christ on earth grows and develops and that God's plan is unfolded. To the Christian, history apart from the data of revelation is shorn of its significance: it is small wonder, then, that Augustine looked on history from the Christian standpoint and that his outlook was primarily spiritual and moral. If we speak of a philosophy of history in Augustine's thought, the word 'philosophy' must be understood in a wide sense as Christian wisdom. The knowledge of the facts of history may be mainly a natural knowledge, for example, knowledge of the existence and development of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires; but the principles by which the facts are interpreted and given meaning and judged are not taken from the facts themselves. The temporal and passing is judged in the light of the eternal. That Augustine's tendency to concentrate on the aspect of Assyria under which it appeared to him as an embodiment of the City of Babylon (in the moral sense) would not commend itself to the modern historian is understandable enough; but Augustine was not concerned to play the part of an historian in the ordinary sense, but rather to give the 'philosophy' of history as he envisaged it, and the 'philosophy' of history, as he understood it, is the discernment of the spiritual and moral significance of historical phenomena and events. Indeed, so far as there can be a philosophy of history at all, the Christian at least will agree with Augustine that only a Christian philosophy of history can ever approach adequacy: to the non-Christian the position of the Jewish people, for example, is radically different from the position it occupies in the eyes of the Christian. If it were objected, as it obviously could be, that this involves a theological interpretation of history, a reading of history in the light of dogma, the objection would not cause Augustine any difficulty, since he never pretended to make that radical dichotomy between theology and philosophy which is implied in the objection.

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[1] *In Ps.*, 64, 2. [2] *De Gen. ad litt.*, 11, 15, 20. [3] *In Ps.*, 136, 1.

CHAPTER VIII

ST. AUGUSTINE—VI: THE STATE

The State and the City of Babylon not identical—The pagan State does not embody true justice—Church superior to State.

1. As I have already remarked, Augustine saw in history, as he saw in the individual, the struggle between two principles of conduct, two loves, on the one hand the love of God and submission to His law, on the other hand love of self, of pleasure, of the world. It was only natural, then, that as he saw the embodiment of the heavenly city, Jerusalem, in the Catholic Church, so he should see in the State, particularly in the pagan State, the embodiment of the City of Babylon, and the result of Augustine's attitude in this matter is that one is tempted to assume that for him the City of God can be identified with the Church as a visible society and the City of Babylon with the State as such. Does he not ask, 'Without justice what are kingdoms but great bands of robbers? What is a band of robbers but a little kingdom?' And does he not approve the pirate's reply to Alexander the Great, 'Because I do it with a little ship, I am called a robber, and you, because you do it with a great fleet, are called an emperor'?[1] Assyria and pagan Rome were founded, increased and maintained by injustice, violence, rapine, oppression: is not this to affirm that the State and the City of Babylon are one and the same thing?

Undeniably Augustine thought that the most adequate historical embodiments of the City of Babylon are to be found in the pagan empires of Assyria and Rome, just as he certainly thought that the City of Jerusalem, the City of God, is manifested in the Church. None the less, the ideas of the heavenly and earthly cities are moral and spiritual ideas, the contents of which are not exactly coterminous with any actual organisation. For instance, a man may be a Christian and belong to the Church; but if the principle of his conduct is self-love and not the love of God, he belongs spiritually and morally to the City of Babylon. Again, if an official of the State is governed in his conduct by the love of God, if he pursues justice and charity, he belongs spiritually and morally to the City of Jerusalem. 'We see now a citizen of Jerusalem, a citizen of the kingdom of heaven, holding some office upon earth; as, for example, wearing the purple, serving as magistrate, as aedile, as proconsul, as emperor, directing the earthly republic, but he hath his heart above if he is a Christian, if he is of the faithful. . . . Let us not therefore despair of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven, when we see them engaged in the affairs of Babylon, doing something terrestrial in a terrestrial republic; nor again let us forthwith congratulate all men whom we see engaged in celestial matters, for even the sons of the pestilence sit sometimes in the seat of Moses. . . . But there will come a time of winnowing when they will be separated, the one from the other, with the greatest care. . . .'[1] Even if, then, the City of Babylon in the moral and spiritual sense tends to be identified with the State, particularly the pagan State, and the City of Jerusalem tends to be identified with the Church as a visible organisation, the identification is not complete: one cannot legitimately conclude that because a man is, for example, a Church official, he is necessarily a citizen of the spiritual City of Jerusalem, for as far as his spiritual and moral condition is concerned he may belong to the City of Babylon. Moreover, if the State were necessarily coincident with the City of Babylon, no Christian could legitimately hold office in the State, or even be a citizen, if he could help it, and St. Augustine certainly did not subscribe to any such opinion.

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[1] *De Civit. Dei*, 4, 4.

2. But if the State and the City of Babylon cannot simply be identified, St. Augustine certainly did not think that the State as such is founded on justice or that true justice is realised in any actual State, not at any rate in any pagan State. That there is some justice even in a pagan State is sufficiently obvious, but true justice demands that that worship should be paid to God which He requires, and pagan Rome did not pay that worship, indeed in Christian times she did her best to prevent its being paid. On the other hand pagan Rome was obviously a State. How, then, is the conclusion to be avoided that true justice must not be included within the definition of the State? For, if it is, one would be reduced to the impossible position of denying that pagan Rome was a State. Augustine accordingly defines a society as a 'multitude of rational creatures associated in a common agreement as to the things which it loves'.[2] If the things which it loves are good, it will be a good society, while, if the things which it loves are bad, it will be a bad society; but nothing is said in the definition of a

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[1] *In Ps.*, 51, 6.

[2] *De Civit. Dei*, 19, 24.

people as to whether the objects of its love are good or bad, with the result that the definition will apply even to the pagan State.

This does not mean, of course, that in Augustine's eyes the State exists in a non-moral sphere: on the contrary, the same moral law holds good for States as for individuals. The point he wants to make is that the State will not embody true justice, will not be a really moral State, unless it is a Christian State: it is Christianity which makes men good citizens. The State itself, as an instrument of force, has its roots in the consequences of original sin and, given the fact of original sin and its consequences, is a necessary institution; but a just State is out of the question unless it is a Christian State. 'No State is more perfectly established and preserved than on the foundations, and by the bond, of faith and of firm concord, when the highest and truest good, namely God, is loved by all and men love each other in Him without dissimulation because they love one another for His sake.'[1] The State, in other words, is informed by love of this world, when it is left to itself; but it can be informed by higher principles, principles which it must derive from Christianity.

3. From this there follow two consequences of importance. (1) The Christian Church will try to inform civil society with its own celestial principles of conduct: it has a mission to act as the leaven of the earth. Augustine's conception of the Christian Church and her mission was essentially a dynamic and a social conception: the Church must permeate the State by her principles. (2) The Church is thus the only really perfect society and is definitely superior to the State, for, if the State must take her principles from the Church, the State cannot be above the Church nor even on a level with the Church. In maintaining this view St. Augustine stands at the head of the mediaeval exaltation of the Church *vis-à-vis* the State, and he was only consistent in invoking the help of the State against the Donatists, since, on his view, the Church is a superior society to which Christ has subjected the kingdoms of the world, and which has the right to make use of the powers of the world.[2] But if Augustine's view of the relation of Church to State was the one which became characteristic of western Christendom and not of Byzantium, it does not follow that his view necessarily tended to undermine the significance of civic and social life. As Christopher Dawson has pointed out,[3]

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[1] *Ep.*, 137, 5, 18.

[2] Cf. *ibid.*, 105, 5, 6; 35, 3.

[3] *A Monument to St. Augustine*, pp. 76–7.

although Augustine deprived the State of its aura of divinity, he at the same time insisted on the value of the free human personality and of moral responsibility, even against the State, so that in this way he 'made possible the ideal of a social order resting upon the free personality and a common effort towards moral ends'.

CHAPTER IX

THE PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS

Writings and author—Affirmative way—Negative way—Neo-Platonic interpretation of Trinity—Ambiguous teaching on creation—Problem of evil—Orthodoxy or unorthodoxy?

1. DURING the Middle Ages the writings which were then ascribed to St. Paul's Athenian convert, Dionysius the Areopagite, enjoyed high esteem, not only among mystics and authors of works on mystical theology, but also among professional theologians and philosophers, such as St. Albert the Great and St. Thomas Aquinas. The reverence and respect paid to these writings were, of course, in great part due to the mistaken notion as to their authorship, a mistake which originated in the author's use of a pseudonym. 'Dionysius the Presbyter, to his fellow-presbyter Timothy.'[1] In 533 the Patriarch of Antioch, Severus, appealed to the writings of Dionysius, in support of his Monophysite doctrine, a fact which can be safely taken to mean that the writings were already regarded as possessed of authority. But, even if Severus appealed to the works in question in support of heretical doctrine, their ascription to St. Dionysius would free them from any suspicion as to their orthodoxy. In the Eastern Church they were widely circulated, being commented on by Maximus the Confessor in the seventh century and appealed to by the great Eastern Doctor, St. John Damascene, in the eighth century, though Hypatius of Ephesus attacked their authenticity.

In the West, Pope Martin I appealed to the writings as authentic at the first Lateran Council in 649, and about the year 858 John Scotus Eriugena, at the request of Charles the Bald, made a translation from the Greek text which had been presented to Louis the Fair in 827 by the Emperor Michael Balbus. John Scotus, besides translating the writings of the Pseudo-Dionysius, also commented on them, thus furnishing the first of a series of commentaries in Western Christendom. For example, Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141) commented on the *Celestial Hierarchy*, using Eriugena's translation, while Robert Grosseteste (d. 1253) and Albert the Great (d. 1280) also commented on the writings.

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[1] *Exordium* to the *Divine Names*.

St. Thomas Aquinas composed a commentary on the *Divine Names* about 1261. All these authors, as also, for example, Denis the Carthusian, accepted the authenticity of the writings; but in time it was bound to become clear that they embodied important elements taken from developed neo-Platonism and that they constituted in fact an attempt to reconcile neo-Platonism and Christianity, so that they would have to be attributed to an author of a much later date than the historic Dionysius the Areopagite. However, the question of the authenticity of the writings is not the same as the question of their orthodoxy from the Christian standpoint, and though in the seventeenth century, when critics began to attack the authenticity of the writings, their orthodoxy was also assailed, a recognition of their unauthentic character did not necessarily involve an admission of their incompatibility with Christian doctrine, though it was obviously no longer possible to maintain their orthodoxy on the *a priori* ground that they were composed by a personal disciple of St. Paul. Personally I consider that the writings are orthodox in regard to the rejection of monism; but that on the question of the Blessed Trinity it is highly questionable at least if they can be reconciled with orthodox Christian dogma. Whatever the intentions of the author may have been, his words, besides being obscure, as Aquinas admitted, are scarcely compatible, as they stand, with the Trinitarian teaching of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. It may be objected that insufficient attention is paid to the dogma of the Incarnation, which is essential to Christianity, but the author clearly maintains this doctrine, and in any case to say little about one particular doctrine, even a central one, is not the same as to deny it. Taking the relevant passages of the Pseudo-Dionysius in the large, it does not seem possible to reject them as definitely unorthodox on this point, unless one is prepared also to reject as unorthodox, for example, the mystical doctrine of St. John of the Cross, who is a Doctor of the Church.

But though no one now supposes that the writings are actually the work of Dionysius the Areopagite, it has not proved possible to discover the real author. Most probably they were composed at the end of the fifth century, as they apparently embody ideas of the neo-Platonist Proclus (418–85), and it has been conjectured that the Hierotheus who figures therein was the Syrian mystic Stephen Bar Sadaili. If the writings of the Pseudo-Dionysius actually depend to any degree on the philosophy of Proclus, they cannot well have been composed before the closing decades of the fifth century, while as they were appealed to at the Council of 533, they can hardly have been composed much after 500. The ascription of about 500 as the date of their composition is, therefore, doubtless correct, while the supposition that they originated in Syria is reasonable. The author was a theologian, without doubt an ecclesiastic also; but he cannot have been Severus himself, as one or two writers have rashly supposed. In any case, though it would be interesting to know with certainty who the author was, it is probably unlikely that anything more than conjecture will ever be possible, and the chief interest of the writings is due, not to the personality of the author, but to the content and influence of the writings, these writings being the *Divine Names* (*De divinis Nominibus*), the *Mystical Theology* (*De mystica Theologia*), the *Celestial Hierarchy* (*De coelesti Hierarchia*) and the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* (*De ecclesiastica Hierarchia*), as well as ten letters. The works are printed in Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, volumes 3–4; but a critical edition of the text has been begun.

2. There are two ways of approaching God, who is the centre of all speculation, a positive way (καταφατική) and a negative way (ἀποφατική). In the former way or method the mind begins 'with the most universal statements, and then through intermediate terms (proceeds) to particular titles',[1] thus beginning with 'the highest category'.[2] In the *Divine Names* the Pseudo-Dionysius pursues this affirmative method, showing how names such as Goodness, Life, Wisdom, Power, are applicable to God in a transcendental manner and how they apply to creatures only in virtue of their derivation from God and their varying degrees of participation in those qualities which are found in God not as inhering qualities but in substantial unity. Thus he begins with the idea or name of goodness, which is the most universal name, inasmuch as all things, existent or possible, share in goodness to some degree, but which at the same time expresses the Nature of God: 'None is good save one, that is, God.'[3] God, as the Good, is the overflowing source of creation and its final goal, and 'from the Good comes the light which is an image of Goodness, so that the Good is described by the name of "Light", being the archetype of that which is revealed in the image'.[4] Here the neo-Platonic light-motive is brought in, and the Pseudo-Dionysius's dependence

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[1] *Myst. Theol.*, 2.

[2] *Ibid.*, 3.

[3] *Div. Names*, 2, 1; St. Matt. 19. 17.

[4] *Div. Names*, 4, 4.

on neo-Platonism is particularly manifest in his language when he goes on to speak of the Good as Beauty, as the 'super-essential beautiful', and uses the phrases of Plato's *Symposium*, which reappear in the *Enneads* of Plotinus. Again, when in chapter 13 of the *Divine Names*[1] the Pseudo-Dionysius speaks of 'One' as 'the most important title of all', he is clearly writing in dependence on the Plotinian doctrine of the ultimate Principle as the One.

In brief, then. the affirmative method means ascribing to God the perfections found in creatures, that is, the perfections which are compatible with the spiritual Nature of God, though not existing in Him in the same manner as they exist in creatures, since in God they exist without imperfection and, in the case of the names which are ascribed to the Divine Nature, without real differentiation. That we start, in the affirmative way, with the highest categories, is, says the author,[2] due to the fact that we should start with what is most akin to God, and it is truer to affirm that He is life and goodness than that He is air or stone. The names 'Life' and 'Goodness' refer to something which is actually in God, but He is air or stone only in a metaphorical sense or in the sense that He is the cause of these things. Yet the Pseudo-Dionysius is careful to insist that, even if certain names describe God better than others, they are very far from representing an adequate knowledge and conception of God on our part, and he expresses this conviction by speaking of God as the super-essential Essence, the super-essential Beautiful, and so on. He is not simply repeating phrases from the Platonic tradition, but he is expressing the truth that the objective reference or content of these names as actually found in God infinitely transcends the content of the names as experienced by us. For example, if we ascribe intelligence to God, we do not mean to ascribe to Him human intelligence, the only intelligence of which we have immediate experience and from which we draw the name: we mean that God is *more*, infinitely more, than what we experience as intelligence, and this fact is best expressed by speaking of God as super-Intelligence or as the super-essential Intelligence.

3. The affirmative way was mainly pursued by the Pseudo-Dionysius in the *Divine Names* and in his (lost) *Symbolical Theology* and *Outlines of Divinity*, whereas the negative way, that of the exclusion from God of the imperfections of creatures, is characteristic of the *Mystical Theology*. The distinction of the two

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[1] 13, 1.

[2] *Myst. Theol.*, 3.

ways was dependent on Proclus, and as developed by the Pseudo-Dionysius it passed into Christian philosophy and theology, being accepted by St. Thomas Aquinas, for example; but the palm is given by the Pseudo-Dionysius to the negative way in preference to the affirmative way. In this way the mind begins by denying of God those things which are farthest removed from Him, e.g. 'drunkenness or fury,'[1] and proceeds upwards progressively denying of God the attributes and qualities of creatures, until it reaches 'the super-essential Darkness'.[2] As God is utterly transcendent, we praise Him best 'by denying or removing all things that are—just as men who, carving a statue out of marble, remove all the impediments that hinder the clear perception of the latent image and by this mere removal display the hidden statue itself in its hidden beauty'.[3] The human being is inclined to form anthropomorphic conceptions of the Deity, and it is necessary to strip away these human, all-too-human conceptions by the *via remotionis*; but the Pseudo-Dionysius does not mean that from this process there results a clear view of what God is in Himself: the comparison of the statue must not mislead us. When the mind has stripped away from its idea of God the human modes of thought and inadequate conceptions of the Deity, it enters upon the 'Darkness of Unknowing',[4] wherein it 'renounces all the apprehension of the understanding and is wrapped in that which is wholly intangible and invisible . . . united . . . to Him that is wholly unknowable';[5] this is the province of mysticism. The 'Darkness of Unknowing' is not due, however, to the unintelligibility of the Object considered in itself, but to the finiteness of the human mind, which is blinded by excess of light. This doctrine is doubtless partly influenced by neo-Platonism, but it is also to be found in the writings of Christian mystical theologians, notably St. Gregory of Nyssa, whose writings in turn, though influenced, as far as language and presentation are concerned, by neo-Platonic treatises, were also the expression of personal experience.

4. The neo-Platonic influence on the Pseudo-Dionysius comes out very strongly in his doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, for he seems to be animated by the desire to find a One behind the differentiation of Persons. He certainly allows that the differentiation of Persons is an eternal differentiation and that the Father,

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[1] *Myst. Theol.*, 3. [2] *Ibid.*, 2. [3] *Ibid.*

[4] The author of the mediaeval mystical treatise, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, doubtless wrote in immediate or mediate dependence on the writings of the Pseudo-Dionysius. [5] *Myst. Theol.*, 1.

for example, is not the Son, and the Son not the Father, but so far as one can achieve an accurate interpretation of what he says, it appears that, in his opinion, the differentiation of Persons exists on the plane of manifestation. The manifestation in question is an eternal manifestation, and the differentiation an eternal differentiation within God, to be distinguished from the external manifestation of God in differentiated creatures; but God in Himself, beyond the plane of manifestation, is undifferentiated Unity. One can, of course, attempt to justify the language of the Pseudo-Dionysius by reference to the Nature of God which, according to orthodox Trinitarianism, is one and undivided and with which each of the divine Persons is substantially identical; but it would seem most probable, not to say certain, that the author was influenced, not only by Plotinus's doctrine of the One, but also by Proclus's doctrine of the primary Principle which transcends the attributes of Unity, Goodness, Being. The super-essential Unity would seem to represent Proclus's first Principle, and the distinction of three Persons in unity of Nature would seem to represent the neo-Platonic conception of emanation, being a stage, if an eternal stage, in the self-manifestation or revelation of the ultimate Godhead or Absolute. When we speak of the all-transcendent Godhead as a Unity and a Trinity, it is not a Unity or a Trinity such as can be known by us . . . (though) 'we apply the titles of "Trinity" and "Unity" to that which is beyond all titles, expressing under the form of Being that which is beyond being. . . . (The transcendent Godhead) hath no name, nor can it be grasped by the reason. . . . Even the title of "Goodness" we do not ascribe to it because we think such a name suitable. . . .'[1] (The Godhead) 'is not unity or goodness, nor a Spirit, not Sonship nor Fatherhood, . . . nor does it belong to the category of non-existence or to that of existence.'[2]

It is true that such phrases could be defended, as regards the intention of the author if not as regards his actual words, by pointing out that it is correct to say that the term 'Father', for instance, belongs to the first Person as Person and not to the Son, though the divine substance exists in numerical identity and without intrinsic real differentiation in each of the three divine Persons, and also by allowing that the term 'Father', as applied to the first Person, though the best term available in human language for the purpose, is borrowed from a human relationship, and applied to God in an analogical sense, so that the content of the idea of 'Father' in our minds is not adequate to the reality in God. Moreover, the Pseudo-Dionysius certainly speaks of 'a differentiation in the super-essential doctrine of God', referring to the Trinity of Persons and the names applicable to each Person in particular,[1] and explicitly denies that he is 'introducing a confusion of all distinctions in the Deity',[2] affirming that, while names such as 'Super-vital' or 'Super-wise' belong to 'the entire Godhead', the 'differentiated names', the names of 'Father', 'Son' and 'Spirit', 'cannot be interchanged, nor are they held in common'.[3] Again, though there is a 'mutual abiding and indwelling' of the divine Persons 'in an utterly undifferentiated and transcendent Unity', this is 'without any confusion'.[4] Nevertheless, though much of what the Pseudo-Dionysius has to say on the subject of the Blessed Trinity can be interpreted and defended from the standpoint of theological orthodoxy, it is hardly possible not to discern a strong tendency to go behind, as it were, the distinction of Persons to a super-transcendent undifferentiated Unity. Probably the truth of the matter is that the Pseudo-Dionysius, though an orthodox Trinitarian in intention, was so much influenced by the neo-Platonic philosophy that a tension between the two elements underlies his attempt to reconcile them and makes itself apparent in his statements.

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[1] *Div. Names*, 13, 3.

[2] *Myst. Theol.*, 5.

5. In regard to the relation of the world to God, the Pseudo-Dionysius speaks of the 'emanation' (πρόοδος) of God into the universe of things;[5] but he tries to combine the neo-Platonic emanation theory with the Christian doctrine of creation and is no pantheist. For example, since God bestows existence on all things that are, He is said to become manifold through bringing forth existent things from Himself; yet at the same time God remains One even in the act of 'self-multiplication' and without differentiation even in the process of emanation.[6] Proclus had insisted that the prior Principle does not become less through the process of emanation and the Pseudo-Dionysius repeats his teaching on this matter; but the influence of neo-Platonism does seem to have meant that he did not clearly realise the relation of creation to the divine will or the freedom of the act of creation, for he is inclined to speak as though creation were a natural and even a spontaneous effect of the divine goodness, even though

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[1] *Div. Names*, 2, 5.
[2] *Ibid.*, 2.
[3] *Ibid.*, 3.
[4] *Ibid.*, 4.
[5] *Ibid.*, 5, 1.
[6] *Ibid.*, 2, 11.

God is distinct from the world. God exists indivisibly and without multiplication of Himself in all individual, separate and multiple things, and, though they participate in the goodness which springs from Him and though they may in a certain sense be thought of as an 'extension' of God, God Himself is not involved in their multiplication: the world, in short, is an outflowing of the divine goodness, but it is not God Himself. On this point of God's transcendence as well as on that of His immanence the Pseudo-Dionysius is clear; but his fondness for depicting the world as the outflowing of the over-brimming Goodness of God, as well as for drawing a kind of parallel between the internal divine Processions and the external procession in creation, lead him to speak as though creation were a spontaneous activity of God, as if God created by a necessity of nature.

That God is the transcendent Cause of all things, the Pseudo-Dionysius affirms several times, explaining in addition that God created the world through the exemplary or archetypal Ideas, the 'preordinations' (προορισμοί) which exist in Him:[1] in addition, God is the final Cause of all things, drawing all things to Himself as the Good.[2] He is, therefore, 'the Beginning and the End of all things',[3] 'the Beginning as their Cause, the End as their Final Purpose'.[4] There is, then, an outgoing from God and a return to God, a process of multiplication and a process of intercommunion and return. This idea became basic in the philosophy of the 'Areopagite's' translator, John Scotus Eriugena.

6. As the Pseudo-Dionysius insisted so much on the divine goodness, it was incumbent on him to give some attention to the existence and the consequent problem of evil, and this he gave in the *Divine Names*,[5] relying, partly at least, on Proclus's *De subsistentia mali*. In the first place he insists that, although evil would have to be referred to God as its Cause, were it something positive, it is in fact not something positive at all: precisely as evil it has no being. If it is objected that evil must be positive, since it is productive, sometimes even of good, and since debauchery, for example, which is the opposite of temperance, is something evil and positive, he answers that nothing is productive precisely as evil, but only in so far as it is good, or through the action of good: evil as such tends only to destroy and debase. That evil has no positive being of itself is clear from the fact that

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[1] *Div. Names*, 5, 8.

[2] *Ibid.*, 4, 4 ff.

[3] *Ibid.*, 4, 35.

[4] *Ibid.*, 5, 10.

[5] 4, 18 ff.

good and being are synonymous: everything which has being proceeds from the Good and, as being, is good. Does this mean, then, that evil and non-existence are precisely the same? The Pseudo-Dionysius certainly tends to speak as if that were the case, but his real meaning is given in his statement that 'all creatures in so far as they have being are good and come from the Good, and in so far as they are deprived of the Good, neither are they good nor have they being'.[1] In other words, evil is a deprivation or privation: it consists, not simply in non-being or in the absence of being, but rather in the absence of a good that ought to be present. The sinner, for instance, is good in so far as he has being, life, existence, will; the evil consists in the deprivation of a good that ought to be there and actually is not, in the wrong relation of his will to the rule of morality, in the absence of this or that virtue, etc.

It follows that no creature, considered as an existent being, can be evil. Even the devils are good in so far as they exist, for they hold their existence from the Good, and that existence continues to be good: they are evil, not in virtue of their existence, their natural constitution, but 'only through a lack of angelic virtues':[2] 'they are called evil through the deprivation and the loss whereby they have lapsed from their proper virtues.' The same is true of bad human beings, who are called evil in virtue of 'the deficiency of good qualities and activities and in virtue of the failure and fall therefrom due to their own weakness'. 'Hence evil inheres not in the devils or in us as evil, but only as a deficiency and lack of the perfection of our proper virtues.'[3]

Physical, non-moral evil is treated in a similar manner. 'No natural force is evil: the evil of nature lies in a thing's inability to fulfil its natural functions.'[4] Again, 'ugliness and disease are a deficiency in form and a want of order', and this is not wholly evil, 'being rather a lesser good'.[5] Nor can matter as such be evil, since 'matter too has a share in order, beauty and form':[6] matter cannot be evil in itself, since it is produced by the Good and since it is necessary to Nature. There is no need to have recourse to two ultimate Principles, good and evil respectively. 'In fine, good comes from the one universal Cause; evil from many partial deficiencies.'[7]

If it be said that some people desire evil, so that evil, as the object of desire, must be something positive, the Pseudo-Dionysius answers that all acts have the good as their object, but that they may be mistaken, since the agent may err as to what is the proper good or object of desire. In the case of sin the sinner has the power to know the true good and the right, so that his 'mistake' is morally attributable to him.[1] Moreover, the objection that Providence should lead men into virtue even against their will is foolish, for 'it is not worthy of Providence to violate nature': Providence provides for free choice and respects it.[2]

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[1] *Div. Names*, 4, 20.
[2] *Ibid.*, 23.
[3] *Ibid.*, 24.
[4] *Ibid.*, 26.
[5] *Ibid.*, 27.
[6] *Ibid.*, 28.
[7] *Ibid.*, 30.

7. In conclusion one may remark that, although Ferdinand Christian Baur[3] would seem to have gone too far in saying that the Pseudo-Dionysius reduced the Christian doctrine of the Trinity to a mere formal use of the Christian terms void of the Christian content and that his system will not allow of a special Incarnation, it must be admitted that there was a tension in his thought between the neo-Platonic philosophy which he adopted and the Christian dogmas, in which, we have no real reason to deny, he believed. The Pseudo-Dionysius meant to harmonise the two elements, to express Christian theology and Christian mysticism in a neo-Platonic philosophical framework and scheme; but it can scarcely be gainsaid that, when a clash occurred, the neo-Platonic elements tended to prevail. A specific and peculiar Incarnation was one of the major points in Christianity that pagan neo-Platonists, such as Porphyry, objected to, and though, as I have said, we cannot be justified in asserting that the Pseudo-Dionysius denied the Incarnation, his acceptance of it does not well adapt itself to his philosophical system, nor does it play much part in his extant writings. One may well doubt whether his writings would have exercised the influence they did on Christian mediaeval thinkers, had the latter not taken the author's pseudonym at its face value.

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[1] *Div. Names*, 4, 35.

[2] *Ibid.*, 33.

[3] In his *Christliche Lehre von der Dreieinigkeit und Menschwerdung Gottes*, Vol. 2, p. 42.

CHAPTER X

BOETHIUS, CASSIODORUS, ISIDORE

Boethius's transmission of Aristotelian ideas—Natural theology—Influence on Middle Ages—Cassiodorus on the seven liberal arts and the spirituality of the soul—Isidore's Etymologies *and* Sentences.

1. IF one of the channels whereby the philosophy of the ancient world was passed on to the Middle Ages was the writings of the Pseudo-Dionysius, another channel, and in some respects a complementary one, was constituted by the writings of Boethius (*c.* A.D. 480–524/5), a Christian who, after studying at Athens and subsequently holding high magisterial office under the king of the Ostrogoths, Theodoric, was finally executed on a charge of high treason. I use the word 'complementary' since, while the Pseudo-Dionysius helped to impregnate early mediaeval philosophy, especially that of John Scotus Eriugena, with elements drawn from neo-Platonic speculation, Boethius transmitted to the early mediaevals a knowledge of at least the logic of Aristotle. His works I have listed in my volume on Greek and Roman philosophy,[1] and I shall not repeat them here; suffice it to recall that he translated into Latin the *Organon* of Aristotle and commented thereon, besides commenting on the *Isagoge* of Porphyry and composing original treatises on logic. In addition he wrote several theological opuscula and while in prison his celebrated *De Consolatione Philosophiae.*

It is uncertain whether or not Boethius translated, in accordance with his original plan, other works of Aristotle besides the *Organon*; but in his extant works mention is made of several salient Aristotelian doctrines. The earlier mediaeval thinkers were predominantly concerned with the discussion of the problem of universals, taking as their starting-point certain texts of Porphyry and Boethius, and they took little notice of the Aristotelian metaphysical doctrines to be found in Boethius's writings. The first great speculative thinker of the Middle Ages, John Scotus Eriugena, was more indebted to the Pseudo-Dionysius and other writers dependent on neo-Platonism than to any Aristotelian influence, and it was not until the Aristotelian *corpus* had become available to the West at the close of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries that a synthesis on Aristotelian lines was attempted. But that does not alter the fact that Aristotelian doctrines of importance were incorporated in the writings of Boethius. For instance, in his theological work against Eutyches[1] Boethius speaks clearly of 'matter', the common substrate of bodies, which is the basis for, and renders possible, substantial change in bodies, corporeal substances, while its absence in incorporeal substances renders impossible the change of one immaterial substance into another or the change of a corporeal substance into an incorporeal substance or *vice versa.* The discussion is carried on in a theological setting and with a theological purpose, for Boethius wishes to show that in Christ the divine Nature and the human Nature are distinct and both real, against Eutyches who held that 'the union with Godhead involved the disappearance of the human nature';[2] but within that theological setting a philosophical discussion is included and the categories employed are Aristotelian in character. Similarly, in the *De Trinitate,*[3] Boethius speaks of the correlative principle to matter, namely form. For instance, earth is not earth by reason of unqualified matter, but because it is a distinctive form. (For 'unqualified matter' Boethius uses the Greek phrase ἄποια ὕλη, taking it doubtless from Alexander of Aphrodisias.[4] On the other hand, God, the Divine Substance, is Form without matter and cannot be a substrate. As pure Form, He is one.

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[1] p. 485.

Again, in the *De Trinitate,*[5] Boethius gives the ten Categories or *Praedicamenta* and goes on to explain that when we call God 'substance', we do not mean that He is substance in the same sense in which a created thing is substance: He is 'a substance that is super-substantial'. Similarly, if we predicate a quality of God, such as 'just' or 'great', we do not mean that He has an inhering quality, for 'with Him to be just and to be God are one and the same', and while 'man is merely great, God is greatness'. In the *Contra Eutychen*[6] occurs Boethius's famous definition of person, *naturae rationalis individua substantia,* which was accepted by St. Thomas and became classical in the Schools.

2. In his doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, Boethius relied largely on St. Augustine; but in the *De Consolatione Philosophiae* he

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[1] *Contra Eutychen*, 6.

[2] *Ibid.*, 5.

[3] 2.

[4] Cf. the latter's *De Anima*, 17, 17, and his *De anima libri mantissa*, 124, 7.

[5] 4.

[6] 3.

developed in outline a natural theology on Aristotelian lines, thus implicitly distinguishing between natural theology, the highest part of philosophy, and dogmatic theology which, in distinction from the former, accepts its premisses from revelation. In the third book[1] he at least mentions the rational argument for the existence of God as unmoved Mover, while in the fifth book[2] he treats of the apparent difficulty in reconciling human freedom with the divine foreknowledge. 'If God beholdeth all things and cannot be deceived, that must of necessity follow which His providence foreseeth to be to come. Wherefore, if from eternity He doth foreknow not only the deeds of men, but also their counsels and wills, there can be no free-will.'[3] To answer that it is not that future events will take place because God knows them, but rather that God knows them because they will take place is not a very satisfactory answer, since it implies that temporal events and the temporal acts of creatures are the cause of the eternal foreknowledge of God. Rather should we say that God does not, strictly speaking, 'foresee' anything: God is eternal, eternity being defined in a famous phrase as *interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio,*[4] and His knowledge is the knowledge of what is eternally present to Him, of a never-fading instant, not a foreknowledge of things which are future to God. Now, knowledge of a present event does not impose necessity on the event, so that God's knowledge of man's free acts, which from the human viewpoint are future, though from the divine viewpoint they are present, does not make those acts determined and necessary (in the sense of not-free). The eternity of God's vision, 'which is always present, concurs with the future quality of an action'.

Boethius drew not merely on Aristotle, but also on Porphyry and other neo-Platonic writers, as well as on Cicero, for example, and it may be that the division of philosophy or speculative science into Physics, Mathematics and Theology was taken directly from the *Isagoge* of Porphyry; but it must be remembered that Porphyry himself was indebted to Aristotle. In any case, in view of the predominantly neo-Platonic character of foregoing Christian philosophy, the Aristotelian element in the thought of Boethius is more remarkable and significant than the specifically neo-Platonic elements. It is true that he speaks of the divine Goodness and its overflowing in a manner reminiscent of neo-Platonism (in the *De Consol. Phil.*[5] he says that 'the substance of God consisteth in nothing else but in goodness') and that he sometimes uses such terms as *defluere* in connection with the procession of creatures from God;[1] but he is quite clear about the distinction between God and the world and about the Christian doctrine of creation. Thus he expressly affirms that God, 'without any change, by the exercise of a will known only to Himself, determined of Himself to form the world and brought it into being when it was absolutely nothing, not producing it from His own substance',[2] denying that the divine substance *in externa dilabatur*[3] or that 'all things which are, are God'.[4]

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[1] 12. [2] 2 ff. [3] 5, 3. [4] 5, 6. [5] 3, 9.

3. Boethius, then, was of very considerable importance, for he transmitted to the earlier Middle Ages a great part of the knowledge of Aristotle then available. In addition, his application of philosophical categories to theology helped towards the development of theological science, while his use of and definition of philosophical terms was of service to both theology and philosophy. Lastly we may mention the influence exercised by his composition of commentaries, for this type of writing became a favourite method of composition among the mediaevals. Even if not particularly remarkable as an original and independent philosopher, Boethius is yet of major significance as a transmitter and as a philosopher who attempted to express Christian doctrine in terms drawn, not simply from the neo-Platonists, but also from the philosopher whose thought was to become a predominant influence in the greatest philosophical synthesis of the Middle Ages.

4. *Cassiodorus* (*c.* 477–*c.* 565/70) was a pupil of Boethius and, like his master, worked for a time in the service of Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths. In his *De artibus ac disciplinis liberalium litterarum* (which is the second book of his *Institutiones*) he treated of the seven liberal arts, i.e. the three *scientiae sermocinales* (Grammar, Dialectic and Rhetoric) and the four *scientiae reales* (Arithmetic, Geometry, Music and Astronomy). He did not aim at novelty or originality of thought, but rather at giving a synopsis of the learning he had culled from other writers,[5] and his book on the arts, like that of Martianus Capella, was much used as a text-book in the early Middle Ages. In his *De anima* Cassiodorus drew on St. Augustine and on Claudianus Mamertus (died *c.* 474) in proving the spirituality of the human soul. While the soul cannot be a part of God, since it is changeable and capable of

[1] Cf. *Lib. de hebdom.*, 173.

[2] *De Fide Catholica.*

[3] *De Consol. Phil.*, 3, 12.

[4] *Quomodo Substantiae.* I do not, of course mean to imply that there is any doctrine of creation in Aristotle.

[5] *De anima*, 12.

evil, it is not material and cannot be material, since it can have what is spiritual as the object of its knowledge, and only that which is itself spiritual can know the spiritual. As spiritual, the soul is wholly in the whole body and wholly in each part, being indivisible and unextended; but it operates in a given part of the body, e.g. a sense-organ, now with greater, now with less intensity.[1]

5. Cassiodorus, then, was much more a 'transmitter' than an original thinker, and the same can be said of *Isidore* (died *c.* 636), who became Archbishop of Seville in the Visigothic kingdom and whose encyclopaedia, the *Originum seu Etymologiarum libri XX*, was very popular in the early Middle Ages, being included in every monastic library of note. In this work Isidore deals with the seven liberal arts, as also with a great number of scientific or quasi-scientific facts and theories on subjects from Scripture and jurisprudence and medicine to architecture, agriculture, war, navigation, and so on. He shows his conviction about the divine origin of sovereignty and the paramount authority of morality, law and justice in civil society, even in regard to the conduct and acts of the monarch. In addition to his *Etymologies* Isidore's *Libri tres sententiarum*, a collection of theological and moral theses taken from St. Augustine and St. Gregory the Great, was also widely used. His treatise on numbers, *Liber Numerorum*, which treats of the numbers occurring in the Sacred Scriptures, is often fanciful in the extreme in the mystical meanings which it attaches to numbers.

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[1] *De anima*, 4.

PART II

THE CAROLINGIAN RENAISSANCE

CHAPTER XI

THE CAROLINGIAN RENAISSANCE

Charlemagne—Alcuin and the Palatine School—Other schools, curriculum, libraries—Rhabanus Maurus.

1. IN A.D. 771 the death of Carloman left Charles (Charlemagne) sole ruler of the Frankish dominions, and his subsequent destruction of the Lombard kingdom and his general policy made him, by the close of the century, the paramount sovereign in Western Christendom. His coronation as emperor by the Pope on December 25th, 800, symbolised the success of his imperial policy and the culmination of Frankish power. The Frankish Empire was later to break up and the imperial crown was to pass to Germany, but for the moment Charlemagne was undisputed master in Western Christendom and was enabled to set on foot the work of reorganisation and reform which had become a crying need under the Merovingian dynasty. The emperor was by no means simply a soldier nor even simply soldier and political organiser combined: he had also at heart the work of raising the cultural level of his subjects by the extension and improvement of education. For this purpose he needed scholars and educational leaders, and since these were not easily obtainable in the Frankish kingdom itself, he had to introduce them from abroad. Already in the fifth century the old culture of Romanised Gaul was fast on the wane and in the sixth and seventh centuries it was at a very low point indeed; what schools there were, were teaching only reading, writing and some rudimentary knowledge of Latin, besides, of course, giving religious instruction. It was to remedy this lamentable state of learning and education that Charlemagne made use of foreign scholars like Peter of Pisa and Paul the Deacon, who were both Italians. The former appears to have been already advanced in age when he taught Latin at the Palace School of Charlemagne, while the latter (Paul Warnefrid, the Deacon), who had come to France in 782, in an attempt to obtain the freedom of his brother,

a prisoner of war, taught Greek from 782 to 786, when he retired to Monte Cassino, where he composed his *History of the Lombards.* Another Italian teacher at the Palatine School was Paulinus of Aquileia, who taught from about 777 to 787.

In addition to the group of Italian grammarians one may mention two Spaniards who came to France as refugees: Agobard, who became Archbishop of Lyons in 816, and Theodulf, who became Bishop of Orleans and died in 821. The latter was familiar with the Latin classics and was himself a Latin poet. Incidentally the oldest known mediaeval manuscript of Quintilian comes from Theodulf's private library. From the point of view of practical importance in the educational work of Charlemagne, however, the Italians and the Spaniards are overshadowed by the celebrated English scholar, Alcuin of York.

2. *Alcuin* (*c.* 730–804) received his early education at York. Learning had been making progress in England since the year 669, when Theodore of Tarsus, a Greek monk, arrived in the country as Archbishop of Canterbury and, together with Abbot Hadrian, developed the school of Canterbury and enriched its library. This work was carried on by men like Benedict Biscop, who founded the monasteries of Wearmouth (674) and Jarrow (682), and Aldhelm, who, after studying under Theodore and Hadrian, organised the monastery of Malmesbury in Wiltshire, of which he became abbot. A more important figure in Anglo-Saxon scholarship was, however, that of the great exegete and historian Bede (674–735), a priest and monk of Jarrow. It was due to the labours of Bede's friend and pupil Egbert, who became Archbishop of York shortly before Bede's death, that the school of York became the leading cultural and educational centre of England and noted for the richness of its library.

At York Alcuin was more particularly under the care of Aelbert, in company with whom he travelled to Rome, meeting Charles on the way, and when Aelbert succeeded Egbert as Archbishop of York in 767, the chief work in the school devolved on Alcuin. However, in 781, Alcuin was sent by Aelbert to Rome, and in Parma he met Charles for the second time, the king utilising the meeting to urge the English scholar to enter his service. After receiving the permission of his own king and his archbishop, Alcuin accepted the invitation and in 782 took over the direction of the Palatine School, which he maintained (save for a short visit to England in 786 and a longer one from 790 to

793) until 796, when he accepted the abbacy of St. Martin at Tours, where he spent the last years of his life.

Probably about the year 777 Charlemagne wrote a letter to Baugulf, Abbot of Fulda,[1] in which he exhorts the abbot and community to zeal for learning, and this is merely one of the examples of his constant solicitude in the cause of education. The school which is, however, particularly associated with the name of Charlemagne is the so-called Palace or Palatine School, which though not a new creation of the emperor, owed its development to him. Before its development under Charlemagne the school would seem to have existed for the purpose of training the royal princes and children of the higher nobility in the knightly way of life; but the emperor laid emphasis on intellectual training and, as a result of his reform, the pupils appear to have been drawn from a wider circle than the court. French writers have commonly claimed that the Palatine School was the origin of the University of Paris; but it must be remembered that the emperor's court was at Aachen or Aix-la-Chapelle, and not at Paris, though it would seem to have been later removed to Paris by Charles the Bald (d. 877). However, as the University of Paris eventually grew up out of an amalgamation of the Parisian schools, it may be said that the Palatine School was in some sense a remote ancestor of the University, even if the connection was somewhat loose.

Charlemagne's main instrument in the organisation of the Palatine School was Alcuin, from whose writings we can form some idea of the curriculum. Alcuin was certainly not an original thinker, and his educational works, written in dialogue form, rely for the most part on former authors. For example, the *De Rhetorica* makes use of Cicero, with additions from other authors, while in other treatises Alcuin draws on Donatus, Priscian, Cassiodorus, Boethius, Isidore, Bede. But, though Alcuin was unoriginal and mediocre as a writer and can hardly be held to merit the title of philosopher, he seems to have been eminent and successful as a teacher, and some of the best-known figures of the Carolingian renaissance, e.g. Rhabanus Maurus, were his pupils. When he retired to the abbey of St. Martin at Tours, he continued this work of teaching, as is clear from a celebrated letter to the emperor, in which Alcuin describes how he serves to some youths the honey of the Holy Scriptures, while others he tries to intoxicate with the wine of ancient literature: some are nourished on the apples of grammatical studies, while to others he displays the order of the shining orbs which adorn the azure heavens. (Charlemagne had a considerable personal interest in astronomy and the two men corresponded on this subject.)

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[1] If, however, Baugulf became abbot only in 788, the letter cannot be dated before that year.

At Tours Alcuin enriched the library with copies of manuscripts which he brought from York, the best library in western Europe. He also devoted his attention to improving the method of copying manuscripts. In a letter of 799[1] he speaks of his daily battle with the 'rusticity' of Tours, from which one may conclude that the path of reform was not always an easy one. It is certain that Alcuin also gave attention to the accurate copying and amending of the manuscripts of the Scriptures, since he speaks explicitly of this in letters to Charlemagne in 800[2] and 801;[3] but it is not certain exactly what part he took in producing the revision of the Vulgate which was ordered by the emperor, known as the 'Alcuinian revision'. However, in view of the important position occupied by the scholar in the implementation of the emperor's reforms, it would seem only reasonable to suppose that he took a leading part in this important work, which helped to arrest the progress of manuscript corruption.

3. As regards the development of other schools (i.e. other than the Palatine School and that of Tours), one may mention the schools attached to the monasteries of St. Gall, Corbie and Fulda. In the monasteries education was provided not only for those pupils who were destined to become members of the religious order, but also for other pupils, though it appears that two separate schools were maintained, the *schola claustri* for the former class of pupil, the *schola exterior* for the latter. Thus at St. Gall the *schola claustri* was within the precincts of the monastery, while the *schola exterior* was among the outer buildings. A capitulary of Louis the Pious (817) ordained that the monasteries should only possess schools for the 'oblates'; but it seems that not much notice was taken of this ordinance.

If one sets the Palatine School in a class by itself, the other schools fall, then, into two main classes, the episcopal or capitular schools and the monastic schools. As for the curriculum this consisted, apart from the study of theology and exegesis, especially in the case of those pupils who were preparing for the priesthood or the religious life, in the study of the *Trivium* (grammar, rhetoric and dialectic) and the *Quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music), comprising the seven liberal arts. There was, however, little fresh or original work done on these subjects. Thus grammar, which included literature, would be studied in the writings of Priscian and Donatus, and in the text-books of Alcuin, for example, though some commentaries were composed on the works of the ancient grammarians, by Smaragdus, for instance, on Donatus, and a few undistinguished grammatical works were written, such as the *Ars grammaticae* of Clemens Scotus, who began teaching at the Palatine School in the later years of Charlemagne. Logic too was studied in the handbooks of Alcuin or, if something more was required, in the works of the authors on whom Alcuin relied, e.g. Boethius. In geometry and astronomy little work was done in the ninth century, though the theory of music was advanced by the *Musica enchiriadis*, attributed to Hoger the Abbot of Werden (d. 902). Libraries, e.g. the library of St. Gall, received a considerable increase in the ninth century and they included, besides the theological and religious works which composed the bulk of the items listed, legal and grammatical works, as well as a certain number of classical authors; but it is clear that, as far as philosophy is concerned, logic or dialectic (which, according to Aristotle, is a propaedeutic to philosophy, not a branch of philosophy itself) was the only subject studied. There was only one real speculative philosopher in the ninth century, and that was John Scotus Eriugena. Charlemagne's renaissance aimed at a dissemination of existing learning and what it accomplished was indeed remarkable enough; but it did not lead to original thought and speculation, except in the one instance of John Scotus's system. If the Carolingian empire and civilisation had survived and continued to flourish, a period of original work would doubtless have eventuated at length; but actually it was destined to be submerged in the new Dark Ages and there would be need of another renaissance before the mediaeval period of positive, constructive and original work could be realised.

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[1] *Ep.*, 4, 172. [2] *Ibid.*, 195. [3] *Ibid.*, 205.

4. Because of his importance for education in Germany one must mention, in connection with the Carolingian renaissance, the name of Rhabanus Maurus, who was born about 776 and who, after having been a pupil of Alcuin, taught at the monastery of Fulda, where he became abbot in 822. In 847 he was appointed Archbishop of Mainz and continued in that post until his death

in 856. Rhabanus concerned himself with the education of the clergy, and for this purpose he composed his work *De Institutione Clericorum* in three books. In addition to a treatment of the ecclesiastical grades, the liturgy, the training of the preacher and so on, this work also deals with the seven liberal arts, but Rhabanus showed no more originality in this work than in his *De rerum naturis*, an encyclopaedia which was derived very largely from that of Isidore. In general the author depended almost entirely on former writers like Isidore, Bede and Augustine. In regard to exegesis he favoured mystical and allegorical interpretations. In other words, the *Praeceptor Germaniae* was a faithful product of the Carolingian renaissance, a scholar with a real enthusiasm for learning and a lively zeal for the intellectual formation of the clergy, but markedly unoriginal in thought.

CHAPTER XII

JOHN SCOTUS ERIUGENA—I

Life and works

ONE of the most remarkable phenomena of the ninth century is the philosophical system of John Scotus Eriugena, which stands out like a lofty rock in the midst of a plain. We have seen that there was a lively educational activity in the course of the century and, considering the standard, materials and opportunities of the time, a growing interest in learning and scholarship; but there was little original speculation. This is a fact which need cause no surprise in regard to a period of conservation and dissemination; but it is all the more remarkable that an isolated case of original speculation on the grand scale should suddenly occur, without warning and indeed without any immediate continuation. If John Scotus had confined himself to speculation on one or two particular points, we might not have been so surprised, but in point of fact he produced a system, the first great system of the Middle Ages. It may, of course, be said that he relied largely on the former speculations of St. Gregory of Nyssa, for instance, and particularly on the work of the Pseudo-Dionysius, and this is quite true; but one can scarcely avoid the impression, when reading his *De Divisione Naturae*, that one is watching a vigorous, profound and original mind struggling with the categories and modes of thought and ideas which former writers had bequeathed to him as the material on which and with which he had to work, moulding them into a system and impregnating the whole with an atmosphere, a colour and a tone peculiar to himself. It is indeed interesting, if not altogether profitable, to wonder on what lines the thought of John Scotus would have evolved, had he lived at a later and richer period of philosophical development: as it is, one is confronted with a mind of great power, hampered by the limitations of his time and by the poverty of the material at his disposal. Moreover, while it is, of course, a mistake to interpret the system of John Scotus in terms of a much later philosophy, itself conditioned by the previous development of thought and the historical circumstances of the time, for example, the Hegelian system, one is not thereby debarred from endeavouring to discern the peculiar characteristics of John's thought, which, to a certain extent, altered the meaning of the ideas and categories he borrowed from previous writers.

Of the life of John Scotus we do not know very much. He was born in Ireland about 810 and studied in an Irish monastery. 'Eriugena' means 'belonging to the people of Erin', while the term 'Scotus' need not be taken as indicating any near connection with Scotland, since in the ninth century Ireland was known as *Scotia Maior* and the Irish as *Scoti.* It was doubtless in an Irish monastery that he acquired his knowledge of the Greek language. In the ninth century the study of Greek was, speaking generally, peculiar to the Irish monasteries. Bede, it is true, attained to a working knowledge of the language, but neither Alcuin nor Rhabanus Maurus knew any Greek worth speaking of. The former used Greek phrases in his commentaries but, though he must have known at least the Greek alphabet, these *Graeca* were taken over from the writings of other authors, and, in general, it has been shown that the occurrence of Greek phrases in a manuscript points to Irish authorship or to some association with or influence from an Irish writer. The attention given to Greek at St. Gall, for instance, was due originally to Irish monks. However, even if the presence of *Graeca* in a manuscript indicates an Irish influence, direct or indirect, and even if the study of Greek in the ninth century was characteristic of the Irish monasteries, it would be extremely rash to conclude that all Irish writers who used Greek phrases, still less that all Irish monks, studied and knew Greek in any real sense. The use of a Greek phrase is, by itself, no more a proof of a real knowledge of the Greek language than the use of a phrase like *fait accompli* is, by itself, a proof of a real knowledge of French, and the number of even Irish monks who knew much more than the rudiments of Greek was doubtless small. John Scotus Eriugena at any rate was among their number, as is shown clearly by the fact that he was able, when in France, to translate from the Greek writings of St. Gregory of Nyssa and the works of the Pseudo-Dionysius, and even attempted the composition of Greek verse. It would be absurd to take John's knowledge of the language as typical of the century or even as typical of Irish monasteries: the truth of the matter is that he was, for the ninth century, an outstanding Greek scholar.

Sometime in the forties John Scotus crossed over to France. In any case he was at the court of Charles the Bald by 850 and occupied a prominent position in the Palatine School. There is no sure evidence that he was ever ordained priest; but, whether layman or not, he was induced by Hincmar, Bishop of Rheims, to intervene in a theological dispute concerning predestination and the result was his work *De praedestinatione* which pleased neither side and brought its author under suspicion of heresy. John thereupon turned his attention to philosophy and in 858 he undertook, at the request of Charles the Bald, the translation of the works of the Pseudo-Dionysius from Greek into Latin. These works had been presented to Louis the Fair in 827 by the Emperor Michael Balbus, but they had never been adequately translated. John, then, undertook not only to translate them, but also to comment on them, and in fact he published commentaries on the Pseudo-Dionysius's writings, except on the *Mystical Theology*, though Pope Nicholas I made it a subject of complaint that the publication had taken place without any reference to him. John Scotus also published translations of the *Ambigua* of Maximus the Confessor and the *De Hominis Opificio* of St. Gregory of Nyssa, and it appears that later he commented on St. John's Gospel and on Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae* and theological *opuscula*.

The work for which John Scotus is celebrated, however, is the *De Divisione Naturae*, which he composed probably between 862 and 866. This work consists of five books and is written in dialogue form, a form of composition which was popular at the time and which was much used by Alcuin and others. It is not a very easy work to interpret, since the author's attempt to express Christian teaching and the philosophical doctrine of Augustine on lines suggested by the Pseudo-Dionysius and the neo-Platonic philosophy leaves room for dispute whether John Scotus was an orthodox Christian or very nearly, if not quite, a pantheist. Those scholars who maintain his orthodox intentions can point to such statements as that 'the authority of the Sacred Scriptures must be followed in all things',[1] while those who maintain that he regarded philosophy as superior to theology and anticipated the Hegelian rationalism can point, for example, to the statement[2] that 'every authority' (e.g. that of the Fathers) 'which is not confirmed by true reason seems to be weak, whereas true reason does not need to be supported by any authority'. However, one cannot profitably discuss the question of interpretation until the doctrine of the *De Divisione Naturae* has first been exposed, though it is as well to indicate beforehand the fact that there is a dispute about its correct interpretation.

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[1] *De Div. Nat.*, 1, 64.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1, 69.

John Scotus seems not to have outlived Charles the Bald, who died in 877. There are indeed various stories about his later life which are given by chroniclers, e.g. that he became Abbot of Athelney and was murdered by the monks, but there seems to be little evidence for the truth of such stories, and probably they are either legends or are due to a confusion with some other John.

CHAPTER XIII

JOHN SCOTUS ERIUGENA—II

Nature—God and creation—Knowledge of God by affirmative and negative ways; inapplicability of categories to God—How, then, can God be said to have made the world?—Divine Ideas in the Word—Creatures as participations and theophanies; creatures are in God—Man's nature—Return of all things to God—Eternal punishment in light of cosmic return—Interpretation of John Scotus's system.

1. At the beginning of the first book of the *De Divisione Naturae* John Scotus explains through the lips of the Master, in a dialogue which takes place between a *Magister* and a *Discipulus*, what he means by 'Nature', namely the totality of the things that are and the things that are not, and he gives various ways of making this general division. For example, things which are perceived by the senses or are penetrable by the intellect are the things that are, while the objects that transcend the power of the intellect are the things that are not. Again, things which lie hid in their *semina*, which are not actualised, 'are not', while the things which have developed out of their seeds 'are'. Or again, the objects which are objects of reason alone may be said to be the things which are, while the objects which are material, subject to space and time and to dissolution, may be called the things which are not. Human nature, too, considered as alienated from God by sin may be said 'not to be', whereas when it is reconciled with God by grace, it begins to be.

The term 'Nature', then, means for John Scotus Eriugena, not only the natural world, but also God and the supernatural sphere: it denotes all Reality.[1] When, therefore, he asserts[2] that nature is divided into four species, namely Nature which creates and is not created, Nature which is created and creates, Nature which is created and does not create, and Nature which neither creates nor is created, thus apparently making God and creatures species of Nature, it might well seem that he is asserting a monistic doctrine, and indeed, if these words be taken in their literal significance, we should have to conclude that he was. Nevertheless at the beginning of Book 2, in a long and somewhat complicated period, he makes it clear that it is not his intention to assert that creatures are actually a part of God or that God is a genus of which creatures are a species, although he retains the fourfold division of 'Nature' and says that God and creatures may be looked at as forming together a *universitas*, a 'universe' or totality. The conclusion is warranted that John Scotus did not intend to assert a doctrine of pantheistic monism or to deny the distinction between God and creatures, though his philosophic explanation or rationalisation of the egress of creatures from God and their return to God may, taken by itself, imply pantheism and a denial of the distinction.

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[1] Cf. 3, 1.

[2] 1, 1.

2. 'Nature which creates and is not created' is, of course, God Himself, who is the cause of all things but is Himself without cause. He is the beginning or first principle, since all creatures proceed from Him, the 'middle' (*medium*); since it is in Him and through Him that creatures subsist and move; and the end or final cause, since He is the term of the creature's movement of self-development and perfection.[1] He is the first cause, which brought creatures into existence from a state of non-existence, out of nothing (*de nihilo*).[2] This doctrine of God is in accordance with Christian theology and contains a clear enunciation of the divine transcendence and self-existence; but John Scotus goes on to say that God may be said to be created in creatures, to be made in the things which He makes, to begin to be in the things which begin to be. It would, however, be an anachronism to suppose that he is asserting an evolutionary pantheism, and maintaining that nature, in the ordinary sense, is God-in-His-otherness, for he proceeds to explain[3] that when he says that God is made in creatures, he means that God 'appears' or manifests Himself in creatures, that creatures are a theophany. Some of the illustrations he uses are indeed somewhat unfortunate from the orthodox standpoint, as when he says that, just as the human intellect, when it proceeds into actuality in the sense of actually thinking, may be said to be made in its thoughts, so God may be said to be made in the creatures which proceed from Him, an illustration which would seem to imply that creatures are an actualisation of God; but, whatever illustrations John Scotus may use and however much he is influenced by the philosophical tradition which derived from neo-Platonism, it seems clear that his intention at least was to conserve the real distinction between God and creatures and

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[1] 1, 11.

[2] 1, 12.

[3] *Ibid.*

that God, in relation to creation, is *Natura quae creat et non creatur*. On the truth of this formula he is emphatic.

3. In attaining to some knowledge of the *Natura quae creat et non creatur* one can use the affirmative (καταφατική) and negative (ἀποφατική) ways. When using the negative method one denies that the divine essence or substance is any of those things, 'which are', i.e. which can be understood by us: when using the affirmative method one predicates of God those things 'which are', in the sense that the cause is manifested in the effect.[1] This twofold method of theology was borrowed by John Scotus from the Pseudo-Dionysius, as he himself plainly affirms,[2] and it was from the same writer that he took the idea that God should not be called, e.g. Truth or Wisdom or Essence, but rather super-Truth, super-Wisdom and super-Essence, since no names borrowed from creatures can be applied to God in their strict and proper sense: they are applied to God *metaphorice* or *translative*. Moreover, in a succeeding passage[3] John Scotus indulges in a most ingenious piece of dialectic in order to show that the use of the affirmative method does not contradict the doctrine of the ineffable and incomprehensible character of the Godhead and that the negative method is the fundamental one. For example, by the affirmative method we say that God is Wisdom, while by the negative way we say that God is not wisdom, and this appears at first sight to be a contradiction; but in reality, when we say that God is Wisdom, we are using the word 'wisdom' in a 'metaphorical' sense (an 'analogical' sense, the Scholastic would say), while when we say that God is not wisdom, we are using the word in its proper and primary sense (i.e. in the sense of human wisdom, the only wisdom of which we have direct experience). The contradiction is, therefore, not real, but only verbal, and it is reconciled by calling God super-Wisdom. Now, as far as words go, to predicate super-Wisdom of God would seem to be an act of mind pursuing the affirmative way, but if we examine the matter more closely we shall see that, although the phrase belongs formally and verbally to the *via affirmativa*, the mind has no content, no idea, corresponding to the word 'super', so that in reality the phrase belongs to the *via negativa*, and the addition of the word 'super' to the word 'wisdom' is equivalent to a negation. Verbally there is no negation in the predicate 'super-Wisdom', but in regard to the mind's content there is a negation. The *via negativa* is thus

[1] 1, 13. [2] 1, 14. [3] *Ibid.*

fundamental, and as we do not pretend to define *what* the 'super' is in itself, the ineffability and incomprehensibility of the Godhead is unimpaired. Of course, if we say that the use of the word 'super' is *simply and solely* equivalent to a negation, the obvious objection arises (and would be raised by a Logical Positivist) that there is no meaning in our minds when we use the phrase, that the phrase is non-significant. John Scotus, however, though he does not discuss this real difficulty, provides one answer when he indicates that when we say that God is, for example, super-Wisdom, we mean that He is *more than* wisdom. If this is so, then the addition of 'super' cannot be simply equivalent to a negation, since we can say that 'a stone is not wise' and we certainly mean something different when we say 'God is not wise' and 'a stone is not wise': we mean that if 'wise' be taken to refer to human wisdom, then God is not wise, in the sense that He is *more* than human wisdom, whereas a stone is not wise, in the sense that the stone is *less* than wise. This thought would seem to be indicated by John Scotus's concluding example. '(God) is essence', an affirmation; 'He is not essence', a negation; 'He is super-essential', an affirmation and negation at the same time.[1] The thesis and the antithesis are thus reconciled dialectically in the synthesis.

If, then, God cannot be properly termed wise, for this term is not predicated of purely material things, much less can we predicate of Him any of the ten categories of Aristotle, which are found in purely material objects. For example, quantity can certainly not be predicated of God, as quantity implies dimensions, and God has no dimensions and does not occupy space.[2] Properly speaking, God is not even substance or οὐσία, for He is infinitely more than substance, though He can be called substance *translative*, inasmuch as He is the creator of all substances. The categories are founded on and apply to created things and are strictly inapplicable to God: nor is the predicate 'God' a genus or a species or an accident. Thus God transcends the *praedicamenta* and the *praedicabilia*, and on this matter John Scotus is clearly no monist but he emphasises the divine transcendence in the way that the Pseudo-Dionysius had done. The theology of the Blessed Trinity certainly teaches us that relation is found in God, but it does not follow that the relations in God fall under the category of relation. The word is used *metaphorice* or *translative* and, as applied to the divine Persons, it is not used in its proper and intelligible sense: the divine 'relations' are more than relations. In fine, though we can learn from creatures *that* God is, we cannot learn *what* He is. We learn that He is more than substance, more than wisdom and so on; but what that more is, what substance or wisdom mean as applied to God, we cannot know, for He transcends every intellect, whether of angels or of men.

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[1] 1, 14.

[2] 1, 15.

4. But though the doctrine of the inapplicability of the categories to God would seem to place the transcendence of God and the clear distinction between Him and creatures beyond all doubt, consideration of the categories of *facere* and *pati* seems to lead John Scotus to a very different conclusion. In a most ingenious discussion[1] he shows, what is obvious enough, that *pati* cannot be predicated of God and at the same time argues that both *facere* and *pati* involve motion. Is it possible to attribute motion to God? No, it is not. Then neither can making be attributed to God. But, how in this case, are we to explain the Scriptural doctrine that God made all things? In the first place, we cannot suppose that God existed before He made the world, for, if that were so, God would not only be in time but also His making would be an accident accruing to Him, and both suppositions are impossible. God's making, therefore, must be co-eternal with Himself. In the second place, even if the making is eternal and identical with God, and not an accident of God, we cannot attribute motion to God, and motion is involved in the category of making. What does it mean, then, to say that God made all things? 'When we hear that God makes all things, we should understand nothing else but that God is in all things, i.e. is the essence of all things. For He alone truly is, and everything which is truly said to be in those things which are, is God alone.'[2] Such a statement would seem to come very near, to put it mildly, to pantheism, to the doctrine of Spinoza, and it is small wonder that John Scotus prefaces his discussion with some remarks on the relation of reason to authority[3] in which he says that reason is prior to authority and that true authority is simply 'the truth found by the power of reason and handed on in writing by the Fathers for the use of posterity'. The conclusion is that the words, expressions and statements of Scripture, however suited for the uneducated, have to be rationally interpreted by those capable of doing so. In other words, John Scotus does not think of himself as unorthodox or intend to be unorthodox, but his philosophic interpretation of Scripture

[1] 1, 70–2. [2] 1, 72. [3] 1, 69.

sometimes seems equivalent to its rationalisation and to the setting of reason above authority and faith. However, this point of view should not be overstressed. For example, in spite of the pantheistic passage quoted he goes on to reaffirm creation out of nothing, and it is clear that when he refuses to say that God makes or made the world, he is not intending to deny creation but rather to deny of God making in the only sense in which we understand making, namely as an accident, as falling under a particular category. God's existence and essence and His act of making are ontologically one and the same,[1] and all the predicates we apply to God really signify the one incomprehensible super-Essence.[2]

The truth of the matter seems to be that John Scotus, while maintaining the distinction between God and creatures, wishes at the same time to maintain the conception of God as the one all-comprehensive Reality, at least when God is regarded *altiori theoria*. Thus he points out[3] that the first and fourth divisions of Nature (*Natura quae creat et non creatur* and *Natura quae nec creat nec creatur*) are verified only in God, as first efficient cause and final cause, while the second and third divisions (*Natura quae et creatur et creat* and *Natura quae creatur et non creat*) are verified in creatures alone; but he goes on to say[4] that inasmuch as every creature is a participation of Him who alone exists of Himself, all Nature may be reduced to the one Principle, and Creator and creature may be regarded as one.

5. The second main division of Nature (*Natura quae et creatur et creat*) refers to the 'primordial causes', called by the Greeks πρωτότυπα, ἰδέαι, etc.[5] These primordial causes or *praedestinationes* are the exemplary causes of created species and exist in the Word of God: they are in fact the divine ideas, the prototypes of all created essences. How, then, can they be said to be 'created'? John Scotus means that the eternal generation of the Word or Son involves the eternal constitution of the archetypal ideas or exemplary causes in the Word. The generation of the Word is not a temporal but an eternal process, and so is the constitution of the *praedestinationes*: the priority of the Word, considered abstractly, to the archetypes is a logical and not a temporal priority. The emergence of these archetypes is thus part of the eternal procession of the Word by 'generation', and it is in this sense only that they are said to be created.[6] However, the logical priority of the Word to the archetypes and the dependence of the archetypes on the

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[1] 1, 77. [2] 1, 75. [3] 2, 2. [4] *Ibid.* [5] *Ibid.* [6] 2, 20.

Word mean that, although there never was a time when the Word was without the archetypes, they are not *omnino coaeternae* (*causae*) with the Word.[1]

In what sense, then, can the primordial causes be said to create? If one were to press statements such as this, that the πρωτότυπον is diffused (*diffunditur*) through all things giving them essence, or again that it penetrates all the things which it has made,[2] one would naturally incline to a pantheistic interpretation; yet John Scotus repeats[3] that the Holy Trinity 'made out of nothing all things that it made', which would imply that the prototypes are causes only in the sense of exemplary causes. Nothing is created except that which was eternally pre-ordained, and these eternal *praeordinationes* or θεῖα θηλήματα are the prototypes. All creatures 'participate' in the archetypes, e.g. human wisdom in the Wisdom-in-itself.[4] He drew copiously on the Pseudo-Dionysius and Maximus for his doctrine and it would seem that he intended to reconcile his philosophic speculation with orthodox Christian theology; but his language rather gives the impression that he is straining at the leash and that his thought, in spite of his orthodox intentions, tends towards a form of philosophic pantheism. That his intentions were orthodox seems clear enough from the frequent *cautelae* he gives.

Is there actually and ontologically a plurality of *praedestinationes* in the Word? John Scotus answers in the negative.[5] Numbers proceed from the *monas* or unit, and in their procession they are multiplied and receive an order; but, considered in their origin, in the monad, they do not form a plurality but are undivided from one another. So the primordial causes, as existing in the Word, are one and not really distinct, though in their effects, which are an ordered plurality, they are multiple. The monad does not become less or undergo change through the derivation of numbers, nor does the primordial cause undergo change or diminution through the derivation of its effects, even though, from another point of view, they are contained within it. On this point John Scotus adheres to the neo-Platonic standpoint, according to which the principle undergoes no change or diminution through the emanation of the effect, and it seems that his philosophy suffers from the same tension that is observable in neo-Platonism, i.e. between a theory of emanation and a refusal to allow that emanation or procession impairs the integrity of the principle.

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[1] 2, 21. [2] 2, 27. [3] 2, 24, col. 580. [4] 2, 36. [5] Cf. 3, 1.

6. *Natura quae creatur et non creat* consists of creatures, exterior to God, forming the world of nature in the narrow sense, which was made by God out of nothing. John Scotus calls these creatures 'participations', and asserts that they participate in the primordial causes, as the latter participate immediately in God.[1] The primordial causes, therefore, look upwards towards the ultimate Principle and downwards towards their multiple effects, a doctrine which obviously smacks of the neo-Platonic emanation theory. 'Participation' means, however, derivation from, and, interpreting the Greek μετοχή or μετουσία as meaning μεταέχουσα or μεταουσία (*post-essentia* or *secunda essentia*), he says that participation is nothing else than the derivation of a second essence from a higher essence.[2] Just as the water rises in a fountain and is poured out into the river-bed, so the divine goodness, essence, life, etc., which are in the Fount of all things, flow out first of all into the primordial causes and cause them to be, and then proceed through the primordial causes into their effects.[3] This is clearly an emanation metaphor, and John Scotus concludes that God is everything which truly is, since He makes all things and is made in all things, 'as Saint Dionysius the Areopagite says'.[4] The divine goodness is progressively diffused through the universe of creation, in such a way that it 'makes all things, and is made in all things, and is all things'.[5] This sounds as if it were a purely pantheistic doctrine of the emanation type; but John Scotus equally maintains that the divine goodness created all things out of nothing, and he explains that *ex nihilo* does not imply the pre-existence of any material, whether formed or unformed, which could be called *nihil*: rather does *nihil* mean the negation and absence of all essence or substance, and indeed of all things which have been created. The Creator did not make the world *ex aliquo*, but rather *de omnino nihilo*.[6] Here again, then, John Scotus tries to combine the Christian doctrine of creation and of the relation of creatures to God with the neo-Platonic philosophy of emanation, and it is this attempt at combination which is the reason for diversity of interpretation, according as one regards the one or other element in his thought as the more fundamental.

This tension became even clearer from the following consideration. Creatures constitute, not only a 'participation' of the divine goodness, but also the divine self-manifestation or theophany. All objects of intellection or sensation are 'the appearance of the non-appearing, the manifestation of the hidden, the affirmation of the negated (a reference to the *via negativa*), the comprehension of the incomprehensible, the speaking of the ineffable, the approach of the unapproachable, the understanding of the unintelligible, the body of the incorporeal, the essence of the super-essential, the form of the formless', etc.[1] Just as the human mind, itself invisible, becomes visible or manifest in words and writing and gestures, so the invisible and incomprehensible God reveals Himself in nature, which is, therefore, a true theophany. Now, if creation is a theophany, a revelation of the divine goodness, which is itself incomprehensible, invisible and hidden, does not this suggest a new interpretation of the *nihilum* from which creation proceeds? Accordingly John Scotus explains in a later passage[2] that *nihilum* means 'the ineffable and incomprehensible and inaccessible brightness of the divine goodness', for what is incomprehensible may, *per excellentiam*, be called 'nothing', so that when God begins to appear in His theophanies, He may be said to proceed *ex nihilo in aliquid*. The divine goodness considered in itself may be said to be *omnino nihil*, though in creation it comes to be, 'since it is the essence of the whole universe'. It would indeed be an anachronism to ascribe to John Scotus a doctrine of Absolutism and to conclude that he meant that God, considered in Himself apart from the 'theophanies', is a logical abstraction; but it does seem that two distinct lines of thought are present in his teaching about creation, namely the Christian doctrine of free creation 'in time' and the neo-Platonic doctrine of a necessary diffusion of the divine goodness by way of 'emanation'. Probably he intended to maintain the Christian doctrine, but at the same time considered that he was giving a legitimate philosophic explanation of it. Such an attitude would, of course, be facilitated by the fact that there was at the time no clear distinction between theology and philosophy and their respective spheres, with the result that a thinker could, without being what we would nowadays call a rationalist, accept a revealed dogma like the Trinity, and then proceed in all good faith to 'explain' or deduce it in such a way that the explanation practically changed the dogma into something else. If we want to call John Scotus an Hegelian before Hegel, we must remember that it is extremely unlikely that he realised what he was doing.

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[1] 3. 3. [2] *Ibid.* [3] 3. 4. [4] *Ibid.* [5] *Ibid.* [6] 3. 5.

The precise relation of the created nature to God in the philosophy of John Scotus is not an easy matter to determine. That the world is eternal in one sense, namely in its *rationes*, in the primordial causes, in God's will to create, occasions no difficulty, and if the author, when he maintains that the world is both eternal and created, meant simply that as foreseen and willed by God it is eternal, while as made it is temporal and outside God, there would be no cause for surprise; but he maintains that the world is not outside God and that it is both eternal and created *within* God.[1] As regards the first point, that the world is not *extra Deum*, one must understand it in terms of the theory of participation and 'assumption' (*est igitur participatio divinae essentiae assumptio*).[2] As creatures are derived from God and owe all the reality they possess to God, apart from God they are nothing, so that in this sense it can be said that there is nothing outside God: if the divine activity were withdrawn, creatures would cease to be. But we must go further.[3] God saw from eternity all that He willed to create. Now, if He saw creatures from all eternity, He also made them from all eternity, since vision and operation are one in God. Moreover, as He saw creatures in Himself, He made them in Himself. We must conclude, therefore, that God and creatures are not distinct, but one and the same (*unum et id ipsum*), the creature subsisting in God and God being created in the creature 'in a wonderful and ineffable manner'. God, then, 'contains and comprehends the nature of all sensible things in Himself, not in the sense that He contains within Himself anything beside Himself, but in the sense that He is substantially all that He contains, the substance of all visible things being created in Him'.[4] It is at this point that John Scotus gives his interpretation of the 'nothing' out of which creatures proceed as the divine goodness,[5] and he concludes that God is everything, that from the super-essentiality of His nature (*in qua dicitur non esse*) He is created by Himself in the primordial causes and then in the effects of the primordial causes, in the theophanies.[6] Finally, at the term of the natural order, God draws all things back into Himself, into the divine Nature from which they proceeded, thus being first and final Cause, *omnia in omnibus*.

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[1] 3, 4.

[2] 3, 19.

The objection may be raised that first of all John Scotus says that God is *Natura quae creat et non creatur* and then goes on to identify with God the *Natura quae creatur et non creat*: how can the two positions be reconciled? If we regard the divine Nature as

[1] See the long discussion in 3, 5 ff.
[2] 3, 9.
[3] 3, 17.
[4] 3, 18
[5] 3, 19.
[6] 3, 10.

it is in itself, we see that it is without cause, ἄναρχος and ἀναίτιος,[1] but at the same time it is the cause of all creatures: it is, then, rightly to be called 'Nature which creates and is not created'. From another point of view, looking on God as final Cause, as *term* of the rhythm of the cosmic process, He may be called 'Nature which neither creates nor is created'. On the other hand, considered as issuing out from the hidden depths of His nature and beginning 'to appear', He appears first of all in the primordial causes or *rationes aeternae*. These are identical with the Word, which contains them, so that, in 'creating' the primordial causes or principles of essences, God appears to Himself, becomes self-conscious, and creates Himself, i.e. as generating the Word and the *rationes* contained in the Word. God is thus 'Nature which both creates and is created'. In the second stage of the divine procession or theophany God comes to be in the effects of the primordial causes, and so is 'Nature which is created', while, since these effects have a term and include together all created effects, so that there are no further effects, He is also 'Nature which does not create'.[2]

7. John Scotus's allegorical explanation of the Biblical account of the six days of creation,[3] which he explains in terms of his own philosophy, brings him, in the fourth book, to his doctrine of man. We can say of man that he is an animal, while we can also say that he is not an animal,[4] since while he shares with the animals the functions of nutrition, sensation, etc., he has also the faculty of reason, which is peculiar to him and which elevates him above all the animals. Yet there are not two souls in man, an animal soul and a rational soul: there is a rational soul which is simple and is wholly present in every part of the body, performing its various functions. John Scotus is therefore willing to accept the definition of man as *animal rationale*, understanding by *animal* the genus and by *rationale* the specific difference. On the other hand the human soul is made in the image of God, is like to God, and this likeness to God expresses the true substance and essence of man. As it exists in any actual man it is an effect: as it exists in God it is a primordial cause, though these are but two ways of looking at the same thing.[5] From this point of view man can be defined as *Notio quaedam intellectualis in mente divina aeternaliter facta.*[6] *That* this substance of man, the likeness to God or participation in God, exists, can be known by the human mind, just as the human mind

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[1] 3. 23. [2] *Ibid.* [3] 3. 24 ff. [4] 4. 5. [5] 4. 7. [6] *Ibid.*

can know *that* God exists, but *what* its substance is the human mind cannot know, just as it cannot know *what* God is. While, then, from one point of view man is definable, from another point of view he is undefinable, since the mind or reason of man is made in the image of God and the image, like God Himself, exceeds our power of understanding. In this discussion of the definition of man we can discern Aristotelian elements and also neo-Platonic and Christian elements, which give rise to different attitudes and views on the matter.

John Scotus emphasises the fact that man is the microcosm of creation, since he sums up in himself the material world and the spiritual world, sharing with the plants the powers of growth and nutrition, with the animals the powers of sensation and emotional reaction, with the angels the power of understanding: he is in fact what Poseidonius called the bond or δέσμος, the link between the material and spiritual, the visible and invisible creation. From this point of view one can say that every genus of animal is in man rather than that man is in the genus animal.[1]

8. The fourth stage of the process of Nature is that of *Natura quae nec creat nec creatur*, namely of God as the term and end of all things, God all in all. This stage is that of the return to God, the corresponding movement to the procession from God, for there is a rhythm in the life of Nature and, as the world of creatures proceeded forth from the primordial causes, so will it return into those causes. 'For the end of the whole movement is its beginning, since it is terminated by no other end than by its principle, from which its movement begins and to which it constantly desires to return, that it may attain rest therein. And this is to be understood not only of the parts of the sensible world, but also of the whole world. Its end is its beginning, which it desires, and on finding which it will cease to be, not by the perishing of its substance, but by its return to the ideas (*rationes*), from which it proceeds.'[2] The process is thus a cosmic process and affects all creation, though mutable and unspiritualised matter which John Scotus, following St. Gregory of Nyssa, represented as a complex of accidents and as appearance,[3] will perish.

Besides the cosmical process of creation as a whole, there is the specifically Christian theme (though John Scotus not infrequently does a little 'rationalising') of the return of man to God. Fallen man is led back to God by the incarnate Logos, who has assumed human nature and redeemed all men in that human nature, and John Scotus emphasises the solidarity of mankind both in Adam's fall and in Christ's resurrection. Christ brings mankind back to God, though not all are united to God in the same degree, for, though He redeemed all human nature, 'some He restores to the former state of human nature, while others He deifies beyond human nature', yet in no one except Himself is human nature substantially united with the Godhead.[1] John Scotus thus affirms the unique character of the Incarnation and of the relation of Christ's human nature to the Deity, though, when he gives the stages of the return of human nature to God, another—and less orthodox—point of view seems to show itself. These stages are:[2] (1) the dissolution of the human body into the four elements of the sensible world; (2) the resurrection of the body; (3) the change of body into spirit; (4) the return of human nature in its totality into the eternal and unchangeable primordial causes; and (5) the return of nature and the primordial causes to God. 'For God will be all in all, where nothing will exist but God alone.' Yet if at first sight this latter viewpoint seems quite inconsistent with orthodox theology and especially with the unique position of Christ, John Scotus clearly did not mean to assert a real pantheistic absorption in God, since he goes on to state that he does not mean to imply a perishing of individual substance but its elevation. He uses the illustration of the iron made white-hot in the fire and observes that, though the iron may be said to be transmuted into fire, the substance of the iron remains. Thus when, for example, he says that the human body is changed into spirit, what he refers to is the glorification or 'spiritualisation' of the human body, not to a kind of transubstantiation. Moreover, it must be remembered that John Scotus expressly states that he is basing his teaching on the doctrine of St. Gregory of Nyssa and his commentator Maximus, and his teaching must accordingly be understood in the light of that statement. Lest it be thought, he says, that he is entirely neglecting the Latins in favour of the Greeks, he adds the testimony of St. Ambrose. Though the heavens and the earth will perish and pass away (their perishing being interpreted as a *reditus in causas*, which means the cessation of the generated material world), that does not mean that the individual souls of men, in their *reditus in causas*, will cease to exist: their *deificatio* no more means their substantial absorption in God than the permeation of the air by light means its destruction or transubstantiation. John Scotus is quite clear on that point.

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[1] 4, 8. [2] 5, 3. [3] 1, 34.

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[1] 5, 25. [2] 5, 8.

The fact is that in the case of the cosmic 'return', as elsewhere, John Scotus tries to combine the teaching of the Scriptures and the Fathers with philosophical speculation of the neo-Platonic tradition or rather to express the Christian *Weltanschauung* in terms of such speculation. As the Christian wisdom is looked at as a totality, no clear distinction being made between revealed theology and philosophy, the application of John's speculative method necessarily means a *de facto* rationalisation on occasion, however orthodox his intentions may have been. For instance, though he insists on the fact that the return to God does not spell the annihilation or the complete absorption of the individual human being and though he expresses himself perfectly clearly on this point, yet his attitude towards matter as the term of the descending divine procession leads him to say[1] that before the Fall human beings were not sexually differentiated and that after the resurrection they will return to this state (in support of which views he appeals to St. Paul, St. Gregory and Maximus). Man, had he not fallen, would have been sexually undifferentiated and in the primordial cause human nature is sexually undifferentiated: the *reditus in causam* involves, therefore, a return to the state of human nature *in causa* and a liberation from the state consequent on the Fall. The *reditus in causam*, however, is a stage in the cosmic process of Nature, so that John Scotus has to maintain that the resurrection of the body takes place by nature, *natura et non per gratiam*,[2] though he appeals for support in this to St. Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus and St. Epiphanius. On the other hand, it is certain, theologically at least, that something is attributable to grace, and John Scotus accordingly attributes the *deificatio*, which is not attained by all human beings, to the free gift and disposition of God, to grace. This is an example of his attempt to combine revelation with the exigencies of his speculative system, an attempt for which, of course, he undoubtedly received support from the writings of earlier Christian authors. On the one hand John Scotus, owing to his Christian intentions, must attribute the resurrection in at least one aspect to God's free grace operating through Christ, while on the other hand, his philosophical doctrine of the return of all things to God means that he must make the resurrection in some degree a natural and

[1] 5, 20. [2] 5, 23.

necessary process, not only because human nature itself has to return into its cause, but because all creation has to return into its cause and endure eternally, and this it does effectively as being contained in man, the microcosm.[1]

9. But if there is to take place a cosmic return to God in and through human nature, so that God, as St. Paul says, will be 'all in all', how is it possible to maintain the theologically orthodox doctrine of the eternal punishment of the damned? The Scriptures teach that the fallen angels and human beings who are finally impenitent will be eternally punished, while on the other hand reason teaches that evil cannot be without end, since God will be all in all and evil is diametrically opposed to God, who is goodness.[2] How can one reconcile these two positions without rejecting either authority or reason? John Scotus's answer[3] is ingenious and affords a good example of his 'rationalisation'. Nothing that God has made can be evil: the substances or natures, therefore, of the devils and evil men must be good. On this point he quotes the Pseudo-Dionysius. The demons and evil men will never, then, suffer annihilation. All that God has made will return to God and all 'nature' will be contained in God, human nature included, so that it is impossible that human nature should undergo eternal punishment. What, then, of the punishments described in the Scriptures? In the first place they cannot be corporeal or material in character, while in the second place they can only affect what God has not made and what, in this sense, is outside 'nature'. Now, God did not make the perverse will of demons or evil men, and it is this which will be punished. But, if all things are to return to God and God will be all in all, how can punishment be contained in God? Moreover, if the malice has disappeared and all impiety, what is there left to punish? The punishment must consist in the eternal prevention by God of the will's tendency to fix itself on the images, conserved in the memory, of the objects desired on earth. God, then, will be all in all, and all evil will have perished, but the wicked will be eternally punished. It is obvious, however, that from the viewpoint of orthodox theology 'wicked' and 'punished' must be placed in inverted commas, since John Scotus has rationalised the Scriptural teaching in order to satisfy the exigencies of his philosophical system.[4] All human nature, all men without exception, will rise with spiritualised bodies and the full possession of natural goods, though only the elect will enjoy 'deification'.[5]

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[1] 5, 25. [2] 5, 26–7. [3] 5, 27–8. [4] 5, 29–36. [5] 5, 36.

The conclusion is, then, that the divine nature is the end and term of all things, which will return into their *rationes aeternae* and there abide, 'ceasing to be called by the name of creature', for God will be all in all, 'and every creature will be cast into the shade, i.e. changed into God, as the stars at the rising of the sun'.[1]

10. Although the *De Divisione Naturae* did not have the effect that its outstanding quality as a systematic metaphysic deserved, it was utilised by a succession of mediaeval writers from Remigius of Auxerre to Amalric of Bene, including Berengarius, Anselm of Laon, William of Malmesbury, who praised the work, though he disapproved of John Scotus's predilection for Greek authors, and Honorius of Autun, while the Pseudo-Avicenna borrowed from the work in his *De Intelligentiis*, written in the middle or later part of the twelfth century. However, the fact that the Albigensians appealed to the book, while Amalric of Bene (end of twelfth century) used the doctrine of John Scotus in a pantheistic sense, led to its condemnation in 1225 by Pope Honorius III, who ordered that the work should be burnt, though the order was by no means always fulfilled. This condemnation of the *De Divisione Naturae* and the interpretation which led to the condemnation naturally raises the question, whether John Scotus was or was not a pantheist.

That John Scotus was in intention orthodox has already been given as my opinion; but there are several points that might be mentioned by way of summary argument in support of this statement. First of all, he draws copiously on the writings and ideas of authors whom he certainly regarded as orthodox and with whose ideas he felt his own thought to be in harmony. For example, he makes extensive use of St. Gregory of Nyssa, of the Pseudo-Dionysius (whom he regarded as St. Dionysius the Areopagite), and, not to appear to neglect the Latins, quotes St. Augustine and St. Ambrose in favour of his views. Moreover, John Scotus considered his speculation to be founded on the Scriptures themselves. For instance, the theory of the fourth stage of Nature, *Deus omnia in omnibus*, has its foundation in the words of St. Paul:[2] 'And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then the Son also himself shall be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all,' while the doctrine of the body 'becoming spirit' at the resurrection is based on the Pauline statement that the body is sown in corruption and raised in incorruption, that the risen body is a 'spiritual' body. Again, John Scotus draws from the first chapter of St. John's Gospel the conception of the Logos by whom all things were made, in his account of creation, while the theme of *deificatio* was common in the writings of the Fathers.

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[1] 3. 23.

[2] 1 Cor., 15. 28.

But, even if John Scotus wrote as though his system had a foundation in Scripture and Tradition, might it not be that he was consciously rationalising the text of Scripture, that he had, to put it crudely, 'his tongue in his cheek'? Does he not say[1] that authority proceeds from true reason and reason in no way from authority; that every authority which is not approved by true reason seems to be weak; that true reason does not need the confirmation of any authority and that authority is nothing else but the truth found by the power of reason and handed on by the Fathers in their writings for the use of posterity; and does not this indicate that he set no store by authority? It seems to me that, to judge by the context, when John Scotus speaks about 'authority' here, he is not referring to the words of Scripture but to the teaching of the Fathers and to the interpretation they had put on the words of the Scriptures. Of course, although it is true that authority must rest on reason, in the sense that the authority must have good credentials, the statement of John Scotus to the effect that authority is nothing else than the truth found by reason and handed on by the Fathers is, as it stands, unacceptable from the theological standpoint (I mean, if compared with the orthodox doctrine of Tradition); but what John Scotus apparently *means* is, not that the doctrine of the Trinity, for example, is simply a truth found by reason and not revealed, but that the attempted 'explanation' or development of the dogma by this or that Father is simply the result of the Father's rational effort and is not final. He does not mean to suggest that the bare dogma, as found in Scripture and preserved by, for example, St. Augustine, can legitimately be questioned, but rather that the intellectual development of the dogma given by St. Augustine, though worthy of respect, is the work of reason and cannot be placed on the same level as the dogma itself. His position is, therefore, this. If St. Paul says that God will be *omnia in omnibus*, this is a revealed truth, but when it comes to deciding what St. Paul meant by this statement and how precisely it is to be understood, reason is the final court of appeal. I am not trying to suggest that this attitude is theologically acceptable: my point is rather that, whether his actual view is acceptable or not, John Scotus is not questioning a dogma as such or claiming a right to deny it, but is claiming the right to interpret it, and that his 'rationalisation' consists in this. He has not got his tongue in his cheek when he appeals to Scripture, for he sincerely believed that the data of revelation have to be interpreted rationally and, as we would say, philosophically. This is partly due to the fact that he makes no clear-cut distinction between theology and philosophy. His system presupposes the 'Christian wisdom' (including truths discoverable by reason alone, e.g. God's existence, and truths which are revealed, but not discoverable by reason alone, e.g. the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead) and is a speculative attempt to exhibit the Christian wisdom as an organic and interconnected whole, without making any clear distinction between the spheres of philosophy and revelation, and this attempt inevitably involves some rationalisation. I repeat that I am not trying to defend John Scotus's rationalisation, but to explain his attitude, and my thesis is that it is a mistake to interpret his 'rationalisation' as if it post-dated the clear division of philosophy and theology: his attitude is not essentially different from that of later mediaeval theologians who attempted to prove the Trinity *rationibus necessariis*. If John Scotus had consciously been a 'philosopher' in the narrow sense and nothing more, we would have had to call him a rationalist in the modern sense; but he was both theologian and philosopher in combination (in confusion, if one prefers), and his rationalisation was, *psychologically*, quite compatible with a belief in revelation. Therefore, when he says[1] that he does not want to seem to resist the Apostle or the testimony *summae ac sanctae auctoritatis*, he is quite sincere. Indeed his true attitude is admirably indicated by his statement[2] that 'it is not for us to judge the opinions of the holy Fathers, but to accept them with piety and reverence, though we are not prohibited from choosing (among their opinions) that which appears to reason to agree better with the divine words'. John Scotus accepts, for instance, the doctrine of eternal punishment, because it is revealed, and he accepts it sincerely; but he does not consider that this prevents him from attempting to explain the doctrine in such a way that it will fit in with the rest of his system, a system which he regards as fundamentally based on revelation.

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[1] 1, 69.

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[1] 1, 7.

[2] 2, 16.

The discussion may seem to have strayed from the point at issue; but this is not so in reality. For instance, revelation, Christian dogma, teaches clearly that the world was made by God from nothing and that creatures are not God. Now John Scotus' general system demands that creatures should return to God and that God should be all in all. Regarding both truths as founded on divine teaching, John Scotus has to reconcile them rationally, in such a way that the *reditus in Deum* does not lead to the conclusion to which it might seem to lead, namely pantheistic absorption, and that the presentation of the distinction between God and creatures does not contradict the Pauline statement that God will be all in all. The process of reconciliation may involve him in what the Thomist theologians would call 'rationalisation', but his *cautelae*, e.g. that creatures return to God and 'become' God, not *ita ut non sint* but '*ut melius sint*', are not sops thrown to the theologians with the writer's tongue in his cheek, but they are sincere expressions of John Scotus' desire to preserve Christian teaching or what he regards, rightly or wrongly, as Christian teaching.

That a tension develops between the Christian and neo-Platonic elements in John Scotus' thought has already been pointed out, but it is as well to emphasise it again, as it has a bearing on the question of his 'rationalism'. In accordance with the neo-Platonic tradition inherited through the Pseudo-Dionysius, John Scotus maintained[1] that God in Himself, *Natura quae creat et non creatur*, is impenetrable to Himself, unknown to Himself, as being infinite and super-essential, and that He becomes luminous to Himself only in His theophanies. This is, of course, an echo of the neo-Platonic doctrine that the One, the ultimate Godhead, is beyond thought, beyond self-consciousness, since thought and self-consciousness involve a duality of subject and object. Now, that God in Himself is incomprehensible to the created mind is certainly a Christian tenet, but that He is not self-luminous is not the teaching of Christianity. John Scotus, therefore, has to reconcile the two positions somehow, if he wishes to retain them both, and he attempts to do so by making the first 'theophany' the emergence of the Logos containing the primordial causes, so that in and through the Logos God becomes (though not temporally) self-conscious, appearing to Himself. The Logos thus corresponds to the neo-Platonic *Nous*, and a rationalisation arises out of the desire to preserve both the Christian doctrine and the principles of what John Scotus regards as true philosophy. The desire to preserve Christian doctrine is sincere enough, but a tension between the two elements is inevitable. If one takes a particular set of isolated statements of John Scotus one would have to say that he was either a pantheist or a theist. For example, the statement that the distinction between the second and third stages of Nature is due only to the forms of human reasoning[1] is in itself clearly pantheistic, while the statement that the substantial distinction between God and creatures is always preserved is clearly theistic. It might seem that we should opt for one or the other set in an unqualified manner, and it is this attitude which has given rise to the notion that John Scotus was a conscious pantheist who made verbal concessions to orthodoxy with his tongue in his cheek. But if one realises that he was a sincere Christian, who yet attempted to reconcile Christian teaching with a predominantly neo-Platonic philosophy or rather to express the Christian wisdom in the only framework of thought which was then at hand, which happened to be predominantly neo-Platonic, one should also be able to realise that, in spite of the tension involved and the tendency to rationalise Christian dogma, as far as the subjective standpoint of the philosopher was concerned a satisfactory reconciliation was effected. This does not, of course, alter the fact that not a few statements, if taken in isolation, affirm a pantheistic doctrine and that other statements are irreconcilable with orthodox theological teaching on such points as eternal punishment, and it was in view of such statements that the *De Divisione Naturae* was subsequently condemned by ecclesiastical authority. However, whether orthodox or not, the work bears testimony to a powerful and acute mind, the mind of a speculative philosopher who stands head and shoulders above any other thinker of his day.

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[1] E.g. 3, 23.

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[1] 2. 2.

PART III

THE TENTH, ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH CENTURIES

CHAPTER XIV

THE PROBLEM OF UNIVERSALS

Situation following death of Charlemagne—Origin of discussion in texts of Porphyry and Boethius—Importance of the problem—Exaggerated realism—Roscelin's 'nominalism'—St. Peter Damian's attitude to dialectic—William of Champeaux—Abelard—Gilbert de la Porrée and John of Salisbury—Hugh of St. Victor—St. Thomas Aquinas.

1. ONE might have expected that the revival of letters and learning under Charlemagne would lead to a gradual and progressive development of philosophy and (the retention of what was already possessed having been provided for) that thinkers would be able to extend knowledge and pursue a more speculative path, especially as western Europe had been already supplied with an example of philosophical speculation and systematising by John Scotus Eriugena. In point of fact, however, this was not the case, since historical factors outside the sphere of philosophy plunged the empire of Charlemagne into a new Dark Age, the Dark Ages of the tenth century, and belied the promise of the Carolingian renaissance.

Cultural progress depended to some extent on the maintenance of the tendency to centralisation which had been apparent during the reign of Charlemagne; but after his death the empire was divided and the division of the empire among the descendants of Charlemagne was accompanied by the growth of feudalism, that is, by decentralisation. As nobles could be rewarded practically only through gifts of land, they tended, through the acquisition of land, to become more and more independent of the monarchy: their interests diverged or conflicted. Churchmen of the higher grades became feudal lords, monastic life was degraded (for example, through the common practice of the appointment of lay-abbots), bishoprics were used as means of honouring or rewarding servants of the king. The Papacy, which might have attempted to check and to remedy the worsening conditions in France, was itself at a very low ebb of spiritual and moral prestige, and, since education and learning were mainly in the hands of monks and ecclesiastics, the inevitable result of the break-up of the empire of Charlemagne was the decay of scholarship and educational activity. Reform did not begin until the establishment of Cluny in 910, and the influence of the Cluniac reform made itself felt only gradually, of course. St. Dunstan, who had been in the Cluniac monastery of Ghent, introduced the ideals of Cluny into England.

In addition to the internal factors which prevented the fruit of the Carolingian renaissance coming to maturity (such as the political disintegration which led in the tenth century to the transference of the imperial crown from France to Germany, the decay of monastic and ecclesiastical life, and the degradation of the Papacy), there were also operative such external factors as the attacks of the Norsemen in the ninth and tenth centuries, who destroyed centres of wealth and culture and checked the development of civilisation, as also the attacks of the Saracens and the Mongols. Internal decay, combined with external dangers and attacks, rendered cultural progress impossible. To conserve, or to attempt to do so, was the only practicable course: progress in scholarship and philosophy lay again in the future. Such interest in philosophy as existed, centred largely round dialectical questions, and particularly round the problem of universals, the starting-point for the discussion being supplied by certain texts of Porphyry and Boethius.

2. Boethius, in his commentary on the *Isagoge* of Porphyry,[1] quotes Porphyry as remarking that at present he refuses to state whether genera and species are subsistent entities or whether they consist in concepts alone; if subsisting, whether they are material or immaterial and, further, whether they are separate from sensible objects or not, on the ground that such exalted matters cannot be treated in an introduction. Boethius himself, however, goes on to treat of the matter, first of all remarking on the difficulty of the question and the need of care in considering it and then pointing out that there are two ways in which an idea may be so formed that its content is not found in extramental objects precisely as it exists in the idea. For example, one may join together arbitrarily man and horse, to form the idea of a centaur, joining together objects which nature does not suffer to be joined together, and such arbitrarily constructed ideas are

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[1] *P.L.*, 64, col. 82–6.

'false'. On the other hand, if we form the idea of a line, i.e. a mere line as considered by the geometer, then, although it is true that no mere line exists by itself in extramental reality, the idea is not 'false', since bodies involve lines and all we have done is to isolate the line and consider it in abstraction. Composition (as in the composition of horse and man to form the centaur) produces a false idea, whereas abstraction produces an idea which is true, even though the thing conceived does not exist extramentally in a state of abstraction or separation.

Now, the ideas of genera and species are ideas of the latter type, formed by abstraction. The likeness of humanity is abstracted from individual men, and this likeness, considered by the mind, is the idea of the species, while the idea of the genus is formed by considering the likeness of diverse species. Consequently, 'genera and species are in individuals, but, as thought, are universals'. They 'subsist in sensible things, but are understood without bodies'. Extramentally there is only one subject for both genus and species, i.e. the individual, but that no more prevents their being considered separately than the fact that it is the same line which is both convex and concave prevents our having different ideas of the convex and concave and defining them differently.

Boethius thus afforded the material for an Aristotelian solution of the problem, though he goes on to say that he has not thought it proper to decide between Plato and Aristotle, but that he has been following out the opinions of Aristotle since his book is concerned with the *Categories* of which Aristotle was the author. But, though Boethius afforded material for a solution of the problem of universals on the lines of moderate realism and though his quotations from Porphyry and his comments on them started the discussion of the problem in the early Middle Ages, the first solution of the mediaevals was not on the lines suggested by Boethius but was a rather *simpliste* form of extreme realism.

3. The thoughtless might suppose that in occupying themselves with this problem the early mediaevals were canvassing a useless topic or indulging in a profitless dialectic juggling; but a short reflection should be sufficient to show the importance of the problem, at least if its implications are considered.

Although what we see and touch are particular things, when we think these things we cannot help using general ideas and words, as when we say, 'This particular object which I see is a tree, an elm to be precise.' Such a judgement affirms of a particular object that it is of a certain kind, that it belongs to the genus tree and the species elm; but it is clear that there may be many other objects besides the actual one perceived to which the same terms may be applied, which may be covered by the same ideas. In other words, objects outside the mind are individual, whereas concepts are general, universal in character, in the sense that they apply indifferently to a multitude of individuals. But, if extramental objects are particular and human concepts universal, it is clearly of importance to discover the relation holding between them. If the fact that subsistent objects are individual and concepts general means that universal concepts have no foundation in extramental reality, if the universality of concepts means that they are mere ideas, then a rift between thought and objects is created and our knowledge, so far as it is expressed in universal concepts and judgements, is of doubtful validity at the very least. The scientist expresses his knowledge in abstract and universal terms (for example, he does not make a statement about this particular electron, but about electrons in general), and if these terms have no foundation in extramental reality, his science is an arbitrary construction, which has no relation to reality. In so far indeed as human judgements are of a universal character or involve universal concepts, as in the statement that this rose is red, the problem would extend to human knowledge in general, and if the question as to the existence of an extramental foundation of a universal concept is answered in the negative, scepticism would result.

The problem may be raised in various ways, and, historically speaking, it has taken various forms at various times. It may be raised in this form, for instance. 'What, if anything, in extramental reality corresponds to the universal concepts in the mind?' This may be called the ontological approach, and it was under this form that the early mediaevals discussed the matter. Or one may ask *how* our universal concepts are formed. This is the psychological approach and the emphasis is different from that in the first approach, though the two lines of approach are closely connected and one can scarcely treat the ontological question without answering in some way the psychological question as well. Then again, if one supposes a conceptualist solution, that universal concepts are simply conceptual constructions, one may ask how it is that scientific knowledge, which for all *practical* purposes is a fact, is *possible*. But, however the problem be raised and whatever form it takes, it is of fundamental importance. Perhaps one of the factors which may give the impression that the mediaevals were discussing a comparatively unimportant question is this, that they practically confined their attention to genera and species in the category of substance. Not that the problem, even in this restricted form, is unimportant, but if the problem is raised in regard to the other categories as well, its implications in regard to at least the greater part of human knowledge becomes more evident. It becomes clear that the problem is ultimately the epistemological problem of the relation of thought to reality.

4. The first solution to the problem given by the mediaevals was that known as 'Exaggerated Realism'. That it was chronologically the first solution is borne out by the fact that the opponents of this view were for some time known as the *moderni*, while Abelard, for instance, refers to it as the *antiqua doctrina*. According to this view, our generic and specific concepts correspond to a reality existing extramentally in objects, a subsistent reality in which individuals share. Thus the concept Man or Humanity reflects a reality, humanity or the substance of human nature, which exists extramentally in the same way as it is thought, that is, as a unitary substance in which all men share. If for Plato the concept Man reflects the ideal of human nature subsisting apart from and 'outside' individual men, an ideal which individual men embody or 'imitate' to a greater or less extent, the mediaeval realist believed that the concept reflects a unitary substance existing extramentally, in which men participate or of which they are accidental modifications. Such a view is, of course, extremely naïve, and indicates a complete misunderstanding of Boethius's treatment of the question, since it supposes that unless the object reflected by the concept exists extramentally in exactly the same way that it exists intramentally, the concept is purely subjective. In other words, it supposes that the only way of saving the objectivity of our knowledge is to maintain a naïve and exact correspondence between thought and things.

Realism is already implied in the teaching of e.g. *Fredegisius* who succeeded Alcuin as Abbot of St. Martin's Abbey at Tours and maintained that every name or term supposes a corresponding positive reality (e.g. Darkness or Nothing). It is also implied in the teaching of *John Scotus Eriugena*. We find a statement of the doctrine in the teaching of *Remigius of Auxerre* (*c.* 841–908), who held that the species is a *partitio substantialis* of the genus and that the species, e.g. Man, is the substantial unity of many individuals (*Homo est multorum hominum substantialis unitas*). A statement of this kind, if understood as meaning that the plurality of individual men have a common substance which is numerically one, has as its natural consequence the conclusion that individual men differ only accidentally from one another, and *Odo of Tournai* (d. 1113) of the Cathedral School of Tournai (who is also called Odo of Cambrai, from the fact that he became Bishop of Cambrai) did not hesitate to draw this conclusion, maintaining that when a child comes into being God produces a new property of an already existing substance, not a new substance. Logically this ultra-realism should result in sheer monism. For example, we have the concepts of substance and of being, and, on the principles of ultra-realism, it would follow that all objects to which we apply the term substance are modifications of one substance and, more comprehensively, that all beings are modifications of one Being. It is probable that this attitude weighed with John Scotus Eriugena, in so far as the latter can justly be called a monist.

As Professor Gilson and others have pointed out, those who maintained ultra-realism in the early Middle Ages were philosophising as logicians, in the sense that they assumed that the logical and real orders are exactly parallel and that because the meaning of, for example, 'man' in the statements 'Plato is a man' and 'Aristotle is a man' is the same, there is a substantial identity in the real order between Plato and Aristotle. But it would, I think, be a mistake to suppose that the ultra-realists were influenced simply by logical considerations: they were influenced also by theological considerations. This is clear in the case of Odo of Tournai, who used ultra-realism in order to explain the transmission of original sin. If one understands by original sin a positive infection of the human soul, one is at once faced by an apparent dilemma: either one has to say that God creates out of nothing a new human substance each time a child comes into being, with the consequence that God is responsible for the infection, or one has to deny that God creates the individual soul. What Odo of Tournai maintained was a form of traducianism, i.e. that the human nature or substance of Adam, infected by original sin, is handed on at generation and that what God creates is simply a new property of an already existing substance.

It is not always easy to assess the precise significance to be attached to the words of the early mediaevals, as we cannot always tell with certainty if a writer fully recognised the implications of his words or if he was making an emphatic point in controversy, perhaps as an *argumentum ad hominem*, without consciously wishing his statement to be understood according to its literal meaning. Thus when Roscelin said that the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity might well be called three gods, if usage permitted, on the ground that every existing being is an individual, *St. Anselm* (1033–1109) asked how he who does not understand how a multitude of men are specifically one man, can understand how several Persons, each of whom is perfect God, are one God.[1] On the strength of this statement St. Anselm has been called an ultra- or exaggerated realist, and indeed the natural interpretation of the statement, in the light of the theological dogma involved, is that, just as there is but one Substance or Nature in the Godhead, so there is but one substance or nature (i.e. numerically one) in all men. Yet it might be that St. Anselm was arguing *ad hominem* and that his question, as intended, amounts to asking how a man who does not realise the specific unity of men (supposing, rightly or wrongly, that Roscelin denied *all* reality to the universal) can possibly grasp the far greater union of the divine Persons in the one Nature, a Nature which is *numerically* one. St. Anselm may have been an ultra-realist, but the second interpretation of his question is supported by the fact that he obviously understood Roscelin to hold that universals have no reality but are mere *flatus vocis* and by the fact that in the *Dialogus de Grammatico*[2] he distinguished between primary and secondary substances, mentioning Aristotle by name.

5. If the implied principle of the ultra-realists was the exact correspondence of thought and extramental reality, the principle of the adversaries of ultra-realism was that only individuals exist. Thus *Eric* (Heiricus) *of Auxerre* (841–76) observed that if anyone tries to maintain that white or black exist absolutely and without a substance in which they adhere, he will be unable to point to any corresponding reality but will have to refer to a white man or a black horse. General names have no general or universal objects corresponding to them; their only objects are individuals. How, then, do universal concepts arise and what is their function and their relation to reality? Neither the understanding nor the memory can grasp all individuals, and so the mind gathers together (*coarctat*) the multitude of individuals and forms the idea

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[1] *De fide Trin.*, 2.

[2] 10.

of the species, e.g. man, horse, lion. But the species of animals or plants are themselves too many to be comprehended by the mind at once, and it gathers the species together to form the genus. There are, however, many genera and the mind takes a further step in the process of *coarctatio*, forming the still wider and more extensive concept of *usia* (οὐσία). Now, at first sight this seems to be a nominalist position and to remind one of the shorthand note theory of J. S. Mill; but, in the absence of more extensive evidence, it would be rash to affirm that this actually was Eric's consciously held view. Probably he merely meant to affirm emphatically that only individuals exist, that is, to deny ultra-realism, and at the same time to give attention to the psychological explanation of our universal concepts. We have not sufficient evidence to warrant an affirmation that he denied any real foundation to the universal concept.

A similar difficulty of interpretation arises in regard to the teaching of *Roscelin* (*c.* 1050–1120), who, after studying at Soissons and Rheims, taught at Compiègne, his birthplace, Loches, Besançon and Tours. His writings have been lost, except for a letter to Abelard, and we have to rely on the testimony of other writers like St. Anselm, Abelard and John of Salisbury. These writers make it perfectly clear indeed that Roscelin was an opponent of ultra-realism and that he maintained that only individuals exist, but his positive teaching is not so clear. According to St. Anselm,[1] Roscelin held that the universal is a mere word (*flatus vocis*) and accordingly he is numbered by St. Anselm among the contemporary heretics in dialectic. Anselm goes on to remark that these people think that colour is nothing else but body and the wisdom of man nothing else but the soul, and the chief fault of the 'dialectical heretics' he finds in the fact that their reason is so bound up with their imagination that they cannot free themselves from images and contemplate abstract and purely intelligible objects.[2] Now, that Roscelin said that universals are words, general words, we cannot call in question, since St. Anselm's testimony is quite clear; but it is difficult to assess precisely what he meant by this. If we interpret St. Anselm as more or less an Aristotelian, i.e. as no ultra-realist, then we should have to say that he understood Roscelin's teaching as involving a denial of any kind of objectivity to the universal; whereas if we interpret Anselm as an ultra-realist we can then suppose that Roscelin was

[1] *De fide Trin.*, 2; *P.L.* 158, 265A.

[2] *De fide Trin.*, 2; *P.L.* 158, 265B.

merely denying ultra-realism in a very emphatic way. It is, of course, undeniable that the statement that the universal is a mere *flatus vocis* is, taken literally, a denial not only of ultra-realism and moderate realism but even of conceptualism and the presence of universal concepts in the mind; but we have not sufficient evidence to say what Roscelin held about the concept as such, if indeed he gave any attention to the matter: it might be that, in his determination to deny ultra-realism, the formal subsistence of universals, he simply opposed the *universale in voce* to the subsistent universal, meaning that only individuals exist and that the universal does not, as such, exist extramentally, but without meaning to say anything about the *universale in mente*, which he may have taken for granted or never have thought about. Thus it is clear from some remarks of Abelard in his letter on Roscelin to the Bishop of Paris[1] and in his *De divisione et definitione* that, according to Roscelin, a part is a mere word, in the sense that when we say that a whole substance consists of parts, the idea of a whole consisting of parts is a 'mere word', since the objective reality is a plurality of individual things or substances; but it would be rash to conclude from this that Roscelin, if called upon to define his position, would have been prepared to maintain that we have no *idea* of a whole consisting of parts. May he not have meant simply that our idea of a whole consisting of parts is purely subjective and that the only objective reality is a multiplicity of individual substances? (Similarly he appears to have denied the logical unity of the syllogism and to have dissolved it into separate propositions.) According to Abelard, Roscelin's assertion that the ideas of whole and part are mere words is on a par with his assertion that species are mere words; and if the above interpretation is tenable in regard to the whole-part relation, we could apply it also to his doctrine of genera and species and say that his identification of them with words is an affirmation of their subjectivity rather than a denial that there is such a thing as a general idea.

One has, of course, no axe to grind in interpreting Roscelin. He may indeed have been a nominalist in a naïve and complete sense, and I am certainly not prepared to say that he was not a nominalist pure and simple. John of Salisbury seems to have understood him in this sense, for he says that 'some have the idea that the words themselves are the genera and species, although this view was long ago rejected and has disappeared with its author',[1] an observation which must refer to Roscelin, since the same author says in his *Metalogicus*[2] that the view which identifies species and genera with words practically disappeared with Roscelin. But though Roscelin may have been a pure nominalist and though the fragmentary testimony as to his teaching, if taken literally, certainly supports this interpretation, still it does not seem possible to assert without doubt that he paid any attention to the question whether we have *ideas* of genera or species or not, still less that he denied it, even if his actual words imply this. All we are entitled to say with certainty is that, whether nominalist or conceptualist, Roscelin was an avowed anti-realist.

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[1] *P.L.*, 178, 358B.

6. It has been remarked earlier that Roscelin proposed a form of 'Tritheism' which excited the enmity of St. Anselm and which led to his being condemned and having to retract his theory at a Council at Soissons in 1092. It was the fact of such incursions into theology on the part of the dialecticians which was largely responsible for the hostility shown towards them by men like St. Peter Damian. The peripatetic dialecticians or sophists, laymen who came from Italy and travelled from one centre of study to another, men like Anselmus Peripateticus of Parma, who attempted to ridicule the principle of contradiction, naturally put dialectic in a rather poor light through their verbal sophistry and jugglery; but as long as they restricted themselves to verbal disputes, they were probably little more than an irritating nuisance: it was when they applied their dialectic to theology and fell into heresy, that they aroused the enmity of theologians. Thus *Berengarius of Tours* (*c.* 1000–88), maintaining that accidents cannot exist without their supporting substance, denied the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Berengarius was a monk and not a *Peripateticus*, but his spirit of disregard of authority seems to have been characteristic of a group of dialecticians in the eleventh century, and it was mainly this sort of attitude which led St. Peter Damian to pronounce dialectics a superfluity or Otloh of St. Emmeran (*c.* 1010–70) to say that certain dialecticians put more faith in Boethius than in the Scriptures.

St. Peter Damian (1007–72) had little sympathy with the liberal arts (they are useless, he said) or with dialectics, since they are not concerned with God or the salvation of the soul, though, as theologian and writer, the Saint had naturally to make use of dialectic himself. He was, however, convinced that dialectic is a very inferior pursuit and that its use in theology is purely subsidiary and subordinate, not merely because dogmas are revealed truths but also in the sense that even the ultimate principles of reason may fail to apply in theology. For instance, God, according to St. Peter Damian, is not only arbiter of moral values and the moral law (he would have had some sympathy with Kierkegaard's reflections on Abraham), but can also bring it about that an historical event should be 'undone', should not have occurred, and if this seems to go counter to the principle of contradiction, then so much the worse for the principle of contradiction: it merely shows the inferiority of logic in comparison with theology. In short, the place of dialectic is that of a handmaid, *velut ancilla dominae.*[1]

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[1] *Polycraticus*, 7, 12; *P.L.*, 199, 665A.

[2] 2, 17; *P.L.*, 199, 874C.

The 'handmaid' idea was also employed by *Gerard of Czanad* (d. 1046), a Venetian who became Bishop of Czanad in Hungary. Gerard emphasised the superiority of the wisdom of the Apostles over that of Aristotle and Plato and declared that dialectic should be the *ancilla theologiae.* It is indeed often supposed that this is the Thomist view of the province of philosophy, but, given St. Thomas's delineation of the separate provinces of theology and philosophy, the handmaid idea does not fit in with his professed doctrine on the nature of philosophy: it was rather (as M. De Wulf remarks) the idea of a 'restricted group of theologians', men who had no use for the newfangled science. However, they could not avoid using dialectic themselves, and *Archbishop Lanfranc* (who was born about the year 1010 and died as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1089) was only talking common sense when he observed that it is not dialectic itself, but the abuse of it, which should be condemned.

7. The opposition of a saint and a rigorist theologian to dialectic is also one of the motifs in the life of Abelard, whose controversy with William of Champeaux forms the next stage in the story of the discussion on universals, though it affected only Abelard's life, not the ultimate triumph of his fight against ultra-realism.

William of Champeaux (1070–1120), after studying at Paris and Laon, studied under Roscelin at Compiègne. He adopted, however, the very opposite theory to that of Roscelin, and the doctrine he taught at the Cathedral School of Paris was that of ultra-realism. According to Abelard, who attended William's lectures at Paris and from whom we have to derive our knowledge of William's teaching, the latter maintained the theory that the same essential nature is wholly present at the same time in each of the individual members of the species in question, with the inevitable logical consequence that the individual members of a species differ from one another, not substantially but only accidentally.[1] If this is so, says Abelard,[2] there is the same substance in Plato in one place and in Socrates in another place, being made Plato through one set of accidents and Socrates through another set of accidents. Such a doctrine is, of course, the form of ultra-realism current in the early Middle Ages, and Abelard had no difficulty in showing the absurd consequences it involved. For example, if the human species is substantially, and therefore wholly, present in both Socrates and Plato at the same time, then Socrates must be Plato and he must be present in two places at once.[3] Furthermore, such a doctrine leads ultimately to pantheism, since God is substance and all substances will be identical with the divine substance.

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[1] *De div. omnip.*; *P.L.*, 145, 63.

Under pressure of criticism of this kind William of Champeaux changed his theory, abandoning the identity-theory for the indifference-theory and saying that two members of the same species are the same thing, not essentially (*essentialiter*), but indifferently (*indifferenter*). We have this information from Abelard,[4] who evidently treated the new theory as a mere subterfuge, as though William were now saying that Socrates and Plato are not the same, but yet are not different. However, fragments from William's *Sententiae*[5] makes his position clear. He there says that the two words 'One' and 'same' can be understood in two ways, *secundum indifferentiam et secundum identitatem eiusdem prorsus essentiae*, and goes on to explain that Peter and Paul are 'indifferently' men or possess humanity *secundum indifferentiam* in that, as Peter is rational, so is Paul, and as Peter is mortal, so is Paul, etc., whereas their humanity is not the same (he means that their essence or nature is not numerically the same) but like (*similis*), since they are two men. He adds that this mode of unity does not apply to the divine Nature, referring, of course, to the fact that the divine Nature is identical in each of the three divine Persons. This fragment, then, in spite of somewhat obscure language, is clearly opposed to ultra-realism. When William says that Peter and Paul are one and the same in humanity *secundum indifferentiam* he means that their essences are alike and that this likeness is the foundation of the universal concept of man, which applies 'indifferently' to Peter or Paul or any other man. Whatever Abelard may have thought about this modified theory or under whatever interpretation he may have attacked it, it would seem to be in reality a denial of ultra-realism and not much different from Abelard's own view.

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[1] *Hist. calam.*, 2; *P.L.*, 178, 119AB.

[2] *Dialectica*, edit. Geyer, p. 10.

[3] *De generibus et speciebus;* Cousin, *Ouvrages inédits d'Abélard*, p. 153.

[4] *Hist. calam.*, 2; *P.L.*, 178, 119B.

[5] Edit. Lefèvre, p. 24.

It should be mentioned that the above is somewhat of a simplification, in that the exact course of events in the dispute between Abelard and William is not clear. For instance, although it is certain that William, after being defeated by Abelard, retired to the Abbey of St. Victor and taught there, becoming subsequently Bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne, it is not certain at what point in the controversy he retired. It would seem probable that he changed his theory while teaching at Paris and then, under fresh criticism from Abelard, whether justified or not, retired from the fray to St. Victor, where he continued teaching and may have laid the foundation for the mystical tradition of the abbey; but, according to M. De Wulf, he retired to St. Victor and there taught the new form of his theory, the indifference-theory. It has also been held that William held three theories: (i) the identity-theory of ultra-realism; (ii) the indifference-theory, which was attacked by Abelard as indistinguishable from the first theory; and (iii) an anti-realist theory, in which case he would presumably have retired to St. Victor after teaching the first and second theories. This may be correct, and possibly it is supported by Abelard's interpretation and criticism of the indifference-theory; but it is questionable if Abelard's interpretation was anything more than polemical and I am inclined to agree with De Wulf that the indifference-theory involved a denial of the identity-theory, i.e. that it was not a mere verbal subterfuge. In any case the question is not one of much importance, since all are agreed that William of Champeaux eventually abandoned the ultra-realism with which he had begun.

8. The man who worsted William of Champeaux in debate, *Abelard* (1079–1142), was born at Le Pallet, Palet or Palais near Nantes, deriving thence his name of *Peripateticus Palatinus*, and studied dialectic under Roscelin and William, after which he opened a school of his own, first at Melun, then at Corbeil and subsequently at Paris, where he conducted the dispute with his former master. Later he turned his attention to theology, studied under Anselm of Laon and started teaching theology himself at

Paris in 1113. As a result of the episode with Héloise Abelard had to withdraw to the abbey of St. Denis. In 1121 his book *De Unitate et Trinitate divina* was condemned at Soissons and he then founded the school of Le Paraclet near Nogent-sur-Seine, only to abandon the school in 1125, in order to become Abbot of St. Gildas in Brittany, though he left the monastery in 1129. From 1136 to 1149 at any rate, he was teaching at Ste. Geneviève at Paris, where John of Salisbury was one of his pupils. However, St. Bernard accused him of heresy and in 1141 he was condemned at the Council of Sens. His appeal to Pope Innocent II led to his further condemnation and an injunction against lecturing, after which he retired to Cluny and remained there until his death.

Abelard was, it is clear, a man of combative disposition and unsparing of his adversaries: he ridiculed his masters in philosophy and theology, William of Champeaux and Anselm of Laon. He was also, though somewhat sentimental, egoistic and difficult to get on with: it is significant that he left both the abbey of St. Denis and that of St. Gildas because he was unable to live in peace with the other monks. He was, however, a man of great ability, an outstanding dialectician, far superior in this respect to William of Champeaux; he was no mediocrity who could be ignored, and we know that his brilliance and dialectical dexterity, also no doubt his attacks on other teachers, won him great audiences. His incursions into theology, however, especially in the case of a brilliant man of great reputation, made him seem a dangerous thinker in the eyes of those who had little natural sympathy for dialectic and intellectual cleverness, and Abelard was pursued by the unremitting hostility of St. Bernard in particular, who appears to have looked on the philosopher as an agent of Satan; he certainly did everything he could to secure Abelard's condemnation. Among other charges he accused Abelard of holding an heretical doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, a charge the truth of which Abelard stoutly denied. Probably the philosopher was no rationalist in the usual sense, so far as intentions were concerned (he did not mean to deny revelation or explain away mystery); but at the same time, in his application of dialectic to theology he does seem to have offended against theological orthodoxy, in fact if not in intention. On the other hand it was the very application of dialectic to theology which made theological progress possible and facilitated the Scholastic systematisation of theology in the thirteenth century.

Abelard had no difficulty, as we have seen, in showing the absurdities to which William of Champeaux's ultra-realism logically led; but it was incumbent on him to produce a more satisfactory theory himself. Accepting Aristotle's definition of the universal, as given by Boethius (*quod in pluribus natum est praedicari, singulare vero quod non*), he went on to state that it is not a thing which is predicated but a name, and he concludes that 'it remains to ascribe universality of this sort to words alone'.[1] This sounds like the purely nominalistic view traditionally ascribed to Roscelin (under whom Abelard had studied), but the fact that he was willing to speak of universal and particular words shows that we cannot immediately conclude that Abelard denied any reality corresponding to the universal word, for he certainly did not deny that there is reality corresponding to the particular words, the reality in this case being the individual. Moreover, Abelard proceeded (in the *Logica nostrorum petitioni sociorum*) to distinguish *vox* and *sermo* and to say, not that *Universale est vox*, but that *Universale est sermo*. Why did he make this distinction? Because *vox* signifies the word as a physical entity (*flatus vocis*), a thing, and no thing can be predicated of another thing, whereas *sermo* signifies the word according to its relation to the logical content and it is this which is predicated.

What then is the logical content, what is the *intellectus universalis* or universal idea, which is expressed by the *nomen universale*? By universal ideas the mind 'conceives a common and confused image of many things . . . When I hear *man* a certain figure arises in my mind which is so related to individual men that it is common to all and proper to none.' Such language suggests indeed that, according to Abelard, there are really no universal concepts at all, but only confused images, generic or specific according to the degree of confusion and indistinctness; but he goes on to say that universal concepts are formed by abstraction and that through these concepts we conceive what is *in* the object, though we do not conceive it *as* it is in the object. 'For, when I consider this man only in the nature of substance or of body, and not also of animal or of man or of grammarian, obviously I understand nothing except what is in that nature, but I do not consider all that it has.' He then explains that when he said that our idea of man is 'confused', he meant that by means of abstraction the nature is set free, as it were, from all individuality and is considered in such a way that it bears no special relation to any particular individual but can be predicated of all individual men. In fine, *that which* is conceived in specific and generic ideas is in things (the idea is not void of objective reference), but it is not in them, i.e. in individual things, *as* it is conceived. Ultra-realism, in other words, is false; but that does not mean that universals are purely subjective constructions, still less that they are mere words. When Abelard says that the universal is a *nomen* or *sermo*, what he means is that the logical unity of the universal concept affects only the predicate, that it is a *nomen* and not a *res* or individual thing. If we wish, with John of Salisbury, to call Abelard a 'nominalist', we must recognise at the same time that his 'nominalism' is simply a denial of ultra-realism and an assertion of the distinction between the logical and real orders, without involving any denial of the objective foundation of the universal concept. The Abelardian doctrine is an adumbration, in spite of some ambiguous language, of the developed theory of 'moderate realism'.

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[1] *Ingredientibus*, edit. Geyer, 16.

In his *Theologia Christiana* and *Theologia* Abelard follows St. Augustine, Macrobius and Priscian in placing in the mind of God *formae exemplares* or divine ideas, generic and specific, which are identical with God Himself, and he commends Plato on this point, understanding him in a neo-Platonic sense, as having placed the Ideas in the divine mind, *quam Graeci Noyn appellant.*

9. Abelard's treatment of the problem of universals was really decisive, in the sense that it gave a death-blow to ultra-realism by showing how one could deny the latter doctrine without at the same time being obliged to deny all objectivity to genera and species, and, though the School of Chartres in the twelfth century (in contradistinction to the School of St. Victor) inclined to ultra-realism, two of the most notable figures connected with Chartres, namely Gilbert de la Porrée and John of Salisbury, broke with the old tradition.

(i) *Gilbert de la Porrée* or *Gilbertus Porretanus* was born at Poitiers in 1076, became a pupil of Bernard of Chartres and himself taught at Chartres for more than twelve years. Later he taught at Paris, though he became Bishop of Poitiers in 1142. He died in 1154.

On the subject of each man having his own humanity or human nature Gilbert de la Porrée was firm;[1] but he had a peculiar view as to the inner constitution of the individual. In the individual we must distinguish the individualised essence or substance, in which the accidents of the thing inhere, and the *formae substantiales* or *formae nativae.*[1] These native forms are common in the sense that they are alike in objects of the same species or genus, as the case may be, and they have their exemplars in God. When the mind contemplates the native forms in things, it can abstract them from the matter in which they are embodied or rendered concrete and consider them alone in abstraction: it is then attending to genus or species, which are *subsistentiae,* but not substantially existing objects.[2] For example, the genus is simply the collection (*collectio*) of *subsistentiae* obtained by comparing things which, though differing in species, are alike.[3] He means that the idea of the species is obtained by comparing the similar essential determinations or forms of similar individual objects and gathering them together into one idea, while the idea of the genus is obtained by comparing objects which differ specifically but which yet have some essential determinations or forms in common, as horse and dog have animality in common. The form, as John of Salisbury remarks apropos of Gilbert's doctrine,[4] is sensible in the sensible objects, but is conceived by the mind apart from sense, that is, immaterially, and while individual in each individual, it is yet common, or alike, in all the members of a species or genus.

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[1] *In Boeth. de dual. nat.*; *P.L.*, 64, 1378.

His doctrines of abstraction and of comparison make it clear that Gilbert was a moderate realist and not an ultra-realist, but his curious idea of the distinction between the individual essence or substance and the common essence ('common' meaning alike in a plurality of individuals) landed him in difficulties when he came to apply it to the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity and distinguished as different things *Deus* and *Divinitas, Pater* and *Paternitas,* just as he would distinguish Socrates from humanity, that is, from the humanity of Socrates. He was accused of impairing the unity of God and teaching heresy, St. Bernard being one of his attackers. Condemned at the Council of Rheims in 1148, he retracted the offending propositions.

(ii) *John of Salisbury* (*c.* 1115–80) went to Paris in 1136 and there attended the lectures of, among others, Abelard, Gilbert de la Porrée. Adam Parvipontanus (Smallbridge) and Robert Pulleyn. He became secretary to the Archbishop of Canterbury, first to

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[1] *In Boeth. de Trinit.*; *P.L.*, 64, 1393. Cf. John of Salisbury, *Metalog.*, 2, 17; *P.L.*, 64, 875–6.

[2] *P.L.*, 64, 1267.

[3] *Ibid.*, 64, 1389.

[4] *Ibid.*, 64, 875–6.

Archbishop Theobald and then to St. Thomas à Becket, being subsequently appointed Bishop of Chartres in 1176.

In discussing the problem of universals, says John, the world has grown old: more time has been taken up in this pursuit than was required by the Caesars for conquering and governing the world.[1] But anyone who looks for genera and species outside the things of sense is wasting his time:[2] ultra-realism is untrue and contradicts the teaching of Aristotle,[3] for whom John had a predilection in dialectical matters, remarking, apropos of the *Topics*, that it is of more use than almost all the books of dialectic which the moderns are accustomed to expound in the schools.[4] Genera and species are not things, but are rather the forms of things which the mind, comparing the likeness of things, abstracts and unifies in the universal concepts.[5] Universal concepts or genera and species abstractly considered are mental constructions (*figurata rationis*), since they do not exist as universals in extramental reality; but the construction in question is one of comparison of things and abstraction from things, so that universal concepts are not void of objective foundation and reference.[6]

10. It has been already mentioned that the School of St. Victor inclined to moderate realism. Thus *Hugh of St. Victor* (1096–1141) adopted more or less the position of Abelard and maintained a clear doctrine of abstraction, which he applied to mathematics and to physics. It is the province of mathematics to attend to *actus confusos inconfuse*,[7] abstracting, in the sense of attending to in isolation, the line or the plane surface, for example, although neither lines nor surfaces exist apart from bodies. In physics, too, the physicist considers in abstraction the properties of the four elements, although in concrete reality they are found only in varying combinations. Similarly the dialectician considers the forms of things in isolation or abstraction, in a unified concept, though in actual reality the forms of sensible things exist neither in isolation from matter nor as universals.

11. The foundations of the Thomist doctrine of moderate realism had thus been laid before the thirteenth century, and indeed we may say that it was Abelard who really killed ultra-realism. When St. Thomas declares that universals are not subsistent things but exist only in singular things,[8] he is re-echoing what Abelard and John of Salisbury had said before him. Humanity,

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[1] *Polycrat.*, 7, 12.
[2] *Metal.*, 2, 20.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, 3, 10.
[5] *Ibid.*, 2, 20.
[6] *Ibid.*, 3, 3.
[7] *Didasc.*, 2, 18; *P.L.*, 176, 785.
[8] *Contra Gent.*, 1, 65.

for instance, human nature, has existence only in this or that man, and the universality which attaches to humanity in the concept is a result of abstraction, and so is in a sense a subjective contribution.[1] But this does not involve the falsity of the universal concept. If we were to abstract the specific form of a thing and at the same time think that it actually existed in a state of abstraction, our idea would indeed be false, for a false judgement concerning the thing itself would be involved; but, though in the universal concept the mind conceives something in a manner different to its mode of concrete existence, our judgement about the thing itself is not erroneous; it is simply that the form, which exists in the thing in an individualised state, is abstracted, i.e. is made the object of the exclusive attention of the mind by an immaterial activity. The objective foundation of the universal specific concept is thus the objective and individual essence of the thing, which essence is by the activity of the mind set free from individualising factors, that is, according to St. Thomas, matter, and considered in abstraction. For example, the mind abstracts from the individual man the essence of humanity which is alike, but not numerically the same in the members of the human species, while the foundation of the universal generic concept is an essential determination which several species have in common, as the species of man, horse, dog, etc., have 'animality' in common.

St. Thomas thus denied both forms of ultra-realism, that of Plato and that of the early mediaevals; but, no more than Abelard was he willing to reject Platonism lock, stock and barrel, that is to say, Platonism as developed by St. Augustine. The ideas, exemplar ideas, exist in the divine mind, though not ontologically distinct from God nor really a plurality, and, as far as this truth is concerned, the Platonic theory is justified.[2] St. Thomas thus admits (i) the *universale ante rem,* while insisting that it is not a subsistent thing, either apart from things (Plato) or in things (early mediaeval ultra-realists), for it is God considered as perceiving His Essence as imitable *ad extra* in a certain type of creature; (ii) the *universale in re,* which is the concrete individual essence alike in the members of the species; and (iii) the *universale post rem,* which is the abstract universal concept.[3] Needless to say, the term *universale in re,* used in the *Commentary on the Sentences,* is to be interpreted in the light of St. Thomas's general doctrine.

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 85, 1, ad 1; Ia, 85, 2, ad 2.

[2] *Contra Gent.*, 3, 24.

[3] *In Sent.*, 2; *Dist.* 3, 2 ad 1.

i.e. as the *foundation* of the universal concept, the foundation being the concrete essence or *quidditas rei.*[1]

In the later Middle Ages the problem of universals was to be taken up afresh and a different solution was to be given by William of Ockham and his followers; but the principle that only individuals exist as subsistent things had come to stay: the new current in the fourteenth century was set not towards realism but away from it. The history of this movement I shall consider in the next volume.

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[1] The distinction between *universale ante rem, in re* and *post rem* had been made by Avicenna.

CHAPTER XV

ST. ANSELM OF CANTERBURY

St. Anselm as philosopher—Proofs of God's existence in the Monologium—*The proof of God's existence in the* Proslogium—*Idea of truth and other Augustinian elements in St. Anselm's thought.*

1. St. Anselm was born at Aosta in Piedmont in 1033. After preliminary studies in Burgundy, at Avranches and afterwards at Bec he entered the Benedictine Order and later became Prior of Bec (1063), and subsequently abbot (1078). In 1093 he became Archbishop of Canterbury in succession to his former teacher, friend and religious superior Lanfranc, and in that post he died (1109).

In general the thought of St. Anselm is rightly said to belong to the Augustinian tradition. Like the great African Doctor, he devoted his chief intellectual effort to the understanding of the doctrine of the Christian faith and the statement of his attitude which is contained in the *Proslogium*[1] bears the unmistakable stamp of the Augustinian spirit. 'I do not attempt, O Lord, to penetrate Thy profundity, for I deem my intellect in no way sufficient thereunto, but I desire to understand in some degree Thy truth, which my heart believes and loves. For I do not seek to understand, in order that I may believe; but I believe, that I may understand. For I believe this too, that unless I believed, I should not understand.' This *Credo, ut intelligam* attitude is common to both Augustine and Anselm, and Anselm is in full accord with Augustine when he remarks in the *Cur Deus Homo*[2] that it is negligence if we make no attempt to understand what we believe. In practice, of course, this means for Anselm an application of dialectic or reasoning to the dogmas of faith, not in order to strip them of mystery but in order to penetrate them, develop them and discern their implications, so far as this is possible to the human mind, and the results of this process, for instance his book on the Incarnation and Redemption (*Cur Deus Homo*), make Anselm of importance in the history of theological development and speculation.

Now, the application of dialectic to the data of theology remains theology, and St. Anselm would scarcely earn a place in the history of philosophy through his theological speculation and developments, except indeed as the application of philosophical categories to revealed dogmas necessarily involves some treatment and development of those philosophical categories. In point of fact, however, the use of the *Credo, ut intelligam* motto was not confined by Anselm, any more than by Augustine, to the understanding of those truths exclusively which have been revealed and not discovered dialectically, but was extended to truths like the existence of God, which are indeed believed but which can be reached by human reasoning. Besides, then, his work as dogmatic theologian there is also his work as natural theologian or metaphysician to be considered, and on this count alone St. Anselm deserves a place in the history of philosophy, since he contributed to the development of that branch of philosophy which is known as natural theology. Whether his arguments for the existence of God are considered valid or invalid, the fact that he elaborated these arguments systematically is of importance and gives his work a title to serious consideration by the historian of philosophy.

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[1] *P.L.*, 158, 227.

[2] *Ibid.*, 158, 362.

St. Anselm, like St. Augustine, made no clear distinction between the provinces of theology and philosophy, and his implied attitude of mind may be illustrated as follows. The Christian should try to understand and to apprehend rationally all that he believes, so far as this is possible to the human mind. Now, we believe in God's existence and in the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity. We should, therefore, apply our understanding to the understanding of both truths. From the point of view of one who, like the Thomist, makes a clear distinction between philosophy and dogmatic theology the application of reasoning to the first truth, God's existence, will fall within the province of philosophy, while the application of reasoning to the second truth, the Trinity, will fall within the province of theology, and the Thomist will hold that the first truth is demonstrable by human reasoning, while the second truth is not demonstrable by human reasoning, even though the human mind is able to make true statements about the mystery, once revealed, and to refute the objections against it which human reasoning may raise. But, if one puts oneself in the position of St. Anselm, that is, in a state of mind anterior to the clear distinction between philosophy and theology, it is easy to see how the fact that the first truth is demonstrable, coupled with the desire to understand all that we believe, the attempt to satisfy this desire being regarded as a duty, naturally leads to an attempt to demonstrate the second truth as well, and in point of fact St. Anselm speaks of demonstrating the Trinity of Persons by 'necessary reasons'[1] and of showing in the same way that it is impossible for a man to be saved without Christ.[2] If one wishes to call this 'rationalism', as has been done, one should first of all be quite clear as to what one means by rationalism. If by rationalism one means an attitude of mind which denies revelation and faith, St. Anselm was certainly no rationalist, since he accepted the primacy of faith and the fact of authority and only then went on to attempt to understand the data of faith. If, however, one is going to extend the term 'rationalism' to cover the attitude of mind which leads to the attempt to prove mysteries, not because the mysteries are not accepted by faith or would be rejected if one could not prove them, but because one desires to understand all that one believes, without having first clearly defined the ways in which different truths are accessible to us, then one might, of course, call the thought of St. Anselm 'rationalism' or an approximation to rationalism. But it would show an entire misunderstanding of Anselm's attitude, were one to suppose that he was prepared to reject the doctrine of the Trinity, for example, if he was unable to find *rationes necessariae* for it: he believed the doctrine first of all, and only then did he attempt to understand it. The dispute about Anselm's rationalism or non-rationalism is quite beside the point, unless one first grasps quite clearly the fact that he had no intention of impairing the integrity of the Christian faith: if we insist on interpreting St. Anselm as though he lived after St. Thomas and had clearly distinguished the separate provinces of theology and philosophy, we shall only be guilty of an anachronism and of a misinterpretation.

2. In the *Monologium*[3] St. Anselm develops the proof of God's existence from the degrees of perfection which are found in creatures. In the first chapter he applies the argument to goodness, and in the second chapter to 'greatness', meaning, as he tells us, not quantitative greatness, but a quality like wisdom, the more of which a subject possesses, the better, for greater quantitative size does not prove qualitative superiority. Such qualities are found in varying degrees in the objects of experience, so that the argument proceeds from the empirical observation of degrees of,

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[1] *De fide Trin.*, 4; *P.L.*, 158, 272.

[2] *Cur Deus Homo*; *P.L.*, 158, 361.

[3] *P.L.*, 158.

for example, goodness, and is therefore an *a posteriori* argument. But judgement about different degrees of perfection (St. Anselm assumes, of course, that the judgement is objectively grounded) implies a reference to a standard of perfection, while the fact that things participate objectively in goodness in different degrees shows that the standard is itself objective, that there is, for example, an absolute goodness in which all good things participate, to which they approximate more or less nearly, as the case may be.

This type of argument is Platonic in character (though Aristotle also argued, in his Platonic phase, that where there is a better, there must be a best) and it reappears in the *Via quarta* of St. Thomas Aquinas. It is, as I have said, an *a posteriori* argument: it does not proceed from the idea of absolute goodness to the existence of absolute goodness but from observed degrees of goodness to the existence of absolute goodness and from degrees of wisdom to the existence of absolute wisdom, the absolute goodness and wisdom being then identified as God. The developed form of the argument would necessitate, of course, a demonstration both of the objectivity of the judgement concerning the differing degrees of goodness and also of the principle on which St. Anselm rests the argument, the principle, namely that if objects possess goodness in a limited degree, they must have their goodness from absolute goodness itself, which is good *per se* and not *per aliud.* It is also to be noted that the argument can be applied only to those perfections which do not *of themselves* involve limitation and finiteness: it could not be applied to quantitative size, for instance. (Whether the argument is valid and demonstrative or not, it is scarcely the province of the historian to decide.)

In the third chapter of the *Monologium* St. Anselm applies the same sort of argument to being. Whatever exists, exists either through something or through nothing. The latter supposition is absurd; so whatever exists, must exist through something. This means that all existing things exist either through one another or through themselves or through one cause of existence. But that X should exist through Y, and Y through X, is unthinkable: the choice lies between a plurality of uncaused causes or one such cause. So far indeed the argument is a simple argument from causality, but St. Anselm goes on to introduce a Platonic element when he argues that if there is a plurality of existent things which have being of themselves, i.e. are self-dependent and uncaused, there is a form of being-of-itself in which all participate, and at this point the argument becomes similar to the argument already outlined, the implication being that, when several beings possess the same form, there must be a unitary being external to them which *is* that form. There can, therefore, be but one self-existent or ultimate Being, and this must be the best and highest and greatest of all that is.

In chapters seven and eight St. Anselm considers the relation between the caused and the Cause and argues that all finite objects are made out of nothing, *ex nihilo,* not out of a preceding matter nor out of the Cause as matter. He explains carefully that to say that a thing is made *ex nihilo* is not to say that it is made out of nothing as its material: it means that something is created *non ex aliquo,* that, whereas before it had no existence outside the divine mind, it now has existence. This may seem obvious enough, but it has sometimes been maintained that to say that a creature is made *ex nihilo* is either to make nothing something or to lay oneself open to the observation that *ex nihilo nihil fit,* whereas St. Anselm makes it clear that *ex nihilo* does not mean *ex nihilo tamquam materia* but simply *non ex aliquo.*

As to the attributes of the *Ens a Se,* we can predicate of it only those qualities, to possess which is *absolutely* better than not to possess them.[1] For example, to be gold is better for gold than to be lead, but it would not be better for a man to be made of gold. To be corporeal is better than to be nothing at all, but it would not be better for a spirit to be corporeal rather than incorporeal. To be gold is better than not to be gold only *relatively,* and to be corporeal rather than non-corporeal is better only *relatively.* But it is *absolutely* better to be wise than not to be wise, living than non-living, just than not-just. We must, then, predicate wisdom, life, justice, of the supreme Being, but we cannot predicate corporeity or gold of the supreme Being. Moreover, as the supreme Being does not possess His attributes through participation, but through His own essence, He *is* Wisdom, Justice, Life, etc.,[2] and furthermore, since the supreme Being cannot be composed of elements (which would then be logically anterior, so that He would not be the supreme Being), these attributes are identical with the divine essence, which is simple.[3] Again, God must necessarily transcend space in virtue of His simplicity and spirituality, and time, in virtue of His eternity.[4] He is wholly present in everything but not locally or *determinate,* and all things are present to His eternity, which is not to be conceived as endless time but as *interminabilis vita simul perfecte tota existens.*[1] We may call Him substance, if we refer to the divine essence, but not if we refer to the category of substance, since He is incapable of change or of sustaining accidents.[2] In fine, if we apply to Him any name that we also apply to creatures, *valde procul dubio intelligenda est diversa significatio.*

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[1] Ch. 15. [2] Ch. 16. [3] Ch. 17. [4] Ch. 20–4.

St. Anselm proceeds, in the *Monologium,* to give reasons for the Trinity of Persons in one Nature, without giving any clear indication that he is conscious of leaving the province of one science to enter that of another, and into this subject, interesting as it may be to the theologian, we cannot follow him. Enough has been said, however, to show that St. Anselm made a real contribution to natural theology. The Platonic element is conspicuous and, apart from remarks here and there, there is no considered treatment of analogy; but he gives *a posteriori* arguments for God's existence which are of a much more systematic character than those of St. Augustine and he also deals carefully with the divine attributes, God's immutability, eternity, etc. It is clear, then, how erroneous it is to associate his name with the 'Ontological Argument' in such a way as to imply that St. Anselm's only contribution to the development of philosophy was an argument the validity of which is at least questionable. His work may have not exercised any very considerable influence on contemporary thinkers and those who immediately followed him, because of their preoccupation with other matters (dialectical problems, reconciling the opinions of the Fathers. and so on), but looked at in the light of the general development of philosophy in the Middle Ages he must be acknowledged as one of the main contributors to Scholastic philosophy and theology, on account both of his natural theology and of his application of dialectic to dogma.

3. In the *Proslogium* St. Anselm develops the so-called 'ontological argument', which proceeds from the idea of God to God as a reality, as existent. He tells us that the requests of his brethren and consideration of the complex and various arguments of the *Monologium* led him to inquire whether he could not find an argument which would be sufficient, by itself alone, to prove all that we believe concerning the Divine Substance, so that one argument would fulfil the function of the many complementary arguments of his former *opusculum.* At length he thought that he

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[1] Ch. 24.

[2] Ch. 26.

had discovered such an argument, which for convenience sake may be put into syllogistic form, though St. Anselm himself develops it under the form of an address to God.

> God is that than which no greater can be thought:
>
> But that than which no greater can be thought must exist, not only mentally, in idea, but also extramentally:
>
> Therefore God exists, not only in idea, mentally, but also extramentally.
>
> The *Major Premiss* simply gives the idea of God, the idea which a man has of God, even if he denies His existence.
>
> The *Minor Premiss* is clear, since if that than which no greater can be thought existed only in the mind, it would not be that than which no greater can be thought. A greater could be thought, i.e. a being that existed in extramental reality as well as in idea.

This proof starts from the idea of God as that than which no greater can be conceived, i.e. as absolutely perfect: that is what is *meant* by God.

Now, if such a being had only ideal reality, existed only in our subjective idea, we could still conceive a greater being, namely a being which did not exist simply in our idea but in objective reality. It follows, then, that the idea of God as absolute perfection is necessarily the idea of an existent Being, and St. Anselm argues that in this case no one can at the same time have the idea of God and yet deny His existence. If a man thought of God as, for instance, a superman, he would be quite right to deny 'God's' existence in that sense, but he would not really be denying the objectivity of the idea of God. If, however, a man had the right idea of God, conceived the meaning of the term 'God', he could indeed deny His existence with his lips, but if he realises what the denial involves (i.e. saying that the Being which must exist of its essence, the necessary Being, does not exist) and yet asserts the denial, he is guilty of a plain contradiction: it is only the fool, the *insipiens*, who has said *in his heart*, 'there is no God.' The absolutely perfect Being is a Being the essence of which is to exist or which necessarily involves existence, since otherwise a more perfect being could be conceived; it is the necessary Being; and a necessary being which did not exist would be a contradiction in terms.

St. Anselm wanted his argument to be a demonstration of all that we believe concerning the divine Nature, and, since the argument concerns the absolutely perfect Being, the attributes of God are contained implicitly in the conclusion of the argument. We have only to ask ourselves what is implied by the idea of a Being than which no greater can be thought, in order to see that God must be omnipotent, omniscient, supremely just and so on. Moreover, when deducing these attributes in the *Proslogium*, St. Anselm gives some attention to the clarification of the notions in question. For example, God cannot lie: is not this a sign of lack of omnipotence? No, he answers, to be able to lie should be called impotence rather than power, imperfection rather than perfection. If God could act in a manner inconsistent with His essence, that would be a lack of power on His part. Of course, it might be objected that this *presupposes* that we already know what God's essence is or involves, whereas what God's essence is, is precisely the point to be shown; but St. Anselm would presumably reply that he has already established that God is all-perfect and so that He is both omnipotent and truthful: it is merely a question of showing what the omnipotence of perfection really means and of exposing the falsity of a wrong idea of omnipotence.

The argument given by St. Anselm in the *Proslogium* was attacked by the monk Gaunilo in his *Liber pro Insipiente adversus Anselmi in Proslogio ratiocinationem*, wherein he observed that the idea we have of a thing is no guarantee of its extramental existence and that St. Anselm was guilty of an illicit transition from the logical to the real order. We might as well say that the most beautiful islands which are possible must exist somewhere, because we can conceive them. The Saint, in his *Liber Apologeticus contra Gaunilonem respondentem pro Insipiente*, denied the parity, and denied it with justice, since, if the idea of God is the idea of an all-perfect Being and if absolute perfection involves existence, this idea is the idea of an existent, and necessarily existent Being, whereas the idea of even the most beautiful islands is not the idea of something which must exist: even in the purely logical order the two ideas are not on a par. If God is possible, i.e. if the idea of the all-perfect and necessary Being contains no contradiction, God must exist, since it would be absurd to speak of a *merely possible necessary Being* (it is a contradiction in terms), whereas there is no contradiction in speaking of merely possible beautiful islands. The main objection to St. Anselm's proof, which was raised against Descartes and which Leibniz tried to answer, is that we do not know *a priori* that the idea of God, the idea of infinite and absolute Perfection, is the idea of a *possible* Being. *We* may not see any contradiction in the idea, but, say the objectors, this 'negative' possibility is not the same as 'positive' possibility; it does not show that there really is no contradiction in the idea. That there is no contradiction in the idea is clear only when we have shown *a posteriori* that God exists.

The argument of the *Proslogium* aroused little immediate interest; but in the thirteenth century it was employed by St. Bonaventure, with a less logical and more psychological emphasis, while it was rejected by St. Thomas. Duns Scotus used it as an incidental aid. In the 'modern' era it has had a distinguished, if chequered career. Descartes adopted and adapted it, Leibniz defended it in a careful and ingenious manner, Kant attacked it. In the Schools it is generally rejected, though some individual thinkers have maintained its validity.

4. Among the Augustinian characteristics of St. Anselm's philosophy one may mention his theory of truth. When he is treating of truth in the judgement,[1] he follows the Aristotelian view in making it consist in this, that the judgement or proposition states what actually exists or denies what does not exist, the thing signified being the cause of the truth, the truth itself residing in the judgement (correspondence-theory); but when, after treating of truth (rectitude) in the will,[2] he goes on to speak of the truth of being or essence[3] and makes the truth of things to consist in being what they 'ought' to be, that is, in their embodiment of or correspondence to their idea in God, the supreme Truth and standard of truth, and when he concludes from the eternal truth of the judgement to the eternity of the cause of truth, God,[4] he is treading in the footsteps of Augustine. God, therefore, is the eternal and subsistent Truth, which is cause of the ontological truth of all creatures. The eternal truth is only cause and the truth of the judgement is only effect, while the ontological truth of things is at once effect (of eternal Truth) and cause (of truth in the judgement). This Augustinian conception of ontological truth, with the exemplarism it presupposes, was retained by St. Thomas in the thirteenth century, though he laid far more emphasis, of course, on the truth of the judgement. Thus, whereas St. Thomas's characteristic definition of truth is *adaequatio rei et intellectus*, that of St. Anselm is *rectitudo sola mente perceptibilis*.[5]

In his general way of speaking of the relation of soul to body and in the absence of a theory of hylomorphic composition of the two, Anselm follows the Platonic-Augustinian tradition, though, like Augustine himself, he was perfectly well aware that soul and body form one man, and he affirms the fact. Again, his words in the *Proslogium*[1] on the divine light recall the illumination-theory of Augustine: *Quanta namque est lux illa, de qua micat omne verum, quod rationali menti lucet.*

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[1] *Dialogus de Veritate*, 2; *P.L.*, 158.

[2] *Dial.*, 4.

[3] *Ibid.*, 7 ff.

[4] *Ibid.*, 10.

[5] *Ibid.*, 11.

In general perhaps one might say that though the philosophy of Anselm stands in the line of the Augustinian tradition, it is more systematically elaborated than the corresponding elements of Augustine's thought, his natural theology, that is, and that in the methodic application of dialectic it shows the mark of a later age.

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[1] Ch. 14.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SCHOOL OF CHARTRES

*Universalism of Paris, and systematisation of sciences in twelfth century—Regionalism, humanism—Platonism of Chartres—Hylomorphism at Chartres—*Prima facie *pantheism—John of Salisbury's political theory.*

1. ONE of the greatest contributions made by the Middle Ages to the development of European civilisation was the university system, and the greatest of all mediaeval universities was unquestionably that of Paris. This great centre of theological and philosophical studies did not receive its definitive charter as a University in the formal sense until early in the thirteenth century; but one may speak, in an untechnical sense, of the Parisian schools as already forming a 'university' in the twelfth century. Indeed in some respects the twelfth century was more dominated by French learning than was the thirteenth century, since it was in the thirteenth century that other universities, such as Oxford, came into prominence and began to display a spirit of their own. This is true of northern Europe at least: as to the South, the University of Bologna, for instance, received its first charter in 1158, from Frederick I. But, though France was the great centre of intellectual activity in the twelfth century, a fact which led to the oft-quoted saying that 'Italy has the Papacy, Germany the Empire, and France has Knowledge', this does not mean, of course, that intellectual activity was pursued simply by Frenchmen: European culture was international, and the intellectual supremacy of France meant that students, scholars and professors came in large numbers to the French schools. From England came men like Adam Smallbridge and Alexander Neckham, twelfth-century dialecticians, Adelard of Bath and Robert Pulleyn, Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173) and John of Salisbury; from Germany, Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141), theologian, philosopher and mystic; from Italy, Peter Lombard (*c.* 1100–60), author of the celebrated *Sentences*, which were made the subject of so many commentaries during the Middle Ages, by St. Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, for example. Thus the University of Paris may be said to have represented the international character of mediaeval European

culture, as the Papacy represented the international, or rather supra-national, character of mediaeval religion, though the two were, of course, closely bound together, as the one religion gave a common intellectual outlook and the language of learning, the Latin tongue, was the language of the Church. These two unities, the religious and the cultural, so closely bound together, were what one might call effective and real unities, whereas the political unity of the Holy Roman Empire was rather theoretical than effective, for, though the absolute monarchies were a development of the future, nationalism was already beginning to increase, even if its growth was checked by feudalism, by the local character of mediaeval political and economic institutions and by the common language and intellectual outlook.

This growing and expanding university life naturally found an intellectual and academic expression in the attempt to classify and systematise the science, knowledge and speculation of the time, an attempt which shows itself already in the twelfth century. We may give two examples, the systematisations of Hugh of St. Victor and of Peter Lombard. The former, in his *Didascalion*,[1] more or less follows the Aristotelian classification. Thus Logic is a propaedeutic or preamble to science proper and deals with concepts, not with things. It is divided into Grammar and into the *Ratio Disserendi*, which in turn subdivides into *Demonstratio*, *Pars Probabilis* and *Pars Sophistica* (Dialectic, Rhetoric and Sophistic). Science, to which Logic is a preamble and for which it is a necessary instrument, is divided under the main headings of Theoretical Science, Practical Science and 'Mechanics'. Theoretical Science comprises Theology, Mathematics (Arithmetic, dealing with the numerical aspect of things; Music, dealing with proportion; Geometry, concerned with the extension of things; Astronomy, concerned with the movement of things), and Physics (which has as its subject-matter the inner nature or inner qualities of things, and thus penetrates farther than Mathematics). Practical Science is subdivided into Ethics, 'Economics' and Politics, while Mechanics comprises the seven 'illiberal arts' or *scientiae adulterinae*, since the craftsman borrows his form from nature. These 'illiberal arts' are Wool-making, etc., Armoury and Carpentry, Navigation or Commerce, which, according to Hugh, 'reconciles peoples, quiets wars, strengthens peace, and makes private goods to be for the common use of all', Agriculture, Hunting (including cookery),

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[1] *P.L.*, 176

Medicine and Theatricals. It is clear that Hugh's classification depended, not only on Aristotle, through Boethius, but also on the encyclopaedic work of writers like Isidore of Seville.

Peter Lombard, who was educated at the School of St. Victor, taught at the Cathedral School of Paris, and ultimately became bishop of that city between 1150 and 1152, composed his *Libri Quattuor Sententiarum,* a work which, although unoriginal in respect of content, exercised a tremendous influence, in that it stimulated other writers to the work of systematic and comprehensive exposition of dogma and became itself the subject of compendia and many commentaries, up to the end of the sixteenth century. The *Sentences* of the Lombard are admittedly a text-book[1] and were designed to gather the opinions or *sententiae* of the Fathers on theological doctrines, the first book being devoted to God, the second to creatures, the third to the Incarnation and Redemption and to the virtues, the fourth to the seven Sacraments and to the last things. The greatest number of quotations and the bulk of the doctrine are taken from St. Augustine, though other Latin Fathers are quoted, and even St. John Damascene makes an appearance, though it has been shown that the Lombard had seen only a small part of Burgundius of Pisa's Latin translation of the *Fons Scientiae.* Obviously enough the *Sentences* are predominantly a theological work, but the Lombard speaks of those things which are understood by the natural reason and can be so understood before they are believed, i.e. by faith:[2] such are the existence of God, the creation of the world by God and the immortality of the soul.

2. We have seen that the developing and expanding intellectual life of the twelfth century showed itself in the growing predominance of the 'university' of Paris and in the first attempts at classification and systematisation of knowledge; but the position of Paris did not mean that regional schools were not flourishing. Indeed, vigour of local life and interests was a complementary feature in the mediaeval period to the international character of religious and intellectual life. For example, though some of the scholars who came to Paris to study remained there to teach, others returned to their own lands or provinces or became attached to local educational institutions. Indeed there was a tendency to specialisation, Bologna, for instance, being noted for its school of law and Montpellier for medicine, while mystical theology

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[1] Cf. the Prologue.

[2] 3, 24, 3.

was a prominent feature of the School of St. Victor, outside Paris.

One of the most flourishing and interesting of the local schools of the twelfth century was that of Chartres, in which certain Aristotelian doctrines, to be noted presently, began to come into prominence, associated, however, with a very strong admixture of Platonism. This school was also associated with humanistic studies. Thus *Theodoric of Chartres* (Thierry), who, after being in charge of the school in 1121, taught at Paris, only to return to Chartres in 1141, where he became chancellor in succession to Gilbert de la Porrée, was described by John of Salisbury, himself a humanist, as *artium studiosissimus investigator*. His *Heptateuchon* was concerned with the seven liberal arts and he vigorously combated the anti-humanists, the 'Cornificians', who decried study and literary form. Similarly *William of Conches* (*c.* 1080–1154), who studied under Bernard of Chartres, taught at Paris and became tutor to Henry Plantagenet, attacked the Cornificians and himself paid attention to grammatical studies, thereby drawing from John of Salisbury the assertion that he was the most gifted grammarian after Bernard of Chartres.[1] But it was *John of Salisbury* (1115/20–1180) who was the most gifted of the humanist philosophers associated with Chartres. Though not educated at Chartres, he became, as we have seen earlier, Bishop of Chartres in 1176. A champion of the liberal arts and acquainted with the Latin classics, with Cicero in particular, he had a detestation for barbarity in style, dubbing those persons who opposed style and rhetoric on principle 'Cornificians'. Careful of his own literary style, he represents what was best in twelfth-century philosophic humanism, as St. Bernard, though not perhaps with full intention, represents humanism by his hymns and spiritual writings. In the next century, the thirteenth, one would certainly not go to the works of the philosophers as such for Latinity, most of them being far more concerned with content than with form.

3. The School of Chartres, though its *floreat* fell in the twelfth century, had a long history, having been founded in 990 by *Fulbert*, a pupil of *Gerbert of Aurillac*. (The latter was a very distinguished figure of the tenth century, humanist and scholar, who taught at Rheims and Paris, paid several visits to the court of the German Emperor, became in turn Abbot of Bobbio, Archbishop of Rheims and Archbishop of Ravenna, and ascended the

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[1] *Metal.*, 1, 5.

papal throne as Sylvester II, dying in 1003.) Founded in the tenth century, the School of Chartres preserved, even in the twelfth century, a certain conservative spirit and flavour, which shewed itself in its Platonist tradition, especially in its devotion to the *Timaeus* of Plato and also to the more Platonically inclined writings of Boethius. Thus *Bernard of Chartres*, who was head of the school from 1114 to 1119 and chancellor from 1119 to 1124, maintained that matter existed in a chaotic state before its information, before order was brought out of disorder. Called by John of Salisbury the 'most perfect among the Platonists of our time',[1] Bernard also represented Nature as an organism and maintained the Platonic theory of the World-Soul. In this he was followed by *Bernard of Tours* (*Silvestris*), who was chancellor at Chartres about 1156 and composed a poem *De mundi universitate*, using Chalcidius's commentary on the *Timaeus* and depicting the World-Soul as animating Nature and forming natural beings out of the chaos of prime matter according to the Ideas existing in God or *Nous*. William of Conches went even further by identifying the World-Soul with the Holy Spirit, a doctrine which led to his being attacked by William of St. Theodoric. Retracting, he explained that he was a Christian and not a member of the Academy.

In conjunction with these speculations in the spirit of the *Timaeus* one may mention the inclination of the School of Chartres to ultra-realism, though, as we have seen, two of the most outstanding figures associated with Chartres, Gilbert de la Porrée and John of Salisbury, were not ultra-realists. Thus *Clarembald of Arras*, a pupil of Theodoric of Chartres, who became Provost of Arras in 1152 and Archdeacon of Arras in 1160, maintained, in his Commentary on the *De Trinitate* of Boethius, as against Gilbert de la Porrée, that there is but one and the same humanity in all men and that individual men differ only *propter accidentium varietatem*.[2]

4. In spite, however, of their fondness for the *Timaeus* of Plato, the members of the School of Chartres showed also an esteem for Aristotle. Not only did they follow Aristotle in logic, but they also introduced his hylomorphic theory: indeed it was at Chartres that this theory made its first appearance in the twelfth century. Thus, according to Bernard of Chartres, natural objects are constituted by form and matter. These forms he called *formae nativae* and he represented them as copies of the Ideas in God. This information we have from John of Salisbury, who tells us that Bernard and his

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[1] *Metal.*, 4. 35.

[2] Ed. W. Janssen, p. 42.

disciples tried to mediate between or reconcile Plato and Aristotle.[1] For Bernard of Tours too the forms of things are copies of the Ideas in God, as we have already seen, while Clarembald of Arras represented matter as being always in a state of flux and as being the mutability or *vertibilitas* of things, the form being the perfection and integrity of the thing.[2] He thus interpreted the matter of Aristotle in the light of Plato's teaching about the mutability and evanescent character of material things. William of Conches indeed struck out on a line of his own by maintaining the atomic theory of Democritus;[3] but in general we may say that the members of the School of Chartres adopted the hylomorphic theory of Aristotle, though they interpreted it in the light of the *Timaeus*.[4]

5. The doctrine that natural objects are composed of matter and form, the form being a copy of the exemplar, the Idea in God, clearly makes a distinction between God and creatures and is non-pantheistic in character; but certain members of this School used terminology which, if taken literally and without qualification, would naturally be understood to imply pantheism. Thus Theodoric of Chartres, who was the younger brother of Bernard, maintained that 'all forms are one form; the divine form is all forms' and that the divinity is the *forma essendi* of each thing, while creation is depicted as the production of the many out of the one.[5] Again, Clarembald of Arras argued that God is the *forma essendi* of things and that, since the *forma essendi* must be present wherever a thing is, God is always and everywhere essentially present.[6] But, though these texts, taken literally and in isolation, are pantheistic or monistic in character, it does not appear that either Theodoric of Chartres or Clarembald of Arras meant to teach a monistic doctrine. For instance, immediately after saying that the divine form is all forms Theodoric observes that, though the divine form is all forms by the fact that it is the perfection and integrity of all things, one may not conclude that the divine form is humanity. It would seem that Theodoric's doctrine must be understood in the light of exemplarism, since he says expressly that the divine form cannot be embodied, and cannot, therefore, be the actual concrete form of man or horse or stone. Similarly, Clarembald of Arras's general doctrine of exemplarism and his

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[1] *Metal.*, 2, 17. [2] Ed. W. Janssen, pp. 44 and 63. [3] *P.L.*, 90, 1132.

[4] Gilbert de la Porrée draws attention to the hylomorphic theory when commenting on Boethius's *Contra Eutychen* or *Liber de duabus Naturis et una Persona Christi*; *P.L.*, 64, 1367.

[5] *De sex dierum operibus*, ed. W. Janssen, pp. 16, 21, 108, 109.

[6] Ed. W. Janssen, p. 59.

insistence that the forms of material things are copies, *imagines*, is incompatible with full pantheism. The phrases which seem to teach a doctrine of emanation are borrowed from Boethius, and it is probable that they no more express a literal understanding of emanation in Theodoric or Clarembald than they do in Boethius: in a sense they are stock phrases, canonised, as it were, by their antiquity, and they should not be pressed unduly.

6. Although John of Salisbury was not educated at Chartres, it is convenient to say something here of his philosophy of the State, as given in his *Polycraticus*. The quarrels between the Holy See and the Empire and the investiture controversies had naturally led to those writers who took part in the disputes having to express some view, even if only by the way, on the function of the State and its ruler. One or two writers went beyond mere asides, as it were, and gave a rude sketch of political theory. Thus *Manegold of Lautenbach* (eleventh century) even referred the power of the ruler to a pact with the people[1] and declared[2] that if the king forsakes rule by law and becomes a tyrant, he is to be considered to have broken the pact to which he owes his power and may be deposed by the people. Such ideas concerning the reign of law and justice as essential to the State and concerning the natural law, of which the civil law should be an expression, were based on texts of Cicero, the Stoics and the Roman jurists, and they reappear in the thought of John of Salisbury, who also made use of St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* and the *De Officiis* of St. Ambrose.

Although John of Salisbury did not put forward any compact theory after the fashion of Manegold of Lautenbach, he was insistent that the prince is not above law and declared that whatever the whitewashers of rulers might trumpet abroad to the contrary, he would never allow that the prince is free from all restrictions and all law. But what did he mean when he said that the prince is subject to law? Partly at least he had in mind (and this was indeed his main consideration) the natural law, in accordance with the Stoic doctrine that there is a natural law, to which all positive law does, or ought to, approximate. The prince, then, is not free to enact positive laws which go counter to, or are irreconcilable with, both the natural law and that *aequitas* which is *rerum convenientia, tribuens unicuique quod suum est*. The positive law defines and applies natural law and natural justice, and the attitude of the ruler on this matter shows whether he is prince or tyrant. If his enactments define, apply or supplement natural law and natural justice, he is a prince; if they infringe natural law and natural justice, he is a tyrant, acting according to caprice and not fulfilling the function of his office.

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[1] *Liber ad Gebehardum*, 30 and 47.

[2] *Ibid.*, 47.

Did John of Salisbury understand anything else by law, when he maintained that the prince is subject to the law? Did he maintain that the prince is in any way subject to defined law? It was certainly the common opinion that the prince was subject in some way to the customs of the land and the enactments of his ancestors, to the local systems of law or tradition which had grown up in the course of time, and, although John of Salisbury's political writing shows little concern with feudalism, since he relied so largely on writers of the Roman period, it is only reasonable to suppose that he shared the common outlook on this matter. His actual judgements on the power and office of the prince express the common outlook, though his formal approach to the subject is through the medium of Roman law, and he would certainly not have envisaged the application in an absolutist sense to the feudal monarch of the Roman Jurist's maxim, *Quod principi placuit legis habet vigorem.*

Now, since John of Salisbury praised Roman law and regarded it as one of the great civilising factors of Europe, he was faced with the necessity of interpreting the maxim quoted above, without at the same time sacrificing his convictions about the restricted power of the prince. First of all, how did Ulpian himself understand his maxim? He was a lawyer and it was his aim to justify, to explain the legality of the Emperor's enactments and *constitutiones.* According to Republican lawyers the law governed the magistrate, but it was obvious that in the time of the Empire the Emperor was himself one of the sources of positive law, and the lawyers had to explain the legality of this position. Ulpian accordingly said that, though the Emperor's legislative authority is derived from the Roman people, the people, by the *lex regia,* transfers to him and vests in him all its own power and authority, so that, once invested with his authority, the will of the Emperor has the force of law. In other words, Ulpian was simply explaining the legality of the Roman Emperor's enactments: he was not concerned to establish a political theory by maintaining that the Emperor was entitled to disregard all natural justice and the principles of morality. When John of Salisbury observed, with express reference to Ulpian's dictum, that when the prince is said to be free from the law, this is not to be understood in the sense that he may do what is unjust, but in the sense that he ought to follow equity or natural justice out of a real love of justice and not from fear of punishment, which does not apply to him, he was expressing the general tradition of feudal lawyers and at the same time was not contradicting Ulpian's maxim. When in the late Middle Ages some political theorists detached Ulpian's maxim from the person of the Emperor, and transferring it to the national monarch interpreted it in an absolutist sense, they were forsaking the general mediaeval outlook and were at the same time changing the legal maxim of Ulpian into an abstract statement of absolutist political theory.

In conclusion it may be remarked that John of Salisbury accepted the supremacy of the ecclesiastical power (*Hunc ergo gladium de manu Ecclesiae accipit princeps*),[1] while he carried his distinction between prince and tyrant to its logical conclusion by admitting tyrannicide as legitimate. Indeed, since the tyrant is opposed to the common good, tyrannicide may sometimes be obligatory,[2] though he made the curious stipulation that poison should not be employed for this purpose.

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[1] *Polycrat.*, 4, 3.

[2] *Ibid.*, 8, 10.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SCHOOL OF ST. VICTOR

Hugh of St. Victor; proofs of God's existence, faith, mysticism—Richard of St. Victor; proofs of God's existence—Godfrey of St. Victor and Walter of St. Victor.

THE Abbey of St. Victor outside the walls of Paris belonged to the Augustinian Canons. We have seen that William of Champeaux was associated with the abbey, retiring there after being worsted by Abelard, but the school is of note principally owing to the work of two men, one a German, Hugh of St. Victor, the other a Scotsman, Richard of St. Victor.

1. *Hugh of St. Victor* was born in Saxony in 1096 of noble parentage, and made his early studies in the monastery of Hamersleben near Halberstadt. After taking the habit he went to Paris in 1115 to continue his studies in the Abbey of St. Victor. In 1125 he started lecturing and from 1133 until his death in 1141 he was in charge of the school. One of the foremost theologians, dogmatic and mystical, of his time, he was yet no enemy to the cultivation of the arts, considering not only that the study of the arts, if rightly pursued, conduces to progress in theology, but also that all knowledge is of utility. 'Learn everything; you will see afterwards that nothing is superfluous.'[1] His chief work, from the philosophical viewpoint, is the *Didascalion* in seven books, in which he treats of the liberal arts (three books), theology (three books) and religious meditation (one book), but his writings on the theology of the Sacraments are also important to the theologian. He also compared exegetic and mystical works and a commentary on the *Celestial Hierarchy* of the Pseudo-Dionysius, using the Latin translation of John Scotus Eriugena.

Of Hugh's classification and systematisation of the sciences mention has already been made, in connection with the systematising tendency already discernible in the twelfth century and due partly to the application of dialectic in theology, as also of his theory of abstraction, in connection with the discussion on universals.[2] These two points bring out the Aristotelian aspects of his thought, whereas his psychology is distinctly Augustinian in character. 'No one is really wise who does not see that he exists; and yet, if a man begins truly to consider what he is, he sees that he is none of all those things which are either seen in him or can be seen. For that in us which is capable of reasoning, although it is, so to speak, infused into and mingled with the flesh, is yet distinguishable by reason from the substance of the flesh and is seen to be different therefrom.'[1] In other words, consciousness and introspection bear witness, not only to the existence of the soul, but also to its spirituality and immateriality. Moreover, the soul is of itself a person, having, as a rational spirit, personality of itself and through itself, the body forming an element in human personality only in virtue of its union with the rational spirit.[2] The mode of union is one of 'apposition' rather than of composition.[3]

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[1] *P.L.*, 176, 800C.

[2] See p. 153.

Hugh contributed to the systematic advance of natural theology by giving *a posteriori* arguments both from internal and external experience. As regards the first line of proof, it rests upon the experiential fact of self-consciousness, the consciousness of a self which is 'seen' in a purely rational way and cannot be material. Regarding self-consciousness as necessary to the existence of a rational being, Hugh maintains that, as the soul has not always been conscious of its existence, there was a time when it did not exist. But it could not have given itself existence: it must, then, owe its existence to another being, and this being must be a necessary and self-existent being, God.[4] This proof is somewhat compressed, involving the premisses that the cause of a rational principle must itself be rational and that an infinite regress is impossible. Its 'interiority' certainly reminds one of Augustine, but it is not Augustine's proof from the soul's knowledge of eternal truths, nor does it presuppose religious, still less mystical, experience since it rests on the natural experience of the soul's self-consciousness, and it is this reliance on experience which characterises Hugh's proofs of God's existence.

The second proof, that from external experience,[5] rests on the experienced fact of change. Things are constantly coming into being and passing away, and the totality, which is composed of such changing things, must itself have had a beginning. It requires, therefore, a Cause. Nothing which lacks stability, which ceases to be, can have come into being without a Cause external to itself. The idea of such a proof is contained in the *De Fide Orthodoxa* of

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[1] *P.L.*, 176, 825A. [2] *Ibid.*, 176, 409. [3] *Ibid.*

[4] *De Sacramentis*, 3, 7; *P.L.*, 176, 219.

[5] *De Sacramentis*, 3, 10; *P.L.*, 176, 219, and *Sent.* 1, 3; *P.L.*, 176, 45.

St. John Damascene;[1] but Hugh of St. Victor attempts to supply the deficiencies in St. John Damascene's procedure.

In addition to the proof from change Hugh gives a teleological proof in several parts.[2] In the world of animals we see that the senses and appetites find their satisfaction in objects: in the world in general we see a great variety of movements (the reference is to local motion), which, however, are ordered in harmony. Again, growth is a fact of experience, and growth, since it means the addition of something new, cannot be accomplished solely by the thing which grows. Hugh concludes that these three considerations exclude chance and postulate a Providence which is responsible for growth and guides all things according to law.[3] The proof is clearly somewhat unconvincing in the form given, but it is based on facts of experience, as the starting-point, and this is characteristic of Hugh's proofs in general. Hugh adopted the theory of William of Conches concerning the atomic structure of matter. These atoms are simple bodies, which are capable of increase and growth.[4]

Hugh was thus quite clear about the possibility of a natural knowledge of God's existence, but he was equally insistent on the necessity of faith. This faith is necessary, not only because the *oculus contemplationis*, whereby the soul apprehends God within herself *et ea quae in Deo erant*, has been completely darkened by sin, but also because mysteries which exceed the power of the human reason are proposed to man's beliefs. These mysteries are *supra rationem*, in that revelation and faith are required to apprehend them, but they are *secundum rationem*, not *contra rationem*: in themselves they are reasonable and can be the object of knowledge, but they cannot be the object of knowledge in the strict sense in this life, as man's mind is too weak, especially in its sin-darkened state. Knowledge, then, considered in itself, stands higher than faith, which is a certitude of the mind concerning absent things, superior to opinion but inferior to science or knowledge, since those who comprehend the object as immediately present (the *scientes*) are superior to those who believe on authority. We may say, therefore, that Hugh of St. Victor made a clear distinction between faith and knowledge and that, though he recognised the superiority of the latter, he did not thereby impugn the necessity of the former. His doctrine of the superiority of knowledge to faith is by no means equivalent to the Hegelian doctrine, since Hugh certainly did not consider that knowledge can, naturally at least, be substituted for faith in this life.

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[1] 1, 3; *P.G.*, 94, 796A.
[2] *P.L.*, 176, 826.
[3] Cf. *De Fide Orthodoxa*, 1, 3; *P.G.*, 94, 795B.
[4] *De Sacramentis*, 1, 6, 37; *P.L.*, 176, 286.

But, though the *oculus contemplationis* has been darkened by sin, the mind, under the supernatural influence of grace, can ascend by degrees to contemplation of God in Himself. Thus supernatural mysticism crowns the ascent of knowledge in this life as the beatific vision of God crowns it in heaven. To enter upon a discussion of Hugh's mystical teaching would scarcely be in place here; but it is worth pointing out that the mystical tradition of St. Victor was not simply a spiritual luxury; their mystical theology formed an integral part of their theologico-philosophical synthesis. In philosophy God's existence is proved by the natural use of reason, while in theology the mind learns about the Nature of God and applies dialectic to the data of revelation accepted on faith. But philosophical knowledge and theological (dialectical) knowledge are knowledge about God: higher still is the experience of God, the direct knowledge of God, which is attained in mystical experience, a loving knowledge or a knowing love of God. On the other hand, mystical knowledge is not full vision, and God's presence to the soul in mystical experience blinds by excess of light, so that above both knowledge about God by faith and direct mystical knowledge of God there stands the beatific vision of heaven.

2. *Richard of St. Victor* was born in Scotland but went to Paris early in life and entered the Abbey of St. Victor, where he became sub-prior about 1157 and prior in 1162. He died in 1173. The abbey passed through a difficult period during these years, as the abbot, an Englishman named Ervisius, wasted its goods and ruined its discipline, behaving in such an independent manner that Pope Alexander III called him 'another Caesar'. With some difficulty he was induced to resign in 1172, a year before the death of Richard. However, even if his abbot was a somewhat independent and high-handed individual, the prior, we are told by the abbey necrology, left behind him the memory of a good example, a holy life and beautiful writings.

Richard is an important figure in mediaeval theology, his chief work being the *De Trinitate* in six books, but he was also a philosopher, as well as being a mystical theologian who published two works on contemplation, the *Beniamin minor*, on the preparation of the soul for contemplation, and the *Beniamin maior*, on the grace of contemplation. In other words, he was a worthy successor of Hugh of St. Victor, and like him he insisted on the necessity of using the reason in the pursuit and investigation of truth. 'I have frequently read that there is only one God, that He is eternal, uncreated, immense, omnipotent and Lord of all: . . . I have read concerning my God that He is one and three, one in Substance, three in Persons: all this I have read; but I do not remember that I have read how all these things are proved.'[1] Again, 'In all these matters authorities abound, but not arguments; in all these matters *experimenta desunt*, proofs are becoming rare; so I think that I shall have done something, if I am able to help the minds of the studious a little, even if I cannot satisfy them.'

The general attitude of St. Anselm is evident in the above quotations: *Credo, ut intelligam*. The data of the Christian religion presupposed, Richard of St. Victor sets out to understand them and to prove them. Just as St. Anselm had declared his intention of trying to prove the Blessed Trinity by 'necessary reasons', so Richard declares at the beginning of his *De Trinitate*[2] that it will be his intention in that work, so far as God grants, to adduce not only probable, but also necessary reasons for the things which we believe. He points out that there must be necessary reasons for what necessarily exists; so that, as God is necessarily Three in One, there must be a necessary reason for this fact. Of course, it by no means follows from the fact that God is necessarily Triune (God is the necessary Being) that we can discern this necessity, and Richard admits indeed that we cannot fully comprehend the mysteries of Faith, particularly that of the Blessed Trinity,[3] but that does not prevent his attempting to show that a plurality of Persons in the Godhead necessarily follows from the fact that God is Love and to demonstrate the trinity of Persons in one Nature.

Richard's speculation on the Trinity had a considerable influence on later Scholastic theology; but from the philosophical viewpoint his proofs for the existence of God are of greater import. Such proofs, he insists, must rest on experience: 'We ought to begin from that class of things, of which we can have no manner of doubt, and by means of those things which we know by experience to conclude rationally what we must think concerning the objects which transcend experience.'[4] These objects of experience are contingent objects, things which begin to be and can cease to be. Such things we can come to know only through experience, since what comes into being and can perish cannot be necessary, so that its existence cannot be demonstrated *a priori*, but can be known only by experience.[1]

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[1] *De Trinit.*, 1, 5; *P.L.*, 196, 893BC. [2] *P.L.*, 196, 892C. [3] *Ibid.*, 196, 72A.
[4] *Ibid.*, 196, 894.

The starting-point of the argument is thus provided by the contingent objects of experience; but, in order that our reasoning on this basis may be successful, it is necessary to start from a clearly solid and, as it were, immovable foundation of truth;[2] that is, the argument needs a sure and certain principle on which it may rest. This principle is that every thing which exists or can exist has being either of itself or from another than itself, and that every thing which exists or can exist either has being from eternity or begins to be in time. This application of the principle of contradiction allows us to form a division of being. Any existent thing must be either (i) from eternity and from itself, and so self-existent, or (ii) neither from eternity nor from itself, or (iii) from eternity, but not from itself, or (iv) not from eternity but yet from itself. This logical division into four admits immediately of a reduction to a threefold division, since a thing which is not from eternity but is *a se*, is impossible, for a thing which began to be obviously cannot either have given itself being or be a necessary existent.[3] A beginning in time and aseity are thus incompatible, and it remains to refer back to the things of experience and apply the general principle. The things of experience, as we observe them in the human, animal and vegetable kingdoms, and in nature in general, are perishable and contingent: they begin to be. If, then, they begin to be, they are not from eternity. But what is not from eternity cannot be from itself, as already said. Therefore it must be from another. But ultimately there must exist a being which exists of itself, i.e. necessarily, since, if there is no such being, there would be no sufficient reason for the existence of anything: nothing would exist, whereas in point of fact something does exist, as we know by experience. If it be objected that there must indeed be an *ens a se* but that this may very well be the world itself, Richard would retort that he has already excluded this possibility by pointing out that we experience the contingent character of the things of which the world is composed.

If in this first proof Richard's procedure shows a marked change from that of St. Anselm, in his next proof he adopts a familiar

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[1] *P.L.*, 196, 892.

[2] *Ibid.*, 196, 893.

[3] Cf. *ibid.*, 196, 893.

Anselmian position.[1] It is a fact of experience that there are different and varying degrees of goodness or perfection, the rational, for example, being higher than the irrational. From this experiential fact Richard proceeds to argue that there must be a highest, than which there is no greater or better. As the rational is superior to the irrational, this supreme substance must be intellectual, and as the higher cannot receive what it possesses from the lower, from the subordinate, it must have its being and existence from itself. This necessarily means that it is eternal. Something must be eternal and *a se*, as has been already shown, since otherwise nothing would exist, and experience teaches us that something does exist, and, if the higher cannot receive what it possesses from the lower, it must be the highest, the supreme Substance, which is the eternal and necessary Being.

In the third place Richard attempts to prove the existence of God from the idea of possibility.[2] In the whole universe nothing can exist, unless it has the possibility of being (the potentiality or power to be) from itself or receives it from another. A thing which lacks the possibility of being, which is completely impossible, is nothing at all, and in order that anything should exist, it must receive the ability to exist (*posse esse*) from the ground of possibility. (That the objects in the universe cannot receive their possibility from themselves, cannot be self-grounded, Richard here takes for granted: in his first proof he has already shown the incompatibility of aseity and temporality or beginning to be.) This ground of possibility, then, which is the source of the possibility and the existence of all things, must be self-dependent, ultimate. Every essence, every power, every wisdom, must depend on this Ground, so that the latter must itself be the supreme Essence as the ground of all essences, the supreme Power as source of all power, and supreme Wisdom as source of all wisdom, since it is impossible that a source should confer a gift greater than itself. But there can be no wisdom apart from a rational substance in which it is immanent: so there must be a rational and supreme Substance, in which supreme wisdom is immanent. The Ground of all possibility is, therefore, the supreme Substance.

These arguments are, of course, exercises of the rational, discursive intelligence, of the *oculus rationis*, superior to the *oculus imaginationis*, which views the corporeal world, but inferior to the

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[1] *De Trinit.*, I, 11; *P.L.*, 196, 895–6.

[2] *De Trinit.*, I, 12; *P.L.*, 196, 896.

oculus intelligentiae, by which God is contemplated in Himself.[1] On the inferior level the objects of sense are viewed immediately as present; on the middle level the mind thinks discursively about things not immediately visible, arguing, for example, from effect to cause or *vice versa*; on the superior level the mind views an invisible object, God, as immediately present.[2] The level of contemplation is thus, as it were, the spiritual analogue of sense-perception, being like to it in immediacy and concreteness in contrast with discursive thought, though it differs in that it is a purely spiritual activity, directed to a purely spiritual object. Richard's division of the six stages of knowledge, from the perception of God's beauty in the beauty of creation to the *mentis alienatio*, under the action of grace, influenced St. Bonaventure in the composition of his *Itinerarium mentis in Deum.*

3. Godfrey of St. Victor (d. 1194) wrote a *Fons Philosophiae*, in which he classifies the sciences and treats of such philosophers and transmitters as Plato, Aristotle, Boethius and Macrobius, devoting a special chapter to the problem of universals and the professed solutions of the problem. *Walter of St. Victor* (died after 1180) was the author of the celebrated diatribe *Contra Quattuor Labyrinthos Franciae*, Abelard, Peter Lombard, Peter of Poitiers and Gilbert de la Porrée, the representatives of dialectical theology, who, according to Walter, were puffed up with the spirit of Aristotle, treated with Scholastic levity of the ineffable things of the Blessed Trinity and the Incarnation, vomited out many heresies and bristled with errors. In other words, Walter of St. Victor was a reactionary who does not represent the genuine spirit of St. Victor, of Hugh the German and Richard the Scotsman, with its reasoned combination of philosophy, dialectical theology and mysticism. In any case the hands of the clock could not be put back, for dialectical theology had come to stay and in the following century it attained its triumph in the great systematic syntheses.

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[1] *De gratia contemplationis*, 1, 3, 7; *P.L.*, 196, 66CD, 72C.

[2] *De gratia contemplationis*, 1, 3, 9; *P.L.*, 196, 110D.

CHAPTER XVIII

DUALISTS AND PANTHEISTS

Albigensians and Cathari—Amalric of Bene—David of Dinant.

1. In the thirteenth century St. Dominic preached against the Albigensians. This sect, as well as that of the Cathari, was already widespread in southern France and in Italy during the twelfth century. The principal tenet of these sects was a dualism of the Manichaean type, which came into western Europe by way of Byzantium. There exist two ultimate Principles, the one good and the other bad, of which the former caused the soul, the latter the body and matter in general. From this hypothesis they drew the conclusion that the body is evil and has to be overcome by asceticism and also that it is wrong to marry and propagate the human race. It may seem strange that a sect whose members held such doctrines should flourish; but it must be remembered that it was considered sufficient if the comparatively few *perfecti* led this ascetic existence, while their less exalted followers could safely lead a more ordinary life, if they received the blessing of one of the 'perfect' before death. It must also be remembered, when one is considering the attention which the Albigensians and Cathari received from the ecclesiastical and civil powers, that the condemnation of procreation and of marriage as evil leads naturally to the conclusion that concubinage and marriage are on much the same footing. Moreover, the Cathari denied the legitimacy of oaths and of all war. It was, then, only natural that the sects were looked on as constituting a danger to Christian civilisation. The sect of the Waldenses, which still exists, goes back to the Catharist movement and was originally a sect of dualists, though it was absorbed by the Reformation and adopted anti-Romanism and anti-sacerdotalism as its chief tenets.[1]

2. *Amalric of Bene* was born near Chartres and died as a professor of theology at Paris about 1206/7. St. Thomas Aquinas[2] observes that 'others said that God is the formal principle of all things, and this is said to have been the opinion of the Amalricians', while Martin of Poland says of Amalric that he held God to be the

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[1] The sources for our knowledge of the doctrine of the Albigensians are not rich, and the history of the movement is somewhat obscure.

[2] *S.T.*, Ia, 3, 8, *in corpore*.

essence of all creatures and the existence of all creatures. Apparently he interpreted in a pantheistic sense the teaching of John Scotus Eriugena, as well as the phrases used by Theodoric of Chartres and Clarembald of Arras, even going so far as to say that the Persons of the Trinity are creatures, that all three became incarnate and that every single man is as much God as was Christ. From this doctrine some of his followers seem to have drawn the conclusion that sin is an unreal concept, on the ground that, if every man is divine, there can be no question of his sinning. Whether Amalric consciously upheld real pantheism or not, he was in any case accused of heresy and had to retract, his doctrines being condemned in 1210, after his death, along with those of John Scotus Eriugena.

3. If for Amalric of Bene God is the form of all things, for *David of Dinant* He was identified with prime matter, in the sense of the potentiality of all things. Very little is known of the life of David of Dinant, or of the sources from which he derived his doctrines, or of the doctrines themselves, since his writings, condemned in 1210 and forbidden at Paris in 1215, have perished. St. Albert the Great[1] ascribes to him a *De tomis, hoc est de divisionibus*, while the documents of the Council of Paris (1210) ascribe to him a *Quaterni* or *Quaternuli*, though Geyer, for example, supposes that these two titles refer to the same work, which consisted of a number of sections or paragraphs (*quaterni*). In any case we have to rely for our knowledge of his doctrine on quotations and reports by St. Albert the Great, St. Thomas and Nicholas of Cusa.

In the *Summa Theologica*[2] St. Thomas states that David of Dinant 'very foolishly affirmed that God is prime matter'. Elsewhere[3] he says that David divided things into three classes: bodies, souls and eternal substances, bodies being constituted of *Hyle*, souls of *Nous* or mind, and the eternal substances of God. These three constituent sources are the three indivisibles, and the three indivisibles are one and the same. Thus all bodies would be modes of one indivisible being, *Hyle*, and all souls would be modes of one indivisible being, *Nous*; but these two indivisible beings are one, and were identified by David with God, who is the one Substance. 'It is manifest (according to David) that there is only one substance not only of all bodies, but also of all souls, and that this substance is nothing else but God himself. . . . It is clear, then, that God is the substance of all bodies and all souls, and that God and *Hyle* and *Mens* are one substance.'[1]

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 4, 20, 2, *quaest. incidens.*

[2] Ia, 3, 8, *in corpore.*

[3] 2 *Sent.*, 17, 1, 1.

David of Dinant tried to prove this position dialectically. For two kinds of substances to differ from one another they must differ in virtue of a difference, and the presence of a difference implies the presence of a common element. Now, if matter differed from mind, there would have to be a *differentia* in prime matter, i.e. a form and a matter, and in this case we should go on to infinity.[2] St. Thomas puts the argument this way.[3] When things in no way differ from one another, they are the same. Now, whatever things differ from one another, differ in virtue of *differentiae*, and in this case they must be composite. But God and prime matter are altogether simple, not composite things. Therefore they cannot differ in any way from one another, and must consequently be the same. To this argument St. Thomas replies that composite things such as, for example, man and horse, do indeed differ from one another in virtue of *differentiae*, but that simple things do not: simple things should be said, strictly speaking, to be diverse (*diversa esse*), not to be different (*differre*). In other words he accuses David of playing with terms, of choosing, to express the diversity of God and matter, a term which implies composition in God and matter.

Why did St. Albert and St. Thomas think it worth while giving such attention to a pantheistic system, the theoretical support of which was more or less a dialectical quibble? Probably the reason was not so much that David of Dinant exercised an extensive influence as that they feared that the heresy of David might compromise Aristotle. The sources from which David drew his theories constitute a disputed point, but it is generally agreed that he drew on the exposition of ancient materialism given in the *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, and it is clear that he utilises the Aristotelian ideas of prime matter and form. In 1210 the same Council of Paris which condemned David's writings forbad also the public and private teaching of the natural philosophy of Aristotle in the University. Most probably, then, St. Thomas wished to show that David of Dinant's monism by no means followed from the teaching of Aristotle; and in his reply to the objection already cited he expressly refers to the *Metaphysics*.

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[1] S. Alb. M., *S.T.*, IIa, t. 12, q. 72, membr. 4, a. 2, n. 4.

[2] *Ibid.*, Ia, t. 4, q. 20, membr. 2; *In Metaph.*, t. 4, c. 7.

[3] *S.T.*, Ia, 3, 8, ob. 3.

PART IV

ISLAMIC AND JEWISH PHILOSOPHY: TRANSLATIONS

CHAPTER XIX

ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

Reasons for discussing Islamic philosophy—Origins of Islamic philosophy—Alfarabi—Avicenna—Averroes—Dante and the Arabian philosophers.

1. To come upon a chapter on the philosophy of the Arabs in a work devoted to mediaeval thought, in the sense of the thought of mediaeval Christendom, might astonish a reader who was making his first acquaintance with the philosophy of the Middle Ages; but the influence, positive and negative, of Islamic philosophy on that of Christendom is now a matter of common knowledge among historians, and one can scarcely avoid saying something on the subject. The Arabian philosophy was one of the principal channels whereby the complete Aristotle was introduced to the West; but the great philosophers of mediaeval Islam, men like Avicenna and Averroes, were more than mere transmitters or even commentators; they changed and developed the philosophy of Aristotle, more or less according to the spirit of neo-Platonism, and several of them interpreted Aristotle on important points in a sense which, whether exegetically correct or not, was incompatible with the Christian theology and faith.[1] Aristotle, therefore, when he appeared to mediaeval Christian thinkers in the shape given him by Averroes, for example, naturally appeared as an enemy of Christian wisdom, Christian philosophy in the wide sense. This fact explains to a large extent the opposition offered to Aristotelianism in the thirteenth century by many upholders of the Christian tradition who looked on the pagan philosopher as the foe of Augustine, Anselm and the great philosophers of Christianity. The opposition varied in degree, from a rather crude dislike and fear of novelty, to the reasoned opposition of a thinker like St. Bonaventure; but it becomes easier to understand the opposition

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[1] It is true, however, that some Islamic philosophers, like Avicenna, facilitated through their writings a Christian interpretation of Aristotle.

if one remembers that a Moslem philosopher such as Averroes claimed to give the right interpretation of Aristotle and that this interpretation was, on important questions, at variance with Christian belief. It explains too the attention paid to the Islamic philosophers by those (particularly, of course, St. Thomas Aquinas) who saw in the Aristotelian system not only a valuable instrument for the dialectical expression of Christian theology but also the true philosophy, for such thinkers had to show that Aristotelianism did not necessarily involve the interpretation given to it by the Moslems: they had to dissociate themselves from Averroes and to distinguish their Aristotelianism from his.

In order, then, fully to understand the polemics of St. Thomas Aquinas and others, it is necessary to know something of mediaeval Islamic philosophy; but it is also necessary for a connected reason, namely that there arose in Paris a School of philosophers who claimed to represent integral Aristotelianism, the chief figure of this School being the celebrated opponent of St. Thomas, Siger of Brabant. These 'integral' Aristotelians, the genuine Aristotelians as they thought themselves to be, meant by genuine Aristotelianism the system of Aristotle as interpreted by Averroes, the Commentator *par excellence.* In order, therefore, to understand this school and an important phase of the controversies at Paris, it is obviously necessary to be acquainted with the place of Averroes in the history of philosophy and with his doctrine.

But, though some treatment of mediaeval Islamic philosophy must be given, it does not come within the scope of this book to discuss the Islamic philosophy for its own sake. It has indeed its own peculiar interest (for example, its relations to Islamic theology, their attempted reconciliation and the tension between them, as well as the relation of Islamic thought to mysticism in the Islamic world, and of Islamic philosophy to Islamic culture in general, have their own intrinsic interest), but the reader must expect here no more than a brief sketch of Islamic philosophy in the mediaeval period, a treatment of it less for its own sake than in function of its influence on the thought of mediaeval Christendom. This perhaps rather one-sided treatment is not designed to belittle the achievements of Moslem philosophers, nor does it involve a denial of the intrinsic interest of Islamic philosophy for its own sake: it is simply dictated by the general purpose and scope of this book, as well as, of course, by considerations of space.

2. If Islamic philosophy was connected with the philosophy of

Christendom in the way just mentioned, it was also connected with Christianity in its origins, owing to the fact that it was Christian Syrians who first translated Aristotle and other ancient philosophers into Arabic. The first stage consisted of the translation of Greek works into Syriac at the school of Edessa in Mesopotamia, which was founded by St. Ephrem of Nisibis in 363 and was closed by the Emperor Zeno in 489 because of the Nestorianism which prevailed there. At Edessa some of the works of Aristotle, principally the logical works, as well as Porphyry's *Isagoge*, were translated into Syriac, and this work was continued in Persia, at Nisibis and Gandisapora, whither the scholars betook themselves on the closure of the school. Thus works of Aristotle and Plato were translated into Persian. In the sixth century works of Aristotle and Porphyry and the writings of the Pseudo-Dionysius were translated into Syriac at the Monophysite schools of Syria.

The second stage consisted in the translation of the Syriac translations into Arabic. Even before the time of Mohammed (569–632) there had been a number of Nestorian Christians who worked among the Arabs, mainly as physicians, and when the 'Abbāsid dynasty replaced that of the Ommaiades in 750, Syrian scholars were invited to the Arab court at Baghdad. Medical works were translated first of all; but after a time philosophical works were also translated, and in 832 a school of translators was established at Baghdad, an institution which produced Arabic versions of Aristotle, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius, Porphyry and Ammonius. Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* were also translated, as well as (in the first half of the ninth century) the so-called *Theology of Aristotle*, which consisted of a compilation of the *Enneads* (4–6) of Plotinus, erroneously attributed to Aristotle. To this must be added the fact that the *Liber de Causis*, really the *Institutio Theologica* of Proclus, was also attributed to Aristotle. These false attributions, as well as the translation into Arabic of neo-Platonic commentators on Aristotle, helped to popularise among the Arabs a neo-Platonic interpretation of the Aristotelian system, though other influences, as well as Aristotle and the neo-Platonists, contributed to the formation of Islamic philosophy, e.g. the Islamic religion itself and the influence of Oriental religious thought, such as that of Persia.

3. The Moslem philosophers may be divided into two groups, the eastern group and the western group. In this section I shall treat briefly of three thinkers belonging to the eastern group.

(i) *Alfarabi*, who belonged to the school of Baghdad and died about 950, is a good example of a thinker upon whom the influences mentioned above made themselves felt. Thus he helped to introduce the Islamic cultured world to the logic of Aristotle, while by his classification of the departments of philosophy and theology he made philosophy self-conscious, as it were, marking it off from theology. Logic is a propaedeutic and preparation for philosophy proper, which Alfarabi divided into physics, comprising the particular sciences (psychology being included and the theory of knowledge being treated of in psychology) and metaphysics (physics and metaphysics being the two branches of theoretical philosophy) and ethics or practical philosophy. His scheme for theology included as sections (1) omnipotence and justice of God; (2) the unity and other attributes of God; (3) the doctrine of sanctions in the next life; (4) and (5) the individual's rights and the social relations of the Moslem. By making philosophy a separate province, then, Alfarabi did not mean to supplant or undermine the Islamic theology: rather did he place schematisation and logical form at the service of theology.

In addition, Alfarabi utilised Aristotelian arguments in proving the existence of God. Thus, on the supposition that the things of the world are passively moved, an idea which fitted in well with Islamic theology, he argued that they must receive their movement from a first Mover, God. Again, the things of this world are contingent, they do not exist of necessity: their essence does not involve their existence, as is shown by the fact that they come into being and pass away. From this it follows that they have received their existence, and ultimately one must admit a Being which exists essentially, necessarily, and is the Cause of the existence of all contingent beings.

On the other hand, when it comes to the general system of Alfarabi, the neo-Platonic influence is manifest. Thus the theme of emanation is employed to show how from the ultimate Deity or One there proceed the Intelligence and the World-Soul, from the thoughts or ideas of which proceeds the Cosmos, from the higher or outer spheres to the lower or inner spheres. Bodies are composed of matter and form. The intelligence of man is illuminated by the cosmic intelligence, which is the active intellect of man (the νοῦς ἐπίκτητος of Alexander of Aphrodisias). Moreover, the illumination of the human intellect is the explanation of the fact that our concepts 'fit' things, since the Ideas in God are at once the exemplar and source of the concepts in the human mind and of the forms in things.

This doctrine of illumination is connected, not only with neo-Platonism, but also with Oriental mysticism. Alfarabi himself became attached to the mystical school or sect of the Sufis, and his philosophy had a religious orientation. The highest task of man is to know God, and, just as the general process of the universe is a flowing out from God and a return to God, so should man, who proceeds from God in the emanative process and who is enlightened by God, strive after the return to and likeness with God.

(ii) The greatest Moslem philosopher of the eastern group is without a doubt *Avicenna* or *Ibn Sīnā* (980–1037), the real creator of a Scholastic system in the Islamic world.[1] A Persian by birth, born near Bokhara, he received his education in the Arab tongue, and most of his works, which were extremely numerous, were written in Arabic. A precocious boy, he learnt in succession the Koran, Arabic literature, geometry, jurisprudence, logic. Outstripping his instructors, he studied by himself theology, physics, mathematics and medicine, and at sixteen years of age he was already practising as a doctor. He then devoted a year and a half to the study of philosophy and logic, but it was only when he chanced upon a commentary by Alfarabi that he was able to understand to his satisfaction the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle, which he had read, he tells us, forty times without being able to understand it. The rest of his life was a busy and adventurous one, as he acted as Vizir to several Sultans and practised medicine, experiencing in his travels the ups and downs of life and the favour and disfavour of princes, but being always the philosopher, pursuing his studies and writings wherever he was, even in prison and on horseback. He died at Hamadan at the age of fifty-seven, after performing his ablutions, repenting of his sins, distributing abundant alms and freeing his slaves. His principal philosophical work is the *Aš-Šifā*, known in the Middle Ages as the *Sufficientiae*, which comprised logic, physics (including the natural sciences), mathematics, psychology and metaphysics. The *Najāt* was a collection of texts, taken from the first work and arranged in a different order.

Avicenna's division of philosophy in the wide sense into logic, the propaedeutic to philosophy, speculative philosophy (physics. mathematics and theology) and practical philosophy (ethics, economics and politics) offers no remarkable features, save that theology is divided into first theology (equivalent to ontology and natural theology) and second theology (involving Islamic themes), and this marks off Islamic theology from the Greek. But his metaphysic, in spite of its borrowing both from Aristotle and from neo-Platonism, shows features of its own, which make it plain that, however much he borrowed from former philosophers, Avicenna had thought out his system carefully and independently and had welded it into a system of a peculiar stamp. For instance, although he is at one with Aristotle in assigning the study of being as being to metaphysics, Avicenna employs an un-Aristotelian illustration to show that the mind necessarily apprehends the idea of being, though it is acquired normally through experience. Imagine a man suddenly created, who cannot see or hear, who is floating in space and whose members are so disposed that they cannot touch one another. On the supposition that he cannot exercise the senses and acquire the notion of being through sight or touch, will he thereby be unable to form the notion? No, because he will be conscious of and affirm his own existence, so that, even if he cannot acquire the notion of being through external experience, he will at least acquire it through self-consciousness.[1]

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[1] The name Avicenna, by which Ibn Sīna was known to the mediaeval world, comes from the Hebrew version, Aven Sina.

In Avicenna's eyes the notion of necessity is also a primary notion, for to him all beings are necessary. It is necessary, however, to distinguish two kinds of necessity. A particular object in the world is not necessary of itself: its essence does not involve existence necessarily, as is shown by the fact that it comes into being and passes away; but it is necessary in the sense that its existence is determined by the necessary action of an external cause. Accordingly a contingent being means, for Avicenna, a being the existence of which is due, not to the essence of the being itself, but to the necessary action of an external cause. Such beings are indeed caused and so 'contingent', but none the less the action of the cause is determined.

This leads him on to argue that the chain of causes cannot be infinite, since then there would be no reason for the existence of anything, but that there must be a first cause which is itself uncaused. This uncaused Being, the necessary Being, cannot receive its essence from another, nor can its existence form part of its essence, since composition of parts would involve an anterior uniting cause: essence and existence must therefore be identical in the necessary Being. This ultimate Being is necessary of itself, whereas 'contingent' beings are not necessary of themselves but necessary through another, so that the concept 'being', as applied to necessary and contingent being, has not the same sense. They are not, then, species of one genus; but rather does Being belong *par excellence*, properly and primarily, to the necessary Being and is predicated of contingent being only secondarily and analogically.

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[1] *Šifā*, 1, 281 and 363.

Closely allied with the distinction between the possible and the necessary is the distinction between potentiality and act. Potentiality, as Aristotle said, is the principle of change into another as other, and this principle may exist either in the agent (active potency) or in the patient (passive potency). Moreover, there are degrees of potency and act, ranging between the lower limit, pure potentiality, prime matter, and the upper limit, pure act, the necessary Being, though Avicenna does not use the phrase 'Pure Act' *quoad verbum*. From this position Avicenna proceeds to show that God is Truth, Goodness, Love and Life. For example, the Being which is always in act, without potentiality or privation, must be absolute Goodness, and since the divine attributes are ontologically indistinguishable, the divine Goodness must be identical with absolute Love.

As God is absolute Goodness, He necessarily tends to diffuse His goodness, to radiate it, and this means that He creates necessarily. As God is the necessary Being, all His attributes must be necessary: He is, therefore, necessarily Creator. This in turn involves the conclusion that creation is from eternity, for, if God is necessarily Creator and God is eternal, creation must be eternal. Moreover, if God creates by the necessity of His Nature, it follows also that there is no free choice in creation, that God could not create otherwise or create other things than He actually creates. But God can produce immediately only by a being like Himself: it is impossible for God to create material things directly. The logically first being to proceed from God is, therefore, the first Intelligence. This Intelligence is created, in the sense that it proceeds from God: it receives, then, its existence, and in this way duality begins. Whereas in the One there is no duality, in the primary Intelligence there is a duality of essence and existence, in that existence is received, while there is also a duality of knowledge, in that the primary Intelligence knows the One or God as necessary and itself as 'possible'. In this way Avicenna deduces the ten Intelligences which exhibit a growing multiplicity and so bridges the gap between the unity of God and the multiplicity of creation. The tenth Intelligence is the 'giver of forms', which are received in prime matter, pure potentiality (or rather potentiality 'deprived of' form, and so, in a sense, 'evil'), and so rendered capable of multiplication within the species. The separate Intelligences can differ from one another only specifically, in virtue of their greater or less proximity to the One and the decreasing simplicity in the process of emanation; but, as matter is the principle of individuation, the same specific form can be multiplied in a plurality of individual concrete objects, though prime matter has first to be taken out of its state of indetermination and disposed for the reception of specific form, first through the *forma corporeitatis* and then through the action of external causes which predispose matter for the reception of one particular specific form.

The tenth Intelligence has another function to perform besides that of *Dator formarum*, for it also exercises the function of the active intellect in man. In his analysis of abstraction Avicenna will not credit the human intellect as such with the final act of abstraction, the apprehension of the universal in a state of pure intelligibility, as this would mean that the intellect passes from a state of potentiality to act entirely by its own power, whereas no agent can proceed from passive potency to act except under the influence of an agent external to itself but like itself. He distinguished, therefore, the active and passive intellects, but made the active intellect a separate and unitary intelligence which illumines the human intellect or confers on it its intellectual and abstract grasp of essences (the essence or universal *post rem*, to be distinguished from the essence *ante rem* and *in re*).

Avicenna's idea of necessary creation and his denial that the One has direct knowledge of the multiplicity of concrete objects set him at variance with the theology of the Koran; but he tried, so far as he could, to reconcile his Aristotelian-neo-Platonist system with orthodox Islam. For example, he did not deny the immortality of the human soul, in spite of his doctrine concerning the separateness of the active intellect, and he maintained a doctrine of sanctions in the after life, though he interpreted this in an intellectualist manner, reward consisting in the knowledge of purely intelligible objects, punishment in the deprivation of such knowledge.[1] Again, though his analysis and explanation of creation and the relation of the world to God necessarily involved a theory of emanation and, in this respect, tended towards pantheism, he tried to safeguard himself from pantheism by affirming the distinction between essence and existence in all beings which proceed, immediately or mediately, from God. Possibly the Islamic doctrine of the divine omnipotence, when interpreted 'speculatively', tends to pantheism, and it may well be that some fundamental principles of Avicenna's system would favour pantheism; but he was certainly no pantheist by intention.

When portions of the writings of Avicenna were translated into Latin in the twelfth century, the Christian world found itself faced for the first time with a closely knit system which was bound to exercise a strong attraction on certain minds. Thus *Gundissalinus* (d. 1151) translated into Latin the Spanish translation made by Joannes Hispanus (Avendeath) and utilised the thought of Avicenna in his *De Anima*, following the Avicennian psychology (and citing the latter's allegory of the 'flying man'), though he left Avicenna for Augustine by making the active intellect, as source of illumination, identical with God. Moreover, in his *De Processione Mundi* he attempted to reconcile the cosmogony of Avicenna with Christian doctrine, though his example in this matter was not followed. Before the entire *Metaphysics* of Aristotle became available, uncertainty reigned as to which doctrines were to be attributed to Avicenna and which to Aristotle. Thus Roger Bacon thought that Avicenna must have followed Aristotle throughout, though he (Bacon) had not got books M and N of the *Metaphysics* and so could not check the truth or untruth of this supposition. The result was that *William of Auvergne* (died *c.* 1249), the first vigorous opponent of Avicenna, attributed the cosmogony of Avicenna to Aristotle himself. This cosmogony, said William, was erroneous, in that it admitted intermediaries in the process of creation, thus allowing to creatures a divine power, denied the divine freedom, asserted the eternity of the world, made matter the principle of individuation and regarded the separate active intellect as the efficient cause of human souls. None the less William himself followed Avicenna by introducing into Latin Scholasticism the distinction between essence and existence. Moreover, denying Avicenna's doctrine of the active intellect, he pretty well identified it with God. Other thinkers, such as Alexander of Hales, John of la Rochelle and St. Albert, while denying the doctrine of a separate active intellect, made use of Avicenna's theory of abstraction and of the necessity of illumination, whereas Roger Bacon and Roger Marston found Avicenna's error to consist only in not identifying the separate and illuminating active intellect with God. Without going any further into the question of Avicenna's influence, which would require a distinct monograph, one can say that he influenced Latin Scholasticism in regard to at least three themes, that of knowledge and illumination, that of the relation of essence and existence, and that of matter as the principle of individuation.[1] Criticism of Avicenna by a Latin Scholastic does not mean, of course, that the Scholastic learnt nothing from Avicenna. For instance, St. Thomas found it necessary to criticise the Moslem philosopher's treatment of possibility,[2] but that does not mean that St. Thomas did not develop his own position partly through a consideration of Avicenna's doctrine, even if it is difficult to assess the precise degree of influence exercised by the latter's writings on the greatest of the Scholastics. Scotus, however, was much more influenced by Avicenna than was St. Thomas, though he certainly could not be called with propriety a disciple of Avicenna.

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[1] It should be noted that it was the Averroistic doctrine of the unicity of the passive or possible intellect which *necessarily* involved the denial of personal immortality. The doctrine of the unicity of the active intellect does not necessarily involve such a denial, whether the active intellect is identified with a subordinate Intelligence or with God in His function as illuminator. As for Aristotle, he may not have believed in personal immortality himself, but the rejection of personal immortality does not *necessarily* follow from his doctrine of the active intellect, whereas it does follow from the doctrine of Averroes. On this point the positions of Avicenna and Averroes must be clearly distinguished.

(iii) *Algazel* (1058–1111), who lectured for a time at Baghdad, opposed the views of Alfarabi and Avicenna from the viewpoint of Mohammedan orthodoxy. In his *Maqāsid* or *Intentiones Philosophorum* he summed up the views of these two philosophers, and this exposition, translated into Latin by Gundissalinus, gave the impression, when taken by itself, that Algazel agreed with the opinions expressed. Thus William of Auvergne coupled together as objects of attack the 'followers of Aristotle', Alfarabi, Algazel and Avicenna, being unaware of the fact that Algazel had proceeded to criticise the systems of the philosophers in his *Destructio philosophorum*,[3] which tried to show how the philosophers contradicted themselves. This book elicited later from Averroes a

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[1] On Avicenna's influence, cf. Roland-Gosselin, commentary on the *De ente et essentia*, pp. 59 and 150.

[2] Cf. *De Pot.*, 5, 3; *Contra Gent.*, 2, 30.

[3] More properly *Incoherentia philosophorum*.

Destructio destructionis philosophorum. In his *Revivification of the Religious Sciences* he gave his positive views, defending the orthodox doctrine of the creation of the world in time and out of nothing against Avicenna's ideas of emanation and of the eternity of the world. He defended also the doctrine of God's universal causality, making the connection between cause and effect to depend on the divine power, not on any causal activity on the part of creatures. The philosopher sees consequence or constant conjunction and concludes to the relation of cause and effect, whereas in truth the following of one event on another is simply due to the power and action of God. In other words he maintained an occasionalistic doctrine.

Algazel was very far from being simply a philosopher who wished to counteract the unorthodox tendencies of his Hellenising predecessors: he was also an eminent Sufi, a mystic and spiritual writer. Leaving his work at Baghdad he retired into Syria, where he lived a life of asceticism and contemplation. Sometimes indeed he emerged from his retirement and in any case he had disciples: he even founded a kind of theological college and a school of Sufism at his place of retirement, Tūs; but the major interest of his life was the revival of religion, in the sense of mysticism. Drawing not only on previous Islamic sources, but utilising neo-Platonic ideas, and even ideas from Judaism and Christianity, he built up a system of spirituality which was personalist, i.e. non-pantheistic, in character. Some of Algazel's expressions would seem at first sight to imply or involve pantheism, but his neo-Platonism was put at the service of religious mysticism rather than of speculation. It is not that he tends to identify the world with God, but rather that his fusion of the Islamic doctrines of predestination and divine omni-causality with strongly emphasised religious mysticism leads him into a kind of panentheism. The Semitic monotheism, when seen in the light of neo-Platonism and fused with mysticism, could lead him probably in no other direction. In the field of purely philosophical speculation he shows a somewhat sceptical attitude and he represents the protest of religious mysticism against rationalism as well as that of Islamic theology against Aristotelian philosophy.

4. The background of the Moslem philosophers of the West was provided by the brilliant Islamic civilisation which grew up in Spain in the tenth century and which, at that period, was so greatly superior to what western Christendom had to offer. The

first philosopher of the western group was *Ibn Masarrah* (d. 931), who adopted ideas from the Pseudo-Empedocles, while *Avempace* or *Ibn Bājja* (d. 1138) and *Abubacer* or *Ibn Tufail* (d. 1185) represented mystical tendencies; but the greatest figure of this group is undoubtedly Averroes, who occupies that prominent position in the western group which Avicenna represents in the eastern group.

Averroes or *Ibn Rušd* (the *Commentator* of the Latin Scholastics) was born at Córdoba in 1126, the son of a judge. After studying theology, jurisprudence, medicine, mathematics and philosophy, he occupied judicial posts, first at Seville and afterwards at Córdoba, becoming physician to the Caliph in 1182. Subsequently he fell into disfavour with the Caliph al-Mansūr and was banished from court. He later crossed to Morocco, dying there in 1198.

Being convinced that the genius of Aristotle was the final culmination of the human intellect, Averroes naturally devoted a great deal of energy to the composition of commentaries. These fall into three classes: (i) the lesser or 'middle' commentaries, in which Averroes gives the content of Aristotle's doctrine, adding his own explanations and developments in such a way that it is not always easy to distinguish what comes from Aristotle and what from Averroes; (ii) the greater commentaries, in which Averroes gives first a portion of the actual text of Aristotle and then adds his own commentary; and (iii) the little commentaries (paraphrases or compendia), in which he gives the conclusions arrived at by Aristotle, omitting proofs and historical references, and which were designed for students unable to go to the sources or larger commentaries. (Apparently he composed the middle commentaries and the compendia before the greater commentaries.) The entire *Organon* of Aristotle, in the lesser commentary and in the compendium, is extant, as also Latin translations of all three classes of commentary for the *Posterior Analytics*, the *Physics*, the *De Caelo*, the *De Anima* and the *Metaphysics*. In addition to these and other commentaries in Latin translations the Christian Scholastics possessed Averroes's answer to Algazel (i.e. the *Destructio destructionis philosophorum*); several logical works, a letter on the connection between the abstract intelligence and man, a work on the beatitude of the soul, etc.

The metaphysical scale reaches from pure matter as the lowest limit to pure Act, God, as the highest limit, between these limits being the objects composed of potency and act, which form *Natura* *naturata*. (The phrases of the Latin translation, *Natura naturans* and *Natura naturata*, reappear eventually in the system of Spinoza.) Prime matter, as equivalent to non-being, as pure potentiality and the absence of all determination, cannot be the term of the creative act: it is, therefore, co-eternal with God. God, however, draws or educes the forms of material things from the potency of pure matter, and creates the Intelligences, ten in number, connected extrinsically with the spheres, so that the Avicennian emanation-theory is avoided and real pantheism is excluded. The order of the creation or generation of things is, however, determined.

Nevertheless, even if Averroes's rejection of emanation makes him in a sense more orthodox than Avicenna, he did not follow Avicenna in accepting personal immortality. Averroes did indeed follow Themistius and other commentators in holding that the *intellectus materialis* is the same substance as the *intellectus agens* and that both survive death, but he followed Alexander of Aphrodisias in holding that this substance is a separate and unitary Intelligence. (It is the Intelligence of the moon, the lowest sphere.) The individual passive intellect in the individual man becomes, under the action of the active intellect, the 'acquired intellect', which is absorbed by the active intellect in such a way that, although it survives bodily death, it does so not as a personal, individual existent, but as a moment in the universal and common intelligence of the human species. There is, therefore, immortality, but there is no personal immortality. This view was earnestly combated by St. Thomas Aquinas and other Scholastics, though it was maintained by the Latin Averroists as a philosophical truth.

More interesting, however, than Averroes's particular philosophical doctrine is his notion of the general relation of philosophy to theology. Holding, as he did, that Aristotle was the completer of human science,[1] the model of human perfection and the author of a system which is the supreme truth, interpreting Aristotle as holding the unicity of the active intellect and accepting the doctrine of the eternity of matter, Averroes had necessarily to attempt a reconciliation of his philosophical ideas with orthodox Islamic theology, especially as those were not wanting who were ready to accuse him of heresy because of his devotion to a pagan thinker. He accordingly attempted this reconciliation by means of the so-called 'double truth' theory. This does not mean that, according to Averroes, a proposition can be true in philosophy and false in theology or *vice versa*: his theory is that one and the same truth is understood clearly in philosophy and expressed allegorically in theology. The scientific formulation of truth is achieved only in philosophy, but the same truth is expressed in theology, only in a different manner. The picture-teaching of the Koran expresses the truth in a manner intelligible to the ordinary man, to the unlettered, whereas the philosopher strips away the allegorical husk and attains the truth 'unvarnished', free from the trappings of *Vorstellung*. Averroes's idea of the relation of philosophy to theology resembles somewhat that of Hegel, and it would be unacceptable, and was unacceptable, to the orthodox Islamic theologian; but it was not the absurd idea that one proposition can be true in philosophy and the diametrically opposite proposition true in theology. What Averroes did was to make theology subordinate to philosophy, to make the latter the judge of the former, so that it belongs to the philosopher to decide what theological doctrines need to be allegorically interpreted and in what way they should be interpreted. This view was accepted by the Latin Averroists, and it was this view, moreover, which drew upon Averroes, and upon philosophy generally, the hostility of the Islamic theologians. In regard to statements attributed to Averroes which taken literally imply that one proposition, for example, that the active intellect is numerically single, is true in philosophy and false in theology, it has been suggested that this was simply a sarcastic way of saying that the theological doctrine is nonsense. When Averroes says that some proposition is true in the fideistic theology of the conservatives, who rejected philosophy, he means that it is 'true' in the School of the enemies of science, i.e. that it is simply false. He had no use for the traditionalists as the traditionalists had no use for him, and his attitude in this matter led to the prohibition in Islamic Spain of the study of Greek philosophy and to the burning of philosophic works.

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[1] *De Anima*, 3, 2.

5. Of the influence of Averroes in Latin Christendom I shall speak later; but it may be of interest to add a word here on the attitude of Dante (1265–1321) towards the Arabian philosophers.[1] The question of Dante's attitude to the Arab philosophers arose when scholars began to ask themselves seriously and without prejudice why Dante, who in the *Divina Commedia* places Mohammed in hell, not only placed Averroes and Avicenna in

[1] For some further remarks on this subject see pp. 439–40.

Limbo, but also placed the Latin Averroist Siger of Brabant in heaven and even went so far as to put his eulogium into the mouth of St. Thomas Aquinas, who was a doughty opponent of Siger. Obviously Dante was treating these men as philosophers, and it was because of this fact that he placed the two Islamic thinkers as high in the scale as he could: as they were not Christians, he did not consider that he could release them from *Inferno* altogether, and so he placed them in Limbo. Siger on the other hand was a Christian, and so Dante placed him in heaven. That he made St. Thomas speak his praises and that he put him on the left of St. Thomas, while St. Albert the Great was on Aquinas's right, is explicable if we remember that the Thomist system presupposes a philosophy which is built up by natural reason alone and that to build up a philosophy by reason alone was precisely what Siger of Brabant professed to do: it is not necessary to suppose that Dante approved all Siger's notions, but he takes him as the symbol of 'pure philosophy'.

However, why did Dante single out Avicenna, Averroes and Siger of Brabant? Was it simply because they were philosophers or did Dante owe something himself to the Moslems? It has been shown by Bruno Nardi,[1] and the theme has been resumed by Asín Palacios,[2] that Dante owed to the systems of Alfarabi, Avicenna, Algazel and Averroes important points in his philosophy, for example, the light-doctrine of God, the theory of the Intelligences, the influence of the celestial spheres, the idea that only the intellectual part of the soul is directly and properly created, the need of illumination for intellection, etc. Some of these ideas were found in the Augustinian tradition, it is true; but it has been shown that Dante, far from being a Thomist pure and simple, owed a considerable debt to the Moslems and to Averroes in particular. This will explain why he singles out for special treatment the most eminent of the Islamic philosophers, and why he places in heaven the greatest of the Latin Averroists.

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[1] *Intorno al tomismo di Dante e alla quistione di Sigieri* (*Giornale Dantesco*, XXII, 5).

[2] *Islam and the Divine Comedy* (abridged Engl. Transl., London, 1926).

CHAPTER XX

JEWISH PHILOSOPHY

The Cabala—Avicebron—Maimonides.

1. PHILOSOPHY among the Jews really owes its origin to intercourse with other nations and cultures. Thus in the first volume of this history I have already treated of Philo, the Alexandrian Jew (*c.* 25 B.C.–*c.* A.D. 40), who attempted a reconciliation of the Jewish Scriptural theology and Greek philosophy, producing a system in which elements of the Platonic tradition (the theory of Ideas), of Stoicism (doctrine of the Logos) and of Oriental thought (intermediary beings) were combined. In the philosophy of Philo the transcendence of God was strongly emphasised, and this insistence on the divine transcendence was characteristic of the doctrine of the *Cabala*, as modified by Greek, particularly by Platonic, theories. The *Cabala* consisted of two works, the *Jezirah* (creation), which was probably composed after the middle of the ninth century A.D., and the *Sohar* (brightness), which was built up from the beginning of the thirteenth century and committed to writing by a Spanish Jew about the year 1300. Additions and commentaries were subsequently made. The Cabalistic philosophy shows the influence of neo-Platonism in its doctrine of emanation and intermediary beings between God and the world, and one of the channels by which neo-Platonism influenced the construction of the emanationist philosophy of the *Sohar* was the thought of the Spanish Jew who was known to the Latin Scholastics as Avicebron.

2. *Salomon Ibn Gabirol* or *Avicebron* (so called by the Latin Scholastics, who thought that he was an Arab) was born at Malaga about 1021, was educated at Saragossa and died in 1069/70. He was naturally influenced by the Arabian philosophy and his chief work, the *Fons Vitae*, was originally composed in Arabic. The Arabic original is, however, no longer extant, though we possess the work in the Latin translation of Joannes Hispanus (Avendeath) and Dominicus Gundissalinus. The work consists of five books and had a considerable influence on the Christian Scholastics.

The neo-Platonic influence shows itself in the emanationist scheme of Avicebron's philosophy. The summit of the hierarchy of being and the source of all limited being is, of course, God, who is one and unknowable by the discursive reason, apprehensible only in the intuition of ecstasy. To this Avicebron added a peculiar doctrine concerning the divine will by which are created, or from which emanate, all lesser beings. The divine will, like God Himself, transcends the composition of matter and form and can be apprehended only in mystical experience; but the exact relation of the divine will to God is not easy to determine. The distinction drawn between the divine essence and the divine will would appear to make of the latter a distinct hypostasis, though on the other hand the divine will is depicted as being God Himself as active *ad extra*, as God in His appearance. In any case there is a substitution of Will for Logos. From God, *via* the divine will, whether God under one aspect or a distinct hypostasis, proceeds the cosmic spirit or World-Soul, which is inferior to God and is composed of matter and form, *materia universalis* and *forma universalis*. From the World-Soul in turn proceed pure spirits and corporeal things.

The interesting point about Avicebron's system is, however, not his emanationist scheme, but rather his doctrine of universal hylomorphic composition in all beings inferior to God, a doctrine which was derived, at least indirectly, from Plotinus and which influenced one tradition of Christian Scholasticism. Just as from the World-Soul proceed the individual forms, so from the World-Soul proceed also spiritual matter, which is present in the Intelligence and in the rational soul, and corporeal matter. Matter, then, which does not *of itself* involve corporeality, is the principle of limitation and finiteness in all creatures: it is the hylomorphic composition in creatures which marks them off from God, for in God there is no composition. This doctrine of universal hylomorphic composition in creatures was maintained by St. Bonaventure, for example, the great Franciscan contemporary of St. Thomas Aquinas. Moreover, there is a plurality of forms in every being which possesses in itself a plurality of grades of perfection, as the human being, for example, the microcosm, possesses the perfections of corporeality, vegetative life, sensitive life and intellectual life. Every corporeal being possesses the *forma corporeitatis*, but it has further to be given its determinate place in the hierarchy of being, and this is accomplished by the reception of the form or forms by which it becomes, e.g. living thing, animal, dog. It has been maintained that the doctrine of Avicebron was the real origin of the Augustinian School's theory of the plurality of forms, but, even granting this, it must also be remembered that the doctrine fitted well into the scheme of the Augustinians' philosophy, since Augustine had himself taught that the function of the lower forms is to lead on to the higher forms and that this is true also of these forms as represented in human knowledge, i.e. that contemplation of the lower stages of being should lead the mind to higher stages.

3. The most interesting of the Jewish mediaeval philosophers is, however, *Moses Maimonides*, who was born at Córdoba in 1135 and died in Cairo in 1204, having had to abandon Moorish Spain, which was no longer favourable to philosophers. In his *Guide of the Doubting* he attempted to give to theology its rational basis in philosophy, which for him meant the philosophy of Aristotle, whom he reverenced as the greatest example of human intellectual power apart from the Prophets. We must hold fast to what is given us in sense-perception and what can be strictly demonstrated by the intellect: if statements contained in the Old Testament plainly contradict what is plainly established by reason, then such statements must be interpreted allegorically. This view, however, did not mean that Maimonides discarded the teaching of theology whenever Aristotle held something different to that which the Scripture taught. For example, theology teaches the creation of the world in time out of nothing, and this means both that God must be the author of matter as well as of form and that the world cannot be eternal. If the eternity of the world could be demonstrated by reason in such a way that the opposite was clearly seen to be an impossibility, then we should have to interpret the Scriptural teaching accordingly; but, as a matter of fact, the Scriptural teaching is clear and the philosophical arguments adduced to prove the eternity of the world are inconclusive: we must, then, reject Aristotle's teaching on this point. Plato came nearer to the truth than Aristotle, but even he accepted an uncreated matter. The creation out of nothing of both matter and form is also necessary, according to Maimonides, if the fact of miracles, plainly taught in the Old Testament, is to be allowed, since, if God is able to suspend the operation of natural laws, He must be the absolute Sovereign of nature and He would not be that unless He were Creator in the full sense of the word. To the fanatics Maimonides's allegorical interpretation of some of the Scriptural pictures of God seemed to be a selling of the Holy Scripture to the Greeks, and some Jews in France even went so far as to try to enlist the aid of the Inquisition against this

'heresy'; but in point of fact he was merely saying that there can be a fountain of certain truth besides theology. In other words, he gave a charter to philosophy, and he thus influenced the growth of philosophical interest among the Jews in Spain, even if his chief influence lay in the province of theology. That he was no blind worshipper of Aristotle has been shown already. Aristotle, thought Maimonides, went wrong in teaching the eternity of the world, and even if philosophy cannot demonstrate creation in time, it can at least show that the arguments brought up in favour of the Aristotelian position are inconclusive and unsound.

Relying partly on the natural theology of Alfarabi and Avicenna, Maimonides proved the existence of God in various ways, arguing from creatures to God as first Mover, as necessary Being and as first Cause. These arguments he supported from statements of Aristotle in the *Physics* and *Metaphysics.* But if Maimonides anticipated most of the types of proof given later by St. Thomas, he was more insistent than the latter on the inapplicability of positive predicates to God. God is pure Act, without matter and without potency, infinitely removed from creatures, and, in regard to 'qualities', we can say what God is *not*, rather than what He is. He is one and transcendent (between God and the world there is a hierarchy of Intelligences or pure spirits), but we cannot form any adequate positive idea of God. St. Thomas, of course, would admit this, but Maimonides was rather more insistent on the *via negativa.* We can, however, ascribe to God activities, the activities of creation and providence, for example, provided that we realise that the difference of names does not correspond to any difference in God Himself and that God Himself is unchangeable. Unlike Avicebron, Maimonides admitted a special providence on God's part in regard to particular creatures, though this is true only of men, so far as the material world is concerned. The active intellect is the tenth Intelligence (the Intelligences are without 'matter'), but the passive intellects of the just are immortal. Immortality, then, he admitted only in a limited extension, for the just; but he maintained the freedom of the will, whereby men become just, and he denied the determining influence of the celestial bodies and spheres in regard to human conduct. In fine, Moses Maimonides made a better business of reconciling Greek philosophy with Jewish orthodoxy than Avicebron had made of it, and it is noteworthy that the influence of the Aristotelian system is more in evidence in the former's philosophy than in the latter's.

CHAPTER XXI

THE TRANSLATIONS

The translated works—Translations from Greek and from Arabic—Effects of translations and opposition to Aristotelianism.

1. Before the twelfth century part of the *Organon* of Aristotle (the *Categories* and the *De Interpretatione*) had been available to mediaeval philosophers in the Latin version by Boethius (*Logica vetus*), but the entire *Organon* became available fairly early in the twelfth century. Thus about 1128 James of Venice translated the *Analytics*, the *Topics* and the *Sophistical Arguments* from Greek into Latin, the newly translated books of the *Organon* being known as the *Logica nova*. It appears that portions at least of other books of the *Organon* besides the *Categories* and the *De Interpretatione* had survived into the twelfth century in the translation of Boethius; but in any case a complete translation of the *Organon* into Latin had been effected by the middle of the century. It is to be noted that the translation by James of Spain was made from the Greek, as was also the translation of the fourth book of the *Meteorologica* made by Henricus Aristippus before 1162. Henricus Aristippus was Archdeacon of Catania in Sicily, an island which was an important centre in the work of translation. Thus it was in twelfth-century Sicily that Ptolemy's μεγάλη σύνταξις and the *Optics*, some of the works of Euclid and Proclus's *Elementatio physica* were translated from Greek into Latin.

Sicily was one centre of the work of translation; Spain was another, the most famous school of translators being that of Toledo. Thus under Archbishop Raymond (1126–51) Joannes Hispanus (Avendeath) translated from the Arabic into Latin (*via* Spanish) the Logic of Avicenna, while Dominicus Gundissalinus translated (with help from other scholars) the *Metaphysics* of Avicenna, parts of his *Physics*, his *De Sufficientia*, *De Caelo et Mundo* and *De Mundo*, the *Metaphysics* of Algazel and the *De Scientiis* of Alfarabi. Dominicus Gundissalinus and John of Spain also translated from Arabic into Latin the *Fons Vitae* of Avicebron.

A distinguished member of this group of scholars was Gerard of Cremona, who took up work at Toledo in 1134 and died in 1187. He translated from Arabic into Latin Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* (together with the commentary of Themistius), *Physics*, *De Caelo et Mundo*, *De Generatione et Corruptione*, *Meteorologica* (first three books); Alkindi's *De Intellectu*, *De Somno et Visione*, *De quinque Essentiis*; the *Liber de Causis* and some other works.

The Toledo school of translators was still of importance in the thirteenth century. Thus Michael Scot (Michael Scottus, died *c.* 1235) translated at Toledo the *De Caelo et Mundo*, the *De Anima*, the zoological writings and also (probably) the *Physics of Aristotle*, as well as Averroes's commentaries on the *De Caelo et Mundo* and the *De Anima*, Avicenna's compendium of the *De Animalibus*, while Herman the German, who died in 1272, as Bishop of Astorga, translated Averroes's 'middle commentary' on the *Nicomachean Ethics* and also his compendium of the same work and his commentaries on the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics*.

2. It will be seen from what has already been said that it is a mistake to imagine that the Latin Scholastics were entirely dependent on translations from Arabic or even that translation from the Arabic always preceded translation from the Greek. Thus Henricus Aristippus's translation of the fourth book of the *Meteorologica* from the Greek preceded Gerard of Cremona's translation of the first three books of the same work from the Arabic. Moreover, some of the *Metaphysics* had been translated from the Greek before the Arabic translation was made. The translation from the Greek,[1] which did not comprise simply the first three books and a small part of book four, as was formerly supposed, was in use at Paris by 1210 and was known as the *Metaphysica vetus*, in distinction from the translation from the Arabic, which was made by Gerard of Cremona or Michael Scot and was known (in the first half of the thirteenth century) as the *Metaphysica nova*. Books K, M, N, as well as smaller passages, were missing in this translation. In the second half of the century the title *Metaphysica nova* or *Translatio nova* was given to the translation from the Greek by William of Moerbeke (after 1260), upon which translation St. Thomas based his commentary. It has also been shown that there was a *translatio media* from the Greek, on which St. Albert the Great based his commentary and which was known to St. Thomas.

As regards the ethical writings of Aristotle, a translation of Books 2 and 3 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* was available by the end of the twelfth century. This translation had been made from the Greek (possibly it was the work of Boethius himself) and was known as the *Ethica vetus*, while a later translation (of Book 1) was known as the *Ethica nova*. A full translation, generally ascribed to Robert Grosseteste (d. 1253), was then made from the Greek, the first three books being a recension of the *Ethica vetus* and the *Ethica nova*. The *Magna Moralia* were translated by Bartholomew of Messina in the reign of King Manfred (1258–66); but only the seventh book of the *Eudemian Ethics* was known in the thirteenth century.

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[1] St. Thomas's *Translatio Boethii*.

The *De Anima* was translated from the Greek before 1215, the translation from the Arabic by Michael Scot being somewhat later. William of Moerbeke produced a further version from the Greek or a corrected edition of the first translation from the Greek. Similarly there was a translation of the *Physics* from the Greek before the two translations from the Arabic by Gerard of Cremona and Michael Scot, while a translation of the *De Generatione et Corruptione* from the Greek preceded the translation from the Arabic by Gerard of Cremona. The *Politics* were translated from the Greek about 1260 by William of Moerbeke (there was no translation from the Arabic), who probably also translated the *Economics* about 1267. This eminent man, who was born about 1215 and died in 1286, as Archbishop of Corinth, not only translated Aristotle's works from the Greek and re-edited earlier translations (thus enabling his friend, St. Thomas Aquinas, to write his commentaries), but also translated from the Greek some commentaries by Alexander of Aphrodisias, Simplicius, Joannes Philoponus and Themistius, as also some works of Proclus and the latter's exposition of the *Timaeus* of Plato.[1] His translation of Proclus's *Elementatio theologica* brought to St. Thomas the realisation that the *Liber de Causis* was not the work of Aristotle, as it was previously supposed to be, but was based on the work of Proclus. It was also William of Moerbeke who translated the *Rhetoric* of Aristotle. As to the *Poetics*, the mediaevals possessed only Herman the German's translation of Averroes's commentary.[2]

As modern investigation has shown that translations from the Greek generally preceded translations from the Arabic, and that, even when the original translation from the Greek was incomplete, the Arabic-Latin version soon had to give place to a new and better translation from the Greek, it can no longer be said that the mediaevals had no real knowledge of Aristotle, but only a caricature of his doctrine, a picture distorted by the hand of Arabian philosophers. What can, however, be said is that they were not always able to distinguish what was to be ascribed to Aristotle from what was not to be ascribed to Aristotle. A great step forward was taken when St. Thomas came to realise that the *Liber de Causis* was not the work of Aristotle. He was already quite conscious of the fact that Averroes's commentaries were not to be taken as the unquestionable interpretation of Aristotle's philosophy, but even he seems to have thought, at least for a time, that the Pseudo-Dionysius was not far from being a follower of Aristotle. The fact of the matter is, not that the mediaevals had no reliable texts of Aristotle, but that they were deficient in historical knowledge: they did not, for example, adequately realise the relation of Aristotle to Plato or of neo-Platonism to Plato and Aristotle. That St. Thomas was an able commentator on Aristotle can be denied only by those unacquainted with his commentaries; but it would be foolish to claim even for St. Thomas a knowledge of the history and development of Greek philosophy such as is open to the modern scholar. He made good use of the information available to him; but that information was rather limited.

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[1] The *Timaeus* of Plato was known to the West, thanks to Cicero and Chalcidius, but it was not until the twelfth century that the *Meno* and *Phaedo* were translated (by Henricus Aristippus).

[2] How far St. Thomas actually used William's translation has been much discussed.

3. The translation of works of Aristotle and his commentators, as well as of the Arabian thinkers, provided the Latin Scholastics with a great wealth of intellectual material. In particular they were provided with the knowledge of philosophical systems which were methodologically independent of theology and which were presented as the human mind's reflection on the universe. The systems of Aristotle, of Avicenna, of Averroes, opened up a wide vista of the scope of the human reason and it was clear to the mediaevals that the truth attained in them must have been independent of Christian revelation, since it had been attained by a Greek philosopher and his Greek and Islamic commentators. In this way the new translations helped to clarify in the minds of the mediaevals the relation between philosophy and theology and contributed very largely to the delimitation of the provinces of the two sciences. It is, of course, true that Aristotle's system not unnaturally took the limelight in preference to those of his commentators, and his philosophy tended to appear in the eyes of those Latins who were favourably impressed as the *ne plus ultra* of human intellectual endeavour, since it constituted the

most sustained and extensive effort of the human mind with which they were acquainted; but they were quite well aware that it was the work of reason, not a set of revealed dogmas. To us, looking back from a long way off, it may seem that some of the mediaevals exaggerated the genius of Aristotle (we also know that they did not realise the existence of different strata or periods in Aristotle's thought), but we should put ourselves for a moment in their place and try to imagine the impression which would be made on a mediaeval philosopher by the sight of what in any case is one of the supreme achievements of the human mind, a system which, in regard to both completeness and close reasoning, was unparalleled in the thought of the early Middle Ages.

However, the system of Aristotle did not meet with universal welcome and approbation, though it could not be ignored. Largely because the *Liber de Causis* (until St. Thomas discovered the truth), the so-called *Theologia Aristotelis* (extracts from the *Enneads* of Plotinus) and the *De secretis secretorum* (composed by an Arab philosopher in the eleventh or beginning of the twelfth century) were wrongly attributed to Aristotle, the latter's philosophy tended to appear in a false light. Moreover, the attribution of these books to Aristotle naturally made it appear that the Arab commentators were justified in their neo-Platonic interpretation. Hence it came about that in 1210 the Provincial Council of Paris, meeting under the presidency of Peter of Corbeil, Archbishop of Sens, forbad the public or private teaching of Aristotle's 'natural philosophy' or of the commentaries on them. This prohibition was imposed under pain of excommunication and applied to the University of Paris. In all probability 'natural philosophy' included the metaphysics of Aristotle, since when the statutes of the university were sanctioned by Robert de Courçon, Papal Legate, in 1215 Aristotle's works on metaphysics and natural philosophy, as well as compendia of these works and the doctrines of David of Dinant, Amalric of Bene and Maurice of Spain (probably Averroes, the Moor or *Maurus*) were prohibited, though the study of Aristotle's logic was ordered. The study of the *Ethics* was not forbidden.

The reason for the prohibition was, as already indicated, largely due to the ascription to Aristotle of works which were not by him. Amalric of Bene, whose writings were included in the prohibition of 1215, maintained doctrines which were at variance with Christian teaching and which would naturally appear to find some support in the philosophy of Aristotle, if the latter were interpreted in the light of all the books attributed to him, while David of Dinant, the other heretical philosopher whose writings were prohibited, had actually appealed to the *Metaphysics*, which had been translated into Latin from the Greek version brought from Byzantium before 1210. To these considerations must be added the undoubted fact that Aristotle maintained the eternity of the world. It was, therefore, not unnatural that the Aristotelian system, especially when coupled with the philosophies of David of Dinant, Amalric of Bene and Averroes, should appear as a danger to orthodoxy in the eyes of the traditionalists. The logic of Aristotle had long been in use, even if the full *Organon* had come into circulation only comparatively recently, but the complete metaphysical and cosmological teaching of Aristotle was a novelty, a novelty rendered all the more dangerous through association with heretical philosophies.

However, in 1231 Pope Gregory IX, while maintaining the prohibition, appointed a commission of theologians, William of Auxerre, Stephen of Provins and Simon of Authie, to correct the prohibited books of Aristotle, and as this measure obviously implied that the books were not fundamentally unsound, the prohibition tended to be neglected. It was extended to Toulouse in 1245 by Innocent IV, but by that date it was no longer possible to check the spread of Aristotelianism and from 1255 all the known works of Aristotle were officially lectured on in the University of Paris. The Holy See made no move against the university, though in 1263 Urban IV renewed the prohibition of 1210, probably out of a fear of Averroism, the renewed prohibition remaining a dead letter. The Pope must have known perfectly well that William of Moerbeke was translating the prohibited works of Aristotle at his own court, and the prohibition of 1263 must have been designed as a check to Averroism, not as a seriously meant attempt to put an end to all study of the Aristotelian philosophy. In any case the prohibition was of no effect, and finally in 1366 the Legates of Urban V required from all candidates for the Licentiate of Arts at Paris a knowledge of all the known works of Aristotle. It had by then long been clear to the mediaevals that a work like the *Liber de Causis* was not Aristotelian and that the philosophy of Aristotle was not, except, of course, in the eyes of the Latin Averroists, bound up with the interpretation given it by Averroes but could be harmonised with the Christian faith. Indeed the dogmas of faith themselves had by then been expressed by theologians in terms taken from the Aristotelian system.

This brief summary of the official attitude to Aristotle on the part of ecclesiastical and academic authority shows that Aristotelianism triumphed in the end. This does not mean, however, that all mediaeval philosophers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries extended an equal welcome to Aristotle or that they all understood him in the same way: the vigour and variety of mediaeval thought will be made clear in succeeding chapters. There is truth in the statement that the shadow of Aristotle hung over and dominated the philosophic thought of the Middle Ages, but it is not the whole truth, and we would have a very inadequate idea of mediaeval philosophy in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries if we imagined that it was inspired and characterised by a slavish acceptance of every word of the great Greek philosopher.

PART V

THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

CHAPTER XXII

INTRODUCTION

The University of Paris—Universities closed and privileged corporations—Curriculum—Religious Orders at Paris—Currents of thought in the thirteenth century.

1. THE leading philosophers and theologians of the thirteenth century were all associated, at some period, with the University of Paris, which arose out of the body of professors and students attached to the Cathedral School of Notre Dame and the other schools of Paris, the statutes of the university being sanctioned by Robert de Courçon, Papal Legate, in 1215. Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure, St. Albert the Great, St. Thomas Aquinas, Matthew of Aquasparta, Roger Marston, Richard of Middleton, Roger Bacon, Giles of Rome, Siger of Brabant, Henry of Ghent, Raymond Lull, Duns Scotus (d. 1308), all either studied or taught (or both) at Paris. Other centres of higher education were, however, growing in importance and acquiring a tradition of their own. Thus with the University of Oxford were associated the names of men like Robert Grosseteste, Roger Bacon and Duns Scotus, and whereas Paris was the scene of the triumph of Aristotelianism, the name of Oxford recalls a characteristic mingling of the Augustinian tradition with 'empiricism', as in the philosophy of Roger Bacon. Yet in spite of the importance of Oxford, Bologna and, at times, the Papal Court, the University of Paris was easily the most important centre of higher studies in the Christendom of the thirteenth century. Scholars might come to Paris for their studies and then return to Oxford or Bologna to teach, thus carrying with them the spirit and ideals of the great university, and even those scholars who never themselves set foot in Paris were subject to Parisian influence. Robert of Grosseteste, for instance, who possibly never studied at Paris, was certainly influenced by professors of Paris.

The international character of the University of Paris, with its consequent importance in the intellectual expression and defence of Christianity, naturally made the maintenance of religious orthodoxy within its precincts one of the interests of the Holy See. Thus the Averroistic controversy must be seen in the light of the university's international standing: it represented in itself the intellectual culture of the Middle Ages, as far as philosophy and theology were concerned, and the spread within its walls of a system of thought which was irreconcilable with Christianity could not be a matter of indifference to Rome. On the other hand it would be a mistake to suppose that there was any rigid imposition of one particular tradition. St. Thomas Aquinas met with difficulties, it is true, in his acceptance and propagation of Aristotelianism; but such difficulties did not last, and even if the philosophy of Aristotle came in the end to dominate the intellectual life of the university, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there was still plenty of room for different philosophical outlooks.

2. The universities, to be constituted as such, had to receive a formal charter, either from pope or emperor (the University of Naples received its charter from Frederick II) or, later, from kings. These charters conferred considerable privileges on professors and students, privileges which were jealously guarded. The two most important privileges were those of internal jurisdiction (which still survives at Oxford, for example) and of power to give the degree, which carried with it licence to teach. The students were exempt from military service, except in special circumstances, and the university was generally exempt from a great deal of taxation, particularly local taxation. In northern Europe the professors controlled the university, the rector being elected, whereas the universities of southern Europe were often distinctly democratic in their governmental arrangements, but in either case the university was a largely independent and closed corporation, which maintained its privileges against Church and State. In this respect the universities of Oxford and Cambridge represent more faithfully the mediaeval tradition and practice than do those continental universities where rectors and professors are appointed by the State.

3. In mediaeval times, and the same is true of a much later period as well, students entered the university at a much earlier age than they do at present. Thus boys of thirteen or fourteen might begin attending the university, and if one remembers this fact, the number of years required in order to obtain the doctorate

will not appear so surprising. The course in arts lasted some four and a half to six years, according to the university (though at Oxford some seven years were required), and for a time at least the student had to qualify in the faculty of arts before he could proceed to theology. In the theological course he had to spend four years in attending lectures on the Bible and then two more years in attending lectures on the *Sentences*, after which, if by then twenty-six years of age, he became a Baccalaureate and lectured for the two following years on two books of the Bible. He could then lecture on the *Sentences* and finally, after several years spent in study and disputations, he could take the doctorate and teach theology, the minimum age for this being thirty-four. For teaching the arts the minimum age required was twenty. At Paris the tendency was to increase the number of years required for obtaining the doctorate, though at Oxford the arts course was longer and the theological course shorter than at Paris.

Those students who took the doctorate and left the university were known as *magistri non regentes*, whereas those who remained to teach were known as *magistri regentes*; but, however many students there may have been who fell into the first class, it is clear that the long university course was designed to produce professors and teachers by career.

As for the curriculum, the general practice in the university of the thirteenth century was to lecture or listen to lectures on certain texts. Thus, apart from the writings of the grammarians like Priscian and Donatus and certain other classical texts, the writings of Aristotle came to dominate the arts school altogether in the course of time, and it is significant that 'Latin Averroism' was represented principally by professors in that faculty. In theology the Bible and the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard dominated the scene, and the professor gave his own views by way of commentary. Besides the lectures there was another essential feature of the curriculum, namely the disputation, which took the form either of an 'ordinary' disputation (*disputatio ordinaria*) or the 'general' disputation (*de quolibet*). The *disputationes de quolibet*, in which a choice was made from a great variety of topics, were held at solemn feasts, and after the disputation in the strict sense, that is, between a defendant or *respondens* and the objectors, *opponentes*, the professor summed up the whole matter, arguments, objections and replies, and finished by giving his considered solution (*determinatio*) of the point at issue, in which he began with the words, *Respondeo dicendum*. The final result, arranged by the professor, was then published as a *Quodlibet*. (St. Thomas left some eleven or twelve *Quodlibets*.) The *disputatio ordinaria* was also followed by a *determinatio* and was published as a *quaestio disputata*. There were other forms of disputation as well; but these two, the *disputatio ordinaria* and the *disputatio de quolibet*, were the most important. They were designed to increase the student's understanding of a particular theme, and his power of argument and of refuting objections. In fact, generally speaking, mediaeval university education aimed rather at imparting a certain body of knowledge and dexterity in dealing with it than at increasing factual knowledge as in a modern research institute. Of course, scholars certainly aimed at increasing knowledge speculatively; but the increase of scientific knowledge, for example, had little place in mediaeval education, though in the fourteenth century science made some progress at Paris and at Vienna.

4. Of considerable importance in the life of Paris and Oxford were the religious Orders, particularly the two mendicant Orders founded in the thirteenth century, the Dominicans and the Franciscans. The former Order established itself in Paris in 1217, the latter a few years later, and both Orders then proceeded to claim chairs of theology in the university, i.e. they claimed that their chairs of theology should be incorporated in the university and that their professors and students should enjoy the university privileges. There was considerable opposition to this claim from the teaching body of the university; but in 1229 the Dominicans received one chair and in 1231 a second, in the same year that the Franciscans obtained their first chair (they did not receive a second). Roland of Cremona and John of St. Giles were the first Dominican professors, Alexander of Hales the first Franciscan professor. In 1248 the General Chapter of the Dominican Order decreed the erection of *studia generalia* (houses of study for the whole Order, distinct from the houses of study of particular provinces) at Cologne, Bologna, Montpellier and Oxford, while the Franciscans meanwhile erected *studia generalia* at Oxford and Toulouse. In 1260 the Augustinians opened a house at Paris, the first official doctor being Giles of Rome, while the Carmelites opened houses at Oxford in 1253 and at Paris in 1259. Other Orders also followed suit.

The religious Orders, particularly the Dominicans and Franciscans, accomplished a great work in the intellectual field and produced men of outstanding eminence (we have only to think of St. Albert the Great and St. Thomas Aquinas in the Dominican, of Alexander of Hales and St. Bonaventure in the Franciscan Order); but they had to put up with a good deal of opposition, doubtless inspired in part by jealousy. Not only did their opponents demand that no religious Order should occupy more than one chair at one time, but they even set about attacking the religious state itself. Thus in 1255 William of St. Amour published a pamphlet, *De periculis novissimorum temporum*, which drew from St. Thomas's pen the *Contra impugnantes Dei cultum*. William of St. Amour's pamphlet was condemned and in 1257 the seculars were forbidden to publish writings against the regulars; but in spite of this prohibition Gerard of Abbeville restarted the opposition with his *Contra adversarium perfectionis christianae*. St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas, however much they might disagree on matters philosophical, were united in a determination to defend the religious Orders, and both published replies to Gerard's work, and these in their turn evoked a counterblast from Nicholas of Lisieux, writing on behalf of the seculars. The quarrel between regulars and seculars broke out again on various later occasions, but, as far as the main point was concerned, the incorporation into the university of the regular chairs, judgement had been given in favour of the regulars and it was not revoked. One result followed, however, which is worthy of mention, and that is the founding of the College of the Sorbonne in 1253 by Robert de Sorbon, chaplain to Louis IX, for the education of students in theology, secular students being admitted. If I call the founding of the College of the Sorbonne and similar colleges a 'result' of the controversy between seculars and regulars, all I mean is that such colleges were founded partly perhaps to counterbalance the influence and position of the regulars and certainly in order to extend to a wider field the benefits of the type of education and training provided by the religious.

5. In the thirteenth century one can distinguish various currents of thought which tended eventually, in the religious Orders, to become more or less fixed in traditional schools. First of all there is the Augustinian current of thought, conservative in character and generally reserved in its attitude towards Aristotelianism, its attitude varying from marked hostility to partial acceptance. This current is characteristic of the Franciscan thinkers (and indeed of the first Dominicans), represented by Grosseteste, Alexander of

Hales and St. Bonaventure. Secondly there is the Aristotelian current of thought, which became characteristic of the Dominicans, represented by St. Albert the Great (in part) and (fully) by St. Thomas Aquinas. Thirdly there are the Averroists, represented by Siger of Brabant. Fourthly one has to take into consideration the independent and eclectic thinkers like Giles of Rome and Henry of Ghent. Fifthly, at the turn of the century, there is the great figure of Duns Scotus who revised the Franciscan tradition in the light of Aristotelianism and who, rather than St. Bonaventure, became the accepted Doctor of his order. I cannot enter in detail into the thought of all the philosophers of the thirteenth century; but I shall endeavour to put in clear relief their salient characteristics, show the variety of thought within a more or less common framework and indicate the formation and development of the different traditions.

CHAPTER XXIII

WILLIAM OF AUVERGNE

Reasons for treating of William of Auvergne—God and creatures; essence and existence—Creation by God directly and in time—Proofs of God's existence—Hylomorphism—The soul—Knowledge—William of Auvergne a transition-thinker.

1. William of Auvergne (or William of Paris), author of a *De Trinitate* or *De primo principio* (*c.* 1225), a *De Anima* (1230), a *De universo creaturarum* (*c.* 1231) and other smaller treatises, was Bishop of Paris from 1228 to 1249, the year in which he died. He is not, it is true, one of the best-known thinkers of the Middle Ages; but he claims our attention as a philosopher and theologian who was Bishop of Paris at the time when Gregory IX appointed the commission of theologians to amend the works of Aristotle and thus tacitly modified the Church's attitude towards the pagan philosopher. Indeed William of Auvergne represents the attitude adopted by Gregory IX when he (William) says in his *De Anima* that although Aristotle often contradicts the truth and so must be rejected, his teaching should be accepted when it conforms to the truth, that is, when it is compatible with Christian doctrine. In his fundamental line of thought William continues the tradition of Augustine, Boethius and Anselm, but he knew not only the works of Aristotle, but also the writings of the Arabian and Jewish philosophers and he did not hesitate to utilise their ideas extensively. In general, therefore, one may say that in William of Auvergne we see an intelligent and open-minded adherent of the old tradition who was willing to utilise the new currents of thought but who was perfectly conscious of the points in which the Arabians and Aristotle himself were at variance with Christian doctrine. He is, then, an embodiment of the meeting of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and has a title to be considered when one is treating of the earlier thinkers of the latter century. Moreover, he was a secular priest who occupied the episcopal see of Paris at the time when the mendicant Orders obtained their first chairs, and on this count too there is justification for discussing his philosophical ideas before proceeding to deal with the thinkers of the Franciscan and Dominican Orders. Nor is he himself a

negligible figure: on the contrary, his thought is vigorous, original and systematic.

2. From Avicenna, William of Auvergne adopted the distinction between essence and existence and made it the explanation of the creature's finitude and dependence. *Esse*, existence, does not belong to the *ratio* or essence of any object save that one object (God) in which it is identical with the essence; of all other objects existence is predicated only 'accidentally', i.e. it belongs to them by participation (*per participationem*). If we consider any finite object, we realise that there is a distinction between its *ratio* or essential nature and its existence, it is not necessary that it should exist; but if we consider the necessary Being, we realise that its essence cannot be conceived without existence. In fine, 'in everything (other than God) *ens* is one thing, *esse* or *entitas* another'.[1] This means that God alone is pure existence, existence being His essence, whereas objects do not exist essentially, because they must, but because their existence is acquired, received. The relation, then, of objects other than God to God must be one of creature to Creator, from which it follows that the theory of emanation is false:[2] God is absolutely simple. Things did not pre-exist in God as parts of God, as they would have had to do if they flowed from God as the waters from a fountain, but only in the *formae exemplares*, which are identical with God. God sees Himself as the exemplary cause of all creatures.[3]

3. If William of Auvergne rejects the neo-Platonist-Arabian theory of emanation, he rejects also the notion of creation by way of intermediaries. The hierarchy of Intelligences posited by Aristotle and his followers has no foundation in reality:[4] God created the world directly. From this it follows that He exercises providence in regard to individual things and William appeals at length to the instinctive activities of the brutes as an illustration of the operation of divine providence.[5] Again, the Aristotelian doctrine of the eternity of the world is rejected. Whatsoever people may say and however much they may try to excuse Aristotle, it is a certain fact that he held that the world is eternal and that it did not begin to be, and Avicenna followed him in this opinion.[6] Accordingly William not only gives the reasons why Aristotle and Avicenna held this opinion, but he even tries to put them in the best light by improving on their arguments, after

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[1] Cf. *De Universo*, 1, 3, 26; 2, 2, 8; *De Trinitate*, 1 and 2.

[2] *De Universo*, 1, 1, 17.

[3] *Ibid.*, 1, 1, 17.

[4] *Ibid.*, 1, 1, 24 ff.

[5] *Ibid.*, 1, 3, 2–3.

[6] *Ibid.*, 1, 2, 8.

which he refutes the arguments. For example, the idea that if God preceded the creation of the world, an infinite duration would have to be passed through before creation, and the idea that there would be empty time before creation both rest on a confusion of time with eternity. The idea of infinite duration elapsing before creation would have significance only if eternity were the same as time, i.e. if it were not eternity, if God were in time; and the idea of empty time before creation is also meaningless, since before creation there can be no time. We have to speak of God preceding creation, of existing before the world, it is true, but at the same time we must remember that such phrases are borrowed from temporal duration and that when applied to what is eternal, they are used in an analogical, not in a univocal sense.

However, as William of Auvergne remarks,[1] it is not sufficient to contradict one's opponents and to show the insufficiency of their arguments unless one goes on to prove one's own position positively. He, therefore, gives various arguments for the creation of the world in time, some of which appear again in St. Bonaventure and are declared inconclusive by St. Thomas. For example, William argues, taking the words out of his adversary's mouth, as it were, that if the world had been eternally in existence, an infinite time would have been passed through before the present moment. But it is impossible to pass through an infinite time. Therefore the world cannot have existed from eternity. Therefore it was created in time, that is, a first moment of time is assignable. Again, supposing that the revolutions of Saturn stand to the revolutions of the sun in a proportion of one to thirty, the sun will have made thirty times as many revolutions since creation as Saturn. But if the world exists from eternity, both Saturn and the sun will have made an infinite number of revolutions. Now, how can an infinity be thirty times greater than another infinity?

From what has been already said it is clear that William of Auvergne did not simply deny the neo-Platonic conception of emanation and the Aristotelian idea of an eternal world, while maintaining the Augustinian doctrine of direct and free creation by God in time. On the contrary, he vigorously and exactly detailed and refuted the arguments of his opponents and elaborated systematic proofs of his own thesis. That he was able to do this was largely due to the fact that he was acquainted at first hand with the writings of Aristotle and the Arabians and did not hesitate to utilise not only the Aristotelian logic and the Aristotelian categories but also the ideas of Aristotle, Avicenna and others, when they were acceptable. His utilisation of Avicenna's distinction between essence and existence, for instance, has been already mentioned, and indeed he was the first mediaeval Scholastic to make this distinction an explicit and fundamental point in his philosophy. To this distinction, which enabled him to develop clearly the relation of creature to Creator, William added the doctrine of analogy. Apropos of the statement that finite things possess *esse* 'by participation', he observes that the reader is not to be upset or troubled by the fact that the same word or concept is applied to both God and creatures, since it is not applied in the same sense (*univoce*) or equally: it is applied primarily to God, who *is esse*, and only secondarily to creatures who *have esse*, who participate, that is, in existence in virtue of receiving it through God's creative act. Health, he comments, is predicated of man, of urine, of medicine and of food, but it is not predicated in the same sense or in the same way.[1] The illustration of health is somewhat hackneyed, but it shows that William of Auvergne had apprehended the doctrine of analogy, which is essential to a theistic philosophy.

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[1] *De Universo*, 1, 2, 11.

4. In regard to proofs of God's existence it is a curious fact that William of Auvergne made little use of the proofs used by Aristotle or even by Maimonides. The Aristotelian proof of God as first unmoved mover is not given, and although William certainly looks on God as the first efficient cause, his characteristic proof is one that recalls at least the line of argument adopted by St. Anselm, even though Anselm's argument is not reproduced. The argument in question is from the being which exists by participation to the being which exists essentially, *per essentiam*. This immediately suggests the proof from contingency, which appears in the Arabian and Jewish philosophy, but William prefers to argue from the one concept to the other. For example, the concept *esse adunatum* has as its correlative concept *esse non causatum, esse causatum* involves *esse non causatum, esse secundarium, esse primum,* and so on.[2] William speaks of the *analogia oppositorum* and points out how the one concept or word necessarily involves its correlative concept or word, so that Grunwald[3] can say that William prefers a purely logical or even grammatical mode of proof, in that from one word

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[1] *De Trinit.*, 7.

[2] *Ibid.*, 6.

[3] *Gesch. der Gottesbeweise im Mittelalter; Beiträge*, 6, 3, p. 92.

he concludes to another word which is contained in or presupposed by the first word. That the argument does tend to give this impression is true, and, if it were a purely verbal argument, it would be open to the retort that the words, or concepts, *esse participatum* or *esse causatum* certainly involve the words, or concepts, *esse per essentiam* or *esse non causatum*, but this is no proof that *esse per essentiam* or *esse non causatum* actually exists, unless it has first been shown that there is an *esse participatum* or an *esse causatum.* Otherwise the proof would be no more a demonstration of God's existence than is St. Anselm's *a priori* argument. However, although William does not sufficiently develop the experiential character of the proof in regard to its starting-point, his argument is by no means purely verbal, since he shows that the object which comes into being cannot be self-dependent or self-caused. *Esse indigentiae* demands *esse sufficientiae* as the reason for its existence, just as *esse potentiale* requires being in act to bring it into a state of actuality. The whole universe requires necessary Being as its cause and reason. In other words, though one may often get the impression that William is simply analysing concepts and hypostasising them, he gives a proof which is not merely logical or verbal but also metaphysical.

5. William of Auvergne accepted the Aristotelian doctrine of hylomorphic composition, but he refused to admit Avicebron's notion that the Intelligences or angels are hylomorphically composed.[1] It is clear that Aristotle did not think that the rational soul contains *materia prima*, since he clearly asserts that it is an immaterial form, and the account of prime matter given by Averroes, according to which prime matter is the potentiality of sensible substance and sensible substance the final act of prime matter, clearly implies the same, that is, that prime matter is the matter of sensible substance only. Moreover, what could be the use of prime matter in the angels, what function could it serve? Matter in itself is something dead; it cannot contribute in any way to intellectual and spiritual operations or even receive them. As he had already utilised the distinction between essence and existence to explain the finitude of creatures and their radical difference from God, William did not require universal hylomorphic composition for this purpose, and as he considered that to postulate the presence of prime matter in the angels would hinder rather than facilitate the explanation of their purely spiritual

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[1] *De Universo*, 2, 2, 8.

operations, he restricted prime matter to the sensible world, as St. Thomas did after him.

6. In his psychology, as set forth in the *De Anima*, William of Auvergne combines Aristotelian and Augustinian themes. Thus he expressly adopts the Aristotelian definition of the soul as *perfectio corporis physici organici potentia vitam habentis*,[1] though he warns the reader that he is not quoting Aristotle as an unquestionable authority, but proposes to show the truth of the definition. That he has a soul should be clear to every man, since he is conscious that he understands and judges;[2] but the soul is not the whole of man's nature. If it were, then a human soul joined to an aerial body, for example, would still be a man, whereas in point of fact it would not be. Aristotle, then, was correct in saying that the soul is to the body, as form is to matter.[3] However, that does not prevent him from saying that the soul is a substance on the ground that it must be either substance or accident and cannot be an accident, and he uses the Augustinian comparison of the soul with a harpist, the body being the harp. It might appear that in man there are three souls, one being the principle of life (vegetative soul), the second being the principle of sensation (animal or sensitive soul) and the third being the principle of intellection (rational soul); but a little reflection will show that this cannot be so. If there was an animal soul in man, distinct from the rational or human soul, then humanity, human nature, would not involve animality, whereas in point of fact a man is an animal because he is man, animality belonging to human nature.[4] There is, then, one soul in man, which exercises various functions. It is created and infused by God alone, neither generated by the parents nor educed from the potentiality of matter,[5] and it is, moreover, immortal, as William proceeds to show by arguments, some of which are of Platonic origin. For example, if the malice of an evil soul does not injure or destroy its *esse*, how can bodily death destroy it?[6] Again, since the body receives life from the soul and the soul's power is such that it vivifies a body which, considered in itself, is dead, that is, lacking life, the fact that the body ceases to live cannot destroy the vital power inherent in the soul.[7] Further, the soul can communicate with *substantiae separatae* and is thus like to them, immortal; but as the human soul is indivisible and one, it

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[1] *De Anima*, 1, 1.
[2] *Ibid.*, 1, 3.
[3] *Ibid.*, 1, 2.
[4] *Ibid.*, 4, 1-3.
[5] *Ibid.*, 5, 1 ff.
[6] *Ibid.*, 6, 1.
[7] *Ibid.*, 6, 7.

follows that the whole human soul is immortal, not simply a rational part.[1]

But though he accepts the Peripatetic doctrine of the soul as form of the body (one must make the reservation that he sometimes uses Platonic-Augustinian expressions in regard to the soul's union with the body), William of Auvergne follows St. Augustine in refusing to recognise a real distinction between the soul and its faculties.[2] Only a substance can understand or will, an accident could not do so. Therefore it is the soul itself which understands or wills, though it exercises itself in regard to different objects, or to the same objects, in different ways, now by apprehending them, now by desiring them. From this it would naturally follow that the Aristotelian distinction between the active and the passive intellects must be rejected, and indeed William of Auvergne rejects the doctrines of the active intellect and of the *species intelligibilis* altogether. The followers of Aristotle and of his commentators swallow the theory of the active intellect without any real reflection, whereas not only are the arguments adduced to prove the theory insufficient, but also very good arguments can be adduced to prove the contrary, the argument from the simplicity of the soul, for example. The active intellect is, then, to be rejected as a useless fiction.[3] *A fortiori*, of course, William rejects the Arabian idea of a *separate* active intellect, an idea which, following Averroes, he ascribed (and probably rightly) to Aristotle himself.

7. In regard to the active intellect, then, William of Auvergne parts company with Aristotle and the Arabians in favour of Augustine, and the Augustinian influence is observable also in his theory of knowledge. Like Augustine he emphasises the soul's knowledge of itself, its direct self-consciousness, and, again like Augustine, he minimises the importance of the senses. It is true that man is inclined to concentrate on bodily things, the objects of the senses; that is why a man may neglect the data of self-consciousness and even be so foolish as to deny the very existence of the immaterial soul. It is also true that for sense-perception the senses are necessary, obviously enough, and that corporeal objects produce a physical impression on the organs of sense. But the intelligible forms, abstract and universal, by which we know the objects of the corporeal world, cannot arise either from the objects themselves or from the phantasms of such objects, since both the

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[1] *De Anima*, 6, 8.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, 7, 3.

objects and the images are particular. How, then, are our abstract and universal ideas of sensible objects produced? They are produced by the understanding itself, which is not purely passive, but active, *effectrix earum* (*scientiarum quae a parte sensibilium ei advenire videntur*) *apud semetipsam et in semetipsa.*[1] This activity is an activity of the soul itself, though it is exercised on the occasion of sense-impressions.

What guarantee is there, then, of the objective character of abstract and universal ideas? The guarantee is the fact that the intellect is not merely active but also passive, though it is in regard to God that it is passive, not in regard to the things of sense. God impresses on the intellect not only the first principles, but also our abstract ideas of the sensible world. In the *De Anima*[2] William teaches explicitly that it is not only the first principles (*regulae primae et per se notae*) and the laws of morality (*regulae honestatis*) which are known in this way, but also the intelligible forms of sensible objects. The human soul occupies a position on the bounds of two worlds (*velut in horizonte duorum mundorum naturaliter esse constitutam et ordinatam*), the one being the world of sensible objects, to which it is joined by the body, the other being, not Plato's universal Ideas or Aristotle's separate Intelligence, but God Himself, *creator ipse*, who is the *exemplar*, the *speculum*, the *liber vivus*, so present to the human intellect that the latter reads off, as it were, in God (*absque ullo alio medio*) the principles and rules and intelligible forms. In this way William of Auvergne makes the active intellect of Aristotle and the Arabians to be God Himself, combining this theory with the Augustinian theory of illumination, interpreted ideogenetically.

8. It may cause surprise that a special chapter has been dedicated to a man whose name is not among the most famous of mediaeval thinkers; but William of Auvergne is of interest not only as a vigorous and systematic philosopher, but also as an illustration of the way in which the metaphysical, cosmological and psychological ideas of Aristotle and the Arabians could affect an open-minded man who stood, generally speaking, in the line of the older tradition. William of Auvergne was quite ready to accept ideas from the Aristotelians; he adopted Aristotle's definition of the soul, for instance, and utilised Avicenna's distinction between essence and existence; but he was first and foremost a Christian philosopher and, apart from any personal predilection

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[1] *De Anima*, 5, 6.

[2] 7, 6.

for Augustine, he was not the type of man to adopt Aristotelian or supposedly Aristotelian doctrines when these seemed to him to be incompatible with the Christian faith. Thus the Aristotelian doctrine of the eternity of the world, the neo-Platonic-Arabian notions of emanation and of 'creation' by intermediaries, the theory of a separate, unitary and infra-divine active intellect, he unhesitatingly rejected. It would, however, be a mistake to suppose that he rejected these ideas as incompatible with Christianity and left it at that, for he was clearly satisfied in his own mind that the arguments for the offending positions were inconclusive and insufficient, while the arguments for his own tenets were conclusive. In other words, he was a philosopher and wrote as a philosopher, even though in his works we find theological and philosophical themes treated together in the same book, a feature common to most other mediaeval thinkers.

One may say, then, that William of Auvergne was a transition-thinker. He helped, through his intimate acquaintance with the writings of Aristotle and of the Arabian and Jewish philosophers, and through his limited acceptance of their theories, to pave the way for the completer Aristotelianism of St. Albert and St. Thomas, while, on the other hand, his clear rejection of some leading notions of Aristotle and his followers paved the way for the explicitly anti-Aristotelian attitude of an Augustinian like St. Bonaventure. He is, as I have said earlier, the embodiment of the meeting of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: he is, one might say, the twelfth century meeting the thirteenth century sympathetically, yet by no means with uncritical admiration or acceptance.

But though we are entitled to regard William of Auvergne as a transition-thinker in respect of the rising influence and growing acceptance of Aristotelianism, i.e. as a stage in the development of thought from the older Augustinianism to the Christian Aristotelianism of St. Thomas, we are also entitled to look upon his philosophy as a stage in the development of Augustinianism itself. St. Anselm had made comparatively little use of Aristotelianism, of which he had but a very restricted knowledge; but later Augustinians were forced to take account of Aristotle, and we find Duns Scotus in the thirteenth century attempting the construction of a synthesis in which Augustinianism would be expounded and defended with the help of Aristotle. Of course, whether one should regard these thinkers as Augustinians who modified and enriched Augustinianism under the influence of Aristotle or as incomplete

Aristotelians, is disputable, and one's estimate of William's philosophy will differ, according as one adopts the one or the other point of view, but unless one is determined to view mediaeval philosophy simply in function of Thomism, one should be prepared to admit that William of Auvergne could be regarded as preparing the way for Duns Scotus just as well as preparing the way for St. Thomas. Probably both judgements are true, though from different viewpoints. In a sense any pre-Thomistic mediaeval philosopher who made some use of Aristotle was preparing the way for a more complete adoption of Aristotelianism, and there can be no difficulty in admitting it; yet it is also legitimate to ask whether Aristotelian elements were employed in the service of the Augustinian tradition, so that the resulting philosophy was one in which characteristic Augustinian themes predominated, or whether they were employed in the construction of a philosophy which was definitely orientated towards Aristotelianism as a system. If one asks this question, there can be little doubt about the answer so far as William of Auvergne is concerned; so that M. Gilson can affirm that 'the complex Augustinian of the thirteenth century is almost completely represented by the doctrine of William of Auvergne' and that while nothing could stop the invasion of the Schools by Aristotle, 'the influence of William certainly did much to retard and limit its progress'.[1]

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[1] *La Philosophie au Moyen Age*, third edition, 1944, pp. 423-4.

CHAPTER XXIV

ROBERT GROSSETESTE AND ALEXANDER OF HALES

(*a*) *Robert Grosseteste's life and writings—Doctrine of light—God and creatures—Doctrine of truth and of illumination.*
(*b*) *Alexander of Hales's attitude to philosophy—Proofs of God's existence—The divine attributes—Composition in creatures—Soul, intellect, will—Spirit of Alexander's philosophy.*

WHEN one is treating of mediaeval philosophy, it is not easy to decide in what way one will group the various thinkers. Thus one might very well treat Oxford and Paris separately. At Oxford the general tendency in metaphysics and psychology was conservative, Augustinian, while at the same time an interest was developed in empirical studies, and the combination of these two factors would afford some reason for tracing the course of philosophy at Oxford from Robert Grosseteste to Roger Bacon in a continuous line; while as regards Paris the Augustinianism of Alexander of Hales and St. Bonaventure on the one hand and the Aristotelianism of St. Albert and St. Thomas on the other hand, together with the relation between the two Schools, might make it desirable to treat them in close proximity. However, such a method has its disadvantages. For example, Roger Bacon died (*c.* 1292) long after Alexander of Hales (1245), in regard to whose writings he made some slighting remarks, and also after St. Albert the Great (1280), towards whom he seems to have felt a special hostility, so that it would seem desirable to consider Roger Bacon after considering these two thinkers. One might, even then, leave over Robert Grosseteste for consideration with Roger Bacon, but the fact remains that Grosseteste died (1253) well before the Oxford condemnation of series of theses, among which figured some of those maintained by St. Thomas (1277 and 1284), whereas Roger Bacon was alive at the time of the condemnations and criticised that of 1277, in so far as he felt that it concerned him personally. While admitting, then, that there would be a great deal to say in favour of another mode of grouping, in which more attention would be paid to spiritual affinities than to chronology, I decided to treat first of Robert Grosseteste at Oxford and Alexander of Hales at Paris, then of Alexander's disciple St. Bonaventure, the greatest representative of the Augustinian tradition in the thirteenth century, then of the Aristotelianism of St. Albert and St. Thomas and of the ensuing controversies, and only afterwards to consider Roger Bacon, in spite of his spiritual affinity with Grosseteste.

(a) ROBERT GROSSETESTE

1. Robert Grosseteste was born in Suffolk about 1170 and became Chancellor of Oxford University about 1221. From 1229 to 1232 he was Archdeacon of Leicester and in 1235 he became Bishop of Lincoln, a post which he occupied until his death in 1253. Besides translations (it has already been mentioned that he probably translated the *Ethics* directly from the Greek), Robert Grosseteste composed commentaries on the *Posterior Analytics*, the *Sophistical Arguments*, the *Physics*, though the 'commentary' on the *Physics* was rather a compendium than a commentary, and on the writings of the Pseudo-Dionysius. The statement by Roger Bacon to the effect that Grosseteste *neglexit omnino libros Aristotelis et vias eorum*[1] cannot, therefore, be taken as meaning that he was ignorant of the writings of Aristotle, but must be understood in the sense that, though acquainted with the thought of Aristotle, Grosseteste approached philosophical problems in a different manner. Bacon's further words make this clear, as he says that Grosseteste was dependent on other authors than Aristotle and that he also relied on his own experience.

Of original works Robert Grosseteste published books: *De unica forma omnium, De Intelligentiis, De statu causarum, De potentia et actu, De veritate, De veritate propositionis, De scientia Dei, De ordine emanandi causatorum a Deo* and *De libero arbitrio*, the authenticity of the *De Anima* not being certain. In works such as those just named it is quite clear that Grosseteste stood in the Augustinian tradition, although he knew the philosophy of Aristotle and utilised some of his themes. But with his Augustinianism he combined an interest in empirical science which influenced Roger Bacon and excited his admiration, so that Bacon was led to say of his master that he knew the sciences better than other men[2] and was able to explain causes by the aid of mathematics.[3] Thus Grosseteste wrote *De utilitate artium, De generatione sonorum, De sphaera, De computo, De generatione stellarum, De cometis, De impressione aeris, De luce, De lineis, angulis et figuris, De natura locorum, De iride, De colore, De calore solis, De differentiis localibus*,

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[1] *Compendium studii*, ed. Brewer, p. 469.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 472.

[3] *Opus Maius*, ed. Bridges, 1, 108.

De impressionibus elementorum, De motu corporali, De motu supercaelestium, De finitate motus et temporis and *Quod homo sit minor mundus.*

2. The philosophy of Robert Grosseteste centres round the idea of light, so dear to the mind of the Augustinian. In the *De luce*[1] Grosseteste remarks that the first corporeal form, which some call corporeity, is in his judgement light. Light unites with matter, that is, with Aristotelian prime matter, to form a simple substance without dimensions. Why does Grosseteste make light the first corporeal form? Because it is the nature of light to diffuse itself and he uses this property of light to explain how a substance composed of non-dimensional form and non-dimensional matter acquires tridimensionality. If we suppose that the function of light is to multiply itself and to diffuse itself and so to be responsible for actual extension, we must conclude that light *is* the first corporeal form, since it would not be possible for the first corporeal form to produce extension through a secondary or consequent form. Moreover, light is the noblest of all forms and bears the greatest resemblance to the separate intelligences, so that on this title also it is the first corporeal form.

Light (*lux*) diffuses itself in all directions, 'spherically', forming the outermost sphere, the firmament, at the farthest point of its diffusion, and this sphere consists simply of light and prime matter. From every part of the firmament light (*lumen*) is diffused towards the centre of the sphere, this light (the light of experience) being *çorpus spirituale, sive mavis dicere spiritus corporalis.*[2] This diffusion takes place by means of a self-multiplication and generation of light, so that at intervals, so to speak, there arises a new sphere, until the nine celestial and concentric spheres are complete, the innermost being the sphere of the moon. This sphere in turn produces light, but the rarefaction or diffusion is less as the light approaches the centre, and the four infra-lunar spheres, of fire, air, water and earth are produced. There are, then, thirteen spheres in all in the sensible world, the nine celestial spheres, which are incorruptible and changeless, and the four infra-celestial spheres, which are corruptible and capable of change.

The degree of light possessed by each kind of body determines its place in the corporeal hierarchy, light being the *species et perfectio corporum omnium.*[3] Grosseteste also explains colour in terms of light, declaring that it is *lux incorporata perspicuo.*[4] An abundance of light *in perspicuo puro* is whiteness, while *lux pauca in perspicuo impuro nigredo est*, and he explains in this sense the statement of Aristotle[1] and Averroes that blackness is a privation. Light again is the principle of motion, motion being nothing else but the *vis multiplicativa lucis.*[2]

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[1] Ed. Baur, p. 51. [2] P. 55. [3] P. 56. [4] *De colore,* p. 78.

3. So far light has been considered as something corporeal, as a component of the corporeal; but Grosseteste extends the conception of light to embrace the spiritual world as well. Thus God is pure Light, the eternal Light (not in the corporeal sense, of course), and the angels are also incorporeal lights, participating in the eternal Light. God is also the 'Form of all things', but Grosseteste is careful to explain that God is not the form of all things as entering into their substance, uniting with their matter, but as their exemplary form.[3] God precedes all creatures, but 'precedes' must be understood as meaning that God is eternal, the creature temporal: if it is understood as meaning that there is a common duration in which both God and creatures exist, the statement will be incorrect, since the Creator and the creature do not share any common measure.[4] We naturally *imagine* a time in which God existed before creation, just as we naturally imagine space outside the universe; but reliance on the imagination in such matters is a source of error.

4. In the *De veritate propositionis*[5] Grosseteste says that *veritas sermonis vel opinionis est adaequatio sermonis vel opinionis et rei*, but he concentrates more on 'ontological truth', on the Augustinian view of truth. He is willing to accept the Aristotelian view of the truth of enunciation as *adaequatio sermonis et rei* or *adaequatio rei ad intellectum*, but truth really means the conformity of things to the eternal Word *quo dicuntur* and consists in their conformity to the divine Word.[6] A thing is true, in so far as it is what it ought to be, and it is what it ought to be when it is conformed to the Word, that is, to its exemplar. This conformity can be perceived only by the mind, so that truth may also be defined with St. Anselm as *rectitudo sola mente perceptibilis.*[7]

From this it follows that no created truth can be perceived except in the light of the supreme Truth, God. Augustine bore witness to the fact that a created truth is visible only in so far as the light of its *ratio eterna* is present to the mind.[8] How is it, then, that the wicked and impure can attain truth? They cannot be supposed to see God, who is seen only by the pure of heart. The answer is that the mind does not perceive the Word or the *ratio eterna* directly, but perceives truth in the light of the Word. Just as the bodily eye sees corporeal objects in the light of the sun without looking directly at the sun or even perhaps adverting to it at all, so the mind perceives truth in the light of the divine illumination without thereby perceiving God, the *Veritas summa*, directly or even without necessarily realising at all that it is only in the divine light that it sees truth.[1] Thus Grosseteste follows the Augustinian doctrine of divine illumination, but explicitly rejects any interpretation of the doctrine which would involve a vision of God.

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[1] *Physics*, 201 a 6; *Metaph.*, 1065 b 11.

[2] *De motu corporali et luce*, p. 92.

[3] *De unica forma omnium*, p. 109.

[4] *De ordine emanandi causatorum a Deo*, p. 149.

[5] P. 144.

[6] *De veritate*, pp. 134–5.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 137.

Into Grosseteste's views on mathematics, perspective, etc., I cannot enter: enough has been said to show how Grosseteste's philosophy was built upon Augustinian lines by a man who yet knew and was willing to utilise Aristotelian ideas.

(*b*) ALEXANDER OF HALES

5. There was within the Franciscan Order a party of zealots who adopted a hostile attitude towards learning and other accommodations to the needs of life, which they regarded as treason to the simple idealism of the Seraphic Father; but these 'Spirituals' were frowned upon by the Holy See, and in point of fact the Franciscan Order produced a long line of distinguished theologians and philosophers, the first eminent figure being that of the Englishman, Alexander of Hales, who was born in Gloucestershire between 1170 and 1180, entered the Franciscan Order about 1231 and died in 1245. He was the first Franciscan professor of theology at Paris and occupied the chair until within a few years of his death, having as his successor John of la Rochelle.

It is difficult to ascertain exactly what contributions to philosophy are to be ascribed to Alexander of Hales in person, since the *Summa theologica* which passes under his name, and which drew caustic comments from Roger Bacon, comprises elements, particularly in the latter portion, taken from the writings of other thinkers and seems to have attained its final form some ten years or more after Alexander's death.[2] In any case, however, the work represents a stage in the development of western philosophy and a tendency in that development. It represents a stage, since the Aristotelian philosophy as a whole is clearly known and utilised: it represents a tendency, since the attitude adopted towards Aristotle is critical, in the sense that Alexander not only attacks certain doctrines of Aristotle and the Aristotelians but also considers that the pagan philosophers were unable to formulate a satisfactory 'philosophy', in the wide sense, owing to the fact that they did not possess the Christian revelation: a man on a hill can see more even of the valley than the man at the foot of the hill can see. He followed, therefore, his Christian predecessors (the Fathers, especially St. Augustine, Boethius, the Pseudo-Dionysius, St. Anselm, the Victorines) rather than Aristotle.

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[1] *De veritate*, p. 138.

[2] References below are to the *Summa theologica* in the Quaracchi edition, according to volume and section.

6. The doctrine of the Blessed Trinity cannot be attained by man's unaided reason, owing to the weakness of the human intellect,[1] but God's existence can be known by all men, whether they are good or bad.[2] Distinguishing God's existence (*quia est*) from His nature (*quid est*) Alexander teaches that all can know God's existence by means of creatures, recognising God as efficient and final cause.[3] Moreover, though the natural light of reason is insufficient to attain to a knowledge of the divine nature as it is in itself, that does not mean that all knowledge of God's nature is barred to the natural intellect, since it can come to know something of God, for example, His power and wisdom, by considering His operation in creatures, a degree of knowledge open to those who are not in a state of grace.[4] This type of knowledge is not univocal but analogical.[5] For example, goodness is predicated of God and of creatures, but while it is predicated of God *per naturam*, as being identical with His nature and as the self-existent source of all goodness, it is predicated of creatures *per participationem*, inasmuch as creatures depend on God, are God's effects, and receive a limited degree of goodness from Him.

In proving God's existence Alexander makes use of a variety of arguments. Thus he uses Richard of St. Victor's proof from contingency, St. John Damascene's argument from causality and Hugh of St. Victor's argument from the soul's knowledge that it had a beginning; but he also employs St. Augustine's and St. Anselm's proof from the eternity of truth and accepts the latter's proof from the idea of the Perfect, as given in the *Proslogium*.[6] In addition he maintains that it is impossible to be ignorant of God's existence.[1] This is a startling proposition, but it is necessary to bear in mind certain distinctions. For instance, we must distinguish habitual knowledge and actual knowledge (*cognitio habitu, cognitio actu*). The former, says Alexander, is a habit naturally impressed on the intellect, enabling the intellect to know God, and would seem to be little more than implicit knowledge, if 'implicit knowledge' can be called knowledge at all. St. Albert the Great comments, rather sarcastically, that this distinction is a *solutio mirabilis.*[2] Actual knowledge itself must also be distinguished, since it may comprise the soul's recognition that it is not *a se* or it may mean a concentration on creatures. In so far as actual knowledge of the first sort is concerned, the soul cannot fail to know God's existence, though it would appear that the actual recognition of God may even here be 'implicit', but in so far as the soul is turned away from God by sin and error and rivets its attention on creatures, it may fail to realise God's existence. In this latter case, however, a further distinction must be introduced between knowledge of God *in ratione communi* and knowledge of God *in ratione propria.* For example, the man who places his happiness in riches or sensual pleasures knows God in a sense, since God is Beatitude, but he does not have a true notion of God, *in ratione propria.* Similarly the idolater recognises God *in communi*, for example, as 'Something', but not as He really is, *in ratione propria.* Such distinctions may indeed appear somewhat far-fetched, but Alexander is taking into account such facts as St. Paul's[3] saying that the heathen know God but have not glorified Him as God or St. John Damascene's declaration that the knowledge of God is naturally impressed on the mind.[4] The view that the human mind cannot be without any knowledge of God is characteristic of the Augustinian School; but, in view of the fact that idolaters and, at least, professed atheists exist, any writer who wishes to maintain such a view is bound to introduce the distinction between implicit and explicit knowledge or between knowledge of God *in ratione communi* and knowledge of God *in ratione propria.*

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[1] 1, no. 10.
[2] 1, no. 15.
[3] 1, no. 21.
[4] 1, no. 15.
[5] 1, no. 21.
[6] 1, no. 25.

7. Alexander treats of the divine attributes of immutability, simplicity, infinity, incomprehensibility, immensity, eternity, unity, truth, goodness, power and wisdom, giving objections, his own reply to the general question and answers to the objections.

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[1] 1, no. 26.

[2] *S.T.*, p.l., tr. 4, q. 19.

[3] Romans 1.

[4] *De fide orthod.*, 1, cc. 1 and 3; *P.G.*, 94, 790 and 794.

Appeals to former writers and quotations from authorities like Augustine and Anselm are frequent, nor is the doctrine developed in a particularly original fashion, but the arrangement is systematic and careful, and a considerable amount of general philosophical reflection is included. For instance, when treating of the unity of the divine nature, Alexander begins by considering unity in general, defining *unitas* as *indivisio entis* and *unum* as *ens indivisum in se, divisum autem ab aliis*,[1] and goes on to consider the relation of unity to being, truth and goodness.[2] As regards the divine knowledge, Alexander maintains, following Augustine and Anselm, that God knows all things in and through Himself. The exemplar or eternal 'ideas' of creatures are in God, though, considered in themselves, they do not form a plurality but are identical with the one divine essence, so that it is by knowing Himself that God knows all things. How, then, does He know evil and sin? Only as defect, i.e. a defect from goodness. If light, says Alexander, following the Pseudo-Dionysius, were gifted with the power of knowing, it would know that this or that object was unreceptive of its action: it would not know darkness in itself without any relation to light. This involves, of course, the view that evil is nothing positive but rather a privation,[3] for, if evil were something positive, it would be necessary either to maintain dualism or to say that evil has an exemplar in God.

In treating of the divine will Alexander raises the question whether or not God can order actions which are against the natural law. The immediate origin of the question is a problem of Scriptural exegesis; how, for example, to explain God's order to the Israelites to despoil the Egyptians, but the question has, of course, a much wider significance. God, he answers, cannot order an action which would be formally contrary to the natural law, since this would be to contradict Himself; He cannot, for instance, will that man should have any other end but God, since God is essentially the final end. Nor could God order the Israelites to steal in the proper sense of the word, as implying an act directed against God Himself, a sin. God can, however, deprive the Egyptians of their property and so order the Israelites to take it. He can also order the Israelites to take something that belongs to another, since this affects only the *ordo ad creaturam*, but cannot order them to take it *ex cupiditate*, since this affects the *ordo ad Deum* and would involve self-contradiction on God's part.[4]

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[1] 1, no. 72. [2] 1, no. 73. [3] Cf. 1, nos. 123 ff. [4] 1, no. 276.

Similarly, God could order the prophet Osee to have intercourse with a woman who was not his wife, in so far as this act involved the *ordo ad creaturam*, but He could not order Osee to do this *ex libidine*, since this would involve the *ordo ad Deum*. Alexander's distinctions on this matter are somewhat obscure and not always satisfactory, but it is in any case clear that he did not believe that the moral law depends on God's arbitrary *fiat*, as Ockham was later to maintain.

8. God is the immediate Creator of the world, in regard both to matter and form, and the non-eternity of the world can be proved.[1] Thus Alexander rejects the Aristotelian notion of the eternity of the world, but he accepts the doctrine of hylomorphic composition. This composition is found in every creature, since 'matter' equals potentiality, but a more fundamental composition, also found in every creature, is that between the *quo est* and the *quod est*.[2] It may appear that this is the distinction between essence and existence, but it seems rather that the *quod est* refers to the concrete being, a man, for instance, and the *quo est* to the abstract essence, humanity, for example. In any case the distinction is a 'rational' distinction, since we can predicate the *quo est* of the *quod est*, in a certain sense at least, as when we say that this being is a man. There is no real distinction between a man and his humanity; yet the humanity is received. In God there is no dependence, no reception, and so no composition between the *quod est* (*Deus*) and the *quo est* (*Deitas*).

9. In accordance with his general spirit of reliance on tradition, Alexander of Hales gives and defends seven definitions or descriptions of the human soul.[3] For example, the soul may be defined as *Deiforme spiraculum vitae*,[4] or as *substantia quaedam rationis particeps, regendo corpori accommodata*[5] or as *substantia spiritualis a Deo creata, propria sui corporis vivificatrix*.[6] Other definitions are taken from St. Augustine, St. John Damascene and Seneca. The soul, insists Alexander, is not a substance simply in the sense that it is a substantial form, but it is an *ens in se*, a substance *simpliciter*, composed of 'intellectual' matter and form. If in this respect he follows the Platonic-Augustinian tradition, even suggesting that the soul must be a substance since it stands to the body as the sailor to the ship, he also insists that the soul vivifies the body.

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[1] 2, no. 67.

[2] 2, nos. 59-61.

[3] 2, no. 321.

[4] Cf. *De sp. et an.*, c. 42, (placed among works of Augustine; P. L. 40, 811) and St. Aug., *De Gen. ad litt.*, 7 cc. 1-3.

[5] St. Aug., *De quant. an.*, c. 13, n. 22.

[6] Cassiodorus, *De Anima*, c. 2.

An angel is also *spiraculum vitae*, but an angel is not *spiraculum vitae corporis*, whereas the soul is the principle of the body's life.

Each human soul is created by God out of nothing.[1] The human soul is not an emanation of God, part of the divine substance,[2] nor is it propagated in the manner postulated by the traducianists. Original sin can be explained without recourse to a traducianist theory.[3] The soul is united with the body after the manner of the union of form with matter (*ad modum formae cum materia*),[4] but this must be interpreted in an Augustinian sense, since the rational soul is joined to its body *ut motor mobili et ut perfectio formalis suo perfectibili.*[5] The soul has the three powers of the *vis vegetativa*, the *vis sensitiva* and the *vis intellectiva*, and though these powers are not to be called parts of the soul, in the strict sense of the word 'part',[6] they are yet distinct from one another and from the essence of the soul. Alexander, therefore, explains Augustine's assertion of the identity of the soul and its powers by saying that this identity is to be referred to the substance, not to the essence of the soul.[7] The soul cannot subsist without its powers nor are the powers intelligible apart from the soul, but just as *esse* and *operari* are not identical, so are *essentia* and *potentia* not identical.

The active and passive intellects are *duae differentiae* of the rational soul, the former referring to the spiritual form of the soul, the latter to its spiritual matter, and the active intellect is not separate from the soul but belongs to it.[8] But together with the Aristotelian classification of the rational powers of the soul Alexander gives also the classifications of St. Augustine and St. John Damascene and attempts to reconcile them. For example, 'intellect' in the Aristotelian philosophy refers to our power of acquiring knowledge of intelligible forms by means of abstraction,[9] and it corresponds, therefore, to the Augustinian *ratio*, not to the Augustinian *intellectus* or *intelligentia*, which has to do with spiritual objects. Intellect in the Aristotelian sense has to do with embodied forms and abstracts them from the *phantasmata*, but intellect in the Augustinian sense has to do with non-embodied, spiritual forms, and when there is question of knowing those forms which are superior to the human soul, the intellect is powerless unless it is illuminated by God.[10] Alexander provides no clear

[1] 2, nos. 329 and 322.
[2] 2, no. 322.
[3] 2, no. 327.
[4] 2, no. 347.
[5] 2, no. 345.
[6] 2, no. 351.
[7] 2, no. 349.
[8] 2, no. 372.
[9] 2, no. 368.
[10] 2, no. 372.

explanation of what this illumination precisely is, but he at least makes it clear that he accepts the Aristotelian doctrine of abstraction in regard to the corporeal world, though in regard to the spiritual world the doctrine of Aristotle has to be supplemented by that of Augustine. One may also remark that Alexander was quite right in seeing in the Peripatetic classification a psychological analysis and in the Augustinian classification a division according to the objects of knowledge.

Alexander gives three definitions of free will, that of St. Anselm (*potestas servandi rectitudinem propter se*), that of St. Augustine (*facultas rationis et voluntatis, qua bonum eligitur gratia assistente et malum eadem desistente*) and that of St. Bernard (*consensus ob voluntatis inamissibilem libertatem et rationis indeclinabile iudicium*) and attempts to reconcile them.[1] *Liberum arbitrium* is common to God and the soul, but it is predicated neither universally nor equivocally, but analogically, primarily of God, secondarily of the creature.[2] In man it is one faculty or function of reason and will in union, and it is in this sense only that it may be termed distinct from reason and will: it is not in reality a separate power of the soul. Moreover, inasmuch as it is bound up with the possession of reason and will, it is inseparable from the soul, that is, as far as natural liberty is concerned. Following St. Bernard, Alexander distinguishes *libertas arbitrii* and *libertas consilii et complaciti* and declares that, while the latter may be lost, the former cannot.

10. Alexander of Hales is of interest, since his main work is a sustained effort of systematic thought, being a Scholastic presentation of the Christian theology and philosophy. In regard to form it belongs to the mediaeval period of the *Summas*, sharing in the merits and defects of that type of compilation, in their succinctness and orderly arrangement as in their aridity and absence of developments which, from our point of view, might be desirable. As regards content, on the one hand Alexander's *Summa* stands in close connection with the past, as the author is determined to be faithful to tradition and very frequently quotes Augustine or Anselm, Bernard or John Damascene, instead of developing his own arguments. This does not mean that he appeals simply to authority, in the sense of merely citing famous names, since he often quotes the arguments of his predecessors; but it does mean that the developed arguments which would have been desirable even at the time he wrote, are absent. However, his work is, of

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[1] Cf. 2, nos. 393–6.

[2] 2, no. 402.

course, a *Summa*, and a *Summa* is admittedly a summary. On the other hand the work shows a knowledge of Aristotle, though he is not often explicitly mentioned, and it makes some use of the Peripatetic doctrine. There is always present, however, the desire to harmonise the elements taken from Aristotle with the teaching of Augustine and Anselm, and the general tendency is towards a contrast between the God-enlightened Christian thinkers on the one hand and the Philosophers on the other hand. It is not that Alexander gives the impression of being a polemical writer nor that he confuses philosophy and theology,[1] but he is chiefly concerned with the knowledge of God and of Christ. To say that, is simply to say that he was faithful to the tradition of the Augustinian School.

[1] Cf. 1, no. 2.

CHAPTER XXV

ST. BONAVENTURE—I

Life and works—Spirit—Theology and philosophy—Attitude to Aristotelianism.

1. St. Bonaventure, Giovanni Fidanza, was born at Bagnorea in Tuscany in the year 1221. Healed of a sickness while a child, through his mother's invocation of St. Francis of Assisi, he entered the Franciscan Order at a date which cannot be exactly determined. It may have been shortly before or after 1240, but in any case Bonaventure must have become a Franciscan in time to study under Alexander of Hales at Paris before the latter's death in 1245. The teaching of Alexander evidently made a great impression on his pupil, for in his *Praelocutio prooemio in secundum librum Sententiarum praemissa* Bonaventure declares that just as in the first book of the *Sentences* he has adhered to the common opinions of the masters, and especially to those of 'our master and father of happy memory Brother Alexander', so in the following books he will not stray from their footsteps.[1] In other words Bonaventure imbibed the Franciscan, i.e. the Augustinian, tradition, and he was determined to keep to it. It might perhaps be thought that this determination indicated simply a pious conservatism and that Bonaventure was ignorant of or at least ignored and adopted no definite and positive attitude towards the new philosophical tendencies at Paris; but the Commentary on the *Sentences* dates from 1250–1 (he started lecturing in 1248, on St. Luke's Gospel) and at that date Bonaventure cannot have made his studies at Paris and yet have been ignorant of the Aristotelian philosophy. Moreover, we shall see later that he adopted a very definite attitude towards that philosophy, an attitude which was not simply the fruit of ignorance but proceeded from reflection and reasoned conviction.

St. Bonaventure was involved in the same difficulties between regulars and seculars in which St. Thomas Aquinas was involved, and in 1255 he was excluded from the university, that is, he was refused recognition as a doctor and professor of the university staff. He may have been readmitted in 1256, but in any case he was accepted, along with Aquinas, in October 1257, as a result of Papal intervention. He was then a professor of theology at the university, as far as acceptance was concerned, and would doubtless have proceeded to exercise that office had he not been elected Minister General of his Order on February 2nd, 1257. The fulfilment of the normal functions of his office would by itself have prevented his living the settled life of a university professor, but in addition there were differences of opinion at the time within the Order itself in regard to its spirit, practice and function, and Bonaventure was faced with the difficult task of maintaining or restoring peace. However, in 1259 he wrote the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, in 1261 his two lives of St. Francis, in 1267 or 1268 the *Collationes de decem praeceptis* (Lenten sermons), the *De decem donis Spiritus sancti* (about 1270), the *Collationes in Hexaëmeron* in 1273. The *Breviloquium* was written before 1257. The Commentaries on the Scriptures, short mystical treatises, sermons, and letters on points connected with the Franciscan Order make up his other writings at various periods of his life.

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[1] Alexander appears again as 'our father and master' in 2 *Sent.*, 23, 2, 3; II, p. 547.

Although in 1265 Bonaventure had succeeded in inducing the Pope to rescind his appointment to the Archbishopric of York, he was appointed Bishop of Albano and Cardinal in 1273. In 1274 he was present at the Council of Lyons, where he preached on the reunion of the Eastern Church with Rome, but on the conclusion of the Council he died (July 15th, 1274) and was buried at Lyons in the presence of Pope Gregory X.

2. St. Bonaventure was not only himself a man of learning, but he also encouraged the development of studies within the Franciscan Order, and this may appear strange in the case of a Franciscan saint, when it can hardly be said that the founder had envisaged his friars devoting themselves to erudition. But it is, of course, perfectly clear to us, as it was to Bonaventure, that an order consisting largely of priests, with a vocation which involved preaching, could not possibly fulfil its vocation unless its members, at least those who were destined for the priesthood, studied the Scriptures and theology. But it was impossible to study Scholastic theology without acquiring a knowledge of philosophy, so that philosophical and theological studies were both necessary. And once this general principle was admitted, as admitted it must be, it was hardly practicable to set a limit to the degree of study. If the students were to be trained in philosophy and theology, they

had to have professors and the professors had not only to be competent themselves but to educate their successors. Moreover, if apostolic work might involve contact with learned men, perhaps also with heretics, one could not set on *a priori* grounds a limit to the study which might be advisable.

One might indeed multiply such practical considerations, which justified the development of studies within the Franciscan Order; but, as far as Bonaventure is concerned, there is an equally important consideration to be mentioned. St. Bonaventure was perfectly faithful to the spirit of St. Francis in regarding union with God as the most important aim in life; but he saw very well that this would scarcely be attained without knowledge of God and the things of God, or at least that such knowledge, so far from being a hindrance to union with God, should predispose the soul to closer union. After all, it was the study of the Scriptures and of theology which he recommended and himself pursued, not the study of questions which had no connection with God, and this was one of the reasons why he disliked and mistrusted the metaphysical philosophy of Aristotle, which had no place for personal communion with the Godhead and no place for Christ. There is, as M. Gilson has pointed out, a certain parallel between the life of St. Francis and the teaching of St. Bonaventure. For just as the former's personal life culminated in mystical communion with God, so the latter's teaching culminated in his mystical doctrine, and just as Francis had approached God through Christ and had seen, *concretely*, all things in the light of the divine Word, so Bonaventure insisted that the Christian philosopher must see the world in its relation to the creative Word. Christ, as he expressly says, is the *medium* or Centre of all sciences, and so he could not accept the Aristotelian metaphysic, which, so far from knowing anything of Christ, had rejected even the exemplarism of Plato.

In the end the Franciscan Order accepted Duns Scotus as its doctor *par excellence*; but though it was doubtless right in so doing and though Scotus was undoubtedly a man of genius, a thinker of great speculative and analytic ability, one may perhaps say that it was St. Bonaventure who stood nearer in thought, as in time, to the spirit of the Seraphic Father. Indeed, it is not without reason that he was accorded the title of the Seraphic Doctor.

3. St. Bonaventure's view of the purpose and value of study, determined as much by his own inclinations and spiritual tendencies as by his intellectual training under Alexander of Hales and

his membership of the Franciscan Order, naturally placed him in the Augustinian tradition. St. Augustine's thought centred round God and the soul's relation to God, and, since the man who is related to God is the concrete and actual man of history, who has fallen from grace and who has been redeemed by grace, Augustine dealt with man in the concrete and not with the 'natural man', not, that is, with man considered apart from his supernatural vocation and in abstraction from the operation of supernatural grace. This meant that St. Augustine could make no very rigid distinction between philosophy and theology, even though he distinguished between the natural light of reason and supernatural faith. There is, of course, adequate justification for treating in philosophy of man in 'the state of nature', since the order of grace is super-natural and one can distinguish between the order of grace and the order of nature; but the point I want to make is simply this, that if one is principally interested in the soul's advance to God, as Augustine and Bonaventure were, then one's thought will centre round man in the concrete, and man in the concrete is man with a supernatural vocation. Man considered in the 'state of nature', is a legitimate abstraction; but this legitimate abstraction will not appeal to one whose thought centres round the actual historical order. It is largely a question of approach and method. Neither Augustine nor Bonaventure would deny the distinction between the natural and the supernatural, but since they were both primarily interested in the actual historical man, who, be it repeated, is man with a supernatural vocation, they naturally tended to mingle theological and philosophical themes in one Christian wisdom rather than to make a rigid, methodological distinction between philosophy and theology.

It may be objected that in this case St. Bonaventure is simply a theologian and not a philosopher at all; but one can give a similar answer in the case of Bonaventure as in that of Augustine. If one were to define a philosopher as one who pursues the study of Being or the ultimate causes, or whatever other object one is pleased to assign to the philosopher, without any reference to revelation and prescinding *completely* from dogmatic theology, the Christian dispensation and the supernatural order, then of course neither Augustine nor Bonaventure could be termed a philosopher; but if one is willing to admit into the ranks of the philosophers all those who pursue what are generally recognised as philosophical themes, then both men must be reckoned philosophers. Bonaventure may sometimes treat, for instance, of the stages of the soul's ascent from knowledge of God through creatures to immediate and interior experience of God and he may speak of the stages without any clear demarcation of what is proper to theology and what is proper to philosophy; but that does not alter the fact that in treating of knowledge of God through creatures, he develops proofs of God's existence and that these proofs are reasoned arguments and so can be termed philosophical arguments. Again, Bonaventure's interest in the material world may be principally an interest in that world as the manifestation of God and he may delight to see therein *vestigia* of the Triune God, but that does not alter the fact that he holds certain opinions about the nature of the world and its constitution which are cosmological, philosophical, in character. It is true that to isolate Bonaventure's philosophical doctrines is in a sense to impair the integrity of his system; but there are philosophical doctrines in his system and this fact entitles him to a place in the history of philosophy. Moreover, as I shall mention shortly, he adopted a very definite attitude towards philosophy in general and the Aristotelian system in particular, and on this count alone he merits a place in the history of philosophy. One could hardly exclude Kierkegaard from the history of philosophy, although his attitude towards philosophy, in his understanding of the term, was hostile, for he philosophised about philosophy: still less can one exclude Bonaventure whose attitude was less hostile than that of Kierkegaard and who represents a particular standpoint in regard to philosophy, the standpoint of those who maintain not only that there is such a thing as Christian philosophy, but also that every independent philosophy is bound to be deficient and even partly erroneous as philosophy. Whether this standpoint is right or wrong, justified or unjustified, it deserves consideration in a history of philosophy.

Bonaventure was, then, of the Augustinian tradition; but it must be remembered that a great deal of water had flowed under the bridge since the time of Augustine. Since that time Scholasticism had developed, thought had been systematised, the Aristotelian metaphysic had been fully made known to the western Christian world. Bonaventure commented on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard and he was acquainted with the thought of Aristotle: we would only expect, then, to find in his writings not only far more elements of Scholasticism and of the Scholastic method than in Augustine but also an adoption of not a few

Aristotelian ideas, for Bonaventure by no means rejected Aristotle lock, stock and barrel: on the contrary he respected him as a natural philosopher, even if he had no high opinion of his metaphysics, of his theology at least. Thus from the point of view of the thirteenth century the Bonaventurian system was a modern Augustinianism, an Augustinianism developed through the centuries and re-thought in relation to Aristotelianism.

4. What then was Bonaventure's view of the general relation of philosophy to theology and what was his view of Aristotelianism? The two questions can be taken together, since the answer to the first determines the answer to the second.

As has already been remarked, Augustine distinguished faith and reason, and Bonaventure naturally followed him, quoting Augustine's words to the effect that what we believe we owe to authority, what we understand to reason.[1] It follows from this, one might think, that philosophy and theology are two separate sciences and that an independent philosophy of a satisfactory character is, at least theoretically, possible. Indeed Bonaventure actually makes an explicit and clear distinction between dogmatic theology and philosophy. For example, in the *Breviloquium*[2] he says that theology begins with God, the supreme Cause, with whom philosophy ends. In other words, theology takes its data from revelation and proceeds from God Himself to His effects, whereas philosophy starts with the visible effects and argues to God as cause. Again, in the *De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam*[3] he divides 'natural philosophy' into physics, mathematics and metaphysics, while in the *In Hexaëmeron*[4] he divides philosophy into physics, logic and ethics.

In view of the above, how can it be maintained that St. Bonaventure did not admit of any rigid distinction between philosophy and theology? The answer is that he admitted a methodological distinction between the sciences and also a distinction of subject-matter, but insisted that no satisfactory metaphysic or philosophical system can be worked out unless the philosopher is guided by the light of faith and philosophises in the light of faith. For instance, he was well aware that a philosopher can arrive at the existence of God without the aid of revelation. Even if he had not been convinced of this by his own reason and by the testimony of the Scriptures, the philosophy of Aristotle would have been sufficient to persuade him of the fact. But he was not content to say that the knowledge of God so attained is incomplete and stands in need of the completion provided by revelation: he went further and stated that such purely rational knowledge is, and must be, in important points erroneous. This point he proved empirically. For example, 'the most noble Plotinus of the sect of Plato and Tully of the academic sect', in spite of the fact that their views on God and the soul were preferable to those of Aristotle, fell into error since they were unaware of the supernatural end of man, of the true resurrection of the body and of eternal felicity.[1] They could not know these things without the light of faith, and they fell into error precisely because they had not got the light of faith. Similarly, a mere metaphysician may come to the knowledge of the supreme Cause, but if he is a mere metaphysician he will stop there, and if he stops there he is in error, since he thinks of God otherwise than He is, not knowing that God is both one and three. 'Philosophical science is the way to other sciences; but he who wishes to stop there, falls into darkness.'[2] In other words, Bonaventure is not denying the power of the philosopher to attain truth, but he maintains that the man who is satisfied with philosophy, who is a mere philosopher, necessarily falls into error. It is one thing if a man comes by reason to know that there exists one God and then goes on to recognise, in the light of faith, that this unity is a unity of Nature in Trinity of Persons, and quite another thing if a man stops short at the unity of God. In the latter case the man affirms the unity of Nature to the exclusion of the Trinity of Persons, and to do this is to fall into error. If it is objected that it is not necessary to exclude the Trinity, since a philosopher may prescind from revelation altogether, so that his philosophical knowledge, though incomplete, remains valid and true, Bonaventure would doubtless answer that if the man is simply a philosopher and rests in philosophy, he will be convinced that God is one in Nature and not three in Persons. In order to make due allowance for the completion, he must already possess the light of faith. The light of faith does not supply the rational arguments for God's existence (there is such a thing as philosophy), but it ensures that the philosophy remains 'open' and that it does not close in on itself in such a way that error results.

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[1] Aug., *De utilitate credendi*, 11, 25; Bonav., *Breviloq.*, 1, 1, 4.
[2] 1, 1. [3] 4. [4] 4, 2.

Bonaventure's view of Aristotelianism follows easily enough from these premisses. That Aristotle was eminent as a natural philosopher, that is, in regard to sensible objects, Bonaventure admits: what he will not admit is that Aristotle was a true metaphysician, that is, that the metaphysics of Aristotle are satisfactory. Some people, seeing that Aristotle was so eminent in other sciences, have imagined that he must also have attained truth in metaphysics; but this does not follow, since the light of faith is necessary in order to form a satisfactory metaphysical system. Moreover, Aristotle was so competent in other sciences precisely because his mind and interests were of such a kind that he was not inclined to form a philosophy which should point beyond itself. Thus he refused to find the principle of the world outside the world: he rejected the ideas of Plato[1] and made the world eternal.[2] From his denial of the Platonic theory of ideas there followed not only the denial of creationism, but also the denial of God's knowledge of particulars, and of divine foreknowledge and providence.[3] Again, the doctrine of the unicity of the intellect is at least attributed to Aristotle by Averroes, and from this there follows the denial of individual beatitude or punishment after death.[4] In short, though all pagan philosophers have fallen into error, Aristotle was more involved in error than Plato or Plotinus.

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[1] *In Hexaëm.*, 7, 3ff.

[2] *De Donis*, 3, 12.

Possibly one may obtain a clearer view of Bonaventure's notion of the relation of philosophy to theology if one bears in mind the attitude of the Catholic philosopher in practice. The latter works out arguments for the existence of God, for example, but he does not make himself an atheist for the time being nor does he deny his faith in the dogma of the Trinity: he philosophises in the light of what he already believes and he will not conclude to a unity in God of such a kind that it will exclude the Trinity of Persons. On the other hand his arguments for God's existence are rational arguments: in them he makes no reference to dogma, and the value of the proofs as such rests on their philosophical merits or demerits. The philosopher pursues his arguments, psychologically speaking, in the light of the faith which he already possesses and which he does not discard during his philosophical studies, and his faith helps him to ask the right questions and to avoid untrue conclusions, though he does not make any formal use of the faith in his philosophic arguments. The Thomist would, of course, say that the faith is to the philosopher an extrinsic norm, that the philosopher prescinds from his faith, even though he does not deny it, and that a pagan could, theoretically at least, reach the same conclusions in philosophy. St. Bonaventure, however, would reply that, even though the philosopher may make no formal use of dogma in this or that metaphysical argument, he certainly philosophises in the light of faith and that this is something positive: the action of faith is a positive influence on the mind of the philosopher and without it he will inevitably fall into error. One cannot exactly say that St. Bonaventure believed only in a total Christian wisdom comprising indifferently philosophical and theological truths, since he admitted a classification of the sciences in which philosophy figures; but, this latter point once admitted, one can say that his ideal was the ideal of a Christian wisdom in which the light of the Word is shed not only on theological but also on philosophical truths, and without which those truths would not be attained.

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[1] *In Hexaëm.*, 6, 2. [2] *Ibid.*, 4. [3] *Ibid.*, 2–3. [4] *Ibid.*, 4.

I have argued that since St. Bonaventure certainly treated of philosophical questions, he has a claim to be included in a history of philosophy, and I do not see how this contention can be seriously disputed; but it remains true that he was a theologian, that he wrote as a theologian and that he did not really consider philosophical questions and problems for their own sake. St. Thomas Aquinas was also primarily a theologian, and he wrote primarily as a theologian; but he did consider philosophical problems at length and even composed some philosophical works, which St. Bonaventure did not do. The Commentary on the *Sentences* was not what we would to-day call a philosophical work. It seems, therefore, to constitute something of an exaggeration when M. Gilson maintains, in his magnificent study of St. Bonaventure's philosophical thought, that there is a Bonaventurian philosophical system, the spirit and content of which can be sharply defined. We have seen that St. Bonaventure recognised philosophy as a definite science, separate from theology; but as far as he himself is concerned, he might be called a philosopher *per accidens*. In a sense the same is true, of course, of any mediaeval thinker who was primarily a theologian, even of St. Thomas; but it is most relevant in the case of a thinker who was chiefly concerned with the soul's approach to God. Moreover, M. Gilson probably tends to exaggerate St. Bonaventure's hostility to pagan philosophy and to Aristotle in particular. I have indeed admitted that St. Bonaventure attacked the Aristotelian metaphysic (this is a fact which cannot be denied) and that he considered that any philosopher who is merely a philosopher will inevitably fall into error; but it is desirable in this connection to call to mind the fact that St. Thomas himself insisted on the moral necessity of revelation. On that point St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas were in agreement. They both rejected pagan philosophy where it was incompatible with Christianity, though they differed as to what precise points were to be rejected and how far one could go in following Aristotle.

However, though I think that M. Gilson's genius for capturing the peculiar spirit of the individual thinker and for setting it in clear relief leads him to exaggerate the systematic aspect of St. Bonaventure's philosophy and to find a greater opposition between the views of Bonaventure and Thomas in regard to the pagan philosophers than probably exists in actual fact, I cannot subscribe to the judgement of M. Fernand Van Steenberghen[1] that 'the philosophy of St. Bonaventure is an eclectic and neo-platonising Aristotelianism, put at the service of an Augustinian theology'. That Bonaventure made considerable use of Aristotelianism is perfectly true; but the inspiration of his philosophy is, in my opinion, what for want of a better word we call 'Augustinian'. As I remarked in regard to William of Auvergne, it depends to a large extent on one's point of view whether one calls those Augustinian theologians who adopted selected Aristotelian doctrines in philosophy incomplete Aristotelians or modified Augustinians; but in the case of a man whose whole interest centred round the soul's ascent to God, who laid such stress on the illuminative action of God and who, as M. Van Steenberghen himself states when criticising M. Gilson, never worked out a philosophy for its own sake, it seems to me that 'Augustinian' is the only fit word for describing his thought, if for no better reason than the principle that *maior pars trahit minorem* and that the spirit must take precedence of the letter.

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[1] *Aristote en Occident*, p. 147.

CHAPTER XXVI

ST. BONAVENTURE—II: GOD'S EXISTENCE

*Spirit of Bonaventure's proofs of God's existence—Proofs from sensible world—*A priori *knowledge of God—The Anselmian argument—Argument from truth.*

1. WE have seen that St. Bonaventure, like St. Augustine, was principally interested in the soul's relation to God. This interest had an effect on his treatment of the proofs for God's existence; he was chiefly concerned to exhibit the proofs as stages in the soul's ascent to God or rather to treat them in function of the soul's ascent to God. It must be realised that the God to whom the proofs conclude is not, then, simply an abstract principle of intelligibility, but is rather the God of the Christian consciousness, the God to whom men pray. I do not, of course, mean to suggest that there is, ontologically, any discrepancy or any irreconcilable tension between the God of the 'philosophers' and the God of experience; but since Bonaventure is primarily interested in God as Object of worship and prayer and as goal of the human soul, he tends to make the proofs so many acts of drawing attention to the self-manifestation of God, whether in the material world or within the soul itself. Indeed, as one would expect, he lays more emphasis on proofs from within than on proofs from the material world, from without. He certainly does prove God's existence from the external sensible world (St. Augustine had done this) and he shows how from the knowledge of finite, imperfect, composite, moving and contingent beings man can rise to the apprehension of the infinite, perfect, simple, unchanging and necessary Being; but the proofs are not systematically elaborated, the reason for this being, not any inability on Bonaventure's part to develop the proofs dialectically, but rather his conviction that the existence of God is so evident to the soul through reflection on itself that extra-mental creation serves mainly to remind us of it. His attitude is that of the Psalmist, when he says: *Coeli enarrant gloriam Dei, et opera manuum eius annuntiat firmamentum.* Thus it is quite true that the imperfection of finite and contingent things demands and proves the existence of absolute perfection, God; but, asks St. Bonaventure in a truly Platonic manner, 'how could the intellect

know that this being is defective and incomplete, if it had no knowledge of Being without any defect?'[1] In other words, the idea of imperfection presupposes the idea of perfection, so that the idea of perfection or the perfect cannot be obtained simply by way of negation and abstraction, and consideration of creatures in their finiteness and imperfection and dependence serves simply to remind the soul or to bring the soul to a clearer awareness of what is in some sense already evident to it, already known to it.

2. St. Bonaventure does not deny for a moment that God's existence can be proved from creatures: on the contrary he affirms it. In the Commentary on the *Sentences*[2] he declares that God can be known through creatures as Cause through effect, and he goes on to say that this mode of cognition is natural to man inasmuch as for us sensible things are the means by which we arrive at the knowledge of '*intelligibilia*', that is, objects transcending sense. The Blessed Trinity cannot be proved in the same way, however, by the natural light of reason, since we cannot conclude to the Trinity of Persons either by denying certain properties or limitations of creatures or by the positive way of attributing to God certain qualities of creatures.[3] St. Bonaventure thus teaches clearly enough the possibility of a natural and 'philosophic' knowledge of God, and his remark on the psychological naturalness of this approach to God through sensible objects is Aristotelian in character. Again, in the *In Hexaëmeron*[4] he argues that if there exists being which is produced, there must be a first Being, since there must be a cause: if there is being *ab alio*, there must be Being *a se*: if there is a composite being, there must be simple Being: if there is changeable being, there must be unchanged Being, *quia mobile reducitur ad immobile.* The last statement is obviously a reference to the Aristotelian proof of the existence of the unmoved mover, though Bonaventure mentions Aristotle only to say that he argued on these lines to the eternity of the world and that on this point the Philosopher was wrong.

Similarly in the *De Mysterio Trinitatis*[5] Bonaventure gives a series of brief arguments to show how clearly creatures proclaim the existence of God. For instance, if there is *ens ab alio*, there must exist *ens non ab alio*, because nothing can bring itself out of a state of non-being into a state of being, and finally there must be a first Being which is self-existent. Again, if there is *ens*

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[1] *Itin.*, 3, 3.

[2] 1, 3, 2: *Utrum, Deus sit cognoscibilis per creaturas.*

[3] 1 *Sent.*, 3, 4.

[4] 5, 29.

[5] 1, 1, 10–20.

possibile, Being which can exist and can not exist, there must be *ens necessarium*, being which has no possibility of non-existence, since this is necessary in order to explain the eduction of possible being into a state of existence; and if there is *ens in potentia*, there must be *ens in actu*, since no potency is reducible to act save through the agency of what is itself in act; and ultimately there must be *actus purus*, a Being which is pure Act, without any potentiality, God. Again, if there is *ens mutabile*, there must be *ens immutabile* because, as the Philosopher proves, motion has as its principle an unmoved being and exists for the sake of unmoved being, which is its final cause.

It might indeed appear from such passages, where Bonaventure employs Aristotelian arguments, that the statements to the effect that Bonaventure regarded the witness of creatures to God's existence in function of the soul's ascent to God and that he regarded the existence of God as a self-evident truth, cannot stand. But he makes it quite clear in various places[1] that he regards the sensible world as the mirror of God and sense-knowledge or knowledge obtained through sense and reflection on sensible objects as, formally, the first step in the stages of the soul's spiritual ascent, the highest stage of which in this life is the experimental knowledge of God by means of the *apex mentis* or *synderesis scintilla* (on this point he shows himself faithful to the tradition of Augustine and the Victorines), while in the very article of the *De Mysterio Trinitatis* where he gives the proofs cited he affirms emphatically that God's existence is indubitably a truth naturally implanted in the human mind (*quod Deum esse sit menti humanae indubitabile, tanquam sibi naturaliter insertum*). He goes on to declare that, in addition to what he has already said on this matter, there is a second way of showing that the existence of God is an indubitable truth. This second way consists in showing that what every creature proclaims is an indubitable truth, and it is at this point that he gives his succession of proofs or rather of indications that every creature really does proclaim God's existence. Subsequently he adds that there is a third way of showing that God's existence cannot be doubted and proceeds to give his version of St. Anselm's proof in the *Proslogium*. There can, then, be no doubt at all that Bonaventure affirmed that God's existence is self-evident and cannot be doubted: the question is rather what exactly he meant by this, and we will consider this in the next section.

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[1] For example, in the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, c. 1.

3. In the first place St. Bonaventure did not suppose that everyone has an explicit and clear knowledge of God, still less that he has such a knowledge from birth or from the first use of reason. He was well aware of the existence of idolaters and of the *insipiens*, the fool who said in his heart that there is no God. The existence of idolaters does not, of course, cause much difficulty since idolaters and pagans do not so much deny the existence of God as possess a wrong idea of God; but what of the *insipiens*? The latter sees, for example, that the impious are not always punished in this world or at least that they sometimes appear to be better off in this world than many good people, and he concludes from this that there is no divine Providence, no divine Ruler of the world.[1] Moreover, he explicitly affirms,[2] in answer to the objection that it is useless to prove the existence of that which is self-evident, of that concerning which no one doubts, that though the existence of God is indubitable so far as objective evidence is concerned, it can be doubted *propter defectum considerationis ex parte nostra* because of want of due consideration and reflection on our part. Does not this look as if Bonaventure is saying no more than that objectively speaking, the existence of God is indubitable (i.e. the evidence, when considered, is indubitable and conclusive), but that subjectively speaking it may be doubted (i.e. because this or that human being does not give sufficient attention to the objective evidence); and if this is what he means when he says that God's existence is indubitable and self-evident, how does his position differ from that of St. Thomas?

The answer seems to be this. Although St. Bonaventure did not postulate an explicit and clear idea of God in every human being, still less any immediate vision or experience of God, he certainly postulated a dim awareness of God in every human being, an implicit knowledge which cannot be fully denied and which can become an explicit and clear awareness through interior reflection alone, even if it may sometimes need to be supported by reflection on the sensible world. The universal knowledge of God is, therefore, implicit, not explicit; but it is implicit in the sense that it can at least be rendered explicit through interior reflection alone. St. Thomas admitted an implicit knowledge of God, but by this he meant that the mind has the power of attaining to the knowledge of God's existence through reflection on the things of sense and by arguing from effect to cause, whereas St. Bonaventure meant something more by implicit knowledge, that is, virtual knowledge of God, a dim awareness which can be rendered explicit without recourse to the sensible world.

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[1] *De Mysterio Trinitatis*, 1, 1, *conclusio*.

[2] *Ibid.*, 12.

Application of this view to Bonaventure's concrete instances may make the understanding of it easier. For instance, every human being has a natural desire for happiness (*appetitus beatitudinis*). But happiness consists in the possession of the supreme Good, which is God. Therefore every human being desires God. But there can be no desire without some knowledge of the object (*sine aliquali notitia*). Therefore the knowledge that God or the supreme Good exists is naturally implanted in the soul.[1] Similarly, the rational soul has a natural knowledge of itself, because it is present to itself and is knowable by itself. But God is most present to the soul and is knowable. Therefore a knowledge of its God is implanted in the soul. If it be objected that while the soul is an object proportionate to its own power of knowing, God is not, the reply can be made that, if that were true, the soul could never come to the knowledge of God, which is obviously false.[2]

According to the above line of argument, then, the human will is naturally orientated towards the supreme Good, which is God, and not only is this orientation of the will inexplicable unless the supreme Good, God, really exists, but it also postulates an *a priori* knowledge of God.[3] This knowledge is not necessarily explicit or clear, since if it were there could be no atheists, but it is implicit and vague. If it is objected that an implicit and vague knowledge of this kind is not knowledge at all, it may be answered that an unprejudiced man who reflects on the orientation of his will towards happiness can come to realise that the direction of his will implies the existence of an adequate object and that this object, the complete Good, must exist and is what we call God. He will realise not only that in seeking happiness he is seeking God, but that this search implies an inkling, as it were, of God, since there can be no search for what is *entirely* unknown. Therefore, by reflecting on itself, on its own dependence and on its own desires for wisdom, peace or felicity, the soul can recognise God's existence and even God's presence, God's activity within it: it is not necessary for it to seek without, it has only to follow Augustine's advice and enter within itself, when it will see that it was never without some inkling, some dim awareness, a 'virtual' knowledge of God. To seek for happiness (and every human being must seek for happiness) and to deny God's existence is really to be guilty of a contradiction, to deny with the lips what one affirms with the will and, in the case of wisdom at least, with the intellect. Whether this line of argument is valid or not, I do not propose to discuss here. It is obviously open to the objection, cogent or otherwise, that if there were no God, then the desire for happiness might be *frustra* or might have some other cause than the existence of God. But it is at least clear that St. Bonaventure did not postulate an innate idea of God in the crude form under which Locke later attacked innate ideas. Again, when St. Bonaventure declares that the soul knows God as most present to it, he is not affirming ontologism or saying that the soul sees God immediately: he means that the soul, recognising its dependence, recognises, if it reflects, that it is the image of God: it sees God in His image. As it necessarily knows itself, is conscious of itself, it necessarily knows God in at least an implicit manner. By contemplating itself it can make this implicit awareness explicit, without reference to the external world. Whether the absence of reference to the external world is more than formal, in the sense that the external world is not explicitly mentioned, is perhaps disputable.

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[1] *De Mysterio Trinitatis*, 1, 1, 7.

[2] *Ibid.*, 10.

[3] When speaking here of a 'natural' orientation of the will, I do not mean to use the term in a strictly theological sense, but rather in the sense that the will of man in the concrete is directed to the attainment of God, prescinding altogether from the question whether or not there is a *desiderium naturale videndi Deum*.

4. We have seen that for St. Bonaventure the very arguments from the external world presuppose some awareness of God, for he asks how the mind can know that sensible things are defective and imperfect if it has no previous awareness of perfection, in comparison with which it recognises the imperfections of creatures. This point of view must be borne in mind when considering his statement of St. Anselm's proof, which he adopted from the *Proslogium.*

In the Commentary on the *Sentences*[1] St. Bonaventure resumes the Anselmian argument. God is that than which no greater can be thought. But that which cannot be thought not to exist is greater than that which can be thought not to exist. Therefore, since God is that than which no greater can be thought, God cannot be thought not to exist. In the *De Mysterio Trinitatis*[2] he quotes and states the argument at somewhat greater length and points out[3] that doubt may arise if someone has an erroneous notion of God and does not realise that He is that than which no

[1] 1, 8, 1, 2.

[2] 1, 1, 21–4.

[3] *Ibid., conclusio.*

greater can be thought. Once the mind realises what the idea of God is, then it must also realise not only that the existence of God cannot be doubted, but also that His non-existence cannot even be thought. As regards Gaunilo's objection about the best of all possible islands St. Bonaventure answers[1] that there is no parity, for while there is no contradiction involved in the concept of a Being than which no greater can be thought the idea of an island than which no better can be thought is a contradiction in terms (*oppositio in adiecto*), since 'island' denotes an imperfect being whereas 'than which no better can be thought' denotes a perfect being.

This method of argument may appear to be purely dialectical, but, as already mentioned, Bonaventure did not regard the idea of the perfect as obtained simply through a negation of the imperfection of creatures, but as something presupposed by our recognition of the imperfection of creatures, at least in the sense that man's desire of the perfect implies a previous awareness. In accordance with the Platonic-Augustinian tradition Bonaventure presupposed, then, a virtual innate idea of the perfect, which can be nothing else but God's imprint on the soul, not in the sense that the soul is perfect but in the sense that the soul receives the idea of the perfect or forms the idea of the perfect in the light of God, through the divine illumination. The idea is not something negative, the realisation of which in concrete existence can be denied, for the presence of the idea itself necessarily implies God's existence. On this point we may note the resemblance at least between St. Bonaventure's doctrine and that of Descartes.[2]

5. St. Augustine's favourite argument for the existence of God had been that from truth and the existence of eternal truths: St. Bonaventure utilised this argument as well. For example, every affirmative proposition affirms something as true; but the affirmation of any truth affirms also the cause of all truth.[3] Even if someone says that a man is an ass, this statement, whether correct or not, affirms the existence of the primal truth, and even if a man declares that there is no truth, he affirms this negation as true and so implies the existence of the foundation and cause of truth.[4] No truth can be seen save through the first truth, and the truth

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[1] *De Mysterio Trinitatis*, 1, 1, 6.

[2] Cf. E. Gilson's Commentary on the *Discours de la Méthode*, concerning the idea of the perfect.

[3] 1 *Sent.*, 8, 1, 2, *conclusio*.

[4] *Ibid.*, 5 and 7. Cf. *De Mysterio Trinitatis*, 1, 1, 26.

through which every other truth is seen, is an indubitable truth: therefore, since the first Truth is God, God's existence is indubitable.[1]

But here again St. Bonaventure is not pursuing a merely verbal and dialectical argument. In a passage of the *In Hexaëmeron*,[2] where he points out that the man who says there is no truth contradicts himself, since he affirms it as true that there is no truth, he remarks that the light of the soul is truth, which so enlightens the soul that it cannot deny truth's existence without contradicting itself, and in the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*[3] he maintains that the mind can apprehend eternal truths and draw certain and necessary conclusions only in the divine light. The intellect can apprehend no truth with certainty save under the guidance of Truth itself. To deny God's existence, then, is not simply to be guilty of a dialectical contradiction; it is also to deny the existence of the Source of that light which is necessary for the mind's attainment of certitude, the light *quae illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum*: it is to deny the Source in the name of that which proceeds from the Source.

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[1] *De Mysterio Trinitatis*, 1, 1, 25.

[2] 4, 1.

[3] 3, 2ff.

CHAPTER XXVII

ST. BONAVENTURE—III

RELATION OF CREATURES TO GOD

Exemplarism—The divine knowledge—Impossibility of creation from eternity—Errors which follow from denial of exemplarism and creation—Likeness of creatures to God, analogy—Is this world the best possible world?

1. WE have seen that the lines of proof adopted by St. Bonaventure lead, not to the transcendent and self-enclosed unmoved Mover of Aristotle (though he does not hesitate to utilise the Philosopher's thought and to cite him when he considers it apposite), but to the God, at once transcendent and immanent, who is the Good which draws the will, the Truth which is not only foundation of all particular truths but also the Light which through its radiation within the soul makes the apprehension of certain truth possible, the Original which is mirrored in the human soul and in nature, and the Perfect which is responsible for the idea of the perfect within the human soul. In this way the arguments for God's existence stand in close relation to the spiritual life of the soul, revealing to it the God whom it has always sought, if only in a semi-conscious fashion, and the God who has always operated within it. The further knowledge of God which is given by revelation crowns the philosophic knowledge and opens up to the soul higher levels of spiritual life and the possibility of a closer union with God. Philosophy and theology are thus integrated together, the former leading on to the latter, the latter shedding light on the deeper meaning of the former.

A similar integration of philosophy and theology is seen in Bonaventure's doctrine of exemplarism, which in his eyes was a matter of the greatest importance. In the *In Hexaëmeron*[1] he makes exemplarism the central point of metaphysics. The metaphysician, he says, proceeds from the consideration of created, particular substance to the uncreated and universal substance (not in the pantheistic sense, of course), and so, in so far as he deals in general with the originating Principle of all things, he is akin to the natural philosopher who also considers the origins of things, while in so far as he considers God as final end he shares his subject-matter to some degree with the moral philosopher, who also considers the supreme Good as the last end, giving his attention to happiness in the practical or speculative order. But in so far as the metaphysician considers God, the supreme Being, as exemplary cause of all things, he shares his subject-matter with no one else (*cum nullo communicat et verus est metaphysicus*). The metaphysician, however, if he will attain the truth concerning exemplarism, cannot stop at the mere fact that God is the exemplary Cause of all things, for the *medium* of creation, the express image of the Father and the exemplar of all creatures, is the divine Word. Precisely as a philosopher he cannot come to a certain knowledge of the Word, it is true;[1] but then if he is content to be a mere philosopher, he will fall into error: he must, enlightened by faith, proceed beyond mere philosophy and realise that the divine Word is the exemplary Cause of all things. The purely philosophic doctrine of exemplarism thus prepares the way for the theology of the Word and, conversely, the theology of the Word sheds light on the truth attained by philosophy, and in this sense Christ is the *medium* not only of theology, but also of philosophy.

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[1] 1, 13.

An obvious conclusion in regard to Aristotle follows from this position. Plato had maintained a doctrine of archetypal ideas or essences and, whatever Plato himself may or may not have thought, the neo-Platonists at least 'located' these ideas in the divine mind, so that St. Augustine was enabled to praise Plato and Plotinus on this account; but Aristotle rejected the ideas of Plato and attacked his theory with bitterness (*in principio Metaphysicae et in fine et in multis aliis locis exsecratur ideas Platonis*).[2] In the *Ethics* too he attacks the doctrine, though the reasons he gives are worthless (*nihil valent rationes suae*).[3] Why did he attack Plato? Because he was simply a natural philosopher, interested in the things of the world for their own sake, and gifted with the *sermo scientiae* but not with the *sermo sapientiae*. In refusing to despise the sensible world and in refusing to restrict certainty to knowledge of the transcendent Aristotle was right as against Plato, who, in his enthusiasm for the *via sapientiae*, destroyed the *via scientiae*, and he rightly censured Plato on this point, but he himself went to the opposite extreme and destroyed the *sermo sapientiae*.[4] Indeed, by denying the doctrine of exemplarism,

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[1] *In Hexaëm.*, 1, 13. [2] *Ibid.*, 6, 2. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Serm.*, 18.

Aristotle necessarily involved himself also in a denial of divine creation and divine providence, so that his error was worse than that of Plato. Now, exemplarism, on which Plato insisted, is, as we have seen, the key to and centre of metaphysics, so that Aristotle, by rejecting exemplarism, excluded himself from the rank of metaphysicians, in Bonaventure's understanding of the term.

But we have to go beyond Plato and learn from Augustine, to whom was given both the *sermo sapientiae* and the *sermo scientiae*,[1] for Augustine knew that the ideas are contained in the divine Word, that the Word is the archetype of creation. The Father knows Himself perfectly and this act of knowledge is the image and expression of Himself: it is His Word, His *similitudo expressiva*.[2] As proceeding from the Father the Word is divine, the divine Son (*filius* denotes the *similitudo hypostatica*, the *similitudo connaturalis*),[3] and as representing the Father, as *Imago*, as *similitudo expressa*, the Word expresses also, represents, all that the Father can effect (*quidquid Pater potest*).[4] If anyone could know the Word, he would know all knowable objects (*si igitur intelligis Verbum, intelligis omnia scibilia*).[5] In the Son or Word the Father expressed all that He could make (i.e. all possible beings are ideally or archetypally represented in the Word) and all that He would make.[6] The 'ideas' of all creatures, therefore, possible and actual, are contained in the Word, and these ideas extend not only to universals (*genera* and *species*), but also to singular or individual things.[7] They are infinite in number, as representing all possibles, as representing the infinite power of God.[8] But when it is said that there is an infinity of ideas in the Word, it is not meant that the ideas are really distinct in God, for there is no distinction in God save the distinctions of Persons: considered as existent in God, they are not distinct from the divine Essence or from one another (*ideae sunt unum secundum rem*).[9] It follows that, not being distinct from one another, they cannot form a real hierarchy.[10] However, although the ideas are ontologically one and there is no real distinction between them, there is a distinction of reason, so that they are *plures secundum rationem intelligendi*.[11] The foundation of the distinction cannot be any real distinction in the divine Essence, since not only are the ideas ontologically identical with the simple divine Essence, but also there is no real relation on the part of God to creatures, for He is in no way dependent on creatures, though there is a real relation on the part of creatures to God and God and creatures are not the same, so that from the point of view of the things signified or connoted the ideas are distinct *secundum rationem intelligendi*. In God the ideas are one, but from our point of view they stand midway, as it were, between God the knower and the thing known, the distinction between them being, not a distinction in what they are (i.e. not a real distinction) but a distinction in what they connote, and the foundation of the distinction being the real multiplicity of the things connoted (i.e. creatures), not any real distinction in the divine Essence or in the divine knowledge.

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[1] *Serm.*, 4, 19. [2] *Breviloq.*, 1, 3. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *In Hexaëm.*, 3, 4.
[5] *Ibid.* [6] *Ibid.*, 1, 13. [7] 1 *Sent.*, 35, *art. unicus*, 4. [8] *Ibid.*, 5.
[9] *Ibid.*, 2. [10] *Ibid.*, 6. [11] *Ibid.*, 3.

Plato was working towards this theory of ideas, but as he lacked the light of faith, he could not ascend to the true doctrine but necessarily stopped short: in order to possess the true doctrine of ideas, it is necessary to have knowledge of the Word. Moreover, just as creatures were produced through the medium of the Word and could not have been produced save through the Word, so they cannot be truly known save in the light of their relation to the Word. Aristotle may have been, indeed was, an eminent natural philosopher, but he could not know truly even the selected objects of his studies, since he did not see them in their relation to the Word, as reflections of the divine Image.

2. God, then, in knowing Himself knows also all ways in which His divine essence can be mirrored externally. He knows all the finite good things which will be realised in time, and this knowledge Bonaventure calls the *cognitio approbationis*, the knowledge of those things to which His *beneplacitum voluntatis* extends. He knows too, not only all the good things which have been, are and will be in the course of time, but also all the evil things, and this knowledge Bonaventure calls the *cognitio visionis*. Needless to say St. Bonaventure does not mean to imply that evil has its exemplary idea in God: evil is rather the privation in the creature of that which it ought to have according to its idea in God. God knows too all possible things, and this knowledge Bonaventure terms *cognitio intelligentiae*. Its objects, the possibles, are infinite in number, whereas the objects of the two former types of knowledge are finite.[1] The three types of knowledge are, however, not accidents in God, distinct from one another: considered ontologically, as in God, they are one act of knowledge, identical with the divine essence.

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[1] Cf. 1 *Sent.*, 39, 1, 2 and 3; *De Scientia Christi*, 1.

God's act of knowledge is infinite and eternal, so that all things are present to Him, even future events: there is no succession in the divine knowledge, and if we speak of God's 'foreknowledge' we must understand the futurity as concerning the objects themselves (in the sense that they succeed one another in time and are known by God to succeed one another in time), not as concerning the divine knowledge itself. God knows all things by one eternal act and there is no temporal succession in that act, no before and after; but God knows eternally, through that one act, things as succeeding one another in time. Bonaventure therefore makes a distinction in regard to the statement that God knows all things *praesenter*, pointing out that this *praesentialitas* must be understood in reference to God (*a parte cognoscentis*), not in reference to the objects known (*a parte cognitorum*). If it were understood in the latter sense, the implication would be that all things are present to one another, which is false, for they are not all present to one another, though they are all present to God.[1] Imagine, he says,[2] an eye fixed and motionless on a wall and observing the successive movements of all persons and things down below with a single act of vision. The eye is not changed, nor its act of vision, but the things under the wall are changed. This illustration, remarks Bonaventure, is really in no way like what it illustrates, for the divine knowledge cannot be pictured in this way; but it may help towards an understanding of what is meant.

3. If there were no divine ideas, if God had no knowledge of Himself and of what He can effect and will effect, there could be no creation, since creation demands knowledge on the Creator's part, knowledge and will. It is not a matter for surprise, then, that Aristotle, who rejected the ideas, rejected also creation and taught the eternity of the world, a world uncreated by God. At least he is judged to have held this by all the Greek Doctors, like Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Nazianzen, Damascene and Basil, and by all the Arabian commentators, while you will never find Aristotle himself saying that the world had a beginning: indeed he censures Plato, the only Greek philosopher who seems to have declared that time had a beginning.[3] St. Bonaventure need not have spoken so cautiously, since Aristotle certainly did not believe in a divine creation of the world out of nothing.

St. Thomas saw no incompatibility, from the philosophical standpoint, between the idea of creation on the one hand and of the world's eternity on the other, so that for him the world might have had no beginning in time and yet have been created, that is, God might have created the world from eternity; but St. Bonaventure considered that the eternity of the world is impossible and that God could not have created it from eternity: if it is created, then time necessarily had a beginning. It follows that to deny that time had a beginning is to deny that the world was created, and to prove that eternal motion or time without a beginning is impossible is to prove that the world was created. St. Bonaventure, therefore, regarded the Aristotelian idea of the world's eternity as *necessarily* bound up with a denial of creation, and this opinion, which Aquinas did not share, sharpened his opposition to Aristotle. Both Bonaventure and Aquinas naturally accepted the *fact* of the world having had a beginning in time, since this is taught by theology; but they differed on the question of the abstract possibility of creation from eternity, and Bonaventure's conviction of its impossibility naturally made him resolutely hostile to Aristotle, since the latter's assertion of it as a fact, and not merely as a possibility, necessarily seemed to him an assertion of the independence of the world in relation to God, an assertion which he thought was primarily due to the Philosopher's rejection of exemplarism.

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[1] Cf. 1 *Sent.*, 39, 2, 3, *conclusio.* [2] *Ibid.*, 2, *conclusio.* [3] *In Hexaëm.*, 6, 4.

For what reasons did Bonaventure hold eternal motion or time without a beginning to be impossible? His arguments are more or less those which St. Thomas treats as objections to his own position. I give some examples.

(i) If the world had existed from eternity, it would follow that it is possible to add to the infinite. For instance, there would have been already an infinite number of solar revolutions, yet every day another revolution is added. But it is impossible to add to the infinite. Therefore the world cannot have always existed.[1]

St. Thomas answers[2] that if time is supposed eternal, it is infinite *ex parte ante*, but not *ex parte post*, and there is no cogent objection to an addition being made to the infinity at the end at which it is finite, that is, terminates in the present. To this St. Bonaventure retorts that, if one considers simply the past, then one would have to admit an infinite number of lunar revolutions. But there are twelve lunar revolutions to one solar revolution. Therefore we are faced with two infinite numbers, of which the one is twelve times greater than the other, and this is an impossibility.

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 1, 1, 1, 2, 1.

[2] *Contra Gent.*, 2, 38.

(ii) It is impossible to pass through an infinite series, so that if time were eternal, that is, had no beginning, the world would never have arrived at the present day. But it is clear that it has.[1] To this St. Thomas answers[2] that every passing through or *transitus* requires a beginning term and a final term. But if time is of infinite duration, there was no first term and consequently no *transitus*, so that the objection cannot arise. St. Bonaventure retorts, however, that there is either a revolution of the sun which is infinitely distant, in the past, from to-day's revolution or there is not. If there is not, then the distance is finite and the series must have had a beginning. If there is, then what of the revolution immediately following that which is infinitely distant from to-day's? Is this revolution also infinitely distant from to-day's or not? If not, then the hypothetically infinitely distant revolution cannot be infinitely distant either, since the interval between the 'first' and second revolution is finite. If it is, then what of the third and fourth revolutions, and so on? Are they also infinitely distant from to-day's revolution? If they are, then to-day's revolution is no less distant from them than from the first. In this case there is no succession and they are all synchronous, which is absurd.

(iii) It is impossible for there to be in existence at the same time an infinity of concrete objects. But, if the world existed from eternity, there would be in existence now an infinity of rational souls. Therefore the world cannot have existed from eternity.[3]

To this Aquinas answers[4] that some say that human souls do not exist after the death of the body, while others maintain that only a (common) intellect remains: others again hold a doctrine of reincarnation, while certain writers maintain that an infinite number in act is possible in the case of things which are not ordered (*in his quae ordinem non habent*). St. Thomas naturally held none of the first three positions himself; as to the fourth position his own final attitude seems to be doubtful, so that Bonaventure was able to remark rather caustically that the theory of reincarnation is an error in philosophy and is contrary to the psychology of Aristotle, while the doctrine that a common intellect alone survives is an even worse error. As to the possibility of an infinite number in act he believed that it was an erroneous notion, on the ground that an infinite multitude could not be ordered and so could not be subject to divine providence, whereas in fact all that God has created is subject to His providence.

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 1, 1, 1, 2, 3.

[2] 2 *Sent.*, 1, 1, 1, 2, 5.

[3] *Contra Gent.*, 2, 38: *S.T.*, Ia, 46, 2, ad 6.

[4] *Contra Gent.*, 2, 38.

Bonaventure was thus convinced that it can be philosophically proved, as against Aristotle, that the world had a beginning and that the idea of creation from eternity involves a 'manifest contradiction', since, if the world was created from nothing, it has being after not-being (*esse post non-esse*)[1] and so cannot possibly have existed from eternity. St. Thomas answers that those who assert creation from eternity do not say that the world was made *post nihilum*, but that it was made out of nothing, the opposite of which is 'out of something'. The idea of time, that is to say, is in no way implicated. In Bonaventure's eyes it is bad enough to say that the world is eternal and is uncreated (that is an error which can be philosophically disproved), but to say that it was created eternally out of nothing is to be guilty of a glaring contradiction, 'so contrary to reason that I should not have believed that any philosopher, of however little understanding, could have asserted it'.[2]

4. If the doctrine of exemplarism is denied, and if God did not create the world, it is only natural to conclude that God knows only Himself, that He moves only as final Cause, as object of desire and love (*ut desideratum et amatum*) and that He knows no particular thing outside Himself.[3] In this case God can exercise no providence, not having in Himself the *rationes rerum*, the ideas of things, by which He may know them.[4] The doctrine of St. Bonaventure is, of course, that God knows things other than Himself, but that He knows them in and through Himself, through the exemplary ideas. If he did not hold this, he would have to say that the divine knowledge receives a complement or perfection from things outside of God, depends in some way on creatures. In reality it is God who is completely independent: creatures are dependent on Him and cannot confer on His Being any perfection.[5] But if God is wrapped up in Himself, in the sense of having no knowledge of creatures and exercising no providence, it follows that the changes or movements of the world proceed either from chance, which is impossible, or from necessity, as the Arabian philosophers held, the heavenly bodies determining the movements of things in this world But if this be so, then all doctrine of reward or punishment in this life disappears, and in point of

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 1, 1, 1, 2, 6.

[2] *Ibid., conclusio.*

[3] *In Hexaëm.*, 6, 2.

[4] *Ibid.*, 3.

[5] Cf. 1 *Sent.*, 39, 1, 1, *conclusio.*

fact you will never find Aristotle speaking of a beatitude after the present life.[1] All these erroneous conclusions follow, then, from a denial of exemplarism, and it is more than ever clear that exemplarism is the key to a true metaphysic and that without it a philosopher will inevitably fall into errors if he discusses metaphysical themes.

5. From the doctrine of exemplarism it follows that there is some resemblance between creatures and God; but we have to distinguish various kinds of resemblance (*similitudo*) in order to attain to a correct idea of the relation of creatures to God, in order to avoid pantheism on the one hand and an independent world on the other hand. In the Commentary on the *Sentences*[2] Bonaventure says that *similitudo* may mean the agreement of two things in a third (and this he calls *similitudo secundum univocationem*), or it may mean the likeness of one thing to another without any agreement in a third thing being implied, and it is in this sense that the creature is said to be a likeness of God. In the same *conclusio* (*ad* 2) he distinguishes *similitudo univocationis sive participationis* and *similitudo imitationis, et expressionis*, going on to remark that the former does not hold good of the relation between creatures and God, because there is no common term (*quia nihil est commune*, because there is nothing common to God and the creature, that is). What he means is that God and the creature do not participate in Being, for example, *univocally* (precisely in the same sense), for if they did, the creature would be God and pantheism would result. The creature is, however, an imitation of God, of the idea of it in God, and God expresses the idea externally in the finite creature. Therefore, when Bonaventure rejects *similitudo participationis*, we must understand participation as referring here to participation in something common to both God and creatures in a univocal sense, in a *tertium commune* as he puts it.

It may be objected that if there is nothing common between God and creatures, there can be no likeness; but the community which St. Bonaventure wishes to exclude is *univocal* community, to which he opposes *analogy*. The likeness of the creature to God or of God to the creature (*exemplaris ad exemplatum*) is one kind of analogy, the other being that of *proportionalitas* (*habitudo duorum ad duo*), which exists between sets of things belonging to different genera, though in the case of the relation between creatures and

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[1] *In Hexaëm.*, 6, 3.

[2] 1, 35, *art. un.*, 1, *conclusio.*

God it is only the creature which is a member of a generic class. Thus a teacher is to his school what a pilot is to his ship, since both direct.[1] In the latter place Bonaventure distinguishes proportion in a wide sense, which includes proportionality, from proportion in a strict sense, which exists between members of the same class, arithmetical numbers, for example. Proportion in this strict sense cannot, of course, exist between God and creatures.

But though Bonaventure speaks of analogy of proportionality, the analogies to which he gives most attention are those of likeness, for he loved ever to find expressions, manifestations, images and *vestigia* of God in the world of creatures. Thus in the Commentary on the *Sentences*,[2] after excluding *similitudo per convenientiam omnimodam in natura*, which holds good between the three divine Persons, each of whom is identical with the divine Nature, and *similitudo per participationem alicuius naturae universalis*, which holds good between man and ass, in virtue of their common sharing in the *genus* animal, he admits proportionality, *similitudo secundum proportionalitatem* (giving here the example of the pilot and the charioteer in relation to the objects they direct) and *similitudo per convenientiam ordinis* (*sicut exemplatum assimilatur exemplari*), and proceeds to discuss these latter types of analogy, both of which, as already mentioned, hold good between the creature and God.

Every creature, says Bonaventure, is a *vestigium* of God, and the two types of analogy (that of the *exemplatum* to the *exemplar* and that of proportionality) apply to every creature, the first inasmuch as every creature is the effect of God and is conformed to God through the divine idea, the second inasmuch as the creature also produces an effect, although not in the same way as God produces His effect (*sicut enim Deus producit suum effectum, sic et agens creatum, licet non omnino*—for the creature is not the total cause of its effect). But though every creature is a *vestigium Dei*, this general conformity of the creature to God is comparatively remote (*magis de longinquo*): there is another type of likeness which is closer (*de proximo*) and more express and which applies only to certain creatures. All creatures are ordered to God, but only rational creatures are directed immediately (*immediate*) to God, the irrational creatures being directed to God mediately (*mediante creatura rationali*). The rational creature alone can know God, can praise God and serve God consciously, and so has a greater conformity to God, a greater *convenientia ordinis* than the irrational creature. Now, the greater the *convenientia ordinis*, the greater and closer and more express is the resemblance or *similitudo*. This closer resemblance is called by Bonaventure *imago*. Every creature is, then, a *vestigium Dei*, but only the rational creature is an *imago Dei*, for it resembles God in the possession of spiritual powers through which it can become ever more and more conformed to God.

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[1] Cf. 1 *Sent.*, 3, 1, *art. un.*, 2, 3 and 1 *ibid.*, 48, 1, 1, *conclusio.*

[2] 2 *Sent.*, 16, 1, 1, *conclusio.*

A similar difference between the rational creature and the irrational creature can be observed if we consider the analogy of proportionality. We can say, if we make the due allowances and reservations, that as God is to the creature, as Cause, that is, to His effect, so is the creature to its effect, and this holds good of all creatures in so far as they are active agents: but the effect considered is *extrinsic* to the agent, whereas in the case of rational creatures, and of them alone, there is an *intrinsic* proportion. In God there is a unity of Nature in a Trinity of Persons, and in man there is a unity of essence with a trinity of powers which are ordered to one another, the relation between them resembling in some way the relations in God (*quasi consimili modo se habentium, sicut se habent personae in divinis*). Bonaventure does not mean that we can prove the doctrine of the Trinity by the natural light of reason from a consideration of human nature, for he denies the possibility of any strict philosophical proof of the mystery, but rather that, guided by the light of faith, we can find an analogy to the Trinity in human rational nature. As the divine Nature is to the three divine Persons, so (*quasi consimili modo*) is the human nature or essence to its three powers. This is an 'express' resemblance of proportion and on this count, too, man is to be called the image of God. The word 'express' means that the Blessed Trinity has expressed itself, manifested itself to some degree in the constitution of human nature, and it is clear that for Bonaventure the analogy of resemblance (i.e. *exemplati ad exemplar*) is more fundamental than the analogy of proportionality, the latter being really treated in function of the former and having no concrete value or meaning apart from it.

In this way Bonaventure is enabled to order the hierarchy of being according to the closeness or remoteness of the likeness of the creature to God. The world of purely sensible things is the *vestigium* or *umbra Dei*, though here too he finds analogies of the

Trinity; it is the *liber scriptus forinsecus.* When considered by the natural philosopher who is nothing else but a natural philosopher it is simply *natura*: such a man cannot read the book of nature, which is to him no *vestigium Dei* but something considered for its own sake and without reference to God.[1] The rational creation stands above the purely sensible creation and is *imago Dei*, God's image in a special sense. But the phrase 'image of God' is itself of wide application, for it covers not only the natural substance of men and angels, but also that supernatural likeness which is the result of the possession of grace. The soul in grace is the image of God in a higher sense than is the purely natural essence of man, and the soul in heaven, enjoying the beatific vision, is God's image in a yet deeper sense. Thus there are many grades of analogy, of likeness to God, and every grade must be seen in the light of the Word, who is the consubstantial image of the Father and the Exemplar of all creation, reflected in creatures according to various degrees of 'expression'. We may note not only the constant integration of theology and philosophy, but also the fact that the various degrees of likeness stand in close relation to the intellectual and spiritual life of man. The ascent to God on the part of the individual involves a turning from the *umbra* or pure *vestigium*, contemplated by the senses, from the *liber scriptus forinsecus*, to the interior reflection of God, the *imago Dei*, the *liber scriptus intrinsecus*, in obedience to the command of Augustine to go within oneself, and so ultimately to the contemplation of God in Himself, the *exemplatum*. The fact that St. Bonaventure does not treat theology and philosophy in watertight compartments of their own enables him to link up his vision of the universe with the ascetical and mystical life and so to deserve the name of a specifically Christian thinker.

6. Is this world, which reflects so admirably the Divine Creator, the best of all possible worlds? We must first of all distinguish two questions. Could God make a better world than this world? Could God have made this world better than it is? Bonaventure answers to the first question that God could have made a better world than this one, by creating nobler essences, and that this cannot be denied without thereby limiting the divine power. As to the second question, it all depends on what you mean by 'world' and by 'better'. If you refer to the substances which go to make up the world, are you asking if God could make these

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[1] *In Hexaëm.*, 12, 15.

substances better in the sense of making them nobler essences or substances, that is, of a higher kind, or are you asking if God could make these substances accidentally better, that is, while remaining within their own class? If the former, then the answer is that God could indeed change the substances into nobler ones, but it would not be the same world and God would not be making *this* world better. If the latter, then God could make this world better. To take an example. If God changed a man into an angel, the man would no longer be a man and God would not be making the man better; but God could make a man better by increasing his intellectual power or his moral qualities.[1] Again, while God could make *this* man or *this* horse a better man or horse, we must make another distinction if it is asked whether or not God could make man as such better, in the sense of placing him in better conditions. Absolutely speaking He could; but if one takes into consideration the purpose for which He has placed man in these conditions or allowed him to be in these conditions it may very well be that He could not make man better. For instance, if God brought it about that all men served Him well, He would be making man better, from the abstract viewpoint; but if you consider the purpose for which God has permitted man to serve Him well or ill, He would not be making man better by practically overriding his free will. Finally, if anyone asks why, if God could have made or could make the world better, He has not done so or does not do so, no answer can be given save this, that He so willed and that He Himself knows the reason (*solutio non potest dari nisi haec, quia voluit, et rationem ipse novit*).[2]

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[1] 1 *Sent.*, 44, 1, 1, *conclusio.*

[2] *Ibid.*, *ad* 4.

CHAPTER XXVIII

ST. BONAVENTURE—IV: THE MATERIAL CREATION

*Hylomorphic composition in all creatures—Individuation—Light—Plurality of forms—*Rationes seminales.

1. St. Bonaventure accepted from his master, Alexander of Hales, the doctrine of the hylomorphic composition of all creatures, the doctrine, that is, that all creatures are composed of matter and form. By 'matter' he naturally meant in this connection the principle of potentiality in the widest sense, not 'matter' in the sense in which matter is opposed to spirit. 'Matter *considered in itself* is neither spiritual nor corporeal', and so in itself it is indifferent to the reception either of a spiritual or of a corporeal form; but as matter never exists on its own, apart from a definite form, and as, once united with a corporeal or a spiritual form, it always remains corporeal or spiritual as the case may be, it follows that the matter actually present in a corporeal substance is different in kind from that in a spiritual substance.[1] 'Matter' may be regarded in more than one way. If one considers it from the point of view of 'privation' (*per privationem*), abstracting from all forms, whether substantial or accidental, one must admit that it is essentially the same in all creatures, 'for if either kind of matter is separated from all forms and all accidents, no difference at all will be seen.' But if matter is looked at 'analogically' (*secundum analogiam*), that is, as potentiality, as a foundation for form, one must make a distinction. In so far as matter is looked on as providing a foundation for form in regard simply to being (*in ratione entis*), it is essentially the same in both spiritual and material creatures, since both spiritual and material creatures exist and subsist, and one can consider their existence by itself, without going on to consider the precise way in which they exist or the kind of things they are. This is the way in which the metaphysician considers matter, and so in the eyes of the metaphysician matter is similar in the spiritual and in the material creation. If, however, matter is simply looked on in its relation to motion in the wide sense, understood, that is, as change, then it is not the same in creatures which cannot undergo substantial

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 3, 1, 1, 2, *conclusio ad* 3.

change or receive corporeal forms and in creatures which can undergo substantial change and receive corporeal forms, though it can be considered as *analogically* similar, inasmuch as angels are susceptible of, for example, divine influence. It is the natural philosopher or *physicus* who considers matter in this light.

Without going into the further distinctions made by Bonaventure and without attempting a judgement on his doctrine, one can say, then, that his teaching on the hylomorphic composition of all creatures is this, that matter is the principle of potentiality as such. Both spiritual creatures and material creatures are dependent beings, not self-existent beings, so that if one considers potentiality in abstraction from all form, looking on it as a co-principle of being, one can say with the metaphysician that it is essentially the same in both. If, however, one considers it as actually existent, as standing in relation to a concrete form, spiritual or material, it is not the same in both. The natural philosopher considers bodies and is concerned with matter, not its abstract essence but as existent in a particular type of being, as standing in a concrete relation to a certain kind of form, material form; and matter considered in this light is not to be found in spiritual beings. One might, of course, object that if matter as concretely existing, as united with form, is of different kinds and remains different, there must be something in the matter itself which makes it of different kinds so that its similarity in the spiritual and material created orders cannot be more than analogical; but Bonaventure admits that matter never actually exists apart from form and only states that if it is considered, as it can be considered, in abstraction from all form, as mere potentiality, then it can justly be said to be essentially the same. If the angels have an element of possibility, of potency in them, as they have, they must possess matter, for matter, considered in itself, is simply possibility or potency. It is only in the Being who is pure Act, without any potency or possibility, that there is no matter.

2. Is matter the principle of individuation? Some thinkers, says St. Bonaventure,[1] have held this, relying on the words of Aristotle, but it is very difficult to see how that which is common to all can be the principal cause of distinction, of individuality. On the other hand, to say that form is the principle of individuation and to postulate an individual form, following on that of the species, is to go to the opposite extreme and forget that every created form

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 3, 1, 2, 3, *conclusio.*

is capable of having another like it. It is better to hold that individuation arises from the actual union of matter and form, which appropriate one another, as it were, through their union. Seals are made by different impressions in wax, and without the wax there would be no plurality of seals, but without the different impressions the wax would not become many. Similarly, matter is necessary if there is to be distinction and multiplicity, number, but form is also necessary, for distinction and multiplication presuppose the constitution of a substance through the elements composing it. That an individual substance is something definite, of a definite kind, it owes to the form; that it is *this* something, it owes principally to matter, by which the form acquires position in place and time. Individuation denotes principally something substantial, a substance composed of matter and form, but it also denotes something which can be considered an accident, namely number. Individuality (*discretio individualis*) denotes two things: individuation, which arises from the union of the two principles, matter and form, and secondly distinction from other things, which is the origin of number; but the former, individuation, is the more fundamental.

Personality (*discretio personalis*) arises when the form united with matter is a rational form, and it thus adds to individuality the dignity of rational nature, which holds the highest place among created natures and is not in potency to a higher substantial form. But there is something more needed to constitute personality, namely that within the *suppositum* there should be no other nature of a greater eminence and dignity, that within the *suppositum* rational nature should possess *actualem eminentiam*. (In Christ the human nature, though perfect and complete, does not possess *actualem eminentiam* and so is not a person.) 'We must say, then, that just as individuality arises from the existence of a natural form in matter, so personality arises from the existence of a noble and supereminent nature in the substance.'[1]

As St. Bonaventure attributes matter, that is, a spiritual matter, to the angels, he is able to admit a plurality of individual angels within the same species without being compelled like St. Thomas to postulate as many angelic species as there are angels. The Scriptures show us some angels as exercising similar functions and this argues similarity of being, while the 'love of charity' also demands the multiplicity of angels within the same species.[2]

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 3, 1, 2, 2, *conclusio*.

[2] *Ibid.*, 3, 1, 2, 1.

3. In the corporeal creation there is one substantial form which all bodies possess, and that is the form of light.[1] Light was created on the first day, three days before the production of the sun, and it is corporeal in Bonaventure's opinion, although St. Augustine interpreted it as meaning the angelic creation. It is not, properly speaking, a body but the form of a body, the first substantial form, common to all bodies and the principle of their activity, and the different kinds of body form a graded hierarchy according as they participate more or less in the form of light. Thus the 'empyrean' stands at one end of the scale, while the earth stands at the other, the lower end. In this way the light-theme, so dear to the Augustinian School and going back to Plotinus and to Plato's comparison of the Idea of the Good with the sun, finds a prominent place in the philosophy of St. Bonaventure.

4. Obviously if Bonaventure holds that light is a substantial form, possessed by all bodies, he must also hold that there can be a plurality of substantial forms in one substance. For him there was no difficulty in holding this, since he looked on form as that which prepares the body for the reception of other and higher perfections. While for St. Thomas substantial form was limitative and definitive, so that there could not be more than one substantial form in a body, for St. Bonaventure form looked forward and upward, so to speak, not so much rounding off the body and confining it as preparing it for fresh possibilities and perfections. In the *In Hexaēmeron*[2] he went so far as to say that it is mad (*insanum*) to say that the final form is added to prime matter without there being something which is a disposition for it or in potency to it, without there being any intermediate form, and he loved to trace a parallel between the order of grace and that of nature. Just as the gift of knowledge disposes for the gift of wisdom and is not itself annulled by the gift of wisdom, and as the gifts do not annul the theological virtues, so one form predisposes for a higher form and the latter, when received, does not expel the former but crowns it.

5. It is only to be expected that St. Bonaventure, who avowedly walked in the path of the Augustinian tradition, would accept the doctrine of *rationes seminales*, especially as this doctrine lays emphasis on the work of the Creator and diminishes the independence of the natural agent, though it was no more a 'scientific' doctrine in the modern sense of the word with St. Bonaventure

[1] Cf. 2 *Sent.*, 13.

[2] 4, 10.

than it was with St. Augustine: for both men it was required by true Scriptural exegesis or rather by a philosophy which took account of the data of revelation, with the added reason in the case of Bonaventure that it was held by his great predecessor, the Christian philosopher *par excellence,* who was endowed with both the *sermo sapientiae* and the *sermo scientiae.* 'I believe that this position should be held, not only because reason inclines us to it, but also because the authority of Augustine, in his literal commentary on Genesis, confirms it.'[1]

Bonaventure thus maintained a certain *latitatio formarum* of things in matter; but he refused to accept the view that the forms of things which appear in time were originally in matter in an *actual* state, like a picture covered with a cloth, so that the particular agent only uncovers them, like the man who takes away the cloth from the picture and lets the painting appear. On this view contrary forms, which exclude one another, would have been together at the same time in the same subject, which is impossible. Nor will he accept the view that God is the only efficient cause in the eduction of forms, for this would mean that God creates all forms in the way in which He creates the rational human soul and that the secondary agent really does nothing at all, whereas it is clear that its activity really does contribute something to the effect. The second of these two views would reduce or do away altogether with the activity of the created agent, while the first would reduce it to a minimum, and Bonaventure is unwilling to accept either of them. He prefers the view 'which seems to have been that of Aristotle, and which is now commonly held by the doctors of philosophy and theology' that 'almost all the natural forms, corporeal forms at least, such as the forms of the elements and the forms of mixtures, are contained in the potency of matter and are reduced to act (*educuntur in actum*) through the action of a particular agent.' But this may be understood in two ways. It may mean that matter has both the potency to receive the form and the inclination to co-operate in the production of the form and that the form to be produced is in the particular agent as in its effective and original principle, so that the eduction of the form takes place by the multiplication of the form of the agent, as one burning candle may light a multitude of candles, or it may mean that matter contains the form to be educed not only as that in which and, to a certain extent, by which the form is produced, but also as that from which it is produced, though in the sense that it is concreated with matter and in matter, not as an actual, but as a virtual form. On the first hypothesis the forms are not indeed said to be created by the agent, since they do not come out of nothing, though all the same a new essence would seem to be produced in some way, whereas on the second hypothesis no new essence or quiddity is produced, but the form which existed in potency, virtually, is reduced to act, is given a new *dispositio*. The second hypothesis, therefore, attributes less to the created agent than does the first, since the created agent simply brings it about that what formerly existed in one way now exists in another way, whereas on the first hypothesis the created agent would produce something positively new, even if not by way of creation out of nothing. If a gardener tends the rose-tree so that the rose-buds can blossom into roses he does something, it is true, but less than he would do, were he to produce a rose-tree from some other form of tree. Bonaventure, then, anxious to avoid attributing even the semblance of creative powers to a created agent, chooses the hypothesis which attributes less to the work of the created agent and more to the work of the Creator.

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 7, 2, 2, 1, *resp.*

The forms which are educed were, therefore, originally in matter in a virtual state. These virtual forms are the *rationes seminales*. A *ratio seminalis* is an active power, existing in matter, the active power being the essence of the form to be educed, standing to the latter in the relation of *esse incompletum* to *esse completum* or of *esse in potentia* to *esse in actu*.[1] Matter is thus a *seminarium* or seed-bed in which God created in a virtual state corporeal forms which would be successively educed therefrom. This applies not only to the forms of inorganic things, but also to the souls of brutes and vegetables. Needless to say, Bonaventure is aware that the activity of particular agents is necessary for the birth of an animal, but he will not admit the traducianist theory, according to which the soul of a new animal is produced by 'multiplication' of the soul of the parent, yet without any diminution on the latter's part, as this theory implies that a created form can produce a similar form out of nothing.[2] What happens is that the parent animals act upon what they have themselves received, the seminal principle, the seminal principle being an active power or potency containing the new soul in germ, though the activity of the parents is necessary in order that the virtual should become actual. Bonaventure thus steers a middle course between attributing too little or nothing to the created agent and attributing what seemed to him too much, his general principle being that while God produces things out of nothing, a created agent can only produce something which already existed in potency, by which he means in a virtual state.[1] It is, however, useless to look for an exact description and explanation of the concrete working of his theory of *rationes seminales*, since it is founded partly on authority and partly on *a priori* philosophic reasoning, not on empirical observation or scientific experiment.

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 18, 1, 3, *resp.*

[2] *Ibid.*, 2, 15, 1, 1, *resp.*

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[1] Cf. 2 *Sent.*, 7, 2, 2, 2, *resp.*

CHAPTER XXIX

ST. BONAVENTURE—V: THE HUMAN SOUL

Unity of human soul—Relation of soul to body—Immortality of the human soul—Falsity of Averroistic monopsychism—Knowledge of sensible objects and of first logical principles—Knowledge of spiritual realities—Illumination—The soul's ascent to God—Bonaventure as philosopher of the Christian life.

1. We have seen that, according to St. Bonaventure, the souls of animals are produced *seminaliter*; but this does not, of course, apply to the human soul, which is produced immediately by God, created by Him out of nothing. The human soul is the image of God, called to union with God, and on this count (*propter dignitatem*) its production was fittingly reserved by God to Himself. This reasoning involves theology, but Bonaventure also argues that since the human soul is immortal, incorruptible, its production can be effected only by that Principle which has life and perpetuity of itself. The immortality of the human soul implies a 'matter' in the soul which is incapable of being an element in substantial change; but the activity of created agents is confined to working on transmutable matter and the production of a substance with unchangeable matter transcends the power of such agents. It follows that the traducianist view must be rejected, even if Augustine inclined to it on occasion because he thought that thereby he could explain the transmission of original sin.[1]

What is it that God creates? It is the entire human soul, not the rational faculty alone. There is one soul in man, endowed with rational and sensitive faculties, and it is this soul which God creates. The body was contained *seminaliter* in the body of Adam, the first man, and it is transmitted by means of the seed, but this does not mean that the body has a sensitive soul, educed from the potency of matter and distinct from the created and infused rational soul. The seed contains, it is true, not only the superfluity of the father's nourishment, but also something of his *humiditas radicalis*, so that there is in the embryo, before the infusion of the soul, an active disposition towards the act of sensation, a kind of inchoate sensibility; but this disposition is a disposition to accomplishing the act of sensation through the power of the soul, once it has been infused: at the complete animation of the embryo by the infusion of the soul this inchoate sensibility ceases or rather it is subsumed under the activity of the soul, which is the principle of sensation as well as of intellection. In other words, St. Bonaventure is careful to maintain the continuity of life and the reality of parentage while avoiding any splitting of the human soul into two.[1]

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 18, 2, 3, *resp.*

2. The human soul is the form of the body: St. Bonaventure uses the Aristotelian doctrine against those who hold that the souls of all men are one substance. 'The rational soul is the act and entelechy of the human body: therefore since human bodies are distinct, the rational souls which perfect those bodies will also be distinct':[2] the soul is an existent, living, intelligent form, endowed with liberty.[3] It is present wholly in every part of the body, according to the judgement of St. Augustine, which Bonaventure approves as preferable to the theory that the soul is primarily present in a determinate part of the body, the heart for instance. 'Because it is the form of the whole body, it is present in the whole body; because it is simple, it is not present partly here and partly there; because it is the sufficient moving principle (*motor sufficiens*) of the body, it has no particular situation, is not present at one point or in a determinate part.'[4]

But though Bonaventure accepts the Aristotelian definition of the soul as the form of the body, his general tendency is Platonic and Augustinian in character, inasmuch as he insists that the human soul is a spiritual substance, composed of spiritual form and spiritual matter. It is not enough to say that there is in the soul composition of *ex quo est* and *quod est*, since the soul can act and be acted upon, move and be moved, and this argues the presence of 'matter', the principle of passivity and mutability, though this matter transcends extension and corruptibility, being spiritual and not corporeal matter.[5] This doctrine may seem to contradict the admitted simplicity of the human soul, but Bonaventure points out[6] that 'simplicity' has various meanings and degrees. Thus 'simplicity' may refer to absence of quantitative parts, and this the soul enjoys, being simple in comparison with corporeal things; or it may refer to absence of constitutive parts, and this the soul does not enjoy. The main point, however, is that the soul, though form of the body and moving principle of the body, is also much more than this, and can subsist by itself, being *hoc aliquid*, though as a *hoc aliquid* which is partly passive and mutable it must have in it spiritual matter. The doctrine of the hylomorphic composition of the human soul is thus calculated to ensure its dignity and its power of subsistence apart from the body.

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[1] Cf. 2 *Sent.*, 30, 3, 1 and 31, 1, 1.

[2] *Ibid.*, 18, 2, 1, *contra* 1.

[3] *Breviloq.*, 2, 9.

[4] 1 *Sent.*, 8, 2, *art. un.*, 3, *resp.*

[5] 2 *Sent.*, 17, 1, 2, *resp.*

[6] *Ibid.*, *ad* 5.

If the soul is composed of form and spiritual matter, it follows that it is individuated by its own principles.[1] If this is so, however, why is it united with the body, for it is an individual spiritual substance in its own right? The answer is that the soul, even though a spiritual substance, is so constituted that it not only can inform a body but also has a natural inclination to do so. Conversely, the body, though also composed of matter and form, has an *appetitus* for being informed by the soul. The union of the two is thus for the perfection of each and is not to the detriment of either soul or body.[2] The soul does not exist simply, or even primarily, to move the body[3] but to enjoy God; yet it exercises its powers and potentialities fully only in informing the body and it will one day, at the resurrection, be reunited with the body. Aristotle was ignorant of this, and it is not to be wondered at that he was ignorant of it, for 'a philosopher necessarily falls into some error, unless he is aided by the light of faith'.[4]

3. The doctrine of the hylomorphic composition of the human soul naturally facilitates the proof of its immortality, since Bonaventure does not link the soul so closely to the body as does the Aristotelian doctrine; but his favourite proof is the one drawn from the consideration of the ultimate purpose of the soul (*ex consideratione finis*). The soul seeks for perfect happiness (a fact which no one doubts, 'unless his reason is entirely perverted'). But no one can be perfectly happy if he is afraid of losing what he possesses: on the contrary, it is this very fear which makes him miserable. Therefore, as the soul has a natural desire for perfect happiness, it must be naturally immortal. This proof presupposes the existence of God, of course, and the possibility of attaining perfect happiness, as also the existence of a natural desire for human happiness; but it was Bonaventure's favourite proof because of its spiritual character, because of its connection with

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 18, 2, 1, *ad* 1.

[2] *Ibid.*, 18, 2, 1, *ad* 6.

[3] Cf., *ibid.* 17, 1, 2, *ad* 6.

[4] *Ibid.*

the movement of the soul towards God: it is for him the *ratio principalis*, the principle argument.[1]

In a rather similar way he argues[2] from consideration of the formal cause, from the nature of the soul as the image of God. Because the soul has been made for the attainment of happiness, which consists in the possession of the supreme Good, God, it must be capable of possessing God (*capax Dei*) and so must be made in His image and likeness. But it would not be made in the likeness of God if it were mortal. Therefore it must be immortal. Again (arguing *ex parte materiae*), Bonaventure declares that the form of the rational soul is of such dignity that it makes the soul like to God, with the result that the matter which is united to this form (i.e. the spiritual matter) finds its satisfaction and completion in union with this form alone, so that it must be likewise immortal.

Bonaventure gives other arguments, such as that from the necessity of sanctions in an after life[3] and from the impossibility of God's bringing the good to frustration. In the latter proof he argues that it would be against divine justice for that which has been well done to tend towards evil and frustration. Now, according to all moral teaching a man ought to die rather than commit injustice. But if the soul were mortal, then its adhesion to justice, lauded by all moral philosophers, would come to nothing, and this is contrary to divine justice. More Aristotelian in character are the arguments drawn from the soul's power of reflection on itself and from its intellectual activity, which has no intrinsic dependence on the body, to prove its superiority to corporeal matter and its incorruptibility.[4] But though these Aristotelian proofs are probably more acceptable to us, as presupposing less and as involving no theology, in Bonaventure's eyes it was the proofs borrowed from Augustine or dependent on his line of thought which were more telling, especially that from the desire of beatitude. The Augustinian proof from the soul's apprehension of and assimilation to abiding truth is given by Bonaventure,[5] but it does not appear as a *potissimus modus* of proving the soul's immortality. This qualification is reserved for the proofs drawn from the desire for beatitude.

If it were objected against Bonaventure that this form of proof presupposes the desire for union with God, for beatitude in the full sense, and that this desire is elicited only under the action of grace and so belongs to the supernatural order and not to the order of nature, which is the object of the philosopher's study, the Saint would doubtless answer that he had not the slightest intention of denying the work of grace or its supernatural character, but that, on the other hand, the true philosopher considers the world and human life as they are and that one of the data is precisely the desire for complete happiness. Even though the desire may imply the operation of grace, it is a datum of experience and so can be taken into account by the philosopher. If the philosopher cannot explain it without recourse to theology, that is only another proof of Bonaventure's principle that no philosophy can be satisfactory unless it is illumined by the light of faith. In other words, whereas the 'Thomist' systematically eliminates from the data of experience all he knows to be supernatural and then, as philosopher, considers the resulting 'nature', the Bonaventurian philosopher starts from nature in the sense of the given. It is perfectly true that grace is not something 'given' in the sense of visible or apprehensible with certainty by unaided reason, but some of its effects are given in experience and these the philosopher will take into account, though he cannot explain them without reference to theology. The Thomist approach and the Bonaventurian approach are therefore different and one cannot force them into the same mould without thereby distorting one or the other.

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 19, 1, 1, *resp.*

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, *sed contra* 3, 4.

[4] *Ibid.*, 7ff.; cf. *De Anima*, Bk. 3.

[5] 2 *Sent.*, 11.

4. All that has been said on the human soul implies the individuality of the soul, but Bonaventure was quite aware of the Averroistic interpretation of Aristotle and argued explicitly against it. Averroes maintained that both the active and passive intellects survive death, and, whatever Aristotle himself may have taught, his commentator, Averroes, certainly held that these intellects are not individual to each man, are not parts or faculties of individual men, but rather unitary substances, cosmic intelligences. Such a position, however, is not only heretical and contrary to the Christian religion, but also against reason and experience.[1] It is against reason since it is clear that the intellectual soul is a perfection of man as man, and men differ from one another, are individual persons, as men and not merely as animals, which would be the case if the rational soul were numerically one in all men. It is against experience, since it is a matter of experience that different men have different thoughts. And it is no good saying that this difference of thoughts comes simply from the diversity of *species*

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 18, 2, 1, *resp.*

in the imaginations of different men, that is, that it is only the perishable imagination, fed by the senses, which is different in different individuals, since men differ in ideas, for example, of the virtues, which are not founded on sense-perception and which are not abstracted from imaginative *species*. Nor, from the point of view of Bonaventure, is it a good argument to say that the intellectual soul is independent of the body and cannot therefore be individuated by it, for the soul is not individuated by the body but by the union of its two constitutive principles, spiritual matter and spiritual form.

5. In regard to the content of the soul's knowledge of sensible objects, this is dependent on sense-perception, and St. Bonaventure agrees with Aristotle that the soul does not of itself have either knowledge or species of sensible objects: the human intellect is created in a state of 'nudity' and is dependent on the senses and imagination.[1] The sensible object acts upon the sense organ and produces therein a sensible species, which in turn acts upon the faculty of sensation, and then perception takes place. It will be noted that St. Bonaventure, in admitting a passive element in sensation, departs from the teaching of St. Augustine; but at the same time he holds that the faculty of sensation or sensitive power of the soul judges the content of sensation, for example, that this is white, the passive reception of the species being attributed primarily to the organ, the activity of the judgement to the faculty.[2] This judgement is not, of course, a reflective judgement, it is rather a spontaneous awareness; but it is possible because the faculty of sensation is the sensitive faculty of a rational soul, for it is the soul which communicates to the body the act of sensation.[3] The separate sensations, for example, of colour and touch, are unified by the 'common sense' and preserved in the imagination, which is not the same as 'memory' if the latter is taken as meaning *recordatio* or recalling at will.[4] Finally the active and passive intellects, working in co-operation, abstract the species from the imagination. The active and passive intellects are not two powers, one of which can work without the other, but are two 'differences' of the same intellectual faculty of the soul. We can indeed say that the active intellect abstracts and the passive intellect receives, but Bonaventure qualifies this statement by affirming that the

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 3, 2, 2, 1, *resp.* and *ad* 4.

[2] *Ibid.*, 8, 1, 3, 2, *ad* 7.

[3] *Ibid.*, 25, 2, *art. un.*, 6, *resp.*

[4] *Ibid.*, 7, 2, 1, 2, *resp.*, where Bonaventure distinguishes memory as habit, *retentio speciei*, from the act of remembering or *recordatio*.

passive intellect has the power of abstracting the species and judging it, though *only* with the help of the active intellect, while the active intellect is dependent for its activity of knowing on the information of the passive intellect by the species. There is, in fact, only one complete act of intellection and the active and passive intellects co-operate inseparably in that act.[1]

Clearly, then, apart from various 'Augustinianisms', such as the refusal to make a real distinction between the faculties of the soul, Bonaventure's view of the way in which we acquire our knowledge of sensible objects approximates more or less closely to the Aristotelian theory. He admits that the soul, in regard to knowledge of such objects, is originally a *tabula rasa*,[2] and he has no place for innate ideas. Moreover, this rejection of innate ideas applies also to our knowledge of first principles. Some people have said that these principles are innate in the active intellect, though acquired as far as the possible intellect is concerned; but such a theory agrees neither with the words of Aristotle nor with the truth. For if these principles were innate in the active intellect, why could it not communicate them to the possible intellect without the help of the senses, and why does it not know these principles from the very beginning? A modified version of innatism is that the principles are innate in their most general form while the conclusions or particular applications are acquired, but it would be difficult on such a view to show why a child does not know the first principles in their general form. Moreover, even this modified innatism contradicts both Aristotle and Augustine. Bonaventure doubtless considered that a theory which united against it both Aristotle and Augustine could not possibly be true. It remains then to say that the principles are innate only in the sense that the intellect is endowed with a natural light which enables it to apprehend the principles in their universality when it has acquired knowledge of the relevant species or ideas. For example, no one knows what a whole is or a part until he has acquired the species or idea in dependence on sense-perception; but once he has acquired the idea, the light of the intellect enables him to apprehend the principle that the whole is greater than the part.[3] On this matter, therefore, St. Bonaventure is at one with St. Thomas.

6. But though we have no innate knowledge of sensible objects or of their essences or of the first principles, logical or mathematical,

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[1] *2 Sent.*, 24, 1, 2, 4.

[2] *Ibid.*, *resp.*

[3] *Ibid.*, 39, 1, 2, *resp.*

it does not follow that our knowledge of purely spiritual realities is acquired through sense-perception. 'God is not known by means of a likeness drawn from sense',[1] but rather by the soul's reflection on itself. It has no intuitive vision of God, of the divine Essence, in this life, but it is made in the image of God and is orientated towards God in desire and will, so that reflection on its own nature and on the direction of the will enables the soul to form the idea of God without recourse to the external sensible world. In this sense the idea of God is 'innate', though not in the sense that every man has from the beginning a clear, explicit and accurate knowledge of God. The direction of the will, its desire for complete happiness, is the effect of the divine action itself, and reflection on this desire manifests to the soul the existence of the Object of the desire, which indeed it already knows in a kind of vague awareness, though not necessarily in an explicit idea. 'The knowledge of this truth (God's existence) is innate in the rational mind, inasmuch as the mind is an image of God, by reason of which it has a natural appetite and knowledge and memory of Him in whose image it has been made and towards whom it naturally tends, that it may find its beatitude in Him.'[2] The knowledge of God is of various kinds: God has a comprehensive knowledge of Himself, the Blessed know Him clearly (*clare et perspicue*), we know Him partly and in a hidden way (*ex parte et in aenigmate*), this last knowledge being contained implicitly in or implied by the knowledge which each soul has that it did not always exist and must have had a beginning.[3]

The knowledge of the virtues too must be 'innate' in the sense that it is not derived from sense-perception. An unjust man can know what justice is; but obviously he cannot know justice through its presence in his soul, since he does not possess it, nor can he know it through abstraction from sensible species, since it is not an object of sense and has no likeness in the world of sense. He cannot know it by its effects, since he would not recognise the effects of justice unless he previously knew what justice is, just as one cannot recognise the effects of a man's activity as the effects of a man's activity unless one previously knows what a man is.[4] There must, therefore, be some *a priori* or innate knowledge of the virtues. In what sense is it innate? There is no innate idea (*species innata*) in the sense of a clear idea or intellectual likeness of the virtue in the mind from its beginning; but there is present in the soul a natural light by which it can recognise truth and rectitude, and there is present also an affection or inclination of the will. The soul knows, therefore, what rectitude is and what an affection or inclination of the will is, and in this way it recognises what *rectitudo affectionis* is. As this is charity, it knows what charity is, even though it does not actually possess the virtue of charity.[1]

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[1] *2 Sent.*, 39, 1, 2, *resp.*

[2] *De Myst. Trinit.*, 1, 1, *resp.*

[3] *Ibid.*, 1, 2, *ad* 14.

[4] *De Scientia Christi*, 4, 23.

Thus the knowledge of the virtues is innate in much the same sense as knowledge of God is innate, not as an innate explicit species or idea, but in the sense that the soul has in itself all the material needed to form the explicit idea, without its being necessary for it to have recourse to the sensible world. The innate idea of Bonaventure is a virtually innate idea. Of course, there is one big difference between our knowledge of the virtues and our knowledge of God, for while we can never apprehend the essence of God in this life, it is possible to apprehend the essence of the virtues. However, the ways in which we arrive at the knowledge of the virtues and of God are similar, and we can say that the soul possesses an innate knowledge of the principles necessary to its conduct. It knows by self-reflection what God is, what fear is and what love is, and so it knows what it is to fear and to love God.[2] If anyone quotes in opposition the Philosopher's dictum *nihil est in intellectu, quod prius non fuerit in sensu,* the answer is that the dictum must be understood as having reference only to our knowledge of sensible objects or to the acquisition of ideas which are capable of being formed by abstraction from sensible species.[3]

7. But though Bonaventure will not admit that the first principles relating to the world about us or indeed even the first principles of conduct are explicit in the mind from the beginning or infused into it from outside apart from any activity on the part of the mind itself, it does not follow that he is prepared to dispense with the Augustinian doctrine of illumination; on the contrary, he regards it as one of the cardinal truths of metaphysics.

Truth is the *adaequatio rei et intellectus,*[4] involving the object known and the knowing intellect. In order that truth in this sense, truth apprehended, may exist, conditions are required on the part of both subject and object, immutability on the part of the latter and infallibility on the part of the former.[5] But if Bonaventure is prepared to echo in this way the words of the

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[1] 1 *Sent.*, 17, 1, *art. un.*, 4, *resp.*

[2] 2 *Sent.*, 39, 1, 2, *resp.*

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] 1 *Sent.*, *resp.*, *ad* 1, 2, 3; cf. *Breviloq.*, 6, 8.

[5] *De Scientia Christi*, 4, *resp.*

Theaetetus, demanding these two conditions in order that *cognitio certitudinalis*, certain knowledge, may exist, he is necessarily faced by problems similar to those with which Plato and Augustine were faced, since no created object is strictly immutable and all sensible objects are perishable, while the human mind is not *of itself* infallible in regard to any class of object. It must, therefore, receive help from outside, and naturally Bonaventure had recourse to the Augustinian theory of illumination, which commended itself to him, not only because St. Augustine had held it but also because it emphasised both the dependence of the human intellect on God and the interior activity of God in the human soul. For him it was both an epistemological truth and a religious truth, something that could be established as a necessary conclusion from a study of the nature and requirements of certainty and also something upon which one could profitably meditate in the religious sense. Indeed for him the intellectual life and the spiritual life cannot properly be separated.

The human mind, then, is subject to change, doubt, error, while the phenomena which we experience and know are also changeable. On the other hand it is an indubitable fact that the human mind does possess certainties and knows that it does so and that we apprehend unchanging essences and principles. It is only God, however, who is unchanging, and this means that the human mind is aided by God and that the object of its certain knowledge is seen in some way as rooted in God, as existing in the *rationibus aeternis* or divine ideas. But we do not apprehend these divine ideas directly, in themselves, and Bonaventure points out with Augustine that to follow the Platonic doctrine is to open the door to scepticism, since if the only certain knowledge attainable is direct knowledge of the eternal archetypes or exemplars and if we have no direct knowledge of these archetypes, the necessary conclusion is that true certainty is unattainable by the human mind.[1] On the other hand it is not sufficient to say that the *ratio aeterna* influences the mind in this sense only, that the knowing mind attains not the eternal principle itself but only its influence, as a *habitus mentis*, for the latter would be itself created and subject to the same conditions as the mind of which it is a disposition.[2] The *rationes aeternae*, then, must have a direct regulative action on the human mind, though remaining themselves unseen. It is they which move the mind and rule the mind in its certain judgements, enabling it to apprehend the certain and eternal truths in the speculative and moral orders and to make certain and true judgements even concerning sensible objects: it is their action (which is the divine illumination) which enables the mind to apprehend the unchanging and stable essences in the fleeting and changing objects of experience. This does not mean that Bonaventure contradicts the approval he has given to Aristotle's doctrine about our knowledge of the sensible world, but it does mean that he considers it insufficient. Without sense-perception we would never indeed know sensible objects and it is quite true that the intellect abstracts, but the divine illumination, the direct action of the *ratio aeterna*, is necessary in order that the mind should see in the object the reflection of the unchanging *ratio* and be able to make an infallible judgement concerning it. Sense-perception is required in order that our ideas of sensible objects should arise, but the stability and necessity of our judgements concerning them are due to the action of the *rationes aeternae*, since neither are the sensible objects of our experience unchanging nor are the minds which know them infallible of themselves. The dim (*obtenebratae*) species of our minds, affected by the obscurity of *phantasmata*, are thus illumined in order that the mind should know. 'For if to have real knowledge means to know that a thing cannot possibly be otherwise, it is necessary that He alone should cause us to know, who knows the truth and has the truth in Himself.'[1] Thus it is through the *ratio aeterna* that the mind judges all those things which we know by the senses.[2]

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[1] *De Scientia Christi*, 4, *resp.*

[2] *Ibid.*

In the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*[3] St. Bonaventure describes how the exterior sensible objects produce a likeness of themselves (*similitudo*) first in the medium and then through the medium on the organ of sense, and so on the interior sense. The particular sense, or the faculty of sensation acting through the particular sense, judges that this object is white or black or whatever it is, and the interior sense that it is pleasing, beautiful, or the reverse. The intellectual faculty, turning itself towards the species, asks why the object represented is beautiful and judges that it is beautiful because it possesses certain characteristics. But this judgement implies a reference to an idea of beauty which is stable and unchanging, not bound to place or time. This is where the divine illumination comes in, namely to explain the judgement in its unchanging and supertemporal aspect by reference to the

[1] *In Hexaëm.*, 12, 5.

[2] *Itin. Mentis in Deum*, 2, 9.

[3] 2, 4–6.

directing and regulating *ratio aeterna*, not to supersede or annul the work of the senses or the activity of abstraction. All sensible objects which are known enter the mind through the three psychical operations of *apprehensio*, *oblectatio* and *diiudicatio*, but the latter operation, to be true and certain, must be a judgement made in the light of the *rationes aeternae*.

Now, as we have seen earlier, the *rationes aeternae* are ontologically identified and are in fact identical with the Word of God. It follows then that it is the Word which illuminates the human mind, that Word which enlightens every man who comes into the world. 'Christ is the interior teacher and no truth is known except through Him, not by His speaking as we speak, but by His enlightening us interiorly. . . . He is intimately present to every soul and by His most clear ideas He shines upon the dark ideas of our minds.'[1] We have no vision of the Word of God and though the light is so intimately within us, it is invisible, *inaccessibilis*: we can only reason to its presence from observation of its effects.[2] Thus Bonaventure's doctrine of illumination and his interpretation of Augustine do not involve ontologism. His doctrine completes his seemingly Aristotelian affirmation of abstraction and his denial of the properly innate character of even the first principles, giving to his teaching a peculiar and non-Aristotelian, an Augustinian flavour and colour. We abstract, yes, but we could not seize the intelligible and stable merely through abstraction, we need also the divine illumination: we can attain knowledge of moral principles by interior reflection, yes, but we could not apprehend their unchanging and necessary character without the regulative and guiding action of the divine light. Aristotle failed to see this, he failed to see that as we cannot know creatures fully unless we see them as *exemplata* of the divine *exemplar*, so we cannot form certain judgements about them without the light of the divine Word, of the *Ratio Aeterna*. Exemplarism and illumination are closely connected, the true metaphysician recognises them both: Aristotle recognised neither.

8. There are only four faculties of the soul, the vegetative and sensitive powers, the intellect and the will; but Bonaventure distinguishes various 'aspects' of the soul and, in particular, of the intellect or mind according to the objects to which its attention is directed and according to the way in which it is directed. It would, then, be a mistake to suppose that he meant that *ratio*,

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[1] *In Hexaëm.*, 12, 5.

[2] *Ibid.*, 12, 11.

intellectus, *intelligentia* and *apex mentis* or *synderesis scintilla*[1] are all different faculties of the soul:. they denote rather different functions of the rational soul in its upward ascent from sensible creatures to God Himself. In the Commentary on the *Sentences*[2] he says expressly that the division of the reason into lower and higher (*ratio inferior* and *ratio superior*) is not a division into different faculties: it is a division into *officia* and *dispositiones*, which is something more than a division into aspects (*aspectus*). The lower reason is reason turned towards sense-objects, the higher reason is reason turned towards intelligible objects, and the term 'lower' and 'higher' thus refer to different functions or *officia* of the same faculty; but there is this further point to be added, that the reason as directed to intelligibles is strengthened and invigorated, whereas, directed to sensibles, it is in a manner weakened and drawn down, so that although there is only one *ratio*, the distinction between higher and lower reason corresponds not only to different functions, but also to different dispositions of the one reason.

The stages of the upward ascent of the mind scarcely need much elaboration, as they are more connected with ascetical and mystical theology than with philosophy in our sense; but since they are connected with philosophy in Bonaventure's understanding of the term, it is as well to touch very briefly on them, as they illustrate his tendency to integrate philosophy and theology as closely as possible. Walking in the footsteps of Augustine and the Victorines Bonaventure traces the ascending stages of the soul's life, stages which correspond to different potentialities in the soul and lead him from the sphere of nature into that of grace. Starting from the soul's sensitive powers (*sensualitas*) he shows how the soul may see in sensible objects the *vestigia Dei*, as it contemplates sensible things first as God's effects, then as things wherein God is present, and he accompanies it, with Augustine, as it retires within itself and contemplates its natural constitution and powers as the image of God. The intelligence is then shown contemplating God in the soul's faculties renewed and elevated by grace, being enabled to do so by the Word of God. In this stage, however, the soul still contemplates God in His image, which is the soul itself, even if elevated by grace, and it can proceed yet further, to the contemplation of God *supra nos*, first as Being, then as the Good. Being is good, and the contemplation of God as Being, the perfection of being, leads to the realisation of Being as the Good, as

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[1] *Itin. Mentis in Deum*, 1, 6.

[2] 2 *Sent.*, 24, 1, 2, 2, *resp.*

diffusivum sui, and so to the contemplation of the Blessed Trinity. Further than this the intellect cannot go: beyond lies the luminous darkness of mystical contemplation and ecstasy, the *apex affectus* outstripping the mind. The will, however, is a faculty of the one human soul and, though issuing from the substance of the soul, it is not a distinct accident, so that to say that the affection of the will outruns the intellect is simply to say that the soul is united to God by love so closely that the light infused into it blinds it. There can be but one higher stage, reserved for the next life, and that is the vision of God in heaven.

9. It will be remembered that the three cardinal points of metaphysics for Bonaventure are creation, exemplarism and illumination. His metaphysical system is thus a unity in that the doctrine of creation reveals the world as proceeding from God, created out of nothing and wholly dependent on Him, while the doctrine of exemplarism reveals the world of creatures as standing to God in the relation of imitation to model, of *exemplatum* to *exemplar*, while the doctrine of illumination traces the stages of the soul's return to God by way of contemplation of sensible creatures, of itself and finally of Perfect Being. The divine action is always emphasised. Creation out of nothing can be proved, as also God's presence and activity in creatures and especially in the soul itself: God's action enters into the apprehension of every certain truth, and even though for the establishment of the higher stages of the soul's ascent the data of theology are required, there is in a sense a continuity of divine action in increasing intensity. God acts in every man's mind when he attains truth, but at this stage the activity of God is not all-sufficient, man is also active through the use of his natural powers: in the higher stages God's action progressively increases until in ecstasy God takes possession of the soul and man's intellectual activity is superseded.

Bonaventure may thus be termed the philosopher of the Christian life, who makes use of both reason and faith in order to produce his synthesis. This integration of reason and faith, philosophy and theology, is emphasised by the place he accords to Christ, the Word of God. Just as creation and exemplarism cannot be properly understood apart from the realisation that it is through the Word of God that all things are created and that it is the Word of God, the consubstantial image of the Father, whom all creatures mirror, so illumination in its various stages cannot be properly understood apart from the realisation that it is the Word of God who illumines every man, the Word of God who is the door through which the soul enters into God above itself, the Word of God who, through the Holy Spirit whom He has sent, inflames the soul and leads it beyond the limitations of its clear ideas into the ecstatic union. Finally it is the Word of God who shows us the Father and opens to us the beatific vision of heaven. Christ in fact is the *medium omnium scientiarum*,[1] of metaphysics as of theology, for though the metaphysician as such cannot attain to knowledge of the Word through the use of the natural reason, he can form no true and certain judgements without the illumination of the Word, even if he is quite unaware of this, and in addition his science is incomplete and vitiated by its incompleteness unless it is crowned by theology.

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[1] *In Hexaëm.*, I, 11.

CHAPTER XXX

ST. ALBERT THE GREAT

Life and intellectual activity—Philosophy and theology—God—Creation—The soul—Reputation and importance of St. Albert.

1. ALBERT THE GREAT was born in 1206 at Lauingen in Swabia, but left Germany in order to study the arts at Padua, where he entered the Dominican Order in 1223. After having lectured in theology at Cologne and other places he received the doctorate at Paris in 1245, having Thomas Aquinas among his pupils from 1245 to 1248. In the latter year he returned to Cologne accompanied by Thomas, in order to establish the Dominican house of studies there. His purely intellectual work was interrupted, however, by administrative tasks which were laid upon him. Thus from 1254 until 1257 he was Provincial of the German Province and from 1260 until 1262 Bishop of Ratisbon. Visits to Rome and the preaching of a Crusade in Bohemia also occupied his time, but he seems to have adopted Cologne as his general place of residence. It was from Cologne that he set out for Paris in 1277, to defend the opinions of Thomas Aquinas (died 1274), and it was at Cologne that he died on November 15th, 1280.

It is clear enough from his writings and activities that Albert the Great was a man of wide intellectual interests and sympathies, and it is hardly to be expected that a man of his type would ignore the rise of Aristotelianism in the Parisian Faculty of Arts, especially as he was well aware of the stir and trouble caused by the new tendencies. As a man of open mind and ready intellectual sympathy he was not one to adopt an uncompromisingly hostile attitude to the new movement, though, on the other hand, he was not without strong sympathy for the neo-Platonist and Augustinian tradition. Therefore, while he adopted Aristotelian elements and incorporated them into his philosophy, he retained much of the Augustinian and non-Aristotelian tradition, and his philosophy bears the character of a transitional stage on the way to that fuller incorporation of Aristotelianism which was achieved by his great pupil, St. Thomas Aquinas. Moreover, being primarily a theologian, Albert could not but be sensible of the important points on which Aristotle's thought clashes with Christian doctrine, and that uncritical acceptance of Aristotle which became fashionable in a section of the Faculty of Arts was impossible for him. It is indeed no matter for surprise that though he composed paraphrases on many of the logical, physical (for example, on the *Physics* and *De Caelo et Mundo*), metaphysical and ethical works (*Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*) of Aristotle, he did not hesitate to point out errors committed by the Philosopher and published a *De unitate intellectus* against Averroes. His declared intention in composing the paraphrases was to make Aristotle intelligible to the Latins, and he professed to give simply an objective account of Aristotle's opinions; but in any case he could not criticise Aristotle without showing something of his own ideas, even if his commentaries are for the most part impersonal paraphrases and explanations of the Philosopher's works.

It has not been found possible to determine with any degree of accuracy the dates of Albert's writings or even the order in which he published them, but it seems that the publication of his Commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard and the *Summa de Creaturis* antedate the publication of his paraphrases of Aristotle's works. He also published Commentaries on the books of the Pseudo-Dionysius. The *De unitate intellectus* appears to have been composed after 1270, and the *Summa theologiae*, which may be a compilation due to other hands, remained unfinished.

One cannot pass over in silence a remarkable side of Albert's interest and activity, his interest in the physical sciences. In an enlightened manner he insisted on the necessity of observation and experiment in these matters, and in his *De vegetalibus* and *De animalibus* he gives the results of his own observations as well as ideas of earlier writers. Apropos of his description of trees and plants he remarks that what he has set down is the result of his own experience or has been borrowed from authors whom he knows to have confirmed their ideas by observation, for in such matters experience alone can give certainty.[1] His speculations are often very sensible, as when, in opposition to the idea that the earth south of the equator is uninhabitable, he affirms that the reverse is probably true, though the cold at the poles may be so excessive as to prevent habitation. If, however, there are animals living there, we must suppose that they have coats thick enough to protect them against the climate and these coats are probably white in colour. In any case it is unreasonable to suppose that people living on the lower part of the earth would fall off, since the term 'lower' is only relative to us.[1] Naturally Albert relies very much on the opinions, observations and guesses of his predecessors; but he frequently appeals to his own observation, to what he has personally noticed of the habits of migrating birds, or of the nature of plants, for example, and he shows a robust common sense, as when he makes it plain that *a priori* arguments for the uninhabitable character of the 'torrid zone' cannot outweigh the evident fact that parts of lands which we know to be inhabited lie in that zone. Again, when speaking of the lunar halo or 'rainbow',[2] he remarks that according to Aristotle this phenomenon occurs only twice in fifty years, whereas he and others have observed it twice in one year, so that Aristotle must have been speaking from hearsay and not from experience. In any case, whatever value the particular conclusions drawn by St. Albert have, it is the spirit of curiosity and the reliance on observation and experiment which is remarkable and helps to distinguish him from so many Scholastics of a later period. Incidentally this spirit of inquiry and wide interests brings him near, in this respect, to Aristotle, since the Philosopher himself was well aware of the value of empirical research in scientific matters, however much later disciples may have received all his dicta as unquestionable and lacked his inquiring spirit and many-sided interests.

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[1] *Liber 6, de Veget. et Plantis*, Tract. 1, c. 1.

2. St. Albert the Great is quite clear as to the distinction between theology and philosophy, and so between the theology which takes as its foundation the data of revelation and the theology which is the work of the unaided natural reason and belongs to metaphysical philosophy. Thus metaphysics or first theology treats of God as the first Being (*secundum quod substat proprietatibus entis primi*), while theology treats of God as known by faith (*secundum quod substat attributis quae per fidem attribuuntur*). Again, the philosopher works under the influence of the general light of reason given to all men, by which light he sees the first principles, while the theologian works by the supernatural light of faith, through which he receives the revealed dogmas.[3] St. Albert has, therefore, little sympathy for those who deny or belittle philosophy, since not only does he make use of dialectic in theological reasoning, but he also recognises philosophy itself as an independent science. Against those who assert that it is wrong

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[1] Cf. *De Natura Locorum*, Tract. 1, cc. 6, 7, 8, 12.

[2] *Liber* 3, *Meteorum*, Tract. 4, c. 11.

[3] 1 *Summa Theol.*, 1, 4, *ad* 2 *et* 3.

to introduce philosophic reasoning into theology, he admits that such reasoning cannot be primary, since a dogma is proved *tamquam ex priori*, that is, a dogma is shown by the theologian to have been revealed and is not a conclusion from philosophic argument; but he goes on to say that philosophic arguments can be of real utility in a secondary capacity, when dealing with objections brought by hostile philosophers, and speaks of the ignorant people who want to attack in every way the employment of philosophy and who are like 'brute animals blaspheming against that of which they are ignorant'.[1] Even in the Order of Preachers there was opposition to philosophy and the study of such 'profane' science, and one of the greatest services rendered by St. Albert was to promote the study and use of philosophy in his own Order.

3. The doctrine of St. Albert is not a homogeneous system, but rather a mixture of Aristotelian and neo-Platonic elements. For instance, he appeals to Aristotle when giving a proof for God's existence from motion,[2] and he argues that an infinite chain of *principia* is impossible and contradictory, since there would in reality be no *principium*. The *primum principium* or first principle must, by the very fact that it is the first principle, have its existence from itself and not from another: its existence (*esse*) must be its substance and essence.[3] It is the necessary Being, without any admixture of contingence or of potency, and Albert shows also that it is intelligent, living, omnipotent, free, and so on, in such a way that it is its own intelligence; that in God's knowledge of Himself there is no distinction between subject and object; that His will is not something distinct from His essence. Finally he carefully distinguishes God, the first Principle, from the world by observing that none of the names which we ascribe to God can be predicated of Him in their primary sense. If, for example, He is called substance, this is not because He falls within the category of substance, but because He is above all substances and the whole category of substance. Similarly, the term 'being' primarily refers to the general abstract idea of being, which cannot be predicated of God.[4] In fine, it is truer to say of God that we know what He is not rather than what He is.[5] One may say, then, that in the philosophy of St. Albert God is depicted, in dependence on Aristotle, as first unmoved Mover, as pure Act and as the self-

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[1] *Comm. in Epist.* 9 *B. Dion. Areop.*, 7, 2.

[2] *Lib.* 1, *de causis et proc. universitatis*, 1, 7.

[3] *Ibid.*, 1, 8.

[4] *Ibid.*, 3, 6.

[5] *Comm. in Epist.* 9 *B. Dion. Areop.*, 1.

knowing Intellect, but emphasis is laid, in dependence on the writings of the Pseudo-Dionysius, on the fact that God transcends all our concepts and all the names we predicate of Him.

4. This combination of Aristotle and the Pseudo-Dionysius safeguards the divine transcendence and is the foundation for a doctrine of analogy; but when it comes to describing the creation of the world Albert interprets Aristotle according to the doctrine of the *Peripatetici*, that is to say, according to what are in reality neo-Platonic interpretations. Thus he uses the words *fluxus* and *emanatio* (*fluxus est emanatio formae a primo fonte, qui omnium formarum est fons et origo*)[1] and maintains that the first principle, *intellectus universaliter agens*, is the source whence flows the second intelligence, the latter the source whence flows the third intelligence, and so on. From each subordinate intelligence is derived its own proper sphere, until eventually the earth comes into being. This general scheme (Albert gives several particular schemes, culled from the 'ancients') might seem to impair the divine transcendence and immutability, as also the creative activity of God; but St. Albert does not, of course, think of God as becoming less through the process of emanation or as undergoing any change, while he also insists that a subordinate cause works only in dependence on, with the help of, the higher cause, so that the whole process must ultimately be referred to God. This process is variously represented as a graded diffusion of goodness or as a graded diffusion of light. However, it is clear that in this picture of creation St. Albert is inspired far more by the *Liber de causis*, the neo-Platonists and the neo-Platonising Aristotelians than by the historic Aristotle, while on the other hand he does not appear to have realised that the neo-Platonic notion of emanation, though not strictly pantheistic, since God remains distinct from all other beings, is yet not fully in tune with the Christian doctrine of free creation out of nothing. I do not mean to suggest for a moment that St. Albert intended to substitute the neo-Platonic emanation process for the Christian doctrine: rather did he try to express the latter in terms of the former, without apparently realising the difficulties involved in such an attempt.

St. Albert departs from the Augustinian-Franciscan tradition by holding that reason cannot demonstrate with certainty the world's creation in time, that is, that the world was not created from eternity,[2] and also by denying that angels and the human soul are composed of matter and form, in this evidently thinking of matter as related to quantity; but on the other hand he accepts the doctrine of the *rationes seminales* and that of light as the *forma corporeitatis*. Moreover, besides adopting doctrines sometimes from Aristotelianism and sometimes from Augustinianism or neo-Platonism, St. Albert adopts phrases from the one tradition while interpreting them in the sense of the other, as when he speaks of seeing essences in the divine light, while meaning that the human reason and its operation is a reflection of the divine light, an effect thereof, but not that a special illuminating activity of God is required over and above the creation and conservation of the intellect. In general he follows the Aristotelian theory of abstraction. Again, Albert by no means always makes his meaning clear, so that it remains doubtful whether or not he considered that the distinction between essence and existence is real or conceptual. As he denied the presence of matter in the angels, while affirming that they are composed of 'essential parts', it would indeed seem reasonable to suppose that he maintained the theory of the real distinction, and he speaks in this sense on occasion; but at other times he speaks as if he held the Averroist theory of a conceptual distinction. We are left in difficulty as to the interpretation of his thought on this and other points owing to his habit of giving various different theories without any definite indication of which solution to the problem he himself adopted. It is not always clear how far he is simply reporting the opinions of others and how far he is committing himself to the affirmation of the opinions in question. It is impossible, then, to speak of a completed 'system' of Albert the Great: his thought is really a stage in the adoption of the Aristotelian philosophy as an intellectual instrument for the expression of the Christian outlook. The process of adopting and adapting the Aristotelian philosophy was carried much further by St. Albert's great pupil, Thomas Aquinas; but it would be a mistake to exaggerate the Aristotelianism even of the latter. Both men remained to a great extent in the tradition of Augustine, though both men, St. Albert in an incomplete, St. Thomas in a more complete fashion, interpreted Augustine according to the categories of Aristotle.

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[1] *Lib.* 1, *de causis et proc. universitatis*, 4, 1.

[2] *In Phys.*, 8, 1, 13.

5. St. Albert was convinced that the immortality of the soul can be demonstrated by reason. Thus in his book on the nature and origin of the soul[1] he gives a number of proofs, arguing, for

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[1] *Liber de natura et origine animae*, 2, 6; cf. also *De Anima*, 3.

example, that the soul transcends matter in its intellectual operations, having the principle of such operations in itself, and so cannot depend on the body *secundum esse et essentiam.* But he will not allow that the arguments for the unicity of the active intellect in all men are valid, arguments which, if probative, would deny personal immortality. He treats of this matter not only in the *De Anima,* but also in his special work on the subject, the *Libellus de unitate intellectus contra Averroem.* After remarking that the question is very difficult and that only trained philosophers, accustomed to metaphysical thinking, should take part in the dispute,[1] he goes on to expose thirty arguments which the Averroists bring forward or can bring forward to support their contention and observes that they are very difficult to answer. However, he proceeds to give thirty-six arguments against the Averroists, outlines his opinion on the rational soul and then answers in turn[2] the thirty arguments of the Averroists. The rational soul is the form of man, so that it must be multiplied in individual men: but what is multiplied numerically must also be multiplied substantially. If it can be proved, then, as it can be proved, that the rational soul is immortal, it follows that the multiplicity of rational souls survive death. Again, *esse* is the act of the final form of each thing (*formae ultimae*), and the final or ultimate form of man is the rational soul. Now, either individual men have their own separate *esse* or they have not. If you say that they do not possess their own individual *esse,* you must be prepared to admit that they are not individual men, which is patently false, while if you admit that each man has his own individual *esse,* then he must also have his own individual rational soul.

6. St. Albert the Great enjoyed a high reputation, even during his own lifetime, and Roger Bacon, who was far from being an enthusiastic admirer of his work, tells us that 'just as Aristotle, Avicenna and Averroes are quoted (*allegantur*) in the Schools, so is he'. Roger Bacon means that St. Albert was cited by name, which was contrary to the custom then in vogue of not mentioning living writers by name and which gives witness to the esteem he had won for himself. This reputation was doubtless due in large part to the Saint's erudition and to his many-sided interests, as theologian, philosopher, man of science and commentator. He had a wide knowledge of Jewish and Arabian philosophy and frequently

[1] C. 3.

[2] C. 7.

quotes the opinions of other writers, so that, in spite of his frequent indefiniteness of thought and expression and his mistakes in historical matters, his writings give the impression of a man of extensive knowledge who had read very widely and was interested in many lines of thought. His disciple, Ulric of Strasbourg, a Dominican, who developed the neo-Platonic side of St. Albert's thought, called him 'the wonder and miracle of our time';[1] but, apart from his devotion to experimental science, St. Albert's thought is of interest to us primarily because of its influence on St. Thomas Aquinas, who, unlike Ulric of Strasbourg and John of Fribourg, developed the Aristotelian aspect of that thought. The master, who outlived his pupil, was devoted to the latter's memory, and we are told that when St. Albert, as an old man, used to think of Thomas at the commemoration of the dead in the Canon of the Mass, he would shed tears as he thought of the death of him who had been the flower and glory of the world.

St. Albert's reputation as a man of learning and wide-ranging interests was justly merited; but his chief merit, as several historians have noticed, was that he saw what a treasure for the Christian West was contained in the system of Aristotle and in the writings of the Arabian philosophers. Looking back on the thirteenth century from a much later date, one is inclined to contemplate the invasion and growing dominance of Aristotelianism in the light of the arid Scholastic Aristotelianism of a later period, which sacrificed the spirit to the letter and entirely misunderstood the inquiring mind of the great Greek philosopher, his interest in science and the tentative nature of many of his conclusions; but to regard the thirteenth century in this light is to be guilty of an anachronism, for the attitude of the decadent Aristotelians of a later period was not the attitude of St. Albert. The Christian West possessed nothing of its own in the way of pure philosophy or of natural science which could compare with the philosophy of Aristotle and the Arabians. St. Albert realised this fact clearly; he saw that a definite attitude must be adopted towards Aristotelianism, that it could not simply be disregarded, and he was rightly convinced that it would be wasteful and even disastrous to attempt to disregard it. He saw too, of course, that on some points Aristotle and the Arabians held doctrines which were incompatible with dogma; but at the same time he realised that this was no reason for rejecting in its entirety what one had to reject in part. He endeavoured to make Aristotelianism intelligible to the Latins and to show them its value, while pointing out its errors. That he accepted this or that point, rejected this or that theory, is not so important as the fact that he realised the general significance and value of Aristotelianism, and it is surely not necessary to be a rigid Aristotelian oneself in order to be able to appreciate his merits in this respect. It is a mistake so to stress St. Albert's independence, in regard to some of Aristotle's scientific observations, for example, that one loses sight of the great service he did in drawing attention to Aristotle and displaying something of the wealth of Aristotelianism. The passage of years certainly brought a certain unfortunate ossification in the Aristotelian tradition; but the blame for that cannot be laid at the door of St. Albert the Great. If one tries to imagine what mediaeval philosophy would have been without Aristotle, if one thinks away the Thomistic synthesis and the philosophy of Scotus, if one strips the philosophy of St. Bonaventure of all Aristotelian elements, one will hardly look on the invasion of Aristotelianism as an historical misfortune.

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[1] *Summa de bono*, 4, 3, 9.

CHAPTER XXXI

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS—I

Life—Works—Mode of exposing St. Thomas's philosophy—The spirit of St. Thomas's philosophy.

1. Thomas Aquinas was born in the castle of Roccasecca, not far from Naples, at the end of 1224 or beginning of 1225, his father being the Count of Aquino. At the age of five years he was placed by his parents in the Benedictine Abbey of Monte Cassino as an oblate, and it was there that the future Saint and Doctor made his first studies, remaining in the monastery from 1230 to 1239, when the Emperor Frederick II expelled the monks. The boy returned to his family for a few months and then went to the University of Naples in the autumn of the same year, being then fourteen years old. In the city there was a convent of Dominican friars, and Thomas, attracted by their life, entered the Order in the course of the year 1244. This step was by no means acceptable to his family, who no doubt wished the boy to enter the abbey of Monte Cassino, as a step to ecclesiastical preferment, and it may have partly been due to this family opposition that the Dominican General resolved to take Thomas with him to Bologna, where he was himself going for a General Chapter, and then to send him on to the University of Paris. However, Thomas was kidnapped by his brothers on the way and was kept a prisoner at Aquino for about a year. His determination to remain true to his Order was proof against this trial, and he was able to make his way to Paris in the autumn of 1245.

Thomas was probably at Paris from 1245 until the summer of 1248, when he accompanied St. Albert the Great to Cologne, where the latter was to found a house of studies (*studium generale*) for the Dominican Order, remaining there until 1252. During this period, first at Paris, then at Cologne, Thomas was in close contact with Albert the Great, who realised the potentialities of his pupil, and while it is obvious that his taste for learning and study must in any case have been greatly stimulated by intimate contact with a professor of such erudition and such intellectual curiosity, we can hardly suppose that St. Albert's attempt to utilise what was valuable in Aristotelianism was without direct influence on his pupil's mind. Even if St. Thomas did not at this early date in his career conceive the idea of completing what his master had begun, he must at least have been profoundly influenced by the latter's open-mindedness. Thomas did not possess the all-embracing curiosity of his master (or one might say perhaps that he had a better sense of mental economy), but he certainly possessed greater powers of systematisation, and it was only to be expected that the meeting of the erudition and open-mindedness of the older man with the speculative power and synthesising ability of the younger would result in splendid fruit. It was St. Thomas who was to achieve the expression of the Christian ideology in Aristotelian terms, and who was to utilise Aristotelianism as an instrument of theological and philosophical analysis and synthesis; but his sojourn at Paris and Cologne in company with St. Albert was undoubtedly a factor of prime importance in his intellectual development. Whether or not we choose to regard St. Albert's system as incomplete Thomism is really irrelevant: the main fact is that St. Albert (*mutatis mutandis*) was Thomas's Socrates.

In 1252 St. Thomas returned from Cologne to Paris and continued his course of studies, lecturing on the Scriptures as *Baccalaureus Biblicus* (1252–4) and on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard as *Baccalaureus Sententiarius* (1254–6), at the conclusion of which period he received his Licentiate, the licence or permission to teach in the faculty of theology. In the course of the same year he became *Magister* and lectured as Dominican professor until 1259. Of the controversy which arose concerning the Dominican and Franciscan chairs in the university mention has already been made. In 1259 he left Paris for Italy and taught theology at the *studium curiae* attached to the Papal court until 1268. Thus he was at Anagni with Alexander IV (1259–61), at Orvieto with Urban IV (1261–4), at Santa Sabina in Rome (1265–7), and at Viterbo with Clement IV (1267–8). It was at the court of Urban IV that he met the famous translator, William of Moerbeke, and it was Urban who commissioned Thomas to compose the Office for the feast of Corpus Christi.

In 1268 Thomas returned to Paris and taught there until 1272, engaging in controversy with the Averroists, as also with those who renewed the attack on the religious Orders. In 1272 he was sent to Naples in order to erect a Dominican *studium generale*, and he continued his professorial activity there until 1274, when Pope Gregory X summoned him to Lyons to take part in the

Council. The journey was begun but never completed, as St. Thomas died on the way on March 7th, 1274, at the Cistercian monastery of Fossanuova, between Naples and Rome. He was forty-nine years of age at the time of his death, having behind him a life devoted to study and teaching. It had not been a life of much external activity or excitement, if we except the early incident of his imprisonment, the more or less frequent journeys and the controversies in which the Saint was involved; but it was a life devoted to the pursuit and defence of truth, a life also permeated and motivated by a deep spirituality. In some ways Thomas Aquinas was rather like the professor of legend (there are several stories concerning his fits of abstraction, or rather concentration, which made him oblivious to his surroundings), but he was a great deal more than a professor or theologian, for he was a Saint, and even if his devotion and love are not allowed to manifest themselves in the pages of his academic works, the ecstasies and mystical union with God of his later years bear witness to the fact that the truths of which he wrote were the realities by which he lived.

2. St. Thomas's Commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard dates probably from 1254 to 1256, the *De principiis naturae* from 1255, the *De ente et essentia* from 1256 and the *De Veritate* from between 1256 and 1259. It may be that the *Quaestiones quodlibetales* 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 were also composed before 1259, i.e. before Thomas left Paris for Italy. The *In Boethium de Hebdomadibus* and the *In Boethium de Trinitate* are also to be assigned to this period. While in Italy St. Thomas wrote the *Summa contra Gentiles*, the *De Potentia*, the *Contra errores Graecorum*, the *De emptione et venditione* and the *De regimine principum*. To this period belong also a number of the Commentaries on Aristotle: for example, those on the *Physics* (probably), the *Metaphysics*, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the *De Anima*, the *Politics* (probably). On his return to Paris, where he became engaged in controversy with the Averroists, St. Thomas wrote the *De aeternitate mundi contra murmurantes* and the *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas*, the *De Malo* (probably), the *De spiritualibus creaturis*, the *De anima* (i.e. the *Quaestio disputata*), the *De unione Verbi incarnati*, as well as the *Quaestiones quodlibetales* 1 to 6 and the commentaries on the *De causis*, the *Meteorologica*[1] and the *Perihermeneias*, also

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[1] The supplement to the Commentary on the *Meteorologica* seems to have been completed by an anonymous writer, drawing on Peter of Auvergne.

belong to this period, while during his stay at Naples St. Thomas wrote the *De mixtione elementorum*, the *De motu cordis*, the *De virtutibus*, and the commentaries on Aristotle's *De Caelo* and *De generatione et corruptione*. As to the *Summa Theologica*, this was composed between 1265 (at the earliest) and 1273, the *Pars prima* being written in Paris, the *Prima secundae* and *Secunda secundae* in Italy, and the *Tertia pars* in Paris between 1272 and 1273. The *Supplementum*, made up from previous writings of St. Thomas, was added by Reginald of Piperno, St. Thomas's secretary from the year 1261. One must add that Peter of Auvergne completed the commentary on the *De Caelo* and that on the *Politics* (from Book 3, *lectio* 7), while Ptolemy of Lucca was responsible for part of the *De regimine principum*, St. Thomas having written only the first book and the first four chapters of the second book. The *Compendium theologiae*, an unfinished work, was a product of the later years of St. Thomas's life, but it is not certain if it was written before or after his return to Paris in 1268.

A number of works have been attributed to St. Thomas which were definitely not written by him, while the authenticity of certain other small works is doubtful, for example, the *De natura verbi intellectus*. The chronology which has been given above is not universally agreed upon, Mgr. Martin Grabmann and Père Mandonnet, for instance, ascribing certain works to different years. On this subject the relevant works mentioned in the Bibliography can be consulted.

3. To attempt to give a satisfactory outline of the 'philosophical system' of the greatest of the Schoolmen is to attempt a task of considerable magnitude. It does not indeed appear to me an acute question whether one should attempt a systematic or a genetic exposition, since the literary period of St. Thomas's life comprises but twenty years and though there were modifications and some development of opinion in that period, there was no such considerable development as in the case of Plato and still less was there any such succession of phases or periods as in the case of Schelling.[1] To treat the thought of Plato genetically might well be considered desirable (though actually, for purposes of convenience and clarity, I adopted a predominantly systematic form of exposition in my first volume) and to treat the thought of Schelling genetically is essential; but there is no real reason against

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[1] Recent research, however, tends to show that there was more development in St. Thomas's thought than is sometimes supposed.

presenting the system of St. Thomas systematically: on the contrary, there is every reason why one should present it systematically.

The difficulty lies rather in answering the question, what precise form the systematic exposition should take and what emphasis and interpretation one should give to the component parts of its content. St. Thomas was a theologian and although he distinguished the sciences of revealed theology and philosophy, he did not himself elaborate a systematic exposition of philosophy by itself (there is theology even in the *Summa contra Gentiles*), so that the method of exposition is not already decided upon by the Saint himself.

Against this it may be objected that St. Thomas certainly did fix the starting-point for an exposition of his philosophy, and M. Gilson, in his outstanding work on St. Thomas,[1] argues that the right way of exposing the Thomistic philosophy is to expose it according to the order of the Thomistic theology. St. Thomas was a theologian and his philosophy must be regarded in the light of its relation to his theology. Not only is it true to say that the loss of a theological work like the *Summa Theologica* would be a major disaster in regard to our knowledge of St. Thomas's philosophy, whereas the loss of the Commentaries on Aristotle, though deplorable, would be of less importance; but also St. Thomas's conception of the content of philosophy or of the object which the philosopher (i.e. theologian-philosopher) considers, was that of *le révélable*, that which could have been revealed but has not been revealed and that which has been revealed but need not have been revealed, in the sense that it can be ascertained by the human reason, for example, the fact that God is wise. As M. Gilson rightly remarks, the problem for St. Thomas was not how to introduce philosophy into theology without corrupting the essence and nature of *philosophy*, but how to introduce philosophy without corrupting the essence and nature of *theology*. Theology treats of the revealed, and revelation must remain intact; but some truths are taught in theology which can be ascertained without revelation (God's existence, for example), while there are other truths which have not been revealed but which might have been revealed and which are of importance for a total view of God's creation. St. Thomas's philosophy should thus be regarded in the light of its relation to theology, and it is a mistake to collect the philosophical items from St. Thomas's works, including his theological works, and construct a system out of them according to one's own idea of what a philosophical system should be, even though St. Thomas would very likely have refused to recognise such a system as corresponding with his actual intentions. To reconstruct the Thomistic system in such a way is legitimate enough for a philosopher, but it is the part of the historian to stick to St. Thomas's own method.

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[1] *Le Thomisme*, 5th edition, Paris, 1944.

M. Gilson argues his point with his customary lucidity and cogency, and it seems to me that his point must, in general, be admitted. To begin an historical exposition of St. Thomas's philosophy by a theory of knowledge, for example, especially if the theory of knowledge were separated from psychology or the doctrine of the soul, would scarcely represent St. Thomas's own procedure, though it would be legitimate in an exposition of 'Thomism' which did not pretend to be primarily historical. On the other hand, St. Thomas certainly wrote some philosophical works before he composed the *Summa Theologica,* and the proofs of the existence of God in the latter work obviously presuppose a good many philosophical ideas. Moreover, as those philosophical ideas are not mere ideas, but are, on the principles of St. Thomas's own philosophy, abstracted from experience of the concrete, there seems to me ample justification for starting with the concrete sensible world of experience and considering some of St. Thomas's theories about it before going on to consider his natural theology. And this is the procedure which I have actually adopted.

Another point. St. Thomas was an extremely clear writer; but none the less there have been and are divergences of interpretation in regard to certain of his doctrines. To discuss fully the *pros* and *cons* of different interpretations is, however, not possible in a general history of philosophy: one can do little more than give the interpretation which commends itself in one's own eyes. At the same time, as far as the present writer is concerned, he is not prepared to state that on points where a difference of interpretation has arisen, he can give what is the indubitably correct interpretation. After all, concerning which great philosopher's system is there complete and universal agreement of interpretation? Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel? In the case of some philosophers, especially in the case of those who have expressed their thought clearly and carefully, like St. Thomas, there is a pretty generally accepted interpretation as to the main body of the system; but it is doubtful if the consent ever is or ever will be absolute and universal. A philosopher may write clearly and yet not express his final thought on all problems which arise in connection with his system, especially as some of those problems may not have occurred to him: it would be absurd to expect of any philosopher that he should have answered all questions, settled all problems, even that he should have rounded off and sealed his system in such a way that there could be no possible ground for divergence of interpretation. The present writer has the greatest respect and reverence for the genius of St. Thomas Aquinas, but he does not see that anything is to be gained by confusing the finite mind of the Saint with Absolute Mind or by claiming for his system what its author himself would certainly never have dreamed of claiming.

4. The philosophy of St. Thomas is essentially realist and concrete. St. Thomas certainly adopts the Aristotelian statement that first philosophy or metaphysic studies being as being; but it is perfectly clear that the task he sets himself is the explanation of existent being, so far as this is attainable by the human mind. In other words, he does not presuppose a notion from which reality is to be deduced; but he starts from the existent world and inquires what its being is, how it exists, what is the condition of its existence. Moreover, his thought concentrates on the supreme Existence, on the Being which does not merely possess existence, but is Its own existence, which is the very plenitude of existence, *ipsum esse subsistens*: his thought remains ever in contact with the concrete, the existent, both with that which has existence as something derived, something received, and with that which does not receive existence but is existence. In this sense it is true to say that Thomism is an 'existential philosophy', though it is very misleading, in my opinion, to call St. Thomas an 'existentialist', since the *Existenz* of the existentialists is not the same thing as St. Thomas's *esse*; nor is St. Thomas's method of approach to the problem of existence the same as that of the philosophers who are now called existentialists.

It has been maintained that St. Thomas, by bringing *esse* to the forefront of the philosophic stage, advanced beyond the philosophies of essence, particularly beyond Plato and the philosophies of Platonic inspiration. There is certainly truth in this contention: although Plato did not disregard the question of existence, the salient characteristic of his philosophy is the explanation of the world in terms of essence rather than of existence, while even for Aristotle, God, although pure Act, is primarily Thought, or Idea, the Platonic Good rendered 'personal'. Moreover, although Aristotle endeavoured to explain form and order in the world and the intelligible process of development, he did not explain the existence of the world; apparently he thought that no explanation was needed. In neo-Platonism again, though the derivation of the world is accounted for, the general scheme of emanation is primarily that of an emanation of essences, though existence is certainly not left out of account: God is primarily the One or the Good, not *ipsum esse subsistens*, not the *I am who am.* But one should remember that creation out of nothing was not an idea at which any Greek philosopher arrived without dependence on Judaism or Christianity and that without this idea the derivation of the world tends to be explained as a necessary derivation of essences. Those Christian philosophers who depended on and utilised neo-Platonic terminology spoke of the world as flowing from or emanating from God, and even St. Thomas used such phrases on occasion; but an orthodox Christian philosopher, whatever his terminology, regards the world as created freely by God, as receiving *esse* from *ipsum esse subsistens.* When St. Thomas insisted on the fact that God is subsistent existence, that His essence is not primarily goodness or thought but existence, he was but rendering explicit the implications of the Jewish and Christian view of the world's relation to God. I do not mean to imply that the idea of creation cannot be attained by reason; but the fact remains that it was not attained by the Greek philosophers and could hardly be attained by them, given their idea of God.

Of St. Thomas's general relation to Aristotle I shall speak later; but it may be as well to point out now one great effect which Aristotelianism had on St. Thomas's philosophical outlook and procedure. One might expect that St. Thomas, being a Christian, a theologian, a friar, would emphasise the soul's relation to God and would begin with what some modern philosophers call 'subjectivity', that he would place the interior life in the foreground even of his philosophy, as St. Bonaventure did. In point of fact, however, one of the chief characteristics of St. Thomas's philosophy is its 'objectivity' rather than its 'subjectivity'. The immediate object of the human intellect is the essence of the material thing, and St. Thomas builds up his philosophy by reflection on sense-experience. In the proofs which he gives of God's existence the process of argument is always from the sensible world to God. No doubt certain of the proofs could be applied to the soul itself as a starting-point and be developed in a different way; but in actual fact this was not the way of St. Thomas, and the proof which he calls the *via manifestior* is the one which is most dependent on Aristotle's own arguments. This Aristotelian 'objectivity' of St. Thomas may appear disconcerting to those for whom 'truth is subjectivity'; but at the same time it is a great source of strength, since it means that his arguments can be considered in themselves, apart from St. Thomas's own life, on their own merits or demerits, and that observations about 'wishful thinking' are largely irrelevant, the relevant question being the objective cogency of the arguments themselves. Another result is that St. Thomas's philosophy appears 'modern' in a sense in which the philosophy of St. Bonaventure can hardly do. The latter tends to appear as essentially bound up with the general mediaeval outlook and with the Christian spiritual life and tradition, so that it seems to be on a different plane from the 'profane' philosophies of modern times, whereas the Thomistic philosophy can be divorced from Christian spirituality and, to a large extent, from the mediaeval outlook and background, and can enter into direct competition with more recent systems. A Thomistic revival has taken place, as everybody knows; but it is a little difficult to imagine a Bonaventurian revival, unless one were at the same time to change the conception of philosophy, and in this case the modern philosopher and the Bonaventurian would scarcely speak the same language.

Nevertheless, St. Thomas was a Christian philosopher. As already mentioned, St. Thomas follows Aristotle in speaking of metaphysics as the science of being as being; but the fact that his thought centres round the concrete and the fact that he was a Christian theologian led him to emphasise also the view that 'first philosophy is wholly directed to the knowledge of God as the last end' and that 'the knowledge of God is the ultimate end of every human cognition and operation'.[1] But actually man was created for a profounder and more intimate knowledge of God than he can attain by the exercise of his natural reason in this life, and so revelation was morally necessary in order that his mind might be raised to something higher than his reason can attain to in this life and that he should desire and zealously strive towards something 'which exceeds the whole state of this life.'[1] Metaphysics has its own object, therefore, and a certain autonomy of its own, but it points upwards and needs to be crowned by theology: otherwise man will not realise the end for which he was created and will not desire and strive towards that end. Moreover, as the primary object of metaphysics, God, exceeds the apprehension of the metaphysician and of the natural reason in general, and as the full knowledge or vision of God is not attainable in this life, the conceptual knowledge of God is crowned in this life by mysticism. Mystical theology does not enter the province of philosophy, and St. Thomas's philosophy can be considered without reference to it; but one should not forget that for St. Thomas philosophical knowledge is neither sufficient nor final.

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[1] *Contra Gent.*, 3, 25.

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[1] *Contra Gent.*, 1, 5.

CHAPTER XXXII

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS—II

PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

Distinction between philosophy and theology—Moral necessity of revelation—Incompatibility of faith and science in the same mind concerning the same object—Natural end and supernatural end—St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure—St. Thomas as 'innovator'.

1. THAT St. Thomas made a formal and explicit distinction between dogmatic theology and philosophy is an undoubted and an indubitable fact. Philosophy and the other human sciences rely simply and solely on the natural light of reason: the philosopher uses principles which are known by the human reason (with God's natural concurrence, of course, but without the supernatural light of faith), and he argues to conclusions which are the fruit of human reasoning. The theologian, on the other hand, although he certainly uses his reason, accepts his principles on authority, on faith; he receives them as revealed. The introduction of dialectic into theology, the practice of starting from a revealed premiss or from revealed premisses and arguing rationally to a conclusion, leads to the development of Scholastic theology, but it does not turn theology into philosophy, since the principles, the data, are accepted as revealed. For instance, the theologian may attempt with the aid of categories and forms of reasoning borrowed from philosophy to understand a little better the mystery of the Trinity; but he does not thereby cease to act as a theologian, since all the time he accepts the dogma of the Trinity of Persons in one Nature on the authority of God revealing: it is for him a datum or principle, a revealed premiss accepted on faith, not the conclusion of a philosophical argument. Again, while the philosopher starts from the world of experience and argues by reason to God in so far as He can be known by means of creatures, the theologian starts with God as He has revealed Himself, and the natural method in theology is to pass from God in Himself to creatures rather than to ascend from creatures to God, as the philosopher does and must do.

It follows that the principal difference between theology and philosophy lies in the fact that the theologian receives his principles as revealed and considers the objects with which he deals as revealed or as deducible from what is revealed, whereas the philosopher apprehends his principles by reason alone and considers the objects with which he deals, not as revealed but as apprehensible and apprehended by the natural light of reason. In other words, the fundamental difference between theology and philosophy does not lie in a difference of objects concretely considered. Some truths are proper to theology, since they cannot be known by reason and are known only by revelation, the mystery of the Trinity, for example, while other truths are proper to philosophy alone in the sense that they have not been revealed; but there are some truths which are common to both theology and philosophy, since they have been revealed, though at the same time they can be established by reason. It is the existence of these common truths which makes it impossible to say that theology and philosophy differ primarily because each science considers different truths: in some instances they consider the same truths, though they consider them in a different manner, the theologian considering them as revealed, the philosopher as conclusions of a process of human reasoning. For example, the philosopher argues to God as Creator, while the theologian also treats of God as Creator; but for the philosopher the knowledge of God as Creator comes as the conclusion of a purely rational argument, while the theologian accepts the fact that God is Creator from revelation, so that it is for him a premiss rather than a conclusion, a premiss which is not hypothetically assumed but revealed. In technical language it is not *primarily* a difference of truths considered 'materially', or according to their content, which constitutes the difference between a truth of theology and a truth of philosophy, but rather a difference of truths considered 'formally'. That is to say, the same truth may be enunciated by both the theologian and the philosopher; but it is arrived at and considered by the theologian in a different way from that in which it is arrived at and considered by the philosopher. *Diversa ratio cognoscibilis diversitatem scientiarum inducit.* . . . 'There is, therefore, no reason why another science should not treat of the very same objects, as known by the light of divine revelation, which the philosophical sciences treat of according as they are knowable by the light of natural reason. Hence the theology which belongs to sacred doctrine differs generically from that theology which is a part of philosophy.'[1] Between dogmatic theology and natural theology there is a certain overlapping; but the sciences differ generically from one another.

2. According to St. Thomas, almost the whole of philosophy is directed to the knowledge of God, at least in the sense that a good deal of philosophical study is presupposed and required by natural theology, that part of metaphysics which treats of God. Natural theology, he says, is the last part of philosophy to be learnt.[2] Incidentally, this statement does not support the view that one should start the exposition of the Thomist philosophy with natural theology; but in any case the point I now want to make is that St. Thomas, seeing that natural theology, if it is to be properly grasped, requires much previous study and reflection, insists that revelation is morally necessary, given the fact that God is man's end. Moreover, not only does natural theology require more reflection and study and ability than most men are in a position to devote to it, but also, even when the truth is discovered, history shows that it is often contaminated by error. Pagan philosophers have certainly discovered God's existence; but error was often involved in their speculations, the philosopher either not realising properly the unity of God or denying divine providence or failing to see that God is Creator. If it were a question simply of astronomy or natural science, errors would not matter so much, since man can perfectly well attain his end even if he holds erroneous opinions concerning astronomical or scientific matters; but God is Himself man's end, and knowledge of God is essential in order that man should direct himself rightly towards that end, so that truth concerning God is of great importance and error concerning God is disastrous. Granted, then, that God is man's end, we can see that it is morally necessary that the discovery of truths so important for life should not be left simply to the unaided powers of those men who have the ability, the zeal and the leisure to discover them, but that these truths should also be revealed.[3]

3. At once the question arises whether the same man can at the same time believe (accept on authority by faith) and know (as a result of rational demonstration) the same truth. If God's existence, for instance, has been demonstrated by a philosopher, can he at the same time believe it by faith? In the *De Veritate*[4]

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 1, 1, *ad* 2.

[2] *Contra Gent.*, 1, 4.

[3] Cf. *S.T.*, Ia, 1, 1; *Contra Gent.*, 1, 4.

[4] 14, 9.

St. Thomas answers roundly that it is impossible for there to be faith and knowledge concerning the same object, that the same truths should be both known scientifically (philosophically) and at the same time believed (by faith) by the same man. On this supposition it would seem that a man who has proved the unity of God cannot believe that same truth by faith. In order, then, that it should not appear that this man is failing to give assent to articles of faith, St. Thomas finds himself compelled to say that such truths as the unity of God are not properly speaking articles of faith, but rather *praeambula ad articulos.*[1] He adds, however, that nothing prevents such truths being the object of belief to a man who cannot understand or has no time to consider the philosophical demonstration,[2] and he maintains his opinion that it was proper and fitting for such truths to be proposed for belief.[3] The question whether a man who understands the demonstration but who is not attending to it or considering it at the moment, can exercise faith in regard to the unity of God he does not explicitly answer. As to the opening phrase of the Creed (*Credo in unum Deum,* I believe in one God), which might seem to imply that faith in the unity of God is demanded of all, he would, on his premisses, have to say that the unity of God is here not to be understood by itself but together with what follows, that is, as a unity of Nature in a Trinity of Persons.

To go into this question further and to discuss with what sort of faith the uneducated believe the truths which are known (demonstratively) by the philosopher, would be inappropriate here, not only because it is a theological question, but also because it is a question which St. Thomas does not explicitly discuss: the main point in mentioning the matter at all is to illustrate the fact that St. Thomas makes a real distinction between philosophy on the one hand and theology on the other. Incidentally, if we speak of a 'philosopher', it must not be understood as excluding the theologian: most of the Scholastics were both theologians and philosophers, and St. Thomas distinguishes the sciences rather than the men. That St. Thomas took this distinction seriously can also be seen from the position he adopted towards the question of the eternity of the world (to which I shall return later). He considered that it can be demonstrated that the world was created, but he did not think that reason can demonstrate that the world was not created from eternity, although it can refute the proofs adduced to show that it *was* created from eternity. On the other hand we know by revelation that the world was not created from eternity but had a beginning in time. In other words, the theologian knows through revelation that the world was not created from eternity, but the philosopher cannot prove this—or rather no argument which has been brought forward to prove it is conclusive. This distinction obviously presupposes or implies a real distinction between the two sciences of philosophy and theology.

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 2, 2, *ad* 1; *De Verit.*, 14, 9, *ad* 9.

[2] *S.T.*, Ia, 2, 2, *ad* 1.

[3] *Contra Gent.*, 1, 4.

4. It is sometimes said that St. Thomas differs from St. Augustine in that while the latter considers man simply in the concrete, as man called to a supernatural end, St. Thomas distinguishes two ends, a supernatural end, the consideration of which he assigns to the theologian, and a natural end, the consideration of which he assigns to the philosopher. Now, that St. Thomas distinguishes the two ends is quite true. In the *De Veritate*[1] he says that the final good as considered by the philosopher is different from the final good as considered by the theologian, since the philosopher considers the final good (*bonum ultimum*) which is proportionate to human powers, whereas the theologian considers as the final good that which transcends the power of nature, namely life eternal, by which he means, of course, not simply survival but the vision of God. This distinction is of great importance and it has its repercussion both in morals, where it is the foundation of the distinction between the natural and the supernatural virtues, and in politics, where it is the foundation of the distinction between the ends of the Church and the State and determines the relations which should exist between the two societies; but it is not a distinction between two ends which correspond to two mutually exclusive orders, the one supernatural, the other that of 'pure nature': it is a distinction between two orders of knowledge and activity in the same concrete human being. The concrete human being was created by God for a supernatural end, for perfect happiness, which is attainable only in the next life through the vision of God and which is, moreover, unattainable by man by his own unaided natural power; but man can attain an imperfect happiness in this life by the exercise of his natural powers, through coming to a philosophic knowledge of God through creatures and through the attainment and exercise of the natural

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[1] 14, 3.

virtues.[1] Obviously these ends are not exclusive, since man can attain the imperfect felicity in which his natural end consists without thereby putting himself outside the way to his supernatural end; the natural end, imperfect beatitude, is proportionate to human nature and human powers, but inasmuch as man has been created for a supernatural final end, the natural end cannot satisfy him, as St. Thomas argues in the *Contra Gentiles*[2]; it is imperfect and points beyond itself.

How does this affect the question of the relation between theology and philosophy? In this way. Man has one final end, supernatural beatitude, but the existence of this end, which transcends the powers of mere human nature, even though man was created to attain it and given the power to do so by grace, cannot be known by natural reason and so cannot be divined by the philosopher: its consideration is restricted to the theologian. On the other hand, man can attain through the exercise of his natural powers to an imperfect and limited natural happiness in this life, and the existence of this end and the means to attain it are discoverable by the philosopher, who can prove the existence of God from creatures, attain some analogical knowledge of God, define the natural virtues and the means of attaining them. Thus the philosopher may be said to consider the end of man in so far as this end is discoverable by human reason, i.e. only imperfectly and incompletely. But both theologian and philosopher are considering man in the concrete: the difference is that the philosopher, while able to view and consider human nature as such, cannot discover all there is in man, cannot discover his supernatural vocation; he can only go part of the way in discovering man's destiny, precisely because man was created for an end which transcends the powers of his nature. It is, therefore, not true to say that for St. Thomas the philosopher considers man in a hypothetical state of pure nature, that is, man as he would have been, had he never been called to a supernatural end: he considers man in the concrete, but he cannot know all there is to be known about that man in the concrete. When St. Thomas raises the question whether God could have created man *in puris naturalibus*[3] he is asking simply if God could have created man (who even in this hypothesis was created for a supernatural end) without sanctifying grace, that is to say, if God could have first created man without the means of attaining his end and then afterwards have given it; he is not asking if God could have given man a purely natural ultimate end, as later writers interpreted him as saying. Whatever, then, the merit of the idea of the state of pure nature considered in itself may be (this is a point I do not propose to discuss), it does not play a part in St. Thomas's conception of philosophy. Consequently he does not differ from St. Augustine so much as has been sometimes asserted, though he defined the spheres of the two sciences of philosophy and theology more clearly than Augustine had defined them: what he did was to express Augustinianism in terms of the Aristotelian philosophy, a fact which compelled him to utilise the notion of natural end, though he interpreted it in such a way that he cannot be said to have adopted a starting-point in philosophy totally different from that of Augustine.

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[1] Cf. *In Boethium de Trinitate*, 6, 4, 5; *In* 1 *Sent.*, *prol.*, 1, 1; *De Veritate*, 14, 2; *S.T.*, Ia, IIae, 5, 5.

[2] 3, 27ff.

[3] *In* 2 *Sent.*, 29, 1, 2; *ibid.*, 29, 2, 3; *S.T.*, Ia, 95, 1, 4; *Quodlibet*, 1, 8.

Actually the idea of the state of pure nature seems to have been introduced into Thomism by Cajetan. Suarez, who himself adopted the idea, remarks that 'Cajetan and the more modern theologians have considered a third state, which they have called purely natural, a state which can be thought of as possible, although it has not in fact existed'.[1] Dominicus Soto[2] says that it is a perversion of the mind of St. Thomas, while Toletus[3] observes that there exist in us a natural desire and a natural appetite for the vision of God, though this opinion, which is that of Scotus and seems to be that of St. Thomas, is contrary to that of Cajetan.

5. St. Thomas certainly believed that it is *theoretically* possible for the philosopher to work out a true metaphysical system without recourse to revelation. Such a system would be necessarily imperfect, inadequate and incomplete, because the metaphysician is primarily concerned with the Truth itself, with God who is the principle of all truth, and he is unable by purely human rational investigation to discover all that knowledge of Truth itself, of God, which is necessary for man if he is to attain his final end. The mere philosopher can say nothing about the supernatural end of man or the supernatural means of attaining that end, and as the knowledge of these things is required for man's salvation, the insufficiency of philosophical knowledge is apparent. On the other

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[1] *De Gratia, Prolegom.*, 4, c. 1, n. 2. [2] *In 4 Sent.*, 49, 2, 1; p. 903, 1613 edit.

[3] *In Summam Sancti Thomae*, Ia, 1, 1, t. 1, pp. 17–19, 1869 edit.

hand, incompleteness and inadequacy do not necessarily mean falsity. The truth that God is one is not vitiated by the very fact that nothing is said or known of the Trinity of Persons; the further truth completes the first, but the first truth is not false, even taken by itself. If the philosopher states that God is one and simply says nothing about the Trinity, because the idea of the Trinity has never entered his head; or if he knows of the doctrine of the Trinity and does not himself believe it, but simply contents himself with saying that God is one; or even if he expresses the view that the Trinity, which he understands wrongly, is incompatible with the divine unity; it still remains true that the statement that God is one in Nature is a correct statement. Of course, if the philosopher states positively that God is one Person, he is stating what is false; but if he simply says that God is one and that God is personal, without going on to state that God is one Person, he is stating the truth. It may be unlikely that a philosopher would stop short at saying that God is personal, but it is at least theoretically possible. Unless one is prepared to condemn the human intellect as such or at any rate to debar it from the discovery of a true metaphysic, one must admit that the establishment of a satisfactory metaphysic is abstractly possible, even for the pagan philosopher. St. Thomas was very far from following St. Bonaventure in excluding Aristotle from the ranks of the metaphysicians: on the contrary, the latter was in Thomas's eyes the philosopher *par excellence*, the very embodiment of the intellectual power of the human mind acting without divine faith, and he attempted, wherever possible, to interpret Aristotle in the most 'charitable' sense, that is, in the sense which was most compatible with Christian revelation.

If one emphasises simply this aspect of St. Thomas's attitude towards philosophy, it would seem that a Thomist could not legitimately adopt a consistently hostile and polemical attitude towards modern philosophy. If one adopts the Bonaventurian position and maintains that a metaphysician cannot attain truth unless he philosophises in the light of faith (though without, of course, basing his philosophical proofs on theological premisses), one would only expect that a philosopher who rejected the supernatural or who confined religion within the bounds of reason alone, should go sadly astray; but if one is prepared to admit the possibility of even a pagan philosopher elaborating a more or less satisfactory metaphysic, it is unreasonable to suppose that in several centuries of intensive human thought, no truth has come to light. It would seem that a Thomist should expect to find fresh intellectual illumination in the pages of the modern philosophers and that he should approach them with an initial sympathy and expectancy rather than with an *a priori* suspicion, reserve and even hostility.

On the other hand, though St. Thomas's attitude towards the pagan philosophers, and towards Aristotle in particular, differed from that of St. Bonaventure, it is not right to exaggerate their difference of outlook. As has already been mentioned, St. Thomas gives reasons why it is fitting that even those truths about God which can be discovered by reason should be proposed for men's belief. Some of the reasons he gives are not indeed relevant to the particular point I am discussing. For example, it is perfectly true that many people are so occupied with earning their daily bread that they have not the time to give to metaphysical reflection, even when they have the capacity for such reflection, so that it is desirable that those metaphysical truths which are of importance for them in their lives should be proposed for their belief: otherwise they will never know them at all,[1] just as most of us would have neither the time nor the energy to discover America for ourselves, did we not already accept the fact that it exists on the testimony of others; but it does not necessarily follow that those who have the time and ability for metaphysical reflection will probably draw wrong conclusions, except in so far as metaphysical thinking is difficult and requires prolonged attention and concentration, whereas 'certain people', as St. Thomas remarks, are lazy. However, there is this further point to be borne in mind,[2] that on account of the weakness of our intellect in judging and on account of the intrusion of the imagination falsity is generally (*plerumque*) mixed with truth in the human mind's conclusions. Among the conclusions which are truly demonstrated there is sometimes (*aliquando*) included a false conclusion which has not been demonstrated but is asserted on the strength of a probable or sophistical reasoning passing under the name of demonstration. The practical result will be that even certain and sure conclusions will not be whole-heartedly accepted by many people, particularly when they see philosophers teaching different doctrines while they themselves are unable to distinguish a doctrine which has been truly demonstrated from one which rests on a merely probable or sophistical argument. Similarly, in the *Summa Theologica*, St. Thomas observes that the truth about God is arrived at by the human reason only by a few men and after a long time and 'with the admixture of many errors'.[1] When the Saint says that it is desirable that even those truths about God which are rationally demonstrable should be proposed as objects of belief, to be accepted on authority, he emphasises indeed the practical requirements of the many rather than the speculative insufficiency of metaphysics as such, but he does admit that error is frequently mixed with the truth, either because of over-hastiness in jumping to conclusions or because of the influence of passion and emotion or of imagination. Possibly he did not himself apply this idea with perfect consistency in regard to Aristotle and was too ready to interpret Aristotle in the sense which was most compatible with Christian doctrine, but the fact remains that he acknowledges theoretically the weakness of the human intellect in its present condition, though not its radical perversion. Accordingly, though he differs from St. Bonaventure in that he admits the abstract possibility, and indeed, in Aristotle's case, the concrete fact, of a 'satisfactory' metaphysic being elaborated by a pagan philosopher and also refuses to allow that its incompleteness vitiates a metaphysical system, he also admits it is likely that any independent metaphysical system will contain error.

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[1] *Contra Gent.*, 1, 4.

[2] *Ibid.*

Perhaps it is not fanciful to suggest that the two men's abstract opinions were largely settled by their attitude towards Aristotle. It might, of course, be retorted that this is to put the cart before the horse, but it will appear more reasonable if one considers the actual circumstances in which they lived and wrote. For the first time Latin Christendom was becoming acquainted with a great philosophical system which owed nothing to Christianity and which was represented by its fervent adherents, such as Averroes, as being the last word in human wisdom. The greatness of Aristotle, the depth and comprehensiveness of his system, was a factor which could not be ignored by any Christian philosopher of the thirteenth century; but it could be met and treated in more than one way. On the one hand, as expounded by Averroes, Aristotelianism conflicted on several very important points with Christian doctrine, and it was possible to adopt a hostile and unreceptive attitude towards the Aristotelian metaphysic on this count. If, however, one adopted this course, as St. Bonaventure did, one had to say either that Aristotle's system affirmed philosophical truth but that what was true in philosophy might not be true in theology, since God could override the demands of natural logic, or else that Aristotle went wrong in his metaphysics. St. Bonaventure adopted the second course. But why, in Bonaventure's view, did Aristotle go wrong, the greatest systematiser of the ancient world? Obviously because any independent philosophy is bound to go wrong on important points simply because it is independent: it is only in the light of the Christian faith that one can elaborate anything like a complete and satisfactory philosophical system, since it is only in the light of the Christian faith that the philosopher will be enabled to leave his philosophy open to revelation: if he has not that light, he will round it off and complete it, and if he rounds it off and completes it, it will be thereby vitiated in part at least, especially in regard to those parts, the most important parts, which deal with God and the end of man. On the other hand, if one saw in the Aristotelian system a magnificent instrument for the expression of truth and for the welding together of the divine truths of theology and philosophy, one would have to admit the power of the pagan philosopher to attain metaphysical truth, though in view of the interpretation of Aristotle given by Averroes and others one would have also to allow for and explain the possibility of error even on the part of the Philosopher. This was the course adopted by St. Thomas.

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 1, 1, *in corpore.*

6. When one looks back on the thirteenth century from a much later date, one does not always recognise the fact that St. Thomas was an innovator, that his adoption of Aristotelianism was bold and 'modern'. St. Thomas was faced with a system of growing influence and importance, which seemed in many respects to be incompatible with Christian tradition, but which naturally captivated the minds of many students and masters, particularly in the faculty of arts at Paris, precisely because of its majesty, apparent coherence and comprehensiveness. That Aquinas boldly grasped the bull by the horns and utilised Aristotelianism in the building up of his own system was very far from being an obscurantist action: it was, on the contrary, extremely 'modern' and was of the greatest importance for the future of Scholastic philosophy and indeed for the history of philosophy in general. That some Scholastics in the later Middle Ages and at the time of the Renaissance brought Aristotelianism into discredit by their obscurantist adherence to all the Philosopher's *dicta*, even on scientific

matters, does not concern St. Thomas: the plain fact is that they were not faithful to the spirit of St. Thomas. The Saint rendered, on any count, an incomparable service to Christian thought by utilising the instrument which presented itself, and he naturally interpreted Aristotle in the most favourable sense from the Christian standpoint, since it was essential to show, if he was to succeed in his undertaking, that Aristotle and Averroes did not stand or fall together. Moreover, it is not true to say that St. Thomas had no sense of accurate interpretation: one may not agree with all his interpretations of Aristotle, but there can be no doubt that, given the circumstances of the time and the paucity of relevant historical information at his disposal, he was one of the most conscientious and the finest commentators of Aristotle who have ever existed.

In conclusion, however, it must be emphasised that though St. Thomas adopted Aristotelianism as an instrument for the expression of his system, he was no blind worshipper of the Philosopher, who discarded Augustine in favour of the pagan thinker. In theology he naturally treads in the footsteps of Augustine, though his adoption of the Aristotelian philosophy as an instrument enabled him to systematise, define and argue logically from theological doctrines in a manner which was foreign to the attitude of Augustine: in philosophy, while there is a great deal which comes straight from Aristotle, he often interprets Aristotle in a manner consonant with Augustine or expresses Augustine in Aristotelian categories, though it might be truer to say that he does both at once. For instance, when treating of divine knowledge and providence, he interprets the Aristotelian doctrine of God in a sense which at least does not exclude God's knowledge of the world, and in treating of the divine ideas he observes that Aristotle censured Plato for making the ideas independent both of concrete things and of an intellect, with the tacit implication that Aristotle would not have censured Plato, had the latter placed the ideas in the mind of God. This is, of course, to interpret Aristotle *in meliorem partem* from the theological standpoint, and although the interpretation tends to bring Aristotle and Augustine closer together, it most probably does not represent Aristotle's actual theory of the divine knowledge. However, of St. Thomas's relation to Aristotle I shall speak later.

CHAPTER XXXIII

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS—III

PRINCIPLES OF CREATED BEING

Reasons for starting with corporeal being—Hylomorphism—Rejection of rationes seminales—*Rejection of plurality of substantial forms—Restriction of hylomorphic composition to corporeal substances—Potentiality and act—Essence and existence.*

1. IN the *Summa Theologica*, which, as its name indicates, is a theological synopsis, the first philosophical problem of which St. Thomas treats is that of the existence of God, after which he proceeds to consider the Nature of God and then the divine Persons, passing subsequently to creation. Similarly, in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, which more nearly resembles a philosophical treatise (though it cannot be called simply a philosophical treatise, since it also treats of such purely dogmatic themes as the Trinity and the Incarnation), St. Thomas also starts with the existence of God. It might seem, then, that it would be natural to begin the exposition of St. Thomas's philosophy with his proofs of God's existence; but apart from the fact (mentioned in an earlier chapter) that St. Thomas himself says that the part of philosophy which treats of God comes after the other branches of philosophy, the proofs themselves presuppose some fundamental concepts and principles, and St. Thomas had composed the *De ente et essentia*, for example, before he wrote either of the *Summae*. It would not in any case be natural, then, to start immediately with the proofs of God's existence, and M. Gilson himself, who insists that the natural way of expounding St. Thomas's philosophy is to expound it according to the order adopted by the Saint in the *Summae*, actually begins by considering certain basic ideas and principles. On the other hand, one can scarcely discuss the whole general metaphysic of St. Thomas and all those ideas which are explicitly or implicitly presupposed by his natural theology: it is necessary to restrict the basis of one's discussion.

To a modern reader, familiar with the course and problems of modern philosophy, it might seem natural to begin with a discussion of St. Thomas's theory of knowledge and to raise the question whether or not the Saint provides an epistemological justification of the possibility of metaphysical knowledge. But although St. Thomas certainly had a 'theory of knowledge' he did not live after Kant, and the problem of knowledge did not occupy that position in his philosophy which it has come to occupy in later times. It seems to me that the natural starting-point for an exposition of the Thomist philosophy is the consideration of corporeal substances. After all, St. Thomas expressly teaches that the immediate and proper object of the human intellect in this life is the essence of material things. The fundamental notions and principles which are presupposed by St. Thomas's natural theology are not, according to him, innate, but are apprehended through reflection on and abstraction from our experience of concrete objects, and it seems, therefore, only reasonable to develop those fundamental notions and principles first of all through a consideration of material substances. St. Thomas's proofs of God's existence are *a posteriori*; they proceed from creatures to God, and it is the creature's nature, the lack of self-sufficiency on the part of the immediate objects of experience, which reveals the existence of God. Moreover, we can, by the natural light of reason, attain only that knowledge of God which can be attained by reflection on creatures and their relation to Him. On this count too it would seem only 'natural' to begin the exposition of the Thomist philosophy with a consideration of those concrete objects of experience by reflection on which we arrive at those fundamental principles which lead us on to develop the proofs of God's existence.

2. In regard to corporeal substances St. Thomas adopts from the very outset the common-sense standpoint, according to which there are a multiplicity of substances. The human mind comes to know in dependence on sense-experience, and the first concrete objects the mind knows are material objects into relation with which it enters through the senses. Reflection on these objects, however, at once leads the mind to form a distinction, or rather to discover a distinction, in the objects themselves. If I look out of my window in the spring I see the beech-tree with its young and tender green leaves, while in the autumn I see that the leaves have changed colour, though the same beech-tree stands out there in the park. The beech is substantially the same, a beech-tree, in spring and autumn, but the colour of its leaves is not the same: the colour changes without the beech-tree changing substantially. Similarly, if I go to the plantation, one year I see the larches as small trees, newly planted; later on I see them as bigger trees: their

size has changed but they are still larches. The cows in the field I see now in this place, now in that, now in one posture, now in another, standing up or lying down, now doing one thing, now another, eating the grass or chewing the cud or sleeping, now undergoing one thing, now another, being milked or being rained on or being driven along, but all the time they are the same cows. Reflection thus leads the mind to distinguish between substance and accident, and between the different kinds of accident, and St. Thomas accepts from Aristotle the doctrine of the ten categories, substance and the nine categories of accident.

So far reflection has led us only to the idea of accidental change and the notion of the categories: but further reflection will introduce the mind to a profounder level of the constitution of material being. When the cow eats grass, the grass no longer remains what it was in the field, but becomes something else through assimilation, while on the other hand it does not simply cease to be, but something remains in the process of change. The change is substantial, since the grass itself is changed, not merely its colour or size, and the analysis of substantial change leads the mind to discern two elements, one element which is common to the grass and to the flesh which the grass becomes, another element which confers on that something its determination, its substantial character, making it to be first grass, then cow-flesh. Moreover, ultimately we can conceive any material substance changing into any other, not necessarily directly or immediately, of course, but at least indirectly and mediately, after a series of changes. We come thus to the conception on the one hand of an underlying substrate of change which, *when considered in itself*, cannot be called by the name of any definite substance, and on the other hand of a determining or characterising element. The first element is 'prime matter', the indeterminate substrate of substantial change, the second element is the substantial form, which makes the substance what it is, places it in its specific class and so determines it as grass, cow, oxygen, hydrogen, or whatever it may be. Every material substance is composed in this way of matter and form.

St. Thomas thus accepts the Aristotelian doctrine of the hylomorphic composition of material substances, defining prime matter as pure potentiality and substantial form as the first act of a physical body, 'first act' meaning the principle which places the body in its specific class and determines its essence. Prime matter is in potentiality to all forms which can be the forms of bodies, but considered in itself it is without any form, pure potentiality: it is, as Aristotle said, *nec quid nec quantum nec quale nec aliud quidquam eorum quibus determinatur ens.*[1] For this reason, however, it cannot exist by itself, for to speak of a being actually existing without act or form would be contradictory: it did not, then, precede form temporally, but was created together with form.[2] St. Thomas is thus quite clear on the fact that only concrete substances, individual compositions of matter and form, actually exist in the material world. But though he is at one with Aristotle in denying the separate existence of universals (though we shall see presently that a reservation must be made in regard to this statement), he also follows Aristotle in asserting that the form needs to be individuated. The form is the universal element, being that which places an object in its class, in its species, making it to be horse or elm or iron: it needs, then, to be individuated, in order that it should become the form of this particular substance. What is the principle of individuation? It can only be matter. But matter is of itself pure potentiality: it has not those determinations which are necessary in order that it should individuate form. The accidental characteristics of quantity and so on are logically posterior to the hylomorphic composition of the substance. St. Thomas was, therefore, compelled to say that the principle of individuation is *materia signata quantitate*, in the sense of matter having an exigency for the quantitative determination which it receives from union with form. This is a difficult notion to understand, since although matter, and not form, is the foundation of quantitative multiplication, matter considered in itself is without quantitative determination: the notion is in fact a relic of the Platonic element in Aristotle's thought. Aristotle rejected and attacked the Platonic theory of forms, but his Platonic training influenced him to the extent of his being led to say that form, being of itself universal, requires individuation, and St. Thomas followed him in this. Of course, St. Thomas did not think of forms first existing separately and then being individuated, for the forms of sensible objects do not exist in a state of temporal priority to the composite substances; but the idea of individuation is certainly due originally to the Platonic way of thinking and speaking of forms: Aristotle substituted the notion of the immanent substantial form for that of the 'transcendent' exemplar form, but it would not become an historian to turn a blind eye to the Platonic legacy in Aristotle's thought and consequently in that of St. Thomas.

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[1] *In 7 Metaph., lectio 2.*

[2] *S.T.*, Ia, 66, 1, *in corpore.*

3. As a logical consequence of the doctrine that prime matter as such is pure potentiality, St. Thomas rejected the Augustinian theory of *rationes seminales*:[1] to admit this theory would be to attribute act in some way to what is in itself without act.[2] Non-spiritual forms are educed out of the potentiality of matter under the action of the efficient agent, but they are not previously in prime matter as inchoate forms. The agent does not, of course, work on prime matter as such, since this latter cannot exist by itself; but he or it so modifies or changes the dispositions of a given corporeal substance that it develops an exigency for a new form, which is educed out of the potentiality of matter. Change thus presupposes, for Aquinas as for Aristotle, a 'privation' or an exigency for a new form which the substance has not yet got but 'demands' to have in virtue of the modifications produced in it by the agent. Water, for example, is in a state of potentiality to becoming steam, but it will not become steam until it has been heated to a certain point by an external agent, at which point it develops an exigency for the form of steam, which does not come from outside, but is educed out of the potentiality of matter.

4. Just as St. Thomas rejected the older theory of *rationes seminales*, so he rejected the theory of the plurality of substantial forms in the composite substance, affirming the unicity of the substantial form in each substance. In his Commentary on the *Sentences* St. Thomas seems indeed to accept the *forma corporeitatis* as the first substantial form in the corporeal substance;[3] but even if he accepted it at first, he certainly rejected it afterwards. In the *Contra Gentiles*[4] he argues that if the first form constituted the substance as substance, the subsequent forms would arise in something which was already *hoc aliquid in actu*, something actually subsisting, and so could be no more than accidental forms. Similarly he argues against the theory of Avicebron[5] by pointing out that only the first form can be the substantial form, since it would confer the character of substance, with the result that other

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[1] *In 2 Sent.*, 18, 1, 2.

[2] St. Thomas certainly employed the name, *rationes seminales*, but he meant thereby primarily the active forces of concrete objects, e.g. the active power which controls the generation of living things and restricts it to the same species, not the doctrine that there are inchoate forms in prime matter. This last theory he either rejected or said that it did not fit in with the teaching of St. Augustine (cf. *loc. cit.*, *S.T.*, Ia, 115, 2; *De Veritate*, 5, 9, *ad* 8 and *ad* 9).

[3] Cf. *In 1 Sent.*, 8, 5, 2; 2 *Sent.*, 3, 1, 1.

[4] 4, 81.

[5] *Quodlibet*, 11, 5, 5, *in corpore*.

subsequent forms, arising in an already constituted substance, would be accidental. (The necessary implication is, of course, that the substantial form directly informs prime matter.) This view aroused much opposition, being stigmatised as a dangerous innovation, as we shall see later when dealing with the controversies in which St. Thomas's Aristotelianism involved him.

5. The hylomorphic composition which obtains in material substances was restricted by St. Thomas to the corporeal world: he would not extend it, as St. Bonaventure did, to the incorporeal creation, to angels. That angels exist, St. Thomas considered to be rationally provable, quite apart from revelation, for their existence is demanded by the hierarchic character of the scale of being. We can discern the ascending orders or ranks of forms from the forms of inorganic substances, through vegetative forms, the irrational sensitive forms of animals, the rational soul of man, to the infinite and pure Act, God; but there is a gap in the hierarchy. The rational soul of man is created, finite and embodied, while God is uncreated, infinite and pure spirit: it is only reasonable, then, to suppose that between the human soul and God there are finite and created spiritual forms which are without body. At the summit of the scale is the absolute simplicity of God: at the summit of the corporeal world is the human being, partly spiritual and partly corporeal: there must, therefore, exist between God and man beings which are wholly spiritual and yet which do not possess the absolute simplicity of the Godhead.[1]

This line of argument was not new: it had been employed in Greek philosophy, by Poseidonius, for example. St. Thomas was also influenced by the Aristotelian doctrine of separate Intelligences connected with the motion of the spheres, this astronomical view reappearing in the philosophy of Avicenna, with which St. Thomas was familiar; but the argument which weighed most with him was that drawn from the exigencies of the hierarchy of being. As he distinguished the different grades of forms in general, so he distinguished the different 'choirs' of angels, according to the object of their knowledge. Those who apprehend most clearly the goodness of God in itself and are inflamed with love thereat are the Seraphim, the highest 'choir', while those who are concerned with the providence of God in regard to particular creatures, for example, in regard to particular men, are the angels in the narrower sense of the word, the lowest choir. The choir which is concerned with, *inter alia*, the movement of the heavenly bodies (which are universal causes affecting this world) is that of the Virtues. Thus St. Thomas did not postulate the existence of angels primarily in order to account for the movement of the spheres.

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[1] Cf. *De spirit. creat.*, 1, 5.

Angels exist therefore; but it remains to be asked if they are hylomorphically composed. St. Thomas affirmed that they are not so composed. He argued that the angels must be purely immaterial, since they are intelligences which have as their correlative object immaterial objects, and also that their very place in the hierarchy of being demands their complete immateriality.[1] Moreover, as St. Thomas places in matter an exigency for quantity (which possibly does not altogether square with its character of pure potentiality), he could not in any case attribute hylomorphic composition to the angels. St. Bonaventure, for example, had argued that angels must be hylomorphically composed, since otherwise they would be pure act and God alone is pure act; but St. Thomas countered this argument by affirming that the distinction between essence and existence in the angels is sufficient to safeguard their contingency and their radical distinction from God.[2] To this distinction I shall return shortly.

A consequence of the denial of the hylomorphic composition of the angels is the denial of the multiplicity of angels within one species, since matter is the principle of individuation and there is no matter in the angels. Each angel is pure form: each angel, then, must exhaust the capacity of its species and be its own species. The choirs of angels are not, then, so many species of angels; they consist of angelic hierarchies distinguished not specifically but according to function. There are as many species as there are angels. It is of interest to remember that Aristotle, when asserting in the *Metaphysics* a plurality of movers, of separated intelligences, raised the question how this could be possible if matter is the principle of individuation, though he did not answer the question. While St. Bonaventure, admitting the hylomorphic composition of angels, could and did admit their multiplicity within the species, St. Thomas, holding on the one hand that matter is the principle of individuation and denying its presence in the angels on the other hand, was forced to deny their multiplicity within the species. For St. Thomas, then, the intelligences really became separate universals, though not, of course, in the sense of hypostatised concepts. It was one of the discoveries of Aristotle that a separate form must be intelligent, though he failed to see the historic connection between his theory of separate intelligences and the Platonic theory of separate forms.

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 50, 2; *De spirit. creat.*, 1, 1.

[2] *De spirit. creat.*, 1, 1; *S.T.*, Ia, 50, 2, *ad* 3; *Contra Gent.*, 2, 30; *Quodlibet*, 9, 4, 1.

6. The establishment of the hylomorphic composition of material substances reveals at once the essential mutability of those substances. Change is not, of course, a haphazard affair, but proceeds according to a certain rhythm (one cannot assume that a given substance can become immediately any other substance one likes, while change is also guided and influenced by the general causes, such as the heavenly bodies); yet substantial change cannot take place except in bodies, and it is only matter, the substrate of change, which makes it possible. On the principle which St. Thomas adopted from Aristotle that what is changed or moved is changed or moved 'by another', *ab alio*, one might argue at once from the changes in the corporeal world to the existence of an unmoved mover, with the aid of the principle that an infinite regress in the order of dependence is impossible; but before going on to prove the existence of God from nature, one must first penetrate more deeply into the constitution of finite being.

Hylomorphic composition is confined by St. Thomas to the corporeal world; but there is a more fundamental distinction, of which the distinction between form and matter is but one example. Prime matter, as we have seen, is pure potentiality, while form is act, so that the distinction between matter and form is a distinction between potency and act, but this latter distinction is of wider application than the former. In the angels there is no matter, but there is none the less potentiality. (St. Bonaventure argued that because matter is potentiality, therefore it can be in angels. He was thus forced to admit the *forma corporeitatis*, in order to distinguish corporeal matter from matter in the general sense. St. Thomas, on the other hand, as he made matter pure potentiality and yet denied its presence in the angels, was forced to attribute to matter an exigency for quantity, which comes to it through form. Obviously there are difficulties in both views.) The angels can change by performing acts of intellect and will, even though they cannot change substantially: there is, therefore, some potentiality in the angels. The distinction between potentiality and act runs, therefore, through the whole of creation, whereas the distinction between form and matter is found only in the corporeal creation. Thus, on the principle that the reduction of potentiality to act requires a principle which is itself act, we should be in a position to argue from the fundamental distinction which obtains in all creation to the existence of pure Act, God; but first of all we must consider the basis of potentiality in the angels. In passing, one can notice that the distinction of potency and act is discussed by Aristotle in the *Metaphysics*.

7. We have seen that hylomorphic composition was restricted by St. Thomas to corporeal substance; but there is a profounder composition which affects every finite being. Finite being is being because it exists, because it has existence: the substance is that which is or has being, and 'existence is that in virtue of which a substance is called a being'.[1] The essence of a corporeal being is the substance composed of matter and form, while the essence of an immaterial finite being is form alone; but that by which a material substance or an immaterial substance is a real being (*ens*) is existence (*esse*), existence standing to the essence as act to potentiality. Composition of act and potentiality is found, therefore, in every finite being and not simply in corporeal being. No finite being exists necessarily; it has or possesses existence which is distinct from essence as act is distinct from potentiality. The form determines or completes in the sphere of essence, but that which actualises the essence is existence. 'In intellectual substances which are not composed of matter and form (in them the form is a subsistent substance), the form is that which is; but existence is the act by which the form is; and on that account there is in them only one composition of act and potentiality, namely composition of substance and existence. . . . In substances composed of matter and form, however, there is a double composition of act and potentiality, the first a composition in the substance itself, which is composed of matter and form, the second a composition of the substance itself, which is already composite, with existence. This second composition can also be called a composition of the *quod est* and *esse*, or of the *quod est* and the *quo est*.'[2] Existence, then, is neither matter nor form; it is neither an essence nor part of an essence; it is the act by which the essence is or has being. '*Esse* denotes a certain act; for a thing is not said to be (*esse*) by the fact that it is in potentiality, but by the fact that it is in act.'[3] As neither matter nor form, it can be neither a substantial nor an accidental form; it does not belong to the sphere of essence, but is that by which forms are.

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[1] *Contra Gent.*, 2, 54.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, 1, 22.

Controversy has raged in the Schools round the question whether St. Thomas considered the distinction between essence and existence to be a real distinction or a conceptual distinction. Obviously the answer to this question depends largely on the meaning attached to the phrase 'real distinction'. If by real distinction were meant a distinction between two things which could be separated from one another, then certainly St. Thomas did not hold that there is a real distinction between essence and existence, which are not two separable physical objects. Giles of Rome practically held this view, making the distinction a physical distinction; but for St. Thomas the distinction was metaphysical, essence and existence being the two constitutive metaphysical principles of every finite being. If, however, by real distinction is meant a distinction which is independent of the mind, which is objective, it seems to me not only that St. Thomas maintained such a distinction as obtaining between essence and existence, but that it is essential to his system and that he attached great importance to it. St. Thomas speaks of *esse* as *adveniens extra*, in the sense that it comes from God, the cause of existence; it is act, distinct from the potentiality which it actualises. In God alone, insists St. Thomas, are essence and existence identical: God exists necessarily because His essence is existence: all other things receive or 'participate in' existence, and that which receives must be distinct from that which is received.[1] The fact that St. Thomas argues that that whose existence is other than its essence must have received its existence from another, and that it is true of God alone that His existence is not different from or other than His essence, seems to me to make it perfectly clear that he regarded the distinction between essence and existence as objective and independent of the mind. The 'third way' of proving the existence of God appears to presuppose the real distinction between essence and existence in finite things.

Existence determines essence in the sense that it is act and through it the essence has being; but on the other hand existence, as act, is determined by essence, as potentiality, to be the existence of this or that kind of essence.[2] Yet we must not imagine that essence existed before receiving existence (which would be a contradiction in terms) or that there is a kind of neutral existence which is not the existence of any thing in particular until it is united with essence: the two principles are not two physical things united together, but they are two constitutive principles which are concreated as principles of a particular being. There is no essence without existence and no existence without essence; the two are created together, and if its existence ceases, the concrete essence ceases to be. Existence, then, is not something accidental to the finite being: it is that by which the finite being is a being. If we rely on the imagination, we shall think of essence and existence as two things, two beings; but a great deal of the difficulty in understanding St. Thomas's doctrine on the subject comes from employing the imagination and supposing that if he maintained the real distinction, he must have understood it in the exaggerated and misleading fashion of Giles of Rome.

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[1] Cf. *S.T.*, Ia, 3, 4; *Contra Gent.*, 1, 22.

[2] *De Potentia*, 7, 2, *ad* 9.

The Moslem philosophers had already discussed the relation of existence to essence. Alfarabi, for example, had observed that analysis of the essence of a finite object will not reveal its existence. If it did, then it would be sufficient to know what human nature is, in order to know that man exists, which is not the case. Essence and existence are, therefore, distinct, and Alfarabi drew the somewhat unfortunate conclusion that existence is an accident of the essence. Avicenna followed Alfarabi in this matter. Although St. Thomas certainly did not regard existence as an 'accident', in the *De ente et essentia*[1] he follows Alfarabi and Avicenna in their way of approaching the distinction. Every thing which does not belong to the concept of the essence comes to it from without (*adveniens extra*) and forms a composition with it. No essence can be conceived without that which forms part of the essence; but every finite essence can be conceived without existence being included in the essence. I can conceive 'man' or 'phoenix' and yet not know if they exist in nature. It would, however, be a mistake to interpret St. Thomas as though he maintained that the essence, prior to the reception of existence, was something on its own, so to speak, with a diminutive existence proper to itself: it exists only through existence, and created existence is always the existence of this or that kind of essence. Created existence and essence arise together, and although the two constitutive principles are objectively distinct, existence is the more fundamental. Since created existence is the act of a potentiality, the latter has no actuality apart from existence, which is 'among all things the most perfect' and 'the perfection of all perfections'.[2]

St. Thomas thus discovers in the heart of all finite being a certain instability, a contingency or non-necessity, which immediately points to the existence of a Being which is the source of finite existence, the author of the composition between essence and existence, and which cannot be itself composed of essence and existence but must have existence as its very essence, existing necessarily. It would indeed be absurd and most unjust to accuse Francis Suarez (1548–1617) and other Scholastics who denied the 'real distinction' of denying the contingent character of finite being (Suarez denied a real distinction between essence and existence and maintained that the finite object is limited because *ab alio*); but I do not personally feel any doubt that St. Thomas himself maintained the doctrine of the real distinction, provided that the real distinction is not interpreted as Giles of Rome interpreted it. For St. Thomas, existence is not a state of the essence, but rather that which places the essence in a state of actuality.

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[1] C. 4.

[2] *De Potentia*, 7, 2, *ad* 9.

It may be objected that I have evaded the real point at issue, namely the precise way in which the distinction between essence and existence is objective and independent of the mind. But St. Thomas did not state his doctrine in such a manner that no controversy about its meaning is possible. Nevertheless it seems clear to me that St. Thomas held that the distinction between essence and existence is an objective distinction between two metaphysical principles which constitute the whole being of the created finite thing, one of these principles, namely existence, standing to the other, namely essence, as act to potency. And I do not see how St. Thomas could have attributed that importance to the distinction which he did attribute to it, unless he thought that it was a 'real' distinction.

CHAPTER XXXIV

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS—IV: PROOFS OF GOD'S EXISTENCE

Need of proof—St. Anselm's argument—Possibility of proof—The first three proofs—The fourth proof—The proof from finality—The 'third way' fundamental.

1. BEFORE actually developing his proofs of God's existence St. Thomas tried to show that the provision of such proofs is not a useless superfluity, since the idea of God's existence is not, properly speaking, an innate idea nor is 'God exists' a proposition the opposite of which is inconceivable and cannot be thought. To us indeed, living in a world where atheism is common, where powerful and influential philosophies eliminate or explain away the notion of God, where multitudes of men and women are educated without any belief in God, it seems only natural to think that God's existence requires proof. Kierkegaard and those philosophers and theologians who follow him may have rejected natural theology in the ordinary sense; but normally speaking we should not dream of asserting that God's existence is what St. Thomas calls a *per se notum*. St. Thomas, however, did not live in a world where theoretic atheism was common, and he felt himself compelled to deal not only with statements of certain early Christian writers which seemed to imply that knowledge of God is innate in man, but also with the famous argument of St. Anselm which purports to show that the non-existence of God is inconceivable. Thus in the *Summa Theologica*[1] he devotes an article to answering the question *utrum Deum esse sit per se notum*, and two chapters in the *Summa contra Gentiles*[2] to the consideration *de opinione dicentium quod Deum esse demonstrari non potest, quum sit per se notum.*

St. John Damascene[3] asserts that the knowledge of God's existence is naturally innate in man; but St. Thomas explains that this natural knowledge of God is confused and vague and needs elucidation to be made explicit. Man has a natural desire of happiness (*beatitudo*), and a natural desire supposes a natural knowledge; but although true happiness is to be found only in God, it does not follow that every man has a natural knowledge of God as such: he has a vague idea of happiness since he desires it, but he may think that happiness consists in sensual pleasure or in the possession of wealth, and further reflection is required before he can realise that happiness is to be found only in God. In other words, even if the natural desire for happiness may form the basis for a proof of God's existence, a proof is none the less required. Again, in a sense it is *per se notum* that there is truth, since a man who asserts that there is no truth inevitably asserts that it is true that there is no truth, but it does not follow that the man knows that there is a primal or first Truth, a Source of truth, God: further reflection is necessary if he is to realise this. Once again, although it is true that without God we can know nothing, it does not follow that in knowing anything we have an actual knowledge of God, since God's influence, which enables us to know anything, is not the object of direct intuition but is known only by reflection.[1]

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[1] Ia, 2, 1.

[2] 1, 10–11.

[3] *De fide orthodoxa*, 1, 3.

In general, says St. Thomas, we must make a distinction between what is *per se notum secundum se* and what is *per se notum quoad nos*. A proposition is said to be *per se nota secundum se* when the predicate is included in the subject, as in the proposition that man is an animal, since man is precisely a rational animal. The proposition that God exists is thus a proposition *per se nota secundum se*, since God's essence is His existence and one cannot know God's nature, what God is, without knowing God's existence, that He is; but a man has no *a priori* knowledge of God's nature and only arrives at knowledge of the fact that God's essence is His existence after he has come to know God's existence, so that even though the proposition that God exists is *per se nota secundum se*, it is not *per se nota quoad nos*.

2. In regard to the 'ontological' or *a priori* proof of God's existence given by St. Anselm, St. Thomas answers first of all that not everyone understands by God 'that than which no greater can be thought'. Possibly this observation, though doubtless true, is not altogether relevant, except in so far as St. Anselm considered that everyone understands by 'God' that Being whose existence

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[1] It may appear that St. Thomas's attitude in regard to 'innate' knowledge of God does not differ substantially from that of St. Bonaventure. In a sense this is true, since neither of them admitted an explicit innate idea of God; but St. Bonaventure thought that there is a kind of initial implicit awareness of God, or at least that the idea of God can be rendered explicit by interior reflection alone, whereas the proofs actually given by St. Thomas all proceed by way of the external world. Even if we press the 'Aristotelian' aspect of Bonaventure's epistemology, it remains true that there is a difference of emphasis and approach in the natural theology of the two philosophers.

he intended to prove, namely the supremely perfect Being. It must not be forgotten that Anselm reckoned his argument to be an argument or proof, not the statement of an immediate intuition of God. He then argues, both in the *Summa contra Gentiles* and in the *Summa Theologica*, that the argument of St. Anselm involves an illicit process or transition from the ideal to the real order. Granted that God is conceived as the Being than which no greater can be thought, it does not follow necessarily that such a Being exists, apart from its being conceived, that is, outside the mind. This, however, is not an adequate argument, when taken by itself at least, to disprove the Anselmian reasoning, since it neglects the peculiar character of God, of the Being than which no greater can be thought. Such a Being is its own existence and if it is possible for such a Being to exist, it must exist. The Being than which no greater can be thought is the Being which exists necessarily, it is the necessary Being, and it would be absurd to speak of a merely possible necessary Being. But St. Thomas adds, as we have seen, that the intellect has no *a priori* knowledge of God's nature. In other words, owing to the weakness of the human intellect we cannot discern *a priori* the positive possibility of the supremely perfect Being, the Being the essence of which is existence, and we come to a knowledge of the fact that such a Being exists not through an analysis or consideration of the idea of such a Being, but through arguments from its effects, *a posteriori*.

3. If God's existence cannot be proved *a priori*, through the idea of God, through His essence, it remains that it must be proved *a posteriori*, through an examination of God's effects. It may be objected that this is impossible since the effects of God are finite while God is infinite, so that there is no proportion between the effects and the Cause and the conclusion of the reasoning process will contain infinitely more than the premisses. The reasoning starts with sensible objects and should, therefore, end with a sensible object, whereas in the proofs of God's existence it proceeds to an Object infinitely transcending all sensible objects.

St. Thomas does not deal with this objection at any length, and it would be an absurd anachronism to expect him to discuss and answer the Kantian Critique of metaphysics in advance; but he points out that though from a consideration of effects which are disproportionate to the cause we cannot obtain a perfect knowledge of the cause, we can come to know that the cause exists. We can argue from an effect to the existence of a cause, and if the effect is of such a kind that it can proceed only from a certain kind of cause, we can legitimately argue to the existence of a cause of that kind. (The use of the word 'effect' must not be taken as begging the question, as a *petitio principii*: St. Thomas argues from certain facts concerning the world and argues that these facts require a sufficient ontological explanation. It is true, of course, that he presupposes that the principle of causality is not purely subjective or applicable only within the sphere of 'phenomena' in the Kantian sense; but he is perfectly well aware that it has to be shown that sensible objects are effects, in the sense that they do not contain in themselves their own sufficient ontological explanation.)

A modern Thomist, wishing to expound and defend the natural theology of the Saint in the light of post-mediaeval philosophic thought, would rightly be expected to say something in justification of the speculative reason, of metaphysics. Even if he considered that the onus of proof falls primarily on the opponent of metaphysics, he could not neglect the fact that the legitimacy and even the significance of metaphysical arguments and conclusions have been challenged, and he would be bound to meet this challenge. I cannot see, however, how an historian of mediaeval philosophy in general can justly be expected to treat St. Thomas as though he were a contemporary and fully aware not only of the Kantian criticism of the speculative reason, but also of the attitude towards metaphysics adopted by the logical positivists. Nevertheless, it is true that the Thomist theory of knowledge itself provides, apparently at least, a strong objection against natural theology. According to St. Thomas the proper object of the human intellect is the *quidditas* or essence of the material object: the intellect starts from the sensible objects, knows in dependence on the phantasm and is proportioned, in virtue of its embodied state, to sensible objects. St. Thomas did not admit innate ideas nor did he have recourse to any intuitive knowledge of God, and if one applies strictly the Aristotelian principle that there is nothing in the intellect which was not before in the senses (*Nihil in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu*), it might well appear that the human intellect is confined to knowledge of corporeal objects and cannot, owing to its nature or at least its present state, transcend them. As this objection arises out of the doctrine of Thomas himself, it is relevant to inquire if the Saint attempted to meet it and, if so, how he met it. With the Thomist theory of human knowledge I shall deal later;[1] but I shall give immediately a brief statement of what appears to be St. Thomas's position on this point without development or references.

Objects, whether spiritual or corporeal, are knowable only in so far as they partake of being, are in act, and the intellect as such is the faculty of apprehending being. Considered simply in itself, therefore, the intellect has as its object all being; the primary object of intellect is being. The fact, however, that a particular kind of intellect, the human intellect, is embodied and is dependent on sense for its operation, means that it must start from the things of sense and that, naturally speaking, it can come to know an object which transcends the things of sense (consideration of self-knowledge is here omitted) only in so far as sensible objects bear a relation to that object and manifest it. Owing to the fact that the human intellect is embodied its natural and proper object, proportionate to its present state, is the corporeal object; but this does not destroy the primary orientation of the intellect to being in general, and if corporeal objects bear a discernible relation to an object which transcends them, the intellect can know that such an object exists. Moreover, in so far as material objects reveal the character of the Transcendent, the intellect can attain some knowledge of its nature; but such a knowledge cannot be adequate or perfect, since sense-objects cannot reveal adequately or perfectly the nature of the Transcendent. Of our natural knowledge of God's nature I shall speak later:[2] let it suffice to point out here that when St. Thomas says that the corporeal object is the natural object of the human intellect, he means that the human intellect in its present state is orientated towards the essence of the corporeal object, but that just as the embodied condition of the human intellect does not destroy its primary character as intellect, so its orientation, in virtue of its embodied state, towards the corporeal object does not destroy its primary orientation towards being in general. It can therefore attain to some natural knowledge of God, in so far as corporeal objects are related to Him and reveal Him; but this knowledge is necessarily imperfect and inadequate and cannot be intuitive in character.

4. The first of the five proofs of God's existence given by St. Thomas is that from motion, which is found in Aristotle[3] and was utilised by Maimonides and St. Albert. We know through sense-perception that some things in the world are moved, that motion

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[1] See Ch. XXXVIII. [2] See Ch. XXXV. [3] *Metaph.*, Bk. 12; *Physics*, Bk. 8.

is a fact. Motion is here understood in the wide Aristotelian sense of reduction of potency to act, and St. Thomas, following Aristotle, argues that a thing cannot be reduced from potency to act except by something which is already in act. In this sense 'every thing which is moved is moved by another'. If that other is itself moved, it must be moved by yet another agent. As an infinite series is impossible, we come in the end to an unmoved mover, a first mover, 'and all understand that this is God'.[1] This argument St. Thomas calls the *manifestior via.*[2] In the *Summa contra Gentiles*[3] he develops it at considerable length.

The second proof, which is suggested by the second book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*[4] and which was used by Avicenna, Alan of Lille and St. Albert, also starts from the sensible world, but this time from the order or series of efficient causes. Nothing can be the cause of itself, for in order to be this, it would have to exist before itself. On the other hand, it is impossible to proceed to infinity in the series of efficient causes: therefore there must be a first efficient cause, 'which all men call God'.

The third proof, which Maimonides took over from Avicenna and developed, starts from the fact that some beings come into existence and perish, which shows that they can not be and can be, that they are contingent and not necessary, since if they were necessary they would always have existed and would neither come into being nor pass away. St. Thomas then argues that there must exist a necessary being, which is the reason why contingent beings come into existence. If there were no necessary being, nothing at all would exist.

There are several remarks which must be made, though very briefly, concerning these three proofs. First of all, when St. Thomas says that an infinite series is impossible (and this principle is utilised in all three proofs), he is not thinking of a series stretching back in time, of a 'horizontal' series, so to speak. He is not saying, for example, that because the child owes its life to its parents and its parents owe their lives to their parents and so on, there must have been an original pair, who had no parents but were directly created by God. St. Thomas did not believe that it can be proved philosophically that the world was not created from eternity: he admits the abstract possibility of the world's creation from eternity and this cannot be admitted without the possibility of a beginningless series being admitted at the same time. What he denies is the possibility of an infinite series in the order of actually depending causes, of an infinite 'vertical' series. Suppose that the world had actually been created from eternity. There would be an infinite horizontal or historic series, but the whole series would consist of contingent beings, for the fact of its being without beginning does not make it necessary. The whole series, therefore, must depend on something outside the series. But if you ascend upwards, without ever coming to a stop, you have no explanation of the existence of the series: one must conclude with the existence of a being which is not itself dependent.

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 2, 3, *in corpore.*

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] 1, 13.

[4] C. 2.

Secondly, consideration of the foregoing remarks will show that the so-called mathematical infinite series has nothing to do with the Thomist proofs. It is not the possibility of an infinite series as such which St. Thomas denies, but the possibility of an infinite series in the ontological order of dependence. In other words, he denies that the movement and contingency of the experienced world can be without any ultimate and adequate ontological explanation.

Thirdly, it might seem to be rather cavalier behaviour on St. Thomas's part to assume that the unmoved mover or the first cause or the necessary being is what we call God. Obviously if anything exists at all, there must be a necessary Being: thought must arrive at this conclusion, unless metaphysics is rejected altogether; but it is not so obvious that the necessary being must be the personal Being whom we call God. That a purely philosophical argument does not bring us to the full revealed notion of God needs no elaboration; but, even apart from the full notion of God as revealed by Christ and preached by the Church, does a purely philosophical argument give us a personal Being at all? Did St. Thomas's belief in God lead him perhaps to find more in the conclusion of the argument than was actually there? Because he was looking for arguments to prove the existence of the God in whom he believed, was he not perhaps over-hasty in identifying the first mover, the first cause and the necessary being with the God of Christianity and religious experience, the personal Being to whom man can pray? I think that we must admit that the actual phrases which St. Thomas appends to the proofs given in the *Summa Theologica* (*et hoc omnes intelligunt Deum, causam efficientem primam quam omnes Deum nominant, quod omnes dicunt Deum*) constitute, if considered in isolation, an over-hasty conclusion; but, apart from the fact that the *Summa Theologica* is a summary (and mainly) theological text-book, these phrases should not be taken in isolation. For example, the actual summary proof of the existence of a necessary being contains no explicit argument to show whether that being is material or immaterial, so that the observation at the end of the proof that this being is called by everyone God might seem to be without sufficient warrant; but in the first article of the next question St. Thomas asks if God is material, a body, and argues that He is not. The phrases in the question should, therefore, be understood as expressions of the fact that God is recognised by all who believe in Him to be the first Cause and necessary Being, not as an unjustifiable suppression of further argument. In any case the proofs are given by St. Thomas simply in outline: it is not as though he had in mind the composition of a treatise against professed atheists. If he had to deal with Marxists, he would doubtless treat the proofs in a different, or at least in a more elaborate and developed manner: as it is, his main interest is to give a proof of the *praeambula fidei*. Even in the *Summa contra Gentiles* the Saint was not dealing primarily with atheists, but rather with the Mohammedans, who had a firm belief in God.

5. The fourth proof is suggested by some observations in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*[1] and is found substantially in St. Augustine and St. Anselm. It starts from the degrees of perfection, of goodness, truth, etc., in the things of this world, which permit of one making such comparative judgements as 'this is more beautiful than that', 'this is better than that'. Assuming that such judgements have an objective foundation, St. Thomas argues that the degrees of perfection necessarily imply the existence of a best, a most true, etc., which will be also the supreme being (*maxime ens*).

So far the argument leads only to a relatively best. If one can establish that there actually are degrees of truth, goodness and being, a hierarchy of being, then there must be one being or several beings which are comparatively or relatively supreme. But this is not enough to prove the existence of God, and St. Thomas proceeds to argue that what is supreme in goodness, for example, must be the cause of goodness in all things. Further, inasmuch as goodness, truth and being are convertible, there must be a supreme Being which is the cause of being, goodness, truth, and so of all perfection in every other being; *et hoc dicimus Deum*.

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[1] 2, 1; 4, 4.

As the term of the argument is a Being which transcends all sensible objects, the perfections in question can obviously be only those perfections which are capable of subsisting by themselves, pure perfections, which do not involve any necessary relation to extension or quantity. The argument is Platonic in origin and presupposes the idea of participation. Contingent beings do not possess their being of themselves, nor their goodness or ontological truth; they receive their perfections, share them. The ultimate cause of perfection must itself be perfect: it cannot receive its perfection from another, but must be its own perfection: it is self-existing being and perfection. The argument consists, then, in the application of principles already used in the foregoing proofs to pure perfections: it is not really a departure from the general spirit of the other proofs, in spite of its Platonic descent. One of the main difficulties about it, however, is, as already indicated, to show that there actually are objective degrees of being and perfection before one has shown that there actually exists a Being which is absolute and self-existing Perfection.

6. The fifth way is the teleological proof, for which Kant had a considerable respect on account of its antiquity, clarity and persuasiveness, though, in accordance with the principles of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, he refused to recognise its demonstrative character.

St. Thomas argues that we behold inorganic objects operating for an end, and as this happens always or very frequently, it cannot proceed from chance, but must be the result of intention. But inorganic objects are without knowledge: they cannot, then, tend towards an end unless they are directed by someone who is intelligent and possessed of knowledge, as 'the arrow is directed by the archer'. Therefore there exists an intelligent Being, by whom all natural things are directed to an end; *et hoc dicimus Deum*. In the *Summa contra Gentiles* the Saint states the argument in a slightly different manner, arguing that when many things with different and even contrary qualities co-operate towards the realisation of one order, this must proceed from an intelligent Cause or Providence; *et hoc dicimus Deum*. If the proof as given in the *Summa Theologica* emphasises the internal finality of the inorganic object, that given in the *Summa contra Gentiles* emphasises rather the co-operation of many objects in the realisation of the one world order or harmony. By itself the proof leads to a Designer or Governor or Architect of the universe, as Kant observed; further reasoning is required in order to show that this Architect is not only a 'Demiurge', but also Creator.

7. The proofs have been stated in more or less the same bold and succinct way in which St. Thomas states them. With the exception of the first proof, which is elaborated at some length in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, the proofs are given only in very bare outline, both in the *Summa Theologica* and in the *Summa contra Gentiles*. No mention has been made, however, of Aquinas's (to our view) somewhat unfortunate physical illustrations, as when he says that fire is the cause of all hot things, since these illustrations are really irrelevant to the validity or invalidity of the proofs as such. The modern disciple of St. Thomas naturally has not only to develop the proofs in far greater detail and to consider difficulties and objections which could hardly have occurred to St. Thomas, but also to justify the very principles on which the general line of proof rests. Thus, in regard to the fifth proof given by St. Thomas, the modern Thomist must take some account of recent theories which profess to render intelligible the genesis of the order and finality in the universe without recourse to the hypothesis of any spiritual agent distinct from the universe, while in regard to all the proofs he has not only, in face of the Kantian Critique, to justify the line of argument on which they rest, but he has to show, as against the logical positivists, that the word 'God' has some significance. It is not, however, the task of the historian to develop the proofs as they would have to be developed to-day, nor is it his task to justify those proofs. The way in which St. Thomas states the proofs may perhaps cause some dissatisfaction in the reader; but it must be remembered that the Saint was primarily a theologian and that, as already mentioned, he was concerned not so much to give an exhaustive treatment of the proofs as to prove in a summary fashion the *praeambula fidei*. He, therefore, makes use of traditional proofs, which either had or seemed to have some support in Aristotle and which had been employed by some of his predecessors.

St. Thomas gives five proofs, and among these five proofs he gives a certain preference to the first, to the extent at least of calling it the *via manifestior*. However, whatever we may think of this assertion, the fundamental proof is really the third proof or 'way', that from contingency. In the first proof the argument from contingency is applied to the special fact of motion or change, in the second proof to the order of causality or causal production, in the fourth proof to degrees of perfection and in the fifth proof to finality, to the co-operation of inorganic objects in the attainment of cosmic order. The argument from contingency itself is based on the fact that everything must have its sufficient reason, the reason why it exists. Change or motion must have its sufficient reason in an unmoved mover, the series of secondary causes and effects in an uncaused cause, limited perfection in absolute perfection, and finality and order in nature in an Intelligence or Designer. The 'interiority' of the proofs of God's existence as given by St. Augustine or St. Bonaventure is absent from the five ways of St. Thomas; but one could, of course, apply the general principles to the self, if one so wished. As they stand, the five proofs of St. Thomas may be said to be an explicitation of the words of the *Book of Wisdom*[1] and of St. Paul in *Romans*[2] that God can be known from His works, as transcending His works.

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[1] Ch. 13.

[2] Ch. 1.

CHAPTER XXXV

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS—V: GOD'S NATURE

The negative way—The affirmative way—Analogy—Types of analogy—A difficulty—The divine ideas—No real distinction between the divine attributes—God as existence itself.

1. ONCE it has been established that the necessary Being exists, it would seem only natural to proceed to the investigation of God's nature. It is very unsatisfactory simply to know that a necessary Being exists, unless at the same time we can know what sort of a Being the necessary Being is. But a difficulty at once arises. We have in this life no intuition of the divine essence; we are dependent for our knowledge on sense-perception, and the ideas which we form are derived from our experience of creatures. Language too is formed to express these ideas and so refers primarily to our experience and would seem to have objective reference only within the sphere of our experience. How, then, can we come to know a Being which transcends sense-experience? How can we form ideas which express in any way the nature of a Being which transcends the range of our experience, the world of creatures? How can the words of any human language be at all applicable to the Divine Being?

St. Thomas was well aware of this difficulty, and indeed the whole tradition of Christian philosophy, which had undergone the influence of the writings of the Pseudo-Dionysius, himself dependent on neo-Platonism, would have helped, if help had been needed, to prevent him indulging in any over-confidence in the power of the human reason to penetrate the divine essence. Rationalism of the Hegelian type was quite foreign to his mind, and we find him saying that we cannot come to know of God *quid sit*, what He is (His essence), but only *an sit* or *quod sit*, that He is (His existence). This statement, if taken alone, would seem to involve complete agnosticism as regards the divine nature, but this is not St. Thomas's meaning, and the statement must be interpreted according to his general doctrine and his explanation of it. Thus in the *Summa contra Gentiles*[1] he says that 'the divine substance exceeds by its immensity every form which our intellect attains; and so we cannot apprehend it by knowing what it is, but we have some notion of it by coming to know what it is not.' For example, we come to know something of God by recognising that He is not, and cannot be, a corporeal substance: by denying of Him corporeality we form some notion of His nature, since we know that He is not body, though this does not give us of itself a positive idea of what the divine substance is in itself, and the more predicates we can deny of God in this way, the more we approximate to a knowledge of Him.

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[1] 1, 14.

This is the famous *via remotionis* or *via negativa*, so dear to the Pseudo-Dionysius and other Christian writers who had been strongly influenced by neo-Platonism; but St. Thomas adds a very useful observation concerning the negative way.[1] In the case of a created substance, he says, which we can define, we first of all assign it to its genus by which we know in general what it is, and then we add the difference by which it is distinguished from other things; but in the case of God we cannot assign Him to a genus, since He transcends all genera, and so we cannot distinguish Him from other beings by positive differences (*per affirmativas differentias*). Nevertheless, though we cannot approach to a clear idea of God's nature in the same way in which we can attain a clear idea of human nature, that is, by a succession of positive or affirmative differentiations, such as living, sensitive or animal, rational, we can attain some notion of His nature by the negative way, by a succession of negative differentiations. For example, if we say that God is not an accident, we distinguish Him from all accidents; if we say that He is not corporeal, we distinguish Him from some substances; and thus we can proceed until we obtain an idea of God which belongs to Him alone (*propria consideratio*) and which suffices to distinguish Him from all other beings.

It must, however, be borne in mind that when predicates are denied of God, they are not denied of Him because He lacks any perfection expressed in that predicate, but because He infinitely exceeds that limited perfection in richness. Our natural knowledge has its beginning in sense and extends as far as it can be led by the help of sensible objects.[2] As sensible objects are creatures of God, we can come to know that God exists, but we cannot attain by means of them any adequate knowledge of God, since they are effects which are not fully proportionate to the divine power. But we can come to know about Him what is necessarily true of Him precisely as cause of all sensible objects. As their cause, He transcends them and is not and cannot be a sensible object Himself: we can, then, deny of Him any predicates which are bound up with corporeality or which are inconsistent with His being the first Cause and necessary Being. But *haec non removentur ab eo propter ejus defectum, sed quia superexcedit.*[1] If we say, therefore, that God is not corporeal, we do not mean that God is less than body, that He *lacks* the perfection involved in being body, but rather that He is *more than* body, that He possesses none of the imperfections necessarily involved in being a corporeal substance.

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[1] *Contra Gent.*, 1, 14.

[2] *S.T.*, Ia, 12, 12, *in corpore*.

Arguing by means of the negative way St. Thomas shows that God cannot be corporeal, for example, since the unmoved Mover and the necessary Being must be pure Act, whereas every corporeal substance is in potentiality. Again, there cannot be any composition in God, either of matter and form or of substance and accident or of essence and existence. If there were composition of essence and existence, for instance, God would owe His existence to another being, which is impossible, since God is the first Cause. There cannot in fine be any composition in God, as this would be incompatible with His being as first Cause, necessary Being, pure Act. We express this absence of composition by the positive word 'simplicity', but the idea of the divine simplicity is attained by removing from God all the forms of composition which are found in creatures, so that 'simplicity' here means absence of composition. We cannot form an adequate idea of the divine simplicity as it is in itself, since it transcends our experience: we know, however, that it is at the opposite pole, so to speak, from simplicity or comparative simplicity in creatures. In creatures we experience the more complex substance is the higher, as a man is higher than an oyster; but God's simplicity means that He possesses the fullness of His being and perfection in one undivided and eternal act.

Similarly, God is infinite and perfect, since His *esse* is not something received and limited, but is self-existent; He is immutable, since the necessary Being is necessarily all that it is and cannot be changed; He is eternal, since time requires motion and in the immutable Being there can be no motion. He is one, since He is simple and infinite. Strictly speaking, however, says St. Thomas, God is not eternal, but is eternity, since He is His own subsistent *esse* in one undivided act. To go through all the various attributes of God which can be known by the negative way is unnecessary:

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 12, 12, *in corpore*.

it is sufficient to have given some examples to show how, after proving that God exists as unmoved Mover, first Cause, and necessary Being, St. Thomas then proceeds to remove from God, to deny of God, all those predicates of creatures which are incompatible with God's character as unmoved Mover, first Cause and necessary Being. There cannot be in God corporeality, composition, limitation, imperfection, temporality, etc.

2. Predicates or names such as 'immutable' and 'infinite' suggest by their very form their association with the negative way, immutable being equivalent to not-mutable and infinite to not-finite; but there are other predicates applied to God which suggest no such association, such as good, wise, etc. Moreover, while a negative predicate, says St. Thomas,[1] refers directly not to the divine substance, but to the 'removal' of something from the divine substance, that is, the denial of some predicate's applicability to God, there are positive predicates or names which are predicated of the divine substance affirmatively. For example, the predicate 'non-corporeal' denies corporeality of God, removes it from Him, whereas the predicate good or wise is predicated affirmatively and directly of the divine substance. There is, then, an affirmative or positive way, in addition to the negative way. But what is its justification if these perfections, goodness, wisdom, etc., are experienced by us as they are in creatures, and if the words we use to express these perfections express the ideas we derive from creatures? Are we not applying to God ideas and words which have no application save within the realm of experience? Are we not faced with the following dilemma? Either we are predicating of God predicates which apply only to creatures, in which case our statements about God are false, or we have emptied the predicates of their reference to creatures, in which case they are without content, since they are derived from our experience of creatures and express that experience?

First of all, St. Thomas insists that when affirmative predicates are predicated of God, they are predicated positively of the divine nature or substance. He will not allow the opinion of those who, like Maimonides, make all predicates of God equivalent to negative predicates, nor the opinion of those who say that 'God is good' or 'God is living' means simply 'God is the cause of all goodness' or 'God is the cause of life'. When we say that God is living or God is life, we do not mean merely that God is not non-living: the statement that God is living has a degree of affirmation about it that is wanting to the statement that God is not a body. Nor does the man who states that God is living mean only that God is the cause of life, of all living things: he means to say something positive about God Himself. Again, if the statement that God is living meant no more than that God is the cause of all living things, we might just as well say that God is body, since He is the cause of all bodies. Yet we do not say that God is body, whereas we do say that God is living, and this shows that the statement that God is living means more than that God is the cause of life, and that a positive affirmation is being made concerning the divine substance.

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 13, 2, *in corpore*.

On the other hand, none of the positive ideas by means of which we conceive the nature of God represent God perfectly. Our ideas of God represent God only in so far as our intellects can know Him; but we know Him by means of sensible objects in so far as these objects represent or mirror God, so that inasmuch as creatures represent God or mirror Him only imperfectly, our ideas, derived from our experience of the natural world, can themselves represent God only imperfectly. When we say that God is good or living, we mean that He contains, or rather is the perfection of, goodness or life, but in a manner which exceeds and excludes all the imperfections and limitations of creatures. As regards *what is predicated* (goodness, for example), the affirmative predicate which we predicate of God signifies a perfection without any defect; but as regards the *manner of predicating it* every such predicate involves a defect, for by the word (*nomen*) we express something in the way it is conceived by the intellect. It follows, then, that predicates of this kind may, as the Pseudo-Dionysius observed, be both affirmed and denied of God; affirmed *propter nominis rationem*, denied *propter significandi modum*. For example, if we make the statement that God is wisdom, this affirmative statement is true in regard to the perfection as such; but if we meant that God is wisdom in precisely that sense in which we experience wisdom, it would be false. God is wise, but He is wisdom in a sense transcending our experience; He does not possess wisdom as an inhering quality or form. In other words, we affirm of God the essence of wisdom or goodness or life in a 'supereminent' way, and we deny of God the imperfections attendant on human wisdom, wisdom as we experience it.[1] When, therefore, we say that God is good, the meaning is not that God is the cause of goodness or that God is not evil, but that what we call goodness in creatures pre-exists in God *secundum modum altiorem*. From this it does not follow that goodness belongs to God inasmuch as He causes goodness, but rather that because He is good, He diffuses goodness into things, according to the saying of Augustine, 'because He is good, we exist'.[1]

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[1] *Contra Gent.*, 1, 30.

3. The upshot of the foregoing considerations is, therefore, that we cannot in this life know the divine essence as it is in itself, but only as it is represented in creatures, so that the names we apply to God signify the perfections manifested in creatures. From this fact several important conclusions must be drawn, the first being this, that the names we apply to God and to creatures are not to be understood in an univocal sense. For example, when we say that a man is wise and that God is wise, the predicate 'wise' is not to be understood in an univocal sense, that is, in precisely the same sense. Our concept of wisdom is drawn from creatures, and if we applied precisely this concept to God, we should be saying something false about God, since God is not, and cannot be, wise in precisely the same sense in which a man is wise. On the other hand, the names we apply to God are not purely equivocal, that is to say, they are not entirely and completely different in meaning from the meaning they bear when applied to creatures. If they were purely equivocal, we should have to conclude that we can gain no knowledge of God from creatures. If wisdom as predicated of man and wisdom as predicated of God signified something completely different, the term 'wise' as applied to God would have no content, no significance, since our knowledge of wisdom is drawn from creatures and is not based on direct experience of the divine wisdom. Of course, it might be objected that, though it is true that if the terms predicated of God were used in an equivocal sense, we should know nothing of God from creatures, it does not follow that we can know anything about God from creatures; but St. Thomas's insistence that we can know something of God from creatures is based on the fact that creatures, as effects of God, must manifest God, though they can do this only imperfectly.

Yet if the concepts derived from our experience of creatures and then applied to God are used neither in an univocal nor in an equivocal sense, in what sense are they used? Is there any halfway house? St. Thomas replies that they are used in an analogical sense. When an attribute is predicated analogically of two different beings, this means that it is predicated according to the relation they have to some third thing or according to the relation the one has to the other. As an example of the first type of analogical predication St. Thomas gives his favourite example, health.[1] An animal is said to be healthy because it is the subject of health, possesses health, while medicine is said to be healthy as being the cause of health, and a complexion is said to be healthy as being the sign of health. The word 'healthy' is predicated in different senses of the animal in general, the medicine and the complexion, according to the different relations they bear to health; but it is not predicated in a purely equivocal sense, for all three bear some real relation to health. Medicine is not healthy in the same sense that animal is healthy, for the term 'healthy' is not employed univocally, but the senses in which it is used are not equivocal or purely metaphorical, as when we speak of a smiling meadow. But this, says St. Thomas, is not the way in which we predicate attributes of God and creatures, for God and creatures have no relation to any third object: we predicate attributes of God and creatures, in so far as the creature has a real relation to God. When, for example, we predicate being of God and creatures, we attribute being first and foremost to God, as self-existing being, secondarily to creatures, as dependent on God. We cannot predicate being univocally of God and creatures, since they do not possess being in the same way, nor do we predicate being in a purely equivocal sense, since creatures have being, though their being is not like the divine being but is dependent, participated being.

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 13, 2.

As regards what is meant by the words we apply to God and creatures, it is attributed primarily to God and only secondarily to creatures. Being, as we have seen, belongs essentially to God, whereas it does not belong essentially to creatures but only in dependence on God: it is being, but it is a different kind of being from the divine being, since it is received, derived, dependent, finite. Nevertheless, though the thing signified is attributed primarily to God, the name is predicated primarily of creatures. The reason is that we know creatures before we know God, so that since our knowledge of wisdom, for example, is derived from creatures and the word primarily denotes the concept derived from our experience of creatures, the idea of wisdom and the word are predicated primarily of creatures and analogically of God, even though in actual fact wisdom itself, the thing signified, belongs primarily to God.

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[1] *Contra Gent.*, 1, 34; *S.T.*, Ia, 13, 5.

4. Analogical predication is founded on resemblance. In the *De Veritate*[1] St. Thomas distinguishes resemblance of proportion (*convenientia proportionis*) and resemblance of proportionality (*convenientia proportionalitatis*). Between the number 8 and the number 4 there is a resemblance of proportion, while between the proportions of 6 to 3 and of 4 to 2 there is a resemblance of proportionality, that is, a resemblance or similarity of two proportions to one another. Now, analogical predication in a general sense may be made according to both types of resemblance. The predication of being in regard to created substance and accident, each of which has a relation to the other, is an example of analogical predication according to proportion, while the predication of vision in regard to both ocular and intellectual vision is an example of analogical predication according to proportionality. What corporeal vision is to the eye, that intellectual apprehension or vision is to the mind. There is a certain similarity between the relation of the eye to its vision and the relation of mind to its intellectual apprehension, a similarity which enables us to speak of 'vision' in both cases. We apply the word 'vision' in the two cases neither univocally nor purely equivocally, but analogically.

Now, it is impossible to predicate anything analogically of God and creatures in the same way that it is possible to predicate being of substance and accident, for God and creatures have no mutual real relationship: creatures have a real relation to God, but God has no real relation to creatures. Nor is God included in the definition of any creature in the way that substance is included in the definition of accident. It does not follow, however, that there can be no analogy of proportion between God and creatures. Though God is not related to creatures by a real relation, creatures have a real relation to God, and we are able to apply the same term to God and creatures in virtue of that relation. There are perfections which are not bound up with matter and which do not necessarily imply any defect or imperfection in the being of which they are predicated. Being, wisdom and goodness are examples of such perfections. Obviously we gain knowledge of being or goodness or wisdom from creatures; but it does not follow that these perfections exist primarily in creatures and only secondarily in God, or that they are predicated primarily of creatures and only secondarily of God. On the contrary, goodness, for instance, exists primarily in God, who is the infinite goodness and the cause of all creaturely goodness, and it is predicated primarily of God and only secondarily of creatures, even though creaturely goodness is what we first come to know. Analogy of proportion is possible, then, in virtue of the creature's relation and likeness to God. To this point I shall return shortly.

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[1] 2, 11, *in corpore.*

It has been argued that St. Thomas came to abandon analogy of proportionality in favour of the analogy of proportion (in the acceptable sense); but this does not seem to me likely. In the Commentary on the *Sentences*[1] he gives both types of analogy, and even if in later works, like the *De Potentia*, the *Summa contra Gentiles* and the *Summa Theologica*, he seems to emphasise analogy of proportion, that does not seem to me to indicate that he ever abandoned analogy of proportionality. This type of analogical predication may be used in two ways, symbolically or properly. We can speak of God as 'the Sun', meaning that what the sun is to the bodily eye, that God is to the soul; but we are then speaking symbolically, since the word 'sun' refers to a material thing and can be predicated of a spiritual being only in a symbolic sense. We can say, however, that there is a certain similarity between God's relation to His intellectual activity and man's relation to his intellectual activity, and in this case we are not speaking merely symbolically, since intellectual activity as such is a pure perfection.

The foundation of all analogy, then, that which makes analogical predication possible, is the likeness of creatures to God. We do not predicate wisdom of God merely because God is the cause of all wise things, for in that case we might just as well call God a stone, as being the cause of all stones; but we call Him wise because creatures, God's effects, manifest God, are like to Him, and because a pure perfection like wisdom can be formally predicated of Him. But what is this likeness? In the first place it is only a one-way likeness, that is, the creature is like to God, but we cannot properly say that God is like the creature. God is the absolute standard, as it were. In the second place creatures are only imperfectly like God; they cannot bear a perfect resemblance to Him. This means that the creature is *at the same time* both like and unlike God. It is like God in so far as it is an imitation of Him; it is unlike God in so far as its resemblance to Him is imperfect and deficient. Analogical predication, therefore, lies between univocal and equivocal predication. In analogical predication the predicate is applied to God and creatures neither in precisely the same sense nor in totally different senses; it is applied at the same time in similar and dissimilar senses.[1] This notion of simultaneous similarity and difference is fundamental in analogy. The notion may, it is true, occasion considerable difficulties from the logical standpoint; but it would be inappropriate to discuss here the objections of modern positivists to analogy.

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[1] *In* 4 *Sent.*, 49, 2, 1, *ad* 6.

St. Thomas distinguishes, then, *analogy of proportion* (*analogia secundum convenientiam proportionis*) and *analogy of proportionality* (*analogia secundum convenientiam proportionalitatis*). As we have seen, he does not admit in regard to God and creatures that analogy of proportion which is applicable to substance and accident in respect of being; by analogy of proportion in natural theology he means that analogy in which a predicate is applied primarily to one analogue, namely God, and secondarily and imperfectly to the other analogue, namely the creature, in virtue of the creature's real relation and likeness to God. The perfection attributed to the analogues is really present in both of them, but it is not present in the same way, and the one predicate is used at the same time in senses which are neither completely different nor completely similar. Terminology has changed since the time of St. Thomas, and this kind of analogy is now called analogy of attribution. Analogy of proportionality, the resemblance of proportions, is sometimes called analogy of proportion, in distinction from the analogy of attribution; but not all Scholastics and commentators on St. Thomas employ the terms in precisely the same way.

Some Scholastics have maintained that being, for example, is predicable of God and creatures only by analogy of proportionality and not by analogy of attribution. Without, however, wishing to enter on a discussion of the value of analogy of proportionality as such, I do not see how we could know that God has any perfection save by way of the analogy of attribution. All analogical predication rests on the real relation and likeness of creatures to God, and it seems to me that the analogy of proportionality presupposes analogy of proportion or attribution and that the latter is the more fundamental of the two kinds of analogy.

5. If one reads what St. Thomas has to say of analogy, it may

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[1] Cf. *S.T.*, Ia, 13, 5, *in corpore*.

appear that he is simply examining the way in which we speak about God, the verbal and conceptual implications of our statements, and that he is not actually establishing anything about our real knowledge of God. But it is a fundamental principle with St. Thomas that the perfections of creatures must be found in the Creator in a super-eminent manner, in a manner compatible with the infinity and spirituality of God. For example, if God has created intellectual beings, God must be possessed of intellect; we cannot suppose that He is less than intellectual. Moreover, a spiritual being must be an intellectual form, as Aristotle says, and the infinite spiritual being must be possessed of infinite intelligence. On the other hand, God's intelligence cannot be a faculty distinct from His essence or nature, since God is pure Act and not a composite being, nor can God know things successively, since He is changeless and incapable of accidental determination. He knows future events in virtue of His eternity, by which all things are present to Him.[1] God must possess the perfection of intellectuality, but we cannot form any adequate concept of what the divine intelligence is, since we have no experience of it: our knowledge of the divine intelligence is imperfect and inadequate, but it is not false; it is analogical knowledge. It would be false only if we were unaware of its imperfection and actually meant to ascribe to God finite intelligence as such: we cannot help thinking and speaking of the divine intelligence in terms of human concepts and language, since there are no others available to us, but at the same time we are aware that our concepts and language are imperfect. We cannot, for instance, help speaking as though God 'foresaw' future events, but we are aware that for God there is not past or future. Similarly we must ascribe to God the perfection of free will in respect of other objects than Himself, but God's free will cannot involve changeableness: He willed freely to create the world in time, but He willed it freely from all eternity, in virtue of the one act of will which is identical with His essence. Of the divine free will we can, therefore, form no adequate conception; but the relation of creatures to God shows us that God must possess free will and we can realise some of the things which the divine free will cannot mean; yet the positive reality of the divine free will exceeds our comprehension, precisely because we are creatures and not God. Only God can comprehend Himself.

It can scarcely be denied, however, that a grave difficulty arises in connection with the doctrine of analogy. If our idea of intelligence, for example, is derived from human intelligence, it obviously cannot, as such, be applied to God, and St. Thomas insists that no predicate which is applied to God and creatures is applied univocally. On the other hand, unless we were willing to acquiesce in agnosticism, we could not allow that such predicates are used in a purely equivocal sense. What, then, is the positive content of our concept of the divine intelligence? If St. Thomas adhered simply to the *via negativa* the difficulty would not arise: he would be saying simply that God is not not-intelligent or that He is super-intelligent, admitting that we have no positive idea of what the divine intelligence is. But St. Thomas does not stick simply to the *via negativa*: he admits the *via affirmativa*. Our idea of divine intelligence has, therefore, a positive content; but what can that positive content be? Is the reply that a positive content is obtained by denying the limitations of human intelligence, its finiteness, discursive character, potentiality and so on? In this case, however, we either attain a positive concept of the divine intelligence as such or we attain a concept of the 'essence' of intelligence, apart from finitude or infinity, which would seem to be univocal in respect of God and creatures. It might even appear that the negations either cancel out the content altogether or make it into an idea of the essence of intelligence which would be univocal in respect of divine and human intelligence. It was for this reason that Duns Scotus later insisted that we can form univocal concepts applicable to both God and creatures, though there is no univocity in the real order in respect of God and creatures. It is sometimes said that analogical concepts are partly the same as and partly different from univocal concepts; but the same difficulty recurs. The element of 'sameness' will be an univocal element, while the element of 'difference' will either be negative or it will have no content, since we have no immediate experience of God from which the idea can be derived. But further consideration of this point is best reserved for our treatment of St. Thomas's doctrine of knowledge.[1]

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[1] Cf. *S.T.*, Ia, 14, 13.

6. Mention of the divine intelligence naturally leads one on to raise the question what St. Thomas thought of the doctrine of the divine ideas. In the first place he establishes that there must be ideas in the divine mind, *necesse est ponere in mente divina ideas*,[2] since God has created things not by chance, but intelligently,

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[1] Cf. Ch. XXXVIII, sect. 4.

[2] *S.T.*, Ia, 15, 1.

according to the exemplary idea He conceived in His mind. He remarks that Plato erred in asserting the existence of ideas which were not in any intellect, and he observes that Aristotle blamed Plato on this account. As a matter of fact, Aristotle, who did not believe in any free creation by God, did not blame Plato for making the ideas independent of the divine mind, but for maintaining their subsistence apart from the human mind, if one is considering their subjective reality, and apart from things, if one is considering their objective reality as forms. In asserting the existence of ideas in the divine mind St. Thomas is therefore following in the wake of the tradition which began with Plato, was developed in Middle Platonism and neo-Platonism and lived on, in a Christian setting, in the philosophy of Augustine and those who followed him.

One of the reasons why the neo-Platonists placed the ideas in the *Nous*, the second hypostasis or first emanating divine being, and not in the One or supreme Godhead was that the presence of a multiplicity of ideas in God would, they thought, impair the divine unity. How did St. Thomas meet this difficulty, when the only real distinction he could admit in God was the distinction between the three divine Persons in the Trinity (and with this distinction he was not, of course, concerned as philosopher)? His answer is that from one point of view we must say that there is a plurality of ideas in God, as Augustine said, since God knows each individual thing to be created, but that from another point of view there cannot be a plurality of ideas in God, since this would contradict the divine simplicity. What he means is this. If by idea one refers to the content of the idea, then one must admit a plurality of ideas in God, since God knows many objects; but if by idea one means the subjective mental determination, the species, then one cannot admit a plurality of ideas in God, since God's intellect is identical with His undivided essence and cannot receive determinations or any sort of composition. God knows His divine essence not only as it is in itself, but also as imitable outside itself in a plurality of creatures. This act of knowledge, as it exists in God, is one and undivided and is identical with His essence; but since God not only knows His essence as imitable in a multiplicity of creatures, but also knows that in knowing His essence He knows a multiplicity of creatures, we can and must speak of a plurality of ideas in God, for 'idea' signifies, not the divine essence as it is in itself, but the divine essence as the exemplar of this or that object. And it is the exemplar of many objects. In other words, the truth or falsity of our statements in regard to God must be estimated in terms of human language. To deny a plurality of ideas in God without qualification would be to deny that God knows a plurality of objects; but the truth that God knows His essence as imitable by a plurality of creatures must not be stated in such a way as to imply that there is a multiplicity of real species or really distinct modifications in the divine intellect.[1]

This discussion of the divine ideas is of some interest because it shows that St. Thomas is by no means simply an Aristotelian, but that in this respect at least he adheres to the Platonic-Augustinian tradition. Indeed, although he sees clearly that he has to provide against any impairing of the divine simplicity, he is not content with saying that God by one act of His intellect, one 'idea', knows His essence as imitable in a plurality of creatures, but he asserts that there is a plurality of ideas in God. He certainly gives his reasons for doing so, but one has the impression that one unstated reason was his reverence for Augustine and Augustine's mode of speaking. However, it is true that a distinction must be made. When we to-day use the term 'idea' we naturally refer to the subjective idea or mental modification, and in this sense St. Thomas does not admit in God a plurality of ideas really distinct from one another; but St. Thomas was primarily thinking of 'idea' in the sense of exemplary form, and since the divine essence as known by the divine intellect is known as imitable in a plurality of creatures, as the exemplar of many objects, he felt himself entitled to speak of a plurality of *rationes* in God, though he had to insist that this plurality consists simply in God's knowledge of His essence in respect of the multiplicity of creatures and not in a real distinction in God.

7. We have spoken of the divine intelligence and the divine will, the divine goodness, unity, simplicity and so on. Are these attributes of God really distinct from one another? And if they are not distinct from one another, what is our justification for speaking of them as though they were distinct? The attributes of God are not really distinct from one another, since God is simple: they are identical with the divine essence. The divine intelligence is not really distinct from the divine essence, nor is the divine will: the divine justice and the divine mercy are identical as they exist in God. Nevertheless, apart from the fact that the structure of

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[1] Cf. *S.T.*, Ia, 15, 1–3; *Contra Gent.*, 1, 53–4.

our language compels us to speak in terms of subject and predicate, we apprehend the divine perfection piecemeal, as it were. We attain our natural knowledge of God only by considerations of creatures, God's effects, and since the perfections of creatures, the manifestations or reflections of God in creatures are different, we use different names to signify those different perfections. But if we could comprehend the divine essence as it is in itself and if we could give it its proper name, we should use one alone.[1] We cannot, however, comprehend the divine essence, and we know it only by means of diverse concepts: we have, therefore, to employ diverse words to express the divine essence, though we know at the same time that the actual reality corresponding to all those names is one simple reality. If it is objected that to conceive an object otherwise than it is is to conceive it falsely, the answer is that we do not conceive the object to exist otherwise than it actually exists, for we know that God is actually a simple Being, but we conceive in a composite manner the object which we know to be non-composite. This means simply that our intelligences are finite and discursive and that they cannot apprehend God save by means of His different reflections in creatures. Our knowledge of God is thus inadequate and imperfect, but it is not false.[2] There is indeed a certain foundation in God for our composite and distinct concepts, this foundation, however, not being any real distinction in God between the divine attributes but simply His infinite perfection which, precisely because of its infinite richness, cannot be apprehended by the human mind in one concept.

8. According to St. Thomas[3] the most appropriate name of God is the name He gave to Moses at the burning bush,[4] *Qui est*, He who is. In God there is no distinction between essence and existence; He does not receive His existence, but is His existence; His essence is to exist. In no creature, however, is the distinction between essence and existence absent. Every creature is good and every creature is true; but no creature is its own existence: it is not the essence of any creature to exist. Existence itself *ipsum esse*, is the essence of God, and the name which is derived from that essence is most appropriate to God. God is goodness, for example, and His goodness is identical with His essence, but goodness, in our human experience, follows on and accompanies *esse*; though not really distinct, it is conceived as secondary; but

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[1] *Contra Gent.*, I, 31.

[2] Cf. *S.T.*, Ia, 13, 12, *in corpore* and *ad* 3.

[3] *S.T.*, Ia, 13, 11; *Contra Gent.*, I, 22.

[4] Exodus 3. 14.

to say that God is *ipsum esse* is to give, as it were, His inner nature. Every other name is in some way inadequate. If we say, for example, that God is infinite Justice, we say what is true, but as our intelligences necessarily distinguish Justice and Mercy, even though we know that they are identical in God, the statement that God is infinite Justice is an inadequate expression of the divine essence. The names we employ in speaking of God are derived from our experience of determinate forms and express primarily those forms; but the name *He who is* signifies not a determinate form, but 'the infinite ocean of substance'.

CHAPTER XXXVI

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS—VI: CREATION

Creation out of nothing—God alone can create—God created freely—The motive of creation—Impossibility of creation from eternity has not been demonstrated—Could God create an actually infinite multitude?—Divine omnipotence—The problem of evil.

1. SINCE God is the first Cause of the world, since finite beings are contingent beings owing their existence to the necessary Being, finite beings must proceed from God through creation. Moreover, this creation must be creation out of nothing. If creatures were made out of a pre-existent material, this material would be either God Himself or something other than God. But God cannot be the material of creation, since He is simple, spiritual, unchangeable; nor can there be any thing independent of the first Cause: there can be but one necessary Being. God, therefore, is absolutely prior, and if He cannot change, cannot exteriorise Himself in creation, He must have created the world out of nothing, *ex nihilo*. This phrase must not be taken to imply that nothing, *nihil*, is a material out of which God made the world: when it is said that God created the world out of nothing, it is meant either that first there was nothing and then there was something or the phrase *ex nihilo* must be understood as equivalent to *non ex aliquo*, not out of something. The objection that out of nothing comes nothing is, therefore, irrelevant, since nothing is looked on neither as efficient cause nor as material cause; in creation God is the efficient Cause and there is no material cause whatsoever.[1] Creation is thus not a movement or change in the proper sense, and since it is not a movement, there is no succession in the act of creation.

Creation, considered in the term of the act of creation, that is, in the creature, is a real relation to God as the principle of the creature's being. Every creature, by the very fact that it is created, has a real relation to God as Creator. But one cannot argue the other way round, that God has a real relation to the creature. Such a relation in God would either be identical with the divine substance or it would be an accident in God; but the divine substance cannot be necessarily related to creatures, since in that case God would depend in some way on creatures for His very existence, while on the other hand God, as absolutely simple, cannot receive or possess accidents.[1] The statement that God as Creator has no real relation to creatures certainly sounds rather strange at first hearing, as it might seem to follow that God has no care for His creatures; but it is a strictly logical conclusion from St. Thomas's metaphysic and doctrine of the divine Nature. That God is related to creatures by His very substance St. Thomas could not possibly admit, since in that case not only would creation necessarily be eternal, and we know from revelation that it is not eternal, but God could not exist apart from creatures: God and creatures would form a Totality and it would be impossible to explain the generation and perishing of individual creatures. On the other hand, if one is speaking of relation as falling within one of the nine categories of accidents, such a relation also is inadmissible in God. The acquisition of such an accident would allow of creation in time, it is true; but such an acquisition on the part of God is impossible if God is pure act, without potentiality. It was, therefore, impossible for St. Thomas to admit that God as Creator has a real relation to creatures; he had to say that the relation is a mental relation of reason alone (*relatio rationis*), attributed to God by the human intellect. The attribution is, however, legitimate, since God is Creator and we cannot express this fact in human language without speaking as though God were related to creatures: the important point is that, when we speak of creatures as related to God and of God as related to creatures, we should remember that it is creatures which depend on God and not God on creatures, and that consequently the real relation between them, which is a relation of dependence, is found in creatures alone.

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[1] On the sense of *creatio ex nihilo*, cf. *De Potentia*, 3, 1, *ad* 7; *S.T.*, Ia, 45, 1, *ad* 3.

2. The power of creation is a prerogative of God alone and cannot be communicated to any creature.[2] The reason why some philosophers, Avicenna, for example, introduced intermediary beings was because they thought of God as creating by a necessity of nature, so that there must be intermediary stages between the absolute simplicity of the supreme Godhead and the multiplicity of creatures; but God does not create by a necessity of nature and there is no reason why He should not create directly a multiplicity of creatures. Peter Lombard thought that the power of creation is communicable by God to a creature in such a way

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[1] *Contra Gent.*, 2, 11–13; *S.T.*, Ia, 45, 3; *De Potentia*, 3, 3.

[2] Cf. *De Potentia*, 3, 4.

that the latter could act as an instrument, not by its own power; but this is impossible, since if the creature is to contribute in any way to creation, its own power and activity will be involved, and this power, being finite like the creature itself, cannot accomplish an act which demands infinite power, the act of bridging the infinite gulf between not-being and being.

3. But if God does not create by a necessity of nature, how does He create? An intellectual being, in whom there is, so to speak, no element of unconsciousness, but who is perfectly self-luminous and 'self-possessed', cannot act in any other way than according to wisdom, with full knowledge. To put the matter crudely, God must act for a motive, in view of a purpose, a good. But God's nature is not only infinite intelligence, but also infinite will, and that will is free. God loves Himself necessarily, since He is Himself the infinite good, but objects distinct from Himself are not necessary to Him, since, as infinite perfection, He is self-sufficient: His will is free in their regard. Therefore, although we know that God's intellect and will are not really distinct from His essence, we are bound to say that God chose freely an object or end conceived by Him as good. The language employed is certainly anthropomorphic, but we have only human language at our disposal, and we cannot express the truth that God created the world freely without making it clear that the act of will by which God created was neither a blind act nor a necessary act, but an act which followed, to speak in human fashion, the apprehension of a good, apprehended as a good though not as a good necessary to God.

4. What was the motive for which God acted in creation? As infinite perfection God cannot have created in order to acquire anything for Himself: He created, not in order to obtain, but to give, to diffuse His goodness (*intendit solum communicare suam perfectionem quae est ejus bonitas*).[1] When it is said, then, that God created the world for His own glory the statement must not be taken to mean that God needed something which He had not already got; still less that He wanted to obtain, if one may so speak without irreverence, a chorus of admirers; but rather that God's will cannot depend on anything apart from God, that He Himself as the infinite good must be the end of His infinite act of will, and that in the case of the act of creation the end is His own goodness as communicable to beings outside Himself. The divine goodness is represented in all creatures, though rational creatures

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 44, 4.

have God as their end in a manner peculiar to themselves, since they are able to know and to love God: all creatures glorify God by representing and participating in His goodness, while rational creatures are capable of consciously appreciating and loving the divine goodness. God's glory, the manifestation of His goodness, is thus not something separate from the good of creatures, for creatures attain their end, do the best for themselves, by manifesting the divine goodness.[1]

5. That God created the world freely, does not of itself show that He created it in time, that time had a beginning. As God is eternal, He might have created the world from eternity. That this had been shown to be an impossible supposition St. Thomas refused to allow. He believed that it can be philosophically proved that the world was created out of nothing, but he maintained that none of the philosophical proofs adduced to prove that this creation took place in time, that there is, ideally, a first assignable moment of time, were conclusive, differing on this point from St. Albert. On the other hand, St. Thomas maintained, against the Averroists, that it cannot be shown philosophically that the world cannot have begun in time, that creation in time is an impossibility. In other words, though well aware that the world was actually created in time and not from eternity, St. Thomas was convinced that this fact is known only through revelation, and that the philosopher cannot settle the question whether the world was created in time or from eternity. Thus he maintained, against the *murmurantes*, the possibility (as far as we can see) of creation from eternity. In practice this meant that he showed, or at least was satisfied that he could show, that the type of argument brought forward by St. Bonaventure to prove the impossibility of creation from eternity was inconclusive. It is, however, unnecessary to mention St. Thomas's replies again, since these, or some of them at least, have already been given when we were considering the philosophy of St. Bonaventure.[2] Let it suffice to recall the fact that St. Thomas saw no contradiction in the notion of a series without a beginning. In his eyes the question whether it would be possible for the world to have passed through infinite time does not arise, since there is strictly no passing through an infinite series if there is no first term in the series. Moreover, for St. Thomas a series can be infinite *ex parte ante* and finite *ex parte post*, and it can be added to at the end at which it is finite. In general, there

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[1] Cf. *S.T.*, Ia, 65, 2.

[2] pp. 262-5.

is no contradiction between being brought into existence and existing from eternity: if God is eternal, God could have created from eternity.

On the other hand, St. Thomas rejects the arguments adduced to show that the world must have been created from eternity. 'We must hold firmly, as the Catholic faith teaches, that the world has not always existed. And this position cannot be overcome by any physical demonstration.'[1] It may be argued, for example, that as God is the Cause of the world and as God is eternal, the world, God's effect, must also be eternal. As God cannot change, as He contains no element of potentiality and cannot receive new determinations or modifications, the creative act, God's free act of creation, must be eternal. The effect of this act must, therefore, also be eternal. St. Thomas has to agree, of course, that the creative act as such, that is, God's act of will, is eternal, since it is identical with God's essence; but he argues that what follows from this is simply that God willed freely from eternity to create the world, not that the world came into existence from eternity. If we consider the matter merely as philosophers, if, that is, we prescind from our knowledge, gained from revelation, that God actually created the world in time, all we can say is that God may have willed freely from eternity that the world should come into existence in time or that God may have willed freely from eternity that the world should come into existence from eternity: we are not entitled to conclude that God *must* have willed from eternity that the world should exist from eternity. In other words, God's creative act is certainly eternal, but the external effect of that act will follow in the way willed by God, and if God willed that the external effect should have *esse post non-esse* it will not have *esse ab aeterno*, even though the creative act, considered precisely as an act in God, is eternal.[2]

6. One of the reasons adduced by St. Bonaventure to show that the world must have been created in time and could not have been created from eternity was that, if it had been created from eternity, there would be in existence now an infinite number of immortal human souls and that an infinite actual multitude is an impossibility. What did St. Thomas maintain concerning God's power to create an infinite multitude? The question arises in connection with a multitude *extra genus quantitatis*, since St. Thomas followed

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[1] *De Potentia*, 3, 17.

[2] On this subject see *Contra Gent.*, 2, 31-7; *S.T.*, Ia, 46, 1; *De Potentia*, 3, 17; *De aeternitate mundi contra murmurantes.*

Aristotle in rejecting the possibility of an infinite quantity. In the *De Veritate*[1] the Saint remarks that the only valid reason for saying that God could not create an actual infinite multitude would be an essential repugnance or contradiction in the notion of such an infinity, but he defers any decision on the matter. In the *Summa Theologica*[2] he affirms categorically that there cannot be an actual infinite multitude, since every created multitude must be of a certain number, whereas an infinite multitude would not be of a certain number. But in the *De aeternitate mundi contra Murmurantes*, when dealing with the objection against the possibility of the world's creation from eternity that there would then be in existence an infinite number of immortal human souls, he replies that God might have made the world without men, or that He could have made the world from eternity but have made man only when He did make him, while on the other hand 'it has not yet been demonstrated that God cannot make an infinity in act'. It may be that the last remark indicates a change of mind on St. Thomas's part or a hesitancy concerning the validity of his own previous demonstration; but he does not explicitly recall what he said in the *Summa Theologica*, and the remark might be no more than an *argumentum ad hominem*, '*you* have not yet demonstrated that an existing infinite multitude is impossible'. In any case, in view of the statement in the *Summa Theologica* and in view of the proximity in time of the *De aeternitate mundi* to the first part of the *Summa Theologica*, it would seem rash to conclude to more than a possible hesitancy on St. Thomas's part as to the impossibility of an infinite multitude in act.

7. The mention of God being able or unable to create an actually infinite multitude naturally raises the wider question of the sense in which the divine omnipotence is to be understood. If omnipotence means the ability to do all things, how can God be omnipotent if He cannot make it come about that a man should be a horse or that what has happened should not have happened? In answer St. Thomas observes first of all that the divine attribute of omnipotence means that God can do all that is possible. But 'all that is possible' must not be understood, he goes on to say, as equivalent to 'all that is possible to God', for in this case when we say that God is omnipotent we should mean that God is able to do all that He is able to do a statement which would tell us nothing. How, then, are we to understand the phrase 'all that is possible'? That

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[1] 2, 10.

[2] Ia, 7, 4; 1, 46, *ad* 8.

is possible which has no intrinsic repugnance to being, in other words, that the existence of which would not involve a contradiction. That which involves a contradiction in its very notion is neither actual nor possible, but not-being. For example, that a man, while remaining a man, should also be a horse, involves a contradiction: man is rational, a horse irrational, and rational and irrational are contradictories. We can certainly speak of a human horse or an equine man, but the phrases do not indicate a thing, whether actual or possible; they are mere verbiage, signifying nothing conceivable. To say, therefore, that God's omnipotence means that God can do all that is possible does not indicate a limit to God's power, for power has meaning only in regard to the possible. Whatever has or can have being is the object of divine omnipotence, but that which is intrinsically contradictory is not an object at all. 'So it is better to say that what involves contradiction cannot be done rather than that God cannot do it.'[1]

It must not, however, be imagined that there is a principle of contradiction which stands behind God and to which God is subject as the Greek gods were subject to *Moira* or Destiny. God is supreme Being, *ipsum esse subsistens*, and His will to create is a will to create His own similitude, something, that is, which can participate in being. That which involves a contradiction is at the utmost remove from Being; it neither has nor ever can have any likeness to God, any being. If God could will what is self-contradictory He could depart from His own nature, could love that which bears no resemblance whatsoever to Himself, that which is nothing at all, that which is utterly unthinkable. But if God could act in this way, He would not be God. It is not that God is subject to the principle of contradiction, but rather that the principle of contradiction is founded on the nature of God. To suppose, then, with St. Peter Damian (or with Leo Chestov) that God is superior to the principle of contradiction, in the sense that God can do what is self-contradictory, is to suppose that God can act in a manner inconsistent with and contrary to His own nature, and this is an absurd supposition.[2]

But this does not mean that God can do only what He actually does. It is certainly true that since God actually wills the order of things which He has created and which actually exists, He cannot will another order, since the divine will cannot change, as our finite wills can change; but the question is not concerning the divine power *ex suppositione*, on the supposition that God has already chosen, but concerning the absolute divine power, i.e. whether God was restricted to willing the actual order He has willed or whether He could have willed another order. The answer is that God did not will this present order of things necessarily, and the reason is that the end of creation is the divine goodness which so exceeds any created order that there is not and cannot be any link of necessity between a given order and the end of creation. The divine goodness and the created order are incommensurable, and there cannot be any one created order, any one universe, which is necessary to a divine goodness that is infinite and incapable of any addition. If any created order were proportionate to the divine goodness, to the end, then the divine wisdom would be determined to choose that particular order; but since the divine goodness is infinite and creation necessarily finite, no created order can be proportionate in the full sense to the divine goodness.[1]

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[1] Cf. *S.T.*, Ia, 25, 3-4; *De Potentia*, 1, 7.

[2] Cf. *Contra Gent.*, 1, 84.

From the above is made apparent the answer to the questions whether God could make better things than He has made or could make the things which He has made better than they are.[2] In one sense God must always act in the best possible manner, since God's act is identical with His essence and with infinite goodness; but we cannot conclude from this that the extrinsic object of God's act, creatures, must be the best possible and that God is bound, on account of His goodness, to produce the best possible universe if He produces one at all. As God's power is infinite, there can always be a better universe than the one God actually produces, and why He has chosen to produce a particular order of creation is His secret. St. Thomas says, therefore, that absolutely speaking God could make something better than any given thing. But if the question is raised in regard to the existent universe, a distinction must be drawn. God could not make a given thing better than it actually is in regard to its substance or essence, since that would be to make another thing. For example, rational life is in itself a higher perfection than merely sensitive life; but if God were to make a horse rational it would no longer be a horse and in that case God could not be said to make the horse better. Similarly, if God changed the order of the universe, it would not

[1] Cf. *S.T.*, Ia, 19, 3; 1, 25, 5; *Contra Gent.*, 2, 26–7; *De Potentia*, 1, 5.
[2] *S.T.*, Ia, 25, 6.

be the same universe. On the other hand, God could make a thing accidentally better; He could, for example, increase a man's bodily health or, in the supernatural order, his grace.

It is plain, then, that St. Thomas would not agree with the Leibnizian 'optimism' or maintain that this is the best of all possible worlds. In view of the divine omnipotence the phrase 'the best of all possible worlds' does not seem to have much meaning: it has meaning only if one supposes from the start that God creates from a necessity of His nature, from which it would follow, since God is goodness itself, that the world which proceeds from Him necessarily must be the best possible. But if God creates not from a necessity of nature, but according to His nature, according to intelligence and will, that is, freely, and if God is omnipotent, it must always be possible for God to create a better world. Why, then, did He create this particular world? That is a question to which we cannot give any adequate answer, though we can certainly attempt to answer the question why God created a world in which suffering and evil are present: that is to say, we can attempt to answer the problem of evil, provided that we remember that we cannot expect to attain any comprehensive solution of the problem in this life, owing to the finitude and imperfection of our intelligences and the fact that we cannot fathom the divine counsel and plans.

8. In willing this universe God did not will the evils contained in it. God necessarily loves His own essence, which is infinite goodness, and He freely wills creation as a communication of His goodness; He cannot love what is opposed to goodness, namely evil. But did not God, to speak in human language, foresee the evils in the world; and if He foresaw the evils in the world and yet willed the world, did He not will the evils in the world? If evil were a positive entity, something created, then it would have to be ascribed to God as Creator, since there is no ultimate principle of evil, as the Manichaeans thought; but evil is not a positive entity; it is, as St. Augustine taught, following Plotinus, a *privation.* It is not *aliquid,* a positive thing, and God cannot have created it, since it is not creatable, but it only exists as a privation in what itself, as being, is good. Moreover, evil as such cannot be willed even by a human will, for the object of the will is necessarily the good or what appears as such. The adulterer, says St. Thomas, does not will the evil, the sin, precisely as such; he wills the sensible pleasure of an act which involves evil. It might be objected that

some people have indulged in diabolic wickedness, have committed acts precisely because they were an offence against God; but even in this case it is some apparent good, complete independence, for example, which is the object of the will: the evil defiance of God appears as a good and is willed *sub specie boni*. No will, therefore, can desire evil precisely as such, and God, in creating a world the evils of which He 'foresaw', must be said, not to have willed the evils but to have willed the world which, as such, is good and to have willed to permit the evils which He foresaw.

It must not, however, be imagined that by maintaining the doctrine that evil as such is a privation St. Thomas means to imply that evil is unreal, in the sense of being an illusion. This would be to misunderstand his position completely. Evil is not a being, *entitas*, in the sense that it falls under any of the ten categories of being, but in reply to the question whether evil exists or not, the answer must be in the affirmative. This certainly sounds paradoxical, but St. Thomas means that evil exists as a privation in the good, not in its own right as a positive entity. For example, lack of ability to see is not a privation in a stone, for it does not pertain to a stone to see, and 'blindness' in a stone is the mere absence of a power which would be incompatible with the nature of the stone; but blindness in a man is a privation, the absence of something which belongs to the fullness of man's nature. This blindness is not, however, a positive entity, it is a privation of sight; yet the privation exists, is real, it is by no means an unreal illusion. It has no meaning or existence apart from the being in which it exists, but as existing in that being the privation is real enough. Similarly, evil cannot of and by itself cause anything, but it exists and can be a cause through the good being in which it exists. For example, the difformity in the will of a fallen angel cannot by itself be a cause, but it is a real privation and can be a cause by means of the positive being in which it exists. Indeed, the more powerful the being in which it exists, the greater are its effects.[1]

God did not, then, create evil as a positive entity, but must He not be said to have willed evil in some sense, since He created a world in which He foresaw that evil would exist? It is necessary to consider separately physical evil and moral evil (*malum culpae*). Physical evil was certainly permitted by God and it can in a sense be even said to have been willed by God. God did not will it for its own sake, of course, *per se*, but He willed a universe, a natural order, which involved at least the possibility of physical defect and suffering. By willing the creation of sensitive nature God willed that capacity for feeling pain as well as pleasure which is, naturally speaking, inseparable from human nature. He did not will suffering as such, but He willed that nature (a good) which is accompanied by the capacity for suffering. Moreover, the perfection of the universe requires, says St. Thomas, that there should be, besides incorruptible beings, corruptible beings, and if there are corruptible beings, corruption, death, will take place according to the natural order. God, then, did not will corruption (needless to say, the word is not being used in the moral sense) for its own sake, but He can be said to have caused it *per accidens*, in that He willed to create and created a universe the order of which demanded the capacity for defect and corruption on the part of some beings. Again, the preservation of the order of justice demands that moral evil should meet with punishment (*malum poenae*), and God may be said to will and cause that punishment not for its own sake, but so that the order of justice may be preserved.

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[1] Cf. *S.T.*, Ia, 48, 1–3.

In treating of physical evil, therefore, St. Thomas tends to treat God as an artist and the universe as a work of art. The perfection of that work of art requires a variety of beings, among which will be found beings which are mortal and capable of suffering, so that God may be said to have willed physical evil not *per se* but *per accidens*, for the sake of a good, the good of the whole universe. But when it is a question of the moral order, the order of freedom, and of considering human beings precisely as free agents, his attitude is different. Freedom is a good and without it human beings could not give God that love of which He is worthy, could not merit and so on: freedom makes man more like to God than he would be, were he not free. On the other hand, man's liberty, when he has not got the vision of God, involves the power of choosing against God and the moral law, of sinning. God did not will moral disorder or sin in any sense, but He permitted it. Why? For the sake of a greater good, that man might be free and that he might love and serve God of his own free choice. The physical perfection of the universe required the presence of some beings who could and would die, so that God, as we have seen, can be said to have willed death *per accidens*; but though the perfection of the universe required that man should be free, it did not require that he should misuse his freedom, should sin, and God cannot be said to have willed moral evil either *per se* or *per accidens*. Nevertheless, it was impossible for there to be a human being in the natural order who should be free and at the same time incapable of sinning, so that it is true to say that God permitted a moral evil, though He permitted it only for the sake of a greater good.

There would, of course, be a great deal more to say on this subject, were one to introduce considerations drawn from theology, and any purely philosophical consideration of the problem is necessarily far less satisfactory than a treatment in which both theological and philosophical truths are utilised. The doctrines of the Fall and the Redemption, for instance, throw a light on the problem of evil which cannot be shed by purely philosophical reasoning. However, arguments based on revelation and dogmatic theology must be omitted here. St. Thomas's philosophical answer to the problem of evil in its relation to God can be summed up in the two statements, first that God did not will moral evil in any sense whatever but only permitted it for a greater good than could be attained by preventing it, that is, by not making man free, and secondly that though God did not will physical evil for its own sake, He may be said to have willed certain physical evils *per accidens*, for the perfection of the universe. I say 'certain *physical evils*', since St. Thomas does not mean to imply that God can be said to have willed all physical evils, even *per accidens*. Corruptibility or death pertains to a certain kind of being, but many physical evils and sufferings are not bound up with the perfection or good of the universe at all, but are the result of moral evil on man's part: they are not 'inevitable'. Such physical evils God only permitted.[1]

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[1] On the subject of evil and its relation to God see, for example, *S.T.*, Ia, 19, 9; Ia, 48–9; *Contra Gent.*, 3, 4–5; *De Malo*, questions 1–3; *De Potentia*, 1, 6.

CHAPTER XXXVII

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS—VII: PSYCHOLOGY

One substantial form in man—The powers of the soul—The interior senses—Free will—The noblest faculty—Immortality—The active and passive intellects are not numerically the same in all men.

1. We have already seen[1] that St. Thomas maintained the Aristotelian doctrine of hylomorphism and that, departing from the views of his predecessors, he defended the unicity of the substantial form in the substance. It may be that at first St. Thomas accepted the existence of a *forma corporeitatis* as the first substantial form in a material substance;[2] but in any case he soon opposed this opinion and held that the specific substantial form informs prime matter immediately and not by the medium of any other substantial form. This doctrine he applied to man, maintaining that there is but one substantial form in the human *compositum*. This one substantial form is the rational soul, which informs matter directly: there is no *forma corporeitatis*, still less are there vegetative and sensitive substantial forms. The human being is a unity, and this unity would be impaired, were we to suppose a plurality of substantial forms. The name 'man' applies neither to the soul alone nor to the body alone, but to soul and body together, to the composite substance.

St. Thomas, then, follows Aristotle in stressing the unity of the human substance. It is the one soul in man which confers on him all his determinations as man, his corporeity (by informing prime matter), his vegetative, sensitive and intellectual operations. In a plant there is present only the vegetative principle or soul, conferring life and the powers of growth and reproduction; in the brute there is present only the sensitive soul which acts as the principle not only of vegetative life, but also of sensitive life; in man there is present only the rational principle or soul, which is not only the principle of the operations peculiar to itself, but also of the vegetative and sensitive functions. When death comes and the soul is separated from the body, the body disintegrates: it is not merely that rational functions cease, for the sensitive and vegetative functions also cease: the one principle of all these operations no longer informs the matter which it previously informed and instead of the unified human substance there results a multiplicity of substances, the new substantial forms being educed from the potentiality of matter.

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[1] Ch. XXXIII.

[2] Cf. *In* 1 *Sent.*, 8, 5, 2; *In* 2 *Sent.*, 3, 1, 1.

Clearly, therefore, the Platonic idea of the relation of soul to body was unacceptable to St. Thomas. It is the one individual man who perceives not only that he reasons and understands, but also that he feels, and exercises sensation. But one cannot have sensation without a body, so that the body, and not the soul only, must belong to man.[1] A man is generated when the rational soul is infused and a man dies when the rational soul departs from the body: there is no other substantial form in man than the rational soul and this soul exercises the functions of inferior forms, itself performing in the case of man what the vegetative soul does in the case of plants and the sensitive soul in the case of irrational animals.[2] It follows from this that the union of soul with body cannot be something unnatural: it cannot be a punishment to the soul for sin in a preceding state, as Origen thought. The human soul has the power of sensation, for example, but it cannot exercise this function without a body; it has the power of intellection, but it has no innate ideas and has to form its ideas in dependence on sense-experience, for which it needs a body; the soul, then, is united to a body because it needs it, because it is naturally the form of a body. The union of soul and body is not to the detriment, but to the good of the soul, *propter animam*. Matter exists for the form and not the other way about, and the soul is united to the body in order that it (the soul) may act according to its nature.[3]

2. But though St. Thomas emphasised the unity of man, the close union between soul and body, he held that there is a real distinction between the soul and its faculties, and between the faculties themselves. In God alone are the power of acting and the act itself identical with the substance, since in God alone is there no potentiality: in the human soul there are faculties or powers of acting which are in potentiality to their acts and which are to be distinguished according to their respective acts and objects.[4] Some of these powers or faculties belong to the soul as such and are not intrinsically dependent on a bodily organ, while

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 76, 1.
[2] *Ibid.*, Ia, 76, 4.
[3] Cf. *ibid.*, Ia, 76, 5; Ia, 89, 1.
[4] *Ibid.*, Ia, 77, 1–3; *De Anima*, 1, *lectio* 2.

others belong to the *compositum* and cannot be exercised without the body: the former, therefore, remain in the soul even when it is separated from the body, whereas the latter remain in the separated soul only potentially or virtually (*virtute*), in the sense that the soul still has the remote power to exercise the faculties, but only if it were reunited with the body: in its separated state it cannot use them. For instance, the rational or intellectual faculty is not intrinsically dependent on the body, though in the state of union with the body there is a certain dependence in regard to the material of knowledge (in a sense to be explained later); but the power of sensation can obviously not be exercised without the body. On the other hand it cannot be exercised by the body without the soul. Its 'subject', therefore, is neither soul alone nor body alone but the human *compositum*. Sensation cannot be attributed simply to the soul using a body (as St. Augustine thought); body and soul play their respective parts in producing the act of sensation, and the power of sensation belongs to both in union rather to either of them separately.

In the powers or faculties there is a certain hierarchy. The vegetative faculty, comprising the powers of nutrition, growth and reproduction, has as its object simply the body united to the soul or living by means of the soul. The sensitive faculty (comprising the exterior senses, of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and the interior senses of *sensus communis*, *phantasia* or imagination, *vis aestimativa* and *vis memorativa* or memory) has as its object, not simply the body of the sentient subject but rather every sensible body. The rational faculty (comprising the active and passive intellects) has as its object, not only sensible bodies but being in general. The higher the power, therefore, the wider and more comprehensive its object. The first general faculty is concerned with the subject's own body; but the other two faculties, the sensitive and intellectual, are also concerned with objects extrinsic to the subject itself, and a consideration of this fact shows us that there are other powers in addition to those already mentioned. If we consider the aptitude of the external object to be received in the subject through cognition, we find there are two kinds of faculty, sensitive and intellective, the former of which is more restricted in scope than the latter; but if we consider the inclination and tendency of the soul towards the external object, we find that there are two other powers, that of locomotion, by which the subject attains the object through its own motion, and that of appetition, by which the object is desired as an end or *finis*. The power of locomotion belongs to the level of sensitive life; but the power of appetition is twofold, comprising desire on the sensitive level, the sensitive appetite, and desire on the intellectual level, volition. On the vegetative level of life, therefore, we find the three powers of nutrition, growth and reproduction, on the sensitive level the five exterior senses, the four interior senses, the power of locomotion and the sensitive appetite, on the rational level of life the active intellect, the passive intellect and the will. In man they are all present.

These powers and faculties proceed from the essence of the soul as from their principle, but they are really distinguished from one another. They have different formal objects (sight, for example, has colour as its object), their activities are different, and so they are really distinct powers (*operatio sequitur esse*). But real distinctions must not be multiplied without a sufficient reason. For instance, one of the interior senses is the *vis memorativa* or sensitive memory, by means of which the animal remembers friend or foe, what has given it pleasure and what has injured it, and according to St. Thomas the memory of the past as past belongs to the sensitive memory, since the past as past refers to particulars and it is the sensitive memory which is concerned with particulars. If, however, we mean by memory the conservation of ideas or concepts, it is necessary to refer this to the intellect, and we can speak of the intellectual memory; but the intellectual memory is not a power really distinct from the intellect itself, more precisely the passive intellect: it is the intellect itself regarded under one of its aspects or functions. Again, the act of apprehending a truth, of resting in the apprehension of the truth, does not proceed from a power or faculty different from the faculty by which we reason discursively: *intellectus* and *ratio* are not distinct faculties, for it is the same mind which apprehends truth and reasons from that truth to another truth. Nor is the 'higher reason' (*ratio superior*) concerned with eternal things, a faculty different from the *ratio inferior*, by which we attain rational knowledge of temporal things. The two are one and the same faculty, though the faculty receives different names according to the objects of its different acts, as Augustine said. The same applies to the speculative and practical intellects, which are but one faculty.

3. It may be as well to say a few more words on the subject of the 'interior senses', which are common to animal as well as

human beings. St. Thomas observes[1] that Avicenna in his book *On the Soul* postulated five interior senses, but that in reality there are only four. What does St. Thomas mean by 'senses' in this connection? Obviously not senses in our use of the term, since when we use the word senses, we refer to the five exterior senses. Why, then, does he call them senses? To indicate that they are operations belonging to the level of sensitive life and that they do not involve reason. There must, for example, be an instinctive operation by which the bird 'judges' that the twigs it sees will be useful for building a nest: it cannot see the utility simply by vision, which is directed to colour, while on the other hand it does not reason or judge in the proper sense: it has, therefore, an 'interior sense' by which it apprehends the utility of the twigs.

First of all, there must be an interior sense by which the data of the special exterior senses are distinguished and collated. The eye sees colour, the ear hears sounds, but though the sense of sight distinguishes one colour from another, it cannot distinguish colour from sound, since it cannot hear; and for the same reason it cannot refer the sound to the coloured object seen, for example, when a man is talking to his dog. This function of distinction and collation is performed by the general sense or *sensus communis*. Secondly, the animal is able to conserve the forms apprehended by sense, and this function is performed by the imagination (*phantasia* or *imaginatio*), which is 'a certain treasury of the forms received through the senses'. Thirdly, the animal is able to apprehend things which it cannot perceive through the senses, for example, that something is useful to it, that someone or something is friendly or unfriendly, and this task is performed by the *vis aestimativa*, while, lastly, the *vis memorativa* conserves such apprehensions. As regards sensible forms, there is, says St. Thomas, no difference between men and animals, since they are affected by exterior sensible objects in the same way; but in regard to apprehensions of things which are not directly perceived by the exterior senses, there is a difference between men and animals. The latter perceive such things as utility and inutility, friendliness and hostility by a natural instinct, whereas man compares particular things. What in animals, therefore, he calls the *vis aestimativa naturalis*, St. Thomas calls *vis cogitativa* in the case of human beings. Something more than mere instinct is involved.

4. Besides the five exterior senses, the four interior senses, the

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 78, 4.

power of locomotion, the sensitive appetite and the rational cognitive faculties (to which I shall return in the next chapter, when treating of St. Thomas's theory of knowledge), man has also will (*voluntas*). The will differs from the sensitive appetite, since it desires the good as such or the good in general (*bonum sub communi ratione boni*), whereas the sensitive appetite does not desire good in general, but the particular objects of desire presented by the senses. Moreover, the will is of its very nature orientated towards good in general, and it necessarily desires the good in general. This necessity is not, however, a necessity of coercion, a necessity which bears upon the will with violence; it proceeds from the will itself, which of its very nature desires the last end or happiness (*beatitudo*). The will, since it is an appetitive faculty, cannot be understood apart from its natural object of desire, its natural *finis*, and this object, says St. Thomas, following Aristotle, is beatitude, happiness, the good in general. We necessarily desire to be happy, we cannot help desiring it; but the necessity in question is not a necessity imposed from without by violence (*necessitas coactionis*) but a necessity of nature (*necessitas naturalis*) proceeding from the nature of the will.

Yet although man necessarily desires happiness, this does not mean that he is not free in regard to his particular choices. There are some particular goods which are not necessary to happiness, and a man is free to will them or not. Moreover, even though true happiness is to be found only in the possession of God, only in the attainment of the infinite Good, that does not mean that every man must have a conscious desire of God or that he must necessarily will those means which will bring him to God. In this life the intellect has not got that clear vision of God as the infinite good and only source of happiness which would be needed to determine the will: man necessarily desires happiness, but the connection between happiness and God is not so steadfastly clear to him that he is unable to will something other than God. In a sense, of course, he is always willing God, because he necessarily wills happiness and, *de facto*, happiness is to be found only in the attainment of God, the infinite Good; but owing to his lack of clear vision of God as the infinite Good, objects may appear to him as necessarily related to his happiness which are not so related, and he can place his happiness in something other than God. Whatever he wills, he wills as a good, real or apparent (he necessarily wills *sub ratione boni*), but he does not necessarily will the actual infinite Good. In an interpretative sense he may be said to be always willing God; but as far as conscious choice is concerned, he may will something other than God, even to the exclusion of God. If he shuts his eyes to the truth and turns his attention to sensual pleasures, for example, placing his happiness in them, he is morally guilty; but that does not alter the fact that the incompatibility between indulgence in inordinate sensual pleasure and the attainment of true happiness is not so compellingly self-evident to him that he cannot take indulgence in inordinate pleasure of sense as his end. One can take a parallel example from the activity of the intellect. If a man knows what the terms mean, it is impossible for him not to assent to the first principles in the intellectual order, for example, the principle of identity, but when a chain of reasoning is involved, as in a metaphysical proof of God's existence, he may refuse his assent, not because the argument is insufficient, but because he does not wish to assent and turns away his intellect from perceiving or dwelling on the necessary connection of the conclusion with the premisses. Similarly, a man necessarily wills *sub ratione boni*, he necessarily desires happiness; but he can turn his attention away from the necessary connection between happiness and God and allow something other than God to appear to him as the source of true happiness.

Free will (*liberum arbitrium*) is not a power or faculty different from the will; but there is a mental distinction between them, since the term 'will signifies the faculty as principle of all our volition, whether necessary (in regard to the end, happiness) or free (in regard to the choice of means to the end), whereas 'free will' signifies the same faculty as principle of our free choice of means to the end. As already mentioned, St. Thomas maintained that though man necessarily wills the end, happiness, he has no compelling vision of the connection between particular means and this end, and therefore he is free in regard to the choice of these means, being necessitated neither from without nor from within. That man is free follows from the fact that he is rational. A sheep 'judges' by a natural instinct that the wolf is to be avoided, but man judges that some good is to be attained or some evil to be avoided by a free act of his intelligence.[1] The reason, unlike instinct, is not determined in its judgement concerning particular choices. Choice concerns the means to the final end (happiness), and it is possible for a man to consider any particular object from more than one point of view: he may consider it under its aspect as a good and judge that it should be chosen or he may consider it under its aspect as evil, that is, as lacking some good, and judge that it should be avoided.[1] *Liberum arbitrium* is thus the power by which a man is able to judge freely.[2] It might seem, then, that freedom belongs to the intellect and not to will; but St. Thomas observes[3] that when it is said that *liberum arbitrium* is the power by which a man is able to judge freely, the reference is not to any kind of judgement but to the decisive judgement of choice which puts an end to the deliberation which arises from the fact that a man can consider a possible object of choice from different points of view. For example, if there is a question of my going for a walk or not going for a walk, I can regard the walk as a good, as healthy exercise, or as evil, as taking up time which should be given to writing a letter for the afternoon post. The decisive judgement which says that I will go for a walk (or not, as the case may be) is made under the influence of the will. *Liberum arbitrium*, therefore, is the will, but it designates the will not absolutely, but in its relation to the reason. Judgement as such belongs to the reason, but freedom of judgement belongs immediately to the will. Still, it is true that St. Thomas's account of freedom is intellectualist in character.

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 83, 1.

5. This intellectualism is apparent in his answer to the question whether the intellect or the will is the nobler faculty. St. Thomas answers that, absolutely speaking, the intellect is the nobler faculty, since the intellect through cognition possesses the object, contains it in itself through mental assimilation, whereas the will tends towards the object as external, and it is more perfect to possess the perfection of the object in oneself than to tend towards it as existing outside oneself. In regard to corporeal objects, therefore, knowledge of them is more perfect and nobler than volition in respect to them, since by knowledge we possess the forms of these objects in ourselves, and these forms exist in a nobler way in the rational soul than they do in the corporeal objects. Similarly, the essence of the beatific vision consists in the act of knowledge by which we possess God. On the other hand, although possession of the object by the intellect is in itself more perfect than tending towards the object by volition, the will may be nobler than the intellect in certain respects, *secundum quid*, because of accidental reasons. For example, in this life our knowledge

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, IIae, 13, 6.

[2] *De Veritate*, 24, 4 and 6.

[3] *Ibid.*, 24, 6.

of God is imperfect and analogical, we know God only indirectly, whereas the will tends to God directly: love of God is, therefore, more perfect than knowledge of God. In the case of objects which are less noble than the soul, corporeal objects, we can have immediate knowledge, and such knowledge is more perfect than volition; but in the case of God, an object which transcends the human soul, we have only mediate knowledge in this life, and our love of God is more perfect than our knowledge of God. In the beatific vision in heaven, however, when the soul sees the essence of God immediately, the intrinsic superiority of intellect to will reasserts itself, as it were. In this way St. Thomas, while adopting the intellectualist attitude of Aristotle, interprets it in a Christian setting.[1]

6. We have seen that St. Thomas rejected the Platonic-Augustinian view of the relation of soul to body and adopted the Aristotelian view of the soul as form of the body, emphasising the closeness of the union between the two. There is no *forma corporeitatis*, there is but one substantial form in man, the rational soul, which directly informs prime matter and is the cause of all human activities on the vegetative, sensitive and intellectual levels: sensation is an act not of the soul using a body, but of the *compositum*; we have no innate ideas, but the mind is dependent on sense-experience for its knowledge. The question arises, therefore, whether the closeness of the union between soul and body has not been so emphasised that the possible subsistence of the human soul apart from the body must be ruled out. In other words, is not the Aristotelian doctrine of the relation of soul to body incompatible with personal immortality? If one starts with the Platonic theory of the soul, immortality is assured, but the union of soul and body is rendered difficult to understand; whereas if one starts with the Aristotelian theory of the soul, it might seem that one has to sacrifice immortality, that the soul is so closely bound to the body that it cannot subsist apart from the body.

The soul is indeed the form of the body and, according to St. Thomas, it always retains its aptitude to inform a body, precisely because it is naturally the form of the body; but it is none the less a rational soul and its powers are not exhausted in informing the body. When actually dealing with the immortality of the soul St. Thomas argues that the soul is incorruptible because it is a subsistent form. A thing which corrupts is corrupted either by itself (*per se*) or accidentally (*per accidens*), that is, through the corruption of something else on which it depends for existence. The soul of the brute is dependent on the body for all its operations and corrupts when the body corrupts (*corruptio per accidens*): the rational soul, however, being a subsistent form, cannot be affected by the corruption of the body on which it does not intrinsically depend.[1] If this were all St. Thomas had to say by way of proving immortality, he would obviously be guilty of a gross *petitio principii*, since it is presupposed that the human soul is a *forma subsistens*, and this is precisely the point which has to be proved. St. Thomas argues, however, that the rational soul must be spiritual and a subsistent form, because it is capable of knowing the natures of all bodies. If it were material, it would be determined to a specified object, as the organ of vision is determined to the perception of colour. Again, if it depended intrinsically on a bodily organ, it would be confined to the knowledge of some particular kind of bodily object, which is not the case,[2] while if it were itself a body, material, it could not reflect on itself.[3] For these and other reasons the human soul, which is a rational soul, must be immaterial, i.e. spiritual, from which it follows that it is incorruptible or naturally immortal. Physically speaking, it could, of course, be annihilated by the God who created it; but its immortality follows from its nature and is not simply gratuitous, save in the sense that its very existence, like the existence of any other creature, is gratuitous.

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[1] *De Veritate*, 22, 11; cf. *S.T.*, Ia, 82, 3.

St. Thomas argues also from the desire of persistence in being. There is a natural desire for immortality and a natural desire, as implanted by God, cannot be in vain.[4] 'It is impossible for a natural appetite to be in vain. But man has a natural appetite for perpetual persistence in being. This is clear from the fact that existence (*esse*) is desired by all things, but a man has an intellectual apprehension of *esse* as such, and not only of *esse* here and now as the brutes have. Man therefore attains immortality as regards his soul, by which he apprehends *esse* as such and without temporal limit.'[5] Man, as distinct from the irrational animal, can conceive perpetual existence, divorced from the present moment, and to this apprehension there corresponds a natural desire for immortality. As this desire must have been implanted by the Author of Nature, it cannot be in vain (*frustra* or *inane*). Against this Duns Scotus later argued that, as far as a natural desire (*desiderium naturale*) is concerned, man and brute are on a level in that both naturally shun death, while in regard to an elicited or conscious desire we have first to show that its fulfilment is possible before we can argue that it must be fulfilled.[1] One might reply that the possibility of the fulfilment of the desire is shown by proving that the soul is not intrinsically dependent on the body but is spiritual. This would be to admit that the argument from the spirituality of the soul is fundamental.

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 75, 6; *Contra Gent.*, 2, 79.

[2] *S.T.*, Ia, 75, 2.

[3] *Contra Gent.*, 2, 49.

[4] *S.T.*, Ia, 75, 6.

[5] *Contra Gent.*, 2, 79.

In view of St. Thomas's epistemology, of his insistence on the origin of human ideas in sense-experience and on the rôle of the phantasm in the formation of such ideas, it might appear that he contradicts himself when he says that the human mind is not intrinsically dependent on the body, and it might also appear that the soul in a state of separation would be incapable of intellectual activity. In regard to the first point, however, he maintains that the mind needs the body for its activity not as an organ of mental activity, for this is an activity of the mind alone, but because of the natural object of the human mind in this life, when conjoined to a body. In other words, the mind is not intrinsically dependent on the body for its subsistence. Can it, then, exercise its activity in a state of separation from the body? Yes, for its mode of cognition follows the state in which it is. When united to the body, the rational soul does not come to know things save *convertendo se ad phantasmata*; but when it is in a state of separation it is no longer unable to know itself and other souls perfectly and directly, the angels imperfectly. It might seem indeed that in this case it is better for the soul to be in a state of separation from the body than united to it, since spirits are nobler objects of knowledge than corporeal things; but St. Thomas cannot admit this, since he has insisted that it is natural for the soul to be united to the body and that their union is for the good of the soul. He does not hesitate, then, to draw the conclusion that the state of separation is *praeter naturam* and that the soul's mode of cognition in the state of separation is also *praeter naturam*.[2]

7. When St. Thomas proves the immortality of the soul, he is naturally referring to personal immortality. Against the Averroists he argues that the intellect is not a substance distinct from the human soul and common to all men, but that it is multiplied 'according to the multiplication of bodies'.[3] It is impossible to

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[1] *Opus Oxon.*, 4, 43, 2, nos. 29ff.

[2] *S.T.*, Ia, 89, 1 ff.

[3] *Ibid.*, Ia, 76, 2.

explain the diversity of ideas and intellectual operations in different men on the supposition that all men have but one intellect. It is not only sensations and phantasms which differ from man to man but their intellectual lives and activities as well. It is as absurd to suppose that they have one intellect as it would be to suppose that they have one vision.

It is important to realise that it is not the opinion of Avicenna concerning the unicity and separate character of the *active* intellect which necessarily does away with personal immortality (some mediaeval philosophers who certainly maintained personal immortality identified the active intellect with God or God's activity in the soul), but rather the opinion of Averroes concerning the unicity and separate character of the *passive* as well as of the active intellect. That Averroes was the chief enemy on this point St. Thomas makes quite clear at the beginning of his *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas.* If the Averroistic theory is accepted 'it follows that after death nothing remains of men's souls but one intellect; and in this way the bestowal of rewards and punishments is done away with.' This is not to say, of course, that St. Thomas accepted the theory of the unicity of the active intellect: he argues against it in the *Summa contra Gentiles,* for example,[1] as also in the *Summa Theologica.*[2] One of his arguments is to the effect that if the active intellect were one in all men, then its functioning would be independent of the individual's control and would be constant, whereas in point of fact we can pursue intellectual activity at will and abandon it at will. Incidentally, St. Thomas interprets the notoriously obscure passage in Aristotle's *De Anima*[3] as teaching the individual character of the active intellect in individual men. It is impossible to say with certainty that the Thomist interpretation of Aristotle is wrong, though I incline to this opinion; but the rightness or wrongness of his interpretation of Aristotle obviously does not affect the question of the truth or falsity of his own idea of the active intellect.[4]

Against the unicity of the passive intellect St. Thomas argues in the *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas* and in the *Summa contra Gentiles.*[5] His arguments presuppose for the most part the Aristotelian psychology and epistemology; but the presupposition is only to be expected, not only because St. Thomas accepted the Aristotelian doctrine as he understood and interpreted it, but also because the Averroists were Aristotelians. To say, then, that St. Thomas presupposed the Aristotelian psychology and epistemology is simply to say that he tried to show the Averroists that their notion of the unitary and separate character of the passive intellect was inconsistent with their own principles. If the soul is the form of the body, how could the passive intellect be one in all men? One principle could not be the form of a plurality of substances. Again, if the passive intellect were a separate principle, it would be eternal; it should, then, contain all the *species intelligibiles* which have ever been received, and every man should be able to understand all those things which have ever been understood by men, which is manifestly not the case. Furthermore, if the active intellect were separate and eternal, it would be functioning from eternity and the passive intellect, also supposed to be separate and eternal, would be receiving from eternity; but this would render the senses and imagination unnecessary for intellectual operations, whereas experience shows that they are indispensable. And how could one explain the different intellectual capacities of different men? Men's differences in this respect certainly depend to some extent on their different infra-intellectual capacities.

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[1] 2, 76.
[2] Ia, 79, 4–5.
[3] 3, 5; 430 a. 17ff.
[4] On Aristotle, see *Summa contra Gentiles,* 2, 78, and the Commentary on the *De Anima,* 3, *lectio* 10.
[5] 2, 73–5.

It may be somewhat difficult for us to-day to understand the excitement produced by the Averroistic theory and the interest it aroused; but it was obviously incompatible with the Christian doctrines of immortality and of sanctions in the next life, and even if St. Thomas shows a desire to dissociate Aristotle from Averroes, the moral and religious consequences of the Averroistic doctrine were more important to him than Averroes's attempt to father his doctrine on the Greek philosopher. Against the Averroists Augustinians and Aristotelians made common cause. One might compare the reaction provoked by modern metaphysical and psychological systems which appear to endanger the human personality. On this point absolute idealism, for instance, aroused opposition on the part of philosophers who were otherwise sharply divided among themselves.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS—VIII: KNOWLEDGE

'Theory of knowledge' in St. Thomas—The process of knowledge; knowledge of the universal and of the particular—The soul's knowledge of itself—The possibility of metaphysics.

1. To look for an epistemology in St. Thomas, in the sense of a justification of knowledge, a proof or attempted proof of the objectivity of knowledge in face of subjective idealism of one kind or another, would be to look in vain. That everyone, even the self-styled sceptic, is convinced that knowledge of some sort is attainable was as clear to St. Thomas as it was to St. Augustine, and so far as there is a problem of knowledge for St. Thomas it is rather how to safeguard and justify metaphysics in face of the Aristotelian psychology than to justify the objectivity of our knowledge of the extramental world in face of a subjective idealism which had not yet arisen or to show the legitimacy of metaphysics in face of a Kantian criticism which still lay far in the future. This is not to say, of course, that the Thomist principles cannot be developed in such a way as to afford answers to subjective idealism and Kantianism; but one should not be guilty of the anachronism of making the historic Thomas answer questions with which he was not actually faced. Indeed, to treat St. Thomas's theory of knowledge separately from his psychological doctrine is itself something of an anachronism, yet I think it is capable of being justified, since it is out of the psychology that a problem of knowledge arises, and one can, for the sake of convenience at least, treat this problem separately. For the purpose of making this problem clear it is necessary first of all to give a brief sketch of the way in which we attain our natural ideas and knowledge, according to Aquinas.

2. Corporeal objects act upon the organs of sense, and sensation is an act of the *compositum*, of soul and body, not of the soul alone using a body, as Augustine thought. The senses are naturally determined to the apprehension of particulars, they cannot apprehend universals. Brutes have sensation, but they have no grasp of general ideas. The phantasm or image, which arises in the imagination and which represents the particular material object

perceived by the senses, is itself particular, the phantasm of a particular object or objects. Human intellectual cognition, however, is of the universal: the human being in his intellectual operations apprehends the form of the material object in abstraction; he apprehends a universal. Through sensation we can apprehend only particular men or trees, for example, and the interior images or phantasms of men or trees are always particular. Even if we have a composite image of man, not representing any one actual man distinctly but representing many confusedly, it is still particular, since the images or parts of the images of particular actual men coalesce to form an image which may be 'generic' in respect of actual particular men but which is itself none the less particular, the image of a particular imagined man. The mind, however, can and does conceive the general idea of man as such, which includes all men in its extension. An image of man certainly will not apply to all men, but the intellectual idea of man, even though conceived in dependence on the sensitive apprehension of particular men, applies to all men. The image of a man must be either of a man who has or of a man who has not some hair on his head. If the former, it does not in that respect represent bald men; if the latter, it does not in that respect represent men who are not bald; but if we form the concept of man as a rational animal, this idea covers all men, whether they are bald or not, white or black, tall or short, because it is the idea of the essence of man.

How, then, is the transition from sensitive and particular knowledge to intellectual cognition effected? Although sensation is an activity of soul and body together, the rational and spiritual soul cannot be affected directly by a material thing or by the phantasm: there is need, therefore, of an activity on the part of the soul, since the concept cannot be formed simply passively. This activity is the activity of the active intellect which 'illumines' the phantasm and abstracts from it the universal or 'intelligible species'. St. Thomas thus speaks of illumination, but he does not use the word in the full Augustinian sense (not at least according to what is probably the true interpretation of Augustine's meaning); he means that the active intellect by its natural power and without any special illumination from God renders visible the intelligible aspect of the phantasm, reveals the formal and potentially universal element contained implicitly in the phantasm. The active intellect then abstracts the universal element by itself, producing in the passive intellect the *species impressa.* The reaction of the passive intellect to this determination by the active intellect is the *verbum mentis* (*species expressa*), the universal concept in the full sense. The function of the active intellect is purely active, to abstract the universal element from the particular elements of the phantasm, to cause in the passive intellect the *species impressa.* The intellect of man contains no innate ideas but is in potentiality to the reception of concepts: it has, therefore, to be reduced to act, and this reduction to act must be effected by a principle itself in act. As this active principle has no ready-made ideas of itself to supply, it must draw its materials from what is provided by the senses, and this means that it must abstract the intelligible element from the phantasm. To abstract means to isolate intellectually the universal apart from the particularising notes. Thus the active intellect abstracts the universal essence of man from a particular phantasm by leaving out all particular notes which confine it to a particular man or particular men. As the active intellect is purely active, it cannot impress the universal on itself; it impresses it on the potential element of the human intellect, on the passive intellect, and the reaction to this impression is the concept in the full sense, the *verbum mentis.*

It is important to realise, however, that the abstract concept is not the object of cognition, but the means of cognition. If the concept, the modification of the intellect, were itself the object of knowledge, then our knowledge would be a knowledge of ideas, not of things existing extramentally, and the judgements of science would concern not things outside the mind but concepts within the mind. In actual fact, however, the concept is the likeness of the object produced in the mind and is thus the means by which the mind knows the object: in St. Thomas's language it is *id quo intelligitur,* not *id quod intelligitur.*[1] Of course, the mind has the power of reflecting on its own modifications and so can turn the concept into an object; but it is only secondarily an object of knowledge, primarily it is the instrument of knowledge. By saying this St. Thomas avoids putting himself in a position which would be that of subjective idealism and which would land him in the difficulties attending that form of idealism. The theory he actually contrasts with his own is the theory of Plato; but that does not alter the fact that by adopting the attitude he did he escaped a snare from which it is practically impossible to extricate oneself.

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 5, 2.

As he held that the intellect knows directly the essence, the universal, St. Thomas drew the logical conclusion that the human mind does not know directly singular material things. The emphasis is, of course, on 'mind' and 'know', since it cannot be denied that the human being apprehends particular material objects sensitively: the object of sense is precisely the sensible particular. The intellect, however, comes to know by abstracting the intelligible species from the individualising matter, and in this case it can have direct knowledge of universals only. Nevertheless, even after abstracting the intelligible species, the intellect exercises its activity of knowing only through a 'conversion', a turning of attention to the phantasms in which it apprehends the universals, and in this way it has a reflexive or indirect knowledge of the particular things represented by the phantasms. Thus the sensitive apprehension of Socrates enables the mind to abstract the universal 'man'; but the abstract idea is a means of knowledge, an instrument of knowledge to the intellect only in so far as the latter adverts to the phantasm, and so it is able to form the judgement that Socrates is a man. It is thus not true to say that the intellect, according to St. Thomas, has no knowledge of corporeal particulars: what he held was that the mind has only an indirect knowledge of such particulars, the direct object of knowledge being the universal.[1] But this should not be taken to imply that the primary object of intellectual cognition is the abstract idea as such: the mind apprehends the formal element, the potentially universal element in Socrates, for example, and abstracts this from the individualising matter. In technical language its primary object of knowledge is the direct universal, the universal apprehended in the particular: it is only secondarily that it apprehends the universal precisely as universal, the reflexive universal.

Two explanatory remarks should be added. St. Thomas explains that when he says that the mind abstracts the universal from the corporeal particular by abstracting it from the individualising matter, he means that when the mind abstracts the idea of man, for example, it abstracts it from *this* flesh and *these* bones, that is, from the particular individualising matter, not from matter in general, 'intelligible matter' (i.e. substance as subject to quantity). Corporeality enters into the idea of man as such, though particular matter does not entèr into the universal idea of man.[2] Secondly, St. Thomas does not mean to imply that it is the particular thing as such which cannot be the direct object of intellectual cognition, but rather the particular sensible or corporeal object. In other words, the particular corporeal object is debarred from being the direct object of intellectual cognition not precisely because it is particular but because it is material and the mind knows only by abstracting from matter as principle of individuation, that is, from this or that matter.[1]

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 86, 1.

[2] *Ibid.*, Ia, 85, 1.

3. According to St. Thomas, then, the human mind is originally in potentiality to knowledge; but it has no innate ideas. The only sense in which ideas are innate is that the mind has a natural capacity for abstracting and forming ideas: as far as actual ideas go, the mind is originally a *tabula rasa.* Moreover, the source of the mind's knowledge is sense-perception, since the soul, the form of the body, has as its natural object of knowledge the essences of material objects. The rational soul knows itself only by means of its acts, apprehending itself, not directly in its essence but in the act by which it abstracts intelligible species from sensible objects.[2] The soul's knowledge of itself is not, therefore, an exception to the general rule that all our knowledge begins with sense-perception and is dependent on sense-perception. This fact St. Thomas expresses by saying that the intellect, when united to a body in the present life, cannot come to know anything *nisi convertendo se ad phantasmata.*[3] The human mind does not think without the presence of a phantasm, as is clear from introspection, and it is dependent on the phantasm, as is shown by the fact that a disordered power of imagination (as in mad people) hinders knowledge; and the reason for this is that the cognitive power is proportioned to its natural object.[4] In brief, the human soul, as Aristotle said, understands nothing without a phantasm, and we can say, *nihil in intellectu quod prius non fuerit in sensu.*

4. From this it obviously follows that the human mind cannot in this life attain a direct knowledge of immaterial substances, which are not and cannot be the object of the senses.[5] But the problem also arises whether there can be metaphysical knowledge at all on these premisses, whether the human mind can rise above the things of sense and attain any knowledge of God, for example, since God cannot be an object of sense. If our intellects are dependent on the phantasm, how can they know those objects of which there are no phantasms, which do not act on the senses?[6]

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 86, 1, *ad* 3.
[2] *Ibid.*, Ia, 87, 1.
[3] *Ibid.*, Ia, 84, 7.
[4] *Ibid.*, Ia, 84, 7.
[5] *Ibid.*, Ia, 88, 1.
[6] *Ibid.*, Ia, 84, 7, *ad* 3.

On the principle, *nihil in intellectu quod prius non fuerit in sensu*, how can we attain knowledge of God when we cannot say *quod Deus prius fuerit in sensu*? In other words, once given the Thomist psychology and epistemology, it would appear that the Thomist natural theology is inevitably invalidated: we cannot transcend the objects of sense and are debarred from any knowledge of spiritual objects.

In order to understand St. Thomas's reply to this serious objection, it is necessary to recall his doctrine of intellect as such. The senses are necessarily determined to one particular kind of object, but the intellect, being immaterial, is the faculty of apprehending being. Intellect as such is directed towards all being. The object of the intellect is the intelligible: nothing is intelligible except in so far as it is in act, partakes of being, and all that is in act is intelligible in so far as it is in act, i.e. partakes of being. If we consider the human intellect precisely as intellect, we must admit, then, that its primary object is being. *Intellectus respicit suum obiectum secundum communem rationem entis; eo quod intellectus possibilis est quo est omnia fieri.*[1] *Primo autem in conceptione intellectus cadit ens; quia secundum hoc unumquodque cognoscibile est, inquantum est actu . . . Unde ens est proprium obiectum intellectus.*[2] The first movement of the intellect is thus towards being, not towards sensible being in particular, and the intellect can know the essence of a material thing only in so far as it is being: it is only in the second place that a particular kind of intellect, the human intellect, is directed towards a particular kind of being. Owing to its embodied state and the necessity of the *conversio ad phantasma* the human intellect has, in its embodied state, the sensible object as the natural and 'proper' object of its apprehension, but it does not lose its orientation towards being in general. As *human* intellect it must start from sense, from material beings, but as human *intellect* it can proceed beyond sense, not being confined to material essences, though it can do this only in so far as the immaterial objects are manifested in and through the sensible world, in so far as the material things have a relation to immaterial objects. As embodied intellect, as a *tabula rasa*, the natural object of which is the material essence, the intellect does not and cannot by its own power apprehend God directly; but sensible objects, as finite and contingent, reveal their relation to God, so that the intellect can know that God exists. Moreover, sensible objects, as the effects of God, manifest God to some extent, so that the intellect can come to know something of God's nature, though this knowledge cannot (naturally) be more than analogical. The necessity of the *conversio ad phantasma* means that we cannot know God directly, but we can know Him in so far as sensible objects manifest His existence and enable us to attain an analogical, indirect and imperfect knowledge of His nature: we can know God *ut causam, et per excessum, et per remotionem.*[1]

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 79, 7.

[2] *Ibid.*, Ia, 5, 2.

A presupposition of this position is the activity of the human intellect. If the human intellect were merely passive, if the *conversio ad phantasma* meant that ideas were caused simply passively, there could obviously be no natural knowledge of God, since sensible objects are not God and of God and other immaterial beings *non sunt phantasmata.* It is the active power of the intellect which enables it to read off, as it were, the relation to immaterial being in sensible being. Sensible cognition is not the total and perfect cause of our intellectual cognition, but is rather the *materia causae* of intellectual cognition: the phantasm is made actually intelligible by the active intellect through its abstractive operation. Inasmuch, then, as sensitive cognition is not the total cause of intellectual cognition, 'it is nothing to be astonished at if intellectual cognition extends farther than sensitive cognition'.[2] The human intellect, as united to a body, has as its natural object the essences of material things, but by means of these essences it can ascend to 'some sort of knowledge of invisible things'. These immaterial objects we can know only *per remotionem,* by denying of them the characteristics peculiar to sensible objects, or analogically; but we could not know them at all, were it not for the active power of the intellect.[3]

A further difficulty, already mentioned, remains. How can there be any positive content to our idea of God, or indeed of any spiritual object? If we say, for example, that God is personal, we obviously do not mean to ascribe to God human personality. If, however, we simply mean that God is not less than what we know as personal, is there any positive content to our idea of divine personality? Is 'not-less-than-personal' a positive idea? If we state it in affirmative terms, 'more-than-personal', has it a positive content? If it has not, then we are confined to the *via negativa* and can know God only *per remotionem.* But St. Thomas does not adhere simply to the *via negativa*: he utilises also the *via affirmativa*, maintaining that we can know God *per excessum*. Now, if when we ascribe wisdom, for instance, to God, we say that we are ascribing wisdom *modo eminentiori*, it is difficult to see what the content of our idea of divine wisdom actually is. It must be based on human wisdom, which is the only wisdom we experience naturally and directly; and yet it cannot be precisely human wisdom. But if it is human wisdom without the limitations and forms of human wisdom, what positive content does the idea possess, when we have no experience of wisdom without limitations? It would seem that if one is determined to maintain that the idea has a positive content, one must say either that the idea of human wisdom plus a negation of its limitations is a positive idea or, with Scotus, that we can attain an idea of the essence of wisdom, so to speak, which can be predicated univocally of God and man. The latter theory, though helpful in some ways, is not altogether satisfactory, since neither St. Thomas nor Scotus would hold that wisdom or any other perfection is realised univocally in God and creatures. As to the first answer, it may seem at first hearing to constitute an evasion of the difficulty; but reflection will show that to say that God is wise, meaning that God is more than wise (in the human sense), is not at all the same thing as saying that God is not wise (in the human sense). A stone is not wise (in the human sense), neither is it more than wise: it is less than wise. It is true that if we use the word 'wise' as signifying precisely the wisdom we experience, namely human wisdom, we can say with truth not only that the stone is not wise, but also that God is not wise; but the meaning of the two statements is not the same, and if the meaning is not the same, there must be a positive content in the statement that God is not wise (i.e. that God is more than wise in the specifically human sense). The statement, therefore, that God is wise ('wise' meaning infinitely more than wise in the human sense) has a positive content. To demand that the content of analogical ideas should be perfectly clear and expressible, so that they could be understood perfectly in terms of human experience, would be to misunderstand altogether the nature of analogy. St. Thomas was no rationalist, though he allowed that we can attain to *aliqualis cognitio Dei*. The infinity of the object, God, means that the finite human mind can attain no adequate and perfect idea of God's nature; but it does not mean that it cannot attain an imperfect and inadequate notion of God's nature. To know that

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 84, 7 *ad* 3.

[2] *Ibid.*, Ia, 84, 6, *in corpore* and *ad* 3.

[3] Cf. *ibid.*, Ia, 84, 7, *in corpore* and *ad* 3.

God understands is to know something positive about God, since it tells us at the very least that God is not irrational like a stone or a plant, even though to know what the divine understanding is in itself exceeds our power of comprehension.

To return to the example of personality. The assertion that God is personal depends on the argument that the necessary Being and first Cause cannot be less perfect than what proceeds from it and depends on it. On the other hand, the Aristotelian-Thomist psychology and epistemology prevent one from saying that an argument of this kind will afford any adequate idea of what the divine personality is in itself. If one claimed that one had such an idea, it would be derived from experience and it would inevitably represent the data of experience. In practice this would mean that one would affirm that God is *a* Person, and the consequence would be a contradiction between revelation and philosophy. If, however, one realises that one can by philosophical argument alone attain no adequate idea of the divine personality, one will realise that all one is entitled to say from the philosophical viewpoint is that God is personal, not that God is *a* Person. When revelation informs us that God is three Persons in one Nature, our knowledge of God is extended, but no contradiction between theology and philosophy is involved. Moreover, when we say that God is personal, we really mean that He is not less than what we experience as personality, in the sense that the perfection of personality must be in Him in the only manner in which it can be in an infinite Being. If it is objected that this is to beg the question, since the question is precisely whether personality and infinity are compatible, one can reply that the proofs of God's personality and of His infinity are independent, so that we know that personality and infinity must be compatible, even though we have no direct experience of the divine personality or of the divine infinity. That there is a positive content of some sort to our idea of divine personality is shown by the fact that the meaning in the statement 'God is super-personal' (i.e. more than that which we directly experience as personality) is different from the meaning in the statement 'God is not personal' (i.e. in any sense, just as a stone is not personal). If we had reason to believe that God were not personal in the sense in which a stone is not personal, we should see the uselessness of worship and prayer; but the statement that God is personal suggests immediately that worship and prayer are in place, even though we have no adequate idea of what the divine personality is in itself. Of an infinite Being we can have but a finite and analogical natural knowledge, precisely because we ourselves are finite; but a finite and imperfect knowledge is not the same thing as no knowledge at all.

CHAPTER XXXIX

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS—IX: MORAL THEORY

Eudaemonism—The vision of God—Good and bad—The virtues—The natural law—The eternal law and the foundation of morality in God—Natural virtues recognised by St. Thomas which were not recognised by Aristotle; the virtue of religion.

To treat the moral theory of St. Thomas in detail would be impracticable here, but a discussion of some important points may help to show its relation to the Aristotelian ethic.

1. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle argues that every agent acts for an end and that the human agent acts for happiness, with a view to the acquisition of happiness. Happiness, he says, must consist in an activity, primarily in the activity which perfects the highest faculty in man directed to the highest and noblest objects. He comes to the conclusion, therefore, that human happiness consists primarily in *theoria*, in contemplation of the highest objects, chiefly in the contemplation of the unmoved Mover, God, though he held that the enjoyment of other goods, such as friendship and, in moderation, external goods, is necessary to perfect happiness.[1] Aristotle's ethic was thus eudaemonistic in character, teleological, and markedly intellectualist, since it is clear that for him contemplation meant philosophical contemplation: he was not referring to a religious phenomenon, such as the ecstasy of Plotinus. Moreover, the end (*telos*) of moral activity is an end to be acquired in this life: as far as the ethics of Aristotle are concerned there is no hint of any vision of God in the next life, and it is indeed questionable whether he believed in personal immortality at all. Aristotle's truly happy man is the philosopher, not the saint.

Now, St. Thomas adopted a similar eudaemonological and teleological standpoint, and his theory of the end of human conduct is in some respects intellectualist; but a change of emphasis soon becomes visible which marks a very considerable difference between his ethical theory and that of Aristotle. The only acts of man which fall properly within the moral sphere are free acts, acts which proceed from man precisely as man, as a rational and free being. These human acts (*actiones humanae*, as distinguished from *actiones hominis*) proceed from man's will, and the object of the will is the good (*bonum*). It is the prerogative of man to act for an end which he has apprehended, and every human act is performed for an apprehended end; but the particular end or good, for the attainment of which a particular human act is performed, does not and cannot fully perfect and satisfy the human will, which is set towards the universal good and can find its satisfaction only in the attainment of the universal good. What is the universal good in the concrete? It cannot consist in riches, for example, for riches are simply a means to an end, whereas the universal good is necessarily the final end and cannot be itself a means to a further end. It cannot consist in sensible pleasure, since this perfects only the body, not the whole man; nor can it consist in power, which does not perfect the whole man or satisfy the will completely and which, moreover, can be abused, whereas it is inconceivable that the ultimate and universal good can be abused or employed for an unworthy or evil purpose. It cannot consist even in consideration of the speculative sciences, since philosophic speculation certainly does not satisfy completely the human intellect and will. Our natural knowledge is drawn from sense-experience; yet man aspires to a knowledge of the ultimate cause as it is in itself, and this cannot be acquired by metaphysics. Aristotle may have said that the good of man consists in the consideration of the speculative sciences, but he was speaking of imperfect happiness, such as is attainable in this life. Perfect happiness, the ultimate end, is not to be found in any created thing, but only in God, who is Himself the supreme and infinite Good. God is the universal good in the concrete, and though He is the end of all things, of both rational and irrational creatures, it is only rational creatures who can attain this final good by way of knowledge and love: it is only rational creatures who can attain the vision of God in which alone perfect happiness lies. In this life man can know that God exists and he can attain an imperfect and analogical notion of God's nature, but it is only in the next life that he can know God as He is in Himself and no other end can fully satisfy man.[1]

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[1] For a fuller treatment of the Aristotelian ethic, see the first volume of this history, pp. 332–50.

Aristotle, says St. Thomas, was speaking of imperfect happiness such as is attainable in this life; but Aristotle, as I have already mentioned, says nothing in the *Ethics* of any other happiness. His ethic was an ethic of human conduct in this life, whereas St. Thomas has not proceeded far before he has brought in consideration of the perfect happiness attainable only in the next life, this happiness consisting principally in the vision of God, though it also includes, of course, satisfaction of the will, while other goods, such as the society of friends, contribute to the *bene esse* of beatitude, though no good save God is *necessary* for happiness.[1] At once, therefore, St. Thomas's moral theory is seen to move on a different plane from that of Aristotle, since however much St. Thomas may use Aristotle's language, the introduction of the next life and of the vision of God into moral theory is foreign to the thought of Aristotle.[2] What Aristotle calls happiness, St. Thomas calls imperfect happiness or temporal happiness or happiness as attainable in this life, and this imperfect happiness he regards as ordered to perfect happiness, which is attainable only in the next life and consists principally in the vision of God.

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[1] On the foregoing, see particularly *S.T.*, Ia, IIae, questions 1-3.

2. St. Thomas's statement that the perfect happiness of man consists in the vision of God raises a very difficult problem for any interpreter of the Saint's moral theory, a problem which is of much greater importance than might at first appear. The ordinary way of presenting the Thomist ethic has been to assimilate it to the ethic of Aristotle so far as is consistent with St. Thomas's position as a Christian, and to say that St. Thomas as moral philosopher considers man 'in the natural order' without reference to his supernatural end. When he speaks of beatitude as a moral philosopher he would, therefore, be speaking of natural beatitude, that attainment of the supreme Good, God, which is open to man in the natural order, without supernatural grace being necessary. His difference from Aristotle would lie in the fact that he, unlike the latter, introduces consideration of the next life, concerning which Aristotle is silent. Beatitude would consist principally in the natural knowledge and love of God attainable in this life (imperfect natural beatitude) and in the next life (perfect natural beatitude). Those actions would be good which lead to or are compatible with the attainment of such beatitude, while those actions would be bad which are incompatible with the attainment of such beatitude. The fact that St. Thomas speaks of the attainment of the vision of the divine essence (which is man's supernatural end and is unattainable without supernatural grace) when

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[1] See *S.T.*, Ia, IIae, 4.

[2] This is true of St. Thomas's moral teaching in the *Summae*. I do not mean to imply that St. Thomas rejected the possibility of a purely philosophical ethic.

we would expect him to continue speaking as a moral philosopher would, then, be due to the fact that he makes in practice no very methodical separation between the rôles of philosopher and theologian and speaks sometimes as the one, sometimes as the other, without any clear indication of the change. Alternatively one would have to explain away references to the vision of God as meaning not the supernatural vision of the divine essence, but merely the knowledge of God which would be attainable by man in the next life, had man no supernatural end. In some such way one would make of St. Thomas a moral philosopher who completed the Aristotelian ethic by introducing consideration of the next life.

Unfortunately for upholders of this interpretation not only does St. Thomas seem to refer to the vision of God in the proper sense, but he even speaks of a 'natural desire' for the vision of God. 'Ultimate and perfect beatitude can consist only in the vision of the divine essence.' This, say some commentators, does not refer to the vision of God as supreme good, as He is in Himself, but only to the vision of God as first cause. But how could St. Thomas speak of knowledge of God as first cause as though such knowledge were or could be a vision of the divine essence? By the natural light of reason we can know that God is first cause, but St. Thomas states that 'for perfect beatitude it is required that the intellect should arrive at the very essence of the first cause'.[1] Again, 'Ultimate beatitude consists in the vision of the divine essence, which is the very essence of goodness.'[2] For the attainment of that vision there is in man a natural desire, as man naturally desires to know the essence, the nature of the first cause.[3] Whether or not St. Thomas was right in saying this, it is to me inconceivable that he meant to refer only to what Cajetan calls a *potentia obedientialis*: what can a 'natural desire' be, if it is not something positive? On the other hand, it is out of the question to suppose that St. Thomas meant to deny the supernatural and gratuitous character of the beatific vision of God. Some commentators (Suarez, for example) have got rid of the difficulty by saying that St. Thomas meant to affirm the presence in man of a *conditional* natural desire, that is, conditional on God's elevating man to the supernatural order and giving him the means to attain the supernatural end. This is a reasonable position, no doubt; but is it necessary to suppose that by a natural desire St. Thomas meant more than a desire to know the nature of the first cause, a desire which *in the concrete*, that is, given man's elevation to the supernatural order and his being destined for a supernatural end, means a desire for the vision of God? In other words, I suggest that St. Thomas is considering man in the concrete and that when he says that there is in man a 'natural desire' to know God's essence, and so to attain the vision of God, he means that man's natural desire to know as much as possible of the ultimate cause is, in the concrete and actual order, a desire to see God. Just as the will is naturally set towards the universal good and this movement of the will can reach satisfaction and quiescence only in the possession of God, so the intellect is made for truth and can be satisfied only by the vision of the absolute Truth.

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, IIae, 3, 8. [2] *Ibid.*, 4, 4. [3] *Ibid.*, 3, 8.

It may be objected that this implies either that man has a natural desire for the beatific vision (using the word natural as opposed to supernatural), and in this case it is difficult to safeguard the gratuity of the supernatural order, or that by 'natural' St. Thomas means simply natural in the sense in which we frequently use the word, as opposed to 'unnatural' rather than supernatural, which is to interpret him in an arbitrary and unjustifiable fashion. But what I am suggesting is that St. Thomas is speaking pretty well as St. Augustine might speak, that he is considering man in the concrete, as called to a supernatural end, and that when he says that man has a natural desire to know the essence of God, he does not mean to imply that man in a hypothetical state of nature would have had such a natural desire, whether absolute or conditional, of seeing God, but simply that the term of the natural movement of the human intellect towards truth is *de facto* the vision of God, not because the human intellect can of itself see God, whether in this life or the next, but because *de facto* the only end of man is a supernatural end. I do not think that St. Thomas is considering the hypothetical state of nature at all, when he speaks of the *desiderium naturale*, and if this is so, it obviously means that his moral theory is not and cannot be a purely philosophical theory. His moral theory is partly theological and partly philosophical: he utilises the Aristotelian ethic but fits it into a Christian setting. After all, Aristotle was himself considering man in the concrete, as far as he knew what man in the concrete actually is, and St. Thomas, who knew much better than Aristotle what man in the concrete actually is, was fully justified in utilising the thought of Aristotle when he believed it to be correct and found it compatible with his Christian standpoint.

It is perfectly true that St. Thomas speaks of imperfect beatitude, of man's temporal good, and so on; but that does not mean that he is considering man in a hypothetical state of pure nature. If St. Thomas says that the Church is instituted to help man to attain his supernatural good, and the State to help man to attain his temporal good, it would be absurd to conclude that in considering man in relation to the State he is considering man in a purely hypothetical condition: he is considering actual man in certain aspects and functions. It is not that St. Thomas ignores the fact that the attainment of man's true end exceeds man's unaided powers, but that in his moral theory he considers man as set towards, as called to that end. When answering the question if beatitude, once attained, can be lost, he answers that the imperfect beatitude of this life can be lost, but that the perfect beatitude of the next life cannot be lost, since it is impossible for anyone who has once seen the divine essence to desire not to see it.[1] This shows clearly enough that he is speaking of supernatural beatitude. In the reply to the second objection he says that the will is ordered to the last end by a natural necessity;[2] but this does not mean either that the last end in question is purely natural or, if it is supernatural, that God *could not* have created man without directing him to this end. The will necessarily desires happiness, beatitude, and *de facto* this beatitude can be found only in the vision of God: we can say, therefore, that the concrete human being necessarily desires the vision of God.

It seems to me that this interpretation is confirmed by the doctrine of the *Summa contra Gentiles*. First of all[3] St. Thomas argues that the end of every intellectual substance is to know God. All creatures are ordered to God as to their last end,[4] and rational creatures are ordered to God principally and peculiarly by way of their highest faculty, the intellect. But though the end and happiness of man must consist principally in the knowledge of God, the knowledge in question is not that knowledge which is obtained philosophically, by demonstration. By demonstration we come to know rather what God is not than what He is, and man cannot be happy unless he knows God as He is.[5] Nor can human happiness consist in the knowledge of God which is obtained through faith, even though by faith we are able to know more about God than we can learn through philosophical demonstration. The 'natural desire' is satisfied by the attainment of the final end, complete happiness, but 'knowledge by faith does not satisfy the desire, but rather inflames it, since everyone desires to see what he believes'.[1] Man's final end and happiness must consist, therefore, in the vision of God as He is in Himself, in the vision of the divine essence, a vision which is promised us in the Scriptures and by which man will see God 'face to face'.[2] It is only necessary to read St. Thomas in order to see that he is talking of the vision of the divine essence properly speaking. On the other hand, it is only necessary to read St. Thomas in order to see that he is perfectly aware that 'no created substance can by its natural power come to see God in His essence'[3] and that to attain this vision supernatural elevation and aid are required.[4]

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, IIae, 5, 4. [2] *Ibid.* [3] 3, 25. [4] 3, 18. [5] 3, 39.

What, then, of the 'natural desire'? Does not St. Thomas explicitly say that 'since it is impossible for a natural desire to be in vain (*inane*), and since this would be the case if it were not possible to arrive at the knowledge of the divine substance, which all minds naturally desire, it is necessary to say that it is possible for the substance of God to be seen by the intellect',[5] even though this vision cannot be attained in this life?[6] If there is really a 'natural desire' for the vision of God, is not the gratuitous character of supernatural beatitude endangered? In the first place it may be pointed out once again that St. Thomas explicitly states that man cannot attain to the vision of God by his own efforts: its attainment is made possible only through the grace of God, as he clearly affirms.[7] But there certainly is a difficulty in seeing how the grace of God, which alone makes possible the attainment of the final end, is not in some sense due to man, if there is a 'natural desire' for the vision of God and if it is impossible for a natural desire to be in vain. To come to a definitive conclusion as to what St. Thomas precisely understood by *desiderium naturale* in this connection may not be possible; but it seems legitimate to suppose that he was regarding the natural desire of the intellect to know absolute Truth in the light of the actual and concrete order. Man's intellect has a natural orientation towards happiness, which must consist primarily in the knowledge of the absolute Truth; but man in the concrete actual order has been destined for a supernatural end and cannot be satisfied with anything less. Regarding the natural desire in the light of the facts known by revelation, one can say, then, that man has a 'natural desire' for the vision of God.

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[1] 3, 40.
[2] 3, 51.
[3] 3, 52.
[4] 3, 52–4.
[5] 3, 51.
[6] 3, 47–8.
[7] 3, 52.

In the *De Veritate*[1] St. Thomas says that man, according to his nature, has a natural appetite for *aliqua contemplatio divinorum*, such as it is possible for a man to obtain by the power of nature, and that the inclination of his desire towards the supernatural and gratuitous end (the vision of God) is the work of grace. In this place, then, St. Thomas does not admit a 'natural desire' in the strict sense for the vision of God, and it seems to me only reasonable to suppose that when in the *Summa Theologica* and the *Summa contra Gentiles* he speaks of a natural desire for the vision of God, he is not speaking strictly as a *philosopher*,[2] but as a theologian and philosopher combined, that is, presupposing the supernatural order and interpreting the data of experience in the light of that presupposition. In any case what has been said should be sufficient to show the difference between Aristotle's and St. Thomas's views of the end of man.[3]

3. The will, therefore, desires happiness, beatitude, as its end, and human acts are good or bad in so far as they are or are not means to the attainment of that end. Happiness must, of course, be understood in relation to man as such, to man as a rational being: the end is that good which perfects man as a rational being, not indeed as a disembodied intellect, for man is not a disembodied intellect, but in the sense that the perfecting of his sensitive and vegetative tendencies must be accomplished in subordination to his primary tendency, which is rational: the end is that which perfects man as such, and man as such is a rational being, not a mere animal. Every individual human act, that is to say, every deliberate act, is either in accordance with the order of reason (its immediate end being in harmony with the final end) or out of accordance with the order of reason (its immediate end being incompatible with the final end), so that every human act is either good or bad. An indeliberate act, such as the reflex act of brushing away a fly, may be 'indifferent'; but no human, deliberate act, can be indifferent, neither good nor bad.[4]

4. St. Thomas follows Aristotle in treating the moral and intellectual virtues as habits, as good qualities or habits of the mind, by which a man lives rightly.[5] The virtuous habit is formed by good acts and facilitates the performance of subsequent acts for

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[1] 27, 2.

[2] Cf. *De Veritate, loc. cit.*, and cf. also *De Malo*, 5, 1, 15.

[3] On the question of the 'natural desire' for the vision of God, cf. the summary and discussion of the opinions by A. Motte in the *Bulletin Thomiste*, 1931 (nos. 651–76) and 1934 (nos. 573–90).

[4] *S.T.*, Ia, IIae, 18, 9.

[5] *Ibid.*, Ia, IIae, 55 ff.

the same end. It is possible to have the intellectual virtues with the exception of prudence without the moral virtues, and it is possible to have the moral virtues without the intellectual virtues, with the exception of prudence and of understanding.[1] Moral virtue consists in a mean (*in medio consistit*). The object of moral virtue is to secure or facilitate conformity to the rule of reason in the appetitive part of the soul; but conformity implies the avoidance of the extremes of excess and defect, it means that the appetite or passion is reduced to the rule of reason. Of course, if one is considering simply conformity to reason, virtue is an extreme and all difformity with the rule of reason, whether by excess or defect, constitutes the other extreme (to say that virtue consists in a mean is not to say that it consists in mediocrity); but if one considers moral virtue in regard to the matter with which it is concerned, the passion or appetite in question, it is then seen to consist in a mean. The adoption of this theory of Aristotle might seem to make it difficult to defend virginity or voluntary poverty, for example, but St. Thomas points out that complete chastity, for instance, is virtuous only when it is in conformity with reason enlightened by God. If it is observed in accordance with God's will or invitation and for man's supernatural end, it is in accord with the rule of reason and so is, in St. Thomas's use of the word, a mean: if, however, it were observed out of superstition or vainglory, it would be an excess. In general, a virtue may be looked at as an extreme in relation to one circumstance, as a mean in regard to another.[2] In other words, the fundamental factor in virtuous action is conformity to the rule of reason, directing man's acts to his final end.

5. The rule and measure of human acts is the reason, for it belongs to the reason to direct a man's activity towards his end.[3] It is reason, therefore, which gives orders, which imposes obligation. But this does not mean that the reason is the arbitrary source of obligation or that it can impose whatever obligations it likes. The primary object of the practical reason is the good, which has the nature of an end, and the practical reason, recognising the good as the end of human conduct, enunciates its first principle, ***Bonum est faciendum et prosequendum, et malum vitandum***, good is to be done and pursued, and evil avoided.[4] But the good for man is that which befits his nature, that to which he has a natural

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, IIae, 58, 4–5.

[2] *Ibid.*, Ia, IIae, 64, 1.

[3] *Ibid.*, Ia, IIae, 90, 1.

[4] *Ibid.*, Ia, IIae, 94, 2.

inclination as a rational being. Thus man, in common with all other substances, has a natural inclination to the preservation of his being, and reason, reflecting on this inclination, orders that the means necessary to the preservation of life are to be taken. Conversely, suicide is to be avoided. Again, man, in common with other animals, has a natural inclination to the propagation of the species and the bringing up of children, while as a rational being he has a natural inclination to seek out the truth, especially concerning God. Reason, therefore, orders that the species is to be propagated and children educated, and that truth is to be sought, especially that truth which is necessary to the attainment of man's end. Obligation, therefore, is imposed by reason, but it is founded immediately on human nature itself; the moral law is rational and natural, in the sense of not being arbitrary or capricious: it is a natural law, *lex naturalis*, which has its basis in human nature itself, though it is enunciated and dictated by reason.

As the natural law is founded in human nature as such, in that nature which is the same in all men, it has regard primarily to those things which are necessary to human nature. There is an obligation, for example, to preserve one's life, but that does not mean that every man has to preserve his life in exactly the same way: a man must eat, but it does not follow that he is under an obligation to eat this or that, this much or that much. In other words, acts may be good and according to nature without being obligatory. Moreover, though reason sees that no man can preserve his life without eating and that no man can order his life rightly without knowledge of God, it also sees that the precept of propagating the species falls not on the individual, but on the multitude, and that it is fulfilled, even though not all individuals actually fulfil it. (This would be St. Thomas's answer to the objection that virginity is contrary to the natural law.)[1]

From the fact that the natural law is founded on human nature itself it follows that it cannot be changed, since human nature remains fundamentally the same, and that it is the same for all. It can be 'added to', in the sense that precepts useful for human life can be promulgated by divine law and by human law, even though these precepts do not fall directly under the natural law; but it cannot be changed, if by change is meant subtraction from the law.[2]

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[1] Cf. *S.T.*, IIa, IIae, 152, 2.

[2] *Ibid.*, Ia, IIae, 94, 5.

The primary precepts of the natural law (e.g. life is to be preserved) are entirely unchangeable, since their fulfilment is absolutely necessary for the good of man, while the proximate conclusions from the primary precepts are also unchangeable, though St. Thomas admits that they may be changed in a few particular cases on account of special reasons. But St. Thomas is not thinking here of what we call 'hard cases': he is thinking rather of cases like that of the Israelites who made off with the goods of the Egyptians. His meaning is that in this case God, acting as supreme lord and owner of all things rather than as legislator, transferred the ownership of the goods in question from the Egyptians to the Israelites, so that the Israelites did not really commit theft. Thus St. Thomas's admission of the changeability of the secondary precepts of the natural law in particular cases refers rather to what the Scholastics call a *mutatio materiae* than to a change in the precept itself: it is rather that the circumstances of the act are so changed that it no longer falls under the prohibition than that the prohibition itself is changed.

Moreover, precisely because the natural law is founded on human nature itself, men cannot be ignorant of it in regard to the most general principles, though it is true that they may fail on account of the influence of some passion to apply a principle to a particular case. As regards the secondary precepts men may be ignorant of these through prejudice or passion, and that is all the more reason why the natural law should be confirmed by positive divine law.[1]

6. Obligation, as we have seen, is the binding of the free will to perform that act which is necessary for the attainment of the last end, an end which is not hypothetical (an end which may or may not be desired) but absolute, in the sense that the will cannot help desiring it, the good which must be interpreted in terms of human nature. So far the ethic of St. Thomas follows closely that of Aristotle. Is there nothing further? Is the natural law, promulgated by reason, without any transcendental foundation? Aristotle's eudaemonological ethic fitted in, of course, with his general finalistic outlook; but it was not grounded in God and could not be, since the Aristotelian God was not Creator nor did He exercise providence: He was final cause, but not first efficient cause or supreme exemplary cause. In St. Thomas's case, however, it would be extremely strange were ethics to be left without demonstrable

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, IIae, 95, 6; 99, 2, *ad* 2.

connection with metaphysics, and in fact we find that connection insisted on.

On the supposition that God created and rules the world (the proof of this does not pertain to ethics), it follows that the divine wisdom must be conceived as ordering man's actions towards his end. God, to speak somewhat anthropomorphically, has an exemplar idea of man and of the acts which fulfil man's nature and which are required for the attainment of man's end, and the divine wisdom as directing man's acts to the attainment of that end constitutes the eternal law. As God is eternal and His idea of man eternal, the promulgation of the law is eternal *ex parte Dei*, though it is not eternal *ex parte creaturae.*[1] This eternal law, existing in God, is the origin and fount of the natural law, which is a participation of the eternal law. The natural law is expressed passively in man's natural inclinations, while it is promulgated by the light of reason reflecting on those inclinations, so that inasmuch as every man naturally possesses the inclinations to the end of man and possesses also the light of reason, the eternal law is sufficiently promulgated for every man. The natural law is the totality of the universal dictates of right reason concerning that good of nature which is to be pursued and that evil of man's nature which is to be shunned, and man's reason could, at least in theory, arrive by its own light at a knowledge of these dictates or precepts. Nevertheless, since, as we have seen, the influence of passion and of inclinations which are not in accordance with right reason may lead men astray and since not all men have the time or ability or patience to discover the whole natural law for themselves, it was morally necessary that the natural law should be positively expressed by God, as was done by the revelation of the Decalogue to Moses. It must also be added that man has *de facto* a supernatural end, and in order that he should be able to attain this supernatural end, it was necessary that God should reveal the supernatural law, over and above the natural law. 'Since man is destined to the end of eternal beatitude, which exceeds the capacity of the human natural faculty, it was necessary that besides the natural law and human law he should also be directed to his end by a divinely given law.'[2]

It is very important to realise clearly that the foundation of the natural law in the eternal law, the metaphysical foundation of the natural law, does not mean that the natural law is capricious

[1] *S.T.*, Ia, IIae, 9, 1; 93, 1 ff.

[2] *Ibid.*, Ia, IIae, 91, 4.

or arbitrary; that it could be otherwise than it is: the eternal law does not depend primarily on the divine will but on the divine reason, considering the exemplar idea of human nature. Given human nature, the natural law could not be otherwise than it is. On the other hand, we must not imagine that God is subject to the moral law, as something apart from Himself. God knows His divine essence as imitable in a multiplicity of finite ways, one of those ways being human nature, and in that human nature He discerns the law of its being and wills it: He wills it because He loves Himself, the supreme Good, and because He cannot be inconsistent with Himself. The moral law is thus ultimately founded on the divine essence itself and so cannot change: God wills it certainly, but it does not depend on any arbitrary act of the divine will. Hence to say that the moral law does not depend primarily on the divine will is not at all equivalent to saying that there is a moral law which in some mysterious way stands behind God and rules God: God is Himself the supreme Value and the source and measure of all value: values depend on Him, but in the sense that they are participations or finite reflections of God, not in the sense that God arbitrarily confers on them their character as values. St. Thomas's doctrine of the metaphysical foundation, the theistic foundation, of the moral law in no way threatens its rational or necessary character: ultimately the moral law is what it is because God is what He is, since human nature, the law of whose being is expressed in the natural law, itself depends on God.

7. Finally one can point out that St. Thomas's realisation of God as Creator and supreme Lord led him, in company, of course, with other Scholastics, to recognise natural values which Aristotle did not envisage and could not envisage once given his view of God. To take one example, that of the virtue of religion (*religio*). Religion is the virtue by which men pay to God the worship and reverence which they owe Him as 'first Principle of the creation and government of things'. It is superior to the other moral virtues, inasmuch as it is more closely concerned with God, the last end.[1] It is subordinate to the virtue of justice (as a *virtus annexa*), inasmuch as through the virtue of religion a man pays to God his debt of worship and honour, a debt which is owing in justice.[2] Religion is thus grounded in man's relationship to God, as creature to Creator, as subject to Lord. As Aristotle did not

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[1] On the virtue of religion, cf. *S.T.*, IIa, IIae, 81, 1–8.

[2] *S.T.*, Ia, IIae, 80, *articulus unicus*.

look upon God as Creator nor as exercising conscious government and providence, but regarded Him as the final Cause alone, wrapped up in Himself and drawing the world unconsciously, he could not envisage a personal relationship between man and the unmoved Mover, though he expected, of course, that man would recognise and in a sense honour the unmoved Mover, as the noblest object of philosophic contemplation. St. Thomas, however, with his clear idea of God as Creator and as provident Governor of the universe, could and did envisage as man's primary duty the expression in act of the relationship which is bound up with his very being. The virtuous man of Aristotle is, in a sense, the most independent man, whereas the virtuous man of St. Thomas is, in a sense, the most dependent man, that is, the man who realises truly and fully expresses his relation of dependence on God.

CHAPTER XL

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS—X: POLITICAL THEORY

St. Thomas and Aristotle—The natural origin of human society and government—Human society and political authority willed by God—Church and State—Individual and State—Law—Sovereignty—Constitutions—St. Thomas's political theory an integral part of his total system.

1. St. Thomas's ethical theory or theory of the moral life was based philosophically on the moral theory of Aristotle, though St. Thomas supplied it with a theological basis which was lacking in Aristotle's theory. In addition, the Thomist theory is complicated by the fact that St. Thomas believed, as a Christian, that man has *de facto* only one end, a supernatural end, so that a purely philosophical ethic was bound to be in his eyes an insufficient guide to practice: he could not simply adopt Aristotelianism lock, stock and barrel. The same is true of his political theory, in which he adopted the general framework of Aristotle's treatment, but had at the same time to leave the political theory 'open'. Aristotle certainly supposed that the State satisfied or ideally could satisfy all the needs of man;[1] but St. Thomas could not hold this, since he believed that man's end is a supernatural end and that it is the Church and not the State which caters for the attainment of that end. This meant that a problem which was not, and could not be, treated by Aristotle had to be considered by St. Thomas, as by other mediaeval writers on political theory, the problem of the relations of Church and State. In other words, though St. Thomas borrowed largely from Aristotle in regard to the subject-matter and method of treatment of political theory, he considered the matter in the light of the Christian mediaeval outlook and modified or supplemented his Aristotelianism in accordance with the exigencies of his Christian faith. The Marxist may like to point to the influence of mediaeval economic, social and political conditions on St. Thomas's theory, but the important difference between Aristotle and St. Thomas is not that the former lived in a Greek City-state and the latter in the feudal epoch; it is rather that for the former the natural end of man is self-sufficient and is attained

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[1] This at least was the view which Aristotle took over and which he can hardly be said to have repudiated expressly, though it is true that the individualistic ideal of theoretic contemplation tended to break through the ideal of the City-state's self-sufficiency.

through life in the State, whereas for the latter the end of man is supernatural and is fully attainable only in the next life. Whether the amalgamation of Aristotelianism with the Christian view of man and his end constitutes a fully consistent and coherent synthesis or a somewhat fragile partnership, is a further question; what is insisted on at the moment is that it is a mistake to place a greater emphasis on the influence of mediaeval conditions on St. Thomas than on the influence of the Christian religion as such, which did not grow up in the Middle Ages and is not confined to the Middle Ages. The precise form taken by the problem of the relations of Church and State must of course be seen in the light of mediaeval conditions; but ultimately the problem arises from the confrontation of two different conceptions of man and his destiny; its precise formulation at any given time or by one thinker is incidental.

2. The State is for St. Thomas, as for Aristotle, a natural institution, founded on the nature of man. At the beginning of the *De regimine principum*[1] he argues that every creature has its own end, and that whereas some creatures attain their end necessarily or instinctively, man has to be guided to its attainment by his reason. But man is not an isolated individual who can attain his end simply as an individual by using his own individual reason; he is by nature a social or political being, born to live in community with his fellows. Indeed, man needs society more than other animals do. For whereas nature has provided the animals with clothing, means of defence, etc., she has left man unprovided, in a condition where he has to provide for himself by the use of his reason, and this he can do only through co-operation with other men. Division of labour is necessary, by which one man should devote himself to medicine, another to agriculture, and so on. But the most evident sign of the social nature of man is his faculty of expressing his ideas to other men through the medium of language. Other animals can express their feelings only through very general signs, but man can express his concepts completely (*totaliter*). This shows that man is naturally fitted for society more than any other gregarious animal, more even than the ants and the bees.

Society, therefore, is natural to man; but if society is natural, so also is government. Just as the bodies of men and animals disintegrate when the controlling and unifying principle (the soul) has left them, so would human society tend to disintegrate owing to the number of human beings and their natural preoccupation with self, unless there was someone to take thought for the common good and direct the activities of individuals with a view to the common good. Wherever there is a multitude of creatures with a common good to be attained there must be some common ruling power. In the body there is a principal member, the head or the heart; the body is ruled by the soul, and in the soul the irascible and concupiscible parts are directed by the reason; in the universe at large inferior bodies are ruled by the superior, according to the disposition of divine providence. What is true, then, of the universe at large, and of man as an individual, must be true also of human society.

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[1] I, I.

3. If human society and government are natural, are prefigured in human nature, it follows that they have a divine justification and authority, since human nature has been created by God. In creating man God willed human society and political government, and one is not entitled to say that the State is simply the result of sin. If no one did wrong, then obviously some activities and institutions of the State would be unnecessary; but even in the state of innocence, if it had persisted, there would have to have been an authority to care for the common good. 'Man is by nature a social animal. Hence in the state of innocence men would have lived in society. But a common social life of many individuals could not exist, unless there were someone in control, to attend to the common good.'[1] Moreover, there would have been some inequality of gifts even in the state of innocence, and if one man had been supereminent in knowledge and righteousness, it would not have been proper that he should have no opportunity to exercise his outstanding talents for the common good by direction of common activities.

4. By declaring the State a natural institution St. Thomas gave it, in a sense, a utilitarian foundation, but his utilitarianism is Aristotelian; he certainly did not consider the State simply the creation of enlightened egoism. He recognised the force of egoism, of course, and its centrifugal tendency in regard to society; but he also recognised the social tendency and impulse in man, and it is this social tendency which enables society to endure in spite of the tendency to egoism. As Hobbes regarded egoism as the only fundamental impulse, he had to find the practical principle of cohesion in force, once society had been founded by the prudential

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 96, 4.

dictates of enlightened egoism; but in point of fact neither force nor enlightened egoism would be sufficient to make society endure, if man had no social tendency implanted by nature. In other words, the Christianised Aristotelianism of St. Thomas enabled him to avoid both the notion that the State is the result of original sin, a notion to which St. Augustine seems to have tended, and the notion that the State is simply the creation of egoism: it is prefigured in human nature, and since human nature is God's creation, it is willed by God. From this there follows the important consequence that the State is an institution in its own right, with an end of its own and a sphere of its own. St. Thomas could not, then, adopt an extremist position in regard to the problem of the relations between Church and State: he could not, if he was to be logical, turn the Church into a super-State and the State into a kind of dependency of the Church. The State is a 'perfect society' (*communitas perfecta*), that is, it has at its disposal all the means necessary for the attainment of its end, the *bonum commune* or common good of the citizens.[1] The attainment of the common good postulates first of all peace within the State, among the citizens, secondly the unified direction of the activities of the citizens *ad bene agendum*, thirdly the adequate provision for the needs of life; and the government of the State is instituted to secure these necessary conditions of the common good. It is also necessary for the common good that hindrances to the good life, such as danger from foreign enemies and the disintegrating effects of crime within the State, should be averted, and the monarch has at his disposal the means necessary to avert these hindrances, namely armed force and the judiciary system.[2] The end of the Church, a supernatural end, is higher than that of the State, so that the Church is a society superior to the State, which must subordinate itself to the Church in matters bearing upon the supernatural life; but that does not alter the fact that the State is a 'perfect society', autonomous within its own sphere. In terms of later theology, then, St. Thomas must be reckoned as an upholder of the *indirect power* of the Church over the State. When Dante in his *De Monarchia* recognises the two spheres of Church and State, he is at one with St. Thomas, as far at least as the Aristotelian aspect of the latter's political theory is concerned.[3]

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[1] Cf. *S.T.*, Ia, IIae, 90, 2.

[2] Cf. *De regimine principum*, 1, 15.

[3] Dante was actually more concerned to uphold the authority of the Emperor against that of the Pope and was somewhat behind the times in his imperial dreams; but he carefully adhered to the two spheres theory.

However, the attempted synthesis between the Aristotelian idea of the State and the Christian idea of the Church was somewhat precarious. In the *De regimine principum*[1] St. Thomas declares that the end of society is the good life and that the good life is a life according to virtue, so that a virtuous life is the end of human society. He then goes on to observe that the *final* end of man is not to live virtuously, but by living virtuously to attain to the enjoyment of God, and that the attainment of this end exceeds the powers of human nature. 'Because man does not attain the end of enjoyment of God by human power, but by divine power, according to the words of the Apostle "the grace of God, life eternal",[2] to lead man to this end will pertain not to human but to divine rule': the leading of man to his final end is entrusted to Christ and His Church, so that under the new Covenant of Christ kings must be subject to priests. St. Thomas certainly recognises that the king has in his hands the direction of human and earthly matters, and he cannot be rightly interpreted as meaning to deny that the State has its own sphere; but he insists that it pertains to the king to procure the good life of his subjects with a view to the attainment of eternal beatitude: 'he should order those things which lead to heavenly beatitude and prohibit, as far as possible, their contraries.'[3] The point is that St. Thomas does not say that man has, as it were, two final ends, a temporal end which is catered for by the State and a supernatural, eternal end which is catered for by the Church: he says that man has one final end, a supernatural end, and that the business of the monarch, in his direction of earthly affairs, is to facilitate the attainment of that end.[4] The power of the Church over the State is not a *potestas directa*, since it is the business of the State, not the Church, to care for economic concerns and the preservation of peace; but the State must care for these concerns with an eye on the supernatural end of man. In other words, the State may be a 'perfect society', but the elevation of man to the supernatural order means that the State is very much a handmaid of the Church. This point of view is based not so much on mediaeval practice as on the Christian faith, and it is, needless to say, not the view of Aristotle who knew nothing of man's eternal and supernatural end. That there is a certain synthesis between the Aristotelian political theory and the demands of the Christian faith in the thought of St. Thomas,

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[1] 1, 14. [2] Romans 6. 23. [3] *De regimine principum*, 1, 15.
[4] St. Thomas is, of course, addressing a Christian prince.

I should not attempt to deny; but I do think that the synthesis is, as I have already suggested, somewhat precarious. If the Aristotelian elements were pressed, the result would be a theoretical separation of Church and State of a kind which would be quite foreign to the thought of St. Thomas. In fact, his view of the relation of Church and State is not unlike his view of the relation between Faith and Reason. The latter has its own sphere, but philosophy is none the less inferior to theology: similarly, the State has its own sphere, but it is none the less, to all intents and purposes, the handmaid of the Church. Conversely, if one adheres to the historic Aristotle so closely as to make philosophy absolutely autonomous in its own sphere, one will naturally, in political theory, tend to make the State absolutely autonomous within its own sphere: this is what the Averroists did, but St. Thomas was most emphatically not an Averroist. One may say, then, that St. Thomas's political theory does represent to some extent the actual situation, in which the nation-State was becoming self-conscious but in which the authority of the Church had not yet been expressly repudiated. St. Thomas's Aristotelianism allowed him to make the State a perfect society, but his Christianity, his conviction that man has but one ultimate end, effectually prevented him from making the State an absolutely autonomous society.

5. A similar ambiguity shows itself in St. Thomas's doctrine of the relation of the individual to the State. In the *Summa Theologica*[1] he remarks that since the part is ordered to the whole as what is imperfect to what is perfect, and since the individual is a part of the perfect society, it is necessary that law should properly be concerned with the common happiness. It is true that he is trying to show simply that law is concerned primarily with the common good rather than with the good of the individual, but he does speak as though the individual citizen were subordinated to the whole of which he forms a part. The same principle, that the part exists for the whole, is applied by St. Thomas in more than one place to the individual's relation to the community. For example,[2] he argues that it is right for the public authority to deprive an individual citizen of life for the graver crimes on the ground that the individual is ordered to the community, of which he forms a part, as to an end. And it is really an application of this principle when he insists in the Commentary on the *Ethics*[3] that

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[1] Ia, IIae, 90, 2.

[2] *S.T.*, IIa, IIae, 65, 1.

[3] 3 *Ethic.*, *lect.* 4.

courage is shown by giving one's life for the best things, as is the case when a man dies in defence of his country.

If this principle, that the part is ordered to the whole, which represents St. Thomas's Aristotelianism, were pressed, it would seem that he subordinates the individual to the State to a remarkable degree; but St. Thomas also insists that he who seeks the common good of the multitude seeks his own good as well, since one's own good cannot be attained unless the common good is attained, though it is true that in the *corpus* of the article in question he remarks that right reason judges that the common good is better than the good of the individual.[1] But the principle should not be over-emphasised, since St. Thomas was a Christian theologian and philosopher as well as an admirer of Aristotle, and he was well aware, as we have already seen, that man's final end is outside the sphere of the State: man is not simply a member of the State, indeed the most important thing about him is his supernatural vocation. There can, then, be no question of 'totalitarianism' in St. Thomas, though it is obvious that his Aristotelianism would make it impossible for him to accept such a theory of the State as that of Herbert Spencer: the State has a positive function and a moral function. The human being is a person, with a value of his own; he is not simply an 'individual'.

6. That totalitarianism is foreign to St. Thomas's thought is shown clearly by his theory of law and of the origin and nature of sovereignty. There are four kinds of law: the eternal law, the natural law, the divine positive law and human positive law. The divine positive law is the law of God as positively revealed, imperfectly to the Jews, perfectly through Christ,[2] while the law of the State is human positive law. Now, the function of the human legislator is primarily to apply the natural law[3] and to support the law by sanctions.[4] For example, murder is forbidden by the natural law, but reason shows the desirability of positive enactments whereby murder is clearly defined and whereby sanctions are added, since the natural law does not of itself clearly define murder in detail or provide immediate sanctions. The legislator's primary function is, therefore, that of defining or making explicit the natural law, of applying it to particular cases and of making it effective. It follows that human positive law is derived from the natural law, and that every human law is a true law only in

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[1] *S.T.*, IIa, IIae, 47, 10, *in corpore* and *ad* 2.

[2] *Ibid.*, Ia, IIae, 91, 5.

[3] *Ibid.*, 3.

[4] *Ibid.*, 95, 1.

so far as it is derived from the natural law. 'But if it disagrees with the natural law in something, it will not be a law, but the perversion of law.'[1] The ruler is not entitled to promulgate laws which go counter to or are incompatible with the natural law (or, of course, the divine law): he has his legislative power ultimately from God, since all authority comes from God, and he is responsible for his use of that power: he is himself subject to the natural law and is not entitled to transgress it himself or to order his subjects to do anything incompatible with it. Just human laws bind in conscience in virtue of the eternal law from which they are ultimately derived; but unjust laws do not bind in conscience. Now, a law may be unjust because it is contrary to the common good or because it is enacted simply for the selfish and private ends of the legislator, thus imposing an unjustifiable burden on the subjects, or because it imposes burdens on the subjects in an unjustifiably unequal manner, and such laws, being more acts of violence than laws, do not bind in conscience, unless perhaps on occasion their non-observance would produce a greater evil. As for laws which are contrary to the divine law, it is never licit to obey them, since we ought to obey God rather than men.[2]

7. It will be seen, then, that the legislator's power is very far from being absolute in the thought of St. Thomas; and the same is clear from a consideration of his theory of sovereignty and government. That St. Thomas held that political sovereignty comes from God is admitted by all, and it seems probable that he maintained the view that sovereignty is given by God to the people as a whole, by whom it is delegated to the actual ruler or rulers; but this latter point does not seem to me to be quite so certain as some writers have made out, since texts can be alleged to show that he held otherwise. Yet it is undeniable that he speaks of the ruler as representing the people[3] and that he states roundly[4] that the ruler possesses legislative power only in so far as he stands in place (*gerit personam*) of the people,[5] and such statements may reasonably be taken to imply that he did hold that sovereignty comes to the ruler from God *via* the people, though at the same time it must be admitted that St. Thomas scarcely discusses the question in a formal and explicit manner. In any case, however, the ruler possesses his sovereignty only for the good of the whole

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, IIae, 95, 2. [2] Cf. *ibid.*, Ia, IIae, 96, 4. [3] Cf. *ibid.*, Ia, IIae, 90, 3.

[4] Though apparently referring to elected government.

[5] *S.T.*, Ia, IIae, 97, 3, *ad* 3.

people, not for his private good, and if he abuses his power, he becomes a tyrant. Assassination of a tyrant was condemned by St. Thomas and he speaks at some length of the evils which may attend rebellions against a tyrant. For example, the tyrant may become more tyrannical, if the rebellion fails, while if it is successful, it may simply result in the substitution of one tyranny for another. But deposition of a tyrant is legitimate, especially if the people have the right of providing themselves with a king. (Presumably St. Thomas is referring to an elective monarchy.) In such a case the people do no wrong in deposing the tyrant, even if they had subjected themselves to him without any time limit, for he has deserved deposition by not keeping faith with his subjects.[1] Nevertheless, in view of the evils which may attend rebellion, it is far preferable to make provision beforehand to prevent a monarchy turning into a tyranny than to have to put up with or to rebel against tyranny once established. If feasible, no one should be made ruler if he is likely to turn himself into a tyrant; but in any case the power of the monarch should be so tempered that his rule cannot easily be turned into a tyranny. The best constitution will in fact be a 'mixed' constitution, in which some place is given to aristocracy and also to democracy, in the sense that the election of certain magistrates should be in the hands of the people.[2]

8. In regard to classification of forms of government St. Thomas follows Aristotle. There are three good types of government (law-abiding democracy, aristocracy and monarchy) and three bad forms of government (demagogic and irresponsible democracy, oligarchy and tyranny), tyranny being the worst of the bad forms and monarchy the best of the good forms. Monarchy gives stricter unity and is more conducive to peace than other forms: moreover, it is more 'natural', bearing an analogy to the rule of reason over the other functions of the soul and of the heart over the other members of the body. Moreover, the bees have their monarch, and God rules over all creation.[3] But the ideal of the best man as monarch is not easily attainable, and in practice the best constitution, as we have seen, is a mixed constitution, in which the power of the monarch is tempered by that of magistrates elected by the people. In other words and in modern terms St. Thomas favours limited or constitutional monarchy, though

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[1] *De regimine principum*, 1, 6.

[2] *S.T.*, Ia, IIae, 105, 1.

[3] *De regimine principum*, 1, 2.

he does not regard any particular form of decent government as divinely ordained: it is not the precise form of government which is of importance, but the promotion of the public good, and if in practice the form of government is an important consideration, it is its relation to the public good which makes it of importance. St. Thomas's political theory, therefore, is flexible in character, not rigid and doctrinaire, and while he rejects absolutism, he also implicitly rejects the *laissez-faire* theory. The ruler's task is to promote the public good, and this he will not do unless he promotes the economic well-being of the citizens. In fine, St. Thomas's political theory is characterised by moderation, balance and common sense.

9. In conclusion one may point out that St. Thomas's political theory is an integral part of his total philosophical system, not just something added on. God is supreme Lord and Governor of the universe, but He is not the only cause, even though He is the first Cause and the final Cause; He directs rational creatures to their end in a rational manner through acts the fitness and rightness of which are shown by reason. The right of any creature to direct another, whether it be the right of the father of the family over the members of the family or of the sovereign over his subjects, is founded on reason and must be exercised according to reason: as all power and authority is derived from God and is given for a special purpose, no rational creature is entitled to exercise unlimited, capricious or arbitrary authority over another rational creature. Law is defined, then, as 'an ordinance of reason for the common good, made by him who has care of the community, and promulgated'.[1] The sovereign occupies a natural place in the total hierarchy of the universe, and his authority must be exercised as part of the general scheme by which the universe is directed. Any idea of the sovereign being completely independent and irresponsible would thus be essentially alien to St. Thomas's philosophy. The sovereign has his duties and the subjects have their duties: 'legal justice', which should exist both in the sovereign and in his subjects, directs the acts of all the virtues to the common good;[2] but these duties are to be seen in the light of the relationship of means to end which obtains in all creation. As man is a social being, there is need for political society, in order that his nature may be fulfilled; but man's vocation to live in political society must itself be seen in the light of the final end

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, IIae, 90, 4.

[2] *Ibid.*, IIa, IIae, 58, 6.

for which man was created. Between the supernatural end of man and the natural end of man there must be due harmony and the due subordination of the latter to the former; so that man must prefer the attainment of the final end to anything else, and if the sovereign orders him to act in a manner incompatible with the attainment of the final end, he must disobey the sovereign. Any idea of the complete and total subordination of the individual to the State would be necessarily abhorrent to St. Thomas, not because he was an extreme 'Papalist' in political affairs (he was not), but because of his total theological-philosophical system, in which order, proportion and subordination of the lower to the higher reign, though without the enslavement or moral annihilation of the lower. In the whole scheme of creation and providence man has his place: abuses and practical exaggerations cannot alter the ideal order and hierarchy which are ultimately based on God Himself. Forms of government may alter; but man himself has a fixed and abiding essence or nature, and on that nature the necessity and moral justification of the State are grounded. The State is neither God nor Antichrist: it is one of the means by which God directs the rational embodied creation to its end.

Note on St. Thomas's aesthetic theory.

One cannot say that there is a formal discussion of aesthetic theory in the philosophy of St. Thomas, and what he does have to say on the matter is mostly borrowed from other writers, so that though his remarks may be taken as the starting-point of an aesthetic theory, it would be a mistake to develop an aesthetic theory on the basis of his remarks and then attribute that theory to him, as if he had himself developed it. Nevertheless, it may be as well to point out that when he remarks that ***pulchra dicuntur quae visa placent***[1], he does not mean to deny the objectivity of beauty. The beautiful consists, he says, in proper proportion and belongs to the formal cause: it is the object of the cognitive power, whereas the good is the object of desire.[2] For beauty three elements are required, integrity or perfection, proper proportion and clarity:[3] the form shines out, as it were, through colour, etc., and is the object of disinterested (non-appetitive) apprehension. St. Thomas recognises, therefore, the objectivity of beauty and the fact that aesthetic appreciation or experience is something *sui generis*, that it cannot be identified simply with intellectual cognition and that it cannot be reduced to apprehension of the good.

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 5, 4, *ad* 1.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, Ia, 39, 8.

CHAPTER XLI

ST. THOMAS AND ARISTOTLE: CONTROVERSIES

St. Thomas's utilisation of Aristotle—Non-Aristotelian elements in Thomism—Latent tensions in the Thomist synthesis—Opposition to Thomist 'novelties'.

1. ALTHOUGH St. Albert had gone some way in the utilisation of the Aristotelian philosophy, it was left to St. Thomas to attempt the full reconciliation of the Aristotelian system with Christian theology. The desirability of attempting this reconciliation was clear, since to reject the Aristotelian system would mean rejecting the most powerful and comprehensive intellectual synthesis known to the mediaeval world. Moreover, St. Thomas, with his genius for systematisation, saw clearly the use that could be made of the principles of the Aristotelian philosophy in achieving a systematic theological and philosophical synthesis. But when I say that St. Thomas saw the 'usefulness' of Aristotelianism, I do not mean to imply that his approach was pragmatic. He regarded the Aristotelian principles as true and, because true, as useful; he did not regard them as 'true' because they were useful. It would be absurd, of course, to suggest that the Thomist philosophy is simply Aristotelianism, since he makes use of other writers like St. Augustine and the Pseudo-Dionysius, as also of his mediaeval predecessors and of Jewish (Maimonides in particular) and Arabian philosophers; but none the less the Thomist synthesis is unified by the application of fundamental Aristotelian principles. A great deal of St. Thomas's philosophy is indeed the doctrine of Aristotle, but it is the doctrine of Aristotle re-thought by a powerful mind, not slavishly adopted. If St. Thomas adopted Aristotelianism, he adopted it primarily because he thought it true, not simply because Aristotle was a great name or because an 'unbaptised' Aristotle might constitute a grave danger to orthodoxy: a man of St. Thomas's serious mind, devoted to truth, would certainly not have adopted the system of a pagan philosopher, had he not considered it to be in the main a true system, especially when some of the ideas he put forward ran contrary to tradition and created some scandal and lively opposition. Yet his conviction as to the truth of the philosophy which he adopted did not lead

St. Thomas to adopt mechanically an ill-digested system: he gave a great deal of thought and attention to Aristotelianism, as can be seen from his commentaries on Aristotle's works, and his own works bear evidence of the care with which he must have considered the implications of the principles he adopted and their relation to Christian truth. If I suggest presently that the synthesis of Christianity and Aristotelianism in St. Thomas's thought was in some respects rather precarious, I do not mean to take back what I have just said and to imply that the Saint adopted Aristotelianism purely mechanically, though I think it is true that he did not fully realise the latent tension, in regard to certain points, between his Christian faith and his Aristotelianism. If this is really the case, however, it need cause no surprise; St. Thomas was a great theologian and philosopher, but he was not infinite mind, and a much smaller intellect can look back and discern possibly weak points in the system of a great mind, without the latter's greatness being thereby impugned.

Of St. Thomas's utilisation of Aristotelian themes for the purpose of systematisation one can afford space for only one or two examples. One of the fundamental ideas in the Aristotelian philosophy is that of act and potency or potentiality. St. Thomas, like Aristotle before him, saw the interplay, the correlation of act and potency in the accidental and substantial changes of the material world and in the movements (in the broad Aristotelian sense) of all creatures. Adopting the Aristotelian principle that nothing is reduced from potentiality to act, save by the agency of that which is itself in act, he followed Aristotle in arguing from the observed fact of movement, of change, to the existence of the unmoved Mover. But St. Thomas saw deeper than Aristotle: he saw that in every finite thing there is a duality of principles, of essence and existence, that the essence is in potency its existence, that it does not exist necessarily, and so he was enabled to argue not merely to the Aristotelian unmoved Mover, but to the necessary Being, God the Creator. He was able, moreover, to discern the essence of God as existence, not simply as self-thinking thought but as *ipsum esse subsistens*, and thus while following in the footsteps of Aristotle he was able to go beyond Aristotle. Not distinguishing clearly essence and existence in finite being, Aristotle could not arrive at the idea of Existence itself as the essence of God, from whom all limited existence comes.

Again, a fundamental idea in the Aristotelian philosophy is that of finality; indeed, this idea is in one sense more fundamental than that of act and potency, since all reduction from potentiality to act takes place in view of the attainment of an end, and potency exists only for the realisation of an end. That St. Thomas uses the idea of finality in his cosmological, psychological, ethical and political doctrines is a point which needs no labouring; but one may point out the help it was to him in explaining creation. God, who acts according to wisdom, created the world for an end, but that end can be none other than God Himself: He created the world, therefore, in order to manifest His own perfection, by communicating it to creatures by participation, by diffusing His own goodness. Creatures exist *propter Deum*, for God, who is their ultimate end, though He is not the ultimate end of all creatures in the same way; it is only rational creatures who can possess God by knowledge and love. Creatures have, of course, their proximate ends, the perfecting of their natures, but this perfecting of creatures' natures is subordinate to the final end of all creation, the glory of God, the manifestation of His divine perfection, which is manifested precisely by the perfecting of creatures, so that the glory of God and the good of creatures are by no means antithetical ideas. In this way St. Thomas was able to utilise the Aristotelian doctrine of finality in a Christian setting or rather in a way which would harmonise with the Christian religion.

Among the individual ideas borrowed by St. Thomas from Aristotle or thought out in dependence on the philosophy of Aristotle one may mention the following. The soul is the form of the body, individualised by the matter it informs; it is not a complete substance in its own right, but soul and body together make up a complete substance, a man. This stressing of the close union of soul and body, with the rejection of the Platonic theory on this point, makes it much easier to explain why the soul should be united to the body (the soul is by nature the form of the body), but it suggests that, granted the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body is demanded by the soul.[1] As for the doctrine of matter as the principle of individuation, which has as its consequence the doctrine that angelic beings, because devoid of matter, cannot be multiplied within the same species, this doctrine excited the hostility of critics of Thomism, as we shall see presently. The same can be said of the doctrine that there is only one substantial form in any substance, a doctrine which, when applied to the human substance, means the rejection of any *forma corporeitatis*.

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[1] The answer can only be that it is *conveniens*, but not a strict debt, since it cannot be realised by natural means. We would then seem to be faced by the dilemma, that either the soul after death would, apart from God's intervention, remain in an 'unnatural' condition or that the doctrine of the soul's union with the body must be revised.

The adoption of Aristotelian psychology naturally went hand in hand with the adoption of Aristotelian epistemology and with insistence on the fact that human knowledge is derived from sense-experience and reflection thereon. This meant the rejection of innate ideas, even in a virtual form, and the rejection of the theory of divine illumination or rather the interpretation of divine illumination as equivalent to the natural light of the intellect with the ordinary and natural concurrence of God. This doctrine raises difficulties, as we have seen earlier on, in regard to man's analogical knowledge of God.

But though St. Thomas did not hesitate to adopt an Aristotelian position even when this led him into conflict with traditional theories, he did so only when he considered that the Aristotelian positions were true in themselves and were thus compatible with Christian revelation. When it was a question of positions which were clearly incompatible with the Christian doctrine, he rejected them, or maintained that the Averroistic interpretation of Aristotle on such points was not the true interpretation or at least was not rendered necessary by Aristotle's actual words. For example, commenting on Aristotle's description of God as self-thinking Thought, St. Thomas observes that it does not follow that things other than God are unknown to Him, for by knowing Himself He knows all other things.[1] Probably, however, the historic Aristotle did not think of the unmoved Mover as knowing the world or as exercising any providence: He is the cause of movement as final, not as efficient, cause. Similarly, as already mentioned, when commenting on the very obscure words of Aristotle in the *De Anima* concerning the active intellect and its persistence after death, St. Thomas interprets the passage *in meliorem partem* and not in the Averroistic sense: it is not necessary to conclude that for Aristotle the intellect is one in all men and that there is no personal immortality. St. Thomas was anxious to rescue Aristotle from the toils of Averroes and to show that his philosophy did not necessarily involve the denial of divine providence or of personal immortality, and in this he succeeded, even if his interpretation of what Aristotle actually thought on these matters is probably not the correct one.

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[1] *In 12 Metaph., lect.* 11.

2. St. Thomas's Aristotelianism is so obvious that one sometimes tends to forget the non-Aristotelian elements in his thought, though such elements certainly exist. For example, the God of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, though final cause, is not efficient cause; the world is eternal and was not created by God. Moreover, Aristotle envisaged the possibility at least of a multiplicity of unmoved movers corresponding to the different spheres, the relation of which to one another and to the highest unmoved mover he left in obscurity.[1] The God of St. Thomas's natural theology on the other hand is first efficient cause and Creator, as well as final cause: He is not simply wrapped in splendid isolation, the object of *eros*, but He acts *ad extra*, creating, preserving, concurring, exercising providence. St. Thomas made a certain concession to Aristotle perhaps in allowing that the possibility of creation from eternity had not been disproved; but even if the world could have had no beginning in time, its creation, its utter dependence on God, can none the less be proved. All that St. Thomas admits is that the idea of *creatio ab aeterno* has not been shown to be self-contradictory, not that creation cannot be demonstrated. It may be said that St. Thomas's position in natural theology constituted a supplement to or a completion of Aristotle's position and that it cannot be said to be non-Aristotelian; but it must be remembered that for St. Thomas God creates according to intelligence and will and that He is efficient cause, Creator, as exemplary cause: that is to say, He creates the world as a finite imitation of His divine essence, which He knows as imitable *ad extra* in a multiplicity of ways. In other words, St. Thomas utilises the position of St. Augustine in regard to the divine ideas, a position which, philosophically speaking, was derived from neo-Platonism, which in turn was a development of the Platonic philosophy and tradition. Aristotle rejected the exemplary ideas of Plato, as he rejected the Platonic Demiurge; both of these notions, however, are present in the thought of St. Augustine, transmuted and rendered philosophically consistent, coupled also with the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, at which the Greeks did not arrive; and St. Thomas's acceptance of these notions links him on this point with Augustine, and so with Plato through Plotinus, rather than with Aristotle.

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[1] Cf. the first volume of this history, pp. 315-16.

Again, St. Thomas's Christian faith frequently impinges on or has some effect on his philosophy. For instance, convinced that man has a supernatural final end, and a supernatural final end alone, he was bound to envisage the term of man's intellectual ascent as the knowledge of God as He is in Himself, not as the knowledge of the metaphysician and astronomer; he was bound to place the final goal of man in the next life, not in this, thus transmuting the Aristotelian conception of beatitude; he was bound to recognise the insufficiency of the State for fulfilling the needs of the whole man; he was bound to acknowledge the subordination of State to Church in point of value and dignity; he was bound, not only to allow for divine sanctions in the moral life of man, but also to link up ethics with natural theology, and indeed to admit the insufficiency of the natural moral life in regard to the attainment of beatitude, since the latter is supernatural in character and cannot be attained by purely human means. Instances of this impinging of theology on philosophy could no doubt be multiplied; but what I want to draw attention to now is the latent tension on some points between St. Thomas's Christianity and his Aristotelianism.

3. If one looks on the philosophy of Aristotle as a complete system, a certain tension is bound to be present when one attempts to combine it with a supernatural religion. For the Aristotelian philosopher it is the universal and the totality which really matters, not the individual as such: the viewpoint is what one might call that of the physicist, and partly that of the artist. Individuals exist for the good of the species: it is the species which persists through the succession of individuals; the individual human being attains his beatitude in this life or he does not attain it at all: the universe is not a setting for man, subordinate to man, but man is an item in, a part of, the universe; to contemplate the heavenly bodies is really more worth while than to contemplate man. For the Christian on the other hand the individual human being has a supernatural vocation and his vocation is not an earthly vocation, nor is his final beatitude attainable in this life or by his own natural efforts; the individual stands in a personal relation to God, and however much one may stress the corporate aspect of Christianity, it remains true that each human person is ultimately of more value than the whole material universe, which exists for the sake of man, though both man and the material universe exist ultimately for God. One can, it is true, legitimately adopt a point

of view from which man is regarded as a member of the universe, since he is a member of the universe, rooted in the material universe through his body, and if one adopts, as St. Thomas adopted, the Aristotelian psychology, the doctrine of the soul as by nature the form of the body, individualised by the body and dependent on the body for its knowledge, one emphasises the more man's place as a member of the cosmos. It is from this point of view, for instance, that one is led to regard physical defects and physical suffering, the death and corruption of the individual, as contributing to the good and harmony of the universe, as the shadows that throw into relief the lights of the total picture. It is from this point of view too that St. Thomas speaks of the part as existing for the whole, the member for the whole body, using an analogy taken from the organism. There is, as has been admitted, truth in this point of view, and it has been strenuously defended as a corrective to false individualism and to anthropocentricism: the created universe exists for the glory of God, and man is a part of the universe. No doubt; but there is another point of view as well. Man exists for the glory of God and the material universe exists for man; it is not quantity, but quality which is truly significant; man is small from the point of view of quantity, but qualitatively all the heavenly bodies together pale into insignificance beside one human person; moreover, 'man', existing for the glory of God, is not simply the species man, but a society of immortal persons, each of whom has a supernatural vocation. To contemplate man is more worth while than to contemplate the stars; human history is more important than astronomy; the sufferings of human beings cannot be explained simply 'artistically'. I am not suggesting that the two viewpoints cannot be combined, as St. Thomas attempted to combine them; but I do suggest that their combination involves a certain tension and that this tension is present in the Thomist synthesis.

Since, historically speaking, Aristotelianism was a 'closed' system, in the sense that Aristotle did not and could not envisage the supernatural order, and since it was a production of reason unaided by revelation, it naturally brought home to the mediaevals the potentialities of the natural reason: it was the greatest intellectual achievement they knew. This meant that any theologian who accepted and utilised the Aristotelian philosophy as St. Thomas did was compelled to recognise the theoretical autonomy of philosophy, even though he also recognised theology as an extrinsic norm and criterion. As long as it was a question of theologians, the balance between theology and philosophy was, of course, preserved; but when it was a question of thinkers who were not primarily theologians, the charter granted to philosophy tended to become a declaration of independence. Looking back from the present day and bearing in mind human inclinations, characters, temperaments and intellectual bents, we can see that the acceptance of a great system of philosophy known to have been thought out without the aid of revelation was almost certain sooner or later to lead to philosophy going her own way independently of theology. In this sense (and the judgement is an historical, not a valuational judgement) the synthesis achieved by St. Thomas was intrinsically precarious. The arrival of the full Aristotle on the scene almost certainly meant in the long run the emergence of an independent philosophy, which would first of all stand on its own feet while trying to keep the peace with theology, sometimes sincerely, sometimes perhaps insincerely, and then in the end would try to supplant theology, to absorb the content of theology into itself. At the beginning of the Christian era we find the theologians utilising this or that element of Greek philosophy to help them in their statement of the data of revelation and this process continued during the stages of mediaeval Scholastic development; but the appearance of a fully-fledged system of philosophy, though an inestimable boon in the creation of the Thomist synthesis, could hardly be anything else but a challenge in the long run. It is not the purpose of the present writer to dispute the utility of the Aristotelian philosophy in the creation of a Christian theological and philosophical synthesis or in any way to belittle the achievement of St. Thomas Aquinas, but rather to point out that when philosophic thought had become more or less full-grown and had won a certain autonomy, it was not to be expected that it should for ever be content to sit at home like the elder son in the parable of the prodigal. St. Thomas's baptism of philosophy in the person of Aristotle could not, historically speaking, arrest the development of philosophy, and in that sense his synthesis contained a latent tension.

4. To turn finally, but of necessity briefly, to the opposition caused by the Thomist adoption of Aristotle. This opposition must be looked at against the background of the alarm caused by Averroism, i.e. the Averroistic interpretation of Aristotle, which we shall consider in the next chapter. The Averroists were

accused, and certainly not without justice, of preferring the authority of a pagan philosopher to that of St. Augustine and the *Sancti* in general, and of impairing the integrity of revelation; and St. Thomas was regarded by some zealous traditionalists as selling the pass to the enemy. They accordingly did their best to involve Thomism in the condemnations levelled against Averroism. The whole episode reminds us that St. Thomas in his own day was an innovator, that he struck out on new paths: it is useful to remember this at a time when Thomism stands for tradition, for theological soundness and security. Some of the points on which St. Thomas was most bitterly attacked by the hot-heads may not appear particularly startling to us to-day; but the reasons why they were attacked were largely theological in character, so that it is clear that Thomist Aristotelianism was once regarded as 'dangerous' and that the man who now stands before us as the pillar of orthodoxy was once regarded, by hot-heads at least, as a sower of novelties. Nor was the attack confined to people outside his own religious Order; he had to bear the hostility even of Dominicans, and it was only by degrees that Thomism became the official philosophy of the Dominican Order.

One of the principal points attacked was St. Thomas's theory of the unicity of the substantial form. It was combated at a debate in Paris, before the bishop, about 1270, Dominicans and Franciscans, especially the Franciscan Peckham, accusing St. Thomas of maintaining an opinion which was contrary to the teaching of the saints, particularly Augustine and Anselm. Peckham and the Dominican Robert Kilwardby maintained this point of view vigorously in their letters, the chief ground of complaint being that the Thomist doctrine was unable to explain how the dead body of Christ was the same as the living body, since according to St. Thomas there is only one substantial form in the human substance and this form, the soul, is withdrawn at death, other forms being educed out of the potentiality of matter. St. Thomas certainly held that the dead body of a man is not precisely the same as the living body, but is the same only *secundum quid*,[1] and Peckham and his friends regarded this theory as fatal to the veneration of the bodies and relics of the saints. St. Thomas, however, maintained that the dead body of Christ remained united to the Divinity, so that it was, even in the tomb, united to the Word of God and worthy of adoration. The doctrine of the passivity of matter and that of the simplicity of the angels were also among the novel opinions to which exception was taken.

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[1] *S.T.*, IIIa, 50, 5.

On March 7th, 1277, Stephen Tempier, Bishop of Paris, condemned two hundred and nineteen propositions, threatening with excommunication anyone who should uphold them. This condemnation was levelled chiefly against the Averroists, particularly Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia, but a number of propositions were common to Siger of Brabant and St. Thomas so that Thomism was affected by the bishop's act. Thus the theories of the necessary unicity of the world, of matter as the principle of individuation, of the individualisation of angels and their relation to the universe were condemned, though that of the unicity of substantial form does not appear in the condemnation and seems never to have been formally condemned at Paris, apart from being censured in Scholastic debates and disputations.

The Parisian condemnation was followed, on March 18th, 1277, by a condemnation at Oxford, inspired by Robert Kilwardby, O.P., Archbishop of Canterbury, in which figured, among other propositions, those of the unicity of the substantial form and the passivity of matter. Kilwardby remarked in a letter that he forbad the propositions as dangerous, without condemning them as heretical, and indeed he does not seem to have been oversanguine as to the probable results of his prohibition since he offered an indulgence of forty days to anyone who would abstain from propounding the offending ideas. Kilwardby's condemnation was repeated by his successor in the Archbishopric of Canterbury, the Franciscan Peckham, on October 29th, 1284, though by that time Thomism had been officially approved in the Dominican Order. However, Peckham again prohibited the novel propositions on April 30th, 1286, declaring them to be heretical.

Meanwhile Thomism had been growing in popularity among the Dominicans as was indeed only to be expected in the case of such a splendid achievement by one of their number. In the year 1278 the Dominican Chapter at Milan and in 1279 the Chapter of Paris took steps to counteract the hostile attitude which was evident among the Oxford Dominicans, the Paris Chapter forbidding the condemnation of Thomism, though not enjoining its acceptance. In 1286 another Chapter of Paris declared that professors who showed hostility to Thomism should be relieved of their office, though it was not until the fourteenth century that its acceptance was made obligatory on members of the Order. The growing popularity of Thomism in the last two decades of the thirteenth century, however, naturally led to the publication by Dominican authors of replies to the attacks levelled against it. Thus the *Correctorium Fratris Thomas*, published by William de la Mare, a Franciscan, called forth a series of Corrections of the Correction, such as the *Apologeticum veritatis super corruptorium* (as they called the *Correctorium*), published by Rambert of Bologna near the end of the century, to which the Franciscans replied in their turn. In 1279 the latter, in their General Chapter at Assisi, prohibited the acceptance of the propositions condemned at Paris in 1277, while in 1282 the General Chapter of Strasbourg ordered that those who utilised Thomas's *Summa Theologica* should not do so without consulting William de la Mare's *Correctorium.* However, the attacks of Franciscans and others naturally diminished after the canonisation of St. Thomas on July 18th, 1323, and in 1325 the then Bishop of Paris withdrew the Parisian censures. At Oxford there does not seem to have been any formal withdrawal of this kind, but Peckham's successors did not confirm or repeat his censures and the battle gradually came to an end. Early in the fourteenth century Thomas of Sutton speaks of Aquinas as being, according to the testimony of all, the Common Doctor (*in ore omnium communis doctor dicitur*).

Thomism naturally established itself in the estimation of Christian thinkers owing to its completeness, its lucidity and its depth: it was a closely reasoned synthesis of theology and philosophy which drew on the past and incorporated it into itself, while at the same time it utilised the greatest purely philosophical system of the ancient world. But though the suspicion and hostility which Thomism, or certain aspects of it, at first aroused were destined to die a natural death in face of the undeniable merits of the system, it must not be supposed that Thomism ever acquired in the Middle Ages that official position in the intellectual life of the Church which it has occupied since the Encyclical *Aeterni Patris* of Pope Leo XIII. The *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, for example, continued to be commented upon for very many years, while at the time of the Reformation there existed Chairs in the universities for the exposition of the doctrines not only of St. Thomas and Duns Scotus and Giles of Rome, but also of Nominalists like William of Ockham and Gabriel Biel. Variety was in fact the rule, and though Thomism became at an early date the official system of the Dominican Order, many centuries elapsed before it became in any real sense the official system of the Church. (I do not mean to imply that even after *Aeterni Patris* Thomism, in the sense in which it is distinguished from Scotism, for example, is imposed on all religious Orders and ecclesiastical institutes of higher studies; but Thomism is certainly proposed as a norm from which the Catholic philosopher should dissent only when inspired by reasons which seem to him compelling, and then without disrespect. The singular position now accorded to Thomism must be looked at in the light of the historical circumstances of recent times, in order to be understood; these circumstances were not those obtaining in the Middle Ages.)

CHAPTER XLII

LATIN AVERROISM: SIGER OF BRABANT

Tenets of the 'Latin Averroists'—Siger of Brabant—Dante and Siger of Brabant—Opposition to Averroism; condemnations.

1. THE term 'Latin Averroism' has become so common that it is difficult not to make use of it, but it must be recognised that the movement characterised by this name was one of integral or radical Aristotelianism: Aristotle was the real patron of the movement, not Averroes, though the latter was certainly looked on as the commentator *par excellence* and was followed in his monopsychistic interpretation of Aristotle. The doctrine that the passive intellect, no less than the active intellect, is one and the same in all men and that this unitary intellect alone survives at death, so that individual personal immortality is excluded, was understood in the thirteenth century as being the characteristic tenet of the radical Aristotelians, and as this doctrine was supported by the Averroistic interpretation of Aristotle its upholders came to be known as the Averroists. I do not see how exception can really be taken to the use of this term, provided that it is clearly realised that the 'Averroists' regarded themselves as Aristotelians rather than as Averroists. They seem to have belonged to the faculty of arts of Paris and to have pushed their adherence to Aristotle as interpreted by Averroes so far that they taught doctrines in philosophy which were incompatible with Christian dogma. The salient point in their doctrine, and the one which attracted most attention, was the theory that there is only one rational soul in all men. Adopting Averroes's interpretation of Aristotle's obscure and ambiguous teaching on this matter, they maintained that not only the active intellect, but also the passive intellect is one and the same in all men. The logical consequence of this position is the denial of personal immortality and of sanctions in the next life. Another of their heterodox doctrines, and one which incidentally was an undoubtedly Aristotelian doctrine, was that of the eternity of the world. On this point it is important to note the difference between the Averroists and St. Thomas. Whereas for St. Thomas the eternity of the (created) world has not been proved impossible, though it certainly has not

been proved true (and we know from revelation that as a matter of fact the world was not created from eternity), the Averroists held that the eternity of the world, the eternity of change and movement, can be philosophically demonstrated. Again, it appears that some of them, following Aristotle, denied divine providence and followed Averroes in maintaining determinism. It can, therefore, be understood without difficulty why the theologians attacked the Averroists, either, like St. Bonaventure, attacking Aristotle himself or, like St. Thomas, arguing not only that the peculiar Averroistic positions were intrinsically false, but also that they did not represent the real thought, or at least the clear teaching, of Aristotle.

The Averroists or radical Aristotelians were thus forced to reconcile their philosophical doctrines with theological dogmas, unless they were prepared (and they were not prepared) simply to deny the latter. In other words, they had to provide some theory of the relation of reason to faith which would permit them to assert with Aristotle that there is only one rational soul in all men and at the same time to assert with the Church that every man has his own individual rational soul. It is sometimes said that in order to effect this conciliation they had recourse to the theory of the double truth, maintaining that a thing can be true in philosophy or according to reason and yet that its opposite can be true in theology or according to faith; and indeed Siger of Brabant speaks in this way, implying that certain propositions of Aristotle and Averroes are irrefutable, though the opposite propositions are true according to faith. Thus it can be rationally proved that there is but one intellectual soul in all men, though faith makes us certain that there is one intellectual soul to each human body. Looked at from the logical standpoint this position would lead to the rejection of either theology or philosophy, faith or reason; but the Averroists seem to have meant that in the natural order, with which the philosopher deals, the intellectual soul would have been one in all men, but that God has miraculously multiplied the intellectual soul. The philosopher uses his natural reason, and his natural reason tells him that the intellectual soul is one in all men, while the theologian, who treats of the supernatural order and expounds the divine revelation, assures us that God has miraculously multiplied what by nature could not be multiplied. It is in this sense that what is true in philosophy is false in theology and *vice versa*. This mode of self-defence naturally did not appeal to the theologians, who were quite unprepared to admit that God intervened to perform miraculously what was rationally impossible. Nor had they much sympathy with the alternative method of self-defence adopted by the Averroists, namely the contention that they were simply reporting the teaching of Aristotle. According to a contemporary sermon, perhaps by St. Bonaventure, 'there are some students of philosophy who say certain things which are not true according to faith; and when they are told that something is contrary to faith, they reply that Aristotle says it, but that they themselves do not assert it and are only reporting Aristotle's words'. This defence was treated as a mere subterfuge by the theologians, and justifiably, in view of the Averroists' attitude towards Aristotle.

2. The foremost of the Averroists or radical Aristotelians was *Siger of Brabant*, who was born about the year 1235 and became a teacher in the faculty of arts at Paris. In 1270 he was condemned for his Averroistic doctrines, and it appears that he not only defended himself by saying that he was simply reporting Aristotle and did not intend to assert what was incompatible with the Faith, but also somewhat modified his position. It has been suggested that he was converted from Averroism by the writings of St. Thomas, but there is no certain evidence that he definitely abandoned his Averroism. If he did so, it would be difficult to explain why he was involved in the condemnation of 1277 and why in that year the Inquisitor of France, Simon du Val, ordered him to appear before his court. In any case the question of the changes in Siger's opinions cannot be settled with certainty until the chronology of his works has been settled. The works which have been discovered include the *De anima intellectiva*, *De aeternitate mundi*, *De necessitate et contingentia causarum*, *Compendium de generatione et corruptione*, some *Quaestiones naturales*, some *Quaestiones morales*, some *Quaestiones logicales*, *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*, *Quaestiones in Physicam*, *Quaestiones in libros tres de Anima*, six *Impossibilia*, and fragments of the *De intellectu* and the *Liber de felicitate*. It appears that the *De intellectu* was a reply to St. Thomas's *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas* and that in his reply Siger maintained that the active intellect is God, and that man's beatitude on earth consists in union with the active intellect. Whether Siger was still a monopsychist at this time or not, depends, however, on what he thought about the unicity or multiplication of the passive intellect: it cannot be concluded

without more ado from the identification of the active intellect with God that he was still a monopsychist in the Averroistic sense. If Siger appealed from the Inquisition to Rome, it may be that he felt he had been unjustly accused of heterodoxy. He died at Orvieto about 1282, being assassinated by his mad secretary.

To mention Siger of Brabant simply in connection with the Averroistic controversy is to give a partial view of his thought, since it was a system that he expounded, and not simply isolated points in regard to which he followed Averroes. His system, however, though professedly a system of true Aristotelianism, differed very much in important respects from the philosophy of the historic Aristotle, and this was bound to be so if he followed Averroes. For example, while Aristotle looked on God as the first mover in the sense of ultimate final cause, not in the sense of first efficient cause, Siger followed Averroes in making God the first creative cause. God operates mediately, however, through intermediate causes, the successively emanating intelligences, and in this respect Siger followed Avicenna rather than Averroes, so that, as M. Van Steenberghen has noted, Siger's philosophy cannot, with strict accuracy, be called radical Averroism. Nor for the matter of that can it accurately be termed radical Aristotelianism, if one is thinking of the historic Aristotle, though it is a convenient enough term if one is thinking of Siger's intentions. On the question of the eternity of creation Siger follows 'Aristotle', but rather because the Arabian philosophers followed 'Aristotle' on this point than because of what Aristotle himself said on the matter, since the latter did not envisage creation at all. Similarly, Siger's notion that all terrestrial events are determined by the movements of the heavenly bodies smacks of the Islamic philosophy. Again, while the idea that no species can have had a beginning, so that there can have been no first man, is Aristotelian in origin, the idea of the eternal recurrence or cyclic process of determined events is not found in Aristotle.

As regards the salient Averroistic theses of monopsychism and the eternity of the world, Siger seems to have retracted his heterodox opinions. Commenting on the *De Anima*, for example, he not only admits that the monopsychism of Averroes is not true, but proceeds to admit the weight of the objections brought against it by St. Thomas and others. Thus he allows that it is impossible for two different individual acts in two different human beings to proceed simultaneously from an intellectual faculty or principle which is numerically one. Similarly, in his Questions on the *Physics*, he concedes that motion is not eternal and that it had a beginning, although this beginning cannot be rationally demonstrated. However, as has already been noted, it is difficult to ascertain with certainty whether this apparent change of front involved a real change of opinion or whether it was a prudential course adopted in view of the condemnation of 1270.

3. The fact that Dante not only places Siger of Brabant in Paradise, but even puts his praises on the lips of St. Thomas, his adversary, is difficult to explain. Mandonnet, believing on the one hand that Siger of Brabant was a real Averroist and on the other hand that Dante was an anti-Averroist, was forced to suggest that Dante was probably unacquainted with Siger's doctrines. But, as M. Gilson has pointed out, Dante also places in Paradise and attaches to St. Bonaventure the Abbot Joachim of Flores, whose doctrines were rejected by both St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas, and it is extremely unlikely that Dante was unaware of what he was doing in the case of either Joachim or Siger. M. Gilson himself has suggested that Siger of Brabant, as he appears in the *Divine Comedy*, is not so much the actual historical Siger of Brabant as a symbol. St. Thomas symbolises speculative theology, St. Bernard mystical theology, and while Aristotle represents philosophy in limbo Siger, being a Christian, represents it in Paradise. When, therefore, Dante makes St. Thomas praise Siger of Brabant, he is not intending to make the historic Thomas praise the historic Siger, but rather to make speculative theology pay her compliments to philosophy. (M. Gilson explains in an analogous manner St. Bonaventure's praise of Joachim in the *Divine Comedy*.)

M. Gilson's explanation of the problem seems to me to be reasonable. There are, however, other possibilities. Bruno Nardi argued (and he was followed by Miguel Asín) that the explanation of the problem lies in the fact that Dante was not a pure Thomist, but that he incorporated doctrines not only from other Scholastic sources, but also from the Moslem philosophers, notably Averroes, whom he particularly admired. As Dante could not place Avicenna and Averroes in Paradise, he consigned them to limbo, whereas Mohammed he placed in hell proper; but as Siger was a Christian he placed him in Paradise. Dante would thus have acted with deliberation, showing his appreciation of Siger's devotion to Islamic philosophy.

Even if what Bruno Nardi says of Dante's philosophical sources is true, it seems to me that his explanation could well be combined with that of M. Gilson. If Dante admired the Moslem philosophers and was influenced by them, it would explain why he placed Siger in Paradise; but would it explain why he placed Siger's praises on the lips of St. Thomas? If Dante knew that Siger was an Averroist, he certainly knew also that St. Thomas was an anti-Averroist. May it not have been that Dante made St. Thomas the symbol of speculative theology, as Gilson suggests, and Siger, the Averroist, he made the symbol of philosophy, precisely because Siger was a member of the faculty of arts and not a theologian? In that case, as M. Gilson says, St. Thomas's praise of Siger would simply represent theology's tribute to philosophy.

The question has been complicated by M. Van Steenberghen's contention that Siger of Brabant abandoned Averroism inasmuch as it conflicted with theology and approximated to St. Thomas's position. If this is true, and if Dante were aware of the fact that Siger changed his opinions, the difficulty of explaining how St. Thomas could be made to praise Siger would obviously be greatly lessened. In other words, in order to obtain an adequate explanation of the fact why the poet not only placed Siger in heaven, but also made his adversary, St. Thomas, speak his praises, one would have to obtain first an adequate and accurate idea not only of Dante's philosophical sympathies, but also of the evolution of Siger's opinions.[1]

4. We have seen that the philosophy of St. Thomas aroused considerable opposition on the part of other Scholastic philosophers; but even if an attempt was made to implicate St. Thomas in the condemnation of Averroistic Aristotelianism, it remains true that the controversy over such Thomist doctrines as the unicity of the substantial form was a domestic controversy which can be distinguished from the Averroistic controversy proper in which the theologians in general, including St. Thomas, were united in a common front against the heterodox philosophers. Thus the Franciscans, from Alexander of Hales and St. Bonaventure to Duns Scotus, were at one with Dominicans like St. Albert and St. Thomas, Augustinians like Giles of Rome and secular clergy like Henry of Ghent, in opposing what they regarded as a dangerous movement. From the philosophic standpoint the most important

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[1] Cf. P. Mandonnet: *Siger de Brabant*, second edit., 1911; B. Nardi: *Sigieri di Brabante nella Divina Commedia* and *le fonti della filosofia di Dante*, 1912; F. Van Steenberghen: *Les œuvres et la doctrine de Siger de Brabant*, 1938; E. Gilson: *Dante et la philosophie*, 1939 (English translation, 1948).

feature of their opposition was, of course, their critical refutation of the offending theories, and in this respect one may mention St. Albert's *De unitate intellectus contra Averroem* (1256), St. Thomas's *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas* (1270), Giles of Rome's *De purificatione intellectus possibilis contra Averroem* and his *Errores Philosophorum* (which lists the errors of Aristotle and the Moslem philosophers, but does not treat of Siger of Brabant), and Raymund Lull's *Liber contra errores Boetii et Segerii* (1298), *Liber reprobationis aliquorum errorum Averrois*, *Disputatio Raymundi et Averroistae* and *Sermones contra Averroistas*.

The theologians were not, however, content with writing and speaking against the Averroists; they also endeavoured to secure their official condemnation by ecclesiastical authority. This was only natural, as can be seen from considering the clash on important points between Averroistic philosophy and the Faith, and also from considering the theoretical and possible practical consequences of such theories as those of monopsychism and determinism. Accordingly, in 1270 the Bishop of Paris, Stephen Tempier, condemned the doctrines of monopsychism, denial of personal immortality, determinism, eternity of the world and denial of divine providence. In spite of this condemnation, however, the Averroists continued to teach in secret ('in corners and before boys', as St. Thomas puts it), although in 1272 the professors of the faculty of arts were forbidden to treat of theological matters, and in 1276 secret teaching in the university was prohibited. This led to a further condemnation on March 7th, 1277, when the Bishop of Paris condemned 219 propositions and excommunicated anyone who should persist in maintaining them. The condemnation was aimed principally at the teaching of Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia, and it involved the 'double truth' subterfuge. Boethius of Dacia, who was a contemporary of Siger of Brabant, upheld the intellectualist idea of beatitude expounded by Aristotle, maintaining that only philosophers can attain true happiness, while non-philosophers sin against the natural order. The condemned propositions, that 'there is no more excellent state than to devote oneself to philosophy' and that 'the wise men of the world are the philosophers alone', seem to have been taken from or to have summarised the teaching of Boethius, who, as professor of the faculty of arts, omitted all mention of the supernatural order and treated the Aristotelian conception of beatitude as adequate, at least from the standpoint of reason.

CHAPTER XLIII

FRANCISCAN THINKERS

Roger Bacon, life and works—Philosophy of Roger Bacon—Matthew of Aquasparta—Peter John Olivi—Roger Marston—Richard of Middleton—Raymond Lull.

1. One of the most interesting of mediaeval thinkers is *Roger Bacon* (*c.* 1212 to after 1292), called the *Doctor Mirabilis*. He would be of interest, were it only for his interest in and respect for experimental science and the application of mathematics in science; but what makes him considerably more interesting is that his scientific interests are combined with a lively interest in philosophy proper, and that both these interests were combined with a typically Franciscan emphasis on mysticism. Traditional elements were thus fused with a scientific outlook which was really foreign to the mentality of the majority of contemporary theologians and philosophers.[1] Moreover, Roger Bacon, impulsive, somewhat intolerant and hot-headed, convinced of the truth and value of his own opinions and of the obscurantism of many of the leading thinkers of his time, particularly those of Paris, is interesting not only as philosopher, but also as a man. He was something of a stormy petrel in his Order, but he is at the same time one of the glories of that Order and one of the leading figures of British philosophy. If a comparison were instituted between Roger Bacon and Francis Bacon (1561–1626), the comparison would by no means be to the unqualified advantage of the latter. As Professor Adamson remarked, 'it is more than probable that in all fairness, when we speak of the Baconian reform of science, we should refer to the forgotten monk of the thirteenth century rather than to the brilliant and famous Chancellor of the seventeenth',[2] while Bridges observes that though Francis Bacon was 'immeasurably superior as a writer, Roger Bacon had the sounder estimate and the firmer grasp of that combination of deductive with inductive matters which marks the scientific discoverer'.[3]

Born at Ilchester, Roger Bacon studied at Oxford under Adam Marsh and Robert Grosseteste. For the latter Bacon had the liveliest admiration, remarking that he knew mathematics and perspective, and that he could have known everything; Grosseteste also knew enough of languages to understand the wise men of antiquity.[1] From Oxford, Bacon went to Paris, where he apparently taught for a few years. For the Parisian professors he had little respect. Thus of Alexander of Hales's *Summa* he remarks that it weighed more than a horse, though he contests its authenticity,[2] while he blames the theologians for their incursions into philosophy, for their ignorance of the sciences, and for the unmerited deference they paid to Alexander of Hales and Albert the Great.[3] Ignorance of the sciences and of languages were his chief charges against contemporary thinkers, though he also found fault with the veneration given to the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, which, he says, was preferred to the Bible itself, and with faulty Scriptural exegesis. In other words, his criticism (which was often unfair, as in regard to St. Albert) shows the twofold character of his thought, a devotion to science coupled with a traditional or conservative attitude in respect to theology and metaphysics. As regards Aristotle, Bacon was an admirer of the Philosopher, but he detested what he regarded as bad and misleading Latin translations of his works and declared that he would have them all burnt, if it lay in his power to do so.[4]

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[1] I refer, of course, to experimental science.

[2] *Roger Bacon: The Philosophy of Science in the Middle Ages*, p. 7.

[3] J. H. Bridges: Introduction to *Opus Maius*, pp. xci–xcii.

But though Bacon had little use for the great figures of the University of Paris and contrasted the Parisian thinkers unfavourably with his fellow countrymen, he met at Paris one man at least who had a lasting influence on his thought, Peter of Maricourt, a Picard and author of an *Epistola de magnete* and a *Nova compositio Astrolabii particularis*.[5] According to Roger Bacon[6] he was the one man who could safely be praised for his achievements in scientific research. 'For the last three years he has been working at the production of a mirror which shall produce combustion at a distance; a problem which the Latins have neither solved nor attempted, though books have been written upon the subject.' Peter evidently stimulated Roger Bacon's leaning to experimental science and won his respect by putting his questions to Nature herself instead of attempting to answer them *a priori* and without recourse to experiment.

About the year 1250 Bacon entered the Franciscan Order and taught at Oxford until 1257, when he had to abandon public teaching, having incurred the suspicion or hostility of his superiors. He was still permitted to write, however, though not to publish his works. In June 1266 Pope Clement IV, a friend of Bacon, told the latter to send him his works; but the Pope died shortly afterwards and it is not known with certainty if the manuscripts ever reached Rome and, if they did, what reception was accorded them. In any case Bacon got into trouble in 1277 by writing the *Speculum astronomiae* in order to defend his ideas on astrology and to criticise Stephen Tempier's condemnation of astrology. The Franciscan General of the time, Jerome of Ascoli, had Bacon brought before a Chapter in Paris under suspicion of teaching novelties, and this resulted in Bacon's imprisonment in 1278. He seems to have remained in prison until 1292, and it was in this year or not long afterwards that he died, being buried at Oxford in the Franciscan Church.

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[1] *Opus Tertium*, c. 25.

[2] *Opus Minus*, edit. J. S. Brewer, p. 326.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 322 ff.

[4] *Compendium philosophiae*, p. 469.

[5] Peter's name of *Peregrinus* seems to be due to the fact that he went on a crusade.

[6] *Opus Tertium*, c. 13.

Bacon's chief work was the *Opus Maius*, which may have been completed and sent to the Pope. The *Opus Minus* and the *Opus Tertium* are more or less summaries of material incorporated in the *Opus Maius*, though they contain additional matter as well. It is in the *Opus Minus* that Bacon treats of the seven sins of theology, for example. A number of other works, such as the *Quaestiones supra libros octo Physicorum Aristotelis* and the *Quaestiones supra libros Primae Philosophiae*, have been published in the fourteen volumes of the *Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconi* of which sixteen fascicules have so far appeared. Some of these works seem to have been written as parts of a projected *Scriptum Principale*. Bacon also wrote a *Compendium Philosophiae*, a *Compendium studii Philosophiae* and a *Compendium studii Theologiae*.

2. In the first part of the *Opus Maius* Bacon enumerates four principal causes of human ignorance and failure to attain truth: subjection to unworthy authority, the influence of habit, popular prejudice, and making a show of apparent wisdom to cover one's own ignorance. The first three causes of error were recognised by men like Aristotle, Seneca, Averroes; but the fourth is the most dangerous, as it makes a man conceal his own ignorance by holding up as true wisdom the result of worshipping untrustworthy authority, of habit and of popular prejudice. For example, because Aristotle said something, it is considered true; but Avicenna may have corrected Aristotle on the point, and Averroes may have corrected Avicenna. Again, because the Fathers did not pursue scientific studies, it is taken for granted that such studies are

valueless; but the circumstances of that time were quite different, and what was an excuse for them is not necessarily an excuse for us. Men do not realise the value of studying mathematics and languages, and so they belittle these studies out of prejudice.

In the second part Bacon emphasises the dominating character of theology among the sciences: all truth is contained in the Scriptures. But for the elucidation of the Scriptures we need the help of canon law and of philosophy. Philosophy and the use of reason in general cannot be condemned, since reason is of God. God is the active intellect (so Bacon interpreted St. Augustine, appealing also to Aristotle and Avicenna), and He enlightens the individual human mind, concurring with it in its activity. Philosophy has as its purpose to lead man to the knowledge and service of God; it culminates in moral philosophy. The speculative and moral sciences of the pagans were certainly inadequate and find their completion only in Christian theology and the Christian ethic; but it is not right to condemn or to neglect any particle of truth. As a matter of fact, says Bacon, philosophy was not a pagan invention, but was revealed to the Patriarchs. Subsequently the revelation was obscured through human depravity, but the pagan philosophers helped to rediscover it, or part of it. The greatest of these philosophers was Aristotle, and Avicenna is his principal expounder. As for Averroes, he was a man of real wisdom who improved in many points on what his predecessors had said, though his own theories also stand in need of correction. In fine, we should use pagan philosophy in an intelligent manner, without ignorant rejection and condemnation on the one hand or slavish adherence to any particular thinker on the other. It is our business to carry on and perfect the work of our predecessors, remembering that though it is the function of truth to lead man to God, we should not regard as valueless studies which have at first sight no immediate relation to theology: all truth of whatever kind leads ultimately to God.

The third part Bacon devotes to the subject of language, emphasising the practical importance of the scientific study of languages. Without a real knowledge of Hebrew and Greek the Scriptures cannot be properly interpreted and translated, nor can manuscripts be corrected when faulty; and good translations of Greek and Arabian philosophers are also needed. But for purposes of translation something more than a smattering of a language is necessary, if slavish translations are to be avoided.

In the fourth part Bacon discusses mathematics, the 'door and key' of other sciences. Mathematics were studied by the Patriarchs and came to the knowledge of the Greeks by way of the Chaldeans and Egyptians; but among the Latins they have fallen into neglect. Yet mathematical science is *quasi innata*, or at least it is learnt more easily and immediately and with less dependence on experience than other sciences, so that it may be said to be presupposed by other sciences. Logic and grammar are dependent to a certain extent on mathematics, while it is obvious that without mathematics no advance can be made in astronomy, and they are useful even for theology: mathematical astronomy can, for instance, demonstrate the comparative insignificance of the earth as compared with the heavens, not to speak of the facts that mathematics are useful for solving the chronological problems in the Scriptures and that they show the inadequacy of the Julian Calendar, a matter to which the Pope would do well to attend. Bacon proceeds to speak about light, its propagation, reflection and refraction; about eclipses, tides, the spherical shape of the earth, the unicity of the universe, and so on; and then passes to geography and astrology. Astrology is regarded with suspicion as it is thought to involve determinism; but this suspicion is unjust. The influence and movements of the heavenly bodies affect terrestrial and human events and produce even natural dispositions in human beings, but they do not destroy free will: it is only prudent to gain all the knowledge we can and use it for a good end. Bacon approves Aristotle's advice to Alexander concerning the treatment to be meted out to certain tribes of perverse ways: change their climate, that is, change their place of abode and thus change their morals.

Optics form the subject of the fifth part, in which Bacon treats of the structure of the eye, the principles of vision and the conditions of vision, reflection, refraction, and finally the practical application of the science of optics. Mirrors, he suggests, might be erected in elevated spots in order that the layout and movements of an enemy's camp might be observed, while by the use of refraction we could make small things appear great and distant objects appear near. There is no evidence to show that Bacon actually invented the telescope; but he conceived the possibility of such a thing.

In the sixth part Bacon considers experimental science. Reasoning may guide the mind to a right conclusion, but it is only confirmation by experience which removes doubt. That is one reason why diagrams and figures are employed in geometry. Many beliefs are refuted by experience. Experience, however, is of two kinds. In one kind of experience we employ our bodily senses, aided by instruments and by the evidence of trustworthy witnesses, while the other kind is experience of spiritual things and needs grace. This latter type of experience advances through various stages to the mystical states of rapture. The former type of experience can be used to prolong life (by improving the science of medicine, and discovering antidotes to poisons), to invent explosive substances, to transmute baser metals into gold and to refine gold itself, and so to disabuse the heathen of their false magical beliefs.

Finally, in the seventh part of the *Opus Maius*, Bacon treats of moral philosophy, which stands on a higher level than philology, or mathematics and experimental science. These sciences are related to action of various kinds, whereas moral philosophy is related to the actions by which we become good or bad, and it instructs man about his relations with God, his fellow men and himself. It is thus closely related to theology and shares in the latter's dignity. Supposing the 'principles of metaphysics', which include Christian revelation, Bacon treats of civic morality and then, more at length, of personal morality, making use of the writings of Greek, Roman and Moslem philosophers, particularly of Seneca, the Roman Stoic. In conclusion he treats of the grounds for accepting the Christian religion. Revelation is necessary and the Christian accepts the Faith on authority; but in dealing with non-Christians we cannot appeal simply to authority, but must have recourse to reason. Thus philosophy can prove the existence of God, His unity and infinity, while the credibility of the sacred writers is established by their personal sanctity, their wisdom, the evidence of miracles, their firm steadfastness under persecution, the uniformity of their faith, and their victory in spite of their humble origin and temporal condition. Bacon ends with the doctrine of man's incorporation with Christ and his participation through Christ in the divine life. *Et quid potest homo plus petere in hac vita?* And what more can a man seek in this life?

From what has been said, the twofold character of Bacon's philosophy is clear. His emphasis on the relation of philosophy to theology, on the former's function of leading man to God, and on the practical or moral aspect of philosophy, the place he attributes in his philosophy to inner knowledge of God and spiritual things, culminating in rapture, the close relation he establishes between theology and philosophy, his doctrine of God as the illuminating active intellect,[1] his adoption of the theories of 'seminal reasons' (for the development of which matter has a kind of active appetite), of the universal hylomorphic composition of creatures, and of the plurality of forms (from the form of corporeity up to the *forma individualis*), all mark him as an adherent, to a large extent, of the Augustinian tradition. In spite of his respect for Aristotle he not infrequently misinterprets him and even ascribes to him doctrines which he certainly never held. Thus he discerns elements of the Christian revelation in the philosophy of Aristotle which were actually not there; and though he refers to St. Thomas he does not seem to have been influenced by the Thomist positions or to have been particularly interested in them. On the other hand, the breadth of his interests and the vigour of his insistence on experimental science in general, on the development of astronomy by the aid of mathematics, and on the practical applications of science mark him out as a herald of the future. By temperament he was somewhat self-assured, inclined to impatience and to sometimes unjust criticism and condemnation; but he laid his finger on many weak points in contemporary science as also in contemporary moral and ecclesiastical life. For his scientific theories he depended very much on other thinkers, as was only natural; but he was quick to see the possibility of their development and application, and, as has already been remarked, he had a firmer grasp of scientific method, of the combination of deduction and induction, than was possessed by Francis Bacon, the Chancellor of England, whose insistence on experiment and observation and the practical applications of knowledge has sometimes been depicted as if without parallel or anticipation among philosophers of an earlier period.

3. An Augustinian of a different type was *Matthew of Aquasparta* (*c.* 1240–1302), who studied at Paris, taught at Bologna and Rome, and became General of the Franciscan Order in 1287, being created a cardinal in 1288. The author of, among other works, a Commentary on the *Sentences*, *Quaestiones disputatae* and *Quaestiones quodlibetales*, Matthew adhered in general to the position of St. Bonaventure, regarding St. Augustine as the great fount of wisdom. Thus, while he admitted that man's ideas of corporeal objects are formed only in dependence on sense-experience, he

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[1] Obviously this doctrine is not Averroistic. The latter's monopsychism Bacon condemned as error and heresy.

refused to admit that corporeal objects can affect more than the body: it is the soul itself which is responsible for sensation as such, as St. Augustine had held, though, of course, sensation requires that a sense-organ should be affected by a sensible object. Again, it is the active intellect which transforms the *species sensibilis* and produces the idea in the passive intellect. Matthew appeals explicitly to St. Augustine on this matter.[1] Yet the soul's activity alone is not sufficient to explain knowledge: the divine illumination is required. What is this divine illumination? It is really God's immediate concurrence with the operation of the human intellect, a concurrence by the aid of which the intellect is moved to know the object. God moves us to know the object of which we receive the *species sensibilis*, this movement being the divine illumination. The object is related to its eternal exemplar foundation, the *ratio aeterna* or divine idea, and it is the divine light which enables us to discern this relation, the *rationes aeternae* exercising a regulative effect on the intellect. But we do not discern the divine light or concurrence, nor are the eternal ideas objects directly perceived; we know them rather as principles which move the intellect to know the created essence, *ut obiectum movens et in aliud ducens*, not as *obiectum in se ducens.*[2] There is, then, no difficulty in seeing how the divine light operates in all men, good or bad, since there is no question of a vision of the divine ideas and of the divine essence as such, in themselves. God co-operates in all the activities of creatures; but the human mind is made in the image of God in a special manner and God's concurrence with the mind's activity is rightly termed illumination.

In the same *De cognitione* to which reference has already been made, Matthew mentions the Thomist doctrine that the intellect knows the singular thing *per quandam reflexionem*, by a certain act of reflection[3] and rejects it. It is difficult to understand this position, he says, for the knowledge of the singular thing *per reflexionem ad phantasma* means that the intellect knows the singular thing either in the phantasm or directly in itself. The latter supposition is ruled out by the Thomist view, while on the other hand the phantasm is not actually intelligible (*intelligibile actu*), but the *species intelligibilis* has to be abstracted. In opposition to the Thomist view Matthew asserts that the intellect knows singular things in themselves and directly, by means of *species singulares*. It is sense intuition which apprehends the object as existing and intellectual intuition which apprehends the individual quiddity or essence; but unless the mind had first of all an intuition of the singular thing, it could not abstract the universal notion. The *species universalis* thus presupposes the *species singularis*. Of course, the singular thing is not intelligible if by intelligible you mean deductively demonstrable, since it is contingent and passing; but if by intelligible you mean what can be apprehended by the intellect, then in this case it must be allowed that the singular thing is intelligible.[1] Otherwise it is not possible to explain satisfactorily the abstraction and real foundation of the universal idea.

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[1] *Q. Disp. de cognitione*, p. 291 and p. 280.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 254.

[3] p. 307.

Another theory of St. Thomas which Matthew rejects is the theory that the soul while united to the body has no direct intuition of itself and its dispositions and powers, but knows indirectly that it itself and its dispositions exist, through its perception of the act by which it knows objects through *species* abstracted from phantasms. This theory of the soul's purely indirect knowledge of itself Matthew rejects, as being contrary to the teaching of St. Augustine and also to what reason demands. It is unreasonable to suppose that the soul is so immersed in the body that it can apprehend nothing without an image or phantasm and that it can apprehend itself and its dispositions only indirectly. 'It seems altogether absurd to suppose the intellect so blind that it does not see itself, when it is by the intellect that the soul knows all things.'[2] His own theory Matthew states with considerable care. As regards the *beginning* of knowledge 'I say without any doubt that the soul can intuit neither itself nor the habits which are in it, nor can the first act of knowledge be directed to itself or the things which are in it.'[3] The soul needs a stimulus from the bodily senses for the beginning of knowledge, and then by reflecting on its own perceived act of knowing it comes to know its powers and itself as existent. But afterwards the soul turns in on itself, as it were (*quadam spirituali conversione in semetipsam revocata est*),[4] and then it can have a direct intuition of itself and its habits, these being no longer simply the non-intuited conclusions of a process of reasoning, but the direct object of a mental vision. In order that this intellectual vision should take place, four conditions are required, just as for sensitive vision, namely a visible object which is present as visible, a properly disposed power of vision, mutual proportion, and illumination. All these conditions are or can be fulfilled. The soul is an intellectually visible object and it is present to the intellect; the intellect is an immaterial power and is not intrinsically dependent on a sense-organ; both the intellect and the soul itself are intellectual finite objects, and nothing is so proportioned to the soul as the soul itself; lastly the divine illumination is always present.[1]

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[1] *De cognitione*, p. 311. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 328. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 329. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 329.

Matthew of Aquasparta thus adhered closely, though reasonably and with moderation, to the Augustinian tradition, and it is only to be expected that he would maintain the theories of the *rationes seminales* and the *forma corporeitatis*. In addition he upheld the Bonaventurian doctrine of the universal hylomorphic composition of creatures, rejecting the real distinction of essence and existence as an adequate explanation of their finitude and contingence.

4. A much less faithful Augustinian was *Peter John Olivi* (*c.* 1248–98), a prominent figure among the Franciscan 'spirituals'. Thus while he clung to the theory of the hylomorphic composition of all creatures and the multiplicability of angels in the same species, as also to the doctrine of plurality of forms, he not only denied the existence of *rationes seminales*, but even maintained that this denial was in accordance with the doctrine of St. Augustine. An anticipation of Scotus's *distinctio formalis a parte rei*, intermediate between a real distinction and a conceptual distinction, is to be found in his philosophy; and it exists between the divine attributes, for instance, as Scotus also thought. Olivi is also remarkable for having adopted the *impetus* theory of Joannes Philoponus, i.e. the theory that when a projectile is set in motion, the mover or thrower confers an impetus or *impulsus* on the projectile which carries the projectile on even when it is no longer in contact with the mover, though it may be overcome by the resistance of the air and other opposing forces. But consideration of this theory, which meant the abandonment of the Aristotelian theory of 'unnatural' motion, is best reserved for the next volume, in connection with those thinkers who drew some novel conclusions from the doctrine and paved the way for a new conception of the corporeal world. Further consideration of the *distinctio formalis a parte rei* will be reserved for the treatment of the Scotist system. My real reason for mentioning Olivi here is to allude briefly to his theory of the soul and its relation to the body. This theory, or part of it, was condemned at the Council of Vienne in 1311, and the matter is worth mentioning since certain

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[1] The doctrines of the soul's intuition of itself and of the intellectual knowledge of the singular thing appear also in the teaching of the Franciscan *Vital du Four* (d. 1327).

writers in the past have claimed that the Council meant to condemn what they certainly did not mean to condemn.

According to Olivi, there are three constitutive 'parts' in the human soul, the vegetative principle or form, the sensitive principle or form, and the intellectual principle or form. These three forms together constitute the one human soul, the rational soul, as constitutive parts of the whole soul. There was no particular novelty in maintaining a doctrine of plurality of forms; but Olivi drew from his theory the peculiar conclusion that the three formal parts are united by the spiritual matter of the soul in such a way that the higher form influences and moves the lower forms only through the mediation of the spiritual matter. He concluded further that while the vegetative and sensitive parts inform the body, the intellectual part does not of itself inform the body, though it moves the others parts as its instruments and subjects. He maintained that the rooting of all three parts in the spiritual matter of the soul safeguarded the unity of man and the substantial union of soul and body; but at the same time he refused to allow that the intellectual part of the soul informs the body directly. This last point aroused opposition among the Franciscans themselves. One of the reasons of their opposition was that if it were true that the intellectual form did not inform the body directly but only mediately, through the sensitive form, it would follow that Christ was not, as Man, composed of a rational soul and a body, as the Faith teaches.[1] The end of the matter was that in 1311 the Council of Vienne condemned as heretical the proposition that the rational or intellectual soul does not inform the body directly (*per se*) and essentially (*essentialiter*). The Council did not, however, condemn the doctrine of the plurality of forms and affirm the Thomist view, as some later writers have tried to maintain. The Fathers of the Council, or the majority of them at least, themselves held the doctrine of the plurality of forms. The Council simply wished to preserve the unity of man by affirming that the intellectual soul informs the body directly. This is shown clearly by the reference to Christology. The human nature of Christ consists of a passible human body and a rational human soul which informs the body, the two together forming human nature. The Council did not concern itself with the question of the *forma corporeitatis* or with the question whether there are or are not various 'parts' in the human soul: what it says is simply that the rational soul informs the body directly and so is a principle integral to man: it was the separation between the intellectual soul and the human body which it condemned, not the doctrine of the plurality of forms. It is, therefore, quite erroneous to state that the Council of Vienne declared that the human soul informs prime matter directly and that the Thomist theory is imposed by the Church.

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[1] In support of Olivi's thesis the reason was given that if the intellectual form informed the body directly, it would either give its own immortality to the body or lose its own immortality through informing the body.

5. If Peter John Olivi was an independent thinker who departed on some points from the Augustinian tradition and prepared the way for later stages in Franciscan thought, *Roger Marston* (d. 1303), who was for a time Minister of the English Franciscan province, was a whole-hearted Augustinian. He embraced all the characteristic 'Augustinian' theories, such as the intellectual apprehension of the singular thing, the pre-eminence of will over intellect, universal hylomorphic composition in creatures, plurality of forms, and he criticised St. Thomas for admitting the apparent possibility of creation from eternity and for throwing overboard the *rationes seminales*. Indeed, this resolute English conservative found even Matthew of Aquasparta too accommodating and firmly rejected any attempt to water down what he regarded as the genuine doctrine of St. Augustine and St. Anselm. We should prefer the 'saints' to those 'infernal men', the pagan philosophers.

In his *De Anima* Roger Marston gives an uncompromising interpretation of St. Augustine's teaching on the divine illumination. The active intellect may indeed be called a part of the soul if by active intellect is meant a natural disposition in the soul for the knowledge of truth (*sicut perspicuitas naturalis in oculo*); but if by active intellect is meant the act of illumination, we must say that it is a separate substance, God Himself.[1] The active intellect is the uncreated or eternal light which impresses on the mind, as a seal on the wax, a certain active impression which leaves a passive impression that is the formal principle in the knowledge of unchanging truths.[2] It is not the concepts or terms of the judgement which are provided by the eternal light, God; but the eternal truth.[3] For example, the eternal light does not infuse into the mind the concept of the whole and the concept of the part, but it is the radiation of the eternal light which enables the mind to apprehend infallibly the relation between the terms, the eternal truth that the whole is greater than the part. The eternal ideas are thus the ultimate foundation of the certain and infallible judgement (*rationes aeternae aliqualiter attinguntur*). The explanation of the fact that the human race agrees about the fundamental truths is to be found in the common illumination of all minds by the one divine light, and Roger Marston refuses to allow that this divine light consists simply in the creation of the human intellect as a finite imitation of the divine intellect. Those who deny that the active intellect is the primal and uncreated light are people who are 'drunk with the nectar of philosophy' and who pervert the meaning of St. Augustine and the *Sancti.*[1] If St. Augustine had not intended to say any more than these people make him say, then his arguments would be without point and would beg the question, since if the human intellect was assumed to be the source of its own light, one could not argue to the existence of an uncreated light, as St. Augustine certainly does.[2]

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[1] *De Anima*, p. 259. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 263. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 262.

6. Another English Franciscan of note was *Richard of Middleton*, who studied at Oxford and Paris. He went to Paris in 1278, and after taking his degree he occupied one of the Franciscan chairs of theology until 1286, when he became tutor to St. Louis of Toulouse, the son of Charles II of Sicily. The date of his death is uncertain, but it must have occurred about the turn of the century. He composed the customary Commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard and was responsible for *Quaestiones Disputatae* and *Quodlibets.*

In some points Richard of Middleton followed the general Franciscan tradition, maintaining, for example, the impossibility of creation from eternity, since this would involve a created infinite, universal hylomorphic composition in creatures, the plurality of forms and the primacy of the will. On other points, however, he approximated to the Thomist position, and in this matter he represents the new movement among Franciscan thinkers towards a modified Augustinianism, the greatest exponent of which was Duns Scotus. Thus Richard insists not only that all valid demonstrations of God's existence are *a posteriori*, but also that our intellectual knowledge of spiritual as well as of corporeal beings is abstracted from sense-experience and that it is unnecessary to postulate any special illumination or to identify the active intellect with God. On the other hand, the mind apprehends the singular, though it does so by means of the same concept by which it apprehends the universal.

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[1] *De Anima*, p. 273.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 256.

In addition, Richard maintained some more or less original ideas. One of the less happy of these ideas was the notion that what the mind directly attains is not the individual existent thing itself, but its *esse repraesentatum*. He also invented a *principium pure possibile*, in order to explain how new forms can appear under the action of a created agent. It might appear at first that this is nothing else but prime matter; but matter, which differs in kind in spiritual and corporeal beings and so is not homogeneous, has some actuality of its own in Richard's eyes, whereas the *principium pure possibile* has no actuality of its own, is concreated with matter and cannot exist separately. If matter is understood as the primary foundation of natural change, as that which is common to corrupted and generated bodies and receives form, then it is really distinct from the purely potential principle, which is transmuted into the form itself. The purely potential principle may then be called the potentiality of matter (*potentia materiae*), if the potentiality of matter is understood as meaning the principle out of which the created agent educes the form and which is transmuted into the form educed; but in this case the *potentia materiae* is really distinct from matter itself. Conversely, if by *potentia materiae* is meant matter's power to receive form, it is the same as matter itself; but in this case it is really distinct from the *principium pure possibile*.[1] In other words, the power to receive form is not the same as the power to become form. Besides prime matter as the subject of change, which has some actuality of its own and which receives form, Richard postulates, then, a kind of receptacle of forms, a purely potential principle which is transmuted into those forms which are received in matter. He considered that this theory constituted an improvement on the theory of *rationes seminales*, and he tried to interpret St. Augustine as teaching the existence, not of active forces (which would amount to a *latitatio formarum*), but of a purely potential principle which becomes forms. In virtue of this positive potentiality forms may be said to be created from the beginning in potency, but this must not be taken to imply the presence of 'seeds'. The principle in question is in matter, and Richard calls it the more intimate part of matter and the passive potentiality of matter; but, as we have seen, it is not identical with matter as subject of change and recipient of form.[2] It is not, therefore, something altogether separate from matter, but it is distinct from matter in the ordinary sense. This may appear to involve an approximation to the Thomist view of prime matter, and to a certain extent this seems to be true; but Richard refused to abandon the traditional view of matter as having some actuality of its own, and so he had to distinguish matter as element in the composite thing from the potential principle which becomes forms under the action of the created agent.

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[1] *In 2 Sent.*, 12, 1, 10.

[2] *Ibid.*, 12, 1, 1.

In addition to being composed of matter and form every creature is also composed of essence and existence. But existence is not something really distinct from the essence, to which it comes as an accident. On the other hand, existence is not merely conceptually distinct from essence, since it does add something to essence. What does it add? A twofold relation: a *relatio rationis* to itself, inasmuch as existence confers on essence the dignity of being an hypostasis or substance, and a real relation to the Creator.[1] On this matter Richard of Middleton accepted the position of Henry of Ghent.

At the end of his work *Richard de Middleton*[2] Père E. Hocedez, S.J., remarks: *Richard finit une époque.* The last representative of the Seraphic School, he attempted a synthesis (*prudemment nouvelle*) in which the main positions of Bonaventure, deepened and perfected, should be integrated with what he considered best in Aristotelianism and in the theology of St. Thomas. That Richard of Middleton incorporated ideas from outside the Augustinian tradition is clear enough; but I cannot agree with Père Hocedez that this movement of thought 'had no morrow' and that Scotus directed Franciscan philosophy 'in new ways which were soon to end in nominalism'. Rather did Richard's philosophy form a stage on the way to Scotism, which opened the door wider to Aristotelianism, but was certainly not nominalistic or favourable to nominalism.

7. One of the most interesting of the Franciscan philosophers is *Raymond Lull* (1232/35–1315). Born in Majorca, Raymond Lull was for a time at the court of King James II; but about 1265 he underwent a religious conversion and abandoned his family in order to devote himself to what he considered his great task in life, to fight against Islam and to help in the rooting out of Averroism. With this end in view he devoted nine years to the study of Arabic and philosophy, the first fruit of the period of study being his *Ars Magna*, followed by the *Liber principiorum*

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[1] *In 2 Sent.*, 3, 1, 1; *Quodlibet*, 1, 8.

[2] Paris, 1925.

philosophiae. He joined the Third Order of St. Francis and travelled to Africa to convert the Moors; he taught at Paris and combated Averroism; he wrote logic, philosophy, theology and poetry, writing in his native Catalan and in Arabic, as well as in Latin. Finally he was martyred in Tunisia in 1315. Besides the two above-mentioned works one may mention the *Ars demonstrativa*, the *Ars brevis*, the *Ars generalis ultima*, and the anti-Averroistic works such as the *Liber contra errores Boetii et Segerii* (i.e. against Boethius of Dacia and Siger of Brabant), the *De naturali modo intelligendi*, the *Liber reprobationis aliquorum errorum Averrois*, the *Disputatio Raymundi et Averroistae* and the *Sermones contra Averroistas*. But this forms but a selection of the astonishing literary output of a man who was apostle and traveller, poet and mystic.

The apostolic interests of Raymond Lull were by no means irrelevant to his philosophy; they were partly responsible for the general attitude he adopted towards philosophy, whose ancillary relation to theology he stressed. He was quite aware of the distinction between faith and reason, and he compared faith to oil which continues to rest unmixed on the water, even if the water is increased; but his interest in the conversion of the Moslems naturally led to an insistence, not only on philosophy's subordinate relation to theology, but also on reason's ability to make acceptable the dogmas of the Faith. It is in the light of this general attitude that we must understand his proposal to 'prove' the articles of faith by 'necessary reasons'. He no more proposed to rationalise (in the modern sense) the Christian mysteries than did St. Anselm or Richard of St. Victor, when they spoke of 'necessary reasons' for the Trinity, and he expressly declares that faith treats of objects which the human reason cannot understand; but he wished to show the Moslems that Christian beliefs are not contrary to reason and that reason can meet the objections adduced against them. Moreover, believing that the accusation brought against the Averroists that they held a 'double truth' theory was justified and that the theory in question was contradictory and absurd, he was concerned to show that there is no need to have recourse to any such radical separation of theology and philosophy, but that theological dogmas harmonise with reason and cannot be impugned by reason. In regard to the peculiar theories of the Averroists themselves, he argued that these are contrary both to faith and reason. Monopsychism, for instance, contradicts the testimony of consciousness: we are conscious that our acts of thought and will are our own.

If one looked merely at the familiar 'Augustinian' theories maintained by Lull, such as the impossibility of creation from eternity, universal hylomorphic composition of creatures, plurality of forms, the primacy of will over intellect, and so on, there would not appear to be any particularly interesting feature in his philosophy; but we find such a feature in his *Ars combinatoria*. Raymond Lull supposes first of all that there are certain general principles or categories, which are self-evident and which are common to all sciences, in the sense that without them there can be neither philosophy nor any other science. The most important of these are the nine absolute predicates, goodness, greatness, eternity, power, wisdom, will, virtue, truth, glory. (These predicates express attributes of God.) There are nine other concepts which express relations (between creatures): difference, agreement, contrariety, beginning, middle, end, majority, equality, minority. In addition, there are sets of fundamental questions, such as how, when, where, etc., of virtues and of vices. Lull cannot have attached any particular importance to the number nine, which appears in the *Ars generalis*, as elsewhere he gives other numbers of divine attributes or absolute predicates; for example, in the *Liber de voluntate infinita et ordinata* he gives twelve, while in the *De possibili et impossibili* he gives twenty: the main point is that there are certain fundamental ideas which are essential to philosophy and science.

These fundamental ideas being presupposed, Raymond Lull speaks as though through their combination one could discover the principles of the particular sciences and even discover new truths, and in order that the work of combination might be facilitated, he had recourse to symbolism, the fundamental concepts being symbolised by letters, and to mechanical means of tabulating and grouping. For example, God was represented by the letter A, and, in the later writings, nine *principia*, also symbolised by letters representing the divine attributes, surround Him. These principles could be combined in a hundred and twenty ways through the use of figures and concentric circles. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that some writers have seen in Lull's scheme an anticipation of Leibniz's dream of the *caracteristica universalis* and *Ars combinatoria*, of an algebraic symbolism, the use of which would permit the deduction from fundamental concepts not only of already ascertained truths, but even of new truths. As already mentioned, Lull does seem to imply such an aim on occasion, and if this had been his real object, he would obviously have to be considered as separating himself from the Scholastic tradition; but in point of fact he expressly asserts[1] that his aim was to facilitate the use of the memory. Moreover, we must remember his apostolic interests, which suggest that his scheme was designed for purposes of exposition and explanation rather than of deduction in the strict sense. The fact that Leibniz was influenced by Lull proves nothing as to the latter's intentions, of course. According to Dr. Otto Keicher, O.F.M.,[2] it is the *principia* which form the essence not only of the *Ars generalis*, but of the whole system of Raymond Lull; but though it is obvious enough that what Lull regarded as fundamental concepts formed in a sense the basis of his system, it does not seem that one can reduce his 'art' to the establishment of certain principles or categories: the philosopher himself regarded it as something more than that. Of course, if one stresses the expository, didactic aspect of the art, it is scarcely necessary to debate what are the essential and unessential elements in it; but if one chooses to regard it as an anticipation of Leibniz, then it would be relevant to make a distinction between Lull's schematism and mechanical technique on the one hand and on the other hand the general notion of deducing the principles of the sciences from a combination of fundamental concepts, since Lull might have anticipated Leibniz in regard to the latter's general principle, even though his 'logical algebra' was radically deficient. This is more or less the view of Dr. Bernhard Geyer,[3] and I believe it to be correct. That Lull pursues his deduction in reliance on three main principles;[4] to hold as true everything which affirms the greatest harmony between God and created being, to attribute to God that which is the most perfect, and to assume that God has made whatever truly appears to be the better, is no argument against this interpretation: it doubtless shows the spiritual kinship between Lull and the Augustinian tradition, but it also reminds one of important points in the system of Leibniz some centuries later.

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[1] *Compendium artis demonstrativae*, prol.

[2] *Beiträge*, 7, 4–5, p. 19.

[3] Ueberweg-Geyer, *Die patristische und scholastische Philosophie*, p. 460.

[4] Cf. Article, 'Lulle' by Père E. Longpré in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, vol. 9.

CHAPTER XLIV

GILES OF ROME AND HENRY OF GHENT

(*a*) Giles of Rome. *Life and works—The independence of Giles as a thinker—Essence and existence—Form and matter; soul and body—Political theory.*
(*b*) Henry of Ghent. *Life and works—Eclecticism, illustrated by doctrines of illumination and innatism—Idea of metaphysics—Essence and existence—Proofs of God's existence—General spirit and significance of Henry's philosophy.*

(*a*) *Giles of Rome*

1. Giles (Aegidius) of Rome was born in 1247 or a little earlier and entered the Order of the Hermits of St. Augustine about 1260. He made his studies at Paris and seems to have attended the lectures of St. Thomas Aquinas from 1269 to 1272. It appears that he composed the *Errores Philosophorum* about 1270, in which he enumerates the errors of Aristotle, Averroes, Avicenna, Algazel, Alkindi and Maimonides. The Commentaries on the *De generatione et corruptione*, the *De Anima*, the *Physics*, the *Metaphysics* and the logical treatises of Aristotle, the Commentary on the first book of the *Sentences* and the works entitled *Theoremata de Corpore Christi* and *De plurificatione intellectus possibilis* were apparently also written before 1277. In that year occurred the famous condemnation by Stephen Tempier, Bishop of Paris (March 7th); but between Christmas 1277 and Easter 1278 Giles wrote the *De gradibus formarum*, in which he came out strongly against the doctrine of plurality of forms. For this and similar offences Giles was called upon to make a retractation; but he refused and was excluded from the University of Paris before he had completed his theological studies. In his period of absence from Paris he wrote the *Theoremata de esse et essentia* and his Commentary on the second and third books of the *Sentences*.

In 1285 Giles returned to Paris and was permitted to receive the licentiate in theology, though he had to make a public retractation first. He then taught theology at Paris, until he was elected General of the Order in 1292. In 1295 he was appointed Archbishop of Bourges. The works he wrote after his return to Paris in 1285 include *Quaestiones disputatae de esse et essentia*, *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*, a Commentary on the *Liber de Causis*, exegetical works such as the *In Hexaëmeron* and political treatises like the *De regimine principum* and the *De potestate ecclesiastica.* Giles died at Avignon in 1316.

2. Giles of Rome has sometimes been represented as a 'Thomist'; but though he found himself in agreement with St. Thomas on some points, as against the Franciscans, he can scarcely be called a disciple of St. Thomas: he was an independent thinker, and his independence shows itself even in matters where he might at first sight appear to be following St. Thomas. For instance, though he certainly maintained a real distinction between essence and existence, he equally certainly went beyond what St. Thomas taught on this question. Moreover, though he rejected the plurality of forms in 1277, going so far as to declare that this doctrine was contrary to the Catholic faith,[1] it has been shown that this had not always been his view. In the Commentary on the *De Anima*[2] he spoke hesitantly and doubtfully on the unicity of the substantial form in man, and the same is true in regard to the *Theoremata de Corpore Christi*,[3] while in the *Errores Philosophorum* he had stated that the doctrine of the unicity of the substantial form in man is false.[4] It is clear, then, that he began with the 'Augustinian' or Franciscan view, and that he advanced to the opposite theory only gradually.[5] No doubt he was influenced by St. Thomas in the matter, but it does not look as though he simply accepted Thomas's doctrine without question. He did not hesitate to criticise Thomist positions or to deviate from them when he wished to; and when he agreed with them, it is evident that he agreed as a result of personal thought and reflection, not because he was or had been a disciple of St. Thomas. The legend of Giles of Rome as a 'Thomist' was really a conclusion from the fact that he listened to lectures by St. Thomas for a period; but attendance at a professor's lectures is not a sure guarantee of discipleship.

3. Giles of Rome was considerably influenced by the neo-Platonist theory of participation. Existence (*esse*) flows from God and is a participation of the divine existence. It is received by essence and is really distinct from essence. That it is received by essence can be empirically established as regards corporeal things, since they have a beginning of existence and are not always joined to existence, a fact which shows that they are in potentiality to existence, and that existence is really distinct from the essence

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[1] *De gradibus formarum*, f. 211 v. [2] 1, 12, 16. [3] Prop. 47, f. 36 v. [4] 1, 11.

[5] On the question of the dating and authenticity of the *Errores Philosophorum* see the edition by J. Koch, listed in the bibliography.

of the sensible thing. Indeed, if existence were not really distinct from essence in all created things, creatures would not be creatures: they would exist in virtue of their own essence and would thus be independent of God's creative activity. The real distinction is, therefore, an essential safeguard of the doctrine of creation. Needless to say, the statement that created existence is a participation of the divine existence was not meant to imply pantheism. It was precisely the created character of finite things, of the participations, which Giles wanted to uphold. By essence Giles meant, in the case of material things, the composite of form and matter. The composite or corporeal essence possesses a mode of being (*modus essendi*) which is derived from the union of form and matter (in the case of immaterial creatures the mode of being comes from the form alone); but it does not of itself possess existence in the proper sense (*esse simpliciter*), which is received. The attribution of a *modus essendi* to the essence would seem to make of the latter a thing, and this aspect of the theory is accentuated by Giles's explicit teaching that essence and existence are not only really distinct, but also separable. In fact, he does not hesitate to speak of them as separable things.

This exaggerated version of the theory of the real distinction led to a lively controversy between Giles of Rome and Henry of Ghent, who attacked Giles's doctrine in his first *Quodlibet* (1276). The *Quaestiones disputatae de esse et essentia* contained Giles's answer to Henry; but the latter returned to the attack in his tenth *Quodlibet* (1286), to which Giles retorted in his twelfth *Quaestio disputata*, maintaining therein that unless existence and essence were really distinct, in the sense in which he taught the real distinction, annihilation of a creature would be impossible. He continued to hold, therefore, that his real distinction is absolutely necessary, in order to safeguard the creature's total dependence on God. The fact that he taught a real distinction between essence and existence links him with St. Thomas; but St. Thomas certainly did not teach that essence and existence are two separable things: this was an original, if somewhat strange contribution of Giles himself.

4. Giles of Rome was inclined, as his theory of essence and existence shows, to suppose that wherever the mind detects a real distinction there is separability. Thus the mind abstracts the universal from the individual (abstraction being the work of the passive intellect, when the active intellect has illumined the passive

intellect and the phantasm) by apprehending the form of the object without the matter. Therefore, form and matter are really distinct and separable. Now, matter, which is found only in corporeal things, is the principle of individuation, and it follows that if matter and all the individual conditions which follow from it could be removed, the individuals of any given species would be one. Perhaps this is a legitimate conclusion from the doctrine of matter as the principle of individuation; but in any case the tendency to ultra-realism is obvious, and Giles's inclination to equate 'really distinct from' with 'separable from' is partly responsible.

Again, form (soul) and body are really distinct and separable. There is nothing novel in this idea, of course; but Giles suggested that the body may remain a body, that is, numerically the same body, after separation from the form, since before actual separation it was separable, and actual separation does not change its numerical identity.[1] Body in this sense would mean extended and organised matter. Incidentally, this theory afforded him a simple explanation of the way in which Christ's body was numerically identical before and after Christ's death on the Cross. He neither had to have recourse to the doctrine of a *forma corporeitatis* (in which he did not believe) nor was he compelled to refer the numerical identity of Christ's body in the sepulchre with His body before death simply to its union with the Divinity. Moreover, one of the reasons why Giles of Rome attacked the doctrine of plurality of forms as incompatible with theological orthodoxy was that, in his opinion, it endangered the doctrine of Christ's death. If there are several forms in man and only one of them, which is peculiar to man and is not found in other animals, is separated at death, then Christ could not be said to have undergone bodily death. The theological reason was not his only reason by any means for attacking the plurality of forms; he believed, for instance, that different forms are contrary and cannot be found together in the same substance.

5. The *De ecclesiastica potestate* is of interest not merely intrinsically, as treating of the relation between Church and State, but also because it was one of the works which were utilised by Pope Boniface VIII in the composition of his famous Bull, *Unam*

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[1] It might appear that on Giles's theory the soul (i.e. the form) in a state of separation from the body would not be individual; but it must be remembered that for him, as for St. Thomas, it was individuated by union with matter and retained its individuality.

Sanctam (November 18th, 1302). In his *De regimine principum*, written for the prince who was to become Philip the Fair of France, Giles wrote in dependence on Aristotle and St. Thomas; but in the *De potestate ecclesiastica* he propounded a doctrine of papal absolutism and sovereignty and of the Pope's jurisdiction even in temporal matters which was aimed especially against the pretensions of monarchs and which was most acceptable to Boniface VIII. In this work he relied much more on the attitude shown by St. Augustine towards the State than on the political thought of St. Thomas, and what St. Augustine had said with the pagan empires principally in mind was applied by Giles to contemporary kingdoms, the doctrine of Papal supremacy being added.[1] There are indeed two powers, two swords, that of the Pope and that of the king; but temporal power is subject to the spiritual. 'If the earthly power goes wrong, it will be judged by the spiritual power as by its superior; but if the spiritual power, and especially the power of the supreme pontiff, acts wrongly, it can be judged by God alone.'[2] When Philip IV of France accused Boniface VIII of asserting, in the *Unam Sanctam*, that the Holy See has direct power over kings even in temporal matters, the Pope replied that that had not been his intention: he did not mean to usurp the power of kings, but to make it clear that kings, like any other members of the Church, were subject to the Church *ratione peccati*. It would appear, however, that Giles of Rome, who spoke, of course, simply as a private theologian, went much further in this matter than Boniface VIII. He admits that there are two swords and two powers and that the one power is vested in the monarch, the other in the Church, and especially in the Papacy; but he goes on to say that although priests and especially the supreme pontiff ought not under the new law, that is, in the Christian dispensation, to wield the material sword as well as the spiritual sword; this is not because the Church does not possess the material sword, but rather because it possesses the material sword, *non ad usum, sed ad nutum*. In other words, just as Christ possessed all power, spiritual and temporal, but did not actually use His temporal power, so the Church possesses power in temporal matters, though it is not expedient for her to exercise this power immediately and continually. Just as the body is ordered to the soul and should be subject to the soul, so the temporal power is ordered to the spiritual power and should be subject to it, even in temporal matters. The Church has, then, supreme jurisdiction even in temporal matters; and the logical consequence is that kings are little more than lieutenants of the Church.[1] 'All temporal things are placed under the dominion and power of the Church and especially of the supreme pontiff.'[2] This theory was followed by James of Viterbo in his *De regimine Christiano* before September 1302.

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[1] I do not mean to imply that Augustine rejected the pre-eminence of the Roman See; but it would be absurd to say that he maintained the doctrine of Papal jurisdiction in temporal affairs.

[2] 1, 5.

In 1287 the signal honour was paid to Giles of Rome of being made the Doctor of his Order during his own lifetime, not only in regard to what he had already written, but also in regard to what he should write in the future.

(b) *Henry of Ghent*

6. Henry of Ghent was born at Tournai or at Ghent at a date which cannot be determined. (His family came originally from Ghent in any case; but it was not a noble family, as legend had it.) By 1267 he was a Canon of Tournai, and in 1276 he became Archdeacon of Bruges. In 1279 he was made principal Archdeacon of Tournai. His archidiaconal duties do not seem to have been very exacting, as he taught at Paris, first in the faculty of arts and later (from 1276) in that of theology. In 1277 he was a member of the commission of theologians which assisted Stephen Tempier, Bishop of Paris. His works include a *Summa Theologica*, fifteen *Quodlibets*, *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam Aristotelis* (1–6), *Syncathegorematum Liber* and a *Commentum in Librum de Causis*; but it does not appear that the last three works can be attributed to him with certainty, and the same can be said of the Commentary on the *Physics* of Aristotle. It is, therefore, the *Summa Theologica* and the *Quodlibets* which constitute the sure source for our knowledge of Henry's teaching. He died on June 29th, 1293. He was never a member of the Servite Order, as was once maintained.

7. Henry of Ghent was an eclectic thinker and can be called neither an Augustinian nor an Aristotelian. This eclecticism may be illustrated by his theory of knowledge. If one read a proposition such as *omnis cognitio nostra a sensu ortum habet*,[3] one might suppose that Henry was a decided Aristotelian, with little sympathy for Augustinianism, and especially if one read the proposition in conjunction with his statement that man can know that which is true in the creature without any special divine illumination, but simply through his natural powers aided by God's ordinary

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[1] Cf. 1, 8–9.

[2] 2, 4.

[3] *Summa*, 3, 3, 4; 3, 4, 4.

concurrence.[1] But this is only one aspect of his thought. The knowledge of creatures which we can attain through sense-experience is but a superficial knowledge, and though we can without illumination know what is true in the creature, we cannot without illumination know its truth. The reason why knowledge based simply on sense-experience is superficial, is this. The *species intelligibilis* contains no more than was contained in the *species sensibilis*: by the latter we apprehend the object in its singularity and by the former we apprehend the object in its universal aspect; but neither the one nor the other gives us the intelligible essence of the object in its relation to the divine ideas, and without the apprehension of the intelligible essence we cannot form a certain judgement concerning the object. The 'truth' (*Veritas*) of the object consists in its relation to the unchanging truth, and in order to apprehend this relation we need the divine illumination.[2] Thus when Henry of Ghent says that our knowledge comes from sense, he restricts the extension of 'knowledge': 'it is one thing to know concerning a creature that which is true in it, and it is another thing to know its truth.' The 'truth' of a thing is conceived by him in an Augustinian manner, and to apprehend it illumination is necessary. He may have made comparatively little use of the illumination theory and watered down Augustinianism to a certain extent, but the Augustinian element was certainly present in his thought: the natural operations of sense and intellect explain what one might call man's normal knowledge, which is a comparatively superficial knowledge of objects, but they do not and cannot explain the whole range of possible human knowledge.

A similar eclectic tendency can be seen in his doctrine of innatism. He rejected the Platonic doctrine of innatism and reminiscence and he rejected the theory of Avicenna that in this life ideas are impressed by the *Dator formarum*; but he did not accept the doctrine of Aristotle (as commonly interpreted) that all our ideas are formed by reflection on the data of sense-experience. Henry made his own the statement of Avicenna that the ideas of being, thing, and necessity are of such a kind that they are imprinted immediately on the soul by an impression which owes nothing to anterior and better-known ideas.[3] On the other hand, the primary ideas, of which the most important and the ultimate is that of being, are not innate in the strict sense, but are conceived together with experience of sense-objects, even if they are not derived from that experience.[1] The mind seems to draw these ideas out of itself or rather to form them from within on the occasion of sense-experience.[2] As the idea of being embraces both uncreated and created being,[3] the idea of God may be called innate in a certain sense; but this does not mean that man has from birth an actual idea of God, the origin of which is quite independent of experience: the idea is only virtually innate, in the sense that a man forms it from the idea of being, which is itself presupposed by experience of concrete objects but does not arise in clear consciousness, is not actually formed, until experience is enjoyed. As metaphysics really consist in an investigation of the idea of being and in the realisation of the relation between the intelligible essences of created being and uncreated being, one would expect that the necessity of illumination would be emphasised; but Henry frequently describes the genesis of ideas and of knowledge without any reference to a special illumination, possibly under the influence of Aristotle and of Avicenna. His tendency to eclecticism seems to have led to a certain carelessness in regard to consistency.

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[1] *Summa*, 1, 2, 11 and 13.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1, 2, 26.

[3] Avicenna, *Metaphysics*, 1, 2, 1; Henry, *Summa*, 1, 12, 9; 3, 1, 7.

8. While the natural philosopher or *physicus* starts with the singular object and then forms by abstraction the universal notion of the sensible object, the metaphysician starts with the idea of being (or *res* or *aliquid*) and proceeds to discover the intelligible essences virtually contained in that idea.[4] There is a certain overlapping, of course, between the provinces of physics and metaphysics, since, for example, when the metaphysician says that man is a rational animal, he apprehends the same object as the physicist, who says that man is a body and a soul; but the starting-point and the mode of approach of the metaphysician is different from that of the physicist. The metaphysician, proceeding from the more universal to the less universal, from genus to species, defines the intelligible essence of man, whereas the physicist starts from the individual man and by abstraction apprehends and states the physical components of all men.

Being or *res* in the widest sense comprises *res secundum opinionem* (such as a golden mountain) which have only mental being, and *res secundum veritatem*, which have an actual or possible extramental existence,[5] and it is being in the second sense which is *ens metaphysicum*, the object of metaphysics. Just as *ens* in the widest sense is divided analogically, so is *ens metaphysicum* divided analogically into that which is *ipsum esse*, God, and that *cui convenit esse*, creatures. Being is thus not a genus or predicament. Again, being in the last sense, *aliquid cui convenit vel natum est convenire esse*, comprises and is divided analogically into substances, to which it pertains to exist in themselves (*esse in se*) and accidents, to which it pertains to exist in another (*esse in alio*), that is, in a substance. It is quite true that for Aristotle too metaphysics was the science of being as being; but for Aristotle the idea of being was not the starting-point, the analysis of which leads to the discovery of the analogical divisions of being: Henry of Ghent was inspired in this matter by the thought of Avicenna, whose philosophy was also influential in the building of the Scotist system. According to both Henry of Ghent and Scotus the metaphysician studies the idea of being, and metaphysics move primarily on the conceptual level.

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[1] Cf. *Summa*, 1, 11, 6; 1, 5, 5.

[2] Cf. *ibid.*, 1, 11, 18.

[3] For the qualification which makes this statement not strictly true, see section 10.

[4] *Quodlibet*, 4, 4, 143.

[5] *Ibid.*, 7, 1, 389.

It might appear that on this view not only is it difficult to effect a passage from the essential level to the existential level, but also that there would be confusion between the *res secundum opinionem* and the *res secundum veritatem*. However, Henry maintained that essences which are actualised or which are objectively possible have and can be discerned as having a certain reality of their own, an *esse essentiae*, the possession of which distinguishes them from pure *entia rationis*. The theory of *esse essentiae*, which Henry took from Avicenna, must not be understood, however, to imply a kind of inchoate existence, as though the essence had an extramental existence of a rudimentary sort; Henry accused Giles of Rome of maintaining a theory of this kind: it means that the essence exists actually in thought, that it is definable, that it is an intelligible essence.[1] Its intelligibility, its intrinsic possibility, distinguishes it from the *res secundum opinionem*, from the notion, for example, of a being half man and half goat, which is a contradictory notion. As to the relation between the essential level and the existential level, it is evident enough that we can know the existence of the singular only through experience of the singular (there is no question in Henry's philosophy of any deduction of singulars), while the intelligible essence, which is universal in character, is not deduced from the notion of being so much as 'arranged' under the notion of being. As we have seen, the natural philosopher detects in man his physical components, body and soul; but man is defined by the metaphysician as a rational animal, in terms of genus and species, in terms of his intelligible essence. This intelligible essence is thus arranged under the notion of being and its (analogical) 'contractions', as a particular kind of substance; but that man actually exists is known only by experience. On the other hand, the intelligible essence is a reflection (an *exemplatum* or *ideatum*) of the Idea in God, the exemplar or absolute essence, and God knows singular things through essence considered as multipliable in numerically different substances or *supposita*: there are no ideas of singular things as such in God, but the latter are known by Him in and through the specific essence.[1] From this it would seem to follow either that singular things are contained in the universal idea in some way and are, theoretically at least, deducible from it or that one must relinquish any prospect of rendering singular things intelligible.[2] Henry would not allow that individuality adds any real element to the specific essence:[3] individual things differ from one another simply in virtue of the fact that they exist actually and extramentally. If, then, the individuation cannot be explained in terms of a real added element, it must be explained in terms of a negation, a double negation, that of internal or intrinsic division and that of identity with any other being. Scotus attacked this view on the ground that the principle of individuation cannot be a negation and that the negation must presuppose something positive; but, of course, Henry did presuppose something positive, namely existence.[4]

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[1] Cf. *Quodlibet*, 3, 2, 80.

The above may seem a confusing and perhaps somewhat irrelevant account of varied items of Henry's doctrine, but it is meant to bring out a fundamental difficulty in his system. In so far as metaphysics are a study of the idea of being and of intelligible essences and in so far as individuals are considered as intelligible only as contained in the essence, Henry's metaphysic is of a Platonic type, whereas his theory of individuation looks forward to the Ockhamist view that there is no need to seek for any principle of individuation, since a thing is individual by the very fact that it exists. If the first point of view demands an explanation of objects in terms of essence, the second demands an explanation in terms of existence, of creation and making; and

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[1] Scotus attacked this theory of Henry of Ghent.

[2] Cf. *Quodlibet*, 2, 1, 46.

[3] *Ibid.*, 8, 57f.

[4] For Henry's doctrine of the double negation, cf. *Quodlibet*, 5, 8, 245ff.

Henry juxtaposes the two points of view without achieving any adequate reconciliation.

9. We have seen that Henry of Ghent endowed the intelligible essence with an *esse essentiae*, as distinguished from the *esse existentiae*. What is the nature of the distinction in question? In the first place Henry rejected the theory of Giles of Rome, who transported the distinction on to the physical plane and made it a distinction between two separable things, essence and existence. Against this view Henry argued in his first (9), tenth (7) and eleventh (3) *Quodlibets*. If existence were distinct from essence in the sense postulated by Giles of Rome, existence would itself be an essence and would require another existence in order to exist; so that an infinite process would be involved. Moreover, what would existence, really distinct from essence, be? Substance or accident? One could maintain neither answer. Furthermore, Henry rejected the real distinction understood as a metaphysical distinction: the essence of an existent object is in no way indifferent to existence or non-existence; in the concrete order a thing either is or it is not. Existence is not a constitutive element or principle of a thing, of such a kind that the thing would be a synthesis of essence and existence; any synthesis there may be, that is, by way of addition of existence to essence, is the work of the mind.[1] On the other hand, the content of the concept of essence is not identical with the content of the concept of existence: the idea of an existent essence contains more, to our view, than the mere idea of essence as such. The distinction, therefore, though not a real distinction, is not a purely logical distinction, but an 'intentional' distinction, expressing different *intentiones* concerning the same simple thing.[2]

But if the actualised essence contains more than the essence conceived as possible and if the real distinction between essence and existence is not to be reintroduced, what can this 'more' be? According to Henry of Ghent, it consists in a relation, the relation of effect to Cause, of creature to Creator. It is one and the same thing for a creature to exist and to depend on God:[3] to be an effect of God and to have *esse existentiae ab ipso* are the same, namely a *respectus* or relation to God. The essence considered merely as possible is an *exemplatum* and depends on the divine knowledge, whereas the actualised or existent essence depends on the divine creative power,[1] so that the notion of the latter contains more than the notion of the former; but though the relation of the actualised essence to God is a real relation of dependence, it is not distinct from the essence in the concrete order with a real distinction. From the metaphysical point of view, then, God alone can be thought without relation to any other being; the creature, apart from the twofold relationship to God (as *exemplatum* to Exemplar and as effect to Cause), is nothing. Through the first relationship *by itself* the essence does not exist 'outside' God; by the second relationship it exists as an actualised essence; but apart from that relationship it has no *esse existentiae*, since the *esse existentiae* and the *respectus ad Deum* are the same.

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[1] Cf. *Quodlibet*, 3, 9, 100; *Summa*, 21, 4, 10.

[2] Cf. *Summa*, 21, 4, 7 ff.; 27, 1, 25; 28, 4, 7.

[3] *Quodlibet*, 10, 7, 153.

10. Henry of Ghent admitted the *a posteriori* proofs of God's existence; but he regarded them as physical in character (his ideas of physics or natural philosophy and of metaphysics could lead to no other conclusion) and as inferior to the *a priori* proof. The physical proofs can lead us to the recognition of a pre-eminent Being, but they cannot reveal to us the essence of that Being: as far as these proofs are concerned, the existence of God is an existence of fact, which is not revealed as also an existence of right. The metaphysical proof, however, makes us see God's existence as necessarily contained in, or rather identical with His essence.[2] Similarly, it is only the metaphysical proof which can firmly establish the unicity of God, by showing that the divine essence has an intrinsic repugnance to any multiplication.[3]

The *a priori* idea of God, that of the supreme conceivable simple Perfection, which cannot not exist, was assumed by Henry of Ghent as one of the primary notions, namely Being, thing or essence, and Necessity. One might expect that he would attempt to deduce the notions of necessary Being and contingent being from an original univocal concept of being; but in point of fact he refused to admit the univocal character of the concept of being. Our realisation of what necessary Being is and our realisation of what contingent being is grow *pari passu*: we cannot have an imperfect knowledge of the latter without an imperfect knowledge of the former, nor a perfect knowledge of the latter without a perfect knowledge of the former.[4] There is no one univocal concept of being common to God and creatures: there are two concepts, that of necessary Being and that of contingent being, and our concept of being must be one or the other. We can, however, confuse the two. There are two sorts of indetermination, negative indetermination and privative indetermination. A being is negatively indeterminate when it excludes all possibility of determination in the sense of finitude, and God alone is indeterminate in this sense, while a being is privatively indeterminate when it can or must be determined but is not yet determined or is considered in abstraction from its determinations.[1] Thus if one considers being in abstraction from its determinations, one is considering *created* being, which must in the concrete be either substance or accident but which can be considered in abstraction from these determinations, and this concept of the *privative indeterminatum* does not comprise God, the *negative indeterminatum*. But the mind can easily confuse the two concepts and conceive them as one, although they are in reality two. In saying this and in excluding any univocal concept of being common to God and creatures Henry of Ghent wished to avoid the Avicennian idea of necessary creation, which would seem to follow if one could deduce from an original univocal concept of being both necessary and created being; but he came perilously near to teaching, and he was accused by Scotus of so teaching, that the two concepts of being are equivocal. It is perfectly true that Henry expounded a doctrine of analogy and asserted that 'being' is not used purely equivocally of God and creatures;[2] but he insisted so much that the concept of being is either the concept of God or the concept of creatures and that there is no positive community between them, but only negative, (without there being any positive foundation whatsoever for the negation, i.e. the 'indetermination') that there would seem to be considerable justification for Scotus's accusation.[3] Scotus objected that on Henry's view every argument from creatures to God must be fallacious, and it would indeed appear that if that aspect of Henry's thought to which Scotus objected is emphasised, the only way of safeguarding man's philosophical knowledge of God would be to recognise the existence of an *a priori* idea of God, not derived from experience of creatures.

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[1] *Summa*, 21, 4, 10.

[2] *Ibid.*, 22, 3; 25, 2-3.

[3] Cf. *ibid.*, 24, 6, 7; 22, 4; 22, 5.

[4] *Ibid.*, 24, 8, 6; 7, 7.

11. Henry of Ghent was, it has been said, an eclectic, and of this eclecticism some examples have been given. While he combated the theory of the real distinction put forward by Giles of Rome (and even that of St. Thomas, though Giles was the

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[1] Cf. *Summa*, 21, 2, 14.

[2] Cf. *ibid.*, 21, 2, 6 and 8.

[3] Cf. *ibid.*, 21, 2, 17; 21, 2, *ad* 3.

particular object of attack), while he refused to allow the possibility of creation from eternity, and while he rejected the Thomist theory of individuation, he also rejected the doctrine of universal hylomorphism in creatures and opposed the doctrine of plurality of forms so far as material beings other than man were concerned. In the first *Quodlibet* Henry adopted the Thomist theory of the unicity of the substantial form in man, but in the second *Quodlibet* he changed his opinion and admitted the *forma corporeitatis* in man. On the other hand, while he postulated special illumination of a restricted type and while he maintained the superiority of the free will to the intellect, he borrowed a good deal from Aristotle, was strongly influenced by the philosophy of Avicenna and, in his doctrine of individuation, bears more resemblance to the thinkers of the Ockhamist movement than to his predecessors. Yet to call a philosopher an 'eclectic' without qualification implies that he achieved no synthesis and that his philosophy is a collection of juxtaposed opinions borrowed from various sources. In the case of Henry of Ghent, to picture him in this light would be to commit an injustice. He was certainly not always consistent, nor do his opinions and tendencies of thought always harmonise well with one another; but he belonged definitely to the Platonic tradition in Christian thought and his borrowings from Aristotle and Aristotelian thinkers do not really affect this fact; St. Bonaventure himself had utilised Aristotle, but he was none the less an Augustinian. The main tendency of Henry as metaphysician was to construct a metaphysic of the intelligible, a metaphysic of essences rather than of the concrete, and this marks him off as a philosopher of the Platonic tradition.

But if Henry belonged to the Platonic tradition, he was also a Christian philosopher. Thus he maintained clearly the doctrine of free creation out of nothing. He did not attempt to deduce created existence from the idea of being, and in his desire to avoid making creation necessary he rejected the univocity of the concept of being as a starting-point for metaphysical deduction. Plato himself, of course, never attempted an 'idealist' deduction of this type; but Henry, unlike Plato or any other pagan Greek philosopher, had a clear idea of creation and he stressed the dependence of all created things on God, maintaining that they were nothing apart from their relationship to Him. This prominent Christian element in his thought sets him in the Augustinian tradition, from which he drew his doctrines of illumination and of virtually innate ideas, of ideas which can be formed from within. On the other hand, while he tried to avoid what he considered to be the faults of the philosophy of Avicenna, his metaphysic was strongly influenced by the Moslem philosopher's thought, so that M. Gilson has been able to speak in this connection of an *augustinisme avicennisant*. Apart from the fact that Henry brings together God in His function as illuminator (St. Augustine) with the separate active intellect of Avicenna (a *rapprochement* which was not peculiar to Henry), his doctrine of mitigated innatism naturally inclined him to a metaphysic of intelligible essences rather than to a metaphysic of the concrete, and, like Avicenna, he attributed a certain reality or objectivity, though not independent of God, to essences considered as possible, essences which follow necessarily from the divine intellect and so are, in themselves at least, deducible. But when it was a question of existence, of the concrete existent world of creation, he had to part company with Avicenna. The latter, regarding the divine will as subject to the same necessity as the divine intellect, made the emergence of existences parallel to the emergence of essences, the subordinate Intelligences being responsible for prolonging the activity of the first Cause and bringing about the transition from the universal to the particular; but Henry of Ghent, as a Christian thinker, could not hold this: he had to admit free creation and also creation in time. He saw quite well that the sensible and concrete cannot be rendered fully intelligible, if to render fully intelligible means to explain in terms of essence, and therefore he made a sharp distinction between metaphysics and physics, each of the sciences having its own starting-point and mode of procedure.

In spite, however, of the Platonic and Avicennian tendencies in his thought, Henry of Ghent helped in a certain sense to prepare the way for nominalism. Insistence on illumination easily leads to a certain scepticism concerning the mind's power of achieving a metaphysical system based on experience, while Henry's tendency to simplification when dealing with the created world (for example, by the denial of any real distinction between essence and existence and by his theory of individuation, which involves the rejection of realism) may, if considered by itself, be regarded as heralding the simplifying tendencies and the conceptualism of the fourteenth century. Of course, this is but one aspect of his philosophy and it is not the most important and characteristic, but it is a real aspect none the less. Ockham criticised Henry of

Ghent's thought under its other aspects; but that does not mean that Henry's thought was without influence on the movement of which Ockham was the chief figure. Henry has been called an 'intermediary' figure, intermediary between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and this can hardly be denied; but before Ockhamism arose, Duns Scotus, who so frequently criticised Henry, as Henry had criticised Giles of Rome, was to attempt to develop and justify a synthesis of Augustinianism and Aristotelianism, thus endeavouring, in spite of his polemics against Henry of Ghent, to accomplish satisfactorily what Henry had not accomplished satisfactorily.

CHAPTER XLV

SCOTUS—I

Life—Works—Spirit of Scotus's philosophy.

1. JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Doctor Subtilis*, was born in Scotland, at Maxton in the county of Roxburgh, his family name, Duns, being originally taken from a place in the county of Berwick. That he was a Scotsman can be now taken as certain, not simply from the fact that by his time Scotsmen and Irishmen were no longer called indiscriminately *Scoti*, but also as having been proved by the discovery of a series of documents, the authority of which can scarcely be called in question. But if the country of his birth is certain, the date is not so certain, though it is probable that he was born in 1265 or 1266, and that he entered the Order of Friars Minor in 1278, taking the habit in 1280 and being ordained priest in 1291. The traditional date of his death is November 8th, 1308. He died at Cologne and was buried in the Franciscan Church in that city.

The dates of Scotus's academic career are by no means certain; but it appears that he studied at Paris under Gonsalvus of Spain from 1293 to 1296, after a brief sojourn at Oxford. According to the traditional view Scotus then went to Oxford, where he commented on the *Sentences* and produced the *Opus Oxoniense* or Oxford Commentary on the *Sentences*. The fact that in the fourth book of the *Opus Oxoniense* Scotus quotes a bull of Benedict XI, of January 31st, 1304, is no certain argument against the traditional view, as Scotus certainly retouched and made later additions to the work.[1] In 1302 Scotus returned to Paris and commented there on the *Sentences*; but in 1303 he was banished from Paris, as he had supported the Papal party against King Philip the Fair. Where he spent the time of banishment is not quite clear: Oxford, Cologne and Bologna have all been suggested. In any case he taught at Oxford in the academic year 1303–4, returning to Paris in 1304 and receiving the doctorate in theology in 1305. It is possible that he returned to Oxford again for a short while, but he was certainly at Paris, engaged in commenting on the *Sentences*, when he was sent to Cologne in the summer of 1307. At Cologne he resumed his work of teaching; but in 1308, as already mentioned, he died, when about forty-two or forty-three years of age.

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[1] Scotus is said to have taught at Cambridge also, either before or after his teaching at Oxford.

2. The uncertainty concerning the exact course of Scotus's life is to be regretted; but far more to be regretted is the uncertainty concerning the authentic character of some works attributed to him in the edition of Luke Wadding. Happily, however, the general authenticity of the two great commentaries on the *Sentences* is not in question, though neither the *Opus Oxoniense* nor the *Reportata Parisiensia* in their traditional form can be ascribed in their totality to Scotus. As to the *Opus Oxoniense,* the original text as Scotus left it (the *Ordinatio,* of which no manuscript has yet been discovered) was added to by disciples who wished to complete the work of the master by presenting a complete exposition of his thought, though in some subsequent codices the scribes attempted to note the additions which had been made. A similar situation presents itself in regard to the *Reportata Parisiensia,* since in their case too the desire to give a complete account of Scotus's teaching led the master's disciples to assemble together partial accounts from various sources, without, however, making any serious attempt to discover the respective authority and value of the different parts of the mosaic. The task of the Commission appointed to superintend the production of the critical edition of Scotus's works is, then, no easy one; but although the Oxford and Paris Commentaries represent basically the thought of Scotus, no secure and final picture of that thought can be given until the critical edition of the Commentaries appears, more especially until the original *Ordinatio* or *Liber Scoti* is published, free from accretions.

The authentic character of the *De primo principio* is not in question, though the arguments adduced by Father Ciganotto to show that it was Scotus's last work, written at Cologne, do not appear to be decisive. The *Quaestiones Quodlibetales* are also authentic,[1] as are also the forty-six *Collationes* (Wadding knew of only forty, but C. Balic discovered another six) and the first nine books of the *Quaestiones subtilissimae super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis.* As to the *De Anima,* the question of its authenticity has been a matter for dispute. Pelster maintained that it was authentic, while Longpré tried to show that it was unauthentic, though his arguments were declared insufficient by Fleig. It is now generally accepted as authentic, even by Longpré. On the other hand, the *Grammatica speculativa* is to be attributed to Thomas of Erfurt, while the *De rerum principio* is also unauthentic, being probably, in part at least, a plagiarism from the *Quaestiones Quodlibetales* of Godfrey of Fontaines. Also unauthentic are the *Metaphysica textualis* (probably to be attributed to Antoine André), the *Conclusiones metaphysicae* and the commentaries on Aristotle's *Physics* and *Meteorology*.

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[1] P. Glorieux: *La littérature quodlibétique,* t. 2 (Bibliothèque thomiste, 21), Paris, 1935.

To determine with certainty which are and which are not authentic works of Scotus is obviously a matter of importance. Some doctrines which appear in the *De rerum principio*, for example, do not appear in the certainly authentic works, so that if one were to accept the authenticity of the *De rerum principio* (as already mentioned, it is now rejected), one would have to assume that Scotus first taught a doctrine which he later abandoned, since it would clearly be out of the question to assume that his thought contained patent contradictions. To assert a change of opinion on some comparatively minor doctrine when no such change actually took place might not perhaps be a mistake of great importance, even if it resulted in an inaccurate account of Scotus's doctrinal development; but the question of authenticity or unauthenticity is of much greater importance where the *Theoremata* are concerned. In this work the author states that it cannot be proved that there is only one ultimate Principle or that God is infinite or that He is intelligent, and so on, such statements being, at first sight at least, in clear contradiction with the teaching of the certainly authentic works of Scotus. If, then, one were to accept the *Theoremata* as authentic, one would either have to assume an astonishing *volte-face* on Scotus's part or one would have to attempt a difficult task of interpretation and conciliation.

The first attack on the authenticity of the *Theoremata* was that of Father de Basly in the year 1918, and this attack was continued by Father Longpré. The latter argued that no manuscript had yet been discovered which explicitly attributed the work to Scotus, that the teaching contained in the work is contrary to that contained in Scotus's certainly authentic works, that Ockham and Thomas of Sutton, who attacked Scotus's natural theology, never quote the work as his, that the doctrine of the *Theoremata* is nominalistic in character and must be attributed to the Ockhamist School, and that John of Reading, who knew Scotus, quotes from the authentic works when he is dealing with the question whether God's existence can be proved or not by the natural light of reason, but does not mention the *Theoremata*. These arguments appeared to be convincing and were generally accepted as settling the question, until Father Balic brought forward other arguments to contest Longpré's view. Noting that Longpré's arguments were, for the most part, based on internal evidence, Balic tried to show not only that the arguments drawn from internal evidence were unconvincing, but also that there were good arguments drawn from external evidence to prove that the *Theoremata* were really the work of Scotus. Thus four codices explicitly attribute the work to Scotus, while in the fourth chapter of the *De primo principio* occur the words *In sequenti, scilicet in Theorematibus, ponentur credibilia*. The phrase *scilicet in Theorematibus* cannot have been added by Wadding, since it is found in some codices. In addition, the *Theoremata* are given as the work of Scotus by, among others, Joannes Canonicus, a fourteenth-century Scotist. Baudry then tried to show that even if some of the theories contained in the *Theoremata* betray a nominalistic spirit, the fundamental doctrines of the work are not of Ockhamist origin, and Gilson (in the *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, 1937–8) attempted to prove that the first sixteen *Theoremata* do not stand in contradiction with the certainly authentic works of Scotus. According to Gilson, Scotus speaks in the *Theoremata* (supposing that the work is really by him) as a philosopher showing what the unaided human reason can achieve, while in the *Opus Oxoniense*, which is a theological work, he shows what can be achieved by metaphysics aided by theology. Even if the conclusions arrived at in the *Theoremata* seem to approximate to those of Ockham, the spirit is different, since Scotus believed that the theologian can give metaphysical and demonstrative arguments for God's existence and attributes, whereas Ockham denied this and had recourse to faith alone. In the latest edition (1944) of his work, *La philosophie au moyen âge*, Gilson leaves the question of the authenticity or unauthenticity of the *Theoremata* an open question; but he maintains that if the *Theoremata* are the work of Scotus, there is no difficulty in reconciling the doctrine they contain with the doctrine of the *Opus Oxoniense*. The pure philosopher treats of being in a universal sense and can never get beyond a first mover who is first in the chain of causes but who is nevertheless in the chain; he cannot arrive at the conception of God which can be attained by the philosopher who is also a theologian.

I feel rather doubtful of the validity of M. Gilson's contention. In the Oxford Commentary Scotus states that many essential attributes of God can be known by the metaphysician,[1] and in both commentaries he asserts that man can attain a natural knowledge of God, although he cannot *ex puris naturalibus* come to know such truths as that of the Trinity.[2] I find it hard to suppose that when Scotus said that man can come to know truths about God *ex puris naturalibus*, he was thinking of a metaphysician who is also a theologian. Nor do I see that Scotus meant to confine the pure philosopher's knowledge of God to knowledge of Him as first Mover: he says clearly that the metaphysician can proceed further than the *physicus*.[3] Moreover, it seems to me extremely odd, supposing that the *Theoremata* are Scotus's work, that Scotus should prove in the *De primo principio* that God or the first Principle is, for example, intelligent, and that then in the *Theoremata* he should declare that this truth is a *credibile* and cannot be proved. He certainly restricted somewhat the scope of the natural reason in regard to God (he did not think that God's omnipotence is capable of strict proof by the natural reason); but it would seem from the *Commentaries*, from the *De primo principio* and from the *Collationes* that Scotus undoubtedly considered a natural theology to be possible, irrespective of the question whether the philosopher is also a theologian or not.[4] Of course, if it were ever proved conclusively by external evidence that the *Theoremata* are the authentic work of Scotus, one would have to have recourse to some such theory as that of M. Gilson in order to explain the apparently flat contradiction between the *Theoremata* and the other works of Scotus; but meanwhile it seems to me to be pressing conciliation too far to suggest that there is no contradiction, and I propose in my exposition of Scotus's natural theology to disregard the *Theoremata*. But, while disregarding the *Theoremata*, I admit, as just mentioned, that in the event of the work's authenticity being satisfactorily proved, one would be compelled to say with Gilson that in that work Scotus is considering simply the power of the natural philosopher (the *physicus*) in regard to the attainment of natural knowledge of God. My point is, however, that until the authenticity of the *Theoremata* is proved, there does not seem to be any adequate or compelling reason for affirming that the metaphysician of the certainly authentic works is necessarily a metaphysician who possesses the background of faith. I shall, therefore, treat the *Theoremata* for practical purposes as unauthentic, without, however, pretending to settle the question definitively or to add any further grounds than those already alleged by other writers for rejecting the work as spurious.

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[1] *Ox.*, Prol., 4, no. 32.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1, 3, 1; *Rep.*, 1, 3, 1; *Rep.*, Prol., 3, nos. 1 and 4.

[3] *Rep.*, Prol., 3, 1.

[4] Minges, accepting the *Theoremata*, tries to show that in that work Scotus understands demonstration in the strictest Aristotelian sense, as *demonstratio ex causis*. If that could be proved, there would, of course, be no contradiction between the *Theoremata* and the certainly authentic works of Scotus. Longpré, however, argues against this interpretation of the author's meaning. Cf. Minges, Vol. 2, pp. 29–30; Longpré, p. 109 (cf. Bibliography).

The problem of the *Theoremata* has been discussed at some length in order to show the difficulty there is in interpreting accurately the mind of Scotus. Even if one maintains that the doctrines of the *Theoremata* and of the *Opus Oxoniense* are not at variance, but can be reconciled, the very reconciliation results in a picture of Scotus's philosophy which would hardly be that suggested by a first acquaintance with the *Opus Oxoniense*. Still, even if the authenticity of the *Theoremata* has not been demonstrated and even if it would appear preferable to reject it, convenience of exposition is no sure criterion of authenticity or unauthenticity, and one cannot, in view of recent attempts to rehabilitate the work, exclude the possibility that it may at some future date be shown to be certainly authentic, even though internal evidence may suggest the contrary.

3. Various general interpretations of Scotus's philosophy have been given, ranging from the interpretation of Scotus as a revolutionary, as a direct precursor of Ockham and of Luther, to the attempt to soften down the sharp differences between Scotism and Thomism and to interpret Scotus as a continuator of the work of St. Thomas. The first interpretation, that of Landry, can be dismissed, in its extreme form at least, as extravagant and insufficiently grounded, while on the other hand it is impossible to deny that Scotism does differ from Thomism. But is Scotus to be regarded as a continuator of the Franciscan tradition who at the same time adopted a great deal from Aristotle and from non-Franciscan mediaeval predecessors, or is he to be regarded as a thinker who carried on the Aristotelian tradition of St. Thomas but at the same time corrected St. Thomas in the light of what he himself considered to be the truth, or is he simply to be

regarded as an independent thinker who at the same time depended, as all philosophers must, on preceding thinkers in regard to the problems raised and discussed? The question is not an easy one to answer, and any attempt to answer it definitively must be postponed until the production of the critical edition of Scotus's works; but it would seem that there is truth in each of the foregoing suggestions. Scotus was, indeed, a Franciscan Doctor, and even if he discarded a number of doctrines which were generally held in common by former Franciscan thinkers, he certainly regarded himself as faithful to the Franciscan tradition. Again, although Scotus certainly criticised St. Thomas's views on important points, he can also be regarded as continuing the work of synthesis to which St. Thomas had devoted himself. Finally, Scotus certainly was an independent thinker; but at the same time he built on already existing foundations. But although Scotism did not involve a complete break with the past, it is only reasonable to lay stress on its comparatively original and independent aspects and thus draw attention to the difference between Scotism and other systems.

In some aspects of his thought Scotus did indeed carry on the Augustinian-Franciscan tradition: in his doctrine of the superiority of will to intellect, for example, as also in his admission of plurality of forms and in his utilisation of the Anselmian argument for God's existence. Moreover, it has been shown that Scotus did not invent the *distinctio formalis a parte rei*, but that it had been employed by some preceding Franciscan thinkers. Nevertheless, Scotus often gave a peculiar stamp or emphasis to the elements he adopted from tradition. Thus in his treatment of the relation of will to intellect he emphasised freedom rather than love, though he held, it is true, to the superiority of love to knowledge, a superiority which is closely connected with his theory that the supreme practical principle is that God should be loved above all things. Again, though he utilised the Anselmian argument, the so-called 'ontological argument', he did not accept it as a conclusive proof of God's existence but maintained, not only that it must be 'coloured' before it can be usefully employed, but also that even then it is not a demonstrative proof of God's existence, since the only demonstrative arguments are *a posteriori*.

But if Scotus in some respects carried on the Augustinian-Franciscan tradition, in other respects he departed from that tradition. It is not quite clear whether he did or did not teach the hylomorphic composition of angels; but he expressly rejected as unnecessary the theories of *rationes seminales* and of a special illumination of the human intellect, while he saw no contradiction, as St. Bonaventure had seen, in the idea of creation from eternity, even though he speaks more hesitantly than St. Thomas on this matter. In Scotism, then, the influence of Aristotelianism had penetrated further than it had in the philosophy of St. Bonaventure, and one must mention in particular the influence of Avicenna. For example, Scotus insists that the object of the metaphysician is being as being, and in his insistence on this point, as in his treatment of the problem of God, he seems to have been influenced by the Islamic philosopher, whose name occurs not infrequently in the pages of Scotus's works. It is true that Aristotle himself had declared that metaphysics, or rather first philosophy, is the science of being as being; but the Aristotelian metaphysic centres in practice round the doctrine of the four causes, whereas Scotus treats at length of the idea and nature of being, and the impulse thereto seems to have been partly derived from Avicenna. Scotus's discussion of universals, for instance, was also not without a debt to Avicenna.

Yet even if Scotus owed much more to Aristotle and his commentators than did St. Bonaventure, and even if he appeals to the authority of Aristotle in support of this or that theory, he was far from being a mere follower of 'the Philosopher', whom he does not hesitate to criticise. But, apart from individual pieces of criticism, Scotus's philosophical inspiration, so to speak, was different from that of Aristotle. In his eyes the conception of God as first Mover was a very inadequate conception, as it does not pass beyond the physical world and attain the transcendent, infinite Being on which all finite beings essentially depend. Again, it follows from Scotus's ethical doctrine that the Aristotelian ethic must be insufficient, as the notion of obligation, depending on the divine will, does not appear therein. It may be said, of course, that any Christian philosopher would find Aristotle deficient on such matters, and that St. Thomas was compelled to supplement Aristotle with Augustine; but the point is that Scotus did not go out of his way to 'explain' Aristotle or to 'reconcile' his opinions with what he himself considered to be the truth. In so far, for example, as there is a moral philosophy in the strict sense in Scotism, its dependence on or borrowing from Aristotelianism is far from being conspicuous.

Scotus's attitude to St. Thomas has been depicted in recent years in a rather different light to that in which it was formerly sometimes depicted: there has been, and not unnaturally, a tendency to minimise his divergences from Thomism. It has been pointed out, for example, that in his polemics he often has other thinkers in mind, Henry of Ghent, for example. This is quite true, of course; but the fact remains that he frequently criticises Thomist positions, giving St. Thomas's arguments and refuting them. But whatever the justice or injustice of this or that individual criticism may be, Scotus certainly did not criticise for the sake of criticism. If he insisted, for example, on some intellectual intuition of the singular object and if he emphasised the reality of the 'common nature', without however, falling into the exaggerated realism of early mediaeval philosophers, he did so, not simply in order to differ from St. Thomas, but in order to safeguard, as he believed, the objectivity of knowledge. Similarly, if he insisted on the univocal character of the concept of being, he did so because he considered his own doctrine to be absolutely necessary if agnosticism were to be avoided, that is, in order to safeguard the objective character of natural theology. If he made extensive use of the *distinctio formalis a parte rei*, this was not simply in order to display his subtlety, though he certainly was a subtle and sometimes a tortuous thinker and dialectician, but because he considered that such use was necessitated by the facts and by the objective reference of our concepts. In so far, then, as Scotus can be looked on as a successor of St. Thomas or as a continuator of Thomism, one must recognise that he endeavoured to correct what he regarded, rightly or wrongly, as dangerous deficiencies and tendencies in the Thomist philosophy.

It is well to bear in mind Scotus's concern for the theoretical safeguarding of the objectivity of human knowledge and of natural theology in particular, since the realisation of this concern acts as a counterbalance to the tendency to look on him as predominantly a destructive critic. It is true that Scotus was somewhat rigorous in his idea of what constitutes a proof, and he would not allow that the proofs adduced for the soul's immortality, for example, were conclusive, demonstrative; but all the same his philosophy remains one of the great mediaeval syntheses, an effort of constructive and positive thought. Moreover, it had a religious inspiration, as one can see from the invocations of God which sometimes appear in his writings and which one cannot simply dismiss as literary convention.

Nevertheless, if one looks on Scotism in its position as a stage in the development of mediaeval thought, it would be idle to deny that *de facto* it helped to stimulate the critical movement of the fourteenth century. When Scotus asserted that certain of the divine attributes cannot be proved by natural reason and when he denied the demonstrative character of the arguments adduced for the immortality of the human soul, he did not intend to undermine positive philosophy; but, looking at the matter from the purely historical viewpoint, his criticism obviously helped to prepare the way for the much more radical criticism of Ockham. That the latter regarded Scotism with hostility is not really relevant to the point at issue. Similarly, though it is quite untrue that Scotus made the whole moral law to depend on the arbitrary choice of the divine will, it can hardly be denied that the elements of voluntarism in his philosophy helped to prepare the way for the authoritarianism of Ockham. For example, his doctrine of moral obligation and his assertion that the secondary precepts of the decalogue do not belong, in the strict sense, to the natural law and are subject to divine dispensation in particular cases. I am not suggesting that Ockhamism is the legitimate child of Scotism, but simply that after the attainment of the supreme mediaeval synthesis of Thomism the work of the critical intellect or of the critical function of philosophy was only to be expected, and that the restricted and moderate use of criticism by Scotus prepared the way, as a matter of fact, for the radical and destructive criticism which is characteristic of Ockhamism. An historical judgement of this type does not necessarily mean that Scotus's criticism was not justified and the radical criticism of later thinkers unjustified: that is a matter for the philosopher to decide, not the historian. Of course, if the *Theoremata* were ever proved to be authentic, that would but serve to emphasise the critical aspect of Scotism.

In fine, then, the philosophy of Scotus looks backward as well as forward. As a positive and constructive system it belongs to the thirteenth century, the century which witnessed the philosophies of St. Bonaventure and, above all, of St. Thomas; but in its critical aspects and in its voluntaristic elements, associated though the latter are with the Augustinian-Franciscan tradition, it looks forward to the fourteenth century. A triumph of dialectical skill and of careful and patient thought the philosophy of Scotus is the work of a man who was, though impregnated with tradition, a powerful, vigorous and original thinker, a man who really belonged to the closing epoch of 'dogmatic philosophy' but who at the same time heralded the new movement.

CHAPTER XLVI

SCOTUS—II: KNOWLEDGE

The primary object of the human intellect—Why the intellect depends on the phantasm—The soul's inability to intuit itself in this life—Intellectual apprehension of the individual thing—Is theology a science?—Our knowledge is based on sense-experience, and no special illumination is required for intellectual activity—Intuitive and abstractive knowledge—Induction.

1. THE primary natural object of our intellect is being as being, from which it follows that every being, every thing which is intelligible, falls within the scope of the intellect.[1] Scotus gives, among other proofs, one taken from Avicenna to the effect that if being were not the primary object of the intellect, being could be described or explained in terms of something more ultimate, which is impossible. But if being as being is the natural object of the intellect and if being is taken to include every intelligible object, does it not follow that infinite Being, God, is a natural object of the human intellect? In a sense the answer must be in the affirmative, since being includes infinite being and finite being, but it does not follow that man has an immediate natural knowledge of God, since man's intellect in its present state is directed immediately to sensible things. But, says Scotus, if we are speaking of the primary object of the intellect, it is only reasonable to assign as its primary object that which is the primary object of intellect as such, not that which is the primary object of the intellect in this or that particular case. We do not say, for example, that the primary object of vision is that which the eye can see in candlelight; but we assign as its primary object that which is its object simply as a power or faculty.[2] Therefore, even if man in his present state (*homo viator*) comes first of all to know creatures, this does not mean that the primary adequate object of his intellect is not being as being. It may be added that this doctrine does not mean that the human intellect has a natural power of knowing the divine essence in itself or the divine Persons in the Trinity, since the general (and univocal) concept of being does not include *this particular essence as particular*, while creatures are not such perfect imitations of God that they reveal the divine

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[1] *Ox.*, Prol., q. 1.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1, 3, 3, no. 24.

essence as it is in itself.[1] The divine essence as such moves (*movet*) naturally, is the natural object of the divine intellect only; it can be known by the human intellect only through God's free choice and activity, not through the human intellect's natural power.

But if Scotus in assigning being as being as the primary adequate object of the human intellect certainly did not confuse supernatural and natural knowledge, he equally certainly meant to reject St. Thomas's view, or what he regarded as such, of the primary object of the human mind. St. Thomas[2] maintained that the natural object of the human intellect is the essence of the material thing, which essence becomes intelligible to the intellect when it is abstracted from the individualising matter. It is natural to the angelic intellect to know natures which do not exist in matter; but the human intellect cannot do this in its present state, when united to the body. And to be united to the body is the natural state of the human intellect; to be separated from the body is *praeter naturam*. So St. Thomas argues that, inasmuch as the natural object of the human intellect is the form of the material thing and inasmuch as we know this kind of form by abstracting it from the 'phantasm', the human intellect necessarily depends on the 'phantasm', and so on sense-experience, for its knowledge.[3] Scotus[4] interprets St. Thomas as teaching that the quiddity or essence, known by way of abstraction from the phantasm, is the primary object of the human intellect considered not simply as being in a certain state, that is, in the present life, but in its nature as a power or faculty of a certain kind, and he replies that this opinion is untenable by a theologian, i.e. by a man who accepts the next life and the doctrine of eternal happiness. In heaven the soul knows immaterial things directly. Now, the intellect remains the same power in heaven as it was on earth. Therefore, if it can know immaterial things in heaven, we cannot say that its primary object is the essence of the material thing: its primary object, if we consider the intellect as a power, must embrace both immaterial and material things, even if in this life it cannot know immaterial things directly. Its restriction in this life to a certain type of object must be secondary, not primary. If it is answered that in heaven the intellect is elevated, so that it can know immaterial objects directly, Scotus replies that this knowledge either exceeds the power of the intellect or it does not.

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[1] *Ox.*, 3, 2, 16, cf. *Quodlibet* 14: *Utrum anima suae naturali perfectioni relicta possit cognoscere Trinitatem personarum in Divinis.*

[2] *S.T.*, Ia, 12. 4.

[3] Cf. *ibid.*, Ia, 85, 1.

[4] *Ox.*, 1, 3, 3, nos. 1 ff.

If the latter is the case, then the primary object of the intellect considered *ex natura potentiae* cannot be the quiddity of the material thing, whereas, if the former is the case, then the intellect in heaven becomes another power, which St. Thomas certainly does not intend to teach.

Scotus also argues that if St. Thomas's view were correct, metaphysical science would be impossible for our intellects, since metaphysics are the science of being as being. If the primary object of the human intellect were the essence of the material thing, it could no more know being as being than the power of vision could extend further than its natural object, colour and light.[1] If the Thomist view were true, metaphysics would either be impossible, if understood in its proper sense, or it would not transcend physics. In fine, 'it does not seem fitting to confine the intellect, considered as a power, to the sensible thing, so that it transcends the senses only through its mode of cognition', that is, not through its object as well.

Since Scotus also maintains[2] that there is in the human intellect a natural desire to know 'the cause' distinctly and that a natural desire cannot be in vain, and since he concludes that the primary object of the intellect cannot, therefore, be material things, which are the effect of the immaterial cause, it might appear that he is contradicting his assertion that we cannot have a natural knowledge of the divine essence; but it must be remembered that he does not deny that the human intellect in its present state is limited in range, though he insists that the object of a power in a certain condition must not be confused with the object of the power considered in itself. Moreover, he did not consider that an analysis of being as being can yield knowledge of the divine essence as it is in itself, for even if being is the primary and adequate object of the human intellect, it does not follow that we form our idea of being by any other way than abstraction. In general, we may say that Scotus accepted the Aristotelian account of abstraction, though he considered that the active and passive intellects are not two distinct powers, but are two aspects or functions of one power.[3]

2. As to the reason why the human intellect in its present state, in this life, depends on the phantasm, Scotus declares that it is due to the order established by divine wisdom, either as a penalty for original sin or with a view to the harmonious operation of our

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[1] *Ox.*, 1, 3, 3, nos. 1 ff. [2] *Ibid.*, 1, 3, 3, no. 3. [3] *De Anima*, 13.

various powers (*propter naturalem concordiam potentiarum animae in operando*), sense and imagination apprehending the individual thing, the intellect apprehending the universal essence of that thing, or else on account of our infirmity (*ex infirmitate*). The intellect in its present condition, he repeats, is moved immediately only by what is imaginable or sensible, and the reason for this may be punitive justice (*forte propter peccatum, sicut videtur Augustinus dicere*) or it may be a natural cause, inasmuch as the order or harmony of powers may require it so far as this present state is concerned. 'Nature' in this connection means, therefore, nature in a particular state or condition, not nature absolutely considered: on this point Scotus insists.[1] This is not a very satisfactory or a very clear or decided explanation; but what Scotus is quite clear about is that the intellect, absolutely considered, is the faculty of being as being, and he decisively rejects what he regards as the Thomist doctrine. Whether Scotus is fair in his interpretation of St. Thomas is another matter. Sometimes St. Thomas states explicitly that the proper object of the intellect is being.[2]

However, it is true that St. Thomas insists on the natural character of the necessity of the *conversio ad phantasma*,[3] arguing that if this necessity were simply the result of union with a body and not natural to the soul itself, it would follow that the union of soul and body takes place for the good of the body, not of the soul, since the soul would be hampered in its natural operations through its union with the body. Emphasising this aspect of the Thomist doctrine, Scotus concluded that Thomism is unable, logically speaking, to justify the possibility of metaphysical science.

3. Scotus's view on the primary object of the human intellect naturally had its effect on his treatment of the disputed question concerning the soul's knowledge of itself. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, the soul in its present state, which is its natural state, comes to know by means of ideas abstracted from sensible objects, and from this he concludes that the soul has no immediate knowledge of its own essence, but that it comes to know itself only indirectly, by reflecting on the acts by which it abstracts ideas and knows objects in those ideas.[4] Scotus, however, maintained that though the soul actually lacks an immediate intuition of itself in this life, it is a natural object of intellection to itself and

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[1] Cf. *Ox.*, 1, 3, 3, no. 24; 2, 3, 8, no. 13.

[2] As in *S.T.*, Ia, 5, 2, for instance.

[3] *S.T.*, Ia, 89, 1.

[4] Cf. *ibid.*, Ia, 87, 1.

would actually intuit itself, 'were it not hindered'.[1] He then proceeds to suggest the causes of this hindrance which have already been mentioned. The difference between Scotus and St. Thomas concerns, then, the explanation of a fact rather than the fact itself. Both agree that the soul is actually without an immediate intuition of itself in this life; but, whereas St. Thomas explains this fact in terms of the nature of the human soul, attacking the Platonist view of the relation of soul to body, Scotus explains it, not in terms of the soul's nature, absolutely considered, but in terms of a hindrance, even suggesting that this hindrance may be due to sin and quoting St. Augustine in support of this suggestion. St. Thomas's attitude follows from his adoption of the Aristotelian psychology, whereas Scotus's position can be associated with the Augustinian tradition. On this matter one should regard Scotus not as an innovator or revolutionary or a destructive critic of Thomism, but rather as an upholder of the Augustinian-Franciscan tradition.

4. We have seen that Scotus considered his doctrine concerning the primary object of the intellect to be essential for the maintenance and justification of metaphysics: he also considered his doctrine of the intellectual apprehension of the individual thing as essential to the maintenance of the objectivity of human knowledge. According to St. Thomas[2] the intellect cannot know individual material things directly, since the intellect comes to know only by abstracting the universal from matter, the principle of individuation. He admits, however, that the mind has an indirect knowledge of individual things, since it cannot actually know the abstracted universal except through the 'conversion to the phantasm'. The imagination always plays its part, and the image is an image of the individual thing; but the primary and direct object of intellectual knowledge is the universal.

Scotus refused to accept this Thomist doctrine. The vehement repudiation of the doctrine wherein it is declared false and even heretical (on the ground that the Apostles believed that a certain visible, palpable, individual human being was God) comes from an unauthentic work, the *De rerum principio*; but the authentic works of Scotus make the latter's position perfectly clear. He accepted in general the Aristotelian account of abstraction, but he insists that the intellect has a confused primary intuition of the singular thing. His principle is that the higher power knows what the lower power apprehends, though the higher power knows the object in a more perfect manner than the lower power does, so that the intellect, which co-operates in perception, knows intuitively the singular thing apprehended by the senses. The intellect knows true contingent propositions and reasons from them; and such propositions concern individual things known intuitively as existing. Therefore, although abstract and scientific knowledge concerns universals, as Aristotle rightly taught, we must also recognise an intellectual knowledge of the singular thing as existent.[1] As already mentioned, the very vehement repudiation of the Thomist position, which is ascribed to Scotus by Father Parthenius Minges, for example,[2] comes from the unauthentic *De rerum principio*, and certain remarks which are found in the authentic works might lead one to suppose that Scotus's position on the question of the intellectual knowledge of the singular thing is exactly parallel to his position in regard to the soul's intuition of itself. He insists that the singular thing is intelligible in itself and that the human intellect has at least the remote capability of understanding it; but he seems to imply, or even to state explicitly, that in its present condition it is unable to do so. 'The singular thing is intelligible in itself, as far as the thing itself is concerned; but if it is not intelligible to some intellect, to ours, for example, this is not due to unintelligibility on the part of the singular thing itself.'[3] Again, 'it is not an imperfection to know the singular thing', but 'if you say that our intellect does not understand the singular thing, I reply that this is an imperfection (which obtains) in its present state'.[4] However, Scotus seems to mean that while we have no clear knowledge of the singular thing as singular, a deficiency which is due, not to the singular thing's lack of intelligibility, but to the imperfection of our intellectual operations in this life, we none the less have a primary, though confused, intellectual intuition of the singular thing as existent. This seems to be the view expressed in the *Quodlibet*[5] where Scotus argues that if it is said that we have an intellectual knowledge of the universal and sense-experience of the singular, this is not to be understood in the sense that the two powers are equal and disparate, so that the intellect would not know the singular at all, but in the sense that the lower power is subordinate to the higher and that though the higher power can operate in a way that the lower cannot, the opposite cannot be assumed as true. From the fact that sense cannot know the universal it does not follow that the intellect cannot know the singular. The intellect can have an intuitive knowledge of the singular as existent, even if its knowledge of the essence is knowledge of the universal.

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[1] *Ox.*, 2, 3, 8, no. 13.

[2] *S.T.*, Ia, 86, 1.

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[1] *Ox.*, 4, 45, 3, no. 17.

[2] *J. Duns Scoti Doctrina Philosophica et Theologica*, p. 247.

[3] *Ox.*, 2, 3, 6, no. 16. [4] *Ibid.*, 2, 3, 9, no. 9. [5] 13, 8–10.

If we are willing to accept the *De Anima* as authentic, Scotus's opinion is placed beyond doubt. In that work[1] Scotus rejects the Thomist doctrine on our knowledge of the singular, and also the Thomist doctrine of the principle of individuation, on which the first doctrine rests, and argues that the singular thing is (i) intelligible in itself; (ii) intelligible by us even in our present state; (iii) not intelligible by us in our present state so far as clear knowledge is concerned. The singular thing is intelligible in itself, since what is not intelligible in itself could not be known by any intellect, whereas the singular thing is certainly known by the divine and angelic intellects. It is intelligible by us even in our present state, as is shown by the process of induction and by the fact that we can love the individual thing, love presupposing knowledge. It is not, however, intelligible by us in our present state in a complete and clear manner (*sub propria ratione*). If two material things were deprived of all difference of accidents (of place, colour, shape, etc.), neither sense nor intellect could distinguish them from one another, even though their 'singularities' (Scotus's *haecceitas*) remained, and this shows that we have, in our present state, no clear and complete knowledge of the singularity of a thing. We can say, therefore, that the object of sense is the individual thing and the object of intellect the universal, if we mean that the intellect is not moved by singularity as such and does not know it clearly and completely in its present state; but we are not entitled to say that the intellect has no intuition of the individual thing as existent. If we say this, we destroy the objectivity of knowledge. 'It is impossible to abstract universals from the singular without previous knowledge of the singular; for in this case the intellect would abstract without knowing from what it was abstracting.'[2] It is clear that Scotus rejected the Thomist doctrine not merely because he rejected the Thomist idea of individuation, nor even merely because a process like induction seemed to him to prove the Thomist doctrine false; but also because he was convinced that the Thomist doctrine endangered the objectivity of that scientific and universal knowledge on which the Thomists laid such stress. Scotus did not mean to reject (he makes this quite clear) the Aristotelian doctrine that human science is of the universal; but he considered it essential to supplement that doctrine by accepting our intellectual intuition of the singular thing as existent, and he considered that this supplementation was necessitated by the facts. Concern for the safeguarding of the objectivity of human knowledge shows itself also in Scotus's handling of the problem of universals; but consideration of this problem is best left for the chapter on metaphysics, where it can be treated in connection with the problem of individuation.

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[1] 22.

[2] *De Anima*, 22, 3.

5. From one point of view it would not be unreasonable to maintain, as has been maintained, that Scotus's ideal of science was mathematical science. If science is understood in the sense in which Aristotle uses the word in the first book of the *Posterior Analytics*, that is, as involving necessity of the object, as well as evidence and certainty, we cannot say that theology, as concerned with the Incarnation and with God's relations with man in general, is a science, since the Incarnation is not a necessary or a deducible event.[1] On the other hand, if we consider theology as concerned with its primary object, with God as He is in Himself, it treats of necessary truths like the Trinity of Persons, and is a science; but we must add that it is a science in itself and not for us, since the truths in question, though certain, are not self-evident to us. If someone were unable to understand the arguments of the geometers, but accepted their conclusions on their word, geometry would be for him an object of belief, not a science, even though it would still be a science in itself.[2] Theology considered as concerned with God in Himself, is thus a science in itself, though not for us, since, in spite of the necessity of the object, the data are accepted on faith. Theology as concerned with God's external operations, however, treats of 'contingent', that is, non-necessary events, and so is not a science in that sense. Scotus is clearly taking geometrical science as the model of science in the strict sense.

It should be added, however, that when Scotus denies that theology is a science in the senses above indicated, he does not intend to disparage theology or to cast doubts upon its certainty. He expressly says that if one understands 'science', not in the strictest sense, but as understood by Aristotle in the sixth book of the *Ethics*, namely as contrasted with opinion and conjecture, it is a science, since it is certain and true, though it is more properly to be termed 'wisdom'.[1] Moreover, theology is not subordinate to metaphysics, since, although its object is in some degree comprised in the object of metaphysics, for God as knowable by the natural light of reason is comprised in the object of metaphysics, it does not receive its principles from metaphysics, nor are the truths of dogmatic theology demonstrable by means of the principles of being as such. The principles of dogmatic theology are accepted on faith, on authority; they are not demonstrated by natural reason nor are they demonstrable by the metaphysician. On the other hand, metaphysics are not, in the strict sense, a subordinate science to theology, since the metaphysician does not borrow his principles from the theologian.[2]

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[1] *Ox.*, Prol., 3, no. 28.

[2] *Ibid.*, Prol., 2 lat., no. 4.

Theology, according to Scotus, is a practical science; but he explains very carefully and at length what he means by this.[3] 'Even necessary theology', that is, theological knowledge of necessary truths concerning God in Himself, is logically prior to the elicited act of will by which we choose God, and the first principles of salutary conduct are taken from it. Scotus discusses the views of Henry of Ghent and others, rejecting them in favour of his own view. He thus parts company with St. Thomas, who says[4] that theology is a speculative science, just as he parts company with St. Thomas when the latter declares that theology is a science.[5] Scotus, as one would expect in view of his doctrine of the priority of will over intellect, emphasises the aspect of theology under which it is a norm of salutary conduct for man.

The foregoing considerations may seem to be irrelevant, referring, as they do, to dogmatic theology; but if one understands Scotus's position in regard to dogmatic theology, one can see how unjust and false are some of the accusations which have been brought against him. If one said simply that whereas St. Thomas considered theology to be a science, a speculative science, Scotus declared that theology is not a science and that, in so far as it can be called a science, it is a practical science, one might conclude that theological doctrines were, for Scotus, postulates having only practical or pragmatic value; and in point of fact, Scotus has actually been compared with Kant. But if one considers Scotus's meaning, such an interpretation is obviously unjust and false. For example, Scotus does not deny that theology is a science as far as certainty is concerned; he simply says that if you define science in the sense in which geometry is a science, then theology cannot be called a science. With this position St. Thomas would agree. Theology, he says, is a science, because its principles are derived from those of a higher science, proper to God and the blessed, so that they are absolutely certain; it is not a science in the same sense in which geometry and arithmetic are sciences, since its principles are not self-evident to the natural light of reason.[1] Again, Scotus says that theology is for us a practical science, mainly because revelation is given as a norm for salutary conduct, that we may attain our last end, whereas for St. Thomas[2] theology is primarily a speculative science, though not exclusively, because it deals more with divine things than with human acts. In other words, the main difference between them on this matter is one of emphasis: it is a difference which one would expect in view of St. Thomas's general emphasis on intellect and theoretic contemplation and Scotus's general emphasis on will and love, and it has to be seen in the light of the Aristotelian and Franciscan traditions rather than in the light of Kantianism and Pragmatism. If anyone wishes to make out that Scotus was a Kantian before Kant, he will find no solid reasons to support his contention in Scotus's doctrine concerning dogmatic theology.

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[1] *Ox.*, Prol., 3, no. 28.
[2] *Ibid.*, Prol., 3, no. 29.
[3] *Ibid.*, Prol. 4.
[4] *S.T.*, Ia, 1, 4.
[5] *Ibid.*, Ia, 1, 2.

6. Although Scotus insists, as we have seen, that the primary object of the intellect is being in general and not simply material essences, his Aristotelianism leads him also to emphasise the fact that our actual knowledge originates with sensation. There are no innate ideas, therefore. In the *Quaestiones subtilissimae super libros Metaphysicorum*[3] he affirms that the intellect does not, in virtue of its own constitution, possess any natural knowledge, either in simple or in complex notions, 'because all our knowledge arises from sensation'. This applies even to the knowledge of the first principles. 'For first the sense is moved by some simple, and not complex object, and through the movement of the sense the intellect is moved and apprehends simple objects: this is the intellect's first act. Secondly, after the apprehension of simple objects there follows another act, that of bringing together simple objects, and after this composition the intellect is able to assent to the truth of the complex, if it is a first principle.' Natural knowledge of the first principles means no more than that when the simple terms have been understood and combined, the intellect

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[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 1, 2.

[2] *Ibid.*, Ia, 1, 4.

[3] 2, 1, no. 2.

immediately assents, in virtue of its own natural light, to the truth of the principle; 'but the knowledge of the terms is acquired from sensible objects'. What Scotus means is this. We obtain the notions of 'whole' and 'part', for example, through sense-experience; but when the intellect brings together the terms, it sees immediately the truth of the proposition that the whole is greater than the part. The knowledge of what a whole is and what a part is comes from sense-experience; but the natural light of the intellect enables it to see immediately the truth of the complex object, the first principle. In answer to Averroes's objection that in this case all men would assent to the first principles, whereas in point of fact the Christians do not assent to the principle that 'out of nothing nothing is made', Scotus replies that he is speaking of first principles in the strict sense, such as the principle of contradiction and the principle that the whole is greater than its part, not of principles which some people think to be or which may be conclusions from the first principles. In the Paris Commentary, however,[1] he insists that the intellect cannot err in regard to those principles and conclusions which it sees to follow clearly from the first principles. In the same place he speaks of the intellect as a *tabula nuda*, which has no innate principles or ideas.

Scotus also rejects the doctrine that a special illumination of the intellect is necessary in order that it should apprehend certain truth. Thus he gives the arguments of Henry of Ghent on behalf of the illumination theory[2] and proceeds to criticise them, objecting that Henry's arguments seem to result in the conclusion that all certain and natural knowledge is impossible.[3] For example, if it were true that no certainty can be obtained concerning a continually changing object (and sensible objects are constantly changing, according to Henry), illumination would not help in any way, for we do not attain certainty when we know an object otherwise than it actually is. In any case, Scotus adds, the doctrine that sensible objects are continually changing is the doctrine of Heraclitus and is false. Similarly, if the changing character of the soul and its ideas are an obstacle to certainty, illumination will not remedy the defect. In fine, Henry's opinion would lead to scepticism.

Scotus thus defends the activity and natural power of the human intellect, and a similar preoccupation shows itself in his rejection of St. Thomas's doctrine that the soul, when separated from the body, cannot acquire new ideas from things themselves.[1] He gives the opinion of St. Thomas in more or less the same words that the latter uses in his Commentary on the *Sentences*[2] and argues that it belongs to the nature of the soul to know, to abstract, to will, so that, since the soul is also of such a nature that it can exist in separation from the body, we may legitimately conclude that it can acquire fresh knowledge by natural means in this state of separation. The opinion of St. Thomas, Scotus says, degrades the human soul. Scotus's own opinion is, of course, connected with his view that the soul's dependence on the senses in this life is *pro statu isto, forte ex peccato*. It is also connected with his rejection of the doctrine that the soul is purely passive and that the phantasm causes the idea. The soul in the state of separation from the body is, therefore, not cut off from the acquisition of new knowledge, nor is it even confined to intuition: it can exercise the power of abstraction too.

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[1] 2, 23, no. 3.
[2] *Ox.*, 1, 3, 4, nos. 2–4.
[3] *Ibid.*, 1, 3, 4, no. 5.

7. Scotus distinguishes intuitive and abstractive knowledge. Intuitive knowledge is knowledge of an object as present in its actual existence and it is against the nature of intuitive knowledge that it should be knowledge of an object which is not actually existent and present.[3] However, Scotus makes a distinction between perfect intuitive knowledge, which is immediate knowledge of an object as present, and imperfect intuitive knowledge, which is knowledge of an existent object as existing in the future, as anticipated, or as existing in the past, as remembered.[4] Abstractive knowledge on the other hand is knowledge of the essence of an object considered in abstraction from its existence or non-existence.[5] The difference between intuitive and abstractive knowledge is not, then, that the former is knowledge of an existent object, the latter of a non-existent object, but rather that the former is knowledge of an object as existent and actually present, that is, in intuition properly speaking, whereas the latter is knowledge of the essence of an object considered in abstraction from existence, whether the object actually exists or not. 'There can be abstractive knowledge of a non-existent object as well as of an existent object, but there can be intuitive knowledge only of an existent object as existent.'[6] We should have to add the words 'and present', for 'it is against the nature of intuitive knowledge that it should be of something which is not actually

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[1] *Ox.*, 4, 45, 2.

[2] 4, 50, 1, 1; and cf. *S.T.*, Ia, 89, 1-4.

[3] *Ox.*, 1, 2, 7, no. 42; 2, 9, 2, no. 29.

[4] *Ibid.*, 3, 14, 3, no. 6.

[5] *Ibid.*, 2, 3, 9, no. 6.

[6] *Quodlibet*, 7, no. 8.

existent and present'.[1] Accordingly Scotus says that though the blessed could see him in God, that is, in the beatific vision, as existing and writing, this knowledge would not be intuitive knowledge, since 'I am not actually present in God, whom the blessed behold in heaven'.[2] Scotus's doctrine of abstractive knowledge, the knowledge of essences in abstraction from existence and non-existence, has led to the comparison of this aspect of his thought with the method of the modern Phenomenological School.

8. Scotus was sufficiently permeated by the spirit of the Aristotelian logic to lay stress on deduction and to have a rigorous idea of demonstrative proof; but he made some interesting remarks on induction. We cannot have experience of all instances of a particular type of natural event; but experience of a number of instances may be sufficient to show the scientist that the event in question proceeds from a natural cause and will always follow that cause. 'Whatever happens in most cases (that is, in the cases we have been able to observe) does not proceed from a free cause, but is the natural effect of the cause.' This proposition is recognised as true by the intellect, which sees that a free cause will not produce the same effect: if the cause could produce another effect, we should observe it doing so. If an effect is frequently produced by the same cause (Scotus means if the same effect is produced by the same cause, so far as our experience goes), the cause cannot be a free cause in that respect, nor can it be a 'casual' cause, but it must be the natural cause of that effect. Sometimes we have experience of the effect and are able to reduce the effect to a self-evident causal relation, in which case we can proceed to deduce the effect and so obtain a still more certain knowledge than we had through experience, while on other occasions we may have experience of the cause in such a way that we cannot demonstrate the necessary connection between cause and effect, but only that the effect proceeds from the cause as a natural cause.[3]

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[1] *Ox.*, 2, 9, 2, no. 29.
[2] *Ibid.*, 4, 14, 3, no. 6.
[3] *Ibid.*, 1, 3, 4, no. 9.

CHAPTER XLVII

SCOTUS—III: METAPHYSICS

*Being and its transcendental attributes—The univocal concept of being—The formal objective distinction—Essence and existence—Universals—Hylomorphism—*Rationes seminales *rejected, plurality of forms retained—Individuation.*

1. METAPHYSICS is the science of being as being. The concept of being is the simplest of all concepts, and it is irreducible to other more ultimate concepts: being, therefore, cannot be defined.[1] We can conceive being distinctly by itself, for in its widest signification it simply means that which includes no contradiction, that which is not intrinsically impossible; but every other concept, every concept of a distinct kind of being, includes the concept of being.[2] Being in its widest sense thus includes that which has extramental being and that which has intramental being,[3] and it transcends all genera.[4]

There are various *passiones entis* (categories of being one might call them, provided that the word 'category' is not understood in the Aristotelian sense), the *passiones convertibiles* and the *passiones disiunctae.* The former are those categories of being which are designated by one name, which do not go in distinct pairs, and are convertible with being. For example, *one, true, good,* are *passiones convertibiles.* Every being is one, true, and good by the very fact that it is being, and there is no real distinction between these *passiones convertibiles* or between them and being, but there is a formal distinction, since they denote different aspects of being.[5] The *passiones disiunctae,* on the other hand, are not simply convertible with being if one takes them singly, though they are convertible if one takes them in pairs. For example, not every being is necessary and not every being is contingent; but every being is either necessary or contingent. Similarly, not every being is simply act and not every being is potency; but every being must be either act or potency or act in one respect and potency in another. Scotus speaks of the *passiones disiunctae* as transcendent,[6] since although no *passio disiuncta* comprises all being or is simply convertible with the notion of being, it does not place an object in any definite genus or category, in the Aristotelian sense. The fact that a being is contingent, for example, does not tell one whether it is substance or accident.

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[1] *Quodlibet,* 7, no. 14; 1, 39, no. 13.

[2] *Quodlibet,* 3, no. 2.

[3] *Ox.,* 1, 3, 2, no. 24.

[4] *Ox.,* 2, 1, 4, no. 26.

[5] *Ibid.,* 1, 3, 3, no. 7; 2, 16, no. 17.

[6] *Ibid.,* 1, 8, 3, no. 19.

As Scotus held that the concept of being is univocal, in the sense shortly to be discussed, it might appear that he tried to deduce the actuality of the *passiones disiunctae*; but this was not his intention. We can never deduce from the notion of being that contingent being exists, nor can we show that contingent being exists if necessary being exists, though we can show that if contingent being exists, necessary being exists and that if finite being exists, infinite being exists. In other words, we cannot deduce the existence of the less perfect *passio disiuncta* from the more perfect, though we can proceed the other way round. That contingent being actually exists is known only by experience.[1]

2. We have seen that in Scotus's opinion it is necessary to maintain that the primary object of the intellect is being in general, if one wishes to safeguard the possibility of metaphysics. By saying this I do not mean to suggest that Scotus's doctrine of the primary object of the intellect was motivated simply by pragmatic considerations. Rather did he hold that the intellect as such is the faculty of apprehending being in general, and, holding this, he then pointed out what appeared to him to be the unfortunate conclusion which followed from the Thomist position. Similarly, Scotus maintained that unless there is a concept of being which is univocal in respect of God and creatures, no metaphysical knowledge of God is possible; but he did not assert this doctrine of the univocal character of the concept of being for a purely utilitarian reason; he was convinced that there is actually a univocal concept of this kind, and then pointed out that unless its existence is admitted, one cannot safeguard the possibility of any metaphysical knowledge of God. Our concepts are formed in dependence on sense-perception and represent immediately material quiddities or essences. But no concept of a material quiddity as such is applicable to God, for God is not included among material things. Therefore, unless we can form a concept which is not restricted to the material quiddity as such, but is common to infinite being and to finite being, to immaterial and to material being, we can never attain a true knowledge of God by means of concepts which are proper to Him. If Henry of Ghent's doctrine of the equivocal

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[1] *Ox.*, I, 39, no. 13.

character of the concept of being as applied to God and to creatures were true, it would follow that the human mind was restricted (in this life at least) to the knowledge of creatures alone; agnosticism would thus be the consequence of Henry's theory.[1] If I have mentioned this aspect of the question first, I have done so not in order to imply that Scotus was motivated simply by utilitarian or pragmatic considerations, but rather in order to show that the question was not a purely academic one in Scotus's eyes.

What did Scotus mean by the univocal concept of being? In the Oxford Commentary[2] he says: *et ne fiat contentio de nomine univocationis, conceptum univocum dico, qui ita est unus, quod ejus unitas sufficit ad contradictionem, affirmando et negando ipsum de eodem. Sufficit etiam pro medio syllogistico, ut extrema unita in medio sic uno, sine fallacia aequivocationis, concludantur inter se unum.* Scotus's first point is, therefore, that a univocal concept means for him a concept the unity of which is sufficient to involve a contradiction if one affirms and denies the idea of the same subject at the same time. If one were to say 'the dog (i.e. the animal) is running' and at the same time 'the dog (meaning the star or the dog-fish) is not running', there would be no real contradiction, since 'running' and 'not running' are not affirmed of the same subject: the contradiction is purely verbal. Similarly, if one were to say 'the unicorn is' (meaning that the unicorn has an intramental existence) and 'the unicorn is not' (meaning that the unicorn has no extramental existence in nature), there would be no real contradiction. Scotus, however, is referring to a word the meaning of which is sufficiently the same to bring about a real contradiction if one were to affirm and deny it of the same subject at the same time. For instance, if one said that the unicorn is and that the unicorn is not, understanding 'is' in both judgements as referring to extramental existence, there would be a real contradiction. Similarly, if one said that God is and that God is not, referring in both cases to real existence, there would be a contradiction. What does Scotus mean by *sufficit*? In the judgements 'God is' and 'God is not' it is sufficient for the production of a contradiction that 'is' should mean opposed to nothingness or not-being. A contradiction is involved in saying both that God is opposed to nothingness and that God is not opposed to nothingness. It must be remembered that Scotus is maintaining the existence of a univocal concept of being which is applicable to God and creatures, so that one can say that God is and the creature is, using the word 'is' in the same sense. He is perfectly well aware, of course, that God and the creature are actually opposed to nothingness in different ways, and he does not mean to deny this; but his point is that if you mean by 'is' simply the opposite of nothingness or not-being, then you can use the word 'being' of God and creatures in the same sense, prescinding from the concrete ways in which they are opposed to nothingness. Accordingly he says *sufficit ad contradictionem* so as not to imply that God and the creatures are opposed to nothingness in the same way. But though they are opposed to nothingness in different ways, they are none the less both opposed to nothingness, and if one forms a concept of being denoting sheer opposition to nothingness, a concept which involves contradiction if affirmed and denied of the same subject at the same time, this concept can be predicated univocally of God and creatures.

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[1] *Ox.*, 1, 8, 3, nos. 4 ff. This represents Scotus' interpretation of Henry's doctrine.

[2] 1, 3, 2, no. 5.

As to the remark about the syllogism, Scotus says that a univocal concept, as he understands it, is a concept which, when employed as middle term in a syllogism, has a meaning 'sufficiently' the same in both premisses to prevent the fallacy of equivocation being committed. To take a crude example, if one argued 'every ram is an animal, this object (meaning an instrument for pumping water) is a ram, therefore this object is an animal', the syllogism would involve the fallacy of equivocation and would not be valid. Now take the following argument. If there is wisdom in some creatures, there must be wisdom in God; but there is wisdom in some creatures; therefore there is wisdom in God. If the term 'wisdom' is used equivocally, in completely different senses, in regard to God and in regard to creatures, the argument would be fallacious: if the argument is to be valid, the idea of wisdom as applied to God and to creatures must be sufficiently the same for equivocation to be avoided. Scotus is attacking Henry of Ghent, according to whose opinion the predicates we apply to God and creatures are equivocal, though the two meanings so resemble one another that one word can be used for both. Scotus objects that to admit the truth of Henry's opinion would be to admit that every argument from creatures to God employs the fallacy of equivocation and is fallacious. The univocity which Scotus asserts is not restricted, then, to the concept of being. 'Whatsoever things are common to God and the creature are such as belong to being as indifferent to finite and finite.'[1] If one considers being in abstraction from the distinction between infinite and finite being, that is, as signifying mere opposition to nothing, one has a univocal concept of being, and the transcendental attributes of being, the *passiones convertibiles*, can also give rise to univocal concepts. If one can form a univocal concept of being, one can also form univocal concepts of *one, true, good.*[2] What, then, of wisdom? Goodness is a *passio convertibilis*, inasmuch as every being is good by the mere fact that it is a being; but not every being is wise. Scotus answers[3] that the *passiones disiunctae*, such as *necessary* or *possible, act* or *potency*, are transcendent in the sense that neither member determines its subject as belonging to any special genus, and that wisdom and suchlike attributes can also be called transcendent, that is, as transcending the division of being into genera.

Scotus lays a strong emphasis on this doctrine of univocity. Every metaphysical investigation concerning God involves the consideration of some attribute and the removal from our idea of it of the imperfection which attaches to that attribute as found in creatures. In this way we attain an idea of the essence of *ratio formalis* of the attribute, and then we can predicate it of God in a supremely perfect sense. Scotus takes the example of wisdom, intellect and will.[4] First we remove from the idea of wisdom, for example, the imperfections of finite wisdom and attain to a concept of the *ratio formalis* of wisdom, what wisdom is in itself. Then we attribute wisdom to God in the most perfect manner (*perfectissime*). 'Therefore every investigation concerning God supposes that the intellect has the same univocal concept, which it receives from creatures.'[5] If it is denied that we can thus form an idea of the *ratio formalis* of wisdom, and so on, the conclusion would follow that we could arrive at no knowledge of God. On the one hand our knowledge is founded on our experience of creatures, while on the other hand we cannot predicate of God any attribute precisely as it is found in creatures. Therefore, unless we can attain a common middle term with a univocal meaning, no argument from creatures to God is possible or valid. That we can form a univocal concept of being, without reference to infinite or finite, uncreated or created, Scotus regarded as a fact of experience.[6]

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[1] *Ox.*, 1, 8, 3, no. 18.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1, 8, 3, no. 19.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*, 1, 3, 2, no. 10.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Cf. *ibid.*, 1, 3, 2, no. 6.

Scotus agrees with Henry of Ghent that God is not in a genus, but he will not agree with his denial of the univocal character of the concept of being. 'I hold my middle opinion, that it is compatible with the simplicity of God that there should be some concept common to Him and to the creature, but this common concept is not a generically common concept.'[1] Now, Henry of Ghent, in Scotus's view, maintained that the concept of being as applied to God and to creatures is equivocal, and it is easily understandable that Scotus rejects this opinion. But what was his attitude towards St. Thomas's doctrine of analogy? In the first place Scotus asserts firmly that God and the creature are completely different in the real order, *sunt primo diversa in realitate, quia in nulla realitate conveniunt.*[2] Hence to accuse Scotus of Spinozism is clearly absurd. In the second place Scotus does not reject the analogy of attribution, since he admits that being belongs primarily and principally to God and teaches that creatures are to God as *mensurata ad mensuram, vel excessa ad excedens,*[3] while in the *De Anima*[4] he says that *omnia entia habent attributionem ad ens primum, quod est Deus.* In the third place, however, he insists that analogy itself presupposes a univocal concept, since we could not compare creatures with God as *mensurata ad mensuram, vel excessa ad excedens,* unless there was a concept common to both.[5] God is knowable by man in this life only by means of concepts drawn from creatures, and unless these concepts were common to God and creatures, we should never be able to compare creatures with God as the imperfect with the perfect: there would be no bridge between creatures and God. Even those masters who deny univocity with their lips, really presuppose it.[6] If there were no univocal concepts, we should have only a negative knowledge of God, which is not the case. We may say that God is not a stone, but we can also say that a chimaera is not a stone, so that in saying that God is not a stone we know no more of God than we do of a chimaera.[7] Further, knowledge that something is an effect of God is not sufficient by itself to give us our knowledge of God. A stone is an effect of God; but we do not say that God is a stone, because He is the cause of the stone, whereas we do say that He is wise, and this presupposes a univocal concept of wisdom which is transcendent (in Scotus's sense). In fine, Scotus's teaching is that although all creatures have an essential relation of dependence to God, this fact would not be sufficient to afford us any positive knowledge of God, since we possess no natural intuition of God, unless we could form univocal concepts common to God and creatures. Therefore he says that 'all beings have an attribution to the first being, which is God . . .; yet in spite of this fact there can be abstracted from all of them one common concept which is expressed by this word *being*, and is one logically speaking, although it is not (one) naturally and metaphysically speaking', that is, speaking either as a natural philosopher or as a metaphysician.[1]

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[1] *Ox.*, 1, 8, 3, no. 16.
[2] *Ibid.*, 1, 8, 3, no. 11.
[3] *Ibid.*, 1, 8, 3, no. 12.
[4] 21, no. 14.
[5] *Ox.*, 1, 8, 3, no. 12.
[6] *Rep.*, 1, 3, 1, no. 7.
[7] *Ox.*, 1, 3, 2; 1, 8, 3, no. 9.

This last remark gives rise to the question whether or not Scotus considered the univocity of the concepts of being to be really restricted to the logical order. Some writers affirm that he did. The passage from the *De Anima* which has just been quoted seems to state it positively, and Scotus's observation, quoted above, that God and creatures *sunt primo diversa in realitate, quia in nulla realitate conveniunt*, would seem to teach the same. But if the univocal concept of being were restricted to the logical order in such a way that it was an *ens rationis*, how would it help to ensure objective knowledge of God? Moreover, in the Oxford Commentary[2] Scotus considers the objection to his theory that matter has an *esse* of its own. The objection is that in the case of analogues a thing or attribute is present really only in the primary analogue: in the other it is not present really, except by way of a relation to the primary analogue. Health is present really in the animal, whereas it is present in urine only *per attributionem ad illud. Esse* comes from the form: therefore it is not present really in matter, but only through its relation to the form. In answer to this objection Scotus says that the example given is valueless, since there are a hundred examples to the contrary, and then remarks, 'for there is no greater analogy than that of the creature to God *in ratione essendi*, and yet *esse*, existence, belongs primarily and principally to God in such a way that it yet belongs really and univocally to the creature; and similarly with goodness and wisdom and the like'.[3] Here he uses the words 'really and univocally' (*realiter et univoce*) together. If the doctrine of univocity is meant to ensure an objective knowledge of God from creatures, it would seem to be essential to that doctrine that the univocal concept should not be an *ens rationis* merely, but that it should have a real foundation or counterpart in extramental reality. On the other hand, Scotus is insistent that God is not in a genus and that God and creatures are in the real order *primo diversa*. How can the two sets of statements be reconciled?

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[1] *De Anima*, 21, no. 14.
[2] 2, 12, 2, no. 2.
[3] *Ox.*, 2, 12, 2, no. 8.

The concept of being is abstracted from creatures, and it is the concept of being without any determination; it is logically prior to the division of being into infinite and finite being. But in actual fact every being must be either infinite or finite: it must be opposed to nothingness either as infinite being or as finite being: there is no actually existent being which is neither infinite nor finite. In this sense the univocal concept of being, as logically prior to the division of being into infinite and finite, possesses a unity which belongs to the logical order. The natural philosopher obviously does not consider being in this sense, nor does the metaphysician in so far as he is concerned with actually existent being and with possible being, since the concept of a being which would be neither infinite nor finite would not be the concept of a possible being. On the other hand, even though every actual being is either finite or infinite, every being is really opposed to nothingness, though in different ways, so that there is a real foundation for the univocal concept of being. As *intentio prima* the concept of being is founded on reality, for otherwise it could not be abstracted, and has objective reference, while as *intentio secunda* it is an *ens rationis*; but the concept of being as such, whether considered as *intentio prima* or *intentio secunda*, does not express something which has a formal existence outside the mind. It is, therefore, a logical concept. The logician 'considers second intentions as applied to first intentions', says Scotus when speaking of universals,[1] and what is univocal for the logician is equivocal[2] for the philosopher who is studying real things. One can say, then, that the univocal concept of being is an *ens rationis*. On the other hand, the univocal concept of being has a real foundation in actuality. The case is not without parallel to that of the universal. No doubt, Scotus did not consider adequately all the possible objections against his theory; but the truth of the matter seems to be that he was so intent on refuting the doctrine of Henry of Ghent, which he considered to endanger or render impossible any objective knowledge of God in this life, that he did not give his full attention to all the complexities of the problem and to the difficulties which might be raised against his own theory. It must be remembered, however, that Scotus postulated a formal distinction between the attributes of being and between the attributes and being. 'Being contains many attributes which are not different things from being itself, as Aristotle proves in the beginning of the fourth book of the *Metaphysics*, but which are distinguished formally and quidditatively, that is, by a formal, objectively grounded distinction, from one another, and also from being, by a real and quidditative formality, I say.'[1] In this case the univocal concept of being cannot be a mere *ens rationis*, in the sense of a purely subjective construction. There is no separate or separable thing, existing extramentally, which corresponds to the univocal concept of being; but there is an objective foundation for the concept none the less. One can say, then, that the univocal concept of being is not purely logical, provided that one does not mean to imply that there is any *thing* in extramental reality which corresponds to the concept.

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[1] *Ox.*, 2, 3, 1, no. 7.

[2] For Scotus 'equivocal' means, of distinct or different meanings. The scientist, for instance, considers actual bodies, which differ, but one can form a common concept of body in general.

3. I have treated the doctrine of univocity at some length, not only because the doctrine is one of the characteristics of Scotism, but also because Scotus attached very considerable importance to the doctrine, as a safeguard of natural theology. I turn now to a brief consideration of another characteristic doctrine of Scotus, that of the *distinctio formalis a parte rei*, the objective formal distinction, which plays an important rôle in the Scotist system and one use of which has just been mentioned.

The doctrine of the formal distinction was not an invention of Scotus: one finds it in the philosophy of Olivi, for example, and it has been ascribed to St. Bonaventure himself. In any case it became a common doctrine among the Franciscan thinkers, and what Scotus did was to take over the doctrine from his predecessors and make extensive use of it. In brief, the doctrine is that there is a distinction which is less than the real distinction and more objective than a virtual distinction. A real distinction obtains between two things which are physically separable, at least by divine power. It is obvious enough that there is a real distinction between a man's two hands, since these are distinct things; but there is also a real distinction between the form and matter of any material object. A purely mental distinction signifies a distinction made by the mind when there is no corresponding objective distinction in the thing itself. The distinction between a thing and its definition, for example, between 'man' and 'rational animal', is purely mental. A formal distinction obtains when the mind distinguishes in an object two or more *formalitates* which are objectively distinct, but which are inseparable from one another, even by divine power. For instance, Scotus asserted a formal distinction between the divine attributes. Mercy and justice are formally distinct, though the divine justice and the divine mercy are inseparable, since, in spite of the formal distinction between them, each is really identical with the divine essence.

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[1] *Ox.*, 2, 16, *quaestio unica*, no. 17.

An example from psychology may make Scotus's meaning clearer. There is only one soul in man, and there cannot be a real distinction between the sensitive soul and the intellectual or rational soul in man: it is in virtue of the one vital principle that a man thinks and exercises sensation. Not even God can separate a man's rational soul from his sensitive soul, for it would no longer be a human soul. On the other hand, sensation is not thought: rational activity can exist without sensitive activity, as in the angels, and sensitive activity can exist without rational activity, as in the case of the purely sensitive soul of the brute. In man, then, the sensitive and rational principles are formally distinct, with a distinction which is objective, that is, independent of the mind's distinguishing activity; but they are not really distinct *things*; they are distinct *formalitates* of one thing, the human soul.

Why did Scotus assert the existence of this formal distinction, and why was he not content to call it a *distinctio rationis cum fundamento in re*? The ultimate reason was, of course, that he thought the distinction to be not only warranted, but also demanded by the nature of knowledge and the nature of the object of knowledge. Knowledge is the apprehension of being, and if the mind is forced, so to speak, to recognise distinctions in the object, that is, if it does not simply construct actively a distinction in the object, but finds the recognition of a distinction imposed upon it, the distinction cannot be simply a mental distinction, and the foundation of the distinction in the mind must be an objective distinction in the object. On the other hand, there are cases when the foundation of the distinction cannot be the existence of distinct separable factors in the object. It is necessary, then, to find room for a distinction which is less than a real distinction, such as obtains between soul and body in man, but which at the same time is founded on an objective distinction in the object, a distinction which can be only between different, but not separable formalities of one and the same object. Such a distinction will maintain the objectivity of knowledge, without, however, impairing the unity of the object. It may be objected, of course, that the formal distinction as applied by Scotus does, in some cases at least, impair the requisite unity of the object and that it surrenders too much to 'realism'; but it would appear that Scotus considered the distinction to be necessary if the objectivity of knowledge is to be maintained.

4. One of the questions in which Scotus applies his formal distinction is the question of the distinction which obtains between essence and existence in the creature.[1] He refuses to admit a real distinction between essence and existence: 'it is simply false, that existence (*esse*) is something different from essence'.[2] Similarly, 'the proposition is false, that just as existence stands to essence, so operation (*operari*) stands to potency, for existence is really the same as the essence and does not proceed from the essence, whereas act or operation proceeds from potency and is not really the same as potency'.[3] The assertion, *simpliciter falsum est, quod esse sit aliud ab essentia*, would indeed appear to be directed against such statements of St. Thomas as *Ergo oportet quod omnis talis res, cuius esse est aliud a natura sua, habeat esse ab alio*;[4] but, given Scotus's conception of a real distinction, his denial of a real distinction between essence and existence in creatures is more relevant to the doctrine of Giles of Rome, for whom essence and existence were physically separable, than to that of St. Thomas Aquinas.

But when Scotus discusses the relation of essence and existence, his polemic is directed not so much against St. Thomas or even Giles of Rome as against Henry of Ghent. Henry did not maintain a real distinction between essence and existence in creatures, but he distinguished *esse essentiae* and *esse existentiae*, the former being the state of the essence as known by God, the latter being its state after creation, creation adding no positive element to the essence, but only a relation to God. Henry had asserted this doctrine of the *esse essentiae* in order to account for the fact of science, in the sense of knowledge of timeless truths about essences, irrespective of the actual existence of such objects, but Scotus argued that Henry's doctrine destroyed the Christian idea of creation. For example, creation is production out of nothing; but if a stone formerly, before its creation, had *esse verum reale*, then when it is produced by the efficient cause, it is not produced from nothing.[1] Moreover, as the essence is known eternally by God, it would follow from this notion that the essence before actual existence already possesses *esse reale* and that creation is eternal: one would thus have to admit other necessary beings besides God. Only that which actually exists has *esse reale*; possible existence (*esse possibile*) is only *esse secundum quid.*[2] The essence as known may be said to possess *esse diminutum*; but this existence (*esse*) of an essence in the divine mind before its actual production is simply *esse cognitum*. Scotus and St. Thomas are at one on this point, that creation means the production of the whole object out of nothing and that the essence before creation did not possess any *esse* of its own, though Scotus differed from St. Thomas in his view of the relationship which obtains between the essence and the existence in the created object, since he rejected a real distinction, though, as already remarked, this rejection was actually a rejection of the real distinction maintained by Giles of Rome rather than of that taught by St. Thomas.

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[1] It must be admitted that Scotus confines himself to denying the real distinction and does not explicitly apply the formal objective distinction to the relation of essence and existence in the creature; but the doctrine of Scotists on this point seems to me to be a reasonable interpretation of Scotus's meaning.

[2] *Ox.*, 4, 13, 1, no. 38.

[3] *Ibid.*, 2, 16, no. 10.

[4] *De ente et essentia*, 5.

5. The formal objective distinction was also employed by Scotus in his discussion of universals. In regard to universals Scotus was certainly not an exaggerated realist, and Suarez's assertion[3] that Scotus taught that the common nature is numerically the same in all individuals of the species, misrepresents Scotus's position, at least if taken out of its setting and out of relation to Suarez's own doctrine. Scotus states unambiguously that 'the universal in act does not exist except in the intellect' and that there is no actually existing universal which is predicable of another object than that in which it exists.[4] The common nature is not numerically the same in Socrates and in Plato; it cannot be compared to the divine essence, which is numerically the same in the three divine Persons.[5] Nevertheless, there is a unity which is less than numerical (*unitas minor quam numeralis*). Though the physical nature of an object is inseparable from the object's *haecceitas* (the object's 'thisness' or principle of individuation, which we shall consider shortly) and though it cannot exist in any other object, there is a formal objective distinction between the human nature and the 'Socratesness' or *haecceitas* in Socrates, but not a real distinction, so that the human nature can be considered simply as

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[1] *Ox.*, 1, 36, no. 3.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1, 30, 2, no. 15.

[3] *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, 6, 1, no. 2.

[4] *Rep.*, 2, 12, 5, no. 12.

[5] *Ibid.*, 2, 12, 5, no. 13.

such, without reference to individuality or to universality. Appealing to Avicenna,[1] Scotus observes that horseness is simply horseness (*equinitas est tantum equinitas*) and that of itself it has neither *esse singulare* nor *esse universale*.[2] In other words, there exists between the *haecceitas* and the nature in a concrete object a *distinctio formalis a parte rei*, and it is necessary to suppose such a distinction, since otherwise, that is, if the nature were *of itself* individual, if it were, for example, of itself the nature of Socrates, there would be no objective foundation, no valid ground for our universal statements. The abstraction of the logical universal presupposes a distinction in the object between the nature and the *haecceitas*.

It is, however, important to remember that this distinction is not a real distinction, not, that is, a distinction between two separable entities. Form and matter are separable; but the nature and the *haecceitas* are not separable. Not even the divine power can separate physically the 'Socratesness' of Socrates and the human nature of Socrates. Therefore, even though Scotus's assertion of the formal objective distinction is indeed a concession in one sense to realism, it does not imply that the human nature of Socrates is objectively and numerically identical with the human nature of Plato. Scotus is concerned, not to support exaggerated realism, but rather to account for the objective reference of our universal judgements. Whether or not one agrees with his theory is, of course, another matter; but in any case to accuse him of falling into the early mediaeval form of exaggerated realism is to misunderstand and misrepresent his position. Scotus is willing to say with Averroes,[3] *Intellectus est qui facit universalitatem in rebus*; but he insists that this proposition must not be understood as excluding the *unitas realis minor unitate numerali* which exists prior to the mind's operation, since this exclusion would make it impossible to explain why 'the intellect is moved to abstract one specific concept from Socrates and Plato rather than from Socrates and a stone'.[4] It is the objective reference of science which interests Scotus.

J. Kraus[5] has maintained that Duns Scotus distinguishes three universals. First, there is the physical universal, which is the specific nature existing really in individual objects; secondly, there is the metaphysical universal, which is the common nature, not as it actually exists in the concrete thing, but with the characteristics which it acquires through abstraction by the active intellect, namely positive indetermination or predicability of many individuals *in potentia proxima*; and thirdly, there is the logical universal, the universal in the strict sense, which is the metaphysical universal conceived reflexly in its predicability and analysed into its constitutive notes. But this threefold distinction must not be understood as implying that the physical universal is separable or really distinct from the individuality of the object in which it exists. The concrete object consists of the nature and the *haecceitas*, and between them there is, not a real distinction but a *distinctio formalis a parte rei*. Scotus's mention of the relation of matter to successive forms[1] should not mislead us, since for Scotus there is a real distinction between matter and form, and the same matter can exist under successive forms, though it cannot exist simultaneously under different ultimately determining forms. The physical universal, however, though indifferent, as considered *in itself*, to this or that *haecceitas*, cannot exist in itself extramentally and is physically inseparable from its *haecceitas*.

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[1] In *Metaphysics*, 5, 1. [2] *Ibid.*, 5, 11. [3] *De Anima*, 1, 8. [4] *Rep.*, 2, 12, 5, no. 13.
[5] *Die Lehre des J. Duns Skotus von der natura communis*, Fribourg, 1927.

6. That Scotus taught the doctrine of hylomorphism is clear enough;[2] but it is not so clear whether or not he accepted the Bonaventurian attribution of hylomorphic composition to angels. If the *De rerum principio* were authentic, there could be no doubt as to Scotus's acceptance of the Bonaventurian view, but the *De rerum principio* is not the work of Scotus, and in his authentic writings the latter nowhere expressly states the Bonaventurian doctrine. Thus Father Parthenius Minges, O.F.M., who draws on the *De rerum principio* in his *Joannis Duns Scoti Doctrina philosophica et theologica*, has to admit that 'in the Commentaries on the *Sentences*, the *Quaestiones quodlibetales* and the *Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle* Scotus does not expressly state this doctrine, but only more or less touches on, insinuates or supposes it'.[3] It seems to me that Scotus's treatment of matter in the Commentaries can be said to 'suppose' the doctrine of the hylomorphic composition of rational soul and of angels only if one is determined on other grounds to assume that he held this doctrine, if, for example, one is determined to accept the *De rerum principio* as Scotus's work; but it is true that in the *De Anima*[4] he remarks that 'probably it can be said that in the soul there is matter'. However, Scotus is here engaged in showing that the presence of

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[1] *Loc. cit.*

[2] Cf. *Ox.*, 2, 12, 1.

[3] p. 46.

[4] 15, no. 3ff.

matter in the soul can be deduced with probability from the premisses of Aristotle and St. Thomas, even though St. Thomas did not hold the doctrine. For example, he argues that if matter is the principle of individuation, as St. Thomas (but not Scotus) held, then there must be matter in the rational soul. It is useless to say that the soul, when separated from the body, is distinguished from other souls by its relation to the body, first because the soul does not exist for the sake of the body, secondly because the relation or inclination to the body, which no longer exists, would be no more than a *relatio rationis*, and thirdly because the inclination or relation supposes a foundation, i.e. *this* soul, so that the thisness could not be due to the relation. Thus Scotus in the *De Anima* is trying to show that if one maintains with St. Thomas that matter is the principle of individuation, one ought to assert the presence of matter in the rational soul, in order to explain the individuality of the rational soul after death; he does not state that this conclusion represents his own opinion. It may be that it does represent Scotus's own opinion and that he wished to show that the Thomist ought, on his own premisses, to share that opinion; but one is hardly in a position to state positively that Scotus without a doubt maintained the Bonaventurian doctrine, and if one were prepared to reject the authenticity of the *De Anima*, there would seem to be no very cogent reason for stating that Scotus even probably maintained the doctrine.

But whatever Scotus's opinion on universal hylomorphism may have been, he certainly held that matter, really distinct from form, is an entity in its own right and that it is *potentia subjectiva* and not simply *potentia objectiva*, that is, that it is something existing, not something which is merely possible.[1] Moreover, matter is an *ens absolutum*, in the sense that it could exist by itself without form, at least through the divine power.[2] An entity which is distinct from and prior to another entity can exist apart from that other entity without any contradiction being involved. That matter is distinct from form is proved by the fact that together with form it makes a real composite being, while that it is prior to form, logically prior at least, is proved by the fact that it receives form and that what receives form must be logically prior to form.[3] Similarly, since God creates matter immediately, He could conserve it immediately, that is, without any secondary conserving agency. Again, form does not belong to the essence of matter nor does the *esse* which form confers on matter belong to the matter itself, since it is removed in substantial change.[1] In other words, the reality of substantial change postulates the reality of matter. In answer to the Thomist objection that it is contradictory to speak of matter as a real entity, that is, as actually existing without form, since to say that matter actually exists on its own account and to say that it has a form is one and the same, Scotus answers that act and form are not necessarily convertible terms. Of course, if act is taken to mean act which is received and which actuates and distinguishes, then matter, which is receptive, is not act; but if act and potency are understood in a wider sense, every thing which is *extra causam suam* is in act, even privations, and in this sense matter is in act, though it is not form.[2]

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[1] *Ox.*, 2, 12, 1, no. 10. [2] Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 12, 2; *Rep.* 2, 12, 2. [3] *Ox.*, *loc. cit.*, no. 3.

7. Scotus rejects the theory of *rationes seminales*, on the ground that the theory is not needed in order to avoid the conclusion that the created efficient agent creates and annihilates in the changes it brings about, and that there is no other cogent reason for accepting it.[3] But though he rejects the theory of *rationes seminales*, he retains that of plurality of forms. Against the assertion of the Thomists that there is no need to postulate a form of corporeity, since *sine necessitate non est ponenda pluralitas*, Scotus replies that in this case there is a need, *hic enim est necessitas ponendi plura*, and he goes on to argue that although the body, when the soul has departed, is continually tending to dissolution, it remains a body, for a time at least, and must possess that form which makes a body a body.[4] Moreover, the Body of Christ in the tomb must have possessed a form of corporeity. From the fact that a human body naturally tends to dissolution when the soul has departed it does not follow that the body, in a state of separation from the soul, has no proper form of its own; it follows only that it has not got a *perfect* subsistence of its own, and the reason of this is that the form of corporeity is an imperfect form which disposes the body for a higher form, the soul.

But though Scotus affirms the existence of a form of corporeity in the human body, and, of course, in every organic body, which is transmitted by the parents at the same time that God infuses the rational soul and which is really distinct from the rational soul, from which it can be separated, it should not be imagined that he breaks up the human soul into three really distinct forms or even parts, the vegetative, sensitive and intellective principles; and he rejects the theories which appear to him to impair the unity of the soul. The rational soul of man comprises these three powers *unitive*, 'although they are formally distinct'.[1] It would be false to suggest that Scotus taught the existence of three souls in man or that he maintained that the vegetative and sensitive powers are distinct from the rational power in the same way in which the form of corporeity is distinct. Whereas the distinction between the form of corporeity and the human soul is a real distinction, that between the powers within the soul itself is a formal distinction, which obtains between inseparable *formalitates* of one object, not between separable entities or forms.

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[1] *Rep.*, 2, 12, 2, no. 5.

[2] *Ox.*, 2, 12, 2, no. 7. The distinction of prime matter into *materia primo prima*, *materia secundo prima* and *materia tertio prima* is found only in the unauthentic *De rerum principio*.

[3] *Rep.*, 2, 18, 1.

[4] *Ox.*, 4, 11, 3, nos. 54 ff.

8. It is necessary to say something about Scotus's somewhat obscure doctrine of individuation, the obscurity lying rather on the positive than on the negative side of the doctrine.

Scotus criticises and rejects St. Thomas's theory that prime matter is the principle of individuation. Prime matter cannot be the primary reason of distinction and diversity since it is of itself indistinct and indeterminate.[2] Moreover, if matter is the principle of individuation, it follows that in the case of substantial change the two substances, that corrupted and that generated, are precisely the same substance, since the matter is the same, even though the forms are different. St. Thomas's theory seems to imply that quantity is actually the principle of individuation; but quantity is an accident and a substance cannot be individuated by an accident. Incidentally, Scotus tries to show that Aristotle is wrongly cited as an authority for the Thomist view of individuation.

The principle of individuation is thus not prime matter, nor can it be the nature as such, since it is precisely with the individuation of the nature that we are concerned. What is it, then? It is an *entitas individualis*. 'This entity is neither matter nor form nor the composite thing, in so far as any of these is a nature; but it is the ultimate reality of the being which is matter or form or a composite thing.'[3] The *entitas singularis* and the *entitas naturae*, whether the latter is matter or form or a *compositum*, are formally distinct; but they are not, and cannot be, two things. They are not separable things; nor does the *entitas singularis* stand to the

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[1] *Ox.*, 2, 16, no. 17.

[2] *Ibid.*, 2, 3, 5, no. 1.

[3] *Ibid.*, 2, 3, 6, no. 15.

entitas naturae as specific difference to genus.[1] The word *haecceitas* is not used for the principle of individuation in the Oxford Commentary, though it is so used in the *Reportata Parisiensia*[2] and in the *Quaestiones in libros Metaphysicorum.*[3]

It is not so easy to understand exactly what this *haecceitas* or *entitas singularis vel individualis* or *ultima realitas entis* actually is. It is, as we have seen, neither matter nor form nor the composite thing; but it is a positive entity, the final reality of matter, form and the composite thing. A human being, for instance, is *this* composite being, composed of *this* matter and *this* form. The *haecceitas* does not confer any further qualitative determination; but it seals the being as *this* being. Scotus's view certainly cannot be equated with the theory that every nature is of itself individual, since this he expressly denies, though in view of the fact that Scotus, while postulating a formal distinction between *haecceitas* and nature, denies their real distinction from one another, it seems to be implied that a thing has *haecceitas* or 'thisness' by the fact that it exists. His theory is not the same as that of the Nominalists, since he postulates contraction of the nature by the 'ultimate reality'; but the fact that he speaks of 'ultimate reality' would seem to imply that a nature acquires this ultimate reality through existence, though it is not, says Scotus, existence itself.[4]

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[1] *Ox.*, 2, 3, 6, no. 15.

[2] 2, 12, 5, nos. 1, 8, 13, 14.

[3] 7, 13, nos. 9 and 26.

[4] *Quaestiones in libros Metaph.*, 7, 13, no. 7.

CHAPTER XLVIII

SCOTUS—IV: NATURAL THEOLOGY

Metaphysics and God—Knowledge of God from creatures—Proof of God's existence—Simplicity and intelligence of God—God's infinity—The Anselmian argument—Divine attributes which cannot be philosophically demonstrated—The distinction between the divine attributes—The divine ideas—The divine will—Creation.

1. God is not, properly speaking, an object of metaphysical science, says Scotus,[1] in spite of the fact that metaphysics are the science of being, and God is the first being. A truth belongs properly to that science in which it is known *a priori*, from the principles of that science, and the metaphysician knows truths about God only *a posteriori*. God is, therefore, the proper object of theology, in which science He is known as He is in His essence, in Himself; He is the object of metaphysics only *secundum quid*, inasmuch as the philosopher comes to know God only in and through His effects.

This statement certainly does not mean that for Scotus the philosopher or metaphysician is unable to attain any certain knowledge of God. 'By our natural power (*ex naturalibus*) we can know some truths concerning God', says Scotus,[2] and he goes on to explain that many things (*multa*) can be known about God by the philosophers through a consideration of God's effects. By the natural power of reason one can conclude that God is one, supreme, good, but not that God is three in Persons.[3] Theology deals more properly with the divine Persons than with the essential attributes of God, for most of the essential attributes (*essentialia plurima*) can be known by us in metaphysics.[4] Accordingly, the statement that God is, strictly speaking, the object of theology rather than of metaphysics does not mean that Scotus excludes the study of God from metaphysics, since although God is not the primary object of metaphysics, He is none the less considered in metaphysics in the noblest way in which He can be studied in any natural science.[5] In the *De primo principio*[6] Scotus recapitulates the perfections which the philosophers have proved to belong to

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[1] *Rep.*, Prol., 3, no. 1.
[2] *Ibid.*, Prol., 3, no. 6.
[3] *Ox.*, 1, 1, 2, no. 2.
[4] *Ox.*, Prol., 4, no. 32.
[5] *Ibid.*, Prol., 4, no. 20.
[6] E.g. 4, nos. 36, 37.

God and distinguishes them from other perfections, such as omnipotence and universal and special providence, which belong more properly to the *credibilia*, truths which have not been proved by the philosophers but which are believed by *Catholici*. These latter truths, says Scotus, will be considered in *sequenti* (*tractatu*) and the words have been added, *scilicet in Theorematibus*. That an attempt was made to disprove this identification of the 'following' treatise with the *Theoremata* and that this attempt was largely due to the at least apparent contradiction between the *Theoremata* and the *De primo principio* has already been mentioned in Chapter XLV, and, as I there explained, I propose to expose the natural theology of Scotus on the supposition that the *Theoremata* is not the authentic work of Scotus, with the proviso that, were the authenticity of the *Theoremata* ever to be satisfactorily proved, one would have to explain the apparent contradiction on some such line as that adopted by M. Gilson. In any case, however, Scotus has made it perfectly clear in his certainly authentic works that the philosopher can prove many truths about God by the light of natural reason, without any actual employment of the data of revelation. Some of the points in regard to which Scotus restricted the scope of the unaided human intellect will be noted in the following pages; but it is important to note that Scotus was neither a sceptic nor an agnostic in regard to natural theology, and the *Theoremata*, even if authentic, would be quite insufficient to dispose of the clear and abundant evidence on this point which is afforded by the Commentaries on the *Sentences* and by the *De primo principio*.

2. Scotus certainly thought that the existence of God stands in need of rational proof and that this rational proof must be *a posteriori*. Of his use of the Anselmian argument I shall speak later.

First of all, man has no intuitive knowledge of God in this life, since the intuition of God is precisely that form of knowledge which places a man *extra statum viae*.[1] Our knowledge starts from the things of sense, and our natural conceptual knowledge of God is arrived at through reflection on the objects of experience.[2] By considering creatures as God's effects the human mind is able to form concepts which apply to God; but one must add that the concepts of God which are formed from creatures are imperfect,[3] in contrast, that is, with concepts based on the divine essence itself. It follows that our natural knowledge of God is indistinct and obscure, since it is not knowledge of God as immediately present to the intellect in His essence.[1]

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[1] *Quodlibet*, 7, no. 8. [2] *Ox.*, 1, 3, 2, nos. 1 and 30. [3] *Ibid.*, Prol., 1, no. 17.

Our natural knowledge of God rests on our capacity to form univocal concepts, as has been explained in the last chapter. Scotus affirms that 'creatures which impress their own ideas (*species*) on the intellect, can also impress the ideas of transcendent (attributes) which belong in common to them and to God';[2] but it would not be possible to proceed from a knowledge of creatures to the knowledge of God, were we not able to form from creatures univocal concepts. When the intellect has formed these concepts, it can combine them to form a composite quidditative idea of God. Just as the imagination can combine the images of mountain and gold to form the image of a golden mountain, so can the intellect combine the ideas of goodness, supreme and actuality to form the concept of a supremely good and actual being.[3] Needless to say, this comparison should not mislead us into thinking that for Scotus the combining activity of the mind in natural theology is exactly parallel to the combining work of imagination and fancy; the former activity is governed by the objective truth and apprehended logical necessity, whereas the imaginative construction of a golden mountain is 'imaginary', that is, arbitrary or the work of fancy.

3. How does Scotus prove the existence of God? In the Oxford Commentary[4] he states that the existence of the first cause is shown much more perfectly from the attributes (*passiones*) of creatures considered in metaphysics than from those which are considered by the natural philosopher. 'For it is a more perfect and immediate knowledge of the first being to know it as first or necessary being than to know it as first mover.' Scotus does not here deny that the natural philosopher can show that the fact of motion requires a first mover; but his point is that the argument from motion does not, of itself, transcend the physical order and arrive at the necessary being which is the ultimate total cause of its effects. The first mover, considered as such, is simply the cause of motion; it is not conceived as the cause of the being of all other things, but is a (necessary) hypothesis to explain the physical fact of motion. The argument from motion is thus very far from being Scotus's favourite proof. It may be noted in passing that if the

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[1] *Rep.*, Prol., 3, 2, no. 4.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ox.*, 1, 3, 2, no. 18.

[4] Prol., 2 lateralis, no. 21.

Commentary on the *Physics*, which is now rejected as spurious, were authentic, the difficulty in accepting the *Theoremata* might perhaps be lessened. In the former work[1] the author makes clear his belief that the argument from motion does not, of itself, bring us to a recognisable concept of God, since it merely arrives at a first mover, without indicating the nature of the first mover. Thus if it could be maintained that the author of the *Theoremata* was speaking of natural philosophy when he said that it cannot be proved that God is living or intelligent, it would seem that the apparent contradiction between the *Theoremata* and Scotus's certainly authentic works could be resolved. However, as the *Questions on the Physics of Aristotle* is unauthentic and as the authenticity of the *Theoremata* has not been proved, it is hardly worth while pursuing the matter further. In any case it remains true that Scotus emphasised those proofs for the existence of God which are founded on *passiones metaphysicae.* Moreover, in the Oxford Commentary,[2] Scotus remarks that the proposition that mover and moved must be distinct 'is true only in corporeal things' and 'I also believe that (even) there it is not necessarily true', while 'I say at least that in regard to spiritual beings it is simply false . . .

In the *De primo principio*[3] Scotus argues from the fact of contingency to the existence of a first cause and a necessary being. That there are beings which can have being after not-being, which can come into existence, which are contingent, is clear; and such beings require a cause of their being, since they can neither cause themselves nor be caused by nothing (*nec a se nec a nihilo*). If *A* is the cause of the being of a contingent object, it must be itself either caused or uncaused. If it is itself caused, let *B* be the cause of *A*. But it is impossible to proceed to infinity; so there must ultimately be a cause which is itself uncaused. Scotus distinguishes clearly between the series of *essentialiter ordinata* and the series of *accidentaliter ordinata*, and he points out that what he is denying is not the possibility of an unending regress of successive causes, each of which, taken in itself, is contingent, but the possibility of an unending (vertical) series of simultaneous total causes. As he observes, even if we grant the possibility of an infinite series of successive causes, the whole chain requires an explanation, and this explanation must be outside the chain itself, since each member of the chain is caused, and so contingent. An infinite series of succeeding contingent beings cannot explain its own existence, since the whole series is contingent if each member is contingent: it is necessary to postulate a transcendent cause. 'The totality of ordered effects (*causatorum*) is itself caused; therefore (it has been caused) by some cause which does not belong to that totality.'[1] If, for example, one postulates that the human race goes back to infinity, there is an infinite succession of fathers and children. The father causes the child; but after the father's death the son continues to exist and continues to be contingent. An ultimate cause is required, not only of the son's being here and now, but also of the whole series of fathers and sons, since the infinite regress does not make the series necessary. The same principle must be extended to the universe of contingent beings in general: the universe of contingent beings requires an *actual* transcendent cause (itself uncaused). An infinite succession 'is impossible, except in virtue of some nature of infinite duration (*durante infinite*), on which the whole succession and every member of it depends'.[2]

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[1] 3, 7.

[2] 2, 25, *quaestio unica*, no. 12.

[3] 3.

Scotus then proceeds to show that the first cause in the essential order of dependence must exist actually and cannot be merely possible,[3] that it is necessary being, that is, that it cannot not exist[4] and that it is one.[5] There cannot be more than one necessary being. Scotus argues, for example, that if there were two beings with a common nature of necessary being, one would have to distinguish formally between the common nature and the individuality, which would be something other than necessary being. If it is answered that there is no such distinction in a necessary being, it follows that the two beings are indistinguishable and hence one. This argument, though based on Scotus's theory of the common nature and of individuation, reminds one of an analogous argument given by St. Anselm. Moreover, the one essential order of the universe postulates only one *primum effectivum.* Scotus then goes on to show that there is a first final cause, *primum finitivum,*[6] and a supreme being in the order of eminence,[7] and proceeds to show that the *primum effectivum,* the *primum finitivum* and the *primum eminens* (or *perfectissimum*) are identical.[8]

In the Oxford Commentary on the *Sentences*[9] Scotus argues in much the same way. We have to proceed from creatures to God by considering the causal relation (in respect of either efficient or final causality) or the relation of *excessum* to *excedens* in the order of perfection. Contingent being, the *effectibile*, is caused by nothing or by itself or by another. As it is impossible for it to be caused by nothing or by itself, it must be caused by another. If that other is the first cause, we have found what we are seeking: if not, then we must proceed further. But we cannot proceed for ever in the vertical order of dependence. *Infinitas autem est impossibilis in ascendendo.*[1] Nor can we suppose that contingent beings cause one another, for then we shall proceed in a circle, without arriving at any ultimate explanation of contingency. It is useless to say that the world is eternal, since the eternal series of contingent beings itself requires a cause.[2] Similarly in the order of final causality there must be a final cause which is not directed to any more ultimate final cause,[3] while in the order of eminence there must be a most perfect being, a *suprema natura.*[4] These three are one and the same being. The first efficient cause acts with a view to the final end; but nothing other than the first being itself can be its final end. Similarly, the first efficient cause is not univocal with its effects, that is, it cannot be of the same nature, but must transcend them; and as first cause, it must be the 'most eminent' being.[5]

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[1] *De primo principio,* 3, 3.
[2] *Ibid.,* 3, 4.
[3] *Ibid.,* 3, no. 5.
[4] *Ibid.,* 3, no. 6.
[5] *Ibid.,* 3, nos. 6–7.
[6] *Ibid.,* 3, no. 9.
[7] *Ibid.,* nos. 9–10.
[8] *Ibid.,* nos. 11–14.
[9] *Ox.,* 2, 2, nos. 10ff.

4. As the first being is uncaused, it cannot possess essential parts like matter and form nor can it possess accidents: it cannot, in short, be composed in any way but must be essentially simple.[6] It must be intelligent and possessed of will. The natural agents in the world which do not consciously act for an end do nevertheless act for an end; and this means that they do so by the power and knowledge of the agent which transcends them. If the natural agents of the world act teleologically, this supposes that the primary cause knows the end and wills it, since nothing can be directed to an end except in virtue of knowledge and will (as, we might say, the arrow is directed to an end by an archer who knows and wills the end). God loves Himself and wills Himself necessarily; but He does not will necessarily anything outside Himself, since nothing outside Himself is necessary to Him: He alone is necessary being. It follows that He causes His effects freely and not necessarily. God knows and understands from eternity all that He can produce; He has actual and distinct

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[1] *Ox.*, 2, 2, no. 11.
[2] *Ibid.*, nos. 14–15.
[3] *Ibid.*, no. 17.
[4] *Ibid.*, no. 18.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *De primo principio*, 4, nos. 1–4.

understanding of every intelligible, and this understanding is identical with Himself (*idem sibi*).[1]

5. But Scotus gave his closest attention to the infinity of God. The simplest and most perfect concept of God which we can form is that of the absolutely infinite Being. It is simpler than the concept of goodness or the like, since infinity is not like an attribute or *passio* of the being of which it is predicated, but signifies the intrinsic mode of that being. It is the most perfect concept, since infinite being includes virtually infinite truth, infinite goodness and every perfection which is compatible with infinity.[2] It is true that every perfection in God is infinite, but 'it has its formal perfection from the infinity of the essence as its root and foundation'.[3] All the divine perfections are grounded in the divine essence, which is best described as the infinity of being: it is not correct, therefore, to state that for Scotus the divine essence consists in will. 'Although the will is formally infinite, it does not, however, include all intrinsic perfections formally in itself . . . but the essence alone includes all perfections in this way.'[4]

In the *Opus Oxoniense*[5] and in the *De primo principio*[6] Scotus gives a series of proofs of the divine infinity. Presupposing the compatibility of infinity with being Scotus takes as the text of his first argument Aristotle's words, *Primum movet motu infinito; ergo habet potentiam infinitam,* and argues that the conclusion is invalid if it is understood as following from motion which is infinite in duration, since length of duration does not make a thing more perfect, though it is valid if it is understood as following from the power to produce by motion infinite effects, that is, successively. God, as first efficient Cause, able to produce an infinity of effects, must be infinite in power. Moreover, as God possesses in Himself in a more eminent way the causality of all possible secondary causes, He must be infinite in Himself, *intensive.*[7] Secondly, God must be infinite since He knows an infinity of intelligible objects. This argument might seem to be a sheer *petitio principii*; but Scotus gives a somewhat singular reason for supposing that God knows an infinity of *intelligibilia*. 'Whatsoever things are infinite in potency, so that if they are taken one after the other they can have no end, are infinite in act, if they are together in act. But it is clear enough that intelligible objects are infinite in potency in respect of the created intellect, and in the uncreated intellect all (the *intelligibilia*) which are successively intelligible by the created intellect are actually understood together. Therefore, there are there (in the uncreated intellect) an infinite number of actually apprehended objects.'[1] Thirdly, Scotus argues from the finality of the will. 'Our will can desire and love an object greater than any finite object . . . and what is more, there seems to be a natural inclination to love above all an infinite good. . . . It thus appears that in the act of loving we have experience of an infinite good; indeed, the will seems to find no perfect rest in any other object . . .' The infinite good must, therefore, exist.[2] The fourth argument of the Oxford Commentary[3] is to the effect that it is not incompatible with finite being that there should be a more perfect being, but that it is incompatible with the *ens eminentissimum* that there should be a more perfect being. But infinity is greater and more perfect than finitude, and infinity and being are compatible. The *ens eminentissimum* must, therefore, be infinite. The proof that infinity is compatible with being amounts to little more than saying that we can discern no incompatibility. In the *De primo principio*[4] Scotus also proves God's infinity from the fact that His intellect is identical with His substance, arguing that such identification is impossible in a finite being.

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[1] *De primo principio*, 4, no. 14.

[2] *Ox.*, 1, 2, 3, no. 17.

[3] *Ibid.*, 4, 3, 1, no. 32.

[4] *Ibid.*, 4, 13, 1, no. 32.

[5] 2, 2, nos. 25 ff.

[6] 4, nos. 15 ff.

[7] Cf. *Ox.*, 1, 2, 2, nos. 25–9.

Having proved, to his satisfaction at least, God's infinity, Scotus is able to show that God must be one and one alone.[5]

6. In his discussion of the divine infinity Scotus introduces the so-called ontological argument of St. Anselm.[6] He has just remarked that the intellect, the object of which is being, finds no mutual repugnance between 'being' and 'infinite', and that it would be astonishing, supposing the two to be incompatible, if the intellect did not discern the incompatibility, 'when a discord in sound so easily offends the hearing'. If there is such an incompatibility, why does not the intellect 'shrink back' from the idea of the infinite, if it is incompatible with its own proper object, being? He then proceeds to state that the argument of St. Anselm in the first chapter of the *Proslogium* can be 'coloured' (*potest colorari*) and that it should be understood in this way: 'God is that than which, having been thought without contradiction, a greater cannot be thought without contradiction. That (the words) "without contradiction" must be added is clear, for that in the thought

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[1] *Ox.*, 1, 2, 2, no. 30; cf. *De primo principio*, 15ff.

[2] 1, 2, 2, nos. 31–2.

[3] *Ox.*, 1, 2, 2, no. 31.

[4] 4, no. 21.

[5] *Ox.*, 1, 2, 3; *De primo principio*, 4, nos. 38–40.

[6] *Ox.*, 1, 2, 2, no. 32.

of which a contradiction is included (that is, involved), is unthinkable . . .' It has been asserted that since Scotus admits that the Anselmian argument must be 'coloured', he rejects it. But he obviously does not reject it without more ado. Why should he 'colour' it, except to use it? And in point of fact he does use it. First he tries to show that the idea of the *summum cogitabile* is without contradiction, i.e. that the essence or *esse quidditativum* is possible, and then he observes that if the *summum cogitabile* is possible, it must exist, that it must have *esse existentiae. Majus igitur cogitabile est, quod est in re quam quod est tantum in intellectu.* That which really exists is *majus cogitabile* than that which does not really exist but is merely conceived, inasmuch as that which really exists is 'visible' or capable of being intuited, and that which can be intuited is 'greater' than that which can be merely conceived or can be known by abstractive thought alone. It follows, then, that the *summum cogitabile* must really exist. Scotus is not saying that we have a natural intuition of God; he is giving a reason for the judgement that that which really exists is greater or more perfect than tnat which does not really exist extramentally.

There is no doubt, then, that Scotus makes use of the Anselmian argument. Two questions arise, therefore. First, in what does the *coloratio* of the argument consist? Secondly, how did Scotus think that his use of the argument was consistent with his clear assertion that we can demonstrate God's existence only *a posteriori*? First the *coloratio* consists in an attempt to show that the idea of the most perfect being is the idea of a possible being, and he does this primarily by observing that no contradiction is observable in the idea of the most perfect being. In other words, he anticipates Leibniz's attempt to show that the idea of God is the idea of a possible being, inasmuch as the idea does not involve any contradiction, and the idea of a being which does not involve a contradiction constitutes the idea of a possible being. On the other hand, Scotus did not consider that the fact that we cannot observe any contradiction in the idea of the most perfect being is a demonstrative proof of the fact that no contradiction is involved. We cannot show apodeictically and *a priori* that the most perfect being is possible, and that is why he states elsewhere that the Anselmian argument belongs to the proofs which amount to no more than *persuasiones probabiles*.[1] This supplies the answer to our second question. Scotus considered his use of the Anselmian argument to be compatible with his assertion that we can demonstrate God's existence only *a posteriori* because he did not regard the Anselmian argument as a demonstration, but only as a 'probable persuasion', a probable proof. He did not simply reject the argument as St. Thomas did; but he was dissatisfied with the argument as it stood and thought that it needed 'colouring'. On the other hand, he did not think that the 'colouring', the proof that the idea of God is the idea of a possible being, is a demonstrative proof, and so he put forward the argument as probable. He used it as an auxiliary argument to show what is involved or implied in the idea of God rather than as a strict demonstration of God's existence. It is as though he had said: 'This is the best we can make of the argument, and it has its uses if you accept the premisses; but I do not regard the argument as a demonstration. If a strict demonstration of God's existence is wanted, it will have to proceed *a posteriori*.'

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[1] *Rep.*, I, 2, 3, no. 8.

7. Scotus did not consider that we can demonstrate by the natural reason all God's essential attributes. Thus in the *De primo principio*[1] he says that consideration of the attributes of omnipotence, immensity, omnipresence, truth, justice, mercy and providence directed to all creatures, to intelligent creatures in particular, will be postponed until the next treatise, as they are *credibilia*, that is, revealed objects of faith. It might well appear strange to read that omnipotence, for instance, cannot be philosophically demonstrated as a divine attribute, when Scotus does not hesitate to conclude God's infinity from His infinite power; but he distinguishes between omnipotence in the proper theological sense (*proprie theologice*), which cannot be demonstrated with certainty by philosophers, and infinite power (*potentia infinita*), which can be demonstrated by philosophers.[2] The distinction consists in this. God's power to produce every possible effect, immediately *or* mediately, can be proved philosophically, but not His power to produce all possible effects immediately. Even though the first cause possesses in itself *eminentius* the causality of the secondary cause, it does not necessarily follow, says Scotus, that the first cause can produce the effect of the secondary cause immediately, without the co-operation of the secondary cause, not because the causality of the first cause needs adding to, so to speak, but because the imperfection of the effect may require, so far as the philosopher can see, the causal operation of the finite cause as its

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[1] 4, no. 37.

[2] *Ox.*, 1, 42, *quaestio unica*, no. 2.

explanation. Scotus is thus not attacking the demonstrability of God's creative power: what he is saying is that the proposition, 'whatever the first efficient cause can do with the co-operation of a secondary cause, that it can do immediately by itself', is neither self-evident nor philosophically demonstrable, but is known by faith (*non est nota ex terminis neque ratione naturali, sed est tantum credita*). The objection that God's universal immediate causality would destroy the proper causality of creatures cannot be solved by reason alone.[1]

As to the divine immensity and omnipresence, Scotus's denial of the demonstrability of this attribute of God depends on his denial of St. Thomas's rejection of *actio in distans*, action at a distance. According to St. Thomas[2] *actio in distans* is impossible, while for Scotus the greater the efficacy of the agent, the greater its power to act at a distance. 'Therefore, since God is the most perfect agent, it cannot be concluded concerning Him through the nature of action that He is together with (essentially present to) any effect caused by Him, but rather that He is distant.'[3] It is difficult to see what *actio in distans* could possibly mean in regard to God; but, as far as Scotus is concerned, he is not denying that God is omnipresent or that omnipresence is a necessary attribute of God, but only that God's omnipresence is philosophically demonstrable and, in particular, that the supposed impossibility of *actio in distans* is a valid reason for showing that God is omnipresent.

Probably 'truth' must be taken together with mercy and justice, as meaning in the context much the same as justice. At least, if this suggestion of commentators is not accepted, it is extremely difficult to see what Scotus did mean, since truth and veracity are listed among the divine attributes which are known by the natural reason.[4] As to justice, Scotus sometimes seems to say that the divine justice can be known by the natural light of reason;[5] but when he denies that the justice of God is philosophically demonstrable he appears to mean that it cannot be proved that God rewards and punishes in the next life, since it cannot be proved strictly by the philosopher that the soul is immortal,[6] or that we cannot justify by our reason all the ways of God in regard to man. That God is merciful, in the sense of forgiving sins and forgoing the exaction of punishment, cannot be philosophically demonstrated. Finally, as to divine providence, when Scotus says this cannot be philosophically proved, he appears to mean, not that no providence at all can be demonstrated, but that immediate or special providential action on the part of God, without the employment of secondary causes, cannot be philosophically demonstrated. Scotus certainly held that divine creation, conservation and government of the world can be demonstrated.

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[1] Cf. *Rep.* 1, 42, 2, no. 4; *Quodlibet*, 7, nos. 4 and 18.

[2] *S.T.*, Ia, 8, 1, *ad* 3.

[3] *Rep.*, 1, 37, 2, nos. 6ff.

[4] Cf. *De primo principio*, 4, nos. 36ff; *Ox.*, Prol., 2, no. 10; 3, 23, no. 5; 3, 24, no. 22.

[5] Cf. *ibid.*, 4, 17, no. 7; *Rep.*, 4, 17, no. 7.

[6] Cf. *Ox.*, 4, 43, 2, no. 27.

8. Scotus rejected the theories of St. Thomas and Henry of Ghent concerning the absence in God of any distinction other than the real distinction between the divine Persons and postulated a formal objective distinction between the divine attributes. The *ratio formalis* of wisdom, for example, is not identical with the *ratio formalis* of goodness. Now, 'infinity does not destroy the *ratio* of that to which it is added'.[1] If, therefore, the formal character of the univocal concept of wisdom is not the same as the formal character of the univocal concept of goodness, infinite wisdom will be formally distinct from infinite goodness. It follows, then, that the divine attributes of wisdom and goodness will be formally distinct, independently of the human mind's operation. On the other hand, there can be no composition in God, nor any real distinction in the technical sense between the divine attributes. The distinction between the divine attributes must be, therefore, not a real distinction, but a *distinctio formalis a parte rei*, and the formula will be that the attributes are really or substantially identical (*in re*), but formally distinct. 'So I allow that truth is identical with goodness *in re*, but not, however, that truth is formally goodness.'[2] Scotus contends that the distinction between the divine essence and the divine attributes and between the attributes themselves does not impair the divine simplicity, since the attributes are not accidents of God, nor do they inform God as finite accidents inform finite substances. As infinite they are really identical with the divine essence, and God can be called Truth or Wisdom or Goodness; but the fact remains that the *rationes formales* of truth, wisdom and goodness are formally and objectively distinct.[3]

9. It has been maintained in the past that the divine ideas depend, according to Scotus, on God's free will, so that the exemplar ideas are God's arbitrary creation. But as a matter of fact Scotus explicitly teaches that it is the divine intellect which

[1] *Ox.*, 1, 8, 4, no. 17. [2] *Ibid.*, 1, 8, 4, no. 18. [3] *Ibid.*, nos. 19ff.

produces the ideas: 'the divine intellect, precisely as intellect, produces in God the *rationes ideales*, the ideal or intelligible natures'.[1] The divine essence, however, is the foundation of the ideas. 'God first knows His essence, and in the second instant He understands (*intelligit*) creatures by means of His essence, and then in that way the knowable object depends on the divine understanding in regard to its being known (*in esse cognito*), since it is constituted in its *esse cognito* by that understanding.'[2] The divine ideas do not, then, depend on the divine will. 'The divine intellect, as in some way, that is, logically prior to the act of the divine will, produces those objects in their intelligible being (*in esse intelligibili*), and so in respect of them it seems to be a merely natural cause, since God is not a free cause in respect of anything but that which presupposes in some way His will or an act of His will.'[3] Possibles are not produced by the divine omnipotence, but by the divine intellect, which produces them *in esse intelligibili.*[4]

The divine ideas are infinite in number, and they are substantially identical with the divine essence; but they are not formally identical with the divine essence:[5] they are necessary and eternal, but they are not formally necessary and eternal in precisely the same sense as the divine essence, since the divine essence has a certain logical priority. Again, 'although the divine essence was from eternity the exemplary cause of the stone in its intelligible being, yet by a certain order of priority the Persons were "produced" before the stone in its intelligible being . . . even though it is eternal.'[6] Logically speaking, the divine essence is imitable before the divine intellect apprehends it as imitable.[7] The ideas are participations or possible imitations of the divine essence, apprehended by the divine intellect, and it is because the divine essence is infinite, because it is imitable in an infinite number of ways, that the ideas are infinite, though the presence of the ideas does not compel God to create corresponding objects.[8]

10. Scotus did not teach that the divine will acts in a simply capricious and arbitrary manner, though this doctrine has been ascribed to him. 'Will in God is His essence really, perfectly and identically',[9] and the divine volition is one act in itself.[10] The divine will and the act of the divine will, which are one *in re*, cannot change, therefore, though it does not follow that what God

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[1] *Ox.*, 1, 36, no. 4, cf. no. 6.
[2] *Rep.*, 1, 36, 2, no. 33.
[3] *Ox.*, 1, 3, 4, no. 20.
[4] *Ibid.*, 2, 1, 2, no. 6.
[5] *Rep.*, 1, 36, 3, no. 27.
[6] *Collationes*, 31, no. 5.
[7] *Ox.*, 1, 35, no. 8.
[8] *Ibid.*, 1, 38, no. 5.
[9] *Rep.*, 1, 45, 2, no. 7.
[10] *Ox.*, 1, 17, 3, no. 18.

wills eternally must necessarily exist eternally. 'The operation (of the will) is in eternity, and the production of *esse existentiae* is in time.'[1] Logically speaking, even in God understanding precedes will, and God wills most rationally (*rationabilissime*). Although there is, ontologically, but one act of the divine will, we can distinguish the primary act by which God wills the end or *finis*, Himself, the secondary act by which He wills what is immediately ordered to the end, for example, by predestinating the elect, the third act by which He wills those things which are necessary to attain this end (e.g. grace), and the fourth act by which He wills more remote means, such as the sensible world.[2] But although the divine understanding logically precedes the divine volition, the divine will does not need direction as though it could err or choose something unsuitable, and *in this sense* the divine will is its own rule. Scotus sometimes states, indeed, that the divine will wills because it wills and that no reason can be given; but he makes his meaning clear enough. After citing Aristotle to the effect that it is the mark of an uneducated man to seek a demonstrative reason for everything, Scotus argues that it is not only ultimate principles which cannot be demonstrated, but also contingent things, because contingent things do not follow from necessary principles. The idea of human nature in God is necessary; but why God willed human nature to be represented in this or that individual, at this or that time, is a question to which no answer can be given save that 'because He willed it to be, therefore it was good that it should be'.[3] Scotus's point is that contingent things cannot be deduced by necessary demonstrations, since they would be necessary, and not contingent, if they could be so deduced. If you ask, he says, why heat heats, the only answer is that heat is heat: so the only answer to the question why God willed a contingent thing is that He willed it.[4] Scotus is not denying that God acts for an end, Himself, that He acts 'most rationally'; but he wants to show the absurdity of seeking a necessary reason for what is not necessary. 'From a necessary (principle) there does not follow something contingent.'[5] The free choice of God is the ultimate reason of contingent things, and we cannot legitimately go behind God's free choice and seek a necessary reason determining that choice. God's intellect does not determine His creative work by necessary reasons, since creation is free, nor is He

[1] *Ox.*, 1, 39, no. 21, cf. *ibid.*, 2, 1, 2, no. 7.

[2] *Ibid.*, 3, 32, no. 6.

[3] *Ibid.*, 2, 1, 2, no. 65.

[4] *Ibid.*, 1, 8, 5, nos. 23f.; cf. *Quodlibet*, 16.

[5] *Rep.*, 1, 10, 3, no. 4.

determined by the goodness of objects, since the objects do not yet exist: rather are they good because He wills them to be. That God can create only what is an imitation of His essence and that He cannot, therefore, create anything evil, is understood.

Scotus thus insisted on God's freedom of will in regard to His operations *ad extra*; but he also maintained that though God loves Himself necessarily and cannot not will and love Himself, that love is none the less free. This theory certainly seems rather singular. That God's will is free in regard to finite objects other than Himself follows from the infinity of the divine will, which can have as its necessary object only an infinite object, God Himself; but that God should love Himself necessarily and freely at the same time would certainly appear, at first sight at least, to involve a contradiction. Scotus's position is as follows. Liberty belongs to the perfection of volition, and it must be present formally in God. As volition directed to the final end is the most perfect kind of volition, it must include what belongs to the perfection of volition. It must, therefore, be free. On the other hand, the divine will, identical with God, cannot but will and love the final end, God Himself. The principle of reconciliation of the two seemingly contradictory propositions is that necessity in the supreme act of the will does not take away, but rather postulates, what belongs to the perfection of will. 'The intrinsic condition of the power itself whether absolutely or in order to a perfect act is not incompatible with perfection in operation. But liberty is an intrinsic condition of the will absolutely or in order to the act of willing. Therefore liberty is compatible with a perfect possible condition in operation, and such a condition is necessity, especially when it is possible.'[1] Scotus gives an example to show what he means. 'If someone voluntarily hurls himself over a precipice (*voluntarie se praecipitat*) and, while falling, always continues to will it, he falls indeed necessarily by the necessity of natural gravity, and yet he freely wills that fall. So God, although He necessarily lives by His natural life, and that with a necessity which excludes all liberty, wills none the less freely that He should live by that life. Therefore, we do not place the life of God under necessity (i.e. we do not attribute necessity to God's life) if we understand by "life" life as loved by God by free will.'[2] Scotus appears to mean, then, that we can distinguish in God the natural necessity by which He loves Himself and His free ratification, as it were, of that necessity, so that necessary love of Himself and free love of Himself are not incompatible. One may think that this distinction is not particularly helpful; but in any case it is clear that Scotus's voluntaristic and libertarian doctrine does not imply that God could refrain from willing Himself or that His love for Himself is arbitrary. The truth of the matter is that Scotus attached so much value to liberty as a perfection of will that he was reluctant to exclude it even from those acts of will which he was compelled to regard as necessary. This will be apparent when we come to consider his doctrine concerning the human will.

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[1] *Quodlibet*, 16, no. 8.

[2] *Ibid.*, 16, no. 9; cf. *Rep.*, 1, 10, 3, nos. 3ff.

11. Scotus maintained that God's power to create out of nothing is demonstrable by the natural light of reason. God as first efficient cause must be able to produce some effect immediately, since otherwise He would not be able to produce effects even mediately (taking as proved that He is *first* efficient cause). 'Therefore it is clear to the natural intellect that God can cause in such a way that something should be from Him (i.e. should have its being from God) without any element of itself being presupposed or any receptive element in which it is received. It is clear, then, to the natural reason that, although the Philosopher (Aristotle) did not say so, something can be proved to be capable of being caused by God in this way.' 'And I say that Aristotle did not affirm that God creates something in this way; but it does not thereby follow that the contrary (i.e. of Aristotle's opinion) cannot be known by the natural reason. . . .'[1] Moreover, it can be proved that God can create out of nothing.[2] But the relationship involved by creation is not mutual: the relation of the creature to God is a real relation, whereas the relation of God to the creature is a mental relation only (*relatio rationis*), since God is not essentially Creator and cannot be called Creator in the same sense in which He is called wise or good. He is really Creator; but His relationship to the creature is not a real relation, since He is not Creator by essence, in which case He would create necessarily, nor on the other hand can He receive an accidental relation.

As to the question whether creation in time can be proved, Scotus inclined to the opinion of St. Thomas, though he did not accept St. Thomas's reasons, that creation in time cannot be proved philosophically. The logical priority of *nihil* can be proved, 'since otherwise creation could not be admitted'; but it is not

[1] *Rep.*, 2, 1, 3, nos. 9–11; cf. *Ox.*, 2, 1, 2; *Collationes*, 13, no. 4.
[2] *Ox.*, 4, 1, 1, nos. 27 ff.

necessary that logical priority should involve temporal priority. Scotus speaks, however, with hesitation. 'It does not seem to be necessary that *nihil* should precede the world temporally; but it seems sufficient if it precedes the world logically.'[1] In other words, Scotus rejected the opinion of St. Bonaventure that the impossibility of creation from eternity can be philosophically demonstrated, and he inclined to the opinion of St. Thomas that creation in time is also incapable of philosophic demonstration; but he speaks more hesitantly on the point than does St. Thomas.

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[1] *Ox.*, 2, 1, 3, no. 19.

CHAPTER XLIX

SCOTUS—V: THE SOUL

The specific form of man—Union of soul and body—Will and intellect—Soul's immortality not strictly demonstrated.

1. THAT the rational soul is the specific form of man can be philosophically proved,[1] and the opinion of Averroes that the intellect is a separate principle is unintelligible. 'All philosophers, generally speaking, have included "rational" in the definition of man as his special *differentia*, understanding by "rational" that the intellectual soul is an essential part of man.' No philosopher of note denies this, 'although that accursed Averroes in his fiction *On the Soul*, which, however, is intelligible neither to himself nor to anyone else, affirms that the intellect is a certain separate substance, which can be joined to us by means of the *phantasmata*; a union which neither he himself nor any disciple of his has hitherto been able to explain, nor has he been able by means of that union to preserve (the truth that) man understands. For according to him man would not be formally anything else but a kind of superior irrational animal, more excellent than other animals in virtue of his type of irrational, sensitive soul.'[2]

That the rational soul is the form of man Scotus proves by an enthymeme. 'Man understands (*intelligit*, apprehends intellectually) formally and properly; therefore the intellectual soul is the proper form of man.'[3] The antecedent, he says, seems to be clear enough through the authority of Aristotle; but in case anyone wantonly denies it, a rational proof must be given. To understand properly (*intelligere proprie*) means to understand by an act of knowledge which transcends every kind of sensitive knowledge, and that man understands in this sense can be proved as follows. To exercise intellectual activity in the proper sense is, as remarked, to exercise an activity transcending the power of sense. Now, sensitive apprehension is an organic function, since each of the senses has a determinate kind of object, the object of the special sense in question. Thus vision is determined to the perception of colour, hearing to that of sound. But the intellect is not determined in this way: its object is being, and it is not bound to a bodily organ in the sense in which sensation is bound. It can apprehend objects which are not immediately given to sensation, such as generic and specific relations. Intellectual cognition, therefore, transcends the powers of sense, and it follows that man can *intelligere proprie.*[1]

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[1] *Ox.*, 4, 43, 2, nos. 4–5. [2] *Ibid.*, 4, 43, 2, no. 5. [3] *Ibid.*, 4, 43, 2, no. 6.

That the conclusion of the original enthymeme ('therefore the intellectual soul is the proper form of man') follows from the antecedent can be shown in two ways. Intellectual cognition, as a function of man, must be 'received' in something in man himself which is not extended and which is neither a part nor the whole of the corporeal organism. If it was received in something extended, it would be itself extended and a purely organic function, which it has been proved not to be. When Scotus talks about intellectual cognition being 'received', he means that it is not identical with our substance, since we are not always exercising the power of intellectual cognition; so it must be the act of some principle in us. But it cannot be the act of the material part of man: therefore it must be the act of a spiritual formal principle, and what can this be but the intellectual soul, the principle which has the power of exercising intellectual activity? Secondly, man is master of his voluntary acts, he is free, and his will is not determined to any one kind of appetible object. Therefore it transcends organic appetite, and its acts cannot be the acts of any material form. It follows that our free, voluntary acts are the acts of an intellectual form, and if our free acts are *our* acts, as they are, then the form of which they are the acts must be *our* form. The intellectual soul is, then, the form of man: it is his specific form, which differentiates man from the brutes.[2]

2. In man there is only one soul, though there is, as already mentioned, a form of corporeity. There are, as we also saw earlier, various 'formalities' in the one human soul, which, though not really distinct (separable) from one another, are distinct with a *distinctio formalis a parte rei*, since the intellectual, sensitive and vegetative activities are formally and objectively distinct; but they are formalities of the one rational soul of man. This one rational soul is, therefore, not only the principle of man's rational cognition, but it is also the principle of his sensitive activity and of his life. It gives *esse vivum*, and it is the formal principle by which the organism is a living organism:[3] it is the substantial form of man.[4] The soul is, therefore, a part of man, and it is only

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[1] *Ox.*, 4, 43, 2, nos. 6–11.

[2] *Ibid.*, 4, 43, 2, no. 12.

[3] *Ibid.*, 2, 16, no. 6.

[4] *Ibid.*, 2, 1, 4, no. 25.

improperly that it can be called subsistent, since it is part of a substance rather than a substance by itself; it is the composite being, soul and body, which is a *per se unum.*[1] The soul in the state of separation from the body is not, properly speaking, a person.[2] The soul perfects the body only when the latter is properly disposed for it, and *this* soul has an aptitude for *this* body. This means, says Scotus,[3] that the soul cannot be individuated by the matter it informs, since the soul, that is, a particular soul, is infused into a body, and the creation of that soul is logically prior to its union with the body.

Scotus differs also from St. Thomas in holding that the rational soul does not confer *esse simpliciter*, but rather *esse vivum* and *esse sensitivum*: there is, as already mentioned, a form of corporeity. If the rational soul were to confer *esse simpliciter* on man, man could not really be said to die. Death involves the corruption of the 'entity' of man, and this implies that both soul and body have a reality of their own, that the being of man as man is his being as a *compositum*, not his being as a soul. If the soul conferred *esse simpliciter* and there were no other form in the body, the separation of soul from body would not mean a corruption of the being of man as man. For death to take place, man must have a being as *compositum*, a being distinct from that of his component parts, taken separately or together, for it is this being of man as a *compositum* which is corrupted at death. Moreover, St. Thomas, according to Scotus, contradicts himself. 'Elsewhere he says that the state of the soul in the body is more perfect than its state outside the body, since it is a part of the *compositum*'; yet at the same time he asserts that the soul confers, and therefore possesses, *esse simpliciter*, and that it is not less perfect merely by the fact that it does not communicate that *esse* to any thing other than itself. 'According to you the soul possesses the same *esse* totally in a state of separation which it possessed when united with the body . . . therefore it is in no way more imperfect by the fact that it does not communicate that *esse* to the body.'[4]

The soul is united to the body for the perfection of the whole man, who consists of soul and body. According to St. Thomas,[5] the soul is united to the body for the good of the soul. The soul is naturally dependent on the senses for its cognition, the *conversio ad phantasma* being natural to it,[6] and therefore the soul is united to the body for the soul's good, in order that it may operate according to its nature. For Scotus, however, as we have already seen, the direction of the human intellect towards material things and its *de facto* dependence on the senses originate not so much in the nature of the human reason as such as in the present state of the soul, its condition in the body as wayfarer (with the alternative suggestion that sin may possibly be the responsible factor). St. Thomas would object that in this case its union with the body is for the good of the body, not of the soul, and that this is irrational, 'since matter is for the sake of form, and not conversely'. To such an objection Scotus's answer is that the soul is united to the body, not for the good of the body simply, but for the good of the composite being, man. It is man, the composite being, who is the term of the creative act, not soul taken by itself or body taken by itself, and the union of soul and body is effected in order that this composite being may be realised: the union exists, therefore, for the good of the whole man, *propter perfectionem totius.* The union of soul with body does not take place 'for the perfection of the body, nor for the perfection of the soul alone, but for the perfection of the whole which consists of these parts; and so although no perfection may accrue to this or that part which it would not have possessed without such a union, the union does not, however, take place in vain, since the perfection of the whole, which is principally intended by nature, could not be had except in that way.'[1]

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[1] *Ox.*, 4, 12, 1, no. 19.
[2] *Quodlibet*, 9, no. 7, and 19, no. 19.
[3] *Ibid.*, 2, 3 ff.
[4] *Ox.*, 4, 43, 1, nos. 2–6.
[5] *S.T.*, Ia, 89, 1.
[6] Cf. *ibid.*, Ia, 84, 7.

3. Of Scotus's idea of human intellectual activity something has already been said in the chapter on knowledge; but a brief discussion must be given of his doctrine concerning the relation of will to intellect, as this has given rise to some misunderstanding concerning his general position.

The intellect is not, like the will, a free power. 'It is not in the power of the intellect to restrain its assent to the truths which it apprehends; for in so far as the truth of principles becomes clear to it from the terms or the truth of conclusions from principles, in so far must it give its assent on account of its lack of liberty.'[2] Thus if the truth of the proposition that the whole is greater than the part becomes clear to the intellect from the realisation of what a whole is and what a part is, or if the truth of the conclusion that Socrates is mortal becomes clear to the intellect from a consideration of the premisses that all men are mortal and that Socrates is a man, then the intellect is not free to withhold its consent to the proposition that the whole is greater than the part or the proposition that Socrates is mortal. The intellect is thus a *potentia naturalis*.

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[1] *Ox.*, 4, 45, 2, no. 14.

[2] *Ibid.*, 2, 6, 2, no. 11.

The will, however, is free, a *potentia libera*, and it is essentially free, its *ratio formalis* consisting more in its freedom than its character as appetite.[1] It is necessary to distinguish between will in the sense of a natural inclination and will as free, and it is only free will that is will in the proper sense; from which it follows that will is free of its very nature and that God could not, for example, create a rational will which would be *naturally* incapable of sinning.[2] By an elicited act of his free will, says Scotus, St. Paul willed 'to be dissolved and to be with Christ'; but this elicited act was contrary to his natural 'will', in the sense of natural inclination.[3] The two, therefore, are distinct, and this distinction is of importance when one considers man's desire of happiness or of his last end. The will as natural appetite or inclination to self-perfection necessarily desires happiness above all things, and since happiness or beatitude is, as a matter of concrete fact, to be found in God alone, there is in man a natural inclination to beatitude 'in particular', to God. But it does not follow that the will as free necessarily and perpetually desires the last end, nor that it necessarily elicits a conscious and deliberate act in regard to that object.[4] Scotus protests that he does not mean to imply that the will can choose misery *as such* or evil *as such*: 'I do not will beatitude' is not the same as 'I will the opposite of beatitude'; it means that I do not here and now elicit an act in its regard, not that I elicit a choice of its opposite, which cannot be an object of will. If I do elicit an act, however, that is, an act of willing beatitude, that act will be free, since every elicited act of the will is free.[5] Moreover, Scotus does not hesitate to draw the conclusion from his doctrine of the essential freedom of the will that the blessed in heaven will and love God freely.[6] He rejects, then, the doctrine of St. Thomas that when the *summum bonum* is clearly presented, the will chooses and loves it necessarily, and he even goes so far as to say that the blessed retain the power to sin. But when he says this, he does not mean to say any more than that the will as such remains free in heaven, since it is essentially free and heaven does not destroy its freedom: morally speaking, the blessed in heaven not only will not sin, but cannot sin, though this necessity is only *secundum*

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[1] *Ox.*, 1, 17, 3, no. 5; 2, 25, no. 16. [2] *Ibid.*, 2, 23, nos. 8 and 7. [3] *Ibid.*, 3, 15, no. 37.
[4] Cf. *ibid.*, 4, 49, 10, no. 3; 2, 23, no. 8; 1, 1, 4, no. 16; *Collationes*, 16, no. 3.
[5] Cf. *Ox.*, 4, 49, 10, nos. 8f. [6] *Ox.*, 1, 1, 4, nos. 13ff.

quid, proceeding from the 'habit of glory' (*habitus gloriae*) and the inclination produced in the will, not from a physical determination of the will.[1] The will of the blessed is thus morally impeccable, though not physically impeccable. Scotus does not differ from St. Thomas as to the actual fact that the blessed will not sin and he is willing to say that they cannot sin, provided that 'cannot' is not understood in a sense which would imply that the essence of the will is in any way impaired.[2]

The intellect, then, is a *potentia naturalis*, the will a *potentia libera*, and, given Scotus's insistence on liberty as a perfection, his position in the controversy regarding the primacy of intellect over will or of will over intellect cannot be in doubt. Knowledge certainly precedes every elicited act of the will, since the will cannot exercise choice in regard to an entirely unknown object (Scotus was no 'irrationalist'), and it is difficult, he says, though not impossible, for the will not to incline itself to what is finally dictated by the practical reason; but, on the other hand, the will can command the intellect. Scotus does not mean, of course, that the will can command the intellect to assent to propositions which are seen to be false: the will does not add anything to the act of understanding as such,[3] nor is it the cause of the intellect's act.[4] But the will can co-operate mediately, as an efficient cause, by moving the intellect to attend to this or that intelligible object, to consider this or that argument.[5] It follows that 'the will, by commanding the intellect, is a superior cause in respect of its act. But the intellect, if it is the cause of volition (that is, as a partial cause, by supplying the knowledge of the object) is a cause subservient to the will'.[6]

Scotus gives other reasons for affirming the primacy of the will. The will is more perfect than the intellect since the corruption of the will is worse than the corruption of the intellect; to hate God is worse than not to know God or not to think of God. Again, sin means willing something evil, whereas to think of something evil is not necessarily a sin: it is only a sin when the will gives some consent to or takes some pleasure in the evil thought of.[7] Again, love is a greater good than knowledge, and love resides in the will,[8] while it is the will which plays the principal part in final beatitude, uniting the soul with God, possessing and enjoying God. Though both powers, intellect and will, are involved in beatitude, the higher faculty, will, is the more immediate means of union with God.[1] Scotus thus rejected the Thomist doctrine of the primacy of the intellect and of the essence of beatitude and remained true to the tradition of the Augustinian-Franciscan School. It does not seem to be a matter of great moment, indeed, whether one adopts the Thomist or Scotist viewpoint, for both sides agree that beatitude, taken *extensive*, involves both powers; but it is necessary to explain Scotus's position, in order to show how foolish are accusations of irrationalism and of unmitigated voluntarism.

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[1] *Ox.*, 4, 49, 6, no. 9.

[2] Cf. *Collatio*, 15.

[3] *Rep.*, 2, 42, 4, no. 7.

[4] *Collationes*, 2, no 7.

[5] *Rep.*, 1, 35, 1, no. 27.

[6] *Ox.*, 4, 49, *quaestio ex latere*, nos. 16 and 18.

[7] *Ibid.*, no. 17.

[8] *Ibid.*, no. 21.

4. One might have expected, in view of Scotus's clear teaching, not only that the soul's intellectual activity transcends the powers of sense, but also that it can be proved philosophically to transcend the powers of sense and matter, that he would attempt to demonstrate the immortality of the human soul; but actually he did not believe that this truth can be strictly demonstrated in philosophy, and he criticised the proofs adduced by his predecessors. Of the three propositions, first that the rational soul is the specific form of man, secondly that the soul is immortal, and thirdly that the soul after death will not remain in a perpetual state of separation from the body (that is, that the body will rise again), the first is known by the natural light of reason, the error opposed to it, that of Averroes, being 'not only against the truth of theology, but also against the truth of philosophy' (that is, the Averroistic doctrine is not only against the truth as known by faith, but can also be philosophically refuted). 'But the other two (propositions) are not sufficiently known by the natural reason, although there are certain probable and persuasive arguments (*persuasiones probabiles*) for them. For the second, indeed, there are several more probable (arguments); hence the Philosopher seems to have held it *magis expresse.*' But for the third there are fewer reasons, and consequently the conclusion which follows from those reasons is not thereby sufficiently known through the natural reason.[2] Scotus's general position is, therefore, that we can prove philosophically that the rational soul is the specific form of man; but that we cannot prove demonstratively in philosophy either that the soul is immortal or that the body will rise again. The philosophical arguments for the soul's immortality have greater weight than those for the resurrection of the body, but they are none the less only probable arguments, the *a priori* arguments, namely those

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[1] *Rep.*, 4, 49, 3, no. 7; *Ox.*, 4, 49, 3, nos. 5ff.

[2] *Ox.*, 4, 43, 2, no. 26.

based on the soul's nature, being better than the *a posteriori* arguments, for example, those based on the need for sanctions in a future life. The soul's immortality may be said to be morally provable, *ex inductione*, and it is certainly more probable, philosophically speaking, than its opposite; but the arguments adduced for it are not demonstrative and necessary arguments, enjoying absolute certainty.[1]

As regards the authority of Aristotle, Scotus declares that his opinion is not really clear. 'For he speaks in various ways in different places, and he had different principles, from some of which one opposite (one opinion) seems to follow, from others another. It is probable, then, that he was always doubtful about that conclusion, and at one time he would approach the one side, at another time the other, according as he was treating a matter which harmonised more with one side than with the other.'[2] In any case not all the assertions of the philosophers were proved by them by necessary reasons; but 'frequently they had only some probable persuasions (some probable and persuasive arguments) or the general opinion of preceding philosophers.'[3] The authority of Aristotle is, therefore, no certain argument for the soul's immortality.

As to the arguments adduced by St. Thomas and other Christian philosophers, these are not absolutely conclusive. In the *Summa Theologica*[4] St. Thomas argues that the human soul cannot be corrupted *per accidens*, in virtue of the corruption of the body, since it is a subsistent form, nor can it be corrupted *per se*, since *esse* belongs to a subsistent form in such a way that the natural corruption of the form would mean the separation of the form from itself. To this Scotus answers that St. Thomas is begging the question, since he presupposes that the soul of man is a *forma per se subsistens*, which is the very point which has to be proved. The proposition that the human soul is a form of this kind is accepted as an object of belief, but it is not known by natural reason.[5] If it be objected that this criticism is unfair, in view of the fact that St. Thomas has previously devoted an article (2) to showing that the human soul is an incorporeal and subsistent principle, Scotus retorts that though it can be shown that the rational soul in its intellectual activity does not use a corporeal organ and that its intellectual activity transcends the power of sense, it does not necessarily follow that the rational soul does not depend, as regards its being, on the whole *compositum*, which is certainly corruptible.[1] In other words, the fact that the human soul does not employ a corporeal organ in its purely intellectual activity does not necessarily prove that it is not naturally dependent for its existence on the continued existence of the *compositum*. It would have to be demonstrated that a form which transcends matter in a certain operation is necessarily independent in regard to existence, and this, according to Scotus, has not been conclusively proved.[2]

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[1] Cf. *Rep.*, 4, 43, 2, nos. 15ff.

[2] *Ox.*, 4, 43, 2, no. 16.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Ia, 75, 6.

[5] *Ox.*, 4, 43, 2, no. 23.

In regard to the argument drawn from the desire of beatitude, which involves immortality, Scotus observes that if by desire is meant a natural desire in the strict sense, one which is simply the inclination of nature to some thing, then it is clear that a natural desire for a thing cannot be proved, unless the latter's natural possibility has first been proved: to assert the existence of a natural inclination towards a state, the possibility of which is still unknown, is to be guilty of a *petitio principii*. If, however, by natural desire is meant a natural desire in a wider sense, that is, an elicited desire which is in accordance with a natural inclination, it cannot be shown that the elicited desire is natural in this sense until it has been proved that there is a natural desire in the strict sense. It may be said that an object which becomes the object of an elicited desire immediately it is apprehended must be the object of a natural desire or inclination; but in this case one might as well argue that because a vicious man is immediately inclined to desire the object of his vice when he apprehends it, he has a natural inclination or a natural desire for it, whereas in point of fact nature is not of itself vicious, and certainly not in everybody. It is no good saying that an object which, directly it is apprehended, is the object of an elicited desire according to right reason is the object of a natural desire, since the whole question is to discover whether the desire for immortality is or is not in accordance with right reason: this cannot legitimately be taken for granted. Furthermore, if it is said that man has a natural desire for immortality because he naturally flees from death, and that therefore immortality is at least a possibility, one might equally well argue that a brute has a natural desire for immortality and that it can and does survive.[3]

It may be as well to recall the fact that Scotus is not saying that the arguments for immortality are not probable or persuasive, still less that they are worthless: he is saying that they are not, in his opinion, demonstrative. The argument from desire does not conclude, because if one is speaking of the biological inclination to avoid death or what leads to death, brutes also possess this inclination, while if one is speaking of an elicited, conscious desire, one cannot legitimately argue from the desire of immortality to the fact of immortality unless one has first shown that immortality is a possibility, that the human soul can survive the disintegration of the *compositum*. It is all very well to say that the sufferings of this life demand a counterpoise in another life; but it remains true that man is exposed to suffering in this life, just as he is capable of pleasure and joy in this life, by the very fact of his nature, so that exposure to suffering is natural, and we cannot argue without more ado that suffering must be counterbalanced by other-worldly happiness. As to the argument that there must be sanctions in an after life, and that an after life therefore exists, the argument is not valid until you have shown that God does actually reward and punish people in this way, and Scotus did not think that this can be proved purely philosophically.[1] The best argument for the immortality of the human soul may be that drawn from the intellect's independence of a corporeal organ, from its spiritual activity; but although Scotus thought that this proof constituted a highly probable argument, he did not consider that it was an absolutely conclusive argument, since it might be that the soul, which is created as part of the *compositum*, cannot exist except as part of the *compositum*.

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[1] *Ox.*, 4, 43, 2, no. 18. [2] Cf. also *Rep.*, 4, 43, 2, no. 18. [3] *Ox.*, 4, 43, 2, nos. 29–31.

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[1] *Ox.*, 4, 43, 2, no. 27.

CHAPTER L

SCOTUS—VI: ETHICS

Morality of human acts—Indifferent acts—The moral law and the will of God—Political authority.

My aim in this chapter is not to propound all the ethical doctrines of Scotus, but rather to show that the accusation which has been brought against him of teaching the purely arbitrary character of the moral law, as though it depended simply and solely on the divine will, is, in the main, an unjust accusation.

1. An act is naturally good (*naturaliter bonus*) when it possesses all that is required for its *esse naturale*, just as a body is beautiful when it possesses all those characteristics of size, colour, shape, etc., which befit the body itself and harmonise with one another. An act is morally good when it possesses all that is required, not by the nature of the act taken merely in itself, but by right reason (*recta ratio*). To enter the moral order at all an act must be free, for 'an act is neither praiseworthy nor blameworthy unless it proceeds from the free will'; but obviously this is required for both morally good and morally bad acts; something more than freedom is required for a morally good act and that is conformity with right reason.[1] 'To attribute moral goodness is to attribute conformity to right reason.'[2] Every morally good act must be objectively good, in the sense of having an object conformable to right reason; but no act is good on this count alone, save the love of God, which can in no circumstances be morally evil, just as no act is morally evil on account of its object alone, save hatred of God, which cannot be morally good in any circumstances.[3] It is impossible, for instance, to love God with a bad intention, since there would then be no love, just as it is impossible to hate God with a good intention. In other cases, however, 'the goodness of the will does not depend on the object alone, but on all the other circumstances, and chiefly on the end' (*a fine*), which holds the primary place among the 'circumstances' of the act.[4] But though the end holds the primary place among the circumstances of the act, an act is not morally good merely because the end is good:

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[1] *Ox.*, 2, 40, *quaestio unica*, nos. 2–3. [2] *Ibid.*, 1, 17, 3, no. 14.
[3] *Rep.*, 4, 28, no. 6. [4] *Ox.*, 1, *distinctio ultima*, nos. 1 and 2.

the end does not justify the means. 'It is necessary that all the (requisite) circumstances should occur together in any moral act, for it to be morally good; the defect of any one circumstance is sufficient in order that (the act) should be morally bad':[1] 'evil things must not be done in order that good (results) may eventuate.'[2] For an act to be morally good, then, it must be free, and it must be objectively good and be done with the right intention, in the right way, and so on. If it possesses these circumstances, it will be in accordance with right reason.

2. Every human act, that is, every free act, is good or evil in some way, not only in the sense that every act, considered purely ontologically, i.e. as a positive entity, is good, but also in the sense that every act has an object which is either in accordance with right reason or contrary to it. But inasmuch as goodness of all the circumstances is required for a completely good moral act, it is possible, if some circumstance is deficient in the goodness it should have, for an act to be 'indifferent'. For example, in order for almsgiving to be a completely good moral act, to have full moral value, it must be done with a moral intention. Now, to give alms with a bad intention would make the act bad; but it is possible to give alms simply from an immediate inclination, for example, and such an act, says Scotus, can be called morally indifferent: it is neither a bad act nor is it a fully moral act.[3] In the admission of indifferent elicited acts (and Scotus insisted that he was not speaking of reflex acts like brushing away a fly from one's face)[4] Scotus adopted an opinion opposed to that of St. Thomas Aquinas; but in order to understand his opinion, it is important to realise that for Scotus 'the first practical principle is: God ought to be loved'.[5] A man is not obliged always to refer his act to God either actually or virtually, because, says Scotus, God has not laid us under this obligation, but unless this is done, the act will not be completely good morally. On the other hand, since we are not obliged so to refer every act, it does not follow that an act which is not so referred is an evil act. If it is incompatible with the love of God, it will be evil; but it can be compatible with the love of God without being referred to God either actually or virtually. In this case it is an indifferent act. Apparently Scotus thought that 'habitual' reference is not sufficient to give an act full moral value.

3. We have seen that a morally good act must be in accordance

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[1] *Ox.*, 1, *distinctio ultima*, nos. 1 and 2.

[2] *Rep.*, 2, 41, no. 2.

[3] *Ibid.*, 4, 5, 2, no. 7.

[4] Cf. *Ox.*, 2, 41, no. 4.

[5] *Ibid.*, 4, 46, 1, no. 10.

with right reason. What, then, is the norm of right reason and of the morality of our actions? According to Scotus, 'the divine will is the cause of good, and so by the fact that He wills something it is good . . .'[1] This statement taken by itself naturally appears to imply that the moral law depends simply on the arbitrary will of God; but such was not Scotus's position, and he meant simply that what God wills is good because God of His very nature cannot will anything but what is good. Still, Scotus does make the moral law depend in one sense on the divine will, and his position must be made clear. Inasmuch as the divine intellect, considered as preceding an act of the divine will, perceives the acts which are in conformity with human nature, the eternal and immutable moral law is constituted in regard to its content; but it acquires obligatory force only through the free choice of the divine will. One can say, then, that it is not the content of the moral law which is due to the divine will, but the obligation of the moral law, its morally binding force. 'To command pertains only to the appetite or will.'[2] The intellect says that this is true or untrue, in the practical as in the speculative sphere, and though it inclines to action of a certain type, it does not dictate that one ought to act in that way. Scotus is not simply saying that obligation actually bears on human beings only because God has willed to create them, which would be obvious enough, since they could not be obliged if they did not exist; he is saying that the divine will is the fount of obligation. It seems to follow that if God had not chosen to impose obligation, morality would be a matter of self-perfection, in the sense that the intellect would perceive that a certain course of action is what befits human nature and would judge that it is reasonable and prudent to act in that way. One would have an ethic of the type represented by Aristotle's ethics. Actually, however, God has willed that course of action, and that will is reflected in moral obligation: to transgress the law is thus not simply irrational, it is sin in the theological sense of the word.

That the content of the moral law is not due simply to the arbitrary caprice or choice of God is made abundantly clear by Scotus. Speaking of the sin of Adam,[3] he observes: 'A sin which is a sin only because it is forbidden, is less of a sin formally than that which is evil in itself and not because it is forbidden. Now to eat of that tree was not more a sin, as far as the act was concerned, than to eat of another tree, but only because it was forbidden. But all sins which concern the ten commandments are formally evil not merely because they are forbidden, but because they are evil; therefore they are forbidden, since by the law of nature the opposite of any commandment was evil, and by natural reason a man can see that any of those precepts is to be observed.' Here Scotus states clearly that the ten commandments are not simply arbitrary precepts and that a man can discern their validity through the natural use of reason, a statement which should involve the conclusion that God Himself could not change them, not because He is subject to them, as it were, but because they are ultimately founded on His nature.

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[1] *Rep.*, 1, 48, *quaestio unica.*

[2] *Ox.*, 4, 14, 2, no. 5.

[3] *Rep.*, 2, 22, *quaestio unica*, no. 3.

The difficulty arises, however, that God seems to have dispensed in some of the secondary precepts of the decalogue (the precepts of the second table). For example, He told the Israelites to despoil the Egyptians, and He commissioned Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. Scotus, discussing this matter, asks first whether all the ten commandments belong to the law of nature, and he proceeds to make a distinction. Those moral laws which are self-evident or which follow necessarily from self-evident practical principles belong to the natural law in the strictest sense, and in the case of these principles and conclusions no dispensation is possible. God could not, for example, permit a man to have other gods than Himself or to take His name in vain, as such acts would be quite incompatible with man's end, the love of God as God, which necessarily involves exclusive worship and reverence. On the other hand, a moral law may belong to the law of nature, not as following necessarily from self-evident principles, but as being in accordance with the primary, necessary and self-evident practical principles; and of this type are the commandments of the second table. In the case of these moral commandments God can dispense.[1] Scotus proceeds to argue, or to suggest the argument,[2] that even if the love of the neighbour belongs to the natural law in the strict sense, so that I am necessarily bound to will that my neighbour should love God, it does not necessarily follow that I should will that he should have this or that particular good. This does not, however, prevent Scotus from going on to say[3] that the precepts of the decalogue are binding in every state and that before the giving of the written law all men were bound to observe them, 'because they were written interiorly in the heart, or perhaps by some external teaching given by God which parents learnt and handed on to their sons.' Moreover, he explains that the children of Israel did not really need any dispensation when they despoiled the Egyptians, since God, as supreme lord, transferred to the Israelites the goods of the Egyptians, so that the former did not take what was not their own. Nevertheless, Scotus's general position is that the first two commandments of the first table of the decalogue belong to the natural law in the strictest sense (about the third commandment, that concerning sabbath observance, he expresses doubt), whereas the precepts of the second table do not belong to the natural law in the strictest sense, though they do so belong in the wider sense. God can, then, dispense in the case of the precepts of the second table, though He cannot dispense in the case of commandments which belong strictly to the natural law. On this matter of dispensation Scotus's opinion is at variance with that of the Thomists, who do not allow that God can, properly speaking, dispense in the case of any of the precepts of the decalogue, since they all derive immediately or mediately from primary practical principles. The Thomists explain the apparent dispensations which troubled Scotus as instances of *mutatio materiae*, that is, in much the same way as Scotus himself explained the spoliation of the Egyptians by the Israelites.

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[1] *Ox.*, 3, 37, *quaestio unica*, nos. 5–8.

[2] *Ibid.*, 3, 37, *quaestio unica*, no. 11.

[3] *Ibid.*, 3, 37, *quaestio unica*, nos. 13–15.

There is no call to discuss such Scriptural passages here, as they do not enter into philosophy; but it should be observed that even if Scotus admits the possibility of dispensation in the case of some commandments, the fact that he refused to allow that possibility in regard to moral precepts which belong strictly to the natural law shows clearly that he did not regard the whole moral law as due simply to the arbitrary decision of the divine will. He may have thought that the inviolability of private property, and the consequent wrongness of stealing, were not so bound up with the natural law that no exceptions would be legitimate, even in 'hard cases'; but he certainly stated that if a moral precept belonged to the natural law in the strict sense, it was unalterable. It cannot be denied that Scotus makes remarks such as that the divine will is the first rule of rectitude and that 'whatever does not include a contradiction is not repugnant to the divine will absolutely speaking, so that whatever God does or may do will be right and just';[1] but he certainly did not think that God can, without contradiction, order or permit acts which are contrary to self-evident practical principles or principles necessarily following therefrom. Probably one should view in close connection Scotus's doctrine concerning moral obligation and that concerning the secondary precepts of the decalogue. The primary precepts are self-evident or are so intimately connected with self-evident principles that their obligatory character is obvious. The secondary precepts, however, are not immediately deducible from primary practical principles, even if their harmony with those principles and their immediate derivatives is evident. Their obligatory character is thus not self-evident or necessary, but depends on the divine will. Their content is not purely arbitrary, since their harmony and consonance with necessary principles is clear; but the connection is not so strict that God cannot make exceptions. If it is His will which so reinforces the natural harmony of the secondary precepts with necessary principles that the former become obligatory in the full moral sense, His will can also dispense.

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[1] *Rep.*, 4, 46, 4, no. 8.

It would seem, then, that Scotus occupies a position midway, if one may so put it, between St. Thomas and Ockham. He agrees with the former that there are moral principles which are unalterable and he does not teach that the entire moral law depends on the arbitrary decision of God's will. On the other hand he attributed a much greater degree of prominence to the divine will in the determination of the moral order than St. Thomas had done, and he appears to have held that obligation, at least in regard to certain commandments, depends on that will as distinct from the divine intellect. While, then, if we look at Scotus's philosophy by itself, we must allow that his moral doctrine is not that of arbitrary divine authoritarianism, we must also allow, if we look at the historical development of thought, that his moral doctrine helped to prepare the way for that of Ockham, in whose eyes the moral law, including the whole decalogue, is the arbitrary creation of the divine will.

4. As regards political authority, Scotus distinguishes it carefully from paternal authority,[1] and appears to suggest that it rests on free consent. 'Political authority . . . can be right by common consent and the choice of the community itself.'[2] Scotus speaks of people who see that they cannot get on without some authority and who agree together to commit the care of the community to

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[1] *Rep.*, 4, 15, 4, nos. 10–11.

[2] *Ox.*, 4, 15, 2, no. 7.

one person or to a community of persons, and either to one man for himself alone, so that his successor would have to be elected, or to one man for himself and his posterity.[1] Elsewhere[2] he speaks of many independent peoples who, 'in order to attain a continual state of peace, were able by the mutual consent of all to elect from among them one prince . . .'

Legitimate authority is one of the factors which are required in the legislators, the other factor being 'prudence', the ability to legislate in accordance with right reason.[3] The legislator must not pass laws for his private advantage, but for the common good, which is the end of legislation.[4] Moreover, the positive human law must not be in conflict either with the natural moral law or with the divine positive law. No more than St. Thomas Aquinas would Scotus have had any sympathy with the idea of despotic government or with that of the State as the fount of morality.

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[1] *Ox.*, 4, 15, 2, no. 7.

[2] *Ox.*, 4, 15, 2, no. 6.

[3] *Rep.*, 4, 15, 4, no. 11.

[4] *Ibid.*, 4, 14, 2, no. 7.

CHAPTER LI

CONCLUDING REVIEW

Theology and philosophy—'Christian philosophy'—The Thomist synthesis—Various ways of regarding and interpreting mediaeval philosophy.

ANY general review of mediaeval philosophy must obviously be left to the conclusion of the next volume; but it may be worth while to indicate here some general aspects of the course of philosophy treated of in the present book, even though the omission of Ockhamism, which will be considered in the third volume, restricts the scope of one's reflections.

1. One can regard the development of philosophy in the Christian world from the days of the Roman Empire up to the thirteenth-century syntheses from the point of view of its relation to theology. In the first centuries of the Christian era there was scarcely any philosophy in the modern sense, in the sense, that is, of an autonomous science distinct from theology. The Fathers were aware, of course, of the distinction between reason and faith, between scientific conclusions and the data of revelation; but to distinguish reason and faith is not necessarily the same as to make a clear distinction between philosophy and theology. Christian apologists and writers who were anxious to show the reasonable character of the Christian religion, employed reason to show that there is, for example, but one God, and to that extent they may be said to have developed philosophical themes; but their aim was apologetic, and not primarily philosophic. Even those writers who adopted a hostile attitude towards Greek philosophy had to employ reason for apologetic purposes and they gave their attention to themes which are considered to belong to the province of philosophy; but though we can isolate those arguments and discussions which fall under the heading of philosophy, it would be idle to pretend that a Christian apologist of this kind was a professed philosopher; he may have borrowed from the philosophers to some extent, but he regarded 'philosophy' pretty well as a perverter of the truth and as a foe of Christianity. As to the Christian writers who adopted a predominantly favourable attitude to Greek philosophy, these tended to look on Greek philosophy as a preparation for Christian wisdom, the latter comprising not only the revealed

mysteries of faith but all truth about the world and human life looked at through the eyes of a Christian. Inasmuch as the Fathers not only applied reason to the understanding, correct statement and defence of the data of revelation, but also treated of themes which had been considered by Greek philosophers, they helped not only to develop theology, but also to provide material for the construction of a philosophy which would be compatible with Christian theology; but they were theologians and exegetes, not philosophers in the strict sense, save occasionally and incidentally; and even when they did pursue philosophic themes, they were rounding out, as it were, the total Christian wisdom rather than constructing a distinct philosophy or branch of philosophy. This is true even of St. Augustine, for although one can reconstruct a philosophy from his writings, he was above all a theologian and was not concerned to build up a philosophical system as such.

Fathers of the Church, like St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Augustine, who in their writings utilised elements borrowed from neo-Platonism, found in neo-Platonism material which helped them in their development of a 'philosophy' of the spiritual life, to which, as Christians and saints, they paid much attention. It was only natural that they should speak of the soul, of its relation to the body, and of its ascent to God, in terms strongly reminiscent of Platonism and neo-Platonism; but since they could not (and in any case would not wish to) consider the soul's ascent to God in abstraction from theology and revelation, their philosophy, which concentrated so much on the soul and its ascent to God, was inevitably intertwined with and integrated into their theology. To treat St. Augustine's doctrine of illumination, for example, as a purely philosophic doctrine is not easy; it really ought to be looked at in the light of his general doctrine concerning the soul's relation to God and its ascent to God.

The general attitude of the Fathers set the tone, so to speak, for what we call 'Augustinianism'. St. Anselm, for instance, was a theologian, but he saw that the existence of the God who revealed the mysteries of the Christian religion needs in some way to be proved, and so he developed a natural theology, or helped towards the development of natural theology, though it would be a mistake to picture him as sitting down to elaborate a system of philosophy as such. *Fides quaerens intellectum* may, to speak rather crudely, work forwards or backwards. Working forwards from the data of revelation and applying reasoning to theological dogmas, in order to understand them as far as is possible, it produces Scholastic theology; working backwards, in the sense of considering the presuppositions of revelation, it develops the proofs of God's existence. But the mind at work in either case is really the mind of the theologian, even though in the second case it works within the province and with the methods of philosophy.

If the spirit of Augustinianism, born of the writings of the Fathers, was that of *fides quaerens intellectum*, it might also be called a spirit of *homo quaerens Deum*. This aspect of Augustinianism is especially marked in St. Bonaventure, whose thought was steeped so deeply in the affective spirituality of Franciscanism. A man may contemplate creatures, the world without and the world within, and discern their natures; but his knowledge is of little worth unless he discerns in nature the *vestigium Dei* and in himself the *imago Dei*, unless he can detect the operation of God in his soul, an operation which is itself hidden but is rendered visible in its effects, in its power. A number of 'Augustinians' no doubt maintained the doctrine of illumination, for example, out of conservatism and a respect for tradition; but in the case of a man like St. Bonaventure the retention of the doctrine was something much more than traditionalism. It has been said that of two doctrines, of which one attributes more to God and the other less, the Augustinian chooses the one which attributes more to God and less to the creature; but this is true only in so far as the doctrine is felt to harmonise with and express spiritual experience and in so far as it harmonises with and can be integrated into the general theological outlook.

If one understands the motto *fides quaerens intellectum* as expressing the spirit of Augustinianism and as indicating the place of philosophy in the mind of the Augustinian, it might be objected that such a description of Augustinianism is far too wide and that one might even have to class as Augustinians thinkers whom no one could reasonably call Augustinians. The passage from faith to 'understanding', to Scholastic theology on the one hand and to philosophy on the other hand, was ultimately the result of the fact that Christianity was given to the world as a revealed doctrine of salvation, not as a philosophy in the academic sense, nor even as a Scholastic philosophy. Christians believed first of all, and only afterwards, in the desire to defend, to explain and to understand what they believed, did they develop theology and, in subordination to theology, philosophy. In a sense this was the attitude not only of the early Christian writers and Fathers, but also of all those mediaeval thinkers who were primarily theologians. They believed first of all, and then they attempted to understand. This would be true of St. Thomas himself. But how could one call St. Thomas an Augustinian? Is it not better to confine the term 'Augustinian' to certain philosophical doctrines? Once one has done that, one has a means for distinguishing Augustinians from non-Augustinians: otherwise, one is involved in hopeless confusion.

There is a great deal of truth in this contention, and it must be admitted that in order to be able to discriminate between Augustinians and non-Augustinians in regard to the content of their philosophies, it is desirable to be clear first of all about what doctrines one is prepared to recognise as Augustinian and why; but I am speaking at present of the relation between theology and philosophy, and in regard to this point I maintain that, with an important qualification to be mentioned shortly, there is no essential difference in attitude between St. Augustine himself and the great theologian-philosophers of the thirteenth century. St. Thomas Aquinas certainly made a formal and methodological distinction between philosophy and theology, a distinction which was not clearly made by St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Augustine, or St. Anselm; but the attitude of *fides quaerens intellectum* was none the less the attitude of St. Thomas. *On this point,* therefore, I should be willing to rank St. Thomas as an 'Augustinian'. In regard to doctrinal content one must adopt another criterion, it is true. St. Bonaventure too made a formal distinction between theology and philosophy, though he clung to and emphasised doctrines generally recognised as 'Augustinian', whereas St. Thomas rejected them, and in regard to these doctrines one can call the philosophy of Bonaventure 'Augustinian' and the philosophy of Thomas non-Augustinian. Again, St. Bonaventure, as we have seen, emphasised far more than St. Thomas the insufficiency of independent philosophy, so that it has even been said that the unity of Bonaventure's system must be sought on the theological and not on the philosophical level. All the same, St. Thomas himself did not believe that a purely independent philosophy would be, in actual fact and practice, completely satisfactory, and he, like St. Bonaventure, was primarily a theologian. There is a great deal to be said for M. Gilson's contention that for St. Thomas the sphere of philosophy is the sphere of *le révélable* (in the sense in which M. Gilson uses the term, and not, obviously enough, in every sense).

The 'important qualification' I mentioned above is this. Owing to the discovery of the complete Aristotle and his adoption by St. Thomas, so far as adoption was consistent with theological orthodoxy, St. Thomas provided the material for an independent philosophy. As I have suggested when treating of St. Thomas, the utilisation of the Aristotelian system helped philosophy to become self-conscious and to aspire after independence and autonomy. When philosophical material was comparatively scanty, as in the Patristic period and in the earlier centuries of the mediaeval era, there could be little question of an autonomous philosophy going its own way (it is not necessary to take the phenomenon of the *dialectici* very seriously); but once Aristotelianism, which appeared at least to be a complete philosophical system, elaborated independently of theology, had arrived on the scene and had won its right to be there, a parting of the ways was morally inevitable: philosophy had grown up, and would soon demand its birthright and wander out of the house. But this was by no means the intention of St. Thomas, who had meant to utilise Aristotelianism in the construction of a vast theologico-philosophical synthesis, in which theology should constitute the ultimate measuring-rod. Yet children, when they grow up, do not always behave exactly as their parents expected or wished. Bonaventure, Albert, Thomas utilised and incorporated an increasing amount of the new philosophical materials, and all the while they were rearing a child who would soon go his own way; but the three men, though differing from one another on many points of philosophical doctrine, were really at one in the ideal of a Christian synthesis. They belonged to the *Sancti*, not to the *philosophi*; and if one wishes to find a radical contrast between mediaeval thinkers in regard to their view of the relation between theology and philosophy, one should contrast not so much St. Anselm and St. Bonaventure on the one hand with St. Thomas on the other as St. Anselm, St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas and Scotus on the one hand with the Latin Averroists and, in the fourteenth century, the Ockhamist School on the other. The *philosophi* and radical Peripatetics stand over against the Fathers and theologians and *Sancti*.

2. What has already been said brings one to the question of 'Christian philosophy'. Can one speak of the 'Christian philosophy'

of the Middle Ages, and if so, in what sense? If philosophy is a legitimate and autonomous province of human study and knowledge ('autonomous' in the sense that the philosopher has his own method and subject-matter), it would appear that it is not and cannot be 'Christian'. It would sound absurd to speak of 'Christian biology' or 'Christian mathematics': a biologist or a mathematician can be a Christian, but not his biology or his mathematics. Similarly, it might be said, a philosopher can be a Christian, but not his philosophy. His philosophy may be true and compatible with Christianity; but one does not call a scientific statement Christian simply because it is true and compatible with Christianity. Just as mathematics can be neither pagan nor Moslem nor Christian, though mathematicians can be pagans or Moslems or Christians, so philosophy can be neither pagan nor Moslem nor Christian, though philosophers can be pagans or Moslems or Christians. The relevant question about a scientific hypothesis is whether it is true or false, confirmed by observation and experiment or refuted, not whether it is proposed by a Christian or a Hindoo or an atheist; and the relevant question about a philosophic doctrine is whether it is true or false, more or less adequate as an explanation of the facts it is supposed to explain, not whether it is expounded by a believer in Zeus, a follower of Mahomet or a Christian theologian. The most that the phrase 'Christian philosophy' can legitimately mean is a philosophy compatible with Christianity; if it means more than that, one is speaking of a philosophy which is not simply philosophy, but which is, partly at least, theology.

This is a reasonable and understandable point of view, and it certainly represents one aspect of St. Thomas's attitude towards philosophy, an aspect expressed in his formal distinction between theology and philosophy. The philosopher starts with creatures, the theologian with God; the philosopher's principles are those discerned by the natural light of reason, the theologian's are revealed; the philosopher treats of the natural order, the theologian primarily of the supernatural order. But if one adheres closely to this aspect of Thomism, one is placed in a somewhat difficult position. St. Bonaventure did not think that any satisfactory metaphysic can be achieved save in the light of the Faith. The philosophic doctrine of exemplary ideas, for example, is closely linked up with the theological doctrine of the Word. Is one to say, then, that St. Bonaventure had no philosophy properly speaking, or is one to sort out the theological elements from the philosophical elements? And if so, does not one run the risk of constructing a 'Bonaventurian philosophy' which St. Bonaventure himself would hardly have recognised as an adequate expression of his thought and intentions? Is it not perhaps simpler to allow that St. Bonaventure's idea of philosophy *was* that of a Christian philosophy, in the sense of a general Christian synthesis such as earlier Christian writers endeavoured to achieve? An historian is entitled to adopt this point of view. If one speaks simply as a philosopher who is convinced that philosophy either stands on its own feet or is not philosophy at all, one will not admit the existence of a 'Christian philosophy'; or, in other words, if one speaks simply as a 'Thomist', one will be forced to criticise any other and different conception of philosophy. But if one speaks as an historian, looking on from outside, as it were, one will recognise that there were two conceptions of philosophy, the one that of St. Bonaventure, the conception of a Christian philosophy, the other that of St. Thomas and Scotus, the conception of a philosophy which could not properly be called Christian, save in the sense that it was compatible with theology. From this point of view one can say that St. Bonaventure, even though he made a formal distinction between theology and philosophy, continued the tradition of the Fathers, whereas with St. Thomas philosophy received a charter. In this sense Thomism was 'modern' and looked forward to the future. As a system of self-sufficient philosophy Thomism can enter into competition and discussion with other philosophies, because it can prescind from dogmatic theology altogether, whereas a Christian philosophy of the Bonaventurian type can hardly do so. The true Bonaventurian could, of course, argue with modern philosophers on particular points, the proofs of God's existence, for example; but the total system could hardly enter the philosophical arena on equal terms, precisely because it is not simply a philosophical system but a Christian synthesis.

Yet is there not a sense in which the philosophies of St. Augustine and St. Bonaventure and St. Albert and St. Thomas can all be called Christian? The problems which they discussed were in large measure set by theology, or by the necessity of defending Christian truth. When Aristotle argued to the existence of an unmoved mover, he was answering a problem set by metaphysics (and by physics); but when St. Anselm and St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas proved God's existence, they were showing the rational foundation for the acceptance of a revelation in which they already believed. St. Bonaventure was concerned also to show God's immanent activity within the soul; and even though St. Thomas employed Aristotle's own argument, he was not answering simply an abstract problem nor was he interested simply in showing that there is an unmoved mover, an ultimate cause of motion; he was interested in proving the existence of God, a Being who meant a great deal more to St. Thomas than an unmoved mover. His arguments can naturally be considered in themselves and, from the philosophic standpoint, they must be so considered; but he approached the question from the viewpoint of a theologian, looking on the proof of God's existence as a *praeambulum fidei*. Moreover, although St. Thomas certainly spoke of philosophy or metaphysics as the science of being as being, and though his declaration that the rational knowledge of God is the highest part of philosophy, that to which other parts lead, can certainly be regarded as suggested by Aristotle's words, in his *Summae* (which are of the greatest importance from the philosophical, as well as from the theological standpoint) he follows the order suggested by theology, and his philosophy fits closely into his theology, making a synthesis. St. Thomas did not approach philosophical problems in the spirit of a professor of the Parisian faculty of arts; he approached them in the spirit of a Christian theologian. Moreover, in spite of his Aristotelianism and in spite of his repetition of Aristotelian statements, I think it can be maintained that for St. Thomas philosophy is not so much a study of being in general as a study of God, God's activity and God's effects, so far as the natural reason will take us; so that God is the centre of his philosophy as of his theology, the same God, though attained in different ways. I have suggested earlier on that St. Thomas's formal charter to philosophy meant that philosophy would in the end go her own way, and I think that this is true; but that is not to say that St. Thomas envisaged or desired the 'separation' of philosophy from theology. On the contrary, he attempted a great synthesis, and he attempted it as a Christian theologian who was also a philosopher; he would doubtless have considered that what would have appeared to him as the vagaries and errors of philosophers in later centuries were largely due to those very causes in view of which he declared revelation to be morally necessary.

3. More chapters have been devoted to the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas than to any other philosopher, and rightly so,

since Thomism is unquestionably the most imposing and comprehensive synthesis considered in this book. I may have emphasised those aspects of Thomism which are of non-Aristotelian origin, and one should, I think, bear these aspects in mind, lest one forget that Thomism is a synthesis and not simply a literal adoption of Aristotelianism; but none the less Thomism *can*, of course, be regarded as the culminating process of a movement in the Christian West towards the adoption and utilisation of Greek philosophy as represented by Aristotle. Owing to the fact that philosophy in the time of the Fathers meant, to all intents and purposes, neo-Platonism, to utilise Greek philosophy meant, for the Fathers, to utilise neo-Platonism: St. Augustine, for instance, did not know much of the historic system of Aristotle, as distinct from neo-Platonism. Moreover, the spiritual character of neo-Platonism appealed to the mind of the Fathers. That the categories of neo-Platonism should continue to dominate Christian thought in the early Middle Ages was only natural, in view of the fact that the Fathers had utilised them and that they were consecrated through the prestige attaching to the writings of the Pseudo-Dionysius, believed to be St. Paul's convert. Furthermore, even when the *corpus* of Aristotle's writings had become available in Latin translations from the Greek and the Arabic, the differences between Aristotelianism proper and neo-Platonism proper were by no means clearly recognised: they could not be clearly recognised so long as the *Liber de causis* and the *Elementatio theologica* were ascribed to Aristotle, especially when the great Moslem commentators had themselves drawn copiously on neo-Platonism. That Aristotle had criticised Plato was, of course, perfectly clear from the *Metaphysics*; but the precise nature and scope of the criticism was not so clear. The adoption and utilisation of Aristotle did not mean, therefore, the negation and rejection of all neo-Platonism, and though St. Thomas recognised that the *Liber de causis* was not the work of Aristotle, one can regard his interpretation of Aristotle in a manner consonant with Christianity, not merely as an interpretation *in meliorem partem* (which it was, from the viewpoint of anyone who is both a Christian and an historian), but also as following from the general conception of Aristotle in his time. St. Bonaventure certainly thought that Aristotle's criticism of Plato involved a rejection of exemplarism (and in my opinion St. Bonaventure was quite right); but St. Thomas did not think so, and he interpreted Aristotle accordingly. One might be tempted to think that St. Thomas was simply whitewashing Aristotle; but one should not forget that 'Aristotle' for St. Thomas meant rather more than Aristotle means to the modern historian of Greek philosophy; he was, to a certain extent at least, an Aristotle seen through the eyes of commentators and philosophers who were themselves not pure Aristotelians. Even the radical Aristotelians by intention, the Latin Averroists, were not pure Aristotelians in the strict sense. If one adopts this point of view, one will find it easier to understand how Aristotle could appear to St. Thomas as 'the Philosopher', and one will realise that when St. Thomas baptised Aristotelianism he was not simply substituting Aristotelianism for neo-Platonism, but that he was completing that process of absorbing Greek philosophy which had begun in the early days of the Christian era. In a sense we can say that neo-Platonism, Augustinianism, Aristotelianism and the Moslem and Jewish philosophies came together and were fused in Thomism, not in the sense that selected elements were juxtaposed mechanically, but in the sense that a true fusion and synthesis was achieved under the regulating guidance of certain basic ideas. Thomism, in the fullest sense, is thus a synthesis of Christian theology and Greek philosophy (Aristotelianism, united with other elements, or Aristotelianism, interpreted in the light of later philosophy) in which philosophy is regarded in the light of theology and theology itself is expressed, to a considerable extent, in categories borrowed from Greek philosophy, particularly from Aristotle.

I have asserted that Thomism is a synthesis of Christian theology and Greek philosophy, which might seem to imply that Thomism in the narrower sense, that is, as denoting simply the Thomist philosophy, is a synthesis of Greek philosophy and that it is nothing else but Greek philosophy. In the first place, it seems preferable to speak of Greek philosophy rather than of Aristotelianism, for the simple reason that St. Thomas's philosophy was a synthesis of Platonism (using the term in a wide sense, to include neo-Platonism) and of Aristotelianism, though one should not forget that the Moslem and Jewish philosophers were also important influences in the formation of his thought. In the first volume of my history I have argued that Plato and Aristotle should be regarded as complementary thinkers, in some respects at least, and that a synthesis is needed. St. Thomas Aquinas achieved this synthesis. We cannot speak of his philosophy, therefore, as simply Aristotelianism; it is rather a synthesis of

Greek philosophy, harmonised with Christian theology. In the second place, Thomism is a real synthesis and is not a mere juxtaposition of heterogeneous elements. For example, St. Thomas did not take over the Platonic-Plotinian-Augustinian tradition of exemplary ideas and merely juxtapose it with the Aristotelian doctrine of substantial form: he gave each element its ontological status, making the substantial form subordinate to the exemplary idea, and explaining in what sense one is entitled to speak of 'ideas' in God. Again, if he adopted the (originally) Platonic notion of participation, he did not employ it in a manner which would conflict with the Aristotelian elements of his metaphysic. St. Thomas went beyond the Aristotelian hylomorphism and discerned in the real distinction between essence and existence a profounder application of the principle of potentiality and act. This distinction enabled him to use the Platonic notion of participation to explain finite being, while at the same time his view of God as *ipsum esse subsistens* rather than as mere unmoved mover enabled him to use the idea of participation in such a way as to throw into relief the idea of creation, which was to be found neither in Plato nor in Aristotle. Needless to say, St. Thomas did not take participation, in the full sense, as a premiss; the complete idea of participation could not be obtained until God's existence had been proved, but the material for the elaboration of that idea was provided by the real distinction between essence and existence.

4. Some of the viewpoints adopted in this book may appear to be somewhat inconsistent; but one must remember that it is possible to adopt different viewpoints in regard to the history of mediaeval philosophy, or indeed in regard to the history of philosophy in any epoch. Apart from the fact that one will naturally adopt a different viewpoint and interpret the development of philosophy in a different light according as one is a Thomist, a Scotist, a Kantian, an Hegelian, a Marxist or a Logical Positivist, it is possible even for the same man to discern different principles or modes of interpretation, none of which he would be willing to reject as totally illegitimate and yet for none of which he would be prepared to claim complete truth and adequacy.

Thus it is possible, and from certain viewpoints perfectly legitimate, to adopt the linear or progressive mode of interpretation. It is possible to view the absorption and utilisation of Greek philosophy by Christian thinkers as starting practically from zero in the early years of the Christian era, as increasing through the thought of the Fathers up to the Scholasticism of the early Middle Ages, as being suddenly, comparatively speaking, enriched through the translations from the Arabic and the Greek, and as developing through the thought of William of Auvergne, Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure and St. Albert the Great, until it reached its culmination in the Thomist synthesis. According to this line of interpretation it would be necessary to regard the philosophy of St. Bonaventure as a stage in the development of Thomism, and not as a parallel and heterogeneous philosophy. One would regard the achievement of St. Thomas, not so much as an adoption of Aristotle in place of Augustine or of neo-Platonic Platonism, but rather as a confluence and synthesis of the various currents of Greek philosophy, and of Islamic and Jewish philosophy, as well as of the original ideas contributed by Christian thinkers. Mediaeval philosophy before St. Thomas one would regard, not as 'Augustinianism' as opposed to Aristotelianism, but as pre-Thomist Scholasticism or as the Scholasticism of the earlier Middle Ages. This line of interpretation seems to me to be perfectly legitimate, and it has the very great advantage of not leading to a distorted idea of Thomism as pure Aristotelianism. It would even be possible and legitimate to look on Thomism as an Aristotelianised Platonism rather than as a Platonised Aristotelianism. What has been said of the 'synthetic' character of Thomism and of its relation to Greek, and Islamic, philosophy in general rather than to Aristotelianism in particular supports this line of interpretation, which was also suggested by what was said in the first volume of this history concerning the complementary character of the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies.

On the other hand, if one follows this line of interpretation exclusively, one runs the risk of missing altogether the rich variety of mediaeval philosophy and the individuality of the different philosophers. The spirit of St. Bonaventure was not the same as that of Roger Bacon nor the same as that of St. Thomas, and French historians like M. Gilson have done us a great service in drawing attention to and throwing into relief the peculiar genius of individual thinkers. This 'individualisation' of mediaeval philosophers is all the more to be welcomed in view of the fact that the Christian thinkers shared a common theological background, so that their philosophical differences were expressed within a comparatively restricted field, with the result that mediaeval philosophy might seem to consist of a series of repetitions on salient points and a series of differences on relatively insignificant points. If one said simply that St. Bonaventure postulated a special illumination and that St. Thomas rejected it, the difference between them would not present so much interest as it does if St. Bonaventure's theory of illumination is linked up with his total thought and if St. Thomas's denial of any special illumination is seen against the background of his system in general. But one cannot depict the total thought of Bonaventure or the general system of Thomas without setting in relief the peculiar spirit of each thinker. It may very well be true that M. Gilson, as I suggested earlier in this book, has exaggerated the differences between St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas, and that it is possible to look on St. Bonaventure's philosophy as a stage in the evolution of Thomism rather than as a parallel and different philosophy; but it is also possible for different men to have different conceptions of what philosophy is, and if a man does not accept the Thomist point of view, he will probably be no more inclined to look on Bonaventure as an incomplete Thomas than a Platonist would be inclined to look on Plato as an incomplete Aristotle. It is, I think, a mistake to insist so much on the linear type of interpretation that one rules out as illegitimate the type of interpretation represented by M. Gilson or, conversely, so to insist upon the individual characteristics and spirits of different thinkers as to lose sight of the general evolution of thought towards a complete synthesis. Narrowness of vision can hardly produce adequate understanding.

Again, while it is possible to view the development of mediaeval philosophy as a development towards the Thomist synthesis and to regard pre-Thomist philosophies as stages in that development, and while it is possible to concentrate more on the peculiarities of different philosophies and the individual geniuses of different thinkers, it is also possible to see and to throw into relief different general lines of development. Thus it is possible to distinguish different types of 'Augustinianism' instead of being content with one portmanteau word; to distinguish, for example, the typically Franciscan Augustinianism of St. Bonaventure from the Aristotelianised Augustinianism of Richard of Middleton or the Avicennian Augustinianism of Henry of Ghent and, in a certain measure, of Duns Scotus. It is possible to trace the respective influences on mediaeval thought of Avicenna, Averroes and Avicebron, and to attempt a corresponding classification. Hence phrases such as *augustinisme avicennisant*, *augustinisme avicebronisant*, *avicennisme latin*, of which French historians have made use. An investigation of such influences is certainly of value; but the classification produced by such an investigation cannot be regarded as a *complete* and entirely adequate classification of mediaeval philosophies, since insistence on the influence of the past tends to obscure original contributions, while it depends largely on what points of his philosophy one happens to have in mind whether one classes a philosopher as falling under the influence of Avicenna or Averroes or Avicebron.

Again, one can regard the development of mediaeval philosophy in regard to the relation of Christian thought to 'humanism', to Greek thought and culture and science in general. Thus if St. Peter Damian was a representative of the negative attitude towards humanism, St. Albert the Great and Roger Bacon represented a positive attitude, while from the political point of view Thomism represents a harmonisation of the natural and humanistic with the supernatural which is absent in the characteristic political theory of Giles of Rome. St. Thomas, again, through the greater part he attributes to human activity in knowledge and action compared with some of his predecessors and contemporaries, may be said to represent a humanistic tendency.

In fine, mediaeval philosophy can be considered under several aspects, each of which has its own justification, and it ought to be so considered if one is to attain anything like an adequate view of it; but any more extensive treatment of mediaeval philosophy in general must be reserved until the conclusion of the next volume, when the philosophy of the fourteenth century has been discussed. In the present volume the great synthesis of St. Thomas naturally and rightly occupies the central position, though, as we have seen, mediaeval philosophy and the philosophy of St. Thomas are not synonymous. The thirteenth century was the century of speculative thought, and the century was exceptionally rich in speculative thinkers. It was the century of original thinkers, whose thought had not yet become hardened into the dogmatic traditions of philosophical Schools. But though the great thinkers of the thirteenth century differed from one another in their philosophical doctrines and criticised one another, they did so against a background of commonly accepted metaphysical principles. One must distinguish criticism concerning the application of accepted metaphysical principles from criticism of the very foundations of metaphysical systems. The former was practised by all the great speculative thinkers of the Middle Ages; but the latter did not appear until the fourteenth century. I have concluded this volume with a consideration of Duns Scotus, who, from the chronological point of view, stands at the juncture of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; but even if one can discern in his philosophy the faint beginnings of the more radical spirit of criticism which was to characterise the Ockhamist movement of the fourteenth century, his criticism of his contemporaries and predecessors did not involve a denial of the metaphysical principles commonly accepted in the thirteenth century. Looking back on the Middle Ages, we may tend to see in the system of Scotus a bridge between the two centuries, between the age of St. Thomas and the age of Ockham; but Ockham himself certainly did not see in Scotus a kindred spirit, and I think that even if Scotus's philosophy did prepare the way for a more radical criticism his system must be regarded as the last of the great mediaeval speculative syntheses. It can hardly be denied, I think, that certain of Scotus's opinions in rational psychology, in natural theology and in ethics look forward, as it were, to the Ockhamist critique of metaphysics and the peculiar Ockhamist view of the nature of the moral law; but if one considers Scotus's philosophy in itself, without reference to a future which we know but he did not, we are forced to realise that it was just as much a metaphysical system as any of the great systems of the thirteenth century. It seemed to me, then, that Scotus's place was in this volume rather than in the next. In the next volume I hope to treat of fourteenth-century philosophy, of the philosophies of the Renaissance and of the revival of Scholasticism in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

APPENDIX I

Honorific titles applied in the Middle Ages to philosophers treated of in this volume.

RHABANUS MAURUS:	Praeceptor Germaniae.
ABELARD:	Peripateticus Palatinus.
ALAN OF LILLE:	Doctor universalis.
AVERROES:	Commentator.
ALEXANDER OF HALES:	Doctor irrefragibilis.
ST. BONAVENTURE:	Doctor seraphicus.
ST. ALBERT THE GREAT:	Doctor universalis.
ST. THOMAS AQUINAS:	Doctor angelicus and Doctor communis.
ROGER BACON:	Doctor mirabilis.
RICHARD OF MIDDLETON:	Doctor solidus.
RAYMOND LULL:	Doctor illuminatus.
GILES OF ROME:	Doctor fundatissimus.
HENRY OF GHENT:	Doctor solemnis.
DUNS SCOTUS:	Doctor subtilis.

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A HISTORY
OF
PHILOSOPHY

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VOLUME III

Late Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy

Frederick Copleston, S.J.

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FOREWORD

THE first part of this volume is concerned with the philosophy of the fourteenth century. A good deal in the history of the philosophical thought of this period is still obscure, and no definitive account of it can be written until we have at our disposal a much greater number of reliable texts than are at present available. However, in publishing the account contained in this volume I am encouraged by the thought that the learned Franciscan scholar, Father Philotheus Boehner, who is doing so much to shed light on the dark places of the fourteenth century, was so kind as to read the chapters on Ockham and to express appreciation of their general tone. This does not mean, of course, that Father Boehner endorses all my interpretations of Ockham. In particular he does not agree with my view that analysis discloses two ethics implicitly contained in Ockham's philosophy. (This view is in any case, as I hope I have made clear in the text, a conjectural interpretation, developed in order to account for what may seem to be inconsistencies in Ockham's ethical philosophy.) And I do not think that Father Boehner would express himself in quite the way that I have done about Ockham's opinions on natural theology. I mention these differences of interpretation only in order that, while thanking Father Boehner for his kindness in reading the chapters on Ockham, I may not give the impression that he agrees with all that I have said. Moreover, as proofs were already coming in at the time the chapters reached Father Boehner, I was unable to make as extensive a use of his suggestions as I should otherwise wish to have done. In conclusion I should like to express the hope that when Father Boehner has published the texts of Ockham which he is editing he will add a general account of the latter's philosophy. Nobody would be better qualified to interpret the thought of the last great English philosopher of the Middle Ages.

A HISTORY
OF
PHILOSOPHY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Thirteenth century—Fourteenth century contrasted with thirteenth—Philosophies of the Renaissance—Revival of Scholasticism.

1. In the preceding volume I traced the development of mediaeval philosophy from its birth in the pre-mediaeval period of the early Christian writers and Fathers through its growth in the early Middle Ages up to its attainment of maturity in the thirteenth century. This attainment of maturity was, as we have seen, largely due to that fuller acquaintance with Greek philosophy, particularly in the form of Aristotelianism, which took place in the twelfth century and the early part of the thirteenth. The great achievement of the thirteenth century in the intellectual field was the realization of a synthesis of reason and faith, philosophy and theology. Strictly speaking, of course, one should speak of 'syntheses' rather than of 'a synthesis', since the thought of the thirteenth century cannot legitimately be characterized with reference to one system alone; but the great systems of the period were, in spite of their differences, united by the acceptance of common principles. The thirteenth century was a period of positive constructive thinkers, of speculative theologians and philosophers, who might criticize one another's opinions in regard to this or that problem, but who at the same time were agreed in accepting fundamental metaphysical principles and the mind's power of transcending phenomena and attaining metaphysical truth. Scotus, for example, may have criticized St. Thomas's doctrines of knowledge and of analogy in certain points; but he criticized it in what he regarded, rightly or wrongly, as the interests of objectivity of knowledge and of metaphysical speculation. He considered that St. Thomas had to be corrected or supplemented in certain points; but he had no intention of criticizing the metaphysical foundations of Thomism or of undermining the objective character of philosophic speculation. Again, St. Thomas may have thought that more must be allowed to the unaided power of the human reason than was allowed to it by St. Bonaventure; but neither of these theologian-philosophers

doubted the possibility of attaining certain knowledge concerning the metaphenomenal. Men like St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas, Giles of Rome, Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus were original thinkers; but they worked within the common framework of an ideal synthesis and harmony of theology and philosophy. They were speculative theologians and philosophers and were convinced of the possibility of forming a natural theology, the crown of metaphysics and the link with dogmatic theology; they were uninfected by any radical scepticism in regard to human knowledge. They were also realists, believing that the mind can attain an objective knowledge of essences.

This thirteenth-century ideal of system and synthesis, of harmony between philosophy and theology, can be viewed perhaps in relation to the general framework of life in that century. Nationalism was growing, of course, in the sense that the nation-States were in process of formation and consolidation; but the ideal of a harmony between papacy and empire, the supernatural and natural focuses of unity, was still alive. In fact, one can say that the ideal of harmony between papacy and empire was paralleled, on the intellectual plane, by the ideal of harmony between theology and philosophy, so that the doctrine as upheld by St. Thomas of the indirect power of the papacy in temporal matters and of the State's autonomy within what was strictly its own sphere was paralleled by the doctrine of the normative function of theology in regard to philosophy together with the autonomy of philosophy in its own sphere. Philosophy does not draw its principles from theology, but if the philosopher reaches a conclusion which is at variance with revelation, he knows that his reasoning is at fault. Papacy and empire, especially the former, were unifying factors in the ecclesiastical and political spheres, while the pre-eminence of the university of Paris was a unifying factor in the intellectual sphere. Moreover, the Aristotelian idea of the cosmos was generally accepted and helped to lend a certain appearance of fixity to the mediaeval outlook.

But though the thirteenth century may be characterized by reference to its constructive systems and its ideal of synthesis and harmony, the harmony and balance achieved were, at least from the practical standpoint, precarious. Some ardent Thomists would be convinced, no doubt, that the synthesis achieved by St. Thomas should have been universally accepted as valid and ought to have been preserved. They would not be prepared to admit that the balance and harmony of that synthesis were intrinsically precarious. But they would be prepared, I suppose, to admit that in practice it was scarcely to be expected that the Thomist synthesis, once achieved, would win universal and lasting acceptance. Moreover, there are, I think, elements inherent in the Thomist synthesis which rendered it, in a certain sense, precarious, and which help to explain the development of philosophy in the fourteenth century. I want now to illustrate what I mean.

The assertion that the most important philosophical event in mediaeval philosophy was the discovery by the Christian West of the more or less complete works of Aristotle is an assertion which could, I think, be defended. When the work of the translators of the twelfth century and of the early part of the thirteenth made the thought of Aristotle available to the Christian thinkers of western Europe, they were faced for the first time with what seemed to them a complete and inclusive rational system of philosophy which owed nothing either to Jewish or to Christian revelation, since it was the work of a Greek philosopher. They were forced, therefore, to adopt some attitude towards it: they could not simply ignore it. Some of the attitudes adopted, varying from hostility, greater or less, to enthusiastic and rather uncritical acclamation, we have seen in the preceding volume. St. Thomas Aquinas's attitude was one of critical acceptance: he attempted to reconcile Aristotelianism and Christianity, not simply, of course, in order to avert the dangerous influence of a pagan thinker or to render him innocuous by utilizing him for 'apologetic' purposes, but also because he sincerely believed that the Aristotelian philosophy was, in the main, true. Had he not believed this, he would not have adopted philosophical positions which, in the eyes of many contemporaries, appeared novel and suspicious. But the point I want to make at the moment is this, that in adopting a definite attitude towards Aristotelianism a thirteenth-century thinker was, to all intents and purposes, adopting an attitude towards *philosophy*. The significance of this fact has not always been realized by historians. Looking on mediaeval philosophers, especially those of the thirteenth century, as slavish adherents of Aristotle, they have not seen that Aristotelianism really meant, at that time, philosophy itself. Distinctions had already been drawn, it is true, between theology and philosophy; but it was the full appearance of Aristotelianism on the scene which showed the mediaevals the power and scope, as it were, of philosophy. Philosophy, under the guise of Aristotelianism, presented itself to their gaze as something which was not merely theoretically but also in historical fact independent of theology. This being so, to adopt an attitude towards Aristotelianism was, in effect, to adopt an attitude, not simply towards Aristotle as distinguished, for example, from Plato (of whom the mediaevals really did not know very much), but rather towards philosophy considered as an autonomous discipline. If we regard in this light the different attitudes adopted towards Aristotle in the thirteenth century, one obtains a profounder understanding of the significance of those differences.

(i) When the integral Aristotelians (or 'Latin Averroists') adopted the philosophy of Aristotle with uncritical enthusiasm and when they acclaimed Aristotle as the culmination of human genius, they found themselves involved in difficulties with the theologians. Aristotle held, for example, that the world was uncreated, whereas theology affirmed that the world had a beginning through divine creation. Again, Aristotle, as interpreted by Averroes, maintained that the intellect is one in all men and denied personal immortality whereas Christian theology maintained personal immortality. In face of these obvious difficulties the integral Aristotelians of the faculty of arts at Paris contended that the function of philosophy is to report faithfully the tenets of the philosophers. Therefore there was no contradiction involved in saying at the same time that philosophy, represented by Aristotle; taught the eternity of the world and the unicity of the human soul, while truth, represented by theology, affirmed the creation of the world in time and each man's possession of his individual rational soul.

This plea on the part of the integral Aristotelians or 'Averroists' that they were simply reporting the tenets of Aristotle, that is, that they were acting simply as historians, was treated by the theologians as a mere subterfuge. But, as I remarked in my second volume, it is difficult to ascertain what the mind of the Averroists really was. If, however, they really meant to do no more than report the opinions of past thinkers, and if they were sincere in affirming the truth of Christian revelation and theology, it would seem that their attitude must have been more or less this. Philosophy represents the work of the human reason reflecting on the natural order. Reason, personified by Aristotle, tells us that in the natural course of events time could have had no beginning and that the intellect would naturally be one in all men. That time had no beginning would thus be a philosophical truth; and the same must be said of monopsychism. But theology, which deals with the supernatural order, assures us that God by His divine power created the world in time and miraculously gave to each individual man his own immortal intellectual soul. It is not that something can be a fact and not a fact at the same time: it is rather that something would be a fact, were it not for God's miraculous intervention which has ensured that it is not a fact.

In regard to creative activity the position is, of course, exactly the same whether the integral Aristotelians of the faculty of arts at Paris were simply reporting Aristotle's teaching as they interpreted it, without reference to its truth or falsity, or whether they were affirming it as true. For in either case they did not add anything, at any rate not intentionally. It was the philosophers of the faculty of theology who were the productive and creative thinkers inasmuch as they felt compelled to examine Aristotelianism critically and, if they accepted it in the main, to re-think it critically. But the point I am trying to make is rather this. The position adopted by the integral Aristotelians implied a radical separation between theology and philosophy. If their own account of their activity is to be taken at its face value, they equated philosophy with history, with reporting the opinions of former philosophers. Philosophy understood in this sense is obviously independent of theology, for theology cannot affect the fact that certain opinions have been held by certain thinkers. If, on the other hand, the theologians were right in thinking that the integral Aristotelians really meant to assert the truth of the offending propositions, or if these propositions were asserted as propositions which would have been true, had not God intervened, the same conclusion concerning philosophy's complete independence of theology is implied. As the philosopher would be concerned merely with the natural course of events, he would be justified in drawing conclusions which conflicted with theological doctrine, since he would simply be asserting what would have been the case, had the natural course of events prevailed. Theology could tell us that a conclusion reached by philosophy did not represent the facts; but the theologian would not be justified in saying that the philosopher's reasoning was wrong simply because the conclusion at which he arrived was theologically unacceptable. We may learn from theology that the natural course of events has not been followed in some particular case; but that would not affect the question what the natural course of events is or would have been.

The most obviously salient features of the integral Aristotelianism or 'Averroism' of the thirteenth century were its slavish adherence to Aristotle and the rather desperate devices adopted by its adherents to square their position with the demands of theological orthodoxy. But implicit in integral Aristotelianism was a sharp separation between philosophy and theology, and an assertion of the former's complete independence. It is true that one should not over-emphasize this line of thought. The separation between theology and philosophy which was implicit in fourteenth-century Ockhamism did not derive from thirteenth-century 'Averroism'. But the appearance on the scene of the Aristotelian system in the thirteenth century was the factor which made it possible to give serious attention to the question of synthesis or separation, precisely because it led to the emergence of something which could be either synthesized or separated.

(ii) St. Thomas Aquinas recognized the distinction between philosophy and theology, in regard to both method and subject-matter. As I pointed out in the last volume, he took this distinction seriously. Though theology tells us that the world did not exist from eternity but had a beginning, no philosopher, according to St. Thomas, has ever adequately demonstrated this fact. The alleged proofs of the world's eternity are invalid, but so are the alleged proofs of the statement that the world did not exist from eternity. In other words, philosophy has not succeeded in solving the question whether the world was or was not created from eternity, though revelation does give us the answer to the question. This is an example of the real distinction which exists between philosophy and theology. On the other hand, St. Thomas certainly did not think that the philosopher could arrive, by valid rational argument, at any conclusion incompatible with Christian theology. If a philosopher arrives at a conclusion which contradicts, explicitly or implicitly, a Christian doctrine, that is a sign that his premisses are false or that there is a fallacy somewhere in his argument. In other words, theology acts as an external norm or as a kind of signpost, warning the philosopher off a cul-de-sac or blind alley. But the philosopher must not attempt to substitute data of revelation for premisses known by the philosophic reason. Nor can he make explicit use of dogma in his arguments. For philosophy is intrinsically autonomous.

In practice, this attitude meant that the philosopher who adopted it philosophized in the light of the faith, even if he did not make formal and explicit use of the faith in his philosophy. The maintenance of this attitude was, moreover, facilitated by the fact that the great thinkers of the thirteenth century were primarily theologians: they were theologian-philosophers. At the same time, once philosophy was recognized as an intrinsically autonomous discipline, it was only to be expected that it should tend in the course of time to go its own way and that it should, as it were, chafe at its bonds and resent its position as handmaid of theology. And indeed, once it had become a normal proceeding for philosophers to be primarily, and even exclusively, philosophers, it was natural that philosophy's alliance with theology should tend to disappear. Furthermore, when the philosophers had no firm belief in revelation, it was only to be expected that the positions of theology and philosophy should be reversed, and that philosophy should tend to subordinate theology to herself, to incorporate the subject-matter of theology in philosophy or even to exclude theology altogether. These developments lay, indeed, well in the future; but they may be said, without absurdity at least, to have had their remote origin in the appearance of the Aristotelian system on the scene in the early thirteenth century.

These remarks are not intended to constitute an evaluation of the Aristotelian philosophy; they are meant to be a historical interpretation of the actual course of development taken by philosophic thought. No doubt, they are somewhat too summary and do not allow for the complexity of philosophic development. Once philosophy had been recognized as an autonomous discipline, that process of self-criticism which would seem to be essential to philosophy set in, and, not unnaturally, the criticism, as it grew, undermined the foundations of the synthesis achieved in the thirteenth century. That is one of the reasons why I spoke of that synthesis as 'precarious'. Whatever one may think of the truth or falsity of Aristotelian metaphysics, for example, it was not to be expected that philosophic thought should stop at a particular point: criticism was, from the practical standpoint, inevitable. But there is a second factor to bear in mind. Once a closely-knit theological-philosophical synthesis had been achieved, in which philosophical terms and categories were used for the expression of theological truths, it was not unnatural that some minds should feel that faith was in danger of being rationalized and that Christian theology had become unduly contaminated with Greek and Islamic metaphysics. Such minds might feel that the mystical rather than the philosophical approach was what was needed, especially in view of the wrangling of the Schools on points of theoretical rather than of primarily religious significance and interest. This second line of thought would also tend to dissolve the thirteenth-century synthesis, though the approach was different from that of thinkers who concentrated on philosophical problems and undermined the synthesis by extensive and far-reaching criticism of the philosophic positions characteristic of that synthesis. We shall see how both lines of thought manifested themselves in the fourteenth century.

(iii) To turn to a different field, namely that of political life and thought. It would obviously be absurd to suggest that there was ever anything but a precarious harmony and balance between the ecclesiastical and civil powers in the Middle Ages: no profound knowledge of mediaeval history is required to be well aware of the constantly recurring disputes between pope and emperor and of the quarrels between popes and kings. The thirteenth century was enlivened by these disputes, especially by those between the emperor Frederick II and the Holy See. Nevertheless, although both parties sometimes made extravagant claims in their own favour, the quarrels were, so to speak, family quarrels: they took place within that mediaeval framework of papacy and empire which found a theoretical expression in the writings of Dante. Moreover, as far as the commonly held political theory was concerned, the distinction between the two powers was recognized. St. Thomas Aquinas who, living in Paris, was more concerned with kingdoms than with the empire, recognized the intrinsically autonomous character of temporal sovereignty, though he naturally also recognized the indirect power of the Church in temporal affairs which follows from the recognition of the superiority of the supernatural function of the Church.[1] If one keeps to the plane of theory, one can speak, therefore, of a balance or harmony between the two powers in the thirteenth century, provided that one does not obscure the fact that in practical life the harmony was not so very apparent. The plain fact is that those popes who entertained grandiose ambitions in regard to temporal power were unable to realize those ambitions, while emperors who wished to do exactly as they chose without paying any attention to the Holy See were also unable to fulfil their desires. Triumphs on either side were temporary and not lasting. A certain balance, of a somewhat precarious nature, was therefore achieved.

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[1] The use of the phrase 'indirect power' involves an interpretation of Thomas's doctrine.

At the same time, however, national kingdoms were becoming consolidated and the centralized power of national monarchs gradually increased. England had never been subject, in any practical sense, to the mediaeval emperor. Moreover, the empire was primarily a German affair; France, for instance, was independent; and the course taken by the dispute between Boniface VIII and Philip the Fair of France at the close of the thirteenth century showed clearly enough the position of France in relation both to the Holy See and to the empire. This growth of national kingdoms meant the emergence of a factor which would eventually destroy the traditional balance of papacy and empire. In the fourteenth century we witness the reflection, on the plane of theory, of the civil authority's growing tendency to assert its independence of the Church. The emergence of the strong national States, which became such a prominent feature of post-mediaeval Europe, began in the Middle Ages. They could hardly have developed in the way they did without the centralization and consolidation of power in the hands of local monarchs; and the process of this centralization and consolidation of power was certainly not retarded by the humiliation to which the papacy was exposed in the fourteenth century through the 'Babylonish captivity', when the popes were at Avignon (1305–77), and through the succeeding calamity of the 'Great Schism', which began in 1378.

The Aristotelian theory of the State could be, and was, utilized within the framework of the two-powers scheme by a thirteenth-century thinker like St. Thomas. This facilitated the theoretical recognition of the State as an intrinsically autonomous society, though it had to be supplemented by a Christian idea of the end of man and of the status and function of the Church. This 'addition' was not, however, simply an addition or juxtaposition; for it profoundly modified, by implication at least, the Greek outlook on the State. Conversely, by emphasizing the Aristotelianism in mediaeval political theory the position of the State could be stressed in such a way as practically to reverse the typical mediaeval conception of the proper relation between the two powers. We can see an example of this in the fourteenth century in the political theory of Marsilius of Padua. To say this is not to say, however, that Marsilius's theory was due to the Aristotelian philosophy: it was due much more, as we shall see later, to reflection on concrete historical events and situations. But it does mean that the Aristotelian theory of the State was a double-edged weapon; and that it not only could be but was utilized in a manner foreign to the mind of a theologian-philosopher like Aquinas. Its use represented, indeed, the growing political consciousness; and the phases of its use expressed the phases of the growth of that consciousness in concrete historical development.

2. If the thirteenth century was the period of creative and original thinkers, the fourteenth century may be called, in contrast, the period of Schools. The Dominicans naturally tended to adhere to the doctrines of St. Thomas Aquinas: and a series of injunctions by various Dominican Chapters encouraged them to do so. A number of works on the texts of St. Thomas appeared. Thus, at the request of Pope John XXII, Joannes Dominici composed an *Abbreviatio* or compendium of the *Summa theologica*, which he finished in 1331, while another Dominican, Benedict of Assignano (d. 1339), wrote a *Concordance*, in which he tried to show how the doctrine of the *Summa theologica* harmonized with that of St. Thomas's commentary on the *Sentences*. Then there were the commentators on, or interpreters of, St. Thomas, Dominicans like Hervaeus Natalis (d. 1323), who wrote a *Defensa doctrinae D. Thomae* and attacked Henry of Ghent, Duns Scotus and others, or John of Naples (d. 1330). But it was the fifteenth century, with John Capreolus (*c.* 1380–1444), rather than the fourteenth century, which was distinguished for achievement in this field. Capreolus was the most eminent commentator on St. Thomas before Cajetan (1468–1534).

Besides the Thomists there were the Scotists, who formed a rival school to the former, though Duns Scotus was not, in the fourteenth century, the official Doctor of the Franciscans in the same way that St. Thomas was the official Doctor of the Dominicans. In addition, there were the Hermits of St. Augustine, who followed the teaching of Giles of Rome. Henry of Ghent also had his followers, though they did not form a compact school.

In the fourteenth century these groups together with those who followed other thirteenth-century thinkers more or less closely represented the *via antiqua*. They lived on the thought of the preceding century. But at the same time there arose and spread in the fourteenth century a new movement, associated for ever with the name of William of Ockham. The thinkers of this new movement, the *via moderna*, which naturally possessed all the charm of 'modernity', opposed the realism of the earlier schools and became known as the 'nominalists'. This appellation is in some respects not very apposite, since William of Ockham, for example, did not deny that there are universal concepts in some sense; but the word is universally employed and will doubtless continue to be employed. There is not much point, then, in attempting to change it, though a better name is 'terminists'. The logicians of the new movement gave great attention to the logical status and function of terms. It is true that they strongly opposed and criticized the realism of earlier philosophers, particularly that of Duns Scotus; but it would be an over-simplification of their anti-realism to say that it consisted in attributing universality to 'names' or words alone.

It would, however, be a grossly inadequate description if one contented oneself with saying that the fourteenth-century nominalists attacked the realism of the thirteenth-century philosophers. The nominalist movement possessed a significance and an importance which cannot be adequately expressed by reference to one particular controversy. It constituted the wedge which was driven between theology and philosophy, and which broke apart the synthesis achieved in the thirteenth century. The nominalist spirit, if one may so speak, was inclined to analysis rather than to synthesis, and to criticism rather than to speculation. Through their critical analysis of the metaphysical ideas and arguments of their predecessors the nominalists left faith hanging in the air, without (so far as philosophy is concerned) any rational basis. A broad generalization of this sort has, of course, the defects attaching to such generalizations; it does not apply to all thinkers who were influenced by nominalism; but it indicates the result of the more extreme tendencies in the movement.

Philosophy can hardly live without the analytic and critical spirit: at least, critical analysis is one of the 'moments' of philosophic thought, and it is natural that it should follow a period of constructive synthesis. As we have seen, the spirit was present, to a certain extent, in the thought of Duns Scotus, who maintained, for example, that the proofs of the soul's immortality are not absolutely conclusive and that a number of the divine attributes often held to be demonstrable cannot really be demonstrated. But it must be noted that Scotus was a metaphysician who argued as a metaphysician. It is true that he was, like other mediaeval metaphysicians, a logician; but the logician had not, with him, begun to take the place of the metaphysician: his system belongs to the group of thirteenth-century metaphysical syntheses. In the fourteenth century, however, a change can be observed. Metaphysics, while not abandoned, tends to give place to logic; and questions which were formerly treated as metaphysical questions are treated primarily as logical questions. When William of Ockham tackles the subject of universals, he places the emphasis on the logical aspects of the question, on the *suppositio* and *significatio terminorum* rather than on the ontological aspects. Ockham seems to have been convinced of his fidelity to the exigencies of the Aristotelian logic; and one can even say that it was in the name of the Aristotelian logic, or of what he regarded as such, that Ockham criticized the metaphysics of predecessors like Duns Scotus and Thomas Aquinas. One can, of course, devote oneself to logical studies without troubling about metaphysics, and some of the Oxford logicians of the fourteenth century seem to have done so. But one can also go on to criticize metaphysical arguments and proofs in the name of logic, and this is what Ockham did. As we shall see, he to all intents and purposes undermined the natural theology and metaphysical psychology of his predecessors. In his opinion, the alleged proofs or demonstrations of God's attributes or of the spirituality and immortality of the soul either rest on principles the truth of which is not self-evident or terminate in conclusions which do not strictly follow from the relevant premisses. Ockham admitted, indeed, that some metaphysical arguments are 'probable'; but this simply illustrates the tendency in the fourteenth century to substitute probable arguments for demonstrations.

This substitution of probable arguments was connected, of course, with the nominalist tendency to doubt or to deny the validity of inferring from the existence of one thing the existence of another. Ockham stressed the primacy of intuition of the existent individual thing. In regard to a thing's existence the first question to ask, then, is whether we intuit it as existent. In the case of the spiritual soul, for example, Ockham would deny that we have any such intuition. The question then arises whether we can argue with certainty to the existence of the spiritual soul from the intuitions we do have. Ockham did not think this possible. He did not indeed make a purely phenomenalistic analysis of causality: he used the principle himself in metaphysics: but the later 'extremists', like Nicholas of Autrecourt, did give such an analysis. The result was that they questioned our knowledge of the existence of material substance, and probably also of the spiritual soul. In fact, no logical inference from the existence of one thing to the existence of another could amount to a 'demonstration' or cogent proof. In this way the whole metaphysical system of the thirteenth century was discredited.

This thoroughgoing criticism of the preceding metaphysical systems obviously involved a breach in the synthesis of theology and philosophy which had been a characteristic of those systems. St. Thomas, for example, even if he treated the philosophical arguments for the existence of God in works which were only in part philosophical, as distinct from theological, was certainly convinced that valid metaphysical arguments can be given for God's existence. These arguments belong to the *praeambula fidei*, in the sense that the acceptance of divine revelation logically presupposes the knowledge that a God exists who is capable of revealing Himself, a knowledge which can be gained in abstraction from theology. But if, as a number of the fourteenth-century philosophers believed, no cogent proof or demonstration of God's existence can be given, the very existence of God has to be relegated to the sphere of faith. Two consequences follow. First of all, theology and philosophy tend to fall apart. Of course, this consequence might be avoided, were the whole idea of philosophic 'proof' to be revised, but if the choice lies between demonstration and faith, and if the demonstrability of the 'preambles' of faith is denied, the consequence can scarcely be avoided. Secondly, if the important problems of traditional metaphysics, problems which linked philosophy with theology and religion, are relegated to the sphere of faith, philosophy tends to take on more and more a 'lay' character. This consequence did not become very apparent with Ockham himself, since he was a theologian as well as a philosopher, but it became more apparent with certain other fourteenth-century thinkers, like Nicholas of Autrecourt, who belonged to the faculty of arts.

To say that a thirteenth-century philosopher like St. Thomas was preoccupied with 'apologetics' would be untrue and anachronistic. None the less, though not preoccupied with apologetics in the way some Christian thinkers of a later age have been, he was certainly concerned with the relation between philosophy and revelation. Alive to the contemporary currents of thought and to the controversies of his time, he was prepared neither to reject the new Aristotelian metaphysics in the name of Christian tradition nor to pursue philosophic reflection without any regard to its bearing on Christian theology. He was careful to synthesize dogmatic theology on the one hand with his philosophy on the other, and to show the link between them. When we come to William of Ockham in the fourteenth century however, we find a marked absence of any concern for 'apologetics'. We find, indeed, a theologian who considered that his predecessors had obscured or overlaid Christian truths with false metaphysics; but we find also a philosopher who was quite content to apply his principles in a logical and consistent manner, without appearing to care, or perhaps fully to realize, the implications in regard to the synthesis between theology and philosophy. Truths which he believed but which he did not think could be philosophically proved he relegated to the sphere of faith. By assigning to the sphere of faith the truth that there exists an absolutely supreme, infinite, free, omniscient and omnipotent Being, he snapped the link between metaphysics and theology which had been provided by Aquinas's doctrine of the provable *praeambula fidei*. By making the moral law dependent on the free divine choice he implied, whether he realized it or not, that without revelation man can have no certain knowledge even of the present moral order established by God. The best that man could do, unaided by revelation, would presumably be to reflect on the needs of human nature and human society and follow the dictates of his practical reason, even though those dictates might not represent the divine will. This would imply the possibility of two ethics, the moral order established by God but knowable only by revelation, and a provisional and second-class natural and non-theological ethic worked out by the human reason without revelation. I do not mean to say that Ockham actually drew this conclusion from his authoritarian conception of the moral law; but it was, I think, implicit in that conception. To make these observations is not of itself, of course, to make a statement either in favour of or against the validity of Ockham's philosophical arguments; but it is as well to draw attention to the lack of apologetic preoccupations in Ockham. He was a theologian and a philosopher and a political and ecclesiastical pamphleteer; but he was not an 'apologist', not even in the senses in which Aquinas can reasonably be called an 'apologist', and still less in the modern sense of the word.

Some philosophers in the fourteenth century endeavoured to bridge the threatening gap between theology and philosophy by extending Henry of Ghent's theory of 'illumination'. Thus Hugolino of Orvieto (d. 1373), a Hermit of St. Augustine, distinguished certain degrees of illumination, and maintained that Aristotle, for example, was enlightened by a special divine illumination which enabled him to know something of God and of certain of His attributes. Others, however, turned to mysticism and concentrated their attention on a speculative treatment of the relation of the world to God and, in particular, of the relation of the human soul to God. This movement of speculative mysticism, the chief representative of which was the German Dominican Meister Eckhart, was, as we shall see later, very far from being simply a reaction to the arid wranglings of the Schools or a flight from scepticism to the safe haven of piety; but it was, none the less, a feature of the fourteenth century, quite distinct from the more academic philosophy of the universities.

An important feature of fourteenth-century university life, particularly at Paris, was the growth of science. Something will be said about this later on, though only a brief treatment of this theme can be expected in a history of philosophy. The development of mathematical and scientific studies by such fourteenth-century figures as Nicholas of Oresme, Albert of Saxony and Marsilius of Inghen is generally associated with the Ockhamist movement; and thus it is regarded as a feature of the fourteenth, as contrasted with the thirteenth, century. There is certainly truth in this contention, not so much because William of Ockham showed any particular interest in empirical science or because the fourteenth-century scientists accepted all the Ockhamist positions as because the Ockhamist philosophy should, of its very nature, have favoured the growth of empirical science. William of Ockham had a strong belief in the primacy of intuition, that is, in the primacy of intuition of the individual thing: all real knowledge is ultimately founded on intuitive knowledge of individual existents. Moreover, the only adequate ground for asserting a causal relation between two phenomena is observation of regular sequence. These two theses tend of themselves to favour empirical observation and a fresh approach to scientific questions. And in point of fact we do find that the leading figures in fourteenth-century science were associated in some way, though sometimes rather loosely, with the 'modern way'.

At the same time one is not justified in asserting without qualification that a rudimentary appreciation of physical science was peculiar to the fourteenth century, as contrasted with the thirteenth, or that the scientific studies associated with the Ockhamist movement were the direct progenitors of Renaissance science. Already in the thirteenth century interest had been taken in the Latin translations of Greek and Arabic scientific works, and original observations and experiments had been made. We have only to think of men like Albert the Great, Peter of Maricourt and Roger Bacon. In the following century criticism of Aristotle's physical theories coupled with further original reflection and even experiment led to the putting forward of new explanations and hypotheses in physics; and the investigations of the physicists associated with the Ockhamist movement passed in the fifteenth century to northern Italy. The science of the universities of northern Italy certainly influenced the great scientists of the Renaissance, like Galileo; but it would be a mistake to think that Galileo's work was nothing but a continuation of 'Ockhamist' science, though it would be also a mistake to think that it was not influenced by the latter. For one thing, Galileo was able to achieve his results only through a use of mathematics which was unknown in the fourteenth century. This use was facilitated by the translation, at the time of the Renaissance, of works by Greek mathematicians and physicists; and Galileo was stimulated to apply mathematics to the solution of problems of motion and mechanics in a way for which the mediaeval scientists did not possess the necessary equipment. The use of mathematics as the special means of disclosing the nature of physical reality led to a transformation in physical science. The old way of common-sense observation was abandoned in favour of a very different approach. Though it may sound strange to say so, physical science became less 'empirical': it was set free not only from Aristotelian physical theories but also from the common-sense idea of an observational method which had tended to prevail among earlier physicists. It is true that some continuity can be observed between thirteenth- and fourteenth-century science, and between fourteenth-century science and that of the Renaissance; but that does not alter the fact that in the last period a revolution in physical science took place.

3. Mention of the Renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries probably still conjures up for some minds the idea of a sudden and abrupt transition and awakening, when the learning and literature of the ancient world were made available, when education began, when men began to think for themselves after the intellectual slavery of the Middle Ages, when the invention of printing made the wide dissemination of books at last possible, when the discovery of new lands broadened men's horizons and opened up new sources of wealth, and when the discovery of gunpowder conferred an inestimable blessing upon mankind.

Such a view is, of course, a considerable exaggeration. As far as the recovery of ancient literature, for example, is concerned, this began centuries before the Italian Renaissance; while in regard to thinking for oneself, it does not require a very profound knowledge of mediaeval philosophy to realize that there was plenty of original thinking in the Middle Ages. On the other hand, one should not emphasize the element of continuous transition so much that one implies that the Renaissance does not form a recognizable period or that its achievements were negligible. It is a question of looking at the matter in the light of our present knowledge of the Middle Ages and of correcting false impressions of the Renaissance, and not a question of suggesting that the word 'Renaissance' is a mere word, denoting no reality. Something more on this subject will be said at a later stage; at the moment I wish to confine myself to a few introductory remarks on the philosophies of the Renaissance.

When one looks at mediaeval philosophy, one certainly sees variety; but it is a variety within a common pattern, or at least it is a variety set against a common and well-defined background. There was certainly original thought; but none the less one gets the impression of a common effort, of what one may call teamwork. The thirteenth-century philosophers criticized one another's opinions; but they accepted not only the same religious faith but also, for the most part, the same metaphysical principles. One thus obtains the impression of a philosophical development which was carried on by men of independent minds but which was at the same time a common development, to which the individual philosophers made their several contributions. Even in the fourteenth century the *via moderna* was so widespread a movement as to grow in the course of time into a more or less hardened 'school', taking its place along with Thomism, Scotism and Augustinianism.

When one looks at Renaissance philosophy, however, one is faced at first sight with a rather bewildering assortment of philosophies. One finds for instance Platonists, Aristotelians of various kinds, anti-Aristotelians, Stoics, sceptics, eclectics and philosophers of nature. One can separate the philosophies into various general currents of thought, it is true, even if it is rather difficult to know to which current one should assign a particular thinker; but the over-all impression is one of a pullulating individualism. And this impression is, in many respects, correct. The gradual breakdown of the framework of mediaeval society and the loosening of the bonds between men which helped to produce a more or less common outlook; the transition to new forms of society, sometimes separated from one another by religious differences; the new inventions and discoveries; all this was accompanied by a marked individualism in philosophic reflection. The feeling of discovery, of adventure, was in the air; and it was reflected in philosophy. To say this is not to retract what I have already said about the inadequacy of regarding the Renaissance as without roots in the past. It had its roots in the past and it passed through several phases, as we shall see later; but this does not mean that a new spirit did not come into being at the time of the Renaissance, though it would be more accurate to say that a spirit which had manifested itself to a certain extent at an earlier date showed an outburst of vitality at the time of the Renaissance. For example, the recovery of the classical literature had started at a much earlier date, within the Middle Ages, as has already been remarked; but historians, while rightly emphasizing this fact, have also rightly pointed out that in regard to the Renaissance the important point is not so much that numbers of fresh texts were made available as that the texts were read in a new light. It was a question of appreciating the texts and the thought therein contained for themselves and not just as possible sources of Christian edification or disedification. The bulk of Renaissance thinkers, scholars and scientists were, of course, Christians; and it is as well to remember the fact; but none the less the classical revival, or perhaps rather the Renaissance phase of the classical revival, helped to bring to the fore a conception of autonomous man or an idea of the development of the human personality which, though generally Christian, was more 'naturalistic' and less ascetic than the mediaeval conception. And this idea favoured the growth of individualism. Even among writers who were devout

Christians one can discern the conviction that a new age for man was beginning. This conviction was not due simply to classical studies, of course; it was due to the complex of historical changes which were taking place at the Renaissance.

It was at the time of the Renaissance that the works of Plato and Plotinus were translated, by Marsilius Ficinus; and in the earlier phase of the period an attempt was made to form a philosophical synthesis of Platonic inspiration. The Platonic philosophers were, for the most part, Christians; but, very naturally, Platonism was looked on as a kind of antithesis to Aristotelianism. At the same time another group of humanists, influenced by the Latin classical literature, attacked the Aristotelian logic and Scholastic abstractions in the name of good taste, realism and the feeling for the concrete, rhetoric and literary exposition. A new idea of education by means of classical literature rather than by abstract philosophy was taking shape. Polite and humanistic scepticism was represented by Montaigne, while Justus Lipsius revived Stoicism and Pierre Gassendi Epicureanism. The Aristotelians of the Renaissance, apart from the Scholastics, were meanwhile divided among themselves into the Averroists and those who favoured the interpretation of Aristotle given by Alexander of Aphrodisias. These latter favoured an interpretation of Aristotle's psychology which led to the denial of human immortality, even the impersonal immortality admitted by the Averroists. Pomponazzi, the chief figure of this group, drew the conclusion that man has a purely terrestrial moral end. At the same time he professed to be a believing Christian and so had to make a rigid division between theological and philosophical truth.

The philosophies which took the form of revivals of classical thought tended to accustom people to an idea of man which had no very obvious connection with Christianity and which was sometimes frankly naturalistic, even if the authors of these naturalistic pictures of man were generally Christians. An analogous process of development went on in regard to the philosophy of nature. Whereas certain forms of Oriental thought would scarcely favour the study of nature, owing to the notion that the phenomenal world is illusion or mere 'appearance', Christian philosophy favoured in a sense the investigation of nature, or at least set no theoretical bar to it, because it regarded the material world not only as real but also as the creation of God, and so as worthy of study. At the same time the emphasis laid by a Christian theologian, philosopher and saint like Bonaventure on the religious orientation of man led to a natural concentration on those aspects of the material world which could be most easily looked on not only as manifestations of God but also as means to elevate the mind from the material to the spiritual. The saint was not particularly interested in studying the world for its own sake: he was much more interested in detecting in it the mirror of the divine. Nevertheless, Christian philosophy, apart from this natural concentration of interest, was not radically hostile to the study of the world; and in the case of thirteenth-century philosophers like St. Albert the Great and Roger Bacon we find a combination of the spiritual outlook with an interest in the empirical study of nature. In the fourteenth century we find this interest in scientific studies growing, in association with the Ockhamist movement and favoured by the rift which was introduced into the thirteenth-century synthesis of theology and philosophy. The way was being prepared for a philosophy of nature which, while not necessarily anti-Christian, emphasized nature as an intelligible totality governed by its own immanent laws. It might perhaps be better to say that the way was being gradually prepared for the scientific study of nature, which was in the course of time, though only at a later period, to shed the name of 'natural philosophy' or 'experimental philosophy' and to become conscious of itself as a separate discipline, or set of disciplines, with its own method or methods. But at the time of the Renaissance we find a number of philosophies of nature arising which stand apart from the development of physical science as such, in that they are characterized by a marked speculative trait which sometimes manifested itself in fanciful and bizarre ideas. These philosophies varied from the Christian and strongly Platonic or neo-Platonic philosophy of a Nicholas of Cusa to the pantheistic philosophy of a Giordano Bruno. But they were marked by common characteristics, by a belief, for example, in nature as a developing system which was infinite, or potentially infinite, and which was regarded either as the created infinite, mirroring the uncreated and divine infinite, or as itself in some sense divine. God was certainly not denied; but the emphasis was placed, in varying degrees with different philosophers, on nature itself. Nature tended to be looked on as the macrocosm and man as the microcosm. This was, indeed, an old idea, going back to Greek times; but it represented a change of emphasis from that characteristic of the mediaeval outlook. In other words, there was a tendency to regard nature as an autonomous system, even though nature's dependence on God was not denied. The bizarre and fantastic aspects of some of these philosophies may tend to make one impatient of them and their authors; but they are of importance in that they marked the rise of a new direction of interest and because of the fact that they formed a kind of mental background against which the purely scientific study of nature could go forward. Indeed, it was against the background of these philosophies, which were the ancestors of philosophies like those of Spinoza and Leibniz, rather than against the background of fourteenth-century Ockhamism, that the great advances of the scientific phase of the Renaissance were achieved. Not infrequently the philosophers anticipated speculatively hypotheses which the physicists were to verify or confirm. Even Newton, it may be remembered, looked upon himself as a philosopher.

When we turn to the Renaissance scientists, we find them interested primarily in knowledge for its own sake. But at the same time it was a characteristic of some Renaissance thinkers to emphasize the practical fruits of knowledge. The new scientific discoveries and the opening up of the new world naturally suggested a contrast between a knowledge of nature, gained by study of her laws and making possible a use of nature for man's benefit, and the older abstract discipline which seemed devoid of practical utility. Study of final causes gets one nowhere; study of efficient causes enables one to control nature and to extend man's dominion over nature. The best-known expression of this outlook is to be found in the writings of Francis Bacon (d. 1626), who, though often assigned to 'modern philosophy', may reasonably be assigned to the Renaissance period. (Distinctions of this sort are to a certain extent a matter of personal choice, of course.) It would be a mistake to father this sort of attitude on the great scientific figures; but it is an attitude which has come to dominate a great part of the modern mentality. One can detect it even in some of the political thinkers of the Renaissance. Machiavelli (d. 1527), for example, neglecting theoretical problems of sovereignty and of the nature of the state in favour of 'realism' wrote his *Prince* as a text for princes who wanted to know how to conserve and augment their power.

Finally, one has to consider the great scientific figures, like Kepler and Galileo, who laid the foundations of the classical science of the modern era, the Newtonian science, as it is often known. If the first phase of the Renaissance was that of Italian humanism, the last was that of the growth of modern science. This development came to exercise a profound influence not only on philosophy but also on the modern mentality in general. But of this influence it will be more proper to speak in other volumes.

4. Martin Luther was very strongly anti-Aristotelian and anti-Scholastic; but Melanchthon, his most eminent disciple and associate, was a humanist who introduced into Lutheran Protestantism a humanistic Aristotelianism set to the service of religion. The Reformers were naturally much more concerned with religion and theology than with philosophy; and men like Luther and Calvin could hardly be expected to have very much sympathy with the predominantly aesthetic attitude of the humanists, even though Protestantism stressed the need for education and had to come to terms with humanism in the educational field.

However, though humanism, a movement which was unsympathetic to Scholasticism, began in Catholic Italy, and though the greatest figures of humanism in northern Europe, Erasmus above all, but also men like Thomas More in England, were Catholics, the late Renaissance witnessed a revival of Scholasticism, a brief treatment of which I have included in the present volume. The centre of this revival was, significantly, Spain, a country which was not much affected either by the religious upheavals and divisions which afflicted so much of Europe or, indeed, by Renaissance philosophy. The revival came at the end of the fifteenth century, with Thomas de Vio (d. 1534), known as Cajetan, De Sylvestris (d. 1520) and others; and in the sixteenth century we find two principal groups, the Dominican group, represented by writers like Francis of Vitoria (d. 1546), Dominic Soto (d. 1560), Melchior Cano (d. 1566), and Dominic Báñez (d. 1640), and the Jesuit group, represented, for example, by Toletus (d. 1596), Molina (d. 1600), Bellarmine (d. 1621), and Suárez (d. 1617). The most important of these late Scholastics is probably Suárez, of whose philosophy I shall give a more extended treatment than in the case of any of the others.

The themes treated by the Renaissance Scholastics were for the most part those themes and problems already set by preceding mediaeval Scholasticism; and if one looks at the extensive works of Suárez, one finds abundant evidence of the author's very wide knowledge of preceding philosophies. The rise of Protestantism naturally led the Scholastic theologians to discuss relevant theological problems which had their repercussions in the field of philosophy; but the Scholastics were not much affected by the characteristically Renaissance philosophies. A thinker like Suárez bears more resemblance to the theologian-philosophers of the thirteenth century than to the intellectual free-lances of the Renaissance. Yet, as we shall see later, contemporary movements influenced Suárez in two ways at least. First, the old philosophical method of commenting on a text was abandoned by him in his *Metaphysical Disputations* for a continuous discussion in a more modern, even if, it must be confessed, somewhat prolix style. Philosophy came to be treated, not in predominantly or largely theological works, but in separate treatises. Secondly, the rise of national states was reflected in a fresh development of political theory and of the philosophy of law, of a much more thorough character than anything produced by mediaeval Scholasticism. In this connection one thinks naturally of the study of international law by the Dominican Francis of Vitoria and of Suárez' treatise on law.

PART I

THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

CHAPTER II

DURANDUS AND PETRUS AUREOLI

James of Metz—Durandus—Petrus Aureoli—Henry of Harclay—The relation of these thinkers to Ockhamism.

1. ONE is naturally inclined to think that all the theologians and philosophers of the Dominican Order in the late Middle Ages followed the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas. In 1279 those who did not embrace Thomism were forbidden by the Chapter of Paris to condemn it, and in 1286 the same Chapter enacted that non-Thomists should be removed from their chairs. In the following century the Chapters of Saragossa (1309) and of Metz (1313) made it obligatory to accept the teaching of St. Thomas (who was not canonized until 1323). But these enactments did not succeed in making all Dominicans conform. Leaving out of account Meister Eckhart, whose philosophy will be discussed in the chapter on speculative mysticism, one may mention among the dissentients James of Metz, though his two commentaries on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, which seem to have been composed the one before 1295 and the other in 1302, antedated the official imposition of Thomism on members of the Order.

James of Metz was not an anti-Thomist in the sense of being an opponent of St. Thomas's teaching in general; nor was he a philosophic revolutionary; but he did not hesitate to depart from the teaching of St. Thomas and to question that teaching when he saw fit. For example, he did not accept the Thomist view of matter as the principle of individuation. It is form which gives unity to the substance and so constitutes it; and we must accordingly recognize form as the principle of individuation, since individuality presupposes substantiality. James of Metz appears to have been influenced by thinkers like Henry of Ghent and Peter of Auvergne. Thus he developed Henry's idea of the 'modes of being' (*modi essendi*). There are three modes of being, that of substance, that of real accident (quantity and quality) and that of relation. The modes are distinct from one another; but they are not things which together with their foundations make up composite beings. Thus relation is a mode of being which relates a substance or an absolute accident to the term of the relation: it is not itself a thing. Most relations, like similarity, for example, or equality, are mental: the causal relation is the only 'real' relation, independent of our thought. James was something of an eclectic; and his divagations from the teaching of St. Thomas called forth criticism and reproof from the pen of Hervé Nédellec,[1] a Dominican who published a *Correctorium fratris Jacobi Metensis.*

2. Durandus (Durand de Saint-Pourçain) was much more of an *enfant terrible* than was James of Metz. Born between 1270 and 1275, he entered the Dominican Order and did his studies at Paris, where he is supposed to have followed the lectures of James of Metz. At the beginning of the first edition of his commentary on the *Sentences* he laid down the principle that the proper procedure in speaking and writing of things which do not touch the Faith is to rely on reason rather than on the authority of any Doctor however famous or grave. Armed with this principle Durandus proceeded on his way, to the displeasure of his Dominican colleagues. He then published a second edition of his commentary, omitting the offending propositions; but nothing was gained thereby, for the first edition continued in circulation. The Dominican Chapter of Metz condemned his peculiar opinions in 1313, and in 1314 a commission presided over by Hervé Nédellec censured 91 propositions taken from the first edition of Durandus's commentary. The latter, who was at this time a lecturer at the papal court of Avignon, defended himself in his *Excusationes*; but Hervé Nédellec pursued the attack in his *Reprobationes excusationum Durandi* and followed it up by attacking Durandus's teaching at Avignon. In 1316 the Dominican General Chapter at Montpellier, considering that a 'remedy' should be provided for this shocking state of affairs, drew up a list of 235 points on which Durandus had differed from the teaching of St. Thomas. In 1317 Durandus became Bishop of Limoux, being translated to Puy in 1318 and finally to Meaux in 1326. Strengthened by his episcopal position, he published, sometime after 1317, a third edition of his commentary on the *Sentences*, in which he returned, in part, to the positions he had once retracted. One can safely assume that he had always continued to hold the theories in question. As a matter

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[1] i.e. Hervaeus Natalis, who became Master-General of the Dominicans in 1318.

of fact, though possessed of an independent spirit in regard to St. Thomas's teaching, Durandus was not a revolutionary. He was influenced by the doctrine of Henry of Ghent, for example, while on some points he spoke like an Augustinian. In 1326, when Bishop of Meaux, he was a member of the commission which censured 51 propositions taken from William of Ockham's commentary on the *Sentences*. He died in 1332.

One of Durandus's opinions which offended his critics concerned relations. For Durandus, as for James of Metz, relation is a *modus essendi*, a mode of being. Henry of Ghent, as we have seen, had distinguished three modes of being, that of a substance, that of an absolute accident (quantity and quality) which inheres in a substance, and that of a relation. A relation was regarded by Henry as being a kind of internal tendency of a being towards another being. As far as the real being of a relation is concerned, then, it is reducible to the being of a substance or of a real accident; and the Aristotelian categories are to be regarded as comprising substance, quantity, quality, relation, and the six subdivisions of relation. This doctrine of the three basic modes of being was adopted by James of Metz and Durandus. As the modes of being are really distinct, it follows that the relation is really distinct from its foundation. On the other hand, as the relation is simply the foundation or subject in its relatedness to something else,[1] it cannot properly be a 'thing' or 'creature'; at least, it cannot enter into composition with its foundation.[2] There is a real relation only when a being related to another possesses an objective, internal exigency for this relatedness. This means that there is a real relation, so far as creatures are concerned, only when there is real dependence; and it follows therefore that the causal relation is the only real relation in creatures.[3] Similarity, equality and all relations other than the causal relation are purely conceptual; they are not real relations.

Durandus applied this doctrine to knowledge. The act of knowing is not an absolute accident which inheres in the soul, as St. Thomas thought; it is a *modus essendi* which does not add anything to the intellect or make it more perfect. 'It must be said that sensation and understanding do not imply the addition to the sense and the intellect of anything real which enters into composition with them.'[1] Sensation and understanding are immanent acts which are really identical with the sense and the intellect. Why did Durandus hold this? Because he considered that to maintain that the soul, when it enters into cognitive relation with an object, receives accidents by way of addition is to imply that an external object can act on a spiritual principle or a non-living object on a living subject, a view which he calls 'ridiculous'. Durandus's thought on this matter is clearly of Augustinian inspiration. For example, one of the reasons why St. Augustine maintained that sensation is an act of the soul alone was the impossibility of a material thing acting on the soul. The object is a *conditio sine qua non*, but not a cause, of knowledge; the intellect itself is the cause.

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[1] The relation is a *modus essendi ad aliud, qui est ipse respectus relationis.* 1 *Sent.* (A), 33, 1.

[2] *Relatio est alia res a suo fundamento, et tamen non facit compositionem. Ibid.*

[3] *Relata realia ex natura sui fundamenti habent inter se necessariam coexigentiam ratione fundamenti. Ibid.* (A), 31, 1. *In creaturis realis relatio requirit dependentiam in relato. Ibid.* (A), 30, 2.

From this theory of knowledge as a relation Durandus drew the conclusion that the whole apparatus of cognitive *species*, in the sense of accidental forms, can be dispensed with. It follows also that it is unnecessary to postulate an active intellect which is supposed to abstract these *species*. Similarly, Durandus got rid of 'habits' in the intellect and will, and he followed the Augustinian tradition in denying any real distinction between intellect and will.

The principal reason why Durandus got into trouble over his doctrine of relations was its application to the doctrine of the Trinity. In the first edition of his commentary on the *Sentences*[2] he asserted that there is a real distinction between the divine essence or nature and the divine relations or Persons, though in the second passage referred to he speaks with some hesitation. This opinion was condemned by the commission of 1314 as 'entirely heretical'. Durandus tried to explain away his assertions, but Hervé Nédellec drew attention to his actual words. In the Avignon *Quodlibet* he admitted that one could not properly speak of a real distinction between the divine nature and the divine internal relations: the latter are *modi essendi vel habendi essentiam divinam* and the distinction is only *secundum quid*. A renewed attack by Hervé Nédellec followed this change, and in the final edition of the commentary Durandus proposed another view.[3] There are, he says, three possible theories. First, essence and relation, though not two things, differ in that they are not the same 'adequately and convertibly'. Secondly, essence and relation differ as thing and 'mode of possessing the thing'. This was the view of Henry of Ghent, James of Metz and, formerly, of Durandus himself. Thirdly, essence and relation differ *formaliter ex natura rei*, although they are identically the same thing. Durandus adopts this third view, that of Scotus, though he adds that he does not understand what *formaliter* means unless this view contains the other two. The first view is included, in that essence and relation, while they are the same thing, are not the same thing 'adequately and convertibly'. The second view is also included, namely that essence and relation differ as *res et modus habendi rem*. In other words, Durandus's opinion did not undergo any very startling change.

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[1] *Quaestio de natura cognitionis* (ed. J. Koch), p. 18.

[2] 1 *Sent.* (A), 13, 1, and 33, 1.

[3] 1 *Ibid.* (C), 33, 1.

It used to be said that Durandus was a pure conceptualist in regard to universals and that he thus helped to prepare the way for Ockhamism. But it is now clear that he did not deny that there was some real foundation in things for the universal concept. He held, indeed, that it is 'frivolous to say that there is universality in things, for universality cannot be in things, but only singularity';[1] but the unity of nature which is thought by the intellect as being common to a multiplicity of objects exists really in things, though not as an objective universal. Universality belongs to concepts, but the nature which is conceived by the intellect as a universal exists really in individual things.

Durandus certainly rejected a considerable number of theories which had been maintained by St. Thomas. We have seen that he denied the doctrines of *species* and of habits or dispositions, and the real distinction between intellect and will. Moreover, in regard to the immortality of the soul he followed Scotus in saying that it is not demonstrable; or, at least, that it is difficult to demonstrate in a rigorous manner. But, as already mentioned, he was not a revolutionary even if he was an independent and critical thinker. His psychology was largely Augustinian in character and inspiration, while even his doctrine of relations was founded on that of Henry of Ghent. And in regard to universals he did not reject the position maintained by the mediaeval Aristotelians. In other words, the former picture of Durandus as a closely-related predecessor of William of Ockham has had to be abandoned, though it is true, of course, that he employed the principle of economy, known as 'Ockham's razor'.

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 3, 7, 8.

3. Petrus Aureoli (Pierre d'Auriole) entered the Order of Friars Minor and studied at Paris. After having lectured at Bologna (1312) and Toulouse (1314) he returned to Paris where he received the doctorate of theology in 1318. In 1321 he became Archbishop of Aix-en-Provence. He died shortly afterwards, in January 1322. His first philosophical work was the uncompleted *Tractatus de principiis naturae,* which dealt with questions of natural philosophy. His main work, a commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, was published in two successive editions. We have also his *Quodlibeta.*

Petrus Aureoli takes his stand firmly on the statement that everything which exists is, by the very fact that it exists, an individual thing. Speaking of the dispute concerning the principle of individuation, he asserts that in reality there is no question at all to discuss, 'since every thing, by the very fact that it exists, exists as an individual thing' (*singulariter est*).[1] Conversely, if anything is common or universal or can be predicated of a plurality of objects, it is shown by that very fact to be a concept. 'Therefore to seek for something whereby an extramental object is rendered individual is to seek for nothing.'[2] For this is tantamount to asking in what way an extramental universal is individualized, when in point of fact there is no such thing as an extramental universal which could be individualized. The metaphysical problem of individuation is thus no problem at all. There is no universal outside the mind. But this does not mean that God cannot create a number of individuals of the same species; and we know, in fact, that He has done so. Material things have forms, and certain of these forms possess a quality which we call 'likeness' (*similitudo*). If it is asked what sort of a thing (*quale quid*) Socrates is, the answer is that he is a man: there is a quality of likeness in Socrates and Plato of such a kind that though there is nothing in Socrates which is in Plato, there is not in Plato anything to which there cannot be a likeness in Socrates. 'I and you are not the same; but I can be such as you are. So the Philosopher says that Callias, by generating Socrates, generates a similar being.'[3] The extramental foundation of the universal concept is this quality of likeness. Petrus Aureoli does not deny, then, that there is an objective foundation for the universal concept: what he does deny is that there is any common reality which exists extramentally. As to immaterial forms, these can also be alike. Hence there is no reason why several angels should not belong to the same species.

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 9, 3, 3, p. 114, a A. Pagination is given according to the 1596 edition (Rome).

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 115, a F.

The intellect, as active, assimilates to itself this likeness and, as passive, is assimilated to it, thus conceiving the thing, that is, producing an 'objective concept' (*conceptus obiectivus*). This concept is intramental, of course, and, as such, it is distinct from the thing; but on the other hand it is the thing as known. Thus Petrus Aureoli says that when the intellectual assimilation takes place 'the thing immediately receives *esse apparens*'. If the assimilation is clear, the thing will have a clear *esse apparens* or phenomenal existence; if the assimilation is obscure, the *esse apparens* will be obscure. This 'appearance' is in the intellect alone.[1] 'From the fact that a thing produces an imperfect impression of itself in the intellect, there arises the generic concept, by which the thing is conceived imperfectly and indistinctly, while from the fact that the same thing produces a perfect impression of itself in the intellect there arises the concept of (specific) difference, by which the thing is conceived in its specific and distinct existence.'[2] The 'objective' diversity of concepts is the result of the formal diversity of the impression made by one and the same object on one and the same mind. 'Therefore if you ask in what the specific unity of humanity consists, I say that it consists in humanity, not in animality, but in humanity as conceived. And in this way it is the same as the objective concept of man. But this unity exists in potency and inchoately in the extramental thing, inasmuch as the latter is capable of causing in the intellect a perfect impression like to the impression caused by another thing.'[3]

Every extramentally existing thing is individual; and it is 'nobler' to know it directly in its unique individuality than to know it by means of a universal concept. The human intellect, however, cannot grasp directly and primarily, the thing in its incommunicable individuality, though it can know it secondarily, by means of the imagination: primarily and immediately it apprehends the form of the material thing by means of a universal concept.[4] But to say that the intellect knows the thing 'by means of a universal concept' does not mean that there is a *species intelligibilis* in the Thomist sense which acts as a *medium quo* of knowledge. 'No real form is to be postulated as existing subjectively in the intellect, or in the imagination . . . but that form which we are conscious of beholding when we know the rose as such or the flower as such is not something real impressed subjectively on the intellect, or on the imagination; nor is it a real subsistent thing; it is the thing itself as possessing *esse intentionale*. . . .'[1] Petrus Aureoli thus dispenses with the *species intelligibilis* as *medium quo* of knowledge and insists that the intellect knows the thing itself directly. This is one reason why Étienne Gilson can say that Petrus Aureoli 'admits no other reality than that of the knowable object' and that his solution does not consist of eliminating the *species intelligibilis* in favour of the concept, but in suppressing even the concept.[2] On the other hand, the thing which is known, that is, the object of knowledge, is the extramental thing as possessing *esse intentionale* or *esse apparens*; and it acquires this *esse intentionale* through 'conception' (*conceptio*). The thing as possessing *esse intentionale* is thus the concept (that is to say, the 'objective concept' as distinguished from the 'subjective concept' or psychological act as such); and it follows that the concept is the object of knowledge. 'All understanding demands the placing of a thing in *esse intentionali*', and this is the *forma specularis*.[3] 'The thing posited in *esse apparenti* is said to be conceived by the act of the intellect, indeed, it is the intellectual concept; but a concept remains within the conceiver, and is (owes its being to) the conceiver. Therefore the thing as appearing depends effectively on the act of the intellect, both in regard to production and in regard to content.'[4] Dr. B. Geyer can say, then, that 'the *species*, the *forma specularis*, is thus, according to Aureoli, no longer the *medium quo* of knowledge, as with Thomas Aquinas, but its immediate object'.[5] But, even if Petrus Aureoli may speak on occasion as though he wished to maintain a form of subjective idealism, he insists, for example, that 'health as conceived by the intellect and health as it is present extramentally are one and the same thing in reality (*realiter*), although they differ in their mode of being, since in the mind health has *esse apparens et intentionale*, while extramentally, in the body, it has *esse existens et reale*. . . . They differ in mode of being (*in modo essendi*), although they are one and the same thing.'[6]

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 3, 2, 4, p. 30, c F.

[2] *Ibid.*, 9, 2, 3, p. 109, b A B.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 66, b D.

[4] *Ibid.*, 11, 4, 2, pp. 142–5.

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[1] 1 *Sent.*, 9, 1, p. 319, a B.

[2] *La philosophie au moyen âge*, p. 632.

[3] 1 *Sent.*, 9, 1, p. 320, a B.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 321, b B C.

[5] *Die patristische und scholastische Philosophie*, p. 526.

[6] 1 *Sent.*, 9, 1, p. 321, a D E.

'Hence it is clear that things themselves are conceived by the mind, and that that which we intuit is not another *forma specularis*, but the thing itself as having *esse apparens*; and this is the mental concept or objective idea (*notitia obiectiva*).'[1]

Knowledge, for Petrus Aureoli, is rooted in the perception of the concrete, of actually existing things. But a thing as known *is* the thing as having *esse apparens et intentionale*; it *is* the concept. According to the degree of clarity in the knowledge of the thing there arises a generic or specific concept. Genera and species, considered as universals, do not, however, exist extramentally, and are to be regarded as 'fabricated' by the mind. Petrus Aureoli may thus be called a 'conceptualist' inasmuch as he rejects any extramental existence on the part of universals; but he cannot rightly be called a 'nominalist', if 'nominalism' is taken to involve a denial of the objective similarity of natures. This is not to say, however, that he does not speak, more or less frequently, in an ambiguous and even inconsistent fashion. His idea of logic may be said to favour nominalism in that the logician is said to deal with words (*voces*). 'Therefore the logician considers them ("second intentions"), not as *entia rationis*, for it belongs to the metaphysician to decide about real being and conceptual being, but in so far as they are reduced to speech. . . .'[2] But, though the doctrine that logic is concerned with words (*voces*) may seem, if taken by itself, to favour nominalism, Petrus Aureoli adds that the logician is concerned with words as expressing concepts. 'The word, as well as the concept (*ut expressiva conceptus*), is the subject-matter of logic.'[3] In his logic, says Petrus Aureoli, Aristotle always implies that he is considering words as expressing concepts.[4] Moreover, speech, which expresses concepts, is the subject of truth and falsity: it is the sign of truth and falsity (*voces enim significant verum vel falsum in ordine ad conceptum*).[5] The theory of the *suppositio*, as formed in the terministic logic, may be implied in Petrus Aureoli's idea of logic; but he was not a 'nominalist' in metaphysics. It is true that he emphasized the qualitative similarity of things rather than the similarity of nature or essence; but he does not seem to have denied essential similarity as the foundation of the specific concept: rather did he presuppose it.

We have seen that for Petrus Aureoli conceptual knowledge is of the extramental thing in its likeness to other things rather than of the thing precisely as individual. But it is better, he insists, to know the individual thing in its individuality than to know it by means of a universal concept. If the human intellect in its present state knows things rather *per modum abstractum et universalem* than precisely in their individuality, this is an imperfection. The individual thing can make an impression on the senses in such a way that there is sense-knowledge or intuition of the individual thing as individual; but the material thing cannot make an impression of this sort on the immaterial intellect; its form is known abstractly by the intellect, which cannot directly and immediately attain the individual thing as individual. But this does not alter the fact that an intellectual intuition or knowledge of the individual thing as individual would be more perfect than abstract and universal knowledge. 'For the knowledge which attains to the thing precisely as the thing exists is more perfect than knowledge which attains to the thing in a manner in which the thing does not exist. But it is clear that a universal thing does not exist, except in individual things and through individual things, as the Philosopher says against Plato, in the seventh book of the *Metaphysics*. . . . It is quite clear that science, which apprehends essences (*quidditates*), does not apprehend things precisely as they exist . . . but knowledge of this precise individual is knowledge of the thing as it exists. Therefore, it is nobler to know the individual thing as such (*rem individuatam et demonstratam*) than to know it in an abstract and universal way.'[1] It follows that even if the human intellect cannot have that perfect knowledge of individual things which must be attributed to God, it should approach as near thereto as possible by keeping in close contact with experience. We should adhere to 'the way of experience rather than to any logical reasonings, since science arises from experience'.[2] Petrus Aureoli also stressed inner experience of our psychic acts, and he frequently appeals to inner experience or introspection to support his statements about knowledge, volition and psychic activity in general. He shows a strong 'empiricist' bent in his treatment of universals, in his insistence on keeping close to experience, and in his interest in natural science, which is shown by the examples he takes from Aristotle and his Islamic commentators; but

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[1] 1 *Sent.*, 9, 1, p. 321, b B.

[2] *Ibid.*, 23, 2, p. 539, a F–b A.

[3] *Prologus in Sent.*, 5, p. 66, a D.

[4] *Ibid.*. a F.

[5] *Ibid.*, a E.

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[1] 1 *Sent.*, 35, 4, 2, p. 816, b C–E.

[2] *Prologus in Sent.*, prooemium, 3, p. 25, a F. Petrus Aureoli is here arguing that it is possible for an act of intuition to exist in the absence of the object. This view was also held by Ockham. The remark about keeping close to experience is incidental in the context; but it is none the less significant and enuntiates a principle.

Dreiling's investigation led him to conclude that 'the empiricist tendency of Aureoli has a centripetal rather than a centrifugal direction and is turned towards the psychic life more than towards external nature'.[1]

Mention of Petrus Aureoli's appeals to introspection or inner experience leads one on to discuss his idea of the soul. First of all, it can be proved that the soul is the form of the body, in the sense that the soul is an essential part of man which together with the body makes up man. Indeed, 'no philosopher ever denied this proposition'.[2] But it cannot be proved that the soul is the form of the body in the sense that it is simply the forming and termination of matter (*formatio et terminatio materiae*) or that it makes the body to be a body. 'This has not yet been demonstrated, either by Aristotle or by the Commentator or by any other Peripatetic.'[3] In other words, it can be proved, according to Petrus Aureoli, that the soul is an essential part of man and that it is the principal part (*pars principalior*) of man; but it cannot be proved that it is simply that which makes matter to be a human body or that its relation to the body is analogous to the shape of a piece of copper. If a piece of copper is shaped into a statue, its figure may be called a form; but it is no more than the termination (*terminatio*) or figure of the copper; it is not a distinct nature. The human soul, however, is a distinct nature.

Now, Petrus Aureoli declared that a substantial form is simply the actuation of matter (*pura actuatio materiae*) and that, together with matter, it composes one simple nature.[4] It follows that if the human soul is a distinct nature and is not simply the actuation of matter, it is not a form in the same way and in the same sense that other forms are forms. 'I say, therefore, in answer to the question that it can be demonstrated that the soul is the form of the body and an essential part of us, though it is not the actuation and perfection of the body in the way that other souls are.'[5] The spiritual soul of man and the soul or vital principle of a plant, for example, are not forms in a univocal sense.

On the other hand, the Council of Vienne (1311–12) had just laid down that the intellectual or rational soul of man is 'truly, *per se* and essentially the form of the body'. So, after asserting that the human soul is not the form of the body in the same sense in which other forms which inform matter are forms, Petrus

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[1] *Der Konzeptualismus . . . des Franziskanererzbischofs Petrus Aureoli*, p. 197.

[2] 2 *Sent.*, 16, 1, 1, p. 218, b.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 219, a B.

[4] *Ibid.*, 12, 2, 1, p. 174, b D.

[5] *Ibid.*, 15, 1, 1, p. 223, a F.

Aureoli goes on to say that 'the ninth decree of the sacred Council of Vienne' has asserted the opposite, namely that 'the soul is the form of the body, just like other forms or souls'.[1] In face of this embarrassing situation Petrus Aureoli, while adhering to his position that it cannot be proved that the human soul is the form of the body in the same way that other souls are forms, declares that though this cannot be proved, it is nevertheless known by faith. He makes a comparison with the doctrine of the Trinity. This doctrine cannot be philosophically proved, but it has been revealed and we accept it on faith.[2] He allows that it cannot be demonstrated that the human soul is *not* the form of the body in the same sense that other souls are the forms of their respective matters; but he refuses to allow that it can be demonstrated that the soul *is* the form of the body in this sense. He obviously thought that reason inclines one to think that the human soul and the souls of brutes or plants are forms in an equivocal sense; and he remarks that the teaching of the Saints and Doctors of the Church would not lead one to expect the doctrine laid down by the Council; but, none the less, he accepts the Council's doctrine, as he understands it, and draws a strange conclusion. 'Although it cannot be demonstrated that the soul is the form of the body in the way that other forms (are forms of their respective matters), yet it must be held, as it seems to me, that, just as the shape of wax is the form and perfection of wax, so the soul is simply the actuation and forming of the body in the same way as other forms. And just as no cause is to be sought why from the wax and its shape there results one thing, so no cause is to be sought why from the soul and body there results one thing. Thus the soul is simply the act and perfection of matter, like the shape of the wax . . . I hold this conclusion precisely on account of the decision of the Council, which, according to the apparent sense of the words, seems to mean this.'[3]

The Fathers of the Council would have been startled to hear this interpretation put on their words; but, as he interpreted the Council's decision in this way and accepted it in this sense, Petrus Aureoli obviously found himself in considerable difficulty on the subject of the human soul's immortality. 'Faith holds that the soul is separated (i.e. outlives the body); but it is difficult to see how this can be done if the soul is assumed to be like other forms, simply the actuation of matter. I say, however, that just as God can separate accidents from the subject (i.e. substance), although they are no more than actuations of the subject, so He can miraculously separate the soul, although it is simply the actuation of matter.'[1] It is, indeed, necessary to say that in forms or 'pure perfections' there are degrees. If the form is extended, it can be affected (and so corrupted) by a natural extended agent; but if the form is unextended, then it cannot be affected (and so corrupted) by a natural extended agent. Now the human soul, although it is *pura perfectio materiae*, cannot be affected (i.e. corrupted) by a natural extended agent; it can be 'corrupted' only by God. This is not, however, a very satisfactory answer to the difficulty which Petrus Aureoli created for himself by his interpretation of the Council of Vienne; and he declares that our minds are not capable of understanding how the soul is naturally incorruptible if it is what the Council stated it to be.[2]

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 15, 1, 2, p. 223, b A–C. [2] *Ibid.*, b E–F. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 224, b D–F.

Petrus Aureoli obviously did not think that the natural immortality of the human soul can be philosophically demonstrated; and he seems to have been influenced by the attitude adopted by Duns Scotus in this matter. Various arguments have been produced to prove that the human soul is naturally immortal; but they are scarcely conclusive.[3] Thus some people have argued 'from the proportion of the object to the power' or faculty. The intellect can know an incorruptible object. Therefore the intellect is incorruptible. Therefore the substance of the soul is incorruptible. But the reply might be made that in this case the eye would be incorruptible (presumably because it sees the incorruptible heavenly bodies) or that our intellect must be infinite and uncreated because it can know God, who is infinite and uncreated. Again, others argue that there is a 'natural desire' to exist for ever and that a natural desire cannot be frustrated. Petrus Aureoli answers, like Scotus though more summarily, that the brutes too desire to continue in existence inasmuch as they shun death. The argument, if valid, would thus prove too much. Others, again, argue that justice requires the rewarding of the good and the punishment of the wicked in another life. 'This argument is moral and theological, and moreover, it is not conclusive.' For it might be answered that sin is its own punishment and virtue its own reward.

Petrus Aureoli proceeds to give some arguments of his own; but he is not very confident as to their probative force. 'Now I give my arguments, but I do not know if they are conclusive.'[1] First of all, man can choose freely, and his free choices are not affected by the heavenly bodies nor by any material agent. Therefore the principle of this operation of free choice also is unaffected by any material agent. Secondly, we experience in ourselves immanent, and therefore spiritual operations. Therefore the substance of the soul is spiritual. But the material cannot act on the spiritual or destroy it. Therefore the soul cannot be corrupted by any material agent.

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 15, 1, 2, p. 226, a E-F.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 226, a F-b B.

[3] *Ibid.*, 19, 1, p. 246, b D.

If man is truly free, it follows, according to Petrus Aureoli, that a judgment concerning a future free act is neither true nor false. 'The opinion of the Philosopher is a conclusion which has been thoroughly demonstrated, namely that no singular proposition can be formed concerning a future contingent event, concerning which proposition it can be conceded that it is true and that its opposite is false, or conversely. No proposition of the kind is either true or false.'[2] To deny this is to deny an obvious fact, to destroy the foundation of moral philosophy and to contradict human experience. If it is now true that a certain man will perform a certain free act at a certain future time, the act will necessarily be performed and it will not be a free act, since the man will not be free to act otherwise. If it is to be a free act, then it cannot now be either true or false that it will be performed.

To say this may appear to involve a denial of the 'law' that a proposition must be either true or false. If we are going to say of a proposition that it is not true, are we not compelled to say that it is false? Petrus Aureoli answers that a proposition receives its determination (that is, becomes true or false) from the being of that to which it refers. In the case of a contingent proposition relating to the future that to which the proposition refers has as yet no being: it cannot, therefore, determine the proposition to be either true or false. We can say of a given man, for example, that on Christmas day he will either drink wine or not drink wine, but we cannot affirm separately either that he will drink wine or that he will not drink wine. If we do, then the statement is neither true nor false: it cannot become true or false until the man actually drinks wine on Christmas day or fails to do so. And Petrus Aureoli appeals to Aristotle in the *De Interpretatione* (9) in support of his view.

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 19, 1, p. 247, a.

[2] 1 *Sent.*, 38, 3, p. 883, b C–D.

As to God's knowledge of future free acts, Petrus Aureoli insists that God's knowledge does not make a proposition concerning the future performance or non-performance of such acts either true or false. For example, God's foreknowledge of Peter's denial of his Master did not mean that the proposition 'Peter will deny his Master' was either true or false. Apropos of Christ's prophecy concerning Peter's threefold denial Petrus Aureoli observes: 'therefore Christ would not have spoken falsely, even had Peter not denied Him thrice'.[1] Why not? Because the proposition, 'you will deny Me thrice', could not be either true or false Aureoli does not deny that God knows future free acts; but he insists that, although we cannot help employing the word 'foreknowledge' (*praescientia*), there is no foreknowledge, properly speaking, in God.[2] On the other hand, he rejects the view that God knows future free acts as present. According to him, God knows such acts in a manner which abstracts from past, present and future; but we cannot express the mode of God's knowledge in human language. If the problem of the relation of future free acts to God's knowledge or 'foreknowledge' of them is raised, the problem 'cannot be solved otherwise than by saying that foreknowledge does not make a proposition concerning a future contingent event a true proposition';[3] but this does not tell us what God's 'foreknowledge' is positively. 'We must bear in mind that the difficulty of this problem arises either from the poverty of human language, which cannot express statements save by propositions referring to present, past and future time, or from the condition of our mind, which is always involved in time (*qui semper est cum continuo et tempore*).'[4] Again, 'it is very difficult to find the right way of expressing the knowledge which God has of the future. . . . No proposition in which a reference is made to the future expresses the divine foreknowledge properly: indeed, such a proposition is, strictly speaking, false. . . . But we can say that it (a contingent event) was eternally known to God by a knowledge which neither was distant from that event nor preceded it', although our understanding is unable to grasp what this knowledge is in itself.[5]

It should be noted that Petrus Aureoli is not embracing the opinion of St. Thomas Aquinas, for whom God, in virtue of His eternity, knows all things as present. He admits that God knows

[1] 1 *Sent.*, 38, 3, p. 888, a B.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 889, b A.
[3] *Ibid.*, 39, 3, p. 901, a C.
[4] *Ibid.*, a F–b A.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 902, a F–b B.

all events eternally; but he will not allow that God knows them as present; he objects to any introduction of words like 'present', 'past' and 'future' into statements concerning God's knowledge, if these statements are meant to express the actual mode of God's knowledge. What it comes to, then, is that Petrus Aureoli affirms God's knowledge of future free acts and at the same time insists that no proposition relating to such future acts is either true or false. Exactly how God knows such acts we cannot say. It is perhaps needless to add that Petrus Aureoli rejects decisively any theory according to which God knows future free acts through the determination or decision of His divine will. In his view a theory of this kind is incompatible with human freedom. Thomas Bradwardine, whose theory was directly opposed to that of Petrus Aureoli, attacked him on this point.

Petrus Aureoli's discussion of statements concerning God's knowledge which involve a reference, explicit or implicit, to time serves as an illustration of the fact that mediaeval philosophers were not so entirely blind to problems of language and meaning as might perhaps be supposed. The language used about God in the Bible forced upon Christian thinkers at a very early date a consideration of the meaning of the terms used; and we find the mediaeval theories of analogical predication worked out as a response to this problem. The precise point which I have mentioned in connection with Petrus Aureoli should not be taken as an indication that this thinker was conscious of a problem to which other mediaeval philosophers were blind. Whether one is satisfied or not with mediaeval discussions and solutions of the problem, one could not justifiably claim that the mediaevals did not even suspect the existence of the problem.

4. Henry of Harclay, who was born about 1270, studied and taught in the university of Oxford, where he became Chancellor in 1312. He died at Avignon in 1317. He has sometimes been spoken of as a precursor of Ockhamism, that is to say of 'nominalism'; but in reality the type of theory concerning universals which he defended was rejected by Ockham as unduly realist in character. It is quite true that Henry of Harclay refused to allow that there is any common nature existing, as common, in members of the same species, and he certainly held that the universal concept as such is a production of the mind; but his polemics were directed against Scotist realism, and it was the Scotist doctrine of the *natura communis* which he rejected. The nature of any given man

is his individual nature, and it is in no way 'common'. However, existent things can be similar to one another, and it is this similarity which is the objective foundation of the universal concept. One can speak of abstracting something 'common' from things, if one means that one can consider things according to their likeness to one another. But the universality of the concept, its predicability of many individuals, is superimposed by the mind: there is nothing objectively existing in a thing which can be predicated of any other thing.

On the other hand, Henry evidently thought of the universal concept as a confused concept of the individual. An individual man, for example, can be conceived distinctly as Socrates or Plato, or he may be conceived 'confusedly' not as this or that individual, but simply as 'man'. The similarity which makes this possible is, of course, objective; but the genesis of the universal concept is due to this confused impression of individuals, while the universality, formally considered, of the concept is due to the work of the mind.

5. It is clear enough that the three thinkers, some of whose philosophical ideas we have considered in this chapter, were not revolutionaries in the sense that they set themselves against the traditional philosophical currents in general. For example, they did not manifest any marked preoccupation with purely logical questions and they did not show that mistrust of metaphysics which was characteristic of Ockhamism. They were, indeed, in varying degrees critical of the doctrine of St. Thomas. But Henry of Harclay was a secular priest, not a Dominican; and in any case he showed no particular hostility towards Thomism, though he rejected St. Thomas's doctrine concerning the principle of individuation, affirmed the older theory of a plurality of formal principles in man and protested against the attempt to make a Catholic of the 'heretical' Aristotle. Again, Petrus Aureoli was a Franciscan, not a Dominican, and he was not under any obligation to accept the teaching of St. Thomas. Of these three philosophers, then, it is only Durandus whose departures from Thomism might be called 'revolutionary'; and, even in his case, his opinions can be called 'revolutionary' only in regard to his position as a Dominican and to the obligation on the members of his Order of following the teaching of St. Thomas, the Dominican Doctor. In this restricted sense he might be called a revolutionary: he was certainly independent. Hervé Nédellec, the Dominican theologian who wrote

against Henry of Ghent and James of Metz, conducted a prolonged warfare against Durandus, while John of Naples and Peter Marsh (Petrus de Palude), both Dominicans, drew up a long list of points on which Durandus had offended against the teaching of Aquinas.[1] Bernard of Lombardy, another Dominican, also attacked Durandus; but his attack was not sustained like that of Hervé Nédellec; he admired and was partly influenced by Durandus. A sharp polemic (the *Evidentiae Durandelli contra Durandum*) came from the pen of Durandellus who was identified for a time with Durandus of Aurillac but who may have been, according to J. Koch, another Dominican, Nicholas of St. Victor.[2] But, as we have seen, Durandus did not turn against or reject the thirteenth-century tradition as such: on the contrary, his interests were in metaphysics and in psychology much more than in logic, and he was influenced by speculative philosophers like Henry of Ghent.

But, though one can hardly call Durandus or Petrus Aureoli a precursor of Ockhamism, if by this one means that the shift of emphasis from metaphysics to logic, coupled with a critical attitude towards metaphysical speculation as such, is a feature of their respective philosophies, yet it is probably true that in a broad sense they helped to prepare the way for nominalism and that they can be called, as they often have been called, transition-thinkers. It is perfectly true that Durandus, as has already been mentioned, was a member of the commission which censured a number of propositions taken from Ockham's commentary on the *Sentences*; but though this fact obviously manifests his personal disapproval of Ockham's teaching it does not prove that his own philosophy had no influence at all in favouring the spread of Ockhamism. Durandus, Petrus Aureoli and Henry of Harclay all insist that only individual things exist. It is true that St. Thomas Aquinas held precisely the same; but Petrus Aureoli drew from it the conclusion that the problem of a multiplicity of individuals within the same species is no problem at all. Quite apart from the question whether there is or is not such a problem, the resolute denial that there is a problem facilitates, I think, the taking of further steps on the road to nominalism which Petrus Aureoli himself did not take. After all, Ockham regarded his theory of universals as simply the logical conclusion of the truth that only individuals exist. Again, though it can be said with truth that Durandus's assertion that universality

[1] On this subject see J. Koch: *Durandus de S. Porciano O.P.*, in *Beiträge zur Gesch. des Mittelalters*, 26, 1, pp. 199 ff., Münster i. W., 1927.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 340–69.

belongs only to the concept and Petrus Aureoli's and Henry of Harclay's assertions that the universal concept is a fabrication of the mind and that universality has *esse obiectivum* only in the concept do not constitute a rejection of moderate realism, yet the tendency shown by Petrus Aureoli and Henry of Harclay to explain the genesis of the universal concept by reference to a confused or less clear impression of the individual does facilitate a breakaway from the theory of universals maintained by Thomas Aquinas. Further, cannot one see in these thinkers a tendency to wield what is known as 'Ockham's razor'? Durandus sacrificed the Thomist cognitive *species* (that is 'species' in its psychological sense) while Petrus Aureoli often made use of the principle *pluralitas non est ponenda sine necessitate* in order to get rid of what he regarded as superfluous entities. And Ockhamism belonged, in a sense, to this general movement of simplification. In addition, it carried further that spirit of criticism which one can observe in James of Metz, Durandus and Petrus Aureoli. Thus I think that while historical research has shown that thinkers like Durandus, Petrus Aureoli and Henry of Harclay cannot be called 'nominalists', there are aspects of their thought which enable one to link them in some degree to the general movement of thought which facilitated the spread of Ockhamism. Indeed, if one accepted Ockham's estimation of himself as a true Aristotelian and if one looked on Ockhamism as the final overthrow of all vestiges of non-Aristotelian realism, one could reasonably regard the philosophers whom we have been considering as carrying a step further the general anti-realist movement which culminated in Ockhamism. But it would be necessary to add that they were still more or less moderate realists and that in the eyes of the Ockhamists they did not proceed far enough along the anti-realist path. Ockham certainly did not regard these thinkers as 'Ockhamists' before their time.

CHAPTER III

OCKHAM (1)

Life—Works—Unity of thought.

1. WILLIAM OF OCKHAM was probably born at Ockham in Surrey, though it is possible that he was simply William Ockham and that his name had nothing to do with the village. The date of his birth is uncertain. Though usually placed between 1290 and 1300, it is possible that it took place somewhat earlier.[1] He entered the Franciscan Order and did his studies at Oxford, where he began the study of theology in 1310. If this is correct, he would have lectured on the Bible from 1315 to 1317 and on the *Sentences* from 1317 to 1319. The following years, 1319–24, were spent in study, writing and Scholastic disputation. Ockham had thus completed the studies required for the *magisterium* or doctorate; but he never actually taught as *magister regens*, doubtless because early in 1324 he was cited to appear before the pope at Avignon. His title of *inceptor* (beginner) is due to this fact that he never actually taught as doctor and professor; it has nothing at all to do with the founding of a School.[2]

In 1323 John Lutterell, former Chancellor of Oxford, arrived at Avignon where he brought to the attention of the Holy See a list of 56 propositions taken from a version of Ockham's commentary on the *Sentences*. It appears that Ockham himself, who appeared at Avignon in 1324, presented another version of the commentary, in which he had made some emendations. In any case the commission appointed to deal with the matter did not accept for condemnation all the propositions complained of by Lutterell: in its list of 51 propositions it confined itself more or less to theological points, accepting 33 of Lutterell's propositions and adding others of its own. Some propositions were condemned as heretical, others, less important, as erroneous but not heretical; but the process was not brought to a final conclusion, perhaps because Ockham had in the meantime fled from Avignon. It has also been conjectured that the influence of Durandus, who was a member of the commission, may have been exerted in Ockham's favour, on one or two points at least.

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[1] As he seems to have been ordained subdeacon in February 1306, he was most probably born before 1290; according to P. Boehner, about 1280.

[2] P. Boehner follows Pelster in interpreting *inceptor* in the strict sense, that is to say, as meaning someone who had fulfilled all the requirements for the doctorate, but who had not taken up his duties as an actual professor. If this interpretation is accepted it is easy to explain how the *Venerabilis Inceptor* could sometimes be called *doctor*, and even *magister*; but the word *inceptor* should not, I think, be so explained as to imply that the man to whom it was applied was, or might be, an actual doctor. The word was used for a candidate for the doctorate, a 'formed bachelor', and though Ockham was qualified to take the doctorate, he does not appear to have actually taken it. As to his honorific title, *Venerabilis Inceptor*, the first word was applied to him as founder of 'nominalism', while the second, as we have seen, referred simply to his position at the time his studies at Oxford came to an end. Incidentally, there is no evidence whatever that he ever studied at Paris or took the doctorate there.

At the beginning of December 1327 Michael of Cesena, the Franciscan General, arrived at Avignon, whither Pope John XXII had summoned him, to answer for his attacks on the papal Constitutions concerning evangelical poverty. At the instance of the General Ockham interested himself in the poverty dispute, and in May 1328 Michael of Cesena, who had just been re-elected General of the Franciscans, fled from Avignon, taking with him Bonagratia of Bergamo, Francis of Ascoli and William of Ockham. In June the pope excommunicated the four fugitives, who joined the Emperor Ludwig of Bavaria at Pisa and went with him to Munich. Thus there began Ockham's participation in the struggle between emperor and pope, a struggle in which the emperor was also assisted by Marsilius of Padua. While some of Ockham's polemics against John XXII and his successors, Benedict XII and Clement VI, concerned theological matters, the chief point of the whole dispute was, of course, the right relation of the secular to the ecclesiastical power, and to this point we shall return.

On October 11th, 1347, Ludwig of Bavaria, Ockham's protector, suddenly died, and Ockham took steps to reconcile himself with the Church. It is not necessary to suppose that his motives were merely prudential. A formula of submission was prepared but it is not known if Ockham actually signed it or whether the reconciliation was ever formally effected. Ockham died at Munich in 1349, apparently of the Black Death.

2. The commentary on the first book of the *Sentences* was written by Ockham himself, and the first edition of this *Ordinatio*[1] seems to have been composed between 1318 and 1323. The commentaries on the other three books of the *Sentences* are *reportationes*, though they also belong to an early period. Boehner

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[1] The word *ordinatio* was used to denote the text or the part of a text which a mediaeval lecturer actually wrote or dictated with a view to publication.

thinks that they were composed before the *Ordinatio*. The *Expositio in librum Porphyrii*, the *Expositio in librum Praedicamentorum*, the *Expositio in duos libros Elenchorum* and the *Expositio in duos libros Perihermenias* appear to have been composed while Ockham was working on his commentary on the *Sentences* and to have antedated the first *Ordinatio* though not the *Reportatio*. The text of these logical works, minus the *In libros Elenchorum*, in the 1496 Bologna edition is entitled *Expositio aurea super artem veterem*. The *Expositio super octo libros Physicorum* was composed after the commentary on the *Sentences* and before the *Summa totius logicae*, which was itself composed before 1329. As to the *Compendium logicae*, its authenticity has been questioned.

Ockham also composed *Summulae in libros Physicorum* (or *Philosophia naturalis*) and *Quaestiones in libros Physicorum*. As to the *Tractatus de successivis*, this is a compilation made by another hand from an authentic work of Ockham, namely the *Expositio super libros Physicorum*. Boehner makes it clear that it can be used as a source for Ockham's doctrine. 'Almost every line was written by Ockham, and in this sense the *Tractatus de successivis* is authentic.'[1] The authenticity of the *Quaestiones diversae: De relatione, de puncto, de negatione*, is also doubtful.

Theological works by Ockham include the *Quodlibeta VII*, the *Tractatus de Sacramento Altaris* or *De Corpore Christi* (which seems to contain two distinct treatises) and the *Tractatus de praedestinatione et de praescientia Dei et de futuris contingentibus*. The authenticity of the *Centiloquium theologicum* or *summa de conclusionibus theologicis* has not been proved. On the other hand, the arguments adduced to prove that the work is unauthentic do not appear to be conclusive.[2] To Ockham's Munich period belong among other works the *Opus nonaginta dierum*, the *Compendium errorum Ioannis papae XXII*, the *Octo quaestiones de potestate papae*, the *An princeps pro suo succursu, scilicet guerrae, possit recipere bona ecclesiarum, etiam invito papa*, the *Consultatio de causa matrimoniali* and the *Dialogus inter magistrum et discipulum de imperatorum et pontificum potestate*. The last-named work is Ockham's chief political publication. It consists of three parts, composed at different times. But it has to be used with care, as many opinions for which Ockham does not make himself responsible are canvassed in it.

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[1] *Tractatus de successivis*, edit. Boehner, p. 29.

[2] See E. Iserloh: *Um die Echtheit des Centiloquium*; *Gregorianum*, 30 (1949), 78–103.

3. Ockham possessed an extensive knowledge of the work of the great Scholastics who had preceded him and a remarkable acquaintance with Aristotle. But even though we can discern anticipations in other philosophers of certain theses of Ockham, it would appear that his originality is incontestable. Though the philosophy of Scotus gave rise to certain of Ockham's problems and though certain of Scotus's views and tendencies were developed by Ockham, the latter constantly attacked the system of Scotus, particularly his realism; so that Ockhamism was a strong reaction to, rather than a development of, Scotism. No doubt Ockham was influenced by certain theories of Durandus (those on relations, for example) and Petrus Aureoli; but the extent of such influence, such as it was, does little to impair Ockham's fundamental originality. There is no adequate reason for challenging his reputation as the fountainhead of the terminist or nominalist movement. Nor is there, I think, any cogent reason for representing Ockham as a mere Aristotelian (or, if preferred, as a mere would-be Aristotelian). He certainly tried to overthrow Scotist realism with the help of the Aristotelian logic and theory of knowledge, and further he regarded all realism as a perversion of true Aristotelianism; but he also endeavoured to rectify the theories of Aristotle which excluded any admission of the liberty and omnipotence of God. Ockham was not an 'original' thinker in the sense of one who invented novelties for the sake of novelty, though his reputation as a destructive critic might lead one to suppose that he was; but he was an original thinker in the sense that he thought out his problems for himself and developed his solutions thoroughly and systematically.

The question has been raised and discussed[1] whether or not Ockham's literary career must be regarded as falling into two more or less unconnected parts and, if so, whether this indicates a dichotomy in his character and interests. For it might seem that there is little connection between Ockham's purely logical and philosophical activities at Oxford and his polemical activities at Munich. It might appear that there is a radical discrepancy between Ockham the cold logician and academic philosopher and Ockham the impassioned political and ecclesiastical controversialist. But such a supposition is unnecessary. Ockham was an independent, bold and vigorous thinker, who showed a marked ability for criticism; he held certain clear convictions and principles which he was ready to apply courageously, systematically and logically; and the difference in tone between his philosophical and polemical works is due rather to a difference in the field of application of his principles than to any unreconciled contradiction in the character of the man. No doubt his personal history and circumstances had emotional repercussions which manifested themselves in his polemical writings; but the emotional overtones of these writings cannot conceal the fact that they are the work of the same vigorous, critical and logical mind which composed the commentary on the *Sentences*. His career falls into two phases, and in the second phase a side of Ockham manifests itself which had no occasion to show itself in the same way during the first phase; but it seems to me an exaggeration to imply that Ockham the logician and Ockham the politician were almost different personalities. It is rather that the same personality and the same original mind manifested itself in different ways according to the different circumstances of Ockham's life and the different problems with which he was faced. One would not expect the exile of Munich, his Oxford career cut short and the ban of excommunication on his head, to have treated the problems of Church and State in exactly the same way that he treated the problem of universals at Oxford; but on the other hand one would not expect the exiled philosopher to lose sight of logic and principle and to become simply a polemical journalist. If one knew sufficient of Ockham's character and temperament, the apparent discrepancies between his activities in the two phases would, I think, seem quite natural. The trouble is that we really know very little of Ockham the man. This fact prevents one from making any categorical assertion that he was not a kind of split or double personality; but it seems more sensible to attempt to explain the different aspects of his literary activity on the supposition that he was not a split personality. If this can be done, then we can apply Ockham's own razor to the contrary hypothesis.

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[1] See, for example, Georges de Lagarde (cf. *Bibliog.*), IV, pp. 63–6; V, pp. 7 ff.

As we shall see, there are various elements or strands in Ockham's thought. There are the 'empiricist' element, the rationalist and logical elements, and the theological element. It does not seem to me very easy to synthesize all the elements of his thought; but perhaps it might be as well to remark immediately that one of Ockham's main preoccupations as a philosopher was to purge

Christian theology and philosophy of all traces of Greek necessitarianism, particularly of the theory of essences, which in his opinion endangered the Christian doctrines of the divine liberty and omnipotence. His activity as a logician and his attack on all forms of realism in regard to universals can thus be looked on as subordinate in a sense to his preoccupations as a Christian theologian. This is a point to bear in mind. Ockham was a Franciscan and a theologian: he should not be interpreted as though he were a modern radical empiricist.

CHAPTER IV

OCKHAM (2)

Ockham and the metaphysic of essences—Peter of Spain and the terminist logic—Ockham's logic and theory of universals—Real and rational science—Necessary truths and demonstration.

1. At the end of the last chapter I mentioned Ockham's preoccupation as a theologian with the Christian doctrines of the divine omnipotence and liberty. He thought that these doctrines could not be safeguarded without eliminating the metaphysic of essences which had been introduced into Christian theology and philosophy from Greek sources. In the philosophy of St. Augustine and in the philosophies of the leading thirteenth-century thinkers the theory of divine ideas had played an important part. Plato had postulated eternal forms or 'ideas', which he most probably regarded as distinct from God but which served as models or patterns according to which God formed the world in its intelligible structure; and later Greek philosophers of the Platonic tradition located these exemplary forms in the divine mind. Christian philosophers proceeded to utilize and adapt this theory in their explanation of the free creation of the world by God. Creation considered as a free and intelligent act on God's part, postulates in God an intellectual pattern or model, as it were, of creation. The theory was, of course, constantly refined; and St. Thomas took pains to show that the ideas in God are not really distinct from the divine essence. We cannot help using language which implies that they are distinct; but actually they are ontologically identical with the divine essence, being simply the divine essence known by God as imitable externally (that is, by creatures) in different ways. This doctrine was the common doctrine in the Middle Ages up to and including the thirteenth century, being considered necessary in order to explain creation and to distinguish it from a purely spontaneous production. Plato had simply postulated universal subsistent forms; but though the Christian thinkers, with their belief in divine providence extending to individuals, admitted ideas of individuals in God, they retained the originally Platonic notion of universal ideas. God creates man, for example, according to His universal idea of human nature. From

this it follows that the natural moral law is not something purely arbitrary, capriciously determined by the divine will: given the idea of human nature, the idea of the natural moral law follows.

Correlative to the theory of universal ideas in God is the acceptance of some form of realism in the explanation of our own universal ideas. Indeed, the former would never have been asserted without the latter; for if a class-word like 'man' were devoid of any objective reference and if there were no such thing as human nature, there would be no reason for ascribing to God a universal idea of man, that is, an idea of human nature. In the second volume of this work an account has been given of the course of the controversy concerning universals in the Middle Ages up to the time of Aquinas; and there it was shown how the early mediaeval form of ultra-realism was finally refuted by Abelard. That only individuals exist came to be the accepted belief. At the same time the moderate realists, like Aquinas, certainly believed in the objectivity of real species and natures. If *X* and *Y* are two men, for example, they do not possess the same individual nature; but none the less each possesses his own human nature or essence, and the two natures are similar, each nature being, as it were, a finite imitation of the divine idea of human nature. Duns Scotus proceeded further in the realist direction by finding a formal objective distinction between the human nature of *X* and the *X*-ness of *X* and between the human nature of *Y* and the *Y*-ness of *Y*. Yet, though he spoke of a 'common nature', he did not mean that the actual nature of *X* is individually the same as the actual nature of *Y*.

William of Ockham attacked the first part of the metaphysic of essences. He was, indeed, willing to retain something of the language of the theory of divine ideas, doubtless largely out of respect for St. Augustine and tradition; but he emptied the theory of its former content. He thought of the theory as implying a limitation of the divine freedom and omnipotence, as though God would be governed, as it were, and limited in His creative act by the eternal ideas or essences. Moreover, as we shall see later, he thought that the traditional connection of the moral law with the theory of divine ideas constituted an affront to the divine liberty: the moral law depends ultimately, according to Ockham, on the divine will and choice. In other words, for Ockham there is on the one hand God, free and omnipotent, and on the other hand creatures, utterly contingent and dependent. True, all orthodox Christian thinkers of the Middle Ages held the same; but the point is that according to Ockham the metaphysic of essences was a non-Christian invention which had no place in Christian theology and philosophy. As to the other part of the metaphysic of essences Ockham resolutely attacked all forms of 'realism', especially that of Scotus, and he employed the terminist logic in his attack; but, as we shall see, his view of universals was not quite so revolutionary as is sometimes supposed.

Mention will be made later of Ockham's answer to the question, in what sense is it legitimate to speak of ideas in God; at present I propose to outline his logical theory and his discussion of the problem of universals. It must be remembered, however, that Ockham was a gifted and acute logician with a love for simplicity and clarity. What I have been saying about his theological preoccupations should not be taken to mean that his logical inquiries were simply 'apologetic': I was not trying to suggest that Ockham's logic can be waved aside as informed by interested and extrinsic motives. It is rather that in view of some of the pictures which have been given of Ockham it is as well to bear in mind the fact that he *was* a theologian and that he did have theological preoccupations: remembrance of this fact enables one to form a more unified view of his intellectual activity than is otherwise possible.

2. I have said that Ockham 'employed the terminist logic'. This was not a tendentious statement, but it was meant to indicate that Ockham was not the original inventor of the terminist logic. And I wish to make some brief remarks about its development before going on to outline Ockham's own logical theories.

In the thirteenth century there naturally appeared a variety of commentaries on the Aristotelian logic and of logical handbooks and treatises. Among English authors may be mentioned William of Shyreswood (d. 1249), who composed *Introductiones ad logicam*, and among French authors Lambert of Auxerre and Nicholas of Paris. But the most popular and influential work on logic was the *Summulae logicales* of Peter of Spain, a native of Lisbon, who taught at Paris and later became Pope John XXI. He died in 1277. At the beginning of this work we read that 'dialectic is the art of arts and the science of sciences' which opens the way to the knowledge of the principles of all methods.[1] A similar statement of the fundamental importance of dialectic was made by Lambert of Auxerre. Peter of Spain goes on to say that dialectic is carried on only by means of language, and that language involves the use of words. One must begin, then, by considering the word, first as a physical entity, secondly as a significant term. This emphasis on language was characteristic of the logicians and grammarians of the faculty of arts.

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[1] Ed. Bochenski, p. 1.

When Peter of Spain emphasized the importance of dialectic, he meant by 'dialectic' the art of probable reasoning; and in view of the fact that some other thirteenth-century logicians shared this tendency to concentrate on probable reasoning as distinct from demonstrative science on the one hand and sophistical reasoning on the other, it is tempting to see in their works the source of the fourteenth-century emphasis on probable arguments. No doubt there may have been a connection; but one must remember that a thinker like Peter of Spain did not abandon the idea that metaphysical arguments can give certainty. In other words, Ockham was doubtless influenced by the emphasis placed by the preceding logicians on dialectic or syllogistic reasoning leading to probable conclusions; but that does not mean that one can father on his predecessors his own tendency to look on arguments in philosophy, as distinct from logic, as probable rather than demonstrative arguments.

A number of the treatises in Peter of Spain's *Summulae logicales* deal with the Aristotelian logic; but others deal with the 'modern logic' or logic of terms. Thus in the treatise headed *De suppositionibus* he distinguishes the *significatio* from the *suppositio* of terms. The former function of a term consists in the relation of a sign to the thing signified. Thus in the English language the term 'man' is a sign, while in the French language the term 'homme' has the same sign-function. But in the sentence 'the man is running' the term 'man', which already possesses its *significatio*, acquires the function of standing for (*supponere pro*) a definite man, whereas in the sentence 'man dies' it stands for all men. One must thus, says Peter, distinguish between *significatio* and *suppositio*, inasmuch as the latter presupposes the former.

Now, this logic of terms, with its doctrine of signs and of 'standing-for', undoubtedly influenced William of Ockham, who took from his predecessors much of what one might call his technical equipment. But it does not follow, of course, that Ockham did not develop the terminist logic very considerably. Nor does it follow that Ockham's philosophical views and the use to which he put the terminist logic were borrowed from a thinker like Peter of Spain. On the contrary, Peter was a conservative in philosophy and was very far from showing any tendency to anticipate Ockham's 'nominalism'. To find the antecedents of the terminist logic in the thirteenth century is not the same thing as attempting to push back the whole Ockhamist philosophy into that century: such an attempt would be futile.

The theory of supposition was, however, only one of the features of fourteenth-century logic. I have given it special mention here because of the use made of it by Ockham in his discussion of the problem of universals. But in any history of mediaeval logic prominence would have to be given to the theory of consequences or of the inferential operations between propositions. In his *Summa Logicae*[1] Ockham deals with this subject after treating in turn of terms, propositions and syllogisms. But in the *De puritate artis logicae*[2] of Walter Burleigh the theory of consequences is given great prominence, and the author's remarks on syllogistics form a kind of appendix to it. Again, Albert of Saxony in his *Perutilis Logica* treats syllogistics as part of the general theory of consequences, though he follows Ockham in starting his treatise with a consideration of terms. The importance of this development of the theory of consequences in the fourteenth century is the witness it bears to the growing conception of logic as formalistic in character. For this feature of the later mediaeval logic reveals an affinity, which was for long disregarded or even unsuspected, between mediaeval and modern logic. Research into the history of mediaeval logic has not indeed yet reached the point at which an adequate account of the subject becomes possible. But further lines for reflection and research are indicated in Father Boehner's little work, *Mediaeval Logic*, which is mentioned in the Bibliography. And the reader is referred to this work for further information.

3. I turn now to Ockham's logic, with special attention to his attack on all realist theories of universals. What has been said in the preceding section will suffice to show that the ascription to Ockham of various logical words and notions should not necessarily be taken to imply that he invented them.

(i) There are various kinds of terms, traditionally distinguished from one another. For example, some terms refer directly to a reality and have a meaning even when they stand by themselves. These terms ('butter', for instance) are called categorematic terms. Other terms, however, like 'no' and 'every' acquire a definite reference only when standing in relation to categorematic terms, as in the phrases 'no man' and 'every house'. These are called syncategorematic terms. Again, some terms are absolute, in the sense that they signify a thing without reference to any other thing, while other terms are called connotative terms, because, like 'son' or 'father', they signify an object considered only in relation to some other thing.

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[1] Edited by P. Boehner, O.F.M. The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, N.Y. and E. Nauwelaerts, Louvain. *Pars prima*, 1951.

[2] Edited by P. Boehner, O.F.M. *Ibid.*, 1951.

(ii) If we consider the word 'man', we shall recognize that it is a conventional sign: it signifies something or has a meaning, but that this particular word has that particular meaning or exercises that particular sign-function is a matter of convention. This is easily seen to be the case if we bear in mind the fact that in other languages 'homme' and 'homo' are used with the same meaning. Now, the grammarian can reason about words as words, of course; but the real material of our reasoning is not the conventional but the natural sign. The natural sign is the concept. Whether we are English and use the word 'man' or whether we are French and use the word 'homme', the concept or logical significance of the term is the same. The words are different, but their meaning is the same. Ockham distinguished, therefore, both the spoken word (*terminus prolatus*) and the written word (*terminus scriptus*) from the concept (*terminus conceptus* or *intentio animae*), that is, the term considered according to its meaning or logical significance.

Ockham called the concept or *terminus conceptus* a 'natural sign' because he thought that the direct apprehension of anything causes naturally in the human mind a concept of that thing. Both brutes and men utter some sounds as a natural reaction to a stimulus; and these sounds are natural signs. But 'brutes and men utter sounds of this kind only to signify some feelings or some accidents present in themselves', whereas the intellect 'can elicit qualities to signify any sort of thing naturally'.[1] Perceiving a cow results in the formation of the same idea or 'natural sign' (*terminus conceptus*) in the mind of the Englishman and of the Frenchman though the former will express this concept in word or writing by means of one conventional sign, 'cow', while the latter will express it by means of another conventional sign, 'vache'. This treatment of signs was an improvement on that given by

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[1] 1 *Sent.*, 2, 8, Q.

Peter of Spain, who does not seem to give sufficient explicit recognition to the identity of logical significance which may attach to corresponding words in different languages.

To anticipate for a moment, one may point out that when Ockham is called a 'nominalist', it is not meant, or should not be meant, that he ascribed universality to words considered precisely as *termini prolati* or *scripti*, that is, to terms considered as conventional signs: it was the natural sign, the *terminus conceptus*, of which he was thinking.

(iii) Terms are elements of propositions, the term standing to the proposition as *incomplexum* to *complexum*; and it is only in the proposition that a term acquires the function of 'standing for' (*suppositio*). For example, in the statement 'the man is running' the term 'man' stands for a precise individual. This is an instance of *suppositio personalis*. But in the statement 'man is a species' the term 'man' stands for all men. This is *suppositio simplex*. Finally, in the statement '*Man* is a noun' one is speaking of the word itself. This is *suppositio materialis*. Taken in itself the term 'man' is capable of exercising any of these functions; but it is only in a proposition that it actually acquires a determinate type of the functions in question. *Suppositio*, then, is 'a property belonging to a term, but only in a proposition'.[1]

(iv) In the statement 'man is mortal' the term 'man', which is, as we have seen, a sign, stands for things, that is, men, which are not themselves signs. It is, therefore, a term of 'first intention' (*primae intentionis*). But in the statement 'species are subdivisions of genera' the term 'species' does not stand immediately for things which are not themselves signs: it stands for class-names, like 'man', 'horse', 'dog', which are themselves signs. The term 'species' is thus a term of second intention (*secundae intentionis*). In other words, terms of second intention stand for terms of first intention and are predicated of them, as when it is said that 'man' and 'horse' are species.

In a broad sense of 'first intention' syncategorematic terms may be called first intentions. Taken in themselves, they do not signify things; but when conjoined with other terms they make those other terms stand for things in a determinate manner. For example, the term 'every' cannot by itself stand for definite things; but as qualifying the term 'man' in the sentence 'every man is mortal' it makes the term 'man' stand for a definite set of things.

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[1] *Summa totius logicae*, I, 63.

In the strict sense of 'first intention', however, a term of first intention is an 'extreme term' in a proposition, one, that is, which stands for a thing which is not a sign or for things which are not signs. In the sentence 'arsenic is poisonous', the term 'arsenic' is both an 'extreme term' and one which stands in the proposition for something which is not itself a sign. A term of second intention, strictly understood, will thus be a term which naturally signifies first intentions and which can stand for them in a proposition. 'Genus', 'species' and 'difference' are examples of terms of second intention.[1]

(v) Ockham's answer to the problem of universals has been already indicated in effect: universals are terms (*termini concepti*) which signify individual things and which stand for them in propositions. Only individual things exist; and by the very fact that a thing exists it is individual. There are not and cannot be existent universals. To assert the extramental existence of universals is to commit the folly of asserting a contradiction; for if the universal exists, it must be individual. And that there is no common reality existing at the same time in two members of a species can be shown in several ways. For example, if God were to create a man out of nothing, this would not affect any other man, as far as his essence is concerned. Again, one individual thing can be annihilated without the annihilation or destruction of another individual thing. 'One man can be annihilated by God without any other man being annihilated or destroyed. Therefore there is not anything common to both, because (if there were) it would be annihilated, and consequently no other man would retain his essential nature.'[2] As to the opinion of Scotus that there is a formal distinction between the common nature and the individuality, it is true that he 'excelled others in subtlety of judgment';[3] but if the alleged distinction is an objective and not purely mental distinction, it must be real. The opinion of Scotus is thus subject to the same difficulties which were encountered by older theories of realism.

Whether the universal concept is a quality distinct from the act of the intellect or whether it is that act itself is a question of but secondary importance: the important point is that 'no universal is anything existing in any way outside the soul; but everything which is predicable of many things is of its nature in the mind, whether subjectively or objectively; and no universal belongs to the essence or quiddity of any substance whatever'.[1] Ockham does not appear to have attached very great weight to the question whether the universal concept is an accident distinct from the intellect as such or whether it is simply the intellect itself in its activity: he was more concerned with the analysis of the meaning of terms and propositions than with psychological questions. But it is fairly clear that he did not think that the universal has any existence in the soul except as an act of the understanding. The existence of the universal consists in an act of the understanding and it exists only as such. It owes its existence simply to the intellect: there is no universal reality corresponding to the concept. It is not, however, a fiction in the sense that it does not stand for anything real: it stands for individual real things, though it does not stand for any universal thing. It is, in short, a way of conceiving or knowing individual things.

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[1] *Quodlibet*, 4, 19. [2] 1 *Sent.*, 2, 4, D. [3] *Ibid.*, 2, 6, B.

(vi) Ockham may sometimes imply that the universal is a confused or indistinct image of distinct individual things; but he was not concerned to identify the universal concept with the image or phantasm. His main point was always that there is no need to postulate any factors other than the mind and individual things in order to explain the universal. The universal concept arises simply because there are varying degrees of similarity between individual things. Socrates and Plato are more similar to one another than either is to an ass; and this fact of experience is reflected in the formation of the specific concept of man. But we have to be careful of our way of speaking. We ought not to say that 'Plato and Socrates agree (share) in something or in some things, but that they agree (are alike) by some things, that is, by themselves and that Socrates agrees with (*convenit cum*) Plato, not in something, but by something, namely himself'.[2] In other words, there is no nature common to Socrates and Plato, *in* which they come together or share or agree; but the nature which is Socrates and the nature which is Plato are alike. The foundation of generic concepts can be explained in a similar manner.

(vii) The question might well be raised how this conceptualism differs from the position of St. Thomas. After all, when Ockham says that the notion that there are universal things corresponding to universal terms is absurd and destructive of the whole philosophy of Aristotle and of all science,[1] St. Thomas would agree. And it was certainly St. Thomas's opinion that while the natures of men, for example, are alike there is no common nature considered as a thing in which all individual men have a share. But it must be remembered that St. Thomas gave a metaphysical explanation of the similarity of natures; for he held that God creates things belonging to the same species, things, that is, with similar natures, according to an idea of human nature in the divine mind. Ockham, however, discarded this theory of divine ideas. The consequence was that for him the similarities which give rise to universal concepts are simply similarities, so to speak, of fact: there is no metaphysical reason for these similarities except the divine choice, which is not dependent on any divine ideas. In other words, although St. Thomas and William of Ockham were fundamentally at one in denying that there is any *universale in re*, the former combined his rejection of ultra-realism with the Augustinian doctrine of the *universale ante rem*, whereas the latter did not.[2]

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[1] 1 *Sent.*, 2, 8, Q.

[2] *Ibid.*, 2, 6, E E. *Respondeo quod conveniunt (Socrates et Plato) aliquibus, quia seipsis, et quod Socrates convenit cum Platone non in aliquo sed aliquo, quia seipso.*

Another, though less important, difference concerns the way of speaking about universal concepts. Ockham, as we have seen, held that the universal concept is an act of the understanding. 'I say that the first intention as well as the second intention is truly an act of the understanding, for whatever is saved by the fiction can be saved by the act.'[3] Ockham appears to be referring to the theory of Petrus Aureoli, according to which the concept, which is the object appearing to the mind, is a 'fiction'. Ockham prefers to say that the concept is simply the act of the understanding. 'The first intention is an act of the understanding signifying things which are not signs. The second intention is the act signifying first intentions.'[4] And Ockham proceeds to say that both first and second intentions are truly real entities, and that they are truly qualities subjectively existent in the soul. That they are real entities, if they are acts of the understanding, is clear; but it seems rather odd perhaps to find Ockham calling them qualities. However, if his various utterances are to be interpreted as consistent with one another, he cannot be supposed to mean that universal concepts are qualities really distinct from the acts of understanding. 'Everything which is explained through positing something distinct from the act of understanding can be explained without positing such a distinct thing.'[5] In other words, Ockham is content to talk simply about the act of the understanding; and he applies the principle of economy to get rid of the apparatus of abstracting *species intelligibiles*. But though there is certainly a difference between the theory of Aquinas and that of Ockham in this respect, it must be remembered that Aquinas insisted strongly that the *species intelligibilis* is not the object of knowledge: it is *id quo intelligitur* and not *id quod intelligitur*.[1]

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[1] *Expositio aurea*, 3, 2, 90, R.

[2] See vol. II, p. 154.

[3] *Quodlibet*, 4, 19.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Summa totius logicae*, 1, 12.

4. We are now in a position to consider briefly Ockham's theory of science. He divides science into two main types, real science and rational science. The former (*scientia realis*) is concerned with real things, in a sense to be discussed presently, while the latter (*scientia rationalis*) is concerned with terms which do not stand immediately for real things. Thus logic, which deals with terms of second intention, like 'species' and 'genus', is a rational science. It is important to maintain the distinction between these two types of science: otherwise concepts or terms will be confused with things. For example, if one does not realize that Aristotle's intention in the *Categories* was to treat of words and concepts and not of things, one will interpret him in a sense quite foreign to his thought. Logic is concerned with terms of second intention, which cannot exist *sine ratione*, that is, without the mind's activity; it deals, therefore, with mental 'fabrications'. I said earlier that Ockham did not much like speaking of universal concepts as fictions or fictive entities; but the point I then had in mind was that Ockham objected to the implication that what we know by means of a universal concept is a fiction and not a real thing. He was quite ready to speak of terms of second intention, which enter into the propositions of logic, as 'fabrications', because these terms do not refer directly to real things. But logic, which is rational science, presupposes real science; for terms of second intention presuppose terms of first intention.

Real science is concerned with things, that is, with individual things. But Ockham also says that 'real science is not always of things as the objects which are immediately known'.[2] This might seem to be a contradiction; but Ockham proceeds to explain that any science, whether real or rational, is only of propositions.[3] In other words, when he says that real science is concerned with things, Ockham does not mean to deny the Aristotelian doctrine that science is of the universal; but he is determined to hold to the other Aristotelian doctrine that it is only individuals which exist.

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[1] Cf. *S.T.*, 1, 76, 2, *ad* 4; 1, 85, 2.

[2] 1 *Sent.*, 2, 4, M.

[3] *Ibid.*

Real science, then, is concerned with universal propositions; and he gives as examples of such propositions 'man is capable of laughter' and 'every man is capable of training'; but the universal terms stand for individual things, and not for universal realities existing extramentally. If Ockham says, then, that real science is concerned with individual things by means of terms (*mediantibus terminis*), he does not mean that real science is unconnected with actual existents which are individual things. Science is concerned with the truth or falsity of propositions; but to say that a proposition of real science is true is to say that it is verified in all those individual things of which the terms of the proposition are the natural signs. The difference between real and rational science consists in this, that 'the parts, that is, the terms of the propositions known by real science stand for things, which is not the case with the terms of propositions known by rational science, for these terms stand for other terms'.[1]

5. Ockham's insistence on individual things as the sole existents does not mean, therefore, that he rejects science considered as a knowledge of universal propositions. Nor does he reject the Aristotelian ideas of indemonstrable principles and of demonstration. As regards the former, a principle may be indemonstrable in the sense that the mind cannot but assent to the proposition once it grasps the meaning of the terms, or it may be indemonstrable in the sense that it is known evidently only by experience. 'Certain first principles are not known through themselves (*per se nota* or analytic) but are known only through experience as in the case of the proposition "all heat is calefactive".'[2] As to demonstration, Ockham accepts the Aristotelian definition of demonstration as a syllogism which produces knowledge; but he proceeds to analyse the various meanings of 'know' (*scire*). It may mean the evident understanding of truth; and in this sense even contingent facts, such as the fact that I am now sitting, can be known. Or it may mean the evident understanding of necessary, as distinct from contingent, truths. Or, thirdly, it may mean 'the understanding of one necessary truth through the evident understanding of two necessary truths; . . . and it is in this sense that "knowing" is understood in the aforementioned definition'.[3]

This insistence on necessary truths must not be taken to mean that for Ockham there can be no scientific knowledge of contingent things. He did not think, indeed, that an affirmative and assertoric proposition concerning contingent things and referring to present time (that is, in relation to the speaker) can be a necessary truth; but he held that affirmative and assertoric propositions which include terms standing for contingent things can be necessary, if they are, or can be considered as equivalent to, negative or hypothetical propositions concerning possibility.[1] In other words, Ockham regarded necessary propositions including terms standing for contingent things as equivalent to hypothetical propositions, in the sense that they are true of each thing for which the subject-terms stands *at the time of the existence of that thing*. Thus the proposition, 'every *X* is *Y*' (where *X* stands for contingent things and *Y* for possessing a property) is necessary if considered as equivalent to 'if there is an *X*, it is *Y*' or 'if it is true to say of anything that it is an *X*, it is also true to say of it that it is *Y*'.

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[1] 1 *Sent.*, 2, 4, O.

[2] *Summa totius logicae*, 3, 2.

[3] *Ibid.*

Demonstration for Ockham is demonstration of the attributes of a subject, not of the existence of the subject. We cannot demonstrate, for example, that a certain kind of herb exists; but we may be able to demonstrate the proposition that it has a certain property. True, we can know by experience that it has this property, but if we merely know the fact because we have experienced it, we do not know the 'reason' of the fact. If, however, we can show from the nature of the herb (knowledge of which presupposes experience, of course) that it necessarily possesses this property, we have demonstrative knowledge. To this sort of knowledge Ockham attached considerable importance: he was very far from being a despiser of the syllogism. 'The syllogistic form holds equally in every field.'[2] Ockham did not mean by this, of course, that all true propositions can be proved syllogistically; but he considered that in all matters where scientific knowledge is obtainable syllogistic reasoning holds good. In other words, he adhered to the Aristotelian idea of demonstrative 'science'. In view of the fact that Ockham is not infrequently called an 'empiricist' it is as well to bear in mind the 'rationalist' side of his philosophy. When he said that science is concerned with propositions he did not mean that science is entirely divorced from reality or that demonstration is incapable of telling us anything about things.

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[1] *Summa totius logicae*, 3, 2.

[2] 1 *Sent.*, 2, 6, D.

CHAPTER V

OCKHAM (3)

Intuitive knowledge—God's power to cause intuitive 'knowledge' of a non-existent object—Contingency of the world-order—Relations—Causality—Motion and time—Conclusion.

1. SCIENCE, according to Ockham, is concerned with universal propositions, and syllogistic demonstration is the mode of reasoning proper to science in the strict sense: an assent in science is an assent to the truth of a proposition. But this does not mean that for Ockham scientific knowledge is *a priori* in the sense of being a development of innate principles or ideas. On the contrary, intuitive knowledge is primary and fundamental. If we consider, for example, the proposition that the whole is greater than the part, we shall recognize that the mind assents to the truth of the proposition as soon as it apprehends the meaning of the terms; but this does not mean that the principle is innate. Without experience the proposition would not be enunciated; nor should we apprehend the meaning of the terms. Again, in a case where it is possible to demonstrate that an attribute belongs to a subject it is by experience or intuitive knowledge that we know that there is such a subject. Demonstration of a property of man, for example, presupposes an intuitive knowledge of men. 'Nothing can be known naturally in itself unless it is known intuitively.'[1] Ockham is here arguing that we cannot have a natural knowledge of the divine essence as it is in itself, because we have no natural intuition of God; but the principle is a general one. All knowledge is based on experience.

What is meant by intuitive knowledge? 'Intuitive knowledge (*notitia intuitiva*) of a thing is knowledge of such a kind that one can know by means of it whether a thing is or not; and if it is, the intellect immediately judges that the thing exists and concludes evidently that it exists, unless perchance it is hindered on account of some imperfection in that knowledge.'[2] Intuitive knowledge is thus the immediate apprehension of a thing as existent, enabling the mind to form a contingent proposition concerning the existence of that thing. But intuitive knowledge is also knowledge of such

[1] 1 *Sent.*, 3, 2, F.

[2] *Prol. Sent.*, 1, 2.

a kind that 'when some things are known, of which the one inheres in the other or is locally distant from the other or is related in some other way to the other, the mind straightway knows, by virtue of that simple apprehension of those things, whether the thing inheres or does not inhere, whether it is distant or not, and so with other contingent truths. . . . For example, if Socrates is really white, that apprehension of Socrates and whiteness by means of which it can be known evidently that Socrates is white is intuitive knowledge. And, in general, every simple apprehension of a term or of terms, that is, of a thing or things, by means of which some contingent truths, especially concerning the present, can be known, is intuitive knowledge.'[1] Intuitive knowledge is thus caused by the immediate apprehension of existent things. The concept of an individual thing is the natural expression in the mind of the apprehension of that thing, provided that one does not interpret the concept as a *medium quo* of knowledge. 'I say that in no intuitive apprehension, whether sensitive or intellectual, is the thing placed in any state of being which is a medium between the thing and the act of knowing. That is, I say that the thing itself is known immediately without any medium between itself and the act by which it is seen or apprehended.'[2] In other words, intuition is immediate apprehension of a thing or of things leading naturally to the judgment that the thing exists or to some other contingent proposition about it, such as 'it is white'. The guarantee of such judgments is simply evidence, the evident character of the intuition, together with the natural character of the process leading to the judgment. 'I say, therefore, that intuitive knowledge is proper individual knowledge . . . because it is naturally caused by one thing and not by another, nor can it be caused by another thing.'[3]

It is clear that Ockham is not speaking simply of sensation: he is speaking of an intellectual intuition of an individual thing, which is caused by that thing and not by anything else. Moreover, intuition for him is not confined to intuition of sensible or material things. He expressly says that we know our own acts intuitively, this intuition leading to the formation of propositions like 'there is an understanding' and 'there is a will'.[4] 'Aristotle says that nothing of those things which are external is understood, unless first it falls under sense; and those things are only sensibles according to him.

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[1] *Prol. Sent.*, 1, 2.

[2] 1 *Sent.*, 27, 3, K.

[3] *Quodlibet*, 1, 13.

[4] *Ibid.*, 1, 14.

And this authority is true in regard to those things; but in regard to spirits it is not.'[1] As intuitive knowledge precedes abstractive knowledge, according to Ockham, we can say, using a later language, that for him sense-perception and introspection are the two sources of all our natural knowledge concerning existent reality. In this sense one can call him an 'empiricist'; but on this point he is no more of an 'empiricist' than any other mediaeval philosopher who disbelieved in innate ideas and in purely *a priori* knowledge of existent reality.

2. We have seen that for Ockham intuitive knowledge of a thing is caused by that thing and not by any other thing. In other words, intuition, as immediate apprehension of the individual existent, carries its own guarantee. But, as is well known, he maintained that God could cause in us the intuition of a thing which was not really there. 'Intuitive knowledge cannot be caused naturally unless the object is present at the right distance; but it could be caused supernaturally.'[2] 'If you say that it (intuition) can be caused by God alone, that is true.'[3] 'There can be by the power of God intuitive knowledge (*cognitio intuitiva*) concerning a non-existent object.'[4] Hence among the censured propositions of Ockham's we find one to the effect that 'intuitive knowledge in itself and necessarily is not more concerned with an existent than with a non-existent thing, nor does it regard existence more than non-existence'. This is doubtless an interpretative summary of Ockham's position; and since it appears to contradict his account of the nature of intuitive knowledge as distinct from abstractive knowledge (in the sense of knowledge which abstracts from the existence or non-existence of the things for which the terms in the proposition stand), the following remarks may help to make his position clearer.

(i) When Ockham says that God could produce in us intuition of a non-existent object, he is relying on the truth of the proposition that God can produce and conserve immediately whatever He normally produces through the mediation of secondary causes. For example, the intuition of the stars is normally and naturally produced in us by the actual presence of the stars. To say this is to say that God produces in us intuitive knowledge of the stars by means of a secondary cause, namely the stars themselves. On Ockham's principle, then, God could produce this intuition directly, without the secondary cause. He could not do this if it would involve a contradiction; but it would not involve a contradiction. 'Every effect which God causes through the mediation of a secondary cause He can produce immediately by Himself.'[1]

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[1] *Quodlibet*, 1, 14. [2] 2 *Sent.*, 15, E. [3] *Quodlibet*, 1, 13. [4] *Ibid.*, 6, 6.

(ii) But God could not produce in us evident knowledge of the proposition that the stars are present when they are not present; for the inclusion of the word 'evident' implies that the stars really are present. 'God cannot cause in us knowledge such that by it a thing is seen evidently to be present although it is absent, for that involves a contradiction, because such evident knowledge means that it is thus in fact as is stated by the proposition to which assent is given.'[2]

(iii) Ockham's point seems to be, then, that God could cause in us the act of intuiting an object which was not really present, in the sense that He could cause in us the physiological and psychological conditions which would normally lead us to assent to the proposition that the thing is present. For example, God could produce immediately in the organs of vision all those effects which are naturally produced by the light of the stars. Or one can put the matter this way. God could not produce in me the actual vision of a present white patch, when the white patch was not present; for this would involve a contradiction. But He could produce in me all the psycho-physical conditions involved in seeing a white patch, even if the white patch was not really there.

(iv) To his critics, Ockham's choice of terms seemed to be confusing and unfortunate. On the one hand, after saying that God cannot cause evident knowledge that a thing is present when it is not present, he adds that 'God can cause a "creditive" act by which I believe that an absent is present', and he explains that 'that "creditive" idea will be abstractive, not intuitive'.[3] This seems to be fairly plain sailing, if it can be taken as meaning that God could produce in us, in the absence of the stars, all the psycho-physical conditions which we would naturally have in the presence of the stars, and that we would thereby have a knowledge of what the stars are (so far as this can be obtained by sight), though the knowledge could not properly be called 'intuition'. On the other hand, Ockham seems to speak of God as being able to produce in us 'intuitive knowledge' of a non-existent object, though this knowledge is not 'evident'. Moreover, he does not seem to mean simply that God could produce in us intuitive knowledge of the nature of the object; for he allows that 'God can produce an

[1] *Quodlibet*, 6, 6.

[2] *Ibid.*, 5, 5.

[3] *Ibid.*

assent which belongs to the same species as that evident assent to the contingent proposition, "this whiteness exists", when it does not exist'.[1] If God can properly be said to be capable of producing in us assent to a proposition affirming the existence of a non-existent object, and if this assent can properly be called not only a 'creditive act' but also 'intuitive knowledge', then one can only suppose that it is proper to speak of God as capable of producing in us intuitive knowledge which is not in fact intuitive knowledge at all. And to say this would seem to involve a contradiction. To qualify 'intuitive knowledge' by the words 'not evident' would appear to amount to a cancellation of the former by the latter.

Possibly these difficulties are capable of being cleared up satisfactorily, from Ockham's point of view, I mean. For example, he says that 'it is a contradiction that a chimera be seen intuitively'; but 'it is not a contradiction that that which is seen is nothing in actuality outside the soul, so long as it can be an effect or was at some time an actual reality'.[2] If God had annihilated the stars, He could still cause in us the act of seeing what had once been, so far as the act is considered subjectively, just as He could give us a vision of what will be in the future. Either act would be an immediate apprehension, in the first case of what has been and in the second case of what will be. But, even then, it would be peculiar to imply that if we assented to the proposition, 'these things exist *now*', the assent could be produced by God, unless one were willing to say that God could deceive us. Presumably this was the point to which exception was taken by Ockham's theological opponents, and not the mere assertion that God could act directly on our sense organs. However, it must be remembered that Ockham distinguished evidence, which is objective, from certitude as a psychological state. Possession of the latter is not an infallible guarantee of possession of the former.

(v) In any case one must remember that Ockham is not speaking of the natural course of events. He does not say that God acts in this way as a matter of fact: he simply says that God could act in this way in virtue of His omnipotence. That God is omnipotent was not, however, for Ockham a truth which can be philosophically proved: it is known only by faith. If we look at the matter from the purely philosophical point of view, therefore, the question of God's producing in us intuitions of non-existent objects simply does not come up. On the other hand, what Ockham has to say on the matter admirably illustrates his tendency, as a thinker with marked theological preoccupations, to break through, as it were, the purely philosophic and natural order and to subordinate it to the divine liberty and omnipotence. It illustrates, too, one of his main principles, that when two things are distinct there is no absolutely necessary connection between them. Our act of seeing the stars, considered as an act, is distinct from the stars themselves: it can therefore be separated from them, in the sense that divine omnipotence could annihilate the latter and conserve the former. Ockham's tendency was always to break through supposedly necessary connections which might seem to limit in some way the divine omnipotence, provided that it could not be shown to his satisfaction that denial of the proposition affirming such a necessary connection involved the denial of the principle of contradiction.

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[1] *Quodlibet*, 5, 5.

[2] *Ibid.*, 6, 6.

3. Ockham's insistence on intuitive knowledge as the basis and source of all our knowledge of existents represents, as we have seen, the 'empiricist' side of his philosophy. This aspect of his thought may also be said to be reflected in his insistence that the order of the world follows the divine choice. Scotus had made a distinction between God's choice of the end and His choice of the means, as though one could speak significantly of God 'first' willing the end and 'then' choosing the means. Ockham, however, rejected this way of speaking. 'It does not seem to be well said that God wills the end before that which is (ordered) to the end, because there is not there (in God) such a priority of acts, nor are there (in God) such instants as he postulates.'[1] Apart from the anthropomorphisms of such language it seems to impair the utter contingency of the order of the world. The choice of the end and the choice of the means are both utterly contingent. This does not mean, of course, that we have to picture God as a sort of capricious superman, liable to alter the world-order from day to day or from moment to moment. On the supposition that God has chosen a world-order, that order remains stable. But the choice of the order is in no way necessary: it is the effect of the divine choice and of the divine choice alone.

This position is intimately associated, of course, with Ockham's concern for the divine omnipotence and liberty; and it may appear out of place to speak of it as in any way reflecting the 'empiricist' aspect of his philosophy, since it is the position of a theologian.

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[1] 1 *Sent.*, 41, 1, E.

But what I meant was this. If the order of the world is entirely contingent on the divine choice, it is obviously impossible to deduce it *a priori*. If we want to know what it is, one must examine what it is in fact. Ockham's position may have been primarily that of a theologian; but its natural effect would be to concentrate attention on the actual facts and to discourage any notion that one could reconstruct the order of the world by purely *a priori* reasoning. If a notion of this kind makes its appearance in the pre-Kantian continental rationalism of the classical period of 'modern' philosophy, its origin is certainly not to be looked for in fourteenth-century Ockhamism: it is to be associated, of course, with the influence of mathematics and of mathematical physics.

4 Ockham's tendency, then, was to split up the world, as it were, into 'absolutes'. That is to say, his tendency was to split up the world into distinct entities, each of which depends on God but between which there is no necessary connection: the order of the world is not logically prior to the divine choice, but it is logically posterior to the divine choice of individual contingent entities. And the same tendency is reflected in his treatment of relations. Once granted that there exists only individual distinct entities and that the only kind of distinction which is independent of the mind is a real distinction in the sense of a distinction between separate or separable entities, it follows that if a relation is a distinct entity, distinct, that is, from the terms of the relation, it must be really distinct from the terms in the sense of being separate or separable. 'If I held that a relation were a thing, I should say with John (Scotus) that it is a thing distinct from its foundation, but I should differ (from him) in saying that every relation differs really from its foundation . . . because I do not admit a formal distinction in creatures.'[1] But it would be absurd to hold that a relation is really distinct from its foundation. If it were, God could produce the relation of paternity and confer it on someone who had never generated. The fact is that a man is called a 'father' when he has generated a child; and there is no need to postulate the existence of a third entity, a relation of paternity, linking father to child. Similarly Smith is said to be like Brown because, for example, Smith is a man and Brown is a man or because Smith is white and Brown is white: it is unnecessary to postulate a third entity, a relation of similarity, in

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 2, H.

addition to the 'absolute' substances and qualities; and if one does postulate a third entity, absurd conclusions result.[1] Relations are names or terms signifying absolutes; and a relation as such has no reality outside the mind. For example, there is no order of the universe which is actually or really distinct from the existent parts of the universe.[2] Ockham does not say that a relation is identical with its foundation. 'I do not say that a relation is really the same as its foundation; but I say that a relation is not the foundation but only an "intention" or concept in the soul, signifying several absolute things.'[3] The principle on which Ockham goes is, of course, the principle of economy: the way in which we speak about relations can be analysed or explained satisfactorily without postulating relations as real entities. This was, in Ockham's view, the opinion of Aristotle. The latter would not allow, for example, that every mover is necessarily itself moved. But this implies that relations are not entities distinct from absolute things; for, if they were, the mover would receive a relation and would thus be itself moved.[4] Relations are thus 'intentions' or terms signifying absolutes; though one must add that Ockham restricts the application of this doctrine to the created world: in the Trinity there are real relations.

This theory naturally affected Ockham's view of the relation between creatures and God. It was a common doctrine in the Middle Ages among Ockham's predecessors that the creature has a real relation to God, although God's relation to the creature is only a mental relation. On Ockham's view of relations, however, this distinction becomes in effect null and void. Relations can be analysed into two existent 'absolutes'; and in this case to say that between creatures and God there are different kinds of relation is simply to say, so far as this way of speaking is admissible, that God and creatures are different kinds of beings. It is perfectly true that God produced and conserves creatures and that the latter could not exist apart from God; but this does not mean that the creatures are affected by a mysterious entity called an essential relation of dependence. We conceive and speak about creatures as essentially related to God; but what actually exists is God on the one hand and creatures on the other, and there is no need to postulate any other entity. Ockham distinguishes various senses in which 'real relation' and 'mental relation' can be understood;[5]

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[1] Cf. *Expositio aurea*, 2, 64, V.

[2] 1 *Sent.*, 30, 1, S.

[3] *Ibid.*, 30, 1, R.

[4] *Expositio aurea*, 2, 64, R.

[5] 1 *Sent.*, 30, 5.

and he is willing to say that the relation of creatures to God is a 'real' and not a 'mental' relation, if the statement is taken to mean, for example, that a stone's production and conservation by God is real and does not depend on the human mind. But he excludes any idea of there being any additional entity in the stone, in addition, that is, to the stone itself, which could be called a 'real relation'.

One particular way in which Ockham tries to show that the idea of real relations distinct from their foundations is absurd deserves special mention. If I move my finger, its position is changed in regard to all the parts of the universe. And, if there are real relations distinct from their foundation, 'it would follow that at the movement of my finger the whole universe, that is, heaven and earth, would be at once filled with accidents'.[1] Moreover, if, as Ockham says, the parts of the universe are infinite in number, it would follow that the universe is peopled with an infinite number of fresh accidents whenever I move my finger. This conclusion he considered absurd.

For Ockham, then, the universe consists of 'absolutes', substances and absolute accidents, which can be brought into a greater or lesser local approximation to one another, but which are not affected by any relative entities called 'real relations'. From this it would seem to follow that it is futile to think that one could read off, as it were, a mirror of the whole universe. If one wants to know anything about the universe, one must study it empirically. Very possibly this point of view should be regarded as favouring an 'empiricist' approach to knowledge of the world; but it does not follow, of course, that modern science actually developed against a mental background of this sort. Nevertheless, Ockham's insistence on 'absolutes' and his view of relations may reasonably be said to have favoured the growth of empirical science in the following way. If the creature is regarded as having a real essential relation to God, and if it cannot be properly understood without this relation being understood, it is reasonable to conclude that the study of the way in which creatures mirror God is the most important and valuable study of the world, and that a study of creatures in and for themselves alone, without any reference to God, is a rather inferior kind of study, which yields only an inferior knowledge of the world. But if creatures are 'absolutes', they can perfectly well be studied without any reference to God. Of course, as we have seen, when Ockham spoke of created things as 'absolutes' he had no intention of questioning their utter dependence on God; his point of view was very much that of a theologian; but none the less, if we can know the natures of created things without any advertence to God, it follows that empirical science is an autonomous discipline. The world can be studied in itself in abstraction from God, especially if, as Ockham held, it cannot be strictly proved that God, in the full sense of the term 'God', exists. In this sense it is legitimate to speak of Ockhamism as a factor and stage in the birth of the 'lay spirit', as M. de Lagarde does. At the same time one must remember that Ockham himself was very far from being a secularist or modern 'rationalist'.

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 2, G.

5. When one turns to Ockham's account of causality one finds him expounding the four causes of Aristotle. As to the exemplary cause, which, he says, Seneca added as a fifth type of cause, 'I say that strictly speaking nothing is a cause unless it is a cause in one of the four ways laid down by Aristotle. So the idea or exemplar is not strictly a cause; though, if one extends the name "cause" to (cover) everything the knowledge of which is presupposed by the production of something, the idea or exemplar is a cause in this sense; and Seneca speaks in this extended sense.'[1] Ockham accepts, then, the traditional Aristotelian division of causes into the formal, material, final and efficient causes; and he affirms that 'to any type of cause there corresponds its own (type of) causation'.[2]

Moreover, Ockham did not deny that it is possible to conclude from the characteristics of a given thing that it has or had a cause; and he himself used causal arguments. He did, however, deny that the simple knowledge (*notitia incomplexa*) of one thing can provide us with the simple knowledge of another thing. We may be able to establish that a given thing has a cause; but it does not follow that we thereby gain a simple and proper knowledge of the thing which is its cause. The reason of this is that the knowledge in question comes from intuition; and the intuition of one thing is not the intuition of another thing. This principle has, of course, its ramifications in natural theology; but what I want to emphasize at the moment is that Ockham did not deny that a causal argument can have any validity. It is true that for him two things are always really distinct when the concepts of the two things are distinct, and that when two things are distinct God could create the one without the other; but, given empirical reality as it is, one can discern causal connections.

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[1] 1 *Sent.*, 35, 5, N.

[2] 2 *Sent.*, 3, B.

But, though Ockham enumerates four causes in the traditional manner and though he does not reject the validity of causal argument, his analysis of efficient causality has a marked 'empiricist' colouring. In the first place he insists that, though one may know that a given thing has *a* cause, the only way in which we can ascertain that this definite thing is the cause of that definite thing is by experience: we cannot prove by abstract reasoning that *X* is the cause of *Y*, where *X* is one created thing and *Y* is another created thing. In the second place the experiential test of a causal relation is the employment of the presence and absence methods or the method of exclusion. We are not entitled to assert that *X* is the cause of *Y*, unless we can show that when *X* is present *Y* follows and that when *X* is absent, whatever other factors may be present, *Y* does not follow. For example, 'it is proved that fire is the cause of heat, since, when fire is there and all other things (that is, all other possible causal factors) have been removed, heat follows in a heatable object which has been brought near (the fire) . . . (Similarly) it is proved that the object is the cause of intuitive knowledge, for when all other factors except the object have been removed intuitive knowledge follows'.[1]

That it is by experience we come to know that one thing is the cause of another is, of course, a common-sense position. So, for the matter of that, is Ockham's idea of the test which should be applied in order to ascertain whether *A*, *B* or *C* is the cause of *D* or whether we have to accept a plurality of causes. If we find that when *A* is present *D* always follows, even when *B* and *C* are absent, and that when *B* and *C* are present but *A* is absent *D* never follows, we must take it that *A* is the cause of *D*. If, however, we find that when *A* alone is present *D* never follows, but that when *A* and *B* are both present *D* always follows, even though *C* is absent, we must conclude that both *A* and *B* are causal factors in the production of *D*. In calling these positions common-sense positions I mean that they are positions which would naturally commend themselves to ordinary common sense and that there is nothing revolutionary about either position in itself: I do not mean to suggest that from the scientific point of view the matter was adequately stated by Ockham. It does not need very much reflection to see that there are cases in which the supposed cause of an event cannot be 'removed', in order to see what happens in its absence. We cannot, for example, remove the moon and see what happens to the movement of the tides in the absence of the moon, in order to ascertain whether the moon exercises any causal influence on the tides. However, that is not the point to which I really want to draw attention. For it would be absurd to expect an adequate treatment of scientific induction from a thinker who was not really concerned with the matter and who showed comparatively little interest in matters of pure physical science; especially at a time when science had not attained that degree of development which would appear to be required before reflection on scientific method can really be valuable. The point to which I draw attention is rather this, that in his analysis of efficient causality Ockham shows a tendency to interpret the causal relation as invariable or regular sequence. In one place he distinguishes two senses of cause. In the second sense of the word an antecedent proposition may be called a 'cause' in relation to the consequent. This sense does not concern us, as Ockham expressly says that the antecedent is not the cause of the consequent in any proper sense of the term. It is the first sense which is of interest. 'In one sense it (cause) means something which has another thing as its effect; and in this sense that can be called a cause on the positing of which another thing is posited and on the non-positing of which that other thing is not posited.'[1] In a passage like this Ockham seems to imply that causality means regular sequence and does not seem to be talking simply of an empirical test which should be applied to ascertain whether one thing is actually the cause of another thing. To state without more ado that Ockham reduced causality to regular succession would be incorrect; but he does seem to show a tendency to reduce efficient causality to regular succession. And, after all, to do so would be very much in harmony with his theological view of the universe. God has created distinct things; and the order which prevails between them is purely contingent. There are regular sequences as a matter of fact; but no connection between two distinct things can be said to be necessary, unless one means by necessary simply that the connection, which depends on God's choice, is always observable in fact. In this sense one can probably say that Ockham's theological outlook and his tendency to give an empiricist account of efficient causality went hand in hand. However, as God has

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[1] 1 *Sent.*, 1, 3, N.

[1] 1 *Sent.*, 41, 1, F.

created things in such a way that a certain order results, we can predict that the causal relations we have experienced in the past will be experienced in the future, even though God by the use of His absolute power *could* interfere with the order. This theological background is, of course, generally absent from modern empiricism.

6. It is clear that Ockham utilized his razor in his discussion of causality, just as in that of relations in general. He utilized it too in his treatment of the problem of motion. Indeed, his use of the razor or principle of economy was often connected with the 'empiricist' side of his philosophy, inasmuch as he wielded the weapon in an effort to get rid of unobservable entities the existence of which was not, in his opinion, demanded by the data of experience (or taught by revelation). His tendency was always towards the simplification of our view of the universe. To say this is not to say, of course, that Ockham made any attempt to reduce things to sense-data or to logical constructions out of sense-data. Such a reduction he would doubtless have regarded as an over-simplification. But, once granted the existence of substance and absolute accidents, he made an extensive use of the principle of economy.

Employing the traditional Aristotelian division of types of movement, Ockham asserts that neither qualitative alteration nor quantitative change nor local motion is anything positive in addition to permanent things.[1] In the case of qualitative alteration a body acquires a form gradually or successively, part after part, as Ockham puts it; and there is no need to postulate anything else but the thing which acquires the quality and the quality which is acquired. It is true that the negation of the simultaneous acquisition of all the parts of the form is involved; but this negation is not a thing; and to imagine that it is is to be misled by the false supposition that to every distinct term or name there corresponds a distinct thing. Indeed, if it were not for the use of abstract words like 'motion', 'simultaneity', 'succession', etc., the problems connected with the nature of motion would not create such difficulty for people.[2] In the case of quantitative change it is obvious, says Ockham, that nothing is involved save 'permanent things'. As to local motion, nothing need be postulated except a body and its place, that is, its local situation. To be moved locally 'is first to have one place, and afterwards, without any other thing being postulated, to have another place, without any intervening state of rest, . . . and to proceed thus continuously. . . . And consequently the whole nature of motion can be saved (explained) by this without anything else but the fact that a body is successively in distinct places and is not at rest in any of them.'[1] In the whole of his treatment of motion, both in the *Tractatus de successivis*[2] and in the commentary on the *Sentences*[3] Ockham makes frequent appeal to the principle of economy. He does the same when dealing with sudden change (*mutatio subita*, that is, substantial change), which is nothing in addition to 'absolute' things. Of course, if we say that 'a form is acquired by change' or 'change belongs to the category of relation', we shall be tempted to think that the word 'change' stands for an entity. But a proposition like 'a form is lost and a form is gained through sudden change' can be translated into a proposition like 'the thing which changes loses a form and acquires a form together (at the same moment) and not part after part'.[4]

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 9, C, D, E.

[2] *Tractatus de successivis*, ed. Boehner, p. 47.

The principle of economy was invoked too in Ockham's treatment of place and time. Expounding the Aristotelian definitions,[5] he insists that place is not a thing distinct from the surface or surfaces of the body or bodies in regard to which a certain thing is said to be in a place; and he insists that time is not a thing distinct from motion. 'I say that neither time nor any *successivum* denotes a thing, either absolute or relative, distinct from permanent things; and this is what the Philosopher means.'[6] In whichever of the possible senses one understands 'time', it is not a thing in addition to motion. 'Primarily and principally "time" signifies the same as "motion", although it connotes both the soul and an act of the soul, by which it (the soul or mind) knows the before and after of that motion. And so, presupposing what has been said about motion, and (presupposing) that the statements are understood. . . , it can be said that "time" signifies motion directly and the soul or an act of the soul directly; and on this account it signifies directly the before and after in motion.'[7] As Ockham expressly says that the meaning of Aristotle in the whole of this chapter about time is, in brief, this, that 'time' does not denote any distinct thing outside the soul beyond what 'motion' signifies,[1] and as this is what he himself held, it follows that in so far as one can distinguish time from motion it is mental, or, as Ockham would say, a 'term' or 'name'.

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[1] *Tractatus de successivis*, ed. Boehner, p. 46.

[2] This treatise is a compilation; but it is a compilation from Ockham's authentic writings. See p. 45.

[3] 2, 9.

[4] Cf. *Tractatus de successivis*, ed. Boehner, pp. 41–2.

[5] For the Aristotelian definitions of place and time see, for example, the first volume of this history, *Greece and Rome*, pp. 321–2.

[6] 2 *Sent.*, 12 D.

[7] *Tractatus de successivis*, ed. Boehner, p. 111.

7. As a conclusion to this chapter one can remind oneself of three features of Ockham's 'empiricism'. First, he bases all knowledge of the existent world on experience. We cannot, for example, discover that *A* is the cause of *B*, or that *D* is the effect of *C*, by *a priori* reasoning. Secondly, in his analysis of existent reality, or of the statements which we make about things, he uses the principle of economy. If two factors will suffice to explain motion, for example, one should not add a third. Lastly, when people do postulate unnecessary and unobservable entities, it is not infrequently because they have been misled by language. There is a striking passage on this matter in the *Tractatus de successivis*.[2] 'Nouns which are derived from verbs and also nouns which derive from adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, and in general from syncategorematic terms . . . have been introduced only for the sake of brevity in speaking or as ornaments of speech; and many of them are equivalent in signification to propositions, when they do not stand for the terms from which they derive; and so they do not signify any things in addition to those from which they derive. . . . Of this kind are all nouns of the following kind: negation, privation, condition, perseity, contingency, universality, action, passion, . . . change, motion, and in general all verbal nouns deriving from verbs which belong to the categories of *agere* and *pati*, and many others, which cannot be treated now.'

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[1] *Tractatus de successivis*, ed. Boehner, p. 119.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 37.

CHAPTER VI

OCKHAM (4)

The subject-matter of metaphysics—The univocal concept of being —The existence of God—Our knowledge of God's nature—The divine ideas—God's knowledge of future contingent events—The divine will and omnipotence.

1. OCKHAM accepts the statement of Aristotle that being is the subject of metaphysics; but he insists that this statement must not be understood as implying that metaphysics, considered in a wide sense, possesses a strict unity based on its having one subject-matter. If Aristotle and Averroes say that being is the subject of metaphysics, the statement is false if it is interpreted as meaning that all the parts of metaphysics have being as their subject-matter. The statement is true, however, if it is understood as meaning that 'among all the subjects of the different parts of metaphysics being is first with a priority of predication (*primum primitate praedicationis*). And there is a similarity between the question, what is the subject of metaphysics or of the book of categories and the question who is the king of the world or who is the king of all Christendom. For just as different kingdoms have different kings, and there is no king of the whole (world), though sometimes these kings may stand in a certain relation, as when one is more powerful or richer than another, so nothing is the subject of the whole of metaphysics, but here the different parts have different subjects, though these subjects may have a relation to one another.'[1] If some people say that being is the subject of metaphysics, while others say that God is the subject of metaphysics, a distinction must be made, if both statements are to be justified. Among all the subjects of metaphysics God is the primary subject as far as primacy of perfection is concerned; but being is the primary subject as far as primacy of predication is concerned.[2] For the metaphysician, when treating of God, considers truths like 'God is good', predicating of God an attribute which is primarily predicated of being.[3] There are, then, different branches of metaphysics, or different metaphysical sciences with different subjects. They have a certain relationship to one another, it is

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[1] *Prol. Sent.*, 9, N.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, D, D.

true; and this relationship justifies one in speaking of 'metaphysics' and in saying, for example, that being is the subject-matter of metaphysics in the sense mentioned, though it would not justify one's thinking that metaphysics is a unitary science, that is, that it is numerically one science.

2. In so far as metaphysics is the science of being as being it is concerned not with a thing but with a concept.[1] This abstract concept of being does not stand for a mysterious something which has to be known before we can know particular beings: it signifies all beings, not something in which beings participate. It is formed subsequently to the direct apprehension of existing things. 'I say that a particular being can be known, although those general concepts of being and unity are not known.'[2] For Ockham being and existing are synonymous: essence and existence signify the same, though the two words may signify the same thing in different ways. If 'existence' is used as a noun, then 'essence' and 'existence' signify the same thing grammatically and logically; but if the verb 'to be' is used instead of the noun 'existence', one cannot simply substitute 'essence', which is a noun, for the verb 'to be', for obvious grammatical reasons.[3] But this grammatical distinction cannot properly be taken as a basis for distinguishing essence and existence as distinct things: they are the same thing. It is clear, then, that the general concept of being is the result of the apprehension of concrete existing things; it is only because we have had direct apprehension of actual existents that we can form the general concept of being as such.

The general concept of being is univocal. On this point Ockham agrees with Scotus, so far as the use of the word 'univocal' is concerned. 'There is one concept common to God and creatures and predicable of them':[4] 'being' is a concept predicable in a univocal sense of all existent things.[5] Without a univocal concept we could not conceive God. We cannot in this life attain an intuition of the divine essence; nor can we have a simple 'proper' concept of God; but we can conceive God in a common concept predicable of Him and of other beings.[6] This statement must, however, be properly understood. It does not mean that the univocal concept of being acts as a bridge between a direct apprehension of creatures and a direct apprehension of God. Nor does it mean that one can form the abstract concept of being and deduce therefrom the existence of God. The existence of God is known in other ways, and not by an *a priori* deduction. But without a univocal concept of being one would be unable to conceive the existence of God. 'I admit that the simple knowledge of one creature in itself leads to the knowledge of another thing in a common concept. For example, by the simple knowledge of a whiteness which I have seen I am led to the knowledge of another whiteness which I have never seen, inasmuch as from the first whiteness I abstract a concept of whiteness which refers indifferently to them both. In the same way from some accident which I have seen I abstract a concept of being which does not refer more to that accident than to substance, nor to the creature more than to God.'[1] Obviously, my seeing a white patch does not assure me of the existence of any other white patch; nor did Ockham ever imagine that it could do so. To say that it could would be in flagrant contradiction with his philosophical principles. But, according to him, my seeing a white patch leads to an idea of whiteness which is applicable to other white patches when I see them. Similarly, my abstraction of the concept of being from apprehended existent beings does not assure me of the existence of any other beings. Yet unless I had a common concept of being I could not conceive of the existence of a being, God, which, unlike white patches, cannot be directly apprehended in this life. If, for example, I have no knowledge of God already and then I am told that God exists, I am able to conceive His existence in virtue of the common concept of being, though this does not mean, of course, that I have a 'proper' concept of the divine being.

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[1] 3 *Sent.*, 9, T.
[3] 1 *Sent.*, 3, 1, E.
[2] *Quodlibet*, 2, 7; *Summa totius logicae*, 3, 2.
[4] 1 *Sent.*, 2, 9, P.
[5] *Ibid.*, X.
[6] *Ibid.*, P.

Ockham was very careful to state his theory of the univocal concept of being in a way which would exclude any pantheistic implication. We must distinguish three types of univocity. In the first place a univocal concept may be a concept which is common to a number of things which are perfectly alike. In the second place a univocal concept may be a concept common to a number of things which are like in some points and unlike in other points. Thus man and ass are alike in being animals; and their matters are similar, though their forms are different. Thirdly, a univocal concept may mean a concept which is common to a plurality of things which are neither accidentally nor substantially alike; and it is in this way that a concept common to God and the creature is univocal, since they are alike neither substantially nor accidentally.[1] In regard to the contention that the concept of being is analogous and not univocal, Ockham observes that analogy can be understood in different ways. If by analogy is meant univocity in the third sense mentioned above, then the univocal concept of being may, of course, be called 'analogous';[2] but, since being as such is a concept and not a thing, there is no need to have recourse to the doctrine of analogy in order to avoid pantheism. If by saying that there can be a univocal concept of being predicable of God as well as of creatures, one meant to imply either that creatures are modes, as it were, of a being identified with God, or that God and creatures share in being, as something real in which they participate, then one would be forced either into accepting pantheism or into reducing God and creatures to the same level; but the doctrine of univocity does not imply anything of the kind, since there is no reality corresponding to the term 'being' when it is predicated univocally. Or, rather, the corresponding reality is simply different beings which are simply conceived as existing. If one considered these beings separately, one would have a plurality of concepts, for the concept of God is not the same as the concept of the creature. And in this case the term 'being' would be predicated equivocally, not univocally. Equivocation does not belong to concepts but to words, that is, to spoken or written terms. As far as the concept is concerned, when we conceive a plurality of beings we either have one concept or a number of concepts. If a word corresponds to one concept, it is used univocally; if it corresponds to several concepts, it is used equivocally. There is, then, no room for analogy, either in the case of concepts or in that of spoken or written words. 'There is no analogical predication, as contradistinguished from univocal, equivocal and denominative predication.'[3] In fact, as denominative (that is, connotative) predication is reducible to univocal or to equivocal predication, one must say that predication must be either univocal or equivocal.[4]

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[1] 3 *Sent.*, 9, R.

3. But, though God can be conceived in some way, can it be philosophically shown that God exists? God is indeed the most perfect object of the human intellect, the supreme intelligible reality; but He is certainly not the first object of the human intellect in the sense of being the object which is first known.[5] The primary object of the human mind is the material thing or embodied nature.[6]

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[1] 3 *Sent.*, 9, Q.

[2] *Ibid.*, R.

[3] *Ibid.*, E.

[4] *Expositio aurea*, 2, 39, V.

[5] 1 *Sent.*, 3, 1, D.

[6] *Ibid.*, F.

We possess no natural intuition of the divine essence; and the proposition that God exists is not a self-evident proposition as far as we are concerned. If we imagine someone enjoying the vision of God and making the statement 'God exists', the statement may seem to be the same as the statement 'God exists' made by someone in this life who does not enjoy the vision of God. But though the two statements are verbally the same, the terms or concepts are really different; and in the second case it is not a self-evident proposition.[1] Any natural knowledge of God must, therefore, be derived from reflection on creatures. But can we come to know God from creatures? And, if so, is this knowledge certain knowledge?

Given Ockham's general position in regard to the subject of causality, one could hardly expect him to say that God's existence can be proved with certainty. For if we can only know of a thing that it has *a* cause, and if we cannot establish with certainty by any other way than by actual experience that *A* is the cause of *B*, we could not establish with certainty that the world is caused by God, if the term 'God' is understood in a recognized theistic sense. It is not very surprising, then, to find Ockham criticizing the traditional proofs of God's existence. He did not do so in the interests of scepticism, of course, but rather because he thought that the proofs were not logically conclusive. It does not follow, however, that once given his attitude scepticism, agnosticism or fideism, as the case might be, would not naturally follow.

As the authenticity of the *Centiloquium theologicum* is doubtful, it would scarcely be appropriate to discuss the treatment of the 'first mover' argument which is given by the author of that work. It is sufficient to say that the author refuses to allow that the basic principle of this Aristotelian-Thomist argument is either self-evident or demonstrable.[2] In fact, there are exceptions to the principle, inasmuch as an angel, and the human soul too, moves itself; and such exceptions show that the alleged principle cannot be a necessary principle and that it cannot form a basis for any strict proof of God's existence, especially as it cannot be proved that an infinite regress in the series of movers is impossible. The argument may be a probable argument in the sense that it is more probable that there is a first unmoved mover than that there is no such first unmoved mover; but it is not a certain argument. This criticism follows the line already suggested by Scotus; and even if the work in which it occurs is not a work of Ockham, the criticism would seem to be in harmony with Ockham's ideas. Moreover, there can be no question of his having accepted St. Thomas's *manifestior via* as a certain argument for God's existence, as distinct from the existence of a first mover in a general sense. The first mover might be an angel or some being less than God, if we mean by 'God' an infinite, unique and absolutely supreme being.[1]

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[1] 1 *Sent.*, 3, 4, D, F.

[2] This principle is that whatever is moved is moved by another (*quidquid movetur ab alio movetur*).

The proof from finality also goes by the board. Not only is it impossible to prove that the universe is ordered to one end, God,[2] but it cannot even be proved that individual things act for ends in a way which would justify any certain argument to God's existence. In the case of things which act without knowledge and will, all that we are warranted in saying is that they act because of a natural necessity: it makes no sense to say that they act 'for' an end.[3] Of course, if one presupposes God's existence, one can then speak of inanimate things as acting for ends, that is, for ends determined by God, who created their natures;[4] but if a statement is based on the presupposition of God's existence, it cannot itself be used to prove God's existence. As to agents endowed with intelligence and will, the reason for their voluntary actions is to be found in their own wills; and it cannot be shown that all wills are moved by the perfect good, God.[5] In fine, it is impossible to prove that there is in the universe an immanent teleological order, the existence of which makes it necessary to assert God's existence. There is no order distinct from 'absolute' natures themselves; and the only way in which one could prove God's existence would be as efficient cause of the existence of finite things. Is it, however, possible to do so?

In the *Quodlibet* Ockham states that one must stop at a first efficient cause and not proceed to infinity: but he adds immediately that this efficient cause might be a heavenly body, since 'we know by experience that it is the cause of other things'.[6] He says expressly not only that 'it cannot be proved by the natural reason that God is the immediate efficient cause of all things', but also that it cannot be proved that God is the mediate efficient cause of any effect. He gives as one reason of this the impossibility of proving that there exist any things other than corruptible things. It cannot be proved, for instance, that there is a spiritual and immortal soul in man. And the heavenly bodies can cause corruptible things, without its being possible to prove that the heavenly bodies themselves are caused by God.

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[1] Cf. *Quodlibet*, 7, 22–3.

[2] *Ibid.*, 4, 2.

[3] *Summulae in libros physicorum*, 2, 6.

[4] 2 *Sent.*, 3, NN; *Quodlibet*, 4, 1.

[5] 1 *Sent.*, 1, 4, E.

[6] *Quodlibet*, 2, 1.

However, in the commentary on the *Sentences*, Ockham gives his own version of the proof from efficient causality. It is better, he says, to argue from conservation to conserver rather than from product to producer. The reason for this is that 'it is difficult or impossible to prove against the philosophers that there cannot be an infinite regress in causes of the same kind, of which one can exist without the other'.[1] For example, Ockham does not think that it can be strictly proved that a man does not owe his total being to his parents, and they to their parents, and so on indefinitely. If it is objected that even in the case of an infinite series of this kind the infinite series would itself depend for its production on a being intrinsic to the series, Ockham answers that 'it would be difficult to prove that the series would not be possible unless there were one permanent being, on which the whole infinite series depended'.[2] He therefore prefers to argue that a thing which comes into being (that is, a contingent thing) is conserved in being as long as it exists. It can then be asked whether the conserver is itself dependent for its conservation or not. But in this case we cannot proceed to infinity, because an infinite number of *actual* conservers is, says Ockham, impossible. It may be possible to admit an infinite regress in the case of beings which exist one after the other, since in this case there would not be an actually existent infinity; but in the case of actual conservers of the world here and now, an infinite regress would imply an actual infinity. That an actual infinity of this sort is impossible is shown by the arguments of philosophers and others, which are 'reasonable enough' (*satis rationabiles*).

But even though reasonable arguments can be adduced for the existence of God as first conserver of the world, the unicity of God cannot be demonstrated.[3] It can be shown that there is some ultimate conserving being in *this* world; but we cannot exclude the possibility of there being another world or other worlds, with its or their own relatively first beings. To prove that there is a first efficient cause which is more perfect than *its* effects is not the same thing as proving the existence of a being which is superior to every other being, unless you can first prove that every other being is the effect of one single cause.[4] The unicity of God is known with certainty only by faith.

[1] 1 *Sent.*, 2, 10, O. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Quodlibet*, 1, 1. [4] 1 *Sent.*, 35, 2, C.

In answer, therefore, to the question whether Ockham admitted any philosophical proof of God's existence one must first make a distinction. If by 'God' one means the absolutely supreme, perfect, unique and infinite being, Ockham did not think that the existence of such a being can be strictly proved by the philosopher. If, on the other hand, one means by 'God' the first conserving cause of this world, without any certain knowledge about the nature of that cause, Ockham did think that the existence of such a being can be philosophically proved. But, as this second understanding of the term 'God' is not all that is usually understood by the term, one might just as well say, without further ado, that Ockham did not admit the demonstrability of God's existence. Only by faith do we know, as far at least as certain knowledge is concerned, that the supreme and unique being in the fullest sense exists. From this it would seem to follow, as historians have argued, that theology and philosophy fall apart, since it is not possible to prove the existence of the God whose revelation is accepted on faith. But it does not follow, of course, that Ockham himself was concerned to separate theology from philosophy. If he criticized the traditional proofs of God's existence, he criticized them from the point of view of a logician, and not in order to break apart the traditional synthesis. Moreover, though it may be tempting to a modern philosopher to depict Ockham as assigning to theological propositions a purely 'emotional' significance by relegating a large number of the propositions of traditional metaphysics to dogmatic theology, this would be an inaccurate interpretation of his position. When he said, for example, that theology is not a science, he did not mean that theological propositions are not informative propositions or that no theological syllogism can be a correct piece of reasoning: what he meant was that since the premisses of theological arguments are known by faith the conclusions too fall within the same sphere, and that since the premisses are not self-evident the arguments are not scientific demonstrations in the strict sense of 'scientific demonstration'. Ockham did not deny that a probable argument can be given for God's existence. What he denied was that the existence of God as the unique absolutely supreme being can be philosophically 'demonstrated'.

4. If the existence of God as the absolutely supreme being cannot be strictly proved by the natural reason, it is obvious that it cannot be proved that there is an infinite and omnipotent being, creator of all things. But the question may be raised whether,

given the concept of God as the absolutely supreme being, it can then be demonstrated that God is infinite and omnipotent. Ockham's answer to this question is that attributes like omnipotence, infinity, eternity or the power to create out of nothing cannot be demonstrated to belong to the divine essence. His reason for saying this is a technical one. *A priori* demonstration involves the use of a middle term to which the predicate in question belongs in a prior manner. But in the case of an attribute like infinity there can be no middle term to which infinity belongs; and so there can be no demonstration that God is infinite. It may be said that concepts like infinity or the power of creating out of nothing can be demonstrated to belong to the divine essence by using their definitions as middle terms. For example, one can argue in this way. Anything which can produce something from nothing is capable of creating. But God can produce something from nothing. Therefore God can create. A syllogism of this kind, says Ockham, is not what is meant by a demonstration. A demonstration in the proper sense increases knowledge; but the syllogism just mentioned does not increase knowledge, since the statement that God produces or can produce something from nothing is precisely the same as the statement that God creates or can create. The syllogism is useless unless one knows the meaning of the term 'create'; but if we know the meaning of the term 'create' we know that the statement that God can produce something from nothing is the statement that God can create. Thus the conclusion which is professedly demonstrated is already assumed: the argument contains the fallacy of begging the question.[1]

On the other hand, there are some attributes which can be demonstrated. We can argue, for example, as follows. Every being is good: but God is a being: therefore God is good. In a syllogism of this sort there is a middle term, a concept common to God and creatures. But the term 'good' must here be understood as a connotative term, as connoting a relation to the will, if the argument is to be a demonstration. For if the term 'good' is not taken as a connotative term, it is simply synonymous with the term 'being'; and in this case we learn nothing at all from the argument. No attribute can be demonstrated to belong to a subject, unless the conclusion of the demonstration is *dubitabilis*, that is, unless one can significantly raise the question whether the attribute is to be predicated of the subject or not. But if the term 'good' is taken not as a connotative term but as synonymous with 'being', we could not know that God is a being and significantly raise the question whether God is good. It is not required, of course, that the attribute predicated of a subject should be really distinct from a subject. Ockham rejected the Scotist doctrine of a formal distinction between the divine attributes, and maintained that there is no distinction. But we do not possess an intuition of the divine essence; and though the realities represented by our concepts of the divine essence and attributes are not distinct we can argue from one concept to another provided that there is a middle term. In the case of concepts common to God and creatures there is a middle term.

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[1] *Prol. Sent.*, 2, D, D.

But in our knowledge of God's nature what is it precisely that constitutes the term of our cognition? We do not enjoy intuitive knowledge of God, which it is beyond the scope of the human intellect to attain by its own efforts. Nor can there be any natural 'abstractive' knowledge of God as He is in Himself, since it is impossible for us by our natural powers to have an abstractive knowledge of something in itself without an intuitive knowledge of that thing. It follows, therefore, that in our natural state it is impossible for us to know God in such a way that the divine essence is the immediate and sole term of the act of knowing.[1] Secondly, we cannot in our natural state conceive God in a simple concept, proper to Him alone. For 'no thing can be known by us through our natural powers in a simple concept proper to itself, unless the thing is known in itself. For otherwise we could say that colour can be known in a concept proper to colours by a man born blind.'[2] But, thirdly, God can be conceived by us in connotative concepts and in concepts which are common to God and creatures, like being. As God is a simple being, without any internal distinction save that between the three divine Persons, proper quidditative concepts (*conceptus quidditativi*) would be convertible; and so they would not be distinct concepts. If we can have distinct concepts of God, this is due to the fact that our concepts are not proper quidditative concepts of God. They are not convertible because they are either connotative concepts, like the concept of infinity which connotes the finite negatively, or concepts common to God and creatures, like the concept of wisdom. It is only a proper quidditative concept which corresponds to a single reality. A connotative concept connotes a reality other than the subject of which it is predicated; and a common concept is predicable of other realities than the one of which it is in fact predicated. Moreover, the common concepts which we predicate of God are due to a reflection on other realities than God and presuppose them.

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[1] 1 *Sent.*, 2, 9, P.

[2] *Ibid.*, R.

An important consequence follows. If we have, as we do have, distinct concepts of God, a simple being, our conceptual knowledge of the divine nature is a knowledge of concepts rather than a knowledge of God as He is. What we attain is not the divine essence but a mental representation of the divine essence. We can form, it is true, a composite concept which is predicable of God alone; but this concept is a mental construction; we cannot have a simple concept proper to God which would adequately mirror the divine essence. 'Neither the divine essence . . . nor anything intrinsic to God nor anything which is really God can be known by us without something other than God being involved as object.'[1] 'We cannot know in themselves either the unity of God . . . or His infinite power or the divine goodness or perfection; but what we know immediately are concepts, which are not really God but which we use in propositions to stand for God.'[2] We know the divine nature, then, only through the medium of concepts; and these concepts, not being proper quidditative concepts, cannot take the place of an immediate apprehension of the essence of God. We do not attain a reality (*quid rei*), but a nominal representation (*quid nominis*). This is not to say that theology is not true or that its propositions have no meaning; but it is to say that the theologian is confined to the sphere of concepts and mental representation and that his analyses are analyses of concepts, not of God Himself. To imagine, for example, as Scotus did, that because we conceive divine attributes in distinct concepts these attributes are formally distinct in God is to misunderstand the nature of theological reasoning.

The foregoing inadequate account of what Ockham has to say on the subject of our knowledge of the divine nature really belongs to an account of his theological rather than of his philosophical ideas. For if the existence of God as the absolutely supreme being cannot be firmly established by the philosopher, it is obvious that the philosopher cannot give us any certain knowledge of God's nature. Nor can the theologian's reasoning, according to Ockham,

[1] 1 *Sent.*, 3, 2, F.

[2] *Ibid.*, M.

give us certain knowledge of God's nature. As far as the analysis of concepts goes, an unbeliever could perform the same analysis as is performed by the believing theologian. What gives us certain knowledge of the truth of theological propositions is not the theologian's reasoning as such, nor his demonstrations, so far as demonstration is possible for him, but God's revelation accepted on faith. The theologian can reason correctly from certain premisses; but so can the unbeliever. The former, however, accepts the premisses and the conclusions on faith; and he knows that the propositions are true, that is, that they correspond to reality. But he knows this by faith; and his knowledge is not, in the strict sense, 'science'. For there is no intuitive knowledge lying at the basis of his reasoning. Ockham did not intend to question the truth of theological dogmas: he set out to examine the nature of theological reasoning and theological concepts, and he treated his problems from the point of view of a logician. His theological nominalism was not, in his own mind, equivalent to agnosticism or scepticism: it was rather, in intention at any rate, a logical analysis of a theology which he accepted.

But though Ockham's discussion of our knowledge of God's nature belongs more properly to the theological than to the philosophical sphere, it has its place in a discussion of his philosophy, if only for the reason that in it he deals with matters which preceding mediaeval philosophers had considered to fall within the metaphysician's competence. Similarly, though the philosopher as such could scarcely, in Ockham's eyes, establish anything with certainty about the divine 'ideas', this topic had been a salient feature of the traditional mediaeval metaphysics, and Ockham's treatment of it is closely linked with his general philosophic principles. It is desirable, therefore, to say something about it here.

5. In the first place there cannot be any plurality in the divine intellect. The divine intellect is identical with the divine will and the divine essence. We may speak about 'the divine will', 'the divine intellect' and 'the divine essence'; but the reality referred to is one single and simple being. Hence, talk about the 'divine ideas' cannot be taken to refer to realities in God which are in any way distinct either from the divine essence or from one another. If there were a distinction at all, it would be a real distinction; and a real distinction cannot be admitted. In the second place,

it is quite unnecessary, and also misleading, to postulate divine ideas as a kind of intermediary factor in creation. Apart from the fact that if the divine ideas are in no way distinct from the divine intellect, which is itself identical with the divine essence, they cannot be an intermediary factor in creation, God can know creatures and create them without the intervention of any 'ideas'.[1] Ockham makes it clear that in his opinion the theory of ideas in God is simply a piece of anthropomorphism. It also involves a confusion between *quid rei* and *quid nominis*.[2] The upholders of the theory would certainly admit that there is not a real distinction either between the divine essence and the divine ideas or between the ideas themselves but that the distinction is a mental distinction; yet they talk as though the distinction of ideas in God were prior to the production of creatures. Moreover, they postulate in God ideas of universals, which as a matter of fact do not correspond to any reality. In fine, Ockham applies the principle of economy to the theory of divine ideas in so far as this theory implies that there are ideas in God which are distinct from creatures themselves, whether the ideas are interpreted as real or as mental relations. It is unnecessary to postulate such ideas in God to explain either His production of or His knowledge of creatures.

In one sense, therefore, Ockham may be said to have rejected the theory of divine ideas. But this does not mean that he was prepared to declare that St. Augustine was in error or that there was no acceptable interpretation of the theory. On the contrary, as far as verbal acceptance was concerned, he must be said to have accepted the theory. But the meaning which he attaches to the statements he makes has to be clearly understood, if he is not to be judged guilty of flagrant self-contradiction. He asserts, for instance, that there is an infinite number of distinct ideas; and this assertion appears at first hearing to be in obvious contradiction with his condemnation of any ascription of distinct ideas to God.

In the first place, the term 'idea' is a connotative term. It denotes directly the creature itself; but it connotes indirectly the divine knowledge or knower. 'And so it can be predicated of the creature itself that it is an idea but not of the knowing agent nor of the knowledge, since neither the knowledge nor the knower is an idea or pattern.'[1] We can say, then, that the creature itself is the idea. 'The ideas are not in God subjectively and really; but they are in Him only objectively, that is, as certain things which are known by Him, for the ideas are the things themselves which are producible by God.'[2] In other words, it is quite sufficient to postulate God on the one hand and creatures on the other hand: the creatures as known by God are the 'ideas', and there are no other ideas. The creature as known from eternity by God can be considered as the pattern or exemplar of the creature as actually existent. 'The ideas are certain known patterns (*exempla*); and it is by reference to them that the knower can produce something in real existence. . . . This description does not fit the divine essence itself, nor any mental relation; but the creature itself. . . . The divine essence is not an idea . . . (Nor is the idea either a real or a mental relation) . . . Not a real relation, since there is no real relation on God's part to the creature; and not a mental relation, both because there is no mental relation of God to the creature to which the name "idea" could be given and because a mental relation cannot be the exemplar of the creature, just as an *ens rationis* cannot be the exemplar of a real being.'[3] But if creatures themselves are the ideas, it follows that 'there are distinct ideas of all makable things, as the things themselves are distinct from one another'.[4] And thus there are distinct ideas of all the essential and integral parts of producible things, like matter and form.[5]

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[1] Cf. 1 *Sent.*, 35, 5, C.

[2] In other words, Ockham considered that the upholders of the theory had been misled by language, confusing words or names with things.

On the other hand, if the ideas are the creatures themselves, it follows that the ideas are of individual things, 'since individual things alone are producible outside (the mind) and no others'.[6] There are, for example, no divine ideas of genera; for the divine ideas are creatures makable by God, and genera cannot be produced as real existents. It follows, too, that there are no ideas of negations, privations, evil, guilt and the like, since these are not and cannot be distinct things.[7] But, as God can produce an infinity of creatures, we must say that there is an infinite number of ideas.[8]

Ockham's discussion of the theory of divine ideas illuminates both the general mediaeval outlook and his own mentality. The respect for St. Augustine in the Middle Ages was too great for it to be possible for a theologian simply to reject one of his main theories. We find, then, the language of the theory being retained and used by Ockham. He was willing to speak of distinct ideas and of these ideas as patterns or exemplars of creation. On the other hand, using the principle of economy and determined to get rid of anything which might seem to come between the omnipotent Creator and the creature so as to govern the divine will, he pruned the theory of all Platonism and identified the ideas with creatures themselves as producible by God and as known by God from eternity as producible. From the philosophical point of view he fitted the theory to his general philosophy by eliminating universal ideas, while from the theological point of view he safeguarded, as he thought, the divine omnipotence and eliminated what he considered to be the contamination of Greek metaphysics. (Having identified the ideas with creatures he was able, however, to observe that Plato acted rightly in neither identifying the ideas with God nor placing them in the divine mind.) This is not to say, of course, that Ockham's use of the language of the Aristotelian theory was insincere. He postulated the theory, in so far as it could be taken to mean simply that creatures are known by God, for one of the main traditional reasons, namely that God creates rationally and not irrationally.[1] But at the same time it is clear that in Ockham's hands the theory was so purged of Platonism that to all intents and purposes it was rejected in its original form. Abelard, while rejecting ultra-realism, had retained the theory of universal ideas in God, largely out of respect for St. Augustine; but Ockham eliminated these universal divine ideas. His version of the theory of ideas is thus consistent with his general principle that there are only individual existents and with his constant attempt to get rid of any other factors which could be got rid of. It might be said, of course, that to speak of producible creatures as known by God from all eternity ('things were ideas from eternity; but they were not actually existent from eternity')[2] is to admit the essence of the theory of ideas; and this is, in fact, what Ockham thought and what justified him, in his opinion, in appealing to St. Augustine. But it is perhaps questionable if Ockham's theory is altogether consistent. As he would not confine God's creative power in any way, he had to extend the range of 'ideas' beyond the things actually produced by God; but to do this is, of course, to admit that the 'ideas' cannot be identified with creatures that have existed, do exist and will exist; and to admit this is to come very close to the Thomist theory, except that no ideas of universals

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[1] 1 *Sent.*, 35, 5, E.
[2] *Ibid.*, G.
[3] *Ibid.*, E.
[4] *Ibid.*, G.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] *Ibid.*

[1] Cf. 1 *Sent.*, 35, 5, E.

[2] *Ibid.*, M.

are admitted. The conclusion that should probably be drawn is not that Ockham made an insincere use of the language of a theory which he had really discarded, but rather that he sincerely accepted the theory, though he interpreted it in such a way as to fit in with his conviction that only individuals exist or can exist and that universal concepts belong to the level of human thought and are not to be attributed to God.

6. When it comes to discussing the divine knowledge Ockham shows a marked and, indeed, very understandable reluctance to make assertions concerning a level of cognition which lies entirely outside our experience.

That God knows, besides Himself, all other things cannot be proved philosophically. Any proof would rest principally on God's universal causality; but, apart from the fact that it cannot be proved by means of the principle of causality that a cause knows its immediate effect, it cannot be proved philosophically that God is the immediate cause of all things.[1] Probable arguments can be given for saying that God knows some things other than Himself; but the arguments are not conclusive. On the other hand, it cannot be proved that God knows nothing other than Himself; for it cannot be proved that every act of cognition depends on its object.[2] Nevertheless, though it cannot be philosophically proved that God is omniscient, that is, that He knows not only Himself but also all other things as well, we know by faith that He is.

But, if God knows all things, does this mean that He knows future contingent events, in the sense of events which depend on free wills for their actuality? 'I say to this question that it must be held without any doubt that God knows all future contingent events with certainty and evidence. But it is impossible for any intellect in our present state to make evident either this fact or the manner in which God knows all future contingent events.'[3] Aristotle, says Ockham, would have said that God has no certain knowledge of any future contingent events for the following reason. No statement that a future contingent event depending on free choice will happen or will not happen is true. The proposition that it either will or will not happen is true; but neither the statement that it will happen nor the statement that it will not happen is true. And if neither statement is true, neither statement can be known. 'In spite of this reason, however, we must hold that God evidently knows all future contingents. But the way (in which

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[1] I *Sent.*, 35, 2, D.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, 38, 1, L.

God knows them) I cannot explain.'[1] But Ockham goes on to say that God does not know future contingent events as present to Him,[2] or by means of ideas as media of knowledge, but by the divine essence itself, although this cannot be proved philosophically. Similarly in the *Tractatus de praedestinatione et de praescientia Dei et de futuris contingentibus*[3] Ockham states: 'So I say that it is impossible to express clearly the way in which God knows future contingent events. However, it must be held that He does (know them), though contingently.' By saying that God knows future contingent facts 'contingently' Ockham means that God knows them as contingent and that His knowledge does not make them necessary. He goes on to suggest that 'the divine essence is intuitive knowledge which is so perfect and so clear that it is itself evident knowledge of all past and future events, so that it knows which part of a contradiction will be true and which part false'.[4]

Thus Ockham affirms that God does not merely know that, for example, I shall choose tomorrow either to go for a walk or to stop at home and read; He knows which alternative is true and which false. This affirmation is not one that can be proved philosophically: it is a theological matter. As to the mode of God's knowledge, Ockham does not offer any suggestion beyond saying that the divine essence is such that God does know future contingent facts. He does not have recourse to the expedient of saying that God knows which part of a disjunctive proposition concerning a future contingent event is true because He determines it to be true: he very sensibly admits that he cannot explain how God knows future contingent events. It is to be noted, however, that Ockham is convinced that one part of a disjunctive proposition concerning such an event is true, and that God knows it as true. This is the important fact from the purely philosophical point of view: the relation of God's knowledge of future free events to the theme of predestination does not concern us here. It is an important fact because it shows that Ockham did not admit an exception to the principle of excluded middle. Some fourteenth-century philosophers did admit an exception. For Petrus Aureoli, as we have seen, propositions which either affirm or deny that a definite contingent event will happen in the future are neither true nor false.

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[1] 1 *Sent.*, 38, 1, M.

[2] St. Thomas held that future contingent events are present to God in virtue of His eternity and that He knows them as present.

[3] Ed. Boehner, p. 15.

[4] *Ibid.*

Petrus Aureoli did not deny that God knows future contingent events; but he maintained that as God's knowledge does not look forward, as it were, to the future, it does not make an affirmative or a negative statement which concerns a definite free act in the future either true or false. One can say, then, that he admitted an instance of a 'three-valued' logic, though it would, of course, be an anachronism to depict him as elaborating such a logic. This is not the case, however, with William of Ockham, who does not admit any propositions to be neither true nor false. He rejected Aristotle's arguments designed to show that there are such propositions, though there are one or two passages which seem at first sight to support Aristotle's point of view. Moreover, in the *Summa totius logicae*[1] Ockham expressly states, in opposition to Aristotle, that propositions about future contingent events are true or false. Again, in the *Quodlibet*[2] he maintains that God can reveal knowledge of affirmative propositions concerning future contingent events, because such propositions are true. God made revelations of this sort to the prophets; though precisely how it was done 'I do not know, because it has not been revealed to me.' One cannot say, then, that Ockham admitted an exception to the principle of excluded middle. And because he did not admit an exception he was not faced with the problems of reconciling the admission with the divine omniscience.

7. If the terms 'will', 'intellect' and 'essence' are understood in an absolute sense, they are synonymous. 'If some name were used to signify precisely the divine essence and nothing else, without any connotation of anything else whatever, and similarly if some name were used to signify the divine will in the same manner, those names would be simply synonymous names; and whatever was predicated of the one could be predicated of the other.'[3] Accordingly, if the terms 'essence' and 'will' are taken absolutely, there is no more reason to say that the divine will is the cause of all things than that the divine essence is the cause of all things: it comes to the same thing. However, whether we speak of the 'divine essence' or of the 'divine will', God is the immediate cause of all things, though this cannot be demonstrated philosophically.[4] The divine will (or the divine essence) is the immediate cause of all things in the sense that without the divine causality no effect would follow, even though all other conditions and dispositions were present. Moreover, the power of God is unlimited, in the

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[1] 2, 32.

[2] 4, 4.

[3] 1 *Sent.*, 45, 1, C.

[4] *Ibid.*, G.

sense that He can do all that is possible. But to say that God cannot do what is intrinsically impossible is not to limit God's power; for it makes no sense to speak of doing or making what is intrinsically impossible. However, God can produce every possible effect. even without a secondary cause; He could, for instance, produce in the human being an act of hatred of Himself, and if He were to do so He would not sin.[1] That God can produce every possible effect, even without the concurrence of a secondary cause, cannot be proved by the philosopher; but it is none the less to be believed.

The divine omnipotence cannot, then, be philosophically proved. But once it is assumed as an article of faith the world appears in a special light. All empirical causal relations, that is, all regular sequences, are seen as contingent, not only in the sense that causal relations are matters for experiential verification and not for *a priori* deduction, but also in the sense that an external agent, namely God, can always produce *B* without employing *A* as secondary cause. Of course, in all mediaeval systems of thought the uniformity and regularity of natural processes were regarded as contingent, inasmuch as the possibility of God's miraculous intervention was admitted by all Christian thinkers. But the metaphysic of essences had conferred on Nature a comparative stability of which Ockham deprived it. With him relations and connections in nature were really reduced to the co-existence or successive existence of 'absolutes'. And in the light of the divine omnipotence, believed on faith, the contingency of relations and of order in nature was seen as the expression of the all-powerful will of God. Ockham's view of nature, taken in isolation from its theological background, might reasonably be regarded as a stage on the path to a scientific view of nature through the elimination of the metaphysical; but the theological background was not for Ockham himself an irrelevant excrescence. On the contrary, the thought of the divine omnipotence and liberty pervaded, explicitly or implicitly, his whole system; and in the next chapter we shall see how his convictions on this matter influenced his moral theory.

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[1] 1 *Sent.*, 42, 1, G

CHAPTER VII

OCKHAM (5)

That an immaterial and incorruptible soul is the form of the body cannot be philosophically proved—The plurality of really distinct forms in man—The rational soul possesses no really distinct faculties—The human person—Freedom—Ockham's ethical theory.

1. JUST as Ockham criticized the traditional proofs of God's existence, so also did he criticize a number of the proofs advanced by his predecessors in psychology. We experience acts of understanding and willing; but there is no compelling reason to attribute these acts to an immaterial form or soul. We experience these acts as acts of the form of the body; and, as far as experience takes us, we might reasonably conclude that they are the acts of an extended and corporeal form.[1] 'Understanding by intellectual soul an immaterial and incorruptible form which is wholly in the whole and wholly in every part (of the body), it cannot be known evidently either by arguments or by experience that there is such a form in us or that the activity of understanding belongs to a substance of this kind in us, or that a soul of this kind is the form of the body. I do not care what Aristotle thought about this, for he seems to speak always in an ambiguous manner. But these three things we hold only by faith.'[2] According to Ockham, then, we do not experience the presence of an immaterial and incorruptible form in ourselves; nor can it be proved that the acts of understanding which we do experience are the acts of such a form. And even if we could prove that the acts of understanding which we experience are the acts of an immaterial substance, it would not follow that this substance is the form of the body. And if it cannot be shown by philosophic reasoning or by experience that we possess immaterial and incorruptible souls, it obviously cannot be shown that these souls are created directly by God.[3] Ockham does not say, of course, that we do not possess immortal souls: what he says is that we cannot prove that we possess them. That we do possess them is a revealed truth, known by faith.

2. But though Ockham accepted on faith the existence of an

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[1] *Quodlibet*, 1, 12.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1, 10.

[3] *Ibid.*, 2, 1.

immaterial and incorruptible form in man, he was not prepared to say that this form informs matter directly. The function of matter is to support a form; and it is clear that the matter of the human body has a form. But the corruptibility of the human body shows that it is not an incorruptible form which informs matter immediately. 'I say that one must postulate in man another form in addition to the intellectual soul, namely a sensitive form, on which a natural agent can act by way of corruption and production.'[1] This sensitive form or soul is distinct from man's intellectual soul and, unless God wills otherwise, it perishes with the body.[2] There is only one sensitive form in an animal or in a man; but it is extended in such a way that 'one part of the sensitive soul perfects one part of matter, while another part of the same soul perfects another part of matter'.[3] Thus the part of the sensitive soul which perfects the organ of sight is the power of seeing, while the part which perfects the organ of hearing is the power of hearing.[4] In this sense, then, we can speak of sensitive powers which are really distinct from one another; for 'the accidental dispositions which are of necessity required for the act of seeing are really distinct from the dispositions which are of necessity required for the act of hearing'.[5] This is clear from the fact that one can lose the power of sight, for example, without losing the power of hearing. But if we mean by 'powers' forms which are the eliciting principles of the various acts of sensation, there is no need to postulate really distinct powers corresponding to the various organs of sense: the principle of economy can be applied. The one eliciting principle is the sensitive form or soul itself, which is extended throughout the body and works through the different sense-organs.

In one place Ockham speaks as follows. 'According to the opinion which I consider the true one there are in man several substantial forms, at least a form of corporeity and the intellectual soul.'[6] In another place he says that though it is difficult to prove that there are or are not several substantial forms in man, 'it is proved (that there are) in the following way, at least in regard to the intellectual soul and the sensitive soul, which are distinct in man'.[7] His remark about the difficulty of proof is explained in the *Quodlibet*,[8] where he says that it is difficult to prove that the sensitive and intellectual souls are distinct in man 'because it cannot be proved from self-evident propositions'. But this does

[1] 2 *Sent.*, 22, H.
[2] *Quodlibet*, 2, 10.
[3] 2 *Sent.*, 26, E.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*, D.
[6] *Ibid.*, 9, C C.
[7] 4 *Sent.*, 7, F.
[8] 2, 10.

not prevent his going on to offer arguments based on experience, such as the argument that we can desire a thing with the sensitive appetite, while at the same time we turn away from it with the rational will. As to the fact that in one place he seems to insist on the intellectual soul and the form of corporeity, whereas in another place he seems to insist on the presence in man of intellectual and sensitive souls, the apparent inconsistency seems to be explicable in terms of the two contexts. In any case Ockham clearly maintained the existence in man of three distinct forms. He argues not only that the intellectual soul and the sensitive soul are distinct in man,[1] but also that the sensitive soul and the form of corporeity are really distinct both in men and brutes.[2] In maintaining the existence of a form of corporeity in man Ockham was, of course, continuing the Franciscan tradition; and he gives the traditional theological argument, that the form of corporeity must be postulated in order to explain the numerical identity of Christ's dead body with His living body, though he gives other arguments as well.

In saying that there is in man a form of corporeity and in maintaining that the intellectual soul does not inform prime matter directly Ockham was continuing, then, a traditional position, in favour of which he rejected that of St. Thomas. Moreover, though he maintained the doctrine of the plurality of substantial forms, he did not deny that man, taken in his totality, is a unity. 'There is only one total being of man, but several partial beings.'[3] Nor did he deny that the intellectual soul is the form of the body, though he did not think that this can be proved philosophically. Hence it can hardly be said that Ockham contradicted the teaching of the Council of Vienne (1311), since the Council did not assert that the rational or intellectual soul informs prime matter directly. The majority of the members of the Council themselves held the doctrine of the form of corporeity; and when they declared that the rational soul informs the body directly they left the question entirely open whether or not the body which is informed by the rational soul is constituted as a body by its own form of corporeity or not. On the other hand, the Council had clearly intended to defend the unity of the human being against the implications of Olivi's psychological theories;[4] and it is at least questionable whether Ockham's teaching satisfied this demand.

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[1] *Quodlibet*, 2, 10; 2 *Sent.*, 22, H.

[2] *Ibid.*, 2, 10.

[3] *Quodlibet*, 2, 11.

[4] See vol. II of this history, pp. 451–3.

It must be remembered that for Ockham a real distinction meant a distinction between things which can be separated, at least by the divine power: he rejected the Scotist doctrine of formal objective distinctions, that is, of objective distinctions between different 'formalities' of one and the same thing, which cannot be separated from one another. When discussing the question whether the sensitive soul and the intellectual soul are really distinct in man, he remarks that the sensitive soul of Christ, though always united to the Deity, remained where God pleased during the time between Christ's death and the resurrection. 'But whether it remained with the body or with the intellectual soul God alone knows; yet both can well be said.'[1] If, however, the sensitive form is really separable from man's rational form and from his body, it is difficult to see how the unity of man can be preserved. It is true, of course, that all the mediaeval Christian thinkers would have admitted that the rational soul is separable from the body: they obviously could not do otherwise. And it might be argued that to assert the separability of the sensitive from the rational soul does not impair man's unity any more than does the assertion that man's rational soul is separable from his body. However, one is entitled to say at least that Ockham's doctrine of the real distinction between the sensitive and rational souls in man makes it harder to safeguard the unity of man than does Scotus's doctrine of the formal distinction. Ockham, of course, disposed of Scotus's formal distinction by means of the principle of economy, and he supported his theory of the real distinction between the sensitive and rational souls by an appeal to experience. It was, indeed, for similar reasons that Scotus maintained the formal distinction; but he seems to have realized better than Ockham the fundamental unity of man's intellectual and sensitive life. In certain respects he appears to have been less influenced by Aristotle than was Ockham, who envisaged the possibility at any rate of the rational soul's being united to the body more as a mover than as a form, though, as we have seen, he accepted on faith the doctrine that the intellectual soul is the form of the body.

3. Though Ockham asserted the existence in man of a plurality of forms, really distinct from one another, he would not admit a real distinction between the faculties of a given form. We have already seen that he refused to allow that the sensitive soul or form possesses powers which are really distinct from the sensitive

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[1] *Quodlibet*, 2, 10.

soul itself and from one another, unless by 'powers' one means simply accidental dispositions in the various sense-organs. He also refused to allow that the rational soul or form possesses faculties which are really distinct from the rational soul itself and from one another. The rational soul is unextended and spiritual; and it cannot have parts or ontologically distinct faculties. What is called the intellect is simply the rational soul understanding, and what we call the will is simply the soul willing. The rational soul produces acts; and the intellectual power or faculty 'does not signify only the essence of the soul, but it connotes the act of understanding. And similarly in the case of the will.'[1] In one sense, then, intellect and will are really distinct, that is, if we are taking them as connotative terms; for an act of understanding is really distinct from an act of willing. But if we are referring to that which produces the acts, intellect and will are not really distinct. The principle of economy can be applied in the elimination of really distinct faculties or principles.[2] There is one rational soul, which can elicit different acts. As to the existence of an active intellect distinct from the passive intellect there is no compelling reason for accepting it. The formation of universal concepts, for example, can be explained without postulating any activity of the intellect.[3] Nevertheless, Ockham is prepared to accept the active intellect on account of the authority 'of the saints and philosophers',[4] in spite of the fact that the arguments for its existence can be answered and that in any case no more than probable arguments can be given.

4. In asserting a plurality of substantial forms in man and in denying at the same time that intellect and will are really distinct faculties Ockham remained faithful to two features of the Franciscan tradition. But the doctrine of the plurality of forms in man traditionally meant an acceptance of the form of corporeity in addition to the one human soul, not a breaking-up, as it were, of the soul into distinct forms in Ockham's sense of distinction. His substitution of the real distinction, involving separability, for Scotus's formal objective distinction was scarcely compatible with the assertion of the unity of the human being. Yet in discussing human personality Ockham insisted on this unity. The person is a *suppositum intellectuale*, a definition which holds good for both created and uncreated persons.[5] A *suppositum* is 'a complete

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 24, L.

[2] *Ibid.*, K.

[3] *Ibid.*, 25, O.

[4] *Ibid.*, A A.

[5] 1 *Sent.*, 25, J.

being, incommunicable by identity, incapable of inhering in anything, and not supported (*sustentatum*) by anything'.[1] The words 'a complete being' exclude from the class of *supposita* all parts, whether essential or integral, while the words 'incommunicable by identity' exclude the divine essence, which, though a complete being, is 'communicated' identically to the divine Persons. The phrase 'incapable of inhering in anything' excludes accidents, while 'not supported (Ockham means "taken up" or "assumed") by anything' excludes the human nature of Christ, which was assumed by the second Person and is consequently not a person. In the commentary on the *Sentences* Ockham defines 'person' as 'an intellectual and complete nature, which is neither supported (*nec sustentatur*, is not assumed) by anything else nor is able, as a part, to form with another thing one being'.[2] In the case of the three divine Persons each *suppositum intellectuale* or Person is constituted by the divine essence and a relation.[3]

The human person, then, is the total being of man, not the rational form or soul alone. It is in virtue of the rational form that a human being is a *suppositum intellectuale* as distinct from any other kind of *suppositum*; but it is the whole man, not the rational form alone, which constitutes the human person. Ockham, therefore, maintains with St. Thomas that the human soul in the state of separation from the body after death is not a person.[4]

5. One of the principal characteristics of a rational creature is freedom.[5] Freedom is the power 'by which I can indifferently and contingently produce an effect in such a way that I can cause or not cause that effect, without any difference in that power having been made'.[6] That one possesses this power cannot be proved by *a priori* reasoning, but 'it can, however, be known evidently through experience, that is, through the fact that every man experiences that however much his reason dictates something his will can will it or not will it'.[7] Moreover, the fact that we blame and praise people, that is, that we impute to them the responsibility for their actions, or for some of their actions, shows that we accept freedom as a reality. 'No act is blameworthy unless it is in our power. For no one blames a man born blind, for he is blind by sense (*caecus sensu*). But if he is blind by his own act, then he is blameworthy.'[8]

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[1] *Quodlibet*, 4, 11.

[2] 1 *Sent.*, 25, 1, J.

[3] *Quodlibet*, 1, 16.

[4] 3 *Sent.*, 1, B; cf. 1 *Sent.*, 23, 1, C.

[5] *Ibid.*, 23, 1, C.

[6] *Ibid.*, 1, 3, U.

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] 3 *Sent.*, 10, H.

According to Ockham, the will is free to will or not to will happiness, the last end; it does not will it necessarily. This is clear in regard to the last end considered in the concrete, that is to say, God. 'No object other than God can satisfy the will, because no act which is directed to something other than God excludes all anxiety and sadness. For, whatever created object may be possessed, the will can desire something else with anxiety and sadness.'[1] But that the enjoyment of the divine essence is possible to us cannot be proved philosophically; it is an article of faith.[2] If then we do not know that the enjoyment of God is possible, we cannot will it. And even if we know by faith that it is possible, we can still will it or not will it, as is clear from experience. What is more, we do not will necessarily even perfect happiness in general. For the intellect may believe that perfect happiness is not possible for man and that the only condition possible for us is the one in which we actually find ourselves. But if the intellect can believe that perfect happiness is impossible, it can dictate to the will that it should not will something which is impossible and incompatible with the reality of human life. And in this case the will is able not to will what the intellect says that it should not will. The judgment of the intellect is, indeed, erroneous; but though 'the will does not necessarily conform to the judgment of the reason, it can conform with the judgment of the reason, whether that judgment be right or erroneous'.[3]

In emphasizing the freedom of the will in the face of the judgment of the intellect Ockham was following in the common tradition of the Franciscan philosophers. But it may be remarked that his view on the will's freedom even in regard to the willing of happiness in general (*beatitudo in communi*) fitted in very much with his ethical theory. If the will is free to will or not to will happiness, it would scarcely be possible to analyse the goodness of human acts in terms of a relation to an end which is necessarily desired. And in point of fact Ockham's ethical theory was, as we shall see presently, markedly authoritarian in character.

It is only to be expected that Ockham would insist that the will is free to elicit an act contrary to that to which the sensitive appetite is strongly inclined.[4] But he admitted, of course, the existence of habits and inclinations in the sensitive appetite and in the will.[5] There is some difficulty, he says, in explaining how it is that habits are formed in a free power like the will as a result of repeated acts of the sensitive appetite; but that they are formed is a matter of experience. 'It is difficult to give the cause why the will is more inclined not to will an object which causes pain in the sensitive appetite.' The cause cannot be found in a command of the intellect, because the intellect can equally well say that the will should will that object as that it should not will it. But 'it is obvious through experience that even if the intellect says that death should be undergone for the sake of the State, the will is naturally, so to speak, inclined to the contrary'. On the other hand, we cannot simply say that the cause of the will's inclination is pleasure in the sensitive appetite. For, 'however intense may be the pleasure in the sensitive appetite, the will can, in virtue of its freedom, will the opposite'. 'And so I say that there does not seem to be any other cause for the will's natural inclination except that such is the nature of the matter; and this fact becomes known to us through experience.'[1] In other words, it is an undoubted fact of experience that the will is inclined to follow the sensitive appetite; but it is difficult to give a satisfactory theoretical explanation of the fact, though this does not alter the nature of the fact. If we indulge the sensitive appetite in a certain direction, a habit is formed, and this habit is reflected in what we can call a habit in the will, and this habit grows in strength if the will does not react sufficiently against the sensitive appetite. On the other hand, it remains in the will's power to act against habit and inclination, even if with difficulty, because the will is essentially free. A human act can never be attributed simply to habit and inclination; for it is possible for the will to choose in a manner contrary to the habit and inclination.

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[1] 1 *Sent.*, 1, 4, S.

[2] *Ibid.*, E.

[3] *Ibid.*, 1, 6, P.

[4] 3 *Sent.*, 10, D.

[5] Cf. 3 *Sent.*, 4, M; 3 *Sent.*, 10, D; 4 *Sent.*, 12, C.

6. A created free will is subject to moral obligation. God is not, and cannot be, under any obligation; but man is entirely dependent upon God, and in his free acts his dependence expresses itself as moral obligation. He is morally obliged to will what God orders him to will and not to will what God orders him not to will. The ontological foundation of the moral order is thus man's dependence on God, as creature on Creator; and the content of the moral law is supplied by the divine precept. 'Evil is nothing else than to do something when one is under an obligation to do the opposite. Obligation does not fall on God, since He is not under any obligation to do anything.'[2]

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[1] 3 *Sent.*, 13, U.

[2] 2 *Sent.*, 5, H.

This personal conception of the moral law was closely connected with Ockham's insistence on the divine omnipotence and liberty. Once these truths are accepted as revealed truths, the whole created order, including the moral law, is viewed by Ockham as wholly contingent, in the sense that not only its existence but also its essence and character depend on the divine creative and omnipotent will. Having got rid of any universal idea of man in the divine mind, Ockham was able to eliminate the idea of a natural law which is in essence immutable. For St. Thomas man was contingent, of course, in the sense that his existence depends on God's free choice; but God could not create the particular kind of being which we call man and impose on him precepts irrespective of their content. And, though he considered, for exegetic reasons connected with the Scriptures, that God can dispense in the case of certain precepts of the natural law, Scotus was fundamentally of the same mind as St. Thomas.[1] There are acts which are intrinsically evil and which are forbidden because they are evil: they are not evil simply because they are forbidden. For Ockham, however, the divine will is the ultimate norm of morality: the moral law is founded on the free divine choice rather than ultimately on the divine essence. Moreover, he did not hesitate to draw the logical consequences from this position. God concurs, as universal creator and conserver, in any act, even in an act of hatred of God. But He could also cause, as total cause, the same act with which He concurs as partial cause. 'Thus He can be the total cause of an act of hatred of God, and that without any moral malice.'[2] God is under no obligation; and therefore He could cause an act in the human will which would be a morally evil act if the man were responsible for it. If the man were responsible for it, he would commit sin, since he is obliged to love God and not hate Him; but obligation, being the result of divine imposition, cannot affect God Himself. 'By the very fact that God wills something, it is right for it to be done. . . . Hence if God were to cause hatred of Himself in anyone's will, that is, if He were to be the total cause of the act (He is, as it is, its partial cause), neither would that man sin nor would God; for God is not under any obligation, while the man is not (in the case) obliged, because the act would not be in his own power.'[3] God can do anything or order anything which does not involve logical contradiction. Therefore, because, according to Ockham, there is no natural or formal repugnance between loving God and loving a creature in a way which has been forbidden by God, God could order fornication. Between loving God and loving a creature in a manner which is illicit there is only an extrinsic repugnance, namely the repugnance which arises from the fact that God has actually forbidden that way of loving a creature. Hence, if God were to order fornication, the latter would be not only licit but meritorious.[1] Hatred of God, stealing, committing adultery, are forbidden by God. But they could be ordered by God; and, if they were, they would be meritorious acts.[2] No one can say that Ockham lacked the courage to draw the logical conclusions from his personal theory of ethics.

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[1] On Scotus's moral theory, see vol. II of this history, pp. 545–50.

[2] 2 *Sent.*, 19, P.

[3] 4 *Sent.*, 9, E–F.

Needless to say, Ockham did not mean to suggest that adultery, fornication, theft and hatred of God are legitimate acts in the present moral order; still less did he mean to encourage the commission of such acts. His thesis was that such acts are wrong because God has forbidden them; and his intention was to emphasize the divine omnipotence and liberty, not to encourage immorality. He made use of the distinction between the absolute power (*potentia absoluta*) of God, by which God could order the opposite of the acts which He has, as a matter of fact, forbidden, and the *potentia ordinata* of God, whereby God has actually established a definite moral code. But he explained the distinction in such a way as to make it clear not only that God could have established another moral order but that He could at any time order what He has actually forbidden.[3] There is no sense, then, in seeking for any more ultimate reason of the moral law than the divine *fiat*. Obligation arises through the encounter of a created free will with an external precept. In God's case there can be no question of an external precept. Therefore God is not obliged to order any kind of act rather than its opposite. That He has ordered this and forbidden that is explicable in terms of the divine free choice; and this is a sufficient reason.

The authoritarian element in Ockham's moral theory is, very naturally, the element which has attracted the most attention. But there is another element, which must also be mentioned. Apart from the fact that Ockham analyses the moral virtues in dependence on the Aristotelian analysis, he makes frequent use of the Scholastic concept of 'right reason' (*recta ratio*). Right reason is depicted as the norm, at least the proximate norm, of morality. 'It can be said that every right will is in conformity with right reason.'[1] Again, 'no moral virtue, nor any virtuous act, is possible unless it is in conformity with right reason; for right reason is included in the definition of virtue in the second book of the *Ethics*'.[2] Moreover, for an act to be virtuous, not only must it be in accordance with right reason but it must also be done because it is in accordance with right reason. 'No act is perfectly virtuous unless in that act the will wills that which is prescribed by right reason because it is prescribed by right reason.'[3] For if one willed that which is prescribed by right reason simply because it is pleasant or for some other motive, without regard to its being prescribed by right reason, one's act 'would not be virtuous, since it would not be elicited in conformity with right reason. For to elicit an act in conformity with right reason is to will what is prescribed by right reason on account of its being so prescribed.'[4] This insistence on motive was not, of course, a sudden outbreak of 'puritanism' on Ockham's part: Aristotle had insisted that for an act to be perfectly virtuous it must be done for its own sake, that is, because it is the right thing to do. We call an act just, he says, if it is what the just man would do; but it does not follow that a man is just, that is, that he has the virtue of justice, simply because he does the act which the just man would do in the circumstances. He has to do it as the just man would do it; and this includes doing it because it is the just thing to do.[5]

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[1] 3 *Sent.*, 12, AAA. [2] 2 *Sent.*, 19, O. [3] Cf. *Opus nonaginta dierum*, c. 95.

Right reason, then, is the norm of morality. A man may be mistaken in what he thinks is the dictate of right reason; but, even if he is mistaken, he is obliged to conform his will to what he believes to be prescribed by right reason. In other words, conscience is always to be followed, even if it is an erroneous conscience. A man may, of course, be responsible for his having an erroneous conscience; but it is also possible for him to be in 'invincible ignorance', and in this case he is not responsible for his error. In any case, however, he is bound to follow what happens to be the judgment of his conscience. 'A created will which follows an invincibly erroneous conscience is a right will; for the divine will wills that it should follow its reason when this reason is not blameworthy. If it acts against that reason (that is, against an invincibly erroneous conscience), it sins. . . .'[1] A man is morally obliged to do what he in good faith believes to be right. This doctrine, that one is morally obliged to follow one's conscience, and that to follow an invincibly erroneous conscience, so far from being a sin, is a duty, was not a new doctrine in the Middle Ages; but Ockham expressed it in a clear and unequivocal manner.

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[1] 1 *Sent.*, 41, K.

[2] 3 *Sent.*, 12, NN. For the reference to Aristotle's *Ethics*, cf. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1107, a.

[3] 3 *Sent.*, 12, CCC.

[4] *Ibid.*, CCC–DDD.

[5] Cf. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1105, a b.

It would seem, then, at least at first sight, that we are faced with what amounts to two moral theories in Ockham's philosophy. On the one hand there is his authoritarian conception of the moral law. It would appear to follow from this conception that there can be only a revealed moral code. For how otherwise than through revelation could man know a moral code which depends entirely on God's free choice? Rational deduction could not give us knowledge of it. On the other hand there is Ockham's insistence on right reason, which would seem to imply that reason can discern what is right and what is wrong. The authoritarian conception of morality expresses Ockham's conviction of the freedom and omnipotence of God as they are revealed in Christianity, while the insistence on right reason would seem to represent the influence on his thought of Aristotle's ethical teaching and of the moral theories of his mediaeval predecessors. It might seem, then, that Ockham presents one type of ethical theory in his capacity as theologian and another type in his capacity as philosopher. It has thus been maintained that in spite of his authoritarian conception of the moral law Ockham promoted the growth of a 'lay' moral theory represented by his insistence on reason as the norm of morality and on the duty of doing what one in good faith believes to be the right thing to do.

That there is truth in the contention that two moral theories are implicit in Ockham's ethical teaching can hardly, I think, be denied. He built on the substructure of the Christian-Aristotelian tradition, and he retained a considerable amount of it, as is shown by what he says about the virtues, right reason, natural rights and so on. But he added to this substructure a superstructure which consisted in an ultra-personal conception of the moral law; and he does not seem fully to have realized that the addition of this superstructure demanded a more radical recasting of the substructure than he actually carried out. His personal conception of the moral law was not without precedents in Christian thought; but the point is that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries a moral theory had been elaborated in close association with metaphysics, which ruled out any view of the moral law as dependent simply and solely on the divine will. In retaining a good deal of the former moral theory, while at the same time asserting an authoritarian interpretation of the moral law, Ockham was inevitably involved in difficulties. Like other Christian mediaeval thinkers he accepted, of course, the existence of an actual moral order; and in his discussion of such themes as the function of reason or the existence of natural rights[1] he implied that reason can discern the precepts, or at least the fundamental precepts, of the moral law which actually obtains. At the same time he insisted that the moral order which actually obtains is due to the divine choice, in the sense that God could have established a different moral order and that He could even now order a man to do something contrary to the moral law which He has established. But, if the present moral order is dependent simply and solely on the divine choice, how could we know what it is save through God's revelation? It would seem that there can be only a revealed ethic. Yet Ockham does not appear to have said that there can be only a revealed ethic: he seems to have thought that men, without revelation, are able to discern the moral law in some sense. In this case they can presumably discern a prudential code or a set of hypothetical imperatives. Without revelation men could see that certain acts fit human nature and human society and that other acts are harmful; but they could not discern an immutable natural law, since there is no such immutable natural law, nor could they know, without revelation, whether the acts they thought right were really the acts ordered by God. If reason cannot prove conclusively God's existence, it obviously cannot prove that God has ordered this rather than that. If, therefore, we leave Ockham's theology out of account, it would seem that we are left with a non-metaphysical and non-theological morality, the precepts of which cannot be known as necessary or immutable precepts. Hence perhaps Ockham's insistence on the following of conscience, even an erroneous conscience. Left to himself, that is, without revelation, man might perhaps elaborate an ethic of the Aristotelian type; but he could not discern a natural law of the type envisaged by St. Thomas, since Ockham's authoritarian conception of the moral law, coupled with his 'nominalism', would rule this out.

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[1] 3 *Sent.*, 13, O.

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[1] On this subject, see the following chapter.

In this sense, then, one is probably justified in saying that two moralities are implicit in Ockham's teaching, namely an authoritarian ethic and a 'lay' or non-theological ethic.

It is one thing, however, to say that the two ethical systems are implicit in Ockham's moral teaching; and it is another thing to suggest that he intended to promote an ethic divorced from theology. One could say with far more justice that he intended the very opposite; for he evidently considered that his predecessors had obscured the doctrines of the divine omnipotence and liberty through their theories of an immutable natural law. As far as the interpretation of Ockham's own mind is concerned, it is clear that it is the personal side of his moral theory which has to be stressed. One has only to look at a passage like the following wherein he says that the reason why an act elicited contrary to the dictate of conscience is a wrong act is that 'it would be elicited contrary to the divine precept and the divine will which wills that an act should be elicited in conformity with right reason'.[1] In other words, the ultimate and sufficient reason why we ought to follow right reason or conscience is that God wills that we should do so. Authoritarianism has the last word. Again, Ockham speaks of an act 'which is intrinsically and necessarily virtuous *stante ordinatione divina*'.[2] In the same section he says that 'in the present order (*stante ordinatione quae nunc est*) no act is perfectly virtuous unless it is elicited in conformity with right reason'. Such remarks are revealing. A necessarily virtuous act is only relatively so, that is, if God has decreed that it should be virtuous. Given the order instituted by God, it follows logically that certain acts are good and others bad; but the order itself is dependent on God's choice. It possesses a certain stability, and Ockham did not imagine that God is constantly changing His orders, so to speak; but he insists that its stability is not absolute.

One can, then, sum up Ockham's position on more or less the following lines. The human being, as a free created being which is entirely dependent on God, is morally obliged to conform his will to the divine will in regard to that which God commands or prohibits. Absolutely speaking, God could command or prohibit any act, provided that a contradiction is not involved. Actually God has established a certain moral law. As a rational being man can see that he ought to obey this law. But he may not know what God has commanded; and in this case he is morally obliged to do

[1] 3 *Sent.*, 13, C.

[2] *Ibid.*, 12, CCC.

what he honestly believes to be in accordance with God's commands. To act otherwise would be to act contrary to what is believed to be the divine ordinance; and to do this is to sin. It is not clear what Ockham thought of the moral situation of the man who has no knowledge of revelation, or even no knowledge of God's existence. He appears to imply that reason can discern something of the present moral order; but, if he did mean this, it is difficult to see how this idea can be reconciled with his authoritarian conception of morality. If the moral law is dependent simply on the divine choice, how can its content be known apart from revelation? If its content can be known apart from revelation, how can it be dependent simply on the divine choice? It would seem that the only way of escaping this difficulty is to say that what can be known apart from revelation is simply a provisional code of morality, based on non-theological considerations. But that Ockham actually had this notion clearly in mind, which would imply the possibility of a purely philosophic and second-rank ethic, as distinct from the divinely-imposed and obligatory ethic, I should not care to affirm. He thought in terms of the ethical code commonly accepted by Christians, though he went on to assert that it was dependent on the free divine choice. Very probably he did not clearly realize the difficulties created by his authoritarian conception.

CHAPTER VIII

OCKHAM (6)

The dispute on evangelical poverty, and the doctrine of natural rights—Political sovereignty is not derived from the spiritual power—The relation of the people to their ruler—How far were Ockham's political ideas novel or revolutionary?—The pope's position within the Church.

1. It would be a mistake to suppose that Ockham was a political philosopher in the sense of a man who reflects systematically on the nature of political society, sovereignty and government. Ockham's political writings were not written to provide an abstract political theory; they were immediately occasioned by contemporary disputes involving the Holy See, and Ockham's immediate object was to resist and denounce what he regarded as papal aggression and unjustified absolutism; he was concerned with relations between pope and emperor and between the pope and the members of the Church rather than with political society and political government as such. Ockham shared in the respect for law and custom and in the dislike for arbitrary and capricious absolutism which were common characteristics of the mediaeval philosophers and theologians: it would be wrong to suppose that he set out to revolutionize mediaeval society. It is true, of course, that Ockham was led to lay down general principles on the relations of Church and State and on political government; but he did this mainly in the course of conducting controversies on concrete and specific points of dispute. For example, he published the *Opus nonaginta dierum* about the year 1332 in defence of the attitude of Michael of Cesena in regard to the dispute on evangelical poverty. Pope John XXII had condemned as heretical a doctrine on evangelical poverty which was held by many Franciscans and had deprived Michael of his post as General of the Franciscan Order. Counterblasts from Michael, who, together with Bonagratia of Bergamo and Ockham had taken refuge with the emperor, Ludwig of Bavaria, elicited from the pope the bull *Quia vir reprobus* (1329) in which Michael's doctrines were again censured and the Franciscans were rebuked for daring to publish tracts criticizing papal pronouncements. Ockham retaliated by subjecting the bull to

close scrutiny and trenchant criticism in the *Opus nonaginta dierum*. This publication was occasioned, therefore, not by any purely theoretical consideration of the position of the Holy See, but by a concrete dispute, that concerning evangelical poverty; it was not composed by a political philosopher in hours of cool reflection but by a participant in a heated controversy. Ockham criticized the papal pronouncements as themselves heretical and was able to refer to the erroneous opinion of John XXII concerning the beatific vision. He was thus writing primarily as a theologian.

But though Ockham wrote the *Opus nonaginta dierum* for the specific purpose of defending his Franciscan colleagues against papal condemnation, and though he devoted a good deal of his attention to discovering heresies and errors in the pope's pronouncements, he discussed the poverty question in the manner which one would expect of a philosopher, a man accustomed to close and careful reasoning. The result is that one can find in the work Ockham's general ideas on, for example, the right of property, though it must be confessed that it is not easy to settle the question exactly which of the opinions discussed are Ockham's own opinions, since he writes in a much more restrained and impersonal manner than one might expect in a polemical writer involved in a heated controversy.

Man has a natural right to property. God gave to man the power to dispose of the goods of the earth in the manner dictated by right reason, and since the Fall right reason shows that the personal appropriation of temporal goods is necessary.[1] The right of private property is thus a natural right, willed by God, and, as such, it is inviolable, in the sense that no one can be despoiled of this right by an earthly power. The State can regulate the exercise of the right of private property, the way in which property is transferred in society, for example; but it cannot deprive men of the right against their will. Ockham does not deny that a criminal, for instance, can legitimately be deprived of his freedom to acquire and possess property; but the right of property, he insists, is a natural right which does not depend in its essence on the positive conventions of society; and without fault on his own part or some reasonable cause a man cannot be forcibly deprived of the exercise of the right, still less of the right itself.

Ockham speaks of a right (*ius*) as being a legitimate power

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[1] *Opus nonaginta dierum*, c. 14.

(*potestas licita*), a power in conformity with right reason (*conformis rationi rectae*), and he distinguishes legitimate powers which are anterior to human convention from those which depend on human convention. The right of private property is a legitimate power which is anterior to human convention, since right reason dictates the institution of private property as a remedy for the moral condition of man after the Fall. Inasmuch as a man is permitted to own property and use it and to resist anyone who tries to wrest his property from him, he has a right to private property, for that permission (*licentia*) comes from the natural law. But not all natural rights are of the same kind. There are, first, natural rights which are valid until a contrary convention is made. For example, the Roman people have, according to Ockham, the right to elect their bishop: this follows from the fact that they are under an obligation to have a bishop. But the Roman people may cede this right of election to the Cardinals, though the right of the Roman people must again be exercised if for any reason election by the Cardinals becomes impossible or impracticable. Conditional natural rights of this sort are examples of what Ockham calls rights flowing from the natural law understood in the third sense.[1] Secondly, there are natural rights which obtained in the state of humanity before the Fall, though 'natural right' in this sense means simply the consequence of a perfection which once existed and no longer exists; it is conditional on a certain state of human perfection. Thirdly, there are rights which share in the immutability of moral precepts, and the right of private property is one of these rights. In the *Breviloquium* Ockham declares that 'the aforementioned power of appropriating temporal things falls under a precept and is reckoned to belong to the sphere of morality (*inter pure moralia computatur*)'.

But a further distinction is required. There are some natural rights in the third sense named (Ockham's *primus modus*) which are so bound up with the moral imperative that nobody is entitled to renounce them, since renunciation of the right would be equivalent to a sin against the moral law. Thus everyone has the duty of preserving his own life, and he would sin against the moral law by starving himself to death. But if he is obliged to maintain his life, he has a right to do so, a right which he cannot renounce. The right of private property, however, is not of this kind. There is, indeed, a precept of right reason that temporal goods should be appropriated and owned by men; but it is not necessary for the fulfilment of the precept that every individual man should exercise the right of private property, and he can, for a just and reasonable cause, renounce all rights to the possession of property. Ockham's main point in this connection is that the renunciation must be voluntary, and that when it is voluntary it is legitimate.

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[1] *Dialogus*, 22, 6.

Pope John XXII had maintained that the distinction between merely using temporal things and having the right to use them was unreal. His principle was that 'he who, without a right, uses something uses it unjustly'. Now, the Franciscans were admittedly entitled to use temporal things like food and clothing. Therefore they must have a right over them, a right to use them, and it was unreal to pretend that it was the Holy See which possessed all these things without the Franciscans having any right at all. The reply was made that it is quite possible to renounce a right to property and at the same time to use legitimately those things of which the ownership has been renounced. The Franciscans renounced all rights of property, even the right of use: they were not like tenants who, without owning a field, have the right to use it and enjoy its fruits, but they enjoyed simply a 'precarious' use of temporal things over which they had no property rights at all. We must distinguish, says Ockham, between *usus iuris*, which is the right of using temporal things without the right over their substance, and *usus facti*, which springs from a mere permission to use the things of another, a permission which is at any moment revocable.[1] The pope had said that the Franciscans could not use food, for example, legitimately without at the same time having a right to do so, without, that is to say, possessing the *usus iuris*; but this is not true, said Ockham; the Franciscans have not the *usus iuris* but only the *usus facti*; they have the *usus nudus* or mere use of temporal things. Mere permission to use them does not confer a right to use them, for the permission is always revocable. The Franciscans are *usuarii simplices* in a strict sense; their use of temporal things is permitted or tolerated by the Holy See, which possesses both the *dominium perfectum* and the *dominium utile* (or, in Ockham's phrase, *usus iuris*) over these things. They have renounced all property rights whatsoever, and this is true evangelical poverty, after the example of Christ and the Apostles, who neither individually nor in common possessed any temporal things (an opinion which John XXII declared to be heretical).

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[1] Cf. *Opus nonaginta dierum*, c. 2.

The actual dispute concerning evangelical poverty does not concern the history of philosophy; but it has been mentioned in order to show how Ockham's preoccupation with a concrete dispute led him to institute an inquiry concerning rights in general and the right of property in particular. His main point was that the right of private property is a natural right, but that it is a right which a man may voluntarily renounce, and that this renunciation may even include the right of use. From the philosophical point of view the chief interest of the discussion lies in the fact that Ockham insisted on the validity of natural rights which are anterior to human conventions, especially in view of the fact that he made the natural law dependent on the divine will. It may appear a gross inconsistency to say on the one hand that the natural law depends on the divine will and on the other hand that there are certain natural rights which share in the fixity of the natural law, and when Ockham asserts, as he does, that the natural law is immutable and absolute he would seem to be underlining the self-contradiction. It is true that, when Ockham asserts the dependence of the moral law on the divine will, he refers primarily to the possibility that God might have created a moral order different from the one He has actually instituted, and, if this were all that he meant, self-contradiction might be avoided by saying that the moral law is absolute and unalterable in the present order. But Ockham meant more than that; he meant that God can dispense from the natural law, or order acts contrary to the natural law, even when the present moral order has been constituted. It may be that the idea of the moral law's dependence on the divine will is more evident in the commentary on the *Sentences* than in Ockham's political works and that the idea of the immutability of the moral law is more evident in the political works than in the commentary on the *Sentences*; but the former idea appears, not only in the commentary, but also in the political works. In the *Dialogus*, for example, he says that there can be no exception from the precepts of the natural law in the strict sense 'unless God specially excepts someone'.[1] The same theme recurs in the *Octo quaestionum decisiones*,[2] and in the *Breviloquium*. The most one can say, then, by way of apology for Ockham, in regard to his consistency or lack of it, is that for him the natural law is

[1] *Dialogus*, 1, 3, 2, 24.

[2] 1, 13.

unalterable, given the present order created by God, unless God intervenes to alter it in any particular instance. As a pure philosopher Ockham speaks on occasion as though there were absolute moral laws and human rights; but as a theologian he was determined to maintain the divine omnipotence as he understood it; and as he was theologian and philosopher in one it was scarcely possible for him to reconcile the absolute character of the moral law with his interpretation of the divine omnipotence, an omnipotence known by revelation but unprovable by the philosopher.

2. The dispute about evangelical poverty was not the only dispute in which Ockham was engaged; he was also involved in a dispute between the Holy See and the emperor. In 1323 Pope John XXII attempted to intervene in an imperial election, maintaining that papal confirmation was required, and when Ludwig of Bavaria was elected, the pope denounced the election. But in 1328 Ludwig had himself crowned at Rome, after which he declared the Avignon Pope to be deposed and appointed Nicholas V. (This antipope, however, had to make his submission in 1330, when Ludwig had departed for Germany.) The quarrel between pope and emperor lasted on after the death of John XXII in 1334 through the reign of Benedict XII into that of Clement VI, during whose pontificate Ockham died in 1349.

The immediate point at issue in this dispute was the emperor's independence of the Holy See; but the controversy had, of course, a greater importance than that attaching to the question whether or not an imperial election required papal confirmation; the broader issue of the proper relation between Church and State was inevitably involved. Further, the question of the right relation of sovereign to subjects was also raised, though it was raised primarily in regard to the pope's position in the Church. In this controversy Ockham stoutly supported the independence of the State in relation to the Church and in regard to the Church itself he strongly attacked papal 'absolutism'. His most important political work is the *Dialogus*, the first part of which was composed in the reign of John XXII. The *De potestate et iuribus romani imperii*, written in 1338 during the reign of Benedict XII, was subsequently incorporated in the *Dialogus* as the second treatise of the third part. The first treatise of the third part, the *De potestate papae et cleri*, was written with the purpose of dissociating its author from Marsilius of Padua, and it elicited from the latter the *Defensor minor*. The *Octo quaestionum decisiones super* *potestatem summi pontificis* was directed, partly at least, against the *De iure regni et imperii* of Leopold of Babenberg, while in the *Breviloquium de principatu tyrannico* Ockham gave a clear exposition of his political views. His last work, *De pontificum et imperatorum potestate*, was a diatribe against the Avignon papacy. Other polemical works include the *Compendium errorum papae*, an early publication which sums up Ockham's grievances against John XXII, and the *An princeps pro suo succursu, scilicet guerrae, possit recipere bona ecclesiarum, etiam invito papa*, which was written perhaps between August 1338 and the end of 1339 and was designed to show that Edward III of England was justified in taking subsidies from the clergy, even contrary to the pope's wishes or directions, in his war against the French.

Turning first to the controversy concerning the relations between Church and State one can remark that for the most part Ockham's thought moved within the older mediaeval political outlook. In other words, he gave little consideration to the relation of national monarch to emperor, and he was more concerned with the particular relations between pope and emperor than between Church and State in general. In view of his position as a refugee at the court of Ludwig of Bavaria this was only to be expected, though it is true, of course, that he could not discuss the immediate issue which interested him personally without extending his attention to the wider and more general issue. And, if one looks at Ockham's polemics from the point of view of their influence and in regard to the historical development of Europe, one can say that he did, in effect, concern himself with the relations of Church and State, for the position of the emperor in relation to a national monarch like the king of England was little more than a certain pre-eminence of honour.

In maintaining a clear distinction between the spiritual and temporal powers Ockham was not, of course, propounding any revolutionary theory. He insisted that the supreme head in the spiritual sphere, namely the pope, is not the source of imperial power and authority, and also that papal confirmation is not required in order to validate an imperial election. If the pope arrogates to himself, or attempts to assume, power in the temporal sphere, he is invading a territory over which he has no jurisdiction. The authority of the emperor derives, not from the pope, but from his election, the electors standing in the place of the people. There can be no doubt but that Ockham regarded political power as deriving from God through the people, either immediately, in the event of the people directly choosing a sovereign, or mediately, if the people have agreed, explicitly or implicitly, to some other way of transmitting political authority. The State needs a government and the people cannot avoid choosing a sovereign of some kind, whether emperor, monarch or magistrates; but in no case is the authority derived from, or dependent on, the spiritual power. That Ockham did not intend his denial of the pope's supreme power in temporal matters to apply only in favour of the emperor is made abundantly clear; for example, by the *An princeps pro suo succursu*. All legitimate sovereigns enjoy authority which is not derived from the pope.

3. But, as we have already seen, if Ockham supported the independence of temporal princes in relation to the Church, so far as temporal matters were concerned, he did not reject the temporal authority of the papacy in order to support political absolutism. All men are born free, in the sense that they have a right to freedom, and, though the principle of authority, like the principle of private property, belongs to the natural law, they enjoy a natural right to choose their rulers. The method of choosing a ruler and of transmitting authority from one ruler to his successor depends on human law, and it is obviously not necessary that every successive ruler should be elected; but the fundamental freedom of man to choose and appoint the temporal authority is a right which no power on earth can take from him. The community can, of course, of its own free will establish a hereditary monarchy; but in this case it voluntarily submits itself to the monarch and his legitimate successors, and if the monarch betrays his trust and abuses his authority, the community can assert its freedom by deposing him. 'After the whole world spontaneously consented to the dominion and empire of the Romans, the same empire was a true, just and good empire'; its legitimacy rested on its free acceptance by its subjects.[1] Nobody should be placed over the community except by its choice and consent; every people and State is entitled to elect its head if it so wills.[2] If there were any people without a ruler in temporal affairs, the pope would have neither the duty nor the power of appointing rulers for that people, if they wished to appoint their own ruler or rulers.[3]

4. These two important points, namely the independence of the

[1] *Dialogus*, 2, 3, 1, 27.

[2] *Ibid.*, 2, 3, 2, 6.

[3] *Opus nonaginta dierum*, 2, 4.

temporal power and the freedom of the people to settle their own form of government if they so choose, were not in themselves novelties. The idea of the two swords, for example, represented the common mediaeval outlook, and when Ockham protested against the tendency of certain popes to arrogate to themselves the position and rights of universal temporal monarchs, he was simply expressing the conviction of most mediaeval thinkers that the spiritual and temporal spheres must be clearly distinguished. Again, all the great mediaeval theologians and philosophers believed in natural rights in some sense and would have rejected the notion that princes possess absolute and unrestricted power. The mediaevals had a respect for law and custom and thoroughly disliked arbitrary power; and the idea that rulers must govern within the general framework of law expressed the general mediaeval outlook. It is difficult to say exactly how St. Thomas Aquinas regarded the problem of the derivation of the sovereign's authority; but he certainly thought of it as limited, as having a definite purpose, and he certainly considered that subjects are not bound to submit to tyrannical government. He recognized that some governments do, or may, derive their authority immediately from the people (ultimately from God); and, though there is no very clear indication that he regarded all governments as necessarily deriving their authority in this manner, he maintained that there can be a resistance to tyranny which is justified and is not to be accounted sedition. A ruler has a trust to fulfil, and if he does not fulfil it but abuses his trust, the community is entitled to depose him. There is good reason, then, for saying, as has been said, that in regard to dislike of arbitrary power and in regard to insistence on law, the principles of Ockham did not substantially differ from those of St. Thomas.

However, even though Ockham's insistence on the distinction of the spiritual and temporal powers and on the fundamental rights of subjects in a political community was not novel, still less revolutionary, if considered as expressing abstract principles, it does not follow that the manner in which he conducted his controversy with the papacy was not part of a general movement which can be called revolutionary. For the dispute between Ludwig of Bavaria and the papacy was one incident in a general movement of which the dispute between Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII had been an earlier symptom; and the direction of the movement, if looked at from the point of view of concrete historical development, was towards the complete independence of the State from the Church, even in spiritual matters. Ockham's thought may have moved within the old categories of papacy and empire, but the gradual consolidation of centralized national States was leading to a breakdown of the balance between the two powers and to the emergence of a political consciousness which found partial expression in the Reformation. Moreover, Ockham's hostility to papal absolutism even within the spiritual sphere, when viewed in the light of his general remarks on the relation of subjects to rulers, was bound to have implications in the sphere of political thought as well. I now turn to his ideas on the pope's position within the Church; though it is worth while noticing beforehand that, though Ockham's ideas on Church government concerned the ecclesiastical sphere and heralded the Conciliar Movement which was to be proximately occasioned by the Great Schism (1378–1417), these ideas were also part of the wider movement which ended in the disintegration of mediaeval Christendom.

5. It is entirely unnecessary to say more than a few words on the subject of Ockham's polemic against the position of the pope within the Church, as this subject belongs to Church history, not to the history of philosophy; but, as already mentioned, the further implications of his ideas on the subject make it desirable to say something about them. Ockham's main contention was that papal absolutism within the Church was unjustified, that it was detrimental to the good of Christendom, and that it should be checked and limited.[1] The means which Ockham suggested for limiting papal power was the establishment of a General Council. Possibly drawing on his experience and knowledge of the constitutions of the mendicant Orders he envisaged religious corporations such as parishes, chapters and monasteries sending chosen representatives to provincial synods. These synods would elect representatives for the General Council, which should include layfolk as well as clergy. It is to be noted that Ockham did not look on the General Council as an organ of infallible doctrinal pronouncements, even if he thought that it was more likely to be right than the pope alone, but as a limitation to and a check on papal absolutism: he was concerned with ecclesiastical politics, with constitutionalizing the papacy, rather than with purely theological matters. He did not deny that the pope is the successor

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[1] Ockham did not deny papal supremacy as such; he rejected what he called 'tyrannical' supremacy.

of St. Peter and the Vicar of Christ, nor did he wish, in principle, to destroy the papal government of the Church; but he regarded the Avignon papacy as going beyond its brief, so to speak, and as being unfit to govern without decisive checks and limitations. No doubt he held heterodox opinions; but his motive in making these suggestions was that of combating the actual exercise of arbitrary and unrestrained power, and that is why his ideas on the constitutionalization of the papacy had implications in the political sphere, even if his ideas, when looked at in relation to the immediate future, must be regarded as heralding the Conciliar Movement.

CHAPTER IX

THE OCKHAMIST MOVEMENT: JOHN OF MIRECOURT AND NICHOLAS OF AUTRECOURT

The Ockhamist or nominalist movement—John of Mirecourt—Nicholas of Autrecourt—Nominalism in the universities—Concluding remarks.

1. THE phrase 'Ockhamist Movement' is perhaps something of a misnomer. For it might be understood as implying that William of Ockham was the sole fountainhead of the 'modern' current of thought in the fourteenth century and that the thinkers of the movement all derived their ideas from him. Some of these thinkers, like the Franciscan Adam Wodham or Goddam (d. 1358), had indeed been pupils of Ockham, while others, like the Dominican Holkot (d. 1349), were influenced by Ockham's writings without, however, having actually been his pupils. But in some other cases it is difficult to discover how far a given philosopher owed his ideas to Ockham's influence. However, even if from one point of view it may be preferable to speak of the 'nominalist movement' rather than of the 'Ockhamist Movement', it cannot be denied that Ockham was the most influential writer of the movement; and it is only just that the movement should be associated with his name. The names 'nominalism' and 'terminism' were used synonymously to designate the *via moderna*; and the salient characteristic of terminism was the analysis of the function of the term in the proposition, namely the doctrine of *suppositio* or standing-for. As has already been indicated, the theory of *suppositio* can be found in logicians before Ockham; in the writings of Peter of Spain, for example; but it was Ockham who developed the terminist logic in that conceptualist and 'empiricist' direction which we have come to associate with nominalism. One is justified, therefore, in my opinion, in speaking of the 'Ockhamist Movement', provided that one remembers that the phrase is not meant to imply that Ockham was the direct source of all the developments of that movement.

The development of the terminist logic forms one of the aspects of the movement. In this connection one may mention Richard Swineshead and William Heytesbury, both of whom were associated with Merton College, Oxford. The latter, whose logical writings enjoyed a wide circulation, became chancellor of the university of Oxford in 1371. Another popular logician of the fourteenth century was Richard Billingham. But the technical logical studies of the nominalists and of those influenced by the nominalist movement were frequently associated, as were those of Ockham himself, with a destructive attack on the traditional metaphysics, or rather on the proofs offered in the traditional metaphysics. Sometimes these attacks were based on the view that the traditional lines of proof did not amount to more than probable arguments. Thus according to Richard Swineshead the arguments which had been employed to prove the unicity of God were not demonstrations but dialectical arguments, that is to say, arguments which did not exclude the possibility of the opposite being true or which could not, in the language of the time, be reduced to the principle of contradiction. Sometimes emphasis was placed on our supposed inability to know any substance. If we can have no knowledge of any substance, argued Richard Billingham, we cannot prove the existence of God. Monotheism is a matter of faith, not of philosophical proof.

The relegation of propositions like 'God exists', where the term 'God' is understood as denoting the supreme unique Being, to the sphere of faith does not mean that any philosopher doubted the truth of these propositions: it simply means that he did not think that such propositions can be proved. Nevertheless, this sceptical attitude in regard to metaphysical arguments was doubtless combined, in the case of different philosophers, with varying degrees of insistence on the primacy of faith. A lecturer or professor in the faculty of arts might question the validity of metaphysical arguments on purely logical grounds, while a theologian might also be concerned to emphasize the weakness of the human reason, the supremacy of faith and the transcendent character of revealed truth. Robert Holkot, for example, postulated a 'logic of faith', distinct from and superior to natural logic. He certainly denied the demonstrative character of theistic arguments. Only analytic propositions are absolutely certain. The principle of causality, employed in traditional arguments for God's existence, is not an analytic proposition. From this it follows that philosophical arguments for God's existence cannot amount to more than probable arguments. Theology, however, is superior to philosophy; and in the sphere of dogmatic theology we can see the operation of a logic which is superior to the natural logic employed in philosophy. In particular, that the principle of contradiction is transcended in theology is clear, thought Holkot, from the doctrine of the Trinity. My point is, then, not that the theologians who were influenced by the nominalist criticism of metaphysical 'demonstrations' did not support their criticism by an appeal to logic, but rather that this relative scepticism in philosophy must not be taken without more ado as involving a sceptical attitude towards theological statements considered as statements of fact or as a conscious relegation of dogmatic theology to the sphere of conjecture.

Acceptance of this or that nominalist position did not mean, of course, that a given thinker adopted all the positions maintained by William of Ockham. John of Rodington (d. 1348), for example, who became Provincial of the English Franciscans, doubted the demonstrative character of arguments for God's unicity: but he rejected the notion that the moral law depends simply on the divine will. John of Bassolis (d. 1347), another Franciscan, also questioned the demonstrative character of metaphysical proofs for God's existence, unicity and infinity; but he combined this critical attitude with an acceptance of various Scotist positions. Scotism was naturally a powerful influence in the Franciscan Order, and it produced philosophers like Francis of Meyronnes (d. *c.* 1328), Antoine André (d. *c.* 1320), the *Doctor dulcifluus*, and Francis de Marcia, the *Doctor succinctus*. It is only to be expected, then, that we should find the Scotist and Ockhamist lines of thought meeting and mingling in thinkers like John of Ripa, who lectured at Paris in the early part of the second half of the fourteenth century, and Peter of Candia (d. 1410). Further, in some cases where a thinker was influenced both by the writings of St. Augustine and by Ockhamism, it is not always easy to judge which influence was the stronger on any given point. For example, Thomas Bradwardine (*c.* 1290–1349) appealed to St. Augustine in support of his doctrine of theological determinism; but it is difficult to say how far he was influenced by Augustine's writings taken by themselves and how far he was influenced in his interpretation of Augustine by the Ockhamist emphasis on the divine omnipotence and the divine will. Again, Gregory of Rimini (d. 1358), who became General of the Hermits of St. Augustine, appealed to Augustine in support of his doctrines of the primacy of intuition and the 'sign' function of universal terms. But there is difficulty in deciding to what extent he simply adopted Ockhamist positions and then tried to cover them with the mantle of St. Augustine because he himself was a member of the Augustinian Order, and to what extent he really believed that he found in St. Augustine's writings positions which had been suggested to him by Ockham's philosophy. The Dominican Robert Holkot even tried to show that some of his clearly Ockhamist tenets were really not alien to the mind of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Enough has been said to show that Ockhamism or nominalism, which was associated particularly with the secular clergy, penetrated deeply into the religious Orders. Its influence was felt not only in the Franciscan Order, to which Ockham himself had belonged, but also in the Dominican and other Orders. At the same time, of course, the traditional lines of thought were still maintained, especially in an Order which possessed an official Doctor, as the Dominican Order possessed St. Thomas. Take, for example, the Hermits of St. Augustine, who looked on Giles of Rome as their Doctor. We have seen that Gregory of Rimini, who was General of the Order from 1357 until 1358, was influenced by Ockhamism; but Thomas of Strasbourg, who preceded Gregory as General (1345-1357), had tried to protect the Order from nominalist influence in the name of fidelity to Giles of Rome. In point of fact it did not prove possible to keep out or stamp out the influence of nominalism; but the fact that the Order possessed an official Doctor doubtless encouraged a certain moderation in the degree to which the more extreme nominalist positions were accepted by the sympathizers with the *via moderna*.

One common factor among the nominalists or Ockhamists was, as we have seen, the emphasis they laid on the theory of *suppositio*, the analysis of the different ways in which the terms in a proposition stand for things. It is obvious, however, that one is justified in speaking about 'nominalism' or, if preferred, conceptualism only in the case of philosophers who, like Ockham, maintained that a general term or class-name stands in the proposition for individual things, and for individual things alone. Together with this doctrine, namely that universality belongs only to terms in their logical function, the nominalists also tended to maintain that only those propositions which are reducible to the principle of contradiction are absolutely certain. In other words, they held that the truth of a statement is not absolutely certain unless the opposite cannot be stated without contradiction. Now, no statement of a causal relationship can, they thought, be a statement of this kind. In other words, their theory of universals led the nominalists to an empiricist analysis of the causal relation. Moreover, in so far as the inference from phenomena to substance was an inference from effect to cause, this analysis affected also the nominalist view of the substance-accident metaphysic. If, then, on the one hand only analytic propositions, in the sense of propositions reducible to the principle of contradiction, are absolutely certain, while on the other hand statements about causal relations are empirical or inductive generalizations which enjoy at best only a very high degree of probability, it follows that the traditional metaphysical arguments, resting on the employment of the principle of causality and on the substance-accident metaphysic, cannot be absolutely certain. In the case, then, of statements about God's existence, for example, the nominalists maintained that they owed their certainty not to any philosophical arguments which could be adduced in their favour but to the fact that they were truths of faith, taught by Christian theology. This position naturally tended to introduce a sharp distinction between philosophy and theology. In one sense, of course, a sharp distinction between philosophy and theology had always been recognized, namely in the sense that a distinction had always been recognized between accepting a statement as the result simply of one's own process of reasoning and accepting a statement on divine authority. But a thinker like Aquinas had been convinced that it is possible to prove the 'preambles of faith', such as the statement that a God exists who can make a revelation. Aquinas was also convinced, of course, that the act of faith involves supernatural grace; but the point is that he recognized as strictly provable certain truths which are logically presupposed by the act of faith, even if in most actual cases supernatural faith is operative long before a human being comes to understand, if he ever does advert to or understand, the proofs in question. In the nominalist philosophy, however, the 'preambles of faith' were not regarded as strictly provable, and the bridge between philosophy and theology (so far, that is, as one is entitled to speak of a 'bridge' when faith demands supernatural grace) was thus broken. But the nominalists were not concerned with 'apologetic' considerations. In the Christian Europe of the Middle Ages apologetics were not a matter of such concern as they became for theologians and Catholic philosophers of a later date.

In the foregoing summary of the positions of the nominalists I have used the word 'nominalist' to mean the thoroughgoing nominalist or the thinker who developed the potentialities of nominalism or the 'ideal' nominalist, the nominalist *pur sang.* I have remarked earlier that not all those thinkers who were positively affected by the Ockhamist movement and who may in certain respects be called 'nominalists' adopted all the positions of Ockham. But it will be of use, I hope, to give some account of the philosophical ideas of two thinkers associated with the movement, namely John of Mirecourt and Nicholas of Autrecourt, the latter of whom particularly was an extremist. Acquaintance with the philosophy of Nicholas of Autrecourt is an effective means, if further means are still needed, of dispelling the illusion that there was no variety of opinions in mediaeval philosophy about important topics. After outlining the thought of these two men I shall conclude the chapter with some remarks on the influence of nominalism in the universities, especially in the new universities which were founded in the latter part of the fourteenth century and during the fifteenth.

2. John of Mirecourt, who seems to have been a Cistercian (he was called *monachus albus*, 'the white monk'), lectured on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard at the Cistercian College of St. Bernard in Paris. Of these lectures, which were given in 1344–5, there exist two versions. As a number of his propositions were immediately attacked, John of Mirecourt issued an explanation and justification of his position; but none the less some 41 propositions were condemned in 1347 by the chancellor of the university and the faculty of theology. This led to the publication by John of another work in defence of his position. These two 'apologies', the first explaining or defending 63 suspected propositions, the second doing the same for the 41 condemned propositions, have been edited by F. Stegmüller.[1]

Two types of knowledge are distinguished by John of Mirecourt; and he distinguishes them according to the quality of our assent to different propositions. Sometimes our assent is 'evident', which means, he says, that it is given without fear, actual or potential, of error. At other times our assent is given with fear, actual or potential, of error, as, for example, in the case of suspicion or of opinion. But it is necessary to make a further distinction. Sometimes we give an assent without fear of error because we see clearly the evident truth of the proposition to which we assent. This happens in the case of the principle of contradiction and of those principles and conclusions which are ultimately reducible to the principle of contradiction. If we see that a proposition rests upon or is reducible to the principle of contradiction, we see that the opposite of that proposition, its negation that is to say, is inconceivable and impossible. At other times, however, we give an assent without fear of error to propositions the truth of which is not intrinsically evident, though it is assured in virtue of irrefutable testimony. The revealed truths of faith are of this kind. We know, for example, only by revelation that there are three Persons in one God.

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[1] *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* (1933), pp. 40-79, 192-204.

Leaving out of account the revealed truths of faith we have, then, so far, propositions to which we assent without fear of error because they are reducible to the primary self-evident principle, the principle of contradiction, and propositions to which we assent with fear of error (for example, 'I think that that object in the distance is a cow'). Assents of the first kind are called by John of Mirecourt *assensus evidentes*, assents of the second kind *assensus inevidentes*. But we must now distinguish two kinds of *assensus evidentes*. First of all, there are evident assents in the strictest and most proper meaning of the phrase. Assent of this kind is given to the principle of contradiction, to principles which are reducible to the principle of contradiction and to conclusions which rest upon the principle of contradiction. In the case of such propositions we have *evidentia potissima*. Secondly, there are assents which are indeed given without fear of error but which are not given in virtue of the proposition's intimate connection with the principle of contradiction. If I give my assent to a proposition based on experience (for example, 'there are stones') I give it without fear of error but I give it in virtue of my experience of the external world, not in virtue of the proposition's reducibility to the principle of contradiction. In the case of such proposition we have, not *evidentia potissima*, but *evidentia naturalis*. John of Mirecourt defines this 'natural evidence' as the evidence by which we give our assent to a thing's existence without any fear of error, this assent being brought about by causes which naturally necessitate our assent.

The above account of John's doctrine on human assents comes from his first apology. He is there explaining the 44th proposition, which had been made an object of attack. The proposition runs as follows: 'It has not been demonstratively proved from propositions which are self-evident or which possess an evidence reducible by us to the certitude of the primary principle that God exists, or that there is a most perfect being, or that one thing is the cause of another thing, or that any created thing has a cause without this cause having its own cause and so on to infinity, or that a thing cannot as a total cause produce something nobler than itself, or that it is impossible for something to be produced which is nobler than anything which (now) exists.' In particular, then, the proofs of God's existence do not rest on self-evident propositions or on propositions which we are capable of reducing to the principle of contradiction, which is the primary self-evident principle. John's adversaries interpreted his doctrine as meaning that no proof of God's existence is of such a kind that it compels assent once it is understood, and that we are not certain, so far as philosophy goes, of God's existence. In answer John observes that the proofs of God's existence rest on experience and that no proposition which is the result of experience of the world is reducible by us to the principle of contradiction. It is clear from his teaching in general, however, that he made one exception to this general rule, namely in the case of the proposition which asserts the existence of the thinker or speaker. If I say that I deny or even doubt my own existence I am contradicting myself, for I cannot deny or even doubt my existence without affirming my existence. On this point John of Mirecourt followed St. Augustine. But this particular proposition stands by itself. No other proposition which is the result of sense-experience, or experience of the external world, is reducible by us to the principle of contradiction. No proposition of this kind, then, enjoys *evidentia potissima*. But John denied that he meant that all such propositions are doubtful. They do not enjoy *evidentia potissima* but they enjoy *evidentia naturalis*. Although propositions founded on experience of the external world are not evident in the same way as the principle of contradiction is evident, 'it does not follow from this that we must doubt about them any more than about the first principle. From this it is clear that I do not intend to deny any experience, any knowledge, any evidence. It is even clear that I hold altogether the opposite opinion to those who would say that it is not evident to them that there is a man or that there is a stone, on the ground that it might appear to them that these things are so without their being really so. I do not mean to deny that these things are evident to us and known by us, but only that they are not known to us by the supreme kind of knowledge (*scientia potissima*).'

Analytic propositions, that is to say propositions which are reducible by analysis to the self-evident principle of contradiction, are thus absolutely certain, and this absolute certainty attaches also to each one's affirmation of his own existence. Apart from this last affirmation all propositions which are the result of and express experimental knowledge of the world enjoy only 'natural evidence'. But what does John of Mirecourt mean by 'natural evidence'? Does this mean simply that we spontaneously give our assent in virtue of a natural unavoidable propensity to assent? If so, does it or does it not follow that the propositions to which we give this kind of assent are certain? John admits that error is possible in the case of some empirical propositions: he could hardly do otherwise. On the other hand he asserts that 'we cannot err in many things (propositions) which accord with our experiences'. Again, he could hardly say anything else, unless he were prepared to admit that his adversaries had interpreted his doctrine correctly. But it seems to be clear that John of Mirecourt accepted the Ockhamist doctrine that sensitive knowledge of the external world could be miraculously caused and conserved by God in the absence of the object. This theme was treated by him at the beginning of his commentary on the *Sentences*. It is probably safe to say, then, that for him 'natural evidence' meant that we naturally assent to the existence of what we sense, though it would be possible for us to be in error, if, that is to say, God were to work a miracle. There is no contradiction in the idea of God working such a miracle. If, therefore, we use the word 'certain' in the sense not only of feeling certain but also of having objective and evident certainty, we are certain of the principle of contradiction and of propositions reducible thereto and each one is certain of his own existence, the infallible character of the intuition of one's own existence being shown by the connection of the proposition affirming one's own existence with the principle of contradiction; but we are not certain of the existence of external objects, however certain we may *feel*. If we care to bring in Descartes' hypothetical 'evil genius', we can say that for John of Mirecourt we are not certain of the existence of the external world, unless God assures us that it exists. All proofs, then, of God's existence which rest upon our knowledge of the external world are uncertain; at least they are not 'demonstrative', in the sense of being reducible to the principle of contradiction or of resting on it. In his first apology John openly says that the opposite of the proposition 'God exists' implies a contradiction; but he goes on to observe that a proposition of this kind does not enjoy the evidence which attaches to the first principle. Why not? Because we arrive at the knowledge expressed in such propositions by reflection on the data of sense-experience, in which we can err, although 'we cannot err in many things (propositions) which accord with our experiences'. Does he mean that we can err in particular empirical judgments, but that we cannot err in regard to a conclusion like the existence of God which follows on the totality of sense-experience rather than on particular empirical judgments? In this case what of the possibility of our having sense-experience when no object is present? This is, no doubt, a limiting possibility and we have no reason to suppose that it is an actuality so far as the totality of sense-experience is concerned; but none the less it remains a possibility. I do not see how the traditional proofs of God's existence can have more than moral certainty or, if you like, the highest degree of probability on John's premisses. In his apology he may make an attempt to justify his position by having it both ways; but it seems clear that for him the proofs of God's existence cannot be demonstrative in the sense in which he understands demonstrative. Leaving out of account the question whether John was right or wrong in what he said, he would have been more consistent, I think, if he had openly admitted that for him the proofs of God's existence, based on sense-experience, are not absolutely certain.

The principle of causality, according to John of Mirecourt, is not analytic; that is to say, it cannot be reduced to the principle of contradiction or be shown to depend upon it in such a way that the denial of the principle of causality involves a contradiction. On the other hand it does not follow that we have to doubt the truth of the principle of causality: we have 'natural evidence', even if we have not got *evidentia potissima.* Again the question arises exactly what is meant by 'natural evidence'. It can hardly mean objectively irrefutable evidence, for if the truth of the principle of causality were objectively so clear that it could not possibly be denied and that its opposite was inconceivable, it would surely follow that its evidence is reducible to the evidence of the principle of contradiction. When John speaks of 'causes naturally necessitating assent', it looks very much as though he meant that, though we can conceive the possibility of the principle of causality not being true, we are obliged by nature to think and act in the concrete as though it were true. From this it would appear to follow that for all practical purposes the proofs of God's existence which rest on the validity of the principle of causality are 'evident', but that none the less we can conceive of their not being cogent. Perhaps this means little more than that the proofs of God's existence cannot compel assent in the same way as a mathematical theorem, for example, can compel assent. John's opponents understood him as meaning that one cannot prove God's existence and that God's existence is therefore uncertain; but when he denied that the proofs are demonstrative he was using the word 'demonstrative' in a special sense, and, if his apology represents his real teaching, he did not mean to say that we must be sceptical concerning God's existence. There can, indeed, be little question of his having intended to teach scepticism; but on the other hand it is clear that he did not regard the proofs of God's existence as possessing the same degree of cogency which St. Thomas would have attributed to them.

In criticizing in this way the proofs of God's existence John of Mirecourt showed himself to be a thinker who had his place in the Ockhamist movement. He showed the same thing by his doctrine concerning the moral law. Proposition 51, as contained in the first apology, runs as follows. 'God can cause any act of the will in the will, even hatred of Himself; I doubt, however, whether anything which was created in the will by God alone would be hatred of God, unless the will conserved it actively and effectively.' According to the way of speaking common among the Doctors, says John, hatred of God involves a deformity in the will, and we must not allow that God could, as total cause, cause hatred of Himself in the human will. Absolutely speaking, however, God could cause hatred of Himself in the will, and if He did so, the man in question would not hate God culpably. Again, in the second apology the 25th condemned proposition is to the effect that 'hatred of the neighbour is not demeritorious except for the fact that it has been prohibited by God'. John proceeds to explain that he does not mean that hatred of the neighbour is not contrary to the natural law; he means that a man who hates his neighbour runs the risk of eternal punishment only because God has prohibited hatred of the neighbour. In regard to the 41st proposition of the first apology John similarly observes that nothing can be 'demeritorious' unless it is prohibited by God. It can, however, be contrary to the moral law without being demeritorious.

Needless to say, John of Mirecourt had no intention of denying our duty to obey the moral law; his aim was to emphasize the supremacy and omnipotence of God. Similarly he seems, though extremely tentatively, to have favoured the opinion of St. Peter Damian that God could bring it about that the world should never have been, that is to say, that God could bring it about that the past should not have happened. He allows that this undoing of the fact cannot take place *de potentia Dei ordinata*; but, whereas one might well expect him to appeal to the principle of contradiction in order to show that the undoing of the past is absolutely impossible, he says that this absolute impossibility is not evident to him. 'I was unwilling to lay claim to knowledge which I did not possess' (first apology, proposition 5). He does not say that it is possible for God to bring it about that the past should not have happened; he says that the impossibility of God's doing this is not evident to him. John of Mirecourt was always careful in his statements.

He shows a similar care in the way he hedges over those statements which appear to teach theological determinism and which may betray the influence of Thomas Bradwardine's *De Causa Dei*. According to John, God is the cause of moral deformity, of sin that is to say, just as He is the cause of natural deformity. God is the cause of blindness by not supplying the power of vision; and He is the cause of moral deformity by not supplying moral rectitude. John qualifies this statement, however, by observing that it is perhaps true that while a natural defect can be the total cause of natural deformity, a moral defect is not the total cause of moral deformity because moral deformity (sin), in order to exist, must proceed from a will (first apology, proposition 50). In his commentary on the *Sentences*[1] he first observes that it seems to him possible to concede that God is the cause of moral deformity, and then remarks that the common teaching of the Doctors is the very opposite. But they say the opposite since, in their eyes, to say that God is the cause of sin is to say that God acts sinfully, and that it is impossible for God to act sinfully is clear to John too. But it does not follow from this, he insists, that God cannot be the cause of moral deformity. God causes the moral deformity by not

[1] 2, 3, concl. 3.

supplying moral rectitude; but the sin proceeds from the will, and it is the human being who is guilty. Therefore, if John says that God is not the total cause of sin, he does not mean that God causes the positive element in the act of the will while the human being causes the privation of right order: for him God can be said to cause both, though the privation of right order cannot be realized except in and through a will. The will is the 'effective' cause, not God, though God can be called the 'efficacious' cause in that He wills efficaciously that there should be no rectitude in the will. Nothing can happen unless God wills it, and if God wills it, He wills it efficaciously, for His will is always fulfilled. God causes the sinful act even in its specification as a sinful act of a certain kind; but He does not cause it sinfully.

John considered that the real distinction between accidents and substances is known only by faith. 'I think that except for the faith many would perhaps have said that everything is a substance.'[1] Apparently he affirmed (at least he was understood as affirming) that 'it is probable, as far as the natural light of reason is concerned, that there are no accidents distinct from substance, but that everything is a substance; and except for the faith, this would be or could be probable' (43rd proposition of first apology). For example, 'it can be said with probability that thinking or willing is not something distinct from the soul, but that it is the soul itself' (proposition 42). John defends himself by saying that the reasons for affirming a distinction between substance and accident have more force than the reasons which can be given for denying a distinction; but he adds that he does not know if the arguments for affirming it can rightly be called demonstrations. It is clear that he did not think that these arguments amounted to demonstrations; he accepted the distinction as certain only on faith.

It is difficult to ascertain with any degree of certainty precisely what John of Mirecourt's personal opinions actually were, owing to the way in which he explains away in his apologies what he had said in his lectures on the *Sentences*. When John protests that he is simply retailing other people's opinions or when he remarks that he is merely putting forward a possible point of view without affirming that it is true, is he thoroughly sincere or is he being diplomatic? One can scarcely give any definite answer. However, I turn now to an even more extreme and thoroughgoing adherent of the new movement.

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[1] 1 *Sent.*, 19, concl. 6, *ad* 5.

3. Nicholas of Autrecourt, who was born about the year 1300 in the diocese of Verdun, studied at the Sorbonne between 1320 and 1327. In due course he lectured on the *Sentences*, on Aristotle's *Politics*, etc. In 1338 he obtained a Prebend's stall in the Cathedral of Metz. Already in his introductory lecture on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, Nicholas had indicated his departure from the thought of previous philosophers, and a continuation of this attitude resulted in a letter from Pope Benedict XII to the Bishop of Paris on November 21st, 1340, in which the latter was instructed to see that Nicholas, together with certain other offenders, put in a personal appearance at Avignon within a month. The pope's death led to a postponement of the investigation of Nicholas's opinions; but after the coronation of Clement VI on May 19th, 1342, the matter was taken up again. The new pope entrusted the examination of Nicholas's opinions to a commission under the presidency of Cardinal William Curti, and Nicholas was invited to explain and defend his ideas. He was given the opportunity of defending himself in the pope's presence, and his replies to the objections brought against his doctrine were taken into account. But when it became clear what the verdict would be Nicholas fled from Avignon; and it is possible, though not certain, that he took refuge for the time being at the court of Ludwig of Bavaria. In 1346 he was sentenced to burn his writings publicly at Paris and to recant the condemned propositions. This he did on November 25th, 1347. He was also expelled from the teaching body of the university of Paris. Of his later life little is known, save for the fact that he became an official of the Cathedral of Metz on August 6th, 1350. Presumably he lived 'happily ever after'.

Of Nicholas's writings we possess the first two letters of a series of nine which he wrote to the Franciscan Bernard of Arezzo, one of his principal critics, and a large part of a letter which he wrote to a certain Aegidius (Giles). We also possess a letter from Aegidius to Nicholas. In addition, the lists of condemned propositions contain excerpts from other letters of Nicholas to Bernard of Arezzo together with some other fragments. All these documents have been edited by Dr. Joseph Lappe.[1] We possess also a treatise by Nicholas which begins *Exigit ordo executionis* and which is referred to as the *Exigit*. It has been edited by J. R. O'Donnell, together with Nicholas's theological writing *Utrum visio creaturae*

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[1] *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, VI, 2. References to 'Lappe' in the following account of Nicholas's philosophy are references to this edition, dated 1908.

rationalis beatificabilis per Verbum possit intendi naturaliter.[1] There is further a note by John of Mirecourt about Nicholas's doctrine on causality.[2]

At the beginning of his second letter to Bernard of Arezzo Nicholas remarks that the first principle to be laid down is that 'contradictions cannot be true at the same time'.[3] The principle of contradiction, or rather of non-contradiction, is the primary principle, and its primacy is to be accepted both in the negative sense, namely that there is no more ultimate principle, and in the positive sense, namely that the principle positively precedes and is presupposed by every other principle. Nicholas is arguing that the principle of non-contradiction is the ultimate basis of all natural certitude, and that while any other principle which is put forward as the basis of certitude is reducible to the principle of non-contradiction, the latter is not reducible to any other principle. If any principle other than the principle of non-contradiction is proposed as the basis of certitude, that is, if a principle which is not reducible to the principle of non-contradiction is proposed as the basis of certitude, the proposed principle may appear to be certain but its opposite will not involve a contradiction. But in this case the apparent certitude can never be transformed into genuine certitude. It is only the principle of non-contradiction which bears its own guarantee on its face, so to speak. The reason why we do not doubt the principle of non-contradiction is simply that it cannot be denied without contradiction. In order, then, for any other principle to be certain, its denial must involve a contradiction. But in that case it is reducible to the principle of non-contradiction, in the sense that it is certain in virtue of that principle. The principle of non-contradiction must therefore be the primary principle. It is to be remarked that it is not the truth of the principle of non-contradiction which is in question but its primacy. Nicholas tries to show that any genuine certitude rests ultimately on this principle, and he does it by showing that any principle which did not rest on, or was not reducible to, the principle of non-contradiction would not be genuinely certain.

Any certitude which we have in the light of the principle of non-contradiction is, says Nicholas, genuine certitude, and not even the divine power could deprive it of this character. Further, all genuinely certain propositions possess the same degree of evidence.

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[1] *Mediaeval Studies*, vol. 1, 1939, pp. 179–280. References to the *Exigit* in the following pages are references to this edition.

[2] Lappe, p. 4.

[3] *Ibid*, 6*, 33.

It makes no difference whether a proposition is immediately or mediately reducible to the principle of non-contradiction. If it is not reducible to the principle of non-contradiction, it is not certain; and if it is reducible, it is equally certain, whether it is immediately or mediately reducible. In geometry, for example, a proposition is not less certain because it happens to be the conclusion of a long chain of reasoning, provided that it is rightly demonstrated in the light of the primary principle. Apart from the certitude of faith there is no other certitude than the certitude of the principle of non-contradiction and of propositions which are reducible to that principle.

In a syllogistic argument, then, the conclusion is certain only if it is reducible to the principle of non-contradiction. What is the necessary condition of this reducibility? The conclusion, says Nicholas, is reducible to the primary principle only if it is identical with the antecedent or with a part of what is signified by the antecedent. When this is the case it is impossible to affirm the antecedent and deny the conclusion or to deny the conclusion and affirm the antecedent without contradiction. If the antecedent is certain, the conclusion is also certain. For example, in the inference 'all *X*'s are *Y*, therefore this *X* is *Y*' the conclusion is identical with part of what is signified by the antecedent. It is impossible, without contradiction, to affirm the antecedent and deny the conclusion. That is, if it is certain that all *X*'s are *Y*, it is certain that any particular *X* is *Y*.

How does this criterion of certitude affect factual knowledge? Bernard of Arezzo maintained that because God can cause an intuitive act in the human being without the co-operation of any secondary cause we are not entitled to argue that a thing exists because it is seen. This view was similar to that of Ockham, though Bernard apparently did not add Ockham's qualification that God could not produce in us evident assent to the existence of a non-existent thing, since this would involve a contradiction. Nicholas maintained, though, that Bernard's view led to scepticism, for on his view we should have no means of achieving certitude concerning the existence of anything. In the case of immediate perception the act of perception is not a sign from which we infer the existence of something distinct from the act. To say, for example, that I perceive a colour is simply to say that the colour appears to me: I do not see the colour and then infer its existence. The act of perceiving a colour and the act of being aware that I perceive a colour are one and the same act: I do not perceive a colour and then have to find some guarantee that I actually do perceive a colour. Immediate cognition is its own guarantee. A contradiction would be involved in saying that a colour appears and at the same time that it does not appear. In his first letter to Bernard, Nicholas says, therefore, that in his opinion 'I am evidently certain of the objects of the five senses and of my acts.'[1] Against what he regarded as scepticism, then, Nicholas maintained that immediate cognition, whether it takes the form of sense-perception or of perception of our interior acts, is certain and evident; and he explained the certitude of this knowledge by identifying the direct act of perception and the self-conscious awareness of this act of perception. In this case a contradiction would be involved in affirming that I have an act of perception and in denying that I am aware that I have an act of perception. The act of perceiving a colour is the same as the appearing of the colour to me, and the act of perceiving the colour is identical with the act of being aware that I perceive a colour. To say that I perceive a colour and to say that the colour does not exist or that I am not aware that I perceive a colour would involve me in a contradiction.

Nicholas thus admitted as certain and evident not only analytic propositions but also immediate perception.[2] But he did not think that from the existence of one thing we can infer with certainty the existence of another thing. The reason why we cannot do this is that in the case of two things which are really different from one another it is possible without logical contradiction to affirm the existence of the one thing and deny the existence of the other. If *B* is identical either with the whole of *A* or with part of *A*, it is not possible without contradiction to affirm the existence of *A* and deny that of *B*; and if the existence of *A* is certain the existence of *B* is also certain. But if *B* is really distinct from *A* no contradiction is involved in affirming *A*'s existence and yet at the same time denying the existence of *B*. In the second letter to Bernard of Arezzo Nicholas makes the following assertion. 'From the fact that something is known to exist it cannot be inferred evidently, with, that is, evidence reducible to the first principle or to the certitude of the first principle, that another thing exists.'[3]

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[1] Lappe, 6*, 15–16.

[2] Cf. *Exigit*, p. 235.

[3] Lappe, 9*, 15–20.

Bernard of Arezzo tried to counter Nicholas's assertion by what he evidently regarded as common-sense examples to the contrary. For instance, there is a white colour. But a white colour cannot exist without a substance. Therefore there is a substance. The conclusion of this syllogism is, said Bernard, certain. Nicholas's answer was on the following lines. If it is assumed that whiteness is an accident, and if it is assumed that an accident inheres in a substance and cannot exist without it, the conclusion is indeed certain. In the first place, however, the example would be irrelevant to the discussion. For what Nicholas asserted was that one cannot infer with certainty the existence of one thing from the existence of another. In the second place the assumptions that whiteness is an accident and that an accident necessarily inheres in a substance render the argument hypothetical. If whiteness is an accident and if an accident necessarily inheres in a substance, then, given this whiteness, there is a substance in which it inheres. But Nicholas would not admit that there is any compelling reason why these assumptions should be accepted. Bernard's argument conceals its assumptions. It does not show that one can argue with certainty from the existence of one thing to the existence of another thing, for Bernard has assumed that whiteness inheres in a substance. The fact that one sees a colour warrants one's concluding that a substance exists, only if one has assumed that a colour is an accident and that an accident necessarily inheres in a substance. But to assume this is to assume what has to be proved. Bernard's argument is therefore a concealed vicious circle.

Nicholas commented in a similar manner on another example brought by Bernard in order to show that one can argue with certainty from the existence of one thing to the existence of another thing. Fire is applied to tow, and there is no obstacle; therefore there will be heat. Either, said Nicholas, the consequent is identical with the antecedent or with part of it or it is not. In the first case the example would be irrelevant. For the argument would not be an argument from the existence of one thing to the existence of another thing. In the second case there would be two different propositions of which the one could be affirmed and the other denied without contradiction. 'Fire is applied to tow and there is no obstacle' and 'there will not be heat' are not contradictory propositions. And if they are not contradictory propositions the conclusion cannot be certain with the certitude which comes from reducibility to the first principle. Yet this, as has been agreed, is the only certitude.

From this position of Nicholas, that the existence of one thing cannot with certainty be inferred from that of another, it follows that no proposition which asserts that because *A* happens *B* will happen or that because *B* exists *A* exists, where *A* and *B* are distinct things, is or can be certain. Apart, then, from the immediate perception of sense-data (colours, for example) and of our acts no empirical knowledge is or can be certain. No causal argument can be certain. We doubtless believe in necessary connections in nature; but logic cannot detect them, and propositions which state them cannot be certain. What, then, is the reason of our belief in causal connections? Nicholas apparently explained this in terms of the experience of repeated sequences which gives rise to the expectation that if *B* has followed *A* in the past it will do so again in the future. Nicholas, it is true, affirmed that we cannot have probable knowledge that *B* will follow *A* in the future, unless we have evident certitude that at some time in the past *B* has followed *A*; but he did not mean that we cannot have probable knowledge that *B* will follow *A* in the future, unless we have evident certitude in the past of a necessary causal connection between *A* and *B*. What he meant, in terms of his own example in his second letter to Bernard, was that I cannot have probable knowledge that if I put my hand to the fire it will become warm, unless I have evident certitude of warmth in my hand having followed my putting my hand to the fire in the past. 'If it was once evident to me when I put my hand to the fire that I became warm, it is now probable to me that if I put my hand to the fire I should become warm.'[1] Nicholas considered that repeated experience of the coexistence of two things or of the regular sequence of distinct events increases the probability, from the *subjective* point of view, of similar experiences in the future; but repeated experience does not add anything to the objective evidence.[2]

It is clear that Nicholas considered that the possibility of God acting immediately as a causal agent, without, that is, using any secondary cause, rendered it impossible to argue with absolute certainty from the existence of one created thing to the existence of another created thing. He also argued against Bernard that on the principles enunciated by the latter it would be equally

[1] Lappe, 13*, 9–12.

[2] *Exigit*, p. 237.

impossible. But the main interest of Nicholas's discussion of causality lies in the fact that he did not simply argue from the universally admitted doctrine of the divine omnipotence (universally admitted as a theological doctrine at any rate) but approached the question on a purely philosophical level.

It is to be noted that Nicholas did not deny that we can have certitude concerning the coexistence of appearances of *A* and *B*. All that is required is that we should actually have the two perceptions at once. But he did deny that one can infer with certainty the existence of the non-apparent from the existence of an appearance. He would not allow, then, that one can infer with certainty the existence of any substance. In order to know with certainty the existence of any material substance we should have either to perceive it directly, intuitively, or to infer its existence with certainty from the appearances or phenomena. But we do not perceive material substances, according to Nicholas. If we did, even the uneducated (the *rustici*) would perceive them. And this is not the case. Moreover, we cannot infer their existence with certainty, for the existence of one thing cannot be logically deduced from the existence of another thing.

In his ninth letter to Bernard, Nicholas asserted that 'these inferences are not evident: there is an act of understanding: therefore there is an intellect; there is an act of willing: therefore there is a will'.[1] This statement suggests that according to Nicholas we have no more certainty of the soul's existence as a substance than we have of material substances. Elsewhere, however, he states that 'Aristotle never had evident knowledge of any substance other than his own soul, understanding by "substance" something different from the objects of our five senses and from our formal experience.'[2] Again, 'we have no certitude concerning a substance joined to matter other than our soul'.[3] Statements like this have led some historians to conclude that Nicholas admitted that we have certitude about the knowledge of the soul as a spiritual substance. They accordingly interpret his remarks about our not being entitled to infer the existence of the intellect from the existence of acts of understanding and the existence of the will from the existence of acts of volition as an attack on the faculty psychology. This is certainly a possible interpretation, though it might be considered odd if Nicholas directed his attack simply against the theory of distinct faculties

[1] Lappe, 34*, 7–9.

[2] *Ibid.*, 12*, 20–3.

[3] *Ibid.*, 13*, 19–20.

which had already been subjected to criticism by William of Ockham, for example. But the *Exigit*[1] seems to imply, though it does not say so clearly, that we have no direct awareness of the soul. And in this case it would appear to follow, on Nicholas's premisses, that we have no natural knowledge of the soul's existence as a substance. The statement that Aristotle had no certain knowledge of any substance other than his own soul may be analogous to the assertion in the fifth letter to Bernard of Arezzo that we do not know with certainty that there is any efficient cause other than God. For his general position shows that in Nicholas's opinion we have no natural or philosophical certain knowledge that even God is an efficient cause. It is true that if the parallel between the two statements is pushed, it would seem to follow that Aristotle, according to Nicholas, enjoyed the certainty of faith about the existence of his soul as a spiritual substance; and Nicholas cannot possibly have meant to say this. But it is not necessary to interpret his remarks so strictly. However, it is difficult to be sure whether he did or did not make an exception in favour of our knowledge of our own souls from his general view that we have no certain knowledge of the existence of substances considered as distinct from phenomena.

It is evident that in his critique of causality and substance Nicholas anticipated the position of Hume; and the similarity is all the more striking if he did in fact deny that we have any certain knowledge of the existence of any substance, material or spiritual. But Dr. Weinberg is undoubtedly right, I think, in pointing out that Nicholas was not a phenomenalist. Nicholas thought that one cannot infer with certainty the existence of a non-apparent entity from the existence of phenomena; but he certainly did not think this means that one can infer its non-existence. In the sixth letter to Bernard he laid it down that 'from the fact that one thing exists, it cannot be inferred with certainty that another thing does not exist'.[2] Nicholas did not say that only phenomena exist or that affirmations of the existence of metaphenomenal entities are nonsensical. All he said was that the existence of phenomena does not enable us to infer with certainty the existence of the metaphenomenal or non-apparent. It is one thing to say, for example, that we are unable to prove that there is anything in a material object other than what appears to the senses, and it is another thing to say that there actually is no substance. Nicholas was not a dogmatic phenomenalist. I do not mean to imply by this that Hume was a dogmatic phenomenalist, for he was not, whatever objections his (and Nicholas's) critical analyses of causality and substance may be open to. My point is simply that one must not conclude from Nicholas's denial of the demonstrability of the existence of substances that he actually denied the existence of all substances or said that their non-existence could be proved.

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[1] p. 225.

[2] Lappe, 31*, 16-17.

It is obvious enough that Nicholas's critique of causality and substance had important repercussions in regard to his attitude towards the traditional philosophical theology. Although Nicholas does not say so in clear and explicit terms, it would seem to follow from his general principles that it is not possible to prove the existence of God as efficient cause. In the fifth letter to Bernard he remarks that God may be the sole efficient cause, since one cannot prove that there is any natural efficient cause. But to say that God may be the sole efficient cause is not to say that He is the sole efficient cause or, indeed, that He can be proved to be an efficient cause at all. Nicholas meant merely that for all we know or can establish to the contrary God may be the sole efficient cause. As to our being able to prove that God actually is efficient cause, this is excluded by the general principle that we cannot infer with certainty the existence of one thing from the existence of another thing.

The causal or cosmological argument for God's existence could not, then, be a demonstrative argument on Nicholas's premisses. Nor could St. Thomas's fourth or fifth arguments be admitted as proofs yielding certain conclusions. We cannot, says Nicholas in the fifth letter to Bernard, prove that one thing is or is not nobler than another thing. Neither inspection of one thing nor comparison of two or more things is able to prove a hierarchy of degrees of being from the point of view of value. 'If anything whatever is pointed out, nobody knows evidently that it may not exceed all other things in value.'[1] And Nicholas does not hesitate to draw the conclusion that if by the term 'God' we understand the noblest being, nobody knows with certainty whether any given thing may not be God. If, then, we cannot establish with certainty an objective scale of perfection, St. Thomas's fourth argument obviously cannot be considered a demonstrative argument. As to the argument from finality, St. Thomas's fifth argument, this is ruled out by Nicholas's statement in the same letter that 'no one knows evidently that one thing is the end (that is, final cause) of another'.[1] One cannot establish by inspection or analysis of any one thing that it is the final cause of another thing, nor is there any way of demonstrating it with certainty. We see a certain series of events, but final causality is not demonstrable.

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[1] Lappe, 33*, 12–14.

Nicholas did, however, admit a probable argument for God's existence. Assuming as probable that we have an idea of the good as a standard for judging about the contingent relations between things,[2] and assuming that the order of the universe is such that it would satisfy a mind operating with the criterion of goodness and fitness, we can argue first that all things are so interconnected that one thing can be said to exist for the sake of another and secondly that this relationship between things is intelligible only in the light of the hypothesis that all things are subjected to an ultimate end, the supreme good or God. It might well appear that an argument of this kind would be no more than an entirely unfounded hypothesis, and that it could not, on Nicholas's own principles, amount to a probable argument. But Nicholas did not deny that we can have some sort of evidence enabling us to form a conjectural hypothesis which may be more or less probable, though it may not be certain as far as we are concerned. It might be true; it might even be a necessary truth; but we could not know that it was true, though we could believe it to be true. Besides theological belief, that is, faith in revealed truths, there is room for a belief which rests on arguments that are more or less probable.

Nicholas's probable argument for God's existence was part of the positive philosophy which he put forward as probable. It is not, in my opinion, worth while going into this philosophy in any detail. Apart from the fact that it was proposed as a probable hypothesis, its various parts are by no means always consistent with one another. One may mention, however, that for Nicholas the corruptibility of things is probably inconsistent with the goodness of the universe. Positively expressed this means that things are probably eternal. In order to show that this supposition cannot be ruled out by observation Nicholas argued that the fact that we see *B* succeeding *A* does not warrant our concluding that *A* has ceased to exist. We may not see *A* any more, but we do not see that *A* does not exist any more. And we cannot establish by reasoning that it does not any longer exist. If we could, we could establish by reasoning that nothing exists which is not observed, and this we cannot do. The Aristotelian doctrine of change is by no means certain. Moreover, the corruption of substances can be explained much better on an atomistic hypothesis than on Aristotelian principles. Substantial change may mean simply that one collocation of atoms is succeeded by another, while accidental change may mean the addition of fresh atoms to an atomic complex or the subtraction of some atoms from that complex. It is probable that the atoms are eternal and that precisely the same combinations occur in the periodic cycles which eternally recur.

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[1] Lappe, 33*, 18–19.

[2] *Exigit*, p. 185.

As to the human soul, Nicholas maintained the hypothesis of immortality. But his suggestions on this matter are closely connected with a curious explanation of knowledge. As all things are eternal, it may be supposed that in knowledge the soul or mind enters into a temporary union with the object of knowledge. And the same can be said of imagination. The soul enters into a state of conjunction with images, but the images themselves are eternal. This hypothesis throws light, in Nicholas's opinion, on the nature of immortality. We may suppose that to good souls noble thoughts come after death, while to bad souls come evil thoughts. Or we may suppose that good souls enter into union with a better collection of atoms and are disposed to better experiences than they received in their previous embodied states, while evil souls enter into union with worse atoms and are disposed to receive more evil experiences and thoughts than in their previous embodied states. Nicholas claimed that this hypothesis allowed for the Christian doctrine of rewards and punishments after death; but he added a prudential qualification. His statements were, he said, more probable than the statements which had for a long time seemed probable. None the less, someone might turn up who would deprive his own statements of probability; and in view of this possibility the best thing to do is to adhere to the Biblical teaching on rewards and punishments. This line of argument was called in the *Articles of Cardinal Curti* a 'foxy excuse' (*excusatio vulpina*).[1]

Nicholas's positive philosophy was obviously at variance on some points with Catholic theology. And indeed Nicholas did not hesitate to say that his statements were more probable than the contradictory assertions. But one must interpret this attitude with some care. Nicholas did not state that his doctrines were true and the opposite doctrines false: he said that if the propositions which were contradictory to his own were considered simply in regard to their probability, that is, as probable conclusions of reason, they were less probable than his own statements. For example, the theological doctrine that the world has not existed from eternity is for him certainly true, if it is considered as a revealed truth. But if one attends simply to the philosophical arguments which can be adduced in favour of its truth, one must admit, according to Nicholas, that they are less probable than the philosophical arguments which can be adduced in favour of the contradictory proposition. One is not entitled, however, to conclude that the contradictory proposition is not true. For all we know it may even be a necessary truth. Probability has to be interpreted in terms of the natural evidence available to us at any given moment, and a proposition may be for us more probable than its contradictory even though it is in fact false and its contradictory true. Nicholas did not propose a double-truth theory; nor did he deny any defined doctrines of the Church. What his subjective attitude was is a matter about which we cannot be sure. Pierre d'Ailly asserted that a number of Nicholas's propositions were condemned out of envy or ill-will; and Nicholas himself maintained that some statements were attributed to him which he did not hold at all or which he did not hold in the sense in which they were condemned. It is difficult to judge how far one is justified in taking his protestations at their face-value and how far one should assume that his critics were justified in dismissing these protestations as 'foxy' excuses. There can be little doubt, I think, that he was sincere in saying that the philosophy which he put forward as 'probable' was untrue in so far as it conflicted with the teaching of the Church. At least there is no real difficulty in accepting his sincerity on this point, since apart from any other consideration it would have been quite inconsistent with the critical side of his philosophy if he had regarded the conclusions of his positive philosophy as certain. On the other hand, it is not so easy to accept Nicholas's protestation that the critical views expounded in his correspondence with Bernard of Arezzo were put forward as a kind of experiment in reasoning. His letters to Bernard hardly give that impression, even if the possibility cannot be excluded that the explanation which he offered to his judges represented his real mind. After all, he was by no means the only philosopher of his time to adopt a critical attitude towards the traditional metaphysics, even if he went further than most.

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[1] Lappe, 39*, 8.

It is, however, quite clear that Nicholas meant to attack the philosophy of Aristotle and that he considered his own positive philosophy to be a more probable hypothesis than the Aristotelian system. He declared that he was himself very astonished that some people study Aristotle and the Commentator (Averroes) up to a decrepit old age and forsake moral matters and the care of the common good in favour of the study of Aristotle. They do this to such an extent that when the friend of truth rises up and sounds a trumpet to rouse the sleepers from slumber they are greatly afflicted and rush upon him like armed men to deadly combat.[1]

Mention of 'moral matters' and of the 'common good' leads one to inquire what Nicholas's ethical and political teaching was. We have not much to go upon here. But it seems clear that he maintained the Ockhamist theory of the arbitrary character of the moral law. There is a condemned proposition of his to the effect that 'God can order a rational creature to hate Him, and that the rational creature merits more by obeying this precept than by loving God in obedience to a precept. For he would do so (that is, hate God) with greater effort and more against his inclination.'[2] As to politics, Nicholas is said to have issued a proclamation that whoever wanted to hear lectures on Aristotle's *Politics* together with certain discussions about justice and injustice which would enable a man to make new laws or to correct laws already in existence, should repair to a certain place where he would find Master Nicholas of Autrecourt, who would teach him all these things.[3] How far this proclamation constitutes evidence of Nicholas's serious concern for the common welfare and how far it is the expression of a love of notoriety it is difficult to say.

I have given an account of the philosophical ideas of John of Mirecourt and Nicholas of Autrecourt in a chapter on the 'Ockhamist Movement'. Is this procedure justified? Nicholas's positive philosophy, which he put forward as probable, was certainly not the philosophy of William of Ockham; and in this respect it would be quite wrong to call him an 'Ockhamist'. As to his critical philosophy, it was not the same as that of Ockham, and Nicholas cannot be properly called an 'Ockhamist', if by this term is meant a disciple of Ockham. Moreover, the tone of Nicholas's writing is different from that of the Franciscan theologian. None the less, Nicholas was an extreme representative of that critical movement of thought which was a prominent feature of fourteenth-century

[1] Cf. *Exigit*, pp. 181–2. [2] Lappe, 41*, 31–4. [3] *Ibid.*, 40*, 26–33.

philosophy and which finds expression in one aspect of Ockhamism. I have indicated earlier that I use the term 'Ockhamist Movement' to denote a philosophical movement which was characterized, in part, by a critical attitude towards the presuppositions and arguments of the traditional metaphysics, and if the term is used in this sense, one can, I think, justifiably speak of John of Mirecourt and Nicholas of Autrecourt as belonging to the Ockhamist movement.

Nicholas of Autrecourt was not a sceptic, if by this term we mean a philosopher who denies or questions the possibility of attaining any certain knowledge. He maintained that certainty is obtainable in logic and in mathematics and in immediate perception. In modern terms he recognized as certain both analytic propositions (the propositions which are now sometimes called 'tautologies') and basic empirical statements, though one must add the proviso that for Nicholas we can have evident immediate knowledge without that knowledge being expressed in a proposition. On the other hand, propositions involving the assertion of a causal relation in the metaphysical sense or propositions based on an inference from one existent to another he regarded not as certain propositions but rather as empirical hypotheses. One must not, however, turn Nicholas into a 'logical positivist'. He did not deny the significance of metaphysical or theological statements: on the contrary, he presupposed the certitude of faith and admitted revelation as a source of absolute certainty.

4. I announced my intention of concluding this chapter with some remarks on the influence of the new movement in the universities, especially in the universities which were founded in the latter part of the fourteenth century and during the fifteenth.

In 1389 a statute was passed at the university of Vienna requiring of students in the faculty of arts that they should attend lectures on the logical works of Peter of Spain, while later statutes imposed a similar obligation in regard to the logical works of Ockhamist authors like William Heytesbury. Nominalism was also strongly represented in the German universities of Heidelberg (founded in 1386), Erfurt (1392) and Leipzig (1409) and in the Polish university of Cracow (1397). The university of Leipzig is said to have owed its origin to the exodus of nominalists from Prague, where John Hus and Jerome of Prague taught the Scotist realism which they had learnt from John Wycliffe (*c.* 1320–84). Indeed, when the Council of Constance condemned the theological errors of John Hus in 1415, the nominalists were quick to argue that Scotist realism had also been condemned, though this was not actually the case.

In the first half of the fifteenth century a rather surprising revival of the philosophy of St. Albert the Great took place. The nominalists seem to have left Paris early in the century, partly owing to the conditions brought about by the Hundred Years War, though Ehrle was doubtless correct in connecting the revival of 'Albertism' with the return of the Dominicans to Paris in 1403. They had left the city in 1387. The supremacy of Albertism did not last very long, however, because the nominalists returned in 1437 after the city had been liberated from the English. On March 1st, 1474, King Louis XI issued a decree prohibiting the teaching of nominalism and ordering the confiscation of nominalist books; but in 1481 the ban was withdrawn.

In the fifteenth century, then, nominalism was strongly entrenched at Paris, Oxford and many German universities; but the older traditions continued to hold their ground in certain places. This was the case in the university of Cologne, which was founded in 1389. At Cologne the doctrines of St. Albert and St. Thomas were in possession. After the condemnation of John Hus the Prince Electors asked the university to adopt nominalism on the ground that the more old-fashioned realism easily led to heresy, even though it was not evil in itself. But in 1425 the university replied that while it remained open to anyone to adopt nominalism if he chose, the doctrines of St. Albert, St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, Giles of Rome and Duns Scotus were above suspicion. In any case, said the university, the heresies of John Hus did not spring from philosophical realism but from the theological teaching of Wycliffe. Further, if realism were forbidden at Cologne the students would leave the university.

With the university of Cologne one must associate that of Louvain, which was founded in 1425. The statutes of 1427 required of candidates for the doctorate that they should take an oath never to teach the doctrines of Buridan, Marsilius of Inghen, Ockham or their followers; and in 1480 professors who expounded Aristotle in the light of the Ockhamist theories were threatened with suspension from office.

The adherents of the 'ancient way', therefore, were by no means completely routed by the nominalists. Indeed, in the middle of the fourteenth century realism gained a foothold at Heidelberg.

Moreover, they could boast of some eminent names. Chief among them was John Capreolus (*c.* 1380–1444), a Dominican who lectured for a time at Paris and later at Toulouse. He set out to defend the doctrines of St. Thomas against the contrary opinions of Scotus, Durandus, Henry of Ghent and all adversaries in general, including the nominalists. His great work, which was completed shortly before his death at Rodez and which earned for him the title of *Princeps thomistarum*, was the *Libri IV defensionum theologiae divi Thomae de Aquino*. Capreolus was the first of the line of distinguished Dominican Thomists and commentators on St. Thomas, which included at a later period men like Cajetan (d. 1534) and John of St. Thomas (d. 1644).

In the Italian universities a current of Averroistic Aristotelianism was represented at Bologna in the first half of the fourteenth century by thinkers like Thaddaeus of Parma and Angelo of Arezzo and passed to Padua and Venice where it was represented by Paul of Venice (d. 1429), Cajetan of Thiene (d. 1465), Alexander Achillini (d. 1512) and Agostino Nipho (d. 1546). The first printed edition of Averroes appeared at Padua in 1472. Something will be said later, in connection with the philosophy of the Renaissance, about the controversy between those who followed Averroes' interpretation of Aristotle and those who adhered to the interpretation given by Alexander of Aphrodisias, and about the condemnation of 1513. The Averroists have been mentioned here simply as an illustration of the fact that the *via moderna* should not be regarded as having swept all before it in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Nevertheless, nominalism possessed that attraction which comes from modernity and freshness, and it spread widely, as we have seen. A notable figure among fifteenth-century nominalists was Gabriel Biel (*c.* 1425–95), who taught at Tübingen and composed an epitome of Ockham's commentaries on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. Biel's work was a methodical and clear exposition of Ockhamism, and though he did not pretend to be more than a follower and exponent of Ockham he exercised a considerable influence. Indeed, the Ockhamists at the universities of Erfurt and Wittenberg were known as *Gabrielistae*. It is perhaps interesting to note that Biel did not interpret Ockham's moral theory as meaning that there is no natural moral order. There are objects or ends besides God which can be chosen in accordance with right reason, and pagan philosophers like Aristotle, Cicero and Seneca were able to accomplish morally good and virtuous acts. In virtue of his 'absolute power' God could, indeed, command acts opposed to the dictates of the natural reason; but this does not alter the fact that these dictates can be recognized without revelation.

5. Finally one may recall that the Ockhamist Movement or nominalism had various aspects. On the purely logical side it was partly a development of the logic of terms and of the theory of *suppositio* as found in pre-Ockhamist logicians like Peter of Spain. This terminist logic was used by William of Ockham in order to exclude all forms of realism. The problem of universals was treated from a logical rather than an ontological point of view. The universal is the abstract term considered according to its logical content, and this term stands in the proposition for individual things, which are the only things which exist.

This terminist logic had not of itself any sceptical consequences in regard to knowledge, nor did Ockham regard it as having any such consequences. But together with the logical aspect of nominalism one must take into account the analysis of causality and the consequences of this analysis in regard to the epistemological status of empirical hypotheses. In the philosophy of a man like Nicholas of Autrecourt we have seen a sharp distinction drawn between analytic or formal propositions, which are certain, and empirical hypotheses, which are not and cannot be certain. With Ockham this view, so far as he held it, was closely connected with his insistence on the divine omnipotence: with Nicholas of Autrecourt the theological background was very much less in evidence.

We have seen, too, how the nominalists (some more than others) tended to adopt a critical attitude towards the metaphysical arguments of the older philosophers. This attitude was fully explicit in an extremist like Nicholas of Autrecourt, since it was made to rest on his general position that one cannot infer with certainty the existence of one thing from the existence of another thing. Metaphysical arguments are probable rather than demonstrative.

But, whatever one may be inclined to think on one or two cases, this critical attitude in regard to metaphysical speculation was practically always combined with a firm theological faith and a firm belief in revelation as a source of certain knowledge. This firm belief is particularly striking in the case of Ockham himself. His view that it is possible to have what would be, from the psychological point of view, intuition of a non-existent thing and his theory about the ultimate dependence of the moral law on the divine choice were not expressions of scepticism but of the tremendous emphasis he placed on the divine omnipotence. If one attempts to turn the nominalists into rationalists or even sceptics in the modern sense, one is taking them out of their historical setting and severing them from their mental background. In the course of time nominalism became one of the regular currents in Scholastic thought; and a theological chair of nominalism was erected even in the university of Salamanca.

But nominalism suffered the fate of most philosophical schools of thought. It obviously began as something new; and whatever one's opinion concerning the various tenets of the nominalists may be, it can hardly be denied that they had something to say. They helped to develop logical studies and they raised important problems. But in the course of time a tendency to 'logic-chopping' showed itself, and this can perhaps be connected with their reserved attitude towards metaphysics. Logical refinements and exaggerated subtlety tended to drain off the energies of the later nominalists; and when philosophy received a fresh impetus at the time of the Renaissance this impetus did not come from the nominalists.

CHAPTER X

THE SCIENTIFIC MOVEMENT

Physical science in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries—The problem of motion; impetus and gravity—Nicholas Oresme; the hypothesis of the earth's rotation—The possibility of other worlds —Some scientific implications of nominalism; and implications of the impetus theory.

1. For a long time it was widely supposed that there was no respect for experience in the Middle Ages and that the only ideas on science which the mediaevals possessed were adopted uncritically from Aristotle and other non-Christian writers. Science was assumed to have started again, after centuries of almost complete quiescence, at the time of the Renaissance. Then it was found that a considerable interest had been taken in scientific matters during the fourteenth century, that some important discoveries had been made at that time, that various theories had been fairly widely held which did not derive from Aristotle and that certain hypotheses which were usually associated with the Renaissance scientists had been proposed in the late Middle Ages. At the same time a better knowledge of late mediaeval philosophy suggested that the scientific movement of the fourteenth century should be connected with Ockhamism or nominalism, largely on the ground that Ockham and those who belonged more or less to the same movement of thought insisted on the primacy of intuition or of immediate experience in the acquisition of factual knowledge. It was not that Ockham himself was thought to have shown much interest in scientific matters; but his insistence on intuition as the only basis of factual knowledge and the empiricist side of his philosophy were thought to have given a powerful impetus to scientific interests and investigations. This view of the matter could be fitted into the traditional outlook inasmuch as Ockham and the nominalists were supposed to have been resolute anti-Aristotelians.

It is not at all my intention to attempt to deny that there is truth in this interpretation of the facts. Although Ockham cannot possibly be called simply 'anti-Aristotelian' without qualification, since in some matters he regarded himself as the true interpreter of Aristotle, his philosophy was in certain important respects undoubtedly at variance with Aristotle's, and it is clear that some thinkers who belonged to the nominalist movement were extremely hostile to Aristotelianism. Moreover, it is probably true to say that Ockhamist insistence on experience as the basis of our knowledge of existent things favoured the growth of empirical science. It may be difficult to assess an epistemological theory's positive influence on the growth of science; but it is reasonable to think that the doctrine of the primacy of intuition would naturally encourage such growth rather than discourage it. Moreover, if one assumes that causes cannot be discovered by *a priori* theorizing but that recourse must be had to experience in order to discover them, this assumption is calculated to turn the mind towards the investigation of the empirical data. No doubt, it can be said with justice that science does not consist in 'intuition' or in merely observing the empirical data; but the point is not that Ockhamism provided a theory of scientific method but rather that it helped to create an intellectual climate which facilitated and tended to promote scientific research. For by directing men's minds to the facts or empirical data in the acquisition of knowledge it at the same time directed them away from passive acceptance of the opinions of illustrious thinkers of the past.

But though it would be improper to discount the connection of fourteenth-century science with Ockhamism it would be equally improper to attribute its growth to Ockhamism as a sufficient cause. In the first place it is not clear to what extent one can legitimately speak of the fourteenth-century physicists as 'Ockhamists', even if one uses the term in a wide sense. One of the leading figures who took an interest in physical theories was John Buridan, who was for a time rector of the university of Paris and died about 1360. This theologian, philosopher and physicist was influenced by the terminist logic and by certain views which were held by Ockham; but he was by no means an unqualified nominalist. Apart from the fact that in his official capacity as rector he was associated with the condemnation of nominalist theories in 1340 he maintained, for example, in his writings that it is possible to prove the existence of one thing from the existence of another thing and that consequently it is possible to prove the existence of God. Albert of Saxony was rather more of an Ockhamist. Rector of the university of Paris in 1353 he became in 1365 the first rector of the university of Vienna. In the same year he was appointed bishop of Halberstadt. He died in that post in 1390. In logic he followed Ockham; but he was certainly not an extreme adherent of the *via moderna*. It is true that he held that the certitude given by experience cannot be absolute; but it would appear that his view of the hypothetical character of empirical statements was due more to the conviction that God can miraculously 'interfere' with the natural order than to any other consideration. Marsilius of Inghen (d. 1396), who was rector of the university of Paris in 1367 and 1371 and first rector of the university of Heidelberg in 1386, was indeed, a declared adherent of the *via moderna*; but he seems to have tempered the nominalist position on universals with a dose of realism, and he thought that the metaphysician can prove the existence and unicity of God. As for Nicholas Oresme, who taught at Paris and died as bishop of Lisieux in 1382, he was much more of a physicist than a philosopher, though he had, of course, theological and philosophical interests.

One can say then, I think, that the leading figures in the scientific movement of the fourteenth century had in most cases affiliations with the Ockhamist Movement. And if one is going to use the term 'nominalist' to denote those who adopted the Ockhamist or terminist logic, one can call them 'nominalists'. But it would be a mistake to suppose that they all adhered to Ockham's views on metaphysics; and it would be still more of a mistake to suppose that they shared the extremist philosophical position of a thinker like Nicholas of Autrecourt. Indeed, Buridan and Albert of Saxony both attacked Nicholas. It is fairly clear, however, that the *via moderna* in philosophy did stimulate, though it did not cause, the scientific developments of the fourteenth century.

That the nominalist movement cannot be accounted the sufficient cause of the growth of science in the fourteenth century is clear from the fact that fourteenth-century science was to a considerable extent a continuation of and growth from thirteenth-century science. I have mentioned that modern research has brought to light the reality of scientific progress in the fourteenth century. But research is also bringing to light the scientific investigations which were pursued in the thirteenth century. These investigations were stimulated mainly by the translations of Greek and Arabic scientific works; but they were none the less real. Mediaeval science was doubtless primitive and rudimentary if we compare it with the science of the post-Renaissance era; but there is no longer any excuse for saying that there was no science in the Middle Ages outside the fields of theology and philosophy. Not only was there a scientific development in the Middle Ages but there was also a continuity in some degree between the science of the late Middle Ages and the science of the Renaissance. It would be foolish to belittle the achievements of the Renaissance scientists or to make out that their hypotheses and discoveries were all anticipated in the Middle Ages. But it is also foolish to depict Renaissance science as being without historical antecedents and parentage.

In the thirteenth century a number of thinkers had insisted on the need for observation or 'experience' in scientific study. In the preceding volume of this history mention was made in this connection of St. Albert the Great (1206–80), Peter of Maricourt (exact dates unknown), Robert Grosseteste (*c.* 1175–1253) and of Roger Bacon (*c.* 1212–after 1292). Peter of Maricourt, who stimulated Bacon's interest in scientific matters, is notable for his *Epistola de magnete*, which was utilized by William Gilbert in the second half of the sixteenth century. Grosseteste wrote on optics and tried to improve the theory of refraction contained in Greek and Arabic writings. Optics constituted also one of Bacon's special interests. The Silesian scientist, mathematician and philosopher Witelo wrote on the same subject in his *Perspectiva*. This work was composed in dependence on the writings of the Islamic scientist Alhazen; and Kepler later supplied some developments on Witelo's ideas in his *Ad Vitellionem paralipomena* (1604). The Dominican Theodoric of Freiberg (d. *c.* 1311) developed a theory in explanation of the rainbow on an experimental basis, which was adopted by Descartes;[1] and another Dominican, Jordanus Nemorarius, made discoveries in mechanics.

But though the thirteenth-century physicists insisted on the need for observation in scientific research, and though a man like Roger Bacon was quick to see the practical purposes to which scientific discoveries could be put, they were by no means blind to the theoretical aspects of scientific method. They did not regard science as consisting in the mere accumulation of empirical data; nor did they concentrate simply on real or imagined practical results. They were interested in explaining the data. Aristotle had held that scientific knowledge is obtained only when one is in a position to show how the observed effects follow from their causes; and for Grosseteste and Bacon this meant in large part being able to give a mathematical deduction of the effects. Hence the great emphasis placed by Bacon on mathematics as the key to other sciences. Furthermore, whereas Aristotle had not given any very clear indication how a knowledge of the 'causes' is to be actually obtained, Grosseteste and Bacon showed how the elimination of explanatory theories which are incompatible with the facts helped one to arrive at this knowledge. In other words, they saw not only that an explanatory hypothesis could be arrived at by examining the common factors in different instances of the phenomenon under investigation, but also that it is necessary to verify this hypothesis by considering what results should follow if the hypothesis were true and by then experimenting in order to see if these expectations are actually fulfilled.

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[1] Theodoric's explanation of the shape of the bow was correct, though he failed to explain the colours.

Fourteenth-century science was therefore not an entirely new development: it was a continuation of the scientific work of the preceding century, just as this work was itself a continuation of the scientific studies made by Greek and Arab physicists and mathematicians. But in the fourteenth century other problems came into prominence, especially the problem of motion. And the consideration of this problem in the fourteenth century might have suggested a conception of scientific hypotheses which, had it been subsequently accepted by Galileo, might have gone a long way towards preventing the latter's clash with the theologians.

2. In Aristotle's account of motion a distinction was made between natural and unnatural motion. An element like fire is naturally light and its natural tendency is to move upwards towards its natural place, while earth is heavy and has a natural movement downwards. But one can take a naturally heavy thing and throw it upwards, a stone, for example; and so long as the stone is moving upwards its motion is unnatural. Aristotle considered that this unnatural motion requires an explanation. The obvious answer to the question why the stone moves upwards is that it is thrown upwards. But once the stone has left the hand of the person who throws it it continues to move upwards for some time. Aristotle's answer to the question why this happens was that the person who throws the stone and so starts it on its upward course moves not only the stone but also the surrounding air. This air moves the air higher up and each portion of the air which is moved carries the stone with it until the successive movements of portions of air become so weak that the stone's natural tendency to downward

motion is able at length to reassert itself. The stone then begins to move towards its natural place.

This account of unnatural or violent motion was rejected by William of Ockham. If it is the air which moves a flying arrow, then if two arrows meet in flight we shall have to say that at that moment the same air is causing movements in opposite directions; and this cannot be the case.[1] On the other hand, one cannot suppose that a stone which is thrown upwards continues to move in virtue of some power or quality imparted to it. There is no empirical evidence of the existence of any such quality distinct from the projectile. If there were such a quality it could be conserved by God apart from the projectile; but it would be absurd to suppose that this can be done. Local motion does not involve anything beyond a 'permanent thing' and the term of the motion.[2]

Ockham thus rejected the idea of a quality impressed on the projectile by the agent as an explanation of motion; and to this extent he may be said to have anticipated the law of inertia. But the physicists of the fourteenth century were not content to say that a thing moves because it is in motion: they preferred to adopt the theory of impetus, which had been put forward by Philoponus in the early part of the sixth century and which had been already adopted by the Franciscan Peter John Olivi (*c.* 1248–98), who spoke of the impulse (*impulsus*) or 'inclination' that is given to the projectile by the moving agent. This quality or energy in virtue of which a stone, for example, continues to move after it has left the hand of the thrower until it is overcome by the resistance of the air and the weight of the stone was called *impetus* by the fourteenth-century physicists. They supported the theory empirically, in that they maintained that it was better adapted than the Aristotelian theory for 'saving the appearances'. For example, John Buridan held that Aristotle's theory of motion was unable to explain the movement of a spinning top, whereas this could be explained on the impetus theory. The spinning top, he said, stays in one place; it does not leave its place, which could then be filled by air which would move the top. But though the fourteenth-century physicists attempted to support the impetus theory empirically or to verify it, they did not confine themselves to purely physical considerations but introduced philosophical questions stated in the traditional categories. For example, in his *Abbreviationes super VIII libros physicorum* Marsilius of Inghen raised the question, to what category or *praedicamentum* should impetus be assigned. He did not supply any very definite answer to this question; but he clearly thought that there are different kinds of impetus. For some projectiles move upwards, others downwards, some straight forwards, others in a circle. Again, although Albert of Saxony declared that the question whether impetus is a substance or an accident is a question for the metaphysician rather than for the physicist, he himself asserted that it is a quality, that is to say an accident. In any case it is clear that these physicists regarded impetus as something distinct from and impressed upon the projectile or moving body: they did not follow William of Ockham in his denial of any such distinct reality.

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[1] 2 *Sent.*, 18, J.

[2] *Ibid.*, 9, E.

An interesting application of the impetus theory was made in regard to the movement of the heavenly bodies. In his commentary on the *Metaphysics*[1] Buridan maintained that God imparted to the heavenly bodies an original impetus which is the same in kind as the impetus in virtue of which terrestrial bodies move. There is no need to suppose that the heavenly bodies are made of a special element (the quintessence or fifth element), which can only move with a circular motion. Nor is it necessary to postulate Intelligences of the spheres to account for the spheres' movements. Motion on earth and motion in the heavens can be explained in the same way. Just as a man imparts an impetus to the stone which he throws into the air, so God imparted impetus to the heavenly bodies when He created them. The reason why the latter continue to move while the stone eventually falls to the earth is simply that the stone encounters resistance whereas the heavenly bodies do not. The impetus of the stone is gradually overcome by the air's resistance and the force of gravity; and the operation of these factors results in the stone's eventually moving towards its natural place. But although the heavenly bodies are not composed of some special matter of their own these factors do not operate in their case: gravity, in the sense of a factor which makes a body tend towards the earth as its natural place, operates only in regard to bodies within the terrestrial sphere.

This theory of impetus was adopted, to all intents and purposes, by Albert of Saxony, Marsilius of Inghen and Nicholas Oresme. The first-named, however, tried to give a clear account of what is meant by gravity. He made a distinction between the centre of gravity in a body and the centre of its volume. These are not necessarily the same. In the case of the earth they are different, as the earth's density is not uniform; and when we talk about the 'centre of the earth' in connection with gravity it is the earth's centre of gravity which is meant. The tendency of a body to move towards its natural place may, then, be taken to mean its tendency to unite its own centre of gravity with the earth's centre of gravity or 'the centre of the earth'. A body's 'gravity' means this tendency. It is noteworthy that this 'explanation' is a physical account: it is not an account in terms of 'ultimate causes' but a positive account of what happens or is thought to happen.

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[1] 12, 9.

3. The wider implications of the impetus theory will be briefly discussed later in this chapter. At the moment I wish to mention one or two other developments connected with problems of motion.

Nicholas Oresme, who was one of the most independent and outstanding of the mediaeval physicists, made several discoveries in the sphere of dynamics. He found, for example, that when a body moves with a uniformly increasing velocity the distance which it travels is equal to the distance travelled in the same time by a body which moves with a uniform velocity equal to that attained by the first body at the middle instant of its course. Furthermore, he tried to find a way of expressing successive variations of intensity which would make it easy to understand and compare them. The way he suggested was that of representing them by means of graphs, making use of rectangular co-ordinates. Space or time would be represented by a straight base line. On this line Nicholas erected vertical lines, the length of which corresponded to the position or the intensity of the variable. He then connected the ends of the vertical lines and so was able to obtain a curve which represented the fluctuations in intensity. This geometrical device obviously prepared the way for further mathematical developments. But to depict Nicholas as the founder of analytic geometry, in the sense of ascribing to him the developments of Descartes, would be an exaggeration. For the geometrical presentation suggested by Nicholas had to be superseded by the substitution of numerical equivalents. This does not mean, however, that his work was not of importance and that it did not represent an important stage in the development of applied mathematics. He does not appear, however, to have realized very clearly the difference between symbol and reality. Thus in his treatise *De uniformitate et difformitate intensionum* he implies that heat of varying intensity is actually composed of geometrical particles of pyramidal structure, a notion which recalls to mind the statement in Plato's *Timaeus* that the particles of fire possess pyramidal form, as pyramids have 'the sharpest cutting edges and the sharpest points in every direction'.[1] Indeed, in the treatise *Du ciel et du monde*,[2] he shows plainly enough his predilection for Plato.

One of the problems discussed by Nicholas was that of the earth's movement. The matter had apparently already been discussed at an earlier date, for Francis of Meyronnes, a Scotist who wrote early in the fourteenth century, asserts that 'a certain doctor' maintained that if it was the earth which moved rather than the heavens it would be a 'better arrangement' (*melior dispositio*). Albert of Saxony dismissed as insufficient the arguments offered in favour of the hypothesis that the earth rotates daily on its axis; but Nicholas Oresme, who discussed the hypothesis at some length, gave it a more favourable reception, even if in the end he preferred not to accept it.

In his treatise *Du ciel et du monde* Nicholas maintained first of all that direct observation cannot afford a proof that the heaven or firmament rotates daily while the earth remains at rest. For the appearances would be precisely the same if it were the earth and not the heaven which rotated. For this and other reasons 'I conclude that one could not show by any experience that the heaven was moved with a daily motion and the earth was not moved in this way.'[3] As to other arguments adduced against the possibility of the earth's daily rotation, replies can be made to them all. For example, from the fact that parts of the earth tend to their 'natural place' with a downward movement it does not follow that the earth as a whole cannot rotate: it cannot be shown that a body as a whole may not have one simple movement while its parts have other movements.[4] Again, even if the heaven does rotate, it does not necessarily follow that the earth is at rest. When a mill-wheel rotates, the centre does not remain at rest, except for a mathematical point which is not a body at all.[5] As to arguments drawn from the Scriptures, one must remember that the Scriptures speak according to a common mode of speech and that they are not necessarily to be regarded as making a scientific statement in some particular case. From the statement in the Bible that the sun was stopped in its course[6] one is no more entitled to draw the scientific conclusion that the heaven moves and that the earth does not than one is entitled to draw from phrases like 'God repented' the conclusion that God can actually change His mind like a human being.[1] In view of the fact that it is sometimes said or implied that this interpretation of the relevant Scriptural assertions was invented by theologians only when the Copernican hypothesis had been verified and could no longer be rejected, it is interesting to note the clear statement of it by Nicholas Oresme in the fourteenth century.

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[1] *Timaeus*, 56a.
[2] 62d., p. 280
[3] 140a, p. 273. References are to the edition by A. D. Menut and A. J. Denomy.
[4] 140d–141a, p. 275.
[5] 141b, p. 276.
[6] *Josue*, 10, 13

Furthermore, one can give positive reasons in support of the hypothesis that the earth rotates. For example, it is reasonable to suppose that a body which receives influence from another body should itself move to receive this influence, like a joint being roasted at the fire. Now, the earth receives heat from the sun. It is reasonable, then, to suppose that the earth moves in order to receive this influence.[2] Again, if one postulates the rotation of the earth one can 'save the appearances' much better than on the opposite hypothesis, since if one denies the earth's movement one has to postulate a great number of other movements in order to explain the empirical data.[3] Nicholas draws attention to the fact that Heraclitus Ponticus (Heraclides of Pontus) had put forward the hypothesis of the earth's movement; so it was not a new idea. Nevertheless, he himself ends by rejecting this hypothesis, 'notwithstanding the reasons to the contrary, for they are conclusions which are not evidently conclusive'.[4] In other words, he is not prepared to abandon the common opinion of the time for a hypothesis which has not been conclusively proved.

Nicholas had a critical mind and he was certainly no blind adherent of Aristotle. He saw that the problem was one of 'saving the appearances'; and he asked which hypothesis would account for the empirical data in the most economical manner. It appears to me to be fairly clear that, in spite of his eventual acceptance of the commonly held opinion, he considered the hypothesis of the earth's daily rotation on its axis to meet all requirements better than the opposite hypothesis. The same could not be said about Albert of Saxony, however, who rejected the theory of the earth's rotation on the ground that it did not save the appearances. Like Francis of Meyronnes, he seems to have thought that the theory claimed that all the movements of the heavenly bodies could be eliminated if the earth were regarded as rotating; and he pointed out that the movements of the planets could not be eliminated in this way. Buridan also rejected the theory of the earth's rotation, though he discussed it quite sympathetically. It was Nicholas Oresme who saw clearly that the theory would only eliminate the diurnal rotation of the 'fixed' stars and would still leave the planets in motion. Some of the reasons he proposed in favour of the theory were good reasons, but others were not; and it would be an extravagance to depict Nicholas as having given a clearer and profounder exposition of the hypothesis of the earth's movement than the astronomers of the Renaissance, as Pierre Duhem was inclined to do. It is obvious, however, that men like Albert of Saxony and Nicholas Oresme can properly be called the precursors of the Renaissance physicists, astronomers and mathematicians. In so calling them Duhem was quite justified.

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[1] 141d–142a, pp. 276–7.

[2] 142b, p. 277.

[3] 143c–d, p. 278.

[4] 144b, p. 279.

4. One of the questions discussed in the *Du ciel et du monde* is whether there could be other worlds besides this one. According to Nicholas, neither Aristotle nor anyone else has shown that God could not create a plurality of worlds. It is useless to argue from the unicity of God to the unicity of the world: God is not only one and unique but also infinite, and if there were a plurality of worlds none of them would be, as it were, outside the divine presence and power.[1] Again, to say that if there were another world, the element of earth in the other world would be attracted to this earth as to its natural place is no valid objection: the natural place of the element of earth in the other world would be in the other world and not in this.[2] Nicholas concludes, however, that although no sufficient proofs have been adduced by Aristotle or anyone else to show that there could not be other worlds in addition to this one, there never has been, is not and never will be any other corporeal world.[3]

5. The existence of a certain interest in scientific study during the thirteenth century has been mentioned earlier in this chapter; and the conclusion was then drawn that the scientific work of the succeeding century cannot be ascribed simply to the association of some of the fourteenth-century physicists with the Ockhamist movement. It is true, of course, that certain philosophical positions maintained by Ockham himself or by other followers of the *via moderna* were calculated to influence the conceptions of

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[1] 38b–c, p. 243.

[2] 38a–b, p. 243.

[3] 39b–c, p. 244.

scientific method and of the status of physical theories. The combination of a 'nominalist' or conceptualist view of universals with the thesis that one cannot argue with certainty from the existence of one thing to the existence of another thing would naturally lead to the conclusion that physical theories are empirical hypotheses which can be more or less probable but which cannot be proved with certainty. Again, the emphasis laid by some philosophers on experience and observation as the necessary basis of our knowledge of the world might well encourage the view that the probability of an empirical hypothesis depends on the extent of its verification, that is, on its ability to explain or account for the empirical data. One might perhaps be tempted to suggest that the philosophy of the nominalist movement could have led to the conclusion that physical theories are empirical hypotheses which involve a certain amount of 'dictation' to nature and *a priori* construction, but which depend for their probability and utility on the extent to which they can be verified. A theory is constructed on the basis of empirical data, it might have been said, but it is a mental construction on the basis of those data. Its object, however, is to explain the phenomena, and it is verified in so far as it is possible to deduce from it the phenomena which are actually observed in ordinary life or which are obtained by artificial and purposive experiment. Moreover, that explanatory theory will be preferable which succeeds in explaining the phenomena with the least number of assumptions and presuppositions and which thus best satisfies the principle of economy.

But it is one thing to say that conclusions of this sort might have been suggested by the new movement in philosophy during the fourteenth century, and it is another thing to say that they were actually drawn. On the one hand, philosophers like Ockham do not seem to have shown any particular interest in questions of scientific theory and method as such, while on the other hand the physicists appear to have been more interested in their actual scientific research and speculations than in reflection on the underlying theory and method. This is, after all, only what one would expect. Reflection on scientific method and theory can hardly reach a high degree of development until physical science has itself progressed to a considerable extent and has reached a stage which prompts and stimulates reflection on the method employed and its theoretical presuppositions. We certainly do find in the thought of the fourteenth-century physicists some elements of the scientific theory which might have been suggested by contemporary philosophical developments. For example, Nicholas Oresme clearly regarded the function of any hypothesis about the world's rotation as being that of 'saving the appearances' or accounting for the observable data, and he clearly regarded as preferable the hypothesis which best satisfied the principle of economy. But the fourteenth-century physicists did not make in any very clear manner that kind of distinction between philosophy and physical science which the philosophy of the Ockhamist movement would appear to facilitate. As we have seen, the affiliations of the several physicists with the nominalist movement in philosophy were not by any means always as close as has sometimes been imagined. Moreover, the use of the principle of economy, as found in the physical speculations of Nicholas Oresme, for example, was already known in the thirteenth century. Robert Grosseteste, for instance, realized quite well that the more economical hypothesis is to be preferred to the less economical. He also realized that there is something peculiar about a mathematical explanation in astronomical physics, in that it does not provide knowledge of causes in a metaphysical sense. One has, then, to be careful in ascribing to the exclusive influence of the Ockhamist movement ideas in fourteenth-century science which, in the abstract, might perhaps have been the result of that movement. The idea of a scientific theory involving *a priori* mental construction could hardly arise except in a post-Kantian intellectual climate; and even the idea of physical theories as being concerned with 'saving the appearances' does not seem to have received special attention from or to have been specially developed by fourteenth-century nominalists.

It is true, however, that one can see a new view of the world coming to birth in the fourteenth century and that this was facilitated by the adoption of the theory of impetus in the explanation of movement. As we have seen, according to this theory celestial dynamics were explained on the same principle as terrestrial dynamics. Just as a stone continues to move after it has left the hand of the thrower, because a certain impetus has been imparted to it, so the celestial bodies move in virtue of an impetus originally imparted to them by God. On this view the first mover, God, appears as efficient rather than as final cause. By saying this I do not mean to imply that men like Nicholas Oresme and Albert of Saxony denied that God is final as well as efficient cause: I mean rather that the impetus theory which they adopted facilitated a shift of emphasis from the Aristotelian idea of God causing the movements of the heavenly bodies by 'drawing' them as final cause to the idea of God as imparting at creation a certain impetus in virtue of which these bodies, encountering no resistance, continued to move. This view might easily suggest that the world is a mechanical or quasi-mechanical system. God set the machine going, as it were, when He created it, after which it continues working on its own without further divine 'interference' save the activity of conservation and concurrence. If this idea were developed, God's function would appear to be that of a hypothesis for explaining the source of movement in the universe. And it would be natural to suggest that consideration of final causes should be excluded from physical science in favour of consideration of efficient causes, as Descartes, for example, insisted.

It must be repeated that I am not attempting to father all the ideas mentioned above on the physicists of the fourteenth century. They were concerned with the problem of motion as a particular problem rather than with drawing broad conclusions from it. And they were certainly not deists. None the less, one can see in the adoption of the impetus theory a step on the road towards a new conception of the material world. Or it might be better to say that it was a step on the road towards the development of physical science as distinct from metaphysics. It facilitated the growth of the idea that the material world can be considered as a system of bodies in motion in which impetus or energy is transmitted from body to body while the sum of energy remains constant. But it is one thing to state that the world, as considered by the physicist, can be regarded in this light, and it is another thing to say that the physicist, in his capacity as physicist, can give an adequate account of the world as a whole. When Descartes later insisted on the exclusion of consideration of final causes by what we would call the physical scientist and the astronomer, he did not say (nor did he think) that consideration of final causes has no place in philosophy. And the physicist-philosophers of the fourteenth century certainly did not say anything of the kind. It is conceivable that reflection on their scientific theories could have prompted them to make a clearer distinction between the world of the physicist and the world of the philosopher than they actually did; but in point of fact the idea that there is a rigid distinction between science and philosophy was an idea of much later growth. Before this idea could develop, science itself had to attain a very much richer and fuller development. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries we see the beginnings of empirical science in Christian Europe but only the beginnings. Still, it is as well to realize that the foundations of modern science were laid in mediaeval times. And it is as well also to realize that the development of empirical science is in no way alien in principle to the Christian theology which formed the mental background in the Middle Ages. For if the world is the work of God it is obviously a legitimate and worth-while object of study.

CHAPTER XI

MARSILIUS OF PADUA

Church and State, theory and practice—Life of Marsilius—Hostility to the papal claims—The nature of the State and of law—The legislature and the executive—Ecclesiastical jurisdiction—Marsilius and 'Averroism'—Influence of the Defensor pacis.

1. THE standard political idea of the Middle Ages was the idea of the two swords, of Church and Empire as two intrinsically independent Powers. In other words, the normal mediaeval theory, as presented by St. Thomas, was that Church and State were distinct societies, the former being concerned with man's supernatural well-being and his attainment of his last end, the latter with man's temporal well-being. As man has but one final end, a supernatural end, the Church must be considered superior to the State in point of value and dignity; but that does not mean that the Church is a glorified State enjoying direct jurisdiction in the temporal affairs of particular States, for, on the one hand, the Church is not a State and, on the other hand, each of them, the Church and the State, is a 'perfect' society.[1] All authority of man over man comes ultimately from God; but God wills the existence of the State as well as that of the Church. States existed before the Church, and the institution of the Church by Christ did not abrogate the State or subordinate the State, in the conduct of its own affairs, to the Church.

This view of Church and State is part and parcel of the harmonious philosophical structure achieved in the thirteenth century and associated especially with the name of St. Thomas Aquinas. But it is obvious enough that in practice a harmony of two Powers is inherently unstable, and in point of fact the disputes between papacy and empire, Church and State, loom large on the stage of mediaeval history. The Byzantine emperors had not infrequently attempted to interfere in purely doctrinal questions and to settle these questions by their own decisions; the western emperors did not attempt to usurp the teaching function of the Church, but they frequently quarrelled with the papacy over questions of jurisdiction, investiture and so forth, and we find first one side, then the other, gaining ground or giving ground, according to circumstances and according to the personal strength and vigour of the leaders on either side and their personal interest in advancing and maintaining practical claims. But we are not concerned here with the inevitable frictions and practical disputes between popes and emperors or kings: we are concerned only with the wider issues of which these practical disputes were, in part, the symptoms. (I say 'in part' because in the concrete historical life of the Middle Ages disputes between Church and State were in practice inevitable, even when no fundamentally conflicting theories about the relations of the two Powers were involved.) Whether one calls these wider issues 'theoretical' or 'practical' depends largely on one's point of view; it depends, I mean, on whether or not one regards political theory as simply an ideological reflection of concrete historical developments. I do not think, however, that any simple answer to the question is feasible. It is an exaggeration to say that theory is always simply the pale reflection of practice, exercising no influence on practice; and it is an exaggeration to say that political theory is never the reflection of actual practice. Political theory both reflects and influences practice, and whether one should emphasize the active or the passive element can be decided only by unprejudiced examination of the case under discussion. One cannot legitimately affirm *a priori* that a political theory like that of Marsilius of Padua, a theory which emphasized the independence and sovereignty of the State and which formed the antithesis to Giles of Rome's theoretical justification of the attitude of Pope Boniface VIII, was no more than the pale reflection of economic and political changes in the concrete life of the later Middle Ages. Nor is one entitled to affirm *a priori* that theories like that of Marsilius of Padua were the chief factor responsible for the practical disturbance of the harmonious balance between the Powers in so far as there ever was a harmonious balance in the sphere of practice—and for the emergence of sharply defined national entities with claims which amounted to that of complete autonomy. If one states either of these positions *a priori*, one is stating a theory which itself needs justification, and the only justification which could possibly be given would have to take the form of an examination of the actual historical data. In my opinion there are elements of truth in both theories; but it is not possible in a history of philosophy adequately to discuss the problem how far a given political theory was an ideological epiphenomenon of concrete historical changes or how far it played a part in actively influencing the course of history. In what follows, then, I wish to outline the ideas of Marsilius of Padua without committing myself to any decided opinion concerning the actual influence of these ideas or their lack of it. To form a decided opinion in virtue of a preconceived general theory is not, I think, a proper proceeding; and to discuss an actual example in sufficient detail is not possible in a general work. If, then, I expound Marsilius' ideas in a rather 'abstract way', this should not be taken to mean that I discount the influence of actual historical conditions in the formation of these ideas. Nor should incidental remarks concerning the influence of historical conditions on Marsilius' thought be taken to mean that I subscribe to the Marxist thesis concerning the nature of political theory. I do not believe in general *a priori* principles of interpretation to which the facts of history have to be fitted; and this holds for the anti-Marxist as well as for the Marxist theories.

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[1] A 'perfect' society is a self-sufficing society, possessing in itself all the means required for attaining its end.

2. It is uncertain in what year Marsilius of Padua was born. It would seem that he gave himself to the study of medicine; but in any case he went to Paris, where he was rector of the university from September 1312 until May 1313. The subsequent course of events is by no means clear. It appears that he returned to Italy and studied 'natural philosophy' with Peter of Abano from 1313 to the end of 1315. He may then have visited Avignon, and it appears from bulls of 1316 and 1318 that he was offered benefices at Padua. At Paris he worked on the *Defensor pacis*, with the collaboration of his friend John of Jandun, the book being finished on June 24th, 1324. His enmity towards the papacy and the 'clericals' must have begun at a considerably earlier date, of course; but in any case the book was denounced, and in 1326 Marsilius of Padua and John of Jandun fled from Paris and took refuge at Nuremberg with Ludwig of Bavaria, whom Marsilius accompanied to Italy, entering Rome in his entourage in January 1327. In a papal bull of April 3rd, 1327, Marsilius and John were denounced as 'sons of perdition and fruits of malediction'. The presence of Marsilius at his court was an obstacle to the success of Ludwig's attempts at reconciliation, first with John XXII, then with Benedict XII; but Ludwig had a high opinion of the author of the *Defensor pacis*. The Franciscan group did not share this opinion, and

Ockham criticized the work in his *Dialogus*, a criticism which led to the composition of the *Defensor minor*. Marsilius also published his *De iurisdictione imperatoris in causis matrimonialibus*, which was designed to serve the emperor in a practical difficulty concerning the projected marriage of his son. Marsilius maintained that the emperor could, on his own authority, dissolve an existing marriage and also dispense from the impediment of consanguinity. These two works were composed about 1341–2. A discourse of Clement VI, dated April 10th, 1343, asserts that the 'heresiarchs', Marsilius of Padua and John of Jandun, were both dead; but the exact date of Marsilius' death is unknown. (John of Jandun died considerably earlier than Marsilius.)

3. In his book on Marsilius of Padua[1] Georges de Lagarde finds the key to his mentality, not in a passion for religious reformation nor in a passion for democracy, but in an enthusiastic love for the idea of the lay State or, negatively, in a hatred of ecclesiastical interference in State affairs, that is to say, in a hatred of the doctrines of papal supremacy and of independent ecclesiastical jurisdiction. This is, I think, quite true. Possessed by an ardent enthusiasm for the autonomous State, the idea of which he supported by frequent references to Aristotle, Marsilius set out to show that the papal claims and the ecclesiastical jurisdiction laid down in the Canon Law involve a perversion of the true idea of the State and that they have no foundation in the Scriptures. His examination of the natures of Church and State and of their mutual relations leads him to a theoretical reversal of hierarchy of Powers: the State is completely autonomous and supreme.

But Marsilius was not simply pursuing an abstract theory. It appears that at one time he permitted himself to be lured from the quiet paths of science by the invitations of the Duke of Verona, Can Grande della Scala, and by Matteo Visconti of Milan. In any case his sympathies lay with the Ghibelline party, and he considered that the papal policy and claims were responsible for the wars and miseries of northern Italy. He lays at the door of the popes, who have disturbed the peace with their excommunications and interdicts, the responsibility for the wars, the violent deaths of thousands of the faithful, the hatred and contention, the moral corruption and crimes, the devastated cities and uncared for countryside, the churches abandoned by their pastors, and the

[1] *Naissance de l'esprit laïque;* Cahier II, *Marsile de Padoue.*

whole catalogue of evils which afflict the Italian City-States.[1] He may, no doubt, have exaggerated the situation: but the point I wish to make is that Marsilius was not simply theorizing in the abstract; his starting-point was a concrete historical situation, and his interpretation of this concrete situation reflected itself in his political theory. Similarly, in his account of the State as it ought to be we see an idealized reflection of the contemporary north-Italian republic, just as the Platonic and Aristotelian political theories were, to a greater or less extent, the idealization of the Greek City-State. The ideal of the empire, which is so prominent in Dante's political thought, is without any real effect on Marsilius' thought.

When, therefore, in the first *Dictio* of the *Defensor pacis* Marsilius discusses the nature of the State and draws on the teaching of Aristotle, it must be remembered that his thought is not moving in the purely abstract sphere but that it reflects his interpretation of and his enthusiasm for the Italian City-State. It may even be that the more abstract passages and the more Aristotelian parts are due to the influence of his collaborator, John of Jandun. Again, when in the second *Dictio* he discusses the Scriptural foundation, or lack of foundation, of the papal claims and of the independent ecclesiastical jurisdiction demanded by the Canon Law, it must be remembered that there is no real evidence that he had ever studied Civil Law and that his knowledge of Canon Law and of papal pronouncements did not, in spite of what some writers have maintained, amount to much more than knowledge of a Collection of Canons of the pseudo-Isidore and the bulls of Boniface VIII, Clement V and John XXII. He may have been acquainted with the Decree of Gratian; but the passages which are adduced as evidence of a knowledge of Gratian are too vague to serve as a proof of anything which could truly be called 'knowledge'. When Marsilius fulminated against the papal claims, he had primarily in mind the papal supremacy as conceived by Boniface VIII and those who shared his outlook. This is not to say, of course, that Marsilius did not deliver a general attack on the Church and its claims; but it is as well to remember that this attack had its roots in enmity towards the specific claims of specific ecclesiastics. When one reads in the third and concluding *Dictio* the summary of Marsilius' position, one should bear in mind both the historical situation which gave rise to and was reflected in his theoretical statements and the abstract theory which, though historically conditioned, had its influence in inculcating a certain general mentality and outlook.

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[1] *Def. pacis*, 2, 26, 19.

4. The first *Dictio* begins with a quotation from Cassiodorus in praise of peace. The quotations from classical writers and from the Bible cause perhaps a first impression of abstraction and antiquity; but very soon, after remarking that Aristotle has described almost all the causes of strife in the State, Marsilius remarks that there is another cause, which neither Aristotle nor any of his contemporaries or predecessors saw or could see.[1] This is a covert reference to Marsilius' particular reason for writing; and thus the actuality of the book makes itself felt at once, despite the borrowings from former writers.

The account of the nature of the State as a perfect or self-sufficing community which is brought into being for the sake of life but exists for the sake of the good life,[2] and the account of the 'parts' of the State[3] depend on Aristotle; but Marsilius adds an account of the priestly 'part' or order.[4] The priesthood is, then, part of the State, and though Christian revelation has corrected error in teaching and provided a knowledge of the salutary truth, the Christian priesthood remains none the less a part of the State. Marsilius' fundamental 'Erastianism' is thus asserted very early in the *Defensor pacis*.

Leaving out of account the cases where God directly appoints the ruler, one can reduce the different types of government to two fundamental types, government which exists by consent of the subjects and government which is contrary to the will of the subjects.[5] The latter type of government is tyrannical. The former type does not necessarily depend on election; but a government which depends on election is superior to a government which does not depend on election.[6] It may be that non-hereditary rule is the best form of elective government, but it does not follow that this form of government is best suited for any particular State.

Marsilius' idea of law, which next comes up for discussion in the *Defensor pacis*, involved a change from the attitude of thirteenth-century thinkers like St. Thomas. In the first place law has its origin, not in the positive function of the State, but in the need of preventing quarrels and strife.[7] Statute law is also rendered necessary with a view to preventing malice on the part of judges and arbiters.[1] Marsilius gives, indeed, several definitions of law. For example, law is the knowledge or doctrine or universal judgment concerning the things which are just and useful to the State's life.[2] But knowledge of these matters does not really constitute law unless a coercive precept is added touching their observance. In order that there should be a 'perfect law' there must be knowledge of what is just and useful and of what is unjust and harmful; but the mere expression of such knowledge is not law in the proper sense unless it is expressed as a precept backed up by sanctions.[3] Law is, therefore, a preceptive and coercive rule, fortified by sanctions applicable in this life.[4]

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[1] 1, 3.
[2] 1, 4.
[3] 1, 5.
[4] 1, 5–6.
[5] 1, 9, 5.
[6] 1, 9, 7.
[7] 1, 5, 7.

It would seem to follow from this that law concerns the objectively just and useful, that is to say, what is just and useful in itself, with a logical priority to any positive enactment and that Marsilius implicitly accepts the idea of natural law. So he does to a certain extent. In the second *Dictio*[5] he distinguishes two meanings of natural law. First, it may mean those statutes of the legislator on the rightness and obligatory character of which practically all people agree; for example that parents are to be honoured. These statutes depend on human institution; but they are called natural laws inasmuch as they are enacted by all nations. Secondly, 'there are certain people who call "natural law" the dictate of right reason in regard to human acts, and natural law in this sense they subsume under divine law'. These two senses of natural law, says Marsilius, are not the same; the phrase is used equivocally. In the first case natural law denotes the laws which are enacted in all nations and are practically taken for granted, their rightness being recognized by all: in the second case it denotes the dictates of right reason, which include dictates not universally recognized. From this it follows that 'certain things are licit according to human law which are not licit according to divine law, and conversely'.[6] Marsilius adds that licit and illicit are to be interpreted according to divine rather than human law when the two conflict. In other words, he does not simply deny the existence of natural law in the sense in which St. Thomas would understand it; but he pays little attention to the concept. His philosophy of law represents a transition stage on the way to the rejection of natural law in St. Thomas's sense.

That there is a shift of emphasis and a change in attitude is

[1] 1, 11. [2] 1, 10, 3. [3] 1, 10, 5. [4] 2, 8, 5. [5] 12, 7–8. [6] 2, 12, 9.

clear from the fact, already indicated, that Marsilius was unwilling to apply the word 'law' in a strict sense to any precept which is not fortified by sanctions applicable in this life. It is for this reason that he refused to allow that the law of Christ (*Evangelica Lex*) is law properly speaking: it is rather a speculative or operative doctrine, or both.[1] He speaks in the same strain in the *Defensor minor*.[2] Divine law is compared with the prescriptions of a doctor, it is not law in the proper sense. As natural law in the sense of the Thomist philosophy is expressly said by Marsilius to be reckoned under divine law, it, too, cannot be said to be law in the same sense that the law of the State is law. Thus, although Marsilius does not deny outright the Thomist conception of natural law, he implies that the standard type of law is the law of the State, and his doctrine points towards the conclusion that the law of the State is autonomous and supreme. As Marsilius subordinated Church to State, it would seem that he tended towards the idea that it is the State alone which can judge whether or not a given law is consonant with the divine law and is an application of it; but, on the other hand, as he reserved the name of law in the proper sense to the positive law of the State and refused it to divine law and to natural law in the Thomist sense, one might equally well say that his thought tended towards the separation of law and morality.

5. Law in the proper sense being human law, the law of the State, who precisely is the legislator? The legislator or first efficient cause of law is the people, the totality of citizens, or the more weighty part (*pars valentior*) of the citizens.[3] The more weighty part is estimated according to quantity and quality of persons: it does not necessarily mean a numerical majority, but it must, of course, be legitimately representative of the whole people. It can be understood either in accordance with the actually obtaining customs of States or it may be determined according to the opinions expressed by Aristotle in the sixth book of the *Politics*.[4] However, since there are practical difficulties in the way of the multitude's drawing up the laws, it is suitable and useful that the drawing up of laws should be entrusted to a committee or commission, which will then propose the laws for acceptance or rejection by the legislator.[5] These ideas of Marsilius reflect in large part the theory, if not always the practice, of the Italian republics.

The next point for consideration is the nature, origin and scope

[1] 2, 9, 3. [2] 1, 4. [3] 1, 12, 3. [4] 1, 12, 4. [5] 1, 13, 8.

of executive power in the State, the *pars principans*. The office of the prince is to direct the community according to the norms set by the legislator; his task is to apply and enforce the laws. This subordination of the prince to the legislator is best expressed when the executive power is conferred on each successive prince by election. Election is, in itself at least, preferable to hereditary succession.[1] In each State there should be a supreme executive power, though it does not necessarily follow that this power should be in the hands of one man.[2] Supremacy means that all other powers, executive or judicial, must be subordinate to the prince; but the supremacy is qualified by the assertion that if the prince transgresses the laws or fails seriously in the duties of his office he should be corrected, or if necessary removed from office, by the legislator or by those appointed by the legislature for this task.[3]

Marsilius' dislike of tyranny and his preference for the election of the executive reflect his concern with the well-being of the Italian City-State, while the concentration of supreme executive and judicial power in the hands of the prince reflects the general consolidation of power in the European States. It has been maintained that Marsilius envisaged a clear separation of powers; but though he separated the executive from the legislative power, he subordinated the judiciary to the executive. Again, it is true that he admitted in a sense the sovereignty of the people; but the later theory of the social contract has no clear explicit foundation in Marsilius' political theory. The subordination of the executive power to the legislature is supported by practical considerations touching the good of the State rather than by a philosophic theory of the social contract.

6. In discussing the nature of the State Marsilius has in view, of course, his coming attack on the Church. For example, the concentration of executive and judicial power, without exception, in the hands of the prince is designed to deprive the Church of all 'natural' foundations to its claims. It remains to be seen if the Church can support her claims from the data of revelation; and this subject is considered in the second part of the *Defensor pacis*. The transition from the first to the second part[4] consists of the statements that the State can function and that its parts can discharge their proper tasks only if the State is in a condition of peace and tranquillity; that it cannot be in this condition if the prince is interfered with or suffers aggression; and that the Church

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[1] 1, 15, 3; cf. 1, 16. [2] 1, 17, 2. [3] 1, 18. [4] 1, 19.

has in fact disturbed the peace by its interference with the rights of the Holy Roman Emperor and of other persons.

After considering various definitions or meanings of the words 'Church', 'temporal', 'spiritual', 'judge' and 'judgment' Marsilius proceeds to argue[1] that Christ claimed no temporal jurisdiction when He was in this world but subjected Himself to the civil power, and that the Apostles followed Him in this. The priesthood, then, has no temporal power. Marsilius goes on in the following chapters to minimize the 'power of the keys' and sacerdotal jurisdiction. As to heresy, the temporal legislator may make it a crime with a view to securing the temporal well-being of the State; but to legislate on this point and to exercise coercion belongs to the State, not to the Church.[2]

After an excursus on absolute poverty, from which he draws the conclusion that Church endowments remain the property of the donor, so that the Church has only the use of them,[3] Marsilius proceeds to attack the divine institution of the papacy. It would be out of place to enter upon a discussion of Marsilius' attempt to disprove the papal claims by reference to the Scriptures; nor does space permit any detailed consideration of his conciliar theory, but it is important to note, first that Marsilius assumes that the Scriptures alone are the rule of faith, and secondly that decisions of General Councils are not regarded by him as having any coercive force unless ratified by the temporal legislator. Canon Law is dismissed as having no weight. A historical treatment of papal encroachments leads up to a consideration of the dispute between John XXII and Ludwig of Bavaria.[4] Mention is made of the state of affairs in Italy and of the excommunication of Matteo Visconti.

In the third part Marsilius gives a brief summary of the conclusions he has reached in the *Defensor pacis*. He makes it quite clear that he is primarily concerned, not with the furtherance of democracy nor with any particular form of government, but rather with the rejection of papal supremacy and ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Moreover, the whole course of the work shows that Marsilius was not content simply with rejecting ecclesiastical interference in temporal matters; he went on to subordinate the Church to the State in all matters. His position was not that of one protesting against the encroachments of the Church on the sphere of the State while admitting the Church as a 'perfect society', autonomous in spiritual affairs: on the contrary, his position was frankly 'Erastian' and, at the same time, of a revolutionary character. Previté-Orton is obviously quite correct when he says that, in spite of disproportions in the work, there is unity of purpose and idea in the *Defensor pacis*. 'Everything is subordinated to the main aim, that of the destruction of papal and ecclesiastical power.' In the first part of the work, that which deals with the nature of the State, those themes are discussed and those conclusions are drawn which will serve as foundation for the second part. On the other hand, Marsilius was not animated by a hatred against papal supremacy and ecclesiastical jurisdiction for hatred's sake: as we have seen, his actual starting-point was what he regarded as the deplorable condition of northern Italy. He speaks on occasion about the empire, of course, and he apparently envisages the emperor as ratifying decisions of General Councils; but he was interested above all in the City-State or republic, which he considered to be supreme and autonomous in matters spiritual and temporal. There is, indeed, some excuse for regarding him as a forerunner of Protestantism; his attitude towards the Scriptures and towards the papacy shows as much; but it would be a great mistake to regard his attack on the papacy and on ecclesiastical jurisdiction as having proceeded from religious convictions or zeal. One can, of course, admit that in the course of his writing Marsilius became a 'religious controversialist'; but his religious controversy was undertaken, not for the sake of religion, but in the interests of the State. What characterizes him is his conception of the completely autonomous State. He admitted divine law, it is true; but he also admitted that human law may conflict with divine law, and in this case all subjects of the State, clerics and laymen, must obey human law, though one passage, mentioned earlier, seems to imply that if a law of the State obviously contradicts the law of Christ, the Christian should follow the latter. But since the Church, according to Marsilius, has no fully independent authority to interpret the Scriptures, it would scarcely be possible for the Christian to appeal to the teaching of the Church. In spite of its roots in contemporary history Marsilius' political theory looks forward to conceptions of the nature and function of the State which are modern in character, and which have scarcely brought happiness to mankind.

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[1] 2, 4. [2] 2, 10. [3] 2, 14. [4] 2, 26.

7. It has been maintained that Marsilius' political theory is 'Averroistic' in character. Speaking of the *Defensor pacis* Étienne Gilson remarks that it is 'as perfect an example of political

Averroism as one could wish'.[1] This Averroism consists in the application to politics of the Averroistic dichotomy between the sphere of faith and the sphere of reason. Man has two ends, a natural end, which is served by the State, utilizing the teaching of philosophy, and a supernatural end, served by the Church, utilizing the data of revelation. As the two ends are distinct, the State is completely independent, and the Church has no title to interfere in political affairs. However, although Gilson stresses the Averroism of John of Jandun, he admits that the *Defensor pacis* is due principally to Marsilius of Padua and that what one actually knows of the Averroism of Marsilius 'does not go beyond an application of the theoretic separation of reason and faith to the domain of politics, where he transmutes it into a strict separation of the spiritual and the temporal, of the Church and the State'.[2]

Maurice De Wulf, on the other hand, held that any collaboration of John of Jandun in the *Defensor pacis* has to be excluded, on the ground of the work's unity of plan and homogeneity of style, and was of the opinion that, although Marsilius had been in contact with Averroistic circles, he was influenced much more by the political writings of Aristotle.[3] The Church is not a true society, at least it is not a 'perfect society' since it has no temporal sanctions at its disposal wherewith to enforce its laws. The Church is little more than an association of Christians who find their true unity in the State; and, though the priesthood is of divine institution, the Church's task, as far as this world is concerned, is to serve the State by creating the moral and spiritual conditions which will facilitate the work of the State.

De Wulf's view of the matter, apart from his rejection of any collaboration on the part of John of Jandun, seems to me to be more in accordance with the tone and spirit of the *Defensor pacis* than the idea that the work is of specifically Averroistic inspiration. Marsilius thought that the Church's claims and activity hindered and disturbed the peace of the State, and he found in the Aristotelian conception of the autonomous and self-sufficing State the key to the solution of the problem, provided that the Church was subordinated to the State. It seems to me that Marsilius was animated much more by regard for what he considered to be the welfare of the State than by theoretical considerations concerning the end of man. Nevertheless, this in no way excludes an Averroistic influence on Marsilius' thought and, after all, Averroism was, or professed to be, integral Aristotelianism. Averroes was regarded as the 'Commentator'. Marsilius was influenced by Peter of Abano and was in touch with John of Jandun; and both of these men were animated by the Averroistic veneration for Aristotle. There was really no homogeneous doctrine or set of doctrines which one can call 'Averroism'; and if it is true that 'Averroism' was less a doctrine than an attitude, one can perfectly well admit the 'Averroism' of Marsilius without being thereby compelled to conclude that his inspiration was derived from the Averroists rather than from Aristotle.

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[1] *La philosophie au moyen âge* (1944), p. 592.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 691

[3] *Histoire de la philosophie médiévale*, tome III (1947), p. 142.

8. The *Defensor pacis* was solemnly condemned on April 27th, 1327; but it does not appear that the work was really studied by Marsilius' contemporaries, even by those who wrote against it, though Clement VI affirmed that he, when a cardinal, had submitted the work to a profound examination and had discovered therein 240 errors. Clement VI made this assertion in 1343, and we do not possess his publication. In 1378 Gregory XI renewed the condemnations of 1327; but the fact that the majority of the copies of manuscripts were made at the beginning of the fifteenth century seems to confirm the supposition that the *Defensor pacis* was not widely circulated in the fourteenth century. Those who wrote against the work in the fourteenth century tended to see in it little more than an attack on the independence of the Holy See and the immunity of the clergy: they did not realize its historical importance. In the following century the Great Schism naturally gave an impetus to the diffusion of Marsilius' theories; and these ideas exercised their long-term influence more as a 'spirit' than as precisely the ideas of Marsilius of Padua. It is significant that the first printed edition of the *Defensor pacis* was published in 1517 and that the work was apparently utilized by Cranmer and Hooker.

CHAPTER XII

SPECULATIVE MYSTICISM

Mystical writing in the fourteenth century—Eckhart—Tauler—Blessed Henry Suso—Ruysbroeck—Denis the Carthusian—German mystical speculation—Gerson.

1. ONE is accustomed perhaps to think of the sixteenth century, the century of the great Spanish mystics, as the period which was particularly distinguished for mystical writings. It may, indeed, well be that the works of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross are the supreme achievements of mystical theology, the theoretical exposition, so far as this is possible, of the experimental knowledge of God; but we must remember that there had been writers on mysticism from early Christian times. We have only to think of St. Gregory of Nyssa and of the Pseudo-Dionysius in the Patristic age, of St. Bernard and of Hugh and Richard, of St. Victor in the twelfth century, and of St. Bonaventure and St. Gertrude in the thirteenth century. And in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries there was a remarkable flowering of mystical writings. This fact is attested by the works of writers like Eckhart (1260–1327), Tauler (*c.* 1300–61), Bl. Henry Suso (*c.* 1295–1366), Ruysbroeck (1293–1381), St. Catherine of Siena (1347–80), Richard Rolle of Hampole (*c.* 1300–49), Walter Hilton (d. 1396), John Gerson (1363–1429), Denis the Carthusian (1402–71), St. Catherine of Bologna (1413–63) and St. Catherine of Genoa (1447–1510). It is with these mystical writings of the fourteenth and early part of the fifteenth centuries that I am concerned in this chapter; but I am concerned with them only in so far as they seem to be relevant to the history of philosophy; I am not concerned with mystical theology as such. This means that I shall confine my attention to philosophic speculation which appears to have been influenced by reflection on the mystical life; and this in turn means in effect that special consideration will be given to two themes, namely the relation of finite being in general and that of the human soul in particular to God. More concretely, it is writers like Eckhart rather than writers like Richard Rolle whose thought will be discussed. In a work on mystical theology as such, attention would have to be paid to writers who cannot be dealt

with here; but in a work on the history of philosophy, attention can be paid only to those who can reasonably be thought of as 'philosophers' according to some traditional or normal use of the term. I do not mean to imply, however, that the writers whom I propose to discuss in this chapter were primarily interested in theory. Even Eckhart, who was much more given to speculation than Henry Suso, for example, was deeply concerned with the practical intensification of religious life. This practical orientation of the mystical writers is shown partly by their use of the vernacular. Eckhart used both German and Latin, his more speculative work being in the latter language; Henry Suso also used both languages; Tauler preached in German; Ruysbroeck wrote in Flemish; and we possess a large collection of Gerson's French sermons, though he wrote mainly in Latin. A profound affective piety, issuing in a desire to draw others to closer union with God, is characteristic of these mystics. Their analyses of the mystical life are not so detailed and complete as those of the later Spanish mystical writers; but they form an important stage in the development of mystical theology.

One might reasonably be inclined to see in the flowering of mystical writing in the fourteenth century a reaction against logical and abstract metaphysical studies, against what some people call 'objective thinking', in favour of the one thing needful, salvation through union with God. And that there was such a reaction seems to be true enough. On the one hand there were the older philosophical traditions and schools; on the other hand there was the *via moderna*, the nominalist movement. The wranglings of the schools could not transform the heart; nor did they bring a man nearer to God. What more natural, then, than that the religious consciousness should turn to a 'philosophy' or pursuit of wisdom which was truly Christian and which looked to the work of divine grace rather than to the arid play of the natural intellect? The remarks of Thomas à Kempis on this matter are well known and have often been quoted. For example, 'I desire to feel compunction rather than to know its definition'; 'a humble rustic who serves God is certainly better than a proud philosopher who, neglecting himself, considers the movement of the heavens'; 'what is the use of much quibbling about hidden and obscure matters, when we shall not be reproved at the Judgment for being ignorant of them?'; 'and what do genera and species matter to us!'[1] Thomas à Kempis (1380–1471) belonged to the Brethren of the Common Life, an association founded by Gerard Groot (1340–84), who had been strongly influenced by the ideas of Ruysbroeck. The Brethren were of importance in the educational field, and they devoted special attention to the religious and moral upbringing of their charges.

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[1] *Imitation of Christ*, 1, 1; 1, 2; 1, 3.

But it was not only Scholastic aridities and academic wranglings about abstract questions which influenced, by way of reaction, the mystical writers; some of them seem to have been influenced by the Ockhamist tendency to deny the validity of the traditional natural theology and to relegate all knowledge of God, even of His existence, to the sphere of faith. The answer to this was found by the mystics, or by some of them, in an extension of the idea of experience. Thus, though Henry Suso did not deny the validity of a philosophical approach to God, he tried to show that there is a certitude based on interior experience, when this accords with the revealed truths of faith. And, indeed, had not Roger Bacon, who insisted so much on the experimental method in the acquisition of knowledge, included spiritual experience of God under the general heading of experience? The mystics in their turn saw no reason for confining 'experience' to sense-experience or to consciousness of one's internal acts.

From the philosophical point of view, however, the chief point of interest concerning the mystical writers is their speculative rationalization of religious experience, particularly their pronouncements concerning the relation of the soul to God and, in general, of creatures to God. As is not uncommon with mystical writers of earlier and also later times, some of them made statements which were certainly bold and which were likely to arouse the hostile attention of theologians who regarded the literal sense of such statements. The chief offender in this respect was Eckhart, a number of whose propositions were subsequently condemned, though Henry Suso, his disciple, defended his orthodoxy. There has also been controversy concerning statements made by Ruysbroeck and Gerson. In what follows I shall give particular, if brief, consideration to this speculative aspect of the mystics' writings. Though certain statements, especially in Eckhart's case, are unorthodox if understood in an absolutely literal sense, I do not consider that the writers in question had any intention of being unorthodox. Many of their suspect propositions can be paralleled in earlier writers and are to be seen in the light of the neo-Platonic tradition. In any case I consider that the attempt which has been made in certain quarters to find a new 'German theology' in Eckhart and his disciples is a vain attempt.

2. Meister Eckhart was born about 1260 at Hochheim near Gotha. Joining the Dominican Order he studied and then lectured at Paris. After having been Provincial of Saxony and later Vicar-General of the Order, he returned to Paris in 1311, where he lectured until 1314. From Paris he moved to Cologne; and it was the archbishop of that city who in 1326 instituted an inquiry into Eckhart's doctrine. Eckhart appealed to the Holy See; but in 1329, two years after his death, 28 propositions taken from his later Latin writings were condemned by Pope John XXII.

In the *Quaestiones Parisienses*[1] Eckhart raises the question whether in God being (*esse*) and understanding (*intelligere*) are the same. His answer is, of course, in the affirmative; but he proceeds to maintain[2] that it is not because God is that He understands, but that He is because He is intellect and understanding. Understanding or intellection is 'the foundation of His being' or existence. St. John did not say: 'In the beginning was being, and God was being'; he said: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' So, too, Christ said: 'I am the Truth.' Moreover, St. John also says that all things were made through the Word; and the author of the *Liber de causis* accordingly concludes that 'the first of created things is being'. It follows that God, who is creator, is 'intellect and understanding, but not being or existence' (*non ens vel esse*). Understanding is a higher perfection than being.[3] In God, then, there is neither being nor existence, formally speaking, since God is the cause of being. Of course, if one likes to call understanding 'being', it does not matter; but in this case it must be understood that being belongs to God because He is understanding.[4] 'Nothing which is in a creature is in God save as in its cause, and it is not there formally. And so, since being belongs to creatures, it is not in God save as in its cause; and thus there is not being in God but the purity of being.'[5] This 'purity of being' is understanding. God may have said to Moses, 'I am who am'; but God was then speaking like someone whom one meets in the dark and questions as to his identity, and who, not wishing to reveal himself, answers, 'I am who I am.'[6] Aristotle observed that the power of vision must itself be colourless, if it is to see every colour. So God, if He is the cause of all being, must Himself be above being.[1]

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[1] Ed. A. Dondaine, O.P., 1936, p. 1.

[2] p. 3.

[3] p. 5.

[4] p. 7.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] pp. 7–8.

In making *intelligere* more fundamental than *esse* Eckhart certainly contradicted St. Thomas; but the general notion that God is not being, in the sense that God is super-being or above being, was a commonplace of the neo-Platonic tradition. The doctrine can be found in the writings of the Pseudo-Dionysius, for example. As we have seen, Eckhart cites the author (in a remote sense) of the *Liber de causis*, namely Proclus; and it is very likely that he was influenced by Theodoric (or Dietrich) of Freiberg (*c.* 1250–*c.* 1311), another German Dominican, who made copious use of Proclus, the neo-Platonist. The neo-Platonic side of the teaching of Albert the Great lived on in the thought of Dominicans like Theodoric of Freiberg, Berthold of Moosburg and Meister Eckhart, though it must be added that what for St. Albert was a relic, as it were, of the past, became for some later thinkers a principal and exaggerated element of their thought. In his (unpublished) commentary on Proclus' *Elementatio theologica* Berthold appealed expressly to Albert the Great.

It has been held that, after having maintained in his earlier works that God is *intelligere* and not *esse*, Eckhart changed his view and later maintained that God is *esse*. This was the opinion of Maurice De Wulf, for example. Others, however, like M. Gilson, will not admit a change of doctrine on Eckhart's part. That Eckhart declared that God is *esse*, existence, is certain. Thus, in the *Opus tripartitum*[2] his first proposition is, *Esse est Deus.* 'God and existence are the same.'[3] And he alludes to the words in the book of Exodus, 'I am who am.' 'God alone is properly speaking being (*ens*), one, true and good.'[4] 'To anyone who asks concerning God what or who He is, the reply is: Existence.'[5] That this sounds like a change of front can hardly be denied; but Gilson argues that Eckhart always emphasized the unity of God and that for him real unity is the property of intelligent being alone; so that the supreme unity of God belongs to Him because He is, above all things, intellect, *intelligere*. Eckhart was certainly understood as seeking a unity in God transcending the distinction of Persons; and one of the condemned propositions (24) runs as follows. 'Every distinction is alien to God, whether in Nature or in Persons. Proof: the Nature itself is one, this one thing, and any of the Persons is one and the same thing as the Nature.' The statement and condemnation of this proposition means, of course, that Eckhart was understood by the theologians who examined his writings as teaching that the distinction of Persons in the Godhead is logically posterior to the unity of Nature in such a way that unity transcends trinity. Henry Suso defended Eckhart by observing that to say that each of the divine Persons is identical with the divine Nature is the orthodox doctrine. This is perfectly correct. The examining theologians, however, understood Eckhart to mean that the distinction of Persons from one another is a secondary 'stage', as it were, in the Godhead. But I am not concerned with the orthodoxy or unorthodoxy of Eckhart's trinitarian doctrine: I wish merely to draw attention to the emphasis he laid on the unity of the Godhead. And it is Gilson's contention that this perfect unity belongs to God, according to Eckhart's constant opinion, in virtue of God's being primarily *intelligere*. The pure divine essence is *intelligere*, which is the Father, and it is from the fecundity of this pure essence that there proceed the Son (*vivere*) and the Holy Spirit (*esse*).

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[1] p. 9.
[2] *Prologus generalis;* ed. H. Bascour, O.S.B., 1935.
[3] p. 12.
[4] p. 21.
[5] p. 22.

The truth of the matter seems to be that there are various strands in Eckhart's thought. When he comments on the words, 'I am who am', in the *Expositio libri Exodi*, he observes that in God essence and existence are the same and that the identity of essence and existence belongs to God alone. In every creature essence and existence are distinct, and it is one thing to ask about the existence of a thing (*de annitate sive de esse rei*) and another to ask about its quiddity or nature. But in the case of God, in whom existence and essence are identical, the fit reply to anyone who asks who or what God is, is that God exists or is. 'For existence is God's essence.'[1] This doctrine is obviously the Thomist doctrine, learnt and accepted by the Dominican. But in the very passage mentioned Eckhart speaks of the 'emanation' of Persons in the Godhead and uses the very neo-Platonic expression *monas monadem gignit*. Moreover, the tendency to find in God a unity without distinction, transcending the distinction of Persons, a tendency to which I have referred above, is also of neo-Platonic inspiration, as is also the doctrine that God is above being. On the other hand, the notion that *intelligere* is the supreme divine perfection seems to be original: in the Plotinian scheme the One is above intellect. Probably it is not possible to harmonize these different strands perfectly; but it is not necessary to suppose that when Eckhart stressed the identity of existence and essence in God he was consciously renouncing his 'former' view that God is *intelligere* rather than *esse*. In the *Expositio libri Genesis* he says: 'the nature of God is intellect, and for Him to be is to understand'; *natura Dei est intellectus, et sibi esse est intelligere.*[1]

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[1] Meister Eckhart, *Die lateinischen Werke: erster Band*, fasc. 2, pp. 98–100, Stuttgart-Berlin, 1938.

However, whether he changed his opinion or not, Eckhart made some rather bold statements in connection with the characterization of God as existence, *esse*. For example, 'outside God there is nothing, inasmuch as it would be outside existence'.[2] God is creator but He does not create 'outside' Himself. A builder makes a house outside himself, but it is not to be imagined that God threw, as it were, or created creatures outside Himself in some infinite space or vacuum.[3] 'Therefore God created all things, not to stand outside Himself or near and beside Himself, like other craftsmen, but He called (them) from nothingness, that is, from non-existence, to existence, which they found and received and had in Him. For He Himself is existence.'[4] There is nothing outside the first cause; for to be outside the first cause would mean being outside existence; since the first cause is God, and God is being and existence. The doctrine that 'outside' God there is nothing is certainly susceptible of an orthodox interpretation: if, that is to say, it is taken as tantamount to the denial of the creature's independence of God. Moreover, when Eckhart declares that, though creatures have their specific natures from their forms, which make them this or that kind of being, their *esse* does not proceed from the form but from God, he might seem to be simply insisting on the facts of divine creation and divine conservation. But he goes further than this and declares that God is to the creature as act to potency, as form to matter, and as *esse* to *ens*, implying apparently that the creature exists by the existence of God. Similarly he says that nothing so lacks distinction as that which is constituted and that from which and through which and by which it is constituted and subsists; and he concludes that nothing so lacks distinction (*nihil tam indistinctum*) as the one God or Unity and the multiplicity of creatures (*creatum numeratum*).

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[1] Meister Eckhart, *Die lateinischen Werke: erster Band*, fasc. 1, p. 52, Stuttgart-Berlin, 1937.

[2] *Opus tripartitum, Prologus generalis;* ed. H. Bascour, O.S.B., p. 18.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[4] *Ibid.*

Now, if these propositions are taken in isolation, it is no wonder that Eckhart should be regarded as teaching a form of pantheism. But there is no justification for taking these texts in isolation, if we wish, that is to say, to discover what Eckhart meant. He was accustomed to use antinomies, to state a thesis and give reasons for it, and then to state an antithesis and give reasons for it. Obviously both sets of statements must be taken into consideration if Eckhart's meaning and intention are to be understood. For example, in the case in point the thesis is that nothing is so distinct from the created as God is. One of the reasons given is that nothing is so distant from anything as is the opposite of that thing. Now, 'God and the creature are opposed as the One and Unnumbered is opposed to number, the numbered and the numerable. Therefore nothing is so distinct (as God) from any created being.' The antithesis is that nothing is so 'indistinct' from the creature as God is; and reasons are given for saying this. It is pretty clear that Eckhart's line of thought was as follows. It is necessary to say that God and creatures are utterly different and opposed; but if one *simply* says this, one is implying what is not true; at least one is stating what is not the whole truth; for the creature exists only by and through God, without whom it is nothing at all.

For an understanding of Eckhart's antinomies one can profitably consult Otto Karrer's *Meister Eckhart*,[1] where he cites texts and appends explanatory notes. Karrer may endeavour in an exaggerated manner to assimilate Eckhart's teaching to that of St. Thomas, but his remarks serve to correct an exaggerated view of Eckhart's departures from St. Thomas. For example, Eckhart states that God alone is and that creatures are nothing and also that God is not being; that all creatures are God and also that all creatures are nothing; that no things are so unlike as Creator and creature and that no things are so like as Creator and creature; that God is in all things and also that God is above all things; that God is in all things as their being and also that God is outside all things. That God alone is and that creatures are nothing means simply that in comparison with God creatures are as nothing. In the Augustinian *Soliloquies*[2] occurs the statement that 'only of the Immortal can one really say that He is', and St. Anselm asserts[3] that in a certain sense God alone is. The statement that all creatures are God refers primarily to their eternal presence in God, in the divine intellect, while the statement that they are nothing means that they are nothing apart from God. The doctrine that God and creatures are both like and unlike implies the theory of analogy and it has its roots in the Pseudo-Dionysian *Divine Names*.[1] St. Thomas affirmed[2] that the creature is like God but that God should not be said to be like the creature. God as immanent is in all things by 'power, presence and essence', but He is also above all things, or transcends all things, since He is their creator out of nothing and in no way depends on them. Thus, in his ninth German sermon[3] Eckhart says: 'God is in all creatures . . . and yet He is above them.' In other words, there is no adequate reason for finding pantheism in his thought, even though a considerable number of statements, taken in isolation, would seem to imply that he was a pantheist. What draws one's attention in his thought is the bold way in which he juxtaposes his theses and antitheses rather than the isolated statements, which are frequently commonplaces of mediaeval philosophy and can be discovered in Augustine or the Pseudo-Dionysius or the Victorines or even St. Thomas. As Karrer observes, one can find apparent antinomies even in St. Thomas. For instance, in the *Summa theologica*[4] St. Thomas says that God is above all things (*supra omnia*) and yet in all things (*in omnibus rebus*); that God is in things and yet that all things are in God; that nothing is distant from God and yet that things are said to be distant from God. One condemned proposition of Eckhart begins, 'all creatures are one pure nothingness'; and to say that his intentions were not heterodox is not, of course, to question the legitimacy of the ecclesiastical action which was taken, since it is obvious enough that the propositions in question could easily be misinterpreted, and what was condemned was the proposition as it stood taken in its literal or natural sense but not necessarily as the author understood and meant it. The proposition in question was condemned as 'badly sounding, rash and suspected of heresy', and Rome could hardly judge of it in any other way when it was presented for theological comment and judgment. To realize this, one has only to read the following passage in the fourth German sermon.[5] 'All creatures are a pure nothing. I do not say that they are little or something; they are a pure nothing.' But he goes on to explain what he means. 'All creatures have no being, as their being depends on the presence of God. If God turned away from creatures for one moment, they would be reduced to nothing.' The historian of philosophy, however, is concerned with the author's intended meaning, not with the theological 'note' to be attached to isolated propositions; and it is, I think, to be regretted that some historians have apparently allowed the boldness of some of Eckhart's propositions to blind them both to the general context and meaning and to the history of the propositions in question.

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[1] Munich, 1926. [2] I, 29. [3] *Proslog.*, 27, and *Monol.*, 31.

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[1] 9, 6.

[2] *Summa theologica*, 1, 4, 3, *ad* 4.

[3] Meister Eckhart, *Die deutschen Werke: erster Band, Meister Eckhart's Predigten*, fasc. 2, p. 143.

[4] 1, 8, 1, *ad* 1 ff.

[5] *Op. cit.*, fasc. 1, pp. 69–70.

Eckhart also made some strange statements concerning the act of creation. In the *Expositio libri Genesis* he says, with reference to the statement that God created 'in the beginning', that this 'beginning' is the 'now' of eternity, the indivisible 'now' (*nunc*) in which God is eternally God and the eternal emanation of the divine Persons takes place.[1] He goes on to say that if anyone asks why God did not create the world before He did, the answer is that He could not do so; and He could not do so because He creates the world in the same 'now' in which He is eternally God. It is false to imagine that God awaited, as it were, a moment in which to create the world. To put the matter crudely, in the same 'now' in which God the Father exists and generates His coeternal Son He also creates the world. At first hearing at least this sounds as though Eckhart meant to teach that creation is from eternity, that it is coeternal and bound up with the generation of the Son. Indeed, the first three condemned propositions show clearly that the examining theologians understood him in this sense.

It may be, of course, that Eckhart meant the eternity of creation to refer to the object of the creative act, the actual world, and not only to the act of creation as it is in God. This is certainly the natural interpretation of many of the statements he makes. But in this case are we also to take with absolute literalness his statement that 'creation' and every work of God is simultaneously perfected and finished in the very beginning of creation?[2] If so, would not this imply that there is no time and that the Incarnation, for instance, took place at the beginning of creation? It seems to me that Eckhart was thinking of creation as the work of God who is not in time. God created in the beginning, he says, 'that is, in Himself', since God Himself is the *Principium*.[3] For God there is no past or future; for Him all things are present. So He may rightly be said to have completed His work at the moment of creation. God is the beginning and end of all things, 'the first and the last'; and since God is eternal, existing in one eternal 'now', He must be conceived as eternally creating all things in that eternal 'now'. I am not suggesting that Eckhart's statements, taken as they stand, were correct from the theological point of view; but he seems to me to have been looking at the creation of the world from what one might call God's point of view and to have been insisting that one should not imagine that God created the world 'after' a time in which there was no world. As to the connection of creation with the generation of the Son, Eckhart was thinking of the words of St. John:[1] 'All things were made by him (the Word): and without him was made nothing that was made.' Coupling these words with the statement contained in the first verse of the first chapter of Genesis, 'In the beginning God created heaven and earth', and understanding 'beginning' with reference to God, that is to say, as referring to God's eternal 'now', he says that God created the world simultaneously with the generation of the Son, by whom 'all things were made'. This would certainly seem to imply that there was no beginning of time and to amount to a denial of creation in time; but in the *Expositio libri Genesis*,[2] after referring to the Platonic Ideas or *rationes rerum* and saying that the Word is the *ratio idealis*, he goes on to quote Boethius and says that God created all things *in ratione et secundum rationem idealem*. Again, the 'beginning' in which God created heaven and the earth is the *intellectus* or *intelligentia*. It is possible, then, that Eckhart did not mean that the object of the creative act, the actual world, is eternal, but rather that God eternally conceived and willed creation in and through the Word. This, in any case, is what he later said he had meant. 'Creation, indeed, and every act of God is the very essence of God. Yet it does not follow from this that if God created the world from eternity, the world on this account exists from eternity, as the ignorant think. For creation in the passive sense is not eternal, just as the created itself is not eternal.'[3] Eckhart obviously utilized sayings like that of St. Albert the Great: 'God created from eternity, but the created is not from eternity,'[4] and of St. Augustine: 'In the eternal Word dost Thou speak eternally all that Thou speakest; and yet not all exists at once and from eternity that Thou effectest in speaking.'[1]

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[1] Meister Eckhart, *Die lateinischen Werke; erster Band*, fasc. 1, p. 50, Stuttgart-Berlin, 1937.

[2] *Opus tripartitum, Prologi*, p. 18; ed. H. Bascour, O.S.B.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

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[1] 1, 3. [2] *Die lateinischen Werke: erster Band*, fasc. 1, pp. 49–50.

[3] Cf. Daniels, *Eine lateinische Rechtfertigungsschrift des Meister Eckhart*, p. 10, n. 8. *Beiträge*, 23, 5, Münster i.W., 1923.

[4] Commentary on the *Celestial Hierarchy* of the Pseudo-Dionysius, 4.

We seem perhaps to have strayed far from Eckhart the mystic. But the mystic aims at union with God, and it is not unnatural that a speculative mystic like Eckhart should emphasize the immanence of God in creatures and their dwelling in God. He did not deny God's transcendence; he affirmed it. But he certainly used exaggerated expressions and ambiguous expressions in stating the relations of creatures in general to God. A like boldness and proneness to exaggeration can be seen in his statements concerning the relation of the human soul in particular to God. In the human soul there is an element, which he called *archa* and which is uncreated. This element is the intelligence.[2] In virtue of *intelligere* the soul is deiform, since God Himself is *intelligere*. But the supreme mystical union with God does not take place through the activities of love and knowledge, which are activities of the soul and not the essence of the soul: it takes place in the innermost recess of the soul, the 'spark' or *scintilla animae*, where God unites the soul to Himself in a hidden and ineffable manner. The intellect apprehends God as Truth, the will as the Good: the essence of the soul, however, its citadel (*bürgelin*), is united with God as *esse*. The essence of the soul, also called its 'spark' (*vünkelin* or *scintilla*) is simple; it is on it that the image of God is stamped; and in the mystical union it is united with God as one and simple, that is to say, with the one simple divine essence transcending the distinction of Persons.[3] Eckhart thus preaches a mystical union which reminds one of Plotinus' 'flight of the alone to the Alone', and one can see the parallelism between his psychology and his metaphysic. The soul has a simple, unitary ground or essence and God has a simple essence transcending the distinction of Persons: the supreme mystical union is the union of the two. But this doctrine of a ground of the soul which is superior to the intelligence as a power does not necessarily mean that the soul's presence is not, in a higher sense, intellect. Nor does the doctrine that the ground of the soul is united with God as *esse* necessarily mean that the *esse* is not *intelligere*. In other words, I do not think that the mystical teaching of Eckhart necessarily contradicts Gilson's view that the statement that God is *esse* involves no break with the earlier statements that God is *intelligere*. The Sermons seem to make it clear that Eckhart did not change his opinion. He speaks of the ground of the soul as intellect.

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[1] *Conf.*, 11, 7.

[2] Cf. twelfth German sermon, pp. 197–8. Cf. p. 189, n. 3.

[3] Cf. Meister Eckhart, *Die deutschen Werke: erster Band, Meister Eckhart's Predigten*, fasc. 1, pp. 24–45. Stuttgart-Berlin, 1936.

Of the union mystically effected between God and the soul Eckhart speaks in an extremely bold way. Thus in the German sermon on the text, 'the just shall live for evermore; and their reward is with the Lord',[1] he declares that 'we are wholly transformed and changed into God'. And he goes on to say that, just as the bread is changed into the Body of Christ, so is the soul changed into God in such a way that no distinction remains. 'God and I we are one. By knowledge I take God into myself; by love I enter into God.' Just as fire changes wood into itself, 'so we are transformed into God'. So too in the following sermon[2] Eckhart says that just as the food which I eat becomes one with my nature so do we become one with the divine nature.

Not unnaturally, statements of this kind did not pass unnoticed. The statement that there is something uncreated in the soul was censured, and the statement that we are wholly transformed into God in a manner similar to that of the transformation of bread into Christ's Body was condemned as heretical. In his self-justification Eckhart admitted that it is false to say that the soul or any part of it is uncreated; but he protested that his accusers had overlooked his having declared that the supreme powers of the soul were created in and with the soul.[3] In point of fact Eckhart had implied that there is something uncreated in the soul, and it is not to be wondered at that his words led to trouble; but he maintained that by 'uncreated' he meant 'not created *per se*, but concreated' (with the soul). Moreover, he had said not that the soul is uncreated but that if the whole soul were essentially and totally intellect, it would be uncreated. It is, however, difficult to see how he could maintain this, unless by 'intellect' he meant the ground of the soul, which is the image of God. In this case he may have meant that the soul, if totally and essentially the image of God (*imago Dei*), would be indistinguishable from the Word. This seems to be its probable meaning.

As to the statement that 'we are transformed and changed into God', Eckhart admits that it is an error.[4] Man, he says, is not the 'image of God, the unbegotten Son of God; but he is (made) to the image of God'. He goes on to say that just as many hosts on many altars are turned into the one Body of Christ, though the accidents of each host remain, so 'we are united to the true Son of God, members of the one head of the Church who is Christ'. In other words, he admits that his original statements were exaggerated and incorrect, and that the comparison of the union of the soul with God to transubstantiation is an analogy, not a parallel. As a matter of fact, however, though Eckhart's statements in his sermons concerning mystical union with God were obviously *male sonantes* as they stood, they are by no means exceptional among mystical writers, even among some whose orthodoxy has never seriously been called in question. Phrases like man becoming God or the transformation of the soul into God can be found in the works of writers of unquestioned orthodoxy. If the mystic wishes to describe the mystical union of the soul with God and its effects, he has to make use of words which are not designed to express any such thing. For example, in order to express the closeness of the union, the elevation of the soul and the effect of the union on the soul's activity, he employs a verb like 'transform' or 'change into'. But 'change into' denotes such processes as assimilation (of food), consumption of material by fire, production of steam from water, heat from energy, and so on, whereas the mystical union of the soul with God is *sui generis* and really requires an altogether new and special word to describe it. But if the mystic coined a brand new word for this purpose, it would convey nothing at all to anyone who lacked the experience in question. Therefore he has to employ words in more or less ordinary use, even though these words inevitably suggest pictures and parallels which do not strictly apply to the experience he is attempting to describe. There is nothing to be surprised at, then, if some of the mystic's statements, taken literally, are inadequate or even incorrect. And if the mystic is also theologian and philosopher, as Eckhart was, inexactitude is likely to affect even his more abstract statements, at least if he attempts to express in theological and philosophical statements an experience which is not properly expressible, employing for this purpose words and phrases which either suggest parallels that are not strict parallels or already possess a defined meaning in theology and philosophy.

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[1] *Wisdom* 6, 16; *op. cit.*, fasc. 2, pp. 99–115.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 119.

[3] Daniels, p. 5, n. 4; p. 17, n. 6.

[4] Daniels, p. 15, n. 1.

Moreover, Eckhart's thought and expression were influenced by a number of different sources. He was influenced, for example, by St. Thomas, by St. Bonaventure, by the Victorines, by Avicenna, by the Pseudo-Dionysius, by Proclus, by the Christian Fathers. He was, too, a deeply religious man who was primarily interested in man's attitude to and experience of God: he was not primarily a systematic philosopher, and he never systematically thought through and rendered consistent the ideas and phrases which he had found in various authors and the ideas which occurred to him in his own meditations on the Scriptures. If, then, it is asked whether certain statements made by Eckhart are theologically orthodox when taken in isolation and according to their 'natural' meaning, the answer can hardly be any other than a negative answer. Eckhart lived at a time when exactitude and accuracy of expression were expected; and the fact that he made his bold and exaggerated statements in sermons, the hearers of which might easily misunderstand his real intentions, renders the theological censure of certain propositions easily understandable. On the other hand, if it is asked whether Eckhart intended to be heterodox and whether he intended to found a 'German theology', the answer must also be in the negative. Disciples like Henry Suso warmly defended the Master against charges of heresy; and a man like Suso would never have done this had he seen any reason to doubt Eckhart's personal orthodoxy. To my mind it seems absurd either to make of Eckhart a 'German thinker' in revolt against Catholic orthodoxy or to attack the theologians who took exception to certain of his statements as though there were nothing in these statements to which they were entitled to take exception.

3. John Tauler was born at Strasbourg about the year 1300 and entered the Dominican Order at an early age. He did his studies at Paris; but it is clear that he was already more attracted to the mystical writers and to the writers influenced by neo-Platonism than to the logical investigations of contemporary philosophers or the purely abstract metaphysical speculations of the Schoolmen. He is famous as a preacher rather than as a theologian or a philosopher, and his preaching seems to have been especially concerned with the reformation and deepening of the spiritual life of religious and clergy. At the time of the Black Death he ministered heroically to the sick and dying. His writings present an orthodox Catholic and Christocentric mysticism, in distinction from the heretical and pantheistic mystical doctrines which were strenuously propagated at the time by various associations. He died in the city of his birth in the year 1361.

In Tauler's writings we find the same psychological doctrine of the 'spark' or 'foundation' of the soul as in the writings of Eckhart. The image of God resides in this apex or highest part of the soul, and it is by retreating within himself, transcending images and figures, that a man finds God. If a man's 'heart' (*Gemüt*) is turned towards this foundation of the soul, that is to say, if it is turned towards God, his faculties of intellect and will function as they ought; but if his 'heart' is turned away from the foundation of the soul, from the indwelling God, his faculties, too, are turned away from God. In other words, between the foundation of the soul and the faculties Tauler finds a link, *das Gemüt*, which is a permanent disposition of the soul in regard to its foundation or apex or 'spark'.

Tauler not only utilized the writings of St. Augustine, St. Bonaventure and the Victorines, but also those of the Pseudo-Dionysius; and he seems to have read some Proclus. He was also strongly influenced by Eckhart's teaching. But, whereas Eckhart not infrequently spoke in such a way that his orthodoxy was called in question, it would be superfluous to raise any such question in regard to Tauler, who insists on the simple acceptance of revealed truths and whose thought is constantly Christocentric in character.

4. Henry Suso was born at Constance about the year 1295. He entered the Dominican Order and did his studies at Constance (perhaps partly at Strasbourg), after which he went to Cologne. There he made the personal acquaintance of Eckhart, for whom he retained a lasting admiration, affection and loyalty. Returning to Constance he spent some years there, writing and practising extraordinary mortifications and penances; but at the age of forty he began an apostolic life of preaching not only in Switzerland but also in Alsace and the Rhineland. In 1348 he changed his convent at Constance for that at Ulm (driven thereto by calumnies) and it was at Ulm that he died in January, 1366. He was beatified by Gregory XVI in 1831.

Suso's chief concern as writer was to make known the soul's path to the highest union with God: he was above all a practical mystical writer. The more speculative part of his thought is contianed in *The Little Book of Truth* (*Büchlein der Wahrheit*) and in the last eight chapters of his autobiography. *The Little Book of Eternal Wisdom* (*Büchlein der ewigen Weisheit*) is a book of practical mysticism. Suso wrote a Latin version of it, the *Horologium Sapientiae*, which is not a translation but a development. Some letters and at least two certainly authentic sermons have also been preserved.

Suso warmly defended Eckhart against the charge of confusing God and creatures. He himself is perfectly clear and decisive about the distinction between them. He says indeed that creatures are eternally in God and that, as in God, they are God; but he carefully explains what he means by this. The ideas of creatures are eternally present in the divine mind; but these ideas are identical with the divine essence; they are not forms distinct from one another or from the divine essence. Further, this being of creatures in God is quite distinct from the being of creatures outside God: it is only through creation that 'creatures' exist. One cannot attribute creatureliness to creatures as they are in God. However, 'the creatureliness of any nature is nobler and more useful to it than the being which it has in God'.[1] In all this Suso was not saying anything different from what St. Thomas had taught. Similarly he expressly teaches that creation is a free act of God.[2] He certainly uses the Pseudo-Dionysian (that is to say, neo-Platonic) idea of the overflowing of the divine goodness; but he is careful to observe that this overflowing takes place as a necessary process only within the Godhead, where it is 'interior, substantial, personal, natural, necessary without compulsion, eternal and perfect'.[3] The overflowing in creation is a free act on God's part and is distinct from the eternal procession of the divine Persons. There is, then, no question of pantheism in Suso's thought.

A similar freedom from pantheistic tendencies is clear in Suso's doctrine of the soul's mystical union with God. As with Eckhart and Tauler, the mystical union is said to take place in the 'essence' of the soul, the 'spark' of the soul. This essence or centre of the soul is the unifying principle of the soul's powers, and it is in it that the image of God resides. Through the mystical union, which takes place by supernaturally impressed knowledge and love, this image of God is further actualized. This actualization is called the 'birth of God' (*Gottesgeburt*) or 'birth of Christ' (*Christusgeburt*) in the soul, by means of which the soul is made more like to and more united with the Deity in and through Christ. Suso's mysticism is essentially Christocentric. He speaks of the soul's 'sinking into' God; but he emphasizes the fact that there is not, and never can be, a complete ontological identification of the ground or essence of the soul with the divine Being. Man remains man, even if he becomes deiform: there is no pantheistic absorption of the creature in God.[1] As I have said, Suso was strongly influenced by Eckhart, but he was always careful to bring his teaching into clear harmony with the doctrines of Catholic Christianity. It would, indeed, be preferable to say that his mystical teaching sprang from the Catholic tradition of spirituality, and that, as far as Eckhart is concerned, Suso interpreted the latter's teaching in an orthodox sense.

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[1] *Book of Truth*, 332, 16.

[2] *Vita*, 21–4, p. 178.

[3] *Ibid.*, 178, 24–179, 7.

It has been said that Suso's thought differed from Eckhart's in regard to its direction. Eckhart preferred to start with God: his thought moved from the simple divine essence to the Trinity of Persons, especially to the Word or *Logos*, in which he saw the archetype of creation, and so to creatures in the Word. The union of the soul with God appeared to him as a return of the creature to its dwelling-place in the Word, and the highest mystical experience of the soul is the union of its centre with the simple centre or essence of the Godhead. Suso, however, was less speculatively inclined. His thought moved from the human person to the latter's dynamic union with Christ, the God-Man; and he emphasized strongly the place of the Humanity of Christ in the ascent of the soul to God. In other words, though he often used more or less the same phrases that Eckhart used, his thought was less neo-Platonic than Eckhart's, and he was more strongly influenced than was Eckhart by the affective spirituality and the Christocentric 'bride-mysticism' of St. Bernard.

5. John Ruysbroeck was born in 1293 at the village of Ruysbroeck near Brussels. After some years spent at the latter city he became Prior of the Augustinian convent of Groenendael (Green Valley) in the forest of Soignes near Brussels. He died in 1381. His writings include *The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage* and *The Book of the Twelve Beguines*. He wrote in Flemish.

Ruysbroeck, who was strongly influenced by the writings of Eckhart, insists on the original presence of the creature in God and on the return to that state of unity. One can distinguish in man a threefold unity.[2] 'The first and highest unity of man is in God.' Creatures depend on this unity for their being and preservation, and without it they would be reduced to nothing. But this relationship to God is essential to the creature and it does not, of itself, make a man really good or bad. The second unity is also natural: it is the unity of man's higher powers inasmuch as these spring from the unity of his mind or spirit. This fundamental unity of spirit is the same as the first type of unity, the unity which depends on God; but it is considered in its activity rather than in its essence. The third unity, also natural, is the unity of the senses and of the bodily activities. If in regard to the second natural unity the soul is called 'spirit', in regard to the third it is called 'soul', that is, as vital principle and principle of sensation. The 'adornment' of the soul consists in the supernatural perfection of the three unities; the first through the moral perfection of the Christian; the second through the theological virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit; the third through mystical and inexpressible union with God. The highest unification is 'that most high unity in which God and the loving spirit are united without intermediary'.

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[1] Cf. *Vita*, 50 and 51, p. 176.

[2] *Adornment*, 2, 2.

Like Eckhart Ruysbroeck speaks of 'the most high and superessential Unity of the Divine Nature'. The words recall the writing of the Pseudo-Dionysius. With this supreme Unity the soul, in the highest activity of the mystical life, can become united. But the union transcends the power of reason; it is accomplished by love. In it the ground of the soul is, as it were, lost in the ineffable abyss of the Godhead, in the Essential Unity to which 'the Persons, and all that lives in God, just give place'.[1]

Not unnaturally, Ruysbroeck's doctrine was attacked, particularly by Gerson. However, that he did not intend to teach pantheism Ruysbroeck made clear in *The Mirror of Eternal Salvation* and in *The Book of the Twelve Beguines*. He was defended by Jan van Schoonhoven (d. 1432), himself a mystic, and Denis the Carthusian did not hesitate to borrow from his writings.

6. Denis the Carthusian, who was born at Rychel in 1402 and died as a Carthusian of Roermond in 1471, does not belong chronologically to the period which is being treated in the first part of this work. For the sake of convenience, however, I shall say a few words about him here.

The 'ecstatic Doctor' had done his higher studies at Cologne, and, for a mystical writer, he was surprisingly interested in Scholastic themes. He composed commentaries on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard and on Boethius, as well as on the writings of the Pseudo-Dionysius, and he wrote a summary of the orthodox faith according to the works of St. Thomas, a manual of philosophy and theology (*Elementatio philosophica et theologica*) and other theological works. In addition, there are his purely ascetical and mystical treatises. It is clear that he was at first a devoted follower of St. Thomas; and his hostility not only towards the nominalists but also towards the Scotists seems to have continued throughout his life. But he gradually moved from the camp of the Thomists to that of the followers of St. Albert, and he was much influenced by the writings of the Dominican Ulric of Strasbourg (d. 1277), who had attended St. Albert's lectures at Cologne. Not only did Denis reject the real distinction between essence and existence, which he had at first defended; but he also abandoned the Thomist view of the rôle of the 'phantasm' in human knowledge. Denis restricted the necessity of the phantasm to the lower levels of knowledge and maintained that the soul can know without recourse to the phantasm its own activity, angels and God. Our knowledge of the divine essence, however, is negative; the mind comes to realize clearly the incomprehensibility of God. In this emphasis on negative but immediate knowledge of God Denis was influenced by the Pseudo-Dionysius and by the writings of Ulric of Strasbourg and other followers of St. Albert. The Carthusian Doctor is a remarkable example of the combination of mystical with Scholastic interests.

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[1] *Adornment*, 3, 4.

7. The German mystics of the Middle Ages (I include Ruysbroeck, although he was a Fleming) drew their mysticism from its roots in the Christian Faith. It is not a question of enumerating sources, of showing the influence of the Fathers, of St. Bernard, of the Victorines, of St. Bonaventure or of trying to minimize the neo-Platonic influences on expression and even on idea, but of realizing the mystics' common belief in the necessity of supernatural grace which comes through Christ. The Humanity of Christ may play a larger part in the thought of Suso, for example, than in that of Eckhart; but the latter, in spite of all his exaggerations, was first and foremost a Christian. There is, then, no real support for the attempt which has been made to discover in the writings of the German mediaeval mystics like Eckhart, Tauler and Suso a 'German mysticism', if by this is meant a mysticism which is not Catholic but one proceeding from 'blood and race'.

On the other hand, the German mystics of the fourteenth century do represent an alliance of Scholasticism and mysticism which gives them a stamp of their own. Grabmann remarked that the combination of practical mysticism and of speculation is ultimately a continuation of St. Anselm's programme, *Credo, ut intelligam*. However, although the speculation of the German mystics grew out of the currents of thought which had inspired the mediaeval Scholastics and which had been systematized in various ways in the thirteenth century, their speculation must be seen in the light of their practical mysticism. If it was partly the circumstances of the education of this or that mystical writer which moulded the framework of his speculation and influenced his choice of theoretic ideas, it was also partly his practical mystical life and his reflection on his spiritual experience which influenced the direction of his speculation. It would be a mistake to think that the doctrine of the *scintilla animae,* the spark of the soul or the essence or ground or apex of the soul, was no more than a stock idea which was adopted mechanically from predecessors and passed on from mystic to mystic. The term *scintilla conscientiae* or *synderesis* occurs in St. Jerome[1] and it reappears in, for example, St. Albert the Great, who means by it a power existing in all men which admonishes them of the good and opposes evil. St. Thomas, who refers to St. Jerome,[2] speaks of synderesis metaphorically, as the *scintilla conscientiae.*[3] The mystics certainly meant something else than synderesis when they spoke of the spark or ground of the soul; but, even granting that, practically all the expressions by which they characterized the ground of the soul were already to be found, according to Denifle, in the writings of Richard of St. Victor. No doubt Denifle's contention is true; but the German mystics made the idea of the ground or spark of the soul one of their leading ideas, not simply because they found it in the writings of a revered predecessor, but because it fitted in with their experience of a mystical union with God transcending the conscious play of acts of intelligence and will. As found in their predecessors, the idea doubtless suggested to them this close union; but their meditation on the idea went hand in hand with their experience.

Possibly certain German writers have gone too far in finding in the combination of speculation with practical mysticism a distinguishing mark of the German mystics. It serves to differentiate them from some mystics, it is true, who were more or less innocent of theoretic speculations; but a similar combination can be seen in the case of the Victorines in the twelfth century and, indeed, in that of Gerson himself, though Gerson had scant sympathy for the line of speculation adopted by Eckhart and Ruysbroeck, as he interpreted it at least. However, there is an added characteristic which is connected with the fact that Eckhart, Tauler and Suso were all members of the Dominican Order, the

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[1] *P.L.*, 25, 22 AB.

[2] *De Veritate*, 16, 1, obj. 1.

[3] *Ibid.*, 17, 2, *ad* 3.

Order of Friars Preachers. They disseminated mystical doctrine in their sermons, and attempted, as I have already mentioned, to deepen in this way the general spiritual life, particularly among religious. No doubt one could make a similar observation about St. Bernard, for example, but, particularly in the case of Eckhart, there is a speculative flavour and framework, due to the intervening development of mediaeval philosophy, which is not to be found in St. Bernard's sermons. Moreover, the Germans are more 'rugged', less flowery. The German speculative mysticism is so closely connected with Dominican preaching that it enables one to speak, in this sense, of the 'German mysticism' of the Middle Ages, provided that one does not mean to imply that the German Dominicans were attempting to establish a German religion or a German *Weltanschauung*.

8. John Gerson, who was born in 1363, succeeded Peter d'Ailly as chancellor of the university of Paris in 1395.[1] He has been accounted a nominalist; but his adoption of certain nominalist positions did not proceed from adherence to the nominalist philosophy. He was a theologian and mystical writer rather than a philosopher; and it was in the interests of faith and of theology that he tended in certain matters towards nominalist doctrine. Gerson's chancellorship fell in the period of the Great Schism (1378–1417) and he took a prominent part in the work of the Council of Constance. Much distressed not only at the state of the Church, but also at the condition of university studies and the propagation of doctrines which had, it seemed to him, led to or facilitated the rise of theories like those of Hus, he sought to apply a remedy, not through a dissemination of nominalism as such but through a recall of men to the right attitude towards God. The conflict of systems of philosophy and the curiosity and pride of theologians had, he thought, been responsible for much evil. In his *De modis significandi propositiones quinquaginta* Gerson maintained that the various branches of study had become confused to the detriment of truth, logicians trying to solve metaphysical problems by the *modus significandi* proper to logic, metaphysicians and logicians endeavouring to prove revealed truths or to solve theological problems by methods which are not fitted for dealing with the object of theology. This confusion, thought Gerson, had led to a state of anarchy in the intellectual world and to untrue

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[1] Gerson died in 1429. For chronological details, see *La vie et les œuvres de Gerson* by P. Glorieux (Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge, t. 18, pp. 149–92; Paris, 1951).

conclusions. Furthermore, the pride of the Scholastic theologians had engendered curiosity and the spirit of novelty or singularity. Gerson published two lectures *Contra vanam curiositatem in negotio fidei*, against vain curiosity in the matter of faith, in which he drew attention to the part played in Scholastic disputes by love of one's own opinions, envy, the spirit of contention and contempt for the uneducated and the uninitiated. The root fault is the pride of the natural reason which endeavours to exceed its bounds and to solve problems which it is incapable of solving.

It is from this angle that one should regard Gerson's attack on realism. The notion of ideas in God involves a confusion, first of logic with metaphysics, and then of metaphysics with theology. Secondly, it implies that God is not simple, since the realists tend to speak of these *rationes ideales* in God as though they were distinct; and some even speak as though creatures pre-existed in God, that is to say, as though the divine ideas were creatures existing in God. Thirdly, the doctrine of divine ideas, employed in explaining creation, serves only to limit the divine freedom. And why do philosophers and theologians limit the divine freedom? From a desire of understanding that which cannot be understood, a desire which proceeds from pride. The thinkers of the Platonic tradition also speak of God, not primarily as free, but as the Good, and they utilize the principle of the natural tendency of goodness to diffuse itself in order to explain creation. But by doing so they tend to make creation a necessary effect of the divine nature. Again, realist metaphysicians and theologians insist that the moral law in no way depends on the divine will, thus restricting the divine liberty, whereas in point of fact 'God does not will certain actions because they are good; but they are good because He wills them, just as others are bad because He prohibits them.'[1] 'Right reason does not precede the will, and God does not decide to give law to a rational creature because He has first seen in His wisdom that He ought to do so; it is rather the contrary which takes place.'[2] It follows that the moral law is not immutable. Gerson adopted this Ockhamist position in regard to the moral law because he considered that it was the only position consonant with God's liberty. The Platonizing philosophers and theologians, he thought, had abandoned the principle of belief, of humble subjection, for the pride of the understanding. Moreover, he did not fail to draw attention to the realist aspects of the thought of John Hus and of Jerome of

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[1] *Opera*, 3, col. 13.

[2] *Ibid.*, col. 26.

Prague; and he drew the conclusion that the pride of the understanding manifested by the realists leads in the end to open heresy.

Thus Gerson's attack on realism, though it involved him in some positions which were actually held by the nominalists, proceeded rather from religious preoccupations than from any particular enthusiasm for the *via moderna* as such. 'Repent and believe the Gospel'[1] was the text on which Gerson built his two lectures against vain curiosity in the matter of faith. The pride which had invaded the minds of university professors and lecturers had made them oblivious to the need for repentance and to the simplicity of faith. This point of view is obviously more characteristic of a man whose concern is the soul's attitude towards God than of a man who is passionately interested in academic questions for their own sake. Gerson's hostility towards the metaphysics and theology of the realists certainly bears some analogy to Pascal's hostility towards those who would substitute for the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob the 'God of the philosophers'.

If we look at the matter from this point of view, it is not surprising to find Gerson expressing his amazement that the Franciscans had abandoned St. Bonaventure for *parvenus* in the intellectual world. St. Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* he regarded as a book beyond all praise. On the other hand, if we consider Gerson's hostility towards realism, his attacks on Ruysbroeck and his attempt to connect realism with the heresies of John Hus and Jerome of Prague, his enthusiasm for St. Bonaventure might well appear somewhat startling when it is remembered that St. Bonaventure laid great stress on the Platonic doctrine of ideas in its Augustinian form and roundly condemned Aristotle for 'execrating' the ideas of Plato. Gerson's conviction was that the theologians of his time had neglected the Bible and the Fathers, the true sources of theology, in favour of pagan thinkers and of importations from metaphysics which impaired the simplicity of faith. He regarded, however, the Pseudo-Dionysius as the disciple and convert of St. Paul, and considered the Dionysian writings to form part of the well-spring of true wisdom. St. Bonaventure he revered as a man who had consistently drunk of these undefiled waters and who had concerned himself above all with the true wisdom, which is the knowledge of God through Jesus Christ.

In spite, then, of his attack on realism, Gerson's mystical doctrine was deeply influenced by the teaching of the

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[1] *St. Mark* 1, 15.

Pseudo-Dionysius. M. André Combes, in his most interesting study of Gerson's relation to the writings and thought of the Pseudo-Dionysius,[1] after showing the authenticity of the *Notulae super quaedam verba Dionysii de Caelesti Hierarchia* and arguing that the work should precede the first lecture against 'vain curiosity' in the *Opera* of Gerson, makes it clear that Gerson was never simply a 'nominalist' and that his ideas were never simply identical with those of Peter d'Ailly (1350–1420), his 'master'. In fact, as M. Combes has shown, Gerson borrowed from the Pseudo-Dionysius not merely an arsenal of terminology, but also the important doctrine of the 'return'. Creatures proceed from God and return to God. How is this return accomplished? By each nature performing those acts which are proper to it. Strictly speaking, says Gerson (in his *Sermo de die Jovis sancta*), it is only the rational creature who returns to God, though Boethius said that all things return to their beginning or principle. But the important point about Gerson's doctrine of the 'return' is the emphasis he lays on the fact that it does not mean an ontological merging of the creature with God. As he regarded the Pseudo-Dionysius as a personal disciple of St. Paul, he was convinced that the Dionysian teaching was perfectly 'safe'. But, realizing that it could be misinterpreted, he considered that the theologian must elucidate the Areopagite's true meaning; and he himself utilized the writings of Hugh of St. Victor and of St. Albert the Great. From this two relevant and important points emerge. First, Gerson by no means condemned or rejected the Scholastic theology as such, which he considered necessary for the right interpretation of the Scriptures, of the Fathers and of St. Paul's disciple. Secondly, when he attacked Ruysbroeck, he was not attacking him for drawing on the teaching of the Pseudo-Dionysius but for misinterpreting and perverting that doctrine. Of course, we know that the Pseudo-Dionysius was not a disciple of St. Paul and that he drew copiously on Proclus; but the point is that Gerson interpreted the Pseudo-Dionysius as if he were not a Platonist. This explains how he could show at the same time a marked hostility towards the Platonizers and a marked predilection for the Pseudo-Dionysius.

Gerson accepted the threefold division of theology given by the Pseudo-Dionysius, symbolic theology, theology in the proper sense, and mystical theology. The threefold division is to be found in St. Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*;[2] but Gerson seems to have drawn the distinction from the Pseudo-Dionysius' writings rather than from St. Bonaventure: at least he consulted the former and cites him as his authority. Mystical theology, he says, is the experimental knowledge of God, in which love, rather than the abstract speculative intellect, is at work, though the highest intellectual function is also involved. The *intelligentia simplex* and the *synderesis* or highest affective power are operative in mystical experience, which is not a rejection but a realization of the highest powers of the soul. Mystical union affects the foundation of the soul; but it is a union which does not dissolve the human personality in the Godhead. Mystical theology, at least if it is understood as mysticism itself rather than as the theory of mysticism, is the crown of theology, because it approaches nearest to the beatific vision, which is the final end of the soul.

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[1] *Jean Gerson, Commentateur Dionysien*, Paris, 1940.

[2] 1, 7.

The presence of this threefold division in Gerson's thought helps to make it clear that, while emphasizing the primacy of mystical theology, he did not reject theology in the ordinary sense. Nor did he reject philosophy. Whether his bent of mind might have led him to reject all but mystical theology had it not been for the Pseudo-Dionysius, St. Bonaventure and St. Albert is another and not very profitable question. He certainly laid stress on the Scriptures and the teaching of the Fathers and he certainly thought that theologians would do well to pay more attention to those sources; he certainly thought, moreover, that speculative theology contaminated by unwarranted importations from suspect philosophers encouraged pride and vain curiosity; but there is no real evidence for saying either that he rejected all Scholastic development of Scriptural and Patristic teaching or that he rejected a philosophy which observed its due limits. In some ways Gerson is the most interesting representative of the movement of speculative mysticism in the late Middle Ages. He shows us that the movement was primarily inspired by the desire for remedying the evils of the time and for deepening men's religious life: it was by no means a mere counter-blast to nominalist scepticism. As for Gerson's own nominalism, it is truer to say that he adopted and exploited certain nominalist positions in the service of his own primary aim rather than that he was a nominalist. To say that Gerson was a nominalist philosopher who at the same time happened to be a mystic would be to give a false impression of his aims, his theoretical position and his spirit.

PART II

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE RENAISSANCE

CHAPTER XIII

THE REVIVAL OF PLATONISM

The Italian Renaissance—The northern Renaissance—The revival of Platonism.

1. THE first phase of the Renaissance was the humanistic phase which began in Italy and spread to northern Europe. But it would be absurd to speak as if the Renaissance was a historical period with such clearly-defined temporal limits that one could give the exact dates of its beginning and end. In so far as the Renaissance means or involved a rebirth of literature and a devotion to classical learning and style it may be said to have begun as early as the twelfth century, the century in which John of Salisbury, for example, had declaimed against barbarity in Latin style, the century which saw the humanism of the School of Chartres. It is true that the great theologians and philosophers of the thirteenth century were more concerned with *what* was said and with exactitude of statement than with literary style and grace of expression; but it should not be forgotten that a St. Thomas Aquinas could write hymns which are remarkable for their beauty and that in the same period in which Duns Scotus was composing his somewhat bold and unstylistic commentaries Dante was creating one of the greatest achievements of the Italian language. Dante (1265–1321) certainly wrote from the standpoint of a mediaeval; but in the same century in which Dante died, the fourteenth century, we find Petrarch (1304–74) not only setting himself against the cult of Aristotelian dialectic and promoting the revival of the classical, especially the Ciceronian, style but also favouring through his vernacular sonnets the growth of the spirit of humanistic individualism. Boccaccio (1313–75) also belonged to the fourteenth century; and at the end of the century, in 1396, Manuel Chrysoloras (d. 1415), the first real teacher of classical Greek in the West, began lecturing at Florence.

The political conditions in Italy favoured the growth of the humanistic Renaissance, inasmuch as princely, ducal and ecclesiastical patrons were able to spend large sums of money on the purchase and copying of manuscripts and on the foundation of libraries; and by the time the Renaissance made itself felt in northern Europe the greater part of the Greek and Latin classics had been recovered and made known. But the Italian Renaissance was by no means confined to the recovery and dissemination of texts. A most important feature was the rise of a new style and ideal of education, represented by teachers like Vittorino da Feltre (1378–1446) and Guarino of Verona (1370–1460). The humanistic educational ideal at its best was that of developing the human personality to the full. Ancient literature was regarded as the chief means of education; but moral training, development of character, physical development and awakening of the aesthetic sensibility were not neglected; nor was the ideal of liberal education regarded as in any way incompatible with the acceptance and practice of Christianity.[1] This, however, was the humanistic ideal at its best. In practice the Italian Renaissance became associated to a certain extent with a growth of moral or amoral individualism and with the pursuit of fame; while in the later stages of the Renaissance the cult of classical literature degenerated into 'Ciceronianism', which meant the substitution of the tyranny of Cicero for that of Aristotle. The exchange was scarcely a change for the better. Moreover, while a man like Vittorino da Feltre was a convinced and devout Christian, many figures of the Renaissance were influenced by a spirit of scepticism. While it would be ridiculous to belittle the achievements of the Italian Renaissance at its best, other aspects were symptomatic of the disintegration rather than of the enrichment of the preceding cultural phase. And the degenerate phase of 'Ciceronianism' was no improvement on the broader outlook fostered by a theological and philosophical education.

2. In the Italian Renaissance the ideas of self-development and self-culture were marked features: it was, in large part, an individualistic movement, in the sense that the ideal of social and moral reform was not conspicuous: indeed, some of the humanists were 'pagan' in outlook. The ideal of reform, when it came, did not spring from the Renaissance as such, which was predominantly cultural, aesthetic and literary in character. In northern Europe,

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[1] The *De liberorum educatione*, published in 1450 by Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, later Pope Pius II, was taken in large part from Quintilian's *De Oratore*, which had been discovered in 1416, and from an educational work attributed to Plutarch.

however, the literary Renaissance was allied with efforts to achieve moral and social reformation, and there was a greater emphasis on popular education. The northern Renaissance lacked much of the splendour of the Italian Renaissance and it was less 'aristocratic' in character; but it was more obviously allied with religious and moral purposes and, arising at a later date than the Italian movement, it tended to merge with the Reformation, at least if 'Reformation' is understood in a very broad sense and not merely in the sectarian sense. But though both movements had their peculiar strong points, both tended to lose their original inspiration in the course of time, the Italian movement degenerating into 'Ciceronianism', the northern movement tending to pedantry and 'grammaticism', divorced from a living appreciation of the humanistic aspects of classical literature and culture.

Among the scholars associated with the Renaissance in northern Europe one may mention Rudolf Agricola (1443–85), Hegius (1420–95), who was for a time headmaster of a school at Deventer founded in the fourteenth century by the Brethren of the Common Life, and Jacob Wimpfeling (1450–1528), who made of the university of Heidelberg a centre of humanism in western Germany. But the greatest figure of the northern Renaissance was Erasmus (1467–1536), who promoted the study of Greek and Latin literature, including the Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers, and gave a great impetus to the development of humanistic education. In Great Britain there were ecclesiastics like William of Waynflete (*c.* 1395–1486), St. John Fisher (1459–1535), who brought Erasmus to Cambridge, John Colet (*c.* 1467–1519), who founded St. Paul's School in 1512, and Thomas Linacre (*c.* 1460–1524); and laymen like St. Thomas More (1478–1535). Winchester College was founded in 1382 and Eton in 1440.

The Reformers stressed the need of education; but they were led by religious motives rather than by devotion to the humanistic ideal as such. John Calvin (1509-64), who had studied the humanities in France, drew up an educational curriculum for the schools of Geneva and, since he was religious autocrat of the city, he was able to enforce a system of education on Calvinistic lines. But the most humanistically-minded of the famous continental reformers was Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560), the foremost disciple of Martin Luther (1483–1546). In 1518 Melanchthon became professor of Greek at the university of Wittenberg. The humanism of the Reformers, which was hindered rather than promoted by the religious tenets of strict Protestantism, was not, however, their own discovery; it was derived from the impetus of the Italian Renaissance. And in the Counter-Reformation the humanistic ideal was prominent in the educational system developed by the Society of Jesus, which was founded in 1540 and produced the *Ratio Studiorum* in a definite form in 1599.

3. Through the interest and enthusiasm which it aroused for the literature of Greece and Rome the humanistic phase of the Renaissance not unnaturally inspired a revival of ancient philosophy in its various forms. Of these revived philosophies one of the most influential was Platonism or, to speak more accurately, neo-Platonism. The most remarkable centre of Platonic studies in Italy was the Platonic Academy of Florence, founded by Cosimo de' Medici under the influence of George Gemistus Plethon (d. 1464) who arrived in Italy from Byzantium in 1438. Plethon was an enthusiastic adherent of the Platonic or neo-Platonic tradition, and he composed in Greek a work on the difference between the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies. His main work, of which only parts have survived, was his *νόμων συγγϱαφή*. A kindred spirit was John Argyropoulos (d. 1486), who occupied the chair of Greek at Florence from 1456 until 1471, when he left for Rome, where he numbered Reuchlin among his pupils. One must also mention John Bessarion of Trebizond (1395–1472), who was sent from Byzantium together with Plethon to take part in the Council of Florence (1438–45), at which he laboured to achieve the reunion of the Eastern Church with Rome. Bessarion, who became a cardinal, composed among other works an *Adversus calumniatorem Platonis*, in which he defended Plethon and Platonism against the Aristotelian George of Trebizond, who had written a *Comparatio Aristotelis et Platonis* in answer to Plethon.

It must not be thought that these Platonists were all determined haters of Scholasticism. John Argyropoulos translated into Greek St. Thomas Aquinas's *De ente et essentia*, and Bessarion too had a great respect for the Angelic Doctor. For these Platonists it was not so much a question of setting one philosopher against another, Plato against Aristotle, as of renewing a Platonic, or rather neo-Platonic, view of reality which would unite in itself the valuable elements of pagan antiquity and yet at the same time be Christian. It was the religious side of neo-Platonism, as well as its philosophy of beauty and harmony, which particularly appealed to the Platonists and what they particularly disliked in Aristotelianism was the tendency to naturalism which they detected therein. Plethon looked to the renewal of the Platonic tradition for a renewal of life or a reform in Church and State; and if his enthusiasm for Platonism led him into an attack on Aristotle which even Bessarion considered to be somewhat immoderate, it was what he regarded as the spirit of Platonism and its potentialities for spiritual, moral and cultural renewal which inspired him, rather than a purely academic interest in, for example, the Platonic affirmation and the Aristotelian denial of the theory of Ideas. The Platonists considered that the world of the humanistic Renaissance would greatly benefit in practice by absorbing such a doctrine as that of Man as the microcosm and as the ontological bond between the spiritual and the material.

One of the most eminent scholars of the neo-Platonic movement was Marsilius Ficinus (1433–1499). As a young man he composed two works, the *De laudibus philosophiae* and the *Institutiones platonicae* and these were followed in 1457 by the *De amore divino* and the *Liber de voluptate.* But in 1458 his father sent him to Bologna, to study medicine. Cosimo de' Medici, however, recalled him to Florence and had him taught Greek. In 1462 Marsilius translated the Orphic Hymns and in the following years he translated, at Cosimo's request, the Dialogues and Epistles of Plato and works by Hermes Trismegistus, Iamblichus (*De Secta Pythagorica*), Theo of Smyrna (*Mathematica*) and others. In 1469 appeared the first edition of his commentary on Plato's *Symposium* and commentaries on the *Philebus*, the *Parmenides* and the *Timaeus.* In 1474 he published his *De religione christiana* and his most important philosophical work, the *Theologia platonica.* In the following year appeared the commentary on the *Phaedrus* and the second edition of the commentary on the *Symposium.* The translations of and commentaries on the *Enneads* of Plotinus were published in 1485 and 1486; and in 1489 the *De triplici vita,* Marsilius' last work. Marsilius was an indefatigable worker, and in his translations he aimed above all at literal fidelity to the original: even though he sometimes made mistakes in his translation, there can be no doubt of the benefit he conferred on the men of his age.[1]

Marsilius Ficinus became a priest when he was forty years old, and he dreamed of drawing atheists and sceptics to Christ by means of the Platonic philosophy. In his commentary on the *Phaedrus* he declares that the love spoken of by Plato and that spoken of by St. Paul are one and the same, namely the love of the absolute Beauty, which is God. God is both absolute Beauty and the absolute Good; and on this theme Plato and Dionysius the Areopagite (the Pseudo-Dionysius) are in accord. Again, when Plato insisted that we are 'reminded of' eternal objects, the Ideas, by the sight of their temporal and material imitations, was he not saying the same as St. Paul when the latter declares that the invisible things of God are understood by means of creatures? In the *Theologia platonica* the universe is depicted according to the neo-Platonic spirit as a harmonious and beautiful system, consisting of degrees of being which extend from corporeal things up to God, the absolute Unity or One. The place of man as the bond between the spiritual and the material is emphasized; and, though Marsilius thought of Aristotelianism as springing from the same philosophical tradition and inspiration as Platonism, he insisted, both as Christian and as Platonist, on the immortality and divine vocation of the human soul. He naturally adopted leading ideas from St. Augustine, developing the Platonic theory of Ideas (or better, Forms) in an Augustinian sense and insisting on Illumination. We learn nothing save in and through God, who is the light of the soul.

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[1] For some remarks on the value of Marsilius' translations of Plato and Plotinus, see J. Festugière, *La philosophie de l'amour de Marsile Ficin*, Appendix I, pp. 141–52.

A strongly-marked syncretistic element appears in Marsilius' philosophy, as in that of other Platonists like Plethon. It is not only Plato, Plotinus, Iamblichus and Proclus whose thought is synthesized with that of St. John, St. Paul and St. Augustine, but also Hermes Trismegistus[1] and other pagan figures make their appearance as bearers of the spiritual movement which sprang from an original primitive revelation of the beauty and harmoniously ordered and graded system of reality. Marsilius Ficinus, like other Christian Platonists of the Italian Renaissance, was not only personally captivated by Platonism (in a very wide sense), but he also thought that those minds which had become alienated from Christianity could be brought back to it by being led to view Platonism as a stage in divine revelation. In other words, there was no need to choose between the beauty of classical thought on the one hand and Christianity on the other; one could enjoy both. One could not, however, enjoy the Platonic-Christian heritage if one fell a victim to Aristotelianism as interpreted by those who set Aristotle against Plato, understood him in a naturalistic sense and denied the immortality of the human soul.

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[1] In the Greco-Roman world a considerable literature, dealing with religious, theosophical, philosophical, medical, astrological and alchemist topics became known as the Hermetic literature. It was attributed in some way to, or placed under the patronage of, the 'thrice-great Hermes', who was the Egyptian god Thoth, identified by the Greeks with Hermes.

The best-known member of the circle which was influenced by Marsilius Ficinus was probably John Pico della Mirandola (1463–94). John possessed a knowledge of both Greek and Hebrew, and when twenty-four years old he planned to defend at Rome 900 theses against all comers, his object being to show how Hellenism and Judaism (in the form of the Cabbala) can be synthesized in a Platonic-Christian system. The disputation was, however, forbidden by the ecclesiastical authorities. John's tendency to syncretism showed itself also in the composition of an (unfinished) work, *De concordia Platonis et Aristotelis.*

John Pico della Mirandola was strongly influenced by the 'negative theology' of neo-Platonism and the Pseudo-Dionysius. God is the One; but He is above being rather than being.[1] He is indeed all things, in the sense that He comprises in Himself all perfections; but He comprises these perfections in His undivided unity in an ineffable manner which exceeds our understanding.[2] As far as we are concerned, God is in darkness; we approach Him philosophically by denying the limitations of creaturely perfections. Life is one perfection; wisdom is another perfection. Think away the particularity and limitations of these and all other perfections and 'that which remains is God'. This is not to be understood pantheistically, of course; God is the One, transcending the world which He has created.

The world is a harmonious system, consisting of beings belonging to different levels of reality; and John Pico della Mirandola speaks of God as having desired to create someone to contemplate the nature of the world, to love its beauty and to admire its greatness. 'Therefore, all things having been already completed (as Moses and Timaeus testify), He took thought finally to produce man.'[3] But God did not assign to man a fixed and peculiar place in the universe or laws which he was unable to contravene. 'I placed thee in the middle of the world, that thence thou mightest see more easily all that is in the world. We made thee neither a heavenly being nor an earthly being, neither mortal nor immortal, in order that thou, as the free and sovereign artificer of thyself, mightest mould and sculpture thyself in the form which thou shouldest prefer. Thou wilt be able to degenerate to (the level of) the lower things, the brutes; thou wilt be able, according to thy will, to be reborn into the (level of) the higher things, the divine.'[1] Man is the microcosm; but he has the gift of freedom, which enables him to descend or to ascend. John was, therefore, hostile to the determinism of the astrologers, against whom he wrote his *In astrologiam libri XII*. His view of man, moreover, is a Christian view. There are three 'worlds' within the world or universe; the infralunar world, 'which brutes and men inhabit'; the celestial world, 'in which the planets shine'; and the super-celestial world, 'the abode of the angels'. But Christ, through the Passion, has opened to man the way into the super-celestial world, the way even to God Himself.[2] Man is the head and synthesis of the lower creation, and Christ is the head of the human race.[3] He is also, as divine Word, the 'beginning in which God made heaven and earth'.[4]

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[1] Cf. *De ente et uno*, 4.
[2] *Ibid.*, 5.
[3] *Oratio de hominis dignitate*, ed. E. Garin, p. 104.

In his work against the astrologers John Pico della Mirandola opposed the magical conception of nature. In so far as astrology involved a belief in the harmonious system of nature and in the interrelatedness of all events, it was, whether true or false, a rational system. But it was not rationally grounded, and it involved, moreover, the belief that every earthly event was determined by the heavenly bodies and the belief that he who possessed a knowledge of certain symbols could by the right use of those symbols influence things. It was against the deterministic view of human actions and against the belief in magic that John set himself. Events are causally governed; but the causes are to be looked for in the natures and forms of the various things in the world, not in the stars, and a magical knowledge and use of symbol is ignorant superstition.

Finally one may mention that John's enthusiasm for Plato and his fondness for citing not only Greek and Islamic authors but also Oriental figures did not mean that he was without any appreciation of Aristotle. As already mentioned, he wrote a work on the agreement of Plato and Aristotle, and in the *Prooemium* to the *De ente et uno* he asserts his belief in this agreement. In the fourth chapter of this work he remarks, for instance, that those who think that Aristotle did not realize, as Plato did, that being is subordinate to the One and does not include God 'have not read Aristotle', who expressed this truth 'much more clearly than Plato'. Whether John interpreted Aristotle correctly is, of course, another question; but he was certainly no fanatical anti-Aristotelian. As to the Scholastics, he cites them and he speaks of St. Thomas as 'the splendour of our theology'.[1] John was far too much of a syncretist to be exclusive.

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[1] *Oratio de hominis dignitate*, p. 106.
[2] *Heptaplus*, ed. E. Garin, pp. 186–8. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 220. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 244.

In the last years of his life John Pico della Mirandola was influenced by Savonarola (1452–98), who also influenced the former's nephew, John Francis Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533). In his *De praenotionibus* John Francis discussed the criteria of divine revelation, finding the chief criterion in an 'inner light'. In regard to philosophy as such he did not follow his uncle's example of attempting to reconcile Aristotle and Plato: on the contrary, he sharply attacked the Aristotelian theory of knowledge in his *Examen vanitatis doctrinae gentium et veritatis Christianae disciplinae*. He argued that the Aristotelian bases his philosophy on sense-experience, which is supposed to be the source even of those most general principles which are employed in the process of proof. But sense-experience informs one about the conditions of the percipient subject rather than about objects themselves, and the Aristotelian can never proceed from his empiricist basis to a knowledge of substances or essences.

Among other Platonists one may mention Leo Hebraeus (*c.* 1460–*c.* 1530), a Portuguese Jew who came to Italy and wrote *Dialoghi d'amore* on the intellectual love of God whereby one apprehends beauty as the reflection of absolute Beauty. His views on love in general gave an impetus to the Renaissance literature on this subject, while his idea of the love of God in particular was not without influence on Spinoza. John Reuchlin (1455–1522) may also be mentioned here. This learned German, who not only was a master of the Latin and Greek languages but also introduced into Germany and promoted the study of Hebrew, studied in France and Italy, where, at Rome, he came under the influence of John Pico della Mirandola. In 1520 he became professor of Hebrew and Greek at Ingolstadt; but in 1521 he moved to Tübingen. Looking on the function of philosophy as the winning of happiness in this life and the next, he had little use for the Aristotelian logic and philosophy of nature. Strongly attracted by the Jewish Cabbala, he considered that a profound knowledge of the divine mysteries is to be obtained from that source; and he combined his enthusiasm for the Cabbala with an enthusiasm for neo-Pythagorean number-mysticism. In his view Pythagoras had drawn his wisdom from Jewish sources. In other words, Reuchlin, though an eminent scholar, fell a victim to the attractions of the Cabbala and of the fantasies of number-mysticism; and in this respect he is more akin to the German theosophists and occultists of the Renaissance than to the Italian Platonists. However, he was certainly influenced by the Platonic circle at Florence and by John Pico della Mirandola, who also thought highly of Pythagoreanism, and on this account he can be mentioned in relation with Italian Platonism.

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[1] *Heptaplus*, p. 222.

It is clear that the revived Platonism of Italy might just as well, or better, be called neo-Platonism. But the inspiration of Italian Platonism was not primarily an interest in scholarship, in distinguishing, for example, the doctrines of Plato from those of Plotinus and in critically reconstituting and interpreting their ideas. The Platonic tradition stimulated and provided a framework for the expression of the Renaissance Platonists' belief in the fullest possible development of man's higher potentialities and in their belief in Nature as the expression of the divine. But though they had a strong belief in the value and possibilities of the human personality as such they did not separate man either from God or from his fellow-men. Their humanism involved neither irreligion nor exaggerated individualism. And though they had a strong feeling for Nature and for beauty, they did not deify Nature or identify it with God. They were not pantheists. Their humanism and their feeling for Nature were characteristic of the Renaissance; but for a pantheistic view of Nature we have to turn to other phases of Renaissance thought and not to the Florentine Academy nor, in general, to Italian Platonism. Nor do we find in the Italian Platonists an individualism which discards the ideas of Christian revelation and of the Church.

CHAPTER XIV

ARISTOTELIANISM

Critics of the Aristotelian logic—Aristotelianism—Stoicism and scepticism.

1. THE Scholastic method and the Aristotelian logic were made objects of attack by a number of humanists. Thus Laurentius Valla or Lorenzo della Valle (1407–57) attacked the Aristotelian logic as an abstruse, artificial and abstract scheme which is able neither to express nor to lead to concrete and real knowledge. In his *Dialecticae disputationes contra Aristotelicos* he carried on a polemic against what he regarded as the empty abstractions of the Aristotelian-Scholastic logic and metaphysic. The Aristotelian logic, in Valla's opinion, is sophistry, depending largely on linguistic barbarism. The purpose of thought is to know things, and knowledge of things is expressed in speech, the function of words being to express in determinate form insight into the determinations of things. Many of the terms employed in the Aristotelian logic, however, do not express insight into the concrete characteristics of things, but are artificial constructions which do not express reality at all. A reform of speech is needed, and logic must be recognized as subordinate to 'rhetoric'. The orators treat all subjects much more clearly and in a profounder and sublimer manner than the confused, bloodless and dry dialecticians.[1] Rhetoric is not for Laurentius Valla simply the art of expressing ideas in beautiful or appropriate language; still less is it the art of persuading others 'rhetorically'; it denotes the linguistic expression of real insight into concrete reality.

Paying more attention to the Stoics and Epicureans than to Plato and Aristotle, Laurentius Valla maintained in his *De voluptate* that the Epicureans were right in emphasizing human striving after pleasure and happiness. But as a Christian he added that the complete happiness of man is not to be found in this life. Faith is necessary for life. For instance, man is conscious of freedom; but human freedom, according to Valla in his *De libero arbitrio*, is, as far as the natural light of reason can see, incompatible with the divine omnipotence. Their reconciliation is a mystery which must be accepted on faith.

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[1] *De voluptate*, 1, 10.

Laurentius Valla's ideas on logic were taken up by Rudolf Agricola (1443–85) in his *De inventione dialectica*; and a somewhat similar view was maintained by the Spanish humanist Luis Vives (1492–1540). But Vives also deserves mention for his rejection of any slavish adherence to the scientific, medical or mathematical ideas of Aristotle and for his insistence that progress in science depends on direct observation of phenomena. In his *De anima et vita* he demanded recognition of the value of observation in psychology: one should not be content with what the ancients said about the soul. He himself treated in an independent way of memory, affections, etc., and stated, for example, the principle of association.

The importance of 'rhetoric' as a general science was strongly emphasized by Marius Nizolius (1488–1566 or 1498–1576), the author of a famous *Thesaurus Ciceronianus.* In philosophical writings like the *Antibarbarus philosophicus sive de veris principiis et vera ratione philosophandi contra pseudophilosophos* he rejected all undue deference to former philosophers in favour of independence of judgment. Philosophy in the narrow sense is concerned with the characteristics of things and comprises physics and politics, while rhetoric is a general science which is concerned with the meaning and right use of words. Rhetoric thus stands to other sciences as soul to body; it is their principle. It does not mean for Nizolius the theory and art of public speaking; it is the general science of 'meaning', and it is independent of all metaphysics and ontology. Rhetoric shows, for instance, how the meaning of general words, of universal terms, is independent of, or does not demand, the objective existence of universals. The universal term expresses a mental operation by which the human mind 'comprehends' all individual members of a class. There is no abstraction, in the sense of a mental operation whereby the mind apprehends the metaphysical essence of things in the universal concept; rather does the mind express in a universal term its experience of individuals of the same class. In the deductive syllogism the mind does not reason from the general or universal to the particular but rather from the whole to the part; and in induction the mind passes from the parts to the whole rather than from particulars to the universal. In 1670 Leibniz republished Nizolius' *De veris principiis et vera ratione philosophandi contra pseudophilosophos,* praising the author's attempt to free the general forms of thought from ontological presuppositions but criticizing his inadequate notion of induction. Even if, however, Nizolius did attempt to purify logic from metaphysics and to treat it from the linguistic point of view, it seems to me that his substitution of *comprehensio* for *abstractio* and of the relation of part to whole for the relation of particular to universal contributed very little, if anything, to the discussion concerning universals. That it is individuals alone which exist would have been agreed to by all mediaeval anti-realists; but it is not enlightening to say that universals are collective terms which arise by a mental act called *comprehensio*. What is it which enables the mind to 'comprehend' groups of individuals as belonging to definite classes? Is it simply the presence of similar qualities? If this is what Nizolius meant, he cannot be said to have added anything which was not already present in terminism. But he did insist that for factual knowledge we have to go to things themselves and that it is useless to look to formal logic for information about the nature or character of things. In this way his logical views contributed to the growth of the empiricist movement.

The artificial character of the Aristotelian-Scholastic logic was also insisted on by the famous French humanist Petrus Ramus or Pierre de la Ramée (1515–72), who became a Calvinist and perished in the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve. True logic is a natural logic; it formulates the laws which govern man's spontaneous and natural thinking and reasoning as expressed in correct speech. It is thus the *ars disserendi* and is closely allied with rhetoric. In his *Institutionum dialecticarum libri III* Petrus Ramus divided this natural logic into two parts, the first concerning 'discovery' (*De inventione*), the second dealing with the judgment (*De iudicio*). As the function of natural logic is to enable one to answer questions concerning things, the first stage of the process of logical thought consists in discovering the points of view or categories which will enable the inquiring mind to solve the question raised. These points of view or categories (Ramus calls them *loci*) include original or underived categories like cause and effect and derived or secondary categories like genus, species, division, definition, etc. The second stage consists in applying these categories in such a way that the mind can arrive at the judgment which answers the question raised. In his treatment of the judgment Petrus Ramus distinguishes three stages; first, the syllogism; secondly, the system, the forming, that is to say, of a systematic chain of conclusions; and thirdly, the bringing of all sciences and knowledge into relation with God. Ramus' logic consisted, therefore, of two main sections, one concerning the concept, the other concerning the judgment; he had little new to offer and as his ideal was that of deductive reasoning, he was unable to make any very positive contribution to the advance of the logic of discovery. His lack of real originality did not, however, prevent his logical writings winning widespread popularity, especially in Germany, where Ramists, anti-Ramists and semi-Ramists carried on a lively controversy.

Men like Laurentius Valla, Nizolius, and Petrus Ramus were strongly influenced by their reading of the classics, especially of Cicero's writings. In comparison with Cicero's orations the logical works of Aristotle and the Scholastics seemed to them dry, abstruse and artificial. In the speeches of Cicero, on the other hand, the natural logic of the human mind was expressed in relation to concrete questions. They stressed, therefore, 'natural' logic and its close association with rhetoric or speech. They certainly contrasted the Platonic dialectic with the Aristotelian logic; but in the formation of their ideas on logic, which should be regarded as expressing a humanistic reaction against Scholasticism, Cicero was actually of greater importance than Plato. Their emphasis on rhetoric, however, coupled with the fact that they retained in practice a good deal of the outlook of the formal logician, meant that they did little to develop the method or logic of science. It is true that one of their watchwords was 'things' rather than abstract concepts; and in this respect they may be said to have encouraged the empiricist outlook; but, in general, their attitude was aesthetic rather than scientific. They were humanists, and their projected reform of logic was conceived in the interests of humanism, that is, of cultured expression and, at a deeper level, of the development of personality, rather than in the interests of empirical science.

2. Turning from the opponents of the Aristotelian-Scholastic logic to the Aristotelians themselves, one may mention first one or two scholars who promoted the study of the writings of Aristotle and opposed the Italian Platonists. George of Trebizond (1395–1484), for instance, translated and commented on a number of Aristotle's works and he attacked Plethon as the would-be founder of a new neo-Platonic pagan religion. Theodore of Gaza (1400–78), who, like George of Trebizond, became a convert to Catholicism, was also an opponent of Plethon. He translated works of Aristotle and Theophrastus; and in his ὅτι ἡ φύσις ου βουλεύεται he

discussed the question whether the finality which exists according to Aristotle in nature is really to be ascribed to nature. Hermolaus Barbarus (1454–93) also translated works by Aristotle and commentaries by Themistius. Aristotelian scholars of this sort were for the most part opponents of Scholasticism as well as of Platonism. In the opinion of Hermolaus Barbarus, for example, St. Albert, St. Thomas and Averroes were all philosophical 'barbarians'.

The Aristotelian camp became divided between those who interpreted Aristotle according to the mind of Averroes and those who interpreted him according to the mind of Alexander of Aphrodisias. The difference between them which most excited the attention of their contemporaries was that the Averroists maintained that there is only one immortal intellect in all men while the Alexandrists contended there is no immortal intellect in man. As both parties thus denied personal immortality they excited the hostility of the Platonists. Marsilius Ficinus, for example, declared that both parties did away with religion by denying immortality and divine providence. At the fifth Lateran Council (1512–17) the doctrines of both Averroists and Alexandrists concerning man's rational soul were condemned. In the course of time, however, the former greatly modified the theologically objectionable aspects of Averroism, which tended to become a matter of scholarship rather than of any strict adherence to Averroes's peculiar philosophical ideas.

The centre of the Averroist party was at Padua. Nicoletto Vernias, who lectured at Padua from 1471 to 1499, at first maintained the Averroistic doctrine of one immortal reason in all men; but later on he abandoned his theologically unorthodox view and defended the position that each man has an individual immortal rational soul. The same is true of Agostino Nipho or Augustinus Niphus (1473–1546), a pupil of Vernias and author of commentaries on Aristotle, who first defended the Averroistic doctrine in his *De intellectu et daemonibus* and then later abandoned it. In his *De immortalitate animae*, written in 1518 against Pomponazzi, he maintained the truth of the Thomist interpretation of Aristotle's doctrine against the interpretation given by Alexander of Aphrodisias. One may also mention Alexander Achillini (1463–1512), who taught first at Padua and afterwards at Bologna, and Marcus Antonius Zimara (1460–1532). Achillini declared that Aristotle must be corrected where he differs from the orthodox teaching of the Church, while Zimara, who commented on both Aristotle and Averroes, interpreted the latter's doctrine concerning the human intellect as referring to the unity of the most general principles of knowledge which are recognized by all men in common.

The most important figure of the Alexandrist group was Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525), a native of Mantua, who taught successively at Padua, Ferrara and Bologna. But if one wishes to represent Pomponazzi as a follower of Alexander of Aphrodisias, one must add that it was the Aristotelian elements of Alexander's teaching which exercised a distinctive influence on him, rather than Alexander's own developments of Aristotle's doctrine. The aim Pomponazzi seems to have had in mind was to purify Aristotle of non-Aristotelian accretions. That is why he attacked Averroism, which he regarded as a perversion of genuine Aristotelianism. Thus in his *De immortalitate animae* (1516) he takes his stand on the Aristotelian idea of the soul as the form or entelechy of the body and uses it not only against the Averroists but also against those who, like the Thomists, try to show that the human soul is naturally separable from the body and immortal. His main point is that the human soul, in its rational as in its sensitive operations, depends on the body; and in support of his argument and of the conclusion he draws from it he appeals, in accordance with Aristotle's practice, to the observable facts. This is not to say, of course, that Aristotle drew the same conclusion from the observable facts that Pomponazzi drew; but the latter followed Aristotle in appealing to empirical evidence. It was largely because of its incompatibility with the observable facts that he rejected the Averroistic hypothesis concerning the rational soul of man.

Pomponazzi argued that it is an empirically supported fact that all knowledge originates in sense-perception and that human intellection always needs an image or phantasm. In other words, even those intellectual operations which transcend the power of animals are nevertheless dependent on the body; and there is no evidence to show that while the sensitive soul of the animal is intrinsically dependent on the body man's rational soul is only extrinsically dependent. It is perfectly true that the human soul can exercise functions which the animal soul is incapable of exercising; but there is no empirical evidence to show that those higher functions of the human soul can be exercised apart from the body. The human mind, for instance, is certainly characterized by the power of self-consciousness; but it does not possess this power in the way that an independent intelligent substance would possess it, namely as a power of direct and immediate intuition of itself; the human mind knows itself only in knowing something other than itself.[1] Even the beasts enjoy some self-knowledge. 'Nor must we deny that the beasts know themselves. For it seems to be altogether stupid and irrational to say that they do not know themselves, when they love themselves and their species.'[2] Human self-consciousness transcends the rudimentary self-consciousness of the brutes; but it is none the less dependent on the soul's union with the body. Pomponazzi did not deny that intellection is itself non-quantitative and non-corporeal; on the contrary, he affirmed it;[3] but he argued that the human soul's 'participation in immateriality' does not involve its separability from the body. His main objection against the Thomists was that they in his view asserted both that the soul is and that it is not the form of the body. He considered that they did not take seriously the Aristotelian doctrine which they professed to accept; they endeavoured to have it both ways. The Platonists were at least consistent, even if they paid scant attention to the facts of psychology. Pomponazzi's own theory, however, can scarcely be considered immune from inconsistency. While rejecting a materialistic view of the rational soul,[4] he yet refused to allow that one can argue from the immaterial character of the soul's intelligent life to its capacity for existing in a state of separation from the body. Nor is it easy to understand precisely what was meant by phrases like 'participation in immateriality' or *immaterialis secundum quid.* Possibly Pomponazzi's view, if translated into more modern terms, would be that of epiphenomenalism. In any case, his main point was that investigation of the empirical facts does not permit one to state that the human soul possesses any mode of cognition or volition which it can exercise in independence of the body and that its status as form of the body precludes its natural immortality. In order to possess natural immortality its relation to the body would have to be that accepted by the Platonists, and for the truth of the Platonic theory there is no empirical evidence. To this Pomponazzi added some considerations deduced from his acceptance of the notion of a hierarchy of beings. The human rational soul stands midway in the scale; like the lower souls it is the form of the body, though unlike them it transcends matter in its higher operations; like the separate Intelligences it understands essences, though unlike them it can do so only in and with reference to the concrete particular.[1] It depends for its materials of knowledge on the body, though in its use of the material supplied by sense-perception it transcends matter.

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[1] *De immortalitate animae,* 10; *Apologia,* 1, 3.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *De immortalitate animae,* 9.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.,* 9–10.

The inconsistency of Pomponazzi's doctrine has been mentioned above; and I do not see how this inconsistency can be denied. It must be remembered, however, that he demanded the fulfilment of two conditions before he would recognize the soul's immortality as rationally established.[2] First of all it must be shown that the intelligence as such, in its nature as intelligence, transcends matter. Secondly it must be shown that it is independent of the body in its acquisition of the materials of knowledge. The first position Pomponazzi accepted; the second he regarded as contrary to the empirical facts. The soul's natural immortality cannot, therefore, be proved by mere reason, since, in order for it to be proved, *both* positions would have to be established.

Pomponazzi also gave consideration to the moral objections which were brought against his doctrine, namely that it was destructive of morality by denying sanctions in the future life, by confining the operation of divine justice to the present life, in which it is obviously not always fulfilled, and, most important of all, by depriving man of the possibility of attaining his last end. As regards the first point Pomponazzi argued that virtue is in itself preferable to all other things and that it is its own reward. In dying for his country or in dying rather than commit an act of injustice or sin a man gains virtue. In choosing sin or dishonour in place of death a man does not win immortality, except perhaps an immortality of shame and contempt in the mind of posterity, even if the coming of inevitable death is postponed a little longer.[3] It is true that many people would prefer dishonour or vice to death if they thought that death ended all; but this shows simply that they do not understand the true nature of virtue and vice.[4] Moreover, this is the reason why legislators and rulers have to have recourse to sanctions. In any case, says Pomponazzi, virtue is its own reward, and the essential reward (*praemium essentiale*), which is virtue itself, is diminished in proportion as the accidental reward (*praemium accidentale*, a reward extrinsic to virtue itself) is increased. This is presumably a clumsy way of saying that virtue is diminished in proportion as it is sought with a view to obtaining something other than virtue itself. In regard to the difficulty about divine justice, he asserts that no good action ever goes unrewarded and no vicious action unpunished, since virtue is its own reward and vice its own punishment.[1]

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[1] On the human mind's knowledge of the universal, see, for example, *Apologia*, 1, 3.

[2] *De immortalitate animae*, 4. [3] *Ibid.*, 14. [4] *Ibid.*

As regards the end of man or purpose of human existence, Pomponazzi insists that it is a moral end. It cannot be theoretical contemplation, which is vouchsafed to few men; nor can it consist in mechanical skill. To be a philosopher or to be a house-builder is not within the power of all;[2] but to become virtuous is within everyone's power. Moral perfection is the common end of the human race; 'for the universe would be completely preserved (*perfectissime conservaretur*) if all men were zealous and perfectly moral, but not if all were philosophers or smiths or house-builders'.[3] This moral end is sufficiently attainable within the bounds of mortal life: the idea of Kant that the attainment of the complete good of man postulates immortality was foreign to the mind of Pomponazzi. And to the argument that man has a natural desire for immortality and that this desire cannot be doomed to frustration, he answers that in so far as there is really a natural desire in man not to die, it is in no way fundamentally different from the animal's instinct to shun death, while if an elicited or intellectual desire is meant, the presence of such a desire cannot be used as an argument for immortality, for it has first to be shown that the desire is not unreasonable. One can conceive a desire for all sorts of divine privileges; but it does not follow that such a desire will be fulfilled.[4]

In his *De naturalium effectuum admirandorum causis sive de incantationibus* (generally known as the *De incantationibus*) Pomponazzi endeavours to give a natural explanation of miracles and wonders. He makes a great deal of astral influences; but his astrological explanations are, of course, naturalistic in character, even if they are erroneous. He also accepted a cyclic theory of history and historical institutions, a theory which he apparently applied even to Christianity itself. But in spite of his philosophical ideas Pomponazzi reckoned himself a true Christian. Philosophy, for example, shows that there is no evidence for the immortality of the human soul; on the contrary, it would lead us to postulate the soul's mortal character; but we know by revelation that the human soul is immortal. As already mentioned, Pomponazzi's doctrine concerning the soul's mortality was condemned at the fifth Lateran Council and he was attacked in writing by Niphus and others; but he was never involved in any more serious trouble.

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[1] *De immortalitate animae*, 13–14. [2] *Ibid.*, 14. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*, 10.

Simon Porta of Naples (d. 1555), in his *De rerum naturalibus principiis, De anima et mente humana,* followed Pomponazzi's doctrine concerning the mortality of the human soul; but not all the latter's disciples did so. And we have seen that the Averroist school also tended to modify its original position. Finally we find a group of Aristotelians who can be classified neither as Averroists nor as Alexandrists. Thus Andrew Cesalpino (1519–1603) tried to reconcile the two parties. He is perhaps chiefly remarkable for his botanical work; in 1583 he published a *De plantis libri XVI.* Jacobus Zabarella (1532–89), though a devoted Aristotelian, left many important questions undecided. For instance, if one accepts the eternity of motion and of the world, one can accept an eternal first mover; but if one denies the eternity of motion and of the world, one has no adequate philosophical reason for accepting an eternal first mover. In any case it cannot be demonstrated that the heaven itself is not the supreme being. Similarly, if one regards the soul's nature as form of the body, one will judge it to be mortal; but if one regards its intellectual operations, one will see that it transcends matter. On the other hand, the active intellect is God Himself, using the human passive intellect as an instrument; and the question whether the human soul is immortal or not is left undecided as far as philosophy is concerned. Zabarella was succeeded in his chair at Padua by Caesar Cremoninus (1550–1631) who also refused to allow that one can argue with certainty from the movement of the heaven to the existence of God as mover. In other words the idea of Nature as a more or less independent system was gaining ground; and, indeed, Cremoninus insisted on the autonomy of physical science. He based his own scientific ideas, however, on those of Aristotle and rejected the newer ideas in physics, including the Copernican astronomy. He is said to have been the friend of Galileo who refused to look through a telescope in case he should find it necessary to abandon the Aristotelian astronomy.

The influence of Pomponazzi was strongly felt by Lucilius Vanini (1585–1619), who was strangled and burnt as a heretic at Toulouse. He was the author of an *Amphitheatrum aeternae providentiae* (1615) and of a *De admirandis naturae reginae deaeque* *mortalium arcanis libri quatuor* (1616). He seems to have embraced a kind of pantheism, though he was accused of atheism, which he was said to have dissembled in his first work.

Apart from the work done by scholars in connection with the text of Aristotle, it cannot, I think, be said that the Aristotelians of the Renaissance contributed much that was valuable to philosophy. In the case of Pomponazzi and kindred figures they may be said to have encouraged a 'naturalistic' outlook; but the growth of the new physics can scarcely be attributed to the influence of the Aristotelians. It was made possible very largely by mathematical developments, and it grew in spite of, rather than because of, the Aristotelians.

In northern Europe Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560), although an associate and collaborator of Martin Luther, who was a determined enemy of Scholastic Aristotelianism, distinguished himself as a humanist. Educated in the spirit of the humanistic movement, he then fell under Luther's influence and rejected humanism; but the fact that this narrowness of outlook did not last very long shows that he was always a humanist at heart. He became the leading humanist of the early Protestant movement and was known as the *Praeceptor Germaniae* because of his educational work. For the philosophy of Aristotle he had a lively admiration, though as a thinker he was somewhat eclectic, his ideal being that of moral progress through the study of classical writers and of the Gospels. He had little interest in metaphysics, and his idea of logic, as given in his logical text-books, was influenced by that of Rudolf Agricola. Aristotle he interpreted in a nominalistic sense; and, though he freely utilized Aristotle in his *Commentarius de anima* (in which ideas drawn indirectly from Galen also make their appearance) and in his *Philosophiae moralis epitome* and *Ethicae doctrinae elementa,* he endeavoured to bring Aristotelianism into harmony with revelation and to supplement it by Christian teaching. A salient aspect of Melanchthon's teaching was his doctrine of innate principles, particularly moral principles, and of the innate character of the idea of God, both of which are intuited by means of the *lumen naturale.* This doctrine was opposed to the Aristotelian view of the mind as a *tabula rasa.*

Melanchthon's utilization of Aristotle was influential in the Lutheran universities, though it did not commend itself to all Protestant thinkers, and there occurred some lively disputes, among which may be mentioned the week's debate at Weimar in

1560 between Flacius and Strigel on freedom of the will. Melanchthon maintained the freedom of the will; but Flacius (Illyricus) considered that this doctrine, supported by Strigel, was at variance with the true theory of original sin. In spite of Melanchthon's great influence there was always a certain tension between rigid Protestant theology and the Aristotelian philosophy. Luther himself did not deny all human freedom; but he did not consider that the freedom left to man after the Fall is sufficient to enable him to achieve moral reform. It was only natural, then, that controversy should arise between those who deemed themselves genuine disciples of Luther and those who followed Melanchthon in his Aristotelianism, which was somewhat of a strange bedfellow for orthodox Lutheranism. In addition, of course, there were, as has been mentioned earlier, the disputes between the Ramists, anti-Ramists and semi-Ramists.

3. Among other revivers of ancient philosophical traditions one may mention Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), author of a *Manuductio ad stoicam philosophiam* and a *Physiologia Stoicorum*, who revived Stoicism, and the famous French man of letters, Michel de Montaigne (1533–92), who revived Pyrrhonic scepticism. In his *Essais* Montaigne revived the ancient arguments for scepticism; the relativity of sense-experience, the impossibility of the intellect's rising above this relativity to the sure attainment of absolute truth, the constant change in both object and subject, the relativity of value-judgments, and so on. Man is, in fine, a poor sort of creature whose boasted superiority to the animals is, to a great extent, a vain and hollow pretension. He should, therefore, submit himself to divine revelation, which alone gives certainty. At the same time Montaigne came to attribute considerable importance to the idea of 'nature'. Nature gives to each man a dominant type of character which is fundamentally unchangeable; and the task of moral education is to awaken and preserve the spontaneity and originality of this endowment of nature rather than to attempt to mould it into a stereotyped pattern by the methods of Scholasticism. But Montaigne was no revolutionary; he thought rather that the form of life embodied in the social and political structure of one's country represents a law of nature to which one should submit oneself. The same is true of religion. The theoretical basis of any given religion cannot be rationally established; but the moral consciousness and obedience to nature form the heart of religion, and these will only be

injured by religious anarchy. In this practical conservatism Montaigne was, of course, faithful to the spirit of Pyrrhonic scepticism, which found in the consciousness of one's ignorance an added reason for adhering to traditional social, political and religious forms. A sceptical attitude in regard to metaphysics in general might seem calculated to lead to an emphasis on empirical science; but, as far as Montaigne himself was concerned, his scepticism was rather that of a cultivated man of letters, though he was influenced too by the moral ideal of Socrates and by the Stoic ideals of tranquillity and of obedience to nature.

Among Montaigne's friends was Pierre Charron (1541–1603), who became a lawyer and later a priest. In his *Trois vérités contre tous les athées, idolâtres, juifs, Mohamétans, hérétiques et schismatiques* (1593) he maintained that the existence of one God, the truth of the Christian religion and the truth of Catholicism in particular are three proved truths; but in his main work, *De la sagesse* (1601), he adopted from Montaigne a sceptical position, though he modified it in the second edition. Man is unable to reach certainty concerning metaphysical and theological truths; but human self-knowledge, which reveals to us our ignorance, reveals to us also our possession of a free will by which we can win moral independence and dominion over the passions. The recognition and realization of the moral ideal is true wisdom, and this true wisdom is independent of dogmatic religion. 'I desire that one should be a good man without paradise and hell; these words are, in my view, horrible and abominable, "if I were not a Christian, if I did not fear God and damnation, I should do this or that".'[1]

Another Pyrrhonist was Francis Sanchez (*c.* 1552–1632), a Portuguese by birth, who studied at Bordeaux and in Italy and taught medicine first at Montpellier and afterwards at Toulouse. In his *Quod nihil scitur*, which appeared in 1580, Sanchez maintained that the human being can know nothing, if the word 'know' is understood in its full sense, that is to say, as referring to the perfect ideal of knowledge. God alone, who has created all things, knows all things. Human knowledge is based either on sense-perception or on introspection. The former is not reliable, while the latter, though assuring us of the existence of the self, can give no clear idea of it; our knowledge of the self is indefinite and indeterminate. Introspection gives us no picture of the self, and without a picture or image we can have no clear idea. On the other hand though sense-perception provides us with definite images, these images are far from giving a perfect knowledge of things. Moreover, as the multiplicity of things forms a unified system, no one thing can be perfectly known unless the whole system is known; and this we cannot know.

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[1] *De la sagesse*, 2, 5, 29.

But though Sanchez denied that the human mind can attain perfect knowledge of anything, he insisted that it can attain an approximate knowledge of some things and that the way to do so is through observation rather than through the Aristotelian-Scholastic logic. The latter makes use of definitions which are purely verbal, and syllogistic demonstration presupposes principles the truth of which is by no means clear. Of the leading sceptics Sanchez probably came nearest to anticipating the direction which philosophy and science were to take; but he was prevented by his sceptical attitude from making positive and constructive suggestions. For example, his strictures on the old deductive logic would lead one to expect a clear emphasis on the empirical investigation of nature; but his sceptical attitude in regard to sense-perception was a hindrance to his making any valuable positive contribution to the development of natural philosophy. The scepticism of these Renaissance thinkers was doubtless a symptom of the period of transition between mediaeval thought and the constructive systems of the 'modern' era; but in itself it was a blind alley.

CHAPTER XV

NICHOLAS OF CUSA

Life and works—The influence of Nicholas's leading idea on his practical activity—The coincidentia oppositorum*—'Instructed ignorance'—The relation of God to the world—The 'infinity' of the world—The world-system and the soul of the world—Man, the microcosm; Christ—Nicholas's philosophical affiliations.*

1. Nicholas of Cusa is not an easy figure to classify. His philosophy is frequently included under the heading 'mediaeval philosophy', and there are, of course, some good reasons for doing this. The background of his thought was formed by the doctrines of Catholicism and by the Scholastic tradition, and he was undoubtedly strongly influenced by a number of mediaeval thinkers. It was possible, then, for Maurice De Wulf to say of him, when outlining his ideas in the third volume of his history of mediaeval philosophy, that 'in spite of his audacious theories he is only a continuer of the past',[1] and that he 'remains a mediaeval and a Scholastic'.[2] On the other hand, Nicholas lived in the fifteenth century and for some thirty years his life overlapped that of Marsilius Ficinus. Moreover, although one can emphasize the traditional elements in his philosophy and push him back, as it were, into the Middle Ages, one can equally well emphasize the forward-looking elements of his thought and associate him with the beginnings of 'modern' philosophy. But it seems to me preferable to see in him a transition-thinker, a philosopher of the Renaissance, who combined the old with the new. To treat him simply as a mediaeval thinker seems to me to involve the neglect of those elements in his philosophy which have clear affinities with the philosophical movements of thought at the time of the Renaissance and those elements which reappear at a later date in the system of a thinker like Leibniz. Yet even if one decides to classify Nicholas of Cusa as a Renaissance philosopher, there still remains the difficulty of deciding to which Renaissance current of thought his philosophy should be assigned. Is he to be associated with the Platonists on the ground that he was influenced by the neo-Platonic tradition? Or does his view of Nature as in some

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[1] p. 207.

[2] p. 211.

sense 'infinite' suggest rather that he should be associated with a philosopher like Giordano Bruno? There are doubtless grounds for calling him a Platonist, if one understands the term in a sufficiently generous way; but it would be peculiar if one included him in the same chapter as the Italian Platonists. And there are doubtless grounds for calling him a philosopher of Nature; but he was before all things a Christian, and he was no pantheist like Bruno. He in no way deified Nature. And he cannot be classified with the scientists, even if he was interested in mathematics. I have therefore adopted the solution of giving him a chapter to himself. And this is, in my opinion, what he deserves. Though having many affiliations, he stands more or less by himself.

Nicholas Kryfts or Krebs was born at Cusa on the Moselle in 1401. Educated as a boy by the Brothers of the Common Life at Deventer, he subsequently studied at the universities of Heidelberg (1416) and Padua (1417–23) and received the doctorate in Canon Law. Ordained priest in 1426, he took up a post at Coblenz; but in 1432 he was sent to the Council of Basle on the business of the Count von Manderscheid, who wanted to become bishop of Trier. Becoming involved in the deliberations of the Council, Nicholas showed himself a moderate adherent of the conciliar party. Later, however, he changed his attitude to the position of the papacy and fulfilled a number of missions on behalf of the Holy See. For example, he went to Byzantium in connection with the negotiations for the reunion of the Eastern Church with Rome, which was accomplished (temporarily) at the Council of Florence. In 1448 he was created cardinal and in 1450 he was appointed to the bishopric of Brixen, while from 1451 to 1452 he acted as Papal Legate in Germany. He died in the August of 1464 at Todi in Umbria.

In spite of his ecclesiastical activities Nicholas wrote a considerable number of works, of which the first important one was the *De concordantia catholica* (1433–4). His philosophical writings include the *De docta ignorantia* and the *De coniecturis* (1440), the *De Deo abscondito* (1444) and the *De quaerendo Deum* (1445), the *De Genesi* (1447), the *Apologia doctae ignorantiae* (1449), the *Idiotae libri* (1450), the *De visione Dei* (1453), the *De possest* (1460), the *Tetralogus de non aliud* (1462), the *De venatione sapientiae* (1463) and the *De apice theoriae* (1464). In addition he composed works on mathematical subjects, like the *De transmutationibus geometricis* (1450), the *De mathematicis complementis* (1453) and the *De mathematica perfectione* (1458), and on theological subjects.

2. The thought of Nicholas of Cusa was governed by the idea of unity as the harmonious synthesis of differences. On the metaphysical plane this idea is presented in his idea of God as the *coincidentia oppositorum*, the synthesis of opposites, which transcends and yet includes the distinct perfections of creatures. But the idea of unity as the harmonious reconciliation or synthesis of opposites was not confined to the field of speculative philosophy: it exercised a powerful influence on Nicholas's practical activity, and it goes a long way towards explaining his change of front in regard to the position in the Church of the Holy See. I think that it is worth while to show how this is the case.

At the time when Nicholas went to the Council of Basle and published his *De concordantia catholica* he saw the unity of Christendom threatened, and he was inspired by the ideal of preserving that unity. In common with a number of other sincere Catholics he believed that the best way of preserving or restoring that unity lay in emphasizing the position and rights of General Councils. Like other members of the conciliar party, he was encouraged in this belief by the part played by the Council of Constance (1414–18) in putting an end to the Great Schism which had divided Christendom and caused so much scandal. He was convinced at that time of the natural rights of popular sovereignty not only in the State but also in the Church; and, indeed, despotism and anarchy were always abhorrent to him. In the State the monarch does not receive his authority directly and immediately from God, but rather from or through the people. In the Church, he thought, a General Council, representing the faithful, is superior to the pope, who possesses only an administrative primacy and may for adequate reasons be deposed by a Council. Though he maintained the idea of the empire, his ideal was not that of a monolithic empire which would override or annul the rights and duties of national monarchs and princes: it was rather that of a federation. In an analogous manner, though he was a passionate believer in the unity of the Church, he believed that the cause of this unity would be better served by a moderate conciliar theory than by an insistence on the supreme position of the Holy See. By saying this I do not mean to imply that Nicholas did not at that time believe that the conciliar theory was theoretically justified or that he supported it only for practical reasons, because he considered that the Church's unity would thus be best preserved and that ecclesiastical reform would stand a better chance of being realized if the supremacy of General Councils was recognized. But these practical considerations certainly weighed with him. Moreover, a 'democratic' view of the Church as a harmonious unity in multiplicity, expressed juridically in the conciliar theory, undoubtedly possessed a strong attraction for him. He aimed at unity in the Church and in the State and between Church and State; but the unity at which he aimed, whether in the Church or in the State, or between Church and State, was not a unity resulting from the annulment of differences.

Nicholas came to abandon the conciliar theory and to act as a champion of the Holy See. This change of view was certainly the expression of a change in his theoretical convictions concerning the papacy as a divine institution possessing supreme ecclesiastical authority and jurisdiction. But at the same time he was certainly influenced by the conviction that the cause which he had at heart, namely the unity of the Church, would not in fact be promoted by belittling the position of the pope in the Church. He came to think that an effective implementation of the conciliar theory would be more likely to result in another schism than in unity, and he came to look on the supreme position of the Holy See as the expression of the essential unity of the Church. All the limited authorities in the Church receive their authority from the absolute or sovereign authority, the Holy See, in a manner analogous to the way in which finite, limited beings receive their being from the absolute infinite, God.

This change of view did not involve the acceptance of extravagant theories, like those of Giles of Rome. Nicholas did not envisage, for example, the subordination of State to Church, but rather a harmonious and peaceful relation between the two powers. It was always at reconciliation, harmony, unity in difference that he aimed. In this ideal of unity without suppression of differences he is akin to Leibniz. It is true that Nicholas's attempts to secure harmonious unity were by no means always successful. His attempts to secure harmony in his own diocese were not altogether felicitous; and the reunion of the Eastern Church with Rome, in which he co-operated, was of brief duration. But Leibniz's somewhat unpractical, and sometimes indeed superficial, plans and ideals of unity were also unrealized in practice.

3. God is, for Nicholas, the *coincidentia oppositorum*, the synthesis of opposites in a unique and absolutely infinite being. Finite things are multiple and distinct, possessing their different natures and qualities while God transcends all the distinctions and oppositions which are found in creatures. But God transcends these distinctions and oppositions by uniting them in Himself in an incomprehensible manner. The distinction of essence and existence, for example, which is found in all creatures, cannot be in God as a distinction: in the actual infinite, essence and existence coincide and are one. Again, in creatures we distinguish greatness and smallness, and we speak of them as possessing attributes in different degrees, as being more or less this or that. But in God all these distinctions coincide. If we say that God is the greatest being (*maximum*), we must also say that He is the least being (*minimum*), for God cannot possess size or what we ordinarily call 'greatness'. In Him *maximum* and *minimum* coincide.[1] But we cannot comprehend this synthesis of distinctions and oppositions. If we say that God is the *complicatio oppositorum et eorum coincidentia*,[2] we must realize that we cannot have a positive understanding of what this means. We come to know a finite thing by bringing it into relation to or comparing it with the already known: we come to know a thing by means of comparison, similarity, dissimilarity and distinction. But God, being infinite, is like to no finite thing; and to apply definite predicates to God is to liken Him to things and to bring Him into a relation of similarity with them. In reality the distinct predicates which we apply to finite things coincide in God in a manner which surpasses our knowledge.

4. It is clear, then, that Nicholas of Cusa laid emphasis on the *via negativa*, the way of negation in our intellectual approach to God. If the process of getting to know or becoming acquainted with a thing involves bringing the hitherto unknown thing into relation with, or comparing it with, the already known, and if God is unlike every creature, it follows that the discursive reason cannot penetrate God's nature. We know of God what He is not rather than what He is. In regard, therefore, to positive knowledge of the divine nature our minds are in a state of 'ignorance'. On the other hand, this 'ignorance' of which Nicholas speaks is not the ignorance of someone who has no knowledge of God or who has never made the effort to understand what God is. It is, of course, the result of human psychology and of the limitations

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[1] *De docta ignorantia*, 1, 4. [2] *Ibid.*, 2, 1.

which necessarily affect a finite mind when confronted by an infinite object which is not an empirically given object. But, in order to possess a real value it must be apprehended as the result of these factors, or at any rate as the result of the infinity of God and the finitude of the human mind. The 'ignorance' in question is not the result of a refusal to make an intellectual effort or of religious indifference: it proceeds from the realization of God's infinity and transcendence. It is thus 'learned' or 'instructed ignorance'. Hence the title of Nicholas's most famous work, *De docta ignorantia.*

It may appear inconsistent to stress the 'negative way' and at the same time to affirm positively that God is the *coincidentia oppositorum.* But Nicholas did not reject the 'affirmative way' altogether. For example, since God transcends the sphere of numbers He cannot be called 'one' in the sense in which a finite thing, as distinct from other finite things, is called 'one'. On the other hand, God is the infinite Being and the source of all multiplicity in the created world; and as such He is the infinite unity. But we cannot have a positive understanding of what this unity is in itself. We do make positive affirmations about God, and we are justified in doing so; but there is no positive affirmation about the divine nature which does not need to be qualified by a negation. If we think of God in terms simply of ideas drawn from creatures our notion of Him is less adequate than the realization that He transcends all our concepts of Him: negative theology is superior to positive or affirmative theology. Superior to both, however, is 'copulative' theology by which God is apprehended as the *coincidentia oppositorum.* God is rightly recognized as the supreme and absolutely greatest Being: He cannot be greater than He is. And as the greatest Being He is perfect unity.[1] But we can also say of God that He cannot be smaller than He is. We can say, therefore, that He is the *minimum.* In fact, He is both the greatest and the smallest in a perfect *coincidentia oppositorum.* All theology is 'circular', in the sense that the attributes which we rightly predicate of God coincide in the divine essence in a manner which surpasses the understanding of the human mind.[2]

The lowest stage of human knowledge is sense-perception. The senses by themselves simply affirm. It is when we come to the level of reason (*ratio*) that there is both affirmation and denial. The discursive reason is governed by the principle of contradiction, the principle of the incompatibility or mutual exclusion of opposites; and the activity of the reason cannot bring us to anything more than an approximate knowledge of God. In accordance with his fondness for mathematical analogies Nicholas compares the reason's knowledge of God to a polygon inscribed in a circle. However many sides one adds to the polygon it will not coincide with the circle, even though it may approximate more and more to doing so. What is more, our knowledge of creatures also is only approximate, for their 'truth' is hidden in God. In fine, all knowledge by means of the discursive reason is approximate, and all science is 'conjecture'.[1] This theory of knowledge was developed in the *De coniecturis*; and Nicholas explained that the highest possible natural knowledge of God is attained not by discursive reasoning (*ratio*) but by intellect (*intellectus*), a superior activity of the mind. Whereas sense-perception affirms and reason affirms and denies, intellect denies the oppositions of reason. Reason affirms X and denies Y, but intellect denies X and Y both disjunctively and together; it apprehends God as the *coincidentia oppositorum*. This apprehension or intuition cannot, however, be properly stated in language, which is the instrument of reason rather than of intellect. In its activity as intellect the mind uses language to suggest meaning rather than to state it; and Nicholas employs mathematical analogies and symbols for this purpose. For example, if one side of a triangle is extended to infinity, the other two sides will coincide with it. Again, if the diameter of a circle is extended to infinity the circumference will coincide in the end with the diameter. The infinite straight line is thus at the same time a triangle and a circle. Needless to say, Nicholas regarded these mathematical speculations as no more than symbols; the mathematical infinite and the absolutely infinite being are not the same, though the former can both serve as a symbol for the latter and constitute an aid to thought in metaphysical theology.[2]

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[1] *De docta ignorantia,* 1, 5.

[2] *Ibid.,* 1, 21.

The leading ideas of the *De docta ignorantia* were resumed in the writings which compose the *Idiotae*, and in the *De venatione sapientiae* Nicholas reaffirmed his belief in the idea of 'learned' or 'instructed ignorance'. In this work he reaffirmed also the doctrine contained in the *De non aliud*. God cannot be defined by other terms: He is His own definition. Again, God is not other than anything else, for He defines everything else, in the sense that He alone is the source and conserver of the existence of all things.[3] Nicholas

[1] *De docta ignorantia*, 1, 3.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1, 12.

[3] *De venatione sapientiae*, 14.

also reaffirmed the central idea which he had developed in the *De possest*. 'God alone is *Possest*, because He is in act what He can be.'[1] He is eternal act. This idea he took up again in the *De apice theoriae*, his last work, in which God is represented as *posse ipsum*, the absolute power which reveals itself in creatures. The emphasis laid on this idea has suggested to students of Nicholas's works a change of view on the part of the author. And there is, indeed, a good deal to be said in favour of this interpretation. Nicholas says expressly in *De apice theoriae* that he once thought that the truth about God is found better in darkness or obscurity than in clarity and he adds that the idea of *posse*, of power or being able, is easy to understand. What boy or youth is ignorant of the nature of *posse*, when he knows very well that he can eat, run and speak? And if he were asked whether he could do anything, carry a stone, for example, without the power to do so, he would judge such a question to be entirely superfluous. Now, God is the absolute *posse ipsum*. It would appear, then, that Nicholas felt the need of counterbalancing the negative theology on which he had formerly laid such stress. And we may say perhaps that the idea of *posse*, together with other positive ideas like that of light, of which he made use in his natural theology, expressed his conviction of the divine immanence, while the emphasis on negative theology represented rather his belief in the divine transcendence. But it would be wrong to suggest that Nicholas abandoned the negative for the affirmative way. He makes it quite clear in his last work that the divine *posse ipsum* is in itself incomprehensible and that it is incommensurable with created power. In the *Compendium*,[2] which he wrote a year before the *De apice theoriae*, Nicholas says that the incomprehensible Being, while remaining always the same, shows Himself in a variety of ways, in a variety of 'signs'. It is as though one face appeared in different ways in a number of mirrors. The face is one and the same, but its appearances, which are all distinct from itself, are various. Nicholas may have described the divine nature in various ways, and he may very well have thought that he had overdone the way of negation; but it does not seem that there was any fundamental change in his point of view. God was always for him transcendent, infinite and incomprehensible, even though He was also immanent and even though Nicholas may have come to see the desirability of bringing this aspect of God into greater prominence.

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[1] *De venatione sapientiae*, 13.

[2] 8.

5. In speaking of the relation between God and the world Nicholas used phrases which have suggested to some readers a pantheistic interpretation. God contains all things; He is *omnia complicans*. All things are contained in the divine simplicity, and without Him they are nothing. God is also *omnia explicans*, the source of the multiple things which reveal something of Him. *Deus ergo est omnia complicans, in hoc quod omnia in eo; est omnia explicans, in hoc quia ipse in omnibus.*[1] But Nicholas protested that he was no pantheist. God contains all things in that He is the cause of all things: He contains them *complicative*, as one in His divine and simple essence. He is in all things *explicative*, in the sense that He is immanent in all things and that all things are essentially dependent on Him. When he states that God is both the centre and the circumference of the world[2] he is to be interpreted neither in a pantheistic nor in an acosmistic sense. The world is not, says Nicholas, a limited sphere with a definite centre and circumference. Any point can be taken and considered as the world's centre, and it has no circumference. God, then, can be called the centre of the world in view of the fact that He is everywhere or omnipresent and the circumference of the world in that He is nowhere, that is, by local presence. Nicholas was certainly influenced by writers like John Scotus Eriugena, and he employed the same type of bold phrases and statements which Meister Eckhart had employed. But in spite of a strong tendency to acosmism, as far as the literal meaning of some of his statements is concerned, it is clear that he insisted strongly on the distinction between the finite creature and the infinite Godhead.

In phrases which recall to mind the doctrine of John Scotus Eriugena Nicholas explains that the world is a theophany, a 'contraction' of the divine being. The universe is the *contractum maximum* which came into existence through emanation from the *absolutum maximum*.[3] Every creature is, as it were, a created God or God created (*quasi Deus creatus*).[4] Nicholas even goes so far as to say that God is the absolute essence of the world or universe, and that the universe is that very essence in a state of 'contraction' (*Est enim Deus quidditas absoluta mundi seu universi. Universum vero est ipsa quidditas contracta*).[5] Similarly, in the *De coniecturis*[6] Nicholas declares that to say that God is in the world is also to say that the world is in God, while in the *De visione Dei*[7] he speaks of

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[1] *De docta ignorantia*, 2, 3.
[2] *Ibid.*, 2, 11.
[3] *Ibid.*, 2, 4.
[4] *Ibid.*, 2, 2.
[5] *Ibid.*, 2, 4.
[6] 2, 7.
[7] 12.

God as invisible in Himself but visible *uti creatura est.* Statements of this sort certainly lend themselves to a pantheistic interpretation; but Nicholas makes it clear on occasion that it is a mistake to interpret them in this way. For example, in the *De coniecturis*[1] he asserts that 'man is God, but not absolutely, since he is man. He is therefore a human God (*humanus est igitur Deus*).' He goes on to assert that 'man is also the world' and explains that man is the microcosm or 'a certain human world'. His statements are bold, it is true; but by saying that man is God, though not absolutely, he does not appear to mean more than other writers meant when they called man the image of God. It is clear that Nicholas was deeply convinced of the world's nothingness apart from God and of its relation to God as a mirror of the divine. The world is the *infinitas contracta* and the *contracta unitas.*[2] But this does not mean that the world is God in a literal sense; and in the *Apologia doctae ignorantiae* Nicholas explicitly rejects the charge of pantheism. In the *explicatio Dei* or creation of the world unity is 'contracted' into plurality, infinity into finitude, simplicity into composition, eternity into succession, necessity into possibility.[3] On the plane of creation the divine infinity expresses or reveals itself in the multiplicity of finite things, while the divine eternity expresses or reveals itself in temporal succession. The relation of creatures to the Creator surpasses our understanding; but Nicholas, according to his wont, frequently provides analogies from geometry and arithmetic, which, he believed, made things a bit clearer.

6. But though the world consists of finite things it is in a sense infinite. For example, the world is endless or indeterminate in respect of time. Nicholas agrees with Plato that time is the image of eternity,[4] and he insists that since before creation there was no time we must say that time proceeded from eternity. And if time proceeded from eternity it participates in eternity. 'I do not think that anyone who understands denies that the world is eternal, although it is not eternity.'[5] 'Thus the world is eternal because it comes from eternity and not from time. But the name "eternal" belongs much more to the world than to time since the duration of the world does not depend on time. For if the motion of the heaven and time, which is the measure of motion, were to cease, the world would not cease to exist.'[6] Nicholas thus makes a distinction between time and duration, though he does not develop the

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[1] 2, 14.

[2] *De docta ignorantia,* 2, 4.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *De venatione sapientiae,* 9.

[5] *De ludo globi,* 1.

[6] *Ibid.*

theme. Time is the measure of motion, and it is thus the instrument of the measuring mind and depends on the mind.[1] If motion disappeared, there would be no time; but there would still be duration. Successive duration is the copy or image of the absolute duration which is eternity. We can conceive eternity only as endless duration. The duration of the world is thus the image of the divine eternity and can be called in some sense 'infinite'. This is a curious line of argument, and it is not easy to see precisely what is meant; but presumably Nicholas meant, in part at least, that the world's duration is potentially endless. It is not the absolute eternity of God, but it has not of itself any necessary limits.

The universe is one, unbounded by any other universe. It is, therefore, in some sense spatially 'infinite'. It is without any fixed centre, and there is no point which one could not choose to regard as the world's centre. There is, of course, no absolute 'up' or 'down' either. The earth is neither the centre of the world nor its lowest and least honourable part; nor has the sun any privileged position. Our judgments in these matters are relative. Everything in the universe moves, and so does the earth. 'The earth, which cannot be the centre, cannot be without any motion.'[2] It is smaller than the sun, but it is larger than the moon, as we know from observation of eclipses.[3] Nicholas does not appear to say explicitly that the earth rotates round the sun, but he makes it clear that both the sun and the earth move, together with all the other bodies, though their velocities are not the same. The fact that we do not perceive the earth's motion is no valid argument against its motion. We perceive motion only in relation to fixed points; and if a man in a boat on a river were unable to see the banks and did not know that the water itself was moving he would imagine that the boat was stationary.[4] A man stationed on the earth may think that the earth is stationary and that the other heavenly bodies are in motion, but if he were on the sun or the moon or Mars he would think the same of the body on which he was stationed.[5] Our judgments about motion are relative: we cannot attain 'absolute truth' in these astronomical matters. In order to compare the movements of the heavenly bodies we have to do so in relation to selected fixed points; but there are no fixed points in actuality. We can, therefore, attain only an approximate or relative knowledge in astronomy.

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[1] *De ludo globi*, 2.
[2] *De docta ignorantia*, 2, 11.
[3] *Ibid.*, 2, 12.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*

7. The idea of a hierarchy of levels of reality from matter, through organisms, animals and man, up to pure spirits was a leading feature both of Aristotelianism and of the Platonic tradition. But Nicholas, while retaining this idea, laid particular emphasis on the individual thing as a unique manifestation of God. In the first place, no two individual things are exactly alike. By saying this Nicholas did not mean to deny the reality of species. The Peripatetics, he says,[1] are right in saying that universals do not actually exist: only individual things exist, and universals as such belong to the conceptual order. None the less members of a species have a common specific nature which exists in each of them in a 'contracted' state, that is to say, as an individual nature.[2] No individual thing, however, realizes fully the perfection of its species; and each member of a species has its own distinct characteristics.[3]

In the second place, each individual thing mirrors the whole universe. Every existent thing 'contracts' all other things, so that the universe exists *contracte* in every finite thing.[4] Moreover, as God is in the universe and the universe in God, and as the universe is in each thing, to say that everything is in each thing is also to say that God is in each thing and each thing in God. In other words, the universe is a 'contraction' of the divine being, and each finite thing is a 'contraction' of the universe.

The world is therefore a harmonious system. It consists of a multiplicity of finite things; but its members are so related to one another and to the whole that there is a 'unity in plurality'.[5] The one universe is the unfolding of the absolute and simple divine unity, and the whole universe is reflected or mirrored in each individual part. According to Nicholas, there is a soul of the world (*anima mundi*); but he rejects the Platonic view of this soul. It is not an actually existent being distinct from God on the one hand and from the finite things in the world on the other hand. If the soul of the world is regarded as a universal form containing in itself all forms, it has no separate existence of its own. The forms exist actually in the divine Word, as identical with the divine Word, and they exist in things *contracte*,[6] that is, as the individual forms of things. Nicholas evidently understood the Platonists as teaching that universal forms exist in a soul of the world, which is distinct from God, and this view he rejected. In the *Idiotae*[1] he says that what Plato called the 'soul of the world' Aristotle called 'nature', and he adds that in his opinion the 'soul of the world' or 'nature' is God, 'who works all things in all things'. It is clear, then, that although Nicholas borrowed from Platonism the phrase 'soul of the world' he did not understand by this an existent being distinct from God and intermediate between God and the world. In his cosmology there is no intermediary stage in creation between the actual infinite, God, and the potential infinite, the created world.

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[1] *De docta ignorantia*, 2, 6.

[2] *Ibid.*; cf. *De conjecturis*, 21, 3.

[3] *De docta ignorantia*, 3, 1.

[4] *Ibid.*, 2, 5.

[5] *Ibid.*, 2, 6.

[6] *Ibid.*, 2, 9.

8. Although each finite thing mirrors the whole universe, this is particularly true of man who combines in himself matter, organic life, sensitive animal life and spiritual rationality. Man is the microcosm, a little world, embracing in himself the intellectual and material spheres of reality.[2] 'We cannot deny that man is called the microcosm, that is, a little world'; and just as the great world, the universe, has its soul, so has man his soul.[3] The universe is mirrored in every part, and this is true analogously of man, who is the little universe or world. The nature of man is mirrored in a part like the hand, but it is mirrored more perfectly in the head. So the universe, though mirrored in every part, is mirrored more perfectly in man. Therefore man can be called a 'perfect world, although he is a little world and a part of the great world'.[4] In fact, as uniting in himself attributes which are found separately in other beings man is a finite representation of the divine *coincidentia oppositorum*.

The universe is the *concretum maximum*, while God is the *absolutum maximum*, absolute greatness. But the universe does not exist apart from individual things; and no individual thing embodies all the perfections of its species. The absolute greatness is thus never fully 'contracted' or rendered 'concrete'. We can conceive, however, a *maximum contractum* or *concretum* which would unite in itself not only the various levels of created existence, as man does, but also the Godhead itself together with created nature, though this union 'would exceed all our understanding'.[5] But though the mode of union is a mystery, we know that in Christ divine and human nature have been united without confusion of natures or distinction of persons. Christ, then, is the *maximum concretum*. He is also the *medium absolutum*, not only in the sense that in Him there is a unique and perfect union of the uncreated and the created, of the divine and human nature, but also in the sense that He is the unique and necessary means by which human beings can be united to God.[1] Without Christ it is impossible for man to achieve eternal happiness. He is the ultimate perfection of the universe,[2] and in particular of man, who can realize his highest potentialities only through incorporation with Christ. And we cannot be incorporated with Christ or transformed into His image save through the Church, which is His body.[3] The *Dialogus de pace seu concordantia fidei* shows that Nicholas was by no means narrow in his outlook and that he was quite prepared for concessions to the Eastern Church for the sake of unity; but his works in general by no means suggest that he favoured sacrificing the integrity of the Catholic faith in order to obtain external unity, profoundly concerned though he was about unity and deeply conscious of the fact that such unity could be obtained only through peaceful agreement.

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[1] 3, 13.
[2] *De docta ignorantia*, 3, 3.
[3] *De ludo globi*, 1.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *De docta ignorantia*, 3, 2.

9. It is clear enough that Nicholas of Cusa made copious use of the writings of preceding philosophers. For example, he often quotes the Pseudo-Dionysius; and it is obvious that he was strongly influenced by the latter's insistence on negative theology and on the use of symbols. He knew, too, the *De divisione naturae* of John Scotus Eriugena, and though Eriugena's influence on his thought was doubtless less than that exercised by the Pseudo-Dionysius (whom he thought of, of course, as the disciple of St. Paul) it is reasonable to suppose that some of his bold statements on the way in which God becomes 'visible' in creatures were prompted by a reading of the ninth-century philosopher's work. Again, Nicholas was certainly influenced by the writings of Meister Eckhart and by the latter's use of startling antinomies. Indeed, a great deal of Nicholas's philosophy, his theory of *docta ignorantia*, for example, his idea of God as the *coincidentia oppositorum*, his insistence on the world as a divine self-manifestation and as the *explicatio Dei*, his notion of man as the microcosm, can be regarded as a development of earlier philosophies, particularly those belonging in a wide sense to the Platonic tradition and those which may be classed as in some sense 'mystical'. His fondness for mathematical analogies and symbolism recalls not only the writings of Platonists and Pythagoreans in the ancient world but also those of St. Augustine and other Christian writers. It is considerations of this sort which provide much justification for those who would

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[1] *De visione Dei*, 19–21.

[2] *Ibid.*, 21.

[3] *De docta ignorantia*, 3, 12.

class Nicholas of Cusa as a mediaeval thinker. His preoccupation with our knowledge of God and with the world's relation to God points backward, it might be maintained, to the Middle Ages. His whole thought moves, some historians would say, in mediaeval categories and bears the imprint of mediaeval Catholicism. Even his more startling utterances can be paralleled in the case of writers whom everyone would class as mediaevals.

On the other hand, it is possible to go to the opposite extreme and to attempt to push Nicholas forward into the modern period. His insistence on negative theology, for example, and his doctrine of God as the *coincidentia oppositorum* can be assimilated to Schelling's theory of the Absolute as the vanishing-point of all differences and distinctions, while his view of the world as the *explicatio Dei* can be regarded as a foretaste of Hegel's theory of Nature as God-in-His-otherness, as the concrete manifestation or embodiment of the abstract Idea. His philosophy can, that is to say, be considered as an anticipation of German idealism. In addition it is obvious that Nicholas's idea of the mirroring of the universe in each finite thing and of the qualitative difference which exists between any two things reappeared in the philosophy of Leibniz.

It can hardly be denied, I think, that there is truth in both these conflicting points of view. Nicholas's philosophy undoubtedly depended on or utilized to a great extent preceding systems. On the other hand, to point out the similarities between certain aspects of his thought and the philosophy of Leibniz is by no means to indulge in far-fetched analogies. When it comes to connecting Nicholas of Cusa with post-Kantian German speculative idealism the links are clearly more tenuous, and there is more chance of anachronistic assimilations; but it is true that interest in his writings began to show itself in the nineteenth century and that this was largely due to the direction taken in that century by German thought. But if there is truth in both points of view, that is all the more reason, I think, for recognizing in Nicholas a transition-thinker, a figure of the Renaissance. His philosophy of Nature, for example, certainly contained elements from the past, but it represented also the growing interest in the system of Nature and what one may perhaps call the growing feeling for the universe as a developing and self-unfolding system. Nicholas's idea of the 'infinity' of the world influenced other Renaissance thinkers, especially Giordano Bruno, even though Bruno developed

Nicholas's ideas in a direction which was alien to the latter's mind and convictions. Again, however much Nicholas's theory of Nature as the *explicatio Dei* may have been dependent on the Platonic or neo-Platonic tradition, we find in that theory an insistence on the individual thing and on Nature as a system of individual things, none of which are exactly alike, that looks forward, as has already been mentioned, to the Leibnizian philosophy. Furthermore, his rejection of the idea that anything in the world can properly be called stationary and of the notions of any absolute 'centre' or 'up' and 'down' links him with the cosmologists and scientists of the Renaissance rather than with the Middle Ages. It is perfectly true, of course, that Nicholas's conception of the relation of the world to God was a theistic conception; but if Nature is looked on as a harmonious system which is in some sense 'infinite' and which is a developing or progressive manifestation of God, this idea facilitates and encourages the investigation of Nature for its own sake and not simply as a stepping-stone to the metaphysical knowledge of God. Nicholas was not a pantheist, but his philosophy, in regard to certain aspects at least, can be grouped with that of Bruno and other Renaissance philosophers of Nature; and it was against the background of these speculative philosophies that the scientists of the Renaissance thought and worked. One may remark in this connection that Nicholas's mathematical speculations provided a stimulus for Leonardo da Vinci.

In conclusion we may perhaps remind ourselves that though Nicholas's idea of the infinite system of Nature was developed by philosophers like Giordano Bruno and though these speculative natural philosophies formed a background for and stimulus to the scientific investigation of Nature, Nicholas himself was not only a Christian but also an essentially Christian thinker who was preoccupied with the search for the hidden God and whose thought was definitely Christocentric in character. It was in order to illustrate this last point that in dealing with his theory of man as the microcosm I mentioned his doctrine of Christ as the *maximum contractum* and the *medium absolutum*. In his humanistic interests, in his insistence on individuality, in the value he attached to fresh mathematical and scientific studies, and in the combination of a critical spirit with a marked mystical bent he was akin to a number of other Renaissance thinkers; but he continued into the Renaissance the faith which had animated and inspired the great thinkers of the Middle Ages. In a sense his mind was steeped in the new ideas which were fermenting at the time; but the religious outlook which permeated his thought saved him from the wilder extravagances into which some of the Renaissance philosophers fell.

CHAPTER XVI

PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE (1)

General remarks—Girolamo Cardano—Bernardino Telesio—Francesco Patrizzi—Tommaso Campanella—Giordano Bruno—Pierre Gassendi.

1. In the last chapter mention was made of the link between Nicholas of Cusa's idea of Nature and the other philosophies of Nature which appeared at the time of the Renaissance. Nicholas's idea of Nature was theocentric; and in this aspect of his philosophy he stands close to the leading philosophers of the Middle Ages; but we have seen how in his thought the idea of Nature as an infinite system, in which the earth occupies no privileged position, came to the fore. With a number of other Renaissance thinkers there arose the idea of Nature considered as a self-sufficient unity, as a system unified by all-pervading forces of sympathy and attraction and animated by a world-soul, rather than, as with Nicholas of Cusa, as an external manifestation of God. By these philosophers Nature was regarded practically as an organism, in regard to which the sharp distinctions, characteristic of mediaeval thought, between living and non-living and between spirit and matter, lost their meaning and application. Philosophies of this type naturally tended to be pantheistic in character. In certain respects they had an affinity with aspects of the revived Platonism or neo-Platonism of the Renaissance; but whereas the Platonists laid emphasis on the supernatural and on the soul's ascent to God, the philosophers of Nature emphasized rather Nature itself considered as a self-sufficient system. This is not to say that all the Renaissance thinkers who are usually regarded as 'natural philosophers' abandoned Christian theology or looked on themselves as revolutionaries; but the tendency of their thought was to loosen the bonds which bound nature to the supernatural. They tended to 'naturalism'.

It is, however, rather difficult to make general judgments about those Renaissance thinkers whom historians are accustomed to classify as 'natural philosophers' or 'philosophers of Nature'; or perhaps one should say rather that it is dangerous to do so. Among the Italians, for example, one can certainly find affinities between the philosophy of Giordano Bruno and the German romantic philosophy of the nineteenth century. But 'romanticism' is not exactly a characteristic which one would naturally attribute to the thought of Girolamo Fracastoro (1483–1553), who was physician to Pope Paul III and who wrote on medical subjects, as well as composing a work on astronomy, the *Homocentricorum seu de stellis liber* (1535). In his *De sympathia et antipathia rerum* (1542) he postulated the existence of 'sympathies' and 'antipathies' between objects, that is, of forces of attraction and repulsion, to explain the movements of bodies in their relations to one another. The names 'sympathy' and 'antipathy' may appear perhaps to be symptomatic of a romantic outlook; but Fracastoro explained the mode of operation of these forces by postulating *corpuscula* or *corpora sensibilia* which are emitted by bodies and enter through the pores of other bodies. Applying this line of thought to the problem of perception, he postulated the emission of *species* or images which enter the percipient subject. This theory obviously renewed the mechanical theories of perception put forward in ancient times by Empedocles, Democritus and Epicurus, even though Fracastoro did not adopt the general atomistic theory of Democritus. A view of this kind emphasizes the passivity of the subject in its perception of external objects, and in his *Turrius sive de intellectione* (published 1555) he says that understanding (*intellectio*) is but the representation of an object to the mind, the result of the reception of a *species* of the object. From this he drew the conclusion that understanding is probably purely passive. It is true that he also postulated a special power, which he named *subnotio*, of experiencing or apprehending the various impressions of a thing as a totality possessing relations which are present in the object itself or as a meaningful whole. So one is not entitled to say that he denied any activity on the part of the mind. He did not deny the mind's reflective power nor its power to construct universal concepts or terms. Moreover, the use of the term *species* was obviously derived from the Aristotelian-Scholastic tradition. None the less, Fracastoro's theory of perception has a strongly marked 'naturalistic' character. Perhaps it is to be associated with his interests as a medical man.

Fracastoro was a physician, while Cardano was a mathematician and Telesio possessed a wide interest in scientific matters. But though a man like Telesio stressed the need for empirical investigation and research in science he certainly did not confine himself to hypotheses which could be empirically verified but advanced philosophical speculations of his own. It is not always easy to decide whether a given Renaissance thinker should be classified as a philosopher or a scientist: a number of philosophers of the time were interested in science and in scientific investigation, while the scientists were by no means always averse to philosophic speculation. However, those whose personal scientific work was of importance in the development of scientific studies are very reasonably classed as scientists, while those who are noteworthy rather for their speculation than for their personal contribution to scientific studies are classed as philosophers of Nature, even though they may have contributed indirectly to scientific advance by anticipating speculatively some of the hypotheses which the scientists attempted to verify. But the union of philosophic speculation with an interest in scientific matters, sometimes combined with an interest in alchemy and even in magic, was characteristic of the Renaissance thinkers. They had a profound belief in the free development of man and in his creative power and they sought to promote human development and power by varied means. Their minds delighted in free intellectual speculation, in the development of fresh hypotheses and in the ascertaining of new facts about the world; and the not uncommon interest in alchemy was due rather to the hope of thus extending man's power, control and wealth than to mere superstition. With the necessary qualifications one can say that the Renaissance spirit expressed a shift of emphasis from the other-worldly to the this-worldly, from transcendence to immanence, and from man's dependence to man's creative power. The Renaissance was a time of transition from a period in which the science of theology formed the mental background and stimulated men's minds to a period in which the growth of the particular natural sciences was to influence more and more the human mind and human civilization; and some at least of the Renaissance philosophies were fertilizing agents for the growth of science rather than systems of thought which one could be expected to treat very seriously as philosophies.

In this chapter I propose to deal briefly with some of the Italian philosophers of Nature and with the French philosopher, Pierre Gassendi. In the next chapter I shall treat of German philosophers of Nature, excluding Nicholas of Cusa, who has been considered separately.

2. Girolamo Cardano (1501–76) was a mathematician of note

and a celebrated physician, who became professor of medicine at Pavia in 1547. A typically Renaissance figure he combined his mathematical studies and the practice of medicine with an interest in astrology and a strong bent towards philosophical speculation. His philosophy was a doctrine of hylozoism. There is an original, indeterminate matter, filling all space. In addition it is necessary to postulate a principle of production and movement, which is the world-soul. The latter becomes a factor in the empirical world in the form of 'warmth' or light; and from the operation of the world-soul in matter empirical objects are produced, all of which are en-souled and between which there exist relations of sympathy and antipathy. In the process of the world's formation the heaven, the seat of warmth, was first separated from the sublunary world, which is the place of the wet and the cold elements. Cardano's enthusiasm for astrology was expressed in his conviction that the heavens influence the course of events in the sublunary world. Metals are produced in the interior of the earth through the mutual reactions of the three elements of earth, water and air; and not only are they living things but they all tend towards the form of gold. As for what are normally called living things, animals were produced from worms, and the forms of worms proceed from the natural warmth in the earth.

This view of the world as an animate organism or as a unified system animated by a world-soul obviously owed a good deal to the *Timaeus* of Plato, while some ideas, like those of indeterminate matter and of 'forms', derived from the Aristotelian tradition. It might be expected perhaps that Cardano would develop these ideas in a purely naturalistic direction, but he was not a materialist. There is in man an immortal rational principle, *mens*, which enters into a temporary union with the mortal soul and the body. God created a definite number of these immortal souls, and immortality involves metempsychosis. In this view of the immortal mind as something separable from the mortal soul of man one can see the influence of Averroism; and one can probably see the same influence in Cardano's refusal to admit that God created the world freely. If creation was due simply and solely to the divine choice, there was no reason or ground for creation: it was a necessary process rather than the result of God's choice.

But there was more in Cardano's philosophy than a mere antiquarianism or a patching-together of elements taken from different philosophies of the past to make a hylozoistic and animistic system. It is clear that he laid great emphasis on the idea of natural law and on the unity of Nature as a law-governed system; and in this respect his thought was in tune with the scientific movement of the Renaissance, even though he expressed his belief in natural law in terms of ideas and theories taken from philosophies of the past. This conviction in regard to the reign of law comes out clearly in his insistence that God has subjected the heavenly bodies, and bodies in general, to mathematical laws and that the possession of mathematical knowledge is a form of true wisdom. It is represented even by his belief in 'natural magic', for the power of magic rests on the unity of all that is. Naturally, the sense in which words can be said to 'be' and to belong to the realm of causes needs a far clearer analysis than Cardano attempted; but the interest in magic which was one of the characteristics of some of the Renaissance thinkers expresses their belief in the causal system of the universe, even though to us it may seem fantastic.

3. A hylozoistic theory was also maintained by Bernardino Telesio (1509–88) of Cosenza in Calabria, the author of *De natura rerum iuxta propria principia* and the founder of the *Academia Telesiana* or *Cosentina* at Naples. According to Telesio, the fundamental causes of natural events are the warm and cold elements, the opposition between which is concretely represented by the traditional antithesis between heaven and earth. In addition to these two elements Telesio postulated a third, passive matter, which becomes distended or rarefied through the activity of the warm and compressed through the activity of the cold element. In the bodies of animals and men there is present the 'spirit', a fine emanation of the warm element, which passes throughout the body by means of the nerves though it is properly situated in the brain. This idea of 'spirit' goes back to the Stoic theory of the *pneuma* which was itself derived from the medical schools of Greece, and it reappears in the philosophy of Descartes under the name 'animal spirits'.

The 'spirit', which is a kind of psychological substance, can receive impressions produced by external things and can renew them in the memory. The spirit has thus the function of receiving sense-impressions and of anticipating future sense-impressions; and analogical reasoning from case to case is grounded in sense-perception and memory. Reasoning begins, then, with sense-perception and its function is to anticipate sense-perception, in that its conclusions or anticipations of future experience must be empirically verified. Telesio does not hesitate to draw the conclusion that *intellectio longe est sensu imperfectior.*[1] He interpreted geometry, for example, in the light of this theory, namely as a sublimated form of analogical reasoning based on sense-perception. On the other hand, he admitted the idea of empty space, which is not a thing but rather the system of relations between things. Places are modifications of this general order or system of relations.

The fundamental natural drive or instinct in man is that of self-preservation. This is the ruling instinct in animals as well, and even in anorganic matter, which is non-living only in a comparative sense, as is shown by the omnipresence of motion, a symptom of life. (Indeed, all things are gifted with 'perception' in some degree, an idea which was later developed by Leibniz.) It was in terms of this fundamental instinct that Telesio analysed man's emotional life. Thus love and hate are feelings directed respectively towards that which promotes and that which hinders self-preservation, while joy is the feeling attendant on self-preservation. The cardinal virtues, prudence, for example, and fortitude, are all various forms in which the fundamental instinct expresses itself in its fulfilment, whereas sadness and kindred emotions reflect a weakening of the vital impulse. We have here an obvious anticipation of Spinoza's analysis of the emotions.

Telesio did not think, however, that man can be analysed and explained exclusively in biological terms. For man is able to transcend the biological urge to self-preservation: he can even neglect his own happiness and expose himself freely to death. He can also strive after union with God and contemplate the divine. One must postulate, therefore, the presence in man of a *forma superaddita*, the immortal soul, which informs body and 'spirit', and which is capable of union with God.

The professed method of Telesio was the empirical method; for he looked to sense-experience for knowledge of the world and regarded reasoning as little more than a process of anticipating future sense-experience on the basis of past experience. He may thus be regarded as having outlined, even if somewhat crudely, one aspect of scientific method. At the same time he propounded a philosophy which went far beyond what could be empirically verified by sense-perception. This point was emphasized by

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[1] *De rerum natura*, 8, 3.

Patrizzi, to whom I shall turn next. But the combination of a hostility towards Scholastic abstractions not only with an enthusiasm for immediate sense-experience but also with insufficiently-grounded philosophical speculations was not uncharacteristic of Renaissance thought, which was in many respects both rich and undisciplined.

4. Although Francesco Patrizzi (1529–97) observed that Telesio did not conform in his philosophical speculations to his own canons of verification he himself was much more given to speculation than was Telesio, the essence of whose philosophy may very possibly lie in its naturalistic aspect. Born in Dalmatia Patrizzi ended his life, after many wanderings, as professor of the Platonic philosophy at Rome. He was the author of *Discussionum peripateticarum libri XV* (1571) and *Nova de universis philosophia* (1591), in addition to a number of other works, including fifteen books on geometry. A determined enemy of Aristotle, he considered that Platonism was far more compatible with Christianity and that his own system was eminently adapted for winning heretics back to the Church. He dedicated his *Nova philosophia* to Pope Gregory XIV. Patrizzi might thus very well have been treated in the chapter on the revival of Platonism; but he expounded a general philosophy of Nature, and so I have chosen to deal briefly with his thought here.

Patrizzi had recourse to the ancient light-theme of the Platonic tradition. God is the original and uncreated light, from which proceeds the visible light. This light is the active, formative principle in Nature, and as such it cannot be called wholly material. Indeed, it is a kind of intermediary being which constitutes a bond between the purely spiritual and the purely material and inert. But besides light it is necessary to postulate other fundamental factors in Nature. One of these is space, which Patrizzi describes in a rather baffling manner. Space is subsistent existence, inhering in nothing. Is it, then, a substance? It is not, says Patrizzi, an individual substance composed of matter and form, and it does not fall within the category of substance. On the other hand it is a substance in some sense; for it inheres in nothing else. It cannot therefore be identified with quantity. Or, if it is, it is not to be identified with any quantity which falls under the category of quantity: it is the source and origin of all empirical quantity. Patrizzi's description of space reminds one rather of that given by Plato in the *Timaeus*. It cannot be called anything definite. It is neither purely spiritual; nor is it on the other hand a corporeal substance: rather is it 'incorporeal body', abstract extension which precedes, logically at least, the production of distinct bodies and which can be logically constructed out of *minima* or points. The idea of the *minimum*, which is neither great nor small but is potentially either, was utilized by Giordano Bruno. Space is filled, according to Patrizzi, by another fundamental factor in the constitution of the world, namely 'fluidity'. Light, warmth, space and fluidity are the four elementary factors or principles.

Patrizzi's philosophy was a curious and bizarre amalgam of neo-Platonic speculation and an attempt to explain the empirical world by reference to certain fundamental material or quasi-material factors. Light was for him partly the visible light, but it was also a metaphysical principle or being which emanates from God and animates all things. It is the principle of multiplicity, bringing the multiple into existence; but it is also the principle of unity which binds all things into a unity. And it is by means of light that the mind is enabled to ascend to God.

5. Another strange mixture of various elements was provided by Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639), a member of the Dominican Order and author of the famous political Utopia, the *City of the Sun* (*Civitas solis*, 1623), in which he proposed, whether seriously or not, a communistic arrangement of society obviously suggested by Plato's *Republic*. Campanella spent a very considerable portion of his life in prison, mainly on account of charges of heresy; but he composed a number of philosophical works, including *Philosophia sensibus demonstrata* (1591), *De sensu rerum* (1620), *Atheismus triumphatus* (1631) and *Philosophia universalis seu metaphysica* (1637). In politics he upheld the ideal of a universal monarchy under the spiritual headship of the pope and the temporal leadership of the Spanish monarchy. The very man who had to undergo a term of imprisonment on the accusation of conspiring against the king of Spain lauded the Spanish monarchy in his *De monarchia hispanica* (1640).

Campanella was strongly influenced by Telesio, and he insisted on the direct investigation of Nature as the source of our knowledge about the world. He tended also to interpret reasoning on the same lines as those laid down by Telesio. But the inspiration of his thought was different. If he emphasized sense-perception and the empirical study of Nature, he did so because Nature is, as he put it, the living statue of God, the mirror or image of God.

There are two main ways of coming to a knowledge of God, first the study with the aid of the senses of God's self-revelation in Nature, and secondly the Bible. That Nature is to be regarded as a manifestation of God was, of course, a familiar theme in mediaeval thought. We have only to think of St. Bonaventure's doctrine of the material world as the *vestigium* or *umbra Dei*; and Nicholas of Cusa, who influenced Campanella, had developed this line of thought. But the Renaissance Dominican laid stress on the actual observation of Nature. It is not primarily a question of finding mystical analogies in Nature, as with St. Bonaventure, but rather of reading the book of Nature as it lies open to sense-perception.

That God's existence can be proved was a matter of which Campanella felt quite certain. And the way he set about proving it is interesting, if only because of its obvious affinity with the teaching of Descartes in the seventeenth century. Arguing against scepticism, Campanella maintained that we can at least know that we do not know this or that, or that we doubt whether this or that is the case. Moreover, in the act of doubting one's own existence is revealed. On this point Campanella is a kind of link between St. Augustine with his *Si fallor, sum,* and Descartes, with his *Cogito, ergo sum.* Again, in the consciousness of one's own existence there is also given the consciousness of what is other than oneself: in the experience of finitude is given the knowledge that other being exists. In love, too, is given the consciousness of the existence of the other. (Perhaps Descartes might have adopted and utilized this point of view to advantage.) I, therefore, exist, and I am finite; but I possess, or can possess, the idea of the infinite reality. This idea cannot be my own arbitrary construction or indeed my construction at all: it must be the effect of God's operation in me. Through reflection on the idea of infinite and independent being I see that God actually exists. In this way knowledge of my own existence as a finite being and knowledge of God's existence as infinite being are closely linked. But it is possible also for man to have an immediate contact with God, which affords the highest possible knowledge open to man and at the same time involves love of God; and this loving knowledge of God is the best way of knowing God.

God is the Creator of all finite beings, and these are composed, according to Campanella, of being and not-being, the proportion of not-being increasing as one descends the scale of perfection. This is certainly a very peculiar way of speaking; but the main idea was derived from the Platonic tradition and was not Campanella's invention. The chief attributes (*primalitates*) of being are power, wisdom and love; and the more not-being is mixed with being, the weaker is the participation in these attributes. As one descends the scale of perfection, therefore, one finds an increasing proportion of impotence or lack of power, of unwisdom and of hatred. But every creature is animate in some sense, and nothing is without some degree of perception and feeling. Moreover, all finite things together form a system, the precondition of which is provided by space; and they are related to one another by mutual sympathies and antipathies. Everywhere we find the fundamental instinct of self-preservation. But this instinct or drive is not to be interpreted in a narrowly and exclusively egoistic sense. Man, for example, is a social being, adapted to life in society. Furthermore, he is able to rise above love of self in the narrow sense to love of God, which expresses his tendency to return to his origin and source.

We come to recognize the primary attributes of being through reflection on ourselves. Every man is aware that he can act or that he has some power (*posse*), that he can know something and that he wills or has love. We then ascribe these attributes of power, wisdom and love to God, the infinite being, in the highest possible degree, and we find them in non-human finite things in varying degrees. This is an interesting point because it illustrates Campanella's tendency to imply that we interpret Nature on an analogy with ourselves. In a sense all knowledge is knowledge of ourselves. We perceive the effects of things on ourselves, and we find ourselves limited and conditioned by things other than ourselves. We attribute to them, therefore, activities and functions analogous to those we perceive in ourselves. Whether this point of view is consistent with Campanella's insistence, under the influence of Telesio, on direct sense-knowledge of Nature is perhaps questionable; but the justification for our interpretation of Nature on an analogy with ourselves he found in the doctrine of man as the microcosm. If man is the microcosm or little world, the world in miniature, the attributes of being as found in man are also the attributes of being in general. If this way of thinking really represents Campanella's mind, it is open to the obvious objection that the theory of man as the microcosm should be a conclusion and not a premiss. But Campanella started, of course, from the view that God is revealed in every creature as in a mirror. If this point of view is adopted, it follows that knowledge of the being best known to us is the key to the knowledge of being in general.

6. The most celebrated of the Italian philosophers of Nature is Giordano Bruno. Born at Nola near Naples in 1548 (hence sometimes called 'the Nolan') he entered the Dominican Order at Naples; but in 1576 he laid aside the habit at Rome after he had been accused of holding heterodox opinions. He then began a life of wandering which took him from Italy to Geneva, from Geneva to France, from France to England, where he gave some lectures at Oxford, from England back again to France and then to Germany. Returning rashly to Italy, he was arrested by the Venetian Inquisition in 1592, and in the following year he was handed over to the Roman Inquisition and spent some years in prison. Finally, as he continued to stand by his opinions, he was burned at Rome on February 17th, 1600.

Bruno's writings include *De umbris idearum* (1582) and the following works in dialogue form: *La cena de le ceneri* (1584), *Della causa, principio e uno* (1584), *De l'infinito, universo e mondi* (1584), *Spaccio della bestia trionfante* (1584), *Cabala del cavallo pegaseo con l'agguiunta dell'asino cillenico* (1585) and *Degl' eroici furori* (1585). Among his other works are three Latin poems, published in 1591, the *De triplici minimo et mensura ad trium speculativarum scientiarum et multarum activarum artium principia libri V*, the *De monade, numero et figura, secretioris nempe physicae, mathematicae et metaphysicae elementa* and the *De immenso et innumerabilibus, seu de universo et mundis libri VIII.*

The starting-point and the terminology of Bruno's thought were furnished, very naturally, by preceding philosophies. He took over the neo-Platonic metaphysical' scheme, as mediated by the Italian Platonists and by Nicholas of Cusa. Thus in his *De umbris idearum* he represented Nature with its multiplicity of beings as proceeding from the divine super-substantial unity. There is a hierarchy in Nature from matter upwards to the immaterial, from darkness to light; and Nature is intelligible in so far as it is the expression of the divine ideas. Human ideas, however, are simply shadows or reflections of the divine ideas, though human knowledge is capable of advancement and deepening in proportion as the mind moves upwards from the objects of sense-perception towards the divine and original unity, which in itself, however, is impenetrable by the human intellect.

But this traditional scheme formed little more than the background of Bruno's thought, against which his own philosophy developed. Though neo-Platonism had always represented the world as a divine 'emanation' or creation and as the reflection of God, it had always stressed the divine transcendence and incomprehensibility. But the inner movement of Bruno's speculation was towards the idea of the divine immanence, and so towards pantheism. He never achieved a complete conciliation of the two points of view; nor did he ever carry through a definite exclusion of one point of view in favour of the other.

In his *Della causa, principio e uno* Bruno asserts God's transcendence and incomprehensibility and His creation of things which are distinct from Him. 'From the knowledge of all dependent things we cannot infer any other knowledge of the first cause and principle than by the rather inefficacious way of traces (*de vestigio*). . . . So that to know the universe is like knowing nothing of the being and substance of the first principle. . . . Behold, then, about the divine substance, both because of its infinity and because of its being extremely remote from its effects . . . we can know nothing save by way of traces, as the Platonists say, or by remote effects, as the Peripatetics say. . . .'[1] The interest soon shifts, however, to the principles and causes in the world, and Bruno brings into prominence the idea of the world-soul as the immanent causal and moving agent. The primary and principal faculty of the world-soul is the universal intellect, which is 'the universal physical efficient agent' and 'the universal form' of the world.[2] It produces natural forms in the world, while our intellects produce universal ideas of these forms. It is the universal form of the world in that it is everywhere present and animates everything. Leather as leather or glass as glass, says Bruno, is not in itself animate in the ordinary sense; but it is united to and informed by the world-soul and it has, as matter, the potentiality of forming part of an organism. Matter, in the sense of Aristotle's 'first matter', is indeed, considered from one point of view, a formless and potential substrate; but considered as the fountain-head and source of forms it cannot be regarded as an unintelligible substrate; ultimately pure matter is the same thing as pure act. Bruno used Nicholas of Cusa's doctrine of the *coincidentia oppositorum* in regard to the world. Starting with the assertion of distinctions he went on to show their relative character. The world consists of distinct things and factors, but in the end it is seen to be 'one, infinite, immobile' (that is, incapable of local motion), one being, one substance.[1] The idea, taken over from Nicholas of Cusa, that the world is infinite is supported by arguments in the *De l'infinito, universo e mondi.* 'I call the universe *tutto infinito,* because it has no margin, limit or surface; I do not call the universe *totalmente infinito,* because any part that we take is finite, and of the innumerable worlds which it contains each is finite. I call God *tutto infinito* because He excludes of Himself all limits and because each of His attributes is one and infinite; and I call God *totalmente infinito* because He is wholly in the whole world and infinitely and totally in each of its parts, in distinction from the infinity of the universe which is totally in the whole but not in the parts, if indeed, in reference to the infinite, they can be called parts.'[2]

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[1] *Dialogo secondo, Opere*, 1, pp. 175-6.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 179.

Here Bruno draws a distinction between God and the world. He also speaks of God, using the phrases of Nicholas of Cusa, as being the infinite *complicatamente e totalmente* whereas the world is the infinite *explicatamente e non totalmente.* But the tendency of his thought is always to weaken these distinctions or to synthesize the 'antitheses'. In the *De triplici minimo* he speaks of the *minimum* which is found on the mathematical, physical and metaphysical planes. The mathematical *minimum* is the *monas* or unit; the physical *minimum* is the atom or monad, indivisible and in some sense animate, and immortal souls are also 'monads'. Nature is the harmonious self-unfolding system of atoms and monads in their interrelations. Here we have a pluralistic view of the universe, conceived in terms of monads, each of which is in some sense gifted with perception and appetition; and this aspect of Bruno's philosophy anticipates the monadology of Leibniz. But we have already noted his remark that one can hardly speak of 'parts' in relation to the infinite world; and the complementary aspect of his philosophy is represented by his idea of finite things as accidents or *circonstanzie* of the one infinite substance. Again, God is called *Natura naturans* in so far as He is considered in distinction from His manifestations, while He is called *Natura naturata* when considered in His self-manifestation. Here we have the monistic aspect of Bruno's thought which anticipated the philosophy of Spinoza. But as has been already remarked, Bruno never positively abandoned pluralism in favour of monism. It is reasonable to say that the tendency of his thought lay in the direction of monism; but in actual fact he continued to believe in the transcendent God. He considered, however, that philosophy deals with Nature and that God in Himself is a subject which can be properly treated only in theology, above all by the method of negative theology. One is not justified, then, in stating roundly that Bruno was a pantheist. One can say, if one likes, that his mind tended to move away from the categories of neo-Platonism and of Nicholas of Cusa in the direction of a greater insistence on the divine immanence; but there is no real reason for supposing that his retention of the doctrine of the divine transcendence was a mere formality. His philosophy may be a stage on the road from Nicholas of Cusa to Spinoza; but Bruno himself did not travel to the end of that road.

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[1] *Dialogo quinto,* pp. 247 ff.

[2] *Dialogo primo,* p. 298.

But Bruno's thought was not inspired simply by the neo-Platonic tradition interpreted in a pantheistic sense; it was also deeply influenced by the astronomical hypothesis of Copernicus. Bruno was not a scientist, and he cannot be said to have contributed to the scientific verification of the hypothesis; but he developed speculative conclusions from it with characteristic boldness, and his ideas acted as a stimulus on other thinkers. He envisaged a multitude of solar systems in limitless space. Our sun is simply one star among others, and it occupies no privileged position: still less does the earth. Indeed, all judgments about position are, as Nicholas of Cusa said, relative; and no one star or planet can be called the centre of the universe in an absolute sense. There is no centre, and there is no absolute up or down. Moreover, from the fact that the earth is inhabited by rational beings we are not entitled to draw the conclusion that it is unique in dignity or that it is the centre of the universe from the valuational point of view: for all we know, the presence of life, even of rational beings like ourselves, may not be confined to this planet. The solar systems rise and perish, but all together they form one developing system, indeed one organism animated by the world-soul. Bruno did not confine himself to maintaining that the earth moves and that judgments of position are relative: he linked up the Copernican hypothesis of the earth's movement round the sun with his own metaphysical cosmology. He thus entirely rejected the geocentric and anthropocentric conception of the universe both from the astronomical point of view and in the wider perspective of speculative philosophy. In his system it is Nature considered as an organic whole which stands in the centre of the picture, and not terrestrial human beings who are *circonstanzie* or accidents of the one living world-substance, even if from another point of view each is a monad, mirroring the whole universe.

In some early writings Bruno dealt with questions concerning memory and logic under the influence of the doctrines of Raymond Lull (d. 1315). We can distinguish ideas in the universal intelligence, in the physical order as forms and in the logical order as symbols or concepts. The task of a developed logic would be to show how the plurality of ideas emerge from the 'one'. But though he may be regarded as in some sense a link between Lull and Leibniz, Bruno is best known for his doctrines of the infinite world-substance and of monads and for his speculative use of the Copernican hypothesis. In regard to the first doctrine he probably exercised some influence upon Spinoza, and he was certainly acclaimed as a prophet by later German philosophers like Jacobi and Hegel. In regard to the theory of monads, which is more apparent in his later works, he certainly anticipated Leibniz in some important points, even though it seems improbable that Leibniz received any substantial direct influence from Bruno in the formation of his ideas.[1] Bruno adopted and utilized many ideas taken from Greek, mediaeval and Renaissance thinkers, especially from Nicholas of Cusa; but he possessed an original mind with a strong speculative bent. His ideas were often far-fetched and fantastic and his thought undisciplined, though he was certainly capable of methodical thinking when he chose; and he played the rôle not only of philosopher but also of poet and seer. We have seen that he cannot be called a pantheist in an unqualified manner; but this does not mean that his attitude towards Christian dogmas was either favourable or respectful. He aroused the disapproval and hostility not only of Catholic theologians but also of Calvinists and Lutherans, and his unhappy end was due not to his championship of the Copernican hypothesis, nor to his attacks on Aristotelian Scholasticism, but to his apparent denial of some central theological dogmas. He did make an attempt to explain away his unorthodoxy by reference to a kind of 'double-truth' theory; but his condemnation for heresy was perfectly understandable, whatever one may think of the physical treatment meted out to him. His ultimate fate has, of course, led some writers to attribute to him a greater philosophic importance than he possesses; but though some of the encomia which have sometimes been lavished upon him in an uncritical manner were exaggerated, he nevertheless remains one of the leading and most influential thinkers of the Renaissance.

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[1] See note on p. 268.

7. The date of Pierre Gassendi's death, 1655, coupled with the fact that he carried on a controversy with Descartes, offers a very good reason for considering his philosophy at a later stage. On the other hand, his revival of Epicureanism justifies one, I think, in including it under the general heading of Renaissance philosophy.

Born in Provence in 1592, Pierre Gassendi studied philosophy there at Aix. Turning to theology, he lectured for a time on the subject and was ordained priest; but in 1617 he accepted the chair of philosophy at Aix, where he expounded more or less traditional Aristotelianism. His interest in the discoveries of the Renaissance scientists, however, led his thought into other paths, and in 1624 there appeared the first book of his *Exercitationes paradoxicae adversus Aristotelicos*. He was at this time a canon of Grenoble. The work was to have been composed of seven books; but, apart from a portion of the second book, which appeared posthumously in 1659, no more than the first book was written. In 1631 he published a work against the English philosopher Robert Fludd (1574–1637), who had been influenced by Nicholas of Cusa and Paracelsus, and in 1642 his objections against Descartes's system were published.[1] In 1645 he was appointed professor of mathematics at the Collège Royal in Paris. While occupying this post he wrote on some physical and astronomical questions, but he is best known for the works which he wrote under the influence of the Epicurean philosophy. His treatise *De vita, moribus et doctrina Epicuri libri VIII* appeared in 1647, and this was followed in 1649 by the *Commentarius de vita, moribus et placitis Epicuri seu animadversiones in decimum librum Diogenis Laertii*. This was a Latin translation of and commentary on the tenth book of Diogenes Laërtius's *Lives of the Philosophers*. In the same year he published his *Syntagma philosophiae Epicuri*. His *Syntagma philosophicum* was published posthumously in the edition of his works (1658). In addition he wrote a number of *Lives*, of Copernicus and Tycho Brahe for example.

Gassendi followed the Epicureans in dividing philosophy into logic, physics and ethics. In his logic, which includes his theory

[1] They are the fifth in the series of objections published in the works of Descartes.

of knowledge, his eclecticism at once becomes apparent. In company with many other philosophers of the time he insisted on the sense-origin of all our natural knowledge: *nihil in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu.* And it was from an empiricist standpoint that he criticized Descartes. But although he spoke as if the senses were the only criterion of evidence he also admitted, as one might well expect of a mathematician, the evidence of the deductive reason. As to his 'physics', this was clearly a combination of very different elements. On the one hand, he revived the Epicurean atomism. Atoms, possessing size, shape and weight (interpreted as an inner propensity to movement) move in empty space. According to Gassendi, these atoms come from a material principle, the substrate of all becoming, which, with Aristotle, he described as 'prime matter'. With the help of atoms, space and motion he gave a mechanistic account of Nature. Sensation, for example, is to be explained mechanically. On the other hand, man possesses a rational and immortal soul, the existence of which is revealed by the facts of self-consciousness and by man's power of forming general ideas and apprehending spiritual objects and moral values. Moreover, the system, harmony and beauty of Nature furnish a proof of the existence of God, who is incorporeal, infinite and perfect. Man, as a being who is both spiritual and material and who can know both the material and the spiritual, is the microcosm. Finally, the ethical end of man is happiness, and this is to be understood as absence of pain in the body and tranquillity in the soul. But this end cannot be fully achieved in this life; it can be perfectly attained only in the life after death.

The philosophy of Gassendi may be regarded as an adaptation of Epicureanism to the requirements of Christian orthodoxy. But there is no good reason for saying that the spiritualistic side of his philosophy was inspired simply by motives of diplomatic prudence and that he was insincere in his acceptance of theism and of the spirituality and immortality of the soul. It may well be that the historical importance of his philosophy, so far as it possesses historical importance, lies in the impulse it gave to a mechanistic view of Nature. But this does not alter the fact that his philosophy, considered in itself, is a curious amalgam of Epicurean materialism with spiritualism and theism and of a rather crude empiricism with rationalism. His philosophizing exercised a considerable influence in the seventeenth century, but it was too unsystematic, too much of a patchwork, and too unoriginal to exercise any lasting influence.

CHAPTER XVII

PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE (2)

Agrippa von Nettesheim—Paracelsus—The two Van Helmonts—Sebastian Franck and Valentine Weigel—Jakob Böhme—General remarks.

In this chapter I propose to outline the ideas not only of men like Paracelsus, who are naturally labelled philosophers of Nature, but also of the German mystic, Jakob Böhme. The latter would possibly be more accurately classified as a theosophist than as a philosopher; but he certainly had a philosophy of Nature, which in some respects resembles that of Bruno. Böhme was doubtless much more religiously-minded than Bruno, and to classify him as a philosopher of Nature may involve placing the accent in the wrong place; but, as we have already seen, the term 'Nature' often meant a great deal more for a Renaissance philosopher than the system of empirically-given distinct things which are capable of being investigated systematically.

1. The theme of microcosm and macrocosm, which is prominent in the Italian philosophies of Nature, occupies a prominent place in the German philosophies of the Renaissance. A feature of the neo-Platonic tradition, it became one of the cardinal points in the system of Nicholas of Cusa, and his profound influence on Giordano Bruno has already been mentioned. His influence was naturally also felt by the German thinkers. Thus according to Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486–1535) man unites in himself the three worlds, namely the terrestrial world of the elements, the world of the heavenly bodies and the spiritual world. Man is the ontological bond between these worlds, and this fact explains his ability to know all three worlds: man's range of knowledge depends on his ontological character. Further, the harmonious unity of the three worlds in man, the microcosm, reflects the harmonious unity which exists between them in the macrocosm. Man has his soul, and the universe possesses its soul or spirit (*spiritus mundi*), which is responsible for all production There are, indeed, sympathies and antipathies between distinct things; but they are due to the presence in things of immanent vital principles which are effluences from the *spiritus mundi*.

Finally, the affinities and connections between things and the presence in them of latent powers form the basis for the magical art: man can discover and utilize these powers in his service. In 1510 Agrippa von Nettesheim published his *De occulta philosophia* and though he decried the sciences, including magic, in his *Declamatio de vanitate et incertitudine scientiarum* (1527), he republished the work on occultism in a revised form in 1533. Like Cardano, he was a physician and, like Cardano again, he was interested in magic. It is not an interest which one would associate with modern doctors; but the combination of medicine with magic in an earlier age is understandable. The physician was conscious of powers and healing properties of herbs and minerals and of his ability to utilize them to a certain extent. But it does not follow that he had a scientific understanding of the processes which he himself employed; and it is hardly to be wondered at if he was attracted by the idea of wresting nature's secrets from her by occult means and employing the hidden powers and forces thus discovered. Magic would appear to him as a kind of extension of 'science', a short-cut to the acquisition of further knowledge and skill.

2. This view of the matter is borne out by the example of that strange figure, Theophrastus Bombast von Hohenheim, commonly known as Paracelsus. Born at Einsiedeln in 1493, he was for a time professor of medicine at Basle. He died at Salzburg in 1541. Medical science, which promotes human happiness and well-being, was for him the highest of the sciences. It depends, indeed, on observation and experiment; but an empirical method does not by itself constitute medicine a science. The data of experience must be systematized. Furthermore, the true physician will take account of other sciences like philosophy, astrology and theology; for man, with whom medical science is concerned, participates in three worlds. Through his visible body he participates in the terrestrial world, the world of the elements, through his astral body in the sidereal world and through his immortal soul (the *mens* or *Fünklein*) in the spiritual and divine world. Man is thus the microcosm, the meeting-place of the three worlds which compose the macrocosm; and the physician will have to take this into account. The world at large is animated by its immanent vital principle, the *archeus*, and an individual organism like man develops under the impulse of its own vital principle. Medical treatment should consist essentially in stimulating the activity of the

archeus, a principle which obviously embodies the truth that the task of the physician is to assist nature to do her work. Indeed, Paracelsus put forward some perfectly sensible medical views. Thus he laid considerable emphasis on the individual and on individual factors in the treatment of disease; no disease, he thought, is ever found in exactly the same form or runs precisely the same course in any two individuals. For the matter of that, his idea that the physician should widen his field of view and take other sciences into account was by no means devoid of value. For it means essentially that the physician should consider man as a whole and should not confine his attention exclusively to physical symptoms and causes and treatment.

In some respects, then, Paracelsus was an enlightened theorist; and he attacked violently the medical practice of the time. In particular, he had no use for slavish adherence to the teaching of Galen. His own methods of procedure were highly empirical, and he can hardly be called a scientific chemist, even though he was interested in chemical specifics and drugs but he had at least an independent mind and an enthusiasm for the progress of medicine. With this interest in medicine, however, he combined an interest in astrology and in alchemy. Original matter consists of or contains three fundamental elements or substances, sulphur, mercury and salt. Metals are distinguished from one another through the predominance of this element rather than that; but since they all consist ultimately of the same element it is possible to transform any metal into any other metal. The possibility of alchemy is thus a consequence of the original constitution of matter.

Although Paracelsus may have tended to mix up philosophical speculation with 'science' and also with astrology and alchemy in a fantastic manner, he drew a sharp distinction between theology on the one hand and philosophy on the other. The latter is the study of Nature, not of God Himself. Yet Nature is a self-revelation of God; and we are thus able to attain to some philosophical knowledge of Him. Nature was originally present in God, in the 'great mystery' or 'divine abyss'; and the process by which the world is built up is one of differentiation, that is, of the production of distinctions and oppositions. We come to know only in terms of oppositions. For example, we come to know joy in its opposition to sorrow, health in its opposition to sickness. Similarly, we come to know good only in opposition to evil and God only in opposition to Satan. The term of the world's development will be the absolute division between good and evil, which will constitute the last judgment.

3. Paracelsus' ideas were developed by the Belgian chemist and physician, John Baptist van Helmont (1577–1644). The two primary elements are water and air, and the fundamental substances, namely sulphur, mercury and salt, proceed from water and can be transmuted into water. Van Helmont made a real discovery, however, when he realized that there are gases which are different from atmospheric air. He discovered that what he called *gas sylvestre* (carbon dioxide), which is emitted by burning charcoal, is the same as the gas given off by fermenting must. He is, therefore, of some importance in the history of chemistry. Further, his interest in this science, combined with his interests in physiology and medicine, prompted him to experiment in the application of chemical methods in preparing drugs. In this matter he carried on the work of Paracelsus. Van Helmont was much more of a careful experimenter than Paracelsus had been; but he shared the latter's belief in and enthusiasm for alchemy. In addition, he took up and developed Paracelsus' vitalistic theory. Each organism has its own general *archeus* or *aura vitalis*, on which are dependent the *archei* of the different parts or members of the organism. Not content with the vital principles, however, he also postulated a power of movement, which he called *blas*. This is of various kinds. There is, for instance, a *blas* peculiar to the heavenly bodies (*blas stellarum*) and another which is found in man, the relation between the *blas humanum* and the human *archeus* being left rather obscure.

John Baptist van Helmont did indeed indulge in speculations about the Fall and its effects on human psychology; but he was concerned primarily with chemistry, medicine and physiology, to which one must add alchemy. His son, however, Francis Mercury Van Helmont (1618–99), with whom Leibniz was acquainted,[1] developed a monadology according to which there are a finite number of imperishable monads. Each monad may be called corporeal in so far as it is passive, and spiritual in so far as it is active and endowed with some degree of perception. The inner sympathies and attractions between monads cause groups of them to form complex structures, each of which is governed by a central monad. In man, for example, there is a central monad, the soul, which rules the whole organism. This soul shares in the imperishable character of all monads; but it cannot achieve the perfection of its development in one lifetime, that is to say, in the period in which it is the controlling and directing power in one particular set or series of monads. It therefore enters into union with other bodies or sets of monads until it has perfected itself. It then returns to God, who is the *monas monadum* and the author of the universal harmony of creation. The mediator between God and creatures is Christ.

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[1] It seems probable that at any rate the term 'monad' was adopted by Leibniz from the younger Van Helmont or through a reading of Bruno suggested by Van Helmont.

The younger Van Helmont regarded his philosophy as a valuable antidote to the mechanistic interpretation of Nature, as represented by Descartes (in regard to the material world) and by the philosophy of Thomas Hobbes. His monadology was a development of Bruno's ideas, though it was doubtless also influenced by the vitalistic doctrines of Paracelsus and the elder Van Helmont. It is obvious that it anticipated in many respects the monadology of a much more talented man, Leibniz, though it would appear that Leibniz arrived independently at his fundamental ideas. There was, however, a second link between Van Helmont and Leibniz, and that was a common interest in occultism and alchemy, though in Leibniz's case this interest was perhaps simply one way in which his insatiable curiosity showed itself.

4. The German mystical tradition found a continuation in Protestantism with men like Sebastian Franck (1499–1542) and Valentine Weigel (1533–88). The former, however, would not normally be called a philosopher. At first a Catholic, he became a Protestant minister, only to abandon his charge and lead a restless and wandering life. He was hostile not only to Catholicism but also to official Protestantism. God is the eternal goodness and love which are present to all men, and the true Church, he thought, is the spiritual company of all those who allow God to operate within them. Men like Socrates and Seneca belonged to the 'Church'. Redemption is not a historical event, and doctrines like those of the Fall and the redemption by Christ on Calvary are no more than figures or symbols of eternal truths. This point of view was obviously theological in character.

Valentine Weigel, however, attempted to combine the mystical tradition with the philosophy of Nature as found in Paracelsus. He followed Nicholas of Cusa in teaching that God is all things *complicite* and that the distinctions and oppositions which are found in creatures are one in Him. But to this he added the curious notion that God becomes personal in and through creation, in the sense that He comes to know Himself in and through man, in so far as man rises above his egotism and shares in the divine life. All creatures, including man, receive their being from God, but all have an admixture of not-being, of darkness, and this explains man's power of rejecting God. The being of man tends necessarily towards God, turning to its source and origin and ground; but the will can turn away from God. When this happens, the resulting inner tension is what is known as 'hell'.

Accepting from Paracelsus the division of the universe into three worlds, the terrestrial, the sidereal or astral and the heavenly, Weigel also accepted the doctrine of the astral body of man. Man has a mortal body, which is the seat of the senses, but he has also an astral body, which is the seat of reason. In addition he has an immortal soul or part to which belongs the *Fünklein* or *Gemüt*, the *oculus intellectualis* or *oculus mentis*. This is the recipient of supernatural knowledge of God, though this does not mean that the knowledge comes from without; it comes from God present in the soul, knowing Himself in and through man. And it is in the reception of this knowledge, and not in any external rite or in any historical event, that regeneration consists.

It is clear, then, that Weigel attempted a fusion of Nicholas of Cusa's metaphysic and Paracelsus' philosophy of Nature with a religious mysticism which owed something to the tradition represented by Meister Eckhart (as is shown by the use of the term *Fünklein*, the spark of the soul) but which was strongly coloured by an individualistic and anti-ecclesiastical type of Protestant piety and which also tended in a pantheistic direction. In some respects his philosophy puts one in mind of themes of later German speculative idealism, though in the case of the latter the markedly religious and pietistic element of Weigel's thought was comparatively absent.

5. The man who attempted in a much more complete and influential manner to combine the philosophy of Nature with the mystical tradition as represented in German Protestantism was that remarkable figure, Jakob Böhme. Born in 1575 at Altseidenberg in Silesia, he at first tended cattle, though he received some education at the town-school at Seidenberg. After a period of wandering he settled at Görlitz in 1599, where he pursued the trade of a shoemaker. He married and attained a considerable degree of prosperity, which enabled him to retire

from his shoemaking business though he subsequently took to making woollen gloves. His first treatise, *Aurora*, was written in 1612, though it was not then published. Indeed, the only works which were published in his lifetime were some devotional writings, which appeared at the beginning of 1624. His *Aurora* was, however, circulated in manuscript, and while this brought him a local reputation it also brought upon him from the Protestant clergy a charge of heresy. His other works include, for example, *Die drei Prinzipien des göttlichen Wesens, Vom dreifachen Leben der Menschen, Von der Gnadenwahl, Signatura rerum* and *Mysterium magnum.* An edition of his works was published at Amsterdam in 1675, considerably later than the year of Böhme's death, which occurred in 1624.

God considered in Himself is beyond all differentiations and distinctions: He is the *Ungrund,*[1] the original ground of all things: He is 'neither light, nor darkness, neither love nor wrath, but the eternal One', an incomprehensible will, which is neither evil nor good.[2] But if God is conceived as the *Ungrund* or Abyss, 'the nothing and the all',[3] the problem arises of explaining the emergence of multiplicity, of distinct existent things. First of all Böhme postulates a process of self-manifestation within the inner life of God. The original will is a will to self-intuition, and it wills its own centre, which Böhme calls the 'heart' or 'eternal mind' of the will.[4] Thus the Deity discovers itself; and in the discovery there arises a power emanating from the will and the heart of the will, which is the moving life in the original will and in the power (or second will) that arises from, but is identical with, the heart of the original will. The three movements of the inner life of God are correlated by Böhme with the three Persons of the Trinity. The original will is the Father; the heart of the will, which is the Father's 'discovery and power', is the Son; and the 'moving life' emanating from Father and Son is the Holy Spirit. Having dealt with these obscure matters in a very obscure way Böhme goes on to show how Nature came into being as an expression or manifestation of God in visible variety. The impulse of the divine will to self-revelation leads to the birth of Nature as it exists in God. In this ideal or spiritual state Nature is called the *mysterium magnum.* It emerges in visible and tangible form in the actual world, which is external to God and is animated by the *spiritus mundi.* Böhme proceeds to give a spiritual interpretation of the ultimate principles of the world and of the various elements, including Paracelsus' sulphur, mercury and salt.

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[1] *Von der Gnadenwahl*, 1, 3.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1, 3.

[3] *Ibid.*, 1, 3–5.

[4] *Ibid.*, 1, 9–10.

As Böhme was convinced that God in Himself is good and that the *mysterium magnum* is also good, he found himself confronted with the task of explaining the evil in the actual world. His solution of this problem was not always the same. In the *Aurora* he maintained that only what is good proceeds from God; but there is a good which remains steadfast (Christ) and a good which falls away from goodness, typified by Satan. The end of history is, therefore, the rectification of this falling-away. Later, however, Böhme stated that the external manifestation of God must be expressed in contraries, which are natural concomitants of life. The *mysterium magnum*, when it unfolds itself in visible variety, expresses itself in contrary qualities:[1] light and darkness, good and evil, are correlative. There is, then, a dualism in the world. Christ reconciled man to God, but it is possible for men to refuse salvation. Finally, Böhme tried to relate evil to a movement in the divine life, which he called the wrath of God. The end of history will then be the triumph of love, involving the triumph of the good.

Böhme's ideas were derived in part from a number of different sources. His meditations on the Scriptures were coloured by the mysticism of Kaspar von Schwenckfeld (1490–1561) and of Valentine Weigel; and we find in his writings a deep piety and an insistence on the individual's relation to God. For the idea of a visible and unified authoritative Church he had evidently little sympathy: he laid all the emphasis on personal experience and inner light. This aspect of his thought would not by itself entitle him to be called a philosopher. So far as he can properly be called a philosopher, the name is justified mainly by his having grappled with two problems of theistic philosophy, namely the problem of the relation of the world to God and the problem of evil. Böhme was obviously no trained philosopher, and he was aware of the inadequacy and obscurity of his language. Moreover, he evidently picked up terms and phrases from his friends and from his reading, which derived mainly from the philosophy of Paracelsus, but which he used to express the ideas fermenting in his own mind. None the less, even though the shoemaker of Görlitz was no trained philosopher, he can be said to have carried on the speculative tradition coming from Meister Eckhart and Nicholas of Cusa through the German philosophers of Nature, particularly Paracelsus, a tradition which he impregnated with a strong infusion of Protestant piety. Yet even if one makes due allowance for the handicaps under which he laboured, and even though one has not the slightest intention of questioning his deep piety and the sincerity of his convictions, it may be doubted whether his obscure and oracular utterances throw much light on the problems with which he dealt. No doubt the obscurity is broken through from time to time by rays of light; but his thought as a whole is unlikely to commend itself to those who are not theosophically inclined. It might be said, of course, that Böhme's obscure utterances represent the attempt of a higher kind of knowledge to express itself in inadequate language. But if one means by this that Böhme was struggling to convey solutions to philosophical problems, it has yet to be shown that he actually possessed those solutions. His writings leave one in considerable doubt at any rate whether this could properly be affirmed.

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[1] Cf. *Von der Gnadenwahl*, 8, 8.

But to cast doubt upon the philosophical value of Böhme's utterances is not to deny their influence. He exercised an influence on men like Pierre Poiret (1646–1719) in France, John Pordage (1607–81) and William Law (1686–1761) in England. More important, however, is his influence on post-Kantian German idealism. Böhme's triadic schemes and his idea of the self-unfolding of God reappear, indeed, in Hegel, though minus Böhme's intense piety and devotion; but it was probably Schelling who, in the later phase of his philosophical development, was most influenced by him. For the German idealist drew on Böhme's theosophy and on his ideas about creation and the origin of evil. Schelling was led to Böhme partly by Franz von Baader (1765–1841), who had himself been influenced by Saint-Martin (1743–1803), an opponent of the Revolution who had translated Böhme's *Aurora* into French. There are always some minds for whom Böhme's teaching possesses an appeal, though many others not unnaturally fail to share this sympathy.

6. We have seen how the Renaissance philosophies of Nature varied considerably in tone and emphasis, ranging from the professedly empiricist theories of some of the Italian philosophers to the theosophy of a Jakob Böhme. We find, indeed, a common emphasis on Nature as the manifestation of the divine and as a revelation of God which is deserving of study. But whereas in one philosophy the accent may be laid predominantly on the empirical

study of Nature itself as given to the senses, in another the accent may be laid on metaphysical themes. For Bruno Nature was an infinite system which can be studied in itself, so to speak; and we saw how he championed enthusiastically the Copernican hypothesis. Yet Bruno was above all things a speculative philosopher. And with Böhme we find the emphasis laid on theosophy and on man's relation to God. It is desirable, indeed, to speak of 'accent' and 'emphasis', since the philosophers not infrequently combined an interest in empirical problems with a bent for somewhat ill-grounded speculations. Furthermore, they often combined with these interests an interest in alchemy, in astrology and in magic. They express the feeling for Nature which was one characteristic of the Renaissance; but in their study of Nature they were inclined to take attractive short-cuts, whether by bold and often bizarre philosophical speculations or by means of occultism or by both. The philosophies of Nature acted as a kind of background and stimulus to the scientific study of Nature; but for the actual development of the sciences other methods were required.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SCIENTIFIC MOVEMENT OF THE RENAISSANCE

General remarks on the influence of science on philosophy—Renaissance science; the empirical basis of science, controlled experiment, hypothesis and astronomy, mathematics, the mechanistic view of the world—The influence of Renaissance science on philosophy.

1. We have seen that even in the thirteenth century there was a certain amount of scientific development and that in the following century there was an increased interest in scientific problems. But the results of scholarly researches into mediaeval science have not been such as to necessitate any substantial change of view in regard to the importance of Renaissance science. They have shown that interest in scientific matters was not so alien to the mediaeval mind as has been sometimes supposed, and they have shown that the Aristotelian physics and the Ptolemaic astronomy did not possess that firm and universal hold on the mind of the mediaeval physicist with which they have often been credited; but all this does not alter the fact that science underwent a remarkable development at the time of the Renaissance and that this development has exercised a profound influence on European life and thought.

It is not the business of the historian of philosophy to give a detailed account of the discoveries and achievements of the Renaissance scientists. The reader who desires to acquaint himself with the history of science as such must obviously turn to the relevant literature on the subject. But it would be impossible to by-pass the development of science at the time of the Renaissance, if for no other reason than that it exercised a powerful influence upon philosophy. Philosophy does not pursue an isolated path of its own, without any contact with other factors of human culture. It is simply an undeniable historical fact that philosophic reflection has been influenced by science both in regard to subject-matter and also in regard to method and aims. In so far as philosophy involves reflection on the world philosophic thought will obviously be influenced in some way by the picture of the world that is painted by science and by the concrete achievements of science. This is likely to be the case in some degree in all phases of philosophic development. As to scientific method, when the use of a certain method is seen to lead to striking results it is likely that the thought will occur to some philosophers that the adoption of an analogous method in philosophy might also produce striking results in the way of established conclusions. And this thought is one which actually did influence certain philosophers of the Renaissance period. When, however, it is seen that philosophy does not develop in the same way as science, the realization of the fact is likely to give rise to the question whether the prevalent conception of philosophy should not be revised. Why is it, as Kant asked, that science progresses and that universal and necessary scientific judgments can be made and are made (or seemed to Kant to be made), while philosophy in its traditional form does not lead to comparable results and does not seem to progress in the way that science progresses? Is not our whole conception of philosophy wrong? Are we not expecting of philosophy what philosophy of its very nature cannot give? We should expect of philosophy only what it can give, and in order to see what it can give we have to inquire more closely into the nature and functions of philosophic thought. Again, as the particular sciences develop, each with its particular method, reflection will naturally suggest to some minds that these sciences have successively wrested from philosophy her various chosen fields. It may very understandably appear that cosmology or natural philosophy has given way to physics, the philosophy of the organism to biology, philosophical psychology to scientific psychology, and perhaps even moral philosophy to sociology. In other words, it may appear that for all factual information about the world and existent reality we must turn to direct observation and to the sciences. The philosopher, it may appear, cannot increase our knowledge of things in the way that the scientist can, though he may still perform a useful function in the province of logical analysis. And this is, roughly, what a considerable number of modern philosophers think. It is also possible, of course, to accept the idea that all that can be definitely known falls within the province of the sciences and yet at the same time to maintain that it is the special function of philosophy to raise those ultimate problems which cannot be answered by the scientist or in the way that the scientist answers his problems. And then one gets a different conception, or different conceptions, of philosophy.

Again, as science develops, reflection on the methods of science will also develop. Philosophers will be stimulated to analyse scientific method and to do for induction what Aristotle did for syllogistic deduction. And so we get the reflections of Francis Bacon at the time of the Renaissance and of John Stuart Mill in the nineteenth century and of many other philosophers in more recent times. Thus the concrete progress of the sciences may lead to the development of a new field of philosophic analysis, which could not have been developed apart from actual scientific studies and achievements, since it takes the form of reflection on the method actually used in science.

Further, one can trace the influence of a particular science on a particular philosopher's thought. One can trace, for example, the influence of mathematics on Descartes, of mechanics on Hobbes, the rise of historical science on Hegel or of biology and the evolutionary hypothesis on Bergson.

In the foregoing sketchy remarks I have strayed rather far from the Renaissance and have introduced philosophers and philosophical ideas which will have to be discussed in later volumes of this history. But my object in making these remarks was simply the general one of illustrating, even if in an inevitably inadequate manner, the influence of science upon philosophy. Science is not, of course, the only extra-philosophical factor which exercises an influence upon philosophic thought. Philosophy is influenced also by other factors in human culture and civilization. So, too, is science for the matter of that. Nor is one entitled to conclude from the influence of science and other factors upon philosophy that philosophic thought is itself powerless to exercise any influence upon other cultural elements. I do not think that this is in fact the case. But the point which is relevant to my present purpose is the influence of science upon philosophy, and it is for this reason that I have stressed it here. Before, however, anything very definite can be said about the influence of Renaissance science in particular on philosophic thought something must be said about the nature of Renaissance science, even though I am only too conscious of the handicaps under which I labour in attempting to discuss the matter.

2. (i) The 'vulgar' notion of the cause which brought about the flowering of Renaissance science is still, I suppose, that at that period men began for the first time, since the beginning of the Middle Ages at any rate, to use their eyes and to investigate

Nature for themselves. Direct observation of the facts took the place of reliance on the texts of Aristotle and other ancient writers, and theological prejudice gave place to immediate acquaintance with the empirical data. Yet only a little reflection is needed to realize the inadequacy of this view. The dispute between Galileo and the theologians is considered, perhaps inevitably, as the representative symbol of the struggle between direct recourse to the empirical data on the one hand and theological prejudice and Aristotelian obscurantism on the other. But it is obvious that ordinary observation will not suffice to convince anyone that the earth moves round the sun: ordinary observation would suggest the contrary. The heliocentric hypothesis doubtless 'saved the appearances' better than the geocentric hypothesis did; but it was a hypothesis. Moreover, it was a hypothesis which could not be verified by the type of controlled experiment which is possible in some other sciences. It was not possible for astronomy to advance very much on the basis of observation alone; the use of hypothesis and of mathematical deduction were also required. It argues, then, a short-sighted view of the achievements of Renaissance science if one ascribes those achievements simply to observation and experiment. As Roger Bacon, the thirteenth-century Franciscan, had insisted, astronomy requires the aid of mathematics.

Yet every science is based in some way on observation and has some connection with the empirical data. It is obvious that a physicist who sets out to ascertain the laws of motion starts in a sense with observed movements; for it is the laws exemplified by movements which he wishes to ascertain. And if the laws which he eventually formulates are entirely incompatible with the observed movements, in the sense that if the laws were true the observed movements would not happen, he knows that he will have to revise his theory of motion. The astronomer does not proceed without any reference at all to empirical data: the chemist starts with the empirical data and makes experiments with existent things: the biologist would not get very far if he paid no attention to the actual behaviour of organisms. The development of physics in comparatively recent times, as interpreted by Eddington, for example, may tend to give the impression that science is not concerned with anything so plebeian as empirical data and that it is a pure construction of the human mind which is imposed upon Nature and constitutes the 'facts'; but unless one is dealing with pure mathematics, from which one cannot expect factual information about the world, one can say that every science rests ultimately on a basis of observation of the empirical data. When a science reaches a high degree of development, the empirical basis may not be so immediately obvious; but it is there none the less. The scientist does not set out to evolve a purely arbitrary theory: rather does he set out to 'explain' phenomena and, where possible, he will test or verify his theory, mediately if not immediately.

The connection of scientific theory with the empirical data is probably always obvious in the case of some sciences, whereas in the case of other sciences it may become far from obvious as the science reaches a high degree of development. But it is likely to be insisted on in the earlier stages of the development of any science, and this is especially the case when explanatory theories and hypotheses are put forward which conflict with long established notions. Thus at the time of the Renaissance, when the Aristotelian physics were being discarded in favour of fresh scientific conceptions, appeal was frequently made to the empirical data and to 'saving the appearances'. We have seen how the philosophers of Nature often stressed the need for the empirical study of the facts, and it scarcely needs pointing out that medicine and anatomy, not to speak of technology and geography, would not have made the progress which they actually did make in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries without the aid of empirical investigation. One cannot construct a useful map of the world or give a valid account and explanation of the circulation of the blood by purely *a priori* reasoning.

The results of actual observation may be seen particularly in the advance of anatomy and physiology. Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), the great artist who was also deeply interested in scientific and mechanical problems and experiments, was gifted with a remarkable flair for anticipating future discoveries, inventions and theories. Thus he anticipated speculatively the discovery of the circulation of the blood, which was made by William Harvey about 1615; and in optics he anticipated the undulatory theory of light. He is also well known for his plans for flying-machines, parachutes and improved artillery. But it is his anatomical observation which is relevant in the present context. The results of this observation were portrayed in a large number of drawings; but as they were not published they did not exercise the influence which they might have done. The influential book in this connection was the *De fabrica humani corporis* (1543) by Andreas Vesalius, in which he recorded his study of anatomy. This work was of considerable importance for the development of anatomy, since Vesalius did not set out to find evidence in support of traditional theories but was concerned to observe for himself and to record his observations. The book was illustrated, and it also contained accounts of experiments made by the author on animals.

(ii) The discoveries in anatomy and physiology by men like Vesalius and Harvey were naturally powerful influences in undermining men's trust in traditional theories and assertions and in directing their minds to empirical investigation. The fact that the blood circulates is a commonplace for us; but it was not by any means a commonplace then. The ancient authorities, like Galen and Hippocrates, knew nothing of it. But the scientific advance of the Renaissance cannot be ascribed simply to 'observation' in the narrow sense: one has to take into account the increased use of controlled experiment. For example, in 1586 Simon Stevin published the account of a deliberately contrived experiment with leaden balls, which refuted Aristotle's assertion that the velocity of falling bodies is proportional to the weight of the bodies. Again, William Gilbert, who published his *De magnete* in 1600, confirmed by experiment his theory that the earth is a magnet possessing poles which are near its geographical poles, though not coincident with them, and that it is to these magnetic poles that the needle of the compass is attracted. He took a spherical loadstone and observed the behaviour or a needle or a piece of iron wire placed on it in successively different positions. On each occasion he marked on the stone the direction in which the wire came to rest, and by completing the circles he was able to show that the wire or needle always came to rest pointing to the magnetic pole.

It was Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), however, who was the foremost exponent of the experimental method among the Renaissance scientists. Born at Pisa, he studied at the university of that city, exchanging the study of medicine, with which he started, for the study of mathematics. After lecturing at Florence he became professor of mathematics first at Pisa (1589) and then at Padua (1592), occupying this last place for eighteen years. In 1610 he went to Florence as mathematician and philosopher to the Grand Duke of Tuscany and as *mathematicus primarius* in the university, though he was free from the obligation of giving courses of lectures in the university. In 1616 began the celebrated affair with the Inquisition about his astronomical views, which ended with Galileo's formal recantation in 1633. The great scientist was indeed held in detention for a time; but his scientific studies were not stopped, and he was able to continue working until he became blind in 1637. He died in 1642, the year in which Isaac Newton was born.

Galileo's name is universally associated with astronomy; but his work was also of great importance in the development of hydrostatics and mechanics. For example, whereas the Aristotelians maintained that it was a body's shape which decided whether it would sink or float in water, Galileo tried to show experimentally that Archimedes was right in saying that it was the density or specific gravity of a body, and not its shape, which determined whether it would sink or float. He also tried to show experimentally that it was not simply the body's density which decided the matter but rather its density as relative to that of the fluids in which it was placed. Again, while at Pisa he confirmed by experiment the discovery already made by Stevin that bodies of different weight take the same time to fall a given distance and that they do not, as the Aristotelians thought, reach the ground at different times. He also endeavoured to establish experimentally the law of uniform acceleration, which had indeed been anticipated by other physicists, according to which the speed of a body's fall increases uniformly with the time, and the law that a moving body, unless acted upon by friction, the resistance of the air or gravity, continues to move in the same direction at a uniform speed. Galileo was especially influenced by his conviction that Nature is essentially mathematical, and hence that under ideal conditions an ideal law would be 'obeyed'. His relatively crude experimental results suggested a simple law, even if they could hardly be said to 'prove' it. They also tended to suggest the falsity of the Aristotelian notion that no body would move unless acted upon by an external force. Indeed, Galileo's discoveries were one of the most powerful influences which discredited the Aristotelian physics. He also gave an impetus to technical advance by, for example, his plans for a pendulum clock, which was later constructed and patented by Huygens (1629–95), and by his invention, or reinvention, of the thermometer.

(iii) Mention of controlled experiment should not be taken to imply that the experimental method was widely practised from the beginning of the sixteenth century. On the contrary, it is the comparative rarity of clear cases in the first half at any rate of the century which makes it necessary to draw attention to it as something which was just beginning to be understood. Now, it is clear that experiment, in the sense of deliberately contrived experiment, is inseparable from the use of tentative hypotheses. It is true that one might devise an experiment simply to see what happens; but in actual practice controlled experiment is devised as a means of verifying a hypothesis. To perform an experiment is to put a question to Nature, and asking that particular question normally presupposes some hypothesis. One would not drop balls of different weight from a tower in order to see whether they do or do not hit the ground at the same time, unless one wished to confirm a preconceived hypothesis or unless one envisaged two possible hypotheses and desired to discover which was correct. It would be wrong to suppose that all Renaissance scientists had a clear conception of the hypothetical character of their theories: but that they used hypotheses is clear enough. It is most obvious in the case of astronomy, to which I now turn.

Nicholas Copernicus (1473–1543), the famous and learned Polish ecclesiastic, was by no means the first to realize that the apparent movement of the sun from east to west is no conclusive proof that it does actually move in this way. As we have seen, this fact had been clearly realized in the fourteenth century. But whereas the fourteenth-century physicists had confined themselves to developing the hypothesis of the earth's daily rotation on its axis, Copernicus argued on behalf of the hypothesis that the rotating earth also rotates round a stationary sun. He thus substituted the heliocentric for the geocentric hypothesis. This is not to say, of course, that he discarded the Ptolemaic system entirely. In particular, he retained the old notion that the planets move in circular orbits, though he supposed that these were 'eccentric'. In order to make his heliocentric hypothesis square with the appearances, he then had to add a number of epicycles. He postulated less than half the number of circles postulated by the Ptolemaic system of his time, and he thus simplified it; but he went about matters in much the same way as his predecessors had done. That is to say, he made speculative additions in order to 'save the appearances'.

There can be little doubt that Copernicus was convinced of the truth of the heliocentric hypothesis. But a Lutheran clergyman called Andreas Osiander (1498–1552), to whom the manuscript of Copernicus' *De revolutionibus orbium cœlestium* had been entrusted by Georg Joachim Rheticus of Wittenberg, took it upon himself to substitute a new preface for that written by Copernicus. In this new preface Osiander made Copernicus propose the heliocentric theory as a mere hypothesis or mathematical fiction. In addition he omitted the references to Aristarchus which Copernicus had made; and this omission brought upon Copernicus charges of dishonest plagiarism. Luther and Melanchthon thoroughly disapproved of the new hypothesis; but it did not excite any pronounced opposition on the part of the Catholic authorities. Osiander's preface may have contributed to this, though it must also be remembered that Copernicus had circulated privately his *De hypothesibus motuum coelestium commentariolus* without arousing hostility. It is true that the *De revolutionibus*, which was dedicated to Pope Paul III, was put on the Index in 1616 (*donec corrigatur*), as objections were raised against some sentences which represented the heliocentric hypothesis as a certainty. But this does not alter the fact that the work did not arouse opposition on the part of Catholic ecclesiastical circles when it was first published. In 1758 it was omitted from the revised Index.

Copernicus' hypothesis did not immediately find enthusiastic adherents, however, apart from the Wittenberg mathematicians, Reinhold and Rheticus. Tycho Brahe (1546–1601) opposed the hypothesis and invented one of his own, according to which the sun circles round the earth, as in the Ptolemaic system, while Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn circle round the sun in epicycles. The first real improvement on Copernicus' theory was made by John Kepler (1571–1630). Kepler, who was a Protestant, had been convinced by Michael Mästlin of Tübingen that the Copernican hypothesis was true, and he defended it in his *Prodromus dissertationum cosmographicarum seu mysterium cosmographicum*. The work contained, however, Pythagorean speculations concerning the geometrical plan of the world, and Tycho Brahe characteristically suggested that the young Kepler should give more attention to sound observation before indulging in speculation. But he took Kepler as his assistant, and after his patron's death Kepler published the works in which he enunciated his famous three laws. These works were the *Astronomia nova* (1609), the *Epitome astronomiae copernicanae* (1618) and the *Harmonices mundi* (1619). The planets, said Kepler, move in ellipses having the sun as one focus. The radius sector of the ellipse sweeps out equal areas in equal times. Moreover, we can compare mathematically the times required by the various planets to complete their respective orbits by the use of the formula that the square of the time taken by any planet to complete its orbit is proportional to the cube of its distance from the sun. In order to explain the movement of the planets Kepler postulated a motive force (or *anima motrix*) in the sun which emits rays of force, rotating with the sun. Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727) later showed that this hypothesis was unnecessary, for in 1666 he discovered the law of the inverse square, that the sun's gravitational pull on a planet which is n times the earth's distance from the sun is $1/n^2$ times the pull at the earth's distance, and in 1685 he at last found himself in a position to work out the mathematical calculations which agreed with the demands of observation. But though Newton showed that the movements of the planets can be explained without postulating Kepler's *anima motrix*, the latter had made a most important contribution to the advance of astronomy by showing that the movements of all the then known planets could be accounted for by postulating a number of ellipses corresponding to the number of planets. The old paraphernalia of circles and epicycles could thus be dispensed with. The heliocentric hypothesis was thus greatly simplified.

On the observational side the advance of astronomy was greatly promoted by the invention of the telescope. The credit for the practical invention of the telescope must be given, it seems, to one of two Dutchmen in the first decade of the seventeenth century. Galileo, hearing of the invention, made an instrument for himself. (A Jesuit, Father Scheiner, constructed an improved instrument by embodying a suggestion made by Kepler, and Huygens introduced further improvements.) By using the telescope Galileo was enabled to observe the moon, which revealed itself as having mountains; and from this he concluded that the moon consists of the same sort of material as the earth. He was also able to observe the phases of Venus and the satellites of Jupiter, his observations fitting in very well with the heliocentric, but not with the geocentric, hypothesis. Furthermore, he observed the existence of sunspots, which were also seen by Scheiner. The existence of varying sunspots showed that the sun consisted of changeable matter, and this fact further discredited the Aristotelian cosmology. In general the telescopic observations made by Galileo and others provided empirical confirmation of the Copernican hypothesis. Indeed, observation of the phases of Venus showed clearly the superiority of the heliocentric to the geocentric hypothesis, since they were inexplicable in terms of the Ptolemaic scheme.

Perhaps one should say something at this point about the deplorable clash between Galileo and the Inquisition. Its importance as evidence of the Church's supposed hostility towards science has often been greatly exaggerated. Indeed, the fact that it is to this particular case that appeal is almost always made (the case of Bruno was quite different) by those who wish to show that the Church is the enemy of science should by itself be sufficient to cast doubt on the validity of the universal conclusion which is sometimes drawn from it. The action of the ecclesiastical authorities does not, it is true, reflect credit on them. One could wish that they had all realized more clearly the truth, suggested by Galileo himself in a letter of 1615, envisaged by Bellarmine and others at the time, and clearly affirmed by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical letter *Providentissimus Deus*, that a Biblical passage like *Josue* 10, 12–13 can be taken as an accommodation to the ordinary way of speaking and not as an assertion of a scientific fact. We all speak of the sun as moving, and there is no reason why the Bible should not employ the same way of speaking, without one's being entitled to draw therefrom the conclusion that the sun rotates round a stationary earth. Moreover, even though Galileo had not proved the truth of the Copernican hypothesis beyond question, he had certainly shown its superiority to the geocentric hypothesis. This fact is not altered by his having laid particular stress on an argument based on a mistaken theory about the ebb and flow of the tides in his *Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo*, the work which precipitated a serious clash with the Inquisition. On the other hand, Galileo obstinately refused to recognize the hypothetical character of his theory. Given his naïvely realist view of the status of scientific hypotheses, it might perhaps have been difficult for him to recognize it; but Bellarmine pointed out that the empirical verification of a hypothesis does not necessarily prove its absolute truth, and if Galileo had been ready to recognize this fact, which is familiar enough today, the whole unfortunate episode with the Inquisition could have been avoided. However, Galileo not only persisted in maintaining the non-hypothetical character of the Copernican hypothesis but was also needlessly provocative into the bargain. Indeed, the clash of personalities played a not unimportant part in the affair. In fine, Galileo was a great scientist, and his opponents were not great scientists. Galileo made some sensible remarks about the interpretation of the Scriptures, the truth of which is recognized today and might well have been recognized more clearly by the theologians involved in the case. But the fault was by no means all on one side. In regard to the status of scientific theories Bellarmine's judgment was better than Galileo's, even though the latter was a great scientist and the former was not. If Galileo had had a better understanding of the nature of scientific hypotheses, and if the theologians in general had not taken up the attitude which they did in regard to the interpretation of isolated Biblical texts, the clash would not have occurred. It did occur, of course, and in regard to the superiority of the heliocentric over the geocentric hypothesis Galileo was undoubtedly right. But no universal conclusion can legitimately be drawn from this case about the Church's attitude to science.

(iv) It is clear that in the astronomy of the Renaissance hypothesis as well as observation played an indispensable rôle. But the fruitful combination of hypothesis and verification, both in astronomy and in mechanics, would not have been possible without the aid of mathematics. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries mathematics made considerable progress. A notable step forward was taken when John Napier (1550–1617) conceived the idea of logarithms. He communicated his idea to Tycho Brahe in 1594, and in 1614 he published a description of the general principle in his *Mirifici logarithmorum canonis descriptio.* Shortly afterwards the practical application of the principle was facilitated by the work of Henry Briggs (1561–1630). In 1638 Descartes published an account of the general principles of analytic geometry, while in 1635 Cavalieri, an Italian mathematician, published a statement of the 'method of indivisibles', which had already been used in a primitive form by Kepler. This was, in essence, the first statement of the calculus of infinitesimals. In 1665–6 Newton discovered the binomial theorem, though he did not publish his discovery until 1704. This hesitation in publishing results led to the celebrated dispute between Newton and Leibniz and their respective supporters about priority in discovering the differential and integral calculi. The two men discovered the calculus independently, but although Newton had written a sketch of his ideas in

1669 he did not actually publish anything on the matter until 1704, whereas Leibniz began publication in 1684. These elaborations of the calculus were, of course, much too late to be utilized by the great scientists of the Renaissance, and a man like Galileo had to rely on older and clumsier mathematical methods. But the point is that his ideal was that of developing a scientific view of the world in terms of mathematical formulae. He may be said to have combined the outlook of a mathematical physicist with that of a philosopher. As a physicist he tried to express the foundations of physics and the observed regularities of Nature in terms of mathematical propositions, so far as this was possible. As a philosopher he drew from the success of the mathematical method in physics the conclusion that mathematics is the key to the actual structure of reality. Though partly influenced by the nominalist conception of causality and the nominalist substitution of the study of the behaviour of things for the traditional search for essences, Galileo was also strongly influenced by the mathematical ideas of Platonism and Pythagoreanism; and this influence predisposed him to believe that the objective world is the world of the mathematician. In a well-known passage of his work *Il saggiatore* (6) he declared that philosophy is written in the book of the universe but that 'it cannot be read until we have learnt the language and understood the characters in which it is written. It is written in mathematical language, and its characters are triangles, circles and other geometrical figures, without which it is impossible to understand a single word.'

(v) This aspect of Galileo's idea of Nature expressed itself in a mechanistic view of the world. Thus he believed in atoms and explained change on the basis of an atomist theory. Again, he maintained that qualities like colour and warmth exist as qualities only in the sensing subject: they are 'subjective' in character. Objectively they exist only in the form of the motion of atoms; and they can thus be explained mechanically and mathematically. This mechanistic conception of Nature, based on an atomist theory, was also maintained by Pierre Gassendi, as we saw earlier. It was further developed by Robert Boyle (1627–91), who believed that matter consists of solid particles, each possessing its own shape, which combine with one another to form what are now termed 'molecules'. Finally Newton argued that if we knew the forces which act upon bodies, we could deduce the motions of those bodies mathematically, and he suggested that the ultimate atoms or particles are themselves centres of force. He was concerned immediately only with the movements of certain bodies; but in the preface to his *Philosophiae naturalis principia mathematica* he put forward the idea that the movements of all bodies could be explained in terms of mechanical principles and that the reason why natural philosophers had been unable to achieve this explanation was their ignorance of the active forces in nature. But he took care to explain that it was his purpose to give only 'a mathematical notion of those forces, without considering their physical causes or seats'. Hence when he showed that 'the force' of gravity which causes an apple to fall to the ground is identical with 'the force' which causes the elliptical movements of the planets, what he was doing was to show that the movements of planets and falling apples conform to the same mathematical law. Newton's scientific work enjoyed such a complete success that it reigned supreme, in its general principles that is to say, for some two hundred years, the period of the Newtonian physics.

3. The rise of modern science or, better, of the classical science of the Renaissance and post-Renaissance periods naturally had a profound effect on men's minds, opening up to them new vistas of knowledge and directing them to new interests. No sensible man would wish to deny that the scientific advance of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was one of the most important and influential events in history. But it is possible to exaggerate its effect on the European mind. In particular, it is, I think, an exaggeration to imply that the success of the Copernican hypothesis had the effect of upsetting belief about man's relation to God, on the ground that the earth could no longer be regarded as the geographical centre of the universe. That it did have this effect is not infrequently implied, and one writer repeats what another has said on the subject; but any necessary connection between the revolution in astronomy and a revolution in religious belief has yet to be demonstrated. Further, it is a mistake to suppose that the mechanical view of the universe either was or ought logically to have been a bar to religious belief. Galileo, who considered that the application of mathematics to the world is objectively ensured, believed that it was ensured by God's creation of the world as a mathematically intelligible system. It was divine creation which guaranteed the parallelisms between mathematical deduction and the actual system of Nature. Robert Boyle also was convinced of divine creation. And that Newton

was a man of firm piety is well known. He even conceived absolute space as the instrument by which God is omnipresent in the world and embraces all things in His immanent activity. It is true, of course, that the mechanistic view of the world tended to promote deism, which brings in God simply as an explanation of the origin of the mechanical system. But it must be remembered that even the old astronomy, for example, can be regarded as a mechanical system in a sense: it is a mistake to suppose that the scientific advance of the Renaissance suddenly cut away, as it were, the link between the world and God. The mechanical-mathematical view naturally involved the elimination from physics of the consideration of final causes; but, whatever the psychological effect of this change on many minds may have been, the elimination of final causes from physics did not necessarily involve a denial of final causality. It was a consequence of the advance in scientific method in a particular field of knowledge; but this does not mean that men like Galileo and Newton regarded physical science as the sole source of knowledge.

I want to turn, however, to the influence of the new science on philosophy, though I shall confine myself to indicating two or three lines of thought without attempting at this stage to develop them. As a preliminary, one may remind oneself of the two elements of scientific method, namely the observational and inductive side and the deductive and mathematical side.

The first aspect of scientific method, namely observation of the empirical data as a basis for induction, for discovering causes, was stressed by Francis Bacon. But as his philosophy will form the subject of the next chapter I shall say no more about him here. What I want to do at the moment is to draw attention to the connection between the emphasis laid by Francis Bacon on observation and induction in scientific method and the classical British empiricism. It would certainly be quite wrong to regard classical empiricism as being simply the philosophical reflection of the place occupied by observation and experiment in Renaissance and post-Renaissance science. When Locke asserted that all our ideas are based on sense-perception and introspection he was asserting a psychological and epistemological thesis, the antecedents of which can be seen in mediaeval Aristotelianism. But it can legitimately be said, I think, that a powerful impetus was given to philosophical empiricism by the conviction that the contemporary scientific advances were based on actual observation of the empirical data. The scientific insistence on going to the observable 'facts' as a necessary basis for explanatory theory found its correlative and its theoretical justification in the empiricist thesis that our factual knowledge is ultimately based on perception. The use of observation and experiment in science, and indeed the triumphant advance of science in general, would naturally tend, in the minds of many thinkers, to stimulate and confirm the theory that all our knowledge is based on perception, on direct acquaintance with external and internal events.

It was, however, the other aspect of scientific method, namely the deductive and mathematical aspect, which most influenced the continental 'rationalist' philosophy of the post-Renaissance period. The success of mathematics in the solution of scientific problems naturally enhanced its prestige. Not only was mathematics clear and exact in itself, but in its application to scientific problems it also made clear what had formerly been obscure. It appeared as the highroad to knowledge. It is understandable that the certainty and exactitude of mathematics suggested to Descartes, himself a talented mathematician and the chief pioneer in the field of analytic geometry, that an examination of the essential characteristics of the mathematical method would reveal the right method for use in philosophy also. It is understandable also that under the influence of mathematics as a model several of the leading philosophers on the Continent believed that they could reconstruct the world, as it were, in an *a priori* deductive manner with the aid of certain fundamental ideas analogous to the definitions and axioms of mathematics. Thus a mathematical model provided the framework of Spinoza's *Ethica more geometrico demonstrata*, though it scarcely provided its content.

We have seen how the development of astronomy and of mechanics at the time of the Renaissance promoted the growth of a mechanical view of the world. This outlook was reflected in the field of philosophy. Descartes, for example, considered that the material world and its changes can be explained simply in terms of matter, identified with geometrical extension, and motion. At creation God placed, as it were, a certain amount of motion or energy in the world, which is transmitted from body to body according to the laws of mechanics. Animals can be considered as machines. Descartes himself did not apply these mechanistic analogies to the human being as a whole, but some later French thinkers did. In England Thomas Hobbes, who objected against

Descartes that thought is an activity of bodies and that the activity of bodies is motion, believed that just as the behaviour of inanimate bodies can be deduced from certain fundamental ideas and laws so the behaviour of human societies, which are simply organizations of bodies, can be deduced from the properties of these organized groupings of bodies. Mechanics thus furnished a partial model for Descartes and a more complete model for Hobbes.

The foregoing remarks are intentionally brief and summary: they are designed only to indicate some of the lines on which the development of science influenced philosophic thought. Names of philosophers have been introduced who will be treated of in the next volume; and it would be out of place to say more about them here. It may be as well, however, to point out in conclusion that the philosophic ideas which have been mentioned reacted in turn on science. For example, Descartes' conception of organic bodies may have been crude and inadequate, but it probably helped to encourage scientists to investigate the processes and behaviour of organic bodies in a scientific manner. A hypothesis need not be completely true in order to bear fruit in some particular direction.

CHAPTER XIX

FRANCIS BACON

English philosophy of the Renaissance—Bacon's life and writings—The classification of the sciences—Induction and 'the idols'.

1. THE first outstanding philosopher of the post-mediaeval period in England was Francis Bacon: it is his name which is for ever associated with the philosophy of the Renaissance in Great Britain. With the exception of St. Thomas More and Richard Hooker, whose political ideas will be briefly considered in the next chapter, the other British philosophers of the Renaissance merit little more than bare mention. It should, however, be emphasized that the general tone of philosophical thinking in the English universities at the time of the Renaissance was conservative. The Aristotelian-Scholastic logical tradition persisted for many years, especially at Oxford, and it formed the background of John Locke's university education in the seventeenth century. Latin works of logic, like the *Institutionum dialecticarum libri IV* of John Sanderson (1587–1602) or the *Logicae libri V de praedicabilibus* of Richard Crakanthorpe (1569–1624), began to give place to works in the vernacular like *The rule of reason, containing the arte of logique* (1552) by Thomas Wilson or *The philosopher's game* (1563) and the *Arte of reason rightly termed Witcraft* (1573) of Ralph Lever; but such works contained nothing much in the nature of novelty. Sir William Temple (1533–1626) defended the Ramist logic; but he was attacked by Everard Digby (1550–92), who wrote a refutation of Ramism in the name of Aristotelianism. Sir Kenelm Digby (1603–65), who became a Catholic in Paris, where he was acquainted with Descartes, endeavoured to combine the Aristotelian metaphysics with the corpuscular theory of matter. Everard Digby, though an Aristotelian in logic, was influenced by the neo-Platonic ideas of Reuchlin. Similarly, Robert Greville, Lord Brooke (1608–43), was influenced by the Platonic Academy of Florence; and in *The Nature of Truth* he maintained a doctrine of the divine light which helped to prepare the way for the group of Cambridge Platonists. Ideas of Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa and of Paracelsus were represented by Robert Fludd (1574–1637), who

travelled extensively on the Continent and was influenced by the continental Renaissance. In his *Philosophia Mosaica* he depicted God as the synthesis in identity of opposites. In Himself God is incomprehensible darkness; but considered in another aspect He is the light and wisdom which manifests itself in the world, which is the *explicatio Dei*. The world manifests in itself the twofold aspect of God, for the divine light is manifested in, or is the cause of, warmth, rarefaction, light, love, goodness and beauty, while the divine darkness is the origin of cold, condensation, hate and unloveliness. Man is a microcosm of the universe, uniting in himself the two aspects of God which are revealed in the universe. There is in man a constant strife between light and darkness.

2. The leading figure of the philosophy of the Renaissance in England was, however, a thinker who turned consciously against Aristotelianism and who did so not in favour of Platonism or of theosophy but in the name of scientific and technical advancement in the service of man. The value and justification of knowledge, according to Francis Bacon, consists above all in its practical application and utility; its true function is to extend the dominion of the human race, the reign of man over nature. In the *Novum Organum*[1] Bacon calls attention to the practical effects of the invention of printing, gunpowder and the magnet, which 'have changed the face of things and the state of the world; the first in literature, the second in warfare; the third in navigation'. But inventions such as these did not come from the traditional Aristotelian physics; they came from direct acquaintance with nature herself. Bacon certainly represents 'humanism' in the sense that he was a great writer; but his emphasis on man's dominion over nature by means of science distinguishes him sharply from the Italian humanists, who were more concerned with the development of the human personality, while his insistence on going direct to nature, on the inductive method, and his mistrust of speculation distinguish him from the neo-Platonists and the theosophists. Though he did not make positive contributions to science himself and though he was far more influenced by Aristotelianism than he realized, Bacon divined in a remarkable way the technical progress which was to come, a technical progress which, he was confident, would serve man and human culture. This vision was present, in a limited sense, to the minds of the alchemists; but Bacon saw that it was a scientific knowledge of nature, not alchemy

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[1] I, 129.

or magic or fantastic speculation, which was to open up to man the path of dominion over nature. Bacon stood not only chronologically but also, in part at least, mentally on the threshold of a new world revealed by geographical discovery, the finding of fresh sources of wealth and, above all, by the advance in natural science, the establishment of physics on an experimental and inductive basis. It must be added, however, that Bacon had, as we shall see, an insufficient grasp and appreciation of the new scientific method. That is why I stated that he belonged mentally 'in part at least' to the new era. However, the fact remains that he did look forward to the new era of scientific and technical achievement: his claim to be a herald or *buccinator* of that era was justified, even if he over-estimated his power of vision.

Francis Bacon was born in 1561 in London. After studying at Cambridge he spent two years in France with the British ambassador and then took up the practice of law. In 1584 he entered Parliament and enjoyed a successful career which culminated in his appointment as Lord Chancellor in 1618 and the reception of the title Baron Verulam. He was created Viscount of St. Albans in 1621; but in the same year he was accused of accepting bribes in his judicial capacity. Found guilty he was sentenced to deprivation of his offices and of his seat in Parliament, a large fine and imprisonment in the Tower. In actual fact, however, he was released from the Tower after a few days and payment of the fine was not exacted. Bacon admitted that he had accepted presents from litigants, though he claimed that his judicial decisions had not been influenced thereby. His claim may or may not be valid; one cannot know the truth about this matter; but in any case it would be an anachronism to expect of a judge in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I precisely the same standard of behaviour which is demanded today. This is not to defend Bacon's behaviour, of course; and the fact that he was brought to trial bears witness to contemporary realization of the fact that his behaviour was improper. But it must be added at the same time that his fall was not brought about simply by a disinterested desire for pure justice on the part of his opponents: partly at least he was the victim of political intrigue and jealousy. In other words, though it is true that Bacon was not a man of profound moral integrity, he was not a wicked man or an iniquitous judge. His reception of presents, as also his behaviour towards Essex, has sometimes been presented in a grossly exaggerated light. It is quite incorrect to regard him as an example of a sort of 'split personality', a man who combined in himself the two irreconcilable characters of the disinterested philosopher and the egoistic politician who cared nothing for the demands of morality. He was by no means a saint like Thomas More; but neither was he an instance of Jekyll and Hyde. His death occurred on April 9th, 1626.

Of the Advancement of Learning appeared in 1606 and the *De sapientia veterum* in 1609. Bacon planned a great work, the *Instauratio magna*, of which the first part, the *De dignitate et augmentis scientiarum*, appeared in 1623. This was a revision and extension of *The Advancement of Learning*. The second part, the *Novum organum*, had appeared in 1620. This had its origin in the *Cogitata et visa* (1607); but it was never completed, a fate which overtook most of Bacon's literary plans. In 1622 and 1623 he published parts of his projected *Historia naturalis et experimentalis ad condendam philosophiam: sive phenomena universi*. The *Sylva sylvarum* and the *New Atlantis* were published posthumously. Numerous other writings include essays and a history of Henry VII.

3. According to Bacon[1] 'that division of human learning is most true which is derived from the threefold faculty of the rational soul'. Taking memory, imagination and reason to be the three faculties of the rational soul, he assigns history to memory, poetry to imagination and philosophy to reasoning. History, however, comprises not only 'civil history', but also 'natural history', and Bacon remarks that 'literary history' should be attended to.[2] Philosophy falls into three main divisions; the first being concerned with God (*de Numine*), the second with nature and the third with man. The first division, that concerned with God, is natural or rational theology; it does not comprise 'inspired or sacred theology', which is the result of God's revelation rather than of man's reasoning. Revealed theology is, indeed, 'the haven and sabbath of all human contemplations',[3] and it is a province of knowledge (*scientia*), but it stands outside philosophy. Philosophy is the work of the human reason, nature being known directly (*radio directo*), God indirectly by means of creatures (*radio refracto*), and man by reflection (*radio reflexo*). Bacon's division of human learning or knowledge according to the faculties of the rational soul is unhappy and artificial; but when he comes to determine the main divisions of philosophy he divides them according to objects: God, nature and man.

[1] *De augmentis scientiarum*, 2, 1.

[2] *Ibid.*, 2, 4.

[3] *Ibid.*, 3, 1.

The divisions of philosophy, he says,[1] are like the branches of a tree which are united in a common trunk. This means that there is 'one universal science, which is the mother of the rest' and is known as 'first philosophy'. This comprises both fundamental axioms, like *quae in eodem tertio conveniunt, et inter se conveniunt*, and fundamental notions like 'possible' and 'impossible', 'being' and 'not-being', etc. Natural theology, which is the knowledge of God that can be obtained 'by the light of nature and the contemplation of created things'[2] treats of God's existence and of His nature, but only so far as this is manifested in creatures; and it has as its appendix *doctrina de angelis et spiritibus.* The philosophy of nature Bacon divides into speculative and operative natural philosophy. Speculative natural philosophy is subdivided into *physics* (*physica specialis*) and metaphysics. Metaphysics, as part of natural philosophy, must be distinguished, Bacon says,[3] from first philosophy and natural theology, to neither of which does he give the name 'metaphysics'. What, then, is the difference between physics and metaphysics? It is to be found in the types of causes with which they are respectively concerned. Physics treats of efficient and material causes, metaphysics of formal and final causes. But Bacon presently declares that 'inquiry into final causes is sterile and, like a virgin consecrated to God, produces nothing'.[4] One can say, then, that metaphysics, according to him, is concerned with formal causes. This was the position he adopted in the *Novum organum.*

One is naturally tempted to interpret all this in Aristotelian terms and to think that Bacon was simply continuing the Aristotelian doctrine of causes. This would be a mistake, however, and Bacon himself said that his readers should not suppose that because he used a traditional term he was employing it in the traditional sense. By 'forms', the object of metaphysics, he meant what he called 'fixed laws'. The form of heat is the law of heat. Actually there is no radical division between physics and metaphysics. Physics started with examining specific types of matter or bodies in a restricted field of causality and activity; but it goes on to consider more general laws. Thus it shades off into metaphysics, which is concerned with the highest or widest laws of nature. Bacon's use of Aristotelian terminology is misleading. Metaphysics is for him the most general part of what might otherwise be called physics. Moreover, it is not directed to contemplation but to action. We seek to learn the laws of nature with a view to increasing human control over bodies.

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[1] *De augmentis scientiarum*, 3, 1. [2] *Ibid.*, 2. [3] *Ibid.*, 4. [4] *Ibid.*, 5.

Speculative natural philosophy consisting, then, of physics and metaphysics, what is operative natural philosophy? It is the application of the former; and it falls into two parts, mechanics (by which Bacon means the science of mechanics) and magic. Mechanics is the application of physics in practice, while magic is applied metaphysics. Here again Bacon's terminology is apt to mislead. By 'magic' he does not mean, he tells us, the superstitious and frivolous magic which is as different from true magic as the chronicles about King Arthur are different from Caesar's commentaries: he means the practical application of the science of 'hidden forms' or laws. It is improbable that youth could be suddenly and magically restored to an old man; but it is probable that a knowledge of the true natures of assimilation, bodily 'spirits', etc., could prolong life or even partly restore youth 'by means of diets, baths, unctions, the right medicines, suitable exercises and the like'.[1]

The 'appendix' of natural philosophy is mathematics.[2] Pure mathematics comprises geometry, which treats of continuous abstract quantity, and arithmetic, which treats of discrete abstract quantity. 'Mixed mathematics' comprises perspective, music, astronomy, cosmography, architecture, etc. Elsewhere,[3] however, Bacon remarks that astronomy is rather the noblest part of physics than a part of mathematics. When astronomers pay exclusive attention to mathematics they produce false hypotheses. Even if Bacon did not reject outright the heliocentric hypothesis of Copernicus and Galileo, he certainly did not embrace it. Apologists for Bacon point out that he was convinced that the appearances could be saved either on the heliocentric or on the geocentric hypothesis and that the dispute could not be settled by mathematical and abstract reasoning. Doubtless he did think this; but that does not alter the fact that he failed to discern the superiority of the heliocentric hypothesis.

The third main part of philosophy is the part dealing with man. It comprises *philosophia humanitatis* or anthropology and *philosophia civilis* or political philosophy. The former treats first of the human body and is subdivided into medicine, cosmetics, athletics and *ars voluptuaria*, including, for example, music considered from a certain point of view. Secondly it treats of the human soul, though the nature of the rational, divinely created and immortal soul (*spiraculum*) as distinct from the sensitive soul is a subject which belongs to theology rather than to philosophy. The latter is, however, able to establish the fact that man possesses faculties which transcend the power of matter. Psychology thus leads on to a consideration of logic, *doctrina circa intellectum*, and ethics, *doctrina circa voluntatem.*[1] The parts of logic are the *artes inveniendi, judicandi, retinendi et tradendi*. The most important subdivision of the *ars inveniendi* is what Bacon calls 'the interpretation of nature', which proceeds *ab experimentis ad axiomata, quae et ipsa nova experimenta designent.*[2] This is the *novum organum*. The art of judging is divided into induction, which belongs to the *novum organum*, and the syllogism. Bacon's doctrine concerning the *novum organum* will be considered presently, as also his theory of the 'idols' which forms one of the topics comprised under the heading of the doctrine of the syllogism. In passing it may be mentioned that apropos of pedagogy, which is an 'appendix' of the *ars tradendi*, Bacon observes, 'Consult the schools of the Jesuits: for nothing that has been practised is better than these.'[3] Ethics deals with the nature of human good (*doctrina de exemplari*), not only private but also common, and with the cultivation of the soul with a view to attaining the good (*doctrina de georgica animi*). The part dealing with the common good does not treat of the actual union of men in the State but with the factors which render men apt for social life.[4] Finally *philosophia civilis*[5] is divided into three parts, each of which considers a good which accrues to man from civil society. *Doctrina de conversatione* considers the good which comes to man from association with his fellows (*solamen contra solitudinem*); *doctrina de negotiis* considers the help man receives from society in his practical affairs; and the *doctrina de imperio sive republica* considers the protection from injury which he obtains through government. Or one can say that the three parts consider the three types of prudence; *prudentia in conversando, prudentia in negotiando* and *prudentia in gubernando*. Bacon adds[6] that there are two *desiderata* in the part dealing with government, namely a theory concerning the extension of rule or empire and a science of universal justice, the *de justitia universali sive de fontibus iuris*.

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[1] *De augmentis scientiarum*, 5. [2] *Ibid.*, 6. [3] *Ibid.*, 4.

In the ninth and last book of the *De augmentis scientiarum*

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[1] *De augmentis scientiarum*, 5, 1.
[2] *Ibid.*, 2.
[3] *Ibid.*, 6, 4.
[4] *Ibid.*, 7, 2.
[5] *Ibid.*, 8, 1.
[6] *Ibid.*, 8, 3.

Bacon touches briefly on revealed theology. Just as we are bound to obey the divine law, he says, even when the will resists; so we are obliged to put faith in the divine word even when reason struggles against it. 'For, if we believe only those things which are agreeable to our reason, we assent to things, not to their Author' (that is to say, our belief is based on the evident character of the propositions in question, not on the authority of God revealing). And he adds that 'the more improbable (*absonum*, discordant) and incredible a divine mystery is, so much the more honour is paid to God through believing, and so much the nobler is the victory of faith'. This is not to say, however, that reason has no part to play in Christian theology. It is used both in the attempt to understand the mysteries of faith, so far as this is possible, and in drawing conclusions from them.

Bacon's outline of philosophy in the *De augmentis scientiarum* is on the grand scale and comprises a very extensive programme. He was undoubtedly influenced by traditional philosophy, probably to a greater extent than he realized; but I have already pointed out that the use of Aristotelian terms by Bacon is no sure guide to the meaning he gave them. And in general one can see a new philosophical outlook taking shape in his writings. In the first place, he eliminated from physics consideration of final causality, on the ground that the search for final causes leads thinkers to be content with assigning specious and unreal causes to events when they ought to be looking for the real physical causes, knowledge of which alone is of value for extending human power. In this respect, says Bacon,[1] the natural philosophy of Democritus was more solid and profound than the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, who were constantly introducing final causes. It is not that there is no such thing as final causality; and it would be absurd to attribute the origin of the world to the fortuitous collision of atoms, after the manner of Democritus and Epicurus. But this does not mean that final causality has any place in physics. Furthermore, Bacon did not assign to metaphysics a consideration of final causality in the Aristotelian sense. Metaphysics was for him neither the study of being as being nor a contemplation of unmoving final causes: it is rather the study of the most general principles or laws or 'forms' of the material world, and this study is undertaken in view of a practical end. His conception of philosophy was to all intents and purposes naturalistic and materialistic. This does not mean that Bacon affirmed atheism or that he denied that man possesses a spiritual and immortal soul. It does mean, however, that he excluded from philosophy any consideration of spiritual being. The philosopher may be able to show that a first Cause exists; but he cannot say anything about God's nature, the consideration of which belongs to theology. Similarly, the subject of immortality is not one which can be treated philosophically. Bacon thus made a sharp division between theology and philosophy, not simply in the sense that he made a formal distinction between them but also in the sense that he accorded full liberty to a materialistic and mechanistic interpretation of Nature. The philosopher is concerned with what is material and with what can be considered from the mechanistic and naturalistic point of view. Bacon may have spoken on occasion in more or less traditional terms about natural theology, for example, but it is clear that the real direction of his thought was to relegate the immaterial to the sphere of faith. Moreover, in spite of his retention of the Aristotelian term 'first philosophy', he did not understand by it precisely what the Aristotelians had understood by it: for him first philosophy was the study of the axioms which are common to the different sciences and of various 'transcendental' concepts considered in their relations to the physical sciences. In a broad sense, Bacon's conception of philosophy was positivistic in character, provided that this is not taken to imply a rejection of theology as a source of knowledge.

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[1] *De augmentis scientiarum*, 3, 4.

4. I turn now to the second part of the *Instauratio magna*, which is represented by the *Novum organum sive indicia vera de interpretatione naturae*. In this work Bacon's philosophical attitude is most clearly revealed. 'Knowledge and human power come to the same thing', for 'nature cannot be conquered except by obeying her'.[1] The purpose of science is the extension of the dominion of the human race over nature; but this can be achieved only by a real knowledge of nature; we cannot obtain effects without an accurate knowledge of causes. The sciences which man now possesses, says Bacon,[2] are useless for obtaining practical effects (*ad inventionem operum*) and our present logic is useless for the purpose of establishing sciences. 'The logic in use is of more value for establishing and rendering permanent the errors which are based on vulgar conceptions than for finding out the truth; so that it is more harmful than useful.'[3] The syllogism consists of

[1] I, 3. [2] I, 11. [3] I, 12.

propositions; and propositions consist of words; and words express concepts. Thus, if the concepts are confused and if they are the result of over-hasty abstraction, nothing which is built upon them is secure. Our only hope lies in true *induction*.[1] There are two ways of seeking and finding the truth.[2] First, the mind may proceed from sense and from the perception of particulars to the most general axioms and from these deduce the less general propositions. Secondly it may proceed from sense and the perception of particulars to immediately attainable axioms and thence, gradually and patiently, to more general axioms. The first way is known and employed; but it is unsatisfactory, because particulars are not examined with sufficient accuracy, care and comprehensiveness and because the mind jumps from an insufficient basis to general conclusions and axioms. It produced *anticipationes naturae*, rash and premature generalizations. The second way, which has not yet been tried, is the true way. The mind proceeds from a careful and patient examination of particulars to the *interpretatio naturae*.

Bacon does not deny, then, that some sort of induction had been previously known and employed; what he objected to was rash and hasty generalization, resting on no firm basis in experience. Induction starts with the operation of the senses; but it requires the co-operation of mind, though the mind's activity must be controlled by observation. Bacon may have lacked an adequate notion of the place and importance of hypothesis in scientific method; but he saw clearly that the value of conclusions based on observation depend on the character of that observation. This led him to say that it is useless to attempt to graft the new on to the old; we must start again from the beginning.[3] He does not accuse the Aristotelians and Scholastics of neglecting induction entirely but rather of being in too much of a hurry to generalize and to draw conclusions. He thought of them as being more concerned with logical consistency, with ensuring that their conclusions followed in due form from their premisses, than with giving a sure foundation to the premisses on the truth of which the conclusions depended. Of the logicians he says[4] that 'they seem to have given scarcely any serious consideration to induction; they pass it over with a brief mention and hurry on to the formulas of disputation'. He, on the other hand, rejects the syllogism on the ground that induction must take its rise in the observation of

[1] 1, 14. [2] 1, 19 ff. [3] 1, 31. [4] *Instauratio magna, distributio operis.*

things, of particular facts or events, and must stick to them as closely as possible. The logicians wing their way at once to the most general principles and deduce conclusions syllogistically. This procedure is admittedly very useful for purposes of disputation; but it is useless for purposes of natural and practical science. 'And so the order of demonstration is reversed';[1] in induction we proceed in the opposite direction to that in which we proceed in deduction.

It might appear that Bacon's insistence on the practical ends of inductive science would itself tend to encourage the drawing of over-hasty conclusions. This was not his intention at least. He condemns[2] the 'unreasonable and puerile' desire to snatch at results which, 'as an Atlanta's apple, hinders the race'. In other words, the establishment of scientific laws by the patient employment of the inductive method will bring greater light to the mind and will prove of more utility in the long run than unco-ordinated particular truths, however immediately practical the latter may seem to be.

But to attain a certain knowledge of nature is not so easy or simple as it may sound at first hearing, for the human mind is influenced by preconceptions and prejudices which bear upon our interpretation of experience and distort our judgments. It is necessary, then, to draw attention to 'the idols and false notions' which inevitably influence the human mind and render science difficult of attainment unless one is aware of them and warned against them. Hence Bacon's famous doctrine of 'the idols'.[3] There are four main types, the idols of the tribe, the idols of the cave or den, the idols of the market-place and the idols of the theatre. 'The doctrines of the idols stands to the interpretation of nature as the doctrine of sophistical arguments stands to common logic.'[4] Just as it is useful for the syllogistic dialectician to be aware of the nature of sophistical arguments, so it is useful for the scientist or natural philosopher to be aware of the nature of the idols of the human mind, that he may be on his guard against their influence.

The 'idols of the tribe' (*idola tribus*) are those errors, the tendency to which is inherent in human nature and which hinder objective judgment. For example, man is prone to rest content with that aspect of things which strikes the senses. Apart from the fact that this tendency is responsible for the neglect of investigation into the nature of those things which, like air or the 'animal spirits', are not directly observable, 'sense is in itself weak and misleading'. For the scientific interpretation of nature it is not enough to rely on the senses, not even when they are supplemented by the use of instruments; suitable experiments are also necessary. Then, again, the human mind is prone to rest in those ideas which have once been received and believed or which are pleasing to it and to pass over or reject instances which run counter to received or cherished beliefs. The human mind is not immune from the influence of the will and affections: 'for what a man would like to be true, to that he tends to give credence'. Further, the human mind is prone to indulge in abstractions; and it tends to conceive as constant what is really changing or in flux. Bacon thus draws attention to the danger of relying on appearances, on the untested and uncriticized data of the senses; to the phenomenon of 'wishful thinking'; and to the mind's tendency to mistake abstractions for things. He also draws attention to man's tendency to interpret nature anthropomorphically. Man easily reads into nature final causes 'which proceed from the nature of man rather than from that of the universe'. On this matter one may recall what he says in his work *Of the Advancement of Learning* (2) concerning the introduction of final causes into physics. 'For to say that the hairs of the eyelids are for a quickset and fence about the sight; or that the firmness of the skins and hides of living creatures is to defend them from the extremities of heat or cold; or that the clouds are for watering of the earth' is 'impertinent' in physics. Such considerations 'stay and slug the ship from farther sailing, and have brought this to pass, that the search of the physical causes hath been neglected and passed in silence'. Although Bacon says, as we have seen, that final causality 'is well inquired and collected in metaphysics', it is pretty clear that he regarded notions like the above as instances of man's tendency to interpret natural activity on an analogy with human purposeful activity.

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[1] *Instauratio magna, distributio operis.*

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Novum organum*, I, 38–68.

[4] *Ibid.*, I, 40.

The 'idols of the den' (*idola specus*) are the errors peculiar to each individual, arising from his temperament, education, reading and the special influences which have weighed with him as an individual. These factors lead him to interpret phenomena according to the viewpoint of his own den or cave. 'For each one has (in addition to the aberrations of human nature in general) a certain individual cave or cavern of his own, which breaks and distorts the light of nature.' Bacon's language designedly recalls Plato's parable of the cave in the *Republic*.

The 'idols of the market-place' (*idola fori*) are errors due to the influence of language. The words used in common language describe things as commonly conceived; and when an acute mind sees that the commonly accepted analysis of things is inadequate, language may stand in the way of the expression of a more adequate analysis. Sometimes words are employed when there are no corresponding things. Bacon gives examples like *fortuna* and *primum mobile*. Sometimes words are employed without any clear concept of what is denoted or without any commonly recognized meaning. Bacon takes as an example the word 'humid', *humidum*, which may refer to various sorts of things or qualities or actions.

The 'idols of the theatre' (*idola theatri*) are the philosophical systems of the past, which are nothing better than stage-plays representing unreal worlds of man's own creation. In general there are three types of false philosophy. First there is 'sophistical' philosophy, the chief representative of which is Aristotle, who corrupted natural philosophy with his dialectic. Secondly, there is 'empirical' philosophy, based on a few narrow and obscure observations. The chemists are the chief offenders here: Bacon mentions the philosophy of William Gilbert, author of *De magnete* (1600). Thirdly there is 'superstitious' philosophy, characterized by the introduction of theological considerations. The Pythagoreans indulged in this sort of thing, and, more subtly and dangerously, Plato and the Platonists.

Bad demonstrations are the allies and support of the 'idols': 'by far the best demonstration is experience'.[1] But it is necessary to make a distinction. Mere experience is not enough; it may be compared to a man groping his way in the dark and clutching at anything which offers, in the hope that he will eventually take the right direction. True experience is planned: it may be compared to the activity of a man who first lights a lamp and sees the way clearly.[2] It is not a question of simply multiplying experiments, but of proceeding by an orderly and methodically inductive process.[3] Nor is true induction the same thing as *inductio per enumerationem simplicem*, which is 'puerile' and leads to precarious conclusions which are arrived at without sufficient examination and often with a total neglect of negative instances.[4]

[1] I, 70. [2] I, 83. [3] I, 100. [4] I, 105.

Bacon seems to have thought, wrongly, that the only form of induction known to the Aristotelians was perfect induction or induction 'by simple enumeration', in which no serious attempt was made to discover a real causal connection. But it is undeniable that insufficient consideration had been paid to the subject of inductive method.

What, then, is true induction, positively considered? Human power is directed to or consists in being able to generate a new form in a given nature. From this it follows that human science is directed to the discovery of the forms of things.[1] 'Form' does not here refer to the final cause: the form or formal cause of a given nature is such that, 'given the form, the nature infallibly follows'.[2] It is the law which constitutes a nature. 'And so the form of heat or the form of light is the same thing as the law of heat or the law of light.'[3] Wherever heat manifests itself it is fundamentally the same reality which manifests itself, even if the things in which heat manifests itself are heterogeneous; and to discover the law governing this manifestation of heat is to discover the form of heat. The discovery of these laws or forms would increase human power. For example, gold is a combination of various qualities or natures, and whoever knew the forms or laws of these various qualities or natures could produce them in another body; and this would infallibly result in the transformation of that body into gold.[4]

The discovery of forms in this sense, that is, of the eternal and unchangeable forms or laws, belongs, however, to metaphysics, to which, as has already been mentioned, the consideration of 'formal causes' properly belongs. Physics are concerned with efficient causes or with the investigation of concrete bodies in their natural operation rather than with the possible transformation of one body into another through a knowledge of the forms of simple natures. The physicist will investigate 'concrete bodies as they are found in the ordinary course of nature'.[5] He will investigate what Bacon calls the *latens processus*, the process of change which is not immediately observable but needs to be discovered. 'For example, in every generation and transformation of bodies inquiry must be made as to what is lost and flies away, what remains and what is added; what is dilated and what is contracted; what is united and what is separated; what is continued and what is cut off; what impels and what hinders; what dominates and what succumbs; and much else besides. Nor are these things to be investigated only in the generation and transformation of bodies but also in all other alterations and motions . . .'[1] The process of natural change depends on factors which are not immediately observed by the senses. The physicist will also investigate what Bacon calls the *latens schematismus*, the inner structure of bodies.[2] 'But the thing will not on that account be reduced to the atom, which presupposes the vacuum and unchanging matter (both of which are false) but to true particles, as they may be found to be.'[3]

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[1] 2, 1. [2] 2, 4. [3] 1, 17. [4] 2, 5. [5] *Ibid.*

We have thus the investigation of the eternal and changeless forms of simple natures, which constitutes metaphysics, and the investigation of the efficient and material causes and of the *latens processus* and *latens schematismus* (all of which relate to 'the common and ordinary course of nature, not to the fundamental and eternal laws'), which constitutes physics.[4] The purpose of both is, however, increase of man's power over nature; and this cannot be fully attained without a knowledge of the ultimate forms.

The problem of induction is, therefore, the problem of the discovery of forms. There are two distinct stages. First, there is the 'eduction' of axioms from experience; and, secondly, there is the deduction or derivation of new experiments from the axioms. In more modern language we should say that a hypothesis must first be formed on the basis of the facts of experience, and then observations which will test the value of the hypothesis must be deduced from the hypothesis. This means, says Bacon, that the primary task is to prepare a 'sufficient and good natural and experimental history', based on the facts.[5] Suppose that one desires to discover the form of heat. First of all one must construct a list of cases in which heat is present (*instantiae convenientes in natura calidi*); for example, the rays of the sun, the striking of sparks from flint, the interior of animals, or nasturtium when chewed. Then we shall have a *tabula essentiae et praesentiae*.[6] After this a list should be made of cases which are as much as possible alike to the first but in which heat is nevertheless absent. For example, 'the rays of the moon and of the stars and of comets are not found to be warm to the sense of touch'.[7] In this way *a tabula declinationis sive absentiae in proximo* will be constructed. Finally what Bacon calls a *tabula graduum* or *tabula comparativae* must be made of cases in which the nature whose form is being investigated is present in varying degrees.[1] For example, the heat of animals is increased by exercise and by fever. These tables having been constructed, the work of induction really begins. By comparing the instances we must discover what is always present when a given nature (heat, for example) is present; what is always absent when it is absent; and what varies in correspondence with the variations of that 'nature'.[2] First of all, we shall be able to exclude (as the form of a given nature) what is not present in some instance in which that nature is present or which is present in an instance in which the nature is absent or which does not vary in correspondence with the variations of that nature. This is the process of *rejectio* or *exclusio*.[3] But it simply lays the foundations of true induction, which is not completed until a positive affirmation is arrived at.[4] A provisional positive affirmation is arrived at by comparing the positive 'tables'; and Bacon calls this provisional affirmation a *permissio intellectus* or *interpretatio inchoata* or *vindemiatio prima*.[5] Taking heat as an example, he finds the form of heat in motion or, more exactly, in *motus expansivus, cohibitus, et nitens per partes minores*, expanding and restrained motion which makes its way through the smaller parts.

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[1] 2, 6. [2] 2, 7. [3] 2, 8. [4] 2, 9. [5] 2, 10. [6] 2, 11. [7] 2, 12.

However, in order to render the provisional affirmation certain further means have to be employed; and the rest of the *Novum organum*[6] is devoted to the first of these, which Bacon calls the way of *praerogativae instantiarum*, privileged cases or instances. One class of privileged case is that of unique cases, *instantiae solitariae*. These are cases in which the nature under investigation is found in things which have nothing in common save their participation in that nature. The plan of the *Novum organum* demands that after treating of the *praerogativae instantiarum* Bacon should go on to treat first of seven other 'helps to the intellect' in true and perfect induction and then of the *latentes processus* and *latentes schematismi* in nature; but in actual fact he gets no further than the completion of his treatment of the *praerogativae instantiarum*.

In the *Nova Atlantis*, which also is an unfinished work, Bacon pictures an island in which is situated Solomon's House, an institute devoted to the study and contemplation 'of the works and creatures of God'. Bacon is informed that 'the purpose of our foundation is the knowledge of the causes and motions and inner virtues in nature and the furthest possible extension of the limits of human dominion'. He is then told of their researches and inventions, among which figure submarines and aeroplanes. All this illustrates Bacon's conviction concerning the practical function of science. But though he performed experiments himself he cannot be said to have contributed much personally to the practical realization of his dreams. He certainly exerted himself to find a patron able and willing to endow a scientific institute of the type of which he dreamed, but he met with no success. This lack of immediate success should not, however, be taken as an indication that Bacon's ideas were unimportant, still less that they were silly. The Scholastic, and in general the metaphysician, will lay much more emphasis on and attach much more value to 'contemplation' (in the Aristotelian sense) than Bacon did; but the latter's insistence on the practical function of science, or of what he called 'experimental philosophy', heralded a movement which has culminated in modern technical civilization, rendered possible by those laboratories and institutes of research and applied science which Bacon envisaged. He vehemently attacked the English universities, for which, in his opinion, science meant at the best mere learning and at the worst mere play with words and obscure terms, and he looked on himself, with his idea of fruitful knowledge, as the herald of a new era. So indeed he was. There has been a strong tendency to depreciate Francis Bacon and to minimize his importance; but the influence of his writings was considerable, and the outlook which he represented has entered profoundly into the western mind. Perhaps it is only fitting, if one can say so without being misunderstood, that the most recent systematic and appreciative study of his philosophy is the work of an American. For my own part I find Bacon's outlook inadequate, if it is considered as a comprehensive philosophy; but I do not see how one can legitimately deny its importance and significance. If one looks upon him as a metaphysician or as an epistemologist, he scarcely bears favourable comparison with the leading philosophers of the classical modern period; but if one looks upon him as the herald of the scientific age he stands in a place by himself.

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[1] 2, 13. [2] 2, 15. [3] 2, 16–18. [4] 2, 19. [5] 2, 20. [6] 2, 21 ff.

One of the reasons why Bacon has been depreciated is, of course, his failure to attribute to mathematics that importance in physics which it actually possessed. And it would be difficult, I think, even for his most ardent admirer to maintain successfully that Bacon had a proper understanding of the sort of work which was being accomplished by the leading scientists of his day.

Furthermore, he implies that right use of the inductive method would put all intellects more or less on the same level, as though 'not much is left to acuteness and strength of talent'.[1] It is difficult, he says, to draw a perfect circle without a pair of compasses, but with it anyone can do so. A practical understanding of the true inductive method serves a function analogous to that of the pair of compasses. It was a weakness in Bacon that he did not fully realize that there is such a thing as scientific genius and that its rôle cannot be adequately supplied by the use of a quasi-mechanical method. No doubt he distrusted the illegitimate employment of imagination and fantasy in science, and rightly so; but there is considerable difference between the great scientist who divines a fruitful hypothesis and the man who is capable of making experiments and observations when he has been told on what lines to work.

On the other hand, Bacon was by no means blind to the use of hypothesis in science, even if he did not attach sufficient importance to scientific deduction. In any case the deficiencies in Bacon's conception of method ought not to prevent one giving him full credit for realizing the fact that a 'new organ' was required, namely a developed logic of inductive method. Not only did he realize the need and make a sustained attempt to supply it, but he also anticipated a great deal of what his successor in this matter was to say in the nineteenth century. There are, of course, considerable differences between Bacon's philosophy and that of J. S. Mill. Bacon was not an empiricist in the sense in which Mill was an empiricist, for he believed in 'natures' and in fixed natural laws; but his suggestions as to inductive method contain essentially the canons later formulated by Mill. Bacon may not have made any profound study of the presuppositions of induction. But, then, if induction requires a 'justification', it was certainly not supplied by Mill. Bacon obviously did not solve all problems of induction, nor did he give a final and adequate logical systematization of scientific method; but it would be absurd to expect or to demand that he should have done so. With all his shortcomings the author of the *Novum organum* occupies one of the most important positions in the history of inductive logic and of the philosophy of science.

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[1] *Novum organum*, I, 61.

CHAPTER XX

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

General remarks—Niccolò Machiavelli—St. Thomas More—Richard Hooker—Jean Bodin—Joannes Althusius—Hugo Grotius.

1. WE have seen that political thought at the close of the Middle Ages still moved, to a great extent, within the general framework of mediaeval political theory. In the political philosophy of Marsilius of Padua we can certainly discern a strong tendency to the exaltation of the self-sufficiency of the State and to the subordination of Church to State; but the general outlook of Marsilius, as of kindred thinkers, lay under the influence of the common mediaeval dislike of absolutism. The conciliar movement aimed at the constitutionalization of ecclesiastical government; and neither Ockham nor Marsilius had advocated monarchic absolutism within the State. But in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries we witness the growth of political absolutism; and this historical change was naturally reflected in political theory. In England we witness the rise of the Tudor absolutism, which began with the reign of King Henry VII (1485–1509), who was able to establish centralized monarchic power at the close of the Wars of the Roses. In Spain the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella (1469) united the kingdoms of Aragon and Castile and laid the foundation for the rise of the Spanish absolutism which reached its culmination, so far as imperialistic glory was concerned, in the reign of Charles V (1516–56), who was crowned emperor in 1520 and abdicated in 1556 in favour of Philip II (d. 1598). In France the Hundred Years War constituted a set-back to the growth of national unity and the consolidation of the central power; but when in 1439 the Estates agreed to direct taxation by the sovereign for the purpose of supporting a permanent army, the foundation of monarchic absolutism was laid. When France emerged from the Hundred Years War in 1453, the way was open for the establishment of the absolute monarchy which lasted until the time of the Revolution. Both in England, where absolutism was comparatively short-lived, and in France, where it enjoyed a long life, the rising class of merchants favoured the centralization of power at the expense of

the feudal nobility. The rise of absolutism meant the decay of the feudal society. It meant also the inauguration of a period of transition between mediaeval and 'modern' conceptions of the State and of sovereignty. However, later developments can be left out of account here; it is with the Renaissance that we are concerned; and the Renaissance period was the period in which monarchic absolutism arose in an obvious manner.

This does not mean, of course, that the political theories of the Renaissance period were all theories of monarchic despotism. Catholics and Protestants were at one in regarding the exercise of sovereign power as divinely limited. For example, the famous Anglican writer, Richard Hooker, was strongly influenced by the mediaeval idea of law as divided into eternal, natural and positive law, while a Catholic theorist like Suárez insisted strongly on the unchangeable character of natural law and the indefeasibility of natural rights. The theory of the divine right of kings, as put forward by William Barclay in his *De regno et regali potestate* (1600), by James I in his *Trew Law of Free Monarchies* and by Sir Robert Filmer in his *Patriarcha* (1680), was not so much a theoretical reflection of practical absolutism as an attempt to support a challenged and passing absolutism. This is especially true of Filmer's work, which was largely directed against both Catholic and Protestant opponents of royal absolutism. The theory of the divine right of kings was not really a philosophical theory at all. Philosophers like the Calvinist Althusius and the Catholic Suárez did not regard monarchy as the sole legitimate form of government. Indeed, the theory of the divine right of kings was a passing phenomenon, and it was eminently exposed to the type of ridicule with which John Locke treated it.

But though the consolidation of centralized power and the growth of royal absolutism did not necessarily involve the acceptance of absolutism on the plane of political theory, they were themselves the expression of the felt need for unity in the changing economic and historical circumstances; and this need for unity was indeed reflected in political theory. It was reflected notably in the political and social philosophy of Machiavelli who, living in the divided and disunited Italy of the Renaissance, was peculiarly sensible to the need for unity. If this led him, in one aspect of his philosophy, to emphasize monarchic absolutism, the emphasis was due, not to any illusions about the divine right of kings, but to his conviction that a strong and stable political unity could be secured only in this way. Similarly, when at a later date Hobbes supported centralized absolutism in the form of monarchic government he did not do so out of any belief in the divine right of monarchs or in the divine character of the principle of legitimacy, but because he believed that the cohesion of society and national unity could be best secured in this way. Moreover, both Machiavelli and Hobbes believed in the fundamental egoism of individuals; and a natural consequence of this belief is the conviction that only a strong and unfettered central power is capable of restraining and overcoming the centrifugal forces which tend to the dissolution of society. In the case of Hobbes, whose philosophy will be considered in the next volume of this history, the influence of his system in general on his political theory in particular has also to be taken into account.

The growth of royal absolutism in Europe was also, of course, a symptom of, and a stimulant to, the growth of national consciousness. The rise of the nation-States naturally produced more prolonged reflection on the nature and basis of political society than had been given to this subject during the Middle Ages. With Althusius we find a use of the idea of contract, which was to play so prominent a part in later political theory. All societies, according to Althusius, depend on contract, at least in the form of tacit agreement, and the State is one of the types of society. Again, government rests on agreement or contract, and the sovereign has a trust to fufil. This contract theory was accepted also by Grotius, and it played a part in the political philosophies of the Jesuits Mariana and Suárez. The theory may be employed, of course, in different ways and with different purposes. Thus Hobbes used it to defend absolutism whereas Althusius employed it in defence of the conviction that political sovereignty is, of necessity, limited. But in itself the theory involves no particular view as to the form of government, though the idea of promise or agreement or contract as the basis of organized political society and of government might seem to stress the moral basis and the moral limitations of government.

The rise of absolutism naturally led to further reflection on the natural law and on natural rights. On this matter Catholic and Protestant thinkers were at one in continuing more or less the typical mediaeval attitude. They believed that an unchangeable natural law exists which binds all sovereigns and all societies and that this law is the foundation of certain natural rights. Thus the appeal to natural rights was allied with a belief in the limitation of sovereign power. Even Bodin, who wrote his *Six livres de la république* with a view to strengthening the royal power, which he considered to be necessary in the historical circumstances, had nevertheless a firm belief in natural law and in natural rights, particularly in the rights of private property. For the matter of that, not even the upholders of the divine right of kings imagined that the monarch was entitled to disregard the natural law: indeed, it would have constituted a contradiction had they done so. The theory of natural law and natural rights could not be asserted without a limitation on the exercise of political power being at the same time implied; but it did not involve an acceptance of democracy.

The Reformation naturally raised new issues in the sphere of political theory, or at least it set these issues in a fresh light and rendered them in certain respects more acute. The salient issues were, of course, the relation of Church to State and the right of resistance to the sovereign. The right of resistance to a tyrant was recognized by mediaeval philosophers, who had a strong sense of law; and it was only natural to find this view perpetuated in the political theory of a Catholic theologian and philosopher like Suárez. But the concrete circumstances in those countries which were affected by the Reformation set the problem in a new light. Similarly, the problem of the relation of Church to State took a new form in the minds of those who did not understand by 'Church' the super-national body the head of which is the pope as Vicar of Christ. One cannot conclude, however, that there was, for example, one clearly defined Protestant view on the right of resistance or one clearly defined Protestant view of the relation of Church to State. The situation was much too complicated to allow of such clearly defined views. Owing to the actual course taken by religious history we find different groups and bodies of Protestants adopting different attitudes to these problems. Moreover, the course of events sometimes led members of the same confession to adopt divergent attitudes at different times or in different places.

Both Luther and Calvin condemned resistance to the sovereign; but the attitude of passive obedience and submission came to be associated with Lutheranism, not with Calvinism. The reason for this was that in Scotland and in France Calvinists were at odds with the government. In Scotland John Knox stoutly defended resistance to the sovereign in the name of religious reform, while in France the Calvinists produced a series of works with the same theme. The best known of these, the *Vindiciae contra tyrannos* (1579), the authorship of which is uncertain, represented the view that there are two contracts or covenants, the one between people and sovereign, the other between the people together with the sovereign and God. The first contract creates the State; the second makes the community a religious body or Church. The point of bringing in this second contract was to enable the author to maintain the people's right not only of resistance to a ruler who tries to enforce a false religion but also of bringing pressure to bear on a 'heretical' ruler.

Owing to historical circumstances, then, some groups of Protestants seemed to those who favoured the idea of submission to the ruler in religious matters to be akin to the Catholics, that is to say, to be maintaining not only the distinction of Church and State but also the superiority of the former to the latter. And to a certain extent this was indeed the case. When ecclesiastical power was combined with secular power, as when Calvin ruled at Geneva, it was a simple matter to preach obedience to the sovereign in religious matters; but in Scotland and France a different situation obtained. John Knox found himself compelled to depart from the attitude of Calvin himself, and in Scotland the Calvinist body by no means considered itself obliged to submit to a 'heretical' sovereign. When, in France, the author of the *Vindiciae contra tyrannos* introduced the idea of the contract, he did so in order to find a ground for corporate Huguenot resistance and, ultimately, for bringing pressure to bear on ungodly rulers; he did not do so in order to support 'private judgment' or individualism or toleration. The Calvinists, in spite of their bitter hostility to the Catholic religion, accepted not only the idea of revelation but also that of invoking the aid of the civil power in establishing the religion in which they believed.

The Reformation thus led to the appearance of the perennial problem of the relation of Church and State in a new historical setting; but, as far as the Calvinists were concerned, there was some similarity at least between the solution they gave to the problem and the solution given by Catholic thinkers. Erastianism or the subordination of Church to State, was indeed a different solution; but neither Calvinists nor Erastians believed in the dissociation of religion from politics. Moreover, it would be a mistake to confuse either the limitations placed by Calvinists on the civil power or the Erastian subordination of Church to State with an assertion of 'democracy'. One could scarcely call the Scottish Presbyterians or the French Huguenots 'democrats', in spite of their attacks on their respective monarchs, while Erastianism could be combined with a belief in royal absolutism. It is true, of course, that religious movements and sects arose which did favour what may be called democratic liberalism; but I am speaking of the two most important of the Reformers, Luther and Calvin, and of the more immediate effects of the movements they inaugurated. Luther was by no means always consistent in his attitude or teaching; but his doctrine of submission tended to strengthen the power of the State. Calvin's teaching would have had the same effect but for historical circumstances which led to a modification of Calvin's attitude by his followers and to a forcing of Calvinists in certain countries into opposition to the royal power.

2. Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) is celebrated for his attitude of indifference towards the morality or immorality of the means employed by the ruler in the pursuit of his political purpose, which is the preservation and increase of power. In *The Prince* (1513), which he addressed to Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino, he mentions such good qualities as keeping faith and showing integrity and then observes that 'it is not necessary for a prince to have all the good qualities I have enumerated, but it is very necessary that he should appear to have them'.[1] If, says Machiavelli, the prince possesses and invariably practises all these good qualities, they prove injurious, though the appearance of possessing these qualities is useful. It is a good thing to appear to be merciful, faithful, humane, religious and upright, and it is a good thing to be so in reality; but at the same time the prince ought to be so disposed that he is able to act in a contrary way when circumstances require. In fine, in the actions of all men, and especially of princes, it is results which count and by which people judge. If the prince is successful in establishing and maintaining his authority, the means he employs will always be deemed honourable and will be approved by all.

It has been said that in *The Prince* Machiavelli was concerned simply to give the mechanics of government, that he prescinded from moral questions and wished simply to state the means by which political power may be established and maintained. No doubt this is true; but the fact remains that he obviously considered the ruler entitled to use immoral means in the consolidation and preservation of power. In the *Discourses* he makes it quite clear that in his opinion it is legitimate in the sphere of politics to use an immoral means in order to attain a good end. It is true that the end which Machiavelli has in mind is the security and welfare of the State; but, quite apart from the immoral character of the implied principle that the end justifies the means, the obvious difficulty arises that conceptions of what is a good end may differ. If morality is to be subordinated to political considerations, there is nothing but the actual possession of power to prevent political anarchy.

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[1] *The Prince*, 18.

This does not mean that Machiavelli had any intention of counselling widespread immorality. He was perfectly well aware that a morally degraded and decadent nation is doomed to destruction; he lamented the moral condition of Italy as he saw it and he had a sincere admiration for the civic virtues of the ancient world. Nor do I think that one is entitled to state without any qualification that he explicitly rejected the Christian conception of virtue for a pagan conception. It is perfectly true that he says in the *Discourses*[1] that the Christian exaltation of humility and contempt of the world has rendered Christians weak and effeminate; but he goes on to say that the interpretation of the Christian religion as a religion of humility and love of suffering is an erroneous interpretation. Still, one must admit that a statement of this kind, when taken in connection with Machiavelli's general outlook, approaches very nearly to an explicit repudiation of the Christian ethic. And if one also takes into account his doctrine of the amoral prince, a doctrine which is at variance with the Christian conscience, whether Catholic or Protestant, one can hardly refrain from allowing that Nietzsche's reading of Machiavelli's mind was not without foundation. When, in *The Prince*,[2] Machiavelli remarks that many men have thought that the world's affairs are irresistibly governed by fortune and God, and when he goes on to say that, although he is sometimes inclined to that opinion, he considers that fortune can be resisted, implying that virtue consists in resisting the power which governs the world, it is difficult to avoid the impression that 'virtue' meant for him something different from what it means for the Christian. He admired strength of character and power to achieve one's ends: in the prince he admired ability to win power and keep it: but he did not admire humility and he had no use for any universal application of what Nietzsche would call the 'herd morality'. He took it for granted that human nature is fundamentally egoistic; and he pointed out to the prince where his best interests lay and how he could realize them. The fact of the matter is that Machiavelli admired the unscrupulous though able potentate as he observed him in contemporary political or ecclesiastical life or in historical examples; he idealized the type. It was only through such men, he thought, that good government could be assured in a corrupt and decadent society.

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[1] 2, 2.

[2] 25.

The last sentence gives the key to the problem of the apparent discrepancy between Machiavelli's admiration for the Roman Republic, as manifested in the *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius* and the monarchical doctrine of *The Prince*. In a corrupt and decadent society in which man's natural badness and egoism have more or less free scope, where uprightness, devotion to the common good, and the religious spirit are either dead or submerged by license, lawlessness and faithlessness, it is only an absolute ruler who is able to hold together the centrifugal forces and create a strong and unified society. Machiavelli was at one with the political theorists of the ancient world in thinking that civic virtue is dependent on law; and he considered that in a corrupt society reformation is possible only through the agency of an all-powerful lawgiver. 'This is to be taken for a general rule that it happens rarely, or not at all, that any republic or kingdom is either well-ordered at the beginning or completely reformed in regard to its old institutions, if this is not done by one man. It is thus necessary that there should be one man alone who settles the method and on whose mind any such organization depends.'[1] An absolute legislator is necessary, therefore, for the founding of a State and for the reform of a State; and in saying this Machiavelli was thinking primarily of contemporary Italian States and of the political divisions of Italy. It is law which gives birth to that civic morality or virtue which is required for a strong and unified State, and the promulgation of law requires a legislator. From this Machiavelli drew the conclusion that the monarchic legislator may use any prudent means to secure this end and that, being the cause of law and of civic morality, he is independent of both so far as is required for the fulfilment of his political function. The moral cynicism expressed in *The Prince* by no means constitutes the whole of Machiavelli's doctrine; it is subordinate to the final purpose of creating or of reforming what he regarded as the true State.

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[1] *Discourses*, 1, 9, 2.

But, though Machiavelli regarded the absolute monarch or legislator as necessary for the foundation or reformation of the State, absolute monarchy was not his ideal of government. In the *Discourses*[1] he roundly asserts that, in respect of prudence and constancy, the people have the advantage and are 'more prudent, more steady and of better judgment than princes'.[2] The free republic, which was conceived by Machiavelli on the model of the Roman Republic, is superior to the absolute monarchy. If constitutional law is maintained and the people have some share in the government, the State is more stable than if it is ruled by hereditary and absolute princes. The general good, which consists, according to Machiavelli, in the increase of power and empire and in the preservation of the liberties of the people,[3] is regarded nowhere but in republics; the absolute monarch generally has regard simply for his private interests.[4]

Machiavelli's theory of government may be somewhat patchwork and unsatisfactory in character, combining, as it does, an admiration for the free republic with a doctrine of monarchic despotism; but the principles are clear. A State, when once well-ordered, will hardly be healthy and stable unless it is a republic; this is the ideal; but in order that a well-ordered State should be founded or in order that a disordered State should be reformed, a monarchic legislator is necessary in practice. Another reason for this necessity is the need for curbing the power of the nobles, for whom Machiavelli, contemplating the Italian political scene, had a particular dislike. They are idle and corrupt, and they are always enemies of civil government and order;[5] they maintain bands of mercenaries and ruin the country. Machiavelli also looked forward to a prince who would liberate and unify Italy, who would 'heal her wounds and put an end to the ravaging and plundering of Lombardy, to the swindling and taxing of the kingdom of Naples and of Tuscany'.[6] In his view the papacy, not having sufficient strength to master the whole of Italy but being strong enough to prevent any other Power from doing so, was responsible for the division of Italy into principalities, with the result that the weak and disunited country was a prey for the barbarians and for anyone who thought fit to invade it.[1]

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[1] 1, 58, 61.

[2] *Ibid.*, 8.

[3] *Ibid.*, 1, 29, 5.

[4] *Ibid.*, 2, 2, 3.

[5] *Ibid.*, 1, 55, 7-11.

[6] *The Prince*, 26.

Machiavelli, as historians have remarked, showed his 'modernity' in the emphasis he laid on the State as a sovereign body which maintains its vigour and unity by power-politics and an imperialistic policy. In this sense he divined the course of historical development in Europe. On the other hand he did not work out any systematic political theory; nor was he really concerned to do so. He was intensely interested in the contemporary Italian scene; he was an ardent patriot; and his writings are coloured through and through by this interest; they are not the writings of a detached philosopher. He also over-estimated the part played in historical development by politics in a narrow sense; and he failed to discern the importance of other factors, religious and social. He is chiefly known, of course, for his amoral advice to the prince, for his 'Machiavellianism'; but there can be little doubt that the principles of state-craft he laid down have not infrequently, even if regrettably, been those actually operative in the minds of rulers and statesmen. But historical development is not conditioned entirely by the intentions and deeds of those who occupy the limelight on the political stage. Machiavelli was clever and brilliant; but he can scarcely be called a profound political philosopher.

On the other hand, one must remember that Machiavelli was concerned with actual political life as he saw it and with what is actually done rather than with what ought to be done from the moral point of view. He expressly disclaims any intention of depicting ideal States[2] and he remarks that if a man lives up consistently to the highest moral principles in political life, he is likely to come to ruin and, if he is a ruler, to fail to preserve the security and welfare of the State. In the preface to the first book of the *Discourses*, he speaks of his new 'way', which, he claims, has been hitherto left untrodden. His method was one of historical induction. From a comparative examination of cause-effect sequences in history, ancient and recent, with due allowance for negative instances, he sought to establish certain practical rules in a generalized form. Given a certain purpose to be achieved, history shows that a certain line of action will or will not lead to the achievement of that purpose. He was thus immediately concerned with political mechanics; but his outlook implied a certain philosophy of history.

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[1] *Discourses*, 1, 12, 6–8.

[2] Cf. *The Prince*, 15.

It implied, for example, that there is repetition in history and that history is of such a nature that it affords a basis for induction. Machiavelli's method was not, of course, altogether new. Aristotle, for example, certainly based his political ideas on an examination of actual constitutions and he considered not only the ways in which States are destroyed but also the virtues which the ruler should pretend to have if he is to be successful.[1] But Aristotle was much more concerned than Machiavelli with abstract theory. He was also primarily interested in political organizations as the setting for moral and intellectual education, whereas Machiavelli was much more interested in the actual nature and course of concrete political life.

3. A very different type of thinker was St. Thomas More (1478–1535), Lord Chancellor of England, who was beheaded by Henry VIII for refusing to acknowledge the latter as supreme head of the Church in England. In his *De optimo reipublicae statu deque nova insula Utopia* (1516) he wrote, under the influence of Plato's *Republic*, a kind of philosophical novel describing an ideal State on the island of Utopia. It is a curious work, combining a sharp criticism of contemporary social and economic conditions with an idealization of the simple moral life, which was scarcely in harmony with the more worldly spirit of the time. More was unacquainted with *The Prince*; but his book was in part directed against the idea of statecraft represented in Machiavelli's work. It was also directed against the growing spirit of commercial exploitation. In these respects it was a 'conservative' book. On the other hand More anticipated some ideas which reappear in the development of modern socialism.

In the first book of his *Utopia* More attacks the destruction of the old agricultural system through the enclosure of land by wealthy and wealth-seeking proprietors. Desire of gain and wealth leads to the conversion of arable land into pasture, in order that sheep may be reared on a wide scale and their wool sold in foreign markets. All this greed for gain and the accompanying centralization of wealth in the hands of a few leads to the rise of a dispossessed and indigent class. Then, with a view to keeping this class in due subjection, heavy and fearful punishments are decreed for theft. But the increased severity of the criminal law is useless. It would be much better to provide the means of livelihood for the indigent, since it is precisely want which drives these people to crime. The government, however, does nothing: it is busily engaged in diplomacy and wars of conquest. War necessitates extortionate taxation, and, when war is over, the soldiers are thrown into a community which is already unable to support itself. Power-politics thus aggravates the economic and social evils.

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[1] Cf. *Politics*, 5, 11.

In contrast with an acquisitive society More presents an agricultural society, in which the family is the unit. Private property is abolished, and money is no longer used as a means of exchange. But More did not depict his Utopia as a republic of uneducated peasants. The means of livelihood are assured to all, and the working hours are reduced to six hours a day, in order that the citizens may have leisure for cultural pursuits. For the same reason a slave class sees to the harder and more burdensome work, the slaves consisting partly of condemned criminals, partly of captives of war.

It is sometimes said that More was the first to proclaim the ideal of religious toleration. It must be remembered, however, that in sketching his Utopia he prescinded from the Christian revelation and envisaged simply natural religion. Divergent views and convictions were to be tolerated for the most part, and theological strife was to be avoided; but those who denied God's existence and providence, the immortality of the soul and sanctions in the future life would be deprived of capacity to hold any public office and accounted as less than men. The truths of natural religion and of natural morality might not be called in question, whatever a man might think privately, for the health of the State and of society depended on their acceptance. There can be little doubt that More would have regarded the Wars of Religion with horror; but he was certainly not the type of man who asserts that it is a matter of indifference what one believes.

More had no use at all for the dissociation of morals from politics, and he speaks very sharply of statesmen who rant about the public good when all the time they are seeking their own advantage. Some of his ideas, those concerning the criminal code, for example, are extremely sensible, and in his ideals of security for all and of reasonable toleration he was far ahead of his time. But though his political ideal was in many respects enlightened and practical, in some other respects it can be regarded as an idealization of a past co-operative society. The forces and tendencies against which he protested were not to be stayed in their development by any

Utopia. The great Christian humanist stood on the threshold of a capitalistic development which was to run its course. Yet in due time some at any rate of his ideals were to be fulfilled.

4. More died before the Reformation in England had taken a definite form. In *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* by Richard Hooker (1553–1600) the problem of Church and State finds its expression in the form dictated by religious conditions in England after the Reformation. Hooker's work, which had its influence on John Locke, was written in refutation of the Puritan attack on the established Church of England; but its scope is far wider than that of the ordinary controversial writing of the time. The author treats first of law in general, and on this matter he adheres to the mediaeval idea of law, particularly to that of St. Thomas. He distinguishes the eternal law, 'that order which God before all ages hath set down with Himself for Himself to do all things by',[1] from the natural law. He then proceeds to distinguish the natural law as operative in non-free agents, which he calls 'natural agents', from the natural law as perceived by the human reason and as freely obeyed by man.[2] 'The rule of voluntary agents on earth is the sentence that reason giveth concerning the goodness of those things which they are to do.'[3] 'The main principles of reason are in themselves apparent';[4] that is to say, there are certain general moral principles the obligatory character of which is immediately apparent and evident. A sign of this is the general consent of mankind. 'The general and perpetual voice of men is as the sentence of God Himself. For that which all men have at all times learned Nature herself must needs have taught; and God being the author of Nature, her voice is but His instrument.'[5] Other more particular principles are deduced by reason.

In addition to the eternal law and the natural law there is human positive law. The natural law binds men as men and it does not depend on the State;[6] but human positive law comes into being when men unite in society and form a government. Owing to the fact that we are not self-sufficient as individuals 'we are naturally induced to seek communion and fellowship with others'.[7] But societies cannot exist without government, and government cannot be carried on without law; 'a distinct kind of law from that which hath been already declared'.[8] Hooker teaches that there are two foundations of society; the natural inclination of man to live in society, and 'an order expressly or secretly agreed upon, touching the manner of their union in living together. The latter is that which we call the law of a common weal, the very soul of a politic body, the parts whereof are by law animated, held together, and set on work in such actions as the common good requireth.'[1]

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[1] 1, 2.
[2] 1, 3.
[3] 1, 8.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] 1, 10.
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] *Ibid.*

The establishment of civil government thus rests upon consent, 'without which consent there were no reason that one man should take upon him to be lord or judge over another'.[2] Government is necessary; but Nature has not settled the kind of government or the precise character of laws, provided that the laws enacted are for the common good and in conformity with the natural law. If the ruler enforces laws without explicit authority from God or without authority derived in the first instance from the consent of the governed, he is a mere tyrant. 'Laws they are not therefore which public approbation hath not made so', at least through 'Parliaments, Councils, and the like assemblies'.[3] How, then, does it come about that whole multitudes are obliged to respect laws in the framing of which they had no share at all? The reason is that 'corporations are immortal: we were then alive in our predecessors, and they in their successors do live still'.[4]

Finally there are 'the laws that concern supernatural duties',[5] 'the law which God Himself hath supernaturally revealed'.[6] Thus Hooker's theory of law in general follows the theory of St. Thomas, with the same theological setting or, rather, with a like reference of law to its divine foundation, God. Nor does he add anything particularly new in his theory of the origin of political society. He introduces the idea of contract or agreement; but he does not represent the State as a purely artificial construction; on the contrary, he speaks explicitly of man's natural inclination to society, and he does not explain the State and government simply in terms of a remedy for unbridled egoism.

When he comes to treat of the Church, Hooker distinguishes between truths of faith and Church government, which is 'a plain matter of action'.[7] The point he tries to develop and defend is that the ecclesiastical law of the Church of England is in no way contrary to the Christian religion or to reason. It ought, therefore, to be obeyed by Englishmen, for Englishmen are Christians and, as Christians, they belong to the Church of England. The assumption is that Church and State are not distinct societies, at least not when the State is Christian. Hooker did not, of course, deny that Catholics and Calvinists were Christians; but he assumed in a rather naïve fashion that the Christian faith as a whole requires no universal institution. He also assumed that ecclesiastical government was more or less a matter of indifference, a view which would commend itself, for different reasons, neither to Catholics nor to Calvinists.

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[1] 1, 10. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.* [5] 1, 15. [6] 1, 16. [7] 3, 3.

Hooker is remarkable principally for his continuation of the mediaeval theory and divisions of law. In his political theory he was obviously not an upholder of the divine right of kings or of monarchic despotism. On the other hand, he did not propose his doctrine of consent or contract in order to justify rebellion against the sovereign. Even if he had considered rebellion justified, he would hardly have laboured such a point in a book designed to show that all good Englishmen should conform to the national Church. In conclusion one may remark that Hooker writes for the most part with remarkable moderation of tone, if, that is to say, one bears in mind the prevailing atmosphere of contemporary religious controversy. He was essentially a man of the *via media* and no fanatic.

5. Jean Bodin (1530–96), who had studied law at the university of Toulouse, endeavoured to make a close alliance between the study of universal law and the study of history in his *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (1566). After dividing history into three types he says: 'let us for the moment abandon the divine to the theologians, the natural to the philosophers, while we concentrate long and intently upon human actions and the rules governing them'.[1] His leading interest is revealed by the following statement in his *Dedication*. 'Indeed, in history the best part of universal law lies hidden; and what is of great weight and importance for the best appraisal of legislation—the custom of the peoples, and the beginnings, growth, conditions, changes and decline of all States—are obtained from it. The chief subject matter of this *Method* consists of these facts, since no rewards of history are more ample than those usually gathered about the governmental form of states.' The *Method* is remarkable for its strongly marked tendency to the naturalistic interpretation of history. For example, he treats of the effects of geographical situation on the physiological constitution, and so on the habits, of peoples. 'We shall explain the nature of peoples who dwell to the north and to the south, then of those who live to the east

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[1] *Preamble.*

and to the west.'[1] This sort of idea reappears later in the writings of philosophers like Montesquieu. Bodin also evolved a cyclical theory of the rise and fall of States. But the chief importance of Bodin consists in his analysis of sovereignty. Originally sketched in chapter 6 of the *Methodus*, it is treated at greater length in the *Six livres de la république* (1576).[2]

The natural social unit, from which the State arises, is the family. In the family Bodin included not simply father, mother and children, but also servants. In other words he had the Roman conception of the family, with power residing in the *paterfamilias*. The State is a secondary or derived society, in the sense that it is 'a lawful government of several households, and of their common possessions, with sovereign power'; but it is a different kind of society. The right of property is an inviolable right of the family; but it is not a right of the ruler or the State, considered, that is to say, as ruler. The ruler possesses sovereignty; but sovereignty is not the same thing as proprietorship. It is clear, then, that for Bodin, as he says in the *Methodus*,[3] 'the State is nothing else than a group of families or fraternities subjected to one and the same rule'. From this definition it follows that 'Ragusa or Geneva, whose rule is comprised almost within its walls, ought to be called a State' and that 'what Aristotle said is absurd—that too great a group of men, such as Babylon was, is a race, not a State'.[4] It is also clear that for Bodin sovereignty is essentially different from the power of the head of a family and that a State cannot exist without sovereignty. Sovereignty is defined as 'supreme power over citizens and subjects, unrestrained by law'.[5] It involves the power to create magistrates and define their offices; the power to legislate and to annul laws; the power to declare war and make peace; the right of receiving appeals; and the power of life and death. But, though it is clear that sovereignty is distinct from the power of the head of a family, it is not at all clear how sovereignty comes into being, what ultimately gives the sovereign his title to exercise sovereignty and what is the foundation of the citizen's duty of obedience. Bodin apparently thought that most States come into existence through the exercise of force; but he did not consider that force justifies itself or that the possession of physical power *ipso facto* confers sovereignty on its possessor. What does confer legitimate sovereignty is, however, left obscure.

Sovereignty is inalienable and indivisible. Executive functions and powers can, of course, be delegated, but sovereignty itself, the possession of supreme power, cannot be parcelled out, as it were. The sovereign is unrestrained by law, and he cannot limit his sovereignty by law, so long as he remains sovereign, for law is the creation of the sovereign. This does not mean, of course, that the sovereign is entitled to disregard the divine authority or the natural law; he cannot, for instance, expropriate all families. Bodin was insistent on the natural right of property, and the communistic theories of Plato and More drew sharp criticism from his pen. But the sovereign is the supreme fount of law and has ultimate and full control over legislation.

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[1] 5. [2] Enlarged Latin edition, 1584. [3] 6. [4] *Ibid.* [5] *Republic*, I, 8.

This theory of sovereignty must give the impression that Bodin believed simply in royal absolutism, especially if one speaks of the sovereign as 'he'. But though he certainly wished to strengthen the position of the French monarch, since he felt that this was necessary in the historical circumstances, his theory of sovereignty is not in itself bound up with monarchic absolutism. An assembly, for example, can be the seat of sovereignty. Forms of government may differ in different States; but the nature of sovereignty remains the same in all those States, if they are well-ordered States. Moreover, there is no reason why a monarch should not delegate a great deal of his power and govern 'constitutionally', provided that it is recognized that this governmental arrangement depends on the will of the monarch, if, that is to say, sovereignty rests with the monarch. For it does not necessarily follow that because a State happens to have a king, the latter is sovereign. If the king is really dependent on an assembly or parliament, he cannot be called a sovereign in the strict sense.

As historians have pointed out, however, Bodin was by no means always consistent. It was his intention to increase the prestige and insist on the supreme power of the French monarch; and it followed from his theory of sovereignty that the French monarch should be unrestricted by law. But it followed from his theory of natural law that there might be cases when the subject would be not only justified in disobeying a law promulgated by the sovereign but also morally obliged to do so. Moreover, he even went so far as to state that taxation, as it involves an interference with property, requires the assent of the Estates, though the latter, according to the theory of sovereignty, depend for their existence on the sovereign. Again, he recognized certain *leges imperii* or constitutional limitations on the power of the king. In other words, his desire to emphasize the monarch's supreme and sovereign power was at variance with his inclination towards constitutionalism and led him into contradictory positions.

Bodin emphasized the philosophical study of history and he certainly made a sustained attempt to understand history; but he was not altogether free from the prejudices and superstitions of his time. Though he rejected astrological determinism, he nevertheless believed in the influence of the heavenly bodies on human affairs and he indulged in speculations concerning numbers and their relations to governments and States.

In conclusion it may be mentioned that in his *Colloquium heptaplomeres*, a dialogue, Bodin pictures people of different religions living together in harmony. In the midst of historical events which were not favourable to peace among the members of different confessions he supported the principle of mutual toleration.

6. Bodin had given no very clear account of the origin and foundation of the State; but in the philosophy of the Calvinist writer Joannes Althusius (1557–1638) we find a clear statement of the contract theory. In Althusius' opinion a contract lies at the basis of every association or community of men. He distinguishes various types of community; the family, the *collegium* or corporation, the local community, the province and the State. Each of these communities corresponds to a natural need in man; but the formation of any definite community rests upon an agreement or contract whereby human beings agree to form an association or community for their common good in respect of specified purposes. In this way they become *symbiotici*, living together as sharers in a common good. The family, for instance, corresponds to a natural need in man; but the foundation of any definite family rests on a contract. So it is with the State. But a community, in order to attain its purpose, must have a common authority. So we can distinguish a second contract between the community and the administrative authority, a contract which is the foundation of the duties pertaining to either party.

There is a further important point to be made. As each type of community corresponds to a definite human need, the constitution of a wider or more extensive community does not annul or abolish the narrower community: rather is the wider community constituted by the agreement of a number of narrower communities, which themselves remain in existence. The local community, for example, does not annul the families or the corporations composing it; it owes its existence to their agreement and its purpose is distinct from theirs. They are not, therefore, swallowed up by the wider community. Again, the State is immediately constituted by the agreement of provinces rather than directly by a contract between individuals, and it does not render the provinces superfluous or useless. From this a certain federation logically follows. Althusius was far from considering the State as resting on a contract whereby individuals handed over their rights to a government. A number of associations, which, of course, ultimately represent individuals, agree together to form the State and agree on a constitution or law regulating the attainment of the common purpose or good for which the State is formed.

But, if the State is one among a number of communities or associations, what is its distinguishing and peculiar mark? As in Bodin's political theory it is sovereignty (*ius maiestatis*); but, unlike Bodin, Althusius declared that sovereignty rests always, necessarily and inalienably, with the people. This does not mean, of course, that he envisaged direct government by the people; through the law of the State, a law itself resting on agreement, power is delegated to the administrative officers or magistrates of the State. Althusius contemplated a supreme magistrate, who might, of course, though not necessarily, be a king, and 'ephors' who would see that the constitution was observed. But the theory does involve a clear assertion of popular sovereignty. It also involves the right of resistance, since the power of the ruler rests on a contract, and if he is faithless to his trust or breaks the contract, power reverts to the people. When this happens, the people may appoint another ruler, though this will be done in a constitutional manner.

Althusius assumed, of course, the sanctity of contracts, resting on the natural law; and the natural law itself he regarded, in the traditional manner, as resting on divine authority. It was Grotius, rather than Althusius, who re-examined the idea of natural law. But Althusius' political theory is remarkable for its assertion of popular sovereignty and the use made of the idea of contract. As a Calvinist he insisted on the right of resistance to the ruler; but it must be added that he had no idea of religious freedom or of a State which would be officially indifferent to forms of religion. Such a notion was no more acceptable to the Calvinist than to the Catholic.

7. The chief work of Hugo Grotius or Huig de Groot (1583–1645) is his famous *De iure belli ac pacis* (1625). In the *Prolegomena*

to that work[1] he represents Carneades as holding that there is no such thing as a universally obligatory natural law, 'because all creatures, men as well as animals, are impelled by nature towards ends advantageous to themselves'. Each man seeks his own advantage; human laws are dictated simply by consideration of expediency; they are not based upon or related to a natural law, for the latter does not exist. To this Grotius replies that 'man is, to be sure, an animal, but an animal of a superior kind', and 'among the traits characteristic of man is an impelling desire for society, that is, for the social life, not of any and every sort, but peaceful and organized according to the measure of his intelligence. . . . Stated as a universal truth, therefore, the assertion that every animal is impelled by nature to seek only its own good cannot be conceded.'[2] There is a natural social order, and it is the maintenance of this social order which is the source of law. 'To this sphere of law belong the abstaining from that which is another's . . . the obligation to fulfil promises . . .'[3] Furthermore, man is possessed of the power of judging 'what things are agreeable or harmful (as to both things present and things to come) and what can lead to either alternative'; and 'whatever is clearly at variance with such judgment is understood to be contrary also to the law of nature, that is, to the nature of man'.[4]

The nature of man is thus the foundation of law. 'For the very nature of man, which even if we had no lack of anything would lead us into the mutual relations of society, is the mother of the law of nature.'[5] The natural law enjoins the keeping of promises; and as the obligation of observing the positive laws of States arises from mutual consent and promise, 'nature may be considered, so to say, the great-grandmother of municipal law'. In point of fact, of course, individuals are by no means self-sufficient; and expediency has a part to play in the institution of positive law and subjection to authority. 'But just as the laws of each State have in view the advantage of that State, so by mutual consent it has become possible that certain laws should originate as between all States or a great many States; and it is apparent that the laws thus originating had in view the advantage, not of particular States, but of the great society of States. And this is what is called the law of nations, whenever we distinguish that term from the law of nature.'[6] But it is not simply a question of expediency: it is also a question of natural justice. 'Many hold, in fact, that the standard of justice which they insist upon in the case of individuals within the State is inapplicable to a nation or the ruler of a nation.'[1] But, 'if no association of men can be maintained without law . . . surely also that association which binds together the human race, or binds many nations together, has need of law; this was perceived by him who said that shameful deeds ought not to be committed even for the sake of one's country'.[2] It follows that 'war ought not to be undertaken except for the enforcement of rights; when once undertaken, it should be carried on only within the bounds of law and good faith'.[3]

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[1] 5.

[2] *De iure belli ac pacis*, 6.

[3] *Ibid.*, 8.

[4] *Ibid.*, 9.

[5] *Ibid.*, 16.

[6] *Ibid.*, 17

Grotius is convinced, then, that 'there is a common law among nations, which is valid alike in peace and war'.[4] We have, therefore, the natural law, the municipal law or positive law of States, and the law of nations. In addition, Grotius, a believing Protestant, admits the positive Christian law. 'This, however—contrary to the practice of most men—I have distinguished from the law of nature, considering it as certain that in that most holy law a greater degree of moral perfection is enjoined upon us than the law of nature, alone and by itself, would require.'[5]

Historians generally attribute to Grotius an important rôle in the 'freeing' of the idea of natural law from theological foundations and presuppositions and in naturalizing it. In this respect, it is said, he was much closer than were the Schoolmen to Aristotle, for whom he had a great admiration. It is certainly true to some extent that Grotius separated the idea of natural law from the idea of God. 'What we have been saying would have a degree of validity even if we should concede that which cannot be conceded without the utmost wickedness, that there is no God, or that the affairs of men are of no concern to Him.'[6] But he proceeds to say that the law of nature, 'proceeding as it does from the essential traits implanted in man, can nevertheless rightly be attributed to God, because of His having willed that such traits exist in us'.[7] And he quotes Chrysippus and St. John Chrysostom in support. Moreover he defines the law of nature as follows. 'The law of nature is a dictate of right reason which points out that an act, according as it is or is not in conformity with rational nature, has in it a quality of moral baseness or moral necessity; and that, in consequence, such an act is either forbidden or enjoined by the author of nature, God.'[1] Among his references on this matter he refers to Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, whose remarks, he says, are by no means to be slighted. While, then, it may be true to say that, as a historical fact, Grotius' treatment of the idea of natural law contributed to the 'naturalization' of the idea inasmuch as he was treating law, not as a theologian, but as a lawyer and philosopher of law, it is wrong to suggest that Grotius made any radical break with the position of, say, St. Thomas. What seems to impress some historians is his insistence on the fact that an act enjoined or forbidden by the natural law is enjoined or forbidden by God because it is, in itself, obligatory or wrong. The natural law is unchangeable, even by God.[2] It is not right or wrong because of God's decision that it should be right or wrong. But the notion that the moral quality of acts permitted, enjoined or forbidden by the natural law depends on God's arbitrary *fiat* was certainly not that of St. Thomas. It represents, more or less, the Ockhamist view; but it is in no way necessarily bound up with the attribution of an ultimate metaphysical and 'theological' foundation to the natural law. When Grotius points out[3] the difference between the natural law and 'volitional divine law', he is making a statement with which St. Thomas would gave agreed. It seems to me that it is Grotius' 'modernity', his careful and systematic treatment of law from the standpoint of a lay lawyer and philosopher, which is responsible for the impression that he made a bigger break with the past than he actually did.

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[1] *De iure belli ac pacis*, 21. [2] *Ibid.*, 23. [3] *Ibid.*, 25. [4] *Ibid.*, 28.
[5] *Ibid.*, 50. [6] *Prolegomena*, 11. [7] *Ibid.*, 12.

In his *Prolegomena*[4] Grotius says, 'I have made it my concern to refer the proofs of things touching the law of nature to certain fundamental conceptions which are beyond question, so that no one can deny them without doing violence to himself'. In the first book[5] he asserts that *a priori* proof, which 'consists in demonstrating the necessary agreement or disagreement of anything with a rational and social nature', is 'more subtle' than *a posteriori* proof, though the latter is 'more familiar'. But later in his work,[6] when treating of the causes of doubt in moral questions, he remarks that 'what Aristotle wrote is perfectly true, that certainty is not to be found in moral questions in the same degree as in mathematical science'. To this statement Samuel Pufendorf took exception.[7] I do not think, therefore, that one ought to lay great

[1] 1, 1, 10, 1.

[2] 1, 1, 10, 5.

[3] 1, 1, 10, 2.

[4] 39.

[5] 1, 1, 12, 1.

[6] 2, 23, 1.

[7] *De jure naturae et gentium*, 1, 2, 9–10.

stress on Grotius' place in the movement of philosophical thought which was characterized by emphasis on deduction, an emphasis due to the influence of the success of mathematical science. No doubt he did not escape this influence; but the doctrine that there are self-evident principles of natural morality was by no means new.

'The State', says Grotius,[1] 'is a complete association of free men, joined together for the enjoyment of rights and for their common interests.' The State itself is the 'common subject' of sovereignty, sovereignty being the power 'whose actions are not subject to the legal control of another, so that they cannot be rendered void by the operation of another human will'.[2] The 'special subject is one or more persons, according to the laws and customs of each nation'.[3] Grotius proceeds to deny the opinion of Althusius (who is not named, however) that sovereignty always and necessarily resides in the people. He asks why it should be supposed that the people should be incapable of transferring sovereignty.[4] Though sovereignty is in itself indivisible, in the sense that it means something definite, the actual exercise of sovereign power can be divided. 'It may happen that a people, when choosing a king, may reserve to itself certain powers but may confer the others on the king absolutely.'[5] Divided sovereignty may have its disadvantages, but so has every form of government; 'and a legal provision is to be judged not by what this or that man considers best, but by what accords with the will of him with whom the provision originated'.[6]

As to resistance or rebellion against rulers, Grotius argues that it is quite incompatible with the nature and purpose of the State that the right of resistance should be without limitation. 'Among good men one principle at any rate is established beyond controversy, that if the authorities issue any order that is contrary to the law of nature or to the commandments of God, the order should not be carried out';[7] but rebellion is a different matter. However, if in the conferring of authority the right of resistance was retained or if the king openly shows himself the enemy of the whole people or if he alienates the kingdom, rebellion, that is, resistance by force, is justified.

Grotius teaches that a just war is permissible; but he insists that 'no other just cause for undertaking war can there be excepting injury received'.[1] It is permissible for a State to wage war against another State which has attacked it, or in order to recover what has been stolen from it, or to 'punish' another State, that is, if the other State is obviously infringing the natural or divine law. But preventive war may not be waged unless there is moral certainty that the other State intends attack;[2] nor may it be waged simply for advantage's sake,[3] nor to obtain better land,[4] nor out of a desire to rule others under the pretext that it is for their good.[5] War should not be waged in cases of doubt as to its justice,[6] and, even for just causes, it should not be undertaken rashly:[7] it should only be undertaken in cases of necessity,[8] and peace should always be kept in view.[9] In the actual conduct of war what is permissible can be viewed either absolutely, in relation to the law of nature, or in relation to a previous promise, in relation, that is, to the law of nations.[10] Discussion of the permissible in war with reference to a previous promise is discussion concerning good faith among enemies; and Grotius insists that good faith is always to be kept, because 'those who are enemies do not in fact cease to be men'.[11] For example, treaties should be scrupulously observed. The law of nature binds, of course, all men as men: the law of nations 'is the law which has received its obligatory force from the will of all nations, or of many nations'.[12] It is distinct, therefore, from the law of nature and rests on promise and on custom. 'The law of nations, in fact,' as Dio Chrysostom well observes, 'is the creation of time and custom. And for the study of it the illustrious writers of history are of the greatest value to us.'[13] In other words, custom, consent and contract between States give rise to an obligation just as promises between individuals give rise to an obligation. In the absence of any international authority or tribunal or court of arbitration war between States necessarily takes the place of litigation between individuals; but war should not be waged if it can be avoided by arbitration or conferences (or even lot, says Grotius); and if it cannot be avoided, if, that is to say, it proves to be necessary for the enforcement of rights, it should be waged only within the bounds of good faith and with a scrupulous attention to proper procedure analogous to that observed in judicial processes. It is obvious that Grotius considered 'public war' not as a justifiable instrument of policy, imperialistic ambition or territorial greed, but as something which cannot be avoided in the

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[1] 1, 1, 14, 1.
[2] 1, 3, 7, 1.
[3] 1, 3, 7, 3.
[4] 1, 3, 8, 1.
[5] 1, 3, 17, 1.
[6] 1, 3, 17, 2.
[7] 1, 4, 1, 3.

[1] 2, 1, 1, 4. [2] 2, 22, 5. [3] 2, 22, 6. [4] 2, 23, 8. [5] 2, 22, 12.
[6] 2, 23, 6. [7] 2, 24. [8] 2, 24, 8. [9] 3, 25, 2. [10] 3, 1, 1.
[11] 3, 19, 1, 2. [12] 1, 1, 14, 1. [13] 1, 1, 14, 2.

absence of an international tribunal capable of rendering war as unnecessary as law-courts have rendered 'private war'. Nevertheless, just as individuals enjoy the right of self-defence, so do States. There can be a just war; but it does not follow that every means is legitimate even in a just war. The 'law of nations' must be observed.

Grotius was a humanist, a humanitarian and a learned man; he was also a convinced Christian. He desired the healing of the rifts between Christians; and he defended toleration in regard to the different confessions. His great work, *De iure belli ac pacis*, is remarkable, not only for its systematic and its humanitarian character, but also for its dispassionate freedom from bigotry. Its spirit is well expressed in a remark he makes about the Schoolmen. The latter, he says, 'furnish a praiseworthy example of moderation; they contend with one another by means of arguments—not, in accordance with the practice which has lately begun to disgrace the calling of letters, with personal abuse, base offspring of a spirit lacking self-mastery'.[1]

In this chapter I have avoided discussion of treatises on political theory by Scholastic writers, since I propose to treat of Renaissance Scholasticism in the next part of this work. But it may be as well to draw attention here to the fact that Scholastic authors formed an important channel whereby the mediaeval philosophy of law was transmitted to men like Grotius. This is particularly true of Suárez. In addition, the treatments of the 'law of nations' and of war by Vitoria and Suárez were not without influence on non-Scholastic writers of the Renaissance and post-Renaissance periods. One does not wish to depreciate the importance of a man like Grotius, but it is as well to realize the continuity which existed between mediaeval thought and the political and legal theories of the Renaissance period. Moreover, an understanding of the Scholastic philosophies of law helps one to avoid attributing to Grotius and kindred thinkers a degree of 'secularization' of thought which is not, in my opinion, present in their writings. The notion that the Scholastics in general made the natural law dependent on the arbitrary divine will naturally inclines those who hold it to regard a man like Grotius as one who humanized and secularized the concept of natural law. But the notion is incorrect and is based either on ignorance of Scholasticism in general or on an assumption that the peculiar ideas of some of the nominalist school represented the common views of Scholastic philosophers.

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[1] *Prolegomena*, 52.

PART III
SCHOLASTICISM OF THE RENAISSANCE

CHAPTER XXI
A GENERAL VIEW

The revival of Scholasticism—Dominican writers before the Council of Trent; Cajetan—Later Dominican writers and Jesuit writers—The controversy between Dominicans and Jesuits about grace and free will—The substitution of 'philosophical courses' for commentaries on Aristotle—Political and legal theory.

1. ONE might perhaps have expected that the life and vigour of Aristotelian Scholasticism would have been finally sapped by two factors, first the rise and spread of the nominalist movement in the fourteenth century and secondly the emergence of new lines of thought at the time of the Renaissance. Yet in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries there occurred a remarkable revival of Scholasticism, and some of the greatest names in Scholasticism belong to the period of the Renaissance and the beginning of the modern era. The chief centre of this revival was Spain, in the sense that most, though not all, of the leading figures were Spaniards. Cajetan, the great commentator on the writings of St. Thomas, was an Italian but Francis of Vitoria, who exercised a profound influence on Scholastic thought, was a Spaniard, as were also Dominic Soto, Melchior Cano, Dominic Báñez, Gabriel Vásquez and Francis Suárez. Spain was comparatively untouched either by the ferment of Renaissance thought or by the religious dissensions of the Reformation; and it was only natural that a renewal of studies which was carried through predominantly, though not, of course, exclusively, by Spanish theologians should take the form of a revivification, prolongation and development of Scholasticism.

This renewal of Scholastic thought is associated with two religious Orders in particular. First in the field were the Dominicans, who produced noted commentators on St. Thomas like Cajetan and De Sylvestris and eminent theologians and philosophers like Francis of Vitoria, Dominic Soto, Melchior Cano and Dominic Báñez. Indeed, the first stage of the revival of

Scholasticism, namely the stage which preceded the Council of Trent, was in a special degree the work of the Order of Preachers. The Council of Trent began in 1545, and it gave a powerful impulse to the renewal of Scholastic thought. The Council was primarily concerned, of course, with theological doctrines, questions and controversies, but the handling and discussion of these themes involved also a treatment of philosophical matters, in the sense at least that the theologians who assisted at the Council or who discussed the subjects which arose in the Council were necessarily involved to some extent in philosophical discussions. The work of the Dominicans in commenting on the works of St. Thomas and in elucidating and developing his thought was thus reinforced by the impulse contributed by the Council of Trent to the promotion of Scholastic studies. A further enrichment of life was given to Scholasticism by the Society of Jesus, which was founded in 1540 and which is especially associated with the work of the so-called Counter-Reformation, inaugurated by the Council. The Society of Jesus not only made a most important general contribution to the deepening and extension of intellectual life among Catholics through the foundation of numerous schools, colleges and universities but it also played a signal part in the theological and philosophical discussions and controversies of the time. Among the eminent Jesuits of the sixteenth century and the early part of the seventeenth we find names like Toletus, Molina, Vásquez, Lessius, St. Robert Bellarmine and, above all, Francis Suárez. I do not mean to imply that other Orders did not also play a part in the renewal of Scholasticism. There were well-known writers, like the Franciscan, Lychetus, who belonged to other Orders. But it remains true that the two bodies of men who did most for Scholastic thought at the time of the Renaissance were the Dominicans and the Jesuits.

2. Of the Scholastics who died before or shortly after the beginning of the Council of Trent one may mention, for example, Petrus Niger (d. 1477), author of *Clypeum thomistarum*, Barbus Paulus Soncinas (d. 1494), author of an *Epitome Capreoli*, and Dominic of Flanders (d. 1500), who published among other works *In XII libros metaphysicae Aristotelis quaestiones*. These three were all Dominicans. So also was Chrysostom Javelli (*c.* 1470–*c.* 1545) who was named Chrysostomus Casalensis after his birthplace. He lectured at Bologna and composed commentaries on the principal works of Aristotle; *Compendium logicae isagogicum*,

In universam naturalem philosophiam epitome, In libros XII metaphysicorum epitome, In X ethicorum libros epitome, In VIII politicorum libros epitome, Quaestiones super quartum meteorum, super librum de sensu et sensato, super librum de memoria et reminiscentia. He also defended Aquinas's exposition of Aristotle in *Quaestiones acutissimae super VIII libros physices ad mentem S. Thomae, Aristotelis et Commentatoris decisae* and in *Quaestiones super III libros de anima, super XII libros metaphysicae.* In addition he wrote *In Platonis ethica et politica epitome* and a *Christiana philosophia seu ethica,* besides publishing a refutation of Pomponazzi's arguments to show that the human soul is naturally mortal. This last theme he took up again in his *Tractatus de animae humanae indeficientia in quadruplici via, sc. peripatetica, academica, naturali et christiana.* He also wrote on the thorny subject of predestination.

Mention should also be made of Francis Sylvester de Sylvestris (*c.* 1474–1528), known as Ferrariensis, who lectured at Bologna and published *Quaestiones* on Aristotle's *Physics* and *De anima, Annotationes* on the *Posterior Analytics* and a commentary on St. Thomas's *Summa contra Gentiles.* But a much more important writer was Cajetan.

Thomas de Vio (1468–1534), commonly known as Cajetan, was born at Gaeta and entered the Dominican Order at the age of sixteen. After studying at Naples, Bologna and Padua he lectured in the university of Padua; and it was there that he composed his treatise on Aquinas's *De ente et essentia.* Subsequently he lectured for a time at Pavia, after which he held various high offices in his Order. In 1508 he was elected Master-General, and in this post he gave constant attention to promoting higher studies among the Dominicans. He was created a cardinal in 1517, and from 1518 to 1519 he was papal legate in Germany. In 1519 he was appointed Bishop of Gaeta. His numerous works include commentaries on the *Summa theologica* of St. Thomas, on the *Categories, Posterior Analytics* and *De anima* of Aristotle, and on the *Praedicabilia* of Porphyry, as well as his writings *De nominum analogia, De subiecto naturalis philosophiae, De conceptu entis, De Dei infinitate* and the already-mentioned *De ente et essentia.* Although Cajetan took part in theological and philosophical controversy he wrote with admirable calm and moderation. He was, however, accused of obscurity by Melchior Cano, who was more influenced than Cajetan by contemporary humanism and care for literary style.

In his *De nominum analogia* Cajetan developed a view of analogy which has exercised a considerable influence among Thomists. After insisting[1] on the importance of the rôle which analogy plays in metaphysics he goes on to divide analogy into three main kinds. (i) The first kind of analogy, or of what is sometimes called analogy, is 'analogy of inequality'.[2] Sensitive or animal life, for example, is found in a higher degree of perfection in men than in brutes; and in this sense they are 'unequally' animals. But this does not alter the fact, says Cajetan, that animality is predicated univocally of men and brutes. Corporeity is nobler in a plant than in a metal; but plants and metals are bodily things in a univocal sense. This type of analogy is called 'analogy', therefore, only by a misuse of the term. (ii) The second kind of analogy is analogy of attribution,[3] though the only type of this kind of analogy which Cajetan recognized was analogy of extrinsic attribution. An animal, for example, is called healthy because it possesses health formally, while food and medicine are called healthy only because they preserve or restore health in something other than themselves, an animal, for instance. This example may, however, be misleading. Cajetan did not assert that finite things are good, for example, only in the sense in which food is called healthy: he was well aware that each finite thing has its own inherent goodness. But he insisted that if finite things are called good precisely because of their relationship to the divine goodness as their efficient, exemplary or final cause, they are being called good only by extrinsic denomination. And he thought that when an analogous term is predicated of *A* only because of a relationship which *A* has to *B*, of which alone the analogous term is formally predicated, the predication is called analogous only on sufferance, as it were. Analogy in the proper and full sense occurs only in the case of the third kind of analogy. (iii) This third kind of analogy is analogy of proportionality.[4]

Analogy of proportionality can be either metaphorical or non-metaphorical. If we speak of a 'smiling meadow' this is an instance of metaphorical analogy; 'and sacred Scripture is full of this kind of analogy'.[5] But there is analogy of proportionality in the proper sense only when the common term is predicated of both analogates without the use of metaphor. If we say that there is an analogy between the relation of God's activity to His being and the relation of man's activity to his being, there is analogy of proportionality, since an imperfect similarity is asserted as holding

[1] Ch. 1. [2] *Ibid.* [3] Ch. 2. [4] Ch. 3. [5] *Ibid.*

between these two 'proportions' or relations; but activity is attributed formally and properly to both God and man. Again, we can predicate wisdom of God and man, meaning that an analogy holds between the relation of the divine wisdom to the divine being and the relation of man's wisdom to his being, and we do so without using the word 'wisdom' metaphorically.

According to Cajetan, this kind of analogy is the only kind which obtains between creatures and God; and he made a valiant effort[1] to show that it is capable of yielding a real knowledge of God. In particular, he tried to show that we can argue by analogy from creatures to God without committing the fallacy of equivocation. Suppose an argument like the following. Every pure perfection which is found in a creature exists also in God. But wisdom is found in human beings and it is a pure perfection. Therefore wisdom is found in God. If the word 'wisdom' in the minor premiss means human wisdom, the syllogism involves the fallacy of equivocation, because the word 'wisdom' in the conclusion does not mean human wisdom. In order to avoid this fallacy one must employ the word 'wisdom' neither univocally nor equivocally, that is, neither in one simple sense nor in two distinct senses, but in a sense which contains both uses *proportionaliter*. The conception 'father', for example, as predicated analogously of God and man contains both uses. It is true that we obtain a knowledge of wisdom, for instance, through an acquaintance with human wisdom and then apply it analogously to God; but, says Cajetan,[2] we should not confuse the psychological origin of a concept with its precise content when it is used analogously.

Apart from the obscurity of Cajetan's account of analogy, it is clear, I think, that to lay down rules for the term in order to avoid the fallacy of equivocation is not the same thing as to show that we are objectively justified in using the term in this way. It is one thing to say, for example, that if we assert that there is some similarity between the relation of the divine wisdom to the divine being and the relation of man's wisdom to his being we must not use the term 'wisdom' either univocally or equivocally; but it is another thing to show that we are entitled to speak at all of the divine wisdom. How could this possibly be shown if the only analogy which obtains between creatures and God is analogy of proportionality? It is difficult to see how this kind of analogy can be of any value at all in regard to our knowledge of God, unless the analogy of intrinsic attribution is presupposed. Cajetan had doubtless much of value to say on the wrong uses of analogy; but I venture to doubt whether his restriction of analogy, as applied to God and creatures, to analogy of proportionality represents the view of St. Thomas. And it is perhaps a little difficult to see how his position does not lead in the end to agnosticism.

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[1] Ch. 10.

[2] Ch. 11.

Cajetan criticized Scotism on many occasions, though always politely and temperately. Still more did he criticize the 'Averroism' of his day. But it is worth noting that in his commentary on the *De anima* of Aristotle he allowed that the Greek philosopher had really held the opinion attributed to him by the Averroists, namely that there is only one intellectual and immortal soul in all men and that there is no individual or personal immortality. Cajetan certainly rejected both the Averroist thesis, that there is only one intellectual and immortal soul in all men, and the Alexandrist thesis, that the soul is naturally mortal. But he apparently came to think that the immortality of the human soul cannot be philosophically demonstrated though probable arguments can be adduced to show that it is immortal. In his commentary on the *Epistle to the Romans*,[1] he explicitly says that he has no philosophic or demonstrative knowledge (*nescio* is the word he uses) of the mystery of the Trinity, of the immortality of the soul, of the Incarnation 'and the like, all of which, however, I believe'. If he was ready to couple the immortality of the soul with the mystery of the Trinity in this way, he cannot have thought that the former is a philosophically demonstrable truth. Moreover, in his commentary on *Ecclesiastes*[2] he says explicitly that 'no philosopher has yet demonstrated that the soul of man is immortal: there does not appear to be a demonstrative argument; but we believe it by faith, and it is in agreement with probable arguments' (*rationibus probabilibus consonat*). One can understand, then, his objection to the proposed decree of the fifth Lateran Council (1513) calling upon professors of philosophy to justify the Christian doctrine in their lectures. In Cajetan's opinion this was the task of theologians and not of philosophers.

3. Among the later Dominican writers of the period one can mention first Francis of Vitoria (1480–1546), who lectured at Salamanca and composed commentaries on the *Pars prima* and on the *Secunda secundae* of Aquinas's *Summa theologica*. But he is best known for his political and juridical ideas, and these will be

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[1] 9, 23.

[2] 3, 21.

treated later. Dominic Soto (1494–1560), who also lectured at Salamanca, published, among other works, commentaries on Aristotle's logical writings and his *Physics* and *De anima*, as well as on the fourth book of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. Melchior Cano (1509–60) is justly celebrated for his *De locis theologicis*, in which he endeavoured to establish the sources of theological doctrine in a systematic and methodic manner. Bartholomew of Medina (1527–81), Dominic Báñez (1528–1604) and Raphael Ripa or Riva (d. 1611) were also outstanding Dominican theologians and philosophers.

Among the Jesuit writers an eminent name is that of Francis Toletus (1532–96), who was a pupil of Dominic Soto at Salamanca and afterwards lectured at Rome, where he was created cardinal. He published commentaries on the logical works of Aristotle and on his *Physics*, *De anima* and *De generatione et corruptione*, as well as on St. Thomas's *Summa theologica*. A set of learned commentaries on Aristotle were published by a group of Jesuit writers, known as the *Conimbricenses* from their connection with the university of Coimbra in Portugal. The chief member of this group was Peter de Fonseca (1548–99), who composed commentaries on the *Metaphysics*, as well as publishing *Institutiones dialecticae* and an *Isagoge philosophica* or introduction to philosophy. Among other Jesuit theologians and philosophers mention should be made of Gabriel Vásquez (*c.* 1551–1604), who lectured chiefly at Alcalá and Rome, and Gregory of Valentia (1551–1603). Both these men published commentaries on the *Summa theologica* of St. Thomas. Leonard Lessius (1554–1623), however, who lectured at Douai and Louvain, wrote independent works like his *De iustitia et iure ceterisque virtutibus cardinalibus* (1605), *De gratia efficaci, decretis, divinis libertate arbitrii et praescientia Dei conditionata disputatio apologetica* (1610), *De providentia Numinis et animae immortalitate* (1613), *De summo bono et aeterna beatitudine hominis* (1616) and *De perfectionibus moribusque divinis* (1620).

The Franciscan Lychetus (d. 1520) commented on the *Opus Oxoniense* and the *Quodlibeta* of Scotus. It was not until 1593, however, that the latter was declared the official Doctor of the Franciscan Order. Giles of Viterbo (d. 1532), an Augustinian, composed a commentary on part of the first book of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. And one must not omit to mention the group of professors associated with the university of Alcalá, founded by Cardinal Ximenes in 1489, who are known as the *Complutenses*, The leading member of the group was Gaspar Cardillo de Villalpando (1537–81), who edited commentaries on Aristotle in which he tried to establish critically the actual meaning of the text.

4. Perhaps this is the place to say a few words about the famous controversy which broke out in the sixteenth century between Dominican and Jesuit theologians concerning the relation between divine grace and human free will. I do not wish to say much on the subject, as the controversy was primarily of a theological character. But it ought to be mentioned, I think, as it has philosophical implications.

Leaving out of account preliminary stages of the controversy one can start by mentioning a famous work by Luis de Molina (1535–1600), a Jesuit theologian who lectured for many years at the university of Evora in Portugal. This work, entitled *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providentia, praedestinatione et reprobatione*, was published at Lisbon in 1589. In it Molina affirmed that 'efficacious grace', which includes in its concept the free consent of the human will, is not intrinsically different in nature from merely 'sufficient grace'. Grace which is merely sufficient is grace which is sufficient to enable the human will to elicit a salutary act, if the will were to consent to it and co-operate with it. It becomes 'efficacious', if the will does in fact consent to it. Efficacious grace is thus the grace with which a human will does in fact freely co-operate. On the other hand, if God exercises universal and particular providence, He must have infallible knowledge of how any will would react to any grace in any set of circumstances; and how can He know this if an efficacious grace is efficacious in virtue of the will's free consent? In order to answer this question Molina introduced the concept of *scientia media*, the knowledge by which God knows infallibly how any human will, in any conceivable set of circumstances, would react to this or that grace.

It is quite clear that Molina and those who agreed with him were concerned to safeguard the freedom of the human will. Their point of view may perhaps be expressed by saying that we start from what is best known to us, namely human freedom, and that we must explain the divine foreknowledge and the action of grace in such a way that the freedom of the will is not explained away or tacitly denied. If it did not seem fanciful to introduce such considerations into a theological dispute, one might perhaps suggest that the general humanistic movement of the Renaissance was reflected to some extent in Molinism. In the course of the controversy Molinism was modified by Jesuit theologians like Bellarmine and Suárez, who introduced the idea of 'congruism'. 'Congruous' grace is a grace which is congruous with or suited to the circumstances of the case and obtains the free consent of the will. It is opposed to 'incongruous' grace, which for some reason or other is not suited to the circumstances of the case, in that it does not obtain the free consent of the will, though in itself it is 'sufficient' to enable the will to make a salutary act. In virtue of the *scientia media* God knows from eternity what graces would be 'congruous' in regard to any will in any circumstances.

Molina's adversaries, of whom the most important was the Dominican theologian Báñez, started from the principle that God is the cause of all salutary acts and that God's knowledge and activity must be prior to and independent of the human will's free act. They accused Molina of making the power of divine grace subordinate to the human will. According to Báñez, efficacious grace is intrinsically different from merely sufficient grace, and it obtains its effect by reason of its own intrinsic nature. As for Molina's *scientia media* or 'intermediate knowledge', this is a mere term without any corresponding reality. God knows the future free acts of men, even conditional future free acts, in virtue of His predetermining decrees, by which He decides to give the 'physical premotion' which is necessary for any human act. In the case of a salutary act this physical premotion will take the form of efficacious grace.

Báñez and the theologians who agreed with him thus began with metaphysical principles. God, as first cause and prime mover, must be the cause of human acts in so far as they have being. Báñez, it must be emphasized, did not deny freedom. His view was that God moves non-free agents to act necessarily and free agents, when they act as free agents, to act freely. In other words God moves every contingent agent to act in a manner conformable to its nature. According to the Bannezian view, one must begin with assured metaphysical principles and draw the logical conclusions. The Molinist view, according to the Bannezians, was unfaithful to the principles of metaphysics. According to the Molinists on the other hand, it was very difficult to see how the Bannezians could retain human freedom in anything except in name. Moreover, if the idea of a divine concurrence which is logically prior to the free act and which infallibly brings about a certain act was admitted, it was very difficult to see how one is to avoid making God responsible for sin. The Molinists did not think that the distinctions introduced by their opponents in order to avoid the conclusion that God is responsible for sin were of any substantial use for this purpose. *Scientia media* was admittedly a hypothesis; but it was preferable to make this hypothesis rather than to suppose that God knows the future free acts of men in virtue of His predetermining decrees.

The dispute between the Dominicans and the Jesuits induced Pope Clement VIII to set up a special Congregation in Rome to examine the points at issue. The Congregation is known as the *Congregatio de auxiliis* (1598–1607). Both parties had full opportunity to state their respective cases; but the end of the matter was that both opinions were permitted. At the same time the Jesuits were forbidden to call the Dominicans Calvinists, while the Dominicans were told that they must not call the Jesuits Pelagians. In other words, the different parties could continue to propound their own ways of reconciling God's foreknowledge, predestination and saving activity with human freedom, provided that they did not call each other heretics.

5. Cajetan was the first to take Aquinas's *Summa theologica* as a theological text-book instead of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard; and both Dominicans and Jesuits looked on St. Thomas as their Doctor. Aristotle was still regarded as 'the Philosopher'; and we have seen that Renaissance Scholastics continued to publish commentaries on his works. At the same time there was gradually effected a separation of philosophy from theology more systematic and methodic than that which had generally obtained in the mediaeval Schools. This was due partly to the formal distinction between the two branches of study which had already been made in the Middle Ages and partly, no doubt, to the rise of philosophies which owed nothing, professedly at least, to dogmatic theology. We find, then, the gradual substitution of philosophical courses for commentaries on Aristotle. Already with Suárez (d. 1617) we find an elaborate discussion of philosophical problems in separation from theology; and the order of treating metaphysical themes and problems which had been adopted by Suárez in his *Disputationes metaphysicae* exercised an influence on later Scholastic method. In the freer style of philosophical writing which was inaugurated by Suárez one can doubtless see the influence of Renaissance humanism. I said earlier in this chapter that Spanish Scholasticism was

comparatively unaffected by the Renaissance. But one must make an exception, I think, in regard to literary style. Suárez was, it must be admitted, a diffuse writer; but his work on metaphysics did a great deal to break through the former tradition of writing philosophy in the form of commentaries on Aristotle.

The eminent Dominican theologian and philosopher John of St. Thomas (1589–1644) published his *Cursus philosophicus* before his *Cursus theologicus*, and, to take another Dominican example, Alexander Piny issued a *Cursus philosophicus thomisticus* in 1670. The Carmelite Fathers of Alcalá published a *Cursus artium* in 1624, which was revised and added to in later editions. Among the Jesuits, Cardinal John de Lugo (1583–1660) left an unpublished *Disputationes metaphysicae*, while Peter de Hurtado de Mendoza published *Disputationes de universa philosophia* at Lyons in 1617 and Thomas Compton-Carleton a *Philosophia universa* at Antwerp in 1649. Similarly, both Rodrigo de Arriaga and Francis de Oviedo published philosophical courses, the former at Antwerp in 1632 and the latter at Lyons in 1640. A *Cursus philosophicus* by Francis Soares appeared at Coimbra in 1651, and a *Philosophia peripatetica* by John-Baptist de Benedictis at Naples in 1688. Similar philosophical courses were written by Scotists. Thus John Poncius and Bartholomew Mastrius published respectively a *Cursus philosophicus ad mentem Scoti* (1643) and a *Philosophiae ad mentem Scoti cursus integer* (1678). Among writers belonging to other religious Orders Nicholas of St. John the Baptist, a Hermit of St. Augustine, published his *Philosophia augustiniana, sive integer cursus philosophicus iuxta doctrinam sancti Patris Augustini* at Geneva in 1687, while Celestino Sfondrati, a Benedictine, published a *Cursus philosophicus sangallensis* (1695–9).

In the course of the seventeenth century, then, *Cursus philosophici* tended to take the place of the former commentaries on Aristotle. This is not to say, however, that the former custom was abandoned. Sylvester Maurus (1619–87), for example, a Jesuit theologian and philosopher, published a commentary on Aristotle in 1668. Nor is one entitled to conclude from the change in the method of philosophic writing that the Scholastics of the Renaissance and of the seventeenth century were profoundly influenced by the new scientific ideas of the time. The Franciscan Emmanuel Maignan, who published a *Cursus philosophicus* at Toulouse in 1652, complained that the Scholastics of his time devoted themselves to metaphysical abstractions and subtleties and that some of them, when their opinions on physics were challenged in the name of experience and experiment, replied by denying the testimony of experience. Maignan himself was considerably influenced by Cartesianism and atomism. Honoré Fabri (*c.* 1607–88), a Jesuit writer, laid particular emphasis on mathematics and physics; and there were, of course, other Scholastics who were alive to the ideas of their time. But if one takes the movement of the Renaissance and post-Renaissance philosophy as a whole, it is fairly obvious that Scholasticism lay somewhat apart from the main line of development and that its influence on non-Scholastic philosophers was restricted. This is not to say that it had no influence; but it is obvious that when we think of Renaissance and post-Renaissance philosophy we do not think primarily of Scholasticism. Generally speaking, the Scholastic philosophers of the period failed to give sufficient attention to the problems raised by, for example, the scientific discoveries of the time.

6. There was, however, at least one department of thought in which the Renaissance Scholastics were deeply influenced by contemporary problems and in which they exercised a considerable influence. This was the department of political theory. I shall say something more in detail later about Suárez' political theory; but I want to make some general remarks here concerning the political theory of the Scholastics of the Renaissance.

The problem of the relation between Church and State did not, as we have already seen, come to an end with the close of the Middle Ages. Indeed, it was in a sense intensified by the Reformation and by the claim of some rulers to possess jurisdiction even in matters of religion. As far as the Catholic Church was concerned a doctrine of full submission to the State was impossible: it was precluded by the position accorded to the Holy See and by the Catholic idea of the Church and her mission. The Catholic theologians and philosophers, therefore, felt called upon to lay down the principles by which the relations between Church and State should be governed. Thus Cardinal Robert Bellarmine maintained in his work on the papal power[1] that the pope, while not possessing a direct power over temporal affairs, possesses an indirect power. Temporal interests must give way to spiritual interests, if a clash arises. This theory of the pope's indirect power in temporal affairs did not mean that Bellarmine regarded the civil ruler as the pope's vicar—the theory excluded any such idea; it was simply the consequence of applying the theological doctrine that man's end is a supernatural end, namely the beatific vision of God. The theory was also maintained by Francis Suárez in his *Defensio fidei catholicae* (1613), written against King James I of England.

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[1] *De summo pontifice*, 1581; enlarged as *De potestate summi pontificis*, 1610.

But though Bellarmine and Suárez rejected the idea that the civil ruler is a vicar of the pope, they did not accept the theory that he derives his sovereignty directly from God, as was asserted by the upholders of the theory of the divine right of kings. And the fact that Suárez argued against this theory in his *Defensio fidei catholicae* was one of the reasons why James I had the book burned. Both Bellarmine and Suárez maintained that the civil ruler receives his power immediately from the political community. They held, indeed, that the civil ruler receives his authority ultimately from God, since all legitimate authority comes ultimately from Him; but it is derived immediately from the community.

One might be perhaps tempted to think that this theory was inspired by the desire to minimize the royal power at a time when the centralized and powerful monarchies of the Renaissance were very much in evidence. What better way of taking the wind out of the sails of the royalists could be devised than that of maintaining that though the monarch's power does not come from the pope it does not come directly from God either, but from the people? What better way of exalting the spiritual power could be found than that of asserting that it is the pope alone who receives his authority directly from God? But it would be a great mistake to regard the Bellarmine-Suárez theory of sovereignty as being primarily a piece of ecclesiastical propaganda or politics. The idea that political sovereignty is derived from the people had been put forward as early as the eleventh century by Manegold of Lautenbach; and the conviction that the civil ruler has a trust to fulfil and that if he habitually abuses his position he may be deposed was expressed by John of Salisbury in the twelfth, Aquinas in the thirteenth, and Ockham in the fourteenth century. Writers like Bellarmine and Suárez simply inherited the general outlook of the earlier Scholastic theologians and philosophers, though the fact that they gave a more formal and explicit statement of the theory that political sovereignty derives from the people was doubtless largely due to reflection on the concrete historical data of their time. When Mariana (d. 1624), the Spanish Jesuit, made his unfortunate statements about the use of tyrannicide as a remedy for political oppression (some of his remarks were interpreted as a defence of the murder of Henry III of France, and this caused his *De rege et regis institutione*, 1599, to be burned by the French Parliament) his principle was simply the principle of the legitimacy of resistance against oppression, which had been commonly accepted in the Middle Ages, though Mariana's conclusions were misguided.[1]

The Renaissance Scholastics were not, however, concerned simply with the position of the civil ruler in regard to the Church on the one hand and the political community on the other: they were concerned also with the origin and nature of political society. As far as Suárez is concerned, it is clear that he regarded political society as resting essentially on consent or agreement. Mariana, who derived the power of the monarch from a pact with the people, regarded the origin of political society as following a state of nature which preceded government; and the main step on the road to organized States and governments he found in the institution of private property. Suárez cannot be said to have followed Mariana in the latter hypothesis of a state of nature. But he found the origin of the State in voluntary consent, on the part of heads of families at least, though he evidently thought that such associations between men had occurred from the beginning.

Suárez may, then, be said to have held a double-contract theory, one contract being between the heads of families, the other between the society so formed and its ruler or rulers. But if one says this, one must realize that the contract theory as held by Suárez did not imply the artificial and conventional character either of political society or of government. His political theory, as we shall see more clearly later, was subordinate to his philosophy of law, in which he maintained the natural character of political society and political government. If we want to know Suárez' political theory, we have to turn primarily to his great treatise *De legibus*, which is above all things a philosophy of law. The idea of natural law, which goes back to the ancient world and which was given a metaphysical foundation by the philosophers of the Middle Ages, is essential to that philosophy and forms the background of his political theory. Political society is natural to man, and government is necessary for society; and as God is the Creator of human nature both society and government are willed by God. They are not, therefore, purely arbitrary or conventional human contrivances. On the other hand, though Nature requires political society, the formation of determinate political communities normally depends on human agreement. Again, though Nature demands that any society should have some governing principle, Nature has not fixed any particular form of government or designated any particular individual as ruler. In certain instances God has directly designated a ruler (Saul, for instance, or David); but normally it rests with the community to determine the form of government.

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[1] The then General of the Jesuits prohibited the teaching by members of the Order of Mariana's doctrine on tyrannicide.

The theory that political society rests on some sort of agreement was not altogether new, and one can find anticipations of it even in the ancient world. In the Middle Ages John of Paris, in his *Tractatus de potestate regia et papali* (*c.* 1303), presupposed a state of nature and held that though primitive men probably did not make any definite contract they were persuaded by their more rational fellows to live together under common law. And Giles of Rome in the thirteenth century had put forward a contract theory as one of the possible explanations of the foundation of political society. With Mariana in the sixteenth century the theory became explicit. In the same century the Dominican Francis of Vitoria implied a contract theory, and he was followed by the Jesuit Molina, though neither made any very explicit statement of the theory. Thus there was a growing tradition of the social contract theory; and Suárez' statement of it must be seen in the light of that tradition. In the course of time, however, the theory became divorced from the mediaeval philosophy of law. This philosophy was taken over, as we have seen, by Richard Hooker, and from him it passed, in a watered-down form, to Locke. But in Hobbes, Spinoza and Rousseau it is conspicuous by its absence, even if the old terms were sometimes retained. There is, then, a very great difference between the contract theory of Suárez and that of Rousseau, for example. And for this reason it may be misleading to speak of a contract theory in Suárez, if, that is to say, one understands by the term the sort of theory held by Rousseau. There was some historical continuity, of course; but the setting, atmosphere and the interpretation of the theory had undergone a fundamental change in the intervening period.

Another problem with which some of the Renaissance Scholastics concerned themselves was that of the relations between individual States. Already at the beginning of the seventh century St. Isidore of Seville in his curious encyclopaedic work, the *Etymologies*, had spoken of the *ius gentium* and of its application to war, making use of texts of Roman lawyers. Again, in the thirteenth century St. Raymund of Peñafort examined the topic of the right of war in his *Summa poenitentiae*, while in the second half of the fourteenth century there appeared works like the *De bello* of John of Legnano, a professor of the university of Bologna. Far better known, however, is Francis of Vitoria (1480–1546). It was very largely to him that the revival of theology in Spain was due, as was testified by pupils like Melchior Cano and Dominic Soto, while the Spanish humanist, Vivés, writing to Erasmus, praised Vitoria highly and spoke of his admiration for Erasmus and his defence of him against his critics. But it is for his studies on international law that Vitoria is known to the world at large.

Vitoria looked on different States as forming in some sense one human community, and he regarded the 'law of nations' as being not merely an agreed code of behaviour but as having the force of law, 'having been established by the authority of the whole world'.[1] His position seems to have been more or less as follows. Society could not hold together without laws the infringement of which renders transgressors liable to punishment. That such laws should exist is a demand of the natural law. There have therefore grown up a number of principles of conduct, for example the inviolability of ambassadors, on which society as a whole is agreed, since it is realized that principles of this kind are rational and for the common good. They are derivable in some way from the natural law and they must be reckoned to have the force of law. The *ius gentium* consists of prescriptions for the common good in the widest sense, which either belong directly to the natural law or are derivable in some way from it. 'What natural reason has established among all nations is called the *ius gentium*.'[2] According to Vitoria, the law of nations confers rights and creates obligations. Sanctions, however, can be applied only through the instrumentality of princes. But it is clear that his conception of international law leads to the idea of an international authority, though Vitoria does not say so.

Applying his ideas to war and to the rights of the Indians in regard to the Spaniards, Vitoria in the *De Indis* makes it clear that in his opinion physical power by itself confers no right to annex the property of others and that Christian missionary zeal confers no

[1] *De potestate civili*, 21.

[2] *Ibid.*

title to make war on the heathen. As regards slavery he adopted the usual position of theologians of the time, namely that slavery is legitimate as a penal measure (corresponding to modern penal servitude). But this concession must not be taken to imply that the Scholastic theologians and philosophers simply accepted the contemporary customs in regard to slavery. The example of the Jesuit Molina is interesting in this matter. Not content with theorizing in his study he went down to the port at Lisbon and questioned the slave-traders. As a result of these frank conversations he declared that the slave-trade was simply a commercial affair and that all the talk about exalted motives, like that of converting the slaves to Christianity, was nonsense.[1] But though he condemned the slave-trade, he admitted the legitimacy of slavery as a penal measure, when, for example, criminals were sent to the galleys in accordance with the penal customs of the time.

Suárez developed the idea of the 'law of nations'. He pointed out that it is necessary to make a distinction between the law of nations and the natural law. The former prohibits certain acts for a just and sufficient reason, and so it can be said to render certain acts wrong, but the natural law does not make acts wrong but prohibits certain acts because they are wrong. That treaties should be observed, for example, is a precept of the natural law rather than of the law of nations. The latter consists of customs established by all, or practically all, nations; but it is unwritten law, and this fact distinguishes it from civil law. Although, for instance, the obligation to observe a treaty once it has been made proceeds from the natural law, the precept that an offer of a treaty, when made for a reasonable cause, should be accepted is not a matter of strict obligation proceeding from the natural law; nor is there any written law about the matter. The precept is an unwritten custom which is in harmony with reason, and it belongs to the 'law of nations'.

The rational basis of the *ius gentium* is, according to Suárez, the fact that the human race preserves a certain unity in spite of the division of mankind into separate nations and States. Suárez did not consider a world-State to be practicable or desirable; but at the same time he saw that individual States are not self-sufficing in a complete sense. They need some system of law to regulate their relations with one another. Natural law does not provide sufficiently for this need. But the conduct of nations has introduced certain customs or laws which are in accord with the natural law, even though they are not strictly deducible from it. And these customs or laws form the *ius gentium*.

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[1] Cf. *De iustitia*, 1, 2, disp. 34–5.

It has been said, not unreasonably, that Vitoria's idea of all nations as forming in some sense a world-community and of the *ius gentium* as law established by the authority of the whole world looked forward to the possible creation of a world-government, whereas Suárez' idea of the *ius gentium* looked forward rather to establishment of an international tribunal which would interpret international law and give concrete decisions without being itself a world-government, which Suárez did not regard as practicable.[1] However this may be, it is clear that in much of their political and legal philosophy the Renaissance Scholastics showed a grasp of concrete problems and a readiness to handle them in a 'modern' way. Men like Vitoria, Bellarmine and Suárez all maintained that political sovereignty is in some sense derived from the people; and they maintained the right of resistance to a ruler who acts tyrannically. Although they naturally thought in terms of contemporary forms of government, they did not consider that the actual form of government is a matter of prime importance. At the same time the fact that their conception of political society and of law was founded on a clear acceptance of the natural moral law constituted its great strength. They systematized and developed mediaeval legal and political philosophy and transmitted it to the seventeenth century. Grotius, for example, was certainly indebted to the Scholastics. Some people would maintain, I suppose, that the legal and political theory of the Renaissance Scholastics constituted a stage in the development from a predominantly theological outlook to a positivist outlook; and as a historical judgment this may be true. But it does not follow that the later secularization of the idea of natural law and its subsequent abandonment to all intents and purposes constituted a philosophical advance in any but a chronological sense.

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[1] Cf. *The Catholic Conception of International Law* by J. B. Scott, Ch. XIII.

CHAPTER XXII

FRANCIS SUÁREZ (1)

Life and works—The structure and divisions of the Disputationes metaphysicae—*Metaphysics as the science of being—The concept of being—The attributes of being—Individuation—Analogy—God's existence—The divine Nature—Essence and existence—Substance and accident—Modes—Quantity—Relations*—Entia rationis—*General remarks—Étienne Gilson on Suárez.*

1. FRANCIS SUÁREZ (1548–1617), known as *Doctor eximius*, was born at Granada and studied canon law at Salamanca. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1564 and in due course began his professional career by teaching philosophy at Segovia. Afterwards he taught theology at Avila, Segovia, Valladolid, Rome, Alcalá, Salamanca and Coimbra. Suárez, who was an exemplary and holy priest and religious, was also very much the student, scholar and professor; and his whole adult life was devoted to lecturing, study and writing. He was an indefatigable writer, and his works fill twenty-three volumes in the earlier editions and twenty-eight volumes in the Paris edition of 1856–78. A large number of these works were, of course, concerned with theological questions; and for present purposes his most important writings are the two volumes of *Disputationes metaphysicae* (1597) and his great work *De legibus* (1612). One may also mention his *De Deo uno et trino* (1606) and the *De opere sex dierum* (published posthumously in 1621).

Suárez was convinced that a theologian ought to possess a firm grasp and profound understanding of the metaphysical principles and foundations of speculation. He says explicitly that no one can become a perfect theologian unless he has first laid the firm foundations of metaphysics. Accordingly, in his *Disputationes metaphysicae* he set out to give a complete and systematic treatment of Scholastic metaphysics; and, indeed, the work was the first of its kind. It was incomplete in the sense that metaphysical psychology was omitted; but this was supplied in the *Tractatus de anima* (published posthumously in 1621). Suárez abandoned the order adopted by Aristotle in his *Metaphysics*[1] and divided the matter systematically into fifty-four disputations, subdivided into sections; though at the beginning he provided a table showing where the themes treated of in the successive chapters of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* were dealt with in his own work. In this work the author's astounding erudition is clearly expressed in his discussions of, or references and allusions to, Greek, Patristic, Jewish, Islamic and Scholastic authors and to Renaissance thinkers like Marsilius Ficinus and Pico della Mirandola. Needless to say, however, Suárez does not confine himself to the historical recital of opinions; his object is always the attainment of a positive and objective answer to the problems raised. He may be prolix, but he is certainly systematic. As an example of a competent non-Scholastic judgment of the work one may quote the following sentence. 'All the important Scholastic controversies are in this work lucidly brought together and critically examined and their results combined in the unity of a system.'[1]

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[1] The importance of this change is not diminished, of course, by the fact that we know that Aristotle's *Metaphysics* was not 'a book' but a collection of treatises.

In the present chapter I shall be concerned mainly with the *Disputationes metaphysicae*. In the next chapter I shall treat of the contents of the *Tractatus de legibus ac Deo legislatore in X libros distributus*. This last work summarized and systematized Scholastic legal theories, and in it the author presented his own development of Thomist legal and political theory. In this connection one must mention also Suárez' *Defensio fidei catholicae et apostolicae adversus Anglicanae sectae errores, cum responsione ad apologiam pro iure fidelitatis et praefationem monitoriam Serenissimi Jacobi Angliae Regis* (1613). In this book Suárez maintained Bellarmine's theory of the indirect power of the pope in temporal affairs and argued against the notion, dear to James I of England, that temporal monarchs receive their sovereignty immediately from God. As I remarked in the last chapter, James I had the book burned.

2. Before going on to outline some of Suárez' philosophical ideas I want to say something about the structure and arrangement of the *Disputationes metaphysicae*.

In the first disputation (or discussion) Suárez considers the nature of first philosophy or metaphysics, and he decides that it can be defined as the science which contemplates being as being. The second disputation deals with the concept of being, while disputations 3 to 11 inclusive treat of the *passiones entis* or transcendental attributes of being. Unity in general is the theme of the fourth disputation, while individual unity and the principle of individuation are dealt with in the fifth. The sixth disputation treats of universals, the seventh of distinctions. After considering unity Suárez passes to truth (disputation 8) and falsity (9), while in disputations 10 and 11 he treats of good and evil. Disputations 12 to 27 are concerned with causes; disputation 12 with causes in general, disputations 13 and 14 with the material cause, disputations 15 and 16 with the formal cause, disputations 17 to 22 with efficient causality, and disputations 23 and 24 with final causality, while exemplary causality is the subject of disputation 25. Finally, disputation 26 deals with the relations of causes to effects and disputation 27 with the mutual relations of the causes to one another.

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[1] M. Frischeisen-Köhler and W. Moog: *Die Philosophie der Neuzeit bis zum Ende des XVIII Jahrhunderts*, p. 211; vol. III of F. Ueberweg's *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie*, 12th edition.

The second volume begins with the division of being into infinite and finite being (disputation 28). Infinite or divine being is treated in the next two disputations, God's existence in disputation 29 and His essence and attributes in disputation 30. In disputation 31 Suárez goes on to consider finite created being in general, and in the following disputation he considers the distinction of substance and accidents in general. Disputations 33 to 36 contain Suárez' metaphysics of substance, and disputations 37 to 53 deal with the various categories of accidents. The last disputation of the work, 54, deals with *entia rationis*.

As has already been indicated, Suárez' *Disputationes metaphysicae* mark the transition from commentaries on Aristotle to independent treatises on metaphysics and to *Cursus philosophici* in general. It is true that one can discern among Suárez' predecessors, as for example with Fonseca, a growing tendency to shake off the bonds imposed by the commentary method; but it was Suárez who really originated the new form of treatment. After his time the *Cursus philosophici* and independent philosophical treatises became common, both inside and outside the Jesuit Order. Moreover, Suárez' decision not to include rational psychology in metaphysics but to treat it on its own and consider it as the highest part of 'natural philosophy'[1] had its influence on succeeding writers like Arriaga and Oviedo, who assigned the theory of the soul to physics rather than to metaphysics.[2]

One feature of Suárez' *Disputationes metaphysicae* which should be noticed is that no separation is made in this work between general and special metaphysics. The later distinction between ontology or general metaphysics on the one hand and special metaphysical disciplines like psychology, cosmology and natural theology on the other hand has commonly been ascribed to the influence of Christian Wolff (1679–1754), the disciple of Leibniz, who wrote separate treatises on ontology, cosmology, psychology natural theology, etc. But further investigation into the history of Scholasticism in the second half of the seventeenth century has shown that the distinction between general and special metaphysics and the use of the word 'ontology' to describe the former antedate the writings of Wolff. Jean-Baptiste Duhamel (1624–1706) used the word 'ontology' to describe general metaphysics in his *Philosophia vetus et nova* or *Philosophia universalis* or *Philosophia Burgundica* (1678). This is not to say, however, that Wolff's division of the philosophical disciplines was not of great influence or that the continued use of the word 'ontology' for general metaphysics is not to be ascribed primarily to him.

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[1] *Disp. metaph.*, 1, 2, nn. 19–20.

[2] This classification of psychology was in accordance with Aristotle's remarks in his *De Anima*.

3. Metaphysics, says Suárez,[1] has as its *obiectum adequatum* being in so far as it is real being. But to say that the metaphysician is concerned with being as being is not the same thing as saying that he is concerned with being as being in complete abstraction from the ways in which being is concretely realized, that is to say, in complete abstraction from the most general kinds of being or *inferiora entis*. After all, the metaphysician is concerned with real being, with being as including in some way the *inferiora entis secundum proprias rationes*.[2] He is concerned, therefore, not only with the concept of being as such but also with the transcendental attributes of being, with uncreated and created, infinite and finite being, with substance and accidents, and with the types of causes. But he is not concerned with material being as such: he is concerned with material things only in so far as knowledge of them is necessary in order to know the general divisions and categories of being.[3] The fact is that the concept of being is analogous, and so it cannot be properly known unless the different kinds of being are clearly distinguished.[4] For instance, the metaphysician is primarily concerned with immaterial, not with material substance; but he has to consider material substance in so far as knowledge of it is necessary in order to distinguish it from immaterial substance and

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[1] *Disp.*, 1, 1, 24.
[2] 1, 2, 11.
[3] 1, 2, 24.
[4] *Ibid.*

in order to know the metaphysical predicates which belong to it precisely as material substance.[1]

With Suárez, then, as Suarezians at any rate would maintain, the fundamental metaphysical attitude of Thomism persists unchanged. The Aristotelian idea of 'first philosophy' as the study or science of being as being is maintained. But Suárez emphasizes the fact that by being he means real being; the metaphysician is not concerned simply with concepts. Again, though he is concerned primarily with immaterial reality, he is not so exclusively concerned with it that he has nothing to say of material reality. But he considers material reality only from the metaphysical point of view, not from the point of view of a physicist or of a mathematician; Suárez accepted the Aristotelian doctrine of the degrees of abstraction. Again, we may note that Suárez emphasized the analogical character of the concept of being; he would not allow that it is univocal. Lastly, as to the purpose of metaphysics, Suárez is convinced that it is the contemplation of truth for its own sake;[2] he remains in the serene atmosphere of the Aristotelian *Metaphysics* and of St. Thomas and is unaffected by the new attitude towards knowledge which manifested itself in a Francis Bacon.

4. In the second disputation Suárez treats of the concept of being; and he declares that 'the proper and adequate formal concept of being as such is one' and that 'it is different from the formal concepts of other things'.[3] As he goes on to say that this is the common opinion and reckons among its defenders 'Scotus and all his disciples', it might seem that he is making the concept of being univocal and not analogical. It is necessary, then, to say something about Suárez' view on this matter.

In the first place the formal concept of being is one, in the sense that it does not signify immediately any particular nature or kind of thing: it does not signify a plurality of beings according as they differ from one another, but 'rather in so far as they agree with one another or are like to one another'.[4] The concept of being is really distinct from the concept of substance or the concept of accident: it abstracts from what is proper to each.[5] It will not do to say that there is a unity of word alone, for the concept precedes the word and its use.[6] Moreover, 'to the formal concept of being there corresponds an adequate and immediate objective concept, which does not expressly signify either substance or accident, either God or creature: it signifies them all in so far as they are in some way like to one another and agree in being.'[1] Does this mean that in a created substance, for instance, there is a form of being which is actually distinct from the form or forms which make it a created substance in particular? No, abstraction does not necessarily require a distinction of things or forms which actually precedes the abstraction: it is sufficient if the mind considers objects, not as each exists in itself, but according to its likeness to other things.[2] In the concept of being as such the mind considers only the likeness of things, not their differences from one another. It is true that a real being is such by its own being which is inseparable from it, that is to say, it is true that a thing's being is intrinsic to it; but this simply means that the concept of being as such does not include its 'inferiors'.

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[1] *Disp.*, 1, 2, 5.
[2] 1, 4, 2.
[3] 2, 1, 9.
[4] 2, 1, 9.
[5] 2, 1, 10.
[6] 2, 1, 13.

Suárez admits, then, that a concept of being can be formed which is strictly one; and on this matter he ranges himself with Scotus against Cajetan. But he emphasizes the fact that this concept is the work of the mind and that 'as it exists in the thing itself, it is not something actually distinct from the inferiors in which it exists. This is the common opinion of the whole School of St. Thomas.'[3] Why, then, does he insist that the concept of being represents reality? If it represents reality, in what does being as such consist and how does it belong to its inferiors? Does it not seem that if the concept of being as such represents reality, it must represent something in the inferiors, that is, in existent beings, which is distinct from that intrinsic entity or beingness which is peculiar to each? And, if this is not so, does it not follow that the concept of being as such does not represent reality?

Suárez distinguishes 'being' understood as a participle, that is to say, as signifying the act of existing, from 'being' understood as a noun, that is to say, as signifying what has a real essence, whether it actually exists or not. A 'real essence' is one which does not involve any contradiction and which is not a mere construction of the mind. Now, 'being' understood as a participle gives rise to one concept 'common to all actually existent beings, since they are like to one another and agree in actual existence' and this holds good both for the formal and for the objective concepts.[4] We can also have one concept of being understood as a noun, provided that the concept simply abstracts from, and does not exclude, actual existence.

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[1] *Disp.*, 2, 2, 8.

[2] 2, 2, 15.

[3] 2, 3, 7.

[4] 2, 4, 4.

It does not appear to me that the repetition of this statement of our ability to form one concept of being provides a very adequate answer to the difficulties which can be raised; but I wish now to indicate why Suárez does not call this concept a univocal concept.

In order that a concept should be univocal, it is not sufficient that it should be applicable in the same sense to a plurality of different inferiors which have an equal relationship to one another.[1] Suárez, therefore, demanded more for a univocal concept than that it should be one concept; he demanded that it should apply to its inferiors in the same way. We can, indeed, form a formal concept of being which is one and which says nothing about the differences of the inferiors; but no inferior is, so to speak, outside being. When the concept of being is narrowed down (*contrahitur*) to concepts of different kinds of being, what is done is that a thing is conceived more expressly,[2] according to its own mode of existence, than it is by means of the concept of being.[3] This does not mean, however, that something is added to the concept of being as though from outside. On the contrary, the concept of being is made more express or determinate. In order that the inferiors should be properly conceived as beings of a certain kind, the concept of being must indeed be contracted: but this means making more determinate what was already contained in the concept. The latter cannot, therefore, be univocal.

5. In the third disputation Suárez proceeds to discuss the *passiones entis in communi*, the attributes of being as such. There are only three such attributes, namely unity, truth and goodness.[4] These attributes do not, however, add anything positive to being. Unity signifies being as undivided; and this undividedness adds to being simply a denial of division, not anything positive.[5] Truth of knowledge (*veritas cognitionis*) does not add anything real to the act itself, but it connotes the object existing in the way that it is represented by the judgment as existing.[6] But truth of knowledge is found in the judgment or mental act and is not the same as *veritas transcendentalis*, which signifies the being of a thing with connotation of the knowledge or concept of the intellect, which represents, or can represent, the thing as it is.[7] This conformity of the thing to the mind must be understood primarily of a relation to the divine mind, and only secondarily of conformity to the

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[1] 2, 2, 36; 39, 3, 17.

[2] *expressius, per maiorem determinationem.*

[3] 2, 6, 7.

[4] 3, 2, 3.

[5] *Disp.*, 4, 1–2.

[6] 8, 2, 9.

[7] 8, 7, 25.

human mind.[1] As to goodness, this means the perfection of a thing, though it also connotes in another thing an inclination to or capacity for the aforesaid perfection. This connotation, however, does not add to the thing which is called good anything absolute; nor is it, properly speaking, a relation.[2] None of the three transcendental attributes of being, then, adds anything positive to being.

6. In the fifth disputation Suárez considers the problem of individuation. All actually existing things—all things which can exist 'immediately'—are singular and individual.[3] The word 'immediately' is inserted in order to exclude the common attributes of being, which cannot exist immediately, that is to say, which can exist only in singular, individual beings. Suárez agrees with Scotus that individuality adds something real to the common nature; but he rejects Scotus' doctrine of the *haecceitas* 'formally' distinct from the specific nature.[4] What, then, does individuality add to the common nature? 'Individuality adds to the common nature something which is mentally distinct from that nature, which belongs to the same category, and which (together with the nature) constitutes the individual metaphysically, as an individual *differentia* contracting the species and constituting the individual.'[5] Suárez remarks that to say that what is added is mentally distinct from the specific nature is not the same thing as saying that it is an *ens rationis*; he has already agreed with Scotus that it is *aliquid reale*. In answer, then, to the question whether a substance is individuated by itself Suárez replies that if the words 'by itself' refer to the specific nature as such, the answer is in the negative, but that, if the words 'by itself' mean 'by its own entity or being', the answer is in the affirmative. But it must be added that the thing's entity or being includes not only the *ratio specifica* but also the *differentia individualis*, the two being distinguished from one another by a mental distinction. Suárez emphasizes the fact that he is speaking of created things, not of the divine substance; but among created things he applies the same doctrine to both immaterial and material substances. From this it follows that he rejects the Thomist view of *materia signata* as the only principle of individuation.[6] In the case of a composite substance, composed, that is to say, of matter and form, 'the adequate principle of individuation is this matter and this form in union, the form being the chief principle and sufficient by itself for the composite, as an individual

[1] 8, 7, 28–9. [2] 10, 1, 12. [3] 5, 1, 4. [4] 5, 2, 8–9. [5] 5, 2, 16. [6] 5, 3.

thing of a certain species, to be considered numerically one. This conclusion . . . agrees with the opinion of Durandus and Toletus; and Scotus, Henry of Ghent and the Nominalists do not hold anything substantially different' (*in re non dissentiunt*).[1] It is perfectly true that because our knowledge is founded on experience of sensible things, we often distinguish individuals according to their several 'matters' or according to the accidents, like quantity, which follow on the possession of matter; but if we are considering a material substance in itself, and not in relation simply to our mode of cognition, its individuality must be primarily ascribed to its principal constitutive element, namely the form.[2]

7. Having dealt at length with the doctrine of causes Suárez comes in disputation 28 to the division of being into infinite being and finite being. This division is fundamental; but it can be made 'under different names and concepts'.[3] For example, being can be divided into *ens a se* and *ens ab alio*, into necessary being and contingent being, or into being by essence and being by participation. But these and similar divisions are equivalent, in the sense that they are all divisions of being into God and creatures and exhaust being, as it were.

The question then arises whether being is predicated equivocally, univocally or analogically of God and creatures. Suárez notes[4] that a doctrine of equivocation is wrongly attributed to Petrus Aureoli. The Scotist doctrine, that 'being signifies immediately one concept which is common to God and creatures and which is therefore predicated of them univocally, and not analogically',[5] Suárez rejects. But if being is predicated analogically of God and creatures, is the analogy in question the analogy of proportionality alone, as Cajetan taught, or the analogy of proportionality together with the analogy of attribution, as Fonseca, for example, considered? According to Suárez, the analogy in question cannot be the analogy of proportionality, for 'every true analogy of proportionality includes an element of metaphor', whereas 'in this analogy of being there is no metaphor'.[6] It must be, therefore, analogy of attribution, and, indeed, intrinsic attribution. 'Every creature is being in virtue of a relation to God, inasmuch as it participates in or in some way imitates the being (*esse*) of God, and, as having being, it depends essentially on God, much more than an accident depends on a substance.'[7]

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[1] 5, 6, 15.
[2] 5, 6, 17.
[3] 28, 1, 6.
[4] 28, 3, 1.
[5] 28, 3, 2.
[6] 28, 3, 11.
[7] 28, 3, 16.

8. In the following disputation (29) Suárez considers the question whether God's existence can be known by reason, apart from revelation. First of all he examines the 'physical argument', which is to all intents and purposes the argument from motion as found in Aristotle. Suárez' conclusion is that this argument is unable to demonstrate the existence of God. The principle on which the argument is founded, namely 'every thing which is moved is moved by another' (*omne quod movetur ab alio movetur*), he declares to be uncertain. Some things appear to move themselves, and it might be true of the motion of the heaven that the latter moves itself in virtue of its own form or of some innate power. 'How, then, can a true demonstration, proving God's existence, be obtained by the aid of uncertain principles?'[1] If the principle is rightly understood, it is more probable (*probabilius*) than its opposite, but all the same, 'by what necessary or evident argument can it be proved from this principle that there is an immaterial substance?'[2] Even if it can be shown that a mover is required, it does not follow that there is not a plurality of movers, still less that the mover is immaterial pure act. Suárez' point is that one cannot prove the existence of God as immaterial uncreated substance and pure act by arguments drawn from 'physics'. In order to show that God exists it is necessary to have recourse to metaphysical arguments.

First of all it is necessary to substitute for the principle *omne quod movetur ab alio movetur* the metaphysical principle *omne quod fit, ab alio fit.*[3] The truth of the principle follows from the evident truth that nothing can produce itself. On the basis of this metaphysical principle one can argue as follows.[4] 'Every being is either made or not made (uncreated). But not all beings in the universe can be made. Therefore there is necessarily some being which is not made, but which is uncreated.' The truth of the major premiss can be made evident in this way. A made or produced being is produced by 'something else'. This 'something else' is itself either made or not made. If the latter, then we already have an uncreated being. If the former, then that on which the 'something else' depends for existence is itself either made or not made. In order to avoid an infinite regress or a 'circle' (which would obtain if one said that *A* was made by *B*, *B* by *C*, and *C* by *A*), it is necessary to postulate an uncreated being. In his discussion of the impossibility of an infinite regress[5] Suárez distinguishes *causae per*

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[1] 29, 1, 7. [2] 29, 1, 8. [3] 29, 1, 20. [4] 29, 1, 21. [5] 29, 1, 25–40.

se subordinatae and *causae per accidens subordinatae*; but he makes it clear that he considers an infinite regress impossible even in the case of the latter. He adopts, then, a different opinion from that of St. Thomas. But he remarks that even if one accepts the possibility of an infinite regress in the series of *causae per accidens subordinatae*, this does not affect the main line of the argument, for the infinite series would be eternally dependent on a higher extrinsic cause. If it were not, there would be no causality or production at all.

This argument, however, does not immediately show that God exists: it has still to be shown that there is only one uncreated being. Suárez argues first of all that 'although individual effects, taken and considered separately, do not show that the maker of all things is one and the same, the beauty of the whole universe and of all things which are in it, their marvellous connection and order sufficiently show that there is one first being by which all things are governed and from which they derive their origin'.[1] Against the objection that there might be several governors of the universe Suárez argues that it can be shown that the whole sensible world proceeds from one efficient cause. The cause or causes of the universe must be intelligent; but several intelligent causes could not combine to produce and govern the one systematically united effect unless they were subordinated to a higher cause using them as organs or instruments.[2] There is, however, another possible objection. Might there not be another universe, made by another uncreated cause? Suárez allows that the creation of another universe would not be impossible, but he observes that there is no reason to suppose that there is another universe. Still, given the possibility, the argument from the universe to the unicity of God holds good, strictly speaking, only for those things which are capable of being known by human experience and reasoning. He concludes, therefore, that an *a priori* proof of the unicity of uncreated being must be given.

The *a priori* proof is not, Suárez notes, *a priori* in the strict sense: it is impossible to deduce God's existence from its cause, for it has no cause. 'Nor, even if it had, is God known by us so exactly and perfectly that we can apprehend Him by means of His own principles, so to speak.'[3] Nevertheless, if something about God has been already proved *a posteriori*, we may be in a position to argue *a priori* from one attribute to another.[4] 'When it has been proved

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[1] 29, 2, 7. [2] 29, 2, 21. [3] 29, 3, 1. [4] *Ibid.*

a posteriori that God is necessary self-existent being (*ens a se*), it can be proved *a priori* from this attribute that there cannot be any other necessary self-existent being, and consequently it can be proved that God exists.'[1] In other words, Suárez' argument is that it can be proved that there must be *a* necessary being and that it can then be shown conclusively that there cannot be more than *one* necessary being. How does he show that there can be only one necessary being? He argues that, in order that there may be a plurality of beings having a common nature, it is necessary that the individuality of each should be in some way (*aliquo modo*) outside the essence of the nature. For, if individuality was essential to the nature, the latter would not be multipliable. But in the case of uncreated being it is impossible for its individuality to be in any way distinct from its nature, for its nature is existence itself, and existence is always individual. The foregoing argument is the fourth which Suárez considers.[2] Later on[3] he remarks that 'although some of these arguments which have been considered do not perhaps, when taken separately, so convince the intellect that a froward or ill-disposed man cannot find ways of evading them, none the less all the arguments are most efficacious, and, especially if they are taken together, they abundantly prove the aforesaid truth'.

9. Suárez proceeds to consider the nature of God. He points out at the beginning of disputation 30 that the question of God's existence and the question of God's nature cannot be entirely isolated from one another. He also repeats his observation that, although our knowledge of God is *a posteriori*, we can in some cases argue *a priori* from one attribute to another. After these preliminary remarks he proceeds to argue that God is perfect being, possessing in Himself, as creator, all the perfections which He is capable of communicating. But He does not possess them all in the same way. Those perfections which do not of themselves contain any limitation or imperfection, God possesses 'formally' (*formaliter*). A perfection like wisdom, for example, though it exists in human beings in a finite or imperfect manner, does not include in its formal concept any limitation or imperfection, and it can be predicated formally of God, *salva analogia, quae inter Deum et creaturam semper intercedit.*[4] Perfections of this sort exist 'eminently' (*eminenter*) in God, for creaturely wisdom as such cannot be predicated of God; but there is, none the less, a formal

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[1] 29, 3, 2. [2] 29, 3, 11. [3] 29, 3, 31. [4] 30, 1, 12.

analogous concept of wisdom which can be predicated formally, though analogously, of God. In the case, however, of perfections which involve inclusion of the being possessing them in a certain category these can be said to be present in God only *modo eminenti*, and not formally.

In succeeding sections Suárez argues that God is infinite,[1] pure act and without any composition,[2] omnipresent,[3] immutable and eternal, yet free,[4] one,[5] invisible,[6] incomprehensible,[7] ineffable,[8] living, intelligent and self-sufficient substance.[9] He then considers the divine knowledge[10] and the divine will[11] and the divine power.[12] In the section on the divine knowledge Suárez shows that God knows possible creatures and existent things and then remarks that the question of God's knowledge of conditional future contingent events cannot be properly treated without reference to theological sources, even though it is a metaphysical question, 'and so I entirely omit it'.[13] But he allows himself the remark that if statements like, 'if Peter had been here, he would have sinned' have a determinate truth, this truth cannot be unknown to God. That they have determinate truth is 'much more probable' (*multo probabilius*) than that they have not, in the sense that Peter in the example given would either have sinned or not have sinned and that, though we cannot know which would have happened, God can know it. However, as Suárez omits any further treatment of this matter in his metaphysical disputations, I too omit it.

10. Coming to the subject of finite being, Suárez treats first of the essence of finite being as such, of its existence, and of the distinction between essence and existence in finite being. He first outlines the arguments of those who hold the opinion that existence (*esse*) and essence are really distinct in creatures. 'This is thought to be St. Thomas's opinion, which, understood in this sense, has been followed by almost all the early Thomists.'[14] The second opinion mentioned by Suárez is that the creature's existence is 'formally' distinguished from its nature, as a mode of that nature. 'This opinion is attributed to Scotus.'[15] The third opinion is that essence and existence in the creature are distinguished only mentally (*tantum ratione*). This opinion, says Suárez,[16] was held by Alexander of Hales and others, including the nominalists. It is

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[1] 30, 2.
[2] 30, 3–5.
[3] 30, 7.
[4] 30, 8–9
[5] 30, 10.
[6] 30, 11.
[7] 30, 12.
[8] 30, 13.
[9] 30, 14.
[10] 30, 15.
[11] 30, 16.
[12] 30, 17.
[13] 30, 15, 33.
[14] 31, 1, 3.
[15] 31, 1, 11.
[16] 31, 1, 12.

the opinion he himself defends, provided that 'existence' is understood to mean actual existence and 'essence' actually existing essence. 'And this opinion, if so explained, I think to be quite true.'[1] It is impossible, Suárez states, for anything to be intrinsically and formally constituted as a real and actual being by something distinct from it. From this it follows that existence cannot be distinguished from essence as a mode which is distinct from the essence or nature *ex natura rei*.[2] The right view is this.[3] If the terms 'existence' and 'essence' are understood to refer respectively to actual being (*ens in actu*) and potential or possible being (*ens in potentia*), then there is, of course, a real distinction; but this distinction is simply that between being and not-being, since a possible is not a being and its potentiality for existence is simply logical potentiality, that is, the idea of it does not involve a contradiction. But if 'essence' and 'existence' are understood to mean, as they should be understood to mean in the present controversy, actual essence and actual existence, the distinction between them is a mental distinction with an objective foundation (*distinctio rationis cum fundamento in re*). We can think of the natures or essences of things in abstraction from their existence, and the objective foundation for our being able to do so is the fact that no creature exists necessarily. But the fact that no creature exists necessarily does not mean that when it exists its existence and essence are really distinct. Take away the existence, so to speak, and you cancel the thing altogether. On the other hand, a denial of the real distinction between essence and existence does not, Suárez argues, lead to the conclusion that the creature exists necessarily.

Existence and essence together form an *ens per se unum*; but this composition is a 'composition' in an analogical sense. For it is only really distinct elements that can together form a real composition. The union of essence and existence to form an *ens per se unum* is called a 'composition' only in a sense analogous to the sense in which the union of matter and form, two really distinct elements, is called a composition.[4] Moreover, the union of essence and existence differs from that of matter and form in this point also, that the former is found in all creatures, whereas the latter is confined to bodies. Composition out of matter and form is a physical composition and forms the basis of physical change, whereas composition out of essence and existence is a metaphysical

[1] 31, 1, 13. [2] 31, 6, 9. [3] 31, 6, 13–24. [4] 31, 13, 7.

composition. It belongs to the being of a creature, whether spiritual or material. The statement that it is a *compositio rationis* does not contradict the statement that it belongs to the being of a creature, for the reason why it belongs to the being of a creature is not the mental character of the distinction between essence and existence but rather the objective foundation of this mental distinction, namely the fact that the creature does not exist necessarily or of itself (*a se*).

Suárez considers the objection that it follows or seems to follow from his view that the existence of the creature is not received in a potential and limiting element and that consequently it is perfect and infinite existence. If, it is said, existence is not an act which is received in a potential element, it is unreceived, and consequently it is subsistent existence. But, says Suárez,[1] the existence of a creature is limited by itself, by its entity, and it does not need anything distinct from itself to limit it. Intrinsically it is limited by itself; extrinsically or *effective* it is limited by God. One can distinguish two kinds of limitation or contraction, namely metaphysical and physical. 'Metaphysical limitation (*contractio*) does not require an actual real distinction between the limited and limiting factors, but a distinction of concepts with some objective foundation is sufficient; and so we can admit (if we wish to use the language of many people) that essence is made finite and is limited with a view to existence and, conversely, that existence is rendered finite and limited by being the act of a particular essence.'[2] As to physical limitations, an angel does not need any intrinsic principle of limitation other than its simple substance, while a composite substance is limited by its intrinsic component factors or principles. This is equivalent to saying that a composite substance also is limited by itself, since it is not something distinct from those intrinsic component factors taken together in their actuality.

Suárez' view is, then, this. 'Because existence is nothing else than essence constituted in act, it follows that, just as actual essence is formally limited by itself, or by its own intrinsic principles, so also created existence has its limitation from the essence, not because essence is a potentiality in which existence is received, but because existence is in reality nothing else but the actual essence itself.'[3] A great deal has been written in Scholastic circles about the dispute between Suárez and his Thomist opponents on the subject of the distinction between essence and existence; but, whichever side is right, it should at least be clear that Suárez had no intention whatsoever of impairing, so to speak, the contingent character of the creature. The creature is created and contingent, but what is created is an actual essence, that is to say, an existent essence, and the distinction between the essence and its existence is only mental, though this mental distinction is grounded on and made possible by the creature's contingent character. Both Thomists and Suarezians agree, of course, about the creature's contingent character. Where they differ is in the analysis of what it means to be contingent. When the Thomists say that there is a real distinction between essence and existence in the creature, they do not mean that the two factors are separable in the sense that either or both of them could preserve actuality in isolation; and when the Suarezians say that the distinction is a *distinctio rationis cum fundamento in re*, they do not mean that the creature exists necessarily, in the sense that it cannot not exist. However, I do not propose to take sides in the controversy; nor shall I introduce reflections which, in the context of contemporary philosophy in Great Britain, might suggest themselves.

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[1] 31, 13, 18. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*

11. Passing to the subject of substance and accident, Suárez remarks[1] that the opinion that the division between substance and accident is a sufficient proximate division of created being is 'so common, that it has been received by all as if it were self-evident. Therefore it needs an explanation rather than a proof. That among creatures some things are substances and others accidents is clear from the constant change and alteration of things.' But being is not predicated univocally of substance and accidents: it is predicated analogically. Now, many people, like Cajetan, think that the analogy in question is the analogy of proportionality alone; 'but I think that the same must be said in this connection as has been said concerning being as common to God and to creatures, namely that there is here no analogy of proportionality, properly speaking, but only analogy of attribution'.[2]

In creatures primary substance (that is, existent substance, as distinguished from the universal or *substantia secunda*) is the same thing as a *suppositum*;[3] and a *suppositum* of rational nature is a person.[4] But Suárez discusses the question whether 'subsistence' (*subsistentia*), which makes a nature or essence a created *suppositum*, is something positive, distinct from the nature. According to one opinion existence and subsistence are the same; and that which being a *suppositum* adds to a nature is consequently existence. 'This opinion is now frequently met with among modern theologians.'[1] But Suárez cannot agree with this theory, as he does not believe that existence is really distinct from the actual nature or essence. 'Actual essence and its existence are not really distinct. Therefore, in so far as subsistence is distinct from actual essence, it must be distinct from the existence of that essence.'[2] Therefore being a *suppositum* or having subsistence, which makes a thing independent of any 'support' (that is, which makes a thing a substance) cannot, in so far as it is something added to an actual essence or nature, be the same thing as existence. What, if anything, does subsistence add to an actual essence or nature? Existence as such simply means having actual being: that a being exists does not, of itself, determine whether it exists as a substance or as an accident. 'But subsistence denotes a determinate mode of existing',[3] namely existing as a substance, not inhering in a substance as an accident inheres in a substance. Therefore subsistence does add something. But what it adds is a mode of existing, a way of existing, not existence itself; it determines the mode of existence and gives to the substance its completion *in ratione existendi*, on the level of existence. Having subsistence or being a *suppositum* adds, therefore, to an actual essence or nature a mode (*modus*), and *subsistentia* differs modally (*modaliter*) from the nature of which it is the subsistence as a thing's mode differs from the thing itself.[4] The composition between them is, then, the composition of a mode with the thing modified.[5] Created subsistence is thus 'a substantial mode, finally terminating the substantial nature and constituting a thing as *per se* subsistent and incommunicable'.[6]

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[1] 32, 1, 4. [2] 32, 2, 12. [3] 34, 1, 9. [4] 34, 1, 13.

12. Here we meet Suárez' idea of 'modes', of which he makes extensive use. For example, he says that probably 'the rational soul, even while joined to the body, has a positive mode of subsistence, and, when it is separated (from the body), it does not acquire a new positive mode of existence, but it is simply deprived of the positive mode of union with the body'.[7] In man, then, not only is there a 'mode' whereby soul and body are conjoined but the soul, even while in the body, also has its own mode of partial

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[1] 34, 4, 8.
[2] 34, 4, 16.
[3] 34, 4, 24.
[4] 34, 4, 33.
[5] 34, 4, 39.
[6] 34, 5, 1.
[7] 34, 5, 33.

subsistence; and what happens at death is that the mode of union disappears, though the soul retains its own mode of subsistence. In purely material substances both form and matter have their own modes, in addition to the mode of union; but it is the 'partial mode' (*modus partialis*) of the matter alone which is conserved after separation of form and matter. The form of a purely material substance does not, like the human soul, which is the form of the body, preserve any mode of subsistence after the corruption of the substance.[1] A material form has not got its own mode of existence or partial subsistence,[2] but matter has. It follows that God could conserve matter without any form.[3]

13. In his detailed treatment of the different kinds of accidents Suárez gives a good deal of attention to the subject of quantity. First of all, the opinion that quantity is really distinct from material substance must be accepted. 'For although it may not be possible to demonstrate its truth sufficiently by natural reason, it is nevertheless shown to be true by the principles of theology, especially on account of the mystery of the Eucharist. Indeed, the natural reason, enlightened by this mystery, understands that this truth is more in agreement and conformity with the natures themselves of things (than the opposite opinion). Therefore the first reason for this opinion is that in the mystery of the Eucharist God separated quantity from the substances of bread and wine...'[4] This distinction must be a real distinction, for, if the distinction were only modal, quantity could not exist in separation from that of which it is a mode.

Considerations taken from the theology of the Eucharist appear also in Suárez' treatment of the formal effect of quanity (*effectus formalis quantitatis*), which he finds in the quantitative extension of parts as apt to occupy place. 'In the body of Christ in the Eucharist besides the substantial distinction of parts of matter there is also a quantitative extension of parts. For, although the parts of that body are not actually extended in place, they are none the less so extended and ordered in relation to one another that, if they were not supernaturally prevented, they would have to possess actual extension in place. This (first) extension they receive from quantity, and it is impossible for them to be without it if they are not without quantity.'[5]

14. As to relations, Suárez maintains that there are in creatures real relations which constitute a special category.[6] But a real

[1] 34, 5, 35. [2] 34, 5, 42. [3] 34, 5, 36. [4] 40, 2, 8. [5] 40, 4, 14. [6] 47, 1.

relation, although it signifies a real form, is not something actually distinct from every absolute form: it is in reality identified with an absolute form which is related to something else.[1] To take an example. In the case of two white things the one thing has to the other a real relation of similarity. But that real relation is not something really distinct from the thing's whiteness: it is the whiteness itself (considered as an 'absolute form') as similar to the whiteness of another thing. This denial of a real distinction between the relation and its subject[2] does not, says Suárez, contradict the assertion that real relations belong to a category of their own, for 'the distinction between categories is sometimes only a *distinctio rationis cum aliquo fundamento in re*, as we shall say later in regard to action, passion and other categories'.[3]

It is only real relations which can belong to the category of relation; for mental relations (*relationes rationis*) are not real beings and cannot, therefore, belong to the category *ad aliquid*.[4] But it does not follow that all real relations belong to the category of relation. If there are two white things, the one is really like the other; but if one of them is destroyed or ceases to be white, the real relation of similarity also ceases. There are, however, says Suárez, some real relations which are inseparable from the essences of their subjects. For example, it belongs to the essence of an existent creature that it depends on the Creator: 'it does not seem that it can be conceived or exist without a transcendental relation to that on which it depends. It is in this relation that the potentiality and imperfection of a created being as such seem especially to consist.'[5] Again, 'matter and form have a true and real mutual relationship essentially included in their own being; and so the one is defined by its relation to the other'.[6] These relations, called by Suárez *relationes transcendentales*, are not mental relations; they are real; but they cannot disappear while the subject remains, as predicamental relations (that is, relations belonging to the category of relation) can disappear. A predicamental relation is an accident acquired by a thing which is already constituted in its essential being; but a transcendental relation is, as it were (*quasi*), a *differentia* constituting and completing the essence of that thing of which it is affirmed to be a relation.[7] The definition of a predicamental relation is 'an accident, the whole being of which is *ad aliud esse, seu ad aliud se habere, seu aliud respicere*'.[1] This definition might seem to cover also transcendental relations; but 'I think that transcendental relations are excluded by the phrase, *cuius totum esse est esse ad aliud*, if it is understood in the strict sense explained at the end of the preceding section. For those beings which include a transcendental relation are not so related to another thing that their whole being consists simply in a relation to that other thing.'[2] Suárez goes on to argue that a predicamental relation requires a subject, a foundation (for example, the whiteness of a white thing) and a term of the relation.[3] But a transcendental relation does not require these three conditions. For example, 'the transcendental relation of matter to form has no foundation, but it is intimately included in matter itself'.[4]

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[1] 47, 2, 22.

[2] The opinion that there is always a real distinction between a real relation and its foundation is 'the opinion of the old Thomists', like Capreolus and Cajetan (47, 2, 2).

[3] 47, 2, 22. [4] 47, 3, 3. [5] 47, 3, 12. [6] 47, 3, 11. [7] 47, 4, 2.

The two examples of transcendental relation given above, namely the relation of creature to Creator and of matter and form to one another, should not lead one to suppose that, for Suárez, there is a 'mutual' relation between the creature and the Creator. There is a real relation to the Creator on the part of the creature but the Creator's relation to the creature is a *relatio rationis*.[5] The nominalists hold that[6] God acquires real relations in time, not in the sense that God acquires new perfections but in the sense, for example, that God is really Creator and, as creation took place in time, God becomes related to creatures in time. But Suárez rejects the opinion.[7] If the relation were real, God would acquire an accident in time which is an absurd idea; and it is useless to say that the relation would *assistere Deo*, and not *inesse Deo* (a distinction attributed to Gilbert de la Porrée), for the relation must be in a subject and, if it is not in the creature, it must be in God.

15. Suárez' final disputation (54) is devoted to the subject of *entia rationis*. He tells us that, although he has said in the first disputation that *entia rationis* are not included in the special subject-matter of metaphysics, he thinks that the general principles concerning this topic should be considered. The topic cannot be properly treated except by the metaphysician, even if it belongs to his subject-matter *quasi ex obliquo et concomitanter*.[8]

After distinguishing various possible meanings of the phrase *ens rationis*, Suárez says that, properly speaking, it signifies 'that which has being objectively only in the mind' or 'that which is thought of as being by the mind, although it has no being in itself'.[1] Blindness, for example, has no positive being of its own, though it is 'thought of' as if it were a being. When we say that a man is blind, we do not mean that there is anything positive in the man to which the word 'blindness' is given; we mean that he is deprived of vision. But we think of this deprivation as if it were a being, says Suárez. A purely mental relation is another example of an *ens rationis*. So is a chimera or purely imaginative construction, which cannot have being apart from the mind. Its being consists in being thought or imagined.

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[1] 47, 5, 2.
[2] 47, 6, 5.
[3] 47, 6–9.
[4] 47, 4, 2.
[5] 47, 15, 6.
[6] 47, 15, 16.
[7] 47, 15, 17–28.
[8] 54, *introd.*

Three reasons can be assigned why we form these *entia rationis*. First of all, the human intellect tries to know negations and privations. These are nothing in themselves; but the mind, which has being as its object, cannot conceive that which is in itself nothing except *ad modum entis*, that is, as if it were being. Secondly, our intellect, being imperfect, has sometimes, in its endeavour to know something which it cannot know as it exists in itself, to introduce relations which are not real relations by comparing it to something else. The third reason is the mind's power to construct composite ideas which cannot have an objective counterpart outside the mind, though the ideas of the parts correspond to something extramental. For example, we can construct the idea of a horse's body with a man's head.

There can be no concept of being common to real beings and to *entia rationis*, for existence (*esse*) cannot be intrinsically participated in by the latter. To 'exist' only in the mind is not to exist (*esse*), but to be thought or mentally constructed. Therefore *entia rationis* cannot be said to possess essence. This distinguishes them from accidents. Nevertheless, an *ens rationis* is called *ens* in virtue of 'some analogy' to being, since it is founded in some way on being.[2]

Entia rationis are caused by the intellect conceiving that which has no real act of being as if it were a being.[3] The senses, appetite and will are not causes of *entia rationis*, though the imagination can be; and in this respect 'the human imagination shares in some way the power of the reason', and perhaps it never forms them save with the co-operation of reason.[4]

The three types of *entia rationis* are negations, privations and (purely mental) relations. A negation differs primarily from a privation in that, while a privation signifies the lack of a form in a subject naturally apt to possess that form, a negation signifies the lack of a form without there being any natural aptitude to possess that form.[1] For example, blindness is a privation; but a man's lack of wings is a negation. According to Suárez[2] imaginary space and imaginary time, conceived without any 'subject', are negations. The logical relations of, for example, genus and species, subject and predicate, antecedent and consequent, which are 'second intentions', are purely mental and so *entia rationis*, though they are not gratuitously formed but have some objective foundation.[3]

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[1] 54. 1, 6. [2] 54, 1, 9. [3] 54, 2, 15. [4] 54, 2, 18.

16. In the multitudinous pages of the *Disputationes metaphysicae* Suárez pursues the problems considered into their various ramifications, and he is careful to distinguish the different meanings of the terms employed. He shows himself to be an analytic thinker, in the sense that he is not content with broad generalizations, hasty impressions or universal conclusions based on an insufficient study of the different aspects of the problem at issue. He is thorough, painstaking, exhaustive. One cannot, of course, expect to find in his work an analysis which will satisfy all the demands made by modern analysts: the terms and ideas in which he thought were for the most part traditional in the Schools and were taken for granted. One might, indeed, take various points out of Suárez' writings and express them in the more fashionable terms of today. For example, his observations that to 'exist' only in the mind is not really to exist at all but to be thought or mentally constructed could be translated into a distinction between different types of sentences analysed in reference to their logical meaning as distinct from their grammatical form. One has, however, to take a past thinker in his historical setting, and if Suárez is seen in the light of the philosophical tradition to which he belonged, there can be no doubt that he possessed the gift of analysis in an eminent degree.

That Suárez possessed an analytic mind would hardly, I think, be denied. But it has been maintained that he lacked the power of synthesis. He became immersed in a succession of problems, it is sometimes said, and he gave such a careful consideration to the manifold ways in which these problems had been treated and solved in history that he was unable to see the wood for the trees. Moreover, his great erudition inclined him to eclecticism. He borrowed a view here and an opinion there, and the result was a patchwork rather than a system. His critics would not, I think, suggest that he was a superficial eclectic, since it needs no very close acquaintance with his writings to see that he was very far from being superficial; but they do suggest that he was an eclectic in a sense which is incompatible with possessing the gift of synthesis.

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[1] 54, 5, 7.

[2] 54, 5, 23.

[3] 54, 6, 8–9.

The accusation that a given philosopher was not a system-builder is not an accusation which is likely to carry much weight in contemporary philosophical circles. Provided that the accusation does not rest on the fact that the philosopher in question expounded a number of mutually incompatible theses, many modern philosophers would comment, 'so much the better'. However, leaving this aspect of the matter out of account one can ask whether the accusation is in fact true. And in the first place one can ask in what sense Suárez was an eclectic.

That Suárez was an eclectic in some sense seems to me undeniable. He had an extremely extensive knowledge of former philosophies, even if, as is only to be expected, he was sometimes mistaken in his assertions or interpretations. And he could hardly possess this knowledge without being influenced by the opinions of the philosophers he studied. But this does not mean that he accepted other people's opinions in an uncritical manner. If, for example, he accepted the opinion of Scotus and Ockham that there is a confused intellectual intuition of the individual thing, which logically precedes abstraction, he did so because he thought that it was true. And if he questioned the universal applicability of the principle *quidquid movetur ab alio movetur* he did not do so because he was a Scotist or an Ockhamist (he was neither) but because he considered that the principle, considered as a universal principle, is in fact questionable. Moreover, if Suárez was an eclectic, so was Aquinas. The latter did not simply accept Aristotelianism in its entirety; if he had done so, he would have occupied a far less important position in the development of mediaeval philosophy and would have shown himself to be devoid of any spirit of philosophical criticism. Aquinas borrowed from Augustine and other thinkers, as well as from Aristotle. And there is no cogent reason why Suárez should not have followed his example by utilizing what he considered valuable in philosophers who lived at a later date than Aquinas. Of course, if the accusation of eclecticism means simply that Suárez departed from the teaching of St. Thomas on a number of points, he was certainly an eclectic. But the relevant philosophical question would be not so much whether Suárez departed from Aquinas's teaching as whether he was objectively justified in doing so.

That Aquinas was also in some sense an eclectic would presumably be admitted by all. What philosopher is not in some sense an eclectic? But some would still maintain that there is this big difference between the philosophy of St. Thomas and that of Suárez. The former rethought all the positions which he adopted from others and developed them, welding these developments, together with his own original contributions, into a powerful synthesis with the aid of certain fundamental metaphysical principles. Suárez on the other hand juxtaposed various positions and did not create a synthesis.

The truth of this accusation is, however, extremely doubtful. In his preface (*Ad lectorem*) to the *Disputationes metaphysicae* Suárez says that he intends to play the part of philosopher in such a way as to have always before his eyes the truth that 'our philosophy ought to be Christian and the servant of divine theology' (*divinae Theologiae ministram*). And if one regards his philosophical ideas in this light, one can see a synthesis clearly emerging from the mass of his pages. For Aristotle, in the *Metaphysics* at least, God was simply the first unmoved mover: His existence was asserted in order to explain motion. The Christian philosophers, like St. Augustine, introduced the idea of creation, and St. Thomas attempted to weld together Aristotelianism and creationism. Beneath, as it were, the Aristotelian distinction of matter and form St. Thomas discerned the more fundamental distinction of essence and existence, which runs through all finite being. Act is limited by potentiality, and existence, which stands to essence as act to potentiality, is limited by essence. This explains the finitude of creatures. Suárez, however, was convinced that the utter dependence which logically precedes any distinction of essence and existence is itself the ultimate reason of finitude. There is absolute being, God, and there is participated being. Participation in this sense means total dependence on the Creator. This total dependence or contingency is the reason why the creature is limited or finite.[1] Suárez did not explain finitude and contingency in terms of the distinction between existence and essence: he explained this distinction, in the sense, that is, in which he accepted it, in terms of a finitude which is necessarily bound up with contingency.

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[1] 31, 13, 18.

It is sometimes said that Suarezianism is an 'essential' philosophy or a philosophy of essence rather than a philosophy of existence, like Thomism. But it would seem difficult to find a more 'existential' situation than the situation of utter dependence which Suárez finds to be the ultimate characteristic of every being other than God. Moreover, by refusing to admit a 'real' distinction between essence and existence in the creature Suárez avoided the danger of turning existence into a kind of essence. Cancel the creature's existence, and its essence is cancelled too. The Thomist would say the same, of course; but this fact suggests perhaps that there is not so great a difference between the Thomist 'real' distinction and the Suarezian conceptual distinction with an objective foundation as might be supposed. The difference lies perhaps rather in the fact that the Thomist appeals to the metaphysical principle of the limitation of act by potentiality, which suggests a view of existence that seems strange to many minds, whereas Suárez founds his distinction simply on creation. The view is at any rate arguable that he carried the 'purification' of Greek philosophy a stage further by bringing the concept of creation and of utter dependence which creation spells more into the centre of the picture. Again, whereas St. Thomas laid stress on the Aristotelian argument from motion in proving God's existence, Suárez, like Scotus, preferred a more metaphysical and less 'physical' line of thought, precisely because the existence of creatures is more fundamental than their movement and because God's creation of finite being is more fundamental than His concurrence in their activity.

There are, moreover, many other ideas in the philosophy of Suárez which follow in some way from, or are connected with, his fundamental idea of dependence or 'participation'. Dependent being is necessarily finite, and as finite it is capable of acquiring further perfection. If it is a spiritual being it can do this freely. But as dependent it needs the divine concurrence even in the exercise of its freedom. And as utterly dependent on God it is subject to the divine moral law and is necessarily ordered to God. Again, as finite perfectible being the free creature is capable not only of acquiring perfection by its own activity, with the divine concurrence, but of receiving a perfection which lifts it above its natural life; as dependent spiritual being it is, as it were, malleable by God and possesses a *potentia obedientialis* for the reception of grace. Further, finite being is multipliable in diverse species and in a plurality of individuals in one species. And in order to explain the multipliability of individuals in a species it is not necessary to introduce the idea of matter as principle of individuation, with all the remnants of 'unpurified' Platonism attaching to that Aristotelian idea.

It has not been my intention in this last section of the present chapter to give my own views on the matters raised, and I do not wish to be understood in this sense. My intention has been rather that of showing that there is a Suarezian synthesis, that the key to it is the idea of 'participation' or dependence in being, and that it was this idea above all which must, Suárez was convinced, be the distinguishing mark of a Christian philosophy. To say this is not, of course, to suggest in any way that the idea is absent from Thomism. Suárez regarded himself as a follower of St. Thomas; and Suarezians do not set Suárez against St. Thomas. What they believe is that Suárez carried on and developed the work of St. Thomas in building up a metaphysical system in profound harmony with the Christian religion.

That the *Disputationes metaphysicae* exercised a wide influence in post-Renaissance Scholasticism scarcely needs saying. But they penetrated also into the Protestant universities of Germany, where they were studied by those who preferred Melanchthon's attitude towards philosophy to that of Luther. Indeed, the *Disputationes metaphysicae* served as a text-book of philosophy in a large number of German universities in the seventeenth century and part of the eighteenth. As for the leading post-Renaissance philosophers, Descartes mentions the work in his reply to the fourth set of objections, though apparently he did not know it at all well. But Leibniz tells us himself that he read the work as if it were a novel while he was still a youth. And Vico studied Suárez for a whole year. Again Suárez' idea of analogy is mentioned by Berkeley in his *Alciphron*.[1] At the present time the *Disputationes metaphysicae* are a living force primarily in Spain, where Suárez is considered one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of the national philosophers. To the modern world at large he is known rather for his *De legibus*, to which I shall turn in the next chapter.

17. Reference has been made in the preceding section to the contention that the metaphysics of Suárez is an essentialist, as

[1] 4, 20.

contrasted with an existentialist, metaphysics. In *Being and Some Philosophers* Professor Étienne Gilson argues that Suárez, following Avicenna and Scotus but proceeding further in the same direction, lost sight of Aquinas's vision of being as the concrete act of existing and tended to reduce being to essence. And Suárez begot Christian Wolff who refers with approval to the Spanish Jesuit in his *Ontologia*. Finally Suárez' influence has corrupted large tracts of neo-Scholasticism. Modern existentialism has protested in the name of existence against the essentialist philosophy. Kierkegaard reacted strongly against the system of Hegel, who is to be numbered, so one gathers, among the spiritual descendants of Suárez. But modern existentialism has no true realization of existence. The consoling conclusion emerges, therefore, that St. Thomas Aquinas is the one true metaphysician.

That the position and character of the analysis of the concept of being which is found in many neo-Scholastic text-books of metaphysics are very largely due to the influence of Suárez can hardly be denied. Nor can it well be denied, I think, that Suárez influenced Wolff and that a number of neo-Scholastic writers were influenced, indirectly at least, by Wolff. But the issues raised by Professor Gilson in his discussion of 'essentialist' metaphysics as contrasted with 'existentialist' metaphysics are so wide and far-reaching that they cannot, in my opinion, be properly treated in the form of a note to Suárez' philosophy. At the close of my *History of Philosophy* I hope to return to the subject in the course of considering the development of western philosophy as a whole. Meanwhile, it must suffice to have drawn the reader's attention to Gilson's estimate of Suárez' philosophy, which can be found in *L'être et l'essence* and *Being and Some Philosophers*, both of which books are listed in the Bibliography.

CHAPTER XXIII

FRANCIS SUÁREZ (2)

Philosophy of law and theology—The definition of law—Law (lex) *and right* (ius)*—The necessity of law—The eternal law—The natural law—The precepts of the natural law—Ignorance of natural law—The immutability of the natural law—The law of nations—Political society, sovereignty and government—The contract theory in Suárez—The deposition of tyrants—Penal laws—Cessation of human laws—Custom—Church and State —War.*

1. SUÁREZ' philosophy of law was based on that of St. Thomas Aquinas; but it must, none the less, be judged an original creative development, if one bears in mind its amplitude, thoroughness and profundity. In the philosophy of law Suárez was the mediator between the mediaeval conception of law, as represented by Thomism, and the conditions prevailing at the time he wrote. In the light of those conditions he elaborated a legal philosophy and in connection therewith a political theory which in scope and completeness went beyond anything attained in the Middle Ages and which exercised a profound influence. There can be no doubt that Grotius was seriously indebted to Suárez, even if he did not acknowledge this indebtedness clearly. That he did not do so can be easily understood, if one bears in mind, on the one hand, Suárez' doctrine of political authority and of the right to resist, and on the other hand Grotius' dependence on the King of France at the time that he wrote his *De iure belli ac pacis*.

In his preface to the *De legibus ac Deo legislatore* (1612) Suárez observes that no one need be surprised to find a professional theologian embarking on a discussion of law. The theologian contemplates God, not only as He is in Himself, but also as man's last end. This means that he is concerned with the way of salvation. Now, salvation is attained by free acts and moral rectitude; and moral rectitude depends to a great extent on law considered as the rule of human acts. Theology, then, must comprise a study of law; and, being theology, it is necessarily concerned with God as lawgiver. It may be objected that the theologian, while legitimately giving his attention to divine law, should abstain from concerning himself with human law. But all law derives its authority ultimately from God; and the theologian is justified in treating all types of law, though he does so from a higher point of view than that of the moral philosopher. For example, the theologian considers natural law in its relation of subordination to the supernatural order, and he considers civil law or human positive law with a view to determining its rectitude in the light of higher principles or with a view to making clear the obligations bearing on the conscience in regard to civil law. And Suárez appeals, in the first place, to the example of St. Thomas.

2. Suárez begins by giving a definition of law (*lex*) taken from St. Thomas. 'Law is a certain rule and measure, according to which one is induced to act or is restrained from acting.'[1] He goes on, however, to observe that the definition is too broad. For example, as no mention of obligation is made, no distinction is drawn between law and counsel. It is only after a discussion of the various conditions requisite for law that Suárez finally gives his definition of it as 'a common, just and stable precept, which has been sufficiently promulgated'.[2] Law, as it exists in the legislator, is the act of a just and upright will binding an inferior to the performance of a particular act;[3] and it must be framed for a community. Natural law relates to the community of mankind;[4] but human laws may properly be enacted only for a 'perfect' community.[5] It is also inherent in the nature of law that it be enacted for the common good, though this must be understood in relation to the actual subject-matter of the law, not in relation to the subjective intentions of the legislator, which is a personal factor.[6] Furthermore, it is essential to law that it should prescribe what is just, that is, that it should prescribe acts which can be justly performed by those whom the law affects. It follows from this that a law which is unjust or unrighteous is not, properly speaking, a law at all, and it possesses no binding force.[7] Indeed, an unrighteous law cannot be licitly obeyed, though in cases of doubt as to the righteousness of the law the presumption is in favour of the law. Suárez observes that in order for a law to be just three conditions must be observed.[8] First, it must be enacted, as already mentioned, for the common good, not for private advantage. Secondly, it must be enacted for those in regard to whom the legislator has authority to legislate, that is, for those who are his subjects. Thirdly, law must not proportion

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[1] *De legibus*, 1, 1, 1; cf. St. Thomas, *S.T.*, Ia, IIae, 90, 1.

[2] *De legibus*, 1, 12, 5.

[3] *Ibid.*, 1, 5, 24.

[4] *Ibid.*, 1, 6, 18.

[5] *Ibid.*, 1, 6, 21.

[6] *Ibid.*, 1, 7, 9.

[7] *Ibid.*, 1, 9, 11.

[8] *Ibid.*, 1, 9, 13.

burdens unequally, in an inequitable manner. The three phases of justice which must characterize the law in regard to its form are, then, legal justice, commutative justice and distributive justice.[1] Law must also, of course, be practicable, in the sense that the acts it enjoins must be practicable.

3. What is the relation between law (*lex*) and right (*ius*)? Strictly speaking, *ius* denotes 'a certain moral power which every man has, either over his own property or with respect to what is due to him'.[2] Thus the owner of a thing has a *ius in re* in regard to that thing actually possessed, while a labourer, for example, has a right to his wages, *ius ad stipendium*. In this sense of the word *ius* is distinct from *lex*. But the term *ius* is often used, says Suárez, in the sense of 'law'.

4. Are laws necessary? Law is not necessary, if by 'necessity' is understood absolute necessity. God alone is a necessary being in an absolute sense, and God cannot be subject to law.[3] But, given the creation of rational creatures, law must be said to be necessary in order that the rational creature may live in a manner befitting his nature. A rational creature is capable of choosing well or ill, rightly or wrongly; and it is susceptible of moral government. In fact, moral government, which is effected through command, is connatural to the rational creature. Given, therefore, rational creatures, law is necessary. It is irrelevant, says Suárez,[4] to argue that a creature may receive the grace of impeccability; for the grace in question does not involve the creature's removal from the state of subjection to law but brings it about that the creature obeys the law without fail.

5. Suárez' treatment of the eternal law is contained in the second book of the *De legibus*.[5] This law is not to be understood as a rule of right conduct imposed by God upon Himself:[6] it is a law of action in regard to the things governed. In regard to all things, irrational as well as rational? The answer depends on the degree of strictness in which the word 'law' is understood. It is true that all irrational creatures are subject to God and are governed by Him; but their subjection to God can be called 'obedience' only in a metaphorical sense, and the law by which God governs them is called a 'law' or 'precept' only metaphorically. In the strict sense, then, 'eternal law' has reference only to rational creatures.[7] It is the moral or human acts of rational creatures which form the

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[1] *De legibus*, 1, 9, 13.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1, 2, 5.

[3] *Ibid.*, 1, 3, 2.

[4] *Ibid.*, 1, 3, 3.

[5] Chapters 1–4.

[6] *De legibus*, 2, 2, 5.

[7] *Ibid.*, 2, 2, 13.

proper subject-matter of the eternal law, 'whether the latter commands their performance, prescribes a particular mode of acting, or prohibits some other mode'.[1]

The eternal law is 'a free decree of the will of God, who lays down the order to be observed; either generally, by the separate parts of the universe with respect to the common good . . . or else specifically, by intellectual creatures in their free actions'.[2] It follows that the eternal law, as a freely established law, is not absolutely necessary. This would be inconsistent with the eternity of the law only if nothing which is free could be eternal. The eternal law is eternal and immutable; but it is none the less free.[3] One can, however, distinguish law as it exists in the mind and will of the legislator from law as externally established and promulgated for the subjects. In the first phase the eternal law is truly eternal; but in the second phase it did not exist from eternity, because the subjects did not exist from eternity.[4] This being the case, one must conclude that actual promulgation to subjects is not the essence of eternal law. It is sufficient, for the eternal law to be called 'law', that it should have been made by the legislator to become effective at the proper time. In this respect the eternal law differs from other laws, which are not complete laws until they have been promulgated.[5]

Inasmuch as all created right reason partakes in 'the divine light which has been shed upon us', and inasmuch as all human power comes ultimately from God, all other law is a participation in the eternal law and an effect thereof.[6] It does not follow, however, that the binding force of human law is divine. Human law receives its force and efficacy directly from the will of a human legislator. It is true that the eternal law does not actually bind unless it is actually promulgated; and it is true that it is actually promulgated only through the medium of some other law, divine or human; but, in the case of human law, the obligation to observe it is caused proximately by this human law as enacted and promulgated by legitimate human authority, though fundamentally and mediately it proceeds from the eternal law.[7]

6. Turning to the subject of natural law, Suárez criticizes the opinion of his fellow-Jesuit, Father Vásquez, that rational nature and the natural law are the same. Suárez observes that, although rational nature is indeed the foundation of the objective goodness

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[1] *De legibus*, 2, 2, 15.
[2] *Ibid.*, 2, 3, 6.
[3] *Ibid.*, 2, 3, 4.
[4] *Ibid.*, 2, 1, 5.
[5] *Ibid.*, 2, 1, 11.
[6] *Ibid.*, 2, 4, 5.
[7] *Ibid.*, 2, 4, 8–10.

of the moral acts of human beings, it does not follow that it should be called 'law'. Rational nature may be called a 'standard'; but the term 'standard' is a term of wider extension than the term 'law'.[1] There is, however, a second opinion, according to which rational nature, considered as the basis of the conformity or non-conformity of human acts with itself, is the basis of natural rectitude, while natural reason, or the power of rational nature to discriminate between acts in harmony with itself and acts not in harmony with itself, is the law of nature.[2] So far as this opinion means that the dictates of right reason, considered as the immediate and intrinsic rule of human acts, is the natural law, it may be accepted. In the strictest sense, however, the natural law consists in the actual judgment of the mind; but the natural reason or the natural light of reason may also be called natural law, for we think of men as permanently retaining that law in their minds, even though they may not be engaged in any specific act of moral judgment. In other words, the question how natural law should be defined is partly a terminological question.[3]

As to the relation of the natural law to God, there are two extreme positions, which are opposed to one another. According to the first opinion, ascribed to Gregory of Rimini, the natural law is not a preceptive law in the proper sense; for it does not indicate the will of a superior but simply makes clear what should be done, as being intrinsically good, and what should be avoided, as being intrinsically evil. The natural law is thus a demonstrative law rather than a preceptive law; and it does not derive from God as legislator. It is, so to speak, independent of God, that is, of God considered as moral legislator. According to the second opinion, however, which is ascribed to William of Ockham, God's will constitutes the whole basis of good and evil. Actions are good or evil simply and solely in so far as they are ordered or prohibited by God.

Neither of these opinions is acceptable to Suárez. 'I hold that a middle course should be taken, this middle course being, in my judgment, the opinion held by St. Thomas and common to the theologians.'[4] In the first place, the natural law is a preceptive and not merely a demonstrative law; for it does not merely indicate what is good or evil, but it also commands and prohibits. But it does not follow from this that the divine volition is the total cause of the good or evil involved in the observance or transgression of the natural law. On the contrary, the divine volition presupposes the intrinsic moral character of certain acts. It is repugnant to reason to say, for example, that hatred of God is wrong simply and solely because it is prohibited by God. The divine volition presupposes a dictate of the divine reason concerning the intrinsic character of human acts. God is, indeed, the author of the natural law; for He is Creator and He wills to bind men to observe the dictates of right reason. But God is not the arbitrary author of the natural law; for He commands some acts because they are intrinsically good and prohibits other acts because they are intrinsically evil. Suárez does not, of course, mean to imply that God is, as it were, governed by a law which is external to His nature. What he means is that God (to speak anthropomorphically) could not help seeing that certain acts are in harmony with rational nature and that certain acts are morally incompatible with rational nature, and that God, seeing this, could not fail to command the performance of the former and prohibit the performance of the latter. It is true that the natural law, taken simply in itself, reveals what is intrinsically good and evil, without any explicit reference to God; but the natural light of reason none the less makes known to man the fact that actions contrary to the natural law are necessarily displeasing to the author and governor of nature. As to the promulgation of the natural law, 'the natural light is of itself a sufficient promulgation'.[1]

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[1] *De legibus*, 2, 5, 6. [2] *Ibid.*, 2, 5, 9. [3] *Ibid.*, 2, 5, 14. [4] *Ibid.*, 2, 6, 5.

7. In the discussion of this matter in the *De legibus*, there is, I think, a certain prolixity and even a certain lack of clarity and exactitude. It is certainly clear that Suárez rejected the authoritarian ethical theory of William of Ockham and that, fundamentally, his own theory follows that of St. Thomas; but it does not seem to me to be made as clear as one could wish in what precise sense the term 'good' is being used. Suárez does, however, clarify the matter somewhat when he discusses the question what is the subject-matter dealt with by natural law.

He distinguishes various types of precepts which belong to the natural law.[2] First of all, there are general and primary principles of morality, such as 'one must do good and shun evil'. Secondly, there are principles which are more definite and specific, like 'God must be worshipped' and 'one must live temperately'. Both these types of ethical propositions are self-evident, according to Suárez. Thirdly, there are moral precepts which are not immediately self-evident but which are deduced from self-evident propositions and become known through rational reflection. In the case of some of these precepts, like 'adultery is wrong', their truth is easily recognized; but in the case of some other precepts, like 'usury is unjust' and 'lying can never be justified', more reflection is required in order to see their truth. Nevertheless, all these types of ethical propositions pertain to the natural law.

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[1] *De legibus*, 2, 6, 24.

[2] *Ibid.*, 2, 7, 5.

But if the natural law enjoins that good must be done, and if all righteous and licit acts are good acts, does it not seem to follow that the natural law enjoins the performance of all acts which are righteous and licit? Now, the act of contracting marriage is a good act. Is it, then, enjoined by the natural law? On the other hand, living according to the counsels of perfection is good. For example, it is good to embrace perpetual chastity. Is it, then, enjoined by the natural law? Certainly not; a counsel is not a precept. But why not? Suárez, developing a distinction made by St. Thomas, explains that, if virtuous acts are considered individually, not every such act falls under a natural precept. He mentions the counsels and contracting marriage.[1] One can also say[2] that all virtuous acts, in respect of the manner in which they should be performed, fall under the natural law, but that, in regard to their actual performance, they are not all absolutely prescribed by the natural law. It might, however, have been simpler to say that the natural law enjoins, not simply the doing of what is good, but the doing of good and the avoidance of evil, in the sense that what is prescribed absolutely is the doing of something good when its omission or the doing of something else would be evil. But the terms 'good' and 'evil' would still need some further clarificatory analysis. Some of the apparent confusion in Suárez' treatment of natural law seems to be due to his using the phrase 'natural law' both in a narrower sense, to mean the law based on human nature as such, and also in a wide sense, to include 'the law of grace'.[3] To embrace the evangelical counsels is certainly not made a matter of obligation by the essential propensities and requirements of human nature: but the life of the counsels is offered to the individual for a supernatural end, and it could become a matter of obligation only if God absolutely commanded an individual to embrace it or if he or she could achieve his or her last end only by embracing it.

Possibly the following may make Suárez' position a little clearer. An act is good if it is in accordance with right reason; and an act is evil if it is not in accordance with right reason. If doing a certain act averts a man from his last end, that act is evil and is not in accordance with right reason, which enjoins that the means necessary to the attainment of the last end shall be taken. Now, every concrete human act, that is, every concrete deliberate free act, is in the moral order and is either good or bad: it is either in accordance or not in accordance with right reason.[1] The natural law enjoins, therefore, that every concrete human act should be good and not evil. But to say this is not the same thing as to say that every possible good act should be done. This would scarcely be possible; and in any case omitting to do one good act does not necessarily involve doing a bad act. To take a rather trivial example. If taking some exercise is indispensable for my health and the proper fulfilment of my work, it is in accordance with right reason that I should take some exercise. But it does not follow that I ought to go for a walk; for I might also play golf or swim or do gymnastic exercises. Again, it might be a good thing for a man to become a friar; but it does not follow that he is doing evil if he does not become a friar. He might marry, for example; and to marry is to do a good act, even if, abstractly speaking at least, to become a friar is better. What the moral law enjoins is to do good *and* not to do evil: it does not always order which good act is to be done. The natural law prohibits all evil acts, since the avoidance of evil is necessary for morality; but it does not order all good acts, for to do a particular good act is not always necessary. From the obligation of never sinning there follows the positive obligation of acting well; but this positive obligation is conditional ('if a free act is to be done'), not simply absolute. 'It is a general obligation of doing good, when some act has to be done; and this obligation can be fulfilled by acts which are not absolutely enjoined. Therefore, it is not all good acts which, by virtue of the natural law, fall under a precept.'[2]

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[1] *De legibus*, 2, 7, 11.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, 2, 8, 1.

8. As to possible ignorance of the natural law, Suárez maintains that no one can be ignorant of the primary or most general principles of the natural law.[3] It is possible, however, to be ignorant of particular precepts, even of those which are self-evident or easily deducible from self-evident precepts. But it does not follow that such ignorance can be guiltless, not at least for any considerable length of time. The precepts of the Decalogue are of this character. Their binding force is so easily recognizable that no

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[1] *Tractatus de bonitate et malitia humanorum actuum*, 9, 3, 10.

[2] *De Religione, pars secunda*, 1, 7, 3.

[3] *De legibus*, 2, 8, 7.

one can remain in ignorance of it for any considerable length of time without guilt. However, invincible ignorance is possible in regard to those precepts knowledge of which requires greater reflection.

9. Are the precepts of the natural law immutable? Before the question can be profitably discussed, it is necessary to make a distinction.[1] It is possible for a law to become intrinsically defective by becoming harmful instead of useful or irrational instead of rational. It is also possible for a law to be changed by a superior. Again, both intrinsic change and extrinsic change can affect either the law itself or some particular case or application. For instance, a superior might abolish the law as such or he might relax it or dispense from it in some particular case. Suárez first considers intrinsic change; and he maintains[2] that, properly speaking, the natural law cannot undergo any change, either in regard to its totality or in regard to particular precepts, so long as human nature endures, gifted with reason and free will. If rational nature were abolished, natural law would also be abolished in regard to its concrete existence, since it exists in man or flows from human nature. As natural law flows from human nature, as it were, it cannot become injurious with the course of time; nor can it become irrational if it is grounded in self-evident principles. Apparent instances of intrinsic change in particular cases are due simply to the fact that the general terms in which a natural precept is customarily stated do not adequately express the natural precepts themselves. For instance, if a man has lent me a knife and demands it back, I ought to restore to him what is his property; but if he has become a homicidal maniac and I know that he wants to use the knife to murder someone, I ought not to restore it. This does not mean, however, that the precept that deposits should be restored on demand has undergone an intrinsic change in this case; it simply means that the precept, so stated, is an inadequate statement of what is contained in or involved by the precept itself. Similarly, the precept of the Decalogue, 'thou shalt not kill', really includes many conditions which are not explicitly mentioned; for example, 'thou shalt not kill on thine own authority and as an aggressor'.[3]

Can the natural law be changed by authority? Suárez maintains that 'no human power, even though it be the papal power, can abrogate any proper precept of the natural law' (that is, any precept properly belonging to the natural law), 'nor truly and essentially restrict such a precept, nor grant a dispensation from it'.[1] A difficulty may seem to arise in regard to property. According to Suárez,[2] nature has conferred on men in common dominion over things, and consequently every man has the power to use those things which have been given in common. It might seem, then, that the institution of private property and of laws against theft either constitute an infringement of the natural law or indicate that the natural law is subject, in some cases at least, to human power. Suárez answers that the law of nature did not positively forbid the division of common property and its appropriation by individuals; the institution of common dominion was 'negative', not positive. Positively considered, the natural law ordains that no one should be prevented from making the necessary use of common property as long as it is common, and that, after the division of property, theft is wrong. We have to distinguish[3] between preceptive laws and the law concerning dominion. There is no preceptive law of nature that things should always be held in common; but there are preceptive laws relating to conditions which are to a certain extent subject to human power. Nature did not divide goods among private individuals; but the private appropriation of goods was not forbidden by natural law. Private property may, therefore, be instituted by human agency. But there are preceptive laws of nature relating to common ownership and to private ownership; and these preceptive laws are not subject to human agency. The power of the State to confiscate property when there is just cause (as in certain criminal cases) must be understood as provided for in the preceptive laws of nature.

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[1] *De legibus*, 2, 13, 1.

[2] *Ibid.*, 2, 13, 2.

[3] *Ibid.*, 2, 13, 8.

In other words, Suárez will not admit that the natural law is subject to human power. At the same time he maintained that Nature gave the things of the earth to all men in common. But it does not follow, he tells us, either that the institution of private property is against the natural law or that it constitutes a change in the natural law. Why not? A matter may fall under the natural law either in a negative sense or in a positive sense (through positive prescription of an action). Now, common ownership was a part of natural law only in a negative sense, in the sense, that is to say, that by virtue of the natural law all property was to be held in common unless men introduced a different provision. The introduction of private property was thus not against the natural law nor did it constitute a change in any positive precept of the natural law.

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[1] *De legibus*, 2, 14, 8.
[2] *Ibid.*, 2, 14, 16.
[3] *Ibid.*, 2, 14, 19.

However, even if men cannot change or dispense from the natural law, has not God the power to do so? In the first place, if God can dispense from any of the precepts of the Decalogue, it follows that He can abrogate the whole law and order those acts which are forbidden by the natural law. Dispensation from the law prohibiting an act would render that act permissible; but, if God can render an otherwise prohibited act permissible, why could He not prescribe it? 'This was the opinion supported by Occam, whom Pierre d'Ailly and Andreas a Novocastro followed.'[1] The opinion is, however, to be rejected and condemned. The commands and prohibitions of God in respect of the natural law presuppose the intrinsic righteousness of the acts commanded and the intrinsic wickedness of the prohibited acts. The notion that God could command man to hate Him is absurd. Either God would be commanding man to hate an object worthy of love or He would have to render Himself worthy of hatred; but either supposition is absurd.

What, then, of Scotus' opinion, that a distinction must be drawn between the precepts of the First Table of the Decalogue and those of the Second Table and that God can dispense in regard to the latter? Suárez observes that, in a sense, it is inaccurate to say that God, according to Scotus, can dispense in the case of certain precepts of the natural law, since Scotus would not allow that all the precepts of the Decalogue belong, at least in the strictest sense, to the natural law. But Suárez rejects the opinion that the precepts of the Second Table do not strictly belong to the natural law. 'The arguments of Scotus, indeed, are not convincing.'[2]

Suárez maintains, then, that God cannot dispense in regard to any of the Commandments. He appeals to St. Thomas, Cajetan, Soto and others.[3] All the Commandments involve one intrinsic principle of justice and obligation. The apparent cases of dispensation of which we read in the Old Testament were not really cases of dispensation at all. For example, when God told the Hebrews to despoil the Egyptians, He was not acting as legislator and giving them a dispensation to steal. He was either acting as supreme lord and transferring dominion over the goods in question from the Egyptians to the Hebrews; or He was acting as supreme judge and awarded the Hebrews proper wages for their work, wages which had been withheld by the Egyptians.[4]

[1] *De legibus*, 2, 15, 3. [2] *Ibid.*, 2, 15, 12. [3] *Ibid.*, 2, 15, 16. [4] *Ibid.*, 2, 15, 20.

10. Suárez goes on to distinguish the natural law from 'the law of nations' (*ius gentium*). In Suárez' opinion, the *ius gentium* does not prescribe any acts as being of themselves necessary for right conduct, nor does it forbid anything as being of itself and intrinsically evil: such prescriptions and prohibitions pertain to the natural law, and not to the *ius gentium*.[1] The two are not, therefore, the same. The *ius gentium* 'is not only indicative of what is evil but also constitutive of evil'.[2] Suárez means that the natural law prohibits what is intrinsically evil whereas the *ius gentium* considered precisely as such does not prohibit intrinsically evil acts (for these are already forbidden by natural law) but prohibits certain acts for a just and sufficient reason and renders the performance of those acts wrong. From this it follows that the *ius gentium* cannot possess the same degree of immutability as the natural law possesses.

The laws of the *ius gentium* are, therefore, positive (not natural) and human (not divine) laws. In this case, however, does it differ from civil law? It is not sufficient merely to say that civil law is the law of one State, while the *ius gentium* is common to all peoples; for a mere difference between greater and less does not constitute a specific difference.[3] Suárez' opinion is that 'the precepts of the *ius gentium* differ from those of the civil law in that they are not established in written form'; they are established through the customs of all or nearly all nations.[4] The *ius gentium* is thus unwritten law; and it is made up of customs belonging to all, or practically all, nations. It can, indeed, be understood in two ways. A particular matter can pertain to the *ius gentium* either because it is a law which the various peoples and nations ought to observe in their relations with each other or because it is a set of laws which individual States observe within their own borders and which are similar and so commonly accepted. 'The first interpretation seems, in my opinion, to correspond most properly to the actual *ius gentium* as distinct from the civil law.'[5]

Of the *ius gentium* understood in this sense Suárez gives several examples. For example, as far as natural reason is concerned it is not indispensable that the power of avenging an injury by war should belong to the State, for men could have established some other means of avenging injury. But the method of war, which is 'easier and more in conformity with nature', has been adopted by custom and is just.[6] 'In the same class I place slavery.' The

[1] *De legibus*, 2, 17, 9.
[2] *Ibid.*, 2, 19, 2.
[3] *Ibid.*, 2, 19, 5.
[4] *Ibid.*, 2, 19, 6.
[5] *Ibid.*, 2, 19, 8.
[6] *Ibid.*

institution of slavery (as a punishment for the guilty) was not necessary from the standpoint of natural reason; but, given this custom, the guilty are bound to submit to it, while the victors may not inflict a more severe punishment without some special reason. Again, though the obligation to observe treaties once they have been made proceeds from the natural law, it is a matter pertaining to the *ius gentium* that offers of treaties, when duly made and for a reasonable cause, should not be refused. To act in this way is, indeed, in harmony with natural reason; but it is more firmly established by custom and the *ius gentium*, and so acquires a special binding force.

The rational basis of this kind of *ius gentium* is the fact that the human race, however much it may be divided into different nations and States, preserves a certain unity, which does not consist simply in membership of the human species, but is also a moral and political unity, as it were (*unitatem quasi politicam et moralem*). This is indicated by the natural precept of mutual love and mercy, which extends to all, 'even foreigners'.[1] A given State may constitute a perfect community, but, taken simply by itself, it is not self-sufficient but requires assistance through association and relationship with other States. In a certain sense, then, different States are members of a universal society; and they need some system of law to regulate their relations with one another. Natural reason does not provide sufficiently for this need; but the habitual conduct of nations has introduced certain laws which are in accordance with nature, even if they are not strictly deducible from the natural law.

St. Thomas asserted in the *Summa theologica*[2] that the precepts of the *ius gentium* are conclusions drawn from principles of the natural law and that they differ from precepts of the civil law, which are determinations of the natural law, not general conclusions from it. Suárez interprets this as meaning that the precepts of the *ius gentium* are general conclusions of the natural law, 'not in an absolute sense and by necessary inference, but in comparison with the specific determination of civil and private law'.[3]

11. In the third book of the *De legibus* Suárez turns to the subject of positive human law. He asks first whether man possesses the power to make laws or whether the making of laws by man spells tyranny; and his treatment of this question involves consideration of the State and of political authority.

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[1] *De legibus*, 2, 19, 9.

[2] Ia, IIae, 95, 4.

[3] *De legibus*, 2, 20, 2.

Man is a social animal, as Aristotle said, and he has a natural desire to live in community.[1] The most fundamental natural society is, indeed, the family; but the family, though a perfect community for purposes of domestic or 'economic' government, is not self-sufficing. Man stands in further need of a political community, formed by the coalition of families. This political community is necessary, both for the preservation of peace between individual families and for the growth of civilization and culture.

Secondly, in a perfect community (Suárez is here speaking of the political community) there must be a governing power. The truth of this principle would seem to be self-evident, but it is confirmed by analogy with other forms of human society, like the family.[2] Moreover, as St. Thomas indicates,[3] no body can endure unless it possesses some principle the function of which is to provide for the common good. The institution of civil magistracy is thus necessary.

Thirdly, a human magistracy, if it is supreme in its own sphere, has the power to make laws in its own sphere, that is to say, civil or human laws. A civil magistracy is a necessity in a State; and the establishment of laws is one of the most necessary acts of a civil magistracy, if it is to fulfil its governmental and regulative function in the life of the State.[4] This power to make laws belongs to the magistracy which possesses supreme jurisdiction in the State: it is an essential factor in political sovereignty.

The State and political sovereignty are thus natural institutions, in the sense that nature demands their establishment. It may be true that empires and kingdoms have often been established through tyranny and force; but historical facts of this kind are examples of human abuse of power and strength, not of the essential nature of political sovereignty.[5] As to St. Augustine's opinion, that the domination of one man over another is due to the state of affairs brought about by sin, this is to be understood, says Suárez,[6] of that form of dominion which is accomplished by servitude and the exercise of coercion. Without sin there would be no exercise of coercion and no slavery; but there still would be government; at least, 'in so far as directive power is concerned, it would seem probable that this would have existed among men even in the state of innocence'.[7] In this matter Suárez follows St. Thomas.[8] In the *De opere sex dierum*[9] Suárez says that since

[1] *De legibus*, 3, 1, 3.
[2] *Ibid.*, 3, 1, 4.
[3] *De regimine principum*, 1, 1.
[4] *De legibus*, 3, 1, 6.
[5] *Ibid.*, 3, 1, 11.
[6] *Ibid.*, 3, 1, 12.
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] For St. Augustine's opinion see Vol. II of this history, pp. 88–9.
[9] 5, 7, 6.

human society is a result not of human corruption but of human nature itself, it appears that men would have been united in a political community even in the state of innocence, had that state continued to exist. Whether there would have been one political community or more is not a question which one can answer. All one can say is that if all men had continued to live in Paradise, there could have been one single political community. Suárez goes on to say that there would have been no servitude in the state of innocence but there would have been government, as this is required for the common good.[1]

But the fact that civil magistracy and government are necessary and that the supreme magistracy in a State has power to make laws, does not mean that the power to make laws is conferred directly and immediately on any individual or group of individuals. On the contrary, 'this power, viewed solely according to the nature of things, resides, not in any individual man, but rather in the whole body of mankind'.[2] All men are born free; and nature has not conferred immediately upon any man political jurisdiction over another.

When, however, it is said that the power of making laws was conferred by Nature immediately upon mankind ('the multitude of mankind'), this must not be understood as meaning that the power was conferred on men regarded simply as an aggregate, without any moral union. We must understand mankind as meaning men gathered together by common consent 'into one political body through one bond of fellowship and for the purpose of aiding one another in the attainment of a single political end'.[3] If regarded in this way, men form 'a single mystical body' which needs a single head.[4]

It is to be added that the power in question does not reside in mankind in such a way that it is one power residing in all existent men, with the consequence that they would all form one single political community. 'On the contrary, that would scarcely be possible, and much less would it be expedient.'[5] It seems, then, that the power of making laws, if it existed in the whole assemblage of mankind, did so only for a brief time: mankind began to be divided into distinct political communities 'soon after the creation of the world'. Once this division had begun to take place, the power to make laws resided in the several political communities.

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[1] *De legibus*, 5, 7, 11.

[2] *Ibid.*, 3, 2, 3.

[3] *Ibid.*, 3, 2, 4.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*, 3, 2, 5.

This power comes from God as its primary source.[1] But how does He confer it? In the first place, it is given by God 'as a characteristic property resulting from nature'. In other words, God does not confer the power by any special act which is distinct from the act of creation. That it results from nature means that natural reason shows that the exercise of the power is necessary for the preservation and proper government of the political community, which is itself a natural society. In the second place, the power does not manifest itself until men have formed a political community. Therefore the power is not conferred by God without the intervention of will and consent on the part of men, that is to say, on the part of those men who, by consent, form themselves together into a perfect society or State. However, once they have formed the community the power is resident therein. It is rightly said, then, to have been immediately conferred by God. Suárez adds[2] that the power does not reside in a given political community in such a way that it cannot be alienated by the consent of that community or forfeited by way of just punishment.

12. It is clear that Suárez regarded political society as originating, essentially, in consent. That a greater or less number of States may have actually originated in other ways is a historical accident, not affecting the essence of the State. But if, to this extent, Suárez may be said to have proposed a theory of the 'social contract', this does not mean that he regarded political society as a purely artificial society, a creation of enlightened egoism. On the contrary, as we have seen, he found the ultimate origin of political society in human nature, that is, in the social character and needs of the human being. The formation of political society is a necessary expression of human nature, even if the formation of a given political community must be said to rest essentially on consent, since nature has not specified what particular communities are to be formed.

Much the same is to be said about his theory of sovereignty or, to restrict oneself to the actual point discussed, the power of making laws which appertains to sovereignty. Nature has not specified any particular form of government, says Suárez;[3] the determination of the form of government depends on human choice. It would be extremely difficult for the whole community as such to make laws directly, and practical considerations point to monarchy as the best form of government, though it is as a rule expedient, given man's character, 'to add some element of common government'.[1] What this element of common government is to be, depends on human choice and prudence. In any case, whoever holds the civil power, this power has been derived, either directly or indirectly, from the people as a community. Otherwise it could not be justly held.[2] In order that sovereignty may justly be vested in a given individual, 'it must necessarily be bestowed upon him by the consent of the community'.[3] In certain cases God has conferred power directly, as on Saul; but such cases are extraordinary and, as far as regards the mode of imparting power, supernatural. In the case of hereditary monarchy the just possessor derived power from the commonwealth.[4] As to royal power obtained through unjust force, the king in this case possesses no true legislative power, though in the course of time the people may come to give their consent to and acquiesce in his sovereignty, thus rendering it legitimate.[5]

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[1] *De legibus*, 3, 3, 4. [2] *Ibid.*, 3, 3, 7. [3] *Ibid.*, 3, 4, 1.

Thus, just as Suárez holds that the formation of a given political community depends on human consent, so he holds that the establishment of a certain government depends on the consent of the political community which confers the sovereignty. He may therefore be said to maintain, in a sense, the double-contract theory. But, just as he holds that the formation of political communities is a requirement of nature, so he holds that the establishment of some government is required by nature. He may tend to lay more emphasis on the idea of consent; indeed, he speaks explicitly of a 'pact or agreement' between the king and the kingdom;[6] but political authority and sovereignty are nevertheless necessary for the proper preservation and government of mankind. Political authority is derived ultimately from God, on whom all dominion depends; but the fact that it is conferred on a definite individual derives from a grant on the part of the State itself: 'the principate itself is derived from men'.[7] In other words, political sovereignty is not in itself simply a matter of convention or agreement, for it is necessary for human life; but the conferring of sovereignty on certain individuals does depend on agreement.

It may be noted in passing that Suárez thought in terms of the monarchic state of his time. The mediaeval idea of the imperial power plays little part in his political theory. In his *Defence of the*

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[1] *De legibus*, 3, 4, 1.
[2] *Ibid.*, 3, 4, 2.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, 3, 4, 3.
[5] *Ibid.*, 3, 4, 4.
[6] *Ibid.*, 3, 4, 5.
[7] *Ibid.*, 3, 4, 5.

Catholic and Apostolic Faith[1] Suárez expressly denies that the emperor has universal temporal jurisdiction over all Christians. It is probable, he says, that the emperor never did possess this power; and, even if he did, he has certainly lost it. 'We assume that there are, besides the emperor, a number of temporal kings, like the kings of Spain, France and England, who are entirely independent of the emperor's jurisdiction.'[2] On the other hand, Suárez evidently did not think that a world-State and a world-government were practical possibilities. History shows that there never has been a truly world-wide government. It does not exist, never did exist, and never could have existed.[3] Suárez maintained as we have seen, that the existence of a single political community for all men is morally impossible and that, even if possible, it would be highly inexpedient.[4] If Aristotle was right, as he was, in saying that it is difficult to govern a very large city properly, it would be far more difficult to govern a world-State.

13. What implications did Suárez draw from his doctrine of the pact between monarch and kingdom? Did he hold in particular that the citizens have a right to depose a tyrannical monarch, one who violates his trust?

According to Suárez,[5] the transfer of sovereignty from the State to the prince is not a delegation but a transfer or unlimited bestowal of the whole power which resided in the community. The prince, then, may delegate the power, if he so chooses: it is granted to him absolutely, to be exercised by him personally or through agents, as he thinks most expedient. Moreover, once the power has been transferred to the monarch, he is the vicar of God; and obedience to him is obligatory, according to the natural law.[6] In fact, the transference of power to the monarch makes him superior even to the State which conferred the power, since the State has subjected itself to the monarchy by making the transference.

The monarch cannot, then, be deprived of his sovereignty, since he has acquired ownership of his power. But Suárez immediately adds the qualification, 'unless perchance he lapses into tyranny, on which ground the kingdom may wage a just war against him'.[7] There are two sorts of tyrants.[8] There is the tyrant who has usurped the throne by force and unjustly; and there is the legitimate prince who rules tyrannically in the use he makes of his power. In regard to the first kind of tyrant, the whole State or any

[1] 3, 5, 7.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *De legibus*, 3, 4, 7.
[4] *Ibid.*, 3, 2, 5.
[5] *Ibid.*, 3, 4, 11.
[6] *Ibid.*, 3, 4, 6.
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] *Defence of the Catholic and Apostolic Faith*, 6, 4, 1.

part of it has the right to revolt against him, for he is an aggressor. To revolt is simply to exercise the right of self-defence.[1] As to the second type of tyrant, namely the legitimate prince who rules tyrannically, the State as a whole may rise against him, for it must be supposed that the State granted him the power on condition that he should govern for the common good and that he might be deposed if he lapsed into tyranny.[2] It is, however, a necessary condition for the legitimacy of such a revolt that the king's rule should be manifestly tyrannical and that the norms pertaining to a just war should be observed. Suárez refers to St. Thomas on this matter.[3] But it is only the whole State which is entitled to rise against a legitimate monarch acting tyrannically; for he cannot, without more ado, be an aggressor against all individual citizens in the way that the unjust usurper is an aggressor. This is not to say, however, that an individual who is the subject of actual tyrannical aggression on the part of a legitimate monarch may not defend himself. But a distinction must be drawn between self-defence and defence of the State.

In his *Defence of the Catholic and Apostolic Faith*[4] Suárez considers the particular question of tyrannicide. A legitimate monarch may not be slain by private authority on the grounds that he rules tyrannically. This is the doctrine of St. Thomas,[5] Cajetan and others. A private individual who kills on his own authority a legitimate monarch who acts tyrannically is a murderer. He does not possess the requisite jurisdiction.[6] As to self-defence, a private individual may not kill the legitimate monarch simply in order to defend his private possessions; but if the monarch tyrannically threatens the citizen's life, he may defend himself, even if the monarch's death results, though regard for the common welfare might, in certain circumstances, bind him in charity to refrain from slaying the monarch, even at the cost of his own life.

In the case of a tyrannical usurper, however, it is licit for the private individual to kill him provided that no recourse can be had to a superior authority and provided that the tyranny and injustice of the usurper's rule are manifest. Other conditions added by Suárez[7] are that tyrannicide is a necessary means for the liberation of the kingdom; that no agreement has been freely entered upon by the usurper and the people; that tyrannicide will not leave the State afflicted with the same or greater evils than before; and that the State does not expressly oppose private tyrannicide.

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[1] *De triplici virtute theologica; de caritate*, 13, 8, 2.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *De regimine principum*, 1, 6.

[4] 6, 4.

[5] *De regimine principum*, 1, 6.

[6] *Defence*, 6, 4, 4.

[7] *Ibid.*, 6, 4, 8–9.

Suárez thus affirms the right of resistance, which logically follows from his doctrine of the origin and transference of sovereignty. He certainly in no way encouraged unnecessary revolts; but it is easily understandable that his work on the Catholic Faith was most obnoxious to James I of England, who believed in the divine right of kings and the principle of legitimacy.

14. In the fourth book of the *De legibus* (*De lege positiva canonica*) Suárez considers canon law; and in the fifth book he treats *de varietate legum humanarum et praesertim de poenalibus et odiosis.* In connection with penal laws he raises the question of their binding force in conscience. First of all, it is possible for the human legislator to make laws which bind in conscience, even though a temporal penalty for transgression is attached.[1] But do such laws bind in conscience when the legislator has not expressly stated his intention of binding the consciences of his subjects? In Suárez' opinion[2] a law which contains a precept binds in conscience unless the legislator has expressed or made clear his intention not to bind the conscience. (Whether the law binds under pain of mortal or venial sin depends on the matter of the law and other circumstances.) Suárez draws the logical conclusion that just taxation laws bind in conscience, 'like the law in Spain taxing the price of wheat'.[3] It is possible, however, for there to be penal laws which do not bind in conscience in regard to the act to be performed. Whether a law is of this kind, that is, whether a law is merely penal, depends on the intention of the legislator. This intention need not necessarily be expressed in so many words, for it may be made clear by tradition and custom.[4] When a penal law does not actually command or prohibit an act but simply states, for example, that if someone exports wheat he will be fined, it can be presumed to be merely penal unless it is clear from some other consideration that it was meant to bind in conscience.

A human penal law can oblige subjects in conscience to undergo the penalty, even before judicial sentence; but only if the penalty is one that the subject can licitly inflict on himself and provided that it is not so severe or repugnant to human nature that its voluntary performance cannot be reasonably demanded.[5] But

[1] *De legibus*, 5, 3, 2.

[2] *Ibid.*, 5, 3, 6.

[3] *Ibid.*, 5, 3, 10.

[4] *Ibid.*, 5, 4, 8.

[5] *Ibid.*, 5, 5, 15.

it does not follow that all penal laws do so oblige in actual fact. If a penal law simply threatens a penalty, it does not oblige the transgressor to undergo the penalty before sentence, whatever the penalty may be:[1] the legislator's intention to oblige the transgressor in conscience to undergo the penalty on his own initiative must be made clear. As to the obligation to undergo the penalty inflicted by judicial sentence, Suárez holds that if some action or co-operation on the part of the guilty man is necessary for the execution of the penalty, he is bound in conscience to perform that act or give that co-operation, provided that the law which he has broken is a just law and that the penalty in question is not immoderate.[2] In this matter, however, common sense has to be used. No one, for example, is obliged to execute himself.[3]

As already mentioned, Suárez considered that taxation laws, if they are just, bind in conscience. He maintained that 'the laws by which such taxes are ordered to be paid, even if no penalty is attached, certainly cannot be called purely penal'.[4] They therefore bind in conscience; and just taxes must be paid in full, even if they have not been demanded, from oversight, for example, unless the legislator's intention to pass a purely penal taxation law is made clear. Regarded in themselves, taxation laws are true moral laws binding in conscience.[5] As for unjust taxation laws, they never bind in conscience, either before or after the demand for the payment of the tax.[6]

15. The sixth book of the *De legibus* is concerned with the interpretation, cessation and change of human laws. It is not always necessary that a law should be revoked by the sovereign before it can be disobeyed licitly. Apart from the fact that a law enjoining anything wrong, anything impossible of fulfilment or anything devoid of any utility is unjust and null from the start,[7] a law may cease to be valid and binding because the adequate end, both intrinsic and extrinsic of the law, has ceased to exist.[8] For example, if a law is passed imposing a tax solely with a view to obtaining money for a specific object, the law lapses, as regards its binding force, when the purpose has been achieved, even if the law has not been revoked. But if the end of a law is not purely extrinsic but is also intrinsic (for example, if a good act is indeed commanded with a view to some specific end but in such a way that the legislator would command that act irrespective of the

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[1] *De legibus*, 5, 6, 4.
[2] *Ibid.*, 5, 10, 8.
[3] *Ibid.*, 5, 10, 12.
[4] *Ibid.*, 5, 13, 4.
[5] *Ibid.*, 5, 13, 9.
[6] *Ibid.*, 5, 18, 12.
[7] *Ibid.*, 6, 9, 3.
[8] *Ibid.*, 6, 9, 10.

specific end), it cannot, of course, be taken for granted that the law lapses simply because the specified end has been achieved.

16. Suárez writes at length of unwritten law or custom, a matter to which he devotes the seventh book (*De lege non scripta quae consuetudo appellatur*). Custom, considered as a juridical factor, is introduced in default of law: it is unwritten law. But it is only common or public custom which can establish law (that is, custom regarded as law), not private custom, which is the custom of one person or of an imperfect community.[1] Moreover, a custom, to establish law, must be morally good: a custom which is intrinsically evil establishes no law.[2] But the distinction between morally good and bad customs is not the same as that between reasonable and unreasonable customs: a custom might be good in itself, that is, considered simply as a custom, while at the same time it might be unreasonable and imprudent if regarded juridically, namely as establishing law.[3]

For the establishment of a custom a perfect community is required:[4] but it is not necessary for its establishment that it should be observed by literally the whole of the community; it is sufficient if the greater part of the community observes it.[5] How is it established? By a repetition of certain public acts by the people.[6] These acts must, of course, be voluntary acts. The reason for this is that the acts which establish a custom are of effect in doing so only in so far as they manifest the consent of the people.[7] They must, therefore, be voluntary: a custom cannot be validly established by acts done under compulsion or from grave or unjust fear.[8] But it does not follow that the consent of the prince is not necessary for the valid establishment of custom or consuetudinary law. This consent may, however, be given in different ways; either by express consent, or by antecedently permitting the introduction of a custom or by contemporaneous or subsequent confirmation, or by the prince doing nothing to check the custom when he has become aware of it.[9] Tacit consent, then, on the part of the sovereign can be sufficient.

Legitimate custom may have various different effects. It may establish a law; it may serve to interpret an existent law; or it may abrogate a law.[10] As regards the first effect, ten years are necessary and sufficient to establish a legal custom.[11] As to the abrogation of law through custom, a twofold will, the will of the people and the will of the prince, is necessary for the attainment of this effect,[1] though a tacit consent on the prince's part can suffice. Custom can even establish penal law.[2] A custom of ten years' standing is required for the abrogation of civil law; but in the case of canon law a period of forty years is required for a custom to be prescriptive against a law.[3]

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[1] *De legibus*, 7, 3, 8–10. [2] *Ibid.*, 7, 6, 4. [3] *Ibid.*, 7, 6, 7. [4] *Ibid.*, 7, 9, 3. [5] *Ibid.*, 7, 9, 12. [6] *Ibid.*, 7, 10, 1. [7] *Ibid.*, 7, 12, 1. [8] *Ibid.*, 7, 12, 10. [9] *Ibid.*, 7, 13, 6. [10] *Ibid.*, 7, 14, 1. [11] *Ibid.*, 7, 15, 2.

In the eighth book of the *De legibus* (*De lege humana favorabili*) Suárez deals with privilege, and in the ninth and tenth books with divine positive law. Passing over these topics I propose to say something on Suárez' view of the relation of Church to State.

17. In his *Defence of the Catholic and Apostolic Faith* Suárez discusses and rejects the view that the pope possesses not only supreme spiritual power but also supreme civil power with the consequence that no purely temporal sovereign possesses supreme power in temporal affairs. He appeals to utterances of popes, and then goes on to argue[4] that no just title can be discovered whereby the pope possesses direct jurisdiction in temporal affairs over all Christian States. And without a just title he cannot possess such jurisdiction. There is no evidence that either divine or human law has conferred such jurisdiction on the pope. Suárez recognized, of course, the temporal jurisdiction of the pope as temporal ruler over the Papal States; but he refused to regard other temporal sovereigns as mere vicars of the Holy See. In other words Church and State are distinct and independent societies, even though the end for which the Church exists is higher than that for which the State exists.

But, although the pope does not possess direct or primary civil jurisdiction over temporal sovereigns, he possesses a directive power over them, not merely as individuals but also as sovereigns. In virtue of his spiritual jurisdiction the pope possesses the power of directing temporal princes with a view to a spiritual end.[5] 'By directive power we do not understand simply the power of advising, warning or requesting; for these are not peculiar to superior authority; but we mean a strict power of obliging.'[6] Temporal monarchs are the spiritual subjects of the pope; and the pope's spiritual authority includes the power of directing the monarch in the use of his temporal authority, 'if in any matter he deviates from right reason, or from faith, justice or charity'.[7] This involves an indirect power on the part of the pope over temporal affairs.

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[1] *De legibus*, 7, 18, 5.
[2] *Ibid.*, 7, 16, 3.
[3] *Ibid.*, 7, 18, 12.
[4] *Defence*, 3, 5, 11.
[5] *Ibid.*, 3, 22, 1.
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] *Ibid.*, 3, 22, 5.

There may occur a clash between spiritual good and temporal convenience or expediency; and on such occasions the temporal sovereign must yield to the spiritual.[1] The pope should not attempt to usurp direct temporal jurisdiction; but in cases where it is necessary for spiritual good he may interfere, in virtue of his indirect power.

Suárez thus maintained the doctrine of the pope's indirect, though not direct, jurisdiction in the temporal sphere. He also maintained that the pope possesses 'coercive power over temporal princes who are incorrigibly wicked, and especially over schismatics and stubborn heretics'.[2] For directive power without coercive power is inefficacious. This power extends not only to the infliction of spiritual punishments like excommunication but also to the infliction of temporal punishments, such as, in case of necessity, deposition from the throne.[3] As to heathen monarchs, even if the pope does not possess the power to punish them, he has the power to free their Christian subjects from allegiance to them, if the Christians are in danger of moral destruction.[4]

18. Finally something may be said on the subject of Suárez' doctrine concerning war.

War is not intrinsically evil: there can be a just war. Defensive war is permitted; and sometimes it is even a matter of obligation.[5] But certain conditions have to be observed in order that a war should be just. First of all, the war must be waged by a legitimate power; and this is the supreme sovereign.[6] But the pope has the right to insist that matters of dispute between Christian sovereigns should be referred to himself, though the sovereigns are not bound to secure the pope's authorization before making war, unless the pope has expressly said that they must do so.[7]

The second condition for a just war is that the cause of making war should be just. For example, the suffering of a grave injustice which cannot be repaired or avenged in any other way is a just cause for war.[8] A defensive war should be attempted; but before an offensive war is begun, the sovereign should estimate his chances of victory and should not begin the war if he is more likely to lose than to win it.[9] The reason for this proviso is that otherwise the prince would incur the obvious risk of inflicting great injuries on his State. (By 'offensive war' Suárez means, not an 'aggressive war', but a just war freely undertaken. It is legitimate to declare war freely in order to repair injuries suffered or to defend the innocent.)

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[1] *Defence*, 3, 22, 7.
[2] *Ibid.*, 3, 23, 2.
[3] *Ibid.*, 3, 23, 10.
[4] *Ibid.*, 3, 23, 22.
[5] *De triplici virtute theologica: de caritate*, 13, 1, 4.
[6] *Ibid.*, 13, 2, 4.
[7] *Ibid.*, 13, 2, 5.
[8] *Ibid.*, 13, 4, 1.
[9] *Ibid.*, 13, 4, 10.

The third condition for a just war is that the war must be properly conducted and that due proportion must be observed throughout its course and in victory. Before beginning a war the prince is bound to call the attention of the sovereign of the other State to the existence of a just cause of war and to ask for adequate satisfaction. If the other offers adequate reparation for the injury done, he is bound to accept it; if he nevertheless attacks, the war will be unjust.[1] During the conduct of the war it is legitimate to inflict on the enemy all losses necessary for the attainment of victory, provided that these losses do not involve intrinsic injury to innocent persons.[2] Finally, after the winning of victory the prince may inflict upon the conquered enemy such penalties as are sufficient for a just punishment; and he may demand compensation for all losses his State has suffered, including those suffered through the war.[3] Indeed, after the war 'certain guilty individuals among the enemy may also be put to death with justice'.[4]

As to the 'innocent', 'it is implicit in the natural law that the innocent include children, women, and all unable to bear arms', while, according to the *ius gentium*, ambassadors are included, and, among Christians, by positive law, religious and priests. 'All other persons are considered guilty; for human judgment looks upon those able to take up arms as having actually done so.'[5] Innocent persons as such may never be slain, for the slaying of them is intrinsically evil; but if victory cannot be achieved without the 'incidental' slaying of the innocent, it is legitimate to slay them.[6] Suárez means that it is legitimate, for example, to blow up a bridge or to storm a town, if such acts are necessary for victory, even though the attacker has reason to think that these acts will involve the death of some innocent persons 'incidentally'. It would not, however, be legitimate to do such acts with the purpose of killing innocent people.

A question in connection with war discussed by Suárez[7] is the question how far the soldiers partaking in it are morally obliged to ascertain whether it is a just or unjust war. His answer, briefly stated, is as follows. Regular soldiers who are subjects of a prince are not bound to make careful investigation before obeying the summons to war: they can assume that the war is just, unless the contrary is evident. If they have simply speculative doubts about the justice of the war, they should disregard these doubts; but if the soldiers have practical and convincing reasons for thinking that the justice of the war is extremely doubtful they should make further inquiries. As to mercenaries who are not subjects of the prince who proposes to make war, Suárez argues that, although the common opinion seems to be that they are bound to inquire into the justice of war before enlisting, he himself finds no difference in actual fact between subjects and non-subjects. The general principles are, (*a*) that if the doubt which arises about the justice of a war is purely negative, it is probable that soldiers may enlist without making any further inquiry; and (*b*) that if the doubt is positive, and if both sides advance plausible arguments, those about to enlist should inquire into the truth. If they cannot discover the truth, let them aid him who is probably in the right. In practice 'inquiry' for an ordinary soldier means consulting 'prudent and conscientious men' but if the soldiers form an organized body, they can leave the inquiry and decision to their commander. As to the sovereign who wishes to make war, he is bound, of course, to inquire diligently into the justice of his cause; and he may not go to war if the other side is more probably in the right, let alone if it is morally certain that justice rests with the other side.[1]

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[1] *De triplici virtute theologica: de caritate*, 13, 7, 3.

[2] *Ibid.*, 13, 7, 6.

[3] *Ibid.*, 13, 7, 7.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*, 13, 7, 10.

[6] *Ibid.*, 13, 7, 15.

[7] *Ibid.*, 13, 6, 8–12.

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[1] *De triplici virtute theologica; de caritate*, 13, 6, 2.

CHAPTER XXIV

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE FIRST THREE VOLUMES

Greek philosophy; the pre-Socratic cosmologies and the discovery of Nature, Plato's theory of Forms and idea of God, Aristotle and the explanation of change and movement, neo-Platonism and Christianity—The importance for mediaeval philosophy of the discovery of Aristotle—Philosophy and theology—The rise of science.

I. IN the first volume of this *History of Philosophy* I dealt with the philosophy of Greece and Rome. If one regards Greek philosophy as starting in the sixth century B.C. and ending with Justinian's closing of the Athenian Academy in A.D. 529, one can say that it lasted for about a thousand years and that it formed a definite period of philosophic thought with certain more or less well-defined phases.

(i) According to the traditional division, the first phase was that of pre-Socratic philosophy; and it has been customary to depict this phase as characterized predominantly by cosmological speculation. This view has, of course, the authority of Socrates in the *Phaedo*; and Aristotle, who interpreted the thought of previous philosophers largely in terms of his own theory of causes, speaks of the early Greek philosophers as busying themselves with the 'material cause' and of thinkers like Empedocles and Anaxagoras as considering the source of motion or efficient cause. I think that this view of pre-Socratic philosophy, namely that it was predominantly, though certainly not exclusively, cosmological in character, is obviously reasonable and sound. One can express it perhaps by saying that the pre-Socratic philosophers discovered 'Nature', that is, they formed the idea of a cosmos, an organized physical system governed by law. That the cosmos was looked on as divine in some sense, and that one can discern in the theories of the pre-Socratics mythical elements, the connection of which with older cosmogonies can be traced, is true; but there is a world of difference between the mythical cosmogonies and the cosmologies of the pre-Socratic philosophers. There is connection, but there is also difference. The play of imagination and phantasy began to retreat before the reflective work of the mind, based to some degree on empirical data.

It is, I think, important to remember that the pre-Socratic cosmologists represent a pre-scientific phase of thought. There was then no distinction between philosophy and the empirical sciences; nor, indeed, could there have been. The empirical sciences had to attain a certain stage of development before the distinction could well be made; and we may recall that even after the time of the Renaissance 'natural philosophy' or 'experimental philosophy' was used as a name for what we would call 'physical science'. The early Greek philosophers aimed simply at understanding the nature of the world, and their attention was centred on certain problems which aroused their interest and curiosity or, as Aristotle puts it, 'wonder'. Some of these problems were certainly what we would call 'scientific problems', in the sense that they can be profitably dealt with only by the use of scientific method, though the pre-Socratics tried to solve them by the only means in their power, namely by reflection on casual observations and by speculation. In some instances they made brilliant guesses which anticipated scientific hypotheses of a much later date. Anaximander appears to have put forward an evolutionary hypothesis about man's origin, while the atomic theory of Leucippus and Democritus is a notable example of a speculative anticipation of a later scientific hypothesis. According to Aristotle, men first felt wonder at the more obvious things and later raised difficulties and questions about more important matters; and he mentions questions about the sun and the moon and the stars and about the generation of the universe. This statement by Aristotle is worth reflecting on. The 'wonder' of which he speaks was the fountainhead of both philosophy and science. But in the beginning they were not distinguished, and it is only in terms of a later distinction to which we have become thoroughly accustomed, that we classify questions about the sun and moon and stars as scientific questions. It is obvious enough to us that if we wish to learn about the stars, for example, we have to turn to the astronomer for information: we would hardly go to the speculative philosopher for our information. Similarly, we do not think that questions about the physical constitution of matter or about the mechanism of vision (a subject in which Empedocles, for example, interested himself) can be answered by means of arm-chair reflection.

If I were to rewrite the sections about the pre-Socratics in my first volume, I would wish, I think, to give more attention to these aspects of their thought, namely the fact that a number of the questions which they raised were what we would regard as scientific questions and that a number of the theories which they put forward were speculative anticipations of later scientific hypotheses. At the same time it would be incorrect to suggest that the pre-Socratics were nothing but would-be scientists who lacked the method and the requisite technical means for pursuing their real vocation. One might perhaps say something like this about Thales and Anaximenes; but it would be a strange thing to say about Parmenides or even, I think, about Heraclitus. It seems to me that the pre-Socratics, or some of them at least, raised a number of problems which have generally been considered properly philosophical problems. Heraclitus, for example, appears to have raised moral problems which cannot be answered by empirical science. And it is arguable that the drive behind the intellectual activity of some of them was the desire to 'explain' the universe by reducing multiplicity to unity and by discovering the nature of 'ultimate reality', and that they had this drive in common with later speculative philosophers.

I do not think, then, that one is justified in interpreting the pre-Socratics as nothing more than speculative forerunners of science. To do this is to be guilty of a rather cavalier and hasty generalization. At the same time it is only right to draw attention to the fact that some of the main questions which they raised were not questions which can be answered in the way in which the pre-Socratics (unavoidably) tried to answer them. And in this sense it is true to say that they were forerunners of science. It is, I think, also true to say that they were predominantly 'cosmologists' and that a good deal of the field of their cosmological speculation has now been taken over, as it were, by science. But though one can say if one likes that their assumption that Nature is an organized cosmos was a scientific hypothesis, one can just as well say that it was a philosophic hypothesis which lies at the root of all scientific work and research.

(ii) If the early cosmologists discovered Nature, the Sophists, Socrates and Plato discovered Man. It is true, of course, that this statement is inaccurate and exaggerated in at any rate two ways. In the first place, Man was not discovered by the Sophists or by Socrates in the sense that a hitherto unknown island is discovered by an explorer. Nor, for the matter of that, was Nature discovered in this sense by the pre-Socratics. And in the second place, pre-Socratic philosophers, like the Pythagoreans, had theories about

Man, just as Plato had theories about Nature. None the less at the time of Socrates there occurred a shift in philosophic interest and emphasis. And that is why some historians say, and are able to make out a reasonable case for saying, that Greek philosophy began with Socrates. In their view, pre-Socratic philosophy should be regarded as primitive science, not as philosophy at all. Philosophy began with the Socratic ethical analysis. This is not my view of the situation; but it is an arguable position.

But it is not my purpose to say anything further here about the shift of interest from Nature to Man. That there was such a shift of interest in the case of Socrates would not be denied; and I dwelt on this theme in my first volume. What I want to do now is to draw attention to a topic which I did not sufficiently emphasize in that volume, namely the part played by analysis in the philosophies of Socrates and Plato. It might be better, however, to say that I wish now to emphasize the part played by analysis in the philosophy of Plato, since it is an obvious enough fact that Socrates was concerned with analysis. (In saying this I am assuming the truth of the view, represented in my first volume, that Socrates did not invent the theory of Forms or Ideas.)

It seems to me that Plato's theory of values was based very largely on an analysis of ethical propositions and value-statements. And though statements of this kind do seem to me to imply belief in the objectivity of values in some sense, it does not follow that values possess the kind of objectivity which Plato appears to have attributed to them. If one may borrow the language of Husserl, one can say perhaps that Plato carried on a phenomenological analysis of 'essences' without observing the *epoche*, thus confusing descriptive phenomenology with metaphysics. Again, it is a feature of Plato's thought that he drew attention to the differences in logical meaning between different types of sentences. He saw, for example, that in some sentences names are used which do not denote any definite individual thing and that there is a sense in which such sentences can be true even if there are no individual things in existence which correspond to those names. On this basis he developed his theory of Forms in so far as it was extended to generic and specific terms. In doing so he was misled by language and confused logic with metaphysics.

In saying this I am very far from suggesting that Plato's idea of the Good and his theory of exemplarism were worthless and that his theory of Forms was no more than the result of a confusion of logic with metaphysics. His remarks about the Good, obscure though they may be, scarcely lend support to the notion that he postulated the Good simply and solely because he was misled by our use of the word 'good'. But the fact remains that Plato's dialectical and logical approach to the metaphysics of 'Forms' or 'Ideas' is open to very serious objections; and in my first volume I did not, I think, bring out sufficiently either the element of 'linguistic analysis' in Plato's philosophy or his confusion of logic with metaphysics.

But it is possible, I think, to place too much emphasis on the theory of Forms or Ideas in Plato's thought. There is no real evidence, so far as I know, that he ever abandoned this theory; indeed, it seems to me that the available evidence prohibits any such supposition. But at the same time I think that it is true to say that the idea of mind or soul came to play an increasingly important part in Plato's thought. The subject of Plato's theology is notoriously obscure; but it is at least clear that he was the real founder of natural theology. That he attached great importance to the idea of a divine Mind or Soul in the universe is made obvious in the *Laws*; and it is equally clear from the *Timaeus*, even if one has to allow for the 'mythical' character of the contents of that dialogue. This is not to say, of course, that Plato had any clear theistic philosophy: if he had, he certainly did not reveal the fact to his readers. If one means by 'God' the God of Judaeo-Christian monotheism, the evidence would suggest that Plato arrived by different lines of thought at two aspects of God; but it does not suggest, or at least it gives us no solid ground for asserting, that Plato combined those two aspects of Deity, attributing them to one personal Being. Thus the Good may be said to represent what the Christian philosopher calls 'God' under the aspect of exemplary cause, though it does not follow, of course, that Plato would have called the Good 'God'. And the Demiurge of the *Timaeus* and the divine Mind or Soul of the *Laws* may be said to represent God under the aspect of efficient cause, provided that one understands by efficient cause in this connection not a Creator in the full sense but an explanatory cause of the intelligible structure of the empirical world and of the orderly movements of the heavenly bodies. But there is no compelling evidence that Plato ever identified the Good with the being represented by the Demiurge of the *Timaeus*. Nevertheless it is clear that if his theory of Forms was his answer to one problem, his doctrine of a divine Mind or Soul was his answer to another problem; and it would appear that this latter doctrine came to occupy a more important position in his thoughts as time went on.

(iii) In regard to Aristotle, one must emphasize, I think, his attempt to give a rational account of the world of experience and, in particular, his preoccupation with the business of rendering observable change and movement intelligible. (It should be remembered that 'movement' did not mean for Aristotle simply locomotion: it included also quantitative and qualitative change.) One certainly ought not to eliminate or to brush aside the Platonic elements or the metaphysical elements in Aristotle's philosophy, as though they were simply relics of a Platonist phase in his development which he forgot to discard; but it is significant that the God of the *Metaphysics*, the first unmoved mover, was postulated as an explanation of movement in terms of final causality. The God of the *Metaphysics* tends to appear as an astronomical hypothesis.

If one bears in mind Aristotle's preoccupation with the explanation of change and movement, it becomes much easier to account for his radical criticism of the Platonic theory of Forms. As I have already said, Plato's theory certainly lies open to serious objections on logical grounds, and I doubt if his approach to the theory can stand up to criticism, however much value one may wish to attribute to the theory considered in itself and revised. On the other hand, several of Aristotle's criticisms seem to be singularly unimpressive as they stand. Aristotle tended to assume that what Plato was getting at in his theory of Forms was what he, Aristotle, understood by 'forms'; and he then objected that Plato's Forms did not fulfil the function which his own forms fulfilled and that consequently the Platonic theory was absurd. This line of criticism is not a happy one, since it rests on the assumption that Plato's theory was supposed to fulfil the same function which Aristotle's theory of formal causality was intended to fulfil. But if, as I have suggested, one bears in mind Aristotle's preoccupation with the explanation of change and movement and his 'dynamic' outlook, his hostility towards the Platonic theory becomes understandable. His fundamental objection was that the theory was too 'metaphysical'; it was useless, he thought, for explaining the mixture, as it were, of change and stability which we find in things: it was not a hypothesis which had its roots in the empirical data or which was capable of contributing to the explanation of the empirical data or which was verifiable. I do not wish to suggest that

Aristotle was a positivist. But if the word 'metaphysical' is understood as it sometimes is today, namely as referring to altogether unverifiable and gratuitous hypotheses, it is clear that Aristotle considered the Platonic theory to be too 'metaphysical'. I certainly do not think that the theory of exemplary causality has no explanatory function; but it can hardly possess any such function except in connection with the idea of a divine being capable of an activity of which the God of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* was not capable. If one looks at the matter from Aristotle's point of view, one can easily understand his attitude to the Platonic theory. One can also understand how St. Bonaventure in the Middle Ages was able to look on Aristotle as a natural philosopher but not as a metaphysician.

(iv) Plato's Demiurge formed the empirical world, conferring on it an intelligible pattern according to an external exemplar or model: Aristotle's God was the ultimate explanation, as final cause, of movement. For neither of them was God the creator, in the full sense, of empirical beings. The nearest the Greek philosophers came to the idea of creation and to a consideration of the problem of finite existence as such was in neo-Platonism.

But the point about neo-Platonism which I wish to emphasize here is its character as the synthesis of Greek philosophic thought and as a system in which philosophy, ethics and religion were combined. It presented itself as a 'way of salvation', even if as a highly intellectual way of salvation which could appeal only to comparatively few minds. In pre-Socratic Pythagoreanism we can already discern the conception of philosophy as a way of salvation, though this aspect of Pythagoreanism may have tended to retreat into the background in proportion as the mathematical studies of the School developed. With Socrates and his theory of virtue as knowledge one can see clearly the idea of philosophy as a way of salvation, and in the thought of Plato the idea is also prominent, though it tends to be overshadowed by the logical and mathematical aspects of his philosophy. Plato was, of course, no pragmatist; but it does not require any great knowledge of his writings in order to realize the importance he attached to the possession of truth for the life of the individual and for society in general. But it is in the later phases of Platonism, especially in neo-Platonism, that the idea of philosophy as a way of salvation becomes so obvious. One has only to think of Plotinus' doctrine of the ethical and religious ascent of man, culminating in ecstatic union with the One. When Porphyry expounded neo-Platonism as a Greek and supposedly intellectually superior rival to Christianity, he was able to do this because in neo-Platonism Greek philosophy had taken on the character of a religion. Stoicism and Epicureanism were both presented as ways of salvation; but though the Stoic ethic certainly possessed a striking nobility, neither system was of a sufficiently high intellectual order to enable it to play the part in the final stages of Greek thought which was actually played by neo-Platonism.

The fact that early Christian writers borrowed terms and ideas from neo-Platonism may tend to make one emphasize the continuity between Greek and Christian thought. And this was the line I took in my first and second volumes. I have no intention of renouncing the validity of this line of thought now; but it is as well to emphasize the fact that there was also a sharp break between Greek and Christian thought. A neo-Platonist like Porphyry realized very clearly the difference between a philosophy which attached little importance to history and for which the idea of an incarnate God was unthinkable and a religion which attached a profound importance to concrete historical events and which was founded on belief in the Incarnation. Moreover, the Christian acceptance of Christ as the Son of God and of a divine revelation in history meant that for the Christian philosophy as such could not be the way of salvation. Christian writers like Clement of Alexandria interpreted philosophy in the literal sense as 'love of wisdom' and regarded Greek philosophy, especially Platonism in a wide sense, as a preparation for Christianity which fulfilled for the Greek world a function analogous to that fulfilled for the Jews by the Law and the Prophets. One is therefore struck by the friendly attitude shown towards Greek philosophy by a Clement of Alexandria as contrasted with the attitude shown by a Tertullian. But if one considers the former attitude a little more closely one will see its implications, namely that the rôle of Greek philosophy has been taken over in a definite manner by the Christian religion. And in point of fact when philosophy really developed in the Christian mediaeval world it tended to be 'academic', a matter for universities and professional logicians. No Christian philosopher really looked on philosophy as a way of salvation; and when mediaeval thinkers are reproached with paying too much attention to logical subtleties it is often forgotten that for them philosophy could not well be anything else than an 'academic' pursuit. When in the modern era one finds the conception of philosophy as a 'way of salvation' showing itself again the conception usually originates either in a disbelief in Christian theology and the desire to find a substitute or, if it is shown by Christian thinkers, in the desire to find an acceptable approach to those who are no longer Christians. The believing Christian looks to religion to be the inspiration of his life and his guide to conduct rather than to philosophy, however interested he may be in the latter.

2. In my second volume I traced the history of philosophy in the Christian world up to the end of the thirteenth century, though I included John Duns Scotus (d. 1308), whose philosophy belongs rather with the great thirteenth-century systems than with the *via moderna* of the fourteenth century. The volume thus covered the Patristic period, the early mediaeval period and the period of constructive metaphysical thinking on the grand scale. The next period, that is to say, the late mediaeval period, has been sketched in the first part of the present volume.

This fourfold division of Christian philosophic thought from the beginning of the Christian era to the close of the Middle Ages is a traditional division, and it is, I think, justified and useful. But it is possible to make an even simpler division by saying that mediaeval philosophy falls into two main periods, the period preceding and the period following the introduction of the Aristotelian *corpus* to western Christendom. In any case I think that it is hardly possible to exaggerate the philosophic importance of this event, namely of the rediscovery of Aristotle. I am speaking primarily as a historian. Philosophers may differ in their evaluations of Aristotelian theories, but there is, I think, no ground for dispute concerning the importance of the rediscovery of Aristotle, considered as a historical event. Apart from the system of John Scotus Eriugena, of which little notice was taken, the early mediaevals possessed nothing which we should be likely to call a philosophical system; and in particular they had no intimate knowledge of any system which owed nothing to Christianity. But the rediscovery of Aristotle and the translation of the leading Islamic thinkers in the second half of the twelfth century and the first part of the thirteenth brought to the knowledge of the Christian mediaeval thinkers for the first time a developed system which was the work of a pagan philosopher and which owed nothing to Christianity. Aristotle therefore naturally tended to mean for them 'philosophy'. It is a great mistake to allow the obstinacy with which some Renaissance Scholastics clung to the physical and scientific ideas of Aristotle to make one think of the discovery of Aristotle as a philosophical disaster. In the Middle Ages Aristotle was, indeed, known as 'the philosopher', and he was so named because his system was for the mediaevals 'philosophy' to all intents and purposes. But his system meant for them 'philosophy' not so much because it was Aristotelian, in the sense in which we distinguish Aristotelianism from Platonism, Stoicism, Epicureanism or neo-Platonism, as because it was the one great system of philosophy of which they possessed an extensive knowledge. It is important to realize this fact. If we speak, for example, of the attempt of St. Thomas to reconcile Aristotelianism with Christian theology, one will realize the nature of the situation better if one makes the experiment of substituting the word 'philosophy' for the word 'Aristotelianism'. When some of the theologians in the thirteenth century adopted a hostile attitude to Aristotle and regarded his philosophy as being in many respects an intellectual menace, they were rejecting independent philosophy in the name of the Christian faith. And when St. Thomas adopted in great measure the Aristotelian system, he was giving a charter to philosophy. He should not be regarded as burdening Christian thought with the system of a particular Greek philosopher. The deeper significance of his action was that he recognized the rights and position of philosophy as a rational study distinct from theology.

It is as well, too, to remind oneself of the fact that the utilization of the new learning in a constructive manner was due to men like St. Thomas and Duns Scotus who were primarily theologians. The rediscovery of Aristotle raised the problem of the relation between theology and philosophy in a form far more acute than it had previously assumed in the Middle Ages. And the only people in the thirteenth century who made a serious attempt to cope with the problem constructively were the theologians. Those professors of the faculty of arts who are often known as the 'Latin Averroists' tended to accept the entire philosophy of Aristotle, as it stood or as interpreted by Averroes, in a slavish manner. And when taxed with the fact that some of Aristotle's doctrines were incompatible with Christian theology, they answered that the philosopher's business is simply to report philosophical opinions. If they were sincere in giving this answer, they equated philosophy with the history of philosophy. If they were not sincere, they accepted

Aristotle in an uncritical and slavish manner. In either case they adopted no constructive attitude. Theologians like St. Thomas on the other hand endeavoured to synthesize Aristotelianism, which, as I have said, meant to all intents and purposes 'philosophy', with the Christian religion. This was not, however, a mere attempt to force Aristotle into a Christian mould, as some critics imagine: it involved a rethinking and development of the Aristotelian philosophy. St. Thomas's work was not a work of ignorant distortion but of original construction. He did not assume the truth of Aristotelianism because it was Aristotelianism and then try to force it into a Christian mould. He was convinced that Aristotelianism, in its main lines, was the result of sound reasoning; and when he attacked the monopsychistic doctrine of the Averroists he attacked it partly on the ground that Averroes had, in his opinion, misinterpreted Aristotle and partly on the ground that monopsychism was false and that it could be shown to be false by philosophic reasoning. It is the second ground which is the most important. If a philosophical theory was incompatible with Christian theology, St. Thomas believed that it was false. But he was well aware that from the philosophic point of view it is not sufficient to say that a theory is false because it is incompatible with Christianity. He was also aware that it is not sufficient to argue that it rested on a misinterpretation of Aristotle. His primary task was to show that the theory rested on bad or inconclusive reasoning. In other words, his rethinking of Aristotelianism was a philosophic rethinking: it did not simply take the form of confronting Aristotelian and supposedly Aristotelian theories with Christian theology and eliminating or changing theories which were incompatible with that theology without any philosophical argument. He was quite prepared to meet both the integral Aristotelians and the anti-Aristotelians on their own ground, namely on an appeal to reasoning. In so doing he developed philosophy as a separate branch of study, separate, that is, from theology on the one hand and from a mere reporting of the words of Aristotle on the other.

One can say, then, that it was due to the rediscovery of Aristotle coupled with the work of the thirteenth-century theologian-philosophers that mediaeval philosophy attained adult stature. Knowledge of the metaphysical and physical works of Aristotle widened the mediaevals' conception of philosophy, which could no longer be looked upon as more or less equivalent to dialectic.

Aristotelianism was thus a fecundating principle of prime importance in the growth of mediaeval philosophy. It is doubtless regrettable that Aristotelian science, especially Aristotelian astronomy, should have come to be accorded the degree of respect which it won for itself in certain quarters; but this does not alter the fact that Aristotle the philosopher was very far from being a paralysing weight and burden round the necks of the mediaeval thinkers. Without him mediaeval philosophy would scarcely have been able to advance as rapidly as it did. For study of the works of Aristotle not only raised the general standard of philosophic thinking and analysis but also greatly extended the field of study of the mediaeval philosophers. For example, knowledge of Aristotle's psychological and epistemological theories led to a prolonged reflection on these themes. And when Aristotle's general position was accepted, as by St. Thomas, new problems arose or old problems were rendered more acute. For if there are no innate ideas and our ideas are formed in dependence on sense-perception, the question arises, how is metaphysics possible, in so far as metaphysics involves thinking and speaking of beings which transcend matter. And what meaning can be attached to terms descriptive of transcendent beings? St. Thomas was aware of these problems and of their origin and he gave some consideration to them, while Scotus also was aware of the need for providing some theoretical justification of metaphysics. Again it is arguable that Aristotle's 'empiricism' was one of the influences which gave rise in the fourteenth century to lines of criticism which tended to undermine the metaphysical systems which had themselves been built on Aristotle's ideas. In fine, whatever one's estimation of the value of Aristotle's theories may be, it is hardly possible to deny the fact that the mediaevals' knowledge of his philosophy acted as a most powerful and wide-ranging influence in stimulating philosophic thought in the Middle Ages. When his ideas came to have a deadening effect on thought, this was due simply to the fact that the living and creative movement of thought which had originally been stimulated by his writings had spent itself, for the time being at least.

But if one emphasizes the importance of Aristotelianism for mediaeval philosophy, one must also remember that the theologian-philosophers of the thirteenth century deepened it considerably from the metaphysical point of view. Aristotle himself was concerned to explain the *how* of the world, that is to say, certain features of the world, especially change or becoming or 'movement'. With a philosopher like St. Thomas, however, there was a shift of emphasis: the problem of the *that* of the world, the problem that is, of the existence of finite beings, became primary. It is perfectly true, of course, as M. Gilson has shown with his customary lucidity, that the Judaeo-Christian doctrine of creation directed attention to this subject; and this obviously took place long before the time of St. Thomas. But the latter gave expression to the primacy of this problem for the Christian metaphysician in his theory of the distinction between essence and existence (or rather in his use of the distinction, since he did not invent it). It is possible, therefore, to call the philosophy of St. Thomas an 'existential' philosophy in a sense in which one can hardly call Aristotle's philosophy 'existential'.

3. The mediaevals always had some knowledge of the Aristotelian logic. And at the time when philosophy meant for most people little more than logic or dialectic it was perfectly understandable that philosophy should be widely regarded as being, in a famous phrase, 'the handmaid of theology'. Logic, according to Aristotle's own view, is an instrument of reasoning, and in the early Middle Ages there was not very much outside the theological sphere to which this instrument could be applied. Although, then, a distinction was drawn between faith and reason, that is, between truths accepted on authority and believed by faith and truths which were accepted as the result of demonstration, the problem of the relation of philosophy to theology was not acute. But when the Aristotelian system as a whole became known in the Christian universities the province of philosophy was extended far beyond the sphere of dialectic. The rise of natural or philosophic theology (which had, of course, its roots in the writings of St. Anselm) and of natural philosophy or cosmology, together with metaphysical psychology, introduced the idea of philosophy as a branch of study distinct from theology and from what would now be called 'science'. It followed, therefore, that Christian thinkers had to give their attention to the proper relation of philosophy to theology.

St. Thomas's views on this matter have been outlined in the second volume of this history, and I do not propose to repeat them here. Let it be sufficient to recall that he gave a charter to philosophy and recognized its intrinsic independence. Naturally, St. Thomas, as a believing Christian, was convinced that a philosophic theory which was incompatible with Christianity was false, for he was far from entertaining the absurd idea that two contradictory propositions could be true at the same time. But, given the truth of Christianity, he was convinced that it could always be shown that a philosophic proposition which was incompatible with Christianity was the result of bad or specious arguments. Philosophers as individual thinkers might go wrong in their reasoning and contradict revealed truth; but philosophy itself could not do so. There is no such thing as an infallible philosopher; but, if there were, his conclusions would always be in harmony with revealed truth, though he would arrive at his conclusions independently of the data of revelation.

This was, of course, a very tidy and convenient view of the relation of philosophy to theology. But one must remark in addition that according to St. Thomas the metaphysician, while unable to demonstrate the revealed mysteries of Christianity, like the Trinity, is able to demonstrate or establish with certainty the 'preambles of faith', such as the existence of a God capable of revealing truths to men. In the fourteenth century, however, as we have seen in the first part of the present volume, a number of philosophers began to question the validity of proofs which St. Thomas had accepted as valid proofs of the 'preambles of faith', that is, as demonstrations of the rational foundations of faith. Their right to criticize any given proof could hardly be questioned legitimately; for analysis and criticism are essential to philosophy. If a philosopher thought, for example, that the principle *omne quod movetur ab alio movetur* could not bear the weight laid on it in St. Thomas's first argument for God's existence, he had every right to say so. On the other hand, if a philosopher questioned the validity of all the proofs for God's existence, it was hardly possible to maintain the close relation between philosophy and theology asserted by St. Thomas, and the problems of the rationality of faith became acute. But no really serious consideration was given to this problem in the fourteenth century. A theologian-philosopher like William of Ockham could question the validity of metaphysical proofs for God's existence without going on to inquire seriously either what the true nature of arguments for God's existence is or what is the rational ground of our belief in God if His existence cannot be demonstrated in the traditional manner. Partly because so many of the leading 'nominalists' were themselves theologians, partly because the general mental background was still provided by Christianity, and partly because the attention of many philosophers was absorbed in logical and analytic problems (and, in Ockham's case, in political and ecclesiastical polemics) the problems raised by the nominalist criticism of traditional metaphysics were not fully grasped or sufficiently discussed. Theology and philosophy were tending to fall apart, but the fact was not clearly recognized.

4. In the first part of the present volume we saw how the *via moderna* spread in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. We also saw how in the fourteenth century there were anticipations at least of a new scientific outlook, which developed with striking rapidity at the time of the Renaissance. If the pre-Socratic philosophers discovered Nature, in the sense that they formed the idea of a cosmos or law-governed system, the Renaissance scientists discovered Nature in the sense that they developed the use of scientific method in the discovery of the 'laws' which actually govern natural events. To speak of laws governing Nature may well be open to objection; but the point is not that this or that language was used at the time or that this or that language ought to be used but rather that the Renaissance scientists developed the scientific study of Nature in a way in which it had never been developed before. This meant that physical science attained adult stature. It may have been often known as 'natural philosophy' or 'experimental philosophy', but, terminology apart, the fact remains that through the work of the Renaissance scientists science came to occupy a place of its own alongside theology and philosophy. And with the growth of modern science a great change has gradually taken place in the common estimation of what 'knowledge' is. In the Middle Ages theology and philosophy were universally regarded as 'sciences'; the great figures in university life were the theologians and the philosophers; and it was they who in general estimation were the possessors of knowledge. In the course of time, however, scientific knowledge in the modern sense has come to be popularly regarded as the norm and standard of knowledge; and in many countries neither theologians nor philosophers would be commonly regarded as possessing 'knowledge' in the sense in which scientists are thought to possess it. This attitude towards knowledge has arisen only gradually, of course, and its growth has been fostered by the development of applied and technical science. But the plain fact is that whereas in the Middle Ages philosophy was to all intents and purposes the sole representative of 'scientific'

knowledge outside the sphere of theology, in the post-Renaissance world rival claimants have arisen which in the estimation of many people have wrested from philosophy the title to represent knowledge at all. To mention this view of the matter in connection with Renaissance science is, of course, to anticipate, and it would be inappropriate to discuss the matter at length here. But I have mentioned it in order to show the great importance of the scientific development of the Renaissance period or, rather, one of the ways in which it was important for philosophy. If one can find in the rediscovery of Aristotle a dividing-line in mediaeval philosophy, one can also find in the growth of Renaissance science a dividing-line in the history of European thought.

In view of the fact that the older histories of philosophy were inclined to neglect mediaeval philosophy, of which they knew little, and practically to jump from Aristotle to Descartes, later historians have very rightly emphasized the continuity between Greek philosophy and Christian thought and between mediaeval philosophy and that of the post-Renaissance period. That Descartes, for example, was dependent on Scholasticism for many of his philosophical categories and ideas, that the mediaeval theory of natural law was utilized by Hooker and passed from him in a diluted form to Locke, and that the latter was more dependent on Aristotelianism than he probably realized are now matters of common knowledge among historians. But it is, I think, a mistake so to emphasize the element of continuity that the elements of novelty and change are slurred over. The climate of thought in the post-Renaissance world was not the same as that prevailing in the Middle Ages. The change was due, of course, to a number of different factors working together; but the rise of science was certainly not the least important of those factors. The development of science made it much easier than it formerly had been to consider the world from a point of view which had no obvious connection with theology. If one compares, for instance, St. Bonaventure or even St. Thomas with a philosopher like Descartes one finds at once a considerable difference of outlook and interest, in spite of the fact that all three men were believing Catholics. St. Bonaventure was principally interested in creatures in their relationship to God, as *vestigia Dei*, or in man's case, as the *imago Dei*. St. Thomas, owing to his Aristotelianism, shows a greater interest in creatures from a purely philosophical point of view; but he was above all things a theologian and it is obvious that his primary interest was that of a theologian and a specifically Christian thinker. In the case of Descartes, however, we find an outlook which, though it was the attitude of a man who was a Christian, was what one may call 'neutral' in character. In the post-Renaissance period there were, of course, philosophers who were atheists or at any rate non-Christian: one has only to think of some of the figures of the French Enlightenment. But my point is that after the Middle Ages philosophy tended to become 'lay' in character. A man like Descartes was certainly a good Christian; but one would hardly think of his philosophy as a specifically Christian philosophy, in spite of the influence of his religious beliefs on his philosophic thought. The rise of humanism at the time of the Renaissance, followed by the growth of science, produced fresh interests and lines of thought which, though not necessarily incompatible with theology, could be pursued without any obvious association with or relation to it. This is clear enough in the case of science itself, and the growth of science reacted on philosophy. Or perhaps it is better to say that both the science and the philosophy of the time manifested the growth of the new outlook and fostered it.

But if one stresses the difference between the mediaeval and Renaissance worlds in the climate of thought, it is necessary to qualify this emphasis by drawing attention to the gradual and in large part continuous evolution of the new outlook. A comparatively early mediaeval thinker like St. Anselm was chiefly interested in understanding the faith: for him the primacy of faith was obvious, and what we might call his philosophizing was largely an attempt to understand by the use of reason what we believe. *Credo, ut intelligam.* In the thirteenth century the rediscovery of Aristotelianism greatly widened the interests and horizons of Christian thinkers. Acceptance of Aristotle's physics, however erroneous many of his scientific theories may have been, paved the way for a study of the world for its own sake so to speak. A professional theologian like St. Thomas was naturally not interested in developing what we would call science, not because of any hostility towards such studies but because his interests lay elsewhere. But by the rediscovery of Aristotle and the translations of Greek and Arabic scientific works the ground was prepared for scientific advance. Already in the thirteenth century, and still more in the fourteenth century, we can see the beginning of a scientific investigation of Nature. The ferment of Renaissance philosophy, with its mixture of philosophic speculation and scientific hypothesis, further prepared the way for the rise of Renaissance science. One can say, then, that the rediscovery of Aristotle in the Middle Ages was the remote preparation for the rise of science. But one can, of course, go further still and say that the Christian doctrine of the world's creation by God provided a theological preparation for the advance of science. For if the world is a creation, and if matter is not evil but good, the material world is obviously worth scientific investigation. But scientific investigation could not develop until the right method was found; and for that Christian Europe had to wait many centuries.

The foregoing remarks may possibly sound like an endorsement of Auguste Comte's doctrine of the three stages, as though I meant to say that the theological stage was followed by the philosophical and the philosophical by the scientific stage, in the sense that the later stage supplanted the former, both *de facto* and *de iure*. In regard to the historical facts it has been argued that the development of Greek thought proceeded in the very opposite direction to that demanded by Comte's theory.[1] For the movement was from a primitive 'scientific' stage through metaphysics to theology, rather than from theology through metaphysics to science. However, the development of thought in western Christianity can be used to a certain extent in support of Comte's theory, in so far as the historical facts are concerned. For it might be argued that the primacy of theology was succeeded by a stage characterized by 'lay' philosophical systems, and that this stage has been succeeded by a positivist stage. An interpretation of this sort is certainly open to the objection that it is based on aspects of the development of thought which have been selected in order to support a preconceived theory. For it is clear that the development of Scholastic philosophy did not simply follow the development of Scholastic theology: to a great extent the two developed together. Again, the rise of science in the post-Renaissance world was contemporaneous with a succession of philosophic systems. However, it does seem that at any rate a plausible case can be made out in favour of Comte's interpretation of western thought since the beginning of Christianity. It makes some sense at least to distinguish the Age of Faith, the Age of Reason and the Age of Science, if one is speaking of climates of thought. In the Middle

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[1] On this subject *The Christian Challenge to Philosophy* by W. H. V. Reade (London, 1951) can profitably be consulted.

Ages religious faith and theology shaped the climate of thought; at the time of the 'Enlightenment' wide sections of the intellectual public placed their trust in 'reason' (though the use of the word 'reason' in this connection stands in need of careful analysis); and in the modern world a positivist climate of thought prevails in a number of countries if one understands 'positivist' and 'positivism' in a wide sense. Yet even if a plausible case can be made out for Comte's theory from the historical point of view, it certainly does not follow that the succession of stages, in so far as there actually was a succession of stages, constitutes a 'progress' in any but a temporal sense of the word 'progress'. In one period theology may be the paramount branch of study and in another period science; but a change in the climate of thought from a theological to a scientific period does not mean that theology is false or that a scientific civilization is an adequate realization of the potentialities of human culture.

It is, however, fairly obvious now that science cannot disprove the validity of faith or of theological beliefs. Physics, for example, has nothing to say about the Trinity or about the existence of God. If many people have ceased to believe in Christianity, this does not show that Christianity is false. And, in general, the relation of science to religion and theology is not one of acute tension: the tension which in the last century was often alleged to exist between them does not really exist at all. The theoretical difficulty arises rather in regard to the relation of philosophy to theology. And this tension existed in germ once philosophy had attained to adult stature. It did not become obvious as long as the leading philosophers were also theologians; but once the rise of science had directed men's thought in fresh directions and philosophers were no longer primarily theologians the tension was bound to become apparent. As long as philosophers thought that they were able to build up a true metaphysical system by a method of their own, the tension tended to take the form of a tension between divergent conclusions and propositions. But now that a considerable number of philosophers believe that the philosopher has no method of his own the employment of which is capable of adding to human knowledge, and that all factual knowledge is derivable from immediate observation and from the sciences, the problem is rather one concerning the rational foundations of faith. In this sense we are back in the situation created in the fourteenth century by the nominalist criticism of traditional metaphysics, though the nature of the problem is clearer now than it was then. Is there such a thing as a valid metaphysical argument? Can there be metaphysical knowledge and, if so, what sort of knowledge is it? Have we 'blind' faith on the one hand and scientific knowledge on the other, or can metaphysics supply a kind of bridge between them? Questions of this sort were implicit in fourteenth-century nominalist criticism, and they are still with us. They have been rendered all the more acute, on the one hand by the constant growth of scientific knowledge since the time of the Renaissance and, on the other hand, by the succession of metaphysical systems in the post-Renaissance and modern worlds, leading to a prevailing mistrust of metaphysics in general. What is the rôle of philosophy? What is its proper relation to science? What is its proper relation to faith and religious belief?

These questions cannot be further developed or discussed now. My object in raising them is simply that of suggesting various points for reflection in considering the later development of philosophic thought. In the next volume I hope to treat of 'modern' philosophy from Descartes to Kant inclusive, and in connection with Kant we shall be faced with an explicit statement regarding these questions and their solution.

APPENDIX I

Honorific titles applied to philosophers treated of in this volume.

Durandus:	Doctor modernus, *later* Doctor resolutissimus.
Petrus Aureoli:	Doctor facundus.
William of Ockham:	Venerabilis inceptor.
Antoine André:	Doctor dulcifluus
Francis de Marcia:	Doctor succinctus.
John of Mirecourt:	Monachus albus.
Gregory of Rimini:	Doctor authenticus.
John Ruysbroeck:	Doctor admirabilis.
Denis the Carthusian:	Doctor ecstaticus.
John Gerson:	Doctor christianissimus.
Jakob Böhme:	Philosophus teutonicus.
Francis Suárez:	Doctor eximius.

APPENDIX II

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Tutte le Opere storiche e letterarie di Niccolò Machiavelli. G. Barbèra (edit.). Florence, 1929.
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The Discourse of Niccolò Machiavelli. 2 vols. L. J. Walker, S.J. (translator and editor). London, 1950.
The History of Florence. 2 vols. N. H. Thomson (translator). London, 1906.

Machiavelli (*contd.*) *The Works of Nicholas Machiavel.* 2 vols. E. Farneworth (translator). London, 1762. (2nd edition in 4 vols., 1775).

The Historical, Political and Diplomatic Writings of Niccolò Machiavelli. 4 vols. Boston and New York, 1891.

More. *Utopia* (Latin and English). J. H. Lupton (edit.). London, 1895. (There are many other versions, including an English text in the Everyman Series.)

L'Utopie ou le traité de la meilleure forme de gouvernement. Texte latine édite par M. Delcourt avec des notes explicatives et critiques. Paris, 1936.

The English Works. London, 1557. This text is being re-edited and two volumes appeared in 1931 (London), edited by W. E. Campbell and A. W. Reed.

There are various editions of the Latin works. For example, *Opera omnia latina*: Louvain, 1566.

Hooker. *Works.* 3 vols. J. Keble (edit.). Oxford, 1845 (3rd edition).

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Chapter XXI: (Scholasticism of the Renaissance) A General View

Texts

A number of titles of works are mentioned in the course of the chapter. Only a very few selected texts will be mentioned here. For fuller biographies the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* can be profitably consulted under the relevant names. The standard bibliographical work for writers of the Dominican Order between 1200 and 1700 is *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum* by Quétif-Echard. A photolithographic reprint of the revised Paris edition of 1719–21 is being published by Musurgia Publishers, New York. For Jesuit authors consult Sommervogel-De Backer, *Bibliothèque de la compagnie de Jésus.* Liége, 1852ff.

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Thomas de Vio Cardinalis Caietanus (1469–1534); *Scripta philosophica:*

Cajetan (*contd.*) *Commentaria in Porphyrii Isagogen ad Praedicamenta Aristotelis.* I. M. Marega (edit.). Rome, 1934.

Opuscula oeconomico-socialia. P. N. Zammit (edit.). Rome, 1934.

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Commentaria in de Anima Aristotelis. Y. Coquelle (edit.). Rome, 1938.

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Bellarmine. *Opera omnia.* 11 vols. Paris, 1870–91.

Opera oratoria postuma. 9 vols. Rome, 1942–8.

De controversiis. Rome, 1832.

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Molina. *De Institia et Iure.* 2 vols. Antwerp, 1615.

Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providentia, praedestinatione et reprobatione. Paris, 1876.

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Chapters XXII–XXIII: Francis Suárez

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Metaphysicarum Disputationum Tomi duo. Salamanca, 1597. (Many editions, up to that of Barcelona, 1883–4.)

Selections from Three Works of Francisco Suárez, S.J. (*De legibus, Defensio fidei catholicae. De triplici virtute theologica.*) 2 vols. Vol. 1, the Latin texts; Vol. 2, the translation. Oxford, 1944. (Classics of International Law, No. 20.)

Among bibliographies one can mention *Bibliografica Suareciana* by P. Mugica. Granada, 1948.

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Aguirre, P. *De doctrina Francisci Suárez circa potestatem Ecclesiae in res temporales.* Louvain, 1935.

Alejandro, J. M. *La gnoseología del Doctor Eximio y la acusación nominalista.* Comillas (Santander), 1948.

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Bourret, E. *De l'origine du pouvoir d'après Saint Thomas et Suárez.* Paris, 1875.

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Plaffert, F. *Suárez als Völkerrechtslehrer.* Würzburg, 1919.

Recaséns Siches, L. *La filosofía del Derecho en Francisco Suárez.* Madrid, 1927.

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Archives de philosophie, vol. 18. Paris, 1949.

Pensamiento, vol. 4, número extraordinario, Suárez en el cuarto centenario de su nacimiento (1548–1948). Madrid, 1948. (This number of *Pensamiento* contains valuable studies on the metaphysical, epistemological, political and legal ideas of Suárez.)

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Modern Philosophy: From Descartes to Leibniz

Frederick Copleston, S.J.

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PREFACE

AT the end of Volume III of this *History of Philosophy* I expressed the hope of covering the period from Descartes up to and including Kant in the fourth volume. I meant, of course, that I hoped to discuss the whole of this part of modern philosophy in one book. This hope, however, has not been fulfilled. I have found myself compelled to devote three books to the period in question. And for the sake of convenience I have made each of these three books a separate volume. Volume IV, *Descartes to Leibniz*, deals with the great rationalist systems of philosophy on the Continent in the pre-Kantian period. In Volume V, *Hobbes to Hume*, I discuss the development of British philosophy from Hobbes up to and including the Scottish philosophy of common sense. In Volume VI, *Wolff to Kant*, I shall treat of the French Enlightenment and of Rousseau, of the German Enlightenment, of the rise of the philosophy of history from Vico to Herder, and finally of the system of Immanuel Kant. The title, *Wolff to Kant*, is certainly not ideal; but in view of the fact that in his pre-critical days Kant stood in the Wolffian tradition there is at least something to be said in its favour, whereas a title such as *Voltaire to Kant* would be extremely odd.

As in former volumes, I have divided the matter according to philosophers rather than by following out the development of first one and then another philosophical problem. Furthermore, I have treated some philosophers at considerable length. And though I think that division of the matter according to philosophers is the most convenient division for the readers whom I have principally in mind, this method certainly has its disadvantages. Faced by a number of different thinkers and by more or less detailed descriptions of their ideas, the reader may fail to grasp the general picture. Further, though I think that the old division into continental rationalism and British empiricism is justified, provided that a number of qualifications are added, a rigid adherence to this scheme is apt to give the impression that continental philosophy and British philosophy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries moved on two sets of parallel straight lines, each developing in entire independence of the other. And this is an erroneous impression. Descartes exercised a modest influence on British thought; Berkeley was influenced by Malebranche; Spinoza's political ideas owed something to Hobbes; and the philosophy of Locke, who wrote in the seventeenth century, exercised a great influence on the thought of the French Enlightenment in the eighteenth century.

As a partial remedy for the disadvantages attending the method of division which I have chosen I decided to write an introductory chapter designed to give the reader a general picture of the philosophy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It thus covers the matter discussed in Volumes IV, V and VI, which, as I have said, I originally hoped to deal with in one volume. I have, of course, placed this introduction at the beginning of Volume IV; and there will therefore be no introductory chapters in Volumes V and VI. A descriptive introduction of this sort inevitably involves a good deal of repetition. That is to say, ideas which are discussed in later chapters at greater length and in more detail are roughly outlined in the introduction. None the less, I consider that the advantages to be gained by including a general descriptive introduction greatly outweigh the accompanying disadvantages.

At the end of each of the three previous volumes I have added a 'Concluding Review'. But just as the introduction covers the matter dealt with in Volumes IV, V and VI, so will the Concluding Review. It will therefore be placed at the end of Volume VI, that is, after the exposition of Kant's philosophy. In the course of this Concluding Review I propose to discuss, not only from an historical but also from a more philosophical point of view, the nature, importance and value of the various styles of philosophizing of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I think that it is better to reserve such discussion until after the historical exposition of the thought of the period than to interrupt this exposition with general philosophical reflections.

Finally a word about references. References such as 'Vol. II, ch. XL' or 'See vol. III, pp. 322–4' refer to this *History of Philosophy*. As for references to the writings of the philosophers with whom I deal, I have tried to give these in a form which will be of use to the student who wishes to look them up. Some historians and expositors have the practice of giving references according to volume and page of the recognized critical edition, when such exists, of the writings of the philosopher in question. But I am doubtful of the wisdom of adhering exclusively to this practice in a volume such as the present. In the chapters on Descartes, for example, I have indeed cited the volume and page of the Adam-Tannery edition; but I have also given references, where feasible, according to chapter and section or part and section of the work in question. The number of people who have easy access to the Adam-Tannery edition is extremely limited, just as few people possess the recent splendid critical edition of Berkeley. But cheap editions of the more important writings of the leading philosophers are easily obtainable; and in my opinion references should be given with a view to the convenience of students who possess such editions rather than to that of the few who possess or have access to the recognized critical editions.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Continuity and novelty: the early phase of modern philosophy in its relation to mediaeval and Renaissance thought—Continental rationalism: its nature, its relation to scepticism and to neo-Stoicism, its development—British empiricism: its nature and its development—The seventeenth century—The eighteenth century—Political philosophy—The rise of the philosophy of history—Immanuel Kant.

1. MODERN philosophy is generally said to have begun with Descartes (1596–1650) or with Francis Bacon (1561–1626) in England and with Descartes in France. It is not perhaps immediately evident with what justification the term 'modern' is applied to the thought of the seventeenth century. But its use clearly implies that there is a break between mediaeval and post-mediaeval philosophy and that each possesses important characteristics which the other does not possess. And the seventeenth-century philosophers were certainly convinced that there was a sharp division between the old philosophical traditions and what they themselves were trying to do. Men like Francis Bacon and Descartes were thoroughly persuaded that they were making a new start.

If for a long time the views of Renaissance and post-Renaissance philosophers were accepted at their face value, this was partly due to a conviction that in the Middle Ages there was really nothing which merited the name of philosophy. The flame of independent and creative philosophical reflection which had burned so brightly in ancient Greece was practically extinguished until it was revived at the Renaissance and rose in splendour in the seventeenth century.

But when at last more attention came to be paid to mediaeval philosophy, it was seen that this view was exaggerated. And some writers emphasized the continuity between mediaeval and post-mediaeval thought. That phenomena of continuity can be observed in the political and social spheres is obvious enough. The patterns of society and of political organization in the seventeenth century clearly did not spring into being without any historical antecedents. We can observe, for instance, the gradual formation of the various national States, the emergence of the great monarchies and the growth of the middle class. Even in the field of science the discontinuity is not quite so great as was once supposed. Recent research has shown the existence of a limited interest in empirical science within the mediaeval period itself. And attention was drawn in the third volume of this *History*[1] to the wider implications of the impetus theory of motion as presented by certain fourteenth-century physicists. Similarly, a certain continuity can be observed within the philosophical sphere. We can see philosophy in the Middle Ages gradually winning recognition as a separate branch of study. And we can see lines of thought emerging which anticipate later philosophical developments. For example, the characteristic philosophical movement of the fourteenth century, generally known as the nominalist movement,[2] anticipated later empiricism in several important respects. Again, the speculative philosophy of Nicholas of Cusa,[3] with its anticipations of some theses of Leibniz, forms a link between mediaeval, Renaissance and pre-Kantian modern thought. Again, scholars have shown that thinkers such as Francis Bacon, Descartes and Locke were subject to the influence of the past to a greater degree than they themselves realized.

This emphasis on continuity was doubtless needed as a corrective to a too facile acceptance of the claims to novelty advanced by Renaissance and seventeenth-century philosophers. It expresses an understanding of the fact that there was such a thing as mediaeval philosophy and a recognition of its position as an integral part of European philosophy in general. At the same time, if discontinuity can be over-emphasized, so can continuity. If we compare the patterns of social and political life in the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries, obvious differences in the structure of society at once strike the eye. Again, though the historical factors which contributed to the occurrence of the Reformation can be traced, the Reformation was none the less in some sense an explosion, shattering the religious unity of mediaeval Christendom. And even though the seeds of later science can be discovered in the intellectual soil of mediaeval Europe, the results of research have not been such as to necessitate any substantial change of view about the importance of Renaissance science. Similarly, when all that can legitimately be said to illustrate the continuity between mediaeval and post-mediaeval philosophy has been said, it remains true that there were considerable differences between them. For the matter of that, though Descartes was undoubtedly influenced by Scholastic ways of thought, he himself pointed out that the use of terms taken from Scholastic philosophy did not necessarily mean that the terms were being used in the same senses in which they had been used by the Scholastics. And though Locke was influenced in his theory of natural law by Hooker,[1] who had himself been influenced by mediaeval thought, the Lockean idea of natural law is not precisely the same as that of St. Thomas Aquinas.

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[1] pp. 165–7.

[2] Vol. III, chs. III–IX.

[3] Vol. III, ch. XV.

We can, of course, become the slaves of words or labels. That is to say, because we divide history into periods, we may tend to lose sight of continuity and of gradual transitions, especially when we are looking at historical events from a great distance in time. But this does not mean that it is altogether improper to speak of historical periods or that no major changes take place.

And if the general cultural situation of the post-Renaissance world was in important respects different from that of the mediaeval world, it is only natural that the changes should have been reflected in philosophic thought. At the same time, just as changes in the social and political spheres, even when they seem to have been more or less abrupt, presupposed an already existing situation out of which they developed, so also new attitudes and aims and ways of thought in the field of philosophy presupposed an already existing situation with which they were in some degree linked. In other words, we are not faced with a simple choice between two sharply contrasted alternatives, the assertion of discontinuity and the assertion of continuity. Both elements have to be taken into account. There are change and novelty; but change is not creation out of nothing.

The situation, therefore, seems to be this. The old emphasis on discontinuity was largely due to failure to recognize that there was in the Middle Ages any philosophy worthy of the name. Subsequent recognition of the existence and importance of mediaeval philosophy produced an emphasis on continuity. But we now see that what is required is an attempt to illustrate both the elements of continuity and the peculiar characteristics of different periods. And what is true in regard to our consideration of different periods is true also, of course, in regard to different individual thinkers. Historians are beset by the temptation to depict the thought of one period as simply a preparatory stage for the thought of the next period, and the system of one thinker as no more than a stepping-stone to the system of another thinker. The temptation is, indeed, inevitable; for the historian contemplates a temporal succession of events, not an eternal and immutable reality. Moreover, there is an obvious sense in which mediaeval thought prepared the way for post-mediaeval thought; and there is plenty of ground for looking on Berkeley's philosophy as a stepping-stone between the philosophies of Locke and Hume. But if one succumbs entirely to this temptation, one misses a great deal. Berkeley's philosophy is much more than a mere stage in the development of empiricism from Locke to Hume; and mediaeval thought has its own characteristics.

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[1] See vol. III, pp. 322–4.

Among the easily discernible differences between mediaeval and post-mediaeval philosophy there is a striking difference in forms of literary expression. For one thing, whereas the mediaevals wrote in Latin, in the post-mediaeval period we find an increasing use of the vernacular. It would not, indeed, be true to say that no use was made of Latin in the pre-Kantian modern period. Both Francis Bacon and Descartes wrote in Latin as well as in the vernacular. So too did Hobbes. And Spinoza composed his works in Latin. But Locke wrote in English, and in the eighteenth century we find a common use of the vernacular. Hume wrote in English, Voltaire and Rousseau in French, Kant in German. For another thing, whereas the mediaevals were much given to the practice of writing commentaries on certain standard works, the post-mediaeval philosophers, whether they wrote in Latin or in the vernacular, composed original treatises in which the commentary-form was abandoned. I do not mean to imply that the mediaevals wrote only commentaries; for this would be quite untrue. At the same time commentaries on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard[1] and on the works of Aristotle and others were characteristic features of mediaeval philosophical composition, whereas when we think of the writings of seventeenth-century philosophers we think of free treatises, not of commentaries.

The growing use of the vernacular in philosophical writing accompanied, of course, its growing use in other literary fields. And we can associate this with general cultural, political and social changes and developments. But we can also see in it a symptom of the emergence of philosophy from the confines of the Schools. The mediaeval philosophers were for the most part university professors, engaged in teaching. They wrote commentaries on the standard texts in use at the universities, and they wrote in the language of the learned, academic world. The modern philosophers in the pre-Kantian period, on the contrary, were in the majority of cases unconnected with the work of academic teaching. Descartes was never a university professor. Nor was Spinoza, though he received an invitation to Heidelberg. And Leibniz was very much a man of affairs who refused a professorship because he had quite another kind of life in view. In England Locke held minor posts in the service of the State; Berkeley was a bishop; and though Hume attempted to secure a university chair, he did not succeed in doing so. As for the French philosophers of the eighteenth century, such as Voltaire, Diderot and Rousseau, they were obviously men of letters with philosophical interests. Philosophy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was a matter of common interest and concern among the educated and cultured classes; and it is only natural that the use of the vernacular should have replaced the use of Latin in writings designed for a wide public. As Hegel remarks, it is only when we come to Kant that we find philosophy becoming so technical and abstruse that it could no longer be considered to belong to the general education of a cultured man. And by that time the use of Latin had, of course, practically died out.

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[1] See vol. II, p. 168.

In other words, the original and creative philosophy of the early modern period developed outside the universities. It was the creation of fresh and original minds, not of traditionalists. And this is one reason, of course, why philosophical writing took the form of independent treatises, not of commentaries. For the writers were concerned with developing their own ideas, free from regard for the great names of the past and for the opinions of Greek and mediaeval thinkers.

To say, however, that in the pre-Kantian period of modern philosophy the vernacular came to be employed in place of Latin, that independent treatises were written rather than commentaries, and that the leading philosophers of the period were not university professors, does not do very much to elucidate the intrinsic differences between mediaeval and post-mediaeval philosophy. And an attempt must be made to indicate briefly some of these differences.

It is often said that modern philosophy is autonomous, the product of reason alone, whereas mediaeval philosophy was subordinate to Christian theology, hampered by subservience to dogma. But if it is expressed in this bold way, without qualification, the judgment constitutes an over-simplification. On the one hand we find St. Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century asserting the independence of philosophy as a separate branch of study, while in the fourteenth century we find theology and philosophy tending to fall apart as a result of the nominalist criticism of traditional metaphysics. On the other hand we find Descartes in the seventeenth century trying to harmonize his philosophical ideas with the requirements of Catholic dogma,[1] while in the eighteenth century Berkeley explicitly says that his ultimate aim is to lead men to the saving truths of the Gospel. The facts of the case, therefore, do not warrant our stating dogmatically that all modern philosophy was free from any theological presuppositions and from the exercise of any controlling influence by the Christian faith. Such a statement would not be applicable to Descartes, Pascal, Malebranche, Locke or Berkeley, even if it fits Spinoza, Hobbes, Hume and, of course, the materialist thinkers of the eighteenth century in France. At the same time it is undoubtedly true that we can trace a progressive emancipation of philosophy from theology from the beginnings of philosophical reflection in the early Middle Ages up to the modern era. And there is an obvious difference between, say, Aquinas and Descartes, even though the latter was a believing Christian. For Aquinas was first and foremost a theologian, whereas Descartes was a philosopher and not a theologian. Indeed, practically all the leading mediaeval philosophers, including William of Ockham, were theologians, whereas the leading philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were not. In the Middle Ages theology was esteemed as the supreme science; and we find theologians who were also philosophers. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries we find philosophers, some of whom were believing Christians while others were not. And though their religious beliefs doubtless exercised some influence on the philosophical systems of men such as Descartes and Locke, they were fundamentally in the same position as any philosopher today who happens to be a Christian but who is not, in the professional sense, a theologian. That is one reason why philosophers like Descartes and Locke appear to us 'modern' if we compare them with St. Thomas or St. Bonaventure.

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[1] For example, his theory of substance with the dogma of transubstantiation.

One should, of course, distinguish between a recognition of the facts and an evaluation of the facts. Some would say that in proportion as philosophy was separated from its close connection with theology and was freed from any external control, it became what it ought to be, a purely autonomous branch of study. Others would say that the position accorded to philosophy in the thirteenth century was the right one. That is to say, the rights of reason were recognized; but so were the rights of revelation. And it was a benefit to philosophy if recognition of revealed truth warned it off erroneous conclusions. Here we have different evaluations of the facts. But however we evaluate the facts, it seems to me to be indisputably true that philosophy became progressively emancipated from theology, provided that the word 'emancipated' is understood in a neutral sense from the valuational point of view.

It is customary to associate the change in the position of philosophy in regard to theology with a shift of interest from theological themes to a study of man and of Nature without explicit reference to God. And there is, I think, truth in this interpretation, though there is also room for exaggeration.

The humanistic movement of the Renaissance is often mentioned in this connection. And, indeed, to say that the humanistic movement, with its extension of literary studies and its new educational ideals, was concerned primarily with man is to utter an obvious truth, in fact a tautology. But as was pointed out in the third volume of this *History*,[1] Italian humanism did not involve any very decisive break with the past. The humanists denounced barbarity in Latin style; but so had John of Salisbury in the twelfth and Petrarch in the fourteenth century. The humanists promoted a literary revival; but the Middle Ages had given to the world one of Europe's greatest literary achievements, the *Divina Commedia* of Dante. An enthusiasm for the Platonic or rather neo-Platonic tradition in philosophy accompanied Italian humanism; but neo-Platonism had also exercised an influence on mediaeval thought, even though the neo-Platonic themes in mediaeval philosophy were not based on a study of the variety of texts which were made available in the fifteenth century. Italian Platonism, in spite of its strong feeling for the harmonious development of the human personality and for the expression of the divine in Nature, can hardly be said to have constituted a direct antithesis to the mediaeval outlook. Humanism doubtless developed, intensified, widened and placed in a much more prominent position one strand in mediaeval culture; and in this sense it involved a shift of emphasis. But it would not have been sufficient by itself to prepare the background for the early phase of modern philosophy.

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[1] Ch. XIII.

A change from the theocentric character of the great mediaeval systems to the centring of interest on Nature as a unified, dynamic system can be observed much more clearly in the writings of philosophers such as Giordano Bruno[1] and Paracelsus[2] than in those of Platonists such as Marsilius Ficinus and John Pico della Mirandola.[3] But though the speculative philosophies of Nature of Bruno and kindred thinkers expressed and promoted the transition from mediaeval to modern thought, as far as the centre of interest is concerned, another factor was also required, namely, the scientific movement of the Renaissance.[4] It is not, indeed, always easy to draw a clear line of division between speculative philosophers of Nature and scientists when one is treating of the period in question. But nobody is likely to deny the propriety of placing Bruno in the first class and Kepler and Galileo in the second. And though the speculative philosophies of Nature formed part of the background of modern philosophy, the influence of the scientific movement of the Renaissance was of great importance in determining the direction of philosophical thought in the seventeenth century.

In the first place it was Renaissance science, followed later by the work of Newton, which effectively stimulated the mechanistic conception of the world. And this conception was obviously a factor which contributed powerfully to the centring of attention on Nature in the field of philosophy. For Galileo, God is creator and conserver of the world; the great scientist was far from being either an atheist or an agnostic. But Nature itself can be considered as a dynamic system of bodies in motion, the intelligible structure of which can be expressed mathematically. And even though we do not know the inner natures of the forces[5] which govern the system and which are revealed in motion susceptible of mathematical statement, we can study Nature without any immediate reference to God. We do not find here a break with mediaeval thought in the sense that God's existence and activity are either denied or doubted. But we certainly find an important change of interest and emphasis. Whereas a thirteenth-century theologian-philosopher such as St. Bonaventure was interested principally in the material world considered as a shadow or remote revelation of its divine original, the Renaissance scientist, while not denying that Nature has a divine original, is interested primarily in the quantitatively determinable immanent structure of the world and of its dynamic process. In other words, we have a contrast between the outlook of a theologically-minded metaphysician who lays emphasis on final causality and the outlook of a scientist for whom efficient causality, revealed in mathematically-determinable motion, takes the place of final causality.

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[1] Vol. III, ch. XVI.

[2] *Ibid.*, ch. XVII.

[3] *Ibid.*, ch. XVIII.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] According to Galileo, there are in Nature 'primary causes', namely, forces such as gravity, which produce distinct and specific motions. The inner natures of the former are unknown, but the latter can be expressed mathematically.

It may be said that if we compare men who were primarily theologians with men who were primarily scientists, it is so obvious that their interests will be different that it is quite unnecessary to draw attention to the difference. But the point is that the combined influence of the speculative philosophies of Nature and of Renaissance science made itself felt in the philosophy of the seventeenth century. In England, for example, Hobbes eliminated from philosophy all discourse about the immaterial or spiritual. The philosopher is concerned simply and solely with bodies, though Hobbes included under bodies in the general sense not only the human body but also the body politic or State. The continental rationalist metaphysicians from Descartes to Leibniz did not, indeed, eliminate from philosophy the study of spiritual reality. The assertion of the existence of spiritual substance and of God is integral to the Cartesian system, and in his theory of monads Leibniz, as will be seen later, practically spiritualized body. At the same time Descartes seemed to Pascal to employ God simply to get the world going, as it were, after which he had no further use for Him. Pascal's accusation may well be unjust; and in my opinion it is unjust. But it is none the less significant that Descartes' philosophy was able to give an impression which one can hardly imagine being given by the system of a thirteenth-century metaphysician.

It was not, however, simply a question of direction of interest. The development of physical science not unnaturally stimulated the ambition of using philosophy to discover new truths about the world. In England Bacon emphasized the empirical and inductive study of Nature, pursued with a view to increasing man's power over and control of his material environment, a study which should be carried on without regard to authority or to the great names of the past. In France one of Descartes' main objections against Scholasticism was that it served, in his opinion, only to expound systematically truths already known and that it was powerless to discover new truths. In his *Novum Organum* Bacon called attention to the practical effects of certain inventions which, as he put it, had changed the face of things and the state of the world. He was conscious that new geographical discoveries, the opening up of fresh sources of wealth and, above all, the establishment of physics on an experimental basis heralded the opening of a new era. And though much of what he anticipated was not to be realized until long after his death, he was justified in noting the beginning of a process which has led to our technical civilization. Men such as Bacon and Descartes were doubtless unaware of the extent to which their minds were influenced by former ways of thought; but their consciousness of standing at the threshold of a new era was not unjustified. And philosophy was to be pressed into the service of the ideal of extending human knowledge with a view to progress in civilization. True, the Cartesian and Leibnizian ideas of the appropriate method to be employed in this process were not the same as that of Francis Bacon. But this does not alter the fact that both Descartes and Leibniz were profoundly impressed and influenced by the successful development of the new science and that they regarded philosophy as a means of increasing our knowledge of the world.

There is another important way in which the scientific development of the Renaissance influenced philosophy. At the time no very clear distinction was made between physical science and philosophy. The former was known as natural philosophy or experimental philosophy. Indeed, this nomenclature has survived in the older universities to the extent that we find at Oxford, for example, a chair of experimental philosophy, though the occupant is not concerned with philosophy as the term is now understood. None the less it is obvious that the real discoveries in astronomy and physics during the Renaissance and in the early modern period were made by men whom we would class as scientists and not as philosophers. In other words, on looking back we can see physics and astronomy attaining adult stature and pursuing their paths of progress more or less independently of philosophy, in spite of the fact that both Galileo and Newton philosophized (in our sense of the term). But in the period of which we are treating there was no really empirical study of psychology in the sense of a science distinct from other sciences and from philosophy. It was only natural, therefore, that the successful developments in astronomy, physics and chemistry should arouse in philosophers the idea of elaborating a science of man. True, the empirical study of the human body was already being developed. We have only to recall the discoveries in anatomy and physiology which were made by men like Vesalius, author of the *De fabrica humani corporis* (1543) and Harvey, who discovered the circulation of the blood about 1615. But for the study of psychology we have to turn to the philosophers.

Descartes, for instance, wrote a work on the passions of the soul, and he proposed a theory to explain the interaction between mind and body. Spinoza wrote on human cognition, on the passions and on the reconciliation of the apparent consciousness or awareness of freedom with the determinism demanded by his system. Among the British philosophers we find a marked interest in psychological questions. The leading empiricists, Locke, Berkeley and Hume, all deal with problems about knowledge; and they tend to treat these problems from a psychological rather than from a strictly epistemological point of view. That is to say, they tend to concentrate their attention on the question, how do our ideas arise? And this is obviously a psychological question. Again, in English empiricism we can see the growth of the associationist psychology. Further, in his introduction to the *Treatise of Human Nature* Hume speaks explicitly of the need for developing the science of man on an empirical basis. Natural philosophy, he says, has already been established on an experimental or empirical basis; but philosophers have only just begun to put the science of man on a like footing.

Now, a scientist such as Galileo, who was concerned with bodies in motion, could, of course, confine himself to the material world and to questions of physics and astronomy. But the view of the world as a mechanical system raised problems which the metaphysical philosopher could not evade. In particular since man is a being within the world, the question arises whether or not he falls wholly within the mechanical system. Obviously, there are two possible general lines of answer. On the one hand the philosopher may defend the view that man possesses a spiritual soul, endowed with the power of free choice, and that in virtue of this spiritual and free soul he partly transcends the material world and the system of mechanical causality. On the other hand he may extend the scientific conception of the material universe to include man as a whole. Psychical processes will then be probably interpreted as epiphenomena of physical processes or, more crudely, as being themselves material, and human freedom will be denied.

Descartes was convinced of the truth of the first answer, though he spoke of mind rather than of soul. The material world can be described in terms of matter, identified with geometrical extension, and motion. And all bodies, including living bodies, are in some sense machines. But man as a whole cannot be simply reduced to a member of this mechanical system. For he possesses a spiritual mind which transcends the material world and the determining laws of efficient causality which govern this world. At the very threshold of the modern era, therefore, we find the so-called 'father of modern philosophy' asserting the existence of spiritual reality in general and of man's spiritual mind in particular. And this assertion was not merely the relic of an old tradition; it was an integral part of Descartes' system and represented part of his answer to the challenge of the new scientific outlook.

Descartes' interpretation of man gave rise, however, to a particular problem. For if man consists of two clearly distinguishable substances, his nature tends to fall apart and no longer to possess a unity. It then becomes very difficult to account for the evident facts of psycho-physical interaction. Descartes himself asserted that the mind can and does act on the body: but his theory of interaction was felt to be one of the least satisfactory features of his system. And Cartesians such as Geulincx, who are generally known as 'occasionalists', refused to admit that two heterogeneous types of substances can act on one another. When interaction apparently takes place, what really occurs is that on the occasion of a psychic event God causes the corresponding physical event, or conversely. Thus the occasionalists had recourse to the divine activity to explain the apparent facts of interaction. But it is not immediately evident how, if the mind cannot act on the body, God can do so. And in the system of Spinoza the problem of interaction was eliminated, because mind and body were regarded as two aspects of one reality. In the philosophy of Leibniz, however, the problem reappears in a somewhat different form. It is no longer the question how can there be interaction between two heterogeneous types of substances, but rather how there can be interaction between numerically distinct and independent monads, between, that is to say, the dominant monad which constitutes the human mind and the monads which constitute the body. And Leibniz's answer was similar to, though not precisely the same as, that of the occasionalists. God so created the monads that their activities are synchronized in a manner analogous to that in which the movements of the hands of two perfectly constructed clocks would correspond, though the one clock does not act on the other.

The occasionalists began, of course, with Descartes' idea of spiritual and material substances; and their peculiar theory presupposes this idea. But there were other philosophers who attempted to extend to man as a whole the new scientific conception of the world. In England Hobbes applied the fundamental ideas of Galileo's mechanics to all reality, that is, to all reality which can be significantly considered in philosophy. He equated substance with material substance, and he would not allow that the philosopher can envisage or treat of any other kind of reality. The philosopher, therefore, must consider man as purely material being, subject to the same laws as other bodies. Freedom is eliminated, and consciousness is interpreted as motion, reducible to changes in the nervous system.

On the Continent a number of eighteenth-century philosophers adopted a similarly crude materialism. For example, La Mettrie, author of *Man a Machine* (1748), represented man as a complicated material machine and the theory of a spiritual soul as a fable. In proposing this view he claimed Descartes as his direct ancestor. The latter had started to give a mechanistic interpretation of the world; but he had abandoned it at a certain point. He, La Mettrie, was concerned to complete the process by showing that man's psychical processes, no less than his physical processes, could be explained in terms of a mechanistic and materialist hypothesis.

The challenge of the new science, therefore, raised a problem in regard to man. True, the problem was in a sense an old problem; and in Greek philosophy we can find solutions which are analogous to the divergent solutions offered by Descartes and Hobbes in the seventeenth century. We have only to think of Plato on the one hand and of Democritus on the other. But though the problem was an old one, it was also a new one, in the sense that the development of the Galilean and Newtonian science placed it in a new light and emphasized its importance. At the end of the period covered in Volumes IV–VI we find Immanuel Kant attempting to combine an acceptance of the validity of Newtonian science with a belief in man's moral freedom. It would, indeed, be very misleading to say that Kant restated the position of Descartes; but if we draw a general line of division between those who extended the mechanistic outlook to include man in his totality and those who did not, we must place Descartes and Kant on the same side of the line.

When we are considering the shift of interest from theological themes to a study of Nature and of man without explicit reference to God, the following point is relevant. When Hume in the eighteenth century spoke about the science of man, he included moral philosophy or ethics. And in British philosophy in general during the period between the Renaissance and the end of the eighteenth century we can observe that strong interest in ethics which has continued to be one of the leading characteristics of British thought. Further, it is generally true, though there are certainly exceptions, that the English moralists of the period endeavoured to develop an ethical theory without theological presuppositions. They do not start, as did St. Thomas Aquinas[1] in the thirteenth century, with the idea of the eternal law of God and then descend to the idea of the natural moral law, considered as an expression of the former. Instead they tend to treat ethics without reference to metaphysics. Thus British moral philosophy in the eighteenth century illustrates the tendency of post-mediaeval philosophical thought to pursue its course independently of theology.

Analogous remarks can be made about political philosophy. Hobbes in the seventeenth century certainly writes at some length about ecclesiastical matters; but this does not mean that his political theory is dependent on theological presuppositions. For Hume in the eighteenth century political philosophy is part of the science of man, and in his eyes it has no connection with theology or, indeed, with metaphysics in general. And the political theory of Rousseau in the same century was also what one may call a secularist theory. The outlook of men such as Hobbes, Hume and Rousseau was very different from that of St. Thomas Aquinas[2] and still more from that of St. Augustine.[3] We can, indeed, see their outlook prefigured in the writings of Marsilius of Padua[1] in the first half of the fourteenth century. But Marsilius was scarcely the typical political philosopher of the Middle Ages.

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[1] For St. Thomas's moral theory, see vol. II, ch. XXXIX.

[2] See vol. II, ch. XL.

[3] *Ibid.*, ch. VIII.

In this section I have emphasized the influence of physical science on the philosophy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the Middle Ages theology was regarded as the supreme science, but in the post-mediaeval period the natural sciences begin to occupy the centre of the stage. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, however, we are still in a period when the philosopher is confident that he, like the scientist, can add to our knowledge of the world. True, this statement stands in need of considerable qualification if we bear in mind the scepticism of David Hume. But, generally speaking, the mood is one of optimistic confidence in the power of the philosophical mind. And this confidence is stimulated and intensified by the successful development of physical science. The latter has not yet so completely dominated the scene as to produce in many minds the suspicion, or even the conviction, that philosophy can add nothing to our factual knowledge of reality. Or to put the matter in another way, if philosophy has ceased to be the handmaid of theology, it has not yet become the charwoman of science. It receives a stimulus from science, but it asserts its autonomy and independence. Whether or not the results encourage one to accept its claims, is another question. It is in any case not a question which can be profitably discussed in an introduction to the history of philosophy in the period of which we are treating.

2. It is customary to divide pre-Kantian modern philosophy into two main streams, the one comprising the rationalist systems of the Continent from Descartes to Leibniz and his disciple Christian Wolff, the other comprising British empiricism down to and including Hume. This division has been adopted here. And in this section I wish to make some introductory remarks about continental rationalism.

In the broadest sense of the term a rationalist philosopher would presumably be one who relied on the use of his reason and who did not have recourse to mystical intuitions or to feelings. But this broad sense of the term is quite insufficient for distinguishing the great continental systems of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from British empiricism. Locke, Berkeley and Hume would all maintain that they relied on reasoning in their philosophical reflections. For the matter of that, the term, if understood in this broad sense, will not serve for distinguishing the metaphysics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from mediaeval metaphysics. Some critics may accuse St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, of wishful thinking, in the sense that in their opinion he found inadequate reasons for accepting conclusions which he already believed on non-rational grounds and which he wished to defend. But Aquinas himself was certainly convinced that his philosophy was a product of rational reflection. And if the accusation against him were valid, it would apply equally well to Descartes.

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[1] See vol. III, ch. XI.

In common parlance a rationalist is now generally understood to be a thinker who denies the supernatural and the idea of the divine revelation of mysteries. But, quite apart from the fact that this use of the term presupposes that there is no rational evidence for the existence of the supernatural and no rational motives for believing that there is any divine revelation in the theological sense, it would certainly not provide us with a distinctive characteristic of continental pre-Kantian philosophy as contrasted with British empiricism. The term, as used in this sense, would fit, for example, a number of French philosophers of the eighteenth century. But it would not fit Descartes. For there is no adequate reason for denying or even doubting his sincerity either in elaborating proofs of the existence of God or in accepting the Catholic faith. If we wish to use the term 'rationalism' to distinguish the leading continental systems of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from British empiricism, we have to assign some other meaning to it. And perhaps this can most easily be done by referring to the problem of the origin of knowledge.

Philosophers such as Descartes and Leibniz accepted the idea of innate or *a priori* truths. They did not think, of course, that a newly-born infant perceives certain truths from the moment when it comes into the world. Rather did they think that certain truths are virtually innate in the sense that experience provides no more than the occasion on which the mind by its own light perceives their truth. These truths are not inductive generalizations from experience, and their truth stands in need of no empirical confirmation. It may be that I perceive the truth of a self-evident principle only on the occasion of experience; but its truth does not depend on experience. It is seen to be true in itself, this truth being logically antecedent to experience even though, from the psychological point of view, we may come to an explicit perception of its truth only on the occasion of experience. According to Leibniz, such truths are prefigured, in some undetermined sense, in the mind's structure, even though they are not known explicitly from the first moment of consciousness. They are, therefore, virtually rather than actually innate.

But a belief in self-evident principles is not sufficient by itself to characterize the continental metaphysicians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The mediaeval metaphysicians too had believed in self-evident principles, though Aquinas saw no adequate reason for calling them innate. The point which characterizes Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz is rather their ideal of deducing from such principles a system of truths which would give information about reality, about the world. I say 'their ideal' because we cannot assume, of course, that their philosophies do in fact constitute pure deductions from self-evident principles. If they did, it would be extremely odd that their philosophies should be mutually incompatible. But their ideal was the ideal of a deductive system of truths, analogous to a mathematical system but at the same time capable of increasing our factual information. Spinoza's chief work is entitled *Ethica more geometrico demonstrata* (*Ethics demonstrated in a geometrical manner*), and it purports to expound the truth about reality and man in a quasi-mathematical manner, beginning with definitions and axioms and proceeding through the orderly proving of successive propositions to the building up of a system of conclusions, the truth of which is known with certainty. Leibniz conceived the notion of a universal symbolic language and of a universal logical method or calculus, by means of which we could not only systematize all existing knowledge but also deduce hitherto unknown truths. And if the fundamental principles are said to be virtually innate, the entire system of deducible truths can be considered as the self-unfolding of the reason itself.

It is obvious that the rationalist philosophers were influenced by the model of mathematical reasoning. That is to say, mathematics provides a model of clarity, certainty and orderly deduction. The personal element, subjective factors such as feeling, are eliminated, and a body of propositions, the truth of which is assured, is built up. Could not philosophy attain a like objectivity and certainty, if an appropriate method, analogous to that of mathematics, were employed? The use of the right method could make metaphysical philosophy, and even ethics, a science in the fullest sense of the word instead of a field for verbal wrangling, unclarified ideas, faulty reasoning and mutually incompatible conclusions. The personal element could be eliminated, and philosophy would possess the characteristics of universal, necessary and impersonal truth which is possessed by pure mathematics. Such considerations, as will be seen later, weighed heavily with Descartes.

It is commonly maintained today that pure mathematics as such does not give us factual information about the world. To take a simple example, if we define a triangle in a certain way, it must possess certain properties, but we cannot deduce from this the conclusion that there exist triangles possessing these properties. All that we can deduce is that if a triangle exists which fulfils the definition, it possesses these properties. And an obvious criticism of the rationalists is that they did not understand the difference between mathematical and existential propositions. This criticism is not, indeed, altogether fair. For, as will be shown later, Descartes endeavoured to found his system on an existential proposition and not on what some writers call a 'tautology'. At the same time it can scarcely be denied that there was a tendency on the part of the rationalists to assimilate philosophy, including natural philosophy or physics, to pure mathematics and the causal relation to logical implication. But it is arguable that the background of Renaissance science encouraged them to think in this way. And I wish now to illustrate this point.

That Nature is, as it were, mathematical in structure was the tenet of Galileo. 'As a physicist he tried to express the foundations of physics and the observed regularities of Nature in terms of mathematical propositions, so far as this was possible. As a philosopher he drew from the success of the mathematical method in physics the conclusion that mathematics is the key to the actual structure of reality.'[1] In *Il saggiatore*[2] Galileo declared that philosophy is written by God in the book of the universe, though we cannot read this book until we understand the language, which is that of mathematics. If, therefore, as Galileo maintained, the structure of Nature is mathematical in character, so that there is a conformity between Nature and mathematics, it is easy to understand how philosophers who were dominated by the ideal of the mathematical method came to think that the application of this method in the philosophical field could lead to the discovery of hitherto unknown truths about reality.

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[1] Vol. III, p. 287.

[2] 6.

In order, however, to appreciate the significance of Descartes' quest for certainty and of his looking to mathematics as a model for reasoning, it is desirable to bear in mind the revival of scepticism which was one of the aspects of Renaissance thought. When one thinks of French scepticism in the last part of the sixteenth century the name which comes first to mind is that of Montaigne (1533–92). And this is only natural, given his eminent position in the field of French literature. As was pointed out in the third volume of this *History*,[1] Montaigne revived the ancient arguments in favour of scepticism; the relativity and unreliable character of sense-experience, the mind's dependence on sense-experience and its consequent incapacity for attaining absolute truth, and our inability to solve the problems which arise out of the conflicting claims of the senses and the reason. Man lacks the power to construct any certain metaphysical system; and the fact that metaphysicians have arrived at different and incompatible conclusions bears witness to this. To exalt the powers of the human mind as the humanists did is absurd: rather should we confess our ignorance and the weakness of our mental capacities.

This scepticism about the possibility of attaining metaphysical and theological truth by the use of reason was eventually accepted by Charron (1541–1603), a priest. At the same time he insisted on man's obligation to humble himself before divine revelation, which must be accepted on faith. In the field of moral philosophy he accepted an ethics of Stoic inspiration. In the previous volume[2] mention was made of Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), one of the revivers of Stoicism during the Renaissance. Another was William Du Vair (1556–1621) who tried to harmonize the Stoic ethics with the Christian faith. It is understandable that at a time when scepticism in regard to metaphysics was influential the Stoic ideal of the morally independent man should exercise an attraction on some minds.

But scepticism was not confined to the elegant, literary version represented by Montaigne or to the fideism of Charron. It was represented also by a group of free-thinkers who had little difficulty in showing the inconsistencies in Charron's combination of scepticism with fideism. This combination had existed already in the fourteenth century; and some religiously-minded people are undoubtedly attracted by it. But it is scarcely a satisfactory position from the rational point of view. Further, the free-thinkers or 'libertines' interpreted the term 'nature', which plays such an important role in the Stoic ethic, in a very different sense from that in which Charron understood it. And the term is, indeed, ambiguous, as can be seen by considering the different senses in which it was taken by the Greeks.

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[1] pp. 228–30.

[2] Vol. III, p. 228.

The revival of scepticism, ranging from Montaigne's Pyrrhonism and Charron's fideism to scepticism combined with moral cynicism, is relevant to Descartes' attempt to set philosophy on a sure basis. In meeting the challenge he looked to mathematics as the model of certain and clear reasoning, and he desired to give to metaphysics a similar clarity and certainty. Metaphysics must here be understood as including philosophical, as distinct from dogmatic, theology. In Descartes' opinion the proofs which he offered of God's existence were absolutely valid. And he believed, therefore, that he had provided a firm foundation for belief in the truths revealed by God. That is to say, he believed that he had shown conclusively that there exists a God who is capable of revealing truths to mankind. As for ethics, Descartes was himself influenced by the revival of Stoicism, and though he did not develop a systematic ethics, he at any rate contemplated incorporating into his philosophy those Stoic principles which he recognized as true and valuable. In the moral philosophy of Spinoza too we can see a distinct flavour of Stoicism. Indeed, Stoicism was in certain important respects much better adapted for use in the philosophy of Spinoza than in that of Descartes. For Spinoza, like the Stoics, was both a monist and a determinist, whereas Descartes was neither.

Mention of differences between Descartes and Spinoza leads us to consider briefly the development of continental rationalism. To speak at length about this theme in an introductory chapter would be inappropriate. But a few words on the subject may serve to give the reader some preliminary, if necessarily inadequate, idea of the scheme of development which will be treated more at length in the chapters devoted to individual philosophers.

We have already seen that Descartes affirmed the existence of two different types of substances, spiritual and material. In this sense of the word he can be called a dualist. But he was not a dualist in the sense that he postulated two ultimate, independent ontological principles. There is a plurality of finite minds and there is a plurality of bodies. But both finite minds and bodies depend on God as creator and conserver. God is, as it were, the link between the sphere of finite spiritual substances and the corporeal sphere. In several important respects the philosophy of Descartes differs very much from the systems of the thirteenth-century metaphysicians; but if we attend merely to the statement that he was a theist and a pluralist who recognized an essential difference between spiritual and material substances, we can say that he preserved the tradition of mediaeval metaphysics. To say this alone would be, indeed, to give a very inadequate idea of Cartesianism. For one thing, it would leave out of account the diversity of inspiration and aim. But it is none the less worth bearing in mind the fact that the first outstanding continental philosopher of the modern era preserved a great deal of the general scheme of reality which was current in the Middle Ages.

When we turn to Spinoza, however, we find a monistic system in which the Cartesian dualism and the Cartesian pluralism are discarded. There is only one substance, the divine substance, possessing an infinity of attributes, two of which, thought and extension, are known to us. Minds are modifications of the one substance under the attribute of thought, while bodies are modifications of the same unique substance under the attribute of extension. The Cartesian problem of interaction between the finite mind and the finite body in man disappears, because mind and body are not two substances but parallel modifications of one substance.

Although the monistic system of Spinoza is opposed to the pluralistic system of Descartes, there are equally obvious connections. Descartes defined substance as an existent thing which requires nothing but itself in order to exist. But, as he explicitly acknowledges, this definition applies strictly to God alone, so that creatures can be called substances only in a secondary and analogical sense. Spinoza, however, adopting a similar definition of substance, drew the conclusion that there is only one substance, God, and that creatures cannot be more than modifications of the divine substance. In this limited sense his system is a development of that of Descartes. At the same time, in spite of the connections between Cartesianism and Spinozism, the inspirations and atmospheres of the two systems are very different. The latter system may perhaps be regarded as being partly the result of a speculative application of the new scientific outlook to the whole of reality; but it is also suffused with a quasi-mystical and pantheistic colouring and inspiration which shows through the formal, geometrical trappings and which is absent from Cartesianism.

Leibniz, with his ideal of a logical deduction of hitherto unknown truths about reality, might perhaps be expected to adopt a similar monistic hypothesis. And he evidently saw this himself. But in point of fact he put forward a pluralistic philosophy. Reality consists of an infinity of monads or active substances, God being the supreme monad. Thus as far as pluralism is concerned, his philosophy is more akin to that of Descartes than to that of Spinoza. At the same time he did not believe that there are two radically different types of substances. Each monad is a dynamic and immaterial centre of activity; and no monad can be identified with geometrical extension. This does not mean, however, that reality consists of an anarchic chaos of monads. The world is a dynamic harmony, expressing the divine intelligence and will. In the case of man, for example, there is a dynamic or operational unity between the monads of which he is composed. And so it is with the universe. There is a universal harmony of monads conspiring together, as it were, for the attainment of a common end. And the principle of this harmony is God. The monads are so knit together that, even though one monad does not act directly on another, any change in any monad is reflected throughout the whole system in the divinely pre-established harmony. Each monad reflects the whole universe: the macrocosm is reflected in the microcosm. An infinite mind, therefore, could read off, as it were, the whole universe by contemplating one single monad.

If, therefore, we wish to regard the development of continental rationalism as a development of Cartesianism, we can say perhaps that Spinoza developed Cartesianism as viewed from a static point of view, while Leibniz developed it from a dynamic point of view. With Spinoza Descartes' two kinds of substances become so many modifications of one substance considered under two of its infinite attributes. With Leibniz the Cartesian pluralism is retained, but each substance or monad is interpreted as an immaterial centre of activity, the Cartesian idea of material substance, identifiable with geometrical extension and to which motion is added from without, as it were, being eliminated. Or one can express the development in another way. Spinoza resolves the Cartesian dualism by postulating a substantial or ontological monism, in which Descartes' plurality of substances become modifications or 'accidents' of one divine substance. Leibniz, however, eliminates the Cartesian dualism by asserting a monism of quite a different type from that asserted by Spinoza. All monads or substances are in themselves immaterial. We thus have monism in the sense that there is only one kind of substance. But at the same time the Cartesian pluralism is retained, inasmuch as there is a plurality of monads. Their dynamic unity is due, not to their being modifications or accidents of one divine substance, but to the divinely pre-established harmony.

A further way of expressing the development would be this. In the Cartesian philosophy there is a sharp dualism in the sense that the laws of mechanics and of efficient causality hold good in the material world, whereas in the spiritual world there is freedom and teleology. Spinoza eliminates this dualism by means of his monistic hypothesis, assimilating the causal connections between things to logical implication. As in a mathematical system conclusions flow from the premisses, so in the universe of Nature modifications or what we call things, together with their changes, flow from the one ontological principle, the divine substance. Leibniz, however, tries to combine mechanical causality with teleology. Each monad unfolds and develops according to an inner law of change, but the whole system of changes is directed, in virtue of the pre-established harmony, to the attainment of an end. Descartes excluded from natural philosophy or physics the consideration of final causes. But for Leibniz there is no need to choose between mechanical and final causality. They are really two aspects of one process.

The influence of mediaeval philosophy on the rationalist systems of the pre-Kantian era is sufficiently obvious. For instance, all three philosophers utilize the category of substance. At the same time the idea of substance undergoes equally obvious changes. With Descartes material substance is identified with geometrical extension, a theory which is foreign to mediaeval thought, while Leibniz tries to give an essentially dynamic interpretation to the concept of substance. Again, though the idea of God plays an integral part in the systems of all three thinkers, we can see, in the philosophies of Spinoza and Leibniz at any rate, a tendency to eliminate the idea of personal and voluntary creation. This is evidently the case with Spinoza. The divine substance expresses itself necessarily in its modifications, not, of course, by a necessity imposed from without (this is impossible, because there is no other substance), but by an inner necessity. Human freedom, therefore, goes by the board, together with the Christian concepts of sin, merit and so on. Leibniz, indeed, endeavoured to combine his idea of quasi-logical development of the world with the recognition of contingency and of human freedom. And he made distinctions with this end in view. But, as will be seen in due course, it is arguable that his efforts were not particularly successful. He attempted to 'rationalize' the mediaeval (or, more accurately, Christian) conception of the mystery of personal and voluntary creation, while retaining the fundamental idea; but the task which he set himself was no easy one. Descartes was, indeed, a believing Catholic, and Leibniz professed himself a Christian. But in continental rationalism as a whole we can see a tendency towards the speculative rationalization of Christian dogmas.[1] This tendency reached its climax in the philosophy of Hegel in the nineteenth century, though Hegel belongs, of course, to a different period and to a different climate of thought.

3. We have seen that the certainty of mathematics, its deductive method and its successful application in Renaissance science helped to provide the continental rationalists with a model of method and an ideal of procedure and purpose. But there was another side to Renaissance science besides its use of mathematics. For scientific progress was also felt to depend very largely on attention to empirical data and on the use of controlled experiment. Appeal to authority and to tradition was ousted in favour of experience, of reliance on factual data and on the empirical testing of hypotheses. And although we cannot account for the rise of British empiricism merely in terms of the conviction that scientific advance was based on actual observation of the empirical data, the development of the experimental method in the sciences naturally tended to stimulate and confirm the theory that all our knowledge is based on perception, on direct acquaintance with internal and external events. Indeed, 'The scientific insistence on going to the observable "facts" as a necessary basis for explanatory theory found its correlative and its theoretical justification in the empiricist thesis that our factual knowledge is ultimately based on

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[1] This statement does not cover Spinoza, who was not a Christian. And it does not refer, of course, to those eighteenth-century writers who rejected Christian dogma. But these writers, though 'rationalists' in a modern sense of the term, were not speculative philosophers after the style of Descartes and Leibniz.

perception.'[1] We cannot obtain factual knowledge by *a priori* reasoning, by quasi-mathematical deduction from alleged innate ideas or principles, but only by experience and within the limits of experience. There is, of course, such a thing as *a priori* reasoning. We see it in pure mathematics. And by such reasoning we reach conclusions which are certain. But mathematical propositions do not give us factual information about the world; they state, as Hume put it, relations between ideas. For factual information about the world, indeed about reality in general, we have to turn to experience, to sense-perception and to introspection. And though such inductively-based knowledge enjoys varying degrees of probability, it is not and cannot be absolutely certain. If we wish for absolute certainty, we must confine ourselves to propositions which state something about the relations of ideas or the implications of the meanings of symbols, but which do not give us factual information about the world. If we wish for factual information about the world, we must content ourselves with probabilities, which is all that inductively-based generalizations can give us. A philosophical system which possesses absolute certainty and which at the same time would give us information about reality and be capable of indefinite extension through the deductive discovery of hitherto unknown factual truths is a will-o'-the-wisp.

True, this description of empiricism certainly will not fit all those who are customarily reckoned as empiricists. But it indicates the general tendency of this movement of thought. And the nature of empiricism is revealed most clearly in its historical development, since it is possible to regard this development as consisting, in large part at least, in a progressive application of the thesis, enunciated by Locke, that all our ideas come from experience, from sense-perception and from introspection.

In view of his insistence on the experimental basis of knowledge and on induction as contrasted with deduction, Francis Bacon can be called an empiricist. The appositeness of this name is not, however, so clear in the case of Hobbes. He maintained, indeed, that all our knowledge begins with sensation and can be traced back to sensation as its ultimate fount. And this entitles us to call him an empiricist. At the same time he was deeply influenced by the idea of mathematical method as a model of reasoning, and in this respect he stands closer to the continental rationalists than do other British philosophers of the early modern period. He was, however, a nominalist, and he did not think that we can in fact demonstrate causal relations. He certainly tried to extend the scope of Galileo's mechanics to cover all the subject-matter of philosophy; but it is more appropriate, I think, to class him with the empiricists than with the rationalists, if we have to choose between the two labels. And I have followed this procedure in the present volume, while at the same time I have attempted to point out some of the requisite qualifications.

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[1] Vol. III, p. 290.

The real father of classical British empiricism, however, was John Locke (1632–1704), whose declared aim was to inquire into the source, certainty and extent of human knowledge, and also into the grounds and degrees of belief, opinion and assent. In connection with the first problem, the source of our knowledge, he delivered a vigorous attack on the theory of innate ideas. He then attempted to show how all the ideas which we have can be explained on the hypothesis that they originate in sense-perception and in introspection or, as he put it, reflection. But though Locke asserted the ultimately experimental origin of all our ideas, he did not restrict knowledge to the immediate data of experience. On the contrary, there are complex ideas, built up out of simple ideas, which have objective references. Thus we have, for example, the idea of material substance, the idea of a substratum which supports primary qualities, such as extension, and those 'powers' which produce in the percipient subject ideas of colour, sound and so on. And Locke was convinced that there actually are particular material substances, even though we can never perceive them. Similarly, we have the complex idea of the causal relation; and Locke used the principle of causality to demonstrate the existence of God, of a being, that is to say, who is not the object of direct experience. In other words, Locke combined the empiricist thesis that all our ideas originate in experience with a modest metaphysics. And if there were no Berkeley and no Hume, we might be inclined to look on Locke's philosophy as a watered-down form of Scholasticism, with Cartesian elements thrown in, the whole being expressed in a sometimes confused and inconsistent manner. In point of fact, however, we not unnaturally tend to regard his philosophy as the point of departure for his empiricist successors.

Berkeley (1685–1753) attacked Locke's conception of material substance. He had, indeed, a particular motive for dwelling at length on this point. For he considered that belief in material substance was a fundamental element in materialism, which, as a devout Christian, he was intent on refuting. But he had, of course, other grounds for attacking Locke's thesis. There was the general empiricist ground or reason, namely, that material substance as defined by Locke is an unknowable substrate. We have, therefore, no clear idea of it, and we have no warrant for saying that it exists. A so-called material thing is simply what we perceive it to be. But nobody has perceived or can perceive an imperceptible substrate. Experience, then, gives us no ground for asserting its existence. But there were other reasons which arose out of Locke's unfortunate habit or common, though not invariable, practice of speaking as though it is ideas which we perceive directly, and not things. Starting with Locke's position in regard to secondary and primary qualities (which will be explained in the chapter on Locke), Berkeley argued that all of them, including the primary qualities, such as extension, figure and motion, are ideas. He then asked how ideas could possibly exist in or be supported by a material substance. If all that we perceive is ideas, these ideas must exist in minds. To say that they exist in an unknowable, material substrate is to make an unintelligible statement. The latter has no possible function to fulfil.

To say that Berkeley got rid of Locke's material substance is to mention only one aspect of his empiricism. And just as Locke's empiricism is only a part of his philosophy, so is Berkeley's empiricism only one aspect of his philosophy. For he went on to build up a speculative idealist metaphysic, for which the only realities are God, finite minds and the ideas of finite minds. Indeed, he used his empiricist conclusions as a foundation of a theistic metaphysic. And this attempt to erect a metaphysical philosophy on the basis of a phenomenalistic account of material things constitutes one of the chief points of interest in Berkeley's thought. But in giving a brief and necessarily inadequate sketch of the development of classical British empiricism it is sufficient to draw attention to his elimination of Locke's material substance. If we leave aside the theory of 'ideas', we can say that for Berkeley the so-called material thing or sensible object consists simply of phenomena, of those qualities which we perceive in it. And this, in Berkeley's opinion, is precisely what the man-in-the-street believes it to consist of. For he has never heard of, let alone perceived, any occult substance or substratum. In the eyes of the plain man the tree is simply that which we perceive it, or can perceive it, to be. And we perceive, and can perceive, only qualities.

Now, Berkeley's phenomenalistic analysis of material things was not extended to finite selves. In other words, though he eliminated material substance, he retained spiritual substance. Hume (1711–76), however, proceeded to eliminate spiritual substance as well. All our ideas are derived from impressions, the elementary data of experience. And in order to determine the objective reference of any complex idea, we have to ask, from what impressions is it derived. Now, there is no impression of a spiritual substance. If I look into myself, I perceive only a series of psychic events such as desires, feelings, thoughts. Nowhere do I perceive an underlying, permanent substance or soul. That we have some idea of a spiritual substance can be explained by reference to the working of mental association; but we have no ground for asserting that such a substance exists.

Analysis of the idea of spiritual substance, however, does not occupy so prominent a position in Hume's writings as his analysis of the causal relation. In accordance with his regular programme he asks from what impression or impressions is our idea of causality derived. And he answers that all that we observe is constant conjunction. When, for example, *A* is always followed by *B*, in such a way that when *A* is absent *B* does not occur and that when *B* occurs it is, as far as we can ascertain empirically, always preceded by *A*, we speak of *A* as the cause and of *B* as the effect. To be sure, the idea of necessary connection also belongs to our idea of causality. But we cannot point to any sense-impression from which it is derived. The idea can be explained with the help of the principle of association: it is, so to speak, a subjective contribution. We can inspect the objective relations between cause *A* and effect *B* as long as we like; we shall find nothing more than constant conjunction.

In this case we obviously cannot legitimately use the principle of causality to transcend experience in such a way as to extend our knowledge. We say that *A* is the cause of *B* because, so far as our experience goes, we find that the occurrence of *A* is always followed by the occurrence of *B* and that *B* never occurs when *A* has not previously occurred. But though we may believe that *B* has some cause, we cannot legitimately argue that *A* is this cause unless we observe *A* and *B* occurring in the relation which has just been described. We cannot argue, therefore, that phenomena are caused by substances which are not only never observed but also in principle unobservable. Nor can we argue, as in their different ways both Locke and Berkeley argued, to the existence of God. We can form a hypothesis if we like; but no causal argument in favour of God's existence can possibly give us any certain knowledge. For God transcends our experience. With Hume, therefore, the metaphysics of both Locke and Berkeley go overboard, and both minds and bodies are analysed in phenomenalistic terms. In fact we can be certain of very little, and scepticism may seem to result. But, as will be seen later, Hume answers that we cannot live and act in accordance with pure scepticism. Practical life rests on beliefs, such as belief in the uniformity of nature, which cannot be given any adequate rational justification. But this is no reason for renouncing these beliefs. In his study a man may be a sceptic, realizing how little is capable of proof; but when he turns from his academic reflections he has to act on the fundamental beliefs according to which all men act, whatever their philosophical views may be.

The aspect of classical British empiricism which first impresses itself on the mind is perhaps its negative aspect, namely, the progressive elimination of traditional metaphysics. But it is important to note the more positive aspects. For example, we can see the growth of the approach to philosophy which is now generally known as logical or linguistic analysis. Berkeley asks what it means to say of a material thing that it exists. And he answers that to say that a material thing exists is to say that it is perceived by a subject. Hume asks what it means to say that *A* is the cause of *B*, and he gives a phenomenalistic answer. Moreover, in the philosophy of Hume we can find all the main tenets of what is sometimes called 'logical empiricism'. That this is the case will be shown later. But it is worth while pointing out in advance that Hume is very much a living philosopher. True, he often expresses in psychological terms questions and answers which would be expressed in a different way even by those who accept him as being in some sense their 'master'. But this does not affect the fact that he is one of those philosophers whose thought is a living force in contemporary philosophy.

4. It is in the seventeenth rather than in the eighteenth century that we see the most vigorous manifestation of the impulse to systematic philosophical construction which owed so much to the

new scientific outlook. The succeeding century is not marked to the same extent by brilliant and bold metaphysical speculation, and in its last decades philosophy takes a new turn with the thought of Immanuel Kant.

If we leave out of account Francis Bacon, we can say that the seventeenth century is headed by two systems, that of Descartes on the Continent and that of Hobbes in England. From both the epistemological and the metaphysical points of view their philosophies are very different. But both men were influenced by the ideal of mathematical method, and both were systematizers on the grand scale. One can note that Hobbes, who had personal relations with Mersenne, a friend of Descartes, was acquainted with the latter's *Meditations* and wrote a series of objections against them, to which Descartes replied.

The philosophy of Hobbes excited a sharp reaction in England. In particular the so-called Cambridge Platonists, such as Cudworth (1617–88) and Henry More (1614–87), opposed his materialism and determinism and what they regarded as his atheism. They were also opposed to empiricism and are frequently called 'rationalists'. But though some of them were, indeed, influenced to a minor extent by Descartes, their rationalism sprang rather from other sources. They believed in fundamental speculative and ethical truths or principles which are not derived from experience but discerned immediately by reason, and which reflect the eternal divine truth. They were also concerned to show the reasonableness of Christianity. They can be called Christian Platonists, provided that the term 'Platonist' is understood in a wide sense. In histories of philosophy they are rarely accorded a prominent position. But it is as well to remember their existence if for no other reason than as a corrective to the not uncommon persuasion that British philosophy has been throughout empiricist in character, apart, of course, from the idealist interlude of the second half of the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth centuries. Empiricism is doubtless the distinguishing characteristic of English philosophy; but at the same time there is another, if less prominent, tradition, of which Cambridge Platonism in the seventeenth century forms one phase.

Cartesianism was far more influential on the Continent than was the system of Hobbes in England. At the same time it is a mistake to think that Cartesianism swept everything before it, even in France. A notable example of unfavourable reaction is seen in the case of Blaise Pascal (1623-62). Pascal, the Kierkegaard of the seventeenth century, was uncompromising in his opposition, not, of course, to mathematics (he was himself a mathematical genius), but to the spirit of Cartesianism, which he regarded as naturalistic in character. In the interests of Christian apologetics he emphasized on the one hand the weakness of man and on the other his need of faith, of submission to revelation and of supernatural grace.

We have already seen that Descartes left behind him a legacy in the form of the problem of interaction between mind and body, a problem which was discussed by the occasionalists. Among their names we sometimes find that of Malebranche (1638-1715). But though the latter can be called an occasionalist if we consider only one element of his thought, his philosophy went far beyond occasionalism. It was a metaphysical system of an original stamp which combined elements taken from Cartesianism with elements developed under Augustinian inspiration and which might have become a system of idealistic pantheism, had not Malebranche, who was an Oratorian priest, endeavoured to remain within the bounds of orthodoxy. As it is, his philosophy remains one of the most notable products of French thought. Incidentally, it exercised some influence on the mind of Bishop Berkeley in the eighteenth century.

In the seventeenth century we have, therefore, the systems of Hobbes, Descartes and Malebranche. But these philosophies are by no means the only notable achievements of the century. The year 1632 saw the births of two of the chief thinkers of the pre-Kantian period of modern philosophy, of Spinoza in Holland and of Locke in England. But their lives, as well as their philosophies, were very different. Spinoza was more or less a recluse, a man dominated by a vision of the one reality, the one divine and eternal substance, which manifests itself in those finite modifications which we call 'things'. This one substance he called God or Nature. Obviously, we have here an ambiguity. If we emphasize the second name, we have a naturalistic monism in which the God of Christianity and Judaism (Spinoza was himself a Jew) is eliminated. In the period under discussion Spinoza was frequently understood in this sense and was accordingly regarded and execrated as an atheist. Hence his influence was extremely limited, and he did not come into his own until the German romantic movement and the period of German post-Kantian idealism, when the term 'God' in the phrase 'God or Nature' was emphasized and Spinoza was depicted as a 'God-intoxicated man'. Locke, on the contrary, was by no means a recluse. A friend of scientists and philosophers, he moved on the fringe of the great world and held some government posts. His philosophy, as has already been remarked, followed a rather traditional pattern; he was much respected; and he influenced profoundly not only the subsequent development of British philosophy but also the philosophy of the French Enlightenment in the eighteenth century. Indeed, in the extent of Locke's influence we see an evident refutation of the notion that British and continental thought in the pre-Kantian era flowed in parallel channels without any intermingling of their waters.

In 1642, ten years after the birth of Locke, there was born another of the most influential figures in modern thought, Isaac Newton. He was not, of course, primarily a philosopher, as we understand the word today, and his great importance consists in the fact that he completed to all intents and purposes the classical scientific conception of the world which Galileo in particular had done so much to promote. But Newton laid more stress than had Galileo on empirical observation, induction and the place of probability in science. And for this reason his physics tended to undermine the Galilean-Cartesian ideal of *a priori* method and to encourage the empiricist approach in the field of philosophy. Thus he influenced the mind of Hume to a considerable extent. At the same time, though Newton was not primarily a philosopher, he did not hesitate to go beyond physics or 'experimental philosophy' and to indulge in metaphysical speculation. Indeed, the confident way in which he drew metaphysical conclusions from physical hypotheses was attacked by Berkeley who saw that the tenuous character of the connections between Newton's physics and his theological conclusions might make a (for Berkeley) unfortunate impression on men's minds. And in point of fact a number of French philosophers of the eighteenth century, while accepting Newton's general approach to physics, employed it in a non-theistic setting which was alien to the latter's mind. At the end of the eighteenth century Newton's physics exercised a powerful influence on the thought of Kant.

Though he lived until 1716, Leibniz can be considered the last of the great seventeenth-century speculative philosophers. He evidently had some regard for Spinoza, though he did not manifest this regard to the public. Further, he attempted to hang Spinoza, as it were, round the neck of Descartes, as though the former's system were a logical development of the latter's. In other words, he seems to have been at pains to make it clear that his own philosophy differed greatly from those of his predecessors or, more accurately, that it contained their good points while omitting the bad points in Cartesianism which led to its development into the system of Spinoza. However this may be, there can be no doubt that Leibniz remained faithful to the general spirit and inspiration of continental rationalism. He made a careful critical study of Locke's empiricism, which was eventually published as *New Essays Concerning the Human Understanding.*

Like Newton (and, indeed, like Descartes), Leibniz was an eminent mathematician, though he did not agree with Newton's theories about space and time; and he carried on a controversy about this subject with Samuel Clarke, one of the latter's disciples and admirers. But though Leibniz was a great mathematician, and though the influence of his mathematical studies upon his philosophy is clear enough, his mind was so many-sided that it is not surprising if a great variety of elements and lines of thought can be found in his diverse writings. For example, his conception of the world as a dynamic and progressively self-unfolding and developing system of active entities (monads) and of human history as moving towards an intelligible goal probably had some effect on the rise of the historical outlook. Again, through some aspects of his thought such as his interpretation of space and time as phenomenal, he prepared the way for Kant. If, however, one mentions the influence of Leibniz or his partial anticipation of a thesis maintained by a later thinker, this is not to deny that his system is interesting in itself.

5. The eighteenth century is known as the century of the Enlightenment (also as the Age of Reason). This term can hardly be defined. For though we speak of the philosophy of the Enlightenment, no one school or set of determinate philosophical theories is meant. The term indicates, however, an attitude and a prevalent disposition of mind and outlook, and these can be described in a general way.

Provided that the word 'rationalistic' is not understood as necessarily referring to rationalism in the sense explained in section two of this chapter, one can say that the general spirit of the Enlightenment was rationalistic in character. That is to say, the typical thinkers and writers of the period believed that the human reason was the apt and only instrument for solving problems connected with man and society. Just as Newton had interpreted Nature and had set the pattern for the free, rational and unprejudiced investigation of the physical world, so should man employ his reason for interpreting moral, religious, social and political life. It may be said, of course, that the ideal of using the reason to interpret human life was in no way alien to the mediaeval mind. And this is true. But the point is that the writers of the Enlightenment generally meant by reason a reason unhampered by belief in revelation, by submission to authority, by deference to established customs and institutions. In the religious sphere some explained away religion in a naturalistic manner; but even those who retained religious belief based it simply on reason, without reference to unquestionable divine revelation or to emotional or mystical experience. In the moral sphere the tendency was to separate morality from all metaphysical and theological premisses and in this sense to make it autonomous. In the social and political spheres too the characteristic thinkers of the Enlightenment endeavoured to discover a rational foundation for and justification of political society. Mention was made in the first section of this chapter of Hume's idea that a science of man was needed to complement the science of Nature. And this idea represents very well the spirit of the Enlightenment. For the Enlightenment does not represent a humanistic reaction against the new development in science or natural philosophy, which began with the scientific phase of the Renaissance and which culminated in the work of Newton. It represents rather the extension of the scientific outlook to man himself and a combination of humanism, which had been a characteristic of the first phase of the Renaissance, with this scientific outlook.

There were, indeed, considerable differences between the ideas of the various philosophers of the Enlightenment. Some believed in self-evident principles, the truth of which is immediately discerned by the unprejudiced reason. Others were empiricists. Some believed in God, others did not. Again, there were considerable differences of spirit between the phases of the Enlightenment in Britain, France and Germany. In France, for example, the characteristic thinkers of the period were bitterly opposed to the *ancien régime* and to the Church. In England, however, the Revolution had already taken place, and Catholicism, with its strict concept of revelation and its authoritarianism, counted for very little, being to all intents and purposes still a proscribed religion. Hence we would not expect to find among the British philosophers of the Enlightenment the same degree of hostility towards the Established Church or towards the civil powers that we can find among a number of their French contemporaries. Again, crudely materialistic interpretations of the human mind and of psychical processes were more characteristic of a certain section of French thinkers than of British thinkers of the time.

At the same time, in spite of all differences in spirit and in particular tenets, there was considerable interchange of ideas between the writers of France and England. Locke, for instance, exercised a very considerable influence on eighteenth-century thought in France. There existed in fact a kind of international and cosmopolitan-minded set of thinkers and writers who were united at any rate in their hostility, which showed itself in varying degrees according to circumstances, to ecclesiastical and political authoritarianism and to what they regarded as obscurantism and tyranny. And they looked on philosophy as an instrument of liberation, enlightenment and social and political progress. They were, in short, rationalists more or less in the modern sense, free-thinkers with a profound confidence in the power of reason to promote the betterment of man and of society and with a belief in the deleterious effects of ecclesiastical and political absolutism. Or, to put the matter another way, the liberal and humanitarian rationalists of the nineteenth century were the descendants of the characteristic thinkers of the Enlightenment.

The great systems of the seventeenth century helped, of course, to prepare the way for the Enlightenment. But in the eighteenth century we find not so much outstanding philosophers elaborating original and mutually incompatible metaphysical systems as a comparatively large number of writers with a belief in progress and a conviction that 'enlightenment', diffused through philosophical reflection, would secure in man's moral, social and political life a degree of progress worthy of an age which already possessed a scientific interpretation of Nature. The eighteenth-century philosophers in France were scarcely of the stature of Descartes. But their writings, easily understandable by educated people and sometimes superficial, were undeniably influential. They contributed to the coming of the French Revolution. And the philosophers of the Enlightenment in general exercised a lasting influence on the formation of the liberal mind and on the growth of a secularist outlook. One may have a favourable or an unfavourable view of the ideas of men such as Diderot and Voltaire; but one can hardly deny that, for good or ill, their ideas exercised a powerful influence.

In England, Locke's writings contributed to the philosophical current of thought which is known as deism. In his work on the *Reasonableness of Christianity* and elsewhere he insisted on reason as the judge of revelation, though he did not reject the idea of revelation. The deists, however, tended to reduce Christianity to natural religion. True, they differed considerably in their views about religion in general and Christianity in particular. But, while believing in God, they tended to reduce the Christian dogmas to truths which can be established by reason and to deny the unique and supernatural character of Christianity and God's miraculous intervention in the world. Among the deists were John Toland (1670–1722), Matthew Tindal (*c.* 1656–1733) and the Viscount Bolingbroke (1678–1751), who looked on Locke as his master and as superior to most other philosophers put together. Among the opponents of the deists were Samuel Clarke (1675–1729) and Bishop Butler (1692–1752), author of the famous work *The Analogy of Religion.*

In eighteenth-century philosophy in England we find also a strong interest in ethics. Characteristic of the time is the moral-sense theory, represented by Shaftesbury (1671–1713), Hutcheson (1694–1746), to a certain extent Butler, and Adam Smith (1723–90). As against Hobbes's interpretation of man as fundamentally egoistic they insisted on man's social nature. And they maintained that man possesses an inborn 'sense' or sentiment by which he discerns moral values and distinctions. David Hume had affiliations with this current of thought in that he found the basis of moral attitudes and distinctions in feeling rather than in reasoning or the intuition of eternal and self-evident principles. But at the same time he contributed to the growth of utilitarianism. In the case of several important virtues, for example, the feeling or sentiment of moral approbation is directed towards that which is socially useful. In France utilitarianism was represented by Claude Helvetius (1715–71), who did much to prepare the way for the utilitarian moral theories of Bentham, James and John Stuart Mill in the nineteenth century.

Though Locke was not the first to mention or discuss the principle of the association of ideas, it was largely through his influence that the foundations of the associationist psychology were laid in the eighteenth century. In England David Hartley (1705–57) tried to explain man's mental life with the aid of the principle of association of ideas, combined with the theory that our ideas are faint copies of sensations. He also tried to explain man's moral convictions with the aid of the same principle. And, in general, those moralists who started by assuming that man seeks by nature simply his own interest, in particular his own pleasure, used the principle to show how it is possible for man to seek virtue for its own sake and to act altruistically. For example, if the practice of some virtue is experienced by me as conducing to my own interest or benefit, I can come by the operation of the principle of association to approve of and practise this virtue without any advertence to the advantage which such conduct brings me. The utilitarians of the nineteenth century made copious use of this principle in explaining how altruism is possible in spite of the supposed fact that man naturally seeks his own satisfaction and pleasure.

The two outstanding eighteenth-century philosophers in Great Britain were obviously Berkeley and Hume. But it has already been mentioned that though the former's philosophy can be regarded as constituting a stage in the development of empiricism, it was at the same time much more than this. For on an empiricist foundation Berkeley developed an idealist and spiritualist metaphysics, orientated towards the acceptance of Christianity. His philosophy thus stands apart not only from deism but also from the interpretations of man which have just been mentioned. For the implicit tendency of the associationist current of thought was towards materialism and to the denial of any spiritual soul in man, whereas for Berkeley there are, besides God, only finite spirits and their ideas. Hume, however, though it would be wrong to call him a materialist, represents much better the spirit of the Enlightenment, with his empiricism, scepticism, liberalism and freedom from all theological assumptions and preoccupations.

In the last half of the century a reaction against empiricism and in favour of rationalism made itself felt. It was represented, for example, by Richard Price (1723–91) and Thomas Reid (1710–96). The former insisted that reason, not emotion, is authoritative in morals. We enjoy intellectual intuition of objective moral distinctions. For Reid and his followers there are a number of self-evident principles, principles of 'common sense', which are the foundation of all reasoning and which neither admit of direct proof nor need it. Just as the materialism of Hobbes stimulated the reaction of the Cambridge Platonists, so the empiricism of Hume stimulated a reaction. Indeed, there is continuity between the Cambridge Platonists and the Scottish philosophers of common sense, headed by Reid. Both groups represent a tradition in British philosophy which is weaker and less conspicuous than empiricism, but which is there none the less.

The deist movement in England had its counterpart in France. Voltaire (1694–1778), for example, was not an atheist, even though the Lisbon earthquake of 1755, while not making him abandon all belief in God, caused him to modify his views about the relation of the world to God and about the nature of the divine activity. But atheism was represented by a considerable number of writers. The Baron d'Holbach (1725–89), for instance, was a pronounced atheist. Ignorance and fear led to belief in the gods, weakness worshipped them, credulity preserves them, tyranny uses religion for its own ends. La Mettrie (1709–51) was also an atheist, and he tried to improve on the assertion of Pierre Bayle (1647–1706) that a State of atheists is possible[1] by saying that it is desirable. Again, Diderot (1713–84), who was one of the editors of the *Encyclopédie*,[2] passed from deism to atheism. All these writers, both deists and atheists, were anti-clericals and hostile to Catholicism.

Locke endeavoured to explain the origin of our ideas on empiricist principles; but he did not reduce man's psychical life to sensation. Condillac (1715–80), however, who aimed at developing a consistent empiricism, tried to explain all mental life in terms of sensations, 'transformed' sensations and signs or symbols. His sensationalism, which was worked out in an elaborate manner, was influential in France; but for outspoken materialism we have to turn rather to other writers. Mention has already been made of La Mettrie's attempt in *Man a Machine* to extend Descartes' mechanistic interpretation of infra-human life and of the body to man as a totality. D'Holbach maintained that mind is an epiphenomenon of the brain, and Cabanis (1757–1808) summed up his idea of man in the often quoted words, *Les nerfs—voilà tout l'homme.* According to him, the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile. Goethe later described the unpleasant impression made on him in his student days by d'Holbach's *Système de la nature.*

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[1] Bayle maintained that religion does not affect morality.

[2] This work, edited by Diderot and d'Alembert, was designed to give an account of the progress achieved in the different sciences and, by implication at least, to promote a secularist outlook.

A materialist interpretation of man, however, by no means always involved a rejection of moral ideals and principles. Thus Diderot emphasized the ideal of self-sacrifice and demanded of man benevolence, pity and altruism. D'Holbach, too, made morality consist in altruism, in service of the common good. And in the utilitarian theory of Helvetius the concept of the greatest possible happiness of the greatest number played a fundamental part. This moral idealism was, of course, separated from theological presuppositions and assumptions. Instead it was closely connected with the idea of social and legal reform. According to Helvetius, for example, the rational control of man's environment and the making of good laws would lead people to seek the public advantage. And d'Holbach emphasized the need for social and political reorganization. With appropriate systems of legislation, supported by sensible sanctions, and of education, man would be induced by his pursuit of his own advantage to act virtuously, that is to say, in a manner useful to society.

It has been remarked that the characteristic writers of the French Enlightenment were opposed to political tyranny. But this must not be taken to mean that they were all convinced 'democrats'. Montesquieu (1689–1755), indeed, concerned himself with the problem of liberty, and as a result of his analysis of the British constitution he insisted on the separation of powers as a condition of liberty. That is to say, the legislative, executive and judicial powers should be independent in the sense that they should not be subject to the will either of one man or of one body of men, whether of a small body of nobles or of the people. Montesquieu was opposed to any form of absolutism. But Voltaire, although he too was influenced by his knowledge of British practice and thought, particularly the thought of Locke, looked to the enlightened despot to achieve the necessary reforms. Like Locke, he advocated within limits the principle of toleration; but he was not notably concerned with the establishment of a democracy. One of his charges against the Church, for example, was that it exercised a hampering power over the sovereign and prevented really strong government. To find an outstanding advocate of democracy in a literal sense we have to turn to

Rousseau (1712–78). In general, we find among the writers of the French Enlightenment either an insistence on constitutionalism, as with Montesquieu, or the hope for an enlightened ruler, as with Voltaire. But in both cases the inspiration of and admiration for British political life is evident, though Voltaire was more impressed by freedom of discussion than by representative government.

Locke had maintained the doctrine of natural rights, that is to say, the natural rights of individuals, which are not derived from the State and cannot legitimately be abolished by the State. This theory, which has its antecedents in mediaeval thought and which was applied in the American Declaration of Independence, was influential also on the Continent. Voltaire, for example, supposed that there are self-evident moral principles and natural rights. Indeed, in a good deal of eighteenth-century French philosophy we can find the same sort of attempt to combine empiricism with elements derived from 'rationalism' that we find in Locke himself. With the utilitarians, however, another point of view comes to the fore. In the writings of Helvetius, for instance, the greatest happiness of the greatest number replaces as the standard of value Locke's natural rights. But Helvetius does not appear to have fully understood that this substitution implied the rejection of the theory of natural rights. For if utility is the standard, rights are themselves justified only by their utility. In England, however, this was seen by Hume. Rights are founded on convention, on general rules which experience has shown to be useful, not on self-evident principles or on eternal truths.

Liberty in the economic sphere was demanded by the so-called 'physiocrats', Quesnay (1694–1774) and Turgot (1727–81). If governments abstain from all avoidable interference in this sphere, and if individuals are left free to pursue their interests, the public advantage will inevitably be promoted. The reason for this is that there are natural economic laws which produce prosperity when nobody interferes with their operation. Here we have the policy of economic *laissez-faire*. It reflects to some extent the liberalism of Locke; but it is obviously based on a naïve belief in the harmony between the operation of natural laws[1] and the attainment of the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

We have noticed the dismal materialism expounded by some of the French philosophers of the eighteenth century. But, speaking generally, the thinkers of the period, including the materialists, manifested a strong belief in progress and in the dependence of progress on intellectual enlightenment. This belief received its classic expression in France in the *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* (1794) by Condorcet (1743–94). The scientific culture which began in the sixteenth century is destined to indefinite development.

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[1] Clearly, the term 'natural law', as used in this context, must be sharply distinguished from the term when used in the context of a 'rationalist' system of ethics.

The belief of the Encyclopaedists and others that progress consists in intellectual enlightenment and in the growth of civilization and that progress of this kind is inevitably accompanied by moral progress was sharply challenged by Rousseau. Associated for a time with Diderot and his circle, Rousseau subsequently broke with them and insisted on the virtues of the natural or uncivilized man, on the corruption of man by historic social institutions and by civilization in its actual development, and on the importance of emotion and of the heart in human life. But he is far better known for his great political work, *The Social Contract.* For the moment, however, it is sufficient to say that though Rousseau's starting-point is individualistic, in the sense that the State is justified in terms of a contract between individuals, the whole tendency of his work is to stress the concept of society as against the concept of the individual. Of all the political writings of the French Enlightenment Rousseau's book proved to be the most influential. And one reason for its influence on later thinkers was the fact that the author tended to leave behind the liberal individualism which was one of the characteristics of the philosophy of his period.

We have seen that the philosophy of the Enlightenment in France was inclined to be more extreme than eighteenth-century thought in England. Deism tended to give place to atheism, empiricism to become outspoken materialism. When, however, we turn to the Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*) in Germany, we find a rather different atmosphere.

Leibniz was the first great German philosopher, and the first phase of the Enlightenment in Germany consisted in a prolongation of his philosophy. His doctrine was systematized, not without some changes in its contents, let alone in its spirit, by Christian Wolff (1679–1754). Unlike most of the other well-known philosophers of the pre-Kantian period, Wolff was a university professor; and the textbooks which he published enjoyed a great success. Among his followers were Bilfinger (1693–1750), Knutzen (1713–51), whose lectures at Königsberg were attended by Kant, and Baumgarten (1714–62).

The second phase of the German *Aufklärung* shows the influence of the Enlightenment in France and England. If it is said that this phase is typified by Frederick the Great (1712–86), this does not mean, of course, that the king was himself a philosopher. But he admired the thinkers of the French Enlightenment, and he invited both Helvetius and Voltaire to Potsdam. He looked upon himself as the embodiment of the enlightened monarch, and he endeavoured to spread education and science in his territory. He is therefore of some importance in the philosophical field, as being one of the instruments by which the influence of the French Enlightenment was introduced to Germany.

Deism found a German defender in Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768). Moses Mendelssohn (1729–86), one of the 'popular philosophers' (so called because they excluded subtleties from philosophy and tried to reduce it to the capacity of the mediocre mind), was also influenced by the Enlightenment. But much more important was Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–81), the principal literary representative of the *Aufklärung*. Well known for his saying that if God were to offer him truth with one hand and the search for truth with the other he would choose the latter, he did not think in point of fact that in metaphysics and theology at least absolute truth is attainable or, indeed, that there is such a thing. Reason alone must decide about the content of religion, but the latter cannot be given a final expression. There is, as it were, a continuous education of the human race by God, to which we cannot put a full stop at any given moment in the form of unquestionable propositions. As for morality, it is in itself independent of metaphysics and theology. The human race attains its majority, as it were, when it comes to understand this fact and when man does his duty without regard to reward either in this life or in the next. By this idea of progress towards understanding the autonomy of ethics as well as by his rationalistic attitude towards Christian doctrine and towards Biblical exegesis Lessing gives ample evidence of the influence of eighteenth-century thought in France and England.

In the third phase of eighteenth-century philosophy in Germany[1] a different attitude manifests itself. Indeed, it is rather misleading to include this phase under the heading of the Enlightenment; and those writers who do so are accustomed to speak of men like Hamann, Herder and Jacobi as 'overcoming' the spirit of the Enlightenment. But it is convenient to mention them here.

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[1] I am excluding, of course, the philosophy of Kant, which will be briefly treated in the eighth section of this chapter.

Johann Georg Hamann (1730–88) disliked the intellectualism of the Enlightenment and what he regarded as the illegitimate dichotomy between reason and sensibility. Indeed, language itself shows the unjustifiable character of this separation. For in the word we see the union of reason and sense. With Hamann we find the analytical and rationalist outlook giving way before a synthesizing and almost mystical attitude. He revived Bruno's idea of the *coincidentia oppositorum* or synthesis of opposites,[1] and his aim was to see in Nature and in history the self-revelation of God.

A like reaction against rationalism appears in the thought of Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743–1819). Reason alone, which in its isolation is 'heathen', brings us either to a materialistic, deterministic and atheistic philosophy or to the scepticism of Hume. God is apprehended by faith rather than by reason, by the heart or by intuitive 'feeling' rather than by the coldly logical and analytic process of the intellect. Indeed, Jacobi is one of the leading representatives of the idea of religious sentiment or feeling.

Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), who will be mentioned again in the section on the rise of the philosophy of history, shared with Hamann his dislike of the separation between reason and sensibility and also his interest in the philosophy of language. It is true that Herder is linked with the characteristic thinkers of the French Enlightenment by his belief in progress; but he envisaged progress in a different manner. Instead of being concerned simply with the progress of man towards the development of one type, the type of the free-thinker who becomes, as it were, more and more separated from the Transcendent and from Nature, he tried to see history as a whole. Each nation has its own history and line of development, prefigured in its natural endowments and in its relations to its natural environment. At the same time the different lines of development form one pattern, one great harmony; and the whole process of evolution is the manifestation or working-out of divine providence.

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[1] This idea was borrowed by Bruno from Nicholas of Cusa. See vol. III, ch. XV and ch. XVI, section 6.

These thinkers had, of course, some connections with the Enlightenment. And in Herder's idea of history we can find an application of some of Leibniz's ideas, and also the influence of Montesquieu. At the same time the spirit of a man like Herder is markedly different from that of a man like Voltaire in France or of Reimarus in Germany. Indeed, in their reaction against the narrow rationalism of the eighteenth century and in their feeling for the unity of Nature and history these thinkers may be considered as representatives of a period of transition between the philosophy of the Enlightenment and the speculative idealism of the nineteenth century.

6. In the third volume of this *History*[1] an account was given of the political theories of men such as Machiavelli, Hooker, Bodin and Grotius. The first outstanding political philosophy of the period covered in the present volume is that of Thomas Hobbes. His chief political work, *Leviathan*, which was published in 1651, appears to be, when regarded superficially, a resolute defence of absolute monarchy. And it is quite true that Hobbes, who had a horror of anarchy and of civil war, emphasizes centralized power and the indivisibility of sovereignty. But his theory has fundamentally nothing to do with the notion of the divine right of kings or with the principle of legitimacy, and it could be used to support any strong *de facto* government, whether a monarchy or not. This was seen at the time by those who thought, though wrongly, that Hobbes had written the *Leviathan* to flatter Cromwell.

Hobbes begins with an extreme statement of individualism. In the so-called 'state of nature', the state which precedes, logically at least, the formation of political society, each individual strives after his self-preservation and the acquisition of power for the better attainment of this end; and there is no law in existence with reference to which his actions can be called unjust. This is the state of the war of every man against every man. It is a state of atomic individualism. Whether it existed as a historical reality or not is a secondary question: the main point is that if we think away political society and all that follows from its institution, we are left with a multiplicity of human beings, each of which seeks his own pleasure and self-preservation.

At the same time reason makes men aware of the fact that self-preservation can best be secured if they unite and substitute organized co-operation for the anarchy of the state of nature in which no man can feel safe from his fellows but in which life is attended by constant fear. Hobbes depicts men, therefore, as making a social covenant by which each man agrees to hand over to a sovereign his right of governing himself provided that every other member of the prospective society does the same. This covenant is obviously a fiction, a philosophical and rationalistic justification of society. But the point is that the constitution of political society and the erection of the sovereign take place together, by one act. It follows that if the sovereign loses his power, the society is dissolved. And this is precisely what happened, as Hobbes thought, during the civil war. The cementing bond of society is the sovereign. Hence if enlightened self-interest dictates the formation of political society, it also dictates the concentration of power in the hands of the sovereign. Any division of sovereignty was abhorrent to Hobbes, as tending towards social dissolution. He was not interested in monarchic absolutism as such; he was concerned with the cohesion of society. And if one presupposes an egoistic and individualistic interpretation of man, it follows that concentration of power in the hands of the sovereign is required to overcome the centrifugal forces which are always at work.

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[1] Ch. XX.

Perhaps the most significant feature of Hobbes's political theory is its naturalism. He does, indeed, speak of laws of nature or natural law, but he has not got in mind the mediaeval metaphysically based concept of the moral natural law. He means the laws of self-preservation and power. Moral distinctions come into being with the formation of the State, the establishment of rights and the institution of positive law. True, Hobbes does pay at any rate some lip-service to the idea of divine law; but his thoroughgoing Erastianism shows that to all intents and purposes the will of the sovereign, expressed in law, is the norm of morality. At the same time Hobbes is not concerned to expound a totalitarian doctrine in so far as this means that all life, including, for instance, economic life, should be actively directed and controlled by the State. His view is rather that the institution of the State and the concentration of indivisible sovereignty renders it possible for men to pursue their several ends in security and in a well-ordered manner. And though he speaks of the commonwealth as the mortal god, to whom, after the immortal God, we owe reverence, it is obvious that the State is for him a creation of enlightened self-interest. And if the sovereign loses his power to govern and can no longer protect his subjects, that is the end of his title to rule.

Locke also starts from an individualistic position and makes society depend on a compact or agreement. But his individualism is different from that of Hobbes. The state of nature is not by essence a state of war between each man and his fellows. And in the state of nature there are natural rights and duties which are antecedent to the State. Chief among these rights is the right of private property. Men form political society for the more secure enjoyment and regulation of these rights. As for government, this is instituted by society as a necessary device to preserve peace, defend society and protect rights and liberties; but its function is, or should be, confined to this preservation of rights and liberty. And one of the most effective checks to unbridled despotism is the division of powers, so that the legislative and executive powers are not vested simply in the hands of one man.

With Locke, then, as with Hobbes, the State is the creation of enlightened self-interest, though the former stands closer to the mediaeval philosophers inasmuch as he allows that man is by nature inclined to social life and even impelled to it. The general spirit, however, of Locke's theory is different from that of Hobbes. Behind the latter we can see the fear of civil war and anarchy; behind the former we can see a concern with the preservation and promotion of liberty. The stress which Locke lays on the separation between the legislative and executive powers reflects to some extent the struggle between parliament and monarch. The emphasis placed on the right to property is often said to reflect the outlook of the Whig landowners, the class to which Locke's patrons belonged. And there is some truth in this interpretation, though it should not be exaggerated. Locke certainly did not envisage a monopoly of power in the hands of the landowners. According to the philosopher's statement, he wrote to justify, or hoped that his political treatise would justify, the Revolution of 1688. And it was his liberal outlook, with his defence of natural rights, and, within limits, of the principle of toleration, which exercised most influence on the eighteenth century, particularly in America. The common-sense atmosphere of his philosophy and its appearance (sometimes deceptive) of simplicity doubtless helped to extend its influence.

Both Hobbes and Locke founded the State on a covenant or compact or contract. Hume, however, pointed out the absence of historical support for this theory. He also observed that if government is justified by consent of the governed, as Locke thought, it would be extremely difficult to justify the Revolution of 1688 and the title of William of Orange to rule in England. For the majority of the people were simply not asked for their opinions. In fact, it would be very difficult to justify any extant government. Political obligation cannot be derived from expressed consent; for we acknowledge this obligation even when there is no evidence at all of any compact or agreement. It is founded rather on a sense of self-interest. Through experience men come to feel what is for their interest and they act in certain ways without making any explicit agreements to do so. Political society and civic obedience can be justified on purely utilitarian grounds without the need of having recourse either to philosophical fictions like that of the social compact or to eternal and self-evident truths. If we wish to find a justification for political society and political obligation, we can find it in their utility, which is first known by a kind of feeling or sense of interest.

When we turn to Rousseau we find again the idea of a social contract. Political society rests ultimately upon a voluntary agreement whereby men agree to renounce the freedom of the state of nature for their own advantage and to attain freedom to live according to law. In the state of nature each individual possesses complete independence and sovereignty over himself; and when they join together to form society, the sovereignty which originally belonged to them as separate individuals belongs to them corporately. And this sovereignty is inalienable. The executive appointed by the people is simply the servant or practical instrument of the people.

This doctrine of popular sovereignty represents the democratic side of Rousseau's political theory. He himself came from Geneva, and he admired the vigorous and independent political life of the Swiss canton, which he contrasted with the sophisticated and artificial atmosphere of French civilization and with the monarchic constitution and oppressive ways of the *ancien régime*. Indeed, Rousseau's ideas about active popular government would be quite impracticable in anything but a Greek city-state or a small Swiss canton. At the same time his democratic ideas were influential in the movement which found expression in the French Revolution.

But though Rousseau's doctrine of the social contract falls into the general pattern of the political theory of the Enlightenment, he added a new feature to political philosophy which was of considerable importance. Like Hobbes and Locke before him, he envisaged individuals as agreeing together to form society. But once the social contract has taken place, a new body or organism comes into being which possesses a common life and a common will. This common or general will always tends to the preservation and welfare of the whole, and it is the rule or norm of law and of justice and injustice. This infallible general will is not the same thing as 'the will of all'. If the citizens meet together and vote, their individual wills are expressed in their votes, and if the votes are unanimous, we have the will of all. But individuals may have an incorrect notion of what is for the public advantage, whereas the general will is never mistaken. In other words, the community always wills what is for its good, but it may be deceived in its idea what is actually for its good.

The general will thus becomes, when considered in itself, something inarticulate: it needs interpretation, articulate expression. There can be little doubt that Rousseau himself thought of it as finding expression, in practice, in the expressed will of the majority. And if one has in mind a small Swiss canton in which it is possible for all the citizens to vote on important issues, either as individuals or as members of associations, it is natural to think in this way. But in a large State such direct reference to the people is impracticable, except perhaps on rare occasions by means of a referendum. And in such a State the tendency will be for a few men, or for one man, to claim to embody in their wills, or in his will, the general will which is immanent in the people. Thus we find Robespierre saying of the Jacobins that 'our will is the general will', while Napoleon seems to have regarded himself, on occasion at least, as the organ and embodiment of the Revolution.

We are thus faced with the odd situation of Rousseau, the enthusiastic democrat, starting with individualism, the freedom of the individual in the state of nature, and ending with a theory of the organic State in which the quasi-mystical general will is embodied either in the will of the majority or in the will of one or more leaders. We then have either the despotism of the majority or the despotism of the leader or group of leaders. To say this is not to say that Rousseau fully understood the trend of his own theory. But he originated a paradoxical idea of liberty. To be free is to act according to one's will and according to the law of which one is oneself the author. But the individual whose private will is at variance with the general will does not actually will what he 'really' wills. In being compelled, therefore, to submit to the expression of the general will which represents his own 'real' will, he is being forced to be free. The freedom of man in society can thus come to mean something very different from what is meant by freedom in the state of nature. And though Rousseau's political theory is akin to Locke's so far as the bare idea of a social contract is concerned, it looks forward at the same time to the philosophy of Hegel for whom the obedient citizen is truly free, since he obeys a law which is the expression of the universal, of the essential nature of the human spirit. It also looks forward to much later political developments which would have been abhorrent to Rousseau, as indeed to Hegel, but which could find in Rousseau's theory a theoretical justification.

7. It is not infrequently said that in the period of the Enlightenment a historical outlook was lacking. What is meant by this statement? Obviously, the statement does not mean that historiography was not practised in the eighteenth century. At least, if this were the meaning of the statement, the statement would be false. To see this, we have only to think, for example, of Hume's *History of England*, of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* by Edward Gibbon (1737–94) and of the historical writings of Voltaire and Montesquieu. Nor should the statement be taken to mean that the eighteenth century was marked by no improvements in the writing of history. For example, there was a needed reaction against preoccupation with military, dynastic and diplomatic historiography. Emphasis was laid on cultural and intellectual factors, and attention was paid to the life of the people and to men's habits and customs. This emphasis is clear, for instance, in Voltaire's *Essai sur les mœurs*. Again, Montesquieu emphasized the influence of material conditions, such as climate, on the development of a people or nation and on its customs and laws.

At the same time the historiography of the eighteenth century suffered from serious defects. In the first place historians were, generally speaking, insufficiently critical of their sources and disinclined to carry out the work of historical research and of painstaking evaluation of evidence and documents which is required for objective writing. True, one could hardly expect a man of the world who dabbled in many branches of philosophy and letters to give himself to research of this kind. But the comparative absence of the latter constituted a defect none the less.

In the second place the eighteenth-century historians were too much inclined to use history as a means of proving a thesis and as a source of moral lessons. Gibbon was concerned to show that the victory of Christianity had been a victory of barbarism and bigotry over enlightened civilization. Writers such as Voltaire concentrated in a rather complacent fashion on the victory of rationalism over what they regarded as the dead weight of tradition and obscurantism. They assumed not only the theory of progress but also the idea that progress consists in the advance of rationalism, free-thinking and science. According to Bolingbroke in his *Letters on the Study and Use of History* (1752), history is philosophy teaching us by examples how we ought to conduct ourselves in the situations of public and private life. And when the eighteenth-century historians emphasized the moral lessons of history, they were thinking, of course, of a morality set free from theological presuppositions, and connections. They were all opposed to the theological interpretation of history which had been given by Bossuet (1627–1704) in his *Discours sur l'histoire universelle*. But it does not seem to have occurred to them that in interpreting history in function of the Enlightenment, of the Age of Reason, they were showing an analogous, if different, bias. It would be a great mistake to imagine that because the writers of the Enlightenment were free-thinkers and rationalists, they were exempt from bias and from the tendency to subordinate historiography to moralistic and preconceived purposes. Ranke's call for objectivity in the first half of the nineteenth century applies just as much to the rationalist as to the theologically-minded historians. If we attribute bias to Bossuet, we cannot declare Gibbon exempt. The eighteenth-century historians were concerned not so much to understand the mentality and outlook of the men of past ages as to use what they knew, or thought they knew, of past eras to prove a thesis or to derive moral lessons or conclusions unfavourable to religion, at least to supernatural religion. In particular, the spirit of the Enlightenment was so sharply opposed to that of the Middle Ages that the historians of the former period not only failed to understand the mentality of the Middle Ages but also made no real effort to do so. For them the use of the Middle Ages was to serve as a foil to the Age of Reason. And this attitude is one of the reasons why the Enlightenment is said to be lacking in an historical spirit. As we have seen, this accusation does not mean, or at least should not be taken to mean, that no interesting developments in historiography took place. It indicates rather a lack of imaginative insight and a tendency to interpret past history according to the standards of the Age of Reason. Gibbon, for example, is the opposite of Bossuet so far as the content of his thesis is concerned; but the secularist and rationalist thesis was no less a thesis than the bishop's preconceived theological scheme.

If one admits, as one must, that historiography is more than mere chronicling and that it involves selection and interpretation, it becomes very difficult to draw a hard-and-fast line between historiography and philosophy of history. However, when we find historians interpreting history as the working-out of some kind of general plan or reducing historical development to the operation of certain universal laws, it is reasonable to begin speaking of philosophy of history. A man who endeavours to write, for instance, the objective history of a particular region would not normally, I think, be classed as a philosopher of history. We are not accustomed to speak of Hume or of Justus Möser (author of an *Osnabrückische Geschichte*, 1768) as philosophers of history. But when a man treats of universal history and either gives a finalistic interpretation of historical development or concerns himself with universally-operative laws, it is not improper to speak of him as a philosopher of history. Bossuet in the seventeenth century would count as one. And in the eighteenth century there are a number of notable examples.

The most eminent of these is doubtless John-Baptist Vico (1668–1744). Vico was a Christian, and he did not belong to the camp of those who rejected the theological interpretation of history represented by St. Augustine and Bossuet. At the same time in his work *Principi di una scienza nuova d'intorno alla commune natura delle nazioni* (*Principles of a New Science Concerning the Common Nature of Nations*) he left aside purely theological considerations to examine the natural laws governing historical development. There are two points which we can notice here about this New Science. In the first place Vico did not think in terms of a lineal progress or development of humanity as a whole, but in terms of a series of cyclic developments. That is to say, the laws which govern the movement of history are exemplified in the rise, progress, decline and fall of each particular people or nation. In the second place Vico characterized each successive phase in a cycle by its system of law. In the theocratic phase law is regarded as having divine origins and sanctions. This is the age of the gods. In the aristocratic phase law is in the hands of a few families (for example, in the hands of the patrician families in the Roman Republic). This is the age of heroes. In the phase of human government, the age of men, we have a rationalized system of law, in which there are equal rights for all citizens. In this scheme we can see an adumbration of Comte's three stages. But Vico was not a positivist philosopher; and further, as we have already seen, he retained the Greek idea of historical cycles, which was different from the nineteenth-century idea of human progress.

Montesquieu also concerned himself with law. In his *Esprit des lois* (1748) he set himself to examine the different systems of positive law. He tried to show that each is a system of laws which are linked by mutual relations, so that any given law involves a particular set of other laws and excludes another set. But why does one nation possess this system and another nation that system? By way of answer Montesquieu emphasized the part played by the form of government; but he also emphasized the influence of natural factors such as climate and geographical conditions as well as of acquired factors such as commercial relations and religious beliefs. Each people or nation will have its own constitution and system of law; but the practical problem is fundamentally the same for all, namely, that of developing the system of law which, given the relevant natural and historical conditions, will favour the greatest amount of liberty. It is at this point that the influence of the British constitution makes its mark on Montesquieu's thought. Liberty, he thought, is best assured by a separation of the legislative, executive and judicial powers.

With Condorcet we find a different conception of progress from that of Vico. As has already been remarked, in his *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* (1794) he envisages the indefinite progress of the human race. Before the sixteenth century we can distinguish a number of epochs, and we can find movements of retrogression, in particular the Middle Ages. But the Renaissance ushered in the beginning of a new scientific and moral culture to the development of which we can set no limits. Men's minds can, however, be limited by prejudice and narrow ideas, such as those fostered by religious dogma. Hence follows the importance of education, especially of scientific education.

In Germany, Lessing too proposed an optimistic theory of historical progress. In his work *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlects* (1780) he depicted history as the progressive education of the human race. There are occasional retrogressions and stoppages on the path of progress, but even these enter into the general scheme and serve its realization through the centuries. As for religion, history is, indeed, the education of the human race by God. But there is no final and absolute form of religious belief. Rather is each religion a stage in the progressive 'revelation' of God.

In his work on language (*Ueber den Ursprung der Sprache*, 1772) Herder dealt with the natural origin of language and attacked the view that speech was originally communicated by God to man. In regard to religion he emphasized its natural character. It is closely allied with poetry and myth and is due originally to man's desire to explain phenomena. In developed religion, especially in Christianity, we see the growth and strength of the moral element; and this is why Christianity responds to the human being's moral needs and yearnings. In other words, Herder reacted strongly against the rationalistic criticism of and opposition to religion, especially Christianity, which was characteristic of the eighteenth century. He disliked the separation of the analytic and critical reason from man's other powers, and he showed a sense for human nature as a whole. In his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (*Ideas for the Philosophy of the History of Mankind*, 1784–91) he described history as a purely natural history of human powers, actions and propensities, modified by time and place. And he tried to trace man's development in connection with the character of his physical environment, proposing a theory of the origin of human culture. Theologically speaking, the histories of the different nations form a harmonious whole, the working out of divine providence.

It was only natural that in a period when thought centred round man himself, interest should have grown in the historical development of human culture. And in the eighteenth century we can see an attempt, or rather a series of attempts, to understand history by discovering some alternative principles of explanation to the theological principles of St. Augustine and Bossuet. But even those who believe that the construction of a philosophy of history is a profitable undertaking must admit that the philosophical historians of the eighteenth century were over-hasty in the development of their syntheses. Vico, for instance, based his cyclic interpretation of history largely on a consideration of Roman history. And none of them possessed a sufficiently wide and accurate factual knowledge to warrant the construction of a philosophy of history, even granting that such a thing is a legitimate enterprise. Indeed, some of the men of the French Enlightenment were inclined to despise and belittle the painstaking work of a Muratori (1672–1750), who prepared a great collection of sources for Italian history. At the same time we can see the growth of a broad view of the development of human culture, considered in relation to a variety of factors from the influence of climate to the influence of religion. This is especially observable in the case of Herder, who passes beyond the confines of the Enlightenment when this term is understood in the narrow sense, particularly, that is, with reference to French rationalism.

8. Mention has already been made of a number of philosophers who died in the early years of the nineteenth century. But among those who wrote in the closing decades of the eighteenth century by far the greatest name is that of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). Whatever one may think of his philosophy, nobody would deny his outstanding historical importance. Indeed, in certain respects his thought marks a crisis in European philosophy, so that we can speak of the pre-Kantian and the post-Kantian eras in modern philosophy. If Descartes and Locke can be regarded as the dominating figures in the thought of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, that of the nineteenth century is dominated by Kant. To speak in this way is, indeed, to be guilty of oversimplification. To imagine that all the philosophers of the nineteenth century were Kantians would be as erroneous as to suppose that the philosophers of the eighteenth century were all either Cartesians or followers of Locke. Yet just as Descartes' influence on the development of continental rationalism and Locke's influence on the development of British empiricism are both beyond doubt, even though Spinoza and Leibniz on the Continent and Berkeley and Hume in England were all original thinkers, so is Kant's influence on nineteenth-century thought undeniable, even though Hegel, for example, was a great thinker of marked originality who cannot be classed as a 'Kantian'. Indeed, Kant's attitude towards speculative metaphysics has exercised a powerful influence ever since his time. And many people today think that he successfully exposed its pretensions, even though they may not be prepared to accept much of his

positive thought. It is true that to over-emphasize what I may call the negative or destructive influence of Kant is to give a one-sided view of his philosophy. But this does not alter the fact that in the eyes of many people he appears as the great debunker of speculative metaphysics.

Kant's intellectual life falls into two periods, the pre-critical and the critical periods. In the first he was under the influence of the Leibnizian-Wolffian tradition; in the second he worked out his own original point of view. His first great work, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, appeared in 1781. Kant was then fifty-seven years old; but he had already been engaged for some ten years or more in the elaboration of his own philosophy, and this is why he was able to publish in quick succession the works which have made his name famous. In 1783 appeared the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysic*, in 1785 the *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*, in 1788 the *Critique of Practical Reason*, in 1790 the *Critique of Judgment*, in 1793 *Religion within the Limits of Bare Reason*. The papers found in his study after his death and published posthumously show that he was working until the end on the reconsideration, reconstruction or completion of certain parts of his philosophical system.

It would be inappropriate to expound the philosophy of Kant in an introductory chapter. But something must be said about the problems which presented themselves to him and about his general line of thought.

Among Kant's works two are concerned with moral philosophy and one with religion. This fact is significant. For if we take a broad view of the matter, we can say that Kant's fundamental problem was not dissimilar to that of Descartes. He declared that there were for him two main objects of wonder and admiration, 'the starry heavens above and the moral law within'. On the one hand he was faced by the scientific conception of the world, with the physical universe of Copernicus, Kepler and Newton, as subject to mechanical causality and determined in its motions. On the other hand he was faced by the rational creature who can understand the physical world, set over against it, so to speak, as subject to object, who is conscious of moral obligation and of freedom, and who sees in the world the expression of rational purpose. How can these two aspects of reality be reconciled? How can we harmonize the physical world, the sphere of determinism, with the moral order, the sphere of freedom? It is not simply a matter of juxtaposing the two worlds, as though they were completely separate and independent. For they meet in man. Man is both an item in Nature, in the physical system, and a moral and free agent. The question is, therefore, how can the two points of view, the scientific and the moral, be harmonized without denying either of them. This, it seems to me, is Kant's fundamental problem. And it is as well to realize this from the outset. Otherwise the emphasis which is very naturally placed on the analytical and critical aspects of his thought may almost totally obscure the profound speculative motivation of his philosophy.

But though Kant's general problem was not unlike that of Descartes, a great deal of water had flowed under the bridge since the latter's time; and when we come to Kant's particular problems the change becomes evident. On the one hand he had before him the metaphysical systems of the great continental rationalists. Descartes had tried to put metaphysical philosophy on a scientific basis; but the emergence of conflicting systems and the failure to attain assured conclusions cast doubt on the validity of the aim of traditional metaphysics, the aim of extending our knowledge of reality, especially of reality as transcending the data of sense-experience. On the other hand Kant was faced by British empiricism, culminating in the philosophy of Hume. But pure empiricism, it seemed to him, was quite unable to justify or account for the success of Newtonian physics and the evident fact that it increased man's knowledge of the world. On Hume's principles an informative statement about the world would be no more than a statement of what has actually been experienced. For example, we have always found, as far as our experience goes, that on the occurrence of event *A* event *B* regularly follows. But the empiricism of Hume would give us no objective justification for the universal statement that whenever *A* occurs *B* must follow. In other words, pure empiricism cannot account for universal and necessary informative judgments (which Kant called synthetic *a priori* judgments). Yet the Newtonian physics presupposes the validity of such judgments. Both of the main lines of modern philosophy, therefore, seem to be defective. The rationalist metaphysics does not appear to provide any certain knowledge about the world. And this prompts us to ask whether metaphysical knowledge is, indeed, possible. Pure empiricism, however, is unable to justify a branch of study, namely, physical science, which certainly does increase our knowledge of the world. And this prompts us to ask what is missing in pure empiricism and how the universal, necessary and informative judgments of science are possible. How can we justify the assurance with which we make these judgments?

The problem or problems can be expressed in this way. On the one hand Kant saw that the metaphysicians[1] tended to confuse logical relations with causal relations and to imagine that one could produce by *a priori* reasoning a system which would give us true and certain information about reality. But it did not seem to him at all evident that, even if we avoid this confusion, we can obtain metaphysical knowledge, say about God, by employing the principle of causality. Hence we can profitably ask whether metaphysics is possible and, if so, in what sense it is possible. On the other hand, while agreeing with the empiricists that all our knowledge begins in some sense with experience, Kant saw that the Newtonian physics could not be justified on purely empiricist lines. For the Newtonian physics presupposed, in his opinion, the uniformity of Nature. And it was precisely the belief in the uniformity of Nature of which Hume could give no adequate theoretical justification, even though he tried to give a psychological account of the origin of the belief. The question arises, therefore, what is the theoretical justification of our belief if we once assume with the empiricists that all our knowledge begins with experience?

In answering this last question Kant proposes an original hypothesis. Even if all our knowledge begins with experience, it does not necessarily follow that it all arises from experience. For it may be the case (and Kant thought that it is in fact the case) that our experience comprises two elements, impressions which are given and the *a priori* forms and elements by which these impressions are synthesized. Kant does not mean to suggest that we have innate ideas, nor that the *a priori* elements in cognition are objects of knowledge antecedently to experience. What he is suggesting is that man, the experiencing and knowing subject, is so constituted that he necessarily (because he is what he is) synthesizes the ultimately given data or impressions in certain ways. In other words, the subject, man, is not simply the passive recipient of impressions: he actively (and unconsciously) synthesizes the raw data, so to speak, imposing on them the *a priori* forms and categories by which the world of our experience is built up. The world of experience, the phenomenal world or reality as it appears to us, is not simply our construction, a dream as it were; nor is it simply something given; it is the result of an application of *a priori* forms and categories to what is given.

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[1] This applies to the pre-Kantian continental rationalists, not to a mediaeval philosopher such as Aquinas. Kant's knowledge of mediaeval philosophy, however, was extremely meagre.

What is the advantage of such an hypothesis? It can be illustrated in this way. Appearances are the same both for the man who accepts the Copernican hypothesis that the earth revolves round the sun and for the man who does not accept it or knows nothing of it. As far as appearances go, both men see the sun rising in the east and setting in the west. But the Copernican hypothesis accounts for facts which cannot be accounted for on the geocentric hypothesis. Similarly, the world appears in the same way to the man who recognizes no *a priori* element in knowledge as it appears to the man who does recognize such an element. But on the hypothesis that there is such an element we can explain what pure empiricism cannot explain. If we assume, for example, that by the very fact that our minds are what they are we synthesize data according to the causal relation, Nature will always appear to us as governed by causal laws. In other words, we are assured of the uniformity of Nature. Nature means Nature as appearing; it cannot mean anything else. And given the subjective constants in human cognition, there must be corresponding constants in phenomenal reality. If, for instance, we necessarily apply *a priori* forms of space and time to raw sense-data (of which we are not directly conscious), Nature must always appear to us as spatio-temporal.

I do not propose to enter into any detailed account of Kant's *a priori* conditions of experience. The appropriate place to do this will be in the relevant chapters in the sixth volume. But there is one important point which must be noted because it bears directly on Kant's problem about the possibility of metaphysics.

The function, Kant asserts, of the *a priori* conditions of experience is to synthesize the manifold of sense-impressions. And what we know with their aid is phenomenal reality. We cannot, therefore, legitimately use a subjective category of the understanding to transcend experience. We cannot, for instance, legitimately employ the concept of causality to transcend phenomena by using a causal argument to prove the existence of God. Nor can we ever know metaphenomenal reality, if we are talking about certain theoretical knowledge. Yet this is precisely what the metaphysicians have attempted to do. They have tried to extend our theoretical or scientific knowledge to reality as it is in itself; and they have used categories having validity only within the phenomenal world to transcend phenomena. Such attempts were foredoomed to failure. And Kant tries to show that metaphysical arguments of the traditional type lead to insoluble antinomies. It is no matter for wonder, therefore, if metaphysics makes no progress comparable to that of physical science.

The only 'scientific' metaphysics which there can be is the metaphysics of knowledge, the analysis of the *a priori* elements in human experience. And the greater part of Kant's work consists in an attempt to perform this task of analysis. In *The Critique of Pure Reason* he attempts to analyse the *a priori* elements which govern the formation of our synthetic *a priori* judgments. In the *Critique of Practical Reason* he investigates the *a priori* element in the moral judgment. In the *Critique of Judgment* he sets out to analyse the *a priori* elements governing our aesthetic and teleological judgments.

But though Kant ruled out what he regarded as classical metaphysics, he was far from showing indifference towards the principal themes treated by the metaphysicians. These themes were for him freedom, immortality and God. And he endeavoured to reinstate on a different basis what he had excluded from the province of theoretical and scientific knowledge.

Kant starts from the fact of the awareness or consciousness of moral obligation. And he tries to show that moral obligation presupposes freedom. If I ought, I can. Further, the moral law commands perfect conformity with itself, perfect virtue. But this is an ideal for the attainment of which, Kant assumes, endless duration is required. Hence immortality, in the sense of never-ending progress towards the ideal, is a 'postulate' of the moral law. Again, though morality does not mean acting with a view to one's happiness, morality should produce happiness. But the proportioning of happiness to virtue requires the idea of a Being who can and will effect the connection. The idea of God is thus a 'postulate' of the moral law. We cannot prove, in the way that some metaphysicians sought to prove, that man is free, that his soul is immortal and that there exists a transcendent God. But we are conscious of moral obligation; and freedom, immortality and God are 'postulates' of the moral law. It is a matter of practical faith, that is to say, of a faith involved in committing oneself to moral activity.

This doctrine of 'postulates' is sometimes interpreted either as a cheap pragmatism or as a conventional concession to the prejudices of the orthodox. But I think that Kant himself took the matter much more seriously. He regarded man as a kind of mixed being. As part of the natural order, he is subject to mechanical causality like any other natural object. But he is also a moral being who is conscious of obligation. And to recognize obligation is to recognize that the moral law has a claim upon one which one is free to fulfil or reject.[1] Moreover, to recognize a moral order is to recognize implicitly that moral activity is not doomed to frustration and that ultimately human existence 'makes sense'. But it cannot make sense without immortality and God. We cannot prove freedom, immortality and God's existence scientifically. For these ideas have no place in science. Nor can we prove them by the arguments of traditional metaphysics. For these arguments are invalid. But if a man recognizes moral obligation at all, he is implicitly asserting a moral order which in turn implies the immortality of the soul and the existence of God. It is not a case of strict logical implication, so that we can produce a series of watertight proofs. Rather is it a case of discovering and affirming by faith that view of reality which alone gives full meaning and value to the consciousness of moral obligation mediated by conscience.

Kant leaves us, therefore, with what one may call perhaps a bifurcated reality. On the one hand there is the world of Newtonian science, a world governed by necessary causal laws. This is the phenomenal world, not in the sense that it is mere illusion, but in the sense that it presupposes the operation of those subjective conditions of experience which determine the ways in which things appear to us. On the other hand there is the supersensuous world of the free human spirit and of God. According to Kant, we cannot give any strict theoretical proof that there is such a supersensuous world. At the same time we have no adequate reason for asserting that the material world, governed by mechanical causality, is the only world. And if our interpretation of the world as a mechanical system depends on the operation of subjective conditions of experience, of sense-experience, that is to say, we have even less reason for making this assertion than we should have in any case. Moreover, the moral life, especially the consciousness of obligation, opens up a sphere of reality which the moral man affirms by faith as a postulate or demand of the moral law.

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[1] The moral law, for Kant, is promulgated by the practical reason. In a sense which will be explained in the appropriate place man gives the law to himself. But obligation is without meaning except in relation to a being which is free to obey or disobey the law.

This is not the place to subject Kant's philosophy to critical discussion. I wish instead to remark that what I have called Kant's 'bifurcation' represents a dilemma of the modern mind. We have seen that the new scientific conception of the world threatened to monopolize man's view of reality as a whole. Descartes in the seventeenth century endeavoured to combine the affirmation of spiritual reality with an acceptance of the world of mechanical causality. But he believed that he could show conclusively that, for example, there exists an infinite and transcendent God. Kant, in the closing decades of the eighteenth century, refused to allow that such truths are capable of being proved in the ways in which Descartes and Leibniz had thought that they could be proved. At the same time he felt strongly that the world of Newtonian physics was not coterminous with reality. He therefore relegated the affirmation of supersensuous reality to the sphere of 'faith', trying to justify this by reference to the moral consciousness. Now, there are people today who regard science as the only means of extending our factual *knowledge*, though at the same time they feel that the world as presented by science is not the only reality and that it in some way points beyond itself. For them the system of Kant possesses a certain contemporaneity, even if, as developed in his works, it cannot stand up to criticism. There is, that is to say, some similarity between their situation and that in which Kant found himself. I say 'some similarity' because the setting of the problem has changed very much since the time of Kant. On the one hand there have been changes in scientific theory. On the other hand philosophy has developed in a variety of ways. Yet it is arguable that the basic situation remains the same.

To end the present chapter with a consideration of Kant's philosophy is, I think, appropriate. Brought up in a diluted version of continental rationalism, he was awoken from his dogmatic slumbers, as he put it, by David Hume. At the same time, though he rejected the claims of the continental metaphysicians to increase our knowledge of reality, he was also convinced of the insufficiency of pure empiricism. We can say, therefore, that in his thought the influence of continental rationalism and British empiricism combined to give rise to a new and original system. It must be added, however, that Kant put a full stop neither to metaphysics nor to empiricism. Yet he made a difference to both. Metaphysics in the nineteenth century was not the same as it had been in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. And though British empiricism in the nineteenth century was more or less unaffected by Kant, the neo-empiricism of the twentieth century has consciously tried to deal metaphysics a far more decisive blow than was delivered by Kant who, when all is said and done, was himself something of a metaphysician.

CHAPTER II

DESCARTES (1)

Life and works[1]*—Descartes' aim—His idea of method—The theory of innate ideas—Methodic doubt.*

1. René Descartes was born on March 31st, 1596, in Touraine, being the third child of a councillor of the parliament of Brittany. In 1604 his father sent him to the college of La Flèche which had been founded by Henry IV and was directed by the Fathers of the Society of Jesus. Descartes remained at the college until 1612, the last few years being given to the study of logic, philosophy and mathematics. He tells us[2] of his extreme desire to acquire knowledge, and it is clear that he was an ardent student and a gifted pupil. 'I did not feel that I was esteemed inferior to my fellow-students, although there were amongst them some destined to fill the places of our masters.'[3] When we remember that Descartes later subjected traditional learning to strong adverse criticism and that even as a schoolboy he became so dissatisfied with a great part of what he had been taught (mathematics excepted) that on leaving the college he quitted for a time the pursuit of learning, we may be tempted to draw the conclusion that he felt resentment towards his masters and contempt for their system of education. But this was far from being the case. He spoke of the Jesuits of La Flèche with affection and respect, and he regarded their system of education as greatly superior to that provided in most other pedagogical institutions. It is clear from his writings that he considered that he had been given the best education available within the framework of tradition. Yet on looking back he came to the conclusion that the traditional learning, in some of its branches at least, was not based on any solid foundation. Thus he remarks sarcastically that 'philosophy teaches us to speak with an appearance of truth about all things and causes us to be

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[1] In the references to the writings of Descartes the following abbreviations have been used. *D.M.* stands for the *Discourse on Method*, *R.D.* for the *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, *M.* for the *Meditations*, *P.P.* for the *Principles of Philosophy*, *S.T.* for the *Search after Truth*, *P.S.* for the *Passions of the Soul*, *O.* and *R.O.* for *Objections* and *Replies to Objections* respectively. The letters *A.T.* refer to the edition of the works of Descartes by Charles Adam and Paul Tannery; Paris, 13 vols., 1897–1913.

[2] *D.M.*, 1; *A.T.*, VI, 3.

[3] *D.M.*, 1; *A.T.*, VI, 5.

admired by the less learned', and that though it has been cultivated for centuries by the best minds 'no single thing is to be found in it which is not matter of dispute and which in consequence is not dubious'.[1] Mathematics, indeed, delighted him because of its certainty and clarity, 'but I did not yet understand its true use'.[2]

After leaving La Flèche, Descartes amused himself for a short while, but he soon resolved to study and to learn from the book of the world, as he put it, seeking a knowledge which would be useful for life. He accordingly attached himself to the army of Prince Maurice of Nassau. This may appear to have been a somewhat odd move to make. But Descartes did not accept pay as a soldier, and he combined his new profession with mathematical studies. He wrote a number of papers and notes, including a treatise on music, the *Compendium musicae,* which was published after his death.

In 1619 Descartes left the service of Maurice of Nassau and went to Germany, where he witnessed the coronation of the Emperor Ferdinand at Frankfurt. Joining the army of Maximilian of Bavaria, he was stationed at Neuberg on the Danube; and it was at this time that in secluded reflection he began to lay the foundations of his philosophy. On November 10th, 1619, he had three consecutive dreams which convinced him that his mission was to seek truth by reason, and he made a vow to make a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady at Loreto in Italy. Further military service in Bohemia and Hungary and travel in Silesia, northern Germany and the Netherlands, followed by a visit to his father at Rennes, prevented him from fulfilling this vow for the time being. But in 1623 he made his way to Italy and visited Loreto before proceeding to Rome.

For a few years Descartes resided at Paris, where he enjoyed the friendship of men like Mersenne, a fellow-pupil of La Flèche, and the encouragement of Cardinal de Bérulle. But he found life at Paris too distracting, and in 1628 he retired to Holland, where he remained until 1649, apart from visits to France in 1644, 1647 and 1648.

The publication of his *Traité du monde* was suspended because of the condemnation of Galileo, and the work was not published until 1677. But in 1637 Descartes published in French his *Discourse on the Method of rightly conducting the Reason and seeking*

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[1] *D.M.*, 1; *A.T.*, vi, 6 and 8.

[2] *D.M.*, 1; *A.T.*, vi, 7.

for Truth in the Sciences, together with essays on meteors, dioptrics and geometry. The *Rules for the Direction of the Mind* had apparently been written in 1628, though it was published posthumously. In 1641 appeared the *Meditations on First Philosophy* in a Latin version. This was accompanied by six sets of objections or criticisms submitted by various theologians and philosophers and by Descartes' answers to these objections. The first set consists of objections by Caterus, a Dutch theologian, the second of criticisms by a group of theologians and philosophers, the third, fourth and fifth of objections by Hobbes, Arnauld and Gassendi respectively, and the sixth of criticisms by a second group of theologians and philosophers. In 1642 another edition of the *Meditations* was published which contained in addition a seventh set of objections by the Jesuit Bourdin, together with Descartes' replies and his letter to Father Dinet, also a Jesuit, who had been one of the philosopher's instructors at La Flèche and for whom he had a warm regard. A French translation of the *Meditations* was published in 1647 and a second French edition, containing also the seven sets of objections, in 1661. The French translation had been made by the Duc de Luynes, not by Descartes, but the first edition of it had been seen and partly revised by the philosopher.

The *Principles of Philosophy* was published in Latin in 1644. It was translated into French by the Abbé Claude Picot, and this translation, after having been read by Descartes, was published in 1647, being prefaced by a letter from the author to the translator in which the plan of the work is explained. The treatise entitled *The Passions of the Soul* (1649) was written in French and published, more, it appears, owing to the entreaties of friends than to the author's own desire, shortly before Descartes' death. In addition we possess an unfinished dialogue, *The Search after Truth by the Light of Nature*, a Latin translation of which appeared in 1701, and Latin *Notes directed against a Certain Programme*, a reply written by Descartes to a manifesto about the nature of the mind, which had been composed by Regius or Le Roy of Utrecht, first a friend and later an opponent of the philosopher. Finally, the works of Descartes contain a mass of correspondence which is of considerable value for the elucidation of his thought.

In September 1649 Descartes left Holland for Sweden in response to the pressing invitation of Queen Christina who wished to be instructed in his philosophy. The rigours of the Swedish winter, however, coupled with the queen's practice of expecting

Descartes, who was accustomed to lie for a long time in bed, engaged in reflection, to come to her library at five in the morning, were too much for the poor man, and he was not strong enough to withstand an attack of fever which developed at the end of January 1650. And on February 11th he died.

Descartes was a man of moderation and of a kindly disposition. For example, he is known to have been generous to his servants and attendants and solicitous for their welfare, and they in turn were much attached to their master. He possessed some close friends like Mersenne, but he found that a retired and quiet life was essential for his work, and he never married. As for his religious convictions, he always professed himself a Catholic and he died piously in that faith. There has indeed been some controversy about the sincerity of his protestations of Catholic belief. But in my opinion doubts about his sincerity are founded either on some totally inadequate factual ground, such as his act of timidity or of prudence in suspending publication of the *Traité du monde*, or on the *a priori* assumption that a philosopher who consciously and deliberately set out to construct a new philosophical system could not have really believed in Catholic dogmas. For the most part Descartes avoided discussion of purely theological matters. His point of view was that the road to heaven is as open to the ignorant as to the learned and that revealed mysteries transcend the comprehension of the human mind. He occupied himself, therefore, with problems which in his opinion could be solved by reason alone. He was a philosopher and a mathematician,[1] not a theologian; and he acted accordingly. We cannot legitimately conclude that his personal religious beliefs were not what he said they were.

2. The fundamental aim of Descartes was, obviously enough, to attain philosophical truth by the use of reason. 'I wished to give myself entirely to the search after truth.'[2] But what he was seeking was not to discover a multiplicity of isolated truths but to develop a system of true propositions, in which nothing would be presupposed which was not self-evident and indubitable. There would then be an organic connection between all the parts of the system, and the whole edifice would rest on a sure foundation. It would thus be impervious to the corroding and destructive effect of scepticism.

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[1] Descartes was the real founder of analytic or co-ordinate geometry. At least, his *Géométrie* (1637) was the first work on the subject to be published.

[2] *D.M.*, 4; *A.T.*, VI, 31.

What did Descartes understand by philosophy? 'Philosophy means the study of wisdom, and by wisdom we understand not only prudence in affairs but also a perfect knowledge of all things which man can know both for the conduct of his life and for the conservation of his health and the invention of all the arts.'[1] Under the general heading of philosophy, therefore, Descartes included not only metaphysics but also physics or natural philosophy, the latter standing to the former as trunk to roots. And the branches issuing from this trunk are the other sciences, the three principal ones being medicine, mechanics and morals. By morals 'I mean the highest and most perfect moral science which, presupposing a complete knowledge of the other sciences, is the last degree of wisdom.'[2]

It is not surprising that from time to time Descartes insisted on the practical value of philosophy. The civilization of any nation, he says, is proportionate to the superiority of its philosophy, and 'a State can have no greater good than the possession of true philosophy'.[3] Again, he speaks of 'opening to each one the road by which he can find in himself, and without borrowing from any other, the whole knowledge which is essential to him for the direction of his life'.[4] This practical value of philosophy is seen most clearly in the part which comes last in the order of development, especially in ethics. For 'just as it is not from the roots or the trunks of trees that one gathers the fruit but only from the extremities of their branches, so the main use of philosophy is dependent on those of its parts which we cannot learn until the end'.[5] In theory, therefore, Descartes laid great stress on ethics. But he never elaborated a systematic moral science in accordance with his plan; and his name is associated with an idea of method and with metaphysics rather than with ethics.

Now, it is undeniable that in one sense at least Descartes consciously and deliberately broke with the past. First of all he was determined to start again from the beginning, as it were, without trusting to the authority of any previous philosophy. He charged the Aristotelians not only with relying on Aristotle's authority but also with failing to understand him properly and with pretending to find in his writings solutions to problems 'of which he says nothing and of which he possibly had not thought at all'.[6] Descartes was resolved to rely on his own reason, not on authority.

[1] *P.P.*, Prefatory Letter; *A.T.*, IX B, 2. [2] *P.P.*, Prefatory Letter; *A.T.*, IX B, 14.
[3] *P.P.*, Prefatory Letter; *A.T.*, IX B, 3. [4] *S.T.*; *A.T.*, X, 496.
[5] *P.P.*, Prefatory Letter; *A.T.*, IX B, 15. [6] *D.M.*, 6; *A.T.*, VI, 70.

Secondly, he was resolved to avoid that confusion of the clear and evident with what is conjectural or at best only probable of which he accused the Scholastics. For him there was only one kind of knowledge worthy of the name, certain knowledge. Thirdly, Descartes was determined to attain and work with clear and distinct ideas and not, as he accused the Scholastics of sometimes doing, to use terms without any clear meaning or possibly without any meaning at all. For instance, 'when they [the Scholastics] distinguish substance from extension or quantity, either they mean nothing by the word substance or they simply form in their minds a confused idea of incorporeal substance which they falsely attribute to corporeal substance'.[1] For confused ideas Descartes would substitute clear and distinct ideas.

Descartes, indeed, attached little value to historical learning or to book-learning in general. And in view of this fact it is not surprising that his strictures on Aristotelianism and Scholasticism were based on the impression made on him by a decadent Aristotelianism and by what may be called a textbook Scholasticism rather than on any profound study of the great thinkers of the Greek and mediaeval periods. When, for example, he accuses the Scholastics of appealing to authority, he neglects the fact that Aquinas himself had roundly declared that appeal to authority is the weakest of all arguments in philosophy. But such considerations leave Descartes' general attitude towards previous and contemporary philosophy unaltered. At the time when he hoped to get his *Principles of Philosophy* adopted as a philosophical textbook by the Jesuits, whom he regarded as supreme in the educational sphere, he diminished to some extent his attacks on Scholasticism and renounced the frontal attack which he had threatened. But his point of view remained the same, namely, that a clear break must be made with the past.

This does not mean, however, that Descartes was intent on rejecting all that other philosophers had held to be true. He did not take it for granted that all the propositions enunciated by previous philosophers were false. Some of them at least might very well be true. At the same time they should be rediscovered, in the sense that their truth should be proved in an orderly way by proceeding systematically from basic and indubitable to derived propositions. Descartes wished to find and apply the right method in the search for truth, a method which would enable him to demonstrate truths in a rational and systematic order, irrespective of whether these truths had been previously acknowledged or not. His primary aim was not so much to produce a novel philosophy, as far as content was concerned, as to produce a certain and well-ordered philosophy. And his chief enemy was scepticism rather than Scholasticism. If, therefore, he set himself systematically to doubt all that could possibly be doubted as a preliminary to the establishment of certain knowledge, he did not assume from the outset that none of the propositions which he doubted would turn out later to be certainly true. 'I argued to myself that there was no plausibility in the claim of any private individual to reform a State by altering everything and by overturning it throughout, in order to set it right again. Nor, again, is it probable that the whole body of the sciences, or the order of teaching established by the Schools, should be reformed. But as regards all the opinions which up to this time I had embraced, I thought that I could not do better than endeavour once for all to sweep them completely away, so that they might later on be replaced either by others which were better or by the same when I had made them conform to a rational scheme.'[1] Further reference will be made later to the Cartesian method of doubt; but it is as well to notice the last sentence in this quotation.

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[1] *P.P.*, II, 9; *A.T.*, IX B, 68.

If, therefore, Descartes were faced with the assertion that some of his philosophical views were either similar to those which had been held by other philosophers or that they were in some way indebted to the latter, he could reply that this was a point of minor importance. For he never pretended to be the first man to discover philosophical propositions which were true. What he did claim was that he had developed a method of demonstrating truths according to the order demanded by the exigencies of reason itself.

In the quotation given above Descartes refers to making truths conform to a rational scheme. His ideal of philosophy was that of an organically connected system of scientifically established truths, that is to say, of truths so ordered that the mind passes from fundamental self-evident truths to other evident truths implied by the former. This ideal was suggested in large part by mathematics. Both in the *Rules* and in the *Discourse* he speaks explicitly about the influence exercised by mathematics on his mind. Thus in the latter work[2] he tells us that in his earlier days he had studied mathematics, geometrical analysis and algebra, that he was impressed by the clarity and certainty of these sciences when compared with other branches of study, and that it is necessary to investigate the peculiar characteristics of the mathematical method, which give it its superiority, with a view to applying this method in other branches of science. But this presupposes, of course, that all sciences are similar in the sense that the method which is applicable in mathematics is applicable elsewhere. And this is, indeed, what Descartes thought. All the sciences taken together 'are identical with human wisdom which always remains one and the same, however applied to different subjects'.[1] There is only one kind of knowledge, certain and evident knowledge. And ultimately there is only one science, though it possesses interconnected branches. Hence there can be only one scientific method.

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[1] *D.M.*, 2; *A.T.*, VI, 13–14.

[2] *D.M.*, 2; *A.T.*, VI, 17.

This notion that all sciences are ultimately one science or, rather, organically connected branches of one science, which is identified with human wisdom or understanding, constitutes, of course, a major assumption. But the full proof of its validity, Descartes might say, cannot be given in advance. It is only by employing the right method in building up a unified body of science, an orderly system of the sciences, capable of indefinite progressive development, that we can manifest its validity at all.

It is to be noted that Descartes' theory that all the sciences are ultimately one science and that there is one universal scientific method separates him at once from the Aristotelians. The latter believed that the different subject-matters of different sciences demand different methods. For example, we cannot apply in ethics the method which is appropriate in mathematics; for the difference of subject-matter excludes any such assimilation of ethics to mathematics. But this is a point of view which is expressly attacked by Descartes. He recognized, indeed, a distinction between the sciences, which depended entirely on the mind's cognitive activity, and the arts (such as harp-playing), which depend on the exercise and disposition of the body. We can say perhaps that he admitted a distinction between science and skill, between knowing that and knowing how. But there is only one kind of science; and it does not become differentiated into diverse types through differences of subject-matter. Descartes thus turned his back on the Aristotelian and Scholastic idea of different types of sciences, with their different methods of procedure, and substituted instead the idea of one universal science and of one universal method. He was doubtless encouraged to do this by his success in showing that geometrical propositions can be proved by arithmetical means. Aristotle, who asserted that geometry and arithmetic constitute distinct sciences, had denied that geometrical propositions can be proved arithmetically.[1]

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[1] *R.D.*, 1; *A.T.*, x, 360

Descartes' ideal aim, therefore, was to construct this comprehensive scientific philosophy. In metaphysics, the roots of the tree according to his analogy, he starts with the intuitively apprehended existence of the finite self and proceeds to establish the criterion of truth, the existence of God and the existence of the material world. Physics, the trunk of the tree, depends on metaphysics, in the sense at least that physics cannot be considered an organic part of science until the ultimate principles of physics have been shown to follow from metaphysical principles. And the practical sciences, the branches of the tree, will be truly sciences when their organic dependence on physics or natural philosophy has been made clear. Descartes did not, indeed, pretend to realize this aim in its entirety; but he thought that he had made a start and that he had pointed out the way to the complete fulfilment of his purpose.

Now, what has been said hitherto may have given the impression that Descartes was concerned simply with the systematic arrangement and proof of truths which had already been enunciated. But this would be an erroneous impression. For he also believed that the use of the appropriate method would enable the philosopher to discover hitherto unknown truths. He did not say that Scholastic logic is worthless, but in his view it 'serves better for explaining to others those things which one knows . . . than in learning what is new'.[2] Its use is primarily didactic. Descartes' own logic, he says, is not, like that of the Schools, 'a dialectic which teaches how to make the things which we know understood by others or even to repeat, without forming any judgment on them, many words respecting those things which we do not know': rather is it 'the logic which teaches us how best to direct our reason in order to discover those truths of which we are ignorant'.[3]

Something further will be said in the next section about this claim that the new 'logic' enables us to discover hitherto unknown truths. But we may note here the problem to which the claim gives rise. Let us suppose that mathematical method means the deduction from self-evident principles of propositions which are logically implied by these principles. Now, if we wish to claim that we can deduce factual truths about the world in this way, we shall have to assimilate the causal relation to the relation of logical implication. We can then maintain that the truths of physics, for example, can be deduced *a priori*. But if we assimilate causality to logical implication, we shall be driven in the end to adopt a monistic system, such as that of Spinoza, in which finite things are, as it were, logical consequences of an ultimate ontological principle. Metaphysics and logic will merge with one another And if we claim that the truths of physics can be deduced *a priori*, experiment will play no integral part in the development of physics. That is to say, the true conclusions of the physicist will not depend on experimental verification. The part played by experiment will be at most a means of showing people that the conclusions reached by *a priori* deduction, independently of all experiment, are in fact true. But, as will be seen later, Descartes did not begin in metaphysics with the ontological principle which is prior in the order of being. He did not begin, as Spinoza did, with God, but with the finite self. Nor does his method, as exemplified in the *Meditations*, bear any very close resemblances to that of the mathematician. As for physics, Descartes did not in fact deny the rôle of experiment. The problem facing Descartes, therefore, was to reconcile his actual procedure with his ideal picture of a universal science and of a universal quasi-mathematical method. But he never gave any satisfactory solution to this problem. Nor, indeed, does he appear to have seen clearly the discrepancies between his ideal of assimilating all sciences to mathematics and his actual procedures. This is one reason, of course, why the assertion that Spinozism is a logical development of Cartesianism has considerable plausibility. At the same time Descartes' philosophy consists in what he actually did when he philosophized rather than in what he might have done or perhaps ought to have done, had he fully developed the pan-mathematical aspect of his ideal. And if we once admit this, we must add that he should have revised his ideal of science and of scientific method in the light of the procedures which he considered appropriate when dealing with concrete philosophical problems.

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[1] *Anal. Post.*, I, 7.

[2] *D.M.*, 2; *A.T.*, VI, 17.

[3] *P.P.*, Prefatory Letter; *A.T.*, IX B, 13–14.

3. What is the Cartesian method? Descartes tells us that 'by

method I understand (a set of) certain and easy rules such that anyone who observes them exactly will never take anything false to be true and, without any waste of mental effort but by increasing his knowledge step by step, will arrive at a true understanding of all those things which do not surpass his capacity'.[1] We are told, therefore, that method consists in a set of rules. But Descartes does not mean to imply that there is a technique which can be applied in such a way that the natural capacities of the human mind are irrelevant. On the contrary, the rules are rules for employing rightly the natural capacities and operations of the mind. And Descartes points out that unless the mind were already able to employ its fundamental operations, it would be unable to understand even the simplest precepts or rules of the matter.[2] If left to itself, the mind is infallible. That is to say, if it uses its natural light and capacities, without the disturbing influence of other factors, with regard to matters which do not surpass its capacity of understanding, it will not err. If this were not the case, no technique could supply for the mind's own radical deficiency. But we may allow ourselves to be deflected from the true path of rational reflection by factors such as prejudice, passion, the influence of education, impatience and the over-hasty desire to attain results; and then the mind becomes blinded, as it were, and does not employ its natural operations correctly. Hence a set of rules is of great utility, even though these rules presuppose the mind's natural capacities and operations.

What are these fundamental operations of the mind? They are two, namely, intuition and deduction; 'two mental operations by which we are able, entirely without any fear of illusion, to arrive at the knowledge of things'.[3] The former is described as being 'not the fluctuating assurance of the senses nor the fallacious judgment which results from the arbitrary composition of the imagination, but the conception which arises so readily and distinctly in an unclouded and attentive mind that we are wholly freed from doubt concerning the object of our understanding. Or, what comes to the same thing, intuition is the conception, without doubt, of an unclouded and attentive mind, which springs from the light of reason alone.'[4] By intuition, therefore, is meant a purely intellectual activity, an intellectual seeing or vision which is so clear and distinct that it leaves no room for doubt.

[1] *R.D.*, 4; *A.T.*, x, 371–2.

[2] *R.D.*, 4; *A.T.*, x, 372.

[3] *R.D.*, 3; *A.T.*, x, 368.

[4] *Ibid.*

Deduction is described as 'all necessary inference from other facts which are known with certainty'.[1] It is true that intuition is required even in deductive reasoning. For we must see the truth of each proposition clearly and distinctly before we proceed to the next step. At the same time deduction is distinguishable from intuition by the fact that to the former, though not to the latter, there belongs 'a certain movement or succession'.[2]

Descartes does what he can to reduce deduction to intuition. In the case, for instance, of propositions which are deduced immediately from first principles we can say that their truth is known now by intuition and now by deduction, according to the point of view which we adopt. 'But the first principles themselves are given by intuition alone while the remote conclusions, on the contrary, are furnished only by deduction.'[3] In long processes of deductive reasoning the certitude of deduction depends in some degree upon the validity of memory; and this introduces another factor. So Descartes suggests that by frequently going over the process we can reduce the part played by memory until we approximate at least to an intuitive grasp of the truth of the remote conclusions as evidently implied by the first principles. All the same, though Descartes subordinates deduction to intuition in this way, he continues to speak of them as two mental operations.

Intuition and deduction are spoken of as 'two methods which are the most certain routes to knowledge'.[4] But though they are the ways to attain certain knowledge, they are not 'the method' of which Descartes speaks in the definition quoted at the beginning of this section. For intuition and deduction are not rules. The method consists rather in rules for employing aright these two mental operations. And it is said to consist above all in order. That is to say, we must observe the rules of orderly thinking. These rules are given in the *Rules for the Direction of the Mind* and in the *Discourse on Method.* In the latter work the first of four precepts enumerated is 'to accept nothing as true which I did not clearly recognize to be so: that is to say, carefully to avoid precipitation and prejudices in judgments, and to accept in them nothing more than what was presented to my mind so clearly and distinctly that I could have no occasion to doubt it'.[5] Observance of this precept involves the use of methodic doubt. That is to say, we must systematically subject to doubt all the opinions which we already possess, in order that we may discover what is indubitable and what can therefore serve as a foundation for the edifice of science. As I shall return to this subject in the fifth section of this chapter, I say no more about it here.

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[1] *R.D.*, 3; *A.T.*, x, 369.

[2] *R.D.*, 3; *A.T.*, x, 370.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *D.M.*, 2; *A.T.*, VI, 18.

In the fifth of the *Rules for the Direction of the Mind* Descartes gives a summary of his method. 'Method consists wholly in the ordering and disposing (literally, in the order and disposition) of those objects to which the attention of the mind must be directed if we are to discover any truth. We shall observe this method exactly if we reduce involved and obscure propositions step by step to those which are simpler, and if we then start with the intuitive apprehension of the simplest propositions and try by retracing our path through the same steps to ascend to the knowledge of all the others.'[1] The meaning of this rule is not immediately evident. But the order thus described has two aspects; and these must now be briefly explained.

The first part of the method is that we should reduce involved and obscure propositions step by step to those which are simpler. And this injunction is generally said to correspond to the second precept of the *Discourse on Method*. 'The second (precept) was to divide up each of the difficulties which I was to examine into as many parts as possible and as seemed requisite.'[2] This is the method which Descartes later calls the method of analysis or resolution. It can hardly be said that he always used the term 'analysis' in precisely the same sense; but, as here described, it consists in breaking down, as it were, the multiple data of knowledge into their simplest elements or element. Descartes was certainly influenced in his conception of method by mathematics. But he considered that Euclidean geometry, for example, has a serious drawback, namely, that the axioms and first principles are not 'justified'. That is to say, the geometer does not show how his first principles are reached. The method of analysis or resolution, however, 'justifies' the first principles of a science by making it clear in a systematic manner how they are reached and why they are asserted. In this sense analysis is a logic of discovery. And Descartes was convinced that he had followed the way of analysis in his *Meditations*, by resolving the multiple data of knowledge into the primary existential proposition, *Cogito, ergo sum*, and by showing how the basic truths of metaphysics are discovered in their proper order. In his replies to the second set of *Objections* he remarks that 'analysis shows the true way by which a thing was methodically discovered and derived, as it were, *a priori*, so that if the reader cares to follow it and to give sufficient attention to everything, he understands the matter no less perfectly and makes it as much his own as though he himself had discovered it. . . . But I have used in my *Meditations* only analysis, which seems to me to be the best and truest method of teaching.'[1]

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[1] *R.D.*, 5; *A.T.*, x, 379.

[2] *D.M.*, 2; *A.T.*, VI, 18.

The second part of the method summarized in the fifth Rule says that we should 'start with the intuitive apprehension of the simplest propositions and try by retracing our path through the same steps to ascend to the knowledge of all the others'. This is what Descartes later calls synthesis or the method of composition. In synthesis we start with the intuitively perceived first principles or most simple propositions (which are arrived at last in analysis) and proceed to deduce in an orderly way, making sure that no step is omitted and that each succeeding proposition really does follow from the preceding one. This is the method employed by the Euclidean geometers. According to Descartes, whereas analysis is the method of discovery, synthesis is the method best suited for demonstrating what is already known; and it is the method employed in the *Principles of Philosophy*.

In his replies to the second set of *Objections* Descartes asserts that 'there are two things which I distinguish in the geometrical mode of writing, namely, the order and the method of proof. The order consists merely in putting forward first those things which should be known without the aid of what comes subsequently and in arranging all other matters so that their proof depends on what precedes them. I certainly tried to follow this order as accurately as possible in my *Meditations*. . . .'[2] He then goes on to divide the method of proof into analysis and synthesis and to say, as already quoted, that in the *Meditations* he used only analysis.

Now, according to Descartes, analysis enables us to arrive at the intuition of 'simple natures'. And the question arises, what he meant by this term. Perhaps this can best be shown by employing one of his own examples. A body has extension and figure. And it cannot be said to be literally compounded of corporeal nature, extension and figure, 'since these elements have never existed in isolation from each other. But relatively to our understanding we call it a compound constructed out of these three natures.'[1] We can analyse body into these natures; but we cannot, for instance, analyse figure into further elements. Simple natures are thus the ultimate elements at which the process of analysis arrives and which are known in clear and distinct ideas.

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[1] *R.O.*, 2; *A.T.*, IX, 121–2, cf. VII, 155–6.

[2] *R.O.*, 2; *A.T.*, IX, 121, cf. VII, 155.

Figure, extension, motion and so on are said to form a group of material simple natures, in the sense that they are found only in bodies. But there is also a group of 'intellectual' or spiritual simple natures, such as willing, thinking and doubting. Further, there is a group of simple natures which are common to spiritual and material things, such as existence, unity and duration. And Descartes includes in this group what we call 'common notions', which connect together other simple natures and on which the validity of inference or deduction depends. One of the examples which he gives is 'things which are the same as a third thing are the same as one another'.

Those 'simple natures' are the ultimate elements at which analysis arrives so long as it keeps within the sphere of clear and distinct ideas. (One might proceed further, but only at the cost of falling into mental confusion.) And they are the ultimate materials, as it were, or starting-points of deductive inference. That Descartes also speaks of 'simple propositions' is not surprising when one considers that deduction is deduction of propositions from propositions. But it is not immediately evident how Descartes can think himself justified in speaking about simple natures as propositions. Nor can it well be claimed that Descartes proceeded to explain his meaning in a clear and unambiguous manner. For if he had done so, we should presumably not be confronted with the divergent interpretations which we find in the commentaries. We might perhaps explain the matter in terms of the distinction between the act of intuition and the act of judgment. We intuit the simple nature, but we affirm its simplicity and its distinctness from other simple natures in the proposition. But Descartes can scarcely mean to imply that simple natures are without relations. As we have seen, he mentions figure as an example of a simple nature; but in discussing the twelfth Rule he says that figure is conjoined with extension (another simple nature) because we cannot conceive figure without extension. Nor does the simplicity of the act of intuition necessarily mean that the object of the intuition does not comprise two elements which are necessarily connected, provided, of course, that the apprehension of the connection is immediate. For if it were not immediate, that is, if there were movement or succession, we should have a case of deduction. However, perhaps the natural way of understanding Descartes is this. We intuit first of all propositions. When in his explanation of the third Rule he gives examples of intuition, he mentions in fact only propositions. 'Thus each individual can perceive by intellectual intuition that he exists, that he thinks, that a triangle is bounded by three lines only, a sphere by a single surface, and so on.'[1] It is from such propositions that simple natures like existence are disengaged by a kind of abstraction. But when we judge of their simplicity, this judgment takes the form of a proposition. And there remain necessary connections of 'conjunction' or discrimination between simple natures, which are themselves affirmed by propositions.

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[1] *R.D.*, 12; *A.T.*, x, 418.

Now, simple natures, some commentators have argued, remain in the ideal order. Whether we prefer to call them concepts or essences, they are abstracted from the existential order and become like mathematical objects, such as the perfect lines and circles of the geometer. Hence we can no more deduce from them existential conclusions than we can conclude from a mathematical proposition about the triangle that there are any existent triangles. Yet in his *Meditations* Descartes lays down an existential proposition, *Cogito, ergo sum,* as the fundamental principle and proceeds on this basis to prove the existence of God. We must say, therefore, that he turns his back on his own method.

It is perhaps arguable that Descartes, in order to be consistent, should have prescinded from the existential order. But, obviously enough, he did not wish to produce a metaphysics with no existential reference or one whose existential reference was in doubt. And to say that his introduction of existential propositions does not square with his mathematical method is to exaggerate the rôle of mathematics in the Cartesian idea of method. It was Descartes' conviction that in mathematics we can see the clearest example available of the orderly use of intuition and deduction; but this does not mean that he intended to assimilate metaphysics to mathematics in the sense of confining the former to the ideal order. And, as we have seen, in the *Rules for the Direction of the Mind* he gives as an instance of what he means by intuition a man's intuitive knowledge of the fact that he exists.[2] In the *Meditations* he proposes as questions or problems for treatment the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. Having subjected to doubt all that can be doubted, he arrives at the 'simple' and indubitable proposition, *Cogito, ergo sum.* He then proceeds to analyse the nature of the self whose existence is affirmed, after which, as a kind of prolongation of the original intuition, he proceeds to establish the existence of God. But already in the *Rules* he had given as an example of a necessary proposition which many people erroneously think to be contingent, 'I exist, therefore God exists.'[1] And the general line of argument of the *Meditations* is presented in the fourth part of the *Discourse of Method.* Hence, even if it is disputable whether all the features of Descartes' global idea of method fit well together, and even if there is much that is obscure or ambiguous, it appears that the method actually employed in the *Meditations* is not alien from this global idea.

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[1] *R.D.*, 3; *A.T.*, x, 368.

[2] *Ibid.*

It is worth adding that in a letter to Clerselier, Descartes points out that the word 'principle' can be understood in different senses. It may signify an abstract principle such as the statement that it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be at the same time. And from a principle like this we cannot deduce the existence of anything. Or it may be used to signify, for instance, the proposition affirming one's existence. And from this principle we can deduce the existence of God and of creatures other than oneself. 'It may be that there is no one principle to which all things can be reduced; and the manner in which one reduces other propositions to this, that it is impossible for the same thing to exist and not to exist at the same time, is superfluous and of no use. On the other hand it is of great utility if one begins to assure oneself of the existence of God, and then of that of all creatures, by the consideration of one's own existence.'[2] There is no question of deducing existential propositions from abstract logical or mathematical propositions.

Another point to notice is that in the *Meditations,* where he follows what he calls the analytic method of proof, Descartes is concerned with the *ordo cognoscendi,* the order of discovery, not with the *ordo essendi,* the order of being. In the latter order God is prior; ontologically prior, that is to say. But in the order of discovery one's own existence is prior. I know intuitively that I exist, and by inspection or analysis of the intuitive material expressed in the proposition *Cogito, ergo sum,* I can discover first that God exists and afterwards that material things exist corresponding to my clear and distinct ideas of them.

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[1] *R.D.,* 12; *A.T.,* x, 422.

[2] *A.T.,* iv, 445.

When we turn to physics, we find Descartes speaking as though physics could be deduced from metaphysics. But we have to make a distinction between our knowledge of the laws which would govern any material world which God might choose to create and our knowledge of the existence of the material things which He has created. We can arrive by analysis at simple natures such as extension and motion. And from these one can deduce the general laws which govern any material world; that is to say, one can deduce the most general laws of physics or natural philosophy. In this sense physics depends on metaphysics. In the *Discourse on Method* Descartes summarizes the contents of the *Traité du monde* and remarks that 'I pointed out what are the laws of nature, and, without resting my reasons on any other principle than the infinite perfections of God, I tried to demonstrate all those of which one could have any doubt, and to show that even if God had created other worlds He could not have created any in which these laws would fail to be observed.'[1] But that there actually is a world in which these laws are exemplified is known with certainty, as will be seen later on, only because the divine veracity guarantees the objectivity of our clear and distinct ideas of material things.

This deductive interpretation of physics gives rise to the question whether or not experiment has any part to play in the Cartesian method. And this question is rendered all the more acute by Descartes' contention that his logic enables us to discover truths hitherto unknown. The question concerns his theory, not his practice. For that he actually performed experimental work is a historical fact.[2] We are faced with two sets of texts. On the one hand he speaks scornfully of philosophers who 'neglect experience and imagine that truth will spring from their brain like Minerva from the head of Jupiter',[3] and writes to the Princess Elizabeth that he would not dare to undertake the task of explaining the development of the human system, 'being short of the requisite experimental evidence'.[4] On the other hand we find him writing to Mersenne in 1638 that 'my physics is nothing else but geometry',[5] and in 1640 that he would consider himself entirely ignorant of physics if he were 'only able to explain how things might be and were unable to demonstrate that they could not be otherwise',[1] since he has reduced physics to the laws of mathematics. This does not, however, prevent his also writing to Mersenne in 1638 that to demand geometrical demonstrations of matters which depend on physics is to demand the impossible.[2] It is, indeed, clear that Descartes attributed some sort of rôle to experience and experiment. But it is not so clear what that rôle was.

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[1] *D.M.*, 5; *A.T.*, VI, 43.

[2] Descartes practised dissection and was interested in the practical study of anatomy. He also made some experiments in physics.

[3] *R.D.*, 5; *A.T.*, X, 380.

[4] *A.T.*, V, 112.

[5] *Ibid.*, II, 268.

In the first place, Descartes did not think that we can deduce *a priori* the existence of particular physical things. That there is such a thing as a magnet, for example, is known by experience. But to ascertain the true nature of the magnet it is necessary to apply the Cartesian method. First of all, of course, the philosopher must 'collect' the observations with which sense-experience provides him. For these are the empirical data which he is going to investigate, and they are presupposed by the method. Then he will try to 'deduce (by analysis, that is to say) the character of that inter-mixture of simple natures which is necessary to produce all those effects which he has seen to take place in connection with the magnet. This achieved, he can boldly assert that he has discovered the real nature of the magnet in so far as human intelligence and the given experimental observations can supply him with this knowledge.'[3] The philosopher can then reverse the process, starting with the simple natures and deducing the effects. These should, of course, be consistent with the effects which are actually observed. And experience or experiment can tell us whether they are consistent.

In the second place, Descartes makes a distinction between the primary and more general effects and the more particular effects which can be deduced from principles or 'first causes'. The former can, he thinks, be deduced without great difficulty. But there is an infinity of particular effects which might be deduced from the same first principles. How, therefore, are we to distinguish between the effects which actually take place and those which might follow but do not, because God has willed otherwise? We can do this only by empirical observation and experiment. 'When I wished to descend to those (effects) which were more particular, so many objects of various kinds presented themselves to me that I did not think that it was possible for the human mind to distinguish the forms or species of bodies which are on the earth from an infinitude of others which might have been so if it had been the will of God to place them there, or consequently to apply them to our use, if it were not that we arrive at the causes by the effects and avail ourselves of many particular experiments.'[1] Descartes seems here to be speaking of the different kinds of things which might have been created, given the ultimate principles or simple natures. But he also says that 'I observed hardly any particular effect as to which I could not recognize that it might be deduced from the principles in different ways.'[2] And he concludes, 'I do not know any other plan than again to try to find experiments of such a nature that their result is not the same if it has to be explained in one way as it would be if explained in another.'[3]

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[1] *A.T.*, III, 39.

[2] *Ibid.*, II, 141.

[3] *R.D.*, 12; *A.T.*, X, 427.

Descartes' 'pan-mathematicism' is thus not absolute: he does not refuse to allow any rôle to experience and experiment in physics. At the same time it is noticeable that the part which he assigns to verificatory experiment is to supply for the limitations of the human mind. In other words, although he does in fact give experiment a part to play in the development of our scientific knowledge of the world, and although he recognizes that we cannot in fact discover new particular truths in physics without the aid of sense-experience, his ideal remains that of pure deduction. He can speak scornfully of natural philosophers who disdain any appeal to experience because he recognizes that we cannot in fact dispense with it. But he is far from being an empiricist. The ideal of assimilating physics to mathematics remains always before his eyes; and his general attitude is far removed from that of Francis Bacon. It may be somewhat misleading to speak of Descartes' 'pan-mathematicism'; but the use of the term none the less draws attention to the general line of his thought and helps to differentiate his conception of natural philosophy from that of Bacon.

It is perhaps over-optimistic to say that Descartes' theory of innate ideas sheds further light on the nature of the function which he attributes to experiment in scientific method. For the theory is itself not free from obscurity. However, it is relevant to any discussion of the experimental element in Cartesian method. And in the next section I propose to say something about the theory.

4. Descartes speaks of discovering the first principles or first causes of everything which is or which can be in the world without 'deriving them from any other source than certain germs of truth

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[1] *D.M.*, 6; *A.T.*, VI, 64. [2] *D.M.*, 6; *A.T.*, VI, 64–5. [3] *D.M.*, 6; *A.T.*, VI, 65.

which exist naturally in our souls'.[1] Again, he declares that 'we shall without difficulty set aside all the prejudices of the senses and in this respect rely upon our understanding alone by reflecting carefully on the ideas implanted therein by nature'.[2] Passages of this sort inevitably suggest that according to Descartes we can construct metaphysics and physics by logical deduction from a number of innate ideas implanted in the mind by 'nature' or, as we afterwards learn, by God. All clear and distinct ideas are innate. And all scientific knowledge is knowledge of or by means of innate ideas.

Regius objected that the mind has no need of innate ideas or axioms. The faculty of thinking is quite sufficient to explain its processes. To this Descartes replied that 'I never wrote or concluded that the mind required innate ideas which were in some way different from its faculty of thinking.'[3] We are accustomed to say that certain diseases are innate in certain families, not because 'the babes of these families suffer from these diseases in their mother's womb, but because they are born with a certain disposition or propensity for contracting them'.[4] In other words, we have a faculty of thinking, and this faculty, owing to its innate constitution, conceives things in certain ways. Descartes mentions the general 'notion' that 'things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another' and challenges his opponent to show how this notion can be derived from corporeal movements, when the latter are particular, the former universal.[5] Elsewhere he mentions other common notions or 'eternal truths' (for example, *ex nihilo nihil fit*) which have their seat in the mind.[6]

Statements of this sort tend to suggest that for Descartes innate ideas are *a priori* forms of thought which are not really distinct from the faculty of thinking. Axioms such as those mentioned above are not present in the mind as objects of thought from the beginning; but they are virtually present in the sense that by reason of its innate constitution the mind thinks in these ways. Descartes' theory would thus constitute to some extent an anticipation of Kant's theory of the *a priori*, with the important difference that Descartes does not say, and indeed does not believe, that the *a priori* forms of thought are applicable only within the field of sense-experience.

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[1] *D.M.*, 6; *A.T.*, VI, 64.
[2] *P.P.*, 2, 3; *A.T.*, VIII, 42, cf. IX B, 65.
[3] *Notes Against a Programme*, 12; *A.T.*, VIII B, 357.
[4] *Notes Against a Programme*, 12; *A.T.*, VIII B, 358.
[5] *Notes Against a Programme*, 12; *A.T.*, VIII B, 359.
[6] *P.P.*, 1, 49. *A.T.*, VIII, 23-4.

Yet it is clear that Descartes does not restrict innate ideas to forms of thought or moulds of conception. For he speaks of all clear and distinct ideas as innate. The idea of God, for example, is said to be innate. Such ideas are not, indeed, innate in the sense that they are present in the baby's mind as fully-fledged ideas. But the mind produces them, as it were, out of its own potentialities on the occasion of experience of some sort. It does not derive them from sense-experience. As has already been remarked, Descartes was no empiricist. But sense-experience can furnish the occasion on which these ideas are formed. The latter, clear and distinct ideas, are quite different from the 'adventitious' ideas, the confused ideas which are caused by sense-experience, and from 'factitious' ideas, the constructions of the imagination. They are instances of the mind's actualization of its inner potentialities. It can hardly be claimed, I think, that Descartes provided a clear, positive account of the nature and genesis of innate ideas. But it is at least evident that he distinguished between 'adventitious', 'factitious' and clear and distinct ideas, and that he considered ideas of this third class to be virtually innate, implanted in the mind by nature or, more properly, by God.

This theory of innate ideas is obviously relevant to Descartes' conception not only of metaphysics but also of physics. Our clear and distinct ideas of simple natures are innate. So is our knowledge of the universal and certain principles and laws of physics. They cannot be derived from sense-experience, for this gives us particulars, not the universal. What, then, is the rôle of experience? As we have seen, it furnishes the occasions on which the mind recognizes those ideas which it draws, as it were, out of its own potentialities. Further, it is by means of experience that we are aware that there are external objects corresponding to our ideas. 'In our ideas there is nothing which is not innate in the mind or faculty of thinking, except only those circumstances which point to experience; the fact, for example, that we judge that this or that idea, which we now have present to our thought, is to be referred to a certain external thing, not because these external things transmitted the ideas themselves to the mind through the organs of sense, but because they transmitted something which gave it the occasion to form these ideas, by means of an innate faculty, at this time rather than at another.'[1]

What becomes, then, of Descartes' remarks about the need for experiments in physics? The answer has already been given in the last section. Verificatory experiment plays a part in physics because of the limitations of the human mind. A deductive system remains the ideal. And empirical hypotheses cannot be said to provide us with real scientific knowledge.

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[1] *Notes Against a Programme*, 13; *A.T.*, VIII B, 358–9.

5. Allusion has already been made to Descartes' use of methodic doubt. As a preliminary to the search for absolute certainty he thought that it was necessary to doubt all that could be doubted and to treat provisionally as false all that could be doubted. 'Because I wished to give myself entirely to the search after truth, I thought that it was necessary for me to adopt an apparently opposite course and to reject as absolutely false everything concerning which I could imagine the least ground of doubt, in order to see whether afterwards there remained anything in my beliefs which was entirely certain.'[1]

The doubt recommended and practised by Descartes is universal in the sense that it is applied universally to all that can be doubted; that is, to every proposition about whose truth doubt is possible. It is methodic in the sense that it is practised not for the sake of doubting but as a preliminary stage in the attainment of certainty and in sifting the true from the false, the certain from the probable, the indubitable from the doubtful. It is thus also provisional not only in the sense that it is a preliminary stage in the attainment of certainty but also in the sense that Descartes does not necessarily aim at substituting new propositions for those in which he formerly believed. For it may be found later that one or more propositions which were formerly only opinions, accepted, for example, on the authority of past writers or of teachers, are intrinsically certain on purely rational grounds. The doubt is also theoretical in the sense that we should not make use of it in conduct. For in conduct it frequently happens that we are obliged to follow opinions which are only probable. In other words, what Descartes proposes to do is to re-think philosophy from the start. And to do this it is necessary to examine all his opinions systematically in the hope of finding a certain and secure foundation on which to build. But all this is a matter of theoretical reflection. He does not propose, for example, to live as though there were no moral law until he has deduced a code of ethics which will satisfy all the requirements of the Cartesian method.

How far can doubt be extended? In the first place I can doubt all that I have learned through the senses. 'I have sometimes experienced that these senses were deceptive, and it is wiser not to trust entirely to anything by which we have once been deceived.'[1] It may be objected that though I am sometimes deceived about the nature of very distant or very small objects of sense, there are very many instances of sense-perception in which it would be extravagant to imagine that I am or can be subject to deception. For example, how can I be deceived in thinking that this object is my body? All the same, it is conceivable that 'we are asleep and that all these particulars, for example that we open our eyes, shake our head, extend our hands, or even perhaps that we have such hands, are not true'.[2] In fine, it may be, to use the title of a play by Calderón, that 'life is a dream' and that all which appears to us to be substantial and real is not so in fact.

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[1] *D.M.*, 4; *A.T.*, VI, 31.

This doubt does not, however, affect the propositions of mathematics. 'For whether I am awake or asleep two and three always make five, and the square can never have more than four sides, and it does not seem possible that truths so clear and apparent can be suspected of any uncertainty.'[3] I have sometimes been deceived in my judgments about the objects of the senses, and it is therefore not altogether unnatural to envisage the possibility of my being always deceived, since the hypothesis has a partial basis in experience. But I see very clearly that two and three added together make five, and I have never met with any contrary instance. At first sight, therefore, it appears that I cannot be deceived in such matters. There is ground for doubting 'adventitious ideas' which are derived through the senses; but there seems to be no ground at all for doubting propositions the truth of which I see very clearly and distinctly like the truths of mathematics. Empirical propositions, one might say, are doubtful, but analytic propositions are surely indubitable.

Yet it is possible, given a metaphysical hypothesis, to doubt even the propositions of mathematics. For I can suppose that 'some evil genius, no less powerful than deceitful, has employed his whole energies in deceiving me'.[4] In other words, by a voluntary effort I can envisage the possibility of my having been so constituted that I am deceived even in thinking that those propositions are true which inevitably appear to me to be certain. Descartes did not think, of course, that the hypothesis mentioned is a probable hypothesis or that there is positive ground for doubting the truths of mathematics. But he was searching for absolute certainty, and in his opinion a necessary first stage was to doubt all that could be doubted, even though the possibility of doubting might rest on a fictitious hypothesis. Only by this sifting of supposed truths to the very limit could he hope to arrive at a fundamental truth, doubt of which would prove to be impossible.

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[1] *M.*, I; *A.T.*, VII, 18, cf. IX, 14.

[2] *M.*, I; *A.T.*, VII, 19, cf. IX, 15.

[3] *M.*, I; *A.T.*, VII, 20, cf. IX, 16.

[4] *M.*, I; *A.T.*, VII, 22, cf. IX, 17.

Hence Descartes was willing to set aside as doubtful or to treat provisionally as false not only all propositions concerning the existence and nature of material things but also the principles and demonstrations of those mathematical sciences which had appeared to him to be models of clarity and certainty. In this sense, as has already been remarked, his doubt was universal, not, as we shall see, that he found it possible in fact to doubt every truth without exception, but in the sense that no proposition, however evident its truth might appear to be, was to be excepted from the test.

There has been a certain amount of controversy about the question whether Descartes' doubt was 'real' or not. But it is rather difficult, I think, to give a simple answer to this question. Obviously, if Descartes proposed to doubt or to treat provisionally as false all that could be doubted, he had to have some reason for doubting a proposition before he could doubt it. For if he could find no reason at all, the proposition in question would be indubitable, and he would have already found what he was looking for, namely, a truth which was absolutely certain and could not be doubted. And if there was a reason for doubting, the doubt would presumably be 'real' to the extent that the reason was real. But it is not easy to gather from the writings of Descartes a clear and precise account of the way in which he regarded the reasons which he offered for doubting the truth of different propositions. Doubts concerning the proposition that material things are in themselves precisely what they appear to our senses to be were for him amply justified. Believing that things are not in themselves coloured, for example, he naturally thought that our adventitious ideas of things as coloured are not trustworthy. As for propositions like 'the entire testimony of the senses must be rejected' or 'material things are only mental images' (that is, there are no extramentally existent material things corresponding to our clear ideas of them), Descartes was well aware that we cannot in practice believe or act on such assumptions. 'We must note the distinction emphasized by me in various passages between the practical activities of our life and an inquiry into truth; for when it is a case of regulating our life it would assuredly be stupid not to trust the senses.... It was for this reason that somewhere I announced that no one in his sound mind seriously doubted about such matters.'[1] On the other hand, even though we cannot have any real feeling of doubt in our practical lives about the objective existence of material things, we can prove the proposition asserting that they exist only after God's existence has been proved. And certain knowledge of God's existence depends on knowledge of my existence as a thinking subject. From the point of view of our acquisition of metaphysical knowledge we can doubt the existence of material things, even if we have to introduce the hypothesis of the 'evil genius' in order to be able to do so. At the same time the introduction of this hypothesis makes the doubt 'hyperbolical' to use Descartes' word in the sixth *Meditation.*[2] And his remark in the same *Meditation*, 'being still ignorant or rather supposing myself to be ignorant of the author of my being',[3] helps to underline the fact that the hypothesis of the 'evil genius' is an admittedly voluntary and deliberate fiction.

While I certainly would not care to affirm that what Descartes says in the *Discourse on Method* and in the *Meditations* always lends support to this interpretation, his general point of view, as represented in his replies to criticism and in his *Notes Against a Programme*, is that doubt about the existence of God or about the distinction between sleep and waking is equivalent to a deliberate abstaining from asserting and making use within the framework of his philosophical system of the propositions that God exists and that material things exist until they have been proved according to the order demanded by the *ratio cognoscendi*. Thus in the *Notes Against a Programme* Descartes asserts, 'I proposed, at the beginning of my *Meditations*, to regard as doubtful all the doctrines which did not owe their original discovery to me, but had been for long denounced by the sceptics. What could be more unjust than to attribute to a writer opinions which he states only to the end that he may refute them? What more foolish than to imagine that, at least for the time being, while these false opinions are being propounded previous to their refutation, the author commits himself to them... ? Is there anyone obtuse enough to think that the man who compiled such a book was ignorant, so long as he was writing its first pages, of what he had undertaken to prove in the following?'[1] Descartes pleads, therefore, that his mode of procedure no more implies that he doubted God's existence before he formulated the proofs that God exists than the fact that any other writer undertakes to prove this proposition implies previous real doubt about its truth. But it is true, of course, that Descartes enjoined systematic doubt of all that could be doubted, whereas philosophers like Aquinas and Scotus had not done so. The relevant question is, indeed, in what precise sense this doubt is to be understood. And it does not seem to me that Descartes provides any very clear and consistent analysis of the meaning which he attaches to the term. All we can do is to try to interpret what he says in the *Discourse on Method*, the *Meditations* and the *Principles of Philosophy* in the light of his answers to questions and hostile criticism.

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[1] *R.O.*, 5; *A.T.*, VII, 350–1.

[2] *A.T.*, VII, 89, cf. IX, 71.

[3] *A.T.*, VII, 77, cf. IX, 61.

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[1] *A.T.*, VIII B, 367.

CHAPTER III

DESCARTES (2)

Cogito, ergo sum—*Thinking and the thinker—The criterion of truth—The existence of God—The accusation of a vicious circle —The explanation of error—The certainty of mathematics—The ontological argument for God's existence.*

1. As we have seen, Descartes employed methodic doubt with a view to discovering whether there was any indubitable truth. And whoever knows anything at all about his philosophy knows that he found this truth in the affirmation *Cogito, ergo sum*, 'I think, therefore I am.'

However much I doubt, I must exist: otherwise I could not doubt. In the very act of doubting my existence is manifest. I may be deceived when I judge that material things exist which correspond to my ideas of them. And if I employ the metaphysical hypothesis of an 'evil genius' who has so made me that I am deceived all along the line, I can conceive, though admittedly with difficulty, the possibility that I am deceived in thinking that the propositions of mathematics are certainly true. But however far I extend the application of doubt, I cannot extend it to my own existence. For in the very act of doubting my existence is revealed. Here we have a privileged truth which is immune from the corroding influence not only of the natural doubt which I may feel concerning judgments about material things but also of the 'hyperbolical' doubt which is rendered possible by the fictitious hypothesis of the *malin génie*. If I am deceived, I must exist to be deceived: if I am dreaming, I must exist to dream.

This point had been made already centuries before by St. Augustine.[1] And we might perhaps expect Descartes to follow Augustine in expressing his fundamental existential truth in the form, *Si fallor, sum*, 'If I am deceived, I exist.' But doubting is a form of thinking. 'By the word *thought* I understand all that of which we are conscious as operating in us.'[2] And though the absolute certainty of my existence becomes most manifest to me in the act of doubting,[1] Descartes, while drawing attention to the *Si fallor, sum,* prefers to formulate his truth in the non-hypothetical form, *Cogito, ergo sum.*

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[1] *De libero arbitrio*, 2, 3, 7. St. Augustine, however, did not attempt to construct a philosophy systematically on this basis. His *Si fallor, sum* is an example of an indubitable truth which refutes scepticism; but it does not play in Augustine's philosophy the fundamental rôle which is played by the *Cogito, ergo sum* in the system of Descartes.

[2] *P.P.*, 1, 9; *A.T.*, VIII, 7, cf. IX B, 28.

Obviously, this certainty of my own existence obtains only when I am thinking, when I am conscious. 'I am, I exist, that is certain. But how often? Just when I think; for it might possibly be the case that if I ceased entirely to think, I should likewise cease altogether to exist.'[2] 'If I had only ceased from thinking, even if all the rest of what I had ever imagined had really existed, I should have no reason for thinking that I had existed.'[3] From the fact that I exist when I think and while I think, I cannot conclude without more ado that I exist when I am not thinking. 'I am, I exist, is necessarily true each time that I pronounce it or that I mentally conceive it.'[4] Although if I ceased to think I obviously could not assert my existence, I cannot possibly conceive my non-existence here and now; for to conceive is to exist.

Now, Descartes speaks of 'this proposition *I think, therefore I am*'.[5] And the proposition is obviously expressed in an inferential form. But he had already said that 'each individual can mentally have an intuition of the fact that he exists and that he thinks'.[6] The question arises, therefore, whether according to Descartes I infer or intuit my existence.

The answer to this question is given as follows. 'He who says, *I think, hence I am or exist,* does not deduce existence from thought by a syllogism, but by a simple act of mental vision, he recognizes it as if it were a thing which is known through itself (*per se*). This is evident from the fact that if it were deduced syllogistically, the major premise, that *everything which thinks is or exists,* would have to be known previously; but it has been learned rather from the individual's experience—that unless he exists he cannot think. For our mind is so constituted by nature that general propositions are formed out of the knowledge of particulars.'[7] It is true that in the *Principles of Philosophy* Descartes says that 'I did not deny that we must first of all know what is knowledge, what is existence, what is certainty and that in order to think we must be, and such like.'[1] But while admitting to Burman that he had said this in the *Principles* he explains that the priority of the major premiss, 'whatever thinks, is', is implicit, not explicit. 'For I attend only to what I experience within myself, namely, *I think, therefore I am*, and I do not give attention to that general notion, *whatever thinks, is*.'[2] Descartes may not express himself either with perfect clarity or with perfect consistency. But his general position is this. I intuit in my own case the necessary connection between my thinking and my existing. That is to say, I intuit in a concrete case the impossibility of my thinking without my existing. And I express this intuition in the proposition *Cogito, ergo sum*. Logically speaking, this proposition presupposes a general premiss. But this does not mean that I first think of a general premiss and then draw a particular conclusion. On the contrary, my explicit knowledge of the general premiss follows my intuition of the objective and necessary connection between my thinking and my existing.[3] Or perhaps we can say that it is concomitant with the intuition, in the sense that it is discovered as latent in or intrinsically implied by the intuition.

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[1] For example, 'We cannot doubt our existence without existing while we doubt' (*P.P.*, I, 7; *A.T.*, IX B, 27, cf. VIII, 7). Again, 'I doubt, therefore I am; or, which is the same thing, I think, therefore I am' (*S.T.*; *A.T.*, X, 523).

[2] *M.*, 2; *A.T.*, VII, 27, cf. IX, 21.

[3] *D.M.*, 4; *A.T.*, VI, 32–3.

[4] *M.*, 2; *A.T.*, VII, 25.

[5] *P.P.*, I, 10; *A.T.*, VIII, 8, cf. IX B, 19.

[6] *R.D.*, 3; *A.T.*, X, 368.

[7] *R.O.*, 2, 3; *A.T.*, VII, 140–1, cf. IX, 110–11.

What, however, is meant by 'think' in the proposition *Cogito, ergo sum*? 'By the word *thought* I understand all that of which we are conscious as operating in us. And that is why not only understanding, willing and imagining but also feeling are here the same thing as thought.'[4] But the meaning of this passage must be clearly understood. Otherwise it may appear that Descartes is involved in inconsistency by including under *thought* imagining and feeling when at the same time he is 'feigning' that all material things are non-existent. What he means is that even if I neither felt nor perceived nor imagined any real existent object, either part of my body or external to my body, it would none the less be true that I appear to myself to imagine and perceive and feel, and consequently that I have these experiences so far as they are conscious mental processes. 'It is at least quite certain that it seems to me that I see light, that I hear noise, and that I feel heat. This cannot be false; this is, properly speaking, what is in me called feeling; and used precisely in this sense it is no other thing than thinking.'[1] In his reply to the fifth set of objections Descartes points out that 'from the fact that I think that I walk I can very well infer the existence of the mind which so thinks, but not that of the body which walks'.[2] I can dream that I am walking, and I must exist to dream; but it does not follow that I am actually walking. Similarly, he argues, if I think that I perceive the sun or smell a rose I must exist; and this would hold good even if there were no real sun and no objective rose.

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[1] *P.P.*, I, 10; *A.T.*, VIII, 8, cf. IX B, 29.

[2] *A.T.*, V, 147.

[3] According to Descartes, knowledge of what existence, certainty and knowledge are and of the proposition that in order to think we must be is innate knowledge (*R.O.*, 6, 1; *A.T.*, VII, 422, cf. IX, 225). But it must be remembered that innate ideas are for him virtually innate.

[4] *P.P.*, I, 9; *A.T.*, VIII, 7, cf. IX B, 28.

The *Cogito, ergo sum* is therefore the indubitable truth on which Descartes proposes to found his philosophy. 'I came to the conclusion that I could accept it without scruple as the first principle of the philosophy for which I was seeking.'[3] 'This conclusion, *I think, therefore I am*, is the first and most certain of all which occur to one who philosophizes in an orderly way.'[4] It is the first and most certain existential judgment. Descartes does not propose to build his philosophy on an abstract logical principle. In spite of anything which some critics may have said, his concern is not simply with essences or with possibilities: he is concerned with the existing reality, and his primary principle is an existential proposition. But we have to remember that when Descartes says that this proposition is the first and most certain, he is thinking of the *ordo cognoscendi*. This is why he says that it is the first and most certain of all which occur to a man who philosophizes in an orderly way. He does not mean to imply, for example, that our existence is more firmly grounded than God's existence as far as the *ordo essendi* is concerned. He means simply that in the *ordo cognoscendi* or *ordo inveniendi* the *Cogito, ergo sum* is fundamental since it cannot be doubted. It is obviously possible to doubt whether God exists; for there are in fact people who doubt this. But it is not possible to doubt my own existence, since the proposition 'I doubt whether I exist' is self-contradictory. I could not doubt unless I existed, at any rate during the period of doubt. I can, of course, utter the words, 'I doubt whether I exist', but in uttering them I cannot help affirming my own existence. This is really Descartes' point.

2. But when I affirm my own existence, what is it precisely that I affirm as existing? It must be remembered that I have already 'feigned' that no extramental thing exists. By making the hypothesis of the evil genius I have been able to doubt, at least

[1] *M.*, 2; *A.T.*, VII, 29, cf. IX, 23.

[2] *R.O.*, 2, 1; *A.T.*, VII, 352.

[3] *D.M.*, 4; *A.T.*, VI, 32.

[4] *P.P.*, I, 7; *A.T.*, VIII, 7, cf. IX B 27.

with a 'hyperbolical' doubt, whether the things which I seem to perceive and to feel really exist. And this hyperbolical doubt has been applied even to the existence of my own body. Now, the *Cogito, ergo sum* is affirmed even in the presence of this hyperbolical doubt. The point is that even given the hypothesis of the evil genius and all the consequences which flow from it I cannot doubt my own existence without affirming it. But inasmuch as this hypothesis is presupposed I cannot, when I affirm my own existence, be affirming the existence of my body or of anything distinct from my thinking. Hence, says Descartes, when I affirm my own existence in the *Cogito, ergo sum* I am affirming the existence of myself as something which thinks, and nothing more. 'But what then am I? A thing which thinks. What is a thing which thinks? It is a thing which doubts, understands, affirms, denies, wills, refuses, and which also imagines and feels.'[1]

It has been brought as an objection against Descartes that he here makes a real distinction between soul or mind or consciousness and body and that he has no right to make such a distinction at this stage, since he has not proved that no corporeal thing can think or that thinking is an essentially spiritual process. And it is true, of course, that by applying hyperbolical doubt to the existence of the body and by then declaring that even in the face of this hyperbolical doubt I cannot deny the existence of myself as a thinking thing, Descartes implies that this thinking thing, which is called 'myself', is not the body. But he insists that in the second *Meditation* he did not assume that no corporeal thing can think: all he intended to assert was that the I whose existence I assert in the *Cogito, ergo sum* is a thinking thing. And to state that I am a thinking thing is not the same as to state that soul and body are ontologically distinct, the one being immaterial, the other material. In other words, the first assertion must be understood from an epistemological point of view. If I think away the body and then assert my own existence I assert the existence of myself as a thinking thing, as a subject; but I do not necessarily state anything about the ontological relation between mind and body. As far as the actual point reached is concerned, we can say that whether a corporeal thing can think or not, the thinking is there, and it is of this thinking that I affirm the existence as an indubitable fact. This is why in his replies to objections Descartes insists that his doctrine about the precise relation between mind and body is established at a later stage, namely, in the sixth *Meditation* and not in the second. 'But besides this you here ask how I prove that a body cannot think. Pardon me if I reply that I have not yet given ground for the raising of the question; for I first treat of it in the sixth *Meditation*.'[1] Similarly, in the reply to the third set of *Objections* Descartes remarks: 'A thing which thinks, he says, may be something corporeal; and the opposite of this has been assumed, not proved. But in fact I did not assume the opposite, neither did I use it as a basis for my argument; I left it wholly undetermined until *Meditation VI* in which its proof is given.'[2] In the reply to the fourth set of *Objections* he admits that if he had been looking only for ordinary or 'vulgar' certitude he might, already in the second *Meditation*, have drawn from the conceivability of thinking without reference to the body the conclusion that mind and body are really distinct. 'But, since one of those hyperbolical doubts adduced in the first *Meditation* went so far as to prevent me from being sure of this very fact, that things are in their true nature exactly as we perceive them to be, so long as I supposed that I had no knowledge of the author of my being, all that I have said about God and about truth in the third, fourth and fifth *Meditations* serves to further the conclusion as to the real distinction between mind and body, which is finally completed in the sixth *Meditation*.'[3] Finally, in reply to the seventh set of *Objections*, Descartes asserts that 'I deny that I ever presupposed in any way that the mind was incorporeal. I finally proved this in the sixth *Meditation*.'[4] It can hardly be repeated too often that Descartes proceeds in the *Meditations* according to the *ordo cognoscendi* or *inveniendi* in a methodical and systematic manner, and that he does not wish to be interpreted as asserting more at any given stage of his reflections than is required at the moment.

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[1] *M.*, 2; *A.T.* VII, 28, cf. IX, 22.

There is another objection to which allusion must be made here. Descartes, it is said, had no right to assume that thinking requires a thinker. Thinking, or rather thoughts, constitute a datum; but the 'I' is not a datum. Similarly, he had no justification for asserting that I am 'a thing which thinks'. What he did was to assume uncritically the Scholastic notion of substance when this doctrine ought really to have been subjected to the test of doubt.

It seems to me to be true that Descartes assumes that thinking requires a thinker. In the *Discourse on Method*, after pointing out that to doubt or to be deceived I must exist and that if I ceased from thinking I should have no reason for saying that I existed, he remarks: 'From that I knew that I was a substance the whole nature of which is to think, and that for its existence there is no need of any place, nor does it depend on any material thing.'[1] Here he certainly assumes the doctrine of substance. It may be objected, of course, that it is illegitimate to press what is said in the *Discourse on Method.* In this work he talks, for example, as though the real ontological distinction between soul and body were known immediately on the establishment of the *Cogito, ergo sum*, whereas in the replies to objections he draws attention to the fact that he treats of this distinction in the sixth, and not in the second, *Meditation.* And if we are going to accept this reply in regard to the precise nature of the distinction between soul and body and refrain from pressing what is said in the *Discourse,* we ought also to refrain from giving too much weight to what is said in the same work about knowing myself as 'a substance the whole essence or nature of which is to think'. However, in the second *Meditation* Descartes seems to assume that thinking requires a thinker, and in his replies to the third set of *Objections* he simply asserts that 'it is certain that no thought can exist apart from a thing which thinks, no activity, no accident can be without a substance in which to exist'.[2]

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[1] *R.O.*, 2, 1; *A.T.*, VII, 131, cf. IX, 104.

[2] *R.O.*, 3, 2; *A.T.*, VII, 175, cf. IX, 136.

[3] *R.O.*, 4, 1; *A.T.*, VII, 226, cf. IX, 175–6.

[4] *R.O.*, 7, 5; *A.T.*, VII, 492.

The charge against Descartes that he assumed a doctrine of substance seems, therefore, to be justified. It is true that critics who bring this charge are sometimes phenomenalists, who think that Descartes was misled by grammatical forms into making the false assumption that thinking requires a thinker. But it is not necessary to be a phenomenalist in order to admit the validity of the charge. For the point seems to me to be, not that Descartes was wrong in saying that thinking requires a thinker, but that the exigencies of his method required that this proposition should be submitted to doubt and not assumed.

It is, however, to be remarked that both in the *Meditations* and in the *Principles of Philosophy* Descartes treats of substance after proving the existence of God. And it might be said, therefore, that the assertion of the doctrine of substance as an ontological doctrine is not simply assumed, but that it is established only when Descartes has proved the existence of God as guarantor of the validity of all our clear and distinct ideas. As far as regards the

[1] *D.M.*, 4; *A.T.*, VI, 33.

[2] *R.O.*, 3, 2; *A.T.*, VII, 175–6, cf. IX, 136.

Cogito, ergo sum, Descartes was convinced, it may be said, that after thinking away all that can be doubted I apprehend, not simply a thinking or a thought, which is uncritically attributed to a thinker as substance, but rather a thinking I or ego. I apprehend not merely a 'thinking' but 'me thinking'. He may be right or wrong in believing that he, or any other individual, does apprehend this immediately as an indubitable datum, but, whether right or wrong, he would not be in the position of assuming uncritically a doctrine of substance.

In any case it seems true to say that for Descartes what is apprehended in the *Cogito, ergo sum* is simply the I which is left when everything other than 'thinking' has been thought away. It is, of course, a concrete existing I which is apprehended, and not a transcendental ego; but it is not the I of ordinary discourse, that is to say, for example, the M. Descartes who speaks with his friends and who is listened to and observed by them. If the ego of the *Cogito, ergo sum* is contrasted with Fichte's transcendental ego, one can doubtless talk about it as the 'empirical' ego; but the fact remains that it is not precisely the I of the sentence, 'I went for a walk in the park this afternoon.'

3. Having discovered an indubitable truth, *Cogito, ergo sum*, Descartes inquires 'what is required in a proposition for it to be true and certain. For since I had just discovered one which I knew to be such, I thought that I ought also to know in what this certainty consisted.'[1] In other words, by examining a proposition which is recognized to be true and certain, he hopes to find a general criterion of certainty. And he comes to the conclusion that there is nothing in the proposition, *I think, therefore I am*, which assures him of its truth except that he sees very clearly and distinctly what is affirmed. Hence, 'I came to the conclusion that I might assume as a general rule that the things which we conceive very clearly and distinctly are all true.'[2] Similarly, 'it seems to me that I can establish as a general rule that all things which I perceive (in the French version, conceive) very clearly and very distinctly are true'.[3]

What is meant by clear and distinct perception? In the *Principles of Philosophy*[4] Descartes tells us that 'I call that clear which is present and apparent to an attentive mind, in the same way as we assert that we see objects clearly when, being present to the beholding eye, they operate upon it with sufficient strength. But the distinct is that which is so precise and different from all other objects that it contains within itself nothing but what is clear.' We have to distinguish between clarity and distinctness. A severe pain, for example, may be very clearly perceived, but it may be confused by the sufferer with the false judgment which he makes about its nature. 'In this way perception can be clear without being distinct, though it cannot be distinct without being also clear.' This criterion of truth was doubtless suggested to Descartes by mathematics. A true mathematical proposition imposes itself, as it were, on the mind: when it is seen clearly and distinctly, the mind cannot help assenting to it. Similarly, I affirm the proposition, *I think, therefore I am*, not because I apply some extrinsic criterion of truth, but simply because I see clearly and distinctly that so it is.

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[1] *D.M.*, 4; *A.T.*, VI, 33.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *M.*, 3; *A.T.*, VII, 35, cf. IX, 27.

[4] I, 45–6; *A.T.*, VIII, 22, cf. IX B, 44.

Now, it might seem that having discovered this criterion of truth Descartes could go on to apply it without more ado. But the matter, he thinks, is not so simple as it appears. In the first place, 'there is some difficulty in ascertaining which are those (things) that we distinctly perceive'.[1] In the second place, 'perhaps a God might have endowed me with such a nature that I may have been deceived even concerning things which seemed to me most manifest. . . . I am constrained to admit that it is easy for Him, if He wishes it, to cause me to err, even in matters in which I believe myself to have the best evidence.'[2] True, in view of the fact that I have no reason to believe that there is a deceiving God, and indeed in view of the fact that I have not yet satisfied myself that there is a God at all, the reason for doubting the validity of the criterion is 'very slight and, so to speak, metaphysical'.[3] But none the less it has to be taken into account. And this means that I must prove the existence of a God who is not a deceiver.

If Descartes is prepared to entertain a hyperbolical doubt about the truth of propositions which are seen clearly and distinctly, it may at first sight appear that this doubt should be extended even to the proposition, *I think, therefore I am*. But this is certainly not the case. And the reason why it is not the case is obvious enough from what has already been said. I might have been so constituted that I am deceived when a mathematical proposition, for example, seems to me so clear that I cannot help accepting it as true; but I cannot be so constituted that I am deceived in thinking that I exist. For I cannot be deceived unless I exist. The *Cogito, ergo sum*, provided it is taken in the sense of affirming my existence while I think, eludes all doubt, even hyperbolical doubt. It occupies a privileged position, since it is the necessary condition of all thought, all doubt and all deception.

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[1] *D.M.*, 4; *A.T.*, VI, 33.

[2] *M.*, 3; *A.T.*, VII, 36, cf. IX, 28.

[3] *Ibid.*

4. It is necessary, therefore, to prove the existence of a God who is not a deceiver if I am to be assured that I am not deceived in accepting as true those propositions which I perceive very clearly and distinctly. Further, it is necessary to prove God's existence without reference to the external world considered as a really existent object of sensation and thought. For if one of the functions of the proof is to dissipate my hyperbolical doubt about the real existence of things distinct from my thinking, I should obviously be involved in a vicious circle, were I to base my proof on the assumption that there is a really existent extramental world corresponding to my ideas of it. Descartes is thus debarred by the exigencies of his method from utilizing the type of proof which had been given by St. Thomas. He has to prove God's existence from within, so to speak.

In the third *Meditation* Descartes begins by examining the ideas which he has in his mind. Considered only as subjective modifications or 'modes of thought', they are alike. But if they are considered in their representative character, according to content, they differ very much from one another, some containing more 'objective reality' than others. Now, all these ideas are in some way caused. And 'it is manifest by the natural light that there must be at least as much reality in the efficient and total cause as in its effect. . . . That which is more perfect, that is to say, which has more reality within itself, cannot proceed from the less perfect.'[1]

Some ideas, like my adventitious ideas of colours, tactile qualities, and so on, might have been produced by myself. As for ideas like substance and duration, these might have been derived from the idea which I have of myself. It is, indeed, not so easy to see how this can be so in the case of ideas like extension and motion, given that 'I' am only a thinking thing. 'But because they are merely certain modes of substance and because I myself am also a substance, it would seem that they might be contained in me eminently.'[2]

The question is, therefore, whether the idea of God could have

[1] *M.*, 3; *A.T.*, VII, 40–1, cf. IX, 32.

[2] *M.*, 3; *A.T.*, VII, 45, cf. IX, 35.

been produced by myself. What is this idea? 'By the name God I understand a substance which is infinite, independent, all-knowing, all-powerful and by which I myself and everything else, if anything else exists, have been created.'[1] And if I examine these attributes or characteristics I shall see that the ideas of them cannot have been produced by myself. Inasmuch as I am substance, I can form the idea of substance; but at the same time I should not, as a finite substance, possess the idea of infinite substance unless it proceeded from an existing infinite substance. It may be said that I can perfectly well form for myself the idea of the infinite by a negation of finitude. But, according to Descartes, my idea of the infinite is not a merely negative idea; for I see clearly that there is more reality in infinite than in finite substance. Indeed, in some way the idea of the infinite must be prior to that of the finite. For how could I recognize my finitude and limitations except by comparing myself with the idea of an infinite and perfect being? Moreover, although I do not comprehend the nature of the infinite, my idea of it is sufficiently clear and distinct to convince me that it contains more reality than any other idea and that it cannot be a mere mental construction of my own. It may be objected that all the perfections which I attribute to God may be in me potentially. After all, I am conscious that my knowledge increases. And possibly it might increase to infinitude. But in reality this objection is fallacious. For the possession of potentiality and the ability to increase in perfection are imperfections if we compare them with the idea which we have of the actual infinite perfection of God. 'The objective being of an idea cannot be produced by something which exists potentially . . . but only by a being which is formal or actual.'[2]

This argument can, however, be supplemented by a somewhat different line of reasoning. I can ask whether I, who possess the idea of an infinite and perfect being, can exist if this being does not exist. Is it possible that I derive my existence from myself, from my parents or from some other source less perfect than God?

If I were myself the author of my being, 'I should have bestowed on myself every perfection of which I possessed any idea and would thus be God.'[3] Descartes argues that if I were cause of my own existence I would be the cause of the idea of the perfect which is present in my mind, and in order to be this I should have to be the perfect being, God Himself. He argues, too, that it is not necessary to bring in the notion of the beginning of my existence in the past. For 'in order to be conserved in each moment in which it endures, a substance has need of the same power and action as would be required to produce and create it anew if it did not yet exist; so that the light of nature shows us clearly that the distinction between creation and conservation is solely a distinction of reason'.[1] I can ask myself, therefore, whether I possess the power of making myself, who now am, exist also in the future. If I had this power, I should be conscious of it. 'But I am conscious of nothing of the kind, and by this I know clearly that I depend on some being different from myself.'[2]

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[1] *M.*, 3; *A.T.*, VII, 45, cf. IX, 35–6.

[2] *M.*, 3; *A.T.*, VII, 47, cf. IX, 37–8.

[3] *M.*, 3; *A.T.*, VII, 48, cf. IX, 38.

But this Being which is different from myself cannot be something less than God. There must be at least as much reality in the cause as in the effect. And it follows, therefore, that the being on which I depend must either be God or possess the idea of God. But if it is a being less than God, though possessing the idea of God, we can raise a further question about the existence of this being. And ultimately, to avoid an infinite regress, we must arrive at the affirmation of God's existence. 'It is perfectly clear that in this there can be no regress to infinity, since what is in question is not so much the cause which formerly created me as that which conserves me at the present time.'[3]

In so far as the second line of argument is peculiar to Descartes and cannot be reduced simply to some form of the traditional causal proof of God's existence, its special characteristic is the use made in it of the idea of God as the infinite perfect being. And it shares this feature with the first line of argument. The latter, it is true, proceeds simply from the idea of God to the affirmation of God's existence, whereas the second argument affirms God not only as cause of the idea of the perfect but also as cause of myself, the being which has the idea. And so the second argument adds something to the first. But they both involve consideration of the idea of God as the infinite perfect being, and Descartes claims that 'the great advantage in proving the existence of God in this way by the idea of Him is that we recognize at the same time what He is in so far as the weakness of our nature permits. For when we reflect on the idea of Him which is implanted in us, we perceive that He is eternal, omniscient, omnipotent . . . and that in fine He has in Himself all that in which we can clearly recognize any infinite perfection or good that is not limited by some imperfection.'[1]

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[1] *M.*, 3; *A.T.*, VII, 49, cf. IX, 39.

[2] *M.*, 3; *A.T.*, VII, 50, cf. IX, 40.

[3] *Ibid.*

It is clear, therefore, that for Descartes the idea of the perfect is a privileged idea. It is an idea which must not only be caused by an external cause but also resemble the being of which it is an idea in the way that a copy resembles a model. Our idea of the perfect and infinite being is, indeed, admittedly inadequate to the reality in the sense that we cannot comprehend God; but it is none the less clear and distinct. And it is a privileged idea in the sense that its presence forces us to transcend ourselves, by affirming that it is produced by an external cause, and at the same time to recognize its objectively representative character. Other ideas, according to Descartes, might have been produced by us. In the case of some ideas it may be highly improbable that they are mental fictions, but it is at least conceivable, even if only barely conceivable. But reflection convinces us that this is inconceivable in the case of the idea of the perfect.

Many of us will probably feel very doubtful whether it is as clear and certain that the idea of the infinitely perfect being is inexplicable as a mental construction of our own. And some critics would probably wish to go further and maintain that there is really no such idea at all, even though we use the phrase 'infinite perfect being'. But Descartes at any rate was firmly convinced not only of the tenability but also of the necessity of his thesis. According to him, the idea is a positive idea, that is, an idea with a positive content which is relatively clear and distinct; it cannot have been derived from sense-perception; it is not a mental fiction, variable at will; 'and consequently the only alternative is that it is innate in me, just as the idea of myself is innate in me'.[2] This idea is in fact the image and likeness of God in me; it is 'like the mark of the workman imprinted on his work',[3] placed in me by God when He created me.

Now, reference has already been made to the *Notes Against a Programme* where Descartes denies that by postulating innate ideas he meant to assert that these ideas are *actual* or that they are some kind of species (in the Scholastic sense, meaning accidental modifications of the intellect) distinct from the faculty of thought. He never intended to imply that infants in the womb have an actual notion of God, but only that there is in us by nature an innate potentiality whereby we know God. And this statement seems to imply a Leibnizian conception of innate ideas, namely, that we are capable of forming the idea of God from within. That is to say, without any reference to the external world the self-conscious subject can form within himself the idea of God. In so far as innate ideas are contrasted with ideas derived from sense-perception we can say that the idea of God is innate in the sense that it is produced by a natural and inborn capacity of the mind, being thus potentially rather than actually innate. In the third *Meditation* Descartes speaks of my knowledge of myself as a thing 'which incessantly aspires after something which is better and greater than myself'.[1] And this suggests that the potentially innate idea of God is made actual under the impulse of an inborn orientation of the finite human being to its author and creator, this orientation being manifested in an aspiration towards an object more perfect than the self. And it would be natural to see in this view some connection with the Augustinian tradition with which Descartes had some acquaintance through his relation with the Oratory of Cardinal de Bérulle.

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[1] *P.P.*, I, 22; *A.T.*, VIII, 13, cf. IX B, 35.

[2] *M.*, 3; *A.T.*, VII, 51, cf. IX, 41.

[3] *Ibid.*

It is, however, difficult to see how the interpretation of the innateness of the idea of God can be reconciled with other statements by Descartes. For we have already seen that in the third *Meditation* he asks, 'how would it be possible that I should know that I doubt and desire, that is to say, that something is lacking to me, and that I am not quite perfect, unless I had within me some idea of a being more perfect than myself, in comparison with which I recognize the deficiencies of my nature?'[2] And he expressly states that 'the notion of the infinite is in some way earlier than the notion of the finite—to wit, the notion of God before that of myself'.[3] This passage clearly suggests that it is not that I form the idea of the infinite and perfect being because I am conscious of my imperfection and lack and of my aspiration to the perfect, but rather that I am conscious of my imperfection only because I already possess the idea of the perfect. It may be true that we cannot conclude from this that the idea of God is actually innate; but at least it seems to be stated that the idea of the perfect and infinite being, even if it is only potentially 'innate', is produced as an actual idea before the idea of the self. And in this case it seems to follow that Descartes changes his position between the second and third *Meditations.* The primacy of the *Cogito, ergo sum* gives place to the primacy of the idea of the perfect.

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[1] *A.T.*, VII, 51, cf. IX, 41.

[2] *A.T.*, VII, 45–6, cf. IX, 36.

[3] *Ibid.*

It can, of course, be said that the *Cogito, ergo sum* is a proposition or judgment, whereas the idea of the perfect is not. And Descartes has never denied that the *Cogito, ergo sum* presupposes some ideas. It presupposes, for example, some idea of the self. It may also, therefore, presuppose the idea of the perfect, without the primacy of the *Cogito, ergo sum* as the fundamental existential judgment being thereby impaired. For even if the idea of the perfect precedes this judgment, the affirmation of God's existence does not.

But one would have also, I think, to make some distinction between the *Cogito, ergo sum* of the second *Meditation* and that of the third. In the first case we have an inadequate and abstract idea of the self and affirmation of the self's existence. In the second case we have a less inadequate idea of the self, that is, of the self as possessing the idea of the perfect. And the starting-point of the argument is not the bare *Cogito, ergo sum,* considered without reference to the idea of God, but the *Cogito, ergo sum* considered as the affirmation of the existence of a being possessing the idea of the perfect and conscious of its own imperfections, finitude and limitation in the light of this idea. The datum is therefore not the bare self but the self as having within it the representative likeness of the infinite perfect being.

The aim of these remarks is not to suggest that Descartes' arguments for the existence of God can be rendered impervious to criticism. For example, he may escape from the charge that he postulates actual innate ideas by explaining in the *Notes Against a Programme* that innate ideas in his sense of the term are ideas 'which come from no other source than our faculty of thinking and are accordingly, together with this faculty, innate in us, that is, always existing in us potentially. For existence in any faculty is not actual but merely potential existence, since the very word "faculty" designates nothing more or less than a potentiality.'[1] But it is obviously open to anyone to maintain that the idea of God is not innate even in this sense. At the same time we have to try to discover what Descartes really means before we can profitably criticize what he says. To point out inconsistencies is easy enough; but behind the inconsistencies is a point of view which he is trying to express. And his point of view does not seem to involve

[1] *A.T.*, VIII B, 361.

a substitution in the third *Meditation* of the primacy of the idea of the perfect for the primacy of the *Cogito, ergo sum* implied in the second *Meditation.* It is rather that a more adequate understanding of the 'I', the existence of which is affirmed in the *Cogito, ergo sum,* reveals that it is a thinking self which possesses the idea of the perfect. And this is the foundation of the argument for God's existence. 'The whole strength of the argument which I have here made use of to prove the existence of God consists in this, that I recognize that it is not possible that my nature should be what it is, and indeed that I should have in myself the idea of a God, if God did not truly exist.'[1]

5. In the *Meditations* Descartes concludes from the two foregoing proofs of God's existence that God is not a deceiver. For God, the supremely perfect being, liable to no error or defect, exists. And 'from this it is manifest that He cannot be a deceiver, since the light of nature teaches us that fraud and deception necessarily proceed from some defect'.[2] Since God is perfect, He cannot have deceived. Hence those propositions which I see very clearly and distinctly must be true. It is certainty about God's existence which enables me to apply universally and confidently the criterion of truth which was suggested by reflection on the privileged proposition, *I think, therefore I am.*

But before we go any further we have to consider the question whether in proving God's existence Descartes is not involved in a vicious circle by using the very criterion which is to be guaranteed by the conclusion of the proof. The question is simple enough. Descartes has to prove God's existence before he can assure himself that it is legitimate to make use of the criterion of clarity and distinctness outside the *Cogito, ergo sum.* But can he, and does he, prove God's existence without making use of this criterion? If he makes use of it, he proves God's existence by means of the very criterion which is established as a criterion only when God's existence has been proved.

It may seem that the question should be raised only when Descartes' other argument for God's existence, namely, the so-called ontological argument, has been outlined. But I do not think that this is so. It is, indeed, true that in the *Principles of Philosophy* the ontological argument is given before the others. But in the *Meditations,* where Descartes is especially concerned with the *ordo cognoscendi* or *ordo inveniendi,* he does not give the ontological argument until the fifth *Meditation*, when he has already established his criterion of certain truth. Hence the use of the criterion in this particular argument would not involve him in a vicious circle. And I think, therefore, that it is best to restrict the discussion of the accusation that he is guilty of a vicious circle to the two arguments given in the third *Meditation*.

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[1] *M.,* 3; *A.T.,* VII, 51–2, cf. IX, 41.

[2] *M.,* 3; *A.T.,* VII, 52, cf. IX, 41.

This accusation was clearly expressed by Arnauld in the fourth set of *Objections*. 'The only remaining scruple I have is an uncertainty as to how a circular reasoning is to be avoided in saying: the only secure reason we have for believing that what we clearly and distinctly perceive is true, is the fact that God exists. But we can be sure that God exists, only because we clearly and evidently perceive it. Therefore prior to being certain that God exists, we should be certain that whatever we clearly and evidently perceive is true.'[1]

Various ways of rescuing Descartes from the vicious circle have been proposed, but Descartes himself tried to meet the objection by making a distinction between what we perceive clearly and distinctly here and now and what we remember to have perceived clearly and distinctly on a former occasion. In answer to Arnauld he remarks that 'we are sure that God exists because we have attended to the proofs which established this fact; but afterwards it is enough for us to remember that we have perceived something clearly, in order to be sure that it is true. But this would not suffice, unless we knew that God existed and that He did not deceive us.'[2] And he refers to the replies already given to the second set of *Objections*, where he made the following declaration. 'When I said that we could know nothing with certainty unless we were first aware that God existed, I announced in express terms that I referred only to the science apprehending such conclusions as can recur in memory without attending further to the proofs which led me to make them.'[3]

Descartes is quite right in saying that he had made this distinction. For he had done so towards the end of the fifth *Meditation*. He there said, for example, that 'when I consider the nature of a triangle, I who have some little knowledge of the principles of geometry recognize quite clearly that the three angles are equal to two right angles, and it is not possible for me not to believe this so long as I apply my mind to its demonstration; but so soon as I abstain from attending to the proof, although I still recollect having clearly comprehended it, it may easily occur that I come to doubt its truth, if I am ignorant of there being a God. For I can persuade myself of being so constituted by nature that I can easily deceive myself even in these matters which I believe myself to apprehend with the greatest evidence and clarity. . . .'[1]

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[1] *A.T.*, VII, 214, cf. IX, 166.

[2] *R.O.*, 4, 2; *A.T.*, VII, 246, cf. IX, 190.

[3] *R.O.*, 2, 3; *A.T.*, VII, 140, cf. IX, 110.

We are not told in this passage that the divine veracity guarantees the absolute and universal validity of memory. Nor, indeed, did Descartes think that it does. In the *Interview with Burman* he remarks that 'everyone must experience for himself whether he has a good memory or not. And if he has doubts on this score, he should make use of written notes or something of the kind to help him.'[2] What the divine veracity guarantees is that I am not deceived in thinking that those propositions are true which I remember having perceived clearly and distinctly. It does not guarantee, for example, that my recollection of what was said in some conversation is correct.

The question arises, therefore, whether Descartes' proofs of the existence of God, as given in the third *Meditation*, involve the use of certain axioms or principles. One has only to read them to see that this is the case. And if these principles are employed in the proofs because their validity has been previously seen with clarity and distinctness, it is difficult to see how a vicious circle is to be avoided. For it is only at the conclusion of the proofs when God's existence has been demonstrated, that we are assured that those propositions are true which we remember to have seen clearly and distinctly.

Obviously, Descartes has to show that the employment of memory is not essential for proving God's existence. He might say that the proof is not so much a deduction or movement of the mind from one step to another, the validity of the first step being remembered when the second is taken, as a viewing of the datum, namely the existence of myself as possessing the idea of the perfect, which gradually increases in adequacy until the relation of the self to God is explicitly recognized. It would also have to be maintained that the principles or axioms which appear to be presupposed by the proofs are not seen on a former occasion and then later employed because one remembers that one has seen their validity but seen here and now in a concrete case, so that the total viewing of the datum includes the perception of the principles or axioms in a concrete application. And this is in fact what Descartes appears to imply in the *Interview with Burman*. When accused of involving himself in a vicious circle by proving God's existence with the help of axioms, the validity of which is not yet certain, he answers that the author of the third *Meditation* is not subject to any deception in regard to the axioms, because his attention is fixed on them. 'As long as he does this, he is certain that he is not deceived, and he is compelled to give his assent to them.'[1] In answer to the retort that one cannot conceive more than one thing at a time, Descartes replies that this is simply not true.

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[1] *M.*, 5; *A.T.*, VII, 69–70, cf. IX, 55.

[2] *Entretien avec Burman*, edit. Ch. Adam, pp. 8–9.

It can hardly be claimed, however, that this reply meets all objections. As we have seen, Descartes pressed doubt to the point of 'hyperbolical' doubt by means of the fictitious hypothesis of the evil genius. Although the *Cogito, ergo sum* is impervious to all doubt whatsoever, since we can say *Dubito, ergo sum*, Descartes appears to say that we can envisage at least the bare possibility of our being deceived in regard to the truth of any other proposition which we perceive clearly and distinctly here and now. True, he does not always speak in this way; but this is what the hypothesis of the evil genius seems to imply.[2] And the question then arises whether his solution of the problem of the vicious circle enables him to remove this hyperbolical doubt. For even if in proving God's existence I do not employ my memory but perceive the truth of axioms by attending to them here and now, it seems that this perception is subject to hyperbolical doubt until I have proved the existence of a God who is not a deceiver. But how can I ever be assured of the truth of this conclusion if the latter rests on axioms or principles which are themselves subject to doubt until the conclusion has been proved? If the validity of the conclusion, the proposition affirming God's existence, is to be used to assure myself of the validity of the principles on which the conclusion rests, I appear to be involved in a vicious circle.

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[1] *Entretien avec Burman*, edit. Ch. Adam, p. 9.

[2] Some historians have interpreted Descartes as drawing a distinction between knowing a thing in a simple act of mental vision and knowing it with perfect science. Thus the atheist would know that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, but he would not know it with perfect science until he was assured of God's existence. And Descartes does, indeed, say that though the atheist can know clearly that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, 'such knowledge on his part cannot constitute true science' (*R.O.*, 2, 3; *A.T.*, VII, 140–1, cf. IX, 110–11). But the reason he gives for stating that such knowledge cannot constitute true science is that 'no knowledge which can be rendered doubtful should be called science' (*Ibid.*).

To answer this difficulty, Descartes would have to explain hyperbolical doubt as affecting only the memory of having seen propositions clearly and distinctly. In other words, he ought to make his theory of hyperbolical doubt agree more clearly with his reply to Arnauld than he appears to have done. He could then escape the charge of being involved in a vicious circle, provided that the use of memory is not essential to the proofs of God's existence. Or he would have to show that the clear and distinct perception of the axioms which he himself admits to be involved in the proofs is itself involved in the basic and privileged intuition which is expressed in the *Cogito, ergo sum.*

There are doubtless further difficulties which could be raised. Suppose, for example, that I am now pursuing a line of reasoning in mathematics which involves reliance on memory. Or suppose that I am simply making use of mathematical propositions which I recollect having perceived clearly and distinctly on a previous occasion. What is my guarantee that I can rely confidently on my memory? Memory of the fact that I once proved God's existence? Or must I recall to mind an actual proof of God's existence? In the fifth *Meditation* Descartes says that even when I do not recollect the reasons which led me to affirm that God exists, that He is not a deceiver and that consequently all that I perceive clearly and distinctly is true, I still have a true and certain knowledge of this last proposition. For, provided that I recollect having perceived its truth clearly and distinctly in the past, 'no contrary reason can be brought forward which could ever cause me to doubt of its truth'.[1] Assurance of the existence of God removes hyperbolical doubt, and so I can dismiss any suggestions which proceed from such doubt. It may be questioned, however, whether this answer of Descartes meets all the difficulties which arise out of his various ways of speaking.

The Cartesian system could, of course, be so amended that the vicious circle, real or apparent, would disappear. For example, if Descartes had used the divine veracity simply to assure himself that material things exist corresponding to our ideas of them, Arnauld's accusation would have been deprived of its foundation. We might wish to criticize the representative theory of perception which would seem to be presupposed, but there would be no vicious circle. For Descartes does not presuppose the existence of material things when proving God's existence. For this reason it may be a mistake to attach too much importance to the problem of the vicious circle; and it may appear that I have devoted a disproportionate amount of space to the subject. At the same time when we are considering a philosopher who aims at developing a closely knit system in which each step follows logically from the previous step and in which no presuppositions are made which are illegitimate from the methodological point of view, it is a matter of some importance to examine whether or not he has achieved his aims. And the proofs of God's existence provide an obvious case in which this is at least questionable. However, if Descartes can successfully maintain that the proofs do not necessarily involve the employment of memory and that the perception of any axioms involved in the proofs is somehow included in the basic and privileged intuition, he can free himself from Arnauld's charge. Unfortunately Descartes does not develop his position in an unambiguous and thoroughly consistent manner. And this, of course, is the reason why historians can give somewhat divergent accounts of his position.

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[1] *M.*, 5; *A.T.*, VII, 70, cf. IX, 55–6.

6. If, however, we once assume that we have proved the existence and veracity of God, the problem of truth undergoes a change. The question is now, not how I can be sure that I have attained certainty outside the *Cogito, ergo sum*, but rather how error is to be explained. If God has created me, I cannot attribute error either to my understanding as such or to my will as such. To make error necessary would be to make God responsible for it. And I have already ascertained that God is not a deceiver.

'Whence then come my errors? They come from the sole fact that since the will is much wider in its range and compass than the understanding, I do not restrain it (the will) within the same bounds but extend it also to things which I do not understand. And as the will is of itself indifferent to these, it easily turns aside from the true and the good, and so I am deceived and sin.'[1] Provided only that I refrain from making a judgment about something which I do not see clearly and distinctly, I shall not fall into error. But while 'the perception of the understanding extends only to the few objects which present themselves to it and is always very limited, the will, on the other hand, may in some measure be said to be infinite . . . so that we easily extend it beyond that which we apprehend clearly. And when we do this there is no wonder if it happens that we are deceived.'[2] The will goes out

[1] *M.*, 4; *A.T.*, VII, 58, cf. IX, 46. [2] *P.P.*, I, 35; *A.T.*, VIII, 18, cf. IX B, 40.

to things which the individual does not yet possess, even to things which the intellect does not understand. Hence we are easily led to judge about what we do not clearly understand. This is not the fault of God; for error is not rendered necessary by the will's 'infinity'. 'It is in the misuse of the free will that the privation which constitutes the characteristic nature of error is met with', that is, the privation is found in an act 'in so far as it proceeds from me', not 'in the faculty which I have received from God, nor even in the act in so far as it depends on Him'.[1]

7. Having satisfied himself that he cannot fall into error provided that he restricts his judgments to what he perceives clearly and distinctly, Descartes goes on to justify our belief in the certainty of pure mathematics. Like other thinkers before him, such as Plato and St. Augustine, he is struck by the fact that we discover rather than invent the properties of, for instance, a triangle. In pure mathematics we have a progressive insight into eternal essence or natures and their interrelations; and the truth of mathematical propositions, so far from being dependent on our free choice, imposes itself upon the mind because we see it clearly and distinctly. So we[2] can take it that we cannot be deceived when we assert mathematical propositions which we deduce from propositions which have been clearly and distinctly seen.

8. One might expect that after having ascertained the certain truth of two existential judgments (namely, the *Cogito, ergo sum* and the proposition affirming God's existence) and of all judgments of the ideal order which are clearly and distinctly perceived, Descartes would immediately go on to consider what we are entitled to assert about the existence and nature of material things. In point of fact, however, he proceeds to expound the ontological argument for God's existence. And the connection of this theme with the foregoing is the following reflection. If 'all which I know clearly and distinctly as pertaining to this object really does belong to it, may I not derive from this an argument demonstrating the existence of God?'[3] I know, for example, that all the properties which I clearly and distinctly perceive to belong to the essence of a triangle really do belong to it. Can I demonstrate the existence of God by considering the perfections contained in the idea of God?

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[1] *M.*, 4; *A.T.*, VII, 60, cf. IX, 47-8.

[2] It would be more accurate to say 'I', since Descartes has not yet proved the existence of a plurality of selves.

[3] *M.*, 5; *A.T.*, VII, 65, cf. IX, 52.

Descartes answers that this is possible. For existence is itself one of the perfections of God and belongs to the divine essence. It is true, of course, that I can conceive a rectilinear triangle without ascribing existence to it, though I am forced to admit that the sum of its angles amounts to two right angles. And the explanation of this is simple enough. Existence is not an essential perfection of the idea of a triangle. And from the fact that I cannot conceive a rectilinear triangle the angles of which do not amount to two right angles it follows only that if there is any existent rectilinear triangle its angles equal two right angles; but it does not necessarily follow that there is any existent rectilinear triangle. The divine essence, however, being supreme perfection, comprises existence, which is itself a perfection. Hence I cannot conceive God except as existing. That is to say, I cannot understand the idea of God, which expresses His essence, and at the same time deny His existence. The necessity of conceiving God as existence is thus a necessity in the object itself, in the divine essence, and it is useless to object that my thought does not impose necessity on things. 'It is not within my power to think of God without existence (that is, of a supremely perfect being devoid of a supreme perfection), though it is in my power to imagine a horse either with wings or without wings.'[1] The idea of God is thus on this count also a privileged idea; it occupies a unique status. 'I cannot conceive anything but God Himself to whose essence existence[2] pertains.'[3]

We shall encounter this argument again, in the revised form in which Leibniz defended it and in connection with Kant's adverse criticism of it. But it may be worth while to make the following points here with reference to Descartes' assessment of its value.

In the first place Descartes refused to admit that the ontological argument can be reduced to a mere matter of verbal definition. Thus in his reply to the first set of *Objections* he denies that he intended to say merely that when it is understood what the meaning of the word 'God' is, it is understood that God exists in fact as well as an idea of our minds. 'Here there is a manifest error in the form of the argument; for the only conclusion to be drawn is—hence, when we understand what the word "God" means, we understand that it means that God exists in fact as well as in the mind. But because a word implies something, this is no reason for its being true. My argument, however, was of the following kind. That which we clearly and distinctly understand to belong to the true and immutable nature of anything, its essence or form, can be truly affirmed of that thing. But after we have with sufficient accuracy investigated the nature of God, we clearly and distinctly understand that to exist belongs to His true and immutable nature. Therefore we can with truth affirm of God that He exists.'[1] Descartes thus believes that we have a positive insight into the divine nature or essence. Without this supposition the ontological argument cannot, indeed, stand; yet it constitutes one of the major difficulties in accepting the argument as valid. Leibniz saw this, and attempted to cope with the difficulty.[2]

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[1] *M.*, 5; *A.T.*, VII, 67, cf. IX, 53.

[2] The French version adds the words 'with necessity'.

[3] *M.*, 5; *A.T.*, VII, 68, cf. IX, 54.

The second point which I wish to mention has already been alluded to in passing. As we have seen, Descartes does not expound the ontological argument until the fifth *Meditation*, when he has already proved the existence of God and established that all that we perceive clearly and distinctly is true. And this implies that the argument, while elucidating a truth about God, namely, that He exists necessarily or in virtue of His essence, is of no avail for the atheist who is not already certain that whatever he clearly and distinctly perceives is true. And the atheist cannot know this last fact until he knows that God exists. Hence it would appear that the real proofs of God's existence offered by Descartes are those contained in the third *Meditation* and that the function of the ontological argument is simply to elucidate a truth about God. On the other hand, even in the fifth *Meditation* (in the French version) Descartes speaks of the ontological argument as 'demonstrating the existence of God'.[3] And towards the end of the *Meditation* he seems to say that we can draw from it the conclusion that all that we see clearly and distinctly is true; a conclusion which would imply that the argument is a perfectly valid proof of God's existence, independently of the other proofs already given. Moreover, in the *Principles of Philosophy*,[4] he gives the ontological argument first and clearly says that it is a demonstration of God's existence. The question arises, therefore, whether we have two incompatible assessments of the ontological argument or whether some explanation of Descartes' procedure can be found which will harmonize the two apparently different ways of speaking.

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[1] *R.O.*, I; *A.T.*, VII, 115–16, cf. IX, 91.

[2] Another difficulty, discussed by Kant, concerns the belief that existence can properly be called a perfection.

[3] *A.T.*, IX, 52.

[4] I, 14; *A.T.*, VIII, 10, cf. IX B, 31.

It does not seem to me that Descartes' different ways of speaking can be rendered perfectly consistent. At the same time a general line of harmonization can be found if we bear in mind his distinction between the *ordo inveniendi*, the order of discovery or the order in which a philosopher investigates his subject analytically, and the *ordo docendi*, the order of teaching or systematic exposition of truths already discovered.[1] In the order of discovery, as far as explicit knowledge is concerned, we know our own imperfection before the divine perfection. Hence the order of discovery seems to demand an *a posteriori* proof of God's existence; and this is given in the third *Meditation.* The ontological argument is reserved till later, when it is introduced to elucidate a truth about God, in dependence on the then already established principle that whatever we see clearly and distinctly is true. According to the order of teaching, however, so far as it represents the *ordo essendi* or order of being, the infinite perfection of God is prior to our imperfection; and so in the *Principles of Philosophy* Descartes starts with the ontological argument which is based on the infinite perfection of God. By doing this he appears to neglect his own doctrine that the existence of God must be proved before we can extend the use of the criterion of clarity and distinctness beyond the *Cogito, ergo sum.* But if, as seems to be the case, he looked on the proofs contained in the third *Meditation* as a prolongation and deepening of the original intuition expressed in the *Cogito, ergo sum*, it may be that he regarded the ontological argument in the same light.

It is possible that Descartes' treatment of our knowledge of God's existence combines, without sufficient discrimination, two attitudes or points of view. There is first the 'rationalist' point of view, according to which the arguments are really inferential processes. And if they are regarded in this light, Descartes did well to separate the ontological argument from the *a posteriori* proofs of the third *Meditation*, though at the same time the problem of the vicious circle in regard to the latter becomes acute. And there is secondly the 'Augustinian' point of view. One does not really know oneself, the self whose existence is affirmed in the *Cogito, ergo sum*, unless it is known as one term of the total relationship, self-God. What is required is not so much a process of inferential argument as a prolonged and ever more profound viewing of the datum. We know the self as imperfect only because we have an implicit awareness of God in the innate idea of the perfect. And one function of the ontological argument is to show by penetration of the idea of the perfect, which is part of the original datum, that God does not exist simply in relation to us but that He exists necessarily and eternally in virtue of His essence.

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[1] Cf. *Entretien avec Burman*, *A.T.*, v, 153; edit. Ch. Adam, pp. 27–9.

CHAPTER IV

DESCARTES (3)

The existence of bodies—Substances and their principal attributes—The relation between mind and body.

1. So far we are assured of the truth of only two existential propositions, 'I exist' and 'God exists'. But we also know that all the things which we apprehend clearly and distinctly belong to the realm of possibility. That is to say, they can be created by God, even if we do not yet know whether they have been so created. It is therefore sufficient, says Descartes, that we (or, more accurately, I) should be able to apprehend one thing clearly and distinctly apart from another to be assured that the two are really different and that the one can be created without the other.

Now, on the one hand I see that nothing belongs to my essence, as affirmed in the *Cogito, ergo sum,* except that I am a thinking and unextended thing, while on the other hand I have a clear and distinct idea of body as an extended and unthinking thing. And it follows that 'this I (that is to say, my soul by which I am what I am) is entirely and absolutely distinct from my body, and can exist without it'.[1]

In this case, of course, my existence as a thinking thing does not of itself prove the existence of my body, let alone of other bodies. But I find in myself certain faculties and activities, such as the power of changing position and of local motion in general, which clearly imply the existence of corporeal or extended substance, the body.[2] For in the clear and distinct perception of such activities extension is in some way included, whereas thinking or intellection is not. Further, sense-perception involves a certain passivity, in the sense that I receive impressions of 'ideas' and that it does not depend simply and solely on myself what impressions I receive. This faculty of sense-perception does not presuppose thought, and it must exist in some substance other than myself considered as an essentially thinking and unextended thing. Again, inasmuch as I receive impressions, sometimes against my will, I am inevitably inclined to believe that they come to me from bodies other than my own. And because God, who is no deceiver, has given me 'a very great inclination to believe that they (impressions or 'ideas' of sense) are conveyed to me by corporeal objects, I do not see how He could be defended from the accusation of deceit if these ideas were produced by causes other than corporeal objects. Hence we must allow that corporeal objects exist.'[1] Perhaps they are not exactly what sense-perception suggests that they are; but at any rate they must exist as external objects in respect of all that we clearly and distinctly perceive in them.

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[1] *M.*, 6; *A.T.*, VII, 78, cf. IX, 62.

[2] It should be noted how Descartes assumes that faculties and activities must be the faculties and activities of substances.

Descartes deals rather summarily with the existence of bodies. Moreover, neither in the *Meditations* nor in the *Principles of Philosophy* does he treat specifically the problem of our knowledge of the existence of other minds. But his general argument is that we receive impressions and 'ideas' and that as God has implanted in us a natural inclination to attribute them to the activity of external material causes, the latter must exist. For God would be a deceiver, were He to give us this natural inclination and yet at the same time to produce these impressions directly and immediately by His own activity. And Descartes, if called upon, would doubtless produce an analogous argument, with an appeal to the divine veracity, to existence, the existence of other minds.

We can dismiss, therefore, that form of hyperbolical doubt which formerly suggested to us that life might be a dream and that no corporeal things exist corresponding to our ideas of them. 'I ought to set aside all the doubts of these past days as hyperbolical and ridiculous, particularly that very general uncertainty respecting sleep, which I could not distinguish from the waking state. . . .'[2] And being thus assured of the existence of both mind and body, we can proceed to inquire more closely into the nature of each and into the relationship between the two.

2. Descartes defined substance as 'an existent thing which requires nothing but itself in order to exist'.[3] But this definition, if understood in a strict and literal sense, applies to God alone. 'To speak truth, nothing but God answers to this description, as being that which is absolutely self-sustaining; for we perceive that there is no created thing which can exist without being sustained by His power.'[4] But Descartes did not draw the Spinozistic

[1] *M.*, 6; *A.T.*, VII, 78–80, cf. IX, 63.

[2] *M.*, 6; *A.T.*, VII, 89, cf. IX, 71.

[3] *P.P.*, I, 51; *A.T.*, VIII, 24, cf. IX B, 47.

[4] *Ibid.*

conclusion that there is only one substance, God, and that all creatures are simply modifications of this one substance. He concluded instead that the word 'substance' cannot be predicated in a univocal sense of God and of other beings. He thus proceeds in the opposite way, so to speak, to that in which the Scholastics proceeded. For while the latter applied the word 'substance' first to natural things, the objects of experience, and then in an analogical sense to God, Descartes applies the word primarily to God and then secondarily, and analogically, to creatures. This procedure is in accordance with his professed intention of going from cause to effect rather than the other way round. And though he was by no means a pantheist himself we can, of course, detect in his manner of proceeding a preliminary stage in the development of the Spinozistic conception of substance. But to say this is not to suggest that Descartes would have approved of this conception.

However, if we leave God out of account and think only of substance in its application to creatures, we can say that there are two kinds of substances and that the word is predicated in a univocal sense of these two classes of things. 'Created substances, however, whether corporeal or thinking, may be conceived under this common concept; for they are things which need only the concurrence of God in order to exist.'[1]

Now, what we perceive are not substances as such but rather attributes of substances. And inasmuch as these attributes are rooted in different substances and manifest the latter, they give us knowledge of substances. But not all attributes are on an equal footing. For 'there is always one principal property of substance which constitutes its nature and essence, and on which all the others depend'.[2] The idea of substance as that which needs nothing else (save, in the case of created things, the divine activity of conservation) is a common notion, and it will not serve to differentiate one kind of substance from another. We can do this only by considering the attributes, properties and qualities of substances. On this point the Scholastics would have agreed. But Descartes went on to assign to each kind of substance a principal attribute which he proceeded to identify to all intents and purposes with the substance itself. For his way of determining what is the principal attribute of a given type of substance is to ask what it is that we perceive clearly and distinctly as an indispensable attribute of the thing, so that all other attributes, properties and qualities are seen to presuppose it and depend upon it. And the conclusion seems to be that we cannot distinguish between the substance and its principal attribute. They are to all intents and purposes identical. As will be noted later, this point of view involved him in certain theological difficulties.

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[1] *P.P.*, I, 52; *A.T.*, VIII, 25, cf. IX B, 47.
[2] *P.P.*, I, 53; *A.T.*, VIII, 25, cf. IX B, 48.

We have already seen that for Descartes the principal attribute of spiritual substance is thinking. And he was prepared to maintain that spiritual substance is in some sense always thinking. Thus he tells Arnauld that 'I have no doubt that the mind begins to think at the same time that it is infused into the body of an infant, and that it is at the same time conscious of its own thought, though afterwards it does not remember it, because the specific forms[1] of these thoughts do not live in the memory.'[2] So again he asks Gassendi: 'But why should it (the soul or mind) not always think, when it is a thinking substance? Why is it strange that we do not remember the thoughts it has had when in the womb or in a stupor, when we do not even remember most of those which we know we have had when grown up, in good health, and awake?'[3] And, indeed, if the essence of the soul is to think, it must obviously either always think, even when at first sight it does not do so, or cease to exist when not thinking. Descartes' conclusion follows from his premisses. Whether the premisses are true or not, is another question.

What, then, is the principal attribute of corporeal substance? It must be extension. We cannot conceive figure or action, for example, without extension; but we can conceive extension without figure or action. 'Thus extension in length, breadth and depth constitutes the nature of corporeal substance.'[4] Here we have the geometrical conception of corporeal substance, considered apart from motion and energy.

These principal attributes are inseparable from the substances of which they are attributes. But there are also modifications which are separable, not in the sense that they can exist apart from the substances of which they are modifications, but in the sense that the substances can exist without those particular modifications. For example, though thinking is essential to the mind, the latter has different thoughts successively. And though a thought cannot exist apart from the mind, the latter can exist without this or that particular thought. Similarly, though extension is essential to corporeal substance, a particular quantity or shape is not. The size and figure of a body can vary. And these variable modifications of the attributes of thought and extension are called by Descartes 'modes'. He does, indeed, say that 'when we here speak of modes we mean nothing more than what are elsewhere termed attributes or qualities'.[1] But he proceeds to distinguish his uses of these terms and adds that because in God there is no change we should not ascribe to Him modes or qualities but only attributes. And when we consider thought and extension as 'modes' of substances we are thinking of them as modifiable in diverse ways. In practice, therefore, the word 'mode' should be restricted to the variable modifications of created substances.[2]

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[1] Cf. the Scholastic term *species* as used for a mental modification or idea.

[2] *R.O.*, 4, 2; *A.T.*, VII, 240, cf. IX, 190.

[3] *R.O.*, 5, 2, 4; *A.T.*, VII, 356–7.

[4] *P.P.*, I, 53; *A.T.*, VIII, 25, cf. IX, B, 48.

3. The natural conclusion to draw from the foregoing is that the human being consists of two separate substances and that the relation of mind to body is analogous to that of the pilot in the ship. In Scholastic Aristotelianism the human being was depicted as a unity, soul standing to body as form to matter. The soul, moreover, was not reduced to mind: it was regarded as the principle of biological, sensitive and intellectual life. And in Thomism at least it was depicted as giving existence to the body, in the sense of making the body what it is, a human body. Clearly, this view of the soul facilitated insistence on the unity of the human being. Soul and body together form one complete substance. But on Descartes' principles it would appear to be very difficult to maintain that there is any intrinsic relationship between the two factors. For if Descartes begins by saying that I am a substance the whole nature of which is to think, and if the body does not think and is not included in my clear and distinct idea of myself as a thinking thing, it would seem to follow that the body does not belong to my essence or nature. And in this case I am a soul lodged in a body. True, if I can move my body and direct some of its activities, there is at least this relationship between the two that the soul stands to the body as mover to moved and the body to the soul as instrument to agent. And if this is so, the analogy of the relationship between a captain or a pilot and his ship is not inapt. It is, therefore, easy to understand

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[1] *P.P.*, I, 56; *A.T.*, VIII, 26, cf. IX B, 49.

[2] Descartes remarks that there are in created substances invariable attributes 'like existence and duration in the existing and enduring thing' (*P.P.*, I, 56; *A.T.*, VIII, 26, cf. IX B, 49). These should not be called modes.

Arnauld's remark in the fourth set of *Objections* that the theory of my clearly and distinctly perceiving myself to be merely a thinking being leads to the conclusion that 'nothing corporeal belongs to the essence of man, who is hence entirely spirit, while his body is merely the vehicle of spirit; whence follows the definition of man as a spirit which makes use of a body'.[1]

In point of fact, however, Descartes had already stated in the sixth *Meditation* that the self is not lodged in the body as a pilot in a ship. There must be, he says, some truth in all things which nature teaches us. For nature in general means either God or the order of things created by God, while nature in particular means the complexus of things which He has given us. And God, as we have seen, is no deceiver. If, therefore, nature teaches me that I have a body which is affected by pain and which feels hunger and thirst, I cannot doubt that there is some truth in all this. But 'nature also teaches me by these sensations of pain, hunger, thirst, etc., that I am not only lodged in my body as a pilot in a vessel, but that I am very closely united to it, and, so to speak, so intermingled with it that I seem to compose with it one whole. For if this were not the case, when my body is hurt, I, who am merely a thinking being, should not feel pain, for I should perceive this wound by the understanding only, just as the sailor perceives by sight when something is damaged in his vessel.'[2]

Descartes appears to be in a difficult position. On the one hand, his application of the criterion of clarity and distinctness leads him to emphasize the real distinction between soul and body and even to represent each of them as being a complete substance. On the other hand, he does not want to accept the conclusion which appears to follow, namely, that the soul is simply lodged in a body which it uses as a kind of extrinsic vehicle or instrument. And he did not reject this conclusion simply to avoid criticism on theological grounds. For he was aware of empirical data which militate against the truth of the conclusion. He was aware, in other words, that the soul is influenced by the body and the body by the soul and that they must in some sense constitute a unity. He was not prepared to deny the facts of interaction, and, as is well known, he tried to ascertain the point of interaction. 'In order to understand all these things more perfectly we must know that the soul is really joined to the whole body, and that we cannot, properly speaking, say that it exists in any one of its parts to the exclusion of the others, because it is one and in some manner indivisible. . . . (But) it is likewise necessary to know that although the soul is joined to the whole body, there is yet a certain part in which it exercises its functions more particularly than in all the others; and it is usually believed that this part is the brain, or possibly the heart. . . . But, in examining the matter with care, it seems as though I have clearly ascertained that the part of the body in which the soul exercises its functions immediately is in no way the heart, nor the whole of the brain, but merely the most inward of all its parts, to wit, a certain very small gland which is situated in the middle of its substance and which is so suspended above the duct whereby the animal spirits[1] in its anterior cavities have communication with those in the posterior that the slightest movements which take place in it alter very greatly the course of these spirits; and reciprocally that the smallest changes which occur in the course of the spirits may do much to change the movements of this gland.'[2] Localization of the point of interaction does not, indeed, solve the problems arising in connection with the relationship between an immaterial soul and a material body; and from one point of view it seems to underline the distinction between soul and body. However, it is clear that Descartes had no intention of denying interaction.

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[1] *A.T.*, VII, 203, cf. IX, 158.

[2] *M.*, 6; *A.T.*, VII, 81, cf. IX, 64.

This combination of two lines of thought, namely that of emphasizing the distinction between soul and body and that of accepting and trying to explain interaction and the total unity of man, is reflected in Descartes' reply to Arnauld. If soul and body are said to be incomplete substances 'because they cannot exist by themselves . . . I confess that it seems to me to be a contradiction for them to be substances. . . . Taken alone, they are complete (substances). And I know that thinking substance is a complete thing no less than that which is extended.'[3] Here Descartes says that soul and body are complete substances, underlining the distinction between them. At the same time 'it is true that in another sense they can be called incomplete substances; that is, in a sense which allows that in so far as they are substances they have no lack of completeness, and which merely asserts that in so far as they referred to some other substance, in unison with which they form a single self-subsistent thing. . . . Mind and body are incomplete substances viewed in relation to the man who is the unity which they form together.'[1]

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[1] The 'animal spirits' here referred to are 'the most animated and subtle portions of the blood' which enter into the cavities of the brain. They are material bodies 'of extreme minuteness', which 'move very quickly like the particles of the flame which issues from a torch'; and they are conducted into the nerves and muscles 'by means of which they move the body in all the different ways in which it can be moved' (*P.S.*, I, 10; *A.T.*, XI, 334–5).

[2] *P.S.*, I, 30–1; *A.T.*, XI, 351–2.

[3] *R.O.*, 4, I; *A.T.*, VII, 222, cf. IX, 173.

In view of this unsatisfactory position of uneasy balance it is understandable that a Cartesian like Geulincx maintained a theory of occasionalism according to which there is no real causal interaction between soul and body. On the occasion of an act of my will, for example, God moves the arm. Indeed, Descartes had himself given grounds for the development of such a theory. For example, in the *Notes Against a Programme* he speaks of external objects transmitting to the mind through the organs of sense, not ideas themselves, but 'something which gave the mind occasion to form these ideas, by means of an innate faculty, at this time rather than at another'.[2] A passage like this inevitably suggests the picture of two series of events, ideas in the mental series and movements in the corporeal series, the latter being the occasion on which the former are produced by the mind itself. And inasmuch as Descartes stressed the constant conserving activity of God in the world, this conservation being interpreted as an ever-renewed creation, one might draw the conclusion that God is the only direct causal agent. I do not mean to suggest that Descartes himself asserted a theory of occasionalism; for, as we have seen, he maintained that interaction takes place. But his treatment of the subject understandably led to the assertion of an occasionalist theory, offered partly as an explanation of what 'interaction' really means, by those who maintained Descartes' general position with regard to the nature and status of mind.

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[1] *Ibid.*

[2] *A.T.*, VIII B, 359.

CHAPTER V

DESCARTES (4)

The qualities of bodies—Descartes and the dogma of transubstantiation—Space and place—Motion—Duration and time—The origin of motion—The laws of motion—The divine activity in the world—Living bodies.

1. WE have seen that according to Descartes the principal attribute of corporeal substance is extension, 'thus extension[1] in length, breadth and depth constitutes the nature of corporeal substance'.[2] We can allow, therefore, that size and figure are objective natural phenomena. For they are modes or variable modifications of extension. But what is to be said about qualities like colour, sound and taste, the so-called 'secondary qualities'? Do they exist objectively in corporeal substances or not?

Descartes' answer to this question resembles that already given by Galileo.[3] These qualities are nothing in external things 'but the various dispositions of these objects which have the power of moving our nerves in various ways'.[4] Light, colour, smell, taste, sound and the tactile qualities 'are nothing more, as far as is known to us, than certain dispositions of objects consisting of magnitude, figure and motion'.[5] Thus the secondary qualities exist in us as sentient subjects rather than in external things. The latter, extended things in motion, cause in us the sensations of colour, sound and so on. This is what Descartes meant when he said at an earlier stage of his inquiry that corporeal things might not turn out to be precisely what they seem to be. We read, for example: 'Hence we must allow that corporeal things exist. However, they are perhaps not exactly what we perceive by the senses, because this apprehension by the senses is in many instances very obscure and confused.'[6] Extension is what we perceive clearly and distinctly to belong to the essence or nature of corporeal substance. But our ideas of colours and sounds are not clear and distinct.

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[1] 'By extension we understand whatever has length, breadth and depth, not inquiring whether it is a real body or merely space' (*R.D.*, 14; *A.T.*, X, 442). This is the preliminary idea of extension.

[2] *P.P.*, I, 53; *A.T.*, VIII, 25, cf. IX B, 48.

[3] See vol. III, p. 287.

[4] *P.P.*, 4, 198; *A.T.*, VIII, 322–3, cf. IX B, 317.

[5] *P.P.*, 4, 199; *A.T.*, VIII, 323, cf. IX B, 318.

[6] *M.*, 6; *A.T.*, VII, 80, cf. IX, 63.

The natural conclusion would seem to be that our ideas of colours, sounds and so on are not innate ideas but adventitious ideas, coming from outside, caused, that is to say, by external corporeal things. Descartes held that there are in bodies imperceptible particles, though they are not, like Democritus' atoms, indivisible.[1] And this naturally suggests that in his opinion these particles in motion cause a stimulation of the sense-organs which leads to the perception of colours, sounds and other secondary qualities. Arnauld certainly understood him in this sense. 'M. Descartes recognizes no sense-qualities, but only certain motions of the minute bodies which surround us, by means of which we perceive the different impressions to which we afterwards give the names of colour, savour and odour.'[2] And in his reply Descartes asserts that what stimulates the senses is the 'superficies which forms the boundary of the dimensions of the perceived body', because 'no sense is stimulated otherwise than by contact' and 'contact takes place only at the surface'.[3] He then goes on to say that by surface we must not understand only the external figure of bodies as felt by the fingers. For there are in bodies minute particles which are imperceptible, and the surface of a body is the superficies which immediately surrounds its separate particles.

In the *Notes Against a Programme*, however, Descartes asserts that 'nothing reaches our mind from external objects through the organs of sense beyond certain corporeal movements', and he draws the conclusion that 'the ideas of pain, colour, sound and the like (must) be innate'.[4] Hence, if the ideas of secondary qualities are innate, they can hardly be at the same time adventitious. Corporeal movements stimulate the senses, and on the occasion of these movements the mind produces its ideas of colours and so on. In this sense they are innate. Indeed, in the *Notes Against a Programme* Descartes says that all ideas are innate, even the ideas of corporeal movements themselves. For we do not conceive them in the precise form in which they exist. We must distinguish, therefore, between the corporeal movements and the ideas of them which we form on the occasion of our being stimulated by them.

This theory implies, of course, a representative theory of perception. What is perceived is in the mind, though it represents what is outside the mind. And this theory gives rise to obvious problems. But, quite apart from this point, the distinction between innate, adventitious and factitious ideas appears to break down if it turns out that all ideas are innate. It appears that Descartes first intended to restrict innate ideas to clear and distinct ideas, distinguishing them from ideas which are adventitious and confused, but that he later came to think that all ideas are innate, in which case, of course, not all innate ideas are clear and distinct. And there is evidently a link between these different ways of speaking about ideas and the different ways in which he speaks about the relation between soul and body. For if there can be real relations of efficient causality between body and mind, there can be adventitious ideas whereas on an occasionalistic hypothesis all ideas must be innate, in Descartes' sense of the word 'innate'.

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[1] *P.P.*, 4, 201–2; *A.T.*, VIII, 324–5, cf. IX B, 319–20.
[2] Fourth set of *Objections*; *A.T.*, VII, 217, cf. IX, 169.
[3] *R.O.*, 4; *A.T.*, VII, 249, cf. IX, 192.
[4] *A.T.*, VIII B, 359.

However, if we neglect Descartes' different ways of speaking and select only one aspect of his thought, we can say that he geometrized bodies, in the sense that he reduced them, as they exist in themselves, to extension, figure and size. This interpretation should not be pressed, it is true; but his tendency is to introduce a bifurcation between the world of the physicist, who can neglect all qualities like colour except in so far as they can be reduced to the movements of particles, and the world of ordinary sense-perception. The key to truth is purely rational intuition. We cannot say simply that perception is delusive; but it must submit itself to the final judgment of pure intelligence. The mathematical spirit is here paramount in Descartes' thought.

2. At this point I wish to mention briefly a theological difficulty in which Descartes was involved through his theory of corporeal substance. The difficulty, to which a vague, passing allusion was made in the last chapter, concerns the dogma of transubstantiation. According to the dogmatic decrees of the Council of Trent, at the consecration in the Mass the substance of the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, while the accidents[1] of the bread and wine remain. But if, as Descartes held, extension is identical with corporeal substance, and if qualities are subjective, it seems to follow that there are no real accidents which can remain after the conversion of the substance.

Arnauld raises this point in the fourth set of *Objections* in the section headed, 'Matters likely to cause difficulty to theologians.' 'It is an article of our faith,' says Arnauld, 'that the substance of the bread passes out of the bread of the Eucharist, and that only its accidents remain. Now these are extension, figure, colour, odour, savour and the other sensible qualities. But M. Descartes recognizes no sense-qualities, but only certain motions of the minute bodies which surround us, by means of which we perceive the different impressions to which we afterwards give the names of colour, savour and the like. Hence there remain figure, extension and mobility. But M. Descartes denies that these powers can be comprehended apart from the substance in which they inhere and hence that they can exist apart from it.'[1]

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[1] The word actually used is *species*, not *accidentia*.

In his reply to Arnauld Descartes observes that the Council of Trent employs the word *species*, not the word *accidens*, and he understands *species* as meaning 'semblance'. The semblance or appearances of bread and wine remain after the consecration. Now, *species* can only mean what is required for acting on the senses. And that which stimulates the senses is the superficies of a body, that is, 'the limit which is conceived to lie between the particles of a body and the bodies that surround it, a boundary which has absolutely none but a modal reality'.[2] Further, as the substance of the bread is changed into another substance in such a way that the second substance 'is entirely contained within the same limits as those within which the other substances previously were, or in precisely the same place as that in which the bread and wine previously existed, or rather (since these boundaries are continually moving) in that in which they would exist if they were present, it necessarily follows that the new substance would act on our senses in entirely the same way as that in which the bread and wine would act, if no transubstantiation had occurred.'[3]

So far as possible Descartes avoided theological controversy. 'For the extension of Jesus Christ in this holy sacrament, I have not explained it, because I was not obliged to do so, and because I abstain as far as I can from questions of theology.'[4] But he did so in another letter.[5] However, since Arnauld raised the question, Descartes felt obliged to attempt to reconcile his theory of modes with the dogma of transubstantiation, or rather to show how the dogma could be satisfactorily maintained and explained, given a theory of modes which he looked on as being certainly true. But though he did not deny the dogma (if he had, the problem of reconciling his theory with it would obviously not have arisen), his explanation of its implications in the light of his own theory of modes has not satisfied Catholic theologians. For though it is perfectly true that the Council of Trent used the word *species* and not the word *accidens*, it is clear enough that *species* was taken and intended in the sense of *accidens* and not merely in the very broad sense of 'appearance'. Descartes' attitude is clear enough. 'If I may here speak the truth freely and without offence, I avow that I venture to hope that a time will some day come when the doctrine that postulates the existence of real accidents will be banished by theologians as being foreign to rational thought, incomprehensible and causing uncertainty in the faith, and that mine will be accepted in its place as being certain and indubitable.'[1] His hope has not been fulfilled.

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[1] *A.T.*, VII, 217–18, cf. IX, 169.

[2] *R.O.*, 4; *A.T.*, VII, 250–1, cf. IX, 193.

[3] *R.O.*, 4; *A.T.*, VII, 251, cf. IX, 193–4.

[4] Letter to Père Mesland; *A.T.*, IV, 119.

[5] *A.T.*, IV, 162–70.

It may be noted that quite apart from its theological connections and repercussions Descartes' discussion of this matter makes it clear that although he talked about 'substances' and 'modes' it is a mistake to understand these terms as implying acceptance of the Scholastic theory of substances and accidents. 'Substance' really means for him what one clearly and distinctly perceives to be the fundamental attribute of a thing, while the substitution of the word 'mode' for 'accident' helps to indicate his disbelief in real accidents which, though only through divine power, can exist in separation from the substance of which they were accidents.

Perhaps it is worth adding that though the dogma of transubstantiation is understood by Catholic theologians as implying the existence of real accidents, it is not taken as necessarily implying that material things are, for example, coloured in a formal sense. In other words, the dogma cannot be used to settle the problem of secondary qualities.

3. If the nature or essence of corporeal substance consists in extension, what account is to be given of space? Descartes' answer is that 'space or internal place and the corporeal substance which is contained in it are different only in the way in which they are conceived by us'.[2] If we think away from a body, a stone, for example, all that is not essential to its nature as a body, we are left with extension in length, breadth and depth; 'and this is comprised in our idea of space, not only of that which is full of body, but also of that which is called a vacuum'.[3] All the same, there

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[1] *R.O.*, 4; *A.T.*, VII, 255, cf. IX, 197.

[2] *P.P.*, 2, 10; *A.T.*, VIII, 45; cf. IX B, 68.

[3] *P.P.*, 2, 11; *A.T.*, VIII, 46, cf. IX B, 69.

is a difference in our ways of conceiving corporeal substance and space. For when we think of space, we think, for example, of the extension actually filled by a stone as capable of being filled by other bodies when the stone has been removed. We think, in other words, not of extension as forming the substance of a particular body but of extension in general.

As for place, 'the words place and space signify nothing different from the body which is said to be in a place'.[1] The place of a body is not another body. There is, however, this difference between the terms place and space, that the former indicates situation; that is, situation in regard to other bodies. We often say, Descartes remarks, that one thing has taken the place of another thing, even though the former does not possess the same size or shape as the latter and does not occupy, therefore, the same space. And when we speak of a change of place in this way we are thinking of the situation of a body with reference to other bodies. 'If we say that a thing is in a particular place, we simply mean that it is situated in a certain manner in reference to certain other things.'[2] And it is important to observe that there is no such thing as absolute place; that is to say, that there are no immovable points of reference. If a man is crossing a river in a boat and if he sits still the whole time, he can be said to retain the same place if we are thinking of his situation or position with reference to the boat, though we can also say that his place changes if we are thinking of his situation with reference to the banks of the river. And 'if at length we are persuaded that there are no points in the universe which are really immovable, as will presently be shown to be probable, we shall conclude that there is nothing which has a permanent place except in so far as it is fixed by our thought'.[3] Place is relative.

We have seen that there is no real distinction between space or internal place and the extension which forms the essence of corporeal substances. From this it follows that there can be no empty space, no vacuum, in the strict sense. Because a pitcher is made to hold water, we say that it is empty when there is no water in it; but it contains air. An absolutely empty space, containing no body at all, is impossible. 'And therefore, if it is asked what would happen if God removed all the body contained in a vessel without permitting its place to be occupied by another body, we shall answer that the sides of the vessel will thereby come into immediate contiguity with one another.'[1] There could be no distance between them, for distance is a mode of extension, and without extended substance there can be no extension.

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[1] *P.P.*, 2, 13; *A.T.*, VIII, 47, cf. IX B, 69–70.
[2] *P.P.*, 2, 14; *A.T.*, VIII, 48, cf. IX B, 71.
[3] *P.P.*, 2, 13; *A.T.*, VIII, 47, cf. IX B, 70.

Other conclusions are also drawn by Descartes from his doctrine that extension is the essence of corporeal substance. First, there can be no atoms in the strict sense. For any particle of matter must be extended, and if it is extended it is in principle divisible, even though we have no means of dividing it physically. There can be atoms only in a relative sense, relative, that is, to our power to divide. Secondly, the world is indefinitely extended in the sense that it cannot have definable limits. For if we conceive limits, we conceive space beyond the limits; but empty space is not conceivable. Thirdly, the heavens and the earth must be formed of the same matter, if corporeal substance and extension are fundamentally the same. The old theory that the heavenly bodies are composed of a special kind of matter is excluded. Finally, there cannot be a plurality of worlds. On the one hand, the matter whose nature is extended substance fills all imaginable spaces, while on the other we cannot conceive any other kind of matter.

4. The geometrical conception of body as extension gives us by itself a static universe. But obviously motion is a fact, and its nature has to be considered. We need consider, however, only local motion, since Descartes states that he can conceive no other kind.

In common parlance, motion is 'the action by which any body passes from one place to another'.[2] And we can say of a given body that it is in motion and not in motion at the same time, according to the points of reference which we adopt. A man on a moving ship is in motion with reference to the shore which he is leaving, but he can be at the same time at rest with reference to the parts of the ship.

Properly speaking, however, motion is 'the transference of one part of matter or of one body from the vicinity of those bodies which are in immediate contact with it, and which we regard as being in repose, into the vicinity of others'.[3] In this definition the terms 'part of matter' and 'body' must be understood as meaning all that is transported, even though it is composed of many parts which have their own motion. And the word 'transportation' must be understood as indicating that motion is in the material body, not in the agent which moves it. Motion and rest are simply different modes of a body. Further, the definition of motion as the transportation of a body from the vicinity of others implies that a moving thing can have only one motion; whereas if the word 'place' had been used, we could have ascribed several movements to the same body, since place can be understood in relation to different points of reference. Finally, in the definition the words 'and which we regard as in repose' delimit the meaning of the words 'those bodies which are in immediate contact with it'.

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[1] *P.P.*, 2, 18; *A.T.*, VIII, 50, cf. IX B, 73.

[2] *P.P.*, 2, 24; *A.T.*, VIII, 53, cf. IX B, 75.

[3] *P.P.*, 2, 25; *A.T.*, VIII, 53, cf. IX B, 76.

5. The concept of time is connected with that of motion. But we must make a distinction between time and duration. The latter, is a mode of a thing in so far as it is considered as continuing to exist.[1] Time, however, which is described (and here Descartes employs Aristotelian language) as the measure of movement, is distinct from duration in a general sense. 'But in order to comprehend the duration of all things under the same measure, we usually compare their duration with the duration of the greatest and most regular motions, which are those that create years and days, and these we term time. Hence this adds nothing to the notion of duration, taken generally, but a mode of thinking.'[2] Hence Descartes can say that time is only a mode of thinking or, as the French version of the *Principles of Philosophy* explains, 'only a mode of thinking this duration'.[3] Things have duration or endure, but we can think of this duration by means of a comparison, and then we have the concept of time, which is a common measure of different durations.

6. We have, then, in the material world corporeal substance, considered as extension, and motion. Now, as has already been remarked, if we consider the geometrical conception of corporeal substance by itself, we arrive at the idea of a static world. For the idea of extension does not of itself imply the concept of motion. Therefore motion necessarily appears as something added to corporeal substance. And, indeed, motion is for Descartes a mode of corporeal substance. Thus we have to inquire into the origin of motion. And at this point Descartes introduces the idea of God and of the divine agency. For God is the first cause of motion in the world. Moreover, He conserves an equal quantity of motion

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[1] *P.P.*, I, 56; *A.T.*, VIII, 26, cf. IX B, 49.

[2] *P.P.*, I, 57; *A.T.*, VIII, 27, cf. IX B, 49–50.

[3] *Ibid.*

in the universe, so that though there is transference of motion the total quantity remains the same. 'It seems to me that it is evident that it is none other than God who by His omnipotence has created matter with the movement and repose of its parts, and who conserves now in the universe, by His ordinary concurrence, as much movement and repose as He put there in creating it. For although movement is only a mode in the matter which is moved, matter nevertheless preserves a certain quantity of it which never increases or diminishes, though in some of its parts there is sometimes more and sometimes less. . . .'[1] God, we may say, created the world with a certain amount of energy, and the total quantity of energy in the world remains the same, though it is constantly being transferred from one body to the other.

We may note in passing that Descartes tries to deduce the conservation of the quantity of movement from metaphysical premisses, that is to say, from consideration of the divine perfections. 'We know also that it is a perfection in God, not only that He is immovable in His nature, but also that He acts in a manner which He never changes. So besides the changes that we see in the world and those in which we believe because God has revealed them, and that we know to take place or to have taken place in nature without any change on the part of the Creator, we ought not to postulate any others in His works, from fear of attributing inconstancy to Him. From this it follows that, since He has moved in different ways the parts of matter when He created them, and since He preserves all (the parts) in the same fashion and with the same laws which He has made them observe at their creation, He conserves incessantly in this matter an equal quantity of movement.'[2]

7. Descartes also speaks as though the fundamental laws of motion can be deduced from metaphysical premisses. 'From the fact that God is in no way subject to change and that He acts always in the same manner we can arrive at the knowledge of certain rules which I call the laws of nature.'[3] In the Latin version we read, 'And from this same immutability of God certain rules or laws of nature can be known. . . .'[4] This idea is, of course, in accordance with Descartes' view, to which allusion was made in the second chapter, that physics is dependent on metaphysics in

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[1] *P.P.*, 2, 36; *A.T.*, VIII, 61, cf. IX B, 83.

[2] *P.P.*, 2, 36; *A.T.*, VIII, 61–2, cf. IX B, 84.

[3] *P.P.*, 2, 37; *A.T.*, IX B, 84.

[4] *A.T.*, VIII, 62.

the sense that the fundamental principles of physics follow from metaphysical premisses.

The first law is that each thing, so far as it depends on itself, continues always in the same state of rest or motion and never changes except through the agency of some other thing. No body which is at rest ever begins to move of itself, and no body which is in motion ever stops moving of itself. The truth of this proposition can be seen exemplified in the behaviour of projectiles. If a ball is thrown into the air, why does it continue to move after it has left the hand of the thrower? The reason is that in accordance with the laws of nature 'all bodies which are in motion continue to move until their movement is stopped by some other bodies'.[1] In the case of the ball the resistance of the air gradually diminishes the speed of the ball's motion. The Aristotelian theory of 'violent' motion and the fourteenth-century theory of impetus are alike discarded.[2]

The second law is that every moving body tends to continue its movement in a straight line. If it describes a circular path, this is due to its encountering other bodies. And every body which moves in this way is constantly tending to recede from the centre of the circle which it describes. Descartes first gives a metaphysical reason for this behaviour. 'This rule, like the preceding, depends on the fact that God is immovable and that He conserves movement in matter by a very simple operation. . . .'[3] But he then proceeds to cite some empirical confirmation of the law.

'The third law which I observe in nature is that if a body which is moving and which encounters another body has less force for continuing to move in a straight line than the other body has for resisting it, it loses its direction without losing anything of its movement; and that if it has more force, it moves the other body along with itself and loses as much of its movement as it gives to the other.'[4] Again Descartes tries to prove the law by referring both to the divine immutability and constancy in action and to empirical confirmation. It can hardly be claimed, however, that the connections which Descartes asserts between the divine immutability and constancy on the one hand and his laws of motion on the other provide much support for the view that the fundamental laws of physics can be deduced from metaphysics.

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[1] *P.P.*, 2, 38; *A.T.*, VIII, 63, cf. IX B, 85.

[2] See vol. III, pp. 157–60.

[3] *P.P.*, 2, 39; *A.T.*, VIII, 63, cf. IX B, 86.

[4] *P.P.*, 2, 40; *A.T.*, VIII, 65, cf. IX B, 86–7.

8. All this suggests a deistic conception of the world. The picture which naturally occurs to the mind is that of God creating the world as a system of bodies in motion and then leaving it to carry on by itself. And this is, indeed, the picture which suggested itself to Pascal who remarks in the *Pensées*:[1] 'I cannot forgive Descartes. He would have liked, in the whole of his philosophy, to be able to by-pass God. But he could not help making Him give a shove to set the world in motion; after that he has nothing further to do with God.' But Pascal's criticism is exaggerated, as I propose to show.

We have seen that Descartes insisted on the necessity of divine conservation in order that the created universe should continue to exist. And this conservation was asserted to be equivalent to a perpetual re-creation. Now, this theory is in turn closely connected with his theory of the discontinuity of motion and time. 'All the course of my life can be divided into an infinite number of parts, none of which is in any way dependent on the other; and thus from the fact that I was in existence a short time ago it does not follow that I must be in existence now, unless some cause at this instant, so to speak, produces me anew, that is to say, conserves me. It is as a matter of fact perfectly clear and evident to all those who consider with attention the nature of time, that in order to be conserved in each moment in which it endures a substance has need of the same power and action as would be necessary to produce and create it anew, supposing that it did not yet exist. So the light of nature shows us clearly that the distinction between creation and conservation is only a distinction of reason.'[2] Time is discontinuous. In the *Principles of Philosophy*,[3] Descartes says that time or the duration of things is 'of such a kind that its parts do not depend one upon the other and never co-exist', and in a letter to Chanut he says that 'all the moments of its (the world's) duration are independent the one from the other'.[4] Therefore, all the moments of duration being independent, the moments of my existence are discrete and independent. Hence the necessity of constant re-creation.

But Descartes did not imagine that in point of fact there is no continuity in the life of the self or that the latter really consists of a multitude of discrete selves without any common identity. Nor did he think that there is no continuity in motion and time. What he thought was that God supplies the continuity by His never-ceasing creative activity. And this suggests a very different picture of the world from the deistic conception alluded to above. The order of Nature and the sequences which Descartes attributes to natural laws are seen to depend on the unceasing creative activity of God. Just as it is not simply the beginning of my existence, but also my continued existence and the continuity of my self, which depend on the divine activity, so both the continued existence of material things and the continuity of motion depend on the same cause. The universe is seen to depend in every positive aspect and at every moment on God.

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[1] p. 77.

[2] *M.*, 3; *A.T.*, IX, 39, cf. VII, 49.

[3] I, 21; *A.T.*, VIII, 13, cf. IX B, 34.

[4] *A.T.*, V, 53.

9. So far we have considered the nature of the self as a thing which thinks and the nature of corporeal substance, which is extension. But nothing has been said specifically about living bodies, and it is necessary to inquire how Descartes regarded them. The scope of this question is clearly delimited by what has already been said. For there are only two kinds of created substance, spiritual and corporeal. The question is, therefore, to which class living bodies belong. Furthermore, the answer to the question is obvious from the start. For since living bodies can hardly be ascribed to the class of spiritual substances, they must belong to the class of corporeal substances. And if the essence of corporeal substances is extension, the essence of living bodies must be extension. And our task is that of inquiry into the implications of this position.

In the first place Descartes insists that there is no good reason for attributing reason to animals. And he appeals especially to the absence of any good evidence in favour of saying that animals talk intelligently or can do so. Some animals, it is true, have organs which enable them to utter words. Parrots, for example, can talk, in the sense that they can utter words. But there is no evidence that they talk intelligently; that is, that they think of what they are saying, that they understand the meanings of the words which they utter, or that they can invent signs to express thoughts. Animals give signs of their feelings, it is true, but the evidence goes to show that this is an automatic, and not an intelligent, process. Human beings, on the other hand, even the most stupid, can arrange words to express thoughts, and dumb people can learn or invent other conventional signs to express thoughts. 'And this does not show merely that the brutes have less reason than men, but that they have none at all, since it is clear that very little is required in order to be able to talk.'[1] Many animals, it is true, exhibit more dexterity in certain types of action than human beings do; but this does not prove that they are endowed with minds. If it did, their superior dexterity would show a superiority in mind, and then it would be impossible to explain their incapacity for language. Their dexterity 'shows rather that they have no reason at all, and that it is nature which acts in them according to the disposition of their organs, just as a clock, which is only composed of wheels and weights, is able to tell the hours and measure the time more correctly than we do with all our wisdom'.[2]

Animals, therefore, have no reason or mind. On this point the Scholastics would have agreed. But Descartes draws the conclusion that animals are machines or automata, thus excluding the Aristotelian-Scholastic theory of the presence in animals of sensitive 'souls'.[3] If animals have no minds in the sense in which human beings have minds, they cannot be anything else but matter in motion. When Arnauld objected that the behaviour of animals cannot be explained without the idea of 'soul' (distinct from the body, but not incorruptible), Descartes replied that 'all the actions of brutes resemble only those of ours which occur without the aid of the mind. Hence we are driven to conclude that we can recognize no principle of motion in them beyond the disposition of their organs and the continual discharge of the animal spirits which are produced by the beat of the heart as it rarefies the blood.'[4] In a letter of reply to Henry More, dated February 5th, 1649, Descartes does, indeed, assert that 'I do not deprive any animal of life', meaning that he does not refuse to describe animals as living things; but the reason which he gives is that he makes life consist 'only in the warmth of the heart'.[5] Again, 'I do not refuse them feeling inasmuch as it depends on the organs of the body.'[6] We are inclined to think that animal life is more than merely material processes because we observe in them some actions analogous to our own; and since we attribute the movements of our own bodies to our minds, we are naturally inclined to attribute the movements of animals to some vital principle. But investigation shows that animal behaviour can be exhaustively described without the introduction of any mind or of any unobservable vital principle.

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[1] *D.M.*, 5; *A.T.*, VI, 58.

[2] *D.M.*, 5; *A.T.*, VI, 59.

[3] Descartes also rejected, of course, the idea of a 'vegetative soul' or principle in plants.

[4] *R.O.*, 4, 1; *A.T.*, VII, 230, cf. IX, 178–9.

[5] *A.T.*, V, 278.

[6] *Ibid.*

Descartes is therefore prepared to say that animals are machines or automata. He is also prepared to say the same thing about the human body. A great many physical processes continue without the intervention of mind: respiration, digestion, the circulation of the blood, all these proceed automatically. True, we can deliberately walk, for example; but the mind does not move the limbs immediately; it influences the animal spirits at the pineal gland, and what it does is not to create new movement or energy, but rather to alter its direction or to apply movement originally created by God. Hence the human body is like a machine which can work to a great extent automatically, though its energy can be applied in different ways by the workman. 'The body of a living man differs from that of a dead man just as does a watch or other automaton (that is, a machine which moves of itself), when it is wound up and contains in itself the corporeal principle of those movements for which it is designed along with all that is requisite for its action, from the same watch or other machine when it is broken and when the principle of its movement ceases to act.'[1]

We can look at Descartes' theory of animals from two points of view. From the humanistic point of view, it is an exaltation of man or a reassertion of the unique position of man against those who would reduce the difference between man and brute to one of degree only. And this is not an interpretation which has simply been invented by historians; for Descartes himself provides the ground for it. For example, in the *Discourse on Method* he observes that 'next to the error of those who deny God . . . there is none which is more effectual in leading feeble spirits from the straight path of virtue than to imagine that the soul of the brute is of the same nature as our own, and that in consequence after this life we have nothing to fear or to hope for any more than the flies and the ants. As a matter of fact, when one comes to know how greatly they differ, we understand much better the reasons which go to prove that our soul is of its nature entirely independent of the body, and in consequence that it is not liable to die with it.'[2] And writing to the Marquis of Newcastle,[3] he alludes to Montaigne and Charron, the former of whom compared man disadvantageously with the animals, while the latter, by saying that the wise differ from the common man as much as the common man does from the beasts, implied that men and animals differ only in degree, without there being any radical difference.

[1] *P.S.*, I, 6; *A.T.*, XI, 330–1. [2] *D.M.*, 5; *A.T.*, VI, 59. [3] *A.T.*, IV, 573–5.

On the other hand, Descartes' interpretation of animals as machines, however crude it may be, is in accordance with the original separation he makes between the two worlds of spirit and matter. It represents or foreshadows the attempt to reduce the sciences to physics, and in physics, he says, he does not accept or desire any other principles than those of geometry or abstract mathematics.[1] The whole material world can be treated as a mechanical system, and there is no need for introducing or considering any but efficient causes. Final causality is a theological conception, and, however true it may be, it has no place in physics. Explanation by means of final causes, of 'souls', of occult vital principles and of substantial forms does nothing to promote the advance of physical science. And the same principles of explanation which are employed in regard to inanimate bodies must be applied also in the case of living bodies.

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[1] *P.P.*, 2, 64; *A.T.*, VIII, 78–9, cf. IX B, 101–2.

CHAPTER VI

DESCARTES (5)

Man's awareness of freedom—Freedom and God—Provisional ethics and moral science—The passions and their control—The nature of the good—Comments on Descartes' ethical ideas—General remarks about Descartes.

1. MAN'S possession of free will, or more strictly my possession of free will, is a primary datum, in the sense that my awareness of it is logically prior to the *Cogito, ergo sum.* For it is precisely the possession of freedom which permits me to indulge in hyperbolical doubt. I have a natural inclination to believe in the existence of material things and in the demonstrations of mathematics, and to doubt these things, especially the latter, effort or deliberate choice is needed. Thus 'whoever turns out to have created us, and even if he should prove to be all-powerful and deceitful, we still experience a freedom through which we can abstain from accepting as true and indisputable those things of which we have not certain knowledge, and thus prevent our ever being deceived'.[1]

That we possess this freedom is, indeed, self-evident. 'We had before a very clear proof of this; for at the same time as we tried to doubt all things and even supposed that He who created us employed His unlimited powers in deceiving us in every way, we perceived in ourselves a liberty such that we were able to abstain from believing what was not perfectly certain and indubitable. But that of which we could not doubt at such a time is as self-evident and clear as anything which we can ever know.'[2] The capacity to apply methodic doubt presupposes freedom. Indeed, awareness of freedom or liberty is an 'innate idea'.

This power of acting freely is man's greatest perfection, and by using it 'we are in a special way masters of our actions and thereby merit praise or blame'.[3] Indeed, the universal practice of praising and blaming ourselves and others for actions shows the self-evident character of human freedom. We all perceive naturally that man is free.

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[1] *P.P.*, I, 6; *A.T.*, VIII, 6, cf. IX B, 27.
[2] *P.P.*, I, 39; *A.T.*, VIII, 19–20, cf. IX B, 41.
[3] *P.P.*, I, 37; *A.T.*, VIII, 18, cf. IX B, 40.

2. We are certain, therefore, of man's possession of freedom, and this certainty is logically prior to certainty about God's existence. But once God's existence has been proved, it becomes necessary to re-examine human freedom in the light of what we know about God. For we know that God not only knows from eternity all that is or will be but also pre-ordains it. And the question arises, therefore, how human freedom can be reconciled with divine pre-ordination.

In the *Principles of Philosophy* Descartes avoids offering any positive solution to this problem. And this avoidance is in accord with his explicit resolution to steer clear of theological controversy. We are certain of two things. In the first place we are certain of our freedom. In the second place we may come to recognize clearly and distinctly that God is omnipotent and that He pre-ordains all events. But it does not follow that we can comprehend how it is that divine pre-ordination leaves man's free acts undetermined. To deny freedom because of divine pre-ordination would be absurd. 'For it would be absurd to doubt what we comprehend and experience within ourselves just because we do not comprehend a matter which from its nature we know to be incomprehensible.'[1] The wisest course is to acknowledge that the solution of the problem transcends the power of our understanding. 'We shall have no trouble at all if we recollect that our thought is finite, and that the omnipotence of God, whereby He has not only known from all eternity that which is or can be but also willed and pre-ordained it, is infinite.'[2]

In point of fact, however, Descartes did not content himself with this position. For he gave his opinions on theological issues connected with human freedom. What is more, he spoke in different ways at different times. For example, he went so far as to express his opinion in a controversy between Dutch Protestants, saying that he agreed with the followers of Gomar rather than with the Arminians. This was equivalent to saying that he preferred a strict doctrine of predestination. And as he dragged in the Jesuits, expressing his disagreement with them,[3] it would appear that he preferred Jansenism to Molinism. The Jansenists taught that divine grace is irresistible, and the only freedom which they really admitted was equivalent to spontaneity. An act may be done without any sense of constraint, but it is none the less determined by the attraction of 'delectation', earthly or heavenly. The Molinists held that it is the free co-operation of the will which renders grace efficacious, and that man's liberty of indifference is not impaired or destroyed by divine foreknowledge. That Descartes should show some sympathy with the Jansenists is not surprising when one recalls his statement that 'in order that I should be free, it is not necessary that I should be indifferent in the choice of one or the other of two contraries. Rather, the more I lean towards the one, whether I see clearly that the good and the true are to be found in it, or whether God so disposes my inward thought, the more freely do I choose and embrace it. Without a doubt, both divine grace and natural knowledge, far from diminishing my liberty, rather increase and strengthen it. Hence this indifference which I feel when I am not swayed by any reason to one side rather than the other is the lowest grade of liberty and reveals a lack of knowledge rather than a perfection of the will.'[1] It is true that if Descartes intended to explain what the partisans of liberty of indifference meant by it, he misrepresented their meaning. For he seems to understand by it a state of indifference brought about by lack of knowledge, whereas they meant by it an ability to choose either of two contraries even when the requisite conditions for intelligent choice, including knowledge, are present. At the same time he certainly thought that the more the will is directed to the objectively preferable choice, whether by grace or by natural knowledge, the greater our freedom; and he seems to imply that ability to make another choice does not belong essentially to true liberty. Thus he states in a letter to Mersenne that 'I move the more freely towards an object in proportion to the number of the reasons which compel me; for it is certain that my will is then set in motion with greater ease and spontaneity.'[2]

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[1] *P.P.*, I, 41; *A.T.*, VIII, 20, cf. IX B, 42.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Entretien avec Burman*, edit. Ch. Adam, p. 81.

But in his correspondence with the Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia Descartes speaks in a rather different way, adopting a position more akin to that of the Jesuits. Thus he presents us with an analogy. Two men, who are well known to be enemies, are ordered by the king to be at a certain place at a certain time. The king is perfectly aware that a fight will ensue; and we must say that he wills it, even though it would infringe his own decrees. But though he foresees and wills the fight, he in no way determines the wills of the two men. Their action is due to their own choice.

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[1] *M.*, 4; *A.T.*, VII, 57–8.

[2] *A.T.*, III, 381–2.

So God foresees and 'pre-ordains' all human actions, but He does not determine the human will. In other words, God foresees a man's free act because he is going to perform it; but he is not going to perform it because God foresees it.

The fact of the matter seems to be that when dealing with the theological issues of the free-will controversy Descartes adopted more or less impromptu solutions without any real attempt to render them consistent.[1] What he was really interested in was the problem of error. He wished to stress man's freedom not to assent to a proposition when there is any room for doubt and at the same time to allow for inevitable assent when the truth of a proposition is perceived with certainty. We embrace or reject error freely. Therefore God is not responsible. But truth clearly perceived imposes itself on the mind like a divine illumination.

3. Human freedom being presupposed, we can inquire into Descartes' moral doctrine. In the *Discourse on Method*,[2] before embarking on the application of his method of doubt, he proposes for himself a provisional ethic. Thus he resolves to obey the laws and customs of his country, to be firm and resolute in his actions and to follow faithfully even dubious opinions (opinions which have not yet been established beyond doubt) when his mind has once been made up about them. He resolves also to try always to conquer himself rather than fortune and to alter his desires rather than to try to change the order of the world. Finally he resolves to spend his whole life in cultivating his reason and in making as much progress as possible in the pursuit of truth.

Obviously, these maxims or resolutions constitute a rough-and-ready personal programme; they are far removed from 'the highest and most perfect moral science which, presupposing a complete knowledge of the other sciences, is the last degree of wisdom'.[3] But Descartes never worked out this perfect moral science. He doubtless did not feel that he was in a position to do so. In any case, whatever the reasons for it may have been, the Cartesian ethic is missing from the system, although according to the programme laid down it should have formed its crown.

Nevertheless Descartes did write something on ethical themes and on subjects relevant to ethics. And we can profitably consider first of all what he has to say on the passions, in so far as this concerns moral philosophy.

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[1] *La liberté chez Descartes et la théologie* by E. Gilson may profitably be consulted. Cf. Bibliography.

[2] 3; *A.T.*, VI, 22–8.

[3] *P.P.*, Prefatory Letter; *A.T.*, IX B, 14.

4. Descartes' analysis of the passions involves the theory of interaction. That is to say, he holds that passion is excited or caused in the soul by the body. 'What in the soul is a passion is in the body, commonly speaking, an action.'[1] In the general sense of the word 'passions' and perceptions are the same. 'We may usually term one's passions all those kinds of perception or forms of knowledge which are found in us, because it is often not our soul which makes them what they are, and because it always receives them from the things which are represented by them.'[2] But if understood in a narrower sense, and it is in this sense that the word 'passions' is taken in what follows, 'we may define them generally as the perceptions, feelings or emotions of the soul which we relate specially to it and which are caused, maintained and fortified by some movement of the spirits'.[3] In explanation of this rather obscure definition Descartes makes the following points. The passions can be called perceptions when this word is used to signify all the thoughts which are not actions of the soul. (Thus clear and distinct perceptions are actions of the soul.) We can call them feelings because they are received into the soul. And we can, with greater accuracy, call them emotions because of all the thoughts which the soul can have it is the emotions which are most prone to agitate and disturb it. The clause 'which we relate specially to it (the soul)' is inserted to exclude feelings like scents, sounds and colours, which we relate to external things, and those like hunger, thirst and pain, which we relate to our own bodies. Mention of the causal activity of 'the spirits' is inserted to exclude those desires which are caused by the soul itself. The passions, therefore, are emotions of the soul which are caused by the body; and they must, of course, be distinguished from the perception that we have of these passions. The emotion of fear and the clear perception of the fear and its nature are not the same thing.

The passions, says Descartes, 'are all good in their nature';[4] but they can be misused, and they can be allowed to grow to excess. We have, therefore, to control them. But the passions 'depend absolutely on the actions which govern and direct them, and they can be altered only indirectly by the soul'.[5] That is to say, the passions depend on and are excited by physiological conditions: they are all caused by some movement of the animal

[1] *P.S.*, 1, 2; *A.T.*, XI, 328.
[2] *P.S.*, 1, 17; *A.T.*, XI, 342.
[3] *P.S.*, 1, 27; *A.T.*, XI, 349.
[4] *P.S.*, 3, 211; *A.T.*, XI, 485.
[5] *P.S.*, 1, 41; *A.T.*, XI, 359.

spirits. And the natural conclusion, therefore, would be that to control them we ought to change the physical causes which produce them rather than try to expel them directly without doing anything to alter their causes. For while the causes remain, the commotion of the soul remains, and in this case the most that we can do is 'not to yield to its effects and to restrain many of the movements to which it disposes the body. For example, if anger causes us to lift our hand to strike, the will can usually hold it back; if fear incites our legs to flee, the will can arrest them, and so on in other similar cases.'[1] But though we would perhaps naturally interpret the indirect control of the passions as altering, so far as we can, the physical conditions which produce them, Descartes gives us a rather different interpretation. For he says that we can control the passions indirectly 'by the representation of things which are usually united to the passions which we desire to have, and which are contrary to those which we desire to set aside. Thus in order to excite courage in oneself and remove fear, it is not sufficient to have the will to do so, but we must also apply ourselves to consider the reasons, the objects or the examples which persuade us that the peril is not great. . . .'[2] This interpretation, however, is not a rejection of the first interpretation suggested: it is rather a device which we have to adopt when we cannot easily change directly the external causes of a passion.

5. But because the passions 'can bring us to any kind of action only by the intervention of the desire which they excite, it is this desire especially which we should be careful to regulate, and it is in this that the principal use of morality consists'.[3] The question arises, therefore, when is desire good and when is it bad? And Descartes' answer is that desire is good when it follows from true knowledge and bad when it is founded on some error. But what is the knowledge which renders a desire good? Descartes does not seem to speak very clearly. He tells us, indeed, that 'the error which we most ordinarily commit in respect to desires is that of not sufficiently distinguishing the things which depend on us from those which do not so depend'.[4] But to know that something depends on our free will and is not simply an event which happens to us and which we have to bear as best we may does not necessarily render the desire for this thing a good desire. However,

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[1] *P.S.*, 1, 46; *A.T.*, XI, 364.

[2] *P.S.*, 1, 45; *A.T.*, XI, 362–3.

[3] *P.S.*, 2, 144; *A.T.*, XI, 436.

[4] *Ibid.*

Descartes is, of course, aware of this, and he adds that we have 'to try to know very clearly and to consider with attention the goodness of that which is to be desired'.[1] Presumably he means that a first condition of moral choice is to distinguish what lies in our power from what is not subject to our control. Events of the latter type are ordained by Providence, and we have to submit to them. But, then, having ascertained what lies within our own power, we have to discriminate between what is good and what is bad. And following after virtue consists in performing those actions which we have judged to be the best.[2]

In a letter of 1645 to the Princess Elizabeth, Descartes amplifies the subjects somewhat while commenting on Seneca's *De vita beata*. To be in the possession of beatitude, to live in beatitude, 'is nothing else but to have one's spirit perfectly content and satisfied'.[3] What are the things which confer on us this supreme contentment? They are of two kinds. The first depend on ourselves, namely virtue and wisdom. The second, like honour, riches and health, do not depend (not entirely at least) on ourselves. But though perfect contentment demands the presence of both classes of goods, we are concerned strictly only with the first class, namely, with things which depend on ourselves and which can consequently be obtained by all.

In order to attain beatitude in this restricted sense, there are three rules to be observed. According to Descartes, they are the rules already given in the *Discourse on Method*; but actually he changes the first rule, substituting knowledge for provisional maxims. The first rule is to make every effort to know what one ought to do and what one ought not to do in all the occurrences of life. The second is to have a firm and constant resolution to carry out all the dictates of reason without being turned aside by passion or appetite. 'And it is firmness in this resolution which I think should be taken as virtue.'[4] The third rule is to consider that all the goods which one does not possess are outside the scope of one's power, and to accustom oneself not to desire them; 'for there is nothing but desire and regret . . . which can prevent us from being content'.[5]

However, it is not every desire which is incompatible with beatitude, but only those which are accompanied by impatience or sadness. 'Also it is not necessary that our reason should never be mistaken. It is sufficient that our conscience bear witness to us that we have never wanted in resolution and virtue to carry out all the things which we have judged the best. And so virtue alone is sufficient to render us content in this life.'[1]

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[1] *P.S.*, 2, 144; *A.T.*, XI, 437.
[2] *P.S.*, 2, 144 and 148; *A.T.*, XI, 436 and 442.
[3] *A.T.*, IV, 264.
[4] *A.T.*, IV, 265.
[5] *A.T.*, IV, 266.

Obviously, we are not told very much more by these observations about the content of morality, about, that is to say, the concrete dictates of reason. But Descartes held that before a scientific ethic could be elaborated it was first of all necessary to establish the science of human nature; and he did not pretend to have done this. Hence he did not feel that he was in a position to work out the scientific ethic which the programme of his system demanded. However, in another of his letters to the Princess Elizabeth on ethical topics he says that he will drop Seneca and give his own opinions; and he proceeds to say two things are required for right moral judgment, first, knowledge of truth and, secondly, the habit of remembering and assenting to this knowledge on all occasions which require it. And this knowledge involves knowledge of God; 'for this teaches us to receive in good part all that happens to us, as being expressly sent to us by God'.[2] Secondly, it is necessary to know the nature of the soul, as self-subsistent, independent of the body, nobler than the latter, and immortal. Thirdly, we should realize the extent of the universe and not imagine a finite world made expressly for our convenience. Fourthly, each one should consider that he forms part of a greater whole, the universe, and, more particularly, of a certain State, society and family, and that he ought to prefer the interests of the whole. And there are other things the knowledge of which is desirable; the nature of the passions, for example, the character of the ethical code of our own society, and so on. Generally speaking, as Descartes says in other letters, the supreme good 'consists in the exercise of virtue or (which is the same) in the possession of all the perfections the acquisition of which depends on our free will, and in the satisfaction of mind which follows this acquisition'.[3] And 'the true use of our reason for the conduct of life consists only in examining and considering without passion the value of all the perfections, both of body and mind, which can be acquired by our industry, in order that, being ordinarily obliged to deprive ourselves of some to have others, we may always choose the best. . . .'[4]

6. It is scarcely worth while following any further the rather

[1] *A.T.*, IV, 266–7. [2] *A.T.*, IV, 291. [3] *A.T.*, IV, 305. [4] *A.T.*, IV, 286–7.

haphazard remarks made by Descartes to the Princess Elizabeth. But there are several points to be noticed.

In the first place it is clear that Descartes accepted the traditional theory that the end of human life is 'beatitude'. But whereas for a mediaeval thinker like Aquinas beatitude, perfect beatitude at least, meant the vision of God in heaven, for Descartes it meant a tranquillity or contentment of soul obtainable in this life by one's own efforts. I do not mean to suggest that Descartes denied that man has a supernatural destiny which cannot be attained without grace or that beatitude in the fullest sense is the beatitude of heaven. What I want to draw attention to is simply the fact that he prescinds from purely theological themes and from revelation and sketches, since one cannot use the word 'develops', a natural ethic, a purely philosophical moral theory. In the moral theory of the historic Aquinas, however, there is no such clear-cut abstracting from revealed doctrines.[1]

In the second place one can hardly fail to notice the influence on Descartes' reflections of the writings and ideas of ancient moralists, in particular of the Stoics. It is true that he begins *The Passions of the Soul* with a customary derogatory allusion to the ancients, but this does not mean, of course, that he was not influenced by them; and mention has been made of his use of Seneca in the letters to the Princess Elizabeth. Indeed, the notion of virtue as the end of life, the stress on self-control in face of the passions, and the emphasis on bearing patiently, as expressions of divine providence, all the events which happen to us and which do not lie under our control, represent eminently Stoic ideas. Descartes was not simply a Stoic, of course. For one thing, he attached more value to external goods than did the Stoics; and in this respect he stands closer to Aristotle than to the Stoics. But one whole line of thought in his ethical theory, namely, the line of thought represented by his emphasis on the self-sufficiency of the virtuous man and by his constantly repeated distinction between things which lie in our power and those which do not, is unmistakably Stoic in inspiration and flavour.[2]

Thirdly, attention must be drawn to the intellectualist tendency in Descartes' ethical thought. In a letter written to Père Mesland in 1644 he says that if we see clearly that something is evil 'it would be impossible for us to sin during the time that we see it in this way. That is why they say, *Omnis peccans est ignorans*.'[1] And passages of this sort would seem to imply acceptance of the Socratic notion that virtue is knowledge and vice ignorance. But though it does indeed appear to have been Descartes' settled conviction that we cannot see *clearly* that something is evil and yet choose it, this 'seeing clearly' has to be understood in a somewhat restricted sense. Descartes agreed with the Scholastics that nobody chooses evil precisely as such; a man can choose what is evil only because he represents it to himself as being in some respect a good. If he saw clearly here and now the evil of an evil action, discerning that it is evil and why it is evil, he could not choose it; for the will is set towards the good. But though he may remember having heard that an action is evil or having himself seen on a former occasion that it is evil, this does not prevent him from attending here and now to the aspects of the action under which it appears to him as desirable and good. And so he can choose to perform it. Again, we must distinguish between seeing a good with genuine clarity and seeing it with only apparent clarity. If we saw the good with genuine clarity in the moment of choice, we should inevitably choose it. But the influence of the passions may divert our attention; and 'we are always free to prevent ourselves from pursuing a good which is clearly known to us, or from admitting an evident truth, provided only that we think that it is a good to bear witness to our free will by doing so'.[2]

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[1] I say 'historic Aquinas' to make it clear that I am alluding to Aquinas himself rather than to the sort of ethical theory which is often presented by Thomists and in which no explicit reference is made to revealed doctrines.

[2] On this subject see F. Strowski: *Pascal et son temps*, I, 113–20. Cf. Bibliography.

In general one can say that Descartes holds not only that we always choose what is or appears to be good and that we cannot choose evil precisely as such, but also that if we at the moment of choice saw with genuine and complete clarity that a particular good was good in an unqualified manner, we should inevitably choose it. But in point of fact our knowledge is not so complete that it can exclude the influence of the passions. The intellectualist thesis remains, therefore, an abstract thesis. It asserts how people would behave if certain conditions were fufilled which are not in fact fulfilled.

Finally, although in the remarks which he actually makes about ethical subjects Descartes emphasizes the virtue of resignation, this does not mean that his developed ethical science, if he had ever developed one, would have been simply an ethic of

[1] *A.T.*, IV, 117.

[2] *Letter to Mersenne*; *A.T.*, III, 379.

resignation. A perfect ethical system demands a previous complete knowledge of the other sciences, including physiology and medicine. And he doubtless thought that, given this complete scientific knowledge, man could then work out the moral conditions for the practical exercise and application of this knowledge. For the latter would give man a thorough understanding not only of scientific law and of what was not subject to man's free will but also of what lay in his power. And once man possessed a complete understanding of what lay in his power, he could then evolve an adequate theory about the way in which his free will should be exercised in the concrete. And in this way he would elaborate a dynamic ethic or an ethic of action, and not simply an ethic of resignation.

7. Nobody, I think, would wish to question the truth of the statement that Descartes is the most important French philosopher. His influence has been felt throughout the whole course of French philosophy. For example, one of the main characteristics of this philosophy has been a close alliance between philosophical reflection and the sciences. And though the more recent French thinkers have not followed his example of attempting to work out a complete, deductive system, they have recognized their place in a tradition which goes back to the inspiration of Descartes. Thus Bergson refers to the close alliance between philosophy and mathematics in the thought of Descartes and draws attention to the fact that in the nineteenth century men such as Comte, Cournot and Renouvier came to philosophy through mathematics, one of them, Henri Poincaré, being a mathematician of genius.[1] Again, Descartes' preoccupation with clear and distinct ideas, fortified by his use of comparatively simple language, has been reflected in the clarity of French philosophical writing when considered as a whole. To be sure, certain French thinkers have adopted an obscure style and diction mainly under foreign influence; but, by and large, the philosophers of France have continued the Cartesian tradition in the matter of clarity and in the avoidance of obscure jargon.

The clarity of Descartes is, indeed, somewhat deceptive. For it is not by any means always an easy matter to interpret his meaning. And it can hardly be claimed that he is always consistent. Yet there certainly is a sense in which it is true to say that Descartes is, and that Hegel, for instance, is not, a clear writer.

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[1] 'La philosophie française', p. 251 (in *La Revue de Paris*, May–June 1915).

This fact being presupposed, some philosophers have tried to find in Descartes a deeper meaning, a profound tendency of his thought, which possesses a permanent value independent of the Cartesian system as a whole. Thus in his *History of Philosophy* Hegel salutes Descartes as the real originator of modern philosophy, whose chief merit is to have started from thought without presuppositions. For Hegel Cartesianism is certainly inadequate. For one thing, Descartes, while starting with thought or consciousness, does not deduce the contents of consciousness from thought or reason itself, but accepts them empirically. Again, the ego of Descartes is only the empirical ego. In other words, Cartesianism forms only a stage in the development of philosophy towards absolute idealism. But it is a stage of great importance; for in starting with consciousness or thought Descartes brought about a revolution in philosophy.

Edmund Husserl interpreted the importance of Descartes in a rather different way. For him Descartes' *Meditations* represent a turning-point in the history of philosophical method. The latter aimed at a unification of the sciences, and he saw the necessity of a subjectivist starting-point. Philosophy must start with the meditations of the self-reflecting ego. And Descartes begins by 'bracketing' the existence of the material world and by treating the self as body and material things as phenomena in relation to a subject, the conscious ego. To this extent Descartes can be considered as a forerunner of modern phenomenology. But he did not understand the significance of his own procedure. He saw the necessity of questioning the 'natural' interpretation of experience and of freeing himself from all presuppositions; but instead of treating the ego as pure consciousness and exploring the field of 'transcendental subjectivity', the field of essences as phenomena for a pure subject, he interpreted the ego as a thinking substance and proceeded to develop a realist philosophy with the help of the principle of causality.

Thus while Hegel looked on the philosophy of Descartes as a stage in the development of absolute idealism and Husserl regarded it as an anticipation of phenomenology, both men laid stress on 'subjectivity' as the Cartesian point of departure. M. Jean-Paul Sartre does the same, though within the framework, of course, of a philosophy which is different from that either of Hegel or of Husserl. In his lecture, 'Existentialism and Humanism', Sartre remarks that the starting-point for philosophy must be the subjectivity of the individual, and that the primal truth is *I think, therefore I am*, which is the absolute truth of consciousness as it attains to itself. But he then goes on to argue that in the 'I think' I am conscious of myself in the presence of the other. The existence of others is discovered in the *Cogito* itself, so that we find ourselves at once in a world of inter-subjectivity. And it is worth remarking that the existentialists in general, while starting with the free individual subject, depict the consciousness of the subject as consciousness of the self in a world and in the presence of the other. Hence, though their starting-point has some affinity with that of Descartes, they do not involve themselves in the business of proving the existence of the external world as something not already given within the consciousness of the self. In other words, they do not start with the self-enclosed ego.

Hegel, Husserl and Sartre are, of course, simply three examples of the use made of Cartesianism by later thinkers. Many other examples could be given. One might cite, for instance, Maine de Biran's substitution of *Volo, ergo sum* for Descartes' *Cogito, ergo sum*. But all these thinkers have this in common, that they interpret the inner significance and permanent value of Cartesianism in function of a philosophy which was not that of Descartes. I do not say this by way of criticism. Hegel, Husserl and Sartre are all philosophers. Reference has, indeed, been made to Hegel's *History of Philosophy*. But this work forms an integral part of the Hegelian system: it is not a work of purely historical exegesis. And a philosopher certainly enjoys the right of deciding according to his own point of view what is living and what is dead in the philosophy of Descartes. At the same time, if Descartes is interpreted as an absolute idealist or as a phenomenologist or as an existentialist or, with La Mettrie, as a materialist who took the wrong path and failed to recognize the 'real' significance and the 'true' exigencies and direction of his thought, one runs the risk of failing to see him in his historical perspective. Descartes certainly tried to ground his philosophy in 'subjectivity' if one means by this that he tried to found his system on the *Cogito, ergo sum*. And it is perfectly true that this was an innovation of importance, and that when one looks back from a later stage of philosophical development one can see connections between this innovation and later idealism. But though there are what may be called idealist elements in Cartesianism, it would be most misleading to describe the latter as an idealist system. For Descartes grounded his philosophy on an existential proposition, and he was concerned to establish an objective interpretation of reality which he did not regard as reducible to the activity of consciousness. Again, if one emphasizes simply the connection between Descartes' mechanistic account of material reality and the mechanistic materialism which appeared in the eighteenth-century French Enlightenment, one obscures the fact that he sought to reconcile the 'geometric' view of the world with a belief in God, in the divine activity and in the spirituality of the human soul. Yet this is one of the most important aspects of his philosophy when we consider it in its historical setting.

In a sense Descartes' philosophy was an intensely personal enterprise. The autobiographical parts of the *Discourse on Method* show this clearly enough. He was animated, not by a merely superficial intellectual curiosity, but by a passion for the attainment of certainty. And he considered that the possession of a true system of philosophy was of importance for human life. But that for which he sought was objective certainty, self-evident truth and demonstrated truth. Descartes' insistence on 'subjectivity' (to use a later term) as the point of departure must not be confused with subjectivism. The attainment of something analogous to the objective, impersonal truth of mathematics remained his goal. In this sense he aspired to transcend tradition. That is to say, he aspired to establish the true philosophy which would rest on pure reason and not on past tradition, and which would be free from the limitations of space and time. The fact that we can discern in it the influence of tradition and of contemporary conditions is not, of course, a matter for astonishment. On the contrary, it would be astonishing if we could find no such influence. But the fact that Cartesianism is to a large extent dated does not deprive him of his claim to be considered the father of modern philosophy in the pre-Kantian period.

CHAPTER VII

PASCAL

Life and spirit of Pascal—The geometrical method, its scope and limits—'The heart'—Pascal's method in apologetics—The wretchedness and the greatness of man—The wager-argument—Pascal as a philosopher.

1. IN turning from Descartes to Pascal we are confronted by a man of very different stamp of mind. Both men were, indeed, mathematicians, and both were Catholics; but whereas the former was primarily a philosopher the latter was primarily an apologist. Descartes, it is true, can be considered to a certain extent as a religious apologist in the sense at least that he was aware of the religious and moral significance of his thought; but it is natural to think of him first and foremost as a systematic philosopher, intent on unfolding the 'order of reasons' and elaborating an organically connected and rationally established coherent body of philosophical truth capable of indefinite development. Though he was not a rationalist if by this word we mean a man who rejects the ideas of divine revelation and of the supernatural, he represents rationalism in the sense that he devoted himself to the pursuit of truth as attainable by the philosophical and scientific reflection of the human mind. He was a Catholic philosopher in the sense that he was a philosopher who was a Catholic; but he was not a Catholic philosopher in the sense that he was primarily concerned with defending the truths of faith. Pascal, however, was concerned with showing how the Christian revelation solves the problems which arise out of the human situation. In so far as he devoted himself to drawing attention to and exhibiting these problems he might perhaps be called an 'existentialist' philosopher, if we wished to use this term in a wide and perhaps rather misleading sense. But in so far as he was concerned with insisting that the answers to these problems, to the extent that the answers are available, are provided by Christian revelation and life he would probably be better classed as a Christian apologist than as a philosopher. We can understand at least how it is that while some writers see in him one of the greatest of French philosophers, others refuse to call him a philosopher. Henri Bergson and Victor Delbos, for

example, placed him side by side with Descartes, as the two chief French representatives of different lines of thought, and Jacques Chevalier sees in him a great philosopher precisely because he concerned himself with 'the questions that a man puts to himself face to face with death'.[1] Renouvier, on the other hand, considered Pascal too personal a thinker to merit the title of philosopher, and Émile Bréhier roundly declares that 'Pascal n'est pas un philosophe: c'est un savant et un apologiste de la religion catholique.'[2] These judgments are obviously partly dependent on personal decisions as to what constitutes philosophy and a philosopher. But at the same time they serve to emphasize the difference between Pascal and Descartes, a difference of which Pascal was indeed conscious. Indeed, in certain well-known aphorisms he explicitly rejected 'philosophy', meaning by this the sort of thing which Descartes attempted to do or which Pascal interpreted him as trying to do. In his opinion the great rationalist was too much occupied with the material world and too little concerned with the 'one thing necessary', to which a genuine love of wisdom would direct a man's attention.

Blaise Pascal was born in 1623, his father being the king's elected representative, the president of the Cour des Aides, at Clermont in the Auvergne. Biographers have dwelt on the influence of his early environment, the stark, rugged scenery of the Auvergne, on his character. He was educated by his father who in 1631 moved to Paris, and from childhood he displayed signs of outstanding intelligence and mental power. Whether the story of his rediscovery of geometry for himself at a time when his father was teaching him Greek and Latin is true or false, his interest in and ability for mathematics and physics were shown at an early date, and in 1639 he wrote an essay on conic sections, which was printed in the following year. Later he invented an adding-machine or mechanical computer, inspired by a desire to help his father in the assessment of taxes when he was occupying a Government post at Rouen. There followed the important series of experiments to prove the truth of Torricelli's experimental discovery of the vacuum, and these in turn provided the basis for the enunciation of fundamental principles in hydrostatics. Further, towards the end of his short life, when he was preoccupied with theological and religious problems, he laid the foundations of the infinitesimal calculus, the integral calculus and the calculus of probabilities. It is therefore not exactly true to say that Pascal's asceticism diverted him from all 'this-worldly' activity and frustrated his mathematical genius as some critics have stated.

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[1] *Pascal*, p. 14.

[2] *Histoire de la Philosophie*, Tome II, 1re partie, 1942, p. 129.

In 1654 Pascal underwent the spiritual experience recorded in his *Memorial*, an experience which gave him a fresh realization of the personal God and of the place of Christ in his life. And from this time his life bore a profoundly religious stamp. But this does not mean that we can justifiably divide it into two successive and separated phases, the scientific and the religious. For in abandoning himself to God he did not renounce all scientific and mathematical interests as 'worldly'; rather did he come to look on his scientific activities in a new light, as part of his service of God. If he subordinated mathematics to morals and natural morality to supernatural charity, he was simply embracing the point of view of any convinced Christian.

But though his 'conversion' did not produce in Pascal a complete renunciation of his scientific and mathematical interests, it certainly turned his mind towards theological themes. In 1652 his sister Jacqueline became a member of the community of Port Royal, the stronghold of Mère Angélique; and after his experience of 1654 Pascal formed intimate contacts with the Port Royal circle, the members of which were partisans of Jansenius, bishop of Ypres and author of the famous *Augustinus*. A number of propositions taken from this work had been condemned by the Holy See in May 1653; and the line taken by Arnauld and other partisans of Jansenius who belonged to the Port Royal circle was to accept the condemnation but to deny that the propositions were to be found in the writings of Jansenius in the sense in which they had been declared to be heretical. This attitude was regarded by Rome as equivalent to a dishonest evasion and was itself subjected to censure. But as far as Pascal is concerned he never committed himself to any sectarian or party standpoint, whether to that of Jansenius himself or to the milder views propagated by some of the associates of Port Royal. He declared that he did not belong to Port Royal but to the Catholic Church, and there is no adequate reason for questioning his sincerity. It is a mistake, therefore, to speak of him as a Jansenist if the term is used in a strict sense, namely, to indicate one who accepted and defended the condemned propositions. If at one time he tended towards the position represented by these propositions, he worked himself free of it. At the same time he was to a certain extent in sympathy with the Jansenists. He over-emphasized as they did, the corruption of human nature after the Fall and the powerlessness of man to become or to do anything pleasing to God without divine grace, even though he avoided the Jansenist denial of the part played by free will in accepting or rejecting grace. What attracted him to the Jansenists of Port Royal was not so much this or that specific tenet as the general attitude of Christian 'integralism' and refusal of compromise with the spirit of the world. In a society impregnated by deistic humanism and by rationalist scepticism and free thought he considered that it was above all the ideas of human corruption and of the necessity and power of divine grace which should be emphasized and that the highest Christian ideals should be maintained in their purity without any compromise or attempt to accommodate them to human weakness. And it was in this spirit that he wrote the celebrated *Lettres provinciales* (1655-7), which were condemned by the Congregation of the Index in 1657.

These letters are best known for the attack contained in them on the moral theology of the Jesuits. Pascal regarded the casuistry (the application of moral principles to particular cases) of the moral theologians as evidence of moral laxity and as an unjustifiable attempt to make Christianity easier for the more or less worldly-minded. In his writings on the subject he selects for mention and condemnation extreme cases of moral accommodation from certain authors, and he tends to confuse casuistry itself with the abuse of it. Furthermore, he tends to attribute to moral theologians unworthy motives which were certainly absent from their minds. The *Lettres provinciales*, in fine, show a lack of balanced judgment and a failure to distinguish between the fundamental and valid principles of moral theology and the abuse of casuistry. However, the main underlying issue is clear enough. The Jesuits believed that in the contemporary world the humanistic side of Christianity should be stressed and that when the ideals of the Christian life are applied to individual cases, there is no call to assert an obligation when there is good reason for thinking that there is no such obligation. Their motive was not that of extending their own dominion over consciences but that of including as many as possible in the ranks of practising Christian believers. Pascal, on the other hand, tended to look on humanism as equivalent to paganism, and any tempering of the wind to the shorn lamb he regarded as an intolerable tampering with the purity of the

Christian ideal. For good measure he accused the Jesuits of hypocrisy. In one sense he got the better of the dispute. For he was a brilliant writer, whereas his opponents did not produce any answer which was capable of having an effect equal to the *Lettres provinciales*. But in the long run Pascal was defeated. For moral theology and casuistry had a long history and process of development before them.

From soon after the time of his conversion Pascal seems to have formed the idea of composing an apology for the Christian religion with a view to converting the free-thinkers and sceptics of his time, as well as Catholics who did not live up to the precepts of Christ. But this project was never completed, and at his death in 1662 he left behind him only a sketch of the work, consisting mainly of aphorisms and notes, though there are some more extended passages. The collection of these thoughts is known as the *Pensées*[1] of Pascal.

2. Descartes tended to believe in one sovereign method of universal applicability, the mathematical method. And in his eyes the ideal attitude or spirit was that of the mathematician. It is true that these two statements are in some respects exaggerated and that they stand in need of qualification, as has already been indicated in the chapters on the Cartesian philosophy. But there can be little doubt, I think, that they represent the general impression which the writings of Descartes leave on the mind. Furthermore, they represent the idea which Pascal had of Descartes. And the former profoundly disagreed with the great rationalist's exaltation of the mathematical method and of the mathematical spirit. It is therefore somewhat surprising to find Pascal included in some histories of philosophy among the disciples of Descartes. The man who could make the comment, 'Descartes useless and uncertain',[2] can hardly be reckoned as an ardent Cartesian.

To say this, however, is not to say that Pascal despised the mathematical method or that he ever renounced his own mathematical and scientific achievements. Within its own limited field of application the geometrical method[3] of definition and orderly demonstration is supreme. 'An infallible method is sought by all. Logicians make profession of arriving at it, but the geometers alone attain it, and outside their science and what imitates it there are no true demonstrations.'[1] An ideal mathematical or geometrical method would indeed involve defining all terms and proving all propositions;[2] but this ideal method is beyond us. 'For that which surpasses geometry surpasses us.'[3] It does not follow, however, that geometry is uncertain. According to Pascal the geometer cannot define terms such as space, time, movement, number and equality; but the reason for this is that when the word 'time', for example, is pronounced the minds of all are directed towards the same object. The reference of the term would not be made clearer by any attempted definition. And as for our incapacity to prove all propositions, we must bear in mind the fact that basic propositions or principles are intuited. They cannot be demonstrated, but they are none the less evident. It is this fact which rescues mathematics from the corroding influence of Pyrrhonism or scepticism. It is true that 'reason', the analytic and deductive operation of the mind, comes up against the indefinable and the indemonstratable; and it follows that 'reason' alone cannot justify mathematics as a science which yields certitude. But 'the heart (that is, immediate perception or intuition) perceives that there are three dimensions in space, and that numbers are infinite. . . . We intuit principles and conclude to propositions; and all this with certitude, although by different ways. And it is as useless and ridiculous for the reason to demand of the heart proofs of its first principles before it (reason) is willing to assent to them as it would be for the heart to demand of the reason our intuition of all the propositions which the latter demonstrated before it is ready to accept them.'[1] The evidence which attaches to principles is sufficient to qualify them for performing the function which they are required to perform.

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[1] In references to this work I have used the letter *P* as an abbreviation. Page numbers are given according to the edition by Léon Brunschvicg (1914).

[2] *P.*, 2, 78, p. 361.

[3] Pascal used the word 'geometry' as a generic term, including under it mechanics, arithmetic and geometry in a narrower sense (*De l'esprit géométrique*, p. 173).

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[1] *De l'art de persuader*, p. 194.

[2] It should be noted that when Pascal speaks here of definitions, he means 'the giving of names to things which one has clearly designated in terms perfectly known; and I am speaking only of this sort of definition' (*De l'esprit géométrique*, p. 166). He can therefore say that geometrical definitions are conventional or arbitrary and not subject to contradiction or dispute. In other words, he is speaking of the use of conventional symbols to designate things, and not of propositions which give or purport to give the nature of things. If one says that time is the movement of a created thing, the statement is a definition if it is equivalent to a decision to use the word 'time' in this sense. One is free to use it in this sense if one chooses, provided that one does not also use the same word to designate something else. But if one means to say that time, considered as an 'object', that is, time as known by all, is the same as the movement of a created thing, this statement is not a definition but a proposition, and it is subject to dispute or contradiction. A proposition needs to be proved unless it is self-evident; and then it is an axiom or principle. (Cf. *De l'esprit géométrique*, pp. 170–1.)

[3] *De l'esprit géométrique*, p. 165.

It is worth while drawing attention in passing to Pascal's remarks, quoted above, that while logicians claim to have arrived at an infallible method, the geometers alone have in fact done so. Elsewhere he suggests that 'logic has perhaps borrowed the rules of geometry without understanding their force'.[2] The ideal rational method is the mathematical method, not that of Aristotelian and Scholastic logic. On this point Pascal sides with Descartes and accepts with him the common revolt against and depreciation of the logic of the Schools. It must be added, with regard to the general relation of logic to mathematics, that Leibniz later took the opposite view. For him mathematical logic was a particular form taken by general logic.

But though Pascal was a 'Cartesian' to the extent that he asserted the supremacy of the mathematical method within the field of deduction and demonstration, he by no means shared Descartes' convictions concerning the extent of its applicability and usefulness. We cannot, for example, develop the natural sciences in a purely *a priori* manner. We must recognize the probable character of our hypotheses. And in establishing empirical facts experience, or rather the experimental method, must be our guide. Authority is the source of our theological knowledge; for the mysteries of faith surpass the reach of the human reason. But this is not the case with regard to our mathematical and scientific knowledge. The secrets of nature are indeed hidden; but experience and experiment gradually increase our knowledge of them. Experiences 'are the sole principles of physics'.[3] It follows that our knowledge is limited by our experience. 'When we say that the diamond is the hardest of all bodies, we mean of all bodies with which we are acquainted, and we cannot and ought not to include those of bodies of which we are entirely ignorant.'[4] 'For in all matters in which proof consists in experiences and not in demonstrations one cannot make any universal assertion save by general enumeration of all the parts and of all the different cases.'[5] With regard to the existence or possibility of a void or vacuum, it is experience alone which can decide whether there is or can be a vacuum or not. Authority is not sufficient to solve the problem. Nor can the question be decided by *a priori* mathematical demonstration.

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[1] *P.*, 4. 282, p. 460.

[2] *De l'art de persuader*, p. 194.

[3] *Fragment d'un traité du vide*, p. 78.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

[5] *Ibid.*

The geometrical method is also inefficacious in the metaphysical field. Take, for example, the problem of God. Pascal seems at first sight to contradict himself. On the one hand he asserts that 'we know, then, the existence and the nature of the finite, because we are finite and extended like it. We know the existence of the infinite and are ignorant of its nature, because while like us it has extension, unlike us it has no limits. But we know neither the existence nor the nature of God; for He has neither extension nor limits. By faith, however, we know His existence, and by glory (by the *lumen gloriae*, Pascal means) we shall know His nature.'[1] Again, 'Let us speak now according to our natural light. If there is a God, He is infinitely incomprehensible; for, possessing neither parts nor limits, He has no relation with us. We are therefore incapable of knowing either what He is or whether He is.'[2] Here Pascal seems to say clearly that the natural reason is incapable of proving God's existence and that faith alone can assure us of this truth. On the other hand, there are passages in which he appears to admit that there are or may be valid philosophical proofs of God's existence. And at first sight it may appear that a contradiction is involved. The explanation, however, is simple enough. In the first place, 'the metaphysical proofs of God are so remote from men's reasoning and so complicated that they have little effect. And even when they serve for some people, they do so only during the moment these people see the demonstration. An hour later they are afraid that they may have been deceived.'[3] Again, while proofs based on the marvels of nature may serve to draw the attention of believers to the work of God, they are of no service to atheists. On the contrary, to attempt to convince atheists by an argument based on the movement of the heavenly bodies is to 'give them reason for thinking that the proofs of our religion are very weak; and I see by reason and by experience that nothing is more calculated to excite in them this contempt'.[4] In other words, if the object of proving God's existence is to convince agnostics and atheists, the abstract metaphysical proofs are no use, while physical arguments are worse than useless. Reasoning of both types is inefficacious.

But Pascal had a profounder reason for rejecting the traditional proofs of God's existence. The knowledge of God which he had in

[1] *P.*, 3, 233, p. 436. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *P.*, 7, 543, p. 570. [4] *P.*, 4, 242, p. 446.

mind was the knowledge of God as revealed in Christ, mediator and redeemer, a knowledge which is the response to man's intimate consciousness of his own misery. But a purely philosophical knowledge of God involves knowledge neither of man's need for redemption nor of Christ the redeemer. It can coexist with pride and with ignorance of God as man's supreme good and final end. The Christian religion 'teaches man these two truths together, that there is a God, for whom men have a capacity, and that there is a corruption in nature, which renders them unworthy of Him. It is equally important for men to know both these points; and it is equally dangerous for man to know God without knowing his own misery and to know his own misery without knowing the redeemer who can heal him. Knowledge of one of these truths by itself produces either the pride of the philosophers who have known God but not their misery or the despair of the atheists who know their own misery without (knowing the) redeemer.'[1] In other words, philosophical proofs of God's existence are not only insufficient to convince 'hardened atheists'[2] but also 'useless and sterile'[3] inasmuch as the knowledge attained would be knowledge of God without Christ. It would be deism: and deism is not Christianity. 'The God of the Christians is not a God who is simply the author of geometrical truths and of the order of the elements; this is the concept of the pagans and of the epicureans. . . . All those who seek God apart from Jesus Christ and who stop at nature either find no light to satisfy them or arrive at forming for themselves a way of knowing God and of serving Him without a mediator; and thereby they fall either into atheism or into deism, which are two things which the Christian religion almost equally abhors.'[4]

As Pascal is concerned simply with knowledge of God as the supernatural end of man, with God as revealed in Christ, mediator and redeemer, he excludes natural religion and philosophical theism to all intents and purposes. It is clear enough that the use of the geometrical method will not lead man to knowledge of God in this sense. Pascal doubtless exaggerates the distinction between the God of the philosophers and 'the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob'; but he leaves us in no doubt about the meaning he attaches to 'knowledge of God'. And his attitude towards Descartes is thus understandable. 'I cannot forgive Descartes. He would have liked to have been able to by-pass God in the whole

[1] *P.*, 8, 556, p. 580. [2] *Ibid.*, 9, 581. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*

of his philosophy. But he could not help making God give a shove to set the world in motion; and after that he has no more to do with God.'[1] I do not mean to suggest that Pascal was just to Descartes; for I do not think that he was. But his attitude is understandable. In his view Descartes' philosophy omitted the *unum necessarium*. This is one reason for the maxim: 'To write against those who devote too much study to the sciences. Descartes.'[2] We can understand too how Pascal could write to Fermat, the great French mathematician, that in his opinion geometry is *le plus haut exercice de l'esprit and le plus beau métier du monde* but that at the same time it is so 'useless' that 'I make little difference between a man who is only a geometer and an able artisan.'[3]

If philosophy is unable to establish the existence of God, at least if it is unable to establish the existence in the only sense in which it is worth while doing so, it is also incapable of revealing to man where lies true happiness. 'The Stoics say: "Retreat within yourselves; it is there that you will find your repose." And this is not true. The others say: "Go outside yourselves: seek happiness in diversions." And this is not true.... Happiness is neither outside us nor within us, it is in God, both outside and within us.'[4] Instinct prompts us to seek happiness outside ourselves; and external things draw us, even if we do not realize it. 'And so it is useless for the philosophers to say: "Retreat within yourselves; you will find your good there"; people do not believe them. And those who believe them are the emptiest and most foolish.'[5]

Further, being unable to discover and agree about the true end of man the philosophers have also been unable to discover and agree about the moral law. True, there are natural laws; but the corruption of human nature prevents us from obtaining a clear view of them. And even if we knew clearly by philosophical reflection what true justice is, for example, we should be unable to practise it without divine grace. 'The nature of self-love and of this human ego is to love only itself and to consider only itself.'[6] And in point of fact 'larceny, incest, murder of children and of parents, all have had their place among virtuous actions'.[7] 'Three degrees of latitude reverse the whole of jurisprudence, a meridian, decides about truth.... A pleasing justice which is bounded by a river! Truth this side of the Pyrenees, error beyond.'[1] Man, left to himself, is blind and corrupted. And the philosophers have been unable to remedy this state of affairs. Some of them, such as the Stoics, have indeed provided the world with elevated discourses; but their virtue was infected and corrupted by pride.

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[1] *P.*, 2, 77, pp. 360–1. [2] *P.*, 2, 76, p. 360. [3] *P.*, p. 229. [4] *P.*, 7, 465, p. 546. [5] *P.*, 7, 464, p. 546. [6] *P.*, 2, 100, pp. 375–6. [7] *P.*, 5, 294, p. 466.

It is no matter of astonishment, therefore, if Pascal declares that 'we do not think that the whole of philosophy is worth an hour's labour',[2] and that 'to mock at philosophy is to philosophize truly'.[3] By 'philosophy' he means primarily natural philosophy and science, the knowledge of external things, which he depreciates in comparison with the science of man. But the point is that reason alone is unable to establish the science of man. For without the light of the Christian religion man is incomprehensible to himself. Reason has its own sphere, mathematics and the natural sciences or natural philosophy; but the truths which it is really important for man to know, his nature and his supernatural destiny, these cannot be discovered by the philosopher or the scientist. 'I had passed a long time in the study of the abstract sciences; and the scant communication which one can have in them (that is, the comparative fewness of the people with whom one shares these studies and with whom one can 'communicate') had disgusted me. When I began the study of man, I saw that these abstract sciences are not proper to man. . . .'[4]

When Pascal depreciates 'reason', he is using the term in a narrow sense, to mean the abstract, analytic and deductive operation of the mind as it is found in 'geometry'. He is not, of course, depreciating the use of reason in a wide sense. His outline of a Christian apology is obviously a work of the mind. For the matter of that, his criticism of reason in the narrow sense is, whether we agree with it or not, a reasoned criticism. To put the matter briefly, Pascal wishes to make two points. First, mathematical method and scientific method are not the only means by which we come to know truth. Secondly, mathematical and scientific truths are not those which it is most important for man to know. From neither of these propositions does it follow that reasoning in general or the use of the mind is to be condemned.

3. It is as well to remember this when we are considering what Pascal has to say about 'the heart'. For if we interpret his polemic against 'reason' as a polemic against the mind and against all

[1] *P.*, 5, 294, p. 465. [2] *P.*, 2, 79, p. 361. [3] *P.*, 1, 4, p. 321. [4] *P.*, 21, 44, p. 399.

thought, we shall be inclined to interpret 'the heart' in an exclusively emotional sense. But in distinguishing between heart and reason it was not Pascal's intention to suggest that human beings should abandon the use of their mind and hand themselves over to the dominion of their emotions. The famous statement, 'the heart has its reasons which the reason does not understand',[1] does indeed appear to imply an antithesis between mind and heart, intellectual activity and emotion. But we have already seen that according to Pascal it is by 'the heart' that we know the first principles from which the reason derives other propositions. And it is obvious enough that heart cannot here mean simply emotion. It is necessary, therefore, to ask what Pascal did mean by the term.

It can hardly be said that Pascal uses the term *le cœur* in any one clearly defined sense. Sometimes it appears to be used as synonymous with 'the will'. And when it is used in this sense it does not designate a kind of knowledge or an immediate instrument of knowing, but rather the movement of desire and interest which directs the attention of the intellect to some object. 'The will is one of the principal organs of belief; not that it forms belief, but because things are true or false according to the aspect under which one sees them. The will, which takes pleasure in one (aspect) rather than another, turns away the mind from considering the qualities of those things which it does not wish to see. And so the mind, following the will, stops to contemplate the aspect which the will loves.'[2] At other times *le cœur* designates a kind of knowledge or an instrument of knowing. And this is Pascal's characteristic use of the term. It is exemplified in his statement that we apprehend first principles by 'the heart'. 'We know truth not only by the reason but also by the heart. It is in this second way that we know the first principles.'[3] Pascal also makes use of the terms 'nature' and 'instinct'. 'Nature confounds the Pyrrhonists, and reason confounds the dogmatics.'[4] 'Instinct and reason, characteristics of two natures.'[5] 'Heart, instinct, principles.'[6]

It is clear that even when 'the heart' is used to designate a way of knowing or an instrument of knowledge the term bears different shades of meaning in different contexts. When Pascal says that principles are felt by the heart, he is obviously talking about intuition. And in the case of the first principles of geometry there can hardly be question of loving the principles. But when he asserts that 'it is the heart which feels (perceives) God, and not the reason',[1] he is thinking of a loving apprehension of God, apprehension which is open to those who have no knowledge of metaphysical arguments for God's existence or even of historical and empirical arguments in favour of Christianity. He does not refer to mere emotion, but rather to the loving apprehension of God which is found in the sincere Christian believer. And this is itself the effect of God in the soul, it is a supernatural faith informed by love or charity, which belongs to 'the order of charity or love' rather than to 'the order of the mind (*l'esprit*)'. Again, it is by 'the heart' or 'instinct' that we know that waking life is not a dream. A man may be unable to prove by demonstrative argument that waking life is not a dream, but it does not follow that he does not *know* the difference between waking life and the dream-state. He knows it by 'the heart'. Here the term 'heart' refers to instinctive, immediate, unreasoned apprehension of a truth. And Pascal's point is that we can have certitude (in his opinion legitimate certitude) even when the reason is unable to prove that of which we have certitude. For 'reason' is not the only way in which we come to know truth; and it is mere prejudice and pride on the part of the rationalists if they think that it is.

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[1] *P.*, 4, 277, p. 458.
[2] *P.*, 2, 99, p. 375.
[3] *P.*, 4, 282, p. 459.
[4] *P.*, 7, 434, p. 531.
[5] *P.*, 6, 344, p. 487.
[6] *P.*, 4, 281, p. 459.

Pascal, as is evident, did not develop a technical vocabulary in which the function and meaning of each word is clearly defined. Sometimes the function of a term is that of suggesting meaning rather than of stating it. Thus words like 'heart', 'instinct' and 'feeling' suggest immediacy, spontaneity and directness. On the level of common sense we have, for example, a spontaneous and immediate apprehension or awareness of the reality of the external world; and the resulting conviction or certitude is legitimate, even though it is unsupported by rational proofs. On the level of 'geometry' we have an immediate awareness of principles; and even though these principles cannot be demonstrated our certitude is legitimate and lies at the foundation of deductive reasoning. On the level of the moral life there is a spontaneous and direct apprehension of values, though this apprehension can be obscured or corrupted. And on the level of the religious life the devout believer possesses a loving apprehension of God which is immune from the attacks of scepticism. In general, 'the heart' is a kind

[1] *P.*, 4, 278, p. 458.

of intellectual instinct, rooted in the inmost nature of the soul.

4. If we wish to talk about Pascal's method, we have to mention both heart and reason. It is a mistake to think that he wished to substitute feeling for reason or to deny, for example, the relevance of reasoned argument to the apprehension of religious truth. In mathematics deduction and demonstration would be deprived of certainty, were it not for the immediate apprehension of evident first principles. But without the work of the discursive and deductive reason there would be no mathematics. Again, though the simple and devout Christian possesses legitimate certitude through his loving apprehension of God, this certitude is a personal matter; and it by no means follows that arguments in favour of the Christian religion are not required. We cannot satisfy sceptics and agnostics by appealing to the simple and devout Christian's interior appropriation of the truth. And Pascal himself projected an apology for Christianity, that is to say, a reasoned defence of the Christian religion. The arguments to which he appealed were based on empirical and historical facts, the presence of the Christian faith as an empirical fact, miracles, prophecy and so on; but the arguments were reasoned arguments. In Pascal's opinion we cannot prove the truth of Christianity by 'geometry', by *a priori* deductive reasoning. We have to turn to empirical data and show how their convergence points infallibly to the truth of Christianity. But the process of exhibiting this convergence is the work of the mind.

It is, indeed, necessary to emphasize this fact, because Pascal's aphorisms about feeling may easily give a wrong impression. At the same time the concept of 'the heart' has an important part to play even in his reasoned defence of the Christian religion. For while the heart does not, indeed, supply the proofs, it discerns the significance of the facts cited in the proofs, and it discerns too the significance of the convergence of probabilities. Of two men who listen to the arguments and understand the words one may see the cumulative force of the arguments while the other does not. If all the arguments have been mentioned, the difference between the two men is not that the one has heard an argument which the other has not: it is rather that the one has an intuitive grasp of the force and significance of the converging arguments, which is lacking to the other. In the development of an apologetic, therefore, it is essential to display the arguments in the most persuasive form, not in order to persuade people to embrace a conclusion repugnant to the mind, but in order to facilitate the working of 'the heart'.

5. Any prolonged exposition and discussion of Pascal's apology for Christianity would be out of place in a history of philosophy. At the same time the reader of a chapter on Pascal will legitimately expect to find some indication of the line taken. And we can hardly understand his general outlook without some reference to his defence for Christianity.

Pascal sets out first to show the 'misery of man without God', that is to say, 'that nature is corrupted'.[1] In comparison with the realm of nature, what is man? 'A nothing in comparison with the infinite, a whole with regard to nothing, a mean between nothing and everything. Infinitely removed from understanding either extreme, the end of all things and their beginning are alike invincibly hidden from him in impenetrable mystery. He is equally incapable of seeing either the nothingness from which he was taken or the infinite in which he is enveloped.'[2] Man can know neither the infinitely great nor the infinitely small. Nor can he have a complete knowledge even of those things which fall between either extreme. For all things are bound together in mutual relations, and a complete knowledge of any part demands knowledge of the whole. His intellectual capacity is limited, and he is also liable to be led astray by the senses and the imagination. Further, he takes custom for natural law; and in social life he mistakes the rule of power for the rule of justice. He is dominated by self-love, and this inclination to self-interest blinds his eyes to true justice and is the origin of disorder in social and political life. Again, man is riddled with contradictions, and he is a riddle to himself. He can be satisfied with nothing less than the infinite, but in point of fact he finds no complete satisfaction.

In his picture of the misery or wretchedness of man, Pascal draws on the writings of the Pyrrhonists or sceptics, and up to a certain point he sides with Montaigne and Charron. Montaigne, he said, is invaluable for confounding the pride of those who attribute too much to human nature and who ignore man's corruption and weakness. But we have to remember that what Pascal wishes to show is the wretchedness of man 'without God'. His aim is not to promote scepticism and disillusionment for their own sakes, still less despair, but by showing what man is without

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[1] *P.*, 2, 60, p. 342.

[2] *P.*, 2, 72, p. 350.

God to facilitate favourable dispositions for considering the claims of the Christian religion. Pascal was very conscious of the powerlessness of mere argument to convince those who lacked the requisite dispositions.

But there is another aspect of man to be considered, his 'greatness'. And his greatness can be inferred even from his wretchedness. 'The greatness of man is so evident that it can be inferred even from his wretchedness. For that which is nature in animals we call wretchedness in man. And by this we recognize that his nature being now like that of the animals, he is fallen from a better nature which formerly was his. For who is unhappy at not being a king, except a deposed king?'[1] Even man's excesses reveal his craving for the infinite. And his power of recognizing his wretchedness is itself a sign of his greatness. 'Man knows that he is wretched. He is wretched, then, because he is wretched; but he is great, because he knows it.'[2] Further, 'thought constitutes the greatness of man'.[3] 'Man is only a reed, the frailest thing in nature; but he is a thinking reed. It is not required that the whole universe should arm itself to crush him; a breath of wind, a drop of water is sufficient to destroy him. But were the universe to crush him, man would still be nobler than that which slays him. For he knows that he dies and that the universe has the better of him. But the universe knows nothing of this.'[4] 'Spatially, the universe encompasses and engulfs me like a point. But by thought I encompass the universe.'[5] Man is filled with an insatiable desire for happiness, and this desire is a source of unhappiness. But 'the infinite gulf can be filled only by an infinite and changeless object, that is by God Himself'.[6] So here again man's wretchedness reveals his greatness, his capacity for God.

We are faced, therefore, by contraries; man's wretchedness and man's greatness. And we must hold together these contraries in our thought. For it is precisely the simultaneous presence of these contraries which constitute the problem. 'What a chimera then is man! How strange and monstrous! A chaos, a subject of contradictions, a prodigy. Judge of all things, yet a stupid earthworm; depository of truth, yet a cesspool of uncertainty and error; the glory and the refuse of the universe. Who will unravel this tangle?'[7] The philosophers cannot do so. The Pyrrhonists

[1] *P.*, 6, 409, p. 512.
[2] *P.*, 6, 416, p. 515.
[3] *P.*, 6, 346, p. 488.
[4] *P.*, 6, 347, p. 488.
[5] *P.*, 6, 348, p. 488.
[6] *P.*, 7, 425, p. 519.
[7] *P.*, 7, 434, p. 531.

make man nothing, while others make of him a god; man is both great and wretched at the same time.

If man cannot solve the problem which arises out of his own nature, let him hear God. But where is the voice of God to be found? Not in the pagan religions, which lack authority and proof and which authorize vice. In the Jewish religion? Here we have an explanation of man's wretchedness in the scriptural account of the Fall. But the Old Testament looks beyond itself, and its prophecies are fulfilled in Christ, who provides the remedy which is not provided by Judaism. Here we have the mediator and redeemer, foretold by the prophets and proving His authority by miracles and the sublimity of His doctrine. 'The knowledge of God without that of our wretchedness produces pride. The knowledge of our wretchedness without the knowledge of God produces despair. The knowledge of Jesus Christ forms the middle point; for there we find both God and our wretchedness.'[1]

6. In the *Pensées*[2] there occurs the famous wager-argument. Its significance and purpose are not immediately clear, and a number of different interpretations have been offered by commentators. It seems, however, to be sufficiently evident that Pascal did not develop this argument as a proof of God's existence. Nor did he intend it as a substitute for proofs of Christianity. It appears to be addressed to a particular class of persons, namely, to those who are not yet convinced of the truth of the Christian religion, though they are also unconvinced by the arguments of sceptics and atheists, and who consequently remain in a state of suspended judgment. Pascal wishes to show people who find themselves in this state of mind that to believe is to their advantage and happiness, and that if it depended entirely on their own wills belief would be the only reasonable course of action. But it does not follow that he demands of them faith simply as an outcome of the wager-argument. What he seems to have in mind is rather the preparation of their minds and the production of dispositions favourable to belief, dispositions which are hindered by the passions and by attachment to things of this world. He is speaking to them *selon les lumières naturelles*, according to their natural lights or to common sense; but he did not consider that belief is simply a matter of a self-interested wager, of a betting on an objective uncertainty because, if it were true, it would be to one's advantage to have staked in favour of it. If he had thought this,

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[1] *P.*, 7. 527, p. 567.

[2] 3. 233, pp. 434–42.

it would be impossible to explain either his projected reasoned defence of Christianity or his conviction that it is God Himself who imparts the light of faith.

Either God exists or there is no God. The sceptic blames the Christian because he chooses a definite solution to the problem although reason cannot show which solution is true. 'I shall blame them for having made, not this choice, but a choice . . . the right course is not to wager.' 'Yes,' says Pascal, 'but you must wager. It does not depend on your will; you are already embarked on the affair.' In other words, to remain indifferent or to suspend judgment is itself to make a choice; it is to choose against God. And if, therefore, a man cannot help choosing one way or the other, he should consider where his interest lies. What is involved? A man's reason and his will, his knowledge and his happiness. His reason is not harmed more by choosing one way than by choosing the other way; for choose he must. As for happiness, it is obviously advantageous, and therefore reasonable, to wager for God. 'If you win, you win all; if you lose, you lose nothing.' 'There is here an infinity of an infinitely happy life to gain, one chance of gain against a finite number of chances of loss; and what you stake is finite.' Now, the finite is as nothing in comparison with the infinite. There is no need, therefore, for further deliberation.

It may be said that wagering for God means risking what is certain for what is uncertain. To risk a finite good for a certain infinite good is clearly advantageous; but the certainty of loss balances the possibility of gain when there is question of abandoning a certain finite good for an uncertain infinite good. In such a case it is better to retain what one actually and certainly possesses than to abandon it for an infinite good when one does not even know that there is an infinite good which could possibly be gained. But to this Pascal answers that every gambler stakes a certainty to gain an uncertainty, and he does this 'without sinning against reason'. Moreover, even though the man who wagers for God abandons some pleasures, he will acquire others, and he will win true virtue. 'At each step you take in this path, you will see such a certitude of gain and such a nothingness in what you hazard that you will recognize at the end that you have wagered for something which is certain and infinite and for which you have given nothing.' The prime requisite is to wager, to begin, not by piling up arguments for God's existence, but by lessening one's passions and following the behaviour of those who believe. In other words, though a man cannot give himself faith, there is a great deal that he can do by way of preparing himself, and if he does this, God will give him the faith which he seeks.

Pascal's words do indeed sometimes imply that religion lacks rational support. 'If one should do nothing except for what is certain, one ought to do nothing for religion. For it is not certain.'[1] But he argues that we are constantly running risks for the uncertain, in war, in commerce, in journeys. Moreover, nothing in human life is absolutely certain. It is not certain that we shall see tomorrow; but nobody thinks it irrational to act on the probability of his being alive the next day. 'And there is more certitude in religion than there is in our living till tomorrow.'[2] It is only reasonable to search for the truth; for if we die without adoring God, we are lost. 'But,' you will say, 'if He had willed that I should adore Him, He would have left me signs of His will.' 'So He has done, but you neglect them. Search for them: it is worth the trouble.'[3] 'I tell you that you would soon have faith, if you abandoned pleasure. It is for you to begin. If I could, I would give you faith, but I cannot do it. . . . You, however, can well abandon pleasure and find out whether what I say is true.'[4] The whole wager-argument is obviously an *argumentum ad hominem*, a device to move the sceptic to abandon his attitude of indifference and to do what he can to put himself in that condition in which faith becomes a real possibility. In spite of the way in which he sometimes expresses himself, Pascal does not intend to deny that there are signs of the truth of the Christian religion which in their convergence amount to an evident proof. But a man cannot, in his opinion, read those signs aright or grasp the force of their convergence unless he first abandons the state of indifference and makes serious efforts to conquer himself. Hence the wager-argument.

7. It is obvious that Pascal wrote as a convinced Christian. He did not seek to convert men to 'theism' but to Christianity. And he was profoundly conscious of the need for certain moral dispositions before conversion could be a practicable possibility. It is certainly possible to select and emphasize statements in which he plays down the work of reason to an exaggerated extent. Hence the accusations of fideism and immanentism which have been brought against him. But if we take a broad view and remember

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[1] *P.*, 3, 234, p. 442. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *P.*, 3, 236, p. 443. [4] *P.*, 3, 241, p. 444.

that his main concern is to bring men to the point at which God Himself can operate and that it is Christian faith and not philosophical theism which he has in mind, we must acknowledge, I think, that his originality and genius as an apologist shows itself precisely in his concern with the moral preparation for faith. The value of his general attitude as an apologist for Christianity far outweighs in importance and perennial validity those aspects of his thought which are considered to be questionable or censurable by the Catholic theologian. It is a pity to miss the wood for the trees, and not to appreciate Pascal's importance and influence in the history of Christian apologetics.

But if Pascal was eminent as mathematician and scientist on the one hand and as a Christian apologist on the other, have we to conclude that he was not a philosopher? The answer depends, of course, on what we understand by a philosopher. If we understand by a philosopher a man who sets out to create a system by the use of reason alone, a system which is supposed to represent reality as a whole, then we certainly cannot call Pascal a philosopher. For he believed that problems arise which reason, unaided by faith, cannot solve. And he also believed that there are mysteries which transcend the comprehension of the mind even when it is enlightened by faith. The notion of an omnicompetent human reason was abhorrent to him. But, as we have seen, he had a reasoned view of the different modes and methods of human knowledge and of the different 'orders', the order of the flesh, the order of the mind or of science, and the order of charity. Even though he did not develop these ideas and distinctions in a technical view, we have here theories in epistemology and in the philosophy of values. His analysis of man can obviously be called a philosophy of man, even if it is a philosophy which to a great extent raises problems that are not soluble without reference to revelation. And in the course of this philosophy of man a good many ideas appear which are relevant to, for example, ethical and political analysis.

The word 'analysis' certainly has an application with regard to Pascal's thought. For example, it is not unreasonable to speak of him as analysing the different senses of the word 'knows' and as showing that its restriction to mathematical knowledge and what 'imitates' it is unjustified by ordinary usage. The ordinary man would certainly say that he 'knows' that the external world exists and that waking life is not a dream. And if one says that he does not 'really' know this, one is tacitly identifying knowledge with the sort of knowledge that pertains to the restricted sphere of mathematics.

Yet it would be as misleading to describe Pascal as a philosophical analyst as it would be to describe him as a systematic metaphysician. Can we describe him as an existentialist thinker, as some would do? Certainly, he is concerned with the existent human being and with his possibilities, above all with his possibility of choosing himself or of not choosing himself before God, to use existentialist language. But to use the term 'existentialist' with its modern connotations is also rather misleading, though it would be less misleading perhaps than 'analyst' or 'metaphysician'. In any case he is an 'existentialist' thinker because he is a religious thinker, a thinker who is primarily interested in the relation between man and God and in the lived appropriation of this relation. Pascal is not, like Descartes, a Christian thinker simply in the sense that he is a thinker who is a Christian: he is a Christian thinker in the sense that his Christianity is the inspiration of his thought and unifies his outlook on the world and man. If he is a philosopher, therefore, he is a religious philosopher, more specifically a Christian philosopher. He is a Christian philosopher of his age, in the sense that he addresses himself to his contemporaries and speaks a language which they can understand But this is not to say, of course, that his ideas have no lasting stimulative value. And perhaps this is the chief legacy of Pascal, that he left in his fragmentary writings a fertile source of stimulus and of inspiration for further development. Not all, indeed, feel this stimulus; and some find him repugnant. Others rank him with Descartes, as one of the two greatest of French philosophers, and feel for him the profoundest admiration. Possibly the former do him less and the latter more than justice.

CHAPTER VIII

CARTESIANISM

The spread of Cartesianism—Geulincx and the problem of interaction.

1. CARTESIANISM spread and found defenders first of all in Holland, which had been Descartes' home for a considerable period. Thus Henri Regnier (1593–1639), who occupied the chair of philosophy at the academy, and from 1636 at the University of Utrecht, was a disciple of Descartes. So also, though only for a time, was Regnier's successor at Utrecht, Henricus Regius or Henri Le Roy (1598–1679). After espousing the cause of Descartes and defending him against the theologian Voëtius he later abandoned Cartesianism and wrote the manifesto which occasioned Descartes' *Notes Against a Programme.* Jean de Raey, author of *Clavis philosophiae naturalis* (1654), and Adrian Heereboord, author of *Parallelismus aristotelicae et cartesianae philosophiae* (1643), also taught at Leyden. Of greater importance was Christopher Wittich (1625–87), who tried to show the conformity between Cartesianism and orthodox Christianity and who attacked Spinoza. In 1688 he published a volume of *Annotations and Meditations* and in 1690 his *Antispinoza.* Geulincx will be considered separately.

In Germany the influence of Cartesianism was comparatively slight. Among German Cartesians one can indeed mention John Clauberg (1622–65), author of a *Metaphysica de Ente sive Ontosophia*; but he taught in Holland, at Herborn and Duisberg. Another German was Balthasar Bekker (1634–98), author of a work entitled *De philosophia cartesiana admonitio candida.* He distinguished himself by attacking the persecution of witches, maintaining that magic is nonsense because the spiritual cannot act upon the material.

In England Anthony Legrand or Antoine Le Grand, a Frenchman from Douai, published *Institutiones philosophicae* (1672 and 1678) and endeavoured to introduce Cartesianism into Oxford. He found a strong opponent in Samuel Parker, bishop of Oxford, in whose eyes Descartes was as much an infidel as Thomas Hobbes. But, quite apart from theological opposition, Cartesianism made little headway in the country. That is to say, his philosophy (in the modern sense of the term) made little headway, though his physics was widely accepted. Nor did Cartesianism have very much success in Italy, partly no doubt because the works of Descartes were placed on the Index of prohibited books in 1663 with the proviso *donec corrigantur.*[1] Michel Angelo Fardella (1650–1718) and Cardinal Gerdil (1718–1802) are generally classified under the heading of Italian Cartesians; but they were more influenced by Malebranche.

In Holland the influence of Descartes was felt mainly by university professors and lecturers, who issued manuals of Cartesian philosophy and endeavoured to defend the latter against attacks by theologians. In France, however, Cartesianism enjoyed a popular vogue, becoming the fashionable philosophy. Pierre-Sylvain Régis (1632–1707) did much to popularize it in general society by the lectures which he delivered in various centres, including Paris; and Jacques Rohault (1620–75), a physicist, endeavoured to substitute a science according to the mind of Descartes for the Aristotelian physics. (His *Traité de physique* was influential at Cambridge until it was discredited by Newton's *Principia.*) Louis de la Forge published in 1666 a *Traité de l'âme humaine, de ses facultés et fonctions et de son union avec le corps suivant les principes de R. Descartes*; and in the same year there appeared the *Discernement de l'âme et du corps* of Géraud de Cordemoy. A number of Oratorians saw in the 'spiritualist' side of Descartes' philosophy an affinity with St. Augustine and accorded their favour to Cartesianism. And though there was a very great difference between the spirit of Cartesianism and that of Jansenism, as may be seen from the writings of Pascal, several important Jansenists were influenced by Descartes. Thus Antoine Arnauld (1612–94), author of the fourth set of *Objections,* and Pierre Nicole (1625–95) utilized Cartesian ideas in the composition of *L'art de penser* (1662), the so-called 'logic of Port Royal'. The Jesuits, however, whose favour Descartes had constantly striven to secure, were generally hostile to the new philosophy.

In spite of what one may call the social success of Cartesianism in France, there was a considerable amount of official opposition. The placing of Descartes' works on the Roman Index in 1663 has already been mentioned. Ten years later the Parliament of Paris was about to issue a decree against the teaching of Cartesianism when it was prevented by the publication of *Arrêt burlesque* by Boileau, who made fun of the opposition to reason as represented by the philosophy of Descartes.[1] However, in 1675 the University of Angers took steps to stop the teaching of the new philosophy, and in 1677 the University of Caen adopted a similar course. Pascal attacked Descartes' system as being deistic in character, while Gassendi[2], the reviver of Epicurean atomism, criticized it from an empiricist standpoint. Pierre Daniel Huet (1630–1721), bishop of Avranches, in his *Censura philosophiae Cartesianae* and other writings, maintained that scepticism could be overcome only by religious faith, not by Cartesian rationalism.

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[1] Nobody having taken it upon himself to 'correct' the works of Descartes, they remain on the Index to this day. The proviso *donec corrigantur* referred to points which had theological implications with regard, for example, to the dogma of transubstantiation.

Early in the eighteenth century Descartes' writings had already become more or less official textbooks in philosophy in universities. And the influence of his philosophy had penetrated ecclesiastical seminaries in spite of official prohibition and discouragement. But by that time Cartesianism in the strict sense had become a spent force. As one of the chief sources of the development of metaphysics on the Continent before Kant, Cartesianism is, of course, of great and lasting importance. But in the eighteenth century other philosophies attracted the interests and attention which in the seventeenth century had been given to that of Descartes.

2. It has been remarked with truth that Cartesianism did not receive quite the sort of development which the philosopher would have desired. He considered that the metaphysical foundations had been well and truly laid and he hoped that others would apply his method in a fruitful way in the sciences. But apart from one or two writers such as Rohault the Cartesians themselves hardly fulfilled these expectations: they were more concerned with the metaphysical and epistemological aspects of Cartesianism. And one of the problems to which attention was particularly devoted was the problem of the relation between soul and body. Descartes did not deny interaction between soul and body; but though he asserted it as a fact he did little to explain how it can take place. His attempt to identify the point of interaction did not solve the problem which arises out of his philosophy. For if man is to all intents and purposes divided into two substances, a spiritual mind and an extended body, the problem of explaining how

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[1] Boileau's aesthetic theories were influenced by Cartesianism.

[2] For Gassendi, see vol. III, pp. 263–4.

interaction can take place becomes acute, and the problem is not answered satisfactorily by asserting that it does in fact take place and by trying to identify the site of interaction.

One way of treating this problem would be to admit the fact of interaction, as Descartes did, and then to revise the theories which led to difficulty in explaining how it can take place. But this would mean abandoning one of the chief characteristics of Cartesianism. And the Cartesians who devoted their attention to the problem chose to retain Descartes' dualistic position and to deny that interaction does in fact take place. This heroic way of disposing of the problem was adumbrated by Louis de la Forge and Géraud de Cordemoy; but it is associated above all with the names of Geulincx and Malebranche.

Arnold Geulincx (1625–69) was a professor at Louvain; but in 1658 he had to abandon his chair for reasons which are not very clear. He went to Leyden and there became a Calvinist. After a time he obtained a lectureship in the university. Some of his writings he published himself; but the more important appeared posthumously. Among these are the *Γνῶθι σεαυτόν sive Ethica, Physica vera, Metaphysica vera et ad mentem peripateticam* and *Annotata in Principia philosophiae R. Cartesii.*

According to Geulincx it is an evident principle that in all true activity the agent must know that he acts and how he acts. From this it clearly follows that a material thing cannot be a true causal agent producing effects either in another material thing or in a spiritual substance. For since a material thing lacks consciousness it cannot know that it acts and how it acts. It also follows that I, as a spiritual ego, do not really produce either in my own body or in other bodies those effects which my natural way of thinking, accepted by Aristotle as a criterion, leads me to suppose that I produce. For I do not know how these effects are produced. I am a spectator of the production of changes and movements in my body, but I am not the actor, the real causal agent, in spite of my interior acts of will. For I do not know the connection between my acts of will and the subsequent movements in my body. Similarly, I am aware of the production of sensations and perceptions in my field of consciousness; but it is not my body, or any external material thing, which truly produces these effects.

But if interaction is thus denied, how are we going to explain the fact that volitions are followed by movements in the body and that changes in the body are followed by sensations and perceptions in consciousness? The explanation is that my act of will is an occasional cause; that is, an occasion on which God produces a change or movement in the body. Similarly, a physical event in my body is an occasion on which God produces a psychical event in my consciousness. Body and soul are like two clocks, neither of which acts on the other but which keep perfect time because God constantly synchronizes their movements. At least this is the analogy to which Geulincx seems to incline, though certain passages suggest rather the analogy, which was later used by Leibniz, of two clocks which have been so constructed in the first instance that they always remain in perfect agreement.

This theory of 'occasionalism', if it is accepted at all, must obviously be applied more widely than in the particular context of the relation between soul and body. For it follows from the principles on which the theory rests that no human ego acts on any other human ego or on any body and that no body acts on any other body or on any mind or ego. One might perhaps conclude simply that the causal relation is nothing but regular sequence; but the conclusion which Geulincx drew was the theory, already asserted by Louis de la Forge, that God is the only real cause. And once one has drawn this conclusion one must inevitably tend in the direction of Spinozism. If my successive ideas are caused in me by God and I am simply a spectator of effects which God produces in me, and if all changes and movements in the corporeal world are effected by God, it is not a very long step to the conclusion that minds and bodies are both modes of God. I do not mean to say that Geulincx actually took the further step to Spinozism; but he came near to doing so. And his ethical ideas bear a resemblance to those of Spinoza. We are only spectators: we can change nothing. Therefore we should cultivate a true contempt of the finite and a thorough-going resignation to God and the divinely-caused order of things, restraining our desires and following the path of humility and obedience which reason dictates.

The theory of occasionalism is subject, of course, to the criticism that if true causal activity is defined as activity in which the agent knows both that he acts and how he produces the effect the theory may follow, but that the definition is arbitrary and by no means self-evident. However, if the principle and the theory are accepted, a possible further step, as suggested above, is an approach to

Spinozism. At the same time it is possible to attempt to incorporate the theory into a non-Spinozistic religious metaphysics. And this is what Malebranche tried to do. But since Malebranche was an original philosopher of considerable influence in his own right, it does not seem appropriate to include a brief consideration of his thought in a chapter on Cartesianism, especially if this means giving undue prominence to one particular feature of his philosophy. Hence I accord him separate treatment.

CHAPTER IX

MALEBRANCHE

Life and writings[1]*—The senses, the imagination, the understanding; avoidance of error and attainment of truth—God as the only true cause—Human liberty—The vision of eternal truths in God—Empirical knowledge of the soul—Knowledge of other minds and of the existence of bodies—God's existence and attributes—Malebranche in relation to Spinoza, Descartes and Berkeley—The influence of Malebranche.*

1. NICOLAS MALEBRANCHE was born at Paris in 1638. He studied philosophy at the college of La Marche, where he felt little attraction for the Aristotelianism which he was taught, and theology at the Sorbonne. In 1660 he joined the Oratorians and was ordained priest in 1664. It was in this year that he came upon a posthumous work of Descartes, the *Traité de l'homme*, which had been published by Louis de la Forge; and he conceived a great admiration for its author with whose philosophy he had no previous first-hand acquaintance. He therefore set himself to study the works of Descartes whom he never ceased to regard as a master in philosophy. It is perhaps worth noting that the treatise which had first attracted his attention was really a work on physiology, and also that Malebranche took pains to increase his knowledge of mathematics with a view to a better understanding of Descartes' philosophy. As far as his interest in mathematics and science went, Malebranche can be said to have entered into the Cartesian spirit.

At the same time Malebranche shared the strong inclination of the Oratorian Fathers to the thought of St. Augustine and, in general, to the Platonic-Augustinian tradition. And this combination of Cartesianism with the Augustinian inspiration was characteristic of his philosophy. In his eyes and in the eyes of those who shared his outlook this combination was not a forced combination of incompatibles; for the Paris Oratorians had always seen in the 'spiritualist' side of Descartes' philosophy an affinity with the thought of St. Augustine. But it meant, of course, that

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[1] In the references to the writings of Malebranche the following abbreviations have been used. *R.V.* stands for *De la recherche de la vérité*, and *E.M.* for *Entretiens sur la métaphysique.*

Malebranche's outlook was definitely that of a Christian philosopher who made no rigid separation between theology and philosophy and who was intent on interpreting the world and human experience in the light of his Christian faith. He was a Cartesian in the sense that in his opinion the philosophy of Descartes was true in the main as far as it went, and he certainly considered that this philosophy was superior to Aristotelianism as an instrument in interpreting experience and reality. But he did not think that Cartesianism was an adequate and self-sufficing intellectual instrument, and his metaphysic is markedly theocentric in character. He was certainly not the man to censure the philosophy of Descartes in the way that Pascal did or to belittle the constructive power of reason; but he was definitely a Christian thinker rather than a philosopher who happened to be a Christian. In some respects at least he gives the impression of being a thinker of the Augustinian tradition who has accepted the seventeenth-century science and mathematics and who sees in the Cartesian philosophy an instrument for the construction of a new synthesis. In other words he was an original thinker, and to label him either as a 'Cartesian' or as an 'Augustinian' is to give a misleading impression. He was both; but the synthesis was a construction of Malebranche's mind, not a mere artificial juxtaposition of heterogeneous elements. It must be added, however, that though Malebranche regularly represents his philosophy as a synthesis of St. Augustine and Descartes and decries the Scholastics, the influence of mediaeval Scholasticism on his thought was much greater than he realized.

In his work *De la recherche de la vérité* (1674–5) Malebranche investigates the causes of deception and error and discusses the right method of arriving at truth. This was followed by *Éclaircissements sur la recherche de la vérité* (1678). The *Traité de la nature et de la grâce* (1680) concerns such themes as the application of the theory of occasionalism in the supernatural order and the reconciliation of human liberty with the efficacity of divine grace. The title of *Méditations Chrétiennes* (1683) speaks for itself. In the *Traité de morale* (1684) Malebranche sets out to show that there is only one true morality, the Christian morality, and that other moral systems, such as Stoicism, do not satisfy the criteria of true morality. The *Entretiens sur la métaphysique* (1688) summarizes the author's system, whereas the *Traité de la communication des mouvements* (1692) is purely scientific in character.

In the *Traité de l'amour de Dieu* (1697) Malebranche discusses Fénelon's theory of the pure love of God in a way which was found highly acceptable by Bossuet. In the *Entretien d'un philosophe chrétien avec un philosophe chinois* (1708) he treats of matters connected with the existence and nature of God, and in *Réflexions sur la prémotion physique* (1715) he replies to the Jansenistically coloured work by Boursier, *L'action de Dieu sur les créatures ou de la prémotion physique* (1713).

Malebranche's literary life was accompanied by a good deal of polemics. Arnauld in particular became a determined adversary, attacking both Malebranche's philosophical ideas and his theories about grace. Indeed, he denounced Malebranche at Rome; and though the latter defended his views, his *Traité de la nature et de la grâce* was placed on the Index at the end of 1689. Fénelon also wrote against him. And his last work before his death in 1715 was, as we have seen, a reply to Boursier.

2. 'Error is the cause of men's wretchedness. It is the bad principle which has produced the evil in the world. It is error which has produced and maintained in our soul all the evils that afflict us, and we cannot hope for solid and true happiness save by striving seriously to avoid it.'[1] Error is not necessary to man: whatever the sceptics may say, he is capable of attaining truth. And a general rule can be established at once, namely, that 'we should never give a complete assent save to things that we see evidently'.[2] True, with regard to the revealed mysteries of faith it is our duty to submit to authority, but authority has no place in philosophy. If Descartes is to be preferred to Aristotle, this is not because he is Descartes but because of the evident character of the true propositions which he asserts: 'To be a faithful Christian one must believe blindly; but to be a philosopher one must see evidently.'[3] A distinction must indeed be made between necessary truths, such as are found in mathematics, metaphysics and 'even in a great part of physics and ethics'[4] and contingent truths, such as historical propositions. And we must remember that in morals, politics, medicine and all the practical sciences we have to content ourselves with probability, not because certainty is unattainable but because we have to act and cannot wait for the attainment of certainty. But this does not alter the fact that if we refrain from giving complete assent to any proposition the truth of which is not evident, we shall not err. For to assent to a probable truth as

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[1] *R.V.*, 1, 1.

[2] *R.V.*, 1, 3.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*

probably true is not to give complete assent and does not involve us in error.

However, even though error is not necessary to man but depends on the use of our free will, it is an empirical fact that we do fall into error. And in examining the causes of error we can best begin by considering the senses; for sensation is one of the three kinds of human 'perception', the other two being the imagination and the pure understanding.

'It is not our senses which deceive us; it is our will which deceives us by its precipitate judgments.'[1] Malebranche means that we do not use our free wills to restrain ourselves from making precipitate judgments about external things, from judging, that is to say, that the relation of things to us is a sure indication of the nature of things in themselves. 'When one feels warmth, one is in no way deceived by believing that one feels it. . . . But one is deceived if one judges that the warmth which one feels is outside the soul which feels it.'[2] Malebranche followed Descartes in denying the objectivity of the secondary qualities. These qualities, as objects of consciousness, are psychic modifications, not objective qualities of things in themselves. If we follow our natural inclination to suppose that they are objective qualities of things in themselves, we fall into error; but we are capable of restraining ourselves from making these precipitate judgments. Similarly, our sense-perception of primary qualities is no adequate indication of what things are in themselves. To take a simple illustration, 'the moon appears to our sight to be much larger than the greatest stars, and yet we have no doubt that it is incomparably smaller'.[3] Again, apparent movement and repose, swiftness and slowness, are all relative to us. In fine, we ought 'never to judge by the senses of what things are in themselves, but only of the relation which they have to our bodies'.[4]

Malebranche begins by accepting the Cartesian distinction between two kinds of substances, spiritual and unextended substance and material substance or extension, which is capable of receiving different shapes and of being moved.[5] And from the identification of material or corporeal substance with extension he draws the same conclusion as Descartes about qualities. But this is not to say that in his examination of sense-perception Malebranche simply repeats Descartes. He examines the matter at length and makes careful distinctions. For example, he asserts[1] that in sensation there are four different elements to be distinguished: the action of the object (the movement of particles, for instance), the changes in the sense-organs, the nerves and the brain, the sensation or perception in the soul, and the judgment which the soul makes. And here we must further distinguish between the natural or automatic judgment, which inevitably accompanies sensation, and the free judgment, which we can, even if with difficulty, abstain from making. As these different elements are found together and take place as though instantaneously, we tend to confuse them and not to see that the sensation as a psychic event is in the soul and neither in one's own body nor in any other. Malebranche's final conclusion is that our senses are 'very faithful and exact in instructing us about the relations which all the bodies that surround us have with our body, but that they are incapable of telling us what these bodies are in themselves. To make a good use of them, we must use them only to conserve health and life. . . . Let us understand well that our senses have been given us for the conservation of our body. . . .'[2]

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[1] *R.V.*, 1, 5.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *R.V.*, 1, 6.

[4] *R.V.*, 1, 5.

[5] *R.V.*, 1, 1.

In his view of the physiological process involved in sensation Malebranche followed Descartes. That is to say, he thought of the nerves as minute channels or funnels through which pass the 'animal spirits'. When an external object acts on the sense-organ the peripheral surface of the nerves is set in motion and the animal spirits transmit this impression to the brain. There then takes place the psychic element in sensation, which belongs to the soul alone. During the physiological process, however, 'traces' are imprinted on the brain by the animal-spirits, and these 'traces' may be more or less profound. If, therefore, the animal-spirits are set in motion by some other cause than the presence of an external object acting on a sense-organ, these 'traces' are affected and a psychic image results. A man may will the production or reproduction of images, and on the act of will there follows a movement of the animal spirits, and when the traces imprinted on the fibres of the brain are affected images result. But movements of the animal spirits may take place because of some other cause than an act of the will, and then images are produced involuntarily. It is interesting to note also that Malebranche gives a mechanistic explanation of the association of images. If I see several things associated together, there results a linkage between the corresponding traces in the brain and the excitation of one member of the set of traces is linked with the excitation of the other members. 'If, for example, a man finds himself at some public ceremony, and if he notes all the circumstances and all the principal personages assisting at it, the time, the place, the day and all the other particulars, it is sufficient to recall the place, or even some less remarkable circumstance of the ceremony, to represent to himself all the others.'[1] And this association or linkage is of far-reaching importance. 'The mutual linkage of traces, and consequently of ideas, is not only the foundation of all figures of rhetoric, but also of an infinity of other things of greater importance in morals, politics and, in general, in all the sciences which have some relation to man.'[2] Furthermore, 'there are in our brains traces which are linked naturally one with another and also with certain emotions, because this is necessary for the conservation of life. . . . For example, the trace of a great height which one sees below one and over which one is in danger of falling, or the trace of some large body which is ready to fall on us and crush us is naturally linked with the trace which represents death, and with an emotion of the spirits which disposes us to flight and to the desire of flight. This linkage never changes, because it is necessary that it should be always the same; and it consists in a disposition of the fibres of the brain which we have from our birth.'[3] Memory is also explained in terms of impressions on the fibres of the brain and habit with reference to the passage of the animal spirits through channels where they no longer find any resistance.

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[1] *R.V.*, I, 10.

[2] *R.V.*, I, 20.

Imagination is thus parallel to sensation, in the sense that it is the faculty of producing or reproducing images of material things in the absence of those things; that is to say, when we are not actually perceiving the things in question. Accordingly, the same sort of remarks that were made about error with regard to sensation can be made about error in connection with the imagination. If we judge that images of material things represent things as they are in themselves rather than things in relation to us, our judgment is erroneous. But imagination can, of course, be the source or occasion of additional error. The products of the imagination are generally weaker than actual sensations, and we generally recognize them for what they are. But sometimes they are vivid and possess the same force as sensations from the psychological point of view, and then we may judge that the objects imagined are physically present when in actual fact they are not.

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[1] *R.V.*, 2, 1, 5. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*

Under the general heading of imagination, however, Malebranche includes a great deal more than the mere reproduction of images in the ordinary sense. We have seen that he includes a study of memory; and this affords him the occasion for writing at length against scholars, historians and commentators who are more concerned with memory-work than with the 'pure understanding'. Of this type are all those who devote prolonged attention to examining what, for example, Aristotle held about immortality and who give little or no time to examining whether the human soul is in fact immortal. Worse still are those who imagine that Aristotle, or anyone else, is an authority in philosophical questions. 'In matters of theology we ought to love antiquity because we ought to love the truth, and truth is found in antiquity. . . . But in matters of philosophy we ought on the contrary to love novelty for the same reason, namely, that we ought always to love the truth and search for it. All the same, reason does not wish us to believe these new philosophers on their word any more than the ancient philosophers. Reason wishes us to examine their thoughts with attention and to accept them only when we cannot any longer doubt them. . . .'[1] Malebranche thus tries to combine open-mindedness and 'modernity' in philosophy with a loyal acceptance of the Catholic doctrine of Tradition, namely, that the writings and consent of the Fathers is a witness to theological truth.

In the third part of his treatise on the imagination Malebranche treats of 'the contagious communication of strong imaginations; I mean of the power which certain minds possess of involving others in their errors'.[2] The brains of some people receive very profound 'traces' from unimportant or comparatively unimportant objects. And though this is no fault in itself, it becomes a source of error if the imagination is allowed to dominate. For example, those with strong imaginations may be able to impress others and disseminate their ideas. Tertullian was of these. 'The respect which he had for the visions of Montanus and for his prophetesses is an incontestable proof of his weakness of judgment. This fire, these transports, these enthusiasms for trifling matters visibly mark a disorder of the imagination. How many irregular movements in his hyperboles and in his metaphors!

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[1] *R.V.*, 2, 2, 5.

[2] *R.V.*, 2, 3, 1.

How many pompous and splendid arguments which prove only by their sensible brilliance, and which persuade only by stunning and dazzling the mind!'[1] Montaigne was another writer whose words have effect through the power of his imagination rather than through the cogency of his arguments.

'The errors of the senses and of the imagination come from the nature and constitution of the body, and they are discovered by considering the soul's dependence on the body. But the errors of the pure understanding can be discovered only by considering the nature of the mind itself and of the ideas which are necessary for its understanding of objects.'[2] What is meant by the term 'pure understanding'? Malebranche tells us that he here means the mind's faculty of knowing external objects without forming corporeal images of them in the brain.[3] Now, the mind is finite and limited. And if this fact is not borne in mind errors result. For example, heresy is due to men's unwillingness to recognize this fact and to believe what they do not comprehend. Again, some do not pursue a right method in their thought. They apply themselves immediately to investigating hidden truths which cannot be known unless other truths are known previously, and they do not distinguish clearly between what is evident and what is probable. Aristotle was a great sinner in this respect. The mathematicians, however, especially those who have used algebra and the analytic method practised by Vieta and Descartes, have proceeded in the right way. The capacity and scope of the mind cannot literally be increased: 'the soul of man is, so to speak, a determinate quantity or portion of thought which has limits beyond which it cannot pass'.[4] But this does not mean that the mind cannot perform its functions more or less well. And mathematics is the best means of training the mind to start with clear and distinct ideas and to proceed in an orderly way. Arithmetic and algebra, 'these two sciences are the foundation of all the others, and they give the true means of acquiring all the exact sciences, because one cannot make better use of the mind's capacity than by arithmetic, and above all by algebra'.[5]

Malebranche proceeds to lay down some rules which should be observed in the search for truth. The principal general rule is that we ought to reason only on those matters about which we have clear ideas and that we ought always to begin with the simplest and easiest things.[1] It is clear that, as far as concerns method, Malebranche follows the ideal of Descartes. We should base our search for truth on the perception of clear and distinct ideas and proceed in an orderly way, analogous to the order observed by mathematicians. For example, 'to consider the properties of extension, we ought to begin, as M. Descartes has done, with the simplest relations and pass from the simpler to the more complicated, not only because this method is natural and helps the mind in its operations, but also because since God always acts with order and by the simplest means, this way of examining our ideas and their relations will make us know His works better'.[2] Descartes is the hero, and Aristotle is the villain. Like other 'modern' philosophers of the period Malebranche obviously means Aristotelians when he talks about Aristotle and his misdoings. Of the historical significance of Aristotle and of his achievements in his own time they had little appreciation: it was Aristotle as represented by 'Aristotelianism' and as an authority to which they primarily objected. And Malebranche is careful to add that he is not endeavouring to substitute the authority of Descartes for that of Aristotle.

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[1] *R.V.*, 2, 3, 3.

[2] *R.V.*, 3, 1, 1.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *R.V.*, 6, 1, 5

[5] *Ibid.*

3. Mention has been made in the foregoing section of external objects exciting the sense-organs, of the animal spirits causing traces in the fibres of the brain and of images and ideas resulting from or caused by this physiological process. Similarly, mention has been made of the soul willing the movement of the animal spirits and thus exciting the imagination or moving the members of the body, as the case may be. But to speak in this way is to use ordinary language which does not accurately represent Malebranche's theory. For he accepted the Cartesian dichotomy between spirit and matter, thought and extension; and he drew the conclusion that neither can act directly on the other. He speaks, indeed, of 'the soul' (*l'âme*), but this term does not mean soul in the Aristotelian sense; it means the mind (*l'esprit*). And although he speaks of the soul's dependence on the body and of the close union between them, his theory is that mind and body are two things between which there is correspondence but not interaction. The mind thinks, but it does not, properly speaking, move the body. And the body is a machine adapted indeed by God to the soul, but not 'informed' by it according to the Aristotelian sense of the term. True, he traces at length the

[1] *R.V.*, 6, 2, 1.

[2] *R.V.*, 6, 2, 4.

correspondence between physical and psychic events, between, for example, modifications in the brain and modifications in the soul. But what he has in mind is psycho-physical parallelism rather than interaction. 'It seems to me quite certain that the will of spiritual beings is incapable of moving the smallest body which there is in the world. For it is evident that there is no necessary connection between our will, for example, to move our arm and the arm's movement. It is true that it moves when we will, and that we are thus the natural cause of the movement of our arm. But *natural* causes are not at all true causes, they are only *occasional* causes, which act only by the power and efficacy of God's will, as I have just explained.'[1]

Malebranche does not deny, therefore, that I am in some sense the natural cause of the movement of my arm. But the term 'natural cause' means here 'occasional cause'. How could my volition be anything else than an occasional cause? I certainly do not know how I move my arm, if I move it. 'There is no man who knows what he must do to move one of his fingers by means of the animal spirits. How then could men move their arms? These things appear to me to be evident and also, it seems to me, to all those who are willing to think, though they may be perhaps incomprehensible to all those who are only willing to sense.'[2] Here Malebranche assumes the very questionable assumption of Geulincx, that a true causal agent knows that he acts and how he acts. Moreover, that I should be the true cause of my arm's movement is a contradictory notion. 'A true cause is a cause between which and its effect the mind perceives a necessary connection. It is thus that I understand the term.'[3] To be a true cause is to be a creative agent, and no human agent can create. Nor can God communicate this power to a human being. Hence we must conclude that God moves my arm on the occasion of my willing that the arm should be moved.

God, therefore, is the one and only true cause. 'From all eternity God has willed, and He will continue eternally to will—or, to speak more precisely, God wills without cessation, but without change, succession or necessity, all that will take place in the course of time.'[4] But if God wills the creation and conservation of a chair, for example, He must will that it should be in one place rather than another at any given time. 'Therefore there is a contradiction in saying that one body can move another. I say even there is a contradiction in saying that you can move your armchair. . . . No power can transport it where God does not transport it or place it where God does not place it. . . .'[1] Certainly, there is a natural order in the sense that God has willed, for example, that *A* should always be followed by *B*, and this order is constantly preserved because God has willed that it should be preserved. To all outward appearance, therefore, it seems that *A* causes *B*. But metaphysical reflection shows that *A* is simply an occasional cause. The fact that on the occurrence of event *A* God always causes event *B* does not show that *A* is a true cause of *B*. It is simply the occasion, according to the scheme of divine providence, of God's activity in producing *B*.

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[1] *R.V.*, 6, 2, 3. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.* [4] *E.M.*, 7, 9.

Here we have a curious combination of an empiricist analysis of causality with a metaphysical theory. As far as the connection between *A* and *B* is concerned, we can discover no more than a relation of regular sequence. But for Malebranche this does not mean that causality in general is nothing more than regular sequence. It means that natural causes are not true causes and that the only true cause is a supernatural agent, God. And this general principle must obviously hold good with regard to the relation between soul and body in man. There is parallelism but not interaction. And from this Malebranche draws the conclusion that 'our soul is not at all united to our body in the way that common opinion supposes that it is. The soul is united immediately and directly to God alone.'[2]

4. If God is the one true cause, it may appear that human freedom must be denied, on the ground that God is the cause even of our acts of will. But Malebranche did not deny human freedom and responsibility, and some brief explanation must be given of the way in which he reconciled the assertion of human freedom with the attribution to God alone of all true causal efficacy.

Malebranche liked to find parallels and analogies between the material world and the spiritual world as also between the natural and supernatural orders. In the material world, the sphere of bodies, we find movement, and the corresponding factor in the spiritual world is inclination. 'Now, it seems to me that the inclinations of spirits are to the spiritual world that which movement is to the material world.'[3] If our nature had not been corrupted by the Fall, we should have been immediately aware

[1] *E.M.*, 7, 10.

[2] *E.M.*, 7, 15.

[3] *R.V.*, 4, 1.

of the fundamental inclination in our souls. As things are, however, we have to arrive at this knowledge by reflection and argument. Now, God has no other final end in all His operations than Himself. As creator He certainly wills the conservation and good of the beings which He has created, but 'God wills His glory as His principal end and (He wills also) the conservation of creatures, but for His glory'.[1] And the fundamental inclinations of creatures must correspond to the will and intentions of the creator. Accordingly, God has implanted in spiritual creatures a fundamental inclination towards Himself. This takes the form of an inclination towards the good in general and is the reason why we can never be satisfied with any finite good or set of finite goods. We encounter finite goods, and in virtue of our fundamental inclination to the good in general we desire and love them, above all those which have a close relation to the conservation of our being and the acquisition of happiness. For to say that we have an inclination towards the good in general and to say that we are naturally inclined towards the acquisition of happiness is ultimately the same thing. But no finite good can satisfy the inclination towards the good in general, and we cannot find happiness apart from God. We must acknowledge, therefore, that our wills are fundamentally orientated towards God, even if, through the blindness and disorders consequent on the Fall, we are not immediately conscious of this movement towards God.

Now, if God has implanted in the will an ineradicable inclination towards the good in general, an inclination which can be satisfied only by the supreme and infinite good, namely, God Himself, it is obvious that we are not ourselves the causes of this inclination and interior movement. It is a necessary inclination, not subject to our free control. Furthermore, 'our inclinations towards particular goods, which (inclinations) are common to all men, although they are not equally strong in all men, such as our inclination to the conservation of our being and of the being of those with whom we are united by nature, are also impressions of the will of God in us. For I call indifferently "natural inclinations" all the impressions of the author of nature which are common to all spirits.'[2] These inclinations too are natural and necessary.

What, therefore, is left for free will? Or, rather, what can free will mean, once given these premisses? 'By the word *will* I intend to designate here the impression or the natural movement which carries us towards the indeterminate good, the good in general. And by the word *freedom* I understand nothing else but the power which the spirit possesses of diverting this impression towards the objects which please us, and thus to bring it about that our natural inclinations terminate in some particular object.'[1] The movement towards the good in general or the universal good is irresistible; and this movement is in point of fact a movement or inclination towards God, 'Who alone is the general good, because He alone comprises in Himself all goods.'[2] But we are free with regard to particular finite goods. This can be illustrated by the example chosen by Malebranche.[3] A man represents to himself some dignity as a good. Immediately his will is drawn to it; that is to say, his movement towards the universal good moves him towards this particular object, the dignity, because his mind has represented it to him as a good. But as a matter of fact this dignity is not the universal good. Nor is the mind capable of seeing it clearly and distinctly as the universal good ('for the mind never sees clearly what is not the case'). Therefore the movement towards the universal good cannot be fully arrested, as it were, by this particular good. The will is naturally impelled beyond this particular good, and the man does not love the dignity necessarily or invincibly. He remains free. 'Now, his freedom consists in this that, not being fully convinced that this dignity comprises all the good which he is capable of loving, he can suspend his judgment and his love. Further, in virtue of the union which he has with the universal being or that which comprises all good, he can think of other things and consequently love other goods. . . .'[4] In other words, if I once apprehend or think of something as good, my will goes out towards it. But at the same time I am capable of refusing my consent to this movement or impulse in so far as it is directed towards this particular finite good.

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[1] *R.V.*, 4, 1.

[2] *Ibid.*

In order to understand Malebranche's theory of liberty more clearly, it is helpful to remember that according to him the Fall resulted in the change of 'union' of soul with body into 'dependence' of soul on body. Before the Fall Adam possessed a preternatural power of suspending the operation of the laws of parallelism; but after the Fall the chain of physical events which results in 'traces' in the principal part of the brain is necessarily followed by the appearance of psychic events in the soul. According, therefore, to the necessary operation of the laws of parallelism, whenever a corporeal thing 'causes' traces in the brain, movements of the soul result. And in this sense the soul is subject to the body. Man, therefore, who after the Fall has no longer a clear consciousness of God, is drawn towards sensible things. 'The soul, after sin (original sin) has become, as it were, corporeal by inclination. Its love for sensible things constantly diminishes its union with or relation to intelligible things.'[1] And all sin comes ultimately from this subservience to the flesh. At the same time the reason is still a participation of the divine reason, and the will is still naturally drawn towards the universal good, God. Although, therefore, man is drawn towards finite goods, especially corporeal sources of pleasure, he is capable of seeing that no finite good is the universal good and of refusing his consent to the inclination or love of it. Nobody is captivated by a finite good except by his own choice.

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[1] *R.V.*, 1, 1, 2. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*

5. The will is, therefore, an active power. This activity is, indeed, immanent, in the sense that though I can will or not will a finite good, my will cannot of itself produce an external effect. External effects are produced by God on the occasion of acts of will. None the less, the will is an active, and not a purely passive, power. The mind or pure understanding, however, is a passive power or faculty. It does not produce ideas: it receives them. The question arises, therefore, from what source does it receive them. How do ideas of things distinct from ourselves come to our minds?

These ideas cannot come from the bodies which they represent. Nor can they be produced by the soul itself. For their production by man himself would postulate a power which he does not possess, namely, that of creation. Nor can we suppose that God has placed in the soul from the beginning a complete stock of innate ideas. The only reasonable explanation of our ideas, according to Malebranche, is that 'we see all things in God'.[2] This celebrated theory of vision in God, for which Malebranche claimed the authority of St. Augustine, is one of the characteristic features of the former's philosophy.

God has in Himself 'the ideas of all the things which He has created; for otherwise He could not have produced them'.[3] Further, He is present to us in so intimate a manner that 'one can say that He is the place of spirits, in the same way spaces are in a sense the place of bodies'.[4] It follows, therefore, according to

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[1] *R.V.*, 1, 13, 4.
[2] *R.V.*, 3, 2, 6.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*

Malebranche, that the mind can see in God the works of God, provided that He wills to reveal to it the ideas which represent them. And that God does so will can be shown by various arguments. For example, as we can desire to see all beings, sometimes one and sometimes another, 'it is certain that all beings are present to our mind; and it seems that they cannot all be present to our mind unless God is present to it, that is to say, He who comprises all things within the simplicity of His being'.[1] 'I do not think that we can well explain the way in which the mind knows a diversity of abstract and general truths otherwise than by the presence of Him who can illuminate the mind in an infinity of ways'.[2] Further, ideas act on our minds, illuminating them and rendering them happy or unhappy. But it is God alone who can change the modifications of our minds. 'It must be, then, that all our ideas are in the efficacious substance of the divinity, which alone is intelligible or capable of illuminating us, because it alone can affect our intelligences.'[3]

This does not mean, Malebranche remarks, that we see the essence of God. 'The essence of God is His absolute being, and minds do not at all see the divine substance taken absolutely, but only as relative to creatures or as participable by them.'[4] Malebranche thus tries to avoid the accusation that he is attributing the beatific vision, reserved for souls in heaven, to all men without distinction, and that he is naturalizing it. But it seems to me to be extremely difficult to see how the distinction between seeing the divine essence in itself and seeing the divine essence as externally imitable in creatures is of much real use for this purpose.

However, supposing that we do see our ideas in God, what is it that we see? What are these ideas? In the first place we see the so-called eternal truths. To be more precise, we see the ideas of these truths. A truth such as the proposition 'twice two is four' cannot be identified with God. 'So we do not say that we see God in seeing the truths, as St. Augustine says, but in seeing the *ideas* of these truths. For the ideas are real; but the equality between the ideas, which is the truth, is not real. . . . When one says that twice two makes four, the ideas of the numbers are real, but the equality which exists between them is only a relation. Thus according to our opinion we see God when we see eternal truths; not that these truths are God, but because the ideas on which these truths depend are in God. And perhaps even St. Augustine understood the matter in this way.'[1]

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[1] *R.V.*, 3, 2, 6. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*

In the second place 'we believe also that one knows changing and corruptible things in God, although St. Augustine talks only of immutable and incorruptible things'.[2] But this statement of Malebranche may easily be misunderstood. In our knowledge of material things we can distinguish between the sensational element and the pure idea. The former is, indeed, caused by God but it is not seen in God. 'For God certainly knows sensible things, but He does not perceive them.'[3] The sensational element does not represent the thing as it is in itself. In itself it is extension; and it is this that we see in God as a pure idea. Does this mean that we see in God separate ideas of individual material things? No, we see in God only the pure idea of intelligible extension, which is the archetype of the material world. 'It is clear that matter is nothing else but extension';[4] for in our clear and distinct idea of matter we can discern only extension. And matter or body must have its archetype in God. This does not mean, of course, that God is material and extended: it means that there is in Him the pure idea of extension. And in this archetypal idea are contained ideally the possible relations which are exemplified concretely in the material world. 'When you contemplate intelligible extension, you see as yet only the archetype of the material world which we inhabit and that of an infinity of other possible worlds. In truth you then see the divine substance. For it is this alone which is visible, or which can illumine the mind. But you do not see the divine substance in itself or according to what it is. You see it only according to the relation which it has to material creatures, according as it is participable by them or according as it is representative of them. Consequently it is not, properly speaking, God whom you see, but only the matter which He can produce.'[5]

In the third place 'we believe finally that all minds see the eternal moral laws as well as other things in God, but in a somewhat different way'.[6] We see the eternal truths, for example, in virtue of the union which our minds have with the Word of God. But the moral order is known in virtue of the movement or inclination towards God which we receive constantly from the divine will. It is because of this natural and ever-present inclination that we know that 'we should love good and shun evil, that we should love justice more than all riches, that it is better to obey God than to command men, and an infinity of other natural laws'.[1] For the knowledge of our fundamental orientation towards God as our final end comprises the knowledge of the natural moral law. We have only to examine the implications of this orientation to become aware of the law and of its obligatory character.

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[1] *R.V.*, 3, 2, 6.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *R.V.*, 3, 2, 8, 2.
[5] *E.M.*, 2, 2.
[6] *R.V.*, 3, 2, 6.

6. According to Malebranche, therefore, the vision in God which we possess comprises knowledge of the eternal truths, of intelligible extension as the archetype of the material world and, though in a different sense, of the natural moral law. But 'it is not the same with the soul. We do not know it by its idea; we do not at all see it in God; we know it only by *consciousness*.'[2] But this does not mean that we have a clear vision of the soul itself; 'we know of our soul only what we perceive to take place in us'.[3] If we had never experienced pain and so on, we should be ignorant whether the soul is capable of having such modifications. That it can have these modifications is known only experientially. If, however, we knew the soul by the idea of it in God, we should be capable of knowing *a priori* all the properties and modifications of which it is capable, just as we can know *a priori* the properties of extension. This is not to say that we are ignorant of the soul's existence and of its nature as a thinking being. Indeed, the knowledge which we have of it is sufficient to enable us to prove the soul's spirituality and immortality. At the same time it must be admitted that 'we do not possess as perfect a knowledge of the nature of the soul as that which we possess of the nature of bodies'.[4]

This is not perhaps the view which we would naturally expect from Malebranche. But he gives a reason for it in terms of his own analysis of our knowledge of material things. 'The knowledge which we have of our soul by consciousness is imperfect, it is true, but it is in no way false. The knowledge, on the contrary, which we have of bodies by feeling or consciousness, if one can call "consciousness" the feeling of that which takes place in our body, is not only imperfect but false. It was therefore necessary for us to have an idea of bodies to correct the feelings which we have with regard to them. But we have no need of an idea of our souls, since the consciousness which we have of them does not at all involve us in error. In order not to be deceived in our knowledge of the soul it is sufficient that we do not confuse it with the body; and we can avoid this confusion by the use of reason.'[1] There was no need, then, for us to have a vision of the soul in God analogous to our vision of intelligible extension in God.

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[1] *R.V.*, 3, 2, 6. [2] *R.V.*, 3, 2, 7, 4. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*

7. What, then, of our knowledge of other men and of the pure intelligences or angels? 'It is clear that we know them only by conjecture.'[2] We do not know the souls of other men in themselves, nor by means of their ideas in God. And as they are different from ourselves, we cannot know them by consciousness. 'We conjecture that the souls of other men are of like kind to ours.'[3] True, we know with certainty some facts about other souls. We know, for example, that every soul seeks for happiness. 'But I know it with evidence and certitude because it is God who informs me.'[4] What I know with certainty of other souls or minds is known by revelation. But when I draw conclusions about other people from my knowledge of myself I am often wrong. 'Thus the knowledge which we have of other men is extremely subject to error, if we judge of them by the feelings (perceptions) which we have our ourselves.'[5]

It is evident that Malebranche must make an analogous statement about our knowledge of the existence of other bodies. On the one hand sensations do not represent bodies as they are in themselves. And in any case the psychic events which follow on the chain of physical stimuli are caused by God, so that there is no absolutely compelling proof that they are in fact occasioned by the presence of external bodies, unless, indeed, we first assume the whole order of occasional causality. And this involves assuming the existence of bodies. On the other hand the idea of intelligible extension which we see in God does not of itself assure us of the existence of any bodies at all. For it is the infinite archetype of all possible bodies. Hence it would appear that Malebranche must have recourse to revelation as the source of certain knowledge that bodies do in fact exist. And so he does. 'There are three kinds of beings of which we have some knowledge, and to which we can have some relation: God, or the infinitely perfect being, who is the principle and cause of all things; spirits, which we know only by the interior feeling that we have of our nature; bodies, of whose existence we are assured by the revelation of it which we possess.'[6]

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[1] *R.V.*, 3, 2, 7, 4.
[2] *R.V.*, 3, 2, 7, 5.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *E.M.*, 6, 3.

The existence of bodies cannot be demonstrated, says Malebranche. It is rather the impossibility of a demonstration which can be demonstrated. For there is no necessary connection between the existence of bodies and the cause of their existence, namely, God. We know of their existence through revelation. But here we must distinguish between natural and supernatural revelation. Suppose that I prick my finger with a needle and feel pain. 'This feeling of pain that we have is a kind of revelation.'[1] It is not that the pain is truly caused by the prick: it is caused by God on the occasion of the prick. But in view of God's establishment of a regular order of occasional causality His causing the pain is an intimation or a kind of 'natural revelation' of the existence of bodies. The argument, however, does not of itself produce absolute certainty. Not that it is in itself defective; but we can have doubts about it, since in our present state we are able, for example, to conclude in some particular case that a psychic event is caused on the occasion of the presence and 'activity' of a body when this is not really true. Hence, if we desire greater certainty about the existence of bodies, we must have resource to supernatural revelation. The Scriptures make it abundantly clear that bodies do in fact exist. 'To deliver you entirely from your speculative doubt, faith furnishes us a demonstration which it is impossible to resist.'[2] In practice, however, 'natural revelation' suffices. 'For I am quite certain that you had no need of all that I have just said to you in order to assure yourself that you are in the company of Theodorus.'[3]

8. To be assured of the existence of bodies, therefore, we need to know that God exists. But how do we know this? Malebranche's principal argument is an adaptation of the so-called 'ontological argument' of St. Anselm, as used by Descartes. We have the idea of the infinite. But no finite thing represents or can represent the infinite. We cannot form for ourselves the idea of the infinite by adding to the finite. Rather do we conceive the finite by limiting the idea of the infinite. This idea of the infinite, that is to say of infinite being, is thus no mere mental construction of ours: it is something given, the attestation or effect of God's presence. In it we discern existence as necessarily included. 'One can see a circle, a house, a sun, without its existing. For everything which is finite can be seen in the infinite, which comprises the intelligible ideas of finite things. But the infinite can be seen

[1] *E.M.*, 6, 3.
[2] *E.M.*, 6, 8.
[3] *Ibid.*

only in itself. For no finite thing can represent the infinite. If one thinks of God, He must exist. Other beings, although known, may not exist. One can see their essence without their existence, their idea without them. But one cannot see the essence of the infinite without its existence, the idea of being without being. For being has no idea to represent it. There is no archetype which contains all its intelligible reality. It is its own archetype, and it comprises in itself the archetype of all beings.'[1] In having the idea of the infinite, therefore, we see God. 'I am certain that I see the infinite. Therefore the infinite exists, because I see it, and because I cannot see it except in itself.'[2] True, my perception of the infinite is limited, inasmuch as my mind is limited; but that which I perceive is infinite. 'Thus you see very well that this proposition, "there is a God", is by itself the clearest of all propositions which affirm the existence of anything, and that it is even as certain as the proposition, "I think, therefore I am."'[3]

The idea of God is thus the idea of the infinite, and the idea of the infinite is the idea of infinitely perfect being. 'You define God as He has defined Himself when speaking to Moses, *God is He who is*. . . . Being without restriction, in a word Being, this is the idea of God.'[4] And this meaning of the word 'God' gives us the key to knowledge of the divine attributes, so far as such knowledge is possible for us. 'It is clear that this word *God* being only an abbreviation for "infinitely perfect being" there is a contradiction in saying that we can be deceived if we attribute to God simply what we see clearly as pertaining to the infinite perfect being.'[5] We are justified in predicating of God any perfection which we see to be a true perfection and one which is not necessarily limited or mixed with imperfection. 'God, or the infinitely perfect being, is then, independent (of all causes) and immutable. He is also omnipotent, eternal, necessary, omnipresent. . . .'[6] That an infinite perfection surpasses our comprehension is no valid reason against attributing it to God. Men naturally tend to humanize God, to form anthropomorphic conceptions of Him; and some like to strip Him of all incomprehensible attributes.[7] But we must acknowledge, for example, that 'God is neither good nor merciful nor patient according to the vulgar notions (of these attributes). Those attributes as ordinarily conceived are unworthy of the infinitely perfect being. But God possesses these qualities in the

[1] *E.M.*, 2, 5.
[2] *E.M.*, 8, 1.
[3] *E.M.*, 2, 5.
[4] *E.M.*, 2, 4.
[5] *E.M.*, 8, 1.
[6] *E.M.*, 8, 3.
[7] *E.M.*, 8, 9.

sense that reason tells us and the scripture, which cannot be contradicted, makes us believe.'[1] And we must recognize that God possesses all the perfections which pertain to the infinitely perfect being, even if we cannot comprehend them. God, for example, knows all things in Himself; but we cannot comprehend the divine knowledge.

Malebranche insists on freedom as a divine attribute. God necessarily loves that which is supremely and infinitely lovable, His own substance, the infinite good. And this infinite good is sufficient, if one may so speak, to satisfy the divine will. If, therefore, God creates finite things, He does so, indeed, out of goodness and love, but not from necessity. For creatures cannot add to the infinite anything which it lacks. God created the world freely, and He conserves it freely. 'The will to create the world contains no element of necessity, although, like other immanent operations, it is eternal and immutable.'[2]

But how can the divine freedom be reconciled with the divine immutability? Does not freedom suggest mutability, the power to act otherwise than one does act? Malebranche answers that God willed eternally to create the world. Indeed, as there is no past or future in God, there is one eternal creative act. And this act is immutable. At the same time God willed eternally but freely to create the world. If we once suppose the free decision to create and conserve the world, we can rely, as it were, on a stable order. God does not change His decrees. This does not mean that no miracle is possible. But God's eternal choice of this world and of this order comprised also the choice of those events which we call miracles. The fact, however, that God decreed from eternity the creation of the world and that this decree is immutable is not incompatible with the freedom of this decree. 'From all eternity God has willed, and He will continue eternally to will—or, to speak more exactly, God wills without cessation, but without change, without succession, without necessity—all that He will do in the course of time. The act of His eternal decree, although simple and immutable, is necessary only because it is. It cannot not be, because it is. But it is only because God wills it.'[3] The divine decrees are necessary only 'by supposition', on the supposition, that is to say, that God has made them; and He made them freely. 'At present you are seated. Can you be standing up? You can, absolutely speaking; but, according to the supposition (that you are sitting), you cannot. . . . (So God) wills to make decrees and establish simple and general laws to govern the world in a manner consonant with His attributes. But, these decrees once supposed, they cannot be changed. Not that they are necessary, absolutely speaking; but they are necessary by supposition. . . . (God) is immutable; this is one of the perfections of His nature. Nevertheless He is perfectly free in all that He does externally. He cannot change, because what He wills He wills without succession, by a simple and invariable act. But He can not will it, because He wills freely what He actually wills.'[1]

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[1] *E.M.*, 8, 15.

[2] *E.M.*, 7, 9.

[3] *Ibid.*

9. On this subject of divine freedom and on the problem of reconciling the divine freedom with the divine immutability Malebranche adds nothing to what the mediaeval theologians and philosophers had already said. He certainly contributes nothing new to the solution of the problem. However the fact that he repeats his predecessors is perhaps worth noting in view of his frequent polemics against the 'Aristotelians', even though, as a Catholic theologian, he could not say anything very different from what he did say. But his insistence on the divine freedom has this greater importance, that it illustrates the difference between him and Spinoza. The fact that Malebranche makes God the only true cause, coupled with the fact that he places infinite 'intelligible extension' in God, has led some historians to regard him as a link between Descartes and Spinoza. And this point of view is certainly understandable. At the same time the fact that He insists on the divine freedom shows clearly enough that he was a theist and not a pantheist.

As for Descartes, we have had occasion to note Malebranche's admiration for his great predecessor. Descartes inspired his admiration for mathematics and his conception of the right method to pursue in the search for truth. Several important theories defended by Malebranche were obviously Cartesian in origin; for example, the analysis of matter as extension. Further, the problem created by the Cartesian dualism of thought and extension provided the starting-point for Malebranche's doctrine of occasional causality. And, in general, the latter's devotion to the ideal of clear and distinct ideas and of indubitable evidence analogous to that obtained in mathematics was clearly the fruit of the Cartesian spirit.

Yet in spite of the undoubted influence of Descartes on his thought Malebranche's philosophy has a rather different flavour from that of Cartesianism. Perhaps the difference can be illustrated in this way. The bent of Descartes' mind was towards the discovery of new scientific truths by the aid of the correct method. He hoped that others would prolong his own reflections in fruitful deduction and scientific investigation. Hence, although the notion of God was essential to his system, his philosophy can hardly be called theocentric: It made room, it is true, for the mysteries of faith, but its dynamic impulse, so to speak, is towards the building-up of the sciences, a fact which is not altered by Descartes' faulty notion of scientific method. The philosophy of Malebranche on the contrary is evidently theocentric in character. The doctrines of God as the universal and only true cause and of our vision in God illustrate this character. For Malebranche false ideas of causality are intimately linked with false notions of the divine. The theory of occasional causality and a true idea of God go together. And when we recognize this, we are able to see the world in a true perspective, namely, as dependent at every moment on the infinite Godhead, not simply for existence but also for activity. And if we once recognize this utter dependence of creatures on the transcendent-immanent God, the only source of all being and activity, we shall be all the more ready to listen to the divine revelation, even though this revelation comprises incomprehensible mysteries. The mind is passive, receiving ideas, and it is folly to turn the ideas which we receive against the word of Him from whom we receive them.

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[1] *E.M.*, 8, 2.

Perhaps one may draw the following analogy between Malebranche and Berkeley. The latter in the eighteenth century accepted the principles of empiricism as laid down by Locke and drew some radical conclusions which Locke himself had not drawn; for example, that there is no such thing as material substance. Berkeley can therefore be depicted as carrying the development of empiricism a stage further than his predecessor. At the same time he propounded a thoroughly theocentric philosophy, and he based this metaphysical system, partly at least, on an application of empirical principles. Hence it would not be unreasonable to speak of Berkeley as using empiricism in the service of a theocentric philosophy. Similarly, Malebranche, at an earlier date, accepted many of the principles laid down by Descartes, and he drew conclusions which the latter had not himself drawn; for example, that there is no real interaction between soul and body.

In this sense he can be depicted as having developed Cartesianism. At the same time he used Cartesian principles and the conclusions which he drew from them in the service of a thoroughly theocentric system with peculiarities of its own. Hence it is as misleading to label Malebranche simply as a Cartesian as it would be to label Berkeley simply as an empiricist. Both men developed theocentric metaphysical systems, and these systems bear marked resemblances in some points, though there are also notable differences, due at least in part to the association of the one system with Cartesianism and of the other with British empiricism.

10. The philosophy of Malebranche enjoyed a considerable success. Thus the Oratorian Thomassin (1619–95) is generally recognized as having been influenced by Malebranche, even if he does not name the latter when he speaks of the vision in God. Among the Benedictines François Lamy (1636–1711), who attacked Spinoza's idea of God, was influenced by Malebranche. And the Jesuit Yves Marie André (1675–1764), author of a life of Malebranche, exposed himself to considerable difficulties through his championship of the latter's cause. According to André, the Aristotelian-Thomist doctrine of the sense-origin of our knowledge destroys science and morals. The mathematician and physicist René Fédé, author of *Méditations métaphysiques sur l'origine de l'âme* (1683), can be reckoned as a disciple of Malebranche, though in some respects he inclined to Spinozism. In general, the French disciples of Malebranche endeavoured to defend him against the charge that his philosophy led to or was akin to Spinozism, and also to use his system against the influence of empiricism which was beginning to be felt on the Continent.

A translation of the *Recherche de la vérité* was published in England in 1694; and in the following year Locke wrote *An Examination of Malebranche's Opinion of Seeing All Things in God*, in which he criticized this opinion adversely. This work was not published until 1706, two years after Locke's death. Meanwhile John Norris (1657–1711) had shown his acceptance of Malebranche's opinion in *An Essay Towards the Theory of the Ideal or Intelligible World* (1701–4) in the second part of which he criticized Locke's empiricism.

Ideas of Malebranche were also used by Italian writers against empiricism in the eighteenth century. One can mention especially

Mattia Doria, author of a *Difesa della metafisca contro il signor G. Locke* (1732), and Cardinal Gerdil[1] who published his *Immatérialité de l'âme démontrée contre M. Locke* in 1747 and in the following year a *Défense du sentiment du P. Malebranche sur l'origine et la nature des idées contre l'examen de Locke.*

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[1] Cardinal Gerdil was born in Savoy, but he passed most of his life in Italy.

CHAPTER X

SPINOZA (1)

Life—Works—The geometrical method—The influence of other philosophies on Spinoza's thought—Interpretations of Spinoza's philosophy.

1. Baruch Spinoza (Benedict Spinoza or de Spinoza or Despinoza) was born at Amsterdam on November 24th, 1632. He came of a family of Portuguese Jews who had emigrated to Holland towards the close of the sixteenth century. His ancestors were perhaps Marranos; that is to say, Jews who in the last decade of the fifteenth century had outwardly accepted Christianity in order to avoid expulsion from their country, while remaining inwardly attached to the Jewish religion. In any case, on arrival in Holland the emigrants made open profession of Judaism; and Spinoza was thus brought up in the Jewish community of Amsterdam according to the Jewish traditions. Though his native language was Spanish (he also learned Portuguese at a very early age), his early education naturally took the form of the study of the Old Testament and the Talmud. He also became acquainted with the Cabalistic speculations which had been influenced by the neo-Platonic tradition, and later he studied the writings of Jewish philosophers such as Moses Maimonides.[1] The elements of Latin he acquired from a German, and he continued his study of the language under Francis Van den Ende, a Christian, under whose tuition he studied also mathematics and the Cartesian philosophy. In addition he learned some Greek, though his knowledge of this language did not equal his knowledge of Latin, and he was acquainted with French, Italian and, of course, Hebrew and Dutch.

Though educated in the Jewish religious tradition, Spinoza soon found himself unable to accept the orthodox Jewish theology and interpretation of the Scriptures, and in 1656, when only twenty-four years old, he was solemnly excommunicated, that is, excluded from the Jewish community. As a means of livelihood he took to grinding lenses for optical instruments, and he was thus enabled to lead the retired and quiet life of a scholar and philosopher. In

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[1] For Maimonides (1135–1204), see vol. II, pp. 203–4.

1660 he went to reside near Leyden, and while there he entered into correspondence with Henry Oldenburg, secretary of the Royal Society in London. In 1663 he moved to the neighbourhood of The Hague, where he was visited by Leibniz in 1676. Spinoza never occupied an academic post. In 1673 he was offered the chair of philosophy of Heidelberg, but he refused it, mainly no doubt because he wished to preserve complete freedom. But in any case he was never the man to seek the limelight. He died of consumption in 1677.

2. Only two works by Spinoza were published during his lifetime, and of these only one appeared under his own name. His exposition 'in geometrical form' of part of Descartes' *Principles of Philosophy* (*Renati des Cartes Principiorum philosophiae partes prima et secunda more geometrico demonstratae. Accesserunt Cogitata metaphysica*) appeared in 1663, while his *Theological-Political Treatise* (*Tractatus theologico-politicus*) was published anonymously in 1670. The *Opera posthuma*, which were published shortly after Spinoza's death, include his *Treatise on the Correction of the Understanding* (*Tractatus de intellectus emendatione*) which was written during his residence near Leyden, the *Ethics demonstrated according to the Geometrical Order* (*Ethica ordine geometrico demonstrata*), which is his most important work,[1] and the *Political Treatise* (*Tractatus politicus*). *His Short Treatise on God, Man and his Well-Being* (*Tractatus brevis de Deo et homine ejusque felicitate*) was discovered in 1851 and is generally known as the *Short Treatise*. The complete works of Spinoza include also one or two essays and a collection of his correspondence.

3. The most conspicuous idea of Spinoza's philosophy is that there is only one substance, the infinite divine substance which is identified with Nature; *Deus sive Natura*, God or Nature. And a striking feature of this philosophy as it is presented in the *Ethics* is the geometrical form of its presentation. This work is divided into five parts in which the following subjects are treated in turn: God, the nature and origin of the mind, the origin and nature of the emotions, the power of the intellect or human freedom. At the beginning of the first part we find eight definitions, followed by seven axioms. The second part starts with seven definitions and five axioms, the third with three definitions and two postulates, the fourth with eight definitions and one axiom, and the

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[1] In references this work will be referred to as *E*.
'P.' signifies Part, 'def.' definition and 'prop.' proposition.

fifth with two axioms.[1] And in each case these definitions and axioms or postulates are succeeded by numbered propositions with proofs, ending with the letters Q.E.D., and corollaries.

We can distinguish between this geometrical form of presentation and the central idea of the unity of God and Nature in one infinite substance. Consideration of the first topic I shall leave to the next section, while in the present section I shall make some remarks about the influences which contributed to the formation of Spinoza's central metaphysical idea.

It can hardly be denied that Cartesianism exercised an influence on the mind of Spinoza and that it was to some extent at least an instrument in the formation of his philosophy. In the first place it provided him with an ideal of method. In the second place it provided him with a good deal of his terminology. For example, a comparison of Spinoza's definitions of substance and attribute with those of Descartes reveals clearly enough his indebtedness to the French philosopher. In the third place he was doubtless positively influenced by Descartes' treatment of certain particular points. For instance, he may well have been influenced by Descartes' assertion[2] that in philosophy we should inquire only into efficient and not into final causes, as also of his use of the ontological argument for the existence of God. In the fourth place Cartesianism probably helped to determine the nature of the problems with which he dealt; for example, the problem of the relation between mind and body.

But though it is reasonable to say that Spinoza was influenced by Descartes, it does not follow immediately that his monism was derived from the latter's philosophy. Nobody would wish to claim, of course, that he derived his monism from Cartesianism in the sense of borrowing or adopting it from Descartes. For the latter was not a monist. But it has been argued that what Spinoza did was to develop the logical implications of Cartesianism in a monist direction. We have seen that Descartes defined substance in such a way that the definition applied literally to God alone. It is understandable, therefore, that some historians should claim that Spinoza adopted monism under the influence of this definition. After all, it certainly appeared to a number of people at the time that Spinozism was the result of a logical and consistent re-thinking of Cartesianism. And though the Cartesians strenuously resisted any attempt to hang Spinoza round the neck of Descartes, it is arguable that their opposition to Spinozism was rendered all the more vehement by an uneasy feeling that it could be plausibly represented as a logical development of Descartes' philosophy. In a letter to Oldenburg Spinoza remarked that 'the stupid Cartesians, being suspected of favouring me, endeavoured to remove the aspersion by abusing everywhere my opinions and writings, a course which they still pursue'.[1] But though from the theoretical point of view the philosophy could have been developed through reflection on that of Descartes,[2] it by no means follows necessarily that as a matter of historical fact Spinoza arrived at his central metaphysical idea in precisely this way. And there are reasons for thinking that he did not do so.

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[1] In the second, third, fourth and fifth parts the definitions and axioms are preceded by prefaces.

[2] *Principles of Philosophy*, 1, 28.

In the first place there is reason for thinking that Spinoza was at least predisposed towards pantheistic monism by his study of certain Jewish writers before he devoted attention to Cartesianism. His Jewish upbringing was, of course, ultimately responsible for his use of the word 'God' for the ultimate reality, though it is obvious that he did not borrow the identification of God with Nature from the Old Testament writers, who certainly did not make any such identification. But when still a youth Spinoza came to think that belief in a personal transcendent God who created the world freely is philosophically untenable. He admitted that theological language expressing this belief has a valuable function to perform for those who cannot appreciate the language of philosophy; but he regarded its action as being that of leading people to adopt certain lines of action rather than as that of conveying true information about God. Against Maimonides he argued that it is idle to look for philosophical truth in the Scriptures, since it is not there to be found, save for a few simple truths, though he maintained at the same time that there can be no important contradiction between true philosophy and the Scriptures, because they do not speak the same language. Philosophy gives us the truth in purely rational, not in pictorial, form. And as philosophy tells us that the ultimate reality is infinite, this reality must contain all being within itself. God cannot be something apart from the world. This idea of God as the infinite Being which expresses itself in and yet comprises within itself the world seems to have been suggested at least to Spinoza by his reading of Jewish mystical and Cabalistic writers.

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[1] *Letter 68.*

[2] I do not mean to imply that Cartesianism implies Spinozism as a logically inevitable conclusion.

We have, indeed, to be careful not to exaggerate, or even to emphasize, the influence of the Cabalistic writings on Spinoza's mind. In point of fact he had little sympathy for them. 'I have read and known certain Cabalistic triflers whose insanity provokes my unceasing astonishment.'[1] He found in these writings childish ideas rather than divine secrets. But, as Dunin-Borkowski, for example, has argued, it does not follow that the remote seeds of Spinoza's pantheistic monism were not planted by his acquaintance with these writings. And even if we wish to discount the influence of the later writings of the Cabala, there is at least some evidence other than conjecture to suggest that Jewish writers had exercised some formative influence on his thought. Thus, after saying that a mode of extension and the idea of this mode are one and the same thing, though expressed in different ways, Spinoza adds, 'which certain Jews seem to have perceived, but confusedly, for they said that God and His intellect and the things perceived by His intellect were one and the same thing'.[2] Moreover, Spinoza makes one explicit reference[3] to Chasdaï Crescas, a Jewish writer of the late Middle Ages, who maintained that matter in some way pre-exists in God, on the principle that a being cannot be the cause of another thing if it possesses in itself nothing of that thing. And this idea may possibly have helped to predispose Spinoza to the development of his view of extension as a divine attribute. He may also have been influenced by Crescas's determinism: that is, by the latter's denial that any human choice is incapable of being explained in terms of character and motive.

Another probable source of influence on Spinoza was his study of the pantheistically inclined Renaissance philosophers. It is true that the writings of Giordano Bruno do not figure in the catalogue which was made of the works contained in Spinoza's library. But certain passages in the *Short Treatise* seem to make it clear that he did know Bruno's philosophy and that he had been influenced by it in early years. Moreover, Bruno had made use of the distinction between *Natura naturans* and *Natura naturata* which was an important feature of Spinoza's system.

It is scarcely possible to settle in any definitive fashion the controversy concerning the relative degrees of influence exercised on

[1] *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, 9, 34.
[2] *E.*, P. II, prop. 7, note.
[3] *Letter 12.*

Spinoza's mind by his study of Jewish writers and by that of Renaissance philosophers of Nature such as Bruno. But it seems safe to say that he was predisposed towards the identification of God with Nature through both lines of study, and that this central idea was not derived simply through reflection on Cartesianism. It must be remembered that Spinoza was at no time a Cartesian. True, he expounded part of Descartes' philosophy *more geometrico*; but, as a friend explained in an introduction to the exposition,[1] he did not accept this philosophy. What Cartesianism did for him was to give him an ideal of method and a knowledge of a closely knit and systematically developed philosophy which was far superior to the outpourings of Bruno, and still more to the 'insanity' of the 'Cabalistic triflers'. Spinoza was doubtless impressed by Cartesianism; but he never looked on it as the complete truth. And when writing to Henry Oldenburg, who had asked him what he considered to be the chief defects in the philosophies of Descartes and Bacon, he asserted that the first and chief defect was that 'these philosophers have strayed so far from the knowledge of the first cause and origin of all things'.[2]

It has been claimed that Spinoza owed more to Scholasticism in the way of terminology and concepts than had been generally recognized. But though he had some knowledge of Scholasticism, it does not seem to have been intimate or profound. He did not possess that first-hand and extensive acquaintance with Scholastic philosophers which Leibniz possessed. As for Stoicism, its influence is evident in his moral theory. He was acquainted with at least a few of the writings of ancient Stoics, and he was doubtless well aware of the revived Stoicism of the Renaissance. In his political thought he was influenced by Hobbes, though in a letter to Jarig Jellis he drew attention to a difference between Hobbes's views and his own. But though it is interesting to attempt to trace the influence of other philosophers on Spinoza, the fact remains that his system was his own creation. Historical research into contributory influences should not blind one to the powerful originality of his thought.

4. We have seen that Spinoza expounded part of Descartes' philosophy *more geometrico*, though he was not even at that time an adherent of the Cartesian system. And this fact has been held to show that he did not regard as infallible the method which he himself employed in the *Ethics*. But one has, I think, to make a

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[1] This was done on Spinoza's instructions, as he says in *Letter 13*.

[2] *Letter 2*.

distinction. It is, indeed, obvious that Spinoza did not attach primary importance to the external trappings of this method, such as the formulas of exposition, the use of letters like Q.E.D. and of words like corollary. The true philosophy could be presented without the use of these geometrical adornments and forms. Conversely, a false philosophy could be presented in a geometrical dress. It is, therefore, true to say that Spinoza did not regard the method as infallible if one is thinking simply of externals. But if by the method one means not so much the external geometrical trappings as the logical deduction of propositions from definitions expressing clear and distinct ideas and from self-evident axioms, it seems to me that the method was certainly in Spinoza's eyes an infallible means of developing the true philosophy. If one looks at his definitions, for example, it is true, as far as the wording goes, that they express simply the ways in which Spinoza chooses to understand certain terms. For instance, 'An Attribute I understand to be that which the intellect perceives as constituting the essence of a substance',[1] or, 'By Good I understand that which we certainly know to be useful to us.'[2] But Spinoza was convinced that each definition expressed a clear and distinct idea and that 'every definition or clear and distinct idea is true'.[3] And if the intellect operates with clear and distinct ideas and deduces their logical implications it cannot err; for it is operating according to its own nature, the nature of reason itself. Thus he criticizes Francis Bacon for assuming that 'the human intellect is liable to err, not only through the fallibility of the senses, but also solely through its own nature'.[4]

But those who say that Spinoza did not regard his geometrical method as infallible may have in mind the following point. He regarded the logical deduction from clear and distinct ideas as providing an explanatory account of the world, as rendering the world of experience intelligible. And this point of view involves the assumption that the causal relation is akin to the relation of logical implication. The order of ideas and the order of causes are the same. The logical deduction of conclusions from the appropriate set of definitions and axioms is at the same time a metaphysical deduction and affords us knowledge of reality. Here we have an assumption or hypothesis. And if Spinoza were called upon to justify it, he would have to reply that the assumption is justified by the power of the developed system to give a coherent and comprehensive explanatory account of the world as we experience it. It is not, therefore, a case of simply assuming that the employment of a certain method infallibly provides us with a true philosophy of the world. It is rather that the employment of the method is justified by results; that is, by the power of the system developed with the aid of this method to do what it professes to do.

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[1] *E.*, P. I, def. 4.
[2] *E.*, P. IV, def. 1.
[3] *Letter 4.*
[4] *Letter 2.*

It seems to me, however, to be extremely doubtful whether Spinoza would have been willing to speak of hypotheses or assumptions. We read in the *Ethics* that 'the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things'.[1] In the proof of this proposition he remarks that its truth is clear from the fourth axiom of the first part of the *Ethics*, namely, 'The knowledge of effect depends on the knowledge of cause, and involves the same.' Spinoza adds, 'For the idea of everything which is caused depends on the knowledge of the cause of which it is an effect.'[2] It is arguable, of course, that even if we grant that to know an effect adequately involves knowing its cause, it does not follow that the causal relation is akin to the relation of logical implication. But the point is that Spinoza appears to have regarded the assertion of this affinity as something clearly true and not as a mere assumption or hypothesis. It would be quite possible for him, of course, to appeal to the coherence and explanatory power of the developed system as evidence of its truth. Further, the exposition of the true philosophy in deductive or synthetic form would not be necessary; he might have chosen another form of presentation. But I feel convinced that Spinoza did not regard the system as resting on an assumption or hypothesis which was capable only of pragmatic or empirical confirmation. Writing to Albert Burgh, he remarked, 'I do not presume that I have found the best philosophy, I know that I understand the true philosophy.'[3] And this remark seems to express his attitude admirably.

In Spinoza's view the proper order of philosophical argument demands that we should start with that which is ontologically and logically prior, namely, with the divine essence or nature, and then proceed by logically deducible stages. He speaks of those thinkers who 'have not observed the order of philosophical argument. For the divine nature, which they ought to have considered before all things, because it is prior to knowledge and nature, they have

[1] *E.*, P. II, prop. 7. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Letter* 76.

thought to be the last in the order of knowledge, and things which are called the objects of the senses they have believed to be prior to all things.'[1]

In adopting this approach Spinoza separated himself both from the Scholastics and from Descartes. In the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, the mind does not start with God, but with the objects of sense-experience, and through reflection on the latter it ascends to the affirmation of God's existence. Thus, as far as philosophical method is concerned, God is not prior in the order of ideas, though He is ontologically prior or prior in the order of nature. Similarly, Descartes begins with the *Cogito, ergo sum*, not with God. Further, neither St. Thomas nor Descartes thought that we can deduce finite things from the infinite Being, God. Spinoza, however, rejects the procedures of the Scholastics and of Descartes. The divine substance must be regarded as prior both in the ontological order and in the order of ideas. At least God must be regarded as prior in the order of ideas when a properly philosophical 'order of argument' is observed.

Two points can profitably be noted at once. First, if we propose to start with the infinite divine substance, and if the affirmation of the existence of this substance is not to be regarded as an hypothesis, it has to be shown that the definition of the divine essence or substance involves its existence. In other words, Spinoza is committed to using the ontological argument in some form or other. Otherwise God would not be prior in the order of ideas. Secondly, if we propose to start with God and to proceed to finite things, assimilating causal dependence to logical dependence, we must rule out contingency in the universe. It does not follow, of course, that the finite mind is capable of deducing the existence of particular finite things. Nor did Spinoza think that it was. But if the causal dependence of all things on God is akin to logical dependence, there is no place for free creation, nor for contingency in the world of material things, nor for human freedom. Any contingency which there may seem to be is only apparent. And if we think that some of our actions are free, this is only because we are ignorant of their determining causes.

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[1] *E.*, P. II, prop. 10, note 2.

CHAPTER XI

SPINOZA (2)

Substance and its attributes—Infinite modes—The production of finite modes—Mind and body—The elimination of final causality.

1. IN their endeavour to give a rational explanation of the world speculative metaphysicians have always tended towards the reduction of multiplicity to unity. And inasmuch as explanation in this connection means explanation in terms of causality, to say that they have tended towards the reduction of multiplicity to unity is to say that they have tended to explain the existence and natures of finite things in terms of one ultimate causal factor. I use the term 'tend to' because not all speculative metaphysicians have actually postulated one ultimate cause. For example, though the drive towards the reduction of multiplicity to unity is clearly present in the Platonic dialectic, there is at least no adequate proof that Plato ever identified the absolute Good with 'God' in his sense of the term. In the philosophy of Spinoza, however, we find the many beings of experience causally explained by reference to the unique infinite substance which Spinoza called 'God or Nature', *Deus sive Natura*. As we have already seen, he assimilated the causal relation to the relation of logical implication, and depicted finite things as proceeding necessarily from infinite substance. Here he differs sharply from the Christian mediaeval metaphysicians, and for the matter of that from Descartes, who postulated one ultimate cause but who did not attempt to deduce finite things from this cause.

In order to know a thing, one must know its cause. 'The knowledge of effect depends on the knowledge of cause and involves the same.'[1] To explain a thing is to assign its cause or causes. Now, substance was defined by Spinoza as 'that which is in itself and is conceived through itself: I mean that the conception of which does not depend on the conception of another thing from which it must be formed'.[2] But that which can be known through itself alone cannot have an external cause. Substance, then, is what Spinoza calls 'cause of itself': it is explained through itself and not by reference to any external cause. The definition implies, therefore, that substance is completely self-dependent: it does not depend on any external cause either for its existence or for its attributes and modifications. To say this is to say that its essence involves its existence. 'I understand that to be cause of itself the essence of which involves existence and the nature of which cannot be conceived except as existing.'[1]

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[1] *E.*, P. I, axiom 4.

[2] *Ibid.*, def. 3.

In Spinoza's view we have or can have a clear and distinct idea of substance, and in this idea we perceive that existence pertains to the essence of substance. 'If anyone says, then, that he has a clear and distinct, that is, a true idea of substance and nevertheless doubts whether such substance exists, he is like one who says that he has a true idea and yet doubts whether it may not be false.'[2] 'Since existence appertains to the nature of substance, its definition must of necessity involve existence, and therefore from its mere definition its existence can be concluded.'[3] At a later stage, when he has argued that there is one and only one substance, infinite and eternal, and that this substance is God, Spinoza returns to the same line of thought. Since the essence of God 'excludes all imperfection and involves absolute perfection, by that very fact it removes all doubt concerning His existence and makes it most certain, which will be manifest, I think, to such as pay it the least attention'.[4] Here we have the 'ontological argument', liable to the same line of attack to which St. Anselm's argument was open.

If substance were finite, it would be limited, says Spinoza, by some other substance of the same nature, that is, having the same attribute. But there cannot be two or more substances possessing the same attribute. For if there were two or more of them, they would have to be distinguishable from one another, and this means that they would have to possess different attributes. 'An "attribute" I understand to be that which the intellect perceives as constituting the essence of a substance.'[5] Once given this definition it follows that, if two substances possessed the same attributes, they would possess the same essence; and in this case we should have no reason to speak of them as 'two', for we should not be able to distinguish them. But if there cannot be two or more substances possessing the same attribute, substance cannot be limited or finite. It must, therefore, be infinite.

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[1] *Ibid.*, def. 1.

[2] *Ibid.*, prop. 8, note 2.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *E.*, P. I, prop. 11, note.

[5] *E.*, P. I, def. 4.

This piece of reasoning is difficult to follow, and it does not seem to me cogent. The word 'same' appears to be used ambiguously. But Spinoza's idea is obviously that the existence of a plurality of substances would need explanation, and 'explanation' involves reference to a cause. Substance, however, has been defined in such a way that it cannot be said of it that it is the effect of an external cause. We must come in the end to a being which is 'cause of itself', its own explanation, and infinite. For if substance were limited and finite, it could be acted upon, it could be the term of causal activity. But if it is liable to be affected by an external cause, it cannot be understood purely through itself. And this is against the definition of substance. It follows that substance, so defined, must be infinite.

Infinite substance must possess infinite attributes. 'The more reality or being a thing has, the more attributes will it have.'[1] An infinite being must therefore have an infinity of attributes. And this infinite substance with infinite attributes is called 'God' by Spinoza. 'God I understand to be a being absolutely infinite, that is, a substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence.'[2] And Spinoza goes on to argue that the infinite divine substance is indivisible, unique and eternal and that in God existence and essence are one and the same.[3]

To any one who has made a study of Scholasticism and Cartesianism all this will doubtless sound familiar. The essence-existence language and the term 'substance' were used by the Scholastics, while Spinoza's definitions of substance and attribute were formed in dependence on Descartes' definitions. And we have seen how Spinoza used a form of the 'ontological argument' to demonstrate God's existence. Further, his description of God as infinite being, as infinite substance, as unique, eternal and simple (indivisible and without parts) was the traditional description of God. But one is not entitled to conclude that Spinoza's idea of God was precisely the same as that of the Scholastics or of Descartes. One has only to consider the proposition that 'extension is an attribute of God, or God is an extended thing'[4] in order at once to see a difference. This proposition suggests that Spinoza's view of the relation of God to the world was certainly not the view held by the Scholastics. Nor was it. In Spinoza's opinion, neither the Scholastics nor Descartes understood what is implied by the nature of an infinite being or substance. If God were distinct from Nature and if there were substances other than God, God would not be infinite. Conversely, if God is infinite, there cannot be other substances. Finite things cannot be understood or explained apart from God's causal activity. They cannot, therefore, be substances in the sense in which Spinoza has defined the term 'substance'. They must, then, be in God. 'Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can exist or be conceived without God.'[1] This proposition could, indeed, be accepted by theistic philosophers if it were taken to mean simply that every finite being is essentially dependent on God and that God is present in all finite things, upholding them in existence. But what Spinoza meant was that finite beings are modifications of God, the unique substance. God possesses an infinity of attributes, each of which is infinite; and of these two are known to us, namely, thought and extension. Finite minds are modes of God under the attribute of thought, and finite bodies are modes of God under the attribute of extension. Nature is not ontologically distinct from God; and the reason why it cannot be ontologically distinct is that God is infinite. He must comprise in Himself all reality.[2]

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[1] *E.*, P. I, prop. 9.

[2] *E.*, P. I, def. 6.

[3] *E.*, P. I, props. 12–14 and 19–20.

[4] *E.*, P. II, prop. 2.

2. In the logical process of deduction Spinoza does not proceed straight from the infinite substance to finite modes. In between, as it were, come the infinite and eternal modes, immediate and mediate, which are logically prior to the finite modes and about which something must now be said. As a preliminary it is necessary to recall Spinoza's doctrine that of the divine attributes we perceive two, thought and extension. Of the other attributes nothing more can be said, since we cannot know them. One should also notice that in passing from consideration of God as an infinite substance with divine attributes to consideration of the modes of God the mind is passing from *Natura naturans* to *Natura naturata*; that is, from God in Himself to 'creation', though one must not take the last phrases to mean that the world is distinct from God.

The intellect can discern certain changeless and eternal properties of the universe when it considers the universe under the attributes of thought and extension. I take extension first. The logically prior state of substance under the attribute of extension is motion-and-rest. In order to understand what this means one must remember that for Spinoza there can be no question of movement being impressed upon the world by an external cause. Descartes depicted God as conferring, as it were, a certain amount of movement upon the extended world at creation. But for Spinoza movement must be a characteristic of Nature itself; for there is no cause distinct from Nature which could confer or impress movement upon Nature. Motion-and-rest is the primary characteristic of extended Nature, and the total proportions of motion-and-rest remain constant, though the proportions in the case of individual bodies are constantly changing. Using the language of a later time one can say, then, that the total amount of energy in the universe is an intrinsic property of the universe and that it remains constant. The physical universe is thus a self-contained system of bodies in motion. This total amount of motion-and-rest, or of energy, is what Spinoza calls the 'infinite and eternal immediate mode' of God or Nature under the attribute of extension.

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[1] *E.*, P. I, prop. 15.

[2] The Scholastics were aware of the difficulty involved in asserting that God is infinite and at the same time that Nature is distinct from Him. Their answer was that though the creation of finite things adds to the number of beings (the term 'being' was understood analogically) it does not increase, so to speak, the amount of being. God and finite things are incommensurable, in the sense that their existence adds nothing to the infinite divine being and perfection.

Complex bodies are composed of particles. If each particle is looked on as an individual body, things like human bodies or the bodies of animals are individuals of a higher order, that is, they are complex individuals. They may gain or lose particles, and in this sense they change; but so long as the same proportion of motion-and-rest is preserved in the complex structure they are said to retain their identity. Now, we can conceive increasingly complex bodies; 'and if we thus proceed still further to infinity, we can easily conceive that all nature is one individual whose parts, that is, all bodies, vary in infinite ways without any change of the individual as a whole'.[1] This 'individual as a whole', that is, Nature, considered as a spatial system or system of bodies, is the mediate infinite and eternal mode of God or Nature under the attribute of extension. It is also called the 'face of the universe'.

The immediate infinite and eternal mode of God or Nature under the attribute of thought is called by Spinoza 'absolutely infinite understanding'.[2] He apparently means that just as motion-and-rest is the fundamental mode of extension, so understanding or apprehending is the fundamental mode of thought. It is presupposed, for example, by love and desire. 'The modes of thinking, such as love, desire, or any other name by which the modifications of the mind are designated, are not granted unless an idea in the same individual is granted of the thing loved, desired, etc. But the idea can be granted although no other mode of thinking be granted.'[1] If this account of the immediate and eternal mode under the attribute of thought is correct, it means that 'thought' in general includes, as with Descartes, all conscious activity as such, though the fundamental mode of 'thinking', on which the others depend, is apprehending.

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[1] *E.*, P. II, prop. 13, lemma 7, note.

[2] *Letter 64.*

Spinoza does not make it clear what the mediate infinite and eternal mode under the attribute of thought is. But since for him the attributes of thought and extension were attributes of the same substance or different aspects of the one substance, his scheme seems to demand that the mediate and eternal mode of substance under the attribute of thought should be the strict counterpart of 'the face of the universe', the total system of bodies. In this case it is the total system of minds. 'It is apparent that our mind, in so far as it understands, is an eternal mode of thinking, which is determined by another mode of thinking, and this one again by another, and so on to infinity: so that they all constitute at the same time the eternal and infinite intellect of God.'[2] Spinoza does not actually say that this is the mediate infinite and eternal mode of thought; but it is not unreasonable to think that this was his view. It should be noted, however, that 'the eternal and infinite intellect of God' belongs to *Natura naturata* and not to *Natura naturans*. We cannot speak of God as He is in Himself as having an intellect, distinct from the infinite system of minds. If we do so, the word 'intellect' has no meaning for us. 'If intellect and will appertain to the eternal essence of God, something quite other must be understood by these two attributes than what is commonly understood by men. For intellect and will, which would constitute the essence of God, must differ *toto caelo* from our intellect and will, nor can they agree in any thing save name, nor any more than the dog as a heavenly body agrees with the dog as a barking animal.'[3]

3. According to Spinoza, 'infinite things in infinite modes must necessarily follow from the necessity of divine nature'.[4] And the

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[1] *E.*, P. II, axiom 3.

[2] *E.*, P. V, prop. 40, note.

[3] *E.*, P. I, prop. 17, note.

[4] *Ibid.*, prop. 16.

truth of this proposition is said to be 'manifest' to anyone who considers that from a given definition certain properties necessarily follow. It is assumed, in other words, that substance must have modes; and the conclusion is drawn that as substance is infinite it must have infinite modes. However, whatever the value of Spinoza's 'proof' may be, it is clear that for him finite modes are caused necessarily by God. 'In the nature of things nothing contingent is granted, but all things are determined by the necessity of divine nature for existing and working in a certain way.'[1] Again, 'things could not have been produced by God in any other manner or order than that in which they were produced'.[2] It is true that 'the essence of things produced by God does not involve existence'.[3] For if it did involve existence, they would be causes of themselves. In fact, each would be infinite substance, and this is impossible. Finite things can be called 'contingent', therefore, if by a 'contingent' thing one simply means a thing the essence of which does not involve existence. But they cannot be called 'contingent' if by giving them this name one means that they follow contingently, and not of necessity, from the divine nature. God causes them, but He causes them necessarily, in the sense that He could not omit to cause them. Nor could He produce any other things or order of things than those which He actually causes. It is true, of course, that we may not be able to see how a given thing follows of necessity from the divine nature, but 'nothing can be said to be contingent save in respect to the imperfection of our knowledge'.[4]

At the same time Spinoza states that God is 'free'. This statement may sound surprising at first; but it is a good illustration of the fact that the terms used by Spinoza must be understood in the light of his own definitions and not in the light of the meanings commonly attributed to these terms in ordinary speech. 'That thing is said to be "free" which exists by the mere necessity of its own nature and is determined in its actions by itself alone. That thing is said to be necessary (*necessaria*), or rather compelled (*coacta*), which is determined in its existence and actions by something else in a certain fixed ratio.'[5] God, then, is 'free' in the sense that He is self-determined in His actions. But He is not free in the sense that it was open to Him not to create the world at all or to create other finite beings than those which He has created. 'Hence it follows that God does not act from freedom of will.'[1] The difference between God, the infinite substance, and finite things is that God is not determined in His existence or actions by any external cause (there is no cause external to God which could act upon Him) whereas finite things, being modifications of God, are determined by Him in respect of their existence, essence and actions.

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[1] *E.*, P. I, prop. 29.
[2] *Ibid.*, prop. 33.
[3] *Ibid.*, prop. 24.
[4] *Ibid.*, prop. 33, note 1.
[5] *Ibid.*, def. 7.

The foregoing account of God's necessary production of finite things may easily suggest a most misleading interpretation of Spinoza's thought; and one must guard against allowing one's interpretation to be coloured by the picture which the account inevitably tends to conjure up. For if one speaks of God creating finite things and of finite things being caused and determined by God, one inevitably tends to form a picture of a transcendent God who creates necessarily in the sense that His infinite perfection necessarily expresses itself in finite beings which are distinct from Him, even though they flow necessarily from Him. Spinoza states, for example, that 'things were produced by the consummate perfection of God, since they followed necessarily from a given most perfect nature'.[2] And remarks of this kind tend to suggest that Spinoza had in mind an emanation-theory of the neo-Platonic type. But such an interpretation would be based on a misunderstanding of Spinoza's use of terms. God is identified with Nature. We can consider Nature either as an infinite substance, without reference to its modifications, or as a system of modes, the first way of considering Nature being logically prior to the second. If we consider Nature in the second way (as *Natura naturata*), we must recognize, according to Spinoza, that a given mode is caused by a preceding mode or preceding modes, which are themselves caused by other modes, and so on indefinitely. For example, a particular body is caused by other bodies, and these by other bodies, and so on indefinitely. There is no question of a transcendent God 'intervening', as it were, to create a particular body or a particular mind. There is an endless chain of particular causes. On the other hand, the chain of finite causes is logically and ontologically dependent (it comes to the same thing, since the order of ideas and the order of things are said to be ultimately the same) on Nature considered as a self-dependent and self-determined unique substance (*Natura naturans*). Nature necessarily expresses itself in modifications, and in this sense Nature is the immanent cause of all its modifications or modes. 'God is the indwelling and not the transient cause of all things',[1] for all things exist in God or Nature. But this does not mean that God exists apart from the modes and can interfere with the chain of finite causes. The chain of finite causality *is* the divine causality; for it is the modal expression of God's self-determination.

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[1] *E.*, P. I, prop. 32, corollary 1.

[2] *Ibid.*, prop. 33, note 2.

It is a help, then, towards understanding the drift of Spinoza's thought if for the word 'God' one substitutes the word 'Nature'. For example, the sentence, 'Particular things are nothing else than modifications of the attributes of God, or modes by which attributes of God are expressed in a certain and determined manner',[2] becomes clearer if for 'God' one reads 'Nature'. Nature is an infinite system in which there is one infinite chain of particular causes; but the whole infinite chain exists only because Nature exists. In the order of logical dependence one can distinguish the infinite modes from the finite modes and one can say in a sense that God or Nature is the proximate cause of the infinite modes and the remote cause of the finite modes. But this way of speaking is illegitimate, says Spinoza, if by calling God the remote cause of individual things one means to imply that God is in some way unconnected with individual effects. 'We understand by a remote cause one which is in no wise connected with its effect. But all things which are, are in God, and so depend on God that without Him they can neither exist nor be conceived.'[3] Individual things cannot exist apart from Nature and they are thus all caused by Nature. But this is not to say that they cannot be accounted for in terms of particular causal connections, provided that we remember that *Natura naturata* is not a substance distinct from *Natura naturans*. There is one infinite system; but it can be looked at from different points of view.

4. This infinite system is one system: there are not two systems, a system of minds and a system of bodies. But the one system can be looked at from two points of view: it can be conceived under the attribute of thought or under the attribute of extension. To every mode under the attribute of extension there corresponds a mode under the attribute of thought, and this second mode Spinoza calls an 'idea'. Thus to every extended thing there corresponds an idea. But the word 'corresponds' is misleading, though it is difficult to avoid using it. It suggests that there are

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[1] *E.*, P. I, prop. 18.

[2] *Ibid.*, prop. 25, corollary.

[3] *Ibid.*, prop. 28, note.

two orders, two chains of causes, namely, the order of bodies and the order of ideas. But in reality there is, according to Spinoza, only one order, though it can be conceived by us in two ways. 'The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things.'[1] 'Whether we consider Nature under the attribute of extension or under the attribute of thought or under any other attribute, we shall find one and the same order and one and the same connection of causes: that is, the same things follow in either case.'[2] This does not mean that one can explain bodies in terms of ideas. For if, says Spinoza, we are considering individual things as modes of extension, we must explain the whole system of bodies in terms of the attribute of extension. There is no question of attempting to reduce bodies to ideas or ideas to bodies. Indeed, there would be no sense in making this attempt, since there is really only one order of Nature. But if we are considering things as modes under one particular attribute we ought to do so consistently and not change our points of view and language in an irresponsible manner.

If there is only one order of Nature, it follows that it is inadmissible to speak of the human mind as belonging to one order and of the human body as belonging to another order. The human being is one thing. It is true that 'man consists of mind and body'[3] and that 'the human mind is united to the body';[4] but the human body is man considered as a mode of the attribute of extension, and the human mind is man considered as a mode of the attribute of thought. They are, then, two aspects of the one thing. The Cartesian problem of 'interaction' between soul and body is, therefore, no real problem. Just as it would be senseless to ask how there can be interaction between the divine attributes of thought and extension, which are aspects of God, so is it senseless to ask how there can be interaction between mind and body in the particular case of man. If the natures of mind and body are understood, it must also be recognized that the problem of interaction does not and cannot arise. Spinoza thus avoids altogether the problem which so perplexed the Cartesians. And he avoided it not by reducing mind to body or body to mind but by declaring that they are simply two aspects of one thing. It may be doubted, however, whether his elimination of the problem was anything more than a verbal elimination. I cannot discuss here for its own sake the problem of the relation of soul to body; but it is worth while pointing out that the problem is not eliminated simply by framing one's language in such a way that the problem does not arise in this language. For it has to be shown that the data are more adequately expressed or described in this language than in any other. It may be said, of course, that Spinoza's doctrine about the relation between mind and body must be true if his general doctrine about substance and its attributes is true. This may well be so; but the word 'if' is here of some importance.

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[1] *E.*, P. II, prop. 7.

[2] *Ibid.*, note.

[3] *Ibid.*, prop. 13, corollary.

[4] *Ibid.*, note.

The mind, according to Spinoza, is the idea of the body. That is to say, the mind is the counterpart under the attribute of thought of a mode of extension, namely, the body. The body, however, is composed of many parts, and to each part there 'corresponds' an idea (though it is more accurate to say that each 'pair' are two aspects of one and the same thing). It follows, therefore, that 'the idea which constitutes the formal being of the human mind is not simple but composed of many ideas'.[1] Now, when the human body is affected by an external body, the idea of the modification in the human body is at the same time an idea of the external body. Hence 'the human mind can perceive the nature of many bodies at the same time as the nature of its own body'.[2] Moreover, the mind regards the external body 'as actually existing or as present to itself until the body is affected by a modification which cuts off the existence or presence of that (external) body'.[3] And if the modification of one's own body continues when the external body is no longer actually affecting it, one may continue to regard the external body as present when it is really no longer present. Further, 'if the human body has once been affected at the same time by two or more bodies, when the mind afterwards remembers any one of them it will straightway remember the others'.[4] In this way Spinoza explains memory which, he says, is 'nothing else than a certain concatenation of ideas involving the nature of things which are outside the human body, and this concatenation takes place according to the order and concatenation of the modifications of the human body'.[5]

Besides the 'idea of the body', that is to say, the mind, there can also be 'the idea of the mind'; for the human being can form an idea of his mind. He enjoys self-consciousness. We can consider a mode of thinking without relation to its object, and we then have the idea of an idea. 'Thus if a man knows anything, by that very fact he knows that he knows it, and so on to infinity.'[1] All self-consciousness has a physical basis, in the sense that 'the mind has no knowledge of itself save in so far as it perceives the ideas of the modifications of the body';[2] but that we do enjoy self-consciousness Spinoza does not, of course, dispute.

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[1] *E.*, P. II, prop. 15.
[2] *Ibid.*, prop. 16, corollary 1.
[3] *Ibid.*, prop. 17.
[4] *Ibid.*, prop. 18.
[5] *Ibid.*, note.

Spinoza's theory of the relation between mind and body was introduced here as a particular illustration of his theory of attributes and modes. But if one considers his theory of mind and body in itself, its chief interest lies, I think, in his insistence on the physical dependence of mind. If the human mind is the idea of the body, it follows that the perfection of the mind corresponds to the perfection of the body. This is perhaps another way of saying that we depend on perception for our ideas. It also follows that the relative imperfection of an animal's mind depends on the relative imperfection of its body as compared with the human body. Spinoza did not, of course, think that cows, for example, have 'minds' in the sense in which we ordinarily talk about minds. But it follows from his general theory of attributes and modes that to every cow's body there 'corresponds' an idea of that body; that is, a mode under the attribute of thought. And the perfection of this 'idea' or 'mind' corresponds to the perfection of the body. If one detaches this theory of the physical dependence of mind from its general metaphysical framework, one can regard it as a programme for scientific research into the ascertainable dependence of mind on body. Spinoza doubtless regarded his view on this matter as the result of *a priori* logical deduction and not as a generalization from empirical investigations. But from the point of view of one who is disinclined to believe that such matters can be settled by purely deductive reasoning the view is likely to be of interest in the guise of an hypothesis forming a provisional basis for empirical research. To what extent mental activities are dependent on non-mental factors is a question which can hardly be answered *a priori*. But it is an interesting question and an important one.

5. In the concluding section of this chapter I wish to draw attention to an important point in Spinoza's philosophy, namely, his elimination of final causality. At the same time I wish to set this particular point in a wide context; for it seems to me to shed a clear light on the general direction of Spinoza's thought. This

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[1] *E.*, P. II, prop. 21, note.

[2] *Ibid.*, prop. 23.

section may be said, then, to consist of general reflections on Spinoza's view of God and the world in the light of his elimination of final causes.

We have seen that Spinoza's initial idea of God was derived from the Jewish religion. But he soon rejected orthodox Jewish theology; and there is reason for thinking, as has been already remarked, that his mind was influenced in the direction of pantheism by his study both of certain Jewish philosophers and of Renaissance thinkers like Giordano Bruno. In working out his system, however, Spinoza made use of terminology and categories of thought derived from Scholasticism and Cartesianism. His pantheism took the form, then, of saying that as God is infinite being He must include within Himself all beings, all reality, and that as God is infinite substance finite beings must be modes of this substance. One may say, then, that the pantheistic element of his thought derives from a process of drawing what seemed to Spinoza to be the logical consequences of the idea of God as infinite and completely non-dependent being (that is, as substance in his sense of the word). And if one isolates this element of his thought, one can say, I think, that the term 'God' retains something of its traditional meaning. God is infinite substance possessing infinite attributes, only two of which are known to us, and there is some distinction between *Natura naturans* and *Natura naturata.* It is not empirical Nature which is identified with God, but rather Nature in a peculiar sense, namely, as the infinite substance, which lies behind the transitory modes. One great difficulty about this theory, however, is that of seeing how any logical deduction of *Natura naturata* is possible, unless the initial assumption is made that substance *must* express itself in modes; and this is precisely the point which ought to be proved, not assumed. It is as though Spinoza took the traditional idea of substance as that in which accidents inhere and then applied it without more ado to infinite being. It is true, of course, that he claimed to have a clear and distinct idea of the objective essence of substance or God. In a letter to Hugo Boxell he asserted that he had as clear an idea of God as he had of a triangle.[1] And he had to make this claim. For if his definitions did not express objective essences clearly conceived, the whole system might be simply a system of 'tautologies'. But it is difficult to see that it follows even from Spinoza's definitions that substance as he defined it *must* have modes. On the one hand

[1] *Letter 56.*

he started with the idea of God. On the other hand he knew very well by experience, as we all know, that finite beings exist. In developing a deductive system he thus knew in advance the point of arrival, and it seems probable that his knowledge that there are finite beings encouraged him to believe that he had achieved a logical deduction of *Natura naturata*.

If the terms 'intellect' and 'will' cannot be predicated of God in any sense which has any meaning for us, and if causal connections are of the nature of logical connections, it would seem impossible to talk significantly of God creating the world for any purpose. Spinoza does say that 'things were produced by the consummate perfection of God, since they followed necessarily from a given most perfect nature';[1] and this statement may perhaps seem to imply that it makes sense to talk of God as creating things for a purpose, such as the manifestation of the divine perfection or the wider diffusion of the good. But Spinoza will not allow that there is any sense in speaking of God as acting 'in all things for the furthering of good'.[2] The order of nature follows necessarily from the nature of God, and there could not have been any other order. It is illegitimate, then, to speak of God as 'choosing' to create or as having a purpose in creation. To speak in this way is to turn God into a kind of superman.

Human beings act with an end in view. And this inclines them to interpret Nature in the light of themselves. If they do not know the cause or causes of some natural event, 'nothing remains for them but to turn to themselves and reflect what could induce them personally to bring about such a thing, and thus they necessarily estimate other natures by their own'.[3] Again, since they find many things in Nature useful to them, men are inclined to imagine that these things must have been made for their use by a superhuman power. And when they find inconveniences in Nature, like earthquakes and diseases, they attribute them to the divine anger and displeasure. If it is pointed out to them that these inconveniences affect the pious and good as well as the impious and bad, they talk about the inscrutable judgments of God. Thus 'truth might have lain hidden from the human race through all eternity, had not mathematics, which does not deal with final causes but with the essence and properties of things, offered to men another standard of truth'.[4]

Though human beings act with an end in view this does not mean that their actions are not determined. 'Men think themselves free inasmuch as they are conscious of their volitions and desires, and because they are ignorant of the causes by which they are led to wish and desire, they do not even dream of their existence.'[1] Belief that one is free is for Spinoza the result and expression of ignorance of the determining causes of one's desires, ideals, choices and actions, just as belief in finality in Nature is due to ignorance of the real causes of natural events. Thus belief in final causes in any form is simply the fruit of ignorance. Once the origin of the belief has been traced it should be clear that 'nature has no fixed aim in view and that all final causes are simply fabrications of men'.[2] Indeed, the doctrine of final causality perverts the true notion of causality. For it subordinates the efficient cause, which is prior, to the so-called final cause. 'And so it makes that which is first by nature to be last.'[3] And it is useless to object that if all things follow necessarily from the divine nature it is impossible to explain the imperfections and evils in the world. No explanation is required. For what people call 'imperfections' and 'evils' are so only from the human point of view. An earthquake endangers human life and property and so we think of it as an 'evil'; but it is an evil only in relation to us and from our point of view, not in itself. It requires no explanation, therefore, save in terms of efficient causality, unless we have reason to think that the world was made for man's convenience; and we have, Spinoza was convinced, no reason to think this.

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[1] *E.*, P. I, prop. 33, note 2. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *E.*, P. I, appendix. [4] *Ibid.*

One can, I think, consider Spinoza's elimination of final causality from two points of view. First of all there is what may be called the vertical aspect. *Natura naturata*, the system of modes, follows necessarily from *Natura naturans*, infinite substance or God; and the process has no final cause. Secondly, there is the horizontal aspect. In the infinite system of modes any given mode and any given event can be explained, in principle at least, in terms of efficient causality by reference to the causal activity of other modes. I have purposely spoken of two 'aspects' since they are connected with one another in Spinoza's system. The existence of a given mode is due to causal factors in the modal system, but it is also referable to God, to God, that is, as 'modified'. One can legitimately say that a given event in the modal system is caused by God, provided that one realizes that this does not mean that God interferes from without, as it were, in the system. The system of modes is God as modified, and thus to say that *X* is caused by *Y* is to say that *X* is caused by God, that is to say, by God as modified in *Y*. At the same time one's attention is differently directed, I think, according to whether one considers the one aspect or the other. If one considers the metaphysical aspect, one's attention is directed to the logical priority of *Natura naturans* in relation to *Natura naturata*, and the traditional elements in Spinoza's idea of God are brought into prominence. God as infinite substance appears as supreme and ultimate cause of the empirical world. If on the other hand one considers simply the causal connections between the members of the modal system, the elimination of final causality appears as a programme for research into efficient causes or as a hypothesis in the light of which physical and psychological inquiries are to be pursued.

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[1] *E.*, P. I, appendix. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*

The system of Spinoza is thus, I suggest, two-faced. The metaphysic of infinite being manifesting itself in finite beings looks back to the metaphysical systems of the past. The theory that all finite beings and their modifications can be explained in terms of causal connections which are in principle ascertainable, looks forward to those empirical sciences which do in fact omit consideration of final causality and try to explain their data in terms of efficient causality, however the phrase 'efficient causality' may be understood. I do not, of course, wish to imply that in considering Spinoza's system as he expounded it one can profitably neglect either aspect. But there are, I think, two aspects. If one stresses the metaphysical aspect, one will tend to think of Spinoza primarily as a 'pantheist', as one who endeavoured to develop consistently, even if not successfully, the implications of the concept of God as infinite and completely non-dependent being. If one stresses what I may perhaps call the 'naturalistic' aspect, one will tend to concentrate on *Natura naturata*, to question the propriety of calling Nature 'God' and of describing it as 'substance', and to see in the philosophical system the sketch of a programme for scientific research. But one must not forget that Spinoza himself was a metaphysician with the ambitious aim of explaining reality or making the universe intelligible. He may have anticipated hypotheses which have commended themselves to many scientists; but he concerned himself with metaphysical problems with which the scientist as scientist is not concerned.

CHAPTER XII

SPINOZA (3)

Spinoza's levels or degrees of knowledge—Confused experience; universal ideas; falsity—Scientific knowledge—Intuitive knowledge.

1. SPINOZA'S ideal of knowledge recalls to a certain extent the Platonic ideal of knowledge. And we find in Spinoza as in Plato a theory of degrees of knowledge. Both philosophers present us with ascending degrees of adequacy and of synoptic vision.

In the *Treatise on the Correction of the Understanding*[1] Spinoza distinguishes four levels of what he calls perception. The first and lowest of these levels is perception 'by hearsay', and Spinoza illustrates what he means by an example. 'By hearsay I know my birthday, that certain people were my parents, and the like: things of which I have never had any doubt.'[2] I do not know by personal experience that I was born on a certain day, nor have I probably ever taken steps to prove it. I have been told that I was born on a certain day, and I have become accustomed to regard a certain date as my birthday. I have no doubt that I have been told the truth; but I know this truth only 'by hearsay', through the testimony of others.

The second level of perception as outlined in the *Treatise on the Correction of the Understanding* is the perception of knowledge which we have from vague or confused experience. 'By vague experience I know that I shall die; and I assert this because I have seen my equals undergo death, although they did not all live for the same length of time nor die from the same illness. Again, by vague experience I know also that oil is good for feeding a flame and that water is good for extinguishing it. I know also that a dog is a barking animal, and man a rational animal; and in this way I know nearly all things which are useful in life.'[3]

The third level of perception as given in the *Treatise* is perception wherein 'the essence of one thing is inferred from the essence of another, but not adequately'.[4] For instance, I conclude that some event or thing has a cause, though I have no clear idea of the cause, nor of the precise connection between cause and effect.

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[1] This work will be referred to as *T*.

[2] *T*., 4, 20.

[3] *Ibid*.

[4] *T*., 4, 193.

Finally, the fourth kind of perception is that whereby a thing is perceived through its essence alone or through a knowledge of its proximate cause'.[1] For example, if in virtue of the fact that I know something I know what it is to know anything, that is to say, if in a concrete act of knowing I perceive clearly the essence of knowledge, I enjoy this fourth degree of perception. Again, if I possess a knowledge of the essence of the mind such that I see clearly that mind is essentially united to a body, I enjoy a higher level of perception than if I merely conclude from my feelings with regard to my own body that there is a mind in me and that it is somehow or other united with this body, though I do not understand the mode of union. This fourth level of knowledge is also enjoyed in mathematics. 'But the things which I have so far been able to know by this knowledge have been very few.'[2]

In the *Ethics*, however, Spinoza gives three, and not four, levels of knowledge. 'Perception by hearsay' is not mentioned as a distinct kind of knowledge, and the second level of perception of the *Treatise* appears in the *Ethics* as 'knowledge of the first kind' (*cognitio primi generis*), opinion (*opinio*) or imagination (*imaginatio*). And it is customary to follow the practice of the *Ethics* and to speak of Spinoza's three degrees or levels of knowledge. Following this practice, I shall now attempt to explain somewhat more fully what Spinoza meant by *cognitio primi generis*, knowledge of the first (and lowest) type.

2. The human body is affected by other bodies, and every modification or state so produced is reflected in an idea. Ideas of this kind are more or less equivalent, therefore, to ideas derived from sensation, and Spinoza calls them ideas of imagination. They are not derived by logical deduction from other ideas,[3] and in so far as the mind consists of such ideas it is passive and not active. For these ideas do not spring from the active power of the mind but reflect bodily changes and states produced by other bodies. There is a certain 'casualness' about them: they reflect experience, indeed, but this experience is 'vague'. An individual body is affected by other individual bodies, and its changing states are

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[1] *T.*, 4, 19, 4.

[2] *T.*, 4, 22.

[3] To avoid misunderstanding it is important to note that Spinoza uses the term 'idea' to cover what we would call 'propositions'. Given his understanding of the term 'idea', therefore, it is legitimate to speak of deriving ideas from ideas and of ideas as being true or false.

reflected in ideas which do not represent any scientific and coherent knowledge. On the level of sense-perception the human being has knowledge of other human beings, but its knowledge is knowledge of them as individual things which affect it in some way. It has no scientific knowledge of them, and its ideas are inadequate. When I know an external body through sense-perception I know it only in so far as it affects my own body. I know that it exists, at least as long as it is affecting my body, and I know something of its nature; but I have no adequate knowledge of its nature or essence. Moreover, though I necessarily know my own body in so far as it is affected by another body, since the state produced in my body is reflected in an idea, this knowledge is inadequate. Knowledge which is purely dependent on sense-perception is therefore called by Spinoza 'inadequate' and 'confused'. 'I say expressly that the mind has no adequate but only confused knowledge of itself, of its body and of external bodies when it perceives a thing in the common order of nature, that is, whenever it is determined externally, that is, by fortuitous circumstances, to contemplate this or that.'[1] There is, of course, association of ideas; but on the level of sense-perception or confused and 'vague' experience, these associations are determined by associated modifications of our bodies and not by clear knowledge of objective causal relations between things.

It is to be noted that for Spinoza general or universal ideas belong to this level of experience. A human body is frequently affected by, say, other human bodies. And the ideas which reflect the bodily modifications so produced coalesce to form a confused idea of man in general, which is nothing but a sort of confused and composite image. This does not mean that there are no adequate general ideas; it means that the general ideas which are dependent on sense-perception are, according to Spinoza, confused composite images. 'The human body, since it is limited, is only capable of distinctly forming in itself a certain number of images; and if more than this number are formed, the images begin to be confused; and if this number of images which the body is capable of forming in itself is much exceeded, all will become entirely confused one with the other.'[2] In this way arise the ideas of 'being', 'thing', etc. 'And from similar causes have arisen those notions which are called universal or general, such as man, dog, horse, etc.'[3] These common ideas or composite images are not the same in all men and vary from individual to individual; but in so far as there is similarity it is due to the fact that human bodies resemble one another in structure and are frequently affected in ways which resemble one another.

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[1] *E.*, P. II, prop. 29, note.

[2] *Ibid.*, prop. 40, note 1.

[3] *Ibid.*

There are two points which must be borne in mind if Spinoza's doctrine of 'vague or casual experience' is not to be misunderstood. In the first place, although he denies the adequacy of the first and lowest level of knowledge he does not deny its utility. Speaking of knowledge obtained by 'vague experience', he says: 'And thus I know nearly all things that are useful in life.'[1] Again, when illustrating his theory of levels of knowledge he speaks of the following problem.[2] Three numbers are given, and one has to find a fourth which stands in the same relation to the third as the second stands to the first. He then mentions tradesmen who unhesitatingly multiply the second by the third and divide the product by the first because they have not forgotten the rule once given them by the schoolmaster, though they have never seen any proof of the rule and could give no rational account of their procedure. Their knowledge is not adequate mathematical knowledge; but its practical utility can hardly be denied. In the second place, the inadequacy of an idea does not involve that idea being false when it is taken in isolation. 'There is nothing positive in ideas on account of which they could be called false.'[3] For example, when we look at the sun it seems, says Spinoza, to be 'only some two hundred feet distant from us'.[4] In so far as we consider this impression entirely by itself it is not false; for it is true that the sun appears to us to be near. But once we stop talking about the subjective impression and say that the sun is actually only two hundred feet distant from us, we make a false statement. And what makes it false is a privation, namely, the fact that we lack the knowledge of the cause of the impression and of the true distance of the sun. Yet it is obvious that this privation is not the sole cause of our false statement or 'idea'; for we would not say that the sun is only two hundred feet distant from us unless we had a certain impression or 'imagination'. Spinoza says, therefore, that 'falsity consists in privation of knowledge which is involved by inadequate or mutilated and confused ideas'.[5] Ideas of imagination or confused experience do not represent the true order of causes in Nature: they will not fit into a rational and coherent view of Nature. And in this sense they are false, though no one of them is positively false if it is taken entirely by itself and considered simply as an isolated 'idea' reflecting a bodily modification.

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[1] *T.*, 4, 20.
[2] *E.*, P. II, prop. 40, note 2.
[3] *Ibid.*, prop. 33.
[4] *Ibid.*, prop. 35, note.
[5] *Ibid.*, prop. 35.

3. Knowledge of the second kind (*cognitio secundi generis*) involves adequate ideas and is scientific knowledge. Spinoza calls this level the level of 'reason' (*ratio*) as distinguished from the level of 'imagination'. But this does not mean that it is accessible only to scientists. For all men have some adequate ideas. All human bodies are modes of extension, and all minds are, according to Spinoza, ideas of bodies. All minds, then, will reflect some common properties of bodies; that is, some pervasive features of extended Nature or common properties of extension. Spinoza does not particularize; but we can say that 'motion' is one of these common properties. If a property is common to all bodies in such a way that it is equally in the part and in the whole, the mind necessarily perceives it and its idea of it is an adequate idea. 'Hence it follows that certain ideas or notions are granted common to all men. For all bodies agree in certain things which must be adequately or clearly and distinctly perceived by all.'[1]

These common notions (*notiones communes*) must not be confused with the universal ideas which have been spoken of under the heading of 'imagination'. The latter are composite images, formed by the confusion of 'ideas' which are logically unrelated, whereas the former are logically required for the understanding of things. The idea of extension, for example, or the idea of motion is not a composite image: it is a clear and distinct idea of a universal characteristic of bodies. These 'common notions' are the foundation of the fundamental principles of mathematics and physics. And since the conclusions which can be logically derived from these principles also represent clear and distinct ideas, it is the 'common notions' which make possible systematic and scientific knowledge of the world. But Spinoza apparently did not confine the term 'common notions' to the fundamental principles of mathematics and physics; he used it to cover any fundamental and, in his opinion, self-evident truths.

Knowledge of the second kind (*cognitio secundi generis*) is, says Spinoza, necessarily true.[2] For it is based on adequate ideas, and an adequate idea is defined as 'an idea which, in so far as it is considered without regard to the object, has all the properties or intrinsic marks of a true idea'.[1] There is no sense, then, in seeking for a criterion of the truth of an adequate idea outside the idea itself: it is its own criterion, and we know that it is adequate by having it. 'He who has a true idea knows at the same time that he has a true idea, nor can he doubt concerning the truth of the thing.'[2] Truth is thus its own standard and criterion. It follows that any system of propositions which are logically derived from self-evident axioms is necessarily true and that we know that it is true. To doubt the truth of a self-evident proposition is not possible. Nor can one doubt the truth of a proposition which one sees to be logically entailed by a self-evident proposition.

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[1] *E.*, P. II, prop. 38, corollary.

[2] *Ibid.*, prop. 41.

A deductive system of general propositions, representing knowledge of the second kind, is, of course, abstract in character. General propositions about extension or motion, for example, do not say anything about this or that extended thing or moving body. By advancing from the first to the second level of knowledge one passes from logically unrelated impressions and confused ideas to logically related and clear propositions and adequate ideas; but at the same time one abandons the concreteness of sense-perception and imagination for the abstract generality of mathematics, physics and other sciences. Indeed the philosophical system of Spinoza as expounded in the *Ethics* is itself, in great part at least, an example of this second level of knowledge. Essential properties of all bodies, for example, are deduced, but not individual bodies as such. Spinoza was perfectly well aware, of course, that even if the essential characteristics of bodies can be deduced or discovered by logical analysis it would be beyond the power of the human mind to exhibit the whole of Nature, with all its concrete modes, as a logically interrelated system. Philosophical deduction is a deduction of general propositions: it deals with timeless truths rather than with transitory individual modes as such. This means, however, that knowledge of the second kind is not the highest and most comprehensive level of knowledge which is conceivable. As a limiting ideal at least, to which the human mind can only approximate, we can conceive a third level of knowledge, 'intuitive' knowledge, by which the whole system of Nature in all its richness is grasped in one comprehensive act of vision.

4. The third level of knowledge is called by Spinoza intuitive

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[1] *E.*, P. II, def. 4.

[2] *Ibid.*, prop. 43.

knowledge (*scientia intuitiva*). But it is important to realize that it arises from the second kind of knowledge and that it is not a disconnected stage reached by a leap or by a mystical process. 'Now this kind of knowing proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the essence of things.'[1] This quotation seems to equate knowledge of the third with knowledge of the second kind; but Spinoza's mind seems to be that it is a result of knowledge of the second kind. Elsewhere he says that 'as all things are in God and are conceived through Him, it follows that we can deduce from this knowledge many things which we can adequately know and thereby form that third kind of knowledge'.[2] It seems that Spinoza thought of the logical deduction of the essential and eternal structure of Nature from the divine attributes as providing the necessary framework for seeing all things, that is, the whole of Nature in its concrete reality, as one great system causally dependent on infinite substance. If this is the correct interpretation, it means that in the third level of knowledge the mind returns, as it were, to individual things, though it perceives them in their essential relation to God and not, as in the first level of knowledge, as isolated phenomena. And the passage from the one way of looking at things to the other is made possible only by ascending from the first to the second level of knowledge, which is an indispensable preliminary stage for attaining the third level. 'The more we understand individual things,' says Spinoza, 'the more we understand God.'[3] 'The greatest endeavour of the mind and its greatest virtue is to understand things by the third class of knowledge.'[4] But 'the endeavour or desire of knowing things according to the third class of knowledge cannot arise from the first but (only) from the second class of knowledge'.[5]

As will be seen later, this third class of knowledge is accompanied by the highest satisfaction and emotional fulfilment. Let it be sufficient here to point out that the vision of all things in God is not something which can be fully attained but something to which the mind can approximate. 'The more advanced, then, everyone is in this class of knowledge, the more conscious he is of himself and God, that is, the more perfect or blessed he is.'[6] But these words must be interpreted in the light of Spinoza's general philosophy, and, in particular, of his identification of God with Nature. The vision which is in question is an intellectual contemplation of the eternal and infinite system of Nature and of one's own place in it, not a contemplation of a transcendent God, nor perhaps a religious contemplation at all in any ordinary sense. True, there are religious overtones in what Spinoza says; but these derive more from his upbringing and perhaps from a personal piety than from the requirements of his philosophical system.

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[1] *E.*, P. II, prop. 40, note 2.

[2] *Ibid.*, prop. 47, note.

[3] *E.*, P. V, prop. 24.

[4] *Ibid.*, prop. 25.

[5] *Ibid.*, prop. 28.

[6] *Ibid.*, prop. 31, note.

CHAPTER XIII

SPINOZA (4)

Spinoza's intention in his account of human emotions and conduct—The conatus; *pleasure and pain—The derived emotions —Passive and active emotions—Servitude and freedom—The intellectual love of God—The 'eternity' of the human mind—An inconsistency in Spinoza's ethics.*

1. AT the beginning of the third part of the *Ethics* Spinoza remarks that most of those who have written on the emotions and on human conduct seem to have looked on man as a kingdom within a kingdom, as something standing apart from and above the ordinary course of Nature. He himself, however, proposes to treat man as a part of Nature and to regard 'human actions and desires exactly as if I were dealing with lines, planes and bodies'.[1] The problem of the interaction between mind and body was for Spinoza, as we have already seen, no problem, because he regarded mind and body 'as one and the same thing, which is conceived now under the attribute of thought and now under the attribute of extension'.[2] There is no need, therefore, to become perplexed about the question how the mind can influence and move the body. Nor ought we to imagine that there are free choices which cannot be explained in terms of efficient causes and which belong to the activity of mind as something really distinct from body. As mind and body are the same thing, conceived under different attributes, our mental activities are as determined as our bodily activities. If we are spontaneously inclined to believe that our deliberate acts of choice are free, this is simply because we are ignorant of their causes. Not understanding their causes we think that they have no causes. It is true that people say that activities such as the creation of works of art cannot be explained by the laws of Nature alone in so far as Nature is extended. But these people 'know not what a body is',[3] nor what it is capable of. The fabric of the human body 'far surpasses any piece of work made by human art, to say nothing of what I have already shown, namely, that from Nature considered under any attribute infinite things follow'.[4]

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[1] *E.*, P. III, preface. [2] *E.*, P. III, prop. 2, note. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*

In the three last parts of the *Ethics*, therefore, Spinoza sets out to give a naturalistic account of human emotions and human conduct. At the same time, however, he sets out to show how freedom from the bondage of the passions can be achieved. And this combination of causal analysis, based on a theory of determinism, with ethical idealism seems to involve two inconsistent positions, in a sense which will be discussed later.

2. Every individual thing (and so not merely man) endeavours to persist in its own being; and this endeavour Spinoza calls *conatus*. Nothing can do anything else but that which follows from its nature: its essence or nature determines its activity. The power or 'endeavour', then, by which a thing does what it does or endeavours to do what it endeavours to do is identical with its essence. 'The endeavour wherewith a thing endeavours to persist in its being is nothing else than the actual essence of that thing.'[1] When, therefore, Spinoza says that the fundamental drive in man is the endeavour to persist in his own being, he is not simply making a psychological generalization. He is applying a statement which holds good of every finite thing, and the truth of the statement is, according to him, logically demonstrable. It can be shown that every thing tends to preserve itself and to increase its power and activity.

This tendency, that is, the *conatus*, is called by Spinoza 'appetite' (*appetitus*) when it refers simultaneously to mind and body. But in man there is consciousness of this tendency, and conscious appetite is called 'desire' (*cupiditas*). Further, just as the tendency to self-preservation and to self-perfection is reflected in consciousness as desire, so also is the transition to a higher or lower state of vitality or perfection reflected in consciousness. The former, that is to say, the reflection in consciousness of the transition to a state of greater perfection is called 'pleasure' (*laetitia*), while the reflection in consciousness of the transition to a state of lower perfection is called 'pain' (*tristitia*). On Spinoza's general principles an increase in the mind's perfection must be an increase in the body's perfection, and conversely. 'Whatever increases or diminishes, helps or hinders the power of action of our body, the idea thereof increases or diminishes, helps or hinders the power of thinking of our mind.'[2] The perfection of the mind, according to Spinoza, increases in proportion as the mind is active, that is to say, in proportion as the ideas of which it consists are logically connected with one another and are not simply reflections of changing states produced by the action of external causes on the body. But it is not clear how this fits in with the general doctrine that the mind is the idea of the body, nor is it clear what is the condition of the body which is reflected in the mind's activity. One may note, however, that it follows from Spinoza's definitions that everyone necessarily pursues pleasure. This does not mean that everyone takes pleasure as the consciously conceived end or purpose of all his actions: it means that one necessarily seeks to preserve and perfect one's being. And this perfecting of one's being, when looked at in its mental aspect, is pleasure. The word 'pleasure' may, of course, suggest simply 'sense-pleasure'; but this is not Spinoza's meaning. For there are as many species of pleasure and pain 'as there are species of objects by which we are affected'.[1]

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[1] *E.*, P. III, prop. 7.

[2] *Ibid.*, prop. 11.

3. Having explained the fundamental emotions of pleasure and pain in terms of the *conatus*, which is identical with the determined essence of a thing, Spinoza proceeds to derive other emotions from these fundamental forms. For example, love (*amor*) is 'nothing else but pleasure accompanied by the idea of an external cause', while hate (*odium*) is nothing else but 'pain accompanied by the idea of an external cause'.[2] Again, if I imagine another human being, whom I have not hitherto regarded with any emotion, as being affected by an emotion, I am affected with a like emotion. An image of an external body is a modification of my own body, and the idea of this modification involves the nature of my own body as well as the nature of the external body as present. If, therefore, the nature of the external body is similar to the nature of my own body, the idea of the external body involves a modification of my own body similar to the modification of the external body. Hence, if I imagine a fellow human being to be affected by an emotion, this imagination involves a modification of my own body corresponding to this emotion, with the result that I too am affected by this emotion. In this way compassion, for instance, can be explained: 'This imitation of emotions, when it refers to pain, is called compassion.'[3]

Spinoza thus endeavours to derive the various emotions from the fundamental passions or emotions of desire, pleasure and pain. And this explanation holds good both for men and brutes. 'Hence it follows that the emotions of animals, which are called irrational (for we can in no wise doubt that brutes feel, now that we know the origin of the mind), differ from the emotions of men only inasmuch as their nature differs from man's nature. Horse and man are filled with the desire of procreation: the desire of the former is equine, while that of the latter is human. So also the lusts and appetites of insects, fishes and birds must vary.'[1] Spinoza intended, of course, to give a logical deduction of the emotions; but we can, if we like, regard his treatment of the passions and emotions as a speculative programme for modern psychological research with a more empirical basis. In a psychology like that of Freud, for example, we find an analogous attempt to explain man's emotional life in terms of a fundamental drive. In any case Spinoza's explanation is thoroughly 'naturalistic'.

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[1] *E.*, P. III, prop. 56. [2] *Ibid.*, prop. 13, note. [3] *Ibid.*, prop. 27, note 1.

This naturalism finds expression in his account of 'good' and 'evil'. 'By good (*bonum*) I understand here all kinds of pleasure and whatever conduces to it, and more especially that which satisfies our fervent desires, whatever they may be. By bad (*malum*) I understand all kinds of pain, and especially that which frustrates our desires.'[2] We do not desire a thing because we think it good: on the contrary, we call it 'good' because we desire it. Similarly, we call 'evil' or 'bad' a thing from which we turn away and towards which we feel an aversion. 'Wherefore each one judges or estimates according to his own emotion what is good or bad, better or worse, best or worst.'[3] And because our emotions are determined, so also are our judgments of what is good and what is bad. We do not always realize this; but our failure to recognize it is due to ignorance of causal connections. Once we understand the causal origins of the emotions we understand that our judgments concerning 'good' and 'evil' are determined.

4. It is now necessary to make a distinction which is important for Spinoza's moral theory. All emotions are derived from the fundamental passions of desire, pleasure and pain. And normally they are explicable in terms of association. When the idea of an external thing becomes associated in my mind with pleasure, that is, with the heightening of my vitality or drive to self-preservation and increase of power, I can be said to 'love' that thing. And I call it 'good'. Moreover, 'anything can accidentally be the cause of pleasure, pain or desire'.[4] It depends on my psycho-physical condition what at any given time causes me pleasure or pain, and once the association between a given thing and the causing of

[1] *E.*, P. III, prop. 57, note.

[2] *Ibid.*, prop. 39, note.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *E.*, P. III, prop. 15.

pleasure or pain has been set up, I necessarily tend to love or hate that thing and to call it 'good' or 'bad'. Looked at in this way, the emotions are passive; they are, properly speaking, 'passions'. I am dominated by them. 'Different men can be affected by one and the same object in different manners, and one and the same man can be affected by one and the same object in different ways at different times.'[1] Hence what one man loves another hates, and what one man calls 'good' another man may call 'evil'. But though we can distinguish different men according to their different emotions there is no place for moral judgments, in so far as these imply that a man is free to feel as he likes and to determine freely his judgments of good and evil.

Yet though 'all emotions have reference to pleasure, pain or desire',[2] not all emotions are passive. For there are active emotions which are not merely passive reflections of bodily modifications but which flow from the mind in so far as it is active, that is, in so far as it understands. The active emotions cannot, however, have reference to pain; for 'we understand by pain that the mind's power of thinking is diminished or hindered:[3] it is only emotions of pleasure and desire which can be active emotions. These will be 'adequate ideas', derived from the mind, in contrast with the passive emotions which are confused or inadequate ideas. All actions which follow from the emotions in so far as the mind is active or understands, Spinoza refers to 'fortitude' (*fortitudo*); and he distinguishes in fortitude two parts. The first he calls 'courage' or 'magnanimity' (*animositas*) and the second 'nobility' (*generositas*). 'I understand by "courage" the desire by which each endeavours to preserve what is his own according to the dictate of reason alone.'[4] Temperance, sobriety, presence of mind in danger, and in general all actions which promote the good of the agent in accordance with the dictate of reason alone fall under the general heading of 'courage'. 'By "nobility" I understand the desire by which each endeavours according to the dictate of reason alone to help and to join to himself in friendship all other men.'[5] Modesty, clemency and so on fall under the heading of 'nobility'. One would expect, therefore, that moral advance would consist for Spinoza in a liberation from passive emotions and in a changing of passive emotions, so far as this is possible, into active emotions. And this is in fact what one finds. Moral advance is thus a parallel of intellectual advance, or rather, it is an aspect of the one advance, since passive emotions are called inadequate or confused ideas and active emotions adequate or clear ideas. Spinoza was essentially a 'rationalist'. One might expect a distinction between feeling and thinking; but Spinoza could make no sharp distinction between them because on his general principles every conscious state, including the 'enjoyment' of an emotion, involves having an idea. The more the idea proceeds from the mind itself as it thinks logically, the more 'active' the emotion will be.

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[1] *E.*, P. III, prop. 51.
[2] *Ibid.*, prop. 59.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *E.*, P. III, prop. 59, note.
[5] *Ibid.*

5. 'Human lack of power in moderating and checking the emotions I call servitude. For a man who is submissive to his emotions has not power over himself but is in the hands of fortune to such an extent that he is often constrained, although he may see what is better for him, to follow what is worse.'[1] The last statement may appear to be inconsistent with Spinoza's explanation of the words 'good' and 'bad'. Indeed, he repeats his belief that 'as for the terms "good" and "bad", they indicate nothing positive in things considered in themselves, nor are they anything else than modes of thought or notions which we form from the comparison of things mutually'.[2] But we can and do form a general idea of man, a type of human nature, or, more accurately, an ideal of human nature. And the term 'good' can be understood as meaning that which 'we certainly know to be a means of our attaining the type of human nature which we have set before us', while the term 'bad' can be used to mean 'that which we know certainly prevents us from attaining the said type'.[3] Similarly, we can speak of men as more or less perfect in so far as they approach or are distant from the attainment of this type. If, then, we understand the terms 'good' and 'bad' in this way, we can say that it is possible for a man to know what is good, that is, what will certainly help him to attain the recognized type or ideal of human nature, and yet to do what is bad, that is, what will certainly hinder him from attaining this standard or ideal. The reason why this can happen is that the desires which arise from passive emotions, depending on external causes, can be stronger than the desire which arises from 'a true knowledge of good and evil', in so far as this is an emotion.[4] For example, desire for the attainment of an ideal, envisaged as a future goal, tends to be weaker than desire for a thing which is present and causes pleasure.

Opposed to the bondage of the passive emotions is the life of reason, the life of the wise man. This is the life of virtue. For 'to act absolutely according to virtue is nothing else in us than to act under the guidance of reason, to live and to preserve one's being (these three have the same meaning) on the basis of seeking what is useful to oneself'.[1] The certainly useful is that which is truly conducive to understanding, and the certainly harmful or evil is that which hinders us from understanding. To understand is to be freed from the servitude of the emotions. 'An emotion which is a passion ceases to be a passion as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea of it.'[2] For it becomes an expression of the mind's activity rather than of its passivity. Take hatred, for example. This cannot become an active emotion in Spinoza's sense; for it is essentially a passive emotion or passion. But once I understand that men act from a necessity of nature I shall more easily overcome the hatred which I feel for anyone because he has injured me. Moreover, once I understand that hatred depends on non-recognition of the fact that men are similar in nature and have a common good, I shall cease to wish evil to another. For I shall see that to wish evil to another is irrational. Hatred is felt by those who are governed by confused and inadequate ideas. If I understood the relation of all men to God, I should not feel hatred for any of them.

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[1] *E.*, P. IV, preface. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.* [4] *E.*, P. IV, prop. 15.

6. Understanding, therefore, is the path to freedom from the servitude of the passions. And the highest function of the mind is to know God. 'The greatest good of the mind is the knowledge of God, and the greatest virtue of the mind is to know God.'[3] For a man cannot understand anything greater than the infinite. And the more he understands God, so much the more he loves God. It may seem that the opposite should be the case. For in understanding that God is the cause of all things we understand that He is the cause of pain. 'But to this I make answer that, in so far as we understand the causes of pain, it ceases to be a passion, that is, it ceases to be a pain, and therefore in so far as we understand God to be the cause of pain we rejoice.'[4]

It is important to remember that for Spinoza God and Nature are the same. So far as we conceive things as contained in God and as following from the necessity of the divine nature, that is, so far as we conceive them in their relation to the infinite causal system of Nature, we conceive them 'under the species of eternity'

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[1] *E.*, P. IV, prop. 24.

[2] *E.*, P. IV, prop. 28.

[3] *E.*, P. V, prop. 3.

[4] *E.*, P. V, prop. 18, note.

(*sub specie aeternitatis*). We conceive them as part of the logically connected infinite system. And in so far as we conceive ourselves and other things in this way we know God. Further, from this knowledge arises pleasure or satisfaction of mind. And pleasure accompanied by the idea of God as eternal cause is the 'intellectual love of God'.[1] This intellectual love of God is 'the very love of God with which God loves Himself, not in so far as He is infinite but in so far as He can be expressed through the essence of the human mind considered under the species of eternity'.[2] In fact, 'the love of God for men and the mind's intellectual love towards God is one and the same thing'.[3]

Spinoza declares that this love of God is 'our salvation, blessedness or liberty'.[4] But it is clear that the intellectual love of God must not be interpreted in a mystical sense or in the sense of love for a personal Being. The language is often the language of religion; and the language may perhaps express a personal piety. But, if so, that personal piety was rooted in Spinoza's religious upbringing rather than in his philosophic system. As far as the system alone is concerned, the love in question is more akin to the pleasure or mental satisfaction accompanying a scientist's vision of a complete explanation of Nature rather than to love in the sense of love between persons. And if one remembers that for Spinoza God is Nature, one will not be surprised at his famous saying that 'he who loves God cannot endeavour to bring it about that God should love him in return'.[5] Goethe interpreted this as an expression of Spinoza's boundless disinterestedness. This may be so; but at the same time it is clear that, given Spinoza's conception of God, it was impossible for him to speak of God as 'loving' men in any sense analogous to the normal sense of the word. Indeed, his statement that for a man to desire that God should love him in return would be to desire that 'the God whom he loves should not be God'[6] is perfectly correct, once given his understanding of 'God'.

7. Spinoza declared more than once that the human mind enjoys no existence apart from the body which can be described in terms of duration. He says, for example, that 'our mind can only be said to last, and its existence can be defined by a certain time only in so far as it involves the actual existence of the body'.[7] And it is generally agreed that he rejected the notion of the mind

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[1] *E.*, P. V, prop. 32, corollary. [2] *Ibid.*, prop. 36. [3] *Ibid.*, corollary. [4] *Ibid.*, note.
[5] *Ibid.*, prop. 19. [6] *Ibid.*, proof. [7] *Ibid.*, prop. 23, note.

persisting everlastingly as a distinct entity after death. Indeed, if the human mind consists of ideas which are the ideas of bodily modifications, and if mind and body are one and the same thing, viewed now under the attribute of thought and now under that of extension, it is difficult to see how the mind could possibly survive as a distinct entity after the body had disintegrated.

At the same time Spinoza spoke of the mind as being in some sense 'eternal'; and it is not easy to understand precisely what he meant by this. The statement that 'we are certain that the mind is eternal in so far as it conceives things under the species of eternity'[1] seems, if taken by itself, to suggest that only those minds which enjoy the third degree of knowledge are eternal and that they are eternal only in so far as they enjoy this intuition of all things *sub specie aeternitatis*. Yet he also speaks in a way which implies no such restriction but which seems to mean that eternity belongs in some sense to the essence of the mind, that is, every mind. 'The human mind,' he says, 'cannot be absolutely destroyed with the human body, but there is some part of it which remains eternal.'[2] Again, 'we feel and know that we are eternal'.[3]

I doubt whether a thoroughly satisfactory elucidation of Spinoza's meaning is attainable which will do justice to all his various pronouncements on the topic. In any case it is not sufficient to say simply that Spinoza rejected the idea of the mind's everlasting duration and that he affirmed eternity as a quality of the mind 'here and now'. For it is by no means clear what is meant by saying that the mind is eternal here and now. Indeed, it is the very point which stands in need of explanation. But since Spinoza was careful about terms one ought to be able to gain some light from looking at his definition of eternity. 'I understand eternity to be existence itself, in so far as it is conceived to follow necessarily from the definition of an eternal thing.'[4] Spinoza then explains that 'the existence of a thing, as an eternal truth, is conceived to be the same as its essence'. One can say, then, that the human mind is 'eternal' in so far as it is conceived to follow necessarily from the nature of substance or God. Since connections in Nature are akin to logical connections, one can regard the infinite system of Nature as a logical and timeless system, and in that system each human mind, expressing the idea or truth of a mode of extension, is a necessary moment. In the infinite system

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[1] *E.*, P. V, prop. 31, note.

[2] *Ibid.*, prop. 23.

[3] *Ibid.*, note.

[4] *E.*, P. I, def. 8.

I have an inalienable place. In this sense every human mind is 'eternal'! And in so far as a given mind rises to the third level or degree of knowledge and views things *sub specie aeternitatis* it is conscious of its eternity.

Spinoza seems to have meant something of this sort when he called the human mind eternal in essence. He may have meant something more; but, if he did, one does not seem to be in a position to say what it was. It is perhaps just conceivable that a relic, as it were, of the theory that the mind's 'centre' is divine and eternal appears in his statements; but the safest way of interpreting his meaning is to interpret it in the light of his definition of eternity. Duration applies only to finite things thought of as succeeding one another. And in terms of duration my mind does not survive bodily death. From the point of view of duration it was once true that I shall exist, it is now true that I exist, and it will be true that I have existed. But if one leaves the point of view of duration and looks at things as following necessarily from the eternal substance, God, without any reference to time—much as one looks at the conclusions of a mathematical theorem as following necessarily and timelessly from the premisses—one can say that my existence is in some sense an eternal truth. That is why Spinoza speaks of the mind's eternity as lacking any relation to time: the mind is eternal just as much 'before' as 'after' the existence of the body as a distinct finite entity.[1] 'We do not attribute duration save as long as the body lasts';[2] but the mind can be considered as a necessary moment in God's consciousness of Himself, just as the intellectual love of God is a moment of God's love of Himself, when both are considered *sub specie aeternitatis*. Whether all this is fully intelligible is another question. But Spinoza's point seems to be that the mind, in so far as it actively understands, is 'an eternal mode of thinking' and that all eternal modes of thinking 'constitute at the same time the eternal and infinite intellect of God'.[3] This much at least is clear, that Spinoza rejected the Christian doctrine of immortality. And one can hardly suppose that when he called the mind 'eternal' he meant no more than that the wise enjoy the third degree of knowledge while they enjoy the third degree of knowledge. In some sense, it seems, all human minds were for him eternal in essence. But the precise sense in which this should be understood remains obscure.

[1] Cf. *E.*, P. V, prop. 33, note. [2] *Ibid.*, proof. [3] *E.* P. V, prop. 40, note.

8. There are marked affinities between Spinoza's moral theory and the Stoic ethics. His ideal of the wise man and the emphasis he lays on knowledge and on understanding the place of individual things in the whole divine system of Nature, his belief that this knowledge protects the wise man from undue disturbance of mind in face of the vicissitudes of life and of the blows of fate or fortune, the emphasis he lays on life according to reason and on the acquisition of virtue for its own sake, all bear a similarity to analogous themes in the Stoic philosophy. Moreover, though we miss in Spinoza the noble statements of Stoic writers about the kinship of all men as children of God, he was no mere individualist. 'Nothing can be desired by men more excellent for their self-preservation than that all should so agree with all that they compose the minds of all into one mind and the bodies of all into one body, that all endeavour at the same time as much as possible to preserve their being, and that all seek at the same time what is useful to them all as a body. From which it follows those men who are governed by reason, that is, men who, under the guidance of reason, seek what is useful to them, desire nothing for themselves which they do not also desire for the rest of mankind. And therefore they are just, faithful and honourable.'[1] A passage like this may not attain the level of nobility sometimes reached by Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius; but it at least shows that when Spinoza affirmed that the tendency to preserve one's own being is the fundamental drive he did not mean thereby to teach or promote atomic individualism. Indeed, his monism, like that of the Stoics, leads logically to some doctrine of human solidarity.

The point of similarity, however, between Spinozism and Stoicism to which I want to draw attention is their common acceptance of determinism. For the denial of human freedom raises an important problem in regard to ethics. In what sense can there be a moral theory if determinism is once accepted? It is at any rate questionable whether there is any sense in exhorting men to act in a particular way if each is determined to act in a certain manner, though Spinoza might, of course, reply that the exhorter is determined to exhort and that the exhortation is one of the factors which determine the conduct of the man exhorted. And is there any sense in blaming a man for performing a given action if he was not free to perform any other action? If, then, one understands by 'moral theory' an exhortatory ethic, in the sense of one which lays down the way in which human beings ought to act, though they are capable of acting otherwise even in the same set of circumstances, one must say that acceptance of determinism rules out the possibility of a moral theory. If on the other hand by 'moral theory' one means a theory about human conduct which consists of an analysis of the ways in which different types of men behave, it seems, at first sight at least, that a moral theory is perfectly possible even though determinism is accepted.

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[1] *E.*, P. IV, prop. 18, note.

Spinoza did not, of course, deny that we often 'feel' free, in the sense that we feel responsible for making a given choice or performing some action. It is obvious that we can often give a motive for acting in a certain way, and it is obvious that we do in fact sometimes deliberate about our course of action and finally come to a decision. These psychological facts are so obvious that Spinoza would not have sought to deny them. What he did maintain, however, was that we feel ourselves to be free because we do not understand the causes of our actions and the causes which determine us to desire certain things and to have certain motives. If we imagine a falling stone suddenly endowed with consciousness, it might think that it was falling of its own volition, since it would not perceive the cause of its movement; but it would not be free not to fall, even if it imagined that it was.[1] And it is in view of this determinist position that the claim has been made on Spinoza's behalf that he had no intention of expounding an exhortatory but only an analytic ethic.

There is certainly much to be said in favour of this claim. Writing to Oldenburg, Spinoza remarks that though all are excusable it does not follow that all men are blessed. 'A horse is excusable for being a horse and not a man; but, nevertheless, it must needs be a horse and not a man. He who goes mad from the bite of a dog is excusable, yet he is rightly suffocated, Lastly, he who cannot govern his desires and keep them in check with the fear of the laws, though his weakness may be excusable, yet cannot enjoy with contentment the knowledge and love of God but necessarily perishes.'[2] In other words, even though all men are determined and so 'excusable', there remains an objective difference between those who are the slaves of their passions and those who enjoy 'blessedness', the intellectual love of God. Again, in a letter to Van Blyenbergh Spinoza says that 'in the language of philosophy it cannot be said that God desires anything of any man, or that anything is displeasing or pleasing to Him: all these are human qualities and have no place in God'.[1] But it does not follow that murderers and almsgivers are equally perfect. Similar statements appear in a letter to von Tschirnhausen. In answer to the objection that in his view all wickedness is excusable, Spinoza retorts: 'What then? Wicked men are not less to be feared and are not less harmful when they are wicked from necessity.'[2] Finally, in the *Ethics* Spinoza remarks that it is only in civil society that commonly accepted meanings are given to terms like 'good', 'bad', 'sin' (which, he says, is nothing else but disobedience punishable by the State), 'merit', 'just' and 'unjust'. And his conclusion is that 'just and unjust, sin and merit, are merely extrinsic notions, not attributes which explain the nature of the mind'.[3]

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[1] Cf. *Letter 58.*

[2] *Letter 78.*

It is only to be expected, of course, that Spinoza should sometimes speak in another way, for the language of freedom and of moral obligation is too much embedded in our ordinary speech for it to be avoided. And we find him saying, for example, that his doctrine 'teaches us in what manner we should act with regard to the affairs of fortune' and that it 'teaches us not to despise, hate or ridicule anyone, to be angry with or envy no one'.[4] But it is not simply a question of a phrase here or there or of isolated statements. The *Treatise on the Correction of the Understanding* was intended as a guide to the attainment of true knowledge. 'A method must be thought out of healing the understanding and purifying it at the beginning, that it may with the greatest success understand things correctly. From this every one will be able to see that I wish to direct all sciences in one direction or to one end, namely, to attain the greatest possible human perfection: and thus everything in the sciences which does not promote this endeavour must be rejected as useless, that is, in a word, all our endeavour and thoughts must be directed to this end.'[5] It would have been open to Spinoza to say that some people enjoy a lower degree of knowledge and others a higher and that nothing can be done to enable the former to render their ideas adequate and clear and to free themselves from the servitude of the passions. But he evidently supposed that intellectual progress is possible through efforts. And in this case moral progress is achieved, for Spinoza, through purifying confused and inadequate ideas. He explicitly speaks of man as being incited 'to seek means which should lead him to perfection'[1] and of 'striving' to acquire a better nature.[2] The concluding sentences of the *Ethics* are especially significant in this respect. 'If the road I have shown to lead to this (that is, to 'power of the mind over emotions, or the freedom of the mind') is very difficult, it can yet be discovered. And clearly it must be very hard when it is so seldom found. For how could it be that it is neglected practically by all, if salvation were close at hand and could be found without difficulty? But all excellent things are as difficult as they are rare.'[3] Whatever some commentators may say, it is hard to see how this is compatible with a consistent doctrine of determinism. It is all very well to say that it is a change of point of view which is involved rather than a change in conduct. Change in conduct depends for Spinoza on a change in point of view; and how could one change one's point of view unless one were free? It may be said that some people are determined to change their point of view. But in this case why point out the road to them and try to convince them? It is difficult to avoid the impression that Spinoza tried to have it both ways; to maintain a thorough determinism, based on a metaphysical theory, and at the same time to propound an ethic which makes sense only if determinism is not absolute.

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[1] *Letter 23.*

[2] *Letter 58.*

[3] *E.*, P. IV, prop. 37, note 2.

[4] *E.*, P. II, prop. 49, note.

[5] *T.*, 2, 16.

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[1] *T.*, 2, 13.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *E.*, P. V, prop. 42, note.

CHAPTER XIV

SPINOZA (5)

Natural right—The foundation of political society—Sovereignty and government—Relations between States—Freedom and toleration—Spinoza's influence and different estimates of his philosophy.

1. SPINOZA'S approach to political theory closely resembles that of Hobbes, whose *De Cive* and *Leviathan* he had studied. Both believed that every man is conditioned by nature to pursue his own advantage, and both tried to show that the formation of political society, with all the restrictions on human liberty which it involves, is justifiable in terms of rational or enlightened self-interest. Man is so constituted that in order to avoid the greater evil of anarchy and chaos he has to join with other men in organized social life, even at the cost of restrictions to his natural right to do whatever he is able to do.

Spinoza, like Hobbes, speaks of 'natural law' and 'natural right'. But in order to understand Spinoza's use of these terms it is necessary to prescind altogether from the theological background of the Scholastic conception of natural law and natural rights. When Spinoza speaks of 'natural law' he is not thinking of a moral law which answers to man's nature but which obliges him morally as a free being to act in a certain way: he is thinking of the way of acting which any finite thing, including man, is determined by Nature to pursue. 'By the right and ordinance of Nature I merely mean those natural laws by which we conceive every individual to be conditioned by Nature so as to live and act in a given way.'[1] Fishes, for example, are so conditioned by Nature that 'the greater devour the less by sovereign natural right'.[2] In order to understand Spinoza's meaning it is essential to remember that to say that large fish have 'the right' to devour small fish is simply to say that large fish can devour fish and that they are so made that they do so, given the occasion. 'For it is certain that Nature, taken in the abstract, has sovereign right to do anything she can; in other words, her right is co-extensive with her power.'[3]

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[1] *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 16. This work will be referred to as *T-P.T.*

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*

The rights of any individual, therefore, are limited only by the limits of his power. And the limits of his power are determined by his nature. Therefore, 'as the wise man has sovereign right . . . to live according to the laws of reason, so also the ignorant and foolish man has sovereign right to . . . live according to the laws of desire'.[1] An ignorant or foolish man is no more bound to live according to the dictates of enlightened reason 'than a cat is bound to live by the laws of the nature of a lion'.[2]

Nobody can justifiably accuse Spinoza of not having made his 'realistic' position perfectly plain. Whether a given individual is led by enlightened reason or by the passions, he has a sovereign right to seek and to take for himself whatever he thinks useful, 'whether by force, cunning, entreaty or any other means'.[3] The cause of this is that Nature is not limited by the laws of human reason, which aims at man's preservation. Nature's aims, so far as one can speak of Nature's aims, 'have reference to the eternal order of Nature wherein man is but a speck'.[4] If anything seems to us evil or absurd in Nature, it is simply because we are ignorant of the system of Nature and the interdependence of the members of the system and because we want everything arranged according to the dictates of human reason and interest. If we once succeed in transcending anthropomorphic and anthropocentric ways of regarding Nature, we shall understand that natural right is limited only by desire and power and that desire and power are conditioned by the nature of a given individual.

The same doctrine is repeated in the *Political Treatise*. Spinoza there reaffirms his thesis that if we are treating of the universal power or right of Nature, we can recognize no distinction between desires which are engendered by reason and desires which are engendered by other causes. 'The natural right of universal nature, and consequently of every individual thing, extends as far as its power; and accordingly whatever any man does according to the laws of his nature he does by the highest natural right, and he has as much right over Nature as he has power.'[5] Men are led more by desire than by reason. Hence one can say that natural power and right is limited by appetite rather than by reason. Nature 'forbids' only what we do not desire and have no power to obtain or to do.

Since every man has a natural impulse to self-maintenance and self-preservation, he is, therefore, naturally entitled to take any means which he thinks will help him to preserve himself. And he is entitled to treat as an enemy anyone who hinders the fulfilment of this natural impulse. Indeed, as they are very liable to the passions of anger, envy and hatred in general, 'men are naturally enemies'.[1]

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[1] *T-P.T.*, 16. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Political Treatise*, 2, 4. This work will be referred to as *P.T.*

Spinoza's statement in the *Ethics* that just and unjust, sin and merit are 'merely extrinsic notions'[2] was quoted in the last chapter; and it can now be understood in its appropriate context. In the state of nature it is 'just' for me to take whatever I think useful for my preservation and welfare: 'justice' is measured simply by desire and power. In organized society, however, certain property-rights and certain rules for the transference of property are established, and by common agreement terms like 'just', 'unjust' and 'right' are given definite meanings. When understood in this way they are 'merely extrinsic notions', referring not to properties of actions considered in themselves but to actions considered in relation to norms and rules set up by and resting on agreement. One can add that the binding force of agreements rests on the power to enforce them. In the state of nature a man who has made an agreement with another is entitled 'by nature' to break the agreement directly he comes to think, rightly or wrongly, that it will be advantageous to him to do so.[3] This doctrine is simply a logical application of Spinoza's theory that, if we look at things simply from the point of view of Nature at large, the only limits of 'right' are desire and power.

2. However, 'everyone wishes to live as far as possible securely beyond the reach of fear, and this would be quite impossible so long as everyone did everything he liked and reason's claim was lowered to a par with those of hatred and anger. . . . When we reflect that men without mutual help, or the aid of reason, must needs live most miserably, we shall see plainly that men must necessarily come to an agreement to live together as securely and as well as possible.'[4] Further, 'without mutual help men can hardly support life and cultivate the mind'.[5] One's own power and natural right is thus in constant danger of being rendered ineffective unless one combines with others to form a stable society. One can thus say that natural right itself points to the formation of organized society. 'And if this is why the Schoolmen want to call

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[1] *P.T.*, 2, 14.

[2] *E.*, P. IV, prop. 37, note 2.

[3] *P.T.*, 2, 12.

[4] *T-P.T.*, 16.

[5] *P.T.*, 2, 15.

man a sociable animal—I mean because men in the state of nature can hardly be independent—I have nothing to say against them.'[1]

The social compact thus rests on enlightened self-interest, and the restrictions of social life are justified by being shown to constitute a lesser threat to one's welfare than the perils of the state of nature. 'It is a universal law of human nature that no one ever neglects anything which he judges to be good, except with the hope of gaining a greater good or from the fear of a greater evil; nor does anyone endure an evil except for the sake of avoiding a greater evil or gaining a greater good.'[2] No one, then, will make a compact except to gain a greater good or avoid a greater evil. 'And we may, therefore, conclude that a compact is made valid only by its utility, without which it becomes null and void.'[3]

3. In concluding a social compact individuals hand over their natural rights to the sovereign power; and 'the possessor of sovereign power, whether he be one, or many, or the whole body politic, has the sovereign right of imposing any commands he pleases'.[4] It is, indeed, impossible to transfer all power, and so all right; for there are some things which follow necessarily from human nature and which cannot be altered by the command of authority. For example, it is useless for the sovereign to command men not to love what is pleasurable to them. But apart from cases like this the subject is bound to obey the commands of the sovereign. And it is through the laws enacted by the sovereign that justice and injustice arise. 'Wrong-doing cannot be conceived of but under dominion. . . . Like, then, wrong-doing and obedience in their strict sense, so also justice and injustice cannot be conceived of except under dominion.'[5]

Spinoza did not, however, intend to justify tyrannical government. In his opinion, as in that of Seneca, 'no one can long retain a tyrant's sway'.[6] For if the sovereign acts in a thoroughly capricious, arbitrary and irrational manner, he will eventually raise such opposition that he will lose his power to govern. And loss of power to govern means loss of right to govern. In his own best interests, then, the sovereign is unlikely to exceed reasonable limits in the exercise of authority.

In the *Political Treatise* Spinoza discusses three general forms of 'dominion', monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. But it is unnecessary to enter upon his treatment of this theme. Of more interest is his general principle that 'that commonwealth is most powerful and most independent which is founded and guided by reason'.[1] The purpose of civil society is 'nothing else but peace and security of life. And therefore that dominion is the best where men pass their lives in unity and the laws are kept unbroken.'[2] In the *Theologico-Political Treatise* he states that the most rational State is also the freest, since to live freely is 'to live with full consent under the entire guidance of reason'.[3] And this sort of life is best secured in a democracy, 'which may be defined as a society which wields all its power as a whole'.[4] A democracy is 'of all forms of government the most natural and the most consonant with individual liberty. In it no one transfers his natural right so absolutely that he has no further voice in affairs; he only hands it over to the majority of a society of which he is a unit. Thus all men remain equals, as they were in the state of nature.'[5] In a democracy, says Spinoza, irrational commands are less to be feared than in any other form of constitution; 'for it is almost impossible that the majority of a people, especially if it is a large one, should agree in an irrational design. And, moreover, the basis and aim of a democracy is to avoid the desires as irrational and to bring men as far as possible under the control of reason, so that they may live in peace and harmony.'[6]

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[1] *P.T.*, 2, 15.
[2] *T-P.T.*, 16.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *P.T.*, 2, 19 and 23.
[6] *T-P.T.*, 16.

4. In discussing the best form of constitution in an *a priori* fashion Spinoza trod in the footsteps of predecessors like Aristotle. To look to him for a real sense of historical development is to look in vain. What distinguishes him from the great Greek writers on politics and from the Scholastics is the emphasis which he lays on power. In the state of nature right is limited only by power, and in civil society sovereignty rests on power. The members of a State are, indeed, bound to obey the laws, but the fundamental reason for this is that the sovereign has the power to enforce them. This is not the whole of the story, of course. Spinoza was in some respects a tough political 'realist'; but at the same time he emphasized the function of the State to provide theframework in which men could live rationally. He considered perhaps that most men are led by desire rather than by reason and that restraint is, as it were, the fundamental purpose of law. But his ideal certainly was that law should be rational and that human beings

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[1] *P.T.*, 5, 1.
[2] *P.T.*, 5, 2.
[3] *T-P.T.*, 16.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Ibid.*

should be guided in their private conduct and in their obedience to law by reason rather than by fear. All the same, it is on power that political authority rests, even if this power is never misused. And if the power disappears, the claim to authority disappears.

The importance attributed by Spinoza to power comes out clearly in his view of the relations between States. Different States may enter into agreements with one another, but there is no authority to enforce such agreements, as there is in the case of contracts between fellow members of a State. The relations between States are governed, therefore, not by law but by power and self-interest. A covenant between different States 'is valid so long as its basis of danger or advantage is in force. No one enters into an engagement, or is bound to stand by his compacts, unless there is a hope of some accruing good, or the fear of some evil: if this basis is removed, the compact thereby becomes void. This has been abundantly shown by experience.'[1] States, then, in their relations with one another are in the position of individuals considered apart from the social compact and from the organized society to which the compact gives rise. Spinoza appeals to experience for confirmation of his theory, and in order to recognize that it gives expression to historical fact one has only to reflect on the modern discussions about the need for some international authority.

5. In spite of the emphasis he laid on power, Spinoza's ideal was, as we have seen, the life of reason. And one of the main features of a rationally organized society would be, he was convinced, religious toleration. Like Hobbes, he was filled with horror at the thought of religious wars and divisions, but his idea of the proper remedy was different from that of Hobbes. For whereas Hobbes tended to think that the only remedy lay in subordinating religion to the civil power, that is, in a thorough-going Erastianism, Spinoza emphasized toleration in the matter of religious beliefs. This attitude followed naturally from his philosophical principles. For he made a sharp distinction between the language of philosophy and the language of theology. The function of the latter is not to give scientific information but rather to impel people to adopt certain lines of conduct. Provided, therefore, that the line of conduct to which a certain set of religious beliefs naturally leads is not prejudicial to the good of society, full liberty should be allowed to those who find help in this set of

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[1] *T-P.T.*, 16.

beliefs. Speaking of the religious freedom enjoyed in Holland, he says that he wishes to show that 'not only can such freedom be granted without prejudice to the public peace but also that without such freedom piety cannot flourish nor the public peace be secure'.[1] And he concludes that 'every one should be free to choose for himself the foundations of his creed and that faith should be judged only by its fruits'.[2]

Right over one's judgments, feelings and beliefs is something that one cannot alienate by any social compact. Every man is 'by indefeasible natural right the master of his own thoughts', and he 'cannot, without disastrous results, be compelled to speak only according to the dictates of the supreme power'.[3] Indeed, 'the true aim of government,' says Spinoza, 'is liberty'. For 'the object of government is not to change men from rational beings into beasts or puppets, but to enable them to develop their minds and bodies in security and to employ their reason unshackled'.[4] Toleration, therefore, should not be confined to the sphere of religion. Provided that a man criticizes the sovereign from rational conviction and not out of a desire to make trouble or to promote sedition, he should be allowed to speak his mind freely. Regard for the public welfare sets a limit to free speech; mere agitation, inciting to rebellion or to disobedience to the law, and disturbance of peace cannot reasonably be allowed. But rational discussion and criticism do good rather than harm. If the attempt is made to crush liberty and to regiment thought and speech, great harm results. It is not possible to suppress all freedom of thought; and, if freedom of speech is suppressed, the result is that fools, flatterers, the insincere and the unscrupulous flourish. Moreover, 'freedom is absolutely necessary for progress in science and the liberal arts'.[5] And this freedom is best secured in a democracy, 'the most natural form of government', in which 'every one submits to the control of authority over his actions but not over his judgment and reason'.[6]

It is as well to have brought out this side of Spinoza's political theory. For undue concentration on those elements of his theory which are common to him and Hobbes may easily give a wrong impression: it tends to conceal the fact that his ideal was the life of reason and that he did not laud power for its own sake, even though he was convinced not only that power does play a most important part in political life but that it must do so, for metaphysical and psychological reasons. Moreover, although Spinoza himself clearly did not believe in a definite divine revelation of statable truths, so that his premisses were different from those of believers in such a revelation, the problem which he discussed is a real problem for all. On the one hand, faith is in any case something which cannot be forced; and the attempt to enforce it leads to evil results. On the other hand, complete and unlimited toleration is, as Spinoza saw, impracticable. No government can permit incitement to political assassination, for example, or unhindered propaganda for beliefs which lead directly to crime. The problem for Spinoza, as for those of a later age, is that of combining the greatest possible amount of freedom with regard for the public good. It is hardly to be expected that all will agree about the precise limits of toleration; and in any case this question can scarcely be settled *a priori* and without reference to historical circumstances. To give a very obvious example, all reasonable people agree that in times of war and national crisis liberties may have to be restricted in a way which would be undesirable at other times. But the general principles that Governments should foster rather than destroy liberty and that liberty is required for true cultural development are as valid now as they were when Spinoza enunciated them.

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[1] *T-P.T.*, preface.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *T-P.T.*, 20.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Ibid.*

6. For a considerable time after his death Spinoza was often called an 'atheist', and so far as any attention was paid to him he was generally attacked. The main reason, of course, why he was called an atheist was his identification of God with Nature. The charge of atheism has been indignantly repudiated by many of Spinoza's modern admirers; but the question cannot be settled so simply, and certainly not by the use of emotive language on either side. The only proper way of settling it in a rational manner is to decide on the meaning to be attached to the word 'God' and then to decide whether Spinoza did or did not deny the existence of God so understood. But even this procedure is not so simple to follow in practice as might at first appear. It might reasonably be argued that if the word 'God' is understood in the Judaeo-Christian sense, as meaning a personal Being transcending Nature, the charge of 'atheism' was correct. For it is true that Spinoza denied the existence of a personal Being transcending Nature. Thus when his Lutheran biographer, John Colerus, says in his *Life of Benedict de Spinoza* that the philosopher 'takes the liberty to use the word

"God" and to use it in a sense unknown to all Christians' and that Spinoza's doctrine is therefore atheism, the statement, it might be said, is obviously true if one understands by 'atheism' denial of the existence of God in the sense in which the word is understood by Christians. Spinoza, however, might reply that he defined God as the absolutely infinite Being and that Christians also understood by 'God' the infinite Being, though they did not, in his opinion, understand the implications of this definition. His identification of God with Nature, he might say, was the expression not of atheism but of a true understanding of what is meant by 'God', if 'God' is defined as the absolutely infinite Being. Still, the fact remains that Christians, whether philosophers or not, affirm God's transcendence and do not identify God with Nature; and if the term 'God' is understood in the way in which all Christians understand it, whether they are philosophers or not, it can be said that Spinoza was an 'atheist' in that he denied the existence of God as so understood. It is difficult to see why the charge of atheism, if so interpreted, should raise indignation. Writers who wax indignant over the charge are presumably either thinking of the abusive epithets which were sometimes added to it or protesting against the use of the term 'God' in an exclusively Christian sense.

But it was not only by the theologians that Spinoza was criticized and belittled. In his *Dictionary* Bayle not only represented Spinoza as an atheist but also condemned his philosophy as absurd. And Diderot took more or less the same line in his article on Spinoza in the *Encyclopaedia*. Indeed, the philosophers of the French Enlightenment in general, though they respected Spinoza as a man and were glad of the opportunity of presenting the example of a virtuous yet highly unorthodox thinker, did not extend their respect to his philosophy. They regarded it as obscure sophistry and a juggling with geometrical and metaphysical terms and formulae. Hume remarked that 'the fundamental principle of the atheism of Spinoza' lies in his monism, and he called this a 'hideous hypothesis'.[1] But as he coupled this with the assertion that 'the doctrine of the immateriality, simplicity, and indivisibility of a thinking substance is a true atheism and will serve to justify all those sentiments for which Spinoza is so universally infamous', one may feel a certain doubt about Hume's horror at Spinoza's 'hypothesis'. It is clear, however, that he considered both Descartes' doctrine of an immaterial thinking substance and Spinoza's theory of a unique substance to be unintelligible.

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[1] *Treatise of Human Nature*, 1, 4, 5.

Attacked by theologians on the one hand and by philosophers on the other, the philosophy of Spinoza hardly appeared worthy of serious consideration. In the course of time, however, the tide of opinion turned. In 1780 Lessing had his famous conversation with Jacobi in which he expressed his appreciation of and indebtedness to Spinoza. Herder too appreciated Spinoza, and Novalis described him in an oft-quoted phrase as 'a God-intoxicated man'. Heine wrote warmly of Spinoza, and Goethe spoke of the Jewish philosopher's influence upon him, of the calm and resignation which the *Ethics* brought to his soul and of the wide and disinterested view of reality which the work opened up. The German romantics in general (I do not mean to imply that Goethe can properly be labelled a 'romantic', though he was able to give expression to romanticism) found or thought they found in Spinoza a kindred soul. For them, with their feeling for the totality and their inclination to a poetic and quasi-mystical view of Nature, Spinoza was the 'pantheist' who did not place God in a remote transcendence but saw in Nature a theophany or immanent manifestation of God. And German philosophers like Schelling and Hegel, the philosophers of the romantic movement, brought Spinozism into the main stream of European philosophy. For Hegel, Spinoza's system was an integral and important stage in the development of European thought. Spinoza's idea of God as substance was inadequate; for God should be conceived as Spirit. But the charge of atheism was unfounded. 'Spinozism,' says Hegel, 'might really just as well or even better have been termed Acosmism, since according to its teaching it is not to the world, finite existence, the universe, that reality and permanency are to be ascribed, but rather to God alone as the substantial.'[1] In England Coleridge wrote enthusiastically of Spinoza, and Shelley began a translation of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*.

While he was regarded by his earlier critics as an atheist and by the romantics as a pantheist, the tendency of a number of modern writers is to represent Spinoza as a speculative forerunner of a completely scientific view of the world. For he made a sustained attempt always to give a naturalistic explanation of events without having recourse to explanations in terms either of the supernatural and transcendent or of final causes. Those who stress this aspect of Spinoza's thought do not forget that he was a metaphysician and that he aimed at giving an 'ultimate' explanation of the world. But they think that his idea of Nature as one organic cosmos which can be understood without postulating anything outside Nature can be considered a vast speculative programme for scientific research, though the method required by scientific research is not the method which Spinoza employed in his philosophy. For them, therefore, the central idea of Spinozism is the idea of Nature as a system which can be scientifically investigated. The Hegelian interpretation of Spinoza is put on one side, and one can say perhaps that the 'atheistic' interpretation comes once more to the fore, provided that one remembers that if these writers used the word 'atheism' in this connection it would not have for them the abusive overtones which it had for Spinoza's early theological critics.

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[1] *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, translated by E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simons, vol. III, p. 281.

It is difficult to say precisely how much truth there is in each of these lines of interpretation. To read the spirit and atmosphere of the romantic movement into Spinoza's thought is certainly incorrect, and if one had to choose between a romantic and a naturalistic interpretation, one would certainly do better by preferring the latter. Yet though Spinoza's thought seems to have moved far away from its Jewish origins in the direction of a naturalistic monism, his doctrines of the infinite Godhead, and of the unknown divine attributes, suggest that the religious origins of his thought were by no means completely obscured by its later development. Moreover, we must remember that Spinoza was not interested simply in tracing causal connections and exhibiting the infinite series of causes as a self-enclosed system. His chief work was not entitled the *Ethics* for nothing: he was interested in the attainment of true peace of mind and of freedom from the servitude of the passions. In a famous passage at the beginning of the *Treatise on the Correction of the Understanding* he speaks of his experience of the vanity and futility of riches, fame and pleasure, of the search for supreme happiness and the greatest good. For 'the love towards a thing eternal and infinite alone feeds the mind with pleasure, and it is free from all pain; so it is much to be desired and to be sought out with all our might'.[1] Again, 'I wish to direct all sciences in one direction, or to one end, namely, to attain the greatest possible human perfection: and thus everything in the sciences which does not promote this endeavour must be rejected as useless, that is, in a word, all our endeavours and thoughts must be directed to this one end.'[1] And in a letter to Van Blyenbergh he says: 'Meanwhile I know (and this knowledge gives me the highest contentment and peace of mind) that all things come to pass by the power and unchangeable decree of a Being supremely perfect.'[2]

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[1] *T.*, 1, 10.

But one must not let oneself be misled by the use of phrases such as 'the intellectual love of God' into interpreting Spinoza as though he were a religious mystic like Eckhart. Indeed, in interpreting Spinoza it is essential to remember that terms and phrases must be understood in the sense of his definitions and not in the sense which they bear in 'ordinary language'. In Spinoza's philosophy terms are given a technical sense, and this is often different from the meaning which we would naturally and spontaneously attach to them. The notion that the philosophy of Spinoza was a philosophy of religious mysticism arises only if one persists in neglecting his definitions of terms like 'God' and 'love' and the light shed on those definitions by the system as a whole.

[1] *T.*, 2, 16.

[2] *Letter 21*.

CHAPTER XV

LEIBNIZ (1)

Life—The De arte combinatoria *and the idea of harmony—Writings—Different interpretations of Leibniz's thought.*

1. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz was born at Leipzig in 1646, his father being professor of moral philosophy in the university. A precocious boy, Leibniz studied both Greek and Scholastic philosophy, and he tells us, speaking of himself at about the age of thirteen, that he read Suárez with as much facility as people are accustomed to read romances. At the age of fifteen he entered the university and studied under James Thomasius. Making the acquaintance of 'modern' thinkers like Bacon, Hobbes, Gassendi, Descartes, Kepler and Galileo, he found in them examples of a 'better philosophy'. And according to his reminiscences he debated within himself during solitary walks whether to retain the Aristotelian theory of substantial forms and final causes or to adopt mechanism. Mechanism prevailed, though he later tried to combine Aristotelian elements with new ideas. Indeed, the influence of his early studies of Aristotelianism and Scholasticism is obvious in his later writings; and of all the leading philosophers of the pre-Kantian 'modern' period it was probably Leibniz who possessed the most extensive knowledge of the Scholastics. He was certainly much better acquainted with them than was Spinoza. And his baccalaureate thesis (1663) on the principle of individuation was written under the influence of Scholasticism, though of the nominalist direction.

In 1663 Leibniz went to Jena, where he studied mathematics under Erhard Weigel. He then gave himself to the study of jurisprudence and took the doctorate in Law at Altdorf in 1667. The offer of a university chair at Altdorf was refused, as Leibniz said that he had very different things in view. Having been given a post in the court of the Elector of Mainz, he was sent on a diplomatic mission to Paris in 1672, where he made the acquaintance of men like Malebranche and Arnauld. In 1673 he visited England, meeting Boyle and Oldenburg. Returning to Paris, he remained there until 1676, the final year of his stay being memorable for his discovery of the infinitesimal calculus. Though

Leibniz was unaware of the fact, Newton had already written on the same subject. But the latter was very slow to publish his results and did not do so until 1687, whereas Leibniz published his in 1684. Hence the unprofitable dispute about priority in discovery.

On his way back to Germany Leibniz visited Spinoza. He had already been in correspondence with Spinoza, and he was extremely curious about the latter's philosophy. The precise relations between Leibniz and Spinoza are not very clear. The former criticized and continued to criticize the latter's theories, and when he had studied Spinoza's posthumously published works he made persistent attempts to compromise Descartes by representing Spinozism as the logical outcome of Cartesianism. The philosophy of Descartes, according to Leibniz, leads by way of Spinozism to atheism. On the other hand, it is clear that Leibniz's insatiable curiosity in intellectual matters produced in him a lively interest in Spinoza's doctrine, even if he made no very profound study of it, and that he found it stimulating. Moreover, in view of Leibniz's diplomatic character it has even been suggested that his strong repudiation of Spinozism was partly inspired by his desire to maintain a reputation for orthodoxy. But though Leibniz was a diplomat, a courtier and a man of the world, which Spinoza was not, and though he had an eye to edifying his various patrons and eminent acquaintances, there is no real reason, I think, for believing that his opposition to Spinozism was insincere. He had already arrived at some of the main ideas of his own philosophy by the time he studied Spinoza, and though certain affinities between their respective philosophies stimulated his interest and probably also his eagerness to dissociate himself publicly from Spinoza, the differences between their respective positions were far-reaching.

Owing to his association with the House of Hanover, Leibniz found himself involved in compiling the history of the family; that is, the Brunswick family. But his interests and activities were manifold. In 1682 he founded at Leipzig the *Acta eruditorum*, and in 1700 he became the first president of the Society of the Sciences at Berlin, which later became the Prussian Academy. In addition to an interest in founding learned societies he occupied himself with the problem of uniting the Christian Confessions. First of all he endeavoured to find common ground for agreement between Catholics and Protestants. Later, when he realized that the difficulties were greater than had been anticipated, he tried, though again without success, to prepare the way for the reunion of the Calvinist and Lutheran bodies. Another of his schemes was a plan for an alliance between Christian States, the formation of a kind of United Europe; and after having failed to interest Louis XIV of France, he addressed himself in 1711 to the Tsar Peter the Great. He also endeavoured to bring about an alliance between the Tsar and the Emperor. But his plans for inducing Christian monarchs to abandon their quarrels and to join in alliance against the non-Christian world, were as abortive as his schemes for the reunion of the Christian Confessions. One may mention also that Leibniz took a considerable interest in the information about the Far East which was beginning to percolate into Europe, and that he warmly defended the Jesuit missionaries in China in connection with the rites controversy.

Leibniz was one of the most distinguished men of his time, and he enjoyed the patronage of many eminent people. But the closing years of his life were embittered by neglect, and when the Elector of Hanover became George I of England in 1714 Leibniz was not chosen to accompany him to London. His death in 1716 passed unnoticed even in the Academy which he had founded at Berlin, the French Academy being the sole learned body to do honour to his memory.

2. It is against the background of this varied activity and many-sided interests that one has to see Leibniz's career as a philosophical writer. His history of the House of Brunswick falls, of course, into a class apart. Planned in 1692 and carried on intermittently until his death, though never completed, it was not published until 1843–5. Between his philosophical work, however, and his interest in founding learned societies, in uniting Christian bodies and in furthering an alliance of Christian States there is a much closer connection than might appear at first sight.

In order to grasp this connection it is necessary to bear in mind the part played in Leibniz's thought by the idea of universal harmony. The idea of the universe as a harmonious system in which there is at the same time unity and multiplicity, coordination and differentiation of parts, seems to have become a leading idea, probably the leading idea, of Leibniz at a very early age. For example, in a letter to Thomasius, written in 1669 when Leibniz was twenty-three, after mentioning sayings like 'Nature does nothing in vain' and 'everything shuns its own destruction', he remarks: 'Since, however, there is really no wisdom or appetite in Nature, the beautiful order arises from the fact that Nature is the clock of God (*horologium Dei*).'[1] Similarly, in a letter to Magnus Wedderkopf, written in 1671, Leibniz affirms that God the Creator wills what is most harmonious. The idea of the cosmos as a universal harmony had been prominent in the writings of Renaissance philosophers like Nicholas of Cusa and Giordano Bruno, and it had been emphasized by Kepler and John Henry Bisterfeld, whom Leibniz mentions appreciatively in the *De arte combinatoria* (1666). He was to develop it later in terms of his theory of monads, but it was present in his mind long before he wrote the *Monadology*.

In the *De arte combinatoria* Leibniz proposed the development of a method suggested by the writings of Raymond Lull, the mediaeval Franciscan, and by modern mathematicians and philosophers. He envisaged first of all the analysis of complex terms into simple terms. 'Analysis is as follows. Let any given term be resolved into its formal parts, that is, let it be defined. Then let these parts be resolved into their own parts, or let definitions be given of the terms of the (first) definition, until (one reaches) simple parts or indefinable terms.'[2] These simple or indefinable terms would form an alphabet of human thoughts. For, as all words and phrases are combinations of the letters of the alphabet, so can propositions be seen to result from combinations of simple or indefinable terms. The second step in Leibniz's plan consists in representing these indefinable terms by mathematical symbols. If, then, one can find the right way of 'combining' these symbols, one will have formed a deductive logic of discovery, which would serve not only for demonstrating truths already known but also for discovering new truths.

Leibniz did not think that all truths can be deduced *a poriri*: there are contingent propositions which cannot be deduced in this way. For example, that Augustus was Roman emperor or that Christ was born at Bethlehem are truths known by research into the facts of history, not by logical deduction from definitions. And in addition to particular historical statements of this kind there are also universal propositions the truth of which is known by observation and induction, not by deduction. Their truth 'is founded not in the essence (of things) but in their existence; and they are true as though by chance'.[1] I shall return later to Leibniz's distinction between contingent and necessary propositions: at the moment it is sufficient to notice that he made a distinction. But it is important to understand that by propositions *quarum veritas in essentia fundata est* he did not mean simply the propositions of formal logic and pure mathematics. His ideal of deductive and scientific logic was certainly largely due to that influence of mathematics which can be seen in the thought of other rationalist philosophers of the period; but, like them, he thought that the deductive method could be used to develop systems of true propositions in other spheres than logic and mathematics. He anticipated, in general idea, later symbolic logic; but the development of systems of pure logic and mathematics was but one aspect of his total plan. The deductive method can, he thought, be utilized in developing the essential ideas and truths of metaphysics, physics, jurisprudence and even theology. The discovery of the proper mathematical symbolism would provide a universal language, a *characteristica universalis*, and by using this language in the different branches of study human knowledge could be indefinitely developed in such a way that there would be no more room for rival theories than there is in pure mathematics.

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[1] *G.*, 1, 25. The letter *G* in references to Leibniz's writings signifies C. I. Gerhardt's edition of *Die philosophischen Schriften von G. W. Leibniz* (7 vols., 1875–90). Where possible page references are also given to *The Philosophical Works of Leibniz*, edited by G. M. Duncan (1890). This work, which contains only a selection of Leibniz's writings, is signified by the letter *D*.

[2] *De arte combinatoria*, 64; *G.*, 4, 64–5.

Leibniz thus dreamed of a universal science, of which logic and mathematics would form only parts. And he was led to extend the scope of the deductive method beyond the frontiers of formal logic and pure mathematics largely because of his conviction that the universe forms a harmonious system. In the *De arte combinatoria*[2] he draws attention to Bisterfeld's doctrine of the essential connections between all beings. A deductive system of logic or of mathematics is an illustration or example of the general truth that the universe is a system. Hence there can be a deductive science of metaphysics, a science of being.

The fact that the implementation of Leibniz's grandiose scheme postulates the analysis of complex truths into simple truths and of definable terms into indefinable terms helps to explain his interest in the founding of learned societies. For he conceived the idea of a comprehensive encyclopaedia of human knowledge, from which the fundamental simple ideas could be, as it were, extracted; and he hoped that it would prove possible to enlist the aid of learned societies and academies in this undertaking. He also hoped that the Religious Orders, particularly the Jesuits, would co-operate in the construction of the projected encyclopaedia.

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[1] *De arte combinatoria*, 83; *G.*, 4, 69.

[1] 85; *G.*, 4, 70.

Leibniz's logical dream also helps to explain the attitude which he adopted on the subject of Christian reunion. For he thought that it should prove possible to deduce a number of essential propositions in theology on which all Confessions might agree. He never actually attempted to work out this plan, but in his *Systema theologicum* (1686) he endeavoured to find common ground on which Catholic and Protestants could agree. His ideal of harmony was, of course, more fundamental than the idea of logically deducing a kind of highest common factor for the Christian Confessions.

This ideal of harmony obviously shows itself also in Leibniz's dream of a union of Christian princes. It was manifested too in his view of the development of philosophy. The history of philosophy was for him a perennial philosophy. One thinker may overemphasize one aspect of reality or one truth and his successor another aspect or truth; but there is truth in all systems. Most schools of philosophy, he thought, are right in the greater part of what they affirm, but wrong in the greater part of what they deny. For instance, mechanists are right in affirming that there is efficient mechanical causality but wrong in denying that mechanical causality subserves purpose. There is truth in both mechanism and finalism.

3. The publication of Locke's *Essay*, with its attack on the doctrine of innate ideas, prompted Leibniz to prepare a detailed reply during the period 1701–9. The work was not completely finished, and its publication was for various reasons deferred. It appeared posthumously in 1765 under the title *New Essays on Human Understanding* (*Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement humain*). The only other large work by Leibniz is his *Essays in Theodicy* (*Essais de Théodicée*). This work, a systematic answer to Bayle's article 'Rorarius' in his *Historical and Critical Dictionary*, was published in 1710.

Leibniz's philosophy, that is, what is sometimes called his 'popular philosophy', was not expounded in any large systematic tome. One has to look for it in letters, in articles, in periodicals, and in brief works like the *Discourse on Metaphysics* (*Discours de métaphysique*, 1686), which he sent to Arnauld, the *New System of Nature and of the Interaction of Substances* (*Système nouveau de la *nature et de la communication des substances*, 1695), *The Principles of Nature and of Grace* (*Principes de la nature et de la grâce*, 1714) and the *Monadology* (*Monadologie*, 1714), which was written for Prince Eugene of Savoy. But he left behind him a mass of manuscripts which remained unpublished until comparatively recently. In 1903 L. Couturat published his important collection, *Opuscules et fragments inédits*, and in 1913 there appeared at Kazan *Leibnitiana, Elementa philosophiae arcanae, de summa rerum*, edited by J. Jagodinski. The complete edition of the writings of Leibniz, including all available letters, which was begun by the Prussian Academy of Sciences in 1923, was planned to comprise forty volumes. Political events unfortunately slowed down the continuance of this great project.

4. Most philosophies have given rise to divergent interpretations. In the case of Leibniz there have been pronounced differences. For example, according to Couturat and Bertrand Russell the publication of Leibniz's notes has shown that his metaphysical philosophy was based on his logical studies. The doctrine of monads, for instance, was closely connected with the subject-predicate analysis of propositions. On the other hand, there are inconsistencies and contradictions in his thought. In particular, his ethics and theology are at variance with his logical premisses. The explanation, in Bertrand Russell's opinion, is that Leibniz, having an eye to edification and to the maintenance of his reputation for orthodoxy, shrank from drawing the logical conclusions of his premisses. 'This is the reason why the best parts of his philosophy are the most abstract, and the worst those which most nearly concern human life.'[1] Indeed, Earl Russell does not hesitate to make a sharp distinction between Leibniz's 'popular philosophy' and his 'esoteric doctrine'.[2]

Jean Baruzi, however, in his *Leibniz et l'organisation religieuse de la terre d'après des documents inédits*, maintained that Leibniz was primarily a religious-minded thinker, animated above all by zeal for the glory of God. Another interpretation was that of Kuno Fischer, who saw in Leibniz the chief embodiment of the spirit of the Enlightenment. Leibniz combined in himself the different aspects of the Age of Reason, and in his schemes for Christian reunion and for the political alliance of Christian States we can see the expression of the point of view of rational enlightenment as distinct from fanaticism, sectarianism and narrow nationalism. Again, for Windelband, as also for the Italian idealist Guido de Ruggiero, Leibniz was essentially the precursor of Kant. In the *New Essays* Leibniz showed his belief that the life of the soul transcends the sphere of distinct consciousness or clear awareness, and he foreshadowed the idea of the deeper unity of sensibility and understanding, which the rationalists of the Enlightenment had tended to separate with undue sharpness. On this matter he influenced Herder. 'More important still was another effect of the work of Leibniz. It was no less a thinker than Kant who undertook to build up the doctrine of the *Nouveaux Essais* into a system of epistemology.'[1] On the other hand, Louis Davillé, in his *Leibniz historien*, emphasized the historical activity of Leibniz and the pains he took in gathering materials in various places—in Vienna and Italy, for example—for his history of the House of Brunswick.

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[1] *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz*, p. 202.

[2] *History of Western Philosophy*, pp. 606 and 613.

That there is truth in all these lines of interpretation scarcely needs saying. For they would not have been seriously proposed by their authors had there not been foundations in fact for each of them. It is, for example, undoubtedly true that there is a close connection between Leibniz's logical studies and his metaphysics; and it is also true that he wrote down reflections which indicate some apprehension about possible reactions to the conclusions of the lines of thought he was developing, were he to make those conclusions public. On the other hand, though it is an exaggeration to picture Leibniz as a profoundly religious figure, there is no real reason to think that his theological and ethical writings were insincere or that he had no genuine concern for the realization of religious and political harmony. Again, it is undeniable that Leibniz embodied many of the aspects of the Age of Reason, while it is also true that he endeavoured to overcome some of the features characteristic of the philosophers of the Enlightenment. Further, in some important ways he certainly prepared the way for Kant, while he was, on the other hand, also an historian.

But it is difficult to pigeon-hole Leibniz in any one compartment. The logical side of his philosophy is undoubtedly important, and Couturat and Russell did good service in drawing attention to its importance; but the ethical and theological parts of his philosophy are also real parts. There may be, indeed, as Russell maintains, inconsistencies and even contradictions in

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[1] Windelband, *A History of Philosophy* (translated by J. H. Tufts), p. 465.

Leibniz's thought; but this does not mean that we are entitled to make a radical distinction between his 'esoteric' and his 'exoteric' thought. Leibniz was doubtless a complicated personality; but he was not a split personality. Again, Leibniz is too outstanding and many-sided a thinker for it to be legitimate to label him simply as 'a thinker of the Enlightenment' or as 'a precursor of Kant'. And as for Leibniz as historian, it would be strange to emphasize this aspect of his activity at the expense of his activity as logician, mathematician and philosopher. Moreover, as Benedetto Croce has argued, Leibniz lacked the sense of historical development which was shown by Vico. His tendency to panlogism smacks far more of the rationalist spirit of the Enlightenment and of its comparative neglect of history than of the historical outlook represented by Vico, even though his monadology was in a sense a philosophy of development. In fine, an ideal presentation of Leibniz would do justice to all aspects of his thought while over-emphasizing no one element at the expense of others. But, so far as the achievement of this ideal is a practical possibility, it would have to be the work of a Leibnizian expert thoroughly acquainted with the whole of the relevant literature and without any particular axe of his own to grind. It seems likely, however, that Leibniz will in practice always be a subject for controversy. Perhaps this is inevitable in the case of a man who never really attempted a fully systematic synthesis of his thought.

CHAPTER XVI

LEIBNIZ (2)

The distinction between truths of reason and truths of fact—Truths of reason or necessary propositions—Truths of fact or contingent propositions—The principle of perfection—Substance—The identity of indiscernibles—The law of continuity—The 'panlogism' of Leibniz.

1. In this chapter I propose to discuss some of Leibniz's logical principles. And the first point to be explained is the fundamental distinction between truths of reason and truths of fact. For Leibniz every proposition possesses the subject-predicate form or can be analysed into a proposition or set of propositions of this form. The subject-predicate form of proposition is thus fundamental. And truth consists in the correspondence of a proposition with reality, possible or actual. 'Let us content ourselves with seeking truth in the correspondence of the propositions in the mind with the things in question. It is true that I have also attributed truth to ideas in saying that ideas are true or false; but then I mean in reality the truth of propositions affirming the possibility of the object of the idea. In the same sense we can say also that a being is true, that is to say the proposition affirming its actual or at least possible existence.'[1]

But propositions are not all of the same kind, and a distinction must be made between truths of reason and truths of fact. The former are necessary propositions, in the sense that they are either themselves self-evident propositions or reducible thereto. If we really know what the propositions mean, we see that their contradictories cannot conceivably be true. All truths of reason are necessarily true, and their truth rests on the principle of contradiction. One cannot deny a truth of reason without being involved in contradiction. Leibniz also refers to the principle of contradiction as the principle of identity. 'The first of the truths of reason is the principle of contradiction or, what comes to the same thing, that of identity.'[1] To take an example given by Leibniz himself, I cannot deny the proposition that the equilateral rectangle is a rectangle without being involved in contradiction.

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[1] *New Essays*, 4, 5, p. 452 (page references to the *New Essays* are to the translation by A. G. Langley, listed in the Appendix); *G.*, 5, 378.

Truths of fact, on the other hand, are not necessary propositions. Their opposites are conceivable; and they can be denied without logical contradiction. The proposition, for example, that John Smith exists or that John Smith married Mary Brown is not a necessary but a contingent proposition. It is, indeed, logically and metaphysically inconceivable that John Smith should not exist while he is existing. But the proposition the opposite of which is inconceivable is not the existential statement that John Smith exists but the hypothetical statement that if John Smith exists, he cannot at the same time not exist. The true existential statement that John Smith actually exists is a contingent proposition, a truth of fact. We cannot deduce it from any *a priori* self-evident truth: we know its truth *a posteriori*. At the same time there must be a sufficient reason for the existence of John Smith. It would have been possible for there never to have been a John Smith. 'Truths of reason are necessary and their opposite is impossible: truths of fact are contingent and their opposite is possible.'[2] But if John Smith actually exists, there must be a sufficient reason for his existence; that is, if it is true to say that John Smith exists, there must be a sufficient reason why it is true to say that he exists. Truths of fact, then, rest on the principle of sufficient reason. But they do not rest on the principle of contradiction, since their truth is not necessary and their opposites are conceivable.

Now, for Leibniz contingent propositions or truths of fact are analytic in a sense which will be explained presently. If we are using his language, therefore, we cannot simply equate truths of reason with analytic and truths of fact with synthetic propositions. But since what he calls 'truths of reason' can be shown by us to be analytic, that is, since in the case of truths of reason we can show that the predicate is contained in the subject while in the case of truths of fact we are unable to demonstrate that the predicate is contained in the subject, we can to that extent say that Leibniz's 'truths of reason' are analytic and his 'truths of fact' synthetic propositions. Moreover, we can make the following broad distinction between the range of truths of reason and that of truths of fact. The former embrace the sphere of the possible, while the latter embrace the sphere of the existential. There is, however, one exception to the rule that existential propositions are truths of fact and not of reason. For the proposition that God exists is a truth of reason or necessary proposition, and denial of it involves for Leibniz a logical contradiction. To this subject I shall return later. But apart from this one exception no truth of reason asserts existence of any subject. Conversely, if, except in the one case just mentioned, a true proposition asserts existence of a subject, it is a truth of fact, a contingent proposition, and not a truth of reason. Leibniz's distinction between truths of reason and truths of fact needs, however, some further elucidation, and I propose to say something more about each in turn.

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[1] *G.*, 4, 357. In the *New Essays* (4, 2, 1, pp. 404–5) Leibniz speaks of propositions such as 'each thing is what it is' and '*A* is *A*' as affirmative identicals. Negative identicals belong either to the principle of contradiction or to the disparates (e.g. heat is not the same thing as colour). 'The principle of contradiction is in general: *a proposition is either true or false.* This contains two true statements; one that the true and the false are not compatible in one and the same proposition, or *that a proposition cannot be true and false at once*; the other that the opposition or the negation of the true and the false are not compatible, or that there is no mean between the true and the false, or rather: *it is impossible for a proposition to be neither true nor false*' (*G.*, 5, 343).

[2] *Monadology*, 33; *G.*, 6, 612; *D.*, p. 223.

2. Among truths of reason are those primitive truths which Leibniz calls 'identicals'. They are known by intuition, their truth being self-evident. They are called 'identicals', says Leibniz, 'because they seem only to repeat the same thing without giving us any information'.[1] Examples of affirmative identicals are 'each thing is what it is', and '*A* is *A*', 'the equilateral rectangle is a rectangle'. An example of a negative identical is 'what is *A* cannot be non-*A*'. But there are also negative identicals which are called 'disparates', that is, propositions which state that the object of one idea is not the object of another idea. For example, 'heat is not the same thing as colour'. 'All this,' says Leibniz, 'can be asserted independently of all proof or of reduction to opposition or to the principle of contradiction, when these ideas are sufficiently understood not to require here analysis.'[2] If we understand, for instance, what the terms 'heat' and 'colour' mean, we see at once, without any need of proof, that heat is not the same thing as colour.

If one looks at Leibniz's examples of primitive truths of reason, one notices at once that some of them are tautologies. For example, the propositions that an equilateral rectangle is a

[1] *New Essays* 4, 2, 1, p. 404; *G.*, 5, 343. [2] *New Essays*, pp. 405–6; G., 5, 344.

rectangle, that a rational animal is an animal and that *A* is *A* are clearly tautological. This, of course, is the reason why Leibniz says that identicals seem to repeat the same thing without giving us any information. Indeed, it appears to have been Leibniz's view that logic and pure mathematics are systems of propositions of the kind which are now sometimes called 'tautologies'. 'The great foundation of mathematics is the principle of contradiction or identity, that is, that a proposition cannot be true and false at the same time, and that, therefore, *A* is *A* and cannot be non-*A*. This single principle is sufficient to demonstrate every part of arithmetic and geometry, that is, all mathematical principles. But in order to proceed from mathematics to natural philosophy another principle is required, as I have observed in my *Theodicy*. I mean the principle of sufficient reason, that is, that nothing happens without a reason why it should be so rather than otherwise.'[1]

Leibniz was, of course, well aware that definitions are required in mathematics. And, according to him, the proposition that three is equal to two plus one is 'only the definition of the term three'.[2] But he would not allow that all definitions are arbitrary. We must distinguish between real and nominal definitions. The former 'show clearly that the thing is possible',[3] while the latter do not. Hobbes, says Leibniz, thought that 'truths were arbitrary because they depended on nominal definitions'.[4] But there are also real definitions, clearly defining the possible, and propositions derived from real definitions are true. Nominal definitions are of use; but they can be the source of knowledge of the truth 'only when it is well established otherwise that the thing defined is possible'.[5] 'In order to be assured that what I conclude from a definition is true, I must know that this notion is possible.'[6] Real definitions are thus fundamental.

In a science such as pure mathematics, therefore, we have self-evident propositions or fundamental axioms, definitions and propositions deduced therefrom; and the whole science concerns the sphere of the possible. There are here several points to notice. First, Leibniz defined the possible as the non-contradictory. The proposition that roundness is compatible with squareness is a contradictory proposition, and this is what is meant when it is said that the idea of a round square is contradictory and impossible. Secondly, mathematical propositions are but one instance of truths of reason; and we can say that all truths of reason are concerned with the sphere of possibility. Thirdly, to say that truths of reason are concerned with the sphere of possibility is to say that they are not existential judgments. Truths of reason state what would be true in any case, whereas true existential judgments depend on God's choice of one particular possible world. The exception to the rule that truths of reason are not existential judgments is the proposition that God is a possible Being. For to state that God is possible is to state that God exists. Apart from this exception no truths of reason affirm existence of any subject. A truth of reason may hold good in regard to existent reality: we use mathematics in astronomy, for example. But it is not mathematics which tells us that the stars exist.

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[1] Second letter to S. Clarke, 1; *G.*, 7, 355–6; *D.*, p. 239.

[2] *New Essays*, 4, 2, 1, p. 410; *G.*, 5, 347.

[3] *Thoughts on Knowledge, Truth and Ideas*; *G.*, 4, 424–5; *D.*, p. 30.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *G.*, 1, 384 (in a letter to Foucher).

One must not be misled by Leibniz's example of heat not being the same thing as colour. If I say that heat is not the same thing as colour, I no more assert that heat or colour exist than I assert that triangular bodies exist when I say that a triangle has three sides. Similarly, when I say that man is an animal, I assert that the class 'man' falls under the class 'animal'; but I do not assert that there are existent members of the class. Statements like these concern the sphere of the possible; they concern essences or universals. Except in the one case of God truths of reason are not statements affirming the existence of any individual or individuals. 'That God exists, that all right angles are equal to each other, are necessary truths; but it is a contingent truth that I exist or that there are bodies which show an actual right angle.'[1]

I have said that Leibniz's truths of reason or necessary truths cannot be equated without more ado with analytic propositions because for him all true propositions are in a sense analytic. But contingent propositions or truths of fact are, for him, incapable of being reduced by us to self-evident propositions, whereas truths of reason are either self-evident truths or capable of being reduced by us to self-evident truths. We can say, then, that truths of reason are finitely analytic, and that the principle of contradiction says that all finitely analytic propositions are true. If, therefore, one means by analytic propositions those which are finitely analytic, that is, those which human analysis can show to be necessary propositions, we can equate Leibniz's truths of reason with analytic propositions understood in this sense. And as Leibniz speaks of truths of fact as being 'incapable of analysis'[1] and as not necessary, we can for all intents and purposes speak of truths of reason as analytic propositions, provided that one remembers that for Leibniz truths of fact can be known *a priori* by the divine mind, though not by us.

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[1] *On Necessity and Contingency* (to M. Coste); *G.*, 3, 400; *D.*, p. 170.

3. Connection between truths of reason is necessary, but connection between truths of fact is not always necessary. 'Connection is of two sorts: the one is absolutely necessary, so that its contrary implies contradiction, and this deduction occurs in eternal truths like those of geometry; the other is only necessary *ex hypothesi* and, so to speak, by accident, and it is contingent in itself, when the contrary does not imply contradiction.'[2] It is true that there are interconnections between things: the occurrence of event *B* may depend upon the occurrence of event *A*, and, given *A*, the occurrence of *B* may be certain. Then we have a hypothetical proposition, 'if *A*, then *B*'. But the existence of the system in which this connection finds a place is not necessary but contingent. 'We must distinguish between an absolute and a hypothetical necessity.'[3] Not all possibles are compossible. 'I have reason to believe that not all possible species are compossible in the universe, great as it is, and that this holds not only in regard to things which exist contemporaneously but also in regard to the whole series of things. That is to say, I believe that there are necessarily species which never have existed and never will exist, not being compatible with this series of creatures which God has chosen.'[4] If God chooses, for example, to create a system in which *A* finds a place, *B*, if logically incompatible with *A*, will be necessarily excluded. But it is excluded only on the assumption that God chooses the system in which *A* finds a place; He might have chosen the system in which *B*, and not *A*, finds a place. In other words, the series of existents is not necessary, and so all propositions affirming the existence either of the series as a whole, that is, the world, or any member of the series is a contingent proposition, in the sense that its contrary does not involve logical contradiction. There are different possible worlds. 'The universe is only the collection of a certain kind of compossibles, and the actual universe is the collection of all existent possibles. . . . And as there are different combinations of possibles, some better than

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[1] *Scientia Generalis Characteristica*, 14; *G.*, 7, 200.

[2] *G.*, 4, 437.

[3] Fifth letter to S. Clarke, 4; *G.*, 7, 389; *D.*, p. 254.

[4] *New Essays*, 3. 6, 12, p. 334; *G.*, 5, 286.

others, there are many possible universes, each collection of compossibles making one of them.'[1] And God was under no absolute necessity to choose one particular possible world. 'The whole universe might have been made differently, time, space and matter being absolutely indifferent to motions and figures. . . . Though all the facts of the universe are now certain in relation to God, . . . it does not follow that the truth which pronounces that one fact follows from another is necessary.'[2] Physical science, therefore, cannot be a deductive science in the same sense in which geometry is a deductive science. 'The laws of motion which actually occur in Nature and which are verified by experiments are not in truth absolutely demonstrable, as a geometrical proposition would be.'[3]

Now, if this were all that Leibniz had to say, the matter would be fairly simple. We could say that there are on the one hand truths of reason or analytic and necessary propositions, like the propositions of logic and pure mathematics, and on the other hand truths of fact or synthetic and contingent propositions, and that with one exception all existential statements fall into the second category. Nor would Leibniz's view that each contingent truth must have a sufficient reason cause any difficulty. When *A* and *B* are both finite things, the existence of *B* may be explicable in terms of the existence and activity of *A*. But the existence of *A* itself requires a sufficient reason. In the end we must say that the existence of the world, of the whole harmonious system of finite things, requires a sufficient reason why it exists. And this sufficient reason Leibniz finds in a free decree of God. 'For truths of fact or of existence depend upon the decree of God.'[4] Again, 'the true cause why certain things exist rather than others is to be derived from the free decrees of the divine will. . . .'[5]

But Leibniz complicates matters by implying that contingent propositions are in a sense analytic; and it is necessary to explain in what sense they can be called analytic. In *The Principles of Nature and of Grace* and the *Monadology*, both dated 1714, Leibniz was concerned with using the principle of sufficient reason to prove the existence of God. But in earlier papers he speaks in logical rather than in metaphysical terms and explains the principle of sufficient reason in terms of the subject-predicate form of proposition. 'In demonstration I use two principles, of which one is that what implies contradiction is false, (while) the other is that a reason can be given for every truth (which is not identical or immediate), that is, that the notion of the predicate is always contained, explicitly or implicitly, in the notion of its subject, and that this holds good no less in extrinsic than in intrinsic denominations, no less in contingent than in necessary truths.'[1] For example, Caesar's resolve to cross the Rubicon was certain *a priori*: the predicate was contained in the notion of the subject. But it does not follow that we can see how the notion of the predicate is contained in that of the subject. In order to have an *a priori* certain knowledge of Caesar's resolve to cross the Rubicon we should have to know perfectly not merely Caesar but the whole system of infinite complexity in which Caesar plays a part. 'For, paradoxical as it may appear, it is impossible for us to have knowledge of individuals. . . . The most important factor in the problem is the fact that individuality includes infinity, and only he who is capable of comprehending it can have the knowledge of the principle of individuation of this or that thing.'[2] The ultimate sufficient reason and ground of certainty of a truth of fact is to be found in God, and an infinite analysis would be required in order to know it *a priori*. No finite mind can perform this analysis; and in this sense Leibniz speaks of truths of fact as 'incapable of analysis'.[3] Only God can possess that complete and perfect idea of the individuality of Caesar which would be necessary in order to know *a priori* all that will ever be predicated of him.

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[1] *G.*, 3, 573 (in a letter to Bourguet).

[2] *On Necessity and Contingence* (to M. Coste); *G.*, 3, 400; *D.*, pp. 170–1.

[3] *Theodicy*, 345; *G.*, 6, 319.

[4] *G.*, 2, 39.

[5] *Specimen inventorum de admirandis naturae generalis arcanis*; *G.*, 7, 309.

Leibniz sums up the matter in this way. 'It is essential to distinguish between necessary or eternal truths and contingent truths or truths of fact; and these differ from each other almost as rational numbers and surds. For necessary truths can be reduced to those which are identical, as commensurable quantities can be brought to a common measure; but in contingent truths, as in surd numbers, the reduction proceeds to infinity without ever terminating. And thus the certainty and the perfect reason of contingent truths is known to God alone, who embraces the infinite in one intuition. And when this secret is known, the difficulty about the absolute necessity of all things is removed, and it is apparent what the difference is between the infallible and the necessary.'[4] One can say, then, that while the principle of contradiction states that all finitely analytic propositions are true, the principle of sufficient reason says that all true propositions are analytic, that is, that the predicate is contained in its subject. But it does not follow that all true propositions are finitely analytic, as are truths of reason ('analytic' propositions proper).

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[1] *G.*, 7, 199–200.

[2] *G.*, 7, 200.

[3] *New Essays*, 3, 3, 6, p. 309; *G.*, 5, 268.

[4] *Specimen* (cf. note 5, p. 279); *G.*, 7, 309.

A natural conclusion to draw from this is that for Leibniz the difference between truths of reason and truths of fact, that is, between necessary and contingent propositions, is essentially relative to human knowledge. In this case all true propositions would be necessary in themselves and would be recognized as such by God, though the human mind, owing to its limited and finite character, is able to see the necessity only of those propositions which can be reduced by a finite process to what Leibniz calls 'identicals'. And Leibniz certainly implies this on occasion. 'There is a difference between analysis of the necessary and analysis of the contingent. Analysis of the necessary, which is that of essences, goes from the posterior by nature to the prior by nature and ends in primitive notions, and it is thus that numbers are resolved into units. But in contingents or existents this analysis from the subsequent by nature to the prior by nature proceeds to infinity, without a reduction to primitive elements being ever possible.'[1]

This conclusion would not, however, represent Leibniz's position accurately. It is true that when an individual finite subject like Caesar is considered as a possible being, that is, without reference to its actual existence, the complete notion of this individual comprises all its predicates save existence. 'Every predicate, necessary or contingent, past, present or future, is comprised in the notion of the subject.'[2] But there are two points to notice. In the first place, the meaning which Leibniz attached to the statement that voluntary actions, like Caesar's resolve to cross the Rubicon, are contained in the notion of the subject cannot be understood without introducing the notion of the good, and so of final causality. In the second place, existence, which Leibniz regarded as a predicate, is unique in that it is not comprised in the notion of any finite being. The existence of all actual finite beings is therefore contingent. And when we ask why these beings exist rather than those, we have again to introduce the idea of the good and the principle of perfection. This subject will now be discussed (and it raises its own difficulties); but it is as well to have pointed out in advance that for Leibniz existential propositions are unique. Caesar's resolve to cross the Rubicon was indeed comprised in the notion of Caesar; but it does not follow that the possible world in which Caesar is a member is necessary. Granted that God selected this particular possible world, it was *a priori* certain that Caesar would resolve to cross the Rubicon; but it was not logically or metaphysically necessary for God to select this particular world. The only existential proposition which is necessary in the strict sense is the proposition affirming God's existence.

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[1] *G.*, 3. 582 (in a letter to Bourguet).

[2] *G.*, 2, 46.

4. If from among possible worlds God has freely selected one particular world for creation, the question can be raised, why did God choose this particular world? Leibniz was not content to answer simply that God made this choice. For to answer in this way would be equivalent to 'maintaining that God wills something without any sufficient reason for His will', which would be 'contrary to the wisdom of God as though He could operate without acting by reason'.[1] There must, therefore, be a sufficient reason for God's choice. Similarly, though Caesar chose freely to cross the Rubicon, there must be a sufficient reason for his making this choice. Now, though the principle of sufficient reason tells us that God had a sufficient reason for creating this actual world and that there was a sufficient reason for Caesar's decision to cross the Rubicon, it does not by itself tell us what the sufficient reason was in either case. Something more, that is, a complementary principle to the principle of sufficient reason, is required; and Leibniz finds this complementary principle in the principle of perfection.

In Leibniz's opinion, it is ideally possible to assign a maximum amount of perfection to every possible world or set of compossibles. Therefore, to ask why God chose to create one particular world rather than another is to ask why He chose to confer existence on one system of compossibles, possessing a certain maximum of perfection, rather than on another system of compossibles, possessing a different maximum of perfection. And the answer is that God chose the world which has the greatest maximum of perfection. Further, God has created man in such a way that he chooses what seems to him to be the best. The reason why Caesar chose to cross the Rubicon was that his choice seemed to him to be the best. The principle of perfection states, therefore, that God acts for the objectively best and that man acts with a view to what seems to him to be the best. This principle, as Leibniz saw clearly, meant the reintroduction of final causality. Thus of physics he says that 'so far from excluding final causes and the consideration of a Being acting with wisdom, it is from this that everything must be deduced in physics'.[1] Again, dynamics 'is to a great extent the foundation of my system; for we there learn the difference between truths the necessity of which is brute and geometric and truths which have their source in fitness and final causes'.[2]

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[1] Third letter to S. Clarke, 7; *G.*, 7, 365; *D.*, p. 245. Leibniz is talking about the spatial situations of bodies, but he refers to his 'axiom' or 'general rule'.

Leibniz is careful, especially in his published writings, to make this view square with his admission of contingency. God chose the most perfect world freely; and Leibniz even speaks of God choosing freely to act with a view to the best. 'The true cause why certain things exist rather than others is to be derived from the free decrees of the divine will, the first of which is to will to do all things in the best possible way.'[3] God was not under any absolute compulsion to choose the best possible world. Again, though it was certain that Caesar would resolve to cross the Rubicon, his decision was a free decision. He made a rational decision, and therefore he acted freely. 'There is contingency in a thousand actions of nature; but when there is no judgment in the agent there is no liberty.'[4] God has so made man that he chooses what appears to him to be the best, and for an infinite mind man's actions are certain *a priori*. Yet to act in accordance with a judgment of the reason is to act freely. 'To ask whether there is freedom in our will is the same as to ask whether there is choice in our will. Free and voluntary mean the same thing. For the free is the same as the spontaneous with reason; and to will is to be carried to action by a reason perceived by the intellect. . . .'[5] If freedom, then, is understood in this sense, Caesar chose freely to cross the Rubicon in spite of the fact that his choice was certain *a priori*.

These statements by Leibniz leave some important questions unanswered. It is all very well to say that God chose freely to act for the best. But must there not be, on Leibniz's own principles, a sufficient reason for this choice; and must not this sufficient reason be found in the divine nature? Leibniz admits that this is so. 'Absolutely speaking, it must be said that another state (of things) could exist; yet (it must also be said) that the present state exists because it follows from the nature of God that He should prefer the most perfect.'[1] But if it follows from the nature of God that He should prefer the most perfect, does it not also follow that the creation of the most perfect world is necessary? Leibniz admits this too up to a point. 'In my opinion, if there were no best possible series, God would certainly have created nothing, since He cannot act without a reason or prefer the less perfect to the more perfect.'[2] Further, Leibniz speaks of possibles as having 'a certain need of existence and, so to speak, some claim to existence', and he draws the conclusion that 'among the infinite combinations of possibles and of possible series that one exists by which the most of essence or of possibility is brought into existence'.[3] This seems to imply that creation is in some sense necessary.

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[1] *On a General Principle Useful in the Explanation of the Laws of Nature* to Bayle); *G.*, 3, 54; *D.*, p. 36.

[2] *G.*, 3, 645 (in a letter to Remond).

[3] *Specimen* (cf. note 5, p. 279); *G.*, 7, 309–10.

[4] *Theodicy* 34; *G.*, 6, 122.

[5] *Animadversions on Descartes' Principles of Philosophy*, on Article 39; *G.*, 4, 362; *D.*, p. 54.

Leibniz's answer is to be found in a distinction between logica or metaphysical necessity on the one hand and moral necessity on the other. To say that God chose freely to act for the best is not to say that it was uncertain whether He would act for the best or not. It was morally necessary that He should act for the best, and so it was certain that He would act in this way. But it was not logically or metaphysically necessary for Him to choose the best possible world. 'One can say in a certain sense that it is necessary . . . that God should choose what is best. . . . But this necessity is not incompatible with contingency; for it is not that necessity which I call logical, geometric or metaphysical, the denial of which involves contradiction.'[4] Similarly, given the world and human nature as God created them, it was morally necessary that Caesar should choose to cross the Rubicon; but it was not logically or metaphysically necessary for him to make this choice. He decided under the prevailing inclination to choose what appears to be the best, and it was certain that he would make the decision he did make; but to choose in accordance with this prevailing inclination is to choose freely. 'The demonstration of this predicate of Caesar (that he decided to cross the Rubicon) is not as absolute as those of numbers or of geometry but presupposes the series of things which God has chosen freely and which is founded on the first free decree of God, namely to do always what is most perfect, and on the decree which God has made, in consequence of the first, in regard to human nature, which is that man will always do, though freely, what appears best. Now every truth which is founded on decrees of this kind is contingent, although it is certain.'[1]

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[1] Grua, *Textes inédits*, 1, 393.

[2] *G.*, 2, 424–5 (in a letter to des Bosses).

[3] *On the Ultimate Origin of Things*; *G.*, 7, 303; *D.*, p. 101.

[4] *Theodicy*, 282; *G.*, 6, 284.

The difficulty might be raised that God's existence is necessary and that He must be necessarily good if He is good at all. The necessary Being cannot be contingently good. But Leibniz made a distinction between metaphysical perfection and moral perfection or goodness. The former is quantity of essence or reality. 'The good is what contributes to perfection. But perfection is what involves the most of essence.'[2] As God is infinite being, He necessarily possesses infinite metaphysical perfection. But 'goodness' is distinct from metaphysical perfection: it arises when the latter is the object of intelligent choice.[3] Since, therefore, intelligent choice is free, it seems that there is a sense in which God's moral goodness, arising from a free choice, can be called 'contingent' for Leibniz.

If one understands by free choice purely arbitrary and capricious choice, it is, of course, impossible to make Leibniz consistent. But he explicitly rejected any such conception of freedom as being 'absolutely chimerical, even in creatures'.[4] 'In maintaining that the eternal truths of geometry and morals, and consequently also the rules of justice, goodness and beauty, are the effect of a free or arbitrary choice of the will of God, it seems that He is deprived of His wisdom and justice, or rather of His understanding and will, having left only a certain unmeasured power from which all emanates and which deserves the name of Nature rather than that of God.'[5] God's choice must have a sufficient reason, and the same is true of man's free acts. What this sufficient reason is, is explained by the principle of perfection, which says that God always and certainly, though freely, chooses the objectively best and that man certainly, though freely, chooses what appears to him to be the best. Creation is not absolutely necessary; but, if God creates, He certainly, though freely, creates the best possible world. Leibniz's principle of contingency is thus the principle of perfection. 'All contingent propositions have reasons for being as they are rather than otherwise. . . ; but they do not have necessary demonstrations, since these reasons are founded only on the principle of contingency, or of the existence of things, that is, on what is or appears the best among several equally possible things.'[1] The principle of perfection is, therefore, not identical with the principle of sufficient reason. For the former introduces the notion of the good, whereas the latter by itself says nothing about the good. Even an inferior world would have its sufficient reason, though this could not be the principle of perfection. The principle of sufficient reason needs some complement to make it definite; but this complement need not have been the principle of perfection. If the latter principle says that all propositions, the infinite analysis of which converges on some characteristic of the best possible world, are true, it still remains that they need not, absolutely speaking, have been true. For God was not logically or metaphysically compelled to choose the best possible world.

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[1] *G.*, 4, 438.
[2] *G.*, 7, 195.
[3] Cf. Grua, *Textes inédits*, 1, 393.
[4] Third letter to S. Clarke, 7; *G.*, 7, 365; *D.*, p. 245.
[5] *G.*, 4, 344

At the same time Leibniz's logical theory, especially his view that all predicates are contained virtually in their subjects, seems difficult to reconcile with freedom, if by 'freedom' one means something more than spontaneity. Leibniz himself thought that it could be reconciled, and we are not, I think, entitled to speak as though he denied in his logical papers what he affirmed in his published writings. His correspondence with Arnauld shows that he was conscious of the fact that his subject-predicate theory, when applied to human actions, was unlikely to meet with a favourable reception, were it clearly set forth in a work like the *Monadology*. And he may have allowed readers to attach a meaning to terms like 'freedom' which they would hardly have been able to attach to them, had they been aware of his logical views. But though Leibniz may have exercised a certain prudence, it does not follow that he considered his 'esoteric philosophy' and his 'popular philosophy' to be incompatible: it simply means that in some works he withheld the full explanation of what he meant. He was afraid of being accused of Spinozism, but it does not follow that he was secretly a Spinozist. None the less, it is difficult to see how, on Leibniz's logical principles and given his notion of possibles as pressing forward, as it were, to existence, God was not compelled by His very nature to create the best possible world. Presumably the predicate, God's decision to create this world, was contained in the subject, and it is not easy to understand how, on Leibniz's principles, God's choice was anything else but necessary. It is true that for him existence is not comprised in the notion of any subject save God; but what precisely does it mean to say that

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[1] *G.*, 4, 438.

God was under a moral necessity, and not under an absolute necessity, of choosing the best possible world? God's choice of the principle of perfection, the principle of contingency, must itself have had its sufficient reason in the divine nature. If so, it seems to me that the principle of perfection must be in some sense subordinate to the principle of sufficient reason.

Possibly one of the reasons why some people seem inclined to think that Leibniz had his tongue in his cheek when he spoke as though contingency is not simply relative to our knowledge is that they regard unpredictability as being essential to the notion of free choice. Leibniz spoke of choices and decisions as being *a priori* certain and yet free. These two characteristics are incompatible, and Leibniz, as a man of outstanding ability, must have seen that they were incompatible. Therefore we must take it that his real mind was revealed in his private papers and not in his published writings. This view ignores the fact, however, that Leibniz was by no means alone in regarding predictability as compatible with freedom. The Jesuit Molina (d. 1600) had held that God, and God alone, knows man's future free acts through His 'supercomprehension' of the agent, while the followers of the Dominican Bañez (d. 1604) had held that God knows man's future free acts in virtue of His decree to predetermine the free agent to act, though freely, in a certain way in certain circumstances. One may think that neither of these views is true, but the fact remains that they had been put forward and that Leibniz was well acquainted with Scholastic controversies. Like the Scholastics, Leibniz accepted the traditional view that God created the world freely and that man is free. In his analysis, however, of the meaning of these propositions he approached the matter from a logical point of view and interpreted them in the light of his subject-predicate logic, whereas the Bannesians, for example, had approached the matter from a predominantly metaphysical point of view. We can no more say that Leibniz denied freedom than we can say that the Bannesians denied freedom; but if one understands by 'freedom' something which they did not understand by the term and which Leibniz called 'chimerical', one can say that it is difficult to see how their analysis of freedom does not amount to an explaining-away. In this sense one can speak of a discrepancy between Leibniz's logical studies and his popular writings. But this discrepancy is no more a proof of insincerity than would be an exhortatory sermon by a follower of Bañez in which no explicit mention was made of God's predetermining decrees or by a follower of Molina who did not refer to the 'supercomprehension' of the infinite mind.

5. The foregoing remarks are not meant, of course, to deny the influence of Leibniz's logical studies on his philosophy. And if we turn to his general idea of substance, we find a clear instance of such influence. Leibniz did not obtain his idea of substance from the analysis of propositions, nor did he think that our conviction that there are substances is a result of the forms of language. 'I believe that we have a clear but not a distinct idea of substance, which comes, in my opinion, from the fact that we have the internal feeling of it in ourselves, who are substances.'[1] It is not, I think, true to say that Leibniz derived the idea of substance or the conviction that there are substances by arguing from the subject-predicate form of the proposition. At the same time he connected his idea of substance with his logical studies; and these in turn reacted on his philosophy of substance. We can say, then, with Bertrand Russell, that Leibniz 'definitely brought his notion of substance into dependence upon this logical relation',[2] namely the relation of subject to predicate, provided that we do not understand this as meaning that for Leibniz we are led simply by the forms of language into thinking that there are substances.

In the *New Essays*[3] Philalethes gives Locke's view that because we find clusters of 'simple ideas' (qualities) going together but are unable to conceive their existing by themselves, we assume a substratum in which they inhere and to which we give the name 'substance'. Theophilus (that is, Leibniz) replies that there is reason for thinking in this way, since we conceive several predicates as belonging to one and the same subject. He adds that metaphysical terms like 'support' or 'substratum' mean simply this, namely, that several predicates are conceived as belonging to the same subject. Here we have a clear instance of Leibniz connecting the metaphysic of substance with the subject-predicate form of the proposition. An allied example is cited in the following paragraph.

A substance is not simply the subject of predicates: it also pertains to the notion of substance that it is an enduring subject of which different attributes are successively predicated. Now, our idea of an enduring substance is derived primarily from inner experience, that is, of a permanent self. But there must also be, according to Leibniz, an *a priori* reason for the persistence of substance as well as the *a posteriori* reason provided by our experience of our continuing self-identity. 'Now, it is impossible to find any other (*a priori* reason) except that my attributes of the earlier time and state, as well as my attributes of the later time and state, are predicates of the same subject. But what is meant by saying that the predicate is in the subject, if not that the notion of the predicate is found in some way in the notion of the subject?'[1] Leibniz thus connects the persistence of substances under changing modifications or accidents with the virtual inclusion of the notions of successive predicates in the notions of the subjects. Indeed, a substance is a subject which virtually contains all the attributes which will ever be predicated of it. Translated into the language of substance, this theory of the inclusion of predicates in their subjects means that all the actions of any substances are virtually contained in it. 'This being so, we may say that the nature of an individual substance or complete being is to have a notion so complete that it suffices to comprehend, and to render deducible from it, all the predicates of the subject to which this notion is attributed.'[2] The quality of being a king, which belongs to Alexander, does not give us a complete notion of the individuality of Alexander; and, indeed, we cannot have a complete notion of it. 'But God, seeing the individual notion or haecceity of Alexander, sees in it at the same time the foundation and the reason of all the predicates which can truly be attributed to him, as for example, whether he would conquer Darius and Porus, even to knowing *a priori*, and not by experience, whether he would die a natural death or by poison, which we can know only by history.'[3] In fine, 'in saying that the individual notion of Adam involves all that will ever happen to him, I mean nothing else but what all philosophers mean when they say that the predicate is in the subject of a true proposition'.[4]

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[1] *G.*, 3, 247 (in a letter to T. Burnett).

[2] *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz*, p. 42.

[3] 2, 23, 1, p. 225; *G.*, 5, 201–2.

A substance, then, is a subject which contains virtually all the predicates which it will ever have. But it could not develop its potentialities, that is to say, it could not pass from one state to another while remaining the same subject, unless it had an inner tendency to this self-development or self-unfolding. 'If things were so formed by the mandate (of God) as to render them fit to accomplish the will of the legislator, then it must be admitted that a certain efficacy, form or force . . . was impressed on things from which proceeds the series of phenomena according to the prescription of the first command.'[1] Activity, then, is an essential characteristic of substance. In fact, though a different system of things might have been created by God, 'the activity of substance is rather of metaphysical necessity and would have had a place, if I am not mistaken, in any system whatever'.[2] Again, 'I hold that naturally a substance cannot exist without action.'[3] I do not mean to suggest that Leibniz derived his notion of substance as essentially active simply from reflection on the virtual inclusion of predicates in their subjects; but he connected his theory of substance as actively self-unfolding with his theory of the subject-predicate relation. And in general it is not so much that he derived his metaphysic from his logic as that he brought the two into connection with one another, so that the one influenced the other. They form different aspects of his philosophy.

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[1] *G.*, 2, 43.
[2] *G.*, 4, 433.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *G.*, 2, 43.

6. Leibniz tried to deduce from the principle of sufficient reason the conclusion that there cannot be two indiscernible substances. 'I infer from the principle of sufficient reason, among other consequences, that there are not in Nature two real, absolute beings indiscernible from each other; because if there were, God and Nature would act without reason in ordering the one otherwise than the other.'[4] By 'absolute beings' Leibniz means substances, and his contention is that each substance must differ internally from every other substance. In the total system of substances God would have no sufficient reason for placing two indiscernible substances one in one position in the series and the other in a different position. If two substances were indistinguishable from one another, they would be the same substance.

The principle of the identity of indiscernibles was important in Leibniz's eyes. 'Those great principles of sufficient reason and of the identity of indiscernibles change the state of metaphysics.'[5] The principle was for him bound up with the notion of universal harmony, implying a systematic and harmonious unity of different beings, any two of which are internally different from one another, even though the difference may in some cases be infinitesimal and imperceptible. But the precise status of the principle is not very clear. According to Leibniz, it is possible to conceive two indiscernible substances, though it is false and contrary to the principle of sufficient reason to suppose that two indiscernible substances exist.[1] This seems to imply that the principle of the identity of indiscernibles is contingent. Abstractly or absolutely speaking, two indiscernible substances are conceivable and possible, but it is incompatible with the principle of sufficient reason, interpreted in the light of the principle of perfection, which is a contingent principle, that they should exist. God, having freely chosen to act for the best, would have no sufficient reason for creating them. Elsewhere, however, Leibniz seems to imply that two indiscernibles are inconceivable and metaphysically impossible. 'If two individuals were perfectly alike and equal and, in a word, indistinguishable in themselves, there would be no principle of individuation; and I even venture to assert that there would be no individual distinction or different individuals under this condition.'[2] He goes on to say that this is why the notion of atoms is chimerical. If two atoms possess the same size and shape, they could be distinguished only by external denominations. 'But it is always necessary that besides the difference of time and place there should be an internal principle of distinction.'[3] For different external relations implied for Leibniz different attributes in the related substances. He may have thought that a substance can be defined only in terms of its predicates, with the consequence that two substances could not be spoken of as 'two' and as 'different' unless they had different predicates.[4] But the difficulty then arises, as Bertrand Russell points out, of seeing how there can be more than one substance. 'Until predicates have been assigned, the two substances remain indiscernible; but they cannot have predicates by which they cease to be indiscernible, unless they are first distinguished as numerically different.'[5] If, however, we assume that Leibniz's real view is that two indiscernibles are conceivable and metaphysically possible, though it is incompatible with the principle of perfection that they should actually exist, this difficulty might be overcome. But it is difficult to see how two indiscernibles are conceivable within the framework of Leibniz's philosophy of substance, predicates and relations.

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[1] *On Nature in Itself*, 6; *G.*, 4, 507; *D.*, p. 116.

[2] *G.*, 2, 169 (in a letter to de Volder).

[3] *New Essays*, preface, p. 47; *G.*, 5, 46.

[4] Fifth letter to S. Clarke, 21; *G.*, 7, 393; *D.*, p. 259.

[5] Fourth letter to S. Clarke, 5; *G.*, 7, 372; *D.*, p. 247.

[1] Fifth letter to S. Clarke, 21; *G.*, 7, 394; *D.*, p. 259.

[2] *New Essays*, 2, 27, 3, p. 239; *G.*, 5, 214.

[3] *New Essays*, 2, 27, 1, p. 238; *G.*, 5, 213.

[4] Cf. *New Essays*, 2, 23, 1–2, p. 226; *G.*, 5, 201–2.

[5] *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz*, p. 59.

7. In a letter to Bayle, Leibniz speaks of 'a certain principle of general order', which is 'absolutely necessary in geometry but also holds good in physics', since God acts as a perfect geometrician. He states the principle in the following way. 'When the difference of two cases can be diminished below any magnitude given in the data or in what is posited, it must also be possible to diminish it below any magnitude given in what is sought (*in quaesitis*) or in what results. Or, to express it more familiarly, when the cases (or what is given) continually approach each other and are finally merged in one another, the results or events (or what is sought) must do so too. This depends again on a more general principle, namely: when the data form a series, what is sought does so also (*datis ordinatis etiam quaesita sunt ordinata*).'[1] Leibniz gives examples from geometry and physics. A parabola can be considered as an ellipse with an infinitely distant focus or as a figure which differs from some ellipse by less than any given difference. The geometrical theorems which are true of the ellipse in general can then be applied to the parabola, when considered as an ellipse. Again, rest can be considered as an infinitely small velocity or as an infinite slowness. What is true of velocity or of slowness will then be true of rest when considered in this way, 'so much so that the rule of rest ought to be considered as a particular case of the rule of motion'.[2]

Leibniz thus applied the idea of infinitesimal differences to show how there is continuity between, for example, the parabola and the ellipse in geometry and between motion and rest in physics. He applied it also in his philosophy of substance in the form of the law of continuity, which states that there are no leaps or discontinuities in Nature. 'Nothing is accomplished all at once, and it is one of my great maxims, and one of the most completely verified, that Nature makes no leaps: a maxim which I called the law of continuity.'[3] This law holds good 'not only of transitions from place to place but also of those from form to form or from state to state'.[4] Changes are continuous, and leaps are apparent only, though, says Leibniz, the beauty of Nature demands them so that there can be distinct perceptions. We do not see the infinitesimal stages of change, and so there seems to be discontinuity where there is none in reality.

The law of continuity is complementary to the principle of the identity of indiscernibles. For the law of continuity states that in the series of created things every possible position is occupied, while the principle of the identity of indiscernibles states that every possible position is occupied once and once only. But as far as the created world of substances is concerned, the law of continuity is not metaphysically necessary. It is dependent on the principle of perfection. 'The hypothesis of leaps cannot be refuted except by the principle of order, by the help of the supreme reason, which does everything in the most perfect way.'[1]

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[1] *On a General Principle Useful in the Explanation of the Laws of Nature* (to Bayle); *G.*, 3, 52; *D.*, p. 33.

[2] *Ibid.*, G., 3, 53; *D.*, p. 34.

[3] *New Essays*, preface, p. 50; *G.*, 5, 49.

[4] *G.*, 2, 168 (in a letter to de Volder).

8. It can hardly be denied, I think, that there is a close connection between Leibniz's logical and mathematical reflections on the one hand and his philosophy of substances on the other. As we have seen, it is legitimate to speak, in regard to certain important points at any rate, of a tendency to subordinate the latter to the former and to interpret, for example, the theory of substance and attributes in the light of a particular logical theory about propositions. There is a close connection between the logical theory of analytic propositions and the metaphysical theory of windowless monads or substances, that is, of substances which develop their attributes purely from within according to a pre-established series of continuous changes. And in the law of continuity, as applied to substances, we can see the influence of Leibniz's study of infinite analysis in mathematics. This study is also reflected in his idea of contingent propositions as requiring infinite analysis, that is, as being only infinitely analytic and not finitely analytic like truths of reason.

On the other hand, Leibniz's 'panlogism' is only one aspect of his thought, not the whole of it. He may, for example, have connected his idea of substance as essentially active with his idea of a subject as that in which an infinity of predicates are virtually contained; but this is not to say that he actually derived his idea of activity or force from logic. It is difficult to see how any such derivation would be plausible or possible. Moreover, apart from his own reflections on the self and on the existent world, Leibniz was acquainted not only with the writings of men like Descartes, Hobbes and Spinoza but also with those of Renaissance thinkers who had anticipated several of his leading ideas. The fundamental idea in Leibniz's philosophy was probably that of the universal harmony of the potentially infinite system of Nature, and this idea was certainly present in the philosophy of Nicolas of Cusa in the fifteenth and again in that of Bruno in the sixteenth century. Further, the ideas that no two things are exactly alike and that each thing mirrors the universe in its own way had both been put forward by Nicholas of Cusa. Leibniz may have brought these and allied ideas into relation with his logical and mathematical studies: he could hardly do otherwise, unless he was prepared to admit a fundamental dichotomy in his thought. But this does not justify us regarding him as simply a 'panlogist'. For the matter of that, even if one can show how certain metaphysical theories were derivable from Leibniz's logic, it does not necessarily follow that they were actually so derived. And though there may be inconsistencies between some of Leibniz's logical theories and some of his metaphysical speculations, and even though he may have consciously refrained from publishing some of his conclusions to all and sundry, it is rash to conclude that his mature published writings contain only a popular and edifying philosophy in which he did not really believe. He was a complex and many-sided figure; and even if his logical studies form in some ways the characteristic note of his thinking, the other aspects of his thought cannot be simply disregarded. Moreover, if we remember that he never worked out a system in the way that Spinoza had tried to do, it becomes easier to understand his inconsistencies. It may very well be the case that, as Bertrand Russell has maintained, some of Leibniz's logical reflections would more readily lead to Spinozism than to the monadology; but it does not follow that Leibniz was not sincere in his rejection of Spinozism. He was convinced, for example, that Spinozism is not supported by experience and that his own monadology did gain some support from experience. To this monadology I shall now turn.

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[1] *G.*, 2, 193 (in a letter to de Volder)

CHAPTER XVII

LEIBNIZ (3)

Simple substances or monads—Entelechies and prime matter—Extension—Body and corporeal substance—Space and time—The pre-established harmony—Perception and appetite—Soul and body—Innate ideas.

1. LEIBNIZ connected the psychological origin of the idea of substance with self-consciousness. 'To think a colour and to observe that one thinks it are two very different thoughts, as different as is the colour from the ego which thinks it. And as I conceive that other beings may also have the right to say "I", or that it could be said for them, it is through this that I conceive what is called "substance" in general.'[1] And it is also the consideration of the ego itself which furnishes other metaphysical notions, like cause, effect, action, similarity, etc., and even those of logic and ethics. There are primitive truths of fact as well as primitive truths of reason; and the proposition 'I exist' is a primitive truth of fact, an immediate truth, though it is not the only one. These primitive truths of fact are 'immediate internal experiences of an immediacy of feeling':[2] they are not necessary propositions but propositions 'founded on an immediate experience'.[3] I am certain, then, that I exist, and I am aware of myself as a unity. Hence I derive the general idea of substance as a unity. At the same time, the connection of the idea of substance with the self-consciousness of the ego militates against the Spinozistic conception of a unique substance of which I am but a mode. However much some of Leibniz's logical speculations may have pointed towards Spinozism, his lively awareness of spiritual individuality made it impossible for him to entertain seriously the general metaphysic of Spinoza. He was not prepared to follow Descartes in making the *Cogito* the one fundamental existential proposition; but he agreed that 'the Cartesian principle is valid', though 'it is not the only one of its kind'.[4]

It is not possible to demonstrate by any argument giving absolute certainty that the external world exists,[1] and 'the existence of spirit is more certain than that of sensible objects'.[2] We certainly discover between phenomena connections which enable us to predict, and there must be some cause of this constant connection; but it does not follow as an absolutely certain conclusion that bodies exist, for an external cause, like Berkeley's God, might present to us orderly successions of phenomena.[3] However, we have no real reason to suppose that this is the case, and we are morally, though not metaphysically, certain that bodies exist. Now, we observe that visible bodies, the objects of the senses, are divisible: that is to say, they are aggregates or compounds. This means that bodies are composed of simple substances, without parts. 'There must be simple substances, since there are compound substances, for the compound is only a collection or *aggregatum* of simple substances.'[4] These simple substances, of which all empirical things are composed, are called by Leibniz 'monads'. They are 'the true atoms of nature and, in a word, the elements of things'.[5]

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[1] *On the Supersensible Element in Knowledge and on the Immaterial in Nature* (to Queen Charlotte of Prussia); *G.*, 6, 493; *D.*, p. 151.

[2] *New Essays*, 4, 2, 1, p. 410; *G.*, 5, 347.

[3] *New Essays*, 4, 7, 7, p. 469; *G.*, 5, 392.

[4] *New Essays*, 4, 2, 1, p. 410; *G.*, 5, 348.

The use of the word 'atom' must not be taken to mean that the Leibnizian monad resembles the atoms of Democritus or Epicurus. The monad, being without parts, does not possess extension, figure or divisibility.[6] A thing cannot possess figure or shape unless it is extended; nor can it be divisible unless it possesses extension. But a simple thing cannot be extended; for simplicity and extension are incompatible. This means that monads cannot come into existence in any other way than by creation. Nor can they perish in any other way than by annihilation. Compound substances can, of course, come into existence and perish by aggregation and dissolution of monads; but the latter, being simple, do not admit of these processes. In this respect there is, indeed, a certain resemblance between monads and the atoms of the philosophers; but the atoms of Epicurus possessed shape, even though they were asserted to be indivisible. Moreover, whereas the atomists first conceived atoms and then interpreted the soul in terms of the atomic theory, as composed of smoother, rounder and finer atoms, Leibniz may have been said to have conceived the monad on an analogy with the soul. For each is in some sense a spiritual substance.

[1] *New Essays*, Appendix 12, p. 719; *G.*, 7, 320.

[2] *New Essays*, 2, 23, 15, p. 229; *G.*, 5, 205.

[3] *G.*, 1, 372–3 (in a letter to Foucher).

[4] *Monadology*, 2; *G.*, 6, 607; *D.*, p. 218.

[5] *Monadology*, 3; *G.*, 6, 607; *D.*, p. 218.

[6] *Ibid.*

But though monads are without extension and without differences of quantity and figure, they must, according to the theory of the identity of indiscernibles, be qualitatively distinguishable from one another. They differ, in a sense to be explained later, in the degree of perception and appetition which each possesses. Each monad differs qualitatively and intrinsically from every other monad; yet the universe is an organized and harmonious system in which there is an infinite variety of substances combining to form a perfect harmony. Each monad develops according to its own inner constitution and law; it is insusceptible of increase or diminution through the activity of other monads, since the simple cannot have parts added to it or subtracted from it. But each one, being gifted with some degree of perception, mirrors the universe, that is, the total system, in its own way.

Leibniz thus reaffirmed the existence of a plurality of individual substances; and on this point he agreed with Descartes. But he did not agree with the latter's conception of matter as geometrical extension. Corporeal mass is an aggregate, and we must postulate real substantial unities: bodies cannot be composed of the geometer's points. 'If there were not real substantial unities there would be nothing substantial or real in the mass. It was this which forced Cordemoy to abandon Descartes and to embrace Democritus' doctrine of atoms in order to find a true unity.'[1] Leibniz himself had toyed for a time with the atomic theory. 'At first, when I had freed myself from the yoke of Aristotle, I occupied myself with consideration of the void and atoms.'[2] But he became convinced of the unsatisfactory character of the theory. For the atoms of Democritus and Epicurus were not true unities. Possessing size and shape, they could not be the ultimate factors discoverable by analysis. Even if their physical indivisibility were postulated, they would still be divisible in principle. The ultimate constitutents of things must, therefore, be 'points', though not mathematical points. They must be, then, metaphysical points, distinct both from physical points, which are indivisible in appearance only, and from mathematical points, which do not exist and cannot together form bodies. Further, these metaphysical points, which are logically prior to body, must be conceived after the analogy of souls. There must be some internal principle of differentiation, and Leibniz decided that these substantial units are distinguished from one another by the degree of 'perception' and 'appetite' which each possesses. He frequently called them 'souls', therefore, though in order to be able to distinguish between souls in the ordinary sense and other substantial units he came to employ the word 'monad' as a general term. '*Monas* is a Greek word which signifies unity or that which is one.'[1]

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[1] *A New System of Nature*, 11; *G.*, 4, 482; *D.*, p. 76.

[2] *A New System of Nature*, 3; *G.*, 4, 478; *D.*, p. 72.

2. It is necessary to introduce here a point which is of the greatest importance for an understanding of Leibniz's theory of monads. Each substance or monad is the principle and source of its activities: it is not inert but has an inner tendency to activity and self-development. Force, energy, activity are of the essence of substance. 'The idea of energy or virtue, called by the Germans *Kraft* and by the French *la force*, and for the explanation of which I have designed a special science of dynamics, adds much to the understanding of the notion of substance.'[2] Indeed, substance can be defined as 'being, capable of action'.[3] Substance is not simply activity itself: activity is the activity of a substance. This means that there is in the monad a principle of activity or a primitive force, which can be distinguished from the actual successive activities of the monad.

Leibniz thus reintroduced the idea of entelechy or substantial form. When he had reached his conception of a substantial unit containing some kind of active principle 'it became necessary to recall and, as it were, reinstate the substantial forms so much decried nowadays, but in a way which rendered them more intelligible and distinguished the use to which they should be put from the abuse which they had suffered. I found, then, that the nature of substantial forms consists in force. . . . Aristotle calls them "first entelechies". I call them, perhaps more intelligibly, primitive forces which comprise in themselves not only the act or complement of possibility but also an original activity.'[4] Again, 'the name of "entelechies" might be given to all simple substances or created monads; for they have within themselves a certain perfection (ἔχουσι τὸ ἐντελές). There is a certain sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια) which makes them the source of their internal actions and, so to speak, incorporeal automata.'[5] This entelechy or substantial form is not to be conceived as a mere potentiality for acting, which requires an external stimulus to make it active: it involves what Leibniz calls a *conatus* or positive tendency to action, which inevitably fulfils itself unless it is hindered. It is, indeed, necessary to distinguish primitive active force from derivative active force, the latter being a tendency to some determinate motion, by which the primitive force is modified.[1] And mention of the primitive force does not suffice for the explanation of phenomena. For instance, it is absurd to think that it is a sufficient explanation of any given phenomenal change if we say that it is due to the substantial form of the thing; and Leibniz declares that he is agreed with those who say that the doctrine of forms should not be employed in determining the particular causes of events and of sensible things. General metaphysical notions cannot provide us with adequate answers to scientific questions. At the same time abuse of the theory of forms by some Scholastic Aristotelians is no reason, said Leibniz, for rejecting the theory in itself. The inadequacy of rival philosophies makes it necessary to reintroduce the Aristotelian theory, provided that it is interpreted in dynamic terms, that is, in terms of force or energy, and provided that it is not used as a substitute for scientific explanations of causal events. In reintroducing substantial forms or entelechies Leibniz did not turn his back on the 'modern' mechanical view of Nature, though he considered it insufficient. On the contrary, he insisted that the finalistic and the mechanistic views of Nature are complementary.

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[1] *The Principles of Nature and of Grace*, 1; *G.*, 6, 598; *D.*, p. 209.

[2] *On the Reform of Metaphysics and of the Notion of Substance; G.*, 4, 469; *D.* p 69.

[3] *The Principles of Nature and of Grace*, 1; *G.*, 6, 598; *D.*, p. 209.

[4] *A New System of Nature*, 3; *G.*, 4, 478–9; *D.*, p. 72.

[5] *Monadology*, 18; *G.*, 6, 609–10; *D.*, p. 220.

Though each monad contains a principle of activity or substantial form, no created monad is without a passive component which Leibniz calls 'prime' or 'first matter'. Unfortunately he uses the terms 'matter', 'prime matter' and 'secondary matter' in several senses, and one cannot always assume that the same term has the same meaning in different places or contexts. However, prime matter, as attributed to every created monad, must not be understood as involving corporeality. 'For prime matter does not consist in mass or impenetrability and extension, although it has an exigency for it.'[2] It pertains to the essence of created substance and is more akin to the Scholastic 'potentiality' or 'potency' than to matter in any ordinary sense. 'Although God can by His absolute power deprive substance of secondary matter,

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[1] *New Essays*, Appendix 7, p. 702; *G.*, 4, 396.

[2] *G.*, 3, 324 (in a letter to des Bosses).

He cannot deprive it of prime matter; for He would then make it to be pure act, which He alone is.'[1] To say that there is prime matter in every created substance is to say that the created substance is limited and imperfect; and this imperfection and passivity is shown in confused perceptions. Monads 'are not pure forces: they are the foundations not only of actions but also of resistances or passivities, and their "passions" lie in confused perceptions'.[2]

3. Reality thus consists ultimately of monads, each of which is an unextended metaphysical point. These monads combine, however, to form compound substances. But how is it that extended body results from a union of some sort between unextended monads? Leibniz's answer to this question seems to me extremely obscure. Extension, he says, is a reducible and relative notion: it is reducible to 'plurality, continuity and co-existence or the existence of parts at one and the same time'.[3] These concepts, however, differ formally: existence and continuity are distinct. Extension is, therefore, derived and not primitive: it cannot be an attribute of substance. 'It is one of the primary errors of the Cartesians that they conceived extension as something primitive and absolute and as what constitutes substance.'[4] Extension is thus more the way in which we perceive things than an attribute of things themselves. It belongs to the phenomenal order. It is 'nothing but a certain indefinite repetition of things in so far as they are similar to each other or indiscernible'.[5] As we have already seen, no two monads are indiscernible; but to represent multiplicity one must represent them as similar and to that extent as indiscernible, that is, one must 'repeat' them. This supposes, however, that they possess some quality which is repeated or, as Leibniz also puts it, 'diffused'. And this quality is resistance, which is the essence of matter and implies impenetrability. Here Leibniz is using the term 'matter' (that is, prime or first matter) in a rather different sense from that in which we have already found him using it. He is now using it to mean the passive principle in substance. 'The resistance of matter contains two things, impenetrability or antitypia, and resistance or inertia; and in

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[1] *G.*, 3, 324–5.

[2] *G.*, 6, 636 (in a letter to Remond), cf. *Monadology*, 47–9; *G.*, 6, 614–15; *D.*, p. 225.

[3] *G.*, 2, 169 (in a letter to de Volder).

[4] *G.*, 2, 233–4 (in a letter to de Volder).

[5] *Refutation of Spinoza* (edit. Foucher de Careil), p. 28; *D.*, p. 176; cf. *G.*, 4, 393–4.

these . . . I place the nature of the passive principle or matter.'[1] Again, 'passive force properly constitutes matter or mass. . . . Passive force is that resistance by which a body resists not only penetration but also motion. . . . Thus there are in it two resistances or masses: the first is called antitypia or impenetrability, the second resistance or what Kepler calls the natural inertia of bodies.'[2]

If we start with the conception of many substances or monads, we can consider simply the passive element in them or what Leibniz calls 'prime matter', consisting in impenetrability and inertia. By considering this quality alone we consider substances so far as they are indiscernible; we consider the quality as 'repeated'. And extension is the indefinite repetition of things in so far as they are similar to one another or indiscernible. We are here in the sphere of abstraction. The conception of prime matter is already an abstraction; for passivity is only one constituent principle in substance. And extension is a further abstraction; for the conception of extension as indefinite repetition presupposes the abstraction of prime matter.

4. The idea of prime matter is not the same thing as the idea of body. Prime matter is passivity, but body comprises active force as well as passivity. If the two are taken together, that is, if the active and passive principles are taken together, we have 'matter taken as a complete being (that is, secondary matter in distinction from primary, which is something purely passive and consequently incomplete)'.[3] Secondary matter is thus matter considered as endowed with active force: it is also the same thing as body. 'Matter is that which consists in antitypia or that which resists penetration, and so naked matter is merely passive. Body, however, possesses besides matter also active force.'[4] Secondary matter is also called 'mass' by Leibniz: it is an aggregate of monads. One can say, then, that secondary matter, mass and body mean the same thing, namely, an aggregate of substances or monads. Leibniz also refers to it as an organic body or an organic machine. It is made into an organic body, however; that is, into a truly unified body instead of a mere aggregate or accidental collection of monads, by possessing a dominant monad which acts as the entelechy or substantial form of its organic body. This compound

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[1] *G.*, 2, 171 (in a letter to de Volder).
[2] *New Essays*, Appendix 7, p. 701; *G.*, 4, 395.
[3] *New Essays*, 4, 3, 6, p. 428; *G.*, 5, 359.
[4] *New Essays*, p. 722.

of the dominant monad and an organic body is called by Leibniz a corporeal substance. 'I distinguish (i) the primitive entelechy or soul; (ii) primary matter or primitive passive force; (iii) the monad, completed by these two; (iv) mass or secondary matter or the organic machine, to which innumerable subordinate monads concur; (v) the animal, or corporeal substance, which is made into one machine by the dominant monad.'[1]

If one looks to Leibniz for an absolutely consistent use of terms, one will look in vain. However, certain points are clear enough. The ultimate realities are monads or simple substances. These, of course, are invisible: what we perceive are aggregates of monads. And when an aggregate has a dominant monad, it is an organic body and forms, together with the dominant monad, what Leibniz calls a corporeal substance. A sheep, for example, is an animal or a corporeal substance, not a mere aggregate of monads. What it means for a monad to 'dominate' over an organic body can hardly be considered apart from the theme of perception, and I postpone treatment of this for the moment. But it is worth while pointing out here that in each corporeal substance, and indeed in every mass or aggregate, there is, according to Leibniz, an infinite number of monads. In a sense, then, Leibniz affirmed the existence of an actual infinite, or rather, of actual infinities. 'I am so much in favour of the actual infinite that instead of admitting that Nature abhors it, as is commonly said, I hold that it affects it everywhere in order better to work the perfections of its author. So I believe that there is no part of matter which is not, I do not say divisible, but actually divided; and consequently the least particle must be regarded as a world full of an infinity of different creatures.'[2] But Leibniz did not admit that the conclusion follows that there is an actually infinite number of monads in any aggregate. For there is no infinite number. To say that there is an infinity of monads is to say that there are always more of them than can be assigned. 'Notwithstanding my infinitesimal calculus, I admit no true infinite number, though I confess that the multitude of things surpasses every finite number, or rather every number.'[3] From the statement, therefore, that in any aggregate there is an infinity of monads one cannot draw the conclusion that every aggregate is equal, on the ground that each is composed of an infinite number of simple substances. For there is no sense in speaking of equal infinite numbers. The aggregate is not an infinite whole made up of an infinite number of parts. There is only one true infinite, and this is 'the Absolute, which is anterior to all composition and is not formed by addition of parts'.[1] And Leibniz refers to the distinction made by 'the Schools' between the 'syncategorematic infinite, as they call it', and the categorematic infinite.[2] The former is the indefinite, not the true infinite. 'Instead of an infinite number we ought to say that there are more than any number can express.'[3]

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[1] *G.*, 2, 252 (in a letter to de Volder).

[2] Reply to a letter of M. Foucher; *G.*, 1, 416; *D.*, p. 65.

[3] *G.*, 6, 629.

It should also be noticed that substances in the sense of aggregates of monads are for Leibniz phenomenal. 'For everything except the component monads is added by perception alone, from the very fact of their being simultaneously perceived.'[4] But to say that aggregates are phenomena is not to say that they are dreams or hallucinations. They are well-founded phenomena, their real basis being the co-existence of the monads of which they are aggregates. What is meant is that stones and trees, for example, though they appear to the senses to be unitary things, are really aggregates of simple unextended substances. The world of everyday life, so to speak, the world of sense-perception, and indeed also of science, is phenomenal. The monads or ultimate realities are not phenomenal: they do not appear for perception but are known only by a process of philosophical analysis.

5. Space and time, Leibniz insists, are relative. 'As for my own opinion, I have said more than once that I hold space to be something merely relative, as time is. I hold it to be an order of co-existences, as time is an order of successions. For space denotes, in terms of possibility, an order of things which exist at the same time, considered as existing together, without inquiring into their ways of existing. And when one sees various things together, one perceives this order of things among themselves.'[5] Two co-existing things, *A* and *B*, stand in a relation of situation, and indeed, all co-existing things stand in relations of situation. If we now consider things simply as co-existing, that is, as standing in mutual relations of situation, we have the idea of space as the idea of an order of co-existence. And if, further, we do not advert to any actually existing things but conceive simply the order of possible relations of situation, we have the abstract idea of space. Abstract space, therefore, is nothing real: it is simply the idea of

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[1] *New Essays*, 2, 17, 1, p. 162; *G.*, 5, 144.

[2] *New Essays*, pp. 161–2.

[3] *G.*, 2, 304 (in a letter to des Bosses).

[4] *G.*, 2, 517 (in a letter to des Bosses).

[5] Third letter to S. Clarke, 4; *G.*, 7, 363; *D.*, p. 243.

a possible relational order. Time is also relational. If two events, *A* and *B*, are not simultaneous but successive, there is a certain relation between them which we express by saying that *A* is before *B* and *B* after *A*. And if we conceive the order of possible relations of this kind, we have the abstract idea of time. Abstract time is no more something real than is abstract space. There is no real abstract space in which things are situated, and there is no real abstract and homogeneous time in which successions occur. Both, then, are ideal. At the same time co-existence and pre- and post-existence are real. 'Time is neither more or less a being of reason (that is, something ideal or mental) than space. To co-exist and to pre- or post-exist are something real. . . .'[1] This can be expressed by saying that if space and time are phenomenal, they are none the less well-grounded phenomena (*phenomena bene fundata*): the abstract ideas have some objective foundation or basis, namely, relations.

Leibniz does not give any very detailed considerations to time; but he gives an account of the way in which men form the idea of space. First of all they consider that many things exist at once, and they observe in them an order of co-existence. 'This order is their situation or distance.'[2] Now, when one of these co-existent things, *A*, changes its relation to a number of others (*B*, *C*, *D*) which do not change their mutual relations, and when a new arrival on the scene, *X*, acquires the same relations to *B*, *C* and *D* which *A* formerly had, we say that *X* has taken the place of *A*. And, in general, the 'places' of co-existents can be determined in terms of relations. It is true that no two co-existents can have identically the same relations; for a relation supposes 'accidents' or 'affections' in the related things, and no two things can have the same individual accidents. In strict accuracy, therefore, *X* does not acquire the same relations which *A* formerly had. Nevertheless, we consider them as the same and speak of *X* occupying the same 'place' which *A* formerly occupied. We thus tend to think of place as being in some way extrinsic to *X* and *A*. Now, 'space is that which results from places taken together':[3] it is that which comprehends all place, the place, one might say, of places. Considered in this way, namely as extrinsic to things, space is a mental abstraction, something existing only in idea. But the relations which form the basis of this mental construction are real.

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[1] *G.*, 2, 183.

[2] Fifth letter to S. Clarke, 47; *G.*, 7, 400; *D.*, p. 256.

[3] *Ibid.*, *D.*, p. 266.

In view of the fact that Leibniz maintained a relational theory of space and time, it is only natural that he was a vigorous opponent of the theories maintained by Newton and Clarke, who regarded space and time as absolute. For Newton space was an infinite number of points and time an infinite number of instants. He also used a rather queer analogy by speaking of space and time as God's *sensorium*, apparently meaning that there is some analogy between the way in which God, everywhere present, perceives things in the infinite space in which they are situated and the way in which the soul perceives the image formed in the brain. Leibniz made rather heavy weather of this analogy, pressing it in a manner which Clarke considered unjustifiable. 'There is hardly any expression less proper upon this subject than that which makes God to have a *sensorium*. It seems to make God the soul of the world. And it will be a hard matter to put a justifiable sense upon this word according to the use Sir Isaac Newton makes of it.'[1] As for Clarke's own view, that infinite space is a property of God, namely the divine immensity, Leibniz remarks, among other observations, that in this case 'there would be parts in the essence of God'.[2]

Quite apart, however, from these theological speculations of Newton and Clarke, Leibniz roundly rejected their conceptions of absolute space as being 'an idol of some modern Englishmen',[3] the word 'idol' being used in Francis Bacon's sense. If space were an infinite and real being in which things are situated, it would appear that God could have placed things in space otherwise than they are and that one might speak of the universe, if finite, moving forward in empty space. But there would be no discernible difference between one position of the universe in space and another position. God, therefore, would have no sufficient reason for choosing one position rather than another. And the notion of a finite universe moving forward in empty space is fantastic and chimerical; for there would be no observable change whatsoever. 'Mere mathematicians, who are only taken up with the conceits of the imagination, are apt to forge such notions; but they are destroyed by superior reasons.'[4] Absolutely speaking, God could have created a universe of finite extent; but, whether it is finite or infinite, there is no sense in speaking of it as occupying or as

[1] Fourth letter to S. Clarke, 27; *G.*, 7, 375; *D.*, p. 250.
[2] Fifth letter to S. Clarke, 42; *G.*, 7, 399; *D.*, p. 264.
[3] Third letter to S. Clarke, 2; *G.*, 7, 363; *D.*, p. 243.
[4] Fifth letter to S. Clarke, 29; *G.*, 7, 396; *D.*, p. 261.

capable of occupying different positions. If it were finite and if it were turned round, as it were, in infinite space, the two imagined positions would be indistinguishable. According to the law of sufficient reason, then, it would not occupy one position rather than the other. In fact, it is nonsensical to speak of two positions at all; and the temptation to speak in this way arises only when we frame the chimerical notion of infinite empty space as an assemblage of points, no one of which would be in any way distinguishable from any other.

A similar argument can be used against the idea of absolute time. Suppose that somebody asks why God did not create the world a year or a million years sooner; that is, why He applied, as it were, successive events to this rather than to that succession of instants in absolute time. No answer could be given, since there would be no sufficient reason for God's creating the world at one moment rather than another, if the succession of created things is assumed to be the same in any case. This might seem to be an argument in favour of the eternity of the world, were it not for the fact that in proving that there would be no sufficient reason for God's creating the world at instant *X* rather than at instant *Y* one also proves that there are no instants apart from things. For the fact that there would be no sufficient reason for God preferring one instant rather than another is due to the instants being indistinguishable. And if they are indistinguishable, there cannot be two of them. The notion of absolute time as composed of an infinite number of instants is thus a figment of the imagination.[1] As for Clarke's idea that infinite time is the eternity of God, it would follow from this that everything which is in time is also in the divine essence, just as, if infinite space is the divine immensity, things in space are in the divine essence. 'Strange expressions, which plainly show that the author makes a wrong use of terms.'[2]

Absolute space and time, extrinsic to things, are therefore imaginary entities, 'as the Schoolmen themselves have acknowledged'.[3] But though Leibniz doubtless succeeded in his object of drawing attention to the paradoxical character of the views on space and time put forward by Newton and Clarke, it does not follow that his own theory is, I do not say adequate, since the last word on space and time has scarcely been said even in the post-Einstein era, but self-consistent. On the one hand, monads are not points in space, and they have no real relative situation extending beyond the phenomenal order.[1] 'There is no spatial or absolute distance or propinquity of monads. To say that they are massed together in a point, or disseminated in space, is to make use of certain fictions of our soul.'[2] Space, therefore, belongs to the phenomenal order. On the other hand, space is not purely subjective; it is a *phenomenon bene fundatum.* Monads have an ordered relation of co-existence to other things; and the dominant monad or soul is in some sense, never clearly defined by Leibniz, 'in' the organic body which it dominates. It is all very well to suggest that the position of the dominant monad is defined in some way by the organic body which it dominates; the fact remains that this body is itself composed of monads. And how are their positions defined? If the order of co-existent phenomena which is space and the order of successive phenomena which is time are simply due to 'the mutually conspiring perceptions of monads',[3] space and time are purely subjective. But Leibniz evidently felt that this would not quite do. For the different points of view of different monads presuppose objective relative positions. And in this case space cannot be purely subjective. But Leibniz does not appear to have worked out successfully the relation between the subjective and objective elements in space and time.

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[1] Cf. fourth letter to S. Clarke, 15; *G.*, 7, 373; *D.*, p. 271 (cf. third letter, 6; *G.*, 7, 364; *D.*, p. 244).

[2] Fifth letter to S. Clarke, 44; *G.*, 7, 399; *D.*, p. 264.

[3] Fifth letter to S. Clarke, 33; *G.*, 7, 396; *D.*, p. 261.

Kant was particularly influenced, of course, by the former aspect of Leibniz's theory of space and time, namely its subjectivist aspect. It is true that even Kant admitted on occasion that there must be an objective ground, itself unknown, for actual spatial relations; but his general theory of space and time was more subjectivist, and hence possibly more coherent even though more paradoxical and less acceptable than that of Leibniz. Moreover, though space was subjective for Kant, it resembled more the absolute empty space of Newton than Leibniz's system of relations.

6. The ultimate realities are, then, monads, simple substances conceived according to an analogy with souls. Leibniz was a convinced pluralist. Experience teaches us, he said, that there are individual egos or souls; and this experience is incompatible with the acceptance of Spinozism. The notion that 'there is but one substance, namely God, which thinks, believes and wills one thing

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[1] *G.*, 2, 444 (in a letter to des Bosses).
[2] *G.*, 2, 450–1 (in a letter to des Bosses).
[3] *G.*, 2, 450 (in a letter to des Bosses).

in me, but which thinks, believes and wills exactly the contrary in another (is) an opinion the absurdity of which M. Bayle has well shown in certain parts of his Dictionary'.[1] And no two of these monads is exactly alike. Each has its own peculiar characteristics. Moreover, each monad forms a world apart, in the sense that it develops its potentialities from within. Leibniz did not, of course, deny that on the phenomenal level there is what we call efficient or mechanical causality: he did not, for example, deny that it is true to say that the door slammed because a gust of wind exercised pressure on it. But we must distinguish between the physical level at which this statement is true and the metaphysical level at which we speak about monads. Each monad is like a subject which virtually contains all its predicates, and the primitive force or entelechy of the monad is, as it were, the law of its variations and changes. 'Derivative force is the actual present state while tending to or pre-involving the following state, as everything present is big with the future. But that which persists, in so far as it involves all that can ever happen to it, has primitive force, so that primitive force is, as it were, the law of the series, while derivative force is the determination which designates a particular term of the series.'[2] The monads are, to use Leibniz's term, 'windowless'. Further, there is an infinity of them, though this statement must be understood in the light of Leibniz's denial that there can be an actual infinite number. 'Instead of an infinite number, we ought to say that there are more than any number can express.'[3]

But though there are innumerable monads or simple substances, each of which pre-contains all its successive variations, they do not form a chaotic agglomeration. Though each monad is a world apart, it changes in harmonious correspondence with the changes in all other monads according to a law or harmony pre-established by God. The universe is an ordered system in which each monad has its particular function. The monads are so related to one another in the pre-established harmony that each reflects the whole infinite system in a particular way.

The universe is thus a system in the sense that if one thing 'were taken away or supposed different, all the things in the world would have been different from those which now are'.[4] Each monad or substance expresses the whole universe, though some, as will be seen later, express it more distinctly than others as they enjoy a higher degree of perception. But there is no direct causal interaction between monads. 'The union of soul and body, and even the operation of one substance on another, consists only in this perfect mutual agreement, purposely established by the order of the first creation, in virtue of which each substance, following its own laws, agrees with what the others demand; and the operations of the one thus follow or accompany the operation or change of the other.'[1] According to Leibniz, this doctrine of a pre-established harmony between the changes and variations of non-interacting monads is not a gratuitous theory. It is the only theory which is 'at once intelligible and natural'[2] and it can even be proved *a priori* through showing that the notion of the predicate is contained in that of the subject.[3]

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[1] *Considerations on the Doctrine of a Universal Spirit*; *G.*, 6, 537; *D.*, p. 146.
[2] *G.*, 2, 262 (in a letter to de Volder). [3] *G.*, 2, 304 (in a letter to des Bosses).
[4] *G.*, 2, 226 (in a letter to de Volder).

According to Leibniz, then, God pre-established the harmony of the universe 'in the beginning of things, after which everything goes its own way in the phenomena of Nature, according to the laws of souls and bodies'.[4] Speaking about the relation between soul and body, he compares God to a clockmaker who so constructs two clocks that they ever after keep perfect time without there being any need for repair or adjustment to make them synchronize.[5] The simile can be extended to the pre-established harmony in general. 'Common philosophy' supposes that one thing exercises a physical influence on another; but this is impossible in the case of immaterial monads. The occasionalists assume that God is constantly adjusting the clocks which He has made; but this theory, says Leibniz, involves a *Deus ex machina* unnecessarily and unreasonably. There remains, therefore, the theory of the pre-established harmony. One might be inclined to conclude from this that God sets the universe going, as it were, and then has nothing more to do with it. But writing to Clarke, Leibniz protests that he does not maintain that the world is a machine or clock which goes without any activity on God's part. It needs to be conserved by God and it depends on Him for its continued existence; but it is a clock which goes without needing to be mended by Him. 'Otherwise we must say that God bethinks Himself again.'[6]

It should be noted that in the doctrine of the pre-established harmony Leibniz finds a reconciliation of final and mechanical causality; or, rather, he finds the means of subordinating the latter to the former. Material things act according to fixed and ascertainable laws; and in ordinary language we are entitled to speak of them as acting on one another according to mechanical laws. But all these activities form part of the harmonious system pre-established by God according to the principle of perfection. 'Souls act according to the laws of final causes, by appetitions, ends and means. Bodies act in accordance with the laws of efficient causes or of motion. And the two realms, that of efficient causes and that of final causes, are in harmony with each other.'[1] Finally, history moves towards the establishment of 'a moral world within the natural world'[2] and so towards harmony between 'the physical kingdom of nature and the moral kingdom of grace'.[3] Thus 'nature leads to grace, and grace, while making use of nature, perfects it'.[4]

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[1] *G.*, 2, 136 (in a letter to Arnauld).

[2] *G.*, 3, 144 (in a letter to Basnage).

[3] Cf. *G.*, 2, 58 (to Bayle).

[4] *G.*, 3, 143 (to Basnage).

[5] *G.*, 4, 498; *D.*, pp. 90–3.

[6] Second letter to S. Clarke, 8; *G.*, 7, 358; *D.*, pp. 241–2.

7. We have seen that each monad reflects in itself the whole universe from its own finite point of view. To say this is to say that each monad enjoys perception. For Leibniz defines perception as 'the internal state of the monad representing external things'.[5] Further, each monad will have successive perceptions corresponding to changes in the environment, more particularly in the body of which it is the dominant monad, if it is a dominant monad, or in the body of which it is a member. But owing to the lack of interaction between monads the change from one perception to another must be due to an internal principle. And the action of this principle is called 'appetition' by Leibniz. 'The action of the internal principle which causes the change or the passage from one perception to another may be called appetition.'[6] As this is present in every monad, we can say, therefore, that all monads have perception and appetite.[7] But this must not be taken to mean that for Leibniz every monad is conscious or that every monad experiences desires in the sense in which we experience them. When he says that every monad has perception he simply means that owing to the pre-established harmony each monad reflects internally the changes in its environment. It is not required that this representation of the environment should be

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[1] *Monadology*, 79; *G.*, 6, 620; *D.*, p. 230.
[2] *Monadology*, 86; *G.*, 6, 622; *D.*, p. 231. [3] *Monadology*, 87; *G.*, 6, 622; *D.*, p. 231
[4] *The Principles of Nature and of Grace*, 15; *G.*, 6, 605; *D.*, p. 215.
[5] *The Principles of Nature and of Grace*, 4; *G.*, 6, 600; *D.*, p. 211.
[6] *Monadology*, 15; *G.*, 6, 609; *D.*, pp. 219–20. [7] *G.*, 3, 622 (to Remond).

accompanied by consciousness of the representation. And when he says that each monad has appetite he means fundamentally that the change from one representation to another is due to an internal principle in the monad itself. The monad has been created according to the principle of perfection, and it has a natural tendency to mirror the infinite system of which it is a member.

Leibniz draws a distinction, therefore, between 'perception' and 'apperception'. The former, as already mentioned, is simply 'the internal condition of the monad representing external things' while apperception is 'consciousness or the reflective knowledge of this internal state'.[1] The latter is not enjoyed by all monads, nor at all times by the same monad. There are, therefore, degrees of perception. Some monads possess simply confused perceptions, without distinctness, without memory and without consciousness. Monads in this condition (the dominant monad of a plant, for example) may be said to be in a state of slumber or swoon. Even human beings are sometimes in this condition. A higher degree of perception is found when perception is accompanied by memory and feeling. 'Memory furnishes souls with a sort of consecutiveness which imitates reason but which ought to be distinguished from it. We observe that animals, having the perception of something which strikes them and of which they have had a similar perception before, expect, through the representations of their memory, that which was associated with it in the preceding perception and experience feelings similar to those which they had at that time. For instance, if we show dogs a stick, they remember the pain it has caused them and whine and run.'[2] The living corporeal substance which enjoys perception accompanied by memory is called an 'animal', and its dominant monad can be called a 'soul' to distinguish it from a 'naked monad'. Finally, there is apperception or perception accompanied by consciousness. At this level perception becomes distinct, and the perceiver is aware of the perception. Souls which enjoy apperceptions are called 'rational souls' or 'spirits', to distinguish them from souls in a wider sense. It is only rational souls or spirits which are capable of true reasoning, which depends on a knowledge of necessary and eternal truths, and of performing those acts of reflection which enable us to conceive 'the ego, substance, monad, soul, spirit, in a word, immaterial things and truths'.[1] 'These reflective acts furnish the principal objects of our reasonings.'[2]

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[1] *The Principles of Nature and of Grace*, 4; *G.*, 6, 600; *D.*, p. 211.

[2] *Monadology*, 26; *G.*, 6, 611; *D.*, pp. 221–2.

In attributing apperception to human beings Leibniz did not, of course, mean to suggest that all our perceptions are distinct, still less that 'true reasoning is habitual'. Even in conscious life many perceptions are confused. 'There are a thousand indications which lead us to think that there are constantly numberless perceptions in us, but without apperception and without reflection.'[3] For example, the man who lives near a mill generally has no distinct awareness of his perception of the noise. And even when he has, he is aware of one global perception, as it were, though this is composed of a multitude of confused perceptions. Similarly, a man walking by the sea-shore may be conscious of the sound of the waves in general; but he is not conscious of the *petites perceptions* of which this general perception is composed. Again, 'in three-fourths of their actions (men) act simply as brutes'.[4] Few people are in a position to give the scientific cause why there will be daylight tomorrow: most people are led simply by memory and the association of perceptions to expect daylight tomorrow. 'We are simple empirics in three-fourths of our actions.'[5] Further, although appetite in the rational soul reaches the level of will, this does not mean that we are devoid of the 'passions' and impulses which are found in animals.

Leibniz opposed this theory of varying degrees of perception to the sharp distinction drawn by Descartes between spirit and matter. In a sense all things are living for Leibniz, since all things are ultimately composed of immaterial monads. At the same time there is room for distinctions between different levels of reality in terms of degrees of clarity of perception. If we ask why one monad enjoys a lower degree and another a higher degree of perception the only answer can be that God has so ordered things in accordance with the principle of perfection. Thus Leibniz says that when conception takes place in the case of human beings the monads which before were sensitive souls 'are elevated to the rank of reason and to the prerogative of spirits'.[6] Again, souls 'are not rational until by conception they are destined for human life; but when they are once made rational and rendered capable of consciousness and of society with God, I think that they never lay aside the character of citizens in the Republic of God'.[1] In a sense Leibniz's theory might seem to lend itself to interpretation in an evolutionary sense. In a letter to Remond (1715) he remarks that 'since one can conceive that by the development and change of matter the machine which forms the body of a spermatic animal can become a machine such as is necessary to form the organic body of a man, the sensitive soul must be capable of becoming rational owing to the perfect harmony between the soul and the machine'.[2] He adds, however, that 'as this harmony is pre-established, the future state is already in the present, and a perfect intelligence would recognize long before in the present animal the future man in the case of both soul and body. Thus a pure animal will never become man, and human spermatic animals which do not arrive at the great transformation by conception, are pure animals.' One can say that there are hints of an evolutionary theory in Leibniz; but he was thinking in terms of a monadology which was foreign to the mind of the pioneers of the scientific hypothesis of transformistic evolution.

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[1] *The Principles of Nature and of Grace*, 5; *G.*, 6, 601; *D.*, p. 211.

[2] *Monadology*, 30; *G.*, 6, 612; *D.*, p. 222.

[3] *New Essays*, preface, p. 47; *G.*, 5, 46.

[4] *The Principles of Nature and of Grace*, 5; *G.*, 6, 600; *D.*, p. 211.

[5] *Monadology*, 28; *G.*, 6, 611; *D.*, p. 222.

[6] *Monadology*, 82; *G.*, 6, 621; *D.*, p. 231.

8. The relation of soul to body is that of a dominant monad to an assemblage of monads; but it is not at all easy to give a precise account of what is the relation for Leibniz. Certain basic ideas must, however, be presupposed by any interpretation. First, the human soul is an immaterial substance, and the human body also consists of immaterial monads, its corporeality being a *phenomenon bene fundatum*. Secondly (and this statement follows from the first), there is no interaction in the sense of direct physical influence between the monads composing the human being. Thirdly, the harmony or agreement between the changes in the individual monads composing the human being is due to the pre-established harmony. Fourthly, the relation between the human soul or dominant monad and the monads composing the human body must be explained in such a way as to make it possible to attach a meaning to the statements that soul and body form one being and that in some sense the soul rules the body.

According to Leibniz, 'the creature is said to act externally in so far as it is perfect and to suffer from another (that is, to be acted upon by another) in so far as it is imperfect. Thus action is attributed to the monad in so far as it has distinct perceptions, and passion in so far as it has confused perceptions.'[3] Thus in so far as the human soul has distinct perceptions it is said to be active, and in so far as the monads composing the human body have confused perceptions they are said to be passive. In this sense the body is said to be subject to the soul and the soul to dominate or rule the body. Again, although there is no interaction in the strict sense between soul and body, the changes in the inferior monads composing the human body take place, according to the pre-established harmony, with a view to or for the sake of the changes in the soul, which is a superior monad. The human soul or spirit acts in accordance with its judgment about the best thing to do, and its judgment is objective in proportion as its perceptions are clear and distinct. It can be said, then, to be perfect in so far as it has clear perceptions. And the changes in the inferior monads composing the body are correlated by God with the changes in the superior monad or human soul. In this sense, therefore, the soul, in virtue of its greater perfection, can be said to dominate the body and to act upon the body. This is what Leibniz means when he says that 'one creature is more perfect than another in that there is found in it that which serves to account *a priori* for what takes place in another, and it is in this way that it is said to act upon the other'.[1] In establishing the harmony between monads God correlates the changes in the inferior monads with the changes in the more perfect monads, and not the other way round. It is legitimate, says Leibniz, to speak in ordinary language of the soul acting on the body and of interaction between them. But philosophical analysis of the meaning of such phrases reveals that they mean something rather different from what they are popularly taken to mean. If we speak, for example, of the body acting on the soul, what is meant is that the soul has confused and not clear perceptions; that is to say, the perceptions are not clearly seen to proceed from an internal principle but appear to come from without. In so far as the soul has confused perceptions, it is said to be passive rather than active and so to be acted upon rather than to rule the body. But this must not be taken to mean that there is any physical interaction between soul and body.

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[1] Letter to Wagner, 5; *G.*, 7, 531; *D.*, p. 192.

[2] *G.*, 3, 635.

[3] *Monadology*, 49; *G.*, 6, 615; *D.*, p. 225.

Now, it is quite clear that it is not always the same monads which compose the human body: the latter is always, as it were, shedding some monads and gaining others. And the question arises, in what sense can one legitimately speak of this changing assemblage of monads as 'a body'? It scarcely seems sufficient to say that the monads form one body because there is a dominant monad, if one simply means by 'dominant monad' a monad enjoying clear perceptions. For the dominant monad or soul is distinct from the monads which form the human body. It will not do to say, for example, that the monads composing the body of an individual *A* are *A*'s body because the monad which is the soul of *A* has clearer perceptions. For the monad which is the soul of *B* also has clearer perceptions than the monad composing the body of *A*. Yet the latter do not form the body of *B*. What, then, is the peculiar bond which unites the monads composing *A*'s body to *A*'s soul and which makes it necessary to speak of the former as *A*'s body and not as *B*'s body? We must at least have recourse to an idea mentioned above and say that a certain changing set of monads form the body of *A* in so far as the variations occurring in those monads have their '*a priori* reasons' in the variations occurring in the monad which is the soul of *A*. One can also say perhaps that the monads composing the human body have points of view or perceptions which, according to the pre-established harmony, resemble or approximate to, though confusedly, the point of view of the dominant monad, and that they thus have a peculiar relation to it. But it would seem that the chief reason for saying that these rather than those monads compose *A*'s body must be that the changes in the one set of monads, though not in the other set, are explicable, in terms of final causality, through reference to the changes occurring in *A*'s soul.

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[1] *Monadology*, 50; *G.*, 6, 615; *D.*, p. 225.

In his letters to Father des Bosses, Leibniz speaks of a 'substantial bond' (*vinculum substantiale*) which unites monads to form one substance. But this suggestion cannot legitimately be used to show that the philosopher was dissatisfied with his account of the relation between monads which are said to form one thing. For he made the suggestion in response to a question how the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation could be stated in terms of his philosophy. In a letter written in 1709 he suggested that 'your transubstantiation' might be explained in 'my philosophy' by saying that the monads composing the bread are taken away as far as their primitive active and passive forces are concerned, and that the presence of the monads composing the Body of Christ is substituted, though the derivative forces of the monads composing the bread remain (to allow for the dogma that the accidents of the bread remain after transubstantiation). But in later letters he put forward the theory of the *vinculum substantiale.* Thus in a letter written in 1712 he said that 'your transubstantiation' can be explained without supposing that the monads composing the bread are removed. One might say instead that the *vinculum substantiale* of the bread is destroyed and that the *vinculum substantiale* of the Body of Christ is applied to the same monads which were formerly united into one substance by the substantial bond of the bread. The 'phenomena' of the bread and wine will, however, remain.

It is to be noted, however, that Leibniz speaks of 'your transubstantiation' and that he says that 'we who reject transubstantiation have no need of such theories'.[1] One cannot, therefore, conclude that he himself held the doctrine of the *vinculum substantiale.* He did, however, declare that he made a distinction between an inorganic body, which is not properly a substance, and an organic natural body which, together with its dominant monad, forms a true substance or *unum per se.*[2] And it is difficult to see how this use of Scholastic language is really warranted by the theory of monads.

9. It is well known that in the *New Essays* Leibniz criticized Locke's attack on the doctrine of innate ideas. Indeed, given his denial of interaction between monads and his theory of the pre-established harmony, one would naturally expect Leibniz to say that all ideas are innate, in the sense that they are all produced from within, in virtue, that is, of a principle internal to the mind. As a matter of fact, however, he used the term 'innate' in a special sense which enabled him to say that only some ideas and truths are innate. For example, he says that 'the proposition, the sweet is not the bitter, is not innate according to the sense we have given to the term "innate truth" '.[3] It is necessary, then, to inquire how Leibniz understood the terms 'innate idea' and 'innate truth'.

The reason given by Leibniz for saying that the proposition, the sweet is not the bitter, is not an innate truth is that 'the feelings of sweet and bitter come from the external senses'.[4] Now, he obviously cannot mean by this that the feelings of sweet and bitter are caused by the physical action of external things. In other words, the distinction between ideas which are innate and ideas which are not innate cannot be a distinction between ideas which, to put it crudely, are impressed from without and ideas which are born from within: there must be some intrinsic difference between the two kinds of ideas. And in order to discover this difference one has to refer back to what has already been said on the subject of interaction. The mind or dominant monad can have clear perceptions, and in so far as it has clear perceptions it is said to be active. But it can also have confused perceptions, and in so far as it has them it is said to be passive. The reason for calling it 'passive' is that the '*a priori* reasons' for the confused perceptions in the dominant monad are to be found in changes in the monads composing the human body. In ordinary language, however, we can say that certain ideas are derived from sensation and are due to the action of external things on the sense-organs, just as Copernicans are entitled to speak in ordinary language of the sun rising and setting. For phrases of this kind express the phenomena or appearances.

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[1] *G.*, 2, 399 (to des Bosses).

[2] Cf. *On the Doctrine of Malebranche,* 3; *G.*, 3, 657; *D.*, p. 234.

[3] *New Essays,* 1, 1, 18, p. 84; *G.*, 5, 79.

[4] *Ibid.*

Leibniz also implies that ideas of sense, that is, ideas which are not innate, are marked by externality in the sense that they represent external things. 'For the soul is a little world in which distinct ideas are a representation of God and in which confused ideas are a representation of the universe.'[1] But this statement has to be qualified. It may seem that the idea of space is marked by externality and that it is thus a confused idea of sense. But Leibniz explicitly says that we can have a distinct idea of space, and also, for example, of motion and rest, which come from 'common sense, that is to say, from the mind itself, for they are ideas of the pure understanding' and are 'capable of definition and demonstration'.[2] In speaking of confused ideas of sense Leibniz is thinking rather of ideas of 'scarlet', 'sweet', 'bitter', and so on; that is, of ideas of apparently external qualities which presuppose extension and spatial externality and which cannot in their phenomenal character belong to monads. 'Sweet' and 'bitter', therefore, are confused ideas, and the proposition, the sweet is not the bitter, is not an innate truth, since these confused ideas 'come from the external senses'.

Certain ideas, however, are derived from the mind itself, and not from the external senses. For example, the ideas of squareness and circularity are derived from the mind itself. Again, 'the soul comprises being, substance, unity, identity, cause, perception, reason and many other notions which the senses cannot give'.[3]

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[1] *New Essays*, 2, 1, 1, p. 109; *G.*, 5, 99.

[2] *New Essays*, 2, 5, p. 129; *G.*, 5, 116.

[3] *New Essays*, 2, 1, 2, p. 111; *G.*, 5, 100.

These ideas are derived from reflection and are thus innate ideas. They are, moreover, presupposed (and here Leibniz approaches the position of Kant) by sense-knowledge.

To make the matter clearer attention should be drawn to the following point. In the proposition, the square is not a circle, the principle of contradiction, which is an innate truth of reason, is applied to ideas derived from the mind itself and not from the senses; it is applied, in short, to innate ideas. The proposition can, therefore, be called an innate truth. But it does not follow that the proposition, the sweet is not the bitter, is also an innate truth, on the ground that the principle of contradiction is here applied to the ideas of sweet and bitter. For these ideas are not innate. The proposition is 'a mixed conclusion (*hybrida conclusio*) in which the axiom is applied to a sensible truth'.[1] In spite, then, of the fact that in the proposition the sweet is not the bitter, an application is made of the principle of contradiction, this true proposition is not an innate truth in Leibniz's technical sense.

If logic and mathematics are 'innate', the obvious difficulty arises that children are not born with a knowledge of the propositions of logic and mathematics. But Leibniz never imagined that they were. Innate ideas are innate in the sense that the mind derives them from itself; but it does not follow that every mind starts with a stock, as it were, of innate ideas and truths or even that every mind ever comes to an explicit knowledge of all those truths which are derivable from itself. Further, Leibniz did not deny that experience may be necessary in order to attend to or come to a conscious awareness of innate ideas and truths. There are 'truths of instinct', which are innate and which we employ by a natural instinct. For example, 'everybody employs the rules of deduction by a natural logic without being aware of it'.[2] We all have some instinctive knowledge of the principle of contradiction, not in the sense that we all necessarily possess an explicit knowledge of the principle but in the sense that we all instinctively use the principle. For an explicit knowledge of the principle it may very well be that experience is required, and we certainly come to learn geometry, for example, in this way; we do not possess an explicit knowledge of geometry from the start. But Leibniz refused to admit that 'every innate truth is known always and by all'[3] or that ' all that one learns is not innate'.[4] A child may come

[1] *New Essays*, 1, 1, 18, p. 84; *G.*, 5, 79.
[2] *New Essays*, 1, 2, 3, p. 88; *G.*, 5, 83.
[3] *New Essays*, 1, 2, 11, p. 93; *G.*, 5, 87.
[4] *New Essays*, 1, 1, 23, p. 75; *G.*, 5, 71.

to have an explicit knowledge of a geometrical theorem on the occasion of a diagram being drawn on the blackboard; but this does not mean that it acquires the idea of, say, a triangle, through the senses. For a geometrical triangle cannot be seen: the figure on the board is not a geometrical triangle.

For Leibniz, therefore, innate ideas are virtually innate. This does not mean simply that the mind has the power to form certain ideas and then to perceive the relations between them. For the opponents of innate ideas would admit this. It means in addition that the mind has the power of finding these ideas in itself.[1] For example, by reflection on itself the mind comes to conceive the idea of substance. To the philosophic axiom that there is nothing in the soul which does not come from the senses one must accordingly add 'except the soul itself and its affections. *Nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu, excipe: nisi ipse intellectus.*'[2] Leibniz therefore rejects the idea that the mind is originally a blank tablet or *tabula rasa*, if this means that 'truths would be in us as the figure of Hercules is in the marble when the marble is wholly indifferent to the reception of this figure or of some other'.[3] It is more like a piece of marble which is so veined that the figure of Hercules can be said to be virtually contained in it, although labour is required on the sculptor's part before this figure can be revealed. 'Thus it is that ideas and truths are for us innate as inclinations, dispositions, habits or natural propensities and not as actions, although these potentialities are always accompanied by some actions, often insensible, which correspond to them.'[4]

One of the ideas which Leibniz asserts to be innate in the sense described is the idea of God. 'I have always held, as I still hold, to the innate idea of God, which Descartes maintained.'[5] This does not mean that all men have a clear idea of God. 'What is innate is not at first known clearly and distinctly as such; often much attention and method is necessary in order to perceive it. Students do not always do so, still less every human being.'[6] To say that the idea of God is innate thus means for Leibniz, as it meant for Descartes, that the mind can arrive at this idea from within and that by internal reflection alone it can come to know the truth of the proposition that God exists. But Leibniz's arguments for God's existence can be left to the next chapter.

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[1] *New Essays*, 1, 1, 22, p. 75; *G.*, 5, 70.

[2] *New Essays*, 2, 1, 2, p. 111; *G.*, 5, 100.

[3] *New Essays*, preface, p. 46; *G.*, 5, 45.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *New Essays*, 1, 1, 1, p. 70; *G.*, 5, 66.

[6] *New Essays*, 1, 2, 12, p. 94; *G.*, 5, 88.

CHAPTER XVIII

LEIBNIZ (4)

The ontological argument—The argument to God's existence from eternal truths—The argument from truths of fact—The argument from the pre-established harmony—The problem of evil—Progress and history.

1. Leibniz recognized the validity, or possible validity, of several lines of argument for the existence of God. 'You will remember that I have shown how ideas are in us, not always in such a way that we are conscious of them, but always in such a way that we can draw them from our own depths and make them perceivable. And this is also my belief concerning the idea of God, the possibility and existence of which I hold to be demonstrated in more than one way. . . . I believe also that nearly all the means which have been employed to prove the existence of God are good and might be of service, if we would perfect them. . . .'[1] I shall consider first of all what he says about the so-called 'ontological argument'.

It will be remembered that the ontological argument, if taken as a purely formal argument, is an attempt to show that the proposition 'God exists' is analytic and that its truth is evident *a priori*. That is to say, if anyone understands the notion of the subject, God, he will see that the predicate, existence, is contained in the subject. The notion of God is the notion of a supremely perfect Being. Now, existence is a perfection. Therefore existence is comprised in the notion of God; that is to say, existence belongs to the essence of God. Therefore God is definable as the necessary Being or as the Being who necessarily exists. He must therefore exist; for it would be a contradiction to deny existence of the Being who necessarily exists. Thus by analysing the idea of God we can see that God exists.

Kant later objected against this line of argument that existence is not a perfection and that existence is not predicated of anything in the way in which a quality is predicated of a subject. But Leibniz believed that existence is a perfection[2] and he spoke of it as a predicate.[3] He was thus favourably disposed towards the argument, and he agreed that it would be absurd to speak of God as a merely possible Being. For if the necessary Being is possible He exists. To speak of a merely possible necessary Being would be a contradiction in terms. 'Assuming that God is possible, He exists, which is the privilege of divinity alone.'[1] At the same time Leibniz was convinced that the argument as it stood was not a strict demonstration, since it was assumed that the idea of God is the idea of a possible Being. To say that if God is possible, He exists, does not by itself show that God is possible. Before the argument can be conclusive, it has to be demonstrated that the idea of God is the idea of a possible Being. He therefore spoke of the argument without this demonstration as imperfect. For example, 'the Scholastics, not excepting their Doctor Angelicus, have misunderstood this argument and have taken it as a paralogism. In this respect they were altogether wrong, and Descartes, who studied the Scholastic philosophy for quite a long time at the Jesuit college of La Flèche, had great reason for re-establishing it. It is not a paralogism, but it is an imperfect demonstration, which assumes something that must still be proved in order to render it mathematically evident; that is, it is tacitly assumed that this idea of the all-great or all-perfect Being is possible and implies no contradiction.'[2] According to Leibniz, there is always a presumption on the side of possibility; 'that is to say, everything is held to be possible until its impossibility is proved'.[3] But this presumption is not sufficient to turn the ontological argument into a strict demonstration. Once, however, it has been demonstrated that the idea of a supremely perfect Being is the idea of a possible Being, 'it could be said that the existence of God was demonstrated geometrically *a priori*'.[4] In Leibniz's opinion the Cartesians had paid insufficient attention to demonstrating the possibility of the supremely perfect Being. No doubt he was right; but as has been already mentioned in connection with Descartes, the latter did make some attempt in his reply to the second set of *Objections* to show that God is possible by arguing that there is no contradiction in the idea of God. And this is the line of argument which Leibniz himself adopted. It is true, however, that Descartes had made the attempt as a kind of afterthought, when faced by objections.

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[1] *New Essays*, 4, 10, 7, p. 505; *G.*, 5, 419–20.

[2] *On the Cartesian Demonstration of the Existence of God*; *G.*, 4, 401–2; *D.*, p. 132.

[3] *New Essays*, 4, 1, 7, p. 401; *G.*, 5, 339.

[1] *New Essays*, 4, 10, 7, p. 504; *G.*, 5, 419.
[2] *New Essays*, 4, 10, 7, pp. 503–4; *G.*, 5, 418–19.
[3] *On the Cartesian Demonstration of the Existence of God*; *G.*, 4, 405; *D.*, p. 134.
[4] *On the Cartesian Demonstration of the Existence of God*; *G.*, 4, 405; *D.*, p. 136.

The possible was for Leibniz the non-contradictory. In undertaking, therefore, to prove that the idea of God is the idea of a possible Being he was undertaking to show that the idea does not involve any contradiction. This really means showing that we have a distinct idea of God as supreme and infinite perfection; for if the 'idea' proved to be self-contradictory it might be questioned whether we ever had any idea, properly speaking. We can, for example, use the words 'square circle'; but in what sense have we an idea of a square circle? The question is whether analysis of the idea of God shows that it consists of two or more incompatible ideas or not. Leibniz accordingly asserts that 'we must prove with all imaginable accuracy that there is an idea of an all-perfect Being, that is to say, of God'.[1]

Writing in 1701 to the editor of the *Journal de Trévoux* Leibniz first asserts that if necessary Being is possible, it exists. He then equates necessary Being with Being of itself and proceeds as follows: 'If Being of itself is impossible, all beings by others are so also, since they exist ultimately only through Being of itself. Thus nothing could exist.... If necessary Being is not, no being is possible. It seems that this demonstration has not been carried so far up to this time.'[2] This may seem like a switch-over to an *a posteriori* argument. But Leibniz does not argue, so far as words are concerned, from existent contingent being to Being of itself, but from the possibility of a contingent being. It might, of course, be said that we know its possibility only because we are acquainted with existent contingent beings, that is, because we know that there are true affirmative contingent propositions. And the sentence 'thus nothing could exist' suggests the further sentence 'but something does exist' with the conclusion 'therefore contingent being is possible'. Verbally, however, Leibniz keeps within the sphere of possibility. Still, he adds to this piece of reasoning the statement, 'However, I have also laboured elsewhere to prove that the perfect Being is possible.'

This last sentence presumably refers to a paper entitled 'That the most perfect Being exists', which Leibniz showed to Spinoza in 1676. 'I call every simple quality which is positive and absolute or expresses whatever it expresses without any limits a *perfection*.'[3] A quality of this sort is indefinable or irresolvable. Therefore the incompatibility of two perfections cannot be demonstrated, since demonstration would require the resolution of the terms. Nor is their incompatibility evident *per se*. But if the incompatibility of perfections is neither evident nor demonstrable, there can be a subject of all perfections. Existence is a perfection. Therefore the Being which exists in virtue of its essence is possible. Therefore it exists.

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[1] *On the Cartesian Demonstration of the Existence of God*; G., 4, 405; *D.*, p. 133.
[2] *On the Cartesian Demonstration of the Existence of God*; *G.*, 4, 406; *D.*, p. 138.
[3] *New Essays*, Appendix 10, pp. 714–15; *G.*, 7, 261–2.

This argument presupposes that existence is a perfection. It also seems to be liable to an objection seen by Leibniz himself, namely, that 'it does not follow that a thing is possible because we do not see its impossibility, our knowledge being limited'.[1] This objection might also be brought against the argument for God's possibility adduced by Leibniz in the *Monadology*. 'God, or the necessary Being, alone has this privilege that He must exist if it is possible. And since nothing can hinder the possibility of that which possesses no limitations, no negations and consequently no contradiction, this alone is sufficient to establish the existence of God *a priori*.'[2] This line of argument, namely that the idea of the supremely perfect Being is the idea of a Being without any limitations and that this is the idea of a Being without contradiction and so of a possible Being, is fundamentally the same as the argument in the paper which Leibniz showed to Spinoza. And it is open to the same line of objection, namely, that one is not entitled to equate negative possibility (that is, absence of discerned contradiction) with positive possibility. We should first have to possess a clear, distinct and adequate idea of the divine essence.

2. Another *a priori* argument for God's existence given by Leibniz is the argument from eternal and necessary truths, which had been the favourite argument of St. Augustine. Mathematical propositions, for example, are necessary and eternal, in the sense that their truth is independent of the existence of any contingent things. The statement that given a figure bounded by three straight lines it has three angles is a necessary truth, whether there are any triangles in existence or not. These eternal truths, says Leibniz, are not 'fictions'.[3] They therefore require a metaphysical ground, and we are forced to say that they 'must have their existence in a certain subject absolutely and metaphysically necessary, that is, in God'.[4] God therefore exists.

This is a rather difficult argument to understand. We are not to suppose, says Leibniz, that 'eternal truths . . . depend on the divine will. . . . The reason of truths lies in the ideas of things, which are involved in the divine essence itself.'[1] Again, 'the understanding of God is the region of eternal truths or of the ideas on which they depend'.[2] But in what sense can eternal truths be said to 'exist' in the divine understanding? And if they do exist in the divine understanding, how can we know them? It may be said that the eternal truths are hypothetical (for example, 'given a triangle, the sum of its three angles is 180°') and that they belong to the sphere of possibility, so that Leibniz's argument from necessary propositions is a particular case of the argument from possibles to God as their ultimate ground. And such an interpretation seems to gain support from the statement that 'if there is a reality in the essences or possibilities or in the eternal truths, this reality must be founded in something existing and actual; consequently in the existence of the necessary Being in whom essence involves existence or with whom it is sufficient to be possible in order to be actual'.[3] But some clear statement is required of what it means to say that analytic propositions possess reality and of their precise relation to the divine understanding.

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[1] *On the Cartesian Demonstration of the Existence of God*; *G.*, 4, 402; *D.*, p. 135.

[2] *Monadology*, 45; *G.*, 6, 614; *D.*, p. 224.

[3] *On the Ultimate Origin of Things*; *G.*, 7, 305; *D.*, p. 103.

[4] *Ibid.*

3. Leibniz also uses the principle of sufficient reason to argue from truths of fact to the existence of God. For any given event or for the existence of any given thing in the series of finite beings an explanation could be given in terms of finite causes. And the process of explanation in terms of finite causes might proceed to infinity. In order to explain *A*, *B* and *C* it might be necessary to mention *D*, *E* and *F*, and to explain these latter one might have to mention *G*, *H*, *I*; and so on without end, not only because of the infinite series going back into the past but also because of the infinite complexity of the universe at any given moment. But 'as all this detail only involves other contingents, anterior or more detailed, each one of which needs a like analysis for its explanation, we make no advance, and the sufficient or final reason must be outside the sequence or series of this detail of contingents, however infinite it may be. And thus it is that the final reason of things must be found in a necessary substance, in which the detail of changes exists only eminently, as in their source. And this it is that we call God. Now this substance being the sufficient reason of all this detail, which also is linked together throughout, there

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[1] *G.*, 7, 311 (*Specimen*).

[2] *Monadology*, 43; *G.*, 6, 614; *D.*, p. 224.

[3] *Monadology*, 44; *G.*, 6, 614; *D.*, p. 224.

is but one God, and this God suffices.'[1] This, Leibniz observes, is an *a posteriori* argument.[2]

In his paper *On the Ultimate Origin of Things* Leibniz remarks that truths of fact are hypothetically necessary, in the sense that a posterior state of the world is determined by a prior state. 'The present world is necessary, physically or hypothetically, but not absolutely or metaphysically.'[3] In considering his theory of propositions we saw that for Leibniz all truths of fact or existential propositions save one (namely, the proposition 'God exists') are contingent, that is, not metaphysically necessary. The ultimate origin of 'the chain of states or series of things, the aggregate of which constitutes the world',[4] must therefore be sought outside the series: we must pass 'from physical or hypothetical necessity, which determines the posterior states of the world by the prior, to something which is absolute or metaphysical necessity, the reason for which cannot be given'.[5] By the last remark Leibniz means that no extrinsic reason (or cause) can be given for God's existence: the necessary Being is its own sufficient reason. If by 'reason' is meant 'cause', God has no cause; but His essence is the *ratio sufficiens* of His existence.

According to Kant, this argument depends upon the ontological argument. Kant's statement has been frequently repeated; but frequent repetition does not make it true. It is, of course, true that 'if the world can only be accounted for by the existence of a necessary Being, then there must be a Being whose essence involves existence, for this is what is meant by a necessary Being'.[6] But it does not follow that the possibility of a necessary Being is presupposed by the line of argument based on the existence of finite and contingent things. Leibniz himself accepted the ontological argument, as we have seen, provided that a missing link was supplied; but his *a posteriori* argument for God's existence does not involve the ontological argument.

4. Leibniz also argued *a posteriori* to God's existence from the pre-established harmony. 'This perfect harmony of so many substances which have no communication with each other can only come from a common cause.'[7] Thus we have 'a new proof of the existence of God, which is one of surprising clearness'.[8] The argument to God's existence simply from the order, harmony and

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[1] *Monadology*, 37–9; *G.*, 6, 613; *D.*, p. 223.

[2] *Monadology*, 45; *G.*, 6, 614; *D.*, p. 224.

[3] *On the Ultimate Origin of Things*; *G.*, 7, 303; *D.*, p. 101.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, pp. 610–11.

[7] *A New System of Nature*, 16; *G.*, 4, 486; *D.*, p. 79.

[8] *Ibid.*

beauty of Nature 'appears to possess only a moral certainty', though it acquires 'a necessity wholly metaphysical by the new kind of harmony I have introduced, which is the pre-established harmony'.[1] If Leibniz's theory of windowless monads is once accepted, the harmonious correlating of their activities is certainly remarkable. But Leibniz's 'new proof' of God's existence is so dependent on the previous acceptance of his denial of all interaction between monads that it has never won wide support in the form he gave it.

5. As has been mentioned in the last chapter, God, according to Leibniz, always acts for the best, so that this world must be the best of all possible worlds. Absolutely speaking, God could have created a different world, but, morally speaking, He could create only the best possible world. This is the metaphysical optimism of Leibniz, which excited the ridicule of Schopenhauer, for whom this world, so far from being the best, is rather the worst of all possible worlds and a standing objection to the existence of a beneficent Creator. And, given this optimistic position, it was clearly incumbent on Leibniz to explain how it is that the evil in the world does not constitute its refutation. He gave considerable attention to this subject, and in 1710 he published his *Theodicy, Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil.*

Leibniz distinguished three kinds of evil. 'Evil may be taken metaphysically, physically and morally. Metaphysical evil consists in mere imperfection, physical evil in suffering, and moral evil in sin.'[2] What he meant by 'metaphysical evil' will be explained presently. At the moment I wish to draw attention to two general principles enunciated by Leibniz. First of all, evil itself consists in a privation, not in a positive entity. Hence it has, properly speaking, no efficient cause, for it consists 'in that which the efficient cause does not bring about. That is why the Schoolmen are wont to call the cause of evil *deficient*.'[3] 'St. Augustine has already put forward this idea.'[4] Secondly, God does not will moral evil at all but only permits it, while physical evil or suffering He does not will absolutely but only hypothetically, on the hypothesis, for example, that it will serve as a means to a good end, such as contributing to the greater perfection of the sufferer.

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[1] *New Essays*, 4, 10, 10, p. 507; *G.*, 5, 421.

[2] *Theodicy*, 21, p. 136 (page references to the *Theodicy* are to the translation by E. M. Huggard, listed in the Appendix); *G.*, 6, 115.

[3] *Theodicy*, 20; *G.*, 6, 115.

[4] *Theodicy*, 378, p. 352; *G.*, 6, 340.

Metaphysical evil is imperfection; and this is the imperfection involved in finite being as such. Created being is necessarily finite, and finite being is necessarily imperfect; and this imperfection is the root of the possibility of error and evil. 'We, who derive all being from God, where shall we find the source of evil? The answer is that it must be sought in the ideal nature of the creature, in so far as this nature is contained in the eternal verities which are in the understanding of God independently of His will. For we must consider that there is an *original imperfection in the creature* before sin, because the creature is limited in its essence; whence it follows that it cannot know all, and that it can deceive itself and commit other errors.'[1] The ultimate origin of evil is thus metaphysical, and the question arises, how God is not responsible for evil by the mere fact that He created the world, thus giving existence to limited and imperfect things. Leibniz's answer is that existence is better than non-existence. In so far as we are entitled to distinguish different moments in the divine will, we can say that God willed 'antecedently' simply the good. But since the imperfection of the creature does not depend on the divine choice but on the ideal essence of the creature, God could not choose to create without choosing to create imperfect beings. He chose, however, to create the best possible world. Considered simply in itself the divine will wills simply the good, but 'consequently', that is, once given the divine decision to create, it wills the best possible. 'God wills *antecedently* the good and *consequently* the best.'[2] But He could not will 'the best' without willing the existence of imperfect things. Even in the best of all possible worlds creatures must be imperfect.

In treating the problems of physical and moral evil Leibniz presupposed his metaphysical position. This, of course, he had every right to do; for it was precisely his metaphysical position which gave rise to the problem. (He might, however, have given more consideration to the fact that the doctrine of the pre-established harmony makes these problems even more acute than they are in any case in a theistic philosophy.) Presupposing that the world is the best possible, he observes that 'one must believe that even sufferings and monstrosities are part of order';[3] they all belong to the system, and we have no reason to suppose that another world would be a better world. There is, moreover, more physical

[1] *Theodicy*, 20, pp. 135–6; *G.*, 6, 115.
[2] *Theodicy*, 23, p. 137; *G.*, 6, 116.
[3] *Theodicy*, 241, p. 276; *G.*, 6, 261.

good than physical evil in the world. Further, physical sufferings are 'results of moral evil'.[1] They serve many useful purposes; for they act as a penalty for sin and as a means of perfecting the good. As for animals, 'one cannot reasonably doubt the existence of pain among animals, but it seems as if their pleasures and their pains are not so keen as they are in man; for animals, since they do not reflect, are susceptible neither to the grief that accompanies pain nor to the joy that accompanies pleasure'.[2] Leibniz's general contention is, however, that there is incomparably more good than evil in the world, and that the evil there is in the world belongs to the whole system, which must be taken as a totality. The shadows set the lights in clearer relief. From the metaphysical point of view Leibniz tends to make evil necessary. 'Now since God made all positive reality which is not eternal, He would have made the source of evil (imperfection), if that did not lie rather in the possibility of things or forms, which God did not make, since He is not the author of His own understanding.'[3] When treating of concrete physical evils, he writes in a way which to many minds would seem superficial and 'edifying' in a pejorative sense. Indeed, in the preface to the *Theodicy* he says, 'I have endeavoured in all things to consider edification.'[4]

The chief problem considered by Leibniz is, however, that of moral evil. In the *Theodicy* he writes diffusely about this subject, with many references to other philosophers and to the Scholastic theologians. Indeed, he shows an astonishing knowledge of Scholastic controversies, like that between the 'Thomists' and the 'Molinists'. This diffusiveness makes it somewhat difficult to sum up his position, in spite of the fact that he wrote an abridgement or summary of the *Theodicy*. But a more important reason for the difficulty one finds in stating Leibniz's position in succinct form is that he appears to combine two divergent points of view.

One of the difficulties confronting every theist who tries to grapple with the problem of evil is that of showing how God is not responsible for the moral evil in the world which He created and which He conserves in existence. In answering this difficulty Leibniz employs the Scholastic theory of evil as privation. 'The Platonists, St. Augustine and the Schoolmen were right in saying that God is the cause of the material element of evil which lies in the positive, and not of the formal element which lies in privation.'[1] Moral evil is a privation of right order in the will. If *A* murders *B* by shooting him, his action is physically the same as it would have been if he had shot *B* in legitimate self-defence; but in the first case there is a privation of right order which would not have been present in the second case. This privation is then connected by Leibniz with what he calls 'metaphysical evil'. 'And when it is said that the creature depends upon God in so far as it exists and in so far as it acts, and even that conservation is a continual creation, this is true in that God gives always to the creature and produces continually all that is positive, good and perfect in it. . . . The imperfections, on the other hand, and the defects in operations spring from the original limitation which the creature could not but receive with the first beginning of its being, through the ideal reasons that restrict it. For God could not give the creature all without making it a God; therefore there must needs be different degrees in the perfections of things, and limitations also of every kind.'[2] This implies that a man's evil actions are the unfolding, as it were, of the imperfection and limitation of his essence as contained in the idea of him in the divine understanding. In this sense they would seem to be necessary, even metaphysically necessary. They do not, however, depend on the divine will, save in the sense that God chose to create. And though He created the best possible world freely, He could not create even this world without creating imperfect beings. Further, if Leibniz had pressed his idea of possibles as demanding existence and as competing, as it were, for existence, he might have gone on to say that the existence of the world is necessary and that therefore God cannot be held responsible for the evil in the world.

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[1] *Theodicy*, 241, p. 276; *G.*, 6, 261.

[2] *Theodicy*, 250, p. 281; *G.*, 6, 266.

[3] *Theodicy*, 380, p. 353; *G.*, 6, 341.

[4] *Theodicy*, p. 71; *G.*, 6, 47.

But these developments of his thought would have taken Leibniz very close to Spinozism. And in point of fact he never did develop his ideas in this way. He chose instead to emphasize divine and human freedom and to find place for human responsibility and for sanctions after death. God created the world freely; but He willed positively the positive element, not the element of privation or evil, so far at any rate as moral evil is concerned. This last is to be ascribed to the human agent who will be justly rewarded or punished after death. Writing against Descartes' idea of immortality without memory Leibniz asserts that 'this immortality without memory is altogether useless, viewed ethically, for it destroys all reward, all recompense and all punishment.... In order to satisfy the hope of the human race, it must be proved that the God Who governs all is wise and just, and that He will leave nothing without recompense and without punishment. These are the great foundations of ethics....'[1] But if eternal sanctions were to be justified, freedom must be asserted.

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[1] *Theodicy*, 30, p. 141; *G.*, 6, 120.

[2] *Theodicy*, 31, pp. 141–2; *G.*, 6, 121.

Yet here again Leibniz was involved in great difficulty. According to him, all the successive predicates of a given subject are virtually comprised within the notion of that subject. Now, a substance is analogous to a subject, and all its attributes and actions are virtually contained in its essence. All a man's actions are therefore predictable in principle, in the sense that they can be foreseen by an infinite Mind. How, then, can they properly be called free? In the *Theodicy* Leibniz stoutly asserts the reality of freedom, and he points out that certain Scholastic writers 'of great profundity' developed the idea of God's predetermining decrees in order to explain the divine foreknowledge of future contingents and that they asserted freedom at the same time. God predetermines men to choose this or that freely. He then adds that the doctrine of the pre-established harmony will explain the divine knowledge without there being any need either to introduce further immediate predetermination by God or to postulate the *scientia media* of the Molinists. And this doctrine is perfectly compatible with freedom. For even though it is *a priori* certain that a man will make a certain choice, he will choose not out of constraint but because he is inclined by final causes to choose in that way.

It would be profitless to discuss at greater length the question whether freedom is compatible with Leibniz's logical and metaphysical premisses unless one first defined 'freedom'. If one understands by freedom 'liberty of indifference', it is inadmissible in Leibniz's system, as he himself several times asserts; he calls it a chimerical idea. According to Leibniz, 'there is always a prevailing reason which prompts the will to its choice, and for the maintenance of freedom for the will it suffices that this reason should incline without necessitating'.[2] Metaphysical and moral necessity must be distinguished, and determination must not be identified with the former: there can be a determination which is compatible with freedom but which is not the same as absolute necessity, since the contrary of what is determined is not contradictory and

[1] *G.*, 4, 400; *D.*, p. 9.

[2] *Theodicy*, 45, p. 148; *G.*, 6, 127.

logically inconceivable. Where some would speak of psychological determinism, Leibniz speaks of 'freedom'. And if one defines freedom as 'spontaneity joined to intelligence',[1] this is doubtless compatible with Leibniz's logical and metaphysical premisses. But it may be doubted whether it is compatible with his acceptance in the *Theodicy* of the ideas of sin and eternal sanctions. The plain man at least is inclined to think that there can hardly be question of 'sin' and of retributive punishment except in the case of agents who ought to have acted otherwise and who could have acted otherwise, not merely in the sense that another course of action would have been logically possible but also in the sense that it would have been practically possible.

It is difficult, therefore, to avoid the impression that there is a discrepancy between the implications of Leibniz's logical and metaphysical premisses and the orthodox theological pronouncements of the *Theodicy*. On this matter I must confess that I agree with Bertrand Russell. At the same time there is not, I think, any good ground for accusing Leibniz of insincerity or of suggesting that his theology was dictated simply by motives of expediency. After all, he was well acquainted with certain theological and metaphysical systems in which the term 'freedom' was interpreted in a peculiar sense, and it is not as though he was the first among non-Spinozists to regard 'freedom' as compatible with 'determination'. The theologians and metaphysicians in question would have said that the plain man's notion of freedom is confused and needs clarification and correction. And Leibniz doubtless thought the same. Whether the distinction he draws between metaphysical and moral necessity is sufficient to enable one to attach an unambiguous meaning to the term 'freedom' is matter for dispute.

6. By saying that the world is the best of all possible worlds Leibniz did not mean to imply that it has at any given moment attained its maximum state of perfection: it is constantly progressing and developing. The harmony in the universe 'makes all things progress towards grace by natural methods'.[2] In speaking of progress towards grace Leibniz seems to have in mind the elevation of certain sensitive souls, according to the plan of the pre-established harmony, to the rank of spirits or rational souls, a rank which makes them 'images of the Divinity itself',[3] capable of knowing the system of the universe and of 'entering into a sort

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[1] *G.*, 7, 108 (*Initia Scientiae Generalis*, H).
[2] *Monadology*, 88; *G.*, 6, 622; *D.*, p. 231.
[3] *Monadology*, 83; *G.*, 6, 621.

of society with God'. The harmonious union of spirits composes the 'city of God,' 'a moral world within the natural world'.[1] God considered as architect of the mechanism of the universe and God considered as monarch of the city of spirits is one and the same Being, and this unity is expressed in the 'harmony between the physical kingdom of nature and the moral kingdom of grace'.[2] Just as Leibniz envisaged the possibility of a given monad ascending the scale of monads in the progressive fulfilment of its potentialities, so he regarded the system of monads as progressing towards an ideal term of development. This development or progress is unending. Speaking of the next life, he observes that 'supreme felicity, by whatever beatific vision or knowledge of God it be accompanied, can never be full; for, since God is infinite, He cannot be wholly known. Therefore our happiness will never, and ought not to consist in full joy where there would be nothing to desire, rendering our mind stupid, but in a perpetual progress to new pleasures and to new perfections.'[3] This conception of unending progress and self-perfection is found again in Kant, who was also influenced by Leibniz's idea of the city of God and of the harmony between the moral kingdom and the kingdom of nature as the goal of history. These ideas represent the historical element in Leibniz's philosophy. He emphasized not only the timeless truths of logic and mathematics but also the dynamic and perpetual self-unfolding and self-perfection of individual substances linked together in a bond of harmony. He tried to connect the two sides of his philosophy by interpreting his monads as logical subjects; but the fact remains that it was through the historical side of his philosophy rather than through the logical and mathematical that he breaks through, as it were, the bounds of the rationalist Enlightenment. Yet the historical aspect of his thought was at the same time subordinate to the mathematical. Nothing new ever emerges: all is in principle predictable: all development is analogous to the working-out of a system of logic or mathematics. It is true that for him history is governed by the principle of fitness or perfection rather than by the principle of contradiction; but the tendency to subordinate the former to the latter is always present.

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[1] *Monadology*, 86; *G.*, 6, 622.

[2] *Monadology*, 87; *G.*, 6, 622.

[3] *The Principles of Nature and of Grace*, 18; *G.*, 6, 606; *D.*, p. 217.

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2. The letters *E.L.* in brackets, following the word 'London' after the title of a book, mean that the book in question belongs to the Everyman's Library, published by Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd. No dates for these books are given here, as the numbers of the series are frequently reprinted. (And the format is being changed.)

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VOLUME V

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Frederick Copleston, S.J.

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PREFACE

As I remarked in the preface to the fourth volume of this work, my original intention was to cover the philosophy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including the system of Kant, in one book. But it did not prove possible to do this. And I have divided the matter between three books, treating each as a separate volume. My original plan has, however, been preserved to this extent, that there is a common introductory chapter and a common Concluding Review for Volumes IV, V and VI. The former has been placed, of course, at the beginning of Volume IV, *Descartes to Leibniz*. The Concluding Review, in which I propose to discuss, not only from an historical but also from a more philosophical point of view, the nature, importance and value of the various styles of philosophizing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, will form the last chapter of Volume VI, *Wolff to Kant*, which will comprise the French Enlightenment, the German Enlightenment, the rise of the philosophy of history, and the system of Kant. The present volume, therefore, *Hobbes to Hume*, which is devoted to British philosophical thought from Hobbes up to and including the Scottish philosophy of common sense and which represents the second part of the originally projected fourth volume, *Descartes to Kant*, does not contain either an introductory chapter or a Concluding Review. As its arrangement differs to this extent from that of the first three volumes, I thought it desirable to repeat here the explanation which has already been offered in the preface to Volume IV.

CHAPTER I

HOBBES (1)

Life and writings—The end and nature of philosophy and its exclusion of all theology—The divisions of philosophy—Philosophical method—Hobbes's nominalism—Causality and mechanism—Space and time—Body and accidents—Motion and change—Vital motions and animal motions—Good and evil—The passions—Will—Intellectual virtues—Atomic individualism.

1. THOMAS HOBBES, author of one of the most celebrated political treatises in European literature, was born at Westport near Malmesbury in 1588. His father was a clergyman. In 1608, when Hobbes went down from Oxford, he entered the service of the Cavendish family and spent the years 1608–10 travelling in France and Italy as tutor to the son of Lord Cavendish, future earl of Devonshire. On his return to England he occupied himself with literary pursuits and translated Thucydides into English, the translation being published in 1628. He had relations with Francis Bacon (d. 1626) and with Lord Herbert of Cherbury; but he had not yet given himself to philosophy.

From 1629 until 1631 Hobbes was again in France, this time as tutor to the son of Sir Gervase Clifton; and it was during a visit to Paris that he made acquaintance with the *Elements* of Euclid. Historians have pointed out that for all his labours Hobbes was never able to acquire that degree of mathematical knowledge and insight which Descartes had attained at a far earlier age. But though he was never a great mathematician, it was this encounter with geometry which supplied him with his lasting ideal of scientific method. During his visit to Paris his attention was also drawn to problems of sense-perception, the relation of sensation to the motions of bodies and the status of secondary qualities.

On returning to England Hobbes again entered the service of the Cavendish family, and from 1634 until 1637 he was once more on the Continent. He met Galileo at Florence, and at Paris he was introduced by Mersenne into philosophical and scientific circles. He thus came to know the Cartesian philosophy, and at Mersenne's invitation he submitted to Descartes his objections against the latter's *Meditations*. This period was of great importance in the development of Hobbes's mind and in determining his philosophical interests. He was already a middle-aged man when he turned his attention to philosophy; but he formulated for himself the idea of a system and projected a presentation of it in three parts. In actual fact his mind was first seriously occupied with social and political problems, and in 1640 he wrote *The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic,* of which two portions appeared in 1650 under the titles *Human Nature or the Fundamental Elements of Policy* and *De corpore politico.* The text of the whole work did not appear until 1889, when it was edited and published by F. Tönnies.

In 1640 Hobbes, thinking that his safety was menaced in England because of his royalist convictions, took refuge in France. In 1642 he published at Paris his work *De cive,* the third part of his projected philosophical system; and it was at Paris that he wrote his famous *Leviathan or the Matter, Form and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil,* which appeared in London in 1651. In 1649 Charles I was beheaded, and one might perhaps expect that Hobbes would have remained in France, especially as he had been for a time mathematical tutor to Charles, Prince of Wales, who was living in exile at Paris. However, he made his peace with the Commonwealth in 1652 and settled down in the household of the earl of Devonshire. Some of the ideas which he was known to have expounded in the *Leviathan* were not acceptable in royalist circles at Paris, and in any case the civil war, which had constituted Hobbes's chief reason for remaining abroad, was over. As will be seen later, his political convictions enabled him to accept any *de facto* government which was in effective control of the State. After the Restoration in 1660 Hobbes enjoyed the favour of Charles II and received a pension.

In 1655 and 1658 Hobbes published the first and second sections of his philosophical system, the *De corpore* and the *De homine.* And until the end of his life he occupied himself with literary labours, translating the whole of Homer into English and writing a book on the Long Parliament. He was also much engaged in controversy. Thus he conducted a literary debate with Bramhall, bishop of Derry, on the subject of freedom and necessity, in which he maintained a determinist point of view. He was also engaged in controversy with the mathematician Wallis, who published an *Elenchus geometriae hobbinae* in which Hobbes's mathematical errors were subjected to sharp criticism. He was also attacked, particularly by ecclesiastics, on the score of heresy and atheism. However, having successfully weathered both Commonwealth and Restoration, he was not to be killed by verbal polemics, and he survived until the winter of 1679 when he died at the age of ninety-one.[1]

2. Hobbes, like Bacon, stresses the practical purpose of philosophy. 'The *end* or *scope* of philosophy is that we may make use to our benefit of effects formerly seen; or that, by application of bodies to one another, we may produce the like effects of those we conceive in our mind, as far forth as matter, strength and industry will permit, for the commodity of human life. . . . The end of knowledge is power . . . and the scope of all speculation is the performance of some action or thing to be done.'[2] Natural philosophy confers obvious benefits on mankind. But moral and political philosophy also possesses great utility. For human life is afflicted by calamities, of which civil war is the chief, that arise because men do not understand sufficiently the rules of conduct and of political life. 'Now, the knowledge of these rules is moral philosophy.'[3] Both in the sciences and in politics knowledge is power.

But though philosophical knowledge is power, in the sense that its function is to contribute to man's material prosperity and to social peace and security, it does not follow that all knowledge is philosophical. As far as the remote basis of philosophical knowledge is concerned, Hobbes is an empiricist. The philosopher starts with the given, with sense-impressions made on us by external bodies, and with our memories of such impressions. He starts with the empirical data, from what Hobbes calls 'effects' or 'appearances'. But though our immediate awareness of appearances or phenomena and our memory of them constitute knowledge, and though they form the remote basis of philosophy, they are not philosophical knowledge. 'Although sense and memory of things, which are common to man and all living creatures, be knowledge, yet because they are given us immediately by nature, and not gotten by ratiocination, they are not philosophy.'[4] Everyone knows that the sun exists, in the sense that they have the experience which we call 'seeing the sun'; but nobody would say that such knowledge is scientific astronomical knowledge. Similarly, that human actions take place is known by all; but all do not possess a scientific or philosophical knowledge of human actions. Philosophy is concerned with causal relations. 'Philosophy is such knowledge of effects or appearances as we acquire by true ratiocination from the knowledge we have first of their causes or generation. And again, of such causes or generations as may be (had) from knowing first their effects.'[1] The philosopher discovers effects from known causes and causes from known effects. And he does so by 'ratiocination'. He is not concerned with simply stating empirical facts, that this or that is or was a fact, but with the consequences of propositions, which are discovered by reasoning and not by observation.

---

[1] W. Molesworth edited two collections of Hobbes's writings: *Opera philosophica quae latine scripsit* in five volumes (1839–45) and *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes* in eleven volumes (1839–45). In the references given in this and in the next chapter the letters *O.L.* and *E.W.* refer respectively to these editions.

[2] *Concerning Body*, 1, 1, 6; *E.W.*, 1, p. 7.

[3] *Concerning Body*, 1, 1, 7; *E.W.*, 1, p. 8.

[4] *Concerning Body*, 1, 1, 2; *E.W.*, 1, p. 3.

We can understand, therefore, what Hobbes means when he divides knowledge into knowledge of fact and knowledge of consequence. 'There are of Knowledge two kinds; whereof one is *knowledge of fact:* the other *knowledge of the consequence of one affirmation to another.*'[2] When I see something done or remember seeing it done, I have knowledge of fact. This, says Hobbes, is the kind of knowledge required of a witness in a court of law. It is 'absolute' knowledge, in the sense that it is expressed absolutely or in assertoric form. And the 'register' of knowledge of fact is called history, which may take the form either of natural or of civil history. Knowledge of consequence, on the contrary, is conditional or hypothetical, in the sense that it is knowledge that, for example, if *A* is true, *B* is also true. To use Hobbes's example, 'If the figure shown be a circle, then any straight line through the centre shall divide it into two equal parts'.[3] This is scientific knowledge, the kind of knowledge which is required of a philosopher, 'that is to say, of him that pretends to reasoning'.[4] And the 'registers of science' are books containing the demonstrations of the consequences of propositions and 'are commonly called *books of philosophy*'.[5] Scientific or philosophical knowledge can therefore be described as knowledge of consequences. And such knowledge is always conditional: 'if this be, that is; if this has been, that has been; if this shall be, that shall be'.[6]

We have seen that for Hobbes philosophy is concerned with causal explanation. And by causal explanation he means a scientific account of the generative process by which some effect comes into being. From this it follows that if there is anything which does not come into existence through a generative process, it cannot be part of the subject-matter of philosophy. God, therefore, and indeed all spiritual reality, is excluded from philosophy. 'The *subject* of Philosophy, or the matter it treats of, is every body of which we can conceive any generation, and which we may, by any consideration thereof, compare with other bodies, or which is capable of composition and resolution; that is to say, every body of whose generation or properties we can have any knowledge. . . . Therefore it (philosophy) excludes theology, I mean the doctrine of God, eternal, ingenerable, incomprehensible, and in whom there is nothing neither to divide nor compound, nor any generation to be conceived.'[1] History is also excluded, because 'such knowledge is but experience (memory) or authority, and not ratiocination'.[2] And pseudo-sciences, such as astrology, cannot be admitted.

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[1] *Concerning Body*, I, I, 2; *E.W.*, I, p. 3.
[2] *Leviathan*, I, 9; *E.W.*, III, p. 71.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Leviathan*, I, 7; *E.W.*, III, p. 52.

Philosophy, therefore, is concerned with the causes and properties of bodies. And this means that it is concerned with bodies in motion. For motion is the 'one universal cause', which 'cannot be understood to have any other cause besides motion'; and 'the variety of all figures arises out of the variety of those motions by which they are made'.[3] This account of the nature and subject-matter of philosophy may not, Hobbes observes, be acceptable to everyone. Some will say that it is a matter of definition and that anyone is free to define philosophy as he wishes. This is true, 'though I think it no hard matter to demonstrate that this definition of mine agrees with the sense of all men'.[4] Hobbes adds, however, that those who seek another kind of philosophy must adopt other principles. If his own principles are adopted, philosophy will be what he conceives it to be.

Hobbes's philosophy, therefore, is materialistic in the sense that it takes no account of anything but bodies. And in so far as the exclusion of God and of all spiritual reality is simply the result of a freely chosen definition, his materialism can be called methodological. He does not say that there is no God; he says that God is not the subject-matter of philosophy. At the same time it seems to me to be a great mistake to represent Hobbes as saying no more than that according to his use of the word 'philosophy' the existence and nature of God are not philosophical topics. Philosophy and reasoning are for him coextensive; and from this it follows that theology is irrational. To all intents and purposes he identified the imaginable and the conceivable. And from this he drew the conclusion that we can have no idea of the infinite or of the immaterial. 'Whatsoever we imagine is *finite*. Therefore there is no idea or conception of any thing we call infinite.'[1] A term such as *incorporeal substance* is just as contradictory as *incorporeal body* or *round quadrangle*. Terms of this sort are 'insignificant'[2], that is, meaningless. Some people do indeed think that they understand them; but all that they really do is to repeat the words to themselves without any real understanding of their content. For they have no content. Hobbes explicitly asserts that words such as *hypostatical, transubstantiate, eternal-now* and so on 'signify nothing'.[3] 'Words whereby we conceive nothing but the sound are those we call *absurd, insignificant* and *nonsense*. And therefore if a man should talk to me of a *round quadrangle* . . . or *immaterial substances* . . . or of a *free subject* . . . I should not say he were in an error, but that his words were without meaning, that is to say, absurd.'[4] He makes it abundantly clear that theology, if offered as a science or coherent body of true propositions, is absurd and irrational. And to say this is to say very much more than that one proposes to confine one's attention in philosophy to the realm of the corporeal.

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[1] *Concerning Body*, I, I, 8; *E.W.*, I, p. 10.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[3] *Concerning Body*, I, 6, 5; *E.W.*, I, pp. 69–70.

[4] *Concerning Body*, I, I, 10; *E.W.*, I, p. 12.

At the same time one cannot legitimately conclude without more ado that Hobbes is an atheist. It would indeed appear to follow from his empiricist analysis of the meaning of names that all talk about God is so much gibberish and that belief is simply a matter of emotion, that is, of an emotive attitude. But this is not precisely what Hobbes says. As regards natural religion he says that curiosity or love of the knowledge of causes naturally draws a man to conceive a cause which itself has no cause, 'so that it is impossible to make any profound inquiry into natural causes without being inclined thereby to believe that there is one God eternal; though they (men) cannot have any idea of him in their mind, answerable to his nature'.[5] For 'by the visible things in this world, and their admirable order, a man may conceive there is a cause of them, which men call God; and yet not have an idea or image of him in his mind'.[6] In other words, Hobbes emphasizes the incomprehensibility of God. If a word such as 'infinite' is predicated of God, it does not stand for any positive idea of God but expresses our inability to conceive Him. 'And therefore the name of God is used, not to make us conceive him, for he is incomprehensible; and his greatness and power are inconceivable, but that we may honour him.'[1] Similarly, terms such as *spirit* and *incorporeal* are not in themselves intelligible. 'And therefore, men that by their own meditation arrive to the acknowledgement of one infinite, omnipotent, and eternal God, choose rather to confess he is incomprehensible and above their understanding than to define his nature by *spirit incorporeal*, and then confess their definition to be unintelligible: or if they give him such a title, it is not *dogmatically*, with intention to make the divine nature *understood*; but *piously*, to honour him with attributes, or significations, as remote as they can from the grossness of bodies visible.'[2] As for Christian revelation, expressed in the Scriptures, Hobbes does not deny that there is a revelation, but he applies the same principles in his interpretation of the terms used. The word *spirit* either signifies a subtle and fluid body or is used metaphorically or is purely unintelligible. 'For the nature of God is incomprehensible; that is to say, we understand nothing of *what he is*, but only *that he is*; and therefore the attributes we give him are not to tell one another *what he is*, nor to signify our opinion of his nature, but our desire to honour him with such names as we conceive most honourable amongst ourselves.'[3]

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[1] *Leviathan*, I, 3; *E.W.*, III, p. 17.

[2] *Leviathan*, I, 4; *E.W.*, III, p. 27.

[3] *Leviathan*, I, 5; *E.W.*, III, pp. 34–5.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 32–3.

[5] *Leviathan*, I, 11; *E.W.*, III, p. 92.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 93.

Some commentators have seen in all this a continuation and intensification of the tendency, already visible in fourteenth-century thinkers such as Ockham and those who belonged to the movement of which he was the most eminent representative, to draw a sharp distinction between theology and philosophy and to relegate all theology, including natural theology, to the sphere of faith, so that philosophy would have little or nothing to say about God. And there is certainly a good deal to be said in favour of this interpretation. As we have seen, Hobbes makes explicit use of the famous distinction, common enough in the Middle Ages, between knowing of God *that* He is and knowing *what* He is. But the mediaeval theologians and philosophers who emphasized this distinction believed that God is incorporeal substance and infinite spirit. And this is true both of a writer such as St. Thomas Aquinas who combined the use of the distinction with belief in a philosophical though analogical knowledge of God, and of a fourteenth-century philosopher such as Ockham, who evidently considered that philosophy is incapable of telling us much about God. Hobbes, however, seems to have affirmed the corporeality of God, at least if one can judge by what he says in the course of his controversy with Bishop Bramhall. For there he says explicitly that God is 'a most pure and most simple corporeal spirit' and that 'the Trinity, and the persons thereof, are that one pure, simple and eternal corporeal spirit'.[1] The phrase 'simple, corporeal spirit' seems at first sight to be a contradiction in terms. But a pure and simple body is said to be 'body of one and the same kind in every part throughout'.[2] And spirit is said to be 'thin, fluid, transparent, invisible body'.[3] If, then, the terms are given these meanings, the contradiction disappears. But in this case God's corporeality is affirmed. True, this does not mean that God possesses secondary qualities; but it means that He possesses magnitude. 'By corporeal I mean a substance that has magnitude.'[4] And magnitude, as will be seen later, is the same as extension. God, therefore, is infinite, invisible extension. And to make this statement is to say very much more than that God is incomprehensible and that because of His incomprehensibility philosophy has nothing to say about Him. However, if Hobbes, who appeals not only to Tertullian but also to Scripture in support of his theory, is serious in all this, as presumably he is, he cannot be called an atheist, unless under the term 'atheist' one includes the man who affirms God's existence but denies that He is infinite, incorporeal substance. And in Hobbes's opinion to affirm the latter would be itself atheism; for to say that God is incorporeal substance is to say that there is no God, since substance is necessarily corporeal.

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[1] *Leviathan*, I, 3; *E.W.*, III, p. 17.
[2] *Leviathan*, I, 12; *E.W.*, III, p. 97.
[3] *Leviathan*, 3, 34; *E.W.*, III, p. 383.

3. To say, however, that philosophy is concerned exclusively with bodies and their properties and causes is not to say that it is concerned exclusively with bodies in the ordinary sense and that it is coextensive with what we call the natural sciences. 'For two chief kinds of bodies, and very different from one another, offer themselves to such as search after their generation and properties.'[5] The one is called a *natural body*, because it is made by nature; the other is called a *commonwealth*, and 'it is made by the wills and agreement of men'.[6] Philosophy can thus be subdivided into two

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[1] *E.W.*, IV, p. 306.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 309.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 313.
[5] *Concerning Body*, I, I, 9; *E.W.*, I, p. 11.
[6] *Ibid.*

parts, natural and civil. Further, civil philosophy can be subdivided. For in order to understand the nature, function and properties of a commonwealth we have first to understand the dispositions, affections and manners of man; and the part of philosophy which treats of this subject is called *ethics*, whereas the part which treats of man's civil duties is called *politics* or takes to itself alone the general term *civil philosophy*. And from this analysis of the subject-matter of philosophy there follows the division of headings which Hobbes adopted for his systematic exposition: *De corpore*, treating of natural bodies, *De homine*, treating of man's dispositions, affections and 'manners', and *De cive*, treating of the commonwealth and of man's civic duties.

This division is not, however, complete. In the dedicatory epistle to the *De cive* Hobbes remarks that just as the British, Atlantic and Indian seas make up the ocean, so do geometry, physics and morals make up philosophy. If we consider the effects produced by a body in motion and confine our attention exclusively to the motion of the body, we see that the motion of a point generates a line, the motion of a line a plane surface, and so on. And from this study there sprang 'that part of philosophy which is called geometry'.[1] We can then consider the effects produced by one moving body on another when the bodies are considered as wholes. And we can thus develop a science of motion. We can also consider the effects produced by the motion of the parts of a body. We can arrive, for example, at knowledge of the nature of secondary qualities and of phenomena such as light. And these 'considerations comprehend that part of philosophy which is called physics'.[2] Finally, we can consider the motions of the mind, such as appetite and aversion, hope, anger and so on, and their causes and effects. And then we have moral philosophy.

The completest division which Hobbes gives of the subject-matter of philosophy is derived from applying the definition of science or philosophical knowledge as the 'knowledge of consequences'.[3] The two main divisions are knowledge of consequences from the accidents of natural bodies and knowledge of consequences from the accidents of political bodies. The former is called natural philosophy, the latter politics or civil philosophy. In politics we study what follows from the institution of commonwealths, first as regards the rights and duties of the sovereign, secondly as regards the duty and rights of subjects. Natural philosophy, however, comprises a considerable number of further divisions and subdivisions. If we study the consequences which follow from the accidents common to all bodies, namely, quantity and motion, we have either 'first philosophy', if it is indeterminate quantity and motion which are being considered, or mathematics, if we are considering the consequences from quantity and motion determined by figure and number, or astronomy or mechanics according to the special kinds of bodies we are considering. If we study the consequences from the qualities of bodies, we have physics. And physics in turn can be subdivided according to the different kinds of bodies considered. For instance, study of the consequences from the passions of men yields ethics, which is classified, therefore, under the general heading of natural philosophy, since a human being is a natural and not an artificial body in the sense in which a commonwealth is an artificial body.[1]

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[1] *Concerning Body*, I, 6, 6; *E.W.*, I, p. 71.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

[3] Cf. *Leviathan*, I, 9; *E.W.*, III, pp. 72–3.

4. The description of philosophical knowledge or science as 'knowledge of the consequences of one affirmation to another', coupled with the assertion that such knowledge is hypothetical or conditional, naturally suggests that Hobbes attached great importance to deduction; that is, to the mathematical method. And some commentators have given the impression that in his opinion philosophy is, or rather should be, a purely deductive system. 'Rationalism' or reasoning, which is the essential characteristic of philosophy, is described in mathematical terms. 'By *ratiocination* I mean *computation*.'[2] And Hobbes proceeds to say that to compute is to add or subtract, terms which obviously suggest arithmetical operations. The whole system of Hobbes, it has been said, was designed to be a deduction from an analysis of motion and quantity, even though he did not in fact succeed in fulfilling his purpose. In his insistence on the practical function and end of philosophy or science he was akin to Bacon; but his concept of the proper method to be employed in philosophy was very different from Bacon's. The latter stressed experiment, whereas Hobbes took a dim view of the experimenters and upheld an idea of method which clearly resembles that of continental rationalists such as Descartes.

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[1] The study of the consequences from the qualities of men in particular includes, besides ethics, study of the functions of speech. Study of, for example, the technique of persuading gives us rhetoric, while study of the art of reasoning gives us logic.

[2] *Concerning Body*, 1, 1, 2; *E.W.*, 1, p. 3.

This interpretation of Hobbes's conception of philosophical method contains a great deal of truth. But I think that it is an over-simplified view and stands in need of qualification. For one thing, Hobbes certainly never imagined that he could start with an abstract analysis of motion and then proceed in a purely deductive manner without the introduction of any empirical material drawn from experience. He was, indeed, a systematizer. He was convinced that there is a continuity between physics, psychology and politics, and that a coherent and systematic view of the different branches of philosophy is possible in the light of general principles. But he was well aware that one cannot deduce man and society from abstract laws of motion. If anything can be deduced, it is the laws governing man's 'motions', not man himself. As we have already seen, there are empirically given data which form the remote subject-matter of philosophy, even though knowledge of these data, considered as mere given facts, is not philosophy.

When Hobbes says that ratiocination means computation, and that computation means addition and subtraction, he goes on to explain that he is using these last-mentioned terms in the sense of 'composition' and 'division or resolution'. 'And the resolutive (method) is commonly called *analytical* method, as the compositive is called *synthetical*.'[1] Philosophical method or ratiocination comprises, therefore, analysis and synthesis. In analysis the mind proceeds from the particular to the universal or to first principles. For example, if a man starts with the idea of gold, he can come by 'resolution' to the ideas of solid, visible, heavy 'and many others more universal than gold itself; and these he may resolve again, till he comes to such things as are most universal. . . . I conclude, therefore, that the method of attaining to the universal knowledge of things is purely *analytical*.'[2] In synthesis, on the contrary, the mind starts with principles or general causes and proceeds to construct their possible effects. The whole process of determining or discovering causal relations and establishing causal explanations, the method of invention as Hobbes calls it, is partly analytical and partly synthetical. To use terms which he borrowed from Galileo, it is partly resolutive and partly compositive. Or, to use terms more familiar to us, it is partly inductive and partly deductive. We can say, I think, that Hobbes envisaged the method of framing explanatory hypotheses and deducing their consequences. The fact that he asserts that the deduced effects are 'possible' effects, at least in what we would call physical science, shows that he had some awareness of the hypothetical character of the explanatory theories concerned.

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[1] *Concerning Body*, I, 6, I; *E.W.*, I, p. 66.

[2] *Ibid.*

A distinction is made by Hobbes between the method of invention and the method of teaching or demonstrating. In using the latter method we start with first principles, which stand in need of explanation but not of demonstration, since first principles cannot be demonstrated, and proceed deductively to conclusions. 'The whole method, therefore, of demonstration is *synthetical*, consisting of that order of speech which begins from primary or most universal propositions, which are manifest of themselves, and proceeds by a perpetual composition of propositions into syllogisms, till at last the learner understands the truth of the conclusion sought after.'[1]

It is perhaps this ideal of continuous demonstration which has given the impression that Hobbes aimed at the construction of a purely deductive system. And if we press this point of view, we shall have to say that he failed, at least in part, in his attempt. But in estimating what Hobbes was trying to do it seems reasonable to take into account what he actually says about the method or methods which he in fact employs.

Hobbes certainly emphasizes the debt which science and man owe to mathematics. 'For whatsoever assistance doth accrue to the life of man, whether from the observation of the heavens or from the description of the earth, from the notation of times or from the remotest experiments of navigation; finally, whatsoever things they are in which this present age doth differ from the rude simpleness of antiquity, we must acknowledge to be a debt which we owe to geometry.'[2] The advances in astronomy, for example, were rendered possible by mathematics, and without mathematics there would have been no advance. And the benefits conferred by applied science are also due to mathematics. If moral philosophers took the trouble to ascertain the nature of human passions and actions as clearly as mathematicians understand 'the nature of quantity in geometrical figures'[3] it would be possible to banish war and secure a stable peace.

This suggests that there is a close link between mathematics and physics. And in point of fact Hobbes insists on this link. 'They that study natural philosophy study in vain, except they begin at geometry; and such writers or disputers thereof, as are ignorant of geometry, do but make their readers and hearers lose their time.'[1] But this does not mean that Hobbes endeavoured to deduce from the abstract analysis of motion and quantity and from mathematics the whole of natural philosophy. When he comes to the fourth part of his treatise *Concerning Body,* which he entitles 'Physics or the Phenomena of Nature', he remarks that the definition of philosophy which he gave in the first chapter shows that there are two methods: 'one from the generation of things to their possible effects, and the other from their effects or appearances to some possible generation of the same'.[2] In the foregoing chapters he has followed the first method, affirming nothing but definitions and their implications.[3] He is now about to use the second method, 'the finding out by the appearances or effects of nature, which we know by sense, some ways and means by which they may be, I do not say they are, generated'.[4] He is not now starting with definitions but with sensible phenomena or appearances, and he is seeking their possible causes.

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[1] *Concerning Body*, I, 6, 12; *E.W.*, I, p. 81.

[2] *Concerning Government and Society*, dedicatory epistle; *E.W.*, II, p. iv.

[3] *Ibid.*

If, therefore, Hobbes asserts a connection between the use of these two methods and his own definition of philosophy, it can reasonably be claimed that his introduction of fresh empirical material is not properly described as a 'failure' to fulfil his aim. And in this case we are not justified in accusing him of inconsistency because he makes, as it were, a fresh start when he comes to psychology and politics. He does, indeed, say that to obtain a knowledge of morals and politics by the synthetical method it is necessary to have first studied mathematics and physics. For the synthetical method involves seeing all effects as conclusions, proximate or remote, from first principles. But I do not think that he means much more by this than following out the exemplification of general principles in progressively particularized subject-matter according to an architectonic scheme. One cannot deduce men from the laws of motion, but one can study first the laws of motion in themselves and their application to body in general, secondly their application to different kinds of natural bodies, inanimate and animate, and thirdly their application to the artificial body which we call the commonwealth. In any case Hobbes observes that it is possible to study moral and political philosophy without previous knowledge of mathematics and physics if one employs the analytical method. Let us suppose that the question is asked whether an action is just or unjust. We can 'resolve' the notion *unjust* into the notion *fact against law*, and the notion of *law* into the notion *command* of him who has *coercive* power. And this notion of coercive power can be derived from the notion of men voluntarily establishing this power that they may live a peaceful life. Finally we can arrive at the principle that men's appetites and passions are of such a kind that they will be constantly making war on one another unless they are restrained by some power. And this 'may be known to be so by any man's experience, that will but examine his own mind'.[1] One can then decide, by employing the synthetical method, whether the action in question is just or unjust. And in the total process of 'resolution' and 'composition' one remains within the sphere of morals and politics without introducing remoter principles. Experience provides the factual data, and the philosopher can show systematically how they are connected in a rational scheme of cause and effect without necessarily having to relate the cause or causes to remoter and more general causes. Hobbes doubtless considered that a philosopher should show the connections between natural philosophy and civil philosophy. But the fact that he asserted the relative independence of morals and politics shows clearly enough that he was well aware of the need for fresh empirical data when treating of human psychology and of man's social and political life. I have no intention of denying the affinity between Hobbes and the continental rationalists. Among English philosophers he is one of the few who have tried to create systems. But it is also important to emphasize the fact that he was not a fanatical worshipper of pure deduction.

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[1] *Concerning Body,* 1, 6, 6; *E.W.*, 1, p. 73.

[2] *Concerning Body,* 4, 1, 1; *E.W.*, 1, pp. 387–8.

[3] For example, given a certain definition of motion or a certain definition of body, motion or body will necessarily possess certain properties. But it does not follow immediately that there is motion or body. What follows is that if there is motion or if there is body, it will have these properties.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 388.

5. Now, it is obvious that philosophical knowledge, as envisaged by Hobbes, is concerned with the universal and not simply with the particular. Philosophy aims at a coherent and systematic knowledge of causal relations in the light of first principles or of universal causes. At the same time Hobbes clearly asserts a nominalist position when he is treating of names. The

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[1] *Concerning Body*, 1, 6, 7; *E.W.*, 1, p. 74.

individual philosopher, he says, requires marks to help him to remember or recall his thoughts; and these marks are names. Further, if he is to communicate his thoughts to others, these marks must be able to serve as signs, which they can do when they are connected together in what we call 'speech'. Hence he gives the following definition. 'A *name* is a word taken at pleasure[1] to serve for a mark, which may raise in our mind a thought like to some thought we had before, and which being pronounced to others, may be to them a sign of what thought the speaker had or had not before in his mind.'[2] This does not mean that every name should be the name of something. The word *nothing* does not connote a special kind of something. But of the names which do designate things some are proper to one thing (such as *Homer* or *this man*), while others are common to many things (such as *man* or *tree*). And these common names are called 'universal'. That is to say, the term 'universal' is predicated of the name, not of the object designated by the name. For the name is the name of many individual things taken collectively. No one of them is a universal; nor is there any universal thing alongside of these individual things. Further, the universal name does not stand for any universal concept. 'This word *universal* is never the name of any thing existent in nature, nor of any idea or phantasm formed in the mind, but always the name of some word or name; so that when *a living creature*, *a stone*, *a spirit*, or any other thing, is said to be *universal*, it is not to be understood that any man, stone, etc., ever was or can be universal, but only that the words, living creature, stone, etc., are *universal names*, that is, names common to many things; and the conceptions answering them in our mind are the images and phantasms of several living creatures or other things.'[3] As Hobbes tended to identify the conceivable with the imaginable, he naturally found no place for a universal concept or idea, and he therefore attributed universality to common names only. He gives no very thorough explanation of the justification of our use of common names for sets of individual things, beyond referring to the likeness between things. 'One universal name is imposed on many things, for their similitude in some quality, or other accident.'[4] But his statement of a nominalistic position is unambiguous.

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[1] Hobbes is here referring to the conventional character of language. Names are conventional marks and signs.

[2] *Concerning Body*, I, 2, 4; *E.W.*, I, p. 16.

[3] *Concerning Body*, I, 2, 9; *E.W.*, I, p. 20.

[4] *Leviathan*, I, 4; *E.W.*, III, p. 21.

Like Ockham[1] and other mediaeval predecessors, Hobbes distinguishes between names or terms of 'first intention' and names of 'second intention'. Logical terms such as *universal, genus, species* and *syllogism* are, he tells us, 'the names of names and speeches'; they are terms of second intention. Words such as *man* or *stone* are names of first intention. One might expect perhaps that Hobbes would follow Ockham in saying that while terms of second intention stand for other terms, terms of first intention stand for things, universal terms of first intention standing for a plurality of individual things, not, of course, for any universal thing. But this is not what he actually says. He does, indeed, remark that names such as 'a man', 'a tree', 'a stone', 'are the names of things themselves';[2] but he insists that because 'names ordered in speech are signs of our conceptions, it is manifest that they are not signs of the things themselves'.[3] A name such as *stone* is the sign of a 'conception', that is, of a phantasm or image. If John uses this word when speaking to Peter, it is a sign to the latter of John's thought. 'The general use of speech is to transfer our mental discourse into verbal; or the train of our thoughts into a train of words.'[4] And if the 'thought' or 'conception' is an image, it is obvious that universality can be attributed only to words. But even if a universal word or term signifies directly a mental representation or 'fiction', as Hobbes sometimes puts it, this does not necessarily mean that it has no relation to reality. For it can have an indirect relation, inasmuch as the mental representation is itself caused by things. A 'thought' is 'a representation or appearance of some quality or other accident of a body without us, which is commonly called object. Which object worketh on the eyes, ears, and other parts of a man's body; and by diversity of working produceth diversity of appearances. The original of them all is that which we call *sense*, for there is no conception in a man's mind, which hath not at first, totally or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of sense. The rest are derived from that original.'[5] Thus although universality belongs only to words, which signify 'thoughts', there is an indirect relation between universal statements and reality, even if 'reality' must be here taken to mean the sphere of appearances or phenomena. There is, indeed, a great difference between experience, which Hobbes identifies with memory, and science. 'Experience,' to quote his famous statement, 'concludeth nothing universally.'[1] But science, which does 'conclude universally', is based on sense-experience.

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[1] For an account of Ockham's doctrine on this point, see vol. III of this *History*, pp. 55f.

[2] *Concerning Body*, I, 2, 6; *E.W.*, I, p. 17.

[3] *Concerning Body*, I, 2, 5; *E.W.*, I, p. 17.

[4] *Leviathan*, I, 4; *E.W.*, III, p. 19.

[5] *Leviathan*, I, I; *E.W.*, III, p. I.

If, therefore, we press the empiricist aspect of Hobbes's philosophy, it is possible to argue that his nominalism is not necessarily infected with scepticism; that is to say, with doubt about the real reference of scientific propositions. It may, indeed, follow that science is concerned with the realm of phenomena. For appearances produce images, and images are translated into words, the connection of which in speech renders science possible. But the conclusions of science, it might be said, are applicable within the realm of phenomena. And of any other realm the philosopher or scientist can say nothing. On a nominalistic basis constructed theories and causal explanations would be, as Hobbes says they are, hypothetical and conditional. But it would be possible to verify, or at least to test, scientific conclusions in experience, though Hobbes, who had no great esteem for the experimental method in science, does not in fact talk about verification.

Hobbes is, of course, very far from being only an empiricist, though there is certainly an important empiricist element in his thought. What he emphasizes when speaking of philosophy and science is deduction of consequences from first principles. As we have seen, he explicitly recognizes the use of the analytical or inductive method in arriving at the knowledge of principles; but what he emphasizes as the mark of scientific procedure is the deduction of the consequences of affirmations. And it is important to notice his clear statement that the principles from which deduction starts are definitions, and that definitions are nothing but the explication of the meanings of words. Definitions are the 'settling of significations' or 'settled significations of words'.[2] More exactly, a definition is 'a proposition, whose predicate resolves the subject, when it may; and when it may not, it exemplifies the same'.[3] Definitions are the sole principles of demonstration, and they are 'truths constituted arbitrarily by the inventors of speech, and therefore not to be demonstrated'.[4]

If this is taken to mean that definitions are no more than arbitrary determinations of the meanings of words, the conclusions

[1] *Human Nature*, I, 4, 10; *E.W.*, IV, p. 18.
[2] *Leviathan*, I, 4 and 5; *E.W.*, III, pp. 24 and 33.
[3] *Concerning Body*, I, 6, 14; *E.W.*, I, pp. 83–4.
[4] *Concerning Body*, I, 3, 9; *E.W.*, I, p. 37.

derived from such definitions must partake of their arbitrariness. And then we are confronted with a divorce between scientific propositions and reality. There is no guarantee that scientific propositions are applicable to reality. In Hobbes's objections against the *Meditations* of Descartes we find the following remarkable passage. 'But what shall we now say if reasoning is perhaps nothing else but the joining and stringing together of names or appellations by the word *is*? In this case reason gives no conclusions about the nature of things, but only about their names; whether, indeed, or not we join the names of things according to conventions which we have arbitrarily established about their meanings. If this is the case, as it may be, reasoning will depend on names, names on the imagination, and the imagination perhaps, as I think, on the motion of the bodily organs.'[1] Even though Hobbes does not state dogmatically in this passage that reasoning establishes the connections between words only, he certainly suggests it. And it is no matter for surprise that a number of commentators have drawn the conclusion that philosophy or science is, for Hobbes, inevitably affected by subjectivism, and that they have spoken of his nominalistic scepticism.

Sometimes, indeed, it is possible to interpret Hobbes's assertions in a different light. He says, for example, that 'the first truths were arbitrarily made by those that first of all imposed names upon things, or received them from the imposition of others'.[2] But this statement could at any rate be taken to mean that if people had used the terms involved to mean something else than what they have in fact been made to mean, the propositions would not be true.[3] 'For it is true, for example, that *man is a living creature*, but it is for this reason, that it pleased men to impose both those names on the same thing.'[4] If the term *living creature* had been made to mean *stone*, it could not have been true to say that man is a living creature. And this is obviously the case. Again, when Hobbes asserts that it is false to say that 'the definition is the essence of any thing',[5] he is rejecting a form of expression used by Aristotle. And the remark which immediately follows, that 'definition is not the essence of any thing, but a speech signifying what we conceive of the essence thereof', is not by itself a

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[1] *Objection*, IV; *O.L.*, pp. 257–8.

[2] *Concerning Body*, 1, 3, 8; *E.W.*, 1, p. 36.

[3] Hobbes insists that truth and falsity are predictable of propositions, never of things. Truth 'is not any affection of the thing, but of the proposition concerning it' (*Concerning Body*, 1, 3, 7; *E.W.*, 1, p. 35).

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Concerning Body*, 1, 5, 7; *E.W.*, 1, p. 60.

'sceptical' assertion. For it can be taken to imply that we have some idea or conception of the essence,[1] an idea which is signified by the name that is explained in the definition. Further, it can be pointed out that when Hobbes says that a word is a 'mere name', he does not necessarily mean that the idea signified by the word is without any relation to reality. For example, when he adopts for his own purposes the Aristotelian term 'first matter', he asks what this first matter or *materia prima* is, and he answers that it is a 'mere name'.[2] But he immediately adds, 'yet a name which is not of vain use; for it signifies a conception of body without the consideration of any form or other accident except only magnitude or extension, and aptness to receive form and other accident'.[3] 'First matter' and 'body in general' are for Hobbes equivalent terms. And there is no body in general. 'Wherefore *materia prima* is nothing.'[4] That is to say, there is no thing which corresponds to the name. In this sense the term is a 'mere name'. But it signifies a way of conceiving bodies; and bodies exist. Therefore, even though the name is not the name of any *thing*, it has some relation to reality.

However, even if the statement that Hobbes is a sceptic constitutes an exaggeration, it remains true that whether we proceed from cause to effect or from effect to cause, we attain knowledge only of possible effects or of possible causes. The only certain knowledge we can acquire is knowledge of the implications of propositions. If *A* implies *B*, then if *A* is true, *B* is true.

It seems to me that in Hobbes's interpretation of philosophy or science there are different strands of thought which he failed to distinguish clearly. The idea that in what we would call 'natural science' explanatory theories are hypothetical in character and that we can at best attain only a very high degree of probability may perhaps be said to represent one strand of thought. The idea that in mathematics we start with definitions and develop their implications, so that in pure mathematics we are concerned only with formal implications and not with the 'real world', represents another strand. And both these ideas reappear in modern empiricism. But Hobbes was also influenced by the rationalist ideal of a deductive philosophical system. For him the first principles of mathematics are 'postulates' and not true first principles, because he considered them to be demonstrable. There are ultimate first principles, antecedent to mathematics and to physics. Now, for a rationalism of the continental type the truth of first principles must be known intuitively, and all the propositions which can be deduced from them will be certainly true. And sometimes Hobbes appears to indicate that this is what he thinks. But at other times he speaks as though the first principles or definitions were 'arbitrary', in the sense in which a modern empiricist might say that mathematical definitions are arbitrary. And then he draws the conclusion that the whole of science or philosophy is nothing but a reasoning about 'names', about the consequences of definitions or meanings which have been arbitrarily established. We are then confronted with a divorce between philosophy and the world which was alien to the spirit of continental rationalism. Further, we can find in Hobbes a monolithic idea of science, according to which there is a progressive development from first principles in a deductive manner, and which, if consistently maintained, would neglect the important differences between, for example, pure mathematics and empirical science. And at the same time we find a recognition of the relative independence of ethics and politics, on the ground that their principles can be known experimentally without reference to the parts of philosophy which logically precede.

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[1] The 'essence' of a thing is 'that accident for which we give a certain name to a body, or the accident which denominates its subject . . . as extension is the essence of a body' (*Concerning Body*, 2, 8, 23; *E.W.*, 1, p. 117).

[2] *Concerning Body*, 2, 8, 24; *E.W.*, 1, p. 118.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*

If, therefore, these diverse ideas and lines of thought are present together in Hobbes's mind, it is not surprising that different historians have interpreted him in different ways according to the varying degrees of emphasis which they have placed on this or that aspect of his philosophy. As regards the view that he was a 'sceptical nominalist', his nominalism, as we have seen, is clearly stated, and the charge of 'scepticism' is not without support in his writings. But I do not think that anyone who reads his philosophical writings as a whole would naturally form the impression that 'sceptic' is the most appropriate label to give to Hobbes. It is doubtless arguable that nominalism leads, or should lead, to scepticism. But Hobbes happily combined his nominalism with points of view that are scarcely compatible with it. A great deal of the confusion arose, no doubt, from the failure to distinguish adequately between philosophy, mathematics and empirical science. But we can hardly blame Hobbes for this. In the seventeenth century, philosophy and science were not clearly distinguished, and it is no matter for surprise that Hobbes failed to distinguish them adequately. But, of course, by confining philosophy to the study of bodies he made it even more difficult for him to do so than it would have been in any case.

6. Philosophy, as we have seen, is concerned with the discovery of causes. What does Hobbes understand by 'cause'? 'A cause is the sum or aggregate of all such accidents, both in the agents and the patient, as concur to the producing of the effect propounded; all which existing together, it cannot be understood but that the effect existeth with them; or that it can possibly exist if any one of them be absent.'[1] But to understand this definition we must first understand what Hobbes means by 'accident'. He defines the latter as 'the manner of our conception of body'.[2] And this is, he asserts, the same as saying that 'an accident is that faculty of any body by which it works in us a conception of itself'.[3] If, therefore, we choose to call accidents 'phenomena' or 'appearances', we can say that for Hobbes the cause of any given effect is the sum of phenomena, both in the agent and in the patient, which concur in the following way in producing the effect. If the whole set of phenomena is present, we cannot conceive the absence of the effect. And if any one of the set of phenomena is absent, we cannot conceive the production of the effect. The cause of any thing is thus the sum of all the conditions required for the existence of that thing; the conditions required, that is to say, both in the agent and in the patient. If body *A* generates motion in body *B*, *A* is the agent and *B* is the patient. Thus if fire warms my hand, fire is the agent and the hand is the patient. The accident generated in the patient is the effect of the action of the fire. And the cause (that is, entire cause) of this effect is to vary the definition slightly, 'the aggregate of all the accidents both of the agents, how many soever they be, and of the patient, put together; which when they are all supposed to be present, it cannot be understood but that the effect is produced at the same instant: and if any one of them be wanting, it cannot be understood but that the effect is not produced'.[4]

Within the 'entire cause', as defined above, Hobbes distinguishes between 'efficient cause' and 'material cause'. The former is the aggregate of accidents in the agent or agents which are required for the production of an effect which is actually produced, while the latter is the aggregate of requisite accidents in the patient. Both together make up the entire cause. We can, indeed, talk about the power of the agent and the power of the patient, or, rather, about the active power of the agent and the passive power of the patient. But these are objectively the same as the efficient cause and the material cause respectively, though different terms are used because we can consider the same things from different points of view. The aggregate of accidents in the agent, when considered in relation to an effect already produced, is called the efficient cause, and when considered in relation to future time, to the effect to be produced later, it is called the active power of the agent. Similarly, the aggregate of actions in the patient is called the material cause when it is considered in relation to the past, to the effect already produced, and the passive power of the patient when it is considered in relation to the future. As for the so-called 'formal' and 'final' causes, these are both reducible to efficient causes. 'For when it is said that the essence of a thing is the cause thereof, *as to be rational is the cause of man*, it is not intelligible; for it is all one, as if it were said, *to be a man is the cause of man;* which is not well said. And yet the knowledge of the *essence* of anything is the cause of the knowledge of the thing itself; for, if I first know that a thing is *rational*, I know from thence that the same is *man*; but this is no other than an efficient cause. A *final cause* has no place but in such things as have sense and will; and this also I shall prove hereafter to be an efficient cause.'[1] For Hobbes final causality is simply the way in which efficient causes operate in man, with deliberation.

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[1] *Concerning Body*, 1, 6, 10; *E.W.*, 1, p. 77.

[2] *Concerning Body*, 2, 8, 2; *E.W.*, 1, p. 104.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 103.

[4] *Concerning Body*, 2, 9, 3; *E.W.*, 1, pp. 121–2.

In the foregoing account of Hobbes's analysis of causality we can note how he uses Scholastic terms, interpreting them or assigning them meanings in accordance with his own philosophy. To all intents and purposes we are left with efficient causality alone. Now, if the entire efficient cause is present, the effect is produced. Indeed, this statement is necessarily true, once given Hobbes's definition of a cause. For if the effect were not produced, the cause would not be an entire cause. Furthermore, 'in whatsoever instant the cause is entire, in the same instant the effect is produced. For if it be not produced, something is still wanting, which is requisite for the production of it; and therefore the cause was not entire, as was supposed.'[2]

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[1] *Concerning Body*, 2, 10, 7; *E.W.*, 1, pp. 131–2.

[2] *Concerning Body*, 2, 9, 5; *E.W.*, 1, p. 123.

From these considerations Hobbes draws an important conclusion. We have seen that when the cause is present, the effect always and instantaneously follows. Therefore it cannot but be produced, once given the cause. Therefore the effect follows necessarily from the cause. Hence the cause is a necessary cause. The conclusion is, then, that 'all the effects that have been, or shall be produced, have their necessity in things antecedent'.[1] This at once rules out all freedom in man, at least if freedom is taken to imply absence of necessity. If, indeed, to call an agent free is simply to say that he is not hindered in his activity, this way of speaking has a meaning; but if anyone means by the epithet something more than 'free from being hindered by opposition, I should not say he were in error, but that his words were without meaning, that is to say, absurd'.[2] Once given the cause, the effect necessarily follows. If the effect does not follow, the cause (that is, the entire cause) was not present. And that is all there is to it.

Philosophy, therefore, is concerned with necessary causality; for there can be no other. And causal activity consists in the production of motion by an agent in a patient, both agent and patient being bodies. Creation out of nothing, immaterial causal activity, free causes; such ideas have no place in philosophy. We are concerned simply with the action of bodies in motion on contiguous bodies in motion, with the laws of dynamics operating necessarily and mechanically. And this applies to human activity as much as to the activity of unconscious bodies. True, the deliberate activity of rational beings differs from the activity of inanimate bodies; and in this sense the laws operate in different ways. But for Hobbes mechanistic determinism has the last word, in the human as in the non-human sphere. In this respect it can be said that his philosophy is an attempt to see how far the Galilean dynamics can be pushed as an explanatory principle.

7. The fact that Hobbes believed that every effect has a necessary antecedent cause does not mean that he believed that we can determine with certainty what is the cause of a given event. As we have already seen, the philosopher argues from effects to possible causes and from causes to possible effects. And all our knowledge of the 'consequences' of facts is hypothetical or conditional. That this must be so is, indeed, indicated by the use of the word 'accident' in the definition of a cause. For accident is

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[1] *Concerning Body*, 2, 9, 5; *E.W.*, 1, p. 123.

[2] *Leviathan*, 1, 5; *E.W.*, III, p. 33.

itself defined as 'the manner of our conception of body'. Thus accidents, the aggregate of which form the entire cause, are defined as having a relation to the mind, to our way of looking at things. We cannot attain absolute certainty that causal relations are in fact what we think them to be.

A similar tendency towards subjectivism (I should not care to put it more strongly) can be seen in Hobbes's definitions of space and time. For space is defined as 'the phantasm of a thing existing without the mind simply'[1] and time as 'the phantasm of before and after in motion'.[2] Hobbes does not mean, of course, that the thing existing outside the mind is a phantasm or image: he did not doubt the existence of bodies. But we can have a phantasm or image of a thing 'in which we consider no other accident, but only that it appears without us' (that is, the fact of its externality); and space is defined as being this image. The image has, indeed, an objective foundation, and Hobbes has no intention of denying this. But this does not alter the fact that he defines space in terms of a subjective modification. Time too has an objective foundation, namely, the movement of bodies; but it is none the less defined as a phantasm and so is said to be 'not in the things without us, but only in the thoughts of the mind'.[3]

Given these definitions of space and time, Hobbes naturally answers the question whether space and time are infinite or finite by remarking that the reply depends simply on our imagination; that is, on whether we imagine space and time as terminated or not. We can imagine time as having a beginning and an end, or we can imagine it without any assigned limits, that is, as extending indefinitely. (Similarly, when we say that number is infinite, we mean only that no number is expressed, or that number is an indefinite name.) As for the infinite divisibility of space and time, this is to be taken in the sense that 'whatsoever is divided, is divided into such parts as may again be divided' or as 'the least divisible thing is not to be given, or, as geometricians have it, no quantity is so small, but a less may be taken'.[4]

8. The objective foundation of space is, as we have seen, existent body, which can be considered in abstraction from all accidents. It is called 'body' because of its extension, and 'existing' because it does not depend on our thought. 'Because it depends not upon our thoughts, we say (it) is *a thing subsisting* of itself; as

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[1] *Concerning Body*, 2, 7, 2; *E.W.*, 1, p. 94.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 95.

[3] *Concerning Body*, 2, 7, 3; p. 94.

[4] *Concerning Body*, 2, 7, 13; *E.W.*, 1, p. 100.

also *existing*, because without us.'[1] It is also called the 'subject', 'because it is so placed in and *subjected* to imaginary space, that it may be understood by reason, as well as perceived by sense. The definition, therefore, of *body* may be this, *a body is that, which having no dependence upon our thought, is coincident or coextended with some part of space.*'[2] Objectivity or independence of human thinking thus enters into the definition of body. But at the same time the latter is defined in relation to our thought, as not dependent upon it and as knowable because subjected to imaginary space. If one takes this idea by itself, it has a remarkably Kantian flavour.

A body possesses accidents. The definition of an accident as 'the manner of our conception of body' has already been given. But some further explanation may be appropriate here. If we ask 'what is hard?', we are asking for the definition of a concrete name. 'The answer will be, hard is that, whereof no part gives place, but when the whole gives place.'[3] But if we ask 'what is hardness?', we are asking a question about an abstract name, namely, why a thing appears hard. And therefore 'a cause must be shown why a part does not give place, except the whole give place'.[4] And to ask this is to ask what it is in a body which gives rise in us to a certain conception of body. According to Hobbes, as has been mentioned before, to say that an accident is the manner in which we conceive a body is the same as to say that an accident is the faculty in a body of producing in us a certain conception of itself. The force of this assertion comes out most clearly in Hobbes's theory of secondary qualities.

A distinction must be made between accidents which are common to all bodies and which cannot perish unless the body also perishes and accidents which are not common to all bodies and which can perish and be succeeded by others without the body itself perishing. Extension and figure are accidents of the first kind, 'for no body can be conceived to be without extension or without figure'.[5] Figure varies, of course; but there is not, and cannot be, any body without figure. But an accident such as hardness can be succeeded by softness without the body itself perishing. Hardness, therefore, is an accident of the second type.

Extension and figure are the only accidents of the first type. Magnitude is not another accident: it is the same as extension. It is also called by some 'real space'. It is not, as is imaginary space, 'an accident of the mind': it is an accident of body. We can say, therefore, if we like, that there is real space. But this real space is the same as magnitude, which is itself the same as extension. Is magnitude also the same as place? Hobbes answers that it is not. Place is 'a phantasm of any body of such and such quantity and figure' and is 'nothing out of the mind'.[1] It is 'feigned extension', whereas magnitude is 'true extension',[2] which causes the phantasm that is place.

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[1] *Concerning Body*, 2, 8, 1; *E.W.*, 1, p. 102.

[2] *Concerning Body*, 2, 8, 2; *E.W.*, 1, p. 103.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Concerning Body*, 2, 8, 3; *E.W.*, 1, p. 104.

Accidents of the second type, however, do not exist in bodies in the form in which they are present to consciousness. Colour and sound, for example, as also odour and savour, are 'phantasms'; they belong to the sphere of appearance. 'The phantasm, which is made by hearing, is sound; by smell, odour; by taste, savour. . . .'[3] 'For light and colour, and heat and sound, and other qualities which are commonly called sensible, are not objects, but phantasms in the sentients.'[4] 'As for the objects of hearing, smell, taste and touch, they are not sound, odour, savour, hardness, etc., but the bodies themselves from which sound, odour, savour, hardness, etc., proceed.'[5] Bodies in motion generate motion in the organs of sense, and thence arise the phantasms which we call colour, sound, savour, odour, hardness and softness, light and so on. A contiguous and moving body effects the outermost part of the organ of sense, and pressure or motion is transmitted to the innermost part of the organ. At the same time, by reason of the natural internal motion of the organ, a reaction against this pressure takes place, an 'endeavour outwards' stimulated by the 'endeavour inwards'. And the phantasm or 'idea' arises from the final reaction to the 'endeavour inwards'. We can thus define 'sense' as 'a phantasm, made by the reaction and endeavour outwards in the organ of sense, caused by an endeavour inwards from the object, remaining for some time more or less'.[6] Colour, for instance, is our way of perceiving an external body, or, objectively, it is that in a body which causes our 'conception' of the latter. And this 'faculty' in the body is not itself colour. In the case of extension, on the contrary, it is extension itself which causes our conception of it.

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[1] *Concerning Body*, 2, 8, 5; *E.W.*, 1, p. 105.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Concerning Body*, 4, 25, 10; *E.W.*, 1, p. 405.

[4] *Concerning Body*, 4, 25, 3; *E.W.*, 1, pp. 391–2.

[5] *Concerning Body*, 4, 25, 10; *E.W.*, 1, p. 405.

[6] *Concerning Body*, 4, 25, 2; *E.W.*, 1, p. 391.

The world of colour, sound, odour, savour, tactile qualities and light is thus the world of appearance. And philosophy is to a great extent the endeavour to discover the causes of these appearances, that is, the causes of our 'phantasms'. Behind appearances there are, for Hobbes, at least as far as philosophy is concerned, only extended bodies and motion.

9. Motion means for Hobbes local motion. 'Motion is a continual relinquishing of one place and acquiring of another.'[1] And a thing is said to be at rest when for any time it is in one place. It follows, therefore, from these definitions that anything which is in motion has been moved. For if it has not been moved, it is in the same place in which it formerly was. And thus it follows from the definition of rest that it is at rest. Similarly, that which is moved will yet be moved. For that which is in motion is continually changing place. Lastly, whatever is moved is not in one place during any time, however brief. If it were, it would, by definition, be at rest.

Any thing which is at rest will always be at rest, unless some other body 'by endeavouring to get into its place by motion suffers it no longer to remain at rest'.[2] Similarly, if any thing is in motion, it will be always in motion, unless some other body causes it to be at rest. For if there were no other body, 'there will be no reason why it should rest now rather than at another time'.[3] Again, the cause of motion can only be a contiguous and already moving body.

If motion is reduced to local motion, change is also reducible to local motion. 'Mutation can be nothing else but motion of the parts of that body which is changed.'[4] We do not say that any thing is changed unless it appears to our senses otherwise than it did before. But these appearances are effects produced in us by motion.

10. In animals there are two kinds of motion which are peculiar to them. The first is vital motion. This is 'the motion of the blood, perpetually circulating (as hath been shown from many infallible signs and marks by Doctor Harvey, the first observer of it) in the veins and arteries'.[5] Elsewhere Hobbes describes it as 'the course of the blood, the pulse, the breathing, the concoction, nutrition, excretion, etc., to which motions there needs no help of

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[1] *Concerning Body*, 2, 8, 10; *E.W.*, 1, p. 109.
[2] *Concerning Body*, 2, 8, 18; *E.W.*, 1, p. 115.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Concerning Body*, 2, 9, 9; *E.W.*, 1, p. 126.
[5] *Concerning Body*, 4, 25, 12; *E.W.*, 1, p. 407.

imagination'.[1] In other words, vital motions are those vital processes in the animal organism which take place without any deliberation or conscious effort, such as circulation of the blood, digestion and respiration.

The second kind of motion which is peculiar to animals is 'animal motion, otherwise called voluntary motion'.[2] As examples Hobbes gives, going, speaking, moving the limbs, when such actions are 'first fancied in our minds'.[3] The first internal beginning of all voluntary motions is imagination, while the 'small beginnings of motion within the body of man, before they appear in walking, speaking, striking, and other visible actions are commonly called endeavour'.[4] Here we have the notion of *conatus*, which plays a prominent part in the philosophy of Spinoza.

This endeavour, directed towards something which causes it, is called *appetite* or *desire*. When it is directed away from something ('fromward something', as Hobbes puts it) it is called *aversion*. The fundamental forms of endeavour are thus appetite or desire and aversion, both being motions. They are objectively the same as love and hate respectively; but when we talk of desire and aversion, we think of the objects as absent, whereas in talking of love and hate we think of the objects as present.

11. Some appetites are innate or born with men, such as the appetite for food. Others proceed from experience. But in any case 'whatsoever is the object of any man's appetite or desire, that is it which he for his part calleth *good*: and the object of his hate and aversion, *evil*; and of his contempt, *vile* and *inconsiderable*'.[5]

Good and evil are, therefore, relative notions. There is no absolute good and no absolute evil; and there is no common objective norm, taken from the objects themselves, to distinguish between good and evil. The words 'are ever used with relation to the person that useth them'.[6] The rule for distinguishing good and evil depends on the individual; that is, on his 'voluntary motions', if we consider man as he is apart from the commonwealth or State. In the commonwealth, however, it is the person who represents it; that is, the sovereign, who determines what is good and what is evil.

12. The different passions are different forms of appetite and aversion, with the exception of pure pleasure and pain, which are 'a certain fruition of good or evil'.[7] Consequently, as appetite and

[1] *Leviathan*, I, 6; *E.W.*, III, p. 31. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 4. [6] *Ibid.* [7] *Concerning Body*, 4, 25, 13; *E.W.*, I, pp. 409–10.

aversion are motions, so are the different passions. External objects affect the organs of sense and there arises 'that motion and agitation of the brain which we call conception'.[1] This motion of the brain is continued to the heart, 'there to be called passion'.[2]

Hobbes finds a number of simple passions, namely, appetite, desire, love, aversion, hate, joy and grief.[3] These take different forms; or at least they are given different names according to different considerations. Thus if we consider the opinion which men have of attaining what they desire, we can distinguish hope and despair. The former is appetite with an opinion of attaining the desired object, while the latter is appetite without this opinion. Secondly, we can consider the object loved or hated. And then we can distinguish, for example, between covetousness, which is the desire of riches, and ambition, which is the desire of office or precedence. Thirdly, the consideration of a number of passions together may lead us to use a special name. Thus 'love of one singularly, with desire to be singularly beloved, is called *the passion of love*', whereas 'the same, with fear that the love is not mutual, (is called) *jealousy*'.[4] Finally, we can name a passion from the motion itself. We can speak, for instance, of 'sudden dejection', 'the passion that causeth weeping', and which is caused by events which suddenly take away some vehement hope or some 'prop of power'.[5]

But however many the passions of man may be, they are all motions. And Hobbes speaks in an oft-quoted sentence of delight or pleasure as being 'nothing really but motion about the heart, as conception is nothing but motion in the head'.[6]

13. Hobbes does not overlook the fact that human beings perform some actions with deliberation. But he defines deliberation in terms of the passions. Let us suppose that in a man's mind desire to acquire some object alternates with aversion and that thoughts of the good consequences of acquiring it alternate with thoughts of the evil consequences (that is, undesirable consequences). 'The whole sum of desires, aversions, hopes and fears continued till the thing be either done, or thought impossible, is that we call deliberation.'[7] And Hobbes draws the conclusion that

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[1] *Human Nature*, 8, 1; *E.W.*, IV, p. 34.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Hobbes distinguishes between pleasures and displeasures of sense and pleasures and displeasures of the mind. The latter arise from expectation of an end or of consequences. Pleasures of the mind are called *joy*, while displeasures of the mind are called *grief* (in distinction from displeasures of sense, which are called *pain*).

[4] *Leviathan*, 1, 6; *E.W.*, III, p. 44.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

[6] *Human Nature*, 7, 1; *E.W.*, IV, p. 31.

[7] *Leviathan*, 1, 6; *E.W.*, III, p. 48.

beasts also must be said to deliberate, inasmuch as this alternate succession of appetites, aversions, hopes and fears is found in them as well as in man.

Now, in deliberation the last appetite or aversion is called *will*; that is, the act of willing. '*Will* therefore is the last appetite in deliberating';[1] and the action depends on this final inclination or appetite. From this Hobbes again concludes that since the beasts have deliberation they must necessarily also have will.

It follows that the freedom of willing or not willing is no greater in man than in the beasts. 'And therefore such a liberty as is free from necessity is not to be found in the will either of men or beasts. But if by liberty we understand the faculty or power, not of willing, but of doing what they will, then certainly that liberty is to be allowed to both and both may equally have it, whensoever it is to be had.'[2]

14. When treating of the 'intellectual virtues' Hobbes distinguishes between natural and acquired mental capacity or 'wit'. Some men are naturally quick, others slow. And the principal cause of these differences is 'the difference of men's passions'.[3] Those, for example, whose end is sensual pleasure, are necessarily less delighted with the 'imaginations' which do not conduce to this end, and they pay less attention than others to the means of acquiring knowledge. They suffer from dullness of mind, which 'proceedeth from the appetite of sensual or bodily delight. And it may well be conjectured, that such passion hath its beginning from a *grossness* and *difficulty* of the *motion* of the *spirit* about the heart.'[4] Differences in natural mental capacity are therefore ultimately caused by differences in motion. As for differences in acquired 'wit', which is reason, there are other causal factors, such as education, which have to be taken into consideration.

'The passions that most of all cause the difference of wit are principally the more or less desire of power, of riches, of knowledge, and of honour. All which may be reduced to the first, that is, desire of power. For riches, knowledge and honour are but several sorts of power.'[5] The desire for power is thus the fundamental factor in causing a man to develop his mental capacities.

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[1] *Leviathan*, 1, 6; *E.W.*, III, p. 48.

[2] *Concerning Body*, 4, 25, 13; *E.W.*, I, p. 409.

[3] *Leviathan*, 1, 8; *E.W.* I, p. 57.

[4] *Human Nature*, 10, 3; *E.W.*, IV, p. 55.

[5] *Leviathan*, 1, 8; *E.W.* III, p. 61.

15. We are presented, therefore, with a multiplicity of individual human beings, each of whom is driven by his passions, which themselves are forms of motion. And it is the appetites and aversions of the individual which determine for him what is good and what is evil. In the next chapter we shall consider the consequences of this state of affairs and the transition from this atomic individualism to the construction of that artificial body, the commonwealth or State.

CHAPTER II

HOBBES (2)

The natural state of war—The laws of nature—The generation of a commonwealth and the theory of the covenant—The rights of the sovereign—The liberty of subjects—Reflections on Hobbes's political theory.

1. MEN are by nature equal in bodily and mental capacities; not, indeed, in the sense that all possess the same degree of physical strength and of quickness of mind, but in the sense that, by and large, an individual's deficiencies in one respect can be compensated by other qualities. The physically weak can master the physically strong by craft or by conspiracy; and experience enables all men to acquire prudence in the things to which they apply themselves. And this natural equality produces in men an equal hope of attaining their ends. Every individual seeks and pursues his own conservation, and some set their hearts on delectation or pleasure. Nobody resigns himself to making no effort to attain the end to which he is naturally impelled, on the ground that he is not equal to others.

Now, this fact that every individual seeks his own conservation and his own delectation leads to competition and mistrust of others. Further, every man desires that others should value him as he values himself; and he is quick to resent every slight and all signs of contempt. 'So that in the nature of man we find three principal causes of quarrel. First, competition; secondly, diffidence (that is, mistrust); thirdly, glory.'[1]

From this Hobbes draws the conclusion that until such time as men live under a common power, they are in a state of war with one another. 'For *war* consisteth not in battle only, or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein the will to contend by battle is sufficiently known: and therefore the notion of *time* is to be considered in the nature of war; as it is in the nature of weather. For as the nature of foul weather lieth not in a shower or two of rain; but in an inclination thereto of many days together: so the nature of war consisteth not in actual fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is peace.'[2]

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[1] *Leviathan*, I, 13; *E.W.*, III, p. 112.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 113.

The natural state of war, therefore, is the state of affairs in which the individual is dependent for his security on his own strength and his own wits. 'In such condition there is no place for industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and, which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.'[1] In this frequently quoted passage Hobbes depicts the natural state of war as a condition in which civilization and its benefits are absent. The conclusion is obvious, namely, that it is only through the organization of society and the establishment of the commonwealth that peace and civilization can be attained.

The natural state of war is a deduction from consideration of the nature of man and his passions. But if anyone doubts the objective validity of the conclusion, he has only to observe what happens even in a state of organized society. Everyone carries arms when he takes a journey; bars his door at night; he locks up his valuables. And this shows clearly enough what he thinks of his fellow men. 'Does he not there as much accuse mankind by his actions, as I do by my words? But neither of us accuse man's nature in it. The desires and other passions of man are themselves no sin. No more are the actions that proceed from those passions, till they know a law that forbids them; which till laws be made they cannot know: nor can any law be made, till they have agreed upon the person that shall make it.'[2]

This quotation suggests that in the natural state of war there are no objective moral distinctions. And this is precisely Hobbes's view. In this state 'the notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, have no place. Where there is no common power, there is no law, where no law, no injustice. Force and fraud are in war the two cardinal virtues.'[3] Further, there is 'no dominion, no *mine* and *thine* distinct; but only that to be every man's, that he can get: and for so long as he can keep it'.[4]

Does Hobbes mean that this state of war was an historical fact, in the sense that it universally preceded the organization of society? Or does he mean that it precedes the organization of society only logically, in the sense that if we prescind from what man owes to the commonwealth or State, we arrive by abstraction at this layer, as it were, of atomic individualism, which is rooted in the human passions and which would obtain, were it not for other factors which naturally impel men from the beginning to organize societies and subject themselves to a common power? He means, of course, at least the latter. The state of war was never, in his opinion, universal 'over all the world'; but the idea of this condition of affairs represents the condition which would obtain, were it not for the foundation of commonwealths. There is plenty of empirical evidence for this, apart from *a priori* deduction from the analysis of the passions. We have only to look at the behaviour of kings and sovereigns. They fortify their territories against possible invaders, and even in peace-time they send spies into their neighbours' realms. They are, in fine, in a constant 'posture of war'. Again, we have only to look at what happens when peaceful government breaks down and civil war occurs. This shows clearly 'what manner of life there would be, where there were no common power to fear'.[1] At the same time, the natural state of war is, according to Hobbes, an historical fact in many places, as can be seen in America, where the savages 'live at this day in that brutish manner', if we except the internal government of small families, the harmony of which depends on 'natural lust'.

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[1] *Leviathan*, I, 13; *E.W.*, III, p. 113.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 114.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 115.

[4] *Ibid.*

2. It is obviously in man's interest to emerge from this natural state of war; and the possibility of doing so is provided by nature itself. For by nature men have their passions and their reason. It is, indeed, their passions which bring about the state of war. But at the same time fear of death, desire of such things as are necessary to 'commodious' living, and hope of obtaining these things by industry are passions which incline men to seek for peace. It is not that the passions simply lead to war, whereas reason counsels peace. Some passions incline men to peace; and what reason does is to show how the fundamental desire of self-conservation can be made effective. It suggests first of all 'convenient articles of peace, upon which men may be drawn to agreement. These articles are they, which otherwise are called the Laws of Nature.'[2]

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[1] *Leviathan*, I, 13; *E.W.*, III, p. 114.

[2] *Leviathan*, I, 14; *E.W.*, III, p. 116.

Hobbes defines a law of nature as 'the dictate of right reason,[1] conversant about those things which are either to be done or omitted for the constant preservation of life and member, as much as in us lies'.[2] Again, 'a law of nature, *lex naturalis*, is a precept, or general rule, found out by reason, by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life or taketh away the means of preserving the same; and to omit that, by which he thinketh it may be best preserved'.[3] In interpreting these definitions we have, of course, to avoid attaching to the word 'law' any theological or metaphysical significance or reference. A law of nature in this context is for Hobbes a dictate of egoistic prudence. Every man instinctively pursues self-preservation and security. But man is not merely a creature of instinct and blind impulse; and there is such a thing as rational self-preservation. The so-called laws of nature state the conditions of this rational self-preservation. And as Hobbes goes on to argue that the rational pursuit of self-preservation is what leads men to form commonwealths or states, the laws of nature give the conditions for the establishment of society and stable government. They are the rules a reasonable being would observe in pursuing his own advantage, if he were conscious of man's predicament in a condition in which impulse and passion alone ruled and if he himself were not governed simply by momentary impulse and by prejudices arising from passion. Furthermore, Hobbes believed that by and large man, who is essentially egoistic and self-regarding, does in fact act according to these rules. For in point of fact men do form organized societies and subject themselves to governments. Hence they do in fact observe the dictates of enlightened egoism. It follows that these laws are analogous to the physical laws of nature and state the way in which enlightened egoists do in fact behave, the way in which their psychological make-up determines them to behave. Certainly, Hobbes frequently speaks as though these rules were teleological principles, and as though they were what Kant would call hypothetical imperatives; that is, assertoric hypothetical imperatives, since every individual necessarily seeks his own preservation and security. Indeed, Hobbes could hardly avoid speaking in this way. But he is dealing with the interplay of motions and forces which lead to the creation of that artificial body, the commonwealth; and the tendency of his thought is to assimilate the operation of the 'laws of nature' to the operation of efficient causality. The State itself is the resultant of the interplay of forces; and human reason, displayed in the conduct expressed by these rules, is one of these determining forces. Or, if we wish to look at the matter from the point of view of the philosophical deduction of society and government, the laws of nature can be said to represent axioms or postulates which render this deduction possible. They answer the question, what are the conditions under which the transition from the natural state of war to the state of men living in organized societies becomes intelligible. And these conditions are rooted in the dynamics of human nature itself. They are not a system of God-given laws (except, indeed, in the sense that God created man and all that is in him). Nor do they state absolute values; for, according to Hobbes, there are no absolute values.

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[1] Right reason, Hobbes explains, means here 'the peculiar and true ratiocination of every man concerning those actions of his, which may either redound to the damage or benefit of his neighbours'. 'Peculiar', because in the 'state of nature' the individual's reason is for him the only rule of action.

[2] *Philosophical Elements of a True Citizen*, 2, 1; *E.W.*, II, p. 16.

[3] *Leviathan*, I, 14; *E.W.*, III, pp. 116–17.

The list of the laws of nature is given differently by Hobbes in different places. Here I confine myself to the *Leviathan*, where we are told that the fundamental law of nature is the general rule of reason that 'every man ought to endeavour peace, as far as he has hope of obtaining it; and when he cannot obtain it, that he may seek, and use, all helps and advantages of war'.[1] The first part, he asserts, contains the fundamental law of nature, namely, to seek peace and follow it, while the second part contains the sum of natural right, namely, to defend ourselves by all means that we can.

The second law of nature is 'that a man be willing, when others are so too, as far-forth, as for peace and defence of himself he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself'.[2] To lay down one's right to anything is to divest oneself of the liberty of hindering another from enjoying his own right to the same thing. But if a man lays down his right in this sense, he does so with a view to his own advantage. And it follows from this that there are 'some rights which no man can be understood by any words, or other signs, to have abandoned or transferred'.[3] For example, a man cannot lay down the right to defend his own life, 'because he cannot be understood to aim thereby at any good to himself'.[4]

Hobbes proceeds, in accordance with his declared method, to lay down some definitions. First a contract is defined as 'the mutual transferring of right'.[1] But 'one of the contractors may deliver the thing contracted for on his part, and leave the other to perform his part at some determinate time after, and in the meantime be trusted; and then the contract on his part is called *pact* or *covenant*'.[2] This definition is of importance because, as will be seen presently, Hobbes founds the commonwealth on a social covenant.

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[1] *Leviathan*, I, 14; *E.W.*, III, p. 117. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 118. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 120. [4] *Ibid.*

The third law of nature is 'that men perform their covenant made'.[3] Without this law of nature 'covenants are in vain, and but empty words; and the right of all men to all things remaining, we are still in the condition of war'.[4] Further, this law is the fountain of justice. When there has been no covenant, no action can be unjust. But when a covenant has been made, to break it is unjust. Indeed, injustice can be defined as 'the not performance of covenant. And whatsoever is not unjust, is *just.*'[5]

It may appear to be an instance of gross inconsistency on Hobbes's part if he now talks about justice and injustice when earlier he has asserted that such distinctions do not obtain in the state of war. But if we read carefully what he says, we shall see that on this point at least he is not guilty of contradicting himself. For he adds that covenants of mutual trust are invalid when there is fear of non-performance on either part, and that in the natural condition of war this fear is always present. It follows, therefore, that there are no valid covenants, and hence no justice and injustice, until the commonwealth is established; that is, until a coercive power has been established which will compel men to perform their covenants.

In the *Leviathan* Hobbes states nineteen laws of nature in all; and I omit the rest of them. But it is worth noting that after completing his list he asserts that these laws, and any others which there may be, bind in conscience. And if we take this statement in a moral sense, we can only conclude that Hobbes has suddenly adopted a point of view very different from the one which he has hitherto expressed. In point of fact, however, he appears to mean simply that reason, considering man's desire for security, dictates that he should (that is, if he is to act rationally) desire that the laws should be observed. The laws are only improperly called 'laws', Hobbes tells us; 'for they are but conclusions or theorems concerning what conduceth to the conservation and defence of themselves (men); whereas law, properly, is the word of him, that by right hath command over them'.[1] Reason sees that the observance of these 'theorems' conduces to man's self-preservation and defence; and it is therefore rational for man to desire their observance. In this sense, and in this sense alone, they have an 'obligatory' character. 'The laws of nature oblige *in foro interno*; that is to say, they bind to a desire they should take place: but *in foro externo*; that is, to the putting them in act, not always. For he that should be modest, and tractable, and perform all he promises, in such time and place where no man else should do so, should but make himself a prey to others, and procure his own certain ruin, contrary to the ground of all laws of nature, which tend to nature's preservation.'[2] It is clear that there is no question of a categorical imperative in the Kantian sense. Study of the laws of nature is, indeed, declared by Hobbes to be 'the true moral philosophy',[3] which is the science of good and evil. But, as we have already seen, 'private appetite is the measure of good and evil';[4] and the only reason why the laws of nature are to be called good or, as Hobbes puts it, 'moral virtues', is that men's private appetites happen to agree in desiring security. 'All men agree on this, that peace is good; and therefore also the way or means of peace.'[5]

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[1] *Leviathan*, I, 14; *E.W.*, III, p. 120.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 121.

[3] *Leviathan*, I, 15; *E.W.*, III, p. 130.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 131.

3. Philosophy deals with generative causes. Hence it includes a study of the causes which generate the artificial body which is known as the 'commonwealth'. We have already considered the remote generative causes. Man seeks self-preservation and security, but he is unable to attain this end in the natural condition of war. The laws of nature are unable to achieve the desired end by themselves alone, that is, unless there is coercive power able to enforce their observance by sanctions. For these laws, though dictates of reason, are contrary to man's natural passions. 'And covenants, without the sword, are but words, and of no strength to secure a man at all.'[6] It is necessary, therefore, that there should be a common power or government backed by force and able to punish.

This means that a plurality of individuals 'should confer all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men, that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will'.[1] That is to say, they must appoint one man, or assembly of men, to bear their person. This done, they will form a real unity in one person, a person being defined as 'he whose words or actions are considered, either as his own, or as representing the words or actions of another man, or of any other thing, to whom they are attributed, whether truly or by fiction'.[2] If the words and actions are considered as the person's own words and actions, we have a 'natural person'. If, however, they are considered as representing the words or actions of another man or of other men, we have a 'feigned or artificial person'. In the present context we are concerned, of course, with an artificial person, with a representer. And it is 'the unity of the representer, not the unity of the represented, that maketh the person one'.[3]

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[1] *Leviathan*, I, 15; *E.W.*, III, p. 147.
[2] *Leviathan*, III, 15; *E.W.*, I, p. 145.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 146.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Leviathan*, 2, 17; *E.W.*, III, p. 154.

How does this transfer of rights take place? It takes place 'by covenant of every man with every man, in such manner, as if every man should say to every man, *I authorize and give up my right of governing myself, to this man, or to this assembly of men, on this condition that thou give up thy right to him, and authorize all his actions in like manner.* This done, the multitude so united in one person, is called a Commonwealth, in Latin *Civitas*. This is the generation of that great Leviathan, or rather, to speak more reverently, of that *mortal god*, to which we owe under the *immortal God*, our peace and defence.'[4]

It is to be noted that when Hobbes speaks of the multitude being united in one person he does not mean that the multitude constitute this person. He means that the multitude are united in the person, whether individual or assembly, to whom they transfer their rights. He therefore defines the essence of the commonwealth as 'one person, of whose acts a great multitude, by mutual covenants one with another, have made themselves every one the author, to the end he may use the strength and means of them all, as he should think expedient, for their peace and common defence'.[5] This person is called the *sovereign*. Everyone else is his subject.

The proximate cause, therefore, of the generation of the commonwealth is the covenants made with one another by the individuals who on the establishment of the commonwealth become the subjects of the sovereign. This is an important point. For it follows that the sovereign is not himself a party to the covenant. And Hobbes says as much in explicit terms. 'Because the right of bearing the person of them all is given to him they make sovereign, by covenant only of one to another, and not of him to any of them; there can happen no breach of covenant on the part of the sovereign.'[1] The commonwealth is certainly instituted for a specific purpose, namely, for the peaceful security of those who are party to the social covenant. And this point, too, has its importance, as will be seen later. But Hobbes's insistence that the covenants are made between the subjects, or more accurately future subjects, and not between the subjects and the sovereign, enables him to emphasize more easily the undivided nature of sovereign power. In his opinion it is by the centralization of authority in the person of the sovereign that the evil which he particularly dreaded, namely, civil war, can be avoided.

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[1] *Leviathan*, 2, 17; *E.W.*, III, p. 157.

[2] *Leviathan*, 1, 16; *E.W.*, III, p. 147.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 151.

[4] *Leviathan*, 2, 17; *E.W.*, III, p. 158.

[5] *Ibid.*

Further, this view of the matter enables Hobbes to avoid, at least in part, a difficulty which would inevitably arise if he made the sovereign a party to the covenant. For he has already said that covenants without the sword are but words. And if the sovereign were himself a party to the covenant and at the same time possessed all the authority and power which Hobbes proceeds to attribute to him, it would be difficult to see how the covenant could be valid and effective on his part. As it is, however, the parties to the covenant are simply the individuals who, on making the covenant, immediately become subjects. It is not that they first make a covenant setting up a society and then afterwards choose a sovereign. For in this case a similar difficulty would arise. The covenant would be but words: it would be a covenant within the natural condition of war. It is rather that on the covenant being made sovereign and society come into existence together. From the abstract and theoretical point of view, therefore, we can say that no period of time elapses between the making of the covenant and the setting up of sovereign authority. The covenant, therefore, cannot be made without there immediately coming into existence a power capable of enforcing the covenant.

Although, however, the sovereign is not himself a party to the covenant, his sovereignty derives from the covenant. Hobbes's doctrine lends no support to the theory of the divine right of kings; and he was in fact attacked by those who favoured this theory. In the statement of the covenant he mentions indifferently 'this man' and 'this assembly of men'. He was, as we have seen, a royalist; and he favoured monarchy as conducing to greater unity, and for certain other reasons. But as far as the origin of sovereignty is concerned, the covenant may establish monarchy, democracy or aristocracy. The main point is not what form of constitution is set up, but that wherever sovereignty lies, it must be entire and indivisible. 'The difference between these three kinds of commonwealth consisteth not in the difference of power; but in the difference of convenience or aptitude to produce the peace and security of the people; for which end they were instituted.'[1] But the sovereign's power is absolute, whether the sovereign be an individual or an assembly.

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[1] *Leviathan*, I, 18; *E.W.*, III, p. 161.

One obvious objection to the covenant theory of the generation of the State is that it bears little relation to historical fact. But, of course, it is not at all necessary to suppose that Hobbes thought that, as a matter of historical facts, States originated through an explicit covenant. He is concerned with a logical or philosophical deduction of the State, not with tracing the historical developments of States. And the theory of the covenant enables him to make the transition from the condition of atomic individualism to organized society. I do not mean to imply that for Hobbes men are less individualistic after the covenant, if one may so speak, than before. Self-interest, according to him, lies at the basis of organized society; and self-interest, in an egoistic sense, rules in organized society just as much as it did in the hypothetical state of war. But in organized society the centrifugal tendencies of individuals and their proneness to self-destructive mutual enmity and war are checked by fear of the sovereign's power. The theory of the covenant is, in part at least, a device to exhibit the rational character of subjection to the sovereign and of his exercise of power. Hobbes is a utilitarian in the sense that the basis of the commonwealth is for him utility; and the covenant-theory is an explicit recognition of this utility. The theory is doubtless open to serious objections; but any fundamental criticism of Hobbes must be directed against his account of human nature rather than against the details of the theory of the covenant.

Hobbes makes a distinction between a commonwealth 'by institution' and a commonwealth 'by acquisition'. A commonwealth is said to exist by institution when it has been established in the manner mentioned above, namely, through the covenant of every member of a multitude with every other member. A commonwealth is said to exist by acquisition when the sovereign power has been acquired by force; that is to say, when men 'for fear of death or bonds do authorize all the actions of that man or assembly that hath their lives and liberty in his power'.[1]

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[1] *Leviathan*, 2, 19; *E.W.*, III, p. 173.

In the case of a commonwealth by institution a multitude of men subject themselves to a chosen sovereign from fear of one another. In the case of a commonwealth by acquisition they subject themselves to him of whom they are afraid. Thus 'in both cases they do it for fear'.[2] Hobbes is quite explicit in his statement that sovereign power is based on fear. There is no question of deriving the commonwealth and the legitimacy of sovereign power from either theological or metaphysical principles. Of course, the fear, whether of men for one another or of subjects for their sovereign, is rational, in the sense that it is well-grounded. And the commonwealth by acquisition can be defended for the same utilitarian reasons as the commonwealth by institution. Thus when Hobbes says that all commonwealths are founded on fear, he does not mean to say anything in depreciation of the commonwealth. Given human nature as Hobbes describes it, the commonwealth must in any case be founded on fear. The theory of the covenant glosses over this fact to some extent, and it is perhaps designed to impart some show of legality to an institution which does not rest on legality. In this sense it does not fit in well with the rest of Hobbes's political theory. But at the same time he is quite frank about the part played by fear in politics.

4. This distinction between two kinds of commonwealth does not affect the rights of the sovereign. 'The rights and consequences of sovereignty are the same in both.'[3] Hence in examining these rights we can disregard the distinction.

Sovereignty, Hobbes insists, is not and cannot be conferred conditionally. Hence the subjects of a sovereign cannot either change the form of government or repudiate the authority of the sovereign and return to the condition of a disunited multitude: sovereignty is inalienable. This does not mean, for example, that a monarch cannot legitimately confer executive power or consultative rights on other individuals or on assemblies; but if the sovereign is a monarch, he cannot alienate part of his sovereignty. An assembly, such as a parliament, can have no rights independent of the monarch, if we suppose that the monarch is sovereign. It does not follow, therefore, from Hobbes's position that a monarch cannot make use of a parliament in governing a nation; but it does follow that the parliament does not enjoy part of the sovereignty and that in the exercise of its delegated powers it is necessarily subordinate to the monarch. Similarly, if an assembly which is not coextensive with the people is sovereign, the people do not and cannot enjoy part of the sovereignty. For they must be considered as having conferred unlimited and inalienable sovereignty on that assembly. Hence sovereign power cannot be forfeited. 'There can happen no breach of covenant on the part of the sovereign; and consequently none of his subjects, by any pretence of forfeiture, can be freed from his subjection.'[1]

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[1] *Leviathan*, I, 20; *E.W.*, III, p. 185.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 186.

By the very institution of sovereignty every subject becomes the author of all the sovereign's actions; and 'it follows that whatsoever he (the sovereign) doth, it can be no injury to any of his subjects; nor ought he to be by any of them accused of injustice'.[2] No sovereign can justly be put to death or in any way punished by his subjects. For, inasmuch as every subject is author of all the sovereign's actions, to punish the sovereign would be to punish another for one's own actions.

Among the prerogatives of the sovereign which are enumerated by Hobbes is that of judging what doctrines are fit to be taught. 'It belongeth therefore to him that hath the sovereign power, to be judge or constitute all judges of opinions and doctrines, as a thing necessary to peace; thereby to prevent discord and civil war.'[3] And among the diseases of the commonwealth he lists the doctrines that 'every private man is judge of good and evil actions'[4] and that 'whatsoever a man does against his conscience, is sin'.[5] In the state of nature, it is true, the individual is judge of what is good and what is evil, and he has to follow his own reason or conscience, because he has no other rule to follow. But this is not the case in the commonwealth. For there the civil law is the public conscience, the measure of good and evil.

It is no matter for surprise, therefore, if in the third and fourth parts of the *Leviathan* Hobbes defends a thoroughgoing Erastianism. To be sure, he does not deny Christian revelation or the validity of the idea of a Christian commonwealth, wherein 'there dependeth much upon supernatural revelations of the will of God'.[6] But he completely subordinates Church to State. He makes it abundantly clear that he interprets the struggle between

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[1] *Leviathan*, 2, 18; *E.W.*, III, p. 161.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 163.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 165.

[4] *Leviathan*, 2, 29; *E.W.*, III, p. 310.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 311.

[6] *Leviathan*, 3, 32; *E.W.*, III, p. 359.

Church and State simply in terms of power. The Church has tried to arrogate to itself an authority which belongs to the civil sovereign; and Hobbes, in a famous passage, likens the Papacy to the ghost of the Roman empire. 'And if a man consider the original of this great ecclesiastical dominion, he will easily perceive that the Papacy is no other than the *ghost* of the deceased *Roman empire*, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof. For so did the Papacy start up on a sudden out of the ruins of that heathen power.'[1] But though Hobbes regards the Catholic Church as providing the chief example in the religious sphere of an attempt to steal from the sovereign his rightful authority, he makes it clear that his primary concern is not with anti-Catholic polemics. He is concerned to reject any claim, whether by pope, bishop, priest or presbyter, to possess spiritual authority and jurisdiction independently of the sovereign. Similarly, he rejects any claim on the part of private individuals to be independent channels of divine revelations or of divinely inspired messages.

A Church is defined as 'a company of men professing Christian religion, united in the person of one sovereign, at whose command they ought to assemble'.[2] There is no such thing as a universal Church; and within the national Church the Christian sovereign is the fount, under God, of all authority and jurisdiction, and he alone is the final judge of the interpretation of the Scriptures. In his answer to Bishop Bramhall, Hobbes asks, 'If it be not from the king's authority that the Scripture is law, what other authority makes it law?'[3] And he remarks that 'there is no doubt but by what authority the Scripture or any other writing is made a law, by the same authority the Scriptures are to be interpreted or else they are made in vain'.[4] Again, when Bramhall remarks that on Hobbes's Erastian principles the authority of all general councils is destroyed, Hobbes admits that this is the case. If Anglican prelates pretend that general councils possess authority independently of the sovereign, they to this extent detract from the latter's inalienable authority and power.

5. The power of the sovereign being thus to all intents and purposes unlimited, the question arises, what freedom, if any, is possessed by the subjects or ought to be possessed by them. And in discussing this question we have to presuppose Hobbes's theory of 'natural liberty'. As we have already seen, natural liberty

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[1] *Leviathan*, 4, 47; *E.W.*, III, pp. 697–8.
[2] *Leviathan*, 3, 39; *E.W.*, III, p. 459.
[3] *E.W.*, IV, p. 339. [4] *Ibid.*

means for him simply the absence of external hindrances to motion; and it is perfectly consistent with necessity, that is, with determinism. A man's volitions, desires and inclinations are necessary in the sense that they are the results of a chain of determining causes; but when he acts in accordance with these desires and inclinations, there being no external impediment to prevent him from so acting, he is said to act freely. A free man is thus 'he that in those things which by his strength and wit he is able to do, is not hindered to do what he has a will to do'.[1] This general conception of liberty being presupposed, Hobbes inquires what is the liberty of subjects with regard to the artificial bonds or chains which men have forged for themselves by the mutual covenants which they have made with one another in handing over their rights to the sovereign.

It is scarcely necessary to say that Hobbes has no sympathy with any demand for freedom from law. For law, backed by sanctions, is the very means which protects a man from the caprice and violence of other men. And to demand exemption from law would be a demand for a return to the state of nature. The liberty which is exalted in the histories and philosophies of the ancient Greeks and Romans is, he says, the liberty of the commonwealth, not of particular men. 'The Athenians and Romans were free; that is, free commonwealths: not that any particular men had the liberty to resist their own representative; but that their representative had the liberty to resist or invade other people.'[2] It is true that many people have found in the writings of the ancients an excuse for favouring tumults and 'licentious controlling the actions of their sovereigns . . . with the effusion of so much blood, as I think I may truly say, there was never any thing so dearly bought, as these western parts have bought the learning of the Greek and Latin tongues'.[3] But this comes from failure to distinguish between the rights of individuals and the rights of sovereigns.

At the same time it is clear that in no commonwealth are all actions regulated by law; nor can they be. Hence subjects enjoy liberty in these matters. 'The liberty of a subject lieth therefore only in those things which, in regulating their actions, the sovereign hath praetermitted: such as is the liberty to buy and sell, and otherwise contract with one another; to choose their own abode, their own diet, their own trade of life, and institute their children as they themselves think fit, and the like.'[1]

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[1] *Leviathan*, 2, 21; *E.W.*, III, pp. 196–7.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 201.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 203.

So far as Hobbes is not simply making the tautological pronouncement that actions unregulated by law are unregulated by law, he is here drawing attention to the actual state of affairs, namely, that in a very wide field of human activity subjects can, as far as the law is concerned, act according to their will and inclination. And such liberty is found, he tells us, in all forms of commonwealth. The further question arises, however, whether there are any cases in which the subject is entitled to resist the sovereign.

The answer to this question can be obtained by considering the purpose of the social covenant and what rights cannot be transferred by the covenant. The covenant is made with a view to peace and security, the protection of life and limb. It follows, therefore, that a man does not and cannot transfer or lay down his right to save himself from death, wounds and imprisonment. And from this it follows that if the sovereign commands a man kill or maim himself, or to abstain from air or food, or not to to resist those who assault him, 'yet hath that man the liberty to disobey'.[2] Nor is a man obliged to confess his own crimes. Nor is a subject obliged to kill any other man at command or to take up arms, unless refusal to obey frustrates the end for which sovereignty was instituted. Hobbes does not mean, of course, that the sovereign may not punish a subject for refusing to obey: he means that subjects, having made mutual covenants with one another, and having thus instituted sovereignty with a view to self-protection, cannot legitimately be considered as having bound themselves by covenant to injure themselves or others simply because the sovereign commands it. 'It is one thing to say, *Kill me, or my fellow, if you please*; another thing to say, *I will kill myself or my fellow.*'[3]

A point of greater importance is that subjects are absolved from their duty of obedience to the sovereign, not only if the latter relinquishes his sovereignty, but also if he has, indeed, the will to retain his power but cannot in fact protect his subjects any longer. 'The obligation of subjects to the sovereign is understood to last as long, and no longer, than the power lasteth, by which he is able to protect them.'[4] According to the intention of those who institute it, sovereignty may be immortal; but in actual fact it has in itself 'many seeds of a natural mortality'.[1] If the sovereign is conquered in war and surrenders to the victor, his subjects become subjects of the latter. If the commonwealth is torn asunder by internal discord and the sovereign no longer possesses effective power, the subjects return to the state of nature, and a new sovereign can be set up.

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[1] *Leviathan*, 2, 21; *E.W.*, III, p. 199.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 142.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 204.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 208.

6. A good deal has been written about the significance of Hobbes's political theory and about the comparative importance of the various points which he makes. And different estimates are possible.

The point which is most likely to strike modern readers of the *Leviathan* is, very naturally, the power and authority attributed to the sovereign. This emphasis on the sovereign's position was, in part, a necessary counterbalance in Hobbes's political theory to his theory of atomic individualism. If according to Marxists the State, the capitalist State at least, is the means of binding together conflicting economic interests and classes, the State for Hobbes is the means of uniting warring individuals; and the State cannot perform this function unless the sovereign enjoys complete and unlimited authority. If men are naturally egoistic and always remain so, the only factor which can hold them together effectively is centralized power, vested in the sovereign.

This is not to say that Hobbes's insistence on the power of the sovereign was simply and solely the result of an inference from an aprioristic theory of human nature. He was also undoubtedly influenced by contemporary events. In the civil war he saw a revelation of man's character and of the centrifugal forces operative in human society. And he saw in strong and centralized power the only remedy for this state of affairs. 'If there had not first been an opinion received of the greatest part of England, that these powers (of legislating, administering justice, raising taxes, controlling doctrines and so on) were divided between the King, and the Lords, and the House of Commons, the people had never been divided and fallen into this civil war; first between those that disagreed in politics; and after between the dissenters about the liberty of religion. . . .'[2] Hobbes's absolutism and his Erastianism were greatly strengthened by his reflections on concrete political and religious dissensions.

[1] *Leviathan*, 2, 21; *E.W.*, III, p. 202.

[2] *Leviathan*, 2, 18; *E.W.*, III, p. 168.

At this point it may be advisable to remark that it is authoritarianism rather than 'totalitarianism' in a modern sense which is characteristic of Hobbes's political theory. Of course, there are certainly obvious elements of what we call totalitarianism in his theory. For example, it is the State, or more precisely the sovereign, that determines good and evil. In this sense the State is the fount of morality. Against this interpretation it has been objected that Hobbes admits 'natural laws' and that he allows also that the sovereign is responsible to God. But even if we are prepared to concede that he accepts the notion of natural law in any sense which is relevant to the matter under discussion, it remains true that for him it is the sovereign who interprets the natural law, just as it is the Christian sovereign who interprets the Scriptures. On the other hand, Hobbes did not envisage the sovereign as controlling all human activities; he thought of him as legislating and controlling with a view to the maintenance of peace and security. He was not concerned with exalting the State as such and in subordinating individuals to the State because it is the State; he was concerned, first and last, with the interests of individuals. And if he advocated centralized power and authority, this was because he saw no other way of promoting and preserving the peace and security of human beings, which constitute the purpose of organized society.

But though authoritarianism is certainly a prominent feature of Hobbes's political philosophy it should be emphasized that this authoritarianism has no essential connection with the theory of the divine right of kings and with the principle of legitimacy. Hobbes certainly speaks as though the sovereign is in some sense the representative of God; but in the first place monarchy is not for him the only proper form of government. For the word 'sovereign' in Hobbes's political writings we are not entitled simply to substitute the word 'monarch'; but the principle on which he insists is that sovereignty is indivisible, not that it should necessarily be vested in one man. And in the second place sovereignty, whether vested in one man or in an assembly of men, is derived from the social covenant, not from appointment by God. Further, this fiction of the social covenant would justify any *de facto* government. It would justify, for example, the Commonwealth no less than the rule of Charles I, as long, that is to say, as the latter possessed the power to rule. It is therefore easy to understand the charge brought against Hobbes that he wrote the *Leviathan* when he had a mind to go home and that he wished to win the favour of Cromwell. Thus Dr. John Wallis declared that the *Leviathan* 'was written in defence of Oliver's title, or whoever, by whatsoever means, can get to be upmost; placing the whole right of government merely in strength and absolving all his Majesty's subjects from their allegiance, whenever he is not in a present capacity to force obedience'.[1] Hobbes roundly denied that he had published his *Leviathan* 'to flatter Oliver, who was not made Protector till three or four years after, on purpose to make way for his return',[2] adding 'it is true that Mr. Hobbes came home, but it was because he would not trust his safety with the French clergy'.[3] But though Hobbes was justified in saying that he had not written his work to flatter Oliver Cromwell and that he had not intended to defend rebellion against the monarch, it remains true that his political theory is favourable neither to the idea of the divine right of kings nor to the Stuart principle of legitimacy. And commentators are right in drawing attention to the 'revolutionary' character of his theory of sovereignty, an aspect of his thought which is apt to be overlooked precisely because of his authoritarian conception of government and his personal predilection for monarchy.

If one had to find an analogy to Hobbes's theory of the State in mediaeval philosophy, it might perhaps be suggested that it is provided by St. Augustine much more than by St. Thomas Aquinas.[4] For St. Augustine regarded the State, or at least tended to do so, as a consequence of original sin; that is, as a necessary means of restraining man's evil impulses which are a result of original sin. And this view bears at any rate some likeness to Hobbes's conception of the State as the remedy for the evils consequent on man's natural condition, the war of all against all. Aquinas, on the other hand, adhering to the Greek tradition, regarded the State as a natural institution, the primary function of which is to promote the common good and which would be necessary even if man had not sinned and possessed no evil impulses.

This analogy is, of course, only partial, and it should not be pressed. St. Augustine certainly did not believe, for instance, that the sovereign determines moral distinctions. For him there is an objective moral law, with transcendent foundations, which is independent of the State and to which all sovereigns and subjects are morally obliged to conform their conduct. For Hobbes, however, there is no such moral law. It is true that he allowed that the sovereign is responsible to God and that he did not admit that he had eliminated any idea of objective morality apart from the sovereign's legislation. But at the same time philosophy, according to his own assertion, is not concerned with God, and he explicitly asserted that it is the sovereign who determines what is good and what is evil. In the state of nature good and evil are simply relative to the desires of individuals. On this point Hobbes gets rid of all metaphysical and transcendental theories and ideas.

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[1] *E.W.*, IV, p. 413. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 415. [3] *Ibid.*

[4] For the political theories of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, Chapters VIII and XL of vol. II of this *History* may be consulted.

He acts in a similar way with regard to the State considered as an institution. For Aquinas the State was demanded by the natural law, which was itself a reflection of the eternal law of God. It was therefore divinely willed, irrespective of man's sin and of his evil impulses. But this transcendent foundation of the State disappears in Hobbes's theory. In so far as we can speak of him as deducing the State, he deduces it simply from the passions of man, without reference to metaphysical and transcendental considerations. In this sense his theory is thoroughly naturalistic in character. If Hobbes devotes a considerable part of the *Leviathan* to religious and ecclesiastical questions and problems, he does so in the interests of a defence of Erastianism, not in order to supply a metaphysical theory of the State. A great deal of the importance of Hobbes's theory is due to the fact that he tries to set political philosophy on its own feet, so to speak, connecting it, indeed, with human psychology and, in intention at least, with his general mechanistic philosophy, but cutting it adrift from metaphysics and theology. Whether this was a profitable step is open to dispute; but it was certainly a step of considerable importance.

Hobbes's deduction of the State from a consideration of the passions of man goes a long way towards explaining his authoritarianism and his insistence on the power of the sovereign. But we have seen that his authoritarian ideas were not simply the result of a philosophical deduction; for they were greatly strengthened by his reflections on concrete historical events in his own country and by his fear and hatred of civil war. And, in general, he can be regarded as having discerned the great part played by power in the dynamics of political life and history. In this respect he can be called a 'realist'. And we can link him up with the Renaissance writer, Machiavelli.[1] But whereas the latter had been primarily concerned with political mechanics, with the means of attaining and preserving power, Hobbes provides a general political theory in which the concept of power and its function plays a supremely important part. Much in this theory is dated, historically conditioned, as is indeed inevitable in any political theory which goes beyond principles which can be considered 'eternal', that is, of lasting applicability, precisely because they are too general and abstract to be intrinsically related to a given epoch. But his conception of the role of power in human affairs is of lasting significance. To say this is not to subscribe to his theory of human nature (which, in its nominalistic aspects, connects him with fourteenth-century nominalism) or to pronounce adequate his account of the function of the State and of sovereignty. It is simply to say that Hobbes recognized very clearly factors which have undoubtedly helped to determine the course of human history as we know it up to date. In my opinion, Hobbes's political philosophy is one-sided and inadequate. But precisely because it is one-sided and inadequate it throws into clear relief features of social and political life of which it is important to take account.

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[1] For Machiavelli, pp. 315–20 of vol. III of this *History* may be consulted.

CHAPTER III

THE CAMBRIDGE PLATONISTS

Introductory remarks—Lord Herbert of Cherbury and his theory of natural religion — The Cambridge Platonists — Richard Cumberland.

1. FRANCIS BACON[1] had admitted a philosophical or natural theology, which treats of God's existence and of His nature, so far as this is manifested in creatures. Hobbes, however, excluded from philosophy all consideration of God, since he regarded philosophy as concerned with bodies in motion. Indeed, if by the term 'God' we mean an infinite spiritual or immaterial Being, reason can tell us nothing at all about Him; for terms such as 'spiritual' and 'immaterial' are not intelligible, unless they are used to connote invisible body. But this attitude was not common among the seventeenth-century British philosophers. The general tendency was rather to hold that reason can attain to some knowledge of God, and at the same time to maintain that reason is the judge of revelation and of revealed truth. Associated with this outlook we find in a number of writers the tendency to play down dogmatic differences and to belittle their importance in comparison with the general truths which are attainable by reason alone. And those who thought in this way were obviously more inclined towards a certain broadness of outlook and towards the promotion of toleration in the field of dogmatic religion than were the theologians of the diverse schools and traditions.

This general point of view may be said to have been characteristic of John Locke and his associates. But in this chapter I intend to treat of the group of writers who are known as the Cambridge Platonists. They fit in well enough at this point because, though some of them refer little or not at all to Hobbes, Ralph Cudworth regarded the latter as the principal enemy of true religion and of a spiritualist philosophy and consciously endeavoured to combat his influence. To say this is not to say, however, that the Cambridge Platonists should be estimated simply in terms of a reaction to Hobbes. For they represent a positive and independent current of thought which is not without interest, even though none of them were philosophers of the first rank.

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[1] The philosophy of Francis Bacon is discussed in Chapter XIX of vol. III of this *History.*

But before treating of the Cambridge Platonists I wish to say something about an earlier writer, Lord Herbert of Cherbury. He is, indeed, generally regarded as the predecessor of the eighteenth-century deists, who will be mentioned in a later chapter; but his philosophy of religion can be dealt with briefly here. On certain points his philosophical ideas have an affinity with those of the Cambridge Platonists.

2. Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583–1648) was the author of *Tractatus de Veritate* (1624), *De causis errorum* (1645) and *De religione gentilium* (1645; complete version 1663). In his view in addition to the human cognitive faculties we must postulate a number of 'common notions' (*notitiae communes*). These 'common notions', to use the Stoic term employed by Lord Herbert, are in some sense at least innate truths, characterized by 'apriority' (*prioritas*), independence, universality, certainty, necessity (that is, necessity for life) and immediacy. They are implanted by God and are apprehended by 'natural instinct', being the presuppositions, not the products, of experience. The human mind is not a *tabula rasa*; rather does it resemble a closed book which is opened on the presentation of sense-experience. And experience would not be possible without these 'common notions'.

On this last point Lord Herbert, as commentators have pointed out, anticipated in some degree a conviction which at a much later date was defended by Kant. But Lord Herbert does not provide any systematic deduction of these *a priori* notions or truths; nor does he attempt to tell us what they all are. That he does not attempt to give any exhaustive list of them is not, however, surprising if we bear in mind the fact that in his view there are impediments (for example, lack of talent) which prevent men from recognizing more than a fraction of them. In other words, to say that these truths are implanted by God or by nature is not to say that they are all consciously and reflectively apprehended from the start. When recognized, they win universal consent; so that universal consent is a mark of a recognized 'common notion'. But there can be growth in insight into these virtually innate ideas or truths; and many of them come to light only in the process of discursive thought. Hence one cannot give a complete list of them *a priori*. If men follow the path of reason alone, unhampered by prejudice and passion, they will come to a fuller reflective apprehension of the ideas implanted by God.

Another reason why Lord Herbert does not attempt to list the 'common notions' is that he is primarily interested in those which are involved in religious and moral knowledge. According to him there are five fundamental truths of natural religion; that there is a supreme Being, that this supreme Being ought to be worshipped, that a moral life has always been the principal part of divine worship, that vices and crimes should be expiated by repentance, and that in the next life our deeds on earth are rewarded or punished. In his *De religione gentilium* Lord Herbert tried to show how these five truths are recognized in all religions and form their real essence, in spite of all accretions due to superstition and fantasy. He does not deny that revelation is capable of supplementing natural religion; but he insists that alleged revelation must be judged at the bar of reason. And his reserved attitude towards dogma is evident. His interest, however, lies in defending the rationality of religion and of a religious outlook rather than in purely negative criticism of the different positive religions.

3. The first word in the name 'Cambridge Platonists' is due to the fact that the group of men to whom it is applied were all associated with the University of Cambridge. Benjamin Whichcote (1609–83), John Smith (1616–52), Ralph Cudworth (1617–88), Nathaniel Culverwel (*c.* 1618–*c.* 1651) and Peter Sterry (1613–72) were all graduates of Emmanuel College, while Henry More (1614–87) was a graduate of Christ's College. Some of them were also Fellows of their college; and all were Anglican clergymen.

In what sense were these men 'Platonists'? The answer is, I think, that they were influenced by and drew inspiration from Platonism as being a spiritualist and religious interpretation of reality. But Platonism did not mean for them simply the philosophy of the historic Plato: it meant rather the whole tradition of spiritualist metaphysics from Plato to Plotinus. Moreover, though they utilized Platonism in this sense and referred to philosophers such as Plato and Plotinus, and though they regarded themselves as continuing the Platonic tradition in contemporary thought, they were concerned to expound a religious and Christian philosophy in opposition to materialistic and atheistic currents of thought rather than to propound the philosophy of Plato or that of Plotinus, between which, indeed, they made no clear distinction. Cudworth in particular was a determined opponent of

Hobbes. But though Hobbes was the chief enemy, the Cambridge Platonists also rejected Descartes' mechanistic view of nature. They did not perhaps give sufficient weight to the fact that Cartesianism possesses another and different aspect; but his views of nature seemed to them to be incompatible with a spiritual interpretation of the world and to pave the way for the more radical philosophy of Hobbes.

Emmanuel College was, in effect, a Puritan foundation and a stronghold of Calvinism. The Cambridge Platonists, however, reacted against this narrow Protestant dogmatism. Whichcote, for example, rejected the Calvinist (and, one might add, Hobbesian) view of man. For man is an image of God, gifted with reason, which is 'the candle of the Lord, lighted by God, and leading us to God'; and he should not be belittled or denigrated. Again, Cudworth rejected the doctrine that some men are predestined to hell and eternal torment antecedently to any fault of their own. His study of the ancient philosophers and of ethics liberated him from the Calvinism in which he had been educated and which he had brought with him to the university. It would, indeed, be inaccurate if one asserted that all the Cambridge Platonists rejected Calvinism and liberated themselves from its influence. Culverwel certainly did not do so. While agreeing with Whichcote in extolling reason, he at the same time emphasized the diminution of its light and the weakness of the human mind in a way which shows the influence of the Calvinist theology. None the less one can say in general that the Cambridge Platonists disliked the Calvinist denigration of human nature and its subordination of reason to faith. In fact, they were not concerned with supporting any one dogmatic system. They aimed rather at revealing the essential elements of Christianity; and they regarded a good deal in the Protestant systems as being little more than matter of opinion. With regard to dogmatic differences they thus tended to adopt a tolerant and 'broad' outlook and were known as 'Latitudinarians'. This is not to say that they rejected the idea of revealed truth or that they refused to admit 'mysteries'. They were not rationalists in the modern sense. But they strongly objected to insistence on obscure doctrines, the relevance of which to the moral life was not clear. The essence of Christianity, and indeed of all religion, they found in the moral life. Doctrinal disputes and disputes about ecclesiastical government and institution they regarded as being of secondary importance in comparison with a sincerely moral and Christian life. Religious truth is of value if it reacts on life and produces practical fruit.

By saying this I do not mean to imply that the Cambridge Platonists were pragmatists. They believed in the power of the human reason to attain to objective truth about God and to give us insight into absolute and universal moral laws. But they insisted on two points; first, that a sincere attempt to lead a moral life is a necessary condition for obtaining insight into truth about God and, secondly, that the truths which are of most importance are those which form the clearest basis for a Christian life. In their dislike for sectarian wrangling and bitter controversy about obscure theoretical problems they bear some resemblance to those fourteenth-century writers who had deplored the wrangling of the schools and all preoccupation with logical subtleties to the neglect of the 'one thing necessary'.

At the same time the Cambridge Platonists emphasized the contemplative attitude. That is to say, although they stressed the close connection between moral purity and the attainment of truth, they emphasized the understanding of reality, the personal appropriation and contemplation of truth, rather than the manipulation of reality. In other words, their attitude was different from the attitude insisted on by Francis Bacon and summed up in the aphorism 'Knowledge is power'. They had little sympathy with the subordination of knowledge to its scientific and practical exploitation. For one thing, they believed, whereas Bacon had not, that rational knowledge of supersensible reality is attainable; and this knowledge cannot be exploited scientifically. Nor, for the matter of that, had they much sympathy with the Puritan subordination of knowledge of religious truth to 'practical' purposes. They emphasized rather the Plotinian idea of the conversion of the mind to the contemplation of divine reality and of the world in its relation to God. As historians have pointed out, they were not in tune with either the empiricist or the religious movements of their time and country. It may very well be true that, as Ernst Cassirer has argued,[1] there is a historical connection between the Platonism of the Italian renaissance and the Platonism of the Cambridge divines; but as Cassirer also argues, this Cambridge Platonism stood apart from the dominant movements in contemporary British philosophical and theological thought. The Cambridge men were neither empiricists nor Puritans.

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[1] *The Platonic Renaissance in England,* translated by James P. Pettegrove (Edinburgh, Nelson, 1953).

The Cambridge Platonists, therefore, were concerned with defending a spiritualist interpretation of the universe as a foundation for the Christian moral life. And the most elaborate defence of such an interpretation of the universe is given by Ralph Cudworth in his work *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* (1678). It is a tedious piece of writing, because the author discusses at length the views of different ancient philosophers to the detriment of a clear statement of his own position. But behind the welter of quotations and of expositions of Greek philosophers there appears clearly enough the figure of Hobbes, whom Cudworth interprets as a sheer atheist. In answer to Hobbes he argues that we do in fact possess an idea of God. He reduces materialism to sensationalism and then observes that sense-perception is not knowledge, thus reaffirming the position of Plato in the *Theaetetus*. Moreover, it is evident that we have ideas of many things which are not perceptible by the senses. It follows, therefore, that we cannot legitimately deny the existence of a being simply because it cannot be perceived by the senses; nor are we entitled to say that a name which purports to connote an incorporeal object is necessarily devoid of significance. 'Were existence to be allowed to nothing, that doth not fall under corporeal sense, then must we deny the existence of soul and mind in ourselves and others, because we can neither feel nor see any such thing. Whereas we are certain of the existence of our own souls, partly from an inward consciousness of our own cogitations, and partly from that principle of reason, that nothing cannot act. And the existence of other souls is manifest to us, from their effects upon their respective bodies, their motions, actions, and discourse. Wherefore since the Atheists cannot deny the existence of soul or mind in men, though no such thing fall under external sense, they have as little reason to deny the existence of a perfect mind, presiding over the universe, without which it cannot be conceived whence our imperfect ones should be derived. The existence of that God, whom no eye hath seen nor can see, is plainly proved by reason from his effects, in the visible phenomena of the universe, and from what we are conscious of within ourselves.'[1] Nor can we argue validly from the fact that even the theists admit the incomprehensibility of God to the conclusion that God is altogether inconceivable and that the term 'God' has no meaning. For the statement that God is incomprehensible means that the finite mind cannot have an adequate idea of Him, not that it can have no idea of Him at all. We cannot comprehend the divine perfection; but we can have an idea of absolutely perfect Being. This can be shown in various ways. For example, 'that we have an idea or conception of perfection, or a perfect Being, is evident from the notion that we have of imperfection, so familiar to us; perfection being the rule and measure of imperfection, and not imperfection of perfection . . .: so that perfection is first conceivable, in order of nature, as light before darkness, a positive before the privative or defect'.[1] And the same applies to the idea of the infinite. Further, it is useless to assert that the idea of God is a construction of the imagination, like the idea of a centaur, or that it is implanted in the mind by lawgivers and politicians for their own ends. For a finite and imperfect mind could not have constructed the idea of an infinitely perfect Being. 'Were there no God, the idea of an absolutely or infinitely perfect Being could never have been made or feigned, neither by politicians, nor by poets, nor philosophers, nor any other.'[2] 'The generality of mankind in all ages have had a prolepsis or anticipation in their minds concerning the real and actual existence of such a being.'[3] And it is possible to demonstrate the existence of God by means of the idea of God. For example, 'because we have an idea of God, or a perfect Being, implying no manner of contradiction in it, therefore must it needs have some kind of entity or other, either an actual or possible one; but God, if he be not, is possible to be, therefore he doth actually exist'.[4]

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[1] *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, I, 5, 1; edit. Harrison, 1845, vol. II, p. 515. All quotations from this work of Cudworth are taken from Harrison's edition.

The influence of Descartes on Cudworth's mind is evident from what has just been said about the idea of the perfect. Cudworth does, indeed, give other lines of argument. For example, he argues that from nothing there can come nothing, so that 'if once there had been nothing, there could never have been any thing'.[5] There must, therefore, be something which existed from all eternity, itself unmade; and this something must exist by the necessity of its own nature. But there is nothing which exists necessarily and eternally save an absolutely perfect Being. Hence either God exists or nothing at all exists. But though Cudworth gives a variety of arguments, the influence of Descartes is undeniable. Nor does Cudworth attempt to deny it. He criticizes Descartes' use of our knowledge of God's existence on the ground that it involves us in a scepticism from which we can never escape. Interpreting Descartes as saying that we cannot be sure of anything, even of the trustworthiness of our reason, until we have proved that God exists, he argues that the attainment of such a proof is rendered impossible, because it presupposes the very fact which it is afterwards used to establish, namely, that we can trust our reason and the first principles of reason. But this does not alter the fact that Cudworth drew inspiration from the writings of Descartes.

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[1] *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, I, 5, I; II, pp. 537–8.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 635.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 509.

[4] *Ibid.*, III, pp. 49–50.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 54.

However, though Cudworth was certainly influenced by Descartes, he viewed with sharp disfavour the latter's mechanistic theory of the material world. Descartes belongs to the class of those who have 'an undiscerned tang of the mechanic Atheism hanging about them', because of 'their so confident rejecting of all final and intending causality in nature, and admitting of no other causes of things, as philosophical, save the material and mechanical only'.[1] Cudworth calls the Cartesians 'mechanic Theists' and rejects Descartes' contention that we should not claim the power of discerning God's purposes in nature. That eyes were made for seeing and ears for hearing is so plain that 'nothing but sottish stupidity or atheistic incredulity can make any doubt thereof'.[2] Cudworth argues also against the notion that animals are machines and favours attributing to them sensitive souls. 'If it be evident from the phenomena that brutes are not mere senseless machines or automata, and only like clocks or watches, then ought not popular opinion and vulgar prejudice so far to prevail with us, as to hinder our assent to that which sound reason and philosophy clearly dictate, that therefore they must have something more than matter in them.'[3]

Cudworth thus rejects altogether the sharp dichotomy made by Descartes between the spiritual and material worlds. I do not mean by this that he postulated an evolutionary continuity between inanimate matter, plants, sensitive life and rational life. On the contrary, he denied that life can proceed from inanimate matter, and he denounced Hobbes's account of consciousness and thought in materialist terms. 'There is nothing in body or matter, but magnitude, figure, site, and motion or rest: now it is mathematically certain, that these, however combined together, can never possibly compound, or make up life or cogitation.'[1] Moreover the rational soul of man is naturally immortal, whereas the sensitive souls of brutes are not. There are, therefore, essential differences of degree in nature. 'There is a scale, or ladder of entities and perfections in the universe, one above another, and the production of things cannot possibly be in way of ascent from lower to higher, but must of necessity be in way of descent from higher to lower.'[2] But precisely because there are these various degrees of perfection in nature we cannot make a simple division between the spiritual sphere on the one hand and, on the other, the material sphere, from which final causality is banished and where vital phenomena are interpreted in purely mechanistic terms.

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[1] *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, 3, 37; I, p. 217.

[2] *Ibid.*, 5, I; II, p. 616.

[3] *Ibid.*, 5, 4; III, p. 441.

A more pronounced hostility towards the Cartesian dualism was shown by Henry More. In his younger days he had been an enthusiastic admirer of Descartes. Thus in a letter to Clerselier, written in 1655, he remarks not only that Cartesianism is useful for promoting the highest end of all philosophy, namely, religion, but also that the reasoning and method of demonstration concerning God and man is soundest if it is based on Cartesian principles. Indeed, if exception is made perhaps for Platonism, there is no system of philosophy besides Cartesianism, properly understood, which so stoutly bars the way to atheism.[3] But in his *Enchiridion metaphysicum* (1671) More depicted the Cartesian philosophy as an enemy of religious belief. Inclined as he was to mysticism and theosophy he found Descartes' intellectualism repugnant. The notion of a material world sharply separated from spiritual reality and consisting of extension which can be adequately treated in terms of mathematics was unacceptable to a man who regarded nature as permeated by vitality, by soul. In nature we see the creative activity of the world-soul, a vital dynamic principle, not to be identified with God but operating as the divine instrument. Cudworth, too, speaks of 'Plastic Nature', which, as the instrument of God, is the immediate agent in producing natural effects. In other words, Cudworth and More turned their backs on the Cartesian interpretation of nature and on its developments and attempted to reinstate a philosophy of nature of the type which was popular at the time of the Renaissance.

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[1] *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, 5, 4; III, p. 440.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Œuvres de Descartes, A.T.*, V, pp. 249f.

What has been said about Cudworth's theory of the idea of the perfect as being prior to the idea of imperfection indicates clearly enough his opposition to empiricism. Indeed, he does not hesitate to declare that the statement that the human mind is originally 'a mere blank or white sheet of paper that hath nothing at all in it, but what was scribbled upon it by the objects of sense',[1] implies that the human soul is generated from matter or that it is 'nothing but a higher modification of matter'.[2] He is, of course, interpreting the statement as meaning that the mind is merely the passive recipient of sense-impressions. But in his writings he makes it clear that he intends to reject the empiricist principle even when it is not interpreted in this narrow sense. Thus in the *Treatise concerning eternal and immutable Morality*[3] he states that there are two kinds of 'perceptive cogitations' in the soul. The first kind consists of passive perceptions of the soul, which may be either sensations or images (or phantasms). The other kind consists of 'active perceptions which rise from the mind itself without the body'.[4] And these are called 'conceptions of the mind' or *νοήματα*. They include not only ideas such as those of justice, truth, knowledge, virtue and vice but also propositions such as 'Nothing can be and not be at the same time' or 'Out of nothing there can come nothing'. These conceptions of the mind are not abstracted from phantasms by any active intellect (a view which, according to Cudworth, has been erroneously attributed to Aristotle). The idea that they are so abstracted is due to the fact that they are 'most commonly excited and awakened occasionally from the appulse of outward objects knocking at the door of our senses',[5] and men have failed to distinguish between the outward occasion of these conceptions and their active, productive cause. In reality 'they must needs arise from the innate vigour and activity of the mind itself',[6] which is a created image of the divine mind. These virtually innate ideas are imprinted on the human mind by God. And by them we know not only immaterial objects and eternal truths but also material things. This is not to deny that sense and imagination have a part to play in our knowledge of material things. But sensation cannot give us knowledge of the essence of any thing or of any scientific truth. We cannot have scientific knowledge of the material world save by the activity of the mind producing 'conceptions' from within itself by virtue of its God-given power.

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[1] *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, 5, 4; III, p. 438. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] This treatise is included in vol. III of Harrison's edition of *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*. And references are given according to pagination in this edition.

[4] 4, 1, 7; III, p. 582. [5] *Ibid.*, 4, 2, 2; III, p. 587. [6] *Ibid.*, 4, 3, 1; III, pp. 601-2.

The criterion of theoretical truth is 'the clearness of the apprehensions themselves'.[1] 'Clear intellectual conceptions must of necessity be truths, because they are real entities.'[2] Cudworth accepts, therefore, the Cartesian criterion of truth, clarity and distinction of idea; but he rejects the use of the hypothesis of the 'evil genius' and Descartes' device to escape from the possibility of error and deception. Men are, indeed, sometimes deceived and imagine that they clearly understand what they do not clearly understand. But, says Cudworth, it does not follow that they can never be certain that they do clearly comprehend some thing. We might just as well argue that 'because in our dreams we think we have clear sensations we cannot therefore be ever sure, when we are awake, that we see things that really are'.[3] Cudworth evidently thought that it was absurd to suggest that waking life might be a dream.

The mind, therefore, can perceive eternal essences and immutable truths. And it can do this, as has already been mentioned, because it derives from and depends on the eternal mind 'which comprehends within itself the steady and immutable *rationes* of all things and their verities'.[4] It can therefore discern eternal moral principles and values. Good and evil, just and unjust, are not relative conceptions, as Hobbes imagined. Even if it is possible to have varying degrees of insight into moral values and principles, these are none the less absolute. Cudworth had therefore no sympathy with the view, which he ascribes to Descartes, that moral and other eternal truths are subject to the divine omnipotence and therefore, in principle, variable. Indeed, he goes so far as to say that 'if any one did desire to persuade the world, that Cartesius, notwithstanding all his pretences to demonstrate a Deity, was indeed but an hypocritical Theist, or personated and disguised Atheist, he could not have a fairer pretence for it out of all his writings than from hence; this being plainly to destroy the Deity, by making one attribute thereof to devour and swallow up another; infinite will and power, infinite understanding and wisdom'.[5]

This belief in the mind's power of discerning immutable truths, which bear the evidence of their truth within themselves and which are in some sense imprinted on the mind, was shared by other Cambridge Platonists. Whichcote, for example, spoke of 'truths of first inscription', of which we have knowledge 'by the light of first impression'. 'For God made man to them (moral truths of first inscription), and did write them upon the heart of man, before he did declare them upon Mount Sinai, before he engraved them upon the tables of stone, or before they were writ in our Bibles: God made man to them, and wrought his law upon men's hearts; and as it were, interwove it into the principles of our reason. . . . (We possess) principles that are *concreated*. . . . Things of natural knowledge, or of first impression in the heart of man by God, these are known to be true as soon as ever they are proposed. . . .'[1] Such are, for example, the principles of reverence for the Deity and the fundamental principles of justice.

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[1] *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, 4, 5, 9; III, p. 637.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, 4, 5, 12; III, pp. 638–9.

[4] *Ibid.*, 4, 6, 2; III, p. 639.

[5] *Ibid.*, 5, 1; II, p. 533.

Similarly, Henry More, in his *Enchiridion ethicum* (1668) enumerates twenty-three moral principles which he calls *Noemata moralia*. According to him, they are 'the fruit of that faculty which is properly called *Nous*',[2] and their truth is immediately evident. The first of them is that 'good is that which is pleasing, agreeable and fitting to some perceptive life, or to a degree of this life, and which is conjoined with the conservation of the percipient'.[3] Another is that 'what is good should be chosen; but evil should be avoided. The greater good should be chosen in preference to the latter, while a lesser evil should be tolerated lest we undergo a greater.'[4] But More evidently did not think that his list of twenty-three fundamental moral principles was exhaustive; for he speaks of 'these propositions and their like'.[5] This laying-down of a large number of 'undeniable' principles links More with Lord Herbert of Cherbury and anticipates the procedure of the later 'Scottish School'.

The Cambridge Platonists, as we have seen, were not much in sympathy with the prevailing philosophical and religious movements of their country and time. Though they certainly did not deny the part played by experience in human knowledge, they were not in sympathy with the restricted and narrow concept of experience which was becoming characteristic of what we call 'empiricism'. And though they were far from denouncing science, they showed little understanding of the development and method of contemporary mathematical physics. They tended to look back to 'Platonic' philosophies of nature rather than to attempt a forward-looking synthesis or harmonization of physics with metaphysics. Further, their devotion to a Platonic and Christian humanism led them to hold aloof from, and to adopt a critical attitude towards, the theological controversy of the time. It is understandable, therefore, that their influence was comparatively slight, particularly if one bears in mind the unattractive literary presentation of their ideas. This is not to say, of course, that they exercised no influence at all. For example, in his *Enchiridion metaphysicum* Henry More argued that the Cartesian geometrical interpretation of nature leads us to the idea of absolute space, indestructible, infinite and eternal. These attributes cannot, however, be the attributes of material things. Absolute space must be, therefore, an intelligible reality which is a kind of shadow or symbol of the divine presence and immensity. More was primarily concerned with arguing that the mathematical interpretation of nature, which separated the corporeal from the spiritual, ought logically to lead to the linking of the one to the other; in other words, he was concerned with developing an *argumentum ad hominem* against Descartes. But his argument appears to have exercised an influence on the Newtonian conception of space. Again, Shaftesbury, who will be considered in connection with ethics, was certainly influenced by Cambridge Platonists such as Cudworth, More and Whichcote. Yet though Cambridge Platonism did exercise some influence, it obviously stands apart from what is generally considered to be the chief development in British philosophy of the period, namely, empiricism.

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[1] *Selected sermons*, 1773, pp. 6–7. [2] 1, 4, 2. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.* [5] *Ibid.*, 1, 4, 4.

4. The theory of innate ideas and principles was criticized by Richard Cumberland (1632–1718), who died as bishop of Peterborough. In the introduction to his *De legibus naturae* (1672) he makes it clear that in his opinion it is an unjustifiable short-cut if in order to defend the moral order one simply postulates innate ideas. To build natural religion and morality on a hypothesis which has been rejected by the majority of philosophers and which can never be proved is, he says, an ill-advised procedure.

But though Cumberland rejected the Cambridge Platonists' hypothesis of innate ideas, he was at one with Cudworth in his zeal to refute the philosophy of Hobbes. Laws of nature, in the moral sense, were for him 'propositions of unchangeable truth, which direct our voluntary actions about choosing good and evil; and impose an obligation to external actions even without civil laws, and laying aside all consideration of those compacts which constitute civil government'.[1] The moral law does not depend, therefore, on civil law or on the sovereign's will. And the word 'good' has an objective meaning, signifying that which preserves, develops and perfects the faculties of one or more things. But the point which Cumberland especially emphasizes is that the good of the individual is inseparable from that of others. For man is not, as Hobbes depicted him, a human atom, entirely and incurably egoistic: he is a social being, and he possesses altruistic and benevolent, as well as egoistic, inclinations. There is, therefore, no contradiction between the promotion of one's own good and the promotion of the common good. Indeed, the common good comprises within itself the good of the individual. It follows, therefore, that 'the common good is the supreme law'.[2] And the laws of nature prescribe those actions which will promote the common good, 'and by which only the entire happiness of particular persons can be obtained'.[3]

Cumberland does not work out his ideas in any very precise way. But because he lays down the promotion of the common good as the supreme law, in relation to which all other moral rules should be determined, he has been called the precursor of utilitarianism. It should be noted, however, that promotion of the common good includes for him not only promotion of benevolence and love of other men but also love of God. For perfection of our faculties, even if Cumberland does not define 'perfection', certainly involves for him the conscious appropriation and expression of our relationship to God. Moreover, the law of benevolence is itself an expression of the divine will and is furnished with sanctions, even though disinterested love of God and man provides a higher motive for obedience to the law than is provided by a self-regarding consideration of sanctions.

In view of the emphasis which is customarily, and rightly, placed on the development of empiricism in British philosophy, it is as well not to forget the existence of men such as the Cambridge Platonists and Richard Cumberland. For they represent what Professor J. H. Muirhead called 'the Platonic tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy'. If we wish to use the term 'idealism' in the very wide sense in which the Marxists are accustomed to use the word, we can speak of the Cambridge Platonists and kindred thinkers as representing one phase of the idealist tradition in British philosophy, the tradition which found an eminent expression

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[1] *De legibus naturae*, 1.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*, 5.

(combined with empiricism) in the writings of Berkeley and which flourished in the latter part of the nineteenth century and in the first two decades of the twentieth. On the Continent British philosophy is often supposed to be inherently and constantly empiricist and even naturalistic in character. The existence of another tradition needs, therefore, to be emphasized if we are to form a balanced view of the development of British thought.

CHAPTER IV

LOCKE (1)

Life and writings—Locke's moderation and common sense—The purpose of the Essay*—The attack on innate ideas—The empiricist principle.*

1. John Locke was born at Wrington, near Bristol, in 1632. His father was a country attorney, and he was educated at home until he went in 1646 to Westminster School, where he remained until 1652. In that year he entered the university of Oxford as a junior student of Christ Church. After taking in due course the B.A. and M.A. degrees, he was elected in 1659 to a senior studentship at Christ Church. In the following year he was made a lecturer in Greek, and later he was appointed Reader in rhetoric and Censor of Moral Philosophy.

When Locke started studying philosophy at Oxford, he found there a debased and rather petrified form of Scholasticism for which he conceived a great distaste, regarding it as 'perplexed' with obscure terms and useless questions. No doubt, like some other Renaissance and modern philosophers who revolted against Aristotelian Scholasticism, he was more influenced by it than he himself was aware; but his interest in philosophy was aroused by his private reading of Descartes rather than by what was then being taught at Oxford. This is not to say that Locke was ever a Cartesian. But on certain points he was influenced by Descartes, and in any case the latter's writings showed him that clear and orderly thinking is as possible inside as it is outside the sphere of philosophy.

Locke's studies at Oxford were not confined to philosophy. As a friend of Sir Robert Boyle and his circle, he interested himself in chemistry and physics, and he also pursued studies in medicine, though it was not until a later date (1674) that he obtained his medical degree and a licence to practise. He did not, however, take up the practice of medicine as a regular career, nor did he continue his academic life at Oxford. Instead he became involved, in a minor way, in public affairs.

In 1665 Locke left England as secretary to a diplomatic mission, headed by Sir Walter Vane, to the Elector of Brandenburg. Two years later, after his return to England, he entered the service of Lord Ashley, afterwards the first earl of Shaftesbury, acting as medical adviser to his patron and as tutor to the latter's son. But Shaftesbury evidently held a higher opinion of Locke's abilities; for when he became Lord Chancellor in 1672, he appointed his friend to the post of secretary for the presentation of ecclesiastical benefices. In 1673 Locke was made secretary to the council of trade and plantations; but Shaftesbury's political fortunes suffered a reverse, and Locke retired to Oxford, where he still held his studentship at Christ Church. Ill-health, however, led him to go to France in 1675, and he remained there until 1680. During this period he met Cartesians and anti-Cartesians and was influenced by the thought of Gassendi.

On his return to England Locke re-entered the service of Shaftesbury. But the latter was engaged in intrigue against King James II, then Duke of York, and he was finally forced to take refuge in Holland, where he died in the January of 1683. Locke, believing that his own safety also was menaced, fled to Holland in the autumn of the same year. Charles II died in 1685, and Locke's name was placed on a list of people wanted by the new government in connection with Monmouth's rebellion. He therefore lived under an assumed name and did not return to England even when his name had been removed from the list of wanted persons. However, as Locke was aware, plans were afoot for placing William of Orange on the throne of England, and shortly after the revolution of 1688 Locke returned to his own country, the Dutchman having been safely installed in London.

For reasons of health Locke declined the proffered post of ambassador to the Elector of Brandenburg; but he retained a minor office in London until in 1691 he retired to Oates in Essex, where he lived as guest of the Masham family, though from 1696 until 1700 his duties as Commissioner of Trade forced him to spend part of the year in the capital. He died in October 1704, while Lady Masham was reading the Psalms to him. Incidentally, this lady was the daughter of Ralph Cudworth, the Cambridge Platonist, with whom Locke had been acquainted and with some of whose views he was in sympathy.

Locke's principal work is his *Essay concerning Human Understanding*.[1] In 1671 he was engaged in philosophical discussion with five or six friends when it occurred to him that they could not make further progress until they had examined the mind's capacities and seen 'what objects our understandings were, or were not, fitted to deal with'.[1] Locke prepared a paper on the subject, and this formed the nucleus of the two early drafts of the *Essay*. He continued work on the treatise during the following years, and the first edition was published in 1690 (preceded in 1688 by a French abstract for Le Clerc's *Bibliothèque universelle*). Three further editions were published during Locke's lifetime.

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[1] References to this work by volume and page are to the edition by A. C. Fraser.

In 1690 there also appeared Locke's *Two Treatises of Civil Government*. In the first he attacked the theory of the divine right of kings as expounded by Sir Robert Filmer, while in the second he developed his own political theory. According to Locke in his preface to the *Treatises* his motive in writing was to justify the revolution of 1688 and make good the title of William of Orange to occupy the throne of England. But this does not mean that his political principles had been hurriedly conceived with a view to achieving this practical purpose. Moreover, his expression of his political theory remains one of the most important documents in the history of liberal thought, just as the *Essay* remains one of the most important documents in the history of empiricism.

In 1693 Locke published *Some Thoughts concerning Education* and in 1695 *The Reasonableness of Christianity*. In 1689 he published in Latin, and anonymously, his first *Letter on Toleration*; and this was followed, in 1690 and 1693, by two other letters on the same subject. An incomplete fourth letter appeared posthumously in 1706, together with his discourse on miracles, his examination of Malebranche's opinion about seeing all things in God, the uncompleted work on *The Conduct of the Understanding*, his memoirs of Shaftesbury, and some letters. Other material has been subsequently published.

2. Locke, as is evident from his writings, was very much a man of moderation. He was an empiricist, in the sense that he believed that all the material of our knowledge is supplied by sense-perception and introspection. But he was not an empiricist in the sense that he thought that we can know only sense-presentations. In his own modest fashion he was a metaphysician. He was a rationalist in the sense that he believed in bringing all opinions and beliefs before the tribunal of reason and disliked the substitution of expressions of emotion and feeling for rationally grounded judgments. But he was not a rationalist in the sense of

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[1] *Essay*, 'Epistle to the Reader'.

one who denies spiritual reality or the supernatural order or the possibility of divine revelation of truths which, while not contrary to reason, are above reason, in the sense that they cannot be discovered by reason alone and may not be fully understandable even when revealed. He disliked authoritarianism, whether in the intellectual or in the political field. And he was one of the earlier exponents of the principle of toleration. But he was far from being a friend of anarchy; and there were limits to the extent to which he was willing to apply the principle of toleration. He was a religious man; but he had no sympathy with fanaticism or with intemperate zeal. One does not look to him for brilliant extravaganzas or for flashes of genius; but one finds in him an absence of extremes and the presence of common sense.

One or two commentators have objected against over-emphasizing Locke's 'common sense'. And it is true, for example, that his theory of an occult substrate in material things is not a common-sense view, if by this one means a view spontaneously held by a man who is innocent of all philosophy. But when one speaks of Locke's common sense, one does not mean to imply that his philosophy is no more than an expression of the spontaneously held views of the ordinary man. One means rather that he endeavoured to reflect on and analyse common experience, that he did not strive after originality by producing far-fetched theories and one-sided, if brilliant, interpretations of reality, and that the theories which he did produce were, in his opinion, required by rational reflection on common experience. To those who expect from a philosopher startling paradoxes and novel 'discoveries' he inevitably appears as pedestrian and unexciting. But he gives throughout the impression of being an honest thinker. In reading him one is not forced to ask oneself constantly whether he can possibly have believed what he was saying.

In his writings Locke employs ordinary English, apart from a few technical terms; and he is to this extent easy to follow. But, as far as the *Essay* at any rate is concerned, terms are not always employed in the same sense; and he is to this extent difficult to follow. In his 'Epistle to the Reader' Locke makes open acknowledgement of the fact that the *Essay* was 'written by incoherent parcels; and after long intervals of neglect, resumed again, as my humour or occasions permitted'. This serves to explain defects in arrangement and a certain repetitiveness; 'the way it has been writ in, by catches, and many long intervals of interruption, being apt to cause some repetitions'. The reason for leaving the results as they are is provided by Locke himself. 'But to confess the truth, I am too lazy, or too busy to make it shorter.' He might, however, have profitably cleared up some major inconsistencies and fixed more definitely the meaning of certain terms. For example, sometimes he speaks as though what we know is our ideas and the relations between ideas, and, indeed, he defines the idea as the object of the understanding when a man thinks. But at other times he implies that we know at least some things directly. In other words, he sometimes implies a representationist view of knowledge, while on other occasions he implies the opposite. Again, in what he has to say about universal ideas there are several different strands or tendencies of thought. Sometimes he speaks in a nominalist fashion, but at other times he implies what the Scholastics call 'moderate realism'. And the result of all this is that under the *prima facie* simplicity and clarity of Locke's writing there is a certain amount of ambiguity and confusion. It is not that Locke was incapable of clearing up these obscurities of thought: he has himself provided what is doubtless the true explanation, namely, that he was either too lazy or too busy to do so.

3. We have seen that Locke undertook to institute an inquiry concerning human knowledge. Other philosophers before him had, of course, reflected on and written about human knowledge. In the Greek world both Plato and Aristotle had done so and, from a very different point of view, the sceptics. St. Augustine had reflected on this subject, and the leading mediaeval philosophers all considered it in one connection or another. In post-Renaissance philosophy Descartes had treated the problem of certainty, and in England both Francis Bacon and Hobbes had written about human knowledge. But Locke was really the first philosopher to devote his main work to an inquiry into human understanding, its scope and its limits. And we can say that the prominent place occupied in modern philosophy by the theory of knowledge is in large measure due to him, even though it was the influence of Kant which subsequently led to this branch of philosophical inquiry usurping to all intents and purposes the whole field of philosophy; that is to say, among those thinkers who adhered more or less closely to the position of Kant himself. The mere fact, therefore, that Locke devoted a large-scale treatise to an inquiry into human understanding and knowledge has a peculiar importance of its own.

Now it has already been mentioned that in his 'Epistle to the Reader', prefaced to the *Essay*, Locke says that he considered it necessary to inquire, with what objects are our understandings fitted to deal, with what objects are they not fitted to deal. That he asked such a question is understandable. For he thought that men not infrequently wasted their energies on problems which could not be solved by the human mind. And he also considered that this procedure is an occasion for scepticism in others. If we confined our attention to matters which fall within the scope of the human intellect, we should make progress in knowledge, and less occasion would be given for scepticism. But though it is understandable that he asked the question, its formulation, as given above, is unfortunate. For how, it may be asked, can we distinguish between the objects with which the mind is capable of dealing and those with which it is incapable of dealing without passing beyond the scope of the mind? Or the objection can be expressed in this way. If we can mention any object with which the human mind is incapable of dealing, have we not implicitly stated that the mind is capable of saying something about it and so 'dealing' with it to a certain extent?

Further, Locke defines an idea as 'whatever is meant by phantasm, notion, species, or whatever it is which the mind can be employed about in thinking'.[1] Here he tells us that the objects of the mind are ideas. And it would appear that the mind is fitted to deal with all its ideas. We could not say, with what objects the mind is not fitted to deal. For if we could say this, we should have ideas of these objects. And in this case we could deal with them, since an idea is defined as that about which the mind can be employed in thinking.

In his introduction to the *Essay* Locke says that his purpose is 'to inquire into the original, certainty, and extent of human knowledge; together with the grounds and degrees of belief, opinion, and assent'.[2] He thus makes no clear distinction between the psychological question concerning the origin of our ideas and epistemological questions such as the nature of certain knowledge and the sufficient grounds for 'opinion'. But this could hardly be expected at the time. Before speaking of the method which he proposes to employ, he remarks that it is worth while 'to search out the bounds between opinion and knowledge; and examine by what measures, in things, whereof we have no certain knowledge,

[1] *E.*, Introduction, 8; 1, p. 32.

[2] *Ibid.*, 2; 1, p. 26.

we ought to regulate our assent, and moderate our persuasions'.[1] Here we have a more or less epistemological programme. But the first point of the method of inquiry which Locke then gives is to inquire 'into the origin of those ideas, notions, or whatever else you please to call them, which a man observes, and is conscious to himself he has in his mind; and the ways, whereby the understanding comes to be furnished with them'.[2] Here we have a psychological inquiry.

This inquiry into our ideas covers the first and second books of the *Essay*. In the first book Locke argues against the theory of innate ideas, while in the second he gives his own theories about our ideas, their origin and nature. But, as one might expect when an idea is defined as whatever is the object of the understanding when a man thinks, discussion of ideas is sometimes discussion of our ideas of things and sometimes of the things of which we have ideas.

The third book treats of words. It is closely connected with the preceding book, because 'words in their primary or immediate signification stand for nothing but the ideas in the mind of him that uses them'.[3] Ideas represent things, and words stand for ideas.

The second and third points in Locke's method are 'to show what knowledge the understanding hath by those ideas; and the certainty, evidence, and extent of it' and to inquire 'into the nature and grounds of faith, or opinion'.[4] These subjects, knowledge and opinion, are dealt with in the fourth book.

4. With a view to clearing the ground in preparation for laying the empiricist foundations of knowledge Locke first disposes of the theory of innate ideas. He understands this theory as being the doctrine that 'there are in the understanding certain innate principles; some primary notions, κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι, characters, as it were stamped upon the mind of man, which the soul receives in its very first being; and brings into the world with it'.[5] Some of these principles are speculative. Locke gives as examples 'whatsoever is, is' and 'it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be'. Others are practical, that is to say general moral, principles. In the course of his discussion of this theory Locke makes explicit mention of Lord Herbert of Cherbury's theory of 'common notions'.[6] But he says that he consulted the latter's *De veritate*

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[1] *E.*, Introduction, 3; 1, p. 27. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 28. [3] *E.*, 3, 2, 2; II, p. 9.
[4] *E.*, Introduction, 3; 1, p. 28. [5] *E.*, 1, 1, 1; 1, p. 37. [6] *E.*, 1, 2, 15f.; 1, p. 80.

'when I had writ this' (the foregoing part of the discussion). Hence he did not set out to attack Lord Herbert specifically; and he does not tell us which philosopher or philosophers he had in mind when he started to attack the theory of innate ideas. His remarks about this theory being 'an established opinion amongst some men' and about there being 'nothing more commonly taken for granted' suggest perhaps that he was simply writing in general against the theory, without intending to direct his criticism against any individual in particular, Descartes, for example, or against a particular group, such as the Cambridge Platonists. He includes in a global fashion all the upholders of the theory.

The chief argument, according to Locke, which is customarily adduced in favour of the theory is universal consent. Because all men agree about the validity of certain speculative and practical principles, it needs must be, it is argued, that these principles are originally imprinted on men's minds and that they brought them into the world with them 'as necessarily and really as they do any of their inherent faculties'.[1]

Against this theory Locke argues in the first place that even if it were true that all men agree about certain principles this would not prove that these principles are innate, provided that some other explanation can be given of this universal agreement. In other words, if the agreement of all mankind about the truth of these principles can be explained without introducing the hypothesis of innate ideas, the hypothesis is superfluous, and the principle of economy should be applied. Locke was, of course, convinced that the origin of all our ideas can easily be explained without postulating innate ideas. And for this reason alone he was prepared to exclude the theory.

Secondly, Locke argues that the argument which is brought in favour of the theory of innate ideas is worthless. For there is no universal consent about the truth of any principle. Children and idiots have minds, but they have no knowledge of the principle that it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be. Yet if this principle were really innate, it must be known. 'No proposition can be said to be in the mind, which it never yet knew, which it was never yet conscious of.'[2] Moreover, 'a great part of illiterate people, and savages, pass many years, even of their rational age, without ever thinking on this and the like general propositions'.[3] The general principles of the speculative order are 'seldom mentioned in the huts of Indians, much less are they to be found in the thoughts of children, or any impression of them on the minds of naturals'.[1] As for the practical or moral principles, 'it will be hard to instance any one moral rule, which can pretend to so general and ready an assent as, "What is, is" or to be so manifest a truth as this, that "it is impossible for the same thing to be, and not to be"'.[2] Where is the moral rule to which all men assent? The general principles of justice and of observing contracts seem to be the most generally received. But it is difficult to believe that those who habitually infringe these rules have received them at birth as innate principles. It may be urged that these people assent in their minds to rules which they contradict in practice. But 'I have always thought the actions of men the best interpreters of their thoughts'.[3] And 'it is very strange and unreasonable to suppose innate practical principles, that terminate only in contemplation'.[4] We have, indeed, natural tendencies; but natural tendencies are not the same thing as innate principles. If moral principles were really innate, we should not find those differences in moral outlook and practice in different societies and in different epochs which we do in fact find.

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[1] *E.*, 1, 1, 2; 1, p. 39.
[2] *E.*, 1, 1, 5; 1, p. 40.
[3] *E.*, 1, 1, 12; 1, p. 45.

It may be objected that all this presupposes that principles, to be innate, must be consciously apprehended from the beginning of life, and that this presupposition is unwarranted. For they may be innate, not in the sense that infants in arms consciously apprehend them, but in the sense that they are apprehended when people come to the use of reason. They may even be innate simply in the sense that if and when a man comes to understand the meaning of the relevant terms, he necessarily sees the truth of the proposition in question.

If to apprehend the truth of a principle when one reaches the age of reason means apprehending its truth when one reaches a certain determinate age, Locke did not believe that there are any principles which a man necessarily apprehends when he has passed a certain time in this world. Indeed, he thought, as we have seen, that there are men who apprehend no general abstract principles at all. As for the view that those principles are innate the truth of which is seen when the meaning of the terms is known, Locke did not deny that there are principles of this kind, but he refused to admit that there is any adequate reason for calling them

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[1] *E.*, 1, 1, 27; 1, p. 62.

[2] *E.*, 1, 2, 1; 1, p. 64.

[3] *E.*, 1, 2, 3; 1, pp. 66–7.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

'innate'. If immediate assent to a proposition once the terms are understood is a certain sign that the proposition is an innate principle, people 'will find themselves plentifully stored with innate principles'.[1] There will be 'legions of innate propositions'.[2] Moreover, the fact that the meanings of the terms have to be learned and that we have to acquire the relevant ideas is a sure sign that the propositions in question are not in fact innate.

If, therefore, we take 'innate' to mean explicitly innate, Locke objects that all the available evidence goes to show that there are no explicitly innate principles. If, however, 'innate' is taken to mean implicitly or virtually innate, Locke asks what is really signified by the statement that there are innate principles in this sense. 'It will be hard to conceive what is meant by a principle imprinted on the understanding implicitly; unless it be this, that the mind is capable of understanding and assenting firmly to such propositions.'[3] And nobody denies that the mind is capable of understanding and assenting firmly to, for example, mathematical propositions. Why, then, call them innate? By the addition of this epithet nothing is explained and nothing further is said.

In view of the facts that the theory of innate ideas is not a theory which counts in contemporary thought and that in any case the Kantian theory of the *a priori* superseded the older theory of innate ideas, it may seem that I have given too much space to an outline of Locke's treatment of the subject. But his discussion of the theory serves at least to illustrate Locke's common-sense attitude and his constant recourse to the available empirical evidence. Moreover, the purpose of a history of philosophy is not simply that of mentioning theories which have an importance also today. And in Locke's time the theory of innate ideas was influential. To a certain extent he may have been tilting at a windmill; for it is hard to think of anyone who believed that infants in arms apprehend explicitly any innate propositions. But, as we have seen, Locke also attacked the theory of implicitly or virtually innate ideas and principles; the theory in this form was held by men of the calibre of Descartes and Leibniz.

5. Setting aside, therefore, the hypothesis of innate ideas, how does the mind come to be furnished with ideas? 'Whence has it all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, from *experience*. In that all our knowledge is founded, and

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[1] *E.*, 1, 1, 18; 1, p. 51.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 53.
[3] *E.*, 1, 1, 22; 1, p. 56.

from that it ultimately derives itself.'[1] But what does Locke understand by experience? His theory is that all our ideas are ultimately derived from sensation or from reflection; and that these two make up experience. 'Our senses, conversant about particular sensible objects, do convey into the mind several distinct perceptions of things, according to the ways wherein those objects do affect them . . . when I say the senses convey into the mind, I mean, they from external objects convey into the mind what produces there those perceptions.'[2] This is sensation. The other source of ideas is the perception of the operations of our own minds, such as perceiving, thinking, doubting, believing and willing. This source is reflection, 'the ideas it affords being such only as the mind gets by reflecting on its own operations within itself'.[3] All our ideas come from one or other of these sources.

Attention may be drawn in passing to the ambiguous use of the term 'idea' to which allusion has already been made. Locke frequently speaks, for example, of our ideas of sensible qualities, while at other times the sensible qualities are spoken of as ideas. Further, as will be shown later, he uses the term 'idea' not only for sense-data but also for concepts and universal ideas. And though it is doubtless possible to make out what Locke really wishes to say on a given occasion, this careless use of the term 'idea' scarcely serves the cause of clarity.

In any case, however, Locke is convinced that experience is the fountain of all ideas. If we observe children, we see how their ideas are formed, develop and increase in number together with their experience. The human being's attention is primarily directed outwards, and sensation is thus the chief source of ideas. 'Growing up in a constant attention to outward sensation, (men) seldom make any considerable reflection on what passes within them till they come to be of riper years; and some scarce ever at all.'[4] But though reflection or introspection is not generally developed to the same extent as sensation, we have no ideas of psychical activities such as thinking and willing save by actual experience of these activities. If the words are used when we have had no experience at all of the corresponding activities, we do not know what the words mean. Locke's conclusion is, therefore, that 'all those sublime thoughts which tower above the clouds, reach as high as heaven itself, take their rise and footing here: in all that good extent wherein the mind wanders, in those remote speculations, it may seem to be elevated with, it stirs not one jot beyond those ideas which sense or reflection have offered for its contemplation'.[1]

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[1] *E.*, 2, 1, 2; 1, pp. 121–2.

[2] *E.*, 2, 1, 3; 1, pp. 122–3.

[3] *E.*, 2, 1, 4; 1, p. 124.

[4] *E.*, 2, 1, 8; 1, p. 127.

Locke's general principle, that all our ideas are grounded in experience and depend on it, was basic in classical British empiricism. And in view of the fact that rationalist philosophers such as Descartes and Leibniz believed in virtually innate ideas, we can speak of it as the 'empiricist principle'. But this should not be taken to mean that Locke invented it. To take but one example, St. Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century maintained that all our natural ideas and knowledge are grounded in experience, and that there are no innate ideas. Moreover, Aquinas admitted sense-perception and introspection or reflection as 'fountains' of ideas, to use Locke's way of talking, though he subordinated the latter to the former, in the sense that attention is directed first to external material objects. Aquinas was not, of course, what is generally called an 'empiricist'. Nor, for the matter of that, was Locke himself a pure 'empiricist', if by pure empiricism we mean a philosophy which excludes all metaphysics. But I do not wish to institute any comparison between Aquinas and Locke. My object in mentioning the former is simply to point out that it is a mistake to suppose that Locke invented the theory that our ideas originate in experience and to speak as though the doctrine of innate ideas had held undisputed sway in the Middle Ages. Quite apart from the fourteenth-century philosophers of the Ockhamist current of thought, a metaphysician of the thirteenth century such as Aquinas, who adhered more closely than did philosophers such as St. Bonaventure to the Aristotelian way of thinking, had no belief in the hypothesis of innate ideas. Locke's assertion of the empiricist principle was of great historical importance, but it was not a novelty in the sense that nobody before him had maintained anything of the kind.

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[1] *E.*, 2, 1, 24; 1, p. 142.

CHAPTER V

LOCKE (2)

Simple and complex ideas—Simple modes; space, duration, infinity—Mixed modes—Primary and secondary qualities—Substance—Relations—Causality—Identity in relation to inorganic and organic bodies and to man—Language—Universal ideas—Real and nominal essences.

1. WHAT was said in the final section of the last chapter about the origin of our ideas may suggest that in Locke's view the mind is purely passive; that is, that ideas are 'conveyed into the mind' and lodged there, and that in the formation of ideas the mind plays no active part at all. But this would be an erroneous interpretation of Locke's theory, if it were taken to be an adequate account. For he made a distinction between simple and complex ideas. And while the mind receives the former passively, it exercises an activity in the production of the latter.

As examples of simple ideas Locke first gives the coldness and hardness of a piece of ice, the scent and whiteness of a lily, the taste of sugar. Each of these 'ideas' comes to us through one sense only. Thus the idea of whiteness comes to us only through the sense of sight, while the idea of the scent of a rose comes to us only through the sense of smell. Locke calls them, therefore, 'ideas of one sense'. But there are other ideas which we receive by more than one sense. Such are 'space or extension, figure, rest, and motion. For these make perceivable impressions, both on the eyes and touch; and we can receive and convey into our minds the ideas of the extension, figure, motion and rest of bodies, both by seeing and feeling.'[1]

Both these classes of simple ideas are ideas of sensation. But there are also simple ideas of reflection, the two principal ones being the ideas of 'perception or thinking, and volition or willing'.[2] Further, there are other simple ideas 'which convey themselves into the mind by all the ways of sensation and reflection, viz. pleasure or delight, and its opposite, pain or uneasiness; power; existence; unity'.[3] Thus pleasure or pain, delight or uneasiness, accompanies almost all our ideas, both of sensation and reflection, while 'existence and unity are two other ideas that are suggested to the understanding by every object without, and every idea within'.[1] So also we obtain the idea of power both by observing the effects which natural bodies produce on one another and by observing in ourselves our own power of moving the members of our bodies at will.

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[1] *E.*, 2, 5; 1, p. 158.
[2] *E.*, 2, 6; 1, p. 159.
[3] *E.*, 2, 7, 1; 1, p. 160.

We have, therefore, four classes of simple ideas. And a common characteristic of all these ideas is that they are passively received. 'For the objects of our senses do, many of them, obtrude their particular ideas upon our minds whether we will or not; and the operations of our minds will not let us be without at least some obscure notions of them. No man can be wholly ignorant of what he does when he thinks.'[2] Moreover, once the mind has these simple ideas it cannot alter or destroy them or substitute new ones at will. 'It is not in the power of the most exalted wit, or enlarged understanding, by any quickness or variety of thought, to invent or frame one new simple idea in the mind, not taken in by the ways aforementioned: nor can any force of the understanding destroy those that are there.'[3]

On the other hand the mind can actively frame complex ideas, using simple ideas as its material. A man can combine two or more simple ideas into one complex idea. He is not confined to bare observation and introspection, but he can voluntarily combine the data of sensation and reflection to form new ideas, each of which can be considered as one thing and given one name. Such are, for example, 'beauty, gratitude, a man, an army, the universe'.[4]

Locke's general notion of a complex idea presents no great difficulty. For example, we combine the simple ideas of whiteness, sweetness and hardness to form the complex idea of a lump of sugar. In what sense Locke's simple ideas can properly be called 'simple' is doubtless disputable, just as it is open to question in what sense they can properly be termed 'ideas'. Still, the general notion is clear enough, as long as we do not scrutinize it too closely. But Locke complicates matters by giving two classifications of complex ideas. In the original draft of the *Essay* he divided complex ideas into ideas of substances (for example, the idea of a man or of a rose or of gold), of collective substances (for example, of an army), of modes or modifications (of figure, for example, or of thinking or running) and of relations, 'the considering of one idea with relation to another'.[1] And this classification reappears in the published *Essay*, being reduced for convenience to the three heads of modes, substances and relations. It is a classification in terms of objects. But he includes another threefold classification in the published *Essay*, and puts it in the first place. This is a classification according to the mind's activities. The mind may combine simple ideas into one compound one, 'and thus all complex ideas are made',[2] a remark which seems at first sight to restrict complex ideas to ideas of this type. Secondly, the mind can bring together two ideas, whether simple or complex, and compare them with one another without uniting them into one. And thus it obtains its ideas of relations. Thirdly, it can separate ideas 'from all other ideas that accompany them in their real existence; this is called abstraction: and thus all its general ideas are made'.[3] Having given this classification in the fourth edition of the *Essay*, Locke then proceeds to give his original classification. In the ensuing chapters he follows the latter, treating first of modes, then of substances, and afterwards of relations.

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[1] *E.*, 2, 7, 7; 1, p. 163.

[2] *E.*, 2, 1, 25; 1, p. 142.

[3] *E.*, 2, 2, 2; 1, p. 145.

[4] *E.*, 2, 12, 1; 1, p. 214.

Once given the general theory of simple and complex ideas, it is incumbent on Locke to justify it. It is his business to show how abstract ideas which seem to be extremely remote from the immediate data of sensation and reflection are in fact explicable in terms of the compounding or comparing of simple ideas. 'This I shall endeavour to show in the ideas we have of space, time and infinity, and some few others, that seem the most remote from those originals.'[4]

2. We have seen that complex ideas are divided by Locke into the ideas of modes, substances and relations. Modes are defined as 'complex ideas which, however compounded, contain not in them the supposition of subsisting by themselves, but are considered as dependencies on or affections of substances; such as are ideas signified by the words triangle, gratitude, murder, etc.'.[5] And there are two kinds of modes, namely, simple and mixed. Simple modes are 'variations or different combinations of the same simple idea, without the mixture of any other, (while mixed modes are) compounded of simple ideas of several kinds, put together to make one complex one'.[6] For example, if we suppose that we have the simple idea of one, we can repeat this idea or combine three ideas of the same kind to form the complex idea of three, which is a

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[1] Edit. Rand, p. 120.
[2] *E.*, 2, 12, 1; 1, p. 213.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 214.
[4] *E.*, 2, 12, 8; 1, p. 217.
[5] *E.*, 2, 12, 4; 1, p. 215.
[6] *E.*, 2, 12, 5; 1, pp. 215–16.

simple mode of one. According to Locke's definition it is a simple mode, because it is the result of combining ideas 'of the same kind'. The idea of beauty, however, is the idea of a mixed mode. It is the idea of a mode and not of a substance, because beauty does not subsist of itself but is an affection or mode of things. It is the idea of a mixed mode, because it consists 'of a certain composition of colour and figure, causing delight in the beholder',[1] that is to say, it consists of ideas of different kinds.

Examples of simple modes discussed by Locke are space, duration, number, infinity, modes of motion and modes of sound, colour, taste and smell. Thus 'to slide, roll, tumble, walk, creep, run, dance, leap, skip' and so on are 'all but the different modifications of motion'.[2] Similarly, blue, red and green are variations or modifications of colour. And some indication has been given above of the way in which Locke regarded distinct numbers as simple modes of number. But it is not so easy to see how he could think of space, duration and infinity as simple modes, and a brief explanation must be given here.

The simple idea of space comes to us through two senses, sight and touch. 'This space considered barely in length between any two beings, without considering anything else between them, is called distance; if considered in length, breadth and thickness, I think it may be called capacity. The term extension[3] is usually applied to it in what manner soever considered.'[4] Now, 'each different distance is a different modification of space; and each idea of any different distance or space is a simple mode of this idea'.[5] And we can repeat or add to or expand a simple idea of space until we come to the idea of a common space, for which Locke suggests the name of 'expansion'. The complex idea of this common space, in which the universe is thought of as extended, is thus due to combining or repeating or enlarging simple ideas of space.

The ultimate foundation of our idea of time is our observation of the train of ideas succeeding one another in our minds. 'Reflection on these appearances of several ideas, one after another, in our minds, is that which furnishes us with the idea of succession; and the distance between any parts of that succession, or between the appearances of any two ideas in our minds, is that we call duration.'[1] We thus obtain the ideas of succession and duration. And by observing certain phenomena occurring at regular and apparently equidistant periods we get the ideas of lengths or measures of duration, such as minutes, hours, days and years. We are then able to repeat ideas of any length of time, adding one to another without ever coming to the end of such addition; and so we form the idea of eternity. Lastly, 'by considering any part of infinite duration, as set out by periodical measures, we come by the idea of what we call time in general'.[2] That is to say, time in general, in one of the possible meanings of the term, is 'so much of infinite duration as is measured by and coexistent with the existence and motions of the great bodies of the universe, so far as we know anything of them: and in this sense time begins and ends with the frame of this sensible world'.[3]

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[1] *E.*, 2, 12, 5; 1, p. 216.

[2] *E.*, 2, 18, 2; 1, p. 294.

[3] Locke insists, against Descartes and his followers, that extension and body are not the same thing. The idea of body involves, for example, the idea of solidity, but the idea of extension does not.

[4] *E.*, 2, 13, 3; 1, p. 220.

[5] *E.*, 2, 13, 4; 1, p. 220.

Finite and infinite, says Locke, seem to be modes of 'quantity'. It is true that God is infinite; but He is at the same time 'infinitely beyond the reach of our narrow capacities'.[4] For present purposes, therefore, the terms 'finite' and 'infinite' are attributed only to things which are capable of increase or diminution by addition or subtraction; 'and such are the ideas of space, duration and number'.[5] And the question is, how the mind obtains the ideas of finite and infinite as modifications of space, duration and number. Or, rather, the question is, how the idea of infinity arises, since the idea of the finite is easily explicable in terms of experience.

Locke's answer is what we would expect from the foregoing paragraphs. We can continue adding to any idea of a finite space, and, however long we go on adding, we are no nearer the limit beyond which no addition is possible. We thus obtain the idea of infinite space. It does not follow that there is such a thing as infinite space; for 'our ideas are not always proofs of the existence of things';[6] but we are concerned simply with the origin of the idea. Similarly, by repeating the idea of any finite length of duration, we arrive, as has already been seen, at the idea of eternity. Again, in the addition or increase of number we can set no bound or limit.

An obvious objection to the foregoing account of the origin of the idea of the infinite is that Locke slurs over the gap between, say, the ideas of progressively larger finite spaces and the idea of

[1] *E.*, 2, 14, 3; 1, p. 239.
[2] *E.*, 2, 14, 31; 1, p. 256.
[3] *E.*, 2, 15, 6; 1, p. 262.
[4] *E.*, 2, 17, 1; 1, p. 277.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 276.
[6] *E.*, 2, 17, 4; 1, p. 278.

infinite space. But it should be noted that he does not claim that we have or can have a positive idea of the infinite. 'Whatsoever positive ideas we have in our minds of any space, duration or number, let them be ever so great, they are still finite; but when we suppose an inexhaustible remainder, from which we remove all bounds, and wherein we allow the mind an endless progression of thoughts, without ever completing the idea, there we have our idea of infinity.'[1] He can say, therefore, with regard to number, that 'the clearest idea it (the mind) can get of infinity is the confused incomprehensible remainder of endless addible numbers, which affords no prospect of stop or boundary'.[2] In an idea of the infinite there is, of course, a positive element, namely, the idea of 'so much' space or duration of 'so great' a number; but there is also an indefinite or negative element, namely, the indefinite ideas of what lies beyond, conceived as boundless.

Commentators have drawn attention to the crudeness and inadequacy of Locke's description of the genesis of our idea of the infinite and to the fact that his account of infinite number would certainly not satisfy the modern mathematician. But whatever may be the defects of Locke's analysis, whether from the psychological or from the mathematical point of view, his main endeavour, of course, is to show that even those ideas, such as the ideas of immensity or boundless space, of eternity and of infinite number, which seem to be very remote from the immediate data of experience, can nevertheless be explained on empiricist principles without recourse to the theory of innate ideas. And on this point many, who criticize his analysis on other grounds, would agree with him.

3. Mixed modes, says Locke, consist of combinations of simple ideas of different kinds. These ideas must be compatible, of course; but, apart from this condition, any simple ideas of different kinds can be combined to form a complex idea of a mixed mode. This complex idea will then owe its unity to the mind's activity in effecting the combination. There may, indeed, be something in nature corresponding to the idea, but this is by no means necessarily the case.

As examples of mixed modes Locke gives, for instance, obligation, drunkenness, hypocrisy, sacrilege and murder. No one of these is a substance. And each one (or, more accurately, the idea of each one) is a combination of simple ideas of different kinds.

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[1] *E.*, 2, 17, 8; 1, pp. 281–2.

[2] *E.*, 2, 17, 9; 1, p. 283.

Can they be said to exist, and, if so, where? Murder, for example, can be said to exist externally only in the act of murder. Hence its external existence is transient. It has, however, a more lasting existence in men's minds, that is, as an idea. But 'there too they (mixed modes) have no longer any existence than whilst they are thought on'.[1]

They appear to have their most lasting existence in their names; that is, in the words which are used as signs for the relevant ideas. In the case of mixed modes, indeed, we are very prone, according to Locke, to take the name for the idea itself. The name plays an important role. Because we have the word 'parricide', we tend to have the corresponding complex idea of a mixed mode. But because we have no one name for the killing of an old man (who is not the murderer's father) as distinct from the killing of a young man, we do not combine the relevant simple ideas into a complex idea, nor do we regard the killing of an old man, as distinct from a young man, as a specifically different type of action. Locke was well aware, of course, that we could choose to form this complex idea as a distinct idea and attach a separate name to it. But, as will be seen presently, he believed that one of the principal ways in which we come to have complex ideas of mixed modes is through the explanation of names. And where there is no name, we are apt not to have the corresponding idea.

There are three ways in which we come to have complex ideas of mixed modes. First, 'by experience and observation of things themselves. Thus, by seeing two men wrestle or fence, we get the idea of wrestling or fencing.'[2] Secondly, by voluntarily putting together several simple ideas of different kinds: 'so he that first invented printing, or etching, had an idea of it in his mind, before it ever existed'.[3] Thirdly, 'which is the most usual way, by explaining the names of actions we never saw, or notions we cannot see'.[4] What Locke means is clear enough. A child, for example, learns the meanings of many words not by actual experience of the things signified but by having the meanings explained to him by others. He may never have witnessed sacrilege or murder, but he can obtain the complex ideas of these mixed modes if someone explains the meanings of the words in terms of ideas with which he is already familiar. In Locke's terminology, the complex idea can be conveyed to the child's mind by resolving it into simple ideas and then combining these ideas, provided, of course, that the child already has these simple ideas or, if he has not got them, that they can be conveyed to him. As a child has the idea of man and most probably also possesses the idea of killing, the complex idea of murder can easily be conveyed to him, even though he has never witnessed a murder. Indeed, the majority of people have never witnessed a murder, but they none the less have the complex idea of it.

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[1] *E.*, 2, 22, 8; 1, p. 385.
[2] *E.*, 2, 22, 9; 1, p. 385.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*

4. It will be remembered that Locke divides complex ideas into the ideas of modes, of substances and of relations. And after treating of his distinction between simple and complex ideas I have gone on to deal with the complex ideas of simple and mixed modes, in order to illustrate more easily the application of his theory that all our ideas are derived ultimately from sensation and reflection; that is, from experience, without there being any need to postulate the hypothesis of innate ideas. But before proceeding to discuss the ideas of substance and of relation I wish to say something about his theory of primary and secondary qualities. He treats of this matter in a chapter entitled 'Some farther considerations concerning our simple ideas', before, that is to say, proceeding to speak of complex ideas.

Locke makes a distinction between ideas and qualities. 'Whatsoever the mind perceives in itself or is the immediate object of perception, thought or understanding, that I call idea; and the power to produce any idea in our mind I call quality of the subject wherein that power is.'[1] Taking the example of a snowball, he explains that the snowball's powers of producing in us the ideas of white, cold and round are called by him 'qualities', while the corresponding 'sensations or perceptions' are called 'ideas'.

A further distinction must now be made. Some qualities are inseparable from a body, whatever changes it undergoes. A grain of wheat has solidity, extension, figure and mobility. If it is divided, each part retains these qualities. 'These I call original or primary qualities of body, which I think we may observe to produce simple ideas in us, viz. solidity, extension, figure, motion or rest, and number.'[2] Besides these primary qualities there are also secondary qualities. The latter are 'nothing in the objects themselves but powers to produce various sensations in us by their primary qualities'.[3] Such are colours, sounds, tastes and odours. Locke also mentions tertiary qualities, namely, the powers in bodies of producing, not ideas in us, but changes of bulk, figure, texture and motion in other bodies, so that the latter operate on our senses in a different way from the way in which they previously operated. 'Thus the sun has a power to make wax white, and fire to make lead fluid.'[1] But we can confine our attention to primary and secondary qualities.

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[1] *E.*, 2, 8, 8; 1, p. 169.

[2] *E.*, 2, 8, 9; 1, p. 170.

[3] *E.*, 2, 8, 10; 1, p. 170.

Locke supposes that in the production of our ideas both of primary and of secondary qualities 'insensible particles' or 'imperceptible bodies' emanate from objects and act on our senses. But there is this great difference between our ideas of primary and those of secondary qualities. The former are resemblances of bodies, 'and their patterns do really exist in the bodies themselves; but the ideas produced in us by these secondary qualities have no resemblance of them at all. There is nothing like our ideas existing in the bodies themselves. They are, in the bodies we denominate from them, only a power to produce those sensations in us; and what is sweet, blue or warm in idea is but the certain bulk, figure and motion of the insensible parts in the bodies themselves, which we call so.'[2] Thus our idea of figure, for example, resembles the object itself which causes the idea in us: the object really has figure. But our idea of, say, red does not resemble the rose considered in itself. What corresponds in the rose to our idea of red is its power of producing in us the idea of red through the action of imperceptible particles on our eyes. (In modern terminology we would speak, of course, of the action of light-waves.)

It is not terminologically accurate to say that according to Locke secondary qualities are 'subjective'. For, as we have seen, what he calls secondary qualities are powers in objects of producing certain simple ideas in us. And these powers are really in the objects. Otherwise, of course, the effect would not be produced. But the ideas of secondary qualities, that is to say, the simple ideas of colours, sounds and so on, which are produced in us are not copies, as it were, of colours and sounds in the objects themselves. Obviously, we can say that the ideas of secondary qualities are subjective; but then so are the ideas of primary qualities, if we mean by 'subjective' existing in the percipient subject. Locke's point is, however, that the latter resemble what is in the object, whereas the former do not. 'The particular bulk, number, figure and motion of the parts of fire or snow are really in them, whether any one's senses perceive them or no; and therefore they may be called real qualities, because they really exist in those bodies. But light, heat, whiteness or coldness are no more really in them than sickness or pain is in manna.'[1] 'Why are whiteness and coldness in snow, and pain not, when it produces the one and the other idea in us; and can do neither, but by the bulk, figure, number and motion of its solid parts?'[2] 'Let us consider the red and white colours in porphyry: hinder light from striking on it, and its colours vanish, it no longer produces any such ideas in us; upon the return of light, it produces these appearances on us again.'[3] Again, 'Pound an almond, and the clear white colour will be altered into a dirty one, and the sweet taste into an oily one. What real alteration can the beating of the pestle make in any body, but an alteration of the texture of it?'[4] Such considerations show us that our ideas of secondary qualities have no resembling counterparts in bodies.

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[1] *E.*, 2, 8, 23; 1, p. 179.

[2] *E.*, 2, 8, 15; 1, p. 173.

This theory about secondary, as distinct from primary, qualities was not Locke's invention. It had been held by Galileo[5] and Descartes, and something of the kind had been maintained by Democritus[6] many centuries before. And at first sight at least it may appear to be a perfectly reasonable conclusion, perhaps the only reasonable conclusion, to be drawn from the available scientific data. Nobody, for instance, would wish to question the fact that our sensations of colour depend on certain differences in the wave-lengths of the light rays which affect our eyes. But it is possible to maintain that there is no necessary connection at all between admitting the scientific data which are more or less established and saying that it is improper to speak, for instance, of an object as crimson or blue. If two men argue about the physical events involved in sensation, the argument is a scientific and not a philosophical argument. If they are in agreement about the scientific data, they can dispute about the propriety or impropriety of speaking of roses as white or red, and of sugar as sweet and of tables as hard. And it might well be maintained that the scientific data provide no cogent reasons for saying anything else but what we are accustomed to say. But it would not be appropriate to discuss the problem here for its own sake. I wish instead to point out the very difficult position in which Locke places himself.

That Locke's way of expressing himself is confused and careless is scarcely open to denial. Sometimes he speaks of 'the ideas' of white and black. And it is clear enough that if the term 'idea' were taken in the ordinary sense, these ideas can only be in the mind. If an idea can be said to be somewhere, where else can it be said to be but in the mind? True, he tells that what he here calls 'ideas' are sensations or perceptions. But, again, that our sensations are our sensations and not the object's which produces them is an obvious truism. And Locke does not raise the question whether, if the object is not crimson or sweet, the sensation is to be spoken of as crimson or sweet. He simply says that we have an idea or sensation of crimson or sweet. However, these questions left aside, the main difficulty which arises on Locke's premisses arises from the fact that for him an idea is 'the immediate object of perception, thought or understanding'.[1] We do not know things immediately but mediately, by means of ideas. And these ideas (in the present context we can substitute sense-data, if we like) are regarded as representing things, as signs of them. Ideas of primary qualities really resemble things; ideas of secondary qualities do not. But if what we know immediately are ideas, how can we ever know whether these ideas do or do not resemble things? How, for the matter of that, can we be certain that things other than our ideas even exist? For if we know only ideas immediately, we are in no position to compare ideas with things and ascertain whether the former resemble the latter or not, or even to establish whether there are any things other than ideas. On Locke's representative theory of perception he has no means of establishing the validity of his distinction between primary and secondary qualities.

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[1] *E.*, 2, 8, 17; 1, p. 174.
[2] *E.*, 2, 8, 16; 1, p. 174.
[3] *E.*, 2, 8, 19; 1, p. 176.
[4] *E.*, 2, 8, 20; 1, p. 176.
[5] See vol. III of this *History*, p. 287.
[6] See vol. I of this *History*, pp. 124–5.

Locke was not unaware of this difficulty. As will be seen later on, he fell back on the notion of causality to show that there are things which correspond to our ideas. When we observe constantly recurring collections of simple ideas, which are conveyed to us without choice on our part (except, of course, for the choice not to shut one's eyes and stop one's ears), it is at least highly probable that there are external things which cause these ideas, at least during the time when the latter are being passively received by our minds. And from the common-sense point of view this inference is reliable. But, apart from any intrinsic difficulties in this theory, it would scarcely be sufficient to warrant his distinction between primary and secondary qualities. For this seems to require further knowledge than the knowledge that there is 'something out there'.

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[1] *E.*, 2, 8, 8; 1, p. 169.

Berkeley, as will be shown later in connection with the latter's philosophy, maintained that Locke's arguments to show that colour, taste, odour and so on are ideas in our minds and not real qualities of objects, could just as well be employed to show that the so-called primary qualities are ideas in our minds and not real qualities of objects. And there is obviously a great deal to be said in favour of this point of view. According to Locke, primary qualities are inseparable from bodies. But this is true only if he is speaking of determinable and not of determinate primary qualities. To take one of his own examples, the two parts of a divided grain of wheat certainly possess extension and figure; but they do not possess the determinate extension and figure of the whole grain of wheat. One can also say, however, of a pounded almond that even if, as Locke asserts, it has not the same colour as the unpounded almond, it still possesses colour. And do not the perceived size and shape of an object vary with the position of the percipient subject and with other physical conditions just as much as secondary qualities vary?

The foregoing considerations are not, of course, intended to express doubt concerning the scientific data which can be used to support Locke's position. They are intended to show some of the difficulties which arise on Locke's theory when this is presented as a philosophical theory and thus as something more than an account of scientific data. His representationist theory of perception is a particular source of difficulty. To be sure, he sometimes forgets this theory and speaks in common-sense terms, implying that we know objects immediately; but his prevalent and, so to speak, official position is that ideas are, in Scholastic language, the *media quae*, or immediate objects, of knowledge. And matters are further complicated because, as has already been noted, he uses the term 'idea' in different senses on different occasions.

5. Mention has been made above of 'collections' of simple ideas. We find certain groups of similar sense-data constantly recurring or tending to recur. For example, a certain colour and a certain shape may be associated with a certain scent and with a certain softness or hardness. This is a matter of common experience. If I go into the garden on a summer day I see certain patches of colour (say, the petals of a red rose) of definite shapes and I perceive a certain scent. I can also have certain experiences through the sense of touch, by performing the action which we call touching the rose. There is thus a given constellation or cluster or collection

of qualities which appear to accompany one another and which are associated together in my mind. If I go into the same garden in the dark, I do not see the colour patches, but I perceive the scent and I can have similar experiences of touch to those which I had in the daylight. And I am confident that if there were sufficient light I should see the colours which appear to go with the scent and texture. Again, certain sounds may be associated in my experience with certain colours and with a certain shape. For instance, what we call the song of the blackbird is a succession of sounds which appear to go together with the presence of certain colours and with a certain figure or shape.

There are, therefore, collections or clusters of qualities or, as Locke puts it, 'ideas'. And 'not imagining how these simple ideas can subsist by themselves, we accustom ourselves to suppose some substratum wherein they do subsist and from which they do result; which therefore we call substance'.[1] This is the idea of substance in general, namely, 'a supposition of he knows not what support of such qualities, which are capable of producing simple ideas in us; which qualities are commonly called accidents'.[2] The mind supplies the idea of a substratum, a support for qualities. More accurately, the mind supplies the idea of a substratum or support in which the primary qualities inhere and which has the power of producing in us, by means of the primary qualities, simple ideas of secondary qualities. The general idea of substance is 'nothing but the supposed but unknown support of those qualities we find existing, which we imagine cannot subsist *sine re substante*, without something to support them, (and) we call that support *substantia*, which, according to the true import of the word, is in plain English "standing under" or "upholding"'.[3]

It is important to understand that Locke is talking about the origin of our idea of substance. Bishop Stillingfleet of Worcester at first understood him to mean that substance is nothing but the figment of men's fancies. To this Locke replied that he was discussing the idea of substance, not its existence. To say that the idea is grounded in our custom of supposing or postulating some support for qualities is not to say that this supposition or postulate is unwarranted and that there is no such thing as substance. In Locke's view the inference to substance is justified; but this does not alter the fact that it is an inference. We do not perceive substances; we infer substance as the support of 'accidents', qualities or modes, because we cannot conceive the latter as subsisting by themselves. And to say that the general idea of substance is the idea of an unknown substratum is to say that the only characteristic note of the idea in our minds is that of supporting accidents; that is, of being the substratum in which the primary qualities inhere and which possesses the power of causing simple ideas in us. It is not to say that substance is a mere figment of the imagination.

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[1] *E.*, 2, 23, 1; 1, pp. 390–1.

[2] *E.*, 2, 23, 2; 1, p. 391.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 392.

This general idea of substance, which is not clear and distinct, must be distinguished from our distinct ideas of particular substances. These are 'nothing but several combinations of simple ideas. . . . It is by such combinations of simple ideas, and nothing else, that we represent particular sorts of substances to ourselves.'[1] For example, we have a number of simple ideas (of red or white, of a certain odour, a certain figure or shape, and so on) which go together in experience, and we call the combination of them by one name, 'rose'. Similarly, 'the idea of the sun, what is it but an aggregate of those several simple ideas, bright, hot, roundish, having a constant regular motion, at a certain distance from us, and perhaps some other?'[2] In fine, 'all our ideas of the several sorts of substances are nothing but collections of simple ideas, with a supposition of something to which they belong, and in which they subsist; though of this supposed something we have no clear distinct idea at all'.[3]

The simple ideas which we unite to form the complex idea of a particular substance are obtained through sensation or reflection. Thus our idea of the spiritual substance of the soul is obtained by combining together simple ideas of thinking, doubting and so on, which are obtained by reflection, with the vague and obscure notion of a substratum in which these psychical operations inhere.

It may be as well to remark at once that by 'spiritual substance' in this connection Locke means simply a substance which thinks. In the fourth book of the *Essay*, when discussing the extent of our knowledge he declares that 'we have the ideas of matter and thinking, but possibly shall never be able to know, whether any mere material being thinks or no'.[4] For all we know, divine omnipotence might be able to confer the faculty of thinking on a material thing. Dr. Stillingfleet, bishop of Worcester, objected that in this case it is impossible to prove that there is in us a spiritual substance. To this Locke replied that the concept of substance is vague and indeterminate, and that the addition of thinking makes it a spiritual substance. That there is a spiritual substance in us can thus be shown. But if Dr. Stillingfleet means by 'spiritual substance' an immaterial substance, the existence of such a substance in us cannot be strictly proved by reason. Locke does not say that God can confer the faculty of thinking on a material thing, but rather that he does not see that it is inconceivable that God should do so. As for the implications with regard to immortality, to which the bishop draws attention, our certainty on this matter is derived from faith in revelation rather than from strict philosophical demonstration.

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[1] *E.*, 2, 23, 6; 1, p. 396.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 397.

[3] *E.*, 2, 23, 37; 1, p. 422.

[4] *E.*, 4, 3, 6; 11, p. 192.

Further, 'if we examine the idea we have of the incomprehensible Supreme Being, we shall find that we come by it in the same way, and that the complex ideas we have both of God and separate spirits are made up of the simple ideas we receive from reflection'.[1] When we frame the idea of God we enlarge to infinity the ideas of those qualities 'which it is better to have than to be without'[2] and combine them to form one complex idea. In Himself God is simple and not 'compounded'; but our idea of Him is complex.

Our distinct ideas of corporeal substances are made up of the ideas of primary qualities, those of secondary qualities (the powers in things of producing different simple ideas in us through the senses), and those of the powers of things to cause in other bodies or to receive in themselves such alterations of primary qualities as will produce different ideas in us from the ideas formerly produced. Indeed, 'most of the simple ideas that make up our complex ideas of substances, when truly considered, are only powers, however we are apt to take them for positive qualities'.[3] For example, the greater part of our idea of gold is made up of ideas of qualities (such as yellowness, fusibility and solubility in *aqua regia*) which, as they exist in the gold itself, are only active or passive powers.

Now, in so far as our distinct complex ideas of particular substances are simply combinations of simple ideas received through sensation and reflection, their formation can be explained in terms of Locke's empiricist premisses. For he expressly allowed for the formation of complex ideas by combining simple ideas. But it seems to be doubtful whether his premisses permit of his explaining the formation of the general idea of substance as an occult substratum. Dr. Stillingfleet thought at first that Locke meant that substance is nothing but a combination of qualities. And in

[1] *E.*, 2, 23, 33; 1, p. 418.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *E.*, 2, 23, 37; 1, p. 422.

his reply Locke distinguished between our complex ideas of particular substances and the general idea of substance. The former are obtained by combining simple ideas, but the latter is not. How, then, is it obtained? By 'abstraction', Locke tells us. But earlier on he has described the process of abstraction as 'separating them (ideas) from all other ideas that accompany them in their real existence'.[1] And in the formation of the general idea of substance it is not a question of fixing the attention on one particular member of a cluster of ideas and omitting or abstracting from the rest, but rather of inferring a substratum. And in this case a novel idea seems to make its appearance which is not obtained by sensation or reflection, or by combining simple ideas, or by abstraction in the sense mentioned above. True, Locke speaks of the general idea of substance as being neither clear nor distinct. But he nevertheless speaks of this 'idea'. And if it is an idea at all, it seems difficult to explain, on Locke's premisses, how it arises. He certainly attributed to the mind an active power. But the difficulty of explaining the origin of the general idea of substance remains, unless Locke is willing to revise or re-state his premisses.

Locke's idea of substance obviously derives from Scholasticism. But it is not, as is sometimes supposed, the same as that of Aquinas. The explicit distinction between substance and accident was for Aquinas, as for Locke, the work of the reflective mind; but for the former it was a distinction made within the total datum of experience, the modified or 'accidentified' thing or substance, whereas for Locke substance lies beyond experience and is an unknown substratum. Again, on Aquinas's view substance is not an unchanging substratum, even though we can distinguish between accidental and substantial change. Locke, however, speaks as though substance were an unchanging substratum hidden beneath the changing phenomena. In other words, Aquinas's conception of substance stands nearer to the point of view of common sense than does that of Locke.

Locke's distinction between the general idea of substance and our ideas of particular substances is connected with his distinction between real and nominal essences. But he does not discuss this topic before the third book of the *Essay*, and I leave it aside for the moment to consider his account of the origin of our idea of causality.

6. It has already been pointed out that in the first draft of the

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[1] *E.*, 2, 12, 1; 1, pp. 213–14.

Essay Locke classified relations, together with substances and modes, under the general heading of complex ideas. But though this classification reappears in the fourth edition, Locke gives us another as well, in which relations stand in a class by themselves. This juxtaposition of two methods of classification is obviously unsatisfactory. However, we are told that relations arise from the act of comparing one thing with another. If I consider Caius as such, merely by himself, I do not compare him with any other thing. And the same is true when I say that Caius is white. 'But when I give Caius the name ***husband***, I intimate some other person; and when I give him the name *whiter*, I intimate some other thing: in both cases my thought is led to something beyond Caius, and there are two things brought into consideration.'[1] Terms like 'husband', 'father', 'son', and so on, are obviously relative terms. But there are other terms which appear at first sight to be absolute but which 'conceal a tacit, though less observable relation'.[2] Such, for example, is the term 'imperfect'.

Any idea, whether simple or complex, can be compared with another idea and thus give rise to the idea of a relation. But all our ideas of relations can in the long run be reduced to simple ideas. This is one of the points which Locke is most concerned to make. For if he wishes to show that his empiricist account of the origin of our ideas is justified, he has to show that all ideas of relations are ultimately made up of ideas obtained through sensation or reflection. And he proceeds to argue that this is true by applying his theory to certain selected relations, such as causality.

But before we consider Locke's analysis of causality it is worth while drawing attention to the ambiguous way in which he speaks about relations. Primarily, indeed, he is concerned to show how the mind acquires its ideas of relations; that is to say, he is primarily concerned with a psychological question rather than with the ontological question, what is the nature of relations. However, as he has described an idea as whatever is the object of the mind when it thinks, it follows that relations, as thought about, are ideas. And some of his pronouncements can hardly be understood as meaning anything else but that relations are purely mental. For example, we are told that 'the nature of relation consists in the referring or comparing two things one to another'.[3] Again, 'relation is a way of comparing or considering two things

[1] *E.*, 2, 25, 1; 1, p. 427. [2] *E.*, 2, 25, 3; 1, p. 428. [3] *E.*, 2, 25, 5; 1, p. 428.

together, and giving one or both of them some appellation from that comparison; and sometimes giving even the relation itself a name'.[1] Moreover, he states explicitly that a relation is 'not contained in the real existence of things, but (is) something extraneous and superinduced'.[2] And when treating later on of the abuse of words he remarks that we cannot have ideas of relations which disagree with things themselves, because relation is only a way of considering together or comparing two things and so 'an idea of my own making'.[3] At the same time Locke speaks freely about ideas of relations; and he does not make it clear what he means to imply by this. Suppose that I do not consider John simply by himself but 'compare' him with Peter, his son. I can then think of John as father, which is a relative term. Now, as we have seen, Locke says that a relation is the comparing of one thing with another. The relationship in the case in point should be the act of 'comparing' John with Peter. And the idea of the relation should be the idea of the act of comparing. But it would be odd to say that the relationship of fatherhood is the act of comparing one man with another; and it would be still more odd to say that the idea of the relationship of fatherhood is the idea of the act of comparing. Moreover, when in the fourth book of the *Essay* Locke speaks about our knowledge of the existence of God, he clearly implies that all finite things really depend on God as their cause, that is to say, that they have a real relation of dependence on God. The truth of the matter seems to be that he did not work out his theory of relations in any clear and precise way. When speaking of relations in general, he seems to say that they are all mental; but this does not prevent him from speaking about some particular relations as though they were not purely mental. This can be seen, I think, in his treatment of causality.

7. According to Locke, 'that which produces any simple or complex idea we denote by the general name *cause*; and that which is produced, *effect*'.[4] We receive our ideas of cause and effect, therefore, from observing that particular things, qualities or substances, begin to exist. Observing, for instance, that fluidity, a 'simple idea', is produced in wax by the application of a certain degree of heat, 'we call the simple idea of heat, in relation to fluidity in wax, the cause of it, and fluidity the effect'.[5] Similarly, observing that wood, a 'complex idea', is reduced to ashes, another

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[1] *E.*, 2, 25, 7; 1, pp. 429–30.
[2] *E.*, 2, 25, 8; 1, p. 430.
[3] *E.*, 3, 10, 33; 11, p. 145.
[4] *E.*, 2, 26, 1; 1, p. 433.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 434.

'complex idea', by the application of fire, we call the fire, in relation to the ashes, *cause* and the ashes *effect*. The notions of cause and effect arise, therefore, from ideas received through sensation or reflection. And 'to have the idea of cause and effect it suffices to consider any simple idea, or substance, as beginning to exist by the operation of some other, without knowing the manner of that operation'.[1] We can discriminate between different kinds of production. Thus when a new substance is produced from pre-existing material we speak of 'generation'. When a new 'simple idea' (quality) is produced in a pre-existent thing we speak of 'alteration'. When anything begins to exist without there being any pre-existent material out of which it is constituted we speak of 'creation'. But our ideas of all these different forms of production are said to be derived from ideas received through sensation and reflection, though Locke does not offer any explanation how this general proposition covers the case of our idea of creation.

In so far as causality is a relation between ideas, it is a mental construction. But it has a real foundation, and this is power; the powers, that is to say, which substances have of affecting other substances and of producing ideas in us. The idea of power is classified by Locke as a simple idea, though 'I confess power includes in it some kind of relation, a relation to action or change'.[2] And powers are divided, as we have already seen, into active and passive. We can ask, therefore, whence we derive our idea of active power and causal efficacy. The answer, according to Locke, is that our clearest idea of active power is derived from reflection or introspection. If we observe a moving ball which hits a ball at rest and sets it in motion, we do not observe any active power in the first ball; for 'it only communicates the motion it had received from another and loses in itself so much as the other received: which gives us but a very obscure idea of an active power moving in body, whilst we observe it only to transfer, but not produce any motion. For it is but a very obscure idea of power which reaches not the production of the action, but the continuation of the passion.'[3] If, however, we turn to introspection, 'we find in ourselves a power to begin or forbear, continue or end several actions of our minds and motions of our bodies, barely by a thought or preference of the mind ordering or, as it were, commanding the doing or not doing such or such a particular action'.[4] It is the exercise of volition, therefore, which gives us our clearest idea of power and causal efficacy.

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[1] *E.*, 2, 26, 2; 1, p. 435.

[2] *E.*, 2, 21, 3; 1, p. 310.

[3] *E.*, 2, 21, 4; 1, p. 312.

[4] *E.*, 2, 21, 5; 1, p. 313.

Locke thus establishes to his own satisfaction the empirical foundations of our ideas of cause and effect and of causal efficacy or the exercise of active power. But he does not give any real analysis of the causal relation. However, he makes it clear, both in his arguments for the existence of God and when writing to Stillingfleet, that he was convinced that the proposition 'everything which has a beginning must have a cause' is an indubitable proposition. It has been made a charge against him that he does not explain how this proposition is established by experience. But, as the fourth book of the *Essay* makes abundantly clear, Locke believed that there is such a thing as intuitive certainty and that the mind can apprehend a necessary connection between ideas. In the case of the proposition in question Locke would doubtless say that we obtain through experience our ideas of a thing beginning to be and of cause, and that then we perceive the necessary connection between the ideas, which is expressed in the statement that everything which begins to be has a cause. Presumably he thought that this account of the matter satisfied the demands of his empiricist theory of the foundations of all our ideas and knowledge. Whether it fits in with his remarks about relations as mental constructions is another question.

8. In connection with relations Locke devotes a chapter to the ideas of identity and diversity. When we see a thing existing in a certain place at a certain instant of time we are sure that it is itself and not another thing which exists at the same time in another place, even though the two things may be alike in other respects. For we are certain that one and the same thing cannot exist simultaneously in more than one place. Locke here refers to common linguistic usage. If we observe body A existing at time t in place x and if we observe body B existing at time t in place y, we speak of them as two different bodies, however much they may resemble one another. But if A and B both existed at time t in place x, they would be indistinguishable; and we would speak of one and the same body, not of two bodies. I do not mean that Locke thought that this view was 'simply a matter of words': I mean that he adopts the common-sense point of view which finds expression in ordinary linguistic usage. As God is eternal, immutable and omnipresent, there can be, Locke tells us, no doubt about His constant self-identity. But finite things begin to exist

in time and space; and the identity of each thing will be determined, as long as it exists, by its relation to the time at which and the place in which it begins to exist. And we can therefore solve the problem of individuation by saying that the principle of individuation is 'existence itself, which determines a being of any sort to a particular time and place, incommunicable to two beings of the same kind'.[1] The last part of this definition is included because two substances of different kinds may occupy the same place at the same time. Presumably Locke is thinking primarily of God's eternity and omnipresence.

But though Locke defines identity in general in relation to the temporal and spatial co-ordinates of a thing's existence, he sees that the matter is rather more complicated than is allowed for by this formula. If two atoms are joined to form one 'mass of matter', we speak of the mass as being the same, as long as the same two atoms are conjoined. But if one atom is taken away and another added, the result is a different mass or body. In organic things, however, we are accustomed to speak of the organism as being the same organic body, even though obvious changes in the matter have taken place. A plant continues to be the same plant 'as long as it partakes of the same life, though that life be communicated to new particles of matter vitally united to the living plant, in a like continued organization conformable to that sort of plant'.[2] The case of animals is similar. The continued identity of an animal is in some ways similar to that of a machine. For we speak of a machine as being the same, even if parts of it have been repaired or renewed, because of the continued organization of all the parts with a view to the attainment of a certain end or purpose. An animal differs from a machine, however, in that in the case of the latter the motion comes from without whereas in the case of the animal the motion comes from within.

The identity of a 'simple' inorganic thing can be defined, therefore, in terms of time and place (though Locke does not mention continuity of the thing's spatio-temporal history as one of the criteria of persisting self-identity). The continued identity of a compound inorganic thing demands the continuous identity (in relation to space and time) of its constituent parts. The continuous identity of an organic body, however, is defined in relation to the organization of parts informed by a common life rather than in relation to the continued identity of the parts themselves. In fact,

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[1] *E.*, 2, 27, 4; 1, pp. 441–2.

[2] *E.*, 2, 27, 5; 1, p. 443.

'in these two cases, a mass of matter and a living body, identity is not applied to the same thing'.[1] Inorganic and organic bodies are different in kind, and the criteria of identity differ in the two cases, though in both there must be a continuous existence which has some relation to spatio-temporal co-ordinates.

How far can we apply to man the criteria of identity which are applicable to other organic bodies? Locke answers that a man's continued self-identity consists 'in nothing but a participation of the same continued life by constantly fleeting particles of matter in succession vitally united to the same organized body'.[2] He does not explain in exact terms the precise meaning of this statement, but he makes it clear that in his opinion we are accustomed, and justifiably accustomed, to speak of 'the same man' when there is bodily continuity. Whatever psychological changes may take place in a man, we still call him the same man provided that his bodily existence is continuous. If, however, we take identity of soul as the one and only criterion of sameness, strange results follow. For example, if we assume for the sake of argument the hypothesis of reincarnation, we should have to say that *X*, living in ancient Greece, was the same man as *Y*, living in mediaeval Europe, simply because the soul was the same. But this way of speaking would be very strange. 'I think nobody, could he be sure that the soul of Heliogabalus were in one of his hogs, would yet say that hog were a man or Heliogabalus.'[3] In other words, Locke appeals here to ordinary linguistic usage. We speak of a man as being the same man when there is bodily continuity. And we have here an empirical criterion of sameness. But, in Locke's opinion, there would be no way of controlling our use of the word 'same' if we said that it is identity of soul that makes a man the same man.

But though we are ordinarily accustomed to speak of a man as the same man when there is bodily continuity, we can still raise the question in what does personal identity consist, meaning by 'person' 'a thinking, intelligent being, that has reason and reflection and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing in different times and places'.[4] The answer to this question is consciousness, which Locke declares to be inseparable from thinking and essential to it, 'it being impossible for anyone to perceive without perceiving that he does perceive'.[5] 'As far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person.'[1]

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[1] *E.*, 2, 27, 4; 1, p. 442.
[2] *E.*, 2, 27, 7; 1, p. 444.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 445.
[4] *E.*, 2, 27, 11; 1, p. 448.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 449.

Locke draws the logical conclusion that if it is possible for the same man (that is, a man who is the same man in the sense that there is bodily continuity) to have at time t^1 one distinct and incommunicable consciousness and at time t^2 another distinct and incommunicable consciousness, we could not speak of the man as being the same 'person' at time t^2 as he was at time t^1. This is 'the sense of mankind in the solemnest declaration of their opinions, human laws not punishing the madman for the sober man's actions, nor the sober man for what the madman did, thereby making them two persons; which is somewhat explained by our way of speaking in English, when we say such an one is not himself, or is beside himself; in which phrases it is insinuated as if those who now, or at least first used them, thought that self was changed, the self-same person was no longer in that man'.[2]

9. At the end of the second book of the *Essay* Locke tells us that having given an account of the source and kinds of our ideas he at first proposed to proceed immediately to consider the use which the mind makes of these ideas and the knowledge which we obtain through them. But reflection convinced him that it was necessary to treat of language before going on to discuss knowledge. For ideas and words are clearly closely connected, and our knowledge, as he puts it, consists in propositions. He therefore devoted the third book to the subject of words or language.

God made man a social being by nature. And language was to be 'the great instrument and common tie of society'.[3] Language consists of words, and words are signs of ideas. 'The use of words is to be sensible marks of ideas; and the ideas they stand for are their proper and immediate signification.'[4] It is true that we take our words to be signs of ideas in other men's minds as well of ideas in our own minds, when, that is to say, we and they are speaking a common language. And we often suppose words to stand for things. None the less a man's words signify primarily and immediately the ideas in his own mind. Words can, of course, be used without meaning. A child can learn and use a word in parrot-fashion, without having the idea which is normally signified by it. But in this case the word is nothing but a non-significant noise.

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[1] *E.*, 2, 27, 11; I, p. 449.

[2] *E.*, 2, 27, 20; I, p. 461.

[3] *E.*, 3, 1, 1; II, p. 3.

[4] *E.*, 3, 2, 1; II, p. 9.

Although Locke insists tenaciously that words are signs of ideas, he does not give any thorough explanation of the meaning of this statement. However, his general position is clear enough, if we do not pry into it too closely. Ideas, according to Locke's representationist theory, are the immediate objects of thought; and ideas, or some of them rather, stand for things or are signs of things. But ideas are private. And to communicate our ideas to others and to learn others' ideas we stand in need of 'sensible' and public signs. This need is fulfilled by words. But there is this difference between ideas, which are signs of things, and words. Those ideas which signify things or represent things are natural signs. Some of them at least, that is to say, are produced by things, though others are mental constructions. Words, however, are all conventional signs: their signification is fixed by choice or convention. Thus while the idea of man is the same in the minds of a Frenchman and an Englishman, the sign of this idea is *homme* in French and *man* in English. It is clear that Locke assumed that thought in itself is really distinct from the use of words and symbols, and that the possibility of expressing the same thought in different linguistic forms and in different language is a proof of this distinction.

There is, however, a qualification to be added to the statement that words are signs of ideas. 'Besides words which are names of ideas in the mind there are a great many others that are made use of to signify the connection that the mind gives to ideas or propositions one with another.'[1] The mind needs not only signs of the ideas 'before it' but also signs to show or intimate some action of its own in relation to these ideas. For example, 'is' and 'is not' show or intimate or express the mind's acts of affirming and denying. Locke calls words of this kind 'particles', and he includes under this heading not only the copula in propositions but also prepositions and conjunctions. These all mark or express some action of the mind in relation to its ideas.

Although Locke does not give any thorough explanation of his theory of signification, he saw clearly enough that to say that words are signs of ideas and that language, composed of conventional signs, is a means of communicating ideas, constitutes an over-simplification. 'To make words serviceable to the end of communication, it is necessary that they excite in the hearer exactly the same idea they stand for in the mind of the speaker.'[2]

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[1] *E.*, 3, 7, 1; II, p. 98.

[2] *E.*, 3, 9, 6; II, p. 106.

But this end is not always attained. For example, a word may stand for a very complex idea; and in this case it is very difficult to ensure that the word always stands for precisely the same idea in common use. 'Hence it comes to pass that men's names of very compound ideas, such as for the most part are moral words, have seldom, in two different men, the same precise signification; since one man's complex idea seldom agrees with another's, and often differs from his own, from that which he had yesterday or will have tomorrow.'[1] Again, as mixed modes are mental constructions, collections of ideas put together by the mind, it is difficult to find any fixed standard of meaning. The meaning of a word such as 'murder' depends simply on choice. And although 'common use regulates the meaning of words pretty well for common conversation',[2] there is no recognized authority which can determine the precise meaning of such words. Hence it is one thing to say that names stand for ideas and another thing to say precisely for what ideas they stand.

This 'imperfection' of language is scarcely avoidable. But there is also such a thing as an avoidable 'abuse' of words. In the first place, men not infrequently coin words which do not stand for any clear and distinct ideas. 'I shall not need here to heap up instances; every man's reading and conversation will sufficiently furnish him; or if he wants to be better stored, the great mint-masters of this kind of terms, I mean the Schoolmen and metaphysicians (under which, I think, the disputing natural and moral philosophers of these latter ages may be comprehended) have wherewithal abundantly to content him.'[3] Secondly, words are often abused in controversy through being used by the same man in different senses. Another abuse consists in taking words for things and supposing that the structure of reality must correspond to one's ways of talking about it. Locke also mentions figurative speech as one abuse of language. He would have done better perhaps to have cited it as a source of or occasion for the abuse of language. Indeed, he feels this himself to some extent. For he remarks that 'eloquence, like the fair sex, has too prevailing beauties in it to suffer itself ever to be spoken against'.[4] But his point is that 'eloquence' and rhetoric are used to move the passions and mislead the judgment, as indeed they not infrequently are; and he is too much of a rationalist to attempt to distinguish clearly between the proper and improper use of emotive and evocative language.

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[1] *E.*, 3, 9, 6; II, p. 107.

[2] *E.*, 3, 9, 8; II, p. 108.

[3] *E.*, 3, 10, 2; II, p. 123.

[4] *E.*, 3, 10, 34; II, p. 147.

The misuse of words is thus a prolific source of error, and Locke evidently considered this a subject of considerable importance. For at the end of the *Essay* he insists on the need for studying the science of signs. 'The consideration, then, of ideas and words as the great instruments of knowledge makes no despicable part of their contemplation who would take a view of human knowledge in the whole extent of it. And perhaps if they were distinctly weighed and duly considered, they would afford us another sort of logic and critic than what we have been hitherto acquainted with.'[1] But it is only in very recent times that Locke's suggestion has been taken with any great seriousness.

10. As general terms play such a prominent part in discourse, it is necessary to pay special attention to their origin, meaning and use. We must have general terms; for a language made up exclusively of proper names could not be memorized, and, even if it could, it would be useless for purposes of communication. If, for example, a man was unable to refer to cows in general but had to have a proper name for every particular cow which he had seen, the names would have no meaning for another man who was unacquainted with these particular animals. But although it is obviously necessary that there should be general names, the question arises how we come to have them. 'For since all things that exist are only particulars, how come we by general terms or where find we those general natures they are supposed to stand for?'[2]

Locke replies that words become general by being made signs of general ideas, and that general ideas are formed by abstraction. 'Ideas become general by separating from them the circumstances of time and place and any other ideas that may determine them to this or that particular existence. By this way of abstraction they are made capable of representing more individuals than one; each of which having in it a conformity to that abstract idea is (as we call it) of that sort.'[3] A child, let us suppose, is acquainted first of all with one man. It later becomes acquainted with other men. And it frames an idea of the common characteristics, leaving out the characteristics peculiar to this or that individual. It thus comes to have a general idea, which is itself signified by the general term 'man'. And with the growth of experience it can go on to form other wider and more abstract ideas, each of which will be signified by a general term.

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[1] *E.*, 4, 21, 4; II, p. 462.

[2] *E.*, 3, 3, 6; II, p. 16.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 16–17.

It follows that universality and generality are not attributes of things, which are all individual or particular, but of ideas and words: they are 'the inventions and creatures of the understanding, made by it for its own use, and concern only signs, whether words or ideas'.[1] Of course, any idea or any word is also particular; it is this particular idea or this particular word. But what we call general or universal words and ideas are universal in their signification. That is to say, a universal or general idea signifies a sort of thing, like cow or sheep or man; and the general term stands for the idea as signifying a sort of thing. 'That, then, which general words signify is a *sort* of things; and each of them does that by being a sign of an abstract idea in the mind, to which idea, as things existing are found to agree, so they come to be ranked under that name; or, which is all one, be of that sort.'[2]

To say, however, that universality belongs only to words and ideas is not to say that there is no objective foundation for the universal idea. 'I would not here be thought to forget, much less to deny, that nature in the production of things makes several of them alike: there is nothing more obvious, especially in the races of animals and all things propagated by seed.'[3] But it is the mind which observes these likenesses among particular things and uses them as the occasion to form general ideas. And when a general idea has been formed, say the idea of gold, a particular thing is said to be or not to be gold in so far as it conforms or does not conform to this idea.

Locke occasionally speaks in a manner which suggested to Berkeley that the general idea was a composite image consisting of incompatible elements. For instance, he speaks of the general idea of a triangle, which 'must be neither oblique nor rectangle, neither equilateral, equicrural, nor scalenon; but all and none of these at once. . . . It is an idea wherein some parts of several different and inconsistent ideas are put together.'[4] But this statement must be understood in the light of what Locke says elsewhere about 'abstraction'. He does not say that the general idea of a triangle is an image; nor does he say that it is composed of mutually inconsistent or incompatible ideas. He says that it is composed of 'parts' of different and inconsistent ideas. That is to say, the mind omits the notes peculiar to this or that kind of triangle and puts together the common characteristics of different kinds of triangle to form the general idea of triangularity. Abstraction is thus depicted as a process of elimination or leaving out and of putting together what remains, common characteristics. This may, indeed, be unfortunately vague; but there is no need to make Locke talk absolute nonsense by ascribing to him the view that general ideas are composed of mutually incompatible elements.

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[1] *E.*, 3, 3, 11; II, p. 21.

[2] *E.*, 3, 3, 12; II, p. 22.

[3] *E.*, 3, 3, 13; II, p. 23.

[4] *E.*, 4, 7, 9; II, p. 274.

11. It is important not to understand the word 'abstraction' in the present context as meaning the abstraction of the real essence of a thing. Locke distinguishes two senses of the term 'real essence'. 'The one is of those who, using the word essence for they know not what, suppose a certain number of those essences, according to which all natural things are made, and wherein they do exactly every one of them partake, and so become of this or that species.'[1] This theory is, says Locke, an untenable hypothesis, as is shown by the production of monsters. For the theory presupposes fixed and stable specific essences, and it cannot explain the fact of borderline cases and of variations in type. In other words, it is incompatible with the available empirical data. Further, the hypothesis of stable but unknown specific essences is so useless that it might well be discarded even if it were not contradicted by the empirical data. 'The other and more rational opinion (about real essences) is of those who look on all natural things to have a real but unknown constitution of their insensible parts, from which flow those sensible qualities which serve us to distinguish them one from another, according as we have occasion to rank them into sorts under common denominations.'[2] But though this opinion is 'more rational', there can obviously be no question of abstracting unknown essences. Every collection of simple ideas depends on some 'real constitution' of a thing; but this real constitution is unknown by us. Hence it cannot be abstracted.

From real essences Locke distinguishes nominal essences. We are accustomed to decide whether a given thing is gold or not by observing whether it possesses those common characteristics, possession of which is regarded as necessary and sufficient for a thing to be classed as gold. And the complex idea of these characteristics is the nominal essence of gold. This is why Locke can say that 'the abstract idea for which the (general) name stands and the essence of the species is one and the same',[1] and that 'every distinct abstract idea is a distinct essence'.[2] It is the nominal essence, therefore, which is abstracted, by leaving out characteristics peculiar to individual things as individuals and retaining their common characteristics.

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[1] *E.*, 3, 3, 17; II, p. 27.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 27–8.

Locke adds that in the case of simple ideas and modes the real and nominal essences are the same. 'Thus a figure including a space between three lines is the real as well as nominal essence of a triangle.'[3] But in the case of substances they are different. The nominal essence of gold is the abstract idea of the observable characteristics common to the things which are classed as gold; but its real essence, or substance, is 'the real constitution of its insensible parts, on which depend all those properties of colour, weight, fusibility, fixedness, etc., which are to be found in it'.[4] And this real essence, the particular substance of gold, is unknown by us. Locke's way of speaking is certainly open to criticism. For in the case of the universal idea of triangularity it is inappropriate to speak about 'real essence' at all, if the latter is defined as the real but unknown constitution of the insensible parts of a material substance. But his general meaning is sufficiently clear, namely, that in the case of material substances it makes sense to speak of a real essence distinct from the nominal essence or abstract idea, whereas in the case of triangularity it does not.

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[1] *E.*, 3, 3, 12; II, p. 23.

[2] *E.*, 3, 3, 14; II, 9, 25.

[3] *E.*, 3, 3, 18; II, p. 29.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

CHAPTER VI

LOCKE (3)

Knowledge in general—The degrees of knowledge—The extent and reality of our knowledge—Knowledge of the existence of God—Knowledge of other things—Judgment and probability—Reason and faith.

1. In the draft of the *Essay* Locke remarks that 'it remains now to enquire what kind of knowledge it is we have of or by these ideas, the proper object of knowledge being truth, which lies wholly in affirmation or negation, or propositions either mental or verbal, which is no more but apprehending things to be as really as they are and do exist, or expressing our apprehensions by words fitted to make others apprehend as we do'.[1] But in the published *Essay* he starts the fourth book with the unequivocally representationist statement, 'Seeing the mind in all its thoughts and reasonings hath no other immediate object but its own ideas, which it alone does or can contemplate, it is evident that our knowledge is only conversant about them'.[2] And he goes on to say that knowledge consists exclusively in the perception of the connection and agreement or disagreement and repugnance of any of our ideas. When we see that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, we perceive a necessary connection between ideas. And therefore we can legitimately be said to know that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles.

But what is meant by 'agreement' and 'disagreement' of ideas? The primary form of agreement or disagreement is what Locke calls 'identity or diversity'. The mind, for example, knows immediately and infallibly that the ideas of white and round (when he has received them through sense-experience, needless to say) are what they are and not the other ideas which we call red and square. A man may, indeed, be in error about the right terms for these ideas; but he cannot possess them without seeing that each agrees with itself and disagrees with other and different ideas. The second form mentioned by Locke is called 'relative'. He is here thinking of the perception of relations between ideas, which may be relations of agreement or of disagreement. Mathematical propositions provide the chief, though not the only, example of relational knowledge. Thirdly, there is agreement or disagreement of coexistence. Thus our knowledge of the truth that a substance remains unconsumed by fire is a knowledge that the power of remaining unconsumed by fire coexists with or always accompanies the other characteristics which together form our complex idea of the substance in question. Finally, there is agreement or disagreement 'of real existence'. Locke gives as an example the statement 'God is'. That is to say, we know that the idea of God 'agrees with' or corresponds to a really existent being.

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[1] Rand, p. 85.

[2] *E.*, 4, 1, 1; II, p. 167.

Two points in this classification of forms of knowledge are immediately evident. In the first place knowledge of identity and knowledge of coexistence are both relational. Locke, indeed, explicitly admits this. 'Identity and coexistence are truly nothing but relations.'[1] But he goes on to claim that they have peculiar features of their own which justify their consideration under separate headings, though he does not explain what these peculiar features are. In the second place knowledge of real existence should evidently cause Locke considerable difficulty. For if an idea is defined as whatever is the object of the mind when it thinks, it is not easy to see how we can ever know that our ideas correspond to real existents, in so far as these latter are not our ideas. However, leaving this point aside for the moment, we can say that knowledge consists for Locke either in perceiving the agreement or disagreement between ideas or in perceiving the agreement or disagreement of ideas with things which are not themselves ideas.

2. Locke proceeds to examine the degrees of our knowledge. And here he shows a decidedly rationalistic turn of mind. For he exalts intuition and demonstration, which is characteristic of, though not confined to, mathematical knowledge, at the expense of what he calls 'sensitive knowledge'. He does not, of course, recant his general empiricist theory that all our ideas come from experience, from sensation or reflection. But, presupposing this theory, he then clearly takes mathematical knowledge as the paradigm of knowledge. And on this point at least he shows an affinity with Descartes.

'If we reflect on our own ways of thinking, we shall find that sometimes the mind perceives the agreement or disagreement of two ideas immediately by themselves, without the intervention of any other: and this, I think, we may call intuitive knowledge.'[1] Thus the mind perceives immediately by intuition that white is not black and that three are more than two.[2] This is the clearest and most certain kind of knowledge which the human mind can attain. There is no room for doubt, and 'it is on this intuition that depends all the certainty and evidence of all our knowledge'.[3]

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[1] *E.*, 4, 1, 7; II, p. 171.

The second degree of knowledge is demonstrative knowledge, where the mind does not perceive immediately the agreement or disagreement of ideas but needs intervening ideas to be able to do so. Locke is thinking primarily of mathematical reasoning, where a proposition is proved or demonstrated. We do not, he says, have immediate intuitive knowledge that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles: we need 'intervening ideas' with the aid of which the agreement in question is proved. Demonstrative knowledge of this kind lacks, we are told, the facility and clarity of intuition. At the same time each step in the reasoning has intuitive certainty. But if Locke had paid more attention to syllogistic reasoning than he actually did, he might have felt some doubt about the truth of this last statement. For there can be a valid syllogistic argument containing a contingent proposition. And the truth of a contingent proposition is not known with what Locke calls intuitive certainty. There is no necessary connection between the terms; hence we cannot perceive it immediately. In other words, as commentators have pointed out, Locke's idea of demonstration inevitably restricts the range of demonstrative knowledge to a very narrow field.

Whatever comes short of intuition and demonstration is not knowledge 'but faith or opinion, at least in all general truths'.[4] However, there is sensitive knowledge of particular existence. Some people, Locke remarks, may express doubt whether there are any existent things corresponding to our ideas; 'but yet here, I think, we are provided with an evidence that puts us past doubting'.[5] When a man sees the sun by day his perception is different from his thought of the sun during the night; and there is an unmistakable difference between smelling the scent of a rose and recalling the scent of a rose. If he says that all may be a dream, he must none the less admit that there is a great difference between dreaming of being in the fire and actually being in it.

3. There are, therefore, three degrees of knowledge: intuitive,

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[1] *E.*, 4, 2, 1; II, p. 176.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 177.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *E.*, 4, 2, 14; II, p. 185.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 186.

demonstrative and sensitive. But how far is our knowledge capable of extending? If knowledge consists in perceiving the agreement or disagreement between ideas, it follows that 'we can have knowledge no further than we have ideas'.[1] But according to Locke 'the extent of our knowledge comes not only short of the reality of things, but even of the extent of our own ideas'.[2] And it is necessary to examine what he means by this. We can follow him in taking one by one the four forms of knowledge mentioned in the first section and in seeing how far our knowledge extends or can extend in each of these ways of perceiving the agreement or disagreement of our ideas.

In the first place, our knowledge of 'identity and diversity' extends as far as our ideas extend. That is to say, we cannot have an idea without intuitively perceiving that it is itself and that it is different from any other idea.

But this is not the case with regard to our knowledge of 'coexistence'. 'In this our knowledge is very short, though in this consists the greatest and most material part of our knowledge concerning substances.'[3] Our idea of a particular kind of substance is a collection of simple ideas coexisting together. For example, 'our idea of a flame is a body hot, luminous and moving upward; of gold, a body heavy to a certain degree, yellow, malleable and fusible'.[4] But what we perceive is a factual coexistence or togetherness of simple ideas: we do not perceive any necessary connection between them. Our complex ideas of substances are made up of ideas of their secondary qualities, and these depend upon 'the primary qualities of their minute and insensible parts; or if not upon them, upon something yet more remote from our comprehension'.[5] And if we do not know the root from which they spring, we cannot know what qualities necessarily result from or are necessarily incompatible with the insensible constitution of the substance. Hence we cannot know what secondary qualities must always coexist with the complex idea which we have of the substance in question or what qualities are incompatible with this complex idea. 'Our knowledge in all these inquiries reaches very little farther than our experience.'[6] Again, we cannot discern any necessary connection between the powers of a substance to effect sensible changes in other bodies and any of those ideas which together form our notion of the substance in question. 'Experience

[1] *E.*, 4, 3, 1; II, p. 190.

[2] *E.*, 4, 3, 6; II, p. 191.

[3] *E.*, 4, 3, 9; II, p. 199.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *E.*, 4, 3, 11; II, p. 200.

[6] *E.*, 4, 3, 14; II, p. 203.

is that which in this part we must depend on. And it were to be wished that it were more improved.'[1] And if we turn from bodies to spirits, we find ourselves even more in the dark.

The reason which Locke gives for saying that our knowledge of 'coexistence' does not extend very far is of considerable interest. It is clear that he has in his mind an ideal standard of knowledge. To have a 'real knowledge' of the coexistence of the ideas which together form the nominal essence of a thing would mean seeing their necessary connections with one another, in a manner analogous to that in which we perceive necessary connections between ideas in mathematical propositions. But we do not perceive these necessary connections. We see that the complex idea of gold comprises the idea of yellowness as a matter of fact; but we do not perceive a necessary connection between yellowness and the other qualities which together form a complex idea of gold. Hence our knowledge is judged to be deficient; it is simply a knowledge based on experience, on *de facto* connections. We cannot demonstrate propositions in natural science or 'experimental philosophy': 'certainty and demonstration are things we must not, in these matters, pretend to'.[2] We cannot attain 'general, instructive, unquestionable truths'[3] concerning bodies. In all this Locke's attitude seems to be that of a 'rationalist', who takes mathematical knowledge as the ideal standard, rather than that of an 'empiricist'.

At the same time I do not think that this point of view should be over-emphasized. Locke does, indeed, imply that natural science is deficient precisely because it is empirical; but he also attributes its shortcomings simply to contemporary ignorance. 'Though we are not without ideas of these primary qualities of bodies in general, yet not knowing what is the particular bulk, figure and motion of the greatest part of the bodies of the universe, we are ignorant of the several powers, efficacies and ways of operation whereby the effects which we daily see are produced.'[4] Here it is a question simply of ignorance. Our senses are not acute enough to perceive the 'minute particles' of bodies and discover their operations. Our experiments and researches do not carry us very far, though 'whether they will succeed again another time, we cannot be certain. This hinders our certain knowledge of universal truths concerning natural bodies; and our reason carries us herein very little beyond particular matter of fact.'[1] Locke does, indeed, strike a pessimistic note. For he is 'apt to doubt that how far soever human industry may advance useful and experimental philosophy in physical things, scientifical (knowledge) will still be out of reach'.[2] And he asserts that though our ideas of bodies will serve us for ordinary practical purposes, 'we are not capable of scientifical knowledge; nor shall ever be able to discover general, instructive and unquestionable truths concerning them. Certainty and demonstration are things we must not, in these matters, pretend to.'[3] We have here, as was remarked in the last paragraph, a depreciation of natural science because it falls short of an ideal knowledge: we have a clear statement that natural science can never become 'science'. At the same time, however, Locke's pessimistic remarks about natural science are due in large part simply to contemporary ignorance and lack of the technical equipment required for startling advances and discoveries. Hence, while it is necessary to note the rationalistic attitude which is apparent in the fourth book of the *Essay*, I think that we should be careful not to over-emphasize it in this particular context.

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[1] *E.*, 4, 3, 16; II, p. 206.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *E.*, 4, 3, 26; II, p. 218.

[4] *E.*, 4, 3, 24; II, p. 215.

As for the third kind of knowledge, relational knowledge, it is difficult to say how far it is capable of extending, 'because the advances that are made in this part of knowledge, depending on our sagacity in finding intermediate ideas that may show the relations and habitudes of ideas whose coexistence is not considered, it is a hard matter to tell when we are at the end of such discoveries'.[4] Locke is thinking primarily of mathematics. Those who are ignorant of algebra, he says, cannot imagine its potentialities, and we cannot determine in advance the further resources and utility of mathematics. But he is not thinking exclusively of mathematics, and he suggests that ethics might be made a demonstrative science. Locke's ideas about ethics, however, will be left to the next chapter.

Finally, there is knowledge of the actual existence of things. Locke's position here is easily summarized. 'We have an intuitive knowledge of our own existence; and a demonstrative knowledge of the existence of a God; of the existence of any thing else we have no other but a sensitive knowledge, which extends not beyond the objects present to our senses.'[5] As for knowledge of our own existence, we perceive it so plainly and with such certainty that it neither needs nor is capable of proof. 'If I doubt of all other things, that very doubt makes me perceive my own existence and will not suffer me to doubt of that.'[1] As we have seen in the last chapter, Locke does not mean that I have intuitive certainty of the existence of an immaterial soul in myself. But I perceive clearly that I am a thinking self, though precisely what is intuited Locke does not explain. Our knowledge of God and of things other than God and ourselves will be considered in the following sections of this chapter. Meanwhile, I raise a question which Locke treats under the heading 'the reality of our knowledge'.

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[1] *E.*, 4, 3, 25; II, p. 217.

[2] *E.*, 4, 3, 26; II, pp. 217–18.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *E.*, 4, 3, 18; II, p. 207.

[5] *E.*, 4, 3, 21; II, p. 212.

We have just seen that according to Locke we can know that things exist. And we can know something about them. But how can we do this if the immediate object of knowledge is an idea? 'It is evident that the mind knows not things immediately, but only by the intervention of the ideas it has of them. Our knowledge therefore is real only so far as there is a conformity between our ideas and the reality of things. But what shall be here the criterion? How shall the mind, when it perceives nothing but its own ideas, know that they agree with things themselves?'[2] The question is clear enough. What is Locke's answer?

We can put mathematical and moral knowledge on one side. Pure mathematics gives us certain and real knowledge, but it is knowledge 'only of our own ideas'.[3] That is to say, pure mathematics is formal: it makes statements about the properties of 'ideas', such as the idea of a triangle or circle, and about the relations between ideas, but not about the world of things. And the truth of mathematical propositions is not affected by the presence or absence of things corresponding to the ideas which the mathematician employs in his reasoning. If he makes a statement about the triangle or the circle, the existence or non-existence of a corresponding triangle or circle in the world is entirely irrelevant to the truth of his statement. If the latter is true, it remains true even though there may be no existent triangle or circle which corresponds to the mathematician's ideas of triangles or circles. For the truth of his statement follows simply from his definitions and axioms. 'In the same manner the truth and certainty of moral discourses abstracts from the lives of men and the existence of those virtues in the world whereof they treat. Nor are Tully's Offices (Cicero's *De officiis*) less true because there is nobody in the world that exactly practises his rules and lives up to that pattern of a virtuous man which he has given us and which existed nowhere, when he writ, but in idea.'[1]

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[1] *E.*, 4, 9, 3; II, p. 305. [2] *E.*, 4, 4, 3; II, p. 228. [3] *E.*, 4, 4, 6; II, p. 231.

The situation is different, however, with regard to simple ideas. For these are not fabricated by the mind, as is the idea of a perfect circle; they are imposed on the mind. Hence they must be the product of things operating on the mind, and they must have a conformity with things. In view of the fact that colours, for example, bear little resemblance to the powers in objects which produce in us the relevant simple ideas, one might expect Locke to explain more precisely the nature of this 'conformity'. However, he is satisfied with remarking that 'the idea of whiteness, or bitterness, as it is in the mind, exactly answering that power which is in any body to produce it there, has all the real conformity it can, or ought to have, with things without us. And this conformity between our simple ideas and the existence of things is sufficient for real knowledge.'[2] It may be sufficient; but this is not the point at issue. The question is, how do we know, or rather how can we know on Locke's premisses, that there is any conformity at all?

Simple ideas, therefore, are said to have a conformity with external objects. What, then, of complex ideas? This question concerns our ideas of substances. For as other complex ideas are 'archetypes of the mind's own making, not intended to be the copies of any thing',[3] the problem of their conformity is not so pressing. They can give us 'real' knowledge as in mathematics, even if nothing corresponds to them outside the mind. But ideas of substances are referred, to use Locke's language, to archetypes outside us; that is to say, they are thought to correspond to external reality. And the question arises, how can we know that they correspond supposing that they do in fact correspond in some way to external reality? This question refers, of course, to nominal essences; for according to Locke we do not know the real essences of things. His answer is that our complex ideas of substances are formed of simple ideas, and that 'whatever simple ideas have been found to coexist in any substance, these we may with confidence join together again, and so make abstract ideas of substances. For whatever have once had an union in nature may be united again.'[4]

Of course, if qualities are simple *ideas*, and if we know immediately only ideas, we can never compare the collections of qualities in our minds with the clusters of qualities outside our minds. And Locke's answer certainly does not clear up this difficulty. But though he talks about 'simple ideas' he also talks about our ideas of qualities and of substances. In other words, he oscillates between a representationist view, according to which ideas are the object of knowledge, and the view that ideas are simply psychic modifications by means of which we know things directly. Or, more accurately, he oscillates, not between two 'views' (since his declared view is that the object of knowledge is ideas), but between two ways of talking, speaking sometimes as though the idea is the ***medium quod*** of knowledge (his declared view) and sometimes as though it is the ***medium quo*** of knowledge. And this ambiguity may be partly responsible for his failure to deal seriously with the difficulty which arises out of his representationism.

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[1] *E.*, 4, 4, 8; II, p. 233.

[2] *E.*, 4, 4, 5; II, p. 230.

[3] *E.*, 4, 4, 4; II, p. 230.

[4] *E.*, 4, 4, 12; II, p. 237.

However, let us assume that we can know the correspondence between our complex ideas of substances and existent sets of compresent qualities. As we have seen, Locke will not allow that any necessary connections are perceived between these qualities. Hence our knowledge, though real, does not extend beyond the actual experience which we have had, and if we express this knowledge in the form of general or universal propositions we cannot legitimately claim for the latter that they are more than probably true.

4. In the preceding section mention was made of Locke's view that we have, or rather can have, demonstrative knowledge of the existence of God. By this he means that we can deduce the existence of God 'from some part of our intuitive knowledge'.[1] And the intuitively known truth from which he starts is our knowledge of our own existence. More accurately perhaps, the individual's demonstrative knowledge of God's existence is based on his intuitive knowledge of his own existence. But knowledge of one's own existence does not by itself prove God's existence. We need other intuitively known truths. And the first of these is the proposition that 'bare nothing can no more produce any real being than it can be equal to two right angles'.[2] Intuitive knowledge of my own existence shows me that at least one thing exists. Now, I know that I did not exist from eternity but had a beginning. But that which had a beginning must have been produced by something else; it cannot have produced itself. There must, therefore,

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[1] *E.*, 4, 10, 1; II, p. 306.

[2] *E.*, 4, 10, 3; II, p. 307.

says Locke, be something which existed from eternity. He does not make the steps of the argument very clear. But what he evidently means is that for anything at all to exist at any time there must be a being which itself had no beginning; for, if this were not the case, some being would have produced itself or have 'simply happened', and this is inconceivable. That anything which begins to be does so through the efficacy of an already existent extrinsic cause is obviously taken by Locke to be a self-evident proposition. But he does not explain whether he intends to rule out an infinite regress in the temporal order (an infinite regress, that is to say, going back into the past) or an infinite regress in the order of existential dependence here and now, without reference to the past. However, from various remarks which he makes it seems to follow that he is thinking of an infinite regress going back into the past. If this is the case, his line of argument differs from that of Aquinas, for example, who tried to develop a proof of God's existence which would be independent of the question whether or not there is a series of temporal events reaching back indefinitely into the past. In fact, Locke's argument is carelessly constructed and lacks precision. Some would rule it out altogether on the ground that what Locke regards as self-evident truths are not self-evidently true. But even if we are not prepared to do this, it is difficult to say very much about it, because Locke does not state it clearly.

If we assume, however, that there is a being which existed from eternity, the question arises, what is its nature? Here Locke uses the principle that 'what had its being and beginning from another must also have all that which is in and belongs to its being from another too'.[1] As, therefore, man finds in himself powers, and as he also enjoys perception and knowledge, the eternal being on which he depends must also be powerful and intelligent. For a thing which is itself void of knowledge cannot produce a knowing being. And from this Locke concludes that 'there is an eternal, most powerful and most knowing being; which whether anyone will please to call God, it matters not. The thing is evident, and from this idea duly considered will easily be deduced all those other attributes which we ought to ascribe to this eternal being.'[2]

5. A man knows his own existence by intuition and that of God by demonstration. 'The knowledge of the existence of any other thing we can have only by sensation.'[3] For there is no necessary

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[1] *E.*, 4, 10, 4; II, p. 308. [2] *E.*, 4, 10, 6; II, p. 309. [3] *E.*, 4, 11, 1; II, p. 325.

connection between the idea which a man has of anything other than God and the existence of the thing. The fact that we have an idea of a thing does not prove that it exists. We know that it exists only when it is operating upon us. 'It is therefore the actual receiving of ideas from without that gives us notice of the existence of other things and makes us know that something doth exist at that time without us.'[1] The receiving of ideas from without is sensation, and we know the existence of things which affect our sense-organs only while they are doing so. When I open my eyes, it does not depend on my choice what I see; I am acted upon. Further, if I put my hand too near the fire, I feel pain, whereas when I have the mere idea of putting my hand too near the fire I do not suffer pain. Such considerations show us that our confidence in the existence of other things is not ill-grounded. True, our knowledge of the existence of external things extends only as far as the present testimony of our senses; but it is probable that the table which I saw a moment ago is still existing; and it is folly to look for demonstrative knowledge before we are prepared to assent to an existential proposition. 'He that in the ordinary affairs of life would admit of nothing but direct plain demonstration would be sure of nothing in this world but of perishing quickly. The wholesomeness of his meat or drink would not give him reason to venture on it: and I would fain know what it is he could do upon such grounds as are capable of no doubt, no objection.'[2]

6. The mind is said to 'know' when 'it certainly perceives and is undoubtedly satisfied of the agreement or disagreement of any ideas'.[3] We know that *X* is *Y* when we clearly perceive a necessary connection between them. But the mind has what Locke calls another 'faculty'. namely, judgment, which is 'the putting ideas together or separating them from one another in the mind when their certain agreement or disagreement is not perceived but presumed to be so. . . . And if it so unites or separates them as in reality things are, it is right judgment.'[4] Judgment is therefore concerned with probability and yields 'opinion'.

Probability is defined by Locke as 'the appearance of agreement upon fallible proofs'.[5] That is to say, when we judge that a proposition is probably true, that which moves us to give assent to the proposition as probably true is not its self-evident character (for in this case we would know it to be certainly true) but extrinsic grounds or reasons which are not sufficient to demonstrate its truth. There are two main extrinsic grounds for believing a proposition to be true though it is not self-evidently true. The first of these is 'the conformity of anything with our own knowledge, observation and experience'.[1] For instance, so far as my experience goes, iron sinks in water. If I have often and always seen this happen, the probability that it will happen on future occasions is proportionately greater than if I had only seen it happen once. In fact, when consistent experiences give rise to judgment and this judgment is constantly verified in further experience, probability rises so high that it influences our expectations and actions in practically the same way that the evidence of demonstration influences them. The second ground for believing a proposition to be probably true is testimony. And here again there can be degrees of probability. If, for example, there are a large number of reliable witnesses to some events, and if their testimonies agree, there is a much higher degree of probability than if the witnesses are few and unskilful or if the accounts given disagree with one another.

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[1] *E.*, 4, 11, 2; II, p. 326.

[2] *E.*, 4, 11, 10; II, pp. 335–6.

[3] *E.*, 4, 14, 4; II, p. 362.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *E.*, 4, 15, 1; II, p. 363.

Locke divides 'the propositions we receive upon inducements of probability'[2] into two classes. The first class consists of propositions concerning 'matters of fact' which fall under observation and can be the object of human testimony. That it froze in England last winter would be an example. The second class consists of propositions concerning matters which cannot be the object of human testimony because they are incapable of empirical investigation. That there are angels would be one example, and that heat consists in 'a violent agitation of the imperceptible minute parts of the burning matter'[3] would be another. In such cases it is from analogy that we draw the grounds of probability. Observing the different stages in the hierarchy of levels of being below man (animals, plants, inorganic things), we can judge it probable that between man and God there are finite immaterial spirits. Again, observing that the rubbing of two bodies together produces heat, we can argue by analogy that heat probably consists in the violent motion of imperceptible particles of matter.

It is clear, therefore, that for Locke the propositions of the natural sciences can enjoy at best only a very high degree of probability. This view is closely connected, of course, with his conviction that we know only the nominal essences of things and not their 'real essences', in the sense explained in the last chapter.

[1] *E.*, 4, 15, 4; II, p. 365. [2] *E.*, 4, 16, 5; II, p. 374. [3] *E.*, 4, 16, 12; II, p. 380.

Historical propositions too, which rest on human testimony, can enjoy only varying degrees of probability. And Locke reminds his readers that the degree of probability which is enjoyed by a historical statement depends on the value of the relevant testimony and not on the number of people who may have repeated the statement.

7. It might be expected perhaps that Locke would have included all statements accepted by faith in the class of probable propositions. But he did not do so. For he admitted a divine revelation which gives us certainty about the truth of the doctrines revealed, since the testimony of God admits of no doubt. 'We may as well doubt of our own being, as we can whether any revelation from God be true. So that faith is a settled and sure principle of assent and assurance, and leaves no manner of room for doubt or hesitation.'[1] This does not mean, of course, that all truths about God are accepted on faith. For Locke, as we have seen, asserted the demonstrative character of our knowledge of God's existence. Revealed truths are those which are above, though not contrary to, reason, and the truth of which we know on the testimony of God. In other words, Locke continued the mediaeval distinction between truths about God which can be discovered by the unaided human reason and those which cannot be known unless God reveals them.

At the same time Locke had a great dislike of what he called 'enthusiasm'. He was thinking of the attitude of those people who are prone to assume that some idea which comes into their heads constitutes a private divine revelation, a product of divine inspiration. They do not bother about objective reasons in support of the claim that their ideas are inspired by God: strong feeling is for them more persuasive than any reason. 'They are sure because they are sure; and their persuasions are right because they are strong in them.'[2] They say that they 'see' and 'feel'; but what is it they 'see'? That some proposition is evidently true or that it has been revealed by God? The two questions must be distinguished. And if the proposition is not evidently true or if it is not put forward as probably true on the basis of some objective grounds for belief, reasons must be given for thinking that it is in fact revealed by God. But for the people suffering from 'enthusiasm' a proposition 'is a revelation because they firmly believe it, and they believe it because it is a revelation'.[3] Locke insisted, therefore,

[1] *E.*, 4, 16, 14; II, p. 383. [2] *E.*, 4, 19, 9; II, p. 434. [3] *E.*, 4, 19, 10; II, p. 436.

that even though God can certainly reveal truths which transcend reason, in the sense that reason alone cannot establish them as true, it must be shown by reason that they are in fact revealed before we can be expected to accept them by faith. 'If strength of persuasion be the light which must guide us, I ask how shall anyone distinguish between the delusions of Satan and the inspirations of the Holy Ghost?'[1] After all, 'God, when He makes the prophet, does not unmake the man. He leaves all his faculties in the natural state, to enable him to judge of his inspirations whether they be of divine origin or no.'[2] By disposing of reason to make room for revelation 'enthusiasm' does away with both. In his treatment of enthusiasm Locke's strong common sense is very much in evidence.

Locke did not question, therefore, the possibility of divine revelation. In fact he believed in doctrines such as that of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body on the testimony of God's word. But he insisted that propositions which are contrary to reason cannot have been revealed by God. And it is clear, I think, that when he talks in this way he is thinking very largely of Catholic dogmas such as that of transubstantiation to which he explicitly refers in his chapter on wrong assent or error.[3] The retort might obviously be made that if there is good reason for thinking that a proposition is revealed by God, it cannot be contrary to reason even though it is above reason.[4] But Locke, having made up his mind that certain doctrines were contrary to reason, concluded that they cannot have been revealed and that there cannot be any adequate reason for thinking that they have been revealed. To discuss controversial questions of this kind here would be out of place. But it is worth while drawing attention to the fact that Locke continued the point of view of the Cambridge Platonists or 'latitudinarians'. While rejecting on the one hand what he regarded as the misguided enthusiasm of self-appointed prophets and preachers, he rejected also what would appear to be the logical consequences of a belief in the possibility of divine revelation, namely, that if there are good reasons for thinking that God has revealed truth through a certain mouthpiece no proposition taught by the accredited authority can be contrary to reason. Locke would doubtless reply that the only criterion for deciding whether a doctrine is contrary to reason or simply 'above reason' is reason itself. But he makes his position easier to maintain by admitting, sincerely enough, the possibility of divine revelation without embarking upon the question where this revelation is to be found and through what particular organ or organs it has been made.

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[1] *E.*, 4, 19, 13; II, p. 438. [2] *E.*, 4, 19, 14; II, p. 438. [3] *E.*, 4, 20, 10; II, p. 450.

[4] Catholic theologians would not deny that reason is capable *in principle* of distinguishing between propositions which are contrary to reason and propositions, the truth or falsity of which cannot be decided by reason without the aid of revelation. But in particular cases we may, when left to our own devices, confuse the latter with the former.

Locke's general attitude of moderation and his dislike of extremes, together with his conviction that the reach of certainty is very limited whereas the field of probability, in its various degrees, is very large, led him to espouse, within limits, the cause of toleration. I say 'within limits' because in his *Letter concerning Toleration* he says that toleration should not be extended to atheists, to those whose religion involves allegiance to a foreign power, and to those whose religious faith does not permit them to extend to others the toleration which they claim for themselves. Atheism, in his opinion, necessarily involves lack of moral principles and disregard of the binding character of oaths, covenants and promises. As for the other two classes, he is evidently thinking primarily of Catholics, even if he mentions the Mohammedans. On this matter Locke shared the common attitude of his fellow-countrymen at the time towards Catholics, though it would be interesting to know what he really thought, if he gave any real attention to the matter, of the methods employed in the courts by Lord Chief Justice Scroggs in the trials arising from the 'Popish Plot'. Presumably he sympathized with the ulterior political aims of Shaftesbury and his faction. However, if one takes into consideration the contemporary attitude both in his own country and elsewhere, the remarkable thing is that he advocated toleration at all. He was evidently well aware of this, since he published his writings on the matter anonymously.

CHAPTER VII

LOCKE (4)

Locke's ethical theory—The state of nature and the natural moral law—The right of private property—The origins of political society; the social compact—Civil government—The dissolution of government—General remarks—Locke's influence.

1. In the first chapter on Locke's philosophy we saw that in rejecting the theory of innate ideas he denied both that there are innate speculative principles and that there are innate practical or moral principles. Our moral ideas must, therefore, be derived from experience, in the sense that they must, as Locke puts it, 'terminate in simple ideas'; that is to say, at least the elements from which they are composed must be derived from sensation or reflection. But Locke did not think that this empiricist account of the origin of our moral ideas is any bar to our recognizing moral principles which are known with certainty. For once we have obtained our ideas, we can examine and compare them and discern relations of agreement and disagreement. This enables us to enunciate moral rules, and if they express necessary relations of agreement or disagreement between ideas they are certain and knowable as certain. We have to distinguish between the ideas or terms which occur in an ethical proposition and the relation asserted in the proposition. In a moral rule the ideas must be severally derivable, ultimately at least, from experience; but the truth or validity of a moral rule is independent of its observance. If I say, for example, that truth-telling is morally good, the ideas of telling truth and of moral goodness must be ultimately derivable from experience; but the relation asserted between these ideas holds even if most people tell lies.

If we bear in mind this point of view, it is not so surprising as it might otherwise appear that in the third and fourth books of the *Essay* Locke proposes a 'rationalistic' ideal of ethics. He there remarks that 'morality is capable of demonstration, as well as mathematics'.[1] The reason is that ethics is concerned with ideas which are real essences. In natural science we do not know the real, but only the nominal, essences of things. In mathematics, however, this distinction between nominal essence and real essence falls away; and it is the same with ethics. Our idea of justice is derived ultimately from experience, in the sense that the elements of which it is composed are so derived, but there is no entity 'out there' called justice, the real essence of which could be unknown to us. There is, therefore, no reason why ethics should not be made a demonstrative science, 'For certainty being but the perception of the agreement or disagreement of our ideas and demonstration nothing but the perception of such agreement by the intervention of other ideas or mediums; our moral ideas, as well as mathematical, being archetypes themselves and so adequate and complete ideas; all the agreement or disagreement which we shall find in them will produce real knowledge, as well as in mathematical figure.'[1] By saying that our moral ideas are themselves archetypes Locke means, for example, that the idea of justice is itself the standard by which we discriminate between just and unjust actions; justice is not a subsistent entity with which an idea of justice must agree in order to be a true idea. If, therefore, we take the trouble to define our moral terms clearly and precisely, 'moral knowledge may be brought to so great clearness and certainty'[2] as our mathematical knowledge.

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[1] *E.*, 4, 12, 8; II, p. 347.

These suggestions of Locke may seem to imply that for him ethics is no more than an analysis of ideas in the sense that there is no one set of moral rules which men ought to obey. If we frame this set of ideas, we shall enunciate these rules: if we frame that set of ideas, we shall enunciate those rules. And which set is adopted is a matter of choice. But this was not at all Locke's view of the matter. At least it is certainly not the view which finds expression in the second book of the *Essay* where Locke talks about moral good and evil and about moral rules or laws.

It has already been mentioned that Locke defined good and evil with reference to pleasure and pain. Good is that which is apt to cause or increase pleasure in mind or body, or to diminish pain, while evil is that which is apt to cause or increase any pain or to diminish pleasure.[3] Moral good, however, is the conformity of our voluntary actions to some law, whereby good (that is, 'pleasure') accrues to us according to the will of the law-giver; and moral evil consists in the disagreement of our voluntary actions with some law, whereby evil (that is, 'pain') 'is drawn on us from the will and

[1] *E.*, 4, 4, 7; II, p. 232. [2] *E.*, 3, 11, 17; II, p. 157. [3] *E.*, 2, 20, 2; I, p. 303.

power of the law-maker'.[1] Locke does not say that moral good and evil are pleasure and pain. Nor is he logically committed to saying this. For he defined good and evil not as pleasure and pain (though he does sometimes carelessly speak in this way), but as that which procures pleasure and that which brings pain. Moral good is the conformity of our voluntary actions to a law backed by sanctions; he does not say that it is the same thing as the reward for conformity.

What sort of a law has Locke in mind? He distinguishes three kinds: the divine law, the civil law and 'the law of opinion or reputation'.[2] By the third type of law he means the approval or disapproval, praise or blame, 'which by a secret and tacit consent establishes itself in the several societies, tribes and clubs of men in the world, whereby several actions come to find credit or disgrace amongst them, according to the judgments, maxims or fashion of that place'.[3] In relation to divine law actions are judged to be duties or sins; in relation to the civil law, innocent or criminal; and in relation to the law of opinion or reputation, virtues or vices. Now, it is obvious that these laws might be at variance with one another. As Locke observes, in a given society men may approve of actions which are contrary to the divine law. And he certainly did not think that the civil law is the ultimate criterion of right and wrong. It follows, therefore, that the divine law is the ultimate criterion, in relation to which voluntary actions are called morally good or morally evil. 'That God has given a rule whereby men should govern themselves, I think there is nobody so brutish as to deny. He has a right to do it, we are his creatures: he has goodness and wisdom to direct our actions to that which is best; and he has power to enforce it by rewards and punishments, of infinite weight and duration in another life: for nobody can take us out of his hands. This is the only true touchstone of moral rectitude.'[4]

Now, if we had to understand Locke as meaning that the criterion of moral good and evil, of right and wrong actions, is the arbitrary law of God, there would be a flagrant contradiction between what he says in the second book of the *Essay* and what he says in the fourth. For if the divine law were arbitrarily imposed by God, we could know it only by revelation. And in this case the comparison between ethics and mathematics, which we find in the fourth book, would be entirely misplaced. But when speaking of the divine law in the second book Locke explains that 'I mean that law which God has set to the actions of men, whether promulgated to them by the light of nature, or the voice of revelation'.[1] By the light of nature he means reason; and he evidently thought that we can discover something of the law of God by reason alone, even if Christian revelation gives us further light. And when we turn to the fourth book we find him saying that 'the idea of a supreme being infinite in power, goodness and wisdom, whose workmanship we are and on whom we depend, and the idea of ourselves as understanding rational beings, being such as are clear in us, would, I suppose, if duly considered and pursued, afford such foundations of our duty and rules of actions, as might place morality amongst the sciences capable of demonstration; wherein I doubt not but from self-evident principles, by necessary consequences, as incontestable as those in mathematics, the measures of right and wrong might be made out to anyone that will apply himself with the same indifferency and attention to the one as he does to the other of those sciences'.[2] Clearly, Locke thought that by considering the nature of God and that of man and the relation between them we could arrive at self-evident moral principles from which other more particular moral rules could be deduced. And the system of deducible rules would constitute the law of God as known by the light of nature. Whether he thought of the revealed moral law as supplementary or as forming part of the premisses, he does not make clear. Nor did he himself make any attempt to demonstrate an ethical system on the lines proposed. The examples he gives of self-evident propositions are not very illuminating: 'where there is no property, there is no injustice' and 'no government allows absolute liberty'.[3] (The second proposition is given as a factual statement, but Locke's explanation shows that he did not intend it to be understood in this way.)

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[1] *E.*, 2, 28, 5; 1, p. 474.

[2] *E.*, 2, 28, 7; 1, p. 475.

[3] *E.*, 2, 28, 10; 1, p. 477.

[4] *E.*, 2, 28, 8; 1, p. 475.

I am not disposed, therefore, to subscribe to the verdict of those historians who say that Locke gives us two moral theories which he made no attempt to reconcile. For it seems to me that he does make some attempt to show how the lines of thought given in the second and fourth books of the *Essay* hang together. At the same time it can hardly be denied that what he has to say is sketchy and muddled and that it represents a conflation of different

[1] *E.*, 2, 28, 8; 1, p. 475.

[2] *E.*, 4, 3, 18; II, p. 208.

[3] *Ibid.*

elements. Although, as we have seen, he cannot simply be dubbed a hedonist, even in the second book, there is an element of hedonistic utilitarianism, partly inspired perhaps by Gassendi. Again, there is an element of authoritarianism, based on the idea of the rights of the Creator. Finally, Locke's distinction between the light of nature and revelation recalls Aquinas's distinction between the natural law, known by reason, and the divine positive law; and this distinction was doubtless inspired largely by Hooker, who had taken over a good deal from mediaeval philosophy.[1] The influence of Hooker, and of mediaeval theory through Hooker, on Locke's thought can be seen in the latter's notion of natural rights, which will be considered presently in connection with his political theory.

2. In his preface to the *Treatises of Civil Government*[2] Locke expresses his hope that what he has written is sufficient 'to establish the throne of our great restorer, our present king William (and) to make good his title in the consent of the people'. Hume, as will be seen later, thought that Locke's political theory was unable to fulfil this function. But in any case it would be a mistake to think that Locke developed his political theory simply with a view to establishing William's title to the throne; for he was in possession of the principles of the theory well before 1688. Further, his theory is of lasting historical importance as a systematic expression of the liberal thought of the day, and his treatises are much more than a Whig pamphlet.

The first *Treatise of Civil Government* need not detain us. In it Locke argues against the theory of the divine right of kings as upheld in Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha* (1680). The patriarchal theory of the transmission of royal authority is held up to ridicule. There is no evidence that Adam possessed a divinely granted royal authority. If he had it, there is no evidence that his heirs had it. If they did, the right of succession was not determined, and even if there were a divinely determined order of succession, all knowledge of it has long since perished. In point of fact Filmer was not such an ass as Locke makes him out to be; for he had already published works of greater merit than the *Patriarcha*. But the work was recently published and had raised discussion, and it is quite understandable that Locke selected it for attack in his first treatise.

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[1] For Hooker, vol. III of this *History* may be consulted, pp. 322–4.

[2] Unless otherwise indicated, '*T.*' in references signifies the second *Treatise*.

In the first *Treatise*[1] Locke asserts that 'Sir Robert Filmer's great position is that "men are not naturally free". This is the foundation on which his absolute monarchy stands.' This theory of the natural subjection of men was flatly rejected by Locke, who maintains in the second *Treatise* that in the state of nature men were naturally free and equal. 'This equality of men by nature the judicious Hooker looks upon as so evident in itself and beyond all question that he makes it the foundation of that obligation to mutual love amongst men on which he builds the duties we owe one another and from whence he derives the great maxims of justice and charity.'[2]

Locke starts, therefore, as did Hobbes, with the idea of the state of nature; and in his view 'all men are naturally in that state and remain so till by their own consents they make themselves members of some politic society'.[3] But his idea of the state of nature is very different from that of Hobbes. Indeed, Hobbes is evidently the chief opponent whom he has in mind in the second *Treatise*, though he does not say so explicitly. There is a radical difference, according to Locke, between the state of nature and the state of war. 'Men living together according to reason, without a common superior on earth with authority to judge between them, is properly the state of nature.'[4] Force, exercised without right, creates a state of war; but this is not to be identified with the state of nature, since it constitutes a violation of the state of nature; that is, of what it ought to be.

Locke can speak of what the state of nature ought to be because he admits a natural moral law which is discoverable by reason. The state of nature is a state of liberty but not of licence. 'The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges everyone; and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind who will but consult it that, being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions.'[5] For all men are the creatures of God. And though a man may defend himself against attack and punish aggressors on his private initiative, since, as is supposed, there is no common temporal sovereign or judge, his conscience is bound by the natural moral law which obliges all independently of civil society and its legal enactments. Natural law, therefore, means something quite different for Locke from what it meant for Hobbes. For the latter it meant the law of power and force and fraud, whereas for Locke

[1] 2, 6. [2] *T.*, 2, 5. [3] *T.*, 2, 15. [4] *T.*, 3, 19. [5] *T.*, 2, 6.

it meant a universally obligatory moral law promulgated by the human reason as it reflects on God and His rights, on man's relation to God and on the fundamental equality of all men as rational creatures. Hooker has already been mentioned as one of the sources of Locke's theory of the natural moral law. We can also mention the Cambridge Platonists in England and, on the Continent, writers such as Grotius[1] and Pufendorf.

Believing, as he did, in a natural moral law which binds in conscience independently of the State and its legislation, Locke also believed in natural rights. Every man has, for example, the right to preserve himself and to defend his life, and he has a right to his freedom. There are, too, of course, correlative duties. In fact, because a man has a duty to preserve and defend his life, he has a right to do so. And because he is morally obliged to take the means at his disposal to preserve his life, he has not the right either to take it himself or, by subjecting himself to slavery in the fullest sense of the word, to give to another the power of taking it.

3. The natural right to which Locke paid most attention was, however, the right of property. As man has the duty and the right to preserve himself, he has a right to those things which are required for this purpose. God has given to men the earth and all that is in it for their support and well-being. But though God has not divided up the earth and the things on it, reason shows that it is in accordance with God's will that there should be private property, not only with regard to the fruits of the earth and the things on and in it, but also with regard to the earth itself.

What constitutes the primary title to private property? In Locke's view it is labour. In the state of nature a man's labour is his own, and whatever he removes from its original condition by mixing his labour with it becomes his. 'Though the water running in the fountain be everyone's, yet who can doubt but that in the pitcher is his only who drew it out? His labour hath taken it out of the hands of nature, where it was common and belonged equally to all her children, and hath thereby appropriated it to himself.'[2] Suppose that a man picks up apples for his nourishment under a tree in a wood. Nobody will dispute his ownership of them and his right to eat them. But when did they begin to be his? When he had digested them? When he was eating them? When he cooked them? When he brought them home? It is clear that they became his when he picked them up; that is to say, when he 'mixed his labour' with them and so removed them from the state of being common property. And landed property is acquired in the same way. If a man fells the trees in a forest and makes a clearing, ploughs and sows, the land and its produce are his; for they are the fruit of his labour. The land would not bear the corn unless he had prepared it for doing so.

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[1] For Grotius, vol. III of this *History* may be consulted, pp. 328–34.

[2] *T.*, 5, 29.

Locke's theory of labour as the primary title to property was eventually to be incorporated in the labour theory of value and to be used in a way that its author never envisaged. But it would be irrelevant to treat of these developments here. It is more to the point if attention is drawn to the frequently asserted view that in stressing so much the right of private property Locke was expressing the mentality of the Whig landowners who were his patrons. No doubt, there is some truth in this assertion. At least it is not unreasonable to think that the attention which Locke devoted to private property was due in part to the influence of the outlook of the section of society in which he moved. At the same time it should be remembered that the doctrine that there is a right of private property independently of the laws of civil societies was not a novel invention on Locke's part. It should also be noted that he did not say that any man is entitled to amass property without limit to the detriment of others. He himself raises the objection that if gathering the fruits of the earth confers a right to them, anyone may amass as much as he likes, and he answers, 'Not so. The same law of nature that doth by this means give us property does also bound that property too.'[1] The fruits of the earth are given for use and enjoyment; and 'as much as anyone can make use of to any advantage of life before it spoils, so much he may by his labour fix a property in: whatever is beyond this is more than his share and belongs to others'.[2] As for land, the doctrine that labour is the title to property sets a limit to property. For 'as much land as man tills, plants, improves, cultivates and can use the product of, so much is his property'.[3] It is clear that Locke presupposes a state of affairs in which there is plenty of land for everybody, as in the America of his day. 'In the beginning all the world was America, and more so than it is now; for no such thing as money was anywhere known.'[4]

It is clear that Locke assumes that there is a natural right to inherit property. In fact he expressly says that 'every man is born with a double right: first, a right of freedom to his own person . . .

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[1] *T.*, 5, 31.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *T.*, 5, 32.
[4] *T.*, 5, 49.

secondly, a right, before any other man, to inherit with his brethren his father's goods'.[1] The family is a natural society, and fathers have the duty of providing for their offspring. Still, Locke devotes more attention to explaining how property is acquired than to justifying the right of inheritance, a point which he leaves obscure.

4. Although the state of nature is a condition of affairs in which men have no common authority over them, God 'put him (man) under strong obligations of necessity, convenience and inclination to drive him into society'.[2] We cannot say, therefore, that society is unnatural to man. The family, the primary form of human society, is natural to man, and civil or political society is natural in the sense that it fulfils human needs. For although men, considered in the state of nature, are independent of one another, it is difficult for them to preserve their liberties and rights in actual practice. For from the fact that in the state of nature all are bound in conscience to obey a common moral law it does not follow that all actually obey this law. And from the fact that all enjoy equal rights and are morally bound to respect the rights of others it does not follow that all actually respect the rights of others. It is in man's interest, therefore, to form an organized society for the more effectual preservation of their liberties and rights.

Although, therefore, Locke painted a different picture of the state of nature from that painted by Hobbes, he did not look on this state as an ideal condition of affairs. In the first place, 'though the law of nature be plain and intelligible to all rational creatures, yet men being biased by their interest, as well as ignorant for want of studying it, are not apt to allow of it as a law binding to them in the application of it to their particular cases'.[3] It is desirable, therefore, that there should be a written law to define the natural law and decide controversies. In the second place, though a man in the state of nature enjoys the right to punish transgressions, men are only too apt to be over-zealous in their own cause and too remiss in the cause of others. It is desirable, therefore, that there should be an established and commonly recognized judicial system. In the third place, in the state of nature men may often lack the power to punish crimes, even when their sentence is just. 'Thus mankind, notwithstanding all the privileges of the state of nature, being but in an ill condition while they remain in it, are quickly driven into society.'[4]

[1] *T.*, 16, 190. [2] *T.*, 7, 77. [3] *T.*, 9, 124. [4] *T.*, 9, 127.

According to Locke, 'The great and chief end of men's uniting into commonwealths and putting themselves under government is the preservation of their property'.[1] But this assertion is misinterpreted if we take the word 'property' in the ordinary restricted sense. For Locke has already explained that he is using the word in a wider sense. Men join together in society 'for the mutual preservation of their lives, liberties and estates, which I call by the general name, property'.[2]

Now, Locke is concerned to show that political society and government rest on a rational foundation. And the only way he can see of showing this is to maintain that they rest on consent. It is not enough to explain the disadvantages of the state of nature and the advantage of political society, even though this explanation shows that this society is rational in the sense that it fulfils a useful purpose. For the complete freedom of the state of nature is necessarily curtailed to some extent by the institution of political society and government, and this curtailment can be justified only if it proceeds from the consent of those who are incorporated, or, rather, of those who incorporate themselves, into political society and subject themselves to government. A political society arises 'wherever any number of men in the state of nature enter into society to make one people, one body politic, under one supreme government; or else when anyone joins himself to, and incorporates with any government already made. . . .'[3] 'Men being, as has been said, by nature all free, equal and independent, no one can be put out of this estate and subjected to the political power of another without his own consent. The only way whereby anyone divests himself of his natural liberty and puts on the bonds of civil society is by agreeing with other men to join and unite into a community for their comfortable, safe and peaceable living one amongst another, in a secure enjoyment of their properties and a great security against any that are not of it.'[4]

What, then, do men give up when they join together to form a political community? And to what do they give their consent? In the first place, men do not give up their liberty to enter a state of servitude. Each does, indeed, give up his legislative and executive powers in the form in which they belong to him in the state of nature. For he authorizes society, or rather the legislative, to make such laws as are required for the common good, and he relinquishes to society the power to enforce these laws and exact punishment for their infringement. And to this extent the liberty of the state of nature is curtailed. But men relinquish these powers in order to enjoy their liberties more securely. 'For no rational creature can be supposed to change his condition with an intention to be worse.'[1] In the second place, 'whosoever out of a state of nature unite into a community must be understood to give up all the power necessary to the ends for which they unite into society to the majority of the community, unless they expressly agreed in any number greater than the majority'.[2] In Locke's view, therefore, the 'original compact' must be understood as involving the individual's consent to submit to the will of the majority. 'It is necessary the body should move that way whither the greater force carries it, which is the consent of the majority.'[3] Either the unanimous and explicit consent of every individual is required for every measure to be enacted, and this is in most cases impracticable; or the will of the majority must prevail. Locke evidently considered that the right of the majority to represent the community was practically self-evident; but he apparently did not realize that a majority might act tyrannically with regard to the minority. At any rate his main concern was to show that absolute monarchy was contrary to the original social compact, and he doubtless thought that the danger to liberty from majority rule was much less than the danger to liberty which comes from absolute monarchy. And having included consent to majority rule in his 'original compact' he was able to say that 'absolute monarchy, which by some men is counted the only government in the world, is indeed inconsistent with civil society and so can be no form of civil government at all'.[4]

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[1] *T.*, 9, 124. [2] *T.*, 9, 123. [3] *T.*, 7, 89. [4] *T.*, 8, 95.

One obvious objection to the theory of the social compact or contract is the difficulty in finding historical instances of it. The question arises, therefore, whether Locke thought of the social compact as an historical event. He himself raises the objection that there are no instances of man in the state of nature meeting together and making an explicit agreement to form a political society. He then proceeds to argue that some instances can in fact be found, such as the beginnings of Rome and Venice and of certain political communities in America. And even if we had no records of any such instances, silence would be no disproof of the hypothesis of a social compact. For 'government is everywhere antecedent to records, and letters seldom come in amongst a people till a long continuation of civil society has, by other more necessary arts, provided for their safety, ease and plenty'.[1] All this suggests that Locke did in fact regard the social compact as an historic event. But he insists at the same time that even if it can be shown that civil society grew out of the family and tribe and that civil government is a development of patriarchal rule, this does not alter the fact that the rational foundation of civil society and government is consent.

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[1] *T.*, 9, 131. [2] *T.*, 8, 99. [3] *T.*, 8, 96. [4] *T.*, 7, 90.

A second objection arises, however. Even if it could be shown that political societies originated in a social compact, in the consent of the men who voluntarily created these societies, how would this justify political society as we know it? For it is evident that the citizens of Great Britain, for example, give no explicit consent to being members of their political society and subjects of its government, whatever their remote ancestors may have done. Indeed, Locke himself, who is quite aware of the difficulty, underlines it by maintaining that a father 'cannot, by any compact whatsoever, bind his children or posterity'.[2] A man may lay down conditions in his will so that his son cannot inherit and continue to enjoy his property without being and remaining a member of the same political society as his father. But the latter cannot bind his son to accept the property in question. If his son does not like the conditions, he can renounce his inheritance.

In order to meet the objection Locke has to have recourse to a distinction between explicit and tacit consent. If a man grows up in a certain political society, inherits property in accordance with the laws of the State and enjoys the privileges of a citizen, he must be supposed to have given at least a tacit consent to membership of that society. For it would be utterly unreasonable to enjoy the privilege of a citizen and at the same time to maintain that one was still in the state of nature. In other words, a man who avails himself of the rights and privileges of a citizen of a certain State must be supposed to have voluntarily undertaken, at any rate tacitly, the duties of a citizen of that State. And in answer to the objection that a man who is born as an Englishman or a Frenchman has no choice but to submit himself to the obligations of a citizen, Locke answers that he can in point of fact withdraw from the State, either by going to another State or by retiring to some remote part of the world where he can live in the state of nature.

This answer must be understood, of course, in the light of the circumstances prevailing in Locke's day, when passport regulations, emigration laws, universal military conscription and so on were unknown, and when it was at least physically possible for a man to go off and live in the wilds of America or Africa if he so chose. But all the same, Locke's remarks help to show the artificial and unreal character of the social compact theory. In Locke's account of the origins of political society we find a conflation of two elements; the mediaeval idea, coming from Greek philosophy, of the 'natural' character of political society and the rationalist attempt to find a justification for the limitations of liberty in organized society when a state of nature has been presupposed in which unlimited liberty (except, in Locke's case, for the moral obligation to obey the natural moral law) is enjoyed.

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[1] *T.*, 8, 101.

[2] *T.*, 8, 116.

5. Hobbes, as we saw, asserted that there is one covenant by which a number of men hand over to a sovereign the 'rights' which they enjoyed in the state of nature. Thus political society and government are created at the same time by the one consent. It has been argued, however, that Locke's political theory allows for two covenants or compacts or contracts, one whereby political society is formed, the other whereby a government is set up. There is, indeed, no explicit mention of two compacts; but, it has been argued, Locke tacitly assumes that there are two. By the first compact a man becomes a member of a definite political society and obliges himself to accept the decisions of the majority, while by the second compact the majority (or all) of the members of the new-formed society agree either to carry on the government themselves or to set up an oligarchy or a monarchy, hereditary or elective. While, therefore, on the theory of Hobbes the overthrow of the sovereign logically involves the dissolution of the political society in question, on Locke's theory this is not the case, because political society was formed by a distinct compact and can be dissolved only by agreement of its members.

There is certainly a good deal to be said in favour of this interpretation. But at the same time Locke appears to think of the relation between citizen and government in terms of the idea of trusteeship rather than in terms of a compact. The people set up a government and entrust it with a definite task; and the government is under an obligation to fulfil this trust. 'The first and fundamental positive law of all commonwealths is the establishing of the legislative power.'[1] And 'the community put the legislative power into such hands as they think fit with this trust, that they shall be governed by declared laws, or else their peace, quiet and property will still be at the same uncertainty as it was in the state of nature'.[1]

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[1] *T.*, II, 134.

Locke speaks of the legislature as the 'supreme power' in the commonwealth.[2] And 'all other powers, in any members or parts of the society, (must be) derived from and subordinate to it'.[3] When there is a monarch who possesses supreme executive power he can, in ordinary language, be called the supreme power, especially if acts need his consent to become law and the legislative is not always sitting; but this does not mean that he has in himself all the power of law-making, and it is the whole legislative which is the supreme power in the technical sense. Locke emphasized the desirability of a division of powers in the commonwealth. For example, it is highly undesirable that the persons who make the laws should themselves execute them. For 'they may exempt themselves from obedience to the laws they make, and suit the law, both in its making and execution, to their own private advantage and thereby come to have a distinct interest from the rest of the community'.[4] The executive should, therefore, be distinct from the legislative. And because Locke so emphasized the desirability of a separation of power in the commonwealth it has been argued that he has nothing corresponding to Hobbes's sovereign. This is, of course, true if we attach to the word 'sovereign' the entire meaning which Hobbes attached to it; but, as we have seen, Locke recognizes a supreme power, namely, the legislative. And in so far as it is the supreme power in the commonwealth, to that extent it may perhaps be said to correspond to Hobbes's sovereign.

Though, however, 'there can be but one supreme power, which is the legislative, to which all the rest are and must be subordinate, yet the legislative being only a fiduciary power to act for certain ends, there remains still in the people a supreme power to remove or alter the legislative when they find the legislative act contrary to the trust reposed in them'.[5] Thus the power of the legislative is certainly not absolute: it has a trust to fulfil. And it is, of course, subject to the moral law. Locke accordingly lays down 'the bounds which the trust that is put in them (the members of the legislative) by the society and the law of God and nature have set to the legislative power of every commonwealth in all forms of government'.[1] First, the legislative must govern by promulgated laws which are the same for all and are not varied in particular cases. Secondly, these laws must be designed for no other end than for the good of the people. Thirdly, the legislative must not raise taxes without the consent of the people, given by themselves or their deputies. For the principal purpose for which society is formed is for the presentation and protection of property. Fourthly, the legislative is not entitled to transfer the power of making laws to any person or assembly to which the people has not entrusted this power, nor can it do so validly.

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[1] *T.*, 11, 136. [2] *T.*, 11, 134. [3] *T.*, 13, 150. [4] *T.*, 12, 143. [5] *T.*, 13, 149.

When we speak of the separation of powers, we generally refer to the threefold distinction of the legislative, executive and judicial powers. But Locke's triad is different, consisting of the legislative, the executive and what he calls the 'federative'. This federative power comprises the power to make war and peace, alliances and treaties 'and all the transactions with all persons and communities without the commonwealth'.[2] Locke regarded it as distinct power, though he remarks that it can hardly be separated from the executive in the sense of being entrusted to a different person or to different persons, as this would be apt to cause 'disorder and ruin'.[3] As for the judicial power, Locke seems to have regarded it as part of the executive. In any case the two points on which he insists are that the legislative must be supreme and that every power, including the legislative, has a trust to fulfil.

6. 'Whenever the society is dissolved, it is certain the government of that society cannot remain.'[4] If a conqueror 'mangles societies to pieces'[5] it is obvious that their governments are dissolved. This dissolution by force is called by Locke 'overturning from without'. But there can also take place a dissolution 'from within', and it is to this theme that he devotes most of the last chapter of the second *Treatise*.

The government may be dissolved from within by the legislative being altered. Let us suppose, says Locke, who is evidently thinking of the British constitution, that the legislative power is vested in an assembly of representatives chosen by the people, in an assembly of hereditary nobility, and in a single hereditary person, the prince, who possesses the supreme executive power and also the right to convoke and dissolve the two assemblies. If the prince substitutes his arbitrary will for the laws, or if he hinders the legislative (that is, the assemblies, particularly the representative

[1] *T.*, 11, 142. [2] *T.*, 12, 146. [3] *T.*, 12, 148. [4] *T.*, 19, 211. [5] *Ibid.*

assembly) from coming together at the proper time or from acting freely; or if he arbitrarily changes the method of election without the people's consent and contrary to the interest of the people; in all such cases the legislative is altered. Again, if the holder of supreme executive power abandons or neglects his charge so that the laws cannot be enforced, government is effectually dissolved. Further, governments are dissolved when the prince or the legislative act in a manner contrary to their trust, as when either of them invades the property of citizens or tries to obtain arbitrary dominion over their lives, liberties or property.

When government is 'dissolved' in any of these ways, rebellion is justified. To say that this doctrine encourages frequent rebellion is no sound argument. For if the citizens are subjected to the arbitrary caprice of tyrannical power, they will be ready to seize the opportunity to rebel however much the sacred character of the rulers may have been extolled. Moreover, rebellions do not occur in point of fact 'upon every little mismanagement in public affairs'.[1] And though we speak of 'rebellion' and 'rebels' when speaking of subjects and their acts, we might more properly speak of the rulers as rebels when they turn themselves into tyrants and act in a manner contrary to the will and interest of the people. True, there can be unjustified insurrections and rebellions, and these are crimes, but the possibility of misuse does not take away the right to rebel. And if it is asked who is to judge when circumstances render rebellion legitimate, 'I reply, the people shall be judge'.[2] For it is only they, under God, who can decide whether the trustee has abused his trust or not.

7. Locke's political theory is obviously open to criticism on several grounds. Together with other political theories which are more than the enunciation of very general principles, so general that they can be called 'perennial', it shares the defect of being too closely related to contemporary historical circumstances. This is, of course, inevitable in the case of a theory which enters more or less into detail. And there is nothing surprising in the fact that Locke's *Treatise on Civil Government* reflects to some extent the contemporary historical circumstances and its author's private political convictions as a Whig and as an opponent of the Stuarts. For unless the political philosopher wishes to confine himself to enunciating propositions such as 'government should be carried on with a view to the common good', he cannot help taking as the

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[1] *T.*, 19, 225.

[2] *T.*, 19, 240.

material for his reflection the political data of his time. In political theories we see a certain outlook and spirit and movement of political life attaining reflective expression; and in varying degrees political theories are inevitably dated. This is obviously true of Plato's political theory. It is also true of the Marxist political theory. And it is only natural that it should be true of Locke's theory as well.

It may be said that what is practically speaking inevitable, cannot properly be called a 'defect'. But if a political philosopher puts forward his theory as *the* theory, it would be idle, I think, to cavil at the use of this word. In any case Locke's political theory suffers from other defects as well. Attention has already been drawn to the artificiality of the social compact theory. And we may also note Locke's failure to give any thorough analysis of the concept of the common good. He tends to assume without more ado that the preservation of private property and the promotion of the common good are to all intents and purposes synonymous terms. It may be said that this criticism is made from the point of view of one who looks back on a development of economic, social and political life which Locke could not have foreseen, a development which necessitated a revision of the liberalism of his time. And this is partly true. But it does not follow that even within the framework of his own historical circumstances Locke could not have given a more adequate account of the function of political society and of government. There is something wanting from his account which was present both in Greek and in mediaeval political thought, even if in a rudimentary form.

To say, however, that Locke's political theory is open to criticism is not to say that it does not possess some lasting value. And to say that the principles which can be considered of perennial validity are principles which transcend limitation and restriction to a particular epoch or set of circumstances precisely because of their generality is not the same thing as to say that these principles are worthless. A principle is not rendered worthless because it has to be applied in different ways at different times. Locke's principle that the government, in the wide sense of the State organization and not merely in the narrow sense in which the term 'the government' is generally used today, has a trust to fulfil and that it exists to promote the common good is as true now as it was when he enunciated it. It was not, of course, a novelty. Aquinas would have said the same. But the point is that the principle needs constant reiteration. To be operative, it has to be applied in different ways at different times; and Locke tried to show how, in his opinion, it should be applied in the circumstances of his time, which were not those of the Middle Ages.

The responsibility of government to the people and its function of promoting the common good would be generally admitted. But I should wish to add, as a position of lasting validity, a position which Locke himself constantly adopted but which has been called in question. I refer to the doctrine that there are natural rights and that there is a natural moral law which obliges in conscience both governors and governed. This doctrine is not bound up inextricably with the theories of the state of nature and of the social compact; and it is a lasting safeguard against tyranny when it is sincerely accepted.

Quite apart, however, from its intrinsic merits and demerits, Locke's political theory is of great historical importance. Despite some criticism it obtained general acceptance in his own country in the eighteenth century. And even when writers such as Hume attacked the theory of the social compact Locke's general notions about government were none the less accepted. Later on, of course, different lines of thought made their appearance, with Benthamism on the one hand and the theories of Burke on the other. But much of what Locke had said remained common property. Meanwhile his political theory became known on the Continent, in Holland, of course, where he had lived in exile, and also in France, where he influenced writers of the Enlightenment such as Montesquieu. Further, there can be no doubt of his great influence in America, even if it is difficult to assess the precise degree of his influence on individual leaders of the revolution such as Jefferson. In fine, the widespread and lasting effects of Locke's *Treatise of Civil Government* is a standing disproof of the notion that philosophers are ineffectual. It is doubtless true that Locke himself brought to articulate expression an already existing movement of thought; but this articulate expression was itself a powerful influence in the consolidation and dissemination of the movement of thought and drift of political life which it expressed.

8. According to d'Alembert, the French Encyclopaedist, Locke created metaphysics in much the same way that Newton created physics. By metaphysics in this connection d'Alembert meant the theory of knowledge as conceived by Locke, as, that is to say, the determination of the extent, powers and limitations of the human

understanding. And the impetus given by Locke to the development of the theory of knowledge and to a treatment of metaphysics in function of an analysis of the human understanding was, indeed, one of the principal ways in which he exercised a powerful influence on philosophical thought. But his influence was also powerful in ethics, through hedonistic elements in his ethical theory, and, as we saw in the last section, in political theory. It may be added that economic liberalism of the *laissez-faire* type, such as is found in the writings of the French 'physiocrats' (for instance, François Quesnay, 1694–1774) and in Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776), has at least a remote connection with Locke's economic and political theories.

The influence of Locke's empiricism is best seen in the philosophies of Berkeley and Hume, which will be considered later. In the course of this development of thought his empiricist principle was applied in ways which he had not himself envisaged. But there is nothing surprising in this. Locke was a moderate and balanced thinker. He could appeal, therefore, to a man like Samuel Clarke, who evidently had a considerable respect for him. But it is only natural that different aspects of Locke's thought should have been developed by others in a way which he himself would have considered to be exaggerated. For example, his remarks about reason as the judge of revelation exercised an influence on the deists, who will be considered later, and we find Bolingbroke extolling Locke as the one leading philosopher for whom he had any respect. Again, Locke's observations in the *Essay* about the association of ideas bore fruit later on in the associationist psychology of David Hartley (1705–57) and Joseph Priestley (1733–1804). Both these men emphasized the connection between physical and psychical events, and the latter at any rate adopted a materialist position. Locke himself was not, of course, a materialist; nor did he regard thoughts and ideas as being simply transformed sensations. At the same time he made statements which could be used as a basis for sensationalism. He said, for example, that for all we know God might give the power of thinking to a purely material thing. And these elements of sensationalism influenced, for instance, Peter Browne (d. 1735), bishop of Cork, and the French philosopher, Condillac (1715–80). Indeed, the elements of sensationalism in Locke's philosophy exercised a considerable influence, direct or indirect, on the thinkers of the French Enlightenment, such as the Encyclopaedists.

In brief, Locke was one of the outstanding figures of the period of the Enlightenment in general, representing in himself and in his writings the spirit of free inquiry, of 'rationalism' and of dislike of all authoritarianism which was characteristic of the age. It must be added, however, that he possessed qualities of moderation, of piety and of a serious sense of responsibility which were sometimes lacking in the continental thinkers who came under his influence.

But if Locke was one of the master-thinkers of his age, Newton was another. And d'Alembert was not unjustified in mentioning them together. Hence, although this work is certainly not intended to be a history of physical science, something at least must be said about the great mathematician and physicist who exercised such a profound influence on men's thought.

CHAPTER VIII

NEWTON

Robert Boyle—Sir Isaac Newton.

1. LOCKE's circle of friends included Robert Boyle (1627–91). As a chemist and physicist, Boyle was interested in particular analyses of sensible data rather than in framing wide and far-reaching hypotheses about Nature in general; and in his conception of scientific method he laid stress on experimental research. He thus carried on the work of men such as Gilbert and Harvey. In the emphasis which he laid on experiment he shows an affinity, of course, with Francis Bacon; but in his earlier years he purposely avoided serious study of the works of those whom he subsequently acknowledged as his chief predecessors, namely, Bacon, Descartes and Gassendi, in order to escape premature indoctrination with theories and hypotheses. And he is rightly regarded as one of the leading promoters of experimental science and as a man who contributed to making clear by his own work the inadequacy of theorizing which is unaccompanied by controlled experimental verification or confirmation. Thus his experiments on air and the vacuum by means of an air-pump, an account of which was given in his *New Experiments Physico-Mechanical* (1660), disposed of Hobbes's *a priori* theorizing and dealt a fatal blow to opponents of the experimental method. Again, in his *Sceptical Chymist* (1661) he criticized with effect not only the doctrine of four elements but also the current theory of salt, sulphur and mercury as the three constituent principles of material things. (A chemical element, according to his definition, is a substance which cannot be decomposed into simpler constituents, though he was unable himself to supply a list of these elements.) In 1662 he achieved the generalization which is known as Boyle's Law, namely, the statement that the pressure and volume of a gas are inversely proportional. He himself believed in alchemy, but his own insistence on and use of the experimental method constituted a most effective means of putting an end to alchemy.

To say that Boyle insisted on and used the experimental method in physics and chemistry is not, of course, to say that he was merely an 'experimenter' and that he eschewed all hypotheses.

Had he done this, he would scarcely have achieved eminence as a scientist. What he objected to was not the formation of hypotheses as such but the hasty assertion of theories without the controlling use of the experimental method and the confident assertion of the truth of theories and hypotheses which enjoy only varying degrees of probability. It is preferable to accumulate a little knowledge which is securely based on experiment than to construct sweeping philosophical systems which cannot be verified. But this does not mean that hypotheses should not be formed. For the scientist endeavours to interpret and explain the facts which he has ascertained. At the same time, even when it is possible to show that a given explanatory hypothesis is more probable than any other hypothesis which purports to explain the same facts, there is no guarantee that it will not be superseded in the future. Boyle, it may be noted, embraced the hypothesis of ether; that is to say, of a subtle ethereal substance diffused throughout space. The hypothesis of ether had been postulated to avoid the notion of a vacuum and to explain the propagation of motion without any apparent medium. But there were also phenomena such as magnetism of which no satisfactory explanation had been given in terms of the mechanical conception of the world. Boyle accordingly suggested that the ether might be composed of two kinds of particles or corpuscles, by the aid of one of which we might explain phenomena such as magnetism. He was thus able to avoid Henry More's theory of a spirit of Nature or soul of the world, which the Cambridge Platonist offered as an explanation of phenomena such as magnetism and gravity.[1] In other words, Boyle suggested a more naturalistic and 'scientific' hypothesis. But he was well aware that his own hypothesis was no more than probable and that it might have to be discarded. He did not claim for his own scientific theories a final truth which he would not allow to the theories of others. He was acutely conscious of the limitations of human knowledge in general and of the hypothetical and provisional character of scientific explanation in particular.

Further, to say that Boyle insisted on the experimental method in science is not to say that he was blind to the rôle of mathematics in physics. Although he was not himself a great mathematician, he was in full sympathy with Galileo and Descartes in their views about the mathematical structure of Nature, considered as a system of bodies in motion; and he even looked on mathematical principles as transcendent truths which are the foundation and instrument of all our knowledge. And, with a qualification which will be mentioned shortly, he accepted the mechanical interpretation of Nature. He postulated a theory of atoms, endowed with primary qualities of size and shape, and he argued that the natural phenomena of the material world can be explained mechanically if we also postulate motion. Motion is not an inherent quality of matter and does not pertain to its essence; hence it has to be postulated in addition to matter. It is, so to speak, super-added by God, and the laws of motion are determined by God. Boyle would not accept Descartes' metaphysical proof of the conservation of the same sum-total of motion or energy, namely, the proof from the divine immutability. This metaphysical argument does not constitute a proof, and we do not know that the sum-total of motion must always remain constant. However, given matter and motion, the system of Nature is a cosmic mechanism, though we must reject the view of Hobbes that motion must necessarily be communicated to a body by another contiguous body. For if we accept this view, we involve ourselves in an infinite regress and we rule out the causal activity of a spiritual God.

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[1] To explain gravity mechanically, Descartes had postulated that the ethereal medium forms vortices

But though Boyle shared to a large extent the Cartesian interpretation of the mechanical system of Nature, he considered that this interpretation was exaggerated and stood in need of a qualification. He saw, indeed, and explicitly stated that an explanation of events in terms of final causality is not an answer to the question how these events occur, and any slick substitution of a teleological explanation for an answer to a question about efficient causality was as foreign to his mind as it was to that of Descartes. At the same time he insisted on the validity of the notion of final causality and on the possibility of teleological explanation, even if it is not the business of the physicist or of the chemist as such to concern himself with such matters. Descartes, it is true, had not denied that there are final causes when he excluded teleological explanations from physics or experimental philosophy. And Boyle's insistence on the relevance of final causality to metaphysics should not be described as a counterblast to Descartes. But what he has to say on the subject shows his dissatisfaction with the mechanical interpretation of the world, as maintained by Descartes and Hobbes, when it is taken as an adequate interpretation. It may be adequate for certain purposes or within a restricted field; but as a general philosophy of the world it is inadequate. Boyle was convinced that no satisfactory interpretation or general account of creation can be given without reference to an intelligent Author and Disposer of things, who adapts means to ends.

Boyle was strongly opposed to the materialism of Hobbes. But he was also opposed to what he regarded as the tendency of Galileo and Descartes to depreciate man's importance in the world and to relegate him to the condition of a spectator. He evidently considered it paradoxical that those who had contributed so much to the rise of a new natural philosophy and of a new outlook on the world should tend to push out of the picture, as it were, the very being who had evolved this new philosophy. If one may be permitted to employ a later way of speaking, he thought it odd that the subject should be eager to depreciate its own importance in favour of the object, when the new conceptions of the object were themselves due to the subject.

An expression of Boyle's point of view can be seen in his insistence that though our perception of secondary qualities can be explained mechanically, this is no sufficient ground for saying that secondary qualities are unreal. To say this is to forget man's factual presence in the world. For, given this factual presence, secondary qualities are as real as the primary.

However, though Boyle insisted on the importance of man's position within the cosmos, his interpretation of man's nature was sufficiently Cartesian in character to compel him to draw attention to the great difficulty encountered in solving the problem of interaction. For he thought of the spiritual soul as residing in some mysterious way in the conarion, shut away, as it were, within the brain where it awaits messages from the organs of sense. Further, he inferred from the soul's situation that the mind's power is necessarily very limited and restricted. And this inference has a close connection with Boyle's views about the hypothetical and provisional character of our theories and about the need for experimental verification, though the latter can never prove the absolute truth of an hypothesis.

One conclusion which Boyle drew from the restricted reach of our minds is that we ought to attach all the more value to the Christian religion, which enlarges our knowledge. He was in fact a deeply religious man. He regarded his experimental work in science as a service of God, and he founded the series of Boyle lectures with a view to answers being provided to difficulties about Christianity which might arise out of the scientific and philosophical developments of the time. In his writings he insisted that consideration of the cosmic system in general and of the faculties and operations of the human soul in particular affords sure evidence of the existence of a supremely powerful, wise and good Creator, who has also revealed Himself in the Scriptures. This does not mean that Boyle postulated God simply as the originator of the universe and of motion. He spoke frequently of the divine conservation of the world and of God's 'concurrence' with all its operations. He may not have attempted any systematic harmonization of this doctrine with his view of Nature as a mechanical system; but it was perhaps necessary to do so if he held, as he did, that the laws of Nature have no intrinsic necessity. Further, he insisted that God is by no means bound to His ordinary and general concurrence; that is, to maintaining the system of Nature precisely as we know it in normal experience. Miracles are possible and have occurred.

In Boyle, therefore, we see an interesting combination of an insistence on the experimental method in science and on the hypothetical character of scientific theories with a Cartesian view of the relation of soul to body and with theological convictions which came, indirectly, from mediaeval and Renaissance Scholasticism. His theory of the divine concurrence and his theory that God sees all that He knows intuitively in Himself illustrate the last-mentioned element in his thought.

2. Another of Locke's friends was Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727), who has already been mentioned in the third volume of this *History*.[1] It is scarcely necessary to add that we have here a greater name than that of Boyle. For it was Newton's genius which achieved the completion of the world-view prepared by men such as Copernicus, Galileo and Kepler,[2] and his name dominated science up to recent times. We are still accustomed to speak of modern physics up to the coming of the quantum mechanics as the Newtonian physics.

Born at Woolsthorpe in Lincolnshire, Newton went to Trinity College, Cambridge, in June 1661 and took his degree in January 1665. After spending the intervening period at Woolsthorpe, where he gave his attention to the problem of gravitation and also discovered the integral calculus and the binomial theorem, he was elected a Fellow of Trinity in 1667, and in 1669 he became Lucasian professor of mathematics. In 1687 he published his *Philosophiae naturalis principia mathematica*, commonly known as Newton's *Principia*, the cost of printing being defrayed by his friend, the astronomer Halley. He twice represented the University of Cambridge in Parliament, from 1689 to 1690 and from 1701 to 1705. In 1703 he was elected president of the Royal Society, of which he had become a member in 1672. He was knighted by Queen Anne in 1705. The second and third editions of the *Principia* appeared in 1713 and 1726. Newton was buried in Westminster Abbey.

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[1] p. 284.

[2] For these Renaissance scientists Chapter XVIII of vol. III of this *History* may be consulted.

Newton's genius as a mathematical physicist and his power of co-ordination, unification and simplification are, of course, unquestioned. For example, using Kepler's laws he was able to show that the motion of the planets round the sun can be explained if it is supposed that the sun exerts a force on each planet which varies in inverse proportion to the square of the distance of that planet from the sun. He then asked whether, if we suppose that the earth's attraction extends to the moon, the moon's retention in its orbit can be explained in a manner consonant with this basis. And eventually he was able to enunciate a universal law of gravitation, determining the mutual attraction of masses. Any body of mass M and any other body of mass m attract one another along the line between them with a force F, this force being equivalent to GMm/d^2, when d is the distance between the bodies and G is a universal constant. Newton was thus able to bring under a single mathematical law such major phenomena as the motions of the planets, the comets, the moon and the sea. He was able to show that the movements of terrestrial bodies follow the same laws of motion as celestial ones; and he thus completed the destruction of the Aristotelian theory that terrestrial and celestial bodies obey essentially different laws.

In general, Newton suggested that all the phenomena of motion in Nature might also be derived mathematically from mechanical principles. For instance, in his work *Opticks* (1704) he maintained that, given the relevant theorems relating to the refraction and composition of light, the phenomena of colours could be explained in mathematical-mechanical terms. In other words, he expressed the hope that in the long run all natural phenomena might prove to be explicable in terms of mathematical mechanics. And his own outstanding successes in the solution of particular problems obviously tended to confer authority on his general view. His achievement thus gave a powerful impetus to the mechanical interpretation of the world. At the same time it must be noted that his theory was generally regarded as weakening the extreme mechanism of Descartes, because his 'gravitational force' did not seem to be reducible to the mere motion of material particles. Some eighteenth-century apologists used the existence of gravity, as something inexplicable on a purely mechanistic theory, as an argument for the existence of God.

It is to be noted that for Newton natural philosophy studies the phenomena of motions. Its object is 'from the phenomena of motions to investigate the forces of nature, and then from these forces to demonstrate the other phenomena'.[1] What are these 'forces of nature'? They are defined as the causes of changes in motion. But we have to be careful not to misunderstand the meaning of the word 'cause' in this context. Needless to say, Newton is not referring to the efficient, metaphysical cause of phenomena, namely, God. Nor is he referring to the hypothetical, physical causes which are postulated either to explain those phenomena that have not been successfully reduced to the operation of mechanical laws or to explain the factual conformity of actual motions to these laws. He is referring to the mechanical laws themselves. These descriptive laws are not, of course, physical agents; they do not exercise efficient causality. They are 'mechanical principles'.

The passage quoted from the *Principia mathematica* indicates Newton's conception of scientific method. It comprises two main elements, the inductive discovery of mechanical laws from a study of the phenomena of motions and the deductive explanation of phenomena in the light of these laws. In other words, the method consists of analysis and of synthesis or composition. Analysis consists in making experiments and observations and in deriving general conclusions from them by induction. Synthesis consists in assuming the established laws or principles or 'causes' and in explaining phenomena by deducing consequences from these laws. Mathematics is the mind's tool or instrument in the whole process. It is needed from the start, in the sense that the motions to be studied must be measured and reduced to mathematical formulation. And the scope of the method and of natural philosophy is thereby restricted. But mathematics is regarded by Newton as an instrument or tool which the mind is forced to use rather than, as with Galileo, an infallible key to reality.

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[1] *Principia mathematica*, preface to first edition.

This is, indeed, a point of some importance. That Newton attributed to mathematics an indispensable role in natural philosophy is indicated by the very title of his great work, the *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. The great instrument in the demonstrations of natural philosophy is mathematics. And this may suggest that for Newton mathematical physics, proceeding in a purely deductive manner, gives us the key to reality, and that he stands closer to Galileo and Descartes than to English scientists such as Gilbert, Harvey and Boyle. This, however, would be a misconception. It is doubtless right to stress the importance which Newton attached to mathematics; but one must also emphasize the empiricist aspect of his thought. Galileo and Descartes believed that the structure of the cosmos is mathematical in the sense that by the use of the mathematical method we can discover its secrets. But Newton was unwilling to make any such presupposition. We cannot legitimately assume in advance that mathematics gives us the key to reality. If we start with abstract mathematical principles and deduce conclusions, we do not know that these conclusions provide information about the world until we have verified them. We start with phenomena and discover laws or 'causes' by induction. We can then derive consequences from these laws. But the results of our deductions stand in need of experimental verification, so far as this is possible. The use of mathematics is necessary, but it is not by itself a guarantee of scientific knowledge about the world.

True, Newton himself makes certain assumptions. Thus in the third book of the *Principia mathematica* he lays down some rules for philosophizing or rules of reasoning in natural philosophy. The first of these is the principle of simplicity, which states that we ought not to admit more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearances. The second rule states that to the same natural effects we must, as far as possible, assign the same causes. And the third states that those qualities of bodies which admit of neither intension nor remission of degrees, and which are found to belong to all bodies within the reach of experiment, are to be accounted the universal qualities of all bodies whatsoever. The question arises, therefore, whether Newton regarded the first two rules, which state the simplicity and uniformity of nature, as *a priori* truths or as methodological assumptions suggested by experience. Newton does not provide us with any clear answer to this question. He does, indeed, speak of the analogy of nature, which tends to simplicity and uniformity. But he seems to have thought that Nature observes simplicity and uniformity because it has been so created by God, and this may suggest that the first two rules have for him a metaphysical basis. The fourth rule, however, suggests that the first two should be regarded as methodological postulates or assumptions. It states that in experimental philosophy we ought to look on propositions which are the result of induction from phenomena as being accurately or very nearly true, in spite of any contrary hypotheses which may be imagined, until such time as other phenomena occur which may make the propositions either more accurate or liable to exceptions. And this seems to imply that experimental verification is the ultimate criterion in natural philosophy and that the first two rules are, even if Newton does not say so, methodological postulates.

Now, Newton says of this fourth rule that we ought to follow it 'that the argument of induction may not be evaded by hypotheses'. And in the *Opticks* he states roundly that 'hypotheses are not to be regarded in experimental philosophy'.[1] Again, in the *Principia mathematica* he states that he has been unable to discover the cause of the properties of gravity from phenomena, adding 'and I frame no hypotheses'.[2] And these statements obviously stand in need of some comment.

When Newton rejected hypotheses in natural philosophy, he was thinking primarily, of course, of unverifiable speculations. Thus when he says that the fourth rule should be followed in order that arguments from induction may not be evaded by hypotheses, he was thinking of theories for which no experimental evidence is offered. Propositions which have been arrived at by induction should be accepted until experiment shows that they are not accurate, and unverifiable contrary theories should be disregarded. When he says that he has been unable to discover the causes of the properties of gravity inductively and that he frames no hypotheses, he means that he is concerned only with the descriptive laws which state how gravity acts and not with the nature or essence of gravity. This is made clear by a statement in the *Principia mathematica*. 'Whatever is not deduced from the phenomena is to be called a hypothesis; and hypotheses, whether metaphysical or physical, whether of occult qualities or mechanical, have no place in experimental philosophy. In this philosophy particular propositions are inferred from the phenomena, and afterwards rendered general by induction. Thus it was that the impenetrability, the mobility, and the impulsive force of bodies, and the laws of motion and of gravitation, were discovered.'[1]

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[1] Third edition, 1721, p. 380.

[2] II, p. 314, translation by A. Motte.

Of course, if we understand the word 'hypothesis' in the sense in which it is used in physical science today, we shall have to say that Newton's exclusion of hypotheses constitutes an exaggeration. Further, it is clear that Newton himself framed hypotheses. For example, his atomistic theory, namely, that there are extended, hard, impenetrable, indestructible, mobile particles, endowed with the *vis inertiae*, was an hypothesis. So was his theory of an ethereal medium. Neither of these hypotheses was gratuitous. The theory of the ether was postulated primarily to account for the propagation of light. And the theory of particles was not unverifiable in principle. Newton himself suggested that we might be able to perceive the largest of these particles or atoms if we possessed more powerful microscopes. But the theories were none the less hypotheses.

We must, however, allow for the fact that Newton made a distinction between experimental laws and speculative hypotheses which were, as he recognized, merely plausibly or possibly true. And from the start he refused to look on the latter as *a priori* assumptions which constituted an integral part of the scientific explanation of natural phenomena. As, however, he found it difficult to make people grasp this distinction, he came to make pronouncements about the necessity of excluding from physics or experimental philosophy all 'hypotheses', whether metaphysical or physical. The occult qualities of the Aristotelians, he tells us, constitute a hindrance to progress in science, and to say that a specific type of thing is endowed with a specific occult quality in virtue of which it acts and produces its observable effects is to say nothing at all. 'But to derive two or three general principles of motion from phenomena and afterwards to tell us how the properties and actions of all corporeal things follow from those manifest principles would be a very great step in philosophy, though the causes of those principles were not yet discovered.'[2] Newton may have spoken sometimes in an exaggerated way, and he may not have done justice to the part which has been played by speculative hypotheses in the development of science. But his fundamental intention is clear enough, to rule out useless and unverifiable hypotheses and to warn people against questioning the results of inductively ascertained principles or laws in the name of 'hypotheses' in the sense of unverified speculative assumptions. We are to admit no objections against inductively ascertained 'conclusions' apart from those objections which are based on experiments or on truths which are certain. This is what he means by saying that hypotheses are not to be regarded in experimental philosophy.

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[1] II, p. 314.

[2] *Opticks*, 3rd edition, 1721, p. 377.

The tendency of Newton's thought, therefore, was to continue the purification of physical science from metaphysics and to exclude from science the search for 'causes', whether ultimate efficient causes or what the Scholastics called 'formal causes', namely, natures or essences. Science for him consisted in laws, formulated mathematically when possible, which are inferred from phenomena, which state how things act and which are empirically verified by consequences derived from them. But to say this is not to say that he eschewed all speculation in actual practice. Mention has already been made of his theory of ether, which he postulated to account for the propagation of light. He also believed that it served the purpose of providing for the conservation and increase, when needed, of the decaying motion in the world. He evidently thought that the conservation of energy could not be explained without introducing this additional factor which contains active principles. The ether is not, as Descartes imagined, a kind of dense, pervasive fluid; it is somewhat like air, though much rarer, and Newton sometimes spoke of it as 'spirit'. But he did not really attempt to describe its nature in any precise manner. He does not appear to have felt any doubt about the existence of an ethereal medium; but he recognized that his speculations about its character were only tentative hypotheses, and his general policy of abstaining from descriptions of unobserved entities prevented him from making dogmatic pronouncements about its precise nature.

Newton's theories of absolute space and time provide further examples of speculative hypotheses. Absolute time, as distinct from relative, apparent and common time, is said to flow equably without regard to anything external, and 'by another name (it) is called duration'.[1] Absolute space, as distinct from relative space,

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[1] *Principia mathematica,* I, p. 6.

'remains always similar and immovable'.[1] Newton did, indeed, make some attempt to justify his postulating absolute space and time, not, of course, by suggesting that they are observable entities, but by arguing that they are presuppositions of experimentally measurable motion. In so far, however, as he tends to speak of them as entities in which things move, he certainly transcends the sphere of that experimental philosophy from which hypotheses are banished. Further, there are internal difficulties in Newton's conception of the triad, absolute motion, absolute space and absolute time. For instance, relative motion is a change in a body's distance from some other particular body or the translation of a body from one relative place into another. Absolute motion, therefore, will be the translation of a body from one absolute place into another. And this seems to demand absolute space in order to provide absolute, and not relative, points of reference. But it is difficult to see how absolute, infinite and homogeneous space can provide any such points of reference.

So far we have a mechanical description of the world, with the introduction of certain hypotheses, such as that of ether, to account for phenomena when these apparently cannot be explained in purely mechanical terms. Newton defined bodies as masses, meaning that in addition to its geometrical properties each possesses a *vis inertiae* or force of inertia, measurable by the acceleration which a given external force imparts to the body. We have, therefore, the conception of masses moving in absolute space and time according to the mechanical laws of motion. And in this world of the scientist there are only primary qualities. In things, colours, for instance, are 'nothing but a disposition to reflect this or that sort of rays more copiously than the rest, (while) in the rays they are nothing but their dispositions to propagate this or that motion into the sensorium, and in the sensorium they are sensations of those motions under the forms of colours'.[2] If we prescind, therefore, from man and his sensations we are left with a system of masses, possessing the primary qualities, moving in absolute space and time and pervaded by the ethereal medium.

Yet this picture conveys a very inadequate idea of Newton's total outlook on the world. For he was a religious man and a firm believer in God. He wrote a number of theological treatises, and though these are somewhat unorthodox, particularly on the subject of the Trinity, he certainly looked on himself as a good

[1] *Principia mathematica*, 1, p. 6. [2] *Opticks*, pp. 108f.

Christian. Further, even though a distinction can be made between his scientific and his religious beliefs, he did not think that science is in no way relevant to religion. He was convinced that the cosmic order provides evidence for the existence of God, and that it appears 'from phenomena that there is a being, incorporeal, living, intelligent, omnipresent'.[1] Indeed, he seems to have thought that the motion of the planets round the sun was an argument for God's existence. Moreover, God exercises the function of maintaining the stars at their proper distances from one another, so that they do not collide, and of 'reforming' irregularities in the universe. In Newton's opinion, therefore, God does not simply conserve His creation in a general sense of the word, but He also actively intervenes to keep the machine going.

Furthermore, Newton gave a theological interpretation to his theory of absolute space and time. In the *General Scholium* to the second edition of the *Principia mathematica* he speaks of God as constituting duration and space by existing always and everywhere. Indeed, infinite space is described as the divine *sensorium* or 'sensory' in which God perceives and comprehends all things. Things move and are known 'within His boundless uniform sensorium'.[2] This may appear at first sight to lead to pantheism, but Newton did not maintain that God is to be identified with absolute space and time. Rather does He constitute absolute space and time through His omnipresence and eternity; and He is said to know things in infinite space as it were in His sensorium, because through His omnipresence everything is immediately present to Him.

It is clear that Newton was a philosopher as well as a mathematician and physicist. But it is not so clear how his metaphysics fits in with his views of the nature and function of physical science. In the *Opticks* he does, indeed, say that 'the main business of natural philosophy is to argue from phenomena without feigning hypotheses, and to deduce causes from effects, till we come to the very first cause, which certainly is not mechanical'.[3] And he goes on to argue that reflection on phenomena shows us that there is a spiritual, intelligent Being, who sees all things in infinite space, as it were in His sensory. Thus he obviously thought that his philosophical theology followed from his scientific ideas. But it can hardly be maintained, I think, that there is a perfect harmony between his metaphysics and his more 'positivistic' pronouncements about the nature of science. Nor does Newton seem to have made it very clear which functions are fulfilled by the ether and which by God. Further, Newton's philosophical theology labours under an obvious disadvantage from the point of view of the theist, as Berkeley saw and noted. If, for example, we argue to God's existence from 'irregularities' in Nature and from the need of putting the machine right from time to time, so to speak, such arguments will be deprived of all cogency if the supposed irregularities turn out to be empirically explicable and if phenomena which once appeared to be incapable of mechanical explanation are eventually found to fit without difficulty into a mechanical account of Nature. Again, the concepts of absolute space and time provide weak foundations for a proof of God's existence. It was not without reason that Berkeley feared that Newton's way of arguing to the existence of God would bring philosophical theism into disrepute. In any case, of course, arguments based on physical hypotheses can have no greater validity than the hypotheses themselves. There cannot be a certain *a posteriori* proof of God's existence unless it is based on propositions the truth of which is certain independently of scientific developments, so that it remains unaffected by progress in science.

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[1] *Opticks*, p. 344.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 379.

[3] p. 344.

It is not, however, Newton's philosophical theology which constitutes the chief reason why he should be mentioned in any history of modern philosophy. Nor is it even his philosophy of science, in the sense of his account of scientific method and of the nature of natural or experimental philosophy, an account which was not elaborated in altogether clear, consistent and precise terms. The chief reason is his great importance as one of the outstanding makers of the modern mind, of the scientific conception of the world. He carried on the work which had been developed by men such as Galileo and Descartes, and by giving to the mechanical interpretation of the material cosmos a comprehensive scientific foundation he exercised a vast influence on succeeding generations. It is not necessary to accept the views of those who rejected Newton's theological ideas and who regarded the world as a self-sustaining mechanism in order to recognize his importance. Within the scientific sphere he gave a powerful impetus to the development of empirical science, as distinct from *a priori* theorizing, and by developing the scientific interpretation of the world he helped to provide subsequent philosophical thought with one of the most important data for its reflections.

CHAPTER IX

RELIGIOUS PROBLEMS

Samuel Clarke—The deists—Bishop Butler.

1. AMONG Newton's fervent admirers was Samuel Clarke (1675-1729). In 1697 he published a Latin translation of Jacques Rohault's *Traité de physique,* with notes designed to facilitate the transition to Newton's system. Becoming an Anglican clergyman, he published a number of theological and exegetical works, and he delivered two series of Boyle lectures, the first in 1704 on the being and attributes of God, the second in 1705 on the evidences of natural and revealed religion. In 1706 he wrote against Henry Dodwell's view that the soul is naturally mortal but that God confers immortality on it through His grace with a view to punishment or reward in the next life. He also published a translation of Newton's *Opticks.* In the years 1715 and 1716 he was engaged in controversy with Leibniz about the principles of religion and natural philosophy. At the time of his death he was rector of St. James's, Westminster, a benefice which had been conferred upon him by Queen Anne in 1709.

In his Boyle lectures,[1] which were directed against 'Mr. Hobbes, Spinoza, the author of the *Oracles of Reason* and other deniers of natural and revealed religion', Clarke develops at length an *a posteriori* argument for God's existence. He declares his intention of urging 'such propositions only as cannot be denied without departing from that reason which all atheists pretend to be the foundation of their unbelief'.[2] He then proceeds to enunciate and prove a number of propositions, designed to exhibit in a logical and systematic way the rational character of belief in God.

The propositions are as follows. First, 'it is absolutely and undeniably certain that something has existed from all eternity'.[3] For there are things which exist now; and they cannot have arisen out of nothing. If anything now exists, something existed from eternity. Secondly, 'there has existed from eternity some one unchangeable and independent being'.[1] There are dependent beings, and so there must be a non-dependent being. Otherwise there is no adequate cause for the existence of any dependent thing. Thirdly, 'that unchangeable and independent being, which has existed from eternity, without any external cause of its existence, must be self-existing, that is, necessarily-existing'.[2] Clarke then argues that this necessary being must be simple and infinite, and that it cannot be the world or any material thing. For a necessary being is necessarily all that it is and is thus unchangeable. But though we can know what this being is not, we cannot comprehend its substance. Hence the fourth proposition states that 'what the substance or essence of that being, which is self-existent or necessarily-existing, is, we have no idea, neither is it at all possible for us to comprehend it'.[3] We do not comprehend the essence or substance of anything; much less of God. Nevertheless, says the fifth proposition, 'though the substance or essence of the self-existent being is itself absolutely incomprehensible to us, yet many of the essential attributes of His nature are strictly demonstrable, as well as His existence. Thus, in the first place, the self-existent being must of necessity be eternal.'[4] The sixth proposition[5] states that the self-existent being must be infinite and omnipresent, the seventh[6] that this being must be one and one only, the eighth[7] that God must be intelligent, the ninth[8] that He must be endowed with liberty, the tenth[9] that He must be infinitely powerful, the eleventh[10] that the supreme cause must be infinitely wise, and the twelfth that the supreme cause must be a being 'of infinite goodness, justice and truth and all other moral perfections such as become the supreme governor and judge of the world'.[11]

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[1] The two series of Boyle lectures mentioned above were subsequently published together in one volume with the title *A Discourse concerning the Being and Attributes of God, the Obligations of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation.* References are to the 1719 edition of this work.

[2] *A Discourse,* 1, p. 9.

[3] *Ibid.*

In the course of his reflections and arguments Clarke passes some more or less conventional criticism on the Scholastics; for example, that they used meaningless terms. Apart, however, from the fact that he lays himself open to the same type of criticism by using technical terms, it is obvious to any reader who knows anything of the Scholastic tradition that Clarke makes copious use of it. This is not to say, however, that there is nothing in Clarke except what comes from the Scholastics. For example, when he tries to defend his sixth proposition (that the self-existent being is necessarily infinite and omnipresent) against the objection that ubiquity or omnipresence does not necessarily pertain to the notion of a self-existent being, he argues that space and duration (that is, absolute and infinite space and duration) are properties of God.[1] 'Space is a property of the self-existent substance, but not of any other substance. All other substances are *in* space and are penetrated by it, but the self-existent substance is not in space, nor penetrated by it, but is itself (if I may so speak) the substratum of space, the ground of the existence of space and duration itself. Which space and duration being evidently necessary and yet themselves not substances but properties, show evidently that the substance without which these properties could not subsist is itself much more (if that were possible) necessary.'[2] In answer to further objections Clarke admits that to say that 'the self-existent substance is the substratum of space, or space a property of the self-existent substance, are not perhaps very proper expressions'.[3] But he goes on to indicate that he regards infinite space and duration as being in some sense realities which are independent of finite things. They are not, however, substances. Clarke does not prove God's existence in the first place from space and duration. As we have seen, he proves the existence of a self-existent substance before he arrives at his sixth proposition. But, having proved God's existence, he argues that infinite space and duration must be properties of God. There seems, however, to be an important ambiguity in his account of the matter, which he does not clarify. For to say that space and duration are properties of God and to say that God in some sense grounds space and time are not the same thing. It may be said that for Clarke infinite space and infinite duration are the divine omnipresence and eternity. But if this is the case, an explanation is needed of how we can know them without already knowing God.

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[1] *A Discourse*, I, p. 12.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 15.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 38.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 41–2.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 44.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 48.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 51.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 64.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 76.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 113.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

Clarke's views on this matter bear such a marked resemblance to Newton's that it has sometimes been maintained that he took them from the latter's writings. But historians have rightly pointed out that Clarke had first expounded his ideas some nine years before Newton published the *General Scholium* to the second edition of the *Principia*. But even though Clarke did not borrow his ideas from Newton, it is perfectly understandable that in his correspondence with Leibniz he undertook to defend Newton's theory against the criticism passed by the latter, who evidently considered it to be absurd. He also takes the opportunity of developing his own ideas. Thus 'space is not a being, an eternal and infinite being, but a property or consequence of a being infinite and eternal. Infinite space is immensity; but immensity is not God; and therefore infinite space is not God'.[1] Leibniz objected that absolute or pure space is imaginary, a construction of the imagination; but Clarke answered that 'extra-mundane space (if the material world be finite in its dimensions) is not imaginary but real'.[2] The precise relation of this space to God is, however, left obscure. To say that it is not God but a property of God is not very illuminating, and confusion is simply increased if it is also spoken of as a 'consequence' of God. According to Clarke, 'if no creatures existed, yet the ubiquity of God and the continuance of His existence would make space and time to be exactly the same as they are now'.[3] Leibniz, however, contended that 'if there were no creatures, space and time would be only in the ideas of God'.[4]

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[1] Cf. the letters printed at the end of *A Discourse*, p. 16.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 21–2.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

Leaving aside Clarke's rather obscure theory about space and time, we can say in general that in his eyes the existence of God is or ought to be plain to anyone who gives careful consideration to the implications of the existence of any one finite thing. So also does he consider that anyone can discern without difficulty the objective distinctions between right and wrong. 'There are certain necessary and eternal differences of things, and certain consequent fitnesses or unfitnesses of the application of different things or different relations one to another; not depending on any positive constitutions, but founded unchangeably in the nature and reason of things, and unavoidably arising from the differences of the things themselves.'[5] For example, man's relation to God makes it unchangeably fitting that he should honour, worship and obey his Creator. 'In like manner, in men's dealing and conversing one with another it is undeniably more fit, absolutely and in the nature of the thing itself, that all men should endeavour to promote the universal good and welfare of all than that all men should be continually contriving the ruin and destruction of all.'[6]

Clarke insists against Hobbes that these relations of fitness and unfitness are independent of any social compact or covenant, and that they give rise to obligations quite apart from any legal enactment and from the application of sanctions, present or future. In

[1] *A Collection of Papers which passed between the late learned Mr. Leibniz and Dr. Clarke*, 1717, p. 77. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 125. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 149. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 113.

[5] *A Discourse*, 2, p. 47. [6] *Ibid.*, 2, p. 38.

fact, moral principles are so 'plain and self-evident that nothing but the extremest stupidity of mind, corruption of manners or perverseness of spirit can possibly make any man entertain the least doubt concerning them'.[1] These 'eternal moral obligations are indeed of themselves incumbent on all rational beings, even antecedent to the consideration of their being the positive will and command of God'.[2] But their fulfilment is in fact positively willed by God, and He rewards and punishes men according to their fulfilment or infringement of the moral law. We can thus speak of a 'secondary and additional obligation', but 'the original obligation of all . . . is the eternal reason of things'.[3] There is, in other words, a natural moral law, the main principles of which at least are discerned by the minds of all who are neither idiots nor thoroughly corrupted. And 'that state which Mr. Hobbes calls the state of nature is not in any sense a natural state but a state of the greatest, most unnatural and most intolerable corruption that can be imagined'.[4]

Though, however, the fundamental principles of the moral law are self-evident to the unclouded and unperverted mind, and though more particular rules can be deduced from these, the actual condition of man is such that instruction in moral truth is necessary to him. This means in the end that revelation is morally necessary; and the true divine revelation is the Christian religion. Christianity comprises not only truths which reason can, in principle, find out for itself but also truths which transcend reason, though they are not contrary to it. But 'every one of these doctrines has a natural tendency and a direct and powerful influence to reform men's lives and correct their manners. This is the great end and ultimate design of all true religion.'[5] And the truth of the Christian religion is confirmed by miracle and prophecy.

2. Like the Cambridge Platonists or Latitudinarians, Clarke was a 'rationalist' in the sense that he appealed to reason and maintained that Christianity has a rational foundation. He was not the man to appeal to faith without any reference to the rational grounds for believing. And we can even find in his writings a tendency to rationalize Christianity and to play down the concept of 'mystery'. At the same time he distinguished himself sharply from the deists. In the second series of his Boyle lectures he divides the so-called deists into four sorts or groups. The first group consists of those who acknowledge that God created the

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[1] *A Discourse*, 2, p. 39.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 5.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 54.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 107.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 284.

world but who deny that He plays any part in governing it. The second group consists of those who believe that all natural events depend on the divine activity but who at the same time assert that God takes no notice of man's moral behaviour, on the ground that moral distinctions depend simply on human positive law. The third group consists of those who think indeed that God expects moral behaviour from His rational creatures but who do not believe in the immortality of the soul. The fourth group consists of those who believe that there is a future life in which God rewards and punishes but who accept only those truths which can be discovered by reason alone. And 'these, I say, are the only true Deists'.[1] In Clarke's opinion these 'only true Deists' are to be found exclusively among those philosophers who lived without any knowledge of divine revelation but who recognized and lived up to the principles and obligations of natural religion and natural morality. In others words, he recognizes as 'true' deists those pagan philosophers, if any, who fulfilled the necessary qualifications, and not the contemporary deists.

Clarke's observations about the deists are highly polemical in tone; but his classification, even if over-schematized, is useful in that it draws attention both to common ground and to differences. The word 'deism' was first used in the sixteenth century, and it is employed for a number of writers belonging, for the most part, to the last part of the seventeenth and the early part of the eighteenth century, who rejected the idea of supernatural revelation and of revealed mysteries. Locke himself did not reject the idea of revelation, but, as we have seen, he insisted that reason is the judge of revelation, and his book on the *Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695) acted as a powerful impetus in the direction of the rationalization of the Christian religion. The deists applied his ideas in a more radical manner and tended to reduce Christianity to a purely natural religion, discarding the idea of a unique revelation and trying to find the rational essence at the heart of the different historical religions. They had in common a belief in God, which differentiated them from the atheists, together with a disbelief in any unique revelation and supernatural scheme of salvation, which differentiated them from the orthodox Christians. In other words, they were rationalists who believed in God. At the same time they differed very much among themselves, and there is no such thing as a school of deism. Some were hostile to

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[1] *A Discourse*, 2, p. 19.

Christianity while others were not hostile, though they tended to reduce the Christian religion to a natural religion. Some believed in the immortality of the soul, others did not. Some spoke as though God created the world and then left it to proceed on its way according to natural laws. These were obviously strongly influenced by the new mechanical conception of the cosmic system. Others had some belief at least in divine providence. Finally, some tended to identify God and nature, while others believed in a personal God. But in the course of time the word 'theist' was used to designate the latter as distinct from the naturalistic pantheists and from those who denied all divine providential government. In fine, eighteenth-century deism meant the de-supernaturalizing of religion and the refusal to accept any religious propositions on authority. For the deists reason, and reason alone, was the judge of truth in religion as elsewhere. They were therefore also called 'free-thinkers', the word indicating that for them the activity of reason should be restricted by no tradition and by no authority, whether of the Scriptures or of the Church.

This appeal to reason as the one and only arbiter of religious truth is represented by such books as *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1696) by John Toland (1670–1722) and *Christianity as Old as the Creation; or, the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature* (1730) by Matthew Tindal (*c.* 1656–1733). The last-named work was regarded as a kind of deistic Bible and elicited a number of replies, such as the *Defence of Revealed Religion* (1732) by John Conybeare. Butler's *Analogy of Religion* was also directed in large measure against Tindal's work. Other deistic writings of the same kind are *The Religion of Nature Delineated* (1722) by William Wollaston (1659–1724) and *The True Gospel of Jesus Christ* (1739) by Thomas Chubb (1679–1747). The rights of 'free-thinking' were proclaimed by Anthony Collins (1676–1729) in his work *A Discourse of Free-thinking, occasioned by the Rise and Growth of a Sect called Free-thinkers* (1713).

Some of the deists, such as Tindal, were doubtless concerned simply with expounding what they considered to be the common essence of true, natural religion. And the essence of Christianity consisted for them principally in its ethical teaching. They had no sympathy with the dogmatic disputes of different Christian bodies, but they were not radically hostile to Christianity. Other deists, however, were more radical thinkers. John Toland, who was for a short time a convert to Catholicism before he returned to

Protestantism, ended as a pantheist, this phase of his thought being represented by his *Pantheisticon* (1720). He blamed Spinoza for not seeing that motion is an essential attribute of body, but he approximated to the former's position, with the qualification that he was much more of a materialist than was Spinoza. For Toland the mind was simply a function or epiphenomenon of the brain. Again, Anthony Collins put forward a frankly deterministic theory in his *Inquiry concerning Human Liberty* (1715). And Thomas Woolston (1669–1733), under cover of allegorizing the Bible, called in question the historicity of Christ's miracles and of the Resurrection. *The Trial of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus* (1729) by Thomas Sherlock was an answer to Woolston's *Discourses* so far as they concerned the Resurrection.

Notable among the deists by reason of his prominence in political life was Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke (1678–1751). Bolingbroke acknowledged Locke as his master, but his way of interpreting Locke's empiricism was hardly consonant with the latter's spirit. For he tended to develop it in a positivistic direction. Plato and 'Platonists', including St. Augustine, Malebranche, Berkeley, the Cambridge Platonists and Samuel Clarke, were anathema to him. Metaphysics was in his eyes a creature of the imagination. This did not prevent him, indeed, from maintaining that the existence of an omnipotent and all-wise Creator can be proved by means of reflection on the cosmic system. But he stressed the divine transcendence and rejected the 'Platonist' idea of 'participation'. It is nonsense to speak of God loving man: such talk merely ministers to man's desire to exaggerate his importance. This means, of course, that Bolingbroke had to eviscerate Christianity of its characteristic elements and reduce it to what he regarded as natural religion. He did not explicitly deny that Christ was the Messiah or that He performed miracles: indeed he affirms both propositions. But the work of St. Paul and his successors was the object of bitter attack. The purpose of Christ's coming and of His activity was simply to confirm the truth of natural religion. The theology of redemption and salvation is a worthless accretion. In spite of all his esteem for Locke, Bolingbroke was entirely lacking in Locke's genuine Christian piety, and his outlook was contaminated by a cynicism which was conspicuously absent from the mind of the father of British empiricism. In Bolingbroke's opinion the masses should be left to adhere to the dominant and prevailing religion and not be disturbed by free-thinkers. Free-thought should be a prerogative of the aristocratic and educated.

The English deists were by no means profound philosophers; but the movement exercised a certain considerable influence. In France, for example, Voltaire was an admirer of Bolingbroke, and Diderot was, for a time at least, a deist. The American statesman, Benjamin Franklin, who had once written from an irreligious point of view against Wollaston's *Religion of Nature Delineated*, also confessed himself a deist. But there was, of course, a considerable difference between the French and the American deists. The former were inclined to bitter scoffing and attack against orthodox Christianity, whereas the latter were more akin to the English deists in their positive concern for natural religion and morality

3. The most eminent among the opponents of the deists was Joseph Butler (1692–1752), bishop of Durham. In 1736 appeared his chief work, *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature.*[1] In the preface or 'advertisement' to this book Butler remarks that 'it is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisal for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world.'[2] At the time at which Butler was writing religion was at a very low ebb in England, and his chief concern was to show that belief in Christianity is not unreasonable. So far as he was concerned with the deists in particular, he looked on them as symptomatic of the general decline of religion. But that he was concerned with them is clear from the fact that he presupposes the existence of God and does not undertake to prove it.

The purpose of *The Analogy of Religion* is not to prove that there is a future life, that God rewards and punishes after death, and that Christianity is true. The scope of the work is more limited, being that of showing that the acceptance of such truths is not unreasonable, unless the deists are prepared to say that all their beliefs about the system and course of nature are unreasonable.

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[1] Page references are given to Gladstone's edition of Butler's works in two volumes (Oxford, 1896).

[2] I, pp. 1–2.

Our knowledge of nature is probable. True, probability can vary much in degree; but the knowledge which we possess of nature is based on experience and, even when it attains a very high degree of probability, it is still only probable. And there is much that we do not understand. Yet in spite of the limitations of our knowledge the deists do not question the reasonableness and legitimacy of our beliefs about nature simply because much is obscure to us. We can argue by analogy, therefore, that if in the sphere of religious truth we encounter difficulties similar to those encountered in our knowledge of nature, which is admittedly God's creation, these difficulties are no reason for rejecting religious doctrines out of hand. In other words, the deists advance difficulties against certain truths of natural religion, such as the immortality of the soul, and against the truths of revealed religion; but the existence of such difficulties does not constitute a disproof of the propositions in question if the former are analogous to or have their counterpart in our knowledge of the constitution and course of nature, the author of which is admitted by the deists themselves to be God. In his introduction Butler cites Origen to the effect that a man who believes the Scriptures to be the work of Him who is the Author of nature may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in them as are found in nature. 'And in a like way of reflection it may be added that he who denies the Scriptures to have been from God upon account of these difficulties may, for the very same reason, deny the world to have been formed by Him.'[1]

Butler does not, of course, confine himself to arguing that difficulties in the sphere of religious truth do not constitute a disproof of religious propositions when they are analogous to difficulties encountered in our knowledge of nature. He argues further that natural facts provide a ground for inferring the probable truth of natural and revealed religion. And since it is a question of propositions which are of vital concern to us in the practical order, and not simply of propositions the truth or falsehood of which is a matter of indifference to us, we ought to act according to the balance of probability. For example, there is no natural fact which forces us to say that immortality is impossible; and, further, analogies drawn from our present life make it positively probable that there is a future life. We see caterpillars turning eventually into butterflies, birds breaking their shells and entering upon a fuller life, human beings developing from an embryonic to a mature state; and 'therefore that we are to exist hereafter in a state as different (suppose) from our present as this is from our former, is but according to the analogy of nature'.[1] True, we see the dissolution of the body, but while death deprives us of any 'sensible proof' that a man's powers survive, it does not mean that he does not survive, and the unity of consciousness in this life suggests that he can do so. Again, even in this life our actions meet with natural consequences, happiness and unhappiness depending upon our behaviour. The analogy of nature suggests, therefore, that our actions here meet with reward and punishment in the future life. As for Christianity, it is not true to say that it is merely a 'republication' of natural religion. For it teaches us much that we could not have known otherwise. And if our natural knowledge is deficient and limited, as it is, there is no *a priori* reason why we should not acquire fresh light through revelation. Further, 'analogy of nature shows that we are not to expect any benefits without making use of the appointed means for obtaining or enjoying them. Now reason shows us nothing of the particular immediate means of obtaining either temporal or spiritual benefits. This therefore we must learn either from experience or revelation. And experience the present case does not admit of.'[2] It is folly, therefore, to treat Christian revelation and teaching as light and trivial matters. For we cannot obtain the end and reward proposed by God without using the means appointed by Him, means which are known through revelation.

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[1] Introduction, 8; 1, pp. 9–10.

If Butler's arguments are interpreted as proofs of the truths of natural and revealed religion, they seem to be often extremely weak. But he was aware of this himself. He says, for instance, that 'it is most readily acknowledged that the foregoing treatise is by no means satisfactory; very far indeed from it'.[3] And he considers the objection that 'it is a poor thing to solve difficulties in revelation by saying that there are the same in natural religion, when what is wanting is to clear both of them of these their common, as well as other their respective, difficulties. . . .'[4] At the same time he points out that he has been concerned with a particular line of objection brought against religion, namely, that there are difficulties and doubtful points in it, and that if it were true, it would be free from these. But this objection presupposes that there are no difficulties and doubts in natural non-religious knowledge; and this is not the case. Yet in their temporal concerns people do not hesitate to act upon evidence of the same kind that is available in religious matters. 'And as the force of this answer lies merely in the parallel which there is between the evidence for religion and for our temporal conduct, the answer is equally just and conclusive whether the parallel be made out by showing the evidence of the former to be higher or the evidence of the latter to be lower.'[1] The object of the treatise is not to clear up all difficulties and justify divine providence but to show what we ought to do. It may be said that we ought not to act without evidence. But for the truth of Christianity we have historical evidence, especially miracles and prophecies.

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[1] 1, 1, 3; 1, p. 22.

[2] 2, 1, 24; 1, p. 201.

[3] 2, 8, 17; 1, pp. 362-3.

[4] 2, 8, 2; 1, p. 354.

The *Analogy of Religion* is obviously very deficient if it is considered as a philosophy of religion. But it was not intended to be this, and it should not be judged as such. It is also deficient if considered as a book of systematic apologetics, though it is interesting to observe that Butler outlines the notion of a cumulative argument for Christianity amounting to a proof. 'But the truth of our religion, like the truths of common matters, is to be judged by all the evidence taken together. And unless the whole series of things which may be alleged in this argument, and every particular thing in it, can reasonably be supposed to have been by accident (for here the stress of the argument for Christianity lies) then is the truth of it proved.'[2] This is a valuable line of thought in apologetics. Still, the work was not intended to be a work of systematic apologetics in the modern sense. It was meant to be an answer to the deists' line of objection against revealed religion, an answer based on the analogy of nature in the sense described above. It must be admitted, I think, that some of Butler's analogies are not convincing. There are, for example, obvious objections against arguing from the fact that temporal happiness and unhappiness depend upon our conduct in this life to the probability that happiness and unhappiness in the next life also depend on our behaviour in *this* life. At the same time the great strength of the work seems to lie in Butler's awareness of the role of probability in our interpretation of Nature and in our conduct in temporal concerns, and in his argument that in this case we ought to act according to the balance of probability also in religious affairs, without demanding that all difficulties and obscurities

[1] 2, 8, 9; 1, p. 359.

[2] 2, 7, 62; 1, p. 352.

should first be cleared up. This line of argument may be an *argumentum ad hominem*, namely, against the deists; but it is an effective line of argument in this connection. For the contemporary deists were not, like Lord Herbert of Cherbury, upholders of the theory of innate ideas, but stood rather in the empiricist tradition. And Butler places himself on the same ground, though how this may affect our knowledge of the existence of God he does not explain.

Butler's ethical theory will be considered in the next chapter. But it is not inappropriate to say something here of his views on personal identity, which are given in the first dissertation appended to *The Analogy of Religion.*

In the first place, says Butler, personal identity cannot be defined. Yet to say this is not to say that we are not aware of personal identity or that we have no notion of it. We cannot define similarity or equality, but we know what they are. And we know what they are by viewing, for example, the similarity of two triangles or the equality between twice two and four. In other words, we come to have the notions of similarity and equality by acquaintance with instances. And so it is with personal identity. 'Upon comparing the consciousness of oneself or one's own existence in any two moments there immediately arises to the mind the idea of personal identity.'[1]

Butler does not intend to say that consciousness makes personal identity. Indeed, he criticizes Locke for defining personal identity in terms of consciousness. 'One should really think it self-evident that consciousness of personal identity presupposes, and therefore cannot constitute, personal identity, any more than knowledge in any other case can constitute truth, which it presupposes.'[2] Butler admits that to be endowed with consciousness is inseparable from our idea of a person or intelligent being. But it does not follow that present consciousness of past actions or feelings is necessary to our being the same persons who performed those actions or had those feelings. True, the successive consciousnesses which we have of our own existence are distinct. But 'the person of whose existence the consciousness is felt now, and was felt an hour or a year ago, is discerned to be, not two persons, but one and the same person; and therefore is one and the same'.[3] To attempt to prove the truth of what we perceive in this way is futile; for we could only do so by means of the perceptions themselves.

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[1] 2; I, p. 388.

[2] 3; I, p. 388.

[3] 5; I, p. 392.

In the same way we cannot prove the ability of our faculties to know truth; for to do so we should have to rely on these very faculties. Butler evidently thinks that the fault lies, not with the person who cannot demonstrate what is evident, but with him who demands a demonstration of what cannot be demonstrated and what does not need to be demonstrated. The reason why he discusses the problem of personal identity is its connection with the problem of immortality. And though he can hardly be said to have treated the question very thoroughly, he certainly makes a good point against Locke.

CHAPTER X

PROBLEMS OF ETHICS

Shaftesbury — Mandeville — Hutcheson — Butler — Hartley — Tucker—Paley—General remarks.

1. In the seventeenth century Hobbes had defended an interpretation of man as essentially egoistic and an authoritarian conception of morality, in the sense that according to him the obligatory character of moral laws, as we normally conceive them, depends on the will either of God or of the political sovereign. And as it is the latter who interprets the law of God, we can say that for Hobbes the source of obligation in social morality is the authority of the sovereign.

Locke, as we have seen, was in important respects strongly opposed to Hobbes. He did not share the latter's pessimistic views about human nature when considered in abstraction from the constraining influence of society and government; nor did he think that the obligatory character of moral laws depends on the authority and will of the political sovereign. But in some of his pronouncements on ethics he certainly implied that moral obligation depends on the divine will. Indeed, he sometimes implied that moral distinctions depend on this will. Thus he did not hesitate to state that moral good and evil are the agreement or disagreement of our voluntary actions with a law whereby good or evil is 'drawn on us' by the will and power of the law-maker, this law-maker being God. Again, he asserted that if a Christian is asked why a man ought to keep his word, he will answer that God, who has the power of eternal life and death, requires it of us. To be sure, this authoritarian element represents only one part or aspect of Locke's reflections on morality. But it is none the less an element.

In the first half of the eighteenth century, however, there was a group of moralists who opposed not only Hobbes's interpretation of man as essentially egoistic but also all authoritarian conceptions of the moral law and of moral obligation. As against Hobbes's idea of man they insisted on man's social nature; and as against ethical authoritarianism they insisted on man's possession of a moral sense by which he discerns moral values and moral distinctions independently of the expressed will of God, and still more of the law of the State. They tended, therefore, to set ethics on its own feet, so to speak; and for this reason alone they are of considerable importance in the history of British moral theory. They also gave a social interpretation of morality, in terms of a social rather than of a private end. And in eighteenth-century moral philosophy we can see the beginnings of the utilitarianism which is associated above all with the name of J. S. Mill in the nineteenth century. At the same time we should not allow an interest in the development of utilitarianism to lead us to overlook the peculiar characteristics of moralists of the eighteenth century such as Shaftesbury and Hutcheson.

The first philosopher of the group to be considered here was a pupil of Locke. Anthony Ashley (1671–1713), third earl of Shaftesbury and grandson of Locke's patron, was associated with Locke for three years (1686–9). But though he retained respect for his tutor, he was never a disciple of Locke, in the sense of accepting all the latter's ideas. Shaftesbury was an admirer of what he regarded as the Greek ideal of balance and harmony, and in his opinion Locke would have rendered better service to moral and political philosophy if he had possessed a profounder knowledge and appreciation of Greek thought. For one thing, he would then have been in a position to see more clearly the truth of Aristotle's view that man is by nature a social being. As it was, his dislike of Scholastic Aristotelianism prevented him from appreciating the historic Aristotle and the truths presented in the *Ethics* and *Politics*. The human end, which sets a standard for the distinctions between good and evil, right and wrong, is a social end, and in virtue of his nature man has a natural feeling for these distinctions. To say this is not incompatible with Locke's rejection of innate ideas. The salient question is not about the time at which moral ideas enter the mind but rather whether man's nature is such that in due course moral ideas or ideas of moral values inevitably arise in him. They do not arise because they are innate in the sense in which Locke understood and rejected innate ideas, but because man is what he is, a social being with a moral end which is social in character. Moral ideas are 'connatural' rather than innate.

Shaftesbury had no intention of denying that the individual naturally seeks his own good. 'We know that every creature has a private good and interest of his own, which nature has compelled him to seek.'[1] But man is part of a system, and 'to deserve the name of *good* or *virtuous* a creature must have all his inclinations and affections, his dispositions of mind and temper, suitable and agreeing with the good of his kind or of that system in which he is included and of which he constitutes a part'.[2] A man's individual or private good consists in the harmony or balance of his appetites, passions and affections under the control of reason. But because man is part of a system, that is, because he is by nature a social being, his affections cannot be perfectly harmonized and balanced unless they are in harmony with respect to society. We are not forced to choose between self-love and altruism, between concern for one's own good and concern for the public good as though they are of necessity mutually exclusive. True, 'if there be found in any creature a more than ordinary self-concernment or regard to private good, which is inconsistent with the interest of the species or public, this must in every respect be esteemed an ill and vicious affection. And this is what we commonly call *selfishness*.'[3] But if a man's regard for his private good is not only consistent with the public good but contributes to it, it is in no way blameworthy. For example, though concern for one's own preservation is to be esteemed vicious if it renders one incapable of any generous or benevolent action, a well-ordered concern for their own preservation on the part of individuals contributes to the common good. Thus Shaftesbury does not answer Hobbes by condemning all 'egoism': he maintains that in the moral man the self-regarding impulses and the altruistic or benevolent impulses are harmonized. Benevolence is an integral part of morality, and it is rooted in man's nature as part of a system; but it is not the entire content of morality.

Shaftesbury conceives, therefore, the good of man as something objective, in the sense that it is that which satisfies man as man and in the sense that its nature can be determined by reflection on human nature. 'There is that in which the nature of man is satisfied, and which alone must be his good.'[4] 'Thus is philosophy established. For everyone, of necessity, must reason concerning his own happiness, what his good is and what his ill. The question is only, who reasons best.'[5] This good is not pleasure. To say without qualification or discrimination that pleasure is our good 'has as little meaning as to say, "We choose what we think eligible" and "We are pleased with what delights or pleases us". The question is whether we are rightly pleased and choose as we should do.'[1] Shaftesbury does not describe the nature of the good very precisely. On the one hand he speaks of it as virtue. Thus he writes of 'that quality to which we give the name of goodness or virtue'.[2] The emphasis is placed on the affections or passions. 'Since it is therefore by affection merely that a creature is esteemed good or ill, natural or unnatural, our business will be to examine which are the good and natural, and which the ill and unnatural affections.'[3] When a man's affections and passions are in a proper state of harmony and balance, with regard both to himself and to society, 'this is rectitude, integrity or virtue'.[4] Here the emphasis is laid on character rather than on actions or on any extrinsic end to be achieved by action. On the other hand, Shaftesbury speaks about the affections as directed towards the good, and of the good as 'interest'. 'It has already been shown that in the passions and affections of particular creatures, there is a constant relation to the interest of a species or common nature.'[5] And this may seem to imply that the good is something other than virtue or moral integrity. Shaftesbury had a low opinion of academic, pedantic philosophy, and it is perhaps not surprising that he did not express his ethical ideas in unambiguous terms. But we can say at any rate that the emphasis is consistently laid on virtue and character. For example, a man is not to be esteemed good merely because he happens to do something which is advantageous to mankind; for he may perform such actions under the impulse of a purely selfish affection or through unworthy motives. In actual fact, a man will contribute to his own interest or good or happiness and to the public or common interest or good or happiness in proportion as he is virtuous. Virtue and interest thus go together; and to show that this is so is one of Shaftesbury's main concerns. He can thus say that 'virtue is the good, and vice the ill of everyone'.[6]

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[1] *Characteristics*, II, p. 15. References to Shaftesbury's writings will be given according to volume and page of the 1773 edition of the *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, which contains a number of treatises and pieces on ethical matters.

[2] *Characteristics*, II, p. 77.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 436.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 442.

Every man, Shaftesbury considered, is capable, to some degree at least, of perceiving moral values, of discriminating between virtue and vice. For all men possess conscience or the moral sense, a faculty which is analogous to that whereby men perceive differences between harmonies and discords, proportion and lack of proportion. 'Is there a natural beauty of figures? And is there not as natural a one of actions? . . . No sooner are actions viewed, no sooner the human affections and passions discerned (and they are most of them as soon discerned as felt) than straight an inward eye distinguishes and sees the fair and shapely, the amiable and admirable, apart from the deformed, the foul, the odious or the despicable. How is it possible therefore not to own that as these distinctions have their foundation in nature, the discernment itself is natural and from nature alone?'[1] It may be that there are wicked and depraved persons who lack any real antipathy towards what is wrong and any real love for what is right for its own sake; but even the wickedest man has some moral sense, to the extent at least that he can distinguish to some degree between meritorious conduct and conduct which is deserving of punishment.[2] The sense of right and wrong is natural to man, though custom and education may lead people to have false ideas of what is right and what is wrong. In other words, there is in all men a fundamental moral sense or conscience, though it may be darkened or perverted through bad customs, through erroneous religious ideas, and so on.

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[1] *Characteristics*, II, p. 227.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 78.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 176.

We find, therefore, in Shaftesbury the assimilation of the moral to the aesthetic 'sense' or faculty. The mind 'feels the soft and harsh, the agreeable and disagreeable, in the affections, and finds a foul and a fair, a harmonious and a dissonant, as really and truly here as in any musical numbers or in the outward forms or representations of sensible things. Nor can it withhold its admiration and ecstasy, its aversion and scorn, any more in what relates to the one than to the other of these subjects.'[3] This does not mean that there are innate ideas of moral values. We know, for example, the affections and actions of pity and gratitude by experience. But then 'there arises another kind of affection towards those very affections themselves, which have been already felt and are now become the subject of a new liking or dislike'.[4] The moral sense is innate, but moral concepts are not innate.

A point on which Shaftesbury insists is that virtue should be sought for its own sake. Rewards and punishments can, indeed, be profitably used for educational purposes. But the object of this education is to produce a disinterested love of virtue. It is only when a man comes to love it 'for its own sake, as good and amiable in itself'[1] that he can properly be called virtuous. To make virtue dependent on the will of God or to define it in relation to divine rewards is to begin at the wrong end. 'For how can Supreme Goodness be intelligible to those who know not what goodness itself is? Or how can virtue be understood to deserve reward, when as yet its merit and excellence is unknown? We begin surely at the wrong end, when we would prove merit by favour and order by a Deity.'[2] Ethics, in other words, possesses a certain independence: we ought not to start with the ideas of God, of divine providence and of eternal reward and punishment and base moral concepts on these ideas. At the same time virtue is not complete unless it comprises piety towards God; and piety reacts on the virtuous affections, giving them firmness and constancy. 'And thus the perfection and height of virtue must be owing to the belief of a God.'[3]

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[1] *Characteristics*, II, pp. 414–15.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 42–3.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

Given this point of view, it is scarcely necessary to add that Shaftesbury does not define obligation in terms of obedience to divine will and authority. One might perhaps expect him to say that the moral sense or conscience discerns obligations and to leave the matter there. But in considering obligation he tries to show that concern for one's own interest and concern for the public interest or common good are inseparable, and that virtue, to which benevolence is essential, is to the advantage of the individual. To indulge in selfishness is to be miserable, whereas to be completely virtuous is to be supremely happy. This answer to the problem of obligation is influenced by the way in which he states the question. 'It remains to inquire, what obligation there is to virtue; or what reason to embrace it.'[4] The reason which he gives is that virtue is necessary for happiness, and that vice spells misery. Probably one can see here the influence of Greek ethical thought.

Shaftesbury's ethical writings had a considerable effect on the minds of other philosophers, both in Great Britain and abroad. Hutcheson, whose moral philosophy will be considered presently, owed a great deal to him, and through Hutcheson Shaftesbury influenced later thinkers such as Hume and Adam Smith. He was also appreciated by Voltaire and Diderot in France, and by German literary figures such as Herder. But the next section will be devoted to one of Shaftesbury's critics.

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[1] *Characteristics*, II, p. 66.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 267.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

2. Bernard de Mandeville (1670–1733) subjected Shaftesbury's ethical theory to criticism in his work *The Fable of the Bees or Private Vices Public Benefits* (1714; 2nd edition, 1723), which was a development of *The grumbling Hive or Knaves turned Honest* (1705). Shaftesbury, says Mandeville, called every action which is performed with regard to the public good a virtuous action, and he stigmatizes as vice all selfishness which excludes regard for the common good. This view supposes that it is a man's good qualities which make him sociable and that he is naturally gifted with altruistic inclinations. But daily experience teaches us the contrary. We have no empirical evidence that man is naturally an altruistic being. Nor have we any cogent evidence that society benefits only by what Shaftesbury called virtuous actions. On the contrary, it is vice (that is, self-regarding affections and actions) which benefits society. A society which was endowed with all the 'virtues' would be a static and stagnant society. It is when individuals, seeking their own enjoyment and comfort, contrive or promote new inventions and when, by luxurious living, they circulate capital, that society progresses and flourishes. In this sense private vices are public benefits. Further, Shaftesbury's notion that there are objective standards of morality and objective moral values is incompatible with the empirical evidence. We cannot make objectively grounded distinctions between virtue and vice and between higher and lower pleasures. Exalted notions of social virtues are the result partly of a selfish desire for self-preservation on the part of those who combine together in society to secure this end, partly of an equally selfish desire to assert man's superiority over the brutes, and partly of the activity of politicians playing on man's vanity and pride.

Mandeville's ideas, which were criticized by Berkeley in *Alciphron*, naturally give the impression of being the fruit of a thorough-going moral cynicism. He continued Hobbes's egoistic interpretation of human nature, but at the same time, whereas Hobbes considered that man can and in some sense ought to be constrained by external power to pursue social morality, Mandeville maintained that society is best served by the flourishing of private vices. And this view, so described, necessarily appears to be the expression of moral cynicism. But we have to bear in mind what Mandeville meant by 'vices'. The search for 'luxury', that is, for material amenities which are more than what is necessary, was stigmatized by him as 'vicious'. And seeing the impetus given by this search to the development of material civilization, he asserted that private vice can be a public benefit. But it is obviously by no means everyone who would be willing to call this search for luxury 'vicious'; and to do so is in part an expression of a certain puritanical rigorism rather than of moral cynicism. However, the view that altruistic and disinterested conduct is secured by the ability of statesmen to play on human vanity and pride can legitimately be called cynical; and it was this sort of notion which appeared fashionable to some of his contemporaries and monstrous and hateful to others. Mandeville can certainly not be reckoned a great moral philosopher; but his general idea that private egoism and the public good are not at all inconsistent is of some importance. It is an idea which is implicit in the *laissez-faire* type of political and economic theory.

3. Shaftesbury was neither a systematic nor a particularly clear and precise thinker. His ideas were, however, to a certain extent systematized and developed by Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746), who was for some time professor of moral philosophy at Glasgow. I say 'to some extent' because Shaftesbury was by no means the only influence on Hutcheson's mind and on the formation of his ideas. In the first edition of his first work, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725), Hutcheson explicitly set out to explain and defend the principles of Shaftesbury as against those of Mandeville. But his *Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense* (1728) shows evidence of Butler's influence. Further modifications are observable in his *System of Moral Philosophy*, which was edited by William Leechman and appeared posthumously in 1755, though Hutcheson had completed it by 1737. Finally, the *Philosophiae moralis institutio compendiaria libris tribus ethices et jurisprudentiae naturalis principia continens* (1742) shows the influence, in a minor degree, of Marcus Aurelius, the greater part of whose *Meditations* had been translated by Hutcheson about the time that he was writing his Latin work. It is not possible, however, to note all the successive modifications, changes and developments in his moral philosophy in the brief account which is all that can be given in the present section.

Hutcheson takes up again the subject of the moral sense. He is aware, of course, that the word 'sense' is ordinarily used with reference to vision, touch, and so on. But in his opinion the extended use of the word is justified. For the mind can be passively affected not only by objects of sense in the ordinary meaning of the term but also by objects in the aesthetic and moral orders. He makes a distinction, therefore, between the external and internal senses. By external sense the mind receives, in Locke's terminology, simple ideas of single qualities of objects. 'Those ideas which are raised in the mind upon the presence of external objects and their acting upon our bodies are called sensations.'[1] By internal sense we perceive relations which give rise to a feeling or feelings which are different from the seeing or hearing or touching of separate related objects. And internal sense in general is divided into the sense of beauty and the moral sense. The object of the former is 'uniformity amidst variety',[2] a term which Hutcheson substituted for Shaftesbury's 'harmony'. By the moral sense 'we perceive pleasure, in the contemplation of such (good) actions in others, and are determined to love the agent (and much more do we perceive pleasure in being conscious of having done such actions ourselves) without any view of further natural advantage from them'.[3]

In his account of our reception of simple ideas Hutcheson is obviously dependent to a great extent on Locke. The idea of the moral sense comes, of course, from Shaftesbury, not from Locke. To postulate a moral sense would hardly fit in well with the latter's pronouncements on ethics. But the passivity of external sense, which is found in Locke's theory of our reception of simple ideas, is reflected in Hutcheson's account of the passivity of the moral sense. Moreover, Hutcheson is sufficiently influenced by Locke's empiricism to emphasize the difference between the theory of the moral sense and the theory of innate ideas. In exercising the moral sense we do not contemplate innate ideas, nor do we draw ideas out of ourselves. The sense itself is natural and inborn; but by it we perceive moral qualities as by the external sense we perceive sensible qualities.

What precisely is it that we perceive by the moral sense? Hutcheson does not seem to be very clear on this point. Sometimes he speaks of perceiving the moral qualities of actions; but his considered view seems to be rather that we perceive qualities of character. Of course, the whole matter is complicated, at least in the *Inquiry*, by the hedonistic colouring of his way of describing the activity of the moral sense. Thus in the passage quoted above he speaks of perceiving *pleasure* in the contemplation of good actions, whether in ourselves or in others. But in the *System of Moral Philosophy* he describes the moral sense as 'the faculty of perceiving moral excellence and its supreme objects'.[1] The 'primary objects of the moral sense are the affections of the will'.[2] Which affections? Primarily those which Hutcheson calls the 'kind affections', namely, affections of benevolence. We have, he tells us, a distinct perception of beauty or excellence in the kind affections of rational agents. In the *Inquiry* he speaks of the perception of excellence 'in every appearance or evidence of benevolence',[3] and a similar emphasis on benevolence is clear in his later writings. But there is an obvious difficulty in claiming that the primary object of the moral sense consists in affections, as far as other people at least are concerned. For it may be asked how we can be said to perceive affections other than our own. According to Hutcheson, 'the object of the moral sense is not any external motion or action, but the inward affections and dispositions which by reasoning we infer from the actions observed'.[4] Perhaps we can conclude that the primary object of the moral sense is benevolence as manifested in action. The moral sense tends to become a capacity for a particular type of approbation of a particular type of action (or, rather, of affection or disposition in the agent) rather than a perception of 'pleasure'. The hedonistic element in Hutcheson's theory tends to retreat into the background, as far as the actual activity of the moral sense is concerned, though it by no means disappears.

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[1] *Inquiry*, I, I. [2] *Ibid.* I, 2. [3] *Ibid.*, II, Introduction.

Given the emphasis which Hutcheson lays on benevolence, what is the place of self-love? We experience a great number of particular self-regarding desires, and they cannot all be satisfied; for the satisfaction of one desire frequently interferes with or prevents the satisfaction of another. But we can reduce them to harmony, in accordance with the principle of calm self-love. In Hutcheson's opinion this calm self-love is morally indifferent. That is to say, actions which spring from self-love are not bad unless they injure others and are incompatible with benevolence; but at the same time they are not morally good. It is only benevolent actions which are morally good. Or, more precisely, it is only the kind or benevolent affections (which are the primary object of the moral sense and which, in the case of persons other than the subject of the moral sense, are inferred from their actions) that are morally good. Thus Hutcheson tends to make virtue synonymous

[1] *System*, I, I, 4.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Inquiry*, II, 7.

[4] *System*, I, I, 5.

with benevolence. In the *Essay on the Passions* calm, universal benevolence, as the desire of universal happiness, becomes the dominating principle in morality.

By concentrating on the idea of the beauty of virtue and the ugliness or deformity of vice, Shaftesbury had already given to morality a strongly aesthetic colouring. And Hutcheson continued this tendency to speak of the activity of the moral sense in aesthetic terms. But it is not, I think, true to say simply that he reduces ethics to aesthetics. He does, indeed, speak about a moral sense of beauty; but what he means is a sense of moral beauty. The aesthetic sense and the moral sense are different functions or faculties of internal sense in general; and though they have some characteristics in common, they are distinguishable from one another. The object of the feeling for beauty or of the aesthetic sense may be a single object, considered with reference to the proportion and disposition of its parts and qualities. We then have what Hutcheson calls 'absolute beauty'. Or it may be a relation or set of relations between different objects. And then we have 'relative beauty'. In a case of relative beauty it is not required that each object, taken separately, should be beautiful. For example, a painting of a family group can be beautiful, exhibiting 'uniformity in variety', even though we would not say of any individual person depicted in the group that he or she is beautiful. The primary object of the moral sense is, as we have seen, benevolent affections, giving rise to a feeling of approbation. Therefore, even though Hutcheson, like Shaftesbury, tends to assimilate ethics to aesthetics, the moral sense has an assignable object of its own; and he can speak of two internal senses.[1]

It must be added, however, that Hutcheson is very uncertain about the number of the internal senses or about the divisions of internal sense. In the *Essay on the Passions* he gives a fivefold division of sense in general. Besides external sense and the internal sense of beauty (the aesthetic sense) there are public sense or benevolence, the moral sense, and the sense of honour, which makes approbation or gratitude on the part of others for any good action that we have done a necessary source of pleasure. In the *System of Moral Philosophy* we find various subdivisions of the sense of beauty or aesthetic sense, and we also read of the sense of sympathy, the moral sense or faculty of perceiving moral excellence, the sense of honour and the sense of decency or decorum. In the Latin *Compendiaria* Hutcheson adds the senses of the ridiculous and of veracity. Obviously, once we begin to distinguish senses and faculties according to distinguishable objects and aspects of objects, there is hardly any limit to the number of senses and faculties which we can postulate.

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[1] It is worth noting that a number of Hutcheson's ideas about aesthetic appreciation (for example, about its disinterested character) reappear in Kant's account of the judgment of taste.

In Hutcheson's ethical theory, in which virtue as a quasi-aesthetic excellence of character is the chief theme, we would hardly expect to find much attention devoted to the subject of obligation, especially when he practically reduces liberty to spontaneity. But he offers a criterion for judging between different possible courses of action. 'In comparing the moral quality of actions in order to regulate our elections among various actions proposed, or to find which of them has the greatest moral excellence, we are led by our moral sense of virtue to judge thus: that in equal degrees of happiness, expected to proceed from the action, the virtue is in proportion to the number of persons to whom the happiness shall extend . . . so that that action is best which procures the greatest happiness for the greatest numbers, and that worst which in like manner occasions misery.'[1] Here we have a clear anticipation of utilitarianism. Indeed, Hutcheson is one of the sources of the utilitarian moral philosophy.

Now, the idea of a moral sense, considered as the perception of pleasure in contemplating good actions, suggests feeling rather than a rational process of judging. But the sentence quoted in the last paragraph, which is taken from the same early work in which Hutcheson speaks of the moral sense in hedonistic terms, describes this sense as passing a judgment about the consequences of actions. And in later writings he attempts to bring together these two points of view in a systematic manner. Thus in the *System of Moral Philosophy* he distinguishes between the material and formal goodness of actions. An action is materially good when it tends towards the interest of the system; that is, towards the common interest or happiness, whatever the affections or motives of the agent may be. An action is formally good when it proceeds from good affections in a just proportion. Both the material and formal goodness are objects of the moral sense. Hutcheson borrows Butler's word 'conscience' and distinguishes between antecedent and subsequent conscience. Antecedent conscience is the faculty of moral decision or judgment and prefers that which appears most conducive to the virtue and happiness of mankind. Subsequent conscience has as its object past actions in relation to the motives or affections from which they sprang.

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[1] *Inquiry*, II, 3.

In the *Inquiry* obligation is described as 'a determination, without regard to our own interest, to approve actions and to perform them, which determination shall also make us displeased with ourselves and uneasy upon having acted contrary to it'.[1] And Hutcheson explains that 'no mortal can secure to himself a perfect serenity, satisfaction and self-approbation but by a serious inquiry into the tendency of his actions and a perpetual study of universal good according to the justest notions of it'.[2] But such remarks scarcely touch the problem of obligation. From his description of the moral sense it would appear that it is the moral beauty of virtue rather than the obligatory character of certain actions which is immediately revealed to us. Perhaps he would say that the fitness of actions contributing to the greater good of the greatest possible number is immediately evident to anyone who enjoys the use of an unclouded moral sense. But in the *System of Moral Philosophy* and in the Latin *Compendiaria* 'right reason' makes its appearance as the source of law, as possessing authority and jurisdiction. The affections are Nature's voice, and Nature's voice echoes the voice of God. But this voice needs interpretation and right reason, as one of the functions of conscience or the moral faculty, issues commands. It is called by Hutcheson, using a Stoic phrase, *τὸ ἡγεμονικόν*. Here the moral sense, become the moral faculty, takes on a rationalistic colouring.

There are so many different elements in Hutcheson's ethical theory that it does not seem possible to harmonize them all. But one of the chief features of his reflections on morals, a feature which they have in common with those of Shaftesbury, is the assimilation of morals to aesthetics. And when we bear in mind the fact that both men speak of the aesthetic and moral 'senses', it may seem that intuitionalism should have the last word in their theories. But both writers were concerned to refute Hobbes's theory of man as essentially egoistic. And with Hutcheson especially benevolence is brought so much to the fore that it tends to usurp the whole field of morality. The ideas of benevolence and altruism naturally foster concentration on the idea of the common good and on promoting the greater good or happiness of the greatest possible number. There is, therefore, an easy passage to a utilitarian interpretation of ethics. But utilitarianism, with its regard for the consequences of actions, involves judgment and reasoning, so that the moral sense must be something more than a 'sense'. And if one wishes, as Hutcheson did, to link up morality with metaphysics and theology, the decisions of the moral faculty or conscience become a reflection of the voice of God, not in the sense that morality depends on the divine choice, but in the sense that the moral faculty's approval of moral excellence reflects or mirrors God's approval of this excellence. This line of thought, however, which was doubtless influenced to some extent by Hutcheson's reading of Butler, is not the line of thought which we immediately associate with the former's name. In the history of moral theory Hutcheson is remembered as a champion of the moral sense theory and as a precursor of utilitarianism.

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[1] *Inquiry*, II, 7.

[2] *Ibid.*

4. Both Shaftesbury and Hutcheson endeavoured to redress the balance which had been upset by Hobbes's egoistic interpretation of man's nature. For both men, as we have seen, insisted on the social character of man and on the naturalness of altruism. But whereas Shaftesbury, by finding the essence of virtue in a harmony of the self-regarding with the altruistic affections, had included self-love within the sphere of complete virtue, Hutcheson tended to identify virtue with benevolence. And though he did not condemn 'calm self-love', he regarded it as morally indifferent. On this point Bishop Butler[1] took his stand with Shaftesbury rather than with Hutcheson.

In his *Dissertation of the Nature of Virtue*, which was published in 1736[2] as an appendix to *The Analogy of Religion*, Butler remarks that 'it may be proper to observe that benevolence and the want of it, singly considered, are in no sort the whole of virtue and vice'.[3] And though he does not mention Hutcheson by name, he is probably thinking of him when he says that 'some of great and distinguished merit have, I think, expressed themselves in a manner which may occasion some danger to careless readers of imagining the whole of virtue to consist in singly aiming, according to the best of their judgment, at promoting the happiness of mankind in the present state, and the whole of vice in doing what they foresee, or might foresee, is likely to produce an overbalance of unhappiness in it'.[1] This is a terrible mistake, Butler observes. For it might appear on occasion that grave acts of injustice or of persecution would increase human happiness in the future. It is certainly our duty to contribute, 'within the bounds of veracity and justice',[2] to the common happiness. But to measure the morality of actions simply according to their apparent capacity or lack of it for promoting the greater happiness of the greatest possible number is to open the door to all sorts of injustice perpetrated in the name of mankind's future happiness. We cannot know with certainty what the consequences of our actions will be. Further, the object of the moral sense is action; and though intention forms part of the action considered as a total action, it is not the whole of it. We may intend good and not bad consequences; but it does not necessarily follow that the consequences will actually be what we wish or expect them to be.

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[1] References to Butler's writings are given according to volume and page of Gladstone's edition of his works (1896).

[2] This dissertation, therefore, was published after the appearance of Hutcheson's *Inquiry* and *Essay on the Passions*.

[3] 12; 1, p. 407.

Virtue, therefore, cannot be reduced simply to benevolence. Benevolence is, indeed, natural to man; but so is self-love. The term 'self-love' is, however, ambiguous, and some distinctions must be made. Everyone has a general desire for his own happiness, and this 'proceeds from or is self-love'.[3] It 'belongs to man as a reasonable creature reflecting upon his own interest or happiness'.[4] Self-love in this general sense pertains to man's nature, and though it is distinct from benevolence, it does not exclude the latter. For desire for our own happiness is a general desire, whereas benevolence is a particular affection. 'There is no peculiar contrariety between self-love and benevolence; no greater competition between these than between any other particular affection and self-love.'[5] The fact of the matter is that happiness, the object of self-love, is not identifiable with self-love. 'Happiness or satisfaction consists only in the enjoyment of those objects which are by nature suited to our several particular appetites, passions and affections.'[6] Benevolence is one particular, natural human affection. And there is no reason why its exercise should not contribute to our happiness. Indeed, if happiness consists in the gratification of our natural appetites, passions and affections, and if benevolence or love of the neighbour is one of these affections, its gratification does contribute to our happiness. Benevolence, therefore, cannot be inconsistent with self-love, which is the desire of happiness. There can, however, be a clash between the gratification of a particular appetite or passion or affection, say the desire of riches, and benevolence; and we all know what the word 'selfish' means. When people say that self-love and benevolence or altruism are incompatible, this is often due to a confusion of selfishness with self-love. But this is an unfortunate way of speaking. For it disregards the fact that what we call selfishness may very well be incompatible with true self-love. 'Nothing is more common than to see men give themselves up to a passion or an affection to their known prejudice and ruin, and in direct contradiction to manifest and real interest and the loudest calls of self-love.'[1]

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[1] *Dissertation of the Nature of Virtue*, 15; I, pp. 409–10.
[2] *Ibid.*, 16; I, p. 410.
[3] *Sermons*, 11, 3; II, p. 187.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Sermons*, 11, 11; II, p. 196.
[6] *Sermons*, 11, 6; II, p. 190.

Butler sometimes contrasts 'reasonable self-love' or 'cool self-love' with 'immoderate self-love'.[2] He also contrasts reasonable self-love with 'supposed self-love' or 'supposed interest'; and this way of talking is possibly preferable. For he is contrasting the desire of those ends the attainment of which do in fact confer happiness with the desire of those ends which are mistakenly thought to confer happiness. The particular enjoyments which make up 'the sum total of our happiness' are sometimes 'supposed to arise from riches, honours and the gratification of sensual appetites'.[3] But it is a mistake to think that these enjoyments are the sole components of human happiness. And the people who think in this way have a wrong notion of what true self-love demands.

It may be objected, of course, that happiness is something subjective, and that each individual is the best judge of what constitutes his happiness. But Butler can meet this objection, provided that he can show that 'happiness' has some definite and objective meaning which is independent of different persons' various ideas of happiness. And this he tries to do by giving a definite objective content to the concept of nature, that is to say, human nature. In the first place he mentions two possible meanings of the word 'nature' in order to exclude them. 'By nature is often meant no more than some principle in man, without regard either to the kind or degree of it.'[4] But when we say that nature is the rule of morality, it is obvious that we are not using the word

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[1] *Sermons*, 11, 18; II, p. 203.

[2] Hutcheson was influenced by such distinctions through his acquaintance with Butler's *Sermons*. But, as we have seen, he went on to identify morality with benevolence to all intents and purposes. And it was this position that Butler criticized in his dissertation on virtue.

[3] *Sermons*, 11, 13; II, p. 199.

[4] *Sermons*, 11, 7; II, p. 57.

'nature' in this sense, namely, to indicate any appetite or passion or affection without regard to its character or intensity. Secondly, 'nature is frequently spoken of as consisting in those passions which are strongest and most influence the actions'.[1] But this meaning of nature must also be excluded. Otherwise we should have to say that a man in whose conduct sensual passion, for instance, was the dominating factor was a virtuous man, acting according to nature. We must look, therefore, for a third sense of the term. According to Butler, the 'principles', as he calls them, of man form a hierarchy, in which one principle is superior and possesses authority. 'There is a superior principle of reflection or conscience in every man, which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart, as well as his external actions: which passes judgment upon himself and them; pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves just, right, good; others to be in themselves evil, wrong, unjust. . . .'[2] In so far as conscience rules, therefore, a man acts according to his nature, while in so far as some principle other than conscience dictates his actions, these actions can be called disproportionate to his nature. And to act in accordance with nature is to attain happiness.

But what does Butler mean by conscience? The last quotation shows, of course, that in his view conscience passes judgment on goodness and badness of character, whether in oneself or others, and on the goodness and badness, rightness and wrongness of actions. But this does not tell us what is the precise nature and status of conscience. In the *Dissertation of the Nature of Virtue* he speaks of conscience as 'this moral approving and disapproving faculty'.[3] And in the next section he speaks again of this 'moral faculty, whether called conscience, moral reason, moral sense, or divine reason; whether considered as a sentiment of the understanding or as a perception of the heart, or, which seems the truth, as including both'.[4] Furthermore, Butler sometimes seems at first sight to imply that conscience and self-love are the same.

To take the last point first. Butler maintained that self-love is a superior principle in man. 'If passion prevails over self-love, the consequent action is unnatural; but if self-love prevails over passion, the action is natural: it is manifest that self-love is in human nature a superior principle to passion. This may be contradicted without violating that nature; but the former cannot. So that, if we will act conformably to the economy of man's nature, reasonable self-love must govern.'[1] But he did not maintain that self-love and conscience are identical. They generally coincide, in Butler's opinion; but to say this is to imply that they are not precisely the same thing. 'It is manifest that, in the common course of life, there is seldom any inconsistency between our duty and what is called interest: it is much seldomer that there is an inconsistency between duty and what is really our present interest; meaning by interest, happiness and satisfaction.'[2] 'Self-love, then, though confined to the interest of the present world, does in general perfectly coincide with virtue; and leads us to one and the same course of life.'[3] Again, 'conscience and self-love, if we understand our true happiness, always lead us in the same way. Duty and interest are perfectly coincident; for the most part in this world, but entirely and in every instance if we take in the future and the whole; this being implied in the notion of a good and perfect administration of things.'[4] Conscience may dictate a course of action which is not, or does not appear to be, in accordance with our temporal interest; but in the long run, if we take into account the future life, conscience always dictates that which is to our true interest, that which contributes to our complete happiness. But it does not follow from this that conscience is the same thing as self-love; for it is conscience which tells us that we should do what contributes to our complete happiness as human beings. Nor does it necessarily follow that we should do what conscience dictates from the conscious motive of serving our true interest. For to say that conscience dictates what is to our interest or that duty and interest coincide and to say that we should do our duty with the motive of securing our interest are not one and the same statement.

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[1] *Sermons*, II, 8; II, p. 57.

[2] *Sermons*, II, 10; II, p. 59.

[3] I; I, p. 398.

[4] *Ibid.*, I, p. 399.

In his *Dissertation of the Nature of Virtue* Butler says that the object of the faculty of conscience is 'actions, comprehending under that name active or practical principles: those principles from which men would act, if occasions and circumstances gave them power; and which, when fixed and habitual in any person, we call his character'.[5] 'Acting, conduct, behaviour, abstracted from all regard to what is, in fact and event, the consequence of it, is itself the natural object of the moral discernment; as speculative truth and falsehood is of speculative reason. Intention of such and such consequences, indeed, is always included; for it is part of the action itself.'[1] Secondly, our perception of the goodness or badness of actions involves a 'discernment of them as of good or ill desert'.[2] Thirdly, the perception of vice and 'ill desert' arises from a comparison of actions with the capacities of the agents. We do not judge the action of a madman, for example, in the same way that we judge the actions of sane men.

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[1] *Sermons*, 2, 16; II, p. 62.
[2] *Sermons*, 3, 11; II, p. 74.
[3] *Sermons*, 3, 12; II, p. 75.
[4] *Sermons*, 3, 13; II, p. 76.
[5] 4; I, p. 400.

Conscience, therefore, is concerned with actions without regard to the consequences which occur in point of fact, though not without regard to the agent's intention. For his intention is part of his action when considered as the object of the moral sense or faculty. Actions, therefore, must have objective moral qualities to be discerned. And this was, indeed, Butler's view. The goodness or badness of actions arises simply 'from their being what they are; namely, what becomes such creatures as we are, what the state of the case requires, or the contrary'.[3] Now, this view may give rise to a misunderstanding. For Butler might be interpreted as meaning that we reason from an analysis of human nature to the goodness or badness, rightness or wrongness, of particular actions. This is not, however, quite what he means. We can, indeed, reason in this way. But to do so is more characteristic of the moral philosopher than of the ordinary moral agent. In Butler's opinion, we can generally discern the rightness or wrongness of actions by inspecting the given situation, without referring to general rules or performing any work of deduction. 'The inquiries which have been made by men of leisure after some general rule, the conformity to or disagreement from which should denominate our actions good or evil, are in many respects of great service. Yet let any plain honest man, before he engages in any course of action, ask himself, Is this I am going about right, or is it wrong? Is it good, or is it evil? I do not in the least doubt, but that this question would be answered agreeably to truth and virtue, by almost any fair man in almost any circumstance.'[4]

What, then, of obligation? Butler does not express himself very clearly on this matter. But his dominant view is that conscience, when it recognizes this action as right and that action as wrong, pronounces authoritatively that the former ought and that the latter ought not to be performed. In the Preface to the *Sermons* he says that 'the natural authority of the principle of reflection is an

[1] *Dissertation of the Nature of Virtue*, 4; I, pp. 400–1.

[2] *Ibid.*, 5; I, p. 401.

[3] Preface to *Sermons*, 33; II, p. 25.

[4] *Sermons*, 3, 4; II, p. 70.

obligation the most near and intimate, the most certain and known'.[1] Similarly, 'Take in then that authority and obligation, which is a constituent part of this reflex approbation and it will undeniably follow, though a man should doubt of everything else, yet, that he would still remain under the nearest and most certain obligation to the practice of virtue; an obligation implied in the very idea of virtue, in the very idea of reflex approbation.'[2] He seems to imply that virtue carries with it its own claim on us, and that to approve morally is to declare obligatory, in the sense that if, when faced with an actual choice, I recognize one line of action as good, the other as evil, I inevitably assert that I ought to follow the first line of action and avoid the second. Assuming that there is a law of our nature, he asks, what obligation are we under to follow it! And he replies that 'the question carries its own answer along with it. Your obligation to obey this law is its being the law of your nature. That your conscience approves of and attests to such a course of action is itself alone an obligation. Conscience does not only offer itself to show us the way we should walk in, but it likewise carries its own authority with it. . . .'[3] He does not say that the fact that an action is to our interest constitutes by itself obligation, but rather, as we have seen, that duty and interest are coincident, in the sense at least that God will see to it that doing what we recognize to be our duty will lead in the long run to our complete happiness and satisfaction.

Doubtless, Butler paid insufficient attention to varieties and differences in moral outlook and convictions. He admits, indeed, that there may be doubt about particular points; but he insists that 'in general there is in reality a universally acknowledged standard of it (of virtue). It is that which all ages and all countries have made profession of in public; it is that which every man you meet puts on the show of: it is that which the primary and fundamental laws of all civil constitutions over the face of the earth make it their business and endeavour to enforce the practice of upon mankind: namely, justice, veracity, and regard to common good.'[4] But though he does not adequately discuss the difficulties arising from the strong element of *de facto* relativism in the moral codes of humanity, the important point to notice in his ethical theory seems to me to be his assertion of an ethics which is neither purely authoritarian on the one hand nor purely utilitarian on the other. Conscience promulgates, as it were, the moral law, which does not depend on the arbitrary choice of God, and still less on the law of the State. At the same time, he neither identifies morality with benevolence nor makes self-love the unique supreme principle in morality. The moral law has reference to human nature and is founded on it; but conscience ought to be followed even when duty does not coincide with interest as far as this life is concerned. That duty and interest coincide infallibly in the long run is due to divine providence. But this does not mean that we should act simply with a view to obtaining reward and avoiding punishment. The supreme authority is conscience. 'Had it strength, as it has right; had it power, as it has manifest authority, it would absolutely govern the world.'[1] Butler's ethical theory is inadequate on any count; for there are topics of importance which are scarcely discussed. One could wish, for example, for a more exact analysis of the terms good and evil, right and wrong, and a discussion of the precise relations between the terms. Again, further analysis of obligation and a clear explanation of what is actually said about this subject would be desirable. Yet Butler's ethical theory is a remarkable piece of work, even as it stands, and it certainly provides valuable material for any more thoroughly worked-out and elaborate moral philosophy.

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[1] 21; II, p. 15. [2] *Ibid.*, 22; II, p. 16. [3] *Sermons*, 3, 6; II, p. 71.

[4] *Dissertation of the Nature of Virtue*, 3; I, pp. 399–400.

5. In connection with the influence of Locke mention was made of David Hartley (1705–57). Abandoning his original intention of becoming an Anglican clergyman, he devoted himself to the study of medicine and subsequently practised as a doctor. In 1749 he published his *Observations on Man.* In the first part of this work he deals with the connection between body and mind, while in the second part he treats of matters relating to morality, especially under its psychological aspect. His general position is based on that of Locke. Sensation is the prior element in cognition, and antecedently to sensation the mind is empty or blank. Hence the need of showing how man's ideas in all their diversity and complexity are formed from the data of the senses. And here Hartley makes use of Locke's notion of the association of ideas, though in his preface to the *Observations on Man* he acknowledges his debt to the *Dissertation concerning the Fundamental Principles of Virtue and Morality* which had been written by John Gay (1699–1745), a clergyman, and which had been prefixed by Bishop Law to his translation of the Latin work on the *Origin of Evil* (1731) by

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[1] *Sermons*, 2, 19; II, p. 64.

Archbishop King. But while Hartley's psychological theories were prompted by Gay's dissertation, his physical theory about the connection between body and mind was influenced by Newton's speculations about nervous action in the *Principia.* We can say, therefore, that Hartley's reflections were influenced by Locke, Newton and Gay. In turn, he himself gave an impulse to the study of the connections between body and mind and to the associationist psychology.

Hartley, while agreeing with Locke that the mind is originally devoid of content, disagreed with him about the status of reflection. The latter is not a distinct source of ideas: the only source is sensation. And sensation is the result of vibrations in the particles of the nerves, which are transmitted by means of the ether, the idea of which was suggested by Newton's hypothesis of an ether to account for the action of forces at a distance. Some vibrations are moderate, and these produce pleasure; others are violent, and these produce pain. Memory is explained by postulating faint vibrations or 'vibratiuncles', tendencies which are imprinted by vibrations on the medullary substance of the brain. Indeed, there are always vibrations in the brain, though what they are depends on a man's past experience and, of course, on present external influences. We can thus account for the cause of memories and ideas even when there is no obvious cause in present sensation. The building-up of man's complex mental life is to be explained in terms of association, which Hartley reduced to the influence of 'contiguous' elements, where 'contiguous' includes successive contiguity. When different sensations are frequently associated with one another, each of them becomes associated with the ideas produced by the others; and the ideas which correspond to associated sensations enter into a mutual association.

The principle of association was employed by Hartley in explaining the genesis of man's moral ideas and feelings. But it is important to note his insistence that the product of association can be a new idea, in the sense that it is more than the mere summation of its component elements. He also insisted that that which is prior in the order of nature is less perfect than that which is posterior. In other words, Hartley did not attempt to reduce the moral life to non-moral elements by saying that it is no more than the latter. Rather did he attempt to explain, by employing the idea of association, how the higher and new emergent is produced from lower elements, and ultimately from one original source, namely, sensation. Thus he tried to show that the moral sense and altruistic affections are not original characteristics of human nature, but that they emerge, through the operation of association, from self-regarding affections and the tendency to secure private happiness.

Hartley, in accordance with the demands of his physiological and psychological theories, embraced, if reluctantly, the determinist position. But though some critics maintained that his theories amounted to a materialistic sensationalism, he himself thought otherwise, and he tried to trace the evolution of the higher out of the lower pleasures, from the pleasures of sense and of self-interest, through the pleasures of sympathy and benevolence, up to the supreme pleasure of the pure love of God and of perfect self-denial.

6. While considering the ethical theory of Hutcheson, we noticed the element of utilitarianism which it contains. Clearer anticipations of later utilitarianism can be seen in the theories of Tucker and Paley (to omit Hume, who will be treated separately and more at length).

Abraham Tucker (1705–74), author of *The Light of Nature Pursued*, of which three volumes appeared during his lifetime, believed that the moral-sense theory was an ethical variant of the theory of innate ideas which Locke had successfully demolished. And, like Hartley, though he does not mention his debt to the latter, he tried to account for the 'moral sense' and for our ethical convictions with the aid of the principle of association, which he named 'translation'.

In the Introduction to *The Light of Nature Pursued* Tucker informs his readers that he has examined human nature and has found that satisfaction, each man's own private satisfaction, is the ultimate spring of all his actions. But he also tells his readers that he has aimed at establishing the rule of universal charity or benevolence, directed towards all men without exception, and that the fundamental rule of conduct is to labour for the common good or happiness; that is, to increase the common stock of satisfaction. He has, therefore, to show how such altruistic conduct is possible if every man is impelled by nature to seek his own satisfaction. This he does by arguing that through 'translation' that which was at first a means came to be regarded as an end. For example, the 'pleasure of benefiting' prompts us to do services to others because we like doing them. In time benevolence or service of others becomes an end in itself, in the sense that no thought is given to the securing of one's own satisfaction. By analogous processes virtue comes to be desired for its own sake and general rules of conduct are formed.

But Tucker found some difficulty in explaining the more complete acts of self-sacrifice. A man may be kind to others because he likes behaving in a kindly way and finds no satisfaction in unkindness. And he may very well come to behave in a kindly manner without adverting to his own satisfaction. But, as Tucker remarks, it is one thing to practise benevolence and take measures to increase the public happiness while one is not conscious of the tendency of such behaviour to increase one's own happiness, and it is another thing to discern clearly that the measures which one takes for the common good extinguish one's own capacity for satisfaction. The man who sacrifices his life for his country may be aware that his act is contrary to his own happiness, in the sense that it extinguishes the capacity for further enjoyment. How can such acts be explained and justified?

The problem is solved, to Tucker's satisfaction at least, by passing beyond human nature considered in itself as something empirically given and by introducing the concepts of God and of the other world. He supposes that there is a 'bank of the universe', a common stock of happiness which is administered by God. Men have really no merits, and God parcels out the common stock of happiness or pleasure in equal shares. By working to increase the public happiness I therefore inevitably increase my own; for God will certainly give me my share in due time, in the next world if not in this. If my sacrifice of myself is for the common good, I shall not be the loser in the long run. Indeed, I shall increase my ultimate satisfaction.

This ingenious argument is obviously not the most important feature of Tucker's ethical theory from the historical point of view. More important are his quantitative estimate of pleasure (pleasures differ in degree, but not in kind), his insistence on private satisfaction as the ultimate motive of conduct, his assessment of moral rules in terms of conduciveness to the general happiness or pleasure, and his attempt to show how man's fundamental egoism can be reconciled with benevolence and altruistic conduct. Here we find the elements of later utilitarianism. The difficulties common to Tucker's version and to the utilitarianism of Bentham and the Mills can best be discussed in connection with the latter.

7. William Paley (1743–1805) became fellow and tutor of Christ's College, Cambridge, where he had studied as an undergraduate. He subsequently occupied various ecclesiastical positions, though he was never given high office, because, it is said, of his latitudinarian views.

Paley is best known for his writings in defence of the credibility of natural religion and of Christianity, especially for his *View of the Evidences of Christianity* (1794) and his *Natural Theology, or Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity collected from the Appearances of Nature* (1802). In the last-named work he presented his development of the argument from design. He does not base his argument upon the phenomena of the heavens. 'My opinion of Astronomy has always been that it is *not* the best medium through which to prove the agency of an intelligent Creator; but that, this being proved, it shows, beyond all other sciences, the magnificence of his operations.'[1] He takes his stand instead on anatomy, as he puts it; that is, on evidence of design in the animal organism, particularly in the human organism. And he argues that the data are inexplicable without reference to a designing mind. 'Were there no example in the world of contrivance except that of the *eye*, it would be alone sufficient to support the conclusion which we draw from it as to the necessity of an intelligent Creator.'[2] It is not infrequently said that Paley's argument from design has been deprived of all force by the evolutionary hypothesis. If this means that the evolutionary hypothesis is incompatible with any teleological argument for the existence of God, it is a disputable opinion. But if it is meant that Paley's argument as he states it is insufficient and, in particular, that the evolutionary hypothesis and its supporting data need to be considered in any restatement of the argument, most people would, I suppose, agree. Paley was not a particularly original writer. For example, his famous analogy of the watch at the beginning of the work was not his invention. And he probably took too much for granted. But he showed very considerable skill and ability in his arrangement of his matter and in the development of his argument. And it is, in my opinion, an exaggeration to suggest, as is sometimes done, that his line of thought is worthless.

However, we are concerned here rather with Paley's work on *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* (1785), a revision and enlargement of lectures delivered at Cambridge. Here again he is not particularly original; but he did not pretend to be. And in his Preface he makes a frank acknowledgement of his debt to Abraham Tucker.

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[1] *N.T.*, 22; *Works*, 1821, IV, p. 297.

[2] *N.T.*, 6; IV, p. 59.

Moral philosophy is defined by Paley as 'that science which teaches men their duty and the reasons of it'.[1] He does not think that we can build a moral theory on the hypothesis of a moral sense, considered as a kind of instinct. 'Upon the whole it seems to me either that there exist no such instincts as compose what is called the moral sense, or that they are not now to be distinguished from prejudices and habits; on which account they cannot be depended upon in moral reasoning.'[2] We cannot draw conclusions about the rightness or wrongness of actions without considering their 'tendency'; that is to say, without considering their end. This end is happiness. But what is meant by happiness? 'In strictness, any condition may be denominated happy, in which the amount or aggregate of pleasure exceeds that of pain; and the degree of happiness depends upon the quantity of this excess. And the greatest quantity of it ordinarily attainable in human life is what we mean by happiness, when we inquire or pronounce what human happiness consists in.'[3]

In determining what happiness is in the concrete, Paley accepts Tucker's view that 'pleasures differ in nothing but in continuance and intensity'.[4] It is impossible, he says, to lay down a universal ideal of happiness valid for all, because men differ so much from one another. But there is a presumption in favour of those conditions of life in which men generally appear to be most cheerful and contented. These include the exercise of the social affections, the exercise of our mental or bodily faculties in the pursuit of some 'engaging end' (an end which provides continuing interest and hope), prudent habits and good health.

Virtue is defined in a frankly utilitarian spirit. It is 'the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness'.[5] The good of mankind is the subject-matter of virtue; the will of God provides the rule; and everlasting happiness provides the motive. For the most part we act, not as a result of deliberate reflection, but according to pre-established habits. Hence arises the importance of forming virtuous habits of conduct.

Given this definition of virtue, one would expect a utilitarian interpretation of moral obligation. And this is in fact what we find. Answering the question what we mean when we say that a man is obliged to do something, Paley answers that 'a man is said to be obliged when he is urged by a violent motive resulting from the command of another'.[1] 'We can be obliged to nothing but what we ourselves are to gain or lose something by: for nothing else can be a "violent motive" to us.'[2] If the further question be asked, why I am obliged to do something, the answer that I am urged to do so by a 'violent motive' is quite sufficient. Paley admits that when he first turned his mind to moral philosophy there seemed to him to be something mysterious in the subject, especially with regard to obligation. But he came to the conclusion that moral obligation is like all other obligations. '*Obligation* is nothing more than an *inducement* of sufficient strength, and resulting, in some way, from the command of another.'[3] If it be asked what is the difference between an act of prudence and an act of duty, the answer is that the only difference is this. 'In the one case we consider what we shall gain or lose in the present world; in the other case we consider also what we shall gain or lose in the world to come.'[4] Paley can say, therefore, that 'private happiness is our motive, and the will of God our rule'.[5] He does not mean that God's will is purely arbitrary, in the sense that actions are commanded which have no relation to our happiness. God wills the happiness of men and thus wills the acts which conduce to this happiness. But by attaching eternal sanctions of reward and punishment to human conduct God imposes moral obligation by providing an inducement or violent motive which transcends the motive of prudence, in so far as prudence is concerned simply with this world.

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[1] *Principles*, 1, 1; 1, p. 1.
[2] *Principles*, 1, 5; 1, p. 14.
[3] *Principles*, 1, 6; 1, pp. 16–17.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[5] *Principles*, 1, 7; 1, p. 31.

Hume, Paley notes, in the fourth appendix to his *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, takes exception to attempts to link ethics closely with theology. But if there are eternal sanctions, Paley insists, they must be taken into consideration by the Christian moralist. What is peculiar to Christian morality is not so much the content of morality, so to speak, as the additional motive, provided by a knowledge of eternal sanctions, which operates as an inducement to perform or not to perform some action.

'So then actions are to be estimated by their tendency. Whatever is expedient, is right. It is the utility of any moral rule alone which constitutes the obligation of it.'[1] And in estimating the consequences of actions we should ask what the consequences would be if the same sort of action were universally permitted. The statement that whatever is expedient is right must be understood of long-term expediency or utility, taking into account collateral and remote effects, as well as those which are direct and immediate. Thus while the particular consequence of forgery is the loss of a particular sum to a particular man, the general consequence would be the destruction of the value of all currency. And moral rules can be established by estimating the consequences of actions in this general sense.

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[1] *Principles*, 2, 2; 1, p. 44.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 45.
[3] *Principles*, 2, 3; 1, p. 46.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 47.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

Paley is, indeed, consistently utilitarian. But it is noticeable that in treating of particular moral rules and duties and of the rightness or wrongness of particular types of actions he tends to forget his original insistence on the motive of private happiness and to take public benefit as a criterion. Moreover, by insisting on the need for developing and preserving good habits he evades to some extent the very great difficulties which arise out of the idea of calculation of consequences as a criterion of good and evil, right and wrong. But Paley is inclined to slur over or make short work of serious difficulties against his position. And he takes far too much for granted. It is not at all evident, for example, that when a man says that he is morally obliged he means that he is urged by a violent motive resulting from the command of another. It may be added that in Paley's opinion all moral systems come more or less to the same conclusions. Thus those who say that I am obliged to do *X* because *X* is agreeable to the fitness of things must mean by fitness, fitness to produce happiness. In other words, Paley assumes that all moral philosophers are implicitly asserting utilitarianism.

Paley was also, of course, a utilitarian in his political theory. From the historical point of view 'government, at first, was either patriarchal or military: that of a parent over his family, or of a commander over his fellow-warriors'.[2] But if we ask for the ground of the subject's obligation to obey the sovereign, the only true answer is 'the will of God as collected from expediency'.[3] Paley explains what he means by this. It is the will of God that human happiness should be promoted. Civil society conduces to this end.

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[1] *Principles*, 2, 6; 1, p. 54.

[2] *Principles*, 6, 1; 1, p. 353.

[3] *Principles*, 6, 3; 1, p. 375.

Civil societies cannot be maintained unless the interest of the whole society is binding on every member. Hence it is the will of God that the established government should be obeyed as long as it 'cannot be resisted or changed without public inconveniency'.[1] Thus Paley rejects the contract-theory and substitutes the concept of public benefit or 'public expediency' as the ground (and also, of course, as indicating the limit) of political obligation. Hume had already maintained the same view.

8. In this chapter Shaftesbury and Hutcheson have been depicted as concerned to refute Hobbes's view of man by showing that the benevolent or altruistic impulses are as natural to the human being as the egoistic impulses, or that benevolence is as natural as self-love. And Mandeville was depicted as a critic and adversary of Shaftesbury and so, by implication, as a defender of Hobbes's point of view. But in one sense at least Mandeville was a critic of Hobbes. For while the latter considered that it is ultimately only through fear and constraint that human beings are led to act altruistically and with a view to the good of society, Mandeville maintained that egoism of itself serves the common good and that private 'vices' are public benefits. He thus adopted a point of view different from that of Hobbes, who regarded the natural egoism of the individual as something to be overcome through the constraints imposed by society. However, it obviously remains true that the principal opponents of Hobbes were Shaftesbury and Hutcheson.

Hobbes had, of course, other critics and opponents. An earlier chapter was devoted to the Cambridge Platonists, and in the last chapter something was said about Samuel Clarke. The Cambridge Platonists and Clarke were rationalists, in the sense that they believed that the human reason apprehends eternal and immutable moral principles. And in upholding this view they were opposed to Hobbes. But Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, who were also opposed to Hobbes, did not follow them in their rationalism. Instead, they had recourse to the theory of the moral sense. I do not mean to imply that there was no common ground at all between the rationalists and the defenders of the moral-sense theory. For in both types of ethical theory there was, for example, an element of intuitionalism. But there were also important differences. For the rationalist the mind apprehends eternal and immutable moral principles, which he can use as a guide to conduct. For the adherent of the moral-sense theory a man apprehends immediately moral qualities in concrete instances rather than abstract principles.

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[1] *Principles*, 6, 3; 1, p. 375.

This means that the defender of the moral-sense theory is probably more likely than the rationalist to pay attention to the way in which the ordinary man's mind works when he makes moral decisions and judgments. In other words, we would perhaps expect to find him paying more attention to what we may call the psychology of ethics. And in point of fact we find in Butler in particular a considerable psychological acumen. Further, the moral-sense theory in general reflects an apprehension of the part played by 'feeling', by immediacy, in the moral life. The analogy drawn between moral discrimination and aesthetic appreciation helps to bring out this fact.

But if we examine the ordinary moral consciousness, it will be seen that 'feeling' or immediacy is only one element. There are also, for example, moral judgment or decision and an authoritative imperative to take into account. Bishop Butler tried to do justice to this side of the matter in his analysis of conscience. And by doing so he transformed to a great extent the original moral-sense theory and helped to show the differences between moral discrimination and aesthetic appreciation.

There is another point about Butler's moral theory which should be noticed. Shaftesbury and Hutcheson had laid emphasis on 'moral excellence', on virtue as a state of character, on 'affections'. The primary object of the moral sense was for Hutcheson, as we saw, the kind or benevolent affections. But conscience and moral decision are concerned primarily with actions. So with Butler we can see a tendency to shift the emphasis from affections to actions, not, of course, actions considered merely as external actions but actions as informed by motives, as proceeding from human beings. And the more the emphasis is laid on actions, the more the assimilation of ethics to aesthetics retreats into the background.

Now, in the ethical theories of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson there were several latent potentialities. In the first place the idea of universal benevolence, when coupled with the idea of producing happiness, naturally leads to a utilitarian theory. And we have seen that there was an anticipation of utilitarianism in one aspect of Hutcheson's philosophy. This element was developed by other moralists whom we have considered. Thus, on the psychological side, Hartley and Tucker, using Locke's principle of association, tried to show how altruism and benevolence are possible, even if man seeks by nature his own satisfaction. Further, with Tucker, and still more with Paley, we find a theological utilitarianism. But when Paley emphasized, as a motive for acting altruistically, the thought of divine reward, he was adopting, of course, a point of view very different from that of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson.

In the second place we find in both Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, with their emphasis on virtue and character, a point of departure for an ethics based on the idea of the self-perfection of man or on the harmonious and complete development of human nature rather than on the principles of hedonistic utilitarianism. And in so far as Butler adumbrated the idea of a hierarchy of principles in man under the dominating authority of conscience, he helped to develop this idea. Further, Shaftesbury's idea of the correspondence between man, the microcosm, and the whole of which he forms a part was developed to some extent by Hutcheson, who linked up the idea with the idea of God. Here we have the introduction of metaphysical considerations and materials, as it were, for the development of an idealistic ethic. But it was the utilitarian element in the thinkers with whom we have dealt in this chapter[1] that was most influential. The impetus to a development of idealist ethics in the nineteenth century came from another source.

There was thus a considerable number of divergent elements and potentialities in the moral theories of the philosophers who have been mentioned in this chapter. But the overall picture is of the growth of moral philosophy as a separate subject of study, separated for the most part from theology and standing on its own feet, even though men such as Hutcheson and Butler tried, very naturally and properly, to link up their ethics with their theological beliefs. This interest in moral philosophy has remained one of the characteristic features of British thought.

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[1] I do not mean to imply that Butler can properly be called a utilitarian. For the matter of that, it would be misleading to describe Hutcheson in this way.

CHAPTER XI

BERKELEY (1)

Life—Works—Spirit of Berkeley's thought—Theory of Vision.

1. GEORGE BERKELEY was born at Kilcrene near Kilkenny in Ireland on March 12th, 1685, his family being of English descent. In his eleventh year he was sent to Kilkenny College, and in March 1700 he entered Trinity College, Dublin, being then fifteen years old. After studying mathematics, languages, logic and philosophy he took his B.A. degree in 1704. In 1707 he published his *Arithmetica* and *Miscellanea mathematica*, and in June of that year he became a Fellow of the College. He had already begun to doubt the existence of matter, his interest in this subject having been stimulated by the study of Locke and Malebranche. In fulfilment of statutory requirements he was ordained deacon in 1709 and priest in 1710 in the Protestant Church and held various academic offices first as Junior Fellow and later, from 1717, as Senior Fellow. But in 1724 he obtained the post of dean of Derry and was thus compelled to resign his Fellowship. His residence at the college had not been without a break, of course. He had visited London, where he had made the acquaintance of Addison, Steele, Pope and other notables; and he had twice visited the Continent.

Soon after his installation as dean of Derry, Berkeley left for London in order to interest the Crown and government circles in his project of founding a college in the island of Bermuda for the education of the sons of English planters and of native Indians. He apparently envisaged English youths and Indians coming a very considerable distance from the mainland of America for general, and especially religious, education, after which they would return to the mainland. Berkeley succeeded in obtaining a charter and parliamentary approval of a proposed grant, and in 1728 he set sail with some companions for America and made his way to Newport in Rhode Island. Having become doubtful of the wisdom of his earlier plan, he made up his mind to apply for leave, once the grant was given, to build the projected college in Rhode Island rather than in Bermuda. But the money was not forthcoming, and Berkeley returned to England, reaching London at the end of October 1731.

After his return to England Berkeley waited in London, hoping for preferment, and in 1734 he was in fact appointed bishop of Cloyne. It is to this period of his life that there belongs his famous propaganda on behalf of the virtues of tar-water which he regarded as a panacea for human diseases. Whatever one may think of this specific remedy Berkeley's zeal for the relief of suffering is undoubted.

In 1745 Berkeley refused the offer of the more lucrative bishopric of Clogher, and in 1752 he settled at Oxford with his wife and family, where he took a house in Holywell Street. He died peacefully on January 14th, 1753, and was buried in Christ Church chapel, the cathedral of the diocese of Oxford.

2. Berkeley's most important philosophical works were written at an early period in his career, during his first years as a Fellow of Trinity College. *An Essay towards a New Theory of Vision* appeared in 1709. In this work Berkeley dealt with problems of vision, analysing, for example, the foundations of our judgments of distance, size and position. But though he was already convinced of the truth of immaterialism he did not express in the *Essay* the doctrine for which he is famous. This doctrine was put forward in *A Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, Part I, which was published in 1710, and in *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, published in 1713. Preliminary work for the *Essay* and for the *Principles* was contained in Berkeley's notebooks which were written in 1707 and 1708. These were published by A. C. Fraser in 1871 under the title *Commonplace Book of occasional Metaphysical Thoughts* and by Professor A. A. Luce in 1944 under the title *Philosophical Commentaries*. In 1712 Berkeley published a pamphlet on *Passive Obedience*, in which he maintained the doctrine of passive obedience though he qualified it by admitting the right of revolt in extreme cases of tyranny.

Berkeley's Latin treatise *De motu* appeared in 1721, and in the same year he published *An Essay towards preventing the Ruin of Great Britain* which contained a call to religion, industry, frugality and public spirit in view of the calamities caused by the South Sea Bubble. While he was in America he wrote *Alciphron or the Minute Philosopher*, which he published in London in 1732. Comprising seven dialogues, it is the longest of his books and is essentially a work of Christian apologetic, directed against freethinkers. In 1733 appeared *The Theory of Vision or Visual Language showing the immediate Presence and Providence of a Deity*

Vindicated and Explained in answer to a newspaper criticism of the *Essay*; and in 1734 Berkeley published *The Analyst or a Discourse addressed to an Infidel Mathematician* in which he attacked Newton's theory of fluxions and argued that if there are mysteries in mathematics it is only reasonable to expect them in religion. A Dr. Jurin published a reply, and Berkeley retorted with *A Defence of Free-thinking in Mathematics*, published in 1735.

In 1745 Berkeley published two letters, one addressed to his own flock, the other to the Catholics in the diocese of Cloyne. In the latter he urged non-participation in the Jacobite rising. His ideas about the question of an Irish bank appeared anonymously at Dublin in three parts in 1735, 1736 and 1737 under the title of *The Querist*. Berkeley took a considerable interest in Irish affairs, and in 1749 he addressed *A Word to the Wise* to the Catholic clergy of the country, urging them to join in a movement for the promotion of better social and economic conditions. In connection with his propaganda on behalf of the virtues of tar-water, he published in 1744 *Siris*, a work which also contained a certain amount of philosophy. His last known writing was *Farther Thoughts on Tar-water*, included as the opening piece in his *Miscellany*, published in 1752.

3. Berkeley's philosophy is exciting in the sense that a brief statement of it (for instance, there exist only God, finite spirits and the ideas of spirits) makes it appear so remote from the ordinary man's view of the world that it arrests the attention. How, we may wonder, could an eminent philosopher think himself justified in denying the existence of matter? Indeed, when Berkeley published the *Principles of Human Knowledge* he not unnaturally became the target of criticism and even of ridicule. To many minds it appeared that he had denied what was most obvious, so obvious that no ordinary man would call it in question, and asserted what was by no means so obvious. Such a philosophy was nothing but a fantastic extravagance. Its author might be mentally unbalanced, as some thought, or a hunter after paradoxical novelties or a humorous Irishman perpetrating an elaborate joke. But nobody who believed or who affected to believe that houses and tables and trees and mountains were the ideas of spirits or minds could reasonably expect other men to share his opinions. Some conceded that Berkeley's arguments were ingenious and subtle and difficult to refute. At the same time there must be something wrong with arguments which led to such

paradoxical conclusions. Others thought that it was easy to refute Berkeley's position. Their reaction to his philosophy is well symbolized by Dr. Samuel Johnson's famous refutation. The learned doctor kicked a great stone, exclaiming, 'I refute him thus.'

Berkeley himself, however, was very far from regarding his philosophy as a piece of extravagant fantasy, contrary to common sense, or even as being at variance with the spontaneous convictions of the ordinary man. On the contrary, he was convinced that he was on the side of common sense, and he explicitly classed himself with 'the vulgar' as distinct from the professors and, in his opinion, misguided metaphysicians who propounded strange and bizarre doctrines. In his notebooks we read the significant entry: 'Mem: To be eternally banishing metaphysics, etc., and recalling men to common sense.'[1] One may not, indeed, be inclined to regard Berkeley's philosophy as a whole as being an example of banishing metaphysics; but his denial of Locke's theory of occult material substance was certainly for him an example of this activity. And he did not regard his doctrine that bodies or sensible objects are dependent on perceiving minds as incompatible with the views of the ordinary man. True, the latter would say that the table exists and is present in the room even when there is nobody there to perceive it. But Berkeley would reply that he has no wish to deny that the table can be said to exist in some sense when there is nobody in the room to perceive it. The question is not whether the statement is true or false, but in what sense it is true. What does it mean to say that the table is in the room when nobody is present and perceiving it? What can it mean except that if someone were to enter the room, he would have the experience which we call seeing a table? Would not the ordinary man argue that this is what he means when he says that the table is in the room even when nobody is perceiving it? I do not suggest that the matter is as simple as these questions may seem to imply. Nor do I wish to commit myself to Berkeley's view. But I wish to indicate very briefly in advance how the latter could maintain that opinions which his contemporaries were inclined to look on as fantastic were in point of fact quite consonant with common sense.

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[1] *Philosophical Commentaries*, 751; 1, p. 91. References to Berkeley's writings by volume and page are to the critical edition of his Works by Professors A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop. The *Philosophical Commentaries* will be referred to as *P.C.*; the *Essay towards a New Theory of Vision* as *E.*; the *Principles of Human Knowledge* as *P.*; the *Three Dialogues* as *D.*; the *De motu* as *D.M.*; *Alciphron* as *A.*

Mention has just been made of the question, what does it mean to say of a body or sensible thing that it exists when it is not actually perceived? Berkeley was not only one of those philosophers who are capable of writing their own language well: he was also greatly concerned with the meanings and uses of words. This is, of course, one of the principal reasons for the interest which is taken in his writings today by British philosophers. For they see in him a precursor of the movement of linguistic analysis. Berkeley insisted, for example, on the need for an accurate analysis of the term 'existence'. Thus in his notebooks he remarks that many ancient philosophers ran into absurdities because they did not know what existence was. But ''tis on the discovering of the nature and meaning and import of Existence that I chiefly insist'.[1] In Berkeley's view the conclusion, *Esse est percipi*, was the result of an accurate analysis of the term 'exist' when we say that sensible things exist. Again, Berkeley gave particular attention to the meaning and use of abstract terms, such as those occurring in the Newtonian scientific theories. And his analysis of their use enabled him to anticipate views about the status of scientific theories which have later become common coin. Scientific theories are hypotheses, and it is a mistake to think that because a scientific hypothesis 'works', it must necessarily be the expression of the human mind's natural power of penetrating the ultimate structure of reality and attaining final truth. Further, terms such as 'gravity', 'attraction', and so on, certainly have their uses; but it is one thing to say that they possess instrumentalist value and quite another thing to say that they connote occult entities or qualities. The use of abstract words, though it cannot be avoided, tends to contaminate physics with metaphysics and to give us a wrong idea of the status and function of physical theories.

But though Berkeley spoke about banishing metaphysics and recalling men to common sense, he was himself a metaphysician. He thought, for example, that, given his account of the existence and nature of material things, it follows with certainty that God exists. There is no material substance (Locke's occult and unknown substratum) to support the qualities which Berkeley called 'ideas'. Material things can therefore be reduced to clusters of ideas. But ideas cannot exist on their own apart from some mind. At the same time it is obvious that there is a difference between the ideas which we frame for ourselves, creatures of the imagination (for instance, the idea of a mermaid or of a unicorn), and the phenomena or 'ideas' which a man perceives in normal circumstances and conditions during his waking life. I can create an imaginative world of my own; but it does not depend on me what I see when I raise my eyes from my book and look out of the window. These 'ideas' must, therefore, be presented to me by a mind or spirit; that is to say, by God. This is not exactly how Berkeley expresses the matter; but it will suffice as a brief indication of the fact that in his view phenomenalism entails theism. Whether it does or not is, of course, another question. But Berkeley thought that it does; and this is one reason why he considered that belief in God is a matter of plain common sense. If we take a common-sense view of the existence and nature of material things, we shall be led to affirm the existence of God. Conversely, belief in material substance promotes atheism.

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[1] *P.C.*, 491; 1, pp. 61–2.

This is a matter of some importance if we are considering the spirit of Berkeley's philosophizing. For he made it quite plain that he regarded his criticism of material substance as serving to pave the way for an acceptance of theism in general and of Christianity in particular. As has been said, his philosophy was looked on by many contemporaries as a fantastic extravagance. And his willingness to sacrifice a career in the Protestant Church in Ireland[1] in order to carry out his Bermuda project was considered by some as a symptom of madness. But his immaterialistic philosophy and his Bermuda project reveal the same character and bent of mind which are revealed in another way in his concern for the sufferings of the Irish poor and in his enthusiastic propaganda for the virtues of tar-water. Whatever value may be attached to his philosophy and whichever elements in it may be stressed by later generations of philosophers, his own estimate of it is admirably summarized in the closing words of the *Principles*. 'For after all, what deserves the first place in our studies, is the consideration of God, and our duty; which to promote, as it was the main drift and design of my labours, so shall I esteem them altogether useless and ineffectual, if by what I have said I cannot inspire my readers with a pious sense of the presence of God: and having shown the falseness or vanity of those barren speculations, which make the chief employment of learned men, the better dispose them to reverence and embrace the salutary truths of the Gospel, which to know and to practise is the highest perfection of human nature.'[1]

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[1] Berkeley was not, indeed, indifferent to ecclesiastical preferment. And he had a family to maintain. But his plans for the evangelization of America, however abortive they may have proved, reveal him as an idealist, certainly not as a place-hunter.

Berkeley was thus quite explicit about the practical function of his philosophy. The full title of the *Principles* is *A Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge, wherein the chief causes of error and difficulty in the Sciences, with the grounds of Scepticism, Atheism and Irreligion, are inquired into*. Similarly, the aim of the *Three Dialogues* is said to be 'plainly to demonstrate the reality and perfection of human knowledge, the incorporeal nature of the soul and the immediate providence of a Deity, in opposition to sceptics and atheists'.[2] But the conclusion should not be drawn from these and similar declarations that Berkeley's philosophy is so coloured by preconceptions and preoccupations of a religious and apologetic character that it has nothing of value to offer for philosophical reflection. He was a serious philosopher; and whether one agrees or not with the arguments which he employed and the conclusions at which he arrived, his lines of thought are well worth consideration, and the problems which he raised are of interest and importance. In general, he is remarkable as an empiricist who was also a metaphysician and a phenomenalist who did not think that phenomenalism has the last word in philosophy. His philosophy may, of course, appear to be a hybrid. It inevitably appears in this light if we regard it simply as a stepping-stone on the way from Locke to Hume. But it is, I think, of interest for its own sake.

4. It has already been mentioned that Berkeley did not give his immaterialist philosophy to the world without having made some effort to prepare men's minds for its reception. For though he was convinced of the truth of his views and of their compatibility with common sense, he was aware that his statements would appear strange and bizarre to many readers. He sought, therefore, to prepare the way for the *Principles of Human Knowledge* by publishing first his *Essay towards a New Theory of Vision*.

It would be a mistake, however, to imagine that this *Essay* was merely a device for predisposing men's minds to accord a sympathetic hearing to what Berkeley intended to say in later publications. It is a serious study of a number of problems connected with perception, and it is of interest for its own sake, quite apart from its prefatory function. The construction of optical instruments had stimulated the development of theories of optics.

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[1] *P.*, 1, 156; II, p. 113.

[2] *D.*, sub-title; II, p. 147.

A number of works had already appeared, such as Barrow's *Optical Lectures* (1669); and in the *Essay* Berkeley made his own contribution to the subject. His aim, as expressed in his own words, was 'to show the manner wherein we perceive by sight the distance, magnitude, and situation of objects. Also to consider the difference there is betwixt the ideas of sight and touch, and whether there be any idea common to both senses.'[1]

Berkeley assumes as agreed that we do not immediately perceive distance of itself. 'It remains therefore that it be brought into view by means of some other idea that is itself immediately perceived in the act of vision.'[2] But Berkeley rejects the current geometrical explanation by means of lines and angles. For one thing, experience does not support the notion that we compute or judge distance by geometrical calculation. For another thing, the lines and angles referred to are hypotheses framed by mathematicians with a view to treating optics geometrically. Instead of the geometrical explanation Berkeley offers suggestions on these lines. When I am looking at a near object with both eyes, the interval between my pupils is lessened or widened according as the object approaches or recedes. And this alteration in the eyes is accompanied by sensations. The result is that an association is set up between the different sensations and different distances. Thus the sensations act as intermediate 'ideas' in the perception of distance. Again, if an object is placed at a certain distance from the eye and is then made to approach, it is seen more confusedly. And thus 'there ariseth in the mind an habitual connection between the several degrees of confusion and distance; the greater confusion still implying the lesser distance, and the lesser confusion the greater distance of the object'.[3] But when an object, placed at a certain distance from the eye, is brought nearer, we can, for some time at least, prevent its appearance becoming confused by straining the eye. And the sensation accompanying the effort of strain helps us to judge the distance of the object. The greater the effort of straining the eye, the nearer is the object.

As for our perception of the magnitude or size of sensible objects, we must first distinguish between two sorts of objects apprehended by sight. Some are properly and immediately visible; others do not fall immediately under the sense of sight but are rather tangible objects, and these are seen only mediately, by means of what is directly visible. Each sort of object has its own distinct magnitude or extension. For example, when I look at the moon, I see directly a coloured disc. The moon, as a visible object, is greater when it is situated on the horizon than when it is situated on the meridian. But we do not think of the magnitude of the moon, when it is considered as a tangible object, as changing in this way. 'The magnitude of the object, which exists without the mind, and is at a distance, continues always invariably the same. But the visible object still changing as you approach to, or recede from, the tangible object, it hath no fixed and determinate greatness. Whenever, therefore, we speak of the magnitude of anything, for instance a tree or a house, we must mean the tangible magnitude, otherwise there can be nothing steady and free from ambiguity spoken of it.'[1] 'Whenever we say an object is great or small, of this or that determinate measure, I say it must be meant of the tangible, and not the visible extension which, though immediately perceived, is nevertheless taken little notice of.'[2] The magnitude of tangible objects, however, is not directly perceived; it is judged by the visible magnitude, according to the confusion or distinctness, faintness or vigour, of the visible appearances. There is, indeed, no necessary connection between visible magnitude and tangible magnitude. For instance, a tower and a man, when situated at appropriate distances, might have more or less the same visible magnitude. But we do not on that account judge that they have the same tangible magnitude. Our judgment is affected by a variety of experimental factors. This does not, however, alter the fact that before we touch an object its tangible magnitude is suggested by its visible magnitude, though the latter has no necessary connection with the former. 'As we see distance, so we see magnitude. And we see both in the same way that we see shame or anger in the looks of a man. Those passions are themselves invisible, they are nevertheless let in by the eye along with colours and alterations of countenance, which are the immediate object of vision: and which signify them for no other reason than barely because they have been observed to accompany them. Without experience we should no more have taken blushing for a sign of shame than of gladness.'[3]

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[1] *E.*, 1; II, p. 171. [2] *E.*, 11; II, p. 173. [3] *E.*, 21; II, p. 175.

Berkeley's ideas about visual perception were by no means all original. But he utilized the ideas which he borrowed in the construction of a carefully worked out theory which, apart from particular points of value, possess the great merit of being the result of reflection, with the aid of particular examples, on the ways in which we do as a matter of fact perceive distance, magnitude and situation. He had, of course, no wish to question the utility of a mathematical theory of optics; but it was clear to him that in ordinary visual perception we do not judge distance and size by mathematical calculations. We can, indeed, employ mathematics to determine distances; but this process obviously presupposes the ordinary visual perception of which Berkeley is speaking.

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[1] *E.*, 55; II, p. 191. [2] *E.*, 61; II, p. 194. [3] *E.*, 65; II, p. 195.

It is unnecessary to enter here into further details of Berkeley's account of perception. The point to notice is the distinction which he makes between sight and touch and between their respective objects. We have already seen that he distinguishes between objects which are, properly speaking, the objects of sight or vision and objects which are only mediately objects of visual perception. Visible magnitude or extension is distinct from tangible extension. But we can go further and say, in general, that 'there is no idea common to both senses'.[1] That this is so can be easily shown. The immediate objects of sight are light and colours, and there is no other immediate object.[2] But light and colours are not perceived by touch. Hence there are no immediate objects common to both senses. It may seem perhaps that Berkeley is contradicting himself when he says that the only immediate objects of sight are light and colours, though at the same time he speaks of visible extension. But what we see are colour-patches, as it were extended colours. And visible extension, visible as patches of colour, is, Berkeley insists, entirely distinct from tangible extension.

It may be said that to assert the heterogeneity of the objects of sight and touch is to assert a truism. Everyone knows, for example, that we perceive colours by sight and not by touch. We say, for instance, that a thing looks green, and not that it feels green. All of us are just as much aware that light and colours are the proper objects of sight as we are that sounds are heard and not smelt. But in insisting on the heterogeneity of the objects of sight and touch Berkeley has an ulterior aim. For he wishes to maintain that visual objects, the 'ideas of sight', are symbols or signs which suggest to us tangible ideas. There is no necessary connection between the two; but 'these signs are constant and universal, (and) their connection with tangible ideas has been learnt at our first entrance into the world'.[3] 'Upon the whole, I think we may fairly conclude that the proper objects of vision constitute an universal language of the Author of nature, whereby we are instructed how to regulate our actions in order to attain those things that are necessary to the preservation and well-being of our bodies, as also to avoid whatever may be hurtful and destructive of them. . . . And the manner wherein they signify and mark unto us the objects which are at a distance is the same with that of languages and signs of human appointment, which do not suggest the things signified by any likeness or identity of nature, but only by an habitual connection that experience has made us to observe between them.'[1]

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[1] *E.*, 129; II, p. 223.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *E.*, 144; II, p. 229.

The words 'signify and mark unto us the objects which are at a distance' should be noted. The implication is that the objects of sight or vision are not at a distance. That is to say, they are in some sense within the mind, not 'out there'. Berkeley has already implied this by remarking that 'the magnitude of the object which exists without the mind and is at a distance, continues always the same',[2] and by contrasting this external and tangible object with the visible object. The objects of sight are in some sense within the mind, and they act as signs or symbols of objects outside the mind, tangible objects.

This distinction between visible and tangible objects is not compatible with the view afterwards maintained in the *Principles*, that all sensible objects are 'ideas', existing in some sense within the mind. But this does not mean that Berkeley changed his view in the interval between writing the *Essay* and writing the *Principles*. It means rather that in the *Essay* he wishes to give only a partial version of his general theory. He speaks, therefore, as though visible objects were in the mind and tangible objects outside the mind. In the *Principles*, however, all sensible objects are brought within the mind, and it is no longer objects of sight alone which constitute a language determined by God. In other words, in the *Essay*, where he is primarily discussing a number of particular problems connected with perception, he introduces the reader to a part only of his general theory, and then only incidentally, whereas in the *Principles* he expounds the general theory. It should be added that even on Berkeley's general theory problems connected with our perception of distance, magnitude and situation can still be raised; but distance and situation can be, of course, only relative, and not absolute, if there are no mind-independent material things.

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[1] *E.*, 147; II, p. 231.

[2] *E.*, 55; II p. 191.

CHAPTER XII

BERKELEY (2)

Words and their meanings—Abstract general ideas—The esse *of sensible things is* percipi*—Sensible things are ideas—Material substance is a meaningless term—The reality of sensible things—Berkeley and the representative theory of perception.*

1. IN the last chapter attention was drawn to Berkeley's concern with language and with the meanings of words. In the *Philosophical Commentaries*, that is, in his notebooks, he remarks that mathematics has this advantage over metaphysics and ethics, that mathematical definitions are definitions of words not yet known to the learner, so that their meaning is not disputed, whereas the terms defined in metaphysics and ethics are for the most part already known, with the result that any attempt to define them may meet with preconceived ideas and prejudices about their meanings.[1] Further, in many cases we may understand what is meant by a term used in philosophy and yet be unable to give a clear account of its meaning or define it. 'I may clearly and fully understand my own soul, extension, etc., and not be able to define them.'[2] And he attributes difficulty in defining and talking clearly about things to 'the fault and scantiness of language' as much as to confusion of thought.[3]

Linguistic analysis is, therefore, of importance in philosophy. 'We are frequently puzzled and at a loss in obtaining clear and determined meanings of words commonly in use.'[4] It is not words such as 'thing' or 'substance' which have caused mistakes so much as 'the not reflecting on their meaning. I will be still for retaining the words. I only desire that men would think before they speak and settle the meaning of their words.'[5] 'The chief thing I do or pretend to do is only to remove the mist or veil of words. This has occasioned ignorance and confusion. This has ruined the Schoolmen and mathematicians, lawyers and divines.'[6] Some words do not express any meaning, that is to say, their supposed meaning vanishes under analysis; they are seen not to refer to anything.

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[1] *P.C.*, 162; 1, p. 22.
[2] *P.C.*, 178; 1, p. 24.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *P.C.*, 591; 1, p. 73.
[5] *P.C.*, 553; 1, p. 69.
[6] *P.C.*, 642; 1, p. 78.

'We have learned from Mr. Locke that there may be and that there are several glib, coherent, methodical discourses which nevertheless amount to just nothing.'[1] An example of Berkeley's meaning is given by a jotting expressing an idea which evidently occurred to him, though he did not develop it and indeed rejected the point of view to which he alludes. 'Say you the mind is not the perceptions but that thing which perceives. I answer you are abused by the words "that" and "thing"; these are vague, empty words without a meaning.'[2] We need analysis, therefore, to determine meanings when these are not clear and to reveal the meaninglessness of non-significant terms.

Berkeley applied this line of thought to Locke's doctrine of material substance. One can say that his attack on Locke's theory took the form of an analysis of material-object sentences. He argued that analysis of the meaning of sentences containing the names of sensible objects or bodies does not support the view that there is any material substance in Locke's sense, that is to say, a hidden and unknowable substrate. Things are simply what we perceive them to be, and we perceive no Lockean substance or substrate. Statements about sensible things can be analysed in terms of phenomena or translated into statements about phenomena. We can talk about substances if we simply mean things as we perceive them, but the term 'material substance' does not signify anything distinct from and underlying phenomena.

The whole matter is complicated, of course, by Berkeley's doctrine that sensible things are 'ideas'. But this doctrine can be left aside for the moment. And if we look at his procedure from one point of view only, we can say that for Berkeley those who believe in material substance have been misled by words. Because we predicate qualities of a rose, for example, philosophers such as Locke have been inclined to think that there must be some invisible substance which supports the perceived qualities. But Berkeley argues, as will be seen later, that no clear meaning can be attached to the word 'supports' in this context. He does not wish to deny that there are substances in any sense of the word, but only in the philosophical sense. 'I take not away substances. I ought not to be accused of discarding substance out of the reasonable world. I only reject the philosophic sense (which in effect is no sense) of the word "substance". . . .'[3]

Again, as we saw in the last chapter, Berkeley insisted on the need for a clear analysis of the word 'existence'. When he says of sensible things that their existence is to be perceived (*esse est percipi*), he does not intend to say that it is untrue that they exist; he is concerned to give the meaning of the statement that sensible things exist. 'Let it not be said that I take away Existence. I only declare the meaning of the word so far as I can comprehend it.'[1]

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[1] *P.C.*, 492; 1, p. 62.

[2] *P.C.*, 581; 1, p. 72.

[3] *P.C.*, 517; 1, p. 64.

These remarks about language in the *Philosophical Commentaries* find their echo, of course, in the *Principles of Human Knowledge*; for the former contained preparatory material for the latter, as well as for the *Essay towards a New Theory of Vision*. In his introduction to the *Principles* Berkeley remarks that in order to prepare the mind of the reader for understanding his doctrine about the first principles of knowledge it is proper to say something first 'concerning the nature and abuse of language'.[2] And he has some interesting observations to make about the function of language. It is commonly supposed, he says, that the chief and indeed only function of language is the communication of ideas marked by words. But this is certainly not the case. 'There are other ends, as the raising of some passion, the exciting to, or deterring from an action, the putting the mind in some particular disposition; to which the former (that is, the communication of ideas) is in many cases barely subservient, and sometimes entirely omitted, when these can be obtained without it, as I think both not infrequently happen in the familiar use of language.'[3] Here Berkeley draws attention to the emotive use or uses of language. It is necessary, he thinks, to distinguish the various functions or purposes of language and of particular kinds of words and to discriminate between controversies which are purely verbal and those which are not, if one is to avoid 'being imposed on by words'.[4] This is obviously excellent advice.

2. It is in the setting of these general remarks about language that Berkeley discusses abstract general ideas. His contention is that there are no such things, though he is prepared to admit general ideas in some sense. 'It is to be noted that I do not deny absolutely there are general ideas, but only that there are any *abstract general ideas*.'[5] But this contention stands in need of some explanation.

In the first place there are no abstract general ideas, the emphasis being on the word 'abstract'. Berkeley is primarily concerned with refuting Locke's theory of abstract ideas. He mentions the Schoolmen too; but it is Locke whom he quotes. Further, he takes Locke to mean that we can form abstract general images, and he has, of course, no difficulty in refuting Locke's position when it is so understood. 'The idea of man that I frame to myself must be either of a white, or a black, or a tawny, a straight, or a crooked, a tall, or a low, or a middle-sized man. I cannot by any effort of thought conceive the abstract idea above described.'[1] I cannot, that is to say, frame an image of man which both omits and includes all the particular characteristics of real individual men. Similarly, 'what more easy than for anyone to look a little into his own thoughts, and there try whether he has, or can attain to have, an idea that shall correspond with the description that is here given of the general idea of a triangle, which is ***neither oblique, nor rectangle, equilateral, equicrural, nor scalenon, but all and none of these at once***?'[2] I cannot have an idea (that is, an image) of a triangle which includes all the characteristics of different types of triangles and which at the same time is itself not classifiable as the image of a particular type of triangle.

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[1] *P.C.*, 593; I, p. 74.

[2] *P.*, Introduction, 6; II, p. 27.

[3] *Ibid.*, 20; II, p. 37.

[4] *Ibid.*, 24; II, p. 40.

[5] *Ibid.*, 12; II, p. 31.

This last illustration is taken directly from Locke, who speaks about forming the general idea of a triangle which 'must be neither oblique, nor rectangle, neither equilateral, equicrural, nor scalenon; but all and none of these at once'.[3] But Locke's accounts of abstraction and its products are not always consistent. Elsewhere he says that 'ideas become general by separating from them the circumstances of time, and place, and any other ideas, that may determine them to this or that particular existence. By this way of abstraction they are made capable of representing more individuals than one. . . .'[4] And he tells us that in the general idea of man the characteristics of individual men as individuals are omitted, only those characteristics being retained which all men have in common. Moreover, though Locke sometimes implies that abstract general ideas are images, he does not by any means always do so. Berkeley, however, who is himself speaking throughout of ideas of objects presented in sense-perception, persists in interpreting Locke as though the latter were speaking of abstract general images. And it is easy for him to show that there are no such things. True, he seems to suppose that composite images must be clearer than they are; but this does not alter the fact that there cannot be, for instance, an abstract general image of a triangle which fulfils all the conditions mentioned above. Nor, to take another example given by Berkeley, can we have an idea (image) of motion without a moving body and without any determinate direction or velocity.[1] But if we consider that part of Berkeley's theory which consists in an exegesis of Locke, we must say, I think, that he was definitely unfair to the latter, however much some admirers of the good bishop may have tried to dispose of this charge.

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[1] *P.*, Introduction, 10; II, p. 29.

[2] *Ibid.*, 13; II, p. 33.

[3] *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, 4, 7, 9.

[4] *Ibid.*, 3, 3, 6.

As we have seen, Berkeley appeals to introspection. And a natural comment to make is that on looking into his mind for abstract general ideas he sees only images and proceeds to identify the image with the idea. And as even the composite image is still a particular image, though it can be made to stand for a number of particular things, he denies the existence of abstract general ideas. This may, indeed, be true to a great extent; but Berkeley did not admit that we have universal ideas, if by this it is meant that we can have ideas, with a positive universal content, of sensory qualities which cannot be given alone in perception (such as motion without a moving body) or of purely general sensory qualities such as colour. If he had been accused of confusing images with ideas, he might have replied by challenging his critic to show that there are any abstract general ideas. It must be remembered that in Berkeley's philosophy 'essences' go by the board.

How, then, can Berkeley say that though he denies abstract general ideas he does not intend to deny general ideas absolutely? His view is that 'an idea, which considered in itself is particular, becomes general by being made to represent or stand for all other particular ideas of the same sort'.[2] Thus universality does not consist 'in the absolute, positive nature or conception of anything, but in the relation it bears to the particulars signified or represented by it'.[3] I can attend to this or that aspect of a thing; and if this is what is meant by abstraction, abstraction is obviously possible. 'It must be acknowledged that a man may consider a figure merely as triangular, without attending to the particular qualities of the angles, or relations of the sides. . . . In like manner we may consider Peter so far forth as man, or so far forth as animal. . . .'[1] If I consider Peter only in relation to the characteristics which he possesses in common with animals, abstracting or prescinding from the characteristics which he possesses in common with other men but not with animals, my idea of Peter can be made to represent or stand for all animals. In this sense it becomes a general idea; but universality belongs to it only in its function of representing or standing for. Considered in itself, with regard to its positive content, the idea is a particular idea.

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[1] *P.*, Introduction, 11; II, p. 31.

[2] *Ibid.*, 12; II, p. 32.

[3] *Ibid.*, 15; II, pp. 33–4.

If there are no abstract general ideas, it follows that reasoning must be about particulars. It obviously cannot be about abstract general ideas if there are none. The geometer makes a particular triangle stand for or represent all triangles, by attending to its triangularity rather than to its particular characteristics. And in this case properties demonstrated of this particular triangle are held to be demonstrated of all triangles. But the geometer is not demonstrating properties of the abstract general idea of triangularity; for there is no such thing. His reasoning is about particulars, and its universal scope is made possible by the power we have of rendering a particular idea universal, not by its positive content, but in virtue of a representative function.

Berkeley does not, of course, deny that there are general words. But he rejects Locke's theory that general words denote, as he says, general ideas, if we mean by this ideas which possess a positive universal content. A proper name, such as William, signifies a particular thing, while a general word signifies indifferently a plurality of things of a certain kind. Its universality is a matter of use or function. If we once understand this, we shall be saved from hunting for mysterious entities corresponding to general words. We can utter the term 'material substance', but it does not denote any abstract general idea; and if we suppose that because we can frame the term it must signify an entity apart from the objects of perception, we are misled by words. Berkeley's nominalism is thus of importance in his attack on Locke's theory of material substance. 'Matter' is not a name in the way in which William is a name, though some philosophers seem to have thought mistakenly that it is.

3. Already at the beginning of the *Principles* Berkeley speaks about sensory objects of knowledge as 'ideas'. But it will perhaps be better to leave aside this complicated subject for the moment,

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[1] *P.*, Introduction, 16; II, p. 35.

and to start with an approach to the theory that sensory objects have no absolute existence of their own apart from their being perceived, which does not necessarily involve talking about these objects as 'ideas'.

According to Berkeley, anyone can have knowledge of the fact that sensible things do not and cannot exist independently of being perceived if he attends to the meaning of the term 'exist' when applied to these things. 'The table I write on, I say, exists, that is, I see and feel it; and if I were out of my study I should say it existed, meaning thereby that if I was in my study I might perceive it, or that some other spirit actually does perceive it.'[1] Berkeley thus challenges the reader to find any other meaning for the proposition, 'the table exists', than 'the table is perceived or perceivable'. It is perfectly true to say, as any ordinary man would say, that the table exists when nobody is in the room. But what can this mean, asks Berkeley, save that if I were to enter the room I should perceive the table or that if another person were to enter the room he or she would, or could, perceive the table? Even if I try to imagine the table existing out of all relation to perception, I necessarily imagine myself or someone else perceiving it; that is to say, I covertly introduce a percipient subject, though I may not advert to the fact that I am doing so. Berkeley can say, therefore, that 'the absolute existence of unthinking things without any relation to their being perceived, that seems perfectly unintelligible. Their *esse* is *percipi*, nor is it possible they should have any existence out of the minds or thinking things which perceive them.'[2]

Berkeley's contention, therefore, is that to say of a sensible thing or body that it exists is to say that it is perceived or perceivable: in his opinion, there is nothing else that it can mean. This analysis, he maintains, does not affect the reality of things. 'Existence is *percipi* or *percipere*. The horse is in the stable, the books are in the study as before.'[3] In other words, he does not assert that it is untrue to say that the horse is in the stable when there is nobody about: he is concerned with the meaning of the statement. The following note has already been quoted, but it is worth re-quoting. 'Let it not be said that I take away Existence. I only declare the meaning of the word so far as I can comprehend it.'[4] Further, Berkeley considers that his analysis of existential statements about sensible things is in accordance with the outlook of the plain man whose mind has not been misled by metaphysical abstractions.

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[1] *P.*, I, 3; II, p. 42. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *P.C.*, 429; I, p. 53. [4] *P.C.*, 593; I, p. 74.

It might well be objected, of course, that though the ordinary man would certainly agree that to say that the horse is in the stable when nobody is about means that if someone enters the stable he would or could have the experience which we call seeing a horse, he would boggle at the statement that the horse's existence is to be perceived. For when he admits that to say that the horse is in the stable 'means' that if someone entered the stable he would or could perceive a horse, he really only intends to say that the second statement is a consequence of the first. If the horse is in the stable, then anyone with normal eyesight who enters the stable can perceive the horse, given the other requisite conditions for perception. But it does not follow that the horse's existence consists in being perceived. Berkeley's position, however, seems to approach very closely to that of some of the modern neopositivists when they maintained that the meaning of an empirical statement is identical with the mode of its verification. To enter the stable and perceive the horse is a way of verifying the statement that there is a horse in the stable. And when Berkeley says that the latter statement can only mean that if a percipient subject enters the stable, he will have or could have certain sensory experiences, this seems to be another way of saying that the meaning of the statement that there is a horse in the stable is identical with the mode of its verification. This is not, of course, an adequate account of his view. For it omits all mention not only of his theory that sensible objects are ideas but also of his subsequent introduction of God as a universal and omnipresent perceiver. But as far as the linguistic analysis aspect of his doctrine goes, there does seem to be some similarity between his position and that of a number of modern neopositivists. And Berkeley's position is subject to the same sort of criticism which can be brought against the view of the neopositivists in question.[1]

Before we go any further it may be as well to draw attention to the two following points. First, when Berkeley says *esse est percipi*, he is talking only about sensible things or objects. Secondly, the full formula is, *esse est aut percipi aut percipere*, existence is either to be perceived or to perceive. Besides sensible 'unthinking' things, the existence of which consists in being perceived, there are minds or percipient subjects, which are active and whose existence is to perceive rather than to be perceived.

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[1] Cf., for example, Chapters III and IV of my *Contemporary Philosophy* (London, Burns and Oates, 1956).

4. Already in the *Philosophical Commentaries* we can find a statement of Berkeley's theory that sensible things are ideas or collections of ideas and of the conclusion which he draws, namely, that they cannot exist independently of minds. 'All significant words stand for ideas. All knowledge (is) about our ideas. All ideas come from without or from within.'[1] In the first case the ideas are called sensations, in the second, thoughts. To perceive is to have an idea. When, therefore, we perceive colours, for example, we are perceiving ideas. And as these ideas come from without, they are sensations. But 'no sensation can be in a senseless thing'.[2] Therefore ideas such as colours cannot inhere in material substance, an inert substrate. Hence it is quite unnecessary to postulate such a substance. 'Nothing like an idea can be in an unperceiving thing.'[3] To be perceived implies dependence on a perceiver. And to exist means either to perceive or to be perceived. 'Nothing properly but persons, i.e. conscious things, do exist; all other things are not so much existence as manners of the existence of persons.'[4] To show, therefore, that sensible objects are ideas is one of Berkeley's chief ways, if not the chief way, of showing the truth of the statement that the existence of these objects is to be perceived and of ruling out Locke's theory of material substance.

In the *Principles* Berkeley speaks of sensible things as collections or combinations of 'sensations or ideas' and draws the conclusion that they 'cannot exist otherwise than in a mind perceiving them'.[5] But though he asserts that it is evident that the objects of our knowledge are ideas,[6] he feels that this doctrine is not altogether in accordance with what most people believe. For he remarks that 'it is indeed an opinion strangely prevailing amongst men, that houses, mountains, rivers, and in a word all sensible objects have an existence natural or real, distinct from their being perceived by the understanding'.[7] But this strangely prevalent opinion is, none the less, a manifest contradiction. 'For what are the aforementioned objects but the things we perceive by sense, and what do we perceive besides our own ideas or sensations; and is it not plainly repugnant that any one of these or any combination of them should exist unperceived?'[8] The notion that these things can exist on their own, without relation to perception, 'will, perhaps, be found at bottom to depend on the doctrine of *abstract ideas*. For can there be a nicer strain of abstraction than to distinguish the existence of sensible objects from their being perceived, so as to conceive them existing unperceived?'[1]

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[1] *P.C.*, 378; I, p. 45. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.* [4] *P.C.*, 24; I, p. 10.
[5] *P.*, I, 3; II, p. 42. [6] *P.*, I, I; II, p. 41. [7] *P.*, I, 4; II, p. 42. [8] *Ibid.*

Of course, if sensible things are ideas in the ordinary sense of the word, it is evident that they cannot exist apart from some mind. But what is the justification for calling them ideas? One line of argument pursued by Berkeley runs as follows. Some people make a distinction between secondary qualities, such as colour, sound and taste, and primary qualities, such as extension and figure. They admit that the former, as perceived, are not resemblances of anything existing outside the mind. They admit, in other words, their subjective character, that they are ideas. 'But they will have our ideas of the primary qualities to be patterns or images of things which exist without the mind, in an unthinking substance which they call *matter*. By matter therefore we are to understand an inert, senseless substance, in which extension, figure, and motion, do actually subsist.'[2] But this distinction will not do. It is impossible to conceive primary entirely apart from secondary qualities. 'Extension, figure, and motion, abstracted from all other qualities, are inconceivable.'[3] Further, if, as Locke thought, the relativity of secondary qualities provides a valid argument for their subjectivity, the same sort of argument can be employed with regard to the primary qualities. Figure or shape, for example, depends on the position of the perceiver, while motion is either swift or slow, and these are relative terms. Extension in general and motion in general are meaningless terms, depending 'on that strange doctrine of *abstract ideas*'.[4] In fine, primary qualities are no more independent of perception than are secondary qualities. The first no less than the second are ideas. And if they are ideas, they cannot exist or inhere in an unthinking substance or substrate. We can, therefore, get rid of Locke's material substance; and sensible things become clusters or collections of ideas.

Locke, as we saw earlier, did not actually say that secondary qualities are subjective. For in his technical terminology secondary qualities are the powers in things which produce in us certain ideas; and these powers are objective; that is, not dependent for their existence on our minds. However, if we mean by secondary qualities the qualities as perceived, colours, for example, we can say that for Locke they are subjective, being ideas in the mind. And it is from this point that Berkeley starts in the argument mentioned above. But the validity of the argument is certainly questionable. Berkeley seems to think that the 'relativity' of qualities shows that they are in the mind. There are no qualities in general, over and above the particular qualities perceived. And each particular quality perceived is perceived by and is relative to a particular subject. But it is not immediately evident that because the grass looks to me now green, now yellow or golden, the greenness and yellowness are ideas in the sense of being in my mind. Nor is it immediately evident that because a particular thing looks to me large in these circumstances and small in those circumstances or of one shape at one time and of another shape at another time, extension and figure are ideas. If, of course, we assume that, given the objectivity of qualities, things must necessarily appear the same to all people or to one person at all times and in all circumstances, it follows that if they do not so appear, they are not objective. But there does not seem to be any cogent reason for making this assumption.

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[1] *P.*, I, 5; II, p. 42.

[2] *P.*, I, 9; II, pp. 44–5.

[3] *P.*, I, 10; II, p. 45.

[4] *P.*, I, 11; II, p. 46.

5. However, if we assume that sensible things are ideas, it is evident that Locke's theory of a material substrate is an unnecessary hypothesis. But we can go further than this, according to Berkeley, and say that the hypothesis is not merely unnecessary but unintelligible. If we try to analyse the meaning of the term, we find that it consists of 'the idea of being in general, together with the relative notion of its supporting accidents. The general idea of being appeareth to me the most abstract and incomprehensible of all other; and as for its supporting accidents, this, as we have just now observed, cannot be understood in the common sense of those words; it must therefore be taken in some other sense, but what that is they do not explain.'[1] The phrase 'supporting accidents'[2] cannot be taken in its ordinary sense, 'as when we say that pillars support a building'. For material substance is supposed to be logically prior to extension, an accident, and to support it. 'In what sense therefore must it be taken?'[3] In Berkeley's opinion, no definite meaning can be given to the phrase.

The same line of thought is expressed more at length in the

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[1] *P.*, I, 17; II, pp. 47–8.

[2] The word 'supporting' must be understood, of course, in an active sense. Material substance, that is to say, is said to support accidents.

[3] *P.*, I, 16; II, p. 47.

First Dialogue. Hylas is brought to acknowledge that the distinction between sensation and object, between an action of the mind and its object, is untenable when we are talking about perception. Sensible things are reducible to sensations; and it is inconceivable that sensations should exist in an unperceiving substance. 'But then on the other hand, when I look on sensible things in a different view, considering them as so many modes and qualities, I find it necessary to suppose a material *substratum*, without which they cannot be conceived to exist.'[1] Philonous then challenges Hylas to explain what he means by material substrate. If he means that it is spread under sensible qualities or accidents, it must be spread under extension. In this case it must itself be extended. And then we are involved in an infinite regress. Moreover, the same conclusion follows if we substitute the idea of standing under or supporting for the idea of being a substratum or of being spread under.

Hylas protests that he is being taken too literally. But Philonous retorts: 'I am not for imposing any sense on your words: you are at liberty to explain them as you please. Only I beseech you, make me understand something by them. . . . Pray let me know any sense, literal or not literal, that you understand in it.'[2] In the end Hylas finds himself compelled to admit that he cannot assign any definite meaning to phrases such as 'supporting accidents' and 'material substrate'.[3] The upshot of the discussion, therefore, is that the statement that material things exist absolutely, without dependence on the mind, is meaningless. 'The absolute existence of unthinking things are words without a meaning, or which include a contradiction. This is what I repeat and inculcate, and earnestly recommend to the attentive thought of the reader.'[4]

6. Berkeley is at pains to show that the statement that sensible things are ideas is not equivalent to the statement that sensible things possess no reality. 'Say you, at this rate all's nothing but idea, mere phantasm. I answer that every thing is as real as ever. I hope that to call a thing "idea" makes it not the less real. Truly I should perhaps have stuck to the word "thing", and not men-

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[1] *D.*, 1; II, p. 197.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 199.

[3] Hylas might perhaps have replied that the reason why he could not satisfy Philonous's request for a clear and definite meaning was that the latter was asking him to describe the relation between substance and accidents in terms of some relation other than itself. But Philonous (Berkeley) held, of course, that phenomena are ideas. And in this case they cannot inhere in unthinking, senseless substance.

[4] *P.*, 1, 24; II, p. 51.

tioned the word "idea", were it not for a reason, and I think a good one too, which I shall give in the second Book.'[1] Again, 'On my principles there is a reality, there are things, there is a *rerum natura*'.[2] In the *Principles* Berkeley raises the objection that on his theory 'all that is real and substantial in Nature is banished out of the world: and instead thereof a chimerical scheme of ideas takes place. . . . What therefore becomes of the sun, moon, and stars? What must we think of houses, rivers, mountains, trees, stones; nay, even of our own bodies? Are all these but so many chimeras and illusions of the fancy?'[3] To this he answers that 'by the principles premised, we are not deprived of any one thing in Nature. Whatever we see, feel, hear, or any wise conceive or understand, remains as secure as ever, and is as real as ever. There is a *rerum natura*, and the distinction between realities and chimeras retains its full force.'[4]

If, however, sensible things are ideas, it follows that we eat and drink and are clothed with ideas. And this way of speaking sounds 'very harsh'. Of course it does, replies Berkeley; but the reason why it sounds harsh and strange is simply that in ordinary discourse the word 'idea' is not normally used for the things which we see and touch. The principal requirement is that we should understand in what sense the word is being used in the present context. 'I am not for disputing about the propriety, but the truth of the expression. If therefore you agree with me that we eat and drink and are clad with the immediate objects of sense which cannot exist unperceived or without the mind: I shall readily grant it more proper or conformable to custom, that they should be called things rather than ideas.'[5]

What, then, is the justification for using the term 'idea' in a sense which is admittedly not in accordance with common usage? 'I answer, I do it for two reasons: first, because the term *thing*, in contradistinction to *idea*, is generally supposed to denote somewhat existing without the mind: secondly, because *thing* hath a more comprehensive signification than *idea*, including spirits or thinking things as well as ideas. Since therefore the objects of sense exist only in the mind, and are withal thoughtless and inactive, I chose to mark them by the word *idea*, which implies those properties.'[6]

Because, therefore, Berkeley uses the word 'ideas' to refer to the immediate objects of sense, and because he does not deny the existence of the objects of sense-perception, he can maintain that his theory of ideas makes no difference to the reality of the sensible world. All that he gets rid of is Locke's material substance, which is not an object of sense and which will therefore not be missed by any ordinary man. 'I do not argue against the existence of any one thing that we can apprehend, either by sense or reflexion. That the things I see with mine eyes and touch with my hands do exist, really exist, I make not the least question. The only thing whose existence we deny, is that which philosophers call matter or corporeal substance. And in doing of this, there is no damage done to the rest of mankind, who, I dare say, will never miss it. The atheist indeed will want the colour of an empty name to support his impiety; and the philosophers may possibly find they have lost a great handle for trifling and disputation.'[1]

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[1] *P.C.*, 807; I, p. 97.
[2] *P.C.*, 105; I, p. 38.
[3] *P.*, I, 34; II, p. 55.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *P.*, I, 38; II, p. 57.
[6] *P.*, I, 39; II, p. 57.

It is arguable that there is some confusion or inconsistency in Berkeley's use of the term 'idea'. In the first place he protests that he simply uses the term to signify what we perceive, sensible objects. And though this use of the term may be uncommon its use does not affect the reality of the objects of sense-perception. This suggests to the reader that the term is for Berkeley a purely technical one. To call sensible things ideas in this purely technical sense does not reduce them to ideas in the ordinary sense. At the same time Berkeley speaks, as we have seen, of 'sensations or ideas', as though the terms were synonymous. And, quite apart from the general impropriety of equating ideas and sensations, this inevitably suggests that sensible things are mere subjective modifications of our minds. For the word 'sensation' refers to something subjective and, indeed, to something private. It suggests that there is no real public sensible world, but rather as many private sensible worlds as there are percipient subjects. The sensible world then becomes something very like a dream world.

At this point, however, it is relevant to introduce Berkeley's distinction between ideas and images of things, even though it means touching on aspects of his philosophy which will be considered in the next chapter. Ideas, that is, sensible things, are said to be 'imprinted on the senses by the Author of Nature': they are called 'real things'.[2] When, for example, I open my eyes and see a piece of white paper, it does not depend on my choice that

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[1] *P.*, I, 35; I, p. 55.

[2] *P.*, I, 33; II, p. 54.

I see a piece of white paper, except in the sense that I can choose to look in one direction rather than in another. I cannot look in the direction of the paper and see a piece of green cheese instead. In Berkeley's language the ideas or qualities which compose the piece of white paper are imprinted on my senses. I can, however, have images of things which I have seen, and I can combine images at will, to form, for example, the image of a unicorn. In ordinary language the piece of white paper which I see on my table is not called an idea, whereas we do talk about having the idea of a unicorn. But though in Berkeley's terminology the piece of white paper is spoken of as a collection or cluster of ideas, these ideas are not dependent on the finite mind in the same way that the image of a unicorn is dependent on it. And thus there is room in Berkeley's theory for a distinction between the sphere of sensible reality and the sphere of images. This distinction is of importance; for Berkeley insisted, as will be mentioned in the next chapter, that there is an 'order of Nature', a coherent pattern of ideas which does not depend on human choice. At the same time, though real things, sensible things that is to say, do not depend simply on the human perceiver, they are none the less ideas, and they cannot exist in absolute independence of a mind. For Berkeley, therefore, these two statements are both true and important, namely, that ideas (in his sense of the term) are not entirely dependent on the *human* mind and that they are none the less ideas and so dependent on some mind.

I do not suggest that this distinction clears up all difficulties and answers all possible objections. For one thing, it still seems to follow from Berkeley's theory that there are as many private worlds as there are percipient subjects, and that there is no public world. Berkeley was not, of course, a solipsist. But to say that he was not a solipsist is not the same thing as saying that solipsism cannot be derived from his premisses. He believed, indeed, in a plurality of finite minds or spirits. But it is very difficult to see how on his premisses he can assure himself of the validity of this belief. However, the distinction described in the last paragraph does at least help us to understand how Berkeley could feel justified in maintaining that on his theory there is still a *rerum natura* and that sensible things are not reduced to the level of chimeras, even if there is some discrepancy between the common-sense aspect of this theory (sensible things are simply what we perceive or can perceive them to be) and its idealist aspects (sensible things are ideas, equivalent to sensations). The discrepancy can be expressed in this way. Berkeley sets out to describe the world of the ordinary man, excluding the unnecessary and indeed meaningless additions of metaphysicians; but the result of his analysis is a proposition which, as Berkeley himself was aware, the ordinary man would not be disposed to accept.

7. As a conclusion to this chapter we can raise the question whether Berkeley's use of the term 'idea' implies the representative theory of perception. Locke frequently, though not always, speaks about perceiving ideas rather than things. And inasmuch as ideas for him often represent things, this way of speaking implies the representative theory of perception. This is one reason, of course, why Locke depreciates sensitive knowledge and physics in comparison with mathematics. The question is, therefore, whether Berkeley is involved in the same theory and in the same difficulties.

The proper answer to this question seems to be clear enough, provided that we attend to Berkeley's own philosophy rather than to the fact that Locke furnished him with a point of departure. If we consider merely the last-mentioned fact, we may easily be inclined to father on Berkeley the representative theory of perception. But if we attend carefully to his own philosophy, we shall recognize that he was not involved in this theory.

What Berkeley calls ideas are not ideas of things: they *are* things. They do not represent entities beyond themselves: they are themselves entities. In perceiving ideas we perceive, not images of sensible things, but sensible things themselves. In the *Philosophical Commentaries* Berkeley says explicitly: 'the supposition that things are distinct from ideas takes away all real truth and consequently brings in a universal scepticism, since all our knowledge and contemplation is confined barely to our own ideas'.[1] Again, 'the referring ideas to things which are not ideas, the using the term "idea of", is one great cause of mistake. . . .'[2] This is certainly not the representative theory of perception, which is indeed incompatible with Berkeley's philosophy. For on his premisses there is nothing for 'ideas' to represent. And, as can be seen from the first of the two quotations just given, he objects against the theory that it leads to scepticism. For if the immediate objects of sensible knowledge are ideas which are supposed to represent things other than themselves, we can never know that they do in fact represent things. Berkeley doubtless borrowed from Locke the use of the term 'idea' for the immediate object of perception; but this does not mean that ideas fulfil the same function or have the same status in Berkeley's philosophy that they do in Locke's. With the latter, according at least to his prevalent way of speaking, ideas act as intermediaries between the mind and things, in the sense that though they are the immediate objects of knowledge, they represent external things which are not dependent on our minds. With the former ideas are not intermediaries; they are sensible things themselves.

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[1] *P.C.*, 606; 1, p. 75.

[2] *P.C.*, 660; 1, p. 80.

CHAPTER XIII

BERKELEY (3)

Finite spirits; their existence, nature and immortal character—The order of Nature—Berkeley's empiricist interpretation of physics, especially as seen in the De motu*—The existence and nature of God—The relation of sensible things to ourselves and to God—Causality—Berkeley and other philosophers—Some remarks on Berkeley's ethical ideas—A note on Berkeley's influence.*

1. If sensible things are ideas, they can exist only in minds or spirits. And spirits are thus the only substances. Ideas are passive and inert: spirits, which perceive ideas, are active. '*Thing* or *being* is the most general name of all, it comprehends under it two kinds entirely distinct and heterogeneous, and which have nothing common but the name, to wit, *spirits* and *ideas*. The former are *active, indivisible substances*: the latter are *inert*, fleeting, dependent beings, which subsist not by themselves, but are supported by[1] or exist in minds or spiritual substances.'[2]

Spirits, therefore, cannot be ideas or like ideas. 'It is therefore necessary, in order to prevent equivocation and confounding natures perfectly disagreeing and unlike, that we distinguish between *spirit* and *idea*.'[3] 'That this *substance* which supports or perceives ideas should itself be an *idea* or like an *idea*, is evidently absurd.'[4] Further, we cannot have, properly speaking, any idea of spirit. Indeed, 'it is manifestly impossible there should be any such *idea*'.[5] 'A spirit is one simple, undivided, active being: as it perceives ideas, it is called the *understanding*; and as it produces or operates about them, it is called the *will*. Hence there can be no idea formed of a soul or spirit: for all ideas whatever, being passive and inert, they cannot represent unto us, by way of image or likeness, that which acts.'[6]

When he says that we can have no idea of spirit, Berkeley is using the term 'idea' in his technical sense. He does not mean that we have no knowledge of what is signified by the word 'spirit'. It must be admitted that 'we have some notion of soul, spirit, and the operations of the mind, such as willing, loving, hating, inasmuch as we know or understand the meaning of those words'.[1] A distinction is thus made by Berkeley between 'notion', namely, the mental or spiritual as object, and 'idea', namely, the sensible or corporeal as object. We can have a notion of spirit but not an idea in the technical sense. 'In a large sense indeed, we may be said to have an idea, or rather a notion of *spirit;* that is, we understand the meaning of the word; otherwise we could not affirm or deny anything of it.'[2] A spirit can be described as 'that which thinks, wills, and perceives; this, and this alone, constitutes the signification of that term'.[3] It will be remembered that an entry in Berkeley's notebooks[4] suggests that the possibility had occurred to him of applying to the mind the same sort of phenomenalistic analysis which he applied to bodies. But he rejected this idea. It seemed evident to him that if sensible things are reduced to ideas, there must be spirits or spiritual substances which have or perceive these ideas.

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[1] It may seem that Berkeley is contradicting himself. But when he said, as mentioned in the last chapter, that the term 'supporting accidents' is meaningless, he was referring to the alleged relation between material substance and ideas. Here he is speaking of the relation between spiritual substance or mind and ideas.

[2] *P.*, I, 89; II, pp. 79–80.

[3] *P.*, I, 139; II, p. 105.

[4] *P.*, I, 135; II, p. 103.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *P.*, I, 27; II, p. 52.

The question arises, how do we know of the existence of spirits, that is, of a plurality of finite spirits or selves? 'We comprehend our own existence by inward feeling or reflexion, and that of other spirits by reason.'[5] That I exist is, after all, evident; for I perceive ideas, and I am aware that I am distinct from the ideas which I perceive. But I know the existence of other finite spirits or selves only by reason, that is, by inference. 'It is plain that we cannot know the existence of other spirits, otherwise than by their operations, or the ideas excited by them in us. I perceive several motions, changes, and combinations of ideas, that inform me there are certain particular agents like myself, which accompany them, and concur in their production. Hence the knowledge I have of other spirits is not immediate, as is the knowledge of my ideas; but depending on the intervention of ideas, by me referred to agents or spirits distinct from myself, as effects or concomitant signs.'[6] Berkeley returns to this matter in *Alciphron*. 'In a strict sense I do not see Alciphron, i.e. that individual thinking thing, but only such visible signs and tokens as suggest and infer the being of that invisible thinking principle or soul.'[7] And he draws an analogy between our mediate knowledge of other finite spirits and our mediate knowledge of God. In both cases it is through sensible signs that we come to know the existence of an active agent.

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[1] *P.*, I, 140; II, p. 105.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *P.*, I, 138; II, p. 104.
[4] *P.C.*, 581; I, p. 72.
[5] *P.*, I, 89; II, p. 80.
[6] *P.*, I, 145; II. p. 107.
[7] *A.*, 4. 5; III, p. 147.

Apart from any other possible criticism, this account of our knowledge of the existence of other finite spirits or selves seems to labour under the following difficulty. According to Berkeley, 'when we see the colour, size, figure, and motions of a man, we perceive only certain sensations or ideas excited in our own minds: and these being exhibited to our view in sundry distinct collections serve to mark out unto us the existence of finite and created spirits like ourselves'.[1] 'We do not see a man, if by *man* is meant that which lives, moves, perceives, and thinks as we do: but only such a certain collection of ideas as directs us to think there is a distinct principle of thought and motion like to ourselves, accompanying and represented by it.'[2] But even if I do think in this way, can I be certain that the ideas produced in me which I attribute to other finite spirits are not really the effects of God? If God produces in me, without there being any material substance, the ideas which on the substance-accident theory would be regarded as accidents of material or corporeal substance, how can I be certain that he does not produce in me, without there being any other finite selves, the ideas which I take to be signs of the presence of such selves, that is, of spiritual substances other than myself?

At first sight Berkeley may appear to have felt this difficulty. For he asserts that the existence of God is more evident than the existence of human beings. But his reason for saying this is that the number of signs of God's existence is greater than the number of signs of any given man's existence. Thus Alciphron asks: 'What! Do you pretend you can have the same assurance of the being of a God that you can have of mine, whom you actually see stand before you and talk to you?'[3] And Euphranor answers: 'The very same, if not greater.' He goes on to state that whereas he is convinced of the existence of another finite self by only a few signs, 'I do at all times and in all places perceive sensible signs which evince the being of God.' Similarly, in the *Principles* Berkeley says that 'we may even assert, that the existence of God is far more evidently perceived than the existence of men; because the effects of Nature are infinitely more numerous and considerable than those ascribed to human agents'.[4] But he does not tell us how we can be certain that the ideas which we take to be signs of the presence of finite spiritual substances really are what we think they are. Perhaps, however, he would reply that we do in point of fact discriminate between the particular effects which we ascribe to finite agents and the general order of Nature which is presupposed by these effects; and that his theory does not demand any further grounds for discrimination than those which we in fact possess and utilize. From ideas or observable effects which are analogous to those which we are conscious of producing, we infer the existence of other selves; and this is sufficient evidence. But if anyone is dissatisfied with such an answer and wishes to know what justification there is, on Berkeley's premisses, for making this inference, he will not receive much help from Berkeley's writings.

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[1] *P.*, I, 148; II, p. 109. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *A.*, 4, 5; III, p. 147. [4] *P.*, I, 147; II, p. 108.

Some of Berkeley's descriptions of the nature of a spirit have already been mentioned. But it can hardly be successfully claimed, I think, that his descriptions are always consistent. In the *Philosophical Commentaries* the suggestion is made that the mind is 'a congeries of perceptions. Take away perceptions and you take away the mind: put the perceptions and you put the mind.'[1] As has been noted, Berkeley did not pursue this phenomenalistic analysis of mind. But even later he says that the existence (*esse*) of spirits is to perceive (*percipere*), which implies that a spirit is essentially the act of perceiving. However, he also tells that the word 'spirit' means 'that which thinks, wills and perceives; this, and this alone, constitutes the signification of that term'.[2] Hence we can say in general that Berkeley rejected the idea of applying to mind the type of phenomenalistic analysis which he applied to bodies, and that he accepted Locke's theory of immaterial or spiritual substance.[3] And it is on this basis, of cause, that he maintains the immortality of the human soul or spirit.

If, as some held, the soul of man were a thin vital flame or a system of animal spirits, it would be corruptible like the body. It could not survive 'the ruin of the tabernacle, wherein it is enclosed'.[4] But 'we have shown that the soul is indivisible, incorporeal, unextended, and it is consequently incorruptible'.[5] This does not mean that the human soul is incapable of annihilation even by the infinite power of God; 'but only that it is not liable to be broken or dissolved by the ordinary Laws of Nature or motion'.[1] This is what is meant by saying that the soul of man is naturally immortal; namely, that it cannot be affected by the motions, changes and decay 'which we hourly see befall natural bodies'.[2] The notion that the soul of man is corporeal and corruptible 'hath been greedily embraced and cherished by the worst part of mankind as the most effectual antidote against all impressions of virtue and religion'.[3] But the soul, as spiritual substance, is naturally immortal; and this truth is of great importance for religion and morality.

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[1] *P.C.*, 580; I, p. 72.

[2] *P.*, I, 138; II, p. 104.

[3] If the existence of bodies is defined as *percipi*, then it is natural to define the existence of spirits or minds as *percipere*. For the two are correlative. But inasmuch as bodies are said to be ideas which are imprinted on minds and perceived by them, it is natural to maintain that minds are substances which 'support' ideas and subjects which perceive ideas. Berkeley does not tidy up the confusion caused by his different ways of speaking.

[4] *P.*, I, 141; II, p. 105.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 106.

2. Returning from spirits to bodies, we have seen that according to Berkeley his analysis of the latter leaves intact the *rerum natura*. 'There is a *rerum natura*, and the distinction between realities and chimeras retains its full force.'[4] It is quite proper, therefore, to speak of laws of Nature. 'There are certain general laws that run through the whole chain of natural effects: these are learned by the observation and study of Nature. . . .'[5] Berkeley is thus quite ready to speak of 'the whole system, immense, beautiful, glorious beyond expression and beyond thought'.[6] We have to remember that for him sensible things or bodies are precisely what we perceive or can perceive them to be, and that he calls these phenomena 'ideas'. These ideas form a coherent pattern: we can discern more or less regular sequences. Regular sequences or series can be expressed in the form of 'laws', statements about the regular behaviour of sensible things. But connections in Nature are not necessary connections: they may be more or less regular, but they are always contingent. Ideas are imprinted on our minds in more or less regular series by the Author of Nature, God. And to say that *Y* regularly follows *X* is to say that that God imprints in us ideas in this order. And since all particular regular series, and the whole order of Nature in general, depend on the unceasing divine activity and will, what we call Nature is shot through and through, as it were, with contingency.

Physics, therefore, or natural philosophy is not denied by Berkeley. But physical laws which state, for example, that certain types of bodies attract one another state connections which are purely factual and not necessary. That certain bodies behave in a certain way depends on God; and though we may expect that God will act uniformly for the most part we cannot know that He will always behave in the same way. If, generally speaking, Y always follows X, and if on a given occasion it does not do so, we may have to speak of a miracle. But if God acts miraculously, that is to say, in a manner quite different from the way in which He normally acts, He does not, so to speak, break a hard and fast law of Nature. For a law of Nature states the way in which things generally behave as a matter of fact, as far as our experience goes, not the way in which they must behave. 'By a diligent observation of the phenomena within our view, we may discover the general laws of Nature, and from them deduce the other phenomena. I do not say demonstrate; for all deductions of that kind depend on a supposition that the Author of Nature always operates uniformly, and in a constant observance of those rules we take for principles: which we cannot evidently know.'[1] In the language of ideas God is accustomed to imprint ideas on us in a certain order or in certain regular sequences. And this enables us to state 'laws of Nature'. But God is in no way bound to imprint ideas on us always in the same order. Miracles, therefore, are possible. They do not involve any interference with necessary connections between distinct ideas. For there are no such necessary connections. There is, indeed, a *rerum natura*, and there is an order of Nature, but it is not a necessary order.

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[1] *P.*, I, 141; II, p. 105.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 106.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 105.
[4] *P.*, I, 34; II, p. 55.
[5] *P.*, I, 62; II, p. 67.
[6] *D.*, 2; II, p. 211.

3. In the foregoing section I assumed the existence of God and Berkeley's view of the way in which God acts. For I wished to bring out the fact that for him the order of Nature is not a necessary order. In the present section I wish to illustrate Berkeley's markedly empiricist, even positivistic, interpretation of physics, especially as seen in the *De motu*.

Berkeley's attack on abstract general ideas naturally has its repercussions in his interpretation of physics. He does not say that the use of abstract terms is illegitimate and serves no useful purpose; but he does suggest that the use of such terms may lead people to imagine that they possess more knowledge than they actually have, because they can employ a word to cover their ignorance. 'The great mechanical principle now in vogue is *attraction*. That a stone falls to the earth, or the sea swells towards the moon, may to some appear sufficiently explained thereby. But how are we enlightened by being told this is done by attraction?'[2] The physicist (Berkeley frequently speaks of 'mathematicians') or natural philosopher may come to think that a term like 'attraction' signifies an essential quality inherent in bodies, which acts as a real cause. But it is no such thing. As a matter of pure empirical fact the observed relations between some bodies are of such a kind that we describe them as cases of mutual attraction; but the word 'attraction' does not signify an entity, and it is idle to suppose that the behaviour of bodies is explained by the use of such a term. The physicist is concerned with description and with the grouping of analogies under general 'laws' with a view to prediction and practical utility: but he is not concerned with causal explanation, if we mean by 'cause' an active efficient cause. And it is a great mistake to suppose that phenomena *a*, *b* and *c* are explained by saying that they are due to *P*, where *P* is an abstract term. For to suppose this is to misunderstand the use of the term. It does not signify any entity which could be an active efficient cause.

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[1] *P.*, I, 107; II, p. 88.

[2] *P.*, I, 103; II, p. 86.

In the *De motu* Berkeley develops this point of view. He begins the treatise with the remark that 'in the pursuit of truth we must beware of being misled by terms which we do not rightly understand. Almost all philosophers utter the caution; few observe it.'[1] Take terms such as 'effort' and 'conation'. Such terms are properly applicable only to animate things: when applied to inanimate things they are used metaphorically and in a vague sense. Again, natural philosophers are accustomed to use abstract general terms, and there is a temptation to think they signify actual occult entities. Some writers speak, for example, of absolute space as though it were something, a distinct entity. But we shall find on analysis that 'nothing else is signified by these words than pure privation or negation, that is, mere nothing'.[2]

According to Berkeley, we ought to 'distinguish mathematical hypotheses from the natures of things'.[3] Terms such as 'force', 'gravity' and 'attraction' do not denote physical or metaphysical entities; they are 'mathematical hypotheses'. 'As for attraction, it is certainly employed by Newton, not as a true, physical quality, but only as a mathematical hypothesis. Indeed Leibniz, when distinguishing elementary effort or solicitation from impetus, admits that these entities are not really found in nature, but have to be formed by abstraction.'[4] Mechanics cannot progress without the use of mathematical abstractions and hypotheses, and their use is justified by their success, that is, by their practical utility. But the practical usefulness of a mathematical abstraction does not prove that it denotes any physical or metaphysical entity. 'The mechanician employs certain abstract and general terms, imagining in bodies force, action, attraction . . . which are of great utility for theories and formulations, as also for computations about motion, even if in the truth of things, and in bodies actually existing, they would be sought in vain, just like the things which are fictions made by the geometers through mathematical abstraction.'[1]

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[1] *D.M.*, 1; IV, p. 11.

[2] *D.M.*, 53; IV, p. 24.

[3] *D.M.*, 66; IV, p. 28.

[4] *D.M.*, 17; IV, p. 15.

One main reason why people are inclined to be misled by abstract terms as used in physics is that they think that the physicist is concerned with finding the true efficient causes of phenomena. They are inclined, therefore, to think that a word such as 'gravity' signifies an existent entity or quality which is the true efficient cause of certain motions and which explains the latter. But 'it does not belong to physics or mechanics to give efficient causes. . . .'[2] One reason why Berkeley says this is, of course, that in his view the only true causes are incorporeal agents. This is apparent in the following quotation. 'In physical philosophy we must seek the causes and solutions of phenomena from mechanical principles. Physically, therefore, a thing is explained not by assigning its truly active and incorporeal cause but by demonstrating its connection with mechanical principles, such as *action and reaction are always contrary and equal*. . . .'[3] What is meant by mechanical principles? The primary laws of motion, 'proved by experiments, developed by reasoning and rendered universal . . . are fittingly called principles, since from them are derived both general mechanical theorems and particular explanations of phenomena'.[4] To give a physical explanation of an event, therefore, is to show how it can be deduced from a high-level hypothesis. And explanations of this kind are concerned with behaviour rather than with existence. The existence of phenomena is explained in metaphysical philosophy by deriving it from its true efficient cause, which is incorporeal. The physicist is concerned to this extent with 'causes', that when he finds *B* constantly following *A* and never occurring when *A* has not preceded, where *A* and *B* are phenomena, he speaks of *A* as cause and *B* as effect. But phenomena are ideas, and ideas cannot be active efficient causes; and if this is what is understood by causes, the physicist is not concerned with them.

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[1] *D.M.*, 39; IV, p. 20.

[2] *D.M.*, 69; IV, p. 29.

[3] *D.M.*, 35; IV, p. 19.

[4] *D.M.*, 36; IV, p. 20.

Berkeley's contention, therefore, is that science is left unimpaired by his theory of ideas and by his metaphysics, provided that the nature of science is understood. Metaphysics must be eliminated from physics, and the two should not be confused. This elimination will purify physics of obscurities and vague verbiage and will save us from being misled by words which, however useful they may be, do not denote entities or actual qualities of entities. At the same time Berkeley did not eliminate metaphysics from physics in order to dissolve the former. His desire was rather to point the way to metaphysics. For if we once understand that physical science is not concerned with the truly active efficient causes of phenomena, we shall not only be saved from interpreting wrongly the function and meaning of words such as gravity and attraction but also be prompted to look elsewhere for the cause of the existence of phenomena. Berkeley spoke in a positivistic way about physics; but at the back of his mind was the desire to disabuse people of the notion that an adequate causal explanation of phenomena can be given in terms of gravity, attraction, and so on, which do not signify entities, or existent qualities, but are used for convenience in hypotheses which are validated by their success in grouping phenomena and deducing them from certain principles describing the behaviour of bodies. And he wished to disabuse people of a mistaken interpretation of the function of physical science because he wished to show them that the true causal explanations of phenomena can be found only in metaphysics, which establishes the relation of phenomena to God, the ultimate incorporeal and true efficient cause. 'Only by meditation and reasoning can truly active causes be brought out of the darkness with which they are surrounded and be so to some extent known. To deal with them pertains to first philosophy or metaphysics.'[1]

In this section reference has been made to physics or physical science, understood as including mechanics. But in the *De motu* Berkeley makes a curious distinction between physics and mechanics. 'In physics sense and experience, which reach only to apparent effects, hold sway; in mechanics the abstract notions of mathematicians are admitted.'[2] In other words, physics is concerned with the description of phenomena and their behaviour, while mechanics involves theorizing and explanatory hypotheses which employ mathematics. The reason why Berkeley makes this distinction is that he wishes to distinguish between the observed facts and the theories constructed to understand or explain these facts. For unless we make this last distinction, we shall be inclined to postulate occult entities corresponding to the abstract terms 'of the mathematicians'. Words such as 'gravity' or 'force' do not denote observable entities. Therefore, we may be inclined to think, there must be occult entities or qualities corresponding to these terms. 'But what an occult quality is, or how any quality can act or do anything, we can scarcely conceive—indeed we cannot conceive. . . . What is itself occult explains nothing.'[1] But if we distinguish carefully between observed effects and the hypotheses constructed to explain them, we shall be in a better position to understand the function of the abstract terms employed in these hypotheses. 'In part the terms have been invented by common habit to abbreviate speech, and in part they have been thought out for the purpose of teaching.'[2] In reasoning about sensible things we reason about particular bodies. But we require abstract terms for our universal propositions about particular bodies.

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[1] *D.M.*, 72; IV, p. 30.

[2] *D.M.*, 71; IV, p. 30.

4. There is, therefore, for Berkeley an order of Nature, a system of phenomena or ideas which renders possible the construction of the natural sciences. But, as we have just seen, it is idle to look to the scientist for knowledge of the cause or causes of the existence of phenomena. And this suggests at once that Berkeley's proof of the existence of God will be an *a posteriori* proof, a variant of the causal argument. When he says in the *Philosophical Commentaries*, 'Absurd to argue the existence of God from his idea. We have no idea of God. 'Tis impossible,'[3] he is doubtless thinking primarily of his technical use of the word 'idea'. For it is obvious that there can be no idea of God, if 'God' means a spiritual being and 'idea' is used for the object of sense-perception. And when Alciphron is made to say that he is not to be persuaded by metaphysical arguments, 'such, for instance, as are drawn from the idea of an all-perfect being',[4] we have to remember that Alciphron is the 'minute philosopher' and the defender of atheism. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that Berkeley did not accept the so-called ontological argument, as used in different ways by St. Anselm and Descartes. His proof is a causal argument, based on the existence of sensible things. And the characteristic feature of Berkeley's argument for

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[1] *D.M.*, 4 and 6; IV, p. 32.

[2] *D.M.*, 7; IV, p. 12.

[3] *P.C.*, 782; I, p. 94.

[4] *A.*, 4, 2; III, p. 142.

God's existence is the use which he makes of his theory of 'ideas', If sensible things are ideas, and if these ideas are not dependent simply on our minds, they must be referred to a mind other than our own. 'It is evident to everyone, that those things which are called the works of Nature, that is, the far greater part of the ideas or sensations perceived by us, are not produced by, or dependent on the wills of men. There is, therefore, some other spirit that causes them, since it is repugnant that they should subsist by themselves.'[1]

In the *Dialogues* the proof of God's existence is put in this succinct form. '*Sensible things do really exist: and if they exist, they are necessarily perceived by an infinite mind: therefore there is an infinite mind, or God.* This furnishes you with a direct and immediate demonstration, from a most evident principle, of the *being of a God.*'[2] Berkeley does not enter at any length into the question of the unicity of God; he seems to proceed more or less straight from the statement that sensible things or ideas do not depend on our minds to the conclusion that they depend on one infinite mind. He practically takes it for granted that the system and harmony and beauty of Nature show that Nature is the product of one infinitely wise and perfect spirit, God, who upholds all things by His power. We do not, of course, see God. But we do not, for the matter of that, see finite spirits. We infer the existence of a finite spirit from 'some one finite and narrow assemblage of ideas', whereas 'we do at all times and in all places perceive manifest tokens of the divinity'.[3]

The blemishes and defects of Nature do not constitute any valid argument against this inference. The apparent waste of seeds and embryos, and the accidental destruction of immature plants and animals, may seem to point to faulty and careless management and organization, if we judge by human standards. But 'the splendid profusion of natural things should not be interpreted (as) weakness or prodigality in the agent who produces them, but rather be looked on as an argument of the riches of his power'.[4] And many things which appear to us to be evil, because they affect us painfully, can be seen to be good if they are regarded as part of the whole system of things. In *Alciphron* the speaker with this name is depicted as saying that while it may plausibly be alleged that a little evil in creation sets the good in a stronger light, this principle cannot account for 'blots so large and so black. . . . That there should be so much vice and so little virtue upon earth, and that the laws of God's kingdom should be so ill observed by His subjects, is what can never be reconciled with that surpassing wisdom and goodness of the supreme Monarch.'[1] To this Berkeley answers that moral faults are a result of human choice, and also that we ought not to exaggerate the position of human beings in the universe. 'It seems we are led not only by revelation, but by common sense, observing and inferring from the analogy of visible things, to conclude there are innumerable orders of intelligent beings more happy and more perfect than man.'[2]

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[1] *P.*, I, 146; II, pp. 107–8.

[2] *D.*, 2; II, p. 212.

[3] *P.*, I, 148; II, p. 109.

[4] *P.*, I, 152; II, p. 111.

It would be wrong to conclude from Berkeley's somewhat summary exposition of the proof of God's existence that the philosopher who was so ready to apply a critical analysis to terms such as 'material substance' was blind to the difficulties which can be encountered in analysing the meaning of the terms predicated of God. Thus he makes Lysicles speak as follows: 'You must know then that at bottom the being of God is a point in itself of small consequence, and a man may make this concession without yielding much. The great point is what sense the word God is to be taken in.'[3] There have been people, says Lysicles, who have maintained that terms such as wisdom and goodness, when predicated of God, 'must be understood in a quite different sense from what they signify in the vulgar acceptation, or from anything that we can form a notion of or conceive'.[4] Thus they were able to meet objections brought against the predication of such attributes of God by denying that they were predicated in any known sense. But this denial was equivalent to denying that the attributes belonged to God at all. 'And thus denying the attributes of God, they in effect denied His being, though perhaps they were not aware of it.'[5] In other words, to assert that the terms predicated of God are to be understood in a purely equivocal sense is to assert agnosticism. Such people so whittled away the meaning of the word 'God' by qualifications that 'nothing (was) left but the name without any meaning annexed to it'.[6]

Lysicles takes it that this agnostic position was maintained by a number of Fathers and Schoolmen. But Crito, with an apology for introducing such unpolished and unfashionable writers as the Schoolmen into good company, gives a summary historical account of the doctrine of analogical predication, in which he shows that the position of Schoolmen such as St. Thomas Aquinas and Suárez was not the same as that of the Pseudo-Dionysius. These Schoolmen did not deny, for example, that knowledge can be attributed to God in a proper sense, but only that we can properly attribute to God the imperfections of knowledge as it is found in creatures. When, for instance, Suárez says that 'knowledge is said not to be properly in God it must be understood in a sense including imperfection, such as discursive knowledge. . . . (But) of knowledge taken in general for the clear evident understanding of all truth, he expressly affirms that it is in God, and that this was never denied by any philosopher who believed a God.'[1] Similarly, when the Schoolmen said that God must not be supposed to exist in the same sense as created beings, they meant that He exists 'in a more eminent and perfect manner'.[2]

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[1] *A.*, 4, 23; III, p. 172.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *A.*, 4, 16; III, p. 163.
[4] *A.*, 4, 17; III, p. 164.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Ibid.*

This represents Berkeley's own position. On the one hand, the terms which are first predicated of creatures and afterwards of God must be predicated of Him 'in the proper sense, . . . in the true and formal acceptation of the words. Otherwise, it is evident that every syllogism brought to prove those attributes or (which is the same thing) to prove the being of a God, will be found to consist of four terms, and consequently can conclude nothing.'[3] On the other hand, the terms predicated of God cannot be predicated in the same imperfect manner or degree in which they are predicated of creatures. My notion of God, Berkeley argues, is obtained by reflecting on my own soul, 'heightening its powers, and removing its imperfections'.[4] I conceive God according to the notion of spirit which I obtain by self-reflection. The notion remains essentially the same, though in conceiving God I remove the limitations and imperfections attaching to the notion of finite spirit as such.

It cannot be said that Berkeley carried the analysis of the meaning of the terms predicated of God any further than the Scholastics had done. Nor did he give much, if any, consideration to the possible objection that in the process of removing imperfections we also remove the positive describable content of the term in question. He did, however, understand that there is a problem connected with the meaning of the terms predicated of God. And among the eminent modern philosophers who stood outside the Scholastic tradition he was one of the very few who paid any serious attention to the problem. Analogy in this context was scarcely considered by the non-Scholastic philosophers. And this is one reason why discussion of the problem by analytic philosophers today not infrequently appears to believers as being purely destructive in character. On occasion, of course, it has been destructive. But one ought also to understand that this discussion represents the resuscitation of a problem with which the Schoolmen, and Berkeley, concerned themselves, but which was scarcely touched by the majority of the better-known modern philosophers.

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[1] *A.*, 4, 20; III, pp. 168–9.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *A.*, 4, 22; III, p. 171.

[4] *D.*, 3; II, pp. 231–2.

5. Now, Berkeley frequently speaks of sensible things as though they existed in our minds. Thus we read that God 'excites those ideas in our minds',[1] and that ideas are 'imprinted on the senses'.[2] This suggests that the world is being constantly renewed or rather re-created. 'There is a mind which affects me every moment with all the sensible impressions I perceive.'[3] Again, though the metaphysical hypothesis of seeing all things in God is to be rejected, 'this optic language is equivalent to a constant creation, betokening an immediate act of power and providence'.[4] And Berkeley speaks of 'the instantaneous production and reproduction of so many signs, combined, dissolved, transposed, diversified, and adapted to such an endless variety of purposes. . . .'[5] It is also suggested, as has been already remarked, that there are as many private worlds as there are percipient subjects. And, indeed, Berkeley admits that while in the vulgar acceptation of the word 'same' we can be said to perceive the same objects, we do not do so, strictly speaking, any more than a given individual sees the same object which he touches or perceives the same object with the microscope that he perceives with the naked eye.[6]

But Berkeley also speaks of sensible things or ideas as existing in the mind of God. Natural things do not depend on me in the same way that the image of a unicorn depends on me. But, being ideas, they cannot subsist by themselves. Therefore 'there must be some other mind wherein they exist'.[7] Again, 'Men commonly believe that all things are known or perceived by God, because they believe the being of a God, whereas I on the other side, immediately and necessarily conclude the being of a God, because all sensible things must be perceived by Him'.[8] Berkeley was unwilling to deny all exteriority to sensible things; and he wished

[1] *P.*, I, 57; II, p. 65.
[2] *P.*, I, 90; II, p. 80: cf. *P.*, I, I; II, p. 41.
[3] *D.*, 2; II, p. 215.
[4] *A.*, 4, 14; III, p. 159.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 159–60.
[6] *D.*, 3; II, pp. 245–7.
[7] *D.*, 2; II, p. 212.
[8] *Ibid.*

to give a meaning to the statement that things exist when no finite spirit is perceiving them. That is to say, he wished to give a further meaning to the statement that the horse is in the stable when nobody is perceiving it than the meaning which consists in saying that this statement is equivalent to the statement that anyone who entered the stable would or could have the experience which we call seeing a horse. And he can supply this further meaning only by saying that God is always perceiving the horse, even when no finite spirit is doing so. 'When I deny sensible things an existence out of the mind, I do not mean my mind in particular, but all minds. Now it is plain they have an existence exterior to my mind, since I find them by experience to be independent of it. There is therefore some other mind wherein they exist, during the intervals between the time of my perceiving them. . . . And as the same is true with regard to all other finite created spirits, it necessarily follows there is an *omnipresent eternal Mind*, which knows and comprehends all things, and exhibits them to our view in such a manner and according to such rules as he himself hath ordained, and are by us termed the *Laws of Nature.*'[1]

At first sight at least we are faced with two divergent views in which the statement that to exist is either to perceive or to be perceived assumes different meanings. On the first view to perceive refers to the finite subject, and to be perceived means to be perceived by this subject. On the second view to perceive refers to God and to be perceived means to be perceived by God. But Berkeley attempts to reconcile the two positions by means of a distinction between eternal and relative existence. 'All objects are eternally known by God, or which is the same thing, have an eternal existence in his mind: but when things before imperceptible to creatures are, by a decree of God, made perceptible to them; then they are said to begin a relative existence, with respect to created minds.'[2] Sensible things, therefore, have an 'archetypal and eternal' existence in the divine mind and an 'ectypal or natural' existence in created minds.[3] Creation takes place when the ideas receive 'ectypal' existence.

This distinction justifies Berkeley in saying that he does not share Malebranche's theory of the vision of ideas in God. For what we perceive are ideas as possessing relative or ectypal existence. These ideas come into being when they are imprinted on our minds by God. And they are thus distinct from the ideas as eternally present in the divine mind. But it then appears to follow that we cannot speak of the ideas which we perceive as existing in the divine mind when we are not perceiving them. For they are not the same as the ideas which are present in the divine mind. If they were the same, it would be very difficult for Berkeley to escape embracing the theory of the vision of things in God, a theory which he emphatically rejects.

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[1] *D.*, 3; II, pp. 230–1. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 252. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 254.

It may be said that this distinction should not be pressed to the extent of supposing that Berkeley postulated multitudinous sets of ideas; one set for each human percipient, all these sets possessing ectypal existence, and one set in the divine mind, possessing archetypal existence. What Berkeley means, it may be said, is simply that the same sensible things which, as perceived by a finite subject, possess ectypal or natural existence possess, as perceived by God, archetypal existence. After all, Berkeley speaks explicitly of objects eternally known by God and having an eternal existence in His mind as being made perceptible to creatures and thus beginning a relative existence.[1]

True, Berkeley does speak in this way, and I have no wish to question the fact. But it seems to me disputable whether it will fit in with his other ways of speaking. If we perceive objects existing in the mind of God, we have that vision of things in God which, according to Berkeley, we do not enjoy. If, however, sensible things are our sensations or if they are ideas imprinted on us by God, they must presumably be distinct from the ideas in God.

Berkeley's fundamental aim is, of course, to show that sensible things have no *absolute* existence independent of mind, and thus to cut the ground from under the feet of the materialists and atheists. And this involves for him getting rid of Locke's material substrate as a useless and indeed unintelligible hypothesis and by proving that sensible things are ideas. Then two points of view seem to manifest themselves. First, sensible things are ideas in finite minds, not in the sense that they are arbitrarily constructed by the latter, but in the sense that they are imprinted on or presented to finite minds by the unceasing divine activity. To say, therefore, that the horse is in the stable when nobody is there to perceive it is simply to say that if, given the requisite conditions, anyone were to enter the stable, God would imprint certain ideas on his mind. And this is a metaphysical way of saying that the statement that the horse is in the stable when nobody is there to perceive it means that if anyone were to enter the stable, then, given the requisite conditions, he would have the experience which we call seeing a horse. But this point of view seems to raise difficulties with regard to the existence of the sensible world before the advent of man. Hence Berkeley introduces a second point of view according to which ideas (sensible things) are always perceived by God. But this cannot mean that sensible things are perceived by God because they exist. For they would then be made independent of mind. They must exist because God perceives them. And this means that they must be ideas in the divine mind. But Berkeley does not wish to say that we enjoy the vision of things in God. Hence he introduces the distinction between ectypal or natural and archetypal existence, falling back on the old theory of 'divine ideas'. But in this case sensible things as our ideas are distinct from the ideas possessing archetypal existence in the divine mind. And it is not then proper to say that the horse is in the stable, when it is not perceived by a finite spirit, because God perceives it. For God does not have my ideas when I am not having them. I should not care to state dogmatically that these various ways of speaking cannot be reconciled. But it seems to me very difficult to reconcile them.

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[1] *D.*, 3; II, p. 252.

It is sometimes said that Berkeley's position is difficult to refute because of the difficulty in showing that God could not act in the way that he describes, namely, imprinting ideas on our minds or presenting them to us. But those who say this forget that they are presupposing God's existence, whereas Berkeley argues from *esse est percipi* to God's existence. He does not presuppose theism and use it to prove phenomenalism: he proceeds the other way round, maintaining that phenomenalism entails theism. This is a point of view which those philosophers who followed him in his empiricism and developed it can scarcely be said to have shared. But, quite apart from this question, his phenomenalism itself seems to contain two elements. First, there is the view that sensible things are simply what we perceive or can perceive them to be. This is what may be called the common-sense element inasmuch as the ordinary man never thinks of Locke's inert, unchanging and unknowable material substrate. (The exclusion of Locke's material substrate does not necessarily entail the exclusion of substance in any sense, of course.) Secondly, there is the view that sensible things are ideas. And in so far as this view cannot be reduced to a mere decision to use a word in an uncommon way, it can scarcely be said to represent the view of the ordinary man, whatever Berkeley may say. It is disputable whether these two elements are, as Berkeley thought they were, inseparable.

Finally, there is one topic which should be briefly mentioned in this section. It has sometimes been maintained that Berkeley came to substitute *esse est concipi* for *esse est percipi*, moving from empiricism to rationalism. And the main foundation of this contention is constituted by a number of remarks in *Siris* where he speaks in a deprecatory way of the senses in comparison with reason. Thus he says that 'we know a thing when we understand it; and we understand it when we can interpret or tell what it signifies. Strictly, the sense knows nothing. We perceive indeed sounds by hearing, and characters (letters) by sight; but we are not therefore said to understand them.'[1] And he blames 'the Cartesians and their followers, who consider sensation as a mode of thinking'.[2]

It seems, indeed, to be true that in *Siris* we can see a Platonic influence at work, leading to frequent disparaging remarks about the cognitive value of sensation by itself. And it also seems to be true that Berkeley felt that there was some difficulty in talking about God as 'perceiving' things. Alluding to Newton's idea of space as the divine *sensorium*, he remarks that 'there is no sense nor sensory, nor anything like a sense or sensory, in God. Sense implies an impression from some other being, and denotes a dependence in the soul which hath it. Sense is a passion; and passions imply imperfection. God knoweth all things as pure mind or intellect; but nothing by sense, nor in nor through a sensory. Therefore to suppose a sensory of any kind—whether space or any other—in God, would be very wrong, and lead us into false conceptions of His nature.'[3] But though the philosophical parts of *Siris* (most of this curious work is concerned with the virtues of tar-water) manifest a rather different atmosphere or mood from that of Berkeley's earlier writings, it is questionable if the book represents any such fundamental change of view as has been suggested. The distinction between sensation and thought may have been accentuated in *Siris*, but it was implicit in Berkeley's earlier writings. As we have seen, he insisted on the distinction between observation of phenomena and reasoning or theorizing about them. Again, Berkeley had already stated in express terms

[1] *Siris*, 253; V, p. 120.

[2] *Siris*, 266; V, p. 125.

[3] *Siris*, 289; V, pp. 134–5.

in the *Dialogues* that 'God, whom no external being can affect, who perceives nothing by sense as we do . . . (cannot be affected by) any sensation at all'.[1] God knows or understands all things, but not by sense. Hence I do not think that it is correct to say that *Siris* represents any fundamental change in Berkeley's philosophy. The most we can say is that if certain lines of thought had been followed out and developed, lines of thought which were already implicit in earlier writings, a different version of his philosophy might have been produced in which, for example, difficulties arising from talk about God perceiving things and about 'ideas' existing in the divine mind when we are not perceiving them would have been cleared up.

6. We have already seen that Berkeley gives an empiricist or phenomenalistic analysis of the causal relation as far as the activity of sensible things is concerned. In fact, we cannot properly speak of them as active causes at all. If *B* regularly follows *A* in such a way that, given *A*, *B* follows and that, in the absence of *A*, *B* does not occur, we speak of *A* as cause and of *B* as effect. But this does not mean that *A* acts efficiently in the production of *B*. The latter follows the former according to the disposition of God. Ideas, being ideas, are passive and cannot, properly speaking, exercise efficient causality. The occurrence of *A* is the sign of the coming occurrence of *B*. 'The connexion of ideas does not imply the relation of *cause* and *effect*, but only of a mark or *sign* with the thing *signified*. The fire which I see is not the cause of the pain I suffer upon my approaching it, but the mark that forewarns me of it.'[2]

There are, therefore, as one would expect, two elements in Berkeley's analysis of the causal relation as far as sensible things are concerned. There is first the empiricist element. All we observe is regular sequence. There is secondly the metaphysical element. *A* is a God-given prophetic sign of *B*; and the whole system of Nature is a system of signs, a visual divine language, speaking to our minds of God. Moreover, it is not that God established a system in the beginning and then left it to operate 'as an artist leaves a clock, to go thenceforward of itself for a certain period. But this Visual Language proves, not a Creator merely, but a provident Governor. . . .'[3] God produces each and every sign: He is constantly active, constantly speaking to finite spirits through signs. Perhaps it is not very easy to see why God should act in this way.

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[1] *D.*, 3; II, p. 241. [2] *P.*, I, 65; II, p. 69. [3] *A.*, 4, 14; III, p. 160.

For visual signs can be of use only to spirits with bodies; and bodies, on Berkeley's principles, are themselves congeries of ideas, and so visual signs. But this difficulty is not cleared up.

In the *Third Dialogue* Hylas objects that if God is made the immediate author of all events in Nature, He is made the author of sin and crime. But to this Philonous answers, 'I have nowhere said that God is the only agent who produces motions in bodies'.[1] Human spirits are truly active efficient causes. Further, sin does not consist in the physical action 'but in the internal deviation of the will from the laws of reason and religion'.[2] The physical action of committing murder may be similar to the physical action of executing a criminal; but from the moral point of view the two actions are unlike one another. Where there is sin or moral turpitude there is a departure of the will from the moral law, and for this the human agent is responsible.

Thus Berkeley does not say that causality is nothing but regular sequence. What he says is that only spirits are truly active efficient causes. Nor does he say that God is the only true cause. What he says is that the only truly active causes are spirits. As so often with Berkeley, empiricism and metaphysics are combined.

7. Among the continental philosophers of the early modern period the one for whom one would naturally expect Berkeley to show most sympathy is Malebranche. But though he had studied Malebranche and, one must suppose, learned from him, Berkeley was at pains to draw a sharp distinction between his own philosophy and that of the French Oratorian. Several times in the notebooks he expresses disagreement with the latter. For example 'he (Malebranche) doubts of the existence of Bodies. I doubt not in the least of this.'[3] Again, apropos of Malebranche's occasionalism, he remarks: 'We move our legs ourselves. 'Tis we that will their movement. Herein I differ from Malebranche.'[4] And in the *Dialogues* he speaks at length about the remoteness of his philosophy from the 'enthusiasm' of the Frenchman. 'He builds on the most abstract general ideas, which I entirely disclaim. He asserts an absolute eternal world, which I deny. He maintains that we are deceived by our senses and know not the real natures or the true forms and figures of extended being; of all of which I hold the direct contrary. So that upon the whole there are no principles more fundamentally opposite than his and mine.'[5] Berkeley was,

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[1] *D.* 3; II, p. 237.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *P.C.*, 800; I, p. 96.
[4] *P.C.*, 548; I, p. 69.
[5] *D.*, 2; II, p. 214.

of course, well aware of the comparisons which were sometimes drawn, and understandably drawn, between his writings and those of Malebranche, especially with regard to the latter's theory of the vision of all things in God. And these comparisons irritated him. At this distance of time it may, indeed, be a little difficult to understand this irritation, even if we allow for the fact that in his own mind Berkeley had dissociated himself from Malebranche from the start. But he evidently thought of Malebranche as an 'enthusiast' who paid little attention to strict philosophical argumentation. Thus he remarks, apropos of the existence of matter, that 'Scripture and possibility are the only proofs with Malebranche. Add to these what he calls a great propension to think so.'[1] Malebranche was not concerned, in Berkeley's opinion, to recall men from metaphysics to common sense; and he made great use of alleged general, abstract ideas. However, though Berkeley's critical attitude towards the Oratorian was doubtless sincere and an expression of his honest opinion, his concern to dissociate himself from Malebranche shows that he saw that grounds for making a comparison were not altogether wanting.

The philosophy of Descartes Berkeley found uncongenial, and he criticized it frequently. Referring to the former's view that we are not immediately certain of the existence of bodies, he exclaims: 'What a jest is it for a philosopher to question the existence of sensible things, till he hath it proved to him from the veracity of God. . . . I might as well doubt of my own being, as of the being of those things I actually see and feel.'[2] And for Spinoza and Hobbes he had little, if any, sympathy. In the *Dialogues* they are grouped with Vanini as atheists and 'abbettors of impiety',[3] while in the notebooks Berkeley declares that if his own doctrines are rightly understood 'all that philosophy of Epicurus, Hobbes, Spinoza, etc., which has been a declared enemy of religion, comes to the ground'.[4] 'Hobbes and Spinoza make God extended.'[5] And it was 'silly of Hobbes to speak of the will as if it were motion, with which it has no likeness'.[6] If Berkeley disapproved of Descartes, he disapproved much more strongly of Hobbes's materialism. Nor had he much use for the deists, as can be seen from the text of the *Theory of Vision Vindicated and Explained*.[7]

The chief influence on Berkeley as a philosopher was naturally the writings of Locke. For the latter he had a great respect. He calls him 'as clear a writer as I have met with', and goes on to remark that 'such was the candour of this great man that I persuade myself, were he alive, he would not be offended that I differ from him, seeing that in so doing I follow his advice, viz. to use my own judgment, see with my own eyes and not with another's'.[1] Again, after referring to his reiterated and vain attempts to apprehend the general idea of a triangle he remarks that 'surely if anyone were able to introduce that idea into my mind, it must be the author of the *Essay concerning Human Understanding*; he who has so far distinguished himself from the generality of writers by the clearness and significancy of what he says'.[2] But though Berkeley felt a profound respect for Locke, and though the latter had furnished him to a great extent with his point of departure, his respect was, of course, accompanied by sustained criticism. In the notebooks he remarks that Locke would have done better to begin his *Essay* with the third book.[3] In other words, if the latter had begun with an examination and critique of language, he might not have fallen into his theory of abstract general ideas, which, according to Berkeley, was largely responsible for the doctrine of material substance. In general, we can say that Berkeley considered Locke to have been insufficiently empiricist and insufficiently observant of his own declared principles.

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[1] *P.C.*, 686; I, p. 83. [2] *D.*, 3; II, p. 230. [3] *D.*, 2; II, p. 213. [4] *P.C.*, 824; I, p. 98. [5] *P.C.*, 825; I, p. 98. [6] *P.C.*, 822; I, p. 98. [7] I, pp. 251 f.

8. It is worth remarking that Berkeley was influenced by Locke's notion that ethics could be turned into a demonstrative science like mathematics. Thus he made a memorandum to consider well what Locke meant in saying of algebra 'that it supplies intermediate ideas. Also to think of a method affording the same use in Morals, etc., that this doth in mathematics'.[4] The notion that the mathematical method could be applied to ethics, rendering it a demonstrative science was, of course, common at the time, partly because of the prestige won by mathematics through its successful application in physical science and partly because it was widely thought that ethics had formerly depended on authority and needed a new rational basis. Berkeley saw, indeed, that ethics could not in any case be a branch of pure mathematics; but he shared, at one time at least, the hope of making it analogous to a branch of applied mathematics or, as he puts it, 'mixt Mathematics'.[5] This dream he never attempted to fulfil systematically;

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[1] *P.C.*, 688; 1, p. 84.

[2] *E.*, 125; 1, p. 221.

[3] *P.C.*, 717; 1, p. 87.

[4] *P.C.*, 697; 1, p. 85.

[5] *P.C.*, 755; 1, p. 92.

but he made some remarks which show that he differed from Locke in his view of what form ethical demonstration would take. For Locke mathematics studies the relations between abstract ideas and can pursue demonstration by means of 'intermediate ideas'; but for Berkeley it considers the relations not between abstract ideas but between signs or symbols. Ethics, treated mathematically, would not demonstrate the relations between abstract ideas; it would concern words. It seems, he says, that all that is necessary to make ethics a demonstrative science is to make a dictionary of words and see which includes which.[1] The first important task, therefore, would be that of defining words.[2] It is clear, however, from some remarks in the notebooks that Berkeley realized even then that there is much more difficulty in attaining common agreement about the meaning of ethical terms than there is about the meaning of algebraic symbols. When one learns mathematics one learns the meaning of the symbols at the same time, without preconceptions about their meaning; but this is not the case with the terms used in ethics. This was possibly one of the reasons why Berkeley never wrote the part of the *Principles* which was to have dealt with ethics.

As it is, Berkeley's moral philosophy is fragmentary and undeveloped. In his notebooks we find the surprising assertion that 'Sensual Pleasure is the Summum Bonum. This (is) the Great Principle of Morality'.[3] This seems at first sight to be the expression of a crass hedonism. But the words which follow immediately in the same entry show that this would be a rash conclusion to draw: 'This once rightly understood all the doctrines even the severest of the Gospels may clearly be demonstrated.' For if the statement that sensual pleasure is the *summum bonum* or supreme good is to be made consistent with the severest doctrines of the Gospels, it obviously cannot be taken in its prima facie sense. Moreover, in other entries Berkeley makes a distinction between different kinds of pleasure. 'Sensual pleasure qua pleasure is good and desirable by a wise man. But if it be contemptible, 'tis not qua pleasure but qua pain or cause of pain, or (which is the same thing) of loss of greater pleasure.'[4] Again, he states that 'he that acts not in order to the obtaining of eternal happiness must be an infidel; at least he is not certain of a future judgment'.[5] These entries may seem to be inconsistent; but by 'sensual pleasure' Berkeley apparently

[1] *P.C.*, 690; 1, p. 84.
[2] *P.C.*, 853; 1, p. 101.
[3] *P.C.*, 769; 1, p. 93.
[4] *P.C.*, 773; 1, p. 93.
[5] *P.C.*, 776; 1, p. 93.

means pleasure which is sensed or perceived (concrete pleasure) rather than the gratification of sensual appetite in an exclusive sense. If happiness is the end of human life, it must be something concrete, not a mere abstraction. 'What it is for a man to be happy, or an object good, every one may think he knows. But to frame an abstract idea of *happiness*, prescinded from all particular pleasure, or of *goodness*, from everything that is good, this is what few can pretend to. . . . And in effect, the doctrine of *abstraction* has not a little contributed towards spoiling the most useful parts of knowledge.'[1]

Berkeley came to make a distinction between 'natural' pleasures, suited to man as a rational as well as a sensitive being, and 'fantastical' pleasures, which feed desire without satisfying it. He supposed that self-love, as the desire for happiness, is the ruling motive in conduct; but he emphasized rational self-love and came to depreciate the pleasures of sense in comparison with the pleasures of reason, just as in his later writings, particularly in *Siris*, he depreciated sensation in comparison with rational knowledge.

Some of Berkeley's remarks appear to represent utilitarianism and the view that the common good, rather than private happiness, is the proper object of human endeavour. Thus he speaks of 'moral or practical truths being ever connected with universal benefit'.[2] And in the treatise on *Passive Obedience* we read that it is 'the general well-being of all men, of all nations, of all ages of the world, which God designs should be procured by the concurring actions of each individual'.[3] But insistence on the common good was not in Berkeley's opinion incompatible with insistence on the primacy of rational self-love. For the latter does not spell egoism; it includes what we call altruism. And God has so contrived things that the pursuit of happiness according to reason always contributes to the common good and welfare.

Further, being convinced that morality requires rational, moral laws, Berkeley maintained that reason can ascertain a natural moral law, implying human freedom and duty. But to assert the validity of universal standards and rules is not inconsistent with saying that everyone seeks his own interest. What the moral law commands is that we should seek our true interest according to reason, and it enables us to ascertain where our true interest lies. Thus, as Berkeley observes in *Alciphron*, 'everyone's true interest is combined with his duty' and 'wisdom and virtue are the same thing'.[1]

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[1] *P.*, I, 100; II, pp. 84–5.

[2] *A.*, 5, 4; III, p. 178.

[3] *Passive Obedience*, 7; VI, p. 21.

As Berkeley believed that rational self-love includes altruism, it is only to be expected that he would attack what he regarded as the narrow egoism of Hobbes. In *Alciphron* he also attacked Mandeville and Shaftesbury, the former in the second *Dialogue*, the latter in the third. Berkeley did not accept the theory of the moral sense, and in his view neither of these philosophers understood the function of reason in the moral life, nor did either of them provide an effective motive for altruistic conduct. The common defects of the two, and the special defects of each, illustrate the moral insufficiencies of the free-thinkers. To Shaftesbury at least Berkeley was definitely unfair, and he misrepresented his position. But his criticism of the free-thinkers is of interest because it shows his conviction that morality is not autonomous and that it must be linked with religion. 'Conscience always supposeth the being of a God.'[2] It may be that by the time he wrote *Alciphron* Berkeley had been influenced by the sermons of Bishop Butler; but it does not seem that this can be proved. However, he came to believe, as Butler believed, that rational and universal rules of morality have a real importance in the moral life and that ethics and religion are more closely connected than some writers supposed.

These remarks may suggest that Berkeley threw out a number of remarks about ethics and morality, and that he did not attempt to render them fully consistent, still less to develop them systematically. And it is indeed true that we cannot find in his writings anything which can properly be called a developed ethical system. At the same time we can find in the treatise on *Passive Obedience* what may be called perhaps prolegomena to Berkeley's ethical system. And it is perhaps worth while drawing attention, at the close of this section, to the relevant passages.

Self-love, as a principle of action, has the primacy. 'Self-love being a principle of all others the most universal, and the most deeply engraven in our hearts, it is natural for us to regard things as they are fitted to augment or impair our own happiness; and accordingly we denominate them *good* or *evil*.'[3] At first the human being is guided by the impressions of sense, and sensible pleasure and pain are taken as the infallible characteristics of good and evil. But as the human being grows up, experience shows him that present pleasure is sometimes followed by a greater pain, and that present pain may be the occasion of procuring a greater future good. Further, when the nobler faculties of the soul display their activities, we discover goods which excel those of the senses. 'Hence an alteration is wrought in our judgments; we no longer comply with the first solicitations of sense, but stay to consider the remote consequences of an action, what good may be hoped, or what evil feared from it, according to the wonted course of things.'[1]

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[1] *A.*, 3, 10; III, p. 129.

[2] *A.*, 1, 12; III, p. 52.

[3] *Passive Obedience*, 5; VI, p. 19.

But this is but a first step. Consideration of eternity in comparison with time shows us that every reasonable man ought so to act as to contribute most effectively to his eternal interest. Further, reason shows that there is a God who can make man eternally happy or eternally miserable. And it follows from this that the reasonable man will conform his actions to God's expressed will. But Berkeley does not keep exclusively to this theological utilitarianism. If, he says, we consider the relation which God bears to creatures, we shall have to draw the same conclusion. For God, as maker and preserver of all things, is the supreme legislator. 'And mankind are, by all the ties of duty, no less than interest, bound to obey His laws.'[2] Duty and interest point in the same direction.

But how are we to know these laws, apart from revelation? 'Laws being rules directive of our actions to the end intended by the legislator, in order to attain the knowledge of God's laws we ought first to inquire what that end is which He designs should be carried on by human actions.'[3] The end must be good, for God is infinitely good. But it cannot be God's good; for God is already perfect. Hence the end must be the good of man. Now, it is moral goodness which makes this man rather than that man more acceptable to God. And moral goodness presupposes obedience to law. Hence the end envisaged by the legislator must logically precede all differentiations between individuals. And this means that the end must be the good, not of this or that particular man or nation, but of man in general; that is, of all men.

From this it follows that 'whatsoever practical proposition doth to right reason evidently appear to have a necessary connexion with the universal well-being included in it is to be looked upon

[1] *Passive Obedience*, 5; VI, p. 19. [2] *Ibid.*, 6; VI, p. 20. [3] *Ibid.*, 7; VI, p. 20.

as enjoined by the will of God'.[1] These propositions are called 'laws of nature' because they are universal and derive their obligation from God, not from civil sanction. They are said to be stamped on the mind because they are well known by men and inculcated by conscience. They are termed 'eternal rules of reason' because 'they necessarily result from the nature of things, and may be demonstrated by the infallible deductions of reason'.[2]

This sketch of an ethical system is of some interest because it combines consideration of contemporary themes, such as the place of self-love in the moral life, the relation of duty to interest and the common good as the end of conduct, with traditional elements such as the idea of a natural moral law, determined not by the arbitrary will of God but by an objective end. It is also of interest as showing Berkeley's insistence on the function of reason in morality. On this matter it is possible that Berkeley was influenced, to some slight extent at least, by the Cambridge Platonists. As we have seen, he speaks of 'eternal rules of reason', and he asserts that 'in morality the eternal rules of action have the same immutable universal truth with propositions in geometry. Neither of them depend on circumstances or accidents, being at all times, and in all places, without limitations or exception, true.'[3] But though Berkeley's sketch is of some interest, he is not, as moral philosopher, of the same rank as Butler.

9. To understand Berkeley's own attitude towards his philosophy, we must bear in mind his concern to prove the existence and providential activity of God and the spirituality and immortality of the soul. He was convinced that through his criticism of the theory of material substance he had deprived materialism of its chief support. 'How great a friend material substance hath been to *atheists* in all ages, were needless to relate. All their monstrous systems have so visible and necessary a dependence on it, that when this corner-stone is once removed, the whole fabric cannot choose but fall to the ground.'[4] In order to see Berkeley's philosophy as he saw it, it is essential to remember his religious, apologetic and moral interests.

But it can scarcely be claimed that the metaphysical elements in Berkeley's philosophy have exercised much influence. It was the empiricist element which was most influential. Hume, as will be seen in the following chapters, developed his phenomenalistic analysis. And in the nineteenth century J. S. Mill praised his 'three first rate philosophical discoveries, each sufficient to have constituted a revolution in psychology, and which by their combination have determined the whole course of subsequent philosophical speculation'.[1] These three discoveries were, according to Mill, Berkeley's theory of visual perception (that is, the theory expounded in the *Essay towards a New Theory of Vision*), his doctrine that reasoning is always about particulars, and his view that reality consists of collections or groups of sensations. (Mill himself defined a corporeal thing as a permanent possibility of sensations.)

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[1] *Passive Obedience*, 11; VI, p. 22.

[2] *Ibid.*, 12; VI, p. 23.

[3] *Ibid.*, 53; VI, p. 45.

[4] *P.*, I, 92; II, p. 81.

In speaking of Berkeley's importance Mill was quite justified. He remains as one of the three outstanding classical British empiricists, and his thought, in its empiricist aspect, has influenced, directly or indirectly, the subsequent development of English philosophy in this tradition. Today, when the movement of linguistic analysis is so strong in British thought, particular interest is taken in his anticipations of the theory and practice of this analysis. And it is important that this element in his thought should be brought out. But Berkeley himself would doubtless regret that the more metaphysical elements in his philosophy are generally considered unacceptable by those who esteem him on other grounds.

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[1] *Dissertations and Discussions*, 4, 155.

CHAPTER XIV

HUME (1)

Life and writings—The science of human nature—Impressions and ideas—The association of ideas—Substance and relations—Abstract general ideas—Relations of ideas; mathematics—Matters of fact—The analysis of causality—The nature of belief.

1. LOCKE, as we have seen, combined an acceptance of the principle that all our ideas arise ultimately from experience with a modest metaphysics. Berkeley, though he carried empiricism further than Locke had done by rejecting the latter's conception of material substance, nevertheless utilized empiricism in the service of a spiritualist metaphysical philosophy. The task of completing the empiricist experiment and of presenting an uncompromising antithesis to continental rationalism was reserved for David Hume. It is to Hume, therefore, that modern empiricists look as the progenitor of the philosophy which they accept. I do not mean that the modern empiricist accepts all Hume's assertions or that he imitates all the latter's ways of expressing empiricist theories and analyses. But Hume remains for him the one outstanding philosopher up to the end of the eighteenth century who took empiricism seriously and who endeavoured to develop a consistent empiricist philosophy.

David Hume was born at Edinburgh in 1711. His family wished him to become a lawyer, but he tells that he was dominated by a passion for literature and felt 'an insurmountable aversion to everything but the pursuits of philosophy and general learning'. Hume's father was not, however, sufficiently wealthy to enable his son to follow his inclinations, and the latter went into business at Bristol. This was not a successful experiment, and after a few months of uncongenial work Hume went to France, resolved to devote himself to literary pursuits and to make a consistent frugality compensate for his lack of fortune. During the years which he spent in France, 1734–7, he composed his famous work, *A Treatise of Human Nature*. It was published in three volumes (1738–40) and according to its author's account it 'fell dead-born from the press', without even exciting 'a murmur among the zealots'.

After his return from France in 1737 Hume lived in Scotland with his mother and brother. In 1741–2 he published *Essays, Moral and Political*; and the success of this work stimulated him to set about re-writing the *Treatise* in the hope that in its new form it might prove more acceptable to the public. In 1745 Hume applied for the chair of ethics and pneumatic philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, but his reputation for scepticism and atheism helped to make his application unsuccessful. After a year as a private tutor he went abroad as secretary to General St. Clair, and he did not return home until 1749. In the meantime his revision of the first part of the *Treatise* had appeared in 1748 under the title of *Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding.* A second edition appeared in 1751, and Hume gave to the book the title which it now bears, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*. In the same year he published *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, which was more or less a recasting of the third part of the *Treatise* and which was regarded by its author as the best of his works. In 1752 he published his *Political Discourses*, which earned for him a considerable reputation.

In the same year, 1752, Hume became librarian to the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh and set up house with his sister in the city, his brother having married in the previous year. Helped by the use of his library, he now turned his attention to writing on the history of England. In 1756 he published a history of Great Britain from the accession of James I to the death of Charles I, and this was followed by the appearance in 1756 of a second volume which continued the history of Great Britain up to the revolution of 1688. His *History of England under the House of Tudor* was published in 1759, and in 1761 there appeared his *History of England from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Accession of Henry VII*. As far as philosophy is concerned, he did not publish much at this time, though his *Four Dissertations*, which included one on the natural history of religion, appeared in 1757.

In 1763 Hume went to Paris with the earl of Hertford, British Ambassador to France, and for some time he was secretary to the embassy. While in Paris he consorted with the group of French philosophers associated with the *Encyclopaedia*, and on returning to London in 1716 he brought back with him Rousseau, though the latter's suspicious character soon led to a break in their relations. For two years Hume was an Under-secretary of State, but in 1769 he returned to Edinburgh, where he died in 1776. His

Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, which had been written before 1752, were published posthumously in 1779. His essays on suicide and immortality appeared anonymously in 1777 and under Hume's name in 1783.

Hume's autobiography, edited by his friend Adam Smith, appeared in 1777. In it he describes himself in a frequently quoted passage as 'a man of mild disposition, of command of temper, of an open, social and cheerful humour, capable of attachment, but little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions. Even my love of literary fame, my ruling passion, never soured my temper, notwithstanding my frequent disappointments.' To judge by the memories of the earl of Charlemont, his appearance seems to have been remote from anything which the reader of his works would be likely to attribute to him spontaneously. For according to Charlemont, Hume looked much more like 'a turtle-eating Alderman than a refined philosopher'. We are also told that he spoke English with a very broad Scottish accent and that his French was far from exemplary. However, his personal appearance and his accent, though of interest to those who like to know such details about famous men, are clearly irrelevant to his importance and influence as a philosopher.[1]

2. In his Introduction to the *Treatise of Human Nature* Hume remarks that all the sciences have some relation to human nature. This is obvious, he says, in the case of logic, morals, criticism and politics. Logic is concerned with the principles and operations of man's faculty of reasoning and with the nature of our ideas; morals and criticism (aesthetic) treat of our tastes and sentiments; politics considers the union of men in society. Mathematics, natural philosophy and natural religion appear, indeed, to be concerned with subjects quite other than man. But they are known by man, and it is man who judges what is true and what is false in these branches of knowledge. Moreover, natural religion treats not only of the nature of the divine but also of God's disposition towards us and of our obligations towards Him. Human nature is thus the 'capital or centre' of the sciences, and it is of

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[1] Page-references to Hume's *Treatise* and *Enquiries* will be given according to the editions by L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford, 1951 reprint of 1888 edition of the *Treatise* and 1951 impression of 1902 edition of the *Enquiries*). The *Treatise* will be referred to as *T.*; the *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* as *E.*, and the *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* as *E.M.* Page-references to the *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* will be given according to the edition by Norman Kemp Smith (Edinburgh, second edition, 1947), and the work will be referred to as *D.*

paramount importance that we should develop a science of man. How is this to be done? By applying the experimental method. 'As the science of man is the only solid foundation for the other sciences, so the only solid foundation we can give to this science itself must be laid on experience and observation.'[1]

Hume's *Treatise* is thus inspired by no mean ambition. 'In pretending, therefore, to explain the principles of human nature, we in effect propose a complete system of the sciences, built on a foundation almost entirely new, and the only one upon which they can stand with any security.'[2] His point is that the experimental method which has been applied with such success in natural science should be applied also in the study of man. That is to say, we ought to start with a close observation of man's psychological processes and of his moral behaviour and endeavour to ascertain their principles and causes. We cannot, indeed, make experiments in this field in precisely the same way that we can in, for example, chemistry. We have to be content with the data as they are given to us in introspection and in observation of human life and conduct. But in any case we must start with the empirical data, and not with any pretended intuition of the essence of the human mind, which is something that eludes our grasp. Our method must be inductive rather than deductive. And 'where experiments of this kind are judiciously collected and compared, we may hope to establish on them a science which will not be inferior in certainty, and will be much superior in utility, to any other of human comprehension'.[3]

It is thus the intention of Hume to extend the methods of the Newtonian science, as far as this is possible, to human nature itself, and to carry further the work begun by Locke, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and Butler. He sees, of course, that the science of human nature is in some sense different from physical science. He makes use, for instance, of the method of introspection, and he is obviously aware that this method is inapplicable outside the psychological sphere. At the same time he shares with the other philosophers of the pre-Kantian Enlightenment an insufficient understanding of the differences between the physical sciences and the sciences of the mind or 'spirit'. However, a better understanding was in part a result of the experiment of extending the general concepts of 'natural philosophy' to the science of man. And in view of the great advance in the natural sciences since the

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[1] *T.*, Introduction, p. xx.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.

Renaissance it is no matter for surprise that the experiment was made.

In the *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* Hume says that the science of human nature can be treated in two ways. A philosopher may consider man chiefly as born for action and concern himself with exhibiting the beauty of virtue with a view to stimulating men to virtuous conduct. Or he may consider man as a reasoning rather than as an active being and concern himself with enlightening man's understanding rather than with improving his conduct. Philosophers of this second type 'regard human nature as a subject of speculation, and with a narrow scrutiny examine it, in order to find those principles which regulate our understanding, excite our sentiments and make us approve or blame any particular object, action or behaviour'.[1] The first type of philosophy is 'easy and obvious', the second 'accurate and abstruse'. The generality of mankind naturally prefers the first type; but the second is requisite if the first is to possess any sure foundation. True, abstract and abstruse metaphysical speculation leads nowhere. 'But the only method of freeing learning at once from these abstruse questions is to inquire seriously into the nature of human understanding, and show, from an exact analysis of its powers and capacities, that it is by no means fitted for such remote and abstruse subjects. We must submit to this fatigue, in order to live at ease ever after; and (we) must cultivate true metaphysics with some care, in order to destroy the false and adulterate.'[2] Astronomers were once content with determining the motions and size of the heavenly bodies. But at last they succeeded in determining the laws and forces which govern the movements of the planets. 'The like has been performed with regard to other parts of nature. And there is no reason to despair of equal success in our inquiries concerning the mental powers and economy, if prosecuted with equal capacity and caution.'[3] 'True metaphysics' will drive out false metaphysics; but it will also establish the science of man on a sure basis. And to attain this end it is worth taking trouble and pursuing an accurate, even comparatively abstruse, analysis.

Hume is partly concerned in the first *Enquiry* with commending to his readers the lines of thought developed in the first part of the *Treatise*, which in his opinion failed to win due attention on its publication because of its abstract style. Hence his apologia for a style of philosophizing which goes beyond moralistic edification. But he also makes it clear that he is taking up again the original project of Locke, to determine the extent of human knowledge. He shows, indeed, that he has in mind a purpose connected with morality, namely, to discover the principles and forces which govern our moral judgments. But he is also concerned with discovering the principles which 'regulate our understanding'. To emphasize Hume's role as moral philosopher is legitimate; but this aspect of his thought is over-emphasized if his role as epistemologist is pushed into the background.

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[1] *E.*, 1, 2, p. 6. [2] *E.*, 1, 7, p. 12. [3] *E.*, 1, 9, p. 14.

3. Like Locke, Hume derives all the contents of the mind from experience. But his terminology is rather different from that employed by the former. He uses the word 'perceptions' to cover the mind's contents in general, and he divides perceptions into impressions and ideas. The former are the immediate data of experience, such as sensations. The latter are described by Hume as the copies or faint images of impressions in thinking and reasoning. If I look at my room, I receive an impression of it. 'When I shut my eyes and think of my chamber, the ideas I form are exact representations of the impressions I felt; nor is there any circumstance of the one, which is not to be found in the other.... Ideas and impressions appear always to correspond to each other.'[1] The word 'idea' is obviously used here to signify image. But, passing over this point, we can see immediately the general direction of Hume's thought. Just as Locke derived all our knowledge ultimately from 'simple ideas', so Hume wishes to derive our knowledge ultimately from impressions, from the immediate data of experience. But while these preliminary remarks illustrate the general direction of Hume's thought, they give a very insufficient account of it. And further explanation is required.

Hume describes the difference between impressions and ideas in terms of vividness. 'The difference betwixt these consists in the degrees of force and liveliness with which they strike upon the mind and make their way into our thoughts or consciousness. Those perceptions which enter with most force and violence we may name *impressions*; and, under this name, I comprehend all our sensations, passions and emotions, as they make their first appearance in the soul. By *ideas* I mean the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning; such as, for instance, are all the perceptions excited by the present discourse, excepting only those

[1] *T.*, 1, 1, 1, p. 3.

which arise from the sight and touch, and excepting the immediate pleasure or uneasiness it may occasion.'[1] Hume proceeds to qualify this statement by adding that 'in sleep, in a fever, in madness, or in any very violent emotions of soul, our ideas may approach to our impressions: as, on the other hand, it sometimes happens that our impressions are so faint and low that we cannot distinguish them from our ideas'.[2] But he insists that in general the distinction holds good; and in the *Enquiry* he remarks that 'the most lively thought is still inferior to the dullest sensation'.[3] This distinction between impressions and ideas in terms of liveliness and force is, however, somewhat misleading. At least it can be misleading, if, that is to say, it diverts our attention from the fact that Hume is primarily concerned to distinguish between the immediate data of experience and our thoughts about these data. At the same time he regards ideas as copies of impressions or images of them, and it is perhaps natural that he stresses the difference in vividness between original and image.

As we have seen, Hume asserts that 'ideas and impressions appear always to correspond to each other'. But he goes on to qualify and correct this 'first impression'. He makes a distinction between simple and complex perceptions, a distinction which he applies to both kinds of perceptions, namely, both to impressions and to ideas. The perception of a red patch is a simple impression, and the thought (or image) of the red patch is a simple idea. But if I stand on the hill of Montmartre and survey the city of Paris, I receive a complex impression of the city, of roofs, chimneys, towers and streets. And when I afterwards think of Paris and recall this complex impression, I have a complex idea. In this case the complex idea corresponds in some degree to the complex impression; though it does not do so exactly and adequately. But let us take another case. 'I can imagine to myself a city as the New Jerusalem, whose pavement is gold, and walls are rubies, though I never saw any such.'[4] In this case my complex idea does not correspond to a complex impression.

We cannot say, therefore, with truth that to every idea there is an exactly corresponding impression. But it is to be noted that the complex idea of the New Jerusalem can be broken down into simple ideas. And we can ask whether every simple idea has a corresponding simple impression and every simple impression a corresponding simple idea. Hume answers, 'I venture to affirm that the rule here holds without any exception, and that every simple idea has a simple impression which resembles it, and every simple impression a correspondent idea'.[1] This cannot be proved by examining all possible cases; but anyone who denies the statement can be challenged to mention an exception to it.

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[1] *T.*, 1, 1, 1, p. 1. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 2. [3] *E.*, 2, 11, p. 17. [4] *T.*, 1, 1, 1, p. 3.

Are the impressions derived from ideas or ideas from impressions? To answer this question we need only examine the order of their appearance. It is clear that impressions precede ideas. 'To give a child an idea of scarlet or orange, of sweet or bitter, I present the objects, or, in other words, convey to him these impressions; but proceed not so absurdly as to endeavour to produce the impressions by exciting the ideas.'[2] However, Hume mentions an exception to the general rule that ideas are derived from corresponding impressions. Suppose a man who is familiar with all shades of blue except one. If he is presented with a graded series of blues, running from the deepest to the lightest, and if the particular shade of blue which he has never seen is absent, he will notice a blank in the continuous series. Is it possible for him to supply this deficiency by the use of his imagination and frame the 'idea' of this particular shade, though he has never had the corresponding impression? 'I believe there are few but will be of opinion that he can.'[3] Furthermore, it is obviously possible to form ideas of ideas. For we can reason and talk about ideas, which are themselves ideas of impressions. We then frame 'secondary ideas', which are derived from previous ideas rather than immediately from impressions. But this second qualification does not, strictly speaking, involve an exception to the general rule that impressions precede ideas. And if we make allowance for the exception mentioned in the first qualification, we can safely enunciate the general proposition that our simple impressions are prior to their corresponding ideas.

The following point, however, must be added. Impressions can be divided into impressions of sensation and impressions of reflection. 'The first kind arises in the soul originally from unknown causes.'[4] What, then, of impressions of reflection? These are derived, 'in great measure', from ideas. Suppose that I have an impression of cold, accompanied by pain. A 'copy' of this impression remains in the mind after the impression has ceased. This 'copy' is called an 'idea', and it can produce new impressions of aversion, for example, which are impressions of reflection. These again can be copied by the memory and imagination and become ideas; and so on. But even though in such a case impressions of reflection are posterior to ideas of sensation, they are prior to their corresponding ideas of reflection, and they are derived ultimately from impressions of sensation. In the long run, therefore, impressions are prior to ideas.

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[1] *T.*, I, I, I, p. 3. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 5. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 6. [4] *T.*, I, I, 2, p. 7.

This analysis of the relation between impressions and ideas may appear to constitute a theory of purely academic interest and of little importance, except as a restatement of empiricism which excludes the hypothesis of innate ideas. But its importance becomes manifest if we bear in mind the way in which Hume applies it. For example, he asks, as will be seen later, from what impressions the idea of substance is derived. And he comes to the conclusion that we have no idea of substance apart from a collection of particular qualities. Again, his general theory about impressions and ideas is of great importance in his analysis of causality. Further, the theory can be used to get rid of what Hume calls 'all that jargon which has so long taken possession of metaphysical reasonings and drawn disgrace upon them'.[1] Philosophers may use terms which are vacuous, in the sense that they signify no determinate ideas and possess no definite meaning. 'When we entertain, therefore, any suspicion that a philosophical term is employed without any meaning or idea (as is but too frequent), we need but to inquire, *from what impression is that supposed idea derived?* And if it be impossible to assign any, this will serve to confirm our suspicion.'[2]

Hume's position can be expressed in a rather different way from that in which he actually expresses it. If a child comes across the word 'skyscraper', he may ask his father what it means. The latter can explain its meaning by definition or description. That is to say, he can explain to the child the meaning of the word 'skyscraper' by employing words such as 'house', 'tall', 'storey', and so on. But the child cannot understand the meaning of the description unless he understands the meanings of the terms employed in the description. Some of these terms can themselves be explained by definition or description. But ultimately we come down to words, the meaning of which must be learned ostensively. That is to say, the child must be shown examples of the way in which these words are used, instances of their application. In Hume's language, the child must be given 'impressions'. It is

[1] *E.*, 2, 17, p. 21.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

possible, therefore, to explain Hume's point by the use of a distinction between terms, the meaning of which is learned ostensively, and terms, the meaning of which is learned by definition or by description. In other words, it is possible to substitute for Hume's psychological distinction between impressions and ideas a linguistic distinction between terms. But the main point, the priority of experience, of the immediately given, remains the same.

It is worth noting that Hume assumes that 'experience' can be broken into atomic constituents, namely, impressions or sense-data. But though this may be possible if considered as a purely abstract analysis, it is questionable whether 'experience' can profitably be described in terms of these atomic constituents. It is also worth noting that Hume uses the word 'idea' in an ambiguous way. Sometimes he is obviously referring to the image, and, given this sense of idea, it is not unreasonable to speak of ideas as copies of impressions. But at other times he is referring to the concept rather than to an image, and it is difficult to see how the relation of concept to that of which it is a concept can legitimately be described in the same terms as the relation of an image to that of which it is an image. In the first *Enquiry*[1] he uses the terms 'thoughts and ideas' as synonymous. And it is clear, I think, that his main distinction is between the immediately given, namely, impressions, and the derived, to which he gives the general name 'ideas'.

It has been said that Hume's theory of impressions and ideas excludes the hypothesis of innate ideas. But this statement needs some qualification in view of the way in which Hume employs the term 'innate idea'. If innate is taken as equivalent to natural, 'then all the perceptions and ideas of the mind must be allowed to be innate or natural'.[2] If by innate is meant contemporary with birth, the dispute whether there are innate ideas or not is frivolous; 'nor is it worth while to inquire at what time thinking begins, whether before, at or after our birth'.[3] But if by innate we mean copied from no precedent perception, 'then we may assert that all our impressions are innate, and our ideas not innate'.[4] Obviously, Hume did not assert that there are innate ideas in the sense in which Locke was concerned to deny that there are such things. To say that impressions are innate is merely to say that they are not themselves copies of impressions; that is, that they are not ideas in Hume's sense of the word.

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[1] 2, 12, p. 18.

[2] *E.*, 2, 17, note, p. 22.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*

4. When the mind has received impressions, they can reappear, as Hume puts it, in two ways. First, they can reappear with a degree of vividness which is intermediate between the vividness of an impression and the faintness of an idea. And the faculty by which we repeat our impressions in this way is the memory. Secondly, they can reappear as mere ideas, as faint copies or images of impressions. And the faculty by which we repeat our impressions in this second way is the imagination.

Thus, just as Hume described the difference between impressions and ideas in terms of degrees of vividness, so now he describes the difference between ideas of the memory and ideas of the imagination in a similar manner. But he goes on to give another account of this difference, which is rather more satisfactory. Memory, he says, preserves not only simple ideas but also their order and position. In other words, when we say, for example, that a person has a good memory of a cricket-match, we mean that he recalls not only the various events taken singly but also the order in which they occurred. The imagination, however, is not tied down in this way. It can, for instance, combine simple ideas arbitrarily or break down complex ideas into simple ideas and then rearrange them. This is frequently done in poems and romances. 'Nature there is totally confounded, and nothing mentioned but winged horses, fiery dragons, and monstrous giants.'[1]

But though the imagination can freely combine ideas, it generally works according to some general principles of association. In memory there is an inseparable connection between ideas. In the case of the imagination this inseparable connection is wanting; but there is nevertheless a 'uniting principle' among ideas, 'some associating quality by which one idea naturally introduces another'.[2] Hume describes it as 'a gentle force, which commonly prevails'. Its causes are 'mostly unknown and must be resolved into *original* qualities of human nature, which I pretend not to explain'.[3] In other words, there is in man an innate force or impulse which moves him, though without necessity, to combine together certain types of ideas. What this 'gentle force' is in itself, Hume does not undertake to explain: he takes it as something given. At the same time we can ascertain the qualities which bring this gentle force into play. 'The qualities from which this association arises, and by which the mind is, after this manner, conveyed from one idea to another, are three, viz. *resemblance*, *contiguity* in

[1] *T.*, 1, 1, 3, p. 10.

[2] *T.*, 1, 1, 4, p. 10.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

time or place, and *cause* and *effect*.'[1] The imagination runs easily from one idea to another which resembles it. Similarly, by long custom the mind acquires the habit of associating ideas which are contiguous, immediately or mediately, in space and time. 'As to the connection that is made by the relation of *cause and effect*, we shall have occasion afterwards to examine it to the bottom, and therefore shall not at present insist upon it.'[2]

5. In the *Treatise* the section on the association of ideas is followed by sections on relations and on modes and substances. These are complex ideas which are asserted to be effects of the association mentioned above. In classifying complex ideas in this way Hume is adopting one of Locke's classifications. We can take the idea of substance first.

Hume asks, as we would expect, from what impression or impressions the idea of substance is derived, supposing that there is such an idea. It cannot be derived from impressions of sensation. If it is perceived by the eyes, it must be a colour; if by the ears, a sound; if by the palate, a taste. But nobody would say that substance is a colour, or a sound or a taste. If, therefore, there is an idea of substance, it must be derived from impressions of reflection. But these can be resolved into our passions and emotions. And those who speak of substances do not mean by the word passions or emotions. The idea of substance is derived, therefore, neither from impressions of sensation nor from impressions of reflection. It follows that there is, properly speaking, no idea of substance at all. The word 'substance' connotes a collection of 'simple ideas'. As Hume puts it, 'the idea of a substance . . . is nothing but a collection of simple ideas that are united by the imagination and have a particular name assigned them, by which we are able to recall, either to ourselves or others, that collection'.[3] Sometimes the particular qualities which form a substance are referred to an unknown something in which they are thought to inhere; but even when this 'fiction' is avoided, the qualities are at least supposed to be closely related with one another by 'contiguity and causation'. Thus an association of ideas is set up in the mind, and when we perform the activity which we describe as discovering a new quality of a given substance, the new idea enters into the cluster of associated ideas.

Hume dismisses the subject of substance in a summary manner. It is clear that he accepts the general line of Berkeley's criticism of Locke's notion of material substance, and that he does not consider that the theory of an unknown substratum needs further refutation. What is peculiar to him is that he also rejects Berkeley's theory of spiritual substance. That is to say, he extends the phenomenalistic interpretation of things from bodies to souls or minds. True, he evidently does not feel very happy about the resolution of minds into psychic events, united with the aid of the principle of association. But his general empiricist position obviously points to a consistent phenomenalism, to an analysis of all complex ideas into impressions, and he is involved in the attempt to treat spiritual substance in the same way as material substance. If he feels that his analysis leaves something out and suspects that his explanation of minds is an instance of explaining by explaining away, his doubts indicate either the insufficiency of phenomenalism in general or, at least, the inadequacy of his statement of phenomenalism. However, it is only in a later section of the *Treatise* that he deals with the mind or soul, under the heading of 'personal identity', and we may leave aside this problem for the moment, though it is useful to note at once that he does not confine himself, as Berkeley did, to a phenomenalistic analysis of the idea of material substance.

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[1] *T.*, 1, 1, 4, p. 11. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *T.*, 1, 1, 6, p. 16.

When discussing relations in the *Treatise* Hume distinguishes two senses of the word 'relation'. First, the word may be used to signify the quality or qualities 'by which two ideas are connected together in the imagination, and the one naturally introduces the other, after the manner above explained'.[1] These 'qualities' are resemblance, contiguity and the causal relation, and Hume calls them natural relations. In the case of natural relations, therefore, ideas are connected with one another by the natural force of association, so that the one tends naturally or by custom to recall the other. Secondly, there are what Hume calls philosophical relations. We can compare at will any objects, provided that there is at least some similarity of quality between them. In such comparison the mind is not impelled by a natural force of association to pass from one idea to another: it does so simply because it has chosen to institute a certain comparison.

Hume enumerates seven types of philosophical relation: resemblance, identity, relations of time and place, proportion in quantity or number, degrees in any quality, contrariety and causation.[2] It will be noted at once that there is a certain over-lapping between natural and philosophical relations. In fact, all three natural relations occur in the list of philosophical relations, though not, of course, as natural relations. But this over-lapping is not due to any oversight on Hume's part. He explains, for example, that no objects can be compared unless there is some resemblance between them. Resemblance is, therefore, a relation without which no philosophical relation can exist. But it does not follow that every resemblance produces an association of ideas. If a quality is very general and is found in a very great number of objects or in all objects, it does not lead the mind from one particular member of the class to any other particular member. For instance, all material things resemble one another in being material, and we can compare any material thing with any other material thing. But the idea of a material thing *as such* does not lead the mind by the force of association to any other particular material thing. Again, greenness is common to a great many things. And we can freely compare or group together two or more green things. But the imagination is not impelled, as it were, by natural force of association to move from the idea of green thing *X* to the idea of green thing *Y*. Again, we can compare any two things according to spatio-temporal relations, but it does not necessarily follow that the mind is impelled to do this by the force of association. In some cases it is (for example, when we have always experienced two things as spatially and immediately contiguous or as always succeeding one another immediately); but in very many cases there is no force of association at work. It may be that I am naturally, if not inevitably, impelled to think of St. Peter's when I think of the Vatican palace; but the idea of New York does not naturally recall the idea of Canton, though I can, of course, compare these two cities from a spatial point of view, asserting, for instance, that the one is so far distant from the other.

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[1] *T.*, 1, 1, 5, p. 13.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15; cf. *T.*, 1, 3, 1, p. 69.

As for causation, Hume again postpones discussion of it. But it may be as well to remark here that in his view causation, considered as a philosophical relation, is reducible to such relations of space and time as contiguity, temporal succession and constant conjunction or togetherness. There is here no necessary connection between ideas; there are only factual spatio-temporal relations. Hence causation as a philosophical relation affords no ground for proceeding beyond experience by inferring transcendent causes from observed effects. In causation considered as a natural relation there is, indeed, an inseparable connection between ideas; but this element must be explained subjectively, with the aid of the principles of association.

6. Hume treats of general abstract ideas in the first part of the *Treatise*, in close connection, therefore, with his analysis of ideas and impressions. He begins by remarking that 'a great philosopher', namely, Berkeley, has asserted that all general ideas are 'nothing but particular ones annexed to a certain term, which gives them a more extensive signification, and makes them recall upon occasion other individuals, which are similar to them'.[1] This is not perhaps a very happy statement of Berkeley's position; but in any case Hume regards it as of one of the greatest and most valuable of recent discoveries and proposes to confirm it by some further arguments.

In the first place, abstract ideas are individual or particular in themselves. What Hume means can be illustrated by his arguments in favour of this proposition. First, 'the mind cannot form any notion of quantity or quality without forming a precise notion of degrees of each'.[2] For instance, the precise length of a line is not distinguishable from the line itself. We cannot form a general idea of a line without any length at all. Nor can we form the general idea of a line possessing all possible lengths. Secondly, every impression is determinate and definite. Since, therefore, an idea is an image or copy of an impression, it must itself be determinate and definite, even though it is fainter than the impression from which it is derived. Thirdly, everything which exists must be individual. No triangle, for instance, can exist, which is not a particular triangle with its particular characteristics. To postulate an existent triangle which is at the same time all and none of the possible kinds and sizes of triangle would be an absurdity. But what is absurd in fact and reality is absurd also in idea.

It is clear that Hume's view follows from his conception of ideas and of their relation to impressions. If the idea is an image or copy, it must be particular. He thus agrees with Berkeley that there are no *abstract* general ideas. At the same time he admits that what are called abstract ideas, though they are in themselves particular images, 'may become general in their representation'.[3] And what he tries to do is to define the way in which this extension of signification occurs.

When we have found a resemblance between things which we often observe, we are accustomed to apply the same name to them all, whatever the differences between them may be. For instance, having frequently observed what we call trees and having noticed resemblances between them, we apply the same word 'tree' to them all, in spite of the differences between oaks, elms, larches, tall trees, short trees, deciduous trees, evergreens, and so on. And after we have acquired the custom of applying the same word to these objects, the hearing of the word revives the idea of one of these objects, and makes the imagination conceive it. The hearing of the word or name cannot call up ideas of all the objects to which the name is applied: it calls up one of them. But at the same time it calls into play 'a certain custom', a readiness to produce any other individual resembling this idea, if occasion should demand it. For example, suppose that I hear the word 'triangle' and that this word calls up in my mind the idea of a particular equilateral triangle. If I then assert that the three angles of a triangle are equal to each other, 'custom' or 'association' calls up the idea of some other triangle which shows the falsity of this universal statement. To be sure, this custom is mysterious; and 'to explain the ultimate causes of our mental actions is impossible'.[1] But analogous cases can be cited to confirm the existence of such a custom. For example, if we have learned by heart a long poem, we do not recollect it all at once; but remembrance or hearing of the first line, possibly of the first word, puts the mind in readiness to recall all that follows as occasion demands; that is, in due order. We may not be able to explain how this association works, but there is no doubt about the empirical facts. Again, when we make use of terms such as *government* or *church*, we seldom conceive distinctly in our minds all the simple ideas of which these complex ideas are composed. But we can very well avoid talking nonsense about these complex ideas, and if someone makes a statement which is incompatible with some element of the full content of such an idea, we may recognize at once the absurdity of the statement. For 'custom' calls up the distinct component idea as occasion requires. Again, we may not be able to give any adequate causal explanation of the process; but none the less it occurs.

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[1] *T.*, 1, 1, 7, p. 17.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

7. In the first *Enquiry* Hume asserts that 'all the objects of human reason or inquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, to wit, *relations of ideas* and *matters of fact*. Of the first kind are the sciences of geometry, algebra and arithmetic, and, in short,

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[1] *T.*, I, I, 7, p. 22.

every affirmation which is either intuitively or demonstratively certain.... Matters of fact, which are the second objects of human reason, are not ascertained in the same manner; nor is our evidence of their truth, however great, of a like nature with the foregoing.'[1] Hume means that all our reasoning concerns the relations between things. These relations are, as Locke stated, of two kinds, relations of ideas or matters of fact. An arithmetical proposition is an example of the former, while the statement that the sun will rise tomorrow is an example of the latter. In this section we are concerned with relations of ideas.

Of the seven philosophical relations only four, says Hume, depend solely on ideas; namely, resemblance, contrariety, degrees in quality and proportions in quantity or number. The first three of these are 'discoverable at first sight and fall more properly under the province of intuition than demonstration'.[2] As we are concerned with demonstrative reasoning, we are left, therefore, with proportions in quantity or number, namely, with mathematics. Mathematical propositions assert relations between ideas, and ideas only. In algebra, for example, it makes no difference to the certainty of the demonstrations and the truth of the propositions whether or not there are objects corresponding to the symbols employed. The truth of a mathematical proposition is independent of questions about existence.

Hume's account of mathematics is, therefore, rationalist and non-empiricist, in the sense that he maintains that the relations asserted are necessary. The truth of a mathematical proposition depends simply and solely on the relations between ideas, or, as we might say, on the meanings of certain symbols; and it requires no confirmation from experience. We should not, of course, understand Hume as meaning that mathematical ideas are innate in Locke's sense of the word. He was quite well aware of the ways in which we come to know the meanings of arithmetical and algebraic symbols. His point is that the truth of the propositions is quite independent of the ways in which we come to know the meanings of the symbols. Their truth cannot possibly be refuted by experience; for nothing is said about matters of fact. They are formal propositions, not empirical hypotheses. And though, of course, mathematics can be applied, the truth of the propositions is independent of this application. In this sense they can be called *a priori* propositions, though Hume does not use the term.

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[1] *E.*, 4, 1, 20–1, p. 25.

[2] *T.*, 1, 3, 1, p. 70.

In the nineteenth century J. S. Mill tried to show that mathematical propositions are empirical hypotheses. But in the characteristic empiricism of the twentieth century it is the view of Hume rather than that of Mill which is accepted. The neo-positivists, for instance, interpret mathematical propositions as *a priori* and analytic propositions. At the same time, while not, of course, denying their applicability in science, they insist that in themselves they are void of factual, empirical content. To say that four plus three equals seven is not in itself to say anything about existent things: the truth of the proposition depends simply on the meanings of the terms. And this is the view maintained by Hume.

There is a further point to be noticed. In the *Treatise* Hume asserts that 'geometry falls short of that perfect precision and certainty which are peculiar to arithmetic and algebra, yet it excels the imperfect judgments of our senses and imagination'.[1] The reason he gives is that the first principles of geometry are drawn from the general appearances of things; and that appearances cannot give us certainty. 'Our ideas seem to give a perfect assurance that no two right lines can have a common segment; but if we consider these ideas, we shall find that they always suppose a sensible inclination of the two lines, and that where the angle they form is extremely small, we have no standard of a right line so precise as to assure us of the truth of this proposition.'[2] And the conclusion Hume draws is that 'there remain therefore algebra and arithmetic as the only sciences in which we can carry on a chain of reasoning to any degree of intricacy and yet preserve a perfect exactness and certainty'.[3] But there does not appear to be any adequate reason for treating geometry as an exception to a general interpretation of mathematics. If the truth of algebraic and arithmetical propositions depends solely on 'ideas' or on definitions, the same can be said of geometry, and sensible 'appearances' are irrelevant. Hume seems to have felt this himself; for in the first *Enquiry* geometry is placed on the same footing as algebra and arithmetic. And he remarks that 'though there never were a circle or triangle in nature, the truths demonstrated by Euclid would for ever retain their certainty and evidence'.[4]

8. Philosophical relations are divided by Hume into invariable and variable relations. Invariable relations cannot be changed without a change in the objects related or in the ideas of them.

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[1] *T.*, 1, 3, 1, p. 71.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *E.*, 4, 1, 20, p. 25.

Conversely, if the latter remain unchanged, the relation between them remains unchanged. Mathematical relations are of this type. Given certain ideas or meaningful symbols, the relations between them are invariable. In order to make an arithmetical or an algebraic proposition untrue, we should have to change the meanings of the symbols; if we do not do this, the propositions are necessarily true; that is, the relations between the ideas are invariable. Variable relations, however, can change without any change in the related objects or in their ideas being necessarily involved. For example, the spatial relation of distance between two bodies can vary, though the bodies and our ideas of them remain the same.

It follows that we cannot come to have certain knowledge of variable relations by pure reasoning; that is, simply by analysis of ideas and *a priori* demonstration: we become acquainted with them by experience and observation, or, rather, we depend upon experience and observation, even in those cases where inference is involved. We are here concerned with matters of fact, and not with purely ideal relations. And, as we have seen, we cannot attain the same degree of evidence about matters of fact which we attain about relations of ideas. A proposition which states a relation of ideas, in Hume's sense of the term, cannot be denied without contradiction. Given, for example, the meanings of the symbols 2 and 4, we cannot deny that $2+2=4$ without being involved in contradiction: the opposite is inconceivable. But 'the contrary of every matter of fact is still possible, because it can never imply a contradiction. . . . That the sun will not rise tomorrow is no less intelligible a proposition and implies no more contradiction than the affirmation that it will rise.'[1] Hume does not mean that it is untrue to say that the sun will rise tomorrow: he means that no logical contradiction is involved in saying that the sun will not rise tomorrow. Nor does he intend to deny that we may feel certain that the sun will rise tomorrow. He is maintaining, however, that we do not and cannot have the same grounds for assurance that the sun will rise tomorrow that we have for the truth of a proposition in pure mathematics. It may be highly probable that the sun will rise tomorrow, but it is not certain if we mean by a certain proposition one which is logically necessary and the opposite of which is contradictory and impossible.

Hume's position on this matter is of considerable importance.

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[1] *E.*, 4, 1, 21, pp. 25–6.

Propositions asserting what he calls relations of ideas are now generally called analytic propositions. And propositions which assert matters of fact are called synthetic propositions. It is the contention of modern empiricists that all *a priori* propositions, the truth of which is known independently of experience and observation and the opposites of which are self-contradictory, are analytic propositions, their truth depending simply on the meanings of symbols. No synthetic proposition, therefore, is an *a priori* proposition; it is an empirical hypothesis, enjoying a greater or lesser degree of probability. The existence of synthetic *a priori* propositions, propositions, that is to say, which assert matters of fact but which at the same time are absolutely certain, is excluded. This general position represents a development of Hume's views.

A further point. We can make the following distinction between different kinds of variable or 'inconsistent' relations. According to Hume, 'we ought not to receive as reasoning any of the observations we may make concerning identity and relations of time and place; since in none of them the mind can go beyond what is immediately present to the senses, either to discover the real existence or the relations of objects'.[1] Thus I see immediately that this piece of paper is contiguous with the surface of the table. Here we have a case of perception rather than of reasoning. And I do not go beyond the actual perception by inferring the existence or activity of anything which transcends the actual perception. I can do so, of course; but in this case I introduce causal inference. In Hume's view, therefore, any 'conclusion (about matters of fact) beyond the impressions of our senses can be founded only on the connection of cause and effect'.[2] 'All reasonings concerning matter of fact seem to be founded on the relation of cause and effect. By means of that relation alone we can go beyond the evidence of our memory and senses.'[3] In other words, all reasoning in matters of fact, as contrasted with relations of ideas, is causal inference. Or, to put the matter more concretely, in mathematics we have demonstration, and in the empirical sciences we have causal inference. In view, therefore, of the important role played by causal inference in human knowledge we must inquire into the nature of the causal relation and the grounds which we have for proceeding by means of causal inference beyond the immediate testimony of the senses.

[1] *T.*, 1, 3, 2, p. 73.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 74.

[3] *E.*, 4, 1, 22, p. 26.

9. Hume approaches his examination of the causal relation by asking from what impression or impressions the idea of causation is derived. In the first place no quality of those things which we call 'causes' can be the origin of the idea of causation. For we cannot discover any quality which is common to them all. 'The idea then of causation must be derived from some *relation* among objects; and that relation we must now endeavour to discover.'[1]

The first relation which Hume mentions is contiguity. 'I find in the first place that whatever objects are considered as causes or effects are contiguous.'[2] He does not mean, of course, that the things which we consider to be causes and effects are always immediately contiguous; for there may be a chain or series of causes between thing *A*, which we call a cause, and thing *Z*, which we call an effect. But it will be found that *A* and *B* are contiguous, *B* and *C*, and so on, even though *A* and *Z* are not themselves immediately contiguous. What Hume rules out is action at a distance in the proper sense of the term. It must be added, however, that he is speaking of the popular idea of causation. It is popularly believed, he thinks, that cause and effect are always contiguous, either immediately or mediately. But he does not commit himself definitely in the third part of the *Treatise* to the statement that the relation of contiguity is essential to the causal relation. He says that we can take it that this is the case 'till we can find a more proper occasion to clear up this matter, by examining what objects are or are not susceptible of juxtaposition and conjunction'.[3] And later on he makes it clear that he does not regard spatial contiguity as essential to the idea of causation. For he maintains that an object can exist and yet be nowhere. 'A moral reflection cannot be placed on the right or on the left hand of a passion; nor can a smell or sound be either of a circular or a square figure. These objects and perceptions, so far from requiring any particular place, are absolutely incompatible with it, and even the imagination cannot attribute it to them.'[4] We certainly think of passions, for example, as entering into causal relations; but they cannot be said to be spatially contiguous with other things. Hume does not, therefore, regard spatial contiguity as an indispensable element in the causal relation.

The second relation which Hume discusses is that of temporal priority. He argues that the cause must be temporally prior to the effect. Experience confirms this. Further, if in any instance an effect could be perfectly contemporary with its cause, this would be so in all instances of true causation. For in any instance in which it was not the case, the so-called cause would remain for some time in inactivity and would need some other factor to push it into activity. It would not then be a true or proper cause. But if all effects were perfectly contemporary with their causes, 'it is plain there would be no such thing as succession, and all objects must be coexistent'.[1] This is, however, patently absurd. We can take it, therefore, that an effect cannot be perfectly contemporary with its cause, and that a cause must be temporally prior to its effect.

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[1] *T.*, 1, 3, 2, p. 75.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *T.*, 1, 4, 5, p. 236.

But Hume is evidently not altogether sure of the cogency of this argument. For he goes on to say: 'If this argument appear satisfactory, it is well. If not, I beg the reader to allow me the same liberty which I have used in the preceding case, of supposing it such. For he shall find that the affair is of no great importance.'[2] It is thus untrue to say that Hume lays great emphasis on contiguity and on temporal succession as essential elements of the causal relation. He decided, indeed, to treat them as though they were essential elements, but there is another element of greater importance. 'Shall we then rest contented with these two relations of contiguity and succession, as affording a complete idea of causation? By no means. An object may be contiguous and prior to another, without being considered as its cause. There is a *necessary connection* to be taken into consideration; and that relation is of much greater importance than any of the other two above mentioned.'[3]

The question arises, therefore, from what impression or impressions is the idea of necessary connection derived. But in the *Treatise* Hume finds that he has to approach this question indirectly, by, as he says, beating about all the neighbouring fields in the hope that he may light on his quarry. This means that he finds it necessary to discuss first of all two important questions. 'First, for what reason (do) we pronounce it *necessary* that everything whose existence has a beginning, should also have a cause? Secondly, why (do) we conclude that such particular causes must *necessarily* have such particular effects; and what is the nature of that inference we draw from the one to the other, and of the belief we repose in it?'[4]

The maxim that whatever begins to exist must have a cause of its existence is, Hume maintains, neither intuitively certain nor demonstrable. He does not say much about the first point and to all intents and purposes contents himself with challenging anyone who thinks that it is intuitively certain to show that it is. As for the non-demonstrability of the maxim or principle, Hume argues first of all that we conceive an object as non-existent at one moment and as existent at the next moment without having any distinct idea of a cause or productive principle. And if we can conceive a beginning of existence in separation from the idea of a cause, 'the actual separation of these objects is so far possible, that it implies no contradiction nor absurdity; and is therefore incapable of being refuted by any reasoning from mere ideas, without which it is impossible to demonstrate the necessity of a cause'.[1] After this argument, which is connected with his theory of ideas as copies or images of impressions and with his nominalism, he proceeds to refute certain formulations of the pretended demonstration of the principle that everything which begins to be does so through the productive agency of a cause. For example, Clarke and others argued that if anything began to exist without a cause, it would cause itself; and this is obviously impossible, because to do so it would have to exist before itself. Again, Locke argued that a thing which came into being without a cause would be caused by nothing; and nothing cannot be the cause of anything. Hume's main criticism of arguments of this sort is that they all beg the question by presupposing the validity of the very principle which they are supposed to demonstrate, namely, that anything which begins to exist must have a cause.

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[1] *T.*, 1, 3, 2, p. 76.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 78.

If this principle is neither intuitively certain nor demonstrable, our belief in it must arise from experience and observation. But at this point Hume drops the subject, saying that he proposes to pass to his second question, why we believe that this particular cause must have this particular effect. Perhaps the answer to the second question will be found to answer the first as well.

In the first place, causal inference is not the fruit of intuitive knowledge of essences. 'There is no object which implies the existence of any other, if we consider these objects in themselves and never look beyond the ideas which we form of them. Such an inference would amount to knowledge, and would imply the absolute contradiction and impossibility of conceiving anything different. But as all distinct ideas are separable, it is evident there can be no impossibility of that kind.'[1] For example, we do not, according to Hume, intuit the essence of flame and see its effect or effects as logically necessary consequences.

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[1] *T.*, 1, 3, 3, p. 80.

'It is therefore by *experience* only that we can infer the existence of one object from another.'[2] What does this mean in the concrete? It means that we frequently experience the conjunction of two objects, say, flame and the sensation which we call heat, and we remember that these objects have appeared in a regular recurrent order of contiguity and succession. Then, 'without any further ceremony we call the one *cause* and the other *effect* and infer the existence of the one from that of the other'.[3] The last remark shows that Hume is thinking of the ordinary man's idea of causality, and not simply of that of the philosopher. The ordinary man observes the 'constant conjunction' of *A* and *B* in repeated instances, where *A* is contiguous with *B* and is prior to *B*, and he calls *A* the cause and *B* the effect. 'When one particular species of events has always, in all instances, been conjoined with another, we make no longer any scruple of foretelling one upon the appearance of the other, and of employing that reasoning (causal inference) which can alone assure us of any matter of fact or existence. We then call the one object *cause*, the other *effect*.'[4] 'Suitably to this experience, therefore, we may define a cause to be *an object, followed by another, and where all the objects similar to the first are followed by objects similar to the second*. Or, in other words, *where, if the first object had not been, the second never had existed*.'[5]

In saying that we 'remember' past instances Hume obviously goes beyond what common experience warrants him saying. For we may very well infer cause from effect or effect from cause without recalling any past instances. But Hume corrects this error presently, by means of the principle of association.

If our belief in regular particular causal connections rests on memory of past instances of constant conjunction, it appears that we are assuming the principle or at least acting as though we assumed the principle that 'instances of which we have had no experience must resemble those of which we have had experience, and that the course of nature continues always uniformly the same'.[6] But this principle is neither intuitively certain nor demonstrable. For the notion of a change in the course of nature is not self-contradictory. Nor can the principle be established by probable reasoning from experience. For it lies at the basis of our probable reasoning. We always tacitly presuppose the uniformity. Hume does not mean that we ought not to assume the principle. To do this would be to adopt a scepticism which he considered incapable of being put into practice. He simply wishes to observe that we cannot prove the validity of our belief in causal inference by means of a principle which cannot itself be proved and which is not intuitively certain. At the same time we do in fact presuppose the principle, and we could neither act nor reason (outside pure mathematics) unless we tacitly presupposed it. This '*supposition that the future resembles the past* is not founded on arguments of any kind, but is derived entirely from habit, by which we are determined to expect for the future the same train of objects to which we have been accustomed.'[1] Again, ''Tis not, therefore, reason which is the guide of life, but custom. That alone determines the mind, in all instances, to suppose the future conformable to the past. However easy this step may seem, reason would never, to all eternity, be able to make it.'[2] The idea of habit or custom plays a great part in Hume's final analysis of causality.

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[1] *T.*, 1, 1, 3, 6, pp. 86–7.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 87.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 87.
[4] *E.*, 7, 2, 59, pp. 74–5.
[5] *E.*, 7, 2, 60, p. 76.
[6] *T.*, 1, 3, 6, p. 89.

To return to the idea of constant conjunction. The statement that it is experience of constant conjunction which leads us to assert particular causal connections does not answer Hume's question, from what impression or impressions the idea of necessary connection is derived. For the idea of constant conjunction is the idea of the regular recurrence of two kinds of similar events according to a constant pattern of contiguity and succession, and this idea does not comprise that of necessary connection. 'From the mere repetition of any past impression, even to infinity, there never will arise any new original idea, such as that of a necessary connection; and the number of impressions has in this case no more effect than if we confined ourselves to one only.'[3] But we cannot, in Hume's opinion, derive the idea of necessary connection from observation of regular sequences or causal connections. We must say, therefore, either that there is no such idea or that it must be derived from some subjective source. Hume cannot adopt the first of these alternatives; for he has already laid stress on the importance of the idea of necessary connection. He must therefore adopt the second alternative; and this is in fact what he does.

To say that the idea of necessary connection is derived from a subjective source is to say, within the framework of Hume's philosophy, that it is derived from some impression of reflection. But it does not follow that the idea is derived from the relation of the will to its effects, and that it is then extrapolated. 'The will, being here considered as a cause, has no more a discoverable connection with its effects than any material thing has with its proper effect. . . . In short, the actions of the mind are, in this respect, the same with those of matter. We perceive only their constant conjunction. . . .'[1] We must look, therefore, for another solution. Suppose that we observe several instances of constant conjunction. This repetition cannot, by itself alone, give rise to the idea of necessary connection. This point has been already admitted. To give rise to this idea, the repetition of similar instances of constant conjunction 'must either *discover* or *produce* something new, which is the source of that idea'.[2] But repetition does not make us discover anything new in the conjoined objects. Nor does it produce any new quality in the objects themselves. Observation of the repetition does, however, produce a new impression in the mind. 'For after we have observed the resemblance in a sufficient number of instances, we immediately feel a determination of the mind to pass from one object to its usual attendant. . . . Necessity, then, is the effect of this observation, and is nothing but an internal impression of the mind, or a determination to carry our thoughts from one object to another. . . . There is no internal impression which has any relation to the present business, but that propensity, which custom produces, to pass from an object to its usual attendant.'[3] The propensity, therefore, caused by custom or association, to pass from one of the things which have been observed to be constantly conjoined to the other is the impression from which the idea of necessary connection is derived. That is to say, the propensity, produced by custom, is something given, an impression, and the idea of necessary connection is its reflection or image in consciousness. This explanation of the idea of necessary connection is applicable both to external causal relations and to internal causal relations, such as the relation between the will and its effects.

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[1] *T.*, 1, 3, 12, p. 134. [2] *Abstract*, 16. [3] *T.*. 1, 3, 6, p. 88.

We are now in a position to define the notion of cause more accurately. Causation, as was seen above, can be considered either as a philosophical or as a natural relation. Considered as a philosophical relation, it can be defined thus. A cause is 'an object precedent and contiguous to another, and where all the objects resembling the former are placed in like relations of precedency and contiguity to those objects that resemble the latter'.[1] Considered as a natural relation, 'a *cause* is an object precedent and contiguous to another, and so united with it that the idea of the one determines the mind to form the idea of the other, and the impression of the one to form a more lively idea of the other'.[2] It is to be noted that 'though causation be a *philosophical* relation, as implying contiguity, succession and constant conjunction, yet it is only so far as it is a *natural* relation and produces a union among our ideas, that we are able to reason upon it or draw any inference from it'.[3]

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[1] *T.*, I, 3, 14, pp. 632–3, Appendix.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 163.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 165.

Hume has thus given an answer to his question 'why we conclude that such particular causes must necessarily have such particular effects, and why we form an inference from one to another'.[4] The answer is couched in psychological terms, referring to the psychological effect of observation of instances of constant conjunction. This observation produces a custom or propensity of the mind, an associative link, whereby the mind passes naturally from, say, the idea of flame to the idea of heat or from an impression of flame to the lively idea of heat. This enables us to pass beyond experience or observation. From the observation of smoke we naturally infer fire, even though the fire is not observed. If it is asked what guarantee we have of the objective validity of such an inference, the only ultimate answer which Hume can give is empirical verification. And in an empiricist philosophy this is the only answer which is really required.

Has Hume also answered the question, how experience gives rise to the principle that whatever begins to exist must have a cause of existence? His answer to the question why we conclude that this particular cause must have this particular effect suggests that it is custom which makes us expect every event to have some cause and which prevents us from maintaining that there can be absolutely uncaused events. And this is, I think, what he must say, given his premisses. After giving his analysis of causality he remarks that in view of the resulting definitions of *cause* 'we may easily conceive that there is no absolute nor metaphysical necessity that every beginning of existence should be attended with such an object'.[5] We cannot demonstrate the truth of the principle in question. Yet he says in the first *Enquiry* that 'it is universally allowed that nothing exists without a cause of its existence'.[1] Our belief in this principle must, then, be due to custom. It is worth noting, however, that the sentence just quoted from the *Enquiry* goes on in this way: 'and that chance, when strictly examined, is a mere negative word, and means not any real power which has anywhere a being in nature'.[2] Now, 'chance' means for Hume a fortuitous or uncaused event. And not to believe in chance is to believe that every event has a cause. And to believe this is, for Hume, to believe that every cause is a necessary or determining cause. True, events may occur contrary to expectation. And this may lead the vulgar to believe in chance. But 'philosophers' (including, of course, scientists), finding on close examination in several instances that the unexpected event was due to the counteracting effect of a hitherto unknown cause, 'form a maxim that the connection betwixt all causes and effects is equally necessary, and that its seeming uncertainty in some instances proceeds from the secret opposition of contrary causes'.[3] Here the principle that every event has a cause is described as a maxim 'formed' by philosophers. But our belief in the maxim would seem to be the result of custom or habit.

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[1] *T.*, 1, 3, 14, p. 170.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 170.
[3] *T.*, 1, 3, 6, p. 94.
[4] *T.*, 1, 3, 3, p. 82.
[5] *T.*, 1, 3, 14, p. 172.

Hume remarks that there can be only one kind of cause. 'For as our idea of efficiency is derived from the constant conjunction of two objects, wherever this is observed, the cause is efficient; and where it is not, there can never be a cause of any kind.'[4] The Scholastic distinction between formal, material, efficient and final causes is rejected. So is the distinction between cause and occasion, so far as these terms are used with different meanings. Further, just as there is only one kind of cause, so there is only one kind of necessity. The distinction between physical and moral necessity lacks any real foundation. 'It is the constant conjunction of objects, along with the determination of the mind, which constitutes a physical necessity: and the removal of these is the same thing with *chance*.'[5]

The foregoing sketch of Hume's analysis of causality indicates, I hope, the fact that he devoted considerable attention to the subject. It occupies a much more prominent position in the *Treatise* than is occupied by his treatment of substance. No doubt, he considered that the theory of material substance had already been refuted by Berkeley. But the main reason why he devotes so much attention to causality is his understanding of the all-important role played by causal influence in the sciences and in human life in general. And the great merit of his analysis, which one can recognize whether one agrees with it or not, is his attempt to combine a consistent empiricism with a recognition of the meaning which we ordinarily attribute to causation. Thus he recognizes that when we say that *X* caused *Y* we mean something more than that *X* preceded *Y* temporally and was spatially contiguous with it. He faces up to the difficulty and tries to solve it on empiricist lines. This attempt to develop a consistent empiricist philosophy is his chief title to fame. What he said was by no means so novel as has been sometimes supposed. To take one example, Nicholas of Autrecourt[1] in the fourteenth century maintained that from the existence of one thing we cannot infer with certainty the existence of another thing, since, in the case of two distinct things, it is always possible without logical contradiction to affirm the existence of the one and deny the existence of the other. It is only analytic propositions, 'reducible' to the principle of non-contradiction, which are certain. Furthermore, Nicholas appears to have explained our belief in regular causal connections in terms of our experience of repeated sequences which gives rise to the expectation that if *B* has followed *A* in the past it will do so in the future. I am not suggesting, of course, that Hume knew anything at all about Nicholas of Autrecourt or similar thinkers of the fourteenth century. I am simply drawing attention to the historical fact that a number of Hume's positions had been anticipated in the fourteenth century, even though Hume was unaware of the fact. Nevertheless, it remains true that it is Hume, and not his early predecessors, who is the patron and father of modern empiricism. Terminology has changed since the eighteenth century, and the modern empiricist tries to avoid Hume's tendency to muddle up logic and psychology. But of the modern empiricist's direct or indirect debt to Hume there can be no doubt.

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[1] *E.*, 8, 1, 74, p. 95.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *T.*, 1, 3, 12, p. 132.

[4] *T.*, 1, 3, 14, p. 171.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

To emphasize Hume's historical importance is not necessarily to accept his analysis of causality. To take one example of a possible line of criticism, it seems to me that in spite of what Hume says on the matter we are conscious of interior causal production of a kind which cannot be explained simply in terms of his analysis. He seems to suppose that the notorious difficulty in explaining how our wills influence our bodily movements, or even how we perform at will certain interior operations, shows that even here causality, on the objective side, is simply constant conjunction, or at least that we perceive only constant conjunction. But this way of arguing appears to presuppose the validity of the position which had been maintained by the occasionalists that there is no productive causal efficacy or power unless we know not only that we act causally but also how we do so. And the validity of this contention is open to question. Again, it is important to distinguish between the question whether the scientist can get along with Hume's idea of causality and the question whether this idea represents an analysis that is adequate from the philosophical point of view. The physicist is not concerned, for instance, with the problem of the logical and ontological status of the principle that everything which begins to be does so through the agency of an extrinsic cause. It is not necessary for him to concern himself with such a problem. But the philosopher does ask this question. And Hume's treatment of it is open to criticism. For instance, even if one can imagine first a blank, as it were, and then *X* existing, it by no means follows necessarily that *X* can begin to exist without an extrinsic cause. Nor, from the fact that there is no verbal contradiction between the statements '*X* began to exist' and '*X* had no cause' does it necessarily follow that the statements are compatible when examined from the point of view of 'metaphysical analysis'. We have on the one hand analytic and 'formal' propositions and on the other empirical hypotheses: there is, in his scheme, no room for synthetic *a priori* propositions. And this is, indeed, the problem, whether or not there are propositions which are certain and yet informative about reality. But to discuss this matter adequately would mean discussing the nature and status of metaphysics. Once given Hume's premisses and his conception of 'reason', something resembling his analysis of causality must follow. We cannot accept his premisses and then add on a metaphysical doctrine of causality.

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[1] For Nicholas of Autrecourt vol. III of this *History* may be consulted (pp. 135 f.).

In criticizing Hume it is, however, important to remember that he does not deny that there are causal relations. That is to say, he does not deny the truth of the statement that flame causes heat. Nor does he deny even the truth of the statement that flame necessarily causes heat. What he does is to inquire into the meaning of these statements. And the question, in a discussion with Hume, is not whether there are causal relations, but what it means to say that there are causal relations. Again, the question is not whether there are any necessary connections, but what it means to say that there are necessary connections.

10. As we have seen, the uniformity of nature is not demonstrable by reason. It is the object of belief rather than of intuition or demonstration. We can say, indeed, as the ordinary man would say, that we know it, if the word *know* is used with the wide range of meaning that it has in common discourse. But if the word is used in a strict sense, to mean our apprehension of those propositions in the case of which all other alternatives are excluded, we cannot be said to have knowledge of the uniformity of nature. For Hume, we have analytic propositions on the one hand, which express relations between ideas, and synthetic propositions, which are based in some way on experience. But experience by itself gives us only factual data: it cannot tell us about the future. Nor can we prove by reason that our beliefs and expectations about the future are justified. Yet belief plays a very important part in human life. If we were confined to analytic propositions on the one hand and immediate empirical data, present or remembered, on the other, human life would be impossible. Every day we perform actions which are based on belief. It becomes necessary, therefore, to investigate the nature of belief.

Hume's account of belief illustrates his tendency to confuse logic and psychology. For he gives a psychological answer to the logical question about the grounds of that assurance which he calls belief. But he is perhaps bound to do this. For on his premisses there can be no logical grounds for our beliefs about the future course of events. He must, therefore, content himself with showing how we come to have these beliefs.

According to Hume, believing a proposition cannot be explained in terms of the operations of joining ideas. If, to take one of his examples, someone tells me that Julius Caesar died in his bed, I understand his statement and I join the same ideas as he does, but I do not assent to the proposition. We must look elsewhere for the difference between belief and incredulity. In Hume's view belief 'does nothing but vary the manner in which we conceive any object, it can only bestow on our ideas an additional force and vivacity. An opinion, therefore, or belief, may be most accurately defined, *a lively idea related to or associated with a present impression.*'[1] For example, when we infer the existence of one thing from that of another (that is to say, when we believe as the result of inference that something exists), we pass from the impression of one object to the 'lively' idea of another; and it is this liveliness or vivacity of the idea which is characteristic of belief. In passing from the impression to the idea 'we are not determined by reason, but by custom, or a principle of association. But belief is something more than a simple idea. It is a particular manner of forming an idea; and as the same idea can only be varied by a variation of its degrees of force and vivacity, it follows upon the whole that belief is a lively idea produced by a relation to a present impression, according to the foregoing definition.'[1]

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[1] *T.*, 1, 3, 7, p. 96.

We can distinguish, therefore, between belief and fancies by referring to the manner in which we conceive the relevant ideas. 'An idea assented to *feels* different from a fictitious idea that the fancy alone presents to us: and this different feeling I endeavour to explain by calling it a superior *force*, or *vivacity*, or *solidity*, or *firmness*, or *steadiness*.'[2] Belief is 'a term that everyone sufficiently understands in common life';[3] but in philosophy we can describe it only in terms of feeling.

However, even if words like 'vivacity' and 'liveliness' suffice to distinguish propositions in which we believe from fancies which are known to be fancies, is it not true that we have many beliefs about which we have no strong feelings at all? We believe that the earth is not flat and that the moon is a satellite of the earth, but most of us have no strong *feelings* on these matters. It seems that in answer Hume must refer to the attributes of steadiness and firmness rather than to those of vivacity and liveliness. In Hume's view our assent to a proposition must be conditioned by the exclusion of alternatives. In the cases of an analytic proposition any contrary proposition is excluded because the denial of an analytic proposition is seen to be self-contradictory. In the case of a synthetic proposition the alternatives are excluded in proportion to the regularity with which the situation asserted in the proposition has occurred in the past, observation of this repetition having set up a custom and brought into play the principles of association. In the case of the statement that the moon is a satellite of the earth, we have always been told that it is true, nothing has occurred to make us doubt the truth of the statement, and any observations we may have made are compatible with its truth. We have, therefore, a firm and steady belief in the truth of the statement, even though we may not feel so strongly about it as we might feel, for example, about the honesty of an intimate friend when it has been maliciously impugned.

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[1] *T.*, I, 3, 7, p. 97.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 629, Appendix.

[3] *Ibid.*

I have said that we have always been told that the moon is a satellite of the earth. This means that belief can be generated by education, and so by ideas. This Hume admits. 'All those opinions and notions of things, to which we have been accustomed from our infancy, take such deep root, that it is impossible for us, by all the powers of reason and experience, to eradicate them; and this habit not only approaches in its influence, but even on many occasions prevails over that which arises from the constant and inseparable union of causes and effects. Here we must not be contented with saying that the vividness of the idea produces the belief: we must maintain that they are individually the same. . . . I am persuaded that, upon examination, we shall find more than one half of those opinions which prevail among mankind to be owing to education, and that the principles which are thus implicitly embraced overbalance those which are owing either to abstract reasoning or experience. . . . Education is an artificial and not a natural cause.'[1]

According to Hume, therefore, 'when I am convinced of any principle, it is only an idea which strikes more strongly upon me. When I give the preference to one set of arguments above another, I do nothing but decide from my feeling concerning the superiority of their influence.'[2] Again, 'all our reasonings concerning causes and effects are derived from nothing but custom, and belief is more properly an act of the sensitive than of the cogitative part of our natures'.[3] How, then, can we decide between rational and irrational beliefs? Hume does not appear to give any very clear and explicit answer to this question; and when he is dealing with irrational beliefs, he tends to indicate how, in his opinion, the mind works rather than to make it clear how we are to distinguish between beliefs which are rational and those which are not. But his general answer to the problem seems to be more or less this. Many beliefs are the result of 'education', and some of them are irrational. The way to cure ourselves of them is to have recourse to experience or, rather, to test those beliefs by experience. Does the belief which is the result of our having been constantly told that it is true fit in with the beliefs which are founded on experience

[1] *T.*, 1, 3, 9, pp. 116–17.

[2] *T.*, 1, 3, 8, p. 103.

[3] *T.*, 1, 4, 1, p. 183.

of causal relations? If the former is incompatible or inconsistent with the latter, it should be discarded. Education is an 'artificial cause', and we should prefer the 'natural' cause of beliefs, causal relations in the philosophical sense, that is, constant or invariable conjunctions. Of course, we can form irrational beliefs, based on experience. Hume gives the example of generalizations about the members of some foreign nation which are the result of one or two encounters with foreigners. But the way to correct prejudices of this kind is obvious: it is the way by which such prejudices are in fact corrected, if they are corrected. Further, irrational beliefs can be generated by experience of uniformities or of constant conjunctions. But these can be corrected by reflection in the light of wider experience which reveals contrary instances or brings other factors to light. Tolstoy speaks somewhere of the belief of some peasants that the budding of the oak trees in the spring is due to a certain wind. And if the wind was contiguous with the trees and prior to their budding, the belief can be explained. But if experience reveals instances where the oaks bud even when this particular wind is not blowing, we do not entertain the peasants' belief. Again, even if in all instances oak trees budded only when the particular wind was blowing, the belief that the budding is caused by the wind might still be incompatible with our experience and observation of other cases of budding. The mind would not, then, form a habit or custom supplying, so to speak, the element of necessary connection; and we would not believe that the wind caused the budding of the oak trees.

If these remarks represent Hume's mind, a further difficulty arises. Hume often speaks as though custom not only does dominate but also ought to dominate in human life. At the same time he also speaks as though experience ought to be our guide. Thus he says that 'the experienced train of events is the great standard by which we all regulate our conduct. Nothing else can be appealed to in the field, or in the senate. Nothing else ought ever to be heard of in the school or in the closet.'[1] But perhaps the difficulty can be answered to some extent in this way. According to Hume, there are certain fundamental customary beliefs which are essential to human life; belief in the continuous and independent existence of bodies, and the belief that everything which begins to be has a cause. These fundamental customary beliefs dominate and ought to dominate, if, that is to say, human life is to be possible. And they condition our more specific beliefs. But these latter are not inevitable and necessary: we are capable of testing and altering them. The test is the experienced course of events and consistency with beliefs which are themselves compatible with the experienced course of events.

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[1] *E.*, 11, 110, p. 142.

CHAPTER XV

HUME (2)

Our belief in the existence of bodies—Minds and the problem of personal identity—The existence and nature of God—Scepticism.

1. At the close of the last chapter we saw that belief in the continuing existence of bodies independently of the mind or of perception is for Hume a fundamental natural belief. But we must examine rather more closely what he has to say on this matter.

The main difficulty, Hume says, which arises in connection with our notion of a world of permanently existing objects independent of our perception, is that we are confined to the world of perceptions and enjoy no access to a world of objects existing independently of these perceptions. 'Now since nothing is ever present to the mind but perceptions, and since all ideas are derived from something antecedently present to the mind, it follows that it is impossible for us so much as to conceive or form an idea of anything specifically different from ideas and impressions. Let us fix our attention out of ourselves as much as possible; let us chase our imagination to the heavens, or to the utmost limits of the universe; we never really advance a step beyond ourselves, nor can conceive any kind of existence, but those perceptions which have appeared in that narrow compass. This is the universe of the imagination, nor have we any idea but what is there produced.'[1] Ideas are ultimately reducible to impressions, and impressions are subjective, pertaining to the percipient subject. We cannot, therefore, ever conceive what objects would be like, or are like, apart from our perceptions.

It is important to understand that Hume does not intend to deny the existence of body or bodies independently of our perceptions. He maintains, indeed, that we are unable to prove that body exists; but at the same time he insists that we cannot help assenting to the proposition. 'Nature has not left this to his (the sceptic's) choice, and has doubtless esteemed it an affair of too great importance to be trusted to our uncertain reasonings and speculations. We may well ask, ***What causes induce us to believe in the existence of body?***, but it is in vain to ask ***whether there be body or***

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[1] *T.*, 1, 2, 6, pp. 67–8.

not. That is a point which we must take for granted in all our reasonings.'[1] The sceptic, as well as the non-sceptic, consistently acts as though body really exists; he cannot help believing in this, whatever academic doubts he may air in his study. We can only inquire, therefore, what is the cause or what are the causes which induce us to believe in the continued existence of bodies distinct from our minds and perceptions.

In the first place the senses cannot be the source of the notion that things continue to exist when they are unperceived. For in order for this to be the case, the senses would have to operate when they have ceased to operate. And this would involve a contradiction. Nor do the senses reveal to us bodies which are distinct from our perceptions; that is, from the sensible appearances of bodies. They do not reveal to us both a copy and the original. It may, indeed, seem that I perceive my own body. But 'properly speaking, it is not our body we perceive, when we regard our limbs and members, but certain impressions, which enter by the senses; so that the ascribing a real and corporeal existence to these impressions, or to their objects, is an act of the mind as difficult to explain as that which we examine at present'.[2] It is true that among the classes of impressions we ascribe a distinct and continuous existence to some and not to others. Nobody attributes distinct and continuous existence to pains and pleasures. The 'vulgar', though not 'philosophers', suppose that colours, tastes, sounds and, in general, the so-called secondary qualities possess such existence. Both philosophers and the vulgar alike suppose figure, bulk, motion and solidity to exist continuously and independently of perception. But it cannot be the senses themselves which lead us to make these distinctions; for, as far as the senses are concerned, all these impressions are on the same footing.

In the second place it is not reason which induces us to believe in the continuous and distinct existence of bodies. 'Whatever convincing arguments philosophers may fancy they can produce to establish the belief of objects independent of the mind, it is obvious these arguments are known but to very few; and that it is not by them that children, peasants, and the greatest part of mankind are induced to attribute objects to some impressions and deny them to others.'[3] Nor can we rationally justify our belief, once we have it. 'Philosophy informs us that everything which appears to the mind is nothing but a perception, and is interrupted and dependent on the mind.'[1] And we cannot infer the existence of objects from perceptions. Such an inference would be a causal inference. And for it to be valid we should have to be able to observe the constant conjunction of those objects with these perceptions. And this we cannot do. For we cannot get outside the series of our perceptions to compare them with anything apart from them.

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[1] *T.*, 1, 4, 2, p. 187.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 191.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 193.

Our belief in the continued and independent existence of bodies, and our habit of supposing that objective and independent counterparts of certain impressions exist, must be due, therefore, neither to the senses nor to the reason or understanding but to the imagination. The question thus arises, which are the features of certain impressions that work on the imagination and produce our persuasion of the continued and distinct existence of bodies? It is useless to refer this belief or persuasion to the superior force or violence of certain impressions as compared with others. For it is obvious that the majority of people suppose that the heat of a fire, placed at a convenient distance, is in the fire itself, whereas they do not suppose that the intense pain caused by too great proximity to the fire is anywhere else but in the impressions of the percipient subject. Hence we have to look elsewhere for the peculiar features of certain impressions, which work upon the imagination.

Hume mentions two such peculiar features, namely, constancy and coherence. 'Those mountains and houses and trees which lie at present under my eye have always appeared to me in the same order; and when I lose sight of them by shutting my eyes or turning my head, I soon after find them return upon me without the least alteration.'[2] Here we have constantly recurring similar impressions. But, obviously, bodies often change not only their positions but also their qualities. However, even in their changes there is a coherence. 'When I return to my chamber after an hour's absence, I find not my fire in the same situation in which I left it; but then I am accustomed, in other instances, to see a like alteration produced in a like time, whether I am present or absent, near or remote. This coherence, therefore, in their changes, is one of the characteristics of external objects, as well as their constancy.'[3] Hume's meaning is, I think, sufficiently clear. My impressions of the mountain which I can see through the window are constant, in the sense that, given the requisite conditions, they

[1] *T.*, 1, 4, 2, p. 193. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 194. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 195.

are similar. From the point of view of perception the mountain remains more or less the same. But the impression which I receive of the fire in my room at 9 p.m. is not the same as the impression which I receive when I return to the room at 10.30 p.m. The fire, as we say, has died down in the meantime. On the other hand, these two separate impressions agree with the two separate impressions which I receive at the same interval of time on another evening. And if I watch the fire for a stretch of time on two or more occasions, there is a regular pattern of coherence between the different series of impressions.

Hume is not, however, satisfied with an explanation of our belief in the continuous and independent existence of bodies, which rests simply and solely on the actual course of our impressions. On the one hand our impressions are in fact interrupted, while on the other hand we habitually believe in the continuous existence of bodies. And the mere repetition of interrupted, though similar, impressions cannot by itself produce this belief. We must look there for 'some other principles', and Hume, as we would expect, has recourse to psychological considerations. 'The imagination, when set into any train of thinking, is apt to continue even when its object fails it, and, like a galley put in motion by the oars, carries on its course without any new impulse.'[1] Once the mind begins to observe a uniformity or coherence among impressions, it tends to render this uniformity as complete as possible. The supposition of the continued existence of bodies suffices for this purpose and affords us a notion of greater regularity and coherence than is provided by the senses. But though coherence may give rise to the supposition of the continuous existence of objects, the idea of constancy is needed to explain our supposition of their distinct existence; that is, of their independence of our perceptions. When we have been accustomed to find, for example, that the perception of the sun recurs constantly in the same form as on its first appearance, we are inclined to regard these different and interrupted perceptions as being the same. Reflection, however, shows us that the perceptions are not the same. Therefore, to free ourselves from this contradiction, we disguise or remove the interruption 'by supposing that these interrupted perceptions are connected by a real existence, of which we are insensible'.[2]

These observations are not, it is true, very enlightening. And Hume endeavours to make his position more precise and clear.

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[1] *T.*, 1, 4, 2, p. 198.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 199.

To do this, he distinguishes between the opinion of the vulgar and what he calls the 'philosophical system'. The vulgar are 'all the unthinking and unphilosophical part of mankind, that is, all of us at one time or other'.[1] These people suppose, says Hume, that their perceptions are the only objects. 'The very image which is present to the senses is with us the real body; and it is to these interrupted images we ascribe a perfect identity.'[2] In other words, the vulgar know nothing of Locke's material substance; material objects are for them simply what they perceive them to be. And to say this is, for Hume, to say that for the vulgar objects and perceptions are the same. This presupposed, we are then faced by a difficulty. On the one hand, 'The smooth passage of the imagination along the ideas of the resembling perceptions makes us ascribe to them a perfect identity'.[3] On the other hand, the interrupted manner of their occurrence or, as Hume says, appearance, leads us to consider them as distinct entities. But this contradiction gives rise to an uneasiness, and it must therefore be resolved. As we cannot bring ourselves to sacrifice the propensity produced by the smooth passage of the imagination, we sacrifice the second principle. It is true that the interruptions in the appearance of similar perceptions are often so long and frequent that we cannot overlook them; but at the same time 'an interrupted appearance to the senses implies not necessarily an interruption in the existence'.[4] Hence we can 'feign' a continued existence of objects. Yet we do not merely feign this; we *believe* it. And, according to Hume, this belief can be explained by reference to memory. Memory presents us with a great number of instances of similar perceptions which recur at different times after considerable interruptions. And this resemblance produces a propensity to look upon these interrupted perceptions as the same. At the same time it also produces a propensity to connect the perceptions by means of the hypothesis of a continued existence, in order to justify our ascription of identity to them and in order to avoid the contradiction in which the interrupted character of our perceptions seems to involve us. We have, therefore, a propensity to feign the continuous existence of bodies. Further, since this propensity arises from lively impressions of the memory, it bestows vivacity on this fiction, 'or, in other words, makes us believe the continued existence of body'.[5] For belief consists in the vivacity of an idea.

But though we are led in this way to believe in the continued existence of 'sensible objects or perceptions', philosophy makes us see the fallacy of the supposition. For reason shows us that our perceptions do not exist independently of our perceiving. And they have no more a continued than an independent existence. Philosophers, therefore, have made a distinction between perceptions and objects. The former are interrupted and dependent on the percipient subject: the latter exist continuously and independently. But this theory is arrived at by first embracing and then discarding the vulgar opinion, and it contains not only all the difficulties attaching to the latter but also some which are peculiar to itself. For instance, the theory involves postulating a new set of perceptions. We cannot, as has been seen earlier, conceive of objects except in terms of perceptions. Hence, if we postulate objects as well as perceptions, we merely reduplicate the latter and at the same time ascribe to them attributes, namely, uninterruptedness and independence, which do not belong to perceptions.

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[1] *T.*, I, 4, I, p. 205. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*, pp. 207–8. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 209.

The upshot of Hume's examination of our belief in the continued and independent existence of bodies is, therefore, that there is no rational justification for it. At the same time we cannot eradicate the belief. We can take it for granted, 'whatever may be the reader's opinion at this present moment, that an hour hence he will be persuaded there is both an external and internal world'.[1] It is only in the actual course of philosophical reflection that scepticism on this point is possible, and even there it is only theoretical. It is to be noted that Hume does not recommend the theory that certain qualities (the so-called secondary qualities) are subjective, while others (the primary qualities) are objective. On the contrary, he maintains that 'if colours, sounds, tastes and smells be merely perceptions, nothing we can conceive is possessed of a real, continued and independent existence; not even motion, extension and solidity, which are the primary qualities chiefly insisted on'.[2] True, he agrees that 'when we reason from cause to effect, we conclude that neither colour, sound, taste nor smell have a continued and independent existence'.[3] But 'when we exclude these sensible qualities, there remains nothing in the universe which has such an existence'.[4] Hume certainly accepted the main lines of Berkeley's criticism of Locke, but he did not follow him further. For though Berkeley intended to refute the sceptics, as well as the atheists and materialists, his arguments, according to Hume, lead to scepticism in that 'they admit of no answer and produce no conviction. Their only effect is to cause that momentary amazement and irresolution and confusion, which is the result of scepticism.'[1] The retort can be made, of course, that Hume's position is more sceptical than Berkeley's, since he consciously underlines a fundamental and irreconcilable contradiction between the conclusions of philosophical reasoning and our natural belief. It is also arguable that he tends to misrepresent Berkeley to the extent that he depicts him as wishing to correct the opinions of 'the vulgar'. But, though all this may well be true, we must remember that Hume ultimately takes the side of the vulgar. His point is that we have an inevitable and ineradicable propensity to believe in the continuous and independent existence of bodies. This propensity produces belief, and this belief operates in the vulgar and the philosophical alike. All attempts to give a rational justification of this belief are failures. There may be something apart from our perceptions, but we cannot prove that this is the case. At the same time nobody does or can live his life on sceptical principles. Natural belief inevitably, and rightly, prevails.

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[1] *T.*, 1, 4, 1, p. 218. [2] *T.*, 1, 4, 4, p. 228. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 231. [4] *Ibid.*

It is clear, I think, that a good deal of the force of Hume's arguments depends on the premiss that it is our perceptions with which we are immediately acquainted. Moreover, he seems to use the word 'perception' in two senses, to signify, that is, the act of perceiving and the object perceived. It is obvious that our perceptions, in the first sense of the word 'perception', are interrupted and discrete. But the ordinary man is aware of this, and he does not identify, for example, two interrupted perceptions of the sun. If he can be said to identify his perceptions, he identifies them in the second sense of the word 'perception'. Hume might retort, of course, that to make this distinction is to beg the whole question; for it is the distinction itself which is the subject of dispute. At the same time the discussion cannot be profitably carried on unless linguistic distinctions are carefully sorted out. And Hume's discussion of the problem seems to me to suffer from the defect common to Locke's 'way of ideas' and its derivatives, namely, that a term such as 'idea' or 'perception' is used in an unusual sense without sufficient care being taken to discriminate between the unusual and the usual senses. And this point is of considerable importance. For momentous philosophical conclusions follow if

[1] *E.*, 12, 1, 122, p. 155, note.

these words are taken in the unusual sense. It is, indeed, arguable that it is the empiricists who beg the whole question and that Hume's sceptical conclusions follow from his linguistic usage.

At the same time Hume's general position, that it is natural belief, analogous to animal 'belief', which does and should prevail in human life and that reason is powerless to justify these beliefs, if 'justify' is taken to mean something more than giving a psychological account of the genesis of the beliefs, is of great historical importance. It is probably this position which is characteristic of Hume and which sets him apart from both Locke and Berkeley. There are, indeed, some anticipations of the position in Locke; but Locke's philosophy had, as we have seen, a markedly rationalist element. It is Hume, above all other classical empiricists, who embodies the anti-rationalist current of thought. And it is a mistake to dwell so exclusively on his scepticism as to pass over or minimize the great emphasis which he places on the role of natural belief.

2. According to Hume, the problem of minds is not so complicated and difficult as the problem of bodies. 'The intellectual world, though involved in infinite obscurities, is not perplexed with any such contradictions as those we have discovered in the natural. What is known concerning it, agrees with itself; and what is unknown, we must be contented to leave so.'[1] Further reflection, as we shall see, led Hume to a less optimistic conclusion; but this is what he begins by saying.

Tackling first of all the subject of the immateriality of the soul, Hume suggests that the question whether perceptions inhere in a material or an immaterial substance is a meaningless question, in the sense that we can attach no clear meaning to it and cannot, therefore, answer it. In the first place, have we any idea of substance? If so, what is the impression which produces this idea? It may be said that we have an idea of substance because we can define it as 'something which may exist by itself'. But this definition will fit everything conceivable. For whatever is clearly and distinctly conceivable can exist by itself, as far as possibility is concerned. Hence the definition will not serve to distinguish substance from accident or soul from perceptions. In the second place, what is meant by 'inhesion'? 'Inhesion in something is supposed to be requisite to support the existence of our perceptions. Nothing appears requisite to support the existence of a perception. We have, therefore, no idea of inhesion.'[2] Perceptions cannot inhere in a body. For in order to do so they would have to be present locally. But it is absurd to speak of a passion, for example, being situated locally in relation to a moral reflection, as being above or below it, to the right or left of it. It does not follow, however, that perceptions can inhere in an immaterial substance. 'That table, which just now appears to me, is only a perception, and all its qualities are qualities of a perception. Now the most obvious of all its qualities is extension. The perception consists of parts.'[1] But what does it mean to say that an extended perception inheres in an immaterial substance? The supposed relation is inexplicable. If it is said that perceptions must inhere in something, to say this is to beg the question. In truth an object can exist and yet exist nowhere. 'And I assert that this is not only possible but that the greatest part of beings do and must exist after this manner.'[2]

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[1] *T.*, 1, 4, 5, p. 232.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 234

Hume's remarks about the table evidently presupposes that what I know, when I know the table, is a perception. There may be things other than perceptions; but, if so, we cannot know what they are. We are confined to the world of perceptions. This presupposition is present also, I think, in his argument to show that the theory of the soul as an immaterial substance is indistinguishable in the long run from what he calls, perhaps ironically, the 'hideous hypothesis' of Spinoza. There is, first, the universe of objects or bodies. All these, according to Spinoza, are modifications of one substance or subject. There is, secondly, the universe of thought, the universe of my impressions and ideas. These, we are told by the 'theologians', are modifications of a simple, unextended substance, the soul. But we cannot distinguish between perceptions and objects, and we can find no relation, whether of connection or repugnance, which affects the one and does not affect the other. If, therefore, we object against Spinoza that his substance must be identical with its modifications and, further, that it must be identical with incompatible modifications, exactly the same line of objection can be urged against the hypothesis of the theologians. The immaterial soul must be identical, for instance, with tables and chairs. And if we have an idea of the soul, this idea will itself be a perception and a modification. We shall thus end up with Spinoza's theory of one substance. In fine, any argument to show the absurdity of saying that all so-called natural objects are modifications of one substance will also serve to show the absurdity of saying that all impressions and ideas, that is, all perceptions, are modifications of an immaterial substance, the soul. And all arguments to establish that perceptions are modifications of the soul will also tend to establish the hypothesis of Spinoza. For we cannot distinguish between perceptions and objects and make statements about the one which will not apply to the other.

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[1] *T.*, 1, 4, 5, p. 239.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 235.

Of course, it is not Hume's intention to argue in favour of Spinoza's monism. He is engaged in an *argumentum ad hominem*, trying to show that the theological view of the soul is as open to criticism as is the theory of Spinoza. The conclusion which he draws is that 'the question concerning the substance of the soul is absolutely unintelligible. All our perceptions are not susceptible of a local union, either with what is extended or unextended; there being some of them of the one kind, and some of the other.'[1] The problem about the substance of the soul had, therefore, better be dismissed. For we can make no sense of it.

But if there is no substance, whether extended or unextended, which can be called the 'soul', what of personal identity? Hume is obviously compelled to deny that we have any idea of the self as distinct from our perceptions. Some philosophers, he tells us, imagine that we are always conscious of the self as something which remains in a permanent state of self-identity. But if we have any clear and intelligible idea of the self, it must be derived from an impression. Yet 'self or person is not any one impression, but that to which our several impressions and ideas are supposed to have a reference. If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must continue invariably the same, through the whole course of our lives; since self is supposed to exist after that manner. But there is no impression constant and invariable . . . and consequently there is no such idea.'[2] All our perceptions are distinguishable and separable, and we can discover no self apart from or underlying these perceptions. 'For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception. . . . If anyone upon serious and unprejudiced reflection thinks he has a different notion of *himself*, I must confess I can reason no longer with him. All I can allow him is that he may be in the right as well as I, and that we are essentially different in this particular. He may perhaps perceive something simple and continued, which he calls *himself*, though I am certain there is no such principle in me.'[1] Hume's conclusion is, therefore, that 'the mind is a kind of theatre where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. There is properly no *simplicity* in it at one time, nor *identity* in different; whatever natural propension we have to imagine that simplicity and identity. The comparison of the theatre must not mislead us. They are the successive perceptions only that constitute the mind; nor have we the most distant notion of the place where these scenes are represented or of the materials of which it is composed.'[2]

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[1] *T.*, 1, 4, 5, p. 250.

[2] *T.*, 1, 4, 6, pp. 251–2.

What, then, causes our propensity to attribute identity and simplicity to the mind? According to Hume, we tend to confuse the two ideas of identity and of a succession of related objects. For example, an animal body is an aggregate, and its component parts are constantly changing: in the strict sense it does not remain self-identical. But the changes are normally gradual and cannot be perceived from moment to moment. Further, the parts are related to one another, enjoying a mutual dependence on and connection with one another. The mind thus tends to neglect, as it were, the interruptions and to ascribe persistent self-identity to the aggregate. Now, in the case of the human mind there is a succession of related perceptions. Memory, by raising up images of past perceptions, produces a relation of resemblance among our perceptions: and the imagination is thus carried more easily along the chain, so that the chain appears to be a continued and persistent object. Further, our perceptions are mutually related by means of the causal relation. 'Our impressions give rise to their correspondent ideas: and these ideas in their turn produce other impressions. One thought chases another and draws after it a third, by which it is expelled in its turn.'[3] Here again memory is of primary importance. For it is only by memory that we are able to be aware of the causal relations between our perceptions. Hence memory is to be accounted the chief source of the idea of personal identity. Once given memory, our perceptions are linked by association in the imagination, and we attribute identity to what is in fact an interrupted succession of related perceptions. Indeed, unless corrected by philosophy, we may 'feign' a uniting principle,

[1] *T.*, 1, 4, 6, p. 252.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 253.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 261.

a permanent self distinct from our perceptions. If we rule out this 'fiction', all questions about personal identity 'are to be regarded rather as grammatical than as philosophical difficulties'.[1] That is to say, the question whether in any given instance it is proper to speak of a thing as identical or not, is a linguistic problem.

Given Hume's phenomenalistic analysis of the self, it is hardly worth discussing whether he believed in immortality. True he did not explicitly deny the possibility of survival. James Boswell records that in his last interview with Hume, on July 7th, 1776, he asked the philosopher whether he did not think it possible that there might be a future state. Hume replied that it was possible that a piece of coal put upon the fire would not burn. In other words, if Hume meant his remark to be taken seriously, survival is a logical possibility. He added, however, that it was a most unreasonable fancy that he should exist for ever. And it seems clear enough from what he has to say on the subject elsewhere not only that he did not think that immortality could be proved, either by metaphysical or moral arguments, but also that he himself did not believe in it. And this, it seems to me, is only what we would expect, if we bear in mind his account of the self.

It is important to add, however, that Hume realized that his account of the self presented difficulties. In his Appendix to the *Treatise* he admits that when it comes to explaining what binds together our distinct perceptions and makes us attribute to them a real simplicity and identity, 'I am sensible that my account is very defective, and that nothing but the seeming evidence of the precedent reasonings could have induced me to receive it. If perceptions are distinct existences, they form a whole only by being connected together. . . . But all my hopes vanish when I come to explain the principles that unite our successive perceptions in our thought or consciousness. I cannot discover any theory which gives me satisfaction on this head. In short, there are two principles which I cannot render consistent; nor is it in my power to renounce either of them, viz. *that all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences*, and *that the mind never perceives any real connection among distinct existences*. . . . For my part, I must plead the privilege of a sceptic and confess that this difficulty is too hard for my understanding.'[2] Hume might well feel some doubts about his account of the self and personal identity. Apart from objections which might be levelled against, for example, his ambiguous use of the word 'identity',[1] he gives no real explanation of the functioning of memory, though he emphasizes its importance. And some explanation is required. For it is not easy to see how memory is possible on his theory. Further, as he admits, if the mind can be said in some sense to collect the collection, how can it do this when it is identified with a collection, each member of which is a distinct thing? Does one perception enjoy awareness of others? If so, how? The difficulties do not seem to me to be in any way diminished if we adopt the modern empiricist device of talking about the mind as a 'logical construction' out of psychic events. In fact, precisely the same difficulties recur; and they must recur in any phenomenalistic account of the self.

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[1] *T.*, 1, 4, 6, p. 262.

[2] *T.*, pp. 635–6.

3. Before outlining Hume's views about the existence of God, it may be appropriate to say something about his general personal attitude towards religion. He was brought up as a Calvinist, but at a fairly early age he discarded the doctrines which he had been taught in boyhood. In spite, however, of his undoubted dislike for Calvinism, it would be a mistake to think of his attitude towards religion as being no more than the expression of a hostile reaction towards a theology and a religious discipline which had overshadowed his early years. The truth seems to be that, once he had shed his initial Calvinism, religion was for him a purely external phenomenon which aroused little or no response within himself. In this sense he was an 'irreligious' man. Conscious of the part played by religion in the life of humanity, he was interested in its nature and power; but he was interested in it from the outside, as it were. Furthermore, he came to the conclusion that the influence of religion was far from beneficial. For instance, he thought that religion impairs morality by encouraging people to act for motives other than love of virtue for its own sake. In his essay on *The Natural History of Religion* he traces the development from polytheism to monotheism. The multiple gods and goddesses of polytheism, who were simply magnified human beings, were progressively attributed with different perfections as by a species of flattery, until infinity was at length attributed to the divine, and this involved monotheism. But though in the course of religious development a lessening of superstition has been observable, the transition from polytheism to theism has also been accompanied by a growth of fanaticism, bigotry and intemperate zeal, as the

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[1] He seems to imply, verbally at least, that we attribute identity to our perceptions. But we obviously do not do this, even if we regard them as acts of a persistent subject.

behaviour of Mohammedans and Christians shows. Again, the idea of the greatness and majesty of the infinite God has encouraged emphasis on attitudes of abasement and on practices of asceticism and mortification which were foreign to the pagan mentality. Further, whereas in ancient Greece, for example, there was no dogma, as Christians understand it, and philosophy was free and unencumbered by dogmatic theology, in the Christian world philosophy has been misused in the service of theological doctrines. Hume does not, indeed, reject all religion explicitly and in so many words: he distinguishes between true religion on the one hand and superstition and fanaticism on the other. But when we come to look in his writings for an account of what he understands by true religion we find that its content is tenuous in the extreme.

In the *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* the eleventh section is devoted, according to its title, to the subject of a particular providence and of a future state. In order to give himself a free hand Hume puts what he has to say into the mouth of an Epicurean friend who, at Hume's request, delivers an imaginary speech to the Athenians. The speaker observes that the religious philosophers, instead of resting content with tradition, 'indulge a rash curiosity, in trying how far they can establish religion upon the principles of reason; and they thereby excite, instead of satisfying, the doubts which naturally arise from a diligent and scrutinous enquiry'.[1] He then remarks that 'the chief or sole argument for a divine existence is derived from the order of nature.... You allow that this is an argument drawn from effects to causes. From the order of the work you infer that there must have been project and forethought in the workman. If you cannot make out this point, you allow that your conclusion fails: and you pretend not to establish the conclusion in a greater latitude than the phenomena of nature will justify. These are your concessions. I desire to mark the consequences.'[2]

What are these 'consequences'? First, it is not permissible, when inferring a particular cause from an effect, to ascribe to the cause any qualities other than those which are required and which are sufficient to produce the effect. Secondly, it is not permissible to start with the inferred cause and infer other effects besides those already known. In the case of a human invention or work of art we can, indeed, argue that the author possesses certain attributes

[1] *E.*, 11, 104, p. 135.

[2] *E.*, 11, 105, pp. 135–6.

other than those immediately manifested in the effect. But we can do this only because we are already acquainted with human beings and with their attributes and capacities and ordinary ways of acting. In the case of God, however, this condition does not obtain. If I think that the world as I know it postulates an intelligent cause, I can infer the existence of such a cause. But I cannot legitimately infer that the cause possesses other attributes, moral qualities, for example, or that it can or will produce other effects than those already known to me. It may, of course, possess other attributes; but I do not know this. And even though conjecture may be permissible, it should be recognized as being mere conjecture, an assertion not of known fact but of mere possibility. Hume's 'friend' does not say that he regards the inference from the natural order to an intelligent designer and cause as valid and certain. On the contrary, 'it is uncertain; because the subject lies entirely beyond the reach of human experience'.[1] We can establish a causal relation only when we observe, and in so far as we observe, constant conjunction. But we cannot observe God at all, and natural phenomena remain what they are whatever explanatory hypothesis we adopt. 'I much doubt whether it be possible for a cause to be known only by its effect.'[2] The religious hypothesis is, indeed, one way of accounting for the visible phenomena of the universe; and it may be true, even though its truth is uncertain. At the same time it is not a hypothesis from which we can deduce any facts other than those which we already know. Nor can we derive from it principles and maxims of conduct. In this sense it is a 'useless' hypothesis. 'It is useless because our knowledge of this cause being derived from the course of nature, we can never, according to the rules of just reasoning, return back from the cause with any new inference, or, making additions to the common and experienced course of nature, establish any new principles of conduct and behaviour.'[3]

Substantially the same outlook is expressed at greater length in the *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* which were published, according to Hume's wish, after his death. The participants in the *Dialogues* are named Cleanthes, Philo and Demea, and their conversation is reported by Pamphilus to Hermippus. Hume does not appear in his own person; nor does he state which of the particular views expressed is his own. Pamphilus alludes to 'the accurate philosophical turn of Cleanthes', the 'careless scepticism of Philo' and 'the rigid inflexible orthodoxy of Demea'.[1] It has not infrequently been held, therefore, that Hume identifies himself with Cleanthes. Those who support this view can appeal to the concluding words of the *Dialogues* when Pamphilus remarks that 'upon a serious review of the whole I cannot but think that Philo's principles are more probable than Demea's, but that those of Cleanthes approach still nearer to the truth'.[2] Furthermore, writing to Sir Gilbert Elliot in 1751 Hume remarks that Cleanthes is 'the hero of the Dialogue' and that anything which Elliot can think of as strengthening Cleanthes' position will be 'most acceptable' to him. But if Hume is to be identified with Cleanthes, we must ascribe to him a firm belief in the argument from design. 'By this argument *a posteriori*, and by this argument alone, we do prove at once the existence of a Deity and his similarity to human mind and intelligence.'[3] But though Hume doubtless agreed with Cleanthes' rejection of what he calls *a priori* arguments and with the latter's contention that 'the words *necessary being* have no meaning, or, which is the same thing, none that is consistent',[4] it seems to me most improbable that he regarded the argument from design as conclusive. For this would hardly have been compatible with his general philosophical principles. Nor would it be consistent with the section of the first *Enquiry*, to which reference has been made above. For though in this section Hume produces an imaginary friend as speaker, it is in his own person that he remarks that 'I much doubt whether it be possible for a cause to be known only by its effect, as you have all along supposed'.[5] It seems to me that in the *Dialogues* it is Philo, not Cleanthes, who represents Hume, so far as any particular participant in the conversation can be said to represent him. Hume set out to develop a discussion of the problems of our knowledge of God's existence and nature, and it is unnecessary to suppose that he wished to identify himself exclusively either with Philo or with Cleanthes. But in so far as their views are opposed to one another, it seems to me only reasonable to associate Hume with the views of the former rather than with those of the latter. It would appear that Cleanthes is the hero of the *Dialogues* for Pamphilus rather than for Hume; and though when the latter showed Elliot an incomplete version of the work he could quite well invite Elliot to contribute ideas which would strengthen Cleanthes' position, in order to maintain the dramatic interest of the dialogue, this does not alter the fact that the tendency of Part XII, the final section of the work, tends to strengthen Philo's position rather than that of Cleanthes, in spite of Pamphilus's concluding remarks.

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[1] *E.*, 11, 110, p. 142. [2] *E.*, 11, 114, p. 148. [3] *E.*, 11, 110, p. 142.

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[1] *D.*, Preface, p. 128.
[2] *D.*, XII, p. 228.
[3] *D.*, II, p. 143.
[4] *D.*, IX, p. 190.
[5] *E.*, 11, 115, p. 148.

If we assume, then, that where Philo and Cleanthes are really opposed to one another, it is the former who expresses Hume's mind more nearly than the latter, what conclusion do we arrive at concerning Hume's attitude towards our knowledge of God's existence and nature? The answer can be given in Philo's oft-quoted words. 'If the whole of natural theology, as some people seem to maintain, resolves itself into one simple, though somewhat ambiguous, at least undefined proposition, *that the cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence:* If this proposition be not capable of extension, variation or more particular explication: If it afford no inference that affects human life or can be the source of any action or forbearance: And if the analogy, imperfect as it is, can be carried no farther than to the human intelligence, and cannot be transferred, with any appearance of probability, to the other qualities of the mind: If this really be the case, what can the most inquisitive, contemplative and religious man do more than give a plain, philosophical assent to the proposition as often as it occurs; and believe that the arguments on which it is established exceed the objections which lie against it?'[1] Here we are reduced to the simple proposition that the cause or causes of order in the world probably bear a remote analogy to human intelligence. No more can be said. No affirmation is made about the moral qualities of the 'cause or causes'. The proposition, moreover, is purely theoretical, in the sense that no conclusion can be legitimately drawn from it affecting human conduct, religious or moral. 'True religion' is reduced, therefore, to the recognition of a purely theoretical statement of probability. This is the position which fits the eleventh section of the first *Enquiry*, and it is as far as Hume is prepared to go.

Boswell records Hume's statement at the end of his life that he had never entertained any belief in religion since he began to read Locke and Clarke. Presumably he meant that when he began to study the rational defence of natural theology and of religion in the works of these philosophers he found their arguments so weak that he ceased to believe in the conclusions. It was Hume's view that religion originated in such passions as fear of disaster and hope of advantage or betterment when these passions are directed towards some invisible and intelligent power. In the course of time men attempted to rationalize religion and to find arguments in favour of belief; but most of these arguments will not stand up to critical analysis. This he thought to be true of the arguments adduced by Locke and Clarke and other metaphysicians. There is, however, a quasi-spontaneous tendency to regard the world as showing evidence of design; and, provided that we say no more, it is not unreasonable to say that it is probable that the cause or causes of phenomena, whatever these causes may be, bear some sort of an analogy with what we call intelligence. But in the long run, the world is an inscrutable mystery, and we cannot have any certain knowledge of ultimate causes.

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[1] *D.*, XII, p. 227.

The reader may expect a plain answer to the question whether Hume is to be regarded as an atheist, an agnostic or a theist. But it is not easy to give a 'plain answer' to this question. As already mentioned, he refused to recognize the validity of metaphysical arguments for God's existence; that is to say, he refused to allow that the existence of God is demonstrable. What he does is to examine the argument from design which he treats as leading to the 'religious hypothesis'. It is plain from the *Dialogues* that he disliked any form of the argument which is based principally on an analogy between human artificial constructions and the world. He admitted, however, that there are certain principles which operate in the world, namely, 'organization' or animal and vegetable life, instinct and intelligence. These principles are productive of order and pattern, and we know their effects by experience. But the principles themselves and their modes of operation are mysteries and inscrutable. However, there are points of analogy between them, to judge by their effects. And if by affirming God's existence we mean merely to affirm that the ultimate cause of order in the universe probably bears some remote analogy to intelligence, Hume is prepared to agree. This is not atheism in the sense of a categorical denial that there is anything besides phenomena; and Hume did not profess himself an atheist. Yet it is hardly to be called theism, not at least unless we read far more into Hume's admissions than he intended them to express. It might possibly be called agnosticism; but it must be remembered that Hume was not in a state of agnosticism about the existence of a personal God with moral attributes, as described by Christians in particular. The fact of the matter seems to be that Hume set out, as a detached observer, to examine the rational credentials of theism, maintaining in the meantime that religion rests on revelation, a revelation in which he personally certainly did not believe. The result of his investigation was, as we have seen, to reduce the 'religious hypothesis' to so meagre a content that it is difficult to know what to call it. It is a residuum which, as Hume was well aware, might be accepted by anyone who was not a dogmatic atheist. Its content is ambiguous, and Hume meant it to be ambiguous.

Emphasis is sometimes laid on the fact that Hume devoted his attention principally to theistic arguments as found in English writers such as Clarke and Butler. This is true enough; but if the implication is intended that Hume would have changed his mind, had he been acquainted with more satisfactory formulations of the arguments for the existence of God, it must be remembered that, given Hume's philosophical principles, especially his analysis of causality, he could not admit any cogent proofs of theism in a recognizable sense. In conclusion, it may be noted that Hume's analysis of the argument from design influenced Kant's final treatment of the matter, though the latter's attitude to theism was, of course, much more positive than that adopted by the former. Hume's thought was dissolvent of contemporary theological argument and apologetic, whereas Kant attempted to set belief in God on a new footing.

4. Some remarks on Hume's attitude towards scepticism may perhaps form a suitable conclusion to this chapter. And I shall begin by outlining the distinction which Hume draws in the *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* between 'antecedent' and 'consequent' scepticism.

By antecedent scepticism Hume understands a scepticism which is 'antecedent to all study and philosophy'.[1] As an example he cites Cartesian doubt, taking this to involve doubt not only of all our particular previously held beliefs and opinions but also of the power of our faculties to attain truth. The definition of antecedent scepticism might suggest the sceptical attitude which may arise in the minds of non-philosophers rather than the Cartesian doubt which is part of a deliberately chosen philosophical method. However, it is, indeed, antecedent to the positive building-up of the Cartesian system; and in any case it is the example selected by Hume. According to Descartes, he says, we should entertain a universal doubt until we have reassured ourselves by means of a chain of reasoning deduced from some original principle which cannot itself be doubtful or fallacious. There is, however, no such original principle. And even if there were, we could not advance beyond it except by the use of the very faculties whose trustworthiness we have placed in doubt. Scepticism of this sort is not really possible; and, if it were, it would be incurable. But there is a more moderate and reasonable form of antecedent scepticism. That is to say, before pursuing philosophical inquiry we ought to free ourselves, so far as we can, from all prejudice and attain a state of impartiality. We ought to begin with clear and evident principles and advance carefully, examining all the steps of our reasoning. But this is a matter of common sense. Without such care and accuracy we cannot hope to make any sure progress in knowledge.

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[1] *E.*, 12, 1, 116, p. 149.

Consequent scepticism is scepticism which is 'consequent to science and enquiry'.[1] In other words, it is the result of the discovery, or supposed discovery, by philosophers either of the untrustworthy character of our mental faculties or, at least, of their unfitness for reaching any reliable conclusion 'in all those curious subjects of speculation about which they are commonly employed'.[2] And it may be divided into scepticism about the senses and scepticism about reason. In the *Treatise*[3] Hume discussed scepticism about the senses first, but in the first *Enquiry* the order of treatment is reversed.

What Hume calls the 'more trite topics' adduced by sceptics in all ages to show that the evidence of the senses is untrustworthy are dismissed in a rather summary manner. He refers to the familiar example of the oar which appears to be bent or crooked when partly immersed in water and to the double images which result from exerting pressure on one eye. All that such examples show, however, is that we may need to correct the immediate evidence of the senses by reason and by considerations based on the nature of the medium, the distance of the object, the disposition of the sense-organ, and so on. This is what we do in practice, and it is quite sufficient. 'There are other more profound arguments against the senses, which admit not of so easy a solution.'[4]

Men are led by a natural impulse to put faith in their senses, and from the start we suppose that there exists an external universe which is independent of the senses. Further, led by this 'blind and powerful instinct of nature',[1] men instinctively take the images presented by the senses to be the external objects themselves. 'But this universal and primary opinion of all men is soon destroyed by the slightest philosophy. And no man, who reflects, ever doubted that the existences which we consider when we say *this house* and *that tree* are nothing but perceptions in the mind and fleeting copies or representations of other existences which remain uniform and independent.'[2] To this extent, therefore, philosophy leads us to contradict or depart from our natural instincts. At the same time philosophy finds itself in an embarrassing situation when asked to give a rational defence of its position. For how can we prove that images or perceptions are representations of objects which are not themselves images or perceptions? 'The mind has never anything present to it but the perceptions and cannot possibly reach any experience of their connection with objects. The supposition of such a connection is, therefore, without any foundation in reasoning.'[3] To have recourse with Descartes to the divine veracity is useless. If the divine veracity were really involved, our senses would be always and entirely infallible. Moreover, if we once question the existence of an external world, how can we prove the existence of God or any of His attributes? We are faced, therefore, with a dilemma. If we follow the propensity of nature, we believe that perceptions or images are the external objects themselves; and this is a belief which reason refutes. If, however, we say that perceptions or images are caused by and represent objects, we cannot find any convincing argument, based on experience, to prove that the former are in fact connected with external objects. 'This is a topic, therefore, in which the profounder and more philosophical sceptics will always triumph, when they endeavour to introduce an universal doubt into all subjects of human knowledge and enquiry.'[4]

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[1] *E.*, 12, 1, 117, p. 150.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *T.*, 1, 4, 1–2, pp. 180–218.

[4] *E.*, 12, 1, 117, p. 151.

Scepticism about reason may concern either abstract reasoning or matters of fact. The chief sceptical objection to the validity of abstract reasoning is derived, according to Hume in the *Enquiry*, from examination of our ideas of space and time. Let us suppose that extension is infinitely divisible. A given quantity X contains within itself a quantity Y which is infinitely less than X. Similarly,

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[1] *E.*, 12, 1, 118, p. 151.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 152.

[3] *E.*, 12, 1, 119, p. 153.

[4] *E.*, 12, 1, 121, p. 153.

Y contains within itself a quantity *Z* which is infinitely less than *Y*. And so on indefinitely. A supposition of this kind 'shocks the clearest and most natural principles of human reason'.[1] Again, 'an infinite number of real parts of time, passing in succession and exhausted one after another, appears so evident a contradiction that no man, one should think, whose judgment is not corrupted, instead of being improved, by the sciences, would ever be able to admit it'.[2]

As for sceptical objections to 'moral evidence' or to reasonings concerning matters of fact, these may be either popular or philosophical. Under the former heading can be grouped objections derived from the variety of mutually incompatible opinions held by different men, the different opinions held by the same man at different times, the contradictory beliefs of different societies and nations, and so on. According to Hume, however, popular objections of this sort are ineffective. 'The great subverter of *Pyrrhonism* or the excessive principle of scepticism is action and employment and the occupations of common life.'[3] It may not be possible to refute these objections in the classroom, but in ordinary life they 'vanish like smoke and leave the most determined sceptic in the same condition as other mortals'.[4] More important are the philosophical objections. And chief among these is the objection deriving from Hume's own analysis of causality; for, given this analysis, we have no argument to prove that because *a* and *b* have always been conjoined in our past experience they will be similarly conjoined in the future.

Now, given Hume's view about mathematics and abstract reasoning, which concerns relations between ideas, he could not admit real grounds for scepticism in this field. Hence we find him saying 'how any clear, distinct idea can contain circumstances contradictory to itself or to any other clear, distinct idea is absolutely incomprehensible; and is, perhaps, as absurd as any proposition which can be formed. So that nothing can be more sceptical, or more full of doubt and hesitation, than this scepticism itself, which arises from some of the paradoxical conclusions of geometry or the science of quantity.'[5] He tried to avoid the antinomies which seemed to him to give rise to scepticism by denying that space and time are infinitely divisible in the sense alleged.[6] But whereas he felt bound to indicate a theoretical answer to scepticism about abstract reasoning, he pursued a different method with regard to thorough-going scepticism about the senses and about reasoning concerning matters of fact. As we have already seen when considering the problem of the existence of bodies, Hume remarked that scepticism on this point cannot be maintained in ordinary life. 'Carelessness and inattention alone can afford us any remedy. For this reason I rely entirely upon them.'[1] His remark that action and employment and the occupations of common life constitute the great subverter of Pyrrhonism has been quoted above in connection with popular objections to reasonings concerning matters of fact. Similarly, after speaking in the *Enquiry* about the principal philosophical objection against reasoning concerning matters of fact he observes that 'here is the chief and most confounding objection to *excessive* scepticism, that no durable good can ever result from it, while it remains in its full force and vigour. We need only ask such a sceptic, *What his meaning is? And what he proposes by all these curious researches?* He is immediately at a loss and knows not what to answer. A Copernican or Ptolemaic, who supports each his different system of astronomy, may hope to produce a conviction, which will remain constant and durable, with his audience. A Stoic or Epicurean displays principles which may not be durable but which have an effect on conduct and behaviour. But a Pyrrhonian cannot expect that his philosophy will have any constant influence on the mind; or if it had, that its influence would be beneficial to society. On the contrary, he must acknowledge, if he will acknowledge anything, that all human life must perish, were his principles universally and steadily to prevail. All discourse, all action would immediately cease; and men remain in a total lethargy, till the necessities of nature, unsatisfied, put an end to their miserable existence. It is true; so fatal an event is little to be dreaded. Nature is always too strong for principle.'[2] In the *Treatise*, after speaking of the intense realization of the manifold antinomies in which human reason is involved, he says: 'Most fortunately it happens that since reason is incapable of dispelling these clouds, nature herself suffices to that purpose. . . . I dine, I play a game of backgammon, I converse and am merry with my friends; and when after three or four hours' amusement, I would return to these speculations, they appear so cold and strained and ridiculous that I cannot find in my heart to enter into them any farther. Here then

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[1] *E.*, 12, 2, 124, p. 156. [2] *E.*, 12, 2, 125, p. 157. [3] *E.*, 12, 2, 126, pp. 158–9.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 159. [5] *E.*, 12, 2, 125, pp. 157–8.
[6] Cf. *E.*, 12, 2, 125, note, p. 158, and *T.*, 1, 2, 1–2.

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[1] *T.*, 1, 4, 2, p. 218.

[2] *E.*, 12, 2, 128, pp. 159–60.

I find myself absolutely and necessarily determined to live and talk and act like other people in the common affairs of life.'[1]

Though Hume rejects, we may say, what he calls 'excessive' scepticism, he admits as 'both durable and useful' a 'mitigated' or 'academical' scepticism, which may be in part a result of Pyrrhonism (or excessive scepticism) when this has been 'corrected by common sense and reflection'.[2] This mitigated scepticism involves, for example, limiting our inquiries to those subjects for the consideration of which our mental capacities are adapted. 'It seems to me that the only objects of the abstract science or of demonstration are quantity and number, and that all attempts to extend this more perfect species of knowledge beyond these bounds are mere sophistry and illusion.'[3] As for inquiries about matters of fact and existence, we are here outside the sphere of demonstration. 'Whatever *is* may *not be.* No negation of a fact can involve a contradiction. . . . The existence, therefore, of any being can only be proved by arguments from its cause or its effect; and these arguments are founded entirely on experience. If we reason *a priori*, anything may appear able to produce anything.'[4]

Divinity or theology has a rational foundation in so far as it is supported by experience. 'But its best and most solid foundation is faith and divine revelation.'[5] What we are to think of this last proposition is made clear enough, I think, by the *Dialogues.* As for morals and aesthetics (which Hume calls 'criticism'), these are objects of taste and sentiment more than of the understanding. 'Beauty, whether moral or natural, is felt, more properly than perceived.'[6] We may, indeed, try to fix some standard, but then we have to consider some empirical fact, such as the general tastes of mankind.

Hume's famous conclusion deserves quotation here. 'When we run over libraries, persuaded of these principles, what havoc must we make? If we take in hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, *Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number?* No. *Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?* No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.'[7]

Hume's remarks about scepticism, including 'Pyrrhonism', and about carelessness and inattention as the remedy for scepticism should not be understood in a purely ironical sense or as indicating that the philosopher had his tongue in his cheek. Scepticism was a matter of importance in his eyes, partly because it was a living issue at the time, though more in France than in England, and partly because he was well aware of the sceptical conclusions which followed from the application of his own principles. For one thing, it was, he thought, a healthy antidote to dogmatism and fanaticism. Indeed, 'a true sceptic will be diffident of his philosophical doubts, as well as of his philosophical conviction'.[1] He will refrain from showing dogmatism and fanaticism in his scepticism. At the same time a thorough-going scepticism is untenable in practice. This fact does not prove its falsity; but it shows that in ordinary life we have inevitably to act according to natural belief or the propensities of our human nature. And this is how things should be. Reason is dissolvent; at least, there is very little that it leaves unshaken and unquestionable. And the philosophical spirit is the spirit of free inquiry. But human nature is very far from being governed and directed by reason alone. Morality, for example, is grounded on feeling rather than on the analytic understanding. And though the philosopher in his study may arrive at sceptical conclusions, in the sense that he sees how little reason can prove, he is at the same time a man; and in his ordinary life he is governed, and ought to allow himself to be governed if he wishes to live at all, by the natural beliefs which common human nature imposes on him as on others. In other words, Hume had little sympathy for any attempt to turn philosophy into a creed, a dogmatically propounded standard for belief and conduct. It is, if you like, a game; a game of which Hume was fond, and one which has its uses. But in the long run 'Nature is always too strong for principle'.[2] 'Be a philosopher; but, amidst all your philosophy, be still a man.'[3]

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[1] *T.*, 1 4, 7, p. 269.
[2] *E.*, 12, 3, 129, p. 161.
[3] *E.*, 12, 3, 131, p. 163.
[4] *E.*, 12, 3, 132, p. 164.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 165.
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] *Ibid.*

[1] *T.*, 1, 4, 7, p. 273.

[2] *E.*, 12, 2, 128, p. 160.

[3] *E.*, 1, 4, p. 9.

CHAPTER XVI

HUME (3)

Introductory—The passions, direct and indirect—Sympathy—The will and liberty—The passions and the reason—Moral distinctions and the moral sense—Benevolence and utility—Justice—General remarks.

1. Hume is chiefly famous for his epistemological analyses and for his examinations of causality and of the notions of the self and of personal identity; in other words, for the contents of the first book of the *Treatise*. But the *Treatise of Human Nature* was described by him as an attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects. In the Introduction he says that in the four sciences of logic, morals, criticism and politics 'is comprehended almost everything which it can any way import us to be acquainted with, or which can tend either to the improvement or ornament of the human mind'.[1] And he makes it clear that he hopes to lay the foundation of moral science. Towards the close of the first book he speaks of having been led into several topics which will 'prepare the way for our following opinions',[2] and he alludes to 'those immense depths of philosophy which lie before me'.[3] At the beginning of the third book he declares that 'morality is a subject that interests us above all others'.[4] It is true that he uses the term 'moral philosophy' to mean the science of human nature, and that he divides this into the study of man as 'a reasonable rather than as an active being' and the study of man 'chiefly as born for action'.[5] But there can be no doubt of the importance which Hume attached to moral philosophy in the ordinary sense. He thought of himself as carrying on the work of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Butler and so on, and as doing for morals and politics what others, such as Galileo and Newton, had accomplished for natural science. 'Moral philosophy is in the same condition as natural, with regard to astronomy before the time of Copernicus.'[6] The ancient astronomers invented intricate systems which were overloaded with unnecessary hypotheses. But these systems have at last given place to 'something more simple and

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[1] p. xx.
[2] *T.*, 1, 4, 6, p. 263.
[3] *T.*, 1, 4, 7, p. 263.
[4] *T.*, 3, 1, 3, p. 455.
[5] *E.*, 1, 1–2, pp. 5–6.
[6] *T.*, 2, 1, 3, p. 282.

natural'.[1] So Hume wishes to discover the fundamental or elementary principles which operate in man's ethical life.

We have seen that according to Hume the basic assumptions on which we act, those fundamental beliefs, that is to say, which are necessary for practical life, are not conclusions drawn by the understanding from rational argument. This is not to say, of course, that people do not reason about their practical affairs: it is to say that the ordinary man's reflections and reasoning presuppose beliefs which are not themselves the fruit of reasoning. It is not surprising, therefore, that Hume should also minimize the part played by reason in morals. He is well aware, of course, that we do in fact reflect and reason and argue about moral problems and decisions; but he maintains that moral distinctions are derived ultimately, not from reasoning, but from feeling, from the moral sentiment. Reason alone is not capable of being the sole immediate cause of our actions. Indeed, Hume goes so far as to say that 'reason is, and ought to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them'.[2]

I shall return later to the subject of the moral sentiment and to Hume's view of the part played by reason in morals. But if we bear in mind the general fact that he emphasizes the role of what we may call the emotional aspect of human nature in man's moral life, we can understand more easily why, before coming to ethics proper in the third book of the *Treatise*, he devotes the long second book to a discussion of the passions. I do not propose to enter in a detailed manner into his treatment of this subject; but something at least ought to be said about it. Before doing so, however, it may be as well to remark that the word 'passion' is not used by Hume to signify simply a burst of unregulated emotion, as when we speak of someone flying into a passion. The word is used by him, as by other philosophers of the period, to include emotions and affects in general. He is concerned with analysing the emotional aspect of human nature, considered as a source of action, not with moralizing about inordinate passions.

2. As we saw in Chapter XIV, Hume distinguished between impressions of sensation and impressions of reflection. This is the same as distinguishing between original and secondary impressions. 'Original impressions or impressions of sensation are such as without any antecedent perception arise in the soul, from the

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[1] *T.*, 2, 1, 3, p. 282.

[2] *T.*, 2, 3, 3, p. 415.

constitution of the body, from the animal spirits, or from the application of objects to the external organs. Secondary, or reflective impressions are such as proceed from some of these original ones, either immediately or by the interposition of its idea. Of the first kind are all impressions of the senses, and all bodily pains and pleasure: of the second are the passions, and other emotions resembling them.'[1] Thus a bodily pain, such as the pain of gout, can produce passions like grief, hope and fear. Then we have passions, secondary impressions, derived from an original or primary impression, namely, a certain bodily pain.

I have said that Hume used the word 'passion' to cover all emotions and affects without confining it to unregulated bursts of emotion. But a qualification is needed. For he distinguishes between calm and violent reflective or secondary impressions. The sense of beauty and deformity in actions, in works of art and in natural objects belongs to the first class, while love and hatred, joy and grief, belong to the second. Hume admits, indeed, that 'this division is far from being exact,'[2] on the ground that the raptures of poetry and music may be very intense whereas 'those other impressions, properly called *passions*, may decay into so soft an emotion as to become, in a manner, imperceptible'.[3] But my point is that here he seems to restrict the word 'passion' to what he calls violent reflective impressions. And this is one reason why I said that my former statement stands in need of qualification. At the same time these 'violent' emotions, or passions in a restricted sense, are not necessarily disordered. Hume is thinking of intensity: he is not passing a moral judgment.

The passions are divided by Hume into direct and indirect passions. The former are those which arise immediately from the experience of pleasure or pain; and Hume mentions desire, aversion, grief, joy, hope, fear, despair and security. The pain of gout, for instance, produces direct passions. Hume also mentions direct passions which arise 'from a natural impulse or instinct, which is perfectly unaccountable. Of this kind is the desire of punishment to our enemies and of happiness to our friends; hunger, lust, and a few other bodily appetites.'[4] These passions are said to produce good and evil (that is, pleasure and pain) rather than to proceed from them as other direct passions do. Indirect passions do not arise simply from feelings of pleasure or pain; they arise from what

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[1] *T.*, 2, 1, 1, p. 275.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 276.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *T.*, 2, 3, 9, p. 439.

Hume calls 'a double relation of impressions and ideas'.[1] His meaning can best be explained by using examples, such as pride and humility, love and hatred.

In the first place we must distinguish between the object and the cause of a passion. The object of pride and humility is the self, 'that succession of related ideas and impressions, of which we have an intimate memory and consciousness'.[2] Whatever other objects we may have in mind when we feel pride or humility, they are always considered in relation to the self. And when self does not enter into consideration, there can be neither pride nor humility. But though the self is the object of these two passions, it cannot be their sufficient cause. If it were, a certain degree of pride would always be accompanied by a corresponding degree of humility, and conversely. Again, the object of love and hatred is some person other than the self. According to Hume, 'when we talk of *self-love*, it is not in a proper sense, nor has the sensation it produces anything in common with that tender emotion which is excited by a friend or mistress'.[3] But the other person is not the sole and sufficient cause of these passions. If it were, production of the one passion would involve production of the other.

In the second place we must distinguish, within the cause of a passion, between the quality which operates and the subject in which it is placed. To take an example given by Hume, when a man is vain of a beautiful house which belongs to him we can distinguish between the beauty and the house. Both are necessary component parts of the cause of the passion of vanity, but they are none the less distinguishable.

In the third place we must make the following distinction. The passions of pride and humility are 'determined to have self for their *object*, not only by a natural but also by an original property'.[4] The constancy and steadiness of the determination shows its 'natural' character. The self-regarding direction of pride and humility is 'original' in the sense that it is primary and cannot be further resolved into other elements. Similarly, the other-regarding determination of the passions of love and hatred is both natural and original. But when we turn from 'object' to 'cause', in the sense indicated above, we find a somewhat different situation. The causes of these passions are, according to Hume, natural, in the sense that the same sort of objects tend to give rise to the passions.

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[1] *T.*, 2, 3, 9, p. 439.

[2] *T.*, 2, 1, 2, p. 277.

[3] *T.*, 2, 2, 1, p. 329.

[4] *T.*, 2, 1, 3, p. 280.

Material possessions and physical qualities tend to give rise, for example, to pride and vanity, in whatever epoch men may live. But the causes of pride and humility are not original in the sense of being 'adapted to these passions by a particular provision and primary constitution of nature'.[1] There is a vast number of causes, and many of them depend on human artifice and invention (houses, furniture and clothes, for instance); and it would be absurd to suppose that nature foresaw and provided for each possible cause of a passion. Hence, although it is from natural principles that a great variety of causes excites pride and humility, it is not true that each different cause is adapted to its passion by a different principle. The problem, therefore, is to discover among the various causes a common element on which their influence depends.

In his solution of this problem Hume invokes the principles of association of ideas and association of impressions. When one idea is present to the imagination, any other idea which is related to it by resemblance, contiguity or causality tends to follow. Again, 'all resembling impressions are connected together, and no sooner one arises than the rest immediately follow'.[2] (Impressions, unlike ideas, are associated only by resemblance.) Now, these two kinds of association assist one another and, 'both uniting in one action, bestow on the mind a double impulse'.[3] The cause of the passion produces in us a sensation. In the case of pride this is a sensation of pleasure, in the case of 'humility' or self-depreciation it is a sensation of pain. And this sensation or impression has a natural and original reference to the self as object or to the idea of the self. There is, therefore, a natural relation between impression and idea. And this permits a concurrent working of the two kinds of association—association of impressions and association of ideas. When a passion has been aroused it tends to call forth a succession of resembling passions by force of the principle of association of resembling impressions. Again, by force of the principle of association of ideas the mind passes easily from one idea (say, the idea of one aspect of the causes and object of pride) to another idea. And these two movements reinforce one another, the mind easily passing from one set to the other in virtue of the correlation between them. Suppose that a man has suffered an injury from another and that this has produced in him a passion. This passion (an impression) tends to call forth in him resembling passions. And this movement is facilitated by the fact that the man's idea of the causes and objects of the passion tend to call forth other ideas, which in turn are correlated with impressions. 'When an idea produces an impression, related to an impression, which is connected with an idea, related to the first idea, these two impressions must be in a manner inseparable, nor will the one in any case be unattended with the other.'[1]

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[1] *T.*, 2, 1, 3, p. 281. [2] *T.*, 2, 1, 4, p. 283. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 284.

Hume's intention is obviously that of explaining the complex emotional life of mankind with the aid of as few principles as possible. In treating of the indirect passions and of the transition from one passion to another he makes use of the principles of association. I say 'principles' rather than 'principle' because it is his view that the association of ideas by itself is not sufficient to give rise to a passion. He therefore speaks of indirect passions as arising from 'a double relation of impressions and ideas', and he explains the transition from one such passion to another as the effect of the concurrent operation of associated ideas and impressions. But he also emphasizes the influence of sympathy in our emotional life; and something must be said about this topic.

3. Our knowledge of the passions of others is gained by observation of the effects of these passions. 'When any affection is infused by sympathy, it is at first known only by its effects and by those external signs in the countenance and conversation which convey an idea of it.'[2] Now, the difference between ideas and impressions has been defined in terms of force and vivacity. A lively idea can, therefore, be converted into an impression. And this is what happens in the case of sympathy. The idea of a passion which is produced by observation of the latter's effects 'is presently converted into an impression and acquires such a degree of force and vivacity as to become the very passion itself'.[3] How does this conversion take place? Hume presupposes that 'nature has preserved a great resemblance among all human creatures, and that we never remark any passion or principle in others, of which, in some degree or other, we may not find a parallel in ourselves'.[4] Besides this general relation of resemblance there are other more specific relationships, such as blood-relationship, common membership of one nation, use of the same language, and so on. And 'all these relations, when united together, convey the impression or consciousness of our own person to the idea of the sentiments or passions of others and makes us conceive them in the strongest

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[1] *T.*, 2, 1, 5, p. 289.

[2] *T.*, 2, 1, 11, p. 317.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 318.

and most lively manner'.[1] To each one of us his own self is, so to speak, intimately and always present. And when we observe the effects of the passions of others and so form ideas of these passions, these ideas tend to become converted into impressions; that is, into similar passions, to the degree that we associate ourselves with them in virtue of some relationship or relationships. 'In sympathy there is an evident conversion of an idea into an impression. This conversion arises from the relation of objects to oneself. Ourself is always intimately present to us.'[2]

Again, we may perceive the causes of a passion or emotion. Hume gives the example of seeing the preparations for a 'terrible' surgical operation (without anaesthetic, of course). These may excite in the beholder's mind, even though he is not the patient, a strong emotion of terror. 'No passion of another discovers itself immediately to the mind. We are only sensible of its causes or effects. From *these* we infer the passion: And consequently *these* give rise to our sympathy.'[3]

Whether all this fits in with Hume's phenomenalism is disputable. For he appears to postulate more than is warranted by his phenomenalistic analysis of mind. But it is clear at least that he was well aware of the intimate links between human beings. And he tries to explain the contagious character of the passions and emotions. In point of fact Hume's world is not a world of mutually sundered human atoms, but the world of ordinary experience in which human beings stand to one another in varying degrees of mutual relationships. This he takes for granted. It is the psychological mechanism of sympathy with which he is concerned. And he is sure that sympathetic communication is one important cause in the generation of passions.

4. Something having been said about the causes and mechanism of the passions, we can now turn to consider the relations between the will, the passions and the reason. And in the first place we can ask what Hume understands by will, and whether he recognizes free-will.

Hume speaks of the will as one of the immediate effects of pleasure and pain. It is not, however, properly speaking, a passion. He describes it as 'the internal impression we feel and are conscious of, when we knowingly give rise to any new motion of our body, or new perception of our mind'.[4] It cannot be defined, since it cannot be further resolved, and it is needless to describe it any further. We can, therefore, turn immediately to the problem of freedom.

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[1] *T.*, 2, 1, 11, p. 318.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 320.

[3] *T.*, 3, 3, 1, p. 576.

[4] *T.*, 2, 3, 1, p. 399.

According to Hume, the union between motive and action possesses the same constancy which we observe between cause and effect in physical operations. Further, this constancy influences the understanding in the same way that constant conjunction in physical operations influences the understanding, namely, by 'determining us to infer the existence of one from that of another'.[1] In fact, there is no known circumstance which enters into the production of purely material operations which is not also found in volition. Hence we have no good reason for attributing necessity to the former and denying it of the latter. True, human action often appears uncertain. Yet the more our knowledge is increased, the clearer become the connections between character, motive and choice. In any case we have no adequate reason for supposing that there is a privileged sphere of freedom, where necessary connection is wanting.

It is important to note that for Hume, as for some modern empiricists, absence of necessity spells chance, so that to assert liberty of indifference is to say that human choices are uncaused and are due simply to chance. 'According to my definitions, necessity makes an essential part of causation; and consequently liberty, by removing necessity, removes also causes, and is the very same thing with chance. As chance is commonly thought to imply a contradiction, and is at least directly contrary to experience, there are always the same arguments against liberty or free-will.'[2] It will be remembered that Hume recognized only one type of causal relation, in which constant conjunction forms the objective element and necessary connection the subjectively contributed element. Once given this restricted view of causality, it follows, of course, that free action would be uncaused action; if, that is to say, assertion of freedom involves denial of necessity. Hume admits, however, that the problem of freedom is to a certain extent a linguistic problem, in the sense that though freedom must be denied if it is defined in such a way as to exclude necessity, it can be asserted if it is defined in another way. For instance, if freedom is identified with spontaneity, there is freedom. For it is clear that a great number of actions proceed from a man as a rational agent without any external coercion. Indeed, spontaneity is the only form of liberty which we should have any interest in asserting. For, Hume maintains, if so-called free actions are due to chance and are not caused by the agent, it would be unjust for God or man to hold human beings responsible for bad and vicious actions and to pass moral condemnation on the agents. For the agents would not in fact be agents at all in any proper sense. Obviously the validity of Hume's point of view on this matter depends on the validity of his notion of causality.

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[1] *T.*, 2, 3, 1, p. 404.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 407.

5. Having disposed of freedom, except when it is reduced to spontaneity, Hume attempts to prove the truth of two propositions. The first proposition is that 'reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will', and the second is that reason 'can never oppose passion in the direction of the will'.[1] His defence of these two propositions arises out of the fact that 'nothing is more usual in philosophy, and even in common life, than to talk of the combat of passion and reason, to give the preference to reason and to assert that men are only so far virtuous as they conform themselves to its dictates'.[2]

In the first place, reason in the sense of the abstract understanding concerned with relations between ideas or with matters of demonstration is never the cause of any action. 'Mathematics, indeed, are useful in all mechanical operations, and arithmetic in almost every art and profession: but it is not of themselves they have any influence.'[3] They do not influence action unless we have a purpose or end which is not dictated or determined by mathematics.

The second operation of the understanding concerns probability, the sphere not of abstract ideas but of things related causally to one another, of matters of fact. Here it is obvious that when any object causes pleasure or pain we feel a consequent emotion of attraction or aversion and are impelled to embrace or avoid the object in question. But we are also impelled by the emotion or passion to reason concerning the objects which are or may be causally related with the original object. And 'according as our reasoning varies, our actions receive a subsequent variation'.[4] But the impulse which governs our actions is only directed by reason; it does not arise from it. 'It is from the prospect of pain or pleasure that the aversion or propensity arises towards any object.'[5]

Reason alone, therefore, can never produce any action. And

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[1] *T.*, 2, 3, 3, p. 413.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 414.
[5] *Ibid.*

Hume concludes from this to the truth of his second proposition. 'Since reason alone can never produce any action, or give rise to volition, I infer that the same faculty is as incapable of preventing volition, or of disputing the preference with any passion or emotion. This consequence is necessary.'[1] Reason could prevent volition only by giving an impulse in a contrary direction; but this is excluded by what has been already said. And if reason has no immediate influence of its own, it cannot withstand any principle, such as passion, which does possess efficacy. Hence 'we speak not strictly and philosophically when we talk of the combat of passion and of reason. Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them.'[2]

Now, this appears to be a paradoxical and strange position to adopt. For, as Hume admits, it is not only philosophers who speak of the combat between reason and passion. But the words quoted above, 'we speak not strictly and philosophically', ought to be noticed. Hume does not deny that there is something which is called the combat between reason and passion: what he maintains is that it is not accurately described when it is so called. And his analysis of the situation must be briefly explained.

Reason, Hume says, exerts itself without producing any sensible emotion. Now, there are also 'calm desires and tendencies which, though they be real passions, produce little emotion[3] in the mind and are more known by their effects than by the immediate feeling or sensation'.[4] These may be of two kinds. There are, according to Hume, certain instincts, such as benevolence and resentment, love of life and kindness to children, which are originally implanted in our nature. There are also the desire for good and aversion to evil, considered merely as such. When any of these passions are calm, they are easily taken as being operations of reason 'and are supposed to proceed from the same faculty, with that which judges of truth and falsehood'.[5] The calm passions do not prevail in everyone, it is true. And whether calm or violent passions prevail, depends on the general character and present disposition of a man. However, 'what we call strength of mind implies the prevalence of the calm passions above the violent'.[6]

In asserting this view of the subordination of the reason to the passions Hume was obviously adopting an anti-rationalist position. Not reason but propensity and aversion, following experiences of pleasure and pain, are the fundamental springs of human action. Reason plays a part in man's active life, but as an instrument of passion, not as a sole sufficient cause. Of course, if we consider simply the theory that natural inclinations rather than the conclusions of the abstract reason are the influential factor in human conduct, we can scarcely call it a revolutionary or extravagant theory. It is opposed to Socratic intellectualism, but it is this intellectualism which is extravagant and which has always been attacked by its opponents as contrary to experience. Hume realized very clearly not only that man is not a kind of calculating machine but also that without the appetitive and emotional aspects of his nature he would not be man. At the same time it is arguable that his denial of liberty of indifference and his assertion of psychological determinism encouraged him to minimize in an exaggerated way the part played by the practical reason in human conduct.

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[1] *T.*, 2, 3, 3, pp. 414–15.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 415.

[3] Here Hume uses the word 'emotion' in a literal sense to mean a felt or apparent movement.

[4] *T.*, 2, 3, 3, p. 417.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 418.

6. That there are no moral distinctions whatsoever is not an opinion which is consonant with experience, common sense and reason. 'Let a man's insensibility be ever so great, he must often be touched with the images of Right and Wrong: and let his prejudices be ever so obstinate, he must observe that others are susceptible of like impressions.'[1] But though everyone makes some moral distinctions, the foundation of such distinctions is matter for dispute. Are they founded, as some claim, on reason, so that they are the same for every rational being? Or are they founded, as others claim, on a moral sense or sentiment, resting 'on the particular fabric and constitution of the human species'?[2] Arguments can be produced in favour of each theory. It may be said, on the one hand, that both in ordinary life and in philosophy disputes about good and evil, right and wrong, frequently occur. And the disputants produce reasons in favour of their several views. And how could such discussions take place and be accepted as a normal and sensible proceeding unless moral distinctions are derived from reason? On the other hand, it can be argued that the essence of virtue is to be amiable or lovable and of vice to be odious. And the attribution of such epithets must be the expression of affections or sentiments which are themselves grounded in the original constitution of man. Further, the end or purpose of moral

[1] *E.M.*, 1, 133, p. 170.

[2] *E.M.*, 1, 134, p. 170.

reasoning is action, the performance of duty. But reason alone cannot move to action. It is the passions or affections which constitute the springs of conduct.

We have already seen in the preceding section that according to Hume reason alone cannot affect conduct and that it is the passions or affections which are the fundamental springs of action. He is, therefore, committed, to this extent, to the second theory; that is, to the theory of a moral sense or sentiment. At the same time, however, he has no intention of denying that reason plays a part in morality. Hence he is willing to say that '*reason* and *sentiment* concur in almost all moral determinations and conclusions. The final sentence, it is probable, which pronounces characters and actions amiable or odious, praiseworthy or blameable; that which stamps on them the mark of honour or infamy, approbation or censure; that which renders morality an active principle and constitutes virtue our happiness and vice our misery: it is probable, I say, that this final sentence depends on some internal sense or feeling, which nature has made universal in the whole species. For what else can have an influence of this nature? But in order to pave the way for such a sentiment, and give a proper discernment of its object, it is often necessary, we find, that much reasoning should precede, that nice distinctions be made, just conclusions drawn, distant comparisons formed, complicated relations examined, and general facts fixed and ascertained.'[1] We examine, for instance, an action under its various aspects and in relation to various circumstances, and compare it with actions to which it bears a *prima facie* resemblance. But when we have, as it were, a clear view of the action, what ultimately influences our conduct is the feeling which we have towards the actions.

Examining the matter a little more closely, we find that Hume gives detailed arguments, both in the *Treatise* and in his first appendix to the *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, for saying that moral distinctions are not derived from reason. 'Reason judges either of *matter of fact* or of *relations*.'[2] 'As the operations of human understanding divide themselves into two kinds, the comparing of ideas, and the inferring of matter of fact, were virtue discovered by the understanding it must be an object of one of these operations, nor is there any third operation of the understanding which can discover it.'[3]

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[1] *E.M.*, 1, 137, pp. 172–3. [2] *E.M.*, Appendix 1, 237, p. 287. [3] *T.*, 3, 1, 1, p. 463.

In the first place, moral distinctions are not derived from reason as concerned with matters of fact. 'Take an action allowed to be vicious: wilful murder, for instance. Examine it in all lights, and see if you can find that matter of fact, or real existence, which you call *vice*. In whichever way you take it, you find only certain passions, motives, volitions and thoughts. There is no other matter of fact in the case. . . . You can never find it, till you turn your reflection into your own breast and find a sentiment of disapprobation which arises in you towards this action. Here is a matter of fact; but it is the object of feeling, not of reason. It lies in yourself, not in the object.'[1] What Hume means is that the physical action of killing is or may be the same in a case of murder as it is in a case of justifiable homicide or of execution after judicial sentence.

In the second place, moral distinctions are not derived from reason as concerned with relations. 'There has been an opinion very industriously propagated by certain philosophers, that morality is susceptible of demonstration.'[2] In this case vice and virtue must consist in some relations. If it does, it must consist in resemblance, contrariety, degrees in quality or proportions in quantity and number. But these relations are found just as much in material things as in our actions, passions and volitions. Why is incest among human beings considered a criminal act, while we do not regard it as morally wrong when performed by animals? The relations, after all, are the same in both cases. The answer may be made that incest is not considered to be morally wrong if performed by animals because they lack the reason which is capable of discerning its wrongness, whereas man can do so. This answer, according to Hume, is patently useless. For before reason can perceive the wrongness, the wrongness must be there to perceive. Want of the reasoning faculty may prevent animals from perceiving duties and obligations, but it cannot hinder the duties and obligations from existing, 'since they must antecedently exist, in order to their being perceived. Reason must find them, and can never produce them. This argument deserves to be weighed, as being, in my opinion, entirely decisive.'[3] The same sort of argument appears in the second *Enquiry*. 'No, say you, the morality consists in the relation of actions to the rule of right, and they are denominated good or ill, according as they agree or disagree with it. What then is this rule of right? In what does it consist? How is it determined? By reason, you say, which examines the moral relations of actions. So that moral relations are determined by the comparison of action to a rule. And that rule is determined by considering the moral relations of objects. Is not this fine reasoning?'[1]

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[1] *T.*, 3. 1, 1, pp. 468–9. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 463. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 468.

If we make moral distinctions, and if they are not derived from reason, they must be derived from or founded on feeling. 'Morality, therefore, is more properly felt than judged of.'[2] Virtue arouses an 'agreeable' impression, vice an 'uneasy' impression. 'An action or sentiment or character is virtuous or vicious; why? because its view causes a pleasure or uneasiness of a particular kind.'[3] But, Hume insists, the pleasure caused by virtue and the pain caused by vice are pleasure and pain of a special kind. The term 'pleasure' covers many different types of sensation. 'A good composition of music and a bottle of good wine equally produce pleasure; and what is more, their goodness is determined merely by the pleasure. But shall we say upon that account that the wine is harmonious or the music of a good flavour? . . . Nor is every sentiment of pleasure or pain which arises from characters and actions of that *peculiar* kind which makes us praise or condemn.'[4] The moral sentiment is a feeling of approbation or disapprobation towards actions or qualities or characters. And it is disinterested. 'It is only when a character is considered in general, without reference to our particular interest, that it causes such a feeling or sentiment as denominates it morally good or evil.'[5] Aesthetic pleasure is, it is true, also disinterested. But though moral and natural beauty closely resemble one another, it is not precisely moral approbation which we feel, for example, for a beautiful building or a beautiful body.

Hume's 'hypothesis', therefore, 'defines virtue to be *whatever mental action or quality gives to a spectator the pleasing sentiment of approbation*; and vice the contrary'.[6] Does this view involve sheer relativism, on the principle that there is no dispute about tastes? It is evident that there are often differences between different people's moral judgments. But Hume seems to have thought that the general sentiments of morality are common to all men, not only in the sense that all normal human beings have moral feeling but also in the sense that there is a certain fundamental agreement in the operation of these feelings. When speaking of the legitimacy of rebelling against a tyrant, he remarks that only the most violent perversion of common sense can ever lead us to condemn resistance to oppression. He then adds: 'The general opinion of mankind has some authority in all cases; but in this of morals it is perfectly infallible. Nor is it less infallible because men cannot distinctly explain the principles on which it is founded.'[1] If the moral sentiments are due to the original constitution of men's minds, it is only natural that there should be some fundamental agreement. And if moral distinctions are founded on feelings rather than reason, we cannot go beyond an agreement in feeling and invoke a further criterion.

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[1] *E.M.*, Appendix 1, 239, pp. 288–9.

[2] *T.*, 3, 1, 2, p. 470.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 471.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 472.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *E.M.*, Appendix 1, 239, p. 289.

In the *Treatise* Hume raises the question 'why any action or sentiment upon the general view or survey gives a certain satisfaction or uneasiness'.[2] But the answer to this question is left for a discussion of the different virtues. For it may be that the reason why one type of action arouses the moral sentiment may not be precisely the same as the reason why another type of action does so. In any case, as Hume says in the second *Enquiry*, 'we can only expect success by following the experimental method and deducing general maxims from a comparison of particular instances'.[3] He holds, as we have seen, that what we call a moral judgment simply expresses the feeling of approval or disapproval which the man who makes the judgment has for the action or quality or character in question. And in this sense he maintains an emotive theory of ethics. But it still makes sense to ask what causes the feeling which is expressed in the judgment, even though the latter is not a statement that an action or quality or character causes the feeling. For though the judgment expresses feeling and does not make a statement about the cause of the feeling, we can very well make such statements, though they will be empirical rather than moral propositions.

It is not, however, possible to give a rational explanation of the ultimate ends of human action, if by rational explanation we mean an explanation in terms of higher or more remote principles. If we ask a man why he takes exercise, he may answer that he desires to preserve his health. And if he is asked why he desires this, he may answer that sickness is painful. But if we ask him why he dislikes pain, no answer can be given. 'This is an ultimate end, and is never referred to any other object.'[4] Similarly, if an answer to a question is given in terms of pleasure, it is useless to ask why pleasure is desired. 'It is impossible there can be a progress *in infinitum*; and that one thing can always be a reason why another is desired. Something must be desirable on its own account, and because of its immediate accord or agreement with human sentiment and affection.'[1] This consideration can be applied to virtue. 'Now as virtue is an end and is desirable on its own account, without fee or reward, merely for the immediate satisfaction which it conveys, it is requisite that there should be some sentiment which it touches . . . which distinguishes moral good and evil. . . .'[2] But we can ask why this or that particular line of action causes moral satisfaction and is therefore esteemed virtuous. Hume stresses the importance of utility, and in this respect is a forerunner of the utilitarians. But he does not make utility the sole source of moral approbation. However, the meaning which he gives to utility and the degree of importance which he attributes to it are best illustrated by considering some particular virtues.

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[1] *T.*, 3, 2, 9, p. 552.

[2] *T.*, 3, 1, 2, p. 475.

[3] *E.M.*, 1, 138, p. 174.

[4] *E.M.*, Appendix 1, 244, p. 293.

7. Let us take first the virtue of benevolence. Benevolence and generosity everywhere excite the approbation and goodwill of mankind. 'The epithets *sociable, good-natured, humane, merciful, grateful, friendly, generous, beneficent*, or their equivalents, are known in all languages and universally express the highest merit which *human nature* is capable of attaining.'[3] Further, when people praise the benevolent and humane man, 'there is one circumstance which never fails to be amply insisted on, namely, the happiness and satisfaction derived to society from his intercourse and good offices'. This suggests that the utility of the social virtues 'forms at least a *part* of their merit, and is one source of that approbation and regard so universally paid to them. . . . In general, what praise is implied in the simple epithet *useful*! What reproach in the contrary!'[5]

It is to be noted that Hume does not say that benevolence is esteemed as a virtue simply because of its utility. Some qualities, such as courtesy, are immediately agreeable, without any reference to utility (which means with Hume a tendency to produce some further or ulterior good); and benevolence itself is immediately pleasing and agreeable. But the moral approbation which benevolence arouses is caused in part by its usefulness.

Before proceeding further with the subject of utility, we should note that Hume devotes an appendix to the second *Enquiry* to showing that there is such a thing as benevolence or, rather, that so-called benevolence is not merely a disguised form of self-love. The view that benevolence is really a form of self-love may range from cheap cynicism to a philosophical attempt to preserve the realities of the moral life while providing an analysis of the way in which self-love takes that particular form which we call benevolence. But Hume rejects this view in all its shapes. For one thing, 'the simplest and most obvious cause which can be assigned for any phenomenon is probably the true one'.[1] And there are certainly cases in which it is far simpler to believe that a man is animated by disinterested benevolence and humanity than that he is prompted to act in a benevolent way by some tortuous considerations of self-interest. For another thing, even animals sometimes show a kindness when there is no suspicion of disguise or artifice. And 'if we admit a disinterested benevolence in the inferior species, by what rule of analogy can we refuse it in the superior?'[2] Further, in gratitude and friendship and maternal tenderness we can often find marks of disinterested sentiments and actions. In general 'the hypothesis which allows of a disinterested benevolence, distinct from self-love, has really more *simplicity* in it, and is more conformable to the analogy of nature than that which pretends to resolve all friendship and humanity into this latter principle'.[3]

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[1] *E.M.*, Appendix 1, 244, p. 293.
[2] *Ibid.*, 245, pp. 293-4.
[3] *E.M.*, 2, 1, 139, p. 176.
[4] *E.M.*, 2, 2, 141, p. 178.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 179.

As there is such a thing as disinterested benevolence, it is obvious that when Hume finds in utility or usefulness a part-cause of the moral approbation accorded to benevolence, he is not thinking exclusively of usefulness to oneself. Perhaps we show more alacrity in praising benevolence when it benefits us personally; but we certainly praise it often enough when it does not do so. For instance, we feel moral approbation of benevolent actions performed by historic personages in other lands. And it is a 'weak subterfuge' to argue that when we do this we transport ourselves in imagination into that other land and period and imagine ourselves to be contemporaries benefiting from the actions in question. 'Usefulness is agreeable, and engages our approbation. This is a matter of fact, confirmed by daily observation. But, *useful*? For what? For somebody's interest, surely. Whose interest, then? Not our own only; for our approbation frequently extends farther. It must, therefore, be the interest of those who are served

[1] *E.M.*, Appendix 2, 251, p. 299. [2] *Ibid.*, 252, p. 300. [3] *Ibid.*, 253, p. 301.

by the character or action approved of; and these we may conclude, however remote, are not totally indifferent to us.'[1] Again, 'If usefulness, therefore, be a source of moral sentiment, and if this usefulness be not always considered with a reference to self, it follows that everything which contributes to the happiness of society recommends itself directly to our approbation and goodwill. Here is a principle which accounts, in great part, for the origin of morality.'[2] It is unnecessary to ask why we have humanity or a fellow-feeling with others. 'It is sufficient that this is experienced to be a principle in human nature. We must stop somewhere in our examination of causes.'[3]

In maintaining that usefulness for others can be directly agreeable to us, indeed that 'everything which contributes to the happiness of society recommends itself directly to our approbation and goodwill', Hume seems to have modified, or rather changed, the view which he put forward in the *Treatise*. For there he said that 'there is no such passion in human minds as the love of mankind, merely as such, independent of personal qualities, of services, or of relation to oneself'.[4] The happiness or misery of another affects us, indeed, when it is not too far off and is represented in lively colours; 'but this proceeds merely from sympathy'.[5] And sympathy is explained, as we saw in the last chapter, with the aid of the principles of association. But in the second *Enquiry* the idea of association of ideas drops into the background, and Hume maintains the view that the thought of the pleasures and pains of other people arouses directly in us the sentiments of humanity and benevolence. In other words, the pleasures of others and that which is 'useful' to them, producing pleasure in them, is or can be directly agreeable to us. And it is unnecessary to have recourse to an elaborate associative mechanism to explain altruistic sentiments. In general, Hume tends, in the second *Enquiry*, to emphasize natural propensities, and the propensity to benevolence is one of them. It is probably not a derivative of self-love.

8. We have seen that according to Hume its utility is one of the reasons why benevolence wins our moral approbation. But it is not the only reason. He maintains, however, that 'public utility is the *sole* origin of justice, and that reflections on the beneficial consequences of this virtue are the *sole* foundation of its merit'.[6]

Society is naturally advantageous to man. Left to himself, the individual cannot provide adequately for his needs as a human being. Self-interest, therefore, drives men into society. But this alone is not sufficient. For disturbances inevitably arise in society if there are no conventions establishing and regulating the rights of property. There is need of 'a convention entered into by all the members of the society to bestow stability on the possession of those external goods, and leave everyone in the peaceable enjoyment of what he may acquire by his fortune and industry . . . it is by that means we maintain society, which is so necessary to their well-being and subsistence, as well as to our own'.[1] This convention should not be conceived as a promise. 'For even promises . . . arise from human conventions. It is only a general sense of common interest; which sense all the members of the society express to one another, and which induces them to regulate their conduct by certain rules.'[2] Once this convention about abstaining from the external goods of other people has been entered into, 'there immediately arise the ideas of justice and injustice'.[3] Hume does not mean, however, that there is a right of property which is antecedent to the idea of justice. He explicitly denies this. A 'general sense of common interest' expresses itself in the general principles of justice and equity, in fundamental laws of justice; and 'our property is nothing but those goods whose constant possession is established by the laws of society; that is, by the laws of justice. . . . The origin of justice explains that of property. The same artifice gives rise to both.'[4]

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[1] *E.M.*, 5, 1, 177, p. 218.

[2] *E.M.*, 5, 2, 178, p. 219.

[3] *E.M.*, 5, 2, 178 note, pp. 219–20.

[4] *T.*, 3, 2, 1, p. 481.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *E.M.*, 3, 1, 145, p. 183.

Justice, therefore, is founded on self-interest, on a sense of utility. And it is self-interest which gives rise to what Hume calls the 'natural obligation' of justice. But what gives rise to the '*moral* obligation, or the sentiment of right and wrong'?[5] Or why do we 'annex the idea of virtue to justice, and of vice to injustice'?[6] The explanation is to be found in sympathy. Even when injustice does not affect us personally as victims, it still displeases us, because we consider it as prejudicial to society. We share the 'uneasiness' of other people by sympathy. And since that which in human actions produces uneasiness arouses disapprobation and is called vice, while that which produces satisfaction is called virtue, we regard justice as a moral virtue and injustice as a moral vice. 'Thus self-interest is the original motive to the establishment of justice: but a sympathy with public interest is the source of the moral approbation which attends that virtue.'[1] Education and the words of statesmen and politicians contribute to consolidate this moral approbation; but sympathy is the basis.

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[1] *T.*, 3, 2, 2, p. 489.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 490.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 491.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 498.
[6] *Ibid.*

Hume does not give any clear definition of justice, nor even, as it seems to me, any really clear indication of what he understands by the term. In the second *Enquiry* he asserts that 'general peace and order are the attendants of justice or a general abstinence from the possessions of others';[2] and in the *Treatise*, under the general heading of justice and injustice, he considers first of all matters relating to property. He tells us that the three fundamental 'laws of nature' are those relating to stable possession of property, the transference of property by consent, and the performance of promises.[3] What is clear, however, is that in his opinion all the laws of justice, general and particular, are grounded on public utility.

We can now understand what Hume means by calling justice an 'artificial' virtue. It presupposes a human convention, based on self-interest. Justice produces pleasure and approbation 'by means of an artifice or contrivance which arises from the circumstances and necessity of mankind'.[4] The sense of justice arises from a convention which is a remedy for certain 'inconveniences' in human life. 'The remedy, then, is not derived from nature, but from *artifice*; or more properly speaking, nature provides a remedy in the judgment and understanding for what is irregular and incommodious in the affections.'[5] By using the word 'artifice' Hume does not mean that, given human beings as they are, it is a mere matter of taste or of arbitrary choice whether we regard justice as a virtue and institute laws of justice or not. 'The sense of justice and injustice is not derived from nature, but arises artificially, *though necessarily* (my italics), from education and human conventions.'[6] Justice is 'artificial' in the sense that it is an invention of man, invented as a remedy for human selfishness and rapacity combined with the scanty provision which nature has made for his wants. If these conditions did not obtain, there would be no virtue of justice. 'By rendering justice totally *useless*, you thereby totally destroy its essence and suspend its obligation upon mankind.'[7] But the conditions do obtain, and the 'invention' is required for man's benefit. 'And where an invention is obvious and absolutely necessary, it may as properly be said to be natural as anything that proceeds immediately from original principles, without the intervention of thought or reflexion. Though the rules of justice be *artificial*, they are not arbitrary. Nor is the expression improper to call them *Laws of Nature*; if by natural we understand what is common to any species, or even if we confine it to mean what is inseparable from the species.'[1]

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[1] *T.*, 3, 2, 2, pp. 499–500.

[2] *E.M.*, Appendix 3, 256, p. 304.

[3] *T.*, 3, 2, 6, p. 526.

[4] *T.*, 3, 2, 1, p. 477.

[5] *T.*, 3, 2, 2, p. 489.

[6] *T.*, 3, 2, 1, p. 483.

[7] *E.M.*, 3, 1, 149, p. 188.

The particular laws of justice and equity may, of course, operate in a manner prejudicial to the public benefit if we concentrate our attention on some one particular instance. For instance, an unworthy son may inherit a fortune from a wealthy father and use it for bad ends. But it is the general scheme or system of justice which is of public utility. And here we find a difference between a virtue such as benevolence and a virtue such as justice. 'The social virtues of humanity and benevolence exert their influence immediately by a direct tendency or instinct, which chiefly keeps in view the simple object, moving the affections, and comprehends not any scheme or system, nor the consequences resulting from the concurrence, imitation, or example of others. . . . The case is not the same with the social virtues of justice and fidelity. They are highly useful, or indeed absolutely necessary to the well-being of mankind: but the benefit resulting from them is not the consequence of every individual single act, but arises from the whole scheme or system concurred in by the whole, or the greater part of the society.'[2]

Hume, therefore, will not allow that there are eternal laws of justice, independent of man's conditions and of public utility. Justice is an artifice, an invention. At the same time it does not depend on a social contract, on a promise. For it is justice itself which gives rise to contracts and binding promises. It depends on felt utility, and this utility is real. Men establish the laws of justice out of a concern for their own and the public interest. But this concern is derived not from reasoning about the eternal and necessary relations of ideas but from our impressions and feelings. 'The sense of justice, therefore, is not founded on our ideas, but on our impressions.'[3] Men feel their interest in establishing a scheme of justice, and they feel approval for customary conventions which remedy the 'inconveniences' that accompany human life. But in elaborating particular rules reason is, of course, employed. Hume thus brings the virtue of justice within the general pattern of his moral theory. Feeling is fundamental; but this does not mean that reason has no part to play in morality.

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[1] *T.*, 3, 2, 1, p. 484.

[2] *E.M.*, Appendix 3, 255–6, pp. 303–4.

[3] *T.*, 3, 2, 2, p. 496.

9. Hume set out to understand the moral life of mankind by studying the empirical data. That men make moral judgments is clear: it is an empirical fact which stands in need of no proof. But it is not immediately evident what men are doing when they make these judgments and what is the ultimate foundation of the judgments in question. Some philosophers have represented judgments of value as being the result of reasoning, as being conclusions of a logical process. They have tried to reconstruct the system of morals as a rational system akin to mathematics. But an interpretation of this sort bears little resemblance to the facts. Where there is a general agreement about values and moral principles, we can argue whether, for instance, a particular case falls under a given principle or not. And after we have made a moral judgment, we can look for reasons to support it. But the suggestion that moral judgments are in the first place a conclusion of reason, the conclusion of a deductive process akin to mathematics, does not fit the available data. In practice, of course, men's moral judgments are influenced by education and other external factors. But, if we leave aside the question what factors influence a man to make a particular moral judgment, it is clear, if we keep an eye on concrete moral experience, that when a man makes a moral judgment there is an element of immediacy which is not accounted for on the rationalist interpretation of ethics. Morality is more akin to aesthetics than to mathematics. It is truer to say that we 'feel' values than that we deduce values or arrive at our moral judgments by a process of logical reasoning from abstract principles.

In calling attention to the element of immediacy in the moral judgment Hume was emphasizing a valuable point. But in his further account of the matter he was hampered by his general psychology. Inasmuch as he refused to allow that moral distinctions are derived from either of the operations of reason which he recognized, he had to say that morality is more properly a matter of feeling than of judging and to reduce the judgment to an expression of feeling. But terms such as 'feeling' and 'moral sense', when used in this context, are analogical terms which may be useful for drawing attention to an aspect of man's moral life which was neglected by the rationalists but which need further examination than Hume accorded them. The elements of utilitarianism in his theory seem to me to suggest the desirability of revising Hume's conception of 'reason' rather than of resting content with terms such as 'feeling'. In other words, Hume's philosophy lacks a conception of the practical reason and of its mode of operation.

Hume was also hampered, I think, by his theory of relations. He refused to allow that reason can discern a relation between human acts and a rule of morality promulgated by reason. In fact, he thought that any such view of the matter involves one in circular reasoning. But his own insistence on the original constitution or fabric of human nature suggests that this nature is in some sense the foundation of morality or, in other words, that there is a natural law which is promulgated by reason apprehending human nature in its teleological and dynamic aspect. And an interpretation of morality on these lines can be developed without implying that men in general consciously 'reason' to general moral rules. Hume thought, of course, that if it is said that reason discerns relations which give rise to moral judgment, we shall also have to say that inanimate objects, for instance, are capable of morality. But it is difficult to see how this follows. For, after all, human acts are human acts; and it is these alone which are relevant. Hume, it is true, tended to say that acts are relevant to the moral judgment only as indicating motive and character. But this seems to be a way of saying that it is only human acts, acts which are deliberate, that are morally relevant. And the relation of such acts to a moral law are *sui generis*.

Perhaps it was only natural, given his interpretation of liberty, that Hume stressed above all character and qualities of character. For if liberty is reduced to spontaneity, an act has value either as a revelation of character or because of its 'utility'. Now, we are accustomed to regard characters and personal qualities as admirable or the reverse rather than as right or wrong, words which we reserve for acts. Hence, if we stress personal qualities rather than acts we shall probably be apt to assimilate the moral judgment or judgment of value to the aesthetic judgment. And in point of fact we find Hume slurring over the difference between moral qualities or virtues and natural gifts and talents. If, however, we look on acts as having value because of their utility, we shall tend to develop a utilitarian theory. And we find both lines of thought in Hume's analysis of morality.

It seems to me, therefore, that Hume's ethics is conditioned very largely by positions previously adopted, and that it contains different lines of thought. The utilitarian element was later developed by Bentham and the two Mills, while the insistence on feeling has found fresh life in modern empiricism in the emotive theories of ethics.

CHAPTER XVII

HUME (4)

Politics as a science—The origin of society—The origin of government—The nature and limits of allegiance—The laws of nations—General remarks.

1. HUME regarded politics as being in some sense of the word a science. As we have already seen, politics, which is described as considering men as united in society and dependent on each other, is classed with logic, morals and criticism as part of the science of man.[1] In an essay entitled *That Politics may be reduced to a Science* Hume remarks that 'so great is the force of laws and of particular forms of government, and so little dependence have they on the humours and tempers of men, that consequences almost as general and certain may sometimes be deduced from them as any which the mathematical sciences afford us'. At the end of the first *Enquiry* politics is separated from morals and criticism. 'Moral reasonings are either concerning particular or general facts'; and 'the sciences which treat of general facts are politics, natural philosophy, physic, chemistry, etc., where the qualities, causes and effects of a whole species of objects are enquired into.'[2] 'Morals and criticism,' however, 'are not so properly objects of the understanding as of taste and sentiment'.[3] Here, then, we have a different grouping from that in the introduction to the *Treatise*. Whatever Hume may have come to think about morals, he tries to conserve politics as a science, and he groups it with natural philosophy and chemistry. In the *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, however, politics is mentioned along with morals and criticism. 'So long as we confine our speculations to trade, or morals, or politics, or criticism, we make appeals, every moment, to common sense and experience, which strengthen our philosophical conclusions and remove (at least in part) the suspicion which we so justly entertain with regard to every reasoning that is very subtle and refined.'[4] Here economics, morals, politics and criticism or aesthetics are being contrasted with 'theological reasonings' in which we cannot, according to the

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[1] *T.*, Introduction, pp. xix–xx.

[2] *E.*, 12, 3, 132, pp. 164–5.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 165.

[4] *D.*, 1, p. 135.

speaker, the sceptically-minded Philo, confirm philosophical conclusions by appeals to common sense and experience.

Even if Hume's utterances about the relation of politics to morals differ on different occasions, it is none the less clear that he regards the former as a science or as capable of forming a science. We can form general maxims and explanatory hypotheses, and it is possible, within limits, to predict. But the unexpected may happen, even though after the event we may be able to explain it on the basis of already known principles. Thus in his essay *Of some Remarkable Customs* Hume observes that 'all general maxims in politics ought to be established with great caution', and that 'irregular and extraordinary appearances are frequently discovered in the moral as well as in the physical world. The former, perhaps we can better account for after they happen, from springs and principles of which everyone has, within himself or from observation, the strongest assurance and conviction: but it is often fully impossible for human prudence, beforehand, to foresee and foretell them.' We cannot attain in politics the certainty which is attainable in mathematics; for we are dealing mainly with matters of fact. This is doubtless the reason why, when he assimilates politics or mathematics in the passage quoted at the beginning of this section, he inserts the saving word 'almost'.

2. As we have seen when considering the virtue of justice, organized society came into existence because of its utility to man. It is a remedy for the inconveniences of life without society. 'Society provides a remedy for these *three* inconveniences. By the conjunction of forces, our power is augmented: By the partition of employment, our ability increases: And by mutual succour we are less exposed to fortune and accidents. It is by this additional *force, ability* and *security* that society becomes advantageous.'[1]

It is important to understand, however, that Hume does not imagine primitive human beings as thinking over the disadvantages of their lot without organized society, excogitating a remedy and entering upon any explicit social contract or covenant. Apart from the fact that he does not admit that promises and contracts have binding force apart from society and the rules of justice, he insists that the utility of society is originally felt rather than made the subject of a reflective judgment. There can be a convention or agreement between people although no explicit promises are made. Speaking of the convention from which the ideas of justice, property and right arise, he uses a famous illustration which illustrates what he calls a 'common sense of interest', which is expressed in action rather than in word. 'Two men who pull the oars of a boat do it by an agreement or convention, though they have never given promises to each other. . . . In like manner are languages gradually established by human conventions without any promise.'[1]

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[1] *T.*, 3, 2, 2, p. 485.

In order that society should be formed, says Hume, it is necessary not only that it should be in fact advantageous to men but also that they should 'be sensible of these advantages'. And if we are not to picture primitive men arriving at this knowledge by reflection and study, how did they arrive at it? Hume's answer is that society arose through the family. Natural appetite draws members of the two sexes together and preserves their union until a new bond arises, their common concern for their offspring. 'In a little time, custom and habit operating on the tender minds of the children makes them sensible of the advantages which they may reap from society, as well as fashions them by degrees for it, by rubbing off those rough corners and untoward affections which prevent their coalition.'[2] The family, therefore (or, more accurately, the natural appetite between the sexes), is 'the first and original principle of human society'.[3] The transition to a wider society is effected principally by the felt need for stabilizing the possession of external goods.

As there is question of feeling a need rather than of consciously studying man's situation and arriving at a common and reflective judgment concerning the appropriate way of meeting it, and as this need is present practically from the beginning of human life on earth, it is understandable that Hume felt no more sympathy for the theory of a state of nature than for that of a social contract. He concludes that 'it is utterly impossible for men to remain any considerable time in that savage condition which precedes society, but that his very first state and situation may justly be esteemed social. This, however, hinders not but that philosophers may, if they please, extend their reasoning to the supposed *state of nature*; provided they allow it to be a mere philosophical fiction, which never had, and never could have any reality. . . . This *state of nature*, therefore, is to be regarded as a mere fiction.'[4] The same point is made in the second *Enquiry*. There, too, Hume speaks of the state of nature as a philosophical fiction and remarks that 'whether such a condition of human nature could ever exist or, if it did, could continue so long as to merit the appellation of a *state*, may justly be doubted. Men are necessarily born in a family-society at least'.[1]

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[1] *T.*, 3. 2. 2, p. 490.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 486.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 493.

3. Similar statements may be made about the origin of government. If natural justice were sufficient to govern human conduct, if no disorder or wickedness ever arose, there would be no need for curtailing individual liberty by establishing governments to which we owe allegiance. 'It is evident that, if government were totally useless, it never could take place, and that the sole foundation of the duty of allegiance is the *advantage* which it procures to society by preserving peace and order among mankind.'[2] Its usefulness, therefore, is the foundation of the institution of government. And the principal advantage which it secures for mankind is the establishment and maintenance of justice. Thus in his essay *Of the Origin of Government* Hume begins by saying that 'Man, born in a family, is compelled to maintain society from necessity, from natural inclination and from habit. The same creature, in his further progress, is engaged to establish political society in order to administer justice, without which there can be no peace among them, nor safety, nor mutual intercourse. We are, therefore, to look upon all the vast apparatus of our government as having ultimately no other object or purpose but the distribution of justice.' In the *Treatise*, however, where Hume speaks more precisely, he observes that though the administration of justice and the settlement of controversies relating to matters of justice and equity are the principal advantages derived from government, they are not the only ones. Without government men would find it very difficult to agree about schemes and projects for the common good and to carry out such projects harmoniously. Organized society remedies such inconveniences. 'Thus bridges are built; harbours opened; ramparts raised; canals formed; fleets equipped; and armies disciplined; everywhere by the care of government.'[3]

Government, therefore, is an 'invention' of great advantage to men. But how does it arise? Is it so essential to society that there cannot be a society without government? In the *Treatise* Hume expressly says that he disagrees with those philosophers who declare that men are incapable of social unity without government. 'The state of society without government is one of the most natural states of men, and must subsist with the conjunction of many families, and long after the first generation. Nothing but an increase of riches and possessions could oblige men to quit it.'[1] According to Hume, the existence of societies without regular government is empirically verified in the American tribes. And he seems, at first sight at least, to imply that primitive men, perceiving after a time the necessity of government, met together to choose magistrates, determine their power and promise them obedience. This would be because the 'laws of nature' (the fundamental principles of justice) and the binding character of promises are presupposed. They are antecedent to the establishment of government, though they are not antecedent to the establishment of the convention which lies at the root of society.

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[1] *E.M.*, 3, 1, 151, p. 190.

[2] *E.M.*, 4, 164, p. 205.

[3] *T.*, 3, 2, 7, p. 539.

If it were really Hume's view that government owes its origin to an explicit compact or agreement, this would scarcely be consistent with his general outlook. For, as we have seen in connection with the origin of society, he lays stress on 'felt' utility and mistrusts the rationalistic theory of social contracts. But, however he may speak on occasion, I do not think that Hume intends to say that government originated through explicit agreements. In his view government probably originated, not through a simple development and enlargement of paternal authority or of patriarchal government, but through wars between different societies. Foreign war necessarily produces civil war in the case of societies without government. The first rudiments of government, then, as can be seen among the American tribes, is the authority enjoyed by the captain or tribal chieftain during a campaign. 'I assert the first rudiments of government to arise from quarrels, not among men of the same society, but among those of different societies.'[2] Thus in his essay *Of the Original Contract* Hume remarks that 'the chieftain, who had probably acquired his influence during the continuance of war, ruled more by persuasion than command; and till he could employ force to reduce the refractory and disobedient, the society could scarcely be said to have attained a state of civil government. No compact or agreement, it is evident, was expressly formed for general submission; an idea far beyond the comprehension of savages: each exertion of authority in the chieftain must have been particular, and called forth by the present exigencies of the case: the sensible utility resulting from his interposition made these exertions become daily more frequent; and their frequency gradually produced an habitual, and, if you please to call it so, a voluntary, and therefore precarious, acquiescence in the people.' Inasmuch, therefore, as government probably first arose through a gradual process, implying a progressive realization of its utility, it can be said to have been founded on a 'contract'. But if by 'contract' is meant an explicit agreement by which civil government was established all at once in a form which would be immediately recognized by us as civil government, there is no cogent evidence that any explicit agreement or contract of this kind was ever made. I think that this represents Hume's view of the matter, the hypothesis which he puts forward, though not dogmatically.

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[1] *T.*, 3, 2, 8, p. 541.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 539–40.

But though Hume seems to be willing to allow that in prehistoric times government probably originated in some sense through consent, and though he suggests that observation of the American tribes affords some empirical confirmation of this hypothesis, he has no use at all for the contract theory when its assertions go further than these modest admissions. In the essay *Of the Original Contract* he observes that some philosophers are not content with saying that government in its first beginnings 'arose from consent, or rather the voluntary acquiescence of the people'; they assert, too, that government always rests on consent, on promises, on a contract. 'But would these reasoners look abroad in the world, they would meet with nothing that in the least corresponds to their ideas or can warrant so refined and philosophical a system.' Indeed, 'almost all the governments which exist at present, or of which there remains any record in story, have been founded originally, either on usurpation or conquest or both, without any pretence of a fair consent or voluntary subjection of the people. . . . The face of the earth is continually changing, by the increase of small kingdoms into great empires, by the dissolution of great empires into smaller kingdoms, by the planting of colonies, by the migration of tribes. Is there anything discoverable in all these events but force and violence? Where is the mutual agreement or voluntary association so much talked of?' Even when elections take the place of force, what does it amount to? It may be election by a few powerful and influential men. Or it may take the form of popular sedition, the people following a ringleader who owes his advancement to his own impudence or to the momentary caprice of the crowd, most of whom have little or no knowledge of him and his capacities. In neither case is there a real rational agreement by the people.

Whatever, then, may be the case with regard to the authority in war of really primitive tribal chieftains and leaders, whom the people may be said to have followed voluntarily, the contract theory of the origin of government gains very little empirical support from the available data in historic times. The theory is a mere fiction, which is invalidated by the facts. This being the case, it is necessary to inquire into the foundations of the duty of political allegiance.

4. Granted that there is a duty of political allegiance, it is obviously idle to look for its foundation in popular consent and in promises if there is little or no evidence that popular consent was ever asked or given. As for Locke's idea of tacit consent, 'it may be answered that such an implied consent can only have place where a man imagines that the matter depends on his choice'.[1] But anyone who is born under an established government thinks that he owes allegiance to the sovereign by the very fact that he is by birth a citizen of the political society in question. And to suggest with Locke that every man is free to leave the society to which he belongs by birth is unreal. 'Can we seriously say that a poor peasant or artisan has a free choice to leave his country, when he knows no foreign language or manners and lives from day to day by the small wages which he acquires?'[2]

The obligation of allegiance to civil government, therefore, 'is not derived from any promise of the subjects'.[3] Even if promises were made at some time in the remote past, the present duty of allegiance cannot rest on them. 'It being certain that there is a moral obligation to submit to government, because everyone thinks so, it must be as certain that this obligation arises not from a promise, since no one whose judgment has not been led astray by too strict adherence to a system of philosophy has ever yet dreamt of ascribing it to that origin.'[4] The real foundation of the duty of allegiance is utility or interest. 'This interest I find to consist in the security and protection which we can enjoy in political society, and which we can never attain when perfectly free and independent.'[5] This holds good both of natural and of moral obligation. 'It is evident that, if government were totally useless, it never could have place, and that the sole foundation of the duty of allegiance is the *advantage* which it procures to society by preserving peace and order among mankind.'[1] Similarly, in the essay *Of the Original Contract* Hume observes: 'If the reason be asked of that obedience which we are bound to pay to government, I readily answer, *Because society could not otherwise subsist*; and this answer is clear and intelligible to all mankind.'

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[1] *Of the Original Contract.*
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *T.*, 3, 2, 8, p. 546.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 547.
[5] *T.*, 3, 2, 9, pp. 550–1.

The obvious conclusion to be drawn from this view is that when the advantage ceases, the obligation to allegiance ceases. 'As interest, therefore, is the immediate sanction of government, the one can have no longer being than the other; and whenever the civil magistrate carries his oppression so far as to render his authority perfectly intolerable, we are no longer bound to submit to it. The cause ceases; the effect must cease also.'[2] It is obvious, however, that the evils and dangers attending rebellion are such that it can be legitimately attempted only in cases of real tyranny and oppression and when the advantages of acting in this way are judged to outweigh the disadvantages.

But to whom is allegiance due? In other words, whom are we to regard as legitimate rulers? Originally, Hume thought or inclined to think, government was established by voluntary convention. 'The same promise, then, which binds them (the subjects) to obedience, ties them down to a particular person and makes him the object of their allegiance.'[3] But once government has been established and allegiance no longer rests upon a promise but upon advantage or utility, we cannot have recourse to the original promise to determine who is the legitimate ruler. The fact that some tribe in remote times voluntarily subjected itself to a leader is no guide to determining whether William of Orange or James II is the legitimate monarch.

One foundation of legitimate authority is long possession of the sovereign power: 'I mean, *long possession* in any one form of government, or succession of princes'.[4] Generally speaking, there are no governments or royal houses which do not owe the origin of their power to usurpation or rebellion and whose original title to authority was not 'worse than doubtful and uncertain'.[5] In this case 'time alone gives solidity to their right and, operating gradually on the minds of men, reconciles them to any authority and makes it seem just and reasonable'.[6] The second source of public authority is present possession, which can legitimize the possession of power even when there is no question of its having been acquired a long time ago. 'Right to authority is nothing but the constant possession of authority, maintained by the laws of society and the interests of mankind.'[1] A third source of legitimate political authority is the right of conquest. As fourth and fifth sources can be added the right of succession and positive laws, when the legislature establishes a certain form of government. When all these titles to authority are found together, we have the surest sign of legitimate sovereignty, unless the public good clearly demands a change. But if, says Hume, we consider the actual course of history, we shall soon learn to treat lightly all disputes about the rights of princes. We cannot decide all disputes in accordance with fixed, general rules. Speaking of this matter in the essay *Of the Original Contract,* Hume remarks that 'though an appeal to general opinion may justly, in the speculative sciences of metaphysics, natural philosophy or astronomy, be deemed unfair and inconclusive, yet in all questions with regard to morals, as well as criticism, there is really no other standard by which any controversy can ever be decided'. To say, for example, with Locke that absolute government is not really civil government at all is pointless if absolute government is in fact accepted as a recognized political institution. Again, it is useless to dispute whether the succession of the Prince of Orange to the throne was legitimate or not. It may not have been legitimate at the time. And Locke, who wished to justify the revolution of 1688, could not possibly do so on his theory of legitimate government being founded on the consent of the subjects. For the people of England were not asked for their opinion. But in point of fact William of Orange was accepted, and the doubts about the legitimacy of his accession are nullified by the fact that his successors have been accepted. It may perhaps seem to be an unreasonable way of thinking, but 'princes often *seem* to acquire a right from their successors as well as from their ancestors'.[2]

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[1] *E.M.*, 4, 164, p. 205.
[2] *T.*, 3, 2, 9, p. 551.
[3] *T.*, 3, 2, 10, p. 554.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 556.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Ibid.*

5. Inasmuch as it is to the interest of different political societies to carry on trade and commerce with one another and, in general, to enter into mutual relations, there arises a set of rules which Hume calls 'the laws of nations'. 'Under this head we may comprise the sacredness of the person of ambassadors, the declaration of war, the abstaining from poisoned arms, with other duties of

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[1] *T.*, 3, 2, 10, p. 557.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 566.

that kind, which are evidently calculated for the commerce that is peculiar to different societies.'[1]

These 'laws of nations' have the same foundation as the 'laws of nature', namely, utility or advantage, and they do not abolish the latter. Princes are, indeed, bound by moral rules. 'The same *natural* obligation of interest takes place among independent kingdoms, and gives rise to the same *morality*; so that no one of ever so corrupt morals will approve of a prince who voluntarily and of his own accord breaks his word or violates any treaty.'[2] At the same time, although the moral obligation of princes has the same extent as that of private persons, it does not possess the same *force*. For intercourse between different States is not so necessary or advantageous as that between individuals. Without society of some kind human life cannot subsist; but there is not the same degree of necessity for intercourse between States. Accordingly, the natural obligation to justice is not so strong with regard to the behaviour of one political society towards another as it is with regard to the mutual relations of two private members of the same society. And from this there follows a similar difference of strength in moral obligation. Hence, 'we must necessarily give a greater indulgence to a prince or minister who deceives another than to a private gentleman who breaks his word of honour'.[3] But if one is asked to state the exact proportion which obtains between the morality of princes and the morality of private persons, one can give no precise answer. 'One may safely affirm that this proportion finds itself, without any art or study of men; as we may observe on many other occasions.'[4] Hume is thus ready to find some truth in the principles of Machiavellian politics; but he is not prepared to state that there is one morality for princes and another for private persons.

6. One salient feature of Hume's political theory is his attention to empirical data and his refusal to accept philosophical hypotheses which are not confirmed by the known facts. This is particularly true of his attitude towards the contract theory or theories. He does, indeed, accept this theory to some extent as far as the first origins of government are concerned. But there he is thinking of a tribe voluntarily gathering round a leader in an inter-tribal war rather than of any formal contract or promise. And, apart from this concession, he has no use for contract theories. In place of such

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[1] *T.*, 3, 2, 11, p. 567.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 568–9.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 569.

[4] *Ibid.*

rationalistic theories he substitutes the idea of 'felt' interest or advantage.

There is a strong element of what we may call 'positivism' in Hume's political philosophy. He appeals to what actually happens or to what everyone thinks as a criterion rather than to any *a priori* reasonings. For example, political authority is frequently the result of usurpation, rebellion or conquest, and if the authority is stable and not obviously tyrannical and oppressive, it is in practice accepted as legitimate by the vast majority of the governed. This is sufficient for Hume. Subtle discussions about the legitimacy of such authority, and attempts to prove its legitimacy by means of 'philosophical fictions', are a waste of time. It is more profitable to inquire what are the titles to authority which are actually accepted as titles. Again, Hume is not disposed to spend time discussing ideal forms of commonwealth. In his essay on the *Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth* he does, indeed, remark that it is advantageous to know what is most perfect of its kind, that we may amend existing forms of constitution and government 'by such gentle alterations and innovations as may not give too great disturbance to society'. And he himself makes some suggestions under this heading. But he also observes that 'all plans of government which suppose great reformation in the manners of mankind are plainly imaginary. Of this nature are the *Republic* of Plato and the *Utopia* of Sir Thomas More.' But apart from the essay in question he shows himself more concerned with understanding what has been and is rather than with suggesting what ought to be And even when he does make suggestions towards improving the constitution, it is practical advantage and utility that he has in mind rather than conclusions deduced from eternal, abstract principles.

In his essay *Of the Original Contract* Hume mentions the position of those who maintain that since God is the origin of all authority the sovereign's authority is sacred and inviolable in all circumstances. He then comments as follows. 'That the Deity is the ultimate author of all government will never be denied by any who admit a general providence and allow that all events in the universe are conducted by an uniform plan and directed to wise purposes. . . . But since he (God) gave rise to it, not by any particular or miraculous interposition, but by his concealed and universal efficacy, a sovereign cannot, properly speaking, be called his vicegerent in any other sense than every power or force, being derived from him, may be said to act by his commission.' In other words, even if we grant the validity of the premiss, the conclusion drawn by those who maintain the divine right of kings does not follow. And, in general, it is clear that Hume did not think that there is much practical help to be gained by a process of deduction from metaphysical principles. God has made man so that government is highly advantageous, even necessary, to him; and in this sense God may be called the author of political authority. But in deciding what form of government to adopt or who possesses legitimate authority we must have recourse to other criteria than divine creation, preservation and providence.

But though Hume shows an admirable hard-headed common sense, his political theory seems to me to suffer from a weakness which is shared by his moral theory. It is all very well to appeal to utility and advantage and public benefit; but it is by no means self-evident what these terms mean in the concrete. And it is difficult to give them a meaning which will serve as a criterion without going further into a philosophical anthropology, and so into metaphysics, than Hume was prepared to go.

CHAPTER XVIII

FOR AND AGAINST HUME

Introductory remarks—Adam Smith—Price—Reid—Campbell —Beattie—Stewart—Brown—Concluding remarks.

1. THE title of this chapter is perhaps rather misleading. For it suggests that at any rate immediately after Hume's death, if not during his lifetime, controversy raged about the validity of his philosophical theories. But this would scarcely be an accurate picture of the situation. In France he was acclaimed as the leading British man of letters and during his visits to that country he was lionized in the *salons* of Paris. But though his essays and historical writings were appreciated, his philosophy was not a success in his own country during his lifetime. And, apart from the scandal caused by his reputation for theological unorthodoxy, no very great interest was taken in it. If Hume is now generally regarded as the chief British philosopher, and certainly as the leading British thinker of his period, this is largely because his theories have come into their own, so to speak, in modern empiricism. He has undoubtedly exercised a profound influence on philosophical thought; but, if we except the influence which Hume's empiricism exercised on the mind of Kant, its more important manifestations were reserved for a later period.

In Hume's lifetime there were, however, a few thinkers in his own country who gave a more or less favourable reception to his philosophical ideas. And among these the most remarkable and the most appreciative was his personal friend, Adam Smith. Again, among Hume's critics some were, indeed, moderate and polite; and these included the moral philosopher, Richard Price. Further, a more extensive answer to Hume was proposed by Thomas Reid, the founder of the Scottish philosophy of common sense. It may be appropriate, therefore, to conclude the present part of the fourth volume of this *History* with a brief chapter on Smith, Price, Reid and Reid's followers.

2. Adam Smith (1723–90) went in 1737 to the University of Glasgow, where he attended Hutcheson's lectures. Three years later he went to Balliol College, Oxford. He seems to have become acquainted with Hume at Edinburgh about 1749, and in due course

he became the philosopher's close friend, the friendship lasting until Hume's death. In 1751 Smith was elected to the chair of logic at Glasgow, but in the following year he changed to the chair of moral philosophy, which had become vacant through the death of Hutcheson's successor. In 1759 he published his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

In 1764 Smith went to France as tutor-companion to the duke of Buccleuch, after having resigned from his university chair. While in Paris he consorted with Quesnay and other 'physiocrats' as well as with philosophers such as d'Alembert and Helvetius. The physiocrats were an eighteenth-century school of French economists who insisted that governmental interference with individual liberty should be reduced to the indispensable minimum. The reason for this insistence was that they believed in natural economic laws which produce prosperity and wealth if left to operate freely. Hence the word 'physiocracy' or rule of nature. Smith was influenced by them to some extent; but this influence should not be exaggerated. He did not borrow from them his leading ideas.

On returning to England in 1766 Smith retired to Scotland, and in 1776 there appeared his great work, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. He received a warm letter of congratulation from Hume. In this classic of economics Smith begins by insisting on the annual labour of a nation as the source of its supply of the necessities and conveniences of life. And he goes on to discuss the causes of improvement in the productiveness of labour and the distribution of its produce. The second book treats of the nature, accumulation and employment of stock; the third of the different progress of wealth in different nations; the fourth of systems of political economy; and the fifth of the revenue of the sovereign or commonwealth. And there are a large number of supplementary notes and dissertations.

In 1778 Smith was appointed one of the commissioners of customs in Scotland. In 1787 he was elected Lord Rector of Glasgow University. He died on July 17th, 1790.

We are not concerned here with Smith's economic theories, but with his moral philosophy. It is worth mentioning, however, that when he was lecturing at Glasgow his course was divided into four parts: natural theology, ethics, the part of morality relating to justice, and those political institutions, including those relating to finance and commerce, which are founded on 'expediency' rather than on the principle of justice and which tend to increase the riches and power of a State. For Smith, therefore, economics was a member of a total body of knowledge, of which ethics was another member.

One salient feature of Adam Smith's moral theory is the central place accorded to sympathy. To attribute ethical importance to sympathy was not, indeed, a novel position in British moral philosophy. Hutcheson had attributed importance to it, and Hume, as we have seen, made great use of the concept of sympathy. But Smith's use of it is more obvious in that he begins his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*[1] with this idea and thus gives his ethics from the very start a social character. 'That we often derive sorrow from the sorrow of others is a matter of fact too obvious to require any instances to prove it.'[2] The sentiment of sympathy is not confined to the virtuous and humane; it is found in all men to some degree.

Smith explains sympathy in terms of the imagination. 'As we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation.'[3] When we sympathize with someone's great pain, 'by the imagination we place ourselves in his situation. . . .'[4] Thus sympathy, which means or can be used to mean 'our fellow-feeling with any passion whatever',[5] arises not so much from a view of the passion 'as from that of the situation which excites it'.[6] For example, when we feel sympathy with a madman, that is to say when we feel compassion and pity for his state, it is primarily his situation, that of being deprived of the normal use of reason, which excites our sympathy. For the madman himself may not feel any sorrow at all. He may even laugh and sing and appear quite oblivious of his pitiful condition. Again, 'we sympathize even with the dead'.[7]

However, if we assume the causes of sympathy, whatever they may be, we can say that it is an original sentiment of human nature. It is often excited so directly and immediately that it cannot reasonably be derived from self-interested affection, that is, from self-love. And there is no need to postulate a distinct 'moral sense' which expresses itself in moral approval or disapproval. For 'to approve of the passions of another, as suitable to their objects, is the same thing as to observe that we entirely sympathize with them; and not to approve of them as such is the same thing as to observe that we do not entirely sympathize with them'.[1] Moral approbation and disapprobation, therefore, can ultimately be referred to the operation of sympathy. There are, indeed, cases in which we seem to approve without any sympathy or correspondence of sentiments. But even in these cases it will be found upon examination that our approbation is ultimately founded upon sympathy. Smith takes an example of what he calls a very frivolous nature. I may approve a jest and the consequent laughter, even though, for some reason or other, I do not myself laugh. But I have learned by experience what sort of pleasantry is most capable of amusing me and making me laugh, and I observe that the jest in question is one of this kind. And even though I am not now in the mood for laughing, I approve of the jest and of the company's merriment, this approval being the expression of 'conditional sympathy'. I know that, were it not for my present mood or perhaps illness, I should certainly join in the laughter. Again, if I see a passing stranger who shows signs of distress and sorrow and I am told that he has just lost his father or mother or wife, I approve of his sentiments, even though I may not actually share his distress. For I know by experience that a bereavement of this kind naturally excites such sentiments, and that if I were to take time to consider and enter into his situation, I should doubtless feel sincere sympathy.

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[1] This work will be referred to as *T.M.S.*

[2] *T.M.S.*, I, I, I, p. 2; 1812 edition.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Smith makes the sense of propriety the essential element in our moral judgments. And he speaks frequently of the suitableness or unsuitableness, propriety or impropriety of sentiments, passions and affections. Thus, he says that 'in the suitableness or unsuitableness, in the proportion or disproportion which the affection seems to bear to the cause or object which excites it, consists the propriety or impropriety, the decency or ungracefulness of the consequent action'.[2] Further, 'in the beneficial or hurtful nature of the effects which the affection aims at, or tends to produce, consists the merit or demerit of the action, the qualities by which it is entitled to reward, or is deserving of punishment'.[3] But when I disapprove of a man's resentment as being disproportionate to its exciting cause, I disapprove of his sentiments because they do not tally with my own or with what I think my own would be in a like situation. My sympathy does not reach to the man's degree of resentment, and I therefore disapprove of it as excessive. Again,

[1] *T.M.S.*, I, I, 3, p. 16.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

[3] *Ibid.*

when I approve of a man's act as meritorious, as entitled to reward, I sympathize with the gratitude which the action naturally tends to excite in the beneficiary of the action. Or, more accurately, my sense of the merit of the action is compounded of my sympathy with the agent's motive together with my sympathy with the gratitude of the beneficiary.

It may appear, says Smith, that it is the utility of qualities which first commends them to us. And consideration of utility, when we do come to consider it, doubtless enhances the value of qualities in our eyes. 'Originally, however, we approve of another man's judgment, not as something useful, but as right, as accurate, as agreeable to truth and reality, and it is evident we attribute those qualities to it for no other reason but because we find that it agrees with our own. Taste, in the same manner, is originally approved of, not as useful, but as just, as delicate, and as precisely suited to its object. The idea of the utility of all qualities of this kind is plainly an afterthought, and not what first recommends them to our approbation.'[1] If Smith rejected the idea of an original and distinct moral sense, so also did he reject utilitarianism. The concept of sympathy reigns supreme. Smith does, indeed, agree with an 'ingenious and agreeable author' (Hume) that 'no qualities of the mind are approved of as virtuous, but such as are useful or agreeable either to the person himself or to others; and no qualities are disapproved of as vicious but such as have a contrary tendency'.[2] Indeed, 'nature seems to have so happily adjusted our sentiments of approbation and disapprobation to the conveniency both of the individual and of the society that after the strictest examination it will be found, I believe, that this is universally the case'.[3] But it is not this utility which is the first or principal source of moral approbation or disapprobation. 'It seems impossible that the approbation of virtue should be a sentiment of the same kind with that by which we approve of a convenient and well-contrived building; or that we should have no other reason for praising a man than that for which we commend a chest of drawers.'[4] 'The sentiment of approbation always involves in it a sense of propriety quite distinct from the perception of utility.'[5]

To enter upon Smith's analyses of virtues and passions would be to devote to his ethics an excessive amount of space. But it is necessary to ask how he interprets the moral judgment which we pass about ourselves if moral approbation is an expression of sympathy. And the answer is that in his opinion we cannot approve or disapprove of our own sentiments, motives or conduct except by placing ourselves in the position of another man and viewing our conduct from without, as it were. If a man were brought up on a desert island and had never at any time enjoyed human society, he could no more think 'of the propriety or demerit of his own sentiments and conduct than of the beauty or deformity of his own face'.[1] Our first moral judgments are made about the characters and conduct of other people. But we soon learn that they make judgments about us. Hence we become anxious to know how far we deserve their praise or blame; and we begin to examine our own conduct by imagining ourselves in the position of others, supposing ourselves to be the spectators of our own conduct. Hence, 'I divide myself, as it were, into two persons. . . . The first is the spectator. . . . The second is the agent, the person whom I properly call myself, and of whose conduct, under the character of a spectator, I was endeavouring to form some opinion.'[2] I can thus have sympathy with or antipathy towards my own qualities, motives, sentiments and actions.

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[1] *T.M.S.*, 1, 1, 4, p. 24.

[2] *T.M.S.*, 4, 2, p. 325.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 326.

[5] *Ibid.*

One of the obvious objections against Smith's ethical theory of sympathy is that it seems to leave no room for any objective standard of right or wrong, good or evil. In answer to an objection of this kind Smith stresses the idea of the 'impartial spectator'. For example, he says that 'the natural misrepresentation of self-love can be corrected only by the eye of this impartial spectator'.[3] At the same time 'the violence and injustice of our own selfish passions are sometimes sufficient to induce the man within the breast to make a report very different from what the real circumstances of the case are capable of authorizing'.[4] Nature, however, has not left us to the delusions of self-love. We gradually and insensibly form for ourselves general rules concerning what is right and what is wrong, these rules being founded on experience of particular acts of moral approbation and disapprobation. And these general rules of conduct, 'when they have been fixed in our mind by habitual reflection, are of great use in correcting the misrepresentations of self-love concerning what is fit and proper to be done in our particular situation'.[5] Indeed, these rules are 'the only principle by which the bulk of mankind are capable of

[1] *T.M.S.*, 3. 1, p. 190.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 193.
[3] *T.M.S.*, 3, 8, p. 231.
[4] *T.M.S.*, 3, 4, p. 266.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 273.

directing their actions'.[1] Further, nature impresses upon us an opinion, 'afterwards confirmed by reasoning and philosophy, that these important rules of morality are the commands and laws of the Deity, who will finally reward the obedient and punish the transgressors of their duty'.[2] And 'that our regard to the will of the Deity ought to be the supreme rule of our conduct can be doubted of by nobody who believes his existence'.[3] Conscience is thus the 'vicegerent' of God. Smith does not, however, claim infallibility for the moral judgment. He speaks at some length of the influence of custom on the moral sentiments.[4] Moreover, he tells us that the 'general rules of almost all the virtues . . . are in many respects loose and inaccurate, admit of many exceptions and require so many modifications, that it is scarce possible to regulate our conduct entirely by a regard to them'.[5] There is, indeed, one exception. 'The rules of justice are accurate in the highest degree.'[6]

As historians have pointed out, it is not always easy to reconcile Adam Smith's various statements. On the one hand, the impartial spectator, the man within the breast, will not deceive us if we listen to him attentively and respectfully. On the other hand, there are variations in moral approval from place to place and age to age, and bad customs can pervert or obscure the moral judgment. On the one hand, the majority of people are only capable of directing their conduct by general rules. On the other hand, as these rules, with the exception of the rules of justice, are loose and inaccurate and indeterminate, our conduct should be directed rather by a sense of propriety, by a certain taste for a particular way of acting, than by regard for a rule as such. It may, indeed, be possible to reconcile these diverse statements with one another. For example, it might be said that though the impartial spectator, if listened to attentively, never deceives, passion and bad custom (arising perhaps from external circumstances which seem to make the custom expedient) may very well prevent the requisite attention being given. In any case, however, it seems true to say with his critics that in his ethical treatise Smith displays his abilities to greater advantage as a psychological analyst than as a moral philosopher.

3. It has been already remarked that the philosophers of the moral sense theory tended to assimilate ethics to aesthetics, this

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[1] *T.M.S.*, 3, 5, p. 276.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 279.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 291.
[4] *T.M.S.*, 5, 2.
[5] *T.M.S.*, 3, 6, p. 299.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 301.

tendency being connected, I think, with their concentration on qualities of character rather than with acts. And to the extent that they assimilated ethics to aesthetics they tended to overlook the specifically ethical features of the moral judgment. I use the word 'tended' deliberately; for I do not intend to assert that they identified ethics and aesthetics or that they made no effort to distinguish them by isolating the specific feature or features of the moral judgment.

Adam Smith cannot, of course, be properly called a philosopher of the moral-sense theory. For despite his admiration for Hutcheson and his appreciation of the latter's achievements as a moralist he explicitly rejected 'every account of the principle of approbation, which makes it depend upon a peculiar sentiment, distinct from every other'.[1] At the same time Smith is akin to the philosophers of the moral sense theory in his tendency to dissolve ethics in psychology. (Again I use the word 'tendency' deliberately.) This tendency can be observed also in Hume, though in his moral philosophy, as we have seen, there was present a conspicuous element of utilitarianism.

The early utilitarians (and the same can be said of utilitarianism in general) tended to reduce the moral judgment to a statement about consequences. That is to say, they tended to interpret the specifically moral judgment as an empirical statement or hypothesis.

On the one hand, therefore, we have the moral sense school, with its psychologizing tendencies and its tendency to assimilate ethics to aesthetics, while on the other hand we have utilitarianism, which in its own way tended to strip the moral judgment of its specific character. It was only natural, then, that some thinkers at least should react to these tendencies by insisting on the part played by reason in morality and on the intrinsic nature of the rightness and wrongness of certain actions, quite apart from the thought of reward and punishment and other utilitarian considerations. Such a thinker was Richard Price, who in certain respects anticipated the position of Kant.

Richard Price (1723–91) was the son of a Nonconformist minister and himself entered the ministry. Besides publishing some sermons, he also wrote on financial and political matters. In addition, he carried on a controversy with Priestley, in which he upheld free-will and the immateriality of the soul. We are here concerned, however, with his ethical ideas as expressed in his *Review of the Principal Questions in Morals* (1757). It shows clearly his debt to Cudworth and Clarke on the one hand and to Butler on the other, for whom he had a profound admiration.

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[1] *T.M.S.*, 7, 3, p. 579.

Price disliked the moral sense theory, especially as developed by Hume. It favours subjectivism and abandons the direction of human conduct to instinct and feeling. Reason, not emotion, is authoritative in morals. And reason has every title to this position in that it discerns objective moral distinctions. There are actions which are intrinsically right and actions which are intrinsically wrong. Price does not mean that in ethics we should consider actions without any regard to the intention of the agent and the natural end of the action. But if we consider human acts in their totality, we can discern by reason their rightness or wrongness, which belong to the actions in question independently of consequences such as reward or punishment. There are at least some actions which are right in themselves and which need no further justification in terms of extraneous factors, just as there are some ultimate ends. 'There are, undoubtedly, some actions that are ultimately approved, and for justifying which no reason can be assigned; as there are some ends, which are ultimately desired, and for choosing which no reason can be given.'[1] If this were not the case, says Price, there would be an infinite regress.

In expounding the idea of an intellectual intuition of objective moral distinctions Price was reviving the views held by earlier writers such as Cudworth and Clarke. And the historical source of the neglect of this intellectual operation by the moral sense theorists and of the consequent subjectivism and empiricism of Hume was traced by Price to Locke's theory of ideas and to his concept of the understanding. Locke derived all simple ideas from sensation and reflection. But there are simple and self-evident ideas which are immediately perceived or intuited by the understanding. Among them are the ideas of right and wrong. If we confuse the understanding with the imagination, we shall necessarily tend to confine unduly the scope of the former. 'The powers of the imagination are very narrow; and were the understanding confined to the same limits, nothing could be known, and the very faculty itself would be annihilated. Nothing is plainer than that one of these often perceives where the other is blind . . . and in numberless instances knows things to exist of which the other can frame no idea.'[1] Reasoning, considered as a distinct intellectual operation, studies the relations between ideas which we already possess; but the understanding intuits self-evident ideas which cannot be resolved into elements derived from sense-experience.

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[1] *Review*, I, 3.

In defence of the assertion that the understanding has original and self-evident ideas, Price appeals to 'common sense'. If a man denies that there are such ideas, 'he is not further to be argued with, for the subject will not admit of argument, there being nothing clearer than the point itself disputed to be brought to confirm it'.[2] In appealing to common sense and self-evident principles Price anticipates to some extent the position of the Scottish philosophy of common sense. But his insistence that the ideas of right and wrong are simple or 'single' ideas which are not further analysable recalls to mind later ethical intuitionism.

By rejecting the moral sense theory Price does not commit himself to rejecting the emotional element in morals. Right and wrong are objective attributes of human actions, and these attributes are perceived by the mind; but we certainly have feelings with regard to actions and human qualities, and these feelings find expression in the subjective ideas of moral beauty and deformity. What Price does, therefore, is to oust feeling from a central position and to keep it as an accompaniment of rational intuition. Another accompaniment of the intellectual perception of right and wrong in actions is the perception of merit and demerit in agents. To perceive merit in the agent is simply to perceive that his action is right and that he ought to be rewarded. On this matter Price follows Butler. He also insists that merit depends on the intention of the agent. Unless the action possesses 'formal rightness', unless, that is to say, it is performed with a good intention, it is not meritorious.

Right and obligatory seem to be synonymous for Price. The obligatory character of an intrinsically right action is founded simply on its rightness, without regard to reward or punishment. Benevolence is certainly a virtue, though not the only one; and there is such a thing as rational self-love. But a man, as a rational being, ought, in principle at least, to act simply out of respect for the dictates of reason, and not from instinct, passion or emotion. 'The intellectual nature is its own law. It has, within itself, a spring and guide of action which it cannot suppress or reject. Rectitude is itself an end, an ultimate end, an end superior to all other ends, governing, directing, and limiting them, and whose existence and influence depend on nothing arbitrary. . . . To act from affection to it, is to act with light, and conviction, and knowledge. But acting from instinct is so far acting in the dark, and following a blind guide. Instinct *drives* and *precipitates*; but reason *commands*.'[1] Hence an agent cannot properly be called virtuous 'except he acts from a consciousness of rectitude, and with a regard to it as his *rule* and *end*'.[2] In any case an agent's virtue is always less in proportion as he acts from natural propensity and inclination or from instinct instead of according to purely rational principles.[3] Price does, indeed, bring in consideration of reward and punishment to the extent that he expresses surprise that anyone should forget that by acting virtuously he may gain an infinite reward while by acting otherwise he may suffer infinite loss. And he insists that virtue itself is 'the object of the chief complacency of every virtuous man; the exercise of it is his chief delight; and the consciousness of it gives him his highest joy'.[4] But his insistence on acting in accordance with purely rational principles and out of consideration of the rightness of right acts, which oblige the agent, and his view that the virtue of a man is less in proportion to the degree in which he acts from instinct or natural inclination clearly approximate to a Kantian position. And Kant himself did not exclude all thought of reward from ethics. For though he considered that we should not do right and obligatory actions simply with a view to reward, he certainly thought that virtue should ultimately produce or be united with happiness. So for Price we must conceive happiness as the end envisaged by divine Providence. And virtue will produce happiness. But this happiness depends on 'rectitude', and we cannot be truly virtuous unless we do right actions because they are right.

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[1] *Review*, I, 2.

[2] *Ibid.*

4. Thomas Reid (1710–96), son of a Scottish minister, studied at Aberdeen. After some years as minister in the parish of New Machar he was elected to a post at King's College, Aberdeen, and in 1764 he published *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense*. Thus although Reid was a year older than Hume, his first work (apart from an essay on quantity) appeared much later than Hume's *Treatise* and *Enquiries*. Shortly after the publication of this work Reid was elected professor of moral philosophy at Glasgow in succession to Adam Smith. In 1785 he published a volume of *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of*

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[1] *Review*, 8. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Review*, 9.

Man, which was followed in 1788 by *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*. These two sets of essays have been reprinted together several times as *Essays on the Powers of the Human Mind*.

After reading part of the manuscript of Reid's *Inquiry*, transmitted to him by a Dr. Blair, Hume wrote a letter to the author which contained some innocuous comments. In the course of his reply Reid remarks: 'Your system appears to me not only coherent in all its parts, but likewise justly deduced from principles commonly received among philosophers: principles which I never thought of calling in question, until the conclusions you draw from them in the *Treatise of Human Nature* made me suspect them.' It was Reid's contention that Hume's philosophy was 'a system of scepticism, which leaves no ground to believe any one thing rather than its contrary'.[1] In fact, it constituted, in Reid's opinion, the *reductio ad absurdum* of scepticism. At the same time it was the result of a consistent development of the implications of certain principles, or of a certain principle, which had been shared by writers such as Locke and Berkeley, and even by Descartes, who were not so consistent or rigorous as Hume in drawing the appropriate conclusions from their premisses. Hence it was necessary to examine the starting-point of the process of reasoning which had led in the end to a contradiction of the beliefs upon which all men of common sense must act in common life.

The root of the whole trouble Reid finds in what he calls 'the theory of ideas'. In his first essay,[2] as indeed elsewhere, Reid distinguishes several senses of the word 'idea'. In popular language the word signifies conception or apprehension. Reid means the act of conceiving or apprehending. 'To have an idea of anything is to conceive it. To have a distinct idea is to conceive it distinctly. To have no idea of it is not to conceive it at all. . . . When the word idea is taken in this popular sense, no man can possibly doubt whether he has ideas.'[3] But the word is also given a 'philosophical' meaning; and then 'it does not signify that act of the mind which we call thought or conception, but some object of thought'.[4] Thus according to Locke ideas are nothing but the immediate objects of the mind in thinking. Now, 'Bishop Berkeley, proceeding upon this foundation, demonstrated very easily that there is no material world. . . . But the Bishop, as became his order, was unwilling to give up the world of spirits. . . . Mr. Hume shows no partiality in favour of the world of spirits. He adopts the theory of ideas in its full extent; and, in consequence, shows that there is neither matter nor mind in the universe; nothing but impressions and ideas.'[1] In fact, 'Mr. Hume's system does not even leave him a *self* to claim the property of his impressions and ideas'.[2] Ideas, therefore, which 'were first introduced into philosophy in the humble character of images or representatives of things' have by degrees 'supplanted their constituents and undermined the existence of everything but themselves', the 'triumph of ideas' being completed by Hume's *Treatise*, which 'leaves ideas and impressions as the sole existence in the universe'.[3]

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[1] Dedication to the *Inquiry*.

[2] References to the *Essays on the Powers of the Human Mind* are given according to the three-volume edition of 1819, while references to the *Inquiry* are also given according to 1819 edition.

[3] *Essays*, I, I, 10; I, p. 38.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

In attacking the theory of ideas Reid characteristically employs two ways of approaching the matter. One way is to appeal to common sense, to the universal belief or persuasion of ordinary people. Thus the ordinary man is convinced that what he perceives is the sun itself, and not ideas or impressions. But Reid does not content himself with an appeal to the beliefs of 'the vulgar'. He also argues, for example, that there are no such things as ideas in the 'philosophical' sense of the word; they are fictions of the philosophers, or of some philosophers, and it is in no way necessary to postulate them. Why, then, did philosophers invent this fiction? In Reid's opinion one fundamental error was Locke's assumption that 'simple ideas' are the elementary data of knowledge. The 'ideal system' 'teaches us that the first operation of the mind about its ideas is simple apprehension; that is, the bare conception of a thing without any belief about it; and that after we have got simple apprehensions, by comparing them together, we perceive agreements or disagreements between them; and that this perception of the agreement or disagreement of ideas is all that we call belief, judgment or knowledge. Now this appears to me to be all fiction, without any foundation in nature. . . . Instead of saying that the belief or knowledge is got by putting together and comparing the simple apprehensions, we ought rather to say that the simple apprehension is performed by resolving and analysing a natural and original judgment.'[4] Locke and Hume started with the supposed elements of knowledge, simple ideas in the case of the former and impressions in the case of the latter, and then depicted knowledge as being essentially the result of combining these elementary data and perceiving their agreement or disagreement. But the so-called elementary data are the result of analysis: we first have original, fundamental judgments. 'Every operation of the senses, in its very nature, implies judgment or belief, as well as simple apprehension. . . . When I perceive a tree before me, my faculty of seeing gives me not only a notion or simple apprehension of the tree, but a belief of its existence, and of its figure, distance, and magnitude; and this judgment or belief is not got by comparing ideas, it is included in the very nature of the perception.'[1]

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[1] *Essays*, 2, 12; 1, pp. 266–7.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 267.

[3] *Inquiry*, 2, 6, pp. 60–1.

[4] *Inquiry*, 2, 4, pp. 52–3.

These 'original and natural judgments are therefore a part of that furniture which nature hath given to the human understanding. They are the inspiration of the Almighty, no less than our notions or simple apprehensions. . . . They are a part of our constitution, and all the discoveries of our reason are grounded upon them. They make up what is called *the common sense of mankind*; and what is manifestly contrary to any of those first principles is what we call *absurd*.'[2] If philosophers maintain that ideas are the immediate objects of thought, they will be forced to conclude in the end that ideas are the only objects of our minds. Locke did not draw this conclusion. He used the word 'idea' in several senses, and there are different, and indeed incompatible, elements in his writings. But Hume eventually drew the logical conclusions from Locke's premisses (which can be referred back to Descartes). And in so doing he has to deny the principles of common sense, the original and natural judgments of mankind. His conclusions, therefore, were absurd. The remedy is to recognize the principles of common sense, the original judgments of mankind, and to acknowledge that the 'theory of ideas' is a useless and harmful fiction.

By judgments of nature and principles of common sense Reid means self-evident principles. 'We ascribe to reason two offices, or two degrees. The first is to judge of things self-evident; the second to draw conclusions that are not self-evident from those that are. The first of these is the province, and the sole province of common sense.'[3] The name 'common sense' is appropriate because 'in the greatest part of mankind no other degree of reason is to be found'.[4] The power to deduce conclusions from self-evident principles in an orderly and systematic way is not found in everyone, though many people can learn to do so. But the power to see self-evident truths is found in all beings who qualify for being called rational. And it is 'purely the gift of Heaven':[1] it cannot be acquired if one does not possess it.

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[1] *Inquiry*, 7, 4, p. 394.

[2] *Essays*, 6, 2; 11, pp. 233-4.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 394-5.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 234.

What relation does common sense in this special meaning of the term bear to common sense in the 'popular' meaning of the term? Reid's answer is that 'the same degree of understanding which makes a man capable of acting with common prudence in the conduct of life makes him capable of discovering what is true and what is false in matters that are self-evident and that he distinctly apprehends'.[2]

According to Reid, therefore, there are 'common principles which are the foundation of all reasoning and of all science. Such common principles seldom admit of direct proof, nor do they need it. Men need not to be taught them; for they are such as all men of common understanding know; or such, at least, as they give a ready assent to, as soon as they are proposed and understood.'[3] But what are these principles? Reid distinguishes between necessary truths, the opposite of which is impossible, and contingent truths, the opposite of which is possible. Each class includes 'first principles'. Among first principles belonging to the first class there are logical axioms (for example, every proposition is either true or false), mathematical axioms, and the first principles of morals and metaphysics. One of the examples of moral first principles given by Reid is that 'no man ought to be blamed for what it was not in his power to hinder'.[4] These moral axioms 'appear to me to have no less evidence than those of mathematics'.[5] Under the heading of metaphysical first principles Reid considers three, 'because they have been called in question by Mr. Hume'.[6] The first is that 'the qualities which we perceive by our senses must have a subject, which we call body, and that the thoughts we are conscious of must have a subject, which we call mind'.[7] This principle is recognized as true by all ordinary men, and this recognition is expressed in ordinary language. The second metaphysical principle is that 'whatever begins to exist must have a cause which produced it'.[8] And the third is that 'design and intelligence in the cause may be inferred from marks or signs of it in the effect'.[9]

Among the first principles of contingent truths we find 'that

[1] *Essays*, 6, 2; 11, p. 234.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 223.
[3] *Essays*, 1, 2; 1, p. 57.
[4] *Essays*, 8, 3, 5; 11, p. 338.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Essays*, 8, 3, 6; 11, p. 339.
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 342.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 352.

those things did really happen which I distinctly remember';[1] 'that those things do really exist which we distinctly perceive by our senses, and are what we perceive them to be';[2] 'that the natural faculties by which we distinguish truth from error are not fallacious';[3] and 'that in the phenomena of nature what is to be will probably be like to what has been in similar circumstances'.[4] That we have some degree of power over our actions and over the determinations of our will, and that there is life and intelligence in our fellow-men with whom we converse, are also among the first principles mentioned by Reid.

Now, it is evident, I think, that these first principles are of different types. Among logical axioms Reid mentions the proposition that whatever can be truly affirmed of a genus can be truly affirmed of the species. Here we have an analytic proposition. We have only to learn the meanings of the terms 'genus' and 'species' in order to see that the proposition is true. But can the same be said of the validity of memory or of the existence of the external world? Reid can hardly have thought that it could; for he classifies the relevant propositions as first principles of contingent truths. In what sense, then, are they self-evident? Reid obviously means at the very least that there is a natural propensity to believe them. Speaking of the statement that the things really exist which we perceive by the senses and that they are what we perceive them to be, he remarks: 'It is too evident to need proof, that all men are by nature led to give implicit faith to the distinct testimony of their senses, long before they are capable of any bias from prejudices of education or of philosophy.'[5] Again, when speaking of the principle relating to the uniformity, or probable uniformity, of nature, he observes that it cannot be simply the result of experience, though it is confirmed by experience. For 'the principle is necessary for us before we are able to discover it by reasoning, and therefore is made a part of our constitution, and produces its effects before the use of reason'.[6] In other words, we have a natural propensity to expect that the course of nature will probably prove to be uniform.

Propositions which are obviously tautological cause no difficulty. Given the meanings of the terms, they cannot be denied without absurdity. And though the existence of informative necessary propositions is a matter of controversy, Reid is perfectly entitled to his opinion that there are such propositions. I mean, the issue between Reid and Hume on this matter can be clearly expressed. But the issue is not at all so clear when it comes to natural belief in what Reid calls the first principles of contingent truths; nor has Reid made it clear. Hume never denied that there are natural beliefs; and he was perfectly well aware that these natural beliefs form a basis or framework for practical life. He does, indeed, sometimes make ontological assertions, as when he says that people are nothing but bundles or collections of different perceptions; but, generally speaking, he is concerned, not with denying a given proposition, but with examining our grounds for asserting the proposition. For instance, Hume does not say that there is no external world or that the course of nature will be so entirely unexpected that we can rely on no uniformity at all: he is concerned with examining the rationally assignable grounds for beliefs which he shares in common with other people. Hence in so far as Reid appeals to natural belief, to natural propensities and to the common consent of mankind, his observations have not much relevance as against Hume. Reid does, indeed, recognize that Hume speaks of natural beliefs; but he tends to represent the latter as denying what he does not in fact deny. If Reid had maintained that what he calls first principles were susceptible of proof, the issue with Hume would be sufficiently clear-cut. For example, can the validity of memory be proved or can it not? But Reid did not think that his first principles were susceptible of proof. Speaking of the validity (in principle) of memory, he says that the principle possesses one of the surest marks of a first principle, namely, that no one has pretended to prove it, though no sensible man questions it. But Hume was well aware that people are naturally prone to believe that memory is in principle reliable. Reid refers to the acceptance of testimony in the courts of law and remarks that 'what is absurd at the bar (that no heed at all should be paid to testimony) is so in the philosopher's chair'.[1] But Hume never dreamed, of course, of suggesting that testimony about remembered facts should never be accepted, and that no one should ever trust his or her memory. Reid does, indeed, proceed to admit that 'Mr. Hume has not, as far as I remember, directly called in question the testimony of memory',[2] though he adds immediately that Hume has laid down the premisses by which the authority of memory is overthrown, leaving it to his reader to draw the logical conclusion. But it is a mistake to assume that Hume intended, even by implication, to destroy that degree of reliance on memory which is given it by prudent common sense. He no more intended this than he intended to deny that there are any causal relations and to suggest that no reliance should in practice be put on causal laws. In general, then, we can say that Reid's criticism of Hume is sometimes deprived of force by his misunderstanding of what Hume was about.

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[1] *Essays*, 6, 5, 3; II, p. 304.

[2] *Essays*, 6, 5, 5; II, p. 308.

[3] *Essays*, 6, 5, 7; II, p. 314.

[4] *Essays*, 6, 5, 12; II, p. 328.

[5] *Essays*, 6, 5, 5; II, p. 308.

[6] *Essays*, 6, 5, 12; II, p. 329.

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[1] *Essays*, 6, 5, 3, p. 305.

[2] *Ibid.*

It is not, of course, a fair presentation of Reid's position if he is depicted as appealing simply to the persuasion or opinion of non-philosophers as a proof of the truth of his first principles. What he does is to regard universal consent, when coupled with an inability to doubt, save perhaps in the sceptical philosopher's chair, as an indication that a given proposition is a first principle. First principles cannot be proved; otherwise they would not be first principles. They are known intuitively. But Reid does not give, as it seems to me, any very clear and consistent account of the way or ways in which we come to know the different types of first principles. In some cases he does, indeed, explain his view. For example, 'the evidence of mathematical axioms is not discerned till men come to a certain degree of maturity of understanding. A boy must have formed the general conception of *quantity*, and of *more* and *less* and *equal*, of *sum* and *difference*; and he must have been accustomed to judge of these relations in matters of common life, before he can perceive the evidence of the mathematical axiom, that equal quantities, added to equal quantities, make equal sums. In like manner our moral judgment, or conscience, grows to maturity from an imperceptible seed, planted by our Creator.'[1] Here we have a reasonably straightforward account. In the course of experience a man obtains certain notions or learns the meaning of certain terms, and he can then see the self-evident truth of certain propositions containing or presupposing those terms. If the principles are said to belong to the constitution of human nature, this means that we have a natural power of discerning the evident truth of these principles, but not that the latter are known antecedently to experience. But when talking about the proposition that perceived sensible qualities and thoughts of which we are conscious must have subjects, namely, body and mind, Reid speaks of 'principles of belief in human nature, of which we can give no other account but that they necessarily result from the constitution of our faculties'.[1] And this principle, like mathematical axioms, is classed as a first principle of necessary truths. And when we turn to first principles of contingent truths we find him saying with regard to the principle of the uniformity of nature, that it is 'a part of our constitution and produces its effects before the use of reason'.[2] The principle is antecedent to experience, 'for all experience is grounded upon a belief that the future will be like the past'.[3] We are determined by our nature to expect that the future will be like the past. There is a kind of irresistible natural expectation.

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[1] *Essays*, 5, 1; III, p. 451.

Perhaps these ways of speaking can be made consistent. Speaking of the principle that the natural faculties by which we distinguish truth from error are not fallacious, Reid remarks that 'we are under a necessity of trusting to our reasoning and judging powers', and that doubt on this point cannot be maintained 'because it is doing violence to our constitution'.[4] He also asserts that 'no man ever thinks of this principle, unless when he considers the grounds of scepticism; yet it invariably governs his opinions'.[5] He seems to be saying, therefore, first that there is a natural and irresistible propensity to trust our rational powers, and secondly that this proposition is not explicitly recognized as true from the beginning. And he might make analogous statements, not only about the principle of the uniformity of nature, but also about the principle of causality, which he regards as a metaphysical and necessary principle. But he tends, I think, to leave his readers with the impression that principles such as the validity of memory and the existence of the external world are self-evident in the sense that we have a natural and irresistible impulse to believe them, whereas mathematical axioms, for instance, are self-evident in the sense that once we have the meanings of certain terms we see necessary relations between them. What I suggest, therefore, is that Reid asserts the existence of a considerable number of first principles of different types without providing an unambiguous explanation of the precise sense or senses in which they are said to be self-evident, first principles, and a part of the constitution of our nature. It may be possible to reconcile his various ways of speaking and provide an account which will cover all his first principles; but I do not think that Reid provided it. And if he wished to give different accounts of the different sets of first principles, he might have made the point clearer than he in fact did.

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[1] *Essays*, 6, 6, 6; II, p. 341.
[2] *Essays*, 6, 5, 12; II, p. 329.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Essays*, 6, 5, 7; II, p. 316.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 317.

Reid sometimes tends to play to the gallery by practically making fun of certain philosophers (Berkeley, for example) and by announcing that he takes his stand with 'the vulgar'. But his philosophy of common sense is by no means a mere acceptance of the opinions of the multitude and a rejection of academic philosophy. It was his view that philosophy must be grounded in common experience and that if it reaches paradoxical conclusions which contradict common experience and conflict with the beliefs on which everyone, even sceptical philosophers, necessarily base their lives in practice, there must be something wrong with it. And this is a perfectly reputable view of philosophy. It is not invalidated by Reid's historical inaccuracies and misrepresentations of other points of view.

It must be added that Reid did not adhere invariably to common sense, if by common sense we mean the spontaneous belief of the man in the street. For example, when speaking of colour he first says that 'by colour all men, who have not been tutored by modern philosophy, understand, not a sensation of the mind, which can have no existence when it is not perceived, but a quality or modification of bodies, which continues to be the same, whether it is seen or not'.[1] He then goes on to distinguish between 'the appearance of colour' and colour itself, as a quality of a body. The latter is cause of the former, and it is unknown in itself. But the appearance of scarlet, for example, is so closely united in imagination with its cause that 'they are apt to be mistaken for one and the same thing, although they are in reality so different and unlike that one is an idea in the mind, the other is a quality of body. I conclude, then, that colour . . . is a certain power or virtue in bodies that in fair daylight exhibits to the eye an appearance. . . .'[2] Indeed, Reid does not hesitate to say that 'none of our sensations are resemblances of any of the qualities of bodies'.[3] It is perhaps rather surprising to hear such utterances from the lips of a champion of 'the vulgar'. But the truth is, of course, that though Reid maintained that in the 'unequal contest betwixt common sense and philosophy the latter will always come off both with dishonour and loss',[4] he by no means confined himself to repeating the views of people innocent of all philosophy and science.

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[1] *Inquiry*, 6, 4, p. 153.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 156–7.

[3] *Inquiry*, 6, 6, p. 163.

[4] *Inquiry*, 1, 4, p. 32.

5. Among Reid's friends was George Campbell (1719–96), who became Principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen, in 1759 and professor of divinity at that college in 1771. In his *Philosophy of Rhetoric* he includes under the general heading of propositions the truth of which is known intuitively mathematical axioms, truths of consciousness and first principles of common sense. Some mathematical axioms, he points out, merely exhibit the meanings of terms, though this is not true, in his opinion, of all mathematical principles. Truths of consciousness include, for instance, assurance of one's existence. As for principles of common sense, these include the principle of causality, the principle of the uniformity of nature, the existence of body, and the validity of memory when it is 'clear'. He thus gave to common sense a more restricted meaning than that given it by Reid.

6. Better known than Campbell are James Oswald (d. 1793), author of *An Appeal to Common Sense in behalf of Religion*, and James Beattie (1735–1803). In 1760 the latter was elected professor of moral philosophy and logic at Marischal College, Aberdeen; and in 1770 he published his *Essay on Truth*. In it he not only criticized Hume's opinions but also indulged in declamation and diatribe in passages which were doubtless the expression of sincere indignation but which seem rather out of place in a philosophical work. Hume was angry; and some of his comments have been reported. Of the *Essay on Truth* he remarked: 'Truth! there is no truth in it; it is a horrible large lie in octavo.' And of its author he spoke as 'that silly bigoted fellow, Beattie'. But the work enjoyed a great success. King George III was pleased, and he rewarded the author with an annual pension. Oxford University conferred on Beattie the doctorate of civil law.

In the first part of the *Essay on Truth* Beattie considers the standard of truth. He distinguishes between common sense, which perceives self-evident truth, and reason (reasoning). The first principles of truth, of which there are a considerable number, 'rest upon their own evidence, perceived intuitively by the understanding'.[1] But how are we to distinguish between first principles of common sense and mere prejudices? This question is treated in the second part. Reflection on mathematics shows us that the criterion of truth is that principle which forces our belief by its own intrinsic evidence.[2] In natural philosophy this principle is 'well-informed sense'. When is sense well-informed? First, I must be disposed, of my own accord, to confide in it without hesitation. Secondly, the sensations received must be 'uniformly similar in similar circumstances'.[1] Thirdly, I must ask myself 'whether, in acting upon the supposition that the faculty in question is well-informed, I have ever been misled to my hurt or inconvenience'.[2] Fourthly, the sensations communicated must be compatible with one another and with the perceptions of my other faculties. Fifthly, my sensations must be compatible with those of other men. The third part of the *Essay* is professedly devoted to answering objections against Beattie's theories. But the latter takes the opportunity of giving us his opinions about a large number of philosophers, and in most cases this opinion is very low. For Aristotle he shows an obvious respect; and Reid is naturally immune from attack. But the Schoolmen are depicted as mere verbal wranglers, and the greater number of modern philosophical systems are represented as contributing to or as examples of sceptical systems, 'those unnatural productions, the vile effusions of a hard heart'.[3] Beattie tends to give the impression that he has very little use for philosophy except as a means of attacking philosophies and philosophers.

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[1] *Essay*, 1, 2, 9, p. 93; 1820 edition.

[2] *Essay*, 2, 1, 1; p. 117.

7. Of more account than Beattie was Dugald Stewart (1753–1828). After studying at Edinburgh University he taught mathematics there, and in 1778 he took the class in moral philosophy during the absence of the professor, Adam Ferguson.[4] When the latter resigned his chair in 1785, Stewart was appointed to succeed him. In 1792 he published the first volume of *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, of which the second and third volumes did not appear until 1814 and 1827 respectively. *Outlines of Moral Philosophy* was published in 1793, and *Philosophical Essays* in 1810. In 1815 and 1821 appeared the two parts of his *Dissertation exhibiting the Progress of Metaphysical, Ethical and Political Philosophy since the Revival of Letters in Europe* which was written for the supplement of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Finally, his *Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers* was published in 1828, a few weeks before his death. Stewart was an eloquent and influential lecturer, attracting students even from abroad. And after his death a monument to his memory was

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[1] *Essay*, 2, 1, 2, p. 140. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 141. [3] *Essay*, 3, 3, p. 385.

[4] Adam Ferguson (1723–1816) published an *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), *Institutes of Moral Philosophy* (1769), a *History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic* (1783) and *Principles of Moral and Political Science* (1792). Hume had a high opinion of him and left him a legacy in his will.

erected in Edinburgh. He was not a particularly original thinker; but he was a man of wide culture, and he was gifted with a power of exposition.

In the introduction to his *Outlines of Moral Philosophy* Stewart remarks that 'our knowledge of the laws of nature is entirely the result of observation and experiment; for there is no instance in which we perceive such a necessary connection between two successive events, as might enable us to infer the one from the other by reasoning *a priori*. We find, from experience, that certain events are invariably conjoined, so that when we see the one, we expect the other, but our knowledge in such cases extends no farther than the fact.'[1] We have to use observation and controlled experiment to arrive inductively at general laws, from which we can reason deductively ('synthetically') to effects.

This point of view may seem to be very out of keeping with the outlook of Reid. But though Reid maintained that the truth of the proposition that everything which begins to be has a cause is known intuitively, he did not maintain that experience can inform us about particular necessary connections in Nature. 'General maxims, grounded on experience, have only a degree of probability proportioned to the extent of our experience, and ought always to be understood so as to leave room for exceptions if future, experience shall discover any such.'[2] According to Reid, we can infer the existence of God, as cause of contingent and mutable things, with absolute certainty. But apart from this truth, from self-evident first principles and from what can be strictly deduced from them, we are left to experience and probability. He instances the law of gravitation as a probable law, in the sense that exceptions are in principle possible. Hence Stewart's view of natural philosophy is not so alien to Reid's outlook as might appear at first sight.

Stewart notes that the 'reformation' in physics which has taken place during the last two centuries has not been extended in the same degree to other branches of knowledge, in particular to the knowledge of the mind. 'As all our knowledge of the material world rests ultimately on facts ascertained by observation, so all our knowledge of the human mind rests ultimately on facts for which we have the evidence of our own consciousness. An attentive examination of such facts will lead in time to the general principles of the human constitution, and will gradually form a science of mind not inferior in certainty to the science of body. Of this species of investigation, the works of Dr. Reid furnish many valuable examples.'[1]

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[1] *Outlines* Introduction, I, 3; II, p. 6. All page references are to the edition of Stewart's *Collected Works* by Sir William Hamilton, 1854–8.

[2] *Essays*, 6, 6, 6; II, p. 345.

The general aim proposed by Stewart for inquiries into psychology is, therefore, that of giving to this branch of study the character of a science. And this involves applying to psychology the methods which have proved so successful in physics. The data studied are, of course, different from the data studied by physicists. But an analogous scientific method should be used. And if psychology is to acquire the character of a science, it is most important that it should not be confused with metaphysics. Natural philosophers or physicists 'have, in modern times, wisely abandoned to metaphysicians all speculations concerning the nature of that substance of which it (the material world) is composed; concerning the possibility or impossibility of its being created; . . . and even concerning the reality of its existence, independent of that of percipient beings: and have confined themselves to the humbler province of observing the phenomena it exhibits, and of ascertaining their general laws. . . . This experimental philosophy no one now is in danger of confounding with the metaphysical speculations already mentioned. . . . A similar distinction takes place among the questions which may be stated relative to the human mind. . . . When we have once ascertained a general fact, such as the various laws which regulate the association of ideas, or the dependence of memory on that effort of the mind which we call Attention; it is all we ought to aim at in this branch of science. If we proceed no farther than facts for which we have the evidence of our own consciousness, our conclusions will be no less certain than those in physics. . . .'[2]

Stewart restricts unduly the scope of psychology and regards as 'metaphysical' some inquiries which would not ordinarily be classified in this way.[3] But the interesting point about his discussion of the science of mind is his inductive approach and his insistence on not confounding science with speculation. And even though he tends sometimes to restrict unduly the scope and range of psychological inquiry, this does not mean that he is blind to the need for constructive hypotheses. On the contrary, he reproves those Baconians who reject hypotheses and appeal to Newton's famous *Hypotheses non fingo*, understood in a literal sense. We must distinguish between 'gratuitous' hypotheses and those which are supported by presumptions suggested by analogy. The utility of an hypothesis is shown when conclusions derived from it are verified or confirmed. But even an hypothesis which is subsequently shown to be false may prove to have been of great use. Stewart quotes[1] Hartley's remark in his *Observations on Man*[2] that 'any hypothesis which possesses a sufficient degree of plausibility to account for a number of facts, helps us to digest these facts in proper order, to bring new ones to light, and to make *experimenta crucis* for the sake of future inquirers'.

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[1] *Outlines*, Introduction, 2, 11; 11, p. 8.

[2] *Elements*, Introduction, 1; 11, pp. 48–52.

[3] In another sense psychology has a very broad range for Stewart.

In his approach to psychology, therefore, Stewart adopted what we may call a frankly empiricist approach. But this does not mean that he rejects Reid's theories of first principles or principles of common sense. True, he regards the term 'common sense' as too vague and as calculated to give rise to misunderstanding and misrepresentation. But he accepts the idea of principles, the truth of which is perceived intuitively. These he classifies under three headings. First, there are axioms of mathematics and physics. Secondly, there are first principles relating to consciousness, perception and memory. Thirdly, there are 'those fundamental laws of human belief, which form an essential part of our constitution; and of which our entire conviction is implied, not only in all speculation, but in all our conduct as acting beings'.[3] Among 'laws' of this first class are the truths of the existence of the material world and of the uniformity of nature. 'Such truths no man ever thinks of stating to himself in the form of propositions; but all our conduct and all our reasonings proceed on the supposition that they are admitted. The belief of them is necessary for the preservation of our animal existence; and it is accordingly coeval with the first operations of the intellect.'[4] Stewart distinguishes, therefore, between judgments which 'are formed as soon as the terms of the proposition are understood' and judgments which 'result so necessarily from the earliest constitution of the mind, that we act upon them from our earliest infancy, without ever making them an object of reflection'.[5] In addition, there are judgments which are arrived at by reasoning.

The judgments which result from the earliest constitution of the mind are called by Stewart 'fundamental laws of human belief'. The word 'principle' is, in his opinion, misleading. For we cannot draw any inferences from them for the enlargement of human knowledge. 'Abstracted from other data, they are perfectly barren in themselves.'[1] They should not be confused with 'principles of reasoning'. They are involved in the exercise of our rational powers; but it is with the rise of philosophical reflection that they are thought about, becoming objects of the mind's attention. As for the criterion by which we can distinguish fundamental laws of belief, universality of belief is not the only one. Stewart mentions with approval two criteria proposed by Buffier.[2] First, the truths in question should be such that it is impossible either to attack or to defend them except by means of propositions which are neither more evident nor more certain than they are. Secondly, the practical influence of the truths must extend even to those who theoretically dispute their authority.

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[1] *Elements*, 2, 1, 4, p. 301.

[2] 1, 5.

[3] *Outlines*, 1, 9, 71; 11, p. 28.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Outlines*, 1, 9, 70; p. 27.

It is clear that Stewart is more careful than Reid in trying to state his position exactly. And this care can be frequently seen in his treatment of particular points. For example, he explains with care that though the immediate evidence of consciousness assures us of the present existence of sensations or of affections, desires, and so on, we are not immediately conscious of the mind itself in the sense of enjoying a direct intuition of the mind. True, 'the very first exercise of consciousness necessarily implies a belief, not only of the present existence of what is felt, but of the present existence of *that* which feels and thinks. . . . Of these facts, however, it is the former alone of which we can properly be said to be conscious, agreeably to the rigorous interpretation of the expression.'[3] Consciousness of the self as subject of sensation or feeling is posterior in the order of nature, if not in the order of time, to consciousness of the sensation or feeling. In other words, awareness of our existence is 'a concomitant or accessory of the exercise of consciousness'.[4] Again, when writing about our belief in the uniformity of nature, Stewart is careful to discuss the meaning of the word 'law' when we talk about laws of nature. When used in experimental philosophy, 'it is more correctly logical to consider it as merely a statement of some general fact with respect to the order of nature—a fact which has been found to hold uniformly in our past experience, and on the continuance of which, in future, the constitution of our mind determines us confidently to rely'.[1] We should beware of conceiving so-called laws of nature as acting in the capacity of efficient causes.

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[1] *Elements*, 2, I, I, 2, 4; III, p. 45.

[2] Claude Buffier (1661–1737), a French Jesuit, published a *Traité des vérités premières* (1717) in which he treated of the maxims of common sense.

[3] *Elements*, 2, I, I, 2, I; III, p. 41.

[4] *Ibid.*

The moral faculty is 'an original principle of our constitution which is not resolvable into any other principle or principles more general than itself; in particular, it is not resolvable into self-love or a prudential regard to our own interest'.[2] 'There are, in all languages, words equivalent to *duty* and to *interest*, which men have constantly distinguished in their signification.'[3] By this faculty we perceive the rightness or wrongness of actions. And we must distinguish between this perception and the accompanying emotion of pleasure or pain which varies according to the degree of a person's moral sensibility. We must also distinguish the perception of the merit or demerit of the agent. Hutcheson went wrong by making no distinction between the rightness of an action as approved by our reason and its aptitude to excite a man's moral emotions. Again, Shaftesbury and Hutcheson tended to neglect the fact that the objects of moral approbation are actions, not affections. In other words, Stewart disliked the tendency of the moral sense theorists to turn ethics into aesthetics, though he also thought that some writers, such as Clarke, had paid too little attention to our moral feelings. As for the term 'moral sense', considered in itself, Stewart has no objection to its retention. As he remarks, we habitually speak of a 'sense of duty' and it would be pedantic to object to 'moral sense'. At the same time he insists that when a man asserts that an act is right he intends to say something which is true. Moral discrimination is a rational operation, just as much as is perception of the fact that the three angles of a triangle together equal one right angle. 'The exercise of our reason in the two cases is very different; but in both cases we have a perception of *truth*, and are impressed with an irresistible conviction that the truth is immutable and independent of the will of any being whatever.'[4]

Stewart considers the obvious objection to the theory that rightness and wrongness are qualities of actions, which are perceived by the mind; namely, the objection that people's ideas of what is right and wrong have varied from country to country and from age to age. And he thinks that this variety can be explained in a manner which leaves his theory of objective moral qualities intact. Physical conditions, for instance, may influence the moral judgment. Where nature produces in abundance the necessities of life, it is only to be expected that men should have looser ideas about the rights of property than those which prevail elsewhere. Again, different speculative opinions or convictions can influence people's perceptions of right and wrong.

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[1] *Elements*, 2, 1, 2, 4, 2; III, pp. 159–60.
[2] *Active and Moral Powers*, 2, 3; VI, p. 233.
[3] *Ibid.*, 2, 2; VI, p. 220.
[4] *Ibid.*, 2, 5, 1; VI, p. 299

On the subject of moral obligation Stewart expresses his agreement with Butler's insistence on the supreme authority of conscience. And he commends the statement of a Dr. Adams that '*right* implies duty in its ideas'. Stewart's point is that 'it is absurd to ask *why* we are bound to practise virtue. The very notion of virtue implies the notion of obligation.'[1] Obligation cannot be interpreted simply in terms of the notions of reward and punishment. For these presuppose the existence of obligation. And if we interpret obligation in terms of the divine will and command, we shall find ourselves involved, in Stewart's opinion, in a vicious circle.

In conclusion, we can consider very briefly Stewart's line of argument for the existence of God. The process of reasoning, he tells us, 'consists only of a single step, and the premises belong to that class of first principles which form an essential part of the human constitution. These premises are *two* in number. The one is, that everything which begins to exist must have a cause. The other, that a combination of means conspiring to a particular end implies intelligence.'[2]

Stewart accepts Hume's contention that every attempt to demonstrate the truth of the first premiss involves assuming what has to be proved. He also accepts Hume's analysis of causality, so far as natural philosophy is concerned. 'In natural philosophy, when we speak of one thing being the cause of another, all that we mean is, that the two things are *constantly conjoined*, so that when we see the one we may expect the other. These conjunctions we learn from experience alone. . . .'[3] Causes in this sense can be called 'physical causes'. But there is also a metaphysical sense of causality, in which the word implies necessary connection. And causes in this sense can be called 'metaphysical or efficient causes'. As for the question how this idea of causation, power or efficacy

[1] *Active and Moral Powers*, 2, 6; VI, p. 319.
[2] *Ibid.*, 3, 1; VII, p. 11.
[3] *Ibid.*, 3, 2, 1; VII, p. 24.

is acquired, Stewart says that 'the most probable account of the matter seems to be that the idea of Causation or Power necessarily accompanies the perception of change in a way somewhat analogous to that in which sensation implies a being who feels, and thought a being who thinks'.[1] In any case the truth of the proposition that everything which begins to exist must have a cause is intuitively perceived. And in applying this principle Stewart is prepared to admit that all the events which constantly take place in the material universe are the immediate effects of divine causation and power, God being the constantly operative efficient cause in the material world. Stewart is thus in agreement with Clarke's view that the course of nature is, strictly speaking, nothing but the will of God producing certain effects in a continuous, regular and uniform manner. In other words, we can consider nature from the point of view either of the physicist or of the metaphysician. In the first case the empiricist analysis of causality is all that is required. In the second case (that is to say, if we grant the reality of active power in the material world), we must see natural events as effects of a divine agency. But for this argument to have any cogency, it is obviously necessary to suppose that we cannot discern active power and efficient causes (in Stewart's sense of the term) in nature. Further, as Stewart notes, this line of reasoning does not of itself show the unicity of God.

Stewart then turns to consider our apprehension of intelligence or design as manifested in the 'conspiration' of different means to a particular end. He argues first that we have intuitive knowledge of the connection between observed evidence of design and a designer or designers. That the combination of a variety of means to produce a particular effect implies design is not a generalization from experience; nor can it be demonstrated. We perceive its truth intuitively. Secondly, Stewart argues that there are evidences of design in the universe. He cites, for example, the way in which Nature repairs, in many cases, injuries to the human body. Thirdly, he argues that there is one uniform plan, which proves the unicity of God. He subsequently goes on to consider the moral attributes of the Deity.

In his writings Stewart manifests his wide reading and his power of using material taken from a great variety of philosophers in developing his system. But the essential features of his system are evidently derived mainly from Reid. What he does is to systematize and develop Reid's ideas, even though he criticizes him from time to time. Of Kant, Stewart knew comparatively little, as he himself observes. He shows, indeed, some appreciation of the German philosopher, and he concedes that Kant had a glimpse of the truth. But he was evidently both revolted and mystified by Kant's style, and in his *Philosophical Essays*[1] he speaks of Kant's 'scholastic barbarism' and of the 'scholastic fog through which he delights to view every object to which he turns his attention'. Reid, if he had been able to, might have learned something from Kant; but it is obvious that the former was, in Stewart's opinion, a superior philosophical thinker.

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[1] *Active and Moral Powers*, 3, 2, 1; VII, p. 18.

8. We have seen that Stewart, and indeed Reid before him, accepted Hume's analysis of causality as far as natural philosophy is concerned. Thomas Brown (1778–1820), a pupil of Stewart and his successor in the chair of moral philosophy at Edinburgh, proceeded further in the empiricist direction. Indeed, he may be regarded as a link between the Scottish philosophy of common sense and the nineteenth-century empiricism of J. S. Mill and Alexander Bain.

In his *Inquiry into the Relation of Cause and Effect* (1804, later revised and enlarged), Brown defines a cause as 'that which immediately precedes any change, and which, existing at any time in similar circumstances, has been always, and will be always, immediately followed by a similar change'.[2] The elements, and the only elements combined in the idea of cause are priority in the observed sequence and invariable antecedence. Power is only another word for expressing 'the antecedent itself, and the invariableness of the relation'.[3] When, therefore, we say 'that *A* is the cause of *B*, it may be allowed that we mean only that *A* is followed by *B*, has always been followed by *B*, and, we believe, will be always followed by *B*'.[4] Similarly, 'when I say that I have mentally the power of moving my hand, I mean nothing more than that, when my body is in a sound state, and no foreign force is imposed on me, the motion of my hand will always follow my desire to move it'.[5] Thus in mental phenomena, as in physical phenomena, causality is to be analysed in the same way.

Brown rejects Stewart's distinction between physical and efficient causality. 'The *physical* cause which has been, is, and always will be, followed by a certain change is the *efficient* cause of that change; or if it be not the efficient cause of it, it is necessary that a definition of efficiency should be given us, which involves more than the certainty of a particular change, as consequent in instant sequence. Causation is efficiency; and a cause which is not efficient, is truly no cause whatever.'[1] The defenders of the distinction between efficient and physical causes have merely asserted that there is a distinction without explaining its nature. It is true that God is the ultimate cause of all things; but this is no reason for saying that there are no other efficient causes.

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[1] Cf., *Works*, v, pp. 117–18, note, and p. 422.

[2] 1, 1; 1835 edition, p. 13.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[4] *Ibid.*, 1, 3, p. 32.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

Given this analysis of causality, it may well be asked with what justification Brown is classified with the philosophers of 'common sense' rather than as a follower of Hume. The answer is that though Brown accepts Hume's analysis of causal relation in terms of invariable or uniform sequence, he rejects the latter's account of the origin of our belief in necessary connection and in causation in general. According to Brown, there is an original belief in causation, which is antecedent to any effects of custom and association. 'The belief of regularity of sequence is so much the result of an original principle of the mind, that it arises constantly, on the observation of change, whatever the observed antecedents and consequents may have been, and requires the whole counteracting influence of our past knowledge to save us from the mistakes into which we should thus, at every moment, be in danger of falling.'[2] Further, 'the uniformity of the course of Nature, in the similar returns of future events, is not a conclusion of reason . . . but is a single intuitive judgment that, in certain circumstances, rises in the mind inevitably and with irresistible conviction. Whether true or false, the belief is in these cases felt, and it is felt without even the possibility of a perceived customary conjunction of the particular antecedent and the particular consequent.'[3] Belief in the uniformity of nature is not the result of custom and association; it is antecedent to observed sequences. What experience of customary succession does is to enable us to determine particular antecedents and their particular consequents. The trouble with Hume is his determination to derive all ideas from impressions, which forces him to explain belief in necessary connection and in the uniformity of nature in terms of observation of single sequences. But this belief is prior to such observation, and it is intuitive in character. 'In ascribing the belief of efficiency to such a principle, we place it, then, on a foundation as strong as that on which we suppose our belief of an external world, and even of our own identity, to rest.'[1] Brown goes further than Reid or Stewart in accepting Hume's analysis of causality, which he is prepared to extend to the mental sphere, and even to divine power. But he endeavours to combine this acceptance with an acceptance of the doctrine of intuitive beliefs, which was characteristic of the Scottish philosophy of common sense. In so doing he gives a new colouring to Reid's first principles. He tells us, for instance, that 'the proposition, *Everything which begins to exist must have had a cause of its existence*, is not itself an independent axiom, but is reducible to this more general law of thought, *Every change has had a cause of its existence in some circumstance, or combination of circumstances, immediately prior*'.[2]

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[1] *Inquiry into the Relation of Cause and Effect*, 1, 5; 1835 edition, p. 89.
[2] *Ibid.*, 4, 2, pp. 286–7.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 290.

In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, which were published after his death, Brown assimilates the study of mental phenomena to that of physical phenomena. 'The same great objects are to be had in view, and no other—the analysis of what is complex, and the observation and arrangement of the sequences of phenomena, as respectively antecedent and consequent.'[3] In both cases our knowledge is confined to phenomena. 'The philosophy of mind and the philosophy of matter agree in this respect, that our knowledge is, in both, confined to the mere phenomena.'[4] Brown does not question the existence of matter or the existence of mind; but we use these words, he insists, to connote the unknown causes of the respective sets of phenomena. Our knowledge of mind and matter is relative. We know matter as it affects us and mind in the varying mental phenomena of which we are conscious. A science of mind, therefore, so far as it is open to us, will consist in the analysis of mental phenomena and in the observation and systematic arrangement of causal sequences, that is, of regular sequences, in these phenomena.

The announcement of this programme does not mean, however, that Brown has abandoned belief in primary truths or intuited principles. He does, indeed, remark that the assertion of such principles can be carried to 'an extravagant and ridiculous length —as, indeed, seems to me to have been the case in the works of Dr. Reid and some other Scotch philosophers, his contemporaries

[1] *Inquiry into the Relation of Cause and Effect*, 4, 7, pp. 377–8.

[2] *Ibid.*, Note H, p. 435.

[3] *Ibid.*, Lecture 9; vol. I, p. 178, 1824 edition.

[4] *Ibid.*, Lecture 10; I, p. 194.

and friends'.[1] If this habit is indulged, it only encourages mental laziness. At the same time 'it is not less certain that of our mental nature such principles are truly a part'.[2] Brown does not attempt to give a list of those principles, but among first principles of belief he mentions 'that on which I conceive the conviction of our identity to be founded'.[3] Our belief in our identities as permanent beings is universal, irresistible and immediate; and it is prior to, or presupposed by, reasoning. It is, therefore, an intuitive belief. Brown finds that it is 'another form of the faith which we put in memory':[4] it is 'founded on an essential principle of our constitution, in consequence of which it is impossible for us to consider our successive feelings[5] without regarding them as truly our successive feelings, states, or affections of our thinking substance'.[6]

In the same *Lectures* Brown vigorously criticizes Reid's refutation of the 'theory of ideas'. In his opinion Reid attributed to the majority of philosophers a view which they did not in fact maintain, namely, that ideas are entities which occupy a position intermediate between perceptions and the things perceived. In reality, Brown maintains, these philosophers understood by ideas the perceptions themselves. Further, he finds himself in agreement with the view of these philosophers that it is sensations and perceptions of which we are immediately aware, and not of an independent material world. Sensations, when referred to an external cause, are called perceptions. The question arises, therefore, what is this reference, in consequence of which a new name is given to sensations? For Brown, 'it is the suggestion of some extended resisting object, the presence of which had before been found to be attended with that particular sensation, which is now again referred to it'.[7] In other words, our primary knowledge of the material is due to touch. More accurately, it is due to muscular sensations. The child encounters resistance and, guided by the principle of causation, it finds the cause of this resistance in something other than itself. Brown distinguished between muscular sensations and other feelings commonly ascribed to the sense of touch. 'The feeling of resistance is, I conceive, to be ascribed, not to our organ of touch, but to our muscular frame, to which I have already more than once directed your attention as forming a distinct organ of sense.'[8] Our notion of extension is originally due to muscular sensations as known in time. If a child gradually stretches its arm or closes its hand, it has a succession of feelings, and this gives it the notion of length. The notions of breadth and depth can be analogously explained. But in order to arrive at belief in an independent material reality the muscular feeling of resistance must be added to the notion of extension. 'Extension, resistance—to combine these simple notions into something which is not ourselves, and to have the notion of matter, are precisely the same thing.'[1] The feelings of extension and resistance are referred to an external, material world; but this independent world, considered in itself, is unknown to us.

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[1] *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Lecture 13; 1, p. 265.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 268. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*, p. 273.
[5] Brown gives to the word 'feeling' a very wide range of meaning.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 275. [7] *Ibid.*, Lecture 25; 1, p. 546. [8] *Ibid.*, Lecture 22; 1, p. 460.

From what has been said hitherto it is clear that Brown was very far from simply carrying on the positions adopted by Reid and Stewart. Indeed, he frequently adopted a critical attitude towards their opinions. We would expect him, then, to show a similar vigorous independence in his ethical reflections. In Brown's opinion moral philosophy has suffered from the making of distinctions which seemed to those who made them to be the result of accurate analysis, but which were only verbal. For example, some have thought that questions such as, what makes an action virtuous, what constitutes the moral obligation to perform certain actions, and what constitutes the merit of the agent of such actions, are distinct questions. But 'to say that any action which we are considering is right or wrong, and to say that the person who performed it has moral merit or demerit, are to say precisely the same thing'.[2] 'To have merit, to be virtuous, to have done our duty, to have acted in conformity with obligation—all have reference to one feeling of the mind, that feeling of approbation which attends the consideration of virtuous actions. They are merely, as I have said, different modes of stating one simple truth; that the contemplation of anyone, acting as we have done in a particular case, excites a feeling of moral approval.'[3] We can ask, of course, why it seems to us virtuous to act in this or that way. Why do we have a feeling of obligation? And so on. But 'the only answer which we can give to these questions is the same to all, that it is impossible for us to consider the action without feeling that, by acting in this way, we should look upon ourselves, and others would look on us, with approving regard; and that if we were to act in a different way we should look upon ourselves, and others would look upon us, with abhorrence, or at least with disapprobation'.[1] If we say that we regard an action as virtuous because it tends to the public good or because it represents the divine will, similar questions will recur, and a like answer will have to be given. Certainly, we can and do consider actions in themselves, apart from any particular agent, and we can and do consider virtuous qualities or dispositions in themselves; but here we have abstractions, useful abstractions no doubt, but still abstractions.

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[1] *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Lecture 24; I, p. 508.

[2] *Ibid.*, Lecture 73; III, p. 529.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 532.

Brown insists, however, that when he says that it is vain to ask why we feel the obligation to perform certain actions, he is speaking of inquiry into the nature of the mind. If we look beyond the mind itself, we can find the answer. The case of our belief in the uniformity of nature presents us with an analogous situation. If we consider the mind alone, we cannot say why we expect future events to resemble past events: we can only say that the mind is so constituted. But there are obvious reasons why the mind has been so constituted. For example, if we had been constituted with the opposite expectation, we could not live; we could not provide for the future, nor could we take steps to avoid dangers by learning from past experience. Similarly, if we had no feelings of moral approbation and disapprobation, if there were no virtue or vice, no love of God or man, human life would be wretched in the extreme. 'We know, then, in this sense, why our mind has been so constituted as to have these emotions; and our inquiry leads us, as all other inquiries ultimately lead us, to the provident goodness of him by whom we were made.'[2]

Given this view of moral approbation, Hume's utilitarian interpretation of morality is naturally rejected by Brown. 'That virtuous actions do all tend in some greater or less degree to the advantage of the world, is indeed a fact, with respect to which there can be no doubt.'[3] But 'the approbation which we give to actions as virtuous, whether we be ourselves the agents, or merely consider the actions of others, is not given to them simply as useful. Utility, in either case, is not the measure of moral approbation. . . .'[4] For the matter of that, conduciveness to the public good is itself an object of moral approbation. The reason why thinkers such as Hume find it easy to slip into a utilitarian interpretation of morality is that there is an 'independent pre-established relation of virtue and utility',[1] established, that is to say, by God.

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[1] *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Lecture 73; III, p. 533.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 543.

[3] *Ibid.*, Lecture 77; IV, p. 29.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

Does this mean that Brown accepts the theory of a moral sense? If by the word 'sense' were meant merely susceptibility, then, inasmuch as we undoubtedly possess a susceptibility for moral feelings, we could speak of a moral sense. In this case, however, we should have to speak of as many 'senses' as there are distinguishable kinds of feeling. But the moral sense theorists understood something more by 'sense' than mere susceptibility. They were thinking of a peculiar moral sense analogous to the various senses such as sight and touch. And Brown can 'discover no peculiar analogy to perceptions or sensations, in the philosophical meaning of those terms, and the phrase "moral sense", therefore, I consider as having had a very unfortunate influence on the controversy as to the original moral differences of actions, from the false analogies which it cannot fail to suggest'.[2] Hutcheson's great mistake was to believe that there are certain moral qualities in actions, which excite in us ideas of those qualities in the same way that external things give us ideas of colour, form and hardness. But right and wrong are not qualities of things. 'They are words expressive only of relation, and relations are not existing parts of objects or things. . . . There is no right nor wrong, virtue nor vice, merit or demerit, existing independently of the agents who are virtuous or vicious; and, in like manner, if there had been no moral emotions to arise on the contemplation of certain actions, there would have been no virtue, vice, merit or demerit, which express only relations to these emotions.'[3]

There is another error to which some philosophers have been prone. In considering the aesthetic emotions they suppose that there is a universal beauty which is diffused, as it were, in all beautiful things. Similarly, they have imagined that there must be one universal virtue, diffused in all virtuous actions. Hence some have made of benevolence a universal virtue. 'There is no virtue, however, as I have already repeatedly said; there are only virtuous actions; or, to speak still more correctly, only virtuous agents: and it is not one virtuous agent only, or any number of virtuous agents, acting in one uniform manner, that excite our moral emotion of regard; but agents acting in many different ways —in ways that are not less different in themselves, on account of the real or supposed simplicity of the generalizations and classifications which we may have made.'[1] Brown does not deny, of course, that we can generalize and classify. But he rejects any attempt to reduce all virtuous actions to one class.

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[1] *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Lecture 77; IV, p. 54.
[2] *Ibid.*, Lecture 82; IV, pp. 149–50.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 161–2.

Brown's 'empiricist' tendency shows itself in what he has to say on evidence for God's existence. He remarks several times that he rejects all *a priori* reasonings on this matter, and, indeed, all metaphysical arguments except in so far as they can be reduced to what he calls the physical argument. 'The arguments commonly termed metaphysical I have always regarded as absolutely void of force, unless in as far as they proceed on a tacit assumption of the physical argument.'[2] By the physical argument Brown means the argument from design. 'The universe exhibits indisputable marks of design, and is, therefore, not self-existing, but the work of a designing mind. There exists, then, a great designing mind.'[3] Brown argues that the universe exhibits a harmony of relations, and that to perceive this harmony is to perceive design. 'That is to say, it is impossible for us to perceive them without feeling immediately, that the harmony of parts with parts, and of their results with each other, must have had its origin in some designing mind.'[4] But Brown seems to take it for granted that this argument also shows the existence of God as maker or author of the universe. He does not appear to realize that the argument from design, considered by itself, shows only that there is a designer, not that there is, in the strict sense, a creator.

When speaking of the divine unity, Brown again rejects all metaphysical arguments as, at best, 'a laborious trifling with words, which either signify nothing or prove nothing'.[5] Hence the only divine unity which we can prove is 'wholly relative to that one design which we are capable of tracing in the frame of the universe'.[6] And this anti-metaphysical attitude comes out again in his treatment of the divine goodness. That God is not malevolent 'the far greater proportion of the marks of benevolent intention sufficiently indicates'.[7] In other words, Brown argues that if we weigh the proportion of good to evil in the universe, we shall find that the former exceeds the latter. As for the moral goodness of God, His character is manifested in His gift to man of moral feelings. And we on our part are led by our very nature to regard what we look on with moral approbation or disapprobation as 'objects of approbation or disapprobation, not to all mankind only, but to every being whom we imagine to contemplate the actions, and especially to him who, as quickest to perceive and to know, must, as we think, by this very superiority of discernment, be quickest also to approve and condemn'.[1]

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[1] *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Lecture 82; IV, p. 169.

[2] *Ibid.*, Lecture 93; IV, p. 387.

[3] *Ibid.*, Lecture 92; IV, p. 369.

[4] *Ibid.*, Lecture 93; IV, pp. 387–8.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 391.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 407.

Obviously, if anyone accepts the kind of metaphysical arguments which Brown rejects, he will look on the latter's natural theology as constituting one of the weakest, or more probably the weakest, parts of his philosophy. If, however, he thinks that propositions about God are at best empirical hypotheses, he will presumably sympathize with Brown's general attitude, even if he does not regard the latter's arguments as cogent.

9. Kant's opinion of the Scottish philosophers of common sense was not a high one. His remarks about them in the introduction to the *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysic* have been often quoted. Hume's opponents, says Kant, such as Reid, Oswald and Beattie, missed the point altogether. For they assumed what he doubted and undertook to prove what he never thought of disputing. Further, they appealed to common sense as to an oracle, using it as a criterion of truth when they had no rational justification to offer for their opinions. In any case 'I should think Hume might fairly have laid as much claim to sound sense as Beattie, and besides to a critical understanding such as the latter did not possess. . . .'

This judgment was doubtless prompted primarily by Beattie's performance; and he was far from being the best representative of the Scottish School. However, there is obviously some justification for Kant's remarks. After all, Brown, himself a Scottish philosopher, drew attention to the undesirability of laying down a multitude of inviolable first principles of common sense. We cannot set bounds in this dogmatic way to critical analysis. Further, both Stewart and Brown noted that Hume had often been misunderstood by the earlier philosophers of the common-sense tradition. And they were justified in doing so.

Further, it may appear that the development of the Scottish common-sense philosophy provides empirical evidence for the soundness of Kant's criticism. For, as we have seen, this movement which began, in large part at least, as a vigorous reaction against Hume's theories, gradually came nearer, on several important points, to the latter's philosophy. Moreover, from some of Brown's positions to the position of J. S. Mill there was no great step to be taken. For example, though Brown affirmed the existence of an independent material world, matter in itself was, in his opinion, unknown by us. We know sensations, and belief in the independent material world arises through a combination of the acquired notion of extension and the notion of external reference acquired by muscular experience of resistance. The distance does not seem to be so very great from this position to Mill's view of the world as a permanent possibility of sensations. It is thus arguable that in proportion as the employment of critical analysis advanced within the common-sense School, this philosophy approximated more and more to empiricism, and that this is an indication of its untenable character in the earlier forms which were attacked by Kant.

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[1] *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Lecture 95; IV, p. 444.

Yet the common-sense philosophy obviously had something to say for itself. Reid's attack on the 'theory of ideas' was not entirely without point. It is true, as Brown remarks, that Reid inclined to treat the philosophers who spoke of perceiving ideas as though they all held pretty much the same theory, namely, that the ideas which we perceive are intermediate entities between minds and things. And this interpretation does not fit Berkeley, for instance, who called sensible things 'ideas'. But it is applicable to Locke, if we concentrate on one of his ways of speaking. In any case it is arguable that the language of ideas was unfortunate, that the philosophers who used this language became victims of their own way of speaking and that what Reid was doing was to recall philosophers to the position of common sense and to underline the need for delimiting carefully the meanings of terms such as 'idea' and 'perception'. Again, when Reid objected to the epistemological atomism of Locke and Hume and drew attention to the fundamental role of judgment, maintaining that the supposed elements of cognition were obtained by analytic abstraction from a larger whole, he was putting forward a point of view which certainly merited attention.

As for the general recall to common sense, some distinctions must, I think, be made. In so far as the Scottish philosophers were suggesting that we should regard with some suspicion those theories which are incompatible with common experience or which are plainly at variance with the beliefs and presuppositions which are necessary for life, their point of view was sound. At the same time people like Beattie do not seem to have understood that David Hume was not concerned to reject natural beliefs or to deny the standpoint of common sense. He was concerned to examine the theoretical reasons which can be adduced to support these beliefs. And even when he thought that no valid theoretical reasons or proofs could be adduced, he did not suggest that we should abandon these beliefs. Indeed, his point of view was that in practice belief must prevail over the dissolvent effects of the critical reason. Hence the Scottish philosophers' criticism of Hume frequently missed the mark altogether. It was not sufficient to offer a large number of principles of common sense, especially when the tendency was to depict these principles as representing inevitable propensities of the human mind. What they should have done, if they wished to refute Hume, was to show either that the validity of Hume's natural beliefs, which he accounted for with the aid of association, could be theoretically proved or that the so-called principles of common sense really were intuitively perceived self-evident rational principles. Or, more accurately, they should have concentrated on the second alternative, since in their view the first principles of common sense could not be demonstrated. It was not enough merely to assert the principles. For it would have been open to Hume to retort that in some cases at least what were called principles of common sense simply expressed natural beliefs which could be accounted for psychologically but which could not be philosophically proved, however necessary they might be for practical life. It is really no great matter for surprise that the Scottish philosophy of common sense was overshadowed in the nineteenth century by empiricism on the one hand and idealism on the other. And when something resembling a philosophy of common sense came again to the fore in contemporary British thought it took a new form, namely, the form of linguistic analysis.

On the continent of Europe the Scottish movement was not without success. Through Victor Cousin (1792–1867) in particular it exercised a very considerable influence on what was for a time the official philosophy of France. The French philosophers who were influenced by the Scottish movement saw further than the features which excited Kant's critical comments. They saw, for example, and approved the direction of the mind towards ethical and practical questions, the use of the experimental method, and the tendency to concentrate on available factual data rather than on abstract speculations. And it is true in a sense that for the

Scottish thinkers philosophy was less of a game than it was for their great compatriot, Hume. It would, indeed, be misleading to suggest that for Hume philosophy was no more than a game. He thought, for example, that an analytic and critical philosophy can be a powerful instrument for diminishing fanaticism and intolerance. And, on the positive side, he envisaged the rise of a science of man which might be analogous to the physical science of Galileo and Newton. At the same time he did sometimes speak of his philosophy, especially in what appeared to Reid as its more destructive aspects, as a matter for the study, as having little connection with practical life. Reid and Stewart, however, evidently regarded philosophy as of importance for man's ethical and political life; and they were concerned not merely to investigate why people think and speak as they do, but to reinforce the convictions which they regarded as valuable. And their French admirers, accustomed to see in philosophy a guide to life, found this element in their thought congenial.

Reid's great thesis, so far as his attack on Hume was concerned, was that the latter simply drew in a clear and consistent manner the conclusions which followed from the premisses laid down by his predecessors. And he was thus partly responsible for a common and influential interpretation of the development of classical British empiricism. To a certain extent this thesis was shared by Kant, to the extent at least of considering that a fresh hypothesis should be prepared and that a fresh explanation was needed of man's cognitive life and of his moral and aesthetic judgments. But though Hume provided, in part, a point of departure not only for Reid but also for Kant, the latter is of vastly more importance in the history of philosophy than the philosopher of common sense. And his system will be considered at some length in the next volume.

APPENDIX

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An Essay concerning the Understanding, Knowledge, Opinion and Assent. Edited by B. Rand. Cambridge (U.S.A.), 1931. (These two last-mentioned works are early drafts of Locke's *Essay.* According to Professor von Leyden, 'the text of the draft edited by Rand can only be considered authentic in a small degree. . . .' See *Notes concerning Papers of John Locke in the Lovelace Collection* by W. von Leyden in *The Philosophical Quarterly,* January 1952, pp. 63–9. The Lovelace Collection is now housed in the Bodleian Library.)

Two Treatises of Government (containing also Filmer's *Patriarcha*, edited by T. I. Cook). New York, 1947.

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Kendall, W. *John Locke and the Doctrine of Majority-Rule.* Illinois, 1941.

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Tinivella, G. *Giovanni Locke e i pensieri sull'educazione.* Milan, 1938.

Yolton, J. W. *John Locke and the Way of Ideas.* Oxford, 1956.

Chapter VIII: Boyle and Newton

1. *Boyle*

Texts

The Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle. Edited by T. Birch. 6 vols. London, 1772 (2nd edition).

Studies

Farrington, F. *A Life of the Honourable Robert Boyle.* Cork, 1917.

Fisher, M. S. *Robert Boyle, Devout Naturalist: A Study in Science and Religion in the Seventeenth Century.* Philadelphia, 1945.

Masson, F. *Robert Boyle.* Edinburgh, 1914.

Meier, J. *Robert Boyles Naturphilosophie.* Munich, 1907.

Mendelssohn, S. *Robert Boyle als Philosoph.* Würzburg, 1902.

More, L. T. *The Life and Works of the Hon. Robert Boyle.* Oxford, 1945.

2. *Newton*

Texts

Opera quae existunt omnia. Edited by S. Horsley. 5 vols. London, 1779–85.

Philosophiae naturalis principia mathematica. Edited by R. Cotes. London, 1713, and reprints.

Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy and System of the World. Translated by A. Motte, revised and annotated by F. Cajori. Cambridge, 1934.

Opticks. London, 1730 (4th edition); reprint New York, 1952.

Sir Isaac Newton: Theological Manuscripts. Selected and edited by H. McLachlan. Boston, 1950.

Newton's Philosophy of Nature. Selections from his writings edited by H. S. Thayer. New York, 1953.

Studies

Andrade, E. N. da C. *Sir Isaac Newton.* London, 1954.

Bloch, L. *La Philosophie de Newton.* Paris, 1908.

Clarke, G. N. *Science and Social Welfare in the Age of Newton.* Oxford, 1949 (2nd edition).

De Morgan, A. *Essays on the Life and Work of Newton.* Edited by F. E. B. Jourdain. London, 1914.

Dessauer, F. *Weltfahrt der Erkenntnis. Leben und Werk Isaak Newtons.* Zürich, 1945.

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Whittaker, E. T. *Aristotle, Newton, Einstein.* London, 1942.

3. *General Works*

Burtt, E. A. *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science. A Historical and Critical Essay.* London, 1925; revised edition, 1932.

Cassirer, E. *Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit.* 3 vols. Berlin, 1906–20; later edition, 1922–3.

Dampier, W. C. *A History of Science and its Relations with Philosophy and Religion.* Cambridge, 1949 (4th edition).

Mach, E. *The Science of Mechanics.* Translated by T. J. MacCormack. La Salle (Illinois), 1942 (5th edition).

Strong, E. W. *Procedures and Metaphysics: A Study in the Philosophy of Mathematical Physical Science in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.* Berkeley, U.S.A., 1936.

Chapter IX: Religious Problems

1. *Clarke*

Texts

Works. With a preface by B. Hoadley. 4 vols. London, 1738–42.

Œuvres philosophiques. Translated by C. Jourdain. Paris, 1843.

A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God. London, 1705.

A Discourse concerning the Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion. London, 1706.

One hundred and Twenty Three Sermons. Edited by J. Clarke. 2 vols. Dublin, 1734.

A Collection of Papers which passed between the late learned Mr. Leibniz and Dr. Clarke. London, 1717.

Studies

Le Rossignol, J. E. *The Ethical Philosophy of Samuel Clarke.* Leipzig, 1892.

Zimmermann, R. *Clarkes Leben und Lehre.* Vienna, 1870.

2. *Toland*

Texts

Christianity not Mysterious. London, 1696.

Pantheisticon. London, 1720.

3. *Tindal*

Text

Christianity as Old as the Creation. London, 1730.

4. *Collins*

Texts

A Discourse of Free-thinking. London, 1713.
Philosophical Enquiry concerning Human Liberty and Necessity. London, 1715.
A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion. London, 1724.
A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity. London, 1729.

5. *Dodwell*

Text

An Epistolary Discourse, proving from the Scriptures and the First Fathers that the Soul is a Principle naturally Mortal. London, 1706.

6. *Bolingbroke*

Texts

The Philosophical Works of the Right Hon. Henry St. John, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke. Edited by D. Mallet. London, 1754 (5 vols.), 1778, 1809; Philadelphia (4 vols.), 1849.
Letters on the Study and Use of History. London, 1738 and 1752.

Studies

Brosch, M. *Lord Bolingbroke*. Frankfurt a M., 1883.
Hassall, A. *Life of Viscount Bolingbroke*. London, 1915 (2nd edition).
James, D. G. *The English Augustans: I, The Life of Reason: Hobbes, Locke, Bolingbroke*. London, 1949.
Merrill, W. McIntosh. *From Statesman to Philosopher. A Study of Bolingbroke's Deism*. New York, 1949.
Sichel, W. *Bolingbroke and His Times*. London, 1902.

7. *Deism in General*

Carrau, L. *La philosophie religieuse en Angleterre depuis Locke jusqu'à nos jours*. Paris, 1888.
Farrar, A. S. *A Critical History of Free Thought*. London, 1862.
Lechler, G. V. *Geschichte des englischen Deismus*. 2 vols. Stuttgart, 1841.
Leland, J. *A View of the Principal Deistical Writers*. 2 vols. London, 1837.

Noack, L. *Die englischen, französischen und deutschen Freidenker.* Berne, 1853-5.

Sayous, A. *Les déistes anglais et le christianisme rationaliste.* Paris, 1882.

Stephen, L. *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century.* 2 vols. London, 1876.

8. *Butler*

Texts

Works. Edited by J. H. Bernard. 2 vols. London, 1900.

Works. Edited by W. E. Gladstone. 2 vols. London, 1910 (2nd edition).

The analogy of Religion, natural and revealed, to the Constitution and Cause of Nature, with an introduction by R. Bayne. London (*E.L.*).

Fifteen Sermons upon Human Nature, or Man considered as a Moral Agent. London, 1726, 1841, etc.

Fifteen Sermons (and *Dissertation on Virtue*). Edited by W. R. Matthews. London, 1949.

Studies

Broad, C. D. *Five Types of Ethical Theory.* (Chapter III, 'Butler', pp. 53-83.) London, 1930.

Collins, W. L. *Butler.* Edinburgh and London, 1889.

Duncan-Jones, A. *Butler's Moral Philosophy.* Penguin Books, 1952.

Mossner, E. C. *Bishop Butler and the Age of Reason.* New York, 1936.

Norton, W. J. *Bishop Butler, Moralist and Divine.* New Brunswick and London, 1940.

Chapter X: Problems of Ethics

1. *Shaftesbury*

Texts

Characteristics. Edited by J. M. Robertson. 2 vols. London, 1900.

Studies

Brett, R. L. *The third Earl of Shaftesbury: A Study in Eighteenth-Century Literary Theory.* London, 1951.

Elson, C. *Wieland and Shaftesbury.* New York, 1913.

Fowler, T. *Shaftesbury and Hutcheson.* London, 1882.

Kern, J. *Shaftesburys Bild vom Menschen.* Frankfurt a M., 1943.

Lyons, A. *Shaftesbury's Principle of Adaptation to Universal Harmony*. New York, 1909.

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Osske, I. *Ganzheit, Unendlichkeit und Form. Studien zu Shaftesburys Naturbegriff*. Berlin, 1939.

Rand, B. *Life, Unpublished Letters and Philosophical Regimen of Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury*. London, 1900.

Spicker, G. *Die Philosophie des Grafen von Shaftesbury*. Freiburg i. B., 1871.

Zani, L. *L'etica di Lord Shaftesbury*. Milan, 1954.

2. *Mandeville*

Texts

The Grumbling Hive or Knaves turned Honest. London, 1705.

The Fable of the Bees or Private Vices Public Benefits. London, 1714, and subsequent editions.

The Fable of the Bees. Edited by F. B. Kaye. Oxford, 1924.

Studies

Hübner, W. *Mandevilles Bienenfabel und die Begründung der praktischen Zweckethik der englischen Aufklärung* (in *Grundformen der englischen Geistesgeschichte*. Edited by P. Meissner. Stuttgart, 1941, pp. 275–331).

Stammler, R. *Mandevilles Bienenfabel*. Berlin, 1918.

3. *Hutcheson*

Texts

Works. 5 vols. Glasgow, 1772.

Studies

Fowler, T. *Shaftesbury and Hutcheson*. London, 1882.

Rampendal, R. *Eine Würdigung der Ethik Hutchesons*. Leipzig, 1892.

Scott, W. R. *Francis Hutcheson, His Life, Teaching and Position in the History of Philosophy*. London, 1900.

Vignone, L. *L'etica del senso morale in Francis Hutcheson*. Milan, 1954.

4. *Butler*

For *Texts* and *Studies* see Bibliography under Chapter IX.

5. *Hartley*

Texts

Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty and His Expectations. Edited by J. B. Priestley. 3 vols. London, 1934 (3rd edition).

Studies

Bower, G. S. *Hartley and James Mill.* London, 1881.
Heider, M. *Studien über David Hartley.* Bonn, 1913.
Ribot, T. *Quid David Hartley de consociatione idearum senserit.* Paris, 1872.
Schoenlank, B. *Hartley und Priestley, die Begründer des Assoziationismus in England.* Halle, 1882.

6. *Tucker*

Text

The Light of Nature Pursued. Edited, with a Life, by H. P. St. John Mildmay. 7 vols. London, 1805 and reprints.

Study

Harris, W. G. *Teleology in the Philosophy of Joseph Butler and Abraham Tucker.* Philadelphia, 1942.

7. *Paley*

Texts

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The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy. London, 1785, and subsequent editions.
Natural Theology, or Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity collected from the Appearances of Nature. London, 1802, and subsequent editions.

Study

Stephen, L. *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century.* 2 vols. London, 1876. (For Paley see I, pp. 405f., and II, pp. 121f.)

8. *General Works*

Texts (Selections)

Rand, B. *The Classical Moralists. Selections.* London, 1910.
Selby-Bigge, L. A. *British Moralists.* 2 vols. Oxford, 1897.

Studies

Bonar, J. *Moral Sense.* London, 1930.

Mackintosh, J. *On the Progress of Ethical Philosophy, chiefly during the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries.* Edited by W. Whewell. Edinburgh, 1872 (4th edition).

Martineau, J. *Types of Ethical Theory.* 2 vols. Oxford, 1901 (3rd edition, revised).

Moskowitz, H. *Das moralische Beurteilungsvermögen in der Ethik von Hobbes bis J. S. Mill.* Erlangen, 1906.

Raphael, D. Daiches. *The Moral Sense.* Oxford, 1947.
(This work deals with Hutcheson, Hume, Price and Reid.)

Sidgwick, H. *Outlines of the History of Ethics for English Readers.* London, 1931 (6th edition).

Chapters XI–XIII: Berkeley

Texts

The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne. Edited by A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop. 9 vols. London, 1948 (critical edition).

The Works of George Berkeley. Edited by A. C. Fraser. 4 vols. Oxford. 1901 (2nd edition).

Philosophical Commentaries, generally called the Commonplace Book. An *editio diplomatica* edited with introduction and notes by A. A. Luce. London, 1944.
(The *Philosophical Commentaries* are also contained in the critical edition of the *Works*, vol. I.)

A New Theory of Vision and other Select Philosophical Writings (*Principles of Human Knowledge* and *Three Dialogues*), with an introduction by A. D. Lindsay. London (*E.L.*).

Berkeley: Selections. Edited by M. W. Calkins. New York, 1929.

Berkeley: Philosophical Writings. Selected and edited by T. E. Jessop. London, 1952.

Berkeley: Alciphron ou le Pense-menu. Translated with introduction and notes by J. Pucelle. Paris, 1952.

Studies

Baladi, N. *La pensée religieuse de Berkeley et l'unité de sa philosophie.* Cairo, 1945.

Bender, F. *George Berkeley's Philosophy re-examined.* Amsterdam, 1946.

Broad, C. D. *Berkeley's Argument about Material Substance.* London, 1942.

Cassirer, E. *Berkeley's System.* Giessen, 1914.

Del Bocca, S. *L'unità del pensiero di Giorgio Berkeley.* Florence, 1937.

Fraser, A. C. *Berkeley.* Edinburgh and London, 1881.

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Jessop, T. E. *Great Thinkers: XI, Berkeley* (in *Philosophy* for 1937).

Johnston, G. A. *The Development of Berkeley's Philosophy.* London, 1923.

Joussain, A. *Exposé critique de la philosophie de Berkeley.* Paris, 1920.

Laky, J. J. *A Study of George Berkeley's Philosophy in the Light of the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas.* Washington, 1950.

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Penjon, A. *Étude sur la vie et sur les œuvres philosophiques de George Berkeley, évêque de Cloyne.* Paris, 1878.

Ritchie, A. D. *George Berkeley's 'Siris'* (British Academy Lecture). London, 1955.

Sillem, E. A. *George Berkeley and the Proofs for the Existence of God.* London, 1957.

Stäbler, E. *George Berkeleys Auffassung und Wirkung in der deutschen Philosophie bis Hegel.* Dresden, 1935.

Stammler, G. *Berkeleys Philosophie der Mathematik.* Berlin, 1922.

Testa, A. *La filosofia di Giorgio Berkeley.* Urbino, 1943.

Warnock, G. J. *Berkeley.* Penguin Books, 1953.

Wild, J. *George Berkeley: A Study of His Life and Philosophy.* London, 1936.

Wisdom, J. O. *The Unconscious Origins of Berkeley's Philosophy.* London, 1953.

See also *Hommage to George Berkeley.* A commemorative issue of *Hermathena.* Dublin, 1953. And the commemorative issue of the *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science.* Edinburgh, 1953.

Chapters XIV–XVII: Hume

Texts

The Philosophical Works of David Hume. Edited by T. H. Green and T. H. Grose. 4 vols. London, 1874–5.

A Treatise of Human Nature. Edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge. Oxford, 1951 (reprint of 1888 edition).

A Treatise of Human Nature. With an introduction by A. D. Lindsay. 2 vols. London (*E.L.*).

An Abstract of a Treatise of Human Nature, 1740. Edited by J. M. Keynes and P. Sraffa. Cambridge, 1938.

Enquiries concerning the Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals. Edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge. Oxford, 1951 (reprint of second edition, 1902).

Dialogues concerning Natural Religion. Edited with an introduction by N. K. Smith. London, 1947 (2nd edition).

The Natural History of Religion. Edited by H. Chadwick and with an introduction by H. E. Root. London, 1956.

Political Essays. Edited by C. W. Hendel. New York, 1953.

Hume: Theory of Knowledge. (Selections.) Edited by D. C. Yalden-Thomson. Edinburgh and London, 1951.

Hume: Theory of Politics. (Selections.) Edited by E. Watkins. Edinburgh and London, 1951.

Hume: Selections. Edited by C. W. Hendel. New York, 1927.

The Letters of David Hume. Edited by J. V. T. Grieg. 2 vols. Oxford, 1932.

New Letters of David Hume. Edited by R. Klibansky and E. C. Mossner. Oxford, 1954.

Studies

Bagolini, L. *Esperienza giuridica e politica nel pensiero di David Hume.* Siena, 1947.

Brunius, T. *David Hume on Criticism.* Stockholm, 1952.

Church, R. W. *Hume's Theory of the Understanding.* London, 1935.

Corsi, M. *Natura e società in David Hume.* Florence, 1954.

Dal Pra, M. *Hume.* Milan, 1949.

Della Volpe, G. *La filosofia dell' esperienza di David Hume.* Florence, 1939.

Didier, J. *Hume.* Paris, 1912.

Elkin, W. B. *Hume, the Relation of the Treatise Book I to the Inquiry.* New York, 1904.

Glatke, A. B. *Hume's Theory of the Passions and of Morals.* Berkeley, U.S.A., 1950.

Greig, J. V. T. *David Hume.* (Biography.) Oxford, 1931.

Hedenius, L. *Studies in Hume's Aesthetics.* Uppsala, 1937.

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Huxley, T. *David Hume.* London, 1879.

Jessop, T. E. *A Bibliography of David Hume and of Scottish Philosophy from Francis Hutcheson to Lord Balfour.* London, 1938.

Kruse, V. *Hume's Philosophy in His Principal Work, A Treatise of Human Nature.* Translated by P. E. Federspiel. London, 1939.

Kuypers, M. S. *Studies in the Eighteenth-Century Background of Hume's Empiricism.* Minneapolis, U.S.A., 1930.

Kydd, R. M. *Reason and Conduct in Hume's* Treatise. Oxford, 1946.

Laing, B. M. *David Hume.* London, 1932.

Great Thinkers: XII, Hume (in *Philosophy* for 1937).

Laird, J. *Hume's Philosophy of Human Nature.* London, 1932.

Leroy, A-L. *La critique et la religion chez David Hume.* Paris, 1930.

MacNabb, D. G. *David Hume: His Theory of Knowledge and Morality.* London, 1951.

Magnino, B. *Il pensiero filosofico di David Hume.* Naples, 1935.

Maund, C. *Hume's Theory of Knowledge: A Critical Examination.* London, 1937.

Metz, R. *David Hume, Leben und Philosophie.* Stuttgart, 1929.

Mossner, E. C. *The Forgotten Hume: Le bon David.* New York, 1943.

The Life of David Hume. London, 1954. (The fullest biography to date.)

Passmore, J. A. *Hume's Intentions.* Cambridge, 1952.

Price, H. H. *Hume's Theory of the External World.* Oxford, 1940.

Smith, N. K. *The Philosophy of David Hume.* London, 1941.

Chapter XVIII: For and Against Hume

1. *Adam Smith*

Texts

Collected Works. 5 vols. Edinburgh, 1811–12.

The Theory of Moral Sentiments. London, 1759, and subsequent editions.

The Wealth of Nations. 2 vols. London, 1776, and subsequent editions.

The Wealth of Nations. With an introduction by E. R. A. Seligman. 2 vols. London (*E.L.*).

Studies

Bagolini, L. *La simpatia nella morale e nel diritto: Aspetti del pensiero di Adam Smith.* Bologna, 1952.

Chevalier, M. *Étude sur Adam Smith et sur la fondation de la science économique.* Paris, 1874.
Hasbach, W. *Untersuchungen über Adam Smith.* Leipzig, 1891.
Leiserson, A. *Adam Smith y su teoría sobre il salario.* Buenos Aires, 1939.
Limentani, L. *La morale della simpatia di Adam Smith nella storia del pensiero inglese.* Genoa, 1914.
Paszhowsky, W. *Adam Smith als Moralphilosoph.* Halle, 1890.
Rae, J. *Life of Adam Smith.* London, 1895.
Schubert, J. *Adam Smiths Moralphilosophie.* Leipzig, 1890.
Scott, W. R. *Adam Smith as Student and Professor.* Glasgow, 1937.
Small, A. W. *Adam Smith and Modern Sociology.* London, 1909.

2. *Price*

Text

A Review of the Principal Questions in Morals. Edited by D. Daiches Raphael. Oxford, 1948.

Study

Raphael, D. Daiches. *The Moral Sense.* Oxford, 1947. (This work deals with Hutcheson, Hume, Price and Reid.)

3. *Reid*

Texts

Works. Edited by D. Stewart. Edinburgh, 1804.
Works. Edited by W. Hamilton. 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1846. (6th edition, with additions by H. L. Mansel, 1863.)
Œuvres complètes de Thomas Reid. Translated by T. S. Jouffroy. 6 vols. Paris, 1828–36.
Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man. (Abridged.) Edited by A. D. Woozley. London, 1941.
Philosophical Orations of Thomas Reid. (Delivered at Graduation Ceremonies.) Edited by W. R. Humphries. Aberdeen, 1937.

Studies

Bahne-Jensen, A. *Gestaltanalytische Untersuchung zur Erkenntnislehre Reids.* Glückstadt, 1941.
Dauriac, L. *Le réalisme de Reid.* Paris, 1889.
Fraser, A. C. *Thomas Reid.* Edinburgh and London, 1898.
Latimer, J. F. *Immediate Perception as held by Reid and Hamilton considered as a Refutation of the Scepticism of Hume.* Leipzig, 1880.

Peters, R. *Reid als Kritiker von Hume.* Leipzig, 1909.
Sciacca, M. F. *La filosofia di Tommaso Reid con un'appendice sui rapporti con Gallupi e Rosmini.* Naples, 1936.

4. *Beattie*

Texts

Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth. Edinburgh, 1770, and subsequent editions.
Dissertations Moral and Critical. London, 1783.
Elements of Moral Science. 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1790–3.

Study

Forbes, W. *An Account of the Life and Writings of James Beattie.* 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1806 (2nd edition, 3 vols., 1807).

5. *Stewart*

Texts

Collected Works. Edited by W. Hamilton. 11 vols. Edinburgh, 1854–8.
Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind. 3 vols. Edinburgh, 1792–1827, and subsequent editions.
Outlines of Moral Philosophy. Edinburgh, 1793 (with notes by J. McCosh, London, 1863).
Philosophical Essays. Edinburgh, 1810.
Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man. Edinburgh, 1828.

Study

A Memoir by J. Veitch is included in the 1858 edition of Stewart's *Works.* The latter's eldest son, M. Stewart, published a Memoir in *Annual Biography and Obituary,* 1829.

6. *Brown*

Texts

An Inquiry into the Relation of Cause and Effect. London, 1818.
Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind. Edited by D. Welsh. 4 vols. Edinburgh, 1820, and subsequent editions.
Lectures on Ethics. London, 1856.

Study

Welsh, D. *Account of the Life and Writings of Thomas Brown.* Edinburgh, 1825.

7. *General Works*

Text

Selections from the Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense. Chicago, 1915.

Studies

Jessop, T. E. *A Bibliography of David Hume and of Scottish Philosophy from Francis Hutcheson to Lord Balfour.* London, 1938.

Laurie, H. *Scottish Philosophy in its National Development.* Glasgow, 1902.

McCosh, J. *Scottish Philosophy from Hutcheson to Hamilton.* London, 1875.

Pringle-Pattison, A. S. *Scottish Philosophy: A Comparison of the Scottish and German Answers to Hume.* Edinburgh and London, 1885 and subsequent editions.

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[1] At the time dealt with in this book philosophy and science were not so clearly distinguished as they are today. Hence identical matters may be mentioned and indexed under different names. This should be borne in mind when looking up any of the following subjects: natural philosophy; philosophy, experimental; philosophy of Nature; physics; science, experimental.

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VOLUME VI

Modern Philosophy: From the French Enlightenment to Kant

Frederick Copleston, S.J.

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PREFACE

It was my original intention to cover the philosophy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in one volume, *Descartes to Kant*. But this did not prove to be possible. And I have divided the material between three volumes. Volume IV, *Descartes to Leibniz,* treats of the great rationalist systems on the Continent, while in Volume V, *Hobbes to Hume,* I have outlined the development of British philosophical thought up to and including the Scottish philosophy of common sense. In the present volume I consider the French and German Enlightenments, the rise of the philosophy of history, and the system of Kant.

However, though three volumes have been devoted to the philosophy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, my original plan has been preserved to the extent that there is a common introductory chapter and a common Concluding Review. The former will be found, of course, at the beginning of the fourth volume. And the introductory remarks which relate to the subject-matter of the present volume will not be repeated here. As for the Concluding Review, it forms the final chapter of this book. In it I have attempted to discuss, not only from the historical but also from a more philosophical point of view, the nature, importance and value of the various styles of philosophizing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Thus the fourth, fifth and sixth volumes of this *History of Philosophy* form a trilogy.

PART I

THE FRENCH ENLIGHTENMENT

CHAPTER I

THE FRENCH ENLIGHTENMENT (1)

Introductory remarks—The scepticism of Bayle—Fontenelle—Montesquieu and his study of law—Maupertuis—Voltaire and deism—Vauvenargues—Condillac and the human mind—Helvétius on Man.

1. THERE is perhaps a natural tendency in many minds to think of the French Enlightenment primarily in terms of destructive criticism and of an outspoken hostility towards Christianity, or at any rate towards the Catholic Church. If we exclude Rousseau, the best-known name among the French philosophers of the eighteenth century is probably that of Voltaire. And this name conjures up in the mind the picture of a brilliant and witty literary man who was never tired of denouncing the Church as an enemy of reason and a friend of intolerance. Further, if one knows anything about the materialism of writers such as La Mettrie and d'Holbach, one may be inclined to regard the Enlightenment in France as an anti-religious movement which passed from the deism of Voltaire and of Diderot in his earlier years to the atheism of d'Holbach and the crudely materialistic outlook of a Cabanis. Given this interpretation of the Enlightenment, one's evaluation of it will depend very largely upon one's religious convictions or lack of them. One man will regard eighteenth-century French philosophy as a movement which progressed ever further into impiety and which bore its fruit in the profanation of the cathedral of Notre Dame at the Revolution. Another man will regard it as a progressive liberation of mind from religious superstition and from ecclesiastical tyranny.

Again, the impression is not uncommon that the French philosophers of the eighteenth century were all enemies of the existing political system and that they prepared the way for the Revolution. Given this political interpretation, different evaluations of the work of the philosophers are obviously possible. One may regard them as irresponsible fomenters of revolution whose writings had practical effect in the Jacobin terror. Or one may regard them as representing a stage in an inevitable social-political development, as helping to initiate, that is to say, the stage of bourgeois democracy, which was fated in its turn to be replaced by the rule of the proletariat.

Both interpretations of the French Enlightenment, the interpretation in terms of an attitude towards religious institutions and towards religion itself and the interpretation in terms of an attitude towards political systems and towards political and social developments, have, of course, their foundations in fact. They are not perhaps equally well founded. On the one hand, though some philosophers certainly disliked the *ancien régime*, it would be a great mistake to regard all the typical philosophers of the Enlightenment as conscious fomenters of revolution. Voltaire, for example, though he desired certain reforms, was not really concerned with the promotion of democracy. He was concerned with freedom of expression for himself and his friends; but he could hardly be called a democrat. Benevolent despotism, especially if the benevolence was directed towards *les philosophes*, was more to his taste than popular rule. It was certainly not his intention to promote a revolution on the part of what he regarded as 'the rabble'. On the other hand, it is true that all the philosophers who are regarded as typical representatives of the French Enlightenment were opposed, in varying degrees, to the domination of the Church. Many of them were opposed to Christianity, and some at least were dogmatic atheists, strongly opposed to all religion, which they regarded as the product of ignorance and fear, as the enemy of intellectual progress and as prejudicial to true morality.

But though both the interpretation in terms of an attitude towards religion and also, though to a lesser extent, the interpretation in terms of political convictions have foundations in fact, it would give a thoroughly inadequate picture of eighteenth-century French philosophy, were one to describe it as a prolonged attack on throne and altar. Obviously, attacks on the Catholic Church, on revealed religion and, in certain cases, on religion in any form, were made in the name of reason. But the exercise of reason meant much more to the philosophers of the French Enlightenment than simply destructive criticism in the religious sphere. Destructive criticism was, so to speak, the negative side of the Enlightenment. The positive aspect consisted in the attempt to understand the world and especially man himself in his psychological, moral and social life.

By saying this I do not intend to minimize the philosophers' views on religious topics or to dismiss them as unimportant. To anyone, indeed, who shares the religious convictions of the present writer their attitude can hardly be a matter of indifference. But, quite apart from one's own beliefs, the attitude of *les philosophes* towards religion was clearly of cultural significance and importance. For it expresses a marked change from the outlook of the mediaeval culture, and it represents a different cultural stage. At the same time we have to remember that what we are witnessing is the growth and extension of the scientific outlook. The eighteenth-century French philosophers believed strongly in progress, that is, in the extension of the scientific outlook from physics to psychology, morality and man's social life. If they tended to reject revealed religion and sometimes all religion, this was partly due to their conviction that religion, either revealed religion in particular or religion in general, is an enemy of intellectual progress and of the unimpeded and clear use of reason. I certainly do not mean to imply that they were right in thinking this. There is no inherent incompatibility between religion and science. But my point is that if we dwell too exclusively on their destructive criticism in the religious sphere, we tend to lose sight of the philosopher's positive aims. And then we get only a one-sided view of the picture.

The French philosophers of the eighteenth century were considerably influenced by English thought, especially by Locke and Newton. Generally speaking, they were in agreement with the former's empiricism. The exercise of reason in philosophy did not mean for them the construction of great systems deduced from innate ideas or self-evident first principles. And in this sense they turned their backs on the speculative metaphysics of the preceding century. This is not to say that they had no concern at all with synthesis and were purely analytic thinkers in the sense of giving their attention to different particular problems and questions without any attempt to synthesize their various conclusions. But they were convinced that the right way of approach is to go to the phenomena themselves and by observation to learn their laws and causes. We can then go on to synthesize, forming universal principles and seeing particular facts in the light of universal truths. In other words, it came to be understood that it is a mistake to suppose that there is one ideal method, the deductive method of mathematics, which is applicable in all branches of study. Buffon, for example, saw this clearly; and his ideas had some influence on the mind of Diderot.

This empiricist approach to knowledge led in some cases, as in that of d'Alembert, to a position which can be described as positivistic. Metaphysics, if one means by this the study of trans-phenomenal reality, is the sphere of the unknowable. We cannot have certain knowledge in this field, and it is waste of time to look for it. The only sense in which we can have a rational metaphysics is by synthesizing the results of the empirical sciences. And in empirical science itself we are not concerned with 'essences' but with phenomena. In one sense, of course, we can talk about essences, but these are simply what Locke called 'nominal' essences. The word is not being used in a metaphysical sense.

It would, indeed, be a serious error were one to say that all the philosophers of the French Enlightenment were 'positivists'. Voltaire, for example, thought that we can prove the existence of God. So did Maupertuis. But we can discern an obvious approximation to positivism in certain thinkers of the period. And so we can say that the philosophy of the eighteenth century helped to prepare the way for the positivism of the following century.

At the same time this interpretation of the French Enlightenment is one-sided: it is in a sense too philosophical. To illustrate what I mean, I take the example of Condillac. This philosopher was much influenced by Locke. And he set out to apply Locke's empiricism, as he understood it, to man's psychical faculties and operations, trying to show how they can all be explained in terms of 'transformed sensations'. Now, Condillac himself was not exactly what we would call a positivist. But it is doubtless possible to interpret his *Treatise on Sensations* as a move in the direction of positivism, as a stage in its development. It is also possible, however, to interpret it simply as a stage in the development of psychology. And psychology, considered in itself, is not necessarily connected with philosophical positivism.

Again, several philosophers of the French Enlightenment reflected on the connections between man's psychical life and its physiological conditions. And in certain cases, as in that of Cabanis, this resulted in the statement of a crude materialism. One may be tempted, therefore, to interpret the whole investigation in terms of this result. At the same time it is possible to regard the dogmatic materialism of certain philosophers as a temporary aberration in the course of the development of a valuable line of study. In other words, if one looks on the psychological studies of the eighteenth-century philosophers as tentative experiments in the early stages of the development of this line of research, one may be inclined to attach less weight to exaggerations and crudities than if one restricts one's mental horizon simply to the French Enlightenment considered in itself. Of course, when one is concerned as in these chapters, with the thought of a particular period and of a particular group of men, one has to draw attention to these exaggerations and crudities. But it is as well to keep at the back of one's mind an over-all picture and to remind oneself that these features belong to a certain stage in a line of development which stretches forward into the future and which is capable of supplying at a later date criticism and correction of earlier aberrations.

In general, therefore, we may look on the philosophy of the French Enlightenment as an attempt to develop what Hume called 'the science of man'. True, this description does not fit all the facts. We find, for example, cosmological theories. But it draws attention to the interest of eighteenth-century philosophers in doing for human psychical and social life what Newton had done for the physical universe. And in endeavouring to accomplish this aim they adopted an approach which was inspired by the empiricism of Locke rather than by the speculative systems of the preceding century.

It is worth noting also that the philosophers of the French Enlightenment, like a number of English moralists, endeavoured to separate ethics from metaphysics and theology. Their moral ideas certainly differed considerably, ranging, for instance, from the ethical idealism of Diderot to the low-grade utilitarianism of La Mettrie. But they were more or less at one in attempting to set morality on its own feet, so to speak. This is really the significance of Bayle's assertion that a State composed of atheists was quite possible and of La Mettrie's addition that it was not only possible but desirable. It would, however, be incorrect to say that all *les philosophes* agreed with this point of view. In Voltaire's opinion, for instance, if God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him, precisely for the moral welfare of society. But, generally speaking, the philosophy of the Enlightenment included a separation of ethics from metaphysical and theological considerations.

Whether this separation is tenable or not, is, of course, open to dispute.

Finally we may remind ourselves that eighteenth-century philosophy in France, as in England, was mainly the work of men who were not professors of philosophy in universities and who frequently had extra-philosophical interests. Hume in England was an historian as well as a philosopher. Voltaire in France wrote dramas. Maupertuis went on an expedition to the Arctic with a view to making a contribution towards determining the shape of the earth at its extremities by exact measurements of a degree of latitude. D'Alembert was an eminent mathematician. Montesquieu and Voltaire were of some importance in the development of historiography. La Mettrie was a doctor. In the eighteenth century we are still in the time when some knowledge of philosophical ideas was regarded as a cultural requirement and when philosophy had not yet become an academic preserve. Further, there is still a close connection between philosophy and the sciences, a connection which has, indeed, been a fairly general characteristic of French philosophical thought.

2. Among the French writers who prepared the way for the Enlightenment in France the most influential was probably Pierre Bayle (1647–1706), author of the famous *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1695–7). Brought up as a Protestant, Bayle became a Catholic for a time, returning afterwards to Protestantism. In spite, however, of his adherence to the Reformed Church it was his conviction that the Catholics had no monopoly of intolerance. And during his residence at Rotterdam, where he lived from 1680 onwards, he advocated toleration and attacked the Calvinist theologian Jurieu for his intolerant attitude.

In Bayle's opinion, the current theological controversies were confused and pointless. Take, for example, the controversy about the relations between grace and free will. Thomists, Jansenists and Calvinists are all united in hostility towards Molinism. And there is really no fundamental difference between them. Yet the Thomists protest that they are not Jansenists, and the latter repudiate Calvinism, while the Calvinists denounce the others. As for the Molinists, they have recourse to sophistical arguments in their endeavour to show that the doctrine of St. Augustine was different from that of the Jansenists. In general, human beings are only too prone to believe that there are differences where there are no differences and that there are indissoluble connections between different positions when there are no such connections. So many controversies depend for their life and vigour on prejudice and lack of clear judgment.

More important, however, than Bayle's views about current controversy in dogmatic theology were his views about metaphysics and philosophical or natural theology. The human reason, he thought, is better adapted for the detection of errors than for the discovery of positive truth, and this is especially the case with regard to metaphysics. It is, indeed, commonly recognized that a philosopher has the right to criticize any particular proof of God's existence, provided that he does not deny that God's existence can be proved in some way. But in point of fact all the proofs which have ever been offered have been subjected to destructive criticism. Again, nobody has ever solved the problem of evil. Nor is this surprising. For it is not possible to achieve any rational reconciliation of the evil in the world with the affirmation of an infinite, omniscient and omnipotent God. The Manichaeans, with their dualistic philosophy, gave a much better explanation of evil than any explanation proposed by the orthodox. At the same time the metaphysical hypothesis of the Manichaeans was absurd. As for the immortality of the soul, no evident proof of it has been forthcoming.

Bayle did not say that the doctrines of God's existence and of immortality are false. Rather did he place faith outside the sphere of reason. This statement needs, however, a qualification. For Bayle did not simply say that religious truths are incapable of rational proof, though they do not contradict reason. His position was rather that these truths contain much that is repugnant to reason. There is therefore all the more merit, he suggested, whether sincerely or not, in accepting revelation. In any case, if the truths of religion pertain to the sphere of the non-rational, there is no point in indulging in theological argument and controversy. Toleration should take the place of controversy.

It is to be noted that Bayle separated not only religion and reason but also religion and morality. That is to say, he insisted that it is a great mistake to suppose that religious convictions and motives are necessary for leading a moral life. Non-religious motives can be just as efficacious, or even stronger, than religious motives. And it would be quite possible to have a moral society which consisted of people who did not believe in immortality, or, indeed, in God. After all, says Bayle in his article on the Sadducees in the *Dictionnaire*, the Sadducees, who did not believe in any resurrection, were better than the Pharisees, who did. Experience of life does not suggest that there is any indissoluble connection between belief and practice. We thus come to the concept of the autonomous moral human being who stands in no need of religious belief in order to lead a virtuous life.

Subsequent writers of the French Enlightenment, Diderot, for example, made ample use of Bayle's *Dictionnaire*. The work was also not without some influence on the German *Aufklärung*. In 1767 Frederick the Great wrote to Voltaire that Bayle had begun the battle, that a number of English philosophers had followed in his wake, and that Voltaire was destined to finish the fight.

3. Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657–1757) is perhaps best known as a popularizer of scientific ideas. He started his literary career with, among other productions, an unsuccessful play. But he soon perceived that contemporary society would welcome clear and intelligible accounts of the new physics. And his attempt to fulfil this need met with such success that he became secretary of the *Académie des Sciences*. In general he was a defender of the Cartesian physics; and in his *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes* (1686) he popularized Cartesian astronomical theories. He was not, indeed, blind to the importance of Newton, and in 1727 he published a *Eulogy of Newton*. But he defended Descartes' theory of vortices in his *Théorie des tourbillons cartésiens* (1752) and attacked Newton's principle of gravitation which seemed to him to involve postulating an occult entity. Manuscript notes which were found in his study after his death make it clear that in the latter part of his life his mind was moving definitely towards empiricism. All our ideas are reducible in the long run to the data of sense-experience.

Besides helping to spread the knowledge of scientific ideas in eighteenth-century France, Fontenelle also contributed, in a somewhat indirect way, to the growth of scepticism in regard to religious truths. He published, for instance, small works on *The Origin of Fables* and on *The History of Oracles*. In the first of these he rejected the view that myths or fables are due, not to the intelligence, but to the play of the imaginative faculty. Greek myths, for instance, originated in the desire to explain phenomena; they were the product of intelligence, even if the imagination played a part in elaborating them. The intellect of man in earlier epochs was not essentially different from the intellect of modern man. Both primitive and modern man try to explain phenomena, to reduce the unknown to the known. The difference between them is this. In earlier times positive knowledge was scanty, and the mind was forced to have recourse to mythological explanations. In the modern world, however, positive knowledge has grown to such an extent that scientific explanation is taking the place of mythological explanation. The implication of this view is obvious enough, though it is not explicitly stated by Fontenelle.

In his writing on oracles Fontenelle maintained that there was no cogent reason for saying either that the pagan oracles were due to the activity of demons or that the oracles were reduced to silence by the coming of Christ. The argument in favour of the power and divinity of Christ which consists in saying that the pagan oracles were silenced lacks, therefore, any historical foundation. The particular points at issue can hardly be said to possess great importance. But the implication seems to be that Christian apologists are accustomed to have recourse to worthless arguments.

Fontenelle was not, however, an atheist. His idea was that God manifests Himself in the law-governed system of Nature, not in history, where human passion and caprice reign. In other words, God for Fontenelle was not the God of any historic religion, revealing Himself in history and giving rise to dogmatic systems, but the God of Nature, revealed in the scientific conception of the world. There were, indeed, atheists among the eighteenth-century French philosophers; but deism, or, as Voltaire called it, theism, was rather more common, even though atheism was found more frequently among the French than among their English contemporaries.

4. It has already been remarked that the philosophers of the French Enlightenment endeavoured to understand man's social and political life. One of the most important works in this field was Montesquieu's treatise on law. Charles de Secondat (1689–1755), Baron de la Brède et de Montesquieu, was an enthusiast for liberty and an enemy of despotism. In 1721 he published *Lettres persanes*, which were a satire on the political and ecclesiastical conditions in France. From 1728 to 1729 he was in England, where he conceived a great admiration for certain features of the English political system. In 1734 he published *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur et de la décadence des Romains*. Finally in 1748 there appeared his work on law, *De l'esprit des lois*, which was the fruit of some seventeen years' labour.

In his work on law Montesquieu undertakes a comparative study of society, law and government. His factual knowledge was not, indeed, sufficiently accurate and extensive for an enterprise conceived on so vast a scale; but the enterprise itself, a comparative sociological survey, was of importance. True, Montesquieu had had certain predecessors. Aristotle in particular had initiated the compilation of studies of a great number of Greek constitutions. But Montesquieu's project must be seen in the light of contemporary philosophy. He was applying in the field of politics and law the inductive empirical approach which was applied by other philosophers in other fields.

It was not, however, Montesquieu's aim simply to describe social, political and legal phenomena, to register and describe a large number of particular facts. He wished to understand the facts, to use the comparative survey of phenomena as the basis for a systematic study of the principles of historical development. 'I first of all examined men, and I came to the belief that in this infinite diversity of laws and customs they were not guided solely by their whims. I formulated principles, and I saw particular cases fitting these principles as of themselves, the histories of all nations being only the consequences (of these principles) and every special law being bound to another law or depending on another more general law.'[1] Thus Montesquieu approached his subject, not simply in the spirit of a positivistic sociologist, but rather as a philosopher of history.

Looked at under one of its aspects, Montesquieu's theory of society, government and law consists of generalizations, often over-hasty generalizations, from historical data. The different systems of positive law in different political societies are relative to a variety of factors; to the character of the people, to the nature and principles of the forms of government, to climate and economic conditions, and so on. The totality of these relations forms 'the spirit of laws'. And it is this spirit which Montesquieu undertakes to examine.

Montesquieu speaks first of the relation of laws to government. He divides government into three kinds, 'republican, monarchical and despotic'.[2] A republic can be either a democracy, when the body of the people possess the supreme power, or an aristocracy, when only a part of the people possess supreme power. In a monarchy the prince governs in accordance with certain fundamental laws, and there are generally 'intermediate powers'. In a despotic State there are no such fundamental laws and no 'depositary' of law. 'Hence it is that religion has generally so much influence in these countries, because it forms a kind of permanent depositary, and if this cannot be said of religion, it may be said of the customs which are respected instead of laws.'[1] The principle of republican government is civic virtue; that of monarchical government is honour; and that of despotism is fear. Given these forms of government and their principles, certain types of legal systems will probably prevail. 'There is this difference between the nature and form of government; its nature is that by which it is constituted, and its principle that by which it is made to act. The one is its particular structure, and the other is the human passions which set it in motion. Now, laws ought to be no less relative to the principle than to the nature of each government.'[2]

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[1] *De l'esprit des lois*, Preface.

[2] *Ibid.*, II, I.

Now, I have described Montesquieu's theory as though it were meant to be simply an empirical generalization. And one of the obvious objections against it, when so interpreted, is that his classification is traditional and artificial and that it is quite inadequate as a description of the historical data. But it is important to note that Montesquieu is speaking of ideal types of government. Behind, for example, all actual despotisms we can discern an ideal type of despotic government. But it by no means follows that any given despotism will faithfully embody this ideal or pure type, either in its structure or in its 'principle'. We cannot legitimately conclude from the theory of types that in any given republic the operative principle is civic virtue or that in any given despotism the operative principle of behaviour is fear. At the same time, in so far as a given form of government fails to embody its ideal type, it is spoken of as being imperfect. 'Such are the principles of the three governments: which does not mean that in a certain republic people are virtuous, but that they ought to be. This does not prove that in a certain monarchy people have a sense of honour, and that in a particular despotic State people have a sense of fear, but that they ought to have it. Without these qualities a government will be imperfect.'[3] Montesquieu can say, therefore, that under a given form of government a certain system of laws ought to be found rather than that it *is* found. The enlightened legislator will see to it that the laws correspond to the type of political society; but they do not do so necessarily.

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[1] *De l'esprit des lois*, II, 4.

[2] *Ibid.*, III, 1.

[3] *Ibid.*, III, 11

Analogous statements can be made about the relation of laws to climatic and economic conditions. Climate, for instance, helps to form the character and passions of a people. The character of the English differs from that of the Sicilians. And laws 'should be adapted in such a manner to the people for whom they are framed as to render it very unlikely for those of one nation to be proper for another'.[1] Montesquieu does not say that climate and economic conditions determine systems of laws in such a way that no intelligent control is possible. They do, indeed, exercise a powerful influence on forms of government and on systems of law; but this influence is not equivalent to that of a determining fate. The wise legislator will adapt law to the climatic and economic conditions. But this may mean, for example, that in certain circumstances he will have to react consciously to the adverse effects of climate on character and behaviour. Man is not simply the plaything of infra-human conditions and factors.

We may perhaps distinguish two important ideas in Montesquieu's theory. There is first the idea of systems of law as the result of a complex of empirical factors. Here we have a generalization from historical data, a generalization which can be used as an hypothesis in a further interpretation of man's social and political life. Secondly, there is the idea of operative ideals in human societies. That is to say, Montesquieu's theory of types, though narrow enough as it stands, might perhaps be taken as meaning that each political society is the imperfect embodiment of an ideal which has been an implicit formative factor in its development and towards which it is tending or from which it is departing. The task of the wise legislator will be to discern the nature of this operative ideal and to adapt legislation to its progressive realization. If interpreted in this way, the theory of types appears as something more than a mere relic of Greek classifications of constitutions. One can say that Montesquieu is trying to express a genuine historical insight with the aid of somewhat antiquated categories.

If, however, we state Montesquieu's theory in this way, we imply that he is concerned simply with an understanding of historical data and that he is content with relativism. Systems of law are the results of different complexes of empirical factors. In each system we can see an operative ideal at work. But there is no absolute standard with reference to which the philosopher can compare and evaluate different political and legal systems.

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[1] *De l'esprit des lois*, 1, 3.

This interpretation, however, would be misleading on two counts. In the first place Montesquieu admitted immutable laws of justice. God, the creator and preserver of the world, has established laws or rules which govern the physical world.[1] And 'man, as a physical being, is, like other bodies, governed by invariable laws'.[2] As an intelligent or rational being, however, he is subject to laws which he is capable of transgressing. Some of these are of his own making; but others are not dependent on him. 'We must therefore acknowledge relations of justice antecedent to the positive law by which they are established.'[3] 'To say that there is nothing just or unjust but what is commanded or forbidden by positive laws is the same as saying that before the describing of a circle all the radii were not equal.'[4] Assuming the idea of a state of nature, Montesquieu remarks that prior to all positive laws there are 'those of nature, so called because they derive their force entirely from our frame and being'.[5] And in order to know these laws we must consider man as he was before the establishment of society. 'The laws received in such a state would be those of nature.'[6] Whether this idea fits in well with the other aspects of Montesquieu's theory may be disputable. But there is no doubt that he maintained the existence of a natural moral law which is antecedent to all positive laws established by political society. We can say, if we wish, that his treatise on law looks forward to a purely empirical and inductive treatment of political and legal institutions and that his theory of natural law was a hang-over from earlier philosophers of law. But this theory is none the less a real element in his thought.

In the second place Montesquieu was an enthusiast for liberty and not simply a detached observer of historical phenomena. Thus in the eleventh and twelfth books of *De l'esprit des lois* he sets out to analyse the conditions of political liberty; and as he disliked despotism, the implication is that a liberal constitution is the best. His analysis may take the form of giving a meaning to the word *liberty* as used in a political context and then examining the conditions under which it can be secured and maintained. And, theoretically speaking, this could be done by a political philosopher who had no liking for political liberty or who was indifferent towards it. But in his analysis Montesquieu had one eye on the English constitution, which he admired, and the other on the

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[1] Laws in their most general sense are 'the necessary relations resulting from the nature of things' (*De l'esprit des lois*, I, 1).

[2] *Ibid.*, I, 1.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*

French political system, which he disliked. His discussion of political liberty is thus not simply an abstract analysis, at least so far as its spirit and motive are concerned. For he was inquiring how the French system could be so amended as to permit of and to retain liberty.

Political liberty, says Montesquieu, does not consist in unrestrained freedom but 'only in the power of doing what we ought to will and in not being constrained to do what we ought not to will'.[1] 'Liberty is a right of doing whatever the laws permit.'[2] In a free society no citizen is prevented from acting in a manner permitted by law, and no citizen is forced to act in one particular manner when the law allows him to follow his own inclination. This description of liberty is perhaps not very enlightening; but Montesquieu goes on to insist that political liberty involves the separation of powers. That is to say, the legislative, executive and judicial powers must not be vested in one man or one particular group of men. They must be separated or independent of one another in such a way that they can act as checks on one another and constitute a safeguard against despotism and the tyrannical abuse of power.

This statement of the condition of political liberty is arrived at, as Montesquieu explicitly says, by examination of the English constitution. In different States there have been and are different operative ideals. The ideal or end of Rome was increase of dominion, of the Jewish State the preservation and increase of religion, of China public tranquillity. But there is one nation, England, which has political liberty for the direct end of its constitution. Accordingly, 'to discover political liberty in a constitution no great labour is required. If we are capable of seeing where it exists, why should we go any further in search of it?'[3]

It has been said by some writers that Montesquieu saw the English constitution through the eyes of political theorists such as Harrington and Locke and that when he talked about the separation of powers as the signal mark of the English constitution he failed to understand that the Revolution of 1688 had finally settled the supremacy of Parliament. In other words, a man who relied simply on observation of the English constitution would not have fixed on the so-called separation of powers as its chief characteristic. But even if Montesquieu saw and interpreted the English constitution in the light of a theory about it, and even if the phrase 'separation of powers' was not an adequate description of the concrete situation, it seems clear that the phrase drew attention to real features of the situation. The judges did not, of course, constitute a 'power' in the sense that the legislative did; but at the same time they were not subject in the exercise of their functions to the capricious control of the monarch or his ministers. It may be said, with truth, that what Montesquieu admired in the English constitution was the result of a long process of development rather than of the application of an abstract theory about the 'separation of powers'. But he was not so hypnotized by a phrase that, having interpreted the English constitution as a separation of powers, he then demanded that it should be slavishly copied in his own country. 'How should I have such a design, I who think that the very excess of reason is not always desirable, and that men almost always accommodate themselves better to the mean than to extremes?'[1] Montesquieu desired a reform of the French political system, and observation of the English constitution suggested to him ways in which it might be reformed without a violent and drastic revolution.

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[1] *De l'esprit des lois*, XI, 3. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*, XI, 5.

Montesquieu's ideas about the balancing of powers exercised an influence both in America and in France, as in the case of the 1791 French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens. In later times, however, more emphasis has been laid on his pioneer work in the empirical and comparative study of political societies and of the connections between forms of government, legal systems and other conditioning factors.

5. In the section on Fontenelle attention was drawn to his defence of Cartesian physical theories. The displacement of Descartes by Newton can be illustrated by the activity of Pierre Louis Moreau de Maupertuis (1698–1759), who attacked the Cartesian theory of vortices and defended Newton's theory of gravitation. Indeed, his championship of Newton's theories contributed to his being elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. In 1736 he headed an expedition to Lapland which, as was mentioned in the first section of this chapter, he had undertaken, at the wish of King Louis XV, to make some exact measurements of a degree of latitude with a view to determining the shape of the earth. The results of these observations, published in 1738, confirmed Newton's theory that the surface of the earth is flattened towards the Poles.

In some respects Maupertuis's philosophical ideas were empiricist, and even positivist. In 1750, when acting, on the invitation of Frederick the Great, as president of the Prussian Academy at Berlin, he published an *Essay on Cosmology*. In this work he speaks, for example, of the concept of force which originates in our experience of resistance in the physical overcoming of obstacles. 'The word *force* in its proper sense expresses a certain feeling which we experience when we wish to move a body which was at rest or to change or stop the movement of a body which was in motion. The perception which we then experience is so constantly accompanied by a change in the rest or movement of the body that we are unable to prevent ourselves from believing that it is the cause of this change. When, therefore, we see some change taking place in the rest or movement of a body, we do not fail to say that it is the effect of some force. And if we have no feeling of any effort made by us to contribute to this change, and if we only see some other bodies to which we can attribute this phenomenon, we place the *force* in them, as though it belonged to them.'[1] In its origin the idea of force is only 'a feeling of our soul',[2] and, as such, it cannot belong to the bodies to which we attribute it. There is, however, no harm in speaking about a moving force being present in bodies, provided that we remember that it is 'only a word invented to supply for our (lack of) knowledge, and that it signifies only a result of phenomena'.[3] In other words, we should not allow ourselves to be misled by our use of the word *force* into thinking that there is an occult entity corresponding to it. Force is measured 'only by its apparent effects'. In physical science we remain in the realm of phenomena. And the fundamental concepts of mechanics can be interpreted in terms of sensation. Indeed, Maupertuis believed that the impression of necessary connection in mathematical and mechanical principles can also be explained in empiricist terms, for instance by association and custom.

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[1] *De l'esprit des lois*, XI, 6.

At the same time, however, Maupertuis proposed a teleological conception of natural laws. The fundamental principle in mechanics is the principle 'of the least quantity of action'.[4] This principle states that 'when some change takes place in Nature, the quantity of action employed for this change is always the least possible. It is from this principle that we deduce the laws of motion.'[5] In other words, Nature always employs the least possible amount of force or energy which is required to achieve her purpose. This law of the least possible quantity of action had already been employed by Fermat, the mathematician, in his study of optics; but Maupertuis gave it a universal application. Samuel König, a disciple of Leibniz, argued that the latter had anticipated Maupertuis in the statement of this law; and the French philosopher tried to refute the truth of this assertion. But the question of priority need not concern us here. The point is that Maupertuis felt himself entitled to argue that the teleological system of Nature shows it to be the work of an all-wise Creator. According to him, Descartes' principle of the conservation of energy seems to withdraw the world from the government of the Deity. 'But our principle, more conformable to the ideas which we ought to have of things, leaves the world in continual need of the power of the Creator, and it is a necessary consequence of the wisest employment of this power.'[1]

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[1] *Essai de cosmologie, 2 partie; Œuvres*, 1, edit. 1756, pp. 29–30.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 30. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 31. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 42. [5] *Ibid.*, pp. 42–3.

In the 1756 edition of his *Works* Maupertuis included a *Système de la Nature*, a Latin version of which had already been published under the pseudonym of Baumann with the date 1751. In this essay he denied the sharp Cartesian distinction between thought and extension. At bottom, says Maupertuis,[2] the reluctance which one feels to attribute intelligence to matter arises simply out of the fact that one always assumes that this intelligence must be like ours. In reality there is an infinity of degrees of intelligence, ranging from vague sensation to clear intellectual processes. And each entity possesses some degree of it. Maupertuis thus proposed a form of hylozoism, according to which even the lowest material things possess some degree of life and sensibility.

On the strength of this doctrine Maupertuis has sometimes been classed with the crude materialists of the French Enlightenment who will be mentioned later. But the philosopher objected to Diderot's interpretation of his theory as being equivalent to materialism and as doing away with the basis of any valid argument for the existence of God. In his *Reply to the Objections of M. Diderot* which he appended to the 1756 edition of the *Système de la Nature* Maupertuis observes that when Diderot wishes to substitute for the attribution to purely material things of elementary perceptions an attribution to them of sensation analogous to touch, he is simply playing with words. For sensation is a form of perception. And elementary perceptions are not the same as the clear and distinct perceptions which we enjoy. There is no real difference between what 'Baumann' says and what Diderot wishes him to say. Obviously, these observations do not settle the question, whether Maupertuis is a materialist or not. But this is in any case a difficult question to answer. The philosopher appears to have maintained that higher degrees of 'perception' proceed from combinations of atoms or particles which enjoy elementary perception, but which are physical points rather than metaphysical points like Leibniz's monads. And it is certainly arguable that this is a materialist position. At the same time one must bear in mind the fact that for Maupertuis not only qualities but also extension are phenomena, psychic representations. And Brunet has even maintained[1] that in certain of its aspects his philosophy resembles Berkeley's immaterialist doctrine. The truth of the matter seems to be that though Maupertuis's writings contributed to the growth of materialism, his position is too equivocal to warrant our classing him without qualification with the materialistic philosophers of the French Enlightenment. As for Diderot's interpretation, Maupertuis evidently suspected that he had his tongue in his cheek when he spoke of the 'terrible' consequences of Baumann's hypothesis, and that he merely wished to advertise these consequences while verbally rejecting them.

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[1] *Essai de cosmologie, 2 partie; Œuvres*, I, edit. 1756, p. 44.

[2] *Système de la Nature*, LXII; *Œuvres*, II, pp. 164–5.

6. We have seen that both Fontenelle and Maupertuis believed that the cosmic system manifests the existence of God. Montesquieu also believed in God. So did Voltaire. His name is associated with his violent and mocking attacks not only on the Catholic Church as an institution and on the shortcomings of ecclesiastics but also on Christian doctrines. But this does not alter the fact that he was no atheist.

François Marie Arouet (1694–1778), who later changed his name and styled himself M. de Voltaire, studied as a boy at the Jesuit college of Louis-le-Grand at Paris. After two visits to the Bastille he went to England in 1726 and remained there until 1729. It was during this sojourn in England that he made acquaintance with the writings of Locke and Newton and developed that admiration for the comparative freedom of English life which is evident in his *Philosophical Letters.*[2] Elsewhere Voltaire remarks that Newton, Locke and Clarke would have been persecuted in France, imprisoned at Rome, burned at Lisbon. This zeal for toleration did not, however, prevent him from expressing lively satisfaction when in 1761 he heard it reported that three priests had been burned at Lisbon by the anti-clerical government.

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[1] *Maupertuis*, Paris, 1929.

[2] Voltaire never met Hume, though he greatly admired him. On his part Hume was somewhat reserved in his attitude towards the French philosopher, though he was persuaded to write him an appreciative letter from Paris when Voltaire was at Ferney.

In 1734 Voltaire went to Cirey, and there he wrote his *Treatise on Metaphysics*, which he thought it more prudent not to publish. His *Philosophy of Newton* appeared in 1738. Voltaire took most of his philosophical ideas from thinkers such as Bayle, Locke and Newton; and he was undoubtedly successful in presenting these ideas in lucid and witty writings and in making them intelligible to French society. But he was not a profound philosopher. Though influenced by Locke, he was not in the same class as a philosopher. And though he wrote on Newton, he was not himself a mathematical physicist.

In 1750 Voltaire went to Berlin at the invitation of Frederick the Great, and in 1752 he composed his satire on Maupertuis, *Doctor Akakia*. This satire was displeasing to Frederick; and as the relations between the philosopher and his royal patron were becoming strained, Voltaire left Berlin in 1753 and went to reside near Geneva. His important *Essai sur les mœurs* appeared in 1756.

Voltaire acquired a property at Ferney in 1758. *Candide* appeared in 1759, the *Treatise on Tolerance* in 1763, the *Philosophical Dictionary* in 1764, *The Ignorant Philosopher* in 1766, a work on Bolingbroke in 1767, the *Profession of Faith of Theists* in 1768. In 1778 Voltaire went to Paris for the first performance of his play *Irène*. He received a tremendous ovation in the capital; but he died at Paris not long after the performance.

In the Beuchot edition of 1829–34 Voltaire's complete works comprise some seventy volumes. He was philosopher, dramatist, poet, historian and novelist. As a man, he certainly had some good points. He had a strong dose of common sense; and his call for a reform in the administration of justice, together with his efforts, even if inspired by very mixed motives, to bring certain miscarriages of justice to public attention, show a certain amount of humane feeling. But, in general, his character was not particularly admirable. He was vain, revengeful, cynical and intellectually unscrupulous. His attacks on Maupertuis, Rousseau and others do him little credit. But nothing, of course, that we may say about his defects of character can alter the fact that he sums up brilliantly in his writings the spirit of the French Enlightenment.

In his work on the elements of the Newtonian philosophy Voltaire maintains that Cartesianism leads straight to Spinozism. 'I have known many people whom Cartesianism has led to admit no other God than the immensity of things, and, on the contrary, I have seen no Newtonian who was not a theist in the strictest sense.'[1] 'The whole philosophy of Newton leads necessarily to the knowledge of a Supreme Being who has created everything and arranged everything freely.'[2] If there is a vacuum, matter must be finite. And if it is finite, it is contingent and dependent. Moreover, attraction and motion are not essential qualities of matter. Hence they must have been implanted by God.

In his *Treatise on Metaphysics* Voltaire offers two lines of argument for God's existence. The first is a proof from final causality. The world is compared to a watch; and Voltaire maintains that just as when one sees a watch, the hands of which mark the time, one concludes that it has been made by someone for the purpose of marking the time, so must one conclude from observation of Nature that it has been made by an intelligent Creator. The second argument is an argument from contingency on the lines laid down by Locke and Clarke. Later on, however, Voltaire left aside this second argument and confined himself to the first. At the end of the article on atheism in his *Philosophical Dictionary* he remarks that 'geometers who are not philosophers have rejected final causes, but true philosophers admit them. And, as a well-known author has said, a catechist announces God to infants whereas Newton demonstrates Him for the wise.' And in the article on Nature he argues that no mere assemblage could account for the universal harmony or system. 'They call me Nature, but I am all art.'

But though Voltaire maintained to the end his belief in the existence of God, there was a change in his view of the relation of the world to God. At first he shared more or less the cosmic optimism of Leibniz and Pope. Thus in his work on Newton he speaks of the atheist who denies God because of the evil in the world and then remarks that the terms *good* and *well-being* are equivocal. 'That which is bad in relation to you is good in the general system.'[3] Again, are we to abandon the conclusion about God's existence to which reason leads us because wolves devour sheep and because spiders catch flies? 'Do you not see, on the contrary, that these continual generations constantly devoured and constantly reproduced, enter into the plan of the universe?'[1]

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[1] *Philosophie de Newton*, I, I. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*

The problem of evil was, however, brought vividly to Voltaire's attention by the disastrous earthquake at Lisbon in 1755. And he expressed his reactions to this event in his poem on the disaster at Lisbon and in *Candide*. In the poem he appears to reaffirm the divine liberty; but in his later writings he makes creation necessary. God is the first or supreme cause, existing eternally. But the notion of a cause without an effect is absurd. Therefore the world must proceed eternally from God. It is not, indeed, a part of God, and it is contingent in the sense that it depends on Him for its existence. But creation is eternal and necessary. And as evil is inseparable from the world, it too is necessary. It depends, therefore, on God; but God did not choose to bring it about. We could hold God responsible for evil only if He created freely.

To turn to man. In the *Philosophie de Newton*[2] Voltaire remarks that several people who knew Locke had assured him that Newton once admitted to Locke that our knowledge of Nature is not great enough to allow us to state that it is impossible for God to add the gift of thinking to an extended thing. And it seems sufficiently clear that Voltaire considered the theory of the soul as an immaterial substantial being to be an unnecessary hypothesis. In the article on Soul in the *Philosophical Dictionary* he argues that terms such as 'spiritual soul' are simply words which cover our ignorance. The Greeks made a distinction between the sensitive and the intellectual soul. But the first certainly does not exist; 'it is nothing but the motion of your organs'. And reason can find no better proof for the existence of the higher soul than it can find for the existence of the lower soul. 'It is only by faith that thou canst know it.' Voltaire does not say here in so many words that there is no such thing as a spiritual and immortal soul. But his view is made sufficiently clear elsewhere.

As for human liberty in a psychological sense, Voltaire changed his mind. In the *Treatise on Metaphysics*[3] he defended the reality of liberty by an appeal to the immediate testimony of consciousness which resists all theoretical objections. In his *Philosophie de Newton*,[4] however, he makes a distinction. In certain trivial matters, when I have no motive inclining me to act in one way rather than in another, I may be said to have liberty of indifference. For example, if I have a choice of turning to the left or to the right, and if I have no inclination to do the one and no aversion towards the other, the choice is the result of my own volition. Obviously, liberty of 'indifference' is here taken in a very literal sense. In all other cases when we are free we have the freedom which is called spontaneity; 'that is to say, when we have motives, our will is determined by them. And these motives are always the final result of the understanding or of instinct.'[1] Here liberty is admitted in name. But after having made this distinction Voltaire proceeds to say that 'everything has its cause; therefore your will has one. One cannot will, therefore, except as a consequence of the last idea that one has received. . . . This is why the wise Locke does not venture to pronounce the name *liberty*; a free will does not appear to him to be anything but a chimaera. He knows no other liberty than the power to do what one wills.'[2] In fine, 'we must admit that one can hardly reply to the objections against liberty except by a vague eloquence; a sad theme about which the wise man fears even to think. There is only one consoling reflection, namely that whatever system one embraces, by whatever fatalism one believes our actions to be determined, one will always act as though one were free.'[3] In the next chapter Voltaire proposes a series of objections against liberty of indifference.

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[1] *Philosophie de Newton*, 1, 1. [2] 1, 7. [3] 7. [4] 1, 4.

In his article on Liberty in the *Philosophical Dictionary* Voltaire says roundly that liberty of indifference is 'a word without sense, invented by people who scarcely had any themselves'. What one wills is determined by motive; but one may be free to act or not to act, in the sense that it may or may not be in one's power to perform the action that one wills to perform. 'Your will is not free, but your actions are; you are free to act when you have the power to act.' In *The Ignorant Philosopher*[4] Voltaire maintains that the idea of a free will is absurd; for a free will would be a will without sufficient motive, and it would fall outside the course of Nature. It would be very odd if 'one little animal, five feet tall', were an exception to the universal reign of law. It would act by chance, and there is no chance. 'We have invented this word to express the known effect of any unknown cause.' As for the consciousness or feeling of freedom, this is quite compatible with determinism in our volition. It shows no more than that one can *do* as one pleases when one has the power to perform the action willed.

This assertion of determinism does not mean that Voltaire discarded the idea of the moral law. He expressed his agreement with

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[1] *Philosophie de Newton*, 1, 4. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.* [4] 13.

Locke about the absence of any innate moral principles. But we are so fashioned by God that in the course of time we come to see the necessity of justice. True, Voltaire was accustomed to draw attention to the variability of moral convictions. Thus, in the *Treatise on Metaphysics*,[1] he remarks that what in one region is called virtue is called vice in another, and that moral rules are as variable as languages and fashions. At the same time 'there are natural laws with respect to which human beings in all parts of the world must agree'.[2] God has endowed man with certain inalienable feelings which are eternal bonds and give rise to the fundamental laws of human society. The content of the fundamental law seems to be very restricted and to consist mainly in not injuring others and in pursuing what is pleasurable to oneself provided that this does not involve wanton injury to one's neighbour. None the less, just as Voltaire always maintained a deistic (or, as he called it, a theistic) position, so he never surrendered completely to relativism in morals. Profound religious feeling of the type to be found in Pascal was certainly not a characteristic of Voltaire; nor was lofty moral idealism. But just as he rejected atheism, so did he reject extreme ethical relativism.

We have said that Voltaire came to adopt a determinist position in regard to human liberty in a psychological sense. At the same time he was a resolute defender of political liberty. Like Locke, he believed in a doctrine of human rights which should be respected by the State; and, like Montesquieu, he admired the conditions of freedom prevailing in England. But it is necessary to understand what he meant by political liberty. First and foremost he had liberty of thought and expression in mind. In other words, he was primarily concerned with liberty for *les philosophes*, at least when they agreed with Voltaire. He was not a democrat in the sense of wishing to promote popular rule. True, he advocated toleration, which he thought to be necessary for scientific and economic progress; and he disliked tyrannical despotism. But he mocked at Rousseau's ideas about equality, and his ideal was that of a benevolent monarchy, enlightened by the influence of the philosophers. He mistrusted dreamers and idealists; and his correspondence shows that in his opinion the rabble, as he pleasingly called the people, would always remain a rabble. Better conditions of freedom and toleration and better standards of judicial procedure could quite well be secured under the French monarchy, provided that the power of the Church was broken and philosophical enlightenment substituted for Christian dogma and superstition. Voltaire certainly never thought that salvation could come from the people or from violent insurrection. Although, therefore, his writings helped to prepare the ground for the Revolution, it would be a great mistake to picture Voltaire as looking forward to or as consciously intending to promote the Revolution in the form which it was actually to take. His enemy was not the monarchy, but rather the clergy. He was not interested in liberalizing the constitution in the sense of advocating Montesquieu's 'separation of powers'. In fact one can even say that he was interested in increasing the power of the monarchy, in the sense that he wished it to be free of clerical influence.

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[1] 9.

[2] *Ibid.*

These remarks are not to be taken as implying that Voltaire was an enemy of progress. On the contrary, he was one of the most influential disseminators of the idea of progress. But the term meant for him the reign of reason, intellectual, scientific and economic progress, rather than political progress, if one understands by this a transition to democracy or popular rule. For in his opinion it was the enlightened monarchic ruler who was most likely to promote progress in science, literature and toleration of ideas.

In spite of the fact that Montesquieu's theories have been treated in this chapter, I propose to reserve Voltaire's opinions on history for the chapter on the rise of the philosophy of history.

7. When one thinks of the period known as the Enlightenment or Age of Reason, one naturally tends to think of an exaltation of cool and critical intelligence. Yet it was Hume, one of the greatest figures of the Enlightenment, who said that reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions and who found the basis of moral life in feeling. And in France Voltaire, whom one naturally pictures as the very embodiment of critical, and somewhat superficial, intelligence, declared that without the passions there would be no human progress. For the passions are a motivating force in man; they are the wheels which make the machines go.[1] Similarly, we are told by Vauvenargues that 'our passions are not distinct from ourselves; some of them are the whole foundation and the whole substance of our soul'.[2] Man's true nature is to be found in the passions rather than in the reason.

Luc de Clapiers, Marquis of Vauvenargues, was born in 1715.

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[1] *Treatise on Metaphysics* 8.

[2] *Introduction to the Knowledge of the Human Mind,* II, 42.

From 1733 he was an army officer and took part in several campaigns until his health broke down. He spent the last two years of his life at Paris, where he was a friend of Voltaire and where he died in 1747. In the year preceding his death he published his *Introduction to the Knowledge of the Human Mind*, followed by *Critical Reflections on Some Poets*. Maxims and other pieces were added to subsequent (posthumous) editions.

The first book of Vauvenargues's work is devoted to the mind (*esprit*). 'The object of this first Book is to make known by definitions and reflections founded on experience, all those different qualities of men which are comprised under the name of mind. Those who seek for the physical causes of these same qualities might perhaps be able to speak of them with less uncertainty if in this work one succeeded in developing the effects of which they study the principles.'[1] Vauvenargues did not agree with those who tended to stress the equality of all minds. In his work he discusses briefly a number of qualities which are normally mutually exclusive and which give rise to different types of minds. He also stresses the concept of the genius, in whom we find a combination of normally independent qualities. 'I believe that there is no genius without activity. I believe that genius depends in great part on our passions. I believe that it arises from the meeting of many different qualities, and from the secret agreements of our inclinations with our (mental) lights. When one of these necessary conditions is wanting, there is no genius, or it is only imperfect.... It is the necessity of this meeting of mutually independent qualities which is apparently the cause of the fact that genius is always so rare.'[2]

In the second book Vauvenargues treats of the passions which, 'as Mr. Locke says',[3] are all founded on pleasure and pain. These last are to be referred respectively to perfection and imperfection. That is, man is naturally attached to his being, and if his being were in no way imperfect but developed itself always without hindrance or imperfection, he would feel nothing but pleasure. As it is, we experience both pleasure and pain; and 'it is from the experience of these two contraries that we derive the idea of good and evil'.[4] The passions (at least those which come 'by the organ of reflection' and are not merely immediate impressions of sense) are founded on 'the love of being or of the perfection of being, or on the feeling of our imperfection'.[1] For example, there are people in whom the feeling of their imperfection is more vivid than the feeling of perfection, of capacity, of power. We then find passions such as anxiety, melancholy and so on. Great passions arise from the union of these two feelings, that of our power and that of our imperfection and weakness. For 'the feeling of our miseries impels us to go out of ourselves, and the feeling of our resources encourages us to do so and carries us thereto in hope'.[2]

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[1] *Introduction to the Knowledge of the Human Mind*, I, I.
[2] *Ibid.*, I, 15.
[3] *Ibid.*, II, 22.
[4] *Ibid.*

In the third book Vauvenargues treats of moral good and evil. We have seen that the idea of good and evil are founded on experiences of pleasure and pain. But different people find pleasure and pain in different things. Their ideas of good and evil are therefore different. This, however, is not what is meant by moral good and evil. 'In order that something should be regarded as a good by the whole of society, it must tend to the advantage of the whole of society. And in order that something should be regarded as an evil, it must tend to the ruin of society. Here we have the great characteristic of moral good and evil.'[3] Men, being imperfect, are not self-sufficient; society is necessary for them. And social life involves fusing one's particular interest with the general interest. 'This is the foundation of all morality.'[4] But pursuit of the common good involves sacrifice, and it is not everyone who is spontaneously ready to make such sacrifices. Hence the necessity of law.

As for virtue and vice, 'preference for the general interest before one's personal interest is the only definition which is worthy of virtue and which fixes the idea of it. On the contrary, the mercenary sacrifice of the public happiness to one's own interest is the eternal mark of vice.'[5] Mandeville may hold that private vices are public benefits, and that commerce would not flourish without avarice and vanity. But though this is true in a sense, it must also be admitted that the good which is produced by vice is always mixed with great evils. And if these are held in check and subordinated to the public good, it is reason and virtue which do so.

Vauvenargues proposes, therefore, a utilitarian interpretation of morality. But just as in the first book he makes much of the concept of genius, so in the third he devotes a special discussion to greatness of soul. 'Greatness of soul is a sublime instinct which impels men to that which is great, of whatever nature it may be, but which turns them towards good or evil according to their passions, their lights, their education, their fortune, etc.'[1] Greatness of soul is thus morally indifferent in itself. When united with vice, it is dangerous to society (Vauvenargues mentions Cataline); but it is still greatness of soul. 'Where there is greatness, we feel it in spite of ourselves. The glory of conquerors has always been attacked; the people have always suffered from it, and they have always respected it.[2] It is not surprising that Nietzsche, with his conception of the higher man standing 'beyond good and evil', felt sympathy with Vauvenargues. But the latter was not, of course, concerned to deny what he had already said about the social character of morality. He was drawing attention to the complexity of human nature and character. 'There are vices which do not exclude great qualities, and consequently there are great qualities which stand apart from virtue. I recognize this truth with sorrow. . . . (But) those who wish men to be altogether good or altogether evil do not know nature. In men all is mixed; everything there is limited; and even vice has its limits.'[3]

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[1] *Introduction to the Knowledge of the Human Mind*, II, 22.

[2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*, III, 43. [4] *Ibid.* [5] *Ibid.*

In Vauvenargues's *Maxims* we can find a number of sayings which obviously recall Pascal. 'Reason does not know the interests of the heart.'[4] 'Great thoughts come from the heart.'[5] We find too that insistence on the fundamental role of the passions to which attention has already been drawn. 'We owe perhaps to the passions the greatest advantages of the spirit.'[6] 'The passions have taught reason to man. In the infancy of all peoples, as in that of individuals, feeling has always preceded reflection and has been its first master.'[7] It is perhaps worth while mentioning this point as one may easily think of the Age of Reason as a period in which feeling and passion were habitually depreciated in favour of the coldly analytic reason.

It would not be quite correct to say that Vauvenargues was not a systematic writer on the ground that his writings consist more of aphorisms than of developed discussions. For in his work on the knowledge of the human mind there is a more or less systematic arrangement of his thoughts. But he acknowledged in his preliminary discourses that circumstances had not permitted him to fulfil his original plan. In any case Vauvenargues was more

[1] *Introduction to the Knowledge of the Human Mind*, III, 44.

[2] *Réflexions et maximes*, 222.

[3] *Introduction to the Knowledge of the Human Mind*, III, 44.

[4] *Réflexions et maximes*, 124.

[5] *Ibid.*, 127.

[6] *Ibid.*, 151.

[7] *Ibid.*, 154–5.

concerned with distinguishing and describing different qualities of mind and different passions than with investigating the causes, as he put it, of psychical phenomena. For a study of the way in which mental operations and functions are derived from a primitive foundation we have to turn to Condillac.

8. Étienne Bonnot de Condillac (1715–80) was first destined for the priesthood and entered the seminary of Saint-Sulpice. But he left the seminary in 1740 and took to philosophy. From 1758 to 1767 he was tutor to the son of the Duke of Parma.

Condillac's first publication was an *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge* (*Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines*, 1746), which bears the clear imprint of Locke's empiricism. This is not to say that Condillac simply reproduced the doctrine of the English philosopher. But he was in agreement with the latter's general principles that we must reduce complex to simple ideas and that we must assign to simple ideas an empirical or experiential origin.

In discussing the development of our mental life Condillac laid great stress on the part played by language. Ideas become fixed, as it were, only by being associated with a sign or word. When I look at the grass, for example, I have a sensation of green; a simple idea of green is transmitted to me by sense. But this isolated experience, which can, of course, be repeated indefinitely, becomes an object of reflection and can enter into combination with other ideas only by being linked with a sign or symbol, the word *green*. The fundamental material of knowledge is thus the association of an idea with a sign; and it is in virtue of this association that we are able to develop a complex intellectual life in accordance with our growing experience of the world and with our needs and purposes. True, language, that is to say ordinary language, is defective in the sense that we do not find in it that perfect correspondence between the sign and the signified which we find in mathematical language. None the less, we are intelligent beings, beings capable of reflection. because we possess the gift of language.

In his *Treatise on Systems* (*Traité des Systemes*, 1749) Condillac subjects to adverse criticism the 'spirit of systems' as manifested in the philosophies of thinkers such as Descartes, Malebranche, Spinoza and Leibniz. The great rationalist philosophers tried to construct systems by proceeding from first principles and definitions. This is especially true of Spinoza. But the so-called geometrical system is useless for developing a real knowledge of the world. A philosopher may imagine that his definitions express an apprehension of essences; but in reality they are arbitrary. That is to say, they are arbitrary unless they are intended to state merely the senses in which certain words are used as a matter of fact. And if they are merely dictionary definitions, so to speak, they cannot do the job which they are supposed to do in the philosophical systems.

This does not mean, of course, that Condillac condemns all efforts to systematize knowledge. To subject to adverse criticism the spirit of systems, the attempt to develop a philosophy from reason alone in an *a priori* manner, is not to condemn synthesis. A system in the acceptable meaning of the word is an orderly disposition of the parts of a science so that the relations between them are clearly exhibited. There will certainly be principles. But principles will mean here known phenomena. Thus Newton constructed a system by using the known phenomena of gravitation as a principle and by then explaining phenomena such as the movements of the planets and the tides in the light of this principle.

We find similar ideas in Condillac's *Logic*, which appeared posthumously in 1780. The great metaphysicians of the seventeenth century followed a synthetic method, borrowed from geometry and proceeding by way of deduction from definitions. And this method, as we have seen, cannot give us real knowledge of Nature. The analytic method, however, remains always in the sphere of the given. We start from a confused given and analyse it into its distinct parts: we can recompose the whole in a systematic way. This is the natural method, the method which the mind naturally follows when we wish to develop our knowledge. How, for example, do we come to know a landscape or countryside? First we have a confused impression of it, and then we gradually arrive at a distinct knowledge of its various component features and come to see how these features together make up the whole. In developing a theory of method we are not called upon to elaborate an *a priori* notion of an ideal method; we should study how the mind actually works when it develops its knowledge. It will then be found that there is no one ideal and fixed method. The order in which we ought to study things depends on our need and purpose. And if we wish to study Nature, to acquire a real knowledge of things, we must remain within the sphere of the given, within the phenomenal order which is ultimately given to us in sense-experience.

Condillac is best known for his *Treatise on Sensations* (*Traité des sensations*, 1754). Locke had distinguished between ideas of sensation and ideas of reflection, admitting two founts of ideas, sensation and reflection or introspection. And in his early work on the origin of human knowledge Condillac had more or less assumed Locke's position. But in the *Treatise on Sensations* he made a clear break with Locke's theory of the dual origin of ideas. There is only one origin or fount, namely sensation.

In Condillac's opinion Locke gave only inadequate treatment to ideas of reflection, that is to say, to psychical phenomena. He analysed complex ideas, such as those of substance, into simple ideas; but he simply assumed the mental operations of comparing, judging, willing, and so on. There is room, therefore, for an advance on Locke. It has to be shown how these mental operations and functions are reducible in the long run to sensations. They cannot, of course, be all termed sensations; but they are 'transformed sensations'. That is to say, the whole edifice of the psychical life is built out of sensation. To show that this is the case is the task which Condillac sets himself in his *Treatise on Sensations*.

To make his point Condillac asks his readers to imagine a statue which is gradually endowed with the senses, beginning with the sense of smell. And he tries to show how the whole of man's mental life can be explained on the hypothesis that it arises out of sensations. The analogy of the statue is, indeed, somewhat artificial. But what Condillac wishes his readers to do is to imagine themselves bereft of all knowledge and to reconstruct with him their mental operations from the basis of elementary sensations. His approach to the problem of the origin of our ideas was stimulated by the data provided by the experiences of persons born blind who underwent successful operations for cataract at the hands of Cheselden, the London surgeon, and by Diderot's study of the psychology of the deaf and dumb. In the *Treatise on Sensations*,[1] he speaks at some length of the data provided by one of Cheselden's operations.

One of the chief features of this treatise is the way in which Condillac tries to show how each sense, taken separately, can generate all the faculties. Let us take, for example, a man (represented by the statue) whose range of knowledge is limited to the sense of smell. 'If we give the statue a rose to smell, to us it is a statue smelling a rose, to itself it is smell of rose.'[1] That is to say, the man will have no idea of matter or of external things or of his own body. For his own consciousness he will be nothing but a sensation of smell. Now, suppose that the man only has this one sensation, the smell of a rose. This is 'attention'. And when the rose is taken away, an impression remains, stronger or weaker according as the attention was more or less lively or vivid. Here we have the dawn of memory. Attention to past sensation is memory, which is nothing but a mode of feeling. Then let us suppose that the man, after having repeatedly smelt the scents of roses and pinks, smells a rose. His passive attention is divided between the memories of the smells of roses and pinks. Then we have comparison, which consists in attending to two ideas at the same time. And 'when there is comparison there is judgment. . . . A judgment is only the perception of a relation between two ideas which are compared.'[2] Again, if the man, having a present disagreeable sensation of smell, recalls a past pleasant sensation, we have imagination. For memory and imagination do not differ in kind. Again, the man can form ideas, particular and abstract. Some smells are pleasant, others unpleasant. If the man contracts the habit of separating the ideas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction from their several particular modifications, he will possess abstract ideas. Similarly, he can form ideas of number when he recalls several distinct successive sensations.

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[1] III, v.

Now, every sensation of smell is either agreeable or disagreeable. And if the man who now experiences a disagreeable sensation recalls a past agreeable sensation, he feels the need of re-attaining that happier state. This give rise to desire. For 'desire is nothing else than the action of these faculties when directed on the things of which we feel the need'.[3] And a desire which expels all others, or at least becomes dominant, is a passion. We thus arrive at the passions of love and hate. 'The statue loves a pleasant smell which it has or wishes to have. It hates an unpleasant smell which pains it.'[4] Further, if the statue remembers that the desire which it now experiences has been at other times followed by satisfaction, it thinks that it can fulfil its desire. It is then said to will. 'For by *will* we understand an absolute desire; that is, we think the thing desired is in our power.'[5]

Condillac thus endeavours to show that all mental operations can be derived from the sensation of smelling. Obviously, if we consider our faculties and operations simply as transformed sensations of smell, their range is extremely limited. And we can say the same of the consciousness of self in a man who is limited to the sense of smell. 'Its (the statue's) "I" is only the collection of the sensations which it experiences, and those which memory recalls to it.'[1] None the less, 'with one sense alone the understanding has as many faculties as with the five joined together'.[2] ('Understanding' is simply the name for all the cognitive faculties taken together.)

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[1] *Treatise on Sensations*, I, i, 2.
[2] *Ibid.*, I, i, 15.
[3] *Ibid.*, I, iii, 1.
[4] *Ibid.*, I, iii, 5.
[5] *Ibid.*, I, iii, 9.

Hearing, taste and sight are then considered. But Condillac maintained that though the combination of smell, hearing, taste and sight multiplies the objects of a man's attention, desires and pleasures, it does not produce a judgment of externality. The statue will 'still see only itself. . . . It has no suspicion that it owes its modifications to outside causes. . . . It does not even know that it has a body.'[3] In other words, it is the sense of touch which is ultimately responsible for the judgment of externality. In his account of this matter Condillac's ideas varied somewhat. In the first edition of the *Treatise on Sensations* he made the knowledge of externality independent of movement. But in the second edition he admitted that the notion of externality does not arise independently of movement. In any case, however, it is touch which is primarily responsible for this notion. When a child moves its hand along parts of its body, 'it will feel itself in all parts of the body'.[4] 'But if it touches a foreign body, the "I" which feels itself modified in the hand does not feel itself modified in the foreign body. The "I" does not receive the response from the foreign body which it receives from the hand. The statue, therefore, judges these modes to be altogether outside it.'[5] And when touch is joined to other senses, the man gradually discovers his own several sense-organs and judges that sensations of smell, hearing, and so on are caused by external objects. For example, by touching a rose and making it approach or recede from the face, a man can come to form judgments about the organ of smell and about the external cause of his sensations of smell. Similarly, it is only by combination with touch that the eye learns how to see distance, size and movement. We have become so accustomed to judging size, shape, distance and situation by sight that we are naturally inclined to think that these judgments are due simply to sight. But this is not the case.

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[1] *Treatise on Sensations*, I, vi, 3.
[2] *Ibid.*, I, vii, 1.
[3] *Ibid.*, I, xii, 1–2.
[4] *Ibid.*, II, v, 4.
[5] *Ibid.*, II, v, 5.

It is perhaps worth while drawing attention in passing to a change of view on Condillac's part between the publication of his *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge* and his *Treatise on Sensations*. In the first work he seems to maintain that the link between idea and sign or symbol is necessary for intelligence. But in the second work this point of view is modified. When treating, for example, of the man who is limited to the sense of smell he admits that this man can have some idea of number. He can have the ideas of one and one and one. But, according to Condillac, 'memory does not distinctly grasp four units at once. Beyond three it presents only an indefinite multitude. . . . It is the art of ciphering which has taught us to enlarge our point of view.'[1] Thus in the *Treatise* Condillac maintains that intelligence and the use of ideas precedes language, though language is necessary for the development of our mental life beyond a rudimentary stage.

The upshot of the *Treatise* is that 'in the natural order all knowledge arises from sensations'.[2] All man's mental operations, even those which are generally reckoned his higher mental activities, can be explained as 'transformed sensations'. Thus Condillac was convinced that he had made a definite advance on the position of Locke. The latter had thought that the faculties of the soul are innate qualities; he had not suspected that they might have their origin in sensation itself. It might perhaps be objected that Condillac's statement is not quite accurate. For did not Locke suggest that it had not been shown to be impossible for God to confer on matter the faculty of thinking? But in point of fact Locke was concerned with analysing and tracing back to their empirical grounds the ideas about which our faculties are employed; he did not do the same thing for the faculties or psychical functions themselves.

Now, in his *Essay concerning Human Understanding*,[3] Locke had maintained that the will is determined by 'an uneasiness of the mind for want of some absent good'. It is uneasiness or disquiet which 'determines the will to the successive voluntary actions, whereof the greatest part of our lives is made up, and by which we are conducted through different courses to different ends'.[4] Condillac developed and extended the range of this idea. Thus in the *Extrait raisonné*, which he added to later editions of the

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[1] *Treatise on Sensations* I, iv, 7. [2] *Ibid.*, IV, ix, I. [3] II, 21, 31 f. [4] *Ibid.*, 33.

Treatise on Sensations, he maintains that 'uneasiness (*inquiétude*) is the first principle which gives us the habits of touching, seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, comparing, judging, reflecting, desiring, loving, fearing, hoping, wishing, and that, in a word, it is through uneasiness that all habits of mind and body are born'. All psychical phenomena, therefore, depend on uneasiness, which is not so much anticipation of a good as uneasiness or disquietude under certain conditions. Thus one can say perhaps that Condillac gives a 'voluntaristic' foundation to the whole process by which man's mental life is developed. Attention must be explained with reference to felt need; and memory is directed by appetite and desire rather than by a mere mechanical association of ideas. In his *Traité des animaux*[1] he makes it clear that in his opinion the order of our ideas depends ultimately on need or interest. This is obviously a fruitful theory. It was to bear fruit later on in the voluntaristic interpretation of man's intellectual life which is found, for example, in Schopenhauer.

Condillac's theory of the mind, of mental operations as transformed sensations, appears at first sight to indicate a materialistic position. And this impression is increased by his habit of speaking of the 'faculties' of the soul as being derived from sensation, which may be taken to imply that the human soul itself is material. Moreover, does he not suggest that man is nothing but the sum of his acquirements? 'In giving it (the statue) successively new modes of being and new senses we saw it form desires, learn from experience to regulate and satisfy them, and pass from needs to needs, from cognitions to cognitions, from pleasures to pleasures. The statue is therefore nothing but the sum of all it has acquired. May not this be the same with men?'[2] Man may be the sum of his acquirements; and they are transformed sensations.

It can hardly be denied, I think, that Condillac's theory helped to promote a materialistic outlook, in that it exercised an influence on the materialists. But Condillac was not himself a materialist. In the first place he was not a materialist in the sense of one who holds that there are only bodies and their modifications. For not only did he affirm the existence of God as supreme cause but he also maintained the theory of an immaterial, spiritual soul. He did not intend to reduce the soul to a bundle of sensations. Rather did he presuppose the soul as a simple centre of unity and then attempt to reconstruct its activity on the basis of the hypothesis that all psychical phenomena are ultimately derivable from sensations. Whether his reductive analysis and his acceptance of a spiritual soul in man fit well together is, of course, disputable. But in any case it is inaccurate to describe Condillac as a materialist.

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[1] II, 11.

[2] *Ibid.*, IV, ix, 3.

In the second place Condillac left it an open question whether there are any extended things at all. As we have seen, he said at first that touch assures us of externality. But he soon realized that an account of the way in which the idea of externality arises is not the same thing as a proof that there are extended things. If we wish to say that sounds, tastes, odours and colours do not exist in objects we must also say that extension does not exist in them. Perhaps objects are extended, sonorous, tasty, odiferous and coloured; perhaps they are not. 'I maintain neither the one opinion nor the other, and I am waiting for someone to prove that they are what they appear to us to be, or that they are something else.'[1] It may be objected that if there is no extension, there are no objects. But this is untrue. 'All that we could reasonably infer would be that objects are existences which occasion sensations in us, and that they have properties about which we can have no certain knowledge.'[2] So far, therefore, from being a dogmatic materialist, Condillac leaves the door open for an immaterialist hypothesis, though he does not affirm this hypothesis.

It may be added that Condillac did not admit that his account of man's mental life involved sheer determinism. He appended to the *Treatise on Sensations* a dissertation on freedom, in which he discusses this point.

9. Condillac's attempt to show that all psychical phenomena are transformed sensations was continued by Claude Adrien Helvétius (1715–71) in his work *On the Mind* (*De l'esprit*, 1758). Helvétius came of a medical family whose original name, Schweizer, had been latinized. For a time he held the post of Farmer-General, but the opposition which his book on the mind aroused made it impossible for him to occupy posts in the royal service. So, apart from visits to England and to Berlin, he lived quietly on his estates. His book on man (*De l'homme, de ses facultés et de son éducation*) was published posthumously in 1772.

Helvétius reduces to sensation or sense-perception all the powers of the human understanding. It has been commonly held that man possesses faculties which transcend the level of sense.

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[1] *Treatise on Sensations*, IV, V, *note*.

[2] *Ibid.*

But this is a false theory. Take judgment, for example. To judge is to perceive similarities and dissimilarities between individual ideas. If I judge that red is different from yellow, what I am doing is to perceive that the colour called 'red' affects my eyes differently from the way in which they are affected by the colour called 'yellow'. To judge, therefore, is simply to perceive.

This process of reductive analysis is applied also to man's ethical life. Self-love is the universal basis of human conduct, and self-love is directed to the acquisition of pleasure. 'Men love themselves: they all desire to be happy, and think their happiness would be complete if they were invested with a degree of power sufficient to procure them every sort of pleasure. The love of power, therefore, takes its rise from the love of pleasure.'[1] All phenomena such as the love of power are secondary; they are simply transformations of the fundamental love of pleasure. 'Corporeal sensibility is therefore the sole mover of man.'[2] Even virtues such as liberality and benevolence can be reduced to self-love, that is, to the love of pleasure. 'What is a benevolent man? One in whom a spectacle of misery produces a painful sensation.'[3] In the long run the benevolent man endeavours to relieve human unhappiness and misery simply because they cause in him painful sensations.

On the basis of this crude reductive psychology Helvétius erects a utilitarian theory of morality. In different societies men hold different moral opinions and attach different meanings to words such as *good* and *virtue*. And it is this fact, namely that different people attach different meanings to the same ethical terms, which causes so much confusion in discussion. Before we indulge in discussions about ethics, we ought, therefore, first to settle the meanings of words. And, 'the words once defined, a question is resolved almost as soon as proposed'.[4] But will not these definitions be arbitrary? Not, says Helvétius, if the work is performed by a free people. 'England is perhaps the only country in Europe from which the universe can expect and obtain this benefaction.'[5] If freedom of thought is presupposed, the common sense of mankind will find expression in agreement as to the proper meanings of ethical terms. 'True virtue is reputed such in all ages and all countries. The name of virtue should be given to such actions only as are useful to the public and conformable to the general interest.'[1] Although, therefore, self-interest is the fundamental and universal motive of conduct, public interest or utility is the norm of morality. And Helvétius tries to show how service of the common interest is psychologically possible. For example, if a child is taught to put itself in the place of the miserable and unfortunate, it will feel painful sensations, and self-love will stimulate a desire to relieve misery. In the course of time the force of association will set up a habit of benevolent impulses and conduct. Even if, therefore, self-love lies at the basis of all conduct, altruism is psychologically possible.

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[1] *On Man*, 2, 7; translation by W. Hooper, 1777, 1, 127.

[2] *Ibid.*, Hooper, 1, p. 121.

[3] *Ibid.*, Hooper, 1, p. 122.

[4] *Ibid.*, 2, 18; Hooper, 1, p. 199.

[5] *Ibid.*, 2, 19; Hooper, 1, p. 200.

These considerations suggest that education is all-important in forming habits of conduct. Helvétius is one of the chief pioneers and promoters of utilitarian moral theory; but a special characteristic of his writings is his insistence on the power of education. 'Education can do all' and 'education makes us what we are'.[2] But the institution of a good system of education meets with serious obstacles. In the first place there is the clergy, and in the second place there is the fact that most governments are very imperfect or bad. We cannot have a good system of education until the power of the clergy has been broken and until a truly good system of government, with a corresponding good system of legislation, has been realized. The first and sole principle of morality is 'the public good is the supreme law'.[3] But few governments conduct themselves according to this law. Yet 'every important reformation in the moral part of education supposes one in the laws and form of government'.[4]

In the light of these ideas Helvétius inveighs against political despotism. Thus in the preface to his work *On Man* he speaks of the despotism to which France has been subjected, and adds that 'it is the characteristic of despotic power to extinguish both genius and virtue'.[5] Again, when speaking of the too unequal distribution of the national wealth, he remarks that 'for men to flatter themselves with this equal distribution among a people subject to arbitrary power is a folly'.[6] It is only in a free country that a gradual and more equitable redistribution of the national wealth can take place. We can say, therefore, that Helvétius was much more of a political reformer than was Voltaire; he was much more concerned than the latter with the overthrow of despotism and with the welfare of the people. This is one reason why he can be cited by left-wing writers as one of their predecessors.

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[1] *On Man*, 2, 17; Hooper, I, p. 194.

[2] *Ibid.*, 10, 1; Hooper, II, pp. 392 and 395.

[3] *Ibid.*, 10, 10; Hooper, II, p. 436.

[4] *Ibid.*, Hooper, II, p. 433.

[5] Hooper, I, p. vi.

[6] *Ibid.*, 6, 9; Hooper, II, p. 105.

Helvétius is tireless in attacking not only the clergy, particularly the Catholic priesthood, but also revealed or 'mysterious' religion, which he regardsas detrimental to the interests of society. True, when speaking of the accusation of impiety, he protests that he has not denied any Christian dogma. But it is quite evident from his writings that he does not seriously intend to accept anything but a form of natural religion or deism. And the content of this religion is interpreted in function of morality rather than in function of any theological beliefs. 'The will of God, just and good, is that the children of the earth should be happy and enjoy every pleasure compatible with the public welfare. Such is the true worship, that which philosophy should reveal to the world.'[1] Again, 'morality founded on true principles is the only true natural religion'.[2]

It can hardly be claimed that Helvétius was a profound philosopher. His reduction of all psychical functions to sensation is crude, and in ethics he gives no thorough analysis or defence of his basic ideas. These shortcomings were evident to some of the other thinkers of the French Enlightenment. Diderot, for example, objected to Helvétius's levelling-down tendency and to his explanation of all moral impulses in terms of veiled egotism. None the less, in his reductive analysis, in his insistence on intellectual enlightenment and on the power of education, and in his attacks on Church and State Helvétius represents some important aspects of eighteenth-century French philosophy, even if it is an exaggeration to speak of him as the typical thinker of the period.

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[1] *On Man*, 1, 13; Hooper, 1, pp. 58–9.

[2] *Ibid.*, Hooper, 1, p. 60.

CHAPTER II

THE FRENCH ENLIGHTENMENT (2)

The Encyclopaedia*; Diderot and d'Alembert—Materialism; La Mettrie, d'Holbach and Cabanis—Natural history; Buffon, Robinet and Bonnet—The dynamism of Boscovich—The Physiocrats; Quesnay and Turgot—Final remarks.*

1. THE great literary repository of the ideas and ideals of the French Enlightenment was the *Encylopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des arts et des métiers*. Suggested by a French translation of Chambers's *Cyclopaedia* or *Dictionary*, the *Encyclopaedia* was edited by Diderot and d'Alembert. The first volume was published in 1751, the second in the following year. The government then attempted to stop the work on the ground that it was prejudicial to the royal authority and to religion. However, by 1757 seven volumes had appeared. In 1758 d'Alembert retired from the editorship, and the French Government endeavoured to prevent the continuation of the project. But Diderot was eventually permitted to proceed with the printing, provided that no further volume was published until the whole work was complete. And in 1765 the final ten volumes (8–17) appeared, together with the fourth volume of plates, the first of which had been published in 1762. Subsequently other volumes of plates appeared, while a supplement in five volumes and indices in two volumes were printed at Amsterdam. The complete first edition of the *Encyclopaedia* (1751–80) consisted of thirty-five volumes. There were several foreign editions.

Quite apart from any controversy concerning the views expressed in the articles, the *Encyclopaedia*, as its editors freely acknowledged, left much to be desired. The articles varied greatly in standard and merit, and editorial supervision and co-ordination were lacking. In other words, we cannot expect to find in this work the conciseness, the concentration on clear and precise factual information, the systematic co-ordination and arrangement which are to be found in modern encyclopaedias. But in spite of all its defects the *Encyclopaedia* was a work of great importance. For its aim was not only to provide factual information for readers and to serve as a useful work of reference but also to guide and mould opinion. This is, of course, the reason why its publication aroused so much opposition. For it was the enemy both of the Church and of the existing political system. A certain amount of prudence was, indeed, observed in the writing of the articles; but the general attitude of the collaborators was perfectly clear. It was a large-scale manifesto by free-thinkers and rationalists; and its importance consists in its ideological aspect rather than in any permanent value as an encyclopaedia in the modern sense of the term.

Diderot and d'Alembert obtained collaborators who were of one mind when there was question, for example, of attacking the Church and revealed religion, but who differed considerably among themselves in other respects. Thus some articles were contributed by Voltaire, the deist, though when he thought that prudence rendered such conduct advisable, he did not hesitate to state, quite falsely, that he had had no connection with the *Encyclopaedia*. Another contributor, however, was the outspoken materialist d'Holbach, while the association of Helvétius with the work did nothing to commend it to the ecclesiastical authorities. The contributors included also Montesquieu and the economist Turgot.

D'Holbach will be considered in the section on materialism, while the ideas of Turgot will be discussed at the end of this chapter. In the present section I propose to confine myself to Diderot and d'Alembert.

(i) Denis Diderot (1713–84) was, like Voltaire, a pupil of the Jesuit College of Louis-le-Grand. Again like Voltaire, he came under the influence of English thought, and he translated several English works into French. Among them was the *Essai sur le mérite et la vertu* (1745), in which he added notes of his own to his translation of Shaftesbury's *Inquiry concerning Virtue and Merit.* And, as we have already seen, the idea of the *Encyclopaedia*, his life's work, was suggested to him by Chambers's *Cyclopaedia*. In 1746 he published *Pensées philosophiques* at the Hague and in 1749, at London, his *Lettre sur les aveugles à l'usage de ceux qui voient*. The views to which he gave expression earned him a few months' imprisonment at Vincennes, after which he devoted himself to the task of producing the *Encyclopaedia*. In 1754 there appeared at London his *Pensées sur l'interprétation de la nature*. A number of essays, such as the *Entretien entre d'Alembert et Diderot* and *Le rêve de d'Alembert* were not published during his lifetime. Diderot was by no means a rich man, and at one time he was in very difficult financial straits. But the Empress Catherine of Russia came to his assistance; and in 1773 he went to St. Petersburg, where he passed some months, partaking in frequent philosophical discussions with his benefactress. He was a noted conversationalist.

Diderot had no fixed system of philosophy. His thought was always on the move. We cannot say, for example, that he was a deist, an atheist or a pantheist; for his position changed. At the time when he wrote the *Pensées philosophiques* he was, indeed, a deist; and in the following year (1747) he wrote an essay on the sufficiency of natural religion, though it was not published until 1770. The historical religions, such as Judaism and Christianity, are mutually exclusive and intolerant. They are the creation of superstition. They began at certain periods in history, and they will all perish. But the historical religions all presuppose natural religion, which alone has always existed, which unites rather than separates men from one another, and which rests on the testimony which God has inscribed within us rather than on testimony provided by superstitious human beings. At a later stage of his development, however, Diderot abandoned deism for atheism and called on men to free themselves from the yoke of religion. Deism had cut off a dozen heads from the Hydra of religion; but from the one head which it had spared all the others would grow again. The only remedy is to make a clean sweep of all superstition. Yet Diderot later proposed a form of naturalistic pantheism. All parts of Nature ultimately form one individual, the Whole or All.

Similarly, the fluid character of his thought makes it impossible to state simply and unequivocally that Diderot was or was not a materialist. In his article on Locke in the *Encyclopaedia* he referred to the English philosopher's suggestion that it might not be impossible for God to confer on matter the capacity for thinking, and he evidently considered that thought developed out of sensibility. In the *Entretien entre d'Alembert et Diderot*, written in 1769, he gave clearer expression to a materialistic interpretation of man. Men and animals are really of the same nature, though their organizations differ. Differences in cognitive power and intelligence are simply the results of different physical organizations. And similar ideas appear in the *Rêve de d'Alembert* where it is implied that all psychological phenomena are reducible to physiological bases, and that the sense of freedom is illusory. Diderot was certainly influenced by Condillac's theory of the role of sensation in man's psychical life; but he came to criticize Condillac's sensationalism on the ground that the latter's analysis did not go far enough. We have to look beyond sensation to its physiological basis. And it is significant that Diderot assisted d'Holbach in the composition of his *Système de la nature* (1770), which was an outspoken exposition of materialism, even if the influence of d'Holbach on the development of his thought should not be exaggerated. At the same time we can find in Diderot a tendency to pan-psychism. He had a considerable admiration for Leibniz, whom he praised in the *Encyclopaedia*. And we find him later attributing perception to atoms, which correspond to Leibniz's monads. In certain combinations these atoms constitute animal organisms in which consciousness arises on the basis of the continuum formed by the atoms.

The fluid character of Diderot's interpretation of Nature and man is connected with his insistence on the experimental method in science and philosophy. In his work *On the Interpretation of Nature* he declared, wrongly of course, that mathematical science would soon come to a standstill, and that in less than a century there would not be three great geometers left in Europe. His conviction was that mathematics was limited by its own self-made concepts, and that it was incapable of giving us direct acquaintance with concrete reality. This acquaintance could be obtained only by the use of the experimental method, by the new scientific approach which constituted a successful rival not only to metaphysics but also to mathematics. And once we study Nature itself we find that it is changeable and elastic, rich in fresh possibilities, characterized by diversity and heterogeneity. Who knows all the species which have preceded ours? Who knows the species which will follow ours? Everything changes; no two atoms or molecules are perfectly alike; only the infinite whole is permanent. The order of Nature is not something static, but it is being perpetually born anew. We cannot, therefore, give any permanent interpretation of Nature in terms of our conceptual schemes and classifications. And one of the prime needs of thought is that it should keep itself open to new points of view and to new aspects of empirical reality.

Some historians have emphasized the discrepancy between the materialistic elements in Diderot's thought and his ethical idealism. On the one hand, his materialism does away with freedom and seems to make repentance and remorse pointless and useless. On the other hand, he reproached himself with having written his early erotic romance, *Bijoux indiscrets*; and he upheld the ideals of self-sacrifice, benevolence and humanity. He had no sympathy with those materialists who united the profession of materialism and atheism with low moral ideals; and he objected to Helvétius's attempt to explain all moral impulses and ideals in terms of veiled egotism. Indeed, he asserted the existence of immutable laws of natural morality. And, as an art critic, he extolled the free, creative activity of the artist.

However, even though we may agree with Rosenkranz, in his work on Diderot, that there is an inconsistency between the philosopher's materialism and his ethics, Diderot himself did not see any inconsistency. In his opinion there was no essential relation between ethical ideals and a belief in a spiritual soul in man. The derivation of thought from more rudimentary psychical activities does not entail the denial of high moral ideals. Thus in his article on Locke in the *Encyclopaedia*, to which we alluded above, he asks what difference it makes whether matter does or does not think. 'How can it possibly affect the idea of justice or injustice?' No evil moral consequences follow from the theory that thought emerges or evolves from sensibility. For man remains precisely what he is, and he is judged according to the good or evil purposes to which he devotes his powers, not according to whether thought is an original creation or an emergent from sensibility. In modern terms Diderot, who anticipated the evolutionary theory of Lamarck, is saying that the hypothesis of evolution does not affect the validity of man's moral ideals.

To some extent Diderot formed his ethical ideas under the influence of Shaftesbury's writings. But these ideas were not precisely fixed, except in the sense that he always upheld ideals of benevolence and humanity. He began at least by maintaining a 'rationalist' idea of immutable moral laws. But he found the basis of these laws in man's nature, that is to say, in the organic unity of man's impulses, passions and appetites, rather than in *a priori* commands of the reason. And he was hostile to the ascetic ideal as being contrary to nature. In other words, even if Diderot continued to uphold the idea of a natural law, he came to lay emphasis on its empirical basis and on its pragmatic effectiveness, when contrasted with a theological ethic, in promoting the common welfare.

(ii) Jean le Rond d'Alembert (1717–83) was born out of wedlock and was abandoned by his parents. He owed his name Jean le Rond or Lerond to the fact that he was found near the church of S. Jean le Rond at Paris. The surname was added later by himself. He was cared for by the wife of a glazier named Rousseau; but his real father, a certain Chevalier Destouches, settled an annuity on him, and he was thus enabled to study.

In 1738 d'Alembert was admitted as an advocate, but he did not practise as such. He then turned to medicine; but in a very short time he decided to give himself entirely to mathematics. He presented several papers, including his *Mémoire sur le calcul intégral* (1739) to the Academy of Sciences, and in 1741 he was made a member of this academy. His work in mathematics and science was of considerable importance. In 1741 he published his *Mémoire sur le réfraction des corps solides* and in 1743 his *Traité de dynamique.* In this treatise on dynamics he developed what is still known as 'd'Alembert's principle', and in 1744 he applied it in his *Traité de l'équilibre et du mouvement des fluides.* Subsequently he discovered the calculus of partial differences and applied it in his *Réflexion sur la cause générale des vents* (1747), which was crowned by the Prussian Academy. Among other writings we may mention his *Essai d'une nouvelle théorie sur la résistance des fluides* (1752) and his *Recherches sur différents points importants du système du monde* (1754–6).

As we have seen, d'Alembert was associated with Diderot in editing the *Encyclopaedia*, and he was the author of the *Discours préliminaire.* He also wrote a number of articles, chiefly, though not exclusively, on mathematical topics. But in 1758 he withdrew from collaboration in the work, wearied with opposition and the hazards of publication. In 1752 he had published *Mélanges de littérature, d'histoire et de philosophie,* and in 1759 there appeared his *Essai sur les éléments de philosophie.* In 1763 he visited Berlin, but he refused Frederick the Great's offer of the presidency of the Academy, just as in the previous year he had refused the invitation of Catherine of Russia to become tutor to her son on very generous terms. D'Alembert was a friend of David Hume, who held him in high esteem for his moral character and abilities and left him a legacy of £200 in his will. Being primarily a mathematician and scientist, d'Alembert was less exposed than other Encyclopaedists to suspicion and attack, and in 1755 he had been made a member of the Institute of Bologna on the recommendation of Pope Benedict XIV.

In his preliminary discourse in the *Encyclopaedia* d'Alembert declared that Locke was the creator of scientific philosophy, occupying a position which corresponded to that of Newton in physics. And in the *Elements of Philosophy* he asserted that the eighteenth century was the century of philosophy in a special sense. Natural philosophy had been revolutionized, and nearly all other fields of knowledge had made progress and assumed new forms. 'From the principles of the secular sciences to the foundations of religious revelation, from metaphysics to matters of taste, from music to morals, from the scholastic disputes of theologians to matters of trade, from the laws of princes to those of peoples, from natural law to the arbitrary laws of nations . . . everything has been discussed and analysed, or at least mentioned. The fruit or consequence of this general effervescence of minds has been to cast new light on some things and new shadows on others, just as the effect of the ebb and flow of the tides is to leave some things on the shore and to wash others away.'[1]

This does not mean that for d'Alembert intellectual progress consists simply, or even primarily, in the mere accumulation of new facts. In a manner reminiscent of Descartes he maintains that all the sciences put together are the unfolding of the human intelligence. And he stresses the function of unification. He assumes that the system of phenomena is homogeneous and uniform; and the aim of scientific knowledge is to show the unity and coherence of this system in the light of the principles which it exemplifies.

But this point has to be rightly understood. D'Alembert is not concerned with metaphysical principles. Nor is he concerned with ascertaining the essences of things in a metaphysical sense. Metaphysical theories and speculations lead us into antinomies and result in scepticism; they are not a source of knowledge. We cannot know the why and wherefore of things. We cannot even know that there is an external world. True, we inevitably act on the assumption that there is such a world; but this is a matter of instinct rather than of theoretical knowledge. And it is in no way required for the purpose of scientific philosophy that we should solve problems of this sort. It makes no difference to us, for example, whether we can penetrate to the essences of bodies, 'provided that, matter being supposed such as we conceive it, we can deduce from properties which we regard as primitive other secondary properties which we perceive in matter, and that the general system of phenomena, always uniform and continuous, nowhere manifests to us a contradiction'.[1] To deduce phenomena from principles is not to deduce empirical data from metaphysical principles or from metaphysical essences; it is to deduce observed secondary properties from other observed properties which are regarded as more primitive. The business of scientific philosophy is to describe and correlate phenomena in a systematic way rather than to explain them in a metaphysical sense. Once we attempt to do the latter, we proceed beyond the bounds of what can properly be called knowledge.

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[1] *Eléments de Philosophie* in the 1759 edition of *Mélanges de littérature, d'histoir et de philosophie*, IV, pp. 3–6.

We can say, therefore, that d'Alembert was a forerunner of positivism. Science has no need of occult qualities or substances or of metaphysical theories and explanations. And philosophy, like science, is concerned simply with phenomena, even if it considers a wider field of phenomena than is considered by the specialist in some particular limited branch of science. This does not mean, of course, that the natural philosopher is not concerned with explanation in any sense. On the basis of sense-experience he forms clear definitions, and he can deduce verifiable conclusions. But he cannot go beyond the range of phenomena or the empirically verifiable unless he wishes to enter a sphere where no sure knowledge is attainable. Metaphysics must either become a science of facts or remain the field of illusions. The study of the history of opinions shows us how men developed merely probable theories and how in some cases probability became, so to speak, truth, when it had been verified by patient investigation. So too the study of the history of the sciences suggests points of view for further investigation and theories which must be empirically tested.

In d'Alembert's moral theory we can see the same concern to separate ethics from theology and metaphysics which was commonly shared by the philosophers of the period. Morality is the consciousness of our duty towards our fellow-men. And the principles of morality all converge towards the same end, namely to showing us the intimate connection between our true interest and the performance of our social duty. The task of the moral philosopher is thus to make clear to man his place in society and his duty of employing his powers for the common welfare and happiness.

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[1] *Eléments de Philosophie* in the 1759 edition of *Mélanges de littérature, d'histoire et de philosophie*, IV, p. 59.

We cannot legitimately call d'Alembert a materialist. For he abstained from pronouncements about the ultimate nature of things and mistrusted the dogmatic materialists and mechanists. Apart from his importance as a mathematician, the salient feature of his thought is probably his insistence on positivist methodology. Like Diderot, he thought that progress could pretty well be taken for granted, in the sense that intellectual enlightenment would bring with it social and moral progress. But in his conception of intellectual and scientific development he was profoundly influenced by Newton and the experimental method. His thought moved within the field traced out by contemporary scientific advance rather than in the framework of controversy about the ultimately spiritual or material nature of reality.

2. There were, however, some outspoken materialists belonging to the period of the French Enlightenment; and in this section something will be said about La Mettrie, d'Holbach and Cabanis.

(i) Julien Offray de La Mettrie (1709–51) was a doctor who was stimulated by observation in himself of the effects of fever on the mind and thought to inquire into the relations between physiological factors and psychical operations. His *Histoire naturelle de l'âme* appeared in 1745, and in the following year he was banished from France. In 1748 he published at Leyden *L'homme machine*, and in the same year he was banished from Holland and sought refuge with Frederick the Great. *L'homme plante* appeared at Potsdam in 1748.

In his *Natural History of the Soul* (later called *Treatise on the Soul*) La Mettrie argues that man's psychical life of thought and volition arises out of sensations and is developed by education. Where there are no senses, there are no ideas; the fewer the senses the fewer the ideas; and where there is little education or instruction, there is a paucity of ideas. The soul or mind depends essentially on bodily organization, and its natural history must be studied by exact observation of physiological processes. The senses, says La Mettrie, are his philosophers. The theory of a spiritual soul, intrinsically independent of the body, is an unnecessary hypothesis.

In *Man a Machine* La Mettrie refers to Descartes' description of the living body as a machine. But in his opinion Descartes had no warrant for asserting dualism, that is, for speaking of man as composed of a thinking substance, immaterial and free, and of an extended substance, the body. He should have applied his interpretation of the physical organism to the whole man. At the same time La Mettrie differs considerably from Descartes in his idea of matter. For this is not mere extension: it also possesses the power of movement and the capacity of sensation. At least, organized matter possesses a principle of motion which differentiates it from unorganized matter; and sensation arises from motion. We may not be able to explain or thoroughly understand this emergence; but we cannot thoroughly understand matter itself and its basic properties. It is sufficient that observation assures us that motion, the principle of organized matter, does emerge. And, given the principle of motion, not only sensation but all other forms of psychical life can arise. In fine, all forms of life depend ultimately on different forms of physical organization. Of course, the analogy of a machine is not adequate for describing man. We can also use the analogy of a plant. (Hence *L'homme plante.*) But this does not mean that there are radically different levels in Nature. We find differences of degree rather than of kind.

In matters of religion La Mettrie professed a complete agnosticism. But he was popularly regarded as an atheist. And, indeed, he tried to improve upon Bayle's assertion that a State composed of atheists is possible by adding that it is not only possible but also desirable. In other words, religion is not only quite independent of morality but also inimical to it. As for La Mettrie's ethical ideas, their nature is sufficiently indicated by the title of his work, *The Art of Enjoyment or the School of Pleasure.*[1] He did not possess the moral idealism of Diderot. Incidentally, this work was but one of a number of treatises published in the eighteenth century which represented the views of the circle of so-called 'libertines', though the views expressed ranged from the emphasis on sense pleasure, which was characteristic of La Mettrie, to more refined and intellectualized programmes for enjoyment.

(ii) La Mettrie's writings exercised a considerable influence; but the chief statement of a materialist position was the *Système de la nature ou des lois du monde physique et du monde morale* (1770) by the Baron Paul von Holbach (1723–89). Born in Germany, he resided at Paris and is generally known as d'Holbach. His house at Paris was a meeting-place for *les philosophes,* where they were entertained with lavish hospitality by the Baron and his wife who, incidentally, had no sympathy with her husband's philosophy. Hume, while at Paris, took part in these gatherings, though he did not care for d'Holbach's dogmatic atheism. He expressed his attachment to the Baron, but among the members of the circle he preferred d'Alembert. Horace Walpole, however, who had no love for philosophers, remarks in his letters[1] that he had left off going to d'Holbach's dinners and that 'nonsense for nonsense, I like the Jesuits better than the philosophers'.

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[1] *L'art de jouir ou l'école de la volupté,* 1751.

According to d'Holbach, Descartes was wrong in thinking that matter is inert of itself, so that motion has to be added from outside, as it were. Motion flows necessarily from the essence of matter, that is, from the nature of the atoms of which things are ultimately composed. Descartes was also wrong in thinking that matter is all of a piece, all of the same kind. Leibniz's principle of indiscernibles contains much more truth than the Cartesian notion of the homogeneity of matter. And there are different kinds of movement, each thing having its laws of motion which are inevitably obeyed.

Things as we know them empirically consist of different organizations of atoms, and their behaviours differ according to their several structures. Everywhere we find the phenomena of attraction and repulsion; but in the human sphere these take the form of love and hate. Further, each thing strives to preserve itself in being. And man too is impelled by self-love or self-interest. But this should not be taken as excluding a concern for the welfare of society. For man is a social being, and rational concern for one's own satisfaction and welfare goes hand in hand with concern for the general welfare. D'Holbach was a thorough-going materialist and determinist; but he did not intend to advocate a life of selfishness. As a man, he was known to have a humane and benevolent character. And among the anonymous works ascribed to him we find the *Système social ou principes naturels de la morale et de la politique* (London, 1773) and *La morale universelle* (Amsterdam, 1776).

The theory of a determined system of Nature, in which motion is not an extraneous element but an essential property of things, seemed to d'Holbach to rule out any need for postulating God or any supramundane being or beings. The order or system of the world is not the result of a divine plan, but of the nature of things and of their immanent laws. But d'Holbach was by no means content to profess agnosticism and to say that the religious hypothesis, as Hume called it, was unnecessary. In his opinion religion was the enemy of human happiness and progress. In a

[1] VI, 370.

well-known passage of the second book of the *System of Nature* he declares that ignorance and fear created the gods, that fancy, enthusiasm and deceit have adorned or disfigured the pictures formed of them, that weakness worships them, that credulity preserves them, and that tyranny supports belief in them for its own purposes. Belief in God, so far from making men happy, increases their anxiety and fear.

If, therefore, religion, a powerful instrument of political tyranny, could be overthrown, it would be easier to ensure the development of a rational social system in place of the system which is responsible for so much suffering and misery. In his writings d'Holbach was more outspoken in denunciation of the *ancien régime* than was usual among his colleagues. But he rejected revolution as a solution to political problems, and in his *Social System* he declared that revolution is worse than the disease which it is supposed to cure.

It is sometimes said that in his *System of Nature* d'Holbach combined and then carried to extremes the different tendencies of the writers of the French Enlightenment. And this is doubtless true to some extent. But his ideas were too extreme for many of his fellow-philosophers. Voltaire, for example, denounced the work for its atheism. And in Germany Frederick the Great drew attention to what he regarded as a flagrant contradiction. According to d'Holbach, human beings are as much subject to determinism as are other things. Yet he does not hesitate to denounce priests and governments in passionate terms and to demand a new social order, though this way of speaking makes no sense unless men are free and can reasonably be praised or blamed for their actions.

Finally, there is an often-quoted estimate of d'Holbach's work from a very different quarter. In *Wahrheit und Dichtung* (Book XI) Goethe speaks of his studies at Strasbourg and remarks that out of curiosity he and his friends had a look at the *System of Nature*. 'We could not conceive how such a book could be dangerous. It appeared to us so grey, so Cimmerian, so corpse-like that we had difficulty in enduring its presence and shuddered before it as before a spectre.' To Goethe, d'Holbach's work seemed to deprive Nature and life of all that is precious.

(iii) Particularly crude expressions of materialism can be found in the writings of Pierre Jean Georges Cabanis (1757–1808), a physician and author of *Rapports du physique et du moral de* *l'homme*. He summed up his view of man in the words *Les nerfs—voilà tout l'homme* and declared that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile. In this case, one would have thought, there are simply different sets of secretions, and it is somewhat difficult to decide which possesses the greater truth-value. It would, however, be misleading to suggest that the whole French Enlightenment should be evaluated in the light of the crude assertions made by materialists such as Cabanis. Indeed, we miss the significance of the materialist current of thought itself if we pay attention simply to these crudities. For its importance lies in its programmatic aspect rather than in the dogmatism against which d'Alembert and others protested. That is to say, its long-term importance lies in its aspect as a programme for studying the connections between physiological and psychological phenomena rather than in its dogmatic reduction of the latter to the former.

Cabanis protested that his concentration on the physiological bases of psychical life should not be taken to imply metaphysical materialism. As regards ultimate causes, he professed agnosticism. But in his view morality must be cut adrift from metaphysical and theological presuppositions and given a firm basis in the scientific study of man. One of his contributions to their study was his insistence on the unity of man's life. It is inappropriate, for example, to speak with Condillac of conferring this or that sense on a statue. The senses are not only interdependent but also intimately connected with other organic functions.

3. Diderot gave it as his opinion that under certain circumstances nothing is more wasteful than preoccupation with method. This is especially true, he said, of natural history in general and of botany in particular. He did not mean, of course, that any science can be profitably studied in a purely haphazard manner. What he meant was that we are simply wasting time if we are preoccupied with discovering some universal method which will be applicable to all the sciences. It is absurd, for example, to suppose that the method applicable in mathematics is applicable also in botany. The form of method and of systematization which is appropriate in the study of botany must be derived from the special character of the subject-matter of this science.

In forming this point of view Diderot was influenced to some extent by the earlier volumes of Buffon's *Histoire naturelle générale et particulière* (1749–88).

(i) In his introductory reflections in the work just mentioned Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon (1707–88) maintains that it is a great mistake to form one ideal of scientific method and then to attempt to force all branches of scientific research into the framework of this method. For example, in mathematics we fix clearly the meanings of our symbols, and we can proceed deductively, unfolding the implications of our starting-point; but we cannot do this when we are concerned, not, as in mathematics, with our concepts or with the meanings of symbols, as determined by ourselves, but with existent Nature. Truth is different in mathematics from what it is in the natural sciences. In the latter we must start with observation of phenomena, and only on the basis of observation can we form general conclusions with the aid of analogies. In the end we can see how particular facts are connected together and how universal truths are exemplified in these particular facts. But we cannot employ the deductive method of mathematics. Buffon was the keeper of the royal garden, and it is, indeed, clear that what he says applies with force in the field of botany.

Buffon's rejection of any rigid conception of one ideal and universally applicable scientific method was accompanied by a rejection of the notion that organisms fall into sharply defined classes or species which are separated from one another by rigid boundaries or limits. Even Linnaeus, in his botanical studies, went wrong in this respect. For he arbitrarily selected certain characteristics of plants as the key to classification, whereas we cannot understand Nature in this way. In Nature there is continuity; there are gradual transitions and not rigidly fixed types. In other words, Buffon substituted for the idea of a hierarchy of sharply delimited classes the idea of a series or chain of classes in each of which the members are grasped according to observed kinship. He did not reject the whole notion of classes or species. But the species is a group of members which are more alike to one another, in virtue of observed characteristics, than they are to other things. It is a mistake to suppose that our classifications express the apprehension of fixed essences. We can say, if we like, that Buffon understood classification in terms of what Locke called the 'nominal essence'. But his great point is that we must follow Nature as observed and keep our class-concepts elastic instead of constructing a fixed conceptual scheme and forcing Nature to fit it. If we were concerned merely with our ideas or definitions and their implications, the latter procedure would be apposite. But in botany, for example, we are concerned with knowing reality, not with an ideal system akin to that of mathematics.

It is probably true to say that Buffon's views helped in some way to prepare the way for the theory of evolution. All the same one is not entitled to conclude from his idea of the series or chain of species that he himself maintained this theory. He thought, indeed, of the several types of organisms being brought into existence in a continuous series as external conditions rendered survival possible. But he did not say that one species undergoes a process of transformation into another. He thought rather of a kind of ideal archetype of the living thing, representing the unity of the divine plan, which can take an indefinite number of possible concrete forms. And even though these concrete types are not fixed and rigid, the creation of each is a special act.

(ii) The idea of a series is represented also in the writings of Jean-Baptiste Robinet (1735–1820). For him Nature is faced with the problem of realizing in the most perfect manner possible the three vital functions of nutrition, growth and reproduction, functions which are found in some sense in all matter. Nature's solution to this problem is found in man, who is, therefore, the culmination of the series as far as the material world is concerned. But we can envisage a gradual liberation of activity, which is an essential note of a substance, from matter and from dependence on material organs. And this conception leads us to the idea of pure intelligence.

(iii) There are, however, considerable difficulties in the theory of a purely linear series. And we find Charles Bonnet (1720–93) suggesting that Nature may produce different main lines in the series, which themselves produce subordinate lines. With the German naturalist and traveller, Peter Simon Pallas (1741–1811), we find the analogy of a tree with different branches. For the matter of that, we find with Buffon himself the analogy of a network.

4. The Jesuit, Roger Joseph Boscovich (1711–87), obviously cannot be accounted one of the philosophers of the Enlightenment, if one means by the Enlightenment a movement of thought opposed to all supernatural religion. But the term should not be used simply in this restricted sense. True, we are dealing now with the French Enlightenment, and Boscovich, who was born at Ragusa, was not a Frenchman. But for ten years (1773–83) he acted as director of optics for the marine at Paris; and in any case

this is the most convenient place to make a few remarks about him.

In 1740 Boscovich was appointed professor of mathematics at the Roman College (now the Gregorian University), and while occupying this post he published essays on a variety of mathematical and astronomical topics. In 1758 he published at Vienna his *Philosophiae naturalis theoria, redacta ad unicam legem virium in natura existentium.* During a stay in England he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, and in 1769 he was invited by the Royal Society to undertake a journey to California to observe the transit of Venus, though acceptance was prevented by the fact that the Spanish Government had expelled the Jesuits from its territories. In 1785, after he had returned to Italy from Paris, he published *Opera pertinentia ad opticam et astronomiam* in five volumes. Among other works we may mention his *Elementa universae matheseos* (1754).

In Boscovich's opinion there is no such thing as actual contact between two bodies. The effect of Newton's theory of gravitation has been to show that action is action at a distance. We cannot, therefore, any longer suppose that motion or energy is communicated by immediate contact. Instead we must postulate atoms which attract and repel one another, but which never actually touch each other. Each atom has a position in space, and each possesses potential force, in the sense that any two atoms attract or repel one another. For all distances greater than a certain given distance this force is an attraction which varies as the inverse square of the distance. In the case of smaller distances the force is attraction in the case of one distance and repulsion in the case of the other. But here the laws governing attraction and repulsion have not yet been discovered, though, according to Boscovich, if we decrease the distance without limit, the force of repulsion increases without limit. Hence two atoms can never be in immediate contact. There are, of course, systems of atoms; but no system can occupy the same space as another. For when one system approaches another, there is a point at which the repulsion between the atoms of the two systems grows to such an extent that it cannot be overcome. Needless to say, Boscovich did not maintain that atoms are the only reality. He was speaking simply of bodies, and he went on to show how his theory of dynamic atomism could be applied in problems of mechanics and physics.

5. The Encyclopaedists were animated by the idea of progress as shown in the growth of the sciences and in a corresponding liberation from superstition. Intellectual enlightenment would be accompanied by a growth of toleration and by political and social reform. The idea of progress also finds a place in the theories of the group of eighteenth-century French economists who are known as the 'physiocrats'. This name was invented by Dupont de Nemours (1739–1817), who belonged to the group. The physiocrats originally called themselves economists, but their special name (compounded from the Greek words *phusis*, nature, and *kratein*, to rule) is an apt one because it draws attention to their fundamental tenet. This was that there are natural economic laws, and that economic progress depends on our allowing these laws to have unrestricted play.

It follows from this position that the government should interfere as little as possible in economic affairs. Society is founded on a contract whereby the individual submits to the limitation of his natural freedom in so far as its exercise is incompatible with the rights of other people. And government should limit itself to securing the fulfilment of the contract. If it tries to interfere in the field of economics, by restricting competition, for example, or by maintaining privileges and monopolies, it is trying to interfere with the operation of 'natural law'. And no good can come from such interference: Nature knows best.

This does not mean that the physiocrats were enthusiastic democrats, in the sense that they were zealous promoters of the idea of popular rule. On the contrary, they tended to look to enlightened autocracy as a means of implementing their policy. The doctrines of non-interference and *laissez-faire* lent themselves, indeed, to use in a revolutionary sense as part of a general demand for freedom; and they came in fact to be so used. But neither Quesnay nor Turgot, for instance, can be called an advocate of revolution or of the substitution of popular for monarchic rule.

(i) François Quesnay (1694–1774) studied medicine and surgery and became physician to Louis XV. But he devoted himself while at court to the study of economics, and it was round him and Jean de Gournay (1712–59) that the group of physiocrats centred. Quesnay wrote some articles on economic matters for the *Encyclopaedia*. He also published, among other writings, *Maximes générales de gouvernement économique d'un royaume agricole* (1758) and, in the same year, a *Tableau économique avec son explication, ou extrait des économies royales de Sully.*

According to Quesnay, national wealth is dependent on agricultural productiveness. Those labours alone are truly productive which increase the quantity of raw materials. And national wealth depends on the excess of these products over the cost of producing them. Manufacture and commerce merely give new forms to the wealth produced (raw materials include, for instance, metals) and transfer wealth from one hand to another. They are therefore 'sterile', not 'productive', though to say this is not to say that they are not useful.

The interest of the landowner and of society are, therefore, one. The greater the agricultural production, the greater the national wealth. Or, as Quesnay put it, poor peasants, a poor kingdom; a poor kingdom, a poor king. The increase of the 'net product', therefore, should be the aim of the practical economist. Trade distributes wealth; but the trading and manufacturing classes make their gains at the expense of the nation, and the common good requires that this expense should be reduced as much as possible. The revenues of the State depend on the net product of agricultural labour; and they should be derived from a land tax.

This peculiar emphasis on agricultural production at the expense of industry and commerce was not shared by all the physiocrats, but it was characteristic of some prominent members of the group. Adam Smith, who made the acquaintance of Quesnay during his visit to Paris in 1764–6, had a high opinion of him; but though he was influenced to some extent by the physiocrats, he did not agree with the description of industry and commerce as 'sterile'.

(ii) Anne Robert Jacques Turgot, Baron de Laune (1727–81), first studied for the priesthood but abandoned these studies before ordination and subsequently occupied various parliamentary and administrative posts. A friend of Voltaire, he also became acquainted with Quesnay, Gournay, Dupont de Nemours and other economists of the physiocratic school. Besides concerning himself with practical economic reforms he wrote a number of essays and articles, some for the *Encyclopaedia.* In 1770 he wrote his *Lettres sur la liberté du commerce des grains*, and in 1776 he published as a separate book his *Réflexions sur la formation et la distribution des richesses*, which had first appeared in a journal in 1769–70. In 1774 he was appointed Minister of Marine and shortly afterwards Comptroller-General. In the latter position, which was effectively that of minister of finance, he insisted on economy and succeeded in raising the national credit. At first he enjoyed the support of the king, but his plans for the abolition of privilege, the subjection of all classes to taxation and freedom of trade in corn won for him many enemies, while his schemes for an educational system and for poor-relief proved too much for the king. In the end he was forced to resign in 1776. For the rest of his life he gave himself to his studies.

As an economist Turgot shared Quesnay's ideas about land as the only source of wealth and about complete freedom in industry and commerce. But he was much more than an economist. For example, in his article on existence in the *Encyclopaedia* he developed a positivist interpretation. The given is a multiplicity of phenomena, the mutual relations of which are constantly changing. Yet in certain groups there are relatively persistent relations of co-ordination. One of these groups is what we call the self or ego, a particular group of perceptions related to perceptions or feelings of pleasure and pain. To affirm the existence of the external world is to affirm that other groups of phenomena, either immediately given or postulated, stand to the self in spatial or causal relations. Existence thus means for us existence as a subject or for a subject in the system of spatial and causal relations. The question what existence is in itself or what existent things are apart from the system of spatio-temporal and causal relations, is not a question which we are competent to answer. In other words we cannot solve metaphysical problems. Science is concerned with the description of phenomena, not with 'ultimate questions'.

Turgot is of importance in the development of a positivist interpretation of history. In human as distinct from animal history there is progress, in the sense that the intellectual achievements of one generation are taken over by, widened and surpassed by, the next. In each cultural period we can, indeed, find a certain recurring pattern. But by and large the intellectual advance of the human race passes through three main phases, the religious, the philosophical or metaphysical, and the scientific. In this third phase the mathematical and natural sciences triumph over speculative metaphysics and lay the foundation for further scientific advance and for new forms of social and economic life. Thus Turgot anticipated the interpretation of history which was to be expounded in the next century by Auguste Comte. And though from the point of view of economics he must be classed with Quesnay and the other physiocrats, from the wider philosophical point of view he can be classed with the editors of the *Encyclopaedia*, d'Alembert and Diderot.

6. The French Enlightenment is often associated, doubtless understandably, with the crude materialism and the anti-religious polemics of men such as Helvétius, La Mettrie and d'Holbach. And this is, of course, a real aspect of eighteenth-century French philosophy. But the spirit of the movement is probably better represented by men such as d'Alembert, Diderot and Turgot who tended to abstain from making dogmatic pronouncements about ultimate reality and who looked to scientific progress and the growth of toleration to bring about new and more rational forms of social and political life. Eighteenth-century French philosophy doubtless helped to prepare the way for the Revolution; but the philosophers themselves aimed, not at bloody revolution, but rather at the spread of knowledge and through the diffusion of knowledge at social reform. I do not mean to imply that the philosophical outlook of *les philosophes* was adequate or that I agree with their anti-metaphysical point of view. At the same time it is a mistake to regard them simply in the light of the dogmatic materialism of certain writers. As has been already indicated, to do this is to overlook the programmatic aspect of their work, the programme of extending the sphere of empirically verified knowledge as far as it will go. Crudities apart, they look forward, for instance, to the growth of empirical psychology and biology, to the development of sociological studies, and to the rise of political economy. In the next century the idealists felt the need for reconciling and synthesizing the religious, metaphysical and scientific outlooks. But this ideal presupposed, of course, the presence of the scientific and positivist outlook, and in helping to produce it the eighteenth-century philosophers were of considerable importance. As the idealists of the nineteenth century saw, the scientific outlook did not call for negation but rather for modification by incorporation in a wider synthesis. Whether they succeeded in providing this synthesis, is, of course, another question.

CHAPTER III

ROUSSEAU (1)

Life and writings—The evils of civilization—The origin of inequality—The appearance of the theory of the general will—Rousseau's philosophy of feeling.

1. JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU was born at Geneva on June 28th, 1712, the son of a watchmaker. In 1725 he was apprenticed for five years to an engraver; but after a while he ran away. The priest of Confignon, a village near Geneva, introduced the boy to the Baronne de Warens, who was to figure prominently in his life. Under her influence Rousseau was converted to Catholicism, and in 1728 he was received into the Church at Turin in a hospice for catechumens, an institution of which he has given us a most unfavourable picture in his *Confessions*. After a period of wandering and unsettled existence he rejoined Mme de Warens in 1731. His life with her, first at Chambéry and afterwards at Les Charmettes, was later idealized by him as an idyllic episode. It was in this period that he endeavoured by reading to make up for the deficiencies of his earlier unsystematic education.

From 1738 to 1740 Rousseau acted as tutor to the children of a M. de Mably, and while occupying this post he made the acquaintance of Condillac. In 1742 he went to Paris, only to proceed to Venice in 1743 as secretary to the new French ambassador, the Comte de Montaigu. The two men did not get on well together, and in the following year Rousseau, dismissed for insolence, returned to Paris. In 1745 he met Voltaire for the first time, and in 1749 Diderot invited him to write the articles on music for the *Encyclopaedia*. He was also introduced to d'Holbach's *salon*. In the same year the Academy of Dijon offered a prize for the best essay on the question whether the progress of the arts and sciences had tended to the purification or to the corruption of morality. Rousseau's *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* was the prize-winning essay, and it was published in 1750. Its author became at once a famous man. But as he had indulged in an attack on civilization and its corrupting effects on man, his views not unnaturally met with strong opposition from *les philosophes*, and a battle of words ensued. Rousseau was already well on his way to a decisive break with the d'Holbach circle. However, undaunted by opposition, he decided to compete for another prize offered by the Dijon Academy, this time on the question, what is the origin of inequality among men and whether it is authorized by the natural law. His *Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality among Men* did not obtain the prize, but it was published in 1758. In it we are presented with a picture of natural man or man in the state of nature, that is to say, of man when the trappings and accretions of civilization have been stripped away. Man is naturally good, but civilization has brought with it inequality and a host of consequent evils. In the same year, 1755, Rousseau's article on political economy was printed in the *Encyclopaedia*. In 1758 it appeared separately as a *Discourse on Political Economy*. The idea of the general will makes its first appearance in this essay.

Rousseau had been for some time disgusted with life at Paris, a disgust which was reflected in his first two *Discourses*. And his mind turned towards his native city. Hence in 1754 he turned his back on the French capital and set out for Geneva. He was there received back into the Protestant Church. This change did not, indeed, signify any religious upheaval. For, as Rousseau observed, if his philosophical friends at Paris had done nothing else for him, they had at least undermined any belief he may have had in Catholic dogma. His main reason for formally returning to Protestantism was, as he admits, his wish to regain Genevan citizenship. But the philosopher did not remain long at Geneva. Returning to Paris in October 1754 he sent a copy of his *Discourse on Inequality*, when it appeared in the following year, to Voltaire who wrote to thank him for 'your new book against the human race'.

From 1756 until 1762 Rousseau lived in retirement at Montmorency. This was a period of great literary activity. In 1758 he wrote his *Lettre à d'Alembert sur les spectacles* relating to the article on Geneva in the *Encyclopaedia* in which d'Alembert had criticized the Genevan prohibition of theatrical performances. The year 1761 saw the publication of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, Rousseau's novel. And in 1762 there appeared not only his most famous work, the *Social Contract* (*Du contrat social*) but also *Émile*, his book on education. By this time Rousseau had already quarrelled with Diderot. His decisive break with *les philosophes* found expression in his *Lettres morales*, though these were not published until 1861.

As a result of the publication of the *Social Contract* and *Émile* in 1762 Rousseau had to take refuge in Switzerland. But the reaction to his works at Geneva was also hostile, and in 1763 he formally renounced his Genevan citizenship. In 1765 he set out for Berlin, but on the way he decided to go to England; and in January 1766 he crossed the Channel with David Hume who had offered him sanctuary in England. It cannot be said that this visit was altogether successful. By this time Rousseau, always sensitive and suspicious, was suffering from persecution mania, and he became convinced that Hume was in league with his enemies. Hume, not understanding Rousseau's abnormal state of mind, was very angry, especially as he was engaged in procuring a royal pension for his friend; and, disregarding any advice to the contrary, he published in London and Paris his account of the affair. In May 1766 Rousseau returned to France, where he was received as a guest by the Prince de Conti. In 1770, after various wanderings, he returned to Paris, neglecting the fact that he was liable to arrest. But as a matter of fact he was left undisturbed by the police, though he was subjected to a campaign of literary vilification, especially by Grimm and Diderot. In May 1778 he left for Erménonville, as guest of the Marquis de Girardin, and it was there that he died on July 2nd. His *Confessions* and the *Rêveries du Promeneur Solitaire* were published posthumously (1782–9). The *Considerations on the Government of Poland* appeared in 1782.

The character and life of Rousseau provide ample material for the psychologist. True, some of the troubles were due to physical ill-health. He suffered for years from a bladder complaint, and he most probably died of uraemia. But from the beginning social adjustment was difficult for him; and though he was capable of deep affection and attachment, he was too sensitive, suspicious and intolerant to maintain constant friendships. A man much given to self-analysis, he often failed to understand either himself or others. A philosopher, he yet possessed a highly emotional temperament, and he drew attention to the tension between emotion and thought, heart and mind, which oppressed him. Romantic, emotional, possessing a genuine religious feeling yet self-centred and mentally unbalanced, it is in no way surprising that Rousseau broke with *les philosophes*. D'Holbach warned Hume that he was contemplating warming a viper in his bosom. And Hume later referred to Rousseau as 'the most singular of all human beings', though he afterwards acutely remarked that the latter had only felt during the whole course of his life and that in him sensibility had risen to an unexampled pitch. But all this, of course, in no way affects Rousseau's importance in the history of philosophy.[1]

2. 'It is a noble and beautiful spectacle to see man raising himself, so to speak, from nothing by his own exertions.'[2] These words form the beginning of the first part of Rousseau's *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*. And we would naturally expect to find them followed by a laudatory account of the blessings of civilization. If they had been written by d'Alembert, for example, our expectations would doubtless have been fulfilled. But not so in the case of Rousseau. We are soon told that 'the mind, as well as the body, has its needs: those of the body are the basis of society, those of the mind its ornaments'.[3] These words can, indeed, be taken in a quite innocuous sense, even if they seem to imply that the fulfilment of all non-physical needs is no more than an unessential ornament of society. But we straightway learn that the arts, literature and the sciences fling garlands of flowers over the chains which weigh men down and stifle in men's breasts the sense of liberty for which they seem to have been born. These 'ornaments' make men love their slavery. 'Necessity raised up thrones; the arts and sciences have made them strong.'[4]

The way is thus prepared for a rhetorical attack on so-called civilized society. Rousseau draws special attention to the artificiality of social life. In more rudimentary forms of society human nature may not have been fundamentally better than it is now; but men were sincere and open, letting themselves be seen as they were. Now 'we no longer dare to seem what we really are, but lie under a perpetual restraint'.[5] The herd of men all act exactly alike, unless some very powerful motive intervenes; and sincere friendship and real confidence are banished. The veil of conventional politeness covers all sorts of unworthy attitudes. Again, we may not take the name of God in vain by vulgar oaths; but real blasphemy does not disturb us. We do not indulge in extravagant boasting; instead we subtly decry the merits of others and artfully calumniate them. 'Our hatred of other nations diminishes, but patriotism dies with it. Ignorance is held in contempt; but a dangerous scepticism has succeeded it.'[1] Rousseau disliked and disapproved of the cosmopolitan spirit of the Enlightenment.

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[1] In this and the next chapters the following abbreviations will be used: *D.A.* for the *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*; *D.I.* for the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*; *D.P.* for the *Discourse on Political Economy*; *É.* for *Émile;* and *S.C.* for the *Social Contract*. For the convenience of the reader page-references will be given to the *Everyman's Library* editions of the *Social Contract* and *Discourses* and of *Émile*, as these editions are easily available.

[2] *D.A.*, p. 130. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*, p. 131. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

In his picture of civilized society Rousseau was obviously universalizing his experience at Paris, where he had hitherto appeared in fashionable society not on his own merits but in a humiliating position of dependence. However, some of what he says is doubtless true enough and provides material for the preacher. It is true, for instance, that in sophisticated society extravagant boasting is considered ludicrous but that the same end is sought for by the device of subtle depreciation of others. Rousseau, however, goes on to ascribe this state of affairs to the growth of the arts and sciences. 'Our minds have been corrupted in proportion as the arts and sciences have improved.'[2] And scientific advance is ascribed to 'vain curiosity'.[3] But it is one thing to draw attention to certain shadows in eighteenth-century society, and it is quite another thing to assign the advance of the arts and sciences as the cause of these defects.

To be sure, Rousseau endeavours to support his thesis by reference to history. Egypt, we are told, became the mother of philosophy (a very questionable proposition) and the fine arts, but soon she was conquered by Cambyses and subsequently by the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs, and finally the Turks. In Greece, Rousseau tells us, the progress of the sciences soon produced dissolute manners and led to the imposition of the Macedonian yoke. 'Not all the eloquence of Demosthenes could breathe life into a body which luxury and the arts had once enervated.'[4] We can consider by contrast the virtues of the early Persians and of the Scythians, not to speak of the 'simplicity, innocence and virtue'[5] of the Germanic tribes who conquered the Romans. And we must not forget Sparta, 'eternal proof of the vanity of science'.[6]

In the second part of the *Discourse* we are roundly informed that 'astronomy was born of superstition, eloquence of ambition, hatred, falsehood and flattery; geometry of avarice; physics of an idle curiosity; and even moral philosophy of human pride. Thus the arts and sciences owe their birth to our vices.'[7] They arise out of evil, and they lead to evil consequences. They produce luxury and generate weakness. The military virtues of the Romans were extinguished in proportion as the latter cultivated the fine arts.

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[1] *D.A.*, p. 133.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 134.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 135.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 136.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 140.

And 'if the cultivation of the sciences is prejudicial to military qualities, it is still more so to moral qualities'.[1] An expensive education is provided which teaches everything but moral probity and integrity. Literary, artistic and scientific proficiency are honoured, but moral virtue goes unrewarded. Towards the end of his *Discourse* Rousseau does, indeed, recall to mind the fact that he is addressing the Academy of Dijon and that he is competing for a literary prize. And he finds it advisable to say something in favour of men such as Francis Bacon, Descartes and Newton, 'those teachers of mankind'.[2] But he contrasts these geniuses, who were intended by Nature herself to be her disciples, with 'the herd of text-book authors',[3] who have indiscreetly broken open the doors of the sanctuary of the sciences and admitted an unworthy populace to information and ideas which it would be all the better for lacking. There can be little doubt whom Rousseau has in mind.

Rousseau's critics had no difficulty in showing the deficiencies in his historical knowledge and the weakness of his arguments in favour of the thesis that moral degeneration was caused by the growth of the arts and sciences. If he were alive today, he would doubtless point out how military needs have stimulated the development of scientific research in certain departments. And he would doubtless maintain that such advance has arisen from human vice and leads to evil consequences. But there is obviously another side to the pictures. Even if advance in atomic physics, for instance, has been stimulated in some sense by war, the fruits of research can be used for other than destructive purposes. Again, it is easy to criticize Rousseau's idealization of Sparta at the expense of Athens and his panegyric of the virtues of the Germanic tribes. However, Rousseau himself explicitly admitted the lack of logic and order in the work and its weakness in argument. In spite, however, of its obvious shortcomings the first *Discourse* possesses some importance as a counterblast to the Encyclopaedists' assumption that the advancement of the arts and sciences represents human progress in a general sense. True, it should not be taken as a complete and wholesale rejection of civilized society. It was the expression of feeling, of an attitude adopted in the light of an idea which came to Rousseau with the force of a sudden illumination. But later on, above all in the *Social Contract*, he undertakes to justify the transition from man's primitive state to

[1] *D.A.*, p. 147. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 152. [3] *Ibid.* p., 152.

that of organized society, and to inquire what form of social institution is most compatible with man's natural goodness and is least likely to corrupt and deprave him. Moreover, it appears that in 1750 or 1751 Rousseau began to plan a work on *Political Institutions* which he later abandoned after having extracted from his notes the substance of the *Social Contract.* And in this case he can hardly have held seriously, even at the time when he composed the first *Discourse,* that civilized society is so essentially evil that it must be totally rejected. At the same time it would be quite wrong to conclude that Rousseau was not sincere in what he said about the arts and sciences. The general idea that man has been corrupted by the growth of an artificial civilization and by rationalism remained with him, even if, to obtain an adequate picture of his philosophy, we have to balance it by his positive doctrine concerning the State and its function. In his later writings there is, indeed, a certain change of attitude, but it does not amount to a wholesale recantation of his earlier works.

3. If we assume that man has been corrupted by an artificial civilization, what is the natural state, the state of nature, from which he has been removed? That is to say, what positive meaning is to be attached to the term 'state of nature'? This question is discussed by Rousseau in his *Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality of Mankind.*

We cannot, of course, observe the state of nature; for we are acquainted only with man in society. The really primitive condition of man eludes empirical investigation. Our interpretation, therefore, must take the form of a hypothetical account. 'Let us begin, then, by laying facts aside, as they do not affect the question. The investigations into which we may enter, in treating this subject, must not be considered as historical truths, but only as mere conditional and hypothetical reasonings, calculated to explain the nature of things rather than to ascertain their actual origin, just like the hypotheses which our physicists daily form about the formation of the world.'[1] In practice this means that we have to take man as we know him and then abstract from all supernatural gifts and from those faculties which he can acquire only in the course of a long process of social development. Indeed, we have to abstract from society itself.

When we act in this way, we find man 'satisfying his hunger at the first oak and slaking his thirst at the first brook; finding his bed at the foot of the tree which afforded him a repast; and, with that, all his wants supplied'.[1] Such a man would be physically robust unafraid of the animals which he surpasses in skill, if not in strength, subject to few causes of sickness and so standing in little need of medicines, and still less of doctors. His chief concern would be self-preservation. His senses of sight, hearing and smell would be refined, but not the senses of touch and taste, which are perfected by softness and sensuality.

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[1] *D.I.*, Introduction, pp. 175–6.

How does savage man differ from the animal? 'It is not so much the understanding that constitutes the specific difference between the man and the brute, as the human quality of freedom . . . and it is particularly in his consciousness of this liberty that the spirituality of his soul is displayed. For physics may explain in some degree the mechanism of the senses and the formation of ideas; but in the power of willing or rather of choosing, and in the feeling of this power, nothing is to be found but acts which are purely spiritual and wholly inexplicable by the laws of mechanism.'[2] Rousseau thus rejects outright the adequacy of a purely materialistic and mechanistic interpretation of man.

A further quality which distinguishes man from the brute is the former's faculty of self-improvement, his perfectibility. But man was first governed by immediate wants and by instinct and feeling. 'To will and not to will, to desire and to fear, must be the first and almost the only operations of his soul until new circumstances occasion new development of his faculties.'[3] The desires of the savage never go beyond his physical wants. 'The only goods he recognizes in the universe are food, a female and sleep; the only evils he fears are pain and hunger.'[4]

Rousseau is imagining man 'wandering up and down the forests, without industry, without speech and without home, an equal stranger to war and to all ties, neither standing in need of his fellow-creatures nor having any desire to hurt them'.[5] Man is pictured, therefore, as devoid of social life and as not yet having reached the level of reflection. Can we say of such a man that he possesses moral qualities? In a strict sense, no; but it does not follow that man in a state of nature can be called vicious. We are not entitled to conclude that because man in his most primitive state had no idea of goodness, he was therefore bad. Again, where there are no 'mine' and 'thine', there are no clear concepts of justice and injustice; but it does not follow that in the absence of these concepts men must behave in a violent and ruthless manner. Hobbes's picture of the state of nature as a state of war of all against all was unjustified. He was right in saying that self-love was the fundamental impulse; but self-love, in the sense of the impulse to self-preservation, does not of itself involve badness and violence. In the beginning the individual took little note of his fellows; and when he did so, the natural or innate feeling of compassion came into operation. It precedes all reflection, and even the brutes sometimes show it. To this theme of natural compassion and to its relation to self-love I shall return in the concluding section of this chapter. Meanwhile it is sufficient to note that for Rousseau man in the primitive state of nature is good. Even if he cannot be called good in a strictly moral sense, morality is simply a development of his natural feelings and impulses. Thus in his letter to Christophe de Beaumont, archbishop of Paris, which was printed in 1763, he could say roundly that the fundamental ethical principle is that man is naturally good and that there is no original perversity or sin in human nature.

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[1] *D.I.*, p. 177.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 184.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 185.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 186.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 203.

It will have been noted that Rousseau pictures primitive man as without speech. And in the first part of the *Discourse on Inequality* he makes some reflections about the origins of language and about its importance in man's intellectual development. Language originated in 'the simple cry of nature';[1] but in the course of time conventional signs were established by common consent, a particular name being given to a particular thing. But Rousseau does not profess to be able to explain how the transition took place from this stage of linguistic development to the use of general terms expressing general ideas. 'General ideas cannot be introduced into the mind without the assistance of words, nor can the understanding seize them except by means of propositions.'[2] But the words seem to postulate ideas or thoughts. We are left, therefore, with a problem. There is also the problem of the relation of language to society. 'I leave to anyone who will undertake it the discussion of the difficult problem, which was most necessary, the existence of society for the invention of language, or the invention of language for the establishment of society.'[3] However, whatever the answers to such problems may be, the development of man's intellectual life would be unthinkable apart from the development of language.

[1] *D.I.*, p. 191. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 192 [3] *Ibid.*, p. 194.

In the second part of the *Discourse on Inequality* Rousseau discusses the transition from the state of nature to organized society. He imagines how men gradually came to experience the advantage of common undertakings and how they thus came, on separate occasions at least, to develop a sense of social bonds. But the point on which Rousseau lays special emphasis is the establishment of private property. 'The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, bethought himself of saying *This is mine*, and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society.'[1] Property was introduced, equality disappeared, forests became smiling fields, slavery and misery arose with the crops. 'Metallurgy and agriculture were the two arts which produced this great revolution.'[2] Moral distinctions between justice and injustice also appeared. But this is not to say that men were better than they had been in the state of nature. 'Usurpations by the rich, robbery by the poor, and the unbridled passions of both, suppressed the cries of natural compassion and the still feeble voice of justice and filled men with avarice, ambition and vice. . . . The new-born state of society thus gave rise to a horrible state of war.'[3] In other words, private property was the result of man's departure from his state of primitive simplicity, and it brought untold evils in its train.

We have seen that Rousseau's primitive state of nature did not correspond to Hobbes's state of nature; it was not a condition of affairs of which it would be true to say, *Homo homini lupus*. But the form of society which has just been described was likened by Rousseau to a state of war, and in this respect it is similar to Hobbes's state of nature, though in some other important respects it is dissimilar. For example, moral distinctions arise for Rousseau in the state of civil society which, considered in abstraction, precedes the formation of political society,[4] whereas for Hobbes moral distinctions really follow the covenant whereby political society and government are established.

Given the insecurity and other evils which attend the establishment and development of the institution of private property, the establishment of political society, government and law was a foregone conclusion. 'All ran headlong to their chains in hope of securing their liberty; or they had just wit enough to perceive the advantage of political institutions, without sufficient experience to enable them to foresee the dangers.'[1] Government and law were thus established by common consent. But Rousseau is not the man to wax enthusiastic over this development. On the contrary, the institution of political society 'bound new fetters on the poor and gave new powers to the rich; irretrievably destroyed natural liberty, fixed eternally the law of property and inequality, converted clever usurpation into unalterable right, and, for the advantage of a few ambitious individuals, subjected all mankind to perpetual labour, slavery and wretchedness'.[2]

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[1] *D.I.*, p. 207. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 215. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 219.

[4] Hegel in the next century made a distinction between civil society and the State.

Rousseau declares, therefore, that he is content to adopt the common opinion and to regard the establishment of political society as 'a real contract between the people and the chiefs chosen by them; a contract by which both parties bind themselves to observe the laws therein expressed, which form the bonds of their union'.[3] But we can go on to ask, what was the course of development of political society? Did it begin with arbitrary power and despotism, or was despotism a later development? Rousseau's answer to this question is unequivocal. 'I regard it then as certain that government did not begin with arbitrary power, but that this is the depravation, the extreme term, of government and brings it back finally to just that law of the strongest which it was originally designed to remedy.'[4]

In the state of nature there was only natural or physical inequality, which consists in inequality of natural gifts and talents, whether physical or mental. And it is useless to ask, what is its source? For the very name shows that it is established by Nature. The subject of the *Discourse*, therefore, is what Rousseau calls 'moral or political inequality'.[5] This is due originally to the development of our faculties, and it is 'rendered permanent and legitimate by the establishment of property and laws'.[6] We can say, in addition, that whenever it is not proportionate to natural or physical inequality, it is at variance with natural right. It is wrong, for instance, that 'the privileged few should gorge themselves with superfluities while the starving multitude is in want of the bare necessities of life'.[7] And when we arrive at despotism, we have come, as it were, full circle. The subjects, being all reduced to slaves, return to their first equality. And as their master is unrestrained, all moral distinctions and principles of equity vanish. Men have then returned to a state of nature. Yet it differs from the original state of nature. For the latter was a state of innocence and simplicity, whereas the former is the result of corruption.

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[1] *D.I.*, p. 221.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 228.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 174.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 238.
[7] *Ibid.*

As we saw, Rousseau proposed to begin his *Discourse* by laying facts aside and by developing an hypothesis, that is, an hypothetical account of the origin of inequality. And according to his hypothesis moral or political inequality can be attributed not only to the improvement of the human faculties but also, and above all, to the establishment first of private property and then of political society, government and law. In the end we have a sharp antithesis between the natural goodness and simplicity of primitive man on the one hand and, on the other, the corruption of civilized man and the evils of organized society. At the same time perfectibility was assigned as one of the distinguishing marks of man as distinct from the brute. We can understand, therefore, the objection raised by Charles Bonnet (1720–93), writing under the pseudonym of Philopolis, that if perfectibility is a natural attribute of man, civilized society is natural. And this is obviously by no means the only objection which can be brought against the *Discourse on Inequality*.

But though Rousseau repeats in this *Discourse* the attack on the idea of progress which he had made in the first *Discourse*, he makes it clear at the end that he does not advocate the absurd idea of destroying society. 'What, then, is to be done? Must societies be totally abolished? Must *meum* and *tuum* be annihilated, and must we return to the forests to live among bears?'[1] Those who wish can return to the woods; but those who, like Rousseau, cannot subsist on acorns or live without laws or magistrates will, while maintaining a healthy contempt for the edifice of civilization, show concern for the reform of society. The way thus lies open for a more positive doctrine of political society. And in point of fact one of Rousseau's main ideas, that of the social or political contract, appears, as we have seen, in the *Discourse on Inequality*.

4. Another of Rousseau's leading ideas, that of the general will, makes its appearance in the *Discourse on Political Economy*. Having distinguished between the State and the family, Rousseau goes on to say that the former is 'a moral being possessed of a will'.[2] This general will, which always tends to the preservation and welfare of the whole and of every part, and which is the source of the laws, constitutes for all the members of the State,

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[1] *D.I.*, p. 245.

[2] *D.P.*, p. 253.

in their relations to one another and to it, the rule of what is just or unjust'.[1] It is idle, for instance, to say that Spartan children were morally guilty of theft when they stole to supplement their meagre repasts. For they were acting in accordance with the general will of the Spartan State. And this was for them the measure of just and unjust, right and wrong.

When one remembers that the *Discourse on Political Economy* was written about the same time as the *Discourse on Inequality*, and possibly even just before the latter, one may well be astonished at the difference in tone between the two works. But, as was mentioned in the second section of this chapter, it appears that Rousseau had formed positive ideas about the State before he competed for the prizes offered by the Dijon Academy by writing rhetorical essays on set subjects. In the *Discourse on Inequality* the ideas of the state of nature and of the transition to organized society are discussed, and the theory of political society as resting on a contract makes its appearance; but neither of the first two *Discourses* was intended to be a systematic treatise on political theory. Then in the *Discourse on Political Economy* we find a sketch of the theory of the general will. This work gives, indeed, the impression of being closer in spirit to the *Social Contract* than to the first two *Discourses*; but the concept of the general will is not proposed as though it had just been thought of by Rousseau for the first time.

To return to the theory of the general will. If we take a particular society within the State, say a religious body, this society possesses a will which is general in relation to its members; that is to say, it possesses a common will directed to the attainment of the ends of the society. But this will is particular if it is considered in relation to the general will of the State. Now, moral goodness involves identification of one's particular will with the general will. It follows, therefore, that a man may be a good member of some religious body, for example, but a bad citizen. For though his will may be at one with the general will of the former, this general will may be at variance with the general will of the State which comprises the religious body within itself.

Rousseau assumes that the general will is directed towards the common good or interest, that 'the most general will is always the most just also, and that the voice of the people is in fact the voice of God'.[2] The general will of the State, being more general than the general will of any society within the State, must prevail; for it is more just and directed to a more universal good. We can conclude, therefore, that 'the first and most important rule of legitimate or popular government, that is to say, of government whose object is the good of the people, is . . . to follow in everything the general will'.[1] Again, 'if you would have the general will accomplished, bring all the particular wills into conformity with it; in other words, as virtue is nothing more than this conformity of the particular wills with the general will, establish the reign of virtue'.[2] But if virtue is nothing more than conformity with the general will, to establish the reign of virtue can be nothing more than to conform all particular wills to the general will. Hence public education, on the necessity of which Rousseau lays stress, must be directed to facilitating and securing this conformity.

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[1] *D.P.*, p. 253.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 254.

A distinction is drawn by Rousseau between sovereignty and government. The sovereign is the power which possesses the right of legislation; the government's function is executive and administrative, that is, to administer the law. 'The first duty of the legislator is to make the laws conformable to the general will.'[3] And 'the general will is always on the side which is most favourable to the public interest, that is to say, most equitable; so that it is needful only to act justly to be certain of following the general will'.[4]

What are we to understand by the general will? There is a natural temptation to interpret Rousseau as identifying the infallible general will with the voice of the people as expressed by vote in assembly. But he does not make this identification. In a large State such general assemblies of the whole people are impracticable; but even when a general assembly is practicable, 'it is by no means certain that its decision would be the expression of the general will'.[5] Of course, if one speaks at all about a quasi-mystical general will of the State, which stands in need of articulate expression, one will inevitably tend to identify it with the expressed decision of the legislature or with the expressed will of some supposed mouthpiece of the people. And this tendency is certainly present in Rousseau. It could hardly be otherwise, given his premises. But it is no more than a tendency; it is not a position which he formally adopts. He explicitly allows, for instance, that an actual decision of the sovereign legislature may fail to be a true expression of the general will. It may be the expression of private interests which for some reason or other have wrongly prevailed. To say, for example, that the general will is the criterion of what is just and what is unjust is not, therefore, to say that no criticism of the laws of the State on the score of injustice is possible. That is why Rousseau can say that the legislator's first duty is to make the laws conform to the general will, and that it is needful only to act justly to be certain of following the general will. Such statements obviously suppose that law is not necessarily or inevitably the true expression of the general will, and that not even common decisions of a general assembly are immune from moral criticism.

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[1] *D.P.*, p. 255.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 260.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 258.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 259.
[5] *Ibid.*

As far as the *Discourse on Political Economy* is concerned, Rousseau evidently assumes that there is something higher than the State. We have seen that, according to him, the more general will is also the most just. We can say, therefore, that just as the wills of individuals and of particular societies within the State are particular wills in relation to the general will of the State, so is the will of an individual State a particular will if it is looked at in relation to 'the great city of the world . . . whose general will is always the will of nature, and of which the different States and peoples are individual members'.[1] In other words, there seems to be at the back of Rousseau's mind the traditional concept of a natural moral law, engraven on men's hearts, obedience to which necessarily conduces to human happiness and welfare. And the general will of a political society is a particular canalization, so to speak, of the universal orientation of the human will to the good. The legislator's task is to conform the laws to this general will; and the citizen's task is to bring his particular will into harmony with the general will.

If this general will represents, in a given political society, the universal orientation of the human will to the good of man, it represents what every member of the society 'really' wills. This enables Rousseau to answer the objection that membership of society and obedience to law involve restraint and curtailment of liberty. Men are free by nature. And they unite in societies to assure not only their property and life but also their liberty. In point of fact, however, they become subject to restraint when they form organized societies; they become subjects instead of masters. And is it not paradoxical in the extreme to suggest that men become free or preserve freedom by becoming subjects? Rousseau answers by appealing to the idea of law. 'It is to law alone that men owe justice and liberty.'[1] But this answer can be effective only in so far as law expresses the general will and in so far as the latter represents the 'real' will of everyone and what everyone's reason 'really' dictates. In obeying the law a man is thus obeying his own reason and judgment and following his own real will. And to follow one's own judgment and will is to be free. Hence the obedient citizen is the truly free man; for he obeys a law which expresses his own real will. This notion was to be of considerable importance in later philosophy.

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[1] *D.P.*, p. 253.

In the *Discourse on Political Economy*, therefore, which, as has been already remarked, differs strikingly in tone from the first two *Discourses*, we find an emphatic statement of the most significant theory of the *Social Contract*, namely that of the general will. The theory gives rise to considerable difficulties and problems; but further discussion is best postponed to the next chapter. The concluding section of this chapter, however, may help to throw a little more light on Rousseau's general outlook.

In the final pages of the *Discourse on Political Economy* Rousseau deals with the subject of taxation. In his opinion the most equitable system of taxation, and consequently the one best suited to a society of free men, would be a capitation tax in proportion to the amount of property which a man possesses over and above the necessities of life. Those who possess only the latter should pay nothing at all. As for the other citizens, the tax should be levied, not in simple ratio to the property of the taxed, but in compound ratio to the difference of their conditions and the superfluity of their possessions. It is perfectly just that the more wealthy a man is, the more he should pay in taxation. For one thing, the rich derive great advantages from the social contract. Society protects their possessions and opens to them easy access to lucrative positions of eminence and power. They enjoy many advantages which the poor fail to enjoy. Hence, as the richer a man is, the more he gets out of the State, so to speak, he should be taxed in proportion to his wealth. There should also be heavy taxes on all luxuries. For then either the rich will substitute socially useful for socially useless expenses or the State will receive high taxes. In either case the State will gain.

If we care to translate Rousseau's ideas into modern terms, we can say that he advocated a system of graduated income-tax, according to which those with very low incomes would pay nothing at all while those possessing incomes above a certain level would pay a tax constantly increasing as we go up the scale. This is not, of course, exactly what he says. For he thinks in terms of property and of 'superfluities' rather than in terms of income. But it indicates the spirit of his proposals. And it is significant that he speaks of these proposals as tending insensibly 'to bring all fortunes nearer to that middle condition which constitutes the genuine strength of the State'.[1]

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[1] *D.P.*, p. 256.

5. It was Rousseau's constant thesis that the fundamental impulse in man is self-love. Our wants give rise to our passions; and as primitive man's wants were purely physical, self-preservation was 'his chief and almost sole concern'.[2] In *Émile* we are told that 'our first duties are to ourselves; our first feelings are centred on self; all our instincts are at first directed to our own preservation and on our own welfare'.[3] Again, 'the origin of our passions, the root and spring of all the rest, the only one which is born with man, which never leaves him as long as he lives, is self-love; this passion is primitive, instinctive, it precedes all the rest, which are in a sense only modifications of it'.[4]

But this fundamental passion of self-love is not to be confused with egoism. For egoism is a feeling which arises only in society, and which leads a man always to prefer himself to others. 'In the true state of nature egoism did not exist.'[5] For primitive man did not make the comparisons which are required for egoism to be possible. Self-love, considered in itself, is 'always good, always in accordance with the order of nature'.[6] In his letter to the archbishop of Paris Rousseau says that self-love is 'a passion indifferent in itself to good and evil; it becomes good or evil only by accident and according to the circumstances in which it develops'.[7] But whether it is called good or indifferent, it is certainly not evil, and it is not to be identified with what is called egoism.

Primitive man is also depicted as moved by natural pity or compassion, which Rousseau describes as 'the pure emotion of nature, prior to all kinds of reflection'.[8] This feeling comes into operation, of course, only when a man has taken note in some sense of his fellows; but he does not reason to the desirability of compassion; he simply feels it. It is a natural impulse.

Rousseau may sometimes seem to imply that compassion is a feeling or passion different from and originally independent of self-love. Thus he speaks of compassion as 'a natural feeling which, by moderating the violence of love of self in each individual, contributes to the preservation of the whole species'.[1] And he goes on to add that in the hypothetical state of nature compassion supplies the place of laws, morals and virtues. But though we can distinguish between self-love and compassion, the latter is really a derivative of the former. We are told in *Émile* that 'the child's first sentiment is self-love (and that) his second, which is derived from it, is love of those about him'.[2] True, Rousseau is here speaking of something which goes beyond natural pity or compassion. But later he undertakes to tell us how pity, 'the first relative sentiment which touches the human heart according to the order of nature'[3] is born. We are informed that the individual sympathizes with or feels compassion for, not those who are happier than himself, but only those who are more unfortunate than he is and who are suffering from ills from which he does not believe himself to be immune. In other words, man originally feels pity because he identifies himself with the sufferer. And in this case it is not so much that the original impulse of self-love is accompanied and modified by an independent natural feeling of pity and compassion as that the latter is comprised in the former and grows out of it when man takes note of his fellows. In this sense it is the 'first relative sentiment'.

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[1] *D.P.*, p. 286.
[2] *D.I.*, p. 183.
[3] *É.*, II, p. 61.
[4] *É.*, IV, p. 173.
[5] *D.I.*, p. 197, note 2.
[6] *É.*, IV, p. 174.
[7] *Œuvres*, 1865, III, p. 647.
[8] *D.I.*, p. 198.

Now, all morality is founded on these natural feelings. In his letter to the archbishop of Paris, Rousseau remarks that love of self is not a simple passion. For man is a composite being, sensitive and intelligent. Sense-appetite tends to the good of the body, while the desire of the intelligent part of man, the desire or love of order, tends to the good of the soul. 'This last love, developed and rendered active, bears the name conscience';[4] but the operations of conscience, the love of order, postulate knowledge of order. It is, therefore, only when man has begun to take note of his fellows and to apprehend relations and make comparisons that he comes to have such ideas as justice and order, and that conscience can operate. Given the necessary reflection, moral concepts are formed and virtues and vices arise. But all these are founded on man's fundamental feelings. The concept of justice, for example, is founded on self-love. 'Thus the first notion of justice springs not from what we owe to others, but from what is due to us.'[1] Again, from the natural emotion of compassion 'flow all those social virtues of which he (Mandeville) denied man the possession. What is generosity, clemency or humanity but compassion applied to the weak, to the guilty, or to mankind in general?'[2] And conscience, as we have seen, is founded on love of self as present in man as an intelligent or rational being.

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[1] *D.I.*, p. 199.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 184.

[3] *É.*, IV, p. 174.

[4] *Œuvres*, 1865, III, p. 64.

If our whole moral life depends on our fundamental impulses or passions, it is not surprising to find Rousseau attacking those who maintain that moral education consists in extirpating them. 'Our passions are the chief means of self-preservation; to try to destroy them is therefore as absurd as it is useless; this would be to overcome nature, to reshape God's handiwork.'[3] In point of fact moral development consists in the right direction and extension of the fundamental passion of self-love. 'Extend self-love to others and it is transformed into virtue, a virtue which has its root in the heart of every one of us.'[4] Self-love is capable of development into the love of all mankind and the promotion of the general happiness which are the concern of every truly virtuous man.

Morality is thus the unthwarted and unprevented development of man's natural passions and feelings. Vice is not natural to man; it constitutes a distortion of his nature. 'Our natural passions are few in number; they are the means to freedom, they tend to self-preservation. All those which enslave and destroy us have another source; nature does not bestow them on us; we seize on them in her despite.'[5] For instance, the rise of civilization has multiplied man's wants and needs, and this has given rise to selfishness and to the 'hateful and angry passions'. It is easy, therefore, to understand Rousseau's insistence that it is the simple, those who stand nearest to nature and whose feelings and passions have been least corrupted by an artificial civilization, who are most open to the voice of conscience. 'Virtue! Sublime science of simple minds, are such industry and preparation needed if we are to know you? Are not your principles graven on every heart? Need we do more, to learn your laws, than examine ourselves and listen to the voice of conscience, when the passions are silent? This is the true philosophy, with which we must learn to be content.'[6] And Rousseau makes the Savoyard priest assert that 'there is therefore at the bottom of our hearts an innate principle of justice and virtue by which, in spite of our maxims, we judge our own actions or those of others to be good or evil; and it is this principle which I call conscience'.[1] 'To exist is to feel; our feeling is undoubtedly earlier than our intelligence, and we had feelings before we had ideas. . . . To know good is not to love it; this knowledge is not innate in man. But as soon as his reason leads him to perceive it, his conscience impels him to love it. It is this feeling which is innate.'[2] Hence, although Rousseau does not deny, but rather asserts, that reason and reflection have a part to play in the development of morality, he lays the emphasis on feeling. 'What I feel to be right is right, what I feel to be wrong is wrong . . . it is only when we haggle with conscience that we have recourse to the subtleties of argument.'[3] These words are put into the mouth of the simple Savoyard priest, it is true; but they represent a real element in Rousseau's thought.

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[1] *É.*, II, p. 61.
[2] *D.I.*, p. 199.
[3] *É.*, IV, p. 173.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 215.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 173.
[6] *D.A.*, pp. 153-4.

The word 'feeling', when used in the last quotation, signifies, of course, immediate apprehension or intuition rather than feeling in the sense in which the sentiment of pity is a feeling. And the word has more or less the same meaning when the Savoyard priest uses it in connection with recognition of God's existence. The world is an ordered system of interrelated entities, and this fact manifests the existence of divine intelligence. 'Let us listen to the inner voice of feeling; what healthy mind can reject its evidence?'[4] 'I believe, therefore, that the world is governed by a wise and powerful will; I see it or rather I feel it, and it is a great thing to know this.'[5] 'I see God everywhere in his works; I feel him within myself.'[6] Again, I know that I am a free, active being. 'In vain do you argue this point with me; I feel it, and it is this feeling which speaks to me more forcibly than the reason which disputes it.'[7]

We have seen that morality develops when man begins to recognize his relations with his fellows. Rousseau can say, therefore, that 'society must be studied in the individual and the individual in society; those who desire to treat politics and morals apart from one another will never understand either'.[8] If one is acquainted only with the *Social Contract*, one might perhaps be inclined to interpret this statement as meaning that moral distinctions are settled simply by the general will expressed in positive legislation. But we ought to bear in mind the first part of the statement, namely that society must be studied in the individual.

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[1] *É.*, IV, p. 252.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 253.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 249.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 237.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 239.
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 242.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 197.

What we have said hitherto shows that for Rousseau Nature herself has directed our will to the good for man. But we possess no innate idea of this good. Hence we can form erroneous ideas of it. There is no guarantee, therefore, that what individual citizens, even when they are gathered together in assembly, think to be for the common good actually is for the common good. At the same time there is, underlying all distorted passions and erroneous ideas, a universal and natural direction of the will to the good. Hence it is the business of the legislator to interpret this will and to bring the laws into conformity with it. And this is why Rousseau can say in the *Social Contract* that 'the general will is always right and tends to the public advantage; but it does not follow that the deliberations of the people are always equally correct. Our will is always for our own good, but we do not always see what that is; the people is never corrupted, but it is often deceived, and on such occasions only does it seem to will what is bad.'[1]

I do not suggest that this aspect of Rousseau's theory of the general will, a theory which owes much to the traditional conception of natural law, is the most significant aspect from the point of view of the historical development of political theory. And other aspects will be discussed in the next chapter. But if we bear in mind the relation between the concept of the infallible general will and Rousseau's moral theory as developed in other writings, it becomes easier to understand how he came to propose this concept in the first place.

Rousseau's exaltation of intuition and of inner feeling or sentiment (*sentiment intérieur*) gave expression to a revulsion against arid rationalism which was not uncommon in the second half of the eighteenth century. It also gave to this revolt a powerful impetus. The cult of intuition and sensibility owed much to Rousseau. As for the profession of faith of the Savoyard priest, with its founding of belief in God and in immortality on feeling rather than on sheer reasoning, this exercised a considerable influence on Robespierre and his followers. But in the long run Rosseau's sentimental deism perhaps worked more in favour of the restoration of Catholicism than against it.

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[1] *S.C.*, II, 3, p. 25.

CHAPTER IV

ROUSSEAU (2)

The social contract—Sovereignty, the general will and freedom—Government—Concluding remarks.

I. ROUSSEAU states the first problem to be considered in the *Social Contract* in these terms: 'Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains. One thinks himself the master of others, and still remains a greater slave than they. How did this change come about? I do not know. What can make it legitimate? This question I think I can answer.'[1] Having postulated an original state of nature in which men were free, Rousseau is obliged either to condemn the social order in which man's primitive freedom no longer exists and to say that men should shake off their bonds as soon as possible or to justify it in some way. The first course is ruled out, because 'the social order is a sacred right which is the basis of all other rights'.[2] Hence Rousseau is compelled to show that the social order is justified and legitimate.

In solving his problem Rousseau has recourse to the contractual theory which we have already met in different forms in the philosophies of Hobbes and Locke. He is unwilling to found the social order on force; for might does not confer right. 'Force is a physical power, and I fail to see what moral effect it can have. To yield to force is an act of necessity, not of will—at most it is an act of prudence. In what sense can it be called a duty?'[3] If citizens have a duty of obedience, it cannot be founded simply on the possession of power by the person or persons to whom obedience is rendered. At the same time there is no natural right to legislate for society. For society and the state of nature are distinct. The social order, therefore, to be legitimate and justified, must be founded on agreement or convention.

Rousseau proposes the hypothesis that men have reached the point at which the obstacles to their preservation in the state of nature are greater than their resources for maintaining themselves in this state. They must, therefore, unite together and form an association. But the problem is not simply to find a form of association which will protect the persons and goods of each member. It is also that of finding an association in which each member will still obey himself alone and remain as free as before. 'This is the fundamental problem of which the *Social Contract* provides the solution.'[1]

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[1] *S.C.*, I, 3, p. 5. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *S.C.*, I, 3, p. 8.

In essence the social compact or contract can be expressed as follows. 'Each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and, in our corporate capacity, we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole.'[2] This act of association immediately creates a moral and collective body, a public person, the republic or body politic. It is called the State when considered as passive, the Sovereign when considered as active, and a Power when compared with other similar bodies. Its members are called collectively the people, while, taken individually, they are called citizens, as sharing in the sovereign power, and subjects, as being under the laws of the State.

This theory of the social contract obviously differs from that of Hobbes. According to the latter's theory individuals agree to hand over their rights to a sovereign who stands outside the covenant, not being a party to it. Government is thus set up by the same agreement that creates an organized society: in fact, the existence of the body politic really depends on its relation to the sovereign who might, indeed, be an assembly and not an individual, but who is distinguishable from the contracting parties. In Rousseau's theory, however, the original contract creates a sovereign which is identical with the contracting parties taken collectively, and nothing at all is said about government. For Rousseau, the government is simply an executive power which is dependent for its power on the sovereign assembly or body politic. Hobbes's problem was one of social cohesion. Given his view of man and of the state of nature, he was faced with the task of finding an effective counterbalance to the centrifugal forces in human nature. Or, more concretely, he was faced with the problem of finding an effective remedy for the greatest evil of society, namely civil war. He found the solution in centralized government, in a theory of sovereignty which emphasized above all things the position of the government. And as he accepted the hypothesis of the state of nature, he had to incorporate this emphasis on government into his account of the covenant whereby the transition from the state of nature to that of organized society is effected. Rousseau's problem, however, was different. Given his insistence on liberty, and given his desire to show that the change from the state of nature to that of organized society was not a substitution of slavery for freedom for the sake of mere security, he felt himself compelled to show that in society a higher form of liberty is acquired than the one enjoyed in the state of nature. One would not, therefore, expect to find him emphasizing the idea of government in his account of the social contract or the idea of the contracting parties handing over their rights to a sovereign who stands outside the contract. Instead, we find him emphasizing a mutual agreement between the contracting parties which creates a new moral entity in which each member realizes himself more fully than he could do in the state of nature.

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[1] *S.C.*, 1, 6, p. 14.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Obviously, this signifies a marked change of attitude and tone between the first two *Discourses* and the *Social Contract.* True, in the *Discourse on Inequality* we can see, as was remarked in the last chapter, some elements of Rousseau's mature political theory making their appearance. But the first *Discourse* inevitably gives the impression that for Rousseau political society is an evil, whereas in the *Social Contract* we find man's true nature being fulfilled, as it were, in the social order. He becomes, 'instead of a stupid and unimaginative animal . . . an intelligent being and a man'.[1] There is not, indeed, a pure contradiction between the first *Discourse* and the *Social Contract.* In the former Rousseau is speaking of the evils of civilized society as it actually existed, particularly in France, whereas in the *Social Contract* he is speaking rather of political society as it ought to be. And even in the latter work, while extolling the benefits which man acquires by the social contract, he remarks that 'the abuses of this new condition often degrade him below that which he left'.[2] At the same time it can hardly be denied that there is a remarkable change of tone and emphasis. And the same is true of the relation of the *Social Contract* to the *Discourse on Inequality.* The impression given by the latter is that man, naturally good, acquires moral ideas and moral qualities in the strict sense during a gradual process of development in which civil society, in the sense of loose social bonds, precedes the formation of organized political society. But in the *Social Contract* Rousseau speaks as though through the institution of political society man passes at once from a non-moral to a moral state. 'The passage from the state of nature to

[1] *S.C.*, I, 8, p. 19.

[2] *Ibid.*

the civil state produces a very remarkable change in man, by substituting justice for instinct in his conduct, and giving his actions the morality which they had formerly lacked.'[1] The State becomes the source of justice and the basis of rights. Here again there is perhaps no sheer contradiction. The social contract is after all nothing but a philosophical fiction, as Hume puts it; and we can, if we like, regard Rousseau as making a theoretical or logical, rather than an historical, distinction between man in society and man considered in abstraction from society. As a mere isolated individual, man, while not vicious or bad in himself, is not properly a moral being: it is only in society that his intellectual and moral life develops. And this is substantially what Rousseau had said in the *Discourse on Inequality*. At the same time there is a change of tone. True, this change of tone can be explained in large part by difference of purpose. In the *Discourse* Rousseau was concerned with the origins of inequality, and he ascribes to the institution of society the origin of what he calls 'moral or political inequality'. The emphasis is on inequality, as is indicated by the title of the *Discourse*. In the *Social Contract* Rousseau is concerned with the benefits which man acquires from the institution of society, such as the substitution of civil and moral for merely 'natural' liberty. But though the change in tone is explicable largely in terms of difference of purpose, it is there none the less. In the *Social Contract*, a new, and more important, aspect of Rousseau's political theory is displayed.

We can see, therefore, how misleading the opening words of the first chapter of the *Social Contract* can be, if they are taken as an adequate statement of Rousseau's position. 'Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains.' These words formulate a problem, not a solution. The solution is to be found in the idea of the transformation of natural into civil and moral liberty. 'What a man loses by the social contract is his natural liberty and an unlimited right to everything which he tries to get and succeeds in getting; what he gains is civil liberty and the proprietorship of all he possesses.'[2] Natural liberty is limited only by the strength of the individual; civil liberty is limited by the general will, with which the real will of each member of society is one. Mere possession is the effect of force or of the right of first occupation; proprietorship is founded on a positive title, it is a right conferred by the State. 'Over and above all this, we might add to what man acquires in the civil state moral liberty, which alone makes him truly master of himself. For the mere impulse of appetite is slavery while obedience to a law which we prescribe to ourselves is liberty.'[1] In some forms of society, in a tyrannical and capricious dictatorship for example, men are indeed reduced to slavery, and they may be worse off than in the state of nature. But this is accidental, in the sense that it does not follow from the essence of the State. If we consider the State in its essence, we must say that its institution is an incalculable benefit to man.

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[1] *S.C.*, I, 8, p. 18.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

By accepting the contractual theory Rousseau is faced, of course, with the same difficulty with which Locke was faced. Are we to say that the original contracting parties bound not only themselves but also their descendants? And, if so, what is our justification for saying this? Rousseau does not appear to consider this problem explicitly, though he makes it clear that the citizens of a State can at any time agree to dissolve the contract. 'There neither is nor can be any kind of fundamental law binding on the body of the people—not even the social contract itself.'[2] Again, 'there is in the State no fundamental law that cannot be revoked, not excluding the social compact itself; for if all the citizens assembled of one accord to break the compact, it is impossible to doubt that it would be quite legitimately broken'.[3] As for individuals taken singly, Rousseau refers to Grotius's opinion that each man can renounce his membership of his own State and recover his natural liberty by leaving the country. He appears to endorse this opinion by adding that 'it would be indeed absurd if all the citizens in assembly could not do what each can do by himself'.[4] (Rousseau appends a note to say that flight from the country to escape one's obligations in the hour of need would be a criminal and punishable act.) Presumably he considered that as the social contract brings into existence a new moral being, this being continues to exist, in spite of the fact that some members die and new members are born, unless the members collectively dissolve the contract in one of their periodic assemblies. The membership in the State does not effect the latter's continual existence as a moral being.

2. We have seen that according to Rousseau the public person which is formed by the union of individuals through the social contract is called, when considered as active, the sovereign. This means in effect that the sovereign is the whole body of the people

[1] *S.C.*, I, 8, p. 19. [2] *S.C.*, I, 7, p. 17. [3] *S.C.*, III, 18, p. 89. [4] *Ibid.*

as legislating, as the source of law. Now, law is the expression of will. Rousseau can say, therefore, that sovereignty is 'nothing less than the exercise of the general will'.[1] Each citizen has a dual capacity. As a member of the moral being which is the source of law he is a member of the sovereign. Considered as standing under the law and bound to obey it, he is a subject. The individual possesses, of course, a particular will, and this may be at variance with the general will. It is his civic duty to conform his particular will to the general will of the sovereign, of which he is himself a member.

Sovereignty, Rousseau insists, is inalienable. For it consists in the exercise of the general will, and this will cannot be alienated or transferred. One may transfer power, but not will. This is why Rousseau later insists that the people cannot elect representatives in the full sense of the word; it can only elect deputies. 'Sovereignty, for the same reason as makes it inalienable, cannot be represented; it lies essentially in the general will, and will does not admit of representation. It is either the same or other; there is no intermediate possibility. The deputies of the people, therefore, are not and cannot be its representatives: they are merely its stewards, and can carry through no definitive acts. Every law the people has not ratified in person is null and void. . . .'[2] (Rousseau draws the conclusion that the people of England are free only during the election of members of parliament, and that then they relapse into slavery.)

For the same reason sovereignty is indivisible. For the will, the exercise of which is called sovereignty, is the general will, and this cannot be divided. Divide it, and you have only particular wills, and thus no sovereignty. We cannot divide sovereignty into various powers, such as legislative and executive powers. The executive power or government is neither the sovereign nor a part of it: it is concerned with the administration of law and is a mere instrument of the sovereign. For Rousseau, therefore, the sovereign is the legislative, and this is the people. In a given State the nominal sovereign may be a person or persons other than the people; but the true sovereign is always the people. Needless to say, by 'people' Rousseau does not mean one class in the State, as distinct from another class or from other classes; he means the whole body of citizens. We may also note that he uses the word 'legislator' in a technical sense of his own, to mean a person who draws up laws, as Lycurgus is said to have drawn up laws for the Spartans. But a legislator in this sense does not, of course, possess sovereign power. His function is advisory or illuminative, in the sense that his task is to enlighten the sovereign people so that it may act with a clear idea of what the common interest really is here and now.

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[1] *S.C.*, II, 1, p. 22.

[2] *S.C.*, III, 15, p. 83.

Sovereignty, therefore, is said to be the exercise of the general will: and the sovereign is the people, in whom this will resides. But what is meant by the general will?

The natural temptation, of course, is to understand the term 'general will' primarily in relation to the willing subject, the sovereign people, in its legislative function. We may then be easily led to think that the general will can be identified to all intents and purposes with the decision expressed in a majority vote of the assembly. And if we interpret Rousseau in this sense, we shall be likely to comment that his description of the general will as infallible and as always tending to the public advantage is both absurd and pernicious. Absurd, because there is no guarantee that a law enacted by a popular assembly really will be to the public advantage; pernicious, because it encourages tyranny and intolerance. But the interpretation on which these conclusions are based is incorrect; in any case it places the emphasis wrongly.

We must recall to mind first of all Rousseau's famous distinction between the general will (*volonté générale*) and the will of all (*volonté de tous*). 'There is often a great deal of difference between the will of all and the general will. The latter considers only the common interest, while the former takes private interest into account and is no more than a sum of particular wills.'[1] The general will is, indeed, general in the sense that it is the will of a universal subject, the sovereign people; but the emphasis is placed by Rousseau on universality of object, namely the common interest or good or advantage. And this general will cannot be identified without more ado with the sum of particular wills as manifested in a majority, or even in a unanimous, vote. For the result of voting may give expression to a mistaken idea of what the common good involves and demands; and a law which is enacted as the result of voting may conceivably be detrimental to the public advantage. 'Of itself the people always wills the good, but of itself it by no means always sees it. The general will is always in the right, but the judgment which guides it is not always enlightened . . . the public wills the good it does not see.'[1] It is this fact which 'makes a legislator necessary',[2] in the sense described above.

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[1] *S.C.*, II, 3, p. 25.

The 'will of all', therefore, is not infallible; it is only the 'general will' which is infallible and always right. And this means that it is always directed to the common good. It is clear, I think, that Rousseau has extended his concept of the natural goodness of man to the new moral being which arises through the social contract. The individual, impelled fundamentally by self-love (not, we may recall, to be identified with egoism in a morally depreciative sense), naturally seeks his own good, though it does not necessarily follow that he has a clear idea of its true nature.[3] The 'public person' which the social contract brings into existence also seeks inevitably its own good, the common good. But the people do not always understand where their true good lies. Hence they stand in need of enlightenment in order that the general will may be properly expressed.

Let us suppose for the sake of argument that it makes sense to speak of the State as a moral entity which is capable of willing. If we say that its will, the general will, is always right, and if we distinguish between this will and the will of all considered as the sum of particular wills, then the statement that the general will is infallible does not commit us to the statement that every law which is passed by the popular assembly is necessarily the law which is most conducive to the public advantage in the given circumstances. There is still room for possibly justified criticism. At the same time we run the risk of being reduced to the utterance of a tautology. For if we say that the general will is always right, and if we mean by this that the general will is always directed to the common good, the question arises whether we are saying anything more than that the will for the common good is the will for the common good; if, that is to say, we define the general will in terms of a universal object, namely the common good or interest. It might be maintained, therefore, that Rousseau can be saved from an uncritical worship of the legislative decisions of public assemblies only by reducing what he says to an innocuous tautology.

The comment might then be made that what is really required is a clear account of what it means to speak about the State as a moral entity with a will. If this will is not identical with the will of all, what exactly is it? Is it something over and above all particular wills? Or is it rather particular wills taken collectively and considered according to their natural orientation towards the good rather than as directed by the particular concepts of the good in the minds of their owners? In the first case we are faced with an ontological problem. That is to say, we are faced with the problem of the ontological status of the subsistent general will. In the second case some reconsideration by Rousseau of his initial individualism would seem to be demanded. For the will of *A* is directed towards *A*'s good, and the will of *B* is directed towards *B*'s good. If, therefore, we wish to say that the wills of *A*, *B*, *C*, and so on, considered in their natural orientation towards the good, form collectively the general will (which is directed towards the common good), it seems that we ought to maintain that men are by nature and from the beginning social beings and that their wills are directed naturally not only towards their private good, but also to the common good, or to their private goods as comprised within the common good or as contributing to it. I think that something of this was, indeed, in the back of Rousseau's mind. But by first presenting us with an individualistic picture of man and by then advancing the idea of a new moral public person with a will of its own, he has left in obscurity the precise nature of the general will and its precise relation to particular wills. There is, indeed, little indication that Rousseau gave to these problems the prolonged reflection which they require. We can discern in his political philosophy various lines of thought which it is difficult to harmonize. The most significant line of thought is doubtless the idea of the State as an organic entity with a will of its own, which is in some rather undefined sense the 'true' will of each member of the State. To this notion I shall return presently.

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[1] *S.C.*, II, 6, p. 34.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] We may compare the Scholastic doctrine that, whatever a man wills, he wills *sub specie boni*.

I do not mean to imply that for Rousseau there is no connection between the general will and the legislative activity of the sovereign people. To say, as he does, that there is often a great deal of difference between the will of all and the general will, is not to say that they never coincide. And one of Rousseau's problems as a political theorist was to suggest means of ensuring, so far as this can be done, that the infallible general will attains concrete expression in law. One of the means which he suggests has already been noted, namely the employment of a wise 'legislator'. Another means is the prevention, so far as this is practicable, of partial societies within the State. The point is this. If each citizen votes entirely independently, the differences between them, according to Rousseau, will cancel out, 'and the general will remains as the sum of the differences'.[1] If, however, factions and parties are formed, each with its (relatively speaking) general will, the differences become less numerous, and the result is less general and less expressive of the general will. Worse still, when one association or party is so strong or numerous that its will inevitably prevails over those of the other citizens, the result is not expressive in any way of the general will of the State, but only of a particular will (particular, that is, in relation to the general will of the State, even if it is general in relation to the members of the association or party). Rousseau's conclusion is that 'it is therefore essential, if the general will is to be able to express itself, that there should be no partial society within the State, and that each citizen should think only his own thoughts'.[2]

This is, of course, one reason why Rousseau shows dislike of the Christian Church. 'Wherever the clergy is a corporate body, it is master and legislator in its own country. . . . Of all Christian writers, the philosopher Hobbes alone has seen the evil and how to remedy it, and has dared to propose the reunion of the two heads of the eagle, and the restoration throughout of political unity. . . . But he should have seen that the masterful spirit of Christianity is incompatible with his system, and that the priestly interest would always be stronger than that of the State.'[3] True, when Rousseau speaks against the Christian Church and in favour of a purely civil religion, he is not directly engaged in discussing the general will and its expression. But his remarks are none the less obviously relevant. For if the Church sets itself up as a quasi-sovereign, its influence will inevitably interfere with the expression of the general will of the true sovereign, namely the people.

It should be noted how Rousseau assumes that if the citizens are duly enlightened, and if partial societies within the State are suppressed (or, where this is not possible, rendered so numerous that their diverging interests and influences cancel out), the majority vote will inevitably express the general will. 'If, when the people, being furnished with adequate information, held its deliberations, the citizens had no communication one with another, the grand total of the small differences would always give the general will, and the decision would always be good.'[1] Again, 'there is but one law which, from its nature, needs unanimous consent. This is the social compact. . . . Apart from this primitive contract, the vote of the majority always binds the rest. . . . The general will is found by counting votes.'[2] This does not exactly contradict what Rousseau says about the distinction between the general will and the will of all. For the distinction is meant to allow for the possibility of private interests, especially the interest of partial groups and associations determining the decision of the people in assembly. And when this abuse takes place, the result of voting does not represent the general will. But when such abuses are avoided, the result will certainly give expression to the general will.

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[1] *S.C.*, II, 3, p. 25. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 26. [3] *S.C.*, IV, 8, p. 116.

Of course, in one sense this is obviously true; namely in the sense that the will of a majority is more general than the will of a minority. But this is a truism. And it is not all that Rousseau has in mind. For a law which is the expression of the general will is for him a law which tends to or secures or preserves the common good or interest. If, therefore, the influence of group interests is avoided, the expressed will of the assembly is infallibly conducive to the public good. Criticism of the assembly's expressed will would seem to be legitimate only on the ground of undue influence by private party and group interests. If we assume that each citizen is 'thinking his own thoughts' and is not exposed to illegitimate pressures, there does not seem to be any ground left, on Rousseau's premises, for criticizing the expressed will of the assembly, even if it is expressed only by a majority vote. It is true that he asserts that the majority should approach unanimity in proportion to the gravity of the matters to be decided; but this does not alter the fact that 'the general will is formed by counting votes (and that) all the qualities of the general will still reside in the majority'.[3]

Rousseau's discussion of the general will is closely connected with the problem of freedom. As we have seen, he wished to justify the transition from the hypothetical state of nature to that of organized political society. Believing that man is naturally free and that freedom is an inestimable value, he felt himself compelled to show that through the social contract, which gives rise to the State, man, instead of losing freedom, acquires a higher kind of it. For 'to renounce liberty is to renounce being a man'.[4]

[1] *S.C.*, II, 3, pp. 25-6.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *S.C.*, IV, 2, p. 94.

[4] *S.C.*, I, 4, p. 10.

Rousseau maintained, therefore, that by the social contract natural liberty is exchanged for civil liberty. But it is obvious that in society men are compelled to obey the law. If they do not do so, they are punished. And, given this situation, is it possible to hold that by exchanging the state of nature, in which man was free to do whatever he had the physical capacity for doing, for the state of political society he became more, and not less, free than before, or at least that he acquired a truer and fuller freedom? Rousseau's treatment of this problem is celebrated.

In the first place the social contract must be understood as including the tacit undertaking to submit to the general will and that whoever refuses to do this shall be subjected to compulsion. 'The citizen gives his consent to all the laws, including those which are passed in spite of his opposition, and even those which punish him when he dares to break any of them.'[1]

In the second place, and this is the salient point, the general will is each man's real will. And the expression of the general will is the expression of each citizen's real will. Now, to follow one's own will is to act freely. Hence to be compelled to conform one's will to the general will is to be compelled to be free. It is to be brought into a state where one wills what one 'really' wills.

Here we have Rousseau's famous paradox. 'In order that the social compact may not be an empty formula, it tacitly includes the undertaking, which alone can give force to the rest, that whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be compelled to do so by the whole body. This means nothing less than that he will be forced to be free.'[2] Again, '. . . the general will is found by counting votes. When, therefore, the opinion which is contrary to my own prevails, this proves neither more nor less than that I was mistaken, and that what I thought to be the general will was not so. If my particular will had carried the day I should have achieved the opposite of what was my will; and I should not have been free.'[3]

It is difficult to see how the fact that an opinion different from my own prevails by a majority vote 'proves' that I was mistaken. Rousseau simply assumes that it does. However, passing over this point we can draw attention to the ambiguous use of the word *free*. Another man might be content to say that if freedom means freedom to do whatever one wishes to do and is physically capable of doing, it is, indeed, curtailed by membership of the State. But curtailment of one's freedom by law is essential to the well-being of society, and, in view of the fact that the advantages of society outweigh its disadvantages, such curtailment needs no other justification than its utility. The only relevant problem is that of restricting it to the minimum required by the common good. This purely empirical and utilitarian approach was not, however, to the taste of Rousseau. He wishes to show that apparent curtailment of liberty is not really a curtailment at all. Hence he is led into the paradoxical position of maintaining that one can be forced to be free. And the very fact that the position immediately strikes one as being paradoxical suggests that the word *free* is being given a sense which, whatever it may be, is different from the sense or senses which it normally bears. To apply this word to a man who is forced, for example, to obey a certain law does not conduce to clarity. It is to suggest, by applying a word outside its normal range of meaning, that force and compulsion are not really force and compulsion.

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[1] *S.C.*, IV, 2, p. 93.

[2] *S.C.*, I, 7, p. 18.

[3] *S.C.*, IV, 2, p. 94.

Linguistic criticism may appear tiresome and superficial to some minds. But it has in reality a considerable practical importance. For the transference of laudatory names or epithets to situations which lie outside their normal range of meaning is a stock device of political propagandists who wish to render these situations more acceptable. Thus the term *democracy*, perhaps with the prefix 'true' or 'real', is sometimes applied to a state of affairs in which the few tyrannize over the many with the aid of force and terror. And to call compulsion 'being forced to be free' is an instance of the same kind of thing. Later we find Robespierre saying that the will of the Jacobins was the general will and calling the revolutionary government the despotism of liberty. Linguistic criticism can throw some much-needed light on these troubled waters.

These remarks are not, of course, intended to suggest that Rousseau himself was in any way a friend of despotism or tyranny or terror. His paradox proceeded, not from a desire to make people believe that black is white, but from the difficulty of justifying a normal feature of social life, restriction of personal caprice by universal laws, in face of the picture which he had given of the state of nature. And though it is only proper to point out the dangers inherent in the use of such paradoxes, it is also true that to confine oneself to linguistic criticism of the type to which I have alluded would be to fail to note the historical importance of Rousseau's theory of the general will and the different ways in which it is capable of development. This is perhaps one reason why such criticism can appear tiresome and superficial. But further remarks on Rousseau's theory will be reserved for the final section of this chapter. Meanwhile I turn to the subject of government.

3. Every free action, says Rousseau, is produced by the concurrence of two causes. One is a moral cause, namely the will which determines the act, the other a physical cause, namely the physical power which executes the act. Both causes are required. A paralytic may will to run; but, lacking the physical power to do so, he stays where he is.

Applying this distinction to the body politic we must distinguish between the legislative power, namely the sovereign people, and the executive power or government. The former gives expression to the general will in universal laws and does not concern itself with particular actions or persons. The latter applies and enforces the law, and it is concerned, therefore, with particular actions and persons. 'I call *government*, or supreme administration, the legitimate exercise of the executive power, and prince or magistrate the man or the body entrusted with this administration.'[1]

The action by which a people puts itself under a prince is not a contract: 'it is simply and solely a commission'.[2] It follows that the sovereign can limit or modify or recover the executive power at its pleasure. Indeed, Rousseau envisages periodic assemblies of the sovereign people in which two questions should be voted on separately: 'does it please the sovereign to preserve the present form of government?' and 'does it please the people to leave its administration in the hands of those who are actually in charge of it?'[3] Obviously, Rousseau is here envisaging small States like Swiss cantons, where it is physically possible for the people to meet together periodically. However, the general principle, that the government is merely the instrument or minister of the sovereign people, holds good for all States. Of course, to say that the people can 'recover' the executive power does not mean that it can decide to exercise this power itself. Not even in a small Swiss canton could the people carry on day-by-day administration. And, on Rousseau's principles, the sovereign people is concerned in any case with legislation, not with administration, except in the sense that if it is dissatisfied with the existing government's administration, it is entitled to dismiss it and entrust the executive power to another government.

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[1] *S.C.*, III, 1, p. 50.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *S.C.*, III, 18, p. 89.

The executive power, according to Rousseau, possesses 'a particular personality, a sensibility common to its members, and a force and will of its own making for its preservation'.[1] But this does not alter the fact that 'the State exists by itself and the government only through the sovereign'.[2] This dependence does not, indeed, prevent the government from acting with vigour and promptitude; but its dominant will ought to be the general will as expressed in law. If it comes to have a separate particular will which is more active and powerful than that of the sovereign, 'there would be, so to speak, two sovereigns, the one rightful and the other actual, the social union would evaporate instantly, and the body politic would be dissolved'.[3] Rousseau was no friend of capricious and tyrannical princes or governments.[4] They should be servants, and not masters, of the people.

Although Rousseau discusses types of government, it is unnecessary to say much about this subject. For he very sensibly refuses to assert that there is one ideal form of government, suitable for all peoples and circumstances. 'The question "What absolutely is the best government?" is unanswerable as well as indeterminate; or, rather, there are as many good answers as there are possible combinations in the absolute and relative situations of all nations.'[5] Again, 'there has been at all times much dispute concerning the best form of government, without consideration of the fact that each is in some cases the best, and in other cases the worst'.[6] We can say, however, that democratic governments suit small States, aristocratic governments those of middle size, and monarchical governments large States. But all forms of constitution are capable of abuse and degeneration. 'Were there a people of gods, their government would be democratic. So perfect a government is not for men.'[7] Rousseau is speaking here of democracy in the literal sense, which of all forms of constitution is the one most likely to give rise to factions and civil war. That monarchy is subject to abuse is obvious. The 'best and most natural arrangement' is that 'the wisest should govern the many, when it is assured that they will govern for its profit, and not for their own'.[8] But this is not, of course, assured. Aristocracy, like any other form of government, can degenerate. In fact, the tendency to degeneration is, in all forms of constitution, natural and inevitable. 'The body politic, as well as the human body, begins to die as soon as it is born, and it carries within itself the causes of its destruction.'[1] True, men have to endeavour to preserve the body politic in as healthy a condition as long as possible, just as they do with their own bodies. And this can best be done by separating clearly the executive from the legislative power and by various constitutional devices. But even the best constituted State will have an end, even if it survives longer than others, apart from unforeseen circumstances, just as a healthy and robust human body will eventually die, though of itself, and unforeseen accidents apart, it tends to outlive sickly and weak bodies.

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[1] *S.C.*, III, 1, p. 53. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*

[4] The word tyrannical is here used in its ordinary sense. In Rousseau's technical language, however, a tyrant is one who usurps the royal authority, while a despot is one who usurps the sovereign power. 'Thus the tyrant cannot be a despot, but the despot is always a tyrant' (*S.C.*, III, 10, p. 77).

[5] *S.C.*, III, 9, p. 73. [6] *S.C.*, III, 3, p. 57. [7] *S.C.*, III, 4, p. 59.

[8] *S.C.*, III, 5, pp. 60–1.

4. A certain amount of what Rousseau says in the *Social Contract* is clearly related to his predilection for the small republic, like his own city of Geneva. It is only in a very small State that it would be possible, for example, for the citizens to meet together periodically and to exercise their legislative functions. The Greek city-State and the small Swiss republic furnished him with his ideal of the State in regard to size. Moreover, those extremes of wealth and poverty which disfigured contemporary France and which scandalized Rousseau were absent in the more simple life of the Swiss people. Again, the system of representation of which Rousseau disapproved is encouraged by the vastness of States, even if 'it comes to us from feudal government, from that iniquitous and absurd system which degrades humanity and dishonours the name of man'.[2] To be sure, Rousseau understood well enough that a very small State suffers from certain disadvantages, such as difficulty in defending itself; but he accepted the idea of federations of small States.

But Rousseau's predilection for small States constitutes a comparatively unimportant, though picturesque, aspect of his political theory. He was not so fanciful as to suppose that France, for instance, could in practice be reduced to a multiplicity of small States or to a confederation of such States. In any case his idea of the sovereignty of the people and his ideal of government for the people were of greater importance and influence than any of his ideas about the proper size for States. The idea of popular sovereignty was of some influence with Robespierre and the Jacobins. And we can say that when the slogans, Liberty and Equality, spread through Europe, it was in part Rousseau's ideas which were spreading, though he was not himself an advocate of revolution. Rousseau was not a cosmopolitan: he disliked the cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment and deprecated the lack of that patriotism and love of country which was characteristic of Sparta, the early Roman Republic and the Swiss people. We can say, therefore, at least that Rousseau's idea of national popular sovereignty had some affinity with the growth of national democracy as distinct from international socialism.

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[1] *S.C.*, III, 11, p. 77.

[2] *S.C.*, III, 15, p. 83.

To estimate the practical influence of Rousseau's writings on political and social developments is, however, scarcely possible; we are forced to confine ourselves more or less to general indications. It is much easier, of course, to trace the influence of his theories on other philosophers. And the two thinkers who come immediately to mind are Kant and Hegel.

Rousseau's theory of the social contract is of little or no importance in this respect. He gave it prominence, indeed, as the title of his chief political work clearly shows; but it was merely an artificial device, taken over from other writers, to justify the transition from the hypothetical state of nature to that of political society. It was not a theory which had any future. Far more important was the doctrine of the general will. But this doctrine could be developed in at least two ways.

In the original draft of the *Social Contract* Rousseau speaks of the general will as being in each man a pure act of the understanding, which reasons on what a man may demand of his neighbour and on what his neighbour has a right to demand of him. The will is here depicted as rational. Let us add to this the doctrine expressed in the *Social Contract* that 'the mere impulse of appetite is slavery, while obedience to a law which we prescribe to ourselves is liberty'.[1] We then have an autonomous, rational will or practical reason whereby man in his higher nature, so to speak, legislates for himself and pronounces a moral law to which he, in his lower nature, is subject. And this law is universal, in the sense that reason prescribes what is right and, implicitly at least, what every man in the same circumstances ought to do. This notion of the autonomous will which legislates in the moral sphere is an obvious anticipation of the Kantian ethic. It may be objected that the Kantian will is purely rational, whereas Rousseau emphasizes the fact that reason would be ineffective as a guide to action unless the law were graven on men's hearts in ineffaceable characters. The rational will needs a motive force which lies in man's fundamental impulses. This is true. It is true, that is to say, that Rousseau emphasizes the part played by *le sentiment intérieur* in man's moral life. But there is no intention of suggesting that Rousseau's theory of the general will and Kant's theory of the practical reason are one and the same thing. The point is simply that there are elements in the former's theory which are susceptible of development in a Kantian direction. And Kant was certainly influenced by Rousseau's writings.

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[1] *S.C.*, 1, 8, p. 19.

The general will is not, however, universal simply in relation to its object. For Rousseau it is also universal in relation to its subject. That is to say, it is the will of the sovereign people, of the moral being or public person which is brought into existence by the social contract. And we have here the germs of the organic theory of the State which was developed by Hegel. The latter criticized and rejected the theory of the social contract; but he commended Rousseau for assigning will as the principle of the State.[1] Hegel did not, of course, take over Rousseau's theories of the State and of the general will; but he studied him and was influenced and stimulated by him in the development of his own political theory.

We have noted that Rousseau expressed a predilection for small States. In the sort of political society which he looked on as an ideal the general will would be manifested in what we may call a straightforward democratic manner, namely by the citizens voting in a popular assembly. But if we assume a large State, in which such assemblies are quite impracticable, the general will cannot find expression in direct legislation. It can find partial expression in periodic elections, but for legislative expression it needs interpretation by a man or by men other than the sovereign people. And it is no very far step to the conception of the infallible national will finding articulate expression through the lips of some leader. I do not mean that Rousseau would have approved such an interpretation of his theory. On the contrary, it would have aroused his abhorrence. And he could have pointed to sections of his writings which militate against it. At the same time the notion of a quasi-mystical will seeking articulate expression lends itself to exploitation of this kind.

There is, however, yet another way in which the theory of the general will could be developed. We can think of a nation as possessing some operative ideal which is partially expressed in its history and traditions and institutions, and which is plastic in the sense that it is not a fixed, articulate ideal but one which is gradually built up and which demands modification and reformulation in the light of the nation's development. And we can then perhaps speak of the task of legislators and of political theorists as being, in part at least, that of endeavouring to give concrete expression to this ideal and thus to show the nation what it 'really wants'. I do not suggest that this conception is immune from criticism. My point is that it is possible to put forward a theory of the general will without being forced to conceive the organ of interpretation as an infallible mouthpiece. The legislative and government may endeavour to see what is best for the nation in the light of its traditions, institutions and historical circumstances; but it does not follow that the interpretation of what is best either is or need be regarded as correct. It is possible to keep the idea of the nation wanting what is best for it and of the government and legislative as trying, or as under an obligation to try, to give expression to this will, without supposing that there is any infallible organ of interpretation and expression. In other words, it would be possible to adapt Rousseau's theory to the life of a democratic State as it is found in our western culture.

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[1] Cf. *Philosophy of Right*, translated by T. M. Knox, Oxford, 1942, pp. 156–7.

One main reason why diverse developments of Rousseau's theory are possible is, of course, the ambiguity which can be found in his statement of the theory. One important ambiguity is the following. When Rousseau says that the social order is the basis of all rights, his statement can be taken in an innocuous sense if we understand by 'right' legal right. The statement then becomes a truism. But when he says that legislation gives birth to morality,[1] this suggests that the State is the fount of moral distinctions. And if we couple this with his attack on partial societies and with his defence of a civil religion, as distinct from a revealed religion mediated by the Church, it is easy to understand how the view can be put forward that Rousseau's political theory points in the direction of totalitarianism. Yet he did not in fact think that morality depends simply on the State. After all, he insisted on the need of virtuous citizens if the State itself is to be good. He was thus faced with Plato's dilemma. There cannot be a good State without good citizens. But the citizens will not be good if the

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[1] *S.C.*, IV, 7, p. 111.

State, in its legislation and government, tends to deprave and corrupt them. This is one reason why Rousseau had recourse to the idea of an enlightened 'legislator' after the style of Solon or Lycurgus. But the mere fact that he was faced with this dilemma shows that he did not think that morality depends simply on the State; in the sense that whatever the State declares to be right is right. Moreover, he believed that a natural law is written in the hearts of men. And if he considered that, given certain conditions and precautions, this natural law would certainly find articulate expression in the declared will of the sovereign people, this optimism was due to his belief in man's natural goodness rather than to ethical positivism. It cannot, however, be denied that he made statements which smack of ethical positivism, in the sense that they seem to imply the derivation of morality from legislation and social opinion. In other words, his theory, taken as a whole, is ambiguous. Man always wills the good, but he can be mistaken as to its nature. Who is to interpret the moral law? The answer is ambiguous. Sometimes we are told that it is conscience, sometimes that it is the legislative. On the one hand, the voice of the legislative is not necessarily infallible; it may be influenced by selfish interests, and then it does not express the general will. Conscience presumably must be the deciding factor. On the other hand, a man must conform himself to the decision of the sovereign people: if necessary, he must be forced to be free. It can hardly be claimed that there is no ambiguity here. Hence, even though Rousseau himself laid stress on the law engraven in indelible characters on men's hearts and on the voice of conscience, we can understand the contention that there are incompatible elements in his theory, and that the new element is the tendency to eliminate the traditional conception of a natural moral law.

A final remark. We have considered Rousseau under the general heading of the French Enlightenment. And in view of the fact that he dissociated himself from the Encyclopaedists and the d'Holbach circle this may seem to be an inappropriate classification. Further, in the development of literature Rousseau exercised a powerful influence not only on French but also on German literature, particularly of the *Sturm und Drang* period. And this may appear to be an additional reason for separating him from the French Enlightenment. But Rousseau was not the originator of the literature of sensibility, even if he gave to it a powerful impetus; nor was he alone among eighteenth-century French philosophers and writers in stressing the importance of the passions and of feeling in human life. We have only to think of Vauvenargues, for example. The situation seems to be this. If we single out as the main features of the Enlightenment in France an arid rationalism, religious scepticism and a tendency to materialism, then we must say, of course, that Rousseau overcame the Enlightenment or passed beyond it. But we can equally well revise our conception of the period to include Rousseau: we can find in it something more than arid rationalism, materialism and religious scepticism. The fact of the matter is, however, that while he had his roots in the general movement of thought in eighteenth-century France, he is too outstanding a figure in the history of philosophy and literature for it to be profitable to give him a simple class-label and think that one has then satisfied all justice. He is and remains Jean-Jacques Rousseau, not a mere example of a type. Some of his theories, such as that of the social contract, are typical of the age and of little more than historical interest. In other aspects of his thought, political, educational and psychological, he looked forward to the future. And some of his problems, such as that of the relation between the individual and the State, are obviously as real now as when he wrote, even if we would give to his questions different formulations.

PART II

THE GERMAN ENLIGHTENMENT

CHAPTER V

THE GERMAN ENLIGHTENMENT (1)

Christian Thomasius—Christian Wolff—Followers and opponents of Wolff.

1. THE first phase of the Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*) in Germany is perhaps best represented by Christian Thomasius (1655–1728), son of the Jakob Thomasius who had been one of Leibniz's teachers. As a young man Christian Thomasius emphasized the superiority of the French to the Germans in the sphere of philosophy. The latter have an inclination to metaphysical abstractions which promote neither the common good nor individual happiness. Metaphysics does not yield real knowledge. Moreover, the 'learned' philosophy, taught in the universities, presupposes that the end of rational reflection is contemplation of abstract truth for its own sake. But this presupposition is a mistake. The value of philosophy lies in its utility, in its tendency to contribute to the social or common good and to the happiness or well-being of the individual. Philosophy, in other words, is an instrument of progress.

This hostility towards metaphysics and pure intellectualism was grounded to a certain extent in empiricism. The mind, according to Thomasius, must be purified of prejudices and preconceptions, especially of those characteristic of Aristotelianism and Scholasticism. But if he rejected Aristotelian and Scholastic metaphysics, he did not do so in order to substitute another metaphysics in their place. Thus Thomasius attacked, for example, the *Medicina mentis* of Tschirnhaus (1651–1708) who under the influence of Descartes and Spinoza advocated the application of the mathematical method in a philosophy of discovery and who extolled the attainment of truth as the noblest ideal of human life. For Thomasius it is clear that our natural knowledge depends on the senses. We possess no innate ideas, and we cannot discover truths about the world by a purely deductive method. Experience and observation are the only trustworthy sources of knowledge; and the bounds of this knowledge are determined by our senses. On the one hand, if there is anything so small that it makes no impression on the senses, we cannot know it. On the other hand, there are things so great that they exceed the capacity of our minds. We can know, for example, that the objects of the senses depend on a First Cause; but we cannot know, by philosophy at least, the nature of this cause. The dependence of our minds on sense-perception and the consequent limitation of our range of knowledge show the emptiness of metaphysical speculation. Nor should we allow ourselves to be led back into metaphysics by doubting the trustworthiness of the senses and by then attempting to give a philosophical proof of their trustworthiness. Doubt has, indeed, its proper place in our mental lives. For we ought to subject to doubt the opinions of the past which have proved of no utility to man. But sound common sense places a limit to doubt. We ought to avoid being entangled either in scepticism or in metaphysics. Rather should we devote ourselves to attaining knowledge of the world presented by the senses, not for the sake of knowledge, but for the sake of its utility.

But though Thomasius's idea of philosophy, as it appears in the *Einleitung zur Vernunftlehre* and in the *Ausübung der Vernunftlehre* (both 1691), is to a certain extent the expression of an empiricist outlook, those historians are probably right who connect it not only with social developments but also with the outlook of the Protestant Reformation. Of course, if we simply assert that the prominence given to the idea of the common good is an expression of the rise of the middle class, we lay ourselves open to the charge of exaggeration. For the idea of the common good was prominent in, for example, mediaeval philosophy. At the same time it is probably true that the utilitarian conception of philosophy, with its concentration on the idea of the enlightened reason using its capacities for the promotion of the common good, had some connection with the post-mediaeval structure of society, and that it is not unreasonable to speak of it as 'bourgeois' philosophy, provided that this word is not used as a term of abuse. As for the religious connection, there seems to be some truth in the view that this bourgeois philosophy was a secularized prolongation of the outlook of the Protestant Reformation. The true service of God is to be found in the ordinary forms of social life, not in the secluded contemplation of eternal verities or in turning away from the world in asceticism and mortification. This idea, when divorced from its strictly religious setting, easily leads to the conclusion that social progress and individual success in this world are marks of divine favour. And if philosophical reflection, as Luther thought, has little or no competence in the theological sphere, it seems to follow that it should be devoted to the promotion of the social good and of individual temporal happiness. Utility, not contemplation of the truth for its own sake, will be the chief motive of such reflection. That is to say, philosophy will be concerned with questions of ethics, social organization and law rather than with metaphysics and theology. It will centre round man; but its chief aim in considering man will be to promote his temporal good rather than to integrate a philosophical anthropology into a general metaphysics of Being. Man will be considered psychologically rather than metaphysically or from a theological point of view.

This does not mean, of course, that philosophy has to be anti-religious. As we have seen, the philosophy of the French Enlightenment was frequently hostile to Catholicism and, with certain thinkers, to religion in general, which was looked at as an enemy of social progress; but this point of view was certainly not characteristic either of the German Enlightenment in general or of Thomasius in particular. The latter was far from being an irreligious man. On the contrary, he was or came to be associated with pietism, a movement which arose in the Lutheran Church towards the end of the seventeenth century and which aimed at infusing a new devotional life into this religious body. But though one cannot legitimately say that pietism reduced religion simply to feeling, it had no sympathy with metaphysics or with Scholastic theology but laid emphasis on personal faith and interiority. Pietism, therefore, like empiricism, though for different reasons, contributed to the turning of philosophy away from metaphysics and natural theology.[1]

The conclusion of the *Vernunftlehre* or *Doctrine of Reason* is that metaphysics is useless and that reason should be employed to promote the good of man. Thomasius's ethical theory is set out in his *Einleitung zur Sittenlehre* (1692) and *Ausübung der Sittenlehre* (1696). But the theory undergoes a curious metamorphosis. We are first told that the highest good of man is tranquillity of soul, the way to which is pointed out by the reason, the will being the faculty which leads man away from the good. This appears to be an individualistic ideal. But Thomasius goes on to argue that man is by nature a social being and that only as a member of society is he, properly speaking, a man. It follows that man cannot attain tranquillity of soul without the social bond, without love for his fellow-men; and the individual ought to sacrifice himself to the common good. Through mutual love there arises a common will which transcends the merely private and egoistic will. From this it seems to follow that the will cannot be characterized as bad. For 'rational love' is a manifestation of will; and from rational love the virtues arise. But Thomasius none the less wishes to hold that the human will is bad. The will is the slave of the fundamental impulses or drives such as the desires for wealth, honour and pleasure. Selflessness is unobtainable by our own efforts. Human choice and action can produce only sin: it is divine grace alone which is capable of rescuing man from his moral powerlessness. In other words, it is pietism which has the last word in Thomasius's ethical writings, and he explicitly reproaches himself for having thought that a man could develop a natural morality by his own power.

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[1] This statement is true as regards the direct influence of pietism on Thomasius and his followers; for it tended to remove religion and theology from the sphere of philosophical reflection. But the statement stands in need of qualification. For example, some knowledge of pietism is necessary, as will be seen in the next volume, for an understanding of the development of Hegel's thought.

Thomasius is best known for his works in jurisprudence and international law. In 1688 he published *Institutionum jurisprudentiae divinae libri tres, in quibus fundamenta juris naturae secundum hypotheses ill. Pufendorfii perspicue demonstrantur.* In this work he wrote, as the title indicates, in dependence on the famous jurist, Samuel Pufendorf (1632–94). But he showed a greater degree of originality and independence in his later publication, *Fundamenta juris naturae et gentium ex sensu communi deducta* (1705). In it he begins with a consideration of man which is psychological, and not metaphysical, in character. He finds in man three fundamental drives: the desire to live as long and as happily as possible, the instinctive recoil from death and pain, and the desire for property and mastery. So long as reason does not control these impulses or drives, there exists the natural state of human society, which is a mixture of war and peace, tending always to degenerate into the former. This condition of affairs can be remedied only when rational reflection gains the upper hand and is directed towards securing for man the longest and happiest life possible. But what is a happy life? In the first place it is a just life; and the principle of justice is that we should not do to others what we do not wish them to do to us. On this principle is based natural law in the narrower sense, namely as directed to the preservation of external peaceful relations. In the second place a happy life is characterized by decency (*decorum*); and the principle of decency or of what is fitting is that we should do to others what we wish them to do to us. On this principle is based politics which is directed to the promotion of peace by benevolent action. In the third place a happy life demands virtue and self-respect (*honestum*); and the principle here is that we should do to ourselves what we wish others to do to themselves according to their capacities. On this principle is based ethics, which is directed to the attainment of inner peace.

We have here a rather different outlook from that suggested by Thomasius's remarks in his *Ausübung der Sittenlehre* about man's incapacity to develop a moral life by his own efforts. For in the *Fundamenta juris naturae et gentium ex sensu communi deducta* he clearly takes up the position that a natural law is derivable from the human reason, and that by the exercise of the latter man can overcome his egoistic impulses and promote the useful, namely the common good. Pufendorf had also derived the natural law from reason; but Thomasius separated natural law from metaphysics and theology more sharply than his predecessor had done. We find, therefore, a characteristic idea of the Enlightenment, that reason can heal the wounds of human life, and that exercise of reason should be directed to the social good. The individual should find his own good in overcoming his egoistic desires and lusts and in subordinating himself to the good of society. This is not to say that Thomasius ever discarded belief in religion or in the supernatural. But he tended to separate religion, belonging to the sphere of faith, feeling and devotion, from the sphere of philosophical reflection. Calvinist emphasis on community appears in a secularized form; but it coexists for Thomasius with Lutheran pietism.

2. The chief representative of the second phase of the German Enlightenment is Christian Wolff (1679–1754). With Wolff, however, we find a very different outlook from that of Thomasius. The latter's hostility towards metaphysics, combined with pietism, is entirely absent. Instead we find a renewal of academic philosophy and School metaphysics, and a thorough-going rationalism. This must not be taken to imply that Wolff was a rationalist in the

sense of being anti-religious; he was nothing of the kind. But he developed a complete rational system of philosophy which included metaphysics and natural theology, and which exercised a powerful influence in the universities. True, he emphasized the practical end of philosophy and his aim was that of promoting the spread of understanding and virtue among men. But the characteristic note of his thought is its confidence in and insistence on the power of the human reason to attain certainty in the field of metaphysics, including metaphysical knowledge of God. This rationalism finds expression in the titles of his German writings which frequently begin with the words 'Rational Ideas of . . .' ('*Vernünftige Gedanken von . . .*'); for example, '*Rational Ideas of God, the World and the Soul of Man*' (1719). And his Latin works form together the 'Rational Philosophy' (*Philosophia rationalis*). The pietistic sundering of the sphere of faith from the sphere of reason and the elimination of metaphysics as uncertain and useless were quite foreign to Wolff's mind. In this sense he continued the great rationalist tradition of post-Renaissance continental philosophy. He wrote in considerable dependence on Leibniz, whose thought he expressed in a Scholastic and academic form. But though he lacked the originality of Leibniz and his other leading predecessors, he is a figure of importance in German philosophy. And when Kant discusses metaphysics and metaphysical proofs, it is often the Wolffian philosophy which he has in mind. For in his pre-critical period he had studied and assimilated the ideas of Wolff and his followers.

Wolff was born at Breslau, and at first he was destined for the study of theology, though he soon devoted himself to philosophy and lectured on the subject at Leipzig. Some notes on the *Medicina mentis* of Tschirnhaus brought him into contact with Leibniz, and it was on the latter's recommendation that Wolff was appointed professor of mathematics at Halle, where he lectured not only on mathematics but also on the various branches of philosophy. His views aroused, however, the opposition of his pietistic colleagues, who accused him of godlessness and prevailed upon Frederick William I to deprive him of his chair (1723). Indeed, Wolff was ordered, under pain of death, to leave Prussia within two days. He was received at Marburg, where he continued his activity as lecturer and writer, while his case aroused lively discussion throughout Germany. In 1740 he was recalled as professor to Halle by Frederick II, and subsequently he was awarded a title. Meanwhile the influence of his ideas was spreading through the German universities. He died at Halle in 1754.

In some respects Wolff was a thorough rationalist. Thus the ideal method was for him the deductive method. Its use outside formal logic and pure mathematics is rendered possible by the fact that the highest principle, that of non-contradiction, applies to all reality. From this principle we can derive the principle of sufficient reason which, like that of non-contradiction, is an ontological and not merely a logical principle. And the principle of sufficient reason is of great importance in philosophy. The world, for instance, must have its sufficient reason in a transcendent Being, namely in God.

Wolff was, of course, aware that the deductive method alone will not suffice for building up a system of philosophy, and still less for developing the empirical sciences. We cannot get along in the latter without experience and induction, and even in philosophy we require empirical elements. We must often be content, therefore, with probability. Some propositions are absolutely certain; for we cannot assert their opposites without contradiction. But there are many propositions which cannot be reduced to the principle of non-contradiction but which enjoy varying degrees of probability.

In other words, Wolff adopted Leibniz's distinction between truths of reason, the opposites of which cannot be asserted without contradiction and which are necessarily true, and truths of fact, which are not necessarily but contingently true. He applied the distinction in, for example, this way. The world is the system of interrelated finite things, and it is like a machine which works or moves necessarily in a certain way because it is what it is. But this necessity is hypothetical. If God had so willed, the world could have been other than what it is. It follows that there are many true statements about the world, the truth of which is not absolutely necessary. At the same time the world is ultimately composed of substances, each one of which exemplifies an essence that can, ideally at least, be conceived in a clear idea and defined. And if we possessed a knowledge of these essences, we could deduce a series of necessary truths. For when we conceive essences, we abstract from concrete existence and consider the order of possibility, irrespective of God's choice of this particular world. It is, indeed, arguable that Wolff's view that the world could be different from what it is does not fit in with his theory of essences.

For it might be maintained that, given the essences which compose the world, the world-order could only have been what it is. However, the point which I wish to make is that Wolff's rationalism, his emphasis on clear and distinct definable ideas and on deduction, leads him to describe philosophy as the science of the possible, of all possible things, a possible thing being anything which does not involve a contradiction.

Mention has been made of Leibniz, and there is no question, of course, that the latter's philosophy exercised a marked influence on Wolff's thought. We shall see examples of this influence shortly. But in reinstating the idea of essences Wolff makes explicit reference to the Scholastics; and though, given the widespread contempt for Scholasticism at the time, he is careful to maintain that he is improving on their ideas, he makes no secret of the fact that, following Leibniz, he has no sympathy with the wholesale condemnation of their opinions and work. And in point of fact it is quite clear that he was influenced by the Scholastics. But Wolff's concentration on being as essence puts one in mind of Scotus rather than of Aquinas. It was the later Scholasticism rather than the Thomist system which influenced his thought. Thus in his *Ontology* he refers with approval to Suárez, whose writings had enjoyed considerable success in the German universities, even in the Protestant ones.

The influence of Scholasticism can be seen in Wolff's division of philosophy. The fundamental division, which goes back, of course, to Aristotle, is into theoretical and practical philosophy. Theoretical philosophy or metaphysics is subdivided into ontology, dealing with being as such, rational psychology, concerned with the soul, cosmology, which treats of the cosmic system, and rational or natural theology which has as its subject-matter the existence and attributes of God. (Practical philosophy is divided, with Aristotle, into ethics, economics and politics.) The explicit separation of ontology or general metaphysics from natural theology does not go back to the Middle Ages; and it has sometimes been attributed to Wolff himself. But the separation had already been made by the Cartesian Clauberg (1622–65), who spoke of 'ontosophy' rather than of 'ontology', and the later, term had been used by Jean-Baptiste Duhamel (1624–1706) a Scholastic, in his *Philosophia universalis*. Moreover, in his *Ontology* Wolff explicitly aimed at improving on the definitions given by the Scholastics and on their treatment of the science of being as being.

And although his division of philosophy differs from that, say, of St. Thomas Aquinas, his hierarchical arrangement of its branches was clearly developed under Scholastic influence.[1] This may not appear to be a matter of much importance; but it is at least interesting to observe that the Scholastic tradition found a continued life in the thought of one of the leading figures of the German Enlightenment, even if, from a strictly Thomist point of view, it was a rather debased form of Scholasticism which found a home in the Wolffian philosophy. This is certainly what is thought by those who, with Professor Gilson, contrast the 'existentialism' of Aquinas and his faithful followers with the 'essentialism' of later Scholastics.[2]

The Leibnizian influence can be clearly seen in Wolff's treatment of substance. Though he avoided the term 'monad', he postulated the existence of imperceptible simple substances which are without extension or figure, and no two of which are perfectly alike. The things which we perceive in the material world are aggregates of these substances or metaphysical atoms; and extension belongs, as with Leibniz, to the phenomenal order. The human body is, of course, also an aggregate of substances. But in man there is a soul which is a simple substance and the existence of which can be proved by reference to the fact of consciousness, self-consciousness and consciousness of the external world. Indeed, as far as the soul's existence is concerned, it is immediately evident to everyone in self-consciousness.

Wolff laid considerable emphasis on consciousness. The soul, as a simple substance, possesses active power; but this power consists in the soul's ability to represent to itself the world. And the different activities of the soul, of which the two fundamental forms are knowing and desiring, are simply different manifestations of this power of representation. As for the relation between soul and body, it must be described in terms of a pre-established harmony. As with Leibniz, there is no direct interaction between soul and body. God had so arranged things that the soul represents to itself the world according to the modifications which take place in the sense-organs of its body.

The principal proof of God's existence for Wolff is a cosmological argument. The world, the system of interrelated finite things, requires a sufficient reason for its existence and nature, and this sufficient reason is the divine will, though the divine choice has also its sufficient reason, namely in the attractive power of the best as conceived by God. This means, of course, that Wolff has to follow the main lines of the Leibnizian theodicy. Like Leibniz, he distinguishes between physical, moral and metaphysical evil. The latter, being the imperfection necessarily attendant on finitude, is inseparable from the world. As for physical and moral evil, the world requires at least their possibility. The question is really not whether God could have created the world without evil, but whether there is a sufficient reason for creating a world from which evil, or at least its possibility, cannot be absent. Wolff's answer is that God created the world with a view to being acknowledged, honoured and praised by man.

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[1] One must add that Wolff's division of philosophy had a considerable influence on subsequent Scholastic manuals and text-books.

[2] On this matter cf. Gilson's *Being and Some Philosophers* (second edition, corrected and enlarged, Toronto, 1952).

In all this we are obviously very far from Thomasius's view that the human mind is incapacitated for the attainment of truth in metaphysics and natural theology. Besides his cosmological proof of God's existence Wolff accepted the ontological argument, being persuaded that the development of this argument by Leibniz and himself had rendered it immune from the usual lines of criticism. The accusation of atheism which was brought against Wolff was absurd. But it is understandable that his enemies among pietists thought that he was putting reason in the place of faith and undermining their conception of religion.

Just as Wolff rejected the theory of man's intellectual incapacity in the sphere of metaphysics, so also did he reject the theory of man's moral incapacity, namely that man left to himself is incapable of doing anything but sin. His moral theory was based on the idea of perfection. The good is defined as that which makes us and our condition more perfect, while the bad is defined as that which makes us and our condition more imperfect. But Wolff admits that it was long ago recognized 'by the ancients' that we will only that which we regard as good, as in some way perfecting us, and that we will nothing which we regard as evil. In other words, he admits the Scholastic saying that man always chooses *sub specie boni*. Obviously, therefore, he has to find some criterion for distinguishing between good in the wide sense of the term, namely as including whatever is the object of the will's choice, and good in the moral sense, namely what we ought to strive for or choose. True, he emphasizes the idea of the perfection of our nature. But it is clear that this concept must be given some definite content which will enable us to discriminate between moral and immoral actions. In trying to do this Wolff gives prominence to the idea of the harmonization of the manifold elements of human nature under the rule of reason and of man's interior and exterior conditions. Some writers have maintained that by including external good in the *summum bonum* or end of human moral endeavour Wolff was giving expression to a 'Protestant ethic'. But, many centuries before, Aristotle had included a sufficiency of external goods in the good of man. In any case it must be noted that Wolff is anxious to avoid the individualism which may appear to be connected with an ethic of self-perfection. He therefore emphasizes the fact that man can perfect himself only if he strives to help his fellow-men and to rise above his purely egoistic impulses. Promotion of God's honour and of the common good belong to the idea of self-perfection. The 'natural law' ordains, therefore, that we should do that which makes ourselves and our condition and the condition of others more perfect, and that we should not do that which makes ourselves or others more imperfect.

Wolff asserts freedom as a condition of the moral life. But it is not at all easy for him to explain how freedom is possible, if it means that a man could have made another choice than the one that he has actually made. For, as we have seen, he regards Nature as analogous to a machine in which all movements are determined and (hypothetically) necessary. However, in spite of this difficulty Wolff continued to affirm that man is free. In justification of this position he appeals to the theory of the pre-established harmony between soul and body. There is no direct interaction between them. Hence, bodily conditions and sensual impulses, for example, cannot determine the soul's choices. Its choices spring from its own spontaneity, and they are therefore free.

But Wolff is also involved in difficulties about the relation of intellect to will in the moral life. According to him, a constant will to do only what corresponds with the natural moral law is the beginning and foundation of virtue. But can this constant direction of the will be produced by the intellect or reason, by knowledge of moral good and evil? Must not this production be an act of the will itself? As the constant direction of the will towards the objective moral good is not something which is given from the start, and as there is difficulty in showing how it can be produced by the intellect alone, Wolff stresses the need for and the important part played by education in the moral life. At the same time it is intellectual education, the formation of clear and distinct ideas, which he emphasizes. Hence, even if Wolff does not provide a completely satisfactory answer to the question how man by his own efforts can lead a truly moral life, it is clear that rationalism has for him the last word. The principal end of education is to produce those clear ideas of the moral vocation of man which can serve as motive-forces for the will. What is at the back of his mind seems clear enough. The will naturally seeks the good. But man can have mistaken ideas of the good. Hence the importance of developing true, clear and adequate ideas. The will can be rightly directed only by the intellect. Wolff may not succeed in explaining precisely how the intellect can govern the will and produce the right desires; but that it can do so in his opinion is beyond doubt.

Wolff sometimes speaks as though the aim of the education of the mind is to produce useful ideas. And if we bear in mind his insistence, when talking about our duties to ourselves and to our neighbour, that man ought to work and by this means maintain himself and promote the common good, we may perhaps be inclined to draw the conclusion that his moral ideal is simply that of the decent, hard-working citizen. We may conclude, in other words, that he has a thoroughly bourgeois conception of man's moral vocation, a conception which can be described as a secularized form of the Protestant notion of man's vocation in this world. But though this conception forms one element in his thought, it is not the only element. For he gives to the term 'useful' a wide range of meaning. Being useful to society does not mean simply faithful service as a manual labourer or as an official of some sort. The artist and the philosopher, for instance, develop their potentialities, perfect themselves, and are 'useful' to society. Education for life should not be taken in a narrow, Philistine sense. Wolff tries to combine a wide idea of education and self-perfection with an insistence on the duty of serving the common good, which he looks on as a characteristic note of his moral philosophy.

In view of Kant's idea that man has an obligation to seek moral perfection and that this perfection cannot be attained in a finite time, it is worth remarking that for Wolff before him moral perfection is not something which can be definitely attained here and now. Man cannot reach his objective and then rest on his oars, so to speak. The obligation to seek moral perfection involves an obligation to go on continually striving towards it, an obligation to strive endlessly after the complete harmonization of impulses and affects under the rule of reason. And this obligation falls both on the individual and on the human race in common.

On man's duties are based his rights. By nature all men are equal, and they have the same duties as men. They have, therefore, the same rights. For we have a natural right to all that enables us to fulfil our natural duties. There are also, of course, acquired rights; but as far as natural rights are concerned, all men are equal.

Wolff bases the State on a contract. But it has a natural justification in the fact that it is only in a large society that man can obtain for himself in sufficient measure the goods of life and defend them against aggression. The State exists, therefore, to promote the common good. As for government, this rests ultimately on the consent of the citizens, who may reserve to themselves the supreme power or transfer it to some form of government. Governmental power extends over only those activities of the citizens which are related to the attainment of the common good. However, Wolff conceded to the government wide powers of supervision with a view to the physical and spiritual well-being of the citizens. For he interpreted the common good in terms of human perfection, and not in purely economic terms.

Nations, says Wolff in his *Jus Gentium*,[1] are to be regarded as 'individual free persons living in a state of nature'. And just as there is a natural moral law which obliges individual men and gives rise to rights, so is there a natural law of nations or necessary law of nations, which is immutable and which gives rise to equal rights. This law is the natural moral law as applied to nations.

Further, all nations must be understood to have formed together, by presumed consent, a supreme State. For nature itself compels nations to form an international society for their common good. We must conclude, therefore, that the nations as a whole possess the right of compelling individual nations to fulfil their obligations towards the greater society. And just as in a democratic State the will of the majority must be considered to represent the will of the whole people, so in the supreme State the will of the majority of nations must be taken to represent the will of all nations. But how is this to be expressed, when nations cannot meet together in the way that is possible for groups of individuals? According to Wolff, we must take that to be the will of all nations upon which they would agree if they followed right reason. And from this he concludes that what has been approved by the 'more civilized nations' is the law of nations.

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[1] *Prolegomena*, 2.

The law derived from the concept of a society of nations is called by Wolff the 'voluntary law of nations'. And he places it under the general heading of 'the positive law of nations', together with stipulative law, resting on the express consent of nations, and customary law, resting on their tacit consent. But, quite apart from possible criticism of the idea of a supreme State with a fictitious ruler, it would seem more natural to place what Wolff calls the *jus gentium voluntarium* under the heading of the *jus gentium naturale* rather than under that of the *jus positivum*. For the latter classification would seem to demand the existence of an actual supreme or universal society rather than of a presumed society of nations. However, in asserting the existence of 'the voluntary law of nations' Wolff was influenced by Grotius, to whom he appeals, though he finds fault with the latter for not having distinguished properly between voluntary, stipulative and customary law. In any case the idea of a society of nations is of unquestionable value, whether we accept or reject Wolff's use of the idea.

If Wolff is compared with thinkers such as Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz, he must doubtless be reckoned a minor figure in the history of philosophy. But if he is looked at in the context of the development of German thought, one's judgment will be different. Apart from Leibniz, Germany had produced little in the way of philosophy: the great period of German philosophy lay in the future. But meanwhile Wolff acted as a kind of philosophical educator of his nation. He is often accused, no doubt with justice, of aridity, dogmatism and formalism. But because of its comprehensiveness and its formal and orderly arrangement his system was able to provide a school-philosophy for the German universities. His influence spread throughout Germany and beyond, and his ideas may be said to have dominated in the German universities until the rise of the Kantian criticism. The system, which was no mean achievement in itself, thus stimulated the growth of philosophical reflection. He triumphed over his theological opponents, even if his philosophy was to be conquered by that of Kant and his successors. In other words, he occupies an important place in the history of German thought, and no accusations of lack of originality or of formalism can rob him of it.

3. The term 'Leibniz-Wolffian philosophy', which was rejected by Wolff himself, was coined by Georg Bernhard Bilfinger (1693–1750), who was for a time professor of philosophy at St. Petersburg and later (from 1731) professor of theology at Tübingen. *Dilucidationes philosophicae de Deo, anima humana, mundo et generalibus rerum affectionibus* (1725) helped to spread Wolff's system, though he did not follow the latter in everything. Among other disciples of Wolff we may name Ludwig Philipp Thümmig (1697–1728), who lost his chair at Halle at the same time as Wolff, and Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700–66), author of *Erste Gründe der gesamten Weltweisheit* (1733), who attempted to utilize the Wolffian philosophy in literary criticism. Mention must also be made of Martin Knutzen (1713–51), if for no other reason than that from 1734 he was professor of logic and metaphysics at Königsberg and numbered Kant among his hearers. He was a mathematician and astronomer as well as a philosopher, and he helped to arouse Kant's interest in Newtonian science. In the field of philosophy he was influenced by Leibniz and Wolff, but he was at the same time an independent thinker. Thus he abandoned the theory of the pre-established harmony in favour of a theory of efficient causality. Needless to say, Knutzen was not responsible for Kant's critical philosophy, but his lectures were one of the factors which contributed to form the latter's philosophical views in his pre-critical period. In religion Knutzen was inclined to pietism; but under the influence of Wolff he greatly modified the rejection of natural or philosophical theology which was one of the characteristics of the pietistic movement. Indeed, he published a *Philosophical Proof of the Truth of the Christian Religion* (1740). In other words, he tried to combine pietistic spirituality with Wolffian 'rationalism'.

A more important figure is Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714–62), professor at Frankfurt on the Oder, who produced a number of text-books in which he expounded and developed the Wolffian philosophy. His *Metaphysics*, for example, was used by Kant in his lectures, though not, of course, without criticism of its contents. But Baumgarten's importance does not lie primarily in his relationship to Kant, nor in his enrichment of the German philosophical vocabulary by his translations of Latin terms; it lies in the fact that he was the real founder of German aesthetic theory. In his *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus* (1735), which has been translated into English under the title *Reflections on Poetry*, he coined the word 'aesthetics' (*aesthetica*), and he developed his theories in the two volumes of his *Aesthetica* (1750–8).

Baumgarten's approach to aesthetics was determined to a great extent by Wolff's philosophy. The latter had deliberately omitted a treatment of art and of the beautiful; for the subject did not fit into the scheme of his philosophy. He was concerned with 'distinct' concepts, that is, with concepts which are communicable in words: he was not concerned with concepts which are 'clear' but not 'distinct', that is, with concepts which are clear but not communicable in words, such as the concept of a particular colour. And as he believed that the concepts concerned with the enjoyment of beauty are not distinct, he omitted a treatment of aesthetics. Further, when considering man's powers or faculties, he concentrated on the 'higher powers' (*vires superiores*), leaving aside to all intents and purposes the 'lower powers' (*vires inferiores*). And his belief that aesthetic enjoyment is a function of the lower powers, the faculties of sensation, was thus also a reason for omitting consideration of aesthetic theory. There was, therefore, a gap in the Wolffian philosophy, which Baumgarten set out to fill. And for a disciple of Wolff this involved a consideration of man's sensitive powers. The need for such a consideration had been rendered all the more acute by the increasing knowledge in Germany of British empiricism.

Baumgarten's idea of aesthetics was humanistic in character, in the sense that it was bound up with a view of man. At the beginning of the *Aesthetics* he remarks that 'the philosopher is a man among men; nor does he rightly think so great a part of human knowledge alien to himself'.[1] The philosopher must strive after a knowledge of sensibility, which plays such an important part in human life, and though he may not be able to create the beautiful as the artist does, he should seek for a systematic knowledge of the beautiful. Indeed, Baumgarten defines aesthetics as the science of the beautiful and of beautiful things. But beauty is perfection in the field of sensibility or sense knowledge. Hence aesthetics is the science of the perfection of sense knowledge. 'The goal of aesthetics is the perfection of sense knowledge as such. And this is beauty.'[2]

Aesthetics is also described by Baumgarten as the art of thinking beautifully (*ars pulchre cogitandi*). This unfortunate description or definition obviously lends itself to misunderstanding and misuse.

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[1] Section 6.

[2] *Aesthetics*, section 14.

But Baumgarten was not saying that the science of aesthetics consists in knowing how to think 'beautiful thoughts'; he was referring to the art of using the so-called lower faculties properly with a view to their 'perfection'. And if we put his various definitions or descriptions together, we can say that he looked to aesthetics to provide a psychology of sensation, a logic of the senses, and a system for aesthetic criticism.

The idea of a logic of the senses is of importance. As a follower of Wolff, Baumgarten naturally arranged the philosophical sciences in a hierarchical order, and equally naturally he placed aesthetics in a subordinate position. For it is concerned with the inferior powers and with inferior knowledge. Aesthetics, if it is a science at all, must be the activity of thought; but as it does not treat of the province of distinct ideas, it must take an inferior place in the ladder, so to speak, of knowledge. At the same time Baumgarten saw that it will not do to treat aesthetic intuition as a form of purely logical thinking which has somehow failed to live up to the standards of logical thought. Yet it is not 'illogical'. Aesthetic intuition has its own inner law, its own logic. This is why he speaks of aesthetics as the art of the analogue of reason. 'Aesthetics (the theory of the liberal arts, inferior knowledge, the art of thinking beautifully, the analogue of reason) is the science of sensitive knowledge.'[1] Baumgarten may not always indicate very clearly whether he is speaking of aesthetic intuition itself or of our reflective and conceptual representation of it; but two things at least can be said. First, sensibility is not to be excluded from the sphere of knowledge on the ground that 'sense knowledge' is not purely logical or mathematical knowledge. Secondly, it is a peculiar kind of knowledge. For dealing with it we require a special epistemology, inferior knowledge or theory of knowledge (*gnoseologia inferior*). For the law which governs aesthetic intuition cannot be expressed in distinct and purely logical concepts; it is an 'analogue of reason'. Pure logic means abstraction, and abstraction means impoverishment, in the sense that the concrete and individual is sacrificed in favour of the abstract and universal. But aesthetic intuition bridges the gulf between the individual and the universal, the concrete and the abstract; its 'truth' is found within concrete qualities. And beauty is something which cannot be expressed in abstract concepts.

By including a variety of themes under the general heading of aesthetics Baumgarten did not facilitate the making of clear generalizations. But the salient point of his aesthetic theory is his recognition of the fact that concepts such as beauty have their own peculiar use. He thus established aesthetics as an independent branch of philosophical inquiry. When speaking, for example, of the language of poetry, he makes it clear that we cannot force all uses of language into the same mould and interpret them in the same way. In poetry the words remain, as it were, saturated with immediate sensory content: 'the perfect language of sense is poetry'.[1] The language of poetry must be differentiated from the language of, say, physical science: the words do not function in the same way. But it does not follow that poetic statements are nonsense. They express and evoke vivid intuitions which are not irrational but possess their own analogue of reason. In Baumgarten's phrase they have the 'life of knowledge' (*vita cognitionis*).

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[1] *Aesthetics*, section 1; cf. also *Prolegomena*, section 1.

We certainly ought not to exaggerate the importance of Baumgarten. In the first place he was not 'the father of aesthetics'. To go no further back in history, Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, for example, had already written on the subject in England. In the second place extravagant praise has sometimes been given to his achievements, and as an antidote we have only to consider the judgment of Benedetto Croce that 'save in its title and its first definitions Baumgarten's *Aesthetic* is covered with the mould of antiquity and commonplace'.[2] At the same time his importance in the development of aesthetic theory in Germany is undeniable. It is doubtless true, as Croce remarks, that he is of importance in the history of aesthetics as 'a science in formation . . . of aesthetics *condenda* not *condita*';[3] but he did at least recognize not only that there is such a thing as the philosophy of aesthetics but also that the language of aesthetics has its own peculiarities. He doubtless interpreted the subject in the light of the Wolffian philosophy; and he is open to the accusation of having spoken in too intellectualist terms, 'in terms of knowledge' and 'truth', for instance. But the point to remark is that he felt the inadequacy of a purely rationalist account of aesthetic intuition and enjoyment and that he paved the way for a further development of aesthetic theory. Whatever Baumgarten's shortcomings may have been he saw that there is a side of human life and activity which is a fit object of philosophical consideration but which cannot be understood by anyone who is determined to bring it into the sphere of abstract logical thinking on pain of exclusion from philosophy altogether.

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[1] *Meditations*, section 9.

[2] *Aesthetic*, translated by D. Ainslie, p. 218.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 219.

Among the disciples of Baumgarten was Georg Friedrich Meier (1718–77) who expounded his master's doctrines at Halle and published *Principles of all the Beautiful Sciences* (*Anfangsgründe aller schönen Wissenschaften*) in three volumes (1748–50) and *Considerations on the First Principles of all Fine Arts and Sciences* (*Betrachtungen über den ersten Grundsätzen aller schönen Künste und Wissenchaften*) in 1757. As far as aesthetic theory is concerned, Moses Mendelssohn (1729–86), who will be mentioned again in the next chapter, was also influenced by Baumgarten. But there is no point in giving a list of names. It is sufficient to say that there was a plentiful crop of writings on aesthetics in the second half of the eighteenth century. Indeed in his *Sketch of the History and Literature of Aesthetics* (1799), J. Koller asserted that patriotic youth would be pleased to note that Germany had produced more literature on the subject than any other country.

Turning to Wolff's opponents and critics, we may mention first Joachim Lange (1670–1744) of Halle, who was one of the principal agents in obtaining Wolff's expulsion from the university in the name of orthodoxy and piety. A much more philosophically-minded thinker was Andrew Rüdiger (1673–1731), who lectured at Halle and Leipzig and attacked the notion that the mathematical method can be applied in philosophy. Mathematics is concerned with the sphere of the possible, whereas philosophy is concerned with the actual. The philosopher, therefore, should build on the foundation of experience, as given in sense-perception and self-consciousness; and he should derive his fundamental definitions and axioms from this source. Rüdiger also attacked, for example, the theory of a pre-established harmony between soul and body. The soul is extended, and there is physical interaction between soul and body.

Another opponent of Wolff was Christian August Crusius (1715–75), professor of philosophy and theology at Leipzig, who attacked the optimism and determinism of the Leibniz-Wolffian philosophy. As there are free beings in the world, namely men, we cannot interpret the world-system as a pre-established harmony. Further, Crusius criticized the use made by Leibniz and Wolff of the principle of sufficient reason, though this did not prevent him from substituting a fundamental principle of his own, namely the proposition that what cannot be thought is false and that what cannot be thought of as false is true.[1] From this illuminating proposition he derived three other principles; the principle of contradiction, that nothing can be and not be at the same time; the principle of inseparables, that those things which cannot be thought of separately cannot exist separately; and the principle of incompatibles, that those things which cannot be thought of as conjoined cannot exist in a state of conjunction. Obviously, Crusius was not really opposed to the spirit of Wolff's philosophy, even if he appeared to his contemporaries to be an opponent of Wolff because he rejected some of the latter's characteristic theses. Incidentally, Kant had a high opinion of Crusius, though he criticized his notion of metaphysics.

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[1] The principle is applied by Crusius in this way, for example. The non-existence of the world is thinkable. Therefore it must have been created. Therefore there is a God.

CHAPTER VI

THE GERMAN ENLIGHTENMENT (2)

Introductory remarks; Frederick the Great; the 'popular philosophers'—Deism: Reimarus; Mendelssohn—Lessing—Psychology—Educational theory.

1. (i) THE philosophy of Wolff and of his followers was in one sense a high point of the German *Aufklärung*. It constituted a programme, as it were, for bringing all provinces of human mental activity before the bar of reason. This was, of course, the reason why the pietistic Lutheran theologians opposed Wolff; for they thought that his rationalism was the enemy of faith. The Wolffian system also represented the rise of the educated middle class. Reason should judge, for example, what is and what is not acceptable in belief about God; the personal convictions of the monarch or local sovereign should not be the deciding factor in settling the religion of a people. Again, 'taste' and aesthetic judgment are not the prerogative of the aristocracy or of genius: the philosophic reason can extend its sway to cover the aesthetic field. Philosophy, it is true, is carried on by comparatively few people; but reason is in itself universal. Belief, morals, forms of State and government, aesthetics, all are subject to reason's impersonal judgment.

These aspects of the Wolffian philosophy and its derivatives link it with the general movement of the Enlightenment. At the same time Wolff's system was, as we have seen, closely connected with the thought of Leibniz, and so with the movement of rationalist metaphysics in post-Renaissance philosophy on the European continent. It thus stands somewhat apart from the spirit of the Enlightenment as manifested in France and England. But in the phase of the *Aufklärung* which will be briefly considered in this chapter the influence of French and English thought becomes more marked.

(ii) If one wishes to find a symbol of this influence, one can hardly do better than consider Frederick the Great (1712–86). Brought up by a French governess and tutor, he developed an enthusiasm for French thought and literature, accompanied by a certain contempt for German literature, which showed itself in his preference for speaking and writing in the French language. True, he had at one time a strong sympathy with the philosophies of Leibniz and Wolff. And, as we saw in the last chapter, he reinstated the latter at Halle. Frederick had no sympathy with the Lutheran theologians who had secured Wolff's dismissal by Frederick William I. As far as religious beliefs were concerned, he was strongly in favour of toleration, not only of different dogmatic systems, but also of rationalism, agnosticism and even atheism. That a man of Wolff's eminence should be exiled from Prussia because he was not an adherent of pietism was something which the king could not countenance. In the course of time, however, his opinion of Wolff as a thinker changed, and he came under the predominating influence of French and English thought. In the chapters on the French Enlightenment we saw how Frederick invited philosophers such as Voltaire and Maupertuis to Potsdam, where he liked to converse with them on philosophical and literary matters. As for English thought, he had a high opinion of Locke and arranged for lectures to be given on his philosophy at Halle.

Though Frederick the Great believed in God, he had a strong inclination to scepticism; and Bayle was a writer whom he greatly appreciated. The king was very much of a freethinker. At the same time he developed a veneration for Marcus Aurelius, the Stoic emperor, and, like the Stoics, he laid great emphasis on the sense of duty and on virtue. Thus in his *Essay on Self-love considered as the Principle of Morals* (1770) he tried to show that self-love can be satisfied only through the attainment and practice of virtue which is the true good of man.

In view of Frederick's military exploits and of his successful determination to raise the political and military status of Prussia one may be tempted to regard the 'philosopher of Sans souci', as he called himself, with a cynical eye. But his praise of Marcus Aurelius was not merely idle talk. Nobody would wish to depict the Prussian monarch as a kind of uncanonized saint; but he undoubtedly possessed a strong sense of duty and of his reponsibilities, and his statement in *Antimachiavell* (1740) that the prince should regard himself as the first servant of his people was meant seriously. A despot he may have been; but he was an enlightened despot who concerned himself, for example, with enforcing the impartial administration of justice and with promoting the spread of education, from elementary education up to the reorganization and development of the Prussian Academy.[1] Through this concern with education Frederick was one of the leading figures of the German Enlightenment.

(iii) The spread of philosophical ideas in Germany was promoted by the so-called 'popular philosophers' who, without being creative thinkers, endeavoured to purvey philosophy to the educated public. Thus Christian Garve (1742–98) translated into German a number of works by English moralists, such as Ferguson, Paley and Adam Smith. Friedrich Justus Riedel (1742–85) helped to spread aesthetic ideas by his *Theory of the Fine Arts and Sciences* (1767), which has been called a mere compilation. Christian Friedrich Nicolai (1733–1811) exercised a considerable influence through his editorship, first of the *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften* (1757–8), then of the *Briefe, die neueste Litteratur betreffend* (1759–65), and finally of the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* (1765–1805), literary journals which their editor succeeded in making pay for themselves. One may also mention, though he was scarcely a philosopher in the academic sense, Christoph Martin Wieland (1733–1813), first a pietist and then a literary figure and poet, who translated into German twenty-two plays of Shakespeare and, in his autobiographical novel, *Agathon* (1766), traced the history of the self-development of a young man, chiefly through the successive influences of different philosophies.

2. One effect of the influence of English and French thought on German thought was the rise of deism. In 1741 Tindal's *Christianity as old as the Creation* had appeared in German, and right at the beginning of the century John Toland had spent some time visiting the Courts of Hanover and Berlin.

(i) Prominent among the German deists was Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768), professor of Hebrew and Oriental languages at the Hamburg Gymnasium. His chief work was an *Apology for or Defence of the rational Worshippers of God* (*Apologie oder Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes*). Reimarus did not publish the work, but in 1774–7 Lessing published some portions under the title of the *Wolffenbüttel Fragments*. Lessing did not give the name of the author, but pretended that he had found these fragments at Wolffenbüttel. Another portion was published at Berlin in 1786 under the pseudonym of C. A. E. Schmidt, and further excerpts appeared in 1850–2.

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[1] It was his concern with education which made Frederick refuse to allow the publication in his territories of Pope Clement XIV's Bull suppressing the Society of Jesus. He did not wish the schools maintained by the Jesuits to be dissolved.

On the one hand Reimarus was opposed to purely materialistic mechanism. The world, as an intelligible system, is the self-revelation of God: the world-order is inexplicable without God. On the other hand he was a strong opponent of supernatural religion. The world is itself the divine revelation, and other so-called revelations are human inventions. Further, the idea of the world as a causally interconnected mechanical system is the great achievement of modern thought; and we can no longer accept the idea of miraculous and supernatural divine revelation. Miracles would be unworthy of God; for God achieves His purposes through a rationally intelligible system. In other words, Reimarus's natural theology follows the familiar deistic pattern.

(ii) The Jewish philosopher, Moses Mendelssohn (1729–86), who was a friend of Lessing and a correspondent of Kant, may be reckoned as one of the 'popular philosophers', in the sense that he helped to popularize the religious and philosophical ideas of the Enlightenment. But he is of some interest for his own sake.

In 1755 Lessing and Mendelssohn published an essay with the, at first sight at least, startling title, *Pope a Metaphysician!* (*Pope ein Metaphysiker!*). The Prussian Academy had announced an essay competition on the subject of Alexander Pope's alleged philosophical system, which Maupertuis considered to have been a digest of the Leibnizian philosophy. (The object was apparently to deliver an indirect blow at the reputation of Leibniz.) Lessing and Mendelssohn argued, however, that Pope was either a poet or a metaphysician, but not both; and that in point of fact he had no philosophical system. Philosophy and poetry are two quite different things. This differentiation between the conceptual and the aesthetic was expressed by Mendelssohn in more general terms in his *Letters on Sensations* (*Briefe über die Empfindungen*, 1755) and elsewhere. We must discriminate, he says in his fifth *Letter*, between the 'heavenly Venus', which consists in the perfect adequacy of concepts, and the 'earthly Venus' or beauty. Experience of the beautiful is not a matter of knowledge: we cannot grasp it by a process of analysis and definition. It is wrong to think that we should experience more perfect aesthetic enjoyment if we possessed more perfect cognitive powers. Nor is the beautiful an object of desire. In so far as something is desired, it ceases to be, if it ever has been, the object of aesthetic contemplation and enjoyment. Mendelssohn postulates, therefore, a distinct faculty which he calls the 'faculty of approval' (*Billigungsvermögen*). It is a special sign of beauty, he says in *Morgenstunden* (7), that it is contemplated with 'calm pleasure', whether we possess it or not. In thus insisting on the disinterested character of aesthetic contemplation Mendelssohn was writing to some extent under the influence of English aesthetic theory.

In the sphere of religion Mendelssohn maintained that the existence of God is capable of strict proof. His proofs, as given in *Morning Hours* (*Morgenstunden*, 1785), followed more or less the lines of the Wolffian system; and he accepted and defended the ontological argument. God is possible. But pure possibility is incompatible with the idea of a most perfect Being. Therefore God exists.

In his *Phaedo or on the Immortality of the Soul* (*Phädon oder über die Unsterblichkeit der Seele*, 1767) Mendelssohn tried to modernize Plato and argued that the soul is neither a mere harmony of the body nor a corruptible thing which can, as it were, waste away or disappear. Further, the soul has a natural and constant drive towards self-perfection; and it would be incompatible with the divine wisdom and goodness to create the human soul with this natural drive or impulse and then to render its fulfilment impossible by allowing the soul to relapse into nothingness.

The philosopher, therefore, can prove the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, the foundations of natural religion. In doing so he is simply giving a theoretical justification of truths which the human mind, left to itself, spontaneously recognizes, at least in a confused way. But this does not mean that the State is justified in trying to enforce uniform acceptance of specific religious beliefs. Nor is any religious body which demands of its members uniformity of belief entitled to invoke the aid of the State in attaining this end. The State is concerned with actions, not with beliefs. And though it should, of course, encourage, so far as this is compatible with freedom of thought, the formation of ideas which tend to issue in desirable activity, it should not extend its power of coercion from the sphere of action into that of thought. Toleration is the ideal, though, as Locke observed, we cannot tolerate those who seek to substitute intolerance for toleration.

Mendelssohn became involved in a famous dispute with Jacobi about Spinoza and pantheism. But something will be said about this in the section on Lessing, because the debate arose in connection with the latter's alleged Spinozism.

3. When Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–81) entered the University of Leipzig he enrolled as a student of theology. But he soon abandoned theological studies for a literary career; and he is best known, of course, as a dramatist and as a literary and art critic. He must, however, be accorded a place in the history of philosophy. For though he was never a professional and systematic philosopher in the sense that Wolff was, he was deeply interested in philosophical questions, and his somewhat fragmentary ideas exercised considerable influence. More important, however, than any individual idea or thesis is the fact that his writings tended to form a unified literary expression of the spirit of the *Aufklärung*. This should not be taken to mean that his works simply reflected the ideas of others, as a kind of mirror. They did do this to some extent, of course. For example, *Nathan the Wise* (*Nathan der Weise*, 1779) expressed in dramatic form the ideal of religious toleration which was a prominent feature of the Enlightenment. But at the same time he developed the ideas which he took over from others. For instance, though he was somewhat influenced by the deism of Reimarus, he developed it partly under the inspiration of his understanding of Spinoza in a direction which put one in mind of later idealism rather than of what is usually understood by deism.

Lessing, as has already been mentioned, published some portions of Reimarus's chief work under the title of *Wolffenbüttel Fragments*. And this action led to his being attacked by some writers, especially, of course, by those who suspected that Lessing himself was the author and who at the same time disagreed with the views expressed in the *Fragments*. But as a matter of fact Lessing's view of religion was not that of Reimarus. The latter was convinced that the fundamental truths of natural religion can be strictly proved, whereas Lessing believed that no system of religious belief can be proved by universally valid arguments. Faith rests on inner experience, not on theoretical proofs.

Again, Lessing did not agree with Reimarus's attitude towards the positive, dogmatic religions. We cannot accept the radical distinction made by the rationalistic deists between the truths of natural religion, which can be proved by reason, and the dogmas of so-called revealed religion, which have to be rejected by the enlightened. I do not mean to suggest, of course, that Lessing accepted the idea of revelation in the orthodox sense. He rejected, for instance, the idea of the Bible as an unquestionable revelation, and he was himself a pioneer of the higher criticism which was to become so fashionable in the nineteenth century. But it was his conviction that the value of religious ideas and beliefs is to be judged by their effect on conduct or by their ability to affect conduct in a desirable way. The Christian way of life was already in existence not only before the canon of the New Testament was fixed but also before any of the Gospels were written. And criticism of the documents cannot affect the value of this way of life. Obviously, therefore, if all religious beliefs rest ultimately on experience, and if their value is to be estimated primarily by their tendency to promote moral perfection, the deistic distinction between the rationally provable truths of natural religion and the man-made dogmas of Christianity tends to fall away and disappear. Lessing's interpretation of the Christian dogmas was not the orthodox interpretation; but at the same time it allowed him to give a more positive valuation to Christianity than the rationalistic deists felt able to give it.

Lessing did not mean, of course, that in no case are better reasons available for accepting one religious or philosophical position rather than another. But for him it was a question of comparative degrees of truth and of an unending approximation to absolute truth rather than one of attaining at any given moment an absolute truth possessing final and universal validity. This point of view is symbolized by his famous remark that if God were to offer him with the right hand the complete truth and with the left the unending search for truth, he would choose the latter, even if it meant that he would always be in error. The possession of pure and final truth is for God alone.

This attitude has not unnaturally been criticized on various grounds. For example, the objection has often been made that, given his denial of man's possession of absolute and immutable truth, Lessing has no criterion for distinguishing degrees of truth. He can, indeed, maintain that degrees of truth are to be judged by their tendencies to promote different lines of conduct. But a problem obviously recurs in regard to distinguishing between more and less desirable types of conduct, between the moral and the immoral, and so on. But it is not possible to enter into discussion of these questions here. It is sufficient to point out in passing that such problems arise. The relevant point in a sketch of Lessing's ideas is rather the shift from the rationalist attitude of the deists to a 'dynamic', not to say fluid, idea of truth. The latter reappeared later on in contexts very different from that of Lessing's thought.

Lessing's idea of truth stands in close relation to his idea of history. In the *Education of the Human Race* (*Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*, 1780) he asserts that 'what education is to the individual human being, that revelation is to the whole human race'.[1] Education is revelation made to the individual while revelation is the continual education of the human race. For Lessing, therefore, revelation means the divine education of the human race in history. It is a process which has been always going on, which is still taking place and which will continue in the future.

Further, revelation as the education of the human race in general is analogous to the education of the individual. The child is educated by means of sensible rewards and punishments. And in the childhood of the human race God could give 'no other religion, no other law, than one through the observance of or non-observance of which His people hoped or feared to be happy or unhappy here on earth'.[2] The childhood of the human race corresponds, therefore, more or less to the state of affairs depicted in the Old Testament. This is followed by the boyhood or youth of the human race, corresponding to the New Testament. Nobler motives for moral conduct than terrestrial punishments and rewards are brought to the fore; the immortality of the soul and eternal reward and punishment in the hereafter are preached. At the same time the conception of God as the God of Israel develops into the conception of the universal Father; and the ideal of inner purity of heart as a preparation for heaven takes the place of mere outward obedience to a law with a view to attaining temporal prosperity. To be sure, Christians have added theological speculations of their own to the teaching of Christ; but we should recognize in them a positive value. For they have stimulated the exercise of the reason and through them man has accustomed himself to think about spiritual things. Lessing mentions and rationalizes some particular dogmas; but the important point is not so much that he rationalizes them as that he sees in them a positive value. On this point he looks forward to Hegel rather than backwards to the deists. Finally, there is the manhood of the human race. 'It will certainly come, the time of a new, eternal Gospel, which has been promised to us in the elementary books of the New

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[1] Section 1.

[2] *Education of the Human Race*, section 17.

Covenant.'[1] The term 'elementary books' is not a term of abuse, For Lessing the books of the Old Testament are *Elementarbücher* in comparison with the New Testament, while the books of the latter are *Elementarbücher* in comparison with the further stage of divine revelation. In this third stage of revelation man will do good for the sake of the good and not for the sake of reward, either terrestrial or celestial. Lessing lays the emphasis, therefore, on the moral education of the human race. This is an unending process; and Lessing even suggests a theory of palingenesis or reincarnation. To say that he asserts the theory would be to say too much: he suggests it in a series of questions. 'Why could not each individual human being not have been present more than once in this world? Is this hypothesis ridiculous because it is the oldest? . . . Why should I not return as often as I have been to acquire new knowledge, new capacities?'[2]

In 1783 Jacobi (whose ideas will be outlined in the next chapter) wrote to Mendelssohn that when he had visited Lessing not long before the latter's death, Lessing had openly admitted that he was a Spinozist. To Jacobi this was a shocking admission; for he held that pantheism was simply atheism under another name. As for Mendelssohn, he was not a pantheist; but he was offended and upset by Jacobi's correspondence, which he took as an attack not only on Lessing but also, even if indirectly, on himself, as he was planning an edition of Lessing's works. He therefore in his turn attacked Jacobi in *Morning Hours*, whereupon the latter published a reply, together with his correspondence with Mendelssohn (1785). Both Herder and Goethe were drawn into the controversy, and both disagreed with Jacobi's identification of Spinoza's doctrine with atheism.

What Lessing said to Jacobi seems to have been that the orthodox ideas of God were no longer of any use to him, that God is one and all, and that if he had to call himself a disciple of anybody, he could name nobody but Spinoza. And even if we allow for the possibility of Lessing having taken a pleasure in shocking Jacobi, there seems to be no doubt that he had been influenced by Spinoza and that he recognized an affinity between his later ideas of God and those of the great Jewish philosopher. Lessing believed, for example, that human actions are determined. The world is one system in which God is ultimately the universal cause. Further, he clearly suggests that all things are comprised within the divine

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[1] *Education of the Human Race*, section 86.

[2] *Ibid.*, sections 94–8.

Being. To see this we have only to look, for example, at the paragraphs entitled *On the Reality of Things outside God*, a short essay written for Mendelssohn. Referring to the theory that existent things are different from the divine ideas of these things, he asks: 'Why should not the ideas which God has of real things be these real things themselves?' It will be objected that in this case there are contingent things in the immutable essence of God. But 'has it never occurred to you, who are compelled to attribute to God ideas of contingent things, that ideas of contingent things are contingent ideas?' Lessing doubtless attached much more value to individuality than Spinoza did, and, as we have seen, he laid great stress on the movement of history towards a goal, that of moral perfection. His theories thus looked forward to some extent to later idealism with its emphasis on historical development rather than backward to Spinoza. But the question is not whether Lessing interpreted Spinoza correctly but whether there was some autobiographical truth in his remarks to Jacobi. And it seems to be clear that there was.

In one sense, of course, the so-called *Pantheismusstreit* (pantheism controversy) was not very profitable. The question whether pantheism is atheism under another name, is one which is best dealt with by defining terms. But the controversy had the effect of stimulating interest in Spinoza's philosophy, ideas about which were vague and inexact.

In the field of aesthetic theory Lessing set himself in his *Laokoon* (1766) to analyse the specific differentiating characteristics of poetry and of formative art, that is, painting and sculpture. The great critic Winckelmann (1717–68) had remarked that the artistic effect of the Laokoon in the Vatican is the same as that of Virgil's description of the Laocoon story in the *Aeneid*. Lessing used this remark as a point of departure. We have already seen how, in connection with Pope, he made a sharp distinction between philosophy and poetry. In the *Laokoon* he maintained that poetry is concerned with presenting human actions, and through them the life of the soul; and for this reason he condemned pictorially descriptive poetry. Sculpture, however, is concerned with the presentation of the body, particularly of ideal corporeal beauty. Further, Lessing tried to show how the materials employed by the different arts determine their characteristics.

If human action is the specific theme of poetry, this is particularly true of the drama, a subject to which Lessing gave his attention in the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (1767–9). In this work he insisted on the unity of the drama, a unity which consists essentially in unity of action. According to Lessing, the *Poetics* of Aristotle, the fruit of reflection on the great Greek tragedies, is 'as much an infallible work as the *Elements of Euclid*' (*Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, last chapter). At the same time he strongly attacked the French preoccupation with the 'three unities'. They misunderstood Aristotle when they insisted on unity of time and place as essential characteristics of drama. If they were right, Shakespeare would be no true dramatist. Lessing also made his own Aristotle's statement about the end of tragedy being 'the purging of pity and fear', interpreting pity as compassion, in a literal sense, and fear as self-regarding. Further, Aristotle was right in finding the essence of art in imitation. Drama imitates human actions; and tragedy imitates or presents a unity of human action in such a way as to ennoble man through its arousing of and 'purifying' of the passions of pity and fear. It has, therefore, a moral purpose.

These somewhat random, and in any case bald, observations give, it is true, a highly inadequate picture of Lessing as a writer on aesthetic theory and as a critic of the fine arts. He was not, indeed, an original thinker, in the sense of one who proposes new ideas in philosophy or in aesthetic theory. In the latter sphere he was much influenced by French, English and Swiss writers and, in regard to drama, by Aristotle. But though most of his ideas can be paralleled elsewhere, he had the gift of making these ideas live, and in this sense at least he was original and creative. In the preface to *Laokoon* he remarks that 'we Germans have no lack of systematic books'. His own work, he says, may not be as systematic and concise as that of Baumgarten, but he can flatter himself that whereas the latter admitted having taken many of the examples cited in his *Aesthetics* from Gesner's writings, 'my own example will taste more of the sources'. In other words, he endeavoured, as one would expect of a man who was himself a dramatist and poet, to base his aesthetic reflections on consideration of actual works of art and literature. It is thus doubtless true that Lessing's mind turned away from formalism and that, however dependent he may have been on other writers for his individual ideas, he presented them in a way which stimulated further, if different, reflections. The same can be said of his observations in the spheres of metaphysics and of the philosophy of history.

4. The period of the *Aufklärung* saw the beginnings of the study of psychology in Germany. An important figure in this field was Johann Nikolaus Tetens (1736–1807), who was professor of philosophy at Kiel for a time. In 1789 he accepted an invitation to take up a post at Copenhagen.

The general tendency of Tetens's thought was to mediate between the empiricist philosophy of England and the rationalist philosophy of the Continent. He was by no means an anti-metaphysician. Indeed, he published works on metaphysics and on the proofs of God's existence in which he affirmed the possibility and validity of metaphysics and of metaphysical proofs, while at the same time he endeavoured to ascertain why there are so few universally accepted metaphysical positions. But he insisted that in psychology we must start, not with metaphysical pre-suppositions, but with an analysis of psychical phenomena, though this analysis can form the basis for metaphysical reflections on the soul. Here we have an instance of the mediating tendency to which allusion has just been made.

Introspection must constitute the basis for scientific psychology, according to Tetens. But the soul is conscious of itself only in its activities, and of its activities only in so far as they are productive of psychical phenomena. The soul is not its own immediate object of intuition. In classifying the powers or faculties of the soul, therefore, and in attempting to determine the nature of the soul itself as ground of its activities we are necessarily dependent on hypotheses.

Together with the understanding, namely the activity of the soul as thinking and as productive of images, and willing, the activity whereby the soul produces changes (bodily movements, for instance) which are not themselves psychical representations, Tetens recognizes feeling as a distinguishable activity. We can distinguish, therefore, three powers of the soul, understanding, will and feeling, the latter being described as the receptivity or modifiability of the soul. He suggests, however, the hypothesis that these three powers are ultimately reducible to one fundamental power, the power of feeling and of self-activity, which is capable of progressive perfection. It is in the perfectibility of the soul's activity that man's difference from the animals is particularly conspicuous.

Tetens's *Philosophical Essays on Human Nature and Its Development* (2 vols., 1777) showed a predominantly analytic approach to psychology. A rather different approach was represented by the *Essay on the Soul* (1753) of Karl Kasimir von Creuz (1724–70). Like Tetens after him, von Creuz endeavoured to mediate between the English and continental (Leibnizian) philosophies of the soul. And, again like Tetens, he insisted on the empirical foundation of psychology. But he was concerned with reconciling Leibniz's view of the soul as a simple substance or monad with Hume's phenomenalistic analysis of the self. Von Creuz conceded to Hume that we cannot discover a point-like metaphysical ego which has no extension. At the same time he refused to allow that the self can be dissolved into discrete, separate phenomena. It has, indeed, parts, and in this sense it is extended; but the parts are not separable. And this inseparability of the parts of the soul distinguishes it from material things and constitutes a reason for affirming the soul's immortality, even if the ultimate grounds for this affirmation are to be found in divine revelation.

Of the two men Tetens was certainly of more importance for the development of psychology. He insisted, as we have seen, on a precise analytical approach. But at the same time he linked up analytical psychology with a general philosophy of human nature and its development, as the title of his chief work indicates. In his view we ought to study, not simply, for example, the origins of human ideas in experience, but the whole growth of the human intellectual life up to its expression in the different sciences. Again, his insistence on feeling as a distinct 'power' pointed towards a study of the expression of the life of feeling and sensibility in the world of art and literature.

5. The influence of Rousseau's *Émile* on educational theory in Germany during the *Aufklärung* was considerable. It was felt, for example, by Johann Bernhard Basedow (1723–90), author of, among other educational writings, a large tome named *Elementarwerk* (1774) which was designed as a kind of encyclopaedia for teachers and as a text for parents and children. But while Basedow was stimulated by Rousseau's idea of a 'natural' education, his pedagogical theory was not complicated by presuppositions about the deleterious effects of civilization on the human being. He was thus able to propose as the end and purpose of education preparation of children for a patriotic and happy life in the service of the common good. In his ideas about methods of teaching he was influenced by Comenius (1592–1671), author of *The Great Didactic*.

The stimulating effect of Rousseau was felt also by the famous

Swiss educationalist, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827), who influenced the development of the German *Volksschulen* or elementary schools. But with Pestalozzi, as with Basedow, we find an emphasis on education for social life. He laid great stress on education in the family and in a rural community, and on education in general as the best instrument of social reform, provided, of course, that it fosters moral, and not merely intellectual, development.

Basedow was for a time a professor of moral philosophy; but Pestalozzi can scarcely be called a philosopher, and it would be out of place to discuss here his particular ideas in the field of pedagogy, however famous his name may be in the history of educational theory. It is sufficient to note that the Enlightenment in Germany, as elsewhere, produced its educational theorists. In England there was Locke, in France Rousseau, in Germany and Switzerland Basedow and Pestalozzi. And the idea of education for social life, represented by the two latter names, was in conformity with the general direction of thought in the *Aufklärung*.

CHAPTER VII

THE BREAK WITH THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Hamann—Herder—Jacobi—Concluding remarks.

1. At the time of Wolff's death a very different type of man, Johann Georg Hamann (1730–88), was in his twenty-fourth year. Wolff was a great systematizer: Hamann had no use for philosophical systems. Wolff represented abstraction and the power of the discursive reason: Hamann hated what he regarded as one-sided abstraction and rejected the tyranny of the discursive reason. Wolff strove after clear and distinct ideas: Hamann dealt in oracular utterances which helped to earn for him the title of the Wizard (or Magus) of the North. In other words, Hamann set his face against the rationalism of the Enlightenment which represented for him the power of the devil rather than divine reason.

A native of Königsberg, Hamann was an unstable character who turned from one branch of study to another and from one occupation to another, ranging from posts as tutor in a family to minor posts in the commercial world. When reduced at one time to extreme poverty and an inner torment of spirit, he gave himself to the study of the Bible and developed the extreme pietism which was a characteristic of his writings. He numbered Herder and Jacobi among his friends, and he was also on friendly terms with Kant, though he vigorously criticized the latter's philosophy when Kant, awoken from his dogmatic slumbers, started to publish his *Critiques*.

It may seem that the Wizard of the North is out of place in a history of philosophy. But he gave expression, even if unsystematic and exaggerated expression, to ideas which were characteristic of the reaction against the Enlightenment, and he certainly exercised a considerable influence, even though his influence on Herder in particular has been exaggerated by some historians.

One of the main characteristics of Hamann's anti-rationalism was its religious setting. Let us take, for example, the controversy about language. Against the rationalistic view that man invented language, as though it was a kind of mechanical product, Herder maintained that language is coeval with mankind. Hamann was and always has been of the same opinion. But he was not content with saying that language is not an artificial invention of the human reason and then assigning some other empirical cause or causes. In his opinion language was in some mysterious way a communication of God, a divine revelation. Again, Hamann was convinced that poetry in particular is not the product of reason. On the contrary, poetry, as he says in 'Aesthetics in a Nutshell' (contained in *Crusades of a Philologist*, 1762), was the mother-tongue of mankind. The speech of primitive men was sensation and passion, and they understood nothing but images. It was in music, song and poetry that they expressed themselves. Moreover, great poetry is not the product of a superior reason: it is not to be attributed to a superior capacity of understanding and observing rules. Homer and Shakespeare created their works by genius, not by applying intellectually apprehended rules. But what is genius? The genius is a prophet whose inspiration is divine. Language and the arts are products of revelation.

Of course, such statements could be given a simple and common-sense interpretation. For example, as Goethe remarked, if it is true that God made man, and if language is natural to man as differentiated from the animals, it is true that God made language. Similarly, any theist (or pantheist for the matter of that) would be ready to attribute genius to the creative work of God. But Hamann expressed himself in an oracular style with a mystical colouring, which suggests that he meant something more, even if it is difficult to say what precisely he did mean.[1] In any case he was not content, for example, with insisting on the natural character of human speech and dissociating it from the idea of invention by reason: he insisted too on its divine origin.

Again, Hamann was not content with attacking the tyranny of the discursive reason and its pretended omnicompetence and with allowing a place in human life to faith in God and in divine revelation. His pietism led him to depreciate the reason and to find pleasure in the restriction of its power. It is significant that for him there is poetic, but not scientific, genius. We cannot speak of the great scientists as geniuses. For they work by reason, and this is not the organ of inspiration. And, in the religious sphere, it is not simply the case that the Wolffian natural theology is inadequate: it is thrown overboard in the name of faith. Again, while Hamann's view of history as a commentary on the word or self-expression of God exercised a powerful influence on Herder's mind, the former was rather disconcerted by the latter's use of profane sources and by his attempt to apply a scientific method in his interpretation of history. In Hamann's eyes history, like the Scriptures, possesses an inner mystical or 'true' sense which is revealed by God rather than attained by the patient and untiring effort of the reason. In other words, Hamann tended to apply to the understanding of history the Protestant conception of the true sense of Scripture being revealed by the Holy Spirit to the silent and prayerful individual believer. The deeper exegesis, whether of the Bible or of history, is the work of God alone.

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[1] What Hamann says is that at the beginning every phenomenon of Nature was for man a sign, a symbol, a guarantee of a divine communication, a living word. Language was a natural response to the perception of Nature as a divine word.

We cannot, however, dismiss Hamann as a mere pietist who, if he deserves any consideration at all by the philosopher, deserves it only in the sense that one may pay some attention to one's opponents. His view of history as a divine revelation, as a work of divine providence, which was shared by Herder, was to have considerable importance in the near future. For this view, transposed, it is true, into a system of speculative philosophy which would have seemed to Hamann an intolerable expression of rationalism, was to form an integral part of the Hegelian philosophy of history. Further, Hamann's anti-rationalism was bound up with a dislike of abstraction, which was not the product of mere prejudice. And a brief allusion must be made to this theme.

Goethe remarked[1] that Herder's utterances can be reduced to the principle that everything which man undertakes to perform, be it by word or by deed or in any other way, originates from the total, united powers of the personality. From the beginning man was poet, musician, thinker and worshipper in one. The rationalists of the Enlightenment, however, had, in Hamann's opinion, hypostatized the reason, speaking about 'the reason' and its performances as though it were something on its own and as though the ideal of human life consisted in reason's conquest of all spheres. Thus they tended to give man a false conception of himself and his activities. They abstracted one function of man's activity and turned it into the whole.

This hostility towards what he regards as false or one-sided abstractions is evident in Hamann's criticism of Kant's first *Critique*. In his *Metacritique on the Purism of Pure Reason*[2] Hamann attacked the Kantian separations between reason, understanding and sense, and between form and matter in sensation and conceptualization. Kant deals in abstractions. There certainly is, for example, an activity called 'reasoning'; but there is no such thing as 'the reason' or 'the understanding'. There are simply different activities which are performed by one being, one organism, one person. Obviously, even if this line of criticism does not dispose of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Hamann is making a good point. It is one which is not infrequently made in other contexts by philosophers whose general outlook is far removed from that of the Magus of the North.

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[1] *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, III, 12.

[2] This work, which was utilized by Herder in his own *Metacritique*, was not published during Hamann's lifetime. It was begun in 1781, the year in which the *Critique of Pure Reason* was published.

2. Hamann was clearly opposed to the rationalism of the Enlightenment. When we turn to Herder, however, we find a man who started from the point of view of the *Aufklärung* (so far as one is justified in speaking of 'a' point of view) and who worked his way out of it. While, therefore, historians are perfectly entitled to speak of his break with the Enlightenment, it is also possible to speak of his development of certain lines of thought within the movement. What we choose to say about this matter depends to some extent, of course, on the way in which we define certain terms. If we mean by the Enlightenment the Wolffian rationalism and the individualism of a number of thinkers, it is obvious that Herder made a break with the *Aufklärung*. But if we give the term a wider range of meaning, including under it the first germs or seeds of positions to which Herder gave expression, the word 'break' may seem to be too sharp. It makes, however, for clarity if one follows the traditional practice and represents Herder as having reacted against and broken with the Enlightenment.

Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) was born at Mohrungen in East Prussia, the son of a pietist schoolmaster. In 1762 he enrolled as a student of medicine at the University of Königsberg, though he presently changed to theology. He attended the lectures of Kant who was expounding the traditional Wolffian philosophy and giving courses on astronomy and geography; and Kant introduced him to the writings of Rousseau and Hume. At Königsberg Herder also formed a friendship with Hamann, though he can hardly have been at once deeply influenced by his antirationalist friend; for when he moved to Riga in 1764 he contributed essays and reviews to organs of the Enlightenment. In 1765 he was ordained a Protestant clergyman.

In 1766 there appeared anonymously at Leipzig the first two parts of Herder's *Fragments concerning Recent German Literature* (*Ueber die neuere deutsche Literatur: Fragmente*). The work bore the date 1767, the year which saw its completion. In the course of this work Herder discussed problems concerning language, a subject which occupied a good deal of his thoughts. Like Mendelssohn and Lessing, he insisted on a distinction between poetic and scientific (in his terminology philosophical) language. But the distinction was given a genetic or historical setting. Herder distinguishes four stages of linguistic development, which are classified according to an analogy with human growth, an analogy suggested by Rousseau. First comes the childhood stage when language consists of signs of passions and feelings. Secondly there is the period of youth, the poetic age of language, when poetry and song are one. Thirdly there is the stage of manhood which, though it still possesses poetry, is marked by the development of prose. Fourthly and finally there is the old age of language, the philosophical age, when life and richness are sacrificed to pedantic accuracy.

The context in which this theory of language was placed was a discussion about the German language. We cannot enter here into the details of this discussion. It must suffice to say that Herder, because of his insistence on the difference between poetic and philosophical language, rejected the notion that what German poetry required was to develop logical clarity. This idea had been put forward by, for example, J. G. Sulzer (1720–79), for whom poets were mediators between speculative philosophy and the people. Herder also rejected the idea that the German language should be improved by imitation of foreign literature. German poetry can be great if it grows out of the spontaneous poetry of the people and is the fruit of national genius. Later on Herder was to do much to foster a revival of interest in folk-poetry. In this attitude he was opposed to those thinkers of the *Aufklärung* who despised the German language and thought that the only hope for German literature lay in 'imitation'.

All this may seem to have little to do with philosophy. But it is interesting to observe how Herder (and not Herder alone, of course) distinguished between different types of language. Further, Herder saw that the question of use is of great importance. If we investigate the origins of different types of language, we do so in order to examine their uses more carefully, he tells us. And the uses of language is a subject which is obviously much discussed in present-day English philosophy. Again, Herder's insistence on German and on the spontaneous poetry of the people as the basis for developed poetic literature can be regarded as an initial stage in the growth of his later philosophy of culture and history, which lays stress on the development of national cultures considered as totalities in which languages play an extremely important part.

In *Critical Forests* (*Kritische Wälder*, 1769) Herder took as his point of departure Lessing's *Laokoon*, though he had other critics in view besides Lessing, whom he recognized as an outstanding dramatist. In his work Herder touched on a variety of points, distinguishing sculpture and painting, for example, and arguing that though Homer was, indeed, the greatest of Greek poets, the creations of his poetic genius were historically conditioned and that his practice cannot be taken as a norm. This is obvious enough to us; but Herder's point of view is significant as representing an aspect of his sense of historical development and of his rejection of purely abstract and rationalistic criticism and theorizing.

In the fourth *Grove* of *Critical Forests*, which was not published in his lifetime, Herder subjected to trenchant criticism the ideas of Friedrich Justus Riedel (1742–86), author of a *Theory of the Fine Arts and Sciences* (1767). Riedel had asserted the existence of three fundamental faculties of the mind, common sense, conscience and taste, corresponding to three absolutes, the true, the good and the beautiful. Herder argued, for instance, that it is nonsense to suppose that there is a faculty called 'common sense' whereby man apprehends absolute truth immediately without a process of reasoning. Anti-Wolffian notions of this sort would make one return to the philosophy of Wolff if one thought it acceptable. Again, the theory of a faculty of taste, with its implication that whatever pleases is beautiful or at least what pleases the greater number of people is the more beautiful, is an absurdity. Baumgarten was much more on the right lines when he distinguished between logic and aesthetics but maintained at the same time that there can be and ought to be a science of aesthetics, a science of sensation, which would be an important part of the philosophy of man. For Herder, aesthetics would examine the logic of artistic symbolization. Like Baumgarten, he saw that aesthetics must be distinguished from abstract logic and from science; but his approach was more historical. What is required is an historical analysis of different cultures and of the development and nature of their respective aesthetic ideals. But, while rejecting Riedel's theory of the universal faculty of taste, corresponding to the absolutely beautiful, Herder wavers in his discussion of absolute beauty. It may seem that his idea of an historical approach, with its accompanying psychological and physiological investigations, should lead to a relativistic conception of beauty; and Herder does, indeed, make artistic beauty relative to different cultures and to different periods of those cultures. At the same time he seems to hold that through an historical approach it would be impossible to find a common denominator. For an historical approach does not mean merely registering different conceptions of artistic beauty: it involves also an examination of the factors, psychological, physiological and environmental, determining these conceptions. It is true that Riedel had himself defended a psychological approach to aesthetics, using the psychology of Johann Georg Darjes (1714–91), who had been influenced by the faculty psychology of Crusius. But Herder's point was that the psychological approach must be integrated into an historical approach. We cannot legitimately take a short cut by postulating a faculty which remains uniform in its operations in all cultures and which is correlative to an absolute, universal and unchanging ideal.

In 1769 Herder resigned his post as pastor at Riga and set out on a voyage to Nantes, going afterwards to Paris and then to Strasbourg, where he consorted with the young Goethe (1770–1). The literary fruit of his journey to Nantes was his *Travel Diary*. This work, though not intended for publication, is of considerable importance as manifesting a change of mind in its author. Looking backwards, he expresses his dissatisfaction with the lifeless technicalities of aesthetic criticism, describes his *Critical Forests* as useless, crude and miserable, and wishes that he had given himself to the study of French, of the natural sciences and of history; that is, to the acquisition of positive knowledge of the world and of men. If he had acted in this way, he says, he would not have become an inkpot and a repository of print. Looking forward, he envisages a new type of school and education in which the child will be led by gradual stages from acquaintance with its natural environment through a concrete presentation of geography, ethnography, physics and history to a systematic and more abstract study of such sciences. The method would thus be inductive, proceeding from the concrete to the abstract, so that abstract ideas would be grounded in experience. Religious and moral education would, of course, form an integral part of the general plan. And the result aimed at would be the development of a full and balanced human personality. In other words, Herder's mind in the *Travel Diary* is dominated by the ideas of positive knowledge and of education.

At Strasbourg Herder succeeded in conveying to Goethe some of his own interest in and appreciation for folk-poetry and the national cultural heritage. He also wrote his *Treatise on the Origin of Language* (*Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache*). Written at the end of 1770, it won a prize at the beginning of 1771 which had been offered by the Berlin Academy. Rejecting the extreme opposing views of the divine origin of language on the one hand and of its 'invention' on the other, Herder insists that the question of the origin of language, so far as it has any sense, is one which can be solved only on the basis of empirical evidence concerning the development and use, or uses, of language: it cannot be settled by dogmatic statements and *a priori* theorizing. In the course of his discussion he attacks the faculty psychology, maintains that primitive language and primitive poetry were one, and emphasizes the social function of poetry.

Herder did not like Strasbourg, and in 1771 he went to Bückeburg as court preacher to the Count of Schaumburg-Lippe. Stimulated by James Macpherson's Ossianic forgeries, he contributed to a volume entitled *Of German Nature and Art* (*Von deutscher Art und Kunst*, 1773), an essay on Ossian and folk-songs, as well as another on Shakespeare. At this time Herder was revolting against the typical ideas of the Enlightenment, that it was the highest culmination of historical development and that the middle class was practically the unique source of enlightened reasonableness. He also asserted that the great rationalist systems of Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz and others were poetic fictions, adding that the poetry of Berkeley was greater and better sustained. It is not surprising, therefore, that Herder completed his break with the *Enlightenment*, a break symbolized by *Another Philosophy of History* (*Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte*, 1774).

In this work Herder gives an account of the successive ages of humanity, from the Golden Age of humanity's childhood onwards. But this scheme is not meant to be taken too seriously, as is clear from the fact that Herder states roundly that when one has depicted a whole age or a whole people, one is left with a general word. General characterizations are inherently weak. Indeed, there is a good deal of irony in Herder's account of historical ages. For Rome is said to represent the manhood of the human race. And the implication is that the eighteenth century, so lauded by the men of the Enlightenment, represents senility. And Herder does not hesitate to draw attention to the hollowness of some of the claims made on behalf of the eighteenth century. For instance, sublime ideas and principles are formed and expressed by the enlightened; but inclination and impulse to live with nobility and kindness are weakened. Again, enlightened Europe boasts its freedom, but the invisible slavery of class to class is passed over in silence, and the vices of Europe are exported to other continents.

More important, however, from a philosophical point of view than Herder's attack on the complacency of the men of the Enlightenment is his attack on their historiography. They approach history with a presupposition, namely that history represents an upward movement from religious mysticism and superstition to free and non-religious morality. But if we study history in the light of such presuppositions, we shall never succeed in understanding it in its concrete reality. We ought to study each culture and phase of culture on its own merits, seeking to enter into its complex life and to understand it, so far as possible, from within, without judgments about better and worse, happier and less happy. Each nation, says Herder, carries within itself its own happiness, and the same is true of each period of its development. We cannot say in general that youth is happier than childhood or that old age is more miserable than youth. Nor can we legitimately make analogous generalizations about nations in the course of their development.

Of course, there is a certain historicism in this attitude. But Herder is clearly insisting on an important truth, that if we wish really to understand the historical development of man, we must not force the historical data into the Procrustean bed of a preconceived scheme. This seems obvious enough to us now; but, given the general tendency of the Enlightenment to use history to prove a thesis, and a questionable thesis at that, Herder's point was by no means a truism at the time when he made it.

In 1776 Herder moved from Bückeburg to Weimar, where he was appointed General Superintendent or head of the Lutheran clergy. In 1778 he published an essay *Of the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul* (*Vom Erkennen und Empfinden der menschlichen*

Seele), in which he expressed his opinion that no psychology is possible which is not physiology at every step. This statement is markedly behaviouristic, though Herder postulated in physiology a vital force. He also wrote extensively on literary subjects, such as folk-songs and their cultural significance, on theological questions, on certain books of the Bible, and on the spirit of Hebrew poetry. But the outstanding work of this period was his *Ideas for the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* (*Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*) which appeared in four parts from 1784 to 1791, the production of the work being interrupted by a journey to Italy (1788–9). A projected fifth part was never written. As I propose to discuss the *Ideas* in a later chapter, when dealing specifically with the rise of the philosophy of history, I shall say nothing about its contents here.

In the period from 1793 to 1797 there appeared Herder's *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity* (*Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität*), dealing with a heterogeneous collection of topics. One or two of the views which he expressed in the *Letters* will be mentioned later on in connection with the *Ideas*. The general theory of the work is that 'humanity', the ideal character of our race, is innate in us as a potentiality or predisposition and that it must be developed by formative education. The purpose of science, art and all other human institutions is to 'humanize' man, to develop the perfection of humanity. Herder raises the objection that this development would lead to the production of a Superman or of a being who was outside the human species; but he meets it by saying that perfect man would not be a Superman but simply the realization of 'humanity'. We may note that Herder's educational ideals were not confined simply to theory and writing; for he set himself to plan and carry into effect, so far as he could, a reform of education in the duchy of Weimar.

In his later years Herder published a number of theological writings, notably *Christian Writings* (1794–8), which are, in general, surprisingly rationalistic and much more what one would expect of a man of the Enlightenment than of a friend of Hamann. He also wrote in opposition to the critical philosophy of Kant of which he strongly disapproved. In 1799 he published a *Metacritique of the Critique of Pure Reason*, representing Kant's work as jugglery with words, as a linguistic monstrosity and as involving a wrong-headed perpetuation of the faculty psychology. This should not be taken to mean that Herder's criticism consisted of unintelligent abuse. On the contrary, it consisted of a reasoned examination of Kant's theories. For example, he maintained, as against the Kantian theory that mathematical propositions are synthetic, that they are 'identical', that is to say, that they are what Wittgenstein called 'tautologies'. Again, Herder rejected Kant's view of space and time. The geometer does not analyse the *a priori* form of space; for there is no such form. And even if Herder does not explain clearly what the geometer does analyse, it seems to be implied that he analyses the implications of his own axioms and fundamental postulates. But Herder's account of mathematics is only one particular instance of his criticism of Kant. His main line of thought is that Kant's whole enterprise is wrongly conceived. Even if there were a separate faculty called 'reason', it would be out of order to speak of 'criticizing' it. Rather should we start with language; for reasoning is not only expressed in language, it is also inseparable from it, though it is not coextensive with all the uses of language. Thinking, according to Herder, is inward speaking, while speaking in the ordinary sense is speaking aloud or thinking aloud, whichever you like. There is no 'reason' as an entity, there is only a process, an activity of man as a total personality, and language is an indispensable instrument of this process, merging with it. In fine, the *Critique of Pure Reason* is based, according to Herder, on an erroneous psychology.

In 1800 Herder published *Kalligone*, a criticism of Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. In his opinion Kant had no real understanding of aesthetics. Herder did not write a criticism of the second *Critique*; but this was not because he agreed with it. He intended to attack it but abandoned the idea, partly because he was advised not to do so and partly, probably more, because he was engaged on other work. Thus he undertook to edit a new literary periodical, *Adrastea* (1800–4), to which he was the main contributor, in the form of essays and poetic dramas.[1] The fifth volume of the periodical contained instalments of Herder's German translation of the *Romances of the Cid* (made from a French translation with consultation of a late Spanish version).

Herder died at Weimar on December 18th, 1803. From the foregoing account of his life and activity it should be clear that he was a man of many interests; and though he was not a great systematic philosopher, he was a fertile writer who exercised a great influence on German life and thought. He has been called the teacher of the *Sturm und Drang* (Storm and Stress) movement in German literature; but he certainly influenced also the succeeding romantic movement through his insistence on the significance of folk-songs, through his idea of the all-important role of language in culture and in the development of the aesthetic consciousness, through his idea of history as a divine revelation and through his defence of Spinoza in the pantheism controversy. A. W. Schlegel (1767–1845) and F. Schlegel (1772–1829) were both indebted to Herder. However, as historians of German literature have remarked, it was the younger Herder, the rebel against the rationalism of the Enlightenment, who most influenced the romantic movement. In his later years Herder could not compete in the literary sphere with the influence of Goethe, which was inevitably felt even by those who disagreed with him.[1]

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[1] The fifth volume, dated 1803, appeared in 1804 after Herder's death. The sixth volume (1804) was also published posthumously.

3. Mention has already been made of Jacobi in connection with the pantheism controversy. Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743–1819), who became president of the Academy of Sciences at Munich, was a philosopher of faith. He emphasized the fact that it was never his intention to construct an academic system of philosophy; on the contrary, his writings were the expression of his inner life and experience and were, so to speak, forced from him, as he put it, by a higher and irresistible power.

Jacobi had made a study of Spinoza, and in his opinion the latter's philosophy was the only logical system. For the human reason can pass, in its process of demonstrating truths, only from the conditioned to the conditioned: it cannot rise above the conditioned to a transcendent Deity. All metaphysical demonstrations of an ultimate ground of existence must lead, therefore, to monism, to the conception of a world-system, which, as Jacobi maintained in his correspondence with Mendelssohn, is equivalent to atheism. But this is not to say that Spinozism is to be accepted. On the contrary, it must be rejected in the name of faith, which is an affair of the heart (*Gemüt*) rather than of the speculative reason.

The result of this position is, of course, a complete separation between philosophy on the one hand and the sphere of faith on the other. To attempt to prove God's existence is equivalent to trying to reduce God to a conditioned being; and in the long run speculative metaphysics must result in atheism. It is better to recognize Hume's services in exposing the pretensions of metaphysics, provided that we attribute full validity to faith. Just as we do not prove the existence of the external world but enjoy an immediate intuition in sense-perception of the existence of sense-objects, so do we have (or can have) an immediate intuition of supersensible reality, which we call 'faith'. In his later writings Jacobi spoke of the higher reason (*Vernunft* as distinguished from *Verstand*) whereby we apprehend immediately supersensible reality. If somebody denies the existence of God, we cannot prove this existence to him; but in his denial he shuts himself off from one whole aspect of human experience. Or, rather, his denial is a result of his blindness to all but our perception of the corporeal world and our knowledge of the relations between finite things. Light comes to us from the sphere of supersensible reality, but once we try to grasp by the discursive reason this light and what it renders visible to the higher or intuitive reason, the light fades and disappears.

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[1] In his later years Herder became estranged from Goethe, who found the former afflicted by an 'ill-tempered spirit of contradiction'. As for Schiller, the other great representative of German classicism, he was never particularly enamoured of Herder and, as an admirer of Kant, he was offended by Herder's attack on the critical philosophy, which attack, indeed, was unfashionable and helped to isolate its author.

To a certain extent Jacobi was in agreement with Kant. Thus he believed that the field of knowledge, that is to say of scientific or theoretical knowledge, is limited to the realm of possible experience, where experience means sense-experience, and he was in agreement with Kant about reason's incapacity to prove the existence of supersensible realities. To this extent, therefore, he welcomed the critical philosophy as making room for faith. But he rejected the Kantian theory of the postulates of the practical reason. Belief in God, for example, is not a practical postulate but the result of faith, of an inner illumination of the higher reason. Again, Jacobi rejected what he regarded as Kant's phenomenalism. What we perceive are not phenomena linked together by subjective forms of intuition and categories of the understanding; they are the real things themselves. Further, he insisted on the immediacy of moral intuition or sense as against what he looked on as the empty formalism of the Kantian theory of the categorical imperative. It may be argued that Jacobi misunderstood Kant; but the point in mentioning his criticism of the critical philosophy is to draw attention to the facts, first that he accepted it in so far as it fell in with his idea of the incompetence of the discursive reason to transcend the sphere of the sensible, and secondly that he rejected it in so far as it seemed to rule out immediate apprehension of God and of moral values. It is also to be noted that in

Jacobi's view Kant's doctrine of the thing-in-itself was an anomaly, not in the sense that there are no metaphenomenal realities but in the sense that in the Kantian philosophy the affirmation of things-in-themselves can be justified only by use of the causal principle, though this is a subjectively grounded principle, according to Kant, and applicable only to phenomena.

4. We have seen that all three thinkers whom we have considered in this chapter not only opposed the rationalism of the Enlightenment but also subjected to criticism the new critical philosophy of Kant. It was from Kant, however, that the great movement of German speculative idealism in the first half of the nineteenth century took its rise. To be sure, some of the objections they brought against Kant were shared by the idealists. For instance, Jacobi's objection that the Kantian affirmation of the thing-in-itself, when taken together with his doctrine of the categories, placed Kant in an impossible position was raised also by Fichte. But the line of development taken by speculative idealism was not at all the line which either Hamann or Herder or Jacobi would have approved. (Jacobi charged Schelling with trying to conceal the Spinozistic consequences of his thought.) In this sense they were swimming against a current which was to prove too strong for them. At the same time Herder's idea of history as a progressive education of humanity and as a manifestation of providence, together with his insistence on organic totality, both in the cultural and in the psychological spheres, as against analytic splintering, were to be incorporated into the idealist movement, especially in the Hegelian system. It is true that Hamann also sponsored the idea of history as a kind of commentary on the divine *logos*. But his utterances were too oracular to have the effect of Herder's ideas. Historically speaking, therefore, the latter must be accounted the most important of the three.

It may be said that we ought to regard these three men, not simply in relation to subsequent philosophical development, but on their own merits, recognizing that they performed the useful function of drawing attention to and insisting on aspects of man's spiritual life which the rationalistic Enlightenment tended to ignore. This may well be true. At the same time one could hardly expect the human mind to rest content with the sort of dichotomy between faith and philosophy which was made by Hamann and Jacobi. If religion, as Herder maintained, is an integral part of human culture and not something man must grow out of, as some of the men of the Enlightenment had believed, man, in trying to understand his own cultural development, must try to understand religion. And this, of course, is one of the things which Hegel tried to do. In doing so he elevated the speculative reason above the immediacy of faith, and he thus adopted a position which was contrary to that of Hamann and Jacobi and which stimulated Kierkegaard to a reassertion of faith. We thus have the reaction of Hamann and Jacobi against the rationalism of the Enlightenment and, later, the reaction of Kierkegaard against the Hegelian form of rationalism. This suggests that Hamann and Jacobi in the late eighteenth century[1] and Kierkegaard in the nineteenth represent an important fact, the role of faith in human life. But it also suggests that a more satisfactory, that is, rationally satisfactory, synthesis of faith and philosophy is required than any which was offered by these protesters against an arid rationalism or an all-engulfing speculative intellect.

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[1] Jacobi's activity continued into the early part of the nineteenth century.

PART III

THE RISE OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

CHAPTER VIII

BOSSUET AND VICO

Introductory remarks; the Greeks, St. Augustine—Bossuet—Vico—Montesquieu.

1. ACCORDING to Aristotle in the *Poetics*,[1] poetry is 'something more philosophical and of graver import than history, because its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are particular'.[2] Science and philosophy are concerned with the universal, whereas history is the sphere of the particular and of the contingent. Poetry, of course, is not philosophy or science; but it is 'more philosophical' than history. It is true that Aristotle makes general statements about historical development, which might possibly be classified under the heading of philosophy of history. For, like Plato before him, he speaks in the *Politics* of the various kinds of revolution which tend to occur under different institutions, of their causes and of the means of preventing them and of the tendencies in certain types of constitution to turn into other types. But such remarks are obviously general reflections on history of the kind which could perfectly well be made by the historian himself. If we mean by philosophy of history a total view of historical development purporting to show that this development, as made known by historical research, follows a rational pattern and fulfils some plan or exemplifies certain universal and necessary laws, we can hardly say that the Greeks elaborated a philosophy of history. They had, of course, their historians, such as Thucydides, but this is a different matter. True, the notion of a cyclic return in the history of the world was common enough, and this theory can, indeed, be called a philosophy of history. But it can scarcely be claimed that the Greeks elaborated the theory. And if we concentrate our attention on the tradition

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[1] 1451b, 5–8.

[2] On the meaning of this statement, as far as poetry is concerned, see Vol. I, pp. 361–2.

which ultimately came to dominate Greek philosophy, namely the Platonic tradition, we find a marked tendency to belittle the importance of historical development, a tendency connected, of course, with the Platonic insistence on unchanging spiritual reality as the sphere of true being in contrast with the sphere of becoming. The most impressive expression of this tendency is probably that found in Plotinus,[1] when he depicts historical events as so many incidents in a play which must be set in sharp contrast with the interior life, the spiritual return of the soul to God. True, Plotinus does not subtract history from the rule of law and of 'providence'. And his view of human history must be accounted a philosophy of history, inasmuch as it is closely linked with his general philosophical outlook: it is part of his system, just as the Stoics' view of cosmic history as a series of cycles was part of their system. But the tendency of Plotinus is to belittle the events to which prominence is accorded by the historian. And in any case there is no idea of human history in general as a development towards a goal which is attained in and through history.

The idea of history not as a series of cycles but as a process of progressive development towards an ultimate goal is characteristic, not of Greek but of Jewish and Christian thought. But the intimate connection between this idea and the doctrines of the Messias in Judaism and of the Incarnation in Christianity, as well as with Jewish and Christian eschatological doctrines, leads to a theory of historical development which is theological in character, in the sense that it presupposes theological doctrines. The most notable example of a specifically Christian philosophy of history is, of course, the theory of St. Augustine as presented in his *De civitate Dei*, in which the history of the Jewish people and the foundation and growth of the Christian Church play important roles. I do not wish to repeat here what I have said in the second volume of this *History*[2] about St. Augustine's philosophy of history. It is sufficient to remark that he thought in terms of a total 'Christian wisdom' rather than in terms of a systematic distinction between theology and philosophy. The fact, therefore, that his view of history is largely a theological interpretation with reference to God's providential dealings with the Jews as manifested in the Old Testament and with reference to the Incarnation and its prolongation, so to speak, in the Church, Christ's mystical body, is in no way inconsistent with his general outlook. And it is, indeed, arguable, at least from a Christian point of view, both that an interpretation of history as a process of development towards a determinate goal cannot be anything else but a theological interpretation and that a non-theological interpretation of history, so far as it is capable of validity, is reducible to the sort of statements about history which historians themselves are competent to make. In other words, it is arguable, from a Christian point of view, that there can be no such thing as a philosophy of history, if this term is understood to mean an interpretation of the whole of history as an intelligible movement towards a determinate goal and if a systematic distinction between philosophy and theology is presupposed. However, if it is claimed that there can be no such thing as a philosophy of history in this sense, the claim must obviously be understood with reference to a valid philosophy of history. For it is clear enough that philosophies of history which do not presuppose theological doctrines have been and are presented. The Marxist philosophy of history is a case in point. And though we are not concerned with Marxism in this volume, we are concerned with the transition from a theological to a non-theological interpretation of history.

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[1] *Enneads*, III, 2.

[2] See Vol. II, pp. 85–9.

2. Jacques Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704), the great orator who was bishop first of Condom and afterwards of Meaux, expounded a theological interpretation of history in his *Discourse on Universal History* (*Discours sur l'histoire universelle*, 1681). In his preface to the work, dedicated to the Dauphin, he emphasizes two aspects of universal history, the development of religion and that of empires. For 'religion and political government are the two points on which human affairs turn'.[1] Through a study of history princes can be made aware of the abiding presence and importance of religion in its successive forms and of the causes of political changes and of the transition from one empire to another.

Obviously, these two themes could be treated by a non-religious historian, without any theological presuppositions. But in his *Discourse on Universal History* Bossuet has apologetic considerations in mind. In the first part he outlines twelve epochs: Adam, or creation; Noe, or the Deluge; the vocation of Abraham; Moses, or the written Law; the taking of Troy; Solomon, or the building of the Temple; Romulus, or the foundation of Rome; Cyrus, or the re-establishment of the Jews; Scipio, or the conquest of Carthage; the birth of Jesus Christ; Constantine, or the peace of the Church; and Charlemagne, or the establishment of the new empire. In other words, Bossuet is concerned with the providential dealings of God with the chosen people, with the spread of the Roman empire as a preparation for Christianity, with the Incarnation and with the establishment of the Church and of Christian society. Oriental empires enter upon the scene only in function of their relations with the Jewish people. India and China are omitted. The theological doctrines of creation, of divine providence, and of the Incarnation form the framework of the author's historical scheme. And the twelve epochs fall under seven 'ages of the world', the birth of Christ ushering in the seventh and last.

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[1] *Dessein général.*

In the second part, devoted to the development of religion, apologetic considerations are again dominant. We pass from the creation through the time of the Patriarchs to the revelation of the Law to Moses; and from the kings and prophets to the Christian revelation. Bossuet discusses, indeed, some religions, such as those of Rome and Egypt, other than Judaism and Christianity; but his remarks are incidental to his main theme, that Christianity is the perfect development of religion. 'This Church, always attacked and never conquered, is a perpetual miracle and a striking testimony to the changelessness of the counsels of God.'[1]

The idea of divine providence is prominent also in the third part of the *Discourse*, which deals with the fortunes of empires. Thus we are told that 'these empires have for the most part a necessary connection with the history of the people of God'.[2] God used the Assyrians and Babylonians to punish the Jews, the Persians to re-establish them in their land, Alexander and his first successors to protect them, and the Romans to maintain their liberty against the kings of Syria. And when the Jews rejected Christ, God used these same Romans to chastise them, though the Romans did not understand the significance of the destruction of Jerusalem. Bossuet does not, of course, confine himself to such general familiar statements. He discusses the particular causes of the falls of a number of empires and States from Egypt to Rome, and he endeavours to draw lessons for the Dauphin from these discussions. His final conclusion is that no man can rule the course of history according to his own plans and wishes. A prince may intend to produce one effect by his actions and in actual fact produce another. 'There is no human power which does not serve, despite itself, other designs than its own: God alone knows how to reduce all to His will. That is why everything is surprising if we regard only particular causes; and yet everything proceeds according to an ordered development.'[1] In other words, historical changes have their particular causes, and the way in which these causes operate is by no means always foreseen or willed by men. But at the same time divine providence is fulfilled in and through the operations of these particular causes.

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[1] *Discourse*, Part II, 13.

[2] *Ibid.*, Part III, 1.

Perhaps we can say, therefore, that for Bossuet there are, as it were, two historical levels. There is the level of particular causes which are considered by the historian. The latter can determine, for instance, the particular causes which contributed to the fall of the Babylonian empire or of imperial Rome. But there is also the level of theological interpretation, according to which divine providence is fulfilled in and through historical events. But we are restricted in our knowledge of how divine providence is thus fulfilled in the cause of history. And this is obviously one reason why Bossuet dwells on the relations of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon and Persia to the Jewish people; for here he can have recourse to the teaching of the Old Testament.

Bossuet thus renewed in the seventeenth century St. Augustine's attempt to develop a philosophy of history. But, as has been remarked and as Bossuet was doubtless well aware, our ability to develop this sort of philosophy of history, namely in terms of the idea of divine providence, is very restricted. The chief significance of his *Discourse* is probably that it helped to draw attention to human history as the subject-matter of philosophical reflection.

3. A much more important figure in the rise of the philosophy of history is Giambattista Vico (1688–1744), one of the greatest of Italian philosophers. During Vico's lifetime a considerable amount of historical research was carried on. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation had both stimulated this work; and a further impetus, as historians have noted, was given by the rise of the national States and by dynastic interests. Thus Leibniz engaged in writing the history of the House of Brunswick, while in Italy Muratori, who was librarian to the Duke of Modena in the first half of the eighteenth century, was commissioned by his patron to prepare a history of the House of Este.[2] But historical research and accumulation of material for the writing of history is not the

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[1] *Discourse*, Part III, 7.

[2] Muratori's great work was the *Rerum italicarum scriptores*.

same thing as historiography; and historiography or the writing of history is not the same thing as a theory or philosophy of history. For the latter we have to turn to Vico.

In 1699 Vico became professor of rhetoric in the university of Naples, a post which he held until 1741.[1] And in this capacity he delivered a number of inaugural lectures. The earlier ones show the influence of Cartesianism; but in that of 1708 he adopts a different attitude. The moderns, he says, have introduced great improvements in certain sciences, namely the physical sciences; but they have underestimated and depreciated the branches of study whose subject-matter depends on the human will and cannot be treated by the same method as, for instance, mathematics. These sciences include poetry, history, language, politics and jurisprudence. Further, the moderns have tried to extend the application of the demonstrative mathematical method of sciences where it can yield only apparent demonstration.

This point of view was developed more fully in his *Ancient Wisdom of the Italians* (*De antiquissima italorum sapientia*, 1710). In this work Vico attacks the philosophy of Descartes. In the first place, the *Cogito, ergo sum* cannot serve as an adequate refutation of scepticism or as a basis for scientific knowledge. For the certainty that one is thinking belongs to the level of unreflecting consciousness and not to the level of science. In the second place, clarity and distinctness of idea will not serve as a universal criterion of truth. It may appear to serve as a criterion of truth in mathematics. But it is applicable in geometry, for example, because geometry is a constructive science, in which the mind constructs or makes its own entities. Mathematical entities are not realities in the sense in which the objects of natural sciences are realities; they are fictions made by man. They are indeed clear and distinct; but they are so because the mind has itself constructed them. Construction of the object is therefore more fundamental than clarity and distinctness; and it provides us with the criterion of truth. 'The rule and criterion of truth is to have made it.'[2] But construction of the object does not mean precisely the same in physics, for instance, as in pure geometry. In the latter the objects are unreal entities, mental fictions; in the former they are not. Construction of the object in physics means using the experimental method. The things which we can prove in physics are those to which we can perform something similar. And the ideas of natural things which are clearest are those which we can support by experiments which imitate nature.

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[1] In 1723 Vico competed for, but failed to obtain, the chair of civil law.

[2] *Opere*, I, 136; Bari, 1929.

The statement of the principle *verum factum*, namely that the criterion of truth is to have made it, does not, therefore, lead to the conclusion that the geometrical method is of universal applicability in all sciences. Nor should it be taken to mean that the mind creates physical objects in the same sense in which it creates mathematical entities. We should not interpret Vico as maintaining that things are mental fictions or mere ideas. The making or constructing of the object should be understood in a cognitive rather than in an existential sense. When the mind reconstructs the structure of the object out of its elements, it attains certainty of truth in the very act of reconstruction. In this sense knowing and making are identified, *verum* and *factum* becoming one. God, creating all things, necessarily knows all things clearly. And a strict analogue to this truth is found only in human mathematical knowledge, where the objects or entities are mental fictions. We do not create Nature in the existential order. At the same time we have a scientific knowledge of Nature only in so far as we remake, as it were, the structure of the object in the cognitive order. And we cannot know that we are doing this correctly without the help of the experimental method. A deduction from purely abstract concepts created by ourselves cannot guarantee a knowledge of existent Nature, however clear and distinct these concepts may be.

The application of these ideas to history was not made in the *Ancient Wisdom of the Italians*; but it is easy to anticipate the general line which Vico's thought was to take. Human history is made by man; it is therefore understandable by man. The principles of historical science are to be found in the modifications of the human mind, in man's nature. Indeed, history lends itself to scientific investigation and reflection more easily than physical Nature. Nature was made by God alone, not man; hence God alone can have a full, adequate knowledge of Nature. But human society, human laws, language and literature, are all made by man. Hence man can truly understand them and the principles of their development. Here we have a reversal of the Cartesian position. The sciences which Descartes belittled in favour of physical science are given a position superior to the latter.

The principles of this new science were discussed by Vico in his great work, *Principles of a New Science concerning the Common*

Nature of the Nations (*Principi di una scienza nuova d'intorno alla comune natura delle nazioni*, 1725; 2nd edition, 1730; 3rd edition, 1744). In his autobiography Vico remarks that up to a certain date he admired two men above all, namely Plato and Tacitus. 'For with an incomparable metaphysical mind Tacitus contemplates man as he is, Plato as he should be.'[1] And we can connect with his admiration for these two men his aim in the *New Science* of determining the universal and eternal law of history and the ways in which this eternal law works itself out in the histories of individual peoples. The 'esoteric wisdom' of Plato is to be combined with the 'common wisdom' of Tacitus. But Vico adds the names of two other men to whom he recognizes a special debt. The first of these is Francis Bacon, from whose *De augmentis scientiarum* and *Novum organum* he derived a powerful inspiration in the development of his new science. (The title *New Science* may have been suggested by Bacon's *Novum organum*.) The second name is Grotius. Bacon saw that the sum of knowledge as existing in his time stood in need of being supplemented and amended, but, as far as law was concerned, he did not succeed in working out the laws governing human history. 'Grotius, however, embraces in a system of universal law the whole of philosophy and philology, including both parts of the latter, the history on the one hand of facts and events, both fabulous and real, and on the other of the three languages, Hebrew, Greek and Latin; that is to say, the three learned languages of antiquity that have been handed down to us by the Christian religion.'[2] Vico desired to carry further the work of Grotius. And we can connect with his reading of the philosophers of natural law, such as Grotius and Pufendorf (we may add Hobbes), his formulation of the problem of history as, in a large part, a problem concerning the origins of civilization. This is a theme to which he gives special attention in the *New Science*.

Vico was unwilling to start with Hobbes's 'licentious and violent men', Grotius's 'solitary, weak and needy simpletons' or Pufendorf's 'vagrants cast into the world without divine care or help', as he expresses the matter at the beginning of the first book of the first edition of the *New Science*. That is to say, he was unwilling to make an absolute start with men in these conditions. For Genesis does not suggest that Adam was originally in the state of nature described, for example, by Hobbes. So Vico allows a lapse of time for the process of man's bestialization to take place, among the Gentile races, that is to say. And then the problem arises how civilization developed.

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[1] *The Autobiography of Giambattista Vico*, translated by M. H. Fisch and T. G. Bergin, Cornell U.P., 1944, p. 138.

[2] *Autobiography*, p. 155.

Vico supposes that the first beginnings of civilization came with settled dwellings. The thunder and lightning of the sky god drove men, together with their women, into the shelter of caves. And these primitive habitations made possible the rise of the first stage of civilization, 'the age of the gods' or 'state of the families', when the father of the family was king, priest, moral arbiter and judge. This family-stage of civilization had three principles, namely, religion, marriage and burial of the dead.

In this primitive stage of civilization there were, however, ever-present tensions and inequalities. Among the vagrants, for instance, those who had not yet formed themselves into settled families which worshipped deities and tilled the soil in common, some were strong, others weak. And one can picture the weak taking refuge with settled families as dependents or serfs, to save themselves from their stronger and more violent fellows. We can then imagine the fathers of families uniting together against the serfs. That is to say, patrician and plebeian orders were gradually formed, and so there arose 'heroic states', in which the magistrates belonged to the patrician order. This was the second stage in the development of civilization; it was 'the age of the heroes'.

But this stage was inherently unstable. The patricians or nobles naturally wished to conserve the structure of society as it was; for they wished to preserve their position and privileges intact. But, equally naturally, the plebeians wished to change the structure of society. And in the course of time they succeeded in winning for themselves a share in one privilege after another, from a legal recognition of their marriages up to citizenship and eligibility for office. The age of the heroes thus gradually gave place to 'the age of men', characterized by democratic republics. It was the age of men, because the dignity of man as man, as a rational being, was at length recognized.

However, this third stage in the development of civilization held within itself the seeds of its own decay. Religion, which had been present from the start and which had been an all-important agent in man's rise to a civilized condition, tended, with the flowering of rationality, to give place to philosophy and barren intellectualism. Equality gave birth to a decline in public spirit and to the growth of licence. The laws certainly became more humane, and toleration increased; but decadence accompanied this process of humanization, until in the end society disintegrated from within or succumbed to external attack. This led, as at the close of the Roman empire, to a reversion to barbarism.

After the completion of the cycle a new cycle begins. Thus in the West the coming of Christianity heralded a new age of the gods. The Middle Ages represented the age of the heroes in the new cycle. And the seventeenth century, the century of the philosophies, was a phase of a renewed age of men. We find cycles in the histories of individual peoples; and their particular cycles are the working-out of a universal law. But this theory of cycles, which Vico believed to be confirmed inductively, must not be misunderstood. Vico does not mean that historical events are determined or that precisely similar sets of particular events occur in each cycle. Nor does he mean, for instance, that Christianity is a temporary religious phenomenon which possesses a value relative to one particular cycle, so that it must give place to another religion in the future. What recurs is not the particular historical facts or events but rather the general framework in which the events occur. Or, better, it is the cycle of mentalities which recur. Thus the primitive mentality, expressed in the language of sense, imagination and passion is gradually succeeded by the emergence of reflective rationality. This in turn becomes, as it were, cut off from other layers of human nature and tends to develop into the dissolvent criticism of the sceptical reason. And the dissolution of society is not arrested until man recaptures the spontaneous primitive mentality which brings with it a renewed contact with God, a renewal of religion. Civilization 'in every case began with religion and was completed by sciences, disciplines and arts'.[1] There is a cycle of mentalities, of the forms of historical development, but not of the contents, the particular historical facts and events. Vico's idea does, indeed, recall Greek theories of the cyclic return; but he has no intention of affirming a fatalistic theory of the necessary repetition of similar particular events. Nor does his theory of cycles preclude all progress. For instance, Christianity may correspond in a new cycle to what Vico calls the 'frightful religions' of the first age of the gods; but it does not follow that Christianity is not superior to them.

It is a great mistake to think that Vico offered nothing else in his philosophy of history but a theory of cycles. There is much more to it than a tidy map of the development of each people or nation. For one thing we can find in his work a healthy counterblast to rationalism in the sense of an over-intellectualist interpretation of man and his history. The philosophers, says Vico, are incapable of forming for themselves a true idea of the origins of society; for they tend constantly to read back into the past their own ways of looking at things and to rationalize what was not the work of reason in the sense which they give to this word. Thus the philosophers of natural law depict for us men in the state of nature as making a contract or covenant which gives rise to society. But the real origins of society cannot have been of this kind. The factor which drove the vagrants or vagabonds into caves and suchlike primitive dwellings, there to establish more or less settled habitations, was fear; or, more generally, felt need.

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[1] *Opere*, III, 5.

This idea can be applied, not only to the philosophers of the seventeenth century, but also to those of the ancient world. The latter, subject to the same rationalizing tendency as their modern successors, attributed the laws of States to enlightened law-givers, such as Lycurgus at Sparta. But laws did not begin as the product of reflective reason, though in the course of time, as civilization developed, they have been subjected to revision by reason. The trouble is that philosophers, worshipping the reflective reason, find the essence of man in this reason. They think that it is reason alone which unites men and acts as a common bond, so that it must be the source of law, which is a unifying factor. The imagination, the senses and the passions separate men from one another. In reality, however, men in the first stages of development were ruled by imagination and feeling rather than by the reflective reason. True, reason was present; but it expressed itself in forms proper to imagination and feeling. Primitive religion was, psychologically, the spontaneous product of fear and of a sense of helplessness, not of reason in the philosophic sense; and primitive law was intimately associated with primitive religion. Both were the product, not of the philosophical reason, but of a logic of feeling and imagination. Law, in its origins, was custom as a natural growth, not the fruit of the planning intellect.

Vico laid great emphasis on poetry and mythology. Indeed, the third book of the *New Science* is entitled *On the Discovery of the True Homer*. If we wish to study the early stages of religion, morality, law, social organization and economics, we must refrain from mere abstract theorizing and study the data of philology, namely poetry and myth. And in interpreting, for instance, the Homeric poems we must avoid two erroneous ideas. First, we should not look on the myths as deliberate impostures, useful lies of the type commended by Plato in the *Republic*. Secondly, we should not rationalize them, as though their authors were giving allegorical expression to clearly conceived and rationally formulated ideas and theories. Rather are they the expression of the 'vulgar wisdom', the 'poetic wisdom', of a people; and they give us the key to the manner of thinking of peoples at the time when the myths were born. The Homeric poems, for instance, express in 'poetic characters' the religion, customs, social organization, economics and even scientific ideas of the Greeks in the heroic age. They are, as it were, the spontaneous literary expression or deposit of the mentality and life of a people at a given period of its development. Hence comes their great value for a reconstruction of history. Obviously, we are not called upon to accept everything as literal truth. Zeus, for instance, was not a real person, in the form in which he and his activities are described in the Homeric poems. At the same time he is not a mere literary device, symbolizing some abstract philosophical notion of deity. He is rather the imaginative expression of an early stage of contact with the divine. It is not that poetical descriptions of the divine covered, as it were, a philosophical theory of the divine, which was clearly formulated in reflective reason: the religious thinking of the period was poetical thinking. It had its own logic, but this was the logic of imagination and feeling rather than the abstract logic of the philosopher.

Another point to notice in Vico's philosophy of history is his insistence on the complex unity of each cultural period. Each 'age' or stage in a cycle has its own types of religion, law, social organization, and economics. Vico doubtless over-schematized; but he provided a programme, as it were, for a study of history which would not be confined to the narration of dynastic, political and military events but which would delve into the lives of peoples in successive phases of their histories and explore these lives in all their ramifications, exhibiting the connections between religion, morality, custom and law, social and political organization, economics, literature and art. At the same time he outlined programmes for the comparative study of the development both of human mentality in general and of particular sciences and arts.

History, therefore, reveals to us human nature. We cannot attain a knowledge of human nature by simply considering man as he is, say, in the second period of the 'age of men' or by taking the philosopher as a standard. We have to turn to the gradual revelation of man's nature in history, in his poems, in his art, in his development of society and law, and so on. History is made by man; it is therefore understandable by man. And in studying history man attains a reflective awareness of his own nature, of what it has been and is and can be. It is silly to extol the achievements of the age of reason, the age of the philosophers, and despise the past and the primitive, for the whole course of history is the revelation of man. In the primitive age of the gods we see man as sense; in the age of heroes we see man as imagination; in the age of men we see man as reason.

The fact that history, whether we consider human actions or the monuments of art and literature or institutions, is made by man does not mean, however, that it is cut off from divine providence and that it is not in some sense the work of God. But for Vico divine providence operates primarily through the human mind and will; that is, through natural means and not primarily through miraculous intervention. Men have often intended one end and achieved another. For example, 'fathers meant to exercise without restraint their paternal power over their serfs, and they subjected them to the civil power from which cities arose. The ruling class of nobles meant to abuse their lordly freedom over the plebeians, and they had to submit to the laws which established popular freedom.'[1] Whatever individuals may have intended, through their actions civilization arose and developed. And in the second phase of the age of man, when free-thinkers, for instance, try to destroy religion, they contribute to the dissolution of society, to the end of a cultural cycle, and so to a rebirth of religion which is the chief factor in facilitating man's conquest of his egoistic passions and which leads to the growth of a new culture. Men act freely, but their free actions are the means by which the eternal purposes of divine providence are realized.

It is not quite accurate to say that Vico's *New Science* was entirely disregarded by his contemporaries. For certain particular theses became the subject of discussion. But the general significance of his ideas was certainly not appreciated; and Vico did not begin to come into his own until the nineteenth century. In 1787 Goethe visited Naples, and the *New Science* was brought to his

[1] *Opere*, IV, 2, 164.

attention. The great poet lent the work to Jacobi, and in 1811 Jacobi referred to what he considered to be Vico's anticipation of Kant. This passage was used by Coleridge in his *Theory of Life* (1816, published 1848), and in subsequent years he spoke with some enthusiasm of Vico. In France, Michelet published an abridged translation of Vico's main work (1827), and in 1835 he re-issued it, accompanied by a translation of the autobiography and of some other writings. In Italy, Rosmini and Gioberti interested themselves in Vico, and so did the idealists, such as Spaventa, who maintained that the entry of Hegelianism into Italy was, as it were, the homecoming of Vico to his native soil, on the ground that the latter was the precursor of German philosophy. But the modern spread of interest in Vico has been due above all to Benedetto Croce who represented him as the man who 'discovered the true nature of poetry and art and, so to speak, invented the science of aesthetic'.[1]

4. Montesquieu (1689–1755) does not refer in his published writings to Vico; but it seems probable that he made the acquaintance of the *New Science* when he was travelling in Italy in 1728, that is to say, before the publication of his famous works on the causes of the greatness and decadence of the Romans (1734) and on the spirit of laws (1748). The fact that he undertook a comparative study of society, law and government with a view to ascertaining the principles of historical development at once suggests that Vico exercised some influence on his mind, at least by way of stimulus, though it does not of itself prove that there was such an influence. However, Montesquieu's personal notes seem to show that Vico's theory of cycles and of the decay of civilization did exercise some influence on his mind, though its extent can hardly be ascertained.

As Montesquieu's ideas have been outlined already in the first chapter of this volume, no more will be said about them here. It is sufficient to point out that with both Vico and Montesquieu we find the idea of a comparative historical method, and that both men set out to use historical data as a basis for determining the laws governing the historical development of peoples. Of the two men Montesquieu, a thinker of the Enlightenment with a passion for liberty, had incomparably the greater success as far as his own time was concerned. Vico's star did not really begin to shine until the Enlightenment had run its course.

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[1] B. Croce, *Aesthetic*, translated by D. Ainslie, London, 2nd edition, 1929, p. 220.

CHAPTER IX

VOLTAIRE TO HERDER

Introductory remarks—Voltaire—Condorcet—Lessing—Herder.

1. It has sometimes been maintained that the outlook of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment was unhistorical. If this were taken to mean that no history was written, the statement would be patently false. We have only to think of Montesquieu's *Histoire de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence* (1734), of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–81), of Voltaire's *Histoire de Charles XII* (1731) and of his *Histoire du siècle de Louis XIV* (1751), and of Hume's historical works. Nor can it be said that the historiography of the eighteenth century was concerned simply with battles, diplomatic and political struggles and the doings of 'great men'. On the contrary, we see the rise of the idea of history as a history of human civilization. Charles Pinot Duclos, author of a *Histoire de Louis XI* (1745) and of *Considérations sur les mœurs de ce siècle* (1750), declared that he was concerned with the manners and customs of men rather than with wars or politics. In this attitude he was at one with Voltaire. The eighteenth century certainly saw a broadening of the idea of history.

When it is said that the outlook of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment was unhistorical, the statement may refer in part to the tendency shown by some writers to treat history as a form of *belles-lettres* and to make over-hasty judgments without real knowledge or understanding of the sources. More important, it refers to the tendency to treat the age of reason and enlightenment and its ideals as a kind of absolute standard of judgment and to despise the past except in so far as it could be interpreted as leading up to the age of *les philosophes*. This attitude of mind, with its accompanying tendency to use history to prove a thesis, namely the superiority of the eighteenth century in general and of the philosophers in particular, obviously did not conduce to an objective understanding of the past. It would be, indeed, an exaggeration to suggest that all the thinkers of the Enlightenment expounded a naïve theory of progress. A certain pessimism shows itself even in Voltaire. But, by and large, the philosophers were convinced that progress and the triumph of emancipated reason are synonymous; and their idea of reason made it difficult for them to understand either a primitive mentality or, for instance, the Middle Ages. When the philosophers wished to picture to themselves primitive man, they set before themselves modern man and stripped him of the qualities and habits which could be attributed to civilization, being careful to leave him the exercise of reason which would enable him to enter into the social contract. True, Vico saw the artificiality of this analytical method, and he looked to an examination of poetry, song, art, records of customs and of religious observance to afford a secure basis for an understanding of the mentality of earlier times. But Vico was a genius who stood somewhat apart from the Enlightenment, and who was consciously opposed to the exaggerated rationalism and intellectualism of so many of his contemporaries. His estimate of his own time was certainly not that of the average *philosophe*. As for the Middle Ages, the men of the Enlightenment were quite incapable of a sympathetic understanding of the mediaeval culture and outlook; the Middle Ages represented for them a darkness out of which the light of the reason had gradually emerged. Thus though they broadened the idea of historical study and made a valuable contribution to the future of historiography, they were too much inclined to use history to prove a thesis, to glorify the Enlightenment, and their prejudices made it difficult for them to penetrate with sympathetic understanding into cultures and outlooks which they felt to be very different from their own and which they were inclined to despise. It is in this sense that we should understand the accusation that the mentality of the Enlightenment was 'unhistorical'.

2. Voltaire, whose general philosophical position has been discussed in the first chapter of this volume, asserted that his *Essai sur les mœurs* (1740–9, published 1756) was intended as a continuation of the work of Bossuet. 'The illustrious Bossuet, who in his discourse on a part of the universal history grasped its true spirit, stopped at Charlemagne.'[1] Voltaire wishes to continue from where Bossuet left off, and the full title of his work is *An Essay on General History and on the Manners and Spirit of Nations from Charlemagne up to Our Days*. In point of fact, however, he goes back much further and begins with China, passing to India, Persia and Arabia, and then coming to the Church in West and East before Charlemagne.

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[1] *Avant-propos.*

But though Voltaire announces his intention of continuing the work of Bossuet, it is obvious that his idea of history is very different from that of the bishop of Meaux. For Bossuet the important events in history are the creation, the dealings of God with the Jewish people, the Incarnation and the growth of the Church; and he envisages human history, from the creation to the last day, as a unity, as a manifestation of divine providence which is served even by human free choices. With Voltaire the theological outlook of St. Augustine and Bossuet is conspicuous by its absence. History is the field of the interplay of human wills and passions. Progress is possible in so far as man rises above the animal condition and in so far as reason dominates, particularly when it takes the form of that enlightened despotism which alone can bring true social reform. But the idea of history as the implementation of a divine plan and as moving towards a supernatural goal disappears. And with it there disappears any strong conviction about the unity and continuity of history.

In part, of course, Voltaire is simply putting forward the idea of an empirical study of history, without dogmatic presuppositions. He wrote a *Philosophie de l'histoire* (1765), which was prefixed to the 1769 edition of the *Essai sur les mœurs*; but there is little philosophy in it in any ordinary sense of the term. When he talks about the need for writing history in a philosophical spirit, he is referring to the need for excluding legends and fairy-stories. This is made clear, for instance, in his *Remarques sur l'histoire* where he asks whether a man of good sense, born in the eighteenth century, can be permitted to speak seriously about the oracles of Delphi. But Voltaire is ultimately demanding, of course, that supernatural explanations should be left out altogether. To write history in a philosophic spirit is to write in the spirit of a *philosophe*, a man of the Enlightenment. And 'the illustrious Bossuet' was not a *philosophe*.

The conviction that it is not the historian's business to entertain his reader with fabulous anecdotes and tall stories is one of the reasons why Voltaire advises people to study the history of modern, rather than of ancient, times. In his *Nouvelles considérations sur l'histoire* he remarks that to treat of ancient history is to mix a few truths with a thousand lies. But it is obvious that an historian of ancient times is not obliged to write in the chatty and gossipy manner of Herodotus or to accept as true all fable and legend. Quite apart from the fact that a study of such legends, and even of the oracles of Delphi can be, as Vico saw but Voltaire did not, of great use to the serious historian, the remedy for uncertain and fabulous history is patient research. But Voltaire had, of course, another reason for preferring the history of modern times, namely a conviction of the superiority of the modern world, and especially of the philosophers. In the brief *Remarques sur l'histoire* he expresses the wish that the young should begin a serious study of history 'at the time when it becomes really interesting for us; that is, it seems to me, towards the end of the fifteenth century'. It was then that Europe changed its aspect. In other words, the Middle Ages have no real interest for us.

This point of view comes out in a number of places in Voltaire's writings. We are told that past times are as if they had never been; that the world of the ancient Jews was so different from ours that one can hardly draw from it any rule of conduct applicable today; that study of ancient times satisfies curiosity, whereas study of modern times is a necessity; and so on. This attitude obviously constitutes a weak point in Voltaire as historian and philosopher of history.

But Voltaire has, of course, his strong points. In his little essay, *Nouvelles considérations sur l'histoire*, he remarks that after having read three or four thousand descriptions of battles and the contents of some hundreds of treaties he has scarcely found himself any wiser than before. 'I no more know the French and the Saracens by the battle of Charles Martel than I know the Tartars and the Turks by the victory which Tamerlane won over Bajazet.' Instead of a narration of battles and of the doings of kings and courts one should find in histories accounts of the dominant virtues and vices of nations, explanations of their power or feebleness, the story of the establishment and growth of arts and industries. In fine, for the man who wishes to read history 'as a citizen and philosopher' 'changes in manners and in the laws will be his great object of study'.[1] Similarly, at the beginning of the sixty-ninth chapter of the *Esprit des mœurs* Voltaire states: 'I should like to show what human society was at the time (the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries), how people lived in the intimacy of family life, which arts were cultivated, rather than to repeat so many disasters and combats, those deadly subjects of (ordinary) history, those well-worn examples of human malice.' The philosopher may have underestimated the importance of

[1] *Nouvelles considérations sur l'histoire.*

political and military history, but he certainly drew attention to aspects of human life which are now universally regarded as important parts of the subject-matter of the historian but which had been overlooked by chroniclers who were hypnotized by the deeds of generals and monarchs and heroes.

In his general ideas about history Voltaire was clearly not as profound as Montesquieu, whom he attacked, let alone Vico: but in his conception of social historiography we can see the expression of the development of the bourgeois consciousness. For him history should no longer be dynastic history, an instrument for the glorification or vilification, as the case might be, of potentates, but rather an account of the emergence of the life, arts, literature and science of the eighteenth century, or, more broadly, of the social life of man through the ages.

Finally, to balance what has been said about Voltaire's contempt for the pre-Renaissance world, it should be added that in the *Esprit des mœurs*, including the additions which he made to it, he paints on a vast canvas. He speaks not only of Europe but also of the Far East and of America, not only of the Christian world but also of the Mohammedan world and of the oriental religions. True, his knowledge is often very defective; but this does not alter the scope of his design. In one sense his history was less universal than that of Bossuet. For the latter's theological framework held together in an intelligible unity the whole history of the race. But in another, and more obvious, sense Voltaire's *Esprit des mœurs* was more universal than the bishop's *Discours sur l'histoire universelle*, namely in the sense that the former wrote about nations and cultures on which the latter did not touch.

3. In the section on the physiocrats in the second chapter of this volume attention was drawn to the theory of progress proposed by Turgot, who anticipated the view of history which was expounded in the nineteenth century by Auguste Comte. Turgot was, indeed, much more of a believer in progress than Voltaire had been. For in spite of his convictions about the superiority of the age of the Enlightenment the latter had no belief in laws governing human history. But I have no wish to repeat what has been already said about Turgot, and I turn instead to another leading exponent of the idea of progress in the later part of the eighteenth century, namely Condorcet.

Marie Jean Antoine Nicolas Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet (1743–94), was a mathematician as well as a philosopher. At the early age of twenty-two he composed a treatise on the integral calculus, which won for him the esteem of d'Alembert. For the latter, as well as for Voltaire and Turgot, whose lives he subsequently wrote (Turgot's in 1786 and Voltaire's in 1787), he had a great admiration. He took part in the preparation of the *Encyclopaedia*, and he was elected to the Academy of Sciences (1769) and to the French Academy (1782). In 1785 he published an essay on probability, a second edition of which, revised and enlarged, appeared in 1804 with the title *Éléments du calcul des probabilités et son application aux jeux de hasard, à la loterie et aux jugements des hommes.*

Condorcet also interested himself in economic matters, writing, under Turgot's influence, in defence of free trade in corn. In politics he was an enthusiastic democrat and republican. He welcomed the revolution and was elected a deputy in the Convention. But he possessed too independent a mind to survive for long in those tempestuous years. He criticized the constitution which had been adopted by the Convention in favour of the one which he had sponsored; he denounced the arrest of the Girondists; and, objecting on principle to the death penalty, he opposed the conduct of the Mountain, the left-wing group headed by Robespierre, Marat and Danton. His critical attitude resulted in his being declared an enemy of the Republic and an outlaw. For a time he lay in hiding in the house of a widow, Madame Vernet; but, becoming convinced that the house was watched and that he was endangering the life of his benefactress, he fled. In the end he was captured and died in a cell at Bourg-la-Reine. Whether he succumbed to a stroke, was poisoned or poisoned himself does not seem to be clear.

While in hiding from his enemies Condorcet wrote his work on progress, *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* (1794), which is his chief title to fame as a philosopher. His main general ideas are those of the perfectibility of man, of the history of the human race as a gradual progress from darkness to light, from barbarism to civilization, and of indefinite progress in the future. Thus, although he wrote the work in the shadow of the guillotine, it is pervaded by a spirit of optimism. The violence and evil of the times he explained principally in terms of the bad institutions and laws which had been created by rulers and priests. For he was an enemy, not only of the monarchy, but also of the priesthood, indeed of all religion. He looked to constitutional reform and to education as the chief means of promoting progress. In 1792 he was one of those who presented to the Assembly a plan for organizing State secularist education, which became the basis for the plan subsequently adopted by the Convention. According to his plan mathematics, natural, technical, moral and political science would form the chief subject-matters for instruction in more advanced education, the study of languages, living or dead, occupying a comparatively minor place in the syllabus. In other words, the emphasis would be put on the science of Nature and on the science of Man.

Condorcet's interpretation of past history is developed in the light of this idea of scientific culture. He distinguishes nine stages or epochs. In the first epoch men, emerging from a state of barbarism in which they differed only physically from the animals, united together into groups of hunters and fishers, recognizing family relationships and using language. In the second or pastoral stage of development inequality and slavery make their appearance, together with some rudimentary arts; and in the third period, the agricultural period, there is further progress. These three preliminary epochs are admittedly conjectural; but with the invention of the alphabetic script we pass from conjecture to historic fact. The culture of Greece represents for Condorcet the fourth epoch, and that of Rome the fifth. He then divides the mediaeval period into two epochs. The sixth closes with the Crusades, the seventh with the great invention of printing. The eighth epoch is more or less synonymous with the Renaissance, opening with the invention of printing and closing with the new turn given to philosophy by Descartes. The ninth epoch closes with the revolution of 1789. It embraces Newton's discovery of the true system of Nature, Locke's opening-up of the science of Man, that is, of human nature, and the discovery of the system of human society by Turgot, Rousseau and Price.

A future and tenth epoch is then envisaged by Condorcet. In it, he says, there will be progress towards equality between nations, towards equality between classes, and in the physical, moral and intellectual improvement of individuals. Equality for him does not mean mathematical equality, but rather freedom, accompanied by equality of rights.

Progress in the past is thus regarded as issuing in future progress. The justification for this optimistic belief is obviously the assumption that there is a kind of law of progress or of human development which permits inferences from the past to the future. But the factor on which Condorcet lays most stress as securing future progress is not some hypothetical law operating inevitably but education, that is, rational enlightenment, political reform and moral formation. In his view we can set no limits in advance to human progress and perfectibility. When treating of the tenth epoch he insists that indefinite progress is possible, not only in moral science (in, for instance, the reconciliation of self-interest with the common good), but also in physical science, technical science and even (as against Diderot's view) in mathematics.

Obviously, the interpretations of history given by Turgot and Condorcet prepared the way for the positivist system of Auguste Comte. Theology is regarded as disappearing as the light of the scientific reason grows in strength; and the same can be said of metaphysical philosophy, except in so far as this can be reduced to a synthesis of scientific laws. We can hardly say that Condorcet worshipped *les philosophes* and regarded them as the peak of historical advance. He admired Voltaire, it is true, and shared his violent anticlericalism. But he did not share his faith in enlightened despotism or his contempt for the people. He looked forward to a democratic and scientific civilization; and in spite of the defects of his *Essay*, both in its schematic framework and in many of its particular statements, he is in a sense much more modern than Voltaire. He does not so much canonize the eighteenth century as point to the future. Unfortunately he was blind to important aspects of reality and of man; but this blindness was shared, of course, by his nineteenth-century successors. And as for the dogma of progress, this has suffered a serious setback in the twentieth century.

4. The idea of progress was represented in Germany by Lessing. But, as we saw in the sixth chapter of this volume, his theory of progress in history had a theological setting. In *The Education of the Human Race* (1780) he declared that what education is to the individual human being, that revelation is to the whole human race. Progress is first and foremost the moral education of mankind by God. True, Lessing's conception of history differs very much from that of St. Augustine and Bossuet. For he did not, like them, regard Christianity as God's definitive revelation to man. Just as the Old Testament consisted of 'elementary books' in comparison with the New, so the New Testament consists of

'elementary books' with the further stage of divine revelation when men will be educated to the doing of good for its own sake and not for the sake of reward either in this life or the next. In this idea of passing beyond Christian morality, with its doctrine of sanctions, Lessing was in tune with the general current of moral theory characteristic of the Enlightenment. At the same time his conception of history as a progressive divine revelation permits at least some analogy between it and the philosophies of history of St. Augustine and Bossuet. It certainly bears the stamp of the eighteenth century; but it obviously differs very much from the theory of Condorcet, for whom historical progress is not the work of God but rather a liberation from religion.[1]

5. When we turn to Herder's philosophy of history, we find important differences from the characteristic theories of the Enlightenment. As we saw in the seventh chapter of this volume,[2] Herder attacked the self-complacency of the Enlightenment, the tendency of eighteenth-century philosophers to think that history led up to their own times by a process of progressive development. But, as we also saw, he did not base this attack simply on a disagreement with their interpretation of the Enlightenment: he attacked their general approach to history. For in his view they approached history with presuppositions, and they used it to prove a preconceived thesis. Their thesis certainly differed from that of Bossuet, but it was none the less a preconceived theory, namely that history represents an upward movement from religious mysticism and the slavery of superstition towards a free and non-religious morality. To be sure, the philosophers of the Enlightenment might reply that their interpretation was based on induction rather than on presuppositions. But Herder could retort that their selection of facts on which to base a general interpretation was itself guided by presuppositions. And his great point was that their approach to history prevented them from studying and understanding each culture on its own merits, according to its own spirit and complex unity. In his *Another Philosophy of History* (1774) Herder himself divided up history into ages or periods; but he also drew attention to the danger of such a proceeding. When we delimit an 'age' and describe it in a few generalizations, we tend to be left with mere words: the reality, the rich life of a people escapes us. It is only patient and thorough study of the data

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[1] For further information about Lessing, the reader is referred back to Chapter VI, pp. 126–31.

[2] Pp. 138–46, to which the reader is referred for a further account of Herder.

which will enable us to understand the development of a people. And he himself laid emphasis, as we saw, on the poetry and early folk-songs of peoples as an important source for understanding the development of the human spirit. We can, indeed, hardly say that an emphasis on the understanding of the development of language and literature was in contradiction with the ideas of the Enlightenment. But Herder drew attention to the importance of the comparatively primitive in interpreting man and his history. We shall fail to appreciate the significance of earlier cultural phases if we persist in judging them simply with reference to a standard based on the rationalist ideals and presuppositions of eighteenth-century philosophers.

Herder's great work, *Ideas for the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* (*Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, 1784–91) was conceived on a gigantic scale. For, in the first two parts of the work, each of which contains five books, he treats of man's physical environment and organization, with anthropology and, to speak paradoxically, with the prehistorical period of man's development. It is only in the third part, comprising books XI–XV, that he comes to recorded history, carrying his account up to the fall of the Roman empire. This account is continued in the fourth part (books XVI–XX) up to about A.D. 1500. The fifth part was not written. However, ambitious as the scheme of his work certainly was, Herder did not make extravagant claims on its behalf. The very title, *Ideas for the Philosophy of the History of Mankind*, is significant in its modesty. And the author explicitly states that the work consists of 'stones for a building which only centuries can finish'.[1] He was not so foolish as to suppose that he could complete the edifice.

After treating of man's physical environment, that is, of the forces of the physical cosmos and of the position and history of the earth, Herder comes to the subject of organic life and of man himself. He does not expound evolution in the sense of maintaining that man has evolved from some species of animal; but he regards genera and species as forming a kind of pyramid, at the apex of which is man. Throughout all organic life we find, according to Herder, the manifestation of a vital force (obviously corresponding to Aristotle's *entelechy*), which, as we ascend the scale of genera and species, expresses itself in ever-increasing differentiation of function. Herder's conception of this hierarchy is frankly teleological in character. The lower species in their ascending order prepare the way for the appearance of man as being capable of conceptual thinking, a rational and free being. Man in his appearance fulfils the purpose of Nature, that is, of God. But Herder notes that whereas on the level of pure instinct the fundamental drives of the organism function in an unerring manner, the possibility of error increases with the growth of the will. 'The weaker instinct becomes, the more does it fall under the command of arbitrary will (or caprice) and therefore also of error.'[1]

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[1] Preface, XIII, p. 6. References to the *Ideas* are, by volume and page, to the edition of Herder's works by A. Suphan, Berlin, 1877–1913.

For Herder history is the natural history of human powers, actions and propensities, as modified by time and place. Though not expounding, at least not in any explicit fashion, the theory of transformistic evolution, he emphasizes man's continuity, so to speak, with his physical environment and with lower forms of life. He also emphasizes man's organization. Man is 'organized for' reason and freedom. He has come into the world to learn reason and acquire freedom. He can speak, therefore, of humanity (*Humanität*) being latent in man, as something which has to be developed. At first sight it may appear to constitute a contradiction in terms if one speaks of humanity being latent in man. But Herder uses the term in two senses. It may mean the ideal which man is capable of attaining; or it may mean the potentiality for attaining this ideal. The ideal is thus latent in man, and Herder can speak of man as being organized for humanity. As a physical entity, of course, man is already there. But he has a potentiality for the perfection of man, for 'humanity'.

Man is also said to be organized for religion. Indeed, religion and humanity are intimately connected, so that the former is described as the highest humanity. As for the origin of religion, this is due, according to Herder, to man's spontaneous inference from visible phenomena to their invisible cause. To say that religion is due to fear (to fear, for instance, of hostile, dangerous or threatening meteorological phenomena) is to assign a totally inadequate cause. 'It is saying nothing to say that fear invented the gods of most peoples. For fear, considered as such, does not invent anything; it simply awakens the understanding.'[2] Even false religions bear witness to man's power of recognizing God. He may infer the existence of beings which do not exist as he conceives them; but he is justified in his inference from the visible to the invisible, from the phenomena to a hidden cause.

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[1] XIII, p. 102.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 162.

When treating of Herder in Chapter VII, we mentioned his statement in *Of the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul* (1778) that no psychology is possible which is not physiology at every step. It is worth mentioning, therefore, that in the fifth book of the first part of his *Ideas* Herder explicitly affirms the spirituality and immortality of the human soul. He describes the mind as a unity. The phenomena of association of ideas cannot be used as a proof of the contrary. Associated ideas belong to a being which 'calls up memories from its own energy . . . and connects ideas according to an internal attraction or repulsion, not according to some external mechanics'.[1] There are purely psychological laws according to which the soul carries out its activities and combines its concepts. This certainly takes place in conjunction with organic changes; but this does not alter the nature of the soul or mind. 'If the tool is worthless, the artist can do nothing.'[2] In other words, Herder has clarified his position as against materialism.

The second part of Herder's *Ideas* can be regarded as a sustained polemic against the tendency of the thinkers of the Enlightenment to despise the primitive. Certainly, there has been development from the more to the less primitive, a development in which reaction to physical environment (as with Montesquieu) was an important factor. And Herder gives a conjectural account of the development of the family into the clan, of the clan into a tribe with an elected leader, and of the tribe into a society with an hereditary monarch. But it is nonsense to suggest that primitive peoples were without any culture; and it is still greater nonsense to suggest that they were unhappy and miserable because they did not share the supposed privileges of the eighteenth century.

Further, Herder attacks the idea that history should be interpreted as a movement of progress towards the modern State. He implies at least that the development of a modern State had little to do with reason, and that it was due rather to purely historical factors. The members of a tribe may very well have been happier than many inhabitants of a great modern State, in which 'hundreds must go hungry so that one can strut and wallow in luxury'.[3] And Herder's dislike for authoritarian government is plain enough. When he published the second part he had to omit the statements that the best ruler is the one who contributes the most to making rulers unnecessary, and that governments are like bad doctors who treat their patients in such a way that the latter are in constant need of them. But what he did say was clear enough. In his view, 'the man who needs a lord is an animal; as soon as he becomes a human being he no longer needs a lord'.[1] So much for the ideal of enlightened despotism.

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[1] XIII, p. 183.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 340.

In all this Herder was partly engaged in an indirect attack on Kant. The latter had published a hostile review of the first part of *Ideas*; and in the second part Herder took the opportunity of attacking, indirectly, Kant's *Idea for a General History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View* (*Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht*, 1784). Kant was prepared to neglect all stages of social organization except in so far as they could be seen as contributing to the development of the rational State. And a rational State must have a 'lord'; for man is so defective that he cannot live in society without one. Kant may very well have been right on this point; but Herder preferred to believe in man's natural goodness and perfectibility. In any case he was intent on rejecting the notion that history can profitably be interpreted as a progress towards the modern State, in the light of which all other forms of social organization must be judged.

In the third part of his *Ideas* Herder comes to recorded history. His general principle for the historian is that the latter's mind should be free from hypotheses, and that he ought not to take any particular nation or people as his favourite, despising or belittling other peoples. The historian of mankind must judge impartially and dispassionately, 'like the Creator of our race'.[2] Generally speaking, Herder makes a point of endeavouring to live up to this principle, though an animus against Rome manifests itself, with an accompanying indulgence towards the civilization of the Phoenicians.

Herder does not confine himself to Europe, but considers also the cultures of, for example, China, India, Egypt and the Jews, though his knowledge of China and India was, not unnaturally, deficient. Coming to Greece,[3] he finds a complete cultural cycle, the rise and decline of one people, and uses it to draw general conclusions. Every culture has its centre of gravity, and the deeper this centre of gravity lies in a balance of the culture's living active forces, the more solid and lasting is the culture. We can say therefore, that the peak of a culture is found when its active forces are most in equilibrium. But this peak is, of course, a point; that is to say, the centre of gravity inevitably moves, and the equilibrium is disturbed. The active forces may be so deployed that equilibrium is temporarily restored; but it cannot last for ever. Decline comes without fail sooner or later. Herder speaks as though the life of a culture were determined by natural laws: it is analogous to the life of a biological organism. The fate of Rome was predetermined not by divine intervention but by natural factors. Environment forced the Romans to become a military people, and this development shaped their history, their rise to greatness and their eventual decline. The empire became unbalanced, and it could not sustain itself.

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[1] XIII, p. 383.

[2] XIV, p. 85.

[3] Goethe consulted Herder as an authority on Greek culture.

In the fourth part of his *Ideas* Herder continues his account of European history from the fall of the Roman empire. In it he lays stress on the part played by Christianity in the development of European culture. It is true that we find an awareness of the importance of economic factors. Herder's account of the Crusades is a case in point. And he is by no means blind to the importance of technical inventions and of new scientific knowledge. But he is very far removed from the mentality of the Enlightenment, which regarded the desirable development of civilization as a movement away from religion. Herder may have been a liberal Christian, but he was profoundly convinced of the indispensable role of religion in human culture.

Inasmuch as Herder emphasizes ethnic groups, nations and cultures, and inasmuch as he emphasizes the part played by the Germanic peoples in the rise of Christian culture, a few misguided people, Nazis for instance, have tried to depict him as a nationalist and even as an adherent of a race-theory. But this interpretation is quite beside the mark. He nowhere suggests that the Germans should rule other nations. Indeed, he condemns, for instance, the behaviour of the Teutonic knights towards Germany's eastern neighbours; and in his writings he frequently attacks militarism and imperialism. His ideal was that of a harmonious unfolding of national cultures. Just as individuals are, or should be, free and yet united in society, so different nations should form a family, each making its own contribution to the development of 'humanity'. As for the race-theory, Herder believed that ethnic groupings form the most natural bases for States. And in his view one of the factors which contributed to the instability of Rome was precisely the way in which conquest of other peoples destroyed its ethnic unity. But this idea, whether valid or not, has nothing to do with the race-theory, if this is taken to mean the notion that one race is inherently superior to other races and has a right to rule them. As for the Jews, Herder was far from being an anti-Semite. But it would be waste of time to dwell more on this topic. No sensible, objective historian supposes that Herder's theory of history as a development of national cultures involves nationalism in the pejorative sense, militarism and imperialism, or the theory of the inherent superiority of a given race. Of course, in some sense he was a nationalist, but not in the sense that he claimed on behalf of his own nation rights which he was unwilling to concede to other nations.

Herder's philosophy of history is somewhat complex. In the first place we have his insistence on the need for an objective and dispassionate examination, free from preconceived theories, of each culture on its own merits. This is obviously an excellent rule for an historian. In the second place we have his theory of the life of a culture, on an analogy with the life of the organism; and this theory may appear to lend itself to interpretation in a manner reminiscent of Vico's theory of cycles. In the third place, however, we have his idea of 'humanity', which fits in better with a theory of progress than with a theory of cycles. But a harmonization is doubtless possible. Each culture has its cycle; but the general movement is towards the realization of man's immanent potentiality for 'humanity'.

Whether the progressive approximation to the ideal of humanity is inevitable or not for Herder, does not seem to be altogether clear. In his *Ideas* he remarks that 'the philosophy of final purposes has brought no advantage to natural history'.[1] It is absurd to suggest, for example, that the bad actions of Rome were necessary and required in order that Roman culture might develop and attain its peak. At the same time, although we cannot legitimately justify all actions in history on the ground that they were required for the fulfilment of some specific providential plan, Herder certainly appears to say that the gradual development of 'humanity' is inevitable. Thus he informs his readers that anything which can happen within the limits of given national, temporal and spatial circumstances, does happen.[2] And this appears to imply that if progressive approximation to the ideal of

[1] XIV, p. 202.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 144.

humanity is possible, it will inevitably take place. Indeed, we are told that all destructive forces must ultimately yield to conserving forces and work for the development of the whole.[1]

A similar ambiguity appears in the series of *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity* (*Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität*, 1793–7). In these *Letters*, in which Herder shows a greater readiness than before to recognize the capacity of political changes to contribute to the advance of mankind,[2] his general point of view seems to be that there is, and will be, by and large, a progressive movement towards the realization of the ideal of humanity. At the same time he insists on the necessity for education to develop man's innate potentialities. Without this unceasing formative education man would sink back into bestiality.[3] And such statements do not seem to imply the inevitability of progress. According to Herder, we can distinguish three phases in the development of the European spirit. First, there was that mixture of Roman and Germanic culture which produced the organization, religious and political, of Europe. Secondly, there were the Renaissance and Reformation. And, thirdly, there is the present phase, the result of which we are unable to predict.[4] Here again there seems to be some doubt about the future, though this doubt could, of course, be reconciled with a general belief in the forward march of humanity towards the ultimate development of its highest potentialities.

The situation can perhaps be expressed in this way. As an historian, hostile to the tendency to judge all cultures in the light of the civilization of his time, Herder was strongly inclined to historicism and relativism, which hardly fitted in with a dogma of progress. But as a philosopher, believing not only in man's natural goodness and perfectibility but also in the working of divine providence in and through men's actions, he was naturally inclined to the conclusion that man's highest potentialities will be eventually actualized in spite of all setbacks on the way.

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[1] XIV, p. 213.

[2] He is more appreciative, for example, of Frederick the Great's measures of reform. And he at first intended to write optimistically of the French Revolution, though the appearance of the Terror led him to omit these sections.

[3] XVII, p. 138.

[4] In connection with this phase Herder speaks of the world-spirit (*Weltgeist*), a term which recurs with Hegel.

PART IV

KANT

CHAPTER X

KANT (1): LIFE AND WRITINGS

Kant's life and character—Earlier writings and the Newtonian physics—Philosophical writings of the pre-critical period—The dissertation of 1770 and its context—The conception of the critical philosophy.

1. IF we prescind from the history of his intellectual development and from the results of this development, we do not need to spend much time in recounting the facts of Kant's life. For it was singularly uneventful and devoid of dramatic incident. True, any philosopher's life is devoted primarily to reflection, not to external activity on the stage of public life. He is not a commander in the field or an Arctic explorer. And unless he is forced to drink poison like Socrates or is burned at the stake like Giordano Bruno, his life naturally tends to be undramatic. But Kant was not even a travelled man of the world like Leibniz. For he spent all his life in East Prussia. Nor did he occupy the position of a philosophical dictator in the university of a capital city, as Hegel later did at Berlin. He was simply an excellent professor in the not very distinguished university of a provincial town. Nor was his character such as to provide a happy hunting-ground for psychological analysts, as with Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. In his later years he was noted for his methodical regularity of life and for his punctuality; but it would hardly occur to anyone to think of him as an abnormal personality. But perhaps one can say that the contrast between his quiet and comparatively uneventful life and the greatness of his influence has itself a dramatic quality.

Immanuel Kant was born at Königsberg on April 22nd, 1724, the son of a saddler. Both as a child at home and at the Collegium Fridericianum, where he studied from 1732 until 1740, he was brought up in the spirit of the pietist movement. He continued throughout his life to appreciate the good qualities of sincere pietists; but it is evident that he reacted rather sharply against the religious observances to which he had to conform at the college. As for his formal schooling, he acquired a good knowledge of Latin.

In 1740 Kant entered upon his university studies in his home town and attended lectures in a wide variety of subjects. The main influence upon his mind, however, was that of Martin Knutzen, professor of logic and metaphysics. Knutzen was a disciple of Wolff; but he had a particular interest in natural science, lecturing in physics, astronomy and mathematics, as well as in philosophy. And Kant, who enjoyed the use of the professor's library, was stimulated by him to acquire a knowledge of Newtonian science. Indeed, Kant's first writings were mostly of a scientific nature, and he always retained a deep interest in the subject.

At the conclusion of his university studies Kant was driven by financial reasons to take posts as a family tutor in East Prussia; and this period of his life lasted some seven or eight years, finishing in 1755 when he took what we would call the doctorate and received permission to set up as a *Privatdozent* or lecturer. In 1756 he tried to obtain Knutzen's chair, rendered vacant by the latter's death. But Knutzen had been an 'extraordinary' professor, and the government, influenced by financial considerations, left the post unfilled. In 1764 Kant was offered the chair of poetry, but he declined it, no doubt wisely. In 1769 he refused a similar offer from Jena. Finally in March 1770 he was appointed 'ordinary' professor of logic and metaphysics at Königsberg. His period as a *Privatdozent* lasted, therefore, from 1755 until 1770, though for the last four years of this period a post as assistant librarian afforded him some additional financial support. (In 1772 he resigned this post as incompatible with his professorship.)

During these fifteen years, which belong to what is generally called Kant's pre-critical period, the philosopher gave an enormous number of lectures on a wide variety of topics. Thus at various times he lectured not only on logic, metaphysics and moral philosophy but also on physics, mathematics, geography, anthropology, pedagogy and mineralogy. From all accounts he was an excellent lecturer. It was the rule for professors and lecturers to expound text-books, and Kant had, of course, to conform to this rule. Thus he made use of Baumgarten's *Metaphysics*. But he did not hesitate to depart from his text or to criticize it, and his lectures were salted with humour, and even with stories. In his philosophical courses his main aim was to stimulate his hearers to think for themselves, to stand on their own feet, as he put it.

It must not be thought that Kant was a recluse. Later on he found himself compelled to economize with his time, but at the period of which we are writing he went a good deal into local society. Indeed, throughout his life he enjoyed social intercourse. Moreover, though he was far from being a travelled man, he took pleasure in meeting people who had experience of other countries, and he sometimes astonished them by his own knowledge, though this had been gained, of course, by reading. His interests were fairly wide. Thus the influence of Rousseau's writings stimulated a lively interest in educational reform, besides helping to develop his political views in a radical direction.

It is hardly to be expected, of course, that one should be able to designate the exact moment at which the pre-critical period of Kant's thought ended and the critical period began. That is to say, it would be unreasonable to expect that one should be able to state exactly when Kant rejected the Leibniz-Wolffian system of philosophy and began to work out his own system. However, for general purposes one can take his appointment as professor in 1770 as a convenient date. But the *Critique of Pure Reason* did not appear until 1781. During the intervening eleven years Kant was thinking out his philosophy. At the same time (or, rather, until 1796 inclusive) he was also engaged in lecturing. He continued to use Wolffian text-books in philosophy, and he also continued to give courses of lectures on non-philosophical subjects, those on anthropology and physical geography being particularly popular. It was his conviction that students needed factual knowledge of this kind, in order that they might understand the part played by experience in our knowledge. Philosophical theorizing in the void was by no means a Kantian ideal, even though a cursory glance at the first *Critique* might suggest that it was.

Once the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* had appeared in 1781, Kant's other famous writings followed in quick succession. In 1783 he published *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*, in 1785 the *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*, in 1786 the *Metaphysical First Principles of Natural Science*, in 1787 the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, in 1788 the *Critique of Practical Reason*, in 1790 the *Critique of Judgment*, in 1793 *Religion within the Bounds of Reason Alone*, in 1795 a little treatise *On Perpetual Peace*, and in 1797 the

Metaphysics of Morals. It is understandable, therefore, that with this heavy programme Kant had to husband his time. And his order of the day, to which he faithfully adhered during his years as a professor, has become famous. Rising shortly before five in the morning, he spent the hour from five to six drinking tea, smoking a pipe, and thinking over his day's work. From six to seven he prepared his lecture, which began at seven or eight, according to the time of year, and lasted until nine or ten. He then devoted himself to writing until the midday meal, at which he always had company and which was prolonged for several hours, as Kant enjoyed conversation. Afterwards he took a daily walk of an hour or so, and the evening was given to reading and reflection. He retired to bed at ten o'clock.

Only once did Kant come into collision with political authority. This was in connection with his *Religion within the Bounds of Reason Alone*. In 1792 the first part of this work, entitled 'On the Radical Evil in Human Nature', had been passed by the censor on the ground that, like Kant's other writings, it was not intended for the general reader. But the second part, 'On the Conflict of the Good Principle with the Evil', failed to satisfy the censorship, on the ground that it attacked biblical theology. However, the whole work, consisting of four parts, was approved by the theological faculty of Königsberg and the philosophical faculty of Jena, and was published in 1793. Then trouble arose. In 1794 Frederick William II, successor to Frederick the Great on the throne of Prussia, expressed his displeasure at the book and accused Kant of misrepresenting and depreciating many fundamental principles of the Scriptures and of Christianity. The king threatened Kant with penalties if he should venture to repeat the offence. The philosopher declined to retract his opinions, but he promised to refrain from making any further public pronouncements, whether in lectures or in writing, on religion either natural or revealed. On the king's death, however, Kant considered that he was released from his promise, and in 1798 he published *The Conflict of the Faculties*, in which he discussed the relation between theology, in the sense of biblical belief, and philosophy or the critical reason.

Kant died on February 12th, 1804. He was already fifty-seven years old when he published his first famous work, the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and his literary production between 1781 and the time of his death constitutes an astonishing performance. In his last years he was working at a restatement of his philosophy, and the notes which were designed as material for a revised version of his system were published in a critical edition by Erich Adickes in 1920 under the title *Kants opus postumum.*

The salient trait in Kant's character was probably his moral earnestness and his devotion to the idea of duty, a devotion which found theoretical expression in his ethical writings. He was, as we have seen, a sociable man; he was also a kindly and benevolent one. Never rich, he was systematically careful in money matters; but he regularly assisted a number of poor persons. His thrift was certainly not accompanied by selfishness or hard-heartedness. Though scarcely a sentimental man, he was a sincere and loyal friend, and his conduct was marked by courtesy and respect for others. As regards religion, Kant was not given to the ordinary observances, and nobody could claim that he was inclined to mysticism. Nor was he precisely an orthodox Christian. But he certainly possessed a real belief in God. Though he maintained that morality is autonomous, in the sense that its principles are underived from theology, natural or revealed, he was also convinced that it implies or ultimately involves belief in God, in a sense which will be explained later. It would be an exaggeration to say that he had no idea of religious experience. And if one did say this, one would unfailingly arouse indignant references to Kant's reverence for the starry heavens above and the moral law within. At the same time he showed no real appreciation of the activities of adoration and prayer and of what Baron von Hügel called the mystical element in religion. But this does not mean, of course, that he had no reverence for God, even if his approach to religion was practically exclusively through the consciousness of moral obligation. The fact of the matter seems to be that just as Kant wrote on aesthetics and aesthetic experience without apparently possessing any personal and lively taste for, say, music, so he wrote on religion without possessing any deep understanding either of Christian piety or, for instance, of oriental mysticism. He was characterized by moral earnestness rather than by religious devotion, provided that this statement is not understood to mean that he was an irreligious man or that his assertion of belief in God was insincere. It was only on formal occasions which required his presence that he attended church services, and his remark to a friend that advance in moral goodness is accompanied by disuse of prayer reveals something of his character.

In politics Kant was inclined to republicanism, if this term is taken to include limited, constitutional monarchy. He sympathized with the Americans in the War of Independence, and later with the ideals at least of the French Revolution. Militarism and chauvinism were quite alien to his mind: the author of the *Treatise On Perpetual Peace* was not the kind of thinker of whom the Nazis were able to make plausible use. His political ideas were, of course, intimately associated with his conception of the value of the free, moral personality.

2. As we have seen, Kant's interest in scientific matters was stimulated by Martin Knutzen at the university of Königsberg. It is also evident that during the period which he spent as a family tutor in East Prussia he read extensively in scientific literature. For the doctorate dissertation which he submitted to the university in 1755 was on *Fire* (*De igne*): and in the same year he published a *General Natural History and Theory of the Heavens* (*Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels*). This work had grown out of two previous essays (1754), one on the earth's motion round its axis, the other on the physical question whether the earth is growing old. In it he proposed an original anticipation of the nebular hypothesis advanced later by Laplace.

Instead, therefore, of the customary twofold division of Kant's intellectual life into the pre-critical period, when he was under the influence of the Leibniz-Wolffian system, and the critical period, when he was thinking out and expressing his own philosophy, some historians prefer a threefold division. That is to say, they think that we should recognize the existence of an initial period in which Kant was primarily concerned with problems of a scientific nature. This period would have lasted until 1755 or 1756, and the pre-critical philosophical period would fall more or less in the sixties.

There is, of course, something to be said in favour of this threefold division. For it serves to draw attention to the predominantly scientific character of Kant's earlier writing. But for general purposes the traditional twofold division seems to me to be quite sufficient. After all, Kant did not abandon Newtonian physics for any other kind of physics. But he did abandon the Wolffian philosophical tradition in favour of an original philosophy. And this remains the important fact in his mental development. Further, the threefold division can be misleading. On the one hand Kant's earlier writings, though predominantly scientific, were not exclusively so. For instance, in 1755 his *De igne* was followed by another Latin dissertation entitled *A New Explanation of the First Principles of Metaphysical Knowledge* (*Principiorum primorum cognitionis metaphysicae nova dilucidatio*), which was composed in connection with receiving permission to lecture in the university as *Privatdozent.* On the other hand Kant published some scientific papers even during the critical period. Thus in 1785 he published an essay *On Volcanoes in the Moon* (*Ueber die Vulkane in Monde*).

It would, however, be a waste of time to pursue this question any further. The important point is that Kant, though never, so to speak, a practising physicist or astronomer, acquired a knowledge of Newtonian science, and that the validity of the scientific conception of the world remained for him a firm fact. The nature of scientific knowledge was, of course, open to discussion; and the range of applicability of scientific categories and concepts constituted a problem. But Kant never doubted the general validity of Newtonian physics within its own field; and his later problems arose on the basis of this conviction. How, for example, can we reconcile with the scientific conception of the world as a law-governed system, in which each event has its determinate and determining course, the world of moral experience which implies freedom? Again, what theoretical justification can we find for the universality of scientific statements and for the validity of scientific prediction in face of the empiricism of David Hume, which appears to deprive the scientific conception of the world of any rational, theoretical justification? I do not mean to imply that such problems were present from the beginning in Kant's mind; nor do I wish to anticipate at this point a discussion of the questions which gave rise at a later stage to his critical philosophy. But for an appreciation of his characteristic problematic it is essential to understand from the start that he accepted and continued to accept the validity of Newtonian science. Given this acceptance and given the empiricism of Hume, Kant found himself compelled in the course of time to raise questions about the nature of scientific knowledge. Again, given his acceptance of the scientific conception of the world and given at the same time his acceptance of the validity of moral experience, Kant found himself compelled in the course of time to discuss the reconciliation of the world of necessity with the world of freedom. Finally, given the facts of scientific advance and of the common acceptance of the classical physics, he found himself driven to ask whether the lack of comparable advance in metaphysics and of a common acceptance of any one metaphysical system did not demand a radical revision of our ideas of the nature and function of metaphysics. Kant's treatment of these problems lay in the future; but it presupposed that acceptance of Newtonian science which is manifested in his earlier writings.

3. When we speak of the pre-critical period in Kant's intellectual development, the reference is, of course, to the period which precedes the conception and working-out of his own original philosophy. In other words, the term must be taken in a technical sense and not in the sense of 'uncritical'. In this period he adhered more or less to the standpoint of the Wolffian philosophy; but he never accepted this philosophy in a slavish and uncritical manner. Already in 1755 he had criticized some doctrines of Leibniz and Wolff, such as the use made by them of the principle of sufficient reason, in his Latin work, *A New Explanation of the First Principles of Metaphysical Knowledge*. At this time his knowledge of the philosophy of Leibniz, as distinct from the scholasticized version of it elaborated by Wolff and his followers, was restricted and inadequate; but in the writings during the sixties we can see an increasingly critical attitude towards the Leibniz-Wolffian system, though it was not until the end of the decade that the critical point of view, in a technical sense of the term, made its appearance.

In 1762 Kant published *The False Subtlety of the Four Syllogistic Figures* (*Die falsche Spitzfindigkeit der vier syllogistischen Figuren*), in which he maintained that the logical division of the syllogism into four figures is over-subtle and unnecessary. And at the end of the same year he published *The Only Possible Ground for a Demonstration of God's Existence* (*Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes*). As this work is of some interest a few brief remarks can be made about it here.

At the end of the essay Kant remarks that though 'it is thoroughly necessary to be convinced of God's existence, it is not quite so necessary that one should demonstrate it'.[1] For Providence has not willed that the only way of coming to a knowledge of God should be by way of metaphysical subtleties. Indeed, if this were the case, we should be in a sorry plight. For no really cogent demonstration, affording a certainty analogous to that of mathematics, has yet been provided. However, it is natural that the professional philosopher should inquire whether a strict demonstration of God's existence is possible. And Kant's intention is to make a contribution to this inquiry.

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[1] 3, 5; *W.*, II, p. 163. References to volume and page, preceded by the letter *W.*, are always to the edition of Kant's Works by the Prussian Academy of Sciences. See Bibliography.

All proofs of the existence of God must rest either on the concept of the possible or on the empirical idea of the existent. Further, each class can be divided into two sub-classes. In the first place we may attempt to argue either from possibility as a ground to the existence of God as a consequence or from possibility as a consequence to God's existence as the ground of this possibility. In the second place, that is, if we start with existing things, two courses are open to us. Either we can try to prove the existence of a first and independent cause of these things, and then show that such a cause must possess certain attributes, which make it proper to speak of it as God. Or we can try to prove at the same time both the existence and the attributes of God. Any proof of the existence of God must, according to Kant,[1] take one of these four forms.

The first line of argument mentioned, namely that from possibility as a ground to the existence of God as consequence, corresponds to the so-called ontological argument, from the idea of God to the divine existence, which was proposed in different forms by St. Anselm and Descartes and which was restated and accepted by Leibniz. It is rejected by Kant in *The Only Possible Ground* because, as he maintains, it presupposes that existence is a predicate, which is a false presupposition. The third line of argument, which corresponds to what Kant later calls the cosmological argument and which, he remarks, is much used by philosophers of the Wolffian School, is ruled out on the ground that we cannot demonstrate that a first cause must be what we call God. For the fourth line of argument, which corresponds to a teleological proof or proof from design, Kant shows, as he will continue to show in future, considerable respect, provided that emphasis is placed on the immanent teleology of the organism. None the less it does not, and cannot, amount to a demonstration of God's existence. For it brings us at best to a divine mind or intelligence which produces system and order and teleology in the world, not to a creator. In other words, it leaves us with a dualism, with superterrestrial mind on the one hand and with the material to be shaped on the other. As far as this argument alone is concerned, we are left in doubt whether this material is independent of or dependent on God.

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[1] 3, 1; *W.*, II, pp. 154–5.

There remains, therefore, the second line of argument, that from possibility as consequence to the existence of God as its ground. And it is this line of argument which Kant proposes as the only possible basis for a demonstration of God's existence. There is, he tells us, no intrinsic logical contradiction in denying all existence whatsoever. But what we cannot legitimately do is to affirm possibility and at the same time to deny that there is an existent ground of possibility. And we must admit possibility. For we cannot deny it without thinking, and to think is to affirm implicitly the realm of possibility. And Kant proceeds to argue that this being must be one, simple, immutable, eternal, spiritual and whatever else is included in the meaning of the term 'God' as used in metaphysics.

As far as mediaeval philosophy is concerned, this line of argument reminds one much more of Duns Scotus, who tried to argue from possibility to the existence and attributes of God, than of St. Thomas Aquinas. True, in his Third Way Aquinas bases his argument on the concept of 'possible' beings; but his concept of possibility is derived from the empirical fact that some things come into being and pass away and are therefore 'possible' (what Scholastics generally call 'contingent'). And Kant is arguing that the existence of God is implied by all thinking rather than that the existence of contingent things manifests the existence of God. Perhaps we can say that what Kant is demanding is that the Leibnizian argument from eternal truths should be turned into a strict demonstration. In any case it is interesting to observe that his line of thought, though different from that of the ontological argument, is of an *a priori* character in comparison with, say, the argument from design, and that it presupposes a Leibnizian view of metaphysics as a non-empirical science. But this does not mean that he did not see any intrinsic difference between mathematics and metaphysics. A difference is clearly affirmed in a work to which reference will now be made.

In *The Only Possible Ground*[1] Kant spoke of metaphysics as 'a bottomless abyss' and as 'a dark ocean without shore and without lighthouses'. We hear something more explicit about the nature of metaphysics in his *Enquiry into the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morals* (*Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und der Moral*, 1764). In the preceding year the Berlin Academy had offered a prize for an essay on the question whether metaphysical truths in general and, in particular, the first principles of natural theology and morals are capable of the same degree of demonstrative certainty as the truths of geometry. If not, what are the peculiar nature and degree of the certainty which they enjoy? And is this degree sufficient to justify full conviction? Kant's essay did not win the prize, which went to a contribution by Mendelssohn; but it is naturally of considerable interest.

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[1] Preface; *W.*, II, p. 66.

Kant insists that there are fundamental differences between mathematics and metaphysics.[1] Thus mathematics is a constructive science in the sense that it proceeds 'synthetically' constructing its definitions arbitrarily. The definition of a geometrical figure is not the result of analysing a previously possessed concept or idea: the concept arises through the definition. In philosophy (which Kant calls 'world-wisdom', *Weltweisheit*), however, definitions are obtained, when they are obtained, by analysis. That is to say, we have first of all an idea of something, though this idea is confused or inadequate; and we then endeavour to clarify it by comparing instances of its application and by performing a work of abstraction. In this sense philosophy proceeds analytically, and not synthetically. To illustrate the difference, Kant takes the example of time. We already have some idea and knowledge of time before we undertake a philosophical investigation of it. And this investigation takes the form of comparing and analysing diverse instances of the experience of time with a view to forming an adequate, abstract concept. 'But if I wished to try to arrive synthetically at a definition of time, what a happy chance I should have to meet with, for this concept to be precisely the one which completely expressed the previously given idea.'[2] That is to say, if I constructed a definition of time arbitrarily, as the geometer constructs his definitions, it would be a matter of mere chance if it happened to give explicit, abstract expression to the concrete idea of time which I, like anyone else, already possess.

It may be said that philosophers do as a matter of fact construct definitions 'synthetically'. For instance, Leibniz conceived for himself a simple substance possessing only obscure or confused representations and called it a slumbering monad. This is perfectly true. But the point is that when philosophers construct definitions arbitrarily, these definitions are not properly speaking *philosophical* definitions. 'Such determinations of the meaning of a word are never philosophical definitions; but if they are to be called clarifications at all, they are only grammatical clarifications.'[1] I can explain, if I wish, in what sense I intend to use the term 'slumbering monad'; but then I am acting as a grammarian rather than as a philosopher. Leibniz 'had not explained this monad, but imagined it; for the idea of it was not something given to him but something which he had himself created'.[2] Analogously, the mathematician often enough deals with concepts which are capable of philosophical analysis and which are not mere arbitrary constructions. The concept of space is a case in point. But such concepts are received by the mathematician; they are not, technically speaking, mathematical concepts in the same sense as the concept of, say, a polygon.

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[1] In an essay on the concept of negative quantity (1763) Kant had already explicitly rejected the notion that the mathematical method should be used in philosophy, though he also insisted that mathematical truths can be philosophically relevant and fertile (*W.*, II, pp. 167–8).

[2] *Enquiry*, I, I; *W.*, II, p. 277.

We can say, then, that while in mathematics I have no concept at all of my object until the definition provides one, in metaphysics[3] I have a concept which is already given to me, although it is confused, and I should try to make it clear, explicit and definite.[4] As St. Augustine says, I know very well what time is as long as nobody asks me for a definition. And in metaphysics I can very well know some truths about an object of thought and draw valid conclusions from these truths without being able to define the object. Kant gives the example of desire. There is much that I can say with truth about the nature of desire without being able to define it. In short, while in mathematics one begins with definitions, in metaphysics it is rather the other way about. And Kant concludes that the principle rule to be observed if certainty is to be obtained in metaphysics is to ascertain what it is that one knows immediately and with certainty of the subject-matter in question, and to determine the judgments to which this knowledge gives rise.

Metaphysics is thus different from mathematics. At the same time we must admit that philosophical theories have been for the most part like meteors, the brightness of which is no guarantee of their longevity. 'Metaphysics is without a doubt the most difficult of all human studies; only no metaphysics has yet been written.'[1] What is required is a change of method. 'The genuine method of metaphysics is fundamentally of the same kind as that which Newton introduced into natural science and which was there so fruitful.'[2] The metaphysician should start with some phenomena of 'inner experience', describe them accurately and ascertain the immediate judgments to which they give rise and of which we are certain. He can later inquire whether the diverse phenomena can be brought together under a single concept or definition, analogous to, say, the general law of gravitation. Kant, as we have seen, used Wolffian text-books in philosophy, and in metaphysics he made use of Baumgarten. Now, Baumgarten's method was that of starting with very general definitions and then proceeding to the more particular. And it is precisely this method which Kant rejects. The metaphysician is not concerned primarily with the relation of ground to consequent in a purely logical and formal sense. He is concerned with 'real grounds'; and he must start with the given.

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[1] *Enquiry*, 1, 1; *W.*, II, p. 277.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Metaphysics is described by Kant as 'nothing else but philosophy about the ultimate principles of our knowledge' (*Enquiry*, 2; *W.*, II, p. 283).

[4] *Enquiry*, 2; *W.*, II, p. 283.

As regards the particular questions proposed by the Berlin Academy concerning natural theology and morals, Kant still maintains in the *Enquiry* that the principles of natural theology are, or can be, certain. And he refers briefly to his demonstration of the existence of God as the actual ground of possibility. But in morals the situation is somewhat different. For one thing we must recognize the part played by feeling in the moral life. Kant refers to 'Hutcheson and others', and he remarks that 'it is first of all in our days that people have begun to see that while the power of representing truth is *knowledge*, that of perceiving the good is *feeling*, and that these two must not be confused with one another'.[3] (The influence of British moralists and writers on aesthetics is apparent also in Kant's *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (*Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen*, 1764).) But, quite apart from the part played by feeling in the moral life, the first principles of morality have not yet been made sufficiently clear. We find some anticipation of Kant's later ethical theory in the distinction which he makes between 'problematical necessity' (to attain end *X*, you must take means *Y*) and 'legal necessity' (you are obliged to do this, not as a means to something else, but as an end). At the same time he tells us that after much thought he has come to the

[1] *Enquiry*, 1, 4; *W.*, II, p. 283.
[2] *Enquiry*, 2; *W.*, II, p. 286.
[3] *Enquiry*, 4, 2; *W.*, II, pp. 299–300.

conclusion that the first formal principle of obligation is 'Do the most perfect thing which is possible for you'.[1] But we cannot deduce from this principle particular obligations, unless 'material' first principles are also given. All these themes need to be carefully examined and thought through before we can give to the first principles of morals the highest degree of philosophical certainty.

Kant's remarks in the *Enquiry* about clarifying our idea of time may perhaps suggest to the contemporary English reader that he is engaged in reducing philosophy to 'linguistic analysis', to an analysis of the use of terms. But he does not intend to deny the existential import of metaphysics. This is made clear, for instance, by what he has to say on natural theology. His point in this work is that a metaphysics which really employs the mathematical method will be confined to exhibiting relations of formal implication. If the metaphysician is to increase our knowledge of reality, he must cease trying to ape the mathematician and turn rather to a method analogous to that which was employed so successfully by Newton in natural science. He should, indeed, begin by clarifying the confused concepts of experience and giving them adequate and abstract expression; but he may then be able to proceed to inference and to the building-up of a metaphysics. It does not follow, however, that Kant possesses any great faith in the capacity of metaphysics for extending our theoretical knowledge beyond the sphere of the sciences. And when we are already aware of the later development of his thought, certain remarks in the *Enquiry* naturally suggest to our minds a tentative anticipation of his later point of view. Such a remark is the statement that metaphysics is concerned with the first principles of our knowledge. We should not, however, be justified in trying to father upon Kant at this stage the critical point of view. What we can say is that his recommendation to metaphysicians to substitute the Newtonian for the mathematical method should not blind us to his growing scepticism about the pretensions of speculative metaphysics. Indeed, the recommendation is partly an expression of this scepticism, or at least doubt. For it is linked with the conviction that whereas natural science has made good its claim to increase our knowledge of the world, metaphysics has not yet done so. And a suggestion as to how it might do so does not mean that Kant commits himself to the claims of speculative metaphysics. Indeed, he very soon makes it clear that this is far from being the case.

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[1] *Enquiry*, 4, 2; *W.*, II, p. 299.

In 1766 Kant published anonymously (though the author's identity was never a secret) a partly serious, partly humorous work entitled *Dreams of a Ghost-seer explained by Dreams of Metaphysics* (*Träume eines Geistersehers, erläutert durch Träume der Metaphysik*). For some time he had been curious about the visionary experiences of Immanuel Swedenborg; and he studied the latter's *Arcana coelestia*, the result of his reflections being *Dreams of a Ghost-seer*. As regards visionary experiences, Kant does not definitely either accept or reject their possible origin in the influence exerted by a world of spirits. On the one hand he gives us what he calls 'a fragment of esoteric philosophy',[1] in which, given the (unproved) assumption of a world of spirits, he suggests a way in which the influence of spirits on men's souls might be projected in imaginative visions. On the other hand he follows this up with 'a fragment of vulgar philosophy',[2] in which he suggests an explanation of experiences such as those of Swedenborg which would make their subjects fit candidates for medical attention and treatment. The reader is left to adopt which explanation he chooses. But the main point is not Kant's discussion of visionary experiences but rather his question whether the theories of speculative metaphysics, so far as they pretend to transcend experience, are in any stronger position than Swedenborg's visions. And he makes it clear that they are, in his opinion, in a weaker position. It may be that Swedenborg's visions were caused by contact with a world of spirits, even if this cannot be proved. But metaphysical theories are supposed to be rationally demonstrated; and this is what metaphysical theories about spiritual beings cannot be. We cannot even have positive conceptions of spirits. True, we can try to describe them by the aid of negations. But the possibility of this procedure rests, according to Kant, neither on experience nor on rational inference: it rests on our ignorance, on the limitations of our knowledge. The conclusion is that the doctrine of spirits must be excluded from metaphysics which, if it is to be scientific at all, must consist in determining 'the limits of knowledge which have been set by the nature of the human reason'.[3]

In adopting this attitude towards metaphysics Kant was influenced by the criticism of Hume. This seems to be made abundantly clear by what is said in *Dreams of a Ghost-seer* about the causal relation. This must not be confused with the relation of logical implication. No logical contradiction is ever involved in affirming the cause and denying the effect. Causes and effects can be known only through experience. We cannot, therefore, employ the idea of causality to transcend experience (that is, sense-experience) and to attain knowledge of supersensible reality. Kant does not deny that there is supersensible reality: what he denies is that metaphysics can open the door to it in the way that metaphysicians of the past have thought that it could.

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[1] *Dreams*, 1, 2; *W.*, II, p. 329.

[2] *Dreams*, 1, 3; *W.*, II, p. 342.

[3] *Dreams*, 2, 3; *W.*, II, p. 369.

It is no good saying, Kant remarks, that traditional metaphysics is necessary for morality, in the sense that moral principles are dependent on metaphysical truths, such as the immortality of the soul and divine reward and punishment in the next life. Moral principles are not conclusions drawn from speculative metaphysics. At the same time moral faith (*der moralische Glaube*) may well point beyond the empirical world. 'It seems to be more in accordance with human nature and the purity of morals to ground the expectation of the future world on the experience of a virtuous soul than, conversely, to base its moral attitude on the hope of another world.'[1]

In the *Dreams of a Ghost-seer*, therefore, we find anticipations of Kant's later views. Speculative metaphysics of the traditional type is not, and cannot be, a source of scientific, demonstrated knowledge. Morality is autonomous and not dependent on metaphysics or on theology. That is to say, moral principles are not conclusions drawn from metaphysical or theological premises. At the same time morality may point beyond itself, in the sense that moral experience produces a (reasonable) moral faith in certain truths which cannot be demonstrated by the metaphysicians. But beyond the suggestion that metaphysics should take the form of a science of the limits of human knowledge Kant has not yet arrived at his characteristic conception of philosophy. The negative side of his thought is still prominent, namely the sceptical criticism of speculative metaphysics.

That Kant has not yet arrived at the critical standpoint is clear, for example, from the essay on space which he published in 1768. In this essay he developed some ideas of Leonard Euler (1707–83), for whom he had a great admiration, and maintained that 'absolute space possesses a reality of its own independently of the existence of all matter. . . .'[2] At the same time he shows himself conscious of the difficulties attending the theory that space is an independent, objective reality. And he remarks that absolute space is not an object of external perception but a fundamental concept which makes external perception possible.[1] This point of view was to be developed in his inaugural dissertation.

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[1] *Dreams*, 2, 3; *W.*, II, p. 373.

[2] *W.*, II, p. 378.

4. Kant's statement in the introduction to the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* that it was David Hume who first interrupted his dogmatic slumbers is so often quoted or referred to that one may be inclined to overlook or underestimate the influence of Leibniz. In 1765 the latter's *New Essays concerning the Human Understanding* were at last published, and in 1768 there appeared Duten's edition of Leibniz's writings, containing the Leibniz-Clarke correspondence. Before these publications Kant had seen the thought of his great predecessor largely through the medium of the Wolffian philosophy; and it is clear that the fresh light shed on Leibniz had a profound effect on his mind. The first results of his reflections found expression in his inaugural dissertation as professor *On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and Intelligible World* (*De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis*, 1770).

To start with a particular point. As regards the Leibniz-Clarke correspondence, Kant was convinced that the former was right in maintaining against Newton and Clarke that space and time cannot be absolute realities or properties of things-in-themselves. If we try to retain Clarke's position, we shall find ourselves hopelessly involved in antinomies. Kant accepted, therefore, the view of Leibniz that space and time are phenomenal, and that they are not properties of things-in-themselves. At the same time he was not prepared to accept Leibniz's notion that they are confused ideas or representations. For in this case geometry, for instance, would not be the exact and certain science which it is. Kant speaks, therefore, of space and time as 'pure intuitions'.

In order to understand this position, we must go further back. In his inaugural dissertation Kant divides human knowledge into sensitive knowledge and intellectual knowledge. This distinction must not be understood as being between confused and distinct knowledge. For sensitive knowledge can be perfectly distinct, as it is, indeed, in the case of geometry, the prototype of such knowledge. And intellectual knowledge can be confused, as it not infrequently is in the case of metaphysics. The distinction must be understood rather in terms of objects, the objects of sensitive knowledge being sensible things, *sensibilia*, capable of affecting the sensibility (*sensualitas*) of the subject, which is the latter's receptivity or capacity for being affected by the presence of an object so as to produce a representation of it.

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[1] *W.*, II, p. 383.

Leaving aside intellectual knowledge for the moment and attending to sensitive knowledge, we must distinguish therein between the matter and the form. The matter is what is given, namely sensations, that which is produced by the presence of sensible objects. The form is that which co-ordinates the matter; it is contributed, as it were, by the knowing subject and is the condition of sensitive knowledge. There are two such conditions, namely space and time. In the inaugural dissertation Kant speaks of them as 'concepts'. But he is careful to observe that they are not universal concepts *under* which sensible things are grouped but singular concepts *in* which *sensibilia* become the object of knowledge. These 'singular concepts' are described as 'pure intuitions'. The divine intuition is the archetype and active principle of things; but this is not the case with our intuitions which are said to be passive. Their function is simply to co-ordinate the sensations which are received and thus to make sensitive knowledge possible. '*Time is not something objective and real;* it is neither an accident, nor a substance, nor a relation; it is the subjective condition, necessary because of the nature of the human mind, of co-ordinating all *sensibilia* by a certain law, and it is a *pure intuition.* For we co-ordinate substances and accidents alike, as well according to simultaneity as to succession, only through the concept of time. . . .'[1] Again, '*space is not anything objective* and real; it is neither a substance nor an accident nor a relation; but it is *subjective* and ideal and proceeding from the nature of the mind by a stable law, as the scheme (*schema*) of co-ordinating all external *sensa*'.[2] The pure intuition of time is thus the necessary condition for all sensitive knowledge whatsoever. I cannot, for instance, be aware of my internal desires except in time. The pure intuition of space is the necessary condition for all knowledge of external *sensa*.

In order, therefore, to avoid the difficulties and antinomies which are involved if we hold either that space and time are independent, absolute realities or that they are real and objective properties of things, Kant suggests that they are subjective pure (that is, of themselves empty of all empirical content) intuitions which, together with sensations, the matter of sensitive knowledge, form what he calls in the dissertation 'appearances' (*apparentiae*). But this should obviously not be taken to mean that the human being consciously and deliberately applies these pure intuitions to sensations. The union of form and matter precedes all reflection. That is to say, because the human subject is what it is it necessarily perceives sensible objects in space and time. The act of distinguishing between form and matter is the work of philosophical reflection. But as far as our first awareness is concerned the union is something given, even though in subsequent reflection we can distinguish between what is due to the presence of sensible objects and what is contributed by the subject.

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[1] *On the Form and Principles*, 3, 14, 5; *W.*, II, p. 400.
[2] *On the Form and Principles*, 3, 15, D; *W.*, II, p. 403.

One can interpret Kant's point of view in this way. Let us assume with Hume that in sense-knowledge the given consists ultimately of impressions or sensations. The world of experience obviously does not consist simply of impressions or sensations or sense-data. The question arises, therefore, how the ultimately given is synthesized to form the world of experience. In Kant's terminology in the inaugural dissertation what are the form and principles of the sensible world? First of all (that is, first of all from the point of view of logical priority) the given elements are perceived in the pure intuitions or 'concepts' of space and time. There is spatial and temporal co-ordination. We then have 'appearances'. The mind then, through what Kant calls the logical use of the intellect, organizes the data of sense intuition, while leaving their fundamentally sensuous character intact. We then have the phenomenal world of 'experience'. 'From appearance to experience there is no way except by reflection according to the logical use of the intellect.'[1] In its logical use or function the mind simply organizes the data of sense intuition; and we then have the empirical concepts of experience. The empirical sciences are thus rendered possible by the logical use of the intellect. They belong to the sphere of sensitive knowledge, not in the sense that the intellect or understanding is not employed in these sciences (which would be an absurd notion), but in the sense that it does not provide new concepts out of its own resources, so to speak, but simply organizes logically the materials drawn from a sensuous source. The logical use of the intellect is not, indeed, confined to the organization of material derived from a sensuous source; but, when it is used in this way, its use does not turn sensitive knowledge into intellectual knowledge, in the sense in which Kant uses these terms in the dissertation.

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[1] *On the Form and Principles*, 2, 5; *W.*, II, p. 394.

What, then, does Kant mean by intellectual knowledge and by the intelligible world? Intellectual or rational knowledge is knowledge of objects which do not affect the senses: that is to say, it is knowledge, not of *sensibilia*, but of *intelligibilia*. And the latter together form the intelligible world. Sensitive knowledge is knowledge of objects as they *appear*, that is, as subjected to what Kant calls 'the laws of sensibility', namely the *a priori* conditions of space and time, whereas intellectual knowledge is knowledge of things *as they are* (*sicuti sunt*).[1] The empirical sciences come under the heading of sensitive knowledge, while metaphysics is the prime example of intellectual knowledge.

Now, this obviously suggests that in metaphysics the mind apprehends objects which transcend the senses; above all, God. But do we enjoy intuition of spiritual realities? Kant explicitly denies this. 'An *intuition* of intelligible objects is not given to man, but only a *symbolic knowledge*.'[2] That is to say, we conceive supersensible objects by means of universal concepts, not by direct intuition. What, then, is the justification for thinking that our conceptual representations of supersensible realities are valid?

The difficulty can be put in this way. Kant spoke, as we have seen, of the logical use of the understanding or intellect, the latter's function, that is, of comparing and organizing material derived from either a sensuous or a supersensuous source. In the case of material derived from a sensuous source the understanding has something to work on, namely the data derived from sense intuition, from the marriage, as it were, between sensations and the pure intuitions of space and time. But if we enjoy no intuition of supersensible reality, the understanding appears to have nothing to work on. For in its logical use it does not supply materials but logically organizes them.

The problem can be developed thus. Kant distinguished between the logical use of understanding or intellect and its 'real use'. According to its real use the intellect produces concepts from itself; that is, it forms concepts which are non-empirical in character. In the *New Essays* Leibniz had criticized Locke's empiricism. We do not, as the latter had maintained, derive all our concepts empirically. On this matter Kant sided with Leibniz, though he did not follow the latter in speaking of innate ideas. 'Since, then, in metaphysics we do not find empirical principles, the concepts encountered therein must be sought, not in the senses, but in the very nature of the pure intellect, not as *innate* (*connati*) concepts, but as abstracted from the intrinsic laws of the mind (attending to its actions on the occasion of experience), and so as *acquired*. Of this kind are possibility, existence, necessity, substance, cause, etc., together with their opposites or correlates. . . .'[1] Thus the concepts of substance and cause, for instance, are derived, not from sense-experience, but from the mind itself on the occasion of experience. The question arises, however, whether in the absence of intuitive material as far as the intelligible world is concerned, these concepts can be used to grasp supersensible realities in such a way that we can make positive and certainly true statements about them. In other words, can there be a dogmatic metaphysics which has any valid claim to embodying knowledge of *intelligibilia*?

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[1] *On the Form and Principles*, 2, 4; *W.*, II, p. 392.

[2] *On the Form and Principles*, 2, 10; *W.*, II, p. 396.

We have seen that Kant divides not only knowledge into sensitive and intellectual knowledge but also the world into the sensible and intelligible worlds. And this naturally suggests that intellectual knowledge is knowledge of *intelligibilia*, just as sensitive knowledge is knowledge of *sensibilia*. And inasmuch as supersensible realities belong to the class of *intelligibilia*, we would naturally expect Kant to maintain that dogmatic metaphysics, considered as a system of known truths, is possible. And in point of fact this twofold scheme of knowledge and of objects of knowledge, proposed under the influence of Leibniz, makes it difficult for him to throw dogmatic metaphysics overboard. At the same time he says enough in the dissertation to weaken very considerably the position of dogmatic metaphysics and to cast doubt upon its claims, even if he does not reject it outright and in so many words. And it is worth while dwelling briefly on this point which is of importance in the development of Kant's thought.

In the first place Kant asserts, as we have seen, that the 'real use' of the intellect in the sphere of *intelligibilia* gives us only symbolic knowledge. And this might suggest to someone trained in the Thomist tradition that Kant is saying that we can have valid knowledge of supersensible realities, though this knowledge is analogical in character. But what he seems to mean is that in the absence of intuitive material the extension of the 'real use' of the intellect (as producing from itself its concepts and axioms on the occasion of experience) into its dogmatic use provides us only with symbolic indications of supersensible realities, so that the description, for example, of God as first cause would be an instance of symbolism. And from this position to Kant's later position the distance is not very great. That is to say, it is easy to take the further step of maintaining that the primary function of concepts such as cause and substance is to synthesize further the data of sense intuition, and though it is, of course, psychologically possible to apply such concepts to supersensible realities the application does not yield scientific knowledge of these realities.

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[1] *On the Form and Principles*, 2, 8; *W.*, II, p. 395.

In the second place Kant discusses the following important point. In the natural sciences and in mathematics, where sense intuition supplies the data or material and where the intellect is employed only according to its logical use (that is, logically comparing and organizing the data but not supplying concepts and axioms from its own inner nature), 'use provides the method'.[1] That is to say, it is only after these sciences have already acquired a certain degree of development that we reflect on and analyse the method employed, considering how the method can be improved in detail. The situation is analogous to that obtaining in the case of language. Man did not first elaborate grammatical rules and then begin to employ language. The development of grammar followed, not preceded, the use of language. 'But in pure philosophy, such as is metaphysics, in which *the use of the intellect* concerning the principles is *real*, that is, where primitive concepts of things and relations and the very axioms are originally provided by the pure intellect itself, and where, since there are no intuitions, we are not immune from error, *method precedes all science*; and whatever is undertaken before the precepts of this method have been duly worked out and firmly established, seems to be rashly conceived and fit to be rejected as a vain and ridiculous activity of the mind.'[2] In dealing with material things, which affect the senses, we can come to know much about them without having first worked out a scientific method. But when we are dealing with supersensible realities, such as God, or with things in themselves as distinct from the way in which they appear to us in sense intuition, it is essential to ascertain first *how* we can come to know them. For in the absence of intuition the problem of method becomes all-important.

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[1] *On the Form and Principles*, 5, 23; *W.*, II, p. 410.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 411.

The chief rule of method, Kant tells us, must be to see that the principles of sensitive knowledge are not extended from sensible to supersensible realities. As we have seen, he made a sharp distinction between the sensuous and intellectual levels in human knowledge. And he insists that we must be on our guard against applying to supersensible realities concepts which are applicable only in the sphere of sensitive knowledge and against turning into universal principles the principles of sensitive knowledge. He gives as an example the axiom that whatever exists, exists somewhere and at some time. We are not entitled to state this universally, thus drawing down God, for example, into the spatio-temporal sphere. And the intellect in what Kant calls its 'critical use' (*usus elencticus*) has the office of exposing the unjustifiable character of such universal statements. The intellect in its critical use can thus keep the sphere of supersensible reality free, as it were, from contamination by the application of concepts and principles peculiar to sensitive knowledge.

But the critical use of the intellect must be distinguished from its dogmatic use. The fact that we can say, for instance, that God is not in space or time does not necessarily mean that we can attain positive and certain knowledge about God by the pure intellect. And, as has been already remarked, Kant has only to go on to say that the cognitive function of the primitive concepts of the pure intellect is that of further synthesizing the data of sense intuition for dogmatic metaphysics to be ruled out, if we mean by dogmatic metaphysics a system of certain truths about supersensible realities such as God and the immortal soul of man. Strictly speaking, the concept of cause, for instance, would then be inapplicable to God. Psychologically speaking, we could, of course, so apply it; but its use would give us only a symbolic indication of God, not scientific knowledge.

Kant does not maintain, and indeed never maintained, that there are no supersensible realities. And it may be objected that, given the doubt cast upon dogmatic metaphysics, he has no warrant for asserting that there are any such realities. But in the dissertation he does not reject dogmatic metaphysics in so many words, in explicit and clear terms. When he later comes to do so he also develops his theory of the postulates of the moral law, a theme which must be left aside for the present.

In the dissertation Kant speaks of the dogmatic use of the intellect as an extension of the general principles of the pure intellect to conceive a perfect *noumenon* or purely intelligible reality as the measure of all other realities. In the theoretical sphere (that is, in the sphere of being, of what is) this measure or exemplar is God, the supreme being. In the practical sphere (in the sphere of what ought to be effected through free action) it is moral perfection. Moral philosophy, therefore, as far as its fundamental principles are concerned, is said to belong to pure philosophy. Kant is saying that these principles depend on the reason itself, and not on sense-perception. He agreed with Hume that we cannot found moral principles on sense-perception. At the same time he was not prepared to make them the expression of feeling and to abandon the attempt to give them a purely rational foundation. Epicurus, accordingly, is worthy of severe reproof; and so are those, 'such as Shaftesbury and his followers',[1] who follow him to a certain extent. But Kant does not develop the subject. The elaboration of his moral philosophy lies in the future.

5. At the beginning of September 1770 Kant wrote to J. H. Lambert that he proposed during the winter to pursue his inquiries into pure moral philosophy, 'in which there are no empirical principles'.[2] He also mentioned his intention of revising and extending certain sections of his inaugural dissertation. In particular he wished to develop the idea of a particular, though negative, science which must precede metaphysics. This science, described as 'general phenomenology',[3] makes clear the range of validity of the principles of sensitive knowledge and thus prevents the unwarranted application of these principles in metaphysics. We have already seen that Kant spoke about this science in his dissertation, where, as afterwards in the letter, it is referred to as a 'propaedeutic' in relation to metaphysics.[4]

His reflections during the winter of 1770–1, however, led Kant to abandon the idea of extending the inaugural dissertation and to project instead a new work. Thus in June 1771 he wrote to Marcus Herz,[5] who had been one of his pupils, that he was engaged on a book which would bear the title *The Bounds of Sensibility and Reason* (*Die Grenzen der Sinnlichkeit und der Vernunft*). In this work he proposed to deal with the relations of the fundamental principles and laws, taken to be determined before experience of the sensible world, to the subjects involved in the theory of taste, in metaphysics and in morals. We have seen that in the inaugural dissertation of 1770 Kant expounded the theory that space and time are subjective 'laws' of the co-ordination of sensations, and that in the same dissertation he embraced the theory that the pure intellect derives from itself on the occasion of experience the fundamental concepts of metaphysics, and also the theory that the fundamental principles of morals are derived from the reason alone. He now proposes to undertake an investigation into the fundamental concepts and laws which originate in the nature of the subject and which are applied to the experiential data of aesthetics, metaphysics and morals. In other words, he proposes to cover in one volume the subjects which proved in the end to need three, namely the three *Critiques*. In this letter he speaks of the subjective principles 'not only of sensibility but also of the understanding' (*des Verstandes*).[1] He is thus well on his way to conceiving his great enterprise of isolating the *a priori* elements in human knowledge. The distinction between form and matter in knowledge must be investigated not merely in relation to sensibility, where the subjective elements are the pure intuitions of space and time, but also in relation to the understanding and to the part which it plays in synthesizing the given. And the range of inquiry is to cover not only theoretical knowledge but also moral and aesthetic experience.

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[1] *On the Form and Principles*, 2, 9; *W.*, II, p. 396.

[2] *W.*, x, p. 97.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 98.

[4] *W.*, II, p. 395, and x, p. 98.

[5] See *W.*, x, p. 123.

In another letter to Herz, written in February 1772, Kant refers again to his projected book on *The Bounds of Sensibility and Reason*. According to his original plan the book would have consisted of two parts, one theoretical, the other practical. The first part would have been subdivided into two sections, treating respectively of general phenomenology and of metaphysics considered according to its nature and method. The second part would also have consisted of two sections, dealing respectively with the general principles of the feeling of taste and with the ultimate grounds of morality. But while thinking out the first part Kant noticed, he tells Herz, that something essential was wanting, namely a thorough treatment of the relation of mental presentations (*Vorstellungen*) to the objects of knowledge. And something must be said here about Kant's remarks on this theme; for they show him at grips with his critical problem.

Our sensuous representations do not create a problem, provided that they are the result of the subject's being affected by the object. True, sensible objects appear to us in a certain way because we are what we are, that is, because of the *a priori* intuitions of space and time. But in sensitive knowledge the form is applied to a matter which is passively received; our sensibility is affected by things external to us. Hence there is no great problem about the objective reference of our sensuous representations. But the situation is different when we turn to intellectual presentations. Abstractly speaking, the objective conformity of concept with object would be guaranteed if the intellect produced its objects through its concepts; that is, if it created the objects by conceiving or thinking them. But it is only the divine intellect which is an archetypal intellect in this sense. We cannot suppose that the human intellect creates its objects by thinking them. Kant never accepted pure idealism in this sense. At the same time the pure concepts of the understanding are not, according to Kant, abstracted from sense-experience. The pure concepts of the understanding must 'have their origins in the nature of the soul, yet so that they neither are caused by the object nor bring the object into being'.[1] But in this case the question immediately arises how these concepts refer to objects and how objects conform to the concepts. Kant remarks that in his inaugural dissertation he had contented himself with a negative account of the matter. That is to say, he had contented himself with saying that 'intellectual presentations . . . are not modifications of the soul by the object',[2] passing over in silence the question how these intellectual presentations or pure concepts of the understanding refer to objects when they are not affected by the latter.

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[1] See *W.*, x, p. 122.

Given Kant's assumption, namely that the pure concepts of the understanding and the axioms of the pure reason[3] are not empirically derived, this question is obviously a pertinent one. And the only way of answering it in the end, if the assumption is to be maintained, will be to abandon the statement of the dissertation that sensuous presentations present us with objects as they appear while intellectual presentations give us objects as they are, and to say instead that the pure concepts of the understanding have as their cognitive function the further synthesizing of the data of sense intuition. That is to say, Kant will have to maintain that pure concepts of the understanding are, as it were, subjective forms by which we necessarily conceive (because the mind is what it is) the data of sense intuition. Objects will then conform to our concepts, and our concepts will refer to objects, because these concepts are *a priori* conditions of the possibility of objects of knowledge, performing a function analogous to that of the pure intuitions of space and time, though at a higher, namely an intellectual, level. In other words, Kant will be able to maintain his sharp distinction between sense and intellect; but he will have to abandon the notion that while sense presentations give us things as they appear, intellectual presentations give us things as they are in themselves. Instead there will be an ascending process of synthesis whereby empirical reality is constituted. The sensuous and intellectual forms of the human subject remaining constant, and things being knowable only in so far as subjected to these forms, there will always be conformity between objects and our concepts.

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[1] *W.*, x, p. 130.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Kant's terminology is still fluid. He speaks of 'the pure concepts of the understanding' (*die reinen Verstandesbegriffe*), of 'intellectual presentations' (*intellectuale* [*sic*] *Vorstellungen*), and of 'the axioms of the pure reason' (*die axiomata der reinen Vernunft*).

To return to the letter to Herz. Plato, says Kant, postulated an intuition of the divinity in a previous existence as the source of the pure concepts and fundamental principles of the understanding. Malebranche postulated a present and continuing intuition of divine ideas. Crusius assumed that God implanted in the soul certain rules of judgment and certain concepts such that they will agree with objects according to a pre-established harmony. But all such theories have recourse to a *Deus ex machina* and they raise more problems than they solve. Some other explanations of the conformity between concepts and objects must therefore be sought. And Kant informs Herz that his inquiry into 'transcendental philosophy' (namely his attempt to reduce the concepts of the pure reason to a certain number of categories) is now sufficiently advanced for him to offer a *Critique of the Pure Reason* (*eine Kritik der reinen Vernunft*),[1] which will deal with the nature both of theoretical and of practical (moral) knowledge. The first part should be published within three months; and it will treat of the sources, method and limits of metaphysics. In the second part, to be published later, he will deal with the basic principles of morality.

The work did not, however, progress as rapidly as Kant at first imagined that it would. As he struggled with his problems, he became more and more conscious of their complexity. After a time he saw that he would have to divide up the matter which he hoped to treat in one *Critique*. In the end he became worried about the delay and put together the *Critique of Pure Reason* (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*) in four or five months. It appeared in 1781. In this famous work Kant treats of mathematical and scientific knowledge and endeavours to justify the objectivity of this knowledge in the face of the empiricism of David Hume. He does this by proposing his 'Copernican revolution', that is, the theory that objects conform to the mind rather than the other way round. Because the structure of human sensibility and of the human mind is constant, objects will always appear to us in certain ways. We are thus enabled to make universal scientific judgments which hold good not only for actual but also for possible experience. The Newtonian science is thus theoretically justified despite the dissolvent tendencies of empiricism. From this position it follows, however, that the pure concepts of the understanding do not enable us to apprehend things in themselves, apart from the way in which they appear to us, or supersensible realities. And in the first *Critique* Kant tries to explain how speculative metaphysics of the traditional type arose and why it is foredoomed to failure. The problems which lie at the basis of the *Critique of Pure Reason* will be discussed in the next chapter.

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[1] *W.*, x, p. 132.

Kant found that the *Critique of Pure Reason* was misunderstood, and that there were complaints about its obscurity. He therefore published *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (*Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik*, 1783), a shorter work which was designed, not to supplement the *Critique*, but to act as a kind of introduction or explanation. In 1787 he published a second edition of the *Critique*. In references the first edition is referred to as *A*, the second as *B*.

Meanwhile Kant had turned his attention to the fundamental principles of morals. And in 1785 he published his *Fundamental Principles* (or *Groundwork*) *of the Metaphysics of Morals* (*Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*). And this was followed in 1788 by the *Critique of Practical Reason* (*Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*), though in between he had published, not only the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, but also *Metaphysical First Principles of Natural Science* (*Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft*, 1786). Kant's moral theory will be dealt with in a later chapter. It is sufficient to say here that, just as in the first *Critique* he endeavoured to isolate and give a systematic account of the *a priori* elements in scientific knowledge, so in his moral writings he tried to isolate and give a systematic account of the *a priori* or formal elements in morality. Thus he endeavoured to ground obligation and the universality of the moral law not on feeling but on the practical reason, that is, on reason as legislating for human conduct. This does not mean that he tried to deduce from reason alone all the concrete duties which Smith or Brown encounters in his life. Nor did he think that we could work out a set of concrete moral laws, binding on man as such, without any reference to empirically given material. But he believed that in the moral judgment there is, as it were, a 'form' which can be derived from the practical reason and which is applied to empirically given material. The situation in morals is thus analogous to some extent with that in science. Both in science and in man's moral life, that is, both in theoretical and in practical knowledge, there is the given, the 'matter', and there is the 'formal' and *a priori* element. And it is with the latter that Kant is chiefly concerned in his ethical writings. In this sense he is concerned with the 'metaphysics' of morals.

But Kant is also concerned in his ethical writings with metaphysics in another sense. For he tries to establish as postulates of the moral law the great truths of freedom, immortality and God. Thus the principal truths which, according to the first *Critique*, are incapable of scientific demonstration, are later re-introduced as postulates of moral or practical faith. This theory is not a mere appendix to the Kantian philosophy, still less a superfluous excrescence. For it is an essential part of Kant's attempt to harmonize the world of Newtonian science with the world of moral experience and of religious faith. The notion that pure concepts of the understanding can give us theoretical knowledge of things in themselves and of a supersensible world has been ruled out in the first *Critique*. At the same time room has been made for 'faith'. And in the ethical writings the truths of human freedom, immortality and the existence of God are brought in, not as scientifically demonstrable, but as implications of the moral law, in the sense that recognition of the fact of moral obligation is seen to demand or postulate a practical faith in these truths. Thus Kant still maintains that there is a supersensible sphere; but he finds the key to it, not in dogmatic metaphysics, but in moral experience.

It will be recalled that in his projected work on *The Bounds of*

Sensibility and Reason Kant had intended to deal not only with metaphysics and morals but also with the fundamental principles of the theory of taste (*die Geschmackslehre*). The aesthetic judgment or judgment of taste was at length treated in the third *Critique*, the *Critique of Judgment* (*Kritik der Urteilskraft*), which appeared in 1790. This work consists of two main parts, the first dealing with the aesthetic judgment, the second with the teleological judgment or judgment of purposiveness in Nature; and it is of considerable importance. For in it Kant tries, as far as our consciousness is concerned at least, to bridge the gulf between the mechanistic world of Nature as presented in physical science and the world of morality, freedom and faith. That is to say, he tries to show how the mind passes from the one to the other; and he attempts the rather difficult task of showing how the transition is reasonable without at the same time going back on what he has already said about the vanity of dogmatic metaphysics and about the position of moral or practical faith as our only means of access to the supersensible world. The contents of the work will be discussed later. But it is worth while noting how deeply Kant was concerned with the reconciliation of the scientific outlook with that of the moral and religious man.

In 1791 Kant published an article 'On the failure of all Philosophical Attempts at a Theodicy' (*Ueber das Miszlingen aller philosophischen Versuche in der Theologie*), in which he maintained that in theodicy or philosophical theology we are concerned with matters of faith rather than with scientifically demonstrable truth. And this was followed in 1793 by *Religion within the Bounds of Reason Alone* (*Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*). Mention has been made in an earlier section of this chapter of the trouble to which publication of this book gave rise. Reference has also been made to the small treatise *On Perpetual Peace* (*Zum ewigen Frieden*, 1795) in which perpetual peace, grounded on a moral basis, is depicted as a practical ideal of historical and political development.[1] Finally, in 1797, there appeared the two works which form the two parts of the *Metaphysics of Morals* (*Metaphysik der Sitten*), namely the *Metaphysical Elements of the Theory of Right* (*Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Rechtslehre*) and the *Metaphysical Elements of the Theory of Virtue* (*Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Tugendlehre*).

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[1] On history Kant had published in 1784 his *Idea for a General History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View* (*Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht*).

We have seen that the human mind does not, on Kant's view, constitute or create the object in its totality. That is to say, although things as perceived and known are relative to us in the sense that we perceive and know them only through the *a priori* forms embedded in the structure of the human subject, there are things-in-themselves, even if we cannot know them as they are in themselves. To put the matter crudely, we no more create things according to their ontological existence than the man who wears red-tinted spectacles creates the things which he sees. If we assume that the spectacles can never be detached, the man will never see things except as red, and their appearance will be due to a factor in the perceiving subject. But it does not follow that things do not exist independently of the perceiving subject. Hence Kant refused to allow that Fichte's suppression of the thing-in-itself represented a legitimate development of his own philosophy. At the same time it can hardly be denied that some of the notes which form part of the *Opus Postumum* indicate that towards the end of his life Kant was developing his thought in such a way that it is reasonable to see in it an anticipation of German speculative idealism. However, it is illegitimate to found one's interpretation of the direction of Kant's thought in his later years on one set of notes to the exclusion of other notes which express a somewhat different point of view. And if we take the *Opus Postumum* as a whole it seems that we must conclude that Kant never abandoned altogether the realistic elements in his thought. But something more will be said about the *Opus Postumum* at a later stage of the discussion of Kant's philosophy.

CHAPTER XI

KANT (2): THE PROBLEMS OF THE FIRST *CRITIQUE*

The general problem of metaphysics—The problem of a priori *knowledge—The divisions of this problem—Kant's Copernican revolution—Sensibility, understanding, reason, and the structure of the first* Critique*—The significance of the first* Critique *in the context of the general problem of Kant's philosophy.*

1. If we look at the prefaces to the first and second editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and at the foreword to and first sections of the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*,[1] we find the author placing an obvious emphasis on the problem of metaphysics. Is metaphysics possible or not? Obviously, the question is not whether it is possible to write metaphysical treatises or to indulge in metaphysical speculation. The question is whether metaphysics is capable of extending our knowledge of reality. For Kant, the chief problems of metaphysics are God, freedom and immortality. We can therefore express the question in this way. Is metaphysics capable of giving us sure knowledge of the existence and nature of God, of human freedom, and of the existence in man of a spiritual, immortal soul?

A question of this sort clearly presupposes a doubt. And there is, in Kant's opinion, abundant reason for such initial doubt, that is, for raising the problem of metaphysics. Time was when metaphysics 'was called the queen of all the sciences; and if one takes the will for the deed, she certainly deserved this title of honour on account of the outstanding importance of her subject-matter'.[2]

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[1] References to Kant's writings in Chapters XI–XIII are to be interpreted as follows. *A* denotes the first edition and *B* the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. These will be found respectively in Volumes IV and III of the critical edition of Kant's works edited by the Prussian Academy of Sciences (see Bibliography). The numbers placed after *A* and *B* refer to sections as given in this edition (the sections corresponding to pagination in the original German editions). For the translation of passages I am responsible. But as the great majority of passages quoted in translation are taken from *B*, the references are generally valid for Professor N. Kemp Smith's translation of *B* (see Bibliography), as this translation embodies the division into sections referred to above. (Professor Kemp Smith's translation also contains the preface to *A*, as well as the Deduction of the Categories as given in *A*.)

Prol. denotes *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, which is contained in Volume IV of the critical German edition. Numbers following *Prol.* refer to sections in the German edition. This division into sections is reproduced in, for example, the translation by J. P. Mahaffy and J. H. Bernard (see Bibliography).

[2] *A*, VIII.

Kant never denied the importance of the main themes of which metaphysics treats. But now, he observes, metaphysics has fallen into disrepute. And this is easily understandable. Mathematics and the natural sciences have advanced, and there is in these fields a great area of generally accepted knowledge. Nobody seriously questions this fact. But metaphysics appears to be an arena for endless disputes. 'One can point to no single book, as one can point to a Euclid, and say: This is metaphysics, here you will find the noblest object of this science, the knowledge of a supreme Being and of a future world, provided by the principles of pure reason.'[1] The fact of the matter is that metaphysics, unlike physics, has not found any sure scientific method the application of which will enable it to solve its problems. And this leads us to ask, 'why is it that here no sure path of science has yet been found? Is it perhaps impossible to find one?'[2]

The inconclusiveness of metaphysics, its inability hitherto to find a reliable method which will lead to certain conclusions, its constant tendency to retrace its steps and to start all over again; such characteristics have helped to produce a widespread indifference towards metaphysics and its claims. True, in one sense this indifference is unjustified; for it is 'vain to profess indifference in regard to such inquiries, the objects of which cannot be a matter of indifference to human nature'.[3] Moreover, those who profess to be indifferentists are prone to make metaphysical pronouncements of their own, even if they are unaware of the fact. At the same time this indifference is not, in Kant's view, the fruit of mere levity of mind: rather is it the expression of a contemporary maturity of judgment which refuses to be satisfied with illusory knowledge or pseudo-science. It should serve, therefore, as a stimulus to undertake a critical investigation of metaphysics, summoning the latter before the tribunal of reason.

What form must this critical investigation take? To be in a position to answer this question we must recall what metaphysics means for Kant. As we saw in the last chapter, he disagreed with Locke's theory that all our concepts are ultimately derived from experience. He did not, indeed, accept the opposite theory of innate ideas. But at the same time he believed that there are concepts and principles which the reason derives from within itself on the occasion of experience. A child is not born with, for example, an idea of causality. But on the occasion of experience its reason derives the concept from within itself. It is an *a priori* concept in the sense that it is not derived from experience but is applied to and in a sense governs experience. There are, therefore, *a priori* concepts and principles which are grounded in the mind's own structure. These concepts are 'pure', in the sense that they are, of themselves, empty of all empirical content or material. Now, the metaphysicians have assumed that reason can apply these concepts and principles so as to apprehend supersensible realities and things-in-themselves, that is, not merely as they appear to us. There have thus arisen the various systems of dogmatic metaphysics. But the assumption was over-hasty. We cannot take it for granted that the *a priori* concepts and principles of the reason can be used to transcend experience; that is, to know realities which are not given in experience. First of all we must undertake a critical investigation into the powers of the pure reason itself. This is the task which the dogmatic philosophers neglected, dogmatism being described as the assumption that it is possible to make progress in knowledge simply on the basis of pure philosophical concepts by employing principles which reason has long been in the habit of employing, 'without having inquired in what way and with what right reason has arrived at these principles. Dogmatism is thus the dogmatic procedure of the pure reason without previous criticism of its own powers.'[1] It is this criticism which Kant proposes to undertake.

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[1] *Prol.*, 4. [2] *B*, xv. [3] *A*, x.

The tribunal before which metaphysics is to be brought is, therefore, 'nothing else than the critical investigation (*Kritik*) of pure reason itself', which means 'a critical inquiry into the faculty of reason with reference to all the cognitions to which it may strive to attain independently of all experience'.[2] The question is, then, 'what and how much can understanding and reason[3] know, apart from all experience'.[4] Let us assume with Kant that speculative metaphysics is a non-empirical science (or alleged science) which claims to transcend experience, attaining to a knowledge of purely intelligible (non-sensible) realities by means of *a priori* concepts and principles. Given this view of metaphysics, the validity of its claim will obviously be determined by the answer to the question, what and how much can the mind know apart from experience.

To answer this question a critical inquiry into the faculty of reason, as Kant puts it, is required. What this means will, I hope, become clearer during the course of this chapter. But it may be as well to point out at once that Kant is not referring to a psychological inquiry into the nature of reason considered as a psychical entity; that is, with reason as an object among objects. He is concerned with reason in regard to the *a priori* cognition which it makes possible. That is to say, he is concerned with the pure conditions in the human subject as such for knowing objects. Such an inquiry is termed 'transcendental'.

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[1] *B*, xxxv.

[2] *A*, xii.

[3] The distinction between understanding and reason can be passed over for the moment. It will be explained later.

[4] *A*, xvii.

One of the main tasks of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is to show in a systematic manner what these conditions are. And it is important to understand what sort of conditions Kant is talking about. There are obviously empirical conditions for perceiving things and for learning truths. For instance, I cannot see things in complete darkness; light is required for vision. And there are many scientific truths which cannot be discovered without the aid of instruments. Further, there are empirical conditions which are subjective, in the sense that they are conditions on the part of the knowing subject himself. I cannot see things if I am suffering from certain diseases of the eye in an advanced state. And there are obviously people who cannot, practically speaking, understand subjects which others understand with comparative ease. But Kant is not concerned with empirical conditions: he is concerned with the non-empirical or 'pure' conditions of human knowledge as such. In other words, he is concerned with the formal elements of pure consciousness. Tom, Dick and Harry, namely particular people with their particular limitations, do not enter into the matter at all. Or, rather, they enter into it only as exemplifying the human subject as such. That is to say, conditions of knowledge which hold for the human subject as such will obviously hold for Tom, Dick and Harry. But it is with the necessary conditions for knowing objects that Kant is concerned, not with variable empirical conditions. And if the conditions turn out to be such that realities transcending sense-experience cannot be objects of knowledge, the claims of speculative metaphysics will have been shown to be hollow and vain.

Now, Kant mentions Wolff with respect as 'the greatest of all dogmatic philosophers'.[1] And it is clear that when he speaks about dogmatic metaphysics, he has in mind principally, though not exclusively, the Leibniz-Wolffian system. We may be inclined to object, therefore, that his inquiry into the possibility or impossibility of metaphysics is really an inquiry into the capacity of a certain type of metaphysics to extend our knowledge of reality, and that it is thus too restricted in scope. For there are other ideas of metaphysics besides that of Wolff. But though it is quite true that Kant pays insufficient attention to other conceptions of metaphysics, it is possible to exaggerate the importance of this line of objection. For instance, concepts such as those of cause and substance are employed in other metaphysical systems besides that of Wolff. Yet if the status and function of these concepts were what Kant, in the course of the first *Critique*, declares them to be, they could not be used to attain knowledge of supersensible realities. The Kantian critique of the powers of reason would thus, if valid, affect many other metaphysical systems besides that of Wolff. In other words, Kant's field of inquiry may be too narrow in its starting-point, in the sense that metaphysics means for him a particular type of metaphysics; but the inquiry is developed in such a way that the conclusions arrived at have a very wide range of application.

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[1] *B*, xxxvi.

It may be as well to note that Kant does not always use the term 'metaphysics' in precisely the same sense. The inquiry into the powers of reason in regard to pure *a priori* cognition is called critical philosophy, while the systematic presentation of the whole body of philosophical knowledge attained or attainable by the power of pure reason (that is, *a priori*) is called metaphysics. When the latter term is used in this sense, critical philosophy is a preparation for or propaedeutic to metaphysics, and thus falls outside metaphysics. But the term 'metaphysics' may also be given to the whole of pure (non-empirical) philosophy, including so-called critical philosophy; and in this case critical philosophy counts as the first part of metaphysics. Again, if we take the term 'metaphysics' as meaning the systematic presentation of the whole body of philosophical knowledge attained by the power of pure reason, we may mean by 'knowledge', knowledge in a strict sense, or we may include the pretended or illusory knowledge which many philosophers have thought to be attainable by pure reason. If we understand the word 'knowledge' in the first of these two senses, Kant obviously does not reject metaphysics. On the contrary, he thought that it could, at least in principle, be systematically and completely developed. And his own *Metaphysical First Elements of Natural Science* is a contribution. But if the term 'metaphysics' is used to mean pretended or illusory knowledge of supersensible realities, one of the tasks of the critical philosophy is to expose the hollowness of the claims made on behalf of this pseudo-science. Finally, we must distinguish between metaphysics as a natural disposition and metaphysics considered as a science. The mind has a natural tendency to raise such problems as those of God and immortality; and though we should try to understand why this is the case, Kant neither wishes to eradicate the tendency nor believes that it is possible to do so, even if it were desirable. Metaphysics as a natural disposition is actual, and therefore it is obviously possible. But metaphysics as a science, if we mean by this a scientific knowledge of supersensible beings, has never, according to Kant, been a reality. For all the alleged demonstrations hitherto produced can be shown to be invalid, that is, pseudo-demonstrations. Hence we can very properly ask whether metaphysics, considered as a science, is possible.

All this may sound very complicated and confusing. But it is not so confusing in practice as it sounds when briefly summarized. In the first place Kant himself refers to the different uses of the term 'metaphysics'.[1] In the second place the context makes it clear in what sense Kant is using the term in a particular passage. But the fact that the term bears more than one meaning in his writings is of some importance. For if one is ignorant of it, one may rashly conclude that he contradicts himself, admitting metaphysics in one place, rejecting it in another, when there is perhaps really no contradiction at all.

2. But though the possibility of metaphysics as a science (that is, as a science with objects of its own, transcending sense-experience) is for Kant an important problem, it is only part of the general problem considered in the *Critique of Pure Reason.* This general problem may be said to be that of the possibility of *a priori* knowledge.

Now, by *a priori* knowledge Kant does not mean knowledge which is relatively *a priori*; that is, in relation to this or that experience or to this or that kind of experience. If someone puts a garment too near the fire so that it is singed or burned, we may say that he might have known *a priori* that this would happen. That is to say, on the basis of past experience the man might have known antecedently to his action what its effect would be. He need not have waited to see what would happen. But this antecedent knowledge would be *a priori* only in relation to a particular experience. And it is not of such relatively *a priori* knowledge that Kant is thinking. He is thinking of knowledge which is *a priori* in relation to all experience.

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[1] See, for example, *B* 869–70.

But here we have to be careful not to draw the conclusion that Kant is thinking about innate ideas, supposed to be present in the human mind before experience in a temporal sense of the word 'before'. Pure *a priori* knowledge does not mean knowledge which is explicitly present in the mind before it has begun to experience anything at all: it means knowledge which is underived from experience, even if it makes its appearance as what we would ordinarily call 'knowledge' only on the occasion of experience. Consider the following famous and often-quoted statements. 'That all our knowledge begins with experience there can be no doubt.... But though all our knowledge begins *with* experience, it does not follow that it all arises *out of* experience.'[1] Kant agrees with the empiricists, such as Locke, to the extent of saying that 'all our knowledge begins with experience'. Our knowledge, he thinks, must begin with experience because the cognitive faculty, as he puts it, requires to be brought into exercise by our senses being affected by objects. Given sensations, the raw material of experience, the mind can set to work. At the same time, however, even if no knowledge is temporally antecedent to experience, it is possible that the cognitive faculty supplies *a priori* elements from within itself on the occasion of sense-impressions. In this sense the *a priori* elements would be underived from experience.

Now, why should Kant think that it is possible for there to be any *a priori* knowledge at all? The answer is that he was convinced that there evidently is such knowledge. He agreed with David Hume that we cannot derive necessity and strict universality[2] from experience. It follows, therefore, that 'necessity and strict universality are sure marks of *a priori* knowledge and are inseparably connected with one another'.[3] And it is easy to show that we possess knowledge which finds expression in necessary and universal judgments. 'If one desires an example from the sciences, one needs only to look at any proposition in mathematics. If one desires an example from the commonest operations of the understanding, the proposition that every change must have a cause can serve one's purposes.'[1] This last proposition is, in Kant's terminology, 'impure' in the sense that the concept of change is derived from experience. But the proposition is none the less *a priori*, even if it is not an example of pure *a priori* knowledge. For it is a necessary and strictly universal judgment.

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[1] *B*, 1.

[2] Universality which is based on induction is not, for Kant, strict but 'assumed and comparative' and admits of exceptions. If, on the basis of my personal experience, I say that human beings do not live more than a hundred years, the universality of the judgment is 'assumed'. Strict universality admits of no possible exception.

[3] *B*, 4.

There is, therefore, a considerable area of *a priori* knowledge. Kant acknowledged his debt to Hume. 'I freely confess that it was the thought of David Hume which many years ago first interrupted my dogmatic slumbers and gave an entirely new direction to my inquiries in the field of speculative philosophy.'[2] But though Kant had been convinced by Hume's discussion of the principle of causality that the element of necessity in the judgment cannot be justified on purely empiricist lines, he refused to accept Hume's psychological account of its origin in terms of the association of ideas. If I say that every event must have a cause, my judgment expresses *a priori* knowledge: it is not simply the expression of an habitual expectation mechanically produced by the association of ideas. The necessity, Kant insists, is not 'purely subjective';[3] the dependence of any event or happening or change on a cause is known, and it is known *a priori*. That is to say, my judgment is not simply a generalization from my experience of particular cases; nor does it stand in need of experiential confirmation before its truth can be known. Though, therefore, Hume was right in saying that a necessary relation between event and cause is not given in experience, his psychological explanation of the origin of the idea of necessity was inadequate. We have here an instance of *a priori* knowledge. But it is by no means the only instance. Hume may have devoted his attention principally to the causal relation; but Kant 'soon found that the concept of connection between cause and effect is by no means the only one through which the understanding thinks connections between things *a priori*'.[4] There is, therefore, a considerable area of *a priori* knowledge.

But if there certainly is *a priori* knowledge, why should Kant ask how it is possible? For if it is actual, it is obviously possible. The answer is, of course, that in the case of those fields (pure mathematics and pure physics) where, Kant is convinced, there evidently is *a priori* knowledge, the question is not how this knowledge is *possible* (better, *whether* it is possible) but *how* it is possible. Granted its possibility (for it is actual), how is it that it is possible? How is it that we can have the *a priori* knowledge which we have, for example, in mathematics?

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[1] *B*, 4–5.

[2] *Prol.*, Foreword.

[3] *B*, 5.

[4] *Prol.*, Foreword.

In the case of speculative metaphysics, however, the claim to possess *a priori* knowledge is suspect. Here, therefore, we ask whether it is possible rather than how it is possible. If metaphysics provides us with knowledge of God or of immortality, for instance, such knowledge must, on Kant's view of metaphysics, be *a priori*. It must be independent of experience, in the sense that it does not logically depend on purely empirical judgments. But does speculative metaphysics provide us with such knowledge? Is it even capable in principle of doing so?

3. We must now try to make these problems more precise. And to do so we must refer to Kant's distinction between different types of judgment.

In the first place we must distinguish between analytic and synthetic judgments. Analytic judgments are those in which the predicate is contained, at least implicitly, in the concept of the subject. They are said to be 'explicative judgments' (*Erläuterungsurteile*)[1] because the predicate does not add to the concept of the subject anything which is not already contained in it, explicitly or implicitly. And their truth depends on the law of contradiction. We cannot deny the proposition without involving ourselves in logical contradiction. Kant cites as an example 'all bodies are extended'. For the idea of extension is contained in the idea of body. Synthetic judgments, however, affirm or deny of a subject a predicate which is not contained in the concept of the subject. They are called, therefore, 'ampliative' or 'augmentative judgments' (*Erweiterungsurteile*),[2] because they add something to the concept of the subject. According to Kant, 'all bodies are heavy' is an example of a synthetic judgment; for the idea of weight or heaviness is not contained in the concept of body as such.

We must now make a further distinction within the general class of synthetic judgments. In all synthetic judgments, as we have seen, something is added to the concept of the subject. A connection is affirmed (to restrict our attention to the affirmative judgment) between predicate and subject, but the predicate cannot be got out of the subject, so to speak, by mere analysis.

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[1] *B*, 11; *A*, 7.

[2] *Ibid.*

Now, this connection may be purely factual and contingent: it is then given only in and through experience. And when this is the case, the judgment is synthetic *a posteriori*. Take the proposition, 'All members of tribe *X* are short', and let us suppose that this is a true proposition. It is synthetic: for we cannot elicit the idea of shortness by mere analysis from the concept of membership of tribe *X*.[1] But the connection between shortness and membership of the tribe is given only in and through experience; and the judgment is simply the result of a series of observations. Its universality is not strict but assumed and comparative. Even if there does not happen to be at the moment any member of the tribe who is not short, there may be one or more tall members in the future. We cannot know *a priori* that all members are short: it is simply a matter of contingent fact.

But, according to Kant, there is another class of synthetic propositions, in which the connection between predicate and subject, though not knowable by mere analysis of the concept of the subject, is none the less necessary and strictly universal. These are called synthetic *a priori* propositions. Kant gives us an example. 'Everything which happens has its cause.'[2] The proposition is synthetic because the predicate, having a cause, is not contained in the concept of what happens, that is, of an event. It is an ampliative, not an explicative judgment. But it is at the same time *a priori*. For it is characterized by necessity and strict universality, the marks of *a priori* judgments. The proposition, 'everything which happens has its cause', does not mean that, so far as our experience goes, all events have had causes and that it is reasonable to expect, until experience shows otherwise, that future events also will have causes. It means that every event, without any possible exception, will have a cause. The proposition is, of course, dependent on experience in one sense, namely that it is by experience that we become acquainted with things happening, with events. But the connection between predicate and subject is given *a priori*. It is not a mere generalization from experience, reached by induction; nor does it stand in need of experiential confirmation. We know *a priori* or in advance that every event must have a cause; and the observation of such a connection in the case of events falling within the field of an experience adds nothing to the certainty of the judgment.

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[1] The judgment could, of course, be turned into an analytic judgment by so defining membership of the tribe that it includes the idea of shortness. But then we should be moving in the realm of verbal definitions and their implications; we should not be dealing with empirical reality, with the tribe as it actually exists.

[2] *B*, 13; *A*, 9.

It would be out of place, I think, to interrupt the course of Kant's problematic by discussing the highly controversial question of synthetic *a priori* propositions. But for the benefit of any reader who may not already be well aware of the fact, it is only fitting to note that the existence of synthetic *a priori* propositions is widely challenged by modern logicians, especially, of course, by empiricists and positivists. Their approach to the matter is rather different from that of Kant, but I do not wish to dwell upon this theme. The main point is that while the general distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions causes no difficulty, many philosophers refuse to admit that there are any synthetic propositions which are *a priori*. If a proposition is necessary, it is analytic. If a proposition is not analytic, it is synthetic *a posteriori*, to use Kant's language. In other words, the empiricist contention is that if a proposition does more than analyse the meanings of terms or illustrate the meanings of symbols, if, that is to say, it gives us information about non-linguistic reality, the connection between predicate and subject is not, and cannot be, necessary. In fine, all synthetic propositions are, in Kant's terminology, *a posteriori*. A proposition whose truth rests simply on the principle of contradiction is, as Kant said, analytic. A proposition whose truth does not rest on the principle of contradiction cannot be necessarily true. There is no room for a third class of propositions besides analytic propositions on the one hand and empirical propositions (corresponding to Kant's synthetic *a posteriori* judgments) on the other.

Kant, however, was convinced that there are synthetic *a priori* propositions; that is, propositions which are not merely 'explicative' but which extend our knowledge of reality and which are at the same time *a priori* (that is, necessary and strictly universal). The general problem, therefore, how is *a priori* cognition possible, can be expressed thus. How are synthetic *a priori* propositions possible? How is it that we can know anything at all about reality *a priori*? But this general question can be split up into several more particular questions by considering where synthetic *a priori* propositions are to be found.

They are to be found, in the first place, in mathematics. 'First of all it must be noted that mathematical propositions proper are always judgments *a priori* and not empirical, because they include the concept of necessity, which cannot be derived from experience.'[1] The proposition $7+5=12$ is not an empirical generalization admitting of possible exceptions. It is a necessary proposition. At the same time, however, this proposition, according to Kant, is not analytic in the sense described above: it is synthetic. The concept of twelve is not obtained, and cannot be obtained, by mere analysis of the idea of the union between seven and five. For this idea does not of itself imply the concept of twelve as the particular number resulting from the union. We cannot arrive at the notion of *12* except with the aid of intuition. 'The arithmetical proposition is therefore always synthetic.'[2] That is to say, it is synthetic *a priori*; for, as we have seen, it is a necessary proposition and so cannot be synthetic *a posteriori*.

Similarly, the propositions of pure geometry are also synthetic *a priori* propositions. For instance, 'that a straight line between two points is the shortest, is a synthetic proposition. For my concept of *straight* contains no notion of quantity, but only of quality. The concept of *the shortest* is thus wholly an addition, and it cannot be derived by any analysis from the concept of a straight line. Intuition must therefore lend its aid here, by means of which alone is this synthesis possible.'[3] But besides being synthetic the proposition is necessary, and so *a priori*. It is not an empirical generalization.

Geometers, Kant remarks, can make use of some analytical propositions; but he insists that all the propositions of pure mathematics proper are synthetic *a priori* propositions. Pure mathematics is not for him, as it was for Leibniz, a simply analytic science, depending on the principle of contradiction: it is constructional in character. Something more will be said in the next chapter about Kant's conception of mathematics, when we treat of his theory of space and time. Meanwhile it is sufficient to note the question which arises from his doctrine that mathematical propositions are synthetic *a priori* propositions; namely how is pure mathematical science possible? We certainly do know mathematical truths *a priori*. But how is it possible to do so?

In the second place, synthetic *a priori* propositions are also found in physics. Take, for instance, the proposition, 'in all changes of the corporeal (material) world the quantity of matter remains unchanged'. This proposition, according to Kant, is necessary and therefore *a priori*. But it is also synthetic. For in the concept of matter we do not think its permanence, but merely its presence in space, which it fills. Physics in general, of course, does not consist simply of synthetic *a priori* propositions. But 'natural science (physics) contains within itself synthetic *a priori* judgments as principles'.[1] And if we call the complex of these principles pure natural science or pure physics, the question arises, 'How is pure natural science or physics possible?' We possess *a priori* knowledge in this sphere. But how is it possible for us to possess it?

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[1] *B*, 14.

[2] *B*, 16.

[3] *Ibid.*

Kant believed that there are also *synthetic a priori* propositions in morals. But this subject can be left to the chapter on his ethical theory, as we are treating here of the problems raised and discussed in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. We come, therefore, to the subject of metaphysics. And if we consider metaphysics, we find that it does not aim simply at analysing concepts. It contains, indeed, analytic propositions; but they are not, properly speaking, metaphysical propositions. Metaphysics aims at extending our knowledge of reality. Its propositions must, therefore, be synthetic. At the same time, if it is not (and it is not) an empirical science, its propositions must be *a priori*. It follows, therefore, that if metaphysics is possible, it must consist of synthetic *a priori* propositions. 'And so metaphysics, according to its aim at least, consists simply of synthetic *a priori* propositions.'[2] As an example Kant cites the proposition, 'the world must have a first beginning'.[3]

But, as we have seen, the claim of metaphysics to be a science is in doubt. The question, therefore, is not so much *how* metaphysics as a science is possible as *whether* it is possible. At this point, however, we must refer to a distinction which we have already made, the distinction between metaphysics as a natural disposition and metaphysics as a science. As Kant believes that the human reason is naturally impelled to raise problems which cannot be answered empirically, he can quite properly ask how metaphysics, considered as a natural disposition, is possible. But inasmuch as he doubts whether the claim of metaphysics to constitute a science, capable of answering its own problems, is justified, the question here is really whether metaphysics considered as a science is possible.

We are faced, therefore, with four questions. First, how is pure mathematical science possible? Secondly, how is pure natural science or pure physics possible? Thirdly, how is metaphysics, considered as a natural disposition, possible? Fourthly, is metaphysics, considered as a science, possible? Kant treats of these questions in the *Critique of Pure Reason.*

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[1] *B*, 17.

[2] *B*, 18.

[3] *Ibid.*

4. If we consider the general question, how is *a priori* knowledge possible or how are synthetic *a priori* judgments possible, and if at the same time we bear in mind Kant's agreement with Hume concerning the impossibility of deriving necessity and strict universality from empirical data, we can see how difficult it would be for him to maintain that knowledge consists simply in the conformity of the mind to its objects. The reason for this is obvious. If, to know objects, the mind must conform itself to them, and if at the same time it cannot find in these objects, considered as empirically given, necessary connections, it becomes impossible to explain how we can make necessary and strictly universal judgments which are as a matter of fact verified and which, as we know in advance or *a priori*, must always be verified. It is not merely that we find, for instance, that experienced events have causes: we also know in advance that every event must have a cause. But if we reduce experience to the merely given, we cannot discover there a necessary causal relation. It is thus impossible to explain our knowledge that every event must have a cause on the hypothesis that knowledge consists simply in the mind's conforming itself to objects.

Kant therefore suggested another hypothesis. 'Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects. But all attempts to ascertain anything about them *a priori* by concepts, and thus to extend our knowledge, came to nothing on this assumption. Let us try, then, whether we may not make better progress in the tasks of metaphysics if we assume that objects must conform to our knowledge. This at all events accords better with the possibility which we are seeking, namely of a knowledge of objects *a priori*, which would determine something about them before they are given to us.'[1]

This hypothesis, Kant observes, is analogous to that proposed by Copernicus. The latter saw that though the sun appears to move across the earth from east to west, we cannot justifiably conclude from this that the earth is fixed and that the sun moves round a fixed earth, for the very good reason that the observed movement of the sun would be precisely the same (that is to say, the phenomena would be precisely what they are) if it were the earth which was moving round the sun, and the human observer with it. The immediate phenomena would be the same on either hypothesis. The question is whether there are not astronomical phenomena which can only be explained on the heliocentric hypothesis, or which at any rate are explained better and more economically on the heliocentric than on the geocentric hypothesis. And subsequent astronomical investigation showed that this is indeed the case. In an analogous manner, Kant suggests, empirical reality would remain what it is even on the hypothesis that for objects to be known (that is, for them to *be* objects, if we mean by 'object' an object of knowledge) they must conform to the mind rather than the other way about. And if *a priori* knowledge can be explained on the new but not on the old hypothesis, this is obviously an argument in favour of the former.

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[1] *B*, xvi.

Kant's 'Copernican revolution' does not imply the view that reality can be reduced to the human mind and its ideas. He is not suggesting that the human mind creates things, as far as their existence is concerned, by thinking them. What he is suggesting is that we cannot know things, that they cannot be objects of knowledge for us, except in so far as they are subjected to certain *a priori* conditions of knowledge on the part of the subject. If we assume that the human mind is purely passive in knowledge, we cannot explain the *a priori* knowledge which we undoubtedly possess. Let us assume, therefore, that the mind is active. This activity does not mean creation of beings out of nothing. It means rather that the mind imposes, as it were, on the ultimate material of experience its own forms of cognition, determined by the structure of human sensibility and understanding, and that things cannot be known except through the medium of these forms. But if we speak of the mind imposing its own cognitive forms on the raw material, so to speak, of knowledge, this must not be taken to mean that the human subject does this deliberately, consciously and of set purpose. The object as given to conscious experience, the object *about* which we think (a tree, for instance), is already subjected to those cognitive forms which the human subject imposes by a natural necessity, because it is what it is; that is, because of its natural structure as a knowing subject. The cognitive forms thus determine the possibility of objects, if 'object' is taken to refer to object of knowledge precisely as such. If the word were taken to refer to things in themselves, that is, to things as they exist apart from any relation to the knowing subject, we could not, of course, say that they are determined by the human mind.

Perhaps the matter can be made a little clearer by reverting to the admittedly crude illustration of a man with red-tinted spectacles. On the one hand it is obvious that the man who sees the world as red because he is wearing red-tinted spectacles does not create the things which he sees in the sense in which God is Creator. Unless there existed things which affected him, that is, which stimulated his power of vision, he would not see anything at all. On the other hand nothing could be seen by him, that is, nothing could be for him an object of vision unless it were seen as red. At the same time, to make the analogy at all applicable, we must add the following important point. A man who puts on red-tinted spectacles does so deliberately: it is by his own choice that he sees things as red. We have to imagine, therefore, a man who is born with his power of vision so constituted that he sees all things as red. The world presented to him in experience is then a red world. This is really the point of departure for his reflection. Two hypotheses are then possible. It may be that everything *is* red. Or it may be that things have different colours,[1] but that they appear as red because of some subjective factor (as is, indeed, the case in the analogy). Spontaneously, the man would naturally embrace the first hypothesis. But it may be that in the course of time he finds a difficulty in explaining certain facts on this hypothesis. Thus he may be led to envisage and consider the alternative hypothesis. And if he finds that certain facts can be explained on this second hypothesis which cannot be explained on the hypothesis that all things are really red, he will embrace the second. He will never, indeed, be able to see the 'real' colours of things: appearances will be the same for him after his change of hypothesis as before, just as the apparent movement of the sun is precisely the same for the man who accepts the heliocentric hypothesis as it is for the man who accepts the geocentric hypothesis. But he will know why things appear as they do. The man who accepts the heliocentric hypothesis will know that the apparent movement of the sun round the earth is due to the earth's movement and to his own with it. The man who sees all things as red will have reason to suppose that this appearance of things is due to a condition in himself. Analogously, the man who accepts

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[1] For purposes of this analogy I must be allowed to use ordinary everyday language. It is obviously an analogy or illustration, not a considered statement about the ontological status of colours.

Kant's 'Copernican revolution' will have reason to believe, let it be assumed, that certain ways in which things appear to him (as spatially co-ordinated, for instance, and as connected with one another by necessary causal relations) are due to subjective *a priori* conditions of knowledge in himself. He will not, indeed, be able to know things apart from their subjection to these *a priori* conditions or forms; but he will know why the empirical world is what it is for his consciousness.

We have already noted Kant's reference in his foreword to the *Prolegomena* to Hume's influence on his thought. In the preface to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* he draws attention to the influence of mathematics and physics in suggesting to him the idea of his 'Copernican revolution'. In mathematics a revolution must have occurred at a very early stage. Whoever the Greek may have been who first demonstrated the properties of the isosceles triangle, a new light must have flashed upon his mind. For he saw that it was not sufficient to contemplate either the visible diagram of the triangle or the idea of it in his mind. He had to demonstrate the properties of the triangle by a process of active construction. And, in general, mathematics became a science only when it became constructional in accordance with *a priori* concepts. As for physics, the revolution in this sphere came at a much later date. With the experiments of Galileo, Torricelli and others a new light broke upon physicists. They understood at last that though the scientist must, indeed, approach Nature to learn from her, he must not do so simply in the spirit of a pupil. Rather must he approach Nature as a judge, compelling her to answer the questions which he proposes, as a judge insists on witnesses answering the questions proposed to them according to a plan. He must come to Nature with principles in one hand and experiment in the other and make her answer questions proposed according to his design or purpose. He must not allow himself simply to follow her about like a child in leading-strings. It was only when physicists saw that Nature must be made to conform, as it were, to their preconceived designs[1] that real progress in the science became possible. And these revolutions in mathematics and physics suggest that we may possibly get along better in metaphysics if we assume that objects mnst conform to the mind rather than the other way round. As Hume showed, *a priori* cognition cannot be explained on the second supposition. Let us see, therefore, if it can be explained on the first.

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[1] Obviously, Kant does not envisage the physicist as simply reading preconceived theories into Nature. He is thinking of the process of hypothesis, deduction and controlled experiment, in which the physicist is clearly no mere passive recipient of impressions from Nature.

How can the 'Copernican revolution' help to explain *a priori* cognition? An example may help to give a preliminary idea. We know that every event must have a cause. But, as Hume showed, no amount of observation of particular events will serve to produce this knowledge. From this Hume concluded that we cannot be said to *know* that every event has a cause. All we can do is to try to find a psychological explanation of our belief or persuasion.[1] For Kant, however, we certainly do know that every event must have a cause. And this is an instance of *a priori* cognition. On what condition is it possible? It is possible only on condition that objects, to be objects (that is, to be known), must be subjected to the *a priori* concepts or categories of the human understanding, of which causality is one. For in this case nothing will ever enter the field of our experience except as exemplifying the causal relation, just as, to revert to our former illustration, nothing can ever enter the field of vision of the man whose power of vision is so constituted that he sees all things as red, except as red. If objects of experience are of necessity partially determined or constituted as such by the imposition of mental categories, and if causality is one of these, we can know in advance or *a priori* that nothing will ever happen, within the whole field of human experience, without a cause. And by extending this idea beyond the single example of causality we can explain the possibility of the whole range of *a priori* cognition.

Now, I have spoken of Kant's 'hypothesis'. And as regards its initial conception it was, of course, an hypothesis. 'Let us see whether we can get on better by assuming that . . .' represents the sort of way in which Kant introduces his idea. But he notes that, though the idea was suggested by the revolution in natural philosophy or physics, we cannot, in the critical philosophy, experiment with objects in a manner analogous to that in which the physicist can make experiments. We are concerned with the relation between objects and consciousness in general, and we cannot remove objects out of their relation to the knowing subject in order to see whether this does or does not make a difference to them. Such a procedure is impossible in principle. At the same time, however, if on the new hypothesis we can explain what cannot be explained in any other way, and if at the same time we succeed in demonstrating the laws which lie *a priori* at the basis of Nature (considered as the sum of possible objects of experience), we shall have succeeded in proving the validity of the point of view which was at first assumed as an hypothesis.

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[1] In the Foreword to the *Prolegomena* Kant rightly notes that Hume never questioned the fact that the concept of cause is indispensable for life.

5. Now, 'there are two sources of human knowledge, which perhaps spring from a common but to us unknown root, namely sensibility and understanding. Through the former objects are *given* to us; through the latter they are *thought*.'[1] Kant here distinguishes between sense or sensibility (*Sinnlichkeit*) and understanding (*Verstand*), telling us that objects are *given* through sense and *thought* through the understanding. But this statement, if taken alone and without reference to the context, might easily give rise to a misconception of his meaning, and a few words of comment are necessary.

We have seen that Kant does not agree with the empiricists that all human knowledge is derived from experience. For there is *a priori* knowledge, which cannot be explained on purely empiricist principles. At the same time he agrees with the empiricists on this point, that objects are given to us in sense-experience. But the word 'given' can be misleading. To put the matter rather crudely, thought can get to work on objects only when they are given to sense; but it does not follow that what is 'given' is not already a synthesis of matter and form, the form being imposed by human sensibility. And it was Kant's conviction that the given is in fact such a synthesis. The word 'given' must therefore be taken as meaning given to consciousness, without the implication that the senses apprehend things-in-themselves, things as they exist independently of the synthesizing activity of the human subject. Sense-experience itself involves such an activity, namely synthesis in the *a priori* sense intuitions of space and time. Things-in-themselves are never given to us as objects: that which the understanding finds before it, so to speak, as the given is already a synthesis of form and matter. The understanding then further synthesizes the data of sense intuition under its own pure (non-empirical) concepts or categories.

Sensibility and understanding, therefore, co-operate in constituting experience and in determining objects as objects, though their contributions are distinguishable. Now, this means that the function of the pure concepts or categories of the understanding (*Verstand*) is to synthesize the data of sense intuition. They are therefore inapplicable to realities which are not, and cannot be, given in sense-experience. And it follows that no metaphysics which consists in using the pure concepts or categories of the understanding (such as the concepts of cause and substance) to transcend experience, as Kant puts it, and to describe supersensible reality can legitimately claim to be a science. Indeed, one of the philosopher's tasks is to expose the hollowness of any such claim.

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[1] *B*, 29; *A*, 19.

The function of the pure concepts or categories of the understanding is thus to synthesize the manifold of sense: their use lies in their application to the data of sense intuition. But there are also certain ideas which, while not being mere abstractions from experience, are at the same time not applicable to the data of sense intuition. They transcend experience in the sense that no objects are given, or can be given, within experience which correspond to them. Such, for instance, are the ideas of the soul as a spiritual principle and of God. How are such ideas produced? The human mind has a natural tendency to seek unconditioned principles of unity. Thus it seeks the unconditioned[1] principle of unity of all categorical thinking in the idea of the soul as a thinking subject or ego. And it seeks the unconditioned principles of unity of all objects of experience in the idea of God, the supremely perfect Being.

These 'transcendental Ideas', as Kant calls them, are ascribed by him to the reason (*Vernunft*). We must note, therefore, that Kant uses this word with varying degrees of strictness. When he calls the first *Critique* the *Critique of Pure Reason* (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*), the word 'reason', as covering the general contents of the work, includes sensibility, understanding and reason in the narrower sense. In this narrower sense reason (*Vernunft*) is distinguished from understanding (*Verstand*), and still more from sensibility (*Sinnlichkeit*). It refers to the human intellect as seeking to unify a manifold referring it to an unconditioned principle, such as God.

Now, this natural tendency of the reason, considered in itself, is in no way belittled by Kant. On the contrary, he considers that the transcendental Ideas exercise an important regulative function. For example, the Idea of the world as a totality, the total system of causally related phenomena, constantly spurs us on to develop ever wider scientific explanatory hypotheses, ever wider conceptual syntheses of phenomena. It serves, in other words, as a kind of ideal goal, the notion of which stimulates the mind to renewed effort.

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[1] 'Unconditioned' as transcending the subjective conditions of sensibility and understanding.

The question arises, however, whether these Ideas possess more than a regulative function. Can they be the source of a theoretical knowledge of corresponding realities? It is Kant's conviction that they cannot. In his view any attempt to use these Ideas as the basis for metaphysics as a science is foredoomed to failure. If we do so, we shall find ourselves involved in logical fallacies and antinomies. Given our possession of these Ideas, it is easy to understand the temptation to use them in a 'transcendent' manner; that is, to extend our theoretical knowledge beyond the field of experience. But it is a temptation to be resisted.

Bearing in mind the considerations outlined in this section, we can easily understand the general structure of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The work is divided into two broad divisions, the first of which is entitled *Transcendental Doctrine of Elements* (*Transzendentale Elementarlehre*). This deals, as the word 'transcendental'[1] indicates, with the *a priori* elements (forms or conditions) of knowledge. It is subdivided into two main parts, *The Transcendental Aesthetic* (*Die transzendentale Aesthetik*) and *The Transcendental Logic* (*Die transzendentale Logik*). In the first of these Kant deals with the *a priori* forms of sensibility and shows how the synthetic *a priori* propositions of mathematics are possible. The *Transcendental Logic* is subdivided into *The Transcendental Analytic* (*Die transzendentale Analytik*) and *The Transcendental Dialectic* (*Die transzendentale Dialektik*). In the *Analytic* Kant treats of the pure concepts or categories of the understanding and shows how the synthetic *a priori* propositions of natural science are possible. In the *Dialectic* he considers two main themes, first the natural disposition to metaphysics, and secondly the question whether metaphysics (that is, speculative metaphysics of the traditional type) can be a science. As has already been remarked, he affirms the value of metaphysics considered as a natural disposition but denies its claim to constitute a true science which give us theoretical knowledge of purely intelligible reality.

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[1] 'I call all knowledge *transcendental* which is occupied not so much with objects as with our mode of cognition of objects, so far as this is possible *a priori*' (*B*, 25; *A*, 11–12).

The second of the two broad divisions of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is entitled *Transcendental Doctrine of Method* (*Transzendentale Methodenlehre*). In the place of speculative or 'transcendent' metaphysics, claiming to be a science of realities which transcend experience, Kant envisages a 'transcendental' metaphysics, which would comprise the complete system of *a priori* cognition, including the metaphysical foundations of natural science. He does not profess to provide this transcendental system in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. If we regard the complete system of *a priori* cognition as an edifice, we can say that the *Transcendental Doctrine of Elements*, the first broad division of the *Critique*, examines the materials and their functions, while the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method* considers the plan of the edifice and is 'the determination of the formal conditions for a complete system of pure Reason'.[1] Kant can say, therefore, that the *Critique of Pure Reason* sketches the plan of the edifice architectonically, and that it is 'the complete idea of transcendental philosophy, but not this science itself'.[2] Strictly speaking, the *Critique of Pure Reason* is only a propaedeutic to the system of transcendental philosophy or metaphysics. But if we use the latter term in a wider sense, we can, of course, say that the contents of the *Critique*, the doctrine of elements and the doctrine of method, constitute the first part of transcendental philosophy or metaphysics.

6. In the last chapter mention was made of the fact that in *Dreams of a Ghost-seer* Kant declared that metaphysics is the science of the boundaries or limits of human reason. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* he endeavours to fulfil this programme. But reason must be understood to mean the theoretical or speculative reason; better, reason in its theoretical function. We cannot have theoretical knowledge of realities which are not given in sense-experience or which are incapable of being so given. There is, of course, reason's critical reflection on itself; but the result of such reflection is primarily to reveal the conditions of scientific knowledge, the conditions of the possibility of objects. It does not open to us a world of supersensible reality as an object of theoretical knowledge.

At the same time this delimitation of the boundaries of theoretical or scientific knowledge does not show that God, for example, is unthinkable or that the term is meaningless. What it does is to put freedom, immortality and God beyond the range of either proof or disproof. The criticism of metaphysics, therefore, which is to be found in the *Transcendental Dialectic* opens the way for practical or moral faith, resting on the moral consciousness. Thus Kant can say[1] that he has to do away with knowledge to make room for faith, and that his destructive criticism of metaphysics' claim to be a science strikes a blow at the root of materialism, fatalism and atheism. For the truths that there is a spiritual soul, that man is free and that God exists no longer rest on fallacious arguments which afford a ground for those who deny these truths; they are moved to the sphere of the practical or moral reason and become objects of faith rather than of knowledge (this term being taken in a sense analogous to that in which it is used with reference to mathematics and natural science).

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[1] *B*, 735–6.

[2] *B*, 28; *A*, 13.

It is a great mistake to look on this theory as a mere sop to the orthodox and devout or as a mere act of prudence on Kant's part. For it is part of his solution to the great problem of reconciling the world of science on the one hand with, on the other, the world of the moral and religious consciousness. Science (that is, classical physics) involves a conception of causal laws which do not admit of freedom. And man, considered as a member of the cosmic system studied by the scientist, is no exception. But scientific knowledge has its limits, and its limits are determined by the *a priori* forms of human sensibility and understanding. There is thus no valid reason whatsoever for saying that the limits of our scientific or theoretical knowledge are identical with the limits of reality. And the moral consciousness, when its practical implications are developed, takes us beyond the sensible sphere. As a phenomenal being, man must be considered as subject to causal laws and as determined; but the moral consciousness, itself a reality, involves the idea of freedom. Though, therefore, we cannot demonstrate scientifically that man is free, belief in freedom is demanded by the moral consciousness.

This point of view is certainly beset with difficulties. Not only do we have the division between sensible, phenomenal reality and noumenal, purely intelligible reality, but we are also faced in particular with the difficult conception of man as phenomenally determined but noumenally free, as determined and free at the same time, though under different aspects. But it would be out of place to discuss the difficulties here. My point in mentioning Kant's point of view was twofold. First, I wished to draw attention once again to the general problem of the reconciliation of the world of Newtonian physics with the world of reality and religion. For if we bear this general problem in mind, we are less likely to lose sight of the wood for the trees. Secondly, I wished to indicate that the *Critique of Pure Reason* does not stand by itself in lonely isolation from Kant's other writings but that it forms a part of a total philosophy which is gradually revealed in successive works. True, the first *Critique* has its own problems, and to this extent it stands by itself. But, quite apart from the fact that inquiry into *a priori* cognition has yet to be pursued in the field of the practical reason, the conclusions of the first *Critique* form only a part of the solution to a general problem which underlies all Kant's thinking. And it is important to understand this fact from the start.

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[1] *B*, xxx.

CHAPTER XII

KANT (3): SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

Space and time—Mathematics—The pure concepts or categories of the understanding—The justification of the application of the categories—The schematism of the categories—Synthetic a priori *principles—The possibility of the pure science of Nature—Phenomena and noumena—The refutation of idealism—Concluding remarks.*

1. THE only way, says Kant at the beginning of the *Transcendental Aesthetic,* in which our knowledge can relate immediately to objects is by means of an intuition.[1] And an intuition can take place only in so far as an object is given to us. The divine intellect is said to be both intuitive and archetypal. That is to say, the divine intuition creates its objects. But this is not the case with human intuition, which presupposes an object. And this means that the human subject must be affected by the object in some way. Now, the capacity for receiving representations (*Vorstellungen*) of objects by being affected by them is named 'sensibility' (*Sinnlichkeit*). 'By means of sensibility, therefore, objects are given to us, and it alone provides us with intuitions.'[2]

If these remarks are taken purely by themselves, the term 'sensibility' has a wide meaning, being simply cognitive receptivity or the capacity for receiving representations of objects by being affected by them. But we must remember that Kant looks on the divine intuition, considered precisely in contrast with human intuition, as being not only archetypal but intellectual. It follows, therefore, that human intuition is sense intuition. And sensibility thus means the capacity for receiving representations of objects by being sensibly affected by them. 'The effect of an object upon the faculty of representation, so far as we are affected by the object, is sensation' (*Empfindung*).[3] Kant agrees, therefore, with the empiricists to the extent of saying that human cognition of objects requires sensation. The mind requires to be put in contact, as it were, with things through an affection of the senses.

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[1] The word 'intuition' (*Anschauung*) can refer either to the act of intuiting or to what is intuited. In the present context the word is used in the first sense. But Kant frequently uses it in the second sense.

[2] *B,* 33; *A,* 19.

[3] *B,* 34; *A,* 19.

Kant takes it for granted that the senses are acted upon by external things; and the effect of this action upon the faculty of representation is called 'sensation'. The latter is thus a subjective representation; but this does not mean that it is caused by the subject.

Sense intuition cannot, however, be reduced simply to the *a posteriori* affections of our senses by things. The object of an empirical sensuous intuition is called by Kant 'appearance' (*Erscheinung*). And in the appearance we can distinguish two elements. First there is its matter. This is described as 'that which corresponds to sensation'.[1] Secondly, there is the form of appearance. And this is described as 'that which enables the manifold of appearance to be arranged in certain relations'.[2] Now, the form, as distinct from the matter, cannot be itself sensation, if the matter is described as that which corresponds to sensation. Hence, while the matter is given is *a posteriori*, the form must lie on the side of the subject: that is to say, it must be *a priori*, an *a priori* form of sensibility, pertaining to the very structure of sensibility and constituting a necessary condition of all sense intuition. According to Kant, there are two pure forms of sensibility, space and time. Space is not, indeed, a necessary condition of *all* empirical intuitions; but this point can be passed over for the moment. It is sufficient to note that Kant parts company with the pure empiricists by finding an *a priori* element in all sense-experience.

Perhaps at this point some remarks should be made about Kant's terminology, even at the cost of interrupting the exposition of his theory of space and time. First, the term 'representation' (*Vorstellung*) is used in a very wide sense to cover a variety of cognitive states. Hence the term 'faculty of representation' is pretty well equivalent to 'mind' (*Gemüt*), a term which is also used in an extremely wide sense. Secondly, the term object (*Gegenstand*) is not used consistently in one sense. Thus in the definition of sensation quoted above 'object' must refer to what Kant later calls thing-in-itself, and which is unknown. But 'object' generally means object of knowledge. Thirdly, in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant distinguishes between 'appearance' and 'phenomenon'. 'Appearances, so far as they are thought as objects according to the unity of the categories, are called *phenomena*.'[1] Hence 'appearance' should mean the content of a sense intuition when this content is considered as 'undetermined' or uncategorized, while 'phenomenon' should mean categorized objects. In point of fact, however, Kant often uses the term 'appearance' (*Erscheinung*) in both senses.

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[1] *B*, 34; *A*, 20.

[2] *B*, 34. In *A*, 20 the wording is somewhat different.

A further remark. We have seen that the matter of appearances is described as that which 'corresponds to' sensation. Elsewhere, however, we are told that sensation itself can be called 'the matter of sense-knowledge'.[2] And perhaps these two ways of speaking can be regarded as expressions of two different tendencies in Kant's thought. The external thing which affects the subject is itself unknown; but by affecting the senses it produces a representation. Now, Kant sometimes tends to speak as though all appearances were subjective representations. And, when this point of view is dominant, it is natural for him to describe sensation itself as the matter of appearance. For sensation is described, as we have seen, as the effect of an object upon the faculty of representation. But Kant also speaks as though phenomena were objects which are not simply subjective representations; and this represents, indeed, his dominant outlook. If, then, we think away the contribution of the categories of the understanding to phenomena and come down to appearances (in the narrower sense of the word), it is natural to speak of the matter of an appearance as being that which 'corresponds to' sensation.

The last three paragraphs can be described, not as a digression, but as a series of footnotes in the text, if one may be permitted a contradiction in terms. However, a brief development of the idea suggested in the final sentence of the last paragraph may serve to clarify Kant's position and carry forward our account of it. The approach is proposed by Kant himself.[3]

The world of common experience obviously consists of things with various qualities, things which stand in various relations to one another. That is to say, we ordinarily talk about perceiving things, each of which can be described in terms of qualities, and each of which stands in various relations to other things. And perception in this sense is clearly the work of understanding and sense in co-operation. But from the total process we can try to abstract all that is contributed by the understanding, in order to arrive at empirical intuition, or perception in a narrow sense. We then come by logical analysis to appearances, to what we may call perhaps sense-contents or sense-data. But we can carry the analysis further. For within the content of sense-experience we can distinguish between the material element, that which corresponds to indeterminate sensation, and the formal element, the spatio-temporal relations of the manifold of appearance.[1] And the purpose of the *Transcendental Aesthetic* is to isolate and study the formal elements, considered as a necessary condition of experience.

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[1] *A*, 248.

[2] *A*, 50; *B*, 74; *Prol.*, 11.

[3] Cf. *A*, 20–2; *B*, 35–6.

The matter can be expressed in this way. The very lowest level conceivable of anything which could be called a knowledge of or acquaintance with objects involves at least an adverting to the representations produced by the action of things upon our senses. But we cannot advert to sensations without relating them in space and time. For instance, to advert to two sensations, that is, to be conscious of them, involves relating the one to the other within time, within an order of temporal succession. One sensation comes before or after or at the same time as another. Space and time constitute the framework, as it were, in which the manifold of sensation is ordered or arranged. They thus at the same time diversify and unify (in spatio-temporal relations) the indeterminate matter of appearance.

This does not mean, of course, that we are at first aware of unordered sensations, and that we then subject them to the *a priori* forms of space and time. For we are never faced, as it were, with unordered sensations. Nor could we be. Indeed, Kant's main point is that space and time are *a priori* necessary conditions of sense-experience. What is given, therefore, in empirical intuition, namely that of which we are aware, is, so to speak, already ordered. The ordering is a condition of awareness or consciousness, not a consequence of it. True, within the appearance we can distinguish, by a process of logical abstraction or analysis, between matter and form. But as soon as we abstract in thought the subjectively contributed form of appearance, the object of which we are aware disappears. In fine, the objects of sensuous or empirical intuition are, as given to consciousness, already subject to the *a priori* forms of sensibility. The ordering or relating takes place within sensuous intuition, not after it.

Attention can now be drawn to the distinction which Kant makes between outer or external sense, by means of which we perceive objects external to us (or, as he puts it, represent to ourselves objects as external to us), and inner or internal sense, by means of which we perceive our interior states.[1] Space is said to be 'the form of all appearances of the external senses, that is, the subjective condition of sensibility, under which alone external intuition is possible for us'.[2] All objects external to us are, and must be, represented as being in space. Time is said to be 'the form of the internal sense, that is, of the intuition of ourselves[3] and of our internal state'.[4] Our psychical states are perceived in time, as following one another or as simultaneous, but not as in space.[5]

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[1] Strictly speaking, the form of appearance is, as we have seen, that which enables the manifold of appearances (sensations or that which corresponds to sensations) to be ordered in certain relations. But we can speak of the relations as the formal element in appearance.

Inasmuch as Kant immediately proceeds to say that time is the *a priori* formal condition of all appearances whatsoever, whereas space is the *a priori* formal condition of external appearances only, it mav appear that he is contradicting himself. But his meaning is this. All representations (*Vorstellungen*), whether they have or have not external things as their objects, are determinations of the mind.[6] And, as such, they belong to our internal state. Hence they must all be subject to the formal condition of inner sense or intuition, namely time. But time is thus only the mediate condition of external appearances, whereas it is the immediate condition of all internal appearances.

Now, we have been speaking of space and time as pure forms of sensibility and as forms of intuition. But we have already drawn attention[7] to the different ways in which Kant uses the term 'intuition'. And in what he calls the 'metaphysical exposition' of the ideas of space and time he refers to them as being themselves *a priori* intuitions. They are not empirically derived concepts. I cannot derive the representation of space *a posteriori*, from the experienced relations between external appearances; for I cannot represent external appearances as having spatial relations except within space. Nor could I represent appearances as existing simultaneously or successively unless the representation of time were already present. For I represent them as existing simultaneously or successively within time. I can think away all external appearances, and the representation of space still remains, as a condition of their possibility. Similarly, I can think away all internal states, but the representation of time still remains. Space and time, therefore, cannot be empirically derived concepts. Further, they cannot be concepts at all, if we mean by concepts general ideas. Our ideas of spaces are formed by introducing limitations within a unitary space, which is presupposed as their necessary foundation; and our ideas of different times or stretches of time are formed in an analogous manner. But we cannot, according to Kant, split up general concepts in this way. Space and time are particulars rather than general concepts. And they are found on the perceptual level; they are presupposed by the concepts of the understanding, not the other way round. We must conclude, therefore, that they are *a priori* intuitions on the level of sense, though we must not, of course, take this as meaning that in the representations of unitary space and time we intuit non-mental existent realities. The representations of space and time are necessary conditions for perception; but they are conditions on the side of the subject.

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[1] Kant would agree with Hume that in introspection we perceive psychical states but not a permanent ego or soul. More will be said on this subject later.

[2] *B*, 42; *A*, 26.

[3] Kant is referring to the empirical ego, not to the spiritual soul.

[4] *B*, 49; *A*, 33.

[5] We may recall that Hume remarked that we cannot properly speak of one internal state as being to the left or right of another.

[6] *Das Gemüt* is customarily translated 'mind'. The word is used by Kant in a very wide sense, and it must not, of course, be taken as equivalent to 'understanding' (*Verstand*).

[7] See p. 235, note 1.

Are space and time, therefore, unreal for Kant? The answer to this question depends on the meanings which we attach to the words 'real' and 'unreal'. Appearances, objects given in empirical intuition, are, so to speak, already temporalized and, in the case of appearances represented as external to ourselves, spatialized. Empirical reality is, therefore, spatio-temporal, and it follows that space and time must be said to possess empirical reality. If the question whether space and time are real is equivalent to the question whether empirical reality is characterized by spatio-temporal relations, the answer must be affirmative. We experience only appearances, and appearances are what they are, possible objects of experience, only through the union of form and matter; that is, through the ordering of the indeterminate and formless matter of sensation by the application of the pure forms of sensibility. There can never be an object of outer sense which is not in space; and there can never be any object, whether of outer or inner sense, which is not in time.[1] Hence empirical reality must necessarily be characterized by spatial and temporal relations. It is not proper to say that appearances *seem* to be in space; they *are* in space and time. It may be objected that, according to Kant, space and time are subjective forms of sensibility, and that they therefore should be called ideal rather than real. But the point is that, for Kant, there can be no empirical reality apart from the imposition of these forms. They enter into the constitution as it were of empirical reality; and they are thus themselves empirically real.

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[1] 'Object' must here be taken, of course, in the sense of object of human knowledge or object for us.

At the same time, however, inasmuch as space and time are *a priori* forms of human sensibility, the range of their application is extended only to things as appearing to us. There is no reason to suppose that they apply to things-in-themselves, apart from their appearance to us. Indeed, they cannot do so. For they are essentially conditions for the possibility of appearances. While, therefore, it is correct to say, for instance, that all appearances are in time, it is quite incorrect to say that all things or all realities are in time. If there are realities which cannot affect our senses and which cannot belong to empirical reality, they cannot be in space and time. That is to say, they cannot have spatio-temporal relations. By transcending empirical reality they transcend the whole spatio-temporal order. Moreover, those realities which do affect our senses, when taken as they are in themselves and apart from being objects of experience, are not in space and time. There may be some ground in things in virtue of which a thing possesses, as a phenomenon, certain spatial relations and not others; but this ground is unknown and it necessarily remains unknown. It is not itself a spatial relation. For space and time have no application to non-phenomenal reality.

Kant's formula is, therefore, this. Space and time are empirically real but transcendentally ideal. They are empirically real in the sense that what is given in experience is in space (if it is an object of the external senses) and in time. Space and time are not, Kant insists, illusions. We can distinguish between reality and illusion as well on his theory as on the opposite theory. But space and time are transcendentally ideal in the sense that the sphere of phenomena is the only sphere of their validity, and that they do not apply to things-in-themselves, considered apart from their appearance to us.[1] This transcendental ideality, however, leaves the empirical reality of the spatio-temporal order entirely unimpaired. Kant would not admit, therefore, that his view could properly be assimilated to the Berkeleian idealism, according to which to exist is to perceive or to be perceived. For he affirmed the existence of things-in-themselves, which are not perceived.[1] His Copernican revolution, he insists, no more impairs the empirical reality of the world of experience than the heliocentric hypothesis alters or denies the phenomena. It is a question of explaining phenomena, not of denying them. And his view of space and time is capable of explaining the *a priori* knowledge founded on these intuitions, which no other view is capable of explaining. To this *a priori* knowledge we must now turn.

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[1] We must remember that to appear means being subjected to the *a priori* forms of sensibility.

2. Kant gives what he calls a 'transcendental exposition' of both space and time. 'By a transcendental exposition I understand the explanation of a conception as a principle from which the possibility of other synthetic *a priori* cognitions can be discerned. For this purpose it is required, first that such cognitions do really flow from the given conception, and secondly that these cognitions are possible only on the presupposition of a given way of explaining this conception.'[2] In his transcendental exposition of time Kant does not tell us very much beyond the facts, first that the concept of change, and with it the concept of motion (considered as change of place), is possible only in and through the representation of time, and secondly that we cannot explain the synthetic *a priori* cognition exhibited in the general doctrine of motion except on the presupposition that time is an *a priori* intuition. When treating of space, however, he speaks at some length[3] of mathematics, in particular of geometry. And his general thesis is that the possibility of mathematical knowledge, which is synthetic *a priori* in character, can be explained only on the theory that space and time are pure *a priori* intuitions.

Let us take the proposition, 'It is possible to construct a figure with three straight lines'. We cannot deduce this proposition by mere analysis of the concepts of a straight line and of the number three. We have to construct the object (a triangle) or, as Kant puts it, to give ourselves an object in intuition. This cannot be an empirical intuition. For then it could not give rise to a necessary proposition. It must be, therefore, an *a priori* intuition. And from this it follows that the object (the triangle) cannot be either a thing-in-itself or a mental image, as it were, of a thing-in-itself. It cannot be a thing-in-itself, for things-in-themselves, by definition, do not appear to us. And even if we grant the possibility of intuiting a thing-in-itself, this intuition could not be *a priori*. The thing would have to be presented to me in an *a posteriori* intellectual intuition, if such were possible to us. Nor can we suppose that the object (the triangle) is a mental image or representation of a thing-in-itself. For the necessary propositions which we are enabled to make by constructing a triangle are made about the triangle itself. For instance, we can demonstrate the properties of *the* isosceles triangle, so to speak. And we have no warrant for supposing that what is necessarily true of a representation is true of a thing-in-itself. How, then, can we construct in intuition objects which enable us to enunciate synthetic *a priori* propositions? We can do so only on condition that there is in us a faculty (*Vermögen*) of *a priori* intuition, which is the universal, necessary condition for the possibility of objects of external intuition. Mathematics is not a purely analytic science which gives us information only about the contents of concepts or meanings of terms. It gives us information *a priori* about objects of external intuition. But this is not possible unless the intuitions required for the construction of mathematics are all grounded in *a priori* intuitions which are the necessary conditions for the very possibility of objects of external intuition. Thus 'geometry is a science which determines the properties of space synthetically, and yet *a priori*'.[1] But we could not determine the properties of space in this way unless space were a pure form of human sensibility, a pure *a priori* intuition which is the necessary condition for all objects of external intuition.

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[1] Whether or not he could do so consistently is a question which need not concern us for the moment.

[2] *B*, 40.

[3] That is, if we take the section entitled 'transcendental exposition of the conception of space' together with the relevant parts of the 'general remarks on the Transcendental Aesthetic'.

The matter can perhaps be made somewhat clearer by referring to Kant's discussion in the *Prolegomena* of the objectivity of mathematics, that is, of its applicability to objects. Geometry, to take one particular branch of mathematics, is constructed *a priori*. Nevertheless we know very well that its propositions are necessary, in the sense that empirical reality must always conform to them. The geometer determines *a priori* the properties of space, and his propositions will always be true of the empirical spatial order. But how can he make necessarily true *a priori* statements which have objective validity in reference to the external, empirical world? It is possible for him to do this only if the space, whose properties he determines, is a pure form of human sensibility, by which form alone objects are given to us and which applies only to phenomena, not to things-in-themselves. Once we accept this explanation, 'it is quite easy to understand and at the same time to prove indisputably that all external objects of our sensible world must necessarily accord in all strictness with the propositions of geometry'.[1]

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[1] *B*, 40.

Kant thus uses the *a priori* character of mathematics to prove his theory of space and time. And it is of interest to note the relation of his position to that of Plato. The latter also was convinced of the *a priori* character of mathematics. But he explained it by postulating an intuition of 'mathematical objects', intelligible particulars which are not phenomena and which subsist in some sense in their own right. This line of explanation is ruled out on Kant's principles; and he accuses Plato of abandoning the world of sense and taking flight into an empty ideal realm where the mind can find no sure support. However, he shares Plato's conviction of the *a priori* character of mathematical knowledge, though his explanation of it is different.

Some references to Leibniz may help to throw some further light on Kant's view of mathematics. For Leibniz all mathematical propositions, including axioms, can be demonstrated with the aid of definitions and the principle of contradiction. For Kant fundamental axioms cannot be demonstrated by recourse to the principle of contradiction. Geometry is thus axiomatic in character. But Kant maintains that the fundamental axioms of geometry express insights into the essential nature of space represented in a subjective *a priori* intuition. And it is obvious that it is possible to hold both that the axioms are indemonstrable and that they do not express insights into the essential nature of space. For they might be held to be free postulates, as, for instance, by the mathematician, D. Hilbert.

Again, in developing mathematical science the mind, according to Leibniz, proceeds analytically. We only require definitions and the principle of contradiction, and we can then proceed by analysis. For Kant, as we have seen, mathematics is not a purely analytic science: it is synthetic, requiring intuition and proceeding constructionally. And this is as true of arithmetic as it is of geometry. Now, if we accept the view, represented above all by Bertrand Russell, that mathematics is ultimately reducible to logic, in the sense that pure mathematics could in principle be deduced from certain primitive logical concepts and indemonstrable propositions, we shall naturally reject Kant's theory. We shall regard this theory as refuted by the *Principles of Mathematics* and *Principia Mathematica*. But Russell's view of mathematics as purely analytic is not, of course, by any means universally accepted. And if we think, with L. E. J. Brouwer for example, that mathematics does in fact involve intuition, we shall naturally attach more value to Kant's theory, even if we do not accept his account of space and time. However, as I am not myself a mathematician, I cannot profitably attempt to decide how much truth there is in the theory. I can only draw attention to the fact that modern philosophers of mathematics are by no means all agreed that mathematics is what Kant said it was not, namely a purely analytic science.

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[1] *Prol.*, 13, remark 1.

Attention must, however, also be drawn to a feature of Kant's theory of geometry which has led critics to maintain that the theory has been discredited by subsequent mathematical developments. By space Kant meant Euclidean space, and by geometry he meant Euclidean geometry.[1] It follows, therefore, that if the geometer reads off, so to speak, the properties of space, the geometry of Euclid is the only geometry. Euclidean geometry will necessarily apply to empirical reality, but no other geometrical system will apply. Since Kant's time, however, non-Euclidean geometries have been developed, and it has been shown that Euclidean space is but one of the conceivable spaces. Moreover, Euclidean geometry is not the only one which will fit reality, as it were; which geometry is to be used depends on the mathematician's purpose and the problems with which he has to deal. It would, indeed, be absurd to blame Kant for having a prejudice in favour of Euclidean geometry. At the same time the development of other geometries has rendered his position untenable.

To be accurate, it is rash to say without qualification that Kant excluded the possibility of any non-Euclidean geometry. For we find him saying, for instance, that 'there is no contradiction in the concept of a figure which is enclosed within two straight lines. For the concepts of two straight lines and of their intersection contain no negation of a figure. The impossibility is found, not in the concept in itself, but in the construction of the concept in space; that is, in the conditions and determinations of space. But these have their own objective reality; that is, they apply to possible things, because they contain in themselves *a priori* the form of experience in general.'[1] But even if we take this passage as saying by implication that a non-Euclidean geometry is a bare logical possibility, Kant clearly states that such a geometry cannot be constructed in intuition. And this is really, for Kant, the same thing as to say that there cannot be a non-Euclidean geometrical system. Non-Euclidean geometry may be thinkable in the sense that it is not ruled out simply by application of the principle of contradiction. But, as we have seen, mathematics for Kant does not rest simply on the principle of contradiction; it is not an analytic but a synthetic science. Hence constructibility is essential for a geometrical system. And to say that only Euclidean geometry can be constructed is really to say that there cannot be non-Euclidean systems.

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[1] Leibniz had also understood by space Euclidean space.

If, therefore, we assume the constructional character of geometry, and if non-Euclidean geometries can be constructed, it follows at any rate that Kant's theory of geometry cannot be accepted as it stands. And if non-Euclidean systems can be applied, this tells against Kant's theory that the intuition of Euclidean space is a universal and necessary condition for the possibility of objects. But whether or not it would be possible to revise the Kantian theory of the subjectivity of space in such a way as to allow for subsequent mathematical developments is not a matter on which I feel disposed to offer any opinion. From the purely mathematical point of view it is not a question of any importance. From the philosophical point of view it has, indeed, importance; but then there may be other reasons for denying Kant's theory of the transcendental ideality of space and time.[2]

However, if we assume that Kant has proved the truth of his theory of space and time, he may be said to have answered his first question, namely how is mathematical science possible. How can we explain the possibility of the synthetic *a priori* cognition which we undoubtedly possess in mathematics? It is explicable if, and only if, space and time are empirically real but transcendentally ideal in the sense described above.

A final remark. It may have occurred to the reader that it is very odd of Kant to treat mathematics on the level of sensibility. But the latter did not imagine, of course, that arithmetic and geometry are developed by the senses without the use of the understanding. The question was what is the necessary foundation for the work of the mind in developing systems of mathematical propositions. And for Kant the *a priori* forms of sensibility, the pure intuitions of space and time, constitute this necessary foundation. In his view all human intuition is sensuous, and if intuition is required in mathematics, it must be sensuous in character. He may well have been wrong in thinking that all human intuition is necessarily sensuous. But at any rate he was not guilty of the absurdity of supposing that the senses construct mathematical systems without the co-operation of the understanding.

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[1] *B*, 268; *A*, 220–1.

[2] In a sense Leibniz also maintained the transcendental ideality of space and time, but with reference to God's thinking, not, as with Kant, to ours. And for Kant the difference is all-important.

3. We can begin our treatment of the *Transcendental Analytic* by developing a little this important point of the co-operation of sense and understanding in human knowledge.

Human knowledge arises from two chief sources in the mind (*Gemüt*). The first is the faculty or power of receiving impressions; and through this an object is given to us. Sense intuition provides us with data, and we cannot obtain objects as data in any other way. The second main source of human knowledge is the power of thinking the data by means of concepts. The receptivity of the mind for impressions is called sensibility (*Sinnlichkeit*). The faculty of spontaneously producing representations is called understanding (*Verstand*). And the co-operation of both faculties is required for knowledge of objects. 'Without sensibility no object would be given to us, and without the understanding no object would be thought. Thoughts without content are empty; intuitions without concepts are blind. . . . These two powers or faculties cannot exchange their functions. The understanding is incapable of intuiting, and the senses are incapable of thinking. It is only from the united co-operation of the two that knowledge can arise.'[1]

But though the co-operation of both powers is required for knowledge, we ought not to overlook the differences between them. And we can distinguish between sensibility and its laws on the one hand and understanding and its laws on the other. The science of the laws of sensibility has already been considered. We must therefore now turn our attention to the science of the laws of the understanding, namely logic.

The logic with which we are here concerned is not, however, formal logic, which regards only the forms of thinking and abstracts from its content and from differences in the kinds of objects about which we can think.[1] We are concerned with what Kant calls 'transcendental logic'. It is not offered as a substitute for traditional formal logic, which Kant simply accepts. It is offered as an additional, and new, science. Like pure formal logic, it is concerned with the *a priori* principles of thought, but, unlike the former science, it does not abstract from all the content of knowledge, that is, from the relation of knowledge to its object. For it is concerned with the *a priori* concepts and principles of the understanding and with their application to objects; not, indeed, with their application to this or that particular kind of object, but with their application to objects in general. In other words, transcendental logic is concerned with the *a priori* knowledge of objects so far as this is the work of the understanding. Transcendental aesthetic, which we have already considered, studies the pure forms of sensibility as the *a priori* conditions necessary for objects being given to us in *sense intuition*. Transcendental logic studies the *a priori* concepts and principles of the understanding as necessary conditions for objects (that is, the data of sense intuition) being *thought*.

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[1] *B*, 75; *A*, 51.

The matter can be put this way. It was Kant's conviction that there are in the understanding *a priori* concepts by which the manifold of phenomena is synthesized. Causality is one of them. There is room, therefore, for a systematic study of these concepts and of the principles grounded in them. In pursuing this study we shall discover the ways in which human understanding necessarily synthesizes phenomena and makes knowledge possible.

The second part of the *Transcendental Logic*, namely the *Transcendental Dialectic*, is concerned with the misuse of these *a priori* concepts and principles and with their illegitimate extension from the objects given in sense intuition to things in general, including those which cannot be given to us as objects in the proper sense. But consideration of this second part must be left for the next chapter. We are concerned at present with the first part, namely the *Transcendental Analytic*. And our first task is to ascertain the *a priori* concepts of the understanding (*Analytic of Concepts*).

But how are we to set about this task? Obviously, we are not called upon to make a complete inventory of all possible concepts and then to separate the *a priori* concepts from those which are *a posteriori* or empirical, abstracted from sense-experience. Even if this were practically possible, we should have to possess a criterion or method for distinguishing between *a priori* and empirical concepts. And if we were in possession of a method for ascertaining which concepts are purely *a priori*, it might be that the use of the method would enable us to achieve our purpose without making any such general inventory. The question is, therefore, whether there is in fact a way of ascertaining the *a priori* concepts of the understanding in a direct and systematic manner. We need a principle or, as Kant puts it, a 'transcendental clue' (*Leitfaden*) for discovering these concepts.

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[1] For example, in systematically mapping out, so to speak, the forms of deductive thinking we are concerned simply with these forms themselves. And the whole matter can be expressed symbolically, without reference to objects.

Kant finds this clue in the faculty of judgment, which for him is the same as the power of thought. 'We can reduce all operations of the understanding to judgments, so that the understanding can be represented as the power of judging. For it is, according to what has been said above, a power of thinking.'[1] Now, what is a judgment? To judge, which is the same as to think, is to unify different representations to form one cognition by means of concepts.[2] In judgment, therefore, representations are synthesized by means of concepts. Now, we can obviously set no limit to the number of possible judgments, if we are talking about particular judgments. But we can determine the number of possible ways of judging, that is, the number of logical types of judgment, considered according to their form. And, in Kant's opinion, logicians have already done so. But they have not carried the matter further and inquired into the reason why these, and only these, forms of judgment are possible. It is, however, precisely here that we can find our 'transcendental clue'. For each form of judgment is determined by an *a priori* concept. And in order, therefore, to discover the list of the pure *a priori* concepts of the understanding, we have only to examine the table of possible logical types of judgment.

We can put the matter in this way. The understanding does not intuit; it judges. And to judge is to synthesize. Now, there are certain fundamental ways of synthesizing (functions of unity in judgment, as Kant puts it), exhibited in the possible logical types or forms of judgment. And these exhibit the *a priori* structure of the understanding, considered as a unifying or synthesizing power. We can thus discover the fundamental synthesizing functions of the understanding. 'The functions of the understanding can thus all be found, if one can completely exhibit the functions of unity in judgments. And the following section will show that this can be done quite easily.'[1]

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[1] *B*, 94; *A*, 69.

[2] According to Kant, judgment is *mediate* knowledge of an object, a representation of a representation of an object. No representation, except an intuition, relates immediately to an object. A concept relates immediately only to some other representation, either to an intuition or to another concept.

Hitherto we have generally spoken of the pure or *a priori concepts* of the understanding. But Kant also calls them *categories.* And this is probably a better word. The understanding, which is the unifying or synthesizing or judging power, possesses an *a priori* categorial structure. That is to say, because it is what it is, it necessarily synthesizes representations in certain fundamental ways, according to certain basic categories. Without this synthesizing knowledge of objects is not possible. Hence the categories of the understanding are *a priori* conditions for knowledge. That is, they are *a priori* conditions for the possibility of objects being thought. And without being thought the objects cannot really be said to be known. For, as we have seen, sensibility and understanding co-operate in the production of knowledge, though their functions differ and can be considered separately.

Kant's table of types of judgment or of logical functions of judgment can now be given. For the sake of convenience I give at the same time his table of categories. The total scheme shows which category corresponds, or is supposed to correspond, to which logical function. The tables are to be found in the first chapter of the *Analytic of Concepts.*[2]

Judgments	*Categories*
1. Quantity.	1. Quantity.
(i) Universal.	(i) Unity.
(ii) Particular.	(ii) Plurality.
(iii) Singular.	(iii) Totality.
2. Quality.	2. Quality.
(iv) Affirmative.	(iv) Reality.
(v) Negative.	(v) Negation.
(vi) Infinite.	(vi) Limitation.

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[1] *B*, 94; *A*, 69.

[2] *B*, 95 and 106; *A*, 70 and 80.

Judgments	*Categories*
3. Relation.	3. Relation.
(vii) Categorical.	(vii) Inherence and subsistence (substance and accident).
(viii) Hypothetical.	(viii) Causality and dependence (cause and effect).
(ix) Disjunctive.	(ix) Community (reciprocity between agent and patient).
4. Modality.	4. Modality.
(x) Problematic	(x) Possibility—impossibility.
(xi) Assertoric.	(xi) Existence—non-existence.
(xii) Apodictic.	(xii) Necessity—contingency.

Kant remarks about the list of categories that it has not been made in a haphazard fashion, like Aristotle's list of categories, but by the systematic application of a principle. It thus contains all the original pure concepts or categories of the understanding. There are, indeed, other pure concepts of the understanding but these are derived (*a priori*) and subsidiary. Kant proposes to call them *predicables*, to distinguish them from the categories (*praedicamenta*); but he does not undertake to give a list of them; that is, to work out the complete system of original and derived pure concepts of the understanding. It is enough for his purpose to have given the list of the original concepts or categories.

Kant was, however, over-optimistic in thinking that he had given a complete list of categories. For it is clear that his principle for determining what they were was dependent on the acceptance of certain views about judgment, which were taken from the logic of his time. And so it was open to his successors to revise his list, even when they accepted the general idea of *a priori* categories.

It is worth remarking, perhaps, that according to Kant the third category in each triad arises out of the combination of the second with the first. Thus totality is plurality regarded as unity; limitation is reality combined with negation; community is the causality of a substance reciprocally determining and determined by another substance; and necessity is existence given through the possibility of existence.[1] This interpretation of the triadic scheme may seem to be somewhat far-fetched; but in view of the central

[1] Thus the concept of a necessary being would be the concept of a being whose possibility involves existence, that is, which cannot be merely possible. But *this* concept is not, for Kant, objectively applicable.

position occupied later in the Hegelian philosophy by the idea of triadic development through thesis, antithesis and synthesis it is worth while drawing attention here to Kant's remarks.

4. According to Kant, therefore, there are twelve *a priori* categories of the understanding. But what is the justification for their employment in synthesizing phenomena? What is the justification for their application to objects? Such a problem does not arise in connection with the employment of the *a priori* forms of sensibility. For, as we have seen, no objects can be given to us at all except through the subjection of the indeterminate matter of sensation to the forms of space and time. Hence it would be foolish to ask how we are justified in applying the forms of sensibility to objects. For these forms are a necessary condition of there being objects at all. But the situation in regard to the categories of the understanding is different. Objects are already there, so to speak, given in sense intuition. Might not these objects, namely appearances, be such that the application to them of the categories of the understanding distorts or misrepresents them? We need to show that the application is justified.

The giving of such a justification is called by Kant the transcendental deduction of the categories. The word 'deduction' can easily be misunderstood. For it suggests a systematic discovery of what the categories are. And this has already been done. In the present context, therefore, deduction means justification, as Kant indeed explains. As for the word 'transcendental', its meaning is best understood by contrasting it with the word 'empirical'. Kant is not concerned to justify the application of the categories by showing that their employment is empirically fruitful, in this or that science, for example. He is concerned to justify their application by showing that they are *a priori* conditions of all experience. He can say, therefore, that the whole aim of the transcendental deduction is to show that the *a priori* concepts or categories of the understanding are *a priori* conditions of the possibility of experience.

The problem can be defined more closely. Space and time are also *a priori* conditions of experience. But they are conditions which are necessarily required in order that objects should be given to us. The task of the transcendental deduction, therefore, is to show that the categories are conditions which are necessarily required for objects to be *thought*. In other words, a justification of the application of the categories to objects must take the form of showing that objects cannot be thought except through the synthesizing categories of the understanding. And as the thinking of objects is required for knowledge of them, to show that objects cannot be thought save through the categories is to show that they cannot be known except through the categories. And to show this is to show that the employment of the categories is justified; that is, that they have objective validity.

This line of thought is clearly involved in Kant's Copernican revolution. The use of the categories cannot be justified on the assumption that the mind must conform to objects. But if objects, to be known, must conform to the mind, and if this means that they must be subjected to the categories of the understanding in order to be objects in the full sense, no further justification of the use of the categories is required.

The argument of Kant's transcendental deduction is by no means easy to follow. But in the course of it he introduces an important idea; and some effort must be made to give a brief account of it, even at the risk of over-simplifying his line of thought. In making this attempt I shall confine my attention to the deduction as given in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason,* which differs considerably from that given in the first edition.

An object of knowledge is defined by Kant as 'that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is *united*'.[1] Without synthesis there can be no knowledge of objects. A mere stream, so to speak, of unconnected representations could not be called knowledge. Now, synthesis is the work of the understanding. 'The connection (*Verbindung* and *conjunctio* are the words used by Kant) of a manifold can never be given us by the sense . . .; for it is an act of the spontaneity of the power of representation. And as one must call this faculty understanding, to distinguish it from sensibility, all connection, whether conscious or unconscious, whether of the manifold of intuition or of several concepts . . . is an act of the understanding. And to this act we give the general name of synthesis.'[2]

Besides the concepts of the manifold and of its synthesis, the idea of connection or conjunction contains another element. This is the representation of the unity of the manifold. Hence connection can be described as 'the representation of the synthetical unity of the manifold'.[3]

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[1] *B,* 137.

[2] *B,* 129–30.

[3] *B,* 130.

Kant is not referring here to the *a priori* concept or category of unity which figures in the list of categories. He is not saying that all connection involves the application of this category. For the application of any category, whether it be unity or any other, presupposes the unity of which he is speaking. Of what, then, is Kant speaking? He is speaking of the unity which consists in relation to one perceiving and thinking subject. Objects are thought by means of the categories but without this unity they would not be thinkable. In other words, the understanding's work of synthesizing is not possible except within the unity of consciousness.

This means that the manifold of intuition or perception is incapable of being thought and so becoming an object of knowledge unless perceiving and thinking are so united in one subject that self-consciousness is capable of accompanying all representations. Kant expresses this by saying that the *I think* must be capable of accompanying all one's representations. It is not necessary that I should always think of my perceiving and thinking as *mine*. But without the *possibility* of such awareness no unity can be given to the manifold of intuition: no connection is possible. 'The *I think* must be capable of accompanying all my representations. For otherwise something could be represented in me which could not be thought at all. And this is equivalent to saying that the representation would be impossible or at least would be nothing to me. . . . Therefore every manifold of intuition has a necessary relation to the *I think* in the same subject in which this manifold is found.'[1] It would be absurd to speak of my having any idea unless self-awareness could accompany it. And it would be absurd to speak of the manifold of perception being thought, unless the same consciousness could accompany the perceiving and the thinking.

This relation between the subject and the manifold of intuition (namely the relation expressed by saying that the *I think* must be capable of accompanying them all) is called by Kant 'pure apperception', to distinguish it from empirical apperception, that is, the empirical and contingent awareness of a given psychical state as mine. The empirical consciousness which accompanies different representations is fragmentary. At one moment I exercise an empirical act of self-awareness, accompanying a given representation, at another I do not. The empirical consciousness, like the representations which it accompanies, is disunited. But the possibility of an identical *I think* accompanying all representations is a permanent condition of experience. And it presupposes a transcendental (not empirical) unity of self-consciousness which is not given to me as an object but which is the fundamental necessary condition for there being any objects at all for me. Unless the manifold of intuition could be brought, as it were, to the unity of apperception, there could be no experience, no knowledge. Or, to express it less subjectively, there could be no objects.

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[1] *B*, 132.

Kant does not mean, of course, that I have first to be aware of myself as a subject or ego before I can do any synthesizing. I have no prior consciousness of a permanent self-identical ego. It is only with acts directed towards the given that I become conscious of them as mine. Consciousness of self and consciousness of that which is cognitively related to the self are so bound up together in the self that consciousness of self is not a temporally prior experience. At the same time the unity of apperception (in the sense that the *I think* must be capable of accompanying all my representations) and the transcendental unity of consciousness are *a priori* conditions of experience. Without connection there is no experience. And connection entails the unity of apperception.

In speaking of the unity of consciousness, of the unity of perceiving and thinking in one subject, as a condition of experience, Kant may seem to be saying something obvious. But, if so, it is an obvious fact which seems to be passed over by those who forget, as it were, the subject as subject and so concentrate on the empirical ego as object that they feel justified in dissolving the self into a series of psychical events or in describing it as being simply a logical construction, that is, the class of such events. If we bear these phenomenalists in mind, Kant seems to be drawing attention to a point of great importance.

The question arises, however, what has all this to do with justifying the application of the categories? The answer is, in brief, as follows. No objective experience, no knowledge of objects, is possible unless the manifold of intuition is connected in one self-consciousness. But all synthesis is effected by the understanding, and it is thus by the understanding that the manifold of representations is brought into the unity of apperception. Now, the understanding synthesizes by means of its *a priori* categories. Hence no objective experience, no knowledge of objects, is possible except through the application of the categories. The world of experience is formed through the co-operation of perception and thinking in the application of the *a priori* forms of sensibility and of the categories of the understanding. Hence the categories refer to objects, that is, have objective reference, because all objects, to be objects, must conform to them.

Kant's own words are worth quoting. 'The manifold which is given in a sensuous intuition comes necessarily under the original synthetic unity of apperception. For thereby alone is the *unity* of intuition possible. But that operation of the understanding, through which the manifold of given representations (whether intuitions or concepts) is brought under one apperception, is the logical function of judgments. Thus all the manifold, so far as it is given in one empirical intuition, is *determined* in relation to one of the logical functions of judgment, through which, that is to say, it is brought under one consciousness. Now, the *categories* are nothing else but these functions of judgment, so far as the manifold in a given intuition is determined in relation to them. Consequently the manifold in a given intuition is necessarily subject to the categories.'[1] Again, 'a manifold which is contained in an intuition that I call mine is represented by means of the synthesis of the understanding as belonging to the *necessary* unity of self-consciousness. And this takes place by means of the category.'[2]

5. A further question, however, arises. We have on the one hand the manifold data of intuition and on the other a plurality of categories. What determines which category or categories are applied? We need some indication of a connecting link. There must be some proportion or homogeneity between the data of sense intuition and the categories if the former are to be subsumed under the latter. But 'the pure concepts of the understanding are quite heterogeneous when compared with empirical intuitions (or even with sensuous intuitions in general), and they can never be discovered in any intuition. How, then, is the *subsumption* of the latter under the former, and with it the application of the categories to appearances possible?'[3] This is the problem.

To solve this problem Kant has recourse to the imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) conceived as a mediating power or faculty between understanding and sensibility. The imagination is said to produce and to be the bearer, as it were, of *schemata*. A schema is, in general, a rule or procedure for the production of images which schematize or delimit, so to speak, a category so as to permit its application to appearances. The schema is not itself an image but represents a general procedure for the constitution of images. 'This representation of a general procedure of the imagination for providing a concept with its image I call the schema for this concept.'[1] The schema, being general, has an affinity with the concept: the image, being particular, has an affinity with the manifold of intuition. Thus the imagination is able to mediate between the concepts of the understanding and the manifold of intuition.

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[1] *B*, 143. [2] *B*, 144. [3] *B*, 176; *A*, 137–8.

Kant was not, of course, the first philosopher to emphasize the mediating function of the image. This function had been attributed to the image in, for example, mediaeval Aristotelianism. But the approach to this subject in the philosophy of Kant obviously is, and must be, different from that of the mediaeval Aristotelian. For the latter the image is the result of processes on the level of sense and serves in turn as a basis for intellectual abstraction. With Kant, however, the image is a spontaneous product of the power of imagination working according to a schema which it itself produces. We must never forget that for Kant the object must conform to the mind rather than the other way about.

To show the sort of thing he means Kant gives one or two examples from mathematics. I can produce, for instance, an image of the number five by placing five points one after the other in this way ..... But the schema of the number five is not itself this image or any other image: it is the representation of a method whereby a multiplicity can be represented in an image in accordance with a certain concept. The schema permits the bringing together, as it were, of the concept and the manifold of phenomena. That is to say, it permits the application of the concept to phenomena. Kant also cites the non-mathematical example of the concept of a dog. The schema of this concept is a rule for producing a representation which is required for applying the concept to a particular animal.

Such illustrations can be extremely misleading. For we are primarily concerned here, not with mathematical concepts, and still less with empirical *a posteriori* ideas such as that of a dog, but with the pure categories of the understanding. And we are concerned, not with schemata or rules for the production of images which (schemata) we can choose or alter, but with transcendental schemata which determine *a priori* the conditions under which a category can be applied to any manifold. However, Kant's examples, taken from the application of mathematical concepts and of *a posteriori* ideas to the data of perception, are intended to serve only as an introduction to the general notion of a schema.

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[1] *B*, 179–80; *A*, 140.

The transcendental schemata of the categories determine the conditions under which the categories can be applied to appearances. And for Kant this means determining the temporal conditions under which a category is applicable to appearances. For situation in time is the only feature which is common to all appearances whatsoever, including the states of the empirical self. Hence Kant can say that 'the schemata are nothing but temporal determinations *a priori* in accordance with rules'.[1] Time is the formal condition of the connection or conjunction of all representations. And a transcendental determination of time, which is a product of the imagination, has, as it were, a footing in both camps. It is homogeneous with the category of which it is the schema in that it is universal and rests on a *a priori* rule. It is homogeneous with appearances, in that time is contained in every empirical representation of the manifold. 'Thus an application of the category to appearances becomes possible by means of the transcendental determination of time which, as the schema of the concepts of the understanding, permits the subsumption of the latter (appearances) under the former.'[2]

Kant does not discuss at much length the particular schemata of particular categories. And what he does say is in some instances extremely difficult to understand. As, therefore, I do not wish to involve myself in lengthy problems of exegesis, I shall mention only a few examples.

Turning to the categories of relation, we are told that the schema of the category of substance is 'the permanence of the real[3] in time, that is, the representation of it as a substratum of the empirical determination of time; as a substratum, therefore, which remains, while all else changes'.[4] That is to say, in order that the concept of substance should be applicable to the data of perception, it must be schematized or determined by the schema of the imagination; and this involves representing substance as a permanent substratum of change in time. Only in this schematized form is the category applicable to appearances.

The schema of the category of cause is 'the real which, when posited, is always followed by something else. It consists, therefore, in the succession of the manifold, in so far as this succession is subject to a rule.'[1] Kant does not wish to say that the concept of causality is nothing but the concept of regular succession. What he means is that the category of cause is not applicable to appearances unless it is so schematized by the imagination that it involves the representation of regular succession in time.

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[1] *B*, 184; *A*, 145.

[2] *B*, 178; *A*, 139.

[3] Reality, as we learn in the section on the categories of quality, is that whose concept indicates a being in time.

[4] *B*, 183; *A*, 144.

The schema of the third category of relation, that of community or reciprocity between agent and patient, is 'the coexistence of the determinations (accidents) of the one with those of the other according to a general rule'.[2] Here again Kant does not mean that the coexistence of substances with their accidents is all that there is in the concept of interaction. But this concept cannot be applied to phenomena unless it is given a form which involves this representation of coexistence in time.

Finally, to take the last two categories of modality, the schema of the category of existence is being at a certain time, while the schema of the category of necessity is the being of an object in all time. Necessity, as a category, does not mean simply being in all time. It means, as we saw earlier, existence which is given through the very possibility of existence. But the category could not be applied, according to Kant, unless the imagination so determined it in respect of time as to involve the representation of being or existence in all time. This is a necessary condition of its applicability. We cannot represent to ourselves anything as necessary except by representing it as existing in all time. This idea belongs to the schematized category. And it is always the schematized category which is applied.

A problem arises which can be briefly indicated here. Kant, as we have seen, uses the terms category and pure or *a priori* concept to refer to the same thing. Now, the categories are described as logical functions. They are pure forms of the understanding which make synthesis possible but which, taken in themselves apart from their application to appearances, do not represent any objects. And in this case it can be asked whether the word 'concept' is not a misnomer. And in his commentary on the *Critique of Pure Reason*[3] we find Professor Kemp Smith maintaining that when Kant speaks about the categories he usually means the schemata. Hence the chapter on the schematism of the categories simply contains their delayed definitions. The categories proper, as pure forms of the understanding, are simply logical functions and have no determinate content or meaning. The concept of substance, for instance, would be what Kant calls the schema of the category of substance. There is no room, as it were, for a pure concept of substance other than the notion of substance defined in the schema.

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[1] *B*, 183; *A*, 144.

[2] *B*, 183-4; *A*, 144.

[3] P. 340: see Bibliography.

There is certainly a good deal to be said for this point of view. And if we turn to mathematical concepts, it might be maintained that the representation of a general rule or procedure for the construction of triangles *is* the concept of triangle. At the same time, while Kant certainly says that the unschematized categories have no sufficient meaning to give us the concept of an object and that they are 'only functions of the understanding for the production of concepts',[1] he also attributes to them some content, even if this content is not sufficient to represent an object. 'Substance, for example, if we leave out the temporal determination of permanence, would mean nothing more than a something, which can be thought as subject, without being a predicate of anything else.'[2] It may be that I can 'make nothing' of this idea, as Kant puts it. But this means that I cannot apply it to represent an object, an object being a possible object of experience, and experience being sense-experience. The fact remains, however, that *some* meaning or content is attributed by Kant to the unschematized category. This meaning is not sufficiently determinate to give knowledge; but it is thinkable, as a logical possibility. According to Kant, metaphysicians have attempted to use the pure categories as a source of knowledge of things-in-themselves. And to use the pure categories in this way is to misuse them. But the very possibility of misuse presupposes that they have *some* meaning.

6. Now, the understanding produces *a priori* certain principles which state the conditions of the possibility of objective experience, that is to say, of experience of objects. Or, to put the same thing in another way, the understanding produces *a priori* certain principles which are rules for the objective use of the categories. To ascertain, therefore, what these principles are, we need only consider the table of schematized categories. 'The table of categories gives us the natural guide to the table of principles (*Grundsätze*), because the latter are nothing else than rules for the objective use of the former.'[3]

The principles corresponding to the categories of quantity are called by Kant 'axioms of intuition'. He does not mention specific axioms; but he tells us that their general principle is, 'All intuitions are extensive magnitudes'.[1] This is a principle of the pure understanding, and so it cannot be (not that one would be tempted to think that it is) a mathematical principle. For mathematical principles are said to be derived from pure intuitions by the mediation of the understanding, not from the pure understanding itself. At the same time this principle of the axioms of intuition explains, according to Kant, why the synthetic *a priori* propositions of mathematics are applicable to experience. For instance, what geometry affirms of the pure intuition of space must be valid for empirical intuitions if all intuitions are extensive magnitudes. In fact, as the principle is itself a condition of objective experience, the applicability of mathematics is also a condition of objective experience. And we may add that if the principle of the axioms of intuition explains why the synthetic *a priori* propositions of mathematics are applicable to phenomenal reality, it also explains the possibility of mathematical physics.

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[1] *B*, 187; *A*, 147.

[2] *B*, 186; *A*, 147.

[3] *B*, 200; *A*, 161.

The principles corresponding to the schematized categories of quality are called by Kant 'anticipations of experience'. The general principle of these anticipations is 'in all appearances the real which is an object of sensation has intensive magnitude, that is, a degree'.[2] In discussing the schema of the categories of quality Kant maintained that it involves the representation of degree of intensity, a notion which implies the possibility of increase in intensity and of decrease down to zero (negation). We are now told, in the general principle of the anticipations of experience, that all empirical perceptions, as involving sensation, must have degrees of intensity. This principle, therefore, affords an *a priori* basis for the mathematical measurement of sensation.

If we take these two principles together, namely the principle of the axioms of intuition and the principle of the anticipations of experience, we can see that they enable us to make predictions about future intuitions or perceptions. We cannot, indeed, predict *a priori* what our future perceptions will be; nor can we predict the quality of empirical perceptions (perceptions involving sensation). We cannot predict that the next object of perception will be red, for instance. But we can predict that all intuitions or perceptions will be extensive magnitudes and that all empirical perceptions involving sensation will have intensive magnitude.

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[1] *B*, 202; *A*, 162.

[2] *B*, 207; *A*, 166.

These two principles are grouped together by Kant as mathematical principles. Or, rather, they are principles of the mathematical use of the categories. By saying this Kant does not mean that the two principles are mathematical propositions. He means that they bear on intuition, and that they justify the applicability of mathematics.

The principles corresponding to the schematized categories of relation are named 'analogies of experience'. And their general underlying principle runs, 'Experience is possible only through the representation of a necessary connection of perceptions'.[1] Objective experience, that is, knowledge of objects of sense, is not possible without a synthesis of perceptions, implying the presence to consciousness of a synthetic unity of the manifold. But this synthetic unity, which comprehends connections, is contributed by the subject, that is, *a priori*. And *a priori* connections are necessary. Hence experience is not possible except through the representation of necessary connections between objects of perception.

The three analogies are regarded by Kant as rules or guides for the empirical use of the understanding in discovering concrete connections. And they correspond respectively to what Kant calls the three *modi* of time, namely permanence, succession and coexistence. What is meant by this can best be understood by considering the analogies themselves. They are stated as follows. First, 'In every change of appearances the substance remains, and its quantum in Nature neither increases nor diminishes'.[2] Secondly, 'All changes take place according to the law of connection of cause and effect'.[3] Thirdly, 'All substances, so far as they can be perceived as coexistent in space, are in thorough-going interaction'.[4]

These principles obviously correspond respectively to the schematized categories of relation, namely substance and accident, cause and effect, and community or interaction between agent and patient. They are *a priori* principles and thus antecedent to experience. But though they tell us about relations or proportions, they do not predict or enable us to predict the unknown term. They differ, therefore, as Kant notes, from mathematical analogies. The first analogy, for instance, does not tell us what the permanent substance in Nature is: it tells us rather that change involves substance, and that, whatever substance is, it conserves its total quantum. This will be true whether we decide on empirical grounds that the substance or substratum of change in Nature is to be called matter (as Kant thought) or energy or whatever it may be. To put the matter crudely, the analogy tells us that the total quantum of the basic stuff or substance in Nature is conserved unchanged; but it does not tell us what it is. We cannot discover this *a priori*. Again, the second analogy tells us that all changes are causal, and that any given effect must have a determining cause. But though we may know the effect, we cannot discover what the cause is by the mere use of the second analogy. We must have recourse to experience, to empirical investigation. The analogy or principle is regulative in character: it guides us in the use of the category of causality. As for the third analogy, it is quite obvious that it does not tell us either what things are coexistent in space or what are their interactions. But it tells us *a priori*, and in a general sense, what we should look for.

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[1] *B*, 218; this differs from the version in *A*, 176–7.

[2] *B*, 224; *A*, 182.

[3] *B*, 232; *A*, 189.

[4] *B*, 256; *A*, 211.

The principles corresponding to the categories of modality are called 'the postulates of empirical thought in general'. They are as follows.[1] First, 'That which agrees with the formal conditions of experience (intuition and concepts) is *possible*'. Secondly, 'That which is connected with the material conditions of experience (that is of sensation) is *real*'. Thirdly, 'That the connection of which with the real is determined according to general conditions of experience is (exists as) *necessary*'.

It is important to understand that, according to Kant, these postulates concern only the relation of the world, of the objects of experience, to our cognitive faculties. The first postulate, for instance, states that only that which can be subjected, as it were, to the formal conditions of experience is a possible existent, that is, an existent within empirical reality. It does not state that there can be no being or beings which transcend empirical reality by transcending the formal conditions of objective experience. God, for example, is not a possible existent in the physical world; but to say this is not to say that there is not, and cannot be, a God. An infinite spiritual being transcends the application of the formal conditions of experience, and it is, therefore, not possible as a physical or experienced object. But the divine being is logically possible, at least in the sense that no logical contradiction is discernible in the idea of it. And there may be grounds for belief in such a being.

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[1] *B*, 265–6; *A*, 218.

The postulates are, as already stated, postulates of empirical thinking. The second postulate, therefore, gives us a definition or explanation of reality in the empirical use of the term. It amounts to saying that in the sciences nothing can be accepted as real which is not connected with an empirical perception, and so with sensation, according to the analysis of experience. As for the third postulate, it concerns inference from what is perceived to what is not perceived according to the analogies of experience and empirical laws. If we take, for instance, the second analogy of experience by itself, we can say only that, given a certain change or event, it must have a cause: we cannot determine *a priori* what the cause is. But, if we take into account the empirical laws of Nature, we can say that a certain definite causal relation is necessary, and that a certain cause must exist, not, of course, with absolute necessity, but with hypothetical necessity, on the hypothesis, that is to say, that a certain change or event occurs.

7. Not only, therefore, is mathematics applicable to Nature, but there are also a number of principles which are derived from the categories of the understanding and which are thus *a priori*. A pure science of Nature is therefore possible. Physics in the narrow sense is an empirical science. Kant never imagined that we could deduce the whole of physics *a priori*. But there is a universal science of Nature, a propaedeutic to physics, as Kant calls it in the *Prolegomena*[1] though he also speaks of it as a universal or general physics.[2] It is true that not all the concepts which are found in this philosophical part of physics, or propaedeutic to physics, are pure in the Kantian sense; for some are dependent on experience. Kant gives as examples the concepts of motion, impenetrability and inertia.[3] And not all the principles of this universal science of Nature are universal in a strict sense. For there are some which apply only to objects of the external sense, and not to objects of the internal sense (namely the psychical states of the empirical ego). But there are at the same time some principles which apply to all objects of experience, whether external or internal; for example, the principle that events are causally determined according to constant laws. In any case there is a pure science of Nature in the sense that it consists of propositions which are not empirical hypotheses but which enable us to predict the course of Nature, and which are synthetic *a priori* propositions.

[1] 15. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*

It will be remembered that one of Kant's main problems in the *Critique of Pure Reason* was to explain the possibility of this pure science of Nature. And the question how it is possible has now been answered, namely in the preceding sections of this chapter. A pure science of Nature is possible because objects of experience, to be objects of experience, must of necessity conform to certain *a priori* conditions. Given this necessary conformity, we know that the complex of synthetic *a priori* propositions derived immediately or mediately from the *a priori* categories of the understanding will be always verified. In brief, 'the principles of possible experience are then at the same time universal laws of Nature, which can be known *a priori*. And thus the problem contained in our second question, *How is the pure science of Nature possible?* has been solved'.[1]

We can put the matter in another way. Objects, to be objects, must be related to the unity of apperception, to the unity of consciousness. And they are related by being subsumed under certain *a priori* forms and categories. The complex of possible objects of experience thus forms one Nature in relation to the unity of consciousness in general. And the necessary conditions for thus relating them are themselves the ground of the necessary laws of Nature. Without synthesis there is for us no Nature; and the *a priori* synthesis gives laws to Nature. These necessary laws are in a real sense imposed by the human subject; but they are at the same time objective laws, because they are valid, and necessarily valid, for the whole range of possible experience; that is, for Nature as the complex of possible objects of experience.

Kant has, therefore, settled to his own satisfaction the problems raised by Hume. Newtonian physics postulates the uniformity of Nature. But experience is incapable of proving the uniformity of Nature. It cannot show that the future will resemble the past, in the sense of showing that there are universal and necessary laws of Nature. But while Hume contented himself with observing that we have a natural belief in the uniformity of Nature and with attempting to give a psychological explanation of this belief, Kant attempted to prove this uniformity. As he agreed with Hume that it cannot be proved by empirical induction, he argued that it follows from the fact that Nature, as the complex of objects of possible experience, must conform to the *a priori* conditions of objective experience. It is this fact which enables us to know

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[1] *Prol.*, 23.

a priori certain truths which lie at the foundation of Newtonian physics.[1]

We can say, if we like, that Kant undertook to justify the Newtonian physics. But the term 'justify' can, of course, be misleading. For in one sense the only justification needed by a scientific system is its fruitfulness. That is to say, it can be maintained that an *a posteriori* justification is the only kind which is really relevant. But Kant believed that the Newtonian physics involved presuppositions which cannot be theoretically justified *a posteriori*. The question arose, therefore, whether an *a priori* theoretical justification is possible. And Kant was convinced that it was possible on one condition, namely on the condition of accepting the standpoint of his Copernican revolution. Much that Kant says is doubtless either dated or highly disputable. But the questions whether natural science does or does not involve presuppositions and, if so, what is the logical status of these presuppositions are by no means dead questions. For instance, in *Human Knowledge, Its Scope and Limits* Bertrand Russell argues that there are a number of 'postulates' of scientific inference, which are not derived from experience and cannot be proved empirically. To be sure, he goes on to give an account, partly psychological and partly biological, of the genesis of these natural beliefs. And he thus treads in the footsteps of Hume rather than in those of Kant, who tried to show that the presuppositions of physics have objective reference and why they have objective reference and yield knowledge. At the same time Bertrand Russell agrees with both Hume and Kant that pure empiricism is inadequate as a theory of knowledge. In spite, therefore, of his hostility towards Kant he recognizes the reality of the *problem* with which Kant found himself faced. And this is the point which I wish to make.

8. The reader will have noticed that the categories of the understanding, taken by themselves, give us no knowledge of objects. And the schematized categories apply only to the data of sense intuition, that is to say, appearances. The categories can give us no knowledge of things 'except in so far as they can be applied to *empirical intuition*. That is to say, they serve only to

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[1] For Kant physics very naturally meant the Newtonian physics: given the historical context, it could hardly mean anything else. And it is evident that there is a connection between Kant's principles, as listed in the *Analytic of Principles*, with the Newtonian conception of the physical world. For instance, a principle asserting that all changes take place according to necessary causal relations, would not fit in with a physics which admitted the concept of indeterminacy.

make *empirical knowledge* possible. But this is called experience.'[1] Hence the only legitimate use of the categories, with respect to the knowledge of things, lies in their application to possible objects of experience. This, says Kant, is a conclusion of great importance, because it determines the limits of the use of the categories and shows that they are valid only for objects of sense. They cannot give us theoretical or scientific knowledge of realities which transcend the sphere of sense.

The same must be said, of course, of the *a priori* principles of the understanding. They apply only to possible objects of experience, that is, to phenomena, to objects as given in empirical or sense intuition. 'The final conclusion of this whole section is, therefore, that all principles of the pure understanding are nothing more than *a priori* principles of the possibility of experience; and to this alone do all synthetic *a priori* propositions relate. Indeed, their possibility itself rests entirely on this relation.'[2] Hence the principles, for example, which have reference to substance and to determined causality hold good only for phenomena.

Our knowledge of objects is thus restricted to phenomenal reality. But though we cannot cross the bounds of phenomenal or empirical reality and know what lies beyond these bounds, we have no right to assert that there are only phenomena. And Kant introduces the idea of noumena, an idea which we must now examine.

Literally the word *noumenon* means object of thought. And Kant sometimes speaks of noumena as objects of the understanding (*Verstandeswesen*).[3] But to say that noumenon means object of thought does not carry us far towards a comprehension of Kant's doctrine. Indeed, it can be definitely misleading. For it may suggest that Kant divides up reality into *sensibilia* or objects of sense and *intelligibilia* or noumena considered as objects apprehended by pure thought. The word *noumenon* can, of course, be used in this way. 'Appearances, in so far as they are thought as objects according to the unity of the categories, are called *phenomena*. But if I assume (the existence of) things which are simply objects of the understanding and which at the same time can be given as objects to intuition, although not to sense but to intellectual intuition, things of this kind would be called *noumena* or *intelligibilia*.'[4] But though the word *noumenon can* be used in this way, the notion that human beings enjoy or can enjoy an intellectual intuition of noumena is precisely one of the positions which

[1] *B*, 147. [2] *B*, 294. [3] Cf. *Prol.*, 32; *B*, 309. [4] *A*, 248–9.

Kant is most concerned to exclude. For him at least all intuition is sense intuition. So it is best to drop all etymological considerations and to concentrate on Kant's actual use of the term, which he takes pains to elucidate.

In the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant distinguishes between 'transcendental object' and noumenon. The idea of appearance involves the idea of something which appears. Correlative to the idea of a thing as appearing is the idea of a thing as not appearing; that is, of a thing as it is in itself, apart from its appearing. But if I try to abstract from all that in the object which has reference to the *a priori* conditions of knowledge, that is, of the possibility of objects of knowledge, I arrive at the idea of an unknown 'something', an unknown and, indeed, unknowable *X*. This unknowable *X* is completely indeterminate: it is merely something in general. For example, the idea of the *X* correlative to a cow is no different from the idea of the *X* correlative to a dog. Thus we have here the idea of the transcendental object; that is, 'the completely undetermined idea of something in general'.[1] But this is not yet the idea of a *noumenon*. To transform, as it were, the transcendental object into a noumenon, I must assume an intellectual intuition in which the object can be given. In other words, while the concept of the transcendental object is a mere limiting concept, the noumenon is conceived as an *intelligibile*, a positive reality which could be the object of an intellectual intuition.

Having made this distinction, Kant goes on to say that we possess no faculty of intellectual intuition, and that we cannot conceive even its possibility, not, that is, in a positive concept. Further, though the idea of a noumenon as a thing-in-itself (*ein Ding an sich*) does not contain a logical contradiction, we cannot see the positive possibility of noumena considered as possible objects of intuition. Hence the division of objects into phenomena and noumena is not to be admitted. At the same time the concept of the noumenon is indispensable as a limiting concept; and we can call things-in-themselves, that is, things considered in so far as they do not appear, *noumena*. But our concept is then problematical. We do not assert that there are noumena, which could be intuited if we possessed a faculty of intellectual intuition. At the same time we have no right to assert that appearances exhaust reality; and the idea of the limits of sensibility carries with it as a correlative concept the indeterminate, negative concept of the noumenon.

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[1] *A*, 253.

The trouble with this account is that Kant first says that the word *noumenon* means something more than what is meant by transcendental object and then he proceeds to exclude this something more and to give an interpretation of the noumenon which seems to differ not at all from his interpretation of the transcendental object. However, in the second edition he clears up this at least apparent confusion by carefully distinguishing two senses of the word *noumenon*, though his doctrine concerning the extent of our knowledge remains unaltered.

First there is the negative sense of the word *noumenon*. 'If by noumenon we understand a thing *in so far as it is not the object of our sensuous intuition*, thus abstracting from our mode of intuiting it, this is a noumenon in the negative sense of the term.'[1] The remark about abstracting from our mode of intuiting the noumenon must not be taken to imply that according to Kant we intuit, or can intuit, it in a non-sensuous manner. He means that if we understand by noumenon a thing in so far as it is not the object of sensuous intuition, and if at the same time we make no assumptions about the possibility of any other kind of intuition, we have the idea of a noumenon in the negative sense of the term.

This negative sense of the term is contrasted with a possible positive sense. 'If we understand by it (the noumenon) an object of a non-sensuous intuition, we then assume a particular kind of intuition, namely intellectual intuition, which, however, is not ours and of which we cannot see even the possibility; and this would be a noumenon in the *positive* sense of the term.'[2] Thus a noumenon in the positive sense of the term would be an *intelligibile*, the object of an intellectual intuition. But as, according to Kant, we do not enjoy any such intuition, we can disregard for the moment the positive sense of the term and return to the use of the term in its negative sense.

The concept of the noumenon, Kant insists, is indispensable; for it is bound up with his whole theory of experience. 'The doctrine of sensibility is also the doctrine of noumena in the negative sense.'[3] If we were prepared to say that the human subject is creative in the full sense of the word, we could drop the distinction between phenomena and noumena. But if the subject contributes, as it were, only the formal elements of experience, we cannot abandon the distinction. For the idea of things conforming to the *a priori* conditions of experience involves the idea of the thing-in-itself.

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[1] *B*, 307.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*

At the same time, given the restriction of the cognitive use of the categories to phenomenal reality, it follows not only that we cannot know noumena in the sense of knowing their characteristics, but also that we are not entitled to assert dogmatically that they exist. Unity, plurality and existence are categories of the understanding. And though we can think of noumena as existing, the application of the categories in this way beyond their proper range of application does not yield knowledge. The existence of noumena thus remains problematical; and the idea of the noumenon or thing-in-itself becomes a limiting concept (*Grenzbegriff*).[1] The understanding limits sensibility 'by giving the name *noumena* to things considered in themselves and not as phenomena. But it at the same time sets limits to itself, that is, of not knowing them by means of any categories and of thinking them simply as an unknown something.'[2]

Now, in the first section of this chapter we saw how Kant speaks about our being affected by objects. In other words, he started from the common-sense position that things produce an effect on the subject which give rise to sensation, sensation being defined as 'the effect of an object upon the faculty of representation, so far as we are affected by the object'.[3] But this common-sense point of view seems to involve the assertion that there are things-in-themselves. For it appears to involve inference from sensation as an effect to the thing-in-itself as cause. Thus in the *Prolegomena* we read that things-in-themselves are unknowable as they are in themselves but that 'we know them through the representations which their influence on our sensibility procures for us'.[4] But by talking in this way Kant obviously lays himself open to the charge of applying the principle of causality beyond the limits which he himself lays down. It has therefore been a common objection against the doctrine of noumena considered as things-in-themselves that their existence is asserted as a result of causal inference whereas, on Kant's principles, the category of cause is only applicable to phenomena. In asserting the existence of the noumenon as a cause of sensation, it has therefore been said, Kant contradicts himself; that is to say, he is inconsistent with his own principles. It is, indeed, understandable that Kant talks in this

[1] *B*, 311. [2] *B*, 312. [3] *A*, 19; *B*, 34. [4] *Prol.*, 13, remark 2.

way. For he never believed that things can be reduced simply to our representations. And it was natural, for him, therefore, to postulate an external cause or external causes of our representations. But this does not alter the fact that he is guilty of a flagrant inconsistency. And if we wish to maintain the Kantian view of the function of the category of cause, we must abandon the notion of the noumenon as thing-in-itself.

However, though this line of objection is clearly relevant if we regard simply Kant's remarks about the cause of our representations, we have seen that when he discusses explicitly the distinction between phenomena and noumena he adopts a different approach. For the idea of the noumenon is represented as arising, not through inference to a cause of sensation, but as an inseparable correlate of the idea of the phenomenon. We are not presented with subjective representations on the one hand and their external causes on the other. Rather are we presented with the idea of an object which appears and corresponding to the idea we have, as a purely limiting concept, the idea of the object apart from its appearance. It is as though the noumenon were the other side of the picture, a side which we do not and cannot see but the indeterminate notion of which necessarily accompanies the idea of the side which we do see. Further, though Kant clearly believes that there are noumena, he abstains, in theory at least, from asserting their existence. And this line of approach does not seem to lay him open to the line of objection mentioned in the last paragraph. For, even if we use the category of cause to think the noumenon, the use is problematical, not assertorical. And no special difficulty is created by the application of this special category which is not also created by the use of any other category.

A final remark. In this section we have been considering the noumenon as the thing which appears, apart from its appearing. That is to say, we have been considering it as the so-called thing-in-itself (*Ding an sich*). But Kant also speaks about the free, non-empirical ego and about God as being noumena and as possessing noumenal reality. He also speaks occasionally of God as a thing-in-itself. This way of talking is, indeed, justified on his premisses. For God is not a phenomenon and cannot possess phenomenal or empirical reality. He must be conceived, therefore, as a noumenon, as a thing-in-itself, and not as something appearing to us. Further, all that has been said about the non-applicability of the categories to noumena holds good in regard to God. At the same time, if God is thought of at all, He is not thought of as being simply a correlate of spatio-temporal appearances. The concept of God is not the concept of a thing which appears, considered as not appearing. For God cannot be said to appear. Hence the terms *noumenon* and *thing-in-itself*, as applied to God, do not bear precisely the same sense which they bear when applied in the manner described above. It is best, therefore, to reserve any further discussion of the idea of God until we come, in the next chapter, to a consideration of the *Transcendental Dialectic*. For it is in this part of the first *Critique* that Kant discusses the idea of God, when he is dealing with the transcendental Ideas of pure reason.

9. Kant's use of the word *idealism* differs at different stages of the development of his thought. There is no one invariable and consistent use of the term. However, his dislike of the label evidently diminished, and we find him calling his philosophy transcendental or critical or problematical idealism. But when he speaks in this way, he is thinking of the doctrine of the unknowability of things-in-themselves. He does not intend to assert that in his view there are only the human ego and its ideas. Indeed, this is a doctrine which he attacks, as will be seen shortly. And if we can speak of Kant's philosophy as critical idealism, we could also speak of it as critical realism. For he resolutely refused to abandon the idea of things-in-themselves. However, I have no wish to embark on a profitless discussion of the proper nomenclature for Kant's philosophy. And I turn instead to his refutation of idealism; that is, of what he called empirical or material idealism in contrast with transcendental or formal idealism. In his view the acceptance of the latter involves the denial of the former.

Both editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason* contain a refutation of idealism; but I shall confine my remarks to the version given in the second edition. In it Kant distinguishes two kinds of idealism, problematic and dogmatic. According to the first kind, attributed to Descartes, the existence of external things in space is doubtful and indemonstrable, there being only one certain empirical proposition, *I am*. According to dogmatic idealism, attributed to Berkeley, space, together with all the objects of which it is the inseparable condition, is impossible, so that objects in space are mere products of the imagination.

These summaries, if considered as summaries of the actual positions of Descartes and Berkeley, are inadequate, to put it mildly. Berkeley did not hold that all external objects are mere products of the imagination in the sense which would naturally be given to this description. As for Descartes, he certainly maintains that we can apply 'hyperbolical' doubt to the existence of external finite things; but he also maintained that reason can overcome this doubt. Kant may have held that Descartes' demonstration of the existence of finite things other than the self was invalid. But this conviction would not justify his saying that according to problematic idealism the existence of external things in space is indemonstrable, and then ascribing this view to Descartes. However, the accuracy of Kant's historical remarks is of minor importance in comparison with his treatment of the two positions.

Of dogmatic idealism Kant says very little. He just remarks that it is unavoidable if we hold that space is a property of things-in-themselves; for in this case space, together with all the objects of which it is an inseparable condition, is a nonentity (*ein Unding*). But this position has been excluded in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*. In other words, if space is alleged to be a property of things-in-themselves, the concept of space can be shown to be a concept of something unreal and impossible. And it involves in its ruin the things of which it is supposed to be a property, and which must therefore be accounted mere products of the imagination. But it has been shown in the *Critique* that space is an *a priori* form of sensibility which applies only to phenomena and not to things-in-themselves. The latter are left intact, so to speak, while space is shown to possess empirical reality.

The treatment of problematic idealism, ascribed to Descartes, is rather more careful. The main point is that Descartes' approach is all wrong. For he assumes that we possess consciousness of ourselves independently of and prior to experience of external things, and then asks how the ego, certain of its own existence, can know that there are external things. Against this position Kant argues that internal experience is possible only through external experience.

Kant's argument is, indeed, somewhat involved. I am conscious of my own existence as determined in time.[1] But all determination in time, in respect, that is, of succession, presupposes the existence of something permanent in perception. But this something permanent cannot be something within myself. For it is the condition of my existence in time. It follows, therefore, that the perception of my own existence in time is possible only through the existence of something real outside me. Consciousness in time is thus necessarily connected with the *existence* of external things; that is, not merely with the *representation* of things external to me.

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[1] Kant is speaking, of course, of the empirical ego, which I perceive introspectively only in its successive states. The transcendental ego is not determined in time, but it is not given as an object of self-consciousness. It is thought as the condition of the transcendental unity of apperception.

The point made by Kant is thus that I cannot be conscious of myself except mediately, that is to say, through the immediate consciousness of external things. 'The consciousness of my own existence is at the same time an immediate consciousness of the existence of other things outside me.'[1] In other words, self-consciousness is not a prior datum: I become conscious of myself in perceiving external things. The question of inferring the existence of external things does not, therefore, arise.

Kant obviously makes a good point here, namely that I become aware of myself concomitantly with acts of attention directed to what is other than myself. But to use this point against Descartes he has to show that this becoming aware of myself is impossible unless external things *exist* and are not merely my representations or ideas. And to show this is, indeed, the burden of his argument. But he then finds himself compelled to admit that 'it does not follow that every intuitive representation of external things involves at the same time the existence of these things; for it may be the mere effect of the power of imagination in dreams as well as in madness.'[2] He argues, however, that these imaginative products are reproductions of previous external perceptions, which would be impossible unless external objects existed. 'Our task here has been to prove only that internal experience in general is possible only through external experience in general.'[3] Whether a particular perception is purely imaginative or not must be decided on the merits of the case.

This treatment of idealism may leave a good deal to be desired; but it at least throws into relief Kant's insistence on the empirical reality of the world of experience as a whole. Within the sphere of empirical reality we cannot justifiably accord a privileged status to the empirical self, reducing external objects, either dogmatically or problematically, to ideas or representations of the empirical self. For the empirical reality of the subject is inseparable from the empirical reality of the external world. That is to say, awareness of the two factors, subject and object, cannot be so divided that

[1] *B*, 276. [2] *B*, 278. [3] *Ibid.*

the alleged problem of inferring the existence of objects other than the self becomes a real problem.

10. There are many detailed criticisms of Kant's theory of experience which can be made from within the general framework of the Kantian philosophy, that is, by those who accept the philosopher's general point of view and who would call themselves Kantians or Neo-Kantians. For instance, dissatisfaction may be felt with Kant's idea that he had provided a complete table of categories, based on the table of judgments which he took over, with some changes, from the formal logic with which he was familiar. But such dissatisfaction would not by itself necessitate an abandonment of the general standpoint represented by the theory of categories. Again, it is possible to criticize the ambiguity involved in Kant's habit of referring sometimes to 'categories' and sometimes to *a priori* concepts. But it might be possible to clear up the ambiguity without being compelled at the same time to throw overboard the whole theory. However, the detailed criticisms which can be brought from within the general framework of the system need not concern us here. Something will be said about the Neo-Kantians in a later volume.

If we look on Kant's theory of experience as an attempt to explain the possibility of synthetic *a priori* knowledge, our judgment about it will obviously depend very largely on whether we admit or reject the existence of synthetic *a priori* propositions. If we think that there are no such propositions, we must obviously draw the conclusions that the problem of explaining synthetic *a priori* knowledge does not arise. We shall say, for example, that Kant was mistaken in thinking that the geometrician reads off the properties of space from an *a priori* intuition. In Kantian terminology all propositions are either analytic or synthetic *a posteriori*. If, however, we think that there are synthetic *a priori* propositions, we shall recognize at least that the Kantian problem was a real problem. For *mere* sense-experience does not present us with necessary connections and with true universality.

It does not follow, however, that if we accept the existence of synthetic *a priori* knowledge, we are bound to accept also the hypothesis of Kant's Copernican revolution. For it is possible to allow that there are synthetic *a priori* propositions and at the same time to hold that there is an intellectual intuition which grounds such propositions. I certainly do not wish to commit myself to the view that the geometrician enjoys an intuition of space and that he reads off, as it were, its properties. I am prescinding altogether from the problem of mathematics. That is to say, when I speak about synthetic *a priori* propositions I am thinking, not of the propositions of pure mathematics, but of metaphysical principles, such as the principle that everything which comes into being has a cause. And by intuition I do not mean a direct apprehension of spiritual realities, such as God, but an intuitive apprehension of being, implied by the existential judgment concerning the concrete object of sense-perception. In other words, if the mind can discern, in dependence on sense-perception, the objective, intelligible structure of being, it can enunciate synthetic *a priori* propositions which have objective validity for things in themselves. I do not wish to develop this point of view any further. My intention in mentioning it is simply to indicate that we are not confined to choosing between empiricism on the one hand and the critical philosophy of Kant on the other.

CHAPTER XIII

KANT (4): METAPHYSICS UNDER FIRE

Introductory remarks—The transcendental Ideas of pure reason—The paralogisms of rational psychology—The antinomies of speculative cosmology—The impossibility of proving the existence of God—The regulative use of the transcendental Ideas of pure reason—Metaphysics and meaning.

1. If we presuppose the analysis of objective experience[1] described in the last chapter, it may appear that there is really nothing further to be said about metaphysics. For certain general conclusions about the subject follow directly from the *Transcendental Aesthetic* and *Transcendental Analytic* taken together. First, to the extent that transcendental criticism can itself be called metaphysics, the metaphysics, that is to say, of objective experience, metaphysics is possible, and possible as a science. Secondly, if the entire system of synthetic *a priori* propositions relating to pure natural science were worked out, we should have a developed metaphysics of Nature or of natural science. Thirdly, in so far as the unschematized categories can be used by the mind to think things-in-themselves and to form ideas which contain no logical contradiction, metaphysics of the traditional type is a psychological possibility. It is psychologically possible, for example, to think of things-in-themselves as substances. But fourthly, inasmuch as this procedure involves applying the categories beyond their legitimate field of application, it cannot yield knowledge. The cognitive function of the categories lies in their application to objects as given in sense intuition, that is, to phenomena. Things-in-themselves are not, and cannot be, phenomena. And we possess no faculty of intellectual intuition which could supply objects for a meta-phenomenal application of the categories. Hence metaphysics of the classical type is excluded, when it is considered as a possible source of objective knowledge. To take the same example, application of the category of substance to things-in-themselves yields no knowledge whatsoever about the latter. Fifthly, we

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[1] Objective experience, that is to say, in the sense of experience or knowledge of objects. The analysis of moral experience has not yet been considered. And moral experience is not an experience of objects in the sense in which we have been using the term.

cannot use the principles of the understanding to infer the existence of supersensible beings such as God. For the principles of the understanding, like the categories on which they are founded, are of limited application. That is to say, their objective reference is to phenomena alone. Hence they cannot be used to transcend experience (in the Kantian sense).

But Kant's attitude towards metaphysics, as manifested in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, is more complex than this series of conclusions might lead one to expect. As we have already seen, he believed that the impulse to metaphysics is an ineradicable impulse in the human mind. Metaphysics considered as a natural disposition is possible. Moreover, it possesses value. In the *Transcendental Dialectic* Kant tends at least to make of the pure reason (*Vernunft*) a faculty distinct, or distinguishable, from understanding (*Verstand*). It produces transcendental Ideas which cannot, indeed, be used to increase our scientific knowledge of objects, but which at the same time have a positive 'regulative' function to perform. It remains for him, therefore, to investigate the origin and system of these Ideas and to determine their precise function.

Further, Kant is not content with saying simply that the knowledge which traditional speculative metaphysics claims to provide is illusory. He wishes to illustrate and confirm the truth of his contention by a detailed criticism of speculative psychology, speculative cosmology and natural or philosophical theology. This is done in the second book of the *Transcendental Dialectic*.

What did Kant mean by 'transcendental dialectic'? He thought that the Greeks understood by dialectic the art of sophistical disputation. This idea of the historical use of the word is extremely inadequate. But this does not matter for our purposes. The point is that Kant thought of dialectic as a 'logic of semblance' (*eine Logik des Scheins*)[1] or illusion. But he obviously did not wish to produce sophistical illusions. So dialectic came to mean for him a critical treatment of false or sophistical reasoning. And transcendental dialectic meant a critique or criticism of understanding and reason in regard to their claims to provide us with knowledge of things-in-themselves and supersensible realities. 'The second part of the transcendental logic must be, therefore, a critique of this dialectical semblance (or illusion). And it is called transcendental dialectic, not as an art of producing dogmatically such illusion (an art which is unfortunately too current among the practitioners of manifold metaphysical jugglery), but as a critique of the understanding and reason in regard to their metaphysical use. Its purpose is to expose the false illusion involved in the groundless pretensions of these faculties, and to substitute for their claims to discover new truths and enlarge our knowledge, which they imagine they can do simply by the use of transcendental principles, their proper function of protecting the pure understanding from sophistical delusion.'[1]

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[1] *B*, 349; *A*, 293.

Here we have a purely negative conception of the function of transcendental dialectic. But inasmuch as the abuse of transcendental ideas and principles presupposes their rise and presence, and inasmuch as they possess a certain value, transcendental dialectic has also the positive function of determining in a systematic manner what are the transcendental Ideas of pure reason and what is their legitimate and proper function. 'The Ideas of the pure reason can never be, in themselves, dialectical; it is their misuse only which brings it about that we are involved in a deceptive illusion by means of them. For they arise in us through the very nature of our reason; and this supreme tribunal for judging the rights and claims of our speculation cannot possibly contain in itself original deceptions and illusions. We can presume, therefore, that these Ideas will have their sound and proper function, determined by the constitution of our reason.'[2]

2. One characteristic which Kant had in common with Wolff was a respect, not to say passion, for systematic arrangement and deduction. We have seen how he deduced the categories of the understanding from the forms of judgment. In the *Transcendental Dialectic* we find him deducing[3] the Ideas of pure reason from the forms of mediate inference, mediate inference meaning for him syllogistic inference.[4] The deduction seems to me highly artificial and not very convincing. But the general idea can be conveyed by means of the following steps.

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[1] *B*, 88; *A*, 63–4.

[2] *B*, 697.

[3] This deduction of the Ideas of pure reason corresponds to the metaphysical deduction of the categories of the understanding, that is, to the systematic derivation of the categories from the forms of judgment. In the *Dialectic* there cannot be anything exactly corresponding to the transcendental deduction or justification of the application of the categories to objects. For the Ideas cannot be applied to objects. However, as the Ideas have a 'regulative' function, the exhibition of this fact is in some way remotely analogous to the transcendental deduction of the categories.

[4] Mediate inference because the conclusion in a syllogism is derived from the major premiss only by means of the minor premiss, which is a condition of the deduction.

The understanding (*Verstand*) is concerned directly with phenomena, unifying them in its judgments. The reason (*Vernunft*) is not directly concerned with phenomena in this way, but only indirectly or mediately. That is to say, it accepts the concepts and judgments of the understanding and seeks to unify them in the light of a higher principle. As an example let us take a syllogism suggested by Kant himself: 'All men are mortal; All scholars are men; Therefore all scholars are mortal.' The conclusion is seen as following from the major premiss by means of, or on the condition of, the minor premiss. But we can obviously go on to seek the condition for the truth of the major premiss. That is to say, we can try to exhibit the major premiss, namely 'All men are mortal', as being itself the conclusion of a prosyllogism. This is achieved, for instance, in the following syllogism: 'All animals are mortal; All men are animals: Therefore all men are mortal.' Our new major premiss can then be seen as unifying a whole series of judgments, such as 'All men are mortal', 'All cats are mortal', 'All elephants are mortal'. And we can then go on to subject the major premiss 'All animals are mortal' to a similar process, exhibiting it as the conclusion of a prosyllogism and thus unifying a wider range of different judgments.

Now, in the examples given it is obvious that reason did not produce the concepts and judgments from itself. It was concerned with the deductive relationship between judgments contributed by the understanding in its empirical use. But it is a peculiar feature of reason that it is not content with stopping this process of unification at any particular premiss which is itself conditioned; that is, which can itself be exhibited as the conclusion of a prosyllogism. It seeks the unconditioned. And the unconditioned is not given in experience.

At this point we must mention a distinction made by Kant, which is important for the line of thought expressed in the *Transcendental Dialectic*. To proceed ever upwards, so to speak, in the chain of prosyllogisms is a logical maxim of pure reason. That is to say, the logical maxim of reason bids us seek an ever greater unification of knowledge, tending more and more towards the unconditioned, towards an ultimate condition which is not itself conditioned. But the logical maxim, taken by itself, does not assert that the chain of reasoning ever does reach an unconditioned. It does not assert that there is an unconditioned: it merely tells us to act as though there were, by telling us to endeavour constantly to complete, as Kant puts it, our conditioned knowledge. When, however, it is assumed that the sequence of conditions reaches the unconditioned, and that there is an unconditioned, the logical maxim becomes a principle of pure reason. And it is one of the main tasks of the *Transcendental Dialectic* to show whether this principle is objectively valid or not. The purely logical maxim is not called in question. But are we justified in assuming that the sequence of conditioned judgments actually is unified in the unconditioned? Or is this assumption the source of deception and fallacy in metaphysics?

Now, there are, according to Kant, three possible types of syllogistic inference, namely categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive. These three types of mediate inference correspond to the three categories of relation, namely substance, cause and community or reciprocity. And corresponding to the three types of inference there are three kinds of unconditioned unity, postulated or assumed by the principles of pure reason. In the ascending series of categorical syllogisms reason tends towards a concept which stands for something which is always subject and never predicate. If we ascend by a chain of hypothetical syllogisms, reason demands an unconditioned unity in the form of a presupposition which itself presupposes nothing else; which is, that is to say, an ultimate presupposition. Finally, if we ascend by a chain of disjunctive syllogisms, reason demands an unconditioned unity in the form of an aggregate of the members of the disjunctive division of such a kind that it makes the division complete.

The reason why Kant endeavours to derive the three kinds of unconditioned unity from the three types of syllogistic inference is, I think, evident. When deducing the categories of the understanding he wished to avoid the haphazard kind of deduction of which he accuses Aristotle of being guilty, and to substitute a systematic and complete deduction. In other words, he wished to show at the same time what the categories are and why there are just these categories and no others. Hence he tried to deduce them from the logical types of judgment, presupposing that his classification of these types was complete. Similarly, in deducing the Ideas of the pure reason he wishes to show at the same time what these Ideas are and why there must be just these Ideas (or, as he puts it, classes of Ideas) and no others. Hence he tries to derive them from the three types of mediate inference which, in accordance with the formal logic which he accepts, are the only possible types. In the whole process we see Kant's passion for systematic arrangement and architectonic at work.

In the course of deducing the Ideas of pure reason, however, Kant introduces a supplementary line of thought which makes the whole matter considerably easier to understand. He introduces, that is to say, the idea of the most general relations in which our representations can stand. These are three. First, there is the relation to the subject. Secondly, there is the relation of our representations to objects as phenomena. Thirdly, there is the relation of our representations to objects as objects of thought in general, whether phenomena or not. We can consider these relations separately.

In the first place it is required for the possibility of experience, as we saw in the last chapter, that all representations should be related to the unity of apperception, in the sense that the *I think* must be capable of accompanying them all. Now, reason tends to complete this synthesis by assuming an unconditioned, namely a permanent ego or thinking subject, conceived as a substance. That is to say, reason tends to complete the synthesis of the inner life by passing beyond the empirical, conditioned ego to the unconditioned thinking self, the substantial subject which is never predicate.

In the second place, turning to the relation of our representations to objects as phenomena, we recall that the understanding synthesizes the manifold of sense intuition according to the second category of relation; namely the causal relation. Now, reason seeks to complete the synthesis by reaching an unconditioned unity conceived as the totality of causal sequences. Understanding provides us, as it were, with causal relations, each of which presupposes other causal relations. Reason postulates an ultimate presupposition which does not presuppose anything else (in the same order), namely the totality of the causal sequences of phenomena. There thus arises the idea of the world, conceived as the totality of causal sequences.

In the third place, that is, in regard to the relation of our representations to objects of thought in general, reason seeks an unconditioned unity in the form of the supreme condition of the possibility of all that is thinkable. Thus arises the conception of God as the union in one Being of all perfections.[1]

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[1] Kant admits that the theory according to which the mere form of the disjunctive syllogism necessarily involves the supreme Idea of pure reason, namely the Idea of a Being of all beings (*Wesen aller Wesen*), 'seems at first sight to be

We have, therefore, three principal Ideas of pure reason, namely the soul as permanent substantial subject, the world as the totality of causally related phenomena, and God as absolute perfection, as the unity of the conditions of objects of thought in general. These three Ideas are not innate. At the same time they are not derived empirically. They arise as a result of the pure reason's natural drive towards completing the synthesis achieved by the understanding. This does not mean, as has already been mentioned, that the pure reason carries further the synthesizing activity of the understanding considered as constituting objects by imposing the *a priori* conditions of experience known as the categories. The Ideas of pure reason are not 'constitutive'. But the reason has a natural drive towards unifying the conditions of experience, and this it does by proceeding to the unconditioned, in the three forms already mentioned. In doing this it obviously passes beyond experience. Hence the Ideas of the pure reason are called by Kant 'transcendental Ideas', though he later goes on to speak of the third Idea, that of God, as the 'transcendental Ideal'. For God is conceived as supreme and absolute perfection.

These three Ideas form the principal unifying themes of the three branches of speculative metaphysics according to the Wolffian classification. 'The thinking subject is the object-matter of *psychology*, the totality of all phenomena (the world), the object-matter of *cosmology*, and the entity which contains the supreme condition of the possibility of all that can be thought (the Being of all beings) is the object-matter of *theology*. Thus the pure reason provides its Idea for a transcendental doctrine of the soul (*psychologia rationalis*), for a transcendental science of the world (*cosmologia rationalis*), and finally for a transcendental doctrine of God (*theologia transcendentalis*).'[1]

Now, inasmuch as we do not possess, according to Kant, any faculty of intellectual intuition, objects corresponding to these Ideas cannot be given to us in this way. Nor can they be given through experience in the sense described in the last chapter. The substantial soul, the world as the totality of all appearances, the supreme Being, God: none of these can be given in experience. They are not, and cannot be, phenomena. And the Ideas of them arise, not through the subjection of the material of experience to

extremely paradoxical' (*B*, 393). But he promises a further treatment later (cf. the sections on the Transcendental Ideal; *B*, 599 ff.). We cannot, however, discuss the matter further here.

[1] *B*, 391–2; *A*, 334–5.

the *a priori* conditions of experience, but through unifying the conditions of experience as far as the unconditioned. It is only to be expected, therefore, that if reason makes what Kant calls a 'transcendent' use of them, claiming to prove the existence and nature of corresponding objects and so to enlarge our theoretical knowledge of objects, it will be involved in sophistical arguments and in antinomies. To show that this is in fact the case, and must be the case, is the aim of Kant's critical examination of rational psychology, speculative cosmology and philosophical theology. And we must now consider each of these in turn.

3. Kant conceives rational psychology as proceeding on Cartesian lines and as arguing from the *I think* to the soul as a simple substance which is permanent in the sense that it remains self-identical in time; that is, throughout all accidental changes. In his view rational psychology must proceed *a priori*; for it is not an empirical science. Hence it starts from the *a priori* condition of experience, the unity of apperception. '*I think* is thus the only text of rational psychology, from which it must develop its whole system.'[1]

If we bear in mind the contents of the last chapter, it is easy to see what line Kant's criticism will take. It is a necessary condition for the possibility of experience that *I think* should be capable of accompanying all one's representations. But the ego as a necessary condition for experience is not given in experience: it is a transcendental ego, not the empirical ego. Hence while it is psychologically possible to think of it as a unitary substance, the application of categories such as substance and unity cannot yield knowledge in this context. For this cognitive function lies in their application to phenomena, not to noumena. We can argue to the conclusion that the transcendental ego, as a logical subject, is a necessary condition of experience, in the sense that experience is unintelligible unless objects, to be objects, must be related to the unity of apperception; but we cannot argue to the existence of the transcendental ego as a substance. For this involves a misuse of categories such as existence, substance and unity. Scientific knowledge is bounded by the world of phenomena; but the transcendental ego does not belong to the world; it is a limiting concept. Thus Kant might say with Ludwig Wittgenstein that 'the subject does not belong to the world but it is a limit of the world'.[2]

According to Kant, rational psychology contains a fundamental paralogism; that is, a logically fallacious syllogism. This syllogism can be expressed as follows:

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[1] *B*, 401; *A*, 343.

[2] *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, 5.632.

> 'That which cannot be thought otherwise than as subject, does not exist otherwise than as subject and is therefore substance:
> Now, a thinking being, considered simply as such, cannot be thought otherwise than as subject:
> Therefore it exists only as such, that is, as substance.'[1]

That this syllogism is a paralogism follows from the fact that it contains four terms. That is to say, the middle term, 'that which cannot be thought otherwise than as subject', is understood in one sense in the major and in another sense in the minor premiss. In the major premiss the reference is to objects of thought in general, including objects of intuition. And it is true that the category of substance applies to an object which is given, or can be given, in intuition, and which can be thought only as subject, in the sense of that which cannot be thought as a predicate. But in the minor premiss that which cannot be thought otherwise than as subject is understood in relation to self-consciousness as the form of thought, not in relation to an object of intuition. And it by no means follows that the category of substance can be applied to a subject in this sense. For the ego of pure self-consciousness is not given in intuition, and so it is not a candidate, so to speak, for the application of the category.

It is to be noted that Kant does not question the truth of either premiss when taken by itself. In fact each premiss is, according to him, an analytical proposition. For instance, if the thinking being, considered purely as such, of the minor premiss is understood as the ego of pure apperception, it is analytically true that it cannot be thought otherwise than as subject. But then the word 'subject' is not being used in the same sense in which it is used in the major premiss. And we are not entitled to draw the *synthetic* conclusion that the ego of pure apperception exists as substance.

It is not necessary to enter further into Kant's discussion of rational psychology in order to see the important place in his criticism which is occupied by the concept of intuition. The permanent ego is not given in intuition; on this point Kant agrees with Hume. Hence we cannot apply to it the category of substance. But obviously someone might wish to call in question the view that the permanent ego is not given in intuition. And even if it is not given in intuition as interpreted by Kant, we might well consider that his idea of intuition is too narrow. In any case it might be argued that the presupposition and necessary condition of all experience is precisely a permanent ego; and that if experience is real, its necessary condition must be real. If to say this involves using the categories beyond their allotted sphere, this restriction of their use becomes questionable. If, however, we once admit all Kant's premisses, we can hardly avoid drawing his conclusions. The validity of the *Transcendental Dialectic* obviously depends to a great extent on the validity of the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, and *Analytic*.

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[1] *B*, 410–11; cf. *A*, 348.

It is worth noting that inasmuch as Kant believes that all phenomenal events are causally determined, it is in a sense in his interest to keep the permanent ego in the sphere of noumenal reality beyond experience. For this will enable him later to postulate freedom. At the same time, by placing the permanent self in the noumenal sphere and beyond the range of intuition, he makes it impossible to argue to the existence of the self in this sense. We can assert, of course, the existence of the empirical ego; for this is given in internal intuition. But the empirical ego is the self as studied in psychology. It is an object in time and is reducible to successive states. The ego which is not reducible to successive states and which cannot be thought except as subject is not given in intuition, is not an object and cannot therefore be dogmatically asserted to exist as a simple substance.

4. We have seen that speculative cosmology, according to Kant, centres round the idea of the world as the totality of the causal sequence of phenomena. The speculative cosmologist seeks to extend our knowledge of the world, as a totality of phenomena, through synthetic *a priori* propositions. But this procedure, Kant maintains, leads to antinomies. An antinomy arises when each of two contradictory propositions can be proved. And if speculative cosmology inevitably leads to antinomies in this sense, the conclusion must be drawn that its whole aim is mistaken, namely the aim of building up a science of the world considered as the totality of phenomena. This branch of speculative metaphysics is not, and cannot be, a science. In other words, the fact that speculative cosmology is productive of antinomies shows that we cannot make scientific use of the transcendental Idea of the world as the totality of phenomena.

Kant discusses four antinomies. Each of them is supposed to correspond to one of the four classes of categories. But there is no necessity to dwell upon this typical piece of systematic correlation. I propose to pass it over and to come at once to a brief discussion of each of the four antinomies.

(i) The conflicting propositions of the first antinomy are as follows. '*Thesis:* The world has a beginning in time and is also limited in regard to space. *Antithesis:* The world has no beginning and no limits in space, but is infinite in respect both of time and space.'[1]

The *thesis* is proved as follows. If the world has no beginning in time, an infinite series of events must have occurred. That is to say, before the present moment an infinite series must have been completed. But an infinite series can never be completed. Therefore the world must have had a beginning in time. As for the second part of the thesis, if the world is not limited in regard to space, it must be an infinite given total of coexistent things. But we cannot think an infinite given total of coexistent things filling all possible spaces except by successively adding part to part or unit to unit until the addition is complete. But we cannot regard this addition or synthesis as completed except by regarding it as completed in infinite time. And this involves looking on an infinite time as having elapsed, which is impossible. Hence we cannot regard the world as an infinite given total of coexistent things filling all possible spaces. We must look on it as spatially limited or finite.

The *antithesis* is proved as follows. If the world began in time, there must have been empty time before the world began. But in empty time no becoming or beginning is possible. It makes no sense to speak of something coming into being in empty time. Hence the world has no beginning. As for the world being spatially infinite, let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that it is finite and limited in space. It must then exist in a void or empty space. And in this case it must have a relation to empty space. But empty space is nothing; and a relation to nothing is itself nothing. Hence the world cannot be finite and spatially limited: it must be spatially infinite.

At first sight Kant seems to adopt a position diametrically opposed to that of St. Thomas Aquinas.[2] For while the latter maintained[1] that it had never been philosophically demonstrated either that the world had a beginning in time or that it had no beginning in time, Kant appears to be saying that both theses can be demonstrated. And we may note in passing that his proof of the thesis that the world had a beginning in time is the same as that advanced by St. Bonaventure[2] in support of this thesis, a proof the validity of which was denied by Aquinas. But both proofs rest, for Kant, on false assumptions. The proof of the thesis rests on the assumption that we can apply to phenomena the principle of pure reason that if the conditioned is given, the totality of conditions, and consequently the unconditioned, is also given. The proof of the antithesis rests on the assumption that the world of phenomena is the world of things-in-themselves. It is assumed, for instance, that space is an objective reality. Given the required assumptions, the proofs are valid.[3] But the fact that each of two contradictory propositions can be proved shows that the assumptions are unwarranted. We can avoid the antinomy only by adopting the standpoint of the critical philosophy and by abandoning the standpoints both of dogmatic rationalism and of uncritical common sense. This is the point which Kant really intends to bring out, though it can hardly be claimed that he does so very clearly. And it would, therefore, be misleading, even if true in a sense, to say that in the long run Kant comes to the position of St. Thomas Aquinas. For, according to Kant's point of view, the inherent futility of trying to prove philosophically either that the world had a beginning in time or that it had no beginning in time can be seen only by adopting a philosophy which was certainly not that of Aquinas.

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[1] *B*, 454–5.

[2] My references here to mediaeval philosophy must not be understood as involving the suggestion that Kant had the mediaevals in mind. As far as I know, there is no evidence that he knew enough about them for this to have been even possible. But the references are, I think, of general interest.

(ii) The second antinomy is as follows. '*Thesis:* Every composite substance in the world consists of simple parts, and there does not exist anything which is not either itself simple or composed of simple parts. *Antithesis:* No composite thing in the world consists of simple parts, and there does not anywhere exist any simple thing.'[4]

The proof of the *thesis* takes this form. If composite substances did not consist of simple parts, then, if we thought away all composition, nothing at all would remain. But this can be excluded. For composition is merely a contingent relation. The composite must, therefore, consist of simple parts. And it follows from this that everything which exists must be either itself simple or composed of simple parts.

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[1] For a statement of Aquinas's position, see Vol. II of this *History*, pp. 366–7.

[2] See Vol. II of this *History*, pp. 262–4.

[3] It does not follow, of course, that we have to follow Kant in saying that they are valid. We might wish to say that neither is valid, or that while one is invalid, the other is valid. For a discussion of Kant's proofs of the theses and antitheses in the four antinomies the reader can consult, for instance, Professor N. Kemp Smith's *Commentary to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 483–506.

[4] *B*, 462–3.

As for the *antithesis*, it can be proved in this way. A composite substance occupies space. And this space must consist of as many parts as there are parts in the composite substance. Therefore every part of the latter occupies a space. But everything which occupies a space must consist of a manifold of parts. And each of these will occupy a space, and will thus itself contain parts. And so on indefinitely. There cannot, therefore, be any composite thing which consists of simple parts. Nor can there be any simple thing.

As in the first antinomy, the thesis represents the position of dogmatic rationalism. All composite substances consist of simple substances, such as the Leibnizian monads. And, again as in the first antinomy, the antithesis represents an empiricist attack on dogmatic rationalism. But the thesis treats noumena as though they were phenomena, objects given in experience; and the antithesis treats phenomena, extended bodies, as though they were noumena. Again, the only way out of the antinomy is to adopt the position of the critical philosophy, and to recognize that what is true of phenomena as phenomena cannot be asserted of noumena, while of the latter we possess no objective knowledge.[1]

(iii) The third antinomy relates to free causation. '*Thesis:* Causality according to the laws of Nature is not the only causality from which the phenomena of the world can be derived. To explain them, it is necessary to assume another causality, causality through freedom. *Antithesis:* There is no freedom, but everything in the world happens solely according to the laws of Nature.'[2]

The *thesis* is proved thus. Let us suppose that there is only one kind of causality, namely causality according to the laws of Nature. In this case a given event is determined by a previous event, and so on indefinitely. There can then be no first beginning; and consequently the series of causes cannot be completed. But the law of Nature is that nothing happens without a cause sufficiently determined *a priori*. And this law is not fulfilled if the causality of every cause is itself an effect of an antecedent cause. There must therefore be an absolutely spontaneous causality which originates a series of phenomena proceeding according to natural causes.

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[1] It is arguable that there is in fact no antinomy, on the ground that the thesis must be interpreted as referring to Leibnizian monads, whereas the antithesis refers to extended bodies in space.

[2] *B*, 472-3.

The proof of the *antithesis* is, in brief, this. Spontaneous, free causation presupposes a state of the cause which stands in no causal relation (that is, as effect) to the preceding state. But this presupposition is contrary to the natural causal law, and it would render impossible the unity of experience. Consequently freedom is not to be found in experience and is a mere fiction of thought.

In this antinomy it is not at all clear in the first place what Kant is talking about. The proof of the thesis naturally suggests that he is thinking about the origination of the natural causal series by a first cause, the causal activity of which is entirely spontaneous in the sense that it does not itself depend on a previous cause. And in his observations on the thesis he explicitly states that he had in mind the origin of the world. But he then goes on to say that if there is a free cause of the total series of phenomenal causal sequences, we are justified in admitting, within the world, free causes of different series of phenomena.

As for the antithesis, it is natural to understand it as referring to human freedom. *Prima facie* at least it makes sense to speak of one state of the human subject being causally determined by another state; but it makes no sense at all to raise the question of the causal relation between states in regard to God. In his observations on the antithesis, however, Kant introduces the idea of a free cause existing outside the world. Even if we admit the existence of such a cause, we cannot, he remarks, admit free causes within the world.

In view of this ambiguity, that is, of the indefinite range of application of thesis and antithesis, it is difficult to maintain that the antinomy is resolved by observing that the thesis and antithesis refer to different things. However, there can be no antinomy at all, in the proper sense, unless thesis and antithesis refer to the same things. If the thesis asserts that a free cause of the total series of phenomenal causal sequences can be proved, while the antithesis states that it can be proved that there is no such cause, we have an antinomy. And if the thesis states that it can be proved that there is free causality within the world, while the antithesis states that it can be proved that there is no free causality within the world, we have again an antinomy. But if the thesis states that it can be proved that there is a free cause of the total series of phenomenal causal sequences, this free cause being outside the series, while the antithesis states that there is no free causality within the phenomenal series, there is, properly speaking, no antinomy at all.

It is not my intention to deny that the third antinomy falls to a great extent into the general pattern of Kant's antinomies. The proof of the thesis, if the latter is understood as referring to a first cause of the total series of phenomenal causal sequences, is valid only on the assumption that we can, as it were, complete the series, using the transcendental Idea of the world as a totality to extend our theoretical knowledge. The thesis, therefore, represents the standpoint of dogmatic rationalism. And the antithesis, whether it is taken as stating that no proof of the existence of a first cause of the total series is possible or as stating that there can be no free causes within the series, represents the empiricist standpoint. But if the antinomy can be resolved only by adopting the standpoint of the critical philosophy, the latter point of view should not be introduced into the proof of either thesis or antithesis. Yet it is at least arguable that this is precisely what Kant does in proving the antithesis. For he states that the admission of free causality destroys the possibility of the unity of experience. And though it may not be necessary to understand this statement in terms of his own peculiar point of view, it is difficult to avoid the impression that this is in fact how it should be understood.

What happens, however, to the antinomy when we explicitly adopt the critical point of view? The proof of the thesis, if the latter is taken as referring to a spontaneous cause of the total series of phenomena, is seen to rest on a misuse of the transcendental Idea of the world. As for the antithesis, the denial of freedom, this is seen to be valid only for the sphere of phenomena. The way is therefore left open for Kant to say later that man is noumenally free and phenomenally determined. If we adopt this point of view we can say that for Kant both thesis and antithesis, when rightly understood, are true. The thesis, that causality 'according to the laws of Nature' is not the only kind of causality, is true, though it is not true that we can prove that this is the case. The antithesis, that there is no freedom, is true if it is taken as referring solely to the phenomenal world, though it is not true if it is taken as referring to all reality whatsoever. For Kant it is only when we adopt the standpoint of the critical philosophy that we can sift out what is true from what is false in thesis and antithesis and rise above the flat contradictions in which reason, in its dogmatic use, has involved itself.

(iv) The fourth antinomy concerns the existence of a necessary being. '*Thesis:* There belongs to the world, either as part of it or as its cause, something which exists as an absolutely necessary being. *Antithesis:* There nowhere exists any necessary being as the cause of the world, either in the world or out of it.'[1]

The *thesis* is proved, as far as the existence of a necessary being is concerned, by the supposed fact that the series of conditions presupposes a complete series of conditions up to the unconditioned, which exists necessarily. Kant then argues that this necessary being cannot be thought of as transcending the world of sense, and that it must therefore be either identical with the whole cosmic series or a part of it.

The *antithesis* is proved by showing that there can be no absolutely necessary being either in or outside the world. There cannot be a first member of the series of changes, which is itself necessary and uncaused. For all phenomena are determined in time. Nor can the whole cosmic series be necessary if no single member is necessary. Therefore there can be no necessary being in the world, either as identical with the latter or as a part of it. But there cannot be a necessary being existing outside the world, as cause of the latter. For if it causes the series of cosmic changes, it must begin to act. And if it begins to act, it is in time. And if it is in time, it is within the world, not outside it.

There is obviously considerable overlapping between the third and fourth antinomies. For though in the fourth antinomy Kant introduces a new term, 'absolutely necessary being', he uses the same line of argument to prove the thesis which he has already used in the third antinomy to prove that there must be a purely spontaneous cause of the series of phenomena. There is thus something to be said in favour of the view that Kant supplies the fourth antinomy precisely in order to make up the number four, each antinomy being supposed to correspond with one of the four classes of categories. It is true, indeed, that the categories of necessity and contingency belong to the fourth class of categories, those of modality, whereas causality belongs to the third class, the categories of relation. But Kant, in proving the thesis of the fourth antinomy, makes use precisely of a causal argument.

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[1] *B*, 480–1.

It is a remarkable fact, according to Kant in his observations on the antithesis of the fourth antinomy, that the same grounds which serve to prove the thesis serve also to prove the antithesis. But he then goes on to say that reason often falls into discord with itself by considering the same object from different points of view. And if thesis and antithesis represent different points of view, it seems to follow that both may be true. That is to say, the antithesis may be correct in so far as it represents the contentions that there is no necessary being in the world, whether as identical with the latter or as part of it, and that no proof can be forthcoming of the existence of such a being outside the world. But the thesis may be true in stating that there is such a being, existing outside the world, though we can never be said to *know* that this is the case.

In regard to the antinomies as a whole, the theses are supposed to represent the point of view of dogmatic rationalist metaphysics, while the antitheses are supposed to represent the empiricist point of view. And Kant sides, of course, with the latter to the extent that he regards as thoroughly sound the empiricist criticism of the pretensions of metaphysics to increase our knowledge. At the same time it is important to understand that he does not commit himself to the empiricist philosophy as such. In his view empiricism, though sound in its negative criticism of speculative metaphysics, is itself a dogmatic system which dogmatically limits reality to phenomena and thus treats them as though they were things-in-themselves. It is not the pretensions of speculative metaphysics alone which have to be exposed. While accepting the empiricist criticism of metaphysical arguments, we have to rise above the narrow limits of dogmatic empiricism (equated pretty well with materialism) and leave room, as it were, for noumenal reality. Further, metaphysics is itself sustained by moral and religious interests. And though this fact easily leads metaphysicians into advancing arguments which are unsound, we must acknowledge that metaphysics represents levels of human life which are not catered for, so to speak, by sheer empiricism. In the critical philosophy, however, Kant maintains, we can avoid both the fallacies of metaphysics and the dogmatic materialism and mechanism of sheer empiricism. We rise above the antinomies by limiting knowledge to its proper sphere while at the same time we leave room for practical faith based on moral experience. Human freedom, for example, cannot be admitted within the phenomenal sphere; but it may be a reality, and later on it turns out to be a necessary postulate of the moral consciousness.

5. The third transcendental Idea of pure reason is called by Kant the transcendental Ideal. Originally, so to speak, it is the idea of the sum total of all possible predicates, containing *a priori* the data for all particular possibilities. That is to say, the mind, ascending the series of disjunctive syllogisms, finds the unconditioned condition of all particular predicates, each of which excludes contradictory or incompatible predicates, in the idea of an aggregate of all predicates. This is the idea of the aggregate or sum total of all possible perfections. But inasmuch as this sum total is thought of as the unconditioned condition of all particular perfections, it is thought of as the prototype of the latter, as that from which the latter are derived and to which they approximate, and not as a mere abstract concept of the conflation, so to speak, of all particular, empirical perfections. It is thought of, therefore, as a real being, indeed as the supreme reality. The idea of the most perfect Being, the *Ens perfectissimum*, is also the idea of the most real Being the *Ens realissimum*. This Being cannot be thought of as a conflation or juxtaposition, so to speak, of empirical, limited and often mutually exclusive perfections. It must be thought of as the union of unlimited, pure perfections in one simple Being. Further, the unconditioned condition of all possible limited perfection and reality is thought of as existing necessarily. We thus reach the idea of God as an individual, necessarily existing, eternal, simple and all-perfect supreme Being, which is not the aggregate of finite realities but their unconditioned condition and ultimate cause. And this idea forms the subject-matter of natural or philosophical theology.[1]

Kant's conception of the procedure of pure reason is clear. The reason seeks the unconditioned unity of all possible predicates. It cannot find this in the aggregate, in a literal sense, of empirical perfections, but has to pass beyond the conditioned. It thus objectifies the indeterminate goal of its search as the *Ens perfectissimum*. This is then 'hypostatized' as the *Ens realissimum*, an individual being. And finally it is personified as the God of theism. But by this procedure of objectification the reason passes beyond all possible experience. We have no right to assert that there *is* a

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[1] Kant's approach was suggested by the Wolffian philosophy. Baumgarten, for example, approached the idea of God through the idea of the *Ens perfectissimum*, which is then identified with the *Ens realissimum*.

Being which is *Ens perfectissimum* and *Ens realissimum*; that is, that there is an object corresponding to the representation of a sum total of all possible perfections. And even though reason goes on to say that we can possess only an analogical (or symbolic) knowledge of the supreme Being, the very fact of objectifying the idea of a totality of perfection means that we extend the categories beyond their proper field of application.

It is obvious that on Kant's premisses no proof of God's existence is possible. But he wishes to make this impossibility clear by showing that every line of proof is fallacious. The task is not so great as one might suppose. For according to Kant there are only three ways of proving God's existence in speculative metaphysics. The reason can start with what we might call the *how* of the sensible world; that is, with its character as apparently manifesting finality, and proceed to God as cause of this finality. We then have the 'physico-theological' argument. Or reason can start from empirical existence and proceed to God as ultimate cause of this existence. And we then have the 'cosmological' argument. Or reason may proceed from the idea of God to the divine existence. And we then have the 'ontological' argument.

In treating these three lines of proof Kant starts with the third. For the movement of the mind towards God in metaphysics is always guided by the transcendental Ideal of pure reason, which is the goal of its striving. And it is thus only proper to start with the *a priori* argument from the idea of God to the divine existence. Further, it is Kant's conviction that in order to reach God by the other lines of argument reason is forced in the end to make use of the ontological argument. The latter is thus the fundamental argument and the one which must be considered first.

(i) The general form of the ontological argument which Kant has in mind can be stated as follows.[1] In the concept of a most perfect being existence is included. For if it were not, the concept would not be the concept of a most perfect being. Therefore if such a being is possible, it necessarily exists. For existence is included in the full complement of its possibility. But the concept of a most perfect being is the concept of a possible being. Therefore such a being necessarily exists.

Or the argument can be expressed thus. The idea of the *Ens realissimum* is the idea of an absolutely necessary being. And if such a being is possible, it exists. For the idea of a merely possible (and not actually existent) necessary being is a contradictory idea. But the idea of an absolutely necessary being is the idea of a possible being. Therefore an *Ens realissimum*, namely God, exists.

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[1] For the ontological argument as given by St. Anselm, see Vol. II of this *History*, pp. 161–4. For the variants given by Descartes and Leibniz, see Vol. IV, pp. 110–15 and 320–3.

Kant objects that it is nonsense to talk about the idea of a merely possible necessary being being a contradictory idea. To think of such a being as merely possible I have to think away its existence. But then there is nothing left which could give rise to a contradiction. 'If you think away its existence, you think away the thing with all its predicates. How, then, can there be room for any contradiction?'[1] If someone says that God does not exist, he is not suppressing existence and leaving predicates such as omnipotence: he is suppressing all predicates, and the subject with them. The judgment that God does not exist is not, therefore, self-contradictory, even if it is false.

It may be said that the case of the *Ens realissimum* is unique. I can deny the existence of any other being without involving myself in self-contradiction: for existence does not belong to the concept or idea of any other being. But it does belong to the concept of the *Ens realissimum*. Hence I cannot without self-contradiction admit the possibility of the *Ens realissimum* and at the same time deny its existence.

Kant's answer is on these lines. In the first place, our inability to see any logical contradiction in the idea of God does not constitute a proof that the *Ens realissimum* is positively possible. In the second place, any argument from the idea of the *Ens realissimum* to its existence is worthless; for it is reducible to a mere tautology. If I introduce existence into the idea of a being, then, of course, I can conclude that it exists. But all I am saying is that an existent being exists. And this is true but tautological. I can draw the conclusion that the being exists from its concept or idea only because I have already put existence into the idea, thus begging the whole question. To say that I am arguing from possibility to actuality is self-deception if possibility is made to include actuality.

It is Kant's contention, therefore, that every existential proposition is synthetic and that none is analytic. Hence any existential proposition can be denied without contradiction. The defenders of the ontological argument would reply, indeed, that Kant is missing the whole point of the argument. In all other cases existential propositions are synthetic; but the case of the most perfect being is unique. For in this case, and in this case alone, existence is contained in the idea of the subject. Hence it can be got out of it, so to speak, by analysis. Kant may say that this is possible only because we have already put it there, thus begging the question; but the point is that existence is a predicate which belongs necessarily to this subject.

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[1] *B*, 623.

For Kant, however, existence is not really a predicate at all. If it were, then it would follow that when I affirm existence of anything, I am adding to the idea of this thing. And in this case I do not affirm exactly the same thing which is represented in my idea. The truth of the matter is that when I say that something exists I simply affirm or posit the subject with all its predicates. Hence if I deny God's existence I am not denying a predicate of a subject: I am simply annihilating in thought the total subject, together with all its predicates. And no logical contradiction arises.

We can conclude, therefore, that 'all the trouble and labour bestowed on the famous ontological or Cartesian proof of the existence of a supreme Being from concepts alone is trouble and labour wasted. A man might as well expect to become richer in knowledge by the aid of mere ideas as a merchant to increase his wealth by adding some noughts to his cash-account.'[1]

(ii) Kant's formulation of the cosmological argument for God's existence is based on Leibniz. 'If anything exists, an absolutely necessary being must also exist. Now, I at least exist. Therefore there also exists an absolutely necessary being. The minor premiss contains an experience; the major premiss reasons from an experience in general to the existence of a necessary being.'[2]

It is obvious enough what Kant's line of criticism of the argument as thus presented will be. In his view the major premiss rests on a 'transcendent' use, and therefore on a misuse, of the principle of causality. Everything contingent has a cause. This principle is valid within the realm of sense-experience and it is only there that it possesses significance. We cannot use it to transcend the world as given in sense-experience. Further, the cosmological argument, according to Kant, involves completing the series of phenomena in the unconditioned unity of a necessary being. And though reason has a natural impulse to do this, surrender to the impulse cannot increase our knowledge.

To enter further into this line of criticism is unnecessary. For it follows immediately from Kant's view of the limits of human knowledge. But there is one point in his treatment of the cosmological argument to which attention must be drawn here. It is Kant's contention that in order to pass from the idea of a necessary being to the affirmation of God's existence recourse must be had, at least covertly, to the ontological argument.

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[1] *B*, 630.

[2] *B*, 632–3.

The concept of a necessary being is indeterminate. Even if we grant that reflection on experience leads us to a necessary being, we cannot discover its properties by experience. We are forced, therefore, to seek for the concept which is adequate to the idea of a necessary being. And reason believes that it has found what is required in the concept of an *Ens realissimum*. It asserts, therefore, that the necessary being is the *Ens realissimum*, the most real or perfect being. But to do this is to work with concepts alone, which is the characteristic of the ontological argument. Further, if a necessary being is an *Ens realissimum*, an *Ens realissimum* is a necessary being. And here we are saying that the concept of a supremely real or perfect being comprises absolute necessity of existence; which is precisely the ontological argument.

A good many philosophers and historians of philosophy seem to have assumed without more ado that Kant's attempt to show that the cosmological argument necessarily relapses into the ontological argument was successful. But to me it seems singularly unconvincing. Or, rather, it is convincing only on one assumption, namely that the argument based on experience brings us, not to an affirmation of the existence of a necessary being, but only to the vague *idea* of a necessary being. For in this case we should have to look about, as Kant puts it, for a determining concept which would include existence in its content, so that existence could be deduced from the determined idea of a necessary being. And then we should be involved in the ontological argument. If, however, the argument based on experience brings us to the affirmation of the *existence* of a necessary being, the attempt to determine *a priori* the necessary attributes of this being has nothing to do with the ontological argument, which is primarily concerned with deducing existence from the idea of a being as possible, and not with deducing attributes from the idea of a being the existence of which has already been affirmed on other grounds than possibility. It may be said that it was precisely Kant's assumption that the argument based on experience brings us only to the vague idea of a necessary being. But this is no adequate reason for saying that the cosmological argument necessarily relapses into the ontological argument. The question whether the argument based on experience is valid or invalid is not really relevant to the precise point at issue. For if someone is convinced, even unjustifiably, that he has already proved the existence of a necessary being on grounds other than the *a priori* possibility of such a being, his subsequent attempt to determine the attributes of this being is not the same procedure as that adopted in the ontological argument.

(iii) Kant opens his discussion of the physico-theological proof by once more repeating general points of view which exclude from the start any *a posteriori* demonstration of God's existence. For example, 'all laws regarding the transition from effects to causes, yes, all synthetic extension of our knowledge, relate solely to possible experience, and thus to the objects of the sensible world; and it is only in relation to the latter that they have significance.'[1] This being the case, no argument from design in Nature to a transcendent cause can possibly be a valid proof.

The chief steps in the physico-theological argument are these. First, we observe in the world manifest signs of purposeful arrangement; that is, of adaptation of means to ends. Secondly, this adaptation of means to ends is contingent, in the sense that it does not belong to the nature of things. Thirdly, there must exist, therefore, at least one cause of this adaptation, and this cause or these causes must be intelligent and free. Fourthly, the reciprocal relations existing between the different parts of the world, relations which produce an harmonious system analogous to a work of art, justify our inferring that there is one, and only one, such cause.

Kant thus interprets the proof of God's existence from finality as based on an analogy from human constructive adaptation of means to ends. And the proof had indeed been presented in this way in the eighteenth century.[2] But, quite apart from any objections which can be raised on this score, Kant remarks that 'the proof could at most establish the existence of an *architect of the world*, whose activity would be limited by the capacity of the material on which he works, and not of a *creator of the world*. . . .'[3] This contention is obviously true. The idea of design brings us, by itself, to the idea of a designer, and not immediately to the conclusion that this designer is also creator of finite sensible things

[1] *B*, 649–50.

[2] Kant did not, of course, have in mind Paley's *Evidences*; for this work was not published until 1802.

[3] *B*, 655.

according to their substance. Kant argues, therefore, that to prove the existence of God in the proper sense the physico-theological proof must summon the aid of the cosmological proof. And this, on Kant's view, relapses into the ontological argument. Thus even the physico-theological proof is dependent, even though indirectly, on the *a priori* or ontological argument. In other words, apart from any other considerations God's existence cannot be proved without the use of the ontological argument, and this is fallacious. All three proofs, therefore, have some fallacies in common; and each has also its own fallacies.

Natural theology or, as Kant often calls it, 'transcendental theology' is, therefore, worthless when it is regarded from one particular point of view, namely as an attempt to demonstrate God's existence by means of transcendental ideas or of theoretical principles which have no application outside the field of experience. But to say simply that Kant rejected natural theology would be apt to give a misleading impression of his position. It is, indeed, a true statement. For he describes natural theology as inferring 'the attributes and existence of an author of the world from the constitution of the world and from the order and unity observable in it'.[1] And the attempt to do this is 'completely fruitless'.[2] At the same time the purely negative statement that Kant rejected natural theology may give the misleading impression that he rejected all philosophical theology altogether. In point of fact, however, he admitted what he sometimes called 'moral theology'.[3] 'We shall show later that the laws of morality do not merely presuppose the existence of a supreme Being, but postulate it with right (though only, of course, from the practical point of view), as these laws are themselves absolutely necessary in another relation.'[4] And when we have arrived at practical (moral) faith in God, we can use the concepts of the reason to think the object of our faith in a consistent manner. True, we remain always in the sphere of practical faith; but, if we remember this fact, we are entitled to use the concepts of reason to construct a rational theology.

These last remarks put the statement that Kant rejected natural theology in a rather different light. That is to say, they help to delimit its meaning. The criticism of natural theology has a twofold function. It exposes the fallacies in the theoretical proofs of God's existence, and shows that God's existence cannot be demonstrated. At the same time the very nature of the criticism shows also that the non-existence of God can never be demonstrated. By reason we cannot either prove or disprove God's existence. The criticism of natural theology thus leaves the way open for practical or moral faith. And, when faith is presupposed, the reason can correct and purify our conception of God. Although reason in its speculative use cannot prove God's existence, 'it is, however, of the greatest use in correcting our knowledge of the supreme Being, supposing that this knowledge can be derived from some other source, in making it consistent with itself and with all other concepts of intelligible objects, and in purifying it from all that is incompatible with the concept of a supreme Being and from all admixture of empirical limitations.'[1]

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[1] *B*, 660.

[2] *B*, 664.

[3] The term does not, of course, refer to moral theology in the sense of a study of the practical application of Christian moral principles. It refers to a philosophical theology, or doctrine of God, based on the demands or postulates of the moral law.

[4] *B*, 662.

Further, the alleged proofs of God's existence, even though they are fallacious arguments, can be of positive use. Thus the physico-theological argument, for which Kant always retained a real respect, can prepare the mind for theological (practical) knowledge and give it 'a right and natural direction',[2] even though it cannot provide a sure foundation for a natural theology.

6. We have already seen that the transcendental Ideas of pure reason have no 'constitutive' use. That is to say, they do not give us knowledge of corresponding objects. The schematized categories of the understanding, applied to the data of sense intuition, 'constitute' objects and thus enable us to know them. But the transcendental Ideas of pure reason are not applicable to the data of sense intuition. Nor are any corresponding objects supplied by a purely intellectual intuition. For we enjoy no such power of intellectual intuition. Hence the transcendental Ideas have no constitutive use and do not increase our knowledge. If we make use of them to transcend the sphere of experience and to assert the existence of realities not given in experience, we inevitably involve ourselves in those fallacies which it is the aim of the *Transcendental Dialectic* to expose.

At the same time, so Kant tells us, the human reason has a natural inclination to overstep the limits of experience, and he even speaks of the transcendental Ideas as being the parents of 'irresistible illusion'.[3] He does not mean, of course, that it is impossible to correct these illusions. But the impulse which produces them is a natural impulse, and the correction follows, as it were, a natural surrender to them. Historically speaking, speculative metaphysics preceded the *Dialectic*. And the latter, though enabling us in principle to avoid metaphysical illusions, cannot destroy the impulse to produce them and surrender to them. The reason for this is that 'transcendental Ideas are just as natural (to reason) as are the categories to the understanding'.[1]

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[1] *B*, 667–8.

[2] *B*, 665.

[3] *B*, 670; cf. *A*, 297–8.

Now, if the transcendental Ideas are natural to the reason, this suggests that they have a proper use. 'Thus the transcendental Ideas will, in all probability, have their proper and consequently *immanent* use.'[2] That is to say, they will have a use in relation to experience, though this use will not consist in enabling us to know objects corresponding to the Ideas. For there are no such objects *immanent* in experience. And if we give the Ideas a transcendent use, we are, as we have seen, inevitably involved in illusion and fallacy. What, then, is the proper employment of the Ideas? It is what Kant calls their 'regulative' use.

The special task of reason is to give systematic arrangement to our cognitions. We can say, therefore, that 'the understanding is an object for reason, as sensibility is for the understanding. To produce a systematic unity in all possible empirical operations of the understanding is the business of reason, just as the understanding unites the manifold of phenomena by means of concepts and brings them under empirical laws.'[3] In this process of systematization the Idea acts as a regulative principle of unity.

In psychology, for example, the Idea of the ego as a simple, permanent subject stimulates and leads us on to an ever greater unification of psychical phenomena, such as desires, emotions, acts of imagination, and so on; and empirical psychology endeavours to bring them together under laws and to form a unified scheme. In this task it is greatly assisted by the transcendental Idea of the ego as a simple, permanent subject. True, this transcendental ego is not given in experience. And if we are misled by the presence of the Idea into asserting dogmatically the existence of a corresponding object, we go beyond what is legitimate. But this does not alter the fact that the Idea is of great value as a kind of heuristic principle.

As for the cosmological Idea of the world, this would be a hindrance to science if it were taken to involve the assertion that the world is a closed totality, so to speak, a completed series. But, when taken without this assertion, the Idea of the world as an indefinite series of events stimulates the mind to proceed ever further along the causal chain. Kant explains that he does not mean to say that in following up a given natural series we are forbidden to find any relatively first term. For instance, we are not forbidden to find the primal members of a given organic species if the empirical evidence so warrants. The cosmological Idea does not tell us what to find or what not to find by scientific investigation. It is a stimulus, a heuristic principle, making us discontented, as it were, with present perceptions and urging us indefinitely to further scientific unification of natural phenomena according to causal laws.

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[1] *B*, 670.

[2] *B*, 671.

[3] *B*, 692; cf. *A*, 302.

Finally, the transcendental Idea of God as a supreme intelligence and the cause of the universe leads us to think of Nature as a systematic teleological unity. And this presupposition aids the mind in its investigation of Nature. Kant does not mean, of course, that investigation of the eye, for instance, should stop short with saying that God gave eyes to certain creatures for a certain purpose. To assert this would in any case involve asserting something which we do not and cannot know. But if we think of Nature *as if* it were the work of an intelligent work of an intelligent author, we shall be prompted, in Kant's opinion, to carry on the work of scientific investigation by subsumption under causal laws. Perhaps one can interpret Kant's meaning in this way. The idea of Nature as the work of an intelligent creator involves the idea of Nature as an intelligible system. And this presupposition is a spur to scientific investigation. In this way the transcendental Idea of a supreme Being can have a regulative and immanent use.

The transcendental Ideas thus form the basis for a philosophy of *As-if*, to borrow the title of Vaihinger's famous work. It is of practical use in psychology to act *as if* psychical phenomena were related to a permanent subject. It is of use in scientific investigation in general to act *as if* the world were a totality stretching back indefinitely in causal series, and *as if* Nature were the work of an intelligent creator. This utility does not show that the Ideas are true, in the sense of having corresponding objects. Nor is Kant saying that the truth of the statement that there is a God consists in the 'immanent' usefulness of the Idea of God. He is not offering a pragmatist interpretation of truth. At the same time it is easy to see how pragmatists have been able to look on Kant as a forerunner of their philosophy.

7. It will be remembered that Kant's two questions about metaphysics were these. How is metaphysics possible as a natural disposition? Is metaphysics possible as a science? The answers to these questions have, indeed, already been given. But it may be worth while to connect the answers with the foregoing section on the regulative use of the transcendental Ideas of pure reason.

Metaphysics as a natural disposition (that is, the natural disposition to metaphysics) is possible because of the very nature of the human reason. The latter, as we have seen, seeks by its very nature to unify the empirical cognitions of the understanding. And this natural impulse to systematic unification gives rise to the Ideas of an unconditioned unity in different forms. The only proper cognitive use of these Ideas is regulative, in the sense explained above, and therefore 'immanent'. At the same time there is a natural tendency to objectify the Ideas. And then reason seeks to justify this objectification in the various branches of metaphysics. In doing so it oversteps the limits of human knowledge. But this transgression does not alter the fact that the Ideas are natural to reason. They are not abstracted from experience; nor are they innate, in the proper sense of innate. But they arise out of reason's very nature. Hence there is nothing to take exception to in the Ideas considered simply as such. Further, they make possible the development of the necessary postulates of moral experience. The transcendental Ideal (the idea of God), for example, makes possible 'moral theology'; that is, a rational theology based on consideration of the moral consciousness. There is no question, therefore, of dismissing the natural impulse to metaphysics as something perverse in itself.

Metaphysics as a science is, however, impossible. That is to say, speculative metaphysics is supposed to be a science concerning objects corresponding to the transcendental Ideas of pure reason; but there are no such objects. Hence there can be no science of them. The function of the Ideas is not 'constitutive'. Of course, if we mean by 'objects' simply realities, including unknown and, indeed, unknowable realities, we are not entitled to say that there are no 'objects' corresponding to the Ideas of the permanent, simple ego and of God.[1] But the word 'object' should be used as a term correlative to our knowledge. Those things are possible objects which can be given to us in experience. But realities, if there are any, corresponding to the transcendental Ideas cannot be given in experience in the absence of any faculty of intellectual intuition. Hence it is perfectly correct to say that there are no objects corresponding to the Ideas. And in this case there obviously cannot be any science of them.

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[1] Kant believed, of course, that there are noumenal realities which we call the soul and God, though he would say that he did not and could not know that this is the case. The arguments to show that there are a soul and God are fallacious;

Now, though there are, strictly speaking, no objects corresponding to the transcendental Ideas, we can *think* realities to which the Ideas of the soul and of God refer. And even if we do not project the Ideas, so to speak, into corresponding realities, the Ideas have content. Hence metaphysics is not meaningless. We cannot know by means of the speculative reason that there is a permanent, simple soul or that God exists; but the Ideas of the soul and of God are free from logical contradiction. They are not mere meaningless terms. Alleged metaphysical knowledge is pseudo-knowledge, illusion, not knowledge at all; and all attempts to show that it is knowledge are fallacious. But metaphysical propositions are not meaningless simply because they are metaphysical.

This seems to me to be Kant's representative position, so to speak, and it differentiates him from the modern positivists who have declared metaphysics to be so much meaningless nonsense. At the same time it must be admitted that the interpretation of Kant's position is by no means such plain sailing as this account would suggest. For sometimes he appears to say, or at least to imply, that speculative metaphysics is meaningless. For instance, he tells us that 'the concepts of reality, substance, causality, and even of necessity in existence lose all meaning and become empty signs of concepts, without any content, if I venture to employ them outside the field of the senses'.[1] And this is not a unique example of this line of thought.

It may well be, as some commentators have suggested, that the apparent diversity in Kant's ways of speaking about the meaning of terms employed in traditional metaphysics is connected with a diversity implicit in his account of the categories. The latter are called *a priori* concepts of the understanding. And in so far as they are concepts, even the unschematized categories must have some content. Hence even in their application outside the field of experience they possess at least some meaning. But the pure

but the ideas, by themselves, do not produce antinomies. The cosmological Idea, however, does produce antinomies. And to this extent it stands in a class by itself.

[1] *B*, 707.

categories are also said to be logical functions of judgments. In this case it seems to follow that they become concepts, as it were, or give rise to concepts only when they are schematized. The unschematized categories would have no content in themselves. They would therefore be meaningless if applied outside the field of experience. Terms such as *Ens realissimum* and *necessary being* would be void of content.

It might be argued, therefore, that Kant's thought points in the direction of the conclusion that the propositions of speculative metaphysics are meaningless. But even if this conclusion appears to follow from one strand in his thought, it certainly does not represent his general position. It seems to me perfectly obvious that a man who insisted on the abiding importance of the fundamental problems of metaphysics, and who tried to show the rational legitimacy of practical faith in freedom, immortality and God did not really believe that metaphysics is simply meaningless nonsense. What he did hold, however, was that if the categories are applied to God, they are not only unable to give knowledge of God but are also of such indeterminate and vague content that they are simply symbols of the unknown. We can, indeed, think God; but we think Him simply by means of symbols. We produce a symbolical conception of the unknown. To think of God in terms of the schematized categories would be equivalent to bringing Him into the sensible world. We therefore try to think away the schematization, as it were, and to apply the term substance, for instance, in an analogical sense. But the attempt to eliminate the concept's reference to the world of sense leaves us with a mere symbol, void of determinate content. Our idea of God is thus symbolical only.

As far as the regulative and so-called immanent use of the transcendental Ideal is concerned, the vagueness of our idea does not matter to Kant. For in making a regulative use of the idea of God we are not asserting that there exists a Being corresponding to this idea. What God may be in Himself, if He exists, can be left indeterminate. We use the idea as 'a point of view' which enables reason to perform its function of unification. 'In a word, this transcendental thing is simply the schema of that regulative principle by means of which reason extends, so far as it can, systematic unity to all experience.'[1]

We may add in conclusion that the Kantian philosophy of religion is grounded in reflection on the practical reason; on reason in its moral use. And it is primarily to Kant's moral theory that we have to look for light on the way in which he thought about God. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* he is concerned with delimiting the range of our theoretical knowledge; and his remarks about the regulative use of the idea of God must not be taken as an account of the meaning of the idea for the religious consciousness.

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[1] *B*, 710.

CHAPTER XIV

KANT (5): MORALITY AND RELIGION[1]

Kant's aim—The good will—Duty and inclination—Duty and law—The categorical imperative—The rational being as an end in itself—The autonomy of the will—The kingdom of ends—Freedom as the condition of the possibility of a categorical imperative—The postulates of practical reason; freedom, Kant's idea of the perfect good, immortality, God, the general theory of the postulates—Kant on religion—Concluding remarks.

1. WE have seen that Kant took for granted our ordinary knowledge of objects and our scientific knowledge. Physical science meant for him the Newtonian physics. And it is obvious that he did not consider it the philosopher's business to substitute for the classical physics some other system or to tell us that all our ordinary knowledge of things is no knowledge at all. But, given our ordinary experience and our scientific knowledge, the philosopher can distinguish by a process of analysis between the formal and material, the *a priori* and *a posteriori* elements in our theoretical knowledge of objects. It is the business of the critical philosopher to isolate and exhibit these *a priori* elements in a systematic way.

Now, besides our knowledge of objects which are originally given in sense intuition there is also moral knowledge. We can be said to know, for example, that we ought to tell the truth. But such knowledge is not knowledge of what is, that is to say, of how men actually behave, but of what ought to be, that is to say, of how men ought to behave. And this knowledge is *a priori*, in the sense that it does not depend on men's actual behaviour. Even if they all told lies, it would still be true that they ought not to do so. We cannot verify the statement that men ought to tell the truth by examining whether they in fact do so or not. The statement is true independently of their conduct, and in this sense is true *a priori*. For necessity and universality are marks of apriority. Of course, if we say 'men ought to tell the truth', our knowledge that there are men depends on experience. But there must be at least an *a priori* element in the judgment. And for Kant the primary task of the moral philosopher should be that of isolating the *a priori* elements in our moral knowledge and showing their origin. In this sense we can depict the moral philosopher as asking how the synthetic *a priori* propositions of morals are possible.

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[1] In references in this chapter *G.* denotes the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, *Pr.R.* the *Critique of Practical Reason*, and *Rel.* the *Religion within the bounds of Reason Alone*. These three works are contained respectively in Volumes IV, V and VI of the critical edition. Numbers after the abbreviated titles indicate sections or (if preceded by p.) pages in this edition. In the case of *G.* and *Pr.R.* corresponding references (by page) will be given to the translations contained in T. K. Abbott's *Kant's Theory of Ethics* (see Bibliography) which will be referred to as *Abb.* In the case of *Rel.* corresponding references will be given to the translation by T. M. Greene and H. H. Hudson, abbreviated as *G.-H.*

The performance of this task obviously does not involve dismissing all our ordinary moral judgments and producing a brand new system of morality. It means discovering the *a priori* principles according to which we judge when we make moral judgments. In the last chapter we saw that there are, according to Kant, certain *a priori* categories and principles of judgment. But Kant did not imagine that he was supplying for the first time a brand new set of categories. What he wished to do was to show how the categories which ground the synthetic *a priori* principles of our theoretical knowledge have their origin in the structure of the understanding. He wanted to connect them with the pure reason (the word 'reason' being here used in its wider sense). So now he wishes to discover the origin in the practical reason of the fundamental principles according to which we all judge when we judge morally.

Kant does not mean to imply, of course, that we are all explicitly aware of the *a priori* principles of morality. If we were, the task of isolating them would be superfluous. As it is, our moral knowledge taken as a whole contains a variety of elements; and it is the primary task, though not the only possible task, of the moral philosopher to lay bare the *a priori* element, freeing it from all empirically derived elements, and to show its origin in the practical reason.

What is the practical reason? It is reason[1] in its practical (moral) use or function. In other words, 'ultimately (there is) only one and the same reason which has to be distinguished simply in its application'.[2] Though ultimately one, reason can be concerned, we are told, with its objects in two ways. It can determine the object, the latter being originally given from some other source than reason itself. Or it can make the object real. 'The first is *theoretical*, the second *practical* rational knowledge.'[1] In its theoretical function reason determines or constitutes the object given in intuition, in the sense explained in the last chapter. It applies itself, as it were, to a datum given from another source than reason itself. In its practical function, however, reason is the source of its objects; it is concerned with moral choice, not with applying categories to the data of sense intuition. We can say that it is concerned with the production of moral choices or decisions in accordance with the law which proceeds from itself. We are told, therefore, that whereas reason in its theoretical function is concerned with objects of the cognitive power, in its practical use it is concerned 'with the grounds of the determination of the will; which is a power either of producing objects corresponding to ideas or of determining itself to produce them (whether the physical power to do so is sufficient or not), that is, of determining its causality'.[2] In plain language, theoretical reason is directed towards knowledge, while practical reason is directed towards choice in accordance with moral law and, when physically possible, to the implementation of choice in action. It should be added that while Kant sometimes speaks of practical reason as though it were distinct from will and influenced the latter, he also sometimes identifies it with will. The former way of speaking suggests the picture of practical reason moving the will by means of the moral imperative. The latter way of speaking shows that for Kant the will is a rational power, not a blind drive. Both ways of speaking seem to be required; for practical reason takes the form of willing in accordance with a principle or a maxim,[3] and we can distinguish the cognitive and voluntary aspects involved. But we must not so emphasize the cognitive aspect, knowledge of a moral principle, as to identify it with practical reason to the exclusion of will. For practical reason is said to produce its objects or to make them real. And it is will which produces choice and action in accordance with moral concepts and principles.

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[1] The word 'reason' must be understood here in the wide sense indicated by the titles of the first two *Critiques*, not in the narrow sense of the power of mediate inference.

[2] *G.*, p. 391; *Abb.*, p. 7.

Now, we have said that for Kant the moral philosopher must find in the practical reason the source of the *a priori* element in the moral judgment. We cannot say, therefore, that Kant expects the philosopher to derive the whole moral law, form and content,

[1] *Critique of Pure Reason, B*, x.

[2] *Pr.R.*, 29–30; *Abb.*, p. 101.

[3] The difference in meaning between these two words will be mentioned later.

from the concept of the practical reason. This follows, indeed, from the statement that the philosopher is concerned with finding the source in practical reason of the *a priori* element in the moral judgment. For the statement implies that there is an *a posteriori* element, which is given empirically. This is perfectly obvious, of course, in the case of a singular moral judgment such as the judgment that I am morally obliged here and now to reply to a certain letter from a particular person. We can distinguish between the concept of moral obligation as such and the empirically given conditions of this particular duty. Further, when Kant speaks of the practical reason or rational will as the fount of the moral law, he is thinking of practical reason *as such*, not of the practical reason as found in a specific class of finite beings, that is, in human beings. True, he does not intend to state that there *are* finite rational beings other than men. But he is concerned with the moral imperative as bearing on all beings which are capable of being subject to obligation, whether they are men or not. Hence he is concerned with the moral imperative regarded as antecedent to consideration of human nature and its empirical conditions. And if practical reason is looked on in this extremely abstract way, it follows that moral laws, in so far as they make sense only on the supposition that there are human beings, cannot be deduced from the concept of practical reason. For instance, it would be absurd to think of the commandment 'Thou shalt not commit adultery' applying to pure spirits, for it presupposes bodies and the institution of marriage. We have to distinguish between pure ethics or the metaphysics of morals, which deals with the supreme principle or principles of morality and with the nature of moral obligation as such, and applied ethics, which applies the supreme principle or principles to the conditions of human nature, calling in the aid of what Kant calls 'anthropology', knowledge of human nature.

The general notion of the division between the metaphysics of morals and applied ethics is reasonably clear. Physics, as we saw, can be divided into pure physics or the metaphysics of Nature and empirical physics. Analogously, ethics or moral philosophy can be divided into the metaphysics of morals and applied ethics or practical anthropology. But when we come down to the details of the division, certain difficulties arise. We would expect the metaphysics of morals to prescind altogether from human nature and to be concerned exclusively with certain fundamental principles which are afterwards applied to human nature in so-called practical anthropology. But in the introduction to the *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797) Kant admits that even in the metaphysics of morals we often have to take account of human nature as such in order to exhibit the consequences of universal moral principles. True, this does not mean that the metaphysics of morals can be founded on anthropology. 'A metaphysics of morals cannot be founded on anthropology, but may be applied to it.'[1] But if the application of moral principles to human nature is admissible in the metaphysical part of ethics, the second part of ethics, namely moral or practical anthropology, tends to become a study of the subjective conditions, favourable and unfavourable, for carrying out moral precepts. It will be concerned, for example, with moral education. And it is, indeed, with such themes that practical anthropology is said to be concerned when Kant describes its function in the introduction to the *Metaphysics of Morals*.

The difficulty, therefore, is this. According to Kant, there is need for a metaphysic of morals which will prescind from all empirical factors. And he blames Wolff for having mixed up *a priori* and empirical factors in his ethical writing. At the same time there seems to be a tendency on Kant's part to push into the metaphysical part of ethics moral laws which seem to include empirical elements. Thus we are told that 'the commandment, *Thou shalt not lie*, is not valid only for human beings as though other rational beings had no need to bother with it; and so with all other moral laws in the proper sense'.[2] But though this precept is *a priori* in the sense that it holds good independently of the way in which human beings actually behave, it is questionable whether it is *a priori* in the sense that it does not depend in any way on 'anthropology'.[3]

However, the main point which Kant wishes to make is that 'the basis of obligation must not be sought in human nature or in the circumstances of the world in which he (man) is placed, but *a priori* simply in the concepts of pure reason'.[4] We must work out a pure ethics which, 'when applied to man, does not borrow the least thing from the knowledge of man himself, but gives laws *a priori* to him as a rational being'.[5] We are really concerned with finding in reason itself the basis of the *a priori* element in the moral

[1] *W.*, VI, p. 217; *Abb.*, p. 272.

[2] *G.*, Preface, p. 389; *Abb.*, pp. 3–4.

[3] It is conceivable that Kant had at the back of his mind the picture of Satan deceiving men. The precept would apply also to 'the father of lies'.

[4] *G.*, Preface, p. 389; *Abb.*, p. 4.

[5] *Ibid.*

judgment, the element which makes possible the synthetic *a priori* propositions of morals. We are certainly not concerned with deducing all moral laws and precepts by mere analysis from the concept of the pure practical reason. Kant did not think that this can be done.

But though we cannot deduce all moral laws and precepts from the concept of pure practical reason alone, the moral law must ultimately be grounded in this reason. And as this means finding the ultimate source of the principles of the moral law in reason considered in itself, without reference to specifically human conditions, Kant obviously parts company with all moral philosophers who try to find the ultimate basis of the moral law in human nature as such or in any feature of human nature or in any factor in human life or society. In the *Critique of Practical Reason* he refers to Montaigne as founding morality on education, to Epicurus as founding it on man's physical feeling, to Mandeville as founding it on political constitution, and to Hutcheson as founding it on man's moral feelings. He then remarks that all these alleged foundations are 'evidently incapable of furnishing the general principle of morality'.[1] We can also note that Kant's moral theory, by grounding the moral law on reason, is incompatible with modern emotive theories of ethics. In a word, he rejects empiricism and must be classed as a rationalist in ethics, provided that this word is not taken to mean someone who thinks that the whole moral law is deducible by mere analysis from some fundamental concept.

In the following outline of Kant's moral theory we shall be concerned primarily with the metaphysical part of morals. That is to say, we shall be concerned primarily with what Kant calls the metaphysics of morals, not with speculative metaphysics. For Kant did not believe that morality should be founded on natural theology. For him belief in God is grounded in the moral consciousness rather than the moral law on belief in God. And our treatment will be based on the *Groundwork* and the second *Critique*. The work entitled *Metaphysics of Morals* does not seem to add much, if anything, which is required for a brief outline of the Kantian moral theory.

In the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (called by Abbott *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*) we are told that the metaphysics of morals is concerned to investigate

[1] *Pr.R.*, 70; *Abb.*, p. 129.

'the source of the practical principles which are to be found *a priori* in our reason'.[1] The *Groundwork* itself is said to be 'nothing more than the investigation and establishment of *the supreme principle of morality*',[2] and thus to constitute a complete treatise in itself. At the same time it does not profess to be a complete critique of the practical reason. Hence it leads on to the second *Critique*. This fact is indicated, indeed, by the titles of the main divisions of the *Groundwork*. For the first part deals with the transition from common or ordinary moral knowledge to philosophical moral knowledge; the second part with the transition from popular moral philosophy to the metaphysics of morals; and the third with the final step from the metaphysics of morals to the critique of the pure practical reason.

The structure of the *Critique of Practical Reason* recalls the structure of the first *Critique*. There is, of course, nothing corresponding to the *Transcendental Aesthetic*. But the work is divided into an *Analytic* (proceeding from principles to concepts rather than, as in the first *Critique*, from concepts to principles) and a *Dialectic*, dealing with the illusions of reason in its practical use, but also putting forward a positive standpoint. And Kant adds a *Methodology of Pure Practical Reason*, treating of the method of making the objectively practical reason also subjectively practical. That is to say, it considers the way in which the laws of the pure practical reason can be given access to and influence on the human mind. But this section is brief, and it is perhaps inserted more to supply something corresponding to the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method* in the first *Critique* than for any more cogent reason.

2. The fact that the opening words of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* have been quoted time and time again is no reason for not quoting them once more. 'It is impossible to conceive of anything in the world, or indeed out of it, which can be called good without qualification save only a good will.'[3] But though Kant begins his treatise in this dramatic way, he does not consider that he is giving a startling new piece of information. For in his opinion he is making explicit a truth which is present at least implicitly in ordinary moral knowledge. However, it is incumbent on him to explain what he means by saying that a good will is the only good without qualification.

The concept of an unqualified good can be explained without

[1] *G.*, Preface, pp. 389–90; *Abb.*, p. 4.

[2] *G.*, Preface, p. 392; *Abb.*, p. 7.

[3] *G.*, p. 393; *Abb.*, p. 9.

much difficulty. External possessions, such as wealth, can be misused, as everybody knows. Hence they are not good without qualification. And the same can be said about mental talents, such as quickness of understanding. A criminal can possess and misuse mental talents of a high order. We can also say the same of natural traits of character, such as courage. They can be employed or manifested in pursuing an evil end. But a good will cannot be bad or evil in any circumstances. It is good without qualification.

This statement, taken by itself, seems to be a mere tautology. For a good will is good by definition; and it is analytically true to say that a good will is always good. Kant must therefore explain what he means by a good will. He refers, indeed, in the first place to a will which is good in itself and not merely in relation to something else. We may say, for example, of a painful surgical treatment that it is good, not in itself, but in relation to the beneficial effect which it is designed to bring about. But the Kantian concept of a good will is the concept of a will which is always good in itself, by virtue of its intrinsic value, and not simply in relation to the production of some end, for example, happiness. We wish to know, however, when a will is good in itself, that is, when it has intrinsic value. According to Kant, a will cannot be said to be good in itself simply because it causes, for instance, good actions. For I may will, for instance, a good action which physical circumstances prevent me from performing. Yet my will can be none the less good. What makes it good? If we are to escape from mere tautology, we must give some content to the term 'good' when applied to the will and not content ourselves with saying that a good will is a good will or that a will is good when it is good.

To elucidate the meaning of the term 'good' when applied to the will, Kant turns his attention to the concept of duty which is for him the salient feature of the moral consciousness. A will which acts for the sake of duty is a good will. The matter has to be stated in this form if it is to be stated with accuracy. For the will of God is a good will, but it would be absurd to speak of God performing His duty. For the concept of duty or obligation involves the concept of at least the possibility of self-conquest, of having to overcome obstacles. And the divine will is not conceived as subject to any possible hindrance in willing what is good. Hence to be quite accurate we cannot say that a good will is a will which acts for the sake of duty; we have to say that a will which acts for the sake of duty is a good will. However, Kant calls a will such as the divine will, which is conceived as always and necessarily good, a 'holy will', thus giving it a special name. And if we prescind from the concept of a holy will and confine our attention to a finite will subject to obligation, we can permit ourselves to say that a good will is one which acts for the sake of duty. But the notion of acting for the sake of duty needs, of course, further elucidation.

3. Kant makes a distinction between actions which are in accordance with duty and acts which are done for the sake of duty. His own example serves to make clear the nature of this distinction. Let us suppose that a tradesman is always careful not to overcharge his customers. His behaviour is certainly in accordance with duty; but it does not necessarily follow that he behaves in this way for the sake of duty, that is, because it is his duty so to behave. For he may refrain from overcharging his customers simply from motives of prudence; for example, on the ground that honesty is the best policy. Thus the class of actions performed in accordance with duty is much wider than the class of actions performed for the sake of duty.

According to Kant, only those actions which are performed for the sake of duty have moral worth. He takes the example of preserving one's life. 'To preserve one's life is a duty, and further, everyone has an immediate inclination to do so.'[1] These are the two presuppositions. Now, if I preserve my life simply because I have an inclination to do so, my action does not, in Kant's view, possess moral worth. To possess such worth my action must be performed because it is my duty to preserve my life; that is, out of a sense of moral obligation. Kant does not explicitly say that it is morally wrong to preserve my life because I desire to do so. For my action would be at least in accordance with duty and not incompatible with it, as suicide would be. But it has no moral value. On the one hand it is not a moral action; but on the other hand it can hardly be called an immoral action in the sense in which suicide is immoral.

This view may be incorrect; but Kant at any rate thinks that it represents the view which everyone who possesses moral convictions implicitly holds and which he will recognize as true if he reflects. Kant tends to complicate matters, however, by giving the impression that in his opinion the moral value of an action performed for the sake of duty is increased in proportion to a decrease in inclination to perform the action. In other words, he gives some ground for the interpretation that, in his view, the less inclination we have to do our duty, the greater is the moral value of our action if we actually perform what it is our duty to do. And this point of view leads to the strange conclusion that the more we hate doing our duty the better, provided that we do it. Or, to put the matter another way, the more we have to overcome ourselves to do our duty, the more moral we are. And, if this is admitted, it seems to follow that the baser a man's inclinations are, the higher is his moral value, provided that he overcomes his evil tendencies. But this point of view is contrary to the common conviction that the integrated personality, in whom inclination and duty coincide, has achieved a higher level of moral development than the man in whom inclination and desire are at war with his sense of duty.

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[1] *G.*, p. 397; *Abb.*, p. 13.

However, though Kant sometimes speaks in a way which appears at first sight at least to support this interpretation, his main point is simply that when a man performs his duty contrary to his inclinations, the fact that he acts for the sake of duty and not simply out of inclination is clearer than it would be if he had a natural attraction to the action. And to say this is not necessarily to say that it is better to have no inclination for doing one's duty than to have such an inclination. Speaking of the beneficent man or philanthropist, he asserts, indeed, that the action of doing good to others has no moral worth if it is simply the effect of a natural inclination, springing from a naturally sympathetic temperament. But he does not say that there is anything wrong or undesirable in possessing such a temperament. On the contrary, actions arising from a natural satisfaction in increasing the happiness of others are 'proper and lovable'.[1] Kant may have been a rigorist in ethics; but his concern to bring out the difference between acting for the sake of duty and acting to satisfy one's natural desires and inclinations should not be taken to imply that he had no use for the ideal of a completely virtuous man who has overcome and transformed all desires which conflict with duty. Nor should it be taken to mean that in his opinion the truly virtuous man would be without any inclinations at all. Speaking of the commandment in the Gospels to love all men, he remarks that love as an affection ('pathological' love, as he puts it) cannot be commanded, but that beneficence for duty's sake ('practical' love) can be commanded, even if a man has an aversion towards beneficent action. But he

[1] *G.*, p. 398; *Abb.*, p. 14.

certainly does not say that it is better to have an aversion towards beneficent action, provided that one performs such actions when it is one's duty to do so, than to have an inclination towards it. On the contrary, he explicitly asserts that it is better to do one's duty cheerfully than otherwise. And his moral ideal, as will be seen later, was the greatest possible approximation to complete virtue, to the holy will of God.

4. So far we have learned that a good will is manifested in acting for the sake of duty, and that acting for the sake of duty must be distinguished from acting out of mere inclination or desire. But we require some more positive indication of what is meant by acting for the sake of duty. And Kant tells us that it means acting out of reverence for law, that is, the moral law. 'Duty is the necessity of acting out of reverence for the law.'[1]

Now, by law Kant means law as such. To act for the sake of duty is to act out of reverence for law as such. And the essential characteristic (the form, we may say) of law as such is universality; that is to say, strict universality which does not admit of exceptions. Physical laws are universal; and so is the moral law. But whereas all physical things, including man as a purely physical thing, conform unconsciously and necessarily to physical law, rational beings, and they alone, are capable of acting in accordance with the idea of law. A man's actions, therefore, if they are to have moral worth, must be performed out of reverence for the law. Their moral worth is derived, according to Kant, not from their results, whether actual or intended, but from the maxim of the agent. And this maxim, to confer moral worth on actions, must be that of abiding by law, of obeying it, out of reverence for the law.

We are told, therefore, that the good will, the only good without qualification, is manifested in acting for the sake of duty; that duty means acting out of reverence for law; and that law is essentially universal. But this leaves us with a highly abstract, not to say empty, concept of acting for the sake of duty. And the question arises how it can be translated into terms of the concrete moral life.

Before we can answer this question, we must make a distinction between maxims and principles. A principle, in Kant's technical terminology, is a fundamental objective moral law, grounded in the pure practical reason. It is a principle on which all men would act if they were purely rational moral agents. A maxim is a subjective principle of volition. That is to say, it is a principle on which an agent acts as a matter of fact and which determines his decisions. Such maxims can be, of course, of diverse kinds; and they may or may not accord with the objective principle or principles of the moral law.

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[1] *G.*, p. 400; *Abb.*, p. 16.

This account of the nature of maxims may seem to be incompatible with what has been said above about Kant's view that the moral worth of actions is determined by the agent's maxim. For if a maxim can be out of accord with the moral law, how can it confer moral worth on the actions prompted by it? To meet this difficulty we have to make a further distinction between empirical or material maxims and *a priori* or formal maxims. The first refer to desired ends or results while the second do not. The maxim which confers moral value on actions must be of the second type. That is to say, it must not refer to any objects of sensuous desire or to any results to be obtained by action; but it must be the maxim of obeying universal law as such. That is to say, if the subjective principle of volition is obedience to the universal moral law, out of reverence for the law, the actions governed by this maxim will have moral worth. For they will have been performed for the sake of duty.

Having made these distinctions, we can return to the question how Kant's abstract concept of acting for the sake of duty can be translated into terms of the concrete moral life. 'As I have robbed the will of all impulses (or inducements) which could arise for it from following any particular law, there remains nothing but the universal conformity of actions to law in general, which should serve the will as a principle. That is to say, *I am never to act otherwise than so that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law*.'[1] The word 'maxim' must be taken here to refer to what we have called empirical or material maxims. Reverence for law, which gives rise to the formal maxim of acting in obedience to law as such, demands that we should bring all our material maxims under the form of law as such, this form being universality. We have to ask whether we could will that a given maxim should become a universal law. That is to say, could it assume the form of universality?

Kant gives an example. Let us imagine a man in distress, who can extricate himself from his plight only by making a promise which he has no intention of fulfilling. That is to say, he can obtain relief only by lying. May he do so? If he does act in this way, his maxim will be that he is entitled to make a promise with no intention of fulfilling it (that is, that he is entitled to lie) if only by this means can he extricate himself from a distressful situation. We may put the question in this form, therefore. Can he will that this maxim should become a universal law? The maxim, when universalized, would state that everyone may make a promise with no intention of keeping it (that is, that anyone may lie) when he finds himself in a difficulty from which he can extricate himself by no other means. According to Kant, this universalization cannot be willed. For it would mean willing that lying should become a universal law. And then no promises would be believed. But the man's maxim postulates belief in promises. Therefore he cannot adopt this maxim and at the same time will that it should become a universal law. Thus the maxim cannot assume the form of universality. And if a maxim cannot enter as a principle into a possible scheme of universal law, it must be rejected.

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[1] *G.*, p. 402; *Abb.*, p. 18.

Far be it from me to suggest that this example is immune from criticism. But I do not wish, by discussing possible objections, to distract attention from the main point which Kant is trying to make. It seems to be this. In practice we all act according to what Kant calls maxims. That is to say, we all have subjective principles of volition. Now, a finite will cannot be good unless it is motivated by respect or reverence for universal law. In order, therefore, that our wills may be morally good, we must ask ourselves whether we can will that our maxims, our subjective principles of volition, should become universal laws. If we cannot do so, we must reject these maxims. If we can do so, that is if our maxims can enter as principles into a possible scheme of universal moral legislation, reason demands that we should admit and respect them in virtue of our reverence for law as such.[1]

It is to be noted that up to this point Kant has been concerned with clarifying the idea of acting for the sake of duty. Further, in his opinion we have been moving in the sphere of what he calls the moral knowledge of common human reason. 'The necessity of acting from pure reverence for the practical law is that which constitutes duty, to which every other motive must give place, because it is the condition of a will being good *in itself*; and the worth of such a will is above everything. Thus, then, without leaving the moral knowledge of common human reason, we have arrived at its principle.'[1] Although men do not ordinarily conceive this principle in such an abstract form, yet it is known by them implicitly, and it is the principle on which their moral judgments rest.

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[1] There is obviously no question here of *deducing* concrete rules of conduct from the concept of universal law as such. The concept is used as a test of the admissibility or inadmissibility of maxims, but not as a premiss from which they can be deduced.

The principle of duty, that I ought never to act otherwise than so that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law, is a way of formulating what Kant calls the categorical imperative. And we can now turn our attention to this subject.

5. As we have seen, a distinction must be made between principles and maxims. The objective principles of morality may be also subjective principles of volition, functioning as maxims. But there may also be a discrepancy between the objective principles of morality on the one hand and a man's maxims or subjective principles of volition on the other. If we were all purely rational moral agents, the objective principles of morality would always govern our actions; that is to say, they would also be subjective principles of volition. In point of fact, however, we are capable of acting on maxims or subjective principles of volition which are incompatible with the objective principles of morality. And this means that the latter present themselves to us as commands or imperatives. We thus experience obligation. If our wills were holy wills, there would be no question of command and no question of obligation. But inasmuch as our wills are not holy wills (though the holy will remains the ideal), the moral law necessarily takes for us the form of an imperative. The pure practical reason commands; and it is our duty to overcome the desires which conflict with these commands.

When defining an imperative, Kant makes a distinction between command and imperative.[2] 'The conception of an objective principle, in so far as it is necessitating for a will, is called a command (of reason), and the formula of the command is called an *imperative*. All imperatives are expressed by an *ought* and exhibit thereby the relation of an objective law of reason to a will which, by reason of its subjective constitution, is not necessarily determined by it.'[3] By speaking of the objective principle as being 'necessitating' (*nötigend*) for a will Kant does not mean, of course, that the human will cannot help obeying the law. The point is rather that the will does not necessarily follow the dictate of reason, with the consequence that the law appears to the agent as something external which exercises constraint or pressure on the will. In this sense the law is said to be 'necessitating' for the will. But the latter is not 'necessarily determined' by the law. Kant's terminology may be confusing; but he is not guilty of self-contradiction.

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[1] *G.*, p. 403; *Abb.*, p. 20.

[2] He does not make much use of it, however. So there is no real need to bother about it

[3] *G.*, p. 413; *Abb.*, p.30.

Now, there are three kinds of imperatives, corresponding to three different kinds or senses of good action. And as only one of these imperatives is the moral imperative, it is important to understand the Kantian distinction between the different types.

Let us first consider the sentence, 'If you wish to learn French, you ought to take these means'. Here we have an imperative. But there are two things to notice. First, the actions commanded are conceived as being good with a view to attaining a certain end. They are not commanded as actions which ought to be performed for their own sake, but only as a means. The imperative is thus said to be *hypothetical*. Secondly, the end in question is not one which everyone seeks by nature. A man may wish or not wish to learn French. The imperative simply states that *if* you wish to learn French, you ought to take certain means, that is, perform certain actions. This type of imperative is called by Kant a *problematic* hypothetical imperative or an imperative of skill.

There is no difficulty in seeing that this type of imperative is not the moral imperative. We have taken the example of learning French. But we might equally well have taken the example of becoming a successful burglar. 'If you wish to become a successful burglar, that is, if you wish to burgle and not to be found out, these are the means which you ought to take.' The imperative of skill, or the technical imperative as we might call it, has, in itself, nothing to do with morality. The actions commanded are commanded simply as useful for the attainment of an end which one may or may not desire to attain; and the pursuit may or may not be compatible with the moral law.

In the second place let us consider the sentence, 'You desire happiness by a necessity of nature; therefore you ought to perform these actions'. Here again we have a *hypothetical* imperative, in the sense that certain actions are commanded as means to an end. But it is not a problematic hypothetical imperative. For the desire of happiness is not an end which we set before ourselves or leave aside as we like, in the way that we can choose or not choose to learn French, to become successful burglars, to acquire the carpenter's art, and so on. The imperative does not say, '*if* you desire happiness': it *asserts* that you desire happiness. It is thus an *assertoric* hypothetical imperative.

Now, this imperative has been regarded in some ethical systems as a moral imperative. But Kant will not allow that any hypothetical imperative, whether problematic or assertoric, is the moral imperative. It seems to me that he is somewhat cavalier in his treatment of teleological ethical theories. I mean that he does not seem to give sufficient consideration to a distinction which has to be made between different types of teleological ethics. 'Happiness' may be regarded as a subjective state which is acquired by certain actions but which is distinct from these actions. In this case the actions are judged good simply as means to an end to which they are external. But 'happiness', if we follow, for instance, the customary way of translating Aristotle's[1] *eudaimonia*, may be regarded as an objective actualization of the potentialities of man as man (that is, as an activity); and in this case the actions which are judged good are not purely external to the end. However, Kant would probably say that we then have an ethic based on the idea of the perfection of human nature, and that, though this idea is morally relevant, it cannot supply the supreme principle of morality which he is seeking.

In any case Kant rejects all hypothetical imperatives, whether problemetic or assertoric, as qualifying for the title of moral imperative. It remains, therefore, that the moral imperative must be *categorical*. That is to say, it must command actions, not as means to any end, but as good in themselves. It is what Kant calls an apodictic imperative. 'The categorical imperative, which declares an action to be objectively necessary in itself without reference to any purpose, that is, without any other end, is valid as an *apodictic* practical principle.'[2]

What is this categorical imperative? All that we can say about it purely *a priori*, that is, by considering the mere concept of a categorical imperative, is that it commands conformity to law in general. It commands, that is to say, that the maxims which serve as our principles of volition should conform to universal law. 'There is, therefore, only one categorical imperative, and it is this:

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[1] For an outline of Aristotle's ethical theory, see Vol. I of this *History*, Chapter XXXI.

[2] *G.*, p. 415; *Abb.*, p. 32.

Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.'[1] But Kant immediately gives us another formulation of the imperative, namely to '*Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a Universal Law of Nature*'.[2]

In the last section we met the categorical imperative expressed in a negative form. And earlier, in the footnote on page 320, I remarked that there is no question of deducing concrete rules of conduct from the concept of universal law as such. So here also we must remember that Kant does not intend to imply that concrete rules of conduct can be deduced from the categorical imperative in the sense in which the conclusion of a syllogism can be deduced from the premisses. The imperative serves, not as a premiss for deduction by mere analysis, but as a criterion for judging the morality of concrete principles of conduct. We might speak, however, of moral laws being derived in some sense from the categorical imperative. Suppose that I give money to a poor person in great distress when there is nobody else who has a greater claim on me. The maxim of my action, that is, the subjective principle of my volition, is, let us assume, that I will give alms to an individual who really needs such assistance when there is nobody else who has a prior claim on me. I ask myself whether I can will this maxim as a universal law valid for all, namely that one should give assistance to those who really need it when there is nobody else who has a prior claim on one. And I decide that I can so will. My maxim is thus morally justified. As for the moral law which I will, this is obviously not deducible by mere analysis from the categorical imperative. For it introduces ideas which are not contained in the latter. At the same time the law can be said to be derived from the categorical imperative, in the sense that it is derived through applying the imperative.

Kant's general notion, therefore, is that the practical or moral law as such is strictly universal; universality being, as it were, its form. Hence all concrete principles of conduct must partake in this universality if they are to qualify for being called moral. But he does not make it at all clear what precisely he means by 'being able' or 'not being able' to will that one's maxim should become a universal law. One would perhaps be naturally inclined to understand him as referring to the absence or presence of logical contradiction when one tries to universalize one's maxim. But Kant makes a distinction. 'Some actions are of such a nature that their maxims cannot, without contradiction, be even conceived as a universal law.'[1] Here Kant seems to refer to a logical contradiction between the maxim and its formulation as a universal law. In other cases, however, this 'intrinsic impossibility' is absent; 'but it is still impossible to *will* that the maxim should be raised to the universality of a law of nature, because such a will would contradict itself'.[2] Here Kant seems to refer to cases in which a maxim could be given the formulation of a universal law without logical contradiction, though we could not *will* this law because the will, as expressed in the law, would be in antagonism or, as Kant puts it, contradiction with itself as adhering steadfastly to some purpose or desire the attainment of which would be incompatible with the observance of the law.

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[1] *G.*, p. 421; *Abb.*, p. 38.

[2] *Ibid.*; *Abb.*, p. 39.

A series of examples is, indeed, supplied. The fourth of these appears to be intended as an example of the second type of inability to will that one's maxim should become a universal law. A man enjoys great prosperity but sees that others are in misery and that he could help them. He adopts, however, the maxim of not concerning himself with the distress of others. Can this maxim be turned into a universal law? It can be done without logical contradiction. For there is no logical contradiction in a law that those in prosperity ought not to render any assistance to those in distress. But, according to Kant, the prosperous man cannot *will* this law without a contradiction or antagonism within his will. For his original maxim was the expression of a selfish disregard for others, and it was accompanied by the firm desire of himself obtaining help from others if he should ever be in a state of misery, a desire which would be negated by willing the universal law in question.

Kant's second example appears to be intended as an example of a logical contradiction being involved in turning one's maxim into a universal law. A man needs money, and he can obtain it only by promising to repay it, though he knows very well that he will be unable to do so. Reflection shows him that he cannot turn the maxim (when I am in need of money, I will borrow it and promise to repay it, though I know that I shall not be able to do so) into a universal law without contradiction. For the universal law would destroy all faith in promises, whereas the maxim presupposes faith in promises. From what he says Kant appears to have thought that the law itself would be self-contradictory, the law being that anyone who is in need and can obtain relief only by making a promise which he cannot fulfil may make such a promise. But it is difficult to see that this proposition is self-contradictory in a purely logical sense, though it may be that the law could not be *willed* without the inconsistencies to which Kant draws attention.

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[1] *G.*, p. 424; *Abb.*, p. 41.

[2] *Ibid.*; *Abb.*, p. 42.

It may be said, of course, that we ought not to make heavy weather of concrete examples. The examples may be open to objection; but even if Kant has not given sufficient attention to their formulation, the theory which they are supposed to illustrate is the important thing. This would be an apt observation if the theory, in its abstract expression, were clear. But this does not seem to me to be the case. It seems to me that Kant has not properly clarified the meaning of 'being able' and 'not being able' to will that one's maxim should become a universal law. However, behind his examples we can see the conviction that the moral law is essentially universal, and that the making of exceptions for oneself from selfish motives is immoral. The practical reason commands us to rise above selfish desires and maxims which clash with the universality of law.

6. We have seen that according to Kant there is 'only one' categorical imperative, namely 'Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law'. But we have also seen that he gives another formulation of the categorical imperative, namely 'Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a Universal Law of Nature'. And he gives further formulations. There seem to be five in all; but Kant tells us that there are three. Thus he asserts that 'the three above-mentioned ways of presenting the principle of morality are at bottom so many formulas of the very same law, each of which involves the other two'.[1] By giving several formulations of the categorical imperative Kant does not, therefore, intend to recant what he has said about there being 'only one' such imperative. The different formulations are intended, he tells us, to bring an idea of the reason nearer to intuition, by means of a certain analogy, and thereby nearer to feeling. Thus the formulation 'Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a Universal Law of Nature' makes use of an analogy between moral law and natural law. And elsewhere Kant expresses the formula in this way: 'Ask yourself whether you could

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[1] *G.*, p. 436; *Abb.*, p. 54.

regard the action which you propose to do as a possible object of your will if it were to take place according to a law of nature in a system of nature of which you were yourself a part.'[1] This formula[2] may be the same as the categorical imperative in its original form in the sense that the latter is its principle, as it were; but it is obvious that the idea of a system of Nature is an addition to the categorical imperative as first expressed.

Assuming, however, that the two formulations of the categorical imperative which have already been mentioned can be reckoned as one, we come to what Kant calls the second formulation or way of presenting the principle of morality. His approach to it is involved.

We have, Kant tells us, exhibited the content of the categorical imperative. 'But we have not yet advanced so far as to prove that there really is such an imperative, that there is a practical law which commands absolutely of itself and without any other impulses, and that the following of this law is duty.'[3] The question arises, therefore, whether it is a practically necessary law (that is, a law imposing obligation) for all rational beings that they should always judge their actions by maxims which they can will to be universal laws. If this is actually the case, there must be a synthetic *a priori* connection between the concept of the will of a rational being as such and the categorical imperative.

Kant's treatment of the matter is not easy to follow and gives the impression of being very roundabout. He argues that that which serves the will as the objective ground of its self-determination is the *end*. And if there is an end which is assigned by reason alone (and not by subjective desire), it will be valid for all rational beings and will thus serve as the ground for a categorical imperative binding the wills of all rational beings. This end cannot be a relative end, fixed by desire; for such ends give rise only to hypothetical imperatives. It must be, therefore, an end in itself, possessing absolute, and not merely relative, value. 'Assuming that there is something *the existence of which* has *in itself* absolute value, something which, *as an end in itself*, could be the ground of determinate laws, then in it and in it alone would lie the ground of a possible categorical imperative, that is, of a practical law.'[4]

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[1] *Pr.R.*, 122; *Abb.*, p. 161.

[2] This formula is clearly presupposed by Kant's first example of the application of the categorical imperative, namely of the man who is reduced to hopeless misery and who asks himself whether he may commit suicide (*G.*, pp. 421–2; *Abb.*, pp. 39–40).

[3] *G.*, p. 425; *Abb.*, p. 43.

[4] *G.*, p. 428; *Abb.*, p. 46.

Again, if there is a supreme practical principle which is for the human will a categorical imperative, 'it must be one which, being derived from the conception of that which is necessarily an end for everyone because it is *an end in itself*, constitutes an *objective* principle of will, and can thus serve as a universal practical law'.[1]

Is there such an end? Kant postulates that man, and indeed any rational being, is an end in itself. The concept of a rational being as an end in itself can therefore serve as the ground for a supreme practical principle or law. 'The ground of this principle is: *rational nature exists as an end in itself*. . . . The practical imperative will thus be as follows. *So act as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of any other, always at the same time as an end, and never merely as a means*.'[2] The words 'at the same time' and 'merely' are of importance. We cannot help making use of other human beings as means. When I go to the hairdresser's, for example, I use him as a means to an end other than himself. But the law states that, even in such cases, I must never use a rational being as a *mere* means; that is, as though he had no value in himself except as a means to my subjective end.

Kant applies this formulation of the categorical imperative to the same cases which he used to illustrate the application of the imperative as originally formulated. The suicide, who destroys himself to escape from painful circumstances, uses himself, a person, as a mere means to a relative end, namely the maintenance of tolerable conditions up to the end of life. The man who makes a promise to obtain a benefit when he has no intention of fulfilling it or when he knows very well that he will not be in a position to keep it, uses the man to whom he makes the promise as a mere means to a relative end.

We may note in passing that Kant makes use of this principle in his treatise *On Perpetual Peace*. A monarch who employs soldiers in aggressive wars undertaken for his own aggrandizement or for that of his country is using rational beings as mere means to a desired end. Indeed, in Kant's view, standing armies should be abolished in the course of time because hiring men to kill or to be killed involves a use of them as mere instruments in the hands of the State and cannot easily be reconciled with the rights of humanity, founded on the absolute value of the rational being as such.

7. The idea of respecting every rational will as an end in itself

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[1] *G.*, pp. 428–9; *Abb.*, p. 47.

[2] *G.*, p. 429; *Abb.*, p. 47.

and not treating it as a mere means to the attainment of the object of one's desires leads us on to the 'idea of the will of every rational being as making universal law'.[1] In Kant's view, the will of man considered as a rational being must be regarded as the source of the law which he recognizes as universally binding. This is the principle of the autonomy, as contrasted with the heteronomy, of the will.

One of Kant's approaches to the autonomy of the will is more or less this. All imperatives which are conditioned by desire or inclination or, as Kant puts it, by 'interest' are hypothetical imperatives. A categorical imperative, therefore, must be unconditioned. And the moral will, which obeys the categorical imperative, must not be determined by interest. That is to say, it must not be heteronomous, at the mercy, as it were, of desires and inclinations which form part of a causally determined series. It must, therefore, be autonomous. And to say that a moral will is autonomous is to say that it gives itself the law which it obeys.

Now, the idea of a categorical imperative contains implicitly the idea of the autonomy of the will. But this autonomy can be expressed explicitly in a formulation of the imperative. And then we have the principle 'never to act on any other maxim than one which could, without contradiction, be also a universal law and accordingly always so to act that *the will could regard itself at the same time as making universal law through its maxim*'.[2] In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, the principle is expressed thus: 'So act that the maxim of your will could always at the same time be valid as a principle making universal law.'[3]

Kant speaks of the autonomy of the will as 'the supreme principle of morality'[4] and as 'the sole principle of all moral laws and of the corresponding duties'.[5] Heteronomy of the will, on the other hand, is 'the source of all spurious principles of morality';[6] and, far from being able to furnish the basis of obligation, 'is much rather opposed to the principle of obligation and to the morality of the will'.[7]

If we accept the heteronomy of the will, we accept the assumption that the will is subject to moral laws which are not the result of its own legislation as a rational will. And though reference has already been made to some of the ethical theories which, according to Kant, accept this assumption, it will clarify Kant's meaning if we refer to them briefly once again. In the *Critique of Practical Reason*[1] he mentions Montaigne as grounding the principles of morality on education, Mandeville as grounding them on the civil constitution (that is, on the legal system), Epicurus as grounding them on physical feeling (that is, pleasure), and Hutcheson as grounding them on moral feeling. All these theories are what Kant calls subjective or empirical, the first two referring to external empirical factors, the second two to internal empirical factors. In addition there are 'objective' or rationalistic theories; that is to say, theories which ground the moral law on ideas of reason. Kant mentions two types. The first, attributed to the Stoics and Wolff, grounds the moral law and obligation on the idea of inner perfection, while the second, attributed to Crusius, grounds the moral law and obligation on the will of God. All these theories are rejected by Kant. He does not say that they are all morally irrelevant; that is, that none of them has any contribution to make in the field of ethics. What he maintains is that none of them is capable of furnishing the supreme principles of morality and obligation. For instance, if we say that the will of God is the norm of morality, we can still ask why we ought to obey the divine will. Kant does not say that we ought not to obey the divine will, if it is manifested. But we must in any case first recognize obedience to God as a duty. Thus before obeying God we must in any case legislate as rational beings. The autonomy of the moral will is thus the supreme principle of morality.

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[1] *G.*, p. 431; *Abb.*, p. 50.

[2] *G.*, p. 434; *Abb.*, p. 52.

[3] *Pr.R.*, 54; *Abb.*, p. 119.

[4] *G.*, p. 440; *Abb.*, p. 59.

[5] *Pr.R.*, 58; *Abb.*, p. 122.

[6] *G.*, p. 441; *Abb.*, p. 59.

[7] *Pr.R.*, 58; *Abb.*, p. 122

Obviously, the concept of the autonomy of the morally legislating will makes no sense unless we make a distinction in man between man considered purely as a rational being, a moral will, and man as a creature who is also subject to desires and inclinations which may conflict with the dictates of reason. And this is, of course, what Kant presupposes. The will or practical reason, considered as such, legislates, and man, considered as being subject to a diversity of desires, impulses and inclinations, ought to obey.

In conceiving this theory of the autonomy of the will Kant was doubtless influenced to some extent by Rousseau. The latter, as we have seen, distinguished between the 'general will', which is always right and which is the real fount of moral laws, and the merely private will, whether taken separately or together with other private wills as 'the will of all'. And Kant utilized these ideas within the context of his own philosophy. Indeed, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the central position accorded by Kant in his ethical theory to the concept of the good will reflects, to some extent that is to say, the influence of his study of Rousseau.

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[1] *Pr.R.*, 69; *Abb.*, p. 129.

8. The idea of rational beings as ends in themselves, coupled with that of the rational will or practical reason as morally legislating, brings us to the concept of a kingdom of ends (*ein Reich der Zwecke*). 'I understand by a *kingdom* the systematic union of rational beings through common laws.'[1] And because these laws have in view the relation of these beings to one another as ends and means, as Kant puts it, it can be called a kingdom of ends. A rational being can belong to this kingdom in either of two ways. He belongs to it as a *member* when, although giving laws, he is also subject to them. He belongs to it as a sovereign or supreme head (*Oberhaupt*) when, while legislating, he is not subject to the will of any other. Perhaps Kant can be interpreted as meaning that every rational being is both member and sovereign; for no rational being is, when legislating and as legislating, subject to the will of another. But it is also possible, and perhaps more likely, that *Oberhaupt* is to be taken as referring to God. For Kant goes on to say that a rational being can occupy the place of supreme head only if he is 'a completely independent being without want and without limitation of power adequate to his will'.[2]

This kingdom of ends is to be thought according to an analogy with the kingdom of Nature, the self-imposed rules of the former being analogous to the causal laws of the latter. It is, as Kant remarks, 'only an ideal'.[3] At the same time it is a possibility. It 'would be actually realized through maxims conforming to the rule prescribed by the categorical imperative for all rational beings, *if they were universally followed*'.[4] And rational beings ought to act as though they were through their maxims law-making members of a kingdom of ends. (Hence we have another variation of the categorical imperative.) The ideal of historical development is, we may say, the establishment of the kingdom of ends as an actuality.

9. Now, the categorical imperative states that all rational beings (that is, all rational beings who can be subject to an imperative at all) ought to act in a certain way. They ought to act

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[1] *G.*, p. 433; *Abb.*, p. 51.
[2] *G.*, p. 433; *Abb.*, p. 52.
[3] *G.*, p. 434; *Abb.*, p. 52.
[4] *G.*, p. 438; *Abb.*, p. 57.

only on those maxims which they can at the same time will, without contradiction, to be universal laws. The imperative thus states an obligation. But it is, according to Kant, a synthetic *a priori* proposition. On the one hand, the obligation cannot be obtained by mere analysis of the concept of a rational will. And the categorical imperative is thus not an analytic proposition. On the other hand, the predicate must be connected necessarily with the subject. For the categorical imperative, unlike a hypothetical imperative, is unconditioned and necessarily binds or obliges the will to act in a certain way. It is, indeed, a *practical* synthetic *a priori* proposition. That is to say, it does not extend our theoretical knowledge of objects, as is done by the synthetic *a priori* propositions which we considered when discussing the first *Critique*. It is directed towards action, towards the performance of actions good in themselves, not towards our knowledge of empirical reality. But it is none the less a proposition which is both *a priori*, independent of all desires and inclinations, and synthetic. The question arises, therefore, how is this practical synthetic *a priori* proposition possible?

We have here a question similar to that propounded in the first *Critique* and in the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*. But there is a difference. As we saw, there is no need to ask *whether* the synthetic *a priori* propositions of mathematics and physics are possible, if we once assume that these sciences do contain such propositions. For the development of the sciences shows their possibility. The only pertinent question is *how* they are possible. In the case of a practical or moral synthetic *a priori* proposition, however, we have, according to Kant, to establish its possibility.

Kant's statement of the problem seems to me to be somewhat confusing. It is not always easy to see precisely what question he is asking. For he formulates it in different ways, and it is not always immediately evident that their meanings are equivalent. However, let us take it that he is asking for a justification of the possibility of a practical synthetic *a priori* proposition. In his terminology this means asking what is the 'third term' which unites the predicate to the subject or, perhaps more precisely, which makes possible a necessary connection between predicate and subject. For if the predicate cannot be got out of the subject by mere analysis, there must be a third term which unites them.

This 'third term' cannot be anything in the sensible world. We cannot establish the possibility of a categorical imperative by referring to anything in the causal series of phenomena. Physical necessity would give us heteronomy, whereas we are looking for that which makes possible the principle of autonomy. And Kant finds it in the idea of freedom. Obviously, what he does is to look for the necessary condition of the possibility of obligation and of acting for the sake of duty alone, in accordance with a categorical imperative; and he finds this necessary condition in the idea of freedom.

We might say simply that Kant finds 'in freedom' the condition of the possibility of a categorical imperative. But, according to him, freedom cannot be *proved*. Hence it is perhaps more accurate to say that the condition of the possibility of a categorical imperative is to be found 'in the idea of freedom'. To say this is not, indeed, to say that the idea of freedom is a mere fiction in any ordinary sense. In the first place the *Critique of Pure Reason* has shown that freedom is a negative possibility, in the sense that the idea of freedom does not involve a logical contradiction. And in the second place we cannot act morally, for the sake of duty, except under the idea of freedom. Obligation, 'ought', implies freedom, freedom to obey or disobey the law. Nor can we regard ourselves as making universal laws, as morally autonomous, save under the idea of freedom. Practical reason or the will of a rational being 'must regard itself as free; that is, the will of such a being cannot be a will of its own except under the idea of freedom'.[1] The idea of freedom is thus *practically* necessary; it is a necessary condition of morality. At the same time the *Critique of Pure Reason* showed that freedom is not logically contradictory by showing that it must belong to the sphere of noumenal reality, and that the existence of such a sphere is not logically contradictory. And as our theoretical knowledge does not extend into this sphere, freedom is not susceptible of theoretical proof. But the assumption of freedom is a practical necessity for the moral agent; and it is thus no mere arbitrary fiction.

The practical necessity of the idea of freedom involves, therefore, our regarding ourselves as belonging, not only to the world of sense, the world which is ruled by determined causality, but also to the intelligible or noumenal world. Man can regard himself from two points of view. As belonging to the world of sense, he finds himself subject to natural laws (heteronomy). As belonging to the intelligible world, he finds himself under laws which have their foundation in reason alone. 'And thus categorical imperatives are possible because the idea of freedom makes me a member of an intelligible world, in consequence of which, supposing that I were nothing else, all my actions *would* always conform to the autonomy of the will; but as I at the same time intuit myself as a member of the world of sense, my actions *ought* so to conform. And this *categorical* 'ought' implies a synthetic *a priori* proposition. . . .'[1]

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[1] *G.*, p. 448; *Abb.*, p. 67.

The matter can be summed up thus in Kant's words. 'The question, therefore, how a categorical imperative is possible, can be answered to this extent, that one can assign the only presupposition on which it is possible, namely the idea of freedom; and one can also discern the necessity of this presupposition, which is sufficient for the *practical use* of reason, that is, for the conviction of the *validity of this imperative,* and hence of the moral law. But no human reason can ever discern how this presupposition itself is possible. However, on the presupposition that the will of an intelligence is free its *autonomy,* as the essential formal condition of its determination, is a necessary consequence.'[2] In saying here that no human reason can discern the possibility of freedom Kant is referring, of course, to positive possibility. We enjoy no intuitive insight into the sphere of noumenal reality. We cannot *prove* freedom, and hence we cannot *prove* the possibility of a categorical imperative. But we can indicate the condition under which alone a categorical imperative is possible. And the idea of this condition is a practical necessity for the moral agent. This, in Kant's view, is quite sufficient for morality, though the impossibility of proving freedom indicates, of course, the limitations of human theoretical knowledge.

10. What we have been saying about the practical necessity of the idea of freedom brings us naturally to the Kantian theory of the postulates of the practical reason. For freedom is one of them. The other two are immortality and God. The ideas, therefore, which Kant declared to be the main themes of metaphysics but which he also judged to transcend the limitations of reason in its theoretical use are here reintroduced as postulates of reason in its practical or moral use. And before we consider the Kantian theory of postulates in general, it may be as well if we consider briefly each of the three particular postulates.

(i) There is no need to say much more about freedom. As we have seen, a theoretical proof that a rational being is free is, according to Kant, impossible for the human reason. None the less it cannot be shown that freedom is not possible. And the moral law compels us to assume it and therefore authorizes us to assume it. The moral law compels us to assume it inasmuch as the concept of freedom and the concept of the supreme principle of morality 'are so inseparably united that one might define practical freedom as independence of the will on anything but the moral law alone'.[1] Because of this inseparable connection the moral law is said to postulate freedom.

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[1] *G.*, p. 454; *Abb.*, pp. 73–4.

[2] *G.*, p. 461; *Abb.*, p. 81.

We must note, however, the difficult position in which Kant involves himself. As there is no faculty of intellectual intuition, we cannot observe actions which belong to the noumenal sphere: all the actions which we can observe, either internally or externally, must be objects of the internal or external senses. This means that they are all given in time and subject to the laws of causality. We cannot, therefore, make a distinction between two types of experienced actions, saying that these are free while those are determined. If, then, we assume that man, as a rational being, is free, we are compelled to hold that the same actions can be both determined and free.

Kant is, of course, well aware of this difficulty. If we wish to save freedom, he remarks, 'no other way remains than to ascribe the existence of a thing, so far as it is determinable in time, and therefore also its causality according to the law of *natural necessity*, to *appearance alone*, and to ascribe *freedom* to precisely *the same being as a thing in itself*'.[2] And he then asks, 'How can a man be called completely free at the same moment and in regard to the same action in which he is subject to an inevitable natural necessity?'[3] His answer is given in terms of time-conditions. In so far as a man's existence is subject to time-conditions, his actions form part of the mechanical system of Nature and are determined by antecedent causes. 'But the very same subject, being on the other hand also conscious of himself as a thing in itself, considers his existence also *in so far as it is not subject to time-conditions*, and he regards himself as determinable only through laws which he gives himself through reason.'[4] And to be determinable only through self-imposed laws is to be free.

In Kant's view this position is supported by the testimony o conscience. When I look on my acts which were contrary to the

[1] *Pr.R.*, 167–8; *Abb.*, p. 187.

[2] *Pr.R.*, 170; *Abb.*, p. 189.

[3] *Pr.R.*, 171; *Abb.*, p. 189.

[4] *Pr.R.*, 175; *Abb.*, p. 191.

moral law precisely as past, I tend to attribute them to excusing causal factors. But the feeling of guilt remains; and the reason of this is that when the moral law, the law of my supersensible and supertemporal existence, is in question, reason recognizes no distinctions of time. It simply recognizes the action as mine, without reference to the time of its performance.

The statement, however, that man is noumenally free and empirically determined in regard to the very same actions is a hard saying. But it is one which, given his premisses, Kant cannot avoid.

(ii) Before we come directly to the second postulate of the practical reason, namely immortality, it is necessary to say something about Kant's conception of the *summum bonum*, a term which, literally translated, means the highest or supreme good. Indeed, without some understanding of what Kant has to say on this subject we cannot follow his doctrine either of the second postulate or of the third, namely that of God.

Reason, even in its practical function, seeks an unconditioned totality. And this means that it seeks the unconditioned totality of the *object* of practical reason or the will, to which object the name of *summum bonum* is given. This term is, however, ambiguous. It may mean the supreme or highest good in the sense of that good which is not itself conditioned. Or it may mean the perfect good in the sense of a whole which is not itself a part of a greater whole. Now, virtue is the supreme and unconditioned good. But it does not follow that it is the perfect good in the sense that it is the total object of the desires of a rational being. And in point of fact happiness must also be included in the concept of a perfect good. If, therefore, we understand by *summum bonum* the perfect good, it includes both virtue and happiness.

It is very important to understand Kant's view of the relation between these two elements of the perfect good. The connection between them is not logical. If the connection between them were logical or analytic, as Kant puts it, the endeavour to be virtuous, that is, to make one's will accord perfectly with the moral law, would be the same as the rational pursuit of happiness. And if this were what Kant meant to affirm, he would be contradicting his constantly repeated conviction that happiness is not and cannot be the ground of the moral law. The connection, therefore, between the two elements of the perfect good is synthetic, in the sense that virtue produces happiness, as a cause produces its effect.

The *summum bonum* 'means the whole, the perfect good, in which, however, virtue as the condition is always the supreme good, because it has no condition above it; whereas happiness, while it is certainly pleasant to him who possesses it, is not of itself absolutely and in every respect good, but always presupposes morally right behaviour as its condition'.[1]

The truth of the proposition that virtue and happiness constitute the two elements of the perfect good cannot, therefore, be discovered by analysis. A man who is seeking his happiness cannot discover by analysis of this idea that he is virtuous. Nor can a virtuous man, whatever the Stoics may have said, discover that he is happy by analysing the idea of being virtuous. The two ideas are distinct. At the same time the proposition, though synthetic, is *a priori*. The connection between virtue and happiness is practically necessary, in the sense that we recognize that virtue ought to produce happiness. We cannot say, of course, that the desire of happiness must be the motive for pursuing virtue. For to say this would be to contradict the whole idea of acting for the sake of duty and would substitute heteronomy for autonomy of the will. But we must recognize virtue as the efficient cause of happiness. For the moral law, according to Kant, commands us to promote the *summum bonum*, in which virtue and happiness are related as conditions to conditioned, as cause to effect.

But how can we possibly hold that virtue necessarily produces happiness? The empirical evidence does not appear to warrant our making any such assertion. Even if it sometimes happens that virtue and happiness are actually found together, this is a purely contingent fact. We thus seem to arrive at an antinomy. On the one hand the practical reason demands a necessary connection between virtue and happiness. On the other hand the empirical evidence shows that there is no such necessary connection.

Kant's solution to this difficulty consists in showing that the assertion that virtue necessarily produces happiness is only conditionally false. That is to say, it is false only on condition that we take existence in this world to be the only sort of existence that a rational being can have, and if we take the assertion as meaning that virtue exercises in this sensible world a causality productive of happiness. The statement that the search for happiness produces virtue would be *absolutely* false; but the statement that virtue produces happiness is false, not absolutely, but only

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[1] *Pr.R.*, 199; *Abb.*, pp. 206–7.

conditionally. It can, therefore, be true if I am justified in thinking that I exist, not only as a physical object in this sensible world, but also as a noumenon in an intelligible and supersensible world. And the moral law, being inseparably connected with the idea of freedom, demands that I should believe this. We must take it, therefore, that the realization of the *summum bonum* is possible, the first element, namely virtue (the supreme or highest good), producing the second element, happiness, if not immediately, yet at least mediately (through the agency of God).

(iii) The conception of existence in another world has already been referred to in what has just been said. But Kant actually approaches the postulate of immortality through a consideration of the first element of the perfect good, namely virtue.

The moral law commands us to promote the *summum bonum*, which is the necessary object of the rational will. This does not mean that the moral law commands us to pursue virtue because it causes happiness. But we are commanded by the practical reason to pursue virtue which causes happiness. Now, the virtue which we are commanded to strive after is, according to Kant, the complete accordance of will and feeling with the moral law. But this complete accordance with the moral law is holiness, and this is 'a perfection of which no rational being of the sensible world is capable at any moment of its existence'.[1] If, therefore, perfect virtue is commanded by reason in its practical use, and if at the same time it is not attainable by a human being at any given moment, the first element of the perfect good must be realized in the form of an indefinite, unending progress towards the ideal. 'But this endless progress is possible only on the supposition of the unending duration of the existence and personality of the same rational being, which is called the immortality of the soul.'[2] As, therefore, the attainment of the first element of the *summum bonum*, the pursuit of which is commanded by the moral law, is possible only on the supposition that the soul is immortal, immortality of the soul is a postulate of the pure practical reason. It is not demonstrable by reason in its theoretical use, which can show only that immortality is not logically impossible. But as the idea of immortality is inseparably connected with the moral law, immortality must be postulated. To deny it is, in the long run, to deny the moral law itself.

A variety of objections have been brought against Kant's doctrine about the second postulate. It has been objected, for instance, that he contradicts himself. On the one hand, the attainment of virtue must be possible; for it is commanded by the practical reason. If, therefore, it is not attainable in this life, there must be another life in which it is attainable. On the other hand, it is never attainable, either in this life or in any other. There is only unending progress towards an unattainable ideal. It seems, therefore, that the moral law commands the impossible. It has also been objected that we cannot regard the attainment of holiness as a command of the moral law. But, whatever may be the cogency of these objections, Kant himself laid considerable stress on the idea of the moral law commanding holiness as an ideal goal. In his opinion, denial of this command involves a degradation of the moral law, a lowering of standards to fit the weakness of human nature.

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[1] *Pr.R.*, 220; *Abb.*, p. 218.

[2] *Ibid.*

(iv) The same moral law which leads us to postulate immortality as the condition of obeying the command to attain holiness leads us also to postulate the existence of God as the condition for a necessary synthetic connection between virtue and happiness.

Happiness is described by Kant as 'the state of a rational being in the world with whom in the totality of his existence *everything goes according to his wish and will*'.[1] It depends, therefore, on the harmony of physical Nature with man's wish and will. But the rational being who is in the world is not the author of the world, nor is he in a position to govern Nature in such a way that a necessary connection is established in fact between virtue and happiness, the latter being proportioned to the former. If, therefore, there is an *a priori* synthetic connection between virtue and happiness, in the sense that happiness ought to follow and be proportioned to virtue as its condition, we must postulate 'the existence of a cause of the whole of Nature which is distinct from Nature and which contains the ground of this connection, namely of the exact harmony of happiness with morality'.[2]

Further, this being must be conceived as apportioning happiness to morality according to the conception of law. For happiness is to be apportioned to morality in the sense that it is to be apportioned according to the degree in which finite rational beings make the moral law the determining principle of their volition. But a being which is capable of acting according to the conception of law is intelligent or rational; and his causality will be his will. Hence the being which is postulated as the cause of Nature must be conceived as acting by intelligence and will. It must, in other words, be conceived as God. Further, we must conceive God as omniscient, as He is conceived as knowing all our inner states; as omnipotent, because He is conceived as capable of bringing into existence a world in which happiness is exactly proportioned to virtue; and so on with other attributes.

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[1] *Pr.R.*, 224; *Abb.*, p. 221.

[2] *Pr.R.*, 225; *Abb.*, p. 221.

Kant reminds us that he is not now affirming what he denied in the first *Critique*, namely that the speculative reason can demonstrate the existence and attributes of God. The admission of God's existence is, of course, an admission by the reason; but this admission is an act of faith. We may speak of it as practical faith as it is connected with duty. We have a duty to promote the *summum bonum*. We can therefore postulate its possibility. But we cannot really conceive the possibility of the perfect good being realized except on the supposition that there exists a God. Hence, though the moral law does not directly enjoin faith in God, it lies at the basis of such faith.

(v) As Kant notes, the three postulates have this in common, that 'they all proceed from the principle of morality, which is not a postulate but a law'.[1] The question arises, however, whether they can be said to extend our knowledge. Kant answers, 'Certainly, but *only from a practical point of view*'.[2] And the customary statement of his view is that the postulates increase our knowledge, not from the theoretical, but only from the practical point of view. But it is by no means immediately clear what is meant by this. If Kant meant merely that it is pragmatically useful, in the sense of morally beneficial, to act as if we were free, as if we had immortal souls, and as if there were a God, his view, whether we agreed with it or not, would present no great difficulty, so far as understanding it was concerned. But in point of fact he appears to mean much more than this.

We are told, indeed, that inasmuch as neither free, immortal soul nor God are given as objects of intuition, 'there is, therefore, no extension of the knowledge *of given supersensible objects*'.[3] This seems to be pretty well a tautology. For if God and the soul are not given as objects, we obviously cannot know them as given objects. But we are also told that though God and the free, immortal soul are not given as objects of any intellectual intuition, the theoretical reason's knowledge of the supersensible is increased to this extent that it is compelled to admit 'that there are such objects'.[1] Further, given the practical reason's assurance of the existence of God and the soul, the theoretical reason can think these supersensible realities by means of the categories; and the latter, when so applied, are 'not empty but possess meaning'.[2] To be sure, Kant insists that the categories can be employed to conceive the supersensible in a definite manner 'only in so far as it is defined by such predicates as are necessarily connected with the pure practical purpose given *a priori* and with its possibility'.[3] But the fact remains that through the aid provided by the practical reason Ideas which for the speculative reason were simply regulative take on definite form and shape as ways of thinking supersensible realities, even if these realities are not given as objects of intuition but are affirmed because of their connection with the moral law.

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[1] *Pr.R.*, 238; *Abb.*, p. 229.
[2] *Pr.R.*, 240; *Abb.*, p. 231.
[3] *Pr.R.*, 243; *Abb.*, p. 233

It seems to me, therefore, to be arguable that what Kant is doing is to substitute a new type of metaphysics for the metaphysics which he rejected in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In the case of the Ideas of a transcendental ego and of God the speculative reason is able to give body to them, as it were, thanks to the practical reason. And this is possible because the latter enjoys a position of primacy when the two co-operate.[4] 'If practical reason could not assume and think as given anything other than that which *speculative* reason can offer it from its own insight, then the latter would have the primacy. But if we suppose that practical reason has of itself original *a priori* principles with which certain theoretical positions are inseparably united, though they are at the same time withdrawn from any possible insight of the speculative reason (which they, however, must not contradict), then the question is, which interest is the superior (not which must give way, for they do not necessarily conflict). . . .'[5] That is to say, the question is whether the interest of speculative reason is to prevail, so that it obstinately rejects all that is offered from any other source than itself, or whether the interest of practical reason is to prevail, so that speculative reason takes over, as it were, the propositions offered it by the practical reason and tries 'to unite them with its own concepts'.[1] In Kant's opinion, the interest of practical reason should prevail. To be sure, this cannot be maintained if practical reason is taken as dependent on sensible inclinations and desires. For in this case speculative reason would have to adopt all sorts of arbitrary fancies. (Kant mentions Mohammed's idea of Paradise.) In other words, Kant does not wish to encourage mere wishful thinking. But if practical reason is taken as being the pure reason in its practical capacity, that is, as judging according to *a priori* principles; and if certain theoretical positions are inseparably connected with the exercise of pure reason in its practical function; then the pure reason in its theoretical capacity must accept these positions and attempt to think them consistently. If we do not accept this primacy of the practical reason, we admit a conflict within reason itself; for pure practical and pure speculative reason are fundamentally one reason.

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[1] *Pr.R.*, 244; *Abb.*, p. 233.

[2] *Pr.R.*, 246; *Abb.*, p. 234.

[3] *Pr.R.*, 255; *Abb.*, p. 239.

[4] This way of speaking can, of course, be misleading. For ultimately, as we saw earlier, there is only one reason, though it has distinguishable functions or modes of employment.

[5] *Pr.R.*, 216–17; *Abb.*, p. 216.

That Kant is really engaged in creating a metaphysics based on the moral consciousness seems to me to be clear also from the fact that he appears to admit differences of degree in practical knowledge. The idea of freedom is so united with the concepts of moral law and duty that we cannot admit obligation and deny freedom. 'I ought' implies 'I can' (that is, I can obey or disobey). But we cannot say that the conception of the *summum bonum* or perfect good implies the existence of God in precisely the same way that obligation implies freedom. Reason cannot decide with absolute certainty whether the apportioning of happiness to virtue implies the existence of God. That is to say, it cannot exclude absolutely the possibility that a state of affairs which would render possible this apportioning might come about by the operation of natural laws without the supposition of a wise and good Creator. There is room, therefore, for choice; that is, for practical faith resting on an act of the will. True, we cannot 'demonstrate' freedom, and so it is in a sense an object of belief. But the fact remains that we cannot accept the existence of the moral law and deny freedom whereas it is possible to accept the existence of the moral law and doubt the existence of God, even if faith in God's existence is more in accordance with the demands of reason.

It would be misleading, therefore, to say simply that Kant rejects metaphysics. True, he rejects dogmatic metaphysics when it is considered either as an *a priori* construction based on *a priori* theoretical principles or as a kind of prolongation or extension of scientific explanation of phenomena. But even if he does not call the general theory of the postulates 'metaphysics', this is what it really amounts to. It is a metaphysics based on the moral consciousness of law and obligation. It does not provide us with an intuition of supersensible reality, and its arguments are conditional on the validity of the moral consciousness and on the Kantian analysis of moral experience. But there are, none the less, reasoned positions in regard to supersensible reality. And we can quite properly speak about a Kantian 'metaphysics'.

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[1] *P.R.*, 216–17; *Abb.*, p. 216

11. We have seen that morality, according to Kant, does not presuppose religion. That is to say, man does not need the idea of God to be able to recognize his duty; and the ultimate motive of moral action is duty for duty's sake, not obedience to the commands of God. At the same time morality leads to religion. 'Through the idea of the supreme good as object and final end of the pure practical reason the moral law leads to religion, that is, to the recognition of all duties as divine commands, *not as sanctions, that is, as arbitrary commands of an alien will which are contingent in themselves*, but as essential *laws* of every free will in itself, which, however, must be looked on as commands of the supreme Being, because it is only from a morally perfect (holy and good) and at the same time all-powerful will, and consequently only through harmony with this will, that we can hope to attain the highest good, which the moral law makes it our duty to take as the object of our endeavour.'[1] The moral law commands us to make ourselves worthy of happiness rather than to be happy or make ourselves happy. But because virtue should produce happiness, and because this completion of the *summum bonum* can be achieved only through divine agency, we are entitled to hope for happiness through the agency of a God whose will, as a holy will, desires that His creatures should be worthy of happiness, while, as an omnipotent will, it can confer this happiness on them. '*The hope* of happiness first begins with religion only.'[2]

This point of view reappears in *Religion within the Bounds of Pure Reason* (1793). Thus the preface to the first edition opens in this way. 'Morality, in so far as it is grounded in the concept of man as a being who is free but at the same time subjects himself through his reason to unconditional laws, needs neither the idea of another being above man for the latter to recognize his duty, nor any other motive than the law itself for man to fulfil his duty.'[1] At the same time, however, the question of the final result of moral action and of a possible harmonization between the moral and the natural orders cannot be a matter of indifference to the human reason. And in the long run 'morality leads inevitably to religion'.[2] For we cannot see any other way in which this harmonization could take place than through divine agency.

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[1] *Pr.R.*, 233; *Abb.*, p. 226.

[2] *Pr.R.*, 235; *Abb.*, p. 227.

True religion, for Kant, consists in this, 'that in all our duties we regard God as the universal legislator who is to be reverenced'.[3] But what does it mean to reverence God? It means obeying the moral law, acting for the sake of duty. In other words, Kant attached little value to religious practices in the sense of expressions of adoration and prayer, whether public or private. And this attitude is summed up in the often-quoted words: 'Everything which, apart from a moral way of life, man believes himself capable of doing to please God is mere religious delusion and spurious worship of God.'[4]

This indifference to religious practices in the ordinary sense is coupled, of course, with an indifference to credal varieties as such. The words 'as such' are, I think, required. For some beliefs would be ruled out as incompatible with true morality, while others would be inacceptable to pure reason. But any idea of a unique revelation of religious truths, and still more of an authoritarian Church as custodian and accredited interpreter of revelation, is rejected by Kant. I do not mean that he rejected altogether the idea of a visible Christian Church, with a faith based on the Scriptures; for he did not. But the visible Church is for him only an approximation to the ideal of the universal invisible Church, which is, or would be, the spiritual union of all men in virtue and the moral service of God.

It is not my intention to discuss Kant's treatment of individual dogmas of Christianity.[5] But it is perhaps worth noting that he shows a strong tendency to strip away, as it were, the historical associations of certain dogmas and to find a meaning which fits in with his own philosophy. Thus he does not deny original sin: on the contrary, he affirms it against those who imagine that man is naturally perfect. But the ideas of an historical Fall and of inherited sin give place to the conception of a fundamental propensity to act out of mere self-love and without regard to the universal moral laws, a propensity which is an empirical fact and of which we cannot provide an ultimate explanation, though the Bible does so in picture-language. In this way Kant affirms the dogma in the sense that he verbally admits it, while at the same time he interprets it rationalistically in such a way that he is able to deny on the one hand the extreme Protestant doctrine of the total depravity of human nature and on the other the optimistic theories of the natural perfection of man. This tendency to retain Christian dogmas while giving a rationalistic account of their content becomes much more evident with Hegel. But the latter, with his reasoned distinction between the ways of thinking characteristic of religion and of philosophy, produced a much more profound philosophy of religion than that of Kant.

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[1] *Rel.*, p. 3; *G.-H.*, p. 3

[2] *Rel.*, p. 6; *G.-H.*, p. 5.

[3] *Rel.*, p. 103; *G.-H.*, p. 95.

[4] *Rel.*, p. 170; *G.-H.*, p. 158.

[5] The reader can consult, for example, *Kant's Philosophy of Religion* by C. C. J. Webb (see Bibliography).

We can say, therefore, that Kant's interpretation of religion was moralistic and rationalistic in character. At the same time this statement can be misleading. For it may suggest that in the content of true religion as Kant understands it every element of what we may call piety towards God is missing. But this is not the case. He does, indeed, show scant sympathy with mystics; but we have already seen that for him religion means looking on our duties as divine commands (in the sense at least that the fulfilment of them fits into the end which is willed by the holy will of God as the final end of creation). And in the *Opus Postumum* the conception of consciousness of duty as a consciousness of the divine presence comes to the fore. To be sure, it is impossible to know how Kant would have systematized and developed the various ideas contained in the notes which form this volume, if he had had the opportunity to do so. But it appears that though the idea of the moral law as the one valid path to faith in God was retained intact, Kant was inclined to lay greater stress on the immanence of God and on an awareness of our moral freedom and of moral obligation as an awareness of the divine presence.

12. It cannot be denied, I think, that there is a certain grandeur in Kant's ethical theory. His uncompromising exaltation of duty and his insistence on the value of the human personality certainly merit respect. Moreover, a great deal of what he says finds a genuine echo in the moral consciousness. Thus, however much particular moral convictions may differ in different people, the conviction that cases arise when in some sense at least consequences

are irrelevant and the moral law must be obeyed, whatever the consequences may be, is a common feature of the moral consciousness. If we have any moral convictions at all, we all feel, to use popular language, that the line must be drawn somewhere, even if we do not all draw it in the same place. The maxim *Fiat iustitia, ruat coelum* can easily be understood in terms of the ordinary man's moral outlook. Again, Kant rightly drew attention to the universal character of the moral law. The fact that different societies and different individuals have had somewhat different moral ideas does not alter the fact that the moral judgment makes, as such, a universal claim. When I say that I ought to do this or that, I imply at least that anyone else in precisely the same situation ought to act likewise; for I am saying that it is the right thing to do. Even if one adopts an 'emotive' theory of ethics, one must allow for this universal claim of the moral judgment. The statement that I ought to perform action *X* is obviously, in this as in other respects, of a different type from the statement that I like olives, even if the former is held to be the expression of an emotion or of an attitude rather than of the application of a supreme principle of reason.[1]

At the same time, even if Kant's ethical theory reflects to some extent the moral consciousness, it is open to serious objections. It is easy to understand how Hegel among others criticized Kant's account of the supreme principle of morality on the ground of formalism and abstractness. Of course, from one point of view objections against Kant's ethical theory on the ground of formalism and 'emptiness' are beside the mark. For in pure, as distinct from applied, ethics he was engaged precisely in ascertaining the 'formal' element in the moral judgment, prescinding from the empirically given 'matter'. And what else, it may be pertinently asked, could the formal element possibly be but formalistic? Again, what is the value of the charge of emptiness when the categorical imperative, though applicable to empirically given material, was never intended to be a premiss for the deduction of concrete rules of conduct by sheer analysis? The categorical imperative is meant to serve as a test or criterion of the morality of our subjective principles of volition, not as a premiss for analytic deduction of a concrete moral code. True; but then the question arises whether the Kantian principle of morality is really capable of serving as a test or criterion. We have already noted the difficulty that there is in understanding precisely what is meant by speaking of a rational agent as 'being able' or 'not being able' to will that his maxims should become universal laws. And it may well be that this difficulty is connected with the abstractness and emptiness of the categorical imperative.

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[1] I do not mean to imply that the defenders of the emotive theory of ethics in its various developed forms do not allow for this feature of the moral judgment.

Some philosophers would object to Kant's rationalism, to the idea, that is to say, that the moral law rests ultimately on reason and that its supreme principles are promulgated by the reason. But let us assume that Kant was right in his view that the moral law is promulgated by reason. The question then arises whether, as he thought, the concept of duty possesses an absolute primacy or whether the concept of the good is primary, the concept of duty being subordinate to it. And, apart from any other consideration, it is arguable that the second of these theories is better able to serve as a framework for interpreting the moral consciousness. True, any teleological theory of ethics which takes the form of the utilitarianism of, for example, Bentham, lays itself open to the charge of changing the specifically moral judgment into a non-moral empirical judgment, and so of explaining morals by explaining it away. But it does not follow that this must be true of every teleological interpretation of morals. And the question whether it does or does not follow can hardly be regarded as having been finally settled by Kant.

As for Kant's philosophy of religion, it stands in certain obvious ways under the influence of the Enlightenment. Thus in interpreting the religious consciousness Kant attaches too little importance to the historical religions; that is, to religion as it has actually existed. Hegel afterwards attempted to remedy this defect. But, generally considered, the Kantian philosophy of religion is clearly a feature of his attempt to reconcile the world of Newtonian physics, the world of empirical reality governed by causal laws which exclude freedom, with the world of the moral consciousness, the world of freedom. The theoretical reason, of itself, can tell us only that it sees no impossibility in the concept of freedom and in the idea of supra-empirical, noumenal reality. The concept of the moral law, through its inseparable connection with the idea of freedom, gives us a practical assurance of the existence of such a reality and of our belonging to it as rational beings. And theoretical reason, on the basis of this assurance, can attempt to think noumenal reality so far as the practical reason warrants our assuming it. But, so far as we can see, it is God alone who is capable of achieving the ultimate harmonization of the two realms. If, therefore, the 'interest' of practical reason should prevail, and if the moral law demands, at least by implication, this ultimate harmonization, we are justified in making an act of faith in God, even if reason in its theoretical function is incapable of demonstrating that God exists.

But though we are entitled to turn to religion and to hope from God the creation of a state of affairs in which happiness will be apportioned to virtue, it is obvious that we are left here and now with a juxtaposition of the realm of natural necessity and that of freedom. Inasmuch as reason tells us that there is no logical impossibility in the latter, we can say that the two are logically compatible. But this is hardly enough to satisfy the demands of philosophical reflection. For one thing, freedom finds expression in actions which belong to the empirical, natural order. And the mind seeks to find some connection between the two orders or realms. It may not, indeed, be able to find an objective connection in the sense that it can prove theoretically the existence of noumenal reality and show precisely how empirical and noumenal reality are objectively related. But it seeks at least a subjective connection in the sense of a justification, on the side of the mind itself, of the transition from the way of thinking which is in accordance with the principles of Nature to the way of thinking which is in accordance with the principles of freedom.

To find, however, Kant's treatment of this subject we have to turn to the third *Critique*, namely the *Critique of Judgment.*

CHAPTER XV

KANT (6): AESTHETICS AND TELEOLOGY

The mediating function of judgment—The analytic of the beautiful—The analytic of the sublime—The deduction of pure aesthetic judgments—Fine art and genius—The dialectic of the aesthetic judgment—The beautiful as a symbol of the morally good—The teleological judgment—Teleology and mechanism—Physico-theology and ethico-theology.

1. At the end of the last chapter mention was made of the need for some principle of connection, at least on the side of the mind, between the world of natural necessity and the world of freedom. Kant refers to this need in his introduction to the *Critique of Judgment.*[1] Between the domain of the concept of Nature or sensible reality and the domain of the concept of freedom or supersensible reality there is a gulf of such a kind that no transition from the first to the second is possible by means of the theoretical use of reason. It appears, therefore, that there are two sundered worlds, of which the one can have no influence on the other. Yet the world of freedom must have an influence on the world of Nature, if the principles of practical reason are to be realized in action. And it must, therefore, be possible to think Nature in such a way that it is compatible at least with the possibility of the attainment in it of ends in accordance with the laws of freedom. Accordingly, there must be some ground or principle of unity which 'makes possible the transition from the way of thinking which is in accordance with the principles of the one (world) to the way of thinking which is in accordance with the principles of the other'.[2] In other words, we are looking for a connecting link between theoretical philosophy, which Kant calls the philosophy of Nature, and practical or moral philosophy which is grounded on the concept of freedom. And Kant finds this connecting link in a critique of judgment which is 'a means to unite in one whole the two parts of philosophy'.[3]

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[1] *The Critique of Judgment* (*Kritik der Urteilskraft*), contained in Volume V of the critical edition of Kant's works, will be referred to in footnotes as *J.*; and references will be given according to sections. Corresponding references will also be given, by page, to the translation by J. H. Bernard (see Bibliography), which will be referred to as *Bd.*

[2] *J.*, xx; *Bd.*, p. 13.

[3] *Ibid.*

To explain why Kant turns to a study of judgment in order to find this connecting link, reference must be made to his theory of the powers or faculties of the mind. In a table given at the end of the introduction to the *Critique of Judgment*[1] he distinguishes three powers or faculties of the mind.[2] These are the cognitive faculty in general, the power of feeling pleasure and displeasure, and the faculty of desire. This suggests at once that feeling mediates in some sense between cognition and desire. He then distinguishes three particular cognitive powers, namely understanding (*Verstand*), judgment (*Urteilskraft*), and reason (*Vernunft*). And this suggests that judgment mediates in some sense between understanding and reason, and that it bears some relation to feeling.

Now, in the *Critique of Pure Reason* we have considered the *a priori* categories and principles of the understanding, which exercise a 'constitutive' function and make possible a knowledge of objects, of Nature. We also considered the Ideas of pure reason in its speculative capacity, which exercise a 'regulative' and not a constitutive function. In the *Critique of Practical Reason* it has been shown that there is an *a priori* principle of pure reason in its practical employment, which legislates for desire (*in Ansehung des Begehrungsvermögens*).[3] It remains, therefore, to inquire whether the power of judgment, which is said by Kant to be a mediating power between the understanding and the reason, possesses its own *a priori* principles. If so, we must also inquire whether these principles exercise a constitutive or a regulative function. In particular, do they give rules *a priori* to feeling; that is, to the power of feeling pleasure and displeasure? If so, we shall have a nice, tidy scheme. The understanding gives laws *a priori* to phenomenal reality, making possible a theoretical knowledge of Nature. The pure reason, in its practical employment, legislates with regard to desire. And judgment legislates for feeling, which is, as it were, a middle term between cognition and desire, just as judgment itself mediates between understanding and reason.

In the technical terms of the critical philosophy, therefore, the problem can be stated in such a way as to throw into relief the similarity of purpose in the three *Critiques*. Has the power of judgment its own *a priori* principle or principles? And, if so, what are their functions and field of application? Further, if the power or faculty of judgment is related, in regard to its *a priori* principles, to feeling in a manner analogous to the ways in which understanding is related to cognition and reason (in its practical employment) to desire, we can see that the *Critique of Judgment* forms a necessary part of the critical philosophy, and not simply an appendage which might or might not be there.

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[1] *J.*, LVIII; *Bd.*, p. 41.

[2] The term used for mind in general is *das Gemüt*. As already noted, Kant uses his term in a very wide sense to cover all psychical powers and activities.

[3] *J.*, V; *Bd.*, p. 2.

But what does Kant mean by judgment in this context? 'The faculty of judgment in general', he tells us, 'is the power of thinking the particular as being contained in the universal.'[1] But we must distinguish between determinant and reflective judgment. 'If the universal (the rule, the principle, the law) is given, then the faculty of judgment which subsumes the particular under it is *determinant*, this being true also when the faculty as a transcendental faculty of judgment gives *a priori* the conditions under which alone the particular can be subsumed under the universal. But if only the particular is given, for which the faculty of judgment is to find the universal, then judgment is merely *reflective*.'[2] In considering the *Critique of Pure Reason* we saw that there are, according to Kant, *a priori* categories and principles of the understanding which are ultimately given in the structure of this faculty. And judgment simply subsumes particulars under these 'universals' as under something given *a priori*. This is an example of *determinant* judgment. But there are obviously many general laws which are not given but have to be discovered. Thus the empirical laws of physics are not given *a priori*. Nor are they given *a posteriori* in the sense in which particulars are given. We know *a priori*, for instance, that all phenomena are members of causal series; but we do not know particular causal laws *a priori*. Nor are they given to us *a posteriori* as objects of experience. We have to discover the general empirical laws under which we subsume particulars. This is the work of *reflective* judgment, the function of which, therefore, is not merely subsumptive; for it has to find the universal, as Kant puts it, under which the particulars can be subsumed. And it is with this reflective judgment that we are concerned here.

Now, from our point of view at least empirical laws are contingent. But the scientist is always trying to subsume more particular under more general empirical laws. He does not leave his laws alongside one another, so to speak, without endeavouring

[1] *J.*, xxv; *Bd.*, p. 16.

[2] *J.*, xxvi; *Bd.*, pp. 16–17.

to establish relations between them. He aims at constructing a system of interrelated laws. And this means that he is guided in his inquiry by the concept of Nature as an intelligible unity. The *a priori* principles of science are grounded in our understanding. But 'the special empirical laws . . . must be considered . . . as if (*als ob*) an understanding which is not ours had given them for our powers of cognition, to make possible a system of experience according to special laws of Nature'.[1] Kant adds that he does not intend to imply that the scientist must presuppose the existence of God. What he means is that the scientist presupposes a unity of Nature of such a kind as would obtain if Nature were the work of a divine mind; if, that is to say, it were an intelligible system adapted to our cognitive faculties. The idea of God is here employed simply in its regulative function. And Kant's point is really simply this, that all scientific inquiry is guided by the at least tacit assumption that Nature is an intelligible unity, 'intelligible' being understood in relation to our cognitive faculties. It is on this principle that reflective judgment proceeds. It is an *a priori* principle in the sense that it is not derived from experience but is a presupposition of all scientific inquiry. But it is not an *a priori* principle in precisely the same sense that the principles considered in the *Transcendental Analytic* are *a priori*. That is to say, it is not a necessary condition for there being objects of experience at all. Rather is it a necessary *heuristic* principle which guides us in our study of the objects of experience.

The concept of Nature as unified through the common ground of its laws in a superhuman intelligence or mind which adapts the system to our cognitive faculties is the concept of the purposiveness or finality of Nature. 'Through this concept Nature is represented as though an intelligence contained the ground of the unity of the manifold of Nature's empirical laws. The purposiveness of Nature is thus a special *a priori* concept which has its ultimate source in the faculty of reflective judgment.'[2] And the principle of the purposiveness or finality of Nature is, Kant maintains, a transcendental principle of the faculty or power of judgment. It is transcendental because it concerns possible objects of empirical knowledge in general and does not itself rest on empirical observation. Its transcendental character becomes evident, according to Kant, if we consider the maxims of judgment to which it gives rise. Among the examples given[3] are 'Nature takes the shortest

[1] *J.*, XXVII; *Bd.*, p. 18. [2] *J.*, XXVIII; *Bd.*, pp. 18–19. [3] *J.*, XXXI; *Bd.*, p. 20.

way' (*lex parsimoniae*) and 'Nature makes no leaps' (*lex continui in natura*). Such maxims are not empirical generalizations; rather are they *a priori* rules or maxims which guide us in our empirical investigation of Nature. And they rest on the general *a priori* principle of the purposiveness or finality of Nature; that is, of the latter's being adapted to our cognitive faculties in respect of the ultimate unity of its empirical laws.

The validity of this *a priori* principle of judgment is subjective rather than objective. In Kantian terminology it does not prescribe to or legislate for Nature considered in itself. It is not a constitutive principle in the sense of a necessary condition for there being any objects at all. And it does not entail the proposition that there is, in an ontological sense, finality in Nature. We cannot deduce from it *a priori* that there actually are final causes operating in Nature. It legislates for the reflective judgment, telling it to regard Nature as though it were a purposive whole, adapted to our cognitive faculties. And if we say that the principle makes Nature possible, we mean that it makes possible an empirical knowledge of Nature in regard to its empirical laws, not that it makes Nature possible in the same sense in which the categories and principles of the understanding make it possible. Of course, the principle is, in a real sense, empirically verified. But in itself it is *a priori*, not the result of observation; and, as an *a priori* principle, it is a necessary condition, not of objects themselves, which are considered as already given, but of the employment of reflective judgment in investigating these objects. Kant is not, therefore, enunciating a metaphysical dogma, namely that there are final causes operating in Nature. He is saying that, because reflective judgment is what it is, all empirical inquiry into Nature involves from the start regarding Nature *as though* it embodied a system of empirical laws which are unified through their common ground in an intelligence other than ours and which are adapted to our cognitive faculties.

Of course, we cannot regard Nature as purposive without attributing purposiveness or finality to Nature. Kant is quite well aware of this fact. 'But that the order of Nature in its particular laws, in this at least possible variety and heterogeneity which transcend our power of comprehension, is yet really adapted to our power of cognition, is, as far as we can discern, a contingent fact. And the discovery of this order is a task of the understanding, a task which is carried out with a view to a necessary end of the understanding, namely the unification of the principles of Nature. And the power of judgment must, then, attribute this end to Nature, because the understanding cannot prescribe any law to Nature in this respect.'[1] But the *a priori* attribution to Nature of finality or purposiveness does not constitute an *a priori* dogma about Nature in itself; it is an attribution with a view to our knowledge. In other words, the *a priori* principle of judgment is, as has already been said, a heuristic principle. If we then find in our empirical investigation that Nature fits in with this principle, this is, as far as we can see, a purely contingent fact. That it *must* fit, is an *a priori* assumption, a heuristic principle of judgment.

Now, the finality or purposiveness of Nature can be represented in two ways. In the first place the finality of a given object of experience can be represented as an accordance of the form of the object with the cognitive faculty, without, however, any reference of the form to a concept with a view to determinate knowledge of the object. The form of the object is considered as the ground of a pleasure which comes from the representation of the object. And when we judge that the representation is necessarily accompanied by this pleasure and that, as a consequence, the representation should be pleasurable for all (and not merely for the particular subject who happens here and now to perceive the form of the object), we have an aesthetic judgment. The object is called beautiful, and the faculty of judging universally on the basis of the pleasure which accompanies the representation is called taste.

In the second place the finality of a given object of experience can be represented as an 'accordance of its form with the possibility of the thing itself, according to a concept of the thing which precedes and contains the ground of its form'.[2] In other words, the thing is represented, in respect of its form, as fulfilling an end or purpose of Nature. And when we judge that this is the case, we have a teleological judgment.

A *Critique of Judgment*, therefore, must pay attention to both the aesthetic and the teleological judgment, distinguishing them carefully. The former is purely subjective, not in the sense that there is no universal claim in the judgment (for there is), but in the sense that it is a judgment about the accordance of the form of an object, whether a natural object or a work of art, with the cognitive faculties on the basis of the feeling caused by the representation of the object and not with reference to any concept.

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[1] *J.*, XXXIX; *Bd.*, p. 27.

[2] *J.*, XLVIII–XLIX; *Bd.*, p. 34.

Kant can say, therefore, that the faculty of judging aesthetically is 'a special power of judging things according to a rule, but not according to concepts'.[1] The teleological judgment, however, is objective in the sense that it judges that a given object fulfils a conceived purpose or end of Nature, and not that it is the ground of certain feelings in the subject. And Kant tells us that the power of making such judgments is 'not a special power but simply reflective judgment in general. . . .'[2]

Finally, reflective judgment's *a priori*, regulative concept of the purposiveness of Nature serves as a connecting link between the domain of the concept of Nature on the one hand and the domain of the concept of freedom on the other. For although it neither constitutes Nature, in the sense that the categories and principles of the understanding constitute Nature, nor legislates with a view to action, as does the *a priori* principle of pure practical reason, it enables us to think Nature as not being entirely alien, as it were, to the realization of ends. Works of art are phenomenal expressions of the noumenal realm of value; and the beauty which aesthetic appreciation of such works enables us to see in natural objects enables us to regard Nature itself as a phenomenal manifestation of the same noumenal reality, which Kant sometimes calls the 'supersensible substrate'.[3] And the concept of the purposiveness of Nature, which finds expression in the teleological judgment, enables us to conceive the possibility of an actualization of ends in Nature in harmony with the latter's laws.

Kant also puts the matter in this way. A study of the *a priori* principles of the understanding shows that we know Nature only as phenomenon. But at the same time it implies that there is a noumenal reality or 'supersensible reality'. Understanding, however, leaves the latter completely undetermined. As we saw when we considered the concepts of phenomenon and noumenon in connection with the first *Critique*, the term *noumenon* must be taken in its negative sense. Judgment, in virtue of its *a priori* principle for judging Nature, leads us to consider noumenal reality on the 'supersensible substrate', as well within as outside us, as determinable by means of the intellectual faculty. For it represents Nature as being a phenomenal expression of noumenal reality. And reason, by its *a priori* practical law, determines noumenal reality, showing us how we should conceive it. 'And thus the faculty of judgment makes possible the transition from the domain of the concept of Nature to that of the concept of freedom.'[1]

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[1] *J.*, LII; *Bd.*, p. 37. [2] *J.*, LII; *Bd.*, p. 37. [3] Cf. *J.*, LVI; *Bd.*, p. 40.

This section has been devoted to lines of thought which are outlined by Kant in his introduction to the *Critique of Judgment.* The main body of the work falls into two parts, the first dealing with aesthetic, the second with teleological judgment. And it is, of course, in these two parts that the main interest of the work lies. But once one turns to the detailed treatment of, for instance, the aesthetic judgment, one is tempted to consider it simply as Kant's aesthetic theory, that is, purely for its own sake, as though it were an isolated part of his philosophy. For this reason it seemed to me appropriate to dwell at some length on the lines of thought which, however involved they may be, at any rate serve to show that the third *Critique* was for Kant an integral part of his system and not a combination of two monographs dealing with subjects interesting in themselves but without intrinsic relation to the first two *Critiques.*

2. Following the usage of English writers on aesthetic, Kant called the judgment which pronounces a thing to be beautiful the judgment of taste (*das Geschmacksurteil*). The word 'taste' immediately suggests subjectivity; and we have already seen that in Kant's view the ground of this judgment is subjective. That is to say, a representation is referred by the imagination to the subject itself, to the feeling of pleasure or displeasure. The ground of our judgment that a thing is beautiful or ugly is the way in which our power of feeling is affected by the representation of the object. In modern language we might say that for Kant the judgment of taste is an emotive proposition, expressing feeling and not conceptual knowledge. As Kant observes, conceptual knowledge about a building is one thing; appreciation of its beauty is another.

But though the ground of the judgment of taste is subjective, what we actually say is obviously something about the thing, namely that it is beautiful. The ground for the statement consists in feeling; but when I say that an object is beautiful I am not simply making a statement about my private feelings. For such a statement would be an empirically verifiable (in principle at least) psychological judgment. It would not be a judgment of taste as such. The latter arises only when I pronounce a thing to be beautiful. There is room, therefore, for an analytic of the beautiful (*Analytik des Schönen*), even though beauty cannot be regarded as an objective quality of an object without relation to the subjective ground of the judgment that the object is beautiful.

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[1] *J.*, LVI; *Bd.*, p. 40.

Kant's analytic of the beautiful takes the form of a study of what he calls four 'moments' of the judgment of taste. Rather oddly perhaps these four moments are correlated with the four logical forms of judgment, namely quality, quantity, relation and modality. I say 'rather oddly perhaps', because the judgment of taste is not itself a logical judgment, even though, according to Kant, it involves a reference or relation to the understanding. However, the study of each moment of the judgment of taste results in a partial definition of the beautiful. We are given, as it were, four complementary elucidations of the meaning of the term 'beautiful'. And Kant's discussion of the theme is of some interest for its own sake, quite apart from the correlation of the four moments with the four logical forms of judgment.

Consideration of the judgment of taste from the standpoint of quality leads us to the following definition of the beautiful. 'Taste is the power of judging of an object or of a way of representing it through an *entirely disinterested* satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The object of such a satisfaction is called *beautiful*.'[1] By saying that aesthetic appreciation is 'entirely disinterested' (*ohne alles Interesse*) Kant does not mean, of course, that it is boring: he means that it is contemplative. In terms of the theory of taste the aesthetic judgment implies that the object which is called beautiful causes satisfaction without reference to desire, to the appetitive faculty. A simple example is sufficient to convey an idea of what Kant means. Suppose that I look at a painting of fruit and say that it is beautiful. If I mean that I should like to eat the fruit, were it real, thus relating it to appetite, my judgment would not be a judgment of taste in the technical sense, that is, an aesthetic judgment; and I should be misusing the word 'beautiful'. The aesthetic judgment implies that the form of the thing is pleasing precisely as an object of contemplation, without any reference to appetite or desire.

Kant distinguishes between the pleasant (*das Angenehme*), the beautiful (*das Schöne*) and the good (*das Gute*) as designating three relations in which representations can stand to the feelings of pleasure and displeasure or pain. The pleasant is that which gratifies inclination or desire, and it is experienced by animals as well as by men. The good is the object of esteem: it is that to which objective worth is attributed. And it concerns all rational beings, including rational beings, if there are any, which are not human beings; that is, which have no bodies. The beautiful is that which simply pleases, without any intrinsic reference to inclination or desire. It is experienced only by rational beings, but not by all. That is to say, it involves sense-perception and so concerns only those rational beings which possess bodies.

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[1] *J.*, 16; *Bd.*, p. 55.

Further, the aesthetic judgment, according to Kant, is indifferent to existence. If to take the simple example given above, I relate the painted fruit to my appetite or desire, I am interested in its existence, in the sense that I wish that the fruit were real, so that I could eat it. But if I contemplate it aesthetically, the fact that the fruit is represented fruit and not existent, eatable fruit is entirely irrelevant.

Finally, Kant points out that when he speaks of the aesthetic judgment as entirely disinterested, he does not mean to say that it cannot or that it ought not to be accompanied by any interest. In society men certainly have an interest in communicating the pleasure which they feel in aesthetic experience. And Kant calls this an empirical interest in the beautiful. But interest, though it may accompany or be combined with the judgment of taste, is not its determining ground. Considered in itself, the judgment is disinterested.

Turning to the study of the judgment of taste according to quantity, we find Kant defining the beautiful as 'that which pleases universally, without a concept'.[1] And we can consider these two characteristics separately.

The fact, already established, that the beautiful is the object of an entirely disinterested satisfaction implies that it is the object, or ought to be the object, of a universal satisfaction. Suppose that I am conscious that my judgment that a given statue is beautiful is entirely disinterested. This means that I am conscious that my judgment is not dependent on any private conditions peculiar to myself. In pronouncing my judgment I am 'free', as Kant puts it, neither impelled by desire on the one hand nor dictated to by the moral imperative on the other.[2] And I therefore believe that I have reason for attributing to others a satisfaction similar to that which I experience in myself; for the satisfaction is not grounded in the gratification of my private inclinations. Accordingly, I speak of the statue as if beauty were an objective characteristic of it.

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[1] *J.*, 32; *Bd.*, p. 67.

[2] In introducing the idea of the moral imperative, I do not mean to imply, of course, that it is a private condition, as inclination is. I introduce it simply to complete the notion of being 'free' as Kant uses this term in connection with the aesthetic judgment.

Kant distinguishes, therefore, in respect to universality, between a judgment concerning the pleasant and a judgment concerning the beautiful. If I say that the taste of olives is pleasant, I am quite prepared for someone to say, 'Well, you may find it pleasant, but I find it unpleasant'. For I recognize that my statement was based on private feeling or taste, and that *de gustibus non est disputandum.* But if I say that a certain work of art is beautiful, I tacitly claim, according to Kant, that it is beautiful for all. I claim, that is to say, that the judgment is based, not upon purely private feelings, so that it has validity only for myself, but upon feelings which I either attribute to others or demand of them. We must distinguish, therefore, between the judgment of taste in Kant's technical use of the term and judgments which we might normally be inclined to call judgments of taste. In making the former judgment we claim universal validity, but in the second class of judgments we do not. And it is only the first type of judgment which is concerned with the beautiful.

Naturally, Kant does not mean to imply that when someone calls a statue beautiful, he necessarily believes that all, as a matter of fact, judge it to be beautiful. He means that by making the judgment a man claims that others should recognize the statue's beauty. For, being conscious that his judgment is 'free' in the sense mentioned above, he either attributes to others a satisfaction similar to his own or claims that they should experience it.

What sort of claim or demand is this? We cannot prove logically to others that an object is beautiful. For the claim of universal validity which we make on behalf of an aesthetic judgment does not have any reference to the cognitive faculty, but only to the feeling of pleasure and pain in every subject. In Kant's terminology, the judgment does not rest upon any concept: it rests upon feeling. We cannot, therefore, make good our claim to the universal validity of the judgment by any process of logical argument. We can only persuade others to look again, and to look with more attention, at the object, confident that in the end their feelings will speak for themselves and that they will concur with our judgment. When we make the judgment, we believe that we speak, as it were, with a universal voice, and we claim the assent of others;

but they will give this assent only on the basis of their own feelings, not in virtue of any concepts which we adduce. 'We may now see that in the judgment of taste nothing is postulated but such a *universal* voice in respect of the satisfaction without the intervention of concepts.'[1] We can draw attention as much as we like to different features of the object to persuade others that it is beautiful. But the assent, if it comes, is the result of a certain satisfaction which is at last felt and does not rest on concepts.

But what is this satisfaction or pleasure of which Kant is speaking? He tells us that it is not emotion (*Rührung*), which is 'a sensation in which pleasantness is produced only by means of a momentary checking and a consequent more powerful outflow of the vital force'.[2] Emotion in this sense is relevant to the experience of sublimity, but not to that of beauty. But to say that the satisfaction or state of pleasure which is the determining ground of the judgment of taste is not emotion is not to explain what it is. And we can ask the question in this form. What is the object of the satisfaction or pleasure of which Kant is speaking? For if we know what arouses it, what it is satisfaction at or in, we shall know of what kind of satisfaction or pleasure he is speaking.

To answer this question, we can turn to Kant's study of the third moment of the judgment of taste, corresponding to the category of relation. His discussion of this third moment results in the following definition. '*Beauty* is the form of the *purposiveness* of an object, so far as this is perceived *without any representation of a purpose*.'[3] But as the meaning of this definition is not perhaps immediately evident, some explanation is required.

The fundamental idea is not difficult to grasp. If we look at a flower, say a rose, we may have the feeling that it is, as we say, just right; we may have the feeling that its form embodies or fulfils a purpose. At the same time we do not represent to ourselves any purpose which is achieved in the rose. It is not merely that if someone asked us what purpose was embodied in the rose we should be unable to give any clear account of it: we do not conceive or represent to ourselves any purpose at all. And yet in some sense we *feel*, without concepts, that a purpose is embodied in the flower. The matter might perhaps be expressed in this way. There is a sense of meaning; but there is no conceptual representation of what is meant. There is an awareness or consciousness of finality; but there is no concept of an end which is achieved.

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[1] *J.*, 25; *Bd.*, p. 62. [2] *J.*, 43; *Bd.*, p. 76. [3] *J.*, 61; *Bd.*, p. 90.

There can, of course, be a concept of purpose, which accompanies the experience of beauty. But Kant will not allow that a judgment of taste is 'pure' if it presupposes a concept of a purpose. He distinguishes between what he calls 'free' and 'adherent' beauty. If we judge that a flower is beautiful, we have, most probably, no concept of a purpose which is achieved in the flower. The beauty of the latter is then said to be free; and our judgment of taste is said to be pure. But when we judge that a building, say a church, is beautiful, we may have a concept of a purpose which is achieved and perfectly embodied in the building. The beauty of the latter is then said to be adherent, and our judgment is said to be impure, in the technical sense that it is not simply an expression of a feeling of satisfaction or pleasure but involves a conceptual element. An aesthetic judgment is pure only if the person who makes it has no concept of a purpose or if he abstracts from the concept, supposing that he has one, when he makes the judgment.

Kant insists upon this point because he wishes to maintain the special and unique character of the aesthetic judgment. If the latter involved a concept of objective purposiveness, of perfection, it would be 'just as much a cognitive judgment as the judgment by which something is pronounced good'.[1] But in point of fact the determining ground of the aesthetic judgment is not a concept at all, and consequently it cannot be a concept of a definite purpose. 'A judgment is called aesthetic precisely because its determining ground is not a concept but the feeling (of the inner sense) of that harmony in the play of the mental powers, so far as it can be experienced in feeling.'[2] Kant admits that we can and do form standards of beauty and that, in the case of man, we form an ideal of beauty which is at the same time a visible expression of moral ideas. But he insists that 'judgment according to such a standard can never be purely aesthetic, and that judgment according to an ideal of beauty is not a mere judgment of taste'.[3]

The fourth partial definition of beauty, derived from a consideration of the judgment of taste according to the modality of the subject's satisfaction in the object, is this. 'The *beautiful* is that which without any concept is recognized as the object of a *necessary* satisfaction.'[4]

This necessity is not a theoretical objective necessity. For if it were, I should know *a priori* that everyone will assent to my judgment of taste. And this is certainly not the case. I claim universal validity for my judgment; but I do not know that it will be admitted in fact. Nor is this necessity a practical necessity; that is, the result of an objective law telling us how we ought to act. It is what Kant calls *exemplary*; 'that is, necessity of the assent of *all* to a judgment which is regarded as an example of a universal rule which one cannot state'.[1] When I say that something is beautiful, I claim that all ought to describe it as beautiful; and this claim presupposes a universal principle, of which the judgment is an example. But the principle cannot be a logical principle. It must be regarded, therefore, as a common sense (*ein Gemeinsinn*). But this is not common sense (*sensus communis*) according to the ordinary usage of the term. For the latter judges by concepts and principles, however indistinctly represented. Common sense in the aesthetic understanding of the term refers to 'the effect resulting from the free play of our cognitive powers'.[2] In passing an aesthetic judgment we presuppose that a certain similar satisfaction will arise or should arise from their interplay in all who perceive the object in question.

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[1] *J.*, 47; *Bd.*, p. 79.

[2] *J.*, 47; *Bd.*, p. 80.

[3] *J.*, 60–1; *Bd.*, p. 90.

[4] *J.*, 68; *Bd.*, p. 96.

What right have we got to presuppose this common sense? We cannot prove its existence; but it is presupposed or assumed as the necessary condition of the communicability of aesthetic judgments. According to Kant, judgments, along with the conviction which accompanies them, must admit of universal communicability. But aesthetic judgments cannot be communicated by concepts and by appeal to a universal logical rule. Hence 'common sense' is the necessary condition of their communicability. And this is our ground for presupposing such a common sense.

In general, it must be understood that in his 'analytic of the beautiful' Kant is not concerned with giving rules or hints for educating and cultivating aesthetic taste. He expressly disclaims any such intention in his preface to the *Critique of Judgment*. He is concerned first and foremost with the nature of the aesthetic judgment, with what we can say about it *a priori*; that is, with its universal and necessary features. In the course of his discussion he obviously draws attention to ideas which, whether we accept them or not, are worthy of consideration. The 'disinterestedness' of the aesthetic judgment and the notion of purposiveness without any concept of a purpose are cases in point. But the fundamental question is probably whether the aesthetic judgment expresses feeling, in the sense that the latter is the only determining ground of the pure judgment of taste, or whether it is in some sense a cognitive judgment. If we think that Kant's account of the matter is too subjectivist and that the aesthetic judgment does in fact express objective knowledge of a kind for which he does not allow, we must, of course, be prepared to state what this knowledge is. If we cannot do so, this is at least a prima facie ground for thinking that Kant's account was on the right lines. But on this matter the reader must form his own opinion.

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[1] *J.*, 62–3; *Bd.*, p. 91.

[2] *J.*, 64–5; *Bd.*, p. 93.

3. Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1756) was regarded by Kant as the most important work in this line of research which had appeared. But though he followed Burke in distinguishing between the beautiful and the sublime,[1] he looked on the English writer's treatment as being 'purely empirical' and 'physiological'[2] and considered that what was needed was a 'transcendental exposition' of aesthetic judgments. Having already considered Kant's study of the judgment of taste in the sense of a judgment about the beautiful, we can now turn to the analytic of the sublime. But I propose to deal with this theme in a more cursory way.

The beautiful and the sublime (*das Erhabene*) have some common features. For instance, both cause pleasure; and the judgment that something is sublime no more presupposes a determinate concept than does the judgment that an object is beautiful. But there are at the same time considerable differences between the beautiful and the sublime. For example, the former is associated with quality rather than with quantity, the latter with quantity rather than with quality. Natural beauty, as we have seen, has to do with the form of an object; and form implies limitation. The experience of the sublime, however, is associated with formlessness, in the sense of absence of limitation, provided that this absence of limits is represented together with totality. (Thus the overpowering grandeur of the tempestuous ocean is felt as limitless, but the absence of limits is also represented as a totality.) Kant is thus enabled to associate beauty with the understanding, the sublime with the reason. Aesthetic experience of the beautiful does not, as we have seen, depend on any determinate concept. Nevertheless, it involves a free interplay of the faculties; in this case imagination and understanding. The beautiful as definite is felt as adequate to the imagination, and the imagination is considered as being in accord, in regard to a given intuition, with the understanding, which is a faculty of concepts. The sublime, however, does violence to the imagination; it overwhelms it, as it were. And it is then represented as being in accord with the reason, considered as the faculty of indeterminate ideas of totality. The sublime, in proportion as it involves absence of limits, is inadequate to our power of imaginative representation; that is to say, it exceeds and overwhelms it. And in so far as this absence of limits is associated with totality, the sublime can be regarded as the 'exhibition', as Kant puts it, of an indefinite idea of the reason. Another difference is that whereas the pleasure produced by the beautiful can be described as a positive joy, prolonged in quiet contemplation, the sublime must be said to cause wonder and awe rather than positive joy. And the experience of it is associated with emotion in the sense alluded to in the last section, namely a momentary checking and a consequent more powerful outflow of the vital force. Finally, the beautiful, though distinct from the charming, can be linked with it. But charm (*Reiz*) and the sublime are incompatible.

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[1] I do not intend to imply by this remark that Burke was the first to make this distinction.

[2] *J.*, 128; *Bd.*, p. 147.

From the fact, or supposed fact, that the sublime is experienced as doing violence to the imagination and as being out of accord with our power of representation Kant draws the conclusion that it is only improperly that natural objects are called sublime. For the term indicates approval. And how can we be said to approve what is experienced as in some sense hostile to ourselves? 'Thus the wide tempestuous ocean cannot be called sublime. The sight of it is terrible; and one must have one's mind already filled with many sorts of Ideas, if through such a sight it is to be attuned to a sentiment which is itself sublime because by it the mind is incited to abandon the realm of sense and to occupy itself with Ideas which involve a higher purposiveness.'[1] There are many natural objects which can properly be called beautiful. But, properly speaking, sublimity belongs to our feelings or sentiments rather than to the objects which occasion them.

Kant distinguishes between the mathematical and the dynamical sublime, according as to whether the imagination refers the mental movement involved in the experience of the sublime to the faculty of cognition or to that of desire. The mathematical sublime is said to be 'that which is absolutely great'[2] or '*that in comparison*

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[1] *J.*, 77; *Bd.*, p. 103.

[2] *J.*, 80; *Bd.*, p. 106.

with which all else is small'.[1] Among examples Kant gives that of St. Peter's at Rome. The dynamical sublime is experienced, for example, when we are confronted with the spectacle of the terrible physical power of Nature but when at the same time we find in our mind and reason a superiority to this physical might.[2]

4. According to Kant, pure judgments of taste (that is, judgments about the beauty of natural objects) stand in need of a deduction, in the sense of justification. The aesthetic judgment demands *a priori* that in representing a given object all should feel the peculiar kind of pleasure (arising from the interplay of imagination and understanding) which is the determining ground of the judgment. As the latter is a particular judgment made by a particular subject, and as its determining ground is subjective (not an objective cognition of a thing), what is the justification of the claim to universal validity? We cannot justify it by logical proof. For the judgment is not a logical judgment. Nor can we justify it by appealing to a factual universal consent. For, quite apart from the fact that people by no means always agree in their aesthetic judgments, the claim on or demand for universal consent is made *a priori*. It is an essential feature of the judgment as such, and it is thus independent of the empirical facts concerning common assent, or the lack of it, to the judgment. The justification, therefore, can take the form neither of a logical deduction nor of an empirical induction, aiming to establish the truth of the judgment when viewed as claiming universal validity.

Kant's way of dealing with the matter amounts to assigning the conditions under which the claim to universal assent can be justified. If the aesthetic judgment rests on purely subjective grounds, on, that is to say, the pleasure or displeasure arising from the interplay of the powers of imagination and understanding in regard to a given representation, and if we have a right to presuppose in all men a similar structure of the cognitive powers and of the relations between them, then the claim to universal validity on the part of the aesthetic judgment is justified. But the judgment does rest on purely subjective grounds. And communicability of representations and of knowledge in general warrants our presupposing in all men similar subjective conditions for judgment. Therefore the claim to universal consent is justified.

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[1] *J.*, 84; *Bd.*, p. 109.

[2] Kant's remark that the spectacle of, say, the might of the storm-tossed ocean or of a volcano in eruption becomes pleasing when beheld from a safe vantage-point incited Schopenhauer to some sarcastic remarks.

It does not seem to me that this deduction[1] carries us much further. No deduction is required, Kant tells us, in the case of judgments about the sublime in Nature. For it is only improperly that the latter is called sublime. The term refers to our sentiments rather than to the natural phenomena which occasion them. In the case of the pure judgment of taste, however, a deduction is required; for an assertion is made about an object in respect of its form, and this assertion involves an *a priori* claim to universal validity. And fidelity to the general programme of the critical philosophy demands a deduction or justification of such a judgment. But what we are actually told in the course of the deduction amounts to little more than the statements that the claim to universal validity is warranted if we are justified in presupposing in all men a similarity of the subjective conditions of judgment, and that communicability justifies this presupposition. It is perhaps true that this fits into the general pattern of the critical philosophy, inasmuch as the possibility of the aesthetic judgment, considered as a synthetic *a priori* proposition, is referred to conditions on the part of the subject. But one might have expected to have heard some more about conditions on the part of the object. True, the determining grounds of the judgment of taste are, according to Kant, subjective. But, as we have seen, he allows that natural objects can properly be called beautiful, whereas sublimity is only improperly predicated of Nature.

5. So far we have been concerned with the beauty of natural objects.[2] We must now turn to the subject of art. Art in general 'is distinguished from Nature as making (*facere*), from acting or operating (*agere*), and the product or result of the former from the product or result of the latter as work (*opus*) from effect (*effectus*)'.[3] Fine art (*die schöne Kunst*), as distinguished from merely pleasing art (*die angenehme Kunst*), is 'a kind of representation which has its end in itself, but which none the less, although it has no purpose external to itself, promotes the culture of the mental powers with a view to social communication'.[4]

According to Kant, it pertains to a product of fine art that we should be conscious that it is art and not Nature. But at the same time the purposiveness of its form must seem to be as free from the constraint of arbitrary rules as though it were a product of Nature. Kant does not mean, of course, that no rules should be observed in the production of a work of art. He means that their observance should not be painfully apparent. The work of art, to be a work of art, should appear to possess the 'freedom' of Nature. However, whether it is a question of natural beauty or of a work of art, we can say: '*That is beautiful which pleases in the mere act of judging it* (not in sensation, nor by means of a concept).'[1]

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[1] For the details of the deduction the reader is referred to the *Critique of Judgment* itself (*J.*, 131 ff.; *Bd.*, pp. 150 ff.).

[2] To judge by the way in which Kant cites the tulip as an example, he appears to have had a predilection for this flower.

[3] *J.*, 173; *Bd.*, p. 183.

[4] *J.*, 179; *Bd.*, p. 187.

Fine art is the work of genius, genius being the talent or natural gift which gives the rule to art. The latter presupposes rules by means of which a product is represented as possible. But these rules cannot have concepts as their determining grounds. Hence the artist, if he is a true artist or genius, cannot devise his rules by means of concepts. And it follows that Nature itself, as operating in the artist (by the harmony of his faculties), must give the rule to art. Genius, therefore, can be defined as 'the inborn mental disposition (*ingenium*) *through which* Nature gives the rule to art'.[2]

It would be out of place to deal here at length with Kant's ideas about art and genius. It is sufficient to mention two points. First, among the faculties which Kant attributes to genius is spirit (*Geist*), which he describes as the animating principle of the mind. It is 'the faculty of presenting aesthetical Ideas',[3] an aesthetical Idea being a representation of the imagination which occasions much thought although no concept is adequate to it, with the consequence that it cannot be made fully intelligible by language. An aesthetical Idea is thus a counterpart of a rational Idea, which, conversely, is a concept to which no intuition or representation of the imagination can be adequate.

The second point which we can note is Kant's insistence on the originality of genius. 'Everyone is agreed that Genius is entirely opposed to the spirit of imitation.'[4] It follows that genius cannot be taught. But it does not follow that genius can dispense with all rules and technical training. Originality is not the only essential condition for genius considered as productive of works of art.

6. We have had occasion to notice Kant's passion for architectonic. This is apparent in the *Critique of Judgment* as well as in

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[1] *J.*, 180; *Bd.*, p. 187.

[2] *J.*, 181; *Bd.*, p. 188.

[3] *J.*, 192; *Bd.*, p. 197.

[4] *J.*, 183; *Bd.*, p. 190.

the first two *Critiques*. And just as he supplies a deduction of the pure judgment of taste, so also does he supply a short *Dialectic of the Aesthetic Judgment.*[1] This contains the statement of an antinomy and its solution.

The antinomy is as follows. '*Thesis:* The judgment of taste is not based upon concepts; for otherwise it would admit of dispute (would be determinable by proofs). *Antithesis*: The judgment of taste is based upon concepts; for otherwise, in spite of its diversity, we could not quarrel about it (we could not claim for our judgment the necessary assent of others).'[2]

The solution of the antinomy consists in showing that the thesis and antithesis are not contradictory, because the word 'concept' is not to be understood in the same sense in the two propositions. The thesis means that the judgment of taste is not based upon *determinate* concepts. And this is quite true. In the antithesis we mean that the judgment of taste is based upon an *indeterminate* concept, namely that of the supersensible substrate of phenomena. And this also is true. For, according to Kant, this indeterminate concept is the concept of the general ground of the subjective purposiveness of Nature for the judgment; and this is required as a basis for the claim to universal validity on behalf of the judgment. But the concept does not give us any knowledge of the object; nor can it supply any proof of the judgment. Hence thesis and antithesis can both be true, and so compatible; and then the apparent antinomy disappears.

7. The fact that the judgment of taste rests in some sense on the indeterminate concept of the supersensible substrate of phenomena suggests that there is some link between aesthetics and morals. For the aesthetic judgment presupposes, indirectly, this indeterminate concept; and reflection on the moral law gives to the idea of the supersensible or intelligible a determinate content. It is not surprising, therefore, to find Kant saying that 'the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good',[3] and that 'taste is at bottom a power of judging of the sensible illustration of moral ideas (by means of a certain analogy involved in our reflection upon both of these)'.[4]

What does Kant understand by a symbol? His own example is an apt illustration of his meaning. A monarchical State can be represented by a living body if it is governed by laws which spring from the people,[1] and by a machine (such as a hand-mill) if it is governed according to the individual, absolute will of an autocrat. But the representation is in both cases only *symbolic*. The former type of State is not in actual fact like a body; nor does the latter type bear any literal resemblance to a hand-mill. At the same time there is an analogy between the rules according to which we reflect upon the type of State and its causality on the one hand and the representative symbol and its causality on the other. Thus Kant bases his idea of symbolism on analogy. And the question arises, what are the points of analogy between the aesthetic and the moral judgments, or between the beautiful and the morally good, which justify our looking on the former as a symbol of the latter?

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[1] He also adds to the first part of the *Critique of Judgment* an appendix on the 'Doctrine of Method of Taste'. But this is extremely brief.

[2] *J.*, 234; *Bd.*, p. 231.

[3] *J.*, 258; *Bd.*, p. 250.

[4] *J.*, 263; *Bd.*, p. 255.

There is an analogy between the beautiful and the morally good in the fact that both please *immediately*. That is to say, there is a similarity between them in the fact that they both please immediately; but there is at the same time a difference. For the beautiful pleases in reflective intuition, the morally good in the concept. Again, the beautiful pleases apart from any interest; and though the morally good is indeed bound up with an interest, it does not precede the moral judgment but follows it. So here too there is an analogy rather than a strict similarity. Further, in the aesthetic judgment the imagination is in harmony with the understanding; and this harmony is analogous to the moral harmony of the will with itself according to the universal law of the practical reason. Lastly, there is an analogy between the claim to universality on the part of the subjective principle in the judgment of taste and the claim to universality on the part of the objective principle of morality.

Kant's way of talking may sometimes suggest a moralizing of aesthetic experience. Thus we are told that 'the true propaedeutic for the foundation of taste is the development of moral ideas and the culture of the moral feeling; for it is only when sensibility is brought into agreement with this that genuine taste can take a definite invariable form'.[2] But Kant does not wish to reduce the aesthetic to the moral judgment. As we have seen, he insists on the special characteristics of the former. The point which he wishes to make is that aesthetic experience forms a connecting link between the sensible world as presented in scientific knowledge and the supersensible world as apprehended in moral experience. And it is primarily with this point in mind that he draws attention to analogies between the beautiful and the morally good.

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[1] *Nach inneren Volksgesetzen* (*J.*, 256; *Bd.*, p. 249) is Kant's phrase. Perhaps he has at the back of his mind Rousseau's idea of law as the expression of the general will.

[2] *J.*, 264; *Bd.*, p. 255.

8. We have seen that the judgment of taste is concerned with the form of the purposiveness of an object, so far as this purposiveness is perceived without any representation of a purpose. It is thus in some sense a teleological judgment. In Kant's terminology it is a formal and subjective teleological judgment. It is formal in the sense that it is not concerned with explaining the existence of anything. Indeed, it is not, of itself, concerned with existing things. It is concerned primarily with representations. And it is subjective in the sense that it refers to the feeling of the person who makes the judgment. That is to say, it asserts a necessary connection between the representation of an object as purposive and the pleasure which accompanies this representation.

Besides the subjective formal teleological judgment there is also the objective formal teleological judgment. This is to be found, according to Kant, in mathematics. One of his examples is the following. In so simple a figure as the circle, he remarks, there is contained the ground for the solution of a number of geometrical problems. For instance, if one wishes to construct a triangle, given the base and the opposite angle, the circle is 'the geometrical place for all triangles which conform to this condition'.[1] And the judgment about the suitability of the circle for this purpose is a teleological judgment; for it states 'purposiveness'. It is a formal teleological judgment, because it is not concerned with existing things and with the causal relationship. In pure mathematics nothing is said 'of the existence, but only of the possibility of things'.[2] But it is an objective, and not a subjective, judgment because there is no reference to the feelings or desires of the person making the judgment.

In addition to formal teleological judgments there are also material teleological judgments, which refer to existing things. And these judgments too can be either subjective or objective. They are subjective if they state human purposes; objective if they are concerned with purposes in Nature. The second part of the *Critique of Judgment* deals with the fourth class; that is, with objective, material teleological judgments. And when Kant speaks simply about the 'teleological judgment', it is this sort of judgment which he has in mind.

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[1] *J.*, 272; *Bd.*, pp. 262-3.

[2] *J.*, 279, note; *Bd.*, p. 268, note.

But there is a further distinction to be made. When we assert that there is purposiveness or finality in Nature, we may be referring either to relative (also called outer or external) or to inner finality. If, for example, we were to say that reindeer exist in the north in order that Eskimos should have meat to eat, we should be asserting a case of relative or outer finality or purposiveness. We should be saying that the natural purpose of the reindeer is to serve something external to itself. If, however, we were to say that the reindeer is a natural purpose in itself, meaning that it is an organic whole in which the parts are mutually interdependent, existing for the whole of which they are parts, we should be asserting a case of inner finality. That is, the natural purpose or end of the reindeer is stated to lie in itself, considered as an organic whole, and not in a relation to something external and other than itself.

Now, let us consider the first judgment, namely that reindeer exist for the sake of human beings. This purports to be an explanation of the existence of reindeer. It is different, however, from a causal explanation. For a causal explanation (in accordance with the schematized category of causality) would merely tell us *how* reindeer come to exist. It would not tell us *why* they exist. The relative teleological judgment purports to supply an answer to the question *why*. But the answer could, at best, be only *hypothetical*. That is to say, it assumes that there must be human beings in the far north. But no amount of study of Nature will show us that there must be human beings in the far north. It is, indeed, psychologically understandable that we should be inclined to think that reindeer should exist for the Eskimos and grass for the sheep and the cows; but, as far as our knowledge is concerned, we might just as well say that human beings are capable of existing in the far north because there happen to be reindeer there, and that sheep and cows are able to live in certain places and not in others because there happens to be appropriate food in the first place and not in the second. In other words, apart from any other possible objections against the assertion of outer finality in Nature, our judgments could never be absolute. We could never be justified in saying absolutely that reindeer exist for men and grass for sheep and cows. The judgments may possibly be true; but we cannot know that they are true. For we cannot see any necessary connections which would establish their truth.

Judgments about inner finality, however, are absolute teleological judgments. That is to say, they assert of some product of Nature that it is in itself a purpose or end of Nature (*Naturzweck*). In the case of relative finality we say, equivalently, that one thing exists with a view to some other thing if this other thing embodies a purpose of Nature. But in the case of inner finality we say that a thing embodies a purpose of Nature because the thing is what it is, and not because of its relation to something else. The question arises, therefore, what are the requisite conditions for making this judgment?

'I should say in a preliminary fashion that a thing exists as a purpose of Nature *when it is cause and effect of itself*, although in a twofold sense.'[1] Kant takes the example of a tree. It is not merely that the tree produces another member of the same species: it produces itself as an individual. For in the process which we call growth it receives and organizes matter in such a way that we can regard the whole process as one of self-production. Further, there is a relation of mutual interdependence between a part and the whole. The leaves, for instance, are produced by the tree; but at the same time they conserve it, in the sense that repeated defoliation would eventually kill the tree.

Trying to define more accurately a thing considered as a purpose of Nature, Kant observes that the parts must be so related to one another that they produce a whole by their causality. At the same time the whole can be regarded as a final cause of the organization of the parts. 'In such a product of Nature each part not only exists *by means of* all the other parts but is also regarded as existing *for the sake* of the others and of the whole, that is, as an instrument (organ).'[2] This is not, however, a sufficient description. For a part of a watch can be regarded as existing for the sake of the others and of the whole. And a watch is not a product of Nature. We must add, therefore, that the parts must be regarded as reciprocally producing each other. It is only a product of this kind which can be called a purpose of Nature; for it is not only organized but also a self-organizing being. We regard it as possessing in itself a formative power (*eine bildende Kraft*), which is not present in an artificial production or machine such as a watch. A watch possesses a moving power (*eine bewegende Kraft*), but not a formative power.

We have, therefore, a principle for judging of internal purposiveness in organized beings. 'This principle, which is at the same time a definition, is as follows: *An organized product of Nature is one in which everything is reciprocally end and means.* In it nothing is in vain, without purpose, or to be ascribed to a blind mechanism of Nature.'[1] This principle is derived from experience in the sense that its formulation is occasioned by observation of organic beings. But at the same time 'on account of the universality and necessity which it predicates of such purposiveness'[2] it cannot rest merely on empirical grounds. It must be grounded on an *a priori* principle, the Idea of a purpose of Nature, which is a regulative (and not constitutive) Idea. And the principle quoted above can be called, Kant tells us, a maxim for the employment of this regulative Idea in judging the inner purposiveness of organized beings.

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[1] *J.*, 286; *Bd.*, pp. 273-4.

[2] *J.*, 291; *Bd.*, p. 277.

The question arises, however, whether we can be content with a dichotomy in Nature. Internal finality or purposiveness can be said to be verified for us only in self-organizing beings. For, whatever may be the case absolutely speaking, we at least are not in a position to give an adequate explanation of such beings in terms of merely mechanical causality, by working, that is to say, with the schematized category of causality. But this is not the case with inorganic beings, where we do not seem to require the concept of finality. Are we, therefore, to be content with making a split, as it were, in Nature, using the concept of final causality in the case of certain types of beings and not using it in other cases?

According to Kant, we cannot remain content with such a dichotomy. For the Idea of finality, of a purpose of Nature, is a regulative Idea for judgment's interpretation of Nature. And we are thus led to the view of Nature as a system of ends, a view which in turn leads us to refer Nature, as empirically given in sense-perception, to a supersensible substrate. Indeed, the very Idea of a natural purpose takes us beyond the sphere of sense-experience. For the Idea is not given in mere sense-perception; it is a regulative principle for judging what is perceived. And we naturally tend to unify the whole of Nature in the light of this Idea. 'If we have once discovered in Nature a power of bringing forth products which can be thought by us only according to the concept of final causes, we go further and are entitled to judge that those things too belong to a system of ends which do not . . . necessitate our seeking for any principle of their possibility beyond the mechanism of causes working blindly. For the first Idea, as regards its ground, already brings us beyond the world of sense; because the unity of the supersensible principle must be regarded as valid in this way not merely for certain species of natural beings, but for the whole of Nature as a system.'[1]

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[1] *J.*, 295–6; *Bd.*, pp. 280–1. [2] *J.*, 296; *Bd.*, p. 281.

It is important to understand, of course, that the principle of finality in Nature is for Kant a regulative Idea of reflective judgment, and that the maxims to which it gives rise are heuristic principles. We must not confuse natural science and theology. Thus we should not introduce the concept of God into natural science in order to explain finality. 'Now, to keep itself strictly within its limits, physics abstracts from the question whether ends in Nature (*Naturzwecke*) are *intentional or unintentional*; for this would mean intruding itself into alien territory (namely that of metaphysics). It is enough that there are objects which are *explicable* as regards their internal form, or even intimately *knowable* solely by means of natural laws which we cannot think except by taking the Idea of ends as a principle.'[2] The Idea of a purpose of Nature, so far as natural science is concerned, is a useful, indeed inevitable, heuristic principle. But though teleology leads naturally to theology, in the sense that a teleological view of Nature leads naturally to the assumption that Nature is the work of an intelligent Being acting for a purpose, this does not mean that the existence of God can be regarded as a conclusion which is demonstrable on the basis of natural science. For the regulative Idea of reflective judgment and the maxims which govern its employment are subjective principles. On the side of the mind, the teleological judgment helps us to bridge the gulf between the phenomenal and noumenal spheres; but it cannot form the basis for a dogmatic metaphysics.

9. As we have seen, Kant concentrates on what he calls inner purposiveness or finality; that is, on the finality manifested within an organic being through the relations of the parts to one another and to the whole. A purely mechanistic explanation is insufficient in the case of such beings.

But the situation is not, of course, as simple as this statement of Kant's position might suggest. On the one hand the categories are constitutive in regard to experience. And though this does not tell us anything about noumenal or supersensible reality, it appears to tell us that all phenomena must be explicable in terms of mechanical causality, or at least that they must be considered to be explicable in this way. On the other hand consideration of organic beings leads us to use the idea of finality in interpreting them. As Kant puts it, the understanding suggests one maxim for judging corporeal things, while reason suggests another. And these two maxims of judgment appear to be mutually incompatible. There thus arises an antinomy, or at least an apparent antinomy, which Kant discusses under the general heading of *Dialectic of Teleological Judgment.*

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[1] *J.*, 304; *Bd.*, p. 287.

[2] *J.*, 307–8; *Bd.*, pp. 289–90.

The antinomy is first stated as follows. '*The first maxim* of judgment is the *proposition*: All production of material things and their forms can be judged to be possible only according to merely mechanical laws. *The second maxim* is the *counter-proposition:* Some products of material Nature cannot be judged to be possible according to merely mechanical laws. (To judge them requires a quite different law of causality, namely that of final causes.)'[1]

Kant remarks that if we turn these maxims into constitutive principles of the possibility of objects, we are, indeed, faced with a contradiction. For we shall have the following statements. '*Proposition:* All production of material things is possible according to merely mechanical laws. *Counter-proposition:* Some production of material things is not possible according to merely mechanical laws.'[2] And these two statements are clearly incompatible. But judgment does not provide us with constitutive principles of the possibility of objects. And no *a priori* proof of either statement can be given. We must return, therefore, to the antinomy as first stated, where we have two maxims for judging of material objects according to the empirical laws of Nature. And it is Kant's contention that the two maxims do not in fact contradict one another.

The reason why they do not contradict one another is this. If I say that I must judge the production of material things to be possible according to merely mechanical laws (that is, without introducing the idea of purpose or finality), I do not say that the production of material things is only possible in this way. I say that I ought to consider them as being possible only in this way. In other words, I lay down the principle that in the scientific investigation of Nature I must push, as it were, mechanistic explanation as far as it will go. And this does not prevent me from judging that in regard to certain material things I cannot provide an adequate explanation in terms of mechanical causality, and that I have to introduce the idea of final causality. I do not thereby assert dogmatically that organic beings cannot possibly be produced by the operation of mechanical causal laws. I say rather that I do not see how the general principle of explaining the production of material things in terms of mechanical causality can be applied in this case, and that I find myself driven to consider such beings as ends, as embodying purposes of Nature, even if the Idea of a purpose of Nature is not altogether clear to me.

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[1] *J.*, 314; *Bd.*, p. 294.

[2] *J.*, 314–15; *Bd.*, pp. 294–5.

Kant notes that in the history of philosophy there have appeared different ways of explaining purposiveness in Nature. He groups them under two general headings, idealism and realism. The former maintains that such purposiveness is undesigned, while the latter holds that it is designed. Under the heading of idealism Kant includes both the system of the Greek atomists, according to which everything is due to the working of the laws of motion, and the system of Spinoza, according to which purposiveness in Nature arises fatalistically, as it were, from the character of infinite substance. Under realism he includes both hylozoism (the theory, for example, of a world-soul) and theism.

The names are oddly chosen. I mean, it is odd to call the philosophies of Democritus and Epicurus 'idealism'. But the main point to be noticed is that according to Kant theism is by far the most acceptable system of explanation. Epicurus tries to explain purposiveness in Nature through blind chance; but in this way 'nothing is explained, not even the illusion in our teleological judgment'.[1] Spinoza's system leads to the conclusion that all is purposive; for all follows necessarily from Substance, and this is what purposiveness is made to mean. But to say that a thing is purposive simply because it is a thing is tantamount to saying that nothing is purposive. It is true, Kant remarks, that Spinoza's doctrine of the original Being is not easy to refute; but this is because it is not understandable in the first place. As for hylozoism, 'the possibility of a living matter cannot even be thought; for its concept involves a contradiction, because lifelessness, *inertia*, constitutes the essential character of matter'.[2] We are left, therefore, with theism which is superior to all other grounds of explanation in that it refers purposiveness in Nature to an original Being acting intelligently.

But though theism is superior to all other explanations of finality in Nature, it cannot be proved. 'What now in the end does

[1] *J.*, 325; *Bd.*, p. 302.

[2] *J.*, 327; *Bd.*, pp. 304–5.

even the most complete teleology prove? Does it prove that there is such an intelligent Being? No; it proves nothing more than that according to the constitution of our cognitive powers, and in the consequent combination of experience with the highest principles of reason, we can form for ourselves absolutely no concept of the possibility of such a world except by thinking a supreme cause of it *working by design*. Objectively, therefore, we cannot assert the proposition that there is an intelligent original Being; but only subjectively for the use of our faculty of judgment in its reflection upon the purposes in Nature, which cannot be thought according to any other principle than that of the designing (intentional) causality of a highest cause.'[1]

Once more, therefore, the Idea of purpose in Nature (*Naturzweck*) is a regulative principle, giving rise to heuristic maxims of judgment. These are found useful, even inevitable, in judging of organic beings. And we are led naturally, first to the concept of the whole of Nature as a system of ends, secondly to the concept of an intelligent cause of Nature. But we are dealing here with the implications of a subjective regulative Idea, not with objective proof. At the same time it cannot be shown that final causality is impossible in Nature. True, we cannot understand in a positive way how mechanical and final causality can be ultimately reconciled; how things can be subject, as it were, to two kinds of causal law at the same time. But the possibility remains that they are reconciled in the 'supersensible substrate' of Nature, to which we have no access. And theism provides us with the best framework for thinking the universe, though the objective truth of theism, is not capable of being theoretically demonstrated.

10. Towards the close of the *Critique of Judgment* Kant discusses once more the deficiencies of a theology based on the idea of purposiveness or finality in Nature (physico-theology, as he calls it). As we saw when considering his criticism of speculative metaphysics, an argument for the existence of God which is based on empirical evidence of design or purpose in Nature can bring us, at best, only to the concept of a designer, an architect of Nature. It could not bring us to the concept of a supreme cause of the existence of the universe. Nor could it serve to determine any attribute of the suprahuman designer save intelligence. In particular, it could not serve to determine the moral attributes of this Being. Kant now adds that the physico-theological argument

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[1] *J.*, 335–6; *Bd.*, p. 311.

could, at best, bring us to the concept of 'an artistic understanding (*Kunstverstand*) for scattered purposes'.[1] That is to say, reflection on certain types of material beings (organisms) would bring us to the concept of a suprahuman intelligence which manifests itself in these beings. But it would not bring us to the concept of a divine wisdom (*Weisheit*)[2] which created the whole universe for one supreme final end. For one thing, the physico-theological argument is based on empirical data; and the universe as a whole is not an empirical datum. We could not refer the 'scattered' purposes which we find in Nature to the unity of a common final end.

If, however, we approach the matter from a different point of view, namely from the point of view of the moral consciousness, the situation is different. As we saw in Chapter XIV, the moral law demands that we should postulate the existence, not simply of a suprahuman intelligence, but of God, the supreme, infinite cause of all finite things. And we must conceive God as creating and sustaining the universe for a final end. What can this end be? According to Kant, it must be man. 'Without man the whole creation would be a mere desert, in vain and without final purpose.'[3] But 'it is only as a moral being that we recognize man as the purpose of creation'.[4] We must look on the end or purpose of creation as a moral purpose, as the full development of man as a moral being in a realized kingdom of ends and as consequently involving human happiness in the final harmonization of the physical and moral orders.

We might, therefore, be inclined to say that in Kant's view 'moral theology' (or ethico-theology) complements and supplies for the deficiencies of physico-theology. And he does sometimes speak in this way. But he also insists that moral theology is quite independent of physico-theology, in the sense that it does not presuppose the latter. Indeed, physical theology is said to be 'a misunderstood physical teleology, only serviceable as a preparation (propaedeutic) for theology'.[5] It can be called theology only when it invokes the aid of the principles of moral theology. In itself, it does not merit the name of theology. For it could just as well, or better, lead to a 'demonology', the indefinite conception of a suprahuman power or powers. In other words, Kant, while retaining his respect for the physico-theological argument for the existence of God once again lays all the emphasis on the moral argument.

[1] *J.*, 408; *Bd.*, p. 368.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *J.*, 410; *Bd.*, p. 370.

[4] *J.*, 413; *Bd.*, p. 372.

[5] *J.*, 410; *Bd.*, p. 369.

The moral argument, however, 'does not supply any *objectively-valid* proof of the existence of God; it does not prove to the sceptic that there is a God, but that, if he wishes to think in a way consonant with morality, he must admit the *assumption* of this proposition under the maxims of his practical reason'.[1] We cannot demonstrate the existence or attributes of God. It is a matter of practical faith, not of theoretical cognition.

This faith is free: the mind cannot be compelled to assent by any theoretical proof. But it is worth noting that Kant does not intend to say that this moral faith is irrational. On the contrary, 'faith (as *habitus*, not as *actus*) is the moral way of thinking (*Denkungsart*) of Reason as to belief in that which is unattainable by theoretical knowledge'.[2] To have theoretical knowledge of God we should have to employ the categories of the understanding. But though these can be used to think God analogically or symbolically, their employment cannot give us knowledge of Him. For they give knowledge of objects only by means of their function as constitutive principles of experience. And God is not a possible object of experience for Kant. At the same time belief in God is grounded in reason in its practical or moral employment. It cannot, therefore, be called irrational.

It may seem that Kant's return to the subject of philosophical theology at the close of the *Critique of Judgment* is a case of superfluous repetition. But though it certainly involves repetition, it is not really superfluous. For it re-emphasizes his view that while the aesthetic and teleological judgments enable us to conceive Nature as a possible field for final causality, it is only the practical reason which enables us to give determinate shape, as it were, to the noumenal reality which is vaguely implied by aesthetic experience and by experience of 'objective' finality in certain products of Nature.

[1] *J.*, 424, note; *Bd.*, p. 381, note.

[2] *J.*, 462; *Bd.*, p. 409.

CHAPTER XVI

KANT (7): REMARKS ON THE *OPUS POSTUMUM*

The transition from the metaphysics of Nature to physics—Transcendental philosophy and the construction of experience—The objectivity of the Idea of God—Man as person and as microcosm.

1. *The Critique of Judgment* appeared in 1790. From 1796 until 1803, the year before his death, Kant was engaged in preparing material for a work dealing with the transition from the metaphysics of Nature to physics. For in his opinion this was required to fill a gap in his philosophy. The manuscripts which he left behind him were at length published by Adickes as the *Opus Postumum*[1] or *Posthumous Work* of Kant. As might be expected in what amounts to a collection of notes comprising material for a systematic work, there is a great deal of repetition. Further, while some points are comparatively developed, others remain undeveloped. Again, it is by no means always easy either to elucidate the meaning of Kant's statements or to harmonize apparently divergent points of view. In other words, the commentator is not infrequently unable to decide with any certainty how Kant would have developed his thought if he had had the opportunity to do so, which ideas he would have discarded and which he would have retained, or how precisely he would have reconciled points of view which for us at least it is difficult to reconcile. And study of the chronology of the notes has not done away with these difficulties of interpretation. Hence any account of the movement of Kant's mind as revealed in the *Opus Postumum* is bound by the nature of the case to be largely problematic and conjectural. But this does not mean, of course, that the work is of no interest, or that it can simply be dismissed as an old man's jottings.

The metaphysics of Nature presents us with the concept of matter as that which is subject to motion in space (*das Bewegliche im Raum*)[2] and with its laws so far as these are determinable *a priori*. Physics, however, is concerned with 'the laws of the moving forces of matter in so far as they are given in experience'.[3]

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[1] The *Opus Postumum* is contained in Vols. XXI–XXII of the Berlin critical edition, and references will be given according to volume and page.

[2] XXI, p. 526.

[3] XXII, p. 497.

At first sight it might appear that no special bridge or transition from the one to the other is required. But Kant is not of this opinion. For experience[1] is not something which is simply given; it is constructed. And physics, considered as concerned with the laws of the moving forces of matter as given in experience, presupposes something corresponding to a schematism of the *a priori* concepts of the metaphysics of Nature, a schematism which will form a bridge between the latter and empirical representations. 'The transition from the one science to the other must have (involve) certain mediating concepts (*Zwischenbegriffe*) which are given in the former and applied to the latter, and which belong both to the territory of the one and to that of the other. Otherwise this progress would be, not a regular transition (*ein gesetzmäsziger Uebergang*), but a leap (*Sprung*), in which one does not know where one is going to arrive, and after which, when one looks back, one does not really see the point of departure.'[2]

What Kant appears to be looking for is a schema of physics, in the sense of anticipations of the empirical investigation of Nature. Mere empirical observation of the moving forces of matter cannot be called physics, if physics is a science. As a science physics involves system, not a mere aggregation of observations. And systematization takes place according to *a priori* principles which give us, as it were, guiding lines in empirical investigation. 'From empirical intuition we can take nothing but what we ourselves have put there for physics.'[3] Thus 'there must be *a priori* principles according to which the moving forces are co-ordinated in relation to one another (that is, according to the formal element), while the moving forces in themselves (according to the material element, the object) are considered empirically'.[4] Some definite truths are, indeed, deducible *a priori*; but we also have problematical anticipations of the empirical investigation of Nature, in the sense that we know that this or that must be the case, though empirical verification alone can tell us which is the case.

Kant aims, therefore, at elaborating a 'schematism of the faculty of judgment for the moving forces of matter'.[5] The metaphysics of Nature, providing us with the concept of matter as that which is subject to motion in space, has a natural tendency towards physics, that is, towards grounding a systematic empirical doctrine of Nature. But for this to be possible we require a mediating concept. And this is provided by the concept of matter in so far as it has moving forces. This concept is partly empirical, inasmuch as it is on the basis of experience that the subject conceives moving forces of matter. But it is also partly *a priori*; for the relations of the moving forces to one another imply *a priori* laws, such as those of attraction and repulsion. The concept of matter in so far as it has moving forces is thus adapted to act as a mediating concept (*Zwischenbegriff*) between the purely *a priori* and the purely *a posteriori* or empirical. And Kant proposes to consider the moving forces of matter in a characteristic manner: 'The moving forces of matter are best divided according to the arrangement of the categories; according to their quantity, quality, relation and modality.'[1]

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[1] Experience is described as the 'absolute unity of the knowledge of the objects of the senses'; XXII, p. 497.

[2] XXI, pp. 525–6. [3] XXII, p. 323. [4] XXI, p. 291. [5] *Ibid.*

From one point of view, therefore, the *Opus Postumum* is a programme for working out the transition from the metaphysics of Nature to physics. But this transition falls under the general heading, so to speak, of the subject's construction of experience. Indeed, in his manuscripts Kant gives so much emphasis to this idea that he has appeared to some readers to be adumbrating a purely idealist system. And I wish now to say something about this topic.

2. In the *Opus Postumum* the Ideas of pure reason occupy a prominent place. According to Kant, the system of Ideas is the foundation of the possibility of the whole of experience. 'Transcendental philosophy is the system of synthetic knowledge by *a priori* concepts.'[2] If we took this proposition by itself, we might be inclined to interpret it as referring simply to the system of the categories and of the *a priori* principles of the understanding. But this is not precisely what Kant has in mind. The word 'system', which signifies a 'complete system of the possibility of the absolute whole of experience',[3] is the system of the Ideas of pure reason. 'Transcendental philosophy is pure philosophy (mixed neither with empirical nor with mathematical elements) in a system of the Ideas of the speculative and moral-practical reason, in so far as this constitutes an unconditioned whole.'[4] And this system is made possible 'through the positing of three objects, God, the World and the Idea of Duty':[5] or, we can say, through the positing of God, the World 'and Man in the world, as subject to the principles of duty'.[6] Or, inasmuch as man is in the world,

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[1] XXI, p. 291.
[2] XXI, p. 81.
[3] XXI, p. 104.
[4] XXI, p. 77.
[5] XXI, p. 81.
[6] XXI, p. 82.

we can say that 'the totality of beings is God and the World'.[1] Transcendental philosophy is thus said to be 'the doctrine of God and the World'.[2] Again, 'highest point of view of the transcendental philosophy in the two mutually related Ideas, *God and the World*'.[3] In the Idea of God we think the totality of supersensible or noumenal reality, and in the Idea of the World we think the totality of sensible reality. Each Idea contains a 'maximum', and we can say that 'there is one God and one World'.[4]

These two Ideas together form the Idea of the Universe. 'The totality of things, *universum*, comprising God and the World.'[5] Apart from God and the World there can be nothing. But while these two Ideas are mutually related, the relation is not one of simple coordination. The World is thought as subordinate to God, the sensible to the supersensible, the phenomenal to the noumenal. God and the World as '*entia non coordinata, sed subordinata*'.[6] Further, the relation between them is synthetic, not analytic. That is to say, it is man, as thinking subject, who thinks and relates these Ideas. 'God, the World, and the subject which links together both objects, the thinking being in the World. God, the World, and that which unites both in one system, the thinking immanent principle of man (*mens*) in the World.'[7] Again, 'God, the World and I, the thinking being in the World, which links them together. God and the World are the two objects of transcendental philosophy, and (subject, predicate and copula) there is the thinking Man; the subject which binds them together in one proposition'.[8]

Kant does not mean that the Ideas of God and the World are conceptual apprehensions of objects given in experience. In a certain sense, of course, God and the World are thought as objects, that is, as objects of thought; but they are not given as objects. The Ideas are the thinking of pure reason as it constitutes itself as thinking subject. They are 'not mere concepts but laws of thinking which the subject prescribes to itself. Autonomy.'[9] By thinking these Ideas the subject gives itself an object and constitutes itself as conscious. 'The first act of reason is consciousness.'[10] But 'I must have objects of my thought and apprehend them; for otherwise I am not conscious of myself (*cogito, sum:* it should not run, *ergo*). It is *autonomia rationis purae*. For without this I should be without ideas . . . like a beast, without knowing

[1] XXI, p. 150.
[2] XXI, p. 6.
[3] XXI, p. 35.
[4] XXI, p. 20.
[5] XXI, p. 22.
[6] XXII, p. 62.
[7] XXI, p. 34.
[8] XXI, pp. 36–7.
[9] XXI, p. 93.
[10] XXI, p. 105.

that I am.'[1] The Ideas supply the material, as it were, for the subject's construction of experience. 'These representations are not mere concepts but also Ideas which provide the material (*den Stoff*) for synthetic *a priori* laws by means of concepts.'[2] God and the World are not 'substances outside my ideas but the thinking whereby we make for ourselves objects through synthetic *a priori* cognitions and are, subjectively, self-creators (*Selbstschöpfer*) of the objects we think'.[3]

The construction of experience can thus be represented as a process of what Kant calls self-positing, self-making, self-constituting, and so on. From the Idea of the World downwards, so to speak, there is a continuous process of schematization which is at the same time a process of objectification. And this process is the work of the self-positing noumenal subject. The categories are said to be acts by which the subject posits itself and constitutes itself as object for the sake of possible experience. And space and time, repeatedly affirmed to be pure subjective intuitions and not things or objects of perception, are said to be primitive products of imagination, self-made intuitions. The subject constitutes or posits itself as object, that is to say, both as the empirical ego and as the object which affects the empirical ego. We can thus speak of the subject as affecting itself.

The transition, therefore, from the metaphysics of Nature to physics, with which the *Opus Postumum* professedly deals, can be seen in the light of this general scheme. For it has to be shown that the possible types of moving forces in Nature and the possible types of quality experienced by the subject in its reaction to these forces are derivable, by a process of schematization, from the self-positing of the subject. At least this has to be shown if it is held that it is the subject itself which constructs experience.

Kant does not attempt to conceal the fact that this theory of the construction of experience through the self-positing of the subject is in some sense an idealist view. 'The transcendental philosophy is an idealism; inasmuch as the subject constitutes itself.'[4] Moreover, this philosophy bears a marked resemblance, at least at first sight, to that of Fichte, who published his *Basis of the Entire Theory of Science* in 1794. And the resemblance becomes all the more striking when we find Kant interpreting the thing in itself as a way in which the subject posits itself or makes itself its own object. 'The object in itself (*Noumenon*) is a mere *Gedankending* (*ens rationis*), in the representation of which the subject posits itself.'[1] It is 'the mere representation of its own (the subject's) activity'.[2] The subject projects, as it were, its own unity, or its own activity of unification, in the negative idea of the thing in itself. The concept of the thing-in-itself becomes an act of the self-positing subject. The thing-in-itself is 'not a real thing';[3] it is 'not an existing reality but merely a principle',[4] 'the principle of the synthetic *a priori* knowledge of the manifold of sense-intuition in general and of the law of its co-ordination'.[5] And this principle is due to the subject in its construction of experience. The distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself is not a distinction between objects but holds good only for the subject.

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[1] xxi, p. 82. [2] xxi, p. 20. [3] xxi, p. 21. [4] xxi, p. 85.

At the same time the resemblances between Kant's theory of the construction of experience, as outlined or at least hinted at in the *Opus Postumum*, and Fichte's subjective transcendental idealism[6] do not justify a dogmatic assertion that in his old age Kant abandoned the doctrine of the thing-in-itself and derived the whole of reality from the self-positing of the noumenal subject. For to make such an assertion would be to over-emphasize the use of certain terms and to press certain statements at the expense of others. For example, passages occur in the *Opus Postumum* which appear simply to reaffirm the doctrine about the thing-in-itself which is to be found in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Thus we are told that though the thing-in-itself is not given as an existing object, and indeed cannot be so given, it is none the less 'a *cogitabile* (and, indeed, as *necessarily thinkable*) which cannot be given but must be thought. . . .'[7] The idea of the thing-in-itself is correlative to that of appearance. Indeed, on one or two occasions Kant seems to go further in a realistic direction than one would expect. 'If we take the world as appearance, it proves precisely the existence (*Dasein*) of something which is not appearance.'[8] He also seems to imply on occasion that the thing-in-itself is simply the thing which appears when considered apart from its appearing. And as for the use of the word 'idealism' for transcendental philosophy, this does not seem to involve any new or revolutionary point of view. For transcendental philosophy is, as we have seen, the system of the Ideas of pure reason. And when Kant emphasizes in the *Opus Postumum* the problematic (not assertoric) character of these Ideas, he is not departing from the doctrine of the *Critiques*.

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[1] XXII, p. 36. [2] XXII, p. 37. [3] XXII, p. 24. [4] XXII, p. 34. [5] XXII, p. 33.

[6] 'Subjective' in the sense that the ultimate principle of being and knowledge is the subject; 'transcendental' in the sense that the subject is the pure or transcendental subject, not the empirical ego; 'idealism' in the sense that there is no factor which is not ultimately reducible to the self-positing of the transcendental subject or ego.

[7] XXXII, p. 23. [8] XXI, p. 440.

The fact of the matter seems to be that in the *Opus Postumum* Kant attempts to show that within the framework of the critical philosophy he can answer the objections of those who consider the theory of the thing-in-itself to be inconsistent and superfluous. It is indeed arguable that in the effort to reformulate his views in such a way as to answer his critics and to show that his philosophy contained within itself all that was valid in the development of Fichte and others Kant went a considerable way towards transforming his system into one of pure transcendental idealism. But to admit this is not the same thing as to admit that he ever definitely repudiated or abandoned the general point of view which is characteristic of the *Critiques*. And I do not believe that he did so.

3. Turning to the Idea of God, we can note in the first place that Kant distinguishes carefully between the question what is meant by the term 'God', that is, what is the content of the Idea of God, and the question whether God exists, that is, whether there is a being which possesses the attributes comprised in the Idea of God.

'God is not the world-soul. . . . The concept of God is that of a Being as supreme cause of the things in the world and as a person.'[1] God is conceived as the supreme Being, the supreme intelligence, the supreme good, who possesses rights and is a person. Again, 'a Being for which all human duties are at the same time his commands is God'.[2] Man thinks God according to the attributes which make him (man) a being in the noumenal sphere; but in the Idea of God these attributes are raised, as it were, to the maximum or absolute degree. Man, for instance, is free; but his being involves receptivity, and his freedom is not absolute. God, however, is conceived as supreme spontaneity and freedom, without receptivity and without limitation. For while man is finite and a mixed being, in the sense that he belongs both to the noumenal and to the phenomenal spheres, God is conceived as infinite noumenal reality. The World is conceived as the totality of sensible reality; but it is conceived as subordinate to the creative power of God and to his purposeful and holy will. As we have seen, the relation between the Ideas of God and the World is not one of co-ordination: it is a relation of subordination, in the sense that the World is conceived as dependent on God.

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[1] XXI, p. 19.

[2] XXI, p. 17.

Now, some statements in the *Opus Postumum*, if they are taken in isolation, that is to say, naturally tend to suggest that Kant has abandoned any notion of there being a God independently of the Idea of God. Thus while the Idea of God is said to be necessary, in the sense that it is inevitably thought by pure reason as an ideal, it is said to represent 'a thought thing[1] (*ens rationis*)'.[2] Indeed, 'the concept of such a Being is not the concept of a substance, that is, of a thing which exists independently of any thought, but the Idea (auto-creation, *Selbstgeschöpf*), thought-thing, *ens rationis*, of a reason which constitutes itself as an object of thought, and which produces, according to the principles of transcendental philosophy, *a priori* propositions and an Ideal, in regard to which there is no question of asking whether such an object exists; for the concept is transcendent'.[3]

At first sight at least this last quotation states clearly and explicitly that the Idea of God is a man-made ideal, a creation of thought, and that there is no extramental divine Being which corresponds to the Idea. Elsewhere, indeed, in the *Opus Postumum* Kant appears to be looking for a simpler and more immediate moral argument for God's existence than the argument already advanced in the second *Critique*. And this fact obviously militates against the view that in his old age Kant abandoned any belief in God as an objective reality, especially when there is other evidence to show that he retained this belief up to his death. It is true, indeed, that the *Opus Postumum* consists very largely of jottings, of ideas which occurred to Kant and which were noted for further consideration; and it is not really surprising if in a series of such notes there appear divergent lines of thought which we are not in a position to harmonize or reconcile. At the same time, however, it must be remembered that the ideas expressed in the passages mentioned in the last paragraph can be paralleled, to a great extent at least, in the *Critiques*, and that in the *Critiques* Kant also puts forward a justification of belief in God. Hence even if the divergence of views is sharper in the *Opus Postumum* than in the *Critiques*, it is not a novel phenomenon.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant had already made it clear that in his opinion the Idea of God, considered as the creation of pure reason, is that of a 'transcendental Ideal'. It does not express any intuition of God; nor can we deduce God's existence from the Idea. And these views reappear in the *Opus Postumum.* We enjoy no intuition of God. 'We see Him as in a mirror; never face to face.'[1] Hence it is impossible to deduce God's existence from the Idea of God:[2] this Idea is a creation of pure reason, a transcendental Ideal. Further, though we think of God as infinite substance, He is not and cannot be a substance; for He transcends the categories of the human understanding. Hence, if we once presuppose this point of view, we cannot sensibly ask whether there is a divine Being corresponding to the Idea of God, at least in so far as the Idea involves thinking of God in terms of the categories. This conclusion substantially repeats the doctrine of the first *Critique.* But, as we have seen, Kant went on in the second *Critique* to offer a moral or practical justification for belief in God. And in the *Opus Postumum* he offers some suggestions for following out or developing this line of thought.

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[1] *Ein Gedankending.*

[2] XXI, pp. 32–3.

[3] XXI, p. 27.

In the second *Critique* Kant justified belief in God as a postulate of the practical reason. We arrive, or can arrive, at belief in God through reflection on the demands of the moral law in regard to the synthesis of virtue with happiness. In the *Opus Postumum* he appears to be concerned with finding a more immediate transition from consciousness of the moral law to belief in God. And the categorical imperative is represented as containing within itself the precept of looking on all human duties as divine commands. 'In the moral-practical reason lies the categorical imperative to regard all human duties as divine commands.'[3] Again, 'To see all in God. The categorical imperative. The knowledge of my duties as divine commands, enunciated through the categorical imperative.'[4] Thus 'the concept of God is the concept of an obligation-imposing subject outside myself'.[5] The categorical imperative is for us the voice of God; and God is manifested in the consciousness of moral obligation, through the moral law.

To be sure, Kant insists that this is not a proof of God's existence as a substance existing outside the human mind. He also insists that nothing is added to the force of the moral law by regarding it as a divine command, and that if a man does not believe in God the obliging force of the categorical imperative is not thereby taken away.'[1] And it is easy to understand that those who concentrate their attention on such statements are inclined to draw the conclusion that the word 'God' became for Kant simply a name for the categorical imperative itself or a name for a purely subjective projection of a voice speaking through the moral law. But, as we have seen, on Kant's premisses there could not possibly be a proof of God's existence as a particular substance. And unless Kant is prepared to reject the doctrine of the second *Critique* about the autonomy of the will, he is bound to say that the moral force of the categorical imperative does not depend on our regarding it as the expression of a divine command. But it does not necessarily follow that God is for him no more than a name for the categorical imperative. What follows is that the only access we have to God is through the moral consciousness. No theoretical demonstration of God's existence is possible. This is, indeed, the doctrine of the *Critique*; but in the *Opus Postumum* Kant seems to be seeking a more immediate connection between consciousness of obligation and belief in God. 'Freedom under laws: duties as divine commands. There is a God.'[2]

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[1] XXI, p. 33.

[2] Some passages of the *Opus Postumum* seem at first sight to contradict this statement. They will be referred to presently.

[3] XXI, p. 12.

[4] XXI, p. 15.

[5] *Ibid.*

It is perhaps in the light of this desire to find a more immediate justification of belief in God that we should interpret the passages in the *Opus Postumum* which at first sight appear to amount to a statement of the *a priori* or ontological argument for God's existence. Kant tells us, for example, that 'the idea (*Gedanke*) of Him is at the same time belief in Him and in His personality'.[3] Again, 'the mere Idea (*Idee*) of God at the same time a postulate of His existence. To think Him and to believe in Him is an identical proposition.'[4] And if we were to connect these statements with the statement that 'a necessary being is one the concept of which is at the same time a sufficient proof of its existence',[5] we might be inclined to suppose that Kant, after having rejected the ontological argument in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, came to accept it in the *Opus Postumum*. But it is most unlikely that he did anything of the kind. He seems to be speaking, not of a theoretical demonstration, such as the ontological argument purported to be, but of a 'sufficient proof' for the moral consciousness, that is, from the purely practical or moral point of view. 'The principle of fulfilling all duties as divine commands in religion, proves the freedom of the human will . . . and is at the same time, in relation

[1] Cf. XXII, p. 64.
[2] XXII, p. 104.
[3] XXII, p. 62.
[4] XXII, p. 109.
[5] XXII, p. 113.

to practical pure principles of reason, a proof of the existence of God as the one God.'[1] It is not that I first have an idea of the divine essence, from which I deduce God's existence. It is rather that through consciousness of the categorical imperative I rise to the idea of God as speaking to me through and in the moral law. And to have this idea of God and to believe in Him are one and the same thing. That is to say, to conceive God as immanent to me, as morally commanding subject, is to conceive Him as existing. But this awareness of God as immanent in the moral consciousness is a 'sufficient proof' of His existence only for this consciousness.

If this interpretation is on the right lines (and one is scarcely in a position to dogmatize on this matter), we can say perhaps that Kant is giving or suggesting a moral equivalent of or analogue to the ontological argument. The latter was thought by its defenders to be a theoretical demonstration of God's existence of such a kind that, once properly understood, it compels assent. Kant does not admit that there is any such argument. But there is something analogous to it. To conceive God as morally commanding subject, immanent in the moral consciousness, and to have a religious belief in Him are one and the same thing. But this does not mean that from a purely abstract idea of a supreme moral legislator one can deduce theoretically the existence of this divine legislator in such a way as to compel the mind's assent. It means rather that within and for the moral consciousness itself the idea of the law as the voice of a divine legislator is equivalent to belief in God's existence. For to have this idea of God is, for the moral consciousness, to postulate His existence. This may not be a very convincing line of argument. For it is arguable that in the long run it amounts to the tautology that to believe in God is to believe in Him. But it is evident at least that Kant is seeking a more immediate approach to belief in God based on the moral consciousness than the one already developed in the second *Critique*. How he would have developed his new approach, if he had had the opportunity of doing so, we cannot, of course, say.

4. We have seen that the synthesis between the Ideas of God and the World is effected by man, the thinking subject. This is possible because man is himself a mediating being; and the concept of man is a mediating concept or idea. For man has a foot, so to speak, in both camps. He belongs to both the supersensible and the sensible, the noumenal and the phenomenal spheres; and

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[1] XXII, p. 111.

through the moral consciousness the sensible is subordinated to the supersensible. The human reason can thus think the totality of supersensible being in the Idea of God and the totality of sensible being in the Idea of the World; and it synthesizes these Ideas by positing a relation between them whereby the Idea of the World is subordinated to the Idea of God.

That man belongs to the sensible order or sphere is evident. That is to say, it is evident that he belongs to the class of physical organic beings. And, as such, he is subject to the laws of determined causality. But his moral life manifests his freedom; and, as free, he belongs to the noumenal order or sphere. 'Man (a being in the world, *ein Weltwesen*) is at the same time a being which possesses freedom, a property which is outside the causal principles of the world but which nevertheless belongs to man.'[1] And to possess freedom is to possess spirit. 'There is thus a being above the world, namely the *spirit* of man.'[2] And to be free in virtue of a spiritual principle is to be a person. 'The living corporeal being is besouled (*animal*). If it is a person, it is a human being.'[3] Man is a person in that he is a free, self-conscious, moral being.

Does this mean that man is split, as it were, into two elements? It obviously means that we can distinguish between man as noumenon and man as phenomenon. 'Man in the world belongs to the knowledge of the world; but man as conscious of his duty in the world is not phenomenon but noumenon; and he is not a thing but a person.'[4] But though man possesses this dual nature, there is a unity of consciousness. 'I (the subject) am a person, not merely conscious of myself, but also as object of intuition in space and time, and so as belonging to the world.'[5] I possess 'the consciousness of my existence in the world in space and time'.[6] This unity, which is at the same time a unity of two principles, is manifested in the moral consciousness. 'There is in me a reality which, different from me in the causal relation of efficacity (*nexus effectivus*), acts on me (*agit, facit, operatur*). This reality, which is free, that is, independent of the natural law in space and time, directs me interiorly (justifies or condemns me); and I, man, am myself this reality. . . .'[7] Moreover, my freedom can translate itself into action within the world. 'There is in man an active but supersensible principle which, independent of Nature and of natural causality, determines phenomena and is called freedom.'[8]

[1] XXI, p. 42.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] XXI, p. 18.
[4] XXI, p. 61.
[5] XXI, p. 42.
[6] XXI, p. 24.
[7] XXI, p. 25.
[8] XXI, p. 50.

If Kant had developed his theory of the construction of experience, he might, indeed, have derived the empirical ego and man as a phenomenal being from the self-positing of the noumenal ego with a view to moral self-realization. But to say this is to say that there are grounds in the Kantian philosophy for the development of the position adopted by Fichte. And the latter, indeed, always maintained that his own system was a consistent development of the inner tendencies of Kantianism. As it is, however, we are presented rather with the metaphysical concept of man as the microcosm which thinks the macrocosm, namely the Universe. The Universe, as thought by man in the regulative Ideas of God and the World, is a projection of man's dual nature. Neither Idea represents a given object. And from the regulative Idea of God as the transcendental Ideal we cannot deduce God's existence as a substance. So far as His existence can be spoken of as given or manifested, it is manifested only to the moral consciousness in its awareness of obligation. But, as we have seen, this leaves the problem of God's objective existence in suspense. Is the reality corresponding to the term 'God' simply the supersensible principle in man himself, the noumenal ego? Or it is a Being distinct from man, which is known only in and through the awareness of obligation? For my part I think that the second view represents Kant's conviction. But it cannot be said that the jottings which form the *Opus Postumum* make the answer very clear. Rather does the work illustrate the tendency of Kantianism to transform itself into a system of transcendental idealism, subordinating being to thought or, rather, ultimately identifying them. I do not think that Kant himself ever took this decisive step. But the tendency to do so is implicit in his writings, even if Kant did not take kindly to Fichte's suggestions that he should eliminate the element of realism in his system or, as Fichte put it, the element of 'dogmatism'. It is, however, inappropriate to interpret the Kantian philosophy simply in terms of its relation to the speculative idealism which succeeded it. And, if we take it by itself, we can see in it an original attempt to solve the problem of reconciling the two realms of necessity and freedom, not by reducing the one to the other, but by finding the meeting-point in the moral consciousness of man.

CHAPTER XVII

CONCLUDING REVIEW

Introductory remarks—Continental rationalism—British empiricism—The Enlightenment and the science of man—The philosophy of history—Immanuel Kant—Final remarks.

1. IN the preface to the present volume I remarked that the fourth, fifth and sixth volumes of this *History*, which together cover the philosophy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, form a trilogy. That is to say, they can be regarded as one whole. At the beginning of Volume IV there was an introductory chapter relating to the matter covered in all three volumes. And I promised to supply a common concluding review at the end of Volume VI.

The purpose of this concluding review is not to give a synopsis of the different philosophies discussed in the trilogy, but to attempt some discussion of the nature, importance and value of the chief styles of philosophizing or philosophical movements in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It will be necessary to confine the discussions to certain selected themes. Further, though reference will, of course, be made to individual philosophers, it will sometimes be necessary to treat complex movements of thought, comprising philosophies which differ from one another in important respects, as though they represented homogeneous styles of philosophizing or even homogeneous systems. In other words, I propose to indulge in discussion of ideal types, as it were, and in generalizations which stand in need of considerable qualification. This procedure may not, indeed, be desirable in itself, but it seems to me to be a legitimate way of drawing attention to certain features of philosophical thought in the period in question, provided, of course, that the different philosophies are treated separately elsewhere.

2. In the introduction to the fourth volume attention was drawn to Descartes' desire to overcome the revived scepticism of the Renaissance which included scepticism about the possibility of solving metaphysical problems and attaining truth in metaphysics. And we saw that he looked to mathematics as a model of clear and certain reasoning. He wished to give to philosophy a clarity and certainty analogous to the clarity and certainty of

mathematics and to distil, as it were, from mathematical method a method which would enable the mind to proceed in an orderly way from step to step without confusion or error.

It is easily understandable that Descartes looked to mathematics as a model of reasoning when one remembers his own mathematical studies and talents and the contemporary advances in this subject. And there is nothing exceptional in this instance of philosophical thought being influenced by extra-philosophical factors. For although philosophy has a continuity of its own, in the sense that we can give an intelligible account of its historical development, this continuity is not absolute, as though philosophy pursued a completely isolated path, without connection with other cultural factors. It can be influenced by other factors in various ways. It can be influenced, for instance, in respect of the concept of the proper method to be employed. Descartes' tendency to look to mathematics as providing a model of method is a case in point. Another example would be modern attempts to interpret metaphysics as hypotheses of wider generality than those of the particular sciences, an interpretation which reflects the influence of an extra-philosophical model, namely the hypothetico-deductive method of modern physics. Again, philosophy can be influenced by extra-philosophical factors in respect of its subject-matter or of the emphasis placed on a certain theme or themes. In the Middle Ages philosophy was powerfully influenced by theology, 'the queen of the sciences'. In the first decades of the nineteenth century we can see the consciousness of historical development, which found expression in the growth of historical science, reflected in the system of Hegel. Marxism obviously showed the influence of the increasing consciousness of the part played by economic factors in the history of civilization and culture. The philosophy of Bergson owed much not only to the scientific hypothesis of evolution but also to the studies of psychologists and sociologists. The thought of Whitehead was influenced by the transition from classical to modern physics. Again, philosophy can be influenced by extra-philosophical factors in regard to the formulation of its problems. For instance, the problem of the relation between soul and body is a classical and a recurrent problem; but the rise of the particular sciences has affected the ways in which the problem has presented itself to different philosophers. The advance of mechanics led to the problem presenting itself to seventeenth-century philosophers in one light, while modern developments in psychology have given a rather different colouring, so to speak, to the problem in the eyes of later thinkers. In one sense we can speak of the same problem, of a 'perennial' problem; but in another sense we can speak of different problems, namely in the sense that different relevant factors which affect our conception and formulation of the basic problem have to be taken into consideration.

To speak in this way is simply to recognize empirical facts: it is not to proclaim the theory that truth is relative. It is, indeed, foolish to deny the historical data to which adherents of the theory of relativism appeal in support of their thesis. But it does not necessarily follow that acknowledgment of the historical data entails acceptance of the thesis that systems of philosophy must be judged simply and solely in terms of their historical contexts and situations, and that no absolute judgments about the truth or falsity of the propositions comprised in them are possible. We can hardly deny that in the course of its development philosophy (that is, the minds of philosophers) has been influenced by extra-philosophical factors. But it is still open to us to discuss, without reference to these factors, whether the propositions enunciated by philosophers are true or false.

Returning to Descartes' admiration for the mathematical model of method, we can recall that other leading rationalist philosophers of the pre-Kantian modern period were also influenced by this model, Spinoza, for example. But what is called 'rationalism'[1] in the history of seventeenth-century philosophy does not consist simply in a preoccupation with method. It is natural to think of philosophy as capable of increasing our knowledge of reality.[2] This is a spontaneous expectation; and any doubt about philosophy's capacity in this respect follows, rather than precedes, the expectation. It is understandable, therefore, that the signal success of the application of mathematics in physical science from the time of the Renaissance onwards should incline some philosophers to think that the application in philosophy of a method analogous to that of mathematics would enable them not only to systematize what was already known or to give the form of knowledge, so to speak, to propositions which were true but which had not been logically demonstrated, but also to increase our knowledge through the deduction of unknown or unrecognized truths. The idea of using mathematics for the advance of physical science was not, of course, new. Roger Bacon, for instance, had already insisted on the need for this use in the thirteenth century. But at the same time it is not until the Renaissance that we can really speak of the signal or striking success of the application in physics. It was natural, therefore, that some post-Renaissance thinkers should look to the application in philosophy of a method analogous to that of mathematics to increase the scope of our knowledge of reality. In other words, the rationalists were concerned not only with methodology but also with using the appropriate method to discover new truths, to increase our positive knowledge of reality.

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[1] As was pointed out in the Introduction to Vol. IV rationalism in the present context does not signify simply an attempt to base philosophy on reason rather than on mystical insights. Nor must the term be understood in the sense which has been given it in later times, namely as involving a denial of revealed religion, and perhaps of all religion. There were, indeed, rationalists in this sense in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; but the term is not used in this way when we speak of Descartes, for example, as a rationalist.

[2] I use the term 'reality' in preference to 'the world', because the knowledge in question might concern a Being, God, which transcends the world.

Now, if we put together the idea of giving to philosophy a method analogous to that of mathematics and the idea of deducing from fundamental propositions or from already demonstrated propositions other propositions which give us new factual information about reality, we obtain the idea of a deductive system of philosophy which will be akin to mathematics in its deductive form but different from it in the sense that the system of philosophy will give us truths about existent reality. I do not intend to imply that this distinction would have been universally admitted by Renaissance and post-Renaissance thinkers. Galileo, for example, thought of mathematics, not as a purely formal science exhibiting the implications of freely-chosen definitions and axioms, but as opening to us the very heart of Nature, as enabling us to read the book of Nature. However, it is clear that a proposition about, say, the properties of a triangle, does not tell us that there are triangular objects, whereas the great rationalist philosophers of the pre-Kantian modern period thought of themselves as concerned with existent reality.

Now, the successful application of mathematics in physical science naturally suggested that the world is intelligible or 'rational'. Thus for Galileo God had written the book of Nature in mathematical characters, as it were. And, indeed, if philosophy is to be a deductive system and at the same time to give us certain factual information about the world, it is obviously necessary to assume that the world is of such a kind that it is possible for philosophy to do this. In practice this means that the causal relation will be assimilated to the relation of logical implication. And we find among the rationalist philosophers the tendency to make this assimilation.

Now, let us assume that the world is a rational system in the sense that it has an intelligible structure which can be reconstructed by the philosopher through a process of deduction. Philosophy can then be represented as the unfolding of reason itself, in such a way that the systematic development of philosophical knowledge discloses to us the objective structure of reality. But if the system of reality can be reconstructed by a deductive process which represents the self-unfolding of reason, it is not unnatural to postulate a theory of ideas which are at least virtually innate. For the self-unfolding of reason will mean the development of a philosophical system by the mind from its own resources, so to speak. And the system will be prefigured in the mind in the form of ideas which are virtually present from the start, even though experience may be the occasion of them becoming actual. I do not mean to imply that a deductive system of philosophy necessarily entails a theory of innate ideas. But if it is represented as an unfolding of the mind itself, and if this description signifies anything more than the development of the logical implications of certain definitions and axioms which are either freely chosen or derived in some way from experience, some version of the theory of innate ideas seems to be required. And the theory of virtually innate ideas obviously fits in very much better with the concept of the self-unfolding of mind or reason than would a theory of actual innate ideas.

If philosophy is to rest on virtually innate ideas, and if its conclusions are to be certainly true to reality, it is clear that these ideas must represent real insights into objective essences. Further, we shall require some assurance that in the process of philosophical deduction we are treating of existent reality, and not simply with the realm of possibility. We can understand, therefore, the fondness of the rationalist metaphysicians for the ontological argument for the existence of God. For, if it is valid, it permits an immediate inference from the idea to the existence of the ultimate reality, God or the absolutely perfect and necessary being.

How is this argument of use in a deductive reconstruction of the structure of reality? In this way. If we press the analogy between the development of a deductive system of mathematics and the construction of a philosophical system, we are driven to start in philosophy with a proposition expressing the existence of the ultimate being (a proposition taken as analogous to the fundamental axioms in mathematics) and to deduce finite being by assimilating the causal relation to that of logical implication. We require, therefore, to be assured of the existence of the primary metaphysical principle or ultimate being. And the ontological argument, passing directly from the idea of this being to its existence, fits in much better with the demands of a purely deductive system than does an *a posteriori* argument which explicitly infers the existence of God from the existence of finite being. For we wish to pass, in logical language, from principle to conclusion rather than from conclusion to principle.

The foregoing account of rationalism is, of course, a description of an ideal type, of what might be called pure or ideal rationalism. And it cannot be applied without qualification to the great systems of pre-Kantian continental philosophy. Of the three leading rationalist systems which were discussed in Volume IV it is that of Spinoza which approximates most closely to the description. Descartes, as we saw, did not start with the ultimate reality but with the existence of the finite ego as thinking subject. And he did not think that the existence of the world can be deduced from the existence of God. As for Leibniz, he distinguished between necessary truths or truths of reason and contingent truths or truths of fact. He tended, indeed, to present this distinction as being relative to our finite knowledge; but he made it none the less. And he did not maintain that the creation of the monads which actually exist is logically deducible from the divine essence by a process of reasoning based on the principle of non-contradiction. To explain the transition from the order of necessary essences to that of contingent existences he invoked the principle of perfection or of the best rather than the principle of non-contradiction.

But though the description of rationalism which I have given above cannot be applied without qualification to all those systems which are generally labelled systems of rationalist metaphysics, it represents a tendency which is present in them all. And in my introductory remarks to this chapter I gave notice that for the purpose of discussing different styles of philosophizing I should make use of ideal types and indulge in generalizations which, in their application to particular instances, would stand in need of qualification.

It is scarcely necessary, I think, to discuss at length the theory of innate ideas. For it seems to me that in its main lines at least Locke's criticism of the theory as a superfluous hypothesis is clearly justified. If the theory of virtually innate ideas meant merely that the mind possesses the capacity of forming certain ideas, all ideas could be called innate. But in this case there would be no point in so describing them. The theory can have point only if certain ideas cannot be derived from experience, while other ideas can be so derived. But what is meant by the derivation of ideas from experience? If, of course, experience is reduced to the reception of impressions (in Hume's sense), and if ideas are thought of as automatic effects or as photographic representations of impressions, it becomes very difficult, if not impossible, to explain certain ideas as derived from experience. We have no impression, for instance, of absolute perfection or of absolute infinity. But if we once allow for the constructive activity of the mind, it does not seem to be any longer necessary to suppose that an idea of absolute perfection, for instance, is either imprinted by God or innate. If, indeed, the idea were equivalent to an intuition of absolute perfection, we could not explain its origin in terms of the mind's synthesizing activity based on experience of finite and limited perfection. But there does not appear to be any adequate reason for saying that we possess intuitions of absolute perfection and absolute infinity. And we can give an empirical explanation of the origin of such ideas, provided that we do not understand derivation from experience as meaning photographic representation of the immediate data of sense-perception and introspection. It is not that the theory of innate ideas states a logical impossibility. It is rather that it appears to constitute a superfluous hypothesis to which the principle of economy or Ockham's razor can be profitably applied. The theory can, of course, be transformed in the way that Kant subsequently transformed it in his theory of *a priori* categories, which were moulds of concepts, as it were, rather than concepts or ideas in the ordinary sense. But once it has been transformed in this way it can no longer perform its original function of forming a basis for a metaphysical system in the sense in which the pre-Kantian rationalists understood metaphysics.

Rejection of the theory of innate ideas must, of course, entail rejection of the rationalist ideal if this is taken to be the ideal of deducing a system of reality simply from the resources of the mind itself without recourse to experience. For this ideal would involve the theory of virtually innate ideas. But rejection of this theory does not necessarily entail the rejection of the ideal of a deductive metaphysics as such. For we might be able to arrive at the fundamental principles of such a metaphysics on the basis of experience. That is to say, experience might be the occasion of our seeing the truth of certain fundamental metaphysical propositions. Take the proposition, 'everything which comes into being does so through the agency of an extrinsic cause'. The ideas of coming into being and of causality are obtained through experience: they are not innate ideas.[1] Further, the ideas are distinct. The idea, that is to say, of being caused is not obtained by mere analysis of the idea of coming into being, in a sense which would make it true to say that the proposition in question is a tautology. Hence the proposition is synthetic. But if, as I believe to be the case, the proposition expresses an insight into an objective necessary connection, it is not a synthetic *a posteriori* proposition, in the sense of an empirical generalization which might prove to admit of exceptions. On the contrary, it is a synthetic *a priori* proposition, not in the sense that it is innate but in the sense that its truth is logically independent of empirical verification.[2] And if there are a number of propositions of this type, it may very well be possible to give to general metaphysics or ontology the form of a deductive science.

It certainly does not follow, however, that from propositions of the type mentioned we can deduce existential propositions. The proposition, 'everything which comes into being does so through the agency of an extrinsic cause', states that if anything comes into being it does so through the agency of an extrinsic cause. It does not state that there is anything which comes into being, has done so or will do so. Nor can we deduce from the proposition the conclusion that there is, has been or will be anything of this kind. More accurately, from two propositions, neither of which is an existential proposition, we cannot logically deduce an existential conclusion. We may, for instance, be able to deduce a proposition or propositions which will be true of any finite being, if there is any finite being; but we cannot deduce that there is in fact a finite being. In other words, if we once grant that there can be synthetic *a priori* propositions, it follows that we can deduce a scheme of reality in the sense of a body of propositions which will be true of existent things if there are any existent things. But we cannot deduce that this condition is in fact fulfilled. We remain within the sphere of possibility.

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[1] The statement can, of course, be expressed in more 'linguistic' fashion, without the use of the word 'idea'. One might say, for instance, that we learn the meanings of the terms through experience, or through ostensive definition.

[2] I have used the Kantian term 'synthetic *a priori* proposition'. And the use of this particular term can be misleading: for though I agree with Kant that there are propositions which are neither tautologies nor merely probable empirical generalizations, I do not accept Kant's interpretation of their status. In my opinion they express insight into the objective intelligible structure of being. But the term is a convenient one; and it is frequently used today without its use involving, or being thought to involve, the interpretation peculiar to Kant.

Further, from propositions which state what must be true of every existent thing we can deduce only similar propositions. That is to say, from necessary propositions we cannot deduce contingent propositions, the opposite of which is possible. And this holds good whether we confine necessary propositions to those of formal logic and pure mathematics or whether we admit metaphysical principles which are necessarily true. In other words, if we start with premisses belonging to general metaphysics or ontology and proceed deductively, we remain within the sphere of general metaphysics or ontology. From such premisses we cannot deduce the true propositions which belong to the body of a particular science. We can, of course, apply metaphysical principles which are necessarily true of, say, every finite thing to particular classes of finite things. But this is not the same as deducing the propositions of chemistry or botany or medicine from metaphysical premisses. If we assume that the proposition that everything which comes into being does so through the agency of an extrinsic cause is a necessarily true metaphysical proposition, it follows that if there is such a thing as cancer of the lung it will have a cause or causes. But it certainly does not follow that we can deduce from metaphysics what the causes are.

I do not intend to imply that Descartes, for instance, believed that we can in fact start with general metaphysical truths and then deduce logically all the truths of natural science, dispensing with experiment or observation, hypothesis and empirical verification. But the tendency of rationalism was to assimilate the whole body of true propositions to a mathematical system in which all conclusions are logically implied by the fundamental premisses. And in so far as the rationalists entertained the ideal of such an assimilation, they were indulging in a vain dream.

Now, it has been said above that from two premisses neither of which is an existential proposition we cannot deduce an existential conclusion. But the question arises whether we can start with an existential proposition and deduce other existential propositions in such a way that from the existence of the ultimate ontological principle we can deduce the existence of dependent, finite being. In other words, can we start with the affirmation of the existence of the absolutely perfect and infinite being and deduce the existence of finite being?

To do this, we should have to be able to demonstrate one of two things. We should have to be able to show either that the meaning of the term 'infinite being' contains as part of itself the meaning of the term 'finite being' or that the nature of infinite being is such that it must necessarily cause (that is, create) finite being. In the first case we should have a monistic philosophy. To assert the existence of infinite being would be to assert the existence of finite being, the latter being comprised in some way within the former. If we had already demonstrated the existence of infinite being, by the ontological argument for example, we should only have to analyse the term 'infinite being' to show that finite being exists. In the second case we should not necessarily have a monistic philosophy; but finite being, even if distinct from God, would proceed from Him by a necessity of the divine nature.

As for the first alternative, the term 'infinite being' is used in contradistinction to the term 'finite being', and it comprises the latter within its meaning only in the sense that it involves the negation of finitude. Affirmation of the existence of infinite being involves the negation that this being is finite, not that finite being exists as its modification. Some might perhaps wish to claim that the term 'infinite being', taken in contradistinction to 'finite being', is vacuous; and that to give it content we must understand it as meaning the infinite complex of finite beings. But in this case the assertion that infinite being exists would be equivalent to the assertion that the number of finite beings is infinite. And it would be as idle to talk about deducing the existence of finite being from that of infinite being as it would be to talk about deducing the existence of tea-cups from the statement that the number of tea-cups is infinite. In the present context we are concerned with the deduction of finite being from that of infinite being when the existence of the latter is already known. But if to assert the existence of infinite being were to assert that the number of finite beings is infinite, how could we possibly be said to know that there is infinite being unless we knew that there was an infinite number of finite beings? And in this case the question of deducing their existence would not arise.

As for the second alternative, namely that of showing that God creates by a necessity of His nature, what basis could we possibly have for such an assertion? If we understand by God, an absolutely perfect and infinite being, to affirm God's existence is to affirm the existence of a being which is by nature self-sufficient. That is to say, the creation of finite being cannot add anything to God which would otherwise be lacking. And in this case it does not appear that there could be any conceivable grounds for asserting the necessity of creation. It is significant that Leibniz, when trying to explain divine creation, had recourse to the idea of moral rather than of metaphysical necessity. But if we once understand by God the absolutely perfect being, there does not seem to be any ground for speaking of creation as 'necessary' in any sense of the word.

Of course, if we were discussing theism and pantheism as such, we should have to consider the whole theme of the relation of the finite to the infinite. But we have been discussing a specific point, namely the deduction of finite from infinite being when the existence of the latter is taken as known. And this question implies a distinction between finite and infinite, for it is a question of deducing the existence of the finite from that of the infinite. If, therefore, the term 'infinite being' is analysed in such a way that it means simply an infinite number of finite beings, the problem of deduction, as originally understood, simply disappears. All that is required is an analysis of 'infinite being', and the analysis dissolves the problem. The original question no longer possesses any significance. If, however, we maintain the distinction which is essential for the significance of the problem (that is, the distinction between the infinite and the finite), there seems to be no conceivable ground for a deduction of the existence of finite being from that of infinite being. And it is with this deduction alone that we have been concerned, not with the problems which arise when we proceed the other way round and infer the existence of the infinite from the existence of the finite.

To sum up these critical reflections in dogmatic form. In the first place, from premisses which state what must be true of anything if there is anything, we cannot deduce the conclusion that there is something. In the second place, from premisses which state what must necessarily be true of anything we cannot deduce conclusions which are in fact true but which could conceivably be false. In the third place, we cannot begin with the affirmation of infinite being and deduce the existence of finite being. We cannot, therefore, construct a purely deductive metaphysics according to the model of a mathematical system, if we mean by a purely deductive metaphysics one in which the affirmation of the being that is first in the ontological order corresponds to the fundamental premisses of a mathematical system and in which the deduction of the existence of the world of finite beings corresponds to the deduction of conclusions in the mathematical system.

Obviously, these critical comments affect the systems of Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz only in so far as they approximate to what I have called the ideal type of rationalism. And they do this in varying degrees. It is not my intention to deny that these philosophers said anything which was true or interesting. At the very least these philosophers present us with interesting outlooks on the world. And they raise important philosophical problems. Further, they offer programmes, as it were, for subsequent research. Thus Spinoza's description of the awareness or feeling of freedom as ignorance of determining causes can be interpreted, when we look back, as an invitation to the development of depth psychology. And Leibniz' dream of an ideal symbolic language has an obvious importance in the fields of logic and linguistic analysis. But all this does not alter the fact that the history of pre-Kantian continental rationalism has helped to show that metaphysical philosophy cannot take a form suggested by a close analogy with the deductive form of pure mathematics.

3. When we turn our attention to British empiricism, we are turning to a movement of thought which has a much greater significance for contemporary philosophy than pre-Kantian continental rationalism can be said to have. Hume is a living thinker in a sense in which Spinoza is not. The empiricism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has, indeed, been developed; and the language in which it is now expressed is somewhat different from that employed by the classical empiricists. In particular, emphasis is now placed on logical rather than on psychological considerations. But the fact remains that empiricism exercises a powerful influence in modern thought, especially, of course, in England, whereas the influence excercised by pre-Kantian rationalist philosophers on the more metaphysically-minded thinkers of today does not proceed from their approximation to

what I have called rationalism as an ideal type but from other aspects of their thought.

In discussing classical British empiricism one is faced with a difficulty analogous to that with which one is faced in attempting to discuss rationalism as such. For those philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who are traditionally classed as empiricist differed very considerably in their views. If one interprets empiricism in the light of its point of departure, namely Locke's theory that all ideas are derived from experience, then we must obviously include Locke as an empiricist. But if one interprets the movement in the light of its point of arrival in the philosophy of Hume, we shall have to admit that the philosophies of Locke and Berkeley, while containing empiricist elements, are not purely empiricist systems. But this difficulty is, of course, unavoidable if we propose to discuss empiricism as a set of doctrines and as an ideal type rather than as an historical movement. And as in this section I intend to concern myself with empiricism as represented principally by Hume, I remark in advance that I am perfectly well aware that my comments are relevant much more to Hume's thought than to that of either Locke or Berkeley.

Hume's empiricism can, of course, be regarded under different aspects. It can be regarded as a psychological doctrine about the origin and formation of ideas, or as an epistemological doctrine concerning the nature, scope and limits of human knowledge. We can consider it as a logical theory of the different types of propositions or as an essay in conceptual analysis, that is, in the analysis of concepts such as mind, body, cause and so on. But all these different aspects are unified by Hume himself in his idea of the science of human nature, the study of man in his cognitive and reasoning activities and in his moral, aesthetic and social life. As we saw when considering Hume's thought in Volume V, he envisaged an extension of 'experimental philosophy' to what he called, using the term in a wide sense, 'moral subjects'. A study of man is not, as such, a mark of empiricism. Man was studied by the rationalists as well, not to speak of Greek, mediaeval and Renaissance philosophers. But, as has just been mentioned, it was Hume's aim to apply to his subject-matter the method of 'experimental philosophy'. And this meant for him restricting oneself to the evidence offered by observation. True, we ought to endeavour to find the simplest and fewest causes which will explain phenomena. But in doing this we must not go beyond phenomena in the sense of appealing to occult entities, to unobserved substances. There may be occult causes; but even if there are, we cannot have anything to do with them in the experimental science of man. We must try to find general laws (the principle of the association of ideas, for example) which will correlate phenomena and permit verifiable prediction. But we ought not to expect or pretend to discover ultimate causes which transcend the phenomenal level. And any hypothesis which purports to do so should be rejected.

In other words, Hume's plan is to extend to philosophy in general the methodological limitations of Newtonian physics. It is therefore not unreasonable to say that just as continental rationalism was influenced by the model of mathematical deduction, so was the empiricism of Hume influenced by the model of Newtonian physics. This is, indeed, made quite clear by Hume himself in his introduction to the *Treatise of Human Nature*. It is thus possible to look on both rationalism and empiricism as experiments, on rationalism as an experiment to see how far the mathematical model was applicable in philosophy, and on empiricism as an experiment in applying in philosophy the methodological limitations of classical physics.[1]

The feature of Hume's actual procedure which immediately strikes the reader is probably reductive analysis. By this term I understand analysis of the complex into the simple or relatively simple and of wholes into constituent parts. There was, indeed, nothing novel in the use of reductive analysis as such. Without going further back we can recall Locke's reduction of complex to simple ideas and Berkeley's analysis of material things as clusters of phenomena or, as he put it, 'ideas'. But Hume applied this method of investigation in a much more radical way than his predecessors had done. We have only to think of his analysis of causality and of the self.

We cannot say, of course, that Hume's philosophy was all analysis and no synthesis. For one thing he tried to reconstruct the complex out of its elements. Thus he tried to show, for example, how our complex idea of the causal relation arises. For another thing he performed an activity of synthesis in the sense of giving a general picture of, say, the extent of human knowledge and of the nature of moral experience. But metaphysical synthesis of the traditional type was excluded. It was excluded by his methodological limitations, and it was excluded by the results of his analysis. Given his analysis of causality, for example, he could not synthesize the multiplicity of phenomenal objects by relating them, as effects to cause, to a One which transcended the objects to be synthesized. Locke and Berkley were able to proceed on these lines; but not Hume. Hence while it would be incorrect to say that there is no synthesis at all in the developed empiricism of Hume, we can legitimately say that in comparison with the rationalist systems it is an analytic philosophy. That is to say, its obvious feature is reductive analysis rather than synthesis as this would be understood by the rationalist metaphysicians.

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[1] What Hume called 'experimental philosophy', namely physics, is now, of course, no longer accounted part of philosophy. And one may be tempted to comment that part at any rate of what he regarded as pertaining to the science of man has also tended to separate itself from philosophy, especially if one bears in mind the methodological limitations which he imposed. I am thinking principally of empirical psychology.

We can put the matter in this way. Hume was concerned with analysing the meanings of terms such as 'cause', 'self', 'justice', and so on. He was not concerned with deducing the existence of one thing from that of another. In fact, his empiricism did not permit any such deduction. Hence any metaphysical synthesis of the rationalist type was excluded. The emphasis was necessarily placed on analysis. And we can say that a fully empiricist philosophy must be a predominantly analytic philosophy. In the philosophies of Locke and Berkeley analysis, though obviously present, is less predominant than in the philosophy of Hume. And the reason is that their philosophies are only partly empiricist.

There is, of course, no fault to be found with analysis as such. Nor can we reasonably object to a philosopher devoting himself primarily to analysis if he chooses to do so. Quite apart from the fact that metaphysical syntheses constructed without careful analysis of terms and propositions are likely to be houses of cards, it is quite natural that different philosophers should have different bents of mind. Further, the fact that the results of Hume's analysis exclude metaphysical syntheses of the traditional type can hardly be taken to prove without more ado that there must be flaws in his analysis. For the empiricist at least would comment that it is a case of so much the worse for metaphysics.

But though there can be no valid objection to analysis as such, it may be possible to object to the assumption or assumptions which are implicit in a given philosopher's practice of analysis. And it seems to me that Hume's practice of reductive analysis is guided by a mistaken assumption, namely that the real constituents of human experience are atomic, discrete 'perceptions'. Once Hume has assumed or, as he believes, shown that all ideas are derived from impressions[1] and that these impressions are 'distinct existences', it remains only to apply this assumption to the analysis of those ideas which seem to be of importance or interest. And if in the process of application we come upon cases where the general principle fails to work, inasmuch as it leads to insuperable inconsistencies, doubt is inevitably cast upon the validity of the general principle.

Hume's analysis of the self seems to be a case in point. The self is resolved into distinct 'perceptions'. But Hume himself admits that we have a propensity to substitute the notion of identity for that of related objects (that is, distinct perceptions), and that this propensity is so great that we are apt to imagine something substantial connecting the perceptions. And it appears to follow that that which has to be reconstructed out of distinct perceptions must be something to which we can reasonably attribute such a propensity. Yet this is precisely what cannot be done. If the self consists, as Hume says it does, of a series or bundle of perceptions, there is nothing of which it can reasonably be said that it has a propensity to imagine something substantial connecting the perceptions. Hume, indeed, sees the difficulty. He admits his perplexity and openly confesses that he does not know how to correct his opinions or to render them consistent. But this admission really shows that his phenomenalistic analysis of the self will not do. And this conclusion casts doubt upon the general assumption that the ultimate constituents of human experience are atomic, discrete impressions.

It may be objected that it is incorrect to speak of an 'assumption'. Reductive analysis is a method, not an assumption, and Hume shows, to his own satisfaction at least, that it can be successfully applied to ideas such as those of causality and the self. One may think perhaps that the application in the case of the self, for instance, is not successful. But this is no reason for speaking of an assumption.

It is true, of course, that Hume attempts to show in concrete cases that we can analyse the meanings of words such as 'self' in terms of distinct 'perceptions'. And in this sense it is true to say that he does not simply assume that it can be done. But he certainly assumes as a working hypothesis that our ideas can be explained in terms of discrete impressions. And he does this because he tacitly assumes, again as a working hypothesis, that the ultimate constituents of human experience are atomic, discrete impressions which are the empirical data from which our interpretation of the world is constructed. He takes it that we can reduce our interpretation of the world to the empirical data which are the direct objects of consciousness, and that these data are 'impressions'. But in carrying out this empiricist reduction he forgets the self which enters experience as subject, in order to concentrate on the immediate objects of introspection. This procedure can perhaps be associated with the endeavour to apply the method of 'experimental philosophy' to 'moral subjects'. But its results, in the case of analysis of the self, show the limitations of the method.

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[1] As we saw in Volume V, Hume admits the possibility of exceptions to this rule. When presented with a graded series of shades of blue in which one shade was missing, we might be able to supply the missing member in the sense of producing the 'idea' though there has been no preceding impression. But, apart from such possible exceptions, Hume presses his general rule throughout.

In general, we have to be careful not to confuse the results of abstraction with the ultimate data of experience. Perceiving is a form of experiencing. And it may be that within perception we can distinguish by abstraction something corresponding to what Hume calls impressions. But it does not follow that impressions are the actual constituents, as it were, of perception, so that we can reconstruct the total experience simply in terms of impressions. Still less does it follow that what we perceive consists of impressions. It may sound naïve to say that in perceiving we must distinguish between subject, object and act of perceiving. It may seem to some to be no more than a reflection of language, that is, of the subject-verb-object type of proposition. But if one eliminates the subject, it is the subject which performs the elimination. And if we eliminated the object as distinct from the perceiving, we should end in solipsism.

It seems to me that the lines of criticism which I have suggested are applicable not only to Hume's philosophy but also to certain modern versions of his empiricism. Some empiricists have tried to avoid giving the impression that their phenomenalistic analysis is a piece of metaphysics, an ontological theory. Thus according to the theory of 'logical constructions' it is possible, in principle at least, to translate sentences about the mind into other sentences which do not contain the word 'mind' but mention psychical phenomena or events instead, in such a way that if the original sentence is true (or false) the equivalent sentences are true (or false), and *vice versa*. Similarly, a sentence about a table could, in principle at least, be translated into sentences in which the word 'table' would not occur but in which sense-data would be mentioned instead, there being a relation of truth-equivalence between the original sentence and its translation. A table is then said to be a 'logical construction' out of sense-data, and a mind a 'logical construction' out of psychical phenomena or events. Phenomenalism is thus put forward as a logical or linguistic and not as an ontological theory. But it seems to be doubtful whether this ingenious attempt to avoid having to admit that phenomenalism is a rival metaphysical theory to a non-phenomenalistic theory is successful. And in any case it can be asked how, given this analysis of mind, the construction of the 'logical construction' is possible. Further, if the analysis of physical objects such as tables implies that we perceive sense-data (and it is difficult to see how this implication can be successfully avoided), it is arguable that solipsism is the necessary consequence, unless one is willing to hold the strange theory of unattached sense-data, so to speak.

The objection may be raised that, whether my criticism of Hume is valid or not, it does not really touch the most important feature of his empiricism, namely its logical theory. The older empiricists certainly approached philosophy from a psychological angle. Thus Locke began by inquiring into the origin of our ideas. And this was a psychological question. Hume followed him in this path by tracing the origin of almost all ideas to impressions. But though such psychological questions are of importance if we are considering the history of empiricism, the permanent value of classical empiricism consists primarily in its contribution to logical theory. And it is this aspect of Hume's thought which should be stressed. It is the aspect which links him most closely with modern empiricism.

As regards Hume's link with modern empiricism, this is, I think, quite true. As we saw when considering Hume's philosophy in Volume V, he made a distinction between demonstrative reasoning, which concerns the 'relations between ideas' and which is found, for example, in pure mathematics, and moral reasoning, which concerns 'matters of fact' and in which logical demonstration has no place. When we argue, for instance, from an effect to its cause, our conclusions may be more or less probable; but its truth is not, and cannot be, demonstrated. For the contrary of a matter of fact is always conceivable and possible: it never involves a logical contradiction. In pure mathematics, however, where we are concerned with the relations between ideas and not with matters of fact, affirmation of the contrary of the conclusion of a demonstration involves a contradiction.

Hume is here concerned with two kinds of reasoning; and his conclusion is that reasoning about matters of fact cannot amount to demonstration. We cannot, for example, demonstrate the existence of one thing from the existence of another. We may, indeed, feel certain about the truth of our conclusion; but if we prescind from states of feeling and attend to the logical aspect of the matter, we must admit that conclusions attained by reasoning about matters of fact cannot be certain.

In modern empiricism this point of view is retained; but the emphasis is placed on a distinction between two types of proposition. A proposition which, in Hume's language, states a relation between ideas, is said to be analytic and to be true *a priori*. That is to say, its truth is logically independent of empirical verification. A proposition which, in Hume's language, concerns a matter of fact, is said to be synthetic. Its truth cannot be known from the proposition alone but only by empirical verification. It is empirical verification which shows whether the proposition is true or false. The contrary of the proposition is always logically possible; hence no amount of empirical verification can give it more than a very high degree of probability.

This classification of propositions excludes, of course, the possibility of any necessarily true existential propositions. But, as interpreted by the empiricists, it excludes also all propositions which, while not affirming the existence of any thing, purport to be both informative about reality and true *a priori* in the sense that their truth cannot be empirically refuted, even in principle. Take, for example, the statement that everything that comes into being or begins to exist does so through the agency of a cause. In Hume's opinion the truth of this statement is not seen by intuition. For the contrary is conceivable. Nor is its truth demonstrable. It is, therefore, an empirical generalization, an hypothesis which may be generally verified but which, in principle at least, admits of empirical refutation. And I suppose that if Hume were alive today, he would look on what is called 'infra-atomic indeterminacy' as constituting empirical confirmation of his assessment of the logical status of the principle of causality.

In the language of modern empiricism, therefore, there are analytic propositions, which are in some sense 'tautologies', and synthetic *a posteriori* propositions or empirical hypotheses; but there are no synthetic *a priori* propositions. All candidates for this class turn out in the end to be either tautologies, open or concealed, or empirical generalizations, which may enjoy a very high degree of probability but the truth of which cannot be known by analysis of the proposition itself.

The problem of synthetic *a priori* propositions is too complicated to be discussed there. But it may be as well to draw attention to the following points. Let us assume that the phenomena which are grouped under the title of infra-atomic indeterminacy can be so interpreted that the principle of causality can still be offered as a candidate for the rank of synthetic *a priori* proposition. And let us take it that the principle of causality states that anything which comes into being or begins to exist does so through the agency of a cause.[1] In one sense the empiricist is quite right when he says that denial of this proposition involves no logical contradiction. That is to say, there is no verbal contradiction between the propositions 'X comes into being' and 'X has no cause'. If there were a verbal contradiction, the principle of causality, as stated above, would be an analytic proposition in the sense in which the empiricist understands the term. It is thus possible to understand the meanings of the English (or French or German, etc.) words used in stating the principle of causality and yet not to see any necessary connection between coming into being and being caused. We can hardly claim that nobody who denies this necessary connection understands the English words employed in the statement of the principle. We should have, I think, to be able to show that there is a deeper level of understanding than what is ordinarily meant by understanding the meanings of certain words.[2] It might then be claimed that though the empiricist's position cannot be assailed at the level of reflection on which he stands, its inadequacy can be seen when one passes to the level of metaphysical insight.

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[1] The principle, be it noted, says nothing about the mode of operation of the cause. That is to say, its application is not confined to mechanical or determined causality.

[2] Obviously, we should have to avoid defining 'understanding the meanings of the terms' as 'seeing a necessary connection between the meanings of the terms'. For in this case the statement that whoever understands the meanings of the terms sees the necessary connection would be equivalent to the tautological statement that whoever sees the necessary connection sees it.

These remarks obviously do not answer the question whether there are or are not synthetic *a priori* propositions. They are designed rather to indicate what must be shown if we claim that there are. It may, indeed, occur to the reader that there is another way of tackling the empiricist position, namely by denying that the propositions of pure mathematics, for example, are purely formal in the sense of being 'tautological'. In other words, it might be claimed that the propositions of pure mathematics are in some sense about reality, even though they are not existential propositions. But if we wish to claim that they are synthetic *a priori* propositions and not analytic propositions in the sense in which the empiricist uses the term, we must be prepared to explain in what sense they are informative about reality.

To return to Hume. Given his classification of propositions, it is clearly impossible to construct an *a priori* deductive system of metaphysics, the propositions of which will be infallibly true of reality. Nor, given his analysis of causality, can we start with the data of experience and infer the existence of God by a causal argument in the way that both Locke and Berkeley thought that we could. But it may appear at first sight that it is still possible to regard metaphysical theories as hypotheses which may enjoy varying degress of probability.

It is true, of course, that Hume discussed some metaphysical problems. And he seems to have been willing to say that it is more probable that there is some cause of order in the universe which bears a remote analogy to human intelligence than that there is no such cause. At the same time it seems to me to follow from his general premisses that terms which are used to denote metaphysical entities are void of meaning when used in this context. For ideas are derived from impressions. And if we think that we have an idea because we use a certain word, and if at the same time we cannot indicate, even in principle, the impression or impressions from which this idea is derived, we are forced to conclude that we have no such idea. And in this case the term or word is vacuous. True, Hume allowed for possible exceptions from the general rule that ideas follow impressions. But he certainly did not make this concession in favour of metaphysics. And though it is only in a rhetorical passage that he dismisses metaphysics as meaningless nonsense, I am inclined to think that this passage represents the conclusion to which Hume's premisses logically lead, at least if we press the assertion that ideas are faint images of impressions. And in this case metaphysical theories can hardly be genuine hypotheses.

It seems arguable, therefore, that the empiricism of Hume, if it is developed to the conclusions which are implicitly contained in it, leads to the rejection of metaphysics as so much verbiage. And this development has taken place in the present century at the hands of the neopositivists or logical positivists or radical empiricists, according to whom metaphysical statements can possess no more than 'emotive' significance.[1] So once more we have a link between Hume's philosophy and modern radical empiricism.

It may be objected that this line of interpretation amounts to treating Hume's thought as a kind of preparation for neopositivism, and that this treatment is defective on several counts. In the first place his contemporary relevance lies rather in the emphasis he gave to philosophical analysis in general than in his anticipations of neopositivism in particular, which, in its original dogmatic form at least, has proved to be a passing phase. In the second place a treatment of Hume as a preparation for later thinkers, whether positivists or not, necessarily fails to do justice to his own interpretation of human experience. Whether one agrees or not with what he says, his account of the scope and limitations of human knowledge, his examination of man's affective, moral and aesthetic life and his political theory, which together constitute his attempt to develop a science of man, are only obscured if one persists in treating his thought in function of later philosophical developments.

These objections are, I think, well-founded. At the same time a treatment of Hume's philosophy in the light of later empiricism does help to bring into relief his contemporary relevance. And it is important to do this, even if one confines oneself to a particular aspect of his contemporary relevance. Hume's empiricism suffers from several grave defects. For instance, his atomization of experience is, in my opinion, a fundamental mistake; his theory of ideas is not, I think, tenable; and it might well be claimed that Kant, in his insistence on the transcendental unity of apperception as a basic condition of human experience, was in a sense more 'empirical' than Hume. But the defects of Hume's philosophy do not diminish its historical importance. And though in some respects his thought falls into older patterns,[1] his concentration on analysis is certainly not the least of his titles to be considered a living thinker.

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[1] This idea of 'emotive' significance also has a basis in Hume's philosophy. For though he complicated his ethical theory by introducing utilitarian elements, his root-idea of the moral judgment was that it expressed 'feeling', specific feelings, that is to say, of approbation or disapprobation. Moral predicates are 'emotive' rather than descriptive terms.

4. In the introduction to Volume IV we noted that Hume's idea of a science of man represents very well the spirit of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. And in considering the French Enlightenment in the present volume we saw how philosophers such as Condillac endeavoured to develop Locke's psychological and epistemological theories and to give an empirical account of the genesis and growth of man's mental life; how writers such as Helvetius developed theories of man's moral life; how Montesquieu studied the structure and growth of societies; how Rousseau and others produced their political theories; how the physiocrats began the study of economics; and how thinkers such as Voltaire, Turgot and Condorcet sketched theories of historical development in the light of the ideals of the Age of Reason. All such studies, psychological, ethical, social, political, historical and economic, can be grouped together under the general title of the scientific study of man.

In pursuing this study the philosophers whom we are accustomed to consider as typical representatives of the Enlightenment were concerned to free it from theological and metaphysical presuppositions. This is, I think, one of the salient features of the thought of the period. The aim is not so much to deduce a comprehensive system from self-evident principles as to understand the empirical data by correlating them under empirically verified laws. Thus Condillac was concerned with giving an empirical account of the development of man's mental life, and Montesquieu endeavoured to group the diverse data in the development of different societies under universal laws. In general, Locke's empirical approach exercised a widespread influence. And there is thus a very considerable difference between the atmosphere, so to speak, of the great systems of continental rationalism and the thought of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. The atmosphere of the former is that of deduction, of the latter that of induction. It is true that this statement, like other such rash generalizations, stands in need of qualification. For instance, one would hardly think immediately of empirical induction on hearing the name of Wolff, the hero of the German *Aufklärung*. At the same time the generalization does at any rate draw attention, even if in an over-simplified manner, to a real difference in spirit and atmosphere.

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[1] For example, though professedly concerned with the limits of our knowledge rather than with the nature of reality in itself, he now and again makes incursions into ontology. And his tendency to speak as though the objects of perception are subjective modifications is an unfortunate legacy from his predecessors.

This difference can be illustrated by a reference to moral theory. The moral theory of Spinoza formed an integral part of a deductively-expounded grandiose system; and it was closely associated with metaphysical doctrines. But when we turn to the moral theories of Hume in England or of Helvetius and the Encyclopaedists in France, we find their authors insisting on the autonomy of the moral consciousness and on the separation of ethics from theology.

Similarly, while the idea of the social compact or contract in political theory is not derived from study of the empirical data but constitutes an attempt to give a rational justification of political authority and of the restriction of individual liberty in organized society, we do not find that the political theorists of the eighteenth century are much given to deducing society and authority from metaphysical and theological doctrines. They are concerned rather with the observed needs of man. And it is this approach, of course, which enables Hume to substitute for the more rationalist idea of the social contract the empirical idea of felt utility.

This is not to say, indeed, that the men of the Enlightenment had no presuppositions of their own. As we saw, they assumed a theory of progress according to which progress consists in the advancing rationalization of man, this rationalization involving man's emancipation from religious superstition and from irrational forms of government, ecclesiastical or civil. In their opinion the fruits of progress were best represented by themselves, the enlightened free-thinkers of the Parisian *salons*; and further progress would consist in the spread of the ideas for which they stood and in the refashioning of society according to the ideals of the Enlightenment. Once a reform of the social structure had taken place, men would advance in morality and virtue. For the moral state of man is largely dependent on his environment and on education.

It may be objected that the theory of progress as maintained by the men of the Enlightenment was an empirical generalization rather than a presupposition. And though in the nineteenth century it may have tended to take the form of a 'dogma', especially when it was thought to be supported by the theory of evolution, for the eighteenth-century thinkers it had more the nature of a plastic hypothesis. Even when Turgot anticipated Comte's law of the three stages of human thought, he was propounding an hypothesis based on a study of the historical data rather than an *a priori* pattern to which the data were made to conform.

It is, indeed, obviously true that in the judgment of the thinkers of the Enlightenment the theory of progress was based on historical facts. They did not present it as a conclusion derived from metaphysical premisses. But it is also true that it played the part of a presupposition, based on a value-judgment. That is to say, the Encyclopaedists and those who shared their outlook first formed their ideals of man and of society and then interpreted progress as a movement towards the realization of those ideals. There is, of course, nothing very strange in this procedure. But it meant, for instance, that they came to the study of human history with a presupposition which exercised an undue influence on their interpretation of history. For example, they were unable to appreciate the contribution of the Middle Ages to European culture: the Middle Ages inevitably appeared to them as the Dark Ages. For if progress meant advance towards the fulfilment of the ideals represented by *les philosophes* of the eighteenth century, it involved liberation from some of the leading features of mediaeval culture. Light was represented by the advanced thinkers of the eighteenth century, and the advance of 'reason' was incompatible with mediaeval religion or with a philosophy which was closely associated with theology. In this sense the men of the Enlightenment had a 'dogma' of their own.

Their point of view also meant, of course, that they were unable to do justice to important aspects of human nature and life. It is, indeed, an exaggeration to say that *les philosophes* had no understanding of any aspect of man other than the life of the analytic and emancipated reason. Hume, for instance, insisted on the great part played by feeling and asserted that reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions.[1] And Vauvenargues emphasized the importance of the affective side of human nature. Even if Rousseau's attacks on the Encyclopaedists were not without foundation, we cannot take his strictures as representing the whole truth. At the same time *les philosophes* showed little appreciation of, for example, man's religious life. It would be absurd to turn to Voltaire among the deists or to d'Holbach among the atheists for a profound understanding of religion. D'Holbach outlined a naturalistic philosophy of religion; but it will not bear comparison with the idealist philosophies of religion which we find in the next century. The rationalist freethinkers of the eighteenth century were too much preoccupied with the idea of man's emancipation from what they regarded as the deadening weight of the chains of superstition and priestcraft to have any profound understanding of the religious consciousness.

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[1] For the meaning of this statement see Vol. V, p. 319 and pp. 326–7.

This element of superficiality shows itself, for instance, in the materialist current of thought in the philosophy of the Enlightenment. As we saw, the word 'materialist' cannot legitimately be used as a label to be applied indiscriminately to *les philosophes*. But there were materialists among them, and they present us with the somewhat comical spectacle of man as subject engaged in reducing himself, so to speak, to a purely material object. It is easy to understand the repugnance and disgust which d'Holbach's *System of Nature* aroused in the mind of Goethe as a student. And d'Holbach was not the crudest of the materialists.

But the superficiality of the philosophy of the French Enlightenment in some of its aspects should not blind one to the historical importance of the movement. Rousseau, indeed, stands in a class by himself. His ideas have an intrinsic interest and they exercised a considerable influence on subsequent thinkers such as Kant and Hegel. But though the Encyclopaedists and kindred philosophers, from whom Rousseau chose to dissociate himself, may not occupy a similar position in the development of philosophy, they nevertheless exercised an important influence which has to be estimated, I think, not so much in terms of definite 'results' to which we can point as in terms of their contribution to the formation of a mentality or outlook. Perhaps we can say that the typical philosophers of the French Enlightenment represent the idea that man's betterment, welfare and happiness rest in his own hands. Provided that he frees himself from the notion that his destiny depends on a supernatural power, whose will is expressed through ecclesiastical authority, and provided that he follows the path marked out by reason, he will be able to create the social environment in which true human morality can flourish and in which the greater good of the greatest possible number can be successfully promoted. The idea, which later became so widespread, that the growth of scientific knowledge and a more rational organization of society would inevitably bring with them an increase of human happiness and further the attainment of sound moral ideals was a development of the outlook of the Enlightenment. True, other factors, such as the advance of technical science, were required before the idea could assume its developed form. But the fundamental idea that human welfare depends on the exercise of reason emancipated from the trammels of authority, of religious dogmas and of dubious metaphysical doctrines came into prominence in the eighteenth century. It was not, as at the Reformation, a question of substituting Protestant for Catholic dogma but of substituting 'free thought', the autonomy of reason, for authority.

These remarks are not, of course, intended to express agreement with the point of view of men like Voltaire. Their idea of reason was limited and narrow. To exercise reason meant for them pretty well to think as *les philosophes* thought; whereas to anyone who believes that God has revealed Himself it is rational to accept this revelation and irrational to reject it. And in any case the men of the Enlightenment were not as free from presuppositions and prejudices as they fondly imagined. Further, their optimistic rationalism has obviously met with a powerful challenge in the twentieth century. But all this does not alter the fact that an outlook which has exercised a considerable influence in the modern world took clear shape in the eighteenth century. The ideals of freedom of thought and of toleration, which have played such a part in the civilization of western Europe and of North America, found striking expression in the writings of the eighteenth-century philosophers.[1] No doubt we can add that the philosophers of the French Enlightenment gave a powerful stimulus to the promotion of scientific studies, in psychology, for example. And some of them, such as d'Alembert, made real contributions in the advance of extra-philosophical pursuits. But their chief importance lies, I think, in their contribution to the formation of a general mentality or outlook.

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[1] I do not mean to imply that toleration and a belief in revealed religion are necessarily incompatible. I am speaking of an historical rather than of a logical connection, unless, of course, one interprets 'freedom of thought' in such a way that it becomes tautological to say that the ideals of 'freedom of thought' and toleration are inseparable.

To a certain extent the philosophy of the Enlightenment expressed the development of the middle classes. From the economic point of view the middle class had, of course, been in process of development for a long time. But in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries its rise was reflected in philosophical currents of thought which, in France, were hostile to the *ancien régime* and which helped to prepare the way for a different organization of society. Such remarks, it may be said, have a Marxist flavour; but they are not for this reason necessarily erroneous.

In conclusion I wish to draw attention to one selected problem which arises out of eighteenth-century philosophy. We have seen that the typical representatives of the Enlightenment tended to insist on the separation of ethics from theology and metaphysics. And I think that behind their attitude there was a genuine philosophical question. But some of the writers of the Enlightenment obscured rather than clarified the nature of this question. I refer to those who were concerned to argue that religion, especially dogmatic Christianity, exercises a baneful influence on moral conduct, with the implication that deism or atheism, as the case may be, is more conducive to morality and virtue. This way of talking obscures the nature of the philosophical question about the relation between ethics on the one hand and metaphysics and theology on the other. For one thing, the question whether virtue is more prevalent among Christians or non-Christians is not a philosophical question. For another thing, if we say, for example, that deism is more conducive to morality and virtue than are Catholicism and Protestantism, we imply that there is a connection between metaphysical beliefs and morals. For deism is, of course, a form of metaphysics. And we ought to make it clear precisely what sort of connection we wish to affirm.

The philosophical question at issue is clearly not whether talk about human conduct can be distinguished from talk about the existence and attributes of God or about things considered simply as beings. For it obviously can be distinguished. In other words, it is clear enough that ethics or moral philosophy has its own subject-matter. This was recognized, for example, by Aristotle in the ancient world and by Aquinas in the Middle Ages.

The immediate question is rather whether fundamental moral principles can be derived from metaphysical or theological premisses. But this question can be reformulated in a broader way, without any specific reference to metaphysical or theological premisses. Let us suppose that someone says: 'We are creatures of God; therefore we ought to obey Him.' The first statement is a statement of fact. The second is a moral statement. And the speaker asserts that the first entails the second. We can ask, therefore, putting the question in a general form, whether a statement of what ought to be the case can be derived from a statement of what is the case, a moral statement from a statement of fact. This general formulation of the question would apply not only to the example which I have given but also, for instance, to the deduction of moral statements from statements of fact about the characteristics of human nature, when no reference is made to theological truths.

This question, we may note, was formulated explicitly by David Hume. 'In every system of morality which I have hitherto met with I have always remarked that the author proceeds for some time in the ordinary way of reasoning and establishes the being of a God or makes observations concerning human affairs, when of a sudden I am surprised to find that instead of the usual copulations of propositions, *is* and *is not*, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an *ought* or an *ought not*. This change is imperceptible, but is, however, of the last consequence. For as this *ought* or *ought not* expresses some new relation or affirmation, it is necessary that it should be observed and explained, and at the same time that a reason should be given for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it'.[1] But though Hume explicitly raised this question, the utilitarians tended to pass it over; and it is only in modern ethical theory that it has been given prominence.

The question is obviously important. For it is relevant not only to authoritarian ethics but also to teleological ethics of the type which first asserts that human nature is of such a kind or that man seeks a certain end and then derives ought-statements from this statement of fact. And I have drawn attention to it because of its importance, not with a view to undertaking a discussion of the right answer. For such a discussion would involve, for instance, an analysis of ought-statements, and this is a task for the writer of a treatise on ethical theory rather than an historian of philosophy.

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[1] *Treatise*, I, 3, I (Selby-Bigge, p. 469).

However, to avoid any possible misunderstanding of my remarks it may be appropriate to state explicitly that I have no intention of suggesting that the idea of a teleological ethics must be abandoned. On the contrary I think that the concept of the good is paramount in morals, and that 'ought' must be interpreted in function of the idea of the good. At the same time any defender of a teleological ethical theory must take account of the question raised by Hume. And it is worth while having pointed out that behind the polemical utterances of French writers about the separation of ethics from metaphysics and theology there lies a genuine philosophical question. That it was Hume who gave a clear explicit formulation to this question is not, I think, surprising.

5. Mention has been made in the last section of the tendency shown by philosophers of the French Enlightenment to look on history as an advance towards the rationalism of the eighteenth century, an advance out of darkness into light, and to expect in the future further advance which would consist in the fuller implementation of the ideals of the Age of Reason. And in the present volume the fourth Part was devoted to the rise of the philosophy of history in the pre-Kantian modern period. It is appropriate, therefore, to make some general remarks in this Concluding Review about the philosophy of history. But the remarks must be brief. For the idea of philosophy of history is best discussed in connection with later thinkers who developed the theme on the grand scale. At present I wish to content myself with merely suggesting some lines of thought for the reader's reflection.

If by philosophy of history one means a critique of historical method, then philosophy of history is obviously a possible and legitimate undertaking. For just as it is possible to examine scientific method, so is it possible to examine the method or methods employed by historians. We can ask questions about the concept of historical fact, about the nature and role of interpretation of the data, about the part played by imaginative reconstruction, and so on. We can discuss the norms of selection which are observed by historians; and we can inquire what presuppositions, if any, are implicit in historical interpretation and reconstruction.

But when we speak of Bossuet or Vico or Montesquieu or Condorcet or Lessing or Herder as a philosopher of history, it is not of these meta-historical inquiries that we are thinking. For such inquiries are concerned with the nature and method of historiography rather than with the course of historical events. And when we speak of the philosophy of history we think of interpretations of the actual course of historical events rather than of an analysis of the historian's method, norms of selection, presuppositions, and so on. We think of the search for patterns or for a pattern in the course of history and of theories of universal laws which are supposed to be operative in history.

Talk about searching for patterns in history is somewhat ambiguous. We can perfectly well say that historians themselves are concerned with patterns. A man who writes a history of England, for instance, is obviously concerned to trace an intelligible pattern of events. He does not leave us with a series of unconnected historical statements such as the statement that William the Conqueror landed in England in 1066. He tries to show how this event came to pass and why the Conqueror acted as he did: he tries to illustrate the effects which the Norman invasion had on English life and culture. And in doing this he inevitably exhibits a pattern of events. But we do not for this reason call him a philosopher of history. Further, the mere fact that a given historian casts his net more widely and concerns himself with a great range of historical data does not of itself qualify him for the label 'philosopher of history'.

But searching for a pattern in history may mean something more than this. It may mean attempting to show that there is a necessary pattern in history, this pattern taking the form either of a movement towards a goal which will be attained whatever the motives of individuals may be or of a series of cycles the course and rhythm of which are determined by certain universal laws. In the case of such theories we should certainly speak of philosophy of history.

Here again, however, there is room for a distinction. On the one hand a man might believe that in his study of history he had discovered certain recurrent patterns, and he might then endeavour to explain this recurrence in terms of the operation of certain laws. Or he might think that the actual course of history manifests a movement towards a condition of affairs which he regards as desirable and which has come about in spite of obstacles. On the other hand a man might come to the study of history with an already-formed belief, derived from theology or from metaphysics, that human history moves inevitably towards the attainment of a certain end or goal. With this belief in mind he then endeavours to see how the actual course of historical events confirms this belief. The distinction is thus between empirically-grounded philosophy of history and one the main tenet of which is an *a priori* theory, in the sense that the theory is brought ready-made to the study of history.

The distinction, when expressed in this abstract way, seems to be clear enough. But it does not follow, of course, that it is always easy to assign a given philosopher of history to one definite class. Perhaps we can assign Montesquieu to the first class. For he seems to have thought that the laws which he regarded as operative in history were derived from a study of the actual course of events. Bossuet belongs definitely to the second class. For his conviction that a providential divine plan is worked out in history was obviously derived from theology. And Hegel, in the nineteenth century, also belongs to this class. For he explicitly asserts that in studying the course of history the philosopher brings to it the truth (believed to have been demonstrated in what we would call metaphysics) that Reason is the sovereign of history, that is, that Absolute Reason manifests itself in the historical process. But it is not so easy to classify writers such as Condorcet. At the very least, however, we can say that they made a value-judgment about the spirit of the Enlightenment, and that this judgment influenced their interpretation of history. That is to say, they made an approving value-judgment about the culture which they diagnosed as emerging out of the past and as beginning to express itself in the spirit of the Enlightenment; and they then interpreted the past in the light of this judgment. As has already been remarked, this affected, for example, their interpretation of the Middle Ages, which constituted in their eyes a retrogressive movement on the upward path. In other words, their interpretation of history and their tracing of a pattern were permeated and influenced by judgments of value. The same sort of remark could be made, of course, about some historians who are not generally thought of as philosophers of history. Gibbon is a case in point. But Condorcet seems to have assumed that a law of progress operates in historical development (and his concept of what constitutes progress obviously involved value-judgments). And for this reason he can be called a philosopher of history. True, he did not make this assumption very clear; and he laid stress on the need for human effort, particularly in the field of education, to perfect man and human society. But his confident optimistic belief in the advance of history from darkness into light involved an implicit assumption about a teleological movement in historical development.

It does not seem to me that one can justifiably dismiss all philosophy of history in a pure *a priori* manner. As far as those philosophies of history are concerned which purport to be generalizations derived from objective study of historical data, the main question is whether the empirical evidence is such as to render probable the truth of a given theory. We can, of course, raise the question whether the concept of historical laws, as found, for instance, in the philosophy of Vico, does not assume that there is repetition in history; and if we think that this assumption is in fact made, it is open to us to challenge it. But the challenge will have to be based on appeal to historical evidence. And if the reply is made that the concept of historical laws does not assume repetition in history but is based on similarities and analogies between different events or different periods, any discussion of these themes must be conducted in the light of the available evidence. We might, indeed, wish to say that the concept of historical laws can be ruled out *a priori* in virtue of an appeal to human freedom. But though human freedom and initiative would be incompatible with the operation of what one might call 'iron laws', it might be possible to elaborate a conception of historical law which would be compatible with human freedom. In other words, it might be possible to develop a theory of loose-texture cultural cycles which would not make nonsense of human choice. The question whether there was any sufficient ground for the development of such a theory would have to be decided in the light of historical data. At the same time, apart from the question whether the division of history into cultural cycles is legitimate and well-grounded, we should have to ask ourselves whether the so-called laws which are supposed to govern the rhythm of these cycles were anything better than truisms on the one hand or, on the other, propositions which the historian himself would be quite capable of enunciating, without the aid of any philosopher.

As for those philosophies of history in which the philosopher openly brings to the study of historical development a belief derived from theology or from metaphysics, there is at least this to be said in their favour, that they are honest, in the sense that the assumption is explicitly stated. In this respect they are preferable to those philosophies of history which do indeed assume that history moves inevitably towards a certain goal but in which this assumption is concealed. Further, the belief which is taken over from theology or from metaphysics may be quite true. It may be quite true, and in my opinion it is true, that divine providence operates in history and that the divine plan will be realized whether human beings like it or not. But it by no means follows that this belief can be of very much practical use for the study of history. Historical events have their phenomenal causes, and without revelation we cannot really tell how the actual course of events is related to divine providence. We can conjecture and speculate, it is true; we can see in the fall of a nation a symbol of divine judgment, or a symbol of the transitoriness of the things of this world. But neither conjecture nor a deciphering of symbols from the standpoint of faith permit prediction. If these activities are what we mean by philosophy of history, then philosophy of history is, of course, possible. But it is then a pursuit, perhaps profitable and in any case harmless, which the man of faith can undertake if he chooses; but it cannot be said to yield scientific knowledge. Moreover, if we rashly assume that we know the providential plan and that we can discern by philosophical reflection its operation in history, we shall probably find ourselves committed to justifying all that happens.

These remarks are not intended to indicate that the present writer entirely rejects the idea of a philosophy of history which goes beyond meta-historical inquiries such as analysis of the historian's method and presuppositions. But they are intended to express a serious doubt concerning the validity of the idea. I believe that a theology of history is possible; but its scope is extremely limited, being determined by the limits of revelation. And I very much doubt whether it is possible to go further than St. Augustine went. But when we turn from Bossuet to the philosophers of history in the eighteenth century, we find them substituting philosophy for theology in the belief that they are thereby giving to their theories of history the character of scientific knowledge. And I doubt whether philosophy of history is capable of assuming this character. No doubt, the philosophers make true statements; but the question is whether these statements are not the sort of truths which can perfectly well be made by the historian himself. In other words, the question is whether the philosopher as such can achieve anything more in developing a synthetic interpretation of history than can be achieved by the historian. If not, there is no place for philosophy of history in the sense in which the term is being used. But it is, of course, difficult to draw any clear line of demarcation between history and philosophy of history. If by the latter term we mean broad generalizations, the historian himself can make them.

6. The three volumes of this *History* which are devoted to the philosophy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries end with a discussion of the Kantian system. And it will obviously be expected of any Concluding Review that it should contain some reflections on Kant's thought. I do not propose, of course, to give a summary of his philosophy. A preliminary summary was provided in the introduction to Volume IV, and after the extended treatment of Kant in the present volume a second summary would be superfluous. Nor do I propose to undertake a direct refutation of Kantianism. I propose instead to make some general reflections about its relations to preceding philosophy and to the German speculative idealism which followed it. And I also wish to draw attention to some of the questions which arise out of Kant's philosophy.

There is, I suppose, a natural temptation to represent the philosophy of Kant as the confluence of the two streams of continental rationalism and British empiricism. It is a natural temptation because there are some obvious grounds for representing his thought in this way. For instance, he was brought up, philosophically speaking, in the scholasticized version of Leibniz' philosophy as presented by Wolff and his successors, and he then underwent the shock, as it were, of Hume's empiricist criticism which awoke him from his dogmatic slumbers. Further, in the construction of Kant's own philosophy we can discern the influence of both movements. For example, his discovery of Leibniz himself, as distinct from Wolff and his successors, had a very considerable influence on Kant's mind; and we may recall that Leibniz had asserted the phenomenal character of space and time. Indeed, the Kantian theory of the *a priori* can be represented as in some sense a development of Leibniz' theory of virtually innate ideas, with the difference that the ideas became innate categorical functions. At the same time we can recall that Hume himself had maintained a subjective contribution to the formation of certain complex ideas, such as that of the causal relation. And thus we might represent Kant's theory of the *a priori* as being also influenced by Hume's position in the light of the former's conviction that Newtonian physics presents us with synthetic *a priori* propositions. In other words, Kant not only offered an answer to Hume's empiricism and phenomenalism but also, in formulating this answer, utilized suggestions made by the British philosopher himself, though the latter did not see their full significance and possibilities.

It would, however, be absurd, were one to represent the Kantian philosophy as a synthesis of continental rationalism and British empiricism in the sense of a conflation of elements borrowed from two mutually opposed currents of thought. Like any other philosopher, Kant was subject to influence by his contemporaries and by his predecessors. And though opinions may differ about the degree of influence which should be ascribed to Leibniz and Hume respectively, we cannot call in question the fact that each man exercised some influence on the development of Kant's thought. So, for the matter of that, did Wolff and his disciples. At the same time any elements which may have been derived from or suggested by other philosophies were taken up and welded together by Kant in a system which was very much more than a conflation. It was intended to supersede both rationalist metaphysics and empiricism, not to combine the incompatible.

The inappropriateness of describing Kant's system as a synthesis of rationalism and empiricism becomes clear if we recall his fundamental problem, the pervasive problem, so to speak, of his philosophy. As we saw, he was faced with the problem of effecting a harmonization between the world of Newtonian physics, the world of mechanistic causality and determinism, and the world of freedom. True, Descartes also had been faced with an analogous problem: it was not a problem peculiar to Kant but one which arose out of the historical situation when natural science had once begun its remarkable development. But the point is that in grappling with this problem Kant submitted to critical examination both rationalism and empiricism and worked out his own philosophy, not as a synthesis of these two movements, but as a triumph over them. Empiricism, he thought, is inadequate because it is unable to account for the possibility of synthetic *a priori* knowledge. If we take scientific knowledge seriously, we cannot embrace sheer empiricism, even if we agree that all knowledge begins with experience. We must have recourse to a theory of the *a priori* formal element in knowledge. That is to say, we cannot explain the possibility of scientific knowledge if we assume that experience is simply given: we have to allow for the subject's construction of experience if we are going to account for the possibility of *a priori* knowledge. But this does not mean that we should accept rationalist metaphysics. If anyone takes moral experience, freedom and religion seriously, it may seem to him that the dogmatic metaphysics of the rationalist philosophers, at least of those who allowed for freedom, offers a sure rational basis for the moral law and for belief in freedom, immortality and God. But this is not the case. Rationalist metaphysics cannot stand up to criticism; and the hollowness of its pretensions to knowledge is shown empirically by the conflict of systems and by the evident incapacity of metaphysics to reach assured results. And the theory of the *a priori*, the transcendental critique of knowledge, shows why this must be the case. But at the same time that this new science shows the hollowness of dogmatic metaphysics it also shows the limitations of scientific knowledge. And for anyone who takes seriously the moral consciousness and the beliefs and hopes which are intimately associated with it the way is left open for a rationally legitimate, though scientifically indemonstrable, belief in freedom, immortality and God. The great truths of metaphysics are then placed beyond the reach of destructive criticism by the very act of removing them from the position of conclusions to worthless metaphysical arguments and linking them with the moral consciousness which is as much a fundamental feature of man as his capacity of scientific knowledge.

In working out his philosophy Kant obviously made use of suggestions and ideas derived from other philosophers. And specialists can trace the origins and development of this or that idea. But this fact does not justify our saying that the Kantian system is a conflation of rationalism and empiricism. He agreed with empiricist criticism of rationalist metaphysics, and at the same time he agreed with the metaphysicians about the importance of the leading metaphysical problems and about the existence of a sphere of noumenal reality to which physical science has no access. But this does not mean that rationalism and empiricism can be combined. It is rather that Kant's measure of agreement, coupled with his measure of disagreement, with each movement drives him forward to the development of an original philosophy. The fact of scientific knowledge rules out sheer empiricism. And a critical analysis of the possibility and conditions of this knowledge rules out dogmatic metaphysics. But man is not simply 'understanding': he is also a moral agent. And his moral consciousness reveals to him his freedom and justifies a practical assurance of spiritual reality, while his aesthetic experience helps him to see the physical world as the manifestation of this reality. To a certain extent, of course, we can see in the Kantian philosophy the culmination of previous lines of thought. Thus it is not unreasonable to regard his theory of the subject's construction of experience as an original development which issued out of a combination of the rationalistic theory of virtually innate ideas with the empiricist tendency to speak as though the immediate objects of experience were phenomena or impressions or sense-data. I have no wish to deny continuity in the development of philosophy or the fact that Kant's philosophy took the form which it did largely because of the character of preceding philosophical thought. But at the same time it remains true that in a certain sense Kant turned his back on both rationalism and empiricism. In other words, if we wished to speak of the Kantian system as a 'synthesis' of rationalism and empiricism, we should have to understand the term in a sense approximating to that given it by Hegel, that is, in the sense that Kant subsumed the elements of positive value (estimated from his own point of view) in the preceding rival traditions or antitheses in an original system, incorporation in which at the same time transformed these elements.

Now, if Kant turned his back on rationalist metaphysics, which he called 'rotten dogmatism', it may appear difficult to explain how it came to pass not only that the critical philosophy was followed in Germany by a series of metaphysical systems but also that the authors of these systems looked on themselves as the true successors of Kant who had developed his thought in the right direction. But if one bears in mind the tension between Kant's theory of the subject's construction of experience and his doctrine of the thing-in-itself, it is an easy matter to understand how German speculative idealism grew out of the critical philosophy.

Kant's doctrine of the thing-in-itself was certainly not unattended by difficulties. Apart from the fact that the nature of the thing-in-itself was declared to be unknowable, not even its existence as cause of the material of sensation could be positively asserted without misuse (on Kant's premisses) of the categories of causality and existence. To be sure, Kant was aware of this fact. And while it seemed to him that the concept of phenomenon demanded as its correlative the concept of thing-in-itself, the former not making any sense without the latter, he maintained that we must refrain from asserting dogmatically the existence of the thing-in-itself, though we cannot help thinking it. It is clear that Kant thought it absurd to reduce reality to a mere construction of the subject, and that he therefore looked on the retention of the concept of the thing-in-itself as a matter of common sense. At the same time he was aware of his difficult position and tried to find formulas which would save him from self-contradiction but which at the same time would enable him to retain a concept which he regarded as indispensable. One can understand Kant's attitude in this matter. But one can also understand Fichte's objections to the theory of the thing-in-itself, which he looked on as a superfluity, indeed as a monstrosity. In his view the thing-in-itself had to be eliminated in the interests of idealism. In his opinion Kant was a man who tried to have things both ways at once, and who therefore involved himself in hopeless inconsistencies. If one had once accepted the Kantian theory of the subject's part in the construction of experience, one was bound, thought Fichte, to go forward to a fully idealist philosophy.

This step involved inevitably a transition from theory of knowledge to metaphysics. If the thing-in-itself is eliminated, it follows that the subject creates the object in its entirety; it does not merely mould, so to speak, a given material. And the theory that the subject creates the object is obviously a metaphysical theory, even if the approach to it is by way of a critique of knowledge.

But what is this creative subject? When Kant spoke about the subject's construction of experience, he was talking about the individual subject. True, he introduced the concept of the transcendental ego as a logical condition of experience; but here again it was of the individual ego that he was thinking, the 'I' which is always subject and never object. But if we transform this logical condition of experience into a metaphysical principle which creates the object, we can hardly identify it with the individual finite ego without being involved in solipsism. For John Smith all other human beings will be objects, and so they will be his own creation. For the matter of fact, John Smith as object, as a phenomenal ego, will be the creation of himself as transcendental ego. If, therefore, we eliminate the thing-in-itself and transform Kant's transcendental ego, a logical condition of experience, into the supreme metaphysical principle, we are driven in the end to interpret it as the universal infinite subject which is productive both of the finite subject and of the finite object. And at once we are involved in a full-blown metaphysical system.

I do not intend, of course, to discuss here the phases of the philosophy of Fichte or the history of German speculative idealism in general. These themes must be reserved for the next volume of this *History*. But I wished to point out that the seeds of speculative idealism were present in the Kantian philosophy itself. Of course, the speculative idealists were concerned to reduce all things to one supreme metaphysical principle from which, in one way or another, they could be philosophically deduced, whereas Kant did not share this concern. And there is an obvious difference in atmosphere and interest between the critical philosophy and the metaphysical systems which succeeded it. At the same time it is not merely a question of 'succeeding'; for the systems of speculative idealism have a more than temporal connection with the philosophy of Kant. And if one admits this and at the same time rejects what grew out of Kant's philosophy, one can hardly accept this philosophy in so far as it formed the point of departure for what one rejects. And this means in practice submitting the idealist and subjectivist aspects of Kant's thought to critical examination. For if one reaffirms these aspects and eliminates instead the thing-in-itself, it is difficult to avoid accompanying Kant's successors along the path which they trod.

It is, indeed, easy to understand that in the middle of the nineteenth century the cry was raised 'Back to Kant!', and that the Neo-Kantians set themselves to develop the critical, epistemological and ethical positions of Kant without falling into what they regarded as the fantastic extravaganzas of the speculative idealists. Kant was for them primarily the patient, methodical, meticulous, analytically-minded author of the first *Critique*; and they thought of the systems of the great idealist metaphysicians from Fichte to Hegel as representing a betrayal of the spirit of Kant. And this point of view is perfectly understandable. At the same time it is, I think, undeniable that the Kantian system lent itself to the very development (or exploitation, if preferred) which it received at the hands of the speculative idealists. In support of the attitude of the Neo-Kantians we can say, of course, that Kant deliberately substituted a new form of metaphysics, a metaphysics of knowledge or of experience, for the older metaphysics which he rejected, and that he regarded this new metaphysics as capable of giving real knowledge, whereas he would certainly not have looked on Hegel's metaphysics of the Absolute, for instance, as constituting knowledge. In other words, he would certainly have disowned those who claimed to be his children, just as he rejected Fichte's preliminary attempts to improve the critical philosophy by eliminating the thing-in-itself. But though one may feel assured that Kant would not have looked with much favour on the metaphysical flights of his successors, this does not alter the fact that he provided them with a promising foundation for their constructions.

It is possible, however, by stressing other aspects of Kant's philosophy than those stressed by his idealist successors, to regard it as pointing in quite a different direction. Kant's rejection of dogmatic metaphysics, it may be said, was more than a rejection of the systems of continental rationalism from Descartes to Leibniz and his disciples. For Kant exposed the fallacious character of all pretended demonstrations in metaphysics and showed that metaphysical knowledge is impossible. True, he offered a new metaphysics of his own; but this was to all intents and purposes analysis of the subjective conditions of experience. It did not pretend to give us a knowledge of so-called noumenal reality. Kant did, indeed, allow for belief in the existence of noumenal reality; but this was inconsistent with his account of the function of the categories. For the categories have content and meaning only in their application to phenomena. Hence it is meaningless, on Kant's premisses, to talk of noumenal reality or of a 'supersensuous substrate' as existing. In fact, if reality is itself one of the categories, it is nonsense to talk about noumenal reality at all. We can, it is true, examine the nature of the scientific, moral and aesthetic judgments. But on Kant's premisses we are really not entitled to use the moral judgment as the basis for any sort of metaphysics. He would not, of course, have admitted the validity of this interpretation of his thought. But in point of fact, it may be claimed, the valuable service performed by Kant was to show that whatever can be known belongs to the sphere of the sciences, and that metaphysics is not only not science but also meaningless. At best it can have only 'emotive' significance. And this is what Kant's theory of practical faith really amounts to, when it is given its cash-value.

In other words, it can be argued that though the Kantian system gave rise directly to the systems of speculative idealism it is really a half-way house on the road to positivism. And it is in this light, I suppose, that positivists would wish to regard it. They would not follow him, of course, in his theory of synthetic *a priori* propositions and of the conditions of their possibility. But they would regard his partial rejection of metaphysics as a step in the right direction; and they would wish, I think, to emphasize the aspects of his philosophy which seem to point the way to a more radical rejection, even if Kant himself did not understand the full implications of these aspects.

But the fact that both idealist metaphysicians and positivists can offer grounds for claiming that the Kantian system points in the direction of their types of philosophy obviously does not compel us to conclude that we must choose one of the two types. There is another possibility, namely that of rejecting the Kantian theories which lead to this choice. After all, Kant's Copernican revolution was an hypothesis designed to explain the possibility of synthetic *a priori* knowledge on the supposition that it could not be explained on a different hypothesis. And there is plenty of room for questioning here. We can ask whether there is in fact any synthetic *a priori* knowledge. And if we decide that there is, we can still ask whether its possibility cannot be better explained in a different way from that in which Kant explained it. Again, though it is widely taken for granted that Kant showed once and for all that speculative metaphysics cannot lead to knowledge, this assumption is open to question. But it is impossible to deal with these questions in a few words. A thorough discussion of Kant's Copernican revolution would involve discussion not only of Kant's own theories but also of the empiricism of Hume which was partly responsible for his thinking those theories necessary. And the only really satisfactory way of showing that there can be metaphysical knowledge is to produce examples and to show that they are examples. Such tasks cannot be attempted here. But it can be remarked that in any genuine dialogue with Kant a philosopher must endeavour to ascertain his insights and to distinguish between them and what is weak or false. In other words, it would be absurd to suppose that in the case of a thinker of such stature his philosophy can simply be thrown on the rubbish-heap of rejected systems. To take but one example, Kant's insistence on the unity of apperception as a fundamental condition of human experience seems to me to represent a genuine and important insight. Even if he failed to see that the substantial subject affirms its own ontological reality in the judgment, he did not forget the subject.

7. In conclusion we might consider briefly the statement which has sometimes been made that whereas mediaeval philosophy was concerned with the problem of being, modern philosophy has been concerned with the problem of knowledge.[1]

This is a difficult statement to deal with. If it were understood in a sense similar to that of the statement that astronomy is concerned with the heavenly bodies and botany with plants, it would be obviously untrue. On the one hand mediaeval philosophers had a good deal to say about knowledge. On the other hand, if concern with the problem of being is taken to mean concern with problems of existence, with metaphysical explanation of empirical reality and with the problem of the One and the Many, we can hardly say that the problem of being was absent from the minds of men such as Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz.

Further, statements which involve saying that 'mediaeval philosophy' and 'modern philosophy' are concerned respectively with this or that are obviously open to the criticism that they are, by their very nature, unjustifiable simplifications of complex situations. That is to say, such statements are open to the well-grounded objection that it is thoroughly misleading to speak about mediaeval and post-Renaissance philosophy as though each were a homogeneous unity. The former ranged, for example, from the systematic metaphysical syntheses of Aquinas or Duns Scotus to the critical reflections of Nicholas of Autrecourt, the mediaeval Hume. And the latter, namely post-Renaissance philosophy, was obviously not all of a piece. If we compare Aquinas with Kant, it is certainly true to say that the theory of knowledge occupies a much more prominent position in the latter's thought than it does in that of the former. But if we selected for comparison other mediaeval and modern thinkers, our judgment about the degree to which each was preoccupied with epistemological problems might be somewhat different.

Again, the attempt to give a general interpretation of the world and of human experience can be found both in mediaeval philosophy and in the philosophy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Even Kant was not concerned only with the question: What can I know? He was also concerned, as he put it, with the questions: What ought I to do? and, What may I hope for? Reflection on these questions leads us not only into moral philosophy proper but also to the postulates of the moral law. And though, for Kant, immortality and the existence of God are not demonstrable, a general world-view is opened up to us in which science, morals and religion are harmonized. A critique of the process of reason shows us the limitations of definite knowledge; but it does not destroy the reality or the importance of the chief metaphysical problems.[1] And though the solutions are a matter of practical or moral faith rather than of knowledge, it is both natural and legitimate for reason to attempt to form a general view of reality which goes beyond the field of mathematics and of science, the field, that is, of 'theoretical' knowledge.

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[1] Some Thomist writers maintain that Aquinas was concerned with the act of existing whereas post-Renaissance rationalist metaphysicians were primarily concerned with the deduction of essences. And there is, I think, some truth in this contention. At the same time we cannot justifiably say that Descartes, for example, bypassed problems of existence. In any case I am concerned in this section with the position occupied by the theory of knowledge in mediaeval and modern philosophy respectively, not with the Thomist contention which I have just mentioned.

True, the extent to which Hume could attempt any such general interpretation of reality was, on his own principles, extremely limited. The nature of reality in itself and the ultimate causes of phenomena were for him shrouded in impenetrable mystery. As far as metaphysical explanation was concerned, the world was for him an enigma. Agnosticism was the only sensible attitude to adopt. His philosophy, therefore, was primarily critical and analytic. But the same can be said of some of the thinkers of the fourteenth century. The difference is that they looked to revelation and theology to supply them with a general view of reality, whereas Hume did not.

But though exception can be taken on several grounds to the statement that mediaeval philosophy is concerned with the problem of being and modern philosophy with the problem of knowledge, the statement may serve to draw attention to certain differences between mediaeval and post-Renaissance thought. If we take mediaeval philosophy as a whole, we can say that the problem of the objectivity of knowledge is not prominent. And one reason for this is, I think, that a philosopher such as Aquinas believed that we perceive directly physical objects such as trees and tables. Our natural knowledge of purely spiritual beings is, indeed, indirect and analogical: there is no natural intuition of God. But we perceive trees and tables and men, not our own subjective modifications or our ideas of trees and tables and men. True, we can make erroneous judgments about the nature of what we perceive. I may judge, for example, that an object in the distance is a man when in point of fact it is a shrub. But the way to correct such error is to do what we are accustomed to do, namely to examine the object more closely. Problems of error arise against the background, so to speak, of a realist theory of perception, the common-sense theory that we enjoy immediate perception of the connatural objects of human cognition. Aquinas was not, of course, so naïve as to suppose that we necessarily know everything that we think that we know. But he believed that we enjoy direct access, as it were, to the world, that the mind is capable of apprehending things in their intelligible being, and that in the act of genuine knowledge it knows that it knows. While, therefore, he was prepared to discuss questions about the origins, conditions and limitations of knowledge and about the nature and causes of erroneous judgments, general questions about the objectivity of knowledge would not have had much meaning for him. For he did not think of ideas as a screen placed between our minds and things.

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[1] As was remarked in the last section, it is arguable that Kant's doctrine of the categories leads to the conclusion that properly metaphysical problems must be excluded from the rank of meaningful problems. But Kant himself did not think so, of course. On the contrary, he emphasized the importance of what he regarded as the leading problems of metaphysics.

But if we follow Locke in describing ideas in such a way that they become the immediate objects of perception and thought, it is natural to ask whether our 'knowledge' of the world really is knowledge, that is, whether our representations correspond with reality existing independently of the mind. I do not mean to imply that all philosophers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries maintained a representative theory of perception and involved themselves in the problem of the correspondence between our representations and the things which they purport to represent. Locke himself did not maintain the representative theory consistently. And if, with Berkeley, we describe physical objects as clusters of 'ideas', the problem of correspondence between ideas and things simply does not arise. The problem arises only if ideas are said to have a representative function and to be the immediate objects of perception and knowledge. But if the problem does arise, the question whether our *prima facie* knowledge of the world is really objective knowledge pushes itself into the foreground. And it is then natural to treat this question before we embark on any metaphysical synthesis. Epistemology or theory of knowledge becomes basic in philosophy.

Again, while the mediaeval philosopher certainly did not think of the mind as a purely passive recipient of impressions, he regarded its activity as one of penetrating the objective intelligible structure of reality.[1] In other words, he thought of the mind as conforming itself to objects rather than of objects as having to conform themselves to the mind for knowledge to be possible.[2] He did not think of what we call the world as a mental construction. But, given the philosophies of Hume and Kant, it becomes natural to ask whether what we call the world is not a kind of logical construction which lies, as it were, between our minds and reality in itself or things in themselves. And if we think that this is a genuine problem, we shall naturally be inclined to give much more emphasis to the theory of knowledge than we should be if we were convinced that the subject does not construct empirical reality but grasps its intelligible nature.

My point is simply that if we bear in mind the development of post-Renaissance philosophy, especially in British empiricism and in the thought of Kant, it is easy to understand the prominence given in subsequent times to theory of knowledge or epistemology. Kant in particular exercised a most powerful influence in this respect. Of course, different attitudes are possible in regard to the emphasis which came to be laid in large areas of philosophical discussion on problems about the objectivity of knowledge. We may wish to say that it represents an advance from realist naïvety to a more sophisticated and profound understanding of the basic problems of philosophy. Or we may wish to say that the problem of the objectivity arises out of mistaken assumptions. Or we may wish to say that it is silly to talk, for example, about 'the critical problem'. We must try to formulate carefully-defined questions. And in the process of doing so we may find that some alleged problems which appear to be of great moment when they are expressed in vague terms turn out either to be pseudo-problems or to answer themselves. But whatever attitude we may wish to adopt in regard to the emphasis placed on the theory of knowledge, it is clear, I think, that it arose through the asking of questions which would not come naturally to the mind of the mediaeval philosopher but which were stimulated by developments in the philosophy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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[1] This is true of the metaphysicians at least.

[2] In a certain sense we can say that for Aquinas things must conform themselves to the subject for knowledge to be possible. For though in his view all being is intelligible in itself, the human subject is of such a kind and possesses such a cognitional structure, so to speak, that the natural scope of its knowledge is limited. For human knowledge as such to be possible conditions are required on the part both of subject and object. But this point of view is different from that represented by Kant's Copernican revolution.

These remarks are not meant to imply that the prominence given to epistemology or the theory of knowledge in modern philosophy was due exclusively to the British empiricists and to Kant. It is obvious that a theory of knowledge was prominent in the philosophy of Descartes. Indeed, we can describe the difference between rationalism and empiricism in terms of different beliefs about the origins of knowledge and about the ways of increasing knowledge. It is thus true to say that from the very beginning of modern philosophy epistemology occupied a prominent and important position. At the same time it is also true that Kant in particular exercised a powerful influence in pushing epistemology into the foreground of philosophical discussion, if only for the fact that his destructive criticism of metaphysics through a transcendental critique of knowledge seemed to imply that the proper subject-matter for the philosopher was precisely the theory of knowledge. And, of course, anyone who wished to refute his criticism of metaphysics had perforce to start with examining his epistemological doctrines.

The fact, discussed briefly in the last section, that the critical philosophy of Kant led, somewhat paradoxically, to a fresh outburst of metaphysical speculation may appear to count against the assertion that Kant exercised a powerful influence in concentrating attention on the theory of knowledge. In point of fact, however, the speculative idealism of the first half of the nineteenth century arose, not out of a revulsion against Kant's epistemology, but out of a development of what seemed to Kant's successors to be the proper implications of his point of view. Thus Fichte started with the theory of knowledge, and his idealist metaphysics grew out of it. The Neo-Kantians may have regarded speculative idealism as a betrayal of the true Kantian spirit; but this does not alter the fact that the approach to the new metaphysics was by way of the theory of knowledge. How this transition from the critical philosophy of Kant to idealist metaphysics took place will be recounted in the next volume of this *History*.

APPENDIX

A SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY[1]

For general remarks and for General Works see the Bibliography at the end of Volume IV, *Descartes to Leibniz.*

For the benefit of the reader who desires some guidance in the selection of a few useful books in English about general movements of thought and the more prominent thinkers an asterisk has been added to some titles. But the absence of this sign must not be taken to indicate a negative judgment about the value of the book in question.

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[1] The abbreviation (*E.L.*) stands, as in previous volumes, for *Everyman's Library.*

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See pp. 442–3.

4. *Voltaire*

See pp. 443–4.

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Notes

1. R. Eisler's *Kantlexion* (Berlin, 1930) is a useful aid to the study of Kant.
2. *Kantstudien,* the periodical founded in 1896 by H. Vaihinger, contains many important articles on Kant.
3. There are various collections of articles on Kant.

For example:

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4. The more metaphysical aspects of Kant's philosophy are emphasized in the works, listed above, by Daval, Heimsoeth, Martin (second work mentioned) and Wundt. For a discussion of the relations between Kant's thought and Thomism see the works by Audley and Maréchal (Cahier V). Besides the works of Professors Paton and N. K. Smith those of de Vleeschauwer are highly recommended.

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VOLUME VII

Modern Philosophy: From the Post-Kantian Idealists to Marx, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche

Frederick Copleston, S.J.

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PREFACE

As Volume VI of this *History of Philosophy* ended with Kant, the natural procedure was to open the present volume with a discussion of post-Kantian German idealism. I might then have turned to the philosophy of the first part of the nineteenth century in France and Great Britain. But on reflection it seemed to me that nineteenth-century German philosophy could reasonably be treated on its own, and that this would confer on the volume a greater unity than would otherwise be possible. And in point of fact the only non-German-speaking philosopher considered in the book is Kierkegaard, who wrote in Danish.

The volume has been entitled *Fichte to Nietzsche*, as Nietzsche is the last world-famous philosopher who is considered at any length. It might indeed have been called *Fichte to Heidegger*. For not only have a good many philosophers been mentioned who were chronologically posterior to Nietzsche, but also in the last chapter a glance has been taken at German philosophy in the first half of the twentieth century. But I decided that to call the volume *Fichte to Heidegger* would tend to mislead prospective readers. For it would suggest that twentieth-century philosophers such as Husserl, N. Hartmann, Jaspers and Heidegger are treated, so to speak, for their own sake, in the same way as Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, whereas in fact they are discussed briefly as illustrating different ideas of the nature and scope of philosophy.

In the present work there are one or two variations from the pattern generally followed in preceding volumes. The introductory chapter deals only with the idealist movement, and it has therefore been placed within Part I, not before it. And though in the final chapter there are some retrospective reflections, there is also, as already indicated, a preview of thought in the first half of the twentieth century. Hence I have called this chapter 'Retrospect and Prospect' rather than 'Concluding Review'. Apart from the reasons given in the text for referring to twentieth-century thought there is the reason that I do not propose to include within this *History* any full-scale treatment of the philosophy of the present century. At the same time I did not wish to end the volume abruptly without any reference at all to later developments. The result is, of course, that one lays oneself open to the comment that it would be better to say nothing about these developments than to make some sketchy and inadequate remarks. However, I decided to risk this criticism.

To economize on space I have confined the Bibliography at the end of the book to general works and to works by and on the major figures. As for minor philosophers, many of their writings are mentioned at the appropriate places in the text. In view of the number both of nineteenth-century philosophers and of their publications, and in view of the vast literature on some of the major figures, anything like a full bibliography is out of the question. In the case of the twentieth-century thinkers mentioned in the final chapter, some books are referred to in the text or in footnotes, but no explicit bibliography has been given. Apart from the problem of space I felt that it would be inappropriate to supply, for example, a bibliography on Heidegger when he is only briefly mentioned.

The present writer hopes to devote a further volume, the eighth in this *History*, to some aspects of French and British thought in the nineteenth century. But he does not propose to spread his net any farther. Instead he plans, circumstances permitting, to turn in a supplementary volume to what may be called the philosophy of the history of philosophy, that is, to reflection on the development of philosophical thought rather than to telling the story of this development.

A final remark. A friendly critic observed that this work would be more appropriately called *A History of Western Philosophy* or *A History of European Philosophy* than *A History of Philosophy* without addition. For there is no mention, for instance, of Indian philosophy. The critic was, of course, quite right. But I should like to remark that the omission of Oriental philosophy is neither an oversight nor due to any prejudice on the author's part. The composition of a history of Oriental philosophy is a work for a specialist and requires a knowledge of the relevant languages which the present writer does not possess. Bréhier included a volume on Oriental philosophy in his *Histoire de la philosophie*, but it was not written by Bréhier.

Finally I have pleasure in expressing my gratitude to the Oxford University Press for their kind permission to quote from Kierkegaard's *The Point of View* and *Fear and Trembling* according to the English translations published by them, and to the Princeton University Press for similar permission to quote from Kierkegaard's

Sickness unto Death, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* and *The Concept of Dread*. In the case of quotations from philosophers other than Kierkegaard I have translated the passages myself. But I have frequently given page-references to existing English translations for the benefit of readers who wish to consult a translation rather than the original. In the case of minor figures, however, I have generally omitted references to translations.

A HISTORY
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PART I

POST-KANTIAN IDEALIST SYSTEMS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Preliminary remarks—Kant's philosophy and idealist metaphysics—The meaning of idealism, its insistence on system and its confidence in the power and scope of philosophy—The idealists and theology—The romantic movement and German idealism—The difficulty in fulfilling the idealist programme—The anthropomorphic element in German idealism—Idealist philosophies of man.

1. IN the German philosophical world during the early part of the nineteenth century we find one of the most remarkable flowerings of metaphysical speculation which have occurred in the long history of western philosophy. We are presented with a succession of systems, of original interpretations of reality and of human life and history, which possess a grandeur that can hardly be called in question and which are still capable of exercising on some minds at least a peculiar power of fascination. For each of the leading philosophers of the period professes to solve the riddle of the world, to reveal the secret of the universe and the meaning of human existence.

True, before the death of Schelling in 1854 Auguste Comte in France had already published his *Course of Positive Philosophy* in which metaphysics was represented as a passing stage in the history of human thought. And Germany was to have its own positivist and materialist movements which, while not killing metaphysics, would force metaphysicians to reflect on and define more closely the relation between philosophy and the particular sciences. But in the early decades of the nineteenth century the shadow of positivism had not yet fallen across the scene and speculative philosophy enjoyed a period of uninhibited and luxuriant growth. With the great German idealists we find a superb confidence in the power of the human reason and in the scope of philosophy. Looking on reality as the self-manifestation of infinite reason, they thought that the life of self-expression of this reason could be retraced in philosophical reflection. They were not nervous men looking over their shoulders to see if critics were whispering that they were producing poetic effusions under the thin disguise of theoretical philosophy, or that their profundity and obscure language were a mask for lack of clarity of thought. On the contrary, they were convinced that the human spirit had at last come into its own and that the nature of reality was at last clearly revealed to human consciousness. And each set out his vision of the Universe with a splendid confidence in its objective truth.

It can, of course, hardly be denied that German idealism makes on most people today the impression of belonging to another world, to another climate of thought. And we can say that the death of Hegel in 1831 marked the end of an epoch. For it was followed by the collapse of absolute idealism[1] and the emergence of other lines of thought. Even metaphysics took a different turn. And the superb confidence in the power and range of speculative philosophy which was characteristic of Hegel in particular has never been regained. But though German idealism sped through the sky like a rocket and after a comparatively short space of time disintegrated and fell to earth, its flight was extremely impressive. Whatever its shortcomings, it represented one of the most sustained attempts which the history of thought has known to achieve a unified conceptual mastery of reality and experience as a whole. And even if the presuppositions of idealism are rejected, the idealist systems can still retain the power of stimulating the natural impulse of the reflective mind to strive after a unified conceptual synthesis.

Some are indeed convinced that the elaboration of an overall view of reality is not the proper task of scientific philosophy. And even those who do not share this conviction may well think that the achievement of a final systematic synthesis lies beyond the capacity of any one man and is more of an ideal goal than a practical possibility. But we should be prepared to recognize intellectual stature when we meet it. Hegel in particular towers up in impressive grandeur above the vast majority of those who have tried to belittle him. And we can always learn from an outstanding philosopher, even if it is only by reflecting on our reasons for disagreeing with him. The historical collapse of metaphysical idealism does not necessarily entail the conclusion that the great idealists have nothing of value to offer. German idealism has its fantastic aspects, but the writings of the leading idealists are very far from being all fantasy.

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[1] The fact that there were later idealist movements in Britain, America, Italy and elsewhere does not alter the fact that after Hegel metaphysical idealism in Germany suffered an eclipse.

2. The point which we have to consider here is not, however, the collapse of German idealism but its rise. And this indeed stands in need of some explanation. On the one hand the immediate philosophical background of the idealist movement was provided by the critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant, who had attacked the claims of metaphysicians to provide theoretical knowledge of reality. On the other hand the German idealists looked on themselves as the true spiritual successors of Kant and not as simply reacting against his ideas. What we have to explain, therefore, is how metaphysical idealism could develop out of the system of a thinker whose name is for ever associated with scepticism about metaphysics' claim to provide us with theoretical knowledge about reality as a whole or indeed about any reality other than the *a priori* structure of human knowledge and experience.[1]

The most convenient starting-point for an explanation of the development of metaphysical idealism out of the critical philosophy is the Kantian notion of the thing-in-itself.[2] In Fichte's view Kant had placed himself in an impossible position by steadfastly refusing to abandon this notion. On the one hand, if Kant had asserted the existence of the thing-in-itself as cause of the given or material element in sensation, he would have been guilty of an obvious inconsistency. For according to his own philosophy the concept of cause cannot be used to extend our knowledge beyond the phenomenal sphere. On the other hand, if Kant retained the idea of the thing-in-itself simply as a problematical and limiting notion, this was tantamount to retaining a ghostly relic of the very dogmatism which it was the mission of the critical philosophy to overcome. Kant's Copernican revolution was a great step forward, and for Fichte there could be no question of moving backwards to a pre-Kantian position. If one had any understanding of the development of philosophy and of the demands of modern thought, one could only go forward and complete Kant's work. And this meant eliminating the thing-in-itself. For, given Kant's premisses, there was no room for an unknowable occult entity supposed to be independent of mind. In other words, the critical philosophy had to be transformed into a consistent idealism; and this meant that things had to be regarded in their entirety as products of thought.

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[1] I say 'could develop' because reflection on Kant's philosophy can lead to different lines of thought, according to the aspects which one emphasizes. See Vol. VI, pp. 433–4.

[2] See Vol. VI, pp. 268–72, 384–6.

Now, it is immediately obvious that what we think of as the extramental world cannot be interpreted as the product of conscious creative activity by the human mind. As far as ordinary consciousness is concerned, I find myself in a world of objects which affect me in various ways and which I spontaneously think of as existing independently of my thought and will. Hence the idealist philosopher must go behind consciousness, as it were, and retrace the process of the unconscious activity which grounds it.

But we must go further than this and recognize that the production of the world cannot be attributed to the individual self at all, even to its unconscious activity. For if it were attributed to the individual finite self as such, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to avoid solipsism, a position which can hardly be seriously maintained. Idealism is thus compelled to go behind the finite subject to a supra-individual intelligence, an absolute subject.

The word 'subject', however, is not really appropriate, except as indicating that the ultimate productive principle lies, so to speak, on the side of thought and not on the side of the sensible thing. For the words 'subject' and 'object' are correlative. And the ultimate principle is, considered in itself, without object. It grounds the subject-object relationship and, in itself, transcends the relationship. It is subject and object in identity, the infinite activity from which both proceed.

Post-Kantian idealism was thus necessarily a metaphysics. Fichte, starting from the position of Kant and developing it into idealism, not unnaturally began by calling his first principle the ego, turning Kant's transcendental ego into a metaphysical or ontological principle. But he explained that he meant by this the absolute ego, not the individual finite ego. But with the other idealists (and with Fichte himself in his later philosophy) the word 'ego' is not used in this context. With Hegel the ultimate principle is infinite reason, infinite spirit. And we can say that for metaphysical idealism in general reality is the process of the self-expression or self-manifestation of infinite thought or reason.

This does not mean, of course, that the world is reduced to a process of thinking in the ordinary sense. Absolute thought or reason is regarded as an activity, as productive reason which posits or expresses itself in the world. And the world retains all the reality which we see it to possess. Metaphysical idealism does not involve the thesis that empirical reality consists of subjective ideas; but it involves the vision of the world and human history as the objective expression of creative reason. This vision was fundamental in the outlook of the German idealist: he could not avoid it. For he accepted the necessity of transforming the critical philosophy into idealism. And this transformation meant that the world in its entirety had to be regarded as the product of creative thought or reason. If, therefore, we look on the need for transforming the philosophy of Kant into idealism as a premiss, we can say that this premiss determined the basic vision of the post-Kantian idealists. But when it comes to explaining what is meant by saying that reality is a process of creative thought, there is room for different interpretations, for the several particular visions of the different idealist philosophers.

The direct influence of Kant's thought was naturally felt more strongly by Fichte than by Schelling or Hegel. For Schelling's philosophizing presupposed the earlier stages of Fichte's thought, and Hegel's absolute idealism presupposed the earlier phases of the philosophies of both Fichte and Schelling. But this does not alter the fact that the movement of German idealism as a whole presupposed the critical philosophy. And in his account of the history of modern philosophy Hegel depicted the Kantian system as representing an advance on preceding stages of thought and as demanding to be itself developed and surpassed in succeeding stages.

In this section reference has been made so far only to the process of eliminating the thing-in-itself and transferring Kant's philosophy into metaphysical idealism. But it was certainly not my intention to suggest that the post-Kantian idealists were influenced only by the idea that the thing-in-itself had to be eliminated. They were also influenced by other aspects of the critical philosophy. For example, Kant's doctrine of the primacy of the practical reason had a powerful appeal for Fichte's strongly-marked ethical outlook. And we find him interpreting the absolute ego as an infinite practical reason or moral will which posits Nature as a field and instrument for moral activity. In his philosophy the concepts of action, of duty and of moral vocation are extremely prominent. And we are perhaps entitled to say that Fichte turned Kant's second *Critique* into a metaphysics, employing his development of the first *Critique* as a means of doing so. With Schelling, however, the prominence given to the philosophy of art, to the role of genius and to the metaphysical significance of aesthetic intuition and artistic creation links him with the third *Critique* rather than with the first or second.

But instead of dwelling at length on the particular ways in which different parts or aspects of Kant's philosophy influenced this or that idealist, it will be more appropriate in our introductory chapter if we take a broader and more general view of the relation between the critical philosophy and metaphysical idealism.

The desire to form a coherent and unified interpretation of reality is natural to the reflective mind. But the actual task to be performed presents itself in different ways at different times. For example, the development of physical science in the post-mediaeval world meant that the philosopher who wished to construct an overall interpretation had to grapple with the problem of reconciling the scientific view of the world as a mechanical system with the demands of the moral and religious consciousness. Descartes was faced with this problem. And so was Kant.[1] But though Kant rejected the ways of dealing with this problem which were characteristic of his philosophical predecessors and offered his own original solution, it is arguable that in the long run he left us with 'a bifurcated reality'.[2] On the one hand we have the phenomenal world, the world of Newtonian science, governed by necessary causal laws.[3] On the other hand there is the supersensuous world of the free moral agent and of God. There is no valid reason for asserting that the phenomenal world is the only reality.[4] But at the same time there is no theoretical proof of the existence of a supersensuous reality. It is a matter of practical faith, resting on the moral consciousness. It is true that in the third *Critique* Kant endeavoured to bridge the gulf between the two worlds to the extent in which he considered this to be possible for the human mind.[5] But it is understandable if other philosophers were not satisfied with his performance. And the German idealists were able to proceed beyond Kant by means of their development and transformation of his philosophy. For if reality is the unified process by which absolute thought or reason manifests itself, it is intelligible. And it is intelligible by the human mind, provided that this mind can be regarded as the vehicle, as it were, of absolute thought reflecting on itself.

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[1] See Vol. IV, pp. 55–6 and Vol. VI, pp. 233–4; 428–9.

[2] Vol. IV, p. 60.

[3] Necessity and causality are for Kant *a priori* categories. But he does not deny, indeed he affirms, that the world of science is 'phenomenally real'.

[4] This is true at least if we refrain from pressing Kant's doctrine of the restricted field of application of the categories to an extent which would exclude any meaningful talk about supersensuous reality, even in the context of moral faith.

[5] See Vol. VI, ch. 15.

This condition possesses an obvious importance if there is to be any continuity between Kant's idea of the only possible scientific metaphysics of the future and the idealists' conception of metaphysics. For Kant the metaphysics of the future is a transcendental critique of human experience and knowledge. We can say in fact that it is the human mind's reflective awareness of its own spontaneous formative activity. In metaphysical idealism, however, the activity in question is productive in the fullest sense (the thing-in-itself having been eliminated); and this activity is attributed, not to the finite human mind as such, but to absolute thought or reason. Hence philosophy, which is reflection by the human mind, cannot be regarded as absolute thought's reflective awareness of itself unless the human mind is capable of rising to the absolute point of view and becoming the vehicle, as it were, of absolute thought or reason's reflective awareness of its own activity. If this condition is fulfilled, there is a certain continuity between Kant's idea of the only possible scientific type of metaphysics and the idealist conception of metaphysics. There is also, of course, an obvious inflation, so to speak. That is to say, the Kantian theory of knowledge is inflated into a metaphysics of reality. But the process of inflation retains a certain measure of continuity. While going far beyond anything that Kant himself envisaged, it is not a simple reversion to a pre-Kantian conception of metaphysics.

The transformation of the Kantian theory of knowledge into a metaphysics of reality carries with it, of course, certain important changes. For example, if with the elimination of the thing-in-itself the world becomes the self-manifestation of thought or reason, the Kantian distinction between the *a priori* and the *a posteriori* loses its absolute character. And the categories, instead of being subjective forms or conceptual moulds of the human understanding, become categories of reality; they regain an objective status. Again, the teleological judgment is no longer subjective, as with Kant. For in metaphysical idealism the idea of purposiveness in Nature cannot be simply a heuristic or regulative principle of the human mind, a principle which performs a useful function but the objectivity of which cannot be theoretically proved. If Nature is the expression and manifestation of thought or reason in its movement towards a goal, the process of Nature must be teleological in character.

It cannot indeed be denied that there is a very great difference between Kant's modest idea of the scope and power of metaphysics and the idealists' notion of what metaphysical philosophy is capable of achieving. Kant himself repudiated Fichte's demand for the transformation of the critical philosophy into pure idealism by the elimination of the thing-in-itself. And it is easy to understand the attitude of the neo-Kantians who, later in the century, announced that they had had enough of the airy metaphysical speculations of the idealists and that it was time to return to the spirit of Kant himself. At the same time the development of Kant's system into metaphysical idealism is not unintelligible, and the remarks in this section may have helped to explain how the idealists were able to look on themselves as Kant's legitimate spiritual successors.

3. It will be clear from what has been said about the development of metaphysical idealism that the post-Kantian idealists were not subjective idealists in the sense of holding that the human mind knows only its own ideas as distinct from extramentally existing things. Nor were they subjective idealists in the sense of holding that all objects of knowledge are the products of the finite human subject. True, Fichte's use of the word 'ego' in his earlier writings tended to give the impression that this was precisely what he did hold. But the impression was mistaken. For Fichte insisted that the productive subject was not the finite ego as such but the absolute ego, a transcendental and supra-individual principle. And as for Schelling and Hegel, any reduction of things to products of the individual finite mind was entirely foreign to their thought.

But though it is easily understood that post-Kantian idealism did not involve subjective idealism in either of the senses alluded to in the last paragraph, it is not so easy to give a general description of the movement which will apply to all the leading idealist systems. For they differ in important respects. Moreover, the thought of Schelling in particular moved through successive phases. At the same time there is, of course, a family likeness between the different systems. And this fact justifies one in venturing on some generalizations.

Inasmuch as reality is looked on as the self-expression or self-unfolding of absolute thought or reason, there is a marked tendency in German idealism to assimilate the causal relation to the logical relation of implication. For example, the empirical world is conceived by Fichte and by Schelling (in at any rate the earlier phases of the latter's thought) as standing to the ultimate productive principle in the relation of consequent to antecedent. And this means, of course, that the world follows necessarily from the first productive principle, the priority of which is logical and not temporal. Obviously, there is not and cannot be any question of external compulsion. But the Absolute spontaneously and inevitably manifests itself in the world. And there is really no place for the idea of creation in time, in the sense of there being an ideally assignable first moment of time.[1]

This notion of reality as the self-unfolding of absolute reason helps to explain the idealists' insistence on system. For if philosophy is the reflective reconstruction of the structure of a dynamic rational process, it should be systematic, in the sense that it should begin with the first principle and exhibit the essential rational structure of reality as flowing from it. True, the idea of a purely theoretical deduction does not in practice occupy such an important place in metaphysical idealism as the foreground dialectical process of Fichte and above all Hegel tends to suggest. For idealist philosophy is the conceptual reconstruction of a dynamic activity, a self-unfolding infinite life, rather than a strict analysis of the meaning and implications of one or more initial basic propositions. But the general world-view is embryonically contained in the initial idea of the world as the process of absolute reason's self-manifestation. And it is the business of philosophy to give systematic articulation to this idea, reliving the process, as it were, on the plane of reflective awareness. Hence, though it would be possible to start from the empirical manifestations of absolute reason and work backwards, metaphysical idealism naturally follows a deductive form of exposition, in the sense that it systematically retraces a teleological movement.

Now, if we assume that reality is a rational process and that its essential dynamic structure is penetrable by the philosopher, this assumption is naturally accompanied by a confidence in the power and scope of metaphysics which contrasts sharply with Kant's modest estimate of what it can achieve. And this contrast is obvious enough if one compares the critical philosophy with Hegel's system of absolute idealism. Indeed, it is probably true to say that Hegel's confidence in the power and reach of philosophy was unequalled by any previous philosopher of note. At the same time we have seen in the last section that there was a certain continuity between Kant's philosophy and metaphysical idealism. And we can even say, though it is a paradoxical statement, that the closer idealism kept to Kant's idea of the only possible form of scientific metaphysics, the greater was its confidence in the power and scope of philosophy. For if we assume that philosophy is thought's reflective awareness of its own spontaneous activity, and if we substitute a context of idealist metaphysics for the context of Kant's theory of human knowledge and experience, we then have the idea of the rational process, which is reality, becoming aware of itself in and through man's philosophical reflection. In this case the history of philosophy is the history of absolute reason's self-reflection. In other words, the Universe knows itself in and through the mind of man. And philosophy can be interpreted as the self-knowledge of the Absolute.

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[1] Hegel admits the idea of free creation on the level of the language of the religious consciousness. But this language is for him pictorial or figurative.

True, this conception of philosophy is characteristic more of Hegel than of the other leading idealists. Fichte ended by insisting on a divine Absolute which in itself transcends the reach of human thought, and in his later philosophy of religion Schelling emphasized the idea of a personal God who reveals himself to man. It is with Hegel that the idea of the philosopher's conceptual mastery of all reality and the interpretation of this mastery as the self-reflection of the Absolute become most prominent. But to say this is simply to say that it is in Hegelianism, the greatest achievement of metaphysical idealism, that the faith in the power and scope of speculative philosophy which inspired the idealist movement finds its purest and most grandiose expression.

4. Mention has just been made of Fichte's later doctrine of the Absolute and of Schelling's philosophy of religion. And it is appropriate to say something here of the relations between German idealism and theology. For it is important to understand that the idealist movement was not simply the result of a transformation of the critical philosophy into metaphysics. All three of the leading idealists started as students of theology, Fichte at Jena, Schelling and Hegel at Tübingen. And though it is true that they turned very quickly to philosophy, theological themes played a conspicuous role in the development of German idealism. Nietzsche's

statement that the philosophers in question were concealed theologians was misleading in some respects, but it was not altogether without foundation.

The importance of the role played by theological themes in German idealism can be illustrated by the following contrast. Though not a professional scientist Kant was always interested in science. His first writings were mainly concerned with scientific topics,[1] and one of his primary questions was about the conditions which render scientific knowledge possible. Hegel, however, came to philosophy from theology. His first writings were largely theological in character, and he was later to declare that the subject-matter of philosophy is God and nothing but God. Whether the term 'God', as here used, is to be understood in anything approaching a theistic sense is not a question which need detain us at present. The point to be made is that Hegel's point of departure was the theme of the relation between the infinite and the finite, between God and creatures. His mind could not remain satisfied with a sharp distinction between the infinite Being on the one hand and finite beings on the other, and he tried to bring them together, seeing the infinite in the finite and the finite in the infinite. In the theological phase of his development he was inclined to think that the elevation of the finite to the infinite could take place only in the life of love, and he then drew the conclusion that philosophy must in the long run yield to religion. As a philosopher, he tried to exhibit the relation between the infinite and the finite conceptually, in thought, and tended to depict philosophical reflection as a higher form of understanding than the way of thinking which is characteristic of the religious consciousness. But the general theme of the relation between the infinite and the finite which runs through his philosophical system was taken over, as it were, from his early theological reflections.

It is not, however, simply a question of Hegel. In Fichte's earlier philosophy the theme of the relation between the infinite and the finite is not indeed conspicuous, for he was primarily concerned with the completion, as he saw it, of Kant's deduction of consciousness. But in his later thought the idea of one infinite divine Life comes to the fore, and the religious aspects of his philosophy were developed. As for Schelling, he did not hesitate to say that the relation between the divine infinite and the finite is the chief problem of philosophy. And his later thought was profoundly religious in character, the ideas of man's alienation from and return to God playing a prominent role.

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[1] See Vol. VI, pp. 181–2, 185–7.

Being philosophers, the idealists tried, of course, to understand the relation between the infinite and the finite. And they tended to view it according to the analogy of logical implication. Further, if we make the necessary exception for Schelling's later religious philosophy, we can say that the idea of a personal God who is both infinite and fully transcendent seemed to the idealists to be both illogical and unduly anthropomorphic. Hence we find a tendency to transform the idea of God into the idea of the Absolute, in the sense of the all-comprehensive totality. At the same time the idealists had no intention of denying the reality of the finite. Hence the problem which faced them was that of including, as it were, the finite within the life of the infinite without depriving the former of its reality. And the difficulty of solving this problem is responsible for a good deal of the ambiguity in metaphysical idealism when it is a question of defining its relation to theism on the one hand and pantheism on the other. But in any case it is clear that a central theological theme, namely the relation between God and the world, looms large in the speculations of the German idealists.

It has been said above that Nietzsche's description of the German idealists as concealed theologians is misleading in some respects. For it suggests that the idealists were concerned with reintroducing orthodox Christianity by the backdoor, whereas in point of fact we find a marked tendency to substitute metaphysics for faith and to rationalize the revealed mysteries of Christianity, bringing them within the scope of the speculative reason. To use a modern term, we find a tendency to demythologize Christian dogmas, turning them in the process into a speculative philosophy. Hence we may be inclined to smile at J. H. Stirling's picture of Hegel as the great philosophical champion of Christianity. We may be more inclined to accept McTaggart's view, and also Kierkegaard's, that the Hegelian philosophy undermined Christianity from within as it were, by professing to lay bare the rational content of the Christian doctrines in their traditional form. And we may feel that the connection which Fichte sought to establish between his later philosophy of the Absolute and the first chapter of St. John's Gospel was somewhat tenuous.

At the same time there is no cogent reason for supposing, for instance, that Hegel had his tongue in his cheek when he referred to St. Anselm and to the process of faith seeking understanding.

His early essays showed marked hostility to positive Christianity; but he came to change his attitude and to take the Christian faith under his wing, so to speak. It would be absurd to claim that Hegel was in fact an orthodox Christian. But he was doubtless sincere when he represented the relation of Christianity to Hegelianism as being that of the absolute religion to the absolute philosophy, two different ways of apprehending and expressing the same truth-content. From an orthodox theological standpoint Hegel must be judged to have substituted reason for faith, philosophy for revelation, and to have defended Christianity by rationalizing it and turning it, to borrow a phrase from McTaggart, into exoteric Hegelianism. But this does not alter the fact that Hegel thought of himself as having demonstrated the truth of the Christian religion. Nietzsche's statement, therefore, was not altogether wide of the mark, especially if one takes into account the development in the religious aspects of Fichte's thought and the later phases of Schelling's philosophy. And in any case the German idealists certainly attributed significance and value to the religious consciousness and found a place for it in their systems. They may have turned from theology to philosophy, but they were very far from being irreligious men or rationalists in a modern sense.

5. But there is another aspect of metaphysical idealism which must also be mentioned, namely its relation to the romantic movement in Germany. The description of German idealism as the philosophy of romanticism is indeed open to serious objection. In the first place it suggests the idea of a one-way influence. That is to say, it suggests that the great idealist systems were simply the ideological expression of the romantic spirit, whereas in point of fact the philosophies of Fichte and Schelling exercised a considerable influence on some of the romantics. In the second place, the leading idealist philosophers stood in somewhat different relations to the romantics. We can say indeed that Schelling gave notable expression to the spirit of the romantic movement. But Fichte indulged in some sharp criticism of the romantics, even if the latter had derived inspiration from certain of his ideas. And Hegel had scant sympathy with some aspects of romanticism. In the third place it is arguable that the term 'philosophy of romanticism' would be better applied to the speculative ideas developed by romantics such as Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829) and Novalis (1772–1801) than to the great idealist systems. At the same time there was undoubtedly some spiritual affinity between

the idealist and romantic movements. The romantic spirit as such was indeed an attitude towards life and the universe rather than a systematic philosophy. One may perhaps borrow Rudolf Carnap's terms and speak of it as a *Lebensgefühl* or *Lebenseinstellung*.[1] And it is perfectly understandable that Hegel saw a considerable difference between systematic philosophical reflection and the utterances of the romantics. But when we look back on the German scene in the first part of the nineteenth century, we are naturally struck by affinities as well as by differences. After all, metaphysical idealism and romanticism were more or less contemporary German cultural phenomena, and an underlying spiritual affinity is only what one might expect to find.

The romantic spirit is notoriously difficult to define. Nor indeed should one expect to be able to define it. But one can, of course, mention some of its characteristic traits. For example, as against the Enlightenment's concentration on the critical, analytic and scientific understanding the romantics exalted the power of the creative imagination and the rôle of feeling and intuition.[2] The artistic genius took the place of *le philosophe*. But the emphasis which was laid on the creative imagination and on artistic genius formed part of a general emphasis on the free and full development of the human personality, on man's creative powers and on enjoyment of the wealth of possible human experience. In other words, stress was laid on the originality of each human person rather than on what is common to all men. And this insistence on the creative personality was sometimes associated with a tendency to ethical subjectivism. That is to say, there was a tendency to depreciate fixed universal moral laws or rules in favour of the free development of the self in accordance with values rooted in and corresponding to the individual personality. I do not mean to imply by this that the romantics had no concern for morality and moral values. But there was a tendency, with F. Schlegel for example, to emphasize the free pursuit by the individual of his own moral ideal (the fulfilment of his own 'Idea') rather than obedience to universal laws dictated by the impersonal practical reason.

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[1] According to Rudolf Carnap, metaphysical systems express a feeling for or attitude towards life. But such terms are much more applicable to the romantic spirit than, say, to Hegel's dialectical system.

[2] Two comments are appropriate here. First, I do not mean to imply that the romantic movement proper followed immediately upon the Enlightenment. But I pass over the intervening phases. Secondly, the generalization in the text should not be interpreted as meaning that the men of the Enlightenment had no understanding at all of the importance of feeling in human life. See, for example, Vol. VI, pp. 24–7.

In developing their ideas of the creative personality some of the romantics derived inspiration and stimulus from Fichte's early thought. This is true of both F. Schlegel and Novalis. But it does not follow, of course, that the use which they made of Fichte's ideas always corresponded with the philosopher's intentions. An example will make this clear. As we have seen, in his transformation of the Kantian philosophy into pure idealism Fichte took as his ultimate creative principle the transcendental ego, considered as unlimited activity. And in his systematic deduction or reconstruction of consciousness he made copious use of the idea of the productive imagination. Novalis seized on these ideas and represented Fichte as opening up to view the wonders of the creative self. But he made an important change. Fichte was concerned with explaining on idealist principles the situation in which the finite subject finds itself in a world of objects which are given to it and which affect it in various ways, as in sensation. He therefore represented the activity of the so-called productive imagination, when it posits the object as affecting the finite self, as taking place below the level of consciousness. By transcendental reflection the philosopher can be aware *that* this activity takes place, but neither he nor anyone else is aware of it *as* taking place. For the positing of the object is logically prior to all awareness or consciousness. And this activity of the productive imagination is certainly not modifiable at the will of the finite self. Novalis, however, depicted the activity of the productive imagination as modifiable by the will. Just as the artist creates works of art, so is man a creative power not only in the moral sphere but also, in principle at least, in the natural sphere. Fichte's transcendental idealism was thus turned into Novalis's 'magical idealism'. In other words, Novalis seized on some of Fichte's philosophical theories and used them in the service of a poetic and romantic extravaganza, to exalt the creative self.

Further, the romantics' emphasis on the creative genius links them with Schelling much more than with Fichte. As will be seen in due course, it was the former and not the latter who laid stress on the metaphysical significance of art and on the role of artistic genius. When Friedrich Schlegel asserted that there is no greater world than the world of art and that the artist exhibits the Idea in finite form, and when Novalis asserted that the poet is the true 'magician', the embodiment of the creative power of the human self, they were speaking in ways which were more in tune with the thought of Schelling than with the strongly ethical outlook of Fichte.

Emphasis on the creative self was, however, only one aspect of romanticism. Another important aspect was the romantics' conception of Nature. Instead of conceiving Nature simply as a mechanical system, so that they would be forced to make a sharp contrast (as in Cartesianism) between man and Nature, the romantics tended to look on Nature as a living organic whole which is in some way akin to spirit and which is clothed in beauty and mystery. And some of them showed a marked sympathy with Spinoza, that is, a romanticized Spinoza.

This view of Nature as an organic totality akin to spirit again links the romantics with Schelling. The philosopher's idea of Nature below man as slumbering spirit and the human spirit as the organ of Nature's consciousness of herself was thoroughly romantic in tone. It is significant that the poet Hölderlin (1770–1843) was a friend of Schelling when they were fellow-students at Tübingen. And the poet's view of Nature as a living comprehensive whole seems to have exercised some influence on the philosopher. In turn Schelling's philosophy of Nature exercised a powerful stimulative influence on some of the romantics. As for the romantics' sympathy with Spinoza, this was shared by the theologian and philosopher Schleiermacher. But it was certainly not shared by Fichte who had a profound dislike for anything approaching a divinization of Nature, which he looked on simply as a field and instrument for free moral activity. In this respect he was anti-romantic in his outlook.

The romantics' attachment to the idea of Nature as an organic living totality does not mean, however, that they emphasized Nature to the detriment, so to speak, of man. We have seen that they also stressed the free creative personality. In the human spirit Nature reaches, as it were, its culmination. Hence the romantic idea of Nature could be and was allied with a marked appreciation of the continuity of historical and cultural development and of the significance of past cultural periods for the unfolding of the potentialities of the human spirit. Hölderlin, for example, had a romantic enthusiasm for the genius of ancient Greece,[1] an enthusiasm which was shared by Hegel in his student days. But special attention can be drawn here to the reawakened interest in the Middle Ages. The man of the Enlightenment had tended to see in the mediaeval period a dark night which preceded the dawn of the Renaissance and the subsequent emergence of *les philosophes.* But for Novalis the Middle Ages represented, even if imperfectly, an ideal of the organic unity of faith and culture, an ideal which should be recovered. Further, the romantics showed a strong attachment to the idea of the spirit of a people (*Volksgeist*) and an interest in the cultural manifestation of this spirit, such as language. In this respect they continued the thought of Herder[1] and other predecessors.

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[1] It is a mistake to suppose that Hölderlin's attachment to Greece necessarily makes of him a classicist as opposed to a romantic.

The idealist philosophers not unnaturally shared this appreciation of historical continuity and development. For history was for them the working-out in time of a spiritual Idea, a *telos* or end. Each of the great idealists had his philosophy of history, that of Hegel being particularly notable. As Fichte looked on Nature primarily as an instrument for moral activity, he naturally laid more emphasis on the sphere of the human spirit and on history as a movement towards the realization of an ideal moral world-order. In Schelling's philosophy of religion history appears as the story of the return to God of fallen humanity, of man alienated from the true centre of his being. With Hegel the idea of the dialectic of national spirits plays a prominent role, though this is accompanied by an insistence on the part played by so-called world-historical individuals. And the movement of history as a whole is depicted as a movement towards the realization of spiritual freedom. In general, we can say, the great idealists regarded their epoch as a time in which the human spirit had become conscious of the significance of its activity in history and of the meaning or direction of the whole historical process.

Above all perhaps romanticism was characterized by a feeling for and longing for the infinite. And the ideas of Nature and of human history were brought together in the conception of them as manifestations of one infinite Life, as aspects of a kind of divine poem. Thus the notion of infinite Life served as a unifying factor in the romantic world-outlook. At first sight perhaps the romantics' attachment to the idea of the *Volksgeist* may appear to be at variance with their emphasis on the free development of the individual personality. But there was really no radical incompatibility. For the infinite totality was conceived, generally speaking, as infinite Life which manifested itself in and through finite beings but not as annihilating them or as reducing them to mere mechanical instruments. And the spirits of peoples were conceived as manifestations of the same infinite Life, as relative totalities which required for their full development the free expression of the individual personalities which were the bearers, so to speak, of these spirits. And the same can be said of the State, considered as the political embodiment of the spirit of a people.

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[1] See Vol. VI, pp. 138–46, 172–9.

The typical romantic was inclined to conceive the infinite totality aesthetically, as an organic whole with which man felt himself to be one, the means of apprehending this unity being intuition and feeling rather than conceptual thought. For conceptual thought tends to fix and perpetuate defined limits and boundaries, whereas romanticism tends to dissolve limits and boundaries in the infinite flow of Life. In other words, romantic feeling for the infinite was not infrequently a feeling for the indefinite. And this trait can be seen as well in the tendency to obscure the boundary between the infinite and the finite as in the tendency to confuse philosophy with poetry or, within the artistic sphere itself, to intermingle the arts.

Partly, of course, it was a question of seeing affinities and of synthesizing different types of human experience. Thus F. Schlegel regarded philosophy as akin to religion on the ground that both are concerned with the infinite and that every relation of man to the infinite can be said to belong to religion. Indeed art too is religious in character, for the creative artist sees the infinite in the finite, in the form of beauty. At the same time the romantics' repugnance to definite limits and clear-cut form was one of the reasons which led Goethe to make his famous statement that the classical is the healthy and the romantic the diseased. For the matter of that, some of the romantics themselves came to feel the need for giving definite shape to their intuitive and rather hazy visions of life and reality and for combining the nostalgia for the infinite and for the free expression of the individual personality with a recognition of definite limits. And certain representatives of the movement, such as F. Schlegel, found in Catholicism a fulfilment of this need.

The feeling for the infinite obviously constitutes common ground for romanticism and idealism. The idea of the infinite Absolute, conceived as infinite Life, comes to the fore in Fichte's later philosophy, and the Absolute is a central theme in the philosophies of Schelling, Schleiermacher and Hegel. Further, we can say that the German idealists tend to conceive the infinite not as something set over against the finite but as infinite life or activity which expresses itself in and through the finite. With Hegel especially there is a deliberate attempt to mediate between the finite and the infinite, to bring them together without either identifying the infinite with the finite or dismissing the latter as unreal or illusory. The totality lives in and through its particular manifestations, whether it is a question of the infinite totality, the Absolute, or of a relative totality such as the State.

The spiritual affinity between the romantic and idealist movements is thus unquestionable. And it can be illustrated by many examples. For instance, when Hegel depicts art, religion and philosophy as concerned with the Absolute, though in different ways, we can see an affinity between his view and the ideas of F. Schlegel to which reference was made in the last paragraph. At the same time it is necessary to emphasize an important contrast between the great idealist philosophers and the romantics, a contrast which can be illustrated in the following manner.

Friedrich Schlegel assimilated philosophy to poetry and dreamed of their becoming one. In his view philosophizing was primarily a matter of intuitive insights, not of deductive reasoning or of proof. For every proof is a proof of something, and the intuitive grasp of the truth to be proved precedes all argument, which is a purely secondary affair.[1] As Schlegel put it, Leibniz asserted and Wolff proved. Evidently, this remark was not intended as a compliment to Wolff. Further, philosophy is concerned with the Universe, the totality. And we cannot prove the totality: it is apprehended only in intuition. Nor can we describe it in the same way in which we can describe a particular thing and its relations to other particular things. The totality can in a sense be displayed or shown, as in poetry, but to say precisely what it is transcends our power. The philosopher, therefore, is concerned with attempting to say what cannot be said. And for this reason philosophy and the philosopher himself are for the true philosopher a matter for ironic wit.

When, however, we turn from Friedrich Schlegel, the romantic, to Hegel, the absolute idealist, we find a resolute insistence on systematic conceptual thought and a determined rejection of appeals to mystical intention and feeling. Hegel is indeed concerned with the totality, the Absolute, but he is concerned with

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[1] Schlegel's view can be compared with the view advanced by some modern writers on metaphysics, that what really matters in a metaphysical system is the 'vision' and that arguments are persuasive devices to commend or put across a vision.

thinking it, with expressing the life of the infinite and its relation to the finite in conceptual thought. It is true that he interprets art, including poetry, as having the same subject-matter as philosophy, namely absolute Spirit. But he also insists on a difference of form which it is essential to preserve. Poetry and philosophy are distinct, and they should not be confused.

It may be objected that the contrast between the romantics' idea of philosophy and that of the great idealists is not nearly so great as a comparison between the views of F. Schlegel and Hegel tends to suggest. Fichte postulated a basic intellectual intuition of the pure or absolute ego an idea which was exploited by some of the romantics. Schelling insisted, at least in one stage of his philosophizing, that the Absolute can be apprehended in itself only in mystical intuition. And he also emphasized an aesthetic intuition through which the nature of the Absolute is apprehended not in itself but in symbolic form. For the matter of that, romantic traits can be discerned even within the Hegelian dialectical logic, which is a logic of movement, designed to exhibit the inner life of the Spirit and to overcome the conceptual antitheses which ordinary logic tends to render fixed and permanent. Indeed, the way in which Hegel depicts the human spirit as passing successively through a variety of attitudes and as restlessly moving from position to position can reasonably be regarded as an expression of the romantic outlook. Hegel's logical apparatus itself is alien to the romantic spirit, but this apparatus belongs to the foreground of his system. Underneath we can see a profound spiritual affinity with the romantic movement.

It is not, however, a question of denying the existence of a spiritual affinity between metaphysical idealism and romanticism. We have already argued that there is such an affinity. It is a question of pointing out that, in general, the idealist philosophers were concerned with systematic thought whereas the romantics were inclined to emphasize the role of intuition and feeling and to assimilate philosophy to poetry. Schelling and Schleiermacher stood indeed closer to the romantic spirit than did Fichte or Hegel. It is true that Fichte postulated a basic intellectual intuition of the pure or absolute ego; but he did not think of this as some sort of privileged mystical insight. For him it was an intuitive grasp of an activity which manifests itself to the reflective consciousness. What is required is not some mystical or poetic capacity but transcendental reflection, which is open in principle to all. And in his attack on the romantics Fichte insisted that his philosophy, though demanding this basic intellectual intuition of the ego as activity, was a matter of logical thought which yielded science, in the sense of certain knowledge. Philosophy is the knowledge of knowledge, the basic science; it is not an attempt to say what cannot be said. As for Hegel, it is doubtless true that we, looking back, can discern romantic traits even within his dialectic. But this does not alter the fact that he insisted that philosophy is not a matter of apocalyptic utterances or poetic rhapsodies or mystical intuitions but of systematic logical thought which thinks its subject-matter conceptually and makes it plain to view. The philosopher's business is to understand reality and to make others understand it, not to edify or to suggest meaning by the use of poetic images.

6. As we have seen, the initial transformation of Kant's philosophy into pure idealism meant that reality had to be looked on as a process of productive thought or reason. In other words, being had to be identified with thought. And the natural programme of idealism was to exhibit the truth of this identification by means of a deductive reconstruction of the essential dynamic structure of the life of absolute thought or reason. Further, if the Kantian conception of philosophy as thought's reflective awareness of its own spontaneous activity was to be retained, philosophical reflection had to be represented as the self-awareness or self-consciousness of absolute reason in and through the human mind. Hence it pertained also to the natural programme of idealism to exhibit the truth of this interpretation of philosophical reflection.

When, however, we turn to the actual history of the idealist movement, we see the difficulty encountered by the idealists in completely fulfilling this programme. Or, to put the matter in another way, we see marked divergences from the pattern suggested by the initial transformation of the critical philosophy into transcendental idealism. For example, Fichte starts with the determination not to go beyond consciousness, in the sense of postulating as his first principle a being which transcends consciousness. He thus takes as his first principle the pure ego as manifested in consciousness, not as a thing but as an activity. But the demands of his transcendental idealism force him to push back, as it were, the ultimate reality behind consciousness. And in the later form of his philosophy we find him postulating absolute infinite Being which transcends thought.

With Schelling the process is in a sense reversed. That is to say, while at one stage of his philosophical pilgrimage he asserts the existence of an Absolute which transcends human thought and conceptualization, in his subsequent religious philosophy he attempts to reconstruct reflectively the essence and inner life of the personal Deity. At the same time, however, he abandons the idea of deducing in a *a priori* manner the existence and structure of empirical reality and emphasizes the idea of God's free self-revelation. He does not entirely abandon the idealist tendency to look on the finite as though it were a logical consequence of the infinite; but once he has introduced the idea of a free personal God his thought necessarily departs to a large extent from the original pattern of metaphysical idealism.

Needless to say, the fact that both Fichte and Schelling, especially the latter, developed and changed their initial positions does not by itself constitute any proof that the developments and changes were unjustified. My point is rather that these illustrate the difficulty in carrying through to completion what I have called the idealist programme. One can say that neither with Fichte nor with Schelling is being in the long run reduced to thought.

It is with Hegel that we find by far the most sustained attempt to fulfil the idealist programme. He has no doubt that the rational is the real and the real the rational. And in his view it is quite wrong to speak of the human mind as merely finite and on this ground to question its power to understand the self-unfolding life of the infinite Absolute. The mind has indeed its finite aspects, but it is also infinite, in the sense that it is capable of rising to the level of absolute thought, at which level the Absolute's knowledge of itself and man's knowledge of the Absolute are one. And Hegel makes what is undoubtedly a most impressive attempt to show in a systematic and detailed way how reality is the life of absolute reason in its movement towards the goal of self-knowledge, thus becoming in actual existence what it always is in essence, namely self-thinking thought.

Clearly, the more Hegel identifies the Absolute's knowledge of itself with man's knowledge of the Absolute, the more completely does he fulfil the demand of the idealist programme that philosophy should be represented as the self-reflection of absolute thought or reason. If the Absolute were a personal God, eternally enjoying perfect self-awareness quite independently of the human spirit, man's knowledge of God would be an outside view, so to speak. If, however, the Absolute is all reality, the Universe, interpreted as the self-unfolding of absolute thought which attains self-reflection in and through the human spirit, man's knowledge of the Absolute is the Absolute's knowledge of itself. And philosophy is productive thought thinking itself.

But what is then meant by productive thought? It is arguable at any rate that it can hardly mean anything else but the Universe considered teleologically, that is, as a process moving towards self-knowledge, this self-knowledge being in effect nothing but man's developing knowledge of Nature, of himself and of his history. And in this case there is nothing behind the Universe, as it were, no thought or reason which expresses itself in Nature and human history in the way that an efficient cause expresses itself in its effect. Thought is teleologically prior, in the sense that man's knowledge of the world-process is represented as the goal of the process and as giving it its significance. But that which is actually or historically prior is Being in the form of objective Nature. And in this case the whole pattern of idealism, as suggested by the initial transformation of Kant's philosophy, is changed. For this transformation inevitably suggests the picture of an activity of infinite thought which produces or creates the objective world, whereas the picture described above is simply the picture of the actual world of experience interpreted as a teleological process. The *telos* or goal of the process is indeed depicted as the world's self-reflection in and through the human mind. But this goal or end is an ideal which is never complete at any given moment of time. Hence the identification of being and thought is never actually achieved.

7. Another aspect of the divergences from the natural pattern of post-Kantian idealism can be expressed in this way. F. H. Bradley, the English absolute idealist, maintained that the concept of God inevitably passes into the concept of the Absolute. That is to say, if the mind tries to think the infinite in a consistent manner, it must in the end acknowledge that the infinite cannot be anything else but the universe of being, reality as a whole, the totality. And with this transformation of God into the Absolute religion disappears. 'Short of the Absolute God cannot rest, and, having reached that goal, he is lost and religion with him.'[1] A similar view was expressed by R. G. Collingwood. 'God and the absolute are not identical but irretrievably distinct. And yet they are identical

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[1] *Appearance and Reality* (2nd edition), p. 447.

in this sense: God is the imaginative or intuitive form in which the absolute reveals itself to the religious consciousness.'[2] If we preserve speculative metaphysics, we must admit in the long run that theism is a half-way house between the frank anthropomorphism of polytheism on the one hand and the idea of the all-inclusive Absolute on the other.

It is indeed obvious that in the absence of any clear idea of the analogy of being the notion of a finite being which is ontologically distinct from the infinite cannot stand. But let us pass over this point, important as it is, and note instead that post-Kantian idealism in what one might call its natural form is thoroughly anthropomorphic. For the pattern of human consciousness is transferred to reality as a whole. Let us suppose that the human ego comes to self-consciousness only indirectly. That is to say, attention is first directed to the not-self. The not-self has to be posited by the ego or subject, not in the sense that the not-self must be ontologically created by the self but in the sense that it must be recognized as an object if consciousness is to arise at all. The ego can then turn back upon itself and become reflectively aware of itself in its activity. In post-Kantian idealism this process of human consciousness is used as a key-idea for the interpretation of reality as a whole. The absolute ego or absolute reason or whatever it may be called is regarded as positing (in an ontological sense) the objective world of Nature as a necessary condition for returning to itself in and through the human spirit.

This general scheme follows naturally enough from the transformation of the Kantian philosophy into metaphysical idealism. But inasmuch as Kant was concerned with human knowledge and consciousness, the inflation of his theory of knowledge into cosmic metaphysics inevitably involves interpreting the process of reality as a whole according to the pattern of human consciousness. And in this sense post-Kantian idealism contains a marked element of anthropomorphism, a fact which it is just as well to notice in view of the not uncommon notion that absolute idealism is much less anthropomorphic than theism. Of course, we cannot conceive God other than analogically; and we cannot conceive the divine consciousness except according to an analogy with human consciousness. But we can endeavour to eliminate in thought the aspects of consciousness which are bound up with finitude. And it is arguable, to put it mildly, that to attribute to the infinite a process of becoming self-conscious is an evident expression of anthropomorphic thinking.

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[2] *Speculum Mentis*, p. 151.

Now, if there is a spiritual reality which is at any rate logically prior to Nature and which becomes self-conscious in and through man, how are we to conceive it? If we conceive it as an unlimited activity which is not itself conscious but grounds consciousness, we have more or less Fichte's theory of the so-called absolute ego. But the concept of an ultimate reality which is at the same time spiritual and unconscious is not easily understood. Nor, of course, does it bear much resemblance to the Christian concept of God. If, however, we maintain with Schelling in his later religious philosophy that the spiritual reality which lies behind Nature is a personal Being, the pattern of the idealist scheme is inevitably changed. For it cannot then be maintained that the ultimate spiritual reality becomes self-conscious in and through the cosmic process. And inasmuch as Schelling outlived Hegel by more than twenty years we can say that the idealist movement which immediately followed the critical philosophy of Kant ended, chronologically speaking, in a reapproximation to philosophical theism. As we have seen, Bradley maintained that the concept of God is required by the religious consciousness but that, from the philosophical point of view, it must be transformed into the concept of the Absolute. Schelling would have accepted the first contention but rejected the second, at least as understood by Bradley. For in his later years Schelling's philosophy was pretty well a philosophy of the religious consciousness. And he believed that the religious consciousness demanded the transformation of his own former idea of the Absolute into the idea of a personal God. In his theosophical speculations he undoubtedly introduced obvious anthropomorphic elements, as will be seen later. But at the same time the movement of his mind towards theism represented a departure from the peculiar brand of anthropomorphism which was characteristic of post-Kantian idealism.

There is, however, a third possibility. We can eliminate the idea of a spiritual reality, whether unconscious or conscious, which produces Nature, and we can at the same time retain the idea of the Absolute becoming self-conscious. The Absolute then means the world, in the sense of the universe. And we have the picture of man's knowledge of the world and of his own history as the self-knowledge of the Absolute. In this picture, which represents the general line of one of the main interpretations of Hegel's absolute idealism,[1] nothing is added, as it were, to the empirical world except a teleological account of the world-process. That is to say, no existent transcendent Being is postulated; but the universe is interpreted as a process moving towards an ideal goal, namely complete self-reflection in and through the human spirit.

This interpretation can hardly be taken as merely equivalent to the empirical statements that in the course of the world's history man has as a matter of fact appeared and that as a matter of fact he is capable of knowing and of increasing his knowledge of himself, his history and his environment. For presumably none of us, whether materialists or idealists, whether theists, pantheists or atheists, would hesitate to accept these statements. At the very least the interpretation is meant to suggest a teleological pattern, a movement towards human knowledge of the universe, considered as the universe's knowledge of itself. But unless we are prepared to admit that this is only one possible way of regarding the world-process and thus to lay ourselves open to the objection that our choice of this particular pattern is determined by an intellectualist prejudice in favour of knowledge for the sake of knowledge (that is, by a particular valuational judgment), we must claim, it appears, that the world moves by some inner necessity towards the goal of self-knowledge in and through man. But what ground have we for making this claim unless we believe either that Nature itself is unconscious mind (or, as Schelling put it, slumbering Spirit) which strives towards consciousness or that behind Nature there is unconscious mind or reason which spontaneously posits Nature as a necessary precondition for attaining consciousness in and through the human spirit? And if we accept either of these positions, we transfer to the universe as a whole the pattern of the development of human consciousness. This procedure may indeed be demanded by the transformation of the critical philosophy into metaphysical idealism; but it is certainly not less anthropomorphic in character than philosophical theism.

8. In this chapter we have been mainly concerned with German idealism as a theory, or rather set of theories, about reality as a whole, the self-manifesting Absolute. But a philosophy of man is also a prominent feature of the idealist movement. And this is indeed only what one would expect if one considers the metaphysical premisses of the several philosophers. According to

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[1] The adequacy of this interpretation of Hegel is highly disputable. But this is a question which need not detain us here.

Fichte, the absolute ego is an unlimited activity which can be represented as striving towards consciousness of its own freedom. But consciousness exists only in the form of individual consciousness. Hence the absolute ego necessarily expresses itself in a community of finite subjects or selves, each of which strives towards the attainment of true freedom. And the theme of moral activity inevitably comes to the fore. Fichte's philosophy is essentially a dynamic ethical idealism. Again, for Hegel the Absolute is definable as Spirit or as self-thinking Thought. Hence it is more adequately revealed in the human spirit and its life than in Nature. And more emphasis must be placed on the reflective understanding of man's spiritual life (the life of man as a rational being) than on the philosophy of Nature. As for Schelling, when he comes to assert the existence of a personal and free God, he occupies himself concurrently with the problem of freedom in man and with man's fall from and return to God.

In the idealist philosophies of man and society insistence on freedom is a conspicuous feature. But it does not follow, of course, that the word 'freedom' is used throughout in the same sense. With Fichte the emphasis is on individual freedom as manifested in action. And we can doubtless see in this emphasis a reflection of the philosopher's own dynamic and energetic temperament. For Fichte man is from one point of view a system of natural drives, instincts and impulses; and if he is looked at simply from this point of view, it is idle to talk about freedom. But as spirit man is not tied, so to speak, to the automatic satisfaction of one desire after another: he can direct his activity to an ideal goal and act in accordance with the idea of duty. As with Kant, freedom tends to mean rising above the life of sensual impulse and acting as a rational, moral being. And Fichte is inclined to speak as though activity were its own end, emphasizing free action for the sake of free action.

But though Fichte's primary emphasis is on the individual's activity and on his rising above the slavery of natural drive and impulse to a life of action in accordance with duty, he sees, of course, that some content has to be given to the idea of free moral action. And he does this by stressing the concept of moral vocation. A man's vocation, the series of actions which he ought to perform in the world, is largely determined by his social situation, by his position, for example, as the father of a family. And in the end we have the vision of a multiplicity of moral vocations converging towards a common ideal end, the establishment of a moral world-order.

As a young man Fichte was an enthusiastic supporter of the French Revolution which he regarded as liberating men from forms of social and political life which hindered their free moral development. But then the question arose, what form of social, economic and political organization is best fitted to favour man's moral development? And Fichte found himself compelled to lay increasing emphasis on the positive role of political society as a morally educative power. But though in his later years reflection on contemporary political events, namely the Napoleonic domination and the war of liberation, was partly responsible for the growth in his mind of a nationalistic outlook and for a strong emphasis on the cultural mission of a unified German State in which alone the Germans could find true freedom, his more characteristic idea was that the State is a necessary instrument to preserve the system of rights as long as man has not attained his full moral development. If man as a moral being were fully developed, the State would wither away.

When we turn to Hegel, however, we find a different attitude. Hegel too was influenced in his youth by the ferment of the French Revolution and the drive to freedom. And the term 'freedom' plays a conspicuous role in his philosophy. As will be seen in due course, he represents human history as a movement towards the fuller realization of freedom. But he distinguishes sharply between negative freedom, as mere absence of restraint, and positive freedom. As Kant saw, moral freedom involves obeying only that law which one gives oneself as a rational being. But the rational is the universal. And positive freedom involves identifying oneself with ends that transcend one's desires as a particular individual. It is attained, above all, by identifying one's particular will with Rousseau's General Will which finds expression in the State. Morality is essentially social morality. The formal moral law receives its content and field of application in social life, especially in the State.

Both Fichte and Hegel, therefore, attempt to overcome the formalism of the Kantian ethic by placing morality in a social setting. But there is a difference of emphasis. Fichte places the emphasis on individual freedom and action in accordance with duty mediated by the personal conscience. We have to add as a corrective that the individual's moral vocation is seen as a member of a system of moral vocations, and so in a social setting. But in Fichte's ethics the emphasis is placed on the individual's struggle to overcome himself, to bring his lower self, as it were, into tune with the free will which aims at complete freedom. Hegel, however, places the emphasis on man as a member of political society and on the social aspects of ethics. Positive freedom is something to be attained through membership in a greater organic whole. As a corrective or counterweight to this emphasis we must add that for Hegel no State can be fully rational unless it recognizes the value of and finds room for subjective or individual freedom. When at Berlin Hegel lectured on political theory and described the State in highfaluting terms, he was concerned with making his hearers socially and politically conscious and with overcoming what he regarded as an unfortunate one-sided emphasis on the inwardness of morality rather than with turning them into totalitarians. Further, political institutions constitute, according to Hegel, the necessary basis for man's higher spiritual activities, art, religion and philosophy, in which the freedom of the spirit reaches its supreme expression.

What one misses, however, in both Fichte and Hegel is perhaps a clear theory of absolute moral values. If we talk with Fichte about action for action's sake, freedom for the sake of freedom, we may show an awareness of the unique character of each human being's moral vocation. But at the same time we run the risk of emphasizing the creative personality and the uniqueness of its moral vocation at the expense of the universality of the moral law. If, however, we socialize morality with Hegel, we give it concrete content and avoid the formalism of the Kantian ethic, but at the same time we run the risk of implying that moral values and standards are simply relative to different societies and cultural periods. Obviously, some would maintain that this is in fact the case. But if we do not agree, we require a clearer and more adequate theory of absolute values than Hegel actually provides.

Schelling's outlook was rather different from that either of Fichte or of Hegel. At one period of his philosophical development he utilized a good many of the former's ideas and represented the moral activity of man as tending to create a second Nature, a moral world-order, a moral world within the physical world. But the difference between his attitude and Fichte's showed itself in the fact that he proceeded to add a philosophy of art and of aesthetic intuition to which he attributed a great metaphysical significance.

With Fichte the emphasis was placed on the moral struggle and on free moral action, with Schelling it was placed on aesthetic intuition as a key to the ultimate nature of reality, and he exalted the artistic genius rather than the moral hero. When, however, theological problems came to absorb his interest, his philosophy of man naturally took on a marked religious colouring. Freedom, he thought, is the power to choose between good and bad. And personality is something to be won by the birth of light out of darkness, that is, by a sublimation of man's lower nature and its subordination to the rational will. But these themes are treated in a metaphysical setting. For example, the views on freedom and personality to which allusion has just been made lead Schelling into theosophical speculation about the nature of God. In turn, his theories about the divine nature react on his view of man.

To return to Hegel, the greatest of the German idealists. His analysis of human society and his philosophy of history are certainly very impressive. Many of those who listened to his lectures on history must have felt that the significance of the past and the meaning of the movement of history were being revealed to them. Moreover, Hegel was not exclusively concerned with understanding the past. As has already been remarked, he wished to make his students socially, politically and ethically conscious. And he doubtless thought that his analysis of the rational State could furnish standards and aims in political life, especially in German political life. But the emphasis is placed on understanding. Hegel is the author of the famous saying that the owl of Minerva spreads her wings only with the falling of the dusk, and that when philosophy spreads her grey on grey, then has a shape of life grown cold. He had a vivid realization of the fact that political philosophy is apt to canonize, as it were, the social and political forms of a society or culture which is about to pass away. When a culture or society has become mature and ripe, or even over-ripe, it becomes conscious of itself in and through philosophical reflection, just at the moment when the movement of life is demanding and bringing forth new societies or new social and political forms.

With Karl Marx we find a different attitude. The business of the philosopher is to understand the movement of history in order to change existing institutions and forms of social organization in accordance with the demands of the teleological movement of history. Marx does not, of course, deny the necessity and value of understanding, but he emphasizes the revolutionary function of understanding. In a sense Hegel looks backward, Marx forward. Whether Marx's idea of the philosopher's function is tenable or not is a question which we need not discuss here. It is sufficient to note the difference between the attitudes of the great idealist and the social revolutionary. If we wish to find among the idealist philosophers something comparable to Marx's missionary zeal, we have to turn to Fichte rather than to Hegel. As will be seen in the relevant chapters, Fichte had a passionate belief in the saving mission of his own philosophy for human society. But Hegel felt, as it were, the weight and burden of all history on his shoulders. And looking back on the history of the world, his primary aim was to understand it. Further, though he certainly did not imagine that history had stopped with the coming of the nineteenth century, he was too historically minded to have much faith in the finality of any philosophical Utopia.

CHAPTER II

FICHTE (1)

Life and writings—On looking for the fundamental principle of philosophy; the choice between idealism and dogmatism—The pure ego and intellectual intuition—Comments on the theory of the pure ego; phenomenology of consciousness and idealist metaphysics—The three fundamental principles of philosophy—Explanatory comments on Fichte's dialectical method—The theory of science and formal logic—The general idea of the two deductions of consciousness—The theoretical deduction—The practical deduction—Comments on Fichte's deduction of consciousness.

1. JOHANN GOTTLIEB FICHTE was born in 1762 at Rammenau in Saxony. He came of a poor family, and in the ordinary course of events he could hardly have enjoyed facilities for pursuing advanced studies. But as a small boy he aroused the interest of a local nobleman, the Baron von Miltitz, who undertook to provide for his education. At the appropriate age Fichte was sent to the famous school at Pforta where Nietzsche was later to study. And in 1780 he enrolled as a student of theology in the University of Jena, moving later to Wittenberg and subsequently to Leipzig.

During his studies Fichte came to accept the theory of determinism. To remedy this sad state of affairs a good clergyman recommended to him an edition of Spinoza's *Ethics* which was furnished with a refutation by Wolff. But as the refutation seemed to Fichte to be extremely weak, the effect of the work was the very opposite of that intended by the pastor. Determinism, however, was not really in tune with Fichte's active and energetic character or with his strong ethical interests, and it was soon replaced by an insistence on moral freedom. He was later to show himself a vigorous opponent of Spinozism, but it always represented for him one of the great alternatives in philosophy.

For financial reasons Fichte found himself compelled to take a post as tutor in a family at Zürich where he read Rousseau and Montesquieu and welcomed the news of the French Revolution with its message of liberty. His interest in Kant was aroused when a student's request for the explanation of the critical philosophy led him to study it for the first time. And in 1791, when returning to Germany from Warsaw, where he had a brief and rather humiliating experience as tutor in a nobleman's family, he visited Kant at Königsberg. But he was not received with any enthusiasm. And he therefore attempted to win the great man's favour by writing an essay to develop Kant's justification of faith in the name of the practical reason. The resulting *Essay towards a Critique of all Revelation* (*Versuch einer Kritik aller Offenbarung*) pleased Kant, and after some difficulties with the theological censorship it was published in 1792. As the name of the author was not given, some reviewers concluded that the essay had been written by Kant. And when Kant proceeded to correct this error and to praise the real author, Fichte's name became at once widely known.

In 1793 Fichte published his *Contributions designed to correct the Judgment of the Public on the French Revolution.* This work won for him the reputation of being a democrat and Jacobin, a politically dangerous figure. In spite of this, however, he was appointed professor of philosophy at Jena in 1794, partly owing to a warm recommendation by Goethe. In addition to his more professional courses of lectures Fichte gave a series of conferences on the dignity of man and the vocation of the scholar, which were published in the year of his appointment to the chair. He was always something of a missionary or preacher. But the chief publication of 1794 was the *Basis of the Entire Theory of Science* (*Grundlage der gesammten Wissenschaftslehre*) in which he presented his idealist development of the critical philosophy of Kant. His predecessor in the chair of philosophy at Jena, K. L. Reinhold (1758–1823), who had accepted an invitation to Kiel, had already demanded that the Kantian criticism should be turned into a system, that is to say, that it should be derived systematically from one fundamental principle. And in his theory of science Fichte undertook to fulfil this task more successfully than Reinhold had done.[1] The theory of science was conceived as exhibiting the systematic development from one ultimate principle of the fundamental propositions which lie at the basis of and make possible all particular sciences or ways of knowing. But to exhibit this development is at the same time to portray the development of creative thought. Hence the theory of science is not only epistemology but also metaphysics.

[1] From about 1797 Reinhold accepted and defended the philosophy of Fichte. But he was a restless spirit, and after a few years he turned to other lines of thought.

But Fichte was very far from concentrating exclusively on the theoretical deduction of consciousness. He laid great stress on the moral end of the development of consciousness or, in more concrete terms, on the moral purpose of human existence. And we find him publishing in 1796 the *Basis of Natural Right* (*Grundlage des Naturrechts*) and in 1798 *The System of Ethics* (*Das System der Sittenlehre*). Both subjects are said to be treated 'according to the principles of the theory of science'. And so no doubt they are. But the works are much more than mere appendages to the *Wissenschaftslehre*. For they display the true character of Fichte's philosophy, that is, as a system of ethical idealism.

Complaints have often been made, and not without reason, of the obscurity of the metaphysical idealists. But a prominent feature of Fichte's literary activity was his unremitting efforts to clarify the ideas and principles of the theory of science.[1] For instance, in 1797 he published two introductions to the *Wissenschaftslehre* and in 1801 his *Sonnenklarer Bericht, A Report, Clear as the Sun, for the General Public on the Real Essence of the Latest Philosophy: An Attempt to compel the Reader to Understand.* The title may have been over-optimistic, but at any rate it bore witness to the author's efforts to make his meaning clear. Moreover, in the period 1801–13 Fichte composed, for his lecture courses, several revised versions of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. In 1810 he published *The Theory of Science in its General Lines* (*Die Wissenschaftslehre in ihrem allgemeinen Umrisse*) and the *Facts of Consciousness* (*Tatsachen des Bewusstseins*, second edition, 1813).

In 1799 Fichte's career at Jena came to an abrupt end. He had already aroused some antagonism in the university by his plans to reform the students' societies and by his Sunday discourses which seemed to the clergy to constitute an act of trespass on their preserves. But his crowning offence was the publication in 1798 of an essay *On the Ground of our Belief in a Divine World-Order* (*Ueber den Grund unseres Glaubens an eine göttliche Weltregierung*). The appearance of this essay led to a charge of atheism, on the ground that Fichte identified God with a moral world-order to be created and sustained by the human will. The philosopher tried to defend himself, but without success. And in 1799 he had to leave Jena and went to Berlin.

In 1800 Fichte published *The Vocation of Man* (*Die Bestimmung*

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[1] It is perhaps needless to say that the word 'science' must be understood in the sense of 'knowledge' rather than according to the narrower modern use of the term.

des Menschen). The work belongs to his so-called popular writings, addressed to the general educated public rather than to professional philosophers; and it is a manifesto in favour of the author's idealist system as contrasted with the romantics' attitude to Nature and to religion. Fichte's exalted language may indeed easily suggest a romantic pantheism, but the significance of the work was understood well enough by the romantics themselves. Schleiermacher, for example, saw that Fichte was concerned with repudiating any attempt to achieve a fusion of Spinozism and idealism, and in a sharply critical review he maintained that Fichte's hostile reaction to the idea of the universal necessity of Nature was really caused by his predominating interest in man as a finite, independent being who had at all costs to be exalted above Nature. In Schleiermacher's opinion Fichte should have sought for a higher synthesis which would include the truth in Spinozism while not denying moral freedom, instead of simply opposing man to Nature.

In the same year, 1800, Fichte published his work on *The Closed Commercial State* (*Der geschlossene Handelsstaat*) in which he proposed a kind of State socialism. It has already been remarked that Fichte was something of a missionary. He regarded his system not only as the philosophical truth in an abstract, academic sense, but also as the saving truth, in the sense that the proper application of its principles would lead to the reform of society. In this respect at least he resembles Plato. Fichte had once hoped that Freemasonry might prove an apt instrument for promoting moral and social reform by taking up and applying the principles of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. But he was disappointed in this hope and turned instead to the Prussian government. And his work was really a programme offered to the government for implementation.

In 1804 Fichte accepted the offer of a chair at Erlangen. But he was not actually nominated professor until April 1805, and he employed the interval by lecturing at Berlin on the *Characteristics of the Present Age* (*Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters*). In these lectures he attacked the view of romantics such as Novalis, Tieck and the two Schlegels. Tieck introduced Novalis to Boehme's writings, and some of the romantics were enthusiastic admirers of the mystical shoemaker of Görlitz. But their enthusiasm was not shared by Fichte. Nor had he any sympathy with Novalis's dream of the restoration of a theocratic Catholic culture. His lectures were also directed against the philosophy of Nature which had been developed by Schelling, his former disciple. But these polemics are in a sense incidental to the general philosophy of history which is sketched in the lectures. Fichte's 'present age' represents one of the epochs in the development of man towards the goal of history described as the ordering of all human relations with freedom according to reason. The lectures were published in 1806.

At Erlangen Fichte lectured in 1805 *On the Nature of the Scholar* (*Ueber das Wesen des Gelehrten*). And in the winter of 1805–6 he gave a course of lectures at Berlin on *The Way to the Blessed Life or The Doctrine of Religion* (*Die Anweisung zum seligen Leben, oder auch die Religionslehre*). At first sight at least this work on religion seems to show a radical change from the philosophy expounded in Fichte's early writings. We hear less about the ego and much more about the Absolute and life in God. Indeed, Schelling accused Fichte of plagiarism, that is, of borrowing ideas from Schelling's theory of the Absolute and trying to graft them on to the *Wissenschaftslehre*, oblivious of the incompatibility between the two elements. Fichte, however, refused to admit that his religious ideas, as set forth in *The Doctrine of Religion*, were in any way inconsistent with his original philosophy.

When Napoleon invaded Prussia in 1806, Fichte offered to accompany the Prussian troops as a lay preacher or orator. But he was informed that the King considered it a time for speaking by acts rather than by words, and that oratory would be better suited for celebrating victory. When events took a menacing turn Fichte left Berlin; but he returned in 1807, and in the winter of 1807–8 he delivered his *Addresses to the German Nation* (*Reden an die deutsche Nation*). These discourses, in which the philosopher speaks in exalted and glowing terms of the cultural mission of the German people,[1] have lent themselves to subsequent exploitation in an extreme nationalist sense. But in justice to him we should remember the circumstances in which they were delivered, namely the period of Napoleonic domination.

The year 1810 saw the foundation of the University of Berlin, and Fichte was appointed dean of the philosophical faculty. From 1811 to 1812 he was rector of the university. At the beginning of 1814 he caught typhus from his wife who had contracted the disease while nursing the sick, and on January 29th of that year he died.

[1] A. G. Schlegel had already spoken in a not dissimilar vein of Germany's cultural mission in a course of lectures given in 1803–4.

2. Fichte's initial conception of philosophy has little in common with the romantic idea of the kinship between it and poetry. Philosophy is, or at least ought to be, a science. In the first place, that is to say, it should be a body of propositions which form a systematic whole of such a kind that each proposition occupies its proper place in a logical order. And in the second there must be a fundamental or logically prior proposition. 'Every science must have a fundamental proposition [*Grundsatz*]. . . . And it cannot have more than one fundamental proposition. For otherwise it would be not one but several sciences.'[1] We might indeed wish to question the statement that every science must have one, and only one basic proposition; but this is at any rate part of what Fichte means by a science.

This idea of science is obviously inspired by a mathematical model. Indeed, Fichte takes geometry as an example of a science. But it is, of course, a particular science, whereas philosophy is for Fichte the science of science, that is, the knowledge of knowledge or doctrine of knowledge (*Wissenschaftslehre*). In other words, philosophy is the basic science. Hence the fundamental proposition of philosophy must be indemonstrable and self-evidently true. 'All other propositions will possess only a mediate certainty, derived from it, whereas it must be immediately certain.'[2] For if its fundamental proposition were demonstrable in another science, philosophy would not be the basic science.

As will be seen in the course of the exposition of his thought, Fichte does not actually adhere to the programme suggested by this concept of philosophy. That is to say, his philosophy is not in practice a strict logical deduction such as could in principle be performed by a machine. But this point must be left aside for the moment. The immediate question is, what is the basic proposition of philosophy?

But before we can answer this question we must decide in what direction we are going to look for the proposition which we are seeking. And here, according to Fichte, one is faced with an initial option, one's choice depending on what kind of a man one is. A man of one type will be inclined to look in one direction and a man of another type in another direction. But this idea of an initial option stands in need of some explanation. And the explanation throws light on Fichte's conception of the task of philosophy and of the issue with which contemporary thought is faced.

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[1] *F*, 1, pp. 41–2; *M*, 1, p. 170. In this and similar references to Fichte's writings *F* and *M* signify respectively the editions of his *Works* by his son, I. H. Fichte, and F. Medicus.

[2] *F*, 1, p. 48; *M*, 1, p. 177.

In his *First Introduction to the Theory of Science* Fichte tells us that philosophy is called upon to make clear the ground of all experience (*Erfahrung*). But the word experience is here used in a somewhat restricted sense. If we consider the contents of consciousness, we see that they are of two kinds. 'We can say in brief: some of our presentations [*Vorstellungen*] are accompanied by the feeling of freedom, while others are accompanied by the feeling of necessity.'[1] If I construct in imagination a griffin or a golden mountain, or if I make up my mind to go to Paris rather than to Brussels, such presentations seem to depend on myself. And, as depending on the subject's choice, they are said to be accompanied by the feeling of freedom. If we ask why they are what they are, the answer is that the subject makes them what they are. But if I take a walk along a London street, it does not depend simply on myself what I see or hear. And such presentations are said to be accompanied by the feeling of necessity. That is to say, they appear to be imposed upon me. The whole system of these presentations is called by Fichte 'experience' even if he does not always use the term in this limited sense. And we can ask, what is the ground of experience? How are we to explain the obvious fact that a very large class of presentations seem to be imposed on the subject? 'To answer this question is the task of philosophy.'[2]

Now, two possibilities lie open to us. Actual experience is always experience of something by an experiencer: consciousness is always consciousness of an object by a subject or, as Fichte sometimes puts it, intelligence. But by a process which Fichte calls abstraction the philosopher can isolate conceptually the two factors which in actual consciousness are always conjoined. He can thus form the concepts of intelligence-in-itself and thing-in-itself. And two paths lie before him. Either he can try to explain experience (in the sense described in the last paragraph) as the product of intelligence-in-itself, that is, of creative thought. Or he can try to explain experience as the effect of the thing-in-itself. The first path is obviously that of idealism. The second is that of 'dogmatism'. And in the long run dogmatism spells materialism and determinism. If the thing, the object, is taken as the fundamental principle of explanation, intelligence will ultimately be reduced to a mere epiphenomenon.

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[1] *F*, I, p. 423; *M*, III, p. 7.

[2] *Ibid.*

This uncompromising Either-Or attitude is characteristic of Fichte. There is for him a clear-cut option between two opposed and mutually exclusive positions. True, some philosophers, notably Kant, have endeavoured to effect a compromise, to find, that is to say, a middle path between pure idealism and a dogmatism which ends in deterministic materialism. But Fichte has no use for such compromises. If a philosopher wishes to avoid dogmatism with all its consequences, and if he is prepared to be consistent, he must eliminate the thing-in-itself as a factor in the explanation of experience. The presentations which are accompanied by a feeling of necessity, by the feeling of being imposed upon or affected by an object existing independently of mind or thought, must be accounted for without any recourse to the Kantian idea of the thing-in-itself.

But on what principle is the philosopher to make his choice between the two possibilities which lie open to him? He cannot appeal to any basic theoretical principle. For we are assuming that he has not yet found such a principle but has to decide in what direction he is going to look for it. The issue must, therefore, be decided 'by inclination and interest'.[1] That is to say, the choice which the philosopher makes depends on what kind of a man he is. Needless to say, Fichte is convinced that the superiority of idealism to dogmatism as an explanation of experience becomes evident in the process of working out the two systems. But they have not yet been worked out. And in looking for the first principle of philosophy we cannot appeal to the theoretical superiority of a system which has not yet been constructed.

What Fichte means is that the philosopher who is maturely conscious of his freedom as revealed in moral experience will be inclined to idealism, while the philosopher who lacks this mature moral consciousness will be inclined to dogmatism. The 'interest' in question is thus interest in and for the self, which Fichte regards as the highest interest. The dogmatist, lacking this interest, emphasizes the thing, the not-self. But the thinker who has a genuine interest in and for the free moral subject will turn for his basic philosophical principle to intelligence, the self or ego, rather than to the not-self.

Fichte's preoccupation with the free and morally active self is thus made clear from the start. Underlying and inspiring his theoretical inquiry into the ground of experience there is a profound conviction of the primary significance of man's free moral activity. He continues Kant's insistence on the primacy of the practical reason, the moral will. But he is convinced that to maintain this primacy one has to take the path to pure idealism. For behind Kant's apparently innocent retention of the thing-in-itself Fichte sees the lurking spectre of Spinozism, the exaltation of Nature and the disappearance of freedom. If we are to exorcize this spectre, compromise must be rejected.

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[1] *F*, I, p. 433; *M*, III, p. 17.

We can, of course, detach Fichte's idea of the influence exercised by 'inclination and interest' from his historically-conditioned picture of the initial option with which philosophers are faced. And the idea can then be seen as opening up fascinating vistas in the field of what Karl Jaspers calls 'the psychology of world-views'. But in a book of this kind one must resist the temptation to embark on a discussion of this attractive topic.

3. Assuming that we have chosen the path of idealism, we must turn for the first principle of philosophy to intelligence-in-itself. But it is better to drop this cumbersome term and to speak, as Fichte proceeds to do, of the *I* or ego. We are committed, therefore, to explaining the genesis of experience from the side, so to speak, of the self. In reality Fichte is concerned with deriving consciousness in general from the ego. But in speaking of experience, in the restricted sense explained above, he lays his finger on the crucial difficulty which pure idealism has to face, namely the evident fact that the self finds itself in a world of objects which affect it in various ways. If idealism is incapable of accounting adequately for this fact, it is evidently untenable.

But what is the ego which is the foundation of philosophy? To answer this question we obviously have to go behind the objectifiable self, the ego as object of introspection or of empirical psychology, to the pure ego. Fichte once said to his students: 'Gentlemen, think the wall.' He then proceeded: 'Gentlemen, think him who thought the wall.' Clearly, we could proceed indefinitely in this fashion. 'Gentlemen, think him who thought him who thought the wall', and so on. In other words, however hard we may try to objectify the self, that is, to turn it into an object of consciousness, there always remains an *I* or ego which transcends objectification and is itself the condition of all objectifiability and the condition of the unity of consciousness. And it is this pure or transcendental ego which is the first principle of philosophy.

It is clearly idle to object against Fichte that we cannot find a pure or transcendental ego by peering about. For it is precisely Fichte's contention that the pure ego cannot be found in this way, though it is the necessary condition of our being able to do any peering about. But for this very reason it may appear that Fichte has gone beyond the range of experience (in a wide sense) or consciousness and has failed to observe his own self-imposed limitations. That is to say, having reaffirmed the Kantian view that our theoretical knowledge cannot extend beyond experience, he now seems to have transgressed this limit.

But this, Fichte insists, is not the case. For we can enjoy an intellectual intuition of the pure ego. This is not, however, a mystical experience reserved for the privileged few. Nor is it an intuition of the pure ego as an entity existing behind or beyond consciousness. Rather is it an awareness of the pure ego or *I* principle as an activity within consciousness. And this awareness is a component element in all self-consciousness. 'I cannot take a pace, I cannot move hand or foot, without the intellectual intuition of my self-consciousness in these actions. It is only through intuition that I know that I perform the action. . . . Everyone who ascribes activity to himself appeals to this intuition. In it is the foundation of life, and without it is death.'[1] In other words, anyone who is conscious of an action as his own is aware of himself acting. In this sense he has an intuition of the self as activity. But it does not follow that he is reflectively aware of this intuition as a component element in consciousness. It is only the philosopher who is reflectively aware of it, for the simple reason that transcendental reflection, by which the attention is reflected onto the pure ego, is a philosophical act. But this reflection is directed, so to speak, to ordinary consciousness, not to a privileged mystical experience. Hence, if the philosopher wishes to convince anyone of the reality of this intuition, he can only draw the man's attention to the data of consciousness and invite him to reflect for himself. He cannot show the man the intuition existing in a pure state, unmixed with any component elements; for it does not exist in this state. Nor can he convince the other man by means of some abstract proof. He can only invite the man to reflect on his own self-consciousness and to see that it includes an intuition of the pure ego, not as a thing, but as an activity. 'That there is such a power of intellectual intuition cannot be demonstrated through concepts, nor can its nature be developed by means of concepts. Everyone must find it immediately in himself or he will never be able to know it.'[1]

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[1] *F*, I, p. 463; *M*, III, p. 47.

Fichte's thesis can be clarified in this way. The pure ego cannot be turned into an object of consciousness in the same way that a desire, for example, can be objectified. It would be absurd to say that through introspection I see a desire, an image and a pure ego. For every act of objectification presupposes the pure ego. And for this reason it can be called the transcendental ego. But it does not follow that the pure ego is an inferred occult entity. For it manifests itself in the activity of objectification. When I say, 'I am walking', I objectify the action, in the sense that I make it object-for-a-subject. And the pure *I* reveals itself to reflection in this activity of objectification. An activity is intuited, but no entity behind consciousness is inferred. Hence Fichte concludes that the pure ego is not something which acts but simply an activity or doing. 'For idealism the intelligence is a doing [*Thun*] and absolutely nothing else; one should not even call it an active thing [*ein Tätiges*].'[2]

At first sight at least Fichte appears to contradict Kant's denial that the human mind possesses any faculty of intellectual intuition. In particular, he seems to be turning into an object of intuition the transcendental ego which for Kant was simply a logical condition of the unity of consciousness and could be neither intuited nor proved to exist as a spiritual substance. But Fichte insists that his contradiction of Kant is really only verbal. For when Kant denied that the human mind possesses any faculty of intellectual intuition, he meant that we do not enjoy any intellectual intuition of supersensible entities transcending experience. And the *Wissenschaftslehre* does not really affirm what Kant denied. For it is not claimed that we intuit the pure ego as a spiritual substance or entity transcending consciousness but simply as an activity within consciousness, which reveals itself to reflection. Further, apart from the fact that Kant's doctrine of pure apperception[3] gives us at any rate a hint of intellectual intuition, we can easily indicate the place, Fichte claims, at which Kant ought to have spoken of and admitted this intuition. For he asserted that we are conscious of a categorical imperative; and if he had considered the matter thoroughly, he should have seen that this consciousness involves the intellectual intuition of the pure ego as activity.

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[1] *F*, I, p. 463; *M*, III, p. 47.

[2] *F*, I, p. 440; *M*, III, p. 24.

[3] See Vol. VI, pp. 253–6, 282–6, 391–2.

Indeed, Fichte goes on to suggest a specifically moral approach to the topic. 'In the consciousness of this law . . . is grounded the intuition of self-activity and freedom. . . . It is only through the medium of the moral law that I apprehend *myself*. And if I apprehend myself in this way, I necessarily apprehend myself as self-active. . . .'[1] Once again, therefore, the strongly ethical bent of Fichte's mind finds clear expression.

4. If we look at the matter from the point of view of phenomenology of consciousness, Fichte is, in the opinion of the present writer, perfectly justified in affirming the I-subject or transcendental ego. Hume, looking into his mind, so to speak, and finding only psychical phenomena, tried to reduce the self to the succession of these phenomena.[2] And it is understandable that he acted in this way. For part of his programme was to apply to man the empirical method, as he conceived it, which had proved so successful in 'experimental philosophy' or natural science. But the direction of his attention to the objects or data of introspection led him to slur over the fact, all-important for the philosopher, that psychical phenomena become phenomena (appearing to a subject) only through the objectifying activity of a subject which transcends objectification in the same sense. Obviously, there is no question of reducing the human being to a transcendental or metaphysical ego. And the problem of the relation between the self as pure subject and other aspects of the self is one that cannot be evaded. But this does not alter the fact that a recognition of the transcendental ego is essential to an adequate phenomenology of consciousness. And in regard to this point Fichte shows a degree of insight which Hume lacked.

But Fichte is not, of course, simply concerned with the phenomenology of consciousness, that is, with a descriptive analysis of consciousness. He is concerned also with developing a system of idealist metaphysics. And this point has an important bearing on his theory of the transcendental ego. From a purely phenomenological point of view talk about 'the transcendental ego' no more commits us to saying that there is one and only one such ego than a medical writer's generalizations about 'the stomach' commit him to holding that there is one and only one stomach. But if we propose to derive the whole sphere of the objective, including Nature and all selves in so far as they are objects for a subject, from the transcendental ego, we must either embrace solipsism or interpret the transcendental ego as a supra-individual productive activity which manifests itself in all finite consciousnesses. As, therefore, Fichte has no intention of defending solipsism, he is bound to interpret the pure ego as a supra-individual absolute ego.

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[1] *F*, I, p. 466; *M*, III, p. 50.

[2] See Vol. V, pp. 300–5.

To be sure, Fichte's use of the term *I* or *ego* not unnaturally suggested to many of his readers that he was talking about the individual self or ego. And this interpretation was facilitated by the fact that the more metaphysical aspects of his thought were comparatively inconspicuous in his earlier writings. But the interpretation, Fichte insisted, was erroneous. Lecturing in the winter of 1810–11 and looking back at the criticism that had been levelled against the *Wissenschaftslehre* he protested that he had never intended to say that the creative ego is the individual finite self. 'People have generally understood the theory of science as attributing to the individual effects which could certainly not be ascribed to it, such as the production of the whole material world.... They have been completely mistaken: it is not the individual but the one immediate spiritual Life which is the creator of all phenomena, including phenomenal individuals.'[1]

It will be noticed that in this passage the word 'Life' is used instead of 'ego'. Starting, as he did, from the position of Kant and being concerned with transforming it into pure idealism, he not unnaturally began by talking about the pure or absolute ego. But in the course of time he saw that it was inappropriate to describe the infinite activity which grounds consciousness, including the finite self, as itself an ego or subject. However, we need not dwell at present on this point. It is sufficient to note Fichte's protest against what he considered to be a fundamental misinterpretation of his theory. The absolute ego is not the individual finite self but an infinite (better, unlimited) activity.

Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* is thus both a phenomenology of consciousness and an idealist metaphysics. And to a certain extent at any rate the two aspects can be separated. Hence it is possible to attach some value to a good deal of what Fichte has to say without committing oneself to his metaphysical idealism. We have already indicated this in regard to the theory of the transcendental ego. But the distinction has a wider field of application.

5. In the second section of this chapter it was remarked that philosophy, according to Fichte, must have a fundamental and

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[1] *F*, II, p. 607 (not included in *M*).

indemonstrable proposition. And the thought may have occurred to the reader that whatever else the ego may be, it is not a proposition. This is, of course, true. We have still to ascertain what is the basic proposition of philosophy. But we know at any rate that it must be the expression of the original activity of the pure ego.

Now, we can distinguish between the spontaneous activity of the pure ego on the one hand and the philosopher's philosophical reconstruction or thinking of this activity on the other. The spontaneous activity of the pure ego in grounding consciousness is not, of course, itself conscious. As spontaneous activity the pure ego does not exist 'for itself'. It comes to exist for itself, as an ego, only in the intellectual intuition by which the philosopher in transcendental reflection apprehends the ego's spontaneous activity. It is through the act of the philosopher, 'through an activity directed towards an activity . . . that the ego first comes to be *originally* [*ursprünglich*] for itself'.[1] In intellectual intuition, therefore, the pure ego is said to posit itself (*sich setzen*). And the fundamental proposition of philosophy is that 'the ego simply posits in an original way its own being'.[2] In transcendental reflection the philosopher goes back, as it were, to the ultimate ground of consciousness. And in his intellectual intuition the pure ego affirms itself. It is not demonstrated as a conclusion from premisses: it is seen as affirming itself and so as existing. 'To *posit itself* and to *be* are, as said of the ego, completely the same.'[3]

But though by means of what Fichte calls an activity directed towards an activity[4] the pure ego is, so to speak, made to affirm itself, the ego's original spontaneous activity is not in itself conscious. Rather is it the ultimate ground of consciousness, that is, of ordinary consciousness, one's natural awareness of oneself in a world. But this consciousness cannot arise unless the non-ego is opposed to the ego. Hence the second basic proposition of philosophy is that 'a non-ego is simply opposited to the ego'.[5] This oppositing must, of course, be done by the ego itself. Otherwise pure idealism would have to be abandoned.

Now, the non-ego of which the second proposition speaks is unlimited, in the sense that it is objectivity in general rather than a definite object or set of finite objects. And this unlimited non-ego is opposited to the ego within the ego. For we are engaged in the systematic reconstruction of consciousness; and consciousness is a unity, comprising both ego and non-ego. Hence the unlimited activity which constitutes the pure or absolute ego must posit the non-ego within itself. But if both are unlimited, each will tend, as it were, to fill all reality to the exclusion of the other. They will tend to cancel one another out, to annihilate one another. And consciousness will be rendered impossible. Hence, if consciousness is to arise, there must be reciprocal limitation of ego and non-ego. Each must cancel the other out, but only in part. In this sense both ego and non-ego must be 'divisible' (*theilbar*). And in his *Basis of the Entire Theory of Science* Fichte offers the following formulation of the third basic proposition of philosophy. 'I posit in the ego a divisible non-ego as opposed to a divisible ego.'[1] That is to say, the absolute ego posits within itself a finite ego and a finite non-ego as reciprocally limiting and determining one another. Fichte obviously does not mean that there can be only one of each. Indeed, as will be seen later, he maintains that for self-consciousness the existence of the Other (and so of a plurality of finite selves) is required. His point is that there can be no consciousness unless the absolute ego, considered as unlimited activity, produces within itself the finite ego and the finite non-ego.

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[1] *F*, I, p. 459; *M*, III, p. 43. [2] *F*, I, p. 98; *M*, I, p. 292. [3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Durch ein Handeln auf ein Handeln.* The philosopher's reflection is an activity, a doing. It makes the spontaneous activity of the pure ego relive itself, so to speak, for consciousness.

[5] *F*, I, p. 104; *M*, I, p. 298.

6. If we mean by consciousness, as Fichte means by it, human consciousness, the assertion that the non-ego is a necessary condition of consciousness is not difficult to understand. To be sure, the finite ego can reflect on itself, but this reflection is for Fichte a bending back of the attention from the not-self. Hence the non-ego is a necessary condition even of self-consciousness.[2] But we can very well ask why there should be consciousness at all. Or, to put the question in another way, how can the second basic proposition of philosophy be deduced from the first?

Fichte answers that no purely theoretical deduction is possible. We must have recourse to a practical deduction. That is to say, we must see the pure or absolute ego as an unlimited activity striving towards consciousness of its own freedom through moral self-realization. And we must see the positing of the non-ego as a necessary means to the attainment of this end. True, the absolute ego in its spontaneous activity does not act consciously for any end at all. But the philosopher consciously rethinking this activity sees the total movement as directed towards a certain goal. And he sees that self-consciousness demands the non-ego, from which the otherwise unlimited activity of the ego, comparable to a straight line stretching out indefinitely, can recoil, as it were, onto itself. He sees too that moral activity requires an objective field, a world, in which actions can be performed.

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[1] *F*, I, p. 110; *M*, I, p. 305.

[2] We can notice again the distinction between phenomenology and idealist metaphysics. It is one thing to say that the positing (recognition) of the non-ego is a condition of human consciousness. It is another thing to say that the non-ego is posited (produced or created) by the pure or absolute ego.

Now, the second basic proposition of philosophy stands to the first as antithesis to thesis. And we have seen that the ego and non-ego tend to cancel one another out, if both are unlimited. It is this fact that drives the philosopher to enunciate the third basic proposition, which stands to the first and second propositions as synthesis to thesis and antithesis. But Fichte does not mean to imply that the non-ego ever exists in such a way that it annihilates the pure ego or threatens to do so. It is because this annihilation would take place if an unlimited non-ego were posited within the ego that we are compelled to proceed to the third proposition. In other words, the synthesis shows what the antithesis must mean if the contradiction between an unlimited ego and an unlimited non-ego is not to arise. If we assume that consciousness is to arise at all, the activity which grounds consciousness must produce the situation in which an ego and a non-ego limit one another.

Looked at under one aspect, therefore, Fichte's dialectic of thesis, antithesis and synthesis[1] takes the form of a progressive determination of the meanings of the initial propositions. And the contradictions which arise are resolved in the sense that they are shown to be only apparent. 'All contradictions are reconciled by determining more closely the contradictory propositions.'[2] Speaking, for example, of the statements that the ego posits itself as infinite and that it posits itself as finite, Fichte remarks that 'were it posited as both infinite and finite in one and the same sense, the contradictions could not be resolved. . . .'[3] The apparent contradiction is resolved by so defining the meanings of the two statements that their mutual compatibility becomes evident. In the case in question we have to see the one infinite activity expressing itself in and through finite selves.

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[1] On the hint of a dialectical method in the philosophy of Kant see Vol. VI, pp. 251–2. Kant's antithetical development of the antinomies (pp. 287 f.) is also relevant.

[2] *F*, I, p. 255; *M*, I, p. 448.

[3] *Ibid.*

Yet it would not be accurate to say that in actual fact Fichte's dialectic consists simply in the progressive determination or clarification of meanings. For he introduces by the way ideas which cannot be obtained through strict analysis of the initial proposition or propositions. For instance, in order to proceed from the second basic proposition to the third Fichte postulates a limiting activity on the part of the ego, though the idea of limitation cannot be obtained simply through logical analysis of either the first or the second proposition.

This procedure was criticized by Hegel as being insufficiently speculative, that is, philosophical. In Hegel's opinion it was unworthy of a philosopher to offer a deduction which was admittedly no strict theoretical deduction[1] and to introduce, like a *deus ex machina*, undeduced activities of the ego to make possible the transition from one proposition to another.

It can hardly be denied, I think, that Fichte's actual procedure does not square very well with his initial account of the nature of philosophy as a deductive science. At the same time we must remember that for him the philosopher is engaged in consciously reconstructing, as it were, an active process, namely the grounding of consciousness, which in itself takes place unconsciously. In doing so the philosopher has his point of departure, the self-positing of the absolute ego, and his point of arrival, human consciousness as we know it. And if it is impossible to proceed from one step to another in the reconstruction of the productive activity of the ego without attributing to the ego a certain function or mode of activity, then this must be done. Thus even if the concept of limitation is not obtained through strict logical analysis of the first two basic propositions, it is none the less required, from Fichte's point of view, to clarify their meaning.

7. When outlining Fichte's theory of the three basic propositions of philosophy I omitted the logical apparatus which is employed in the *Basis of the Entire Theory of Science* and which figures prominently in some accounts of his philosophy. For this apparatus is not really necessary, as is shown by the fact that Fichte himself omits it in some of the expositions of his system. At the same time something ought to be said about it because it serves to clarify Fichte's idea of the relations between philosophy and formal logic.

In the *Basis of the Entire Theory of Science* Fichte approaches the first fundamental proposition of philosophy by reflecting on an indemonstrable logical proposition, the truth of which would be admitted by all. This is the principle of identity, stated in the form *A is A* or $A = A$. Nothing is said about the content of *A*; nor is it asserted that *A* exists. What is asserted is a necessary relation between *A* and itself. If there is an *A*, it is necessarily self-identical. And this necessary relation between *A* as subject and *A* as predicate is referred to by Fichte as *X*.

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[1] We have noted Fichte's frank admission that no purely theoretical deduction of the second basic proposition is possible.

This judgment is asserted or posited only in and through the *I* or ego. Thus the existence of the ego is affirmed in its activity of judging, even if no value has been assigned to *A*. 'If the proposition $A = A$ is certain, so also must the proposition *I am* be certain.'[1] In affirming the principle of identity the ego affirms or posits itself as self-identical.

While, therefore, the formal principle of identity is used by Fichte as a means or device for arriving at the first basic proposition of philosophy, the principle of identity is not itself this proposition. Indeed, it is sufficiently obvious that one would not get very far with a deduction or reconstruction of consciousness if one proposed to use the formal principle of identity as a starting-point or foundation.

At the same time the relation between the formal principle of identity and the first basic proposition of philosophy is closer, according to Fichte, than the description of the former as a means or device for arriving at the latter tends to suggest. For the principle of identity is, so to speak, the first basic proposition of philosophy with variables substituted for definite values or content. That is to say, if we took the first basic proposition of philosophy and rendered it purely formal, we would obtain the principle of identity. And in this sense the latter is grounded in the former and derivable from it.

Similarly, what Fichte calls the formal axiom of opposition, *Not—A not* $= A$, is used to arrive at the second basic proposition. For the positing of *Not —A* presupposes the positing of *A* and is thus an oppositing to *A*. And this oppositing takes place only in and through the ego. At the same time the formal axiom of opposition is said to be grounded in the second proposition of philosophy which affirms the ego's oppositing to itself of the non-ego in general. Again, the logical proposition which Fichte calls the axiom of the ground or of sufficient reason, *A in part* $= -A$, *and*

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[1] *F*, 1, p. 95; *M*, 1, p. 289.

conversely, is said to be grounded in the third basic proposition of philosophy, in the sense that the former is derived by abstracting definite content from the latter and substituting variables instead.

In brief, therefore, Fichte's view is that formal logic is dependent on and derived from the *Wissenschaftslehre*, and not the other way round. This view of the relation between formal logic and basic philosophy is indeed somewhat obscured by the fact that in the *Basis of the Entire Theory of Science* Fichte starts by reflecting on the principle of identity. But in his subsequent discussion he proceeds to make his view of the derivative character of formal logic quite clear. And this view is in any case entailed by his insistence that the *Wissenschaftslehre* is the fundamental science.

We may add that in his deduction of the fundamental propositions of philosophy Fichte begins to deduce the categories. In his opinion Kant's deduction was insufficiently systematic. If, however, we start with the self-positing of the ego, we can deduce them successively in the course of the reconstruction of consciousness. Thus the first basic proposition gives us the category of reality. For 'that which is posited through the mere positing of a thing . . . is its reality, its essence [*Wesen*]'.[1] The second proposition obviously gives us the category of negation and the third that of limitation or determination.

8. The idea of reciprocal limitation provides the basis for the twofold deduction of consciousness which Fichte considers necessary. Take the statement that the absolute ego posits within itself a finite ego and a finite non-ego as reciprocally limiting or determining one another. This implies two propositions. One is that the absolute ego posits itself as limited by the non-ego. The other is that the absolute ego posits (within itself) the non-ego as limited or determined by the (finite) ego. And these two propositions are respectively the basic propositions of the theoretical and practical deductions of consciousness. If we consider the ego as affected by the non-ego, we can proceed to the theoretical deduction of consciousness which considers what Fichte calls the 'real' series of acts, that is, the acts of the ego as determined by the non-ego. Sensation, for example, belongs to this class of acts. If, however, we consider the ego as affecting the non-ego, we can proceed to the practical deduction of consciousness which considers the 'ideal' series of acts, including, for instance, desire and free action.

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[1] *F*, I, p. 99; *M*, I, p. 293.

The two deductions are, of course, complementary, forming together the total philosophical deduction or reconstruction of consciousness. At the same time the theoretical deduction is subordinated to the practical. For the absolute ego is an infinite striving towards self-realization through free moral activity, and the non-ego, the world of Nature, is a means or instrument for the attainment of this end. The practical deduction gives us the reason why the absolute ego posits the non-ego as limiting and affecting the finite ego; and it leads us to the confines of ethics. Indeed, Fichte's theories of rights and of morals are a continuation of the practical deduction as contained in the *Wissenschaftslehre* proper. As already mentioned, Fichte's philosophy is essentially a dynamic ethical idealism.

It is not possible to discuss here all the stages of Fichte's deduction of consciousness. And even if it were possible, it would scarcely be desirable. But in the next two sections some features of the theoretical and practical deductions will be mentioned, to give the reader some idea of Fichte's line of thought.

9. In Fichte's idealist system all activity must be referred ultimately to the ego itself, that is, to the absolute ego, and the non-ego must exist only for consciousness. For to admit the idea of a non-ego which exists quite independently of all consciousness and which affects the ego would be to readmit the idea of the thing-in-itself and to abandon idealism. At the same time it is obvious that from the point of view of ordinary consciousness there is a distinction between presentation (*Vorstellung*) and thing. We have the spontaneous belief that we are acted upon by things which exist independently of the ego. And to all appearances this belief is fully justified. Hence it is incumbent on Fichte to show, in a manner consistent with the idealist position, how the point of view of ordinary consciousness arises, and how from this point of view our spontaneous belief in an objective Nature is in a sense justified. For the aim of idealist philosophy is to explain the facts of consciousness on idealist principles, not to deny them.

Obviously, Fichte must attribute to the ego the power of producing the idea of an independently existing non-ego when in point of fact it is dependent on the ego, so that the non-ego's activity is ultimately the activity of the ego itself. Equally obviously, this power must be attributed to the absolute ego rather than to the individual self, and it must work spontaneously, inevitably and without consciousness. To put the matter crudely, when consciousness comes on the scene the work must be already done. It must take place below the level of consciousness. Otherwise it would be impossible to explain our spontaneous belief in a Nature existing independently of the ego. In other words, for empirical consciousness Nature must be something given. It is only the philosopher who in transcendental reflection retraces with consciousness the productive activity of the absolute ego, which in itself takes place without consciousness. For the non-philosopher, and for the empirical consciousness of the philosopher himself, the natural world is something given, a situation in which the finite ego finds itself.

This power is called by Fichte the power of imagination or, more appropriately, the productive power of imagination or power of productive imagination. The power of imagination was prominent in the philosophy of Kant, where it served as an indispensable link between sensibility and understanding.[1] But with Fichte it assumes an all-important role in grounding ordinary or empirical consciousness. It is not, of course, a kind of third force in addition to the ego and non-ego: it is the activity of the ego itself, that is, the absolute ego. In his earlier writings Fichte may sometimes give the impression that he is talking about the activity of the individual self, but when he reviews the development of his thought he protests that he never meant this.

In what he calls a pragmatic history of consciousness[2] Fichte pictures the ego as spontaneously limiting its own activity and thus positing itself as passive, as affected. Its state is then that of sensation (*Empfindung*). But the ego's activity reasserts itself, as it were, and objectifies sensation. That is to say, in the outwardly-directed activity of intuition the ego spontaneously refers sensation to a non-ego. And this act grounds the distinction between representation or image (*Bild*) and thing. In empirical consciousness, the finite self regards the distinction between image and thing as a distinction between a subjective modification and an object which exists independently of its own activity. For it is ignorant of the fact that the projection of the non-ego was the work of the productive imagination functioning on an infra-conscious level.

Now, consciousness requires not simply an indeterminate non-ego but definite and distinct objects. And if there are to be distinguishable objects, there must be a common sphere in which and in relation to which objects mutually exclude one another. Hence the power of imagination produces space, extended, continuous and indefinitely divisible, as a form of intuition.

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[1] See Vol. VI, pp. 256–60.

[2] This is given in the *Basis of the Entire Theory of Science*. A more detailed analysis of some of the stages is given in the *Outline of the Essence of the Theory of Science*.

Similarly, there must be an irreversible time series of such a kind that successive acts of intuition are possible and that if a particular act of intuition occurs at any moment, every other possibility is excluded as far as this moment is concerned. Hence the productive imagination conveniently posits time as a second form of intuition. Needless to say, the forms of space and time are produced spontaneously by the activity of the pure or absolute ego: they are not consciously and deliberately posited.

The development of consciousness, however, requires that the product of the creative imagination should be rendered more determinate. And this is effected by means of the powers of understanding and judgment. At the level of understanding the ego 'fixes' (*fixiert*) presentations as concepts, while the power of judgment is said to turn these concepts into *thought* objects, in the sense that they come to exist not only *in* but also *for* the understanding. Both understanding and judgment, therefore, are required for understanding in the full sense. 'Nothing in the understanding, no power of judgment: no power of judgment, nothing in the understanding *for the understanding*. . . .'[1] Sensible intuition is riveted, as it were, to particular objects; but at the level of understanding and judgment we find abstraction from particular objects and the making of universal judgments. Thus in the pragmatic history of consciousness we have seen the ego rising above the unconscious activity of the productive imagination and acquiring, so to speak, a certain freedom of movement.

Self-consciousness, however, requires more than the power to abstract from particular objects in favour of the universal. It presupposes the power to abstract from the object in general, in order to achieve reflection on the subject. And this power of absolute abstraction, as Fichte calls it, is reason (*Vernunft*). When reason abstracts from the sphere of the non-ego, the ego remains, and we have self-consciousness. But one cannot totally eliminate the ego-object and identify oneself in consciousness with the ego-subject. That is to say, pure self-consciousness, in which the I-subject would be completely transparent to itself, is an ideal which can never be actually achieved, but to which one can only approximate. 'The more a determinate individual can think himself (as object) away, the closer does his empirical self-consciousness approximate to pure self-consciousness.'[1]

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[1] *F*, 1, p. 242; *M*, 1, p. 435.

It is, of course, the power of reason which enables the philosopher to apprehend the pure ego and to retrace, in transcendental reflection, its productive activity in the movement towards self-consciousness. But we have seen that the intellectual intuition of the absolute ego is never unmixed with other elements. Not even the philosopher can achieve the ideal of what Fichte calls pure self-consciousness.

10. The practical deduction of consciousness goes behind, as it were, the work of the productive imagination and reveals its ground in the nature of the absolute ego as an infinite striving (*ein unendliches Streben*). True, if we speak of striving, we naturally tend to think of striving after something. That is to say, we presuppose the existence of the non-ego. But if we start with the absolute ego as infinite striving, we obviously cannot presuppose the existence of the non-ego. For to do this would be to reintroduce the Kantian thing-in-itself. At the same time striving, Fichte insists, demands a counter-movement, a counter-striving, a check or obstacle. For if it met with no resistance, no obstacle or check, it would be satisfied and would cease to be a striving. But the absolute ego cannot cease to be a striving. Hence the very nature of the absolute ego necessitates the positing of the non-ego by the productive imagination, that is, by the absolute ego in its 'real' activity.

The matter can be expressed in this way. The absolute ego is to be conceived as activity. And this activity is fundamentally an infinite striving. But striving, according to Fichte, implies overcoming, and overcoming requires an obstacle to overcome. Hence the ego must posit the non-ego, Nature, as an obstacle to be overcome, as a check to be transcended. In other words, Nature is a necessary means or instrument to the moral self-realization of the ego. It is a field for action.

Fichte does not, however, proceed directly from the idea of the ego as striving to the positing of the non-ego. He argues first that striving takes the determinate form of infra-conscious impulse or drive (*Trieb*) and that this impulse exists 'for the ego' in the form of feeling (*Gefühl*). Now, impulse or drive aims, as Fichte puts it, at being causality, at effecting something outside itself. Yet it cannot, considered simply as impulse, effect anything. Hence the feeling of impulse or drive is a feeling of constraint, of not-being-able, of being hindered. And the feeling ego is compelled to posit the non-ego as a felt I-know-not-what, a felt obstacle or check. And impulse can then become 'impulse *towards the object*'.[1]

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[1] *F*, I, p. 244; *M*, I, p. 437.

It is worth noting that for Fichte feeling is the basis of all belief in reality. The ego feels impulse or drive as power or force (*Kraft*) which is hindered. The feeling of force and the feeling of hindrance go together. And the total feeling is the foundation of belief in reality. 'Here lies the ground of all reality. Only through the relation of feeling to the ego . . . is reality possible for the ego, whether of the ego or of the non-ego.'[2] Belief in reality is based ultimately on feeling, not on any theoretical argument.

Now, the feeling of impulse as force represents a rudimentary grade of reflection. For the ego is itself the impulse which is felt. Hence the feeling is self-feeling. And in successive sections of the practical deduction of consciousness Fichte traces the development of this reflection. We see, for instance, impulse or drive as such becoming more determinate in the form of distinct impulses and desires, and we see the development in the ego of distinct feelings of satisfaction. But inasmuch as the ego is infinite striving, it is unable to rest in any particular satisfaction or group of satisfactions. And we see it as reaching out towards an ideal goal through its free activity. Yet this goal always recedes. Indeed, it must do so, if the ego is infinite or endless striving. In the end, therefore, we have action for the sake of action, though in his ethical theory Fichte shows how the infinite striving of the absolute ego after complete freedom and self-possession is fulfilled, so far as it can be, through the series of determinate moral actions in the world which it has posited, through, that is to say, the convergence of the determinate moral vocations of finite subjects towards an ideal goal.

In its detailed development Fichte's practical deduction of consciousness is notoriously difficult to follow. But it is clear enough that for him the ego is from the start the morally active ego. That is to say, it is potentially this. And it is the actualization of the ego's potential nature which demands the positing of the non-ego and the whole work of the productive imagination. Behind, as it were, the theoretical activity of the ego lies its nature as striving, as impulse or drive. For example, the production of the presentation (*Vorstellung*) is the work of the theoretical power, not of the practical power or impulse as such. But the production presupposes the drive to presentation (*der Vorstellungstrieb*). Conversely, the positing of the sensible world is necessary in order that the fundamental striving or drive can take the determinate form of free moral activity directed towards an ideal goal. Thus the two deductions are complementary, though the theoretical deduction finds its ultimate explanation in the practical. In this sense Fichte endeavours to satisfy in his own way the demands of Kant's doctrine of the primacy of the practical reason.

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[1] *F*, 1, p. 291; *M*, 1, p. 483.

[2] *F*, 1, p. 301; *M*, 1, p. 492.

We can also say that in his practical deduction of consciousness Fichte tries to overcome the dichotomy, present in the Kantian philosophy, between the higher and lower nature of man, between man as a moral agent and man as a complex of instincts and impulses. For it is the self-same fundamental drive which is represented as assuming different forms up to that of free moral activity. In other words, Fichte sees the moral life as a development out of the life of instinct and impulse rather than as a counterblast to it. And he even finds a prefiguring of the categorical imperative on the level of physical longing (*Sehnen*) and desire. In his ethics he has, of course, to allow for the fact that there may be, and often is, a conflict between the voice of duty and the claims of sensual desire. But he tries to resolve the problem within the framework of a unified view of the ego's activity in general.

11. From one point of view Fichte's deduction of consciousness can be regarded as a systematic exhibition of the conditions of consciousness as we know it. And if it is regarded simply in this way, questions about the temporal or historical relations between the different conditions are irrelevant. For example, Fichte takes it that the subject-object relationship is essential to consciousness. And in this case there must be both subject and object, ego and non-ego, if there is to be consciousness. The historical order in which these conditions appear is irrelevant to the validity of this statement.

But, as we have seen, the deduction of consciousness is also idealist metaphysics, and the pure ego has to be interpreted as a supra-individual and transfinite activity, the so-called absolute ego. Hence it is understandable if the student of Fichte asks whether the philosopher regards the absolute ego as positing the sensible world before the finite ego or simultaneously with it or through it.

At first sight at least this may seem to be a silly question. The temporal, historical point of view, it may be said, presupposes for Fichte the constitution of empirical consciousness. Hence the transcendental deduction of empirical consciousness necessarily transcends the temporal and historical order and possesses the timelessness of a logical deduction. After all, the time-series is itself deduced. Fichte has no intention of denying the point of view of empirical consciousness, for which Nature precedes finite selves. He is concerned with grounding it, not with denying it.

But the matter is not quite so simple. In the Kantian philosophy it is the human mind which exercises a constitutive activity in giving its *a priori* form to phenomenal reality. True, in this activity the mind acts spontaneously and unconsciously, and it acts as mind as such, as the subject as such, rather than as the mind of Tom or John. But it is none the less the human mind, not the divine mind, which is said to exercise this activity. And if we eliminate the thing-in-itself and hypostatize Kant's transcendental ego as the metaphysical absolute ego, it is quite natural to ask whether the absolute ego posits Nature immediately or through the infra-conscious levels, as it were, of the human being. After all, Fichte's deduction of consciousness not infrequently suggests the second of these alternatives. And if this is what the philosopher really means, he is faced with an obvious difficulty.

Happily, Fichte answers the question in explicit terms. At the beginning of the practical deduction of consciousness he draws attention to an apparent contradiction. On the one hand the ego as intelligence is dependent on the non-ego. On the other hand the ego is said to determine the non-ego and must thus be independent of it. The contradiction is resolved (that is, shown to be only apparent) when we understand that the absolute ego determines immediately the non-ego which enters into representation (*das vorzustellende Nicht-Ich*), whereas it determines the ego as intelligence (the ego as representing, *das vorstellende Ich*) *mediately*, that is, by means of the non-ego. In other words, the absolute ego does not posit the world through the finite ego, but immediately. And the same thing is clearly stated in a passage of the lectures on *The Facts of Consciousness*, to which allusion has already been made. 'The material world has been deduced earlier on as an absolute limitation of the productive power of imagination. But we have not yet stated clearly and explicitly whether the productive power in this function is the self-manifestation of the one Life as such or whether it is the manifestation of individual life; whether, that is to say, a material world is posited through one self-identical Life or through the individual as such. . . . It is not the individual as such but the one Life which intuits the objects of the material world.'[1]

The development of this point of view obviously requires that Fichte should move away from his Kantian point of departure, and that the pure ego, a concept arrived at through reflection on human consciousness, should become absolute Being which manifests itself in the world. And this is indeed the path which Fichte takes in the later philosophy, to which the lectures on *The Facts of Consciousness* belong. But, as will be seen later, he never really succeeds in kicking away the ladder by which he has climbed up to metaphysical idealism. And though he clearly thinks of Nature as being posited by the Absolute as a field for moral activity, he maintains to the end that the world exists only in and for consciousness. Apart, therefore, from the explicit denial that material things are posited 'through the individual as such', his position remains ambiguous. For though consciousness is said to be the Absolute's consciousness, the Absolute is also said to be conscious through man, and not in itself considered apart from man.

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[1] *F*, II, p. 614 (not included in *M*).

CHAPTER III

FICHTE (2)

Introductory remarks—The common moral consciousness and the science of ethics—Man's moral nature—The supreme principle of morality and the formal condition of the morality of actions—Conscience as an unerring guide—The philosophical application of the formal moral law—The idea of moral vocation and Fichte's general vision of reality—A community of selves in a world as a condition of self-consciousness—The principle or rule of right—The deduction and nature of the State—The closed commercial State—Fichte and nationalism.

1. In the section on Fichte's life and writings we saw that he published the *Basis of Natural Right* in 1796, two years before the publication of *The System of Ethics*. In his opinion the theory of rights and of political society could be, and ought to be, deduced independently of the deduction of the principles of morality. This does not mean that Fichte thought of the two branches of philosophy as having no connection at all with each other. For one thing the two deductions possess a common root in the concept of the self as striving and as free activity. For another thing the system of rights and political society provides a field of application for the moral law. But it was Fichte's opinion that his field is external to morality, in the sense that it is not a deduction from the fundamental ethical principle but a framework within which, and in regard to which, the moral law can be applied. For example, man can have moral duties towards the State and the State should bring about those conditions in which the moral life can develop. But the State itself is deduced as a hypothetically necessary contrivance or means to guard and protect the system of rights. If man's moral nature were fully developed, the State would wither away. Again, though the right of private property receives from ethics what Fichte calls a further sanction, its initial deduction is supposed to be independent of ethics.

One main reason why Fichte makes this distinction between the theory of rights and political theory on the one hand and ethics on the other is that he looks on ethics as concerned with interior morality, with conscience and the formal principle of morality, whereas the theory of rights and of political society is concerned with the external relations between human beings. Further, if the comment is made that the doctrine of rights can be regarded as applied ethics, in the sense that it is deducible as an application of the moral law, Fichte refuses to admit the truth of this contention. The fact that I have a right does not necessarily mean that I am under an obligation to exercise it. And the common good may demand on occasion a curtailment of or limitation on the exercise of rights. But the moral law is categorical: it simply says, 'Do this' or 'Do not do that'. Hence the system of rights is not deducible from the moral law, though we are, of course, morally obliged to respect the system of rights as established in a community. In this sense the moral law adds a further sanction to rights, but it is not their initial source.

In Hegel's opinion Fichte did not really succeed in overcoming the formalism of the Kantian ethics, even if he provided some of the material for doing so. And it was indeed Hegel rather than Fichte who synthesized the concepts of right, interior morality and society in the general concept of man's ethical life. But the chief reason why I have dwelt in the first section of this chapter on Fichte's distinction between the doctrine of rights and ethical theory is that I propose to treat of the philosopher's moral theory before outlining his theory of rights and of the State. And this procedure might otherwise give the erroneous impression that Fichte regarded the theory of rights as a deduction from the moral law.

2. A man can have knowledge, Fichte says, of his moral nature, of his subjection to a moral imperative, in two ways. In the first place he can possess this knowledge on the level of common moral consciousness. That is to say, he can be aware through his conscience of a moral imperative telling him to do this or not to do that. And this immediate awareness is quite sufficient for a knowledge of one's duties and for moral behaviour. In the second place a man can assume the ordinary moral consciousness as something given and inquire into its grounds. And a systematic deduction of the moral consciousness from its roots in the ego is the science of ethics and provides 'learned knowledge'.[1] In one sense, of course, this learned knowledge leaves everything as it was before. It does not create obligation, nor does it substitute a new set of duties for those of which one is already aware through conscience. It will not

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[1] *F*, IV, p. 122; *M*, II, p. 516.

give a man a moral nature. But it can enable him to understand his moral nature.

3. What is meant by man's moral nature? Fichte tells us that there is in man an impulsion to perform certain actions simply for the sake of performing them, without regard to external purposes or ends, and to leave undone other actions simply for the sake of leaving them undone, again without regard to external purposes or ends. And the nature of man in so far as this impulsion necessarily manifests itself within him is his 'moral or ethical nature'.[1] To understand the grounds of this moral nature is the task of ethics.

The ego is activity, striving. And as we saw when considering the practical deduction of consciousness, the basic form taken by the striving which constitutes the ego is infra-conscious impulse or drive. Hence from one point of view man is a system of impulses, the impulse which can be ascribed to the system as a whole being that of self-preservation. Considered in this light, man can be described as an organized product of Nature. And as conscious of myself as a system of impulses I can say, 'I find myself as an organized product of Nature.'[2] That is to say, I posit or affirm myself as being this when I consider myself as object.

But man is also intelligence, a subject of consciousness. And as subject of consciousness the ego necessarily tends or is impelled to determine itself through itself alone; that is, it is a striving after complete freedom and independence. Inasmuch, therefore, as the natural impulses and desires which belong to man as a product of Nature aim at satisfaction through some relation to a determinate natural object and consequently appear to depend on the object, we understandably contrast these impulses with the spiritual impulse of the ego as intelligence, the impulse, that is to say, to complete self-determination. We speak of lower and higher desires, of the sphere of necessity and the sphere of freedom, and introduce a dichotomy into human nature.

Fichte does not deny, of course, that such distinctions have, so to speak, a cash value. For one can look at man from two points of view, as object and as subject. As we have seen, I can be conscious of myself as an object in Nature, as an organized product of Nature, and I can be aware of myself as a subject for whose consciousness Nature, including myself as object, exists. To this extent Kant's distinction between the phenomenal and noumenal aspects of man is justified.

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[1] *F*, IV, p. 13; *M*, II, p. 407.

[2] *F*, IV, p. 122; *M*, II, p. 516.

At the same time Fichte insists that this distinction is not ultimate. For instance, the natural impulse which aims at satisfaction and the spiritual impulse which aims at complete freedom and independence are from the transcendental or phenomenal point of view one impulse. It is a great mistake to suppose that man as an organized product of Nature is the sphere of mere mechanism. As Fichte puts it, 'I do not hunger because food exists for me, but a certain object becomes food for me because I am hungry.'[1] The organism asserts itself: it tends to activity. And it is fundamentally the same impulse to self-activity which reappears in the form of the spiritual impulse to the realization of complete freedom. For this basic impulse cannot be stilled and brought to quiescence by temporary sense satisfaction, but reaches out, as it were, to infinity. It is true, of course, that the basic impulse or striving could not take the form of the higher spiritual impulse without consciousness. Consciousness is indeed a dividing-line between man as an organized product of Nature and man as a rational ego, as spirit. But from the philosophical point of view there is ultimately only one impulse, and man is subject and object in one. 'My impulse as a being of Nature and my tendency as pure spirit: are they two different impulses? No, from the transcendental point of view both are one and the same original impulse which constitutes my being: it is only regarded from two different sides. That is to say, I am subject-object, and in the identity and inseparability of both consists my true being. If I regard myself as an *object*, completely determined through the laws of sense intuition and discursive thinking, then that which is actually my one impulse becomes for me a natural impulse, because from this point of view I myself am Nature. If I regard myself as subject, the impulse becomes for me a purely spiritual impulse or the law of self-determination. All the phenomena of the ego rest simply on the reciprocity of these two impulses, and this is really the reciprocal relation *of one and the same impulse to itself*.'[2]

This theory of the unity of man in terms of one impulse has an important bearing on ethics. Fichte makes a distinction between formal and material freedom. Formal freedom requires only the presence of consciousness. Even if a man always followed his natural impulses as directed to pleasure, he would do so freely, provided that he did so consciously and deliberately.[1] Material freedom, however, is expressed in a series of acts tending to the realization of the ego's complete independence. And these are moral acts. Now, if we pressed this distinction, we should be faced with the difficulty of giving any content to the moral act. For we should have on the one hand actions performed in accordance with natural impulse, which are rendered determinate by their reference to particular objects, and on the other actions which exclude all determination by particular objects and are performed solely in accordance with the idea of freedom for freedom's sake. And this second class of actions would appear to be completely indeterminate. But Fichte answers that we have to effect a synthesis which is demanded by the fact that the impulse or tendency which constitutes man's nature is ultimately one impulse. The lower impulse or lower form of the one impulse must sacrifice its end, namely pleasure, while the higher impulse or form of the one impulse must sacrifice its purity, that is, its lack of determination by any object.

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[1] *F*, IV, p. 124; *M*, II, p. 518.

[2] *F*, IV, p. 130; *M*, II, p. 524.

Expressed in this abstract way Fichte's idea of a synthesis may seem extremely obscure. But the fundamental notion is clear enough. For example, it is clearly not demanded of the moral agent that he should cease to perform all those actions to which natural impulse prompts him, such as eating and drinking. It is not demanded of him that he should try to live as a disembodied spirit. What is demanded is that his actions should not be performed simply for the sake of immediate satisfaction, but that they should be members of a series converging towards the ideal end which man sets before himself as a spiritual subject. In so far as he fulfils this demand man realizes his moral nature.

This suggests, of course, that the moral life involves substituting one end for another, a spiritual ideal for natural satisfaction and pleasure. And this idea may seem to be at variance with Fichte's picture of morality as demanding the performance of certain actions simply for the sake of performing them and the non-performance of other actions simply for the sake of not performing them. But the spiritual ideal in question is for Fichte self-activity, action determined through the ego alone. And his point is that such action must take the form of a series of determinate actions in the world, though at the same time they must be determined by the ego itself and express its freedom rather than subjection to the natural world. This means in effect that the actions should be performed for the sake of performing them.

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[1] There are activities in man, the circulation of the blood for example, of which he is not immediately, but only mediately, conscious. And he cannot be said to control them. But when I am immediately conscious of an impulse or desire, I am free, Fichte takes it, to satisfy or not to satisfy it.

One can say, therefore, that Fichte makes a resolute attempt to exhibit the unity of human nature and to show that there is continuity between the life of man as a natural organism and the life of man as spiritual subject of consciousness. At the same time the influence of the Kantian formalism is strongly marked. And it shows itself clearly in Fichte's account of the supreme principle of morality.

4. Speaking of the ego when it is thought only as *object* Fichte asserts that 'the essential character of the ego, by which it is distinguished from everything external to itself, consists in a tendency to self-activity [*Selbstthätigkeit*] for the sake of self-activity; and it is this tendency which is thought when the ego is thought in and for itself without relation to anything outside it'.[1] But it is the ego as subject, as intelligence, which thinks itself as object. And when it thinks itself as a tendency to self-activity for the sake of self-activity, it necessarily thinks itself as free, as able to realize absolute self-activity, as a power of self-determination. Further, the ego cannot conceive itself in this way without conceiving itself as subject to law, the law of determining itself in accordance with the concept of self-determination. That is to say, if I conceive my objective essence as a power of self-determination, the power of realizing absolute self-activity, I must also conceive myself as obliged to actualize this essence.

We have, therefore, the two ideas of freedom and law. But just as the ego as subject and the ego as object, though distinguished in consciousness, are inseparable and ultimately one, so are the ideas of freedom and law inseparable and ultimately one. 'When you think yourself as free, you are compelled to think your freedom as falling under a law; and when you think this law, you are compelled to think yourself as free. Freedom does not follow from the law any more than the law follows from freedom. They are not two ideas, of which the one can be thought as dependent on the other, but they are one and the same idea; it is a complete synthesis.'[2]

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[1] *F*, IV, p. 29; *M*, II, p. 423.

[2] *F*, IV, p. 53; *M*, II, p. 447. Kant, Fichte remarks, did not mean that the *thought* of freedom is derived from the thought of law. He meant that faith in the objective validity of the thought of freedom is derived from consciousness of the moral law.

By this somewhat tortuous route Fichte deduces the fundamental principle of morality, 'the necessary idea of the intelligence that it ought to determine its freedom purely and without exception in accordance with the concept of independence [*Selbständigkeit*]'.[1] The free being ought to bring its freedom under a law, namely the law of complete self-determination or absolute independence (absence of determination through any external object). And this law should admit of no exception because it expresses the very nature of the free being.

Now, a finite rational being cannot ascribe freedom to itself without conceiving the possibility of a series of determinate free actions, caused by a will which is capable of exercising real causal activity. But the realization of this possibility demands an objective world in which the rational being can tend towards its goal through a series of particular actions. The natural world, the sphere of the non-ego, can thus be regarded as the material or instrument for the fulfilment of our duty, sensible things appearing as so many occasions for specifying the pure ought. We have already seen that according to Fichte the absolute ego posits the world as an obstacle or check which renders possible the recoil of the ego onto itself in self-consciousness. And we now see the positing of the world in a more specifically ethical context. It is the necessary condition for the rational being's fulfilment of its moral vocation. Without the world it could not give content, as it were, to the pure ought.

To be a moral action, each of these particular actions must fulfil a certain formal condition. '*Act always according to your best conviction of your duty* or *Act according to your conscience.* This is the formal condition of the morality of our actions. . . .'[2] The will which so acts is the good will. Fichte is obviously writing under the influence of Kant.

5. 'Act according to your conscience.' Fichte defines conscience as 'the immediate consciousness of our determinate duty'.[3] That is to say, conscience is the immediate awareness of a particular obligation. And from this definition it obviously follows that conscience never errs and cannot err. For if conscience is defined as an immediate awareness of one's duty, it would be contradictory to say that it can be a non-awareness of one's duty.

It is clear that Fichte wishes to find an absolute criterion of right and wrong. It is also clear that he wishes, like Kant, to avoid heteronomy. No external authority can be the required criterion. Further, the criterion must be at the disposal of all, unlearned as well as learned. Fichte fixes, therefore, upon conscience and describes it as an immediate feeling (*Gefühl*). For inasmuch as the practical power has priority over the theoretical power, it is the former which must be the source of conscience. And as the practical power does not judge, conscience must be a feeling.

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[1] *F*, IV, p. 59; *M*, II, p. 453.

[2] *F*, IV, pp. 173-4; *M*, II, pp. 567-8.

[3] *F*, IV, p. 173; *M*, II, p. 567.

Fichte's description of conscience as an immediate feeling does indeed fit in with the way in which the ordinary man is accustomed to speak about his moral convictions. A man might say, for example, 'I feel that this is the right thing to do. I feel that any other course of action would be wrong.' And he may very well feel certain about it. At the same time one might wish to comment that feeling is scarcely an unerring criterion of duty. Fichte, however, argues that the immediate feeling in question expresses the agreement or harmony between 'our empirical ego and the pure ego. And the pure ego is our only true being; it is all possible being and all possible truth.'[1] Hence the feeling which constitutes conscience can never be erroneous or deceptive.

To understand Fichte's theory we must understand that he is not excluding from man's moral life all activity by the theoretical power. The ego's fundamental tendency to complete freedom and independence stimulates this power to look for the determinate content of duty. After all, we can and do reflect about what we ought to do in this or that set of circumstances. But any theoretical judgment which we make may be mistaken. The function of argument is to draw attention to the different aspects of the situation under discussion and so to facilitate the attunement, so to speak, of the empirical ego with the pure ego. This attunement expresses itself in a feeling, the immediate consciousness of one's duty. And this immediate awareness puts a stop to theoretical inquiry and argument which might otherwise be prolonged indefinitely.

Fichte will not admit that anyone who has an immediate consciousness of his duty can resolve not to do his duty precisely because it is his duty. 'Such a maxim would be diabolical; but the concept of the devil is self-contradictory.'[2] At the same time 'no man, indeed no finite being so far as we know, is confirmed in good'.[3] Conscience as such cannot err, but it can be obscured or even vanish. Thus the concept of duty may remain, though the consciousness of its connection with some particular action may be obscured. To put the matter crudely, I may not give my empirical ego the chance to click with the pure ego.[1] Further, the consciousness of duty may practically vanish, in which case 'we then act either according to the maxim of self-advantage or according to the blind impulse to assert everywhere our lawless will'.[2] Thus even if the possibility of diabolical evil is excluded, the doctrine of infallibility of conscience does not exclude the possibility of acting wrongly. For I may be accountable for allowing my conscience to become obscured or even to vanish altogether.

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[1] *F*, IV, p. 169; *M*, II, p. 563.

[2] *F*, IV, p. 191; *M*, II, p. 585.

[3] *F*, IV, p. 193; *M*, II, p. 587.

According to Fichte, therefore, the ordinary man has at his disposal, if he chooses to make use of it, an infallible criterion for assessing his particular duties, which does not depend on any knowledge of the science of ethics. But the philosopher can inquire into the grounds of this criterion. And we have seen that Fichte offers a metaphysical explanation.

6. Conscience is thus the supreme judge in the practical moral life. But its dictates are not arbitrary and capricious. For the 'feeling' of which Fichte speaks is really the expression of our implicit awareness that a particular action falls inside or outside the series of actions which fulfil the fundamental impulse of the pure ego. Hence even if conscience is a sufficient guide for moral conduct, there is no reason why the philosopher should be unable to show theoretically that actions of a certain type belong or do not belong to the class of actions which lead to the ego's moral goal. He cannot deduce the particular obligations of particular individuals. This is a matter for conscience. But a philosophical application of the fundamental principle of morality is possible, within the limits of general principles or rules.

To take an example. I am under an obligation to act, for only through action can I fulfil the moral law. And the body is a necessary instrument for action. On the one hand, therefore, I ought not to treat my body as if it were itself my final end. On the other hand I ought to preserve and foster the body as a necessary instrument for action. Hence self-mutilation, for example, would be wrong unless it were required for the preservation of the body as a whole. Whether in this or that particular instance self-mutilation is justified is, however, a matter for conscience rather than for the philosopher. I can only consider the situation under its different aspects and then act according to my immediate consciousness of my duty, confident, according to Fichte, that this immediate 'feeling' cannot err.

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[1] This happens, for example, if I do not really size up the situation but look exclusively at one partial aspect.

[2] *F*, IV, p. 194; *M*, II, p. 588.

Similarly, one can formulate general rules in regard to the use of the cognitive powers. Fichte's profound respect for the vocation of the scholar is expressed in his insistence on the need for combining complete freedom of thought and research with the conviction that 'knowledge of my duty must be the final end of all my knowledge, all my thought and research'.[1] The synthesizing rule is that the scholar should pursue his researches in a spirit of devotion to duty and not out of mere curiosity or to have something to do.

7. The philosopher, therefore, can lay down certain general rules of conduct as applications of the fundamental principle of morality. But an individual's moral vocation is made up of countless particular obligations, in regard to which conscience is the unerring guide. Thus each single individual has his own real moral vocation, his own personal contribution to make to converging series of actions which tend to realize a moral world-order, the perfect rule of reason in the world. The attainment of this ideal goal requires, as it were, a division of moral labour. And we can reformulate the fundamental principle of morality in this way: 'Always fulfil your moral vocation.'[2]

The general outlines of Fichte's vision of reality should now be clear. The ultimate reality, which can be described, according to our point of view, as the absolute ego or as infinite Will, strives spontaneously towards perfect consciousness of itself as free, towards perfect self-possession. But self-consciousness, in Fichte's view, must take the form of finite self-consciousness, and the infinite Will's self-realization can take place only through the self-realization of finite wills. Hence the infinite activity spontaneously expresses itself in a multiplicity of finite selves or rational and free beings. But self-consciousness is not possible without a non-ego, from which the finite ego can recoil onto itself. And the realization of the finite free will through action requires a world in and through which action is possible. Hence the absolute ego or infinite Will must posit the world, Nature, if it is to become conscious of its own freedom through finite selves. And the moral vocations of finite selves in a common goal can be seen as the way in which the absolute ego or infinite Will moves towards its goal. Nature is simply the condition, though a necessary condition, for the expression of the moral will. The really significant feature in empirical reality is the moral activity of human beings, which is itself the expression of the infinite Will, the form which the infinite Will, an activity or doing rather than a being which acts, spontaneously and necessarily assumes.

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[1] *F*, IV, p. 300; *M*, II, p. 694.

[2] *F*, IV, p. 150; *M*, II, p. 544

8. We can turn now to the theory of right and the deduction of the State, to a consideration, that is to say, of the framework within which man's moral life is developed. But the theory of right and political theory, treating, as they do, of relations between human beings, presupposes a plurality of selves. Hence it is appropriate to begin by saying a little more about Fichte's deduction of this plurality.

As we have seen, the absolute ego must limit itself in the form of the finite ego if self-consciousness is to arise. But 'no free being becomes conscious of itself without at the same time becoming conscious of other similar beings'.[1] It is only by distinguishing myself from other beings which I recognize as rational and free that I can become conscious of myself as a determinate free individual. Intersubjectivity is a condition of self-consciousness. A community of selves is thus required if self-consciousness is to arise. Intelligence, as existing, is a manifold. In fact it is 'a closed manifold, that is, a *system* of rational beings'.[2] For they are all limitations of the one absolute ego, the one infinite activity.

This recognition of oneself as a member of a community or system of rational beings requires in turn, as a precondition, the sensible world. For I perceive my freedom as manifested in actions which interlock, so to speak, with the actions of others. And for such a system of actions to be possible there must be a common sensible world in which distinct rational beings can express themselves.

9. Now, if I cannot become conscious of myself as free without regarding myself as a member of a community of free rational beings, it follows that I cannot ascribe to myself alone the totality of infinite freedom. 'I limit myself in my appropriation of freedom by the fact that I also recognize the freedom of others.'[3] At the same time I must also conceive each member of the community as limiting the external expression of his freedom in such a way that all other members can express their freedom.

This idea of each member of the community of rational beings limiting the expression of his freedom in such a way that all other members can also express their freedom is the concept of right. And the principle or rule of right (*Rechtsregel*) is stated by Fichte in this way: 'Limit your freedom through the concept of the freedom of all other persons with whom you come into relation.'[1] The concept of right for Fichte is essentially a social concept. It arises together with the idea of other rational beings who are capable of interfering with one's own activity, and with whose activities one is oneself capable of interfering. If I think away all other rational beings save myself, I have *powers*, and I may have a moral duty to exercise them or some of them. But it is inappropriate in this context to speak of my having a *right* to exercise them. For instance, I have the power of free speech. But if I think away all other rational beings, it is absurd, according to Fichte, to speak of my having a right to free speech. For the concept makes no sense unless I conceive the existence of other beings capable of interfering with my exercise of the power to speak my mind freely. Similarly, it makes no sense to speak of a right to private property except in a social context. True, if I were the only rational being I should have a duty to act and to use material things, expressing my freedom in and through them. I should have possessions. But the concept of the right of private property in the strict sense arises only when I conceive other human beings to whom I have to ascribe similar rights. What can private property mean outside a social context?

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[1] *F*, II, p. 143; *M*, IV, p. 143.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *F*, III, p. 8; *M*, II, p. 12.

Now, though the existence of a community of free selves demands that each member should take the rule of right as the operative principle of his conduct, no individual will is necessarily governed by the rule. Fichte argues, however, that the union of many wills into one can produce a will constantly directed by the rule. 'If a million men are together, it may well be that each one wills for himself as much freedom as possible. But if we unite the will of all in one concept as one will, this will divides the sum of possible freedom into equal parts. It aims at all being free in such a way that the freedom of each individual is limited by the freedom of all the rest.'[2] This union expresses itself in mutual recognition of rights. And it is this mutual recognition which gives rise to the right of private property, considered as the right to exclusive possession of certain things.[3] 'The right of exclusive possession is brought into being *through mutual recognition*: and it does not exist without this condition. All property is grounded on the union of many wills into one will.'[1]

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[1] *F*, III, p. 10; *M*, II, p. 14.

[2] *F*, III, p. 106; *M*, II, p. 110.

[3] It is worth noting that for Fichte rightful ownership of a thing is really the exclusive right to perform certain actions in regard to it. For instance, a farmer's property right in regard to a field is an exclusive right to sow it, plough it, graze cattle on it, and so on.

10. If the stability of rights rests on sustained common recognition, reciprocal loyalty and trust are required in the persons concerned. But these are moral conditions on which one cannot count with certainty. Hence there must be some power which can enforce respect for rights. Further, this power must be the expression of the freedom of the human person: it must be established freely. We thus require a compact or contract whereby the contracting parties agree that anyone who infringes the rights of another should be treated in accordance with coercive law. But such a contract can be effective only when it takes the form of the social contract whereby the State is established,[2] furnished with the requisite power to secure the attainment of the end desired by the general will, namely the stability of the system of rights and the protection of the freedom of all. The union of all wills into one thus takes the form of the General Will as embodied in the State.

The influence of Rousseau[3] is obvious, both in Fichte's theory of the General Will and in his idea of the social contract. But the ideas are not introduced simply out of reverence for the name of the French philosopher. For Fichte's deduction of the State consists in a progressive argument showing that the State is a necessary condition for maintaining relations of right without which a community of free persons cannot be conceived. And this community is itself depicted as a necessary condition for the self-realization of the absolute ego as infinite freedom. The State must thus be interpreted as the expression of freedom. And Rousseau's theories of the Social Contract and General Will lend themselves for this purpose.

Fichte does indeed speak of the State as a totality, and he compares it with an organized product of Nature. We cannot say, therefore, that the organic theory of the State is absent from Fichte's political thought. At the same time he emphasizes the fact that the State not only expresses freedom but also exists to create a state of affairs in which each citizen can exercise his personal freedom so far as this is consistent with the freedom of others. Further, the State, considered as a coercive power, is only hypothetically necessary. That is to say, it is necessary on the hypothesis that man's moral development has not reached a point at which each member of society respects the rights and liberties of others from moral motives alone. If this condition were fulfilled, the State, as a coercive power, would no longer be necessary. Indeed, as one of the functions of the State is to facilitate man's moral development, we can say that for Fichte the State should endeavour to bring about the conditions for its own demise. To use Marxist language, Fichte looks forward to the withering away of the State, at least as an ideal possibility. He cannot, therefore, regard it as an end in itself.

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[1] *F*, III, p. 129; *M*, II, p. 133.

[2] Fichte distinguishes various stages of the social contract, culminating in what he calls the union-compact, whereby the members of political society become an organized totality.

[3] See Vol. VI, chapters 3 and 4.

Given these premisses, Fichte naturally rejects despotism. What may seem surprising in a sympathizer with the French Revolution is that he also rejects democracy. 'No State may be ruled either *despotically* or *democratically*.'[1] But by democracy he understands direct rule by the whole people. And his objection to it is that in a literal democracy there would be no authority to compel the multitude to observe its own laws. Even if many citizens were individually well disposed, there would be no power capable of preventing the degeneration of the community into an irresponsible and capricious mob. Provided, however, that the two extremes of unqualified despotism and democracy are avoided, we cannot say what form of constitution is the best. It is a matter of politics, not of philosophy.

At the same time reflection on the possibility of abuse of power by the civil authority led Fichte to lay great stress on the desirability of establishing a kind of supreme court or tribunal, the 'Ephorate'. This would possess no legislative, executive or judicial power in the ordinary sense. Its function would be to watch over the observance of the laws and constitution, and in the event of a serious abuse of power by the civil authority the Ephors would be entitled to suspend it from the exercise of its functions by means of a State interdict. Recourse would then be had to a referendum to ascertain the people's will concerning a change in the constitution, the law or the government, as the case might be.

That Fichte shows no inclination to deify the State is clear enough. But his political theory, as so far outlined, may suggest that he is committed to minimizing the functions of the State by defending a purely *laissez-faire* policy. But this conclusion does not

[1] *F*, III, p. 160; *M*, II, p. 164.

represent his mind. He does indeed maintain that the purpose of the State is to maintain public security and the system of rights. And from this it follows that interference with the freedom of the individual should be limited to what is required for the fulfilment of this purpose. But the establishment and maintenance of a system of rights and its adjustment to the common good may require a very considerable amount of State activity. It is idle, for example, to insist that everyone has a right to live by his labour if conditions are such that many people cannot do so. Further, though the State is not the fount of the moral law, it is its business to promote the conditions which facilitate the moral development without which there is no true freedom. In particular it should attend to the matter of education.

11. Hence it is not really so astonishing if in his *Closed Commercial State* we find Fichte envisaging a planned economy. He presupposes that all human beings have a right not simply to live but to live a decent human life. And the question then arises how this right can be most effectively realized. In the first place, as Plato recognized centuries ago, there must be division of labour, giving rise to the main economic classes.[1] And in the second place a state of harmony or balance must be maintained. If one economic class grows disproportionately large, the whole economy may be upset. In *The System of Ethics* Fichte emphasized the individual's duty to choose his profession in accordance with his talents and circumstances. In *The Closed Commercial State* he is concerned rather with the common good, and he stresses the State's need to watch over and regulate the division of labour for the good of the community. True, changing circumstances will demand changes in the State's regulations. But supervision and planning are in any case indispensable.

In Fichte's opinion a balanced economy, once established, cannot be maintained unless the State has the power to prevent its being upset by any individual or set of individuals. And he draws the conclusion that all commercial relations with foreign countries should be in the hands of the State or subject to strict State control. 'In the rational State immediate trade with a foreign subject cannot be permitted to the individual citizen.'[2] Fichte's ideal is that of a closed economy in the sense of a self-sufficient economic community.[1] But if there has to be trade with foreign countries, it should not be left to the private initiative and judgment of individuals.

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[1] Fichte assumes that there will be three main economic classes. First, the producers of the raw materials required for human life. Secondly, those who transform these raw materials into goods such as clothes, shoes, flour and so on. Thirdly, the merchants.

[2] *F*, III, p. 421; *M*, III, p. 451.

What Fichte envisages, therefore, is a form of national socialism. And he thinks of a planned economy as calculated to provide the material conditions required for the higher intellectual and moral development of the people. In fact, by 'the rational State' (*der Vernunftstaat*) he really means a State directed according to the principles of his own philosophy. We may not feel particularly optimistic about the results of State patronage of a particular philosophical system. But in Fichte's opinion rulers who were really conversant with the principles of transcendental idealism would never abuse their power by restricting private freedom more than was required for the attainment of an end which is itself the expression of freedom.

12. Regarded from the economic point of view, Fichte can be spoken of as one of Germany's first socialist writers. Politically speaking, however, he moved from an earlier cosmopolitan attitude towards German nationalism. In the *Basis of Natural Right* he interpreted the idea of the General Will as leading to the idea of the union of all human wills in a universal community, and he looked forward to a confederation of nations. The system of rights, he thought, could be rendered really stable only through the establishment of a world-wide community. And to a certain extent he always retained this wide outlook. For his ideal was always that of the advance of all men to spiritual freedom. But he came to think that the ideals of the French Revolution, which had aroused his youthful enthusiasm, had been betrayed by Napoleon and that the Germans were better qualified than the French for leading mankind towards its goal. After all, were not the Germans best suited for understanding the principles of the *Wissenschaftslehre* and so for enlightening mankind and teaching it by example what the saving truth could effect? In other words, he thought of Germany as having a cultural mission. And he was convinced that this mission could not be effectively fulfilled without the political unity of the German people. Cultural and linguistic unity go together, and no culture can be unified and lasting without the backbone of

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[1] Fichte's advocacy of a 'closed' commercial State is not based entirely on economic reasons. Like Plato before him, he believes that unrestricted intercourse with foreign countries would hamper the education of the citizens according to the principles of the true philosophy.

political unity. Hence Fichte looked forward to the formation of one German *Reich* which would put an end to the existing division of the Germans into a multiplicity of States. And he hoped for the emergence of a leader who would achieve this political unification of the Germans into one 'rational State'.

If we look back on Fichte's hopes and dreams in the light of Germany's history in the first half of the twentieth century, they obviously tend to appear as sinister and ominous. But, as has already been remarked, we should bear in mind the historical circumstances of his own time. In any case further reflections on this matter can be left to the reader.

CHAPER IV

FICHTE (3)

Fichte's early ideas on religion—God in the first version of the theory of science—The charge of atheism and Fichte's reply—The infinite Will in The Vocation of Man—*The development of the philosophy of Being, 1801–5*—The Doctrine of Religion—*Later writings—Explanatory and critical comments on Fichte's philosophy of Being.*

1. IN 1790 Fichte wrote some notes or *Aphorisms on Religion and Deism* (*Aphorismen über Religion und Deismus*) which express clearly enough a sense of tension between simple Christian piety and speculative philosophy or, to use a rather hackneyed phrase, between the God of religion and the God of the philosophers. 'The Christian religion seems to be designed more for the heart than for the understanding.'[1] The heart seeks a God who can respond to prayer, who can feel compassion and love; and Christianity fulfils this need. But the understanding, as represented by what Fichte calls deism, presents us with the concept of a changeless necessary Being who is the ultimate cause of all that happens in the world. Christianity offers us the picture of an anthropomorphic Deity, and this picture is well adapted to religious feeling and its exigencies. Speculative philosophy offers us the idea of a changeless first cause and of a system of finite beings which is governed by determinism. And this idea of the understanding does not meet the needs of the heart. True, the two are compatible, in the sense that speculative philosophy leaves untouched the subjective validity of religion. And for the pious Christian who knows little or nothing of philosophy there is no problem. But what of the man whose heart desires a God conceived in human terms but who is at the same time so constituted that the inclination to philosophical reflection is part of his nature? It is all very well to say that he should set limits to philosophical reflection. 'But can he do so, even if he wishes?'[2]

Fichte's own reflection, however, led him in the direction of the Kantian conception of God and of religion rather than in that of deism, which belonged to the pre-Kantian era. And in his *Essay*

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[1] *F*, v, p. 5 (not contained in *M*).

[2] *F*, v, p. 8.

towards a Critique of All Revelation (*Versuch einer Kritik aller Offenbarung*, 1792) he attempted to develop Kant's point of view. In particular he made a distinction between 'theology' and religion. The idea of the possibility of a moral law demands belief in God not only as the Power which dominates Nature and is able to synthesize virtue and happiness but also as the complete embodiment of the moral ideal, as the all-holy Being and supreme Good. But assent to propositions about God (such as 'God is holy and just') is not the same thing as religion which 'according to the meaning of the word [*religio*] should be something which *binds* us, and indeed binds us *more strongly* than we would otherwise be bound'.[1] And this binding is derived from the acceptance of the rational moral law as God's law, as the expression of the divine will.

Needless to say, Fichte does not mean that the content of the moral law is arbitrarily determined by the divine will, so that it cannot be known without revelation. Nor does he propose to substitute the concept of heteronomy, of an authoritarian ethics, for the Kantian concept of the autonomy of the practical reason. To justify his position, therefore, he has recourse to the idea of a radical evil in man, that is, to the idea of the ingrained possibility of evil, owing to the strength of natural impulse and passion, and to the idea of the consequent obscuring of man's knowledge of the moral law. The concept of God as the moral legislator and of obedience to the all-holy will of God helps man to fulfil the moral law and grounds the additional element of binding which is peculiar to religion. Further, as the knowledge of God and his law can be obscured, God's revelation of himself as moral legislator is desirable if it is possible.

This may sound as though Fichte is going well beyond Kant. But the difference is much less than may appear at first. Fichte does not decide where revelation is to be found. But he gives general criteria for deciding whether an alleged revelation is really what it claims to be. For example, no alleged revelation can possibly be what it is claimed to be if it contradicts the moral law. And any alleged revelation which goes beyond the idea of the moral law as the expression of the divine will is not revelation. Hence Fichte does not really transcend the limits of Kant's conception of religion. And the sympathy which he was later to show for Christian dogmas is absent at this stage of his thought.

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[1] *F*, v, p. 43; *M*, I, p. 12.

Obviously, it can be objected against Fichte's position that to decide whether revelation really is revelation or not we have first to know the moral law. Hence revelation adds nothing except the idea of fulfilling the moral law as the expression of the all-holy will of God. True, this additional element constitutes what is peculiar to religion. But it seems to follow, on Fichte's premisses, that religion is, as it were, a concession to human weakness. For it is precisely human weakness which needs strengthening through the concept of obedience to the divine legislator. Hence if Fichte is not prepared to abandon the Kantian idea of the autonomy of the practical reason and if at the same time he wishes to retain and support the idea of religion, he must revise his concept of God. And as will be seen presently, his own system of transcendental idealism, in its first form at least, left him no option but to do this.

2. In Fichte's first exposition and explanations of the *Wissenschaftslehre* there is very little mention of God. Nor indeed is there much occasion for mentioning God. For Fichte is concerned with the deduction or reconstruction of consciousness from a first principle which is immanent in consciousness. As we have seen, the pure ego is not a being which lies behind consciousness but an activity which is immanent in consciousness and grounds it. And the intellectual intuition by which the pure ego is apprehended is not a mystical apprehension of the Deity but an intuitive grasping of the pure I-principle revealing itself as an activity or doing (*Thun*). Hence if we emphasize the phenomenological aspect of Fichte's theory of science or knowledge, there is no more reason for describing his pure ego as God than there is for so describing Kant's transcendental ego.

The phenomenological aspect is not indeed the only aspect. In virtue of his elimination of the thing-in-itself and his transformation of the critical philosophy into idealism Fichte is bound to attribute to the pure ego an ontological status and function which was not attributed by Kant to the transcendental ego as logical condition of the unity of consciousness. If the thing-in-itself is to be eliminated, sensible being must be derived, in all the reality which it possesses, from the ultimate principle on the side of the subject; that is, from the absolute ego. But the word 'absolute' must be understood as referring in the first place to that which is fundamental in the transcendental deduction of consciousness from a principle which is immanent in consciousness, not as referring to a Being beyond all consciousness. To postulate such a Being in a system of transcendental idealism would be to abandon the attempt to reduce being to thought.

It is true, of course, that the more the metaphysical implications of the theory of the absolute ego are developed, the more does it take on, as it were, the character of the divine. For it then appears as the infinite activity which produces within itself the world of Nature and of finite selves. But while Fichte is primarily engaged in transforming the system of Kant into idealism and in deducing experience from the transcendental ego, it would hardly occur to him to describe this ego as God. For, as the very use of the word 'ego' shows, the notion of the pure, transcendental or absolute ego is so entangled, as it were, with human consciousness that such a description necessarily appears as extremely inappropriate.

Further, the term 'God' signifies for Fichte a personal self-conscious Being. But the absolute ego is not a self-conscious being. The activity which grounds consciousness and is a striving towards self-consciousness cannot itself be conscious. The absolute ego, therefore, cannot be identified with God. What is more, we cannot even think the idea of God. The concept of consciousness involves a distinction between subject and object, ego and non-ego. And self-consciousness presupposes the positing of the non-ego and itself involves a distinction between the I-subject and the me-object. But the idea of God is the idea of a Being in which there is no such distinction and which is perfectly self-luminous quite independently of the existence of a world. And we are unable to think such an idea. We can *talk* about it, of course; but we cannot be said to *conceive* it. For once we try to *think* what is said, we necessarily introduce the distinctions which are verbally denied. The idea of a subject to which nothing is opposed is thus 'the unthinkable idea of the Godhead'.[1]

It should be noted that Fichte does not say that God is impossible. When Jean-Paul Sartre says that self-consciousness necessarily involves a distinction and that the idea of an infinite self-consciousness in which there is perfect coincidence of subject and object without any distinction is a contradictory idea, he intends this as a proof of atheism, if, that is to say, theism is understood as implying the idea which is alleged to be contradictory. But Fichte carefully avoids saying that it is impossible that there should be a God. He appears to leave open the possibility of a

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[1] *F*, I, p. 254; *M*, I, p. 448.

Being which transcends the range of human thought and conception. In any case Fichte does not assert atheism.

At the same time it is easily understandable that Fichte was accused of atheism. And we can turn to a brief consideration of the famous atheism controversy which resulted in the philosopher having to abandon his chair at Jena.

3. In his paper *On the Basis of Our Belief in a Divine Providence* (1798) Fichte gave an explicit account of his idea of God. Let us assume first of all that we are looking at the world from the point of view of ordinary consciousness, which is also that of empirical science. From this point of view, that is, for empirical consciousness, we find ourselves as being in the world, the universe, and we cannot transcend it by means of any metaphysical proof of the existence of a supernatural Being. 'The world is, simply because it is; and it is what it is, simply because it is what it is. From this point of view we start with an absolute being, and this absolute being is the world: the two concepts are identical.'[1] To explain the world as the creation of a divine intelligence is, from the scientific point of view, 'simply nonsense' (*totaler Unsinn*). The world is a self-organizing whole which contains in itself the ground of all the phenomena which occur in it.

Now let us look at the world from the point of view of transcendental idealism. The world is then seen as existing only for consciousness and as posited by the pure ego. But in this case the question of finding a cause of the world apart from the ego does not arise. Therefore neither from the scientific nor from the transcendental point of view can we prove the existence of a transcendent divine Creator.

There is, however, a third point of view, the moral. And when looked at from this point of view the world is seen to be 'the sensible material for (the performance of) our duty'.[2] And the ego is seen to belong to a supersensible moral order. It is this moral order which is God. The 'living and operative moral order is itself God. We need no other God, and we cannot conceive any other.'[3] 'This is the true faith; this moral order is the *divine*. . . . It is constructed by right action.'[4] To speak of God as substance or as personal or as exercising with foresight a benevolent providence is so much nonsense. Belief in divine providence is the belief that moral action always has good results and that evil actions can never have good results.

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[1] *F*, v, p. 179; *M*, III, p. 123.

[2] *F*, v, p. 185; *M*, III, p. 129.

[3] *F*, v, p. 186; *M*, III, p. 130.

[4] *F*, v, p. 185; *M*, III, p. 129. It is important to notice the original German text: *Dies ist der wahre Glaube; diese moralische Ordnung ist das Göttliche, das wir annehmen. Er wird construirt durch das Rechtthun.* Grammatically, *Er* (It) should refer to *der wahre Glaube* (the true faith) and cannot refer to *diese moralische Ordnung* (this moral order). Unless, therefore, we are prepared to say that Fichte

That such statements led to a charge of atheism is not altogether surprising. For to most of Fichte's readers God seemed to have been reduced to a moral ideal. And this is not what is generally meant by theism. After all, there are atheists with moral ideals. Fichte, however, was indignant at the accusation and answered it at considerable length. His replies did not achieve the desired result of clearing his name in the eyes of his opponents; but this is irrelevant for our purposes. We are concerned only with what he said.

In the first place Fichte explained that he could not describe God as personal or as substance because personality was for him something essentially finite and substance meant something extended in space and time, a material thing. In fact, none of the attributes of things or beings could be predicated of God. 'Speaking in a purely philosophical manner one would have to say of God: He is . . . not a being but a *pure activity*, the life and principle of a supersensible world-order.'[1]

In the second place Fichte maintained that his critics had misunderstood what he meant by a moral world-order. They had interpreted him as saying that God is a moral order in a sense analogous to the order created by a housewife when she arranges the furniture and other objects in a room. But what he had really meant was that God is an active ordering, an *ordo ordinans*, a living and active moral order, not an *ordo ordinatus*, something merely constructed by human effort. God is *ein tätiges Ordnen*, an active ordering, rather than an *Ordnung*, an order constructed by man.[2] And the finite ego, considered as acting in accordance with duty, is 'a member of that supersensible world-order'.[3]

In Fichte's idea of God as the moral world-order we can perhaps see the fusion of two lines of thought. First there is the concept of the dynamic unity of all rational beings. In the *Basis of the Entire Theory of Science* Fichte had not much occasion for dwelling on the plurality of selves. For he was primarily concerned with an abstract

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has simply neglected grammatical propriety, we must recognize that he is *not* saying that God, identified with the moral order, is no more than a creation or construction of man.

[1] *F*, v, p. 261. (Fichte's *Gerichtliche Verantwortungsschrift* is not printed in *M*.)

[2] *F*, v, p. 382; *M*, III, p. 246.

[3] *F*, v, p. 261.

deduction of 'experience' in the sense already explained. But in the *Basis of Natural Right* he insisted, as we have seen, on the necessity of a plurality of rational beings. 'Man becomes man only amongst men; and as he can be nothing else but man and would not exist at all if he were not man, *there must be a plurality of men if there is to be man at all.*'[1] Hence Fichte was naturally impelled to reflect on the bond of union between men. In *The Science of Ethics* he was primarily concerned with the moral law as such and with personal morality; but he expressed his conviction that all rational beings have a common moral end, and he spoke of the moral law as using the individual as a tool or instrument for its self-realization in the sensible world. And from this notion there is an easy transition to the idea of a moral world-order which fulfils itself in and through rational beings and unites them in itself.

The second line of thought is Fichte's strongly moralistic conception of religion. At the time when he wrote the essay which occasioned the atheism-controversy he tended, like Kant before him, to equate religion with morality. Not prayer but the performance of one's duty is true religion. True, Fichte allowed that the moral life has a distinguishable religious aspect, namely the belief that whatever appearances may suggest performance of one's duty always produces a good result because it forms part, as it were, of a self-realizing moral order. But, given Fichte's moralistic interpretation of religion, faith in this moral world-order would naturally count for him as faith in God, especially as on his premisses he could not think of God as a personal transcendent Being.

This moralistic conception of religion finds clear expression in an essay to which the title *From a Private Paper* (1800) has been given. The place or locus of religion, Fichte asserts, is found in obedience to the moral law. And religious faith is faith in a moral order. In action considered from a purely natural and non-moral point of view man reckons on the natural order, that is, on the stability and uniformity of Nature. In moral action he reckons on a supersensible moral order in which his action has a part to play and which ensures its moral fruitfulness. 'Every belief in a divine being *which contains more* than this concept of the moral order is to that extent imagination and superstition.'[2]

Obviously, those who described Fichte as an atheist were from one point of view quite justified. For he refused to assert what theism was generally taken to mean. At the same time his indignant repudiation of the charge of atheism is understandable. For he did not assert that nothing exists except finite selves and the sensible world. There is, at least as an object of practical faith, a supersensible moral world-order which fulfils itself in and through man.

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[1] *F*, III, p. 39; *M*, II, p. 43.

[2] *F*, V, pp. 394–5; *M*, III, p. 258.

4. But if the moral world-order is really an *ordo ordinans*, a truly active ordering, it must obviously possess an ontological status. And in *The Vocation of Man* (1800) it appears as the eternal and infinite Will. 'This Will binds me in union with itself: it also binds me in union with all finite beings like myself and is the common mediator between us all.'[1] It is infinite Reason. But dynamic creative Reason is Will. Fichte also describes it as creative Life.

If we took some of Fichte's expressions literally, we should probably be inclined to interpret his doctrine of the infinite Will in a theistic sense. He even addresses the 'sublime and living Will, named by no name and compassed by no concept'.[2] But he still maintains that personality is something limited and finite and cannot be applied to God. The infinite differs from the finite in nature and not merely in degree. Further, the philosopher repeats that true religion consists in the fulfilment of one's moral vocation. At the same time this idea of doing one's duty and so fulfilling one's moral vocation is undoubtedly infused with a spirit of devout abandonment to and trust in the divine Will.

To appreciate the role of *The Vocation of Man* in the development of Fichte's later philosophy it is important to understand that the doctrine of the infinite Will is described as a matter of faith. This somewhat strange and turgid work, which is introduced by the remarks that it is not intended for professional philosophers and that the *I* of the dialogue portions should not be taken without more ado to represent the author himself, is divided into three parts, entitled respectively *Doubt*, *Knowledge* and *Faith*. In the second part idealism is interpreted as meaning that not only external objects but also one's own self, so far as one can have any idea of it, exist only for consciousness. And the conclusion is drawn that everything is reduced to images or pictures (*Bilder*) without there being any reality which is pictured. 'All reality is transformed into a wonderful dream, without a life which is dreamed of and without a mind which dreams it, into a dream which consists of a dream of itself. *Intuition* is the dream; *thought*—the source of all the being and all the reality which I imagine to myself, of *my* being, my power, my purpose—is the dream of that dream.'[1] In other words, subjective idealism reduces everything to presentations without there being anything which does the presenting or to which the presentations are made. For when I try to grasp the self for whose consciousness the presentations exist, this self necessarily becomes one of the presentations. Knowledge, therefore, that is, idealist philosophy, can find nothing abiding, no being. But the mind cannot rest in such a position. And practical or moral faith, based on consciousness of myself as a moral will subject to the moral imperative, asserts the infinite Will which underlies the finite self and creates the world in the only way in which it can do so, 'in the finite reason'.[2]

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[1] *F*, II, p. 299; *M*, III, p. 395.

[2] *F*, II, p. 303; *M*, III, p. 399.

Fichte thus retains idealism but at the same time goes beyond the ego-philosophy to postulate the infinite underlying and all-comprehensive Will. And with this postulate the atmosphere, so to speak, of his original philosophy changes dramatically. I do not mean to imply that there is no connection. For the theory of the Will can be regarded as implicit in the practical deduction of consciousness in the original *Wissenschaftslehre*. At the same time the ego retreats from the foreground and an infinite reality, which is no longer described as the absolute ego, takes its place. 'Only Reason exists; the infinite in itself, the finite in it and through it. Only in our minds does He create a world, at least that *from which* and that *by which* we unfold it: the voice of duty, and harmonious feelings, intuition and laws of thought.'[3]

As already mentioned, this dynamic panentheistic idealism is for Fichte a matter of practical faith, not of knowledge. To fulfil properly our moral vocations, we require faith in a living and active moral order which can only be interpreted as infinite dynamic Reason, that is, as infinite Will. This is the one true Being behind the sphere of presentation, creating and sustaining it through finite selves which themselves exist only as manifestations of the infinite Will. The development of Fichte's later philosophy is largely conditioned by the need to *think* this concept of absolute Being, to give it philosophical form. In *The Vocation of Man* it remains within the sphere of moral faith.

5. In the *Exposition of the Theory of Science*[4] which he composed in 1801 Fichte clearly states that 'all knowledge presupposes . . .

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[1] *F*, II, p. 245; *M*, III, p. 341.

[2] *F*, II, p. 303; *M*, III, p. 399.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Darstellung der Wissenschaftslehre.*

its own being'.[1] For knowledge is 'a being *for itself* and *in itself*':[2] it is being's 'self-penetration'[3] and is thus the expression of Freedom. Absolute knowledge, therefore, presupposes absolute Being: the former is the latter's self-penetration.

Here we have a clear reversal of the position adopted by Fichte in the earlier form of his doctrine of knowledge. At first he maintained that all being is being for consciousness. Hence it was not possible for him to admit the idea of an absolute divine Being behind or beyond consciousness. For the very fact of conceiving such a Being made it conditioned and dependent. In other words, the idea of absolute Being was for him contradictory. Now, however, he asserts the primacy of Being. Absolute Being comes to exist 'for itself' in absolute knowledge. Hence the latter must presuppose the former. And this absolute Being is the divine.

It does not follow, of course, that absolute Being is for Fichte a personal God. Being 'penetrates itself', comes to knowledge or consciousness of itself, in and through human knowledge of reality. In other words, absolute Being expresses itself in and bears within itself all finite rational beings, and their knowledge of Being is Being's knowledge of itself. At the same time Fichte insists that absolute Being can never be wholly understood or comprehended by the finite mind. In this sense God transcends the human mind.

Evidently, there is some difficulty here. On the one hand absolute Being is said to penetrate itself in absolute knowledge. On the other hand absolute knowledge seems to be ruled out. If, therefore, we exclude Christian theism, according to which God enjoys perfect self-knowledge independently of the human spirit, it appears that Fichte should logically adopt the Hegelian conception of philosophical knowledge as penetrating the inner essence of the Absolute and as being the Absolute's absolute knowledge of itself. But in point of fact Fichte does not do this. To the very end he maintains that absolute Being in itself transcends the reach of the human mind. We know images, pictures, rather than the reality in itself.

In the lectures on the *Wissenschaftslehre* which he delivered in 1804 Fichte emphasizes the idea of absolute Being as Light,[4] an idea which goes back to Plato and the Platonic tradition in metaphysics. This living Light in its radiation is said to divide itself into

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[1] *F*, II, p. 68; *M*, IV, p. 68.
[2] *F*, II, p. 19; *M*, IV, p. 19.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] This idea had already been mentioned in the *Wissenschaftslehre* of 1801.

Being and Thought (*Denken*). But conceptual thought, Fichte insists, can never grasp absolute Being in itself, which is incomprehensible. And this incomprehensibility is 'the negation of the concept'.[1] One might expect Fichte to draw the conclusion that the human mind can approach the Absolute only by way of negation. But in point of fact he makes a good many positive statements, telling us, for example, that Being and Life and *esse* are one, and that the Absolute *in itself* can never be subject to division.[2] It is only in its appearance, in the radiation of Light, that division is introduced.

In *The Nature of the Scholar* (1806), the published version of lectures delivered at Erlangen in 1805, we are again told that the one divine Being is Life and that this Life is itself changeless and eternal. But it externalizes itself in the life of the human race throughout time, 'an endlessly self-developing life which always advances towards a higher self-realization in a never-ending stream of time'.[3] In other words, this external life of God advances towards the realization of an ideal which can be described, in anthropomorphic language, as 'the Idea and fundamental notion of God in the production of the world, God's purpose and plan for the world'.[4] In this sense the divine Idea is 'the ultimate and absolute foundation of all appearances'.[5]

6. These speculations were worked out more at length in *The Way to the Blessed Life or the Doctrine of Religion* (1806), which comprises a series of lectures delivered at Berlin. God is absolute Being. And to say this is to say that God is infinite Life. For 'Being and Life are one and the same'.[6] In itself this Life is one, indivisible and unchanging. But it expresses or manifests itself externally. And the only way in which it can do this is through consciousness which is the ex-istence (*Dasein*) of God. 'Being ex-ists [*ist da*] and the ex-istence of Being is necessarily consciousness or reflection.'[7] In this external manifestation distinction or division appears. For consciousness involves the subject-object relation.

The subject in question is obviously the limited or finite subject, namely the human spirit. But what is the object? It is indeed Being. For consciousness, the divine *Dasein*, is consciousness of Being. But Being in itself, the immediate infinite Life, transcends the comprehension of the human mind. Hence the object of consciousness must be the image or picture or *schema* of the Absolute. And this is the world. 'What does this consciousness contain? I think that each of you will answer: the world and nothing but the world. . . . In consciousness the divine Life is inevitably transformed into an abiding world.'[1] In other words, Being is objectified for consciousness in the form of the world.

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[1] *F*, x, p. 117; *M*, iv, p. 195.

[2] *F*, x, p. 206; *M*, iv, p. 284.

[3] *F*, vi, p. 362; *M*, v, p. 17.

[4] *F*, vi, p. 367; *M*, v, p. 22.

[5] *F*, vi, p. 361; *M*, v, p. 15.

[6] *F*, v, p. 403; *M*, v, p. 115.

[7] *F*, v, p. 539; *M*, v, p. 251.

Although Fichte insists that the Absolute transcends the grasp of the human mind, he says a good deal about it. And even if the finite spirit cannot know the infinite Life as it is in itself, it can at least know that the world of consciousness is the image or *schema* of the Absolute. Hence there are two main forms of life which lie open to man. It is possible for him to immerse himself in apparent life (*das Scheinleben*), life in the finite and changeable, life directed towards the gratification of natural impulse. But because of its unity with the infinite divine Life the human spirit can never be satisfied with love of the finite and sensible. Indeed, the endless seeking for successive finite sources of satisfaction shows that even apparent life is informed or carried along, as it were, by the longing for the infinite and eternal which is 'the innermost root of all finite existence'.[2] Hence man is capable of rising to true life (*das wahrhaftige Leben*) which is characterized by love of God. For love, as Fichte puts it, is the heart of life.

If it is asked in what this true life precisely consists, Fichte's reply is still given primarily in terms of morality. That is to say, true life consists primarily in a man's fulfilling his moral vocation, by which he is liberated from the servitude of the sensible world and in which he strives after the attainment of ideal ends. At the same time the markedly moralistic atmosphere of Fichte's earlier accounts of religion tends to disappear or at any rate to diminish. The religious point of view is not simply identical with the moral point of view. For it involves the fundamental conviction that God alone is, that God is the one true reality. True, God as he is in himself is hidden from the finite mind. But the religious man knows that the infinite divine Life is immanent in himself, and his moral vocation is for him a divine vocation. In the creative realization of ideals or values through action[3] he sees the image or *schema* of the divine Life.

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[1] *F*, v, p. 457; *M*, v, p. 169.

[2] *F*, v, p. 407; *M*, v, p. 119.

[3] In what Fichte calls the higher morality man is creative, seeking actively to realize ideal values. He does not content himself, as in the lower morality, with the mere fulfilment of the successive duties of his state of life. Religion adds belief in God as the one reality and a sense of divine vocation. The life of higher morality is seen as the expression of the one infinite divine Life.

But though *The Doctrine of Religion* is permeated with a religious atmosphere, there is a marked tendency to subordinate the religious point of view to the philosophical. Thus, according to Fichte, while the religious point of view involves belief in the Absolute as the foundation of all plurality and finite existence, philosophy turns this belief into knowledge. And it is in accordance with this attitude that Fichte attempts to show the identity between Christian dogmas and his own system. To be sure, this attempt can be regarded as the expression of a growth in sympathy with Christian theology; but it can also be regarded as an essay in 'demythologization'. For instance, in the sixth lecture Fichte refers to the prologue to St. John's Gospel and argues that the doctrine of the divine Word, when translated into the language of philosophy, is identical with his own theory of the divine ex-istence or *Dasein*. And the statement of St. John that all things were made in and through the Word means, from the speculative point of view, that the world and all that is in it exist only in the sphere of consciousness as the ex-istence of the Absolute.

However, with the development of the philosophy of Being there goes a development in Fichte's understanding of religion. From the religious point of view moral activity is love of God and fulfilment of his will, and it is sustained by faith and trust in God. We exist only in and through God, infinite Life, and the feeling of this union is essential to the religious or blessed life (*das selige Leben*).

7. *The Way to the Blessed Life* is a series of popular lectures, in the sense that it is not a work for professional philosophers. And Fichte is obviously concerned with edifying and uplifting his hearers, as well as with reassuring them that his philosophy is not at variance with the Christian religion. But the fundamental theories are common to Fichte's later writings: they are certainly not put forward simply for the sake of edification. Thus in *The Facts of Consciousness* (1810) we are told that 'knowledge is certainly not merely knowledge of itself . . . it is knowledge of a *Being*, namely of the one Being which truly is, God'.[1] But this object of knowledge is not grasped in itself; it is splintered, as it were, into forms of knowledge. And 'the demonstration of the necessity of these forms is precisely philosophy or the *Wissenschaftslehre*'.[2] Similarly, in *The Theory of Science in its General Outline* (1810) we read that 'only one Being exists purely through

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[1] *F*, II, p. 685 (not included in *M*)

[2] *Ibid.*

itself, God. . . . And neither within him nor outside him can a new being arise.'[1] The only thing which can be external to God is the *schema* or picture of Being itself, which is 'God's Being outside his Being',[2] the divine self-externalization in consciousness. Thus the whole of the productive activity which is reconstructed or deduced in the theory of science is the schematizing or picturing of God, the spontaneous self-externalization of the divine life.

In the *System of Ethics* of 1812 we find Fichte saying that while from the scientific point of view the world is primary and the concept a secondary reflection or picture, from the ethical point of view the Concept is primary. In fact 'the Concept is ground of the world or of Being'.[3] And this assertion, if taken out of its context, appears to contradict the doctrine which we have been considering, namely that Being is primary. But Fichte explains that 'the proposition in question, namely that the Concept is ground of Being, can be expressed in this way: Reason or the Concept is practical'.[4] He further explains that though the Concept or Reason is in fact itself the picture of a higher Being, the picture of God, 'ethics can and should know nothing of this. . . . Ethics must know nothing of God, but take the Concept itself as the Absolute.'[5] In other words, the doctrine of absolute Being, as expounded in the *Wissenschaftslehre*, transcends the sphere of ethics which deals with the causality of the Concept, the self-realizing Idea or Ideal.

8. Fichte's later philosophy has sometimes been represented as being to all intents and purposes a new system which involved a break with the earlier philosophy of the ego. Fichte himself, however, maintained that it was nothing of the kind. In his view the philosophy of Being constituted a development of his earlier thought rather than a break with it. If he had originally meant, as most of his critics took him to mean, that the world is the creation of the finite self as such, his later theory of absolute Being would indeed have involved a radical change of view. But he had never meant this. The finite subject and its object, the two poles of consciousness, had always been for him the expression of an unlimited or infinite principle. And his later doctrine of the sphere of consciousness as the ex-istence of infinite Life or Being was a development, not a contradiction, of his earlier thought. In other words, the philosophy of Being supplemented the *Wissenschaftslehre* rather than took its place.

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[1] *F*, II, p. 696; *M*, V, p. 615.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *F*, XI, p. 5; *M*, VI, p. 5.
[4] *F*, XI, p. 7; *M*, VI, p. 7.
[5] *F*, XI, p. 4; *M*, VI, p. 4.

It is indeed arguable that unless Fichte was prepared to defend a subjective idealism which it would have been difficult to dissociate from a solipsistic implication, he was bound in the long run to transgress his initial self-imposed limits, to go behind consciousness and to find its ground in absolute Being. Further, he explicitly admitted that the absolute ego, as transcending the subject-object relationship which it grounds, must be the identity of subjectivity and objectivity. Hence it is not unnatural that in proportion as he developed the metaphysical aspect of his philosophy he should tend to discard the word 'ego' as an appropriate descriptive term for his ultimate principle. For this word is too closely associated with the idea of the subject as distinct from the object. In this sense his later philosophy was a development of his earlier thought.

At the same time it is also arguable that the philosophy of Being is superimposed on the *Wissenschaftslehre* in such a way that the two do not really fit together. According to the *Wissenschaftslehre* the world exists only for consciousness. And this thesis really depends on the premiss that being must be reduced to thought or consciousness. Fichte's philosophy of absolute Being, however, clearly implies the logical priority of being to thought. True, in his later philosophy Fichte does not deny his former thesis that the world has reality only within the sphere of consciousness. On the contrary, he reaffirms it. What he does is to depict the whole sphere of consciousness as the externalization of absolute Being in itself. But it is very difficult to understand this idea of externalization. If we take seriously the statement that absolute Being is and eternally remains one and immutable, we can hardly interpret Fichte as meaning that Being *becomes* conscious. And if the sphere of consciousness is an eternal reflection of God, if it is the divine self-consciousness eternally proceeding from God as the Plotinian *Nous* emanates eternally from the One, it seems to follow that there must always have been a human spirit.

Fichte could, of course, depict absolute Being as an infinite activity moving towards self-consciousness in and through the human spirit. But then it would be natural to conceive the infinite Life as expressing itself immediately in objective Nature as a necessary condition for the life of the human spirit. In other words, it would be natural to proceed in the direction of Hegel's absolute idealism. But this would involve a greater change in the *Wissenschaftslehre* than Fichte was prepared to make. He does indeed say that it is the one Life, and not the individual as such, which 'intuits' the material world. But he maintains to the end that the world, as the image or *schema* of God, has reality only within the sphere of consciousness. And as absolute Being in itself is not conscious, this can only mean human consciousness. Until this element of subjective idealism is abandoned, the transition to the absolute idealism of Hegel is not possible.

There is indeed another possibility, namely that of conceiving absolute Being as eternally self-conscious. But Fichte can hardly take the path of traditional theism. For his idea of what self-consciousness essentially involves prevents him from attributing it to the One. Hence consciousness must be derivative. And this is human consciousness. But there can be no being apart from God. Hence human consciousness must be in some sense the Absolute's consciousness of itself. But in what sense? It does not seem to me that any clear answer is forthcoming. And the reason is that Fichte's later philosophy of Being could not be simply superimposed on the *Wissenschaftslehre.* A much greater measure of revision was required.

It may be objected that to interpret Fichte's philosophy as demanding revision either in the direction of Hegel's absolute idealism or in that of theism is to fail to do justice to its intrinsic character. And this is true in a sense. For Fichte has his own ethical vision of reality, to which attention has been drawn in these chapters. We have seen the infinite Will expressing itself in finite selves for which Nature forms the scene and material for the fulfilment of their several moral vocations. And we have seen these vocations converging towards the realization of a universal moral order, the goal, as it were, of the infinite Will itself. And the grandeur of this vision of reality, of Fichte's dynamic ethical idealism in its main lines, is not in question. But Fichte did not offer his philosophy simply as an impressionistic vision or as poetry, but as the truth about reality. Hence criticism of his theories is quite in place. After all, it is not the vision of the realization of a universal ideal, a moral world-order, which has been subjected to adverse criticism. This vision may well possess an abiding value. And it can serve as a corrective to an interpretation of reality simply in terms of empirical science. One can certainly derive stimulus and inspiration from Fichte. But to draw profit from him one has to discard a good deal of the theoretical framework of the vision.

It has been stated above that Fichte could hardly take the path of traditional theism. But some writers have maintained that his later philosophy is in fact a form of theism. And in support of this contention they can appeal to certain statements which represent the philosopher's firm convictions and are not simply *obiter dicta* or remarks calculated to reassure his more orthodox readers or hearers. For example, Fichte constantly maintains that absolute Being is unchangeable and that it can suffer no self-diremption. It is the eternal immutable One; not a static lifeless One but the fullness of infinite Life. True, creation is free only in the sense that it is spontaneous; but creation does not effect any change in God. To be sure, Fichte refuses to predicate personality of God, even if he frequently employs Christian language and speaks of God as 'He'. But as he regards personality as necessarily finite, he obviously cannot attribute it to infinite Being. But this does not mean that he looks on God as infra-personal. God is supra-personal, not less than personal. In Scholastic language, Fichte has no analogical concept of personality, and this prevents him from using theistic terms. At the same time the concept of absolute Being which transcends the sphere of the distinctions which necessarily exist between finite beings is clearly a move in the direction of theism. The ego no longer occupies the central position in Fichte's picture of reality: its place is taken by infinite Life which in itself suffers no change or self-diremption.

This is all very well as far as it goes. And it is true that Fichte's refusal to predicate personality of God is due to the fact that personality for him involves finitude. God transcends the sphere of personality rather than falls short of it. But it is also the absence of any clear idea of analogy which involves Fichte's thought in a radical ambiguity. God is infinite Being. Therefore there can arise no being apart from God. If there were such a being, God would not be infinite. The Absolute is the sole Being. This line of thought clearly points in the direction of pantheism. At the same time Fichte is determined to maintain that the sphere of consciousness, with its distinction, between the finite ego and the world, is in some sense outside God. But in what sense? It is all very well for Fichte to say that the distinction between the divine Being and the divine ex-istence arises only for consciousness. The question inevitably suggests itself, are finite selves beings or are they not? If they are not, monism results. And it is then impossible to explain how consciousness, with the distinctions which it introduces, arises. If, however, finite selves are beings, how are we to reconcile this with the statement that God is the only Being unless we have recourse to a theory of analogy? Fichte wishes to have things both ways. That is, he wishes to say at the same time that the sphere of consciousness, with its distinction between the finite self and its object, is external to God and that God is the only Being. Hence his position in regard to the issue between theism and pantheism inevitably remains ambiguous. This is not to deny, of course, that the development of Fichte's philosophy of Being conferred on his thought a much greater resemblance to theism than would be suggested by his earlier writings. But it seems to me that if a writer who admires Fichte for his use of the transcendental method of reflection or for his ethical idealism proceeds to interpret his later philosophy as a clear statement of theism, he is going beyond the historical evidence.

If, finally, it is asked whether in his philosophy of Being Fichte abandons idealism, the answer should be clear from what has been already said. Fichte does not repudiate the *Wissenschaftslehre*, and in this sense he retains idealism. When he says that it is the one Life, and not the individual subject, which 'intuits' (and so produces) the material world, he is obviously accounting for the fact that the material world appears to the finite subject as something given, as an already constituted object. But he had proclaimed from the beginning that this is the crucial fact which idealism has to explain, and not to deny. At the same time the assertion of the primacy of Being and of the derivative character of consciousness and knowledge is a move away from idealism. Hence we can say that in so far as this assertion proceeded from the exigencies of his own thought, idealism with Fichte tended to overcome itself. But this is not to say that the philosopher ever made a clear and explicit break with idealism. In any case we may well feel that though in recent times there has been a tendency to emphasize Fichte's later thought, his impressive vision of reality is his system of ethical idealism rather than his obscure utterances about absolute Being and the divine *Dasein*.

CHAPTER V

SCHELLING (I)

Life and writings—The successive phases in Schelling's thought —Early writings and the influence of Fichte.

I. FRIEDRICH WILHELM JOSEPH VON SCHELLING, son of a learned Lutheran pastor, was born in 1775 at Leonberg in Württemberg. A precocious boy, he was admitted at the age of fifteen to the Protestant theological foundation at the University of Tübingen where he became a friend of Hegel and Hölderlin, both of whom were five years older than himself. At the age of seventeen he wrote a dissertation on the third chapter of Genesis, and in 1793 he published an essay *On Myths* (*Ueber Mythen*). This was followed in 1794 by a paper *On the Possibility of a Form of Philosophy in General* (*Ueber die Möglichkeit einer Form der Philosophie überhaupt*).

At this time Schelling was more or less a disciple of Fichte, a fact which is apparent in the title of a work published in 1795, *On the Ego as Principle of Philosophy* (*Vom Ich als Prinzip der Philosophie*). In the same year there appeared his *Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism* (*Philosophische Briefe über Dogmatismus und Kritizismus*), dogmatism being represented by Spinoza and criticism by Fichte.

But though Fichte's thought formed a point of departure for his reflections, Schelling very soon showed the independence of his mind. In particular, he was dissatisfied with Fichte's view of Nature as being simply an instrument for moral action. And his own view of Nature as an immediate manifestation of the Absolute, as a self-organizing dynamic and teleological system which moves upwards, as it were, to the emergence of consciousness and to Nature's knowledge of herself in and through man, found expression in a series of works on the philosophy of Nature. Thus in 1797 he published *Ideas towards a Philosophy of Nature* (*Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur*), in 1798 *On the World-Soul* (*Von der Weltseele*), and in 1799 a *First Sketch of a System of the Philosophy of Nature* (*Erster Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie*) and an *Introduction to the Sketch of a System of the Philosophy of Nature, or On the Concept of Speculative Physics* (*Einleitung zu dem Entwurf* *eines Systems der Naturphilosophie oder über den Begriff der spekulativen Physik*).

It will be noted that the title of the last work refers to speculative physics. And a similar term occurs in the full title of the work *On the World-Soul,* the world-soul being said to be an hypothesis of 'the higher physics'. One can hardly imagine Fichte giving much attention to speculative physics. Yet the series of publications on the philosophy of Nature does not indicate a complete break with Fichte's thought. For in 1800 Schelling published his *System of Transcendental Idealism* (*System des transzendentalen Idealismus*) in which the influence of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* is obvious. Whereas in his writings on the philosophy of Nature Schelling moved from the objective to the subjective, from the lowest grades of Nature up to the organic sphere as a preparation for consciousness, in the *System of Transcendental Idealism* he began with the ego and proceeded to trace the process of its self-objectification. He regarded the two points of view as complementary, as is shown by the fact that in 1800 he also published a *General Deduction of the Dynamic Process* (*Allgemeine Deduktion des dynamischen Prozesses*), which was followed in 1801 by a short piece *On the True Concept of the Philosophy of Nature* (*Ueber den wahren Begriff der Naturphilosophie*). In the same year he also published *An Exposition of my System of Philosophy* (*Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie*).

In 1798 Schelling was appointed to a chair in the University of Jena. He was only twenty-three, but his writings had won him the commendation not only of Goethe but also of Fichte. From 1802 to 1803 he collaborated with Hegel in editing the *Critical Journal of Philosophy*. And during the period of his professorship at Jena he was in friendly relations with the circle of the romantics, such as the two Schlegels and Novalis. In 1802 Schelling published, *Bruno, or On the Divine and Natural Principle of Things* (*Bruno, oder über das göttliche und natürliche Prinzip der Dinge*) and also a series of *Lectures on the Method of Academic Study* (*Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums*) in which he discussed the unity of the sciences and the place of philosophy in academic life.

It has been mentioned that in his *System of Transcendental Idealism* Schelling started with the ego and utilized ideas taken from Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* in his reconstruction of the ego's self-objectification, for example in morals. But this work culminated in a philosophy of art, to which Schelling attached great importance.

And in the winter of 1802–3 he lectured at Jena on the philosophy of art. At this time he looked on art as the key to the nature of reality. And this fact alone is sufficient to show the marked difference between Schelling's outlook and that of Fichte.

In 1803 Schelling married Caroline Schlegel after the legal dissolution of her marriage with A. W. Schlegel, and the pair went to Würzburg, where Schelling lectured for a period in the University. About this time he began to devote his attention to problems of religion and to the theosophical utterances of the mystical shoemaker of Görlitz, Jakob Boehme.[1] And in 1804 he published *Philosophy and Religion* (*Philosophie und Religion*).

Schelling left Würzburg for Munich in 1806. His reflections on freedom and on the relation between human freedom and the Absolute found expression in *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom* (*Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*), a work which was published in 1809. But by this time his star had begun to grow dim. We have seen that he collaborated with Hegel for a short period in editing a philosophical journal. But in 1807 Hegel, who had previously been little known, published his first great work, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. And this work not only formed the first stage in its author's rise to fame as Germany's leading philosopher but also represented his intellectual break with Schelling. In particular, Hegel gave a somewhat caustic expression to his opinion of Schelling's doctrine of the Absolute. And Schelling, who was the very opposite of thick-skinned, took this betrayal, as he saw it, very much to heart. In the years that followed, as he witnessed the growing reputation of his rival, he became obsessed by the thought that his former friend had foisted on a gullible public an inferior system of philosophy. Indeed, his bitter disappointment at Hegel's rise to a pre-eminent position in the philosophical world of Germany probably helps to explain why, after a remarkable burst of literary activity, he published comparatively little.

Schelling continued, however, to lecture. Thus a course of lectures which he gave at Stuttgart in 1810 is printed in his collected *Works*. In 1811 he wrote *The Ages of the World* (*Die Zeitalter*), but the work remained unfinished and was not published during his lifetime.

During the period 1821–6 Schelling lectured at Erlangen. In 1827 he returned to Munich to occupy the chair of philosophy and zestfully set about the congenial task of undermining the influence of Hegel. He had become convinced that a distinction must be made between negative philosophy, which is a purely abstract conceptual construction, and positive philosophy, which treats of concrete existence. The Hegelian system, needless to say, was declared to be an example of the first type.

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[1] For Jakob Boehme (1575–1624) see Vol. III, pp. 270–3.

The death of Schelling's great rival[1] in 1831 should have facilitated his task. And ten years later, in 1841, he was appointed professor of philosophy at Berlin with the mission of combating the influence of Hegelianism by expounding his own religious system. In the Prussian capital Schelling began lecturing as a prophet, as one announcing the advent of a new era. And he had among his audience professors, statesmen and a number of hearers whose names were to become famous, such as Sören Kierkegaard, Jakob Burckhardt, Friedrich Engels and Bakunin. But the lectures were not as successful as Schelling hoped that they would be, and the audience started to diminish. In 1846 he abandoned lecturing, except for occasional discourses at the Berlin Academy. Later he retired to Munich and busied himself with preparing manuscripts for publication. He died in 1854 at Ragaz in Switzerland. His *Philosophy of Revelation* (*Philosophie der Offenbarung*) and *Philosophy of Mythology* (*Philosophie der Mythologie*) were published posthumously.

2. There is no one closely-knit system which we can call Schelling's system of philosophy. For his thought passed through a succession of phases from the early period when he stood very much under the influence of Fichte up to the final period which is represented by the posthumously published lectures on the philosophy of revelation and mythology. There has been no general agreement among historians about the precise number of phases which should be distinguished. One or two have contented themselves with Schelling's own distinction between negative and positive philosophy; but this distinction fails to take account of the variety of phases in his thought before he set about expounding his final philosophy of religion. Hence it has been customary to make further divisions. But though there certainly are distinct phases in Schelling's thought, it would be a mistake to regard these phases as so many independent systems. For there is a visible continuity.

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[1] Hegel himself does not seem to have been much concerned with personal rivalries as such; he was absorbed in ideas and in the exposition of what he believed to be the truth. But Schelling took Hegel's criticism of his own ideas as a personal affront.

That is to say, reflection on a position already adopted led Schelling to raise further problems, the solution of which required fresh moves on his part. True, in his later years he emphasized the distinction between negative and positive philosophy. But though he regarded a good deal of his own previous thought as negative philosophy, he stressed the distinction in the course of his polemic against Hegel; and what he desired was not so much a complete rejection of so-called negative philosophy as its incorporation into and subordination to positive philosophy. Further, he claimed that some inkling at least of positive philosophy could be found in his early *Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism*, and that even in his first philosophical essays his inclination towards the concrete and historical had manifested itself.

In 1796, when Schelling was twenty-one, he drew up for himself a programme for a system of philosophy. The projected system would proceed from the idea of the ego or self as an absolutely free being by way of the positing of the non-ego to the sphere of speculative physics. It would then proceed to the sphere of the human spirit. The principles of historical development would have to be laid down, and the ideas of a moral world, of God and of the freedom of all spiritual beings would have to be developed. Further, the central importance of the idea of beauty would have to be shown, and the aesthetic character of the highest act of reason. Finally, there would have to be a new mythology, uniting philosophy and religion.

This programme is illuminating. On the one hand it illustrates the element of discontinuity in Schelling's thought. For the fact that he proposes to start from the ego reveals the influence of Fichte, an influence which grew progressively less as time went on. On the other hand the programme illustrates the element of continuity in Schelling's philosophizing. For it envisages the development of a philosophy of Nature, a philosophy of history, a philosophy of art, a philosophy of freedom and a philosophy of religion and mythology, themes which were to occupy his attention in turn. In other words, though Schelling at first gave the impression of being a disciple of Fichte, his interests and bent of mind were already apparent at the beginning of his career.

The upshot of all this is that time spent on discussing exactly how many phases or 'systems' there are in Schelling's philosophizing is time wasted. There certainly are distinct phases, but a genetic account of his thought can do justice to these distinctions without its being implied that Schelling jumped from one self-enclosed system to another. In fine, the philosophy of Schelling is a philosophizing rather than a finished system or succession of finished systems. In a sense the beginning and the end of his pilgrimage coincide. We have seen that in 1793 he published an essay *On Myths*. In his old age he returned to this subject and lectured on it at length. But in between we find a restless process of reflection moving from the ego-philosophy of Fichte through the philosophy of Nature and of art to the philosophy of the religious consciousness and a form of speculative theism, the whole being linked together by the theme of the relation between the finite and the infinite.

3. In his essay *On the Possibility of a Form of Philosophy in General* (1794) Schelling follows Fichte in asserting that philosophy, being a science, must be a logically unified system of propositions, developed from one fundamental proposition which gives expression to the unconditioned. This unconditioned is the self-positing ego. Hence 'the fundamental proposition can only be this: I is I'.[1] In the work *On the Ego as Principle of Philosophy* (1795) this proposition is formulated in the less peculiar form, '*I am I* or *I am*'.[2] And from this proposition Schelling proceeds to the positing of the non-ego and argues that ego and non-ego mutually condition one another. There is no subject without an object and no object without a subject. Hence there must be a mediating factor, a common product which links them together; and this is representation (*Vorstellung*). We thus have the form of the fundamental triad of all science or knowledge, namely subject, object and representation.

The influence of Fichte is obvious enough. But it is worth noting that from the very start Schelling emphasizes the difference between the absolute and the empirical ego. 'The completed system of science starts with the absolute ego.'[3] This is not a thing but infinite freedom. It is indeed one, but the unity which is predicated of it transcends the unity which is predicated of the individual member of a class. The absolute ego is not and cannot be a member of any class: it transcends the concept of class. Further, it transcends the grasp of conceptual thought and can be apprehended only in intellectual intuition.

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[1] *W*, I, p. 57. References to Schelling's writings are given according to volume and page of the edition of his *Works* by Manfred Schröter (Munich, 1927–8).
Schelling prefers '*I is I*' (*Ich ist Ich*) to 'the ego is the ego' (*das Ich ist das Ich*) on the ground that the ego is given only as *I*.

[2] *W*, I, p. 103.

[3] *W*, I, p. 100.

None of this contradicts Fichte; but the point is that Schelling's metaphysical interests are revealed from the beginning of his career. Whereas Fichte, starting from the philosophy of Kant, gave so little prominence at first to the metaphysical implications of his idealism that he was widely thought to be taking the individual ego as his point of departure, Schelling emphasizes at once the idea of the Absolute, even if, under Fichte's influence, he describes it as the absolute ego.

It will be noted that in the essay *On the Possibility of a Form of Philosophy in General* Schelling follows Fichte in deducing the presentation or representation. But his real interest is ontological. In the early *Wissenschaftslehre* Fichte declared that the task of philosophy is to explain experience in the sense of the system of presentations which are accompanied by a feeling of necessity. And he did so by showing how the ego gives rise to these presentations through the activity of the productive imagination which works unconsciously, so that for empirical consciousness the world inevitably possesses an appearance of independence. But in his *Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism* (1795) Schelling roundly declares that the 'chief business of all philosophy consists in solving the problem of the existence of the world'.[1] In one sense, of course, the two statements come to the same thing. But there is a considerable difference in emphasis between saying that the business of philosophy is to explain the system of presentations which are accompanied by a feeling of necessity and saying that the business of philosophy is to explain the existence of the world. And with the help of a little hindsight at any rate we can discern beneath all the Fichtean trappings of Schelling's early thought the same metaphysical bent of mind which led him to say at a later stage that the task of philosophy is to answer the question, why there is something rather than nothing. True, Fichte himself came to develop the metaphysical implications of his philosophy. But when he did so, Schelling accused him of plagiarism.

Schelling's *Philosophical Letters* is an illuminating work. It is in a sense a defence of Fichte. For Schelling contrasts criticism, represented by Fichte, with dogmatism, represented chiefly by Spinoza. And he comes down on the side of Fichte. At the same time the work reveals the author's profound sympathy with Spinoza and an at any rate latent dissatisfaction with Fichte.

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[1] *W*, I, p. 237. This work will be referred to in future simply as *Philosophical Letters*.

Dogmatism, says Schelling, involves in the long run the absolutization of the non-ego. Man is reduced to a mere modification of the infinite Object, Spinoza's substance, and freedom is excluded. It is true that Spinozism, which aims at the attainment of peace and tranquillity of soul through 'quiet self-surrender to the absolute Object',[1] possesses an aesthetic appeal and can exercise a powerful attraction on some minds. But ultimately it means the annihilation of the human being as a free moral agent. Dogmatism has no room for freedom.

But it does not follow that dogmatism can be theoretically refuted. The philosophy of Kant 'has only weak weapons against dogmatism',[2] and can achieve nothing more than a negative refutation. For example, Kant shows that it is impossible to disprove freedom in the noumenal sphere, but he admits himself that he can give no positive theoretical proof of freedom. Yet 'even the completed system of criticism cannot refute dogmatism *theoretically*',[3] even if it can deliver some shrewd blows. And this is not at all surprising. For as long as we remain on the theoretical plane dogmatism and criticism lead, Schelling maintains, to much the same conclusion.

In the first place both systems try to make the transition from the infinite to the finite. But 'philosophy cannot proceed from the infinite to the finite'.[4] We can, of course, invent reasons why the infinite must manifest itself in the finite, but they are simply ways of covering up an inability to bridge the gulf. It appears, therefore, that we must proceed the other way round. But how is this to be done when the traditional *a posteriori* demonstrations have been discredited? Obviously what is required is the suppression of the problem. That is to say, if the finite can be seen in the infinite and the infinite in the finite, the problem of bridging the gulf between them by means of a theoretical argument or demonstration no longer arises.

This need is fulfilled by intellectual intuition, which is an intuition of the identity of the intuiting with the intuited self. But it is interpreted in different ways by dogmatism and criticism. Dogmatism interprets it as an intuition of the self as identical with the Absolute conceived as absolute Object. Criticism interprets it as revealing the identity of the self with the Absolute as absolute Subject, conceived as pure free activity.

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[1] *W*, 1, p. 208.

[2] *W*, 1, p. 214.

[3] *W*, 1, p. 220. The reference is, of course, to Fichte's idealism.

[4] *W*, 1, p. 238.

Though, however, dogmatism and criticism interpret intellectual intuition in different ways, the two interpretations lead to much the same theoretical conclusion. In dogmatism the subject is ultimately reduced to the object, and with this reduction one of the necessary conditions of consciousness is cancelled out. In criticism the object is ultimately reduced to the subject, and with this reduction the other necessary condition of consciousness is cancelled out. In other words, both dogmatism and criticism point to the theoretical annihilation of the finite self or subject. Spinoza reduces the finite self to the absolute Object: Fichte reduces it to the absolute Subject or, more precisely (since the absolute ego is not properly a subject), to infinite activity or striving. In both cases the self is swamped, so to speak, in the Absolute.

But though from the purely theoretical point of view the two systems lead by different routes to much the same conclusion, their practical or moral demands are different. They express different ideas of man's moral vocation. Dogmatism demands of the finite self that it should surrender itself to the absolute causality of the divine substance and renounce its own freedom that the divine may be all in all. Thus in the philosophy of Spinoza the self is called on to recognize an already existing ontological situation, namely its position as a modification of infinite substance, and to surrender itself. Criticism, however, demands that man shall realize the Absolute in himself through constant free activity. For Fichte, that is to say, the identity of the finite self with the Absolute is not simply an existing ontological situation which has only to be recognized. It is a goal to be achieved through moral effort. Moreover, it is an always receding goal. Hence even if the philosophy of Fichte points to the identification of the self with the Absolute as a theoretical ideal, on the practical plane it demands unceasing free moral activity, unceasing fidelity to one's personal moral vocation.

In a sense, therefore, the choice between dogmatism and criticism is for the finite self a choice between non-being and being. That is to say, it is a choice between the ideal of self-surrender, of absorption in the impersonal Absolute, of renunciation of personal freedom as illusion, and the ideal of constant free activity in accordance with one's vocation, of becoming more and more the moral agent who rises free and triumphant over the mere object. 'Be! is the highest demand of criticism.'[1] With Spinoza the absolute Object carries all before it: with Fichte Nature is reduced to a mere instrument for the free moral agent.

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[1] *W*, I, p. 259.

Obviously, if a man accepts the demand of criticism, he is thereby committed to rejecting dogmatism. But it is also true that dogmatism cannot be refuted, even on the moral or practical plane, in the eyes of the man 'who can tolerate the idea of working at his own annihilation, of annulling in himself all free causality, and of being the modification of an object in the infinity of which he sooner of later finds his moral destruction'.[1]

This account of the issue between dogmatism and criticism obviously echoes Fichte's view that the sort of philosophy which a man chooses depends on the sort of man that one is. Further, we can, if we wish, link up Schelling's contention that neither dogmatism nor criticism is theoretically refutable and that the choice between them must be made on the practical plane with the view which has sometimes been advanced in much more recent times that we cannot decide between metaphysical systems on the purely theoretical plane but that moral criteria can be used to judge between them when they serve as backgrounds for and tend to promote different patterns of conduct. But for our present purpose it is more relevant to note that though the *Philosophical Letters* was written in support of Fichte and though Schelling comes down ostensibly on his side, the work implies the unspoken, but none the less clear, criticism that both the philosophy of Spinoza and the transcendental idealism of Fichte are one-sided exaggerations. For Spinoza is depicted as absolutizing the object and Fichte as absolutizing the subject. And the implication is that the Absolute must transcend the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity and be subject and object in identity.[2]

In other words, the implication is that some sort of synthesis must be effected which will reconcile the conflicting attitudes of Spinoza and Fichte. Indeed, we can see in the *Philosophical Letters* evidence of a degree of sympathy with Spinoza which was alien to Fichte's mind. And it is in no way surprising if we find Schelling very soon devoting himself to the publication of works on the philosophy of Nature. For the Spinozistic element in the foreshadowed synthesis will be the attribution to Nature as an organic totality of an ontological status which was denied it by Fichte. Nature will be shown as the immediate objective manifestation of the Absolute. At the same time the synthesis, if it is to be a synthesis at all, must depict Nature as the expression and manifestation of Spirit. A synthesis must be idealism, if it is not to represent a return to pre-Kantian thought. But it must not be a subjective idealism in which Nature is depicted as no more than an obstacle posited by the ego in order that it may have something to overcome.

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[1] *W*, I, p. 263.

[2] Fichte himself came to assert that the absolute ego is the identity of subject and object. But he did so partly under the influence of Schelling's criticism. And in any case Fichte's idealism was always characterized, in Schelling's opinion, by an over-emphasis on the subject and on subjectivity.

These remarks may perhaps seem to go beyond what the early writings of Schelling entitle one to say. But we have already seen that in the programme which Schelling drew up for himself in 1796, very shortly after the writing of *Philosophical Letters*, he explicitly envisaged the development of a speculative physics or philosophy of Nature. And it is quite evident that dissatisfaction with Fichte's one-sided attitude to Nature was already felt by Schelling within the period of his so-called Fichtean phase.

CHAPTER VI

SCHELLING (2)

The possibility and metaphysical grounds of a philosophy of Nature—The general outlines of Schelling's philosophy of Nature—The system of transcendental idealism—The philosophy of art—The Absolute as identity.

1. IT is the growth of reflection, Schelling maintains, that has introduced a rift between the subjective and the objective, the ideal and the real. If we think away the work of reflection, we must conceive man as one with Nature. That is to say, we must conceive him as experiencing this unity with Nature on the level of the immediacy of feeling. But through reflection he has distinguished between the external object and its subjective representation, and he has become an object for himself. In general, reflection has grounded and perpetuated the distinction between the objective external world of Nature and the subjective inner life of representation and self-consciousness, the distinction between Nature and Spirit. Nature thus becomes externality, the opposite of Spirit, and man, as a self-conscious reflective being, is alienated from Nature.

If reflection is made an end in itself, it becomes 'a spiritual malady'.[1] For man is born for action, and the more he is turned in on himself in self-reflection, the less active he is. At the same time it is the capacity for reflection which distinguishes man from the animal. And the rift which has been introduced between the objective and the subjective, the real and the ideal, Nature and Spirit, cannot be overcome by a return to the immediacy of feeling, to the childhood, as it were, of the human race. If the divided factors are to be reunited and the original unity restored, this must be achieved on a higher plane than feeling. That is to say, it must be achieved by reflection itself in the form of philosophy. After all, it is reflection which raises the problem. At the level of ordinary commonsense there is no problem of the relation between the real and the ideal order, between the thing and its mental representation. It is reflection which raises the problem, and it is reflection which must solve it.

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[1] *W*, I, p. 663.

One's first impulse is to solve the problem in terms of causal activity. Things exist independently of the mind and cause representations of themselves: the subjective is causally dependent on the objective. But by saying this one simply gives rise to a further problem. For if I assert that external things exist independently and cause representations of themselves in me, I necessarily set myself above thing and representation. And I thus implicitly affirm myself as spirit. And the question at once arises, how can external things exercise a determining causal activity on spirit?

We can indeed attempt to tackle the problem from the other side. Instead of saying that things cause representations of themselves we can say with Kant that the subject imposes its cognitive forms on some given matter of experience and so creates phenomenal reality. But we are then left with the thing-in-itself. And this is inconceivable. For what can a thing possibly be apart from the forms which the subject is said to impose?

There have been, however, two notable attempts to solve the problem of the correspondence between the subjective and the objective, the ideal and the real, without having recourse to the idea of causal activity. Spinoza explained the correspondence by means of the theory of parallel modifications of different attributes of one infinite substance, while Leibniz had recourse to the theory of a pre-established harmony. But neither theory was a genuine explanation. For Spinoza left the modifications of Substance unexplained, while Leibniz, in Schelling's opinion, simply postulated a pre-established harmony.

At the same time both Spinoza and Leibniz had an inkling of the truth that the ideal and the real are ultimately one. And it is this truth which the philosopher is called upon to exhibit. He must show that Nature is 'visible Spirit' and Spirit 'invisible Nature'.[1] That is to say, the philosopher must show how objective Nature is ideal through and through in the sense that it is a unified dynamic and teleological system which develops upwards, so to speak, to the point at which it returns upon itself in and through the human spirit. For, given this picture of Nature, we can see that the life of representation is not something which is simply set over against and alien to the objective world, so that there arises the problem of correspondence between the subjective and the objective, the ideal and the real. The life of representation is Nature's knowledge of itself; it is the actualization of Nature's potentiality, whereby slumbering Spirit awakens to consciousness.

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[1] *W*, I, p. 706.

But can we show that Nature is in fact a teleological system, exhibiting finality? We cannot indeed accept as adequate the purely mechanistic interpretation of the world. For when we consider the organism, we are driven to introduce the idea of finality. Nor can the mind remain content with a dichotomy between two sharply divided spheres, namely those of mechanism and teleology. It is driven on to regard Nature as a self-organizing totality in which we can distinguish various levels. But the question arises whether we are not then simply reading teleology into Nature, first into the organism and then into Nature as a whole. After all, Kant admitted that we cannot help thinking of Nature as if it were a teleological system. For we have a regulative Idea of purpose in Nature, an Idea which gives rise to certain heuristic maxims of judgment. But Kant would not allow that this subjective Idea proves anything about Nature in itself.

Schelling is convinced that all scientific inquiry presupposes the intelligibility of Nature. Every experiment, he insists, involves putting a question to Nature which Nature is forced to answer. And this procedure presupposes the belief that Nature conforms to the demands of reason, that it is intelligible and in this sense ideal. This belief is justified if we once assume the general view of the world which has been outlined above. For the idea of Nature as an intelligible teleological system then appears as Nature's self-reflection, as Nature knowing itself in and through man.

But we can obviously ask for a justification of this general view of Nature. And the ultimate justification is for Schelling a metaphysical theory about the Absolute. 'The first step towards philosophy and the indispensable condition for even arriving at it is to understand that the Absolute in the ideal order is also the Absolute in the real order.'[1] The Absolute is the 'pure identity'[2] of subjectivity and objectivity. And this identity is reflected in the mutual interpenetration of Nature and Nature's knowledge of itself in and through man.

In itself the Absolute is one eternal act of knowledge in which there is no temporal succession. At the same time we can distinguish three moments or phases in this one act, provided that we do not look on them as succeeding one another temporally. In the first moment the Absolute objectifies itself in ideal Nature, in the universal pattern, as it were, of Nature, for which Schelling uses Spinoza's term *Natura naturans*. In the second moment the Absolute as objectivity is transformed into the Absolute as subjectivity. And the third moment is the synthesis 'in which these two absolutenesses (absolute objectivity and absolute subjectivity) are again one absoluteness'.[1] The Absolute is thus an eternal act of self-knowledge.

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[1] *W*, I, p. 708.

[2] *W*, I, p. 712.

The first moment in the inner life of the Absolute is expressed or manifested in *Natura naturata*, Nature as a system of particular things. This is the symbol or appearance of *Natura naturans*, and as such it is said to be 'outside the Absolute'.[2] The second moment in the inner life of the Absolute, the transformation of objectivity into subjectivity, is expressed externally in the world of representation, the ideal world of human knowledge whereby *Natura naturata* is represented in and through the human mind and the particular is taken up, as it were, into the universal, that is, on the conceptual level. We have, therefore, two unities, as Schelling calls them, objective Nature and the ideal world of representation. The third unity, correlated with the third moment in the inner life of the Absolute, is the apprehended interpenetration of the real and the ideal.

It can hardly be claimed, I think, that Schelling makes the relation between the infinite and the finite, between the Absolute in itself and its self-manifestation, crystal clear. We have seen indeed that *Natura naturata*, considered as the symbol or appearance of *Natura naturans*, is said to be outside the Absolute. But Schelling also speaks of the Absolute as expanding itself into the particular. Clearly, Schelling wishes to make a distinction between the unchanging Absolute in itself and the world of finite particular things. But at the same time he wishes to maintain that the Absolute is the all-comprehensive reality. But we shall have to return later to this topic. For the moment we can content ourselves with the general picture of the Absolute as eternal essence or Idea objectifying itself in Nature, returning to itself as subjectivity in the world of representation and then knowing itself, in and through philosophical reflection, as the identity of the real and the ideal, of Nature and Spirit.[3]

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[1] *W*, I, p. 714. I have used 'absoluteness' to render *Absoluthheit*.

[2] *W*, I, p. 717.

[3] Schelling's picture of the metaphysical basis of a philosophy of Nature exercised a powerful influence on the thought of Hegel. But it would be inappropriate to discuss this matter here.

Schelling's justification of the possibility of a philosophy of Nature or of the so-called higher physics is thus admittedly metaphysical in character. Nature (that is, *Natura naturata*) must be ideal through and through. For it is the symbol or appearance of *Natura naturans*, ideal Nature: it is the 'external' objectification of the Absolute. And as the Absolute is always one, the identity of objectivity and subjectivity, *Natura naturata*, must also be subjectivity. This truth is manifested in the process by which Nature passes, as it were, into the world of representation. And the culmination of this process is the insight by which it is seen that human knowledge of Nature is Nature's knowledge of itself. There is really no rift between the objective and the subjective. From the transcendental point of view they are one. Slumbering Spirit becomes awakened Spirit. The distinguishable moments in the supra-temporal life of the Absolute as pure essence are manifested in the temporal order, which stands to the Absolute in itself as consequent to antecedent.

2. To develop a philosophy of Nature is to develop a systematic ideal construction of Nature. In the *Timaeus* Plato sketched a theoretical construction of bodies out of fundamental qualities. And Schelling is concerned with the same sort of thing. A purely experimental physics would not deserve the name of science. It would be 'nothing but a collection of facts, of reports on what has been observed, of what has happened either under natural or under artificially-produced conditions'.[1] Schelling admits indeed that physics as we know it is not purely experimental or empirical in this sense. 'In what is now called physics empiricism [*Empirie*] and science are mixed up.'[2] But there is room, in Schelling's opinion, for a purely theoretical construction or deduction of matter and of the fundamental types of bodies, the inorganic and the organic. Moreover, this speculative physics will not simply assume natural forces, such as gravitation, as something given. It will construct them from first principles.

According to Schelling's intentions at least this construction does not involve producing a fanciful and arbitrary deduction of the fundamental levels of Nature. Rather does it mean letting Nature construct itself before the watchful attention of the mind. Speculative or higher physics cannot indeed explain the basic productive activity which gives rise to Nature. This is a matter for metaphysics rather than for the philosophy of Nature proper. But if the development of the natural system is the necessary progressive self-expression of ideal Nature, *Natura naturans*, it must be possible to retrace systematically the stages of the process by which ideal Nature expresses itself in *Natura naturata*. And to do this is the task of speculative physics. Schelling is obviously well aware that it is through experience that we become acquainted with the existence of natural forces and of inorganic and organic things. And it is not the philosopher's task to tell us the empirical facts for the first time, so to speak, or to work out *a priori* a natural history which can be developed only on the basis of empirical investigation. He is concerned with exhibiting the fundamental and necessary teleological pattern in Nature, in Nature, that is to say, as known in the first instance by experience and empirical inquiry. One might say that he is concerned with explaining to us the why and wherefore of the facts.

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[1] *W*, II, p. 283.

[2] *Ibid.*

To exhibit Nature as a teleological system, as the necessary self-unfolding of the eternal Idea, involves showing that the explanation of the lower is always to be found in the higher. For instance, even if from the temporal point of view the inorganic is prior to the organic, from the philosophical point of view the latter is logically prior to the former. That is to say, the lower level exists as a foundation for the higher level. And this is true throughout Nature. The materialist tends to reduce the higher to the lower. For example, he tries to explain organic life in terms of mechanical causality, without introducing the concept of finality. But he has the wrong point of view. It is not, as he is inclined to imagine, a question of denying the laws of mechanics or of regarding them as suspended in the organic sphere, if one introduces the concept of finality. Rather is it a question of seeing the sphere of mechanics as the necessary setting for the realization of the ends of Nature in the production of the organism. There is continuity. For the lower is the necessary foundation for the higher, and the latter subsumes the former in itself. But there is also the emergence of something new, and this new level explains the level which it presupposes.

When we understand this, we see that 'the opposition between mechanism and the organic sphere disappears'.[1] For we see the production of the organism as that at which Nature unconsciously aims through the development of the inorganic sphere, with the laws of mechanics. And it is thus truer to say that the inorganic is the organic *minus* than that the organic is the inorganic *plus*. Yet even this way of speaking can be misleading. For the opposition between mechanism and the organic sphere is overcome not so much by the theory that the former exists for the latter as by the theory that Nature as a whole is an organic unity.

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[1] *W*, I, p. 416.

Now, the activity which lies at the basis of Nature and which 'expands' itself in the phenomenal world is infinite or unlimited. For Nature is, as we have seen, the self-objectification of the infinite Absolute which, as an eternal *act*, is activity or willing. But if there is to be any objective system of Nature at all, this unlimited activity must be checked. That is to say, there must be a checking or limiting force. And it is the interaction between the unlimited activity and the checking force which gives rise to the lowest level of Nature, the general structure of the world and the series of bodies,[1] which Schelling calls the first potency (*Potenz*) of Nature. Thus if we think of the force of attraction as corresponding to the checking force and the force of repulsion as corresponding to the unlimited activity, the synthesis of the two is matter in so far as this is simply mass.

But the drive of the unlimited activity reasserts itself, only to be checked at another point. And the second unity or potency in the construction of Nature is universal mechanism, under which heading Schelling deduces light and the dynamic process or the dynamic laws of bodies. 'The dynamic process is nothing else but the second construction of matter.'[2] That is to say, the original construction of matter is repeated, as it were, at a higher level. On the lower level we have the elementary operation of the forces of attraction and repulsion and their synthesis in matter as mass. At the higher level we find the same forces showing themselves in the phenomena of magnetism, electricity and chemical process or the chemical properties of bodies.

The third unity or potency of Nature is the organism. And on this level we find the same forces further actualizing their potentialities in the phenomena of sensibility, irritability and reproduction. This unity or level of Nature is represented as the synthesis of the two others. Hence it cannot be said that at any level Nature is simply lifeless. It is a living organic unity which actualizes its potentialities at ascending levels until it expresses itself in the organism. We must add, however, that there are obviously distinguishable levels within the organic sphere itself. On the lower levels reproductivity is particularly conspicuous whereas sensibility is comparatively undeveloped. The individual organisms are lost, as it were, in the species. On the higher levels the life of the senses is more developed, and the individual organism is, so to speak, more of an individual and less a mere particular member of an indefinite class. The culminating point is reached in the human organism, which most clearly manifests the ideality of Nature and forms the point of transition to the world of representation or subjectivity, Nature's reflection on itself.

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[1] *Der allgemeine Weltbau und die Körperreihe*; *W*, I, p. 718.
[2] *W*, II, p. 320.

Throughout his construction of Nature Schelling employs the idea of the polarity of forces. But 'these two conflicting forces . . . lead to the idea of an *organizing principle* which makes the world a system'.[1] And to this principle we can conveniently give the time-hallowed name of world-soul. It cannot indeed be discovered by empirical investigation. Nor can it be described in terms of the qualities of phenomena. It is a postulate, 'an hypothesis of the higher physics for explaining the universal organism'.[2] This so-called world-soul is not in itself a conscious intelligence. It is the organizing principle which manifests itself in Nature and which attains consciousness in and through the human ego. And unless we postulated it, we could not look on Nature as a unified, self-developing super-organism.

It may have occurred to the reader to wonder how Schelling's theory of Nature stands to the theory of evolution in the sense of the transformation of forms or the emergence of higher from lower forms. And it is clearly arguable not only that a theory of emergent evolution would fit in very well with Schelling's interpretation but that it is demanded by his view of the world as a self-developing organic unity. Indeed, he explicitly refers to the possibility of evolution. He observes, for instance, that even if man's experience does not reveal any case of the transformation of one species into another, lack of empirical evidence does not prove that such a transformation is impossible. For it may well be that such changes can take place only in a much longer period of time than that covered by man's experience. At the same time Schelling goes on to remark, 'however, let us pass over these possibilities'.[3] In other words, while he allows for the possibility of emergent evolution, he is primarily concerned not with a genetic history of Nature but with an ideal or theoretical construction.

This construction is indeed rich in ideas. It echoes much past

[1] *W*, I, p. 449. [2] *W*, I, p. 413. [3] *W*, I, p. 417

speculation about the world. For instance, the pervasive idea of the polarity of forces recalls Greek speculation about Nature, while the theory of Nature as slumbering Spirit recalls certain aspects of Leibniz's philosophy. Schelling's interpretation of Nature also looks forward to later speculation. For example, there is some family resemblance between Schelling's philosophy of Nature and Bergson's picture of inorganic things as representing, as it were, the extinguished sparks thrown off by the *élan vital* in its upward flight.

At the same time Schelling's construction of Nature inevitably appears so fanciful and arbitrary to the scientific mentality that there does not seem to be any justification for devoting space here to further detailed treatment of it.[1] It is not that the philosopher fails to incorporate into his philosophy of Nature theories and hypotheses taken from science as he knows it. On the contrary, he borrows and utilizes ideas taken from contemporary physics, electrodynamics, chemistry and biology. But these ideas are fitted into a dialectical scheme, and they are often held together by the application of analogies which, however ingenious and perhaps sometimes suggestive, tend to appear fanciful and far-fetched. Hence discussion of the details is more a matter for a specialized treatment of Schelling and of his relations to scientists such as Newton and to contemporary writers such as Goethe than for a general history of philosophy.

To say this is not, however, to deny the importance of Schelling's philosophy of Nature in its general outlines. For it shows clearly that German idealism does not involve subjectivism in the ordinary sense. Nature is the immediate and objective manifestation of the Absolute. It is indeed ideal through and through. But this does not mean that Nature is in any sense the creation of the human ego. It is ideal because it expresses the eternal Idea and because it is orientated towards self-reflection in and through the human mind. Schelling's view of the Absolute as the identity of objectivity and subjectivity demands, of course, that the Absolute's self-objectification, namely Nature, should reveal this identity. But the identity is revealed through the teleological pattern of Nature, not through its reduction to human ideas. Nature's representation in and through the human mind presupposes the objectivity of the world, though at the same time it presupposes the intelligibility of the world and its intrinsic orientation to self-reflection.

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[1] The details of Schelling's construction of Nature vary somewhat in his different writings on the subject.

Further, if we prescind from Schelling's rather fanciful speculations about magnetism, electricity and so on, that is, from the details of his theoretical construction of Nature, the general view of Nature as an objective manifestation of the Absolute and as a teleological system possesses an abiding value. It is obviously a metaphysical interpretation, and as such it can hardly commend itself to those who reject all metaphysics. But the general picture of Nature is not unreasonable. And if we once accept with Schelling, and afterwards with Hegel, the idea of a spiritual Absolute, we should expect to find in Nature a teleological pattern, though it does not necessarily follow that we can deduce the forces and phenomena of Nature in the way that Schelling thought that speculative physics is capable of doing.

3. In view of the fact that Schelling's philosophy of Nature represents his divergence from Fichte and his own original contribution to the development of German idealism it is at first sight surprising to find him publishing in 1800 a *System of Transcendental Idealism* in which he starts from the ego and proceeds to elaborate 'the continuous history of self-consciousness'.[1] For it looks as though he is adding to the philosophy of Nature an incompatible system inspired by the influence of Fichte. In Schelling's opinion, however, transcendental idealism forms a necessary complement to the philosophy of Nature. In knowledge itself subject and object are united: they are one. But if we wish to explain this identity, we have first to think it away. And then we are faced with two possibilities. Either we can start with the objective and proceed towards the subjective, asking how unconscious Nature comes to be represented. Or we can start with the subjective and proceed towards the objective, asking how an object comes to exist for the subject. In the first case we develop the philosophy of Nature, showing how Nature develops the conditions for its own self-reflection on the subjective level. In the second case we develop the system of transcendental idealism, showing how the ultimate immanent principle of consciousness produces the objective world as the condition of its attainment of self-consciousness. And the two lines of reflection are and must be complementary. For if the Absolute is the identity of subjectivity and objectivity, it must be possible to start from either pole and to develop a philosophy in

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[1] *W*, II, p. 331.

harmony with the philosophy developed by starting from the other pole. In other words, it is Schelling's conviction that the mutually complementary characters of the philosophy of Nature and the system of transcendental idealism manifest the nature of the Absolute as identity of subject and object, of the ideal and the real.

As transcendental idealism is described as the science of knowledge, it prescinds from the question whether there is an ontological reality behind the whole sphere of knowledge. Hence its first principle must be immanent within this sphere. And if we are to proceed from the subjective to the objective by transcendental deduction, we must start with the original identity of subject and object. This identity within the sphere of knowledge is self-consciousness, wherein subject and object are the same. And self-consciousness is described by Schelling as the ego. But the term 'ego' does not signify the individual self. It signifies 'the act of *self-consciousness in general*'.[1] 'The self-consciousness which is our point of departure is *one absolute act*.'[2] And this absolute act is a production of itself as object. 'The ego is nothing else but a producing which becomes its own object.'[3] It is in fact 'an intellectual intuition'.[4] For the ego exists through knowing itself, and this self-knowledge is the act of intellectual intuition, which is 'the organ of all transcendental thought'[5] and freely produces as its object what is otherwise no object. Intellectual intuition and the production of the object of transcendental thought are one and the same. Hence a system of transcendental idealism must take the form of a production or construction of self-consciousness.

Schelling makes a wider use than Fichte had made of the idea of intellectual intuition. But the general pattern of his transcendental idealism is obviously based on Fichte's thought. The ego is in itself an unlimited act or activity. But to become its own object it must limit this activity by setting something over against itself, namely the non-ego. And it must do so unconsciously. For it is impossible to explain the givenness of the non-ego within the framework of idealism unless we assume that the production of the non-ego is an unconscious and necessary production. The non-ego is a necessary condition of self-consciousness. And in this sense the limitation of the infinite or unlimited activity which constitutes the ego must always remain. But in another sense the limitation must be transcended. That is to say, the ego must be able to abstract from the non-ego and recoil, as it were, on to itself. Self-consciousness, in other words, will take the form of human self-consciousness which presupposes Nature, the non-ego.

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[1] *W*, II, p. 374.
[2] *W*, II, p. 388.
[3] *W*, II, p. 370.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *W*, II, p. 369.

In the first part of the system of transcendental idealism, which corresponds to Fichte's theoretical deduction of consciousness in the *Wissenschaftslehre*, Schelling traces the history of consciousness in three main epochs or stages. Many of Fichte's themes reappear, but Schelling is naturally at pains to correlate his history of consciousness with the philosophy of Nature. The first epoch ranges from primitive sensation up to productive intuition. And it is correlated with the construction of matter in the philosophy of Nature. In other words, we see the production of the material world as the unconscious activity of Spirit. The second epoch ranges from productive intuition up to reflection. The ego is here conscious on the level of sense. That is to say, the sensible object appears as distinct from the act of productive intuition. And Schelling deduces the categories of space, time and causality. A universe begins to exist for the ego. Schelling also occupies himself with the deduction of the organism as a necessary condition for the ego's return on itself. This takes place in the third epoch which culminates in the act of absolute abstraction by which the ego reflectively differentiates itself from the object or non-ego as such and recognizes itself as intelligence. It has become object to itself.

The act of absolute abstraction is explicable only as an act of the self-determining will. And we thus pass to the idea of the ego or intelligence as an active and free power, and so to the second or practical part of the system of transcendental idealism. After treating of the part played by the consciousness of other selves, other free wills, in the development of self-consciousness Schelling goes on to discuss the distinction between natural impulse and the will considered as an idealizing activity (*eine idealisierende Tätigkeit*), that is, as seeking to modify or change the objective in accordance with an ideal. The ideal belongs to the side of the subjective: it is in fact the ego itself. Hence in seeking to actualize the ideal in the objective world the ego also realizes itself.

This idea sets the stage for a discussion of morality. How, asks Schelling, can the will, namely the ego as self-determining or self-realizing activity, become objectified for the ego as intelligence? That is to say, how can the ego become conscious of itself as will?

The answer is, through a demand, the demand that the ego should will nothing else but self-determination. 'This demand is nothing else but the categorical imperative or the moral law which Kant expresses in this way: you ought to will only that which other intelligences can will. But that which all intelligences can will is only pure self-determination, pure conformity to law. Through the law of morality, therefore, pure self-determination . . . becomes an object for the ego.'[1]

But self-determination or self-realization can be achieved only through concrete action in the world. And Schelling proceeds to deduce the system of rights and the State as conditions for moral action. The State is, of course, an edifice built by human hands, by the activity of the Spirit. But it is a necessary condition for the harmonious realization of freedom by a plurality of individuals. And though it is an edifice built by human hands, it should become a second Nature. In all our actions we count on the uniformity of Nature, on the reign of natural laws. And in our moral activity we ought to be able to count on the rule of rational law in society. That is to say, we ought to be able to count on the rational State, the characteristic of which is the rule of law.

Yet even the best-ordered State is exposed to the capricious and egoistic wills of other States. And the question arises, how can political society be rescued, as far as this is possible, from this condition of instability and insecurity? The answer can be found only in 'an organization which transcends the individual State, namely a federation of all States',[2] which will do away with conflicts between nations. Only in this way can political society become a second Nature, something on which we can count.

For this end to be attained, however, two conditions are required. First, the fundamental principles of a truly rational constitution must be generally acknowledged, so that all individual States will have a common interest in guaranteeing and protecting one another's law and rights. Secondly, individual States must submit themselves to a common fundamental law in the same way that individual citizens submit themselves to the law of their own State. And this means in effect that the federation will have to be a 'State of States',[3] in ideal at least a world-organization with sovereign power. If this ideal could be realized, political society would become a secure setting for the full actualization of a universal moral order.

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[1] *W*, II, pp. 573–4.

[2] *W*, II, p. 586.

[3] *W*, II, p. 587.

Now, if this ideal is to be realized at all, it must obviously be realized within history. And the question arises whether we can discern in human history any necessary tendency towards the attainment of this goal. In Schelling's opinion 'there lies in the concept of history the concept of endless *progress*'.[1] Obviously, if this statement meant that the word 'history', as ordinarily used, necessarily includes as part of its meaning the concept of endless progress towards a predetermined goal, its truth would be open to question. But Schelling is looking on history in the light of his theory of the Absolute. 'History as a whole is a continual revelation of the Absolute, a revelation which gradually discloses itself.'[2] As the Absolute is the pure identity of the ideal and the real, history must be a movement towards the creation of a second Nature, a perfect moral world-order in the framework of a rationally-organized political society. And as the Absolute is infinite, this movement of progress must be endless. If the Absolute were perfectly revealed in its true nature, the point of view of human consciousness, which presupposes a distinction between subject and object, would no longer exist. Hence the revelation of the Absolute in human history must be in principle endless.

But are we not then faced with a dilemma? If on the one hand we assert that the human will is free, must we not admit that man can thwart the ends of history and that there is no necessary progress towards an ideal goal? If on the other hand we assert that history necessarily moves in a certain direction, must we not deny human freedom and explain away the psychological feeling of freedom?

In dealing with this problem Schelling has recourse to the idea of an absolute synthesis, as he puts it, of free actions. Individuals act freely. And any given individual may act for some purely private and selfish end. But there is at the same time a hidden necessity which achieves a synthesis of the apparently unconnected and often conflicting actions of human beings. Even if a man acts from purely selfish motives, he will none the less unconsciously contribute, even though against his will, to the fulfilment of the common end of human history.[3]

Up to this point we have been considering briefly the parts of the system of transcendental idealism which cover more or less the ground covered by Fichte in his theoretical and practical deductions of consciousness and in his works on the theory of rights and on ethics, though Schelling makes, of course, some changes and introduces and develops ideas of his own. But Schelling adds a third part which is his own peculiar contribution to transcendental idealism and which serves to underline the difference between his general outlook and that of Fichte. The philosophy of Nature deals with slumbering or unconscious Spirit. In the system of transcendental idealism as hitherto outlined we see conscious Spirit objectifying itself in moral action and in the creation of a moral world-order, a second Nature. But we have yet to find an intuition in which the identity of the unconscious and of the conscious, of the real and of the ideal, is presented in a concrete manner to the ego itself. And in the third part of the system of transcendental idealism Schelling locates what he is seeking in aesthetic intuition. Thus transcendental idealism culminates in a philosophy of art, to which Schelling attaches great importance. And provided that the statement is not taken as implying that the philosopher sets out to minimize the significance of moral activity, we can say that with Schelling, as contrasted with Fichte, the emphasis shifts from ethics to aesthetics, from the moral life to artistic creation, from action for the sake of action to aesthetic contemplation.

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[1] *W*, II, p. 592.

[2] *W*, II, p. 603.

[3] We can call this a doctrine of divine providence if we like. But at this stage at any rate of Schelling's thought we should not think of the Absolute as a personal Deity. The working out of the absolute synthesis is the necessary expression of the Absolute's nature as pure identity of the ideal and the real.

From one point of view it would be desirable to treat first of Schelling's philosophy of art as given in the third part of the *System of Transcendental Idealism* and later of his aesthetic ideas as expressed in his lectures on *The Philosophy of Art*. For in the meantime he had developed his theory of the Absolute, and this fact is reflected in the lectures. But it is more convenient to outline his ideas on art in one section, though I shall draw attention to their historical development.

4. In the *System of Transcendental Idealism* we read that 'the objective world is only the original, still unconscious poetry of the Spirit: the universal organon of philosophy—and the keystone of the whole arch—is *the philosophy of art*'.[1] But the view that the philosophy of art is 'the true organon of philosophy'[2] stands in need of some explanation.

In the first place art is grounded on the power of productive intuition which is the indispensable organ or instrument of transcendental idealism. As we have seen, transcendental idealism comprises a history of consciousness. But the stages of this history are not present from the start to the ego's vision as so many already constituted objects at which it only needs to look. The ego or intelligence has to produce them, in the sense that it has to re-create or, to use a Platonic term, re-collect them in a systematic manner. And this task of re-creation or re-collection is performed by the power of productive intuition. Aesthetic intuition is an activity of the same power, though there it is directed outwards, as it were, rather than inwards.

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[1] *W*, II, p. 349.

[2] *W*, II, p. 351.

In the second place aesthetic intuition manifests the basic truth of the unity of the unconscious and the conscious, of the real and the ideal. If we consider aesthetic intuition from the side of the creative artist, the genius, we can see that in a real sense he knows what he is doing: he acts consciously and deliberately. When Michelangelo made the statue of Moses, he knew what he was about. At the same time, however, we can equally well say that the genius acts unconsciously. Genius is not reducible to a technical proficiency which can be imparted by instruction: the creative artist is, as it were, the vehicle of a power which acts through him. And for Schelling this is the same power which operates in Nature. In other words, the same power which acts without consciousness in producing Nature, the unconscious poetry of the Spirit, acts with consciousness in producing the work of art. That is to say, it acts through the consciousness of the artist. And this illustrates the ultimate unity of the unconscious and the conscious, of the real and the ideal.

The matter can be considered from another point of view. We can ask why it is that contemplation of a work of art is accompanied by 'the feeling of infinite satisfaction',[1] why it is that 'every impulse to produce is stilled with the completion of the product, that all contradictions are reconciled and all riddles solved'.[2] In other words, why is it that in contemplating a work of art the mind, whether of the artist himself or of someone else, enjoys a feeling of finality, the feeling that nothing should be added or subtracted, the feeling that a problem is solved, even if the problem cannot be stated? In Schelling's opinion the answer is that the completed work of art is the intelligence's supreme objectification of itself to itself, that is, as the identity of the unconscious and the conscious, the real and the ideal, the objective and the subjective. But as the intelligence or ego does not know this reflectively, it simply feels a boundless satisfaction, as though some unstated mystery had been revealed, and ascribes the production of the work of art to some power which acts through it.

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[1] *W*, II, p. 615.

[2] *Ibid.*

The philosophy of art is thus the culmination of the *System of Transcendental Idealism.* It will be remembered that transcendental idealism starts with the idea of the so-called ego or intelligence considered as an absolute act of self-consciousness in which subject and object are one. But this absolute act is a producing: it has to produce its object. And the supreme objectification is the work of art. True, the organism, as considered in the philosophy of Nature, is a partial manifestation of the identity of the real and the ideal. But it is ascribed to an unconscious productive power which does not work with freedom, whereas the work of art is the expression of freedom: it is the free ego's manifestation of itself to itself.

Transcendental idealism, as was remarked in the last section, starts with the first immanent principle within the sphere of knowledge, namely with the absolute act which becomes an object for itself, and prescinds from the question whether there is a reality behind, as it were, this absolute act or ego.[1] But by the time (1802–3) that Schelling came to deliver the lectures which were eventually published as the *Philosophy of Art* he had developed his theory of the Absolute, and we find him emphasizing the metaphysical significance of the work of art as the finite manifestation of the infinite Absolute. The Absolute is the 'indifference' (that is to say, the ultimate identity) of the ideal and the real, and 'the indifference of the ideal and the real, as indifference, is expressed in the ideal world through art'.[2] Schelling is not contradicting what he has previously said about art. But in the lectures he transcends the self-imposed Fichtean limitations of the *System of Transcendental Idealism* and adopts the frankly metaphysical point of view which is really characteristic of his thought.

In *Bruno* (1802) Schelling introduced the notion of divine ideas and asserted that things are beautiful in virtue of their participation in these ideas. And this theory reappears in the lectures on art. Thus we are told that 'beauty exists where the particular (the real) is so in accord with its idea that this idea itself, as infinite, enters into the finite and is intuited *in concreto*'.[3] Aesthetic intuition is thus the intuition of the infinite in a finite product of intelligence. Further, the conformity of a thing with its eternal idea is its truth. Hence beauty and truth[1] are ultimately one.

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[1] Similarly, the philosophy of Nature starts with the postulated infinite activity which manifests itself in Nature.

[2] *W*, III, p. 400.

[3] *W*, III, p. 402.

Now, if the creative genius exhibits in the work of art an eternal idea, he must be akin to the philosopher. But it does not follow that he is a philosopher. For he does not apprehend the eternal ideas in an abstract form but only through a symbolic medium. Artistic creation requires the presence of a symbolic world, a world of 'poetic existence'[2] which mediates between the universal and the particular. The symbol represents neither the universal as such nor the particular as such, but both in unity. We must distinguish, therefore, between the symbol and the image. For the image is always concrete and particular.

This symbolic world of poetic existence is provided by mythology which is 'the necessary condition and primary matter [*Stoff*] of all art'.[3] Schelling dwells at length on Greek mythology, but he does not confine the symbolic world which in his view forms the material for artistic creation to the mythology of the Greeks. He includes, for instance, what he calls Jewish and Christian mythology. The Christian mind has constructed its own symbolic world which has proved a fruitful source of material for the artist.

This emphasis on mythology in Schelling's account of the symbolic world of poetic existence may well appear too narrow. But it illustrates Schelling's constant interest in myths as being at the same time imaginative constructions and intimations or expressions of the divine. In his later years he makes a distinction between myth and revelation. But his interest in the significance of mythology is a lasting element in his thought. And we shall have to return to the subject in connection with his later philosophy of religion.

In this outline of Schelling's aesthetic philosophy the terms 'art' and 'artist' have been used in a wider sense than is customary in ordinary English. But it would not, I think, be very profitable to devote space here to Schelling's discussion of the particular fine arts which he divides into those belonging to the real series, such as painting and sculpture, and those belonging to the ideal series, such as poetry.[4] For general purposes it is sufficient to understand how Schelling makes aesthetic theory an integral part of his philosophy. In the third *Critique* Kant had indeed discussed the aesthetic judgment, and he can be said to have made aesthetics an integral part of the critical philosophy. But the nature of Kant's system made it impossible for him to develop a metaphysics of art in the way that Schelling does. Kant allowed, it is true, that from the subjective point of view we can see a hint of noumenal reality, of the so-called supersensible substrate. But with Schelling the product of artistic genius becomes a clear revelation of the nature of the Absolute. And in his exaltation of the genius, in his partial assimilation of the artistic genius to the philosopher and his insistence on the metaphysical significance of aesthetic intuition we can see clear evidence of his romantic affiliations.

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[1] The reference is obviously to what the Scholastics called ontological truth, as distinct from logical truth.

[2] *W*, III, p. 419.

[3] *W*, III, p. 425.

[4] The reader who is interested in this subject can consult the third part of Schelling's *Philosophy of Art* or, for example, Bernard Bosanquet's *History of Aesthetic*.

5. In the foregoing sections reference has frequently been made to Schelling's theory of the Absolute as the pure identity of subjectivity and objectivity, of the ideal and the real. In a sense these references were premature. For in the preface to his *Exposition of My System of Philosophy* (1801) Schelling speaks of expounding 'the system of absolute identity'.[1] And this way of speaking shows that he does not regard himself as simply repeating what he has already said. At the same time the so-called system of identity can be looked on as an inquiry into and exposition of the metaphysical implications of the conviction that the philosophy of Nature and the system of transcendental idealism are mutually complementary.

'The standpoint of philosophy,' says Schelling, 'is the standpoint of Reason.'[2] That is to say, philosophical knowledge of things is knowledge of them as they are in Reason. 'I give the name of Reason [*Vernunft*] to the absolute Reason or to Reason in so far as it is conceived as the total indifference of the subjective and objective.'[3] In other words, philosophy is knowledge of the relation between things and the Absolute or, as the Absolute is infinite, between the finite and the infinite. And the Absolute is to be conceived as the pure identity or indifference (lack of all difference) of subjectivity and objectivity.

In attempting to describe the relation between the finite and the infinite Schelling is in a very difficult position. On the one hand there can be nothing outside the Absolute. For it is infinite reality and must contain all reality within itself. Hence it cannot be the external cause of the universe. 'The absolute identity is not the cause of the universe but the universe itself. For everything which exists is the absolute identity itself. And the universe is everything which is.'[1] On the other hand, if the Absolute is pure identity, all distinctions must be outside it. 'Quantitative difference is possible only outside the absolute totality.'[2] Hence finite things must be external to the Absolute.

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[1] *W*, III, p. 9.

[2] *W*, III, p. 11.

[3] *W*, III, p. 10.

Schelling cannot say that the Absolute somehow proceeds outside itself. For he maintains that 'the fundamental error of all philosophy is the proposition that the absolute identity has really gone out of itself. . . .'[3] Hence he is forced to say that it is only from the point of view of empirical consciousness that there is a distinction between subject and object and that there are subsistent finite things. But this really will not do. For the emergence of the point of view of empirical consciousness and its ontological status remain unexplained. It is all very well for Schelling to say that quantitative difference is posited 'only in appearance'[4] and that the Absolute is 'in no way affected by the opposition between subjectivity and objectivity'.[5] If appearance is anything at all, it must, on Schelling's premisses, be within the Absolute. And if it is not within the Absolute, the Absolute must be transcendent and unidentifiable with the universe.

In *Bruno* (1802) Schelling makes play with the theory of divine Ideas, taken over from the Platonic and Neo-Platonic traditions. Considered from one point of view at least, the Absolute is the Idea of ideas, and finite things have eternal existence in the divine Ideas. But even if we are prepared to admit that this theory of divine Ideas is compatible with the view of the Absolute as pure identity, a view which is reaffirmed in *Bruno*, there is still the temporal status of finite things and their quantitative differentiation to be explained. In the dialogue Bruno tells Lucian that individual finite things are separate 'only for you'[6] and that for a stone nothing proceeds out of the darkness of absolute identity. But we can very well ask how empirical consciousness, with the distinctions which it involves, can arise either within the Absolute, if it is pure identity, or outside it, if it is the totality.

Schelling's general point of view is that absolute Reason, as the identity of subjectivity and objectivity, is self-consciousness, the absolute act in which subject and object are one. But Reason is not itself actually self-conscious: it is simply the 'indifference' or lack of difference between subject and object, the ideal and the real. It attains actual self-consciousness only in and through human consciousness, the immediate object of which is the world. In other words, the Absolute manifests itself or appears in two series of 'potencies', the real series, which is considered in the philosophy of Nature, and the ideal series, which is considered in transcendental idealism. And from the standpoint of empirical consciousness the two series are distinct. We have subjectivity on the one hand and objectivity on the other. And the two together constitute 'the universe', which, as everything that is, is the Absolute. If, however, we try to transcend the standpoint of empirical consciousness, for which distinctions exist, and to grasp the Absolute as it is in itself rather than in its appearance, we can conceive it only as the indifference or vanishing-point of all difference and distinctions. True, the concept has then no positive content. But this simply shows that by conceptual thought we can apprehend only the appearance of the Absolute, the absolute identity as it appears in its 'external' being, and not as it is in itself.

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[1] *W*, III, p. 25.

[2] *W*, III, p. 21.

[3] *W*, III, p. 16.

[4] *W*, III, p. 23.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *W*, III, p. 155.

In Schelling's opinion the theory of identity enables him to transcend all disputes between realism and idealism. For such controversy assumes that the distinction made by empirical consciousness between the real and the ideal can be overcome only by subordinating or even reducing the one to the other. But once we understand that the real and the ideal are one in the Absolute, the controversy loses its point. And the system of identity can thus be called real-idealism (*Realidealismus*).

But though Schelling himself was pleased with the system of identity, there were others who were not so appreciative. And the philosopher set himself to explain his position in such a way as to meet what he regarded as the misunderstandings of his critics. Further, his own reflections on his position drove him to develop fresh lines of thought. Maintaining, as he did, that the relation between the finite and the infinite or the problem of the existence of the world of things is the fundamental problem of metaphysics, he could hardly rest content with the system of identity. For it seemed to imply that the universe is the actualization of the Absolute, while it also asserted that the distinction between potentiality and act falls outside the Absolute in itself. Some more satisfactory account of the relation between the finite and the infinite was obviously required. But a sketch of Schelling's further philosophical journeying is best reserved for the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII

SCHELLING (3)

The idea of the cosmic Fall—Personality and freedom in man and God; good and evil—The distinction between negative and positive philosophy—Mythology and revelation—General remarks on Schelling—Notes on Schelling's influence and on some kindred thinkers.

1. IN his work on *Philosophy and Religion* (1804) Schelling explains that the description of the Absolute as pure identity does not mean either that it is a formless stuff, composed of all phenomena fused together, or that it is a vacuous nonentity. The Absolute is pure identity in the sense that it is an absolutely simple infinity. We can approach it in conceptual thought only by thinking away and denying of it the attributes of finite things; but it does not follow that it is in itself empty of all reality. What follows is that it can be apprehended only by intuition. 'The nature of the Absolute *itself*, which as ideal is also immediately real, cannot be known by explanations, but only through intuition. For it is only the composite which can be known by description. The simple must be intuited.'[1] This intuition cannot be imparted by instruction. But the negative approach to the Absolute facilitates the act of intuition of which the soul is capable through its fundamental unity with the divine reality.

The Absolute as ideal manifests or expresses itself immediately in the eternal ideas. Strictly speaking, indeed, there is only one Idea, the immediate eternal reflection of the Absolute which proceeds from it as the light flows from the sun. 'All ideas are one Idea.'[2] But we can speak of a plurality of ideas inasmuch as Nature with all its grades is eternally present in the one Idea. This eternal Idea can be described as the divine self-knowledge. 'But this self-knowledge must not be conceived as a mere accident or attribute of the Absolute-ideal but as itself a subsistent Absolute. For the Absolute cannot be the ideal ground of anything which is not like itself, absolute.'[3]

In developing this theory of the divine Idea, which, as we have

[1] *W*, IV, pp. 15–16.

[2] *W*, IV, pp. 23–4.

[3] *W*, IV, p. 21.

seen, was first expounded in *Bruno*, Schelling draws attention to its origins in Greek philosophy. No doubt he has also at the back of his mind the Christian doctrine of the divine Word; but the description of the eternal Idea as a second Absolute is more akin to the Plotinian theory of *Nous* than to the Christian doctrine of the second Person of the Trinity. Further, the ideas of the negative approach to the Absolute and of intuitive apprehension of the supreme Godhead also go back to Neo-Platonism, though the first idea at any rate reappears in Scholasticism, as well, of course, as the theory of divine ideas.

However, in spite of its venerable history Schelling's theory of the eternal Idea cannot by itself explain the existence of finite things. For Nature as present in the eternal Idea is *Natura naturans* rather than *Natura naturata*. And from ideas, Schelling sensibly maintains, we can derive by deduction only other ideas. He therefore has recourse to the speculations of Jakob Boehme and introduces the notion of a cosmic Fall. The origin of the world is to be found in a falling-away or breaking-away (*Abbrechen*) from God, which can also be described as a leap (*Sprung*). 'From the Absolute to the real there is no continuous transition; the origin of the sensible world is thinkable only as a complete breaking-away from Absoluteness by means of a leap.'[1]

Schelling does not mean that a part of the Absolute breaks away or splits off. The Fall consists in the emergence of a dim image of an image, resembling the shadow which accompanies the body. All things have their eternal ideal existence in the Idea or divine ideas. Hence the centre and true reality of any finite thing is in the divine Idea, and the essence of the finite thing may thus be said to be infinite rather than finite. Considered, however, precisely as a finite thing, it is the image of an image (that is, an image of the ideal essence which is itself a reflection of the Absolute). And its existence as a distinct finite thing is an alienation from its true centre, a negation of infinity. True, finite things are not simply nothing. They are, as Plato said, a mixture of being and not-being. But particularity and finitude represent the negative element. Hence the emergence of *Natura naturata*, the system of particular finite things, is a Fall from the Absolute.

It must not be thought, however, that the cosmic Fall, the emergence of an image of an image, is an event in time. It is 'as eternal (outside all time) as the Absolute itself and the world of

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[1] *W*, IV, p. 28.

Ideas'.[1] The Idea is an eternal image of God. And the sensible world is an indefinite succession of shadows, images of images, without any assignable beginning. This means that no finite thing can be referred to God as its immediate cause. The origin of any given finite thing, a man for instance, is explicable in terms of finite causes. The thing, in other words, is a member in the endless chain of causes and effects which constitutes the sensible world. And this is why it is psychologically possible for a human being to look upon the world as the one reality. For it possesses a relative independence and self-subsistence. But this point of view is precisely the point of view of a fallen creature. From the metaphysical and religious standpoints we must see in the world's relative independence a clear sign of its fallen nature, of its alienation from the Absolute.

Now, if creation is not an event in time, the natural conclusion is that it is a necessary external self-expression of the eternal Idea. And in this case it should be in principle deducible, even if the finite mind is unable actually to perform the deduction. But we have seen that Schelling refuses to allow that the world is deducible even in principle from the Absolute. 'The Fall cannot be, as they say, explained.'[2] Hence the origin of the world must be ascribed to freedom. 'The ground of the possibility of the Fall lies in freedom.'[3] But in what sense? On the one hand this freedom cannot be exercised by the world itself. Schelling may sometimes speak as though the world broke away from the Absolute. But as it is the very existence and origin of the world which are in question, we can hardly conceive it as freely leaping away, as it were, from the Absolute. For *ex hypothesi* it does not yet exist. On the other hand, if we ascribe the timeless origination of the world to a free creative act of God, in a theistic sense, there is no very obvious reason for speaking about a cosmic Fall.

In treating of this problem Schelling appears to connect the Fall with a kind of double-life led by the eternal Idea considered as 'another Absolute'.[4] Regarded precisely as the eternal reflection of the Absolute, as the eternal Idea, its true life is in the Absolute itself. But regarded as 'real', as a second Absolute, as Soul, it strives to produce, and it can produce only phenomena, images of images, 'the nothingness of sensible things'.[5] It is, however, only the *possibility* of finite things which can be 'explained', that is, deduced from the second Absolute. Their actual existence is due to freedom, to a spontaneous movement which is at the same time a lapse.

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[1] *W*, IV, p. 31.
[2] *W*, IV, p. 32.
[3] *W*, IV, p. 30.
[4] *W*, IV, p. 31.
[5] *W*, IV, p. 30.

Creation is thus a Fall in the sense that it is a centrifugal movement. The absolute identity becomes differentiated or splintered on the phenomenal level, though not in itself. But there is also a centripetal movement, the return to God. This does not mean that particular finite material things as such return to the divine Idea. We have seen that no particular sensible thing has God for its immediate cause. Similarly, no particular sensible thing, considered precisely as such, returns immediately to God. Its return is mediate, by means of the transformation of the real into the ideal, of objectivity into subjectivity, in and through the human ego or reason which is capable of seeing the infinite in the finite and referring all images to the divine exemplar. As for the finite ego itself, it represents from one point of view 'the point of furthest alienation from God'.[1] For the apparent independence of the phenomenal image of the Absolute reaches its culminating-point in the ego's conscious self-possession and self-assertion. At the same time the ego is one in essence with infinite Reason, and it can rise above its egoistic point of view, returning to its true centre from which it has been alienated.

This point of view determines Schelling's general conception of history, which is well illustrated by the following oft-quoted passage. 'History is an epic composed in the mind of God. Its two main parts are: first, that which depicts the departure of humanity from its centre up to its furthest point of alienation from this centre, and, secondly, that which depicts the return. The first part is the *Iliad*, the second the *Odyssey* of history. In the first the movement was centrifugal, in the second it is centripetal.'[2]

In grappling with the problem of the One and the Many or of the relation between the infinite and the finite Schelling is obviously concerned with allowing for the possibility of evil. The idea of the Fall and of alienation allows for this possibility. For the human self is a fallen self, entangled, as it were, in particularity; and this entanglement, this alienation from the self's true centre, renders possible selfishness, sensuality and so on. But how can man be really free if the Absolute is the totality? And if there is a real possibility of evil, must it not have a ground in the Absolute itself? If so, what conclusions must we draw about the nature of the

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[1] *W*, IV, p. 32.

[2] *W*, IV, p. 47.

Absolute or God? In the next section we can consider Schelling's reflections on these problems.

2. In the Preface to his *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom* (1809) Schelling frankly admits that *Philosophy and Religion* was deficient in clarity. He intends, therefore, to give another exposition of his thought in the light of the idea of human freedom.[1] This is especially desirable, he says, in view of the accusation that his system is pantheistic and that there is accordingly no room in it for the concept of human freedom.

As for the charge of pantheism, this is, Schelling remarks, an ambiguous term. On the one hand it might be used to describe the theory that the visible world, *Natura naturata*, is identical with God. On the other hand it might be understood as referring to the theory that finite things do not exist at all but that there is only the simple indifferentiated unity of the Godhead. But in neither sense is Schelling's philosophy pantheistic. For he neither identifies the visible world with God nor teaches acosmism, the theory of the non-existence of the world. Nature is a consequence of the first principle, not the first principle itself. But it is a real consequence. God is the God of the living, not of the dead: the divine Being manifests itself and the manifestation is real. If, however, pantheism is interpreted as meaning that all things are immanent in God, Schelling is quite prepared to be called a pantheist. But he proceeds to point out that St. Paul himself declared that in God we live and move and have our being.

To clarify his position, Schelling reinterprets the principle of identity. 'The profound logic of the ancients distinguished subject and predicate as antecedent and consequent [*antecedens et consequens*] and thereby expressed the real meaning of the principle of identity.'[2] God and the world are identical; but to say this is to say that God is the ground or antecedent and the world the consequent. The unity which is asserted is a creative unity. God is self-revealing or self-manifesting life. And though the manifestation is immanent in God, it is yet distinguishable from him. The consequent is dependent on the antecedent, but it is not identical with it in the sense that there is no distinction between them.

This theory, Schelling insists, in no way involves the denial of human freedom. For by itself it says nothing about the nature of the consequent. If God is free, the human spirit, which is his image, is free. If God is not free, the human spirit is not free.

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[1] The revised system is also expounded in the Stuttgart lectures (1810), which are printed together with *Philosophical Inquiries* in the fourth volume of his *Works*.

[2] *W*, IV, p. 234.

Now, in Schelling's view the human spirit is certainly free. For 'the real and living concept [of freedom] is that it is a power of good and evil'.[1] And it is evident that man possesses this power. But if this power is present in man, the consequent, must it not also be present in God, the antecedent? And the question then arises, whether we are forced to draw the conclusion that God can do evil.

To answer this question, let us first look more closely at the human being. We talk about human beings as persons, but personality, Schelling maintains, is not something given from the start, it is something to be won. 'All birth is birth out of darkness into light',[2] and this general proposition is true of the birth of human personality. There is in man a dark foundation, as it were, the unconscious and the life or urge and natural impulse. And it is on this foundation that personality is built. Man is capable of following sensual desire and dark impulse rather than reason: he is able to affirm himself as a particular finite being to the exclusion of the moral law. But he also has the power of subordinating selfish desire and impulse to the rational will and of developing his true human personality. He can do this, however, only by strife, conflict and sublimation. For the dark foundation of personality always remains, though it can be progressively sublimated and integrated in the movement from darkness to light.

As far as man is concerned, what Schelling has to say on this subject obviously contains a great deal of truth. But stimulated by the writings of Boehme and impelled by the exigencies of his theory of the relation between the human spirit and God, he applies this notion of personality to God himself. There is in God a ground of his personal existence,[3] which is itself impersonal. It can be called will, but it is a 'will in which there is no understanding'.[4] It can be conceived as an unconscious desire or yearning for personal existence. And the personal divine existence must be conceived as rational will. The irrational or unconscious will can be called 'the egoism in God'.[5] And if there were only this will in God, there would be no creation. But the rational will is the will of love, and as such it is 'expansive',[6] self-communicating.

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[1] *W*, IV, p. 244.

[2] *W*, IV, p. 252.

[3] It should be noted that the divine Being is now for Schelling a personal Deity and no longer an impersonal Absolute.

[4] *W*, IV, p. 251.

[5] *W*, IV, p. 330.

[6] *W*, IV, p. 331.

The inner life of God is thus conceived by Schelling as a dynamic process of self-creation. In the ultimate dark abyss of the divine Being, the primal ground or *Urgrund*, there is no differentiation but only pure identity. But this absolutely undifferentiated identity does not exist as such. 'A division, a difference must be posited, that is, if we wish to pass from essence to existence.'[1] God first posits himself as object, as the unconscious will. But he cannot do this without at the same time positing himself as subject, as the rational will of love.

There is, therefore, a likeness between the divine and the human conquest of personality. And we can even say that 'God makes himself.'[2] But there is also a great difference. And an understanding of this difference shows that the answer to the question whether God can do evil is that he cannot.

In God the conquest of personality is not a temporal process. We can distinguish different 'potencies' in God, different moments in the divine life, but there is no temporal succession. Thus if we say that God first posits himself as unconscious will and then as rational will, there is no question of temporally successive acts. 'Both acts are one act, and both are absolutely simultaneous.'[3] For Schelling the unconscious will in God is no more temporally prior to the rational will than the Father is temporally prior to the Son in the Christian theology of the Trinity. Hence, though we can distinguish different moments in the 'becoming' of the divine personality, one moment being logically prior to another, there is no becoming at all in the temporal sense. God is eternally love, and 'in love there can never be the will to evil'.[4] Hence it is metaphysically impossible for God to do evil.

But in God's external manifestation the two principles, the lower and the higher wills, are and must be separable. 'If the identity of the two principles were as indissoluble in the human spirit as in God, there would be no distinction (that is, between God and the human spirit); that is to say, God would not manifest himself. Therefore the unity which is indissoluble in God must be dissoluble in man. And this is the possibility of good and evil.'[5] This possibility has its ground in God, but as a realized possibility it is present only in man. Perhaps one can express the matter by saying that whereas God is necessarily an integrated personality, man need not be. For the basic elements are separable in man.

[1] *W*, IV, p. 316.
[2] *W*, IV, p. 324.
[3] *W*, IV, p. 326.
[4] *W*, IV, p. 267.
[5] *W*, IV, p. 256.

It would, however, be erroneous to conclude that Schelling attributes to man a complete liberty of indifference. He is too fond of the idea of antecedent and consequent to admit the concept of freedom as 'a completely indeterminate power of willing one or other of two contradictory things without determining grounds and simply because it is willed'.[1] Schelling rejects this concept and finds the determining ground of a man's successive choices in his intelligible essence or character which stands to his particular acts as antecedent to consequent. At the same time he does not wish to say that it is God who predetermines a man's acts by conceiving him in the eternal Idea. Hence he is forced to depict a man's intelligible character as due to an original self-positing of the ego, as the result of an original choice by the ego itself. He can thus say both that a man's actions are in principle predictable and that they are free. They are necessary; but this necessity is an inner necessity, imposed by the ego's original choice, not a necessity externally imposed by God. 'This inner necessity is itself freedom, the essence of man is essentially *his own act*; necessity and freedom are mutually immanent, as one reality which appears as one or the other only when looked at from different sides....'[2] Thus Judas's betrayal of Christ was necessary and inevitable, given the historical circumstances; but at the same time he betrayed Christ 'willingly and with complete freedom'.[3] Similarly it was inevitable both that Peter would deny Christ and that he would repent of this denial; yet both the denial and the repentance, being Peter's own acts, were free.

If the theory of an intelligible character is given a purely psychological interpretation, it can be made at any rate very plausible. On the one hand we not infrequently say of a given man that he could not act in this or that manner, meaning that such a way of acting would be quite contrary to his character. And if after all he does act in this way, we are inclined to say that his character was not what we supposed. On the other hand we come to know not only other people's characters but also our own through their and our acts. And we might wish to draw the conclusion that in each man there is, as it were, a hidden character which manifests itself progressively in his acts, so that his acts stand to his character in a relation analogous to that between consequent and ground or antecedent. The objection can indeed be made that this presupposes that character is something fixed and settled from the start (by heredity, environment, very early experiences and so on), and that this presupposition is false. But as long as the theory is presented as a psychological theory, it is a matter for empirical investigation. And it is clear that some empirical data count in its favour, even if others tell against it. It is a question of weighing, interpreting and co-ordinating the available evidence.

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[1] *W*, IV, p. 274.
[2] *W*, IV, p. 277.
[3] *W*, IV, p. 278.

But Schelling does not present his theory simply as an empirical hypothesis. It is a metaphysical theory. At least it depends in part on metaphysical theories. For example, the theory of identity is influential. The Absolute is the identity of necessity and freedom, and this identity is reflected in man. His acts are both necessary and free. And Schelling draws the conclusion that a man's intelligible essence, which determines his particular acts, must itself have, as it were, an aspect of freedom, in that it is the result of the ego's self-positing. But this original choice of itself by the ego is neither a conscious act nor an act in time. According to Schelling, it is outside time and determines all consciousness, though a man's acts are free inasmuch as they issue from his own essence or self. But it is extremely difficult to see what this primeval act of will can possibly be. Schelling's theory bears some resemblance to M. Sartre's interpretation of freedom in his existentialist philosophy; but the setting is much more metaphysical. Schelling develops Kant's distinction between the intelligible and phenomenal spheres in the light of his theory of identity and of his preoccupation with the idea of ground and consequent, and the resulting theory is extremely obscure. It is indeed clear that Schelling wishes to avoid the Calvinist doctrine of divine predestination on the one hand and the theory of liberty of indifference on the other, while at the same time he wishes to allow for the truths which find expression in these positions. But it can hardly be claimed that the conclusion of his reflections is crystal clear. True, Schelling did not claim that everything in philosophy could be made crystal clear. But the trouble is that it is difficult to assess the truth of what is said unless one understands what is being said.

As for the nature of evil, Schelling experienced considerable difficulty in finding a satisfactory descriptive formula. As he did not look on himself as a pantheist in the sense of one who denies any distinction between the world and God, he felt that he could affirm the positive reality of evil without committing himself to the conclusion that there is evil in the divine Being itself. At the same time his account of the relation between the world and God as being that of consequent or ground to antecedent implies that if evil is a positive reality it must have its ground in God. And the conclusion might be thought to follow that 'in order that evil should not be, God would have not to be himself'.[1] In the Stuttgart lectures Schelling attempts to steer a middle course between asserting and denying the positive reality of evil by saying that it is 'from one point of view nothing, from another point of view an extremely real being'.[2] Perhaps we can say that he was feeling after the Scholastic formula which describes evil as a privation, though a real privation.

In any case evil is certainly present in the world, whatever its precise nature may be. Hence the return to God in human history must take the form of the progressive triumph of good over evil. 'The good must be brought out of darkness into actuality that it may live everlastingly with God; and evil must be separated from the good that it may be cast into not-being. For this is the final end of creation.'[3] In other words, the complete triumph of the rational will over the lower will or urge, which is eternally accomplished in God, is the ideal goal of human history In God the sublimation of the lower will is eternal and necessary. In man it is a temporal process.

3. We have already had occasion to note Schelling's insistence that from ideas we can deduce only ideas. It is not surprising, therefore, if in his later years we find him emphasizing the distinction, to which allusion was made in the section on his life and writings, between negative philosophy, which is confined to the world of concepts and essences, and positive philosophy, which stresses existence.

All philosophy worthy of the name, Schelling maintains, is concerned with the first or ultimate principle of reality. Negative philosophy, however, discovers this principle only as a supreme essence, as the absolute Idea. And from a supreme essence we can deduce only other essences, from the Idea only other ideas. From a *What* we cannot deduce a *That*. In other words, negative philosophy is quite incapable of explaining the existent world. Its deduction of the world is not a deduction of existents but only of what things must be if they exist. Of being outside God the negative philosopher can only say that '*if* it exists, it can exist only in this way and only as such and such'.[4] His thought moves within the realm of the hypothetical. And this is especially clear in the case of the Hegelian system which, according to Schelling, by-passes the existential order.

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[1] *W*, IV, p. 295.

[2] *W*, IV, p. 296.

[3] *W*, IV, p. 296.

[4] *W*, V, p. 558.

Positive philosophy, however, does not start simply with God as Idea, as a *What* or essence, but rather with God 'as a pure That',[1] as pure act or being in an existential sense. And from this supreme existential act it passes to the concept or nature of God, showing that he is not an impersonal Idea or essence but a creative personal Being, the existing 'Lord of being',[2] where 'being' means the world. Schelling thus connects positive philosophy with the concept of God as a personal Being.

Schelling does not mean to imply that he is the first to discover positive philosophy. On the contrary, the whole history of philosophy manifests the 'combat between negative and positive philosophy'.[3] But the use of the word 'combat' must not be misunderstood. It is a question of emphasis and priority rather than of a fight to the death between two completely irreconcilable lines of thought. For negative philosophy cannot be simply rejected. No system can be constructed without concepts. And even if the positive philosopher places the emphasis on existence, he obviously does not and cannot disdain all consideration of what exists. Hence we have 'to assert the connection, yes the unity, between the two',[4] that is, between positive and negative philosophy.[5]

But how, Schelling asks, are we to make the transition from negative to positive philosophy? It cannot be made merely by thinking. For conceptual thought is concerned with essences and logical deductions. Hence we must have recourse to the will, 'a will which demands with inner necessity that God should not be a mere idea'.[6] In other words, the initial affirmation of the divine existence is based on an act of faith demanded by the will. The ego is conscious of its fallen condition, of its state of alienation, and it is aware that this alienation can be overcome only by God's activity. It demands, therefore, that God should be not simply a transmundane ideal but an actually existing personal God through whom man can be redeemed. Fichte's ideal moral order will not satisfy man's religious needs. The faith which lies at the basis of positive philosophy is faith in a personal creative and redeeming God, not in Fichte's ideal moral order, nor in Hegel's absolute Idea.

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[1] *als reines Dass*; *W*, v, p. 746. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.* [4] *W*, v, p. 746.

[5] Schelling's distinction is similar in certain respects to the distinction made by some modern writers, notably Professor Gilson, between essentialist and existential philosophy, the latter term meaning, not 'existentialism', but philosophy which lays its fundamental emphasis on being in the sense of existence (*esse*) rather than on being in the sense of essence. But the extent of the similarity is limited.

[6] *W*, v, p. 746.

At first sight at least Schelling may appear to be repeating Kant's theory of practical or moral faith. But Schelling makes it clear that he regards the critical philosophy as an example of negative philosophizing. Kant does indeed affirm God on faith, but simply as a postulate, that is, as a possibility. Further, Kant affirms God as an instrument, as it were, for synthesizing virtue and happiness. In his religion within the limits of bare reason there is no room for genuine religion. The truly religious man is conscious of his profound need of God, and he is brought by this consciousness and by his longing for God to a personal Deity. 'For the person seeks a person.'[1] The truly religious man does not affirm God simply as an instrument for apportioning happiness to virtue: he seeks God for himself. The ego 'demands God himself. *Him, him,* will it have, the God who acts, who exercises providence, who, as being himself real, can meet the reality of the Fall. . . . In this God alone does the ego see the *real* supreme good.'[2]

The distinction between positive and negative philosophy thus turns out to be a distinction between philosophy which is truly religious and philosophy which cannot assimilate the religious consciousness and its demands. Schelling says this quite explicitly with an evident reference to Kant. 'The longing for the real God and for redemption through him is, as you see, nothing else but the expression of the need of *religion*. . . . Without an active God . . . there can be no religion, for religion presupposes an actual, real relationship of man to God. Nor can there be any history in which God is providence. . . . At the end of negative philosophy I have only possible and not actual religion, religion only "within the limits of bare reason". . . . It is with the transition to positive philosophy that we first enter the sphere of religion.'[3]

Now, if positive philosophy affirms the existence of God as a first principle, and if the transition to positive philosophy cannot be made by thinking but only by an act of the will issuing in faith, Schelling obviously cannot turn negative into positive philosophy by supplementing the former by a natural theology in the traditional sense. At the same time there can be what we may call an empirical proof of the rationality of the will's act. For the demand of the religious man is for a God who reveals himself and accomplishes man's redemption. And the proof, if one may so put it, of God's existence will take the form of showing the historical development of the religious consciousness, the history of man's demand for God and of God's answer to this demand. 'Positive philosophy is historical philosophy.'[1] And this is the reason why in his later writings Schelling devotes himself to the study of mythology and revelation. He is trying to exhibit God's progressive self-revelation to man and the progressive work of divine redemption.

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[1] *W*, v, p. 748.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *W*, v, p. 750.

This is not to say that Schelling abandons all his earlier speculations in favour of an empirical study of the history of mythology and revelation. As we have seen, his thesis is that negative and positive philosophy must be combined. And his earlier religious speculations are not jettisoned. For example, in the essay entitled *Another Deduction of the Principles of Positive Philosophy* (1841) he takes as his point of departure 'the unconditioned existent'[2] and proceeds to deduce the moments or phases of God's inner life. He does indeed lay emphasis on the primacy of being in the sense of existence, but the general scheme of his earlier philosophy of religion, with the ideas of the moments in the divine life, of the cosmic Fall and of the return to God, is retained. And though in his lectures on mythology and religion he concerns himself with the empirical confirmation, as it were, of his religious philosophy, he never really frees himself from the idealist tendency to interpret the relation between God and the world as a relation of ground or antecedent to consequent.

The reader may be inclined to share Kierkegaard's disappointment that after making his distinction between negative and positive philosophy Schelling proceeds to concentrate on the study of mythology and revelation instead of radically rethinking his philosophy in the light of this distinction. At the same time we can understand the philosopher's point of view. The philosophy of religion has come to occupy the central position in his thought. And the self-manifesting impersonal Absolute has become the self-revealing personal God. Schelling is anxious, therefore, to show that man's faith in God is historically justified and that the history of the religious consciousness is also the history of the divine self-revelation to man.

4. If, however, we speak of Schelling's philosophy of mythology and revelation as an empirical study, the word 'empirical' must be understood in a relative sense. Schelling has not abandoned deductive metaphysics for pure empiricism. Far from it. For

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[1] *W*, v, p. 753.

[2] *W*, v, p. 729

example, the deduction of three 'potencies' in the one God is presupposed. It is also presupposed that if there is a self-manifesting God, this necessary nature of an absolute Being will be progressively revealed. Hence when Schelling turns to the study of mythology and revelation, he already possesses the scheme, as it were, of what he will find. The study is empirical in the sense that its matter is provided by the actual history of religion as known through empirical investigation. But the framework of interpretation is provided by the supposedly necessary deductions of metaphysics. In other words, Schelling sets out to find in the history of religion the self-revelation of one personal God, whose unity does not exclude three distinguishable potencies or moments. And he has, of course, no difficulty in discovering expressions of this conception of the Deity in the development of religious beliefs from the ancient mythologies of East and West up to the Christian dogma of the Trinity. Similarly, he has no difficulty in finding expressions of the ideas of a Fall and of a return to God.

If Schelling's premisses are once assumed, this procedure is, of course, justified. For, as we have seen, he never intended to jettison metaphysics, the abstract philosophy of reason, which, to use modern jargon, shows us what must be the case if anything is the case. Hence from Schelling's point of view metaphysical presuppositions are quite in order. For philosophy as a whole is a combination of negative and positive philosophy. At the same time Schelling's procedure is doubtless one reason why his philosophy of mythology and revelation exercised comparatively little influence on the development of the study of the history of religion. This is not to say that metaphysical presuppositions are illegitimate. Whether one thinks that they are legitimate or illegitimate obviously depends on one's view of the cognitive value of metaphysics. But it is easy to understand that Schelling's *philosophy* of mythology and revelation was looked at askance by those who wished to free the study of the history of religion from the presuppositions of idealist metaphysics.

A distinction is drawn by Schelling between mythology on the one hand and revelation on the other. 'Everything has its time. Mythological religion had to come first. In mythological religion we have blind (because produced by a necessary process), *unfree* and *unspiritual* religion.'[1] Myths are not simply arbitrary and capricious products of the imagination. But neither are they revelation, in the sense of a freely-imparted knowledge of God. They can, of course, be consciously elaborated, but fundamentally they are the product of an unconscious and necessary process, successive forms in which an apprehension of the divine imposes itself on the religious consciousness. In other words, mythology corresponds to the dark or lower principle in God, and it has its roots in the sphere of the unconscious. When, however, we pass from mythology to revelation, we pass 'into a completely different sphere'.[1] In mythology the mind 'had to do with a necessary process, here with something which exists only as the result of an absolutely free will'.[2] For the concept of revelation presupposes an act whereby God 'freely gives or has given himself to mankind'.[3]

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[1] *W*, v, p. 437.

Inasmuch as mythological religion and revealed religion are both religion, it must be possible, Schelling insists, to subsume them under a common idea. And in fact the whole history of the religious consciousness is a second theogony or birth of God, in the sense that the eternal and timeless becoming or birth of God in himself[4] is represented in time in the history of religion. Mythology, as rooted in the unconscious, represents a moment in the divine life. It logically precedes revelation and is a preparation for it. But it is not itself revelation. For revelation is essentially God's free manifestation of himself as infinite, personal and free creator and lord of being. And, as a free act on God's part, it is not simply a logical consequence of mythology. At the same time revelation can be described as the truth of mythology. For mythology is, as it were, the exoteric element which veils the revealed truth. And in paganism the philosopher can find mythological representations or antcipiations of the truth.

In other words, Schelling wishes to represent the whole history of the religious consciousness as God's revelation of himself, while at the same time he wishes to leave room for a specifically Christian concept of revelation. On the one hand revelation, in what we might perhaps call a weak sense of the term, runs through the whole history of religion. For it is the inner truth of mythology. On the other hand revelation in a strong sense of the term is found in Christianity. For it is in the Christian religion that this inner truth first comes to the clear light of day. Christianity thus gives the truth of mythology, and it can be described as the culmination of historical religion. But it does not follow that Christianity is an automatic consequence of mythology. Mythology as such is, as we have seen, a necessary process. But in and through Christ the personal God freely reveals himself. Obviously, if Schelling wishes to represent the whole history of religion as the temporal representation of the divine life, it is very difficult for him to avoid asserting a necessary connection between pagan mythology and Christianity. The former would represent God as unconscious will, while the latter would represent God as free will, the will of love. At the same time Schelling tries to preserve an essential distinction between mythology and revelation by insisting that the concept of revelation is the concept of a free act on God's part. Revelation is the truth of mythology in the sense that it is that at which mythology aims and that which underlies the exoteric clothing of myth. But it is in and through Christ that the truth is clearly revealed, and it is revealed freely. Its truth could not be known simply by logical deduction from the pagan myths.

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[1] *W*, VI, p. 396. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *W*, VI, p. 395.

[4] The reference is to the logically distinguishable 'potencies' in God's inner life.

But though Schelling certainly tries to allow for a distinction between mythology and revelation, there is a further important point to make. If we mean by revelation Christianity simply as a fact which stands over against the fact of paganism, there is room for a higher standpoint, namely that of reason understanding both mythology and revelation. And this higher standpoint is positive philosophy. But Schelling is careful to explain that he is not referring to a rationalistic interpretation of religion from outside. He is referring to the activity of the religious consciousness whereby it understands itself from within. The philosophy of religion is thus for Schelling not only philosophy but also religion. It presupposes Christianity and cannot exist without it. It arises within Christianity, not outside it. 'Philosophical religion is therefore *historically* mediated through revealed religion.'[1] But it cannot be simply identified with Christian belief and life as facts. For it takes these facts as subject-matter for free reflective understanding. In contrast, therefore, with the simple acceptance of the original Christian revelation on authority philosophical religion can be called 'free' religion. 'The free religion is only *mediated* through Christianity; it is not immediately *posited* by it.'[2] But this does not mean that philosophical religion rejects revelation. Faith seeks understanding; but understanding from within does not annul what is understood.

This process of understanding, of free reflection, has its own history, ranging through Scholastic theology and metaphysics, up to Schelling's own later religious philosophy. And in this philosophy we can discern Schelling's hankering after a higher wisdom. There was always something of the Gnostic in his mental make-up. Just as he was not content with ordinary physics but expounded a speculative or higher physics, so in later years he expounded an esoteric or higher knowledge of God's nature and of his self-revelation.

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[1] *W*, v, p. 437.

[2] *W*, v, p. 440.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find Schelling giving an interpretation of the history of Christianity which in certain respects is reminiscent of the theories of the twelfth-century Abbot Joachim of Flores. According to Schelling there are three main periods in the development of Christianity. The first is the Petrine, characterized by the dominating ideas of law and authority and correlated with the ultimate ground of being in God, which is itself identified with the Father of Trinitarian theology. The second period, the Pauline, starts with the Protestant Reformation. It is characterized by the idea of freedom and correlated with the ideal principle in God, identified with the Son. And Schelling looks forward to a third period, the Johannine, which will be a higher synthesis of the first two periods and unite together law and freedom in the one Christian community. This third period is correlated with the Holy Spirit, the divine love, interpreted as a synthesis of the first two moments in God's inner life.

5. If we look at Schelling's philosophical pilgrimage as a whole, there is obviously a very great difference between its point of departure and its point of arrival. At the same time there is a certain continuity. For we can see how fresh problems arise for him out of positions already adopted, and how his solutions to these problems demand the adoption of new positions which involve modifications in the old or display them in a new light. Further, there are certain pervasive fundamental problems which serve to confer a certain unity on his philosophizing in spite of all changes.

There can be no reasonable objection to this process of development as such, unless we are prepared to defend as reasonable the thesis that a philosopher should expound a rigid closed system and never change it. Indeed, it is arguable that Schelling did not make sufficient changes. For he showed a tendency to retain ideas already employed even when the adoption of a new idea or set of ideas might well have suggested the advisability of discarding them. This characteristic may not be peculiar to Schelling: it is likely to be found in any philosopher whose thought passed through a variety of distinct phases. But it leads to a certain difficulty in assessing Schelling's precise position at a given moment. For instance, in his later thought he emphasizes the personal nature of God and the freedom of God's creative act. And it is natural to describe the evolution of his thought in its theological aspects as being a movement from pantheism to speculative theism. At the same time his insistence on the divine freedom is accompanied by a retention of the idea of the cosmic Fall and by a persistent inclination to look on the relation between the world and God as analogous to that between consequent and antecedent. Hence, though it seems to me more appropriate to describe his later thought in terms of the ideas which are new rather than in terms of those which are retained for the past, he provides material for those who maintain that even in the last phase of his philosophizing he was a dynamic pantheist rather than a theist. It is, of course, a question partly of emphasis and partly of terminology. But the point is that Schelling himself is largely responsible for the difficulty in finding the precise appropriate descriptive term. However, perhaps one ought not to expect anything else in the case of a philosopher who was so anxious to synthesize apparently conflicting points of view and to show that they were really complementary.

It scarcely needs saying that Schelling was not a systematizer in the sense of one who leaves to posterity a closed and rigid system of the take-it-or-leave-it type. But it does not necessarily follow that he was not a systematic thinker. True, his mind was notably open to stimulus and inspiration from a variety of thinkers whom he found in some respects congenial. For example, Plato, the Neo-Platonists, Giordano Bruno,[1] Jakob Boehme, Spinoza and Leibniz, not to speak of Kant and Fichte, were all used as sources of inspiration. But this openness to the reception of ideas from a variety of sources was not accompanied by any very pronounced ability to weld them all together into one consistent whole. Further, we have seen that in his later years he showed a strong inclination to take flight into the cloudy realm of theosophy and gnosticism. And it is understandable that a man who drew heavily on the speculations of Jakob Boehme can exercise only a very limited appeal among philosophers. At the same time it is necessary, as Hegel remarks, to make a distinction between Schelling's philosophy and the imitations of it which consist in a farrago of words about the Absolute or in the substitution for sustained thought of vague analogies based on alleged intuitive insights. For though Schelling was not a systematizer in the sense that Hegel was, he none the less thought systematically. That is to say, he made a real and sustained effort to understand his material and to think through the problems which he raised. It was always systematic understanding at which he aimed and which he tried to communicate. Whether he succeeded or not, is another question.

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[1] Schelling's theory of the Absolute as pure identity can be regarded as a continuation of Bruno's idea of the infinite as the *coincidentia oppositorum*, an idea which was itself derived from Nicholas of Cusa.

Schelling's later thought has been comparatively neglected by historians. And this is understandable. For one thing, as was remarked in the introductory chapter, Schelling's philosophy of Nature, system of transcendental idealism and theory of the Absolute as pure identity are the important phases of his thought if we choose to regard him primarily as a link between Fichte and Hegel in the development of German idealism. For another thing, his philosophy of mythology and revelation, which in any case belonged to a period when the impetus of metaphysical idealism was already spent, has seemed to many not only to represent a flight beyond anything which can be regarded as rational philosophy but also to be hardly worth considering in view of the actual development of the history of religion in subsequent times.

But though this neglect is understandable, it is also perhaps regrettable. At least it is regrettable if one thinks that there is room for a philosophy of religion as well as for a purely historical and sociological study of religions or a purely psychological study of the religious consciousness. It is not so much a question of looking to Schelling for solutions to problems as of finding stimulus and inspiration in his thought, points of departure for independent reflection. And possibly this is a characteristic of Schelling's philosophizing as a whole. Its value may be primarily suggestive and stimulative. But it can, of course, exercise this function only for those who have a certain initial sympathy with his mentality and an appreciation of the problems which he raised. In the absence of this sympathy and appreciation there is a natural tendency to write him off as a poet who chose the wrong medium for the expression of his visions of the world.

6. In the introductory chapter some mention was made of Schelling's relations with the romantic movement as represented by F. Schlegel, Novalis, Hölderlin and so on. And I do not propose

either to repeat or to develop what was then said. But some remarks may be appropriate in this last section of the present chapter on Schelling's influence on some other thinkers both inside and outside Germany.

Schelling's philosophy of Nature exercised some influence on Lorenz Oken (1779–1851). Oken was a professor of medicine at Jena, Munich and Zürich successively; but he was deeply interested in philosophy and published several philosophical works, such as *On the Universe* (*Ueber das Universum*), 1808. In his view the philosophy of Nature is the doctrine of the eternal transformation of God into the world. God is the totality, and the world is the eternal appearance of God. That is to say, the world cannot have had a beginning because it is the expressed divine thought. And for the same reason it can have no end. But there can be and is evolution in the world.

Schelling's judgment of Oken's philosophy was not particularly favourable, though he made use of some of Oken's ideas in his lectures. In his turn Oken refused to follow Schelling into the paths of his later religious philosophy.

The influence of Schelling's philosophy of Nature was also felt by Johann Joseph von Görres (1776–1848), a leading Catholic philosopher of Munich.[1] But Görres is chiefly known as a religious thinker. At first somewhat inclined to the pantheism of Schelling's system of identity, he later expounded a theistic philosophy, as in the four volumes of his *Christian Mysticism* (*Christliche Mystik*, 1836–42), though, like Schelling himself, he was strongly attracted to theosophical speculation. Görres also wrote on art and on political questions. Indeed he took an active part in political life and interested himself in the problem of the relations between Church and State.

Görres's abandonment of the standpoint represented by Schelling's system of identity was not shared by Karl Gustav Carus (1789–1860), a doctor and philosopher who defended pantheism throughout his career. He is of some importance for his work on the soul (*Psyche*, 1846) in which he maintains that the key to the conscious life of the soul is to be found in the sphere of the unconscious.

Turning to Franz von Baader (1765–1841) who, like Görres, was an important member of the circle of Catholic thinkers and writers at Munich, we find a clear case of reciprocal influence. That is to say, though Baader was influenced by Schelling, he in turn influenced the latter. For it was Baader who introduced Schelling to the writings of Boehme and so helped to determine the direction taken by his thought.

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[1] Schelling's influence was felt in southern rather than in northern Germany.

It was Baader's conviction that since the time of Francis Bacon and Descartes philosophy had tended to become more and more divorced from religion, whereas true philosophy should have its foundations in faith. And in working out his own philosophy Baader drew on the speculations of thinkers such as Eckhart and Boehme. In God himself we can distinguish higher and lower principles, and though the sensible world is to be regarded as a divine self-manifestation it none the less represents a Fall. Again, just as in God there is the eternal victory of the higher principle over the lower, of light over darkness, so in man there should be a process of spiritualization whereby the world would return to God. It is evident that Baader and Schelling were kindred souls who drank from the same spiritual fountain.

Baader's social and political writings are of some interest. In them he expresses a resolute opposition to the theory of the State as a result of a social compact or contract between individuals. On the contrary, the State is a natural institution in the sense that it is grounded in and proceeds from the nature of man: it is not the product of a convention. At the same time Baader strongly attacks the notion that the State is the ultimate sovereign power. The ultimate sovereign is God alone, and reverence for God and the universal moral law, together with respect for the human person as the image of God, are the only real safeguards against tyranny. If these safeguards are neglected, tyranny and intolerance will result, no matter whether sovereignty is regarded as residing with the monarch or with the people. To the atheistic or secular power-State Baader opposes the ideal of the Christian State. The concentration of power which is characteristic of the secular or the atheistic national State and which leads to injustice at home and to war abroad can be overcome only if religion and morality penetrate the whole of human society.

One can hardly call Karl Christian Friedrich Krause (1781–1832) a disciple of Schelling. For he professed to be the true spiritual successor of Kant, and his relations with Schelling, when at Munich, were far from friendly. However, he was wont to say that the approach to his own philosophy must be by way of Schelling, and some of his ideas were akin to those of Schelling. The body, he maintained, belongs to the realm of Nature, while the spirit or ego belongs to the spiritual sphere, the realm of 'reason'. This idea echoes indeed Kant's distinction between the phenomenal and noumenal spheres. But Krause argued that as Spirit and Nature, though distinct and in one sense opposed, react on one another, we must look for the ground of both in a perfect essence, God or the Absolute. Krause also expounded a 'synthetic' order, proceeding from God or the Absolute to the derived essences, Spirit and Nature, and to finite things. He insisted on the unity of all humanity as the goal of history, and after abandoning his hope of this end being attained through Freemasonry, issued a manifesto proclaiming a League of Humanity (*Menschheitsbund*). In Germany his philosophy was overshadowed by the systems of the three great idealists, but it exercised, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, a wide influence in Spain where 'Krausism' became a fashionable system of thought.

In Russia Schelling appealed to the pan-Slavist group, whereas the westernizers were influenced more by Hegel. For instance, in the early part of the nineteenth century Schelling's philosophy of Nature was expounded at Moscow by M. G. Pavlov (1773–1840), while the later religious thought of Schelling exercised some influence on the famous Russian philosopher Vladimir Soloviev (1853–1900). It would certainly not be accurate to call Soloviev a disciple of Schelling. Apart from the fact that he was influenced by other non-Russian thinkers, he was in any case an original philosopher and not the 'disciple' of anyone. But in his tendency to theosophical speculation[1] he showed a marked affinity of spirit with Schelling, and certain aspects of his profoundly religious thought are very similar to positions adopted by the German philosopher.

In Great Britain the influence of Schelling has been negligible. Coleridge, the poet, remarks in his *Biographia Literaria* that in Schelling's philosophy of Nature and system of transcendental idealism he found 'a genial coincidence' with much that he had worked out for himself, and he praises Schelling at the expense of Fichte, whom he caricatures. But it can hardly be said that professional philosophers in this country have shown any enthusiasm for Schelling.

In recent times there has been a certain renewal of interest in

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[1] Soloviev made great play with the idea of Wisdom or *Sophia*, as found in the Bible and also, for instance, in the writings of Boehme.

Schelling's philosophy of religion. For instance, it acted as a stimulus in the development of the thought of the Protestant theologian Paul Tillich. And in spite of Kierkegaard's attitude there has been a tendency to see in Schelling's distinction between negative and positive philosophy, in his insistence on freedom and in his emphasis on existence, an anticipation of some themes of existentialism. But though this interpretation has some limited justification, the desire to find anticipations of later ideas in illustrious minds of the past should not blind us to the great differences in atmosphere between the idealist and existentialist movements. In any case Schelling is perhaps most notable for his transformation of the impersonal Absolute of metaphysical idealism into the personal God who reveals himself to the religious consciousness.

CHAPTER VIII

SCHLEIERMACHER

Life and writings—The basic religious experience and its interpretation—The moral and religious life of man—Final remarks.

1. CONCERNED as they were with the Absolute, with the relation between the infinite and the finite and with the life of the spirit, the three great German idealists naturally devoted attention to religion as an expression of the finite spirit's relation to the divine reality. And as all three were professors of philosophy and constructors of philosophical systems, it was also natural that they should interpret religion in the light of the fundamental principles of these systems. Thus in accordance with the spirit of his ethical idealism Fichte tended to reduce religion to ethics,[1] while Hegel tended to depict it as a form of knowledge. Even Schelling, whose thought, as we have seen, became more and more a philosophy of the religious consciousness and who laid emphasis on man's need of a personal God, tended to interpret the development of the religious consciousness as the development of a higher knowledge. With Schleiermacher, however, we find an approach to the philosophy of religion from the point of view of a theologian and preacher, a man who in spite of his strongly-marked philosophical interests retained the imprint of his pietistic upbringing and who was concerned with making a sharp distinction between the religious consciousness on the one hand and metaphysics and ethics on the other.

Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher was born at Breslau on November 21st, 1768. His school education was entrusted by his parents to the Moravian Brotherhood. In spite of a loss of faith in some fundamental Christian doctrines he then proceeded to Halle for the study of theology, though during his first two years at the university he interested himself in Spinoza and Kant more than in purely theological subjects. In 1790 he passed his examinations at Berlin and then took a post as tutor in a family. From 1794 until the end of 1795 he acted as pastor at Landsberg near Frankfurt on the Oder, and from 1796 until 1802 he held an ecclesiastical position at Berlin.

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[1] As was mentioned in the account of Fichte's philosophy, the strength of this tendency was considerably weaker in his later thought.

During this period at Berlin Schleiermacher was in relation with the circle of the romantics, particularly with Friedrich Schlegel. He shared the general romantic concern with the totality, and he had a profound sympathy with Spinoza. At the same time he had been attracted from an early age by Plato's view of the world as the visible image of the ideal realm of true being. And Spinoza's Nature was conceived by him as the reality which reveals itself in the phenomenal world. But as an admirer of Spinoza he was faced with the task of reconciling his philosophical outlook with the religion which he was commissioned to teach. Nor was this simply a matter of satisfying his professional conscience as a Protestant clergyman. For he was a sincerely religious man who, as already remarked, retained the lasting imprint of the piety of his family and of his early teachers. He had therefore to think out the intellectual framework for the religious consciousness as he conceived it. And in 1799 he published his *Discourses on Religion* (*Reden über die Religion*), of which there were several subsequent editions.

This work was followed in 1800 by *Monologues* (*Monologen*) treating of problems connected with the relation between the individual and society, and in 1801 by Schleiermacher's first collection of sermons. Schleiermacher was not, however, what would generally be considered an orthodox Protestant theologian, and the years 1802–4 were passed in retirement. In 1803 he published *Outlines of a Critique of the Doctrine of Morals up to Present* (*Grundlinien einer Kritik der bisherigen Sittenlehre*). He also occupied himself with translating into German the dialogues of Plato, furnished with introductions and notes. The first part appeared in 1804, the second in 1809 and the third in 1828.

In 1804 Schleiermacher accepted a chair at the University of Halle. And when Napoleon closed the university, he remained in the town as a preacher. In 1807, however, he returned to Berlin where he took part in political life and collaborated in the foundation of the new university. In 1810 he was appointed professor of theology in the university and he held this post until his death in 1834. In 1821–2 he published his *Christian Faith according to the Principles of the Evangelical Church* (*Der christliche Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche*), a second edition of which appeared in 1830–1. He also published further collections of sermons. His lecture-courses at the university, which covered not only theological but also philosophical and educational themes, were published after his death.

2. Thought and being, Schleiermacher maintains, are correlative. But there are two ways in which thought can be related to being. In the first place thought can conform itself to being, as in scientific or theoretical knowledge. And the being which corresponds to the totality of our scientific concepts and judgments is called Nature. In the second place thought can seek to conform being to itself. And this is verified in the thinking which lies at the basis of our moral activity. For through moral action we seek to realize our ethical ideals and purposes, endeavouring in this way to conform being to our ideas rather than the other way round. 'Thought which aims at knowledge relates itself to a being which it presupposes; the thought which lies at the root of our actions relates itself to a being which is to come about through us.'[1] And the totality of that which expresses itself in thought-directed action is called Spirit.

We are thus presented, at first sight at least, with a dualism. On the one hand we have Nature, on the other Spirit. But though Spirit and Nature, thought and being, subject and object, are distinct and different notions for conceptual thinking, which is unable to transcend all distinction and oppositions, the dualism is not absolute. The ultimate reality is the identity of Spirit and Nature in the Universe or God. Conceptual thought cannot apprehend this identity. But the identity can be felt. And this feeling is linked by Schleiermacher with self-consciousness. It is not indeed reflective self-awareness, which apprehends the identity of the ego in the diversity of its moments or phases. But at the basis of reflective self-awareness there lies an 'immediate self-consciousness, which equals feeling'.[2] In other words, there is a fundamental immediacy of feeling, at which level the distinctions and oppositions of conceptual thought have not yet emerged. We can speak of it as an intuition. But if we do, we must understand that it is never a clear intellectual intuition. Rather is it the feeling-basis, so to speak, in self-consciousness, and it cannot be separated from consciousness of the self. That is to say, the self does not enjoy any intellectual intuition of the divine totality as direct and sole object, but it feels itself as dependent on the totality which transcends all oppositions.

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[1] *W*, III, p. 59. References to Schleiermacher's writing are given according to volume and page of the edition of his *Works* by O. Braun and J. Bauer (4 vols., Leipzig, 1911–13). This edition consists of selections.

[2] *W*, III, p. 71.

This feeling of dependence (*Abhängigkeitsgefühl*) is the 'religious side'[1] of self-consciousness: it is in fact 'the religious feeling'.[2] For the essence of religion is 'neither thought nor action but intuition and feeling. It seeks to intuit the Universe. . . .'[3] And the Universe, as Schleiermacher uses the term, is the infinite divine reality. Hence religion is for him essentially or fundamentally the feeling of dependence on the infinite.

In this case it is obviously necessary to make a sharp distinction between religion on the one hand and metaphysics and ethics on the other. True, metaphysics and ethics have 'the same subject-matter as religion, namely the Universe and man's relation to it'.[4] But their approaches are quite different. Metaphysics, says Schleiermacher with an obvious reference to Fichte's idealism, 'spins out of itself the reality of the world and its laws'.[5] Ethics 'develops out of the nature of man and his relation to the Universe a system of duties; it commands and prohibits actions. . . .'[6] But religion is not concerned with metaphysical deduction, nor is it concerned with using the Universe to derive a code of duties. It is neither knowledge nor morality: it is feeling.

We can say, therefore, that Schleiermacher turns his back on the tendency shown by Kant and Fichte to reduce religion to morals, just as he rejects any attempt to exhibit the essence of religion as a form of theoretical knowledge, and that he follows Jacobi in finding the basis of faith in feeling. But there is an important difference between Schleiermacher and Jacobi. For while Jacobi grounded all knowledge on faith, Schleiermacher wishes to differentiate between theoretical knowledge and religious faith and finds in feeling the specific basis of the latter. We can add that though for Schleiermacher the religious consciousness stands closer to the aesthetic consciousness than to theoretical knowledge, the feeling on which the religious consciousness is based, namely the feeling of dependence on the infinite, is peculiar to it. Hence Schleiermacher avoids the romantic tendency to confuse the religious with the aesthetic consciousness.

It must not be concluded from what has been said that in Schleiermacher's view there is no connection at all between religion on the one hand and metaphysics and ethics on the other. On the contrary, there is a sense in which both metaphysics and ethics stand in need of religion. Without the fundamental religious intuition of the infinite totality metaphysics would be left hanging in the air, as a purely conceptual construction. And ethics without religion would give us a very inadequate idea of man. For from the purely ethical point of view man appears as the free and autonomous master of his fate, whereas religious intuition reveals to him his dependence on the infinite Totality, on God.

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[1] *W*, III, p. 72.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *W*, IV, p. 240.
[4] *W*, IV, p. 235.
[5] *W*, IV, p. 236.
[6] *Ibid.*

Now, when Schleiermacher asserts that religious faith is grounded on the feeling of dependence on the infinite, the word 'feeling' must obviously be understood as signifying the immediacy of this consciousness of dependence rather than as excluding any intellectual act. For, as we have seen, he also talks about 'intuition'. But this intuition is not an apprehension of God as a clearly-conceived object: it is a consciousness of self as essentially dependent on infinite being in an indeterminate and unconceptualized sense. Hence the feeling of dependence stands in need of interpretation on the conceptual level. And this is the task of philosophical theology. It is arguable, of course, that Schleiermacher's account of the basic religious experience already comprises a conspicuous element of interpretation. For turning away from the moralism of Kant and the metaphysical speculation of Fichte and inspired by the thought of 'the holy, rejected Spinoza'[1] he identifies that on which the self is felt to depend with the infinite totality, the divine Universe. 'Religion is feeling and taste for the infinite';[2] and of Spinoza we can say that 'the infinite was his beginning and end; the Universe was his only and eternal love. . . .'[3] Thus the basic religious feeling of dependence is initially described in a manner inspired by a romanticized Spinoza. At the same time the influence of Spinoza should not be overestimated. For whereas Spinoza set the 'intellectual love of God' at the summit of the mind's ascent, Schleiermacher finds the feeling of dependence on the infinite at the basis of the religious view of the world. And the question arises, how are we to think or conceive this immediate consciousness of dependence?

A difficulty immediately arises. The basic religious feeling is one of dependence on an infinite in which there are no oppositions, the self-identical totality. But conceptual thought at once introduces distinctions and oppositions: the infinite unity falls apart into the ideas of God and the world. The world is thought of as the totality of all oppositions and differences, while God is conceived a simple unity, as the existing negation of all opposition and distinction.

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[1] *W*, IV, p. 243.

[2] *W*, IV, p. 242.

[3] *W*, IV, p. 243.

As conceptual thought cannot do away altogether with the distinction to which it necessarily gives rise, it must conceive God and the world as correlates. That is to say, it must conceive the relation between God and the world as one of mutual implication and not as one of mere compresence, nor even as a one-way relation of dependence, that is, of the world's dependence on God. 'No God without the world, and no world without God.'[1] At the same time the two ideas, namely of God and the world, must not be identified: 'therefore neither complete identification nor complete separation of the two ideas'.[2] In other words, as conceptual thought necessarily conceives the Universe through two ideas, it should not confuse them. The unity of the Universe of being must be conceived in terms of their correlation rather than of their identification.

At first sight at least this suggests that for Schleiermacher the distinction between God and the world exists only for human reflection, and that in reality there is no distinction. In point of fact, however, Schleiermacher wishes to avoid both the reduction of the world to God and the reduction of God to the world. On the one hand an acosmistic theory which simply denied any reality to the finite would be unfaithful to the basic religious consciousness. For this would inevitably be misinterpreted by a theory which left nothing at all of which it could be said that it was dependent. On the other hand a simple identification of God with the spatio-temporal system of finite things would leave no room for an underlying undifferentiated unity. Hence the distinction between God and the world must be something more than the expression of a defect in conceptual thought. True, conceptual thought is quite unable to attain an adequate understanding of the totality, the divine Universe. But it can and should correct its tendency to separate completely the ideas of God and the world by conceiving them as correlates and seeing the world as standing to God in the relation of consequent to antecedent, as the necessary self-manifestation of an undifferentiated unity, or, to use Spinoza's terms, as *Natura naturata* in relation to *Natura naturans*. This is, as it were, the best that conceptual thought can do, avoiding, that is to say, both complete separation and complete identification. The divine reality in itself transcends the reach of our concepts.

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[1] *W*, III, p. 81.

[2] *W*, III, p. 86.

The really interesting and significant feature in Schleiermacher's philosophy of religion is the fact that it is for him the explicitation of a fundamental religious experience. In interpreting this experience he is obviously influenced by Spinoza. And, like Spinoza, he insists that God transcends all human categories. As God is the unity without differentiation or opposition, none of the categories of human thought, such as personality, can really apply to him. For they are bound up with finitude. At the same time God is not to be conceived as static Substance but as infinite Life which reveals itself necessarily in the world. In this respect Schleiermacher stands closer to Fichte's later philosophy than to the system of Spinoza, while the theory of God or the Absolute as the undifferentiated self-identity to which the world stands as consequent to antecedent resembles the speculations of Schelling. But Schelling's later gnosticism would hardly have met with Schleiermacher's full approval. Religion for Schleiermacher really consists in the appropriation of the basic feeling of dependence on the infinite. It is an affair of the heart rather than of the understanding, of faith rather than knowledge.

3. Though he refuses to ascribe personality to God, except in a symbolic sense, Schleiermacher lays great stress on the value of the individual personality when he is considering human beings as moral agents. The totality, the universal, is indeed immanent in all finite individuals. And for this reason sheer egoism, involving the deification of one finite self, cannot possibly be the moral ideal for man. At the same time every individual is a particular manifestation of God, and he has his own special gifts, his own particularity (*Eigentümlichkeit*). It is thus his duty to develop his individual talents. And education should be directed to the formation of fully developed and harmoniously integrated individual personalities. Man combines in himself Spirit and Nature, and his moral development requires their harmonization. From the metaphysical point of view Spirit and Nature are ultimately one. Hence the human personality cannot be properly developed if we make so sharp a distinction between, say, reason and natural impulse as to imply that morality consists in disregarding or opposing all natural impulses. The moral ideal is not conflict but harmonization and integration. In other words, Schleiermacher has little sympathy with the rigoristic morality of Kant and with his tendency to assert an antithesis between reason and inclination or impulse. If God is the positive negation, so to speak, of all differences and

oppositions, man's moral vocation involves expressing the divine nature in finite form through the harmonization in an integrated personality of reason, will and impulse.

But though Schleiermacher stresses the development of the individual personality, he also insists that individual and society are not contradictory concepts. For particularity 'exists only in relation to others'.[1] On the one hand a man's element of uniqueness, that which distinguishes him from other men, presupposes human society. On the other hand society, being a community of distinct individuals, presupposes individual differences. Hence individual and society imply one another. And self-expression or self-development demands not only the development of one's individual gifts but also respect for other personalities. In other words, every human being has a unique moral vocation, but this vocation can be fulfilled only within society, that is, by man as member of a community.

If we ask what is the relation between morality as depicted by the philosopher and specifically Christian morality, the answer is that they differ in form but not in content. The content of Christian morality cannot contradict the content of 'philosophical' morality, but it has its own form, this form being furnished by the elements in the Christian consciousness which mark it off from the religious consciousness in general. And the specific note of the Christian consciousness is that 'all community with God is regarded as conditioned by Christ's redemptive act'.[2]

As regards historical religions, Schleiermacher's attitude is somewhat complex. On the one hand he rejects the idea of a universal natural religion which should be substituted for historical religions. For there are only the latter; the former is a fiction. On the other hand Schleiermacher sees in the series of historical religions the progressive revelation of an ideal which can never be grasped in its entirety. Dogmas are necessary in one sense, namely as concrete symbolic expressions of the religious consciousness. But they can at the same time become fetters preventing the free movement of the spirit. An historical religion such as Christianity owes its origin and impetus to a religious genius, analogous to an artistic genius; and its life is perpetuated by its adherents steeping themselves in the spirit of the genius and in the vital movement which stems from him rather than by subscription to a certain set of dogmas. It is true that as time went on Schleiermacher came to

[1] *W*, II, p. 92.

[2] *W*, III, p. 128.

lay more stress on the idea of the Church and on specifically Christian belief; but he was and remained what is sometimes called a liberal theologian. And as such he has exercised a very considerable influence in German Protestant circles, though this influence has been sharply challenged in recent times by the revival of Protestant orthodoxy.

4. In his attempt to interpret what he regarded as the basic religious consciousness Schleiermacher certainly attempted to develop a systematic philosophy, a coherent whole. But it can hardly be claimed that this philosophy is free from internal strains and stresses. The influence of a romanticized Spinoza, the man possessed by a passion for the infinite, impelled him in the direction of pantheism. At the same time the very nature of the fundamental feeling or intuition which he wished to interpret militated against sheer monism and demanded some distinction between God and the world. For unless we postulate some distinction, how can we sensibly speak of the finite self as conscious of its dependence on the infinite? Again, whereas the pantheistic aspects of Schleiermacher's thought were unfavourable to the admission of personal freedom, in his moral theory and in his account of the relations between human beings he needed and used the idea of freedom. In other words, the pantheistic elements in his metaphysics were offset by his emphasis on the individual in his theories of moral conduct and of society. There was no question of the theory of the divine Universe being reflected in political totalitarianism. On the contrary, quite apart from his admission of the Church as a society distinct from the State, he emphasized the concept of the 'free society', the social organization which gives free play to the expression of the unique character of each individual personality.

The strains in Schleiermacher's philosophy were not, however, peculiar to it. For any philosophy which tried to combine the idea of the divine totality with personal freedom and the idea of an ultimate identity with a full recognition of the value of the distinct finite particular was bound to find itself involved in similar difficulties. But Schleiermacher could hardly evade the problem by saying that the universal exists only in and through the particulars. For he was determined to justify the feeling of dependence on a reality which was not identifiable with the spatio-temporal world. There had to be something 'behind' the world. Yet the world could not be something outside God. Hence he was driven in the same direction taken by Schelling. Perhaps we can say that Schleiermacher had a profound quasi-mystical consciousness of the One as underlying and expressing itself in the Many, and that this was the foundation of his philosophy. The difficulties arose when he tried to give theoretical expression to this consciousness. But, to do him justice, he readily admitted that no adequate theoretical account was possible. God is the object of 'feeling' and faith rather than of knowledge. Religion is neither metaphysics nor morals. And theology is symbolical. Schleiermacher had indeed obvious affinities with the great idealists, but he was certainly not a rationalist. Religion was for him the basic element in man's spiritual life; and religion, he insisted, is grounded on the immediate intuitive feeling of dependence. This feeling of absolute dependence was for him the food, as it were, of philosophical reflection. And this is not, of course, a view which can be summarily dismissed as the amiable prejudice of a man who attributed to the pious feelings of the heart a cosmic significance which the reflective reason denies them. For it is at any rate arguable that speculative metaphysics is, in part at least, a reflective explicitation of a preliminary apprehension of the dependence of the Many on the One, an apprehension which for want of a better word can be described as intuitive.

CHAPTER IX

HEGEL (1)

Life and writings—Early theological writings—Hegel's relations to Fichte and Schelling—The life of the Absolute and the nature of philosophy—The phenomenology of consciousness.

1. GEORG WILHELM FRIEDRICH HEGEL, greatest of German idealists and one of the most outstanding of western philosophers, was born at Stuttgart on August 27th, 1770.[1] His father was a civil servant. In his school years at Stuttgart the future philosopher did not distinguish himself in any particular way, but it was at this period that he first felt the attraction of the Greek genius, being especially impressed by the plays of Sophocles, above all by the *Antigone*.

In 1788 Hegel enrolled as a student in the Protestant theological foundation of the University of Tübingen where he formed relations of friendship with Schelling and Hölderlin. The friends studied Rousseau together and shared a common enthusiasm for the ideals of the French Revolution. But, as at school, Hegel gave no impression of exceptional ability. And when he left the university in 1793, his certificate mentioned his good character, his fair knowledge of theology and philology and his inadequate grasp of philosophy. Hegel's mind was not precocious like Schelling's: it needed more time to mature. There is, however, another side to the picture. He had already begun to turn his attention to the relation between philosophy and theology, but he did not show his jottings or notes to his professors, who do not appear to have been remarkable in any way and in whom he doubtless did not feel much confidence.

After leaving the university Hegel gained his livelihood as a family tutor, first at Berne in Switzerland (1793–6) and then at Frankfurt (1797–1800). Though outwardly uneventful these years constituted an important period in his philosophical development. The essays which he wrote at the time were published for the first time in 1907 by Hermann Nohl under the title *Hegel's Early Theological Writings* (*Hegels theologische Jugendschriften*), and something will be said about their content in the next section. True, if we possessed only these essays we should not have any idea of the philosophical system which he subsequently developed, and there would be no good reason for devoting space to him in a history of philosophy. In this sense the essays are of minor importance. But when we look back on Hegel's early writings in the light of our knowledge of his developed system, we can discern a certain continuity in his problematics and understand better how he arrived at his system and what was his leading idea. As we have seen, the early writings have been described as 'theological'. And though it is true that Hegel became a philosopher rather than a theologian, his philosophy was always theology in the sense that its subject-matter was, as he himself insisted, the same as the subject-matter of theology, namely the Absolute or, in religious language, God and the relation of the finite to the infinite.

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[1] This was the year of Kant's inaugural dissertation. It was also the year of birth of Hölderlin in Germany and of Bentham and Wordsworth in England.

In 1801 Hegel obtained a post in the University of Jena, and his first published work, on the *Difference between the Philosophical Systems of Fichte and Schelling* (*Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems*) appeared in the same year. This work gave the impression that he was to all intents and purposes a disciple of Schelling. And the impression was strengthened by his collaboration with Schelling in editing the *Critical Journal of Philosophy* (1802–3). But Hegel's lectures at Jena, which were not published before the present century, show that he was already working out an independent position of his own. And his divergence from Schelling was made clear to the public in his first great work, *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (*Die Phänomenologie des Geistes*), which appeared in 1807. Further reference to this remarkable book will be made in the fifth section of this chapter.

After the Battle of Jena, which brought the life of the university to a close, Hegel found himself practically destitute; and from 1807 to 1808 he edited a newspaper at Bamberg. He was appointed rector of the *Gymnasium* at Nuremberg, a post which he held until 1816. (In 1811 he married.) As rector of the *Gymnasium* Hegel promoted classical studies, though not, we are told, to the detriment of study of the students' mother tongue. He also gave instruction to his pupils in the rudiments of philosophy, though more, it appears, out of deference to the wish of his patron Niethammer than from any personal enthusiasm for the policy of introducing philosophy into the school curriculum. And one imagines that most of the pupils must have experienced great difficulty in understanding Hegel's meaning. At the same time the philosopher pursued his own studies and reflections, and it was during his sojourn at Nuremberg that he produced one of his main works, the *Science of Logic* (*Wissenschaft der Logik*, 1812–16).

In the year in which the second and final volume of this work appeared Hegel received three invitations to accept a chair of philosophy, from Erlangen, Heidelberg and Berlin. He accepted the one from Heidelberg. His influence on the general body of the students does not seem to have been very great, but his reputation as a philosopher was steadily rising. And it was enhanced by the publication in 1817 of the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline* (*Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundriss*) in which he gave a conspectus of his system according to its three main divisions, logic, philosophy of Nature and philosophy of Spirit. We may also note that it was at Heidelberg that Hegel first lectured on aesthetics.

In 1818 Hegel accepted a renewed invitation to Berlin, and he occupied the chair of philosophy in the university until his death from cholera on November 14th, 1831. During this period he attained an unrivalled position in the philosophical world not only of Berlin but also of Germany as a whole. To some extent he was looked on as a kind of official philosopher. But his influence as a teacher was certainly not due to his connections with the government. Nor was it due to any outstanding gift of eloquence. As an orator he was inferior to Schelling. His influence was due rather to his evident and uncompromising devotion to pure thought, coupled with his remarkable ability for comprising a vast field within the scope and sweep of his dialectic. And his disciples felt that under his tuition the inner nature and process of reality, including the history of man, his political life and spiritual achievements, were being revealed to their understanding.

During his tenure of the chair of philosophy at Berlin Hegel published comparatively little. His *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* (*Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*) appeared in 1821, and new editions of the *Encyclopaedia* were published in 1827 and 1830. At the time of his death Hegel was revising *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. But he was, of course, lecturing during the whole of this period. And the texts of his courses, partly based on the collated notes of students, were published posthumously. In their English translations the lectures on the philosophy of art comprise four volumes, those on the philosophy of religion and on the history of philosophy three volumes each, and those on the philosophy of history one volume.

In Hölderlin's opinion Hegel was a man of calm prosaic understanding. In ordinary life at least he never gave the impression of exuberant genius. Painstaking, methodical, conscientious, sociable, he was from one point of view very much the honest *bourgeois* university professor, the worthy son of a good civil servant. At the same time he was inspired by a profound vision of the movement and significance of cosmic and human history, to the expression of which he gave his life. This is not to say that he was what is usually meant by a visionary. Appeals to mystical intuitions and to feelings were abhorrent to him, so far as philosophy at any rate was concerned. He was a firm believer in the unity of form and content. The content, truth, exists for philosophy, he was convinced, only in its systematic conceptual form. The real is the rational and the rational the real; and reality can be apprehended only in its rational reconstruction. But though Hegel had little use for philosophies which took short-cuts, as it were, by appealing to mystical insights or for philosophies which, in his opinion, aimed at edification rather than at systematic understanding, the fact remains that he presented mankind with one of the most grandiose and impressive pictures of the Universe which are to be met with in the history of philosophy. And in this sense he was a great visionary.

2. We have seen that Hegel was attracted by the Greek genius while he was still at school. And at the university this attraction exercised a marked influence on his attitude towards the Christian religion. The theology which he heard from his professors at Tübingen was for the most part Christianity adapted to the ideas of the Enlightenment, that is to say, rationalistic theism with a certain infusion of or tincture of Biblical supernaturalism. But this religion of the understanding, as Hegel described it, seemed to him to be not only arid and barren but also divorced from the spirit and needs of his generation. And he contrasted it unfavourably with Greek religion which was rooted in the spirit of the Greek people and formed an integral part of their culture. Christianity is, he thought, a book-religion, and the book in question, namely the Bible, is the product of an alien race and out of harmony with the Germanic soul. Hegel was not, of course, proposing a literal substitute of Greek religion for Christianity. His point was that Greek religion was a *Volksreligion*, a religion

intimately related to the spirit and genius of the people and forming an element of this people's culture, whereas Christianity, at least as presented to him by his professors, was something imposed from without. Moreover, Christianity was, he thought, hostile to human happiness and liberty and indifferent to beauty.

This expression of Hegel's early enthusiasm for the Greek genius and culture was soon modified by his study of Kant. While not abandoning his admiration for the Greek spirit, he came to regard it as lacking in moral profundity. In his opinion this element of moral profundity and earnestness had been supplied by Kant who had at the same time expounded an ethical religion which was free from the burdens of dogma and Bible-worship. Obviously, Hegel did not mean to imply that mankind had to wait till the time of Kant for the appearance of moral profundity. On the contrary, he attributed a Kantian-like emphasis on morality to the Founder of Christianity. And in his *Life of Jesus* (*Das Leben Jesu*, 1795), which was written while he was a family tutor at Berne, he depicted Christ as being exclusively a moral teacher and almost as an expounder of the Kantian ethics. True, Christ insisted on his personal mission; but according to Hegel he was forced to do so simply because the Jews were accustomed to think of all religions and moral insights as revealed, as coming from a divine source. Hence to persuade the Jews to listen to him at all Christ had to represent himself as the legate or messenger of God. But it was not really his intention either to make himself the unique mediator between God and man or to impose revealed dogmas.

How, then, did Christianity become transformed into an authoritarian, ecclesiastical and dogmatic system? Hegel considered this question in *The Positivity of the Christian Religion* (*Die Positivität der christlichen Religion*), the first two parts of which were composed in 1795–6 and the third somewhat later, in 1798–9. As one would expect, the transformation of Christianity is attributed in large part to the apostles and other disciples of Christ. And the result of the transformation is depicted as the alienation of man from his true self. Through the imposition of dogmas liberty of thought was lost, and through the idea of a moral law imposed from without moral liberty perished. Further, man was regarded as alienated from God. He could be reconciled only by faith and, in Catholicism at least, by the sacraments of the Church.

During his Frankfurt period, however, Hegel's attitude towards

Christianity underwent a certain change, which found expression in *The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate* (*Der Geist des Christentums und sein Schicksal*, 1800). In this essay Judaism with its legalistic morality becomes the villain of the piece. For the Jew God was the master and man the slave who had to carry out his master's will. For Christ God is love, living in man; and the alienation of man from God, as of man from man, is overcome by the union and life of love. Kant's insistence on law and duty and the emphasis which he lays on the overcoming of passion and impulse seem now to Hegel to express an inadequate notion of morality and to smack in their own way of the master-slave relationship which was characteristic of the Jewish outlook. Christ, however, rises above both Jewish legalism and Kantian moralism. He recognizes, of course, the moral struggle, but his ideal is that morality should cease to be a matter of obedience to law and should become the spontaneous expression of a life which is itself a participation in the infinite divine life. Christ does not abrogate morality in regard to its content, but he strips it of its legal form, substituting the motive of love for that of obedience to law.

It will be noted that Hegel's attention is already directed to the themes of alienation and to the recovery of a lost unity. At the time when he was contrasting Christianity with Greek religion to the detriment of the former he was already dissatisfied with any view of the divine reality as a remote and purely transcendent being. In the poem entitled *Eleusis* which he wrote at the end of his sojourn at Berne and which he dedicated to Holderlin he expressed his feeling for the infinite Totality. And at Frankfurt he represented Christ as preaching the overcoming of the gulf between man and God, the infinite and the finite, by the life of love. The Absolute is infinite life, and love is the consciousness of the unity of this life, of unity with the infinite life itself and of unity with other men through this life.

In 1800, while still at Frankfurt, Hegel wrote some notes to which Hermann Nohl gave the title *Fragment of a System* (*Systemfragment*). For on the strength of an allusion in a letter from Hegel to Schelling, Nohl and Dilthey thought that the extant notes represented the sketch of a completed system. This conclusion seems to be based on somewhat insufficient evidence, at least if the word 'system' is understood in terms of Hegel's developed philosophy. At the same time the notes are of considerable interest, and deserve some mention.

Hegel is grappling with the problem of overcoming oppositions or antitheses, above all the opposition between the finite and the infinite. If we put ourselves in the position of spectators, the movement of life appears to us an infinite organized multiplicity of finite individuals, that is, as Nature. Indeed, Nature can well be described as life posited for reflection or understanding. But the individual things, the organization of which is Nature, are transitory and perishing. Thought, therefore, which is itself a form of life, thinks the unity between things as an infinite, creative life which is free from the mortality which affects finite individuals. And this creative life, which is conceived as bearing the manifold within itself and not as a mere conceptual abstraction, is called God. It must also be defined as Spirit (*Geist*). For it is neither an external link between finite things nor the purely abstract concept of life, an abstract universal. Infinite life unites all finite things from within, as it were, but without annihilating them. It is the living unity of the manifold.

Hegel thus introduces a term, namely Spirit, which is of great importance in his developed philosophy. But the question arises whether we are able by conceptual thought so to unify the infinite and the finite that neither term is dissolved in the other while at the same time they are truly united. And in the so-called *Fragment of a System* Hegel maintains that it is not possible. That is to say, in denying the gulf between finite and infinite conceptual thought inevitably tends to merge them without distinction or to reduce the one to the other, while if it affirms their unity it inevitably tends to deny their distinction. We can see the necessity for a synthesis in which unity does not exclude distinction, but we cannot really think it. The unification of the Many within the One without the former's dissolution can be achieved only by living it, that is, by man's self-elevation from finite to infinite life. And this living process is religion.

It follows from this that philosophy stops short of religion, and that in this sense it is subordinate to religion. Philosophy shows us what is demanded if the opposition between finite and infinite is to be overcome, but it cannot itself fulfil this demand. For its fulfilment we have to turn to religion, that is, to the Christian religion. The Jews objectified God as a being set over above and outside the finite. And this is the wrong idea of the infinite, a 'bad' infinity. Christ, however, discovered the infinite life within himself as source of his thought and action. And this is the right idea of the infinite, namely as immanent in the finite and as comprising the finite within itself. But this synthesis can only be lived as Christ lived it: it is the life of love. The organ of mediation between finite and infinite is love, not reflection. True, there is a passage where Hegel foreshadows his later dialectical method, but he asserts at the same time that the complete synthesis transcends reflection.

Yet if it is presupposed that philosophy demands the overcoming of the oppositions which it posits, it is only to be expected that philosophy will itself try to fulfil this demand. And even if we say that the life of love, the religious life, fulfils the demand, philosophy will attempt to understand what religion does and how it does it. It is thus not surprising if Hegel soon tries to accomplish by reflection what he had previously declared to be impossible. And what he requires for the fulfilment of this task is a new form of logic, a logic which is able to follow the movement of life and does not leave opposed concepts in irremediable opposition. The adoption of this new logic signifies the transition from Hegel the theologian to Hegel the philosopher or, better, from the view that religion is supreme and that philosophy stops short of it to the view that speculative philosophy is the supreme truth. But the problem remains the same, namely the relation of the finite to the infinite. And so does the idea of the infinite as Spirit.

3. Some six months after his arrival at Jena Hegel published his work on the *Difference between the Philosophical Systems of Fichte and Schelling* (1801). Its immediate aim was twofold; first to show that these systems really were different and not, as some people supposed, the same, and secondly to show that the system of Schelling represented an advance on that of Fichte. But Hegel's discussion of these topics naturally leads him into general reflections on the nature and purpose of philosophy.

The fundamental purpose of philosophy, Hegel maintains, is that of overcoming oppositions and divisions. 'Division [*Entzweiung*] is the source of *the need of philosophy*.'[1] In the world of experience the mind finds differences, oppositions, apparent contradictions, and it seeks to construct a unified whole, to overcome the splintered harmony, as Hegel puts it. True, division and opposition present themselves to the mind in different forms in different cultural epochs. And this helps to explain the peculiar

[1] *W*, 1, p. 44. Unless otherwise stated, references to Hegel's writings will be given according to volume and page of the jubilee edition of his *Works* by Hermann Glockner (26 vols., Stuttgart, 1928).

characteristics of different systems. At one time the mind is confronted, for instance, with the problem of the division and opposition between soul and body, while at another time the same sort of problem presents itself as that of the relation between subject and object, intelligence and Nature. But in whatever particular way or ways the problem may present itself, the fundamental interest of reason (*Vernunft*) is the same, namely to attain a unified synthesis.

This means in effect that 'the Absolute is to be constructed for consciousness; such is the task of philosophy'.[1] For the synthesis must in the long run involve reality as a whole. And it must overcome the basic opposition between the finite and the infinite, not by denying all reality to the finite, not by reducing the infinite to the multiplicity of finite particulars as such, but by integrating, as it were, the finite into the infinite.

But a difficulty at once arises. If the life of the Absolute is to be constructed by philosophy, the instrument will be reflection. Left to itself, however, reflection tends to function as understanding (*Verstand*) and thus to posit and perpetuate oppositions. It must therefore be united with transcendental intuition which discovers the interpenetration of the ideal and the real, idea and being, subject and object. Reflection is then raised to the level of reason (*Vernunft*), and we have a speculative knowledge which 'must be conceived as identity of reflection and intuition'.[2] Hegel is evidently writing under the influence of Schelling's ideas.

Now, in the Kantian system, as Hegel sees it, we are repeatedly confronted with unreconciled dualisms or oppositions, between phenomena and noumena, sensibility and understanding, and so on. Hegel shows therefore a lively sympathy with Fichte's attempt to remedy this state of affairs. He entirely agrees, for instance, with Fichte's elimination of the unknowable thing-in-itself, and regards his system as an important essay in genuine philosophizing. 'The absolute principle, the one real foundation and firm standpoint of philosophy is, in the philosophy of Fichte as in that of Schelling, intellectual intuition or, in the language of reflection, the identity of subject and object. In science this intuition becomes the object of reflection, and philosophical reflection is thus itself transcendental intuition which makes itself its own object and is one with it. Hence it is speculation. Fichte's philosophy, therefore, is a genuine product of speculation.'[3]

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[1] *W*, 1, p. 50.

[2] *W*, 1, p. 69.

[3] *W*, 1, pp. 143-4.

But though Fichte sees that the presupposition of speculative philosophy is an ultimate unity and starts with the principle of identity, 'the principle of identity is not the principle of the system: directly the construction of the system begins, identity disappears'.[1] In the theoretical deduction of consciousness it is only the idea of the objective world which is deduced, not the world itself. We are left simply with subjectivity. In the practical deduction we are indeed presented with a real world, but Nature is posited only as the opposite of the ego. In other words, we are left with an unresolved dualism.

With Schelling, however, the situation is very different. For 'the principle of identity is the absolute principle of the *whole* system of Schelling. Philosophy and system coincide: identity is not lost in the parts, and much less in the result.'[2] That is to say, Schelling starts with the idea of the Absolute as the identity of subjectivity and objectivity, and it persists as the guiding-idea of the parts of the system. In the philosophy of Nature Schelling shows that Nature is not simply the opposite of the ideal but that, though real, it is also ideal through and through: it is visible Spirit. In the system of transcendental idealism he shows how subjectivity objectifies itself, how the ideal is also the real. The principle of identity is thus maintained throughout the whole system.

In his works on the systems of Fichte and Schelling there are indeed signs of Hegel's divergence from Schelling. For instance, it is clear that intellectual intuition does not mean for him a mystical intuition of a dark and impenetrable abyss, the vanishing-point of all differences, but rather reason's insight into antitheses as moments in the one all-comprehensive life of the Absolute. But as the work is designed to illustrate the superiority of Schelling's system to that of Fichte, Hegel naturally does not make explicit his points of divergence from the former's thought. The independence of his own standpoint is, however, clearly revealed in the lectures of his Jena period.

In the Jena lectures Hegel argues, for example, that if finite and infinite are set over against one another as opposed concepts, there is no passage from one to the other. A synthesis is impossible. But in point of fact we cannot think the finite without thinking the infinite: the concept of the finite is not a self-contained and isolated concept. The finite is limited by what is other than itself. In Hegel's language, it is affected by negation. But the finite is not simply negation. Hence we must negate the negation. And in doing so we affirm that the finite is more than finite. That is to say, it is a moment in the life of the infinite. And from this it follows that to construct the life of the Absolute, which is the task of philosophy, is to construct it in and through the finite, showing how the Absolute necessarily expresses itself as Spirit, as self-consciousness, in and through the human mind. For the human mind, though finite, is at the same time more than finite and can attain the standpoint at which it is the vehicle, as it were, of the Absolute's knowledge of itself.

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[1] *W*, I, p. 122.

[2] *Ibid.*

To a certain extent, of course, this is in harmony with Schelling's philosophy. But there is also a major difference. For Schelling the Absolute in itself transcends conceptual thought, and we must approach the absolute identity by the *via negativa*, thinking away the attributes and distinctions of the finite.[1] For Hegel the Absolute is not an identity about which nothing further can be said: it is the total process of its self-expression or self-manifestation in and through the finite. It is not surprising, therefore, to find in the Preface to *The Phenomenology of Spirit* a sharp rejection of Schelling's view of the Absolute. True, Schelling is not mentioned by name, but the reference is clear enough. It was clear to Schelling himself, who felt deeply wounded. Hegel speaks of a monotonous formalism and abstract universality which are said to constitute the Absolute. All the emphasis is placed on the universal in the bare form of identity. 'And we see speculative contemplation identified with the dissolution of the distinct and determinate, or rather with hurling it down, without more ado and without justification, into the abyss of vacuity.'[2] To consider a thing as in the Absolute is taken to mean considering it as dissolved in an undifferentiated self-identical unity. But 'to pit this one piece of knowledge, namely that in the Absolute all is one, against determinate and complete knowledge or knowledge which at least seeks and demands completion—to proclaim the *Absolute* as the night in which, as we say, all cows are black—this is the naïvety of empty knowledge'.[3] It is not by plunging ourselves into a mystical night that we can come to know the Absolute. We come to know it only by understanding a determinate content, the self-developing life of the Absolute in Nature and Spirit. True, in his philosophy of Nature and in his system of transcendental idealism Schelling considered determinate contents, and in regard to these contents he attempted a systematic demonstration of the identity of the ideal and the real. But he conceived the Absolute in itself as being, for conceptual thought at least, a blank identity, a vanishing-point of all differences, whereas for Hegel the Absolute is not an impenetrable reality existing, as it were, above and behind its determinate manifestations: it *is* its self-manifestation.

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[1] Needless to say, the reference is to Schelling's philosophical ideas in the first years of the nineteenth century.

[2] *W*, II, p. 21; *B*, p. 79. In references, as here, to *The Phenomenology of Spirit* *B* signifies the English translation of this work by J. B. Baillie. But it does not necessarily follow that the present writer has followed this translation. The like holds good of other such references to standard English translations, which are included for the convenience of readers.

[3] *W*, II, p. 22; *B*, p. 79.

4. This point is of great importance for understanding Hegel. The subject-matter of philosophy is indeed the Absolute. But the Absolute is the Totality, reality as a whole, the universe. 'Philosophy is concerned with the true and the true is the whole.'[1] Further, this totality or whole is infinite life, a process of self-development. The Absolute is 'the process of its own becoming, the circle which presupposes its end as its purpose and has its end as its beginning. It becomes concrete or actual only by its development and through its end.'[2] In other words, reality is a teleological process; and the ideal term presupposes the whole process and gives to it its significance. Indeed we can say that the Absolute is 'essentially a result'.[3] For if we look on the whole process as the self-unfolding of an essence, the actualization of an eternal Idea, we can see that it is the term or end of the process which reveals what the Absolute really is. True, the whole process is the Absolute; but in a teleological process it is the *telos* or end which shows its nature, its meaning. And philosophy must take the form of a systematic understanding of this teleological process. 'The true form in which truth exists can only be the scientific system of the same.'[4]

Now, if we say that the Absolute is the whole of reality, the Universe, it may seem that we are committed to Spinozism, to the statement that the Absolute is infinite Substance. But this is for Hegel a very inadequate description of the Absolute. 'In my view —a view which can be justified only through the exposition of the system itself—everything depends on grasping the true not merely as *Substance* but as *Subject* as well.'[5] But if the Absolute is subject, what is its object? The only possible answer is that its object is itself. In this case it is Thought which thinks itself, self-thinking

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[1] *W*, II, p. 24; *B*, p. 81.

[2] *W*, II, p. 23; *B*, p. 81.

[3] *W*, II, p. 24; *B*, p. 81.

[4] *W*, II, p. 14; *B*, p. 70.

[5] *W*, II, p. 22; *B*, p. 80.

Thought. And to say this is to say that the Absolute is Spirit, the infinite self-luminous or self-conscious subject. The statement that the Absolute is Spirit is for Hegel its supreme definition.

In saying that the Absolute is self-thinking Thought Hegel is obviously repeating Aristotle's definition of God, a fact of which he is, of course, well aware. But it would be a great mistake to assume that Hegel is thinking of a transcendent Deity. The Absolute is, as we have seen, the Totality, the whole of reality; and this totality is a process. In other words, the Absolute is a process of self-reflection: reality comes to know itself. And it does so in and through the human spirit. Nature is a necessary precondition of human consciousness in general: it provides the sphere of the objective without which the sphere of the subjective cannot exist. But both are moments in the life of the Absolute. In Nature the Absolute goes over into, as it were, or expresses itself in objectivity. There is no question with Hegel of Nature being unreal or merely idea in a subjectivist sense. In the sphere of human consciousness the Absolute returns to itself, that is, as Spirit. And the philosophical reflection of humanity is the Absolute's self-knowledge. That is to say, the history of philosophy is the process by which the Absolute, reality as a whole, comes to think itself. Philosophical reason comes to see the whole history of the cosmos and the whole history of man as the self-unfolding of the Absolute. And this insight is the Absolute's knowledge of itself.

One can put the matter in this way. Hegel agrees with Aristotle that God is self-thinking Thought,[1] and that this self-thinking Thought is the *telos* or end which draws the world as its final cause. But whereas the self-thinking Thought of Aristotle is, so to speak, an already constituted self-consciousness which does not depend on the world, the self-thinking Thought of Hegel is not a transcendent reality but rather the universe's knowledge of itself. The whole process of reality is a teleological movement towards the actualization of self-thinking Thought; and in this sense the Thought which thinks itself is the *telos* or end of the universe. But it is an end which is immanent within the process. The Absolute, the universe or totality, is indeed definable as self-thinking Thought. But it is Thought which comes to think itself. And in this sense we can say, as Hegel says, that the Absolute is essentially a result.

To say, therefore, that the Absolute is self-thinking Thought is to affirm the identity of the ideal and the real, of subjectivity and objectivity. But this is an identity-in-difference, not a blank undifferentiated identity. Spirit sees itself in Nature: it sees Nature as the objective manifestation of the Absolute, a manifestation which is a necessary condition for its own existence. In other words, the Absolute knows itself as the Totality, as the whole process of its becoming; but at the same time it sees the distinctions between the phases of its own life. It knows itself as an identity-in-difference, as the unity which comprises distinguishable phases within itself.

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[1] Hegel frequently speaks of the Absolute as 'God'. But it does not necessarily follow from his use of religious language that he looks on the Absolute as a personal Deity in the theistic sense. This question will be discussed later.

As we have seen, the task of philosophy is to construct the life of the Absolute. That is to say, it must exhibit systematically the rational dynamic structure, the teleological process or movement of the cosmic Reason, in Nature and the sphere of the human spirit, which culminates in the Absolute's knowledge of itself. It is not, of course, a question of philosophy trying to do over again, or to do better, the work accomplished by empirical science or by history. Such knowledge is presupposed. Rather is it philosophy's task to make clear the basic teleological process which is immanent in the material known in other ways, the process which gives to this material its metaphysical significance. In other words, philosophy has to exhibit systematically the self-realization of infinite Reason in and through the finite.

Now if, as Hegel believes, the rational is the real and the real the rational, in the sense that reality is the necessary process by which infinite Reason, the self-thinking Thought, actualizes itself, we can say that Nature and the sphere of the human spirit are the field in which an eternal Idea or an eternal essence manifests itself. That is to say, we can make a distinction between the Idea or essence which is actualized and the field of its actualization. We then have the picture of the eternal Idea or *Logos* manifesting itself in Nature and in Spirit. In Nature the *Logos* goes over, as it were, into objectivity, into the material world, which is its antithesis. In Spirit (the sphere of the human spirit) the *Logos* returns to itself, in the sense that it manifests itself as what it essentially is. The life of the Absolute thus comprises three main phases: the logical Idea or Concept or Notion,[1] Nature and Spirit. And the system of philosophy will fall into three main parts: logic, which for Hegel is metaphysics in the sense that it studies the nature of the Absolute 'in itself', the philosophy of Nature and the philosophy of Spirit. These three parts together form the philosophical construction of the life of the Absolute.

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[1] The word 'Idea' can have different shades of meaning with Hegel. It may refer to the logical Idea, otherwise called the Concept (*Begriff*) or Notion. It may refer to the whole process of reality, as the actualization of the Idea. Or it may refer primarily to the term of the process.

Obviously, if we talk about the eternal Idea 'manifesting itself' in Nature and Spirit, we imply that the *Logos* possesses an ontological status of its own, independently of things. And when Hegel uses, as he so frequently does, the language of religion and speaks of the logical Idea as God-in-himself, he inevitably tends to give the impression that the *Logos* is for him a transcendent reality which manifests itself externally in Nature. But such use of religious language does not necessarily justify this conclusion about his meaning. However, I do not wish to discuss this disputed problem here. For the moment we can leave undecided the question whether or not the self-thinking Thought which forms the culminating category of Hegel's logic can properly be said to exist, that is, independently of the finite. It is sufficient to have noticed the three main parts of philosophy, each of which is concerned with the Absolute. Logic studies the Absolute 'in itself'; the philosophy of Nature studies the Absolute 'for itself'; and the philosophy of Spirit studies the Absolute 'in and for itself'. Together they constitute the complete construction of the life of the Absolute.

Philosophy must, of course, exhibit this life in conceptual form. There is no other form in which it can present it. And if the life of the Absolute is a necessary process of self-actualization, this necessity must be reflected in the philosophical system. That is to say, it must be shown that concept *A* gives rise to concept *B*. And if the Absolute is the Totality, philosophy must be a self-contained system, exhibiting the fact that the Absolute is both Alpha and Omega. A truly adequate philosophy would be the total system of truth, the whole truth, the perfect conceptual reflection of the life of the Absolute. It would in fact be the Absolute's knowledge of itself in and through the human mind; it would be the self-mediation of the Totality. Hence, on Hegelian principles, there would be no question of comparing the absolute philosophy with the Absolute, as though the former were a purely external account of the latter, so that we had to compare them to see whether the philosophy fitted the reality which it described. For the absolute philosophy would *be* the Absolute's knowledge of itself.

But if we say that philosophy must exhibit the life of the Absolute in conceptual form, a difficulty at once arises. The Absolute is, as we have seen, identity-in-difference. For instance, it is the identity-in-difference of the infinite and the finite, of the One and the Many. But the concepts of infinite and finite, as of the One and the Many, seem to be mutually exclusive. If, therefore, philosophy operates with clearly-defined concepts, how can it possibly construct the life of the Absolute? And if it operates with vague, ill-defined concepts, how can it be an apt instrument for understanding anything? Would it not be better to say with Schelling that the Absolute transcends conceptual thought?

In Hegel's view this difficulty does indeed arise on the level of understanding (*Verstand*). For understanding posits and perpetuates fixed static concepts of such a kind that it cannot itself overcome the oppositions which it posits. To take the same example which has already been given, for understanding the concepts of the finite and the infinite are irrevocably opposed. If finite, then not infinite: if infinite, then not finite. But the conclusion to be drawn is that understanding is an inadequate instrument for the development of speculative philosophy, not that philosophy is impossible. Obviously, if the term 'understanding' is taken in a wide sense, philosophy is understanding. But if the term is taken in the narrow sense of *Verstand*, the mind, functioning in this way, is unable to produce the understanding (in the wide sense) which is, or ought to be, characteristic of philosophy.

Hegel has, of course, no intention of denying that understanding, in the sense of the mind operating as *Verstand*, has its uses in human life. For practical purposes it is often important to maintain clear-cut concepts and oppositions. The opposition between the real and the apparent might be a case in point. Moreover, a great deal of scientific work, such as mathematics, is based on *Verstand*. But it is a different matter when the mind is trying to grasp the life of the Absolute, the identity-in-difference. It cannot then remain content with the level of understanding, which for Hegel is a superficial level. It must penetrate deeper into the concepts which are categories of reality, and it will then see how a given concept tends to pass over into or to call forth its opposite. For example, if the mind really thinks through, so to speak, the concept of the infinite, it sees it losing its rigid self-containedness and the concept of the infinite emerging. Similarly, if the mind really thinks through the concept of reality as opposed to appearance, it will see the absurd or 'contradictory' character of a reality which in no way at all appears or manifests itself. Again, for common sense and practical life one thing is distinct from all other things; it is self-identical and negates all other things. And so long as we are not concerned with thinking what this really means, the idea has its practical uses. But once we really try to think it, we see the absurdity of the notion of a completely isolated thing, and we are forced to negate the original negation.

Thus in speculative philosophy the mind must elevate itself from the level of understanding in the narrow sense to the level of dialectical thinking which overcomes the rigidity of the concepts of the understanding and sees one concept as generating or passing into its opposite. Only so can it hope to grasp the life of the Absolute in which one moment or phase passes necessarily into another. But this is obviously not enough. If for the understanding concepts *A* and *B* are irrevocably opposed whereas for the deeper penetration of dialectical thought *A* passes into *B* and *B* into *A*, there must be a higher unity or synthesis which unites them without annulling their difference. And it is the function of reason (*Vernunft*) to grasp this moment of identity-in-difference. Hence philosophy demands the elevation of understanding through dialectical thinking to the level of reason or speculative thought which is capable of apprehending identity-in-difference.[1]

It is perhaps unnecessary to add that from Hegel's point of view it is not a question of producing a new species of logic out of the hat to enable him to establish an arbitrarily preconceived view of reality. For he sincerely believes that dialectical thought gives a deeper penetration of the nature of reality than understanding in the narrow sense can possibly do. For example, it is not for Hegel a question of insisting that the concept of the finite must pass over into or call forth the concept of the infinite simply because of a preconceived belief that the infinite exists in and through the finite. For it is his conviction that we cannot really think the finite without relating it to the infinite. It is not we who do something to the concept, juggling about with it, as it were: it is the concept itself which loses its rigidity and breaks up before the mind's attentive gaze. And this fact reveals to us the nature of the finite: it has a metaphysical significance.

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[1] The terms 'understanding' and 'reason' are not used in precisely the same ways by Kant and Hegel. This fact apart, however, the contrast between Kant's mistrust of the flights of reason, coupled with his admission of its practical function, and Hegel's depreciation of understanding, coupled with a recognition of its practical use, well illustrates their respective attitudes to speculative metaphysics.

In his account of dialectical thinking Hegel makes a rather disconcerting use of the word 'contradiction'. Through what he calls the power of the negative a concept of the understanding is said to give rise to a contradiction. That is to say, the contradiction implicit in the concept becomes explicit when the concept loses its rigidity and self-containedness and passes into its opposite. Further, Hegel does not hesitate to speak as though contradictions are present not only in conceptual thought or discourse about the world but in things themselves. And indeed this must be so in some sense if the dialectic mirrors the life of the Absolute. Moreover, this insistence on the role of contradiction is not simply incidental to Hegel's thought. For the emergence of contradiction is the motive force, as it were, of the dialectical movement. The conflict of opposed concepts and the resolution of the conflict in a synthesis which itself gives rise to another contradiction is the feature which drives the mind restlessly onwards towards an ideal term, an all-embracing synthesis, the complete system of truth. And, as we have noted, this does not mean that contradiction and conflict are confined to discourse about reality. When philosophy considers, for example, the history of man, it discovers a dialectical movement at work.

This use of the word 'contradiction' has led some critics of Hegel to accuse him of denying the logical principle of non-contradiction by saying that contradictory notions or propositions can stand together. And in refutation of this charge it has often been pointed out that for Hegel it is precisely the impossibility of being satisfied with a sheer contradiction which forces the mind onwards to a synthesis in which the contradiction is overcome. This answer, however, lays itself open to the retort that Hegel does not share Fichte's tendency to argue that the contradictions or antinomies which arise in the course of dialectical thinking are merely apparent. On the contrary, he insists on their reality. And in the syntheses the so-called contradictory concepts are preserved. In turn, however, it can be replied that though the concepts are preserved, they are not preserved in a relation of mutual exclusiveness. For they are shown to be essential and complementary moments in a higher unity. And in this sense the contradiction is resolved. Hence the simple assertion that Hegel denies the principle of non-contradiction gives a quite inaccurate view of the situation. What Hegel does is to give a dynamic interpretation of the principle in place of the static interpretation which is characteristic of the level of understanding. The principle operates in dialectical thinking, but it operates as a principle of movement.

This discussion might be prolonged. But it would be pointless to do so without first inquiring in what sense Hegel actually understands the term 'contradiction' when he is engaged in working out his dialectical philosophy rather than in talking abstractly about dialectical thought. And it is a notorious fact that the result of such an inquiry is to show that there is no single precise and invariable sense in which Hegel uses the term. Occasionally indeed we find a verbal contradiction. Thus the concept of Being is said to give rise to and pass into the concept of Not-being, while the concept of Not-being passes into the concept of Being. And this dialectical oscillation gives rise to the concept of Becoming which synthesizes Being and Not-being. But, as will be seen in the section on Hegel's logic in the next chapter, the meaning of this dialectical performance is easily intelligible, whether we agree or not with what Hegel has to say. In any case Hegel's so-called contradictions are much more often contraries than contradictions. And the idea is that one contrary demands the other, an idea which, whether true or false, does not amount to a denial of the principle of non-contradiction. Again, the so-called contradictory or opposed concepts may be simply complementary concepts. A one-sided abstraction evokes another one-sided abstraction. And the one-sidedness of each is overcome in the synthesis. Further, the statement that every thing is contradictory sometimes bears the meaning that a thing in a state of complete isolation, apart from its essential relations, would be impossible and 'contradictory'. Reason cannot remain in the idea of a completely isolated finite thing. Here again there is no question of denying the principle of non-contradiction.

We have used the word 'synthesis' for the moment of identity-in-difference in the dialectical advance. But in point of fact the terms 'thesis', 'antithesis' and 'synthesis' are more characteristic of Fichte than of Hegel, who seldom uses them. At the same time the most cursory inspection of the Hegelian system reveals his preoccupation with triads. Thus there are three main phases in the construction of the life of the Absolute: the logical Idea, Nature and Spirit. And each phase is divided and subdivided into triads. Moreover, the whole system is, or aims at, a necessary development. That is to say, for philosophical reflection one stage reveals itself as demanding the next by an inner necessity. Thus, in theory at least, if we start with the first category of the *Logic*, the inner necessity of dialectical development forces the mind to proceed not simply to the final category of the *Logic* but also to the ultimate phase of the philosophy of Spirit.

As for Hegel's preoccupation with triadic development, we may think that it is unnecessary and that it sometimes produces highly artificial results, but we obviously have to accept it as a fact. But though it is a fact that he develops his system according to this pattern, it obviously does not follow that the development always possesses the character of necessity which Hegel implies that it ought to have. And if it does not, this is easily understandable. For when Hegel is concerned, for example, with the life of the Spirit in art or in religion, he is faced with a multitude of historical data which he takes over, as it were, from the relevant sources and which he then interprets according to a dialectical pattern. And it is clear that there might be various possible ways of grouping and interpreting the data, no one of which was strictly necessary. The discovery of the best way will be a matter of reflection and insight rather than of strict deduction. To say this is not necessarily to condemn Hegel's practice. For in point of fact his interpretations of vast masses of data can sometimes be illuminating and are often stimulating even when we do not agree with them. At the same time the transitions between the stages of his dialectic are by no means always of the logical type suggested by his claim that philosophy is a necessary deductive system, even if the persistent observance of the same external pattern, namely the triadic arrangement, tends to obscure the underlying complexity.

Of course, when Hegel claims that philosophy is or ought to be a necessary deductive system, he does not really mean that it is the sort of deductive system which could be worked out by a machine. If it were, then it would belong to the sphere of understanding rather than to that of reason. Philosophy is concerned with the life of absolute Spirit, and to discern the unfolding of this life in, say, human history, *a priori* deduction is obviously not enough. The empirical material cannot be supplied by philosophy, though philosophy discerns the teleological pattern which works itself out in this material. At the same time the whole dialectical movement of the Hegelian system should, in theory at least, impose itself on the mind by its own inner necessity. Otherwise the system could hardly be, as Hegel claims that it is, its own justification. Yet it is clear that Hegel comes to philosophy with certain basic convictions; that the rational is the real and the real the rational, that reality is the self-manifestation of infinite reason, and that infinite reason is self-thinking Thought which actualizes itself in the historical process. True, it is Hegel's contention that the truth of these convictions is demonstrated in the system. But it is arguable that the system really depends upon them, and that this is one of the main reasons why those who do not share, or at least are not sympathetically disposed towards, Hegel's initial convictions are not much impressed by what we may call his empirical confirmation of his general metaphysical scheme. For it seems to them that his interpretations of the material are governed by a preconceived scheme, and that even if the system is a remarkable intellectual *tour de force*, it demonstrates at best only on what lines we must interpret the various aspects of reality if we have already made up our minds that reality as a whole is of a certain nature. This criticism would indeed be invalidated if the system really showed that Hegel's interpretation of the process of reality was the only interpretation which satisfied the demands of reason. But it may well be doubted whether this can be shown without giving to the word 'reason' a meaning which would beg the whole question.

One might perhaps neglect or pass over Hegel's theory of the necessity inherent in the dialectical development of the system and view his philosophy simply as one of the possible ways of satisfying the mind's impulse to obtain conceptual mastery over the whole wealth of empirical data or to interpret the world as a whole and man's relation to it. And we could then compare it with other large-scale interpretations or visions of the universe and try to find criteria for judging between them. But though this procedure may seem eminently reasonable to many people, it does not square with Hegel's own estimation of his own philosophy. For even if he did not think that his presentation of the system of philosophy was the whole truth in its final form, he certainly thought that it represented the highest stage which the Absolute's developing knowledge of itself had reached up to date.

This may seem to be an extremely bizarre notion. But we have to bear in mind Hegel's view of the Absolute as identity-in-difference. The infinite exists in and through the finite, and infinite Reason or Spirit knows itself in and through the finite spirit or mind. But it is not every sort of thinking by the finite mind which can be said to form a moment in the developing self-knowledge of the infinite Absolute. It is man's knowledge of the Absolute which is the Absolute's knowledge of itself. Yet we cannot say of any finite mind's knowledge of the Absolute that it is identical with the Absolute's knowledge of itself. For the latter transcends any given finite mind or set of finite minds. Plato and Aristotle, for example, are dead. But according to Hegel's interpretation of the history of philosophy the essential elements in their respective apprehensions of reality were taken up into and persist in the total dialectical movement of philosophy through the centuries. And it is this developing movement which is the Absolute's developing knowledge of itself. It does not exist apart from all finite minds, but it is obviously not confined to any given mind or set of minds.[1]

5. We can speak, therefore, of the human mind rising to a participation in the self-knowledge of the Absolute. Some writers have interpreted Hegel on more or less theistic lines. That is to say, they have understood him to mean that God is perfectly luminous to himself quite independently of man, though man is capable of participating in this self-knowledge. But I have interpreted him here as meaning that man's knowledge of the Absolute and the Absolute's knowledge of itself are two aspects of the same reality. Even, however, on this interpretation we can still speak of the finite mind rising to a participation in the divine self-knowledge. For, as we have seen, it is not every sort of idea and thought in man's mind which can be regarded as a moment in the Absolute's self-knowledge. It is not every level of consciousness which is a participation in the divine self-consciousness. To achieve this participation the finite mind has to rise to the level of what Hegel calls absolute knowledge.

In this case it is possible to trace the successive stages of consciousness from the lowest to the highest levels. And this is what Hegel does in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, which can be described as a history of consciousness. If we consider the mind and its activity in themselves, without relation to an object, we are concerned with psychology. If, however, we consider mind as essentially related to an object, external or internal, we are concerned with consciousness. And phenomenology is the science of consciousness in this sense. Hegel begins with the natural unscientific consciousness and proceeds to trace the dialectical development of this consciousness, showing how the lower levels are subsumed in the higher according to a more adequate point of view, until we reach the level of absolute knowledge.

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[1] I do not mean to imply that for Hegel philosophy is the only way of apprehending the Absolute. There are also art and religion. But in the present context we are concerned only with philosophy.

In a certain sense *The Phenomenology* can be regarded as an introduction to philosophy. That is to say, it systematically traces the development of consciousness up to the level of what we might call the properly philosophical consciousness. But it is certainly not an introduction to philosophy in the sense of being an external preparation for philosophizing. Hegel did not believe that an introduction in this sense was possible. And in any case the work is itself an outstanding example of sustained philosophical reflection. It is, we may say, the philosophical consciousness reflecting on the phenomenology of its own genesis. Moreover, even if the work is in some sense an introduction to the point of view required by the Hegelian system, there is an overlapping. The system itself finds a place for the phenomenology of consciousness, and *The Phenomenology* contains an outline of a certain amount of material which is later treated by Hegel at greater length. The religious consciousness is a case in point. Lastly, by no stretch of the imagination can *The Phenomenology* be described as an introduction to philosophy in the sense of a work of philosophy-without-tears. On the contrary, it is a profound work and often extremely difficult to understand.

The Phenomenology falls into three main parts, corresponding with the three main phases of consciousness. The first of these phases is consciousness of the object as a sensible thing standing over against the subject. And it is to this phase that Hegel appropriates the name 'consciousness' (*Bewusstsein*). The second phase is that of self-consciousness (*Selbstbewusstsein*). And here Hegel has a lot to say about social consciousness. The third phase is that of Reason (*Vernunft*), which is represented as the synthesis or unity of the preceding phases on a higher level. In other words, Reason is the synthesis of objectivity and subjectivity. Needless to say, each of these main divisions of the work has its subdivisions. And Hegel's general procedure is first to describe the spontaneous attitude of consciousness at a given level and then to institute an analysis of it. The result of the analysis is that the mind is compelled to proceed to the next level, considered as a more adequate attitude or point of view.

Hegel begins with what he calls sense-certainty, the uncritical apprehension by the senses of particular objects, which to the naïve consciousness appears to be not only the most certain and basic form of knowledge but also the richest. Analysis, he argues, shows that it is in fact a peculiarly empty and abstract form of knowledge. The naïve consciousness feels certain that it is directly acquainted through sense-apprehension with a particular thing. But when we try to say what it is that we know, that is, to describe the particular object with which we claim to be immediately acquainted, we find that we can describe it only in universal terms which are applicable to other things as well. We can, of course, attempt to pin the object down, as it were, by using words such as 'this', 'here', and 'now', accompanying them perhaps with an ostensive gesture. But a moment later the same words apply to another object. Indeed, it is impossible, Hegel argues, to give even to words like 'this' a genuinely particular significance, however much we may wish and try to do so.

We might wish to say that Hegel is simply calling attention to a feature of language. And he is, of course, perfectly well aware that he is saying something about language. But his main concern is epistemological. He wishes to show that the claim of 'sense-certainty' to be knowledge *par excellence* is a bogus claim. And he draws the conclusion that this level of consciousness, on the path towards becoming genuine knowledge, must pass into the level of perception for which the object is a thing conceived as the centre of distinct properties and qualities. But analysis of this level of consciousness shows that it is not possible, as long as we remain simply on the level of sense, to reconcile in any satisfactory manner the elements of unity and multiplicity which are postulated by this view of the object. And the mind passes, therefore, by various stages to the level of scientific understanding which invokes metaphenomenal or unobservable entities to explain sense-phenomena.

For instance, the mind sees sense-phenomena as the manifestations of hidden forces. But, Hegel maintains, the mind cannot rest here and proceeds instead to the idea of laws. Yet natural laws are ways of ordering and describing phenomena; they are not explicative. Hence they cannot perform the function for which they have been invoked, namely to explain sense-phenomena. Hegel obviously does not mean to deny that the concept of natural laws has a useful function to perform at the appropriate level. But it does not give the sort of knowledge which, in his opinion, the mind is seeking.

In the end the mind sees that the whole realm of the metaphenomenal which has been invoked to explain sense-phenomena is the product of the understanding itself. Consciousness is thus turned back on itself as the reality behind the veil of phenomena and becomes self-consciousness.

Hegel begins with self-consciousness in the form of desire (*Begierde*). The self is still concerned with the external object, but it is characteristic of the attitude of desire that the self subordinates the object to itself, seeking to make it minister to its satisfaction, to appropriate it, even to consume it. And this attitude can be shown, of course, in regard to living and non-living things. But when the self is confronted with another self, this attitude breaks down. For the presence of the Other is for Hegel essential to self-consciousness. Developed self-consciousness can arise only when the self recognizes selfhood in itself and others. It must take the form, therefore, of a truly social or we-consciousness, the recognition at the level of self-consciousness of identity-in-difference. But in the dialectical evolution of this phase of consciousness developed self-consciousness is not attained immediately. And Hegel's study of the successive stages forms one of the most interesting and influential parts of *The Phenomenology*.

The existence of another self is, we have mentioned, a condition of self-consciousness. But the first spontaneous reaction of a self confronted with another self is to assert its own existence as a self in face of the other. The one self desires to cancel out or annihilate the other self as a means to the triumphant assertion of its own selfhood. But a literal destruction would defeat its own purpose. For consciousness of one's own selfhood demands as a condition the recognition of this selfhood by another self. There thus arises the master-slave relationship. The master is the one who succeeds in obtaining recognition from the other, in the sense that he imposes himself as the other's value. The slave is the one who sees his own true self in the other.

Paradoxically, however, the original situation changes. And it must do so because of the contradictions concealed in it. On the one hand, by not recognizing the slave as a real person the master deprives himself of that recognition of his own freedom which he originally demanded and which is required for the development of self-consciousness. He thus debases himself to an infra-human condition. On the other hand, by carrying out his master's will the slave objectifies himself through labour which transforms material things. He thus forms himself and rises to the level of true existence.[1]

It is obvious that the concept of the master-slave relationship has two aspects. It can be considered as a stage in the abstract dialectical development of consciousness. And it can also be considered in relation to history. But the two aspects are by no means incompatible. For human history itself reveals the development of Spirit, the travail of the Spirit on the way to its goal. Hence we need not be surprised if from the master-slave relationship in its primary form Hegel passes to an attitude or state of consciousness to which he gives a name with explicit historical associations, namely the Stoic consciousness.

In the Stoic consciousness the contradictions inherent in the slave relationship are not really overcome: they are overcome only to the extent that both master (typified by Marcus Aurelius) and slave (typified by Epictetus) take flight into interiority and exalt the idea of true interior freedom, internal self-sufficiency, leaving concrete relationships unchanged. Hence, according to Hegel, this negative attitude towards the concrete and external passes easily into the Sceptical consciousness for which the self alone abides while all else is subjected to doubt and negation.

But the Sceptical consciousness contains an implicit contradiction. For it is impossible for the sceptic to eliminate the natural consciousness; and affirmation and negation coexist in the same attitude. And when this contradiction becomes explicit, as it must do, we pass to what Hegel calls 'the unhappy consciousness' (*das unglückliche Bewusstsein*), which is a divided consciousness. At this level the master-slave relationship, which has not been successfully overcome by either the Stoic or the Sceptical consciousness, returns in another form. In the master-slave relationship proper the elements of true self-consciousness, recognition of selfhood and freedom both in oneself and in the Other, were divided between two individual consciousnesses. The master recognized selfhood and freedom only in himself, not in the slave, while the slave recognized them only in the master, not in himself. In the so-called unhappy consciousness, however, the division occurs in the same self. For example, the self is conscious of a gulf between a changing, inconsistent, fickle self and a changeless, ideal self. The first appears as in some sense a false self, something to be denied, while the second appears as the true self which is not yet attained. And this ideal self can be projected into an other-worldly sphere and identified with absolute perfection, God considered as existing apart from the world and the finite self.[1] The human consciousness is then divided, self-alienated, 'unhappy'.

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[1] For obvious reasons Hegel's profound analysis of the master-slave relationship contained lines of reflection which found favour with Karl Marx.

The contradictions or divisions implicit in self-consciousness are overcome in the third phase of *The Phenomenology* when the finite subject rises to universal self-consciousness. At this level self-consciousness no longer takes the form of the one-sided awareness of oneself as an individual subject threatened by and in conflict with other self-conscious beings. Rather is there a full recognition of selfhood in oneself and in others; and this recognition is at least an implicit awareness of the life of the universal, the infinite Spirit, in and through finite selves, binding them together yet not annulling them. Present implicitly and imperfectly in the developed moral consciousness, for which the one rational will expresses itself in a multiplicity of concrete moral vocations in the social order, this awareness of the identity-in-difference which is characteristic of the life of the Spirit attains a higher and more explicit expression in the developed religious consciousness, for which the one divine life is immanent in all selves, bearing them in itself while yet maintaining their distinctness. In the idea of a living union with God the division within the unhappy or divided consciousness is overcome. The true self is no longer conceived as an ideal from which the actual self is hopelessly alienated, but rather as the living core, so to speak, of the actual self, which expresses itself in and through its finite manifestations.

This third phase of the phenomenological history of consciousness, to which, as we have seen, Hegel gives the general name of Reason, is represented as the synthesis of consciousness and self-consciousness, that is, of the first two phases. In consciousness in the narrow sense (*Bewusstsein*) the subject is aware of the sensible object as something external and heterogeneous to itself. In self-consciousness (*Selbstbewusstsein*) the subject's attention is turned back on itself as a finite self. At the level of Reason it sees Nature as the objective expression of infinite Spirit with which it is itself united. But this awareness can take different forms. In the developed religious consciousness the subject sees Nature as the creation and self-manifestation of God, with whom it is united in the depth of its being and through whom it is united with other selves. And this religious vision of reality is true. But at the level of the religious consciousness truth finds expression in the form of figurative or pictorial thought (*Vorstellung*), whereas at the supreme level of 'absolute knowledge' (*das absolute Wissen*) the same truth is reflectively apprehended in philosophical form. The finite subject is explicitly aware of its inmost self as a moment in the life of the infinite and universal Spirit, as a moment in absolute Thought. And, as such, it sees Nature as its own objectification and as the precondition of its own life as actually existing Spirit. This does not mean, of course, that the finite subject considered precisely as such sees Nature as its own product. Rather does it mean that the finite subject, aware of itself as more than finite, as a moment in the innermost life of absolute Spirit, sees Nature as a necessary stage in the onward march of Spirit in its process of self-actualization. In other words, absolute knowledge is the level at which the finite subject participates in the life of self-thinking Thought, the Absolute. Or, to put the matter in another way, it is the level at which the Absolute, the Totality, thinks itself as identity-in-difference in and through the finite mind of the philosopher.

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[1] Hegel, the Lutheran, tended to associate the unhappy or divided consciousness, in a somewhat polemical way, with mediaeval Catholicism, especially with its ascetic ideals.

As in the previous main phases of the phenomenology of consciousness Hegel develops the third phase, that of Reason, through a series of dialectical stages. He treats first of observing Reason which is seen as obtaining some glimpse at any rate of its own reflection in Nature (through the idea of finality, for example), then as turning inwards in the study of formal logic and of empirical psychology, and finally as manifesting itself in a series of practical ethical attitudes, ranging from the pursuit of happiness up to that criticism of the universal moral laws dictated by the practical reason which follows from recognition of the fact that a universal law stands in need of so many qualifications that it tends to lose all definite meaning. This sets the stage for the transition to concrete moral life in society. Here Hegel moves from the unreflective ethical life in which human beings simply follow the customs and traditions of their community to the form of culture in which individuals are estranged from this unreflective background and pass judgments about it. The two moments are synthesized in the developed moral consciousness for which the rational general will is not something over and above individuals in society but a common life binding them together as free persons.

In the first moment, we can say, Spirit is unreflective, as in the ancient Greek morality before the time of the so-called Sophists. In the second moment Spirit is reflective but at the same time estranged from actual society and its traditions, on which it passes judgment. In the extreme case, as in the Jacobin Terror, it annihilates actual persons in the name of abstract freedom. In the third moment, however, Spirit is said to be ethically sure of itself. It takes the form of a community of free persons embodying the general will as a living unity.

This living unity, however, in which each member of the community is for the others a free self demands an explicit recognition of the idea of identity-in-difference, of a life which is present in all as their inner bond of unity though it does not annihilate them as individuals. It demands, that is to say, an explicit recognition of the idea of the concrete universal which differentiates itself into or manifests itself in its particulars while uniting them within itself. In other words, morality passes dialectically into religion, the moral into the religious consciousness, for which this living unity is explicitly recognized in the form of God.

In religion, therefore, we see absolute Spirit becoming explicitly conscious of itself. But religion, of course, has its history; and in this history we see earlier phases of the dialectic being repeated. Thus Hegel moves from what he calls 'natural religion', in which the divine is seen under the form of perceptual objects or of Nature, to the religion of art or of beauty, in which, as in Greek religion, the divine is seen as the self-conscious associated with the physical. The statue, for example, represents the anthropomorphic deity. Finally, in the absolute religion, Christianity, absolute Spirit is recognized for what it is, namely Spirit; Nature is seen as a divine creation, the expression of the Word; and the Holy Spirit is seen as immanent in and uniting together finite selves.

But the religious consciousness expresses itself, as we have seen, in pictorial forms. And it demands to be transmuted into the pure conceptual form of philosophy which at the same time expresses the transition from faith to knowledge or science. That is to say, the pictorial idea of the transcendent personal Deity who saves man by a unique Incarnation and the power of grace passes into the concept of absolute Spirit, the infinite self-thinking Thought which knows itself in Nature (as its objectification and as the condition for its own actualization) and recognizes in the history of human culture, with its successive forms and levels, its own Odyssey. Hegel is not saying that religion is untrue. On the contrary, the absolute religion, Christianity, is the absolute truth. But it is expressed in the imaginative or pictorial form which is correlative to the religious consciousness. In philosophy this truth becomes absolute knowledge which is 'Spirit knowing itself in the form of Spirit.'[1] The Absolute, the Totality, comes to know itself in and through the human spirit, in so far, that is to say, as the human spirit rises above its finitude and identifies itself with pure Thought. God cannot be equated with man. For God is Being, the Totality, and man is not. But the Totality comes actually to know itself in and through the spirit of man; on the level of pictorial thought in the evolution of the religious consciousness, on the level of science or pure conceptual knowledge in the history of philosophy which has as its ideal term the complete truth about reality in the form of the Absolute's knowledge of itself.

In *The Phenomenology*, therefore, Hegel starts with the lowest levels of human consciousness and works dialectically upwards to the level at which the human mind attains the absolute point of view and becomes the vehicle, as it were, of infinite self-conscious Spirit. The connections between one level and the next are often very loose, logically speaking. And some of the stages are obviously suggested not so much by the demands of a dialectical development as by Hegel's reflections on the spirits and attitudes of different cultural phases and epochs. Further, some of the topics of which Hegel treats strike the modern reader as somewhat odd. There is, for example, a critical treatment of phrenology. At the same time, as a study of the Odyssey of the human spirit, of the movement from one attitude or outlook, which proves to be one-sided and inadequate, to another, the work is both impressive and fascinating. And the correlations between stages of the dialectic of consciousness and historically-manifested attitudes (the spirit of the Enlightenment, the romantic spirit, and so on) add to its interest. One may be suspicious of Hegel's summaries and interpretations of the spirits of epochs and cultures, and his exaltation of philosophical knowledge may strike one as having a comical aspect; but in spite of all reservations and disagreements the reader who really tries to penetrate into Hegel's thought can hardly come to any other conclusion than that *The Phenomenology* is one of the great works of speculative philosophy.

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[1] *W*, II, p. 610; *B*, p. 798.

CHAPTER X

HEGEL (2)

The logic of Hegel—The ontological status of the Idea or Absolute in itself and the transition to Nature—The philosophy of Nature—The Absolute as Spirit; subjective Spirit—The concept of right—Morality—The family and civil society—The State—Explanatory comments on Hegel's idea of political philosophy—The function of war—Philosophy of history—Some comments on Hegel's philosophy of history.

1. As we have seen, Hegel rejected the view, advanced by Schelling in his so-called system of identity, that the Absolute in itself is for conceptual thought the vanishing-point of all differences, an absolute self-identity which cannot properly be described except in negative terms and which can be positively apprehended only, if at all, in mystical intuition. Hegel was convinced that the speculative reason can penetrate the inner essence of the Absolute, the essence which manifests itself in Nature and in the history of the human spirit.

The part of philosophy which is concerned with laying bare the inner essence of the Absolute is for Hegel logic. To anyone who is accustomed to regard logic as a purely formal science, entirely dissociated from metaphysics, this must seem an extraordinary and even absurd point of view. But we have to bear in mind the fact that for Hegel the Absolute is pure Thought. This Thought can be considered in itself, apart from its externalization or self-manifestation. And the science of pure Thought in itself is logic. Further, inasmuch as pure Thought is the substance, as it were, of reality, logic necessarily coincides with metaphysics, that is, with metaphysics as concerned with the Absolute in itself.

The matter can be made clearer by relating Hegel's conception of logic to Kant's view of transcendental logic. In the philosophy of Kant the categories which give shape and form to phenomena are *a priori* categories of human thought. The human mind does not create things-in-themselves, but it determines the basic character of the phenomenal world, the world of appearance. On Kant's premisses, therefore, we have no warrant for assuming that the categories of the human mind apply to reality in itself; their cognitive function is limited to the phenomenal world. But, as was explained in the introductory chapter, with the elimination of the unknowable thing-in-itself and the transformation of the critical philosophy into pure idealism the categories become the categories of creative thought in the full sense. And if a subjectivist position, threatening to lead to solipsism, is to be avoided, creative thought must be interpreted as absolute Thought. The categories, therefore, become the categories of absolute Thought, the categories of reality. And logic, which studies them, becomes metaphysics. It discloses the essence or nature of the absolute Thought which manifests itself in Nature and history.

Now, Hegel speaks of the Absolute in itself as God in himself. The subject-matter of logic is 'the truth as it is without husk and for itself. One can therefore express the matter by saying that its content is the presentation of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of Nature and of a finite spirit.'[1] And this manner of speaking tends to suggest the very odd picture of the logician penetrating the inner essence of a transcendent Deity and describing it in terms of a system of categories. But Hegel's use of religious language can be misleading. We have to remember that though his Absolute is certainly transcendent in the sense that it cannot be identified with any particular finite entity or set of entities, it is not transcendent in the sense in which the God of Christianity is said to transcend the created universe. Hegel's Absolute is the Totality, and this Totality is depicted as coming to know itself in and through the finite spirit, in so far as the finite spirit attains the level of 'absolute knowledge'. Logic, therefore, is the Absolute's knowledge of itself in itself, in abstraction from its concrete self-manifestation in Nature and history. That is to say, logic is absolute Thought's knowledge of its own essence, the essence which exists concretely in the process of reality.

If we use the word 'category' in a somewhat wider sense than that in which it is used by Hegel himself, we can say, therefore, that his logic is the system of categories. But if we say this, it is essential to understand that the whole system of categories is a progressive definition of the Absolute in itself. Hegel starts with the concept of being because it is for him the most indeterminate and the logically prior concept. And he then proceeds to show how this concept passes necessarily into successive concepts until we reach the absolute Idea, the concept or category of self-knowledge or self-consciousness, self-thinking Thought. But the Absolute is not, of course, a string or chain of categories or concepts. If we ask what the Absolute is, we can answer that it is being. And if we ask what being is, we shall in the end be forced to answer that being is self-thinking Thought or Spirit. The process of showing that this is the case, as worked out by the logician, is obviously a temporal process. But the Absolute in itself does not, to put the matter crudely, start as being at seven in the morning and end as self-thinking Thought at seven in the evening. To say that the Absolute is being is to say that it is self-thinking Thought. But the logician's demonstration of the fact, his systematic dialectical elucidation of the meaning of being, is a temporal process. It is his business to show that the whole system of categories turns in on itself, so to speak. The beginning is the end, and the end is the beginning. That is to say, the first category or concept contains all the others implicitly, and the last is the final explicitation of the first: it gives its true meaning.

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[1] *W*, IV, p. 46; *J-S*, I, p. 60. The letters *J-S* signify the English translation of the *Science of Logic* by W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers.

The point is easily understood if we employ the religious or theological language which Hegel not infrequently uses. God is being, he is also self-thinking Thought. But the word 'also' is really inappropriate. For to say that God is being is to say that he is self-thinking Thought. The systematic exhibition of this fact by the philosopher is a temporal process. But this temporality obviously does not affect the divine essence in itself. There is, of course, a great difference between Hegel's Absolute and the God of Christian theology. But though Hegel's Absolute is said to be the process of its own becoming, we are not concerned in logic with this actual process, the actualization of the *Logos*: we are concerned with the Absolute 'in itself', with the logical Idea. And this is not a temporal process.

The dialectical movement of Hegel's logic can be illustrated by means of the first three categories. The logically prior concept of the Absolute is the concept of being. But the concept or category of pure being (*reines Sein*) is wholly indeterminate. And the concept of wholly indeterminate being passes into the concept of not-being. That is to say, if we try to think being without any determination at all, we find that we are thinking nothing. The mind passes from being to not-being and from not-being back to being: it can rest in neither, and each disappears, as it were, in its opposite. 'Their truth is thus this *movement* of the immediate disappearing of the one into the other.'[1] And this movement from being to not-being and from not-being to being is becoming. Becoming is thus the synthesis of being and not-being; it is their unity and truth. Being must therefore be conceived as becoming. In other words, the concept of the Absolute as being is the concept of the Absolute as becoming, as a process of self-development.[2]

According to our ordinary way of looking at things a contradiction brings us to a full stop. Being and not-being are mutually exclusive. But we think in this way because we conceive being as determinate being and not-being as the not-being of this determination. Pure being, however, is for Hegel indeterminate, empty or vacuous; and it is for this reason that it is said to pass into its opposite. But contradiction is for Hegel a positive force which reveals both thesis and antithesis as abstract moments in a higher unity or synthesis. And this unity of the concepts of being and not-being is the concept of becoming. But the unity gives rise in turn to a 'contradiction', so that the mind is driven onwards in its search for the meaning of being, for the nature or essence of the Absolute in itself.

Being, not-being or nothing and becoming form the first triad of the first part of Hegel's logic, the so-called logic of being (*die Logik des Seins*). This part is concerned with the categories of being-in-itself, as distinct from the categories of relation. And the three main classes of categories in this part of logic are those of quality, which include the above-mentioned triad, quantity and measure. Measure is described as the synthesis of quality and quantity. For it is the concept of a specific quantum determined by the nature of the object, that is, by its quality.

In the second main part of the *Logic*, the logic of essence (*die Logik des Wesens*), Hegel deduces pairs of related categories, such as essence and existence, force and expression, substance and accident, cause and effect, action and reaction. These categories are called categories of reflection because they correspond with the reflective consciousness which penetrates beneath the surface, as it were, of being in its immediacy. Essence, for example, is conceived as lying behind appearance, and force is conceived as the reality displayed in its expression. In other words, for the reflective consciousness being-in-itself undergoes self-diremption, breaking up into related categories.

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[1] *W*, IV, p. 89; *J-S*, I, p. 95.

[2] This statement does not contradict what has been said about the non-temporal nature of the logical Absolute. For we are not concerned here with the actual process of the Absolute's self-actualization.

But the logic of essence does not leave us with the division of being into inner essence and outward phenomenal existence. For the last main subdivision is devoted to the category of actuality (*die Wirklichkeit*) which is described as 'the unity of essence and existence'.[1] That is to say, the actual is the inner essence which ex-ists, the force which has found complete expression. If we identify being with appearance, with its external manifestation, this is a one-sided abstraction. But so is the identification of being with a hidden essence underlying appearance. Being as actuality is the unity of the inner and the outer; it is essence manifesting itself. And it must manifest itself.

It is under the general heading of the category of actuality that Hegel deduces the categories of substance and accident, cause and effect, and action and reaction or reciprocal action. And as we have said that his logic is a progressive definition or determination of the nature of the Absolute in itself, the impression may be given that for him there is only one substance and one cause, namely the Absolute. In other words the impression may be given that Hegel embraces Spinozism. But this would be an incorrect interpretation of his meaning. The deduction of the categories of substance and cause is not intended to imply, for example, that there can be no such thing as a finite cause. For the Absolute as actuality is essence manifesting itself; and the manifestation is the universe as we know it. The Absolute is not simply the One. It is the One, but it is also the Many: it is identity-in-difference.

From the logic of essence Hegel passes to the logic of the Concept (*die Logik des Begriffs*) which is the third main part of his work. In the logic of being each category is at first sight independent, standing on its own feet, as it were, even if the dialectical movement of thought breaks down this apparent self-containedness. In the logic of essence we are concerned with obviously related categories, such as cause and effect or substance and accident. We are thus in the sphere of mediation. But each member of a pair of related categories is conceived as mediated 'by another', that is, by something different from itself. The cause, for example, is constituted as a cause by passing into its opposite, namely the effect, which is conceived as something different from the cause. Similarly, the effect is constituted as an effect by its relation to something different from itself, namely the cause. The synthesis of the spheres of immediacy and of mediation by another will be the sphere of self-mediation. A being is said to be self-mediating when it is conceived as passing into its opposite and yet as remaining identical with itself even in this self-opposition. And the self-mediating is what Hegel calls the Concept or the Notion.[1]

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[1] *W*, IV, p. 662; *J-S*, II, p. 160.

Needless to say, the logic of the Notion has three main subdivisions. In the first Hegel considers the Notion as 'subjectivity', as thought in its formal aspects. And this part corresponds more or less with logic in the ordinary sense. Hegel tries to show how the general idea of being going out from itself and then returning to itself at a higher level is verified in a formal manner in the movement of logical thought. Thus the unity of the universal concept is divided in the judgment and is re-established at a higher level in the syllogism.

Having considered the Notion as subjectivity, Hegel goes on to consider it as objectivity. And as in the first phase or part of the logic of the Notion he finds three moments, the universal concept, the judgment and syllogistic inference, so in this second phase or part he finds three moments, namely mechanism, chemism and teleology. He thus anticipates the main ideas of the philosophy of Nature. But he is concerned here with the thought or concept of the objective rather than with Nature considered as an empirically-given existing reality. The nature of the Absolute is such that it comprises the concept of self-objectification.

Given the character of the Hegelian dialectic, the third phase of the logic of the Notion will obviously be the synthesis or unity on a higher plane of subjectivity and objectivity. As such the Notion is called the Idea. In the Idea the one-sided factors of the formal and the material, the subjective and the objective, are brought together. But the Idea too has its phases or moments. And in the final subdivision of the logic of the Notion Hegel considers in turn life, knowledge and their unity in the absolute Idea which is, as it were, the union of subjectivity and objectivity enriched with rational life. In other words, the absolute Idea is the concept or category of self-consciousness, personality, self-thinking Thought which knows itself in its object and its object as itself. It is thus the category of Spirit. In religious language, it is the concept of God in and for himself, knowing himself as the totality.

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[1] As the word 'concept' has too restricted a meaning in English, Hegel's *Begriff* is frequently rendered as 'Notion'.

After a long dialectical wandering, therefore, being has at length revealed itself as the absolute Idea, as self-thinking Thought. The Absolute is being, and the meaning of this statement has now been made explicit. 'The absolute Idea alone is *being*, eternal *life*, *self-knowing truth*, and it is *all truth*. It is the one subject-matter and content of philosophy.'[1] Hegel does not mean, of course, that the logical Idea, considered precisely as such, is the one subject-matter of philosophy. But philosophy is concerned with reality as a whole, with the Absolute. And reality, in the sense of Nature and the sphere of the human spirit, is the process by which the logical Idea or *Logos* actualizes itself. Hence philosophy is always concerned with the Idea.

2. Now, if we speak of the logical Idea or *Logos* as manifesting or expressing itself in Nature and in the sphere of the human spirit, we are obviously faced with the question, what is the ontological status of the logical Idea or the Absolute in itself? Is it a reality which exists independently of the world and which manifests itself in the world, or is it not? If it is, how can there be a subsistent Idea? If it is not, how can we speak of the Idea as manifesting or actualizing itself?

At the end of the *Logic* in the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*[2] Hegel asserts that the Idea 'in its absolute freedom . . . *resolves* to let its moment of particularity . . . the immediate Idea as its reflected image, go forth freely out of itself as Nature'.[3] In this passage, therefore, Hegel seems to imply not only that Nature is ontologically derived from the Idea but also that the Idea freely posits Nature. And if this implication were taken literally, we should clearly have to interpret the Idea as a name for the personal creative Deity. For it would be preposterous to speak of an Idea in any other sense as 'resolving' to do something.

But consideration of the Hegelian system as a whole suggests that this passage represents an intrusion, as it were, of the way of speaking which is characteristic of the Christian religious consciousness, and that its implications should not be pressed. It seems to be clear enough that according to Hegel the doctrine of free creation by God belongs to the figurative or pictorial language of the religious consciousness. It expresses indeed a truth, but it does not do so in the idiom of pure philosophy. From the strictly philosophical point of view the Absolute in itself manifests itself necessarily in Nature. Obviously, it is not constrained to do so by anything external to itself. The necessity is an inner necessity of nature. The only freedom in the *Logos'* self-manifestation is the freedom of spontaneity. And from this it follows that from the philosophical point of view there is no sense in speaking of the Absolute in itself as existing 'before' creation. If Nature is derived ontologically from the Idea, the latter is not temporally prior to the former.[1] Further, though some writers have interpreted Hegel in a theistic sense, as holding, that is to say, that the Absolute in itself is a personal Being, existing independently of Nature and of the sphere of the human spirit, it does not seem to me that this interpretation is correct. True, there are passages which can be cited in support of it. But these passages can equally well be interpreted as expressions of the religious consciousness, as pictorial or figurative statements of the truth. And the nature of the system as a whole clearly suggests that the Absolute attains actual self-consciousness only in and through the human spirit. As has already been explained, this does not mean that human consciousness can be identified without more ado with the divine self-consciousness. For the Absolute is said to know itself in and through the human mind in so far as this mind rises above mere finitude and particularity and reaches the level of absolute knowledge. But the point is that if the Absolute becomes actually existent only in and through the human spirit, the Absolute in itself, the logical Idea, cannot properly be said to 'resolve' to posit Nature, which is the objective precondition for the existence of the sphere of Spirit. If such language is used, it is a concession, as it were, to the mode of thought which is characteristic of the religious consciousness.

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[1] *W*, v, p. 328; *J-S*, II, p. 466.

[2] The *Logic* contained in the *Encyclopaedia* is known as the *Lesser* or *Shorter Logic*, in distinction from the *Greater Logic*, that is, Hegel's *Science of Logic*. Quotations in the last section were from the latter work.

[3] *W*, VI, p. 144; *E*, 191. The letter *E* stands for *Encyclopaedia*. As this work is divided into numbered sections, no reference to particular translations is required. A glance at the number of the relevant volume in the reference to *W* will show whether it is the Heidelberg edition (*W*, VI) or the Berlin edition (*W*, VIII–X) which is being referred to.

If, however, we exclude the theistic interpretation of the Absolute in itself,[2] how are we to conceive the transition from the logical Idea to Nature? If we conceive it as a real ontological transition, that is to say, if we conceive a subsistent Idea as manifesting itself necessarily in Nature, we are obviously attributing to Hegel a thesis which, to put it mildly, is somewhat odd. We expose him at once to the criticism made by Schelling in his polemic against 'negative philosophy', that from ideas we can deduce only other ideas, and that it is quite impossible to deduce an existing world from an Idea.

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[1] Cf., for example, *W*, IX, pp. 51–4; *E*, 247.

[2] The theistic view is certainly admitted by Hegel as far as the religious consciousness and its own characteristic expression are concerned. But we are treating here of the strictly philosophical point of view.

It is understandable, therefore, that some writers have endeavoured to exclude altogether the concept of an ontological derivation of Nature from the Idea. The Absolute is the totality, the universe. And this totality is a teleological process, the actualization of self-thinking Thought. The essential nature of this process can be considered in abstraction. It then takes the form of the logical Idea. But it does not exist as a subsistent reality which is logically prior to Nature and which is the efficient cause of Nature. The Idea reflects the goal or result of the process rather than a subsistent reality which stands at its beginning. Hence there is no question of an ontological derivation of Nature from the logical Idea as efficient cause. And the so-called deduction of Nature from the Idea is really an exhibition of the fact, or alleged fact, that Nature is a necessary precondition for the realization of the goal of the total process of reality, the universe's knowledge of itself in and through the human spirit.

It seems to the present writer that the foregoing line of interpretation must be accepted in so far as it denies the separate existence of the logical Idea as a reality quite distinct from the world or as an external efficient cause of the world. For Hegel the infinite exists in and through the finite; the universal lives and has its being, as it were, in and through the particulars. Hence there is no room in his system for an efficient cause which transcends the world in the sense that it exists quite independently of it. At the same time, even though the infinite exists in and through the finite, it is obvious that finite things arise and perish. They are, so to speak, transitory manifestations of an infinite Life. And Hegel certainly tends to speak of the *Logos* as though it were pulsating Life, dynamic Reason or Thought. It exists, it is true, only in and through its manifestations. But inasmuch as it is a continuous Life, Being actualizing itself as what it potentially is, namely Spirit, it is quite natural to look on the passing manifestations as ontologically dependent on the one immanent Life, as an 'outside' in relation to an 'inside'. And Hegel can thus speak of the *Logos* spontaneously expressing itself in or going over into Nature. For Being, the Absolute, the infinite Totality, is not a mere collection of finite things, but one infinite Life, self-actualizing Spirit. It is the universal of universals; and even though it exists only in and through the particulars, it itself persists whereas the particulars do not. Hence it is perfectly reasonable to speak of the *Logos* as expressing or manifesting itself in finite things. And inasmuch as it is absolute Spirit which comes to exist as such through the process of its own self-development, material Nature is naturally conceived as its opposite, the opposite which is a precondition for the attainment of the end or *telos* of the process.

This line of interpretation may seem to be an attempt to have things both ways. On the one hand it is admitted that the logical Idea does not exist as a subsistent reality which creates Nature from outside, as it were. On the other hand, it is claimed that the logical Idea, in the sense of the essential structure or meaning of Being as grasped by the metaphysician, represents a metaphysical reality which, though it exists only in and through its self-manifestation, is in a certain sense logically prior to its manifestation. But I do not think that we can exclude metaphysics from Hegelianism or eliminate altogether a certain element of transcendence. The attempt to do this seems to me to make nonsense of Hegel's doctrine of the infinite Absolute. The Absolute is indeed the totality, the universe, considered as the process of its own self-development; but in my opinion we cannot escape making a distinction between inner and outer, between, that is to say, the one infinite Life, self-actualizing Spirit, and the finite manifestations in and through which it lives and has its being. And in this case we can equally well say that the finite manifestations derive their reality from the one Life which expresses itself in them. If there is a certain element of ambiguity in Hegel's position, this is scarcely surprising. For if there were no such element, his philosophy would hardly have given rise to divergent interpretations.

3. 'Nature,' says Hegel, 'is *in itself*, in the Idea, divine. . . . But as it exists, its being does not correspond with its concept.'[1] In the language of religion, the idea of Nature in the divine mind is divine, but the objectification of this idea in existing Nature cannot be called divine. For the fact that the idea is expressed in the material world, in that which is most unlike God, means that it is only inadequately expressed. God cannot be adequately manifested in the material world. In the language of philosophy, the Absolute is defined as Spirit. Hence it can manifest itself adequately

[1] *W*, VI, p. 147; *E*, 193.

only in the sphere of Spirit. Nature is a precondition of the existence of this sphere, but it is not in itself Spirit, though in its rational structure it bears the imprint of Spirit. One might say with Schelling that it is slumbering Spirit or visible Spirit; but it is not Spirit proper, Spirit as awoken to consciousness of itself.

Spirit is freedom: Nature is the sphere of necessity rather than of freedom. It is also the sphere of contingency (*Zufälligkeit*). For example, it does not exhibit in any uniformly clear-cut way the distinctions postulated by a purely rational pattern. There are, for instance, 'monsters' in Nature which do not conform clearly to any one specific type. And there are even natural species which seem to be due to a kind of Bacchic dance or revel on Nature's part, and not to any rational necessity. Nature appears to run riot as much in the wealth of forms which she produces as in the number of individual members of given species. They elude all logical deduction. Obviously, an empirical explanation of any natural object can be given in terms of physical causality. But to give an empirical explanation in terms of physical causality is not the same thing as to give a logical deduction.

Obviously, Nature cannot exist without particular things. Immanent teleology, for instance, cannot exist without particular organisms. The universal exists only in and through its particulars. But it does not follow that any given individual is logically deducible from the concept of its specific type or from any more general concept. It is not simply a question of its being very difficult or practically impossible for the finite mind to deduce particulars which could in principle be deduced by an infinite mind. For Hegel seems to say that particular objects in Nature are not deducible even in principle, even though they are physically explicable. To put the matter somewhat paradoxically, contingency in Nature is necessary. For without it there could be no Nature. But contingency is none the less real, in the sense that it is a factor in Nature which the philosopher is unable to eliminate. And Hegel ascribes it to 'the *impotence* of Nature'[1] to remain faithful to the determination of the Notion. He is speaking here about the way in which Nature mixes specific types, producing intermediate forms. But the main point is that contingency is ascribed to the impotence of Nature itself and not to the finite mind's incapability of giving a purely rational account of Nature. Whether on his principles Hegel ought to have admitted contingency in Nature is disputable, but the fact that he did so is not open to doubt. And this is why he sometimes speaks of Nature as a Fall (*Abfall*) from the Idea. In other words, contingency represents the externality of Nature in relation to the Idea. And it follows that Nature 'is not to be deified'.[1] Indeed, it is a mistake, Hegel says, to regard natural phenomena such as the heavenly bodies as works of God in a higher sense than the creations of the human spirit, such as works of art or the State. Hegel certainly followed Schelling in attributing to Nature a status which it did not enjoy in the philosophy of Fichte. At the same time he shows no inclination to share the romantic divinization of Nature.

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[1] *W*, IX, pp. 63–4; *E*, 250.

But though Hegel rejects any deification of existing Nature, the fact remains that if Nature is real it must be a moment in the life of the Absolute. For the Absolute is the totality. Hegel is thus placed in a difficult position. On the one hand he has no wish to deny that there is an objective Nature. Indeed, it is essential to his system to maintain that there is. For the Absolute is the identity-in-difference of subjectivity and objectivity. And if there is real subjectivity, there must be real objectivity. On the other hand it is not easy for him to explain how contingency can have any place in a system of absolute idealism. And it is understandable if we can discern a marked tendency to adopt a Platonic position by distinguishing between the inside, as it were, of Nature, its rational structure or reflection of the Idea, and its outside, its contingent aspect, and by relegating the latter to the sphere of the irrational and unreal. There must indeed be an objective Nature. For the Idea must take the form of objectivity. And there cannot be an objective Nature without contingency. But the philosopher cannot cope with this element, beyond registering the fact that it is there and must be there. And what Professor Hegel cannot cope with he tends to dismiss as irrational and so as unreal. For the rational is the real and the real the rational. Obviously, once contingency has been admitted Hegel is driven either to admit some kind of dualism or to slide over the contingent element in Nature as though it were not 'really real'.

However this may be, Nature, in so far as it can be treated by the philosopher, 'is to be considered as a system of stages, of which one proceeds necessarily from the other'.[2] But it must be clearly understood that this system of stages or levels in Nature is a dialectical development of concepts and not an empirical history of Nature. It is indeed somewhat amusing to find Hegel dismissing the evolutionary hypothesis in a cavalier manner.[1] But a physical hypothesis of this kind is in any case irrelevant to the philosophy of Nature as expounded by Hegel. For it introduces the idea of temporal succession which has no place in the dialectical deduction of the levels of Nature. And if Hegel had lived to a time when the evolutionary hypothesis had won wide acceptance, it would have been open to him to say: 'Well, I dare say that I was wrong about evolution. But in any case it is an empirical hypothesis, and its acceptance or rejection does not affect the validity of my dialectic.'

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[1] *W*, VI, p. 147; *E*, 193.

[2] *W*, VI, p. 149; *E*, 194.

As one would expect, the main divisions of Hegel's philosophy of Nature are three in number. In the *Encyclopaedia* they are given as mathematics, physics and organic physics, while in the lectures on the philosophy of Nature they are given as mechanics, physics and organics. In both cases, however, Hegel starts with space, with what is most removed from mind or Spirit, and works dialectically up to the animal organism which of all levels of Nature is the closest to Spirit. Space is sheer externality: in the organism we find internality. Subjectivity can be said to make its appearance in the animal organism, though not in the form of self-consciousness. Nature brings us to the threshold of Spirit, but only to the threshold.

It is hardly worth while following Hegel into the details of his philosophy of Nature. But attention should be drawn to the fact that he is not trying to do the work of the scientist all over again by some peculiar philosophical method of his own. He is concerned rather with finding in Nature as known through observation and science the exemplification of a dynamic rational pattern. This may sometimes lead to bizarre attempts to show that natural phenomena are what they are, or what Hegel believes that they are, because it is rational and, so to speak, for the best that they should be what they are. And we may well feel somewhat sceptical about the value of this kind of speculative or higher physics, as well as amused at the philosopher's tendency to look down on empirical science from a superior position. But it is as well to understand that Hegel takes empirical science for granted, even if he sometimes takes sides, and not always to the advantage of his reputation, in controversial issues. It is more a question of fitting the facts into a conceptual scheme than of pretending to deduce the facts in a purely *a priori* manner.

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[1] *W*, IX, pp. 59–62; *E*, 249.

4. 'The Absolute is Spirit: this is the highest definition of the Absolute. To find this definition and to understand its content was, one may say, the final motive of all culture and philosophy. All religion and science have striven to reach this point.'[1] The Absolute in itself is Spirit, but it is potential rather than actual Spirit.[2] The Absolute for itself, Nature, is Spirit, but it is 'self-alienated Spirit',[3] in religious language it is, as Hegel puts it, God in his otherness. Spirit begins to exist as such only when we come to the human spirit, which is studied by Hegel in the third main part of his system, the philosophy of Spirit.

The philosophy of Spirit, needless to say, has three main parts or subdivisions. 'The two first parts of the doctrine of Spirit treat of the finite spirit',[4] while the third part deals with absolute Spirit, the *Logos* in its concrete existence as self-thinking Thought. In this section we shall be concerned only with the first part, to which Hegel gives the title 'subjective Spirit'.

This first part of the philosophy of Spirit is subdivided, according to Hegel's pervasive dialectical scheme, into three subordinate parts. Under the heading of anthropology he treats of the soul (*Seele*) as sensing and feeling subject. The soul is, as it were, a point of transition from Nature to Spirit. On the one hand it reveals the ideality of Nature, while on the other hand it is 'only the *sleep* of the Spirit'.[5] That is to say, it enjoys self-feeling (*Selbstgefühl*) but not reflective self-consciousness. It is sunk in the particularity of its feelings. And it is actual precisely as embodied, the body being the externality of the soul. In the human organism soul and body are its inner and outer aspects.

From the concept of the soul in this restricted sense Hegel passes to the phenomenology of consciousness, resuming some of the themes already treated in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. The soul of the section on anthropology was subjective spirit considered on its lowest level, as a yet undifferentiated unity. On the level of consciousness, however, subjective spirit is confronted by an object, first by an object regarded as external to and independent of the subject, then, in self-consciousness, by itself. Finally, the subject is depicted as rising to universal self-consciousness in which it recognizes other selves as both distinct from and one with itself. Here, therefore, consciousness (consciousness, that is, of something external to the subject) and self-consciousness are unified on a higher level.

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[1] *W*, VI, p. 228; *E*, 302.

[2] The logical Idea, considered precisely as such, is the category of Spirit, of self-thinking Thought, rather than potential Spirit.

[3] *W*, IX, p. 50; *E*, 247.

[4] *W*, VI, p. 229; *E*, 305.

[5] *W*, VI, p. 232; *E*, 309.

The third section of the philosophy of subjective Spirit is entitled 'mind' or 'spirit' (*Geist*), and it considers the powers or general modes of activity of the finite spirit as such. We are no longer concerned simply with slumbering spirit, the 'soul' of the section on anthropology, nor, as in phenomenology, with the ego or subject in relation to an object. We have returned from the finite spirit as term of a relation to spirit in itself but at a higher level than that of soul. In a sense we are concerned with psychology rather than with the phenomenology of consciousness. But the psychology in question is not empirical psychology but a dialectical deduction of the concepts of the logically successive stages in the activity of the finite spirit in itself.

Hegel studies the activity of the finite spirit or mind in both its theoretical and its practical aspects. Under the theoretical aspect he treats, for instance, of intuition, memory, imagination and thought, while under the practical aspect he considers feeling, impulse and will. And his conclusion is that 'the actual free will is the unity of the theoretical and practical spirit; *free will which exists for itself as free will*'.[1] He is speaking, of course, of the will as conscious of its freedom. And this is '*will* as free *intelligence*'.[2] We can say, therefore, that the concept of Spirit in itself is the concept of the rational will (*der vernünftige Wille*).

But 'whole regions of the world, Africa and the East, have never had this idea and do not yet have it. The Greeks and the Romans, Plato and Aristotle, also the Stoics, did not have it. On the contrary, they knew only that man is actually free by birth (as a citizen of Athens or Sparta and so on) or through strength of character, education or philosophy (the wise man is free even when he is a slave and in chains). This idea entered the world through Christianity, according to which the individual *as such* possesses an *infinite* value, . . . that is, that man *in himself* is destined to the highest freedom.'[3] This idea of the realization of freedom is a key-idea in Hegel's philosophy of history.

5. We have seen that the Absolute in itself objectifies or expresses itself in Nature. So also does Spirit in itself objectify or

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[1] *W*, x, p. 379; *E*, 481. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *W*, x, p. 380; *E*, 482.

express itself, issuing, as it were, out of its state of immediacy. Thus we come to the sphere of 'objective Spirit', the second main part of the philosophy of Spirit as a whole.

The first phase of objective Spirit is the sphere of right (*das Recht*). The person, the individual subject conscious of his freedom, must give external expression to his nature as free spirit; he must 'give himself an external sphere of freedom'.[1] And he does this by expressing his will in the realm of material things. That is to say, he expresses his free will by effectively appropriating and using material things. Personality confers the capacity for having and exercising rights such as that of property. A material thing, precisely because it is material and not spiritual, can have no rights: it is an instrument for the expression of rational will. By its being taken possession of and used a thing's non-personal nature is actually revealed and its destiny fulfilled. Indeed, it is in a sense elevated by being thus set in relation to a rational will.

A person becomes the owner of a thing not by a merely internal act of will but by effective appropriation, by embodying his will in it, as it were.[2] But he can also withdraw his will from the thing, thereby alienating it. And this is possible because the thing is external to him. A man can relinquish his right, for example, to a house. He can also relinquish his right to his labour for a limited time and for a specified purpose. For his labour can then be looked upon as something external. But he cannot alienate his total freedom by handing himself over as a slave. For his total freedom is not and cannot properly be regarded as something external to himself. Nor can his moral conscience or his religion be regarded as an external thing.[3]

In Hegel's somewhat odd dialectical progression the concept of alienation of property leads us to the concept of contract (*Vertrag*). True, alienation of property might take the form of withdrawing one's will, as it were, from a thing and leaving it ownerless. I might alienate an umbrella in this way. But we then remain within the sphere of the abstract concept of property. We advance beyond this sphere by introducing the concept of the unity of two or more individual wills in respect of property, that is, by developing the concept of contract. When a man gives, sells or exchanges by agreement, two wills come together. But he can also agree with one or more persons to possess and use certain property in common for a common end. And here the union of wills, mediated by an external thing, is more evident.

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[1] *W*, VII, p. 94; *R*, 41. The letter *R* signifies *The Philosophy of Right*. The following number refers to the section. In references to *R* the word 'addition' refers to the additions made by Hegel to the original text. In Professor T. M. Knox's translation these additions are printed after the version of the original text.

[2] Hegel is speaking of the right of property in the abstract. Needless to say, once the concept of society has been introduced the range of legitimate appropriation is restricted.

[3] This refers to religion as something internal. In a state of organized society a man cannot claim inviolability for the external expression of his religious beliefs when such expression is socially harmful.

But though contract rests on a union of wills, there is obviously no guarantee that the particular wills of the contracting parties will remain in union. In this sense the union of wills into a common will is contingent. And it comprises within itself the possibility of its own negation. This negation is actualized in wrong. The concept of wrong, however, passes through several phases; and Hegel considers in turn civil wrong (which is the result of incorrect interpretation rather than of evil intent or disrespect of other persons' rights), fraud and crime and violence. The notion of crime brings him to the subject of punishment, which he interprets as a cancellation of wrong, a cancellation which is said to be demanded even by the implicit will of the criminal himself. A criminal, according to Hegel, is not to be treated like an animal which has to be deterred or reformed. As a rational free being, he implicitly consents to and even demands the annulment of his crime through punishment.

Now, it is easy to see how Hegel is led from the concept of contract to that of wrong. For contract, as a free act, involves the possibility of its violation. But it is not so easy to see how the concept of wrong can reasonably be regarded as the unity on a higher plane of the concepts of property and contract. However, it is obvious that Hegel's dialectic is often a process of rational reflection in which one idea leads more or less naturally to another than a process of strictly necessary deduction. And even though he persists in observing his uniform triadic scheme, there is not much point in pressing it.

6. In wrong there is an opposition between the particular will and the universal will, the principle of rightness, which is implicit in the common will expressed in contract. This is true at least of wrong in the form of crime. The particular will negates right, and in doing so it negates the conception or notion of the will, which is universal, the rational free will as such. As we have seen, punishment is the negation of this negation. But punishment is external, in the sense that it is inflicted by an external authority. The

opposition or negation can be adequately overcome only when the particular will is in harmony with the universal will, that is, when it becomes what it ought to be, namely in accord with the concept of the will as raised above mere particularity and selfishness. Such a will is the moral will. We are thus led to make the transition from the concept of right to that of morality (*Moralität*).

It is important to note that the term 'morality' is used by Hegel in a much more restricted sense than it bears in ordinary usage. True, the term can be used in a variety of ways in ordinary language. But when we think of morality, we generally think of the fulfilment of positive duties, especially in a social setting, whereas Hegel abstracts from particular duties, towards the family, for example, or the State, and uses the term for what he calls 'a determination of the will [*Willensbestimmtheit*], so far as it is in the interior of the will in general'.[1] The moral will is free will which has returned on itself, that is, which is conscious of itself as free and which recognizes only itself, and no external authority, as the principle of its actions. As such the will is said to be 'infinite' or universal not only in itself but also for itself. 'The moral standpoint is the standpoint of the will in so far as it is *infinite* not simply *in itself* but *for itself*.'[2] It is the will as conscious of itself as the source of its own principle of action in an unrestricted way Hegel does indeed introduce in passing the topic of obligation or ought (*Sollen*). For the will considered as a particular finite will may not be in accordance with the will considered as universal; and what is willed by the latter thus appears to the former as a demand or obligation. And, as will be seen presently, he discusses action from the point of view of the responsibility of the subject for its action. But in his treatment of morality he is concerned with the autonomous free will in its subjective aspect, that is, with the purely formal aspect of morality (in the wider sense of the term).

This purely formal treatment of morality is, of course, an unfortunate legacy from the Kantian philosophy. It is all the more important, therefore, to understand that morality, as Hegel uses the term, is a one-sided concept in which the mind cannot rest. It is certainly not his intention to imply that morality consists simply of 'interiority'. On the contrary, it is his intention to show that the purely formal concept of morality is inadequate. And we can say, therefore, that he treats the Kantian ethic as a one-sided moment in the dialectical development of the full moral consciousness. If, then, we use the term 'morality' to mean the whole ethical life of man, it would be quite incorrect to say that Hegel makes it entirely formal and 'interior' or subjective. For he does nothing of the kind. At the same time it is arguable that in the transition from morality in the restricted sense (*Moralität*) to the concrete ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) some important elements in the moral consciousness are omitted or at least slurred over.

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[1] *W*, x, p. 392; *E*, 503.

[2] *W*, VII, p. 164; *R*, 105.

The subjective will externalizes itself in action. But the free will, as self-determined, has the right to regard as its own action, for which it can be held accountable, only those acts which stand in certain relations to it. We can say, therefore, that Hegel raises the question, for what actions can a person rightly be held accountable? Or, what are, properly speaking, the actions of a person? But it must be remembered that Hegel is thinking of the general formal characteristics of actions, and that he is not concerned at this stage with indicating where a person's concrete moral duties lie. For the matter of that, a person can be accountable for bad as well as for good actions. Hegel is, as it were, going behind the moral distinction between good and bad to the characteristics of action which make it possible for us to say that a person has acted morally or immorally.

In the first place any change or alteration in the world which the subject brings about can be called his 'deed' (*Handlung*). But he has the right to recognize as his 'action' (*That*) only that deed which was the purpose (*Vorsatz*) of his will. The external world is the sphere of contingency, and I cannot hold myself responsible for the unforeseeable consequences of my action. It does not follow, of course, that I can disavow all its consequences. For some consequences are simply the outward shape which my acting necessarily assumes, and they must be counted as comprised within my purpose. But it would be contrary to the idea of the self-determining free will to hold myself responsible for the unforeseeable consequences or alterations in the world which are in some sense my deed but which were certainly not comprised within my purpose.

Purpose is thus the first phase of morality. The second is intention (*Absicht*) or, more accurately, intention and welfare or well-being (*das Wohl*). It seems true to say that we generally use the words 'purpose' and 'intention' synonymously. But Hegel distinguishes between them. If I apply a lighted match to inflammable material in the grate, the natural and foreseen consequence of my action is the ensuing fire. My purpose was to light the fire. But I should not perform this action except in view of an intended end, such as warming myself or drying the room. And my intention is relevant to the moral character of the action. It is not, of course, the only relevant factor. Hegel is far from saying that any sort of action is justified by a good intention. But intention is none the less a moment or relevant factor in morality.

Hegel assumes that intentions are directed to welfare or well-being. And he insists that the moral agent has a right to seek his own welfare, the satisfaction of his needs as a human being. He is not suggesting, of course, that egoism is the norm or morality. But at present we are considering morality apart from its social framework and expression. And when Hegel insists that a man has a right to seek his own welfare, he is saying that the satisfaction of one's needs as a human being belongs to morality and is not opposed to it. In other words, he is defending a point of view comprised in Greek ethics as represented by Aristotle and rejecting the Kantian notion that an act loses its moral value if performed from inclination. In his opinion it is quite wrong to suppose that morality consists in a constant warfare against inclinations and natural impulses.

But though the individual is entitled to seek his own welfare, morality certainly does not consist in the particular will seeking its particular good. At the same time this idea has to be preserved and not simply negated. Hence we must proceed to the idea of the particular will identifying itself with the rational and so universal will and aiming at universal welfare. And the unity of the particular will with the concept of the will in itself (that is, with the rational will as such) is the good (*das Gute*), which can be described as 'the realization of freedom, the absolute final purpose of the world'.[1]

The rational will as such is a man's true will, his will as a rational, free being. And the need for conforming his particular will, his will as this or that particular individual, to the rational will (to his true self, one might say) presents itself as duty or obligation. Inasmuch, therefore, as morality abstracts from all concrete positive duties, we can say that duty should be done for duty's sake. A man ought to conform his particular will to the universal will, which is his true or real will; and he ought to do so simply because it is his duty. But this, of course, tells us nothing about what a man ought to will in particular. We can only say that the good will is determined by the subject's inward certainty, which is conscience (*Gewissen*). 'Conscience expresses the absolute right of subjective self-consciousness to know *in itself* and *through itself* what is right and duty, and to recognize nothing as good other than what it knows to be good, at the same time asserting that what it knows and wills as good is in truth right and duty.'[1]

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[1] *W*, VII, p. 188; *R*, 129.

Hegel thus incorporates into his account of morality what we may perhaps call the Protestant insistence on inwardness and on the absolute authority of conscience. But pure subjectivism and inwardness are really abhorrent to him. And he proceeds immediately to argue that to rely on a purely subjective conscience is to be potentially evil. If he had contented himself with saying that a person's conscience can err and that some objective norm or standard is required, he would have been expounding a familiar and easily intelligible position. But he gives the impression of trying to establish a connection between undiluted moral inwardness and wickedness, at least as a possible conjunction. Exaggeration apart, however, his main point is that we cannot give a definite content to morality on the level of pure moral inwardness. To do so, we have to turn to the idea of organized society.

The concepts of abstract right and of morality are thus for Hegel one-sided notions which have to be unified on a higher level in the concept of ethical life (*die Sittlichkeit*). That is to say, in the dialectical development of the sphere of objective Spirit they reveal themselves as moments or phases in the development of the concept of concrete ethics, phases which have at the same time to be negated, preserved and elevated.

Concrete ethics is for Hegel social ethics. It is one's position in society which specifies one's duties. Hence social ethics is the synthesis or unity at a higher level of the one-sided concepts of right and morality.

7. Hegel's way of dealing with the concrete life is to deduce the three moments of what he calls 'the ethical substance' (*die sittliche Substanz*). These are the family, civil society and the State. One might perhaps expect him to consider man's concrete duties in this social setting. But what he actually does is to study the essential natures of the family, civil society and the State and to

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[1] *W*, VII, pp. 196–7; *R*, 137.

show how one concept leads to another. It is not necessary, he remarks, to add that a man has these or those duties towards his family or towards the State. For this will be sufficiently evident from a study of the natures or essences of these societies. In any case it cannot properly be expected of the philosopher that he should draw up a code of particular duties. He is concerned with the universal, with the dialectical development of concepts, rather than with moralizing.

The family, the first moment in 'the ethical substance' or union of moral subjectivity and objectivity, is said to be 'the immediate or natural ethical spirit'.[1] In the social sphere the human spirit, issuing, as it were, out of its inwardness, objectifies itself first of all in the family. This is not to say that in Hegel's opinion the family is a transitory institution which passes away when other types of society have reached their full development. It is to say that the family is the logically prior society inasmuch as it represents the universal in its logically first moment of immediacy. The members of the family are considered as one, united primarily by the bond of feeling, that is, by love.[2] The family is what one might call a feeling-totality. It is, as it were, one person whose will is expressed in property, the common property of the family.

But if we consider the family in this way, we must add that it contains within itself the seeds of its own dissolution. Within the family, considered as a feeling-totality and as representing the moment of universality, the children exist simply as members. They are, of course, individual persons, but they are such *in* themselves rather than *for* themselves. In the course of time, however, they pass out of the unity of family life into the condition of individual persons, each of whom possesses his own plans in life and so on. It is as though the particulars emerge out of the universality of family life and assert themselves as particulars.

The notion of the comparatively undifferentiated unity of the family breaking up through the emergence of particularity is not in itself, of course, the notion of a society. Rather is it the notion of the dissolution or negation of a society. But this negation is itself negated or overcome in what Hegel calls 'civil society' (*die bürgerliche Gesellschaft*) which represents the second moment in the development of social ethics.

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[1] *W*, VII, p. 237; *R*, 157.

[2] Obviously, Hegel is not so foolish as to maintain that as a matter of empirical fact every family is united by love. He is talking about the concept or ideal essence of the family, what it ought to be.

To understand what Hegel means by civil society we can first picture a plurality of individuals, each of whom seeks his own ends and endeavours to satisfy his own needs. We must then conceive them as united in a form of economic organization for the better furtherance of their ends. This will involve specialization of labour and the development of economic classes and corporations. Further, an economic organization of this kind requires for its stability the institution of law and the machinery of law-enforcements, namely law-courts, a judiciary and police.

Inasmuch as Hegel considers the political constitution and government under the heading of the State and not under that of civil society, we may be inclined to comment that the latter could never exist. For how can there be laws and the administration of justice except in a State? The answer is, of course, that there cannot. But Hegel is not concerned with maintaining that civil society ever existed in the precise form in which he describes it. For the concept of civil society is for him a one-sided and inadequate concept of the State itself. It is the State 'as external State'.[1] That is to say, it is the State with the latter's essential nature omitted.

In other words, Hegel is concerned with the dialectical development of the concept of the State. And he does so by taking two one-sided concepts of society and showing that both represent ideas which are united on a higher plane in the concept of the State. The family, of course, persists in the State. So does civil society. For it represents an aspect of the State, even though it is only a partial aspect. But it does not follow that this aspect, taken in isolation and called 'civil society', ever actually existed precisely as such. The dialectical development of the concept of the State is a conceptual development. It is not equivalent to the statement that, historically speaking, the family existed first, then civil society, then the State, as though these concepts were all mutually exclusive. If we interpret Hegel in this way, we shall probably be inclined to think that he is concerned with expounding a thoroughly totalitarian theory of the State as against, for example, the sort of theory advanced by Herbert Spencer which more or less corresponds, though with certain important qualifications, to the concept of civil society. But though Hegel would doubtless have regarded Spencer's theory of society as very inadequate, he thought of the moment of particularity, represented by the concept of civil society, as being preserved, and not simply cancelled out, in the State.

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[1] *W*, x, p. 401; *E*, 523.

8. The family represents the moment of universality in the sense of undifferentiated unity. Civil society represents the moment of particularity. The State represents the unity of the universal and the particular. Instead of undifferentiated unity we find in the State differentiated universality, that is, unity in difference. And instead of sheer particularity[1] we find the identification of the particular with the universal will. To put the matter in another way, in the State self-consciousness has risen to the level of universal self-consciousness. The individual is conscious of himself as being a member of the totality in such a way that his selfhood is not annulled but fulfilled. The State is not an abstract universal standing over against its members: it exists in and through them. At the same time by participation in the life of the State the members are elevated above their sheer particularity. In other words, the State is an organic unity. It is a concrete universal, existing in and through particulars which are distinct and one at the same time.

The State is said to be 'the self-conscious ethical substance'.[2] It is 'ethical mind as substantial will manifest and clear to itself, which thinks and knows itself and accomplishes what it knows in so far as it knows it'.[3] The State is the actuality of the rational will when this has been raised to the plane of universal self-consciousness. It is thus the highest expression of objective Spirit. And the preceding moments of this sphere are resumed and synthesized in it. For instance, rights are established and maintained as the expression of the universal rational will. And morality obtains its content. That is to say, a man's duties are determined by his position in the social organism. This does not mean, of course, that a man has duties only to the State and none to his family. For the family is not annulled in the State: it is an essential, if subordinate, moment in the State's life. Nor does Hegel mean to imply that a man's duties are determined once and for all by an unchangeable social position. For though he insists that the welfare of the whole social organism is paramount, he also insists that the principle of individual freedom and personal decision is not annihilated in the State but preserved. The theory of 'my station and its duties', to use Bradley's famous phrase, does not imply acceptance of some sort of caste system.

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[1] To speak of civil society as representing 'sheer particularity' is from one point of view to be guilty of exaggeration. For within civil society itself the antagonisms consequent on the emergence and self-assertion of the particulars are partly overcome through the corporations on which Hegel lays stress. But the union of wills among members of a corporation in seeking a common end has also a limited universality and prepares the way for the transition to the concept of the State.

[2] *W*, x, p. 409; *E*, 535.

[3] *W*, VII, p. 328; *R*, 257.

It is indeed undeniable that Hegel speaks of the State in the most exalted terms. He even describes it, for instance, as 'this actual God'.[1] But there are several points to be borne in mind. In the first place the State, as objective Spirit, is necessarily 'divine' in some sense. And just as the Absolute itself is identity-in-difference, so is the State, though on a more restricted scale. In the second place it is essential to remember that Hegel is speaking throughout of the concept of the State, its ideal essence. He has no intention of suggesting that historical States are immune from criticism. Indeed, he makes this point quite clear. 'The State is no work of art; it stands in the world, and so in the sphere of caprice, contingency and error; it can be disfigured by evil conduct in many respects. But the ugliest human being, the criminal, the diseased and the cripple, each is still a living man. The positive element, life, remains in spite of the privation; and it is with this positive element that we have to do here.'[2]

In the third place we must bear in mind Hegel's insistence on the fact that the mature or well-developed State preserves the principle of private liberty in the ordinary sense. He maintains indeed that the will of the State must prevail over the particular will when there is a clash between them. And inasmuch as the will of the State, the universal or general will, is for him in some sense the 'real' will of the individual, it follows that the individual's identification of his interests with those of the State is the actualization of freedom. For the free will is potentially universal, and, as universal, it wills the general good. There is a strong dose of Rousseau's doctrines in Hegel's political theory. At the same time it is unjust to Hegel to draw from the highfaluting way in which he speaks of the majesty and divinity of the State the conclusion that his ideal is a totalitarian State in which private freedom and initiative are reduced to a minimum. On the contrary, a mature State is for Hegel one which ensures the maximum development of personal liberty which is compatible with the sovereign rights of the universal will. Thus he insists that while the stability of the State requires that its members should make the universal end their end[1] according to their several positions and capacities, it also requires that the State should be in a real sense the means to the satisfaction of their subjective aims.[2] As already remarked, the concept of civil society is not simply cancelled out in the concept of the State.

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[1] *W*, VII, p. 336; *R*, 258, addition.

[2] *Ibid.*

In his treatment of the State Hegel discusses first the political constitution. And he represents constitutional monarchy as being the most rational form. But he regards a corporative State as more rational than democracy after the English model. That is to say, he maintains that the citizens should participate in the affairs of the State as members of subordinate wholes, corporations or Estates, rather than as individuals. Or, more accurately, representatives should represent corporations or Estates rather than the individual citizens precisely as such. And this view seems to be required by Hegel's dialectical scheme. For the concept of civil society, which is preserved in that of the State, culminates in the idea of the corporation.

It has frequently been said that by deducing constitutional monarchy as the most rational form of political organization Hegel canonized the Prussian State of his time. But though he may, like Fichte, have come to regard Prussia as the most promising instrument for educating the Germans to political self-consciousness, his historical sense was far too strong to allow him to suppose that one particular type of constitution could be profitably adopted by any given nation without regard to its history, traditions and spirit. He may have talked a good deal about the rational State, but he was far too reasonable himself to think that a constitution could be imposed on all nations simply because it corresponded best with the demands of abstract reason. 'A constitution *develops* out of the spirit of a nation *only* in identity with this spirit's own development; and it runs through, together with this spirit, the grades of formation and the alterations required by its spirit. It is the indwelling spirit and the history of the nation (and, indeed, the history is simply the history of this spirit) by which constitutions have been and are made.'[3] Again, 'Napoleon wished to give the Spaniards, for example, a constitution *a priori*, but the attempt fared badly enough. For a constitution is no mere artificial product; it is the work of centuries, the idea and the consciousness of the rational in so far as it has been developed in a people. . . . What Napoleon gave the Spaniards was more rational than what they had before, and yet they rejected it as something alien to them.'[1]

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[1] It should be remembered that Hegel was partly concerned with educating the Germans to political self-consciousness.

[2] Cf. *W*, VII, p. 344; *R*, 265, addition.

[3] *W*, X, p. 416; *E*, 540.

Hegel further observes that from one point of view it is idle to ask whether monarchy or democracy is the best form of government. The fact of the matter is that any constitution is one-sided and inadequate unless it embodies the principle of subjectivity (that is, the principle of personal freedom) and answers to the demands of 'mature reason'.[2] In other words, a more rational constitution means a more liberal constitution, at least in the sense that it must explicitly allow for the free development of individual personality and respect the rights of individuals. Hegel was by no means so reactionary as has sometimes been supposed. He did not hanker after the *ancien régime.*

9. It is worth drawing attention to Hegel's general idea of political theory. His insistence that the philosopher is concerned with the concept or ideal essence of the State may suggest that in his opinion it is the philosopher's business to show politicians and statesmen what they should aim at, by portraying more or less in detail a supposedly ideal State, subsisting in some Platonic world of essences. But if we look at the Preface to *The Philosophy of Right* we find Hegel denying in explicit terms that it is the philosopher's business to do anything of the kind. The philosopher is concerned with understanding the actual rather than with offering political schemes and panaceas. And in a sense the actual is the past. For political philosophy appears in the period of a culture's maturity, and when the philosopher attempts to understand the actual, it is already passing into the past and giving place to new forms. In Hegel's famous words, 'when philosophy paints its grey on grey, then has a shape of life grown old. And by this grey on grey it can only be understood, not rejuvenated. The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk.'[3]

Some thinkers, of course, have supposed that they were delineating an eternal pattern, a changeless ideal essence. But in Hegel's opinion they were mistaken. 'Even the Platonic *Republic,* which passes proverbially as an *empty ideal,* was in essence nothing but an interpretation of Greek ethical life.'[4] After all, 'every individual is a son of his time [and] it is just as foolish to suppose that a philosophy can transcend its contemporary world as it is to suppose that an individual can overleap his own time. . . .'[1]

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[1] *W*, VII, p. 376; *R*, 274, addition. [2] *W*, VII, p. 376; *R*, 273, addition.

[3] *W*, VII, pp. 36–7; *R*, preface. Marx's equally famous retort was that it is the philosopher's business to change the world, not simply to understand it.

[4] *W*, VII, p. 33; *R*, preface.

The clear expression of this view obviously constitutes an answer to those who take too seriously Hegel's apparent canonization of the Prussian State. For it is difficult to suppose that a man who understood very well that Aristotle, for example, canonized the Greek *polis* or City-State at a time when its vigorous life was already on the decline really supposed that the contemporary State of his own period represented the final and culminating form of political development. And even if Hegel did think this, there is nothing in his philosophy as such to warrant his prejudice. On the contrary, one would expect the sphere of objective Spirit to undergo further developments as long as history lasts.

Given this interpretation of political philosophy, the natural conclusion to draw is that the philosopher is concerned with making explicit what we may call the operative ideal of the culture or nation to which he belongs. He is an interpreter of the spirit of his time (*die Zeitgeist*). In and through him the political ideals of a society are raised to the level of reflective consciousness. And a society becomes self-conscious in this way only when it has reached maturity and looks back, as it were, on itself, at a time, that is to say, when a form of life has already actualized itself and is ready to pass into or give way to another.

No doubt, this is partly what Hegel means. His remarks about Plato's *Republic* show that it is. But in this case, it may be asked, how can he at the same time speak of the political philosopher as being concerned with the concept or essence of the State?

The answer to this question must be given, I think, in terms of Hegel's metaphysics. The historical process is the self-actualization of Spirit or Reason. 'What is rational is real and what is real is rational.'[2] And the concept of Spirit is the concept of identity-in-difference at the level of rational life. Objective Spirit, therefore, which culminates in the State tends towards the manifestation of identity-in-difference in political life. And this means that a mature or rational State will unite in itself the moments of universality and difference. It will embody universal self-consciousness or the self-conscious General Will. But this is embodied only in and through distinct finite spirits, each of which, as spirit, possesses 'infinite' value. Hence no State can be fully mature or rational (it cannot accord with the concept of the

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[1] *W*, VII, p. 35; *R*, preface.

[2] *W*, VII, p. 33; *R*, preface.

State) unless it reconciles the conception of the State as an organic totality with the principle of individual freedom. And the philosopher, reflecting on the past and present political organizations, can discern how far they approximate to the requirements of the State as such. But this State as such is not a subsistent essence, existing in a celestial world. It is the *telos* or end of the movement of Spirit or Reason in man's social life. The philosopher can discern this *telos* in its essential outline, because he understands the nature of reality. But it does not follow that he is in a better position, as a philosopher, than is anyone else to prophesy the future or to tell statesmen and politicians what they ought to do. 'Philosophy always comes too late on the scene to do so.'[1] Plato may indeed have told contemporary Greeks how they ought, in his opinion, to organize the City-State. But he was in any case too late. For the shape of life which he dreamed of reorganizing was growing cold and would before long be ripe for decay. Utopian schemes are defeated by the movement of history.

10. Each State is in relation to other States a sovereign individual and demands recognition as such. The mutual relations between States are indeed partly regulated by treaties and by international law, which presuppose acceptance by the States concerned. But if this acceptance is refused or withdrawn, the ultimate arbiter in any dispute is war. For there is no sovereign power above individual States.

Now, if Hegel was simply registering an obvious empirical fact in the international life of his time, there would be no reason for adverse comment. But he goes on to justify war, as though it were an essential feature of human history. True, he admits that war can bring with it much injustice, cruelty and waste. But he argues that it has an ethical aspect and that it should not be regarded as 'an absolute evil and as a mere external contingent fact'.[2] On the contrary, it is a rational necessity. 'It is *necessary* that the finite, property and life, should be *posited* as contingent. . . .'[3] And this is precisely what war does. It is 'the condition in which we have to take seriously the vanity of temporal goods and things, which otherwise is usually only an edifying phrase'.[4]

It should be noted that Hegel is not simply saying that in war a man's moral qualities can be displayed on an heroic scale, which is obviously true. Nor is he saying merely that war brings home to

[1] *W*, VII, p. 36; *R*, preface.

[2] *W*, VII, p. 434; *R*, 324.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*

us the transitory character of the finite. He is asserting that war is a necessary rational phenomenon. It is in fact for him the means by which the dialectic of history gets, so to speak, a move on. It prevents stagnation and preserves, as he puts it, the ethical health of nations. It is the chief means by which a people's spirit acquires renewed vigour or a decayed political organism is swept aside and gives place to a more vigorous manifestation of the Spirit. Hegel rejects, therefore, Kant's ideal of perpetual peace.[1]

Obviously, Hegel had no experience of what we call total war. And he doubtless had the Napoleonic Wars and Prussia's struggle for independence fresh in his mind. But when one reads the passages in which he speaks of war and dismisses Kant's ideal of perpetual peace it is difficult to avoid the impression, partly comical and partly unpleasant, of a university professor romanticizing a dark feature of human history and decking it out with metaphysical trappings.[2]

11. Mention of international relations and of war as an instrument by which the historical dialectic progresses brings us to the subject of Hegel's concept of world-history.

Hegel distinguishes three main types of history or, rather, historiography. First there is 'original history', that is to say, descriptions of deeds and events and states of society which the historian had before his eyes. Thucydides' history represents this type. Secondly there is 'reflective history'. A general history, extending beyond the limits of the historian's experience, belongs to this type. So, for instance, does didactic history. Thirdly, there is 'philosophical history' or the philosophy of history. This term, says Hegel, signifies 'nothing else but the thoughtful consideration of history'.[3] But it can hardly be claimed that this description, taken by itself, is very enlightening. And, as Hegel explicitly admits, something more must be said by way of elucidation.

To say that the philosophy of history is the thoughtful consideration of history is to say that a thought is brought to this consideration. But the thought in question, Hegel insists, is not a preconceived plan or scheme into which the facts have somehow to be fitted. 'The only idea which philosophy brings with it [that is, to the contemplation of history] is the simple idea of reason, that reason dominates the world and that world-history is thus a rational process.'[1] As far as philosophy is concerned, this truth is provided in metaphysics. But in history as such it is an hypothesis. Hence the truth that world-history is the self-unfolding of Spirit must be exhibited as the result of reflection on history. In our reflection history 'must be taken as it is; we must proceed historically, empirically'.[2]

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[1] See Vol. VI, pp. 185 and 209.

[2] In justice to Hegel we can recall that he himself had felt the effect of war, its exhibition of the transitoriness of the finite, when he lost his position and belongings at Jena as a result of Napoleon's victorious campaign.

[3] *W*, XI, p. 34; *S*, p. 8. The letter *S* signifies J. Sibree's translation of Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of history.

The obvious comment on this is that even if Hegel disclaims any desire to force history into a preconceived mould, the thought or idea which the philosopher brings to the study of history must obviously exercise a great influence on his interpretation of events. Even if the idea is professedly proposed as an empirically verifiable hypothesis, the philosopher who, like Hegel himself, believes that its truth has been demonstrated in metaphysics will undoubtedly be prone to emphasize those aspects of history which seem to offer support for the hypothesis. Moreover, for the Hegelian the hypothesis is really no hypothesis at all but a demonstrated truth.

Hegel remarks, however, that even the would-be 'impartial' historians bring their own categories to the study of history. Absolute impartiality is a myth. And there cannot be a better principle of interpretation than a proven philosophical truth. Evidently, Hegel's general idea is more or less this. As the philosopher knows that reality is the self-unfolding of infinite reason, he knows that reason must operate in human history. At the same time we cannot tell in advance how it operates. To discover this, we have to study the course of events as depicted by historians in the ordinary sense and try to discern the significant rational process in the mass of contingent material. In theological language, we know in advance that divine providence operates in history. But to see how it operates we must study the historical data.

Now, world-history is the process whereby Spirit comes to actual consciousness of itself as freedom. Hence 'world-history is progress in the consciousness of freedom'.[3] This consciousness is attained, of course, only in and through the mind of man. And the divine Spirit, as manifested in history through the consciousness of man, is the World-Spirit (*der Weltgeist*). History, therefore, is the process whereby the World-Spirit comes to explicit consciousness of itself as free.

But though the *Weltgeist* attains consciousness of itself as free only in and through the human mind, the historian is concerned with nations rather than with individuals. Hence the unit, so to speak, in the concrete development of the World-Spirit is the national spirit or the spirit of a people (*der Volksgeist*). And by this Hegel means in part a people's culture as manifested not only in its political constitution and traditions but also in its morality, art, religion and philosophy. But a national spirit is not, of course, resident simply in legal forms, works of art and so on. It is a living totality, the spirit of a people as living in and through that people. And the individual is a bearer of the *Weltgeist* in so far as he participates in this more limited totality, the *Volksgeist*, which is itself a phase or moment in the life of the World-Spirit.

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[1] *W*, XI, p. 34; *S*, p. 9.

[2] *W*, XI, p. 36; *S*, p. 10.

[3] *W*, XI, p. 46; *S*, p. 19.

Hegel does indeed assert that 'in world-history the individuals with whom we have to do are peoples, the totalities which are States'.[1] But he can use the terms 'State' and 'national spirit' more or less interchangeably because the first term signifies for him something much more than the juridical State. He understands by the State in this context a totality which exists in and through its members, though it is not identical with any given set of citizens existing here and now, and which gives concrete form to the spirit and culture of a people or nation.

It should be noted, however, that one important reason why Hegel insists that world-history is concerned with States is that in his view a national spirit exists for itself (that is, as conscious of itself) only in and through the State. Hence those peoples which do not constitute national States are practically excluded from consideration in world-history. For their spirits are only implicit: they do not exist 'for themselves'.

Each national spirit, therefore, embodied in a State, is a phase or moment in the life of the *Weltgeist*. Indeed, this World-Spirit is really a *result* of the interplay of national spirits. They are, so to speak, the moments in its actualization. National spirits are limited, finite 'and their fates and deeds in their relations to one another reveal the dialectic of the finitude of these spirits. Out of this dialectic there arises the *Universal Spirit*, the unlimited *World-Spirit* which pronounces its judgment—and its judgment is the highest—upon the finite national spirits. It does so within *world-history* which is the *world's court of* judgment.'[2] The judgment of the nations is for Hegel immanent in history. The actual fate of each nation constitutes its judgment.

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[1] *W*, XI, p. 40; *S*, p. 14.

[2] *W*, VIII, p. 446; *R*, 340.

Spirit, therefore, in its progress towards full and explicit self-consciousness takes the form of limited and one-sided manifestations of itself, the several national spirits. And Hegel assumes that in any given epoch one particular nation represents in a special way the development of the World-Spirit. 'This people is the dominant people in world-history for this epoch—*and it is only once that it can make its hour strike*.'[1] Its national spirit develops, reaches its zenith and then declines, after which the nation is relegated to the background of the historical stage. Hegel is doubtless thinking of the way in which Spain, for instance, developed into a great empire, with a peculiar stamp and culture of its own, and then declined. But he assumes without more ado that a nation cannot occupy the centre of the stage more than once. And this assumption is perhaps disputable, unless, of course, we choose to make it necessarily true by maintaining that a nation which enjoys a second period of outstanding importance is really a different nation with a different spirit. In any case Hegel's desire to find a particular world-historical nation for each epoch has a narrowing effect on his conception of history.

To say this is not, however, to deny that in his lectures on the philosophy of history Hegel covers a wide field. As he is dealing with world-history, this is obviously bound to be the case. The first part of his work is devoted to the Oriental world, including China, India, Persia, Asia Minor, Palestine and Egypt. In the second part he treats of the Greek world, and in the third of the Roman world, including the rise of Christianity to the position of an historical power (*eine geschichtliche Macht*). The fourth part is devoted to what Hegel calls the Germanic world. The period covered stretches from the Byzantine Empire up to the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars inclusively. Mohammedanism receives a brief treatment in this fourth part.

The Orientals, according to Hegel, did not know that man as such is free. And in the absence of this knowledge they were not free. They knew only that *one* man, the despot, was free. 'But for this very reason such freedom is only caprice, ferocity or brutal passion—or a mildness and tameness in the passions which is itself only an accident of Nature or caprice. This *one* is, therefore, only a despot, he is not a free man, a true human being.'[2]

In the Greco-Roman world there arises the consciousness of freedom. But the Greeks and Romans of classical times knew only that *some* men are free, namely the free men as opposed to the slaves. Even Plato and Aristotle exemplify this inadequate phase in the growth of the consciousness of freedom.

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[1] *W*, VII, p. 449; *R*, 347.

[2] *W*, XI, p. 45; *S*, p. 18.

In Hegel's view it was the 'Germanic' peoples who under the influence of Christianity first arrived at the conscious awareness that man as such is free. But though this principle was recognized from the start in Christianity, it does not follow that it immediately found expression in laws, government and political organization and institutions. The awareness of the freedom of the spirit arose first in religion, but a long process of development was required for it to attain explicit practical recognition as the basis of the State. And this process of development is studied in history. The inner consciousness of the freedom of the spirit had to give itself explicit objectification, and here Hegel attributes a leading role to the so-called Germanic peoples.

Now, we have seen that the units to which primary consideration is given in world-history are national States. But it is a notorious fact that Hegel emphasizes the role of what he calls the world-historical individuals (*die weltgeschichtlichen Individuen*), men such as Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar and Napoleon. And this may seem to involve him in some inconsistency. But national spirits and the World-Spirit which arises out of their dialectic exist and live and operate only in and through human beings. And Hegel's point of view is that the World-Spirit has used certain individuals as its instruments in a signal way. In theological language, they were the special instruments of divine providence. They had, of course, their subjective passions and private motives. Napoleon, for example, may have been dominated to a great extent by personal ambition and megalomania. But though the private motives, conscious and unconscious, of a Caesar or a Napoleon are of interest to the biographer and the psychologist, they are not of much importance or relevance for the philosopher of history who is interested in such men for what they accomplished as instruments of the World-Spirit. Nothing great, Hegel remarks, is accomplished in this world without passion. But the passions of the great figures of history are used as instruments by the World-Spirit and exhibit 'the cunning of Reason'. Whatever motives Julius Caesar may have had for crossing the Rubicon his action had an historical importance which probably far transcended anything that he understood. Whatever his private interests may have been, the cosmic Reason or Spirit in its 'cunning' used these interests to transform the Republic into the Empire and to bring the Roman genius and spirit to the peak of its development.

If we abstract from all questionable metaphysics, Hegel is obviously saying something quite sensible. It is certainly not absurd to claim, for example, that the historian is or ought to be more interested in what Stalin actually accomplished for Russia than in the psychology of that unpleasing tyrant. But Hegel's teleological view of history implies in addition, of course, that what Stalin accomplished *had* to be accomplished, and that the Russian dictator, with all his unpleasant characteristics, was an instrument in the hands of the World-Spirit.[1]

12. In view of the already somewhat inordinate length of this chapter I have no wish either to repeat or to amplify the general remarks about the philosophy of history which I made in the preceding volume.[2] But one or two comments relating to Hegel's concept of world-history may be appropriate.

In the first place, if history is a rational process in the sense of being a teleological process, a movement towards a goal which is determined by the nature of the Absolute rather than by human choice, it may appear that all that occurs is justified by the very fact that it occurs. And if the history of the world is itself the highest court of judgment, the judgment of the nations, it may appear to follow that might is right. For example, if one nation succeeds in conquering another, it seems to follow that its action is justified by its success.

Now, the saying 'might is right' is perhaps generally understood as being an expression of that type of cynical outlook which is manifested by Callicles in Plato's *Gorgias*. For this outlook the notion of a universally obligatory and fundamentally unchanging moral law is the creation of a self-defensive instinct on the part of the weak who try by this means to enslave the strong and free. The really free and strong man sees through this notion of morality and rejects it. He sees that the only right is might. In his judgment the weak, nature's slaves, implicitly admit the truth of this judgment, though they are not consciously aware of the fact. For, individually weak, they try to exercise a collective might by imposing on the strong an ethical code which is of advantage to themselves.

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[1] Hegel's answer to any theologically-minded critic is that the theory of the cunning of Reason is in accord with Christianity. For Christianity maintains that God brings good out of evil, using, for instance, Judas's betrayal of Christ in the accomplishment of the Redemption.

[2] See Vol. VI, pp. 422–7.

But Hegel was no cynic. As we have seen, he was convinced of the value of the human person as such, not merely of the value of some human beings. And it can be reasonably claimed that with him it is not so much a question of the cynical view that might is right as of the exaggeratedly optimistic view that in history right, in the form of the rational, is the necessarily dominant factor.

Yet it is arguable, of course, that in the long run it comes more or less to the same thing, even if there is a difference of attitude between Hegel and the cynic. If right always prevails in history, then successful might is justified. It is justified because it is right rather than because it is might; but it is none the less justified. Hegel does indeed allow, for example, that moral judgments can be passed on what he calls world-historical individuals. But he also makes it clear that such judgments possess for him only a purely formal rectitude, as he puts it. From the point of view of a given system of social ethics a great revolutionary, for example, may be a bad man. But from the point of view of world-history his deeds are justified, for he accomplishes what the universal Spirit requires. And if one nation conquers another, its action is justified inasmuch as it is a moment in the dialectic of world-history, whatever moral judgments are passed on the actions of the individuals involved when they are considered, so to speak, in their private capacities. Indeed, world-history is not interested in this second aspect of the situation.

We can say, therefore, that it is Hegel's metaphysical views rather than any cynical outlook which involve him in justifying all the events in which the world-historian or philosopher of history is interested. Hegel argues indeed that he is simply taking seriously and applying to history as a whole the Christian doctrine of divine providence. But there are obvious differences. Once the transcendent God has been transformed into the Hegelian Absolute and judgment has been made purely immanent in history itself, no escape is left from the conclusion that from the world-historical point of view all the events and actions which form moments in the self-manifestation of the Absolute are justified. And moral questions which possess importance from the Christian point of view become practically irrelevant. I do not mean to imply, of course, that this shows of itself that Hegel's point of view is false. Nor do I mean to imply that a Christian historian is committed to moralizing. But Hegel's philosophy of history is much more than what historians generally understand by history. It is a metaphysical interpretation of history. And my point is that Hegel's metaphysics drives him to conclusions to which the Christian theologian is not committed. True, Hegel thought that he was giving the philosophical essence, as it were, of the Christian doctrine of providence. But in point of fact this 'demythologization' was a transformation.

Mention of Hegel's metaphysics suggests another comment. If, as Hegel maintains, world-history is the process by which the universal Spirit actualizes itself in time, it is difficult to understand why the goal of the process should not be a universal world-State or world-society in which personal freedom would be perfectly realized within an all-embracing unity. Even if Hegel wishes to insist that the universal is manifested in its particulars and that the particulars in question are national spirits, it would seem that the ideal end of the whole movement should be a world-federation, representing the concrete universal.

Hegel did not, however, adopt this point of view. World-history is for him essentially the dialectic of national spirits, of States, which are the determinate shape which Spirit assumes in history. If we consider Spirit as rising above these particular finite forms, we enter the sphere of absolute Spirit, which will be the theme of the next chapter.

CHAPTER XI

HEGEL (3)

The sphere of absolute Spirit—The philosophy of art—The philosophy of religion—The relation between religion and philosophy—Hegel's philosophy of the history of philosophy—The influence of Hegel and the division between right-wing and left-wing Hegelians.

1. As we have seen, difficulties arise directly we begin to probe beneath the surface of the outlines of Hegel's system. For example, when we start to inquire into the ontological reference of the logical Idea and the precise relation between the *Logos* and Nature, several possible lines of interpretation present themselves to the mind. But this does not alter the fact that a preliminary statement of the outline of the system can be easily made. The Absolute is Being. Being, considered first (though not in a temporal sense) as the Idea, objectifies itself in Nature, the material world. As the objectification of the Idea, Nature manifests the Idea. At the same time it cannot do so adequately. For Being, the Absolute, is defined as Spirit, as Thought which thinks itself. And it must come to exist as such. It cannot do so in Nature, though Nature is a condition for its doing so. Being comes to exist as Spirit and thus to manifest its essence adequately only in and through the human spirit. But Being as Spirit can be conceived in different ways. It can be conceived 'in itself', in the form of the finite spirit in its inwardness or subjectivity. This is the sphere of subjective Spirit. It can be conceived as issuing out of itself and objectifying itself in the institutions, above all the State, which it posits or creates. This is the sphere of objective Spirit. And it can be conceived as rising above finitude and knowing itself as Being, the totality. And this is the sphere of absolute Spirit. Absolute Spirit exists only in and through the human spirit, but it does so at the level at which the individual human spirit is no longer a finite mind, enclosed in its own private thoughts, emotions, interests and purposes, but has become a moment in the life of the infinite as an identity-in-difference which knows itself as such. In other words, absolute Spirit is Spirit at the level of that absolute knowledge of

which Hegel wrote in *The Phenomenology of Spirit.* And we can thus say that man's knowledge of the Absolute and the Absolute's knowledge of itself are two aspects of the same reality. For Being actualizes itself as concretely existing self-thinking Thought through the human spirit.

For the sake of clarity the following point must be made clear. I am conscious of myself as a finite being: I have, so to speak, my own self-consciousness which is quite different from the self-consciousness of any other human being. But though, like anything else, this subjective self-consciousness must be within the Absolute, it is not at all what Hegel means by absolute knowledge. This arises when I am aware, not simply of myself as a finite individual standing over against other finite persons and things, but rather of the Absolute as the ultimate and all-embracing reality. My knowledge, if I attain it, of Nature as the objective manifestation of the Absolute and of the Absolute as returning to itself as subjectivity in the form of Spirit, existing in and through the spiritual life of man in history, is a moment in absolute self-consciousness, that is, in the self-knowledge of Being or the Absolute.

The matter can be put in this way. We have seen that according to Hegel the World-Spirit arises out of the dialectic of national spirits. And in the comments at the end of the last chapter it was remarked that this view might reasonably be expected to involve the conclusion that the end or goal of history is a universal society, a world-State or at least a world-federation of States. But this was not Hegel's point of view. National spirits are limited and finite. And when the World-Spirit is conceived as rising above this finitude and limitation and existing as infinite Spirit, it must be conceived as knowledge, as self-thinking Thought. We thus pass out of the political sphere. The State is indeed described by Hegel as the self-conscious ethical substance, in the sense that it conceives its own ends and consciously pursues them. But it cannot be described as self-thinking Thought or as personality. Self-thinking Thought is Spirit knowing itself as Spirit and Nature as its objectification and as the condition for its own concrete existence as Spirit. It is the Absolute knowing itself as the Totality, that is, as identity-in-difference: it is infinite Being reflectively conscious of the distinct phases or moments in its own life. It is Spirit set free, as it were, from the limitations of the finitude which characterizes the national spirit.

Absolute Spirit is thus the synthesis or unity of subjective

Spirit and objective Spirit on a higher plane. It is subjectivity and objectivity in one. For it is Spirit knowing itself. But whereas in the spheres of subjective Spirit and objective Spirit we are concerned with the finite Spirit, first in its inwardness, then in its self-manifestation in objective institutions, such as the family and the State, in the sphere of absolute Spirit we are concerned with infinite Spirit knowing itself as infinite. This does not mean that infinite Spirit is something set over against, opposed to and existing entirely apart from the finite spirit. The infinite exists in and through the finite. But in the sphere of absolute Spirit the infinite is reflectively conscious of itself as such. Hence absolute Spirit is not a repetition, so to speak, of subjective Spirit. It is Spirit's return to itself at a higher level, a level at which subjectivity and objectivity are united in one infinite act.

To speak, however, of one infinite act can be misleading. For it suggests the idea of an eternally changeless self-intuition on the part of the Absolute, whereas for Hegel absolute Spirit is the life of the Absolute's developing self-knowledge. It is the process whereby the Absolute actualizes itself precisely as self-thinking Thought. And it does so at three main levels, those of art, religion and philosophy.

What Hegel means by this can most easily be understood if we approach the matter from the point of view of man's knowledge of the Absolute. First, the Absolute can be apprehended under the sensuous form of beauty as manifested in Nature or, more adequately, in the work of art. Hegel thus accepts Schelling's theory of the metaphysical significance of art. Secondly, the Absolute can be apprehended in the form of pictorial or figurative thought which finds expression in the language of religion. Thirdly, the Absolute can be apprehended purely conceptually, that is, in speculative philosophy. Art, religion and philosophy are thus all concerned with the Absolute. The infinite divine Being is, as it were, the content or subject-matter of all three spiritual activities. But though the content is the same, the form is different. That is to say, the Absolute is apprehended in different ways in these activities. As having the same content or subject-matter, art, religion and philosophy all belong to the sphere of absolute Spirit. But the differences in form show that they are distinct phases in the life of absolute Spirit.

The philosophy of absolute Spirit, therefore, consists of three main parts, the philosophy of art, the philosophy of religion and what we may call the philosophy of philosophy. And as Hegel proceeds dialectically, showing how art passes into or demands the transition to religion and how religion in turn demands the transition to philosophy, it is important to understand in what sense the time element enters into this dialectic and in what sense it does not.

In his philosophy of art Hegel does not confine himself to a purely abstract account of the essence of the aesthetic consciousness. He surveys the historical development of art and tries to show a development in the aesthetic consciousness up to the point at which it demands the transition to the religious consciousness. Similarly, in his philosophy of religion he does not confine himself to delineating the essential features or moments of the religious consciousness: he surveys the history of religion from primitive religion up to the absolute religion, Christianity, and endeavours to make clear a dialectical pattern of development in the religious consciousness up to the point at which it demands a transition to the standpoint of speculative philosophy. There is, therefore, a mixture of the temporal and the non-temporal. On the one hand the actual historical developments of art, religion and philosophy are all temporal processes. This is sufficiently obvious. For instance, classical Greek art temporally preceded Christian art, and Greek religion temporally preceded the Christian religion. On the other hand Hegel is not so foolish as to suppose that art ran through all its forms before religion appeared on the scene or that there was no philosophy before the appearance of the absolute religion. He is as well aware as anyone else that Greek temples were associated with Greek religion, and that there were Greek philosophers. The dialectical transition from the concept of art to the concept of religion and from the concept of religion to that of philosophy is in itself timeless. That is to say, it is in essence a conceptual, and not a temporal or historical, progression.

The point can be expressed in this way. Hegel might have confined himself to a purely conceptual movement, in which the only priority involved would be logical, not temporal. But the life of the Spirit is an historical development in which one form of art succeeds another, one stage in the evolution of the religious consciousness succeeds another stage, and one philosophical system succeeds another philosophical system. And Hegel is anxious to show the dialectical patterns exhibited in the history of art, the history of religion and the history of philosophy. Hence the philosophy of absolute Spirit, as he expounds it, cannot abstract from all temporal succession. And it has, therefore, two aspects. It may not indeed be always a simple matter to sort them out. But in any case we only make nonsense of Hegel's doctrine if we take him to mean, for example, that religion started only when art stopped. And whatever some writers may think that Hegel ought to have said, in my opinion he looked on art, religion and philosophy as permanent activities of the human spirit. He may have thought that philosophy is the highest of these activities. But it does not follow that he imagined that man would ever become pure thought.

By way of conclusion to this section it is worth drawing attention to the following point. It is a mistake to think that according to Hegel the State is the highest of all realities and political life the highest activity of man. For, as we have seen, the sphere of objective Spirit leads on to the sphere of absolute Spirit. And while organized society in some form is for Hegel a condition for art, religion and philosophy, these three activities are the highest expression of Spirit. Hegel doubtless exalted the State, but he exalted philosophy still more.

2. Dialectically or logically speaking, the Absolute is manifested first of all in the form of immediacy, under the guise, that is to say, of objects of sense. As such, it is apprehended as beauty, which is 'the sensuous semblance [*Scheinen*] of the Idea'.[1] And this sensuous appearance of the Idea, this shining of the Absolute through the veils of sense, is called the Ideal. Looked at from one point of view the Idea as beauty is, of course, identical with the Idea as truth. For it is the same Absolute which is apprehended as beauty by the aesthetic consciousness and as truth in philosophy. But the forms or modes of apprehension are distinct. Aesthetic intuition and philosophy are not the same thing. Hence the Idea as beauty is termed the Ideal.

While not denying that there can be such a thing as beauty in Nature, Hegel insists that beauty in art is far superior. For artistic beauty is the immediate creation of Spirit; it is Spirit's manifestation of itself to itself. And Spirit and its products are superior to Nature and its phenomena. Hegel confines his attention, therefore, to beauty in art. It may indeed be regrettable that he underestimates natural beauty as a manifestation of the divine. But, given the construction of his system, he can hardly do anything else but concentrate on artistic beauty. For he has left the philosophy of Nature behind him and is concerned with the philosophy of Spirit.

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[1] *W*, XII, p. 160; *O*, I, p. 154. In references to Hegel's lectures on *The Philosophy of Fine Art* the letter *O* signifies the English translation by F. P. B. Osmaston.

But, we may ask, if artistic beauty is said to be the sensuous semblance or appearance of the Idea, what does this proposition mean? Is it anything more than a high-sounding but vague statement? The answer is fairly simple. The Idea is the unity of subjectivity and objectivity. And in the beautiful work of art this unity is expressed or represented in the union of spiritual content with external or material embodiment. Spirit and matter, subjectivity and objectivity, are fused together in a harmonious unity or synthesis. 'Art has the task of presenting the Idea to immediate intuition in sensuous form, and not in the form of thought or pure spirituality. And the value and dignity of this presentation lie in the correspondence and unity of the two aspects of ideal content and its embodiment, so that the perfection and excellence of art and the conformity of its products with its essential concept depend on the degree of inner harmony and unity with which the ideal content and sensuous form are made to interpenetrate.'[1]

Obviously, Hegel does not mean to imply that the artist is consciously aware of the fact that his product is a manifestation of the nature of the Absolute. Nor does he mean to imply that a man is unable to appreciate the beauty of a work of art unless he has this conscious awareness. Both the artist and the beholder may feel that the product is, so to speak, just right or perfect, in the sense that to add or subtract anything would be to impair or disfigure the work of art. Both may feel that spiritual content and sensuous embodiment are perfectly fused. And they may both feel that the product is in some undefined sense a manifestation of 'truth'. But it by no means follows that either of them can state the metaphysical significance of the work of art, whether to himself or to anyone else. Nor does this indicate any defect in the aesthetic consciousness. For it is philosophy, and not the aesthetic consciousness, which explicitly or reflectively apprehends the metaphysical significance of art. In other words, this apprehension arises from philosophical reflection *about* art. And this is something very different from artistic creation. A great artist may be a very bad philosopher or no philosopher at all. And a great philosopher may well be incapable of painting a beautiful picture or composing a symphony.

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[1] *W*, XII, p. 110; *O*, I, p. 98.

In the perfect work of art, therefore, there is complete harmony between ideal content and its sensuous form or embodiment. The two elements interpenetrate and are fused into one. But this artistic ideal is not always attained. And the different possible types of relation between the two elements give us the fundamental types of art.

First we have the type of art in which the sensuous element predominates over the spiritual or ideal content, in the sense that the latter has not mastered its medium of expression and does not shine through the veils of sense. In other words, the artist suggests rather than expresses his meaning. There is ambiguity and an air of mystery. And this type of art is *symbolic* art. It can be found, for example, among the ancient Egyptians. 'It is in *Egypt* that we have to look for the perfect exemplification of the symbolic mode of expression, in regard both to its peculiar content and to its form. Egypt is the land of symbol which sets itself the spiritual task of the self-interpretation of Spirit, without really being able to fulfil it.'[1] And Hegel finds in the Sphinx 'the symbol of the symbolic itself'.[2] It is 'the objective riddle'.[3]

Hegel subdivides symbolic art into subordinate phases and discusses the difference between Hindu and Egyptian art and the religious poetry of the Hebrews. But we cannot follow him into details. It is sufficient to notice that according to him symbolic art is best suited to the early ages of humanity when the world and man itself, Nature and Spirit, are felt as mysterious and enigmatic.

Secondly we have the type of art in which spiritual or ideal content are fused into a harmonious unity. This is *classical* art. Whereas in symbolic art the Absolute is conceived as a mysterious, formless One which is suggested rather than expressed in the work of art, in classical art Spirit is conceived in concrete form as the self-conscious individual spirit, whose sensuous embodiment is the human body. This type of art, therefore, is predominantly anthropomorphic. The gods are simply glorified human beings. And the leading classical art is thus *sculpture*, which presents Spirit as the finite embodied spirit.

Just as Hegel associates symbolic art with the Hindus and Egyptians, so he associates classical art with the ancient Greeks. In the great works of Greek sculpture we find the perfect marriage, as it were, of Spirit and matter. The spiritual content shines through the veils of sense: it is expressed, not merely suggested

[1] *W*, XII, p. 472; *O*, II, p. 74. [2] *W*, XII, p. 480; *O*, II, p. 83. [3] *Ibid.*

in symbolic form. For the human body, as represented by a Praxiteles, is the clear expression of Spirit.

Yet 'classical art and its religion of beauty do not satisfy wholly the depths of the Spirit'.[1] And we have the third main type of art, namely *romantic* art, in which Spirit, felt as infinite, tends to overflow, as it were, its sensuous embodiment and to abandon the veils of sense. In classical art there is a perfect fusion of ideal content and sensuous form. But Spirit is not merely the particular finite spirit, united with a particular body: it is the divine infinite. And in romantic art, which is to all intents and purposes the art of Christendom, no sensuous embodiment is felt to be adequate to the spiritual content. It is not, as in symbolic art, a case of the spiritual content having to be suggested rather than expressed because Spirit has not yet been conceived as such and remains enigmatic, a riddle or problem. Rather is it that Spirit has been conceived as what it is, namely infinite spiritual Life as God, and therefore as overflowing any finite sensuous embodiment.

Romantic art, according to Hegel, is concerned with the life of the Spirit, which is movement, action, conflict. Spirit must, as it were, die to live. That is to say, it must go over into what is not itself that it may rise again to become itself, a truth which is expressed in Christianity, in the doctrine of self-sacrifice and resurrection, exemplified above all in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. The typical romantic arts, therefore, will be those which are best adapted to expressing movement, action and conflict. And these are painting, music and poetry. Architecture is least adapted for expressing the inner life of the Spirit and is the typical form of symbolic art. Sculpture, the typical form of classical art, is better adapted than architecture for this purpose, but it concentrates on the external, on the body, and its expression of movement and life is very limited. In poetry, however, the medium consists of words, that is, of sensuous images expressed in language; and it is best suited for expressing the life of the Spirit.

This asscoiation of particular arts with definite general types of art must not, however, be understood in an exclusive sense. Architecture, for example, is particularly associated with symbolic art because, while capable of expressing mystery, it is of all the fine arts the least fitted for expressing the life of the Spirit. But to say this is not to deny that there are forms of architecture which are characteristic of classical and romantic art. Thus the Greek temple, the perfect house for the anthropomorphic deity, is an obvious example of classical architecture, while the Gothic, an example of romantic architecture, expresses the feeling that the divine transcends the sphere of finitude and of matter. In contrast with the Greek temple we can see how 'the romantic character of Christian churches consists in the way in which they arise out of the soil and soar into the heights'.[1]

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[1] *W*, XIII, p. 14; *O*, II, p. 180. Note that Hegel here associates a particular type of art with a particular type of religion.

Similarly, sculpture is not confined to classical art, even if it is the characteristic classical art-form. Nor are painting, music and poetry confined to romantic art. But we cannot follow Hegel any further into his lengthy discussion of the particular fine arts.

Now, if we are considering art simply in itself, we must say that the highest type of art is that in which spiritual content and sensuous embodiment are in perfect harmonious accord. And this is classical art, the leading characteristic form of which is sculpture. But if we are considering the aesthetic consciousness as a stage in the self-manifestation of God or as a level in man's developing knowledge of God, we must say that romantic art is the highest type. For, as we have seen, in romantic art infinite Spirit tends to drop the veils of sense, a fact which becomes most evident in poetry. Of course, as long as we remain in the sphere of art at all, the veils of sense are never completely abandoned. But romantic art provides the point of transition from the aesthetic to the religious consciousness. That is to say, when the mind perceives that no material embodiment is adequate to the expression of Spirit, it passes from the sphere of art to that of religion.[2] Art cannot satisfy the Spirit as a means of apprehending its own nature.

3. If the Absolute is Spirit, Reason, self-thinking Thought, it can be adequately apprehended as such only by thought itself. And we might perhaps expect Hegel to make a direct transition from art to philosophy, whereas in point of fact he makes the transition to philosophy by way of an intermediate mode of apprehending the Absolute, namely religion. 'The sphere of conscious life which is nearest in ascending order to the realm of art is religion.'[3] Obviously, Hegel is not simply concerned with completing a triad, so that the sphere of absolute Spirit may

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[1] *W*, XIII, p. 334; *O*, III, p. 91.

[2] To repeat, this transition is dialectical rather than temporal. The Egyptians and the Hindus, for instance, had their own religions as well as their own forms of art.

[3] *W*, XII, p. 151; *O*, I, p. 142.

conform to the general pattern of the system. Nor is it simply that he sees the need for a philosophy of religion in view of the importance of religion in the history of mankind, and of the obvious fact that it is concerned with the divine. The insertion of religion between art and philosophy is due above all to Hegel's conviction that the religious consciousness exemplifies an intermediate way of apprehending the Absolute. Religion in general is or essentially involves the self-manifestation of the Absolute in the form of *Vorstellung*, a word which can be translated in this context as figurative or pictorial thought. On the one hand the religious consciousness differs from the aesthetic in that it *thinks* the Absolute. On the other hand the thought which is characteristic of religion is not pure conceptual thought as found in philosophy. It is thought clothed, as it were, in imagery: it is, one may say, the product of a marriage between imagination and thought. A *Vorstellung* is a concept, but it is not the pure concept of the philosopher. Rather is it a pictorial or imaginative concept.

For example, the truth that the logical Idea, the *Logos*, is objectified in Nature is apprehended by the religious consciousness (at least in Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism) in the form of the imaginative or pictorial concept of the free creation of the world by a transcendent Deity. Again, the truth that the finite spirit is in essence a moment in the life of infinite Spirit is apprehended by the Christian consciousness in the form of the doctrine of the Incarnation and of man's union with God through Christ. For Hegel the truths are the same in content, but the modes of apprehension and expression are different in religion and in philosophy. For instance, the idea of God in the Christian consciousness and the concept of the Absolute have for Hegel exactly the same content: they refer to or mean the same reality. But this reality is apprehended and described in different ways.

As for the existence of God, there is an obvious sense in which Hegel needs no proof, no proof, that is to say, in addition to his system itself. For God is Being, and the nature of Being is demonstrated in logic or abstract metaphysics. At the same time Hegel devotes a good deal of attention to traditional proofs of God's existence. Nowadays, he remarks, these proofs have fallen into discredit. They are regarded not only as completely antiquated from a philosophical point of view but also, from a religious standpoint, as irreligious and practically impious. For there is a strong tendency to substitute unreasoned faith and pious feelings of the heart for any attempt to give faith a rational foundation. Indeed, so unfashionable has this business of proof become that 'the proofs are here and there hardly even known as historical data; and even by theologians, people, that is to say, who profess to have a scientific knowledge of religious truths, they are sometimes unknown'.[1] Yet the proofs do not merit this contempt. For they arose 'out of the need to satisfy thought, reason',[2] and they represent the elevation of the human mind to God, making explicit the immediate movement of faith.

Speaking of the cosmological proof, Hegel remarks that its essential defect in its traditional forms is that it posits the finite as something existing on its own and then tries to make a transition to the infinite as something different from the finite. But this defect can be remedied if we once understand that 'Being is to be defined not only as finite but also as infinite.'[3] In other words, we have to show that 'the being of the finite is not only its being but also the being of the infinite'.[4] Conversely, of course, it has to be shown that infinite Being unfolds itself in and through the finite. The objections against making the transition from the finite to the infinite or from the infinite to the finite can be met only by a true philosophy of Being which shows that the supposed gulf between the finite and the infinite does not exist. Kant's criticism of the proofs then falls to the ground.

This amounts to saying that the true proof of the existence of God is, as was remarked above, the Hegelian system itself. And to expound this system is obviously a philosophical task. Hence the philosophy of religion proper is concerned more with the religious consciousness and its mode or modes of apprehending God than with proving God's existence.

Considered abstractly, the religious consciousness comprises three main moments or phases. The first, as the normal scheme of the Hegelian dialectic would lead one to expect, is the moment of universality. God is conceived as the undifferentiated universal, as the infinite and only true reality. The second moment is that of particularity. In conceiving God I distinguish between myself and him, between the infinite and the finite. He becomes for me an object over against me. And my consciousness of God as 'outside' me or over against me involves the consciousness of myself as

[1] *W*, XVI, p. 361; *SS*, III, p. 156. In references to Hegel's *Lectures on The Philosophy of Religion* *SS* signifies the English translation by E. B. Speirs and J. Burdon Sanderson.

[2] *W*, XVI, p. 361; *SS*, III, p. 157.

[3] *W*, XVI, p. 457; *SS*, III, p. 259.

[4] *W*, XVI, p. 456; *SS*, III, p. 259.

separated or alienated from him, as a sinner. Finally, the third moment is that of individuality, of the return of the particular to the universal, of the finite to the infinite. Separation and alienation are overcome. For the religious consciousness this is accomplished in worship and in the way of salvation, that is, by the variety of means by which man conceives himself as entering into union with God.

The mind thus moves from the bare abstract thought of God to the consciousness of itself and God in separation, and thence to awareness of itself as one with God. And this movement is the essential movement of the religious consciousness. Its three moments or phases, one may note, correspond with the three moments of the Idea.

But religion is not, of course, simply religion in the abstract. It takes the form of definite religions. And in his lectures on the philosophy of religion Hegel traces the development of the religious consciousness through different types of religion. He is primarily concerned with exhibiting a logical or conceptual sequence; but this sequence is developed through reflection on the historical religions of mankind, the existence and nature of which is obviously known by other means than *a priori* deduction. Hegel's concern is to exhibit the dialectical pattern exemplified in the empirical or historical data.

The first main phase of definite or determinate religion is called by Hegel the religion of Nature (*die Naturreligion*), this phrase being used to cover any religion in which God is conceived as less than Spirit. It is subdivided into three phases. First there is immediate religion or magic. Secondly there is the religion of substance, under which heading Hegel considers in turn Chinese religion, Hinduism and Buddhism. Thirdly there are the religions of Persia, Syria and Egypt in which there can be found some glimmering of the idea of spirituality. Thus while in Hinduism Brahman is the purely abstract undifferentiated One, in the Persian religion of Zoroastrianism God is conceived as the Good.

The religion of Nature can be said to correspond with the first moment of the religious consciousness as described above. In the characteristic *Naturreligion*, namely the religion of substance, God is conceived as the undifferentiated universal. This is pantheism in the sense that the finite being is regarded as swallowed up by or as purely accidental to the divine Being. At the same time, though in Hinduism Brahman is conceived in a way corresponding to the first moment of the religious consciousness, this does not mean that the other moments are altogether absent.

The second main phase of definite religion is the religion of spiritual individuality. Here God is conceived as Spirit, but in the form of an individual person or of individual persons. The inevitable triad comprises the Jewish, Greek and Roman religions, entitled respectively the religions of sublimity, beauty and utility. Thus Jupiter Capitolinus has as his function the preservation of the safety and sovereignty of Rome.[1]

These three types of religion correspond to the second moment of the religious consciousness. The divine is conceived as being over against or apart from the human. In Jewish religion, for example, God is exalted above the world and man in transcendent sublimity. At the same time the other moments of the religious consciousness are also represented. Thus in Judaism there is the idea of man's reconciliation with God through sacrifice and obedience to the divine law.

The third main phase of definite religion is absolute religion, namely Christianity. In Christianity God is conceived as what he really is, infinite Spirit which is not only transcendent but also immanent. And man is conceived as united with God by participating in the divine life through the grace received from Christ, the God-man. Hence the Christian religion corresponds above all with the third moment of the religious consciousness, which is the synthesis or unity of the first two moments. God is not looked on as an undifferentiated unity, but as the Trinity of Persons, as infinite spiritual Life. And the infinite and finite are not regarded as set over against one another, but as united without confusion. As St. Paul says, in him we live and move and have our being.

To say that Christianity is the absolute religion is to say that it is the absolute truth. And Hegel fulminates against preachers and theologians who pass lightly over the Christian dogmas or who whittle them down to suit the outlook of a supposedly enlightened age. But we must add that Christianity expresses the absolute truth under the form of *Vorstellung*. There arises, therefore, the demand for a transition to philosophy which thinks the content of religion in pure conceptual form. The attempt to do so is, according to Hegel, the continuation of the pioneer work of men such as St. Anselm who consciously set out to understand and justify by necessary reasons the content of faith.

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[1] Evidently, the third member of the triad, the religion of utility, is from one point of view a degradation of religion. For it practically reduces God to an instrument. At the same time it demands the transition to a higher form of religion. For example, the admission by Rome of all deities into its pantheon reduces polytheism to an absurdity and demands the transition to monotheism.

4. As we have seen, the transition from religion to philosophy is in no way a transition from one subject-matter to another. The subject-matter is in both cases the same, '*the eternal truth* in its objectivity, God and nothing but God and the unfolding [*die Explication*] of God'.[1] In this sense, therefore, 'religion and philosophy come to the same thing'.[2] 'Philosophy unfolds only itself when it unfolds religion; and when it unfolds itself, it unfolds religion.'[3]

The distinction between them lies in the different ways in which they conceive God, 'in the peculiar ways in which they occupy themselves with God'.[4] For example, the change from *Vorstellung* to pure thought involves the replacement of the form of contingency by that of logical sequence. Thus the theological concept of divine creation as a contingent event, in the sense that it might or might not have taken place, becomes in philosophy the doctrine that the *Logos* is necessarily objectified in Nature, not because the Absolute is subject to compulsion but because it is what it is. Speculative philosophy, in other words, strips away the imaginative or pictorial element which is characteristic of religious thought and expresses the truth, the same truth, in purely conceptual form.

It does not follow, however, that philosophy is irreligious. In Hegel's opinion the notion that philosophy and religion are incompatible or that the former is hostile or dangerous to the latter rests on a misconception of their respective natures. Both treat of God and both are religion. 'What they have in common is that both are religion; what distinguishes them lies only in the kind and manner of religion which we find in each.'[5] It is indeed this difference in their respective ways of apprehending and expressing the truth which gives rise to the idea that philosophy threatens religion. But philosophy would be a threat to religion only if it professed to substitute truth for falsity. And this is not the case. The truth is the same, though the religious consciousness demands a mode of expression which must be distinguished from that of philosophy.

One may be inclined to comment that Hegel uses the term

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[1] *W*, xv, p. 37; *SS*, I, p. 19.

[2] *W*, xv, p. 37; *SS*, I, p. 20.

[3] *W*, xv, p. 37; *SS*, I, p. 19.

[4] *W*, xv, p. 38; *SS*, I, p. 20.

[5] *Ibid.*

'religion' ambiguously. For he uses it to cover not only religious experience, faith and cult but also theology. And while a plausible case can be made out for saying that philosophy is not hostile to religious experience as such, or even to pure faith, it must necessarily be hostile to religion if religion is taken to mean or include theology and if philosophy proposes to reveal the unvarnished truth, as it were, which is contained in the doctrines which theologians believe to be the best possible expression of the truth in human language.

As regards the first point, Hegel insists that '*knowledge* is an essential part of the Christian religion itself'.[1] Christianity strives to understand its own faith. And speculative philosophy is a continuation of this attempt. The difference lies in the fact that philosophy substitutes the form of pure thought for the form of *Vorstellung*, pictorial or figurative thought. But this does not mean that speculative philosophy takes the place of Christianity in the sense that the latter is simply discarded in favour of the former. Christianity is the absolute religion and absolute idealism is the absolute philosophy. Both are true, and their truth is the same. The forms of conception and expression may differ, but it does not follow that Christianity is superseded by absolute idealism. For the human being is not simply pure thought: he is by no means only a philosopher, even if he is a philosopher at all. And for the religious consciousness Christian theology is the perfect expression of the truth. This is why preachers, who are addressing themselves to the religious consciousness, have no business to tamper with Christian dogmas. For Christianity is the revealed religion, in the sense that it is the perfect self-manifestation of God to the religious consciousness.

It is not my intention to imply that Hegel's attitude is consistent with the standpoint of Christian orthodoxy. For I am convinced that it is not. I agree with McTaggart, who was not himself a Christian believer, when he points out that as an ally of Christianity Hegelianism is 'an enemy in disguise—the least evident but the most dangerous. The doctrines which have been protected from external refutation are found to be transforming themselves till they are on the point of melting away. . . .'[2] Thus Hegel gives philosophical proofs of such doctrines as the Trinity, the Fall and the Incarnation. But when he has finished with stating them in the form of pure thought, they are obviously something very different from the doctrines which the Church believes to be the correct statement of the truth in human language. In other words, Hegel makes speculative philosophy the final arbiter of the inner meaning of Christian revelation. Absolute idealism is presented as esoteric Christianity and Christianity as exoteric Hegelianism; and the mystery insisted on by theology is subordinated to a philosophical clarification which amounts in fact to a transformation.

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[1] *W*, xv, p. 35; *SS*, I, p. 17.

[2] *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology* (1901 edition), p. 250.

At the same time there is, in my opinion at least, no cogent reason for accusing Hegel of personal insincerity. I do not believe that when he posed as a champion of orthodoxy he had his tongue in his cheek. As was noted in the introductory chapter, Benedetto Croce argued that there could be no valid reason for retaining an inferior form of thought, namely religion, along with science, art and philosophy. If philosophy really gives the inner meaning of religious beliefs, then religion must give place to philosophy. That is to say, the two cannot coexist in the same mind. A man may think in the categories of religion or he may think in the categories of philosophy. But he cannot think in both. But while Croce's comments are by no means without point, it does not necessarily follow that they represent Hegel's real, though concealed, opinion. After all, Croce, though not a believing Catholic, was accustomed to the idea of ecclesiastical authority as the final arbiter of religious truth and its statement. And it is perfectly obvious that Hegel's theory of the relation of speculative philosophy to Christianity is incompatible with *this* idea. But Hegel was a Lutheran. And though the superiority of speculative philosophy to faith is very far from being a Lutheran idea, it was much easier for him than it would have been for Croce to be sincerely convinced that his view of the relation between the absolute philosophy and the absolute religion was acceptable from the Christian standpoint. He doubtless thought of himself as continuing the work of the theologians who in their accounts of the Christian dogmas endeavoured to avoid the crudely imaginative forms in which these dogmas were pictured by the theologically uneducated religious consciousness.

5. But the absolute philosophy is no more the only manifestation of the speculative reason than is the absolute religion the only manifestation of the religious consciousness. Just as art and religion have their history, so has philosophy. And this history is a dialectical process. From one point of view it is the process by

which infinite Thought comes to think itself explicitly, moving from one inadequate conception of itself to another and then uniting them in a higher unity. From another point of view it is the process by which the human mind moves dialectically towards an adequate conception of the ultimate reality, the Absolute. But these two points of view represent simply different aspects of one process. For Spirit, self-thinking Thought, becomes explicit in and through the reflection of the human mind on the level of absolute knowledge.

This means, of course, that the different one-sided and inadequate concepts of reality which emerge at different stages of the history of philosophy are taken up and preserved in the succeeding higher stages. 'The last philosophy is the result of all earlier ones: nothing is lost, all principles are preserved.'[1] 'The general result of the history of philosophy is this. First, throughout all time there has been only one philosophy, the contemporary differences of which represent the necessary aspects of the one principle. Secondly, the succession of philosophical systems is no matter of chance but exhibits the necessary succession of stages in the development of this science. Thirdly, the final philosophy of a period is the result of this development and is truth in the highest form which the self-consciousness of Spirit affords. The final philosophy, therefore, contains the ones which went before; it embraces in itself all their stages; it is the product and result of all the philosophies which preceded it.'[2]

Now, if the history of philosophy is the development of the divine self-knowledge, of absolute self-consciousness, the successive stages in this history will tend to correspond with the successive phases or moments in the Notion or logical Idea. We find, therefore, that Hegel represents Parmenides as the first genuine philosopher, the man who apprehended the Absolute as Being, while Heraclitus affirms the Absolute as Becoming. If this is taken as a statement of chronological sequence, it is open to criticism. But it illustrates Hegel's general procedure. Like Aristotle before him, he looks on his predecessors as bringing to light aspects of truth which are preserved, elevated and integrated with complementary aspects in his own system. Needless to say, the explicit and adequate recognition of the category of Spirit is reserved for German idealism.

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[1] *W*, XIX, p. 685; *HS*, III, p. 546. In references to Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy HS* signifies the English translation by E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simson.

[2] *W*, XIX, pp. 690–1; *HS*, III, pp. 552–3.

And the philosophies of Fichte and Schelling are treated as moments in the development of absolute idealism.

Hegel's history of philosophy is thus an integral part of his system. It is not simply an account of what philosophers have held, of the factors which influenced their thought and led them to think in the ways that they did, and of their influence on their successors and perhaps on society at large. It is a sustained attempt to exhibit a necessary dialectical advance, a teleological development; in the data of the history of philosophy. And this enterprise is obviously carried out in the light of a general philosophy. It is the work of a philosopher looking back on the past from the vantage-point of a system which he believes to be the highest expression of the truth up to date and seeing this system as the culmination of a process of reflection which, in spite of all contingent elements, has been in its essential outlines a necessary movement of Thought coming to think itself. Hegel's history of philosophy is thus a philosophy of the history of philosophy. If it is objected that the selection of the essential elements in a given system is governed by philosophical preconceptions or principles, Hegel can, of course, answer that any history of philosophy worthy of the name necessarily involves not only interpretation but also a separation of the essential from the unessential in the light of beliefs about what is philosophically important and what is not. But such an answer, though reasonable enough, would not be adequate in the context. For just as Hegel approaches the philosophy of history with the belief that the history of mankind is a rational teleological process, so does he approach the history of philosophy with the conviction that this history is 'the temple of self-conscious reason',[1] the dialectically continuous and progressive determination of the Idea, 'a logical progress impelled by an inherent necessity',[2] the one true philosophy developing itself in time, the dynamic process of self-thinking Thought.

Does this conception of the history of philosophy imply the conclusion that for Hegel his philosophy is the final system, the system to end all systems? He has sometimes been represented as thinking precisely this. But it seems to me that this picture is a caricature. He does indeed depict German idealism in general, and his own system in particular, as the highest stage yet reached in the historical development of philosophy. In view of his interpretation of the history of philosophy he cannot do anything else. And

[1] *W*, XVII, p. 65; *HS*, I, p. 35.

[2] *W*, XVII, p. 66; *HS*, I, p. 36.

he makes remarks which lend themselves for use by those who wish to ascribe to him the absurd idea that with Hegelianism philosophy comes to an end. 'A new epoch has arisen in the world. It seems that the World-Spirit has now succeeded in freeing itself from all alien objective existence and in apprehending itself at last as absolute Spirit. . . . The strife between the finite self-consciousness and the absolute self-consciousness, which seemed to finite self-consciousness to lie outside it, now ceases. Finite self-consciousness has ceased to be finite, and thereby absolute self-consciousness on the other hand has attained the reality which it formerly lacked.'[1] But though this passage clearly states that absolute idealism is the culmination of all preceding philosophy, Hegel goes on to speak of 'the whole history of the World in general and of the history of philosophy in particular up to the present'.[2] And is it probable that a man who stated roundly that 'philosophy is *its own time expressed in thoughts*'[3] and that it is just as foolish to suppose that a philosophy can transcend its contemporary world as it is to suppose that an individual can overleap his own time seriously thought that philosophy had come to an end with himself? Obviously, on Hegel's principles subsequent philosophy would have to incorporate absolute idealism, even if his system revealed itself as a one-sided moment in a higher synthesis. But to say this is not the same as to deny that there could be or would be any subsequent philosophy.

There is, however, this point. If Christianity is the absolute religion, Hegelianism, as esoteric Christianity, must be the absolute philosophy. And if we take the word 'absolute' in this context as meaning truth in the highest form which it has yet attained rather than as meaning the final or terminal statement of the truth, Christianity is no more the final religion than is Hegelianism the final philosophy. On Hegel's own principles Christianity and absolute idealism stand or fall together. And if we wish to say that Christianity cannot be surpassed whereas Hegelianism can, we cannot at the same time accept Hegel's account of the relation between the two.

6. In view of the comprehensive character of Hegel's system and of the commanding position which he came to occupy in the German philosophical world it is not surprising that his influence was felt in a variety of fields. As one would expect in the case of a man whose thought centred round the Absolute and who appeared,

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[1] *W*, XIX, pp. 689–90; *HS*, III, p. 551.

[2] *W*, XIX, p. 690; *HS*, III, p. 551.

[3] *W*, VII, p. 35; *R*, preface.

to the not too critical or too orthodox observer, to have provided a rational justification of Christianity in terms of the most up-to-date philosophy, his sphere of influence included the theological field. For example, Karl Daub (1765–1836), professor of theology at Heidelberg, abandoned the ideas of Schelling and endeavoured to use the dialectical method of Hegel in the service of Protestant theology. Another eminent theologian who was converted or seduced, according as one chooses to regard the matter, by the attraction of Hegel was Philipp Konrad Marheineke (1780–1846) who became a professor of theology at Berlin and who helped to edit the first general edition of Hegel's works. In his posthumously published *System of Christian Dogmatics* Marheineke attempted to translate Hegelianism into the terms of Christian theology and at the same time to interpret the content of Christian dogma in the Hegelian manner. For instance, he represented the Absolute as attaining full consciousness of itself in the Church, which was for him the concrete actualization of Spirit, this Spirit being interpreted as the Third Person of the Trinity.

The history of ethical systems was studied from an Hegelian point of view by Leopold von Henning (1791–1866) who followed Hegel's courses at Berlin and became one of his most fervent admirers. In the field of law Hegel's influence was considerable. Prominent among his disciples was the celebrated jurist Eduard Gans (1798–1839) who obtained a chair of law at Berlin and published a well-known work on the right of inheritance.[1] In the field of aesthetics Heinrich Theodor Rötscher (1803–71) may be mentioned as one of those who derived inspiration from Hegel. In the history of philosophy Hegel's influence was felt by such eminent historians as Johann Eduard Erdmann (1805–92), Eduard Zeller (1814–1908) and Kuno Fischer (1824–1907). Whatever one may think of absolute idealism, one cannot deny Hegel's stimulating effect on scholars in a variety of fields.

To return to the theological field. We have noted that the Hegelian system left room for dispute about its precise relation to Christian theism. And in point of fact controversy arose on this topic even before Hegel's death, though this event naturally gave it fresh impetus. Some writers, who are generally classified as belonging to the Hegelian right wing, maintained that absolute idealism could be legitimately interpreted in a sense compatible with Christianity. While Hegel was still alive Karl Friedrich

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[1] *Das Erbrecht in weltgeschichtlicher Entwicklung* (1824–35).

Göschel (1784–1861) tried to interpret the philosopher's theory of the relation between the form of thought peculiar to the religious consciousness and pure thought or knowledge in such a way as not to imply that religion is inferior to philosophy. And this defence of Hegel met with a warm response from the philosopher. After Hegel's death Göschel published writings designed to show that Hegelianism was compatible with the doctrines of a personal God and of personal immortality. Mention can also be made of Karl Ludwig Michelet (1801–93), a Berlin professor, who identified the Hegelian triad with the Persons of the Trinity (as indeed Hegel himself had done) and tried to show that there was no incompatibility between Hegelianism and Christian theology.

The left wing was represented, for example, by David Friedrich Strauss (1808–74), author of the celebrated *Life of Jesus* (1835). According to Strauss the Gospel stories were myths, and he explicitly connected this view with Hegel's theory of *Vorstellung* and represented his own dissolution of historic Christianity as a genuine development of Hegel's thought. He thus provided valuable ammunition for the Christian writers who refused to accept the contention of the right-wing Hegelians that Hegelianism and Christianity were compatible.

The centre of the Hegelian movement can be represented by the name of Johann Karl Friedrich Rosenkranz (1805–79), biographer of Hegel and a professor at Königsberg. As a pupil of both Schleiermacher and Hegel he tried to mediate between them in his development of the Hegelian system. In his *Encyclopaedia of the Theological Sciences* (1831) he distinguished between speculative, historical and practical theology. Speculative theology exhibits the absolute religion, Christianity, in an *a priori* form. Historical theology deals with the temporal objectification of this Idea or concept of the absolute religion. In his evaluation of historic Christianity Rosenkranz was more restrained than Strauss, who looked on him as belonging to the centre of the Hegelian school. Later on Rosenkranz attempted to develop Hegel's logic, though his efforts in this direction were not much appreciated by other Hegelians.

We can say, therefore, that the split between right- and left-wing Hegelians concerned first of all the interpretation, evaluation and development of Hegel's position in regard to religious and theological problems. The right wing interpreted Hegel in a sense more or less compatible with Christianity, which meant that God had to be represented as a personal, self-conscious Being in his own right, so to speak. The left wing maintained a pantheistic interpretation and denied personal immortality.

The left wing, however, soon went beyond pantheism to naturalism and atheism. And at the hands of Marx and Engels the Hegelian theories of society and history were revolutionized. The left wing is thus of much greater historical importance than the right wing. But the radical thinkers of the former group must be accorded separate treatment and not treated as disciples of Hegel, who would scarcely have recognized them as such.

Under the heading of the influence of Hegel we might refer, of course, to the British idealism of the second half of the nineteenth century and of the first two decades of the present century, to Italian philosophers such as Benedetto Croce (1866–1952) and Giovanni Gentile (1875–1944) and to recent French works on Hegel, not to mention other examples of the philosopher's long-term influence. But these topics would take us outside the scope of the present volume. Instead we can turn to consideration of the reaction against metaphysical idealism and of the emergence of other lines of thought in the German philosophical world of the nineteenth century.

PART II

THE REACTION AGAINST METAPHYSICAL IDEALISM

CHAPTER XII

EARLIER OPPONENTS AND CRITICS

Fries and his disciples—The realism of Herbart—Beneke and psychology as the fundamental science—The logic of Bolzano—Weisse and I. H. Fichte as critics of Hegel.

1. The development of idealism at the hands of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel was regarded as a great mistake by Jakob Friedrich Fries (1773–1843). In his view the proper and profitable task for philosophy was to carry on the work of Kant without turning the Kantian philosophy into a system of metaphysics. True, Fries himself made use of the word 'metaphysics', and in 1824 he published a *System of Metaphysics* (*System der Metaphysik*). But this word meant for him a critique of human knowledge, not a science of the Absolute. To this extent, therefore, he walked in the footsteps of Kant. Yet at the same time he turned Kant's transcendental critique of knowledge into a psychological investigation, a process of psychological self-observation. Although, therefore, Fries starts with Kant and tries to correct and develop his position, the fact that this correction takes the form of psychologizing the Kantian critique results in a certain measure of affinity with the attitude of Locke. For according to Fries we must investigate the nature and laws and scope of knowledge before we can tackle problems about the object of knowledge. And the method of pursuing this investigation is empirical observation.

Fries did not by any means confine his activities to the theory of knowledge. In 1803 he published a *Philosophical Theory of Right* (*Philosophische Rechtslehre*) and in 1818 an *Ethics* (*Ethik*). His political ideas were liberal, and in 1819 he was deprived of his chair at Jena. Some years later, however, he was nominated to a chair of mathematics and physics in the same university. He had already published some works on natural philosophy and physics, and he tried to unite the mathematical physics of Newton with the Kantian philosophy as he interpreted it.

In 1832 Fries published a *Handbook of the Philosophy of Religion and of Philosophical Aesthetics* (*Handbuch der Religionsphilosophie und der philosophischen Aesthetik*). As a boy he had been educated in the traditions of pietism, and he maintained to the end an insistence on religious feeling and interior piety. On the one hand we have mathematical and scientific knowledge; on the other hand we have the presage of religious and aesthetic feeling, its witness to the Being which lies behind the sphere of phenomena. Practical or moral faith relates us to noumenal reality, but religious and aesthetic feeling gives us a further assurance that the reality behind phenomena is that which moral faith conceives it to be. Fries thus added to Kant's doctrine of practical faith an insistence on the value of religious emotion.

Fries was not without influence. Prominent among his disciples was E. F. Apelt (1812–59), who defended his master's psychological interpretation of Kant and insisted on the need for a close union between philosophy and science.[1] And it is worth mentioning that the celebrated philosopher of religion Rudolf Otto (1869–1937) was influenced by Fries's insistence on the fundamental importance of feeling in religion, though it would be quite incorrect to call Otto a disciple of Fries.

In the early part of the present century the so-called Neo-Friesian School was founded by Leonard Nelson (1882–1927).

2. Among the contemporary opponents of post-Kantian idealism the name of Fries is much less widely known than that of Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841). In 1809 Herbart was nominated to the chair at Königsberg which had once been held by Kant, and he occupied it until 1833 when he went to Göttingen. While in Switzerland (1797–1800) he had known Pestalozzi, and he took a great interest in and wrote on educational subjects. Among his main philosophical works are his *Introduction to Philosophy* (*Einleitung in die Philosophie*, 1813), *Psychology as a Science* (*Psychologie als Wissenschaft*, 1824–5) and *General Metaphysics* (*Allgemeine Metaphysik*, 1828–9).

Herbart once remarked that he was a Kantian of the year 1828. He meant, of course, that though he paid tribute to the work of the great thinker whose chair he then occupied, a good deal of water had flowed under the bridge in the meantime, and that he did not simply accept the Kantian system as it came from the hands of the master. Indeed, Herbart cannot be called a Kantian in any ordinary sense. To be sure, he rejected post-Kantian idealism. But to regard post-Kantian idealism as a perversion of the thought of Kant is not necessarily the same as to be a Kantian. And in some respects Herbart's affinities are with the pre-Kantian philosophers rather than with Kant himself.

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[1] Modern logicians rightly look with disfavour on the psychologizing of logic. But the tendency to do this was connected, however mistakenly, with the notion that it was the expression of a scientific attitude.

When considered under one aspect at least, Herbart's account of philosophy has an extremely modern flavour. For he describes philosophy as the elaboration (*Bearbeitung*) of concepts. An obvious objection to this description is that no indication is given of the peculiar subject-matter of philosophy. Any science might be described in this way. But it is Herbart's contention that philosophy does not possess a peculiar subject-matter of its own alongside the subject-matters of the various particular sciences. Or, more accurately, we cannot say from the start that philosophy has a particular field of reality as its peculiar subject-matter. We must first describe it as the activity of elaborating and clarifying concepts.

It is in the course of this activity that the different branches of philosophy arise. For example, if we concern ourselves with working out the theory of distinct concepts and their combination and the principles of the clarification of concepts, we are engaged in logic. If, however, we apply logical principles to the clarification of concepts furnished by experience, we are engaged in metaphysics.

In Herbart's opinion this work of clarification is essential. For when the fundamental concepts derived from experience are submitted to logical analysis, they show themselves to be riddled with contradictions. Take, for example, the concept of a thing. If it can properly be called a thing, it must be one, a unity. But if we try to describe it, it is resolved into a plurality of qualities. It is one and many, one and not-one, at the same time. We are thus faced with a contradiction, and we cannot rest content with it. It is not, however, a question of simply rejecting the concept derived from experience. For if we sever the link between thought and experience, we cut ourselves off from reality. What is required is a clarification and elaboration of the concept in such a way that the contradiction disappears.

Herbart assumes, therefore, that the principle of non-contradiction is fundamental. He will have nothing to do with the dialectical logic of Hegel which in his opinion blurs this principle. Reality must be without contradiction. That is to say, it must be of such a kind that a true world-view or account of the world would be a harmonious system of mutually consistent and intrinsically non-contradictory concepts. Raw experience, so to speak, does not present us with such a world-view. It belongs to philosophy to construct it by clarifying, modifying and rendering consistent the concepts derived from experience and used in the sciences.

A better way of expressing Herbart's point of view would be to say that reality is of such a kind that a complete account of it would take the form of a comprehensive system of mutually consistent non-contradictory propositions. It is indeed arguable that Hegel himself had a similar ideal of truth, and that he should not be interpreted as having denied the principle of non-contradiction. After all, Herbart too allows contradictions to emerge from our ordinary ways of regarding things and then tries to resolve them. But Hegel speaks as though contradictions were a feature of the process of reality itself, of the life of the Absolute, whereas for Herbart contradictions emerge only from our inadequate ways of conceiving reality: they are not a feature of reality itself. Hence Herbart's view bears more resemblance to that of F. H. Bradley than it does to that of Hegel. And in point of fact Bradley was considerably influenced by Herbart.[1]

Now, let us assume that our ordinary view of things contains or gives rise to contradictions. We regard a rose as one thing and a lump of sugar as another thing. Each seems to be a unity. But when we try to describe them, each dissolves into a plurality of qualities. The rose is red, fragrant and soft; the sugar is white, sweet and hard. In each case we attribute the qualities to a uniting substance or thing. But what is it? If we try to say anything about it, the unity dissolves once more into a plurality. Or, if we say that it underlies the qualities, it seems to be a different thing. We can no longer say that the rose *is* red, fragrant and soft.

According to Herbart, the solution of this problem lies in postulating a plurality of simple and unchangeable entities or substances which he calls 'reals' (*Realen*). They enter into different relations with one another, and phenomenal qualities and changes correspond to these relations. For instance, the lump of sugar, which appears to us as a unit, is composed of a plurality of unextended and changeless entities. And the various phenomenal qualities of the sugar correspond to the relations in which these entities stand to one another, while the phenomenal changes in the sugar correspond to the changing relations between the entities. We are thus able to harmonize unity and multiplicity, constancy and change.

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[1] I am speaking, of course, simply of Bradley's view that our ordinary ways of conceiving and describing things give rise to contradictions, whereas reality itself is a harmonious whole without any contradiction. On the issue between pluralism and monism there is a great difference between Herbart and the British absolute idealist.

After having proposed, therefore, a view of philosophy which has been recently fashionable in this country, namely that philosophy consists in the clarification of concepts or in conceptual analysis, Herbart goes on to raise a problem to which Bradley subsequently gave a good deal of attention in *Appearance and Reality*. But whereas Bradley, in accordance with the spirit of post-Kantian idealism, finds the solution in terms of a One which 'appears' as a multiplicity of things, Herbart has recourse to a pluralistic metaphysics which calls to mind the atoms of Democritus and the monads of Leibniz. His 'reals' are indeed different from Democritus's atoms in that they are said to possess qualities, though these, being metaphenomenal, are unknowable. Further, though each 'real' is simply and essentially unchanging, they do not seem to be, like Leibniz's monads, 'windowless'. For each 'real' is said to preserve its self-identity in the face of disturbances (*Störungen*) from other such entities, so that there appears to be some reciprocal influence. At the same time Herbart's theory obviously has affinity with pre-Kantian metaphysics.

The theory of disturbances, each of which calls forth a self-preservative reaction on the part of the disturbed entity, gives rise to some difficulty. For it is not easy to reconcile it with the idea that space, time and causal interaction are phenomenal. To be sure, Herbart assumes that phenomenal occurrences are grounded on and explicable by the behaviour of the 'reals'. And the world of the 'reals' is not taken to be the static reality of Parmenides. But it seems arguable that so far as the postulated relations between 'reals' are thought at all, they are inevitably brought into the phenomenal sphere. For they can hardly be thought except in terms of relations which are said to be phenomenal.

In any case it is on this metaphysical basis that Herbart constructs his psychology. The soul is a simple and unextended substance or 'real'. It is not, however, to be identified with the pure subject or ego of consciousness. The soul, considered simply as such, is not conscious at all. Nor is it furnished with any Kantian apparatus of *a priori* forms and categories. All psychical activities are secondary and derived. That is to say, the soul strives to preserve itself in face of disturbances occasioned by other 'reals', and the self-preservative reactions are expressed in sensations and ideas. And mental life is constituted by the relations and interactions between sensations and ideas. The idea of distinct faculties can be thrown overboard. For instance, an idea which meets with hindrance can be called a desire, while an idea which is accompanied by a supposition of success can be called a volition. There is no need to postulate appetitive and volitional faculties. The relevant psychical phenomena can be explained in terms of ideas which are themselves explicable in terms of stimuli directly or indirectly caused by the soul's self-preservative reactions to disturbances.

An interesting feature of Herbart's psychology is his theory of the subconscious. Ideas may be associated with one another, but they may also be mutually opposed. In this case a state of tension is set up, and some idea or ideas are forced below the level of consciousness. They then turn into impulses, though they can return to consciousness as ideas. We may also note Herbart's insistence not only that on the conscious level consciousness of objects other than the self precedes self-consciousness but also that self-consciousness is always empirical self-consciousness, consciousness of the me-object. There are ego-ideas, but there is no such thing as pure self-consciousness.

Though, however, Herbart's theory of the subconscious is not without historical importance, the salient feature of his psychology is perhaps his attempt to make it a science by mathematicizing it. Thus he assumes that ideas have varying degrees of intensity, and that the relations between them can be expressed in mathematical formulas. When, for example, an idea has been inhibited and forced below the level of consciousness, its return to consciousness will involve the return, according to a mathematically determinable sequence, of associated ideas. And if we possessed sufficient empirical evidence, we could predict the cause of such events. In principle at any rate psychology is capable of being turned into an exact science, the statics and dynamics of the mental life of presentations.

Psychology, therefore, like metaphysics, is concerned with the real. Aesthetics and ethics are concerned with values. The more fundamental of these two is aesthetics. For the ethical judgment is a subdivision of the aesthetic judgment, the judgment of taste which expresses approval or disapproval. But this is not to say that the ethical judgment has no objective reference. For approval and disapproval are grounded in certain relations, and in the case of ethics these are relations of the will, of which Herbart discovers five. In the first place experience shows that we express approval of the relation in which the will is in agreement with a person's inner conviction. That is to say, we express approval in accordance with the ideal of inner freedom.[1] Secondly our approval is given to a relation of harmony between the different tendencies or strivings of the individual will. And our approval is then elicited in accordance with the ideal of perfection. Thirdly we approve the relation in which one will takes as its object the satisfaction of another will. And here it is the ideal of benevolence which informs our judgment. Fourthly approval or disapproval is elicited in accordance with the idea of justice. We disapprove a relation of conflict or disharmony between several wills, while we approve a relation in which each will allows the others to limit it. Fifthly we disapprove a relation in which deliberate good and evil acts are unrecompensed. Here the idea of retribution is operative.

It is in the light of this theory of values that Herbart criticizes the Kantian ethics. We cannot take the categorical imperative as an ultimate moral fact. For we can always ask whence the practical reason or will derives its authority. Behind a command and obedience to it there must be something which warrants respect for the command. And this is found in the recognition of values, the morally beautiful and pleasing.

We cannot enter here into Herbart's educational theory. But it is worth noting that it involves a combination of his ethics with his psychology. Ethics, with its theory of values, provides the end or aim of education, namely character-development. The goal of the moral life is the perfect conformity of the will with moral ideals or values. And this is virtue. But to estimate how this aim is to be pedagogically attained we have to take account of psychology and utilize its laws and principles. The main end of education is moral, but the educator has to build upon the two masses of presentations derived from experience of the world and from social intercourse and environment. The first basis has to be developed into knowledge, the second into benevolence towards and sympathy with others.

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[1] Given the psychology outlined above, Herbart does not accept the theory of liberty of indifference. Indeed, he regards the theory as incompatible with the idea of a stable and firm character, the development of which is one of the principal aims of education. But he recognizes, of course, a psychological difference between choosing in accordance with conviction or conscience and being led by impulse or desire to act in a manner contrary to one's conscience.

Herbart's philosophy clearly lacked the romantic appeal of the great idealist systems. In one sense it was out of date. That is to say, it looked back behind Kant, and its author was out of sympathy with the contemporary prevailing movement in Germany. But in another sense it was very much up to date. For it demanded a closer integration of philosophy and science and looked forward to some of the systems which followed the collapse of idealism and demanded precisely this integration. The most significant features of Herbart's philosophy were probably his psychology and his educational theory. In the second field he helped to provide a theoretical background for the practical ideas of Pestalozzi. In the field of psychology he exercised a stimulative influence. But in view of his idea of psychology as the mechanics of the mental life of sensations and ideas it is as well to remind oneself that he was no materialist. Matter was for him phenomenal. Further, he accepted a form of the argument from design, pointing to a divine supersensible Being.

3. The importance of psychology was even more strongly emphasized by Friedrich Eduard Beneke (1798–1854). Beneke was considerably influenced by the writings of Herbart, but he was certainly not a disciple. He was also influenced by Fries, but above all he derived inspiration from British thought and had a high regard for Locke. He was quite out of sympathy with the dominant idealist philosophy and encountered great difficulties in his academic career. In the end he appears to have committed suicide, an event which elicited some remarks in thoroughly bad taste from Arthur Schopenhauer.

In Beneke's view psychology is the fundamental science and the basis of philosophy. It should not be grounded, as with Herbart, on metaphysics. On the contrary, it is or ought to be grounded on interior experience which reveals to us the fundamental psychical processes. Mathematics is no help and is not required. Beneke was indeed influenced by the associationist psychology, but he did not share Herbart's notion of turning psychology into an exact science by mathematicizing it. He looked rather to the introspective method of the English empiricists.

As for the soul, it is, as Locke rightly claimed, devoid of innate ideas. There are also, as Herbart saw, no distinct faculties in the traditional sense. But we can discover a number of predispositions or impulses which can be called faculties if we wish to do so. And the unity of the self results from the harmonization of these impulses. Further, pedagogy and ethics, which are both applied psychology, show how the impulses and predispositions are to be developed and harmonized in view of a hierarchy of goods or values determined by a consideration of actions and their effects.

Beneke's philosophy is doubtless very small beer compared with the grandiose systems of German idealism. At the same time we can see perhaps in the emphasis which he lays upon impulses as the fundamental elements in the psychical life and in his tendency to stress the practical rather than the theoretical some affinity with the shift towards voluntarism which was given large-scale expression in the metaphysical system of Schopenhauer, the very man who made caustic remarks about Beneke's suicide. For the matter of that, Fichte had already emphasized the fundamental role of impulse and drive.

4. Chronological reasons justify the inclusion in this chapter of some brief reference to Bernhard Bolzano (1781–1848), even if his rediscovery as a forerunner in certain respects of modern logical developments tends to make one think of him as a more recent writer than he actually was.

Bolzano was born in Prague of an Italian father and German mother. In 1805 he was ordained priest and soon afterwards he was appointed to the chair of philosophy of religion in the University of Prague. But at the end of 1819 he was deprived of his post, not, as has sometimes been stated, by his ecclesiastical superiors, but by order of the Emperor in Vienna. The imperial decree made special mention of Bolzano's objectionable doctrines on war, social rank and civic disobedience. In point of fact Bolzano had told the students that war would one day be regarded with the same abhorrence as duelling, that social differences would in time be reduced to proper limits, and that obedience to the civil power was limited by the moral conscience and by the norms of the legitimate exercise of sovereignty. And though these views may have been objectionable in the eyes of the Holy Roman Emperor, they were far from being theologically heretical. Indeed, the ecclesiastical authorities at Prague, when instructed by Vienna to investigate the case of Bolzano, declared that he was an orthodox Catholic. However, Bolzano had to abandon teaching and he devoted himself to a life of study and writing, though he had some difficulties about publication, at any rate in the Austrian dominions.

In 1827 Bolzano published anonymously a work, commonly called *Athanasia*, on the grounds of belief in the immortality of the soul. His chief work, *Theory of Science: an Essay towards a Detailed and for the most part New Exposition of Logic* (*Wissenschaftslehre: Versuch einer ausführlichen und grösstenteils neuen Darstellung der Logik*) appeared in four volumes in 1837. The *Paradoxes of the Infinite* (*Paradoxen des Unendlichen*) was published posthumously in 1851. In addition he wrote a considerable number of papers on logical, mathematical, physical, aesthetic and political themes, many of them for the Bohemian Society of the Sciences of which he was an active member.

In a short account which he wrote of his intellectual development Bolzano remarked that at no time had he felt inclined to recognize any given philosophical system as the one true philosophy. Referring to Kant, whose first *Critique* he had begun to study in his eighteenth year, he admitted that he found much to approve of in the critical philosophy. At the same time he found much to disagree with and much that was lacking. For example, while he welcomed the distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions, he could not agree with Kant's explanation of the distinction. Nor could he accept the view of mathematical propositions as synthetic propositions based on *a priori* intuitions. For he had himself succeeded in deducing some geometrical truths by analysis of concepts. Mathematics, he thought, is purely conceptual in character, and it should be constructed by a rigorous process of analysis.

This insistence on conceptual analysis and on logical rigour was indeed characteristic of Bolzano. Not only did he find fault with leading philosophers for failing to define their terms,[1] for slovenly conceptual analysis and for lack of consistency in their use of terms, but he also made it clear that in his opinion nobody could be a good philosopher unless he was a good mathematician. Obviously, he was not disposed to regard with a particularly kindly eye the goings-on of the metaphysical idealists.

Further, the tendency of Bolzano's mind was to de-psychologize logic, to formalize it and to set it free from any intrinsic connection with the subject or ego or productive imagination or any other subjective factor. And this tendency shows itself in his theory of the proposition in itself (*der Satz an sich*). A proposition in itself is defined as 'a statement that something is or is not, irrespective of whether this statement is true or false, irrespective of whether anyone has ever formulated it in words, and even irrespective of whether it has ever been present in any mind as a thought'.[1] The idea of propositions in themselves may give rise to some difficulties; but it is clear that for Bolzano the primary element in a proposition is its objective content or meaning. Its being thought or posited by a subject is a secondary factor, irrelevant to the objective meaning.

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[1] For instance, he blames Kant for introducing the term 'experience' at the beginning of the first *Critique* without any adequate and unambiguous explanation of the meaning which he attaches to it.

Bolzano also speaks of the presentation in itself (*die Vorstellung an sich*). This is described as whatever can be a component part in a proposition but which does not by itself constitute a proposition. Hence no presentation or concept can be in itself true or false. For truth and falsity are predicated only of propositions, not of their component parts taken singly. But the meaning or content of a presentation in itself can be analysed; and this can be done without reference to any subject. Logically speaking, the subject is irrelevant. For example, if idea X is conceived by A, B and C, there are three ideas from the psychological point of view but only one from the point of view of the logical analyst who is interested simply in the content of the concept. It seems to me disputable whether the range of meaning of a concept can be analysed in abstraction from the propositions in which it is employed. For meaning is determined by use. But in any case Bolzano's concern with de-psychologizing logic is clear enough.

In the third place Bolzano speaks of the judgment in itself (*das Urteil an sich*). Every judgment expresses and affirms a proposition.

Now, if there are propositions in themselves, there must also be truths in themselves (*Wahrheiten an sich*), namely those propositions which are in fact true. Their truth does not, however, depend in any way on their being expressed and affirmed in judgments by thinking subjects. And this holds good not only of finite subjects but also of God. Truths in themselves are not true because God posits them; God thinks them because they are true. Bolzano does not mean that it is false to say that God makes true factual propositions about the world to be true in the sense that God is creator and thus responsible for there being a world at all. He is looking at the matter from the logician's point of view and maintaining that the truth of a proposition does not depend on its being thought by a subject, whether finite or infinite. The truth of a mathematical proposition, for example, depends on the meanings of the terms, not on whether it is thought by a mathematician, human or divine.

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[1] *Theory of Science* (2nd edition, Leipzig, 1929), p. 77.

As a philosopher, Bolzano rejected Kant's condemnation of metaphysics and maintained that important truths about God and about the spirituality and immortality of the soul could be proved. In his general metaphysical outlook he was influenced by Leibniz. Bolzano did not indeed accept Leibniz's theory of 'windowless' monads; but he shared his conviction that every substance is an active being, its activity being expressed in some form of representation or, as Leibniz puts it, perception. But Bolzano's significance does not lie in his metaphysics but in his work as logician and mathematician. It was his status as a mathematician which first met with recognition, but in modern times tribute has been paid to him as a logician, notably by Edmund Husserl.

5. In the foregoing sections of this chapter we have been concerned with thinkers who stood apart from the movement of post-Kantian metaphysical idealism and followed other lines of thought. We can now consider briefly two philosophers who belonged to the idealist movement but who both developed a critical attitude towards absolute idealism.

(*a*) Christian Hermann Weisse (1801–66), who was a professor in the University of Leipzig, stood at one time fairly close to Hegel, though he considered that Hegel had exaggerated the role of logic, particularly by trying (according to Weisse's interpretation) to deduce reality from the abstract forms of Being. We require the idea of a personal creative God to make the system tenable.

In his development of a speculative theism Weisse was stimulated by the later religious philosophy of Schelling. And in the *Philosophical Problem of Today* (*Das philosophische Problem der Gegenwart*, 1842) he maintained that Hegel had developed in his logic the negative side of philosophy. The Hegelian dialectic provides us with the idea of the possible Godhead. The logical Absolute is not the real God, but it is the necessary logical foundation of his reality. Hegel, of course, might have agreed. For the logical Idea as such was not for him the existing divine Being. But what Weisse was concerned to defend was the idea of a personal and free God, whose existence cannot be deduced from the absolute Idea, though it presupposes the validity of the Idea.

That is to say, the divine Being, if there is one, must be self-thinking Thought, a personal and self-conscious Being. But that there is such a Being must be shown in some other way than by *a priori* logical deduction. Further, Weisse tried to show that God cannot be *a* Person, and that we must accept the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

(*b*) Weisse's criticism of Hegel seemed to be only half-hearted in the eyes of Immanuel Hermann Fichte (1796–1879), son of the famous idealist. The younger Fichte laid emphasis on the individual human personality, and he was strongly opposed to what he regarded as Hegel's tendency to merge the individual in the universal. In Hegelianism as he interpreted it the human person was presented as being no more than a transitory moment in the life of universal Spirit, whereas in his own view the development of personality was the end of creation and man was assured of personal immortality.

The thought of the younger Fichte passed through several stages, from a period when the influence of his father and of Kant was strong to his later concentration on a philosophical anthropology, accompanied by a marked interest in the preconscious aspects of man and in parapsychological phenomena. But the general framework of his philosophy was provided by a speculative theism in which he tried to combine idealist themes with theism and with an emphasis on the human personality. In his *Speculative Theology or General Doctrine of Religion* (*Die spekulative Theologie oder allgemeine Religionslehre*, 1846), which forms the third volume of his trilogy on speculative theism, God is represented as the supreme personal unity of the ideal and the real. The ideal aspect of God is his infinite self-consciousness, while the real aspect is formed by the monads which are the eternal thoughts of God. Creation signifies the act of endowing these monads with free will, with a life of their own. And the development of the human personality is a development of self-consciousness on a basis of preconscious or subconscious levels.

Obviously I. H. Fichte was strongly influenced by the idealist movement. One would hardly expect anything else. But he laid great emphasis on the personal nature of God and on the value and immortality of the human person. And it was in the name of this personalistic idealism that he attacked the Hegelian system in which, he was convinced, finite personality was offered up in sacrifice to the all-devouring Absolute.

CHAPTER XIII

SCHOPENHAUER (1)

Life and writings—Schopenhauer's doctorate dissertation—The world as Idea—The biological function of concepts and the possibility of metaphysics—The world as the manifestation of the Will to live—Metaphysical pessimism—Some critical comments.

1. A PHILOSOPHY'S ability to strike our imaginations by presenting an original and dramatic picture of the universe is obviously not an infallible criterion of its truth. But it certainly adds greatly to its interest. It is not, however, a quality which is conspicuously present in any of the philosophies considered in the last chapter. Herbart, it is true, produced a general system. But if one had to single out the dramatic visions of the world provided by nineteenth-century philosophers, it would hardly occur to anyone to mention Herbart. Hegel, yes; Marx, yes; Nietzsche, yes; but not, I think, Herbart. And still less the sober logician and mathematician Bolzano. In 1819, however, when Herbart was professor at Königsberg and Hegel had recently moved from Heidelberg to Berlin, there appeared the main work of Arthur Schopenhauer, which, though it excited little notice at the time, expressed an interpretation of the world and of human life that was both striking in itself and opposed in certain important respects to the interpretations offered by the great idealists. There are indeed certain family likenesses between the system of Schopenhauer and those of the idealists. But its author, who never minced words, professed an utter contempt for Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, especially the last named, and regarded himself as their great opponent and the purveyor of the real truth to mankind.

Arthur Schopenhauer was born at Danzig on February 22nd, 1788. His father, a wealthy merchant, hoped that his son would follow in his footsteps, and he allowed the boy to spend the years 1803-4 in visiting England, France and other countries on the understanding that at the conclusion of the tour he would take up work in a business house. The young Schopenhauer fulfilled his promise, but he had no relish for a business career and on his father's death in 1803 he obtained his mother's consent to his continuing his studies. In 1809 he entered the University of Göttingen to study medicine, but he changed to philosophy in his second year at the university. As he put it, life is a problem and he had decided to spend his time reflecting on it.

From Göttingen, where he became an admirer of Plato, Schopenhauer went in 1811 to Berlin to listen to the lectures of Fichte and Schleiermacher. The former's obscurity was repugnant to him, while the latter's assertion that nobody could be a real philosopher without being religious elicited the sarcastic comment that nobody who is religious takes to philosophy, as he has no need of it.

Schopenhauer regarded himself as a cosmopolitan, and at no time was he a German nationalist. Having, as he subsequently said, a detestation for all military affairs he prudently left Berlin when Prussia rose against Napoleon and devoted himself in peaceful retirement to the preparation of a dissertation *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* (*Ueber die vierfache Wurzel des Satzes vom zureichenden Grunde*) which won for him the doctorate at Jena and was published in 1813. Goethe congratulated the author, and in return Schopenhauer wrote his essay *On Vision and Colours* (*Ueber das Sehen und die Farben,* 1816) in which he more or less supported Goethe against Newton. But apart from the flattering reception accorded it by the great poet the *Fourfold Root* was practically unnoticed and unsold. The author, however, continued to look on it as an indispensable introduction to his philosophy, and something will be said about it in the next section.

From May 1814 until September 1818 Schopenhauer was living at Dresden. And it was there that he composed his main philosophical work, *The World as Will and Idea* (*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*). Having consigned the manuscript to the publishers Schopenhauer left for an art tour of Italy. The work appeared early in 1819, and the author had the consolation of finding that some philosophers, such as Herbart and Beneke, took notice of it. But this consolation was offset by the very small sale of a book which its author believed to contain the secret of the universe.

Encouraged, however, by the fact that his *magnum opus* had not passed entirely unnoticed and eager to expound the truth about the world by word of mouth as well as in writing, Schopenhauer betook himself to Berlin and started lecturing there in 1820. Though he held no university chair, he did not hesitate to choose for his lectures the hour at which Hegel was accustomed to lecture. The enterprise was a complete failure, and Schopenhauer left off lecturing after one semester. His doctrine was scarcely representative of the dominant *Zeitgeist* or spirit of the time.

After some wanderings Schopenhauer settled at Frankfurt on the Main in 1833. He read widely in European literature, consulted scientific books and journals, being quick to notice points which would serve as illustrations or empirical confirmation of his philosophical theories, visited the theatre and continued writing. In 1836 he published *On the Will in Nature* (*Ueber den Willen in der Natur*), and in 1839 he won a prize from the Scientific Society of Drontheim in Norway for an essay on freedom. He failed, however, to obtain a similar prize from the Royal Danish Academy of the Sciences for an essay on the foundations of ethics. One of the reasons given for the refusal of the prize was the writer's disrespectful references to leading philosophers. Schopenhauer had a great admiration for Kant, but he had the habit of referring to thinkers such as Fichte, Schelling and Hegel in terms which were, to put it mildly, unconventional, however amusing his expressions may be to later generations. The two essays were published together in 1841 under the title *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics* (*Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik*).

In 1844 Schopenhauer published a second edition of *The World as Will and Idea* with fifty supplementary chapters. In the preface to this edition he took the opportunity of making quite clear his views about German university professors of philosophy, just in case his attitude might not have been sufficiently indicated already. In 1851 he published a successful collection of essays entitled *Parerga and Paralipomena*, dealing with a wide variety of topics. Finally, in 1859 he published a third and augmented edition of his *magnum opus*.

After the failure of the Revolution of 1848, a revolution for which Schopenhauer had no sympathy at all, people were more ready to pay attention to a philosophy which emphasized the evil in the world and the vanity of life and preached a turning away from life to aesthetic contemplation and asceticism. And in the last decade of his life Schopenhauer became a famous man. Visitors came to see him from all sides and were entertained by his brilliant conversational powers. And though the German professors had not forgotten his sarcasm and abuse, lectures were delivered on his system in several universities, a sure sign that he had at last arrived. He died in September 1860.

Schopenhauer possessed a great breadth of culture, and he could write extremely well. A man of strong character and will, he was never afraid to express his opinions; and he had a gift of wit. He also possessed a considerable fund of practical sense and business acumen. But he was egoistic, vain, quarrelsome and, on occasion, even boorish; and he can hardly be said to have been remarkable for gifts of the heart. His relations with women were not exactly what one expects from a man who discoursed with eloquence on ethical, ascetical and mystical matters; and his literary executors suppressed some of his remarks about the female sex. Further, his theoretical sensitivity to the sufferings of humanity was not accompanied by any very practical efforts to alleviate it. But, as he sagely remarked, it is no more necessary for a philosopher to be a saint than for a saint to be a philosopher. And while as a man he can scarcely be considered as one of the most lovable of philosophers, his outstanding gifts as a writer are, I think, unquestionable.

2. In his doctorate dissertation Schopenhauer writes under the strong influence of Kant. The world of experience is the phenomenal world: it is object for a subject. And as such it is the world of our mental presentations (*Vorstellungen*). But no object is ever presented to us in a state of complete isolation and detachment. That is to say, all our presentations are related to or connected with other presentations in regular ways. And knowledge or science is precisely knowledge of these regular relations. '*Science*, that is to say, signifies a *system* of objects known',[1] not a mere aggregate of presentations. And there must be a sufficient reason for this relatedness or correctedness. Thus the general principle which governs our knowledge of objects or phenomena is the principle of sufficient reason.

As a preliminary enunciation of the principle of sufficient reason Schopenhauer chooses 'the Wolffian formulation as the most general: *Nihil est sine ratione cur potius sit quam non sit.* Nothing is without a reason [*Grund*, ground] why it is.'[2] But he goes on to discover four main types or classes of objects and four main types of relatedness or connection. And he draws the conclusion that there are four fundamental forms of the principle of sufficient reason and that the principle in its general enunciation is an abstraction from them. Hence the title of the dissertation, *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason.*

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[1] *W*, I, p. 4. References to Schopenhauer's *Works* are given according to volume and page of the edition by J. Frauenstädt (1877).

[2] *W*, I, p. 5.

The first class of objects or presentations is that of our intuitive, empirical and complete[1] presentations. This may not sound very enlightening; but in the language of ordinary realism the objects in question are the physical objects which are causally related in space and time and which form the subject-matter of natural sciences such as physics and chemistry. According to Schopenhauer, this spatial, temporal and causal relatedness is to be ascribed to an activity of the mind which organizes the matter of phenomena, elementary sensations, according to the *a priori* forms of sensibility, namely space and time, and the pure form of causality which is the only category of the understanding. He thus follows Kant, though the Kantian categories of the understanding are reduced to one. And our knowledge of these presentations, of phenomena or, in realist language, of physical objects, is said to be governed by 'the principle of sufficient reason of becoming, *principium rationis sufficientis fiendi*'.[2]

The second class of objects consists of abstract concepts, and the relevant form of relatedness is the judgment. But a judgment does not express knowledge unless it is true. And 'truth is the relation of a judgment to something different from it, which can be called its ground'.[3] The ground or sufficient reason can be of different types. For instance, a judgment can have as its ground another judgment; and when we consider the rules of implication and inference in a formal way, we are in the province of logic.[4] But in any case the judgment, the synthesis of concepts, is governed by 'the principle of sufficient reason of knowing, *principium rationis sufficientis cognoscendi*'.[5]

The third class of objects comprises 'the *a priori* intuitions of the forms of outer and inner sense, space and time'.[6] Space and time are of such a nature that each part is related in a certain way to another. And 'the law according to which the parts of space and time . . . determine one another I call the principle of sufficient reason of being, *principium rationis sufficientis essendi*'.[7] In time, for example, this is the law of irreversible succession; and 'on this connection of the parts of time rests all counting'.[8] Arithmetic, in other words, rests on the law governing the relations between the parts of time, while geometry rests on the law governing the respective positions of the parts of space. We can say, therefore, that Schopenhauer's third class of objects are mathematical objects, and that the relevant form of the principle of sufficient reason or ground, which governs our knowledge of geometrical and arithmetical relations, is the law, or rather laws, according to which the parts of space and time are respectively related to one another.

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[1] Complete in the sense that such presentations comprise both the form and the matter of phenomena. In other words, it is not a question here of abstract concepts.

[2] *W*, 1, p. 34.

[3] *W*, 1, p. 105.

[4] The implication of this is that Hegel's identification of logic with metaphysics, in the sense of the science of the Absolute, is absurd.

[5] *W*, 1, p. 105.

[6] *W*, 1, p. 130.

[7] *W*, 1, p. 131.

[8] *W*, 1, p. 133.

The fourth class of objects contains only one member, namely 'the subject of willing considered as object for the knowing subject'.[1] That is to say, the object is the self as source or subject of volition. And the principle governing our knowledge of the relation between this subject and its volitions or acts of will is 'the principle of the ground (or sufficient reason) of acting, *principium rationis sufficientis agendi*; more briefly, the *law of motivation*'.[2] The implication of this is character-determinism. A man acts for motives, and the motives for which he acts have their ground or sufficient reason in his character. We understand the relation between a man's deliberate actions and himself as subject of volition where we see these actions as issuing from the character of the subject. But this subject will be considered later.

Schopenhauer's terminology is based on that of Wolff. But his general position is based on Kant's. The world is phenomenal, object for a subject. And it is the sphere of necessity. True, Schopenhauer recognizes different types of necessity. In the sphere of volition, for example, moral necessity rules, which is to be distinguished both from physical and from logical necessity. But within the sphere of presentations as a whole, the relations between them are governed by certain laws, described as distinct roots of the principle of sufficient reason.

It is to be noted, however, that the principle of sufficient reason applies only within the phenomenal sphere, the sphere of objects for a subject. It does not apply to the noumenon, metaphenomenal reality, whatever this may be. Nor can it be legitimately applied to the phenomenal world considered as a totality. For it governs relations *between* phenomena. Hence no cosmological argument for God's existence can be valid, if it is an argument from the world as a whole to God as cause or as sufficient ground of phenomena. And here again Schopenhauer is in substantial agreement with Kant, though he certainly does not follow

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[1] *W*, I, p. 140.

[2] *W*, I, p. 145.

Kant in proposing belief in God as a matter of practical or moral faith.

3. The doctorate dissertation which we have just briefly considered appears arid and unexciting in comparison with Schopenhauer's great work *The World as Will and Idea.* Yet Schopenhauer was justified in regarding the former as an introduction to the latter. For his *magnum opus* begins with the statement that 'the world is my idea'.[1] That is to say, the whole visible world or, as Schopenhauer describes it, the sum total of experience is object for a subject: its reality consists in its appearing to or being perceived by a subject. As Berkeley said, the *esse* of sensible things is *percipi.*

The following point should be noticed. The German word translated here by 'idea' is *Vorstellung.* And in the section on Schopenhauer's doctorate dissertation I translated this word by 'presentation', which is preferable to 'idea'. But the title *The World as Will and Idea* has become so familiar that it seems pedantic to insist on a change. At the same time it is important to understand that Schopenhauer distinguishes between intuitive presentations (*intuitive Vorstellungen*) and abstract presentations (*abstrakte Vorstellungen*) or concepts. And when Schopenhauer says that the world is my idea, he is referring to intuitive presentations. He does not mean, for example, that a tree is identical with my abstract concept of a tree. He means that the tree as perceived by me exists only in relation to me as a percipient subject. Its reality is exhausted, so to speak, in its perceptibility. It is simply what I perceive or can perceive it to be.

Schopenhauer's position can be clarified in this way. Abstract concepts are possessed only by man: intuitive presentations are common to man and animals, at least to the higher animals. There is a phenomenal world not only for man but also for animals. For the conditions of its possibility are present also in the latter, these conditions being the *a priori* forms of sensibility, namely space and time, and the category of the understanding, namely causality. In Schopenhauer's view understanding (*Verstand*) is found also in animals. And the *principium rationis sufficientis fiendi* operates, for instance, in a dog, for which there exists a world of causally related things. But animals do not possess reason (*Vernuft*), the faculty of abstract concepts. A dog perceives things in space and time, and it can perceive concrete causal relations. But it does not follow that a dog can reflect abstractly about space, time or causality. To put the matter in another way, the statement that the visible world is object for a percipient subject applies as well to a dog as to a man. But it does not follow from this that a dog can know that the statement is true.

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[1] *W,* II, p. 3; *HK,* I, p. 3. In references to *The World as Will and Idea HK* signifies the English translation by R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp.

It should be added that according to Schopenhauer it was an important discovery of Kant that space and time, as the *a priori* conditions of the visible world, can be intuited in themselves. Hence they can be included in the range of our intuitive presentations which comprise 'the whole visible world, or the whole of experience, together with the conditions of its possibility'.[1] But it does not follow that a dog can intuit space and time in themselves and work out pure mathematics, though there is for it a spatio-temporal world.

Now, if the world is my idea, my body also must be my idea. For it is a visible thing. But we must go further than this. If it is true that the world exists only as object for a subject, it is also true that the percipient subject is correlative with the object. 'For me [Schopenhauer] matter and intelligence are inseparable correlates, existing only for one another, and therefore only relatively . . . the two together constitute *the world as idea*, which is just Kant's *appearance*, and consequently something secondary.'[2] The world as idea or presentation thus comprises both perceiver and perceived. This totality is, as Kant said, empirically real but transcendentally ideal.

For Kant Schopenhauer had a profound respect, and he claimed to be Kant's true successor. But his theory of the phenomenal character of empirical reality was powerfully reinforced by, though not derived from, another factor. Shortly after the publication of his doctorate dissertation in 1813 Schopenhauer met at Weimar an Oriental scholar, F. Mayer, who introduced him to Indian philosophical literature. And he retained an interest in Oriental philosophy up to the end of his life. As an old man he meditated on the text of the Upanishads. It is not surprising, therefore, if he associated his theory of the world as idea or presentation with the Indian doctrine of Maya. Individual subjects and objects are all appearance, Maya.

Now, if the world is phenomenal, the question arises, what is the noumenon? What is the reality which lies behind the veil of Maya?

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[1] *W*, II, p. 7; *HK*, I, p. 7.

[2] *W*, III, pp. 19–20; *HK*, II, p. 181.

And Schopenhauer's discussion of the nature of this reality and of its self-manifestation forms the really interesting part of his system. For the theory of the world as idea, though it is in Schopenhauer's opinion an indispensable part of his philosophy, is obviously a development of Kant's position, whereas his theory of the world as will is original[1] and contains the expression of his characteristic interpretation of human life. Before, however, we approach this topic, something must be said about his theory of the practical function of concepts, which possesses an intrinsic interest of its own.

4. As we have seen, besides intuitive presentations man possesses also abstract concepts which are formed by reason and presuppose experience, whether directly or indirectly. But why do we form them? What is their function? Schopenhauer's answer is that their primary function is practical. 'The great utility of concepts consists in the fact that by means of them the original material of knowledge is easier to handle, survey and order.'[2] In comparison with intuitive presentations, with immediate perceptive knowledge, abstract concepts are in a sense poor. For they omit a great deal, the differences, for example, between individual members of a class. But they are required if communication is to be possible and if experimental knowledge is to be retained and handed on. 'The greatest value of rational or abstract knowledge lies in its communicability and in the possibility of retaining it permanently. It is chiefly on this account that it is so inestimably important for practice.'[3] Schopenhauer also mentions the ethical importance of concepts and abstract reasoning. A moral man guides his conduct by principles. And principles require concepts.

But Schopenhauer is not concerned simply with pointing out examples of the practical value of concepts. He is also at pains to show how this practical value is connected with his general theory of cognition. Knowledge is the servant of the will. Or, to omit metaphysics for the present, knowledge is in the first instance the instrument of satisfying physical needs, the servant of the body. In animals needs are less complicated than in man, and they are more easily satisfied. Perception is sufficient, especially as Nature has provided animals with their own means of attack and defence, such as the claws of the lion and the sting of the wasp. But with the further development of the organism, in particular of the brain, there is a corresponding development of needs and wants. And a higher type of knowledge is required to satisfy them. In man reason appears, which enables him to discover new ways of satisfying his needs, to invent tools, and so on.[1]

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[1] Schopenhauer liked to regard his philosophy of the Will as a development of Kant's doctrine of the primacy of the practical reason or rational will. But the former's metaphysical voluntarism was really foreign to the latter's mind. It was Schopenhauer's original creation.

[2] *W*, III, p. 89; *HK*, II, p. 258.

[3] *W*, II, p. 66; *HK*, I, p. 72.

Reason, therefore, has a primarily biological function. If one may so speak, Nature intends it as an instrument for satisfying the needs of a more highly complicated and developed organism than that of the animal. But the needs in question are physical needs. Reason is primarily concerned with nourishment and propagation, with the bodily needs of the individual and species. And it follows from this that reason is unfitted for penetrating through the veil of phenomena to the underlying reality, the noumenon. The concept is a practical instrument: it stands for a number of things belonging to the same class and enables us to deal easily and economically with a vast amount of material. But it is not adapted for going beyond phenomena to any underlying essence or thing-in-itself.

In this case, we may well ask, how can metaphysics be possible? Schopenhauer answers that though the intellect is by nature the servant of the will, it is capable in man of developing to such an extent that it can achieve objectivity. That is to say, though man's mind is in the first instance an instrument for satisfying his bodily needs, it can develop a kind of surplus energy which sets it free, at least temporarily, from the service of desire. Man then becomes a disinterested spectator: he can adopt a contemplative attitude, as in aesthetic contemplation and in philosophy.

Clearly, this claim on behalf of the human mind does not by itself dispose of the difficulty which arises out of Schopenhauer's account of the concept. For systematic and communicable philosophy must be expressed in concepts. And if the concept is fitted for dealing only with phenomena, metaphysics appears to be ruled out. But Schopenhauer replies that metaphysical philosophy is possible provided that there is a fundamental intuition on the level of perceptive knowledge, which gives us direct insight into the nature of the reality underlying phenomena, an insight which philosophy endeavours to express in conceptual form. Philosophy, therefore, involves an interplay between intuition and conceptual reasoning. 'To enrich the concept from intuition is the constant concern of poetry and philosophy.'[1] Concepts do not provide us with new knowledge: intuition is fundamental. But intuition must be raised to the conceptual level if it is to become philosophy.

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[1] An obvious line of objection is that there is an element of putting the cart before the horse in all this. It might be claimed, that is to say, that it is precisely because man possesses the power of reasoning that he is able to extend the scope and number of his wants and desires.

Schopenhauer is in a rather difficult position. He does not wish to postulate as the basis of philosophy an exceptional intuition which would be something entirely different from perception on the one hand and abstract reasoning on the other. Hence the intuition of which he is speaking must be on the level of perceptive knowledge. But perception is concerned with individual objects, and so with phenomena. For individuality belongs to the phenomenal sphere. He is forced, therefore, to try to show that even on the level of perception there can be an intuitive awareness of the noumenon, an awareness which forms the basis for philosophical mediation.

Leaving the nature of this intuition for consideration in the next section, we can pause to note how in some respects Schopenhauer anticipates certain Bergsonian positions. For Bergson emphasized the practical function of intelligence and the inability of the concept to grasp the reality of life. And he went on to base philosophy on intuition and to depict the philosopher's task as being partly that of endeavouring to mediate this intuition, so far as this is possible, on the conceptual level. Hence for Bergson as for Schopenhauer philosophy involves the interplay of intuition and discursive or conceptual reasoning. I do not mean to imply that Bergson actually took his ideas from Schopenhauer. For I am not aware of any real evidence to show that he did. The notion that if philosopher *X* holds views which are similar to his predecessor *Y*, the former must necessarily have borrowed from or been influenced by the latter, is absurd. But the fact remains that though Bergson, when he became aware of the similarity, distinguished between his idea of intuition and that of the German philosopher, there is an obvious analogy between their positions. In other words, the same current or line of thought which found expression in the philosophy of Schopenhauer, when considered under the aspects in question, reappeared in the thought of Bergson. To put the matter in another way, there is some continuity, though there is also difference, between the system of Schopenhauer and the philosophy of Life of which the thought of Bergson is a notable example.

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[1] *W*, III, p. 80; *HK*, II, p. 248.

5. Kant maintained that the thing-in-itself, the correlative of the phenomenon, is unknowable. Schopenhauer, however, tells us what it is. It is Will. 'Thing-in-itself signifies that which exists independently of our perception, in short that which properly is. For Democritus this was formed matter. It was the same at bottom for Locke. For Kant it was $=X$. For me it is Will.'[1] And this is one single Will. For multiplicity can exist only in the spatio-temporal world, the sphere of phenomena. There cannot be more than one metaphenomenal reality or thing-in-itself. In other words, the inside of the world, so to speak, is one reality, whereas the outside, the appearance of this reality, is the empirical world which consists of finite things.

How does Schopenhauer arrive at the conviction that the thing-in-itself is Will? To find the key to reality I must look within myself. For in inner consciousness or inwardly directed perception lies 'the single narrow door to the truth'.[2] Through this inner consciousness I am aware that the bodily action which is said to follow or result from volition is not something different from volition but one and the same. That is to say, the bodily action is simply the objectified will: it is the will become idea or presentation. Indeed, the whole body is nothing but objectified will, will as a presentation to consciousness. According to Schopenhauer anyone can understand this if he enters into himself. And once he has this fundamental intuition, he has the key to reality. He has only to extend his discovery to the world at large.

This Schopenhauer proceeds to do. He sees the manifestation of the one individual Will in the impulse by which the magnet turns to the north pole, in the phenomena of attraction and repulsion, in gravitation, in animal instinct, in human desire and so on. Wherever he looks, whether in the inorganic or in the organic sphere, he discovers empirical confirmation of his thesis that phenomena constitute the appearance of the one metaphysical Will.

The natural question to ask is this? If the thing-in-itself is manifested in such diverse phenomena as the universal forces of Nature, such as gravity, and human volition, why call it 'Will'? Would not 'Force' or 'Energy' be a more appropriate term, especially as the so-called Will, when considered in itself, is said to be 'without knowledge and merely a blind incessant impulse',[3] 'an endless striving'?[4] For the term 'Will', which implies rationality, seems to be hardly suitable for describing a blind impulse or striving.

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[1] *W*, VI, p. 96. From *Parerga und Paralipomena*.

[2] *W*, III, p. 219; *HK*, II, p. 406.

[3] *W*, II, p. 323; *HK*, I, p. 354.

[4] *W*, II, p. 195; *HK*, I, p. 213.

Schopenhauer, however, defends his linguistic usage by maintaining that we ought to take our descriptive term from what is best known to us. We are immediately conscious of our own volition. And it is more appropriate to describe the less well known in terms of the better known than the other way round.

Besides being described as blind impulse, endless striving, eternal becoming and so on, the metaphysical Will is characterized as the Will to live. Indeed, to say 'the Will' and to say 'the Will to live are for Schopenhauer one and the same thing. As, therefore, empirical reality is the objectification or appearance of the metaphysical Will, it necessarily manifests the Will to live. And Schopenhauer has no difficulty in multiplying examples of this manifestation. We have only to look at Nature's concern for the maintenance of the species. Birds, for instance, build nests for the young which they do not yet know. Insects deposit their eggs where the larva may find nourishment. The whole series of phenomena of animal instinct manifests the omnipresence of the Will to live. If we look at the untiring activity of bees and ants and ask what it all leads to, what is attained by it, we can only answer 'the satisfaction of hunger and the sexual instinct',[1] the means, in other words, of maintaining the species in life. And if we look at man with his industry and trade, with his inventions and technology, we must admit that all this striving serves in the first instance only to sustain and to bring a certain amount of additional comfort to ephemeral individuals in their brief span of existence, and through them to contribute to the maintenance of the species.

All this fits in with what was said in the last section about Schopenhauer's theory of the biological function of reason as existing primarily to satisfy physical needs. We noticed indeed that the human intellect is capable of developing in such a way that it can free itself, at least temporarily, from the slavery of the Will. And we shall see later that Schopenhauer by no means confines the possible range of human activities to eating, drinking and copulation, the means of maintaining the life of the individual and of the species. But the primary function of reason manifests the character of the Will as the Will to live.

6. Now, if the Will is an endless striving, a blind urge or impulse which knows no cessation, it cannot find satisfaction or reach a

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[1] *W*, III, p. 403; *HK*, III, p. 111.

state of tranquillity. It is always striving and never attaining. And this essential feature of the metaphysical Will is reflected in its self-objectification, above all in human life. Man seeks satisfaction, happiness, but he cannot attain it. What we call happiness or enjoyment is simply a temporary cessation of desire. And desire, as the expression of a need or want, is a form of pain. Happiness, therefore, is 'the deliverance from a pain, from a want';[1] it is 'really and essentially always only *negative* and never positive'.[2] It soon turns to boredom, and the striving after satisfaction reasserts itself. It is boredom which makes beings who love one another so little as men do seek one another's company. And great intellectual powers simply increase the capacity for suffering and deepen the individual's isolation.

Each individual thing, as an objectification of the one Will to live, strives to assert its own existence at the expense of other things. Hence the world is the field of conflict, a conflict which manifests the nature of the Will as at variance with itself, as a tortured Will. And Schopenhauer finds illustrations of this conflict even in the inorganic sphere. But it is naturally to the organic and human spheres that he chiefly turns for empirical confirmation of his thesis. He dwells, for example, on the ways in which animals of one species prey on those of another. And when he comes to man, he really lets himself go. 'The chief source of the most serious evils which afflict man is man himself: *homo homini lupus*. Whoever keeps this last fact clearly in view sees the world as a hell which surpasses that of Dante through the fact that one man must be the devil of another.'[3] War and cruelty are, of course, grist for Schopenhauer's mill. And the man who showed no sympathy with the Revolution of 1848 speaks in the sharpest terms of industrial exploitation, slavery and such like social abuses.

We may note that it is the egoism, rapacity and hardness and cruelty of men which are for Schopenhauer the real justification of the State. So far from being a divine manifestation, the State is simply the creation of enlightened egoism which tries to make the world a little more tolerable than it would otherwise be.

Schopenhauer's pessimism is thus metaphysical in the sense that it is presented as a consequence of the nature of the metaphysical Will. The philosopher is not simply engaged in drawing attention to the empirical fact that there is much evil and suffering in the world. He is also indicating what he believes to be the cause of this empirical fact. The thing-in-itself being what it is, phenomenal reality must be marked with the black features which we actually observe. We can, of course, do something to alleviate suffering. This also is an empirical fact. But it is no good thinking that we can change the fundamental character of the world or of human life. If war, for instance, were abolished and if all men's material needs were met, the result would presumably be, on Schopenhauer's premisses, a condition of intolerable boredom which would be succeeded by the return of conflict. In any case the prevalence of suffering and evil in the world is ultimately due to the nature of the thing-in-itself. And Schopenhauer is not slow to castigate what he regards as the facile optimism of Leibniz and the way in which the German idealists, especially Hegel, slur over the dark side of human existence or, when they admit it, justify it as 'rational'.

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[1] *W*, II, p. 376; *HK*, I, pp. 411–12.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *W*, III, p. 663; *HK*, III, p. 388.

7. Needless to say, Schopenhauer thought that his theory of the phenomenal character of empirical reality fitted in well with his theory of the Will. That is to say, he thought that having once accepted Kant's general thesis of the phenomenal character of the world he could then go on, without inconsistency, to reveal the nature of the thing-in-itself. But this is questionable.

Take, for example, Schopenhauer's approach to the Will through inner consciousness. As Herbart remarked, on Schopenhauer's principles the Will, as viewed in inner perception, must be subject to the form of time: it is known in its successive acts. And these are phenomenal. We cannot arrive at the Will as a metaphenomenal reality. For in so far as we are conscious of it, it is phenomenal. True, we can talk about the metaphysical Will. But in so far as it is thought and spoken about, it must be, it seems, object for a subject, and so phenomenal.

Schopenhauer does indeed admit that we cannot know the metaphysical Will in itself, and that it may have attributes which are unknown by us and indeed incomprehensible to us. But he insists that it is known, even if only partially, in its manifestation or objectification, and that our own volition is for us its most distinct manifestation. In this case, however, the metaphysical Will seems to disintegrate, as it were, into phenomena, as far as our knowledge is concerned. And the conclusion seems to follow that we cannot know the thing-in-itself. To put the matter in another way, Schopenhauer does not wish to base his philosophy on a privileged and exceptional intuition of ultimate reality, but rather on our intuitive perception of our own volition. Yet this intuitive perception seems, on his own premisses, to belong to the phenomenal sphere which includes the whole range of the subject-object relationship. In fine, once given the doctrine of *The World as Idea*, the first book of Schopenhauer's *magnum opus*, it is difficult to see how any access to the thing-in-itself is possible. Kant would presumably say that it was impossible.

This line of objection is, I think, justified. But it would, of course, be possible to cut Schopenhauer's philosophy adrift from its Kantian moorings and present it as a kind of hypothesis. The philosopher, let us suppose, was temperamentally inclined to see in a clear light and to emphasize the dark aspects of the world and of human life and history. So far from being secondary features, they seemed to him to constitute the world's most significant and positive aspects. And he considered that analysis of the concepts of happiness and of suffering confirmed this initial vision. On this basis he erected the explanatory hypothesis of the blind and endlessly striving impulse or force which he called the Will. And he could then look round to discover fresh empirical confirmation of his hypothesis in the inorganic, organic and specifically human spheres. Further, the hypothesis enabled him to make some general predictions about human life and history in the future.

It is obviously not my intention to suggest that Schopenhauer would have been willing to surrender his theory of the World as Idea. On the contrary, he laid emphasis on it. Nor is it my intention to suggest that Schopenhauer's picture of the world would be acceptable if it were presented as the lines just indicated above. His analysis of happiness as 'negative', to mention but one point of criticism, seems to me quite untenable. My point is rather that Schopenhauer's philosophy expresses a 'vision' of the world which draws attention to certain aspects of it. And this vision can perhaps be made clearer if his philosophy is expressed in the form of an hypothesis based on an exclusive attention to the aspects in question. To be sure, it is a one-sided vision or picture of the world. But precisely because of its one-sidedness and exaggeration it serves as an effective counter-balance or antithesis to a system such as that of Hegel in which attention is so focused on the triumphant march of Reason through history that the evil and suffering in the world are obscured from view by high-sounding phrases.

CHAPTER XIV

SCHOPENHAUER (2)

Aesthetic contemplation as a temporary escape from the slavery of the Will—The particular fine arts—Virtue and renunciation: the way of salvation—Schopenhauer and metaphysical idealism —The general influence of Schopenhauer—Notes on Eduard von Hartmann's development of Schopenhauer's philosophy.

1. THE root of all evil for Schopenhauer is the slavery of the Will, subservience to the Will to live. But his claim has already been mentioned that the human mind has the capacity for developing beyond the extent required for the satisfaction of physical needs. It can develop, as it were, a surplus of energy over and above the energy required to fulfil its primary biological and practical function. Man is thus able to escape from the futile life of desire and striving, of egoistic self-assertion and conflict.

Schopenhauer describes two ways of escape from the slavery of the Will, the one temporary, an oasis in the desert, the other more lasting. The first is the way of aesthetic contemplation, the way of art; the second is the path of asceticism, the way of salvation. In this section we are concerned with the first, the way of escape through art.

In aesthetic contemplation man becomes the disinterested observer. Needless to say, this does not mean that aesthetic contemplation is uninteresting. If, for example, I regard a beautiful object as an object of desire or as a stimulant to desire, my point of view is not that of aesthetic contemplation: I am an 'interested' spectator. In point of fact I am the servant or instrument of the Will. But it is possible for me to regard the beautiful object neither as itself an object of desire nor as a stimulant to desire but simply and solely for its aesthetic significance. I am then a disinterested, but not an uninterested, spectator. And I am freed, temporarily at least, from the slavery of the Will.

This theory of temporary escape through aesthetic contemplation, whether of natural objects or of works of art, is linked by Schopenhauer with a metaphysical theory of what he calls Platonic Ideas. The Will is said to objectify itself immediately in Ideas which stand to individual natural things as archetypes to copies. They are 'the determinate species or the original unchanging forms and properties of all natural bodies, both inorganic and organic, and also the universal forces which reveal themselves according to natural laws'.[1] There are thus Ideas of natural forces such as gravity, and there are Ideas of species. But there are no Ideas of genuses. For while there are natural species, there are, according to Schopenhauer, no natural genuses.

The Ideas of species must not be confused with the immanent forms of things. The individual members of a species or natural class are said to be 'the empirical correlative of the Idea'.[2] And the Idea is an eternal archetype. It is for this reason, of course, that Schopenhauer identifies his Ideas with the Platonic Forms or Ideas.

How a blind Will or endless striving can reasonably be said to objectify itself immediately in Platonic Ideas, is something which I do not profess to understand. It seems to me that Schopenhauer, sharing the belief of Schelling and Hegel, in spite of his abuse of them, in the metaphysical significance of art and aesthetic intuition, and seeing that aesthetic contemplation offers a temporary escape from the slavery of desire, turns to a philosopher whom he greatly admires, namely Plato, and borrows from him a theory of Ideas which has no clear connection with the description of the Will as a blind, self-tortured impulse or striving. However, it is unnecessary to labour this aspect of the matter. The point is that the artistic genius is capable of apprehending the Ideas and of giving expression to them in works of art. And in aesthetic contemplation the beholder is participating in this apprehension of the Ideas. He thus rises above the temporal and changing and contemplates the eternal and unchanging. His attitude is contemplative, not appetitive. Appetite is stilled during aesthetic experience.

Schopenhauer's exaltation of the role of artistic genius represents a point of affinity with the romantic spirit. He does not, however, speak very clearly about the nature of artistic genius or about the relation between the genius and the ordinary man. Sometimes he seems to imply that genius means not only the ability to apprehend the Ideas but also the ability to express them in works of art. At other times he seems to imply that genius is simply the faculty of intuiting the Ideas, and that the ability to give external expression to them is a matter of technique which can be acquired by training and practice. The first way of speaking fits in best with what is presumably our normal conviction, namely that artistic genius involves the capacity for creative production. If a man lacked this capacity, we would not normally speak of him as an artistic genius or, for the matter of that, as an artist at all. The second way of speaking implies that everyone who is capable of aesthetic appreciation and contemplation participates in genius to some extent. But one might go on to claim with Benedetto Croce that aesthetic intuition involves interior expression, in the sense of imaginative recreation, as distinct from external expression. In this case both the creative artist and the man who contemplates and appreciates the work of art would 'express', though only the first would express externally. However, though it may be possible to bring together the two ways of speaking in some such manner, I think that for Schopenhauer artistic genius really involves both the faculty of intuiting the Ideas and the faculty of giving creative expression to this intuition, though this is aided by technical training. In this case the man who is not capable of producing works of art himself could still share in genius to the extent of intuiting the Ideas in and through their external expression.

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[1] *W*, II, p. 199; *HK*, I, p. 219.

[2] *W*, III, p. 417; *HK*, III, p. 123.

The important point, however, in the present context is that in aesthetic contemplation a man transcends the original subjection of knowledge to the Will, to desire. He becomes the 'pure will-less subject of knowledge, who no longer traces relations in accordance with the principle of sufficient reason, but rests and is lost in fixed contemplation of the object presented to him, apart from its connection with any other object'.[1] If the object of contemplation is simply significant form, the Idea as concretely presented to perception, we are concerned with the beautiful. If, however, a man perceives the object of contemplation as having a hostile relation to his body, as menacing, that is to say, the objectification of the Will in the form of the human body by its power of greatness, he is contemplating the sublime. That is, he is contemplating the sublime provided that, while recognizing the menacing character of the object, he persists in objective contemplation and does not allow himself to be overwhelmed by the self-regarding emotion of fear. For instance, a man in a small boat at sea during a terrible storm is contemplating the sublime if he fixes his attention on the grandeur of the scene and the power of the elements.[1] But whether a man is contemplating the beautiful or the sublime, he is temporarily freed from the servitude of the Will. His mind enjoys a rest, as it were, from being an instrument for the satisfaction of desire and adopts a purely objective and disinterested point of view.

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[1] *W*, II, pp. 209–10; *HK*, I, p. 230.

2. Both Schelling and Hegel arranged the particular fine arts in ascending series. And Schopenhauer too engages in this pastime. His standard of classification and arrangement is the series of grades of the Will's objectification. For example, architecture is said to express some low-grade Ideas such as gravity, cohesion, rigidity and hardness, the universal qualities of stone. Moreover, in expressing the tension between gravity and rigidity architecture expresses indirectly the conflict of the Will. Artistic hydraulics exhibits the Ideas of fluid matter in, for instance, fountains and artificial waterfalls, while artistic horticulture or landscape-gardening exhibits the Ideas of the higher grades of vegetative life. Historical painting and sculpture express the Idea of man, though sculpture is concerned principally with beauty and grace while painting is chiefly concerned with the expression of character and passion. Poetry is capable of representing Ideas of all grades. For its immediate material is concepts, though the poet tries by his use of epithets to bring down the abstract concept to the level of perception and thus to stimulate the imagination and enable the reader or hearer to apprehend the Idea in the perceptible object.[2] But though poetry is capable of representing all grades of Ideas, its chief object is the representation of man as expressing himself through a series of actions and through the accompanying thoughts and emotions.

At the time there was controversy among writers on aesthetics about the range of the concept of fine art. But it would hardly be profitable to enter into a discussion about the propriety or impropriety of describing artistic hydraulics and landscape-gardening as fine arts. Nor need we discuss an arrangement of the arts which depends on correlating them with a questionable metaphysical system. Instead we can notice the two following points.

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[1] Following Kant, Schopenhauer distinguishes between the dynamical and the mathematically sublime. The man in the boat is contemplating an example of the first type. The mathematically sublime is the statically immense, a great range of mountains, for instance.

[2] For instance, Homer does not simply talk about the sea or the dawn but brings the ideas nearer to the level of perception by the use of epithets such as 'wine-dark' and 'rosy-fingered'.

First, as one would expect, the supreme poetical art is for Schopenhauer tragedy. For in tragedy we witness the real character of human life transmuted into art and expressed in dramatic form, 'the unspeakable pain, the wail of humanity, the triumph of evil, the mocking mastery of chance and the irretrievable fall of the just and innocent'.[1]

Secondly, the highest of all arts is not tragedy but music. For music does not exhibit an Idea or Ideas, the immediate objectification of the Will: it exhibits the Will itself, the inner nature of the thing-in-itself.[2] In listening to music, therefore, a man receives a direct revelation, though not in conceptual form, of the reality which underlies phenomena. And he intuits this reality, revealed in the form of art, in an objective and disinterested manner, not as one caught in the grip of the Will's tyranny. Further, if it were possible to express accurately in concepts all that music expresses without concepts, we should have the true philosophy.

3. Aesthetic contemplation affords no more than a temporary or transient escape from the slavery of the Will. But Schopenhauer offers a lasting release through renunciation of the Will to live. Indeed, moral progress must take this form if morality is possible at all. For the Will to live, manifesting itself in egoism, self-assertion, hatred and conflict, is for Schopenhauer the source of evil. 'There really resides in the heart of each of us a wild beast which only waits the opportunity to rage and rave in order to injure others, and which, if they do not prevent it, would like to destroy them.'[3] This wild beast, this radical evil, is the direct expression of the Will to live. Hence morality, if it is possible, must involve denial of the Will. And as man is an objectification of the Will, denial will mean self-denial, asceticism and mortification.

Schopenhauer does indeed say that in his philosophy the world possesses a moral significance. But what he means by this at first sight astonishing statement is this. Existence, life, is itself a crime: it is our original sin. And it is inevitably expiated by suffering and death. Hence we can say that justice reigns and, adapting Hegel's famous statement, that 'the world itself is the world's court of judgment'.[4] In this sense, therefore, the world possesses a moral significance. 'If we could lay all the misery of the world in one scale of the balance and all the guilt of the world in the other, the needle would certainly point to the centre.'[1] Schopenhauer speaks as though it were the Will itself which is guilty and the Will itself which pays the penalty. For it objectifies itself and suffers in its objectification. And this way of speaking may seem to be extravagant. For the sufferings of men must be phenomenal on Schopenhauer's premisses: they can hardly affect the thing-in-itself. Passing over this point, however, we can draw from the statement that existence or life is itself a crime the conclusion that morality, if it is possible, must take the form of denial of the Will to live, of a turning away from life.

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[1] *W*, II, p. 298; *HK*, I, p. 326.

[2] It is for this reason that Schopenhauer condemns imitative music, mentioning Haydn's *Seasons* as an example.

[3] *W*, VI, p. 230. From *Parerga und Paralipomena*.

[4] *W*, II, p. 415; *HK*, I, p. 454.

Given these premisses, it may well appear to follow that the highest moral act will be suicide. But Schopenhauer argues that suicide expresses a surrender to the Will rather than a denial of it. For the man who commits suicide does so to escape certain evils. And if he could escape from them without killing himself, he would do so. Hence suicide is, paradoxically, the expression of a concealed will to live. Consequently, denial and renunciation must take some form other than suicide.

But is morality possible within the framework of Schopenhauer's philosophy? The individual human being is an objectification of the one individual Will, and his actions are determined. Schopenhauer draws a distinction between the intelligible and empirical characters. The metaphysical Will objectifies itself in the individual will, and this individual will, when considered in itself and anteriorly to its acts, is the intelligible or noumenal character. The individual will as manifested through its successive acts is the empirical character. Now, consciousness has for its object the particular acts of the will. And these appear successively. A man thus comes to know his character only gradually and imperfectly: in principle he is in the same position as an outsider. He does not foresee his future acts of will but is conscious only of acts already posited. He therefore seems to himself to be free. And this feeling of freedom is quite natural. Yet the empirical act is really the unfolding of the intelligible or noumenal character. The former is the consequence of the latter and determined by it. As Spinoza said, the feeling or persuasion of freedom is really the effect of ignorance of the determining causes of one's actions.

At first sight, therefore, there would seem to be little point in indicating how people ought to act if they wish to escape from the slavery of desire and restless striving. For their actions are determined by their character. And these characters are objectifications of the Will, which is the Will to live and manifests itself precisely in desire and restless striving.

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[1] *W*, II, p. 416; *HK*, I, p. 454.

Schopenhauer argues, however, that character-determinism does not exclude changes in conduct. Let us suppose, for example, that I am accustomed to act in the way most calculated to bring me financial gain. One day somebody persuades me that treasure in heaven is more valuable and lasting than treasure on earth. And my new conviction leads to a change in conduct. Instead of trying to avail myself of an opportunity to enrich myself at the expense of Tom Jones I leave the opportunity of financial gain to him. My friends, if I have any, may say that my character has changed. But in point of fact I am the same sort of man that I was before. The actions which I now perform are different from my past actions, but my character has not changed. For I act for the same sort of motive, namely personal gain, though I have changed my view about what constitutes the most gainful line of conduct. In other words, my intelligible character determines what sort of motives move me to act; and the motive remains the same whether I am amassing riches on earth or renouncing them for celestial wealth.

Taken by itself, indeed, this example does not help us to understand how a denial of the Will to live can be possible. For it illustrates the permanence of egoism rather than the emergence of radical self-denial. And though it may be useful as indicating a plausible way of reconciling with the theory of character-determinism the empirical facts which appear to show the possibility of changes in character, it does not explain how the Will to live can turn back on itself, in and through its objectification, and deny itself. But we can pass over this point for the moment. It is sufficient to note that the idea of changing one's point of view plays an important role in Schopenhauer's philosophy as it does in that of Spinoza. For Schopenhauer envisages a progressive seeing through, as it were, the veil of Maya, the phenomenal world of individuality and multiplicity. This is possible because of the intellect's capacity to develop beyond the extent required for the fulfilment of its primary practical functions. And the degrees of moral advance correspond with the degrees of penetration of the veil of Maya.

Individuality is phenomenal. The noumenon is one: a plurality of individuals exists only for the phenomenal subject. And a man may, in the first instance, penetrate the illusion of individuality to the extent that he sets others on the same level as himself and does them no injury. We then have the just man, as distinct from the man who is so enmeshed in the veil of Maya that he asserts himself to the exclusion of others.

But it is possible to go further. A man may penetrate the veil of Maya to the extent of seeing that all individuals are really one. For they are all phenomena of the one undivided Will. We then have the ethical level of sympathy. We have goodness or virtue which is characterized by a disinterested love of others. True goodness is not, as Kant thought, a matter of obeying the categorical imperative for the sake of duty alone. True goodness is love, *agape* or *caritas* in distinction from *eros*, which is self-directed. And love is sympathy. 'All true and pure love is sympathy [*Mitleid*], and all love which is not sympathy is selfishness [*Selbstsucht*]. *Eros* is selfishness; *agape* is sympathy.'[1] Schopenhauer combined his enthusiasm for the Hindu philosophy of Maya with a great admiration for the Buddha. And he had perhaps more sympathy with the Buddhist ethic than with more dynamic western concepts of altruism.

We can, however, go further still. For in and through man the Will can attain such a clear knowledge of itself that it turns from itself in horror and denies itself. The human will then ceases to become attached to anything, and the man pursues the path of asceticism and holiness. Schopenhauer proceeds, therefore, to extol voluntary chastity, poverty and self-mortification and holds out the prospect of a complete deliverance at death from the servitude of the Will.

It was remarked above that it is difficult to understand how the Will's denial of itself is possible. And Schopenhauer recognizes the difficulty. That the Will, manifested or objectified in the phenomenon, should deny itself and renounce what the phenomenon expresses, namely the Will to live, is, Schopenhauer frankly admits, a case of self-contradiction. But, contradiction or not, this radical act of self-denial can take place, even though it happens only in exceptional or rare cases. The Will in itself is free. For it is not subject to the principle of sufficient reason. And in the case of total self-denial, total self-renunciation, the essential freedom of the Will, the thing-in-itself, is made manifest in the phenomenon. In other words, Schopenhauer admits an exception to the principle of determinism. The free metaphysical Will 'by abolishing the nature which lies at the foundation of the phenomenon, while the phenomenon itself continues to exist in time, brings about a contradiction of the phenomenon with itself'.[1] That is to say, the saint does not kill himself; he continues to exist in time. But he totally renounces the reality which lies at the foundation of himself as a phenomenon and can be said to 'abolish it', namely the Will. This is a contradiction, but it is a contradiction which manifests the truth that the Will transcends the principle of sufficient reason.

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[1] *W*, II, p. 444; *HK*, I, p. 485.

What, we may ask, is the final end of virtue and holiness? Obviously, the man who denies the Will treats the world as nothing. For it is simply the appearance of the Will, which he denies. And in this sense at least it is true to say that when the Will turns and denies itself, 'our world with all its suns and milky ways is—nothing'.[2] But what happens at death? Does it mean total extinction or not?

'Before us', says Schopenhauer, 'there is indeed only nothingness.'[3] And if, as seems to be the case, there can be no question on his premisses of personal immortality, there is a sense in which this must obviously be true. For if individuality is phenomenal, Maya, then death, the withdrawal, as it were, from the phenomenal world, means the extinction of consciousness. There remains perhaps the possibility of absorption in the one Will. But Schopenhauer seems to imply, though he does not express himself clearly, that for the man who has denied the Will death means total extinction. In life he has reduced existence to a tenuous thread, and at death it is finally destroyed. The man has reached the final goal of the denial of the Will to live.

Schopenhauer does indeed speak of another possibility.[4] As we have already seen, he admits that the thing-in-itself, the ultimate reality, may possibly possess attributes which we do not and cannot know. If so, these may remain when Will has denied itself as Will. Hence there is presumably the possibility of a state being achieved through self-renunciation which does not amount to nothingness. It could hardly be a state of knowledge, for the subject-object relationship is phenomenal. But it might resemble the incommunicable experience to which mystics refer in obscure terms.

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[1] *W*, II, p. 339; *HK*, I, p. 371.

[2] *W*, II, p. 487; *HK*, I, p. 532.

[3] *W*, II, p. 486; *HK*, I, p. 531.

[4] Cp. *W*, II, p. 485 and III, pp. 221–2; *HK*, I, p. 530 and II, p. 408.

But though it is open to anyone to press this admission if he wishes, I should not myself care to do so. Partly, I suppose, Schopenhauer feels bound to make the admission in view of his own statement that we know the ultimate reality in its self-manifestation as Will and not in itself, apart from phenomena. Partly he may feel that the possibility cannot be excluded that the experiences of the mystics are not adequately explicable in terms of his philosophy of the Will. But it would be going too far, were one to represent Schopenhauer as suggesting that either theism or pantheism may be true. Theism he stigmatizes as childish and unable to satisfy the mature mind. Pantheism he judges to be even more absurd and, in addition, to be incompatible with any moral convictions. To identify a world filled with suffering and evil and cruelty with the Godhead or to interpret it as a theophany in a literal sense is utter nonsense, worthy only of a Hegel. Moreover, it leads to a justification of all that happens, a justification which is incompatible with the demands of morality.

In any case, even if the ultimate reality possesses attributes other than those which justify its description as a blind Will, philosophy can know nothing about them. As far as philosophy is concerned, the thing-in-itself is Will. And the denial of the Will thus means for the philosopher the denial of reality, of all that there is, at least of all that he can know that there is. Hence philosophy at any rate must be content with the conclusion: 'no Will; no idea, no world'.[1] If the Will turns on itself and 'abolishes' itself, nothing is left.

4. The reader may perhaps be surprised that the philosophy of Schopenhauer has been considered under the general heading of the reaction to metaphysical idealism. And there is, of course, ground for such surprise. For in spite of Schopenhauer's constant abuse of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel his system undoubtedly belongs in some important respects to the movement of German speculative idealism. Will is indeed substituted for Fichte's Ego and Hegel's *Logos* or Idea, but the distinction between phenomenon and noumenon and the theory of the subjective and phenomenal character of space, time and causality are based on Kant. And it is not unreasonable to describe Schopenhauer's system as transcendental voluntaristic idealism. It is idealism in the sense that the world is said to be our idea or presentation. It is voluntaristic in the sense that the concept of Will rather than that of Reason or

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[1] *W*, II, p. 486; *HK*, I, p. 531.

Thought is made the key to reality. And it is transcendental in the sense that the one individual Will is an absolute Will which manifests itself in the multiple phenomena of experience.

But though Schopenhauer's philosophy, when regarded from this point of view, appears as a member of the class of post-Kantian speculative systems which include those of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, there are also considerable differences between it and the other three philosophies. For example, in the system of Hegel the ultimate reality is Reason, the self-thinking thought which actualizes itself as concrete spirit. The real is the rational and the rational the real. With Schopenhauer, however, reality is not so much rational as irrational: the world is the manifestation of a blind impulse or energy. There are, of course, certain similarities between the cosmic Reason of Hegel and the Schopenhauerian Will. For instance, for Hegel Reason has itself as an end, in the sense that it is thought which comes to think itself, and Schopenhauer's Will also has itself as an end, in the sense that it wills for the sake of willing. But there is a great difference between the idea of the universe as the life of self-unfolding Reason and the idea of the universe as the expression of a blind irrational impulse to existence or life. There are indeed elements of 'irrationalism' in German idealism itself. Schelling's theory of an irrational will in the Deity is a case in point. But with Schopenhauer the irrational character of existence becomes something to be emphasized; it is the cardinal truth rather than a partial truth, to be overcome in a higher synthesis.

This metaphysical irrationalism in Schopenhauer's philosophy may be obscured by his theory of art which sets before us the possibility of transmuting the horrors of existence in the serene world of aesthetic contemplation. But it has important consequences. For one thing there is the substitution of a metaphysically-grounded pessimism for the metaphysically-grounded optimism of absolute idealism. For another thing the deductive character of metaphysical idealism, which is natural enough if reality is regarded as the self-unfolding of Thought or Reason, gives way to a much more empirical approach. To be sure, the comprehensive and metaphysical character of Schopenhauer's philosophy, together with its strongly-marked romantic elements, gives it a family-likeness to the other great post-Kantian systems. At the same time it lends itself very easily to interpretation as a very wide hypothesis based on generalization from empirical data.

And though we naturally and rightly regard it as part of the general movement of post-Kantian speculative metaphysics, it also looks forward to the inductive metaphysics which followed the collapse of absolute idealism.

Further, when we look back on Schopenhauer's system from a much later point in history, we can see in it a transition-stage between the idealist movement and the later philosophies of Life. Obviously, from one point of view the system is simply itself and not a 'transition-stage'. But this does not exclude the point of view which relates the system to the general movement of thought and sees it as a bridge between rationalist idealism and the philosophy of Life in Germany and France. It may be objected, of course, that Schopenhauer emphasizes a no-saying attitude to life. Life is something to be denied rather than affirmed. But Schopenhauer's theory of renunciation and denial is reached only by means of a philosophy which first emphasizes the idea of the Will to live and interprets the world in the light of this idea. Both instinct and reason are described by Schopenhauer as biological instruments or tools, even if he subsequently goes on to speak of the detachment of the human intellect from this practical orientation. Hence he provides the material, as it were, for the substitution of the idea of Life as the central idea in philosophy for that of Thought. Schopenhauer's pessimism no longer appears in the later philosophies of Life; but this does not alter the fact that he brings the idea of Life into the centre of the picture. True, the idea of Life is present in, for example, the philosophies of Fichte and Hegel. But with Schopenhauer the term 'Life' receives a primarily biological significance, and reason (which is also, of course, a form of life) is interpreted as an instrument of Life in a biological sense.

5. After the death of Hegel and after the failure of the Revolution of 1848 the climate of opinion was more prepared for a favourable reconsideration of Schopenhauer's anti-rationalist and pessimistic system, and it became more widely known and won some adherents. Among these was Julius Frauenstädt (1813–79) who was converted from Hegelianism to the philosophy of Schopenhauer in the course of protracted conversations with the philosopher at Frankfurt. He modified somewhat the position of his master, maintaining that space, time and causality are not mere subjective forms and that individuality and multiplicity are not mere appearance. But he defended the theory that the ultimate reality is Will and published an edition of Schopenhauer's writings.

Schopenhauer's writings helped to stimulate in Germany an interest in Oriental thought and religion. Among the philosophers who were influenced by him in this direction we can mention Paul Deussen (1845–1919), founder of the *Schopenhauer-Gesellschaft* (Schopenhauer Society) and a friend of Nietzsche. Deussen occupied a chair in the university of Kiel. In addition to a general history of philosophy he published several works on Indian thought and contributed to bringing about the recognition of Oriental philosophy as an integral part of the history of philosophy in general.

Outside philosophical circles Schopenhauer's influence was considerable. And special mention can be made of his influence on Richard Wagner. The theory that music is the highest of the arts was naturally congenial to Wagner, and he thought of himself as the living embodiment of the Schopenhauerian concept of genius.[1] One cannot, of course, reduce Wagner's outlook on life to Schopenhauer's philosophy. Many of the composer's ideas were formed before he made the acquaintance of this philosophy, and in the course of time he modified and changed his ideas. But when he had been introduced to Schopenhauer's writings in 1854, he sent the philosopher an appreciative letter. And it is said that *Tristan and Isolde* in particular reflects Schopenhauer's influence. One can also mention the writer Thomas Mann as one who owed a debt to Schopenhauer.

Within philosophical circles Schopenhauer's influence was felt more in the form of a stimulus in this or that direction than in the creation of anything which could be called a school. In Germany his writings exercised a powerful influence on Nietzsche in his youth, though he afterwards repudiated Schopenhauer's no-saying attitude to Life. One can also mention the names of Wilhelm Wundt and Hans Vaihinger as philosophers who derived some stimulus from Schopenhauer, though neither man was a disciple of the great pessimist. As for France, it has been already remarked that we must avoid the not uncommon mistake of assuming that similarity of ideas necessarily reveals derivation or borrowing. The development of the philosophy of Life in France explains itself, without the need of involving the name of Schopenhauer. But this does not, of course, exclude a stimulative influence, direct or indirect, by the German philosopher on certain French thinkers.

6. There is at any rate one philosopher of some note whose most

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[1] Nietzsche, during the halcyon days of their friendship, gave Wagner every encouragement to think this.

obvious affinity is with Schopenhauer and who derived a great deal from him, namely Eduard von Hartmann (1842–1906), a retired artillery officer who gave himself to study and writing. Von Hartmann, who also acknowledged debts to Leibniz and Schelling, endeavoured to develop the philosophy of Schopenhauer in such a way as to lessen the gulf between it and Hegelianism. And he claimed to have worked out his own system on an empirical and scientific basis. His best known work is *The Philosophy of the Unconscious* (*Die Philosophie des Unbewussten*, 1869).

The ultimate reality, according to von Hartmann, is indeed unconscious, but it cannot be, as Schopenhauer thought, simply a blind Will. For the matter of that, even Schopenhauer could not avoid speaking as though the Will had an end in view. Hence we must recognize that the one unconscious principle has two correlative and irreducible attributes, Will and Idea. Or we can express the matter by saying that the one unconscious principle has two co-ordinate functions. As Will it is responsible for the *that*, the existence, of the world: as Idea it is responsible for the *what*, the nature, of the world.

In this way von Hartmann claims to effect a synthesis between Schopenhauer and Hegel. The former's Will could never produce a teleological world-process, and the latter's Idea could never objectify itself in an existent world. The ultimate reality must thus be Will and Idea in one. But it does not follow that the ultimate reality must be conscious. On the contrary, we must turn to Schelling and import the notion of an unconscious Idea behind Nature. The world has more than one aspect. Will manifests itself, as Schopenhauer taught, in pain, suffering and evil. But the unconscious Idea, as Schelling maintained in his philosophy of Nature, manifests itself in finality, teleology, intelligible development and an advance towards consciousness.

Not content with reconciling Schopenhauer, Hegel and Schelling, von Hartmann is also concerned with synthesizing Schopenhauerian pessimism and Leibnizian optimism. The manifestation of the unconscious Absolute as Will gives grounds for pessimism, while its manifestation as Idea gives grounds for optimism. But the unconscious Absolute is one. Hence pessimism and optimism must be reconciled. And this demands a modification of Schopenhauer's analysis of pleasure and enjoyment as 'negative'. The pleasures, for example, of aesthetic contemplation and of intellectual activity are certainly positive.

Now, inasmuch as von Hartmann maintains that the end or *telos* of the cosmic process is the liberation of the Idea from the servitude of the Will through the development of consciousness, we might expect that optimism would have the last word. But though von Hartmann does indeed emphasize the way in which the development of intellect renders possible the higher pleasures, in particular those of aesthetic contemplation, he at the same time insists that the capacity for suffering grows in proportion to intellectual development. For this reason primitive peoples and the uneducated classes are happier than civilized peoples and the more cultured classes.

To think, therefore, that progress in civilization and in intellectual development brings with it an increase in happiness is an illusion. The pagans thought that happiness was attainable in this world. And this was an illusion. The Christians recognized it as such and looked for happiness in heaven. But this too was an illusion. Yet those who recognize it as such tend to fall into a third illusion, namely that of thinking that a terrestrial Paradise can be attained through unending progress. They fail to see two truths. First, increasing refinement and mental development increase the capacity for suffering. Secondly, progress in material civilization and well-being is accompanied by a forgetfulness of spiritual values and by the decadence of genius.

These illusions are ultimately the work of the unconscious principle which shows its cunning by inducing the human race in this way to perpetuate itself. But von Hartmann looks forward to a time when the human race in general will have so developed its consciousness of the real state of affairs that a cosmic suicide will take place. Schopenhauer was wrong in suggesting that an individual can attain annihilation by self-denial and asceticism. What is needed is the greatest possible development of consciousness, so that in the end humanity may understand the folly of volition, commit suicide and, with its own destruction, bring the world-process to an end. For by that time the volition of the unconscious Absolute, which is responsible for the existence of the world, will, von Hartmann hopes, have passed into or been objectified in humanity. Hence suicide on humanity's part will bring the world to an end.

Most people would describe this astonishing theory as pessimism. Not so von Hartmann. The cosmic suicide requires as its condition the greatest possible evolution of consciousness and the triumph of intellect over volition. But this is precisely the end aimed at by the Absolute as Idea, as unconscious Spirit. One can say, therefore, that the world will be redeemed by the cosmic suicide and its own disappearance. And a world which achieves redemption is the best possible world.

There are only two comments which I wish to make on von Hartmann's philosophy. First, if a man writes as much as von Hartmann did, he can hardly avoid making some true and apposite statements, be their setting what it may. Secondly, if the human race destroys itself, which is now a physical possibility, it is much more likely to be due to its folly than to its wisdom or, in von Hartmann's language, to the triumph of Will rather than to that of Idea.

CHAPTER XV

THE TRANSFORMATION OF IDEALISM (1)

Introductory remarks—Feuerbach and the transformation of theology into anthropology—Ruge's criticism of the Hegelian attitude to history—Stirner's philosophy of the ego.

1. When considering the influence of Hegel we noted that after the philosopher's death there emerged a right and a left wing. And something was said about the differences between them in regard to the interpretation of the idea of God in the philosophy of Hegel and about the system's relation to Christianity. We can now turn to consider some of the more radical representatives of the left wing who were concerned not so much with interpreting Hegel as with using some of his ideas to transform metaphysical idealism into something quite different.

These thinkers are commonly known as the Young Hegelians. This term ought indeed to signify the younger generation of those who stood under the influence of Hegel, whether they belonged to the right or to the left wing or to the centre. But it has come to be reserved in practice for the radical members of the left wing, such as Feuerbach. From one point of view they might well be called anti-Hegelians. For they represent a line of thought which culminated in dialectical materialism, whereas a cardinal tenet of Hegel is that the Absolute must be defined as Spirit. From another point of view, however, the name 'anti-Hegelian' would be a misnomer. For they were concerned to set Hegel on his feet, and even if they transformed his philosophy, they made use, as already mentioned, of some of his own ideas. In other words, they represent a left-wing development of Hegelianism, a development which was also a transformation. We find both continuity and discontinuity.

2. Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–72) studied Protestant theology at Heidelberg and then went to Berlin where he attended Hegel's lectures and gave himself to the study of philosophy. In 1828 he became an unsalaried lecturer (*Privatdozent*) at the university of Erlangen. But finding no prospect of advancement in the academic career he retired into a life of private study and writing. At the time of his death he was living near Nuremberg.

If one were to look only at the titles of Feuerbach's writings, one would naturally conclude that he was first and foremost a theologian, or at any rate that he had strong theological interests. True, his earlier works are obviously concerned with philosophy. For example, in 1833 he published a history of modern philosophy from Francis Bacon to Spinoza; in 1837 an exposition and criticism of Leibniz's system; in 1838 a work on Bayle; and in 1839 an essay devoted to criticism of Hegel's philosophy. But then come his important works, such as *The Essence of Christianity* (*Das Wesen des Christentums*, 1841), *The Essence of Religion* (*Das Wesen der Religion*, 1845) and *Lectures on the Essence of Religion* (*Vorlesungen über das Wesen der Religion*, 1851). And these titles, together with such others as *On Philosophy and Christianity* (*Ueber Philosophie und Christentum*, 1839) and *The Essence of Faith in Luther's sense* (*Das Wesen des Glaubens im Sinne Luthers*, 1844), clearly suggest that the author's mind is preoccupied with theological problems.

In a certain sense this impression is quite correct. Feuerbach himself asserted that the main theme of his writings was religion and theology. But he did not mean by this statement that he believed in the objective existence of a God outside human thought. He meant that he was principally concerned with clarifying the real significance and function of religion in the light of human life and thought as a whole. Religion was not for him an unimportant phenomenon, an unfortunate piece of superstition of which we can say that it would have been better if it had never existed and that its effect has been simply that of retarding man's development. On the contrary, the religious consciousness was for Feuerbach an integral stage in the development of human consciousness in general. At the same time he regarded the idea of God as a projection of man's ideal for himself and religion as a temporal, even if essential, stage in the development of human consciousness. He can be said, therefore, to have substituted anthropology for theology.

Feuerbach reaches this position, the substitution of anthropology for theology, through a radical criticism of the Hegelian system. But the criticism is in a sense internal. For it is presupposed that Hegelianism is the highest expression of philosophy up to date. Hegel was 'Fichte mediated through Schelling',[1] and 'the Hegelian philosophy is the culminating point of speculative systematic philosophy'.[1] But though in the system of Hegel idealism, and indeed metaphysics in general, has attained its most complete expression, the system is not tenable. What is required is to set Hegel on his feet. In particular we have to find our way back from the conceptual abstractions of absolute idealism to concrete reality. Speculative philosophy has tried to make a transition 'from the abstract to the concrete, from the ideal to the real'.[2] But this was a mistake. The passage or transition from the ideal to the real has a part to play only in practical or moral philosophy, where it is a question of realizing ideals through action. When it is a matter of theoretical knowledge, we must start with the real, with Being.

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[1] *W*, II, p. 180. References to Feuerbach's writings are given according to volume and page of the second edition of his *Works* by Friedrich Jodl (Stuttgart, 1959–60).

Hegel, of course, starts with Being. But the point is that for Feuerbach Being in this context is Nature, not Idea or Thought.[3] 'Being is subject and thought is predicate.'[4] The fundamental reality is spatio-temporal Nature; consciousness and thought are secondary, derived. True, the existence of Nature can be known only by a conscious subject. But the being which distinguishes itself from Nature knows that it is not the ground of Nature. On the contrary, man knows Nature by distinguishing himself from his ground, sensible reality. 'Nature is thus the ground of man.'[5]

We can say indeed with Schleiermacher that the feeling of dependence is the ground of religion. But 'that on which man depends and feels himself to be dependent is originally nothing else but Nature'.[6] Thus the primary object of religion, if we view religion historically and not simply in the form of Christian theism, is Nature. Natural religion ranges from the deification of objects such as trees and fountains up to the idea of the Deity conceived as the physical cause of natural things. But the foundation of natural religion in all its phases is man's feeling of dependence on external sensible reality. 'The divine essence which manifests itself in Nature is nothing else but Nature which reveals and manifests itself to man and imposes itself on him as a divine being.'[7]

Man can objectify Nature only by distinguishing himself from it. And he can return upon himself and contemplate his own essence. What is this essence? 'Reason, will, heart. To a perfect man there belong the power of thought, the power of willing, the power of the heart.'[1] Reason, will and love in unity constitute the essence of man. Further, if we think any of these three perfections in itself, we think of it as unlimited. We do not conceive, for example, the power of thought as being in itself limited to this or that object. And if we think the three perfections as infinite, we have the idea of God as infinite knowledge, infinite will and infinite love. Monotheism, at least when God is endowed with moral attributes, is thus the result of man's projection of his own essence raised to infinity. 'The divine essence is nothing else but the essence of man; or, better, it is the essence of man when freed from the limitations of the individual, that is to say, actual corporeal man, objectified and venerated as an independent Being distinct from man himself.'[2]

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[1] *W*, II, p. 175.
[2] *W*, II, p. 231.
[3] Feuerbach, like Schelling, assumes that Hegel deduces existent Nature from the logical Idea. If this is not assumed, the criticism loses its point.
[4] *W*, II, p. 239.
[5] *W*, II, p. 240.
[6] *W*, VII, p. 434.
[7] *W*, VII, p. 438.

In *The Essence of Christianity* Feuerbach concentrates on the idea of God as a projection of human self-consciousness, whereas in *The Essence of Religion*, in which religion is considered historically, he lays emphasis on the feeling of dependence on Nature as the ground of religion. But he also brings the two points of view together. Man, conscious of his dependence on external reality, begins by venerating the forces of Nature and particular natural phenomena. But he does not rise to the concept of personal gods or of God without self-projection. In polytheism the qualities which differentiate man from man are deified in the form of a multiplicity of anthropomorphic deities, each with his or her peculiar characteristics. In monotheism it is that which unifies men, namely the essence of man as such, which is projected into a transcendent sphere and deified. And a powerful factor in making the transition to some form of monotheism is the consciousness that Nature not only serves man's physical needs but can also be made to serve the purpose which man freely sets before himself. For in this way he comes to think of Nature as existing for him, and so as a unity which embodies a purpose and is the product of an intelligent Creator. But in thinking the Creator man projects his own essence. And if we strip from the idea of God all that is due to this projection, we are left simply with Nature. Hence, though religion is ultimately grounded on man's feeling of dependence on Nature, the most important factor in the formation of the concept of an infinite personal Deity is man's projection of his own essence.

Now, this self-projection expresses man's alienation from himself. 'Religion is the separation of man from himself: he sets God over against himself as an opposed being. God is not what man is, and man is not what God is. God is the infinite Being, man the finite; God is perfect, man is imperfect; God is eternal, man is temporal; God is almighty, man is powerless; God is holy, man is sinful. God and man are extremes: God is the absolutely positive, the essence of all realities, while man is the negative, the essence of all nothingness.'[1] Thus by projecting his essence into a transcendent sphere and objectifying it as God man reduces himself to a pitiful, miserable sinful creature.

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[1] *W*, VI, p. 3.

[2] *W*, VI, p. 17.

In this case, of course, religion is something to be overcome. But it does not follow that religion has not played an essential role in human life. On the contrary, man's objectification of his own essence in the idea of God forms an integral stage in the explicit development of his self-awareness. For he has first to objectify his essence before he can become aware of it as *his* essence. And in the highest or most perfect form of religion, namely Christianity, this objectification reaches the point at which it calls for its own overcoming. Man is a social being, and the power of love belongs to his essence. He is an 'I' in relation to a 'Thou'. And in the Christian religion awareness of this fact finds a projected expression in the doctrine of the Trinity. Further, in the doctrine of the Incarnation, 'the Christian religion has united the word *Man* with the word *God* in the one name *God-Man*, thus making humanity an attribute of the supreme Being'.[2] What remains is to reverse this relation by making Deity an attribute of man. 'The new philosophy has, in accordance with the truth, made this attribute (humanity) the substance; it has made the predicate the subject. The new philosophy is . . . the *truth* of Christianity.'[3]

This last statement recalls to mind Hegel's view of the relation between the absolute religion and the absolute philosophy. But it is certainly not Feuerbach's intention to suggest that 'the new philosophy' can coexist with Christianity in the same mind. On the contrary, the new philosophy abandons the name of Christianity precisely because it gives the rational truth-value of the Christian religion and, in so doing, transforms it from theology into anthropology. Philosophy's elucidation of Christianity is no longer Christianity. Once a man understands that 'God' is a name for his own idealized essence projected into a transcendent sphere, he overcomes the self-alienation involved in religion. And the way then lies open to the objectification of this essence in man's own activity and social life. Man recovers faith in himself and in his own powers and future.

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[1] *W*, VI, p. 41. [2] *W*, II, p. 244. [3] *Ibid.*

The abandonment of theology involves the abandonment of historic Hegelianism. For 'the Hegelian philosophy is the last place of refuge, the last rational prop of theology'.[1] And 'he who does not give up the Hegelian philosophy does not give up theology. For the Hegelian doctrine that Nature, reality, is posited by the Idea is simply the *rational* expression of the theological doctrine that Nature has been created by God. . . .'[2] Yet for the overcoming of theology we have to make use of the Hegelian concept of self-alienation. Hegel spoke of the return of absolute Spirit to itself from its self-alienation in Nature. For this concept we must substitute that of man's return to himself. And this means 'the transformation of theology into anthropology, and its dissolution therein'.[3] Yet philosophical anthropology is itself religion. For it gives the truth of religion in the highest form that religion has attained. 'What yesterday was still religion is not religion today, and what is accounted atheism today is accounted religion tomorrow.'[4]

With the substitution of anthropology for theology man becomes his own highest object, an end to himself. But this does not mean egoism. For man is by essence a social being: he is not simply *Mensch* but *Mit-Mensch*. And the supreme principle of philosophy is 'the unity between man and man',[5] a unity which should find expression in love. 'Love is the universal law of intelligence and nature—it is nothing else but the realization of the unity of the species on the plane of feeling.'[6]

Feuerbach is obviously alive to the fact that Hegel emphasized man's social nature. But he insists that Hegel had an erroneous idea of the ground of unity in the species. In absolute idealism men are thought to be united in proportion as they become one with the life of universal spirit, interpreted as self-thinking Thought. It is thus on the level of pure thought that human unity is primarily achieved. But here again Hegel needs to be set squarely on his feet. The special nature of man is grounded on the biological level, 'on the *reality* of the *difference* between I and Thou',[7] that is, on sexual differentiation. The relation between man and woman manifests unity-in-difference and difference-in-unity. This distinction between male and female is not indeed simply a biological distinction. For it determines distinct ways of feeling and thinking

[1] *W*, II, p. 239.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *W*, II, p. 245.
[4] *W*, VI, p. 40.
[5] *W*, II, p. 319.
[6] *W*, II, p. 321.
[7] *W*, II, p. 318.

and thus affects the whole personality. Nor is it, of course, the only way in which man's social nature is manifested. But Feuerbach wishes to emphasize the fact that man's nature as *Mit-Mensch* is grounded on the fundamental reality, which is sensible reality, not pure thought. In other words, sexual differentiation shows that the individual human being is incomplete. The fact that the 'I' calls for the 'Thou' as its complement is shown in its primary and basic form in the fact that the male needs the female and the female the male.

One might expect that with this insistence on man's special nature, on the unity of the species and on love, Feuerbach would go on to develop the theme of a supranational society or to propose some form of international federation. But in point of fact he is sufficiently Hegelian to represent the State as the living unity of men and the objective expression of the consciousness of this unity. 'In the State the powers of man divide and develop only to constitute an infinite being through this division and through their reunion; many human beings, many powers are one power. The State is the essence of all realities, the State is the providence of man. . . . The true State is the unlimited, infinite, true, complete, divine Man . . . the absolute Man.'[1]

From this it follows that 'politics must become our religion',[2] though, paradoxically, atheism is a condition of this religion. Religion in the traditional sense, says Feuerbach, tends to dissolve rather than to unite the State. And the State can be for us an Absolute only if we substitute man for God, anthropology for theology. 'Man is the fundamental essence of the State. And the State is the actualized, developed and explicit totality of human nature.'[3] Justice cannot be done to this truth if we continue to project human nature into a transcendent sphere in the form of the concept of God.

The State which Feuerbach has in mind is the democratic republic. Protestantism, he remarks, put the monarch in the place of the Pope. 'The Reformation destroyed *religious* Catholicism, but in its place the modern era set *political* Catholicism'.[4] The so-called modern era has been up to now a Protestant Middle Ages. And it is only through the dissolution of the Protestant religion that we can develop the true democratic republic as the living unity of men and the concrete expression of man's essence.

If regarded from a purely theoretical standpoint, Feuerbach's

[1] *W*, II, p. 220. [2] *W*, II, p. 219. [3] *W*, II, p. 244. [4] *W*, II, p. 221.

philosophy is certainly not outstanding. For example, his attempt to dispose of theism by an account of the genesis of the idea of God is superficial. But from the historical point of view his philosophy possesses real significance. In general, it forms part of a movement away from a theological interpretation of the world to an interpretation in which man himself, considered as a social being, occupies the centre of the stage. Feuerbach's substitution of anthropology for theology is an explicit acknowledgement of this. And to a certain extent he is justified in regarding Hegelianism as a half-way house in the process of this transformation. In particular, the philosophy of Feuerbach is a stage in the movement which culminated in the dialectical materialism and the economic theory of history of Marx and Engels. True, Feuerbach's thought moves within the framework of the idea of the State as the supreme expression of social unity and of the concept of political rather than of economic man. But his transformation of idealism into materialism and his insistence on overcoming man's self-alienation as manifested in religion prepared the ground for the thought of Marx and Engels. Marx may have criticized Feuerbach severely, but he certainly owed him a debt.

3. In view of Feuerbach's preoccupation with the subject of religion the shift of emphasis in the Hegelian left wing from logical, metaphysical and religious problems to problems of a social and political nature is perhaps better illustrated by Arnold Ruge (1802–80). Ruge's first two works, written when he was more or less an orthodox Hegelian, were on aesthetics. But his interest came to centre on political and historical problems. In 1838 he founded the *Hallische Jahrbücher für deutsche Wissenschaft und Kunst*, having among his collaborators David Strauss, Feuerbach and Bruno Bauer (1809–82). In 1841 the review was renamed *Deutsche Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Kunst*, and at this time Marx began to collaborate with it. Early in 1843, however, the periodical, which had become more and more radical in tone and had aroused the hostile attention of the Prussian government, was suppressed; and Ruge moved to Paris where he founded the *Deutsch-französische Jahrbücher*. But a break between Ruge and Marx and the dispersal of other contributors brought the life of the new review to a speedy close. Ruge went to Zürich. In 1847 he returned to Germany, but after the failure of the Revolution of 1848 he crossed over into England. In his last years he became a supporter of the new German empire. He died at Brighton.

Ruge shared Hegel's belief that history is a progressive advance towards the realization of freedom, and that freedom is attained in the State, the creation of the rational General Will. He was thus prepared to give full marks to Hegel for having utilized Rousseau's concept of the *volonté generale* and for having grounded the State on the universal will which realizes itself in and through the wills of individuals. At the same time he criticized Hegel for having given an interpretation of history which was closed to the future, in the sense that it left no room for novelty. In the Hegelian system, according to Ruge, historical events and institutions were portrayed as examples or illustrations of a dialectical scheme which worked itself out with logical necessity. Hegel failed to understand the uniqueness and non-repeatable character of historical events, institutions and epochs. And his deduction of the Prussian monarchical constitution was a sign of the closed character of his thought, that is, of its lack of openness to the future, to progress, to novelty.

The basic trouble with Hegel, in Ruge's view, was that he derived the scheme of history from the system. We ought not to presuppose a rational scheme and then derive the pattern of history from it. If we do this, we inevitably end by justifying the actual state of affairs. Our task is rather that of *making* history rational, of bringing, for example, new institutions into being which will be more rational than those already in existence. In other words, in place of Hegel's predominantly speculative and theoretical attitude to history and to social and political life we need to substitute a practical and revolutionary attitude.

This does not mean that we have to abandon the idea of a teleological movement in history. But it does mean that the philosopher should endeavour to discern the movement and demands of the spirit of the time (*der Zeitgeist*) and that he should criticize existing institutions in the light of these demands. Hegel's career fell in the period after the French Revolution, but he had little understanding of the real movement of the *Zeitgeist*. He did not see, for instance, that the realization of freedom of which he talked so much could not be achieved without radical changes in the institutions which he canonized.

We can see in Ruge's attitude an attempt to combine belief in a teleological movement in history with a practical and revolutionary attitude. And his criticism of Hegel was congenial to Marx. The great idealist was primarily concerned with understanding history, with seeing the rational in the real. Ruge and Marx were concerned with making history, with understanding the world in order to change it. But Ruge refused to follow Marx in the path of communism. In his opinion Marx's idea of man was very one-sided, and he opposed to it what he called an integral humanism. It is not only man's material and economic needs which require to be satisfied but also his spiritual needs. However, the break between the two men was by no means due simply to ideological differences.

4. A counterblast to the general movement of thought in left-wing Hegelianism came from the somewhat eccentric philosopher Max Stirner (1806–56) whose real name was Johann Kaspar Schmidt. After attending the lectures of Schleiermacher and Hegel at Berlin Stirner taught in a school for a few years and then gave himself to private study. His best known work is *The Individual and His Property* (*Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, 1845).

At the beginning of this work Stirner quotes Feuerbach's statement that man is man's supreme being and Bruno Bauer's assertion that man has just been discovered. And he invites his readers to take a more careful look at this supreme being and new discovery. What do they find? What he himself finds is the ego, not the absolute ego of Fichte's philosophy but the concrete individual self, the man of flesh and blood. And the individual ego is a unique reality which seeks from the start to preserve itself and so to assert itself. For it has to preserve itself in the face of other beings which threaten, actually or potentially, its existence as an ego. In other words, the ego's concern is with itself.

It is precisely this unique individual ego which most philosophers pass over and forget. In Hegelianism the individual self was belittled in favour of absolute Thought or Spirit. Paradoxically, man was supposed to realize his true self or essence in proportion as he became a moment in the life of the universal Spirit. An abstraction was substituted for concrete reality. And Feuerbach's philosophy is tarred with the same brush. To be sure, Feuerbach is right in claiming that man should overcome the self-alienation involved in the religious attitude and rediscover himself. For in Judaism and Christianity freedom, the very essence of man, was projected outside the human being in the concept of God, and man was enslaved. He was told to deny himself and obey. But though Feuerbach is justified in his polemics against religious self-alienation and against the abstractions of Hegelianism, he fails to understand the significance of the unique individual and offers us instead the abstraction of Humanity or of absolute Man and the fulfilment of selfhood in and through the State. Similarly, even if in humanistic socialism Humanity is substituted for the Christian God and the Hegelian Absolute, the individual is still sacrificed on the altar of an abstraction. In fine, the left-wing Hegelians can be subjected to the same sort of criticism which they level against Hegel himself.

In place of such abstractions as Absolute Spirit, Humanity and the universal essence of man Stirner enthrones the unique and free individual. In his view freedom is realized through owning. And, as this unique individual, I own all that I can appropriate. This does not mean, of course, that I have in fact to make everything my property. But there is no reason why I should not do so, other than my inability to do it or my own free decision not to do it. I proceed out of and return into the 'creative nothing', and while I exist my concern is with myself alone. My endeavour should be that of expressing my unique individuality without allowing myself to be enslaved or hampered by any alleged higher power such as God or the State or by any abstraction such as Humanity or the universal Moral Law. Subservience to such fictitious entities weakens my sense of my own uniqueness.

Stirner's philosophy of egoism possesses a certain interest and significance in so far as it represents the protest of the concrete human person against the worship of the collectivity or of an abstraction. Moreover some may wish to see in it some spiritual affinity with existentialism. And there is at least some ground for this. It can hardly be said that emphasis on the theme of property is a characteristic of existentialism, but the theme of the unique free individual certainly is.[1] Stirner's philosophy has been mentioned here, however, not for any anticipation of later thought but rather as a phase in the movement of revolt against metaphysical idealism. One can say perhaps that it represents an expression of the nominalistic reaction which over-emphasis on the universal always tends to evoke. It is, of course, an exaggeration. A healthy insistence on the uniqueness of the individual self is coupled with a fantastic philosophy of egoism. But the protest against an exaggeration very often takes the form of an exaggeration in the opposite direction.

Apart, however, from the fact that Stirner was far from being a great philosopher, his thought was out of harmony with the *Zeitgeist*, and it is not surprising if Marx saw in it the expression of the alienated isolated individual in a doomed bourgeois society. Marx and Engels may have incorporated in their philosophy the very features which Stirner so disliked, substituting the economic class for Hegel's national State, the class war for the dialectic of States, and Humanity for absolute Spirit. But the fact remains that their philosophy was, for good or ill, to possess a great historical importance, whereas Max Stirner is remembered only as an eccentric thinker whose philosophy has little significance except when it is seen as a moment in the perennially recurrent protest of the free individual against the voraciously devouring universal.

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[1] Stirner's obscure remarks about 'creative nothing' recall to mind certain aspects of Heidegger's thought.

CHAPTER XVI

THE TRANSFORMATION OF IDEALISM (2)

Introductory remarks—The lives and writings of Marx and Engels and the development of their thought—Materialism—Dialectical materialism—The materialist conception of history—Comments on the thought of Marx and Engels.

1. CONFRONTED with the thought of Marx and Engels the historian of philosophy finds himself in a rather difficult situation. On the one hand the contemporary influence and importance of their philosophy is so obvious that the not uncommon practice of according it little more than a passing mention in connection with the development of left-wing Hegelianism scarcely seems to be justified. Indeed, it might seem more appropriate to treat it as one of the great modern visions of human life and history. On the other hand it would be a mistake to allow oneself to be so hypnotized by the indubitable importance of Communism in the modern world as to tear its basic ideology from its historical setting in nineteenth-century thought. Marxism is indeed a living philosophy in the sense that it inspired and gave impetus and coherence to a force which, for good or ill, exercises a vast influence in the modern world. It is accepted, doubtless with varying degrees of conviction, by a great many people today. At the same time it is arguable that its continued life as a more or less unified system is primarily due to its association with an extra-philosophical factor, a powerful social-political movement, the contemporary importance of which nobody would deny. It is true, of course, that the connection is not accidental. That is to say, Communism did not adopt a system of ideas which lay outside the process of its own birth and development. But the point is that it is the Communist Party which has saved Marxism from undergoing the fate of other nineteenth-century philosophies by turning it into a faith. And the historian of nineteenth-century philosophy is justified in dwelling primarily on the thought of Marx and Engels in its historical setting and in prescinding from its contemporary importance as the basic creed of a Party, however powerful this Party may be.

The present writer has therefore decided to confine his attention to some aspects of the thought of Marx and Engels themselves and to neglect, except for some brief references, the subsequent development of their philosophy as well as its impact on the modern world through the medium of the Communist Party. When it is a question of an inevitably somewhat overcrowded account of philosophy in Germany during the nineteenth century, this restriction does not really stand in need of any defence. But as the importance of Communism in our day may lead the reader to think that a more extended treatment would have been desirable and even that this volume should have culminated in the philosophy of Marx, it may be as well to point out that to depict Marxism as the apex and point of confluence of nineteenth-century German philosophical thought would be to give a false historical picture under the determining influence of the political situation in the world today.

2. Karl Marx (1818–83) was of Jewish descent. His father, a liberal Jew, became a Protestant in 1816, and Marx himself was baptized in 1824. But his father's religious convictions were by no means profound, and he was brought up in the traditions of Kantian rationalism and political liberalism. After his school education at Trier he studied at the universities of Bonn and Berlin. At Berlin he associated with the Young Hegelians, the members of the so-called *Doktorklub*, especially with Bruno Bauer. But he soon became dissatisfied with the purely theoretical attitude of left-wing Hegelianism, and this dissatisfaction was intensified when in 1842 he began to collaborate in editing at Cologne the newly-founded *Rheinische Zeitung*, of which he soon became the chief editor. For his work brought him into closer contact with concrete political, social and economic problems, and he became convinced that theory must issue in practical activity, in action, if it is to be effective. This may indeed seem to be obvious, even a tautology. But the point is that Marx was already turning away from the Hegelian notion that it is the philosopher's business simply to understand the world and that we can trust, as it were, to the working out of the Idea or of Reason. Criticism of traditional ideas and existing institutions is not sufficient to change them unless it issues in political and social action. In fact, if religion signifies man's alienation from himself, so also in its own way does German philosophy. For it divorces man from reality, making him a mere spectator of the process in which he is involved.

At the same time reflection on the actual situation led Marx to adopt a critical attitude towards the Hegelian theory of the State. And it was apparently in this period, between 1841 and 1843, that he wrote a criticism of Hegel's concept of the State under the title *Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts.* According to Hegel objective spirit reaches its highest expression in the State, the family and civil society being moments or phases in the dialectical development of the idea of the State. The State, as the full expression of the Idea in the form of objective Spirit, is for Hegel the 'subject', while the family and civil society are 'predicates'. But this is to put things the wrong way round. The family and civil society, not the State, are the 'subject': they form the basic realities in human society. Hegel's State is an abstract universal, a governmental and bureaucratic institution which stands apart from and over against the life of the people. In fact there is a contradiction between public and private concerns. Transposing on to the political plane Feuerbach's idea of religion as an expression of man's self-alienation, Marx argues that in the State as conceived by Hegel man alienates his true nature. For man's true life is conceived as existing in the State whereas in point of fact the State stands over against individual human beings and their interests. And this contradiction or gulf between public and private concerns will last until man becomes socialized man and the political State, exalted by Hegel, gives way to a true democracy in which the social organism is no longer something external to man and his real interests.

Marx also attacks Hegel's idea of insistence on private property as the basis of civil society. But he has not yet arrived at an explicit communistic theory. He appeals rather for the abolition of the monarchy and the development of social democracy. The idea, however, of a classless economic society is implicit in his criticism of Hegel's political State and in his notion of true democracy. Further, his concern with man as such and his internationalism are also implicit in his criticism of Hegel.

Early in 1843 the life of the *Rheinische Zeitung* was brought to a close by the political authorities, and Marx went to Paris where he collaborated with Ruge in editing the *Deutsch-französische Jahrbücher.* In the first and only number which appeared he published two articles, one a criticism of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right,* the other a review of essays by Bruno Bauer on Judaism. In the first of these articles Marx refers to Feuerbach's analysis of religion as a self-alienation on man's part and asks why it occurs.

Why does man create the illusory world of the supernatural and project into it his own true self? The answer is that religion reflects or expresses the distortion in human society. Man's political, social and economic life is incapable of fulfilling his true self, and he creates the illusory world of religion and seeks his happiness therein, so that religion is man's self-administered opium. Inasmuch as religion prevents man from seeking his happiness where alone it can be found, it must indeed be attacked. But a criticism of religion is of little value if it is divorced from political and social criticism, for it attacks the effect while neglecting the cause. Further, criticism by itself is in any case inadequate. We cannot change society simply by philosophizing about it. Thought must issue in action, that is, in social revolution. For philosophical criticism raises problems which can be solved only in this way. In Marx's language philosophy must be overcome, this overcoming being also the realization (*Verwirklichkung*) of philosophy. It must leave the plane of theory and penetrate to the masses. And when it does so, it is no longer philosophy but takes the form of a social revolution which must be the work of the most oppressed class, namely the proletariat. By abolishing private property consciously and explicitly the proletariat will emancipate itself and, together with itself, the whole of society. For egoism and social injustice are bound up with the institution of private property.

In certain obvious respects Marx's way of thinking is influenced by Hegel's. For example, the idea of alienation and its overcoming is of Hegelian origin. But it is equally obvious that he rejects the notion of history as the self-manifestation or self-expression of the Absolute defined as Spirit. His concept of theory as realizing itself through practice or action reminds us indeed of Hegel's concept of the concrete self-unfolding of the Idea. But the fundamental reality is for him, as for Feuerbach, Nature rather than the Idea or *Logos*. And in his political and economic manuscripts of 1844 Marx emphasizes the difference between his own position and that of Hegel.

True, Marx retains a profound admiration for Hegel. He praises him for having recognized the dialectical character of all process and for having seen that man develops or realizes himself through his own activity, through self-alienation and its overcoming. At the same time Marx sharply criticizes Hegel for his idealist concept of man as self-consciousness and for having conceived human activity as being primarily the spiritual activity of thought. Hegel did indeed look on man as expressing himself outwardly in the objective order and then returning to himself on a higher plane. But his idealism involved the tendency to do away with the objective order by interpreting it simply in relation to consciousness. Hence the process of self-alienation and its overcoming was for him a process in and for thought rather than in objective reality.

Whether Marx does justice to Hegel may be open to question. But in any case he opposes to the primacy of the Idea the primacy of sensible reality. And he maintains that the fundamental form of human work is not thought but manual labour in which man alienates himself in the objective product of his labour, a product which, in society as at present constituted, does not belong to the producer. This alienation cannot be overcome by a process of thought in which the idea of private property is regarded as a moment in the dialectical movement to a higher idea. It can be overcome only through a social revolution which abolishes private property and effects the transition to communism. The dialectical movement is not a movement of thought about reality: it is the movement of reality itself, the historical process. And the negation of the negation (the abolition of private property) involves the positive occurrence of a new historical situation in which man's self-alienation is overcome in actual fact and not simply for thought.

This insistence on the unity of thought and action and on the overcoming of man's self-alienation through social revolution and the transition to communism, an insistence which shows itself in the articles of 1843 and the manuscripts of 1844, can be regarded, in part at least, as the result of a marriage between left-wing Hegelianism and the socialist movement with which Marx came into contact at Paris. Dissatisfied with the predominantly critical and theoretical attitude of the Young Hegelians, Marx found at Paris a much more dynamic attitude. For besides studying the classical English economists, such as Adam Smith and Ricardo, he made the personal acquaintance of German socialists in exile and of French socialists such as Proudhon and Louis Blanc, as well as of revolutionaries such as the Russian Bakunin. And even if he had already shown an inclination to emphasize the need for action, this personal contact with the socialist movement had a profound influence upon his mind. At the same time he came to the conclusion that though the socialists were more in touch with reality than were the German philosophers, they failed to make an adequate appraisal of the situation and its demands. They needed an intellectual instrument to give unity of vision, purpose and method. And though Marx spoke of the overcoming of philosophy and did not regard his own theory of history as a philosophical system, it is clear not only that this is in fact what it became but also that it owed much to a transformation of Hegelianism.

The most important personal contact, however, which Marx made at Paris was his meeting with Engels who arrived in the city from England in 1844. The two men had indeed met one another a couple of years before, but the period of their friendship and collaboration dates from 1844.

Friedrich Engels (1820–95) was the son of a rich industrialist, and he took up a position in his father's firm at an early age. While doing his military service at Berlin in 1841 he associated with the circle of Bruno Bauer and adopted an Hegelian position. The writings of Feuerbach, however, turned his mind away from idealism to materialism. In 1842 he went to Manchester to work for his father's firm and interested himself in the ideas of the early English socialists. It was at Manchester that he wrote his study of the working classes in England (*Die Lage der arbeitenden Klassen in England*) which was published in Germany in 1845. He also composed for the *Deutsch-französische Jahrbücher* his *Outlines of a Critique of National Economy* (*Umrisse einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie*).

An immediate result of the meeting between Marx and Engels in Paris was their collaboration in writing *The Holy Family* (*Die heilige Family*, 1845) directed against the idealism of Bruno Bauer and his associates who appeared to think that 'criticism' was a transcendent being which had found its embodiment in the 'Holy Family', namely the members of Bauer's circle. In opposition to the idealist emphasis on thought and consciousness Marx and Engels maintained that the forms of the State, law, religion and morality were determined by the stages of the class-war.

At the beginning of 1845 Marx was expelled from France and went to Brussels where he composed eleven theses against Feuerbach, ending with the famous statement that whereas philosophers have only tried to understand the world in different ways, the real need is to change it. When he had been joined by Engels the two men collaborated in writing *The German Ideology* (*Die deutsche Ideologie*) which remained unpublished until 1932. The work is a criticism of contemporary German philosophy as represented by Feuerbach, Bauer and Stirner and of the German socialists, and it is important for its outline of the materialist conception of history. The fundamental historical reality is social man in his activity in Nature. This material or sensible activity is man's basic life, and it is life which determines consciousness, not, as the idealists imagine, the other way round. In other words, the fundamental factor in history is the process of material or economic production. And the formation of social classes, the warfare between classes and, indirectly, the forms of political life, of law and of ethics are all determined by the varying successive modes of production. Further, the whole historical process is moving dialectically towards the proletarian revolution and the coming of communism, not the self-knowledge of absolute Spirit or any such philosophical illusion.

In 1847 Marx published in French his *Poverty of Philosophy* (*Misère de la philosophie*), a reply to Proudhon's *Philosophy of Poverty* (*Philosophie de la misère*). In it he attacks the notion of fixed categories, eternal truths and natural laws which in his view is characteristic of bourgeois economics. For example, after accepting the description of property as theft Proudhon goes on to envisage a socialist system which will strip property of this character. And this shows that he regards the institution of private property as an eternal or natural value and as a fixed economic category. But there are no such values and categories. Nor is there any philosophy which can be worked out *a priori* and then applied to the understanding of history and society. There can be only a critical knowledge based on the analysis of concrete historical situations. In Marx's view the dialectic is not a law of thought which is expressed in reality: it is immanent in the actual process of reality and is reflected in thought when the mind correctly analyses concrete situations.

Faithful, however, to his idea of the unity of thought and action, Marx was by no means content to criticize the shortcomings of German ideologists such as Bauer and Feuerbach and of socialists such as Proudhon. He joined the Communist League and in 1847 was commissioned, together with Engels, to draw up a summary statement of its principles and aims. This was the famous *Communist Manifesto* or *Manifesto of the Communist Party* which appeared in London early in 1848, shortly before the beginning of the series of revolutions and insurrections which took place in Europe during that year. When the active phase of the revolutionary movement started in Germany, Marx and Engels returned to their native land. But after the failure of the revolution Marx, who had been brought to trial and acquitted, retired to Paris, only to be expelled from France for the second time in 1849. He went to London where he remained for the rest of his life, receiving financial aid from his friend Engels.

In 1859 Marx published at Berlin his *Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy* (*Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie*) which is important, as is also the *Manifesto*, for its statement of the materialist conception of history. And, again uniting action with theory, he founded in 1864 the International Working Men's Association, commonly known as the First International. Its life, however, was beset with difficulties. For example, Marx and his friends considered that it was necessary for authority to be centralized in the hands of the committee if the proletariat was to be led successfully to victory, whereas others, such as Bakunin the anarchist, refused to accept a dictatorship of the central committee. Besides, Marx soon found himself at loggerheads with the French and German socialist groups. After the congress at The Hague in 1872 the central committee was transferred to New York at the instance of Marx. And the First International did not long survive.

The first volume of Marx's famous work *Capital* (*Das Kapital*) appeared at Hamburg in 1867. But the author did not continue the publication. He died in March 1883, and the second and third volumes were published posthumously by Engels in 1885 and 1894 respectively. Further manuscripts were published in several parts by K. Kautsky in 1905–10. In the work Marx maintains that the bourgeois or capitalist system necessarily involves a class antagonism. For the value of a community is crystallized labour, as it were. That is to say, its value represents the labour put into it. Yet the capitalist appropriates to himself part of this value, paying the worker a wage which is less than the value of the commodity produced. He thus defrauds or exploits the worker. And this exploitation cannot be overcome except by the abolition of capitalism. Marx refers, of course, to contemporary abuses in the economic system, such as the practice of keeping wages as low as possible. But exploitation should not be understood only in this sense. For if the so-called labour theory of value is once accepted, it necessarily follows that the capitalist system involves exploitation or defrauding of the worker. And the payment of high wages would not alter this fact.

In 1878 Engels published as a book, commonly known as *Anti-Dühring*, some articles which he had written against the then influential German socialist Eugen Dühring. One chapter was written by Marx. Engels also occupied himself with composing his *Dialectics of Nature* (*Dialektik der Natur*). But he was too taken up with bringing out the second and third volumes of Marx's *Capital* and with efforts to resuscitate the International to be able to finish the work. And it was not published until 1925, when it appeared at Moscow. Engels lacked his friend's philosophical training, but he had wide interests, and it was he rather than Marx who applied dialectical materialism to the philosophy of Nature. The results were not perhaps such as to enhance Engels' reputation as a philosopher among those who do not accept his writings as part of a creed.

Of Engels' other publications mention should be made of his work on *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (*Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats*, 1884) in which he tries to derive the origin of class divisions and of the State from the institution of private property. In 1888 a series of articles by Engels were published together as a book under the title *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of the Classical German Philosophy* (*Ludwig Feuerbach und der Ausgang der klassischen deutschen Philosophie*). Engels died of cancer in August 1895.

3. Whether or not Hegel meant that the Concept (*der Begriff*) or logical Idea is a subsistent reality which externalizes or alienates itself in Nature, is a disputable question. But both Marx and Engels understood him in this sense, namely as holding that the *Logos* is the primary reality which expresses itself in its opposite, namely unconscious Nature, and then returns to itself as Spirit, thus actualizing, as it were, its own essence or definition. Thus in his preface to the second German edition of *Capital* Marx states that 'for Hegel the thought-process, which he goes so far as to transform into an independent Subject under the name "Idea", is the demiurge of the real, the real being simply its external appearance'.[1] And in his book on Feuerbach Engels asserts that 'with Hegel the dialectic is the self-development of the Concept. The absolute Concept is not only present from eternity—who knows where?—but it is also the real living soul of the whole existent world. . . . It alienates itself in the sense that it transforms itself into Nature where, without consciousness of itself and

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[1] *Das Kapital*, I, p. xvii (Hamburg, 1922); *Capital*, II, p. 873 (London, Everyman).

disguised as natural necessity, it goes through a new process of development and finally comes again to self-consciousness in man'.[1]

As against this metaphysical idealism Marx and Engels accepted Feuerbach's thesis that the primary reality is Nature. Thus Engels speaks of the liberating effect of Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*, which restored materialism to its throne. 'Nature exists independently of all philosophy; it is the basis on which we human beings, ourselves products of Nature, have grown. Apart from Nature and human beings nothing exists; and the higher beings which our religious fantasy created are only the fantastic reflection of our own essence . . . the enthusiasm was general; we were all for the moment followers of Feuerbach. One can see in the *Holy Family* how enthusiastically Marx welcomed the new conception, and how much he was influenced by it, in spite of all critical reservations'.[2]

In this passage Engels speaks of the re-enthronement of materialism. And both Marx and Engels were, of course, materialists. But this obviously does not mean that they denied the reality of mind or that they identified the processes of thought in a crude manner with material processes. What materialism meant for them was in the first place the denial that there is any Mind or Idea which is prior to Nature and expresses itself in Nature. It was certainly not equivalent to denying that human beings have minds. In his *Dialectics of Nature* Engels speaks of the law of the transformation of quantity into quality, and *vice versa*, as the law by which changes in Nature take place.[3] A transformation of this kind occurs when a series of quantitative changes is succeeded by an abrupt qualitative change. Thus when matter has reached a certain pattern of complicated organization mind emerges as a new qualitative factor.

To be sure, the question of the power of the mind is left somewhat obscure by Marx and Engels. In the preface to his *Critique of Political Economy* Marx makes the famous statement that 'it is not the consciousness of human beings which determines their being, but it is, on the contrary, their social being which determines their consciousness.'[1] And Engels remarks that 'we conceived the concepts in our heads once more from a materialist point of view as copies of real things, instead of conceiving real things as copies of this or that stage of the absolute Concept'.[2] And such passages tend to suggest that human thought is no more than a copy or reflection of material economic conditions or of the processes of Nature. In other words, they tend to suggest the passive character of the human mind. But we have already seen that in his theses against Feuerbach Marx asserts that whereas philosophers have only tried to understand the world, it is man's business to change it. Hence it is not really surprising if in the first volume of *Capital* we find him comparing the human worker with the spider and the bee and remarking that even the worst builder can be distinguished from the best bee by the fact that the former conceives the product of his work before he constructs it whereas the latter does not. In the human worker there is the will which has an end in view and which externalizes itself.[3] Indeed, if Marx and Engels wish to maintain, as they do, the need for revolutionary activity, for correctly analysing the situation and acting accordingly, they obviously cannot maintain at the same time that the mind is no more than a kind of pool on the surface of which natural processes and economic conditions are passively mirrored. When they are engaged in setting Hegel on his feet, that is, in substituting materialism for idealism, they tend to stress the copy-idea of human concepts and thought-processes. But when they are speaking of the need for social revolution and for its preparation, they clearly have to attribute to the human mind and will an active role. Their utterances may not be always perfectly consistent, but their materialism is basically an assertion of the priority of matter, not a denial of the reality of mind.

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[1] *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 44 (Stuttgart, 1888); *Ludwig Feuerbach*, edited by C. P. Dutt with an introduction by L. Rudas, p. 53 (London, no date).

[2] *Ludwig Feuerbach*, pp. 12–13 (p. 28). When a translated work is referred to more than once, on all occasions but the first I give the pagination of the translation in brackets, without repeating the title.

[3] It is true that in the *Science of Logic* Hegel passes from the category of quality to that of quantity, but when dealing with measure he speaks of nodal points at which a series of quantitative variations is succeeded by an abrupt qualitative change, a leap. This is succeeded in turn by further quantitative variations until a new nodal point is reached.

4. Although, however, Marx and Engels regarded their materialism as a counterblast to Hegel's idealism, they certainly did not look on themselves as being simply opponents of Hegel. For they recognized their indebtedness to him for the idea of the dialectical process of reality, that is, a process by way of negation followed by a negation of the negation, which is also an affirmation of a higher stage. Another way of putting the same thing is to say

[1] *Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie*, p. xi (Stuttgart, 1897); *Marx-Engels: Selected Works*, 1, p. 363 (London, 1958).

[2] *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 45 (p. 54).

[3] *Das Kapital*, 1, p. 140 (1, pp. 169–70).

that process or development takes the form of the contradiction of an existing situation or state of affairs, followed by the contradiction of the contradiction, this contradiction being an overcoming of the first. It is not so much a question of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, as of negation and its negation, though the second negation can be regarded as in some sense a 'synthesis', inasmuch as it is a transition to a higher stage in the dialectical process.

This idea of development as a dialectical process is essential to the thought of Marx and Engels. Obviously, a man can accept the thesis of the priority of matter to mind and some form of what is now called emergent evolution without thereby being a Marxist. The materialism of Marx and Engels is dialectical materialism, to use the descriptive term which is now in general use, even if Marx himself did not employ it.

Marx and Engels were indeed at pains to distinguish between their conception of the dialectic and that of Hegel. In their view Hegel, having seen that thought moves dialectically, hypostatized this process as the process of absolute Thought, the self-development of the Idea. Thus the movement of the dialectic in the world and in human history was regarded by Hegel as the reflection or phenomenal expression of the movement of Thought. For Marx and Engels, however, the dialectical movement is found first of all in reality, that is to say, in Nature and history. The dialectical movement of human thought is simply a reflection of the dialectical process of reality. And this reversal of the relation between thought and reality was for them an essential part of the business of setting Hegel on his feet. At the same time Marx and Engels made no secret of the fact that the idea of the dialectic was derived from Hegel. Hence they regarded their materialism as being essentially a post-Hegelian materialism, and not as a mere return to an earlier type of materialist theory.

Now, though Marx affirms with Feuerbach the priority of matter to mind, he is not really interested in Nature as such, considered apart from man. Sometimes indeed he seems to imply that Nature does not exist except for man. But this must not be taken as meaning that Nature possesses no ontological reality except as object of consciousness. It would be absurd to interpret Marx as an idealist. What he means is that Nature first exists for man when man differentiates himself from it, though at the same time he recognizes a relation between himself and Nature. An animal is a natural product, and we see it as related to Nature. But the animal is not conscious of these relations as such: they do not exist 'for it'. Hence Nature cannot be said to exist 'for the animal'. With the emergence of consciousness, however, and the subject-object relation Nature begins to exist for man. And this is essential for what we may call the becoming of man. To be man, man must objectify himself. And he cannot do so, except by distinguishing himself from Nature.

But man is orientated towards Nature in the sense that he has needs which can be satisfied only through objects other than himself. And Nature is orientated towards man in the sense that it is the means of satisfying these needs. Further, man's satisfaction of his needs involves activity or work on his part. And in a sense the spontaneous satisfaction of a basic physical need by appropriating a ready-made object, so to speak, is work. But it is not specifically human work or activity, not at least if it is considered simply as a physical act. A man may, for example, stoop down and drink from a stream to quench his thirst. But so do many animals. Work becomes specifically human when man consciously transforms a natural object to satisfy his needs, and when he employs means or instruments to do so. In other words, the fundamental form of human work and man's fundamental relation to Nature is his productive activity, his conscious production of the means of satisfying his needs. Man is basically economic man, though this is not to say that he cannot be anything but economic man.

Man cannot, however, objectify himself and become man unless he is also object for another. In other words, man is a social being: a relation to his fellows is essential to his being as man. And the basic form of society is the family. We can say, therefore, that the fundamental reality to which Marx directs his attention is productive man as standing in a twofold relation, to Nature and to other human beings. Or, inasmuch as the term 'productive man' already implies a relation to Nature, we can say that the fundamental reality considered by Marx is productive man in society.

For Marx, therefore, man is basically not a contemplative but an active being, this activity being primarily the material one of production. And the relations between man and Nature are not static but changing relations. He uses means of production to satisfy his needs, and therefore fresh needs present themselves, leading to a further development in the means of production. Further, corresponding to each stage in the development of means of production for the satisfaction of man's needs there are social relations between men. And the dynamic interaction between the means or forces of production and the social relations between men constitute the basis of history. Speaking of man's basic physical needs Marx asserts that 'the first historical fact is the production of the means which enable man to satisfy these needs'.[1] But, as we have seen, this leads to the appearance of fresh needs, to a development in the means of production and to new sets of social relations. Hence the so-called first historical fact contains in itself, as it were in germ, the whole history of man. And this history is for Marx the 'locus', so to speak, of the dialectic. But an account of the dialectic of history according to Marx is best reserved for the next section. It is sufficient to note here that his theory of history is materialist in the sense that the basic factor in history is for him man's economic activity, his activity of production to satisfy his physical needs.

Attention has already been drawn to the fact that Engels extended the dialectic to Nature itself, thus developing what may be called a philosophy of Nature. And there has been some dispute about whether this extension was compatible with the attitude of Marx. Of course, if one assumes that for Marx Nature exists for us only as the field for transformation by human work and that the dialectical movement is confined to history, which presupposes a dynamic relation between man and his natural environment, the extension of the dialectic to Nature in itself would constitute not only a novelty but also a change in the Marxist conception of the dialectic. There might perhaps be a dialectical movement in the development of man's scientific knowledge, but this movement could hardly be attributed to Nature in itself, considered apart from man. It would not be merely a case of Marx having concentrated on human history to the practical exclusion of a philosophy of Nature. It would be a case of an exclusion in principle. But it must be remembered that in Marxism the dialectical movement of history is not the expression of the interior movement of absolute Thought: it is the movement of reality itself. It can be reproduced in the human mind, but in the first instance it is the movement of objective reality. Unless, therefore, we choose to press certain of Marx's utterances to the extent of turning him into an idealist, it does not seem to me that his position excludes in principle the notion of a dialectic of Nature. Moreover, Marx was well aware that his friend was working at a dialectic of Nature, and he appears to have approved or at any rate not to have shown disapproval. So even if it is arguable that Engels was unfaithful to the thought of Marx and that he was laying the foundation of a mechanistic version of dialectical materialism, in which the movement of history would be regarded as simply a continuation of the necessary movement of autodynamic matter, I should not care to commit myself to the assertion that the extension of the dialectic to Nature in itself was excluded by Marx. Given some of his statements, it may be that he ought to have excluded it. But it does not appear that he did so in point of fact.

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[1] *Deutsche Ideologie*, *W*, III, p. 28; *The German Ideology*, p. 16 (Parts I and III, translated by W. Lough and C. P. Magill, London, 1942). In references *W* signifies the edition of the *Works* of Marx and Engels published by Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1957 f.

However this may be, in what he calls his 'recapitulation of mathematics and the natural sciences'[1] Engels was struck by the fact that in Nature nothing is fixed and static but that all is in movement, change, development. And, as he tells us himself, he was particularly impressed by three factors; first, the discovery of the cell, through the multiplication and differentiation of which plant and animal bodies have developed; secondly, the law of the transformation of energy; and, thirdly, Darwin's statement of the theory of evolution. Reflecting on Nature as revealed by contemporary science Engels came to the conclusion that 'in Nature the same dialectical laws of movement assert themselves in the confusion of innumerable changes which govern the apparent contingency of events in history'.[2]

In his *Dialectics of Nature*[3] Engels summarizes these laws as those of the transformation of quantity into quality, of the mutual penetration of opposites and of the negation of the negation. Some often-quoted examples of this last law, the negation of the negation, are to be found in *Anti-Dühring*. Engels speaks, for instance, of the barley-seed which is said to be negated when it sprouts and the plant begins to grow. The plant then produces a multiplicity of seeds and is itself negated. Thus as 'result of this negation of the negation we have again the original barley-seed, though not as such but tenfold, twentyfold or thirtyfold'.[4] Similarly, the larva or caterpillar negates the egg out of which it comes, is transformed in the course of time into a butterfly and is then itself negated in its death.

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[1] *Anti-Dühring*, p. xv (Stuttgart, 1919); *Anti-Dühring*, p. 17 (London, 1959, 2nd edition).

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Dialektik der Natur*, p. 53 (Berlin, 1952); *Dialectics of Nature*, p. 83 (London, 1954).

[4] *Anti-Dühring*, p. 138 (p. 187).

Whether logical terms such as 'negation' and 'contradiction' are appropriate in this context is, to put it mildly, disputable. But we need not labour this point. Instead we can note that Engels draws an important conclusion in regard to human thought and knowledge from the nature of the twofold field of application of the dialectic, namely Nature and human history.[1] In his view it was Hegel's great discovery that the world is a complex not of finished things but of processes. And it is true both of Nature and of human history that each is a process or complex of processes. From this it follows that human knowledge, as a mirror of this twofold reality, is itself a process which does not and cannot reach a fixed and absolute system of truth. Hegel saw that 'truth lay in the process of knowing itself, in the long historical development of science which rises from lower to ever higher levels of knowledge without ever arriving, through the discovery of a so-called absolute truth, to the point where it can proceed no further, where nothing remains but to lay one's hands on one's lap and wonder at the absolute truth which has been attained'.[2] There is not and cannot be an absolute system of philosophy which only needs to be learned and accepted. Indeed, inasmuch as absolute truth is precisely what philosophers have had in view, we can say that with Hegel philosophy comes to an end. Instead we have a dialectically-advancing progressive scientific knowledge of reality which is always open to further change and development.

Like Marx, therefore, Engels attacks the notion of 'eternal truths'. He finds himself compelled to admit that there are truths which nobody can doubt without being considered mad; for example, that 'two and two make four, that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, that Paris lies in France, that a man who eats nothing dies of hunger and so on'.[3] But such truths, says Engels, are trivialities or commonplaces. And nobody would dignify them with the solemn title of 'eternal truths' unless he wished to draw from their existence the conclusion that in the field of human history there is an eternal moral law, an eternal essence of justice, and so on. But it is precisely this sort of conclusion which is erroneous. Just as hypotheses in physics and biology are subject to revision and even to revolutionary change, so is morality.

[1] Strictly speaking, there are for Engels three fields of application. 'Dialectics is nothing else but the science of the general laws of movement and development in Nature, human society and thought'; *Anti-Dühring*, p. 144 (p. 193).

[2] *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 4 (p. 21).

[3] *Anti-Dühring*, p. 81 (p. 122).

Marx and Engels, therefore, did not present their interpretation of reality as being the absolute and final system of philosophy. True, they regarded it as science rather than as speculative philosophy. And this means, of course, that they regarded it as supplanting all previous interpretations, whether idealist or materialist. At the same time science was not for them something which could ever attain a fixed and final form. If reality is a dialectical process, so is human thought, in so far, that is to say, as it reflects reality and does not take refuge in an illusory world of eternal truths and fixed essences.

Taken by itself, this denial of eternal truths, stable positions and final solutions suggests that a detached attitude towards their philosophy would be the appropriate one for Marx and Engels to maintain. But they did not look on it as being simply a theoretical exercise in interpreting the world and history. And it was precisely the detached, theoretical attitude which they decried in Hegel. But the implications of their view of dialectical materialism as a practical instrument or weapon is a topic which must be left aside for the moment.

5. As we have seen, the Marxist theory of history is materialist in the sense that the fundamental situation is depicted as a relation between man, considered as a material being, and Nature: it is man producing by his physical activity the means of satisfying his basic needs. But we must add that historical materialism does not mean only this. It means in addition that man's productive activity determines, directly or indirectly, his political life, his law, his morality, his religion, his art, his philosophy. In the present context materialism does not involve, as has been already remarked, denying the reality of mind or consciousness. Nor does it involve denying all value to the cultural activities which depend on mind. But it maintains that the cultural superstructure in general depends on and is in some sense determined by the economic substructure.

In the economic substructure Marx distinguishes two elements, the material forces of production and the productive relations, the second element depending upon the first. 'In the social production of their life human beings enter into determinate necessary relations which are independent of their will, productive relations [*Produktionsverhältnisse*] which correspond with a determinate stage in the development of their material forces of production [*Produktivkräfte*]. The totality of these productive relations forms the economic structure of society'.[1] In this passage the economic structure of a society is indeed identified with the totality of its productive relations. But inasmuch as these relations are said to correspond with a certain level of development of the productive forces of the society in question, and inasmuch as the emergence of conflicts between the productive forces and the productive relations in a given society is an essential feature in Marx's picture of human history, it is obvious that we must distinguish two main elements in the economic structure of society, a structure which is also described by Marx as a mode of production (*Produktionsweise*).

The term 'material forces of production' (or 'material productive powers') obviously covers all the material things which are used by man as artificial instruments in his productive activity, that is, in the satisfaction of his physical needs, from primitive flint instruments up to the most complicated modern machinery. It also includes natural forces in so far as they are used by man in the process of production. And the term can apparently also cover all such objects as are required for productive activity, even if they do not enter into it directly.[2]

Now, if the term is applied exclusively to things distinct from man himself, man is obviously presupposed. Marx tends to speak of the forces of production as doing this or that, but he is not so stupid as to suppose that these forces develop themselves without any human agency. 'The first condition of all human history is naturally the existence of living human individuals.'[3] And in the *Communist Manifesto* he speaks of the bourgeoisie as revolutionizing the instruments of production and thereby the productive relations. However, in the *German Ideology* he remarks that the production of life, whether of one's own life by work or of that of another through procreation, always involves a social relation, in the sense of the collaboration of several individuals. And after observing that it follows from this that a given mode of production is always linked to a given mode of collaboration, he asserts that this mode of collaboration is itself a 'productive force'.[4] He means, of course, that the social relation between men in the process of production can itself react on men's needs and on the productive forces. But if the mode of collaboration in the labour-process can be reckoned as a productive force, there seems to be no reason why, for example, the proletariat should not be accounted a productive force, even if the term is generally used by Marx for instruments or means of production rather than for man himself.[1] In any case it is notoriously difficult to pin him down to a precise and universal use of such terms.

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[1] *Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie*, p. x (I, p. 363).

[2] Cf. *Das Kapital*, I, p. 143 (I, pp. 172–3)

[3] *Deutsche Ideologie*, *W*, III, p. 20 (p. 7).

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 30 (p. 18).

The term 'productive relations' means above all property-relations. Indeed, in the *Critique of Political Economy* we are told that 'property relations' (*Eigentumsverhältnisse*) is simply a juristic expression for 'productive relations'.[2] However, in general the term 'productive relations' refers to the social relations between men as involved in the labour-process. As we have seen, these relations are said to depend on the stage of development of the productive forces. And the two together constitute the economic substructure.

This economic substructure is said to condition the superstructure. 'The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and mental (*geistigen*) life-process in general. It is not the consciousness of human beings which determines their being, but it is, on the contrary, their social being which determines their consciousness.'[3] Obviously, the statement that the economic substructure 'conditions' (*bedingt*) the superstructure is ambiguous. The statement is not at all startling if it is taken in a very weak sense. It becomes interesting only in proportion as the meaning of the term 'conditions' approaches 'determines'. And it has indeed frequently been taken in this strong sense. Thus it has been maintained, for example, that the celestial hierarchy (from God down to the choirs of angels and the company of the saints) of mediaeval theology was simply an ideological reflection of the mediaeval feudal structure which was itself determined by economic factors. Again, the rise of the bourgeoisie and the arrival of the capitalist mode of production were reflected in the transition from Catholicism to Protestantism. According to Engels the Calvinist doctrine of predestination reflected the supposed economic fact that in commercial competition success or failure does not depend on personal merits but on incomprehensible and uncontrollable economic powers. Yet it was also Engels who protested that the doctrine of Marx and himself had been misunderstood. They had never meant that man's ideas are simply a pale reflection of economic conditions in the sense that the relation of dependence is exclusively unilateral. Ideas (that is to say, men inspired by ideas) can react on the substructure which has conditioned them.

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[1] In *The Poverty of Philosophy* Marx says explicitly that the revolutionary proletariat is the greatest of all productive forces. See below, p. 328.

[2] *Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie*, p. x (1, p. 363).

[3] *Ibid.*, p. xi (1, p. 363).

The fact of the matter is, I think, that in their reversal of the idealist conception of history Marx and Engels not unnaturally emphasized the determining influence of the economic substructure. But, having once stated their vision of the world in terms which suggested that for them the world of consciousness and ideas was simply determined by the mode of economic production, they found themselves compelled to qualify this simple outlook. Political and legal structures are more directly determined by the economic substructure than are ideological superstructures such as religion and philosophy. And human ideas, though conditioned by economic conditions, can react on these conditions. In fact they had to allow for such reaction if they wished to allow for revolutionary activity.

To turn now to a more dynamic aspect of history. According to Marx 'at a certain stage in their development a society's forces of production come into conflict [literally 'contradiction', *Widerspruch*] with the existing productive relations'.[1] That is to say, when in a given social epoch the forces of production have developed to such a point that the existing productive relations, especially property-relations, have become a fetter on the further development of the forces of production, there is a contradiction within the economic structure of society, and a revolution takes place, a qualitative change to a new economic structure, a new social epoch. And this change in the substructure is accompanied by changes in the superstructure. Man's political, juristic, religious, artistic and philosophical consciousness undergoes a revolution which depends on and is subsidiary to the revolution in the economic sphere.

A revolution of this kind, the change to a new social epoch, does not take place, Marx insists, until the forces of production have developed to the fullest extent that is compatible with the existing productive relations and the material conditions for the existence of the new form of society are already present within the old. For this is the state of affairs which comprises a contradiction, namely that between the forces of production and the existing social relations. The qualitative change in the economic structure of society or mode of production does not occur until a contradiction has matured, as it were, within the old society through a series of quantitative changes.

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[1] *Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie*, p. xi (1, p. 363).

Now, if the theory is expressed simply in this way, it gives the impression of being simply a technological and mechanical theory. That is to say, it seems as though social revolution, the transition from one social epoch to another, took place inevitably and mechanically, and as though man's consciousness of the need for a change and his revolutionary activity constituted mere epiphenomena which exercised no real influence on the cause of events. But though this interpretation would fit in with the general doctrine that it is the material conditions of life which determine consciousness and not the other way round, it could scarcely fit in with Marx's insistence on the unity of theory and practice and on the need for the active preparation of the proletariat's revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist economy. Hence, although Marx sometimes tends to speak as though the material forces of production were the real revolutionary agent, we have to introduce the idea of the class war and of human agency.

Marx and Engels envisage at the dawn of history a state of primitive communism in which the land was possessed and tilled by the tribe in common and in which there was no class-division. Once, however, private property had been introduced, a division of society into economic classes soon followed. Marx is aware, of course, that social distinctions in civilized society form a more or less complicated pattern. But his general tendency is to simplify the situation by representing the fundamental distinction as being that between the oppressors and the oppressed, the exploiters and the exploited. In all forms of society, therefore, which presuppose the institution of private property, there is an antagonism between classes, an antagonism now latent, now open. And 'the history of all society hitherto is the history of class struggle'.[1] The State becomes the organ or instrument of the dominant class. So does the law. And the dominant class also tries to impose its own moral conceptions. In the Marxist dialectic of history, therefore, the concept of the class replaces Hegel's concept of the national State, and the class war replaces national wars.[2]

This class war or class struggle becomes particularly significant at the period when in a given social epoch the forces of production have developed to such a point that the existing social relations, especially property-relations, are turned into a drag and a fetter. For the hitherto dominant class (individual defections apart) endeavours to maintain the existing productive relations, while it is in the interest of a rising class to overthrow these relations. And when the contradiction between the forces of production and the productive relations has been perceived by the rising class whose interest it is to overthrow the existing and antiquated social order, revolution takes place. Then the new dominant class in its own turn uses the State and the law as its instruments. This process inevitably continues until private property has been abolished and, with it, the division of society into mutually antagonistic classes.

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[1] *Manifest der kommunistischen Partei, W*, IV, p. 462; *Communist Manifesto*, p. 125 (edit. H. J. Laski, London, 1948). Obviously, this refers to all known history after the passing of primitive communism.

[2] That is to say, the class war is looked on as more fundamental, and national wars are interpreted in economic terms.

In the preface to his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* Marx observes that we can distinguish in broad outline four progressive social epochs which together form the prehistory (*die Vorgeschichte*) of mankind. The first of these, the asiatic, called by Engels the *gens* organization, is that of primitive communism. As we have seen, this was marked by communal ownership of land, associated labour and absence of private property. But with the institution of private property, associated by Engels with the change from matriarchy to patriarchy and with improvements in methods of production, the accumulation of private wealth was rendered possible. It was possible, for example, for a man to produce more than he required for his own needs. Hence there arose a division between rich and poor, and a new form of economic organization was required. If we ask what was the new productive force which was responsible for the transition, special mention is made of iron, though the subject is not developed. In any case the growth of private property and wealth made it necessary for the prospective rich to have labour at their disposal. But as under primitive communism there was no free labour available, slaves had to be obtained through captives in war.

We thus pass to the antique or ancient period, characterized by slavery and by the class antagonism between freemen and slaves. On this economic structure, represented, for instance, by Greece and Rome, there arose corresponding legal and political institutions and the splendid ideological superstructure of the classical world.

Although Marx and Engels mention various historical factors which contributed to the transition from the antique to the feudal epoch, which reached its culminating phase in the Middle Ages, no convincing explanation is offered of the productive force or forces which were responsible for the transition. However, it took place, and the feudal economy was reflected in the political and legal institutions of the time, as well as, though more indirectly, in mediaeval religion and philosophy.

During the mediaeval period a middle class or bourgoisie gradually developed. But its wealth-amassing propensities were hampered by factors such as feudal restrictions and guild regulations, as also by the lack of free labour for hire. With the discovery of America, however, and the opening-up of markets in different parts of the world, a powerful impetus was given to commerce, navigation and industry. New sources of wealth became available, and at the close of the Middle Ages land-enclosure by the nobility and other factors contributed to the formation of a class of dispossessed people ready to be hired and exploited. The time was ripe for a change, and the guild-system was overthrown by the new middle class in favour of the early phase of capitalist society. Finally, steam and machinery revolutionized industry; the world market was opened up; means of communication underwent a remarkable development; and the bourgeoisie pushed into the background the classes which had lingered from the Middle Ages.

In feudal society, as Marx is aware, the pattern of organization was too complicated to permit of its being reduced to one simple class antagonism, as between barons and serfs. But in capitalist society, to which he naturally devotes most of his attention, we can see, Marx argues, a growing simplification. For there has been a tendency for capital to become concentrated in ever fewer hands, in great combines of a more or less international or cosmopolitan character. At the same time many of the small capitalists have sunk into the ranks of the proletariat[1] which has also tended to take on an international character. Hence we are faced by two prominent classes, the exploiters and the exploited. The term 'exploitation' suggests, of course, the imposition of long hours of work for starvation wages. But though Marx does indeed inveigh against the abuses of the earlier phases of the industrial revolution, the primary meaning of the term is for him technical, not emotive. As we have seen, according to the doctrine expounded in *Capital* the whole value of a commodity is, as it were, crystallized labour;

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[1] This is what Marx says in the *Communist Manifesto* which dates, it should be remembered, from the beginning of 1848.

it is due to the labour expended in its production. Hence the wage-system is necessarily exploitation, irrespective of the amount of the wages paid. For in every case the capitalist filches from the worker. The fact that a given capitalist is a humane man who does his best to improve wages and conditions of work makes no difference to the basic situation which is a necessary antagonism between the two classes.

Now, the bourgeoisie has developed the forces of production to a hitherto unknown and undreamed-of extent. But at the same time it has developed them to the point at which they can no longer co-exist with the existing productive relations. According to Marx, this fact is shown, for example, by the periodic recurrence of economic crises. Hence the time is approaching for the overthrow of the capitalist system. And the task of revolutionary activity, particularly of the Communist Party, is to turn the proletariat from a class in itself, to use Hegelian language, into a class for itself, a class conscious of itself and of its mission. The proletariat will then be able to sweep away the capitalist system, seize the organ of the State and use it to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat which will prepare the way for communist society. In this society the political State will wither away. For the State is an instrument for the maintenance of its own position by a dominant class in face of another class or other classes. And under communism class divisions and the class war will disappear.

In view of the fact that the bourgeoisie itself develops the forces of production we may be inclined to ask, what is the new productive force which emerges and which is fettered by the capitalist mode of production? But Marx is ready with his answer. And in the *Poverty of Philosophy* he tells us that the greatest of all productive forces is 'the revolutionary class itself'.[1] This is the productive force which enters into conflict with the existing economic system and overthrows it by revolution.

Human history is thus a dialectical progress from primitive communism to developed communism. And from one point of view at least the intermediary stages are necessary. For it is through them that the forces of production have been developed and that productive relations have been correspondingly changed in such a manner that developed communism is rendered not only possible but also the inevitable result. But the Marxist theory of history is also an instrument or weapon, not merely a spectator's analysis of historical situations. It is the instrument by which the proletariat, through its vanguard the Communist Party, becomes conscious of itself and of the historical task which it has to perform.

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[1] *W*, IV, p. 181; *The Poverty of Philosophy*, edited by C. P. Dutt and V. Chattopadhyaya, p. 146 (London, no date); p. 174 (London, 1956).

The theory is also, however, a philosophy of man. Marx assumes the Hegelian thesis that to realize himself man must objectify himself. And the primary form of self-objectification is in labour, production. The product is, as it were, man-in-his-otherness. But in all societies based on private property this self-objectification takes the form of self-alienation or self-estrangement. For the worker's product is treated as something alien to himself. In capitalist society it belongs to the capitalist, not to the worker. Further, this economic self-alienation is reflected in a social self-alienation. For membership of a class does not represent the whole man. Whichever class he belongs to, there is, so to speak, something of himself in the other class. Thus class antagonism expresses a profound division, a self-estrangement, in the nature of man. Religion also represents, as Feuerbach said, human self-alienation. But, as we have seen, self-alienation in the religious consciousness is for Marx a reflection of a profounder self-alienation in the social-economic sphere. And this cannot be overcome except through the abolition of private property and the establishment of communism. If self-alienation on the economic and social level is overcome, its religious expression will disappear. And at last the whole man, the non-divided man, will exist. Human ethics will take the place of class ethics, and a genuine humanism will reign.

It follows from this that the overthrow of the capitalist system by the proletariat is not merely a case of the replacement of one dominant class by another. It is indeed this, but it is also much more. The dictatorship of the proletariat is a temporary phase which prepares the way for the classless communist society from which self-alienation will be absent. In other words, by its revolutionary act the international proletariat saves not simply itself but all mankind. It has a messianic mission.

6. There is no great difficulty in giving a certain plausibility to the materialist theory of history. For example, if I wish to illustrate the conditioning by the economic structure of political and legal forms and of the ideological superstructure, there is a large variety of facts to which I can appeal. I can point to the connection between the then existing economic and class structure and the ferocious penalties which were once inflicted in England for theft, or to the

connection between the economic interests of plantation-owners in the southern States of America and the absence of strong moral feeling against slavery. I can draw attention to the connections between the economic life of a hunting tribe and its ideas of life after death or between class divisions and the lines of the hymn 'The rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate, God made them high and lowly and ordered their estate'. I can refer to the evident influence of Greek political structures on Plato's picture of the ideal State or, for the matter of that, to the influence of existing conditions in the world of industry on the thought of Marx and Engels.

But though the Marxist theory of the relation between the economic substructure and the superstructure can be rendered plausible, this plausibility depends in large part on one's selecting certain data, slurring over others and circumventing awkward questions. For example, to maintain the theory I have to slur over the fact that Christianity became the dominant religion in the late Roman empire and was then accepted by the peoples who built up the feudal society of the Middle Ages. And I have to avoid awkward questions about the relation between the development of the forces of production and the origins of Islam. If such questions are pressed, I refer to factors which lie outside my original explanation of the ideological superstructure, while at the same time I continue to assert the truth of this explanation. And I blithely admit that the superstructure can itself exercise an influence on the substructure and that changes can take place in the former independently of changes in the latter, while at the same time I refuse to admit that these concessions are inconsistent with my original position. Why, indeed, should I admit this? For I have spoken of the relation between the substructure and the superstructure as a 'conditioning' of the latter by the former. And I can understand this term in a weak or in a strong sense according to the demands of the particular situation which I am considering.

We have seen that for Marx and Engels the dialectic is not something imposed on the world from without, the expression of absolute Thought or Reason. The dialectic as thought is the reflection of the inner movement of reality, of its immanent laws of development. And in this case the movement is presumably necessary and inevitable. This does not mean, of course, that human thought has no part to play. For there is continuity between Nature, human society and the world of ideas. We have already quoted Engels' statement that 'dialectic is nothing else but the science of the general laws of movement and development in Nature, human society and thought'.[1] But the total process would then be the necessary working-out of immanent laws. And in this case there does not seem to be much room for revolutionary activity. Or, rather, revolutionary activity would be a phase of an inevitable process.

From one point of view this mechanical view of the dialectic seems to be required by the conviction of Marx and Engels that the coming of communism is inevitable. But if the dialectic as operating in human history is, as Engels at any rate suggests, continuous with the dialectic as operating in Nature, that is, if it is ultimately a question of the self-development of auto-dynamic matter, it is difficult to see why the process should ever stop or reach a stage where contradictions and antagonisms disappear. Indeed, there is a passage in the *Dialectics of Nature* where Engels remarks that matter goes through an eternal cycle and that with an 'iron necessity' it will exterminate its highest product, namely the thinking mind, and produce it again somewhere else at another time.[2]

But this idea hardly fits in with the apocalyptic aspect of Marxism, which requires the vision of history as moving towards a goal, a terrestrial Paradise. The two ways of looking at the matter are perhaps compatible up to a point. That is to say, it is possible to look on each cycle as leading up to a peak point, as it were. But the more one emphasizes the teleological aspect of history, its movement from primitive communism, the age of innocence, through the Fall, as represented by the introduction of private property and the consequent emergence of selfishness, exploitation and class antagonism, up to the recovery of communism at a higher level and the overcoming of man's self-alienation, so much the more does one tend to reintroduce surreptitiously the notion of the working out of a plan, the realization of an Idea.

In other words, there is a fundamental ambiguity in Marxism. If some aspects are stressed, we have a mechanistic interpretation of the historical process. If other aspects are stressed, the system seems to demand the reintroduction of what Marx and Engels called idealism. Nor is this surprising. For in part Marxism is a transformation of idealism, and elements of this particular source linger on. The alliance between dialectic and materialism is not altogether an easy one. For, as Marx and Engels were well aware, dialectics originally referred to a movement of thought. And though they located the movement of the dialectic primarily in the object of thought and only secondarily and by way of reflection in human thinking, this transposition inevitably tends to suggest that the historical process is the self-development of an Idea. The alternative is to interpret the process as a purely mechanical one.[1]

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[1] *Anti-Dühring*, p. 144 (p. 193).

[2] *Dialektik der Natur*, p. 28 (p. 54).

This is a matter of some importance. Left to itself, so to speak, Marxism tends to divide into divergent lines of thought. It is possible to emphasize the ideas of necessity, inevitability, determinism, and it is possible to emphasize the ideas of deliberate revolutionary activity and of free action. It is possible to emphasize the materialist element, and it is possible to emphasize the dialectical element. It is also possible, of course, to attempt to hold together all these different aspects, in spite of the ambiguities to which this attempt gives rise. But it is significant that even in the Soviet Union different lines of interpretation and development have manifested themselves. If the emergence of these different lines of thought has been held in check, this has been due to the constraining force of the Party Line, to an extra-philosophical factor and not to any intrinsic consistency and lack of ambiguity in the thought of Marx and Engels themselves.

From one point of view criticism of the type suggested in the foregoing paragraphs[2] is beside the point. That is to say, if we choose to regard Marxism as an interesting 'vision' of the world, detailed criticism necessarily seems pedantic and tiresome. Philosophers who provide striking visions of the world are inclined to take one aspect of reality and to use it as a key to unlock all doors. And detailed criticism, it may be said, is out of place. For it is the very exaggeration involved in the vision which enables us to see the world in a new light. When we have done so, we can forget about the exaggeration: the vision has accomplished its purpose. Thus the philosophy of Marx and Engels enables us to see the importance and far-reaching influence of man's economic life, of the so-called substructure. And it is largely because of the exaggerations involved that it can have this effect, breaking the rigidity of other pictures or interpretations of the world. Once we have seen what Marx and Engels are drawing attention to, we can forget Marxism as expounded in their writings: the essence of their vision passes into the common outlook. It is pedantic to worry about such detailed questions as the precise relation between freedom and necessity, the precise meaning of 'condition', the exact extent to which morality and values are thought to be relative, and so on.

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[1] It is probably Engels, with his extension of the dialectic to Nature, who provides most ground for a mechanical interpretation.

[2] The lines of criticism suggested are not, of course, in any way new. They are familiar enough to 'bourgeois' philosophers, that is to say, to objective observers.

This attitude is indeed understandable. But the Marxist theory of history is not simply a striking nineteenth-century vision of the world which has made its contribution to human thought and then relapsed into the historical background. It is a living and influential system which professes to be a scientific analysis of historical development, an analysis which permits prediction, and it is at the same time the creed or faith of groups whose importance in the modern world nobody would deny. It is therefore appropriate to point out that the transformation of this philosophy into the dogmatic creed of a powerful Party has arrested the natural development of the different lines of thought to which its diverse aspects might otherwise be expected to have given rise.

The Communist theoretician would perhaps reply that it is not a question of the philosophy of Marx and Engels having been adopted by a Party and transformed into a weapon or instrument. For it was this from the beginning. And it is precisely this fact which distinguishes it from all previous philosophies. Marx always thought of his philosophy as a means of transforming the world and not simply as an interpretation of it. But though this is doubtless true, the question then arises whether Marxism falls under its own concept of ideologies as relative to a passing economic structure or whether it transcends this status and represents absolute truth. If Marxism is relative to the situation in which the proletariat is opposed to the bourgeoisie, it should pass away when this antagonism has been overcome. If, however, it represents absolute truth, how is this claim to be reconciled with what Marx and Engels have to say about eternal truths, natural laws and so on?

And yet all criticism based on the internal ambiguities of the philosophy of Marx and Engels seems in a certain sense to be futile. It may have an effect on those, if any, who are attracted to Marxism simply because they think that it is 'scientific'. But it is not likely to have much effect on those who are primarily attracted by the ideal of human society which Marxism represents. What is needed is the delineation of another ideal, based on a more adequate view of man and his vocation and on a more adequate view of the nature of reality.

The philosophy of Marx and Engels has, of course, undergone some development. Attention has been paid, for example, to the theory of knowledge. And certain modern Thomists seem to think that among contemporary philosophical traditions Marxism, as represented by the philosophers of the Soviet Union, offers them a common basis of discussion because of its insistence on realism in epistemology and ontology. This is a theme which goes beyond the scope of this book. But one may remark that even if realism in the sense intended is common to Thomism and to Marxism, Thomism is for the Marxist an 'idealist' system. For it maintains the priority of Mind or Spirit to matter. And it was precisely this doctrine which Marx and Engels were concerned to deny when they affirmed the truth of materialism.

CHAPTER XVII

KIERKEGAARD

Introductory remarks—Life and writings—The individual and the crowd—The dialectic of the stages and truth as subjectivity —The idea of existence—The concept of dread—The influence of Kierkegaard.

1. IN the chapters on the development of Schelling's thought mention was made of the distinction which he came to draw between negative and positive philosophy. The former moves in the realm of ideas: it is a deduction of concepts or essences. The latter is concerned with the *that* of things, with existence. Positive philosophy cannot simply dispense with negative philosophy. At the same time negative philosophy by itself by-passes actual existence. And its chief modern representative is Hegel.

Among Schelling's hearers at Berlin, when he expounded this distinction, was the Dane, Søren Kierkegaard. For the way in which the German thinker developed his own idea of positive philosophy Kierkegaard had little sympathy. But he was in full agreement with Schelling's attack on Hegel. Not that Kierkegaard was lacking in admiration for Hegel or in appreciation of the magnitude of his achievement. On the contrary, he regarded Hegel as the greatest of all speculative philosophers and as a thinker who had achieved a stupendous intellectual *tour de force.* But this, in Kierkegaard's opinion, was precisely the trouble with Hegelianism, namely that it was a gigantic *tour de force* and nothing more. Hegel sought to capture all reality in the conceptual net of his dialectic, while existence slipped through the meshes.

Existence, as will be explained presently, was for Kierkegaard a category relating to the free individual. In his use of the term, to exist means realizing oneself through free choice between alternatives, through self-commitment. To exist, therefore, means becoming more and more an individual and less and less a mere member of a group. It means, one can say, transcending universality in favour of individuality. Hence Kierkegaard has scant sympathy with what he took to be Hegel's view, that a man realizes his true self or essence in proportion as he transcends his particularity and becomes a spectator of all time and existence as a moment in the life of universal thought. Hegelianism, in Kierkegaard's opinion, had no place for the existing individual: it could only universalize him in a fantastic manner. And what could not be universalized it dismissed as unimportant, whereas in point of fact it is that which is most important and significant. To merge or sink oneself in the universal, whether this is conceived as the State or as universal Thought, is to reject personal responsibility and authentic existence.

Kierkegaard's emphasis on self-commitment through free choice, a self-commitment whereby the individual resolutely chooses one alternative and rejects another, is an aspect of his general tendency to underline antitheses and distinctions rather than to gloss them over. For example, God is not man, and man is not God. And the gulf between them cannot be bridged by dialectical thinking. It can be bridged only by the leap of faith, by a voluntary act by which man relates himself to God and freely appropriates, as it were, his relation as creature to the Creator, as a finite individual to the transcendent Absolute. Hegel, however, confounds what ought to be distinguished. And his dialectical mediation between the infinite and the finite, between God and man, leaves us in the end with neither God nor man but only with the pale ghost of hypostatized thought, dignified by the name of absolute Spirit.

With this emphasis on the individual, on choice, on self-commitment, Kierkegaard's philosophical thought tends to become a clarification of issues and an appeal to choose, an attempt to get men to see their existential situation and the great alternatives with which they are faced. It is certainly not an attempt to master all reality by thought and to exhibit it as a necessary system of concepts. This idea was quite foreign and repugnant to his mind. In his view speculative systematic philosophy, the greatest example of which was for him absolute idealism, radically misrepresented human existence. The really important problems, that is, the problems which are of real importance for man as the existing individual, are not solved by thought, by adopting the absolute standpoint of the speculative philosopher, but by the act of choice, on the level of existence rather than on that of detached, objective reflection.

As one might expect, Kierkegaard's philosophy is intensely personal. In one sense, of course, every philosopher worthy of the name is a personal thinker. For it is he who does the thinking.

But with Kierkegaard there is a closer connection between his life and his philosophy than in the case of many other philosophers. He does not simply take over traditional problems or the problems most discussed in contemporary philosophical circles and then attempt to solve them in a purely objective and disinterested spirit. His problems arise out of his own life, in the sense that in the first instance they arise for him in the form of alternatives presented for his own personal choice, a choice involving a radical self-commitment. His philosophy is, as it were, a lived philosophy. And one of his objections to Hegelianism is that one cannot live by it. Obviously, Kierkegaard has to universalize. Without universalization there would be only autobiography. At the same time it is abundantly clear that it is the actor who speaks rather than the spectator.

From one point of view this feature of his philosophy constitutes its weakness. That is to say, his thought may appear too subjective, too hostile to objectivity. In fact, some would refuse it the name of philosophy at all. But from another point of view the intensely personal character of Kierkegaard's thought constitutes its strength. For it gives to his writing a degree of seriousness and depth which sets it entirely outside the concept of philosophy as a game or as an academic pastime for those who have the requisite aptitude and inclination.

In view of the fact that Kierkegaard's thought is developed in conscious opposition to Hegelianism or, if preferred, to speculative philosophy as represented by absolute idealism, as well as for chronological reasons, I have included the chapter on his philosophy in this part of the present volume. But if one were to neglect chronology and take effective influence as a standard, one would have to postpone consideration of his thought to a later stage. For though he was one of the most passionate thinkers of his period, he excited very little real interest at the time. A Dane, he was first discovered, so to speak, by the Germans in the first decades of the present century, and he has exercised a profound influence on some phases of the existentialist movement and on modern Protestant theology of the type represented by Karl Barth. Kierkegaard's preoccupation with Hegelianism as the dominant philosophy of his time and cultural milieu constitutes the dating element in his thought. But the ideas which he opposed to Hegelianism have a quite independent significance, and they have exercised a widespread influence in another and later cultural context.

2. Søren Aabye Kierkegaard was born at Copenhagen on May 15th, 1813. He was given an extremely religious upbringing by his father, a man who suffered from melancholia and imagined that the curse of God hung over him and his family.[1] And Kierkegaard was himself affected to some degree by this melancholy, concealed beneath a display of sarcastic wit.

In 1830 Kierkegaard matriculated in the university of Copenhagen and chose the faculty of theology, doubtless in accordance with his father's wishes. But he paid little attention to theological studies and devoted himself instead to philosophy, literature and history. It was at this time that he gained his knowledge of Hegelianism. During this period Kierkegaard was very much the observer of life, cynical and disillusioned, yet devoted to the social life of the university. Estranged from his father and his father's religion, he spoke of the 'stuffy atmosphere' of Christianity and maintained that philosophy and Christianity were incompatible. Religious disbelief was accompanied by laxity in moral standards. And Kierkegaard's general attitude at this time fell under the heading of what he later called the aesthetic stage on life's way.

In the spring of 1836 Kierkegaard appears to have had a temptation to commit suicide, having been overcome by a vision of his inner cynicism. But in June of that year he underwent a kind of moral conversion, in the sense that he adopted moral standards and made an attempt, even if not always successful, to live up to them.[2] This period corresponds to the ethical stage in his later dialectic.

On May 19th, 1838, the year in which his father died, Kierkegaard experienced a religious conversion, accompanied by an 'indescribable joy'. He resumed the practice of his religion and in 1840 he passed his examinations in theology. He became engaged to Regina Olsen, but a year later he broke off the engagement. He evidently thought that he was unsuited for married life, a correct idea one would imagine. But he had also become convinced that he was a man with a mission, and that marriage would interfere with it.

In 1843 Kierkegaard published *Either-Or*, a title which well expresses his attitude to life and his abhorrence of what he took to be Hegel's 'Both-And', *Fear and Trembling* and *Repetition*. These works were followed in 1844 by *The Concept of Dread* and *Philosophical Fragments*, in 1845 by *Stages on Life's Way* and in 1846 by the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* which, though its name may not suggest it, is a large and weighty tome. He also published some 'edifying discourses' in these years. The works of this period appeared under various pseudonyms, though the identity of the author was well enough known at Copenhagen. As far as the Christian faith was concerned, it was presented from the point of view of an observer, by indirect communication as Kierkegaard put it, rather than from the point of view of an apostle intent on direct communication of the truth.

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[1] As a boy, Kierkegaard's father had tended sheep on a Jutland heath. One day, afflicted with hunger, cold and loneliness, he had cursed God. And this incident was indelibly printed on his memory.

[2] I do not mean to imply that Kierkegaard had ever led what would be generally understood by a thoroughly immoral life. It was more a question of a change of interior attitude from a rejection to an acceptance of ethical self-commitment.

In the spring of 1848 Kierkegaard enjoyed a religious experience which, as he wrote in his *Journal*, changed his nature and impelled him to direct communication. He did not at once abandon the use of pseudonyms, but with *Anti-Climacus* the change to a direct and positive presentation of the standpoint of Christian faith becomes apparent. The year 1848 saw the publication of *Christian Discourses*, and *The Point of View* was also composed at this time, though it was published only after Kierkegaard's death. *The Sickness unto Death* appeared in 1849.

Kierkegaard was meditating a frontal attack on the Danish State Church which, in his opinion, scarcely deserved any more the name of Christian. For as far as its official representatives at least were concerned, it appeared to him to have watered down Christianity to a polite moral humanism with a modicum of religious beliefs calculated not to offend the susceptibilities of the educated. However, to avoid wounding Bishop Mynster, who had been a friend of his father, Kierkegaard did not open fire until 1854, after the prelate's death. A vigorous controversy ensued in the course of which Kierkegaard maintained that what he represented was simply ordinary honesty. The emasculated Christianity of the established Church should recognize and admit that it was not Christianity.

Kierkegaard died on November 4th, 1855. At his funeral there was an unfortunate scene when his nephew interrupted the Dean to protest against the appropriation by the Danish Church of a man who had so vigorously condemned it.

3. There is an obvious sense in which every human being is and remains an individual, distinct from other persons and things. In this sense of individuality even the members of an enraged mob are individuals. At the same time there is a sense in which the

individuality of the members of such a mob is sunk in a common consciousness. The mob is possessed, as it were, by a common emotion, and it is a notorious fact that a mob is capable of performing actions which its members would not perform precisely as individuals.

This is indeed an extreme example. But I mention it to show in a simple way that we can quite easily give a cash value to the idea of man's being more or less of an individual. One might, of course, take less dramatic examples. Suppose that my opinions are dictated predominantly by what 'one thinks', my emotive reactions by what 'one feels', and my actions by the social conventions of my environment. To the extent that this is the case I can be said to think, feel and act as a member of 'the One', as a member of an impersonal collectivity, rather than as this individual. If, however, I become aware of my anonymous status, so to speak, and begin to form my own principles of conduct and to act resolutely in accordance with them, even if this means acting in a way quite opposed to the customary ways of acting of my social environment, there is a sense in which I can be said to have become more of an individual, in spite of the fact that in another sense I am no more and no less an individual than I was before.

If space permitted, these concepts would obviously require careful analysis. But even in this unanalysed state they may serve to facilitate understanding of the following quotation from Kierkegaard. 'A crowd—not this crowd or that, the crowd now living or the crowd long deceased, a crowd of humble people or of superior people, of rich or of poor, etc.—a crowd in its very concept is the untruth, by reason of the fact that it renders the individual completely impenitent and irresponsible, or at least weakens his sense of responsibility by reducing it to a fraction.'[1] Kierkegaard is not, of course, concerned simply with the dangers of allowing oneself to become a member of a crowd in the sense of a mob. His point is that philosophy, with its emphasis on the universal rather than on the particular, has tried to show that man realizes his true essence in proportion as he rises above what is contemptuously regarded as his mere particularity and becomes a moment in the life of the universal. This theory, Kierkegaard argues, is false, whether the universal is considered as the State or as the economic or social class or as Humanity or as absolute Thought. 'I have endeavoured to express the thought that to employ the category "race" to indicate what it is to be a man, and especially as an indication of the highest attainment, is a misunderstanding and mere paganism, because the race, mankind, differs from an animal race not merely by its general superiority as a race, but by the *human* characteristic that every single individual within the race (not merely distinguished individuals but every individual) is more than the race. For to relate oneself to God is a far higher thing than to be related to the race and through the race to God.'[1]

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[1] *The Point of View*, p. 114 (translated by W. Lowrie, London, 1939).

The last sentence of this quotation indicates the general direction of Kierkegaard's thought. The highest self-actualization of the individual is the relating of oneself to God, not as the universal, absolute Thought, but as the absolute Thou. But further explanation of what Kierkegaard means by becoming the individual is best reserved for the context of his theory of the three stages. For the moment it is sufficient to notice that it means the opposite of self-dispersal in 'the One' or self-submerging in the universal, however this may be conceived. The exaltation of the universal, the collectivity, the totality, is for Kierkegaard 'mere paganism'. But he also insists that historic paganism was orientated towards Christianity, whereas the new paganism is a falling away or an apostasy from Christianity.[2]

4. In *The Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel expounded his masterly dialectic of the stages by which the mind awakens to self-consciousness, to universal consciousness and to the standpoint of absolute Thought. Kierkegaard also expounds a dialectic. But it is radically different from that of Hegel. In the first place it is the process by which spirit is actualized in the form of individuality, the individual existent, not in the form of the all-comprehensive universal. In the second place the transition from one stage to the next is accomplished not by thinking but by choice, by an act of the will, and in this sense by a leap. There is no question of overcoming antitheses by a process of conceptual synthesis: there is a choice between alternatives, and the choice of the higher alternative, the transition to a higher stage of the dialectic, is a willed self-commitment of the whole man.

The first stage or sphere is described as the aesthetic.[3] And it is characterized by self-dispersal on the level of sense. The aesthetic man is governed by sense, impulse and emotion. But we must not conceive him as being simply and solely the grossly sensual man. The aesthetic stage can also be exemplified, for instance, in the poet who transmutes the world into an imaginative realm and in the romantic. The essential features of the aesthetic consciousness are the absence of fixed universal moral standards and of determinate religious faith and the presence of a desire to enjoy the whole range of emotive and sense experience. True, there can be discrimination. But the principle of discrimination is aesthetic rather than obedience to a universal moral law considered as the dictate of impersonal reason. The aesthetic man strives after infinity, but in the sense of a bad infinity which is nothing else but the absence of all limitations other than those imposed by his own tastes. Open to all emotional and sense experience, sampling the nectar from every flower, he hates all that would limit his field of choice and he never gives definite form to his life. Or, rather, the form of his life is its very formlessness, self-dispersal on the level of sense.

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[1] *Ibid*, pp. 88–9, in Note.

[2] See, for example, *The Sickness unto Death*, pp. 73–4 (translated by W. Lowrie, Princeton and London, 1941).

[3] This is discussed, for instance, in the first volume of *Either-Or* and in the first part of *Stages on Life's Way*.

To the aesthetic man his existence seems to be the expression of freedom. Yet he is more than a psycho-physical organism, endowed with emotive and imaginative power and the capacity for sense enjoyment. 'The soulish-bodily synthesis in every man is planned with a view to being spirit, such is the building; but the man prefers to dwell in the cellar, that is, in the determinants of sensuousness.'[1] And the aesthetic consciousness or attitude to life may be accompanied by a vague awareness of this fact, by a vague dissatisfaction with the dispersal of the self in the pursuit of pleasure and sense enjoyment. Further, the more aware a man becomes that he is living in what Kierkegaard calls the cellar of the building, the more subject he becomes to 'despair'. For he finds that there is no remedy, no salvation, at the level on which he stands. He is faced, therefore, with two alternatives. Either he must remain in despair on the aesthetic level or he must make the transition to the next level by an act of choice, by self-commitment. Mere thinking will not do the trick for him. It is a question of choice; either-or.

The second stage is the ethical. A man accepts determinate moral standards and obligations, the voice of universal reason, and thus gives form and consistency to his life. If the aesthetic stage is typified by Don Juan, the ethical stage is typified by Socrates. And a simple example of the transition from the aesthetic to the moral consciousness is for Kierkegaard that of the man who renounces the satisfaction of his sexual impulse according to passing attraction and enters into the state of marriage, accepting all its obligations. For marriage is an ethical institution, an expression of the universal law of reason.

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[1] *The Sickness unto Death*, p. 67.

Now, the ethical stage has its own heroism. It can produce what Kierkegaard calls the tragic hero. 'The tragic hero renounces himself in order to express the universal.'[1] This is what Socrates did, and Antigone was prepared to give her life in defence of the unwritten natural law. At the same time the ethical consciousness as such does not understand sin. The ethical man may take account of human weakness, of course; but he thinks that it can be overcome by strength of will, enlightened by clear ideas. In so far as he exemplifies the attitude characteristic of the ethical consciousness as such he believes in man's moral self-sufficiency. Yet in point of fact a man can come to realize his own inability to fulfil the moral law as it should be fulfilled and to acquire perfect virtue. He can come to an awareness of his lack of self-sufficiency and of his sin and guilt. He has then arrived at the point at which he is faced with the choice or rejection of the standpoint of faith. Just as 'despair' forms, as it were, the antithesis to the aesthetic consciousness, an antithesis which is overcome or resolved by ethical self-commitment, so consciousness of sin forms the antithesis to the ethical stage, and this antithesis is overcome only by the act of faith, by relating oneself to God.

To affirm one's relationship to God, the personal and transcendent Absolute, is to affirm oneself as spirit. 'By relating itself to its own self and by willing to be itself, the self is grounded transparently in the Power which constituted it. And this formula . . . is the definition of faith.'[2] Every man is, as it were, a mixture of the finite and the infinite. Considered precisely as finite, he is separated from God, alienated from him. Considered as infinite, man is not indeed God, but he is a movement towards God, the movement of the spirit. And the man who appropriates and affirms his relationship to God in faith becomes what he really is, the individual before God.

To emphasize the difference between the second and third stages Kierkegaard uses as a symbol Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac at God's command. The tragic hero, such as Socrates, sacrifices himself for the universal moral law; but Abraham, as Kierkegaard puts it, does nothing for the universal. 'So we stand in the presence of the paradox. Either the Individual as the Individual can stand in an absolute relation to the Absolute, and then ethics is not supreme, or Abraham is lost: he is neither a tragic hero nor an aesthetic hero.'[1] Needless to say, Kierkegaard does not intend to enunciate the general proposition that religion involves the negation of morality. What he means is that the man of faith is directly related to a personal God whose demands are absolute and cannot be measured simply by the standards of the human reason. At the back of Kierkegaard's mind there is doubtless the memory of his behaviour towards Regina Olsen. Marriage is an ethical institution, the expression of the universal. And if ethics, the universal, is supreme, Kierkegaard's conduct was inexcusable. He was justified only if he had a personal mission from God whose absolute demands are addressed to the individual. Obviously, I do not intend to suggest that Kierkegaard is universalizing his own experience in the sense of assuming that everyone has the same specific experience. He universalizes it in the sense that he reflects on its general significance.

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[1] *Fear and Trembling*, p. 109 (translated by R. Payne, London, 1939).

[2] *The Sickness unto Death*, p. 216.

As Kierkegaard's dialectic is one of discontinuity, in the sense that the transition from one stage to another is made by choice, by self-commitment, and not through a continuous process of conceptual mediation, he not unnaturally plays down the role of reason and emphasizes that of will when he is treating of religious faith. In his view faith is a leap. That is to say, it is an adventure, a risk, a self-commitment to an objective uncertainty. God is the transcendent Absolute, the absolute Thou; he is not an object the existence of which can be proved. True, God reveals himself to the human conscience in the sense that man can become aware of his sin and alienation and his need of God. But man's response is a venture, an act of faith in a Being who lies beyond the reach of speculative philosophy. And this act of faith is not something which can be performed once and for all. It has to be constantly repeated. It is true that God has revealed himself in Christ, the God-Man. But Christ is the Paradox, to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness. Faith is always a venture, a leap.

Looked at from one point of view Kierkegaard's account of the standpoint of faith is a vigorous protest against the way in which speculative philosophy, represented principally by Hegelianism, blurs the distinction between God and man and rationalizes the Christian dogmas, turning them into philosophically-demonstrated conclusions. In the Hegelian system 'the qualitative distinction between God and man is pantheistically abolished'.[1] The system does indeed hold out the attractive prospect of 'an illusory land, which to a mortal eye might appear to yield a certainty higher than that of faith'.[2] But the mirage is destructive of faith, and its claim to represent Christianity is bogus. 'The entirely unsocratic tract of modern philosophy is that it wants to make itself and us believe that it is Christianity.'[3] In other words, Kierkegaard refuses to admit that in this life there can be a higher standpoint than that of faith. The vaunted transformation of faith into speculative knowledge is an illusion.

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[1] *Fear and Trembling*, p. 171.

But though in such passages it is Hegelianism which Kierkegaard has principally in mind, there is no adequate ground for saying that he would have had much sympathy with the idea of proving God's existence by metaphysical argument provided that an unequivocally theistic idea of God were maintained. In his view the fact that man is held eternally accountable for belief or disbelief shows that belief is not a matter of accepting the conclusion of a demonstrative argument but rather a matter of will. Catholic theologians would obviously wish to make some distinctions here. But Kierkegaard was not a Catholic theologian. And the point is that he deliberately emphasized the nature of faith as a leap. It was not simply a case of opposition to Hegelian rationalism.

This comes out clearly in his famous interpretation of truth as subjectivity. '*An objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness is the truth*, the highest truth attainable for an *existing* individual.'[4] Kierkegaard is not denying that there is any such thing as objective, impersonal truth. But mathematical truths, for example, do not concern the 'existing individual' as such. That is to say, they are irrelevant to a man's life of total self-commitment. He accepts them. He cannot do otherwise. But he does not stake his whole being on them. That on which I stake my whole being is not something which I cannot deny without logical contradiction or something which is so obviously true that I cannot deny it without palpable absurdity. It is something which I can doubt but which is so important to me that if I accept it, I do so with a passionate self-commitment. It is in a sense *my* truth. 'The truth is precisely the venture which chooses an objective uncertainty with the passion of the infinite. I contemplate the order of nature in the hope of finding God, and I see omnipotence and wisdom; but I also see much else that disturbs my mind and excites anxiety. The sum of all this is an objective uncertainty. But it is for this very reason that the inwardness becomes as intense as it is, for it embraces this objective uncertainty with the entire passion of the infinite.'[1]

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[1] *The Sickness unto Death*, p. 192.

[2] *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, p. 213 (translated by D. F. Swenson, Princeton and London, 1941).

[3] *The Sickness unto Death*, p. 151.

[4] *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, p. 182.

Obviously, truth as so described is precisely what Kierkegaard means by faith. The definition of truth as subjectivity and the definition of faith are the same. 'Without risk there is no faith. Faith is precisely the contradiction between the infinite passion of the individual's inwardness and the objective uncertainty.'[2] Kierkegaard does indeed assert more than once that the eternal truth is not in itself a paradox. But it becomes paradoxical in relation to us. One can indeed see some evidence in Nature of God's work, but at the same time one can see much which points in the opposite direction. There is, and remains, 'objective uncertainty', whether we look at Nature or at the Gospels. For the idea of the God-Man is itself paradoxical for the finite reason. Faith grasps the objectively uncertain and affirms it; but it has to maintain itself, as it were, over a fathomless sea. Religious truth exists only in the 'passionate' appropriation of the objectively uncertain.[3]

In point of fact Kierkegaard does not say that there are no rational motives at all for making the act of faith and that it is a purely arbitrary act of capricious choice. But he certainly takes delight in minimizing the rational motives for religious belief and in emphasizing the subjectivity of truth and the nature of faith as a leap. Hence he inevitably gives the impression that faith is for him an arbitrary act of the will. And Catholic theologians at least criticize him on this score. But if we prescind from the theological analysis of faith and concentrate on the psychological aspect of the matter, there is no difficulty in recognizing, whether one is Catholic or Protestant, that there are certainly some who understand very well from their own experience what Kierkegaard is driving at when he describes faith as a venture or risk. And, in general, Kierkegaard's phenomenological analysis of the three distinct attitudes or levels of consciousness which he describes possess a value and a stimulative power which is not destroyed by his characteristic exaggerations.

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[1] *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, p. 182. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] We have to remember that for Kierkegaard faith is a self-commitment to the absolute and transcendent Thou, the personal God, rather than to propositions.

5. In the passage quoted above which gives Kierkegaard's unconventional definition of truth mention is made of the '*existing* individual'. It has already been explained that the term 'existence', as used by Kierkegaard, is a specifically human category which cannot be applied, for example, to a stone. But something more must be said about it here.

To illustrate his use of the concept of existence Kierkegaard employs the following analogy. A man sits in a cart and holds the reins, but the horse goes along its accustomed path without any active control by the driver, who may be asleep. Another man actively guides and directs his horse. In one sense both men can be said to be drivers. But in another sense it is only the second man who can be said to be driving. In an analogous manner the man who drifts with the crowd, who merges himself in the anonymous 'One', can be said to exist in one sense of the term, though in another sense he cannot be said to exist. For he is not the 'existing individual' who strives resolutely towards an end which cannot be realized once and for all at a given moment and is thus in a constant state of becoming, making himself, as it were, by his repeated acts of choice. Again, the man who contents himself with the role of spectator of the world and of life and transmutes everything into a dialectic of abstract concepts exists indeed in one sense but not in another. For he wishes to understand everything and commits himself to nothing. The 'existing individual', however, is the actor rather than the spectator. He commits himself and so gives form and direction to his life. He ex-ists towards an end for which he actively strives by choosing this and rejecting that. In other words, the term 'existence' has with Kierkegaard more or less the same sense as the term 'authentic existence' as used by some modern existentialist philosophers.

If understood simply in this way, the term 'existence' is neutral, in the sense that it can be applied within any of the three stages of the dialectic. Indeed, Kierkegaard says explicitly that 'there are three spheres of existence: the aesthetic, the ethical, the religious'.[1] A man can 'exist' within the aesthetic sphere if he deliberately, resolutely and consistently acts as the aesthetic man, excluding alternatives. In this sense Don Juan typifies the existing individual within the aesthetic sphere. Similarly, the man who sacrifices his own inclinations to the universal moral law and constantly strives after the fulfilment of a moral ideal which beckons him ever forward is an existing individual within the ethical sphere. 'An existing individual is himself in process of becoming. . . . In existence the watchword is always *forward*.'[1]

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[1] *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, p. 448.

But though the term 'existence' has indeed this wide field of application, it tends to take on a specifically religious connotation. Nor is this in any way surprising. For man's highest form of self-realization as spirit is for Kierkegaard his self-relating to the personal Absolute. 'Existence is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, and the existing individual is both infinite and finite.'[2] But to say that the existing individual is infinite is not to identify him with God. It is to say that his becoming is a constant striving towards God. 'Existence itself, the act of existing, is a striving . . . (and) the striving is infinite.'[3] 'Existence is the child that is born of the infinite and the finite, the eternal and the temporal, and is therefore a constant striving.'[4] One can say, therefore, that existence comprises two moments: separation or finiteness and a constant striving, in this context towards God. The striving must be constant, a constant becoming, because the self-relating to God in faith cannot be accomplished once and for all: it has to take the form of a constantly repeated self-commitment.

It can hardly be claimed that Kierkegaard's definition or descriptions of existence are always crystal clear. At the same time the general notion is intelligible enough. And it is clear that for him the existing individual *par excellence* is the individual before God, the man who sustains the standpoint of faith.

6. In the writings of the existentialists the concept of dread[5] is conspicuous. But the term is used by different writers in different ways. With Kierkegaard it has a religious setting. And in *The Concept of Dread* it has a close association with the idea of sin. However, one can, I think, broaden the range of application and say that dread is a state which precedes a qualitative leap from one stage in life's way to another.

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[1] *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, p. 368.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 350. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 84. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 85.

[5] The Germans speak of *Angst*, the French of *angoisse*. Some English writers have employed 'anguish' or even 'anxiety'. I have retained 'dread'. In any case 'fear' should be avoided, for a reason explained in the text.

Dread is defined by Kierkegaard as a '*sympathetic antipathy and an antipathetic sympathy*'.[1] Take the case of the small boy who feels an attraction for adventure, 'a thirst for the prodigious, the mysterious'.[2] The child is attracted by the unknown, yet at the same time is repelled by it, as a menace to his security. Attraction and repulsion, sympathy and antipathy, are interwoven. The child is in a state of dread, but not of fear. For fear is concerned with something quite definite, real or imagined, a snake under the bed, a wasp threatening to sting, whereas dread is concerned with the as yet unknown and indefinite. And it is precisely the unknown, the mysterious, which both attracts and repels the child.

Kierkegaard applies this idea to sin. In the state of innocence, he says, spirit is in a dreaming state, in a state of immediacy. It does not yet know sin. Yet it can have a vague attraction, not for sin as something definite, but for the use of freedom and so for the possibility of sin. 'Dread is the possibility of freedom.'[3] Kierkegaard uses Adam as an illustration. When Adam, in the state of innocence, was told not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil under pain of death, he could not know what was meant either by evil or by death. For the knowledge could be obtained only by disobeying the prohibition. But the prohibition awoke in Adam 'the possibility of freedom . . . the alarming possibility of *being able*'.[4] And he was attracted and repelled by it at the same time.

But there is also, Kierkegaard says, a dread in relation to the good. Let us suppose, for example, a man sunk in sin. He may be aware of the possibility of emerging from this state, and he may be attracted by it. But at the same time he may be repelled by the prospect, inasmuch as he loves his state of sin. He is then possessed by dread of the good. And this is really a dread of freedom, if, that is to say, we suppose that the man is in the enslaving grip of sin. Freedom is for him the object of a sympathetic antipathy and an antipathetic sympathy. And this dread is itself the possibility of freedom.

The notion of dread may perhaps become clearer if we can apply it in this way. A man, let us suppose, has become conscious of sin and of his utter lack of self-sufficiency. And he is faced with the possibility of the leap of faith,[5] which, as we have seen, means self-commitment to an objective uncertainty, a leap into the unknown. He is rather like the man on the edge of the precipice

[1] *The Concept of Dread*, p. 38 (translated by W. Lowrie, Princeton and London, 1944). [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid*, p. 139.. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

[5] 'The opposite of sin is not virtue but faith'; *The Sickness unto Death*, p. 132.

who is aware of the possibility of throwing himself over and who feels attraction and repulsion at the same time. True, the leap of faith means salvation, not destruction. 'The dread of possibility holds him as its prey, until it can deliver him saved into the hands of faith. In no other place does he find repose. . . .'[1] This seems to imply that dread is overcome by the leap. But in so far at least as the maintenance of the standpoint of faith involves a repeated self-commitment to an objective uncertainty, it would appear that dread recurs as the emotive tonality of the repeated leap.

7. Kierkegaard was first and foremost a religious thinker. And though for his actual contemporaries he was pretty well a voice crying in the wilderness, his idea of the Christian religion has exercised a powerful influence on important currents of modern Protestant theology. Mention has already been made of the name of Karl Barth, whose hostility to 'natural theology' is very much in tune with Kierkegaard's attitude towards any invasion by metaphysics into the sphere of faith. It may be said, of course, and with justice, that in the type of theology represented by Karl Barth it is a case not so much of following Kierkegaard as of making a renewed contact with the original well-spring of Protestant thought and spirituality. But inasmuch as some of Kierkegaard's ideas were distinctively Lutheran, this was just one of the effects which his writings could and did exercise.

At the same time his writings are obviously capable of exercising an influence in other directions. On the one hand he had some very hard things to say about Protestantism, and we can discern a movement in his thought not only away from emasculated Protestantism but also from Protestantism as such. It is not my purpose to argue that if he had lived longer, he would have become a Catholic. Whether he would or not is a question which we cannot possibly answer. Hence it is unprofitable to discuss it. But in point of fact his writings have had the effect of turning some people's minds towards Catholicism which, as he remarked, has always maintained the ideal at any rate of what he called No. 1 Christianity. On the other hand one can envisage the possibility of his writings contributing to turn people away from Christianity altogether. One can imagine a man saying, 'Yes, I see the point. Kierkegaard is quite right. I am not really a Christian. And, what is more, I do not wish to be. No leaps for me, no passionate embracing of objective uncertainties.'

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[1] *The Concept of Dread*, p. 141.

It is not so surprising, therefore, if in the development of the modern existentialist movement we find certain Kierkegaardian themes divorced from their original religious setting and employed in an atheistic system. This is notably the case in the philosophy of M. Sartre. With Karl Jaspers indeed, who of all the philosophers commonly classified as existentialists[1] stands nearest to Kierkegaard, the religious setting of the concept of existence is to a large extent retained.[2] But the philosophy of M. Sartre reminds us that the concepts of authentic existence, of free self-commitment and of dread are capable of displacement from this setting.

These remarks are certainly not meant to imply that the origins of modern existentialism can be attributed simply to the posthumous influence of Kierkegaard. This would be a gross misstatement. But Kierkegaardian themes recur in existentialism, though the historical context has changed. And writers on the existentialist movement are perfectly justified in seeing in the Danish thinker its spiritual ancestor, though not, of course, its sufficient cause. At the same time Kierkegaard has exercised a stimulative influence on many people who would not call themselves existentialists or, for the matter of that, professional philosophers or theologians of any kind. As was remarked in the first section of this chapter, his philosophical thought tends to become both an attempt to get men to see their existential situation and the alternatives with which they are faced and an appeal to choose, to commit themselves, to become 'existing individuals'. It is also, of course, a protest in the name of the free individual or person against submergence in the collectivity. Kierkegaard indeed exaggerates. And the exaggeration becomes more evident when the concept of existence is deprived of the religious significance which he gave it. But exaggeration so often serves to draw attention to what is after all worth saying.

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[1] Some of these, it is true, have repudiated the label. But we cannot discuss this matter here. In any case, 'existentialism', unless it is confined to the philosophy of M. Sartre, is a portmanteau term.

[2] Jaspers is a professional philosopher and a university professor, whereas it is difficult to imagine the eccentric and passionate Danish thinker as the occupant of any chair. But the life and thought of Kierkegaard (as of Nietzsche) has been for Jaspers a subject of prolonged meditation.

PART III

LATER CURRENTS OF THOUGHT

CHAPTER XVIII

NON-DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

Introductory remarks—The first phase of the materialist movement—Lange's criticism of materialism—Haeckel's monism—Ostwald's energeticism—Empirio-criticism considered as an attempt to overcome the opposition between materialism and idealism.

1. THE collapse of absolute idealism was soon followed by the rise of a materialistic philosophy which did not stem, as did dialectical materialism, from left-wing Hegelianism but professed to be based on and to follow from serious reflection on the empirical sciences. Science has, of course, no intrinsic connection with philosophical materialism, even if the philosophies of Nature expounded by Schelling and Hegel did little to foster the conviction that the natural complement of science is metaphysical idealism. Further, the leading German philosophers, apart from Marx, have certainly not been materialists. Hence I do not propose to devote much space to the nineteenth-century materialist movement in Germany. But it is as well to understand that there was such a movement. And though it did not represent any profound philosophical thought, it was none the less influential. Indeed, it was precisely because of its lack of profundity and its appeal to the prestige of science that a book such as Büchner's *Force and Matter* enjoyed a wide vogue and passed through a great number of editions.

2. Among the German materialists prominent in the middle of the nineteenth century were Karl Vogt (1817–95), Heinrich Czolbe (1819–73), Jakob Moleschott (1822–93) and Ludwig Büchner (1824–99). Vogt, a zoologist and professor at Giessen for a time, is memorable for his statement that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile. His general outlook is indicated by the title of his polemical work against the physiologist Rudolf Wagner, *Blind Faith and Science* (*Kohlerglaube und Wissenschaft,*

1854, literally *Faith of a Charcoal-burner and Science*). Rudolf Wagner had openly professed belief in divine creation, and Vogt attacked him in the name of science. Czolbe, author of a *New Exposition of Sensualism* (*Neue Darstellung des Sensualismus*, 1855) and of attacks on Kant, Hegel and Lotze, derived consciousness from sensation, which he interpreted in a manner reminiscent of Democritus. At the same time he admitted the presence in Nature of organic forms which are not susceptible of a purely mechanistic explanation.

Moleschott was a physiologist and doctor who had to abandon his chair at Utrecht in consequence of the opposition aroused by his materialistic theories. Subsequently he became a professor in Italy where he exercised a considerable influence on minds inclined to positivism and materialism. In particular he influenced Cesare Lombroso (1836–1909), the famous professor of criminal anthropology at Turin, who translated into Italian Moleschott's *The Cycle of Life* (*Der Kreislauf des Lebens*, 1852). In Moleschott's view the whole history of the universe can be explained in terms of an original matter, of which force or energy is an intrinsic and essential attribute. There is no matter without force, and no force without matter. Life is simply a state of matter itself. Feuerbach prepared the way for the destruction of all anthropomorphic, teleological interpretations of the world, and it is the task of modern science to continue and complete this work. There is no good reason for making a dichotomy between the natural sciences on the one hand and the study of man and his history on the other. Science can use the same principles of explanation in both cases.

The best known product of the earlier phase of German materialism is probably Büchner's *Force and Matter* (*Kraft und Stoff*, 1855), which became a kind of popular textbook of materialism and was translated into a number of foreign languages. The author condemned out of hand all philosophy which could not be understood by the ordinary educated reader. And for this very reason the book enjoyed considerable popularity. As its title indicates, force and matter are taken as sufficient principles of explanation. The spiritual soul, for example, is thrown overboard.

3. In 1866 Friedrich Albert Lange (1828–75) published his famous *History of Materialism* (*Geschichte des Materialismus*) in which he subjected the materialist philosophy to well-founded criticism from the point of view of a Neo-Kantian. If it is considered simply as a methodological principle in natural science,

materialism is to be affirmed. That is to say, the physicist, for example, should proceed as though there were only material things. Kant himself was of this opinion. The natural scientist is not concerned with spiritual reality. But though materialism is acceptable as a methodological principle in the field of natural science, it is no longer acceptable when it has been transformed into a metaphysics or general philosophy. In this form it becomes uncritical and naïve. For example, in empirical psychology it is quite right and proper to carry as far as possible the physiological explanation of psychical processes. But it is a sure sign of an uncritical and naïve outlook if it is supposed that consciousness itself is susceptible of a purely materialist interpretation. For it is only through consciousness that we know anything at all about bodies, nerves and so on. And the very attempt to develop a materialist reduction of consciousness reveals its irreducible character.

Further, the materialists betray their uncritical mentality when they treat matter, force, atoms and so forth as though they were things-in-themselves. In point of fact they are concepts formed by the mind or spirit in its effort to understand the world. We have indeed to make use of such concepts, but it is naïve to assume that their utility shows that they can properly be made the basis for a dogmatist materialist metaphysics. And this is what philosophical materialism really is.

4. Lange's criticism dealt a telling blow at materialism, all the more so because he did not confine himself to polemics but was at pains to show what was, in his opinion, the valid element in the materialist attitude. But, as one might expect, his criticism did not prevent a recrudescence of materialism, a second wave which appealed for support to the Darwinian theory of evolution as a proved factor which showed that the origin and development of man was simply a phase of cosmic evolution in general, that man's higher activities could be adequately explained in terms of this evolution, and that at no point was it necessary to introduce the notion of creative activity by a supramundane Being. The fact that there is no necessary connection between the scientific hypothesis of biological evolution and philosophical materialism was indeed clear to some minds at the time. But there were many people who either welcomed or attacked the hypothesis, as the case might be, because they thought that materialism was the natural conclusion to draw from it.

The characteristic popular expression of this second phase of the materialist movement in Germany was Haeckel's *The Riddle of the Universe* (*Die Welträtsel*, 1899). Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919) was for many years professor of zoology at Jena, and a number of his works treated simply of the results of his scientific research. Others, however, were devoted to expounding a monistic philosophy based on the hypothesis of evolution. Between 1859, the year which saw the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, and 1871, when Darwin's *The Descent of Man* appeared, Haeckel published several works on topics connected with evolution and made it clear that in his opinion Darwin had at last set the evolutionary hypothesis on a really scientific basis. On this basis Haeckel proceeded to develop a general monism and to offer it as a valid substitute for religion in the traditional sense. Thus in 1892 he published a lecture, with additional notes, bearing the title *Monism as Link between Religion and Science* (*Der Monismus als Band zwischen Religion und Wissenschaft*). And similar attempts to find in his monism a fulfilment of man's need for religion can be seen in *The Riddle of the Universe* and in *God-Nature, Studies in Monistic Religion* (*Gott-Natur, Studien über monistische Religion*, 1914).

Reflection on the world has given rise, Haeckel asserts, to a number of riddles or problems. Some of these have been solved, while others are insoluble and are no real problems at all. 'The monistic philosophy is ultimately prepared to recognize only one comprehensive riddle of the universe, the problem of substance.'[1] If this is understood to mean the problem of the nature of some mysterious thing-in-itself behind phenomena, Haeckel is prepared to grant that we are perhaps as unable to solve it as were 'Anaximander and Empedocles 2400 years ago'.[2] But inasmuch as we do not even know that there is such a thing-in-itself, discussion of its nature is fruitless. What has been made clear is 'the comprehensive law of substance',[3] the law of the conservation of force and matter. Matter and force or energy are the two attributes of substance, and the law of their conservation, when interpreted as the universal law of evolution, justifies us in conceiving the universe as a unity in which natural laws are eternally and universally valid. We thus arrive at a monistic interpretation of the universe which is based on the proofs of its unity and of the causal relation between all phenomena. Further, this monism destroys the three principal dogmas of dualistic metaphysics, namely 'God, freedom and immortality'.[1]

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[1] *Die Welträtsel*, p. 10 (Leipzig, 1908 edition).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 239.

[3] *Ibid.*

Kant's theory of two worlds, the physical, material world and the moral, immaterial world, is thus excluded by the monistic philosophy. But it does not follow that there is no place in monism for an ethics, provided that it is grounded on the social instincts of man and not on some imagined categorical imperative. Monism acknowledges as its highest moral ideal the achievement of a harmony between egoism and altruism, self-love and love of the neighbour. 'Before all others it is the great English philosopher Herbert Spencer whom we have to thank for finding in the theory of evolution a basis for this monistic ethics.'[2]

Haeckel protests that materialism is an entirely inappropriate epithet to apply to his monistic philosophy. For while it does indeed reject the idea of immaterial spirit, it equally rejects the idea of a dead, spiritless matter. 'In every atom both are inseparably combined.'[3] But to say that in every atom spirit and matter (*Geist und Materie*) are combined is really to say that in every atom force and 'stuff' (*Kraft und Stoff*) are combined. And though Haeckel asserts that his philosophy might just as well be labelled spiritualism as materialism, it is evidently what most people would describe as materialism, an evolutionary version of it, it is true, but none the less materialism. His account of the nature of consciousness and reason makes this quite clear, whatever he may say to the contrary.

If the term 'materialism' is objectionable to Haeckel, so also is the term 'atheism'. The monistic philosophy is pantheistic, not atheistic: God is completely immanent and one with the universe. 'Whether we describe this impersonal "Almighty" as "God-Nature" (*Theophysis*) or as "All-God" (*Pantheos*) is ultimately a matter of indifference.'[4] It does not seem to have occurred to Haeckel that if pantheism consists in calling the universe 'God' and if religion consists in cultivating science, ethics and aesthetics as directed respectively towards the ideals of truth, goodness and beauty, pantheism is distinguishable from atheism only by the possible presence of a certain emotive attitude towards the universe in those who call themselves pantheists which is not present in those who call themselves atheists. Haeckel does indeed make the suggestion that 'as the ultimate cause of all things "God" is the hypothetical "original ground of substance"'.[1] But this concept is presumably the same as that of the ghostly impersonal thing-in-itself which, as we have seen, Haeckel elsewhere dismisses from consideration. Hence his pantheism cannot amount to much more than calling the universe 'God' and entertaining a certain emotive attitude towards it.

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[1] *Die Welträtsel*, pp. 140, 217 and 240.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 218. If Haeckel were still alive, he would doubtless express appreciation of the ethical ideas of Professor Julian Huxley.

[3] *Der Monismus*, p. 27 (Stuttgart, 1905 edition).

[4] *Gott-Natur*, p. 38 (Leipzig, 1914).

5. In 1906 a German Monist Society (Monistenbund) was founded at Munich under the patronage of Haeckel,[2] and in 1912 *The Monist Century* (*Das monistische Jahrhundert*) was published by Ostwald, the then president of the Monist Society.

Wilhelm Ostwald (1853–1932) was a famous chemist, professor of chemistry first at Riga and afterwards at Leipzig, a recipient of the Nobel Prize (1909) and founder of the *Annalen der Naturphilosophie* (1901–21), in the last issue of which there appeared the German text of Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*. In 1906 he resigned from his chair at Leipzig, and in subsequent years he published a considerable number of writings on philosophical topics.

In 1895 Ostwald published a book on *The Overcoming of Scientific Materialism* (*Die Ueberwindung des wissenschaftlichen Materialismus*). But the so-called overcoming of materialism meant for him the substitution of the concept of energy for that of matter. The fundamental element of reality is energy which in a process of transformations takes a variety of distinct forms. The different properties of matter are different forms of energy; and psychic energy, which can be either unconscious or conscious, constitutes another distinct level or form. The different forms or levels are irreducible, in the sense that one distinct form cannot be identified with another. At the same time they arise through transformation of the one ultimate reality, namely energy. Hence 'energeticism' is a monistic theory. It hardly fits in perhaps with Ostwald's own canons of scientific method, which exclude anything approaching metaphysical hypotheses. But when he turned to the philosophy of Nature he was in any case going beyond the limits of empirical science.

6. It is only in its crudest form that materialism involves the

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[1] *Ibid.*

[2] The Society's guiding idea was that of science as providing a way of life.

assertion that all processes are material. But a philosophy could not be classified as materialist unless it at any rate maintained the priority of matter and that processes which cannot be properly described as material are emergents from matter or epiphenomenal to material processes. Similarly, though idealism does not involve the assertion that all things are ideas in any ordinary sense, a philosophy could not be properly described as a system of metaphysical idealism unless it at any rate held that Thought or Reason or Spirit is prior and that the material world is its expression or externalization. In any case the dispute between materialism and idealism presupposes a *prima facie* distinction between matter and spirit or thought. An attempt is then made to overcome the opposition by subordinating one term of the distinction to the other. One way, therefore, of excluding the dispute between materialism and idealism is to reduce reality to phenomena which cannot properly be described either as material or as spiritual.

We find such an attempt in the phenomenalism of Mach and Avenarius, which is commonly known as empirio-criticism. This is not to say that the two philosophers in question were simply concerned with overcoming the opposition between materialism and idealism. Mach, for instance, was largely concerned with the nature of physical science. At the same time they regarded their phenomenalism as eliminating the dualisms which give rise to metaphysical essays in unification. And it is from this point of view that their theory is considered here.

Richard Avenarius (1843–96), professor of physics at Zürich and author of a *Critique of Pure Experience* (*Kritik der reinen Erfahrung*, 1888–90) and *The Human Concept of the World* (*Der menschliche Weltbegriff*, 1891), sought to reveal the essential nature of pure experience, that is, of experience stripped of all added interpretation. And he found the immediate data or elements of experience in sensations. These depend on changes in the central nervous system which are conditioned by the environment acting either as an external stimulus or by way of the process of nutrition. Further, the more the brain develops, the more is it excited by constant elements in the environment. Thus the impression of a familiar world is produced, a world in which one can feel secure. And increase in these feelings of familiarity and security is accompanied by a decrease in the impression of the world as enigmatic, problematic and mysterious. In fine, the unanswerable problems of metaphysics tend to be eliminated. And the theory of pure experience, with its reduction of both the outer and the inner worlds to sensations, excludes those dichotomies between the physical and the psychical, thing and thought, object and subject, which have formed the basis for such rival metaphysical theories as materialism and idealism.

A similar theory was produced, though by way of a rather different approach, by Ernst Mach (1838–1916) who was for many years a professor in the university of Vienna and published, in addition to works concerned with physical science, *Contributions to the Analysis of Sensations* (*Beiträge zur Analyse der Empfindungen*, 1886), and *Knowledge and Error* (*Erkenntnis und Irrtum*, 1905). Experience is reducible to sensations which are neither purely physical nor purely psychical but rather neutral. Mach thus tries to get behind the distinctions which philosophers have used as a basis for the construction of metaphysical theories. But he is more concerned with purifying physical science from metaphysical elements than with developing a general philosophy.[1] Arising out of our biological needs, science aims at control of Nature by enabling us to predict. For this purpose we have to practise an economy of thought, uniting phenomena by means of the fewest and simplest concepts possible. But though these concepts are indispensable instruments for rendering scientific prediction possible, they do not give us insight into causes or essences or substances in a metaphysical sense.

In *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (1909) Lenin maintained that the phenomenalism of Mach and Avenarius leads inevitably to idealism and thence to religious belief. For if things are reduced to sensations or sense-data, they must be mind-dependent. And as they can hardly be dependent simply on the individual human mind, they must be referred to a divine mind.

Historically, the phenomenalism of Mach and Avenarius formed part of the line of thought which issued in the neopositivism of the Vienna Circle in the twenties of the present century. It can hardly be said to have led to a revival of idealism, and much less of theism. It does not follow, however, that Lenin's point of view has nothing to be said for it. For example, as Avenarius had no intention of denying that there were things in some sense before there were human beings, he maintained that sensations could exist before minds, as possible sensations. But unless the reduction of things to sensations is interpreted as equivalent to the statement, with which not even the most resolute realist would quarrel, that physical objects are in principle capable of being sensed if there is any sentient subject at hand, it becomes difficult to avoid some such conclusion as that drawn by Lenin. One can, of course, try to do so by speaking of *sensibilia* rather than of sensations. But in this case one either reinstates physical objects over against the mind or becomes involved in the same difficulty as before. Besides, it is absurd, in the opinion of the present writer, to reduce the self to a complex or succession of *sensibilia*. For the presence of the self as irreducible to *sensibilia* is a condition of the possibility of attempting such a reduction. Hence one would be left with the self on the one hand and *sensibilia* on the other, in other words with a dualism of the very type which empirio-criticism was concerned to overcome.[1] Mach's attempt to purify physical science from metaphysics is one thing: phenomenalism as a philosophical theory is quite another.

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[1] Mach rejects the concept of the ego as a spiritual substance standing over against Nature and interprets the self as a complex of phenomena which are continuous with Nature. But he does not work out this theory in any thoroughgoing manner, and he admits that the ego is the bond which unites experience.

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[1] The neopositivist attempted to transform phenomenalism from an ontological into a linguistic theory by saying that the statement that physical objects are sense-data means that a sentence in which a physical object is mentioned can be translated into a sentence or sentences in which only sense-data are mentioned, in such a way that if the original sentence is true (or false) the translation will be true (or false) and *vice versa*. But I do not think that this attempt proved to be successful.

CHAPTER XIX

THE NEO-KANTIAN MOVEMENT

Introductory remarks—The Marburg School—The School of Baden—The pragmatist tendency—E. Cassirer; concluding observations—Some notes on Dilthey.

1. IN 1865 Otto Liebmann (1840–1912), in his *Kant und die Epigonen*, raised the cry of 'Back to Kant!' This demand for a return to Kant was indeed perfectly understandable in the circumstances. On the one hand idealist metaphysics had produced a crop of systems which, when the first flush of enthusiasm had passed away, seemed to many to be incapable of providing anything which could properly be called knowledge and thus to justify Kant's attitude towards metaphysics. On the other hand materialism, while speaking in the name of science, proceeded to serve up its own highly questionable form of metaphysics and was blind to the limitations placed by Kant to the use which could legitimately be made of scientific concepts. In other words, both the idealists and the materialists justified by their fruits the limitations which Kant had set to man's theoretical knowledge. Was it not desirable, therefore, to turn back to the great thinker of modern times who by a careful critique of human knowledge had succeeded in avoiding the extravagances of metaphysics without falling into the dogmatism of the materialists? It was not a question of following Kant slavishly, but rather of accepting his general position or attitude and working on the lines which he had followed.

The Neo-Kantian movement became a powerful force in German philosophy. It became in fact the academic philosophy or 'School Philosophy' (*Schulphilosophie*), as the Germans say, and by the turn of the century most of the university chairs of philosophy were occupied by people who were in some degree at least representatives of the movement. But Neo-Kantianism assumed pretty well as many shapes as it had representatives. And we cannot possibly mention them all here. Some general indications of the principal lines of thought will have to suffice.

2. A distinction is drawn within the Neo-Kantian movement

between the Schools of Marburg and Baden. The Marburg School can be said to have concentrated principally on logical, epistemological and methodological themes. And it is associated above all with the names of Hermann Cohen (1842–1918) and Paul Natorp (1854–1924).

Cohen, who was nominated professor of philosophy in the university of Marburg in 1876, concerned himself with both the exegesis and the development of Kant's thought. In a wide sense his principal theme is the unity of the cultural consciousness and its evolution, and whether he is writing on logic, ethics, aesthetics or religion[1] it is noticeable that he is constantly referring to the historical development of the ideas which he is treating and to their cultural significance at different stages of their development. This aspect of his thought makes it less formalistic and abstract than Kant's, though the wealth of historical reflections does not facilitate an immediate grasp of Cohen's personal point of view.

In the first volume of his *System of Philosophy* (*System der Philosophie*, 1902–12) Cohen abandons Kant's doctrine of sensibility, the transcendental aesthetic, and devotes himself entirely to the logic of pure thought or pure knowledge (*die reine Erkenntnis*), especially of the pure or *a priori* knowledge which lies at the basis of mathematical physics. True, logic possesses a wider field of application. But 'the fact that logic must have a relation which extends beyond the field of mathematical natural science to the field of the mental sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) in no way affects the fundamental relation of logic to knowledge in mathematical natural science'.[2] Indeed, 'the establishment of the relation between metaphysics and mathematical natural science is Kant's decisive act'.[3]

In the second volume, devoted to the ethics of the pure will (*Ethik des reinen Willens*), Cohen remarks that 'ethics, as the doctrine of man, becomes the centre of philosophy'.[4] But the concept of man is complex and comprises the two principal aspects of man, namely as an individual and as a member of society. Thus the deduction of the adequate concept of man moves through several phases or moments until the two aspects are seen as interpenetrating one another. In his discussion of this matter Cohen observes that philosophy has come to look on the State as the embodiment of man's ethical consciousness. But the empirical or actual State is only too evidently the State 'of the ruling classes'.[1] And the power-State (*der Machtstaat*) can become the State which embodies the principles of right and justice (*der Rechtsstaat*) only when it ceases to serve particular class-interests. In other words, Cohen looks forward to a democratic socialist society which will be the true expression of the ethical will of man considered both as a free individual person and as essentially orientated towards social life and the attainment of a common ideal end.

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[1] In his *System of Philosophy* the idea of God is discussed in the second volume. Cf. also *The Concept of Religion in the System of Philosophy* (*Der Begriff der Religion im System der Philosophie*, Giessen, 1915). The idea of God is depicted as the unifying ideal of truth and perfection.

[2] *System der Philosophie*, I, p. 15 (Berlin, 1922, 3rd edition). The term *Geisteswissenschaften* will be discussed later.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 9. Cohen is obviously referring to metaphysics in the sense in which Kant accepted metaphysics.

[4] *System der Philosophie*, II, p. 1 (Berlin 1921, 3rd edition).

As the whole system of philosophy is conceived 'from the point of view of the unity of the cultural consciousness'[2] and as this consciousness is certainly not completely characterized by science and morals, Cohen devotes the third volume to aesthetics. As Kant saw, a treatment of aesthetics forms an intrinsic part of systematic philosophy.

Natorp, who also occupied a chair at Marburg, was strongly influenced by Cohen. In his *Philosophical Foundations of the Exact Sciences* (*Die philosophischen Grundlagen der exakten Wissenschaften*, 1910) he tries to show that the logical development of mathematics does not require any recourse to intuitions of space and time. His philosophy of mathematics is thus considerably more 'modern' than Kant's. As for ethics, Natorp shared Cohen's general outlook, and on the basis of the idea that the moral law demands of the individual that he should subordinate his activity to the elevation of humanity he developed a theory of social pedagogy. It can also be mentioned that in a well-known work, *Plato's Theory of Ideas* (*Platons Ideenlehre*, 1903), Natorp attempted to establish an affinity between Plato and Kant.

Both Cohen and Natorp endeavoured to overcome the dichotomy between thought and being which seemed to be implied by the Kantian theory of the thing-in-itself. Thus according to Natorp 'both, namely thought and being, exist and have meaning only in their constant mutual relations to one another'.[3] Being is not something static, set over against the activity of thought; it exists only in a process of becoming which is intrinsically related to this activity. And thought is a process which progressively determines its object, being. But though Cohen and Natorp sought to unite thought and being as related poles of one process, it would not have been possible for them to eliminate effectively the thing-in-itself without deserting the Kantian standpoint and making the transition to metaphysical idealism.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 620.

[2] *System der Philosophie*, III, p. 4 (Berlin, 1922).

[3] *Philosophie*, p. 13 (Göttingen, 1921, 3rd edition).

3. While the Marburg School emphasized inquiry into the logical foundations of the natural sciences, the School of Baden emphasized the philosophy of values and reflection on the cultural sciences. Thus for Wilhelm Windelband[1] (1848–1915) the philosopher is concerned with inquiry into the principles and presuppositions of value-judgments and with the relation between the judging subject or consciousness and the value or norm or ideal in the light of which the judgment is made.

Given this account of philosophy, it is obvious that ethical and aesthetic judgments provide material for philosophical reflection. The moral judgment, for example, is clearly axiological in character rather than descriptive. It expresses what ought to be rather than what is the case in the world. But Windelband includes also logical judgments. For just as ethics is concerned with moral values, so is logic concerned with a value, namely truth. It is not everything which is thought that is true. The true is that which ought to be thought. Thus all logical thought is guided by a value, a norm. The ultimate axioms of logic cannot be proved; but we must accept them if we value truth. And we must accept truth as an objective norm or value unless we are prepared to reject all logical thinking.

Logic, ethics and aesthetics, therefore, presuppose the values of truth, goodness and beauty. And this fact compels us to postulate a transcendental norm-setting or value-positing consciousness which lies, as it were, behind empirical consciousness. Further, inasmuch as in their logical, ethical and aesthetic judgments all individuals appeal implicitly to universal absolute values, this transcendental consciousness forms the living bond between individuals.

Absolute values, however, require a metaphysical anchoring (*eine metaphysische Verānkerung*). That is to say, recognition and affirmation of objective values leads us to postulate a metaphysical foundation in a supersensible reality which we call God. And there thus arises the values of the holy. 'We do not understand by the holy a particular class of universally valid values, such as the classes constituted by the true, the good and the beautiful, but rather all these values themselves in so far as they stand in relation to a supersensible reality.'[1]

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[1] Windelband, the well-known historian of philosophy, occupied chairs successively at Zürich, Freiburg and Strasbourg. In 1903 he was nominated professor of philosophy at Heidelberg. He was the first major figure of the so-called Baden School.

Windelband's philosophy of values was developed by Heinrich Rickert (1863–1936), his successor in the chair of philosophy at Heidelberg. Rickert insists that there is a realm of values which possess reality but cannot properly be said to exist.[2] They possess reality in the sense that the subject recognizes and does not create them. But they are not existing things among other existing things. In value-judgments, however, the subject brings together the realm of values and the sensible world, giving valuational significance to things and events. And though values themselves cannot be properly said to exist, we are not entitled to deny the possibility of their being grounded in an eternal divine reality which transcends our theoretical knowledge.

In accordance with his general outlook Rickert emphasizes the place of the idea of value in history. Windelband had maintained[3] that natural science is concerned with things in their universal aspects, as exemplifying types, and with events as repeatable, that is, as exemplifying universal laws, whereas history is concerned with the singular, the unique. The natural sciences are 'nomothetic' or law-positing, whereas history (that is, the science of history) is 'idiographic'.[4] Rickert agrees that the historian is concerned with the singular and unique, but insists that he is interested in persons and events only with reference to values. In other words, the ideal of historiography is a science of culture which depicts historical development in the light of the values recognized by different societies and cultures.

As far as one particular aspect of his thought is concerned, Hugo Münsterberg (1863–1916), who was a friend of Rickert, can be associated with the Baden School of Neo-Kantianism. In his *Philosophy of Values* (*Philosophie der Werte*, 1908), he expounded the idea of giving meaning to the world in terms of a system of values. But as professor of experimental psychology at Harvard he gave his attention mainly to the field of psychology, where he had been strongly influenced by Wundt.

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[1] *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, p. 390 (Tübingen, 1914).

[2] In his *System of Philosophy* (*System der Philosophie*, 1921) Rickert attempts to classify values in six groups or spheres; the values of logic (truth values), aesthetics (values of beauty), mysticism (values of impersonal sanctity or holiness), ethics (moral values), erotics (values of happiness) and religion (values of personal sanctity).

[3] In his *History and Natural Science* (*Geschichte und Naturwissenschaft*, 1894).

[4] A science is not 'idiographic' by reason simply of the fact that it treats of human beings. Empirical psychology, for instance, treats of human beings, but it is none the less a 'nonothetic' science. In Scholastic language, the distinction is formal rather than material.

4. We have seen that Windelband regarded the existence of a supersensible divine reality as a postulate of the recognition of absolute values. At the same time he was concerned to argue that the term 'postulate', as used in this context, means much more than 'useful fiction'. There were, however, some Neo-Kantians who interpreted Kant's postulate-theory in a definitely pragmatist sense.

Thus Friedrich Albert Lange (1828–75), who has already been mentioned as a critic of materialism, interpreted metaphysical theories and religious doctrines as belonging to a sphere between knowledge and poetry. If such theories and doctrines are presented as expressing knowledge of reality, they are open to all the objections raised by Kant and other critics. For we cannot have theoretical knowledge of metaphenomenal reality. But if they are interpreted as symbols of a reality which transcends knowledge and if at the same time their value for life is emphasized, they become immune from objections which have point only if cognitive value is claimed for metaphysics and theology.

The useful-fiction version of the theory of postulates was developed in a more systematic way by Hans Vaihinger (1852–1933), author of the celebrated work *The Philosophy of As-If* (*Die Philosophie des Als-Ob*, 1911). With him metaphysical theories and religious doctrines become only particular instances of the application of a general pragmatist view of truth. Only sensations and feelings are real: otherwise the whole of human knowledge consists of 'fictions'. The principles of logic, for example, are fictions which have proved their real utility in experience. And to say that they are undeniably true is to say that they have been found indispensably useful. Hence the question to ask in regard, say, to a religious doctrine is whether it is useful or valuable to act as though it were true rather than whether it is true. Indeed, the question whether the doctrine is 'really' true or not hardly arises, not simply because we have no means of knowing whether it is true or not but rather because the concept of truth is given a pragmatist interpretation.[1]

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[1] To do Vaihinger justice, it must be added that he endeavours to sort out the different ways in which the concepts of 'as-if' and 'fiction' operate. He does not simply throw the principles of logic, scientific hypotheses and religious doctrines indiscriminately into the same basket.

This pragmatist fictionalism evidently goes a long way beyond the position of Kant. Indeed, it really deprives the Kantian theory of postulates of its significance, inasmuch as it does away with the sharp contrast established by Kant between theoretical knowledge on the one hand and the postulates of the moral law on the other. But though I have included Vaihinger among the Neo-Kantians, he was strongly influenced by the vitalism and fiction-theory of Nietzsche on whom he published a well-known work, *Nietzsche as Philosopher* (*Nietzsche als Philosoph*, 1902).

5. As we have seen, Neo-Kantianism was by no means a homogeneous system of thought. On the one hand we have a philosopher such as Alois Riehl (1844–1924), professor at Berlin, who not only rejected decisively all metaphysics but also maintained that value-theory must be excluded from philosophy in the proper sense.[1] On the other hand we have a philosopher such as Windelband who developed the theory of absolute values in such a way as practically to reintroduce metaphysics, even if he still spoke about 'postulates'.

Such differences naturally become all the more marked in proportion as the field of application of the term 'Neo-Kantian' is extended. For instance, the term has sometimes been applied to Johannes Volkelt (1848–1930), professor of philosophy at Leipzig. But as Volkelt maintained that the human spirit can enjoy an intuitive certitude of its unity with the Absolute, that the Absolute is infinite spirit, and that creation can be conceived as analogous to aesthetic production, the propriety of calling him a Neo-Kantian is obviously questionable. And in point of fact Volkelt was strongly influenced by other German philosophers besides Kant.

It will have been noticed that most of the philosophers mentioned lived into the twentieth century. And the Neo-Kantian movement has indeed had one or two eminent representatives in comparatively recent times. Notable among these is Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945) who occupied chairs successively at Berlin, Hamburg, Göteborg and Yale in the United States. The influence of the Marburg School contributed to directing his attention to problems of knowledge. And the fruit of his studies was his three-volume work on *The Problem of Knowledge in the Philosophy and*

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[1] According to Riehl, a philosophy which deserves to be called scientific must confine itself to the critique of knowledge as realized in the natural sciences. He did not, of course, deny the importance of values in human life; but he insisted that recognition of them is not, properly speaking, a cognitive act and falls outside the scope of scientific philosophy.

Science of the Modern Era (*Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit*, 1906–20). This was followed in 1910 by a work on the concepts of substance and function (*Substanzbegriff und Funktionsbegriff*). Cassirer was struck by the progressive mathematization of physics, and he concluded that in modern physics sensible reality is transformed into and reconstructed as a world of symbols. Further reflection on the function of symbolism led him to develop a large-scale *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (*Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*, 1923–9) in which he maintained that it is the use of symbols which distinguishes man from the animals. It is by means of language that man creates a new world, the world of culture. And Cassirer used the idea of symbolism to unlock many doors. For example, he tried to explain the unity of the human person as a functional unity which unites man's different symbolic activities. He devoted special attention to the function of symbolism in the form of myth, and he studied such activities as art and historiography in the light of the idea of symbolic transformation.

But though Neo-Kantianism lasted on into the present century, it can scarcely be called a twentieth-century philosophy. The emergence of new movements and lines of thought has pushed it into the background. It is not so much that the subjects with which it dealt are dead. It is rather that they are treated in different settings or frameworks of thought. Inquiry into the logic of the sciences and the philosophy of values are cases in point. Further, epistemology or theory of knowledge no longer enjoys the central position which Kant and his disciples attributed to it.

This is not to say, of course, that the influence of Kant is exhausted. Far from it. But it is not felt, at any rate on a significant scale, in the continuance of any movement which could appropriately be called Neo-Kantian. Further, Kant's influence is sometimes exercised in a direction which is thoroughly un-Kantian. For example, while positivists believe that Kant was substantially right in excluding metaphysics from the field of knowledge, there is a current of thought in modern Thomism which has interpreted and developed Kant's transcendental method for the very un-Kantian purpose of establishing a systematic metaphysics.

6. This is a convenient place at which to make a few remarks about Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), who occupied chairs successively at Basel, Kiel, Breslau and finally Berlin, where he succeeded Lotze as professor of philosophy. True, though Dilthey entertained

a profound admiration for Kant he cannot properly be described as a Neo-Kantian. He did indeed endeavour to develop a critique of historical reason (*Kritik der historischen Vernunft*) and a corresponding theory of categories. And this activity can be regarded from one point of view as an extension of Kant's critical work to what the Germans call the *Geisteswissenschaften.* At the same time he insisted that the categories of the historical reason, that is, of reason engaged in understanding and interpreting history, are not *a priori* categories which are then applied to some raw materials to constitute history. They arise out of the living penetration by the human spirit of its own objective manifestation in history. And in general, especially from 1883 onwards, Dilthey drew a sharp distinction between the abstractness of Kant's thought and his own concrete approach. However, the fact that we have already had occasion in this chapter to refer to the distinction between the natural sciences and the *Geisteswissenschaften* provides, I think, sufficient reason for mentioning Dilthey here.

The fact that the term 'mental sciences' is a misleading translation of *Geisteswissenschaften* can easily be seen by considering the examples given by Dilthey. Alongside the natural sciences, he says, there has grown up a group of other sciences which together can be called the *Geisteswissenschaften* or *Kulturwissenschaften.* Such are 'history, national economy, the sciences of law and of the State, the science of religion, the study of literature and poetry, of art and music, of philosophical world-views, and systems, finally psychology'.[1] The term 'mental sciences' tends to suggest only psychology. But in a similar list of examples Dilthey does not even mention psychology.[2] The French are accustomed to speak of 'the moral sciences'. But in English this term suggests primarily ethics.Hence I propose to speak of 'the cultural sciences'. It is true that this term would not normally suggest national economy. But it is sufficient to say that the term is being used to cover what Dilthey calls *Kulturwissenschaften* or *Geisteswissenschaften.*

It is clear that we cannot distinguish between the cultural sciences on the one hand and the natural sciences on the other by the simple expedient of saying that the former are concerned with man whereas the latter are not. For physiology is a natural science; yet it treats of man. And the same can be said of experimental psychology. Nor can we say simply that the natural sciences are concerned with the physical and sensible, including the physical aspects of man, whereas the cultural sciences are concerned with the psychical, the interior, with that which does not enter into the sensible world. For it is evident that in the study of art, for instance, we are concerned with sensible objects such as pictures rather than with the psychical states of the artists. True, works of art are studied as objectifications of the human spirit. But they are none the less sensible objectifications. Hence we must find some other way of distinguishing between the two groups of sciences.

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[1] *Gesammelte Schiften*, VII, p. 79. This collection of Dilthey's *Works* will be referred to hereafter as *GS.*

[2] *GS*, VII, p. 70.

Man stands in a living felt unity with Nature, and his primary experience of his physical milieu are personal lived experiences (*Erlebnisse*), not objects of reflection from which man detaches himself. To construct the world of natural science, however, man has to prescind from the aspect of his impressions of his physical milieu under which they are his personal lived experiences; he has to put himself out of the picture as far as he can[1] and develop an abstract conception of Nature in terms of relations of space, time, mass and motion. Nature has to become for him the central reality, a law-ordered physical system, which is considered, as it were, from without.

When, however, we turn to the world of history and culture, the objectifications of the human spirit, the situation is different. It is a question of penetration from within. And the individual's personal lived relations with his own social milieu become of fundamental importance. For example, I cannot understand the social and political life of ancient Greece as an objectification of the human spirit if I exclude my own lived experiences of social relations. For these form the basis of my understanding of the social life of any other epoch. True, a certain unity in the historical and social life of humanity is a necessary condition of the possibility of my own *Erlebnisse* providing a key to the understanding of history. But the 'original cell of the historical world,'[2] as Dilthey calls it, is precisely the individual's *Erlebnis*, his lived experience of interaction with his own social milieu.

But though what Dilthey calls *Erlebnisse* are a necessary condition for the development of the cultural sciences, they do not by themselves constitute a science of any kind. Understanding (*Verstehen*) is also necessary. And what we have to understand in history and the other cultural sciences is not the human spirit in its interiority, so to speak, but the external objectification of this spirit, its objective expression, as in art, law, the State and so on. We are concerned in other words with the understanding of objective spirit.[1] And to understand a phase of objective spirit means relating its phenomena to an inner structure which finds expression in these phenomena. For example, the understanding of Roman law involves penetrating beneath the external apparatus, so to speak, to the spiritual structure which find expression in the laws. It means penetrating what can be called the spirit of Roman law, just as understanding Baroque architecture would involve penetrating the spirit, the structure of purposes and ideals, which found expression in this style. We can say, therefore, that 'the cultural sciences rest on the relation of lived experience, expression and understanding'.[2] Expression is required because the underlying spiritual structure is grasped only in and through its external expression. Understanding is a movement from the outside to the inside. And in the process of understanding a spiritual object rises before our vision, whereas in the natural sciences a physical object is constructed (though not in the Kantian sense) in the process of scientific knowledge.

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[1] In the science of physiology man regards himself from an impersonal and external point of view as a physical object, as part of Nature.

[2] *GS*, VII, p. 161.

We have seen that a man's personal experience of his own social milieu is a necessary condition of his being able to live over again the experience of men in the past. *Erleben* is a condition of the possibility of *Nacherleben*. And the former renders the latter possible because of the continuity and fundamental unity of the developing historical-cultural reality which Dilthey describes as Life (*Leben*). Cultures are, of course, spatially and temporally distinct. But if we conceive the reciprocal relations between persons, under the conditions set by the external world, as a structural and developing unity which persists throughout spatial and temporal differentiations, we have the concept of Life. And in studying this Life the historical reason employs certain categories. As has already been remarked, these categories are not *a priori* forms or concepts applied to some raw material: 'they lie in the nature of Life itself'[1] and are conceptualized abstractly in the process of understanding. We cannot determine the exact number of such categories or turn them into a tidy abstract logical scheme for mechanical application. But among them we can name 'meaning, value, purpose, development, ideal'.[2]

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[1] Dilthey was influenced by Hegel's concept of 'objective spirit'. But his own use of the term is obviously somewhat different from that of Hegel who classified art and religion under the heading of 'absolute spirit'. Hegel's use of the term is connected, of course, with his idealist metaphysics, for which Dilthey had no use. Further, Dilthey rejected what he regarded as Hegel's *a priori* methods of interpreting history and human culture.

[2] *Auf dem Verhältnis von Erlebnis, Ausdruck und Verstehen*; *GS*, VII, p. 131.

These categories should not be understood in a metaphysical sense. It is not a question, for example, of defining the end or meaning of history in the sense of an end which the process of historical development is predestined to attain. It is a question rather of understanding the meaning which Life has for a particular society and the operative ideals which find expression in that society's political and legal institutions, in its art, religion and so on. 'The category of meaning signifies the relations of parts of Life to the whole.'[3] But 'our conception of the meaning of Life is always changing. Each life-plan expresses an idea of the meaning of Life. And the purpose which we set for the future conditions our account of the meaning of the past.'[4] If we say that the task for the future is to achieve this or that, our judgment conditions our understanding of the meaning of the past. And, of course, the other way round as well.

It can hardly be denied that Dilthey's thought contains a prominent element of historical relativism. For example, all world-views or *Weltanschauungen* are partial views of the world, relative to distinct cultural phases. And a study of such world-views or metaphysical systems would exhibit their relativity. At the same time Dilthey does not maintain that there is no universally valid truth at all. And he regards the study of Life, of history as a whole, as a constant approximation to an objective and complete self-knowledge by man. Man is fundamentally an historical being, and he comes to know himself in history. This self-knowledge is never actually complete, but the knowledge which man attains through a study of history is no more purely subjective than is the knowledge attained through the natural sciences. How far Dilthey actually succeeds in overcoming pure historicism is doubtless open to discussion. But he certainly does not intend to assert an extreme relativism which would necessarily invalidate his conception of world-history.

At a time when the natural sciences appear to be threatening to engulf the whole field of knowledge, the question whether and how one could distinguish between the natural and the cultural sciences naturally becomes an issue of importance. And Dilthey's account of the matter was one of the most signal contributions to the discussion. What one thinks of its value seems to depend very largely on one's view of the historian's function. If, for example, one thinks that Dilthey's idea of getting behind the external expression to an inward spiritual structure (the 'spirit' of Roman law, of Baroque art and architecture, and so on) smacks of the transcendental metaphysics which Dilthey himself professed to reject, and if at the same time one disapproves of such transcendental metaphysics, one will hardly be disposed to accept Dilthey's account of the differences between the two groups of sciences. If, however, one thinks that an understanding of man's cultural life does in fact demand this passage from the external phenomena to the operative ideals, purposes and values which are expressed in them, one can hardly deny the relevance of the concepts of *Erleben* and *Nacherleben*. For historical understanding would then necessarily involve a penetration of the past from within, a reliving, so far as this is possible, of past experience, of past attitudes, valuations and ideals. And this would be at any rate one distinguishing characteristic of the historical and cultural sciences. For the physicist can scarcely be said to attempt to relive the experience of an atom or to penetrate behind the relations of infra-atomic particles to a spiritual structure expressed in them. To introduce such notions into mathematical physics would mean its ruin. Conversely, to fail to introduce them into the theory of the cultural sciences is to forget that 'he who explores history is the same who makes history'.[1]

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[1] *GS*, VII, p. 232. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *GS*, VII, p. 233. [4] *Ibid.*

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[1] *GS*, VII, p. 278.

CHAPTER XX

THE REVIVAL OF METAPHYSICS

Remarks on inductive metaphysics—Fechner's inductive metaphysics—The teleological idealism of Lotze—Wundt and the relation between science and philosophy—The vitalism of Driesch—Eucken's activism—Appropriation of the past: Trendelenburg and Greek thought; the revival of Thomism.

1. IN spite of their own excursions into metaphysics both the materialists and the Neo-Kantians were opposed to the idea of metaphysics as a source of positive knowledge about reality, the former appealing to scientific thinking in justification of their attitude, the latter to Kant's theory of the limitations of man's theoretical knowledge. But there was also a group of philosophers who came to philosophy from some branch or other of empirical science and who were convinced that the scientific view of the world demands completion through metaphysical reflection. They did not believe that a valid system of metaphysics could be worked out *a priori* or without regard to our scientific knowledge. And they tended to look on metaphysical theories as hypothetical and as enjoying a higher or lower degree of probability. Hence in their case we can speak of inductive metaphysics.

Inductive metaphysics has, of course, had its notable representatives, above all perhaps Henri Bergson. But there are probably few people who would be prepared to claim that the German inductive metaphysicians of the second half of the nineteenth century were of the same stature as the great idealists. And one of the weak points of inductive metaphysics in general is that it tends to leave unexamined and unestablished the basic principles on which it rests. However, it is as well to realize that we cannot simply divide the German philosophers into two classes, those who constructed metaphysics in an *a priori* manner and those who rejected metaphysics in the name of science or in that of the limitations of the human mind. For there were also those who attempted to achieve a synthesis between science and metaphysics, not by trying to harmonize science with an already-made philosophical system but rather by trying to show that reflection on the world as known through the particular sciences reasonably leads to metaphysical theories.

2. Among the representatives of inductive metaphysics, we can mention Gustav Theodor Fechner (1801–87), for many years professor of physics at Leipzig and celebrated as one of the founders of experimental psychology. Continuing the studies of E. H. Weber (1795–1878) on the relation between sensation and stimulus, Fechner gave expression in his *Elements of Psychophysics* (*Elemente des Psychophysik*, 1860) to the 'law' which states that the intensity of the sensation varies in proportion to the logarithm of the intensity of the stimulus. Fechner also devoted himself to the psychological study of aesthetics, publishing his *Propaedeutics to Aesthetics* (*Vorschule der Aesthetik*) in 1876.

These studies in exact science did not, however, lead Fechner to materialist conclusions.[1] In psychology he was a parallelist. That is to say, he thought that psychical and physical phenomena correspond in a manner analogous to the relation between a text and its translation or between two translations of a text, as he explained in his *Zend-Avesta* (1851) and in his *Elements of Psychophysics*. In fact, the psychical and the physical were for him two aspects of one reality. And in accordance with this view he postulated the presence of a psychical life even in plants, though of a lower type than in animals.[2] Moreover, he extended this parallelism to the planets and stars and indeed to all material things, justifying this panpsychism by a principle of analogy which states that when objects agree in possessing certain qualities or traits, one is entitled to assume hypothetically that they agree also in other qualities, provided that one's hypotheses do not contradict established scientific facts.

This is hardly a very safe rule of procedure, but, to do Fechner justice, it should be added that he demanded some positive ground for metaphysical theories, as distinct from a mere absence of contradiction of scientific facts. At the same time he also made use of a principle which is not calculated to commend his metaphysics in the eyes of anti-metaphysicians or, for the matter of that, of many metaphysicians themselves. I refer to the principle which states that an hypothesis which has some positive ground and does not contradict any established fact is to be the more readily embraced the more it renders man happy.[1]

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[1] As a youth Fechner went through an atheistic phase, but a book by Oken, one of Schelling's disciples, convinced him that materialism and atheism were by no means entailed by an acceptance of exact science.

[2] In 1848 Fechner published *Nanna, or the Soul-Life of Plants* (*Nanna, oder das Seelenleben der Pflanzen*).

In the spirit of this principle Fechner contrasted what he called the day-view with the night-view, to the detriment of the latter.[2] The night-view, attributed not only to the materialists but also to the Kantians, is the view of Nature as dumb and dead and as affording no real clue to its teleological significance. The day-view is the vision of Nature as a living harmonious unity, animated by a soul. The soul of the universe is God, and the universe considered as a physical system is the divine externality. Fechner thus uses his principle of analogy to extend psychophysical parallelism not only from human beings to other classes of particular things but also from all particular things to the universe as a whole. He employs it also as a basis for belief in personal immortality. Our perceptions persist in memory and enter once again into consciousness. So, we may suppose, our souls persist in the divine memory but without simple absorption in the Deity.

Panpsychism is indeed a very ancient theory, and it is one which tends to recur. It is far from being Fechner's private invention. However, it is difficult to avoid the impression that when Fechner leaves the purely scientific sphere and embarks on philosophy he becomes a kind of poet of the universe. But it is interesting to observe the pragmatist element in his thought. We have seen that in his view, other things being equal, the theory which makes for happiness is to be preferred to the theory which does not. But Fechner does not make it a matter simply of individual preference. Another of his principles states that the probability of a belief increases in proportion to the length of its survival, especially if acceptance of it increases together with the development of human culture. And it is not surprising that William James derived inspiration from Fechner.

3. A much more impressive figure as a philosopher is Rudolf Hermann Lotze (1817–81) who studied medicine and philosophy at Leipzig, where he also listened to Fechner's lectures on physics. In 1844 he was nominated professor of philosophy at Göttingen and in 1881, shortly before his death, he accepted a chair of philosophy at Berlin. Besides works on physiology, medicine and

[1] Happiness for Fechner does not mean simply sense-pleasure. It includes joy in the beautiful, the good and the true and in the religious feeling of union with God.

[2] Cf. *Die Tagesansicht gegenüber der Nachtansicht*, 1879.

psychology he published a considerable number of philosophical writings.[1] In 1841 there appeared a *Metaphysics*, in 1843 a *Logic*, in 1856–64 a large three-volume work entitled *Microcosm* (*Mikrokosmus*) on philosophical anthropology, in 1868 a history of aesthetics in Germany and in 1874–9 a *System of Philosophy* (*System der Philosophie*). After Lotze's death a series of volumes were published which were based on lecture-notes taken by his students. These covered in outline the fields of psychology, ethics, philosophy of religion, philosophy of Nature, logic, metaphysics, aesthetics and the history of post-Kantian philosophy in Germany. A three-volume collection of his minor writings (*Kleine Schriften*) appeared in 1885–91.

According to Lotze himself it was his inclination to poetry and art which originally turned his mind to philosophy. Hence it can be somewhat misleading to say that he came to philosophy from science. At the same time he had a scientific training at the university of Leipzig, where he enrolled in the faculty of medicine, and it is characteristic of his systematic philosophical thinking that he presupposed and took seriously what he called the mechanical interpretation of Nature.

For example, while recognizing, of course, the evident fact that there are differences in behaviour between living and non-living things, Lotze refused to allow that the biologist must postulate some special vital principle which is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the organism. For science, which seeks everywhere to discover connections which can be formulated in terms of general laws, 'the realm of life is not divided from that of inorganic Nature by a higher force peculiar to itself, setting itself up as something alien above other modes of action . . . but simply by the peculiar kind of connection into which its manifold constituents are woven. . . .'[2] That is to say, the characteristic behaviour of the organism can be explained in terms of the combination of material elements in certain ways. And it is the biologist's business to push this type of explanation as far as he can and not to have recourse to the expedient of invoking special vital principles. 'The connection of vital phenomena demands throughout a mechanical treatment which explains life not by a peculiar principle of operation but by a characteristic application of the general principles of physical process.'[1]

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[1] Some of his medico-psychological publications, such as his *Medical Psychology or Physiology of the Soul* (*Medizinische Psychologie oder Physiologie der Seele*, 1852) are of importance for his philosophy.

[2] *Mikrokosmus*, Bk. I, ch. 3, sect. 1 (in 5th German edition, Leipzig, 1896–1909, I, p. 58).

This mechanical interpretation of Nature, which is necessary for the development of science, should be extended as far as possible. And this is as true of psychology as of biology. At the same time we are certainly not entitled to rule out *a priori* the possibility of finding facts of experience which limit the applicability of the mechanical view. And we do find such facts. For example, the unity of consciousness, which manifests itself in the simple act of comparing two presentations and judging them to be like or unlike, at once sets a limit to the possibility of describing man's psychical life in terms of causal relations between distinct psychical events. It is not a question of inferring the existence of a soul as a kind of unalterable psychical atom. It is 'the fact of the unity of consciousness which is *eo ipso* at the same time the fact of the existence of a substance',[2] namely the soul. In other words, to affirm the existence of the soul is neither to postulate a logical condition of the unity of consciousness nor to infer from this unity an occult entity. For recognition of the unity of consciousness is at the same time recognition of the existence of the soul, though the proper way of describing the soul is obviously a matter for further reflection.

Thus there are certain empirical facts which set a limit to the field of application of the mechanical interpretation of Nature. And it is no good suggesting that further scientific advance can abolish these facts or show that they are not facts. This is quite evident in the case of the unity of consciousness. For any further scientific advances in empirical and physiological psychology depend on and presuppose the unity of consciousness. And as for Lotze reflection on the unity of consciousness shows that psychical states must be referred to an immaterial reality as their subject, the point at which the limitation of the mechanical interpretation of man's psychical life becomes decisively evident is also the point at which the need for a metaphysical psychology becomes clear.

It is not, however, Lotze's intention to construct a two-storey system, as it were, in which the mechanical interpretation of material Nature would form the lower storey and a superimposed metaphysics of spiritual reality the higher. For he argues that even as regards Nature itself the mechanical interpretation gives but a one-sided picture, valid indeed for scientific purposes but inadequate from a metaphysical point of view.

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[1] *System der Philosophie*, II, p. 447 (Leipzig, 1912; Bk. 2, ch. 8, sect. 229).
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 481 (sect. 243).

The mechanical interpretation of Nature presupposes the existence of distinct things which are in causal relations of interaction and each of which is relatively permanent, that is, in relation to its own changing states. But interaction between *A* and *B* is possible, according to Lotze, only if they are members of an organic unity. And permanence in relation to changing states can best be interpreted on an analogy with the permanent subject of change which is best known to us, namely the human soul as revealed in the unity of consciousness. We are thus led not only to the concept of Nature as an organic unity but also to the idea of things as in some sense psychical or spiritual entities. Further, the ground of this unity must be conceived on an analogy with the highest thing known to us, namely the human spirit. Hence the world of finite spirits is to be conceived as the self-expression of infinite Spirit or God. All things are immanent in God, and what the scientist sees as mechanical causality is simply the expression of the divine activity. God does not create a world and then sit back, as it were, while the world obeys the laws he has given it. The so-called laws are the divine action itself, the mode of God's operation.

From a rather hard-headed starting-point in the mechanical conception of Nature Lotze thus goes on to expound a metaphysical theory which recalls the monadology of Leibniz and which entails the conclusion that space is phenomenal. But though Lotze did indeed derive stimulus from Leibniz and Herbart, he also drew inspiration, as he himself says, from the ethical idealism of Fichte. He was not a disciple of Fichte, and he disapproved of the *a priori* method of the post-Kantian idealists, especially of Hegel. At the same time Fichte's conception of the ultimate principle expressing itself in finite subjects with a view to a moral end exercised a powerful attraction on Lotze's mind. And it is to the philosophy of values that he turns for the key to the meaning of creation. Sense experience tells us nothing about the final cause of the world. But that the world cannot be without end or purpose is a moral conviction. And we must conceive God as expressing himself in the world for the realization of value, of a moral ideal which is being constantly fulfilled in and through the divine activity. As for our knowledge of what this end or aim is, we can come to some knowledge of it only by an analysis of the notion of the Good, of the highest value. A phenomenological analysis of values is thus an integral part of philosophy. Indeed, our belief in God's existence ultimately rests on our moral experience and appreciation of value.[1]

God is for Lotze a personal Being. The notion of impersonal spirit he dismisses as contrary to reason. As for the view of Fichte and other philosophers that personality is necessarily finite and limited and so cannot be predicated of the infinite, Lotze replies that it is only infinite spirit which can be personal in the fullest sense of the word: finitude involves a limitation of personality. At the same time all things are immanent in God, and, as we have seen, mechanical causality is simply the divine action. In this sense God is the Absolute. But he is not the Absolute in the sense that finite spirits can be considered modifications of the divine substance. For each exists 'for itself' and is a centre of activity. From a metaphysical point of view, says Lotze, pantheism could be accepted as a possible view of the world only if it renounced all inclination to conceive the infinite as anything else but Spirit. For the spatial world is phenomenal and cannot be identified with God under the name of Substance. From a religious point of view 'we do not share the inclination which commonly governs the pantheistic imagination to suppress all that is finite in favour of the infinite. . . .'[2]

Lotze's teleological idealism has obvious affinities with the post-Kantian idealist movement. And his vision of the world as an organic unity which is the expression of infinite Spirit's realization of ideal value may be said to have given fresh life to idealist thought. But he did not believe that we can deduce a metaphysical system, descriptive of existent reality, from ultimate principles of thought or self-evident truths. For the so-called eternal truths of logic are hypothetical in character, in the sense that they state conditions of possibility. Hence they cannot be used as premisses for an *a priori* deduction of existent reality. Nor can human beings achieve an absolute point of view and describe the whole process of reality in the light of a final end which they already know. Man's metaphysical interpretation of the universe must be based on experience. And, as we have seen, Lotze attributes a profound significance to the experience of value. For it is this experience which lies at the root of the conviction that the world cannot be simply a mechanical system without purpose or ethical value but must be conceived as progressively realizing a spiritual end. This is not to say that the metaphysician, once armed with this conviction, is entitled to indulge in flights of the imagination uncontrolled by logical thinking about the nature of reality. But in the philosopher's systematic interpretation of the universe there will inevitably be much that is hypothetical.

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[1] When discussing the traditional proofs of God's existence, Lotze remarks that the immediate moral conviction that that which is greatest, most beautiful and most worthy has reality lies at the foundation of the ontological argument, just as it is the factor which carries the teleological argument far beyond any conclusions which could be logically derived from its assumptions. *Mikrokosmus*, Bk. IX, ch. 4, sect. 2 (5th German edition, III, p. 561).

[2] *Mikrokosmus*, Bk. IX, ch. 4, sect. 3 (5th German edition, III, p. 569).

The influence of Lotze was considerable. For instance, in the field of psychology it was felt by Carl Stumpf (1848–1936) and Franz Brentano, of whom something will be said in the last chapter. But it was perhaps in the field of the philosophy of values that his influence was most felt. Among a number of English thinkers who derived stimulus from Lotze we may mention in particular James Ward (1843–1925). In America the idealist Josiah Royce (1855–1916) was influenced by Lotze's personalistic idealism.

4. Among the German philosophers of the second half of the nineteenth century who came from science to philosophy mention must be made of Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920). After studying medicine Wundt gave himself to physiological and psychological research, and in 1863–4 he published a series of *Lectures on the Human and Animal Soul* (*Vorlesungen über die Menschen- und Tierseele*). After nine years as an 'extraordinary' professor of physiology at Heidelberg he was nominated to the chair of inductive philosophy at Zürich in 1874. In the following year he moved to Leipzig where he occupied the chair of philosophy until 1918. And it was at Leipzig that he founded the first laboratory of experimental psychology. The first edition of his *Outlines of Physiological Psychology* (*Grundzüge der physiologischen Psychologie*) was published in 1874. In the philosophical field he published a two-volume *Logic* in 1880–3,[1] an *Ethics* in 1886, a *System of Philosophy* in 1889,[2] and a *Metaphysics* in 1907. But he did not abandon his psychological studies, and in 1904 he published a two-volume *Psychology of Peoples* (*Völkerpsychologie*) of which a new and greatly enlarged edition appeared in 1911–20.

When Wundt speaks about experimental psychology and the experimental method he is generally referring to introspective psychology and the introspective method. Or, more accurately, he regards introspection as the appropriate method of investigation for individual, as distinct from social, psychology. Introspection reveals, as its immediate data, a connection of psychical events or processes, not a substantial soul, nor a set of relatively permanent objects. For no one of the events revealed by introspection remains precisely the same from one moment to another. At the same time there is a unity of connection. And just as the natural scientist tries to establish the causal laws which operate in the physical sphere, so should the introspective psychologist endeavour to ascertain the fundamental laws of relation and development which give content to the idea of psychical causality. In interpreting man's psychical life Wundt lays emphasis on volitional rather than on cognitive elements. The latter are not denied, of course, but the volitional element is taken as fundamental and as providing the key for the interpretation of man's psychical life as a whole.

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[1] An enlarged edition in 3 vols. appeared in 1919–21.

[2] A two-volume edition appeared in 1919.

When we turn from the psychical life as manifested in introspection to human societies, we find common and relatively permanent products such as language, myth and custom. And the social psychologist is called on to investigate the psychical energies which are responsible for these common products and which together form the spirit or soul of a people. This spirit exists only in and through individuals, but it is not reducible to them when taken separately. In other words, through the relations of individuals in a society there arises a reality, the spirit of a people, which expresses itself in common spiritual products. And social psychology studies the development of these realities. It also studies the evolution of the concept of humanity and of the general spirit of man which manifests itself, for example, in the rise of universal instead of purely national religions, in the development of science, in the growth of the idea of common human rights, and so on. Wundt thus allots to social psychology a far-reaching programme. For its task is to study from a psychological point of view the development of human society and culture in all its principal manifestations.

Philosophy, according to Wundt, presupposes natural science and psychology. It builds upon them and incorporates them into a synthesis. At the same time philosophy goes beyond the sciences. Yet there can be no reasonable objection to this procedure on the ground that it is contrary to the scientific spirit. For in the particular sciences themselves explanatory hypotheses are constructed which go beyond the empirical data. At the level of knowledge of the understanding (*Verstandeserkenntnis*), the level at which sciences such as physics and psychology arise, presentations are synthesized with the aid of logical method and techniques. At the level of rational knowledge (*Vernunfterkenntnis*) philosophy, especially metaphysics, tries to construct a systematic synthesis of the results of the previous level. At all levels of cognition the mind aims at absence of contradiction in a progressive synthesis of presentations, which form the fundamental point of departure for human knowledge.

In his general metaphysical picture of reality Wundt conceives the world as the totality of individual agents or active centres which are to be regarded as volitional unities of different grades. These volitional unities form a developing series which tends towards the emergence of a total spirit (*Gesamtgeist*). In more concrete terms, there is a movement towards the complete spiritual unification of man or humanity, and individual human beings are called on to act in accordance with the values which contribute to this end. Metaphysics and ethics are thus closely connected, and both receive a natural completion in religious idealism. For the concept of a cosmic process directed towards an ideal leads to a religious view of the world.

5. We have seen that though Lotze went on to develop a metaphysical theory about the spiritual nature of reality, he would not allow that the biologist has any warrant for setting aside the mechanical interpretation of Nature which is proper to the empirical sciences and postulating a special vital principle to explain the behaviour of the organism. When, however, we turn to Hans Driesch (1867–1941) we find this onetime pupil of Haeckel being led by his biological and zoological researches to a theory of dynamic vitalism and to the conviction that finality is an essential category in biology. He became convinced that in the organic body there is an autonomous active principle which directs the vital processes and which cannot be accounted for by a purely mechanistic theory of life.

To this principle Driesch gave the name of *entelechy*, making use of an Aristotelian term. But he was careful to refrain from describing the entelechy or vital principle as psychical. For this term, he considered, is inappropriate in view both of its human associations and of its ambiguity.

Having formed the concept of entelechies Driesch proceeded to blossom out as a philosopher. In 1907–8 he gave the Gifford Lectures at Aberdeen, and in 1909 he published his two-volume *Philosophy of the Organic* (*Philosophie des Organischen*). In 1911 he obtained a chair of philosophy at Heidelberg, and subsequently he was professor first at Cologne and later at Leipzig. In his general philosophy[1] the concept of the organism was extrapolated to apply to the world as a whole, and his metaphysics culminated in the idea of a supreme entelechy, God. The picture was that of a cosmic entelechy, the teleological activity of which is directed towards the realization of the highest possible level of knowledge. But the question of theism or pantheism was left in suspense.

Through his attack on mechanistic biology Driesch exercised a considerable influence. But of those who agreed with him that a mechanistic interpretation was inadequate and that the organism manifests finality by no means all were prepared to accept the theory of entelechies. To mention two Englishmen who, like Driesch, came to philosophy from science and in due course delivered series of Gifford Lectures, Lloyd Morgan (1852–1936) rejected Driesch's neo-vitalism, while J. A. Thomson (1861–1933) tried to steer a middle path between what he regarded as the metaphysical Scylla of the entelechy theory and the Charybdis of mechanistic materialism.

6. The philosophers whom we have been considering in this chapter had a scientific training and either turned from the study of some particular science or sciences to philosophical speculation or combined the two activities. We can now consider briefly a thinker, Rudolf Eucken (1846–1926), who certainly did not come to philosophy from science but who was already interested as a schoolboy[2] in philosophical and religious problems and who devoted himself to the study of philosophy at the universities of Göttingen and Berlin. In 1871 he was appointed professor of philosophy at Basel, and in 1874 he accepted the chair of philosophy at Jena.

Eucken had little sympathy with the view of philosophy as a purely theoretical interpretation of the world. Philosophy was for him, as for the Stoics, a wisdom for life. Further, it was for him an expression of life. In his opinion the interpretation of philosophical systems as so many life-views (*Lebensanschauungen*) contained a profound truth, namely that philosophy is rooted in life and continuous with it. At the same time he wished to overcome the fragmentation of philosophy, its falling apart into purely personal reactions to life and ideals for life. And he concluded that if philosophy, as the expression of life, is to possess a more than subjective and purely personal significance, it must be the expression of a universal life which rescues man from his mere particularity.

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[1] In epistemology Driesch was influenced by Kant, but he departed from Kantian doctrine by attributing an objective character to the categories, such as to render possible a metaphysics of reality.

[2] At school Eucken came under the influence of a certain Wilhelm Reuter who was a disciple of the philosopher Krause.

This universal life is identified by Eucken with what he calls Spiritual Life (*das Geistesleben*). From the purely naturalistic point of view psychical life 'forms a mere means and instrument for the preservation of beings in the hard fight for existence'.[1] Spiritual Life, however, is an active reality which produces a new spiritual world. 'There thus arise whole fields such as science and art, law and morals, and they develop their own contents, their own motive forces, their own laws.'[2] Provided that he breaks with the naturalistic and egoistic point of view man can rise to a participation in this Spiritual Life. He then becomes 'more than a mere point; a universal Life becomes for him his own life'.[3]

Spiritual Life, therefore, is an active reality which operates in and through man. And it can be regarded as the movement of reality towards the full actualization of Spirit. It is, as it were, reality organizing itself from within into a spiritual unity. And as it is through participation in this Life that man achieves real personality, the Life which is the foundation of human personality can be regarded as being itself personal. It is in fact God. 'The concept of God receives here the meaning of an absolute Spiritual Life,'[4] 'the Spiritual Life which attains to complete independence and at the same time to the embracing in itself of all reality.'[5]

Philosophy is or should be the expression of this Life. 'The synthesis of the manifold which philosophy undertakes must not be imposed on reality from without but should proceed out of reality itself and contribute to its development.'[6] That is to say, philosophy should be the conceptual expression of the unifying activity of the Spiritual Life, and it should at the same time contribute to the development of this Life by enabling men to understand their relation to it.

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[1] *Einführung in eine Philosophie des Geisteslebens*, p. 9 (Leipzig, 1908).
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 8.
[3] *Grundlinien einer neuen Lebensanschauung*, p. 117 (Leipzig, 1907).
[4] *Der Wahrheitsgehalt der Religion*, p. 138 (Leipzig, 1905, 2nd edition).
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 150.
[6] *Einführung in eine Philosophie des Geisteslebens*, p. 10.

The concept of *das Geistesleben* naturally recalls to mind the philosophy of Hegel. And from this point of view Eucken's thought can be described as neo-idealism. But whereas Hegel emphasized the conceptual solution of problems, Eucken is inclined to say that the important problems of life are solved by action. A man attains to truth in so far as he overcomes the pull of his non-spiritual nature and participates actively in the one Spiritual Life. Hence Eucken described his philosophy as 'activism'.[1] As for the affinities between his own philosophy and pragmatism, Eucken was inclined to interpret pragmatism as involving the reduction of truth to an instrument in the service of 'mere man's' egoistic search for satisfaction and thus as favouring the very fragmentation of philosophy which he wished to overcome. In his view truth is that towards which Spiritual Life actively strives.

In his own day Eucken had a considerable reputation. But what he offers is obviously one more world-view, one more *Lebensanschauung*, rather than an effective overcoming of the conflict of systems. And his philosophy is one in which the element of precise statement and explanation is by no means always conspicuous. It is all very well, for example, to talk about problems being solved by action. But when it is a question of theoretical problems, the concept of solution through action requires much more careful analysis than is given it by Eucken.

7. Hegel, as we have seen, gave a powerful impetus to the study of the history of philosophy. But for him the history of philosophy was absolute idealism in the making or, to express the matter metaphysically, absolute Spirit's progressive understanding of itself. And the historian of philosophy who is thoroughly imbued with Hegelian principles sees in the development of philosophical thought a constant dialectical advance, later systems presupposing and subsuming in themselves earlier phases of thought. It is understandable, however, that there should be other philosophers who look back to past phases of thought as valuable sources of insights which have been later forgotten or overlooked rather than taken up and elevated in succeeding systems.

As an example of the philosophers who have emphasized the objective study of the past with a view to rethinking and reappropriating its perennially valuable elements we can mention Adolf Trendelenburg (1802–72) who occupied the chair of philosophy at Berlin for many years and exercised a considerable influence on the development of historical studies. He applied himself especially to the study of Aristotle, though his historical writings dealt also with Spinoza, Kant, Hegel and Herbart. A vigorous opponent both of Hegel and Herbart, he contributed to the decline of the former's prestige in the middle of the century. And he directed men's attention to the perennially valuable sources of European philosophy in Greek thought, though he was convinced that the insights of Greek philosophy needed to be rethought and appropriated in the light of the modern scientific conception of the world.

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[1] *Einführung in eine Philosophie des Geisteslebens*, p. 155.

Trendelenburg's own philosophy, described by him as the 'organic world-view' (*organische Weltanschauung*) was developed in his two-volume *Logical Inquiries* (*Logische Untersuchungen*, 1840). It owed much to Aristotle, and, as in Aristotelianism, the idea of finality was fundamental. At the same time Trendelenburg endeavoured to reconcile Aristotle and Kant by depicting space, time and the categories as forms both of being and of thought. He also attempted to give a moral foundation to the ideas of right and law in his works on *the Moral Idea of Right* (*Die sittliche Idee des Rechts*, 1849) and *Natural Right on the Foundation of Ethics* (*Naturrecht auf dem Grunde der Ethik*, 1860).

Aristotelian studies were also pursued by Gustav Teichmüller (1832–88) who came under Trendelenburg's influence at Berlin. But Teichmüller subsequently developed a philosophy inspired by Leibniz and Lotze, especially by the former.

Among Trendelenburg's pupils was Otto Willmann (1839–1920) whose mind moved from the thought of Aristotle through criticism of both idealism and materialism to Thomist philosophy. And some allusion can be made here to the reappropriation of mediaeval philosophy, in particular of the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. It is indeed rather difficult to treat this subject simply within the context of German philosophy in the nineteenth century. For the rise of Thomism was a phenomenon within the intellectual life of the Catholic Church in general, and it can hardly be claimed that the German contribution was the most important. At the same time the subject cannot be simply passed over in silence.

In the seventeenth, eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth centuries philosophy in ecclesiastical seminaries and teaching institutions generally tended to take the form of an uninspired Scholastic Aristotelianism amalgamated with ideas taken from other currents of thought, notably Cartesianism and, later, the philosophy of Wolff. And it lacked the intrinsic vigour which was required to make its presence felt in the intellectual world at large. Further, in the first half of the nineteenth century there were a number of Catholic thinkers in France, Italy and Germany whose ideas, developed either in dialogue with or under the influence of contemporary thought, seemed to the ecclesiastical authorities to compromise, whether directly or indirectly, the integrity of the Catholic faith. Thus in Germany Georg Hermes (1775–1831), professor of theology first at Münster and then at Bonn, was judged by the Church to have adopted far too much from the philosophers whom he tried to oppose, such as Kant and Fichte, and to have thrown Catholic dogma into the melting-pot of philosophical speculation. Again, in his enthusiasm for the revivification of theology Anton Günther (1783–1863) attempted to make use of the Hegelian dialectic to explain and prove the doctrine of the Trinity,[1] while Jakob Froschhammer (1821–93), a priest and a professor of philosophy at Munich, was judged to have subordinated supernatural faith and revelation to idealist philosophy.[2]

In the course of the nineteenth century, however, a number of Catholic thinkers raised the call for a reappropriation of mediaeval thought, and especially of the theological-philosophical synthesis developed in the thirteenth century by St. Thomas Aquinas. As far as Germany was concerned, the revival of interest in Scholasticism in general and Thomism in particular owed much to the writings of men such as Joseph Kleutgen (1811–83), Albert Stöckl (1832–95) and Konstantin Gutberlet (1837–1928). Most of Gutberlet's works appeared after the publication in 1879 of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical letter *Aeterni Patris* in which the Pope asserted the permanent value of Thomism and urged Catholic philosophers to draw their inspiration from it while at the same time developing it to meet modern needs. But Stöckl's *Textbook of Philosophy* (*Lehrbuch der Philosophie*) had appeared in 1868, and the first editions of Kleutgen's *The Theology of Early Times Defended* (*Die Theologie der Vorzeit verteidigt*) and *The Philosophy of Early Times Defended* (*Die Philosophie der Vorzeit verteidigt*) had appeared respectively in 1853–60 and 1860–3. Hence it is not quite accurate to say that Leo XIII inaugurated the revival of

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[1] Accused by the Church of rationalism, Günther submitted to her judgment.

[2] Froschhammer, who refused to submit to ecclesiastical authority when his views were censured, was later one of the opponents of the dogma of papal infallibility.

Thomism. What he did was to give a powerful impetus to an already existing movement.

The revival of Thomism naturally demanded a real knowledge and understanding not only of the thought of Aquinas in particular but also of mediaeval philosophy in general. And it is natural that the first phase of the revival should have been succeeded by specialist studies in the sphere, such as we associate with the names of Clemens Baeumker (1853–1924) and Martin Grabmann (1875–1949) in Germany, of Maurice De Wulf (1867–1947) in Belgium, and of Pierre Mandonnet (1858–1936) and Étienne Gilson (*b.* 1884) in France.

At the same time, if Thomism was to be presented as a living system of thought and not as possessing a purely historical interest, it had to be shown, first that it was not entangled with antiquated physics and discarded scientific hypotheses, and secondly that it was capable of development and of throwing light on philosophical problems as they present themselves to the modern mind. In the fulfilment of the first task much was accomplished by the work of Cardinal Mercier (1851–1926) and his collaborators and successors at the university of Louvain.[1] In regard to the fulfilment of the second task we can mention the names of Joseph Geyser (1869–1948) in Germany and of Jacques Maritain (*b.* 1882) in France.

Having established itself as, so to speak, a respectable system of thought, Thomism had then to show that it was capable of assimilating the valuable elements in other philosophies without self-destruction. But this is a theme which belongs to the history of Thomist thought in the present century.

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[1] Mercier was not concerned simply with showing that Thomism did not conflict with the sciences. He envisaged the development of Thomism in close connection with the positive and purely objective study of the sciences. An eminent representative of the fulfilment of Mercier's project is the Louvain psychologist Albert Michotte (b. 1881).

CHAPTER XXI

NIETZSCHE (1)

Life and writings—The phases of Nietzsche's thought as 'masks' —Nietzsche's early writings and the critique of contemporary culture—The critique of morals—Atheism and its consequences.

1. As we have already strayed into the twentieth century, it may seem inappropriate to reserve to this stage of the volume two chapters on a philosopher who died physically in 1900 and, as far as writing was concerned, some ten years previously. But though this procedure is questionable from the chronological point of view, one can also argue in favour of closing a volume on nineteenth-century German philosophy with a thinker who died in 1900 but whose influence was not fully felt until the present century. Whatever one may think about Nietzsche's ideas, one cannot question his vast reputation and the power of his ideas to act like a potent wine in the minds of a good many people. And this is something which can hardly be said about the materialists, Neo-Kantians and the inductive metaphysicians whom we have been considering in the foregoing chapters.

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche was born on October 15th, 1844, at Röcken in Prussian Saxony. His father, a Lutheran pastor, died in 1849, and the boy was brought up at Naumburg in the feminine and pious society of his mother, his sister, a grandmother and two aunts. From 1854 to 1858 he studied at the local *Gymnasium*, and from 1858 to 1864 he was a pupil at the celebrated boarding-school at Pforta. His admiration for the Greek genius was awakened during his schooldays, his favourite classical authors being Plato and Aeschylus. He also tried his hand at poetry and music.

In October 1864 Nietzsche went to the university of Bonn in company with his school friend Paul Deussen, the future orientalist and philosopher. But in the autumn of the following year he moved to Leipzig to continue his philological studies under Ritschl. He formed an intimate friendship with Erwin Rohde, then a fellow student, later a university professor and author of *Psyche*. By this time Nietzsche had abandoned Christianity, and when at Leipzig he made the acquaintance of Schopenhauer's main work one of the features which attracted him was, as he himself said, the author's atheism.

Nietzsche had published some papers in the *Rheinisches Museum*, and when the university of Basel asked Ritschl whether their author was a suitable person to occupy the chair of philosophy at Basel, Ritschl had no hesitation in giving an unqualified testimonial on behalf of his favourite pupil. The result was that Nietzsche found himself appointed a university professor before he had even taken the doctorate.[1] And in May 1869 he delivered his inaugural lecture on *Homer and Classical Philology*. On the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war Nietzsche joined the ambulance corps of the German army; but illness forced him to abandon this work, and after an insufficient period of convalescence he resumed his professional duties at Basel.

Nietzsche's great consolation at Basel lay in his visits to Richard Wagner's villa on the lake of Lucerne. He had already been seized with admiration for Wagner's music while he was still a student at Leipzig, and his friendship with the composer had a possibly unfortunate effect on his writing. In *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music* (*Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*) which appeared in 1872, he first drew a contrast between Greek culture before and after Socrates, to the disadvantage of the latter, and then argued that contemporary German culture bore a strong resemblance to Greek culture after Socrates and that it could be saved only if it were permeated with the spirit of Wagner. Not unnaturally, the work met with an enthusiastic reception from Wagner, but the philologists reacted somewhat differently to Nietzsche's views about the origins of Greek tragedy. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff in particular, then a young man, launched a devastating attack against the book. And not even Rohde's loyal defence of his friend could save Nietzsche from losing credit in the world of classical scholarship. Not that this matters much to us today. For it is Nietzsche as philosopher, moralist and psychologist who interests us, not as professor of philology at Basel.

In the period 1873–6 Nietzsche published four essays with the common title *Untimely Meditations* or *Considerations* (*Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*) which is rendered as *Thoughts out of Season* in the English translation of his works. In the first he vehemently attacked the unfortunate David Strauss as a representative of German culture-philistinism, while in the second he attacked the idolization of historical learning as a substitute for a living culture. The third essay was devoted to extolling Schopenhauer as an educator, to the disadvantage of the university professors of philosophy, while the fourth depicted Wagner as originating a rebirth of the Greek genius.

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[1] The university of Leipzig thereupon conferred the degree without examination.

By 1876, the date of publication of the fourth essay, entitled *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, Nietzsche and Wagner had already begun to drift apart.[1] And his break with the composer represented the end of the first phase or period in Nietzsche's development. If in the first period he decries Socrates, the rationalist, in the second he tends to exalt him. In the first period culture, and indeed human life in general, is depicted as finding its justification in the production of the genius, the creative artist, poet and musician: in the second Nietzsche prefers science to poetry, questions all accepted beliefs and pretty well plays the part of a rationalistic philosopher of the French Enlightenment.

Characteristic of this second period is *Human, All-too-Human* (*Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*) which was originally published in three parts, 1878–9. In a sense the work is positivistic in outlook. Nietzsche attacks metaphysics in an indirect manner, trying to show that the features of human experience and knowledge which had been supposed to necessitate metaphysical explanations or to justify a metaphysical superstructure are capable of explanation on materialistic lines. For instance, the moral distinction between good and bad had its origin in the experience of some actions as beneficial to society and of others as detrimental to it, though in the course of time the utilitarian origin of the distinction was lost sight of. Again, conscience originates in a belief in authority: it is the voice not of God but of parents and educators.

A combination of bad health and dissatisfaction, amounting to disgust, with his professional duties led Nietzsche to resign from his chair at Basel in the spring of 1879. And for the next ten years he led a wandering life, seeking health in various places in Switzerland and Italy, with occasional visits to Germany.

In 1881 Nietzsche published *The Dawn of Day* (*Morgenröte*) in which, as he declared, he opened his campaign against the morality of self-renunciation. And this was followed in 1882[2] by *Joyful*

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[1] Nietzsche thought, no doubt rightly, that Wagner regarded him as a tool to promote the cause of Wagnerism. But he also came to feel that the real Wagner was not all that he had imagined him to be. The publication of *Parsifal* was for Nietzsche the last straw.

[2] The fifth part of *Joyful Wisdom* was not added until 1887.

Wisdom (*Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*) in which we find the idea of Christianity as hostile to life. The report that God is dead, as Nietzsche puts it, opens up vast horizons to free spirits. Neither book was successful. Nietzsche sent a copy of *The Dawn of Day* to Rohde, but his former friend did not even acknowledge it. And the indifference with which his writings were met in Germany was not calculated to increase Nietzsche's fondness for his fellow countrymen.

In 1881 the idea of the eternal recurrence came to Nietzsche while he was at Sils-Maria in the Engadine. In infinite time there are periodic cycles in which all that has been is repeated over again. This somewhat depressing idea was scarcely new, but it came to Nietzsche with the force of an inspiration. And he conceived the plan of presenting the ideas which were fermenting in his mind through the lips of the Persian sage Zarathustra. The result was his most famous work, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (*Also sprach Zarathustra*). The first two parts were published separately in 1883. The third, in which the doctrine of the eternal recurrence was proclaimed, appeared at the beginning of 1884, and the fourth part was published early in 1885.

Zarathustra, with its ideas of Superman and the transvaluation of values, expresses the third phase of Nietzsche's thought. But its poetic and prophetical style gives it the appearance of being the work of a visionary.[1] Calmer expositions of Nietzsche's ideas are to be found in *Beyond Good and Evil* (*Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, 1886) and *A Genealogy of Morals* (*Zur Genealogie der Moral*, 1887), which, together with *Zarathustra*, are probably Nietzsche's most important writings. *Beyond Good and Evil* elicited an appreciative letter from Hippolyte Taine, and after the publication of *A Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche received a similar letter from Georg Brandes, the Danish critic, who later delivered a course of lectures on Nietzsche's ideas at Copenhagen.

Beyond Good and Evil had as its subtitle *Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. Nietzsche planned a systematic exposition of his philosophy, for which he made copious notes. His idea of the appropriate title underwent several changes. At first it was to be *The Will to Power, a New Interpretation of Nature* or *The Will to Power, an Essay towards a New Interpretation of the Universe*. In other words, just as Schopenhauer had based a philosophy on the concept of the will to life, so would Nietzsche base a philosophy on the idea of the will to power. Later the emphasis changed, and the proposed title was *The Will to Power, an Essay towards the Transvaluation of all Values* (*Der Wille zur Macht: Versuch einer Umwerthung aller Werthe*). But in point of fact the projected *magnum opus* was never completed, though *The Antichrist* (*Der Antichrist*) was meant to be the first part of it. Nietzsche's notes for the work which he planned have been published posthumously.

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[1] Rudolf Carnap remarks that when Nietzsche wished to take to metaphysics, he very properly had recourse to poetry. Carnap thus looks on *Zarathustra* as empirical confirmation of his own neopositivist interpretation of the nature of metaphysics.

Nietzsche turned aside from his projected work to write a ferocious attack on Wagner, *The Case of Wagner* (*Der Fall Wagner*, 1888), and followed it up with *Nietzsche contra Wagner*. This second essay was published only after Nietzsche's breakdown, as were also other writings of 1888, *The Twilight of the Idols* (*Die Götzendämmerung*), *The Antichrist* and *Ecce Homo*, a kind of autobiography. The works of this year show evident signs of extreme tension and mental instability, and *Ecce Homo* in particular, with its exalted spirit of self-assertion, gives a marked impression of psychical disturbance. At the end of the year definite signs of madness began to show themselves, and in January 1889 Nietzsche was taken from Turin, where he then was, to a clinic at Basel. He never really recovered, but after treatment at Basel and then at Jena he was able to go to his mother's home at Naumburg.[1] After her death he lived with his sister at Weimar. By that time he had become a famous man, though he was hardly in a position to appreciate the fact. He died on August 25th, 1900.

2. In the foregoing section reference has been made to periods or phases in the development of Nietzsche's thought. The philosopher himself, as he looked back, described these phases as so many masks. For example, he asserted that the attitude of a free spirit, that is, of a critical, rationalistic and sceptical observer of life, which he adopted in his second period, was an 'eccentric pose', a second nature, as it were, which was assumed as a means whereby he might win through to his first or true nature. It had to be discarded as the snake sloughs its old skin. Further, Nietzsche was accustomed to speak of particular doctrines or theories as though they were artifices of self-preservation or self-administered tonics. For instance, the theory of the eternal recurrence was a test of

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[1] Nietzsche was indeed dogged by bad health and insomnia. And loneliness and neglect preyed on his mind. But it seems probable, in spite of his sister's attempts to deny it, that as a university student he contracted a syphilitic infection and that the disease, after running an atypical course, finally affected the brain.

strength, of Nietzsche's power to say 'yes' to life instead of the Schopenhauerian 'no'. Could he face the thought that his whole life, every moment of it, every suffering, every agony, every humiliation, would be repeated countless times throughout endless time? Could he face this thought and embrace it not only with stoical resignation but also with joy? If so, it was a sign of inner strength, of the triumph in Nietzsche himself of the yea-saying attitude of life.

Obviously, Nietzsche did not say to himself one fine day: 'I shall now pose for a time as a positivist and a coolly critical and scientific observer, because I think that it would be good for my mental health.' It is rather that he seriously attempted to play such a part until, having grown out of it, he recognized it in retrospect as a self-administered tonic and as a mask under which the real direction of his thought could develop unseen. But what was the real direction of his thought? In view of what Nietzsche says about winning through to his true nature, one is inclined, of course, to assume that the doctrine of his later works and of the posthumously-published notes for *The Will to Power* represents his real thought. Yet if we press the theory of masks, we must apply it also, I think, to his third period. As already mentioned, he spoke of the theory of the eternal recurrence as a trial of strength; and this theory belongs to his third period. Further, it was in the third period that Nietzsche explicitly stated his relativistic and pragmatist view of truth. His general theory of truth was indeed social rather than personal, in the sense that those theories were said to be true which are biologically useful for a given species or for a certain kind of man. Thus the theory of Superman would be a myth which possessed truth in so far as it enabled the higher type of man to develop his potentialities. But if we press the idea of masks, we must take such a statement as 'the criterion of truth lies in the intensification of the feeling of power'[1] in a personal sense and apply it to the thought of Nietzsche's third period no less than to that of the first and second periods.

In this case, of course, there remains no 'real thought' of Nietzsche which is statable in terms of definite philosophical theories. For the whole of his expressed thought becomes an instrument whereby Nietzsche as an existing individual, to use Kierkegaard's phrase, seeks to realize his own possibilities. His ideas represent a medium through which we have to try to discern the significance of an existence. We then have the sort of interpretation of Nietzsche's life and work of which Karl Jaspers has given us a fine example.[1]

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[1] *W*, III, p. 919 (XV, p. 49). Unless otherwise stated, references are given according to volume and page of the three-volume (incomplete) edition of Nietzsche's *Works* by K. Schlechta (Munich, 1954–6). The references in brackets are always to the English translation of Nietzsche's *Works* edited by Dr. Oscar Levy (see Bibliography). The critical German edition of Nietzsche's writings is still unfinished.

The present writer has no intention of questioning the value of the existential interpretation of Nietzsche's life and thought. But in a book such as this the reader has a right to expect a summary account of what Nietzsche said, of his public face or appearance, so to speak. After all, when a philosopher commits ideas to paper and publishes them, they take on, as it were, a life of their own and exercise a greater or lesser influence, as the case may be. It is true that his philosophy lacks the impressiveness of systems such as those of Spinoza and Hegel, a fact of which Nietzsche was well aware. And if one wishes to find in it German 'profundity', one has to look beneath the surface. But though Nietzsche himself drew attention to the personal aspects of his thinking and to the need for probing beneath the surface, the fact remains that he held certain convictions very strongly and that he came to think of himself as a prophet, as a reforming force, and of his ideas as 'dynamite'. Even if on his own view of truth his theories necessarily assume the character of myth, these myths were intimately associated with value-judgments which Nietzsche asserted with passion. And it is perhaps these value-judgments more than anything else which have been the source of his great influence.

3. We have already referred to Nietzsche's discovery, when he was a student at Leipzig, of Schopenhauer's *World as Will and Idea.* But though Nietzsche received a powerful stimulus from the great pessimist, he was at no time a disciple of Schopenhauer. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, for example, he does indeed follow Schopenhauer to the extent of postulating what he calls a 'Primordial Unity' which manifests itself in the world and in human life. And, like Schopenhauer, he depicts life as terrible and tragic and speaks of its transmutation through art, the work of the creative genius. At the same time even in his early works, when the inspiration derived from Schopenhauer's philosophy is evident, the general direction of Nietzsche's thought is towards the affirmation of life rather than towards its negation. And when in 1888 he looked back on *The*

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[1] In his *Nietzsche: Einführung in das Verständnis seines Philosophierens* (Berlin 1936). For Jaspers Nietzsche and Kierkegaard represent two 'exceptions', two embodiments of different possibilities of human existence.

Birth of Tragedy and asserted that it expressed an attitude to life which was the antithesis of Schopenhauer's, the assertion was not without foundation.

The Greeks, according to Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy*, knew very well that life is terrible, inexplicable, dangerous. But though they were alive to the real character of the world and of human life, they did not surrender to pessimism by turning their backs on life. What they did was to transmute the world and human life through the medium of art. And they were then able to say 'yes' to the world as an aesthetic phenomenon. There were, however, two ways of doing this, corresponding respectively to the Dionysian and Apollonian attitudes or mentalities.

Dionysus is for Nietzsche the symbol of the stream of life itself, breaking down all barriers and ignoring all restraints. In the Dionysian or Bacchic rites we can see the intoxicated votaries becoming, as it were, one with life. The barriers set up by the principle of individuation tend to break down; the veil of Maya is turned aside; and men and women are plunged into the stream of life, manifesting the Primordial Unity. Apollo, however, is the symbol of light, of measure, of restraint. He represents the principle of individuation. And the Apollonian attitude is expressed in the shining dream-world of the Olympic deities.

But we can, of course, get away from metaphysical theories about the Primordial Unity and Schopenhauer's talk about the principle of individuation, and express the matter in a psychological form. Beneath the moderation so often ascribed to the Greeks, beneath their devotion to art and beauty and form, Nietzsche sees the dark, turgid and formless torrent of instinct and impulse and passion which tends to sweep away everything in its path.

Now, if we assume that life is in itself an object of horror and terror and that pessimism, in the sense of the no-saying attitude to life, can be avoided only by the aesthetic transmutation of reality, there are two ways of doing this. One is to draw an aesthetic veil over reality, creating an ideal world of form and beauty. This is the Apollonian way. And it found expression in the Olympic mythology, in the epic and in the plastic arts. The other possibility is that of triumphantly affirming and embracing existence in all its darkness and horror. This is the Dionysian attitude, and its typical art forms are tragedy and music. Tragedy does indeed transmute existence into an aesthetic phenomenon, but it does not draw a veil over existence as it is. Rather does it exhibit existence in aesthetic form and affirm it.

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, as its title indicates, Nietzsche is concerned immediately with the origins and development of Greek tragedy. But we cannot discuss the matter here. Nor does it matter for our present purposes how far Nietzsche's account of the origins of tragedy is acceptable from the point of view of classical scholarship. The important point is that the supreme achievement of Greek culture, before it was spoiled by the spirit of Socratic nationalism, lay for Nietzsche in a fusion of Dionysian and Apollonian elements.[1] And in this fusion he saw the foundation for a cultural standard. True culture is a unity of the forces of life, the Dionysian element, with the love of form and beauty which is characteristic of the Apollonian attitude.

If existence is justified as an aesthetic phenomenon, the fine flower of humanity will be constituted by those who transmute existence into such a phenomenon and enable men to see existence in this way and affirm it. In other words, the creative genius will be the highest cultural product. Indeed, in the period which we are considering Nietzsche speaks as though the production of genius were the aim and end of culture, its justification. He makes this quite clear in, for instance, his essay on *The Greek State* (*Der griechische Staat*, 1871). Here and elsewhere he insists that the toil and labour of the majority in the struggle of life are justified by forming the substructure on which the genius, whether in art, music or philosophy, can arise. For the genius is the organ whereby existence is, as it were, redeemed.

On the basis of these ideas Nietzsche proceeds to give a highly critical evaluation of contemporary German culture. He contrasts, for example, historical knowledge about past cultures with culture itself, described as 'unity of artistic style in all the expressions of the life of a people'.[2] But his critique of the German culture of his time need not detain us here. Instead we can note two or three general ideas which also look forward to Nietzsche's later thought.

Nietzsche varies the question whether life should dominate knowledge or knowledge life. 'Which of the two is the higher and decisive power? Nobody will doubt that life is the higher and dominating power. . . .'[3] This means that the nineteenth-century culture, characterized by the domination of knowledge and science, is exposed to the revenge, as it were, of the vital forces, the explosion of which will produce a new barbarism. Beneath the surface of modern life Nietzsche sees vital forces which are 'wild, primitive and completely merciless. One looks at them with a fearful expectancy as though at the cauldron in a witch's kitchen . . . for a century we have been ready for world-shaking convulsions.'[1] In nineteenth-century society we can see both a complacency in the condition which man has already reached and a widespread tendency, fostered by the national State and manifested in the movements towards democracy and socialism, to promote a uniform mediocrity, hostile to genius. But there is no reason to suppose that the development of man's potentialities has reached its term. And the emergence of the latent destructive forces will pave the way for the rise of higher specimens of humanity in the form of outstanding individuals.

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[1] According to Nietzsche, the tragedies of Aeschylus were the supreme artistic expression of this fusion.

[2] *W*, I, p. 140 (I, p. 8).

[3] *W*, I, p. 282 (II, p. 96).

Obviously, this view involves a supra-historical outlook, as Nietzsche puts it. It involves, that is to say, a rejection of the Hegelian canonization of the actual in the name of a necessary self-manifestation of the *Logos* or Idea, and a vision of values which transcend the historical situation. The human being is plastic; he is capable of transcending himself, of realizing fresh possibilities; and he needs a vision, a goal, a sense of direction. Empirical science cannot provide this vision. And though Nietzsche does not say much about Christianity in his early writings, it is clear that he does not look to the Christian religion as the source of the requisite vision.[2] There remains philosophy, not indeed as represented by learned university professors, but in the guise of the lonely thinker who has a clear vision of the possibilities of man's self-transcendence and who is not afraid to be 'dangerous'. Once it has been decided how far things are alterable, philosophy should set itself 'with ruthless courage to the task of *improving that aspect of the world which has been recognized as susceptible to being changed*'.[3] When in later years Nietzsche looks back on these early essays, he sees in this ideal of the philosopher as judge of life and creator of values Zarathustra or himself. It comes to the same thing.

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[1] *W*, I, p. 313 (II, p. 137).

[2] In *Schopenhauer as Educator* Nietzsche remarks that 'Christianity is certainly one of the purest manifestations of that impulse towards culture and, precisely, towards the ever renewed production of the saint'; *W*, I, p. 332 (II, p. 161). But he goes on to argue that Christianity has been used to turn the mill-wheels of the State and that it has become hopelessly degenerate. It is clear that he regards the Christian religion as a spent force. Looking back later on *The Birth of Tragedy* he sees in its silence about Christianity a hostile silence. For the book in question recognized only aesthetic values, which, Nietzsche maintains, Christianity denies.

[3] *W*, I, p. 379 (I, p. 120).

4. A criticism of the ethical attitude in so far as this involves the assertion of a universal moral law and of absolute moral values is implicit in Nietzsche's early writings. We have seen that according to his own statement only aesthetic values were recognized in *The Birth of Tragedy*. And in his essay on David Strauss Nietzsche refers to Strauss's contention that the sum and substance of morality consists in looking on all other human beings as having the same needs, claims and rights as oneself and then asks where this imperative comes from. Strauss seems to take it for granted that the imperative has its basis in the Darwinian theory of evolution. But evolution provides no such basis. The class *Man* comprises a multitude of different types, and it is absurd to claim that we are required to behave as though individual differences and distinctions were non-existent or unimportant. And we have seen that Nietzsche lays stress on outstanding individuals rather than on the race or species.

However, it is in *Human, All-too-Human* that Nietzsche begins to treat of morality in some detail. The work is indeed composed of aphorisms; it is not a systematic treatise. But if we compare the remarks relating to morality, a more or less coherent theory emerges.

It is the first sign that the animal has become man when its notions are no longer directed simply to the satisfaction of the moment but to what is recognized as useful in an enduring manner.[1] But we can hardly talk about morality until utility is understood in the sense of usefulness for the existence, survival and welfare of the community. For 'morality is primarily a means of preserving the community in general and warding off destruction from it'.[2] Compulsion has first to be employed to make the individual conform his conduct to the interests of society. But compulsion is succeeded by the force of custom, and in time the authoritative voice of the community takes the form of what we call conscience. Obedience can become a second nature, as it were, and be associated with pleasure. At the same time moral epithets come to be extended from actions to the intentions of the agents. And the concepts of virtue and of the virtuous man arise. In other words, morality is interiorized through a process of progressive refinement.

[1] *W*, I, p. 502 (VII/1, p. 92).

[2] *W*, I, p. 900 (VII/2, p. 221).

So far Nietzsche speaks like a utilitarian. And his concept of morality bears some resemblance to what Bergson calls closed morality. But once we look at the historical development of morality we see a 'twofold early history of good and evil'.[1] And it is the development of this idea of two moral outlooks which is really characteristic of Nietzsche. But the idea is best discussed in relation to his later writings.

In *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche says that he has discovered two primary types of morality, 'master-morality and slave-morality'.[2] In all higher civilizations they are mixed, and elements of both can be found even in the same man. But it is important to distinguish them. In the master-morality or aristocratic morality 'good' and 'bad' are equivalent to 'noble' and 'despicable', and the epithets are applied to men rather than to actions. In the slave-morality the standard is that which is useful or beneficial to the society of the weak and powerless. Qualities such as sympathy, kindness and humility are extolled as virtues, and the strong and independent individuals are regarded as dangerous, and therefore as 'evil'. By the standards of the slave-morality the 'good' man of the master-morality tends to be accounted as 'evil'. Slave-morality is thus herd-morality. Its moral valuations are expressions of the needs of a herd.

This point of view is expounded more systematically in *The Genealogy of Morals* where Nietzsche makes use of the concept of resentment. The higher type of man creates his own values out of the abundance of his life and strength. The meek and powerless, however, fear the strong and powerful, and they attempt to curb and tame them by asserting as absolute the values of the herd. 'The revolt of the slaves in morals begins with resentment becoming creative and giving birth to values.'[3] This resentment is not, of course, openly acknowledged by the herd, and it can work by devious and indirect paths. But the psychologist of the moral life can detect and bring to light its presence and complex modes of operation.

What we see, therefore, in the history of morals is the conflict of two moral attitudes or outlooks. From the point of view of the higher man there can in a sense be coexistence. That is to say, there could be coexistence if the herd, incapable of anything higher, was content to keep its values to itself. But, of course, it is not content to do this. It endeavours to impose its own values universally. And according to Nietzsche it succeeded in doing this, at least in the West, in Christianity. He does not indeed deny all value to Christian morality. He admits, for instance, that it has contributed to the refinement of man. At the same time he sees in it an expression of the resentment which is characteristic of the herd-instinct or slave-morality. And the same resentment is attributed to the democratic and socialist movements which Nietzsche interprets as derivatives of Christianity.

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[1] *W*, I, p. 483 (VII/I, p. 64).

[2] *W*, II, p. 730 (V, p. 227).

[3] *W*, II, p. 782 (XIII, p. 34).

Nietzsche maintains, therefore, that the concept of a uniform, universal and absolute moral system is to be rejected. For it is the fruit of resentment and represents inferior life, descending life, degeneracy, whereas the aristocratic morality represents the movement of ascending life.[1] And in place of the concept of one universal and absolute moral system (or indeed of different sets of values, relative to different societies, if each set is regarded as binding all the members of the society) we must put the concept of a gradation of rank among different types of morality. The herd is welcome to its own set of values, provided that it is deprived of the power of imposing them on the higher type of man who is called upon to create his own values which will enable man to transcend his present condition.

When, therefore, Nietzsche speaks of standing beyond good and evil, what he has in mind is rising above the so-called herd-morality which in his opinion reduces everyone to a common level, favours mediocrity and prevents the development of a higher type of man. He does not mean to imply that all respect for values should be abandoned and all self-restraint thrown overboard. The man who rejects the binding force of what is customarily called morality may be himself so weak and degenerate that he destroys himself morally. It is only the higher type of man who can safely go beyond good and evil in the sense which these terms bear in the morality of resentment. And he does so in order to create values which will be at once an expression of ascending life and a means of enabling man to transcend himself in the direction of Superman, a higher level of human existence.

When it comes to describing the content of the new values, Nietzsche does not indeed afford us very much light. Some of the virtues on which he insists look suspiciously like old virtues, though he maintains that they are 'transvalued', that is, made different by reason of the different motives, attitudes and valuations which they express. However, one can say in general that what Nietzsche looks for is the highest possible integration of all aspects of human nature. He accuses Christianity of depreciating the body, impulse, instinct, passion, the free and untrammelled exercise of the mind, aesthetic values, and so on. But he obviously does not call for the disintegration of the human personality into a bundle of warring impulses and unbridled passions. It is a question of integration as an expression of strength, not of extirpation or mortification out of a motive of fear which is based on a consciousness of weakness. Needless to say, Nietzsche gives a very one-sided account of the Christian doctrine of man and of values. But it is essential for him to insist on this one-sided view. Otherwise he would find it difficult to assert that he had anything new to offer, unless it were the type of ideal for man which some of the Nazis liked to attribute to him.

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[1] The general philosophy of life which these judgments require as a background will be considered later.

5. In *Joyful Wisdom* Nietzsche remarks that 'the greatest event of recent times—that 'God is dead', that belief in the Christian God has become unworthy of belief—already begins to cast its first shadows over Europe. . . . At last the horizon lies free before us, even granted that it is not bright; at least the sea, *our* sea, lies open before us. Perhaps there has never been so open a sea.'[1] In other words, decay of belief in God opens the way for man's creative energies to develop fully; the Christian God, with his commands and prohibitions, no longer stands in the path; and man's eyes are no longer turned towards an unreal supernatural realm, towards the other world rather than towards this world.

This point of view obviously implies that the concept of God is hostile to life. And this is precisely Nietzsche's contention, which he expresses with increasing vehemence as time goes on. 'The concept *God*', he says in *The Twilight of the Idols*, 'was up to now the greatest *objection* against existence.'[2] And in *The Antichrist* we read that 'with God war is declared on life, Nature and the will to live! God is the formula for every calumny against this world and for every lie concerning a beyond!'[3] But it is unnecessary to multiply quotations. Nietzsche is willing to admit that religion in some of its phases has expressed the will to life, or rather to power; but his general attitude is that belief in God, especially in the God of the Christian religion, is hostile to life, and that when it expresses the will to power, the will in question is that of the lower types of man.

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[1] *W*, II, pp. 205–6 (x, pp. 275–6).

[2] *W*, II, p. 978 (XVI, p. 43).

[3] *W*, II, p. 1178 (XVI, p. 146). Nietzsche is speaking specifically of the Christian concept of God.

Given this attitude, it is understandable that Nietzsche tends to make the choice between theism, especially Christian theism, and atheism a matter of taste or instinct. He recognizes that there have been great men who were believers, but he maintains that nowadays at least, when the existence of God is no longer taken for granted, strength, intellectual freedom, independence and concern for the future of man demand atheism. Belief is a sign of weakness, cowardice, decadence, a no-saying attitude to life. True, Nietzsche attempts a sketch of the origins of the idea of God. And he cheerfully commits the genetic fallacy, maintaining that when it has been shown how the idea of God could have originated, any disproof of God's existence becomes superfluous. He also occasionally alludes to theoretical objections against belief in God. But, generally speaking, the illusory character of this belief is assumed. And the decisive motive for its rejection is that man (or Nietzsche himself) may take the place of God as legislator and creator of values. Considered as a purely theoretical attack, Nietzsche's condemnation of theism in general and of Christianity in particular is worth very little. But it is not an aspect of the matter to which he attaches much importance. As far as theology is concerned, there is no need to bother about such fables. Nietzsche's hatred of Christianity proceeds principally from his view of its supposed effect on man, whom it renders weak, submissive, resigned, humble or tortured in conscience and unable to develop himself freely. It either prevents the growth of superior individuals or ruins them, as in the case of Pascal.[1]

It is indeed noticeable that in his attack on Christianity Nietzsche often speaks of the seductiveness and fascination of Christian beliefs and ideals. And it is clear that he himself felt the attraction and that he rejected it partly in order to prove to himself that 'apart from the fact that I am a *decadent*, I am also the opposite of such a being'.[2] His rejection of God proved to himself his inner strength, his ability to live without God. But from the purely philosophical point of view the conclusions which he draws from atheism are more important than the psychological factors bearing on his rejection of the Christian God.

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[1] Nietzsche does occasionally say something in favour of Christian values. But his admissions are by no means always calculated to afford consolation to Christians. For instance, while admitting that Christianity has developed the sense of truth and the ideal of love, he insists that the sense of truth ultimately turns against the Christian interpretation of reality and the ideal of love against the Christian idea of God.

[2] *W*, II, p. 1072 (XVII, p. 12).

Some people have imagined, Nietzsche maintains, that there is no necessary connection between belief in the Christian God and acceptance of Christian moral standards and values. That is to say, they have thought that the latter can be maintained more or less intact when the former has been discarded. We have thus witnessed the growth of secularized forms of Christianity, such as democracy and socialism, which have tried to maintain a considerable part of the Christian moral system without its theological foundations. But such attempts are, in Nietzsche's opinion, vain. The 'death of God' will inevitably be followed, sooner or later, by the rejection of absolute values and of the idea of an objective and universal moral law.

The European man, however, has been brought up to recognize certain moral values which have been associated with Christian belief and, Nietzsche maintains, in a certain sense depend on it. If, therefore, European man loses his faith in these values, he loses his faith in all values. For he knows only 'morality', the morality which was canonized, as it were, by Christianity and given a theological foundation. And disbelief in all values, issuing in the sense of the purposelessness of the world of becoming, is one of the main elements in nihilism. 'Morality was the greatest *antidote* (*Gegenmittel*) against practical and theoretical *nihilism*.'[1] For it ascribed an absolute value to man and 'prevented man from despising himself as man, from turning against life and from despairing of the possibility of knowledge; it was a *means of preservation*'.[2] True, the man who was preserved in this way by the Christian morality was the lower type of man. But the point is that the Christian morality succeeded in imposing itself generally, whether directly or in the form of its derivatives. Hence the breakdown of belief in the Christian moral values exposes man to the danger of nihilism, not because there are no other possible values, but because most men, in the West at least, know no others.

Nihilism can take more than one form. There is, for instance, passive nihilism, a pessimistic acquiescence in the absence of values and in the purposelessness of existence. But there is also active nihilism which seeks to destroy that in which it no longer believes. And Nietzsche prophesies the advent of an active nihilism, showing itself in world-shaking ideological wars. 'There will be wars such as there have never been on earth before. Only from my time on will there be on earth *politics on the grand scale.*'[1]

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[1] *W*, III, p. 852 (IX, p. 9).

[2] *Ibid.*

The advent of nihilism is in Nietzsche's opinion inevitable. And it will mean the final overthrow of the decadent Christian civilization of Europe. At the same time it will clear the way for a new dawn, for the transvaluation of values, for the emergence of a higher type of man. For this reason 'this most gruesome of all guests',[2] who stands at the door, is to be welcomed.

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[1] *W*, II, p. 1153 (XVII, p. 132).

[2] *W*, III, p. 881 (IX, p. 5).

CHAPTER XXII

NIETZSCHE (2)

The hypothesis of the Will to Power—The Will to Power as manifested in knowledge; Nietzsche's view of truth—The Will to Power in Nature and man—Superman and the order of rank—The theory of the eternal recurrence—Comments on Nietzsche's philosophy.

1. '*This world*', Nietzsche asserts, '*is the Will to Power—and nothing else!* And you yourselves too are this Will to Power—and nothing else!'[1] These words are an adaptation of Schopenhauer's statements at the close of his *magnum opus*; and the way in which Nietzsche is accustomed to speak of 'the Will to Power' naturally gives the impression that he has transformed Schopenhauer's Will to Existence or Will to Live into the Will to Power. But though the impression is, of course, correct in a sense, we must not understand Nietzsche as meaning that the world is an appearance of a metaphysical unity which transcends the world. For he is never tired of attacking the distinction between this world, identified with merely phenomenal reality, and a transcendent reality which is 'really real'. The world is not an illusion. Nor does the Will to Power exist in a state of transcendence. The world, the universe, is a unity, a process of becoming; and it is the Will to Power in the sense that this Will is its intelligible character. Everywhere, in everything, we can see the Will to Power expressing itself. And though one can perhaps say that for Nietzsche the Will to Power is the inner reality of the universe, it exists only in its manifestations. Nietzsche's theory of the Will to Power is thus an interpretation of the universe, a way of looking at it and describing it, rather than a metaphysical doctrine about a reality which lies *behind* the visible world and transcends it.

Nietzsche had, of course, Schopenhauer at the back of his mind. But he did not jump straight from his reading of *The World as Will and Idea* to a general theory of the universe. Rather did he discern manifestations of the Will to Power in human psychical processes and then extend this idea to organic life in general. In *Beyond Good and Evil* he remarks that logical method compels us to inquire whether we can find one principle of explanation, one fundamental form of causal activity, through which we can unify vital phenomena. And he finds this principle in the Will to Power. 'A living thing seeks above all to *discharge* its force—life itself is Will to Power: self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most common *consequences* thereof.'[1] Nietzsche then proceeds to extend this principle of explanation to the world as a whole. 'Granted that we succeed in explaining our whole instinctive life as the development and ramification of *one* fundamental form of will—namely the Will to Power, as *my* thesis says; granted that one could refer all organic functions to this Will to Power, . . . one would have thereby acquired the right to define unequivocally *all* active force as *Will to Power*. The world as seen from within, the world as defined and characterized according to its "intelligible character", would be precisely "Will to Power" and nothing else.'[2]

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[1] *W*, III, p. 917 (XV, p. 432).

Thus Nietzsche's theory of the Will to Power is not so much an *a priori* metaphysical thesis as a sweeping empirical hypothesis. If, he says, we believe in the causality of the will, a belief which is really belief in causality itself, 'we *must* make the attempt to posit hypothetically the causality of the will as the only form of causality'.[3] In Nietzsche's intention at least the theory was an explanatory hypothesis, and in his projected *magnum opus* he planned to apply it to different classes of phenomena, showing how they could be unified in terms of this hypothesis. The notes which he made for this work indicate the lines of his thought, and in the next two sections I propose to give some examples of his reflections.

2. 'Knowledge', Nietzsche insists, 'works as an instrument of power. It is therefore obvious that it grows with every increase of power. . . .'[4] The desire of knowledge, the will to know, depends on the will to power, that is, on a given kind of being's impulse to master a certain field of reality and to enlist it in its service. The aim of knowledge is not to know, in the sense of grasping absolute truth for its own sake, but to master. We desire to schematize, to impose order and form on the multiplicity of impressions and sensations to the extent required by our practical needs. Reality is Becoming: it is we who turn it into Being, imposing stable patterns on the flux of Becoming. And this activity is an expression of the Will to Power. Science can thus be defined or described as the

[1] *W*, II, p. 578 (v, p. 20).

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *W*, II, p. 601 (v, p. 52).

[4] *W*, III, p. 751 (xv, p. 11).

'transformation of Nature into concepts for the purpose of governing Nature'.[1]

Knowledge is, of course, a process of interpretation. But this process is grounded on vital needs and expresses the will to master the otherwise unintelligible flux of Becoming. And it is a question of reading an interpretation into reality rather than of reading it, so to speak, off or in reality. For instance, the concept of the ego or self as a permanent substance is an interpretation imposed upon the flux of Becoming: it is our creation for practical purposes. To be sure, the idea that 'we' interpret psychical states as similar and attribute them to a permanent subject involves Nietzsche in obvious and, in the opinion of the present writer, insoluble difficulties. His general contention is, however, that we cannot legitimately argue from the utility of an interpretation to its objectivity. For a useful fiction, an interpretation which was devoid of objectivity in the sense in which believers in absolute truth would understand objectivity, might be required and thereby justified by our needs.

But there is, according to Nietzsche, no absolute truth. The concept of absolute truth is an invention of philosophers who are dissatisfied with the world of Becoming and seek an abiding world of Being. '*Truth is that sort of error* without which a particular type of living being could not live. The value for *life* is ultimately decisive.'[2]

Some 'fictions', of course, prove to be so useful, and indeed practically necessary, to the human race that they tend to become unquestioned assumptions; for example, 'that there are enduring things, that there are equal things, that there are things, substances, bodies. . . .'[3] It was necessary for life that the concept of a thing or of substance should be imposed on the constant flux of phenomena. 'The beings which did not see correctly had an advantage over those who saw everything "in flux".'[4] Similarly, the law of causality has become so assimilated by human belief that '*not* to believe in it would mean the ruin of our species'.[5] And the same can be said of the laws of logic.

The fictions which have shown themselves to be less useful than other fictions, or even positively harmful, are reputed as 'errors'. But those which have proved their utility to the species and have attained the rank of unquestioned 'truths' become embedded, as

[1] *W*, III, p. 440 (XV, p. 105).

[2] *W*, III, p. 844 (XV, p. 20).

[3] *W*, II, p. 116 (X, p. 153).

[4] *W*, II, p. 119 (X, p. 157).

[5] *W*, III, p. 443 (XV, pp. 21–2).

it were, in language. And here lies a danger. For we may be misled by language and imagine that our way of speaking about the world necessarily mirrors reality. 'We are still being constantly led astray by words and concepts into thinking things are simpler than they are, as separate from one another, indivisible and existing each on its own. A philosophical mythology lies hidden in *language*, and it breaks out again at every moment, however careful one may be.'[1]

All 'truths' are 'fictions'; all such fictions are interpretations; and all interpretations are perspectives. Even every instinct has its perspective, its point of view, which it endeavours to impose on other instincts. And the categories of reason are also logical fictions and perspectives, not necessary truths, nor *a priori* forms. But the perspectival view of truth admits, of course, of differences. Some perspectives, as we have seen, have proved to be practically necessary for the welfare of the race. But there are others which are by no means necessary. And here the influence of valuations becomes especially evident. For example, the philosopher who interprets the world as the appearance of an Absolute which transcends change and is alone 'really real' expounds a perspective based on a negative evaluation of the world of becoming. And this in turn shows what sort of a man he is.

The obvious comment on Nietzsche's general view of truth is that it presupposes the possibility of occupying an absolute standpoint from which the relativity of all truth or its fictional character can be asserted, and that this presupposition is at variance with the relativist interpretation of truth. Further, this comment by no means loses its point if Nietzsche is willing to say that his own view of the world, and even of truth, is perspectival and 'fictional'.[2] A few moments' reflection is sufficient to show this. Still, it is interesting to find Nietzsche anticipating John Dewey in applying a pragmatist or instrumentalist view of truth to such strongholds of the absolute truth theory as logic. For him, even the fundamental principles of logic are simply expressions of the Will to Power, instruments to enable man to dominate the flux of Becoming.

3. If Nietzsche is prepared to apply his view of truth to alleged eternal truths, he must obviously apply it *a fortiori* to scientific

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[1] *W*, I, pp. 878–9 (VII/2, p. 192).

[2] No doubt, Nietzsche would admit this in principle, while insisting that his interpretation of the world was the expression of a higher form of the Will to Power. But what is the standard of higher and lower?

hypotheses. The atomic theory, for example, is fictional in character; that is to say, it is a schema imposed on phenomena by the scientist with a view to mastery.[1] We cannot indeed help speaking as though there was a distinction between the seat of force or energy and the force itself. But this should not blind us to the fact that the atom, considered as an entity, a seat of force, is a symbol invented by the scientist, a mental projection.

However, if we presuppose the fictional character of the atomic theory, we can go on to say that every atom is a quantum of energy or, better, of the Will to Power. It seeks to discharge its energy, to radiate its force or power. And so-called physical laws represent relations of power between two or more forces. We need to unify, and we need mathematical formulas for grasping, classifying, mastering. But this is no proof either that things obey laws in the sense of rules or that there are substantial things which exercise force or power. There are simply 'dynamic quanta in a relation of tension to all other dynamic quanta'.[2]

To turn to the organic world. 'A plurality of forces, united by a common nutritive process, we call *Life*.'[3] And life might be defined as 'a lasting form of processes of assertions of force, in which the various combatants on their side grow unequally'.[4] In other words, the organism is an intricate complexity of systems which strive after an increase in the feeling of power. And being itself an expression of the Will to Power, it looks for obstacles, for something to overcome. For example, appropriation and assimilation are interpreted by Nietzsche as manifestations of the Will to Power. And the same can be said of all organic functions.

When treating of biological evolution Nietzsche attacks Darwinism. He points out, for instance, that during most of the time taken up in the formation of a certain organ or quality, the inchoate organ is of no use to its possessor and cannot aid it in its struggle with external circumstances and foes. 'The influence of "external circumstances" is absurdly *overrated* by Darwin. The essential factor in the vital process is precisely the tremendous power to shape and create forms from within, a power which *uses* and *exploits* the environment.'[5] Again, the assumption that natural selection works in favour of the progress of the species and of its better-constituted and individually stronger specimens is unwarranted. It is precisely the better specimens which perish and the mediocre which survive. For the exceptions, the best specimens, are weak in comparison with the majority. Taken individually, the members of the majority may be inferior, but when grouped together under the influence of fear and the gregarious instincts they are powerful.

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[1] Mastery is not to be understood, of course, in a vulgarly utilitarian sense. Knowledge itself is mastery, an expression of the Will to Power.

[2] *W*, III, p. 778 (XV, p. 120).

[3] *W*, III, p. 874 (XV, p. 123).

[4] *W*, III, p. 458 (XV, p. 124).

[5] *W*, III, p. 889 (XV, p. 127).

Hence if we based our moral values on the facts of evolution, we should have to conclude that 'the mediocre are more valuable than the exceptional specimens, and that the *decadent* are more valuable than the mediocre'.[1] For higher values we have to look to superior individuals who in their isolation are stimulated to set before themselves lofty aims.

In the field of human psychology Nietzsche finds ample opportunity for diagnosing the manifestations of the Will to Power. For example, he dismisses as quite unfounded the psychological theory presupposed by hedonism, namely the theory that pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain are the fundamental motives of human conduct. In Nietzsche's view pleasure and pain are concomitant phenomena in the striving after an increase of power. Pleasure can be described as the feeling of increased power, while pain results from a felt hindrance to the Will to Power. At the same time pain often provides a stimulus to this Will. For every triumph presupposes an obstacle, a hindrance, which is overcome. It is thus absurd to look on pain as an unmixed evil. Man is constantly in need of it as a stimulus to fresh effort and, for the matter of that, as a stimulus to obtaining new forms of pleasure as accompanying results of the triumphs to which pain urges him on.

Though we cannot enter in detail into Nietzsche's psychological analyses, it is worth noting the role played in these analyses by the concept of sublimation. For example, in his view self-mortification and asceticism can be sublimated forms of a primitive cruelty which is itself an expression of the Will to Power. And he raises the question, what instincts are sublimated in, say, the aesthetic view of the world? Everywhere Nietzsche sees the operation, often devious and hidden, of the Will to Power.

4. According to Nietzsche, rank is determined by power. 'It is quanta of power, and nothing else, which determine and distinguish rank.'[2] And one might well draw the conclusion that if the mediocre

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[1] *W*, III, pp. 748–9 (XV, p. 159).

[2] *W*, X, p. 105 (XV, p. 295). The first reference here is not to the Schlechta edition but to the *Taschen-Ausgabe* published by A. Kroner of Stuttgart, the date of the volume in question being 1921.

majority possesses greater power than individuals who are not mediocre, it also possesses greater value. But this, of course, is by no means Nietzsche's view. He understands power in the sense of an intrinsic quality of the individual. And he tells us, 'I distinguish between a type which represents ascending life and a type which represents decadence, decomposition, weakness'.[1] And even if the mediocre majority, united together, happens to be powerful, it does not, for Nietzsche, represent ascending life.

Yet the mediocre are necessary. For 'a high culture can exist only on a broad basis, on a strongly and soundly consolidated mediocrity'.[2] In fact, from this point of view Nietzsche welcomes the spread of democracy and socialism. For they help to create the requisite basis of mediocrity. In a famous passage in the first part of *Zarathustra* Nietzsche launches an attack against the national State, 'the coldest of all cold monsters'[3] and the new idol which sets itself up as an object of worship and endeavours to reduce all to a common state of mediocrity. But though he condemns the national State from this point of view, namely as preventing the development of outstanding individuals, he none the less insists that the mediocre masses are a necessary means to an end, the emergence of a higher type of man. It is not the mission of the new higher caste or type to lead the masses as a shepherd leads his flock. Rather is it the mission of the masses to form the foundation on which the new so-called lords of the earth can lead their own life and make possible the emergence of still higher types of man. But before this can happen there will come the new barbarians, as Nietzsche calls them, who will break the actual dominion of the masses and thus render possible the free development of outstanding individuals.

As a spur and goal to the potentially higher man Nietzsche offers the myth of Superman (*der Uebermensch*). 'Not "humanity" but *Superman* is the goal.'[4] 'Man is something which must be surpassed; man is a bridge and not a goal.'[5] But this must not be taken to mean that man will evolve into Superman by an inevitable process. Superman is a myth, a goal for the will. 'Superman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: Superman *is to be* the meaning of the earth.'[6] Nietzsche does indeed assert that 'man is a rope stretched between animal and Superman—a rope over an abyss'.[7]

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[1] *W*, III, p. 829 (XV, p. 296).
[2] *W*, III, p. 709 (XV, pp. 302–3).
[3] *W*, II, p. 313 (IV, p. 54).
[4] *W*, III, p. 440 (XV, p. 387).
[5] *W*, II, p. 445 (IV, p. 241).
[6] *W*, II, p. 280 (IV, p. 7).
[7] *W*, II, p. 281 (IV, p. 9).

But it is not a question of man evolving into Superman by a process of natural selection. For the matter of that, the rope might fall into the abyss. Superman cannot come unless superior individuals have the courage to transvalue all values, to break the old table of values, especially the Christian tables, and create new values out of their superabundant life and power. The new values will give direction and a goal to the higher man, and Superman is, as it were, their personification.

If he were taxed with his failure to give a clear description of Superman, Nietzsche might reply that as Superman does not yet exist he can hardly be expected to supply a clear description. At the same time, if the idea of Superman is to act as a spur, stimulus and goal, it must possess some content. And we can say perhaps that it is the concept of the highest possible development and integration of intellectual power, strength of character and will, independence, passion, taste and physique. Nietzsche alludes in one place to 'the Roman Caesar with Christ's soul'.[1] Superman would be Goethe and Napoleon in one, Nietzsche hints, or the Epicurean god appearing on earth. He would be a highly-cultured man, we may say, skilful in all bodily accomplishments, tolerant out of strength, regarding nothing as forbidden unless it is weakness either under the form of 'virtue' or under that of 'vice', the man who has become fully free and independent and affirms life and the universe. In fine, Superman is all that ailing, lonely, tormented, neglected Herr Professor Dr. Friedrich Nietzsche would like to be.

5. The reader of *Zarathustra* may easily and not unnaturally assume that the idea of Superman, if taken in conjunction with that of the transvaluation of values, is the main idea of the book. And he may be inclined to conclude that Nietzsche hopes at least for a constant development of man's potentialities. But Zarathustra is not only the prophet of Superman but also the teacher of the doctrine of the eternal recurrence. Further, in *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche informs us that the fundamental idea of *Zarathustra* is that of the eternal recurrence as 'the highest formula of the yea-saying (attitude to life) which can ever be attained'.[2] He also tells us that this 'fundamental thought'[3] of the work was first presented in the last aphorism but one of *Joyful Wisdom*. If, therefore, the doctrine of the eternal recurrence is the fundamental thought of *Zarathustra*,

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[1] *W*, III, p. 422 (XV, p. 380).

[2] *W*, II, p. 1128 (XVII, p. 96).

[3] *Ibid.*

it can hardly be dismissed as a strange excrescence in Nietzsche's philosophy.

To be sure, Nietzsche found the idea of the eternal recurrence somewhat dismaying and oppressive. But, as was remarked earlier, he used the idea as a test of his strength, of his ability to say 'yes' to life as it is. Thus in the relevant aphorism of *Joyful Wisdom* he imagines a spirit appearing to him and telling him that his life, even in all its smallest details, will recur again innumerable times; and he raises the question whether he would be prostrated by this thought and curse the speaker or whether he would welcome the message in a spirit of affirmation of life, inasmuch as the eternal recurrence sets the seal of eternity on the world of Becoming. Similarly, in *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche speaks of the world-approving man who wishes to have the play all over again a countless number of times and who cries *encore* not only to the play but also to the players. And he sets this idea against the 'half-Christian, half-German narrowness and simplicity'[1] with which pessimism was presented in Schopenhauer's philosophy. Again, in the third part of *Zarathustra* Nietzsche speaks of feeling disgust at the thought that even the most inferior man will return and that he himself is to 'come again eternally to this self same life, in its greatest and smallest (events)'.[2] And he proceeds to welcome this return. 'Oh, how should I not be ardent for eternity and for the marriage-ring of rings—the ring of the return?'[3] Similarly, in the notes for his *magnum opus* he speaks several times of the theory of the eternal recurrence as a great disciplinary thought, at once oppressive and liberating.

At the same time the theory is presented as an empirical hypothesis, and not merely as a disciplinary thought or test of inner strength. Thus we read that 'the principle of conservation of energy demands the *eternal* recurrence'.[4] If the world can be looked at as a determinate quantum of force or energy and as a determinate number of centres of force, it follows that the world-process will take the form of successive combinations of these centres, the number of these combinations being in principle determinable, that is, finite. And 'in an infinite time every possible combination would have been realized at some point; further, it would be realized an infinite number of times. And as between each combination and its next recurrence all other possible combinations would have to occur, and as each of these combinations conditions the whole sequence of combinations in the same series, a cycle of absolutely identical series would be proved.'[1]

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[1] *W*, II, p. 617 (V, p. 74).

[2] *W*, II, p. 467 (IV, p. 270).

[3] *W*, II, p. 474 (IV, p. 280).

[4] *W* III, p. 861 (XV, p. 427).

One main reason why Nietzsche lays stress on the theory of the eternal recurrence is that it seems to him to fill a gap in his philosophy. It confers on the flux of Becoming the semblance of Being, and it does so without introducing any Being which transcends the universe. Further, while the theory avoids the introduction of a transcendent Deity, it also avoids pantheism, the surreptitious reintroduction of the concept of God under the name of the universe. According to Nietzsche, if we say that the universe never repeats itself but is constantly creating new forms, this statement betrays a hankering after the idea of God. For the universe itself is assimilated to the concept of a creative Deity. And this assimilation is excluded by the theory of the eternal recurrence. The theory also excludes, of course, the idea of personal immortality in a 'beyond', though at the same time it provides a substitute for this idea, even if the notion of living one's life over again in all its details a countless number of times is unlikely to exercise a more than limited appeal. In other words, the theory of the eternal recurrence expresses Nietzsche's resolute will to this-worldliness, to *Diesseitigkeit.* The universe is shut in, as it were, on itself. Its significance is purely immanent. And the truly strong man, the truly Dionysian man, will affirm this universe with steadfastness, courage and even joy, shunning the escapism which is a manifestation of weakness.

It is sometimes said that the theory of the eternal recurrence and the theory of Superman are incompatible. But it can hardly be claimed, I think, that they are logically incompatible. For the theory of recurrent cycles does not exclude the recurrence of the will to Superman or, for the matter of that, of Superman himself. It is, of course, true that the theory of the eternal recurrence rules out the concept of Superman as the final end of a non-repeatable creative process. But Nietzsche does not admit this concept. On the contrary, he excludes it as being equivalent to a surreptitious reintroduction of a theological manner of interpreting the universe.

6. There have been disciples of Nietzsche who endeavoured to make his thought into a system which they then accepted as a kind of gospel and tried to propagate. But, generally speaking, his

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[1] *W*, III, p. 704 (xv, p. 430).

influence has taken the form of stimulating thought in this or that direction. And this stimulative influence has been widespread. But it certainly has not been uniform in character. Nietzsche has meant different things to different people. In the field of morals and values, for example, his importance for some people has lain primarily in his development of a naturalistic criticism of morality, while others would emphasize rather his work in the phenomenology of values. Others again, of a less academically philosophical turn of mind, have stressed his idea of the transvaluation of values. In the field of social and cultural philosophy some have portrayed him as attacking democracy and democratic socialism in favour of something like Nazism, while others have represented him as a great European, or as a great cosmopolitan, a man who was above any nationalistic outlook. To some he has been primarily the man who diagnosed the decadence and imminent collapse of western civilization, while others have seen in him and his philosophy the embodiment of the very nihilism for which he professed to supply a remedy. In the field of religion he has appeared to some as a radical atheist, intent on exposing the baneful influence of religious belief, while others have seen in the very vehemence of his attack on Christianity evidence of his fundamental concern with the problem of God. Some have regarded him first and foremost from the literary point of view, as a man who developed the potentialities of the German language; others, such as Thomas Mann, have been influenced by his distinction between the Dionysian and Apollonian outlooks or attitudes; others again have emphasized his psychological analyses.

Obviously, Nietzsche's method of writing is partly responsible for the possibility of diverse interpretations. Many of his books consist of aphorisms. And we know that in some cases he jotted down thoughts which came to him on his solitary walks and later strung them together to form a book. The results are what might be expected. For instance, reflection on the tameness of bourgeois life and on the heroism and self-sacrifice occasioned by war might produce an aphorism or passage in praise of war and warriors, while on another occasion reflection on the way in which war leads to the waste and destruction of the best elements of a nation, and often for no appreciable gain to anyone except a few selfish individuals, might produce, and indeed did produce, a condemnation of war as stupid and suicidal for both victors and vanquished. It is then possible for the commentator to depict Nietzsche either as a lover of war or as almost a pacifist. A judicious selection of texts is all that is required.

The situation is complicated, of course, by the relation between the philosophizing of Nietzsche and his personal life and struggles. Thus while it is possible to confine one's attention to the written word, it is also possible to develop a psychological interpretation of his thought. And, as already noted, there is the possibility of giving an existentialist interpretation of the significance of the whole complex of his life and thought.

That Nietzsche was in some respects an acute and far-seeing thinker is hardly open to question. Take, for example, his excursions into psychology. It is not necessary to regard all his analyses as acceptable before one is prepared to admit that he divined, as it were, a number of important ideas which have become common coin in modern psychology. We have only to recall his notion of concealed operative ideals and motives or his concept of sublimation. As for his use of the concept of the Will to Power as a key to human psychology, an idea which found its classical expression in the psychological theory of Alfred Adler, we can say indeed that it was exaggerated and that the more widely the concept is applied the more indefinite does its content become.[1] At the same time Nietzsche's experimentation with the use of the concept as a key to man's psychical life helped to focus attention on the operation of a powerful drive, even if it is not the only one. Again, as we look back in the light of the events of the twentieth century on Nietzsche's anticipation of the coming of the 'new barbarism' and of world-wars we can hardly fail to recognize that he had a deeper insight into the situation than those of his contemporaries who showed a complacent optimistic belief in the inevitability of progress.

But though Nietzsche was clear-sighted in some respects, he was myopic in others. For instance, he certainly failed to give sufficient attention to the question whether his distinctions between ascending and descending life and between higher and lower types of men did not tacitly presuppose the very objectivity of values which he rejected. It would be open to him, of course, to make it a matter of taste and aesthetic preference, as he sometimes said that it was. But then a similar question can be raised about aesthetic values, unless perhaps the distinction between higher and lower is to become simply a matter of subjective feeling and no claim is made that one's own feelings should be accepted as a norm by anyone else. Again, as has already been hinted, Nietzsche failed to give the requisite prolonged consideration to the question how the subject can impose an intelligible structure on the flux of Becoming when the subject is itself resolved into the flux and exists as a subject only as part of the structure which it is said to impose.

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[1] Obviously, similar remarks can be made about Freud's concept of *libido*.

As for Nietzsche's attitude to Christianity, his increasingly shrill attack on it is accompanied by an increasing inability to do justice to his foe. And it is arguable that the vehemence of his attack was partly an expression of an inner tension and uncertainty which he endeavoured to stifle.[1] As he himself put it, he had the blood of theologians in his veins. But if we abstract from the shrillness and one-sidedness of his attack on Christianity in particular, we can say that this attack forms part of his general campaign against all beliefs and philosophies, such as metaphysical idealism, which ascribe to the world and to human existence and history a meaning or purpose or goal other than the meaning freely imposed by man himself.[2] The rejection of the idea that the world has been created by God for a purpose or that it is the self-manifestation of the absolute Idea or Spirit sets man free to give to life the meaning which he wills to give it. And it has no other meaning.

The idea of God, whether theistically or pantheistically conceived, thus gives way to the concept of man as the being who confers intelligibility on the world and creates values. But are we to say that in the long run it is the world itself which has, so to speak, the last word, and that man, the moral legislator and conferer of meaning, is absorbed as an insignificant speck in the meaningless cycles of history? If so, man's effort to confer meaning and value on his life appear as a defiant 'No', a rejection of the meaningless universe, rather than as a yea-saying attitude.[1] Or are we to say that the interpretation of the world as without a given meaning or goal and as a series of endless cycles is a fiction which expresses man's Will to Power? If so, the question whether the world has or has not a given meaning or goal remains open.

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[1] To claim that a professed atheist was 'really' a believer simply because he attacked theism persistently and vehemently would be extravagant and paradoxical. But Nietzsche, who as a boy was profoundly religious, was never indifferent to the problems of Being and of the meaning or purpose of existence. Further, his dialogue, as it were, with Christ, culminating in the final words of *Ecce Homo*, '*Dionysus* versus *the Crucified*', shows clearly enough that 'the Antichrist' had to do violence to himself, even if he thought of it as a case of transcending his own inclinations to weakness. In spite of his rejection of God he was very far from being what would generally be thought of as an 'irreligious man'.

[2] Nietzsche insists indeed that his main objection against Christianity is against the system of morals and values. At the same time he joins Christianity with German idealism, which he regards as a derivative of Christianity or as a masked form of it, in his attack on the view that the world has a given meaning or goal.

A final remark. Professional philosophers who read Nietzsche may be interested principally in his critique of morality or in his phenomenological analyses or in his psychological theories. But it is probably true to say that the attention of the general reader is usually concentrated on the remedies which he offers for the overcoming of what he calls nihilism, the spiritual crisis of modern man. It is the idea of the transvaluation of values, the concept of the order of rank and the myth of Superman which strike their attention. It is arguable, however, that what is really significant in what one may call the non-academic Nietzsche is not his proposed antidotes to nihilism but rather his existence and thought considered precisely as a dramatic expression of a lived spiritual crisis from which there is no issue in terms of his own philosophy.

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[1] Unless indeed we understand by a yea-saying attitude an acceptance of the fact of differences between the strong and the weak, as opposed to an attempt to set all on the same level. But in this case a yea-saying attitude should also involve acceptance of the fact that the majority sets limits to the activities of the independent rebels.

CHAPTER XXIII

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

Some questions arising out of nineteenth-century German philosophy—The positivist answer—The philosophy of existence—The rise of phenomenology; Brentano, Meinong, Husserl, the widespread use of phenomenological analysis—Return to ontology; N. Hartmann—The metaphysics of Being; Heidegger, the Thomists—Concluding reflections.

1. KANT endeavoured to overcome what he regarded as the scandal of conflicting metaphysical systems and to set philosophy on a secure basis. And at the beginning of the period covered in this volume we find Fichte insisting that philosophy is the fundamental science which grounds all other sciences. But when Fichte declared that philosophy was the fundamental science, he was referring, of course, to the *Wissenschaftslehre*, that is, to his own philosophy. And his system simply forms one member of the series of highly personal, though interesting and often fascinating, interpretations of reality which span the nineteenth century like a series of mountain peaks. Other examples are the speculative theism of Schelling, the absolute idealism of Hegel, Schopenhauer's philosophy of the world as presentation and will, Kierkegaard's vision of human history and Nietzsche's philosophy of the Will to Power. And it would need a bold man to maintain that the series provides empirical confirmation of the validity of Fichte's claim on behalf of the scientific character of philosophy.

It is indeed arguable that the differences between philosophies, even when these differences are very considerable, do not prove that philosophy has no cognitive value. For it may be that each philosophy expresses a truth, an apprehension of a real aspect of reality or of human life and history, and that these truths are mutually complementary. That is to say, the element of conflict does not arise from any incompatibility between the fundamental ideas which lie at the bases of the different systems, but rather from the fact that each philosopher exaggerates one aspect of the world or of human life and history, thus turning a part into the whole. For example, Marx undoubtedly draws attention to real aspects of man and of human history; and there is no fundamental incompatibility between these aspects and, say, the religious aspects of human existence which are emphasized by Schelling. The incompatibility arises when Marx turns one idea which expresses a partial aspect of man and his history into a key-idea to unlock all doors.

One trouble, however, with this way of looking at things is that it involves whittling down philosophical systems to what amount practically to truisms, and that this process deprives the systems of most of their interest. It can be argued, for example, that Marx's philosophy is of interest precisely because of the element of exaggeration which sets the whole of human history in a certain perspective. If Marxism is whittled down to indubitable truths such as that without man's economic life there could be no philosophy or art or science, it loses a great deal of its interest and all of its provocative character. Similarly, if Nietzsche's philosophy is whittled down to the statement that the will to power or drive to power is one of the influential factors in human life, it becomes compatible with the reduced version of Marxism, but only at the cost of being itself reduced to a fairly obvious proposition.

A possible way of countering this line of argument is to say that the exaggerations in a philosophical system serve a useful purpose. For it is precisely the element of striking and arresting exaggeration which serves to draw attention in a forcible way to the basic truth which is contained in the system. And once we have digested this truth, we can forget about the exaggeration. It is not so much a question of whittling down the system as of using it as a source of insight and then forgetting the instrument by which we attained this insight, unless indeed we need to refer to it again as a means of recovering the insight in question.

But though this is in itself a not unreasonable line of thought, it is of very little use for supporting Fichte's contention that philosophy is the science of sciences. For suppose that we reduce the philosophies of Schopenhauer, Marx and Nietzsche respectively to such statements as that there is a great deal of evil and suffering in the world, that we have to produce food and consume it before we can develop the sciences, and that the will to power can operate in devious and concealed forms. We then have three propositions of which the first two are for most people obviously true while the third, which is rather more interesting, is a psychological proposition. None of them would normally be called a specifically philosophical proposition. The philosophical propositions of

Schopenhauer, Marx and Nietzsche would thus become instruments for drawing attention to propositions of some other type. And this is obviously not at all the sort of thing which Fichte had in mind when he claimed that philosophy was the basic science.

It may be objected that I have been concentrating simply on the outstanding original systems, on the mountain peaks, and neglecting the foothills, the general movements such as Neo-Kantianism. It may be suggested, that is to say, that while it is true that if we are looking for highly personal imaginative interpretations of the universe or of human life we must turn to the famous philosophers, it is also true that in those general movements in which the particular tends to be merged in the universal we can find more plebeian scientific work in philosophy, patient co-operative efforts at tackling separate problems.

But is it true? In Neo-Kantianism, for example, there are, of course, family-likenesses which justify our describing it as a definite movement, distinct from other movements. But once we start to inspect it at close hand we see not only somewhat different general tendencies within the movement as a whole but also a multitude of individual philosophies. Again, in the movement of inductive metaphysics this philosopher uses one idea as a key-idea for interpreting the world while that philosopher uses another. Wundt uses his voluntaristic interpretation of human psychology as a basis for a general philosophy, while Driesch uses his theory of entelechies, derived from reflection on biological processes. True, a sense of proportion and the requirements of mental economy suggest that in many cases individual systems are best forgotten or allowed to sink into the background of a general movement. But this does not alter the fact that the closer we look at the philosophy of the nineteenth century, the more do the massive groupings tend to break up into individual philosophies. Indeed, it is not altogether an exaggeration to say that as the century wears on each professor of philosophy seems to think it necessary to produce his own system.

Obviously, there can be different opinions within the framework of a common conviction about the nature and function of philosophy. Thus the Neo-Kantians were more or less agreed about what philosophy is incompetent to achieve. But though conflicting views about the nature and function of philosophy are not necessarily coextensive with different philosophical views or even systems, there were obviously in nineteenth-century German thought some very different concepts about what philosophy ought to be. For instance, when Fichte said that philosophy ought to be a science, he meant that it should be derived systematically from one fundamental principle. The inductive metaphysicians, however, had a different idea of philosophy. And when we turn to Nietzsche, we find him rejecting the concept of absolute truth and emphasizing the valuational foundations of different kinds of philosophy, the value-judgments themselves depending on the types of men who make them.[1]

Needless to say, the fact that two philosophers differ does not of itself prove that neither is right. And even if they are both wrong, some other philosopher may be right. At the same time the conflicting systems of the nineteenth century, and still more perhaps the conflicting views about the nature and competence of philosophy, show that Kant's attempt to settle once and for all the true nature and function of philosophy was from the historical point of view a failure. And the old questions present themselves to the mind with renewed force. Can philosophy be a science? If so, how? What sort of knowledge can we legitimately expect from it? Has philosophy been superseded by the growth and development of the particular sciences? Or has it still a field of its own? If so, what is it? And what is the appropriate method for investigating this field?

It is not indeed surprising that Kant's judgment about the nature and limits of scientific philosophy should have failed to win universal acceptance. For it was closely related to his own system. In other words, it was a philosophical judgment, just as the pronouncements of Fichte, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Eucken and others were philosophical judgments. In fact, provided that one is not making a statement either about the current conventional use of terms or about the various uses of the word 'philosophy' in history, any pronouncement that one may make about the 'true' nature and function of philosophy is a philosophical statement, one which is made from within philosophy and commits one to or expresses a particular philosophical position.

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[1] This view naturally brings to mind Fichte's statement that the kind of philosophy which a man chooses depends on the kind of man that he is. But even if we prescind from the fact that Fichte did not intend this statement to be understood in a sense which would exclude the concept of philosophy as a science and see in it an anticipation of the tendency to subordinate the concept of truth to the concept of human life or existence, in tracing the concrete development of this tendency we find it splitting up into different conceptions of man and of human life and existence. One has only to mention the names of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, for example.

It is obviously not the intention of the present writer to suggest that no definite philosophical position should be adopted or that it is improper to make philosophical judgments about the nature and function of philosophy. Nor is it his intention to suggest that no good reasons can be adduced in favour of accepting one judgment rather than another. At the same time he does not wish to make an abrupt transition at this moment from the role of historian to the role of one who speaks in the name of a definite philosophical system. He prefers instead to take a brief glance at some of the general lines of answer which have been offered in German thought during the first part of the twentieth century to the type of question mentioned above. This procedure will serve to provide some sort of bridge between past and present.

2. One possible line of answer to questions about the scope of philosophy is to maintain that the particular sciences are the only source of knowledge about the world and that philosophy has no field of its own in the sense that its function is to investigate a special level or type of being. It is indeed perfectly understandable that at one time men sought to acquire knowledge about the world through philosophical speculation. But in the course of their development the various sciences have taken over one part after another of the field of exploration which was once attributed to philosophy. There has thus been a gradual substitution of scientific knowledge for philosophical speculation. And it is no wonder if philosophers who think that they can increase our knowledge of reality by other means than the employment of the scientific method of hypothesis, deduction and verification only succeed in producing conflicting systems which may possess some aesthetic value or emotive significance but which can no longer be seriously considered as possessing cognitive value. If philosophy is to be scientific and not a form of poetry masquerading as science, its function must be purely analytic in character. For example, it may be able to clarify some of the fundamental concepts employed in the sciences and to inquire into scientific methodology, but it cannot go beyond the sciences by adding to or supplementing our scientific knowledge of the world.

This general positivist attitude, the conviction that the empirical sciences are the only reliable source of knowledge about the world, is obviously widespread. In the nineteenth century it attained its classical expression in the philosophy of Auguste Comte, and we have seen that it also found expression, though on a less impressive scale, in the materialist and positivist current of thought in Germany. But we also noted how some of the German philosophers who represented this current of thought went well beyond the particular sciences by developing a general view of reality. Haeckel's monism was a case in point. And it was just this tendency of philosophy to develop into a *Weltanschauung* or world-view which the positivism of the twentieth century was concerned to exclude.

An obvious objection to the reduction of philosophy to the position of a handmaid of science is that there are questions and problems which are not raised by any particular science, which demand answers and which have been traditionally and properly regarded as belonging to the field of philosophical inquiry. The positivist is convinced, of course, that questions about ultimate reality or the Absolute, about the origin of finite existents, and so on have not in fact been answered by the metaphysical philosophers, such as Schelling for instance. But even if one agreed that the questions had not in fact been definitely answered, or even that we were not in a position to answer them, one might still wish to say that the raising and discussion of such questions has a great value. For it helps to show the limits of scientific knowledge and reminds us of the mysteries of finite existence. Hence an effective exclusion of metaphysical philosophy requires the establishment of two complementary theses. It must be shown that metaphysical problems are unanswerable in principle and not merely in the sense that we are not in a position to answer them here and now. And it must further be shown that problems which are unanswerable in principle are pseudo-problems in the sense that they are not real questions at all but verbal expressions which lack any clear meaning.

This is precisely what the neopositivists of the Vienna Circle and their associates set out to show in the twenties of the present century by developing a criterion of meaning, the so-called principle of verifiability, which would effectively exclude metaphysical problems and statements from the class of meaningful problems and statements. Apart from the purely formal propositions of logic and pure mathematics, meaningful propositions were interpreted as empirical hypotheses, the meaning of which was coincident with the thinkable, though not necessarily practically realizable, mode of verification in sense-experience. And as, for instance, we can conceive no empirical verification in sense-experience of the statement of Parmenides that all things are really one changeless being, this statement could not be accepted as meaningful.[1]

As stated in this form, however, the neopositivist criterion of meaning was unable to stand up to criticism, whether from outside or inside the neopositivist movement, and it either came to be interpreted as a purely methodological principle for the purpose of delimiting the range of what could properly be called scientific hypotheses or was so whittled down and explained away that it became quite ineffective for excluding speculative philosophy.

The fact of the matter is, I think, that neopositivism as a philosophy was an attempt to provide a theoretical justification of positivism as a mentality or attitude. And the neopositivist criterion of meaning was heavily loaded with the implicit philosophical presuppositions of this attitude. Further, its effectiveness as a weapon against metaphysical philosophy depended on these presuppositions not being made explicit. For once they have been made explicit, neopositivism stands revealed as one more questionable philosophy. This obviously does not entail the disappearance of positivism as a mentality or attitude. But the whole episode of the rise and criticism (partly autocriticism) of neopositivism had the great advantage of dragging concealed presuppositions into the light of day. It was a question of the positivist mentality, which had become widespread in the nineteenth century, becoming reflectively conscious of itself and seeing its own presuppositions. True, this self-consciousness was attained within the philosophical field and left untouched great areas of the positivist mentality or attitude. But this simply helps to illustrate the need of philosophy, one of the functions of which is precisely to render explicit and subject to critical examination the concealed implicit presuppositions of non-reflective philosophical attitudes.[2]

3. According to the neopositivists, philosophy can become scientific, but only at the cost of becoming purely analytic and relinquishing any claim to increase our factual knowledge of

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[1] That is to say, the statement might be expressive and evocative of emotive attitudes, thus possessing 'emotive' significance; but according to strict neopositivist principles it would be meaningless in the sense that it would be incapable of being either true or false.

[2] A bibliography of neopositivism is provided in *Logical Positivism* (an anthology), edited by A. J. Ayer, Glencoe, Ill., and London, 1959. Some writings illustrating the discussion of the principle of verifiability, together with a selected bibliography, can be found in *A Modern Introduction to Philosophy* edited by P. Edwards and A. Pap, pp. 543–621, Glencoe, Ill. 1957. Cf. also *Contemporary Philosophy*, by F. C. Copleston, pp. 26–60, London, 1956, for a critical discussion of neopositivism.

reality. Another possible way of describing the function and nature of philosophy is to say that it has a field of its own, inasmuch as it is concerned with Being, and at the same time to deny that it is or can be a science, whether a universal science or a special science alongside the particular empirical sciences. In one sense philosophy is what it always has been, namely concerned with Being (*das Sein*) as distinct from *die Seienden*. But it was a mistake to suppose that there can be a science of Being. For Being is unobjectifiable; it cannot be turned into an object of scientific investigation. The primary function of philosophy is to awaken man to an awareness of Being as transcending beings and grounding them. But as there can be no science of Being, no metaphysical system can possess universal validity. The different systems are so many personal decipherings of unobjectifiable Being. This does not mean, however, that they are valueless. For any great metaphysical system can serve to push open, as it were, the door which positivism would keep shut. Thus to speak of the scandal of conflicting systems betrays a misconception of the true nature of philosophy. For the objection is valid only if philosophy, to be justified at all, should be a science. And this is not the case. True, by claiming that philosophy is a science, the metaphysicians of the past have themselves provided the ground for talk about the scandal of different and incompatible systems. But once this claim is relinquished and we understand the true function of metaphysics as being that of awakening man to an awareness of the enveloping Being in which he and all other finite existents are grounded, the ground for scandal disappears. For that there should be different personal decipherings of transcendent Being is only what one ought to expect. The important thing is to see them for what they are and not to take the extravagant claims of their authors at their face value.

This point of view represents one aspect of the philosophy of Professor Karl Jaspers (b. 1883). But he combines acceptance of the Kantian contention that speculative metaphysics cannot provide us with theoretical knowledge with a theory of 'existence' which shows the influence of Kierkegaard. The human being can be objectified and studied scientifically by, say, the physiologist and the psychologist. The individual is then exhibited as classifiable in this or that way. But when looked at from the point of view of the free agent himself, from within the life of free choice, the individual is seen as this unique existent, the being who freely transcends what he already is and creates himself, as it were, through the exercise of his freedom. Indeed, from this point of view man is always in the making, his own making: *Existenz* is always possible existence, *mögliche Existenz*. Of man regarded under this aspect there can be no scientific study. But philosophy can draw attention to or illuminate 'existence' in such a way as to enable the existing individual to understand what is meant in terms of his own experience. It can also draw attention to the movement by which, especially in certain situations, the individual becomes aware both of his finitude and of the enveloping presence of Being as the Transcendent in which he and all other beings are grounded. But as transcendent Being can be neither objectified nor reduced to the conclusion of a demonstration or proof, the man who becomes aware of it as the unobjectifiable complement and ground of finite beings is free either to affirm it with Kierkegaard, through what Jaspers calls 'philosophical faith', or to reject it with Nietzsche.

We cannot enter into further descriptions of the philosophy of Karl Jaspers,[1] as it has been mentioned less for its own sake than as one of the ways of depicting the nature and functions of philosophy which have been exemplified in German thought during the first half of the twentieth century. It should be noted, however, that Jaspers, like Kant before him, endeavours to place belief in human freedom and in God beyond the reach of scientific criticism. Indeed, we can see an evident recurrence of Kantian themes. For example, Jaspers' distinction between man as seen from the external scientific point of view and man as seen from the internal point of view of 'existence' corresponds in some way to the Kantian distinction between the phenomenal and noumenal levels. At the same time there are also evident differences between Kant and Jaspers. For instance, Kant's emphasis on the moral law, on which practical faith in God is grounded, disappears, and the Kierkegaardian concept of the existing individual comes to the fore. Besides, Jaspers' 'philosophical faith', which is a more academic version of Kierkegaard's leap of faith, is directed towards God as Being, not, as with Kant, to the idea of God as an instrument for synthesizing virtue and happiness.

An obvious objection to Jaspers' way of setting metaphysics beyond the reach of scientific criticism is that in speaking at all about freedom and, still more, about Being he is inevitably objectifying what according to him cannot be objectified. If Being is really unobjectifiable, it cannot be mentioned. We can only remain silent. But one might, of course, employ Wittgenstein's distinction and say that for Jaspers philosophy tries to 'show' what cannot be 'said'. Indeed, Jaspers' emphasis on the 'illuminating' function of philosophy points in precisely this direction.

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[1] As a sympathetic study one can recommend *Karl Jaspers et la philosophie de l'existence*, by M. Dufrenne and P. Ricoeur, Paris, 1947.

4. For the neopositivists, philosophy can be scientific, but by the very fact of becoming scientific it is not a science in the sense of having a field peculiar to itself. For Jaspers philosophy has in a sense a field of its own,[1] but it is not a science and moves on a different plane from those of the sciences. The phenomenologists, however, have tried both to assign to philosophy a field or fields and to vindicate its scientific character.

(i) In a few notes on the rise of phenomenology there is no need to go back beyond Franz Brentano (1838–1917). After studying with Trendelenburg Brentano became a Catholic priest. In 1872 he was appointed to a chair at Würzburg, and in 1874 at Vienna. But in 1873 he had abandoned the Church, and his status as a married ex-priest did not make his life as a university professor in the Austrian capital an easy one. In 1895 he retired from teaching and took up residence at Florence, moving to Switzerland on the outbreak of the First World War.

In 1874 Brentano published a book bearing the title *Psychology from the Empirical Standpoint* (*Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt*).[2] Empirical psychology, he insists, is not a science of the soul, a term which has metaphysical implications, but of psychical phenomena. Further, when Brentano talks about empirical psychology, it is descriptive rather than genetic psychology which he has in mind. And descriptive psychology is for him an inquiry into psychical acts or acts of consciousness as concerned with 'inexistent' objects, that is, with objects as contained within the acts themselves. All consciousness is consciousness *of*. To think is to think of something, and to desire is to desire something. Thus every act of consciousness is 'intentional': it 'intends' an object. And we can consider the object precisely as intended and as inexistent, without raising questions about its extramental nature and status.

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[1] The term 'philosophy of existence' suggests that *Existenz* constitutes this field. But Jaspers insists more on Being, the illumination of 'existence' being the path to the awareness of Being. Being, however, is not a field for scientific investigation by philosophy, though the philosopher may be able to reawaken or keep alive the awareness of Being.

[2] Among other writings we can mention *On the Origin of Moral Knowledge* (*Vom Ursprung der sittlichen Erkenntnis*, 1889), *On the Future of Philosophy* (*Ueber die Zukunft der Philosophie*, 1893) and *The Four Phases of Philosophy* (*Die vier Phasen der Philosophie*, 1895).

This theory of the intentionality of consciousness, which goes back to Aristotelian-Scholastic thought, is not in itself a subjectivist theory. The descriptive psychologist, as Brentano interprets his function, does not say that the objects of consciousness have no existence apart from consciousness. But he considers them only as inexistent, for the good reason that he is concerned with psychical acts or acts of consciousness and not with ontological questions about extramental reality.

Now, it is clear that in considering consciousness one can concentrate either on the inexistent objects of consciousness or on the intentional reference as such. And Brentano tends to concentrate on the second aspect of consciousness, distinguishing three main types of intentional reference. First there is simple presentation, in which there is no question of truth or falsity. Secondly there is judgment which involves recognition (*Anerkennen*) or rejection (*Verwerfen*), in other words affirmation or denial. Thirdly there are the movements of the will and of feelings (*Gemütsbewegungen*), where the fundamental attitudes or structures of consciousness are love and hate or, as Brentano also says, of pleasure and displeasure.

We may add that just as Brentano believed that there are logical judgments which are evidently true, so did he believe that there are moral sentiments which are evidently correct or right. That is to say, there are goods, objects of moral approval or pleasure, which are evidently and always preferable. But from the point of view of the rise of phenomenology the important feature of Brentano's thought is the doctrine of the intentionality of consciousness.

(ii) Brentano's reflections exercised an influence on a number of philosophers who are sometimes grouped together as the Austrian School, such as Anton Marty (1847–1914), a professor at Prague, Oskar Kraus (1872–1942), a pupil of Marty and himself a professor at Prague, and Carl Stumpf (1848–1936), who was a noted psychologist and had Edmund Husserl among his pupils.

Special mention, however, must be made of Alexius Meinong (1853–1920) who studied under Brentano at Vienna and subsequently became professor of philosophy at Graz. In his theory of objects (*Gegenstandstheorie*) Meinong distinguished different types of objects. In ordinary life we generally understand by the term 'objects' particular existing things such as trees, stones, tables, and so on. But if we consider 'objects' as objects of consciousness, we can easily see that there are other types as well. For example, there are ideal objects, such as values and numbers, which can be said to possess reality though they do not exist in the sense in which trees and cows exist. Again, there are imaginary objects such as a golden mountain or the king of France. There is no existing golden mountain and there has been no king of France for many years. But if we can talk about golden mountains, we must be talking about something. For to talk about nothing is not to talk. There is an object present to consciousness, even if there is no corresponding extramentally existent thing.

Bertrand Russell's theory of descriptions was designed to circumvent Meinong's line of argument and to depopulate, as it were, the world of objects which are in some sense real but do not exist. However, this is irrelevant to our present purpose. The main point is that Meinong's theory helped to concentrate attention on objects considered precisely as objects of consciousness, as, to use Brentano's term, inexistent.

(iii) The effective founder of the phenomenological movement was, however, neither Brentano nor Meinong but Edmund Husserl (1859–1938). After having taken his doctorate in mathematics Husserl attended Brentano's lectures at Vienna (1884–6) and it was Brentano's influence which led him to devote himself to philosophy. He became professor of philosophy at Göttingen and subsequently at Freiburg-im-Breisgau where Martin Heidegger was one of his pupils.

In 1891 Husserl published a *Philosophy of Arithmetic* (*Philosophie der Arithmetik*) in which he showed a certain tendency to psychologism, that is, to grounding logic on psychology. For example, the concept of multiplicity, which is essential for the concept of number, is grounded on the psychical act of binding together diverse contents of consciousness in one representation. This view was subjected to criticism by the celebrated mathematician and logician Gottlob Frege (1848–1925) and in his *Logical Investigations* (*Logische Untersuchungen*, 1900–1) Husserl maintained clearly that logic is not reducible to psychology.[1] Logic is concerned with the sphere of meaning, that is, with what is meant (*gemeint*) or intended, not with the succession of real psychical acts. In other words, we must distinguish between consciousness as a complex of psychical facts, events or experiences (*Erlebnisse*) and the objects of consciousness which are meant or intended. The latter 'appear' to or for consciousness: in this sense they are phenomena. The former, however, do not appear: they are lived through (*erlebt*) or experienced. Obviously, this does not mean that psychical acts cannot themselves be reduced to phenomena by reflection; but then, considered precisely as appearing to consciousness, they are no longer real psychical acts.

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[1] In his rejection of psychologism Husserl was probably influenced not only by Frege but also by Bolzano (see pp. 256–9).

This involves a distinction between meanings and things, a distinction which is of considerable importance. For failure to make this distinction was one of the main reasons why the empiricists found it necessary to deny the existence of universal concepts or ideas. Things, including real psychical acts, are all individual or particular, whereas meanings can be universal. And as such they are 'essences'.

In the work which in its English translation bears the title *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (*Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, 1913) Husserl calls the act of consciousness *noesis* and its correlative object, which is meant or intended, *noema*. Further, he speaks of the intuition of essences (*Wesensschau*). In pure mathematics, for example, there is an intuition of essences which gives rise to propositions which are not empirical generalizations but belong to a different type, that of *a priori* propositions. And phenomenology in general is the descriptive analysis of essences or ideal structures. There could thus be, for example, a phenomenology of values. But there could also be a phenomenological analysis of the fundamental structures of consciousness, provided, of course, that these structures are 'reduced' to essences or *eidē*.

A point insisted on by Husserl is the suspension of judgment (the so-called *epoche*) in regard to the ontological or existential status or reference of the objects of consciousness. By means of this suspension existence is said to be 'bracketed'. Suppose, for example, that I wished to develop a phenomenological analysis of the aesthetic experience of beauty. I suspend all judgment about the subjectivity or objectivity of beauty in an ontological sense and direct my attention simply to the essential structure of aesthetic experience as 'appearing' to consciousness.

The reason why Husserl insists on this suspension of judgment can be seen by considering the implications of the title of one of his writings, *Philosophy as Strict Science* (*Philosophie als strenge*

Wissenschaft, 1910–11). Like Descartes before him, Husserl wished to put philosophy on a firm basis. And in his opinion this meant going behind all presuppositions to that which one cannot doubt or question. Now, in ordinary life we make all sorts of existential assumptions, about, for instance, the existence of physical objects independently of consciousness. We must therefore prescind from or bracket this 'natural attitude' (*natürliche Einstellung*). It is not a question of saying that the natural attitude is wrong and its assumptions unjustified. It is a question of methodologically prescinding from such assumptions and going behind them to consciousness itself which it is impossible either to doubt or to prescind from. Further, we cannot, for example, profitably discuss the ontological status of values until we are quite clear what we are talking about, what value 'means'. And this is revealed by phenomenological analysis. Hence phenomenology is fundamental philosophy: it must precede and ground any ontological philosophy, any metaphysics.

As already hinted, Husserl's employment of the *epoche* bears a resemblance to Descartes' use of methodological doubt. And in point of fact Husserl saw in Descartes' philosophy a certain measure of anticipation of phenomenology. At the same time he insisted that the existence of a self in the sense of a spiritual substance or, as Descartes put it, a 'thinking thing' (*res cogitans*) must itself be bracketed. True, the ego cannot be simply eliminated. But the subject which is required as correlative to the object of consciousness is simply the pure or transcendental ego, the pure subject as such, not a spiritual substance or soul. The existence of such a substance is something about which we must suspend judgment, so far as pure phenomenology is concerned.

The methodological use of the *epoche* does not by itself commit Husserl to idealism. To say that the existence of consciousness is the only undeniable or indubitable existence is not necessarily to say that consciousness is the only existent. But in point of fact Husserl proceeds to make the transition to idealism by trying to deduce consciousness from the transcendental ego and by making the reality of the world relative to consciousness. Nothing can be conceived except as an object of consciousness. Hence the object must be constituted by consciousness.[1]

Already discernible in *Ideas*, this idealistic orientation of

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[1] Constituting an object can mean making it an object *for* consciousness. And this does not necessarily mean idealism. Or it can be taken to refer to a creative

Husserl's thought became more marked in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (*Formale und transzendentale Logik*, 1929) where logic and ontology tend to coincide, and in *Cartesian Meditations* (*Méditations cartésiennes*, 1931). It is understandable that this transition to idealism did not favour the acceptance by other phenomenologists of Husserl's original insistence on the *epoche.* Martin Heidegger, for example, decisively rejected the demand for the *epoche* and attempted to use the phenomenological method in the development of a non-idealistic philosophy of Being.

(iv) Phenomenological analysis is capable of fruitful application in a variety of fields. Alexander Pfänder (1870–1941) applied it in the field of psychology, Oskar Becker (b. 1889), a disciple of Husserl, in the philosophy of mathematics, Adolf Reinach (1883–1917) in the philosophy of law, Max Scheler (1874–1928) in the field of values, while others have applied it in the fields of aesthetics and the religious consciousness. But the use of the method does not necessarily mean that the user can be called a 'disciple' of Husserl. Scheler, for example, was an eminent philosopher in his own right. And phenomenological analysis has been practised by thinkers whose general philosophical position is markedly different from Husserl's. One has only to mention the French existentialists Jean-Paul Sartre (b. 1905) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (b. 1908) or indeed the contemporary Thomists.

It is not unreasonable to argue that this widespread use of phenomenological analysis not only constitutes an eloquent testimony to its value but also shows that it is a unifying factor. At the same time it is also arguable that the fact that Husserl's demand for the *epoche* has generally been disregarded or rejected and that phenomenology has been used within the frameworks of different philosophies rather than as a foundation for a philosophy to put an end to conflicting systems shows that it has not fulfilled Husserl's original hopes. Besides, the nature of what is called phenomenological analysis can itself be called in question. For example, though the relations between continental phenomenology and the conceptual or 'linguistic' analysis practised in England is one of the main themes which permit a fruitful dialogue between groups of philosophers who in other respects may find it difficult to understand one another, one of the principal issues in such a dialogue is precisely the nature of what is called phenomenological

activity by which things are given the only reality they possess, namely as related to consciousness, as consciousness-dependent. It is the transition to this second meaning which involves idealism.

analysis. Is it legitimate to speak of a phenomenological analysis of 'essences'? If so, in what precise sense? Is phenomenological analysis a specifically philosophical activity? Or does it fall apart into psychology on the one hand and so-called linguistic analysis on the other? We cannot discuss such questions here. But the fact that they can be raised suggests that Husserl was as over-optimistic as Descartes, Kant and Fichte before him in thinking that he had at last overcome the fragmentation of philosophy.

5. We have seen that at the turn of the century Neo-Kantianism was the dominant academic philosophy or *Schulphilosophie* in the German universities. And one obviously associates with this tradition a concern with the forms of thought and of the judgment rather than with objective categories of things. Yet it was a pupil of Cohen and Natorp at Marburg, namely Nicolai Hartmann (1882–1950), who expressed in his philosophy what we may call a return to things and developed an impressive realist ontology. And though it would be out of place to dwell here at any length on the ideas of a philosopher who belonged so definitely to the twentieth century, some general indication of his line of thought will serve to illustrate an important view of the nature and function of philosophy.

In his *Principles of a Metaphysics of Knowledge* (*Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, 1921) Nicolai Hartmann passed from Neo-Kantianism to a realist theory of knowledge, and in subsequent publications he developed an ontology which took the form of an analysis of the categories of different modes or levels of being. Thus in his *Ethics* (*Ethik*, 1926) he devoted himself to a phenomenological study of values, which possess ideal being, while in *The Problem of Spiritual Being* (*Das Problem des geistigen Seins*, 1933) he considered the life of the human spirit both in its personal form and in its objectification. *A Contribution to the Foundation of Ontology* (*Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie*, 1935), *Possibility and Actuality* (*Möglichkeit und Wirklichkeit*, 1938), *The Construction of the Real World. Outline of the General Doctrine of Categories* (*Der Aufbau der realen Welt. Grundriss der allgemeinen Kategorienlehre*, 1940) and *New Ways in Ontology* (*Neue Wege der Ontologie*, 1941) represent general ontology, while in *Philosophy of Nature* (*Philosophie der Natur*, 1950) special attention is paid to the categories of the inorganic and organic levels.[1]

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[1] We can also mention the posthumously-published works, *Teleological Thought* (*Teleologisches Denken*, 1951) and *Aesthetics* (*Aesthetik*, 1953), a study of beauty and aesthetic values.

In general, therefore, Hartmann's thought moves from a study of the universal structural principles or categories of being, such as unity and multiplicity, persistence and becoming or change, to regional ontologies, that is, to the analysis of the specific categories of inorganic being, organic being and so on. And to this extent he distinguishes between being-there (*Dasein*) and being-thus-or-thus (*Sosein*). But his ontology takes throughout the form of a phenomenological analysis of the categories exemplified in the beings given in experience. The idea of subsistent being, in the sense of the infinite act of existence, *ipsum esse subsistens*, is entirely foreign to his thought. And any metaphysics of transcendent being, in the sense in which God is transcendent, is excluded. Indeed, metaphysics for Hartmann deals with insoluble problems, whereas ontology in his sense is perfectly capable of attaining definite results.

Hartmann's ontology, therefore, is an overcoming of Neo-Kantianism inasmuch as it involves a study of the objective categories of real being. It is an overcoming of positivism inasmuch as it assigns to philosophy a definite field of its own, namely the different levels or types of being considered precisely as such. And though Hartmann employs the method of phenomenological analysis, he is not involved in that restriction to a subjective sphere to which an observance of Husserl's *epoche* would have condemned him. At the same time his ontology is a doctrine of categories, not a metaphysics of Being (*das Sein*) as grounding beings (*die Seienden*). In his view scientific philosophy has no place for an inquiry into Being which goes beyond a study of beings as beings. There is indeed the ideal being of values which are recognized in varying degrees by the human mind. But though these values possess ideal reality, they do not, as such, exist. And existent beings are those which form the world.

6. (i) The recall of philosophy to the thought of Being (*das Sein*) is principally represented in contemporary German thought by that enigmatic thinker, Martin Heidegger (b. 1889). According to Heidegger the whole of western philosophy has forgotten Being and immersed itself in the study of beings.[1] And the idea of Being has meant either an empty and indeterminate concept, obtained by thinking away all the determinate characteristics of beings, or the supreme being in the hierarchy of beings, namely God. Being as the Being of beings, as that which is veiled by beings and as that

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[1] Obviously, Nicolai Hartmann is included in this judgment.

which grounds the duality of subject and object that is presupposed by the study of beings, is passed over and forgotten: it remains hidden, veiled. Heidegger asks, therefore, what is the meaning of Being? For him this is not a grammatical question. It is to ask for an unveiling of the Being of beings.

The very fact that man can ask this question shows, for Heidegger, that he has a pre-reflective sense of Being. And in the first part of *Being and Time* (*Sein und Zeit*, 1927) Heidegger sets out to give a phenomenological-ontological analysis of man as the being who is able to raise the question and who is thus open to Being. What he calls fundamental ontology thus becomes an existential analysis of man as 'existence' (*Dasein*). But though Heidegger's aim is in this way to bring Being to show itself, as it were, he never really gets further than man. And inasmuch as man's finitude and temporality are brought clearly to light, the work not unnaturally tends to give the impression, even if incorrect, that Being is for the author essentially finite and temporal. The second part of *Being and Time* has never been published.

In Heidegger's later writings we hear a great deal about man's openness to Being and of the need for keeping it alive, but it can hardly be said that he has succeeded in unveiling Being. Nor indeed would he claim to have done so. In fact, though Heidegger proclaims that the world in general and philosophers in particular have forgotten Being, he seems unable to explain clearly what they have forgotten or why this forgetfulness should be as disastrous as he says it is.

(ii) Heidegger's pronouncements about Being, as distinct from his existential analysis of man, are so oracular that they cannot be said to amount to a science of Being. The idea of metaphysics as a science of Being is most clearly maintained by the modern Thomists, especially by those who employ what they call the transcendental method. Inspired by Kant and, more particularly (inasmuch as Kant is concerned only with the transcendental deduction of the forms of thought) by German idealists such as Fichte, the transcendental method contains two main phases. To establish metaphysics as a science it is necessary to work backwards, as it were, to a foundation which cannot itself be called in question; and this is the reductive phase or moment.[1] The other phase consists in the systematic deduction of metaphysics from the ultimate starting-point.

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[1] Some see the proper starting-point in an analysis of the judgment as an act of absolute affirmation. So, for example, J. B. Lotz in *Das Urteil und das Sein. Eine Grundlegung der Metaphysik* (Pullach bei München, 1957) and *Metaphysica operationis humanae methodo transcendentali explicata* (Rome, 1958). Others go

In effect the transcendental method is used by the philosophers in question to establish Thomist metaphysics on a secure foundation and deduce it systematically, not to produce a new system of metaphysics as far as content is concerned, still less to discover startling new truths about the world. Hence to the outsider at least it seems to be a question of putting the same old wine into a new bottle. At the same time it is obvious that the question of scientific method inevitably tends to loom large and to grow in importance in proportion as emphasis is placed, as with the Thomists under discussion, on the task of converting man's unreflective and implicit apprehension of Being into systematically-grounded explicit knowledge.

7. This admittedly sketchy outline of some currents in thought in German philosophy during the first half of the twentieth century does not afford much ground for saying that the divergencies of systems and tendencies has been at last overcome. At the same time it suggests that in order to justify its claim to be more than a mere handmaid of the sciences philosophy must be metaphysical. If we assume that the aspects of the world under which it is considered by the particular sciences are the only aspects under which it can properly be considered, philosophy, if it is to continue to exist at all, must concern itself either with the logic and methodology of the sciences or with the analysis of ordinary language. For it obviously cannot compete with the sciences on their own ground. To have a field of its own other than analysis of the language of the sciences or of ordinary language, it must consider beings simply as beings. But if it confines itself, as with Nicolai Hartmann, to an inquiry into the categories of the different levels of finite being as revealed in experience, the crucial question of the being or existence of beings is simply passed over. And unless this question is ruled out as meaningless, there can be no justification for this neglect. If, however, the question is once admitted as a genuine philosophical question, the problem of the Absolute comes once more into the foreground. And in the long run Schelling will be shown to be justified in claiming that no more important philosophical problem can be conceived than that of the relation of finite existence to the unconditioned Absolute.

behind the judgment to the *question*, what is the ultimate foundation of all knowledge and judgment? So E. Coreth in *Metaphysik. Eine methodisch-systematische Grundlegung* (Innsbruck, Vienna and Munich, 1961).

This reference to Schelling is not equivalent to a demand for a return to German idealism. What I have in mind is this. Man is spirit-in-the-world. He is in the world not only as locally present in it but also as, by nature, involved in it. He finds himself in the world as dependent on other things for his life, for the satisfaction of his needs, for the material of his knowledge, for his activity. At the same time, by the very fact that he conceives himself as a being in the world he stands out from the world: he is not, as it were, totally immersed in the world-process. He is an historical being, but in the sense that he can objectify history he is a supra-historical being. It is not, of course, possible to make a complete separation between these two aspects of man. He is a being in the world, a 'worldly' being, as standing out from the world; and he stands out from the world as a being in the world. Considered as spirit, as standing out from the world, he is able, and indeed impelled, to raise metaphysical problems, to seek a unity behind or underlying the subject-object situation. Considered as a being involved in the world, he is naturally inclined to regard these problems as empty and profitless. In the development of philosophical thought these divergent attitudes or tendencies recur, assuming different historical, and historically explicable, forms. Thus German idealism was one historically-conditioned form assumed by the metaphysical tendency or drive. Inductive metaphysics was another. And we can see the same fundamental tendency reasserting itself in different ways in the philosophies of Jaspers and Heidegger.

On the plane of philosophy each tendency or attitude seeks to justify itself theoretically. But the dialectic continues. I do not mean to imply that there is no means of discriminating between the proffered justifications. For example, inasmuch as man can objectify himself and treat himself as an object of scientific investigation, he is inclined to regard talk about his standing out from the world or as having a spiritual aspect as so much nonsense. Yet the mere fact that it is he who objectifies himself shows, as Fichte well saw, that he cannot be completely objectified, and that a phenomenalistic reduction of the self is uncritical and naïve. And once reflective thought understands this, metaphysics begins to reassert itself. Yet the pull of the 'worldly' aspect of man also reasserts itself, and insights once gained are lost sight of, only to be regained once more.

Obviously, reference to two tendencies or attitudes based on the dual nature of man would be a gross over-simplification if it were taken to be a sufficient key to the history of philosophy. For in explaining the actual development of philosophy very many factors have to be taken into account. Yet even if there is no simple repetition in history, it is only to be expected that persistent tendencies should constantly tend to recur in varying historical shapes. For, as Dilthey remarked, he who understands history also made history. The dialectic of philosophy reflects the complex nature of man.

The conclusion may appear to be pessimistic, namely that there is no very good reason to suppose that we shall ever reach universal and lasting agreement even about the scope of philosophy. But if fundamental disagreements spring from the very nature of man himself, we can hardly expect anything else but a dialectical movement, a recurrence of certain fundamental tendencies and attitudes in different historical shapes. This is what we have had hitherto, in spite of well-intentioned efforts to bring the process to a close. And it can hardly be called undue pessimism if one expects the continuation of the process in the future.

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Schutz, W. *Schleiermacher und der Protestantismus.* Hamburg, 1957.

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Chapters IX–XI: Hegel

Texts

Werke, Jubiläumsausgabe, edited by H. G. Glockner. 26 vols. Stuttgart, 1927–39. The first 20 vols., containing Hegel's writings, are a reprint of the 1832–87 edition (19 vols.). Vols. 21–2 contain Glockner's *Hegel* and Vols. 23–6 his *Hegel-Lexikon.*

Sämmtliche Werke, kritische Ausgabe, edited by G. Lasson and J. Hoffmeister. This critical edition, originally published at Leipzig (F. Meiner), was begun by G. Lasson (1862–1932) in 1905. On Lasson's death it was continued by J. Hoffmeister, and from 1949 it was published at Hamburg (F. Meiner). It was planned to contain 24 (later 26 and then 27) vols. Some of the vols. went through several editions. For example, a third edition of Vol. 2 (*Die Phänomenologie des Geistes*) appeared in 1929 and a third edition of Vol. 6 (*Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*) in 1930. The total work remains unfinished.

Sämmtliche Werke, neue kritische Ausgabe, edited by J. Hoffmeister. This edition, planned to contain 32 vols., is published at Hamburg (F. Meiner) and is designed both to complete and to supersede the Lasson-Hoffmeister edition, now known as the *Erste kritische Ausgabe.* The situation is somewhat complicated as some of the volumes of the Lasson-Hoffmeister edition are being taken over by the new critical edition. For instance, the first part of Hoffmeister's edition of Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie,* which was published in 1940 as Vol. 15*a* in the *Kritische Ausgabe,* becomes Vol. 20 in the *Neue kritische Ausgabe.* Again, the first volume of Hoffmeister's edition of letters written by and to Hegel (1952) bore the title *Kritische Ausgabe* and mention was made of Lasson as the original editor, whereas the second volume (1953) bore the title *Neue kritische Ausgabe* and no mention was made of Lasson. (The *Briefe von und an Hegel* form Vols. 27–30 in the new critical edition.)

Hegels theologische Jugendschriften, edited by H. Nohl. Tübingen, 1907.

Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung, edited by J. Hoffmeister. Stuttgart, 1936.

G. W. F. Hegel: Early Theological Writings, translated by T. M. Knox with an introduction by R. Kroner. Chicago, 1948.

The Phenomenology of Mind, translated by J. Baillie. London, 1931 (2nd edition).

Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, translated and annotated by G. E. Mueller New York, 1959.

Science of Logic, translated by W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers. 2 vols. London, 1929. (This is the so-called 'Greater Logic' of Hegel.)

The Logic of Hegel, translated from the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, translated by W. Wallace. Oxford, 1892 (2nd edition). (This is the so-called 'Lesser Logic'.)

Hegel's Philosophy of Mind, translated from the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, translated by W. Wallace. Oxford, 1894.

The Philosophy of Right, translated and annotated by T. M. Knox. Oxford, 1942.

Philosophy of History, translated by J. Sibree. London, 1861.

The Philosophy of Fine Art, translated by F. P. B. Osmaston. 4 vols. London, 1920.

Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, together with a Work on the Proofs of the Existence of God, translated by E. B. Speirs and J. B. Sanderson. 3 vols. London, 1895 (reprint 1962).

Lectures on the History of Philosophy, translated by E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simpson. 3 vols. London, 1892–6.

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Asveld, P. *La pensée religieuse du jeune Hegel. Liberté et aliénation*. Louvain, 1953.

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Findlay, J. N. *Hegel. A Re-Examination*. London, 1958. (A sympathetic and systematic account of Hegel's philosophy, in which the metaphysical aspect is minimized.)

Fischer, K. *Hegels Leben, Werke und Lehre*. 2 vols. Heidelberg, 1911 (2nd edition).

Foster, M. B. *The Political Philosophies of Plato and Hegel*. Oxford, 1935.

Glockner, H. *Hegel*. 2 vols. Stuttgart. (Vols. 21 and 22 in Glockner's edition of Hegel's *Works* mentioned above.)

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Haym, R. *Hegel und seine Zeit*. Leipzig, 1927 (2nd edition).

Heimann, B. *System und Methode in Hegels Philosophie*. Leipzig, 1927.

Hoffmeister, J. *Hölderlin und Hegel*. Tübingen, 1931.

Goethe und der deutsche Idealismus. Eine Einführung zu Hegels Realphilosophie. Leipzig, 1932.

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Steinbüchel, T. *Das Grundproblem der Hegelschen Philosophie.* Vol. 1. Bonn, 1933. (The author, a Catholic priest, died before the completion of the work.)

Stirling, J. H. *The Secret of Hegel.* London, 1865.

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Chapters XIII–XIV: Schopenhauer

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Sämmtliche Werke, edited by P. Deussen and A. Hübscher. 16 vols. Munich, 1911–42.

On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason, and On the Will in Nature, translated by K. Hillebrand. London, 1907 (revised edition).

The World as Will and Idea, translated by R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp. 3 vols. London, 1906 (5th edition).

The Basis of Morality, translated by A. B. Bullock. London, 1903.

Selected Essays, translated by E. B. Bax. London, 1891.

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Wallace, W. *Schopenhauer.* London, 1891.

Whittaker, T. *Schopenhauer.* London, 1909.

Zimmern, H. *Schopenhauer: His Life and Philosophy.* London, 1932 (revised edition). (A short introduction.)

Zint, H. *Schopenhauer als Erlebnis.* Munich and Basel, 1954.

Chapter XV: Feuerbach

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Sämmtliche Werke, edited by L. Feuerbach (the philosopher himself). 10 vols. Leipzig, 1846–66.

Sämmtliche Werke, edited by W. Bolin and F. Jodl. 10 vols. Stuttgart, 1903–11.

The Essence of Christianity, translated by G. Eliot. New York, 1957. (London, 1881, 2nd edition, with translator's name given as M. Evans.)

Studies

Arvon, H. *Ludwig Feuerbach ou la transformation du sacré.* Paris, 1957.

Bolin, W. *Ludwig Feuerbach, sein Wirken und seine Zeitgenossen.* Stuttgart, 1891.

Chamberlin, W. B. *Heaven Wasn't His Destination: The Philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach.* London, 1941.

Engels, F. *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*. (Contained in *Karl Marx, Selected Works*, edited by C. P. Dutt. See under Marx and Engels.)

Grégoire, F. *Aux Sources de la pensée de Marx, Hegel, Feuerbach*. Louvain, 1947.

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Chapter XVI: Marx and Engels

Texts

Marx-Engels, Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe: Werke, Schriften, Briefe, edited by D. Ryazanov (from 1931 by V. Adoratsky). Moscow and Berlin. This critical edition, planned to contain some 42 vols., was undertaken by the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow. It remains, however, sadly incomplete. Between 1926 and 1935 there appeared 7 vols. of the writings of Marx and Engels, with a special volume to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of Engels' death. And between 1929 and 1931 there appeared 4 vols. of correspondence between Marx and Engels.

Karl Marx–Friedrich Engels, Werke. 5 vols. Berlin, 1957–9. This edition, based on the one mentioned above, covers the writings of Marx and Engels up to November 1848. It is published by the Dietz Verlag. And a large number of the works of Marx and Engels have been reissued in this publisher's Library of Marxism-Leninism (*Bücherei des Marximus-Leninismus*).

Gesammelte Schriften von Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels, 1852–1862, edited by D. Ryazanov. 2 vols. Stuttgart, 1920 (2nd edition). (Four volumes were contemplated.)

Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels und Friedrich Lassalle, 1841–1850, edited by F. Mehring. 4 vols. Berlin and Stuttgart, 1923 (4th edition).

Karl Marx. Die Frühschriften, edited by S. Landshut. Stuttgart, 1953.

Der Briefwechsel zwischen F. Engels und K. Marx, edited by A. Bebel and E. Bernstein. 4 vols. Stuttgart, 1913.

A number of the writings of Marx and Engels have been translated into English for the Foreign Languages Publishing House in Moscow and have been published in London (Lawrence and Wishart). For example: Marx's *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1956), Engels' *Anti-Dühring* (1959, 2nd edition) and *Dialectics of Nature* (1954), and *The Holy Family* (1957) by Marx and Engels.

Of older translations one can mention the following. Marx: *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (New York, 1904); *Selected Essays*, translated by H. J. Stenning (London and New York, 1926); *The Poverty of Philosophy* (New York, 1936). Engels: *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (Chicago, 1902); *Ludwig Feuerbach* (New York, 1934); *Herr Dühring's Revolution in Science*, i.e. *Anti-Dühring* (London, 1935). Marx and Engels: *The German Ideology* (London, 1938).

There are several English translations of *Capital*. For example: *Capital*, revised and amplified according to the 4th German edition by E. Untermann (New York, 1906), and the two-volume edition of *Capital* in the Everyman Library (London), introduced by G. D. H. Cole and translated from the 4th German edition by E. and C. Paul.

Of the English editions of *The Communist Manifesto* we can mention that by H. J. Laski: *Communist Manifesto: Socialist Landmark*, with an introduction (London, 1948).

Other Writings

Marx-Engels. Selected Correspondence. London, 1934.

Karl Marx. Selected Works, edited by C. P. Dutt. 2 vols. London and New York, 1936, and subsequent editions.

Karl Marx. Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy, edited by T. Bottomore and M. Rubel. London, 1956.

Three Essays by Karl Marx, translated by R. Stone. New York, 1947.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy, edited by L. S. Feuer. New York, 1959.

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Adams, H. P. *Karl Marx in His Earlier Writings.* London, 1940.

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Baas, E. *L'humanisme marxiste.* Paris, 1947.

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Bartoli, H. *La doctrine économique et sociale de Karl Marx*. Paris, 1950.

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Bekker, K. *Marx's philosophische Entwicklung, sein Verhältnis zu Hegel*. Zürich, 1940.

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Boudin, L. B. *Theoretical System of Karl Marx in the Light of Recent Criticism*. Chicago, 1907.

Bouquet, A. C. *Karl Marx and His Doctrine*. London and New York, 1950. (A small work published by the S.P.C.K.)

Calvez, J.-V. *La pensée de Karl Marx*. Paris, 1956. (An outstanding study of Marx's thought.)

Carr, H. *Karl Marx. A Study in Fanaticism*. London, 1934.

Cornu, A. *Karl Marx, sa vie et son œuvre*. Paris, 1934.

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Gentile, G. *La filosofia di Marx*. Milan, 1955 (new edition).

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Marx Engels und Lassalle als Philosophen. Stuttgart, 1920.

Wetter, G. A. *Dialectical Materialism* (based on 4th German edition). London, 1959. (This outstanding work is devoted mainly to the development of Marxism-Leninism in the Soviet Union. But the author treats first of Marx and Engels.)

Chapter XVII: Kierkegaard

Texts

Samlede Vaerker, edited by A. B. Drachmann, J. L. Herberg and H. O. Lange. 14 vols. Copenhagen, 1901–6. A critical Danish edition of Kierkegaard's *Complete Works* is being edited by N. Thulstrup. Copenhagen, 1951 ff. A German translation of this edition is being published concurrently at Cologne and Olten. (There are, of course, previous German editions of Kierkegaard's writings.)

Papirer (*Journals*), edited by P. A. Heiberg, V. Kuhr and E. Torsting. 20 vols. (11 vols. in 20 parts). Copenhagen, 1909–48.

Breve (*Letters*), edited by N. Thulstrup. 2 vols. Copenhagen, 1954.

There is a Danish *Anthology* of Kierkegaard's writings, *S. Kierkegaard's Vaerker i Udvalg*, edited by F. J. Billeskov-Jansen. 4 vols. Copenhagen, 1950 (2nd edition).

English translations, mainly by D. F. Swenson and W. Lowrie, of Kierkegaard's more important writings are published by the Oxford University Press and the Princeton University Press. Exclusive of the Journals (mentioned separately below) there are 12 vols. up to date, 1936–53. Further references to individual volumes are made in the footnotes to the chapter on Kierkegaard in this book.

Johannes Climacus, translated by T. H. Croxall. London, 1958.

Works of Love, translated by H. and E. Hong. London, 1962.

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Chapters XXI–XXII: Nietzsche

Texts

A complete critical edition of Nietzsche's writings and correspondence, *Nietzsches Werke und Briefe, historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, was begun at Munich in 1933 under the auspices of the Nietzsche-Archiv. Five volumes of the *Werke* (comprising the *juvenilia*) appeared between 1933 and 1940, and four volumes of the *Briefe* between 1938 and 1942. But the enterprise does not seem to be making much progress.

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VOLUME VIII

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PREFACE

In the preface to Volume VII of this *History of Philosophy* I said that I hoped to devote a further volume, the eighth, to some aspects of French and British thought in the nineteenth century. This hope has been only partially fulfilled. For the present volume contains no treatment of French philosophy but is devoted exclusively to some aspects of British and American thought. It covers rather familiar ground. But in a general history of Western philosophy this ground obviously ought to be covered.

As I have strayed over well into the twentieth century, some explanation may be needed of the fact that the philosophy of Bertrand Russell, who is happily still with us, has been accorded relatively extensive treatment, whereas the thought of Ludwig Wittgenstein, who died in 1951, has been relegated to the epilogue, apart from a few allusions in the chapter on Russell. After all, it may be pointed out, Russell was himself influenced to a certain extent by Wittgenstein, both in regard to the interpretation of the logical status of the propositions of logic and pure mathematics and in regard to logical atomism.

The explanation is simple enough. Russell's thought fits naturally into the context of the revolt against idealism; and though he has obviously exercised a powerful influence on the rise and development of the analytic movement in twentieth-century British thought, in some important respects he has maintained a traditional view of the function of philosophy. His lack of sympathy with Wittgenstein's later ideas and with certain aspects of recent 'Oxford philosophy' is notorious. Further, though he has emphasized the limitations of empiricism as a theory of knowledge, in some respects he can be regarded as prolonging the empiricist tradition into the twentieth century, even if he has enriched it with new techniques of logical analysis. Wittgenstein, however, frankly proposed a revolutionary concept of the nature, function and scope of philosophy. Certainly, there is a very considerable difference between the ideas of language expounded in the *Tractatus* and those expounded in *Philosophical Investigations*; but in both cases the concept of philosophy is far from being a traditional one. And as limitations of space excluded the possibility of according extensive treatment to the concentration on language which is associated with the name of Wittgenstein, I decided to confine my discussion of the subject to some brief remarks in an epilogue. This fact should not, however, be interpreted as implying a judgment of value in regard to the philosophy either of Russell or of Wittgenstein. I mean, the fact that I have devoted three chapters to Russell does not signify that in my opinion his thought is simply a hangover from the nineteenth century. Nor does the fact that I have relegated Wittgenstein to the epilogue, apart from some allusions in the chapters on Russell, mean that I fail to appreciate his originality and importance. Rather is it a matter of not being able to give equally extensive treatment to the ideas of both these philosophers.

A word of explanation may also be appropriate in regard to my treatment of Cardinal Newman. It will be obvious to any attentive reader that in distinguishing the currents of thought in the nineteenth century I have used traditional labels, 'empiricism', 'idealism' and so on, none of which can properly be applied to Newman. But to omit him altogether, because of the difficulty of classifying him, would have been absurd, especially when I have mentioned a considerable number of much less distinguished thinkers. I decided, therefore, to make a few remarks about some of his philosophical ideas in an appendix. I am well aware, of course, that this will not satisfy Newman enthusiasts; but a writer cannot undertake to satisfy everybody.

Volumes VII and VIII having been devoted respectively to German and British-American philosophy in the nineteenth century, the natural procedure would be to devote a further volume, the ninth, to aspects of French and other European philosophy during the same period. But I am inclined to postpone the writing of this volume and to turn my attention instead to the subject to which I referred in the preface to Volume VII, that is, to what may be called the philosophy of the history of philosophy or general reflection on the development of philosophical thought and on its implications. For I should like to undertake this task while there is a reasonable possibility of fulfilling it.

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The Library of Living Philosophers Inc., formerly published by The Tudor Publishing Co., N.Y., and now published by The Open Court Publishing Co., La Salle, Illinois: *The Philosophy of John Dewey* (1939 and 1951) and *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell* (1946), both edited by Paul Arthur Schilpp.

PART I

BRITISH EMPIRICISM

CHAPTER I

THE UTILITARIAN MOVEMENT (1)

Introductory remarks—The life and writings of Bentham—The principles of Benthamism, followed by some critical comments—The life and writings of James Mill—Altruism and the associationist psychology; Mill's polemic against Mackintosh—James Mill on the mind—Remarks on Benthamite economics.

1. THE philosophy of David Hume, which represented the culmination of classical British empiricism, called forth a lively reaction on the part of Thomas Reid and his successors.[1] Indeed, as far as the Universities were concerned, in the first decades of the nineteenth century the so-called Scottish School was the one living and vigorous movement of thought. Moreover, though in the meantime it had received some serious blows and had lost its first vigour, its place in the Universities was eventually taken by idealism rather than by empiricism.

It would, however, be a great mistake to suppose that empiricism was reduced to a moribund condition by Reid's attack on Hume, and that it remained in this position until it was given a fresh lease of life by J. S. Mill. Philosophy is not confined to the Universities. Hume himself never occupied an academic chair, though, admittedly, this was not due to lack of effort on his part. And empiricism continued its life, despite attack by Reid and his followers, though its leading representatives were not university professors or lecturers.

The first phase of nineteenth-century empiricism, which is known as the utilitarian movement, may be said to have originated with Bentham. But though we naturally tend to think of him as a philosopher of the early part of the nineteenth century, inasmuch as it was then that his influence made itself felt, he was born in 1748, twenty-eight years before the death of Hume. And some of his works were published in the last three decades of the eighteenth century. It is no matter of surprise, therefore, if we find that there is a conspicuous element of continuity between the empiricism of the eighteenth century and that of the nineteenth. For example, the method of reductive analysis, the reduction, that is to say, of the whole to its parts, of the complex to its primitive or simple elements, which had been practised by Hume, was continued by Bentham. This involved, as can be seen in the philosophy of James Mill, a phenomenalistic analysis of the self. And in the reconstruction of mental life out of its supposed simple elements use was made of the associationist psychology which had been developed in the eighteenth century by, for instance, David Hartley,[1] not to speak of Hume's employment of the principles of association of ideas. Again, in the first chapter of his *Fragment on Government* Bentham gave explicit expression to his indebtedness to Hume for the light which had fallen on his mind when he saw in the *Treatise of Human Nature* how Hume had demolished the fiction of a social contract or compact and had shown how all virtue is founded on utility. To be sure, Bentham was also influenced by the thought of the French Enlightenment, particularly by that of Helvétius.[2] But this does not alter the fact that in regard to both method and theory there was a notable element of continuity between the empiricist movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Great Britain.

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[1] See Vol. V of this *History*, pp. 364–94.

But once the element of continuity has been noted, attention must be drawn to the considerable difference in emphasis. As traditionally represented at any rate, classical British empiricism had been predominantly concerned with the nature, scope and limits of human knowledge, whereas the utilitarian movement was essentially practical in outlook, orientated towards legal, penal and political reform. It is true that emphasis on the role of the theory of knowledge in classical empiricism can be overdone. Hume, for example, was concerned with the development of a science of human nature. And it can be argued, and has indeed been argued, that he was primarily a moral philosopher.[3] But Hume's aim was chiefly to understand the moral life and the moral judgment, whereas Bentham was mainly concerned with providing the criterion for judging commonly received moral ideas and legal and political institutions with a view to their reformation. Perhaps we can apply Marx's famous assertion and say that Hume was primarily concerned with understanding the world, whereas Bentham was primarily concerned with changing it.

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[1] See Vol. V of this *History*, pp. 191–3.

[2] See Vol. VI of this *History*, pp. 35–8.

[3] Cf. Vol. V of this *History*, pp. 260–3, 318–19 and 342–3.

Of the two men Hume was, indeed, by far the greater philosopher. But Bentham had the gift of seizing on certain ideas which were not his own inventions, developing them and welding them into a weapon or instrument of social reform. Benthamism in a narrow sense, and utilitarianism in general, expressed the attitude of liberal and radical elements in the middle class to the weight of tradition and to the vested interests of what is now often called the Establishment. The excesses connected with the French Revolution produced in England a strong reaction which found notable expression in the reflections of Edmund Burke (1729–97), with their emphasis on social stability and tradition. But after the Napoleonic Wars at any rate the movement of radical reform was more easily able to make its influence felt. And in this movement utilitarianism possesses an undeniable historical importance. Considered as a moral philosophy, it is over-simplified and skates lightly over awkward and difficult questions. But its over-simplified character, together with an at least *prima facie* clarity, obviously facilitated its use as an instrument in the endeavour to secure practical reforms in the social and political fields.

During the nineteenth century social philosophy in Great Britain passed through several successive phases. First, there was the philosophical radicalism which is associated with the name of Bentham and which had been already expressed by him in the closing decades of the eighteenth century. Secondly, there was Benthamism as modified, added to and developed by J. S. Mill. And thirdly, there was the idealist political philosophy which arose in the last part of the nineteenth century. The term 'utilitarianism' covers the first two phases, but not, of course, the third. Utilitarianism was individualistic in outlook, even though it aimed at the welfare of society, whereas in idealist political theory the idea of the State as an organic totality came to the fore under the influence of both Greek and German thought.

This and the following chapters will be devoted to an account of the development of utilitarianism from Bentham to J. S. Mill inclusively. The latter's theories in the fields of logic, epistemology and ontology will be discussed separately in a subsequent chapter.

2. Jeremy Bentham was born on February 15th, 1748. A

precocious child, he was learning Latin grammar at the age of four. Educated at Westminster School and the University of Oxford, neither of which institutions captivated his heart, he was destined by his father for a career at the Bar. But he preferred the life of reflection to that of a practising lawyer. And in the law, the penal code and the political institutions of his time he found plenty to think about. To put the matter in simple terms, he asked questions on these lines. What is the purpose of this law or of this institution? Is this purpose desirable? If so, does the law or institution really conduce to its fulfilment? In fine, how is the law or institution to be judged from the point of view of utility?

In its application to legislation and to political institutions the measure of utility was for Bentham the degree of conduciveness to the greater happiness of the greatest possible number of human beings or members of society. Bentham himself remarks that the principle of utility, as so interpreted, occurred to him when he was reading the *Essay on Government* (1768) by Joseph Priestley (1733–1804) who stated roundly that the happiness of the majority of the members of any State was the standard by which all the affairs of the State should be judged. But Hutcheson, when treating of ethics, had previously asserted that that action is best which conduces to the greatest happiness of the greatest number.[1] Again, in the preface to his famous treatise on crimes and punishments (*Dei delitti e delle pene*, 1764), Cesare Beccaria (1738–94) had spoken of the greatest happiness divided among the greatest possible number. There were utilitarian elements in the philosophy of Hume, who declared, for example, that 'public utility is the sole origin of justice'.[2] And Helvétius, who, as already noted, strongly influenced Bentham, was a pioneer in utilitarian moral theory and in its application to the reform of society. In other words, Bentham did not invent the principle of utility: what he did was to expound and apply it explicitly and universally as the basic principle of both morals and legislation.

Bentham was at first principally interested in legal and penal reform. Radical changes in the British constitution did not enter into his original schemes. And at no time was he an enthusiast for democracy as such. That is to say, he had no more belief in the sacred right of the people to rule than he had in the theory of natural rights in general, which he considered to be nonsense. But whereas he seems to have thought at first that rulers and legislators were really seeking the common good, however muddled and mistaken they might be about the right means for attaining this end, in the course of time he became convinced that the ruling class was dominated by self-interest. Indifference and opposition to his plans for legal, penal and economic reform doubtless helped him to come to this conclusion. Hence he came to advocate political reform as a prerequisite for other changes. And eventually he proposed the abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords, the disestablishment of the Church of England, and the introduction of universal suffrage and annual parliaments. His political radicalism was facilitated by the fact that he had no veneration for tradition as such. He was far from sharing Burke's view of the British constitution; and his attitude had much more affinity with that of the French *philosophes*,[1] with their impatience with tradition and their belief that everything would be for the best if only reason could reign. But his appeal throughout was to the principle of utility, not to any belief that democracy possesses some peculiarly sacred character of its own.

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[1] See Vol. V of this *History*, p. 182.

[2] *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, 3, 1, 145.

Nor was Bentham primarily moved by humanitarian considerations. In the movement of social reform in Great Britain throughout the nineteenth century, humanitarianism, sometimes based on Christian beliefs and sometimes without any explicit reference to Christianity, undoubtedly played a very important role. But though, for example, in his campaign against the outrageously severe penal code of his time and against the disgraceful state of the prisons, Bentham often demanded changes which humanitarian sentiment would in fact suggest, he was primarily roused to indignation by what he considered, doubtless rightly, to be the irrationality of the penal system, its incapacity to achieve its purposes and to serve the common good. To say this is not, of course, to say that he was what would normally be called inhumane. It is to say that he was not primarily moved by compassion for the victims of the penal system, but rather by the 'inutility' of the system. He was a man of the reason or understanding rather than of the heart or of feeling.

In 1776 Bentham published anonymously his *Fragment on Government* in which he attacked the famous lawyer Sir William

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[1] Allusion to the influence of Helvétius's writings on Bentham's mind has already been made. We may add that he corresponded with d'Alembert.

Blackstone (1723–80) for his use of the fiction of a social compact or contract. The work had no immediate success, but in 1781 it brought Bentham the friendship of Lord Shelburne, afterwards Marquis of Lansdowne, who was Prime Minister from July 1782 to February 1783. And through Shelburne the philosopher met several other important people. He also formed a friendship with Étienne Dumont, tutor to Shelburne's son, who was to prove of invaluable help in publishing a number of his papers. Bentham not infrequently left manuscripts unfinished and went on to some other topic. And many of his writings were published through the agency of friends and disciples. Sometimes they first appeared in French. For example, a chapter of his *Manual of Political Economy*, written in 1793, appeared in the *Bibliothèque britannique* in 1798; and Dumont made use of the work in his *Théorie des peines et des récompenses* (1811). Bentham's work was published in English for the first time in John Bowring's edition of his *Works* (1838–43).

Bentham's *Defence of Usury* appeared in 1787 and his important *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* in 1789.[1] The *Introduction* was intended as a preparation and scheme for a number of further treatises. Thus Bentham's *Essay on Political Tactics* corresponded to one section in this scheme. But though a part of this essay was sent to the Abbé Morellet in 1789, the work was first published by Dumont in 1816,[2] together with *Anarchical Fallacies* which had been written in about 1791.

In 1791 Bentham published his scheme for a model prison, the so-called *Panopticon*. And he approached the French National Assembly with a view to the establishment of such an institution under its auspices, offering his gratuitous services as supervisor. But though Bentham was one of the foreigners on whom the Assembly conferred the title of citizen in the following year, his offer was not taken up.[3] Similar efforts to induce the British government to implement the scheme for a model prison promised at first to be successful. But they eventually failed, partly, so Bentham at any rate liked to believe, through the machinations of King George III. However, in 1813 Parliament voted the philosopher a large sum of money in compensation for his expenditure on the Panopticon scheme.

[1] This work had been printed in 1788.

[2] A partial English text appeared in 1791.

[3] Obviously, the prisoners whom Bentham had in mind were not at all of the type of those who later became victims of the Jacobin Terror. He turned to the new French Assembly in the hope that now at last the reign of unclouded reason was beginning, that philosophy was coming into its own.

In 1802 Dumont published a work entitled *Traités de législation de M. Jérémie Bentham.* This consisted partly of papers written by Bentham himself, some of which had been originally composed in French, and partly of a digest by Dumont of the philosopher's ideas. And the work contributed greatly to the rise of Bentham's fame. At first this was more evident abroad than in England. But in the course of time the philosopher's star began to rise even in his own country. From 1808 James Mill became his disciple and a propagator of his doctrines. And Bentham became what might be called the background leader or inspirer of a group of radicals devoted to the principles of Benthamism.

In 1812 James Mill published an *Introductory View of the Rationale of Evidence,* a version of some of Bentham's papers. A French version of the papers was published by Dumont in 1823 under the title *Traité des preuves judiciaires*; and an English translation of this work appeared in 1825. A five-volume edition of Bentham's papers on jurisprudence which was much fuller than James Mill's was published by J. S. Mill in 1827 under the title *Rationale of Judicial Evidence.*

Bentham also gave his attention both to questions of constitutional reform and to the subject of the codification of the law. Characteristically, he was impatient of what he regarded as the chaotic condition of English law. His *Catechism of Parliamentary Reform* appeared in 1817, though it had been written in 1809. The year 1817 also saw the publication of *Papers upon Codification and Public Instruction.* In 1819 Bentham published a paper entitled *Radical Reform Bill, with Explanations,* and in 1823 *Leading Principles of a Constitutional Code.* The first volume of his *Constitutional Code,* together with the first chapter of the second volume, appeared in 1830. The whole work, edited by R. Doane, was published posthumously in 1841.

It is not possible to list all Bentham's publications here. But we can mention two or three further titles. *Chrestomathia,* a series of papers on education, appeared in 1816, while in the following year James Mill published his edition of Bentham's *Table of the Springs of Action*[1] which is concerned with the analysis of pains and pleasures as springs of action. The philosopher's *Deontology or Science of Morality* was published posthumously by Bowring in 1834 in two volumes, the second volume being compiled from notes. Reference has already been made to Bowring's edition of

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[1] The work had been written at a considerably earlier period.

Bentham's *Works*.[1] A complete and critical edition of the philosopher's writings is yet to come.

Bentham died on June 6th, 1832, leaving directions that his body should be dissected for the benefit of science. It is preserved at University College, London. This College was founded in 1828, largely as a result of pressure from a group of which Bentham himself was a member. It was designed to extend the benefits of higher education to those for whom the two existing universities did not cater. Further, there were to be no religious tests, as there still were at Oxford and Cambridge.

3. Benthamism rested on a basis of psychological hedonism, the theory that every human being seeks by nature to attain pleasure and avoid pain. This was not, of course, a novel doctrine. It had been propounded in the ancient world, notably by Epicurus, while in the eighteenth century it was defended by, for example, Helvétius in France and Hartley and Tucker in England.[2] But though Bentham was not the inventor of the theory, he gave a memorable statement of it. 'Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure*. . . . They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think: every effort we can make to throw off our subjection will serve but to demonstrate and confirm it. In words a man may pretend to abjure their empire, but in reality he will remain subject to it all the while.'[3]

Further, Bentham is at pains to make clear what he means by pleasure and pain. He has no intention of restricting the range of meaning of these terms by arbitrary or 'metaphysical' definitions. He means by them what they mean in common estimation, in common language, no more and no less. 'In this matter we want no refinement, no metaphysics. It is not necessary to consult Plato, nor Aristotle. *Pain* and *pleasure* are what everybody feels to be such.'[4] The term 'pleasure' covers, for example, the pleasures of eating and drinking; but it also covers those of reading an interesting book, listening to music or performing a kind action.

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[1] In the *Works* Bowring included a number of fragments, some of which are of philosophical interest. Thus in the fragment entitled *Ontology* Bentham distinguishes between real entities and fictitious entities. The latter, which are not to be compared with fabulous entities, the products of the free play of the imagination, are creations of the exigencies of language. For example, we require to be able to speak of relations, using the noun 'relation'. But though things can be related, there are no separate entities called 'relations'. If such entities are postulated through the influence of language, they are 'fictitious'.

[2] For Tucker see Vol. V of this *History*, pp. 193–4.

[3] *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, ch. 1, sect. 1. This work will be referred to in future as *Introduction*.

[4] *Theory of Legislation*, translated from the French of Étienne Dumont by R. Hildreth, p. 3 (London, 1896).

But Bentham is not concerned simply with stating what he takes to be a psychological truth, namely that all men are moved to action by the attraction of pleasure and the repulsion of pain. He is concerned with establishing an objective criterion of morality, of the moral character of human actions. Thus after the sentence quoted above, in which Bentham says that Nature has placed mankind under the government of pain and pleasure, he adds that 'it is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne.'[1] If, therefore, we assume that pleasure, happiness and good are synonymous terms and that pain, unhappiness and evil are also synonymous, the question immediately arises whether it makes any sense to say that we ought to pursue what is good and avoid what is evil, if, as a matter of psychological fact, we always do pursue the one and endeavour to avoid the other.

To be able to answer this question affirmatively, we have to make two assumptions. First, when it is said that man seeks pleasure, it is meant that he seeks his greater pleasure or the greatest possible amount of it. Secondly, man does not necessarily perform those actions which will as a matter of fact conduce to this end.[2] If we make these assumptions and pass over the difficulties inherent in any hedonistic ethics, we can then say that right actions are those which tend to increase the sum total of pleasure while wrong actions are those which tend to diminish it, and that we ought to do what is right and not do what is wrong.[3]

We thus arrive at the principle of utility, also called the greatest happiness principle. This 'states the greatest happiness of all those whose interest is in question, as being the right and proper, and only right and proper and universally desirable, end of human action'.[1] The parties whose interest is in question may, of course, differ. If we are thinking of the individual agent as such, it is his greatest happiness which is referred to. If we are thinking of the community, it is the greater happiness of the greatest possible number of the members of the community which is being referred to. If we are thinking of all sentient beings, then we must also consider the greater pleasure of animals. Bentham is chiefly concerned with the greater happiness of the human community, with the common good or welfare in the sense of the common good of any given human political society. But in all cases the principle is the same, namely that the greatest happiness of the party in question is the only desirable end of human action.

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[1] *Introduction*, ch. I, sect. I.

[2] For example, under the attraction of an immediate pleasure a man might neglect the fact that the course of action which causes this pleasure leads to a sum total of pain which outweighs the pleasure.

[3] Strictly speaking, an action which tends to add to the sum total of pleasure is for Bentham a 'right' action, in the sense of an action which we ought to perform, or at any rate not an action which we are obliged not to perform, that is, a 'wrong' action. It may not always be the case that an addition to the sum of pleasure cannot exist otherwise than through my action here and now. Hence I may not be obliged to act, though, if I do, the action will certainly not be wrong.

If we mean by proof deduction from some more ultimate principle or principles, the principle of utility cannot be proved. For there is no more ultimate ethical principle. At the same time Bentham tries to show that any other theory of morals involves in the long run an at least tacit appeal to the principle of utility. Whatever may be the reasons for which people act or think that they act, if we once raise the question why we *ought* to perform a certain action, we shall ultimately have to answer in terms of the principle of utility. The alternative moral theories which Bentham has in mind are principally intuitionist theories or theories which appeal to a moral sense. In his opinion such theories, taken by themselves, are incapable of answering the question why we ought to perform this action and not that. If the upholders of such theories once try to answer the question, they will ultimately have to argue that the action which ought to be performed is one which conduces to the greater happiness or pleasure of whatever party it is whose interest is in question. In other words, it is utilitarianism alone which can provide an objective criterion of right and wrong.[2] And to show that this is the case, is to give the only proof of the principle of utility which is required.

In passing we can note that though hedonism represented only one element in Locke's ethical theory,[3] he explicitly stated that

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[1] *Introduction*, ch. 1, sect. 1, note 1.

[2] Bentham insists that the rightness or wrongness of actions depends on an objective criterion and not simply on the motive with which they are performed. 'Motive' and 'intention' are often confused, though they ought, Bentham maintains, to be carefully distinguished. If 'motive' is understood as a tendency to action when a pleasure, or the cause of a pleasure, is contemplated as the consequent of one's action, it makes no sense to speak of a bad motive. But in any case the criterion of right and wrong is primarily an objective criterion, not a subjective one.

[3] See Vol. V of this *History*, pp. 123-7.

'things then are good or evil only in reference to pleasure or pain. That we call good which is apt to cause or increase pleasure or diminish pain in us. . . . And on the contrary we name that evil which is apt to increase any pain or diminish any pleasure in us. . . .'[1] The property which is here called 'good' by Locke is described by Bentham as 'utility'. For 'utility is any property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good or happiness, or . . . to prevent the happening of mischief, pain, evil or unhappiness to the party whose interest is considered.'[2]

Now, if actions are right in so far as they tend to increase the sum total of pleasure or diminish the sum total of pain of the party whose interest is in question, as Bentham puts it, the moral agent, when deciding whether a given action is right or wrong, will have to estimate the amount of pleasure and the amount of pain to which the action seems likely to give rise, and to weigh the one against the other. And Bentham provides a hedonistic or 'felicific' calculus for this purpose.[3] Let us suppose that I wish to estimate the value of a pleasure (or pain) for myself. I have to take into account four factors or dimensions of value: intensity, duration, certainty or uncertainty, propinquity or remoteness. For example, one pleasure might be very intense but of short duration, while another might be less intense but so much more lasting that it would be quantitatively greater than the first. Further, when considering actions which tend to produce pleasure or pain, I have to bear in mind two other factors, fecundity and purity. If of two types of action, each of which tends to produce pleasurable sensations, the one type tends to be followed by further pleasurable sensations while the other type does not or only in a lesser degree, the first is said to be more fecund or fruitful than the second. As for purity, this signifies freedom from being followed by sensations of the opposite kind. For instance, the cultivation of an appreciation of music opens up a range of enduring pleasure which does not yield those diminishing returns that result from the action of taking certain habit-forming drugs.

So far Bentham's calculus follows the same lines as that of Epicurus. But Bentham is chiefly concerned, in the application of his ethical theory, with the common good. And he adds that when a number of persons or community is the party whose interest is in question, we have to take into account a seventh factor in addition to the six just mentioned. This seventh factor is extent, that is, the number of persons who are affected by the pleasure or pain in question.

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[1] *Essay*, Bk. 2, ch. 20, sect. 2.

[2] *Introduction*, ch. 1, sect. 3.

[3] *Ibid.*, ch. 4.

It has sometimes been said that Bentham's calculus is useless but that one could quite well discard it while retaining his general moral theory. But it seems to the present writer that some distinctions are required. If one chose to look on this theory as no more than an analysis of the meaning of certain ethical terms, it would doubtless be possible to maintain that the analysis is correct and at the same time to disregard the hedonistic calculus. But if one looks on Bentham's moral theory as he himself looked on it, that is, not simply as an analysis but also as a guide for action, the case is somewhat different. We could indeed maintain, and rightly, that no exact mathematical calculation of pains and pleasures can be made. It is fairly obvious, for example, that in many cases a man cannot make a precise mathematical calculation of the respective quantities of pleasure which would probably result from alternative courses of action. And if it is the community whose interest is in question, how are we going to calculate the probable sum total of pleasure when it is a notorious fact that in many cases what is pleasurable to one is not pleasurable to another? At the same time, if we admit, as Bentham admitted, only quantitative differences between pleasures, and if we regard hedonistic ethics as providing a practical rule for conduct, some sort of calculation will be required, even if it cannot be precise. And in point of fact people do make such rough calculations on occasion. Thus a man may very well ask himself whether it is really worth while pursuing a certain course of pleasurable action which will probably involve certain painful consequences. And if he does seriously consider this question, he is making use of one of the rules of Bentham's calculus. What relation this sort of reasoning bears to morality is another question. And it is irrelevant in the present context. For the hypothesis is that Bentham's general moral doctrine is accepted.

Now, the sphere of human action is obviously very much wider than legislation and acts of government. And in some cases it is the individual agent as such whose interest is in question. Hence I can have duties to myself. But if the sphere of morality is coterminous with the sphere of human action, legislation and acts of government fall within the moral sphere. Hence the principle of utility must apply to them. But here the party whose interest is in question is the community. Although, therefore, as Bentham says, there are many actions which are as a matter of fact useful to the community but the regulation of which by law would not be in the public interest, legislation ought to serve this interest. It ought to be directed to the common welfare or happiness. Hence an act of legislation or of government is said to conform with or be dictated by the principle of utility when 'the tendency which it has to augment the happiness of the community is greater than any which it has to diminish it'.[1]

The community, however, is 'a fictitious *body*, composed of the individual persons who are considered as constituting as it were its members'.[2] And the interest of the community is 'the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it'.[3] To say, therefore, that legislation and government should be directed to the common good is to say that they should be directed to the greater happiness of the greatest possible number of individuals who are members of the society in question.

Obviously, if we assume that the common interest is simply the sum total of the private interests of the individual members of the community, we might draw the conclusion that the common good is inevitably promoted if every individual seeks and increases his own personal happiness. But there is no guarantee that individuals will seek their own happiness in a rational or enlightened manner, and in such a way that they do not diminish the happiness of other individuals, thus diminishing the sum total of happiness in the community. And in point of fact it is clear that clashes of interest do occur. Hence a harmonization of interests is required with a view to the attainment of the common good. And this is the function of government and legislation.[4]

It is sometimes said that any such harmonization of interests presupposes the possibility of working altruistically for the common good, and that Bentham thus makes an abrupt and unwarranted transition from the egoistic or selfish pleasure-seeker to the public-spirited altruist. But some distinctions are required. In the first place Bentham does not assume that all men are by nature necessarily egoistic or selfish in the sense in which these terms would generally be understood. For he recognizes social affections as well as their contrary. Thus in his table of pleasures he includes among the so-called simple pleasures those of benevolence, which are described as 'the pleasures resulting from the view of any pleasures supposed to be possessed by the beings who may be the objects of benevolence; to wit the sensitive beings we are acquainted with'.[1] In the second place, though Benthamism doubtless assumes that the man who takes pleasure in witnessing the pleasure of another does so originally because it is pleasurable to himself, it invokes the principles of the associationist psychology to explain how a man can come to seek the good of others without any advertence to his own.[2]

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[1] *Introduction*, ch. 1, sect. 7.

[2] *Ibid.*, ch. 1, sect. 4. For Bentham's use of the word 'fictitious' see Note 1 on p. 15.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Bentham and his followers were indeed convinced that in the sphere of the economic market the removal of legal restrictions and the introduction of free trade and competition would, in the long run at any rate, inevitably make for the greater happiness of the community. But further reference to Benthamite economics will be made in the last section of this chapter.

At the same time there is obviously no guarantee that those whose task it is to harmonize private interests will be notably endowed with benevolence, or that they will in fact have learned to seek the common good in a disinterested spirit. Indeed, it did not take Bentham long to come to the conclusion that rulers are very far from constituting exceptions to the general run of men, who, left to themselves, pursue their own interests, even if many of them are perfectly capable of being pleased by the pleasure of others. And it was this conclusion which was largely responsible for his adoption of democratic ideas. A despot or absolute monarch generally seeks his own interest, and so does a ruling aristocracy. The only way, therefore, of securing that the greater happiness of the greatest possible number is taken as the criterion in government and legislation is to place government, so far as this is practicable, in the hands of all. Hence Bentham's proposals for abolishing the monarchy[3] and the House of Lords and for introducing universal suffrage and annual parliaments. As the common interest is simply the sum total of private interests, everyone has a stake, so to speak, in the common good. And education can help the individual to understand that in acting for the common good he is also acting for his own good.

To avoid misunderstanding, it must be added that the harmonization of interests by law which Bentham demanded was primarily a removal of hindrances to the increase of the happiness of the greatest possible number of citizens rather than what would generally be thought of as positive interference with the freedom of the individual. This is one reason why he gave so much attention to the subject of penology, the infliction of penal sanctions for diminishing the general happiness or good by infringing laws which are or at any rate ought to be passed with a view to preventing actions which are incompatible with the happiness of the members of society in general. In Bentham's opinion the primary purpose of punishment is to deter, not to reform. Reformation of offenders is only a subsidiary purpose.

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[1] *Introduction*, ch. 5, sect. 10. 'Sensitive beings' includes animals.

[2] This theme will be treated in connection with James Mill.

[3] In Bentham's time the British monarch was able to exercise considerably more effective influence in political life than is possible today.

Bentham's remarks on concrete issues are often sensible enough. His general attitude to penal sanctions is a case in point. As already remarked, the primary purpose of punishment is to deter. But punishment involves the infliction of pain, of a diminution of pleasure in some way or other. And as all pain is evil, it follows that 'all punishment in itself is evil'.[1] And the conclusion to be drawn is that the legislator ought not to attach to the infringement of the law a penal sanction which exceeds what is strictly required to obtain the desired effect. True, it might be argued that if the primary aim of punishment is to deter, the most ferocious penalties will be the most efficacious. But if punishment is in itself an evil, even though in the concrete circumstances of human life in society a necessary evil, the relevant question is, what is the least amount of punishment which will have a deterrent effect? Besides, the legislator has to take into account public opinion, though this is indeed a variable factor. For the more people come to consider a given penal sanction to be grossly excessive or inappropriate, the more they tend to withhold their co-operation in the execution of the law.[2] And in this case the supposedly deterrent effect of the punishment is diminished. Again, it has a bad educative effect and is not for the public good if some heavy penalty, such as the death penalty, is inflicted for a variety of offences which differ very much in gravity, that is, in the amount of harm which they do to others or to the community at large. As for the subsidiary aim of punishment, namely to contribute to the reformation of offenders, how can this aim be fulfilled when the prisons are notoriously hotbeds of vice?

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[1] *Introduction*, ch. 13, sect. 2.

[2] It was certainly not unknown at the time for juries to refuse to convict even when they were well aware that the accused was guilty. Further, the death sentence, when passed for what would now be considered comparatively minor offences and even on children, was frequently commuted. In other words, there was a growing discrepancy between the actual state of the law and educated opinion as to what it should be.

It is possible, of course, to hold a different view about the primary purpose of punishment. But it would require a considerable degree of eccentricity for a man of today to disagree with Bentham's conclusion that the penal system of his time stood in need of reform. And even if we do hold a somewhat different view about the function of punishment, we can none the less recognize that his arguments in favour of reform are, generally speaking, intelligible and persuasive.

But when we turn from such discussions about the need for reform to Bentham's general philosophy, the situation is somewhat different. For example, J. S. Mill objected that Bentham's idea of human nature betrayed a narrowness of vision. And inasmuch as Bentham tends to reduce man to a system of attractions and repulsions in response to pleasures and pains, together with an ability to make a quasi-mathematical computation of the pluses of pleasures and the minuses of pains, many would find themselves in full agreement with Mill on this point.

At the same time J. S. Mill awards high marks to Bentham for employing a scientific method in morals and politics. This consists above all in 'the method of detail; of treating wholes by separating them into their parts, abstractions by resolving them into things—classes and generalities by distinguishing them into the individuals of which they are made up; and breaking every question into pieces before attempting to solve it'.[1] In other words, Mill commends Bentham for his thoroughgoing use of reductive analysis and for this reason regards him as a reformer in philosophy.

In regard to the question of fact Mill is, of course, quite right. We have seen, for example, how Bentham applied a kind of quantitative analysis in ethics. And he applied it because he thought that it was the only proper scientific method. It was the only method which would enable us to give clear meanings to terms such as 'right' and 'wrong'. Again, for Bentham terms such as 'community' and 'common interest' were abstractions which stood in need of analysis if they were to be given a cash-value. To imagine that they signified peculiar entities over and above the elements into which they could be analysed was to be misled by language into postulating fictitious entities.

But though there can obviously be no valid *a priori* objection to experimenting with the method of reductive analysis, it is also clear that Bentham skates lightly over difficulties and treats that which is complicated as though it were simple. For example, it is admittedly difficult to give a clear explanation of what the common good is, if it is not reducible to the private goods of the individual members of the community. But it is also difficult to suppose that a true statement about the common good is always reducible to true statements about the private goods of individuals. We cannot legitimately take it for granted that such a reduction or translation is possible. Its possibility ought to be established by providing actual examples. As the Scholastics say, *ab esse ad posse valet illatio*. But Bentham tends to take the possibility for granted and to conclude without more ado that those who think otherwise have fallen victims to what Wittgenstein was later to call the bewitchment of language. In other words, even if Bentham was right in his application of reductive analysis, he did not pay anything like sufficient attention to what can be said on the other side. Indeed, Mill draws attention to 'Bentham's contempt of all other schools of thinkers'.[1]

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[1] *Dissertations and Discussions*, I, pp. 339–40 (2nd edition, 1867).

According to Mill, Bentham 'was not a great philosopher, but he was a great reformer in philosophy'.[2] And if we are devotees of reductive analysis, we shall probably agree with this statement. Otherwise we may be inclined to omit the last two words. Bentham's habit of over-simplifying and of skating over difficulties, together with that peculiar narrowness of moral vision to which Mill aptly alludes, disqualifies him from being called a great philosopher. But his place in the movement of social reform is assured. His premisses are often questionable but he is certainly skilled in drawing from them conclusions which are frequently sensible and enlightened. And, as has already been remarked, the over-simplified nature of his moral philosophy facilitated its use as a practical instrument or weapon.

4. James Mill, Bentham's leading disciple, was born on April 6th, 1773, in Forfarshire. His father was a village shoemaker. After schooling at the Montrose Academy Mill entered the University of Edinburgh in 1790, where he attended the lectures of Dugald Stewart.[3] In 1798 he was licensed to preach; but he never received a call from any Presbyterian parish, and in 1802 he went to London with the hope of earning a living by writing and editorship. In 1805 he married. At the end of the following year he began work on his history of British India which appeared in three

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[1] *Ibid.*, 1, p. 353.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1, p. 339.

[3] See Vol. V of this *History*, pp. 375–83.

volumes in 1817. In 1819 this brought him a post in the East India Company, and subsequent advancement, with increases in salary, set him free at last from financial worries.

In 1808 Mill met Bentham and became a fervent disciple. By this time the would-be Presbyterian minister had become an agnostic. For some years he wrote for the *Edinburgh Review*, but he was too much of a radical to win the real confidence of the editors. In 1816–23 he wrote for the *Supplement* to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* series of political articles which set forth the views of the utilitarian circle.[1] In 1821 he published his *Elements of Political Economy* and in 1829 his *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*. Between these two dates he contributed for a time to the *Westminster Review*, which was founded in 1824 as an organ of the radicals.

James Mill died on June 23rd, 1836, a champion of Benthamism to the last. He was not perhaps a particularly attractive figure. A man of vigorous though somewhat narrow intellect, he was extremely reserved and apparently devoid of any poetic sensibility, while for passionate emotions and for sentiment he had little use. His son remarks that though James Mill upheld an Epicurean ethical theory (Bentham's hedonism), he was personally a Stoic and combined Stoic qualities with a Cynic's disregard for pleasure. But he was certainly an extremely hard-working and conscientious man, devoted to propagating the views which he believed to be true.

With James Mill, as with Bentham, we find a combination of *laissez-faire* economics with a reiterated demand for political reform. As every man naturally seeks his own interest, it is not surprising that the executive does so. The executive, therefore, must be controlled by the legislature. But the House of Commons is itself the organ of the interests of a comparatively small number of families. And its interest cannot be made identical with that of the community in general unless the suffrage is extended and elections are frequent.[2] Like other Benthamites, Mill also had a somewhat simple faith in the power of education to make man see that their 'real' interests are bound up with the common interest. Hence political reform and extended education should go hand in hand.

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[1] This circle comprised, among others, the economists David Ricardo and J. R. McCulloch, T. R. Malthus, the famous writer on population, and John Austin, who applied utilitarian principles to jurisprudence in his work *The Province of Jurisprudence Determined* (1832).

[2] Mill was indeed quite right in thinking that the House of Commons of his time was effectively representative of only a small part of the population. He seems, however, to have thought that a legislature which represented the prosperous middle classes would represent the interests of the country as a whole. At the same time he saw no logical stopping-point in the process of extending the suffrage, though he assumed, rather surprisingly, that the lower classes would be governed by the wisdom of the middle class.

5. James Mill undertook to show, with the aid of the associationist psychology, how altruistic conduct on the part of the pleasure-seeking individual is possible. He was indeed convinced that 'we never feel any pains or pleasures but our own. The fact, indeed, is, that our very idea of the pains or pleasures of another man is only the idea of our own pains, or our own pleasures, associated with the idea of another man.'[1] But these remarks contain also the key to understanding the possibility of altruistic conduct. For an inseparable association can be set up, say between the idea of my own pleasure and the idea of that of the other members of the community to which I belong, an association such that its result is analogous to a chemical product which is something more than the mere sum of its elements. And even if I originally sought the good of the community only as a means to my own, I can then seek the former without any advertence to the latter.

Given this point of view, it may seem strange that in his *Fragment on Mackintosh*, which was published in 1835 after having been held up for a time, Mill indulges in a vehement attack on Sir James Mackintosh (1765–1832), who in 1829 had written on ethics for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. For Mackintosh not only accepted the principle of utility but also made use of the associationist psychology in explaining the development of the morality which takes the general happiness as its end. But the reason for the attack is clear enough. If Mackintosh had expounded an ethical theory quite different from that of the Benthamites, the Kantian ethics for example, Mill would presumably not have been so indignant. As it was, Mackintosh's crime in Mill's eyes was to have adulterated the pure milk of Benthamism by adding to it the moral sense theory, derived from Hutcheson and to a certain extent from the Scottish School, a theory which Bentham had decisively rejected.

Although Mackintosh accepted utility as the criterion for distinguishing between right and wrong actions, he also insisted on the peculiar character of the moral sentiments which are experienced in contemplating such actions and, in particular, the qualities of the agents as manifested in such actions. If we group together these sentiments as forming the moral sense, we can say that it is akin to the sense of beauty. True, a virtuous man's moral qualities are indeed useful in that they contribute to the common good or happiness. But one can perfectly well approve and admire them without any more reference to utility than when we appreciate a beautiful painting.[1]

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[1] *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*, II, p. 217 (1869, edited by J. S. Mill). Commenting on his father's statement, J. S. Mill draws attention to its ambiguity. To say that if I take pleasure in another man's pleasure, the pleasure which I feel is my own and not the other man's, is one thing. And it is obviously true. To imply that if I seek another man's pleasure I do so as a means to my own, is something different.

In discussing Mackintosh's view James Mill urged that if there were a moral sense, it would be a peculiar kind of faculty, and that we ought logically to admit the possibility of its overriding the judgment of utility. True, Mackintosh believed that in point of fact the moral sentiments and the judgment of utility are always in harmony. But in this case the moral sense is a superfluous postulate. If, however, it is a distinct faculty which, in principle at least, is capable of overriding the judgment of utility, it should be described as an immoral rather than a moral sense. For the judgment of utility is the moral judgment.

Many people would probably feel that, apart from the question whether the term 'moral sense' is appropriate or inappropriate, we certainly can experience the kind of sentiments described by Mackintosh. So what is all the fuss about? A general answer is that both Bentham and Mill looked on the theory of the moral sense as a cloudy and in some respects dangerous doctrine which had been superseded by utilitarianism, so that any attempt to reintroduce it constituted a retrograde step. In particular, Mill doubtless believed that Mackintosh's theory implied that there is a superior point of view to that of utilitarianism, a point of view, that is to say, which rises above such a mundane consideration as that of utility. And any such claim was anathema to Mill.

The long and the short of it is that James Mill was determined to maintain a rigid Benthamism.[2] Any attempt, such as that made by Mackintosh, to reconcile utilitarianism with intuitionist ethics simply aroused his indignation. As will be seen later, however, his son had no such devotion to the letter of the Benthamite gospel.

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[1] Similarly, the sentiments which we feel in contemplating the undesirable qualities of a bad man need not involve any reference to their lack of utility.

[2] This determination also shows itself in Mill's attack on Mackintosh for making the morality of actions depend on motive, when Bentham had shown that it does not.

6. Obviously, the use made by James Mill of the associationist psychology in explaining the possibility of altruistic conduct on the part of the individual who by nature seeks his own pleasure presupposes a general employment of the method of reductive analysis which was characteristic of classical empiricism, especially in the thought of Hume, and which was systematically practised by Bentham. Thus in his *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind* Mill tries to reduce man's mental life to its basic elements. In general he follows Hume in distinguishing between impressions and ideas, the latter being copies or images of the former. But Mill actually speaks of sensations, not of impressions. Hence we can also say that he follows Condillac[1] in depicting the development of mental phenomena as a process of the transformation of sensations. It must be added, however, that Mill groups together sensations and ideas under the term 'feelings'. 'We have two classes of feelings; one, that which exists when the object of sense is present; another, that which exists after the object of sense has ceased to be present. The one class of feelings I call sensations; the other class of feelings I call *ideas*.'[2]

After reducing the mind to its basic elements Mill is then faced with the task of reconstructing mental phenomena with the aid of the principles of the association of ideas. Hume, he remarks, recognized three principles of association, namely contiguity in time and place, causation and resemblance. But causation, in Mill's view, can be identified with contiguity in time, that is, with the order of regular succession. 'Causation is only a name for the order established between an antecedent and consequent; that is, the established or constant antecedence of the one, and consequence of the other.'[3]

Mill's work covers such topics as naming, classification, abstraction, memory, belief, ratiocination, pleasurable and painful sensations, the will and intentions. And at the end the author remarks that the work, which constitutes the theoretical part of the doctrine of the mind, should be followed by a practical part comprising logic, considered as practical rules for the mind in its search for truth, ethics and the study of education as directed to training the individual to contribute actively to the greatest possible good or happiness for himself and for his fellow men.

We cannot follow Mill in his reconstruction of mental phenomena. But it is worth while drawing attention to the way in which he deals with reflection, which was described by Locke as the notice which the mind takes of its own operations. The mind is identified with the stream of consciousness. And consciousness means having sensations and ideas. As, therefore, 'reflection is nothing but consciousness',[1] to reflect on an idea is the same thing as to have it. There is no room for any additional factor.

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[1] See Vol. VI of this *History*, pp. 28–35.

[2] *Analysis*, 1, p. 52.

[3] *Ibid.*, 1, p. 110.

Commenting on his father's theory J. S. Mill remarks that 'to reflect on any of our feelings or mental acts is more properly identified with *attending* to the feeling than (as stated in the text) with merely having it'.[2] And this seems to be true. But James Mill is so obstinately determined to explain the whole mental life in terms of the association of primitive elements reached by reductive analysis that he has to explain away those factors in consciousness to which it is difficult to apply such treatment. In other words, empiricism can manifest its own form of dogmatism.

7. To turn briefly to Benthamite economics. As far as the economic market was concerned, Bentham believed that in a freely competitive market a harmony of interest is inevitably attained, at least in the long run. Such State action as he demanded consisted in the removal of restrictions, such as the abolition of the tariffs which protected the English market in grain and which Bentham thought of as serving the sectional interest of the landowners.

Behind this *laissez-faire* theory lay the influence of the French physiocrats, to whom allusion has already been made, though elements were also derived, of course, from English writers, particularly from Adam Smith.[3] But it was obviously not simply a question of deriving ideas from previous writers. For the *laissez-faire* economics can be said to have reflected the needs and aspirations of the expanding industrial and capitalist system of the time. In other words, it reflected the interests, real or supposed, of that middle class which James Mill considered to be the wisest element in the community.

The theory found its classical expression in the writings of David Ricardo (1772–1823), especially in his *Principles of Political Economy*, which was published in 1817. Bentham is reported to have said that James Mill was his spiritual child, and that Ricardo was the spiritual child of James Mill. But though it was largely as a result of Mill's encouragement that Ricardo published his *Principles* when he did, in economic theory Mill was more dependent on Ricardo than the other way round. In any case it was Ricardo's work which became the classical statement of Benthamite economics.

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[1] *Analysis*, II, p. 177.

[2] *Ibid.*, II, p. 179, note 34.

[3] See Vol. V of this *History*, pp. 354–5.

In the view of his disciple J. R. McCulloch (1789–1864) Ricardo's great service was to state the fundamental theorem of the science of value. This was to the effect that in a free market the value of commodities is determined by the amount of labour required for their production. In other words, value is crystallized labour.

Now, if this theory were true, it would appear to follow that the money obtained from the sale of commodities belongs rightfully to those whose labour produced the commodities in question. That is to say, the conclusion drawn by Marx[1] from the labour theory of value appears to be amply justified, unless perhaps we wish to argue that the capitalist is to be included among the labourers. But Ricardo and the other economists of the *laissez-faire* School were far from using the labour theory of value as a means of showing that capitalism by its very nature involves exploitation of the workers. For one thing they were conscious that the capitalist contributes to production by the investment of capital in machinery and so on. For another thing they were interested in arguing that in a competitive market, free from all restrictions, prices tend naturally to represent the real values of commodities.

This line of argument seems to involve the at least implicit assumption that a free market is governed by some sort of natural economic law which ultimately ensures a harmonization of interests and operates for the common good, provided that nobody attempts to interfere with its functioning. But this optimistic view represents only one aspect of Benthamite economics. According to T. R. Malthus (1766–1834), population always increases when living becomes easier, unless, of course, its rate of increase is restricted in some way. Thus population tends to outrun the means of subsistence. And it follows that wages tend to remain constant, at a subsistence level that is to say. Hence there is a law of wages which can hardly be said to operate in favour of the greater happiness of the greatest possible number.

If the Benthamites had made in the economic sphere a thoroughgoing application of the principle of utility, they would have had to demand in this sphere a harmonization of interests through legislation similar to the harmonization of interests through legislation which they demanded in the political sphere. Indeed, in his essay on government for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* James Mill declared that the general happiness is promoted by assuring to every man the greatest possible amount of the fruit of his own labour, and that the government should prevent the powerful robbing the weak. But their belief in certain economic laws restricted the Benthamites' view both of the possibility and of the desirability of State action in the economic sphere.

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[1] See Vol. VII of this *History*, p. 312.

And yet they themselves made breaches in the wall set up round the economic sphere by the belief in natural economic laws. For one thing Malthus argued that while wages tend to remain constant, rents tend to increase with the increasing fertility of the land. And these rents represent profit for the landlords though they contribute nothing to production. In other words, the landlords are parasites on society. And it was the conviction of the Benthamites that their power should be broken. For another thing, while those who were strongly influenced by Malthus's reflections on population may have thought that the only way of increasing profits and wages would be by restricting the growth of population, and that this would be impracticable, the very admission of the possibility in principle of interfering with the distribution of wealth in one way should have encouraged the exploration of other ways of attaining this end. And in point of fact J. S. Mill came to envisage legislative control, in a limited form at least, of the distribution of wealth.

In other words, if the Benthamite economists began by separating the economic sphere, in which a *laissez-faire* policy should reign, from the political sphere, in which a harmonization of interests through legislation was demanded, in J. S. Mill's development of utilitarianism the gap between the economic and political spheres tended to close. As will be seen presently, J. S. Mill introduced into the utilitarian philosophy elements which were incompatible with strict Benthamism. But it seems to the present writer at any rate that in proposing some State interference in the economic sphere with a view to the general happiness, Mill was simply applying the principle of utility in a way in which it might well have been applied from the start, had it not been for the belief in the autonomy of the economic sphere, governed by its own iron laws.

CHAPTER II

THE UTILITARIAN MOVEMENT (2)

Life and writings of J. S. Mill—Mill's development of the utilitarian ethics—Mill on civil liberty and government—Psychological freedom.

1. John Stuart Mill was born in London on May 20th, 1806. A fascinating account of the extraordinary education to which he was subjected by his father is to be found in his *Autobiography*. Having apparently started to learn Greek at the age of three, by the time he was about twelve years old he was sufficiently acquainted with Greek and Latin literature, history and mathematics to enter on what he calls more advanced studies, including logic. In 1819 he was taken through a complete course of political economy, during which he read Adam Smith and Ricardo. As for religion, 'I was brought up from the first without any religious belief, in the ordinary acceptation of the term',[1] though his father encouraged him to learn what religious beliefs mankind had in point of fact held.

In 1820 J. S. Mill was invited to stay in the South of France with Sir Samuel Bentham, brother of the philosopher. And during his time abroad he not only studied the French language and literature but also followed courses at Montpellier on chemistry, zoology, logic and higher mathematics, besides making the acquaintance of some economists and liberal thinkers. Returning to England in 1821 Mill started to read Condillac, studied Roman law with John Austin (1790–1859), and gave further attention to the philosophy of Bentham. He also extended his philosophical reading to the writings of thinkers such as Helvétius, Locke, Hume, Reid and Dugald Stewart. Through personal contact with men such as John Austin and his younger brother Charles, Mill was initiated into the utilitarian circle. Indeed, in the winter of 1822–3 he founded a little Utilitarian Circle of his own, which lasted for about three and a half years.

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[1] *Autobiography*, p. 38 (2nd edition, 1873). Though James Mill was an agnostic rather than a dogmatic atheist, he refused to admit that the world could possibly have been created by a God who combined infinite power with infinite wisdom and goodness. Moreover, he thought that this belief had a detrimental effect upon morality.

In 1823 Mill obtained, through his father's influence, a clerkship in the East India Company. And after successive promotions he became head of the office in 1856 with a substantial salary. Neither father nor son ever held an academic chair.

Mill's first printed writings consisted of some letters published in 1822, in which he defended Ricardo and James Mill against attack. After the foundation of the *Westminster Review* in 1824 he became a frequent contributor. And in 1825 he undertook the editing of Bentham's *Rationale of Evidence* in five volumes, a labour which, so he tells us, occupied about all his leisure time for almost a year.

It is hardly surprising that prolonged overwork, culminating in the editing of Bentham's manuscripts, resulted in 1826 in what is popularly called a nervous breakdown. But this mental crisis had a considerable importance through its effect on Mill's outlook. In his period of dejection the utilitarian philosophy, in which he had been indoctrinated by his father, lost its charms for him. He did not indeed abandon it. But he came to two conclusions. First, happiness is not attained by seeking it directly. One finds it by striving after some goal or ideal other than one's own happiness or pleasure. Secondly, analytic thought needs to be complemented by a cultivation of the feelings, an aspect of human nature which Bentham had mistrusted. This meant in part that Mill began to find some meaning in poetry and art.[1] More important, he found himself able to appreciate Coleridge and his disciples, who were generally regarded as the antithesis to the Benthamites. In the course of time he even came to see some merit in Carlyle, a feat which his father was never able to achieve. True, the effect of Mill's crisis should not be exaggerated. He remained a utilitarian, and, though modifying Benthamism in important ways, he never went over to the opposite camp. As he himself puts it, he did not share in the sharp reaction of the nineteenth century against the eighteenth, a reaction represented in Great Britain by the names of Coleridge and Carlyle. At the same time he became conscious of the narrowness of Bentham's view of human nature, and he formed the conviction that the emphasis laid by the French *philosophes* and by Bentham on the analytic reason needed to be supplemented, though not supplanted, by an understanding of the importance of other aspects of man and his activity.

In 1829–30 Mill became acquainted with the doctrines of the followers of Saint-Simon.[1] While he disagreed with them on many issues, their criticism of the *laissez-faire* economics appeared to him to express important truths. Further, 'their aim seemed to me desirable and rational, however their means might be inefficacious'.[2] In a real sense Mill always remained an individualist at heart, a staunch upholder of individual liberty. But he was quite prepared to modify individualism in the interest of the common welfare.

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[1] Mill started to read Wordsworth in 1828.

In 1830–1 Mill wrote five *Essays on Some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy*, though they were not published until 1844.[3] In 1843 he published his famous *System of Logic*, on which he had been working for some years. For part of the work he found stimulus in W. Whewell's *History of the Inductive Sciences* (1837) and in Sir John Herschel's *Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy* (1830), while in the final rewriting of the work he found further help in Whewell's *Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences* (1840) and the earlier volumes of Auguste Comte's *Cours de philosophie positive*.[4] His correspondence with the celebrated French positivist, whom he never actually met, began in 1841. But in the course of time this epistolary friendship waned and then ceased. Mill continued to respect Comte, but he found himself entirely out of sympathy with the positivist's later ideas for the spiritual organization of humanity.

In 1848 Mill published his *Principles of Political Economy*.[5] In 1851 he married Harriet Taylor, with whom he had been on terms of intimate friendship from 1830 and whose first husband died in 1849. In 1859, the year following that of his wife's death, Mill published his essay *On Liberty*, in 1861 his *Considerations on Representative Government*, and in 1863 *Utilitarianism*.[6] *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* and the small volume on *Auguste Comte and Positivism* appeared in 1865.

From 1865 until 1868 Mill was a Member of Parliament for Westminster. He spoke in favour of the Reform Bill of 1867, and he denounced the policy of the British government in Ireland. Of his pamphlet *England and Ireland* (1868) he remarks that it 'was not popular, except in Ireland, as I did not expect it to be.'[1] Mill also advocated proportional representation and the suffrage for women.

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[1] Comte Claude Henri de Rouvroy de Saint-Simon (1760–1825) was a French socialist, whose ideas gave rise to a group or School.

[2] *Autobiography*, p. 167. Mill is referring to the aim or ideal of organizing labour and capital for the general good of the community.

[3] The fifth essay was partially rewritten in 1833.

[4] Auguste Comte (1798–1857) published the first volume of this work in 1830.

[5] Subsequent editions appeared in 1849 and 1852.

[6] This short work had previously appeared in instalments in *Fraser's Magazine*.

Mill died at Avignon on May 8th, 1873. His *Dissertations and Discussions* appeared in four volumes between 1859 and 1875, while his *Essays in Religion* were published in 1874. Further reference to the last-named work, in which Mill discusses sympathetically the hypothesis of a finite God, that is, God limited in power, will be made in the next chapter.

2. In *Utilitarianism* Mill gives an often-quoted definition or description of the basic principle of utilitarian ethics which is quite in accord with Benthamism. 'The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure.'[2]

True, Mill is anxious to show that utilitarianism is not a philosophy either of egoism or of expediency. It is not a philosophy of egoism because happiness, in the moral context, 'is not the agent's own greatest happiness, but the greatest amount of happiness altogether'.[3] As for expediency, the expedient as opposed to the right generally means that which serves the interests of the individual as such, without regard to the common good, 'as when a minister sacrifices the interests of his country to keep himself in place'.[4] Such conduct is clearly incompatible with the greatest happiness principle. At the same time, though Mill is anxious to show that utilitarianism does not deserve the accusations to which Bentham's doctrine seemed to some people to lay it open, he provides plenty of evidence that his thought moves within a Benthamite framework. This can be seen easily enough if one considers his discussion of the sense in which the principle of utility is susceptible of proof.[1] Mill's first point is that happiness is universally recognized to be a good. 'Each person's happiness is a good to that person, and the general happiness, therefore, a good to the aggregate of all persons.'[2] This remark implies an acceptance of Bentham's analysis of such terms as 'community' and 'common interest'. Mill then goes on to argue that happiness is not merely *a* good but *the* good: it is the one ultimate end which all desire and seek. True, it can be objected that some people seek virtue or money or fame for its own sake, and that such things cannot properly be described as happiness. But the fact that such things can be sought for their own sakes is explicable in terms of the association of ideas. Take virtue, for example. 'There was no original desire of it, or motive to it, save its conduciveness to pleasure; and especially to protection from pain.'[3] But that which is originally sought as a means to pleasure can, by association with the idea of pleasure, come to be sought for its own sake. And it is then sought not as a means to pleasure or happiness but as a constituent part of it. Evidently, this line of argument, with its appeal to the associationist psychology, is in line with Benthamism.

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[1] *Autobiography*, p. 294.

[2] *Utilitarianism*, pp. 9–10 (2nd edition, 1864).

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 32. Mill recognizes that the expedient may mean that which is expedient or useful for securing some temporary advantage when the securing of this advantage involves violation of a rule 'whose observance is expedient in a much higher degree' (*ibid.*). And it is clear that not only the individual but also the community, as represented by public authority, might succumb to the temptation to seek its immediate temporary advantage in this way. But Mill argues that the expedient in this sense is not really 'useful' at all. It is harmful. Hence there can be no question of choice of the expedient being justified by the principle of utility.

Nobody, of course, disputes the facts that Mill began with the Benthamism in which he had been indoctrinated by his father, and that he never formally rejected it, and that he always retained elements of it. The significant aspect of Mill's brand of utilitarianism, however, is not to be found in the ideas which he took over from Bentham and James Mill. It is to be found in the ideas which Mill himself added, and which strained the original Benthamite framework to such an extent that it ought to have been radically refashioned or even abandoned.

Foremost among the ideas which Mill introduced was that of intrinsic qualitative differences between pleasures. He does indeed admit that 'utilitarian writers in general have placed the superiority of mental over bodily pleasures chiefly in the greater permanency, safety, uncostliness, etc., of the former—that is, in their circumstantial advantages rather than in their intrinsic nature'.[1] But he goes on to argue that the utilitarians in question might have adopted another point of view 'with entire consistency. It is quite compatible with the principle of utility to recognize the fact, that some *kinds* of pleasure are more desirable and more valuable than others. It would be absurd that while, in estimating all other things, quality is considered as well as quantity, the estimation of pleasures should be supposed to depend on quantity alone.'[2]

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[1] Mill agrees with Bentham that the principle of utility cannot be proved by deduction from any more ultimate principle or principles. For the point at issue is the ultimate end of human action. And 'questions of ultimate ends do not admit of proof, in the ordinary acceptation of the term' (*Utilitarianism*, p. 52). It can, however, be shown that all men seek happiness, and only happiness, as the end of action. And this is sufficient proof of the statement that happiness is the one ultimate end of action.

[2] *Utilitarianism*, p. 53.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 56–7.

Mill may be quite right in claiming that it is absurd that in discriminating between pleasures no account should be taken of qualitative differences. But the suggestion that the recognition of intrinsic qualitative differences is compatible with Benthamism is quite unjustified. And the reason is clear. If we wish to discriminate between different pleasures without introducing any standard or criterion other than pleasure itself, the principle of discrimination can only be quantitative, whatever Mill may say to the contrary. In this sense Bentham adopted the only possible consistent attitude. If, however, we are determined to recognize intrinsic qualitative differences between pleasures, we have to find some standard other than pleasure itself. This may not be immediately evident. But if we reflect, we can see that when we say that one kind of pleasure is qualitatively superior to another, we really mean that one kind of pleasure-producing activity is qualitatively superior to or intrinsically more valuable than another. And if we try to explain what this means, we shall probably find ourselves referring to some ideal of man, to some idea of what the human being ought to be. For example, it makes little sense to say that the pleasure of constructive activity is qualitatively superior to that of destructive activity except with reference to the context of man in society. Or, to put the matter more simply, it makes little sense to say that the pleasure of listening to Beethoven is qualitatively superior to the pleasure of smoking opium, unless we take into account considerations other than that of pleasure itself. If we decline to do this, the only relevant question is, which is the greater pleasure, quantity being measured not simply by intensity but also according to the other criteria of the Benthamite calculus.

In point of fact Mill does introduce a standard other than pleasure itself. On occasion at least he appeals to the nature of man, even if he does not clearly understand the significance of what he is doing. 'It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied.'[1] After all, when Mill is engaged in discussing explicitly Bentham's strong and weak points, one of the main features of Bentham's thought to which he draws attention is its inadequate conception of human nature. 'Man is conceived by Bentham as a being susceptible of pleasures and pains, and governed in all his conduct partly by the different modifications of self-interest, and the passions commonly classed as selfish, partly by sympathies, or occasionally antipathies, towards other beings. And here Bentham's conception of human nature stops. . . . Man is never recognized by him as a being capable of pursuing spiritual perfection as an end; of desiring, for its own sake, the conformity of his own character to his standard of excellence, without hope of good or fear of evil from other source than his own inward consciousness.'[2]

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[1] *Utilitarianism*, p. 11.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12.

It is very far from being the intention of the present writer to find fault with Mill for introducing the idea of human nature as a standard for determining qualitative differences between pleasure-producing activities. The point is rather that he does not appear to understand the extent to which he is subjecting the original Benthamite framework of his thought to acute stresses and strains. There is no need to consult Aristotle, said Bentham. But to come closer to Aristotle is precisely what Mill is doing. In his essay *On Liberty* he remarks that 'I regard utility as the ultimate appeal on all ethical questions; but it must be utility in the largest sense, grounded on the permanent interests of man as a progressive being.'[3] Mill does not hesitate to refer to man's 'higher faculties',[4] to which higher or superior pleasures are correlative. And in the essay *On Liberty* he quotes with approval the statement of Wilhelm von Humboldt that 'the end of man is the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole.'[5] True, Mill does not produce a clear and full account of what he means by human nature. He lays stress, indeed, on the perfecting and improving of human nature, and he emphasizes the idea of individuality. Thus he says, for example, that 'individuality is the same thing with development', and that 'it is only the cultivation of individuality which produces, or can produce, well-developed human beings'.[1] But he makes it clear that individual self-development does not mean for him a surrender to any impulses which the individual is inclined to follow, but rather the individual fulfilment of the ideal of harmonious integration of all one's powers. It is not a question of sheer eccentricity, but of unity in diversity. Hence there must be a standard of excellence; and this is not fully worked out. The relevant point in the present context, however, is not Mill's failure to elaborate a theory of human nature. Rather is it the fact that he grafts on to Benthamism a moral theory which has little or nothing to do with the balancing of pleasures and pains according to the hedonistic calculus of Bentham, and that he does not see the necessity of subjecting his original starting-point to a thorough criticism and revision. As we have seen, he does indeed criticize Bentham's narrowness of moral vision. But at other times he tends to slur over the differences between them, especially, of course, when it is a question of uniting against what they would consider reactionary forces.

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[1] *Dissertations and Discussions*, I, pp. 358–9.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *On Liberty*, p. 9 (edited by R. B. McCallum, Oxford, 1946).

[4] *Utilitarianism*, pp. 13 and 16.

[5] *On Liberty*, p. 50.

The reference to Aristotle in the last paragraph is not so far-fetched as may at first sight appear. As Bentham was primarily interested in questions of practical reform, he not unnaturally emphasized the consequences of actions. The moral character of actions is to be estimated according to the consequences which they tend to have. This view is, of course, essential to utilitarianism, in some form or other at least. And Mill often speaks in the same way. But he also sees, as Aristotle saw, that the exercise of human activities cannot properly be described as a means to an end, happiness, when the end is taken to be something purely external to these activities. For the exercise of the activities can itself constitute a part of happiness. The enjoyment of good health, for example, and the appreciative hearing of good music are, or can be, constituent elements in happiness, and not simply means to some abstract external end. 'Happiness is not an abstract idea, but a concrete whole.'[2] This is a thoroughly Aristotelian notion.

Now, in the first two paragraphs of this section we saw that according to Mill actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong in so far as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. We also noted Mill's explanation that in this ethical context happiness does not mean the individual agent's own greater happiness, but the greatest amount of happiness altogether. And if we ask why the general happiness is desirable, Mill answers that 'no reason can be given why the general happiness is desirable, except that each person, so far as he believes it to be attainable, desires his own happiness'.[1] It is therefore incumbent on him to make clear the relation between the agent's own happiness and the general happiness.

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[1] *On Liberty*, p. 56.

[2] *Utilitarianism*, p. 56.

One line of argument employed by Mill represents orthodox Benthamism. 'Each person's happiness is a good to that person, and the general happiness, therefore, a good to the aggregate of all persons.'[2] If the general happiness is related to my happiness as a whole to a part, in desiring the general happiness I am desiring my own. And by the force of association of ideas I can come to desire the general happiness without adverting to my own. It can thus be explained not only how altruism is possible but also how egoism is possible. For it is no more necessary that all should attain to an altruistic point of view than it is necessary that all those who desire money as a means to an end should become misers, seeking money for its own sake.

This may sound reasonable. But reflection discloses a difficulty. If the general happiness is, as Bentham maintained, nothing but the sum total resulting from an addition of the happinesses of individuals, there is no reason why I should be unable to seek my own happiness without seeking the general happiness. And if I ask why I ought to seek the latter, it is no use replying that I seek the former. For this reply to have any relevance, it must be assumed that the general happiness is not simply the result of an addition sum, the aggregate which results from a juxtaposition of individual happinesses, but rather an organic whole of such a kind that he who promotes his own happiness necessarily promotes the general happiness. For he actualizes a constituent part of an organic whole. But it can hardly be shown that this is the case unless emphasis is placed on the social nature of man. For one can then argue that the individual does not attain his own real happiness except as a social being, a member of society, and that his happiness is a constituent element in an organic whole.

This seems indeed to be the sort of idea towards which Mill is working. He remarks, for example, that the firm foundation of the utilitarian morality is to be found in 'the social feelings of mankind'.[3] These social feelings can be described as the 'desire to be in unity with our fellow creatures, which is already a powerful principle in human nature, and happily one of those which tend to become stronger, even without express inculcation, from the influences of advancing civilization. The social state is at once so natural, so necessary, and so habitual to man, that, except in some unusual circumstances, or by an effort of voluntary abstraction, he never conceives himself otherwise than as a member of a body.'[1] True, Mill emphasizes the fact that the social feelings grow through the influence of education and of advancing civilization, and that the more they grow the more does the common good or general happiness appear as desirable, as an object to be sought. At the same time he also emphasizes the fact that social feeling has its root in human nature itself, and that 'to those who have it, it possesses all the characters of a natural feeling. It does not present itself to their minds as a superstition of education, or a law despotically imposed by the power of society, but as an attitude which it would not be well for them to be without. This conviction is the ultimate sanction of the greatest happiness morality.'[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

Once again, therefore, we receive the impression that Mill is working away from Benthamism to an ethics based on a more adequate view of the human person. At the same time the new theory is not developed in such a way as to make clear its relations to and differences from the framework of thought with which Mill started and which he never actually abandoned.

Though, however, the difficulty of passing from the man who seeks his own personal happiness to the man who seeks the common good is diminished in proportion as emphasis is laid on the nature of man as a social being, there remains an objection which can be brought against the utilitarian theory of obligation, whether utilitarianism is understood in its original Benthamite form or as developed by Mill.[3] For anyone at least who accepts Hume's famous assertion that an 'ought' cannot be derived from an 'is', an ought-statement from a purely factual or empirical statement, is likely to object that this is precisely what the utilitarians try to do. That is to say, they first assert that as a matter of empirical fact man seeks happiness, and they then conclude that he ought to perform those actions which are required to increase happiness and that he ought not to perform those actions which diminish happiness or increase pain or unhappiness.

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[1] *Utilitarianism*, p. 46. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

[3] This line of objection is not confined, of course, to utilitarianism. It can be brought against any form of teleological ethics which interprets the moral imperative as what Kant would call an assertoric hypothetical imperative. (See Vol. VI of this *History*, pp. 321–3.)

One possible way of dealing with this objection is, of course, to challenge its validity. But if it is once admitted that an ought-statement cannot be derived from a purely factual statement, then, to defend utilitarianism, we have to deny the applicability of the objection in this case. Obviously, we cannot deny that the utilitarians start with a factual statement, namely that all men seek happiness. But it might be argued that this factual statement is not the only statement which functions as a premiss. For example, it might be maintained that a judgment of value about the end, namely happiness, is tacitly understood. That is to say, the utilitarians are not simply stating that as a matter of empirical fact all men pursue happiness as the ultimate end of action. They are also stating implicitly that happiness is the only end worthy of being an ultimate end. Or it might be maintained that together with the factual statement that all men seek for happiness as the ultimate end of action, the utilitarians tacitly include the premisses that to act in the way which effectively increases happiness is the only rational way of acting (given the fact that all seek this end), and that to act in a rational manner is worthy of commendation. Indeed, it is fairly clear that Bentham does assume that, as all seek pleasure, to act in the way which will effectively increase pleasure is to act rationally, and that to act rationally is commendable. And it is also clear that Mill assumes that to act in such a way as to develop a harmonious integration of the powers of human nature or of the human person is commendable.

It is not the purpose of these remarks to suggest that in the opinion of the present writer utilitarianism either in its original Benthamite form or in the somewhat incoherent shape that it assumes with J. S. Mill, is the correct moral philosophy. The point is that though in word the utilitarians derive ought-statements from a purely factual, empirical statement, it is perfectly reasonable to argue that they tacitly presuppose other premisses which are not purely factual statements. Hence, even if it is admitted that an ought-statement cannot be derived from a purely factual statement, the admission is not by itself necessarily fatal to utilitarian moral theory.

As for the general merits and demerits of utilitarian moral theory, this is too broad a question for discussion here. But we can make two points. First, when we are asked why we think that one action is right and another action wrong, we frequently refer to consequences. And this suggests that a teleological ethics finds support in the way in which we ordinarily think and speak about moral questions. Secondly, the fact that a man of the calibre of J. S. Mill found himself driven to transcend the narrow hedonism of Bentham and to interpret happiness in the light of the idea of the development of the human personality suggests that we cannot understand man's moral life except in terms of a philosophical anthropology. Hedonism certainly tends to recur in the history of ethical theory. But reflection on it prompts the mind to seek for a more adequate theory of human nature than that which is immediately suggested by the statement that all men pursue pleasure. This fact is well illustrated by Mill's development of Benthamism.

3. Mill's idea of the self-development of the individual plays a central role in his reflections on civil or social liberty. As he follows Hume and Bentham in rejecting the theory of 'abstract right, as a thing independent of utility',[1] he cannot indeed appeal to a natural right on the part of the individual to develop himself freely. But he insists that the principle of utility demands that every man should be free to develop his powers according to his own will and judgment, provided that he does not do so in a way which interferes with the exercise of a similar freedom by others. It is not in the common interest that all should be moulded or expected to conform to the same pattern. On the contrary, society is enriched in proportion as individuals develop themselves freely. 'The free development of individuality is one of the principal ingredients of human happiness, and quite the chief ingredient of individual and social progress.'[2] Hence the need for liberty.

When he is thinking of the value of free self-development on the part of the individual, Mill not unnaturally pushes the idea of liberty to the fullest extent which is consistent with the existence and maintenance of social harmony. 'The liberty of the individual must be thus far limited; he must not make himself a nuisance to other people.'[3] Provided that he refrains from interfering with other people's liberty and from actively inciting others to crime, the individual's freedom should be unrestricted. 'The only part of the conduct of anyone, for which he is amenable to society, is that which concerns others. In the part which merely concerns himself, his independence is, of right, absolute. Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.'[1]

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[1] *On Liberty*, p. 9. All page references to this essay and to that *On Representative Government* are to the edition of the two essays in one volume by R. B. McCallum (Oxford, 1946).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

In the passage just cited the phrase 'of right' suggests, at first sight at least, that Mill has forgotten for the moment that the theory of natural rights does not form part of his intellectual baggage. It would not indeed be matter for astonishment if after inheriting the rejection of this theory from Bentham and his father Mill then tended to reintroduce the theory. But presumably he would comment that what he rejects is the theory of 'abstract' rights which are not based on the principle of utility and which are supposed to be valid irrespective of the historical and social context. 'Liberty, as a principle, has no application to any state of things anterior to the time when mankind have become capable of being improved by free and equal discussion.'[2] In a society of barbarians despotism would be legitimate, 'provided that the end be their improvement, and the means justified by actually effecting that end'.[3] But when civilization has developed up to a certain point, the principle of utility demands that the individual should enjoy full liberty, except the liberty to do harm to others. And if we presuppose a society of this sort, we can reasonably talk about a 'right' to liberty, a right grounded on the principle of utility.

Mill's general thesis is, therefoıe, that in a civilized community the only legitimate ground for the exercise of coercion in regard to the individual is 'to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant.'[4] But where does the boundary lie between what does harm to others and what does not, between purely self-regarding conduct and conduct which concerns others? We have noted that Mill quotes with approval Wilhelm von Humboldt's statement that the end of man is 'the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole'.[5] And Mill is, of course, convinced that the common happiness is increased if individuals do develop themselves in this way. Might it not be argued, therefore, that harm is done to others, to the community, if the individual acts in such a way as to prevent the harmonious integration of his powers and becomes a warped personality?

This difficulty is, of course, seen and discussed by Mill himself.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 9. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*, p. 8. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

And he suggests various ways of dealing with it. In general, however, his answer is on these lines. The common good demands that as much liberty as possible should be conceded to the individual. Hence injury to others should be interpreted as narrowly as possible. The majority is by no means infallible in its judgments about what would be beneficial to an individual. Hence it should not attempt to impose its own ideas about what is good and bad on all. The community should not interfere with private liberty except when 'there is a definite damage, or a definite risk of damage, either to an individual or to the public'.[1]

Obviously, this does not constitute a complete answer to the objection from the purely theoretical point of view. For questions can still be asked about what constitutes 'definite damage' or 'a definite risk of damage'.[2] At the same time Mill's general principle is, by and large, that which tends to be followed in our Western democracies. And most of us would doubtless agree that restrictions on private liberty should be kept to the minimum demanded by respect for the rights of others and for the common interest. But it is idle to suppose that any philosopher can provide us with a formula which will settle all disputes about the limits of this minimum.

Mill's insistence on the value of private liberty and on the principle of individuality or originality, the principle, that is to say, of individual self-development, naturally affects his ideas on government and its functions. It affects his concept of the most desirable form of government, and it also leads him to see how democracy can be threatened by a danger to which Bentham and James Mill had not really paid attention. We can consider these two points successively.

Though Mill is well aware of the absurdity of supposing that the form of constitution which one considers to be, abstractly speaking, the best is necessarily the best in the practical sense of being suited to all people and to all stages of civilization, he none the less insists that 'to inquire into the best form of government in the abstract (as it is called) is not a chimerical, but a highly practical employment of scientific intellect'.[1] For political institutions do not simply grow while men sleep. They are what they are through the agency of the human will. And when a political institution has become obsolete and no longer corresponds to the needs and legitimate demands of a society, it is only through the agency of the human will that it can be changed or developed or supplanted by another institution. But this demands thought about what is desirable and practicable, about the ideally best form of government. For, 'the ideally best form of government, it is scarcely necessary to say, does not mean one which is practicable or eligible in all states of civilization, but the one which, in the circumstances in which it is practicable and eligible, is attended with the greatest amount of beneficial consequences, immediate and prospective.'[2]

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[1] *On Liberty*, p. 73.

[2] Mill makes a distinction between violating specific duties to society and causing perceptible hurt to assignable individuals on the one hand and merely 'constructive injury' on the other (cf. *On Liberty*, p. 73). But though most people would make a clear distinction between, say, driving a car to the danger of the public when the driver is drunk and getting drunk in the privacy of one's own home, there are bound to be many cases in which the application of general categories is a matter for dispute.

If we presuppose that a stage of civilization has been reached in which democracy is practicable, the ideally best form of government is, for Mill, that in which sovereignty is vested in the community as a whole, in which each citizen has a voice in the exercise of sovereignty, and in which each citizen is sometimes called on to take an actual part in government, whether local or national, in some capacity or other. For one thing, the individual is more secure from being harmed by others in proportion as he is able to protect himself. And he can do this best in a democracy. For another thing, a democratic constitution encourages an active type of character, gifted with initiative and vigour. And it is more valuable to promote an active than a passive type of character. Obviously, this consideration weighs heavily with Mill. In his opinion a democratic constitution is the most likely to encourage that individual self-development on which he lays so much emphasis. Further, it promotes the growth in the individual of a public spirit, of concern with the common good, whereas under a benevolent despotism individuals are likely to concentrate simply on their private interests, leaving care for the common good to a government in which they have no voice or share.

It is clear that Mill is not primarily concerned with an external harmonization of interests among atomic human individuals, each of which is supposed to be seeking simply his own pleasure. For if this were the chief concern of government, one might conclude that benevolent despotism is the ideal form of government and that democracy is preferable only because despots are, in practice, generally as self-seeking as anyone else. It was partly this idea that drove Bentham to adopt a radically democratic point of view. Mill, however, while by no means blind to the need for harmonizing interests, is concerned above all with the superior educative effect of democracy. True, it presupposes a certain level of education. At the same time it encourages, more than any other form of government, private liberty and free self-development on the part of the individual.

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[1] *On Representative Government*, p. 115.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 141.

Ideally, direct democracy would be the best form of government, at least in the sense of a democracy in which all citizens would have the opportunity of sharing in government in some capacity. 'But since all cannot, in a community exceeding a single small town, participate personally in any but some very minor portions of the public business, it follows that the ideal type of a perfect government must be representative.'[1]

Mill is not, however, so naïve as to suppose that a democratic constitution automatically ensures a due respect for individual liberty. When democracy means in effect the rule, by representation, of a numerical majority, there is no guarantee that the majority will not oppress the minority. For example, legislation might be made to serve the interest of a racial or religious majority or that of a particular economic class[2] rather than the interests of the whole community. In fine, what Bentham called 'sinister interests' can operate in a democracy as elsewhere.

As a safeguard against this danger Mill insists that minorities must be effectively represented. And to secure this he advocates a system of proportional representation, referring to Thomas Hare's *Treatise on the Election of Representatives* (1859) and to Professor Henry Fawcett's pamphlet *Mr. Hare's Reform Bill Simplified and Explained* (1860). But constitutional devices such as universal suffrage and proportional representation will not be sufficient without a process of education which inculcates a genuine respect for individual liberty and for the rights of all citizens, whatever may be their race, religion or position in society.

Given Mill's insistence on the value of individual self-development and initiative, it is not surprising that he disapproves of any tendency on the part of the State to usurp the functions of voluntary institutions and to hand them over to the control of a State bureaucracy. 'The disease which afflicts bureaucratic governments, and which they usually die of, is routine. . . . A bureaucracy always tends to become a pedantocracy.'[1] The tendency for all the more able members of the community to be absorbed into the ranks of State functionaries 'is fatal, sooner or later, to the mental activity and progressiveness of the body itself.'[2]

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[1] *On Representative Government*, p. 151.

[2] Mill envisages the possibility of a majority of unskilled workers obtaining legislation to protect what it conceives to be its own interest, to the detriment of the interests of skilled workers and of other classes. Cf. *On Representative Government*, p. 183.

This does not mean, however, that Mill condemns all legislation and State control other than that required to maintain peace and order in the community. It seems true to say that he is drawn in two directions. On the one hand the principle of individual liberty inclines him to disapprove of any legislation or State control of conduct which goes beyond what is required for preventing or deterring the individual from injuring others, whether assignable individuals or the community at large. On the other hand the principle of utility, the greatest happiness principle, might well be used to justify a very considerable amount of legislation and State control with a view to the common good or happiness. But, as we have seen, the principle of individuality is itself grounded on the principle of utility. And the idea of preventing the individual from injuring others can be interpreted in such a way as to justify a good deal of State 'interference' with the individual's conduct.

Education is a case in point. We have seen that according to Mill the community has no right to coerce the individual simply for his own good. But this applies, as Mill explains, only to adults, not to children. For the latter must be protected not only from being harmed by others but also from harming themselves. Hence Mill does not hesitate to say, 'is it not almost a self-evident axiom, that the State should require and compel the education, up to a certain standard, of every human being who is born its citizen?'[3] He is not suggesting that parents should be compelled to send their children to State schools. For 'a general State education is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another':[4] it might easily become an attempt to establish 'a despotism over the mind'.[5] But if parents do not provide in some way for the education of their children, they are failing in their duty and are harming both individuals, namely the children, and the community.[1] Hence the State should prevent them from injuring others in this way. And if the parents are genuinely unable to pay for their children's education, the State should come to their aid.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 179.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 102.

[3] *On Liberty*, p. 94.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 95.

[5] *Ibid.*

On occasion Mill's interpretation of the principle of preventing the individual from injuring others is astonishingly broad. Thus in the essay *On Liberty* he remarks that in a country in which the population is or threatens to become so great that wages are reduced through superabundant labour, with the consequence that parents are unable to support their children, a law to forbid marriages unless the parties could show that they had the means of supporting a family would not exceed the legitimate power of the State. True, the expediency of such a law is open to dispute. But the law would not constitute a violation of liberty. For its aim would be to prevent the parties concerned from injuring others, namely the prospective offspring. And if anyone objected to the law simply on the ground that it would violate the liberty of parties who wished to marry, he would give evidence of a misplaced notion of liberty.

In point of fact Mill came to modify his view that no man should be compelled to act or to refrain from acting in a certain way simply for his own good. Take the case of proposed legislation to reduce the hours of labour. Mill came to the conclusion that such legislation would be perfectly legitimate, and also desirable, if it were in the real interest of the workmen. To pretend that it violates the worker's freedom to work for as many hours as he likes is absurd. It is indeed obviously true that he would choose to work for an excessive length of time, if the alternative were to starve. But it by no means follows that he would not choose to work for shorter hours, provided that the reduction were universally enforced by law. And in enacting such a law the legislator would be acting for the good of the worker and in accordance with his real desire.

Given his belief in the value of voluntary associations and of initiative uncontrolled by the State, together with his rooted mistrust of bureaucracy, Mill would hardly take kindly to the idea of the so-called Welfare State. At the same time in his later years he came to envisage a degree of State-control of the distribution of wealth which he at any rate was prepared to describe as socialist in character. And the development of his thought on social legislation has often been depicted, though not necessarily with disapproval of course, as constituting an implicit desertion of his original principles. But though it is perfectly reasonable to see in his thought a shift of emphasis from the idea of private liberty to that of the demands of the common good, it seems to the present writer that the charge of inconsistency or of making a *volte-face* can easily be overdone. After all, Mill did not mean by liberty merely freedom from external control. He emphasized liberty as freedom to develop oneself as a human being in the full sense, a freedom which is demanded by the common good. Hence it is reasonable to conclude that it is the business of the community, that it makes for the common good or general happiness, to remove obstacles to such self-development on the part of the individual. But the removal of obstacles may very well entail a considerable amount of social legislation.

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[1] Mill insists, for example, that some education is a prerequisite for exercise of the suffrage, and so for democracy.

What is true, of course, is that Mill departs very far from Benthamism. And this departure from Benthamism can also be seen in the sphere of economics. For example, when Mill condemned laws against trade unions and associations formed to raise wage-levels, the condemnation may have been based primarily on his belief that free rein should be given to private enterprises in general and to voluntary economic experiments in particular. But it implied that, within the limits set by other factors, something can be done to raise wages by human effort. In other words, there is no iron law of wages which renders nugatory all attempts to raise them.

To conclude this section. Bentham, with what we may call his quantitative point of view, naturally emphasized the individual unit. Each is to count, so to speak, as one and not as more than one. And this idea naturally led him in the direction of democratic convictions. Mill shared these convictions; but he came to lay the emphasis on quality, on the development of the individual personality, a value which is best assured in a democratically constituted society. And this shift in emphasis, involving a change from the concept of the pleasure-seeking and pain-avoiding unit to the concept of the personality seeking the harmonious and integrated active development of all his powers, is perhaps the most salient characteristic of Mill's development of utilitarianism from the philosophical point of view. From the practical point of view, that of the reformer, the feature of Mill's thought which usually strikes the observer is the way in which he discerns the growing movement towards social legislation and approves it in so far as he feels that he can reconcile it with his profound belief in the value of individual liberty. But the two points of view go together, as has already been remarked. For Mill's qualified approval of social legislation is motivated very largely by his conviction that such legislation is required to create the conditions for, by the removal of hindrances to, the fuller self-development of the individual. To the extent that he envisages the removal by the State of obstacles or hindrances to the leading by all of a full human life, Mill approximates to the point of view expounded by the British idealists in the latter part of the nineteenth century. But veneration for the State as such, the kind of veneration which had been shown by Hegel, is entirely absent from his outlook. In a very real sense he remains an individualist to the last. What exists is the individual, though the individual character and personality cannot be fully developed apart from social relations.

4. The topics of civil liberty and government are obviously connected. Freedom of the will or liberty in a psychological sense is discussed by Mill in his *A System of Logic*, under the general heading of the logic of the mental sciences, and in his *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*. But as interest in the problem of freedom of the will is generally prompted by its bearing on ethics and on questions, whether moral or legal, about responsibility, it seems permissible to take the problem out of the general logical setting in which Mill actually discusses it and to consider it here.

Mill assumes that according to libertarians, upholders, that is to say, of the doctrine of freedom of the will, 'our volitions are not, properly speaking, the effects of causes, or at least have no causes which they uniformly and implicitly obey'.[1] And as he himself believes that all volitions or acts of the will are caused, he embraces, to this extent at least, what he calls the doctrine of philosophical necessity. By causation he understands 'invariable, certain and unconditional sequence',[2] a uniformity of order or sequence which permits predictability. And it is this empiricist idea of causation which he applies to human volitions and actions.

The causes which are relevant in this context are motives and character. Hence the doctrine of philosophical necessity means that, 'given the motives which are present to an individual's mind, and given likewise the character and disposition of the individual, the manner in which he will act might be unerringly inferred'.[1] It is scarcely necessary to say that Mill is referring to predictability in principle. The less knowledge we have of a man's character and of the motives which present themselves to his mind with varying degrees of force, the less able are we to predict his actions in practice.

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[1] *A System of Logic*, II, p. 421 (10th edition, 1879). All further page-references to this work will be to this edition, denoted by the title *Logic*.

[2] *Logic*, II, p. 423.

One obvious objection to this theory is that it presupposes either that a man's character is fixed from the start or that it is formed only by factors which lie outside his control. In point of fact, however, Mill is quite prepared to admit that 'our character is formed by us as well as for us'.[2] At the same time he adds, and indeed must add if he is to preserve consistency with his premiss about causality, that the will to shape our character is formed for us. For example, experience of painful consequences of the character which he already possesses, or some other strong feeling, such as admiration, which has been aroused in him, may cause a man to desire to change his character.

It is true that when we yield, for example, to a stray temptation, we tend to think of ourselves as capable of having acted differently. But, according to Mill, this does not mean that we are actually aware or conscious that we could have acted in a different manner, all other things being equal. We are not conscious of liberty of indifference in this sense. What we are conscious of is that we could have acted differently if we had preferred to do so, that is, if the desire not to act in the way in which we did act or to act in a different manner had been stronger than the desire which, as a matter of fact, operated in us and caused our choice.

We can say, therefore, if we like, that Mill embraces a theory of character-determinism. But though he speaks, as we have seen, about the doctrine of philosophical necessity, he does not relish the use of such terms as 'necessity' and 'determinism'. He argues instead that the predictability in principle of human actions is perfectly compatible with all that the upholders of freedom of the will can reasonably maintain. Some religious metaphysicians, for instance, have found no difficulty in claiming both that God foresees all human actions and that man acts freely. And if God's foreknowledge is compatible with human liberty, so is any other

[1] *Ibid.*, II, p. 422.

[2] *Ibid.*, II, p. 426.

foreknowledge. Hence an admission of predictability in principle does not prevent us from saying that man acts freely. It is rather a question of analysing what is meant by freedom. If it is taken to mean that when I am faced with alternative courses of action, I could make a different choice from the one which I actually make, even though all factors, including character, desires and motives, are assumed to be the same, it cannot be allowed that man is free. For freedom in this sense would be incompatible with predictability in principle: it would follow that human actions are uncaused and random events. But if by saying that man is free we mean simply that he could act differently from the way in which he does act if his character and motives were otherwise than they are, and that he himself has a hand in shaping his character, it is then quite legitimate to say that man is free. Indeed, those who assert human freedom can mean no more than this unless they are prepared to say that human actions are chance, inexplicable events.

Mill is naturally convinced that his analysis of human freedom is not at odds with the utilitarian ethics. For he does not deny that character is malleable or that moral education is possible. All that follows from the causal activity of motives, in conjunction with character, is that moral education must be directed to the cultivation of the right desires and aversions, that is, to the cultivation of those desires and aversions which are demanded by the principle of utility. 'The object of moral education is to educate the will: but the will can only be educated through the desires and aversions.'[1] As for penal sanctions and punishment in general, the statement that all human actions are in principle predictable does not entail the conclusion that all punishment is unjust. Let us assume that punishment has two ends, 'the benefit of the offender himself and the protection of others'.[2] Appropriate punishment can serve to strengthen the offender's aversion to wrong-doing and his desire to obey the law. As for protection of others, punishment, provided that unnecessary suffering is not inflicted, needs no defence other than that provided by common sense. Whatever position we may adopt on the subject of free will, murderers can no more be allowed to commit their crimes with impunity than a mad dog can be allowed to roam the streets.

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[1] *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, p. 505 (2nd edition, 1865). This work will be referred to in future page-references as *Examination*.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 511.

In maintaining that all human actions are predictable in principle, Mill can draw, of course, on some empirical evidence. For it is an undoubted fact that the better we know a man the more confident we feel that in a given set of circumstances he would act in one way rather than in another. And if he does not act as we expected, we may conclude either that his character was stronger than we suspected or that there was a hidden flaw in his character, as the case may be. Similarly, if we find that our friends are surprised that we have resisted, say, a temptation to use a given opportunity of making money by some shady means, we may very well comment that they ought to have known us better. But though plenty of examples can be found in ordinary speech which seem to imply that a perfect knowledge of a man's character would enable the possessor of the knowledge to predict the man's actions, examples can also be found which suggest a belief to the contrary. After all, there are occasions on which we resent the suggestion that all our utterances and actions can be predicted, as though we were automata, incapable of any originality. Ultimately, however, Mill asserts the predictability in principle of all human actions more as the alternative to admitting uncaused events than as an empirical generalization.

If we assume that Mill is right in saying that we have to choose between these two alternatives, and if we are not prepared to describe human volitions and actions as chance or random events which happen without being caused, the question then arises whether the admission that all human volitions and actions are predictable in principle is or is not compatible with describing some actions as free. In one sense at any rate it is certainly compatible. For some of our actions are performed deliberately, with a conscious purpose, while others are not, reflex acts for instance. And if we wish to use the word 'free' simply to describe actions of the first kind, as distinct from the second kind, the question of predictability is irrelevant. For even if actions of both types are predictable in principle, the difference between them remains. And the word 'free' is being used simply to mark this difference. If, however, we wish to maintain that to say that an action is performed freely necessarily implies that the agent could act otherwise without being a different sort of person, unerring predictability in virtue of a knowledge of the person's character is ruled out. And if we have already accepted the validity of Mill's thesis that we have to choose between asserting predictability in principle and asserting that free actions are random events, we shall find it difficult to claim at the same time that an agent is morally responsible for his free actions.

If, however, we wish to maintain that Mill is not justified in forcing us to choose between admitting that all human actions are predictable in principle in virtue of the agent's character and admitting that free actions are random or chance events, we have to find an acceptable alternative. And this is not easy to do. It is hardly sufficient to say that the action is indeed caused but that it is caused by the agent's will, and that no other cause is required save a final cause, namely a purpose or motive. For Mill would immediately ask, what is the cause of the volition? Or is it an uncaused event? As for the motive, what causes this motive rather than another to be the stronger, actually prevailing motive? Must it not be the agent's character, the fact that he is the sort of man that he is?

It may be said that Mill himself gets into difficulties. For example, he admits that the individual can play a part in shaping his own character. And it is indeed essential for him to admit this, if any sense is to be given to his idea of civil liberty as required for self-development. But on Mill's own premisses every effort that a man makes with a view to self-improvement must be caused. And in the long run what can be meant by the statement that a man plays an active part in shaping his own character except that the causes of his character are not simply external, educational and environmental, but also internal, physiological and psychological? But this hardly squares with what the ordinary person understands by the claim that man is free, and that he is not simply a product of his environment, but can freely play an active part in shaping his character. Hence Mill should either embrace and assert determinism, which he tries to avoid, or make it clear that he is using terms such as 'free' and 'freedom' in some peculiar sense of his own, in what Bentham would call a 'metaphysical' sense.

But the fact that difficulties can be raised in regard to Mill's position does not necessarily get other people out of their difficulties. And it might very well be argued that we cannot escape these difficulties if we once allow ourselves to share Mill's analytic approach, speaking about the agent, his character and his motives as though they were distinct entities which interact on one another. We ought instead to find another way of talking, based on a conception of the human person and his acting which cannot be expressed in Mill's terms. Bergson made an attempt to develop, or at least to indicate, such a language. And others have followed suit. We cannot talk about God in the language of, say, physics. For the concept of God is not a concept of physical science. Nor can we talk about freedom in the language used by Mill. If we try to do so, we shall find freedom being translated into something else.

The aim of the foregoing remarks is not to solve the problem of freedom, but simply to indicate some lines of reflection which arise out of Mill's discussions of the matter. For the matter of that, there is a great deal more that could be said in connection with Mill's approach and line of thought. But it would be inappropriate to devote more space to the subject in a book which is not intended to be a treatise on human liberty, whether in the civil or in the psychological sense of the term.

CHAPTER III

J. S. MILL: LOGIC AND EMPIRICISM

Introductory remarks—Names and propositions, real and verbal—The nature of mathematics—Syllogistic reasoning—Induction and the principle of the uniformity of Nature—The law of causation—Experimental inquiry and deduction—Method in the Moral Sciences—Matter as a permanent possibility of sensations—The analysis of mind and the spectre of solipsism—Mill on religion and natural theology.

1. IN the eighteenth century the study of logic had been comparatively neglected. And in the introduction to his *System of Logic* Mill pays a tribute to Richard Whateley (1787–1863), Archbishop of Dublin, as 'a writer who has done more than any other person to restore this study to the rank from which it had fallen in the estimation of the cultivated class in our own country.'[1] But it does not follow, of course, that Mill is in full agreement with Whateley's idea of the nature and scope of logic. Logic was defined by Whateley as the science and art of reasoning.[2] But this definition, Mill contends, is in any case too narrow to cover all logical operations. More important, Whateley regarded syllogistic deduction as the standard and type of all scientific inference, and he refused to admit that the logic of induction could be given a scientific form analogous to the theory of the syllogism. He did not mean, he explained, that no rules for inductive investigation could be laid down. But in his opinion such rules must always remain comparatively vague and could not be synthesized in a properly scientific theory of inductive logic. Mill, however, sets out with the aim of showing that the opposite is true. He is careful to remark that he does not despise the syllogism. And in his *System of Logic* he deals with syllogistic inference. But he lays emphasis on the nature of logic as 'the science which treats of the operations of the human mind in the pursuit of truth'.[3] That is to say, he lays emphasis on the function of logic in generalizing and

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[1] *Logic*, I, p. 2 (I, *Introduction*, 2). Whateley's *Elements of Logic* appeared in 1826.

[2] Whateley regarded the description of logic as the art of reasoning as inadequate. Logic is also the science of reasoning. As far as this emendation is concerned, Mill agrees with him.

[3] *Logic*, I, p. 4 (I, *Introduction*, 4).

synthesizing the rules for estimating evidence and advancing from known to unknown truths rather than on its function as providing rules for formal consistency in reasoning. Hence what is primarily required for the development of logic is precisely the fulfilment of the task which according to Whateley could not be fulfilled, or at least not with any degree of scientific exactitude, namely to generalize 'the modes of investigating truth and estimating evidence, by which so many important and recondite laws of nature have, in the various sciences, been aggregated to the stock of human knowledge'.[1]

But Mill is not interested simply in developing a systematic theory of inductive logic as employed in natural science. He is also concerned with working out a logic of what he calls the moral sciences, which include psychology and sociology. True, he actually considered this topic before he found himself able to complete a satisfactory account of inductive logic as given in the third book of the *System of Logic*. But this does not prevent Mill from presenting the sixth book, which deals with the logic of the moral sciences, as an application to them of the experimental method of the physical sciences. He thus makes his own the programme envisaged by David Hume, namely that of employing the experimental method in the development of a science of human nature.[2]

If it is asked whether Mill's point of view is that of an empiricist, the answer obviously depends to a great extent on the meaning which is given to this term. As Mill himself uses the term, he is not, or at any rate does not wish to be, an empiricist. Thus in the *System of Logic* he speaks of 'bad generalization *a posteriori* or empiricism properly so called',[3] as when causation is inferred from casual conjunction. Again, Mill refers to induction by simple enumeration as 'this rude and slovenly mode of generalization',[4] a mode of generalization which was demanded by Francis Bacon and which confuses merely empirical laws with causal laws. A simple example is offered by the way in which many people generalize from the people of their own country to the peoples of other countries, 'as if human beings felt, judged and acted everywhere in the same manner'.[5] Again, in Mill's work on Comte we are told that 'direct induction [is] usually no better than empiricism',[1] 'empiricism' being obviously employed in a depreciatory sense. And similar remarks occur elsewhere.

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[1] *Ibid.*, I, p. vii (in the Preface to the first edition).

[2] See Vol. V of this *History*, pp. 260–2.

[3] *Logic*, II, p. 368 (II, 5, 5, 5).

[4] *Ibid.*, II, p. 363 (II, 5, 5, 4).

[5] *Ibid.*, II, p. 368 (II, 5, 5, 4).

But though Mill certainly rejects empiricism in the sense in which he understands the term, in the sense, that is to say, of bad and slovenly generalization, of a procedure which bears little relation to scientific method or methods, he equally certainly takes his stand with Locke in holding that the material of all our knowledge is provided by experience. And if this is what is meant by empiricism, Mill is indubitably an empiricist. True, he admits intuition as a source of knowledge. Indeed, 'the truths known by intuition are the original premises from which all others are inferred'.[2] But by intuition Mill means consciousness, immediate awareness of our sensations and feelings. If by intuition is meant 'the direct knowledge we are supposed to have of things external to our minds',[3] he is not prepared to admit that there is any such thing. Indeed, the *System of Logic* 'supplies what was much wanted, a text-book of the opposite doctrine—that which derives all knowledge from experience, and all moral and intellectual qualities principally from the direction given to the associations'.[4]

Mill's rejection of what he calls the German or *a priori* view of human knowledge, which is to be found in the philosophy of Coleridge and to a certain extent in that of Whewell, is complicated by the fact that he regards it as having undesirable consequences in moral and political theory, or even as being invoked to support undesirable social attitudes and convictions. 'The notion that truths external to the mind may be known by intuition or consciousness, independently of observation and experience, is, I am persuaded, in these times the great intellectual support of false doctrines and bad institutions. . . . There never was such an instrument devised for consecrating all deep-seated prejudices.'[5] Hence when the *System of Logic* endeavours to explain mathematical knowledge, the stronghold of the intuitionists, without recourse to the idea of intuitive or *a priori* knowledge, it is performing a valuable social service as well as attempting to settle a purely theoretical problem.

It may be objected that these remarks are really quite inadequate for settling the question whether or not Mill is to be described as an empiricist. On the one hand, if empiricism is equated with bad and slovenly generalization, it is indeed obvious that neither Mill nor any other serious thinker would wish to be called an empiricist. For the term becomes one of abuse or at least of depreciation. On the other hand, a conviction that the material of our knowledge is furnished by experience is not by itself sufficient warrant for calling a philosopher an empiricist. Hence to observe that Mill attacks empiricism in a certain sense of the term while at the same time he maintains that all our knowledge is grounded in experience, does not do more than narrow down the question to a certain extent. It does not answer it. We are not told, for instance, whether Mill admits metaphysical principles which, though we come to know them as a basis of experience and not *a priori*, nevertheless go beyond any actual experience, in the sense that they apply to all possible experience.

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[1] *Auguste Comte and Positivism*, p. 121 (2nd edition, 1866).

[2] *Logic*, I, p. 5 (I, *Introduction*, 4).

[3] *Ibid.*, I, footnote (I, *Introduction*, 4).

[4] *Autobiography*, p. 225.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 225–6.

This line of objection is perfectly reasonable. But it is difficult to give a simple answer to the question raised. On the one hand Mill certainly takes up an empiricist position when he explicitly asserts that we cannot attain absolute truth and that all generalizations are revisable in principle. On the other hand, when he is differentiating between properly scientific induction and slovenly generalization, he tends to speak in such a way as to imply that hitherto unknown truths can be inferred with certainty from known truths and, consequently, that Nature possesses a stable structure, as it were, which could be expressed in statements which would be true of all possible experience. In view of Mill's general position in the history of British philosophy and in view of the influence exercised by his thought it is perfectly natural that we should emphasize the first aspect of his thought and call him an empiricist. But it is as well to remember that he sometimes adopts positions which imply a different point of view. In any case the different strands in his thought can be seen only by considering what he says on particular topics.

2. Logic, Mill maintains, is concerned with inferences from truths previously known, not, of course, in the sense that the logician increases our knowledge of the world by actually making substantial inferences, but in the sense that he provides the tests or criteria for determining the value of inference or proof, and consequently of belief in so far as it professes to be grounded on proof. But inference is 'an operation which usually takes place by means of words, and in complicated cases can take place in no

other way'.[1] Hence it is proper to begin a systematic study of logic by a consideration of language.

We might perhaps expect that Mill would turn immediately to propositions. For it is propositions which are inferred. But as he regards the proposition as always affirming or denying a predicate of a subject, one name, as he puts it, of another name, he actually begins by discussing names and the process of naming.

It is unnecessary to mention here all the distinctions which Mill draws between different types of names. But the following points can be noted. According to Mill, whenever a name given to objects has in the proper sense a meaning, its meaning consists in what it connotes, not in what it denotes. All concrete general names are of this kind. For example, the word 'man' can denote or refer to an indefinite number of individual things which together are said to form a class; but its meaning resides in what it connotes, namely the attributes which are predicated when the word 'man' is applied to certain beings. It follows, therefore, that proper names, such as John, which can be applied to more than one individual but which have no connotation, possess, strictly speaking, no meaning. It does not follow, however, that the word 'God' has no meaning. For this term is not, according to Mill, a proper name. To be sure, as used by the monotheist the term is applicable to only one being. But this is because, as so used, it connotes a certain union of attributes which in fact limits its range of application. It is thus a connotative term, not a proper name like John or Mary.

Mill does indeed distinguish between words which name things or attributes and words which enter into the naming-process. For instance, in 'the wife of Socrates' the word 'of' is not itself a name.[2] But Mill has been criticized by later logicians for passing over words such as 'or' and 'if', which can certainly not be described as parts of names.

Turning to propositions, we find, as already indicated, that Mill's over-emphasis on names and naming leads him to regard all propositions as affirming or denying one name or another. The words which are commonly, though not necessarily, used to signify affirmative or negative predication are 'is' or 'is not', 'are' or 'are not'. Thus Mill takes the subject-copula-predicate form of proposition as the standard, though not invariable, form. And he warns his readers about the ambiguity of the term 'is'. For example, if we fail to distinguish between the existential use of the verb 'to be' and its use as a copula, we may be led into such absurdities as supposing that unicorns must possess some form of existence because we can say that the unicorn is an animal with one horn, or even because we can say that it is an imaginary beast.

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[1] *Logic*, I, p. 17 (I, I, I, I).

[2] The phrase 'the wife of Socrates' would be for Mill a name, but not a proper name. For it is a connotative name, whereas proper names, such as John, are not connotative but solely denotative.

In the course of his discussion of the import or meaning of propositions Mill distinguishes between real and verbal propositions. In a real proposition we affirm or deny of a subject an attribute which is not already connoted by its name, or a fact which is not already comprised in the signification of the name of the subject. In other words, a real proposition conveys new factual information, true or false as the case may be, information which is new in the sense that it cannot be obtained simply by analysis of the meaning of the subject term. As proper names are not connotative terms and, strictly speaking, possess no 'meaning', every proposition, such as 'John is married', which has as its subject a proper name, must necessarily belong to this class. Verbal propositions, however, are concerned simply with the meanings of names: the predicate can be obtained by analysis of the connotation or meaning of the subject term. For example, in 'man is a corporeal being' the predicate already forms part of the connotation or meaning of the term 'man'. For we would not call anything a man unless it were a corporeal being. Hence the proposition says something about the meaning of a name, about its usage: it does not convey factual information in the sense that 'John is married' or 'the mean distance of the moon from the earth is 238,860 miles' conveys factual information.

The most important class of verbal propositions are definitions, a definition being 'a proposition declaratory of the meaning of a word: namely, either the meaning which it bears in common acceptance or that which the speaker or writer, for the particular purposes of his discourse, intends to annex to it'.[1] Mill thus does not exclude the use of words in new ways for specific purposes. But he insists on the need for examining ordinary usage very carefully before we undertake to reform language. For an examination of the different shades of meaning which a word has in common usage, or changes in its use, may bring to light distinctions and other relevant factors which it is important that the would-be reformer of language should bear in mind.

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[1] *Logic*, I, p. 151 (I, I, 8, I). As proper names do not possess meaning, they cannot be defined.

Obviously, when Mill says that definitions are verbal propositions, he does not intend to imply that they are by nature purely arbitrary or that inquiries into matters of fact are never relevant to the framing of definitions. It would be absurd, for example, to define man with complete disregard for the attributes which those beings whom we call men possess in common. Mill's point is that though the connotation of the term 'man' is grounded in experience of men, and though inquiries into matters of fact can render this connotation less vague and more distinct, what the definition as such does is simply to make this connotation or meaning explicit, either wholly or in part, that is, by means of selected differentiating attributes. True, we may be inclined to suppose that the definition is not purely verbal. But the inclination can be easily explained if we bear in mind the ambiguity of the copula. A general connotative term such as 'man' denotes an indefinite number of things and connotes certain attributes which they have in common. When, therefore, it is said that 'man is . . .', we may be inclined to suppose that the definition asserts that there are men. In this case, however, we tacitly presuppose the presence of two propositions, corresponding to two possible uses of the verb 'to be'; on the one hand the definition, which simply makes explicit the meaning of the term 'man', and on the other hand an existential proposition which asserts that there are beings which possess the attributes mentioned in the definition. If we omit the existential proposition which we have surreptitiously introduced, we can see that the definition is purely verbal, concerned simply with the meaning of a name.

Let us return for a moment to real propositions and consider a general proposition such as 'All men are mortal.'[1] Looked at from one point of view, as a portion of speculative truth, as Mill puts it, this means that the attributes of man are always accompanied by the attribute of being mortal. And under analysis this means that certain phenomena are regularly associated with other phenomena. But we can also look at the proposition under the aspect of a memorandum for practical use. And it then means that 'the attributes of man are *evidence of*, are a *mark* of, mortality'.[2] In other words, it tells us what to expect. According to Mill these different meanings are ultimately equivalent. But in scientific inference it is the practical aspect of meaning, its predictive aspect, which is of special importance.

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[1] This is, for Mill, a real proposition, and not an 'essential' or purely verbal proposition.

[2] *Logic*, I, p. 13 (I, I, 6, 5).

We have, therefore, a distinction between verbal propositions in which the predicate is either identical with or a part of the meaning of the subject term, and real propositions, in which the predicate is not contained in the connotation of the subject. And Mill remarks that 'this distinction corresponds to that which is drawn by Kant and other metaphysicians between what they term analytic and synthetic judgments; the former being those which can be evolved from the meaning of the terms used'.[1] We may add that Mill's distinction also corresponds more or less to Hume's distinction between propositions which state relations between ideas and propositions which state matters of fact.

If we mean by truth correspondence between a proposition and the extra-linguistic fact to which it refers,[2] it obviously follows that no purely verbal proposition can be properly described as true. A definition can be adequate or inadequate; it can correspond or not correspond with linguistic usage. But by itself it makes no statement about matters of extra-linguistic fact. The question arises, however, whether for Mill there are real propositions which are necessarily true. Does he agree with Hume that no real proposition can be necessarily true? Or, to use Kantian terminology, does he recognize the existence of synthetic *a priori* propositions?

It is a notorious fact that Mill tends to speak in different ways, his way of speaking being influenced by his reaction to the type of theory which he happens to be discussing. Hence it is difficult to say what *the* view of Mill is. However, he is undoubtedly opposed to the view that there is any *a priori* knowledge of reality. And this opposition naturally inclines him to reject synthetic *a priori* propositions. Mill is not indeed prepared to say that when the negation of a given proposition appears to us as unbelievable, the proposition must be merely verbal. For there are doubtless some real propositions which reflect a uniformity or regularity of experience such that the negations of these propositions seem to us unbelievable. And for all practical purposes we are justified in treating them as though they were necessarily true. Indeed, we can hardly do otherwise, because *ex hypothesi* we have had no experience which has led us to question their universal applicability. But a real proposition can be necessarily true in the psychological sense that we find its opposite unbelievable, without being necessarily true in the logical sense that it must be true of all possible experience, of all unobserved or unexperienced phenomena.

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[1] *Ibid.*, I, p. 129, footnote (I, I, 6, 4, footnote). Mill tends to use the term 'metaphysics' in the sense of theory of knowledge.

[2] It is not denied, of course, that there can be true propositions which state matters of linguistic fact, propositions about the English language, for example.

This seems to be more or less Mill's characteristic position. But to appreciate the complexity of the situation it is advisable to consider what he has to say about mathematical propositions, the great stronghold of intuitionists and upholders of *a priori* knowledge.

3. It is scarcely necessary to say that Mill recognizes that mathematics possesses some peculiar characteristics. He remarks, for example, that 'the propositions of geometry are independent of the succession of events'.[1] Again, the truths of mathematics 'have no connection with laws of causation. . . . That when two straight lines intersect each other the opposite angles are equal, is true of all such lines and angles, by whatever cause produced.'[2] Again, mathematical reasoning 'does not suffer us to let in, at any of the joints in the reasoning, an assumption which we have not faced in the shape of an axiom, postulate or definition. This is a merit which it has in common with formal Logic.'[3]

When, however, we start inquiring into Mill's general theory of mathematics, complications arise. Dugald Stewart maintained that mathematical propositions do not express matters of fact but only connections between suppositions or assumptions and certain consequences. He further maintained that the first principles of geometry are Euclid's definitions, not the postulates and axioms. And as he regarded the definitions as arbitrary, he made it difficult to explain how pure mathematics can be applied. That mathematics can fit reality, so to speak, and be successfully applied in physics becomes for him a matter of pure coincidence. Mill, however, was not satisfied with this position. He wished to say that mathematical propositions are true. Hence he could not admit that Euclid's theorems are deducible from definitions. For Mill held, as we have seen, that definitions are neither true nor false. He had to maintain, therefore, that Euclid's theorems are deduced from postulates, which can be true or false. And he argued that any Euclidean definition is only partly a definition. For it also involves a postulate. In other words, any Euclidean definition can be analysed into two propositions, of which one is a postulate or assumption in regard to a matter of fact while the other is a genuine definition. Thus the definition of a circle can be analysed into the following two propositions: 'a figure may exist, having all the points in the line which bounds it equally distant from a single point within it', (and) 'any figure possessing this property is called a circle'.[1] The first proposition is a postulate; and it is such postulates, not the pure definitions, which form the premisses for the deduction of Euclid's theorems. The gap which Stewart created between pure and applied mathematics is thus closed. For the propositions of geometry, for instance, are not derived from arbitrary definitions but from postulates or assumptions concerning matters of fact.

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[1] *Logic*, I, p. 373 (I, 3, 5, 1).

[2] *Ibid.*, II, p. 147 (II, 3, 24, 3).

[3] *Examination*, p. 526.

We can say, therefore, that in geometry 'our reasonings are grounded on the matters of fact postulated in definitions, and not on the definitions themselves'.[2] And 'this conclusion', Mills remarks, 'is one which I have in common with Dr. Whewell'.[3] But though Mill may find himself in agreement with Whewell when it is a question of attacking Stewart's idea that the theorems of Euclidean geometry are deduced from definitions, agreement immediately ceases when it is a question of our knowledge of the first principles of mathematics. According to Whewell these first principles are self-evident, underived from experience and known intuitively. They constitute examples of *a priori* knowledge. And this is a position which Mill is unwilling to accept. He maintains instead that in mathematics 'these original premisses, from which the remaining truths of the science are deduced, are, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, results of observations and experiences, founded, in short, on the evidence of the senses'.[4] We have never come across a case which would refute a mathematical axiom; and the operation of the laws of association is quite sufficient to explain our belief in the necessity of such axioms.

In the general class of 'original premisses' Mill makes a distinction between axioms and the postulates involved in definitions. Axioms are exactly true. 'That things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another, is as true of the lines and figures in nature, as it would be of the imaginary ones assumed in the definitions.'[1] But the postulates or assumptions involved in the definitions of Euclidean geometry 'are so far from being necessary, that they are not even true; they purposely depart, more or less widely, from the truth'.[2] For example, it is not true that a line as defined by the geometer can exist. But it does not follow that the geometer intuits some peculiar mathematical entity. When he defines the line as having length but not breadth, he is deciding, for his own purposes, to ignore the element of breadth, to abstract from it, and to consider only length. Hence both axioms and postulates are derived from experience.

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[1] *Logic*, I, p. 165 (I, I, 8, 5). [2] *Ibid.*, I, p. 171 (I, I, 8, 6). [3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, II, pp. 148–9 (II, 3, 24, 4).

Obviously, when Mill describes the first principles of mathematics as generalizations from experience, he is not suggesting that our knowledge of all mathematical propositions is in fact the result of inductive generalization. What he is saying in effect is that the ultimate premisses of mathematical demonstration are empirical hypotheses. He therefore finds himself in agreement with Dugald Stewart as against Whewell. As we have seen, he disagrees with Stewart's derivation of Euclidean geometry from pure definitions; but this disagreement is played down when it is a question of noting their substantial agreement about the nature of mathematics. 'The opinion of Dugald Stewart respecting the foundations of geometry is, I conceive, substantially correct; that it is built on hypotheses.'[3] All that Whewell can show, when arguing against this opinion, is that the hypotheses are not arbitrary. But 'those who say that the premisses of geometry are hypotheses, are not bound to maintain them to be hypotheses which have no relation whatever to fact'.[4]

Having said this, Mill then proceeds to get himself into an impossible position. An hypothesis, he remarks, is usually taken to be a postulate or assumption which is not known to be true but is surmised to be true, because, if it were true, it would account for certain facts. But the hypotheses of which he is speaking are not at all of this kind. For, as we have seen, the postulates involved in the definitions of Euclidean geometry are known *not* to be literally true. Further, as much as is true in the hypotheses under discussion 'is not hypothetical, but certain'.[5] The hypotheses, therefore, appear to fall into two parts, one part being known not to be literally true, the other part being certain. And it is thus rather difficult to see what justification there is for speaking of 'hypotheses' at all. Nor is the situation improved when Mill says that to call the conclusions of geometry necessary truths is really to say that they follow correctly from suppositions which 'are not even true'.[1] What he means, of course, is that the necessity of the conclusions consists in the fact that they follow necessarily from the premisses. But if we were to take literally the suggestion that necessary truths are necessary because they follow from untrue assumptions, we should have to say that Mill was talking nonsense. However, it would be unfair to understand him in this way.

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[1] *Logic*, I, p. 265 (I, 2, 5, 3).
[2] *Ibid.*, I, p. 262 (I, 2, 5, 1).
[3] *Ibid.*, I, p. 261 (I, 2, 5, 1).
[4] *Ibid.*, I, p. 263 (I, 2, 5, 2).
[5] *Ibid.*, I, p. 261, note (I, 2, 5, 1, note).

In his *Autobiography* Mill makes it clear that the interpretation of mathematics which he regards as his own is the explanation of so-called necessary truths in terms of 'experience and association'.[2] Hence it would be going too far if one suggested that after the publication of the *System of Logic* Mill later produced a new interpretation of mathematics. It may even be going too far if one suggests that he consciously entertained second thoughts about the interpretation, or interpretations, given in the *Logic*. But it can hardly be denied that he made remarks which implied a different conception of mathematics. For example, in his *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* Mill informs his readers that the laws of number underlie the laws of extension, that these two sets of laws underlie the laws of force, and that the laws of force 'underlie all the other laws of the material universe'.[3] Similarly, in the Address which he wrote in 1866 for the University of St. Andrews Mill implies that mathematics gives us the key to Nature, and that it is not so much that the first principles of mathematics are formed by inductive generalization from observation of phenomena which might be otherwise than they are as that phenomena are what they are because of certain mathematical laws. Obviously, this would not necessarily affect the thesis that we come to know mathematical truths on a basis of experience and not *a priori*. But it would certainly affect the thesis that the necessity of mathematics is purely hypothetical.

Perhaps the situation can be summed up in this way. According to Mill, for the development of the science of number or arithmetic no more is required than two fundamental axioms, namely 'things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another' and

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[1] *Ibid.*, I, p. 262 (I, 2, 5, 1).

[2] *Autobiography*, p. 226.

[3] *Examination*, p. 533.

'equals added to equals make equal sums', 'together with the definitions of the various numbers'.[1] These axioms can hardly be described as empirical hypotheses, unless one resolutely confuses the psychological question of the way in which we come to recognize them with the question of their logical status. And though Mill speaks of them as inductive truths, he also speaks of their 'infallible truth'[2] being recognized 'from the dawn of speculation'.[3] It would thus be quite possible to regard such axioms as necessarily true by virtue of the meanings of the verbal symbols used, and to develop a formalist interpretation of mathematics. But Mill was not prepared to admit that the fundamental axioms of mathematics are verbal propositions. Hence, if he was determined, as he was, to undermine the stronghold of the intuitionists, he had to interpret them as inductive generalizations, as empirical hypotheses. And the necessity of mathematical propositions had to be interpreted simply as a necessity of logical connection between premisses and the conclusions derived from them. At the same time Mill was acutely conscious of the success of applied mathematics in increasing our knowledge of the world; and he came to make remarks which remind us of Galileo, not to mention Plato. He thought, no doubt, that talk about laws of number lying at the basis of the phenomenal world was quite consistent with his interpretation of the basic principles of mathematics. But though it was consistent with the psychological statement that our knowledge of mathematical truths actually presupposes experience of things, it was hardly consistent with the logical statement that mathematical axioms are empirical hypotheses. And we have seen how Mill got himself into a difficult position when he tried to explain in what sense they are hypotheses.

In fine, we can say one of two things. Either we can say that Mill held an empiricist view of mathematics, but that he made assertions which were inconsistent with this view. And this is the traditional way of depicting the situation. Or we can say with certain writers[4] that though Mill seems to have thought that he was expounding one unified interpretation of mathematics, in actual fact we can discern several alternative interpretations in his writings, interpretations between which he continued to hesitate, in practice if not in theory.

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[1] *Logic*, II, p. 150 (II, 3, 24, 5). [2] *Ibid.*, II, p. 149 (II, 3, 24, 4). [3] *Ibid.*

[4] Notably R. P. Anschutz in *The Philosophy of J. S. Mill*, ch. 9.

4. Most of the propositions which we believe, Mill remarks, are believed not because of any immediate evidence for their truth but because they are derived from other propositions, the truth of which we have already assumed, whether justifiably or not. In short, most of the propositions which we believe are inferred from other propositions. But inference can be of two main kinds. On the one hand we can infer propositions from others which are equally or more general. On the other hand we can infer propositions from others which are less general than the propositions inferred from them. In the first case we have what is commonly called deductive inference or ratiocination, while in the second case we have inductive inference.

Now, according to Mill there is 'real' inference only when a new truth is inferred, that is, a truth which is not already contained in the premisses. And in this case only induction can be accounted real inference, inasmuch as 'the conclusion or induction embraces more than is contained in the premisses'.[1] When the conclusion is precontained in the premisses inference makes no real advance in knowledge. And this is true of syllogistic inference. For 'it is universally allowed that a syllogism is vicious if there be anything more in the conclusion than was assumed in the premisses. But this is, in fact, to say that nothing ever was, or can be, proved by syllogism, which was not known, or assumed to be known, before.'[2]

If this were all that Mill had to say on the matter, it would be natural to conclude that for him there are two distinct types of logic. On the one hand there is deductive inference, in which from more general propositions we infer less general propositions. And as the inference is invalid unless the conclusion is precontained in the premisses, no new truth can be discovered in this way. Syllogistic reasoning can ensure logical consistency in thought. For example, if someone speaks in such a way as to show that he is really asserting both that all *X's* are *Y* and that a particular *X* is not *Y*, we can employ the forms of syllogistic reasoning to make clear to him the logical inconsistency of his thought. But no new truth is, or can be, discovered in this way. For to say that all *X's* are *Y* is to say that every *X* is *Y*. On the other hand we have inductive inference, the inference employed in physical science, whereby the mind moves from what is known to a truth which is unknown before the process of inference establishes it. In short, on the one hand we have a logic of consistency, on the other hand a logic of discovery.

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[1] *Logic*, I, p. 187 (I, 2, I, 3).

[2] *Ibid.*, I, p. 209 (I, 2, 3, I).

In reality, however, the situation is much more complicated than this preliminary account suggests. Consider one of the arguments mentioned by Mill: 'All men are mortal; the Duke of Wellington is a man: therefore the Duke of Wellington is mortal.' It is indeed obvious that to concede the major and minor premisses and deny the conclusion would involve one in logical inconsistency. But Mill sometimes speaks as though to assume the truth of the major premiss is to assume the truth of the conclusion in such a way that to know the truth of the major is already to know the truth of the conclusion. And this seems to be questionable on either of the interpretations of the major premiss which he puts forward.

We have already seen that according to Mill the proposition 'all men are mortal', when it is considered as what he calls a portion of speculative truth, means that 'the attributes of man are always accompanied by the attribute mortality'.[1] Mill here fixes his attention on the connotation of the word 'man'. And if the proposition 'all men are mortal' is interpreted in terms of the connotation of the word 'man', it is natural to say that the proposition concerns universals, not particulars. Further, if we were to interpret 'always' as meaning 'necessarily', there would be no cogent ground for saying that the man who asserts that the attributes which make up the connotation of the word 'man' are always accompanied by the attribute of mortality, must already know that the Duke of Wellington is mortal. True, the assertion in question can be said to imply that if there is a being which can properly be described as the Duke of Wellington and which also possesses the attributes that make up the connotation of the word 'man', this being also possesses the attribute of mortality. But the fact remains that the assertion does not necessarily presuppose any knowledge whatsoever of the Duke of Wellington.

It may be objected that Mill does not interpret 'always' as 'necessarily'. If he did, this would make 'all men are mortal' an essential or verbal proposition. For mortality would then be one of the attributes which make up the connotation of the word 'man'. In point of fact Mill regards 'all men are mortal' as a real proposition. Hence 'always' does not mean 'necessarily' but 'so far as all observation goes'. Moreover, though Mill may sometimes speak in a way which implies or suggests a realistic theory of universals, it is a notorious fact that in the course of his discussion of the syllogism he supports a nominalist theory. In other words, 'all men' must be understood in terms of denotation. It means 'all particular men'. And if we *know* that *all* particular men are mortal, we know that any particular man is mortal.

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[1] *Logic*, I, p. 130 (I, I, 6, 5).

The premisses of this argument are correct. That is to say, Mill does regard 'all men are mortal' as a real and not as a verbal proposition, and he does take up a nominalist position in his discussion of the syllogism. But the conclusion of the argument does not follow from the premisses. For according to Mill's nominalist theory 'all men are mortal' is a record of experience of particular facts, that is, of facts such as that Socrates and Julius Caesar both died. And if the Duke of Wellington is a living man, his death is obviously not included among these particular facts. Hence it cannot be reasonably claimed that to know that all men are mortal presupposes or includes knowledge of the mortality of the Duke of Wellington. The conclusion that the Duke of Wellington is mortal is not precontained in the proposition 'all men are mortal'. And it seems to follow that inference from 'all men are mortal' to 'the Duke of Wellington is mortal' is invalid.

In order to make the inference valid we have to say that 'all men are mortal' is not simply a record of past experience of people dying but also an inductive inference which goes beyond the empirical evidence and serves as a prediction, telling us what to expect. Having observed in the past that the attributes which make up the connotation of the term 'man' have in fact been accompanied by mortality, we infer that the same is to be expected in the future. In other words, 'all men are mortal' becomes not so much a premiss from which the mortality of living and future men is deduced as a formula for making future inferences, that is, from the possession of certain other attributes to the attribute of mortality. And this is precisely what Mill says. 'General propositions are merely registers of such inferences already made, and short formulae for making more. The major premiss of a syllogism, consequently, is a formula of this description: and the conclusion is not an inference drawn *from* the formula, but an inference drawn *according* to the formula.'[1] And the rules of syllogistic inferences are rules for the correct interpretation of the formula. As such, they are useful. And Mill can enter 'a protest, as strong as that of Archbishop Whateley himself, against the doctrine that the syllogistic art is useless for the purposes of reasoning'.[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, I, p. 221 (I, 2, 3, 4). The notion of a formula 'according to which' was suggested to Mill by Dugald Stewart's doctrine that the axioms of geometry are principles according to which, not from which, we reason.

But if the major premiss is not a proposition *from* which the conclusion is derived but a formula *according to which* the conclusion is drawn, it follows that it is particular observed facts which constitute the real logical antecedent. In other words 'all inference is from particulars to particulars'.[2] A multitude of particular factual connections between being a man and being mortal have been observed in the past. As we cannot carry them all in our heads, we record them in a compendious memorandum. But the record is not simply an historical note. It runs beyond the empirical evidence observed in the past and predicts the future, serving as a guide to or formula for making inferences. And though we need not cast our reasoning according to the formula in syllogistic form, we can do so. The rules of syllogistic inference are a set of rules or precautions for ensuring correctness and consistency in our interpretation of the formula, correctness being measured by our purpose in establishing the formula, namely to simplify the making of future inferences in accordance with our past inferences. Syllogistic reasoning then becomes the latter half in the total process, as Mill puts it, of travelling from premisses to conclusions, that is, from particulars to particulars. In other words, the gap between deductive and inductive inference is diminished.

But there is more to come. Mill admits that there are cases in which syllogistic reasoning constitutes the whole process of reasoning from premisses to conclusion. These cases occur, for example, in theology and in law, when the major premiss is derived from the appropriate authority, and not by inductive inference from particular cases. Thus a lawyer may receive his major premiss, in the form of a general law, from the legislator and then argue that it applies or does not apply in some particular case or set of circumstances. But Mill adds that the lawyer's process of reasoning is then 'not a process of inference, but a process of interpretation'.[3]

We have already seen, however, that when syllogistic inference constitutes the second half of a total process of reasoning from premisses to conclusion, it is in effect a process of interpreting a formula, namely the major premiss. And in this case the sharp distinction between two kinds of logic collapses. Syllogistic reasoning is simply a process of interpretation. It can stand on its own, so to speak, as may happen when a theologian takes his major premiss from the authority of the Scripture or the Church. Or it can form one phase in a total process of inference from particulars to particulars. But in neither case is it, taken in itself, an example of inference. And the rules of the syllogism are rules for the correct interpretation of a general proposition, not rules of inference, in the proper sense of the term at least.

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[1] *Logic*, I, p. 225 (I, 2, 3, 5).

[2] *Ibid.*, I, p. 223 (I, 2, 3, 4).

[3] *Ibid.*, I, p. 221 (I, 2, 3, 4).

5. In view of the fact that Mill represents syllogistic reasoning as a process of interpreting a general proposition which is itself the result of induction, it is not surprising that he defines inductive inference as 'the operation of discovering and proving general propositions'.[1] At first sight the definition may indeed appear somewhat strange. For, as we have seen, all inference is said to be from particulars to particulars. However, 'generals are but collections of particulars definite in kind but indefinite in number'.[2]

This amounts to saying that to prove a general proposition is to prove that something is true of a whole class of particulars. Hence induction can be defined as 'that operation of the mind by which we infer that what we know to be true in a particular case or cases will be true in all cases which resemble the former in certain assignable respects'.[3] Obviously, Mill is not thinking of so-called perfect induction, in which the general proposition simply records what has already been observed to be true in regard to every single member of a class. For induction in this sense does not represent any advance in knowledge.[4] He is thinking of inference which goes beyond the actual data of experience and argues, for example, from the known truth that some *X's* are *Y* to the conclusion that anything at any time which possesses the attributes in virtue of which *X's* are considered as members of a class will also be found to possess the attribute *Y*.

The basic presupposition implied by this process of going beyond the actual empirical data to the enunciation of a general proposition is, according to Mill, the principle of the uniformity of Nature, that all phenomena take place according to general laws. 'The proposition that the course of Nature is uniform, is the fundamental principle, or general axiom, of Induction.'[1] And he goes on to say that if inductive inference from particulars to particulars were to be put in syllogistic form by supplying a major premiss, this same principle would constitute the ultimate major premiss.

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[1] *Ibid.*, 1, p. 328 (1, 3, 1, 2).

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, 1, p. 333 (1, 3, 2, 1). The use of the word 'will' should not be taken to mean that inductive inference is exclusively a process of inferring the future from the past. The general proposition refers also, of course, to unobserved contemporary members of a class, and indeed to unobserved past members.

[4] If, for instance, I first discover that each Apostle is a Jew and then say, 'all the Apostles are Jews', this general proposition does not represent any real advance in knowledge.

Now, if the principle of the uniformity of Nature is described as a fundamental principle or axiom or postulate of induction, this may tend to suggest that the principle is explicitly conceived and postulated before any particular scientific inference is made. But this is not at all Mill's point of view. He means rather that the uniformity of Nature is the necessary condition for the validity of scientific inference, and that in embarking on any particular inference we tacitly presuppose it, even though we are not consciously aware of the fact. When, therefore, he says that if an inductive inference were to be cast into syllogistic form, the principle of the uniformity of Nature would be found to constitute the ultimate major premiss, he means that the principle is the 'suppressed' premiss of induction. And, following his general doctrine of syllogistic reasoning, he means that it is a tacit formula or axiom *in accordance with which* inferences are made, not a proposition *from* which the conclusion of the inference is deduced. True, mention of the syllogism is rather confusing. For, as we have seen, Mill regards syllogistic reasoning as the interpretation of a formula; and this suggests deliberate interpretation of a consciously conceived and enunciated formula. But though the principle of the uniformity of Nature would obviously have to be explicitly enunciated if we were actually to cast inference into syllogistic form by supplying the suppressed major premiss, it by no means follows that all scientific inference involves conscious awareness of the principle or axiom in accordance with which it operates.

Mill has no intention, therefore, of suggesting that the principle of the uniformity of Nature is a self-evident truth which is known antecedently to the discovery of particular regularities or uniformities. On the contrary, 'this great generalization is itself founded on prior generalizations.'[2] And so far from being the first induction to be made, it is one of the last. This may indeed appear at first sight to be incompatible with Mill's view that the uniformity of Nature is the basic presupposition of scientific inference. But his position seems to be more or less as follows. Scientific inference would not be valid unless there was uniformity in Nature. Hence when we turn to the investigation of Nature and embark on scientific inference, we tacitly presuppose that there is uniformity in Nature, even though we are unaware of the fact. The explicit idea of the uniformity of Nature arises through the discovery of particular uniformities. And the more we discover such uniformities, the more we tend to prove the validity of the idea, and thus of the implicit presupposition of all inference.

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[1] *Logic*, I, p. 355 (I, 3, 3, 1).

[2] *Ibid.*

Now, if the principle of the uniformity of Nature is taken to mean that the course of Nature is always uniform in the sense that the future will always repeat or resemble the past, the principle, as a universal proposition, is patently untrue. As Mill observes, the weather does not follow a uniform course in this sense, nor does anyone expect it to do so. But what is called the uniformity of Nature 'is itself a complex fact, compounded of all the separate uniformities which exist in respect to single phenomena',[1] these separate uniformities being commonly called laws of Nature. Presumably, therefore, to say that scientific inference presupposes the uniformity of Nature is simply to say that the scientific investigation of Nature tacitly presupposes that there are uniformities in Nature. In other words, the condition of the validity of scientific inference is that there should be uniformities in the context or sphere with which the inference is concerned. And the progressive discovery of particular uniformities constitutes the progressive validation of scientific inference.

It is often said that Mill attempts to 'justify' scientific inference from the unknown to the known. And so he does in a sense. But in what sense? He tells us indeed that 'the real proof that what is true of John, Peter, etc. is true of all mankind, can only be, that a different supposition would be inconsistent with the uniformity which we know to exist in the course of Nature'.[2] But we do not know in advance that the course of Nature is uniform. We may assume it, and if the assumption is partly a rule for making inferences, consistency demands that we should follow it. But consistency alone can hardly constitute a proof of the assumption. If at any rate we concentrate our attention on the empiricist aspects of Mill's thought, on his denial of *a priori* knowledge and on his view that all inference is from particulars to particulars, generals being but collections of particulars, it seems that the only possible justification of inductive generalization is partial verification coupled with absence of falsification. We cannot observe all possible instances of a law or asserted uniformity. But if the law is verified in those cases where we do test it empirically and if we know of no case in which it is falsified, this appears to be the only sort of justification of the inductive leap from the known to the unknown, from the observed to the unobserved, from 'some' to 'all', which can be provided. And if the uniformity of Nature is simply the complex of particular uniformities, it follows that the uniformity of Nature in a general sense tends to be proved, in the only sense in which it can ever be proved, in proportion as particular inductive generalizations are found, through partial verification and absence of falsification, to be successful predictions of phenomena.

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[1] *Ibid.*, I, p. 364 (I, 3, 4, I).

[2] *Ibid.*, I, p. 357 (I, 3, 3, I).

6. In common parlance, as Mill puts it, the various uniformities in Nature are called the laws of Nature. But in stricter scientific language the laws of Nature are the uniformities in Nature when reduced to their simplest expression. They are 'the fewest and simplest assumptions, which being granted, the whole existing order of Nature would result',[1] or 'the fewest general propositions from which all the uniformities which exist in the universe might be deductively inferred'.[2] The task of the scientific study of Nature is to ascertain what these laws are and what subordinate uniformities can be inferred from them, while the task of inductive logic is to determine the principles and rules governing the arguments by which such knowledge is established.

We can note in passing how Mill shifts his position under the influence of the actual nature of science. When speaking as an empiricist, he tells us that all inference is from particulars to particulars, and that general propositions, reached by inductive generalization, are formulas for making inferences but not propositions *from* which conclusions are deduced. Now he tells us that the scientific study of Nature involves deducing less general from more general laws. Obviously, it remains true that particulars as such cannot be deduced from any general proposition. The general proposition tells us what to expect, and we then have to examine empirically whether the prediction is confirmed or falsified. At the same time there seems to be a change of emphasis. When discussing the syllogism, Mill gives a nominalist account of the process of inference. When he turns to induction he tends to adopt a more realist position. He tends to assume that Nature possesses a stable structure which can be represented in the edifice of science.

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[1] *Logic*, I, p. 366 (I, 3, 4, 1).

[2] *Ibid.*

Some laws or uniformities, such as the propositions of geometry, are unrelated to temporal succession. Others, such as the propositions of arithmetic, apply both to synchronous or coexisting and to successive phenomena. Others again are related only to temporal succession. And the most important of these is the law of causation. 'The truth that every fact which has a beginning has a cause, is coextensive with human experience.'[1] Indeed, recognition of the law of causation is 'the main pillar of inductive science'.[2] That is to say, inductive science establishes causal laws, and it presupposes that every event happens in accordance with such a law. Hence in developing a theory of induction it is essential to define the idea of causality as clearly as possible.

Mill disclaims any intention of concerning himself with ultimate causes in a metaphysical sense.[3] Moreover, as he intends to determine the idea of causality only in so far as it can be obtained from experience, he does not propose to introduce the notion of any mysterious necessary bond between cause and effect. Such a notion is not required for a theory of inductive science. There is no need to go beyond 'the familiar truth, that invariability of succession is found by observation to obtain between every fact in nature and some other fact which has preceded it'.[4]

At the same time it is misleading to assert that Mill reduces the causal relation to invariable sequence. For this might be taken to imply that in his view the cause of a given phenomenon can be identified with any other phenomenon which is found by experience always to precede it. Rather does he identify the cause of a given phenomenon with the totality of antecedents, positive and negative, which are required for the occurrence of the phenomenon and which are sufficient for its occurrence. 'Invariable sequence, therefore, is not synonymous with causation, unless the sequence, besides being invariable, is unconditional.'[5] And the cause of a phenomenon is, properly speaking, 'the antecedent, or the concurrence of antecedents, on which it is invariably and *unconditionally* consequent'.[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, I, p. 376 (I, 3, 5, 1).

[2] *Ibid.*, I, p. 377 (I, 3, 5, 2).

[3] Adopting a distinction made by Reid, Mill says that he is concerned only with 'physical' causes, and not with 'efficient' causes.

[4] *Logic*, I, p. 377 (I, 3, 5, 2).

[5] *Ibid.*, I, p. 392 (I, 3, 5, 6).

Now, Mill says of the law of causation that 'on the universality of this truth depends the possibility of reducing the inductive process to rules'.[2] And he certainly assumes in practice that every phenomenon has a cause in the sense explained above. All the phenomena of Nature are the 'unconditional' consequences of previous collocations of causes.[3] And any mind which knew all the causal agents existing at a given moment, together with their positions and the laws of their operations, 'could predict the whole subsequent history of the universe, at least unless some new volition of a power capable of controlling the universe should supervene'.[4]

But how do we know that the law of causation is a universal truth? Mill is certainly not prepared to say that it is a self-evident *a priori* proposition, nor that it is deducible from any such proposition. Hence he must hold that it is a product of inductive inference. But what sort of inductive inference? In ascertaining particular causal laws the method recommended by Mill is that of elimination, as will be seen in the next section. But the method, or rather methods, of experimental inquiry by the process of elimination presuppose the truth of the law of causation. Hence it can hardly be itself established by this process. And this means that we have to fall back on induction by simple enumeration. That is to say, we find in ordinary experience that every event has a cause. And when we come to the scientific study of Nature, we already believe in and expect to find causal connections.

It can hardly be denied, I think, that Mill is in rather a difficult position. On the one hand he wishes to say that the law of causation is a universal and certain truth which validates scientific inference. And he maintains that induction by simple enumeration becomes more and more certain in proportion as the sphere of observation is widened. Hence 'the most universal class of truths, the law of causation for instance, and the principles of number and of geometry, are duly and satisfactorily proved by that method alone, nor are they susceptible of any other proof'.[5] The law of causation 'stands at the head of all observed uniformities, in point of universality, and therefore (if the preceding observations are correct) in point of certainty'.[1] Again, 'the law of cause and effect, being thus certain, is capable of imparting its certainty to all other inductive propositions which can be deduced from it'.[2] On the other hand Mill maintains that induction by simple enumeration is fallible. True, the certainty of the law of causation is 'for all practical purposes complete'.[3] At the same time 'the uniformity in the succession of events, otherwise called the law of causation, must be received not as a law of the universe, but of that portion of it only which is within the range of our means of sure observation, with a reasonable degree of extension to adjust cases. To extend it further is to make a supposition without evidence, and to which, in the absence of any ground of experience for estimating its degree of probability, it would be idle to attempt to assign any.'[4]

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[1] *Logic*, I, p. 392 (I, 3, 5, 6).
[2] *Ibid.*, I, p. 378 (I, 3, 5, 2).
[3] Mill recognizes in the universe 'permanent causes', natural agents which precede all human experience and of whose origin we are ignorant.
[4] *Logic*, I, p. 400 (I, 3, 5, 8).
[5] *Ibid.*, II, p. 102 (II, 3, 21, 3).

The upshot seems to be more or less this. In ordinary experience we find that events have causes. And experience, together with the operation of the laws of the association of ideas, can explain our undoubting assurance in the universal validity of the law of causation. And the law can thus fulfil, in regard to scientific inference, the function which Mill assigns to the major premiss in a syllogism. That is to say, it is at once a record of past experience and a prediction of what we are to expect. It is a rule or formula for scientific induction. Moreover, scientific inference always confirms the law of causation and never falsifies it. If we in fact arrive at a wrong conclusion and assert that *A* is the cause of *C* when it is not, we eventually find that something else, say *B*, is the cause of *C*, not that *C* is uncaused. Hence for all practical purposes the law of causation is certain, and we can safely rely on it. But from the purely theoretical point of view we are not entitled to say that it infallibly holds good in regions of the universe which lie outside all human experience.

If it is objected that Mill clearly wishes to attribute to the law of causation an absolute certainty which enables it to constitute the absolutely sure foundation of scientific inference, the objection can be conceded. 'That every fact which begins to exist has a cause . . . may be taken for certain. The whole of the present facts are the infallible result of all past facts, and more immediately of all facts which existed at the moment previous. Here, then, is a great sequence, which we know to be uniform. If the whole prior state of the entire universe could again recur, it would again be followed by the present state.'[1] But though Mill may believe in the universality and infallibility of the law of causation, the point is that on his premisses he has no adequate justification for his belief. And, as we have seen, he finds himself compelled to recognize this fact.

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[1] *Ibid.*, II, p. 103 (II, 3, 21, 3).

[2] *Ibid.*, II, p. 104 (II, 3, 21, 3).

[3] *Ibid.*, II, p. 106 (II, 3, 21, 4).

[4] *Ibid.*, II, p. 108 (II, 3, 21, 4).

7. Mill is very far from thinking that empiricism, in the sense of mere observation, can do much to advance scientific knowledge. Nor does he think that experimentalism, in the sense of the making of controlled experiments, constitutes the whole of scientific method. He is conscious that the function of hypotheses is 'one which must be reckoned absolutely indispensable in science. . . . Without such assumptions, science could never have attained its present state; they are necessary steps in the progress to something more certain; and nearly everything which is now theory was once hypothesis.'[2] Nor, of course, does he pass over the role of deduction. 'To the Deductive Method, thus characterized in its three constituent parts, Induction, Ratiocination and Verification, the human mind is indebted for its most conspicuous triumphs in the investigation of Nature.'[3] As attention is generally concentrated on Mill's methods of experimental inquiry, of which a brief account will shortly be given, it is as well to recognize from the outset that the experimentalism which he contrasts with mere empiricism does not involve a total blindness to the actual nature of scientific method.

A distinction is made by Mill between purely descriptive and explanatory hypotheses. Take the bare assertion that the orbits of the planets are ellipses. This merely describes the movements of the planets without offering any causal explanation. And if the hypothesis is verified, this is the only proof of its truth which is required. 'In all these cases, verification is proof; if the supposition accords with the phenomena there needs no other evidence of it.'[4] But in the case of explanatory hypotheses the situation is different. Let us suppose that from hypothesis *X* we deduce that if the hypothesis is true, phenomena *a*, *b* and *c* should occur in certain given circumstances. And let us suppose that the prediction is verified. The verification does not prove the truth of *X*; for the same consequences might also be deducible from hypotheses *Y* and *Z*. We are then faced with three possible causes. And in order to discover the true one we have to eliminate two. When this has been done, what was originally an hypothesis becomes a law of Nature.

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[1] *Logic*, I, p. 437 (I, 3, 7, 1).
[2] *Ibid.*, II, pp. 16–17 (II, 3, 14, 5).
[3] *Ibid.*, I, p. 538 (I, 3, 11, 3).
[4] *Ibid.*, II, p. 15 (II, 3, 14, 4).

The implied view of physical science is clearly realistic. Mill speaks as though we already know that Nature is uniform, in the sense that 'the whole of the present facts are the infallible result of all past facts'.[1] But when we contemplate Nature, we are not immediately presented with particular uniformities. And no amount of mere observation will enable us to resolve general uniformity into particular uniformities. For 'the order of Nature, as perceived at a first glance, presents at every instant a chaos followed by another chaos'.[2] In other words, when we look for the cause of a given event, we are faced with a plurality of *prima facie* causes or of possible causes; and observation alone will not enable us to determine the true cause. Nor for the matter of that will purely mental analysis or reasoning. Reasoning is indeed indispensable. For in science we have to form hypotheses and deduce their consequences. But an hypothesis cannot be turned into a law of Nature unless alternative possibilities are eliminated. And this requires methods of experimental inquiry. Obviously, all this presupposes the existence of an objective uniformity of Nature, and so of real causal laws waiting to be discovered. Given the empiricist aspects of Mill's thought, we cannot indeed prove the general uniformity of Nature except *a posteriori* and progressively, in proportion as we discover factual causal connections. But this does not alter the fact that Mill is clearly convinced that there are such connections to be discovered. And this is doubtless why he tends to speak, as we have seen, as though the general uniformity of Nature can be known in advance of the scientific discovery of particular causal laws.

Mill gives four methods of experimental inquiry. The first two methods are respectively those of agreement and disagreement. The canon or regulating principle of the method of agreement states that 'if two or more instances of the phenomenon under investigation have only one circumstance in common, the circumstance in which alone all the instances agree is the cause (or effect) of the given phenomenon'.[3] The canon of the method of disagreement states that if we consider a case in which the phenomenon under investigation occurs and a case in which it does not occur, and if we find that the two cases have all circumstances in common save one, which is present only in the former case, this one circumstance is the effect or the cause, or an indispensable part of the cause, of the phenomenon in question. Both methods are obviously methods of elimination, the first resting on the axiom that whatever can be eliminated is not connected by any causal law with the occurrence of the phenomenon under investigation, the second on the axiom that whatever cannot be eliminated is so connected. And Mill combines the two methods in the joint method of agreement and disagreement.[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, I, p. 437 (I, 3, 7, I).

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, I, p. 451 (I, 3, 8, I).

The canon of the third experimental method, the method of residues, is stated as follows. 'Subduct from any phenomenon such part as is known by previous inductions to be the effect of certain antecedents, and the residue of the phenomenon is the effect of the remaining antecedents.'[2] The fourth method, that of concomitant variations, is especially used in cases where artificial experiment is not practicable. Its canon declares that whatever phenomenon varies whenever another phenomenon varies in a given manner is either a cause of this phenomenon or its effect or connected with it through some causal fact. For example, if we find that variations in the moon's position are always followed by corresponding variations in the tides, we are entitled to conclude that the moon is the cause, total or partial, which determines the tides, even though we are obviously not able to remove the moon and see what happens in its absence.

Now, Mill does indeed speak as though his four methods of experimental inquiry, which he regards as 'the only possible modes of experimental inquiry',[3] were methods of discovery. And it has been sometimes objected that they are in reality only ways of checking the validity of scientific hypotheses which have been worked out by other means. But in justice to Mill it must be added that he insists more on the status of the methods as methods of proof than on their function as possible methods of discovery. 'If discoveries are ever made by observation and experiment without Deduction, the four methods are methods of discovery: but even if they were not methods of discovery, it would not be the less true that they are the sole methods of Proof; and in that character even the results of deduction are amenable to them.'[4]

Mill recognizes, of course, that experimentation has a limited field of application. In astronomy we cannot perform the experiments which we can perform in chemistry. And the same is more or less true of psychology and sociology. Hence the method of these sciences, 'in order to accomplish anything worthy of attainment, must be to a great extent, if not principally deductive'.[1] But his general principle is that 'observation without experiment (supposing no aid from deduction) can ascertain sequences and coexistences, but cannot prove causation'.[2] And the four methods mentioned above are the methods of proof, the methods of turning an hypothesis into an assured causal law. Mill is therefore not prepared to accept the view, which he attributes to Whewell, that in the absence of empirical falsification we should be content to let an hypothesis stand until a simpler hypothesis, equally consistent with the empirical facts, presents itself. In his opinion absence of falsification is by no means the only proof of physical laws which is required. And for this reason he insists on the use of the methods of experimental inquiry, whenever this is practicable.

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[1] *Logic*, I, p. 458 (I, 3, 8, 4).

[2] *Ibid.*, I, p. 460 (I, 3, 8, 5).

[3] *Ibid.*, I, p. 470 (I, 3, 8, 7).

[4] *Ibid.*, I, p. 502 (I, 3, 9, 6).

Does Mill succeed in justifying inductive inference from the observed to the unobserved, from the known to the unknown? If we concentrate attention on his explicit assertion that all inference is from particulars to particulars, and if we take it that particulars are all entirely separate entities (that is, if we concentrate attention on the nominalist elements in Mill's thought), a negative answer must be given. Mill might, of course, have tried to work out a theory of probability. But in the absence of such a theory he would perhaps have done best to say that science is justified by its success and requires no further theoretical justification. At the same time we can say that he does provide such a justification. But he provides it only by assuming that throughout Nature there is a structure of real uniformities which are something more than purely factual sequences. In other words, he justifies scientific inference by assuming a realist position and forgetting the implications of nominalism.

8. Hume's programme of extending the reign of science from the study of the non-human material world to man himself, by creating a science of human nature, had found a partial fulfilment in Mill's empiricist predecessors. The associationist psychologists aimed at setting psychology, the study of man's mental life, on a scientific basis. And Bentham thought of himself as developing a science of man's moral life and of man in society. As we have seen, J. S. Mill considered that Bentham's idea of human nature was narrow and short-sighted. And he was well aware that the science

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[1] *Ibid.*, I, p. 443 (I, 3, 7, 3).

[2] *Ibid.*, I, p. 446 (I, 3, 7, 4).

of human nature had not made an advance comparable to that made by the physical sciences. Hence for the would-be creator of a logic of the 'moral sciences' it could not be simply a question of stating in abstract and explicit form a method or methods of proof which had already been employed to obtain impressive concrete results. His work must be necessarily in large measure tentative, a pointing out of a path to be followed in the future rather than a reflection on a road already traversed. But in any case it was natural that Mill should lay emphasis on the need for developing a logic of the moral sciences. I do not intend to imply that he was influenced exclusively by his British predecessors. For French social philosophy was also a stimulative factor. But, given the general movement of thought, it was natural that a man who wished to work out a logic of inductive inference and who was at the same time deeply interested in social thought and reform, should include man in society in the field of his reflections about scientific method.

The sixth book of the *System of Logic* is entitled 'On the Logic of the Moral Sciences'. By the moral sciences Mill means those branches of study which deal with man, provided that they are neither strictly normative in character nor classifiable as parts of physical science. The first condition excludes practical ethics or 'morality', that is, ethics in so far as it is expressed in the imperative mood. 'The imperative mood is the characteristic of art, as distinguished from science.'[1] The second condition excludes consideration of states of mind in so far as they are considered as caused immediately by bodily states. Study of the laws governing the relations between states of mind belongs to psychology as a moral science; but study of the laws governing sensations regarded as proximately dependent on physical conditions belongs to physiology, which is a natural science. Provided that we bear in mind these qualifications, we can say that the moral sciences include psychology, ethology or the science of the formation of character,[2] sociology and history, though the science of history is really part of general sociology, the science of man in society.

What is needed, in Mill's opinion, is to rescue the moral sciences from 'empiricism'. That is to say, purely empirical descriptive laws must be turned into explanatory or causal laws or deduced from such laws. We may, for example, have observed that in all known cases human beings behave in a certain way in certain circumstances. We then state in a generalized form that human beings behave in this way. But mere observation of a certain number of instances does not really provide us with any reliable assurance that the empirical law holds universally. Such assurance can be provided only by ascertaining the cause or causes which determine human behaviour under given conditions. And it is only by ascertaining such causal connections that a genuine science of human nature can be developed. It does not follow, of course, that we can always ascertain exact laws in practice. But this at least is the ideal. Thus once more, in the distinction between empiricism and science we see evidence of Mill's firm belief in the existence of objective causal connections waiting to be discovered.

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[1] *Logic*, II, p. 546 (II, 6, 12, 1).

[2] The study of the formation of national character had been suggested, for example, by Montesquieu.

The subject-matter of psychology as a moral science is 'the uniformities of succession, the laws, whether ultimate or derivative, according to which one mental state succeeds another; is caused by, or at least is caused to follow, another'.[1] These laws are those of the association of ideas, which have been ascertained, and in Mill's opinion could only be ascertained, by the methods of experimental inquiry. Hence psychology is 'altogether, or principally, a science of observation and experiment'.[2]

When, however, in ethology we turn to the formation of character, especially national character, there is little room for experiment. But mere observation is not sufficient to establish ethology as a science. Hence its method must be 'altogether deductive'.[3] That is to say, it must presuppose psychology, and its principles must be deduced from the general laws of psychology, while the already accepted empirical laws relating to the formation of character, individual or national, must be shown to be derivable from, and hence to function as verifications of, these principles. Moreover, once the principles of ethology have been firmly established, the way will lie open for the development of a corresponding art, namely that of practical education, which will be able to make use of the principles with a view to producing desirable effects or preventing undesirable effects.

Social science, the science of man in society, studies 'the actions of collective masses of mankind, and the various phenomena which constitute social life'.[4] It includes, of course, the study of politics. In social science or sociology, as in ethology, the making of artificial experiments is impracticable, while mere observation is not sufficient to create a science. At the same time the deductive method as practised in geometry does not provide an appropriate model. Bentham, indeed, endeavoured to deduce a social-political theory from one principle, namely that men always seek their own interests. But in point of fact it is not always true that men are always governed in their actions by selfish interests. Nor, for that matter, is it universally true that they are governed by altruistic motives. In general, social phenomena are too complex and are the results of too many diverse factors for it to be possible to deduce them from one principle. If he is seeking a model of method, the sociologist should look not to geometry but to physical science. For the physical scientist allows for a variety of causes contributing to the production of an effect, and so for a variety of laws.

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[1] *Logic*, II, p. 439 (II, 6, 4, 3).

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, II, p. 458 (II, 6, 5, 5).

[4] *Ibid.*, II, p. 464 (II, 6, 6, 1).

Mill emphasizes the utility in social science of what he calls the inverse deductive or historical method. In employing this method the sociologist does not deduce conclusions *a priori* from laws and then verify them by observation. He first obtains the conclusions, as approximate empirical generalizations, from experience and then connects them 'with the principles of human nature by *a priori* reasonings, which reasonings are thus a real Verification'.[1] This idea was borrowed, as Mill frankly acknowledges, from Auguste Comte. 'This was an idea entirely new to me when I found it in Comte: and but for him I might not soon (if ever) have arrived at it.'[2]

But while he emphasizes the utility of the inverse deductive method Mill is not prepared to allow that it is the only method suitable for employment in sociology. For we can also make use of the direct deductive method, provided that we recognize its limitations. For example, if we know that *X* is a law of human nature, we can deduce that human beings will tend to act in a certain manner. But we cannot know and positively predict that they will act in this way in concrete fact. For we cannot know in advance, or at any rate only rarely, all the other causal agents at work, which may counteract the operation of the cause which we have in mind or combine with it to produce an effect rather different from that which would be produced if there were no other causal agents. However, the direct deductive method undoubtedly has its own use in predicting tendencies to action. And this is of value for practical politics. Further, it is especially fitted for use in a science such as political economy which 'considers mankind as occupied solely in acquiring and consuming wealth'.[1] Obviously, this is not all that mankind does. But the point is that the more simplified a view of man we take, the more scope can we attribute to the direct deductive method. Conversely, the more complex the situation considered, the more we have to turn to the inverse deductive method.

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[1] *Logic*, II, p. 490 (II, 6, 9, 1). That is to say, the empirical generalizations are verified by ascertaining whether they follow from known general principles relating to human nature.

[2] *Autobiography*, p. 211.

In sociology Mill follows Comte in making a distinction between social statics and dynamics. The former is concerned with ascertaining and verifying uniformities of coexistence in society. That is to say, it investigates the mutual actions and reactions of contemporaneous social phenomena, abstracting, as far as possible, from the continuous process of change which is always, if gradually, modifying the whole complex of phenomena. Social dynamics, however, studies society considered as being in a constant state of movement or change, and it tries to explain the historical sequences of social conditions. But though we can ascertain some general laws of historical change or progress, we cannot predict the rate of progress. For one thing, we cannot predict the appearance of those exceptional individuals who exercise a marked influence on the course of history.

In this connection Mill refers to Macaulay's essay on Dryden and criticizes the view, there expressed, of the comparative inoperativeness of great historical individuals. We cannot legitimately assume, for example, that without Socrates, Plato and Aristotle European philosophy would have developed as it did, or even that it would have developed at all. Nor can we justifiably assume that if Newton had not lived his natural philosophy would have been worked out practically just as soon by someone else. It is a complete mistake to suppose that the truth that all human volitions and actions are caused, entails the conclusion that outstandingly gifted individuals cannot exercise an exceptional influence.

Obviously, Mill's conception of social science as involving the explanation of human behaviour in terms of causal laws presupposes the predictability in principle of all human volitions and actions. This subject has already been touched on in connection with Mill's ethical theory. But he insists that this predictability is not to be confused with 'fatalism', when fatalism is understood as meaning that the human will is of no account in determining the cause of events. For the human will is itself a cause, and a powerful one.[1] Further, in sociology we have to steer a middle course between thinking that no definite causal laws can be ascertained and imagining that it is possible to predict the course of history. Social laws are hypothetical, and statistically-based generalizations by their very nature admit of exceptions.

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[1] *Logic*, II, p. 496 (II, 6, 9, 3).

Mill does indeed express his belief that with the progress of civilization collective agencies tend to predominate more and more, and that in proportion as this happens prediction becomes easier. But he is thinking, for example, of the difference between a society in which much depends on the caprices of an individual, the absolute monarch, and a society in which the people at large expresses its will through universal suffrage. In other words, empirical generalizations have a greater predictive power when we are dealing with men in the mass than when we are dealing with the individual agent.[2] True, one of the main aims of social science is to connect these empirical generalizations with the laws of human nature. But the situation is too complex for it to be possible to predict infallibly the course of history, even if, in Mill's opinions, changes in human society have made it easier to approximate to a science of history or of social dynamics.

9. Mill's whole conception of the sciences, whether physical or moral, obviously presupposes the existence of the external world. And we can now turn to his discussion of the grounds of our belief in such a world, a discussion which is carried on for the most part within the framework of his criticism of Sir William Hamilton's philosophy.

Hamilton maintained that in perception we have an immediate knowledge of the ego and the non-ego, of the self and of something existing which is external to the self. Mill, however, while readily admitting that we have, as Hume claimed, a natural belief in the existence of an external world, endeavours to show how this belief can be psychologically explained without its being necessary to suppose that it expresses an original datum of consciousness. He makes two postulates. The first is that the mind is capable of expectation, while the second is the validity of the associationist psychology. On the basis of these two postulates he argues that there are associations 'which, supposing no intuition of an external world to have existed in consciousness, would inevitably generate the belief in a permanent external world, and would cause it to be regarded as an intuition'.[1]

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[1] Mill can, of course, evade fatalism, if fatalism is understood as omitting the human will from the chain of operative causes. At the same time if, given the antecedent conditions, a human volition cannot be otherwise than it is, it is difficult to see how he can evade fatalism if this is understood as synonymous with rejection of liberty of indifference.,

[2] For instance, statistically-based generalizations may enable us to predict the approximate number of people in a given county who will post letters incorrectly addressed. But the statistician is not in a position to say which individual citizens will be guilty of this oversight.

Let us suppose that I have certain visual and tactual sensations which produce in my mind an association of ideas. For example, when sitting at the table in my study, I have those visual sensations which I call seeing the table and the tactual sensations which I call touching or feeling the table. And an association is set up such that when I have a visual sensation of this kind, a tactual sensation is present as a possibility. Conversely, when I have only a tactual sensation, as when the room is completely dark, a visual sensation is there as a possibility. Further, when I leave the room and later re-enter it, I have similar sensations. Hence an association is formed in my mind of such a kind that when I am out of the room, I am firmly persuaded that, if I were at any moment to re-enter it, I should or could have similar sensations. Further, as these possible sensations form a group, and as moreover the group is found to enter into various causal relations, I inevitably think of the permanent possibilities of sensations as an abiding physical object. Actual sensations are transient and fugitive. But the possibilities of sensation, associated as a group, remain. Hence we come to distinguish between sensations and physical objects. But the ground of our belief in these external objects is the existence of different mutually associated clusters or groups of possible sensations, these groups being permanent in comparison with actual sensations.[2]

A further point. We find that the permanent possibilities of sensation which we think of as physical objects 'belong as much to other human or sentient beings as to ourselves',[3] though they certainly do not experience the same actual sensations as we do. And this puts the final seal to our belief in a common external world.

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[1] *Examination*, p. 192.

[2] Obviously, in the illustration which has just been given of someone sitting at a table, a belief in the existence of an external world is already present. But it can serve to show the general line of Mill's psychological reconstruction of the belief.

[3] *Examination*, p. 196.

Now, Mill's theory, as so far outlined, might possibly be taken as being simply a psychological account of the genesis of a belief. That is to say, it might be understood as being free from any ontological commitment, as not involving any statement about the ontological nature of physical objects. In point of fact, however, Mill proceeds to define matter as 'a Permanent Possibility of Sensation',[1] bodies being groups of simultaneous possibilities of sensation. To be sure, he remarks that it is a question of defining matter rather than of denying its existence. But he makes it clear that he, like 'all Berkeleians',[2] believes in matter only in the sense of this definition, a definition which, he claims, includes the whole meaning which ordinary people attach to the term, whatever some philosophers and theologians may have done. Hence Mill clearly commits himself to an ontological statement.

The definition of matter as a permanent possibility of sensation is, however, ambiguous. For it easily suggests the idea of a permanent ground of possible sensations, a ground which is itself unknowable. And if this were what Mill intended to imply, a rift would inevitably be introduced between the world of science and the underlying physical reality. Scientific truths would relate to phenomena, not to things-in-themselves. But though he remarks elsewhere that 'all matter apart from the feelings of sentient beings has but an hypothetical and unsubstantial existence: it is a mere assumption to account for our sensations',[3] he makes it clear that he does not intend to assert the validity of this hypothesis.

Of course, if we interpret Mill on the lines on which Berkeley is often interpreted, namely as saying simply that material things are simply what we perceive and can perceive them to be, and that there is no unknowable substratum as postulated by Locke, the nature of science, as depicted by Mill, does not appear to be affected. But though it is doubtless part of what Mill means, as is shown by his conviction that in defining matter as he does he is on the side of the common man, the fact remains that he speaks of material things as 'sensations'. Thus he says, for example, that 'the brain, just as much as the mental functions, is, like matter itself, merely a set of human sensations either actual or inferred as possible—namely, those which the anatomist has when he opens the skull. . . .'[1] And from this it appears to follow that physical science inquires into the relations between sensations, principally, of course, possible sensations, but still sensations. Indeed, Mill himself speaks of causal relations or constant sequences as being found to exist between sets of possible sensations.

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[1] *Examination*, p. 198.

[2] *Ibid.* Needless to say, Mill does not accept the theological conclusions which Berkeley drew from his theory of material things as 'ideas'. But he regards his own analysis of what it means to say that there are material things which continue to exist even when unperceived, as being substantially the same as that given by the good bishop.

[3] *Three Essays on Religion*, p. 86 (1904 edition).

It is understandable that later empiricists have endeavoured to avoid this conclusion by forbearing from saying that material things *are* sensations or sense-data. Instead they have contented themselves with claiming that a sentence in which a physical or material object is mentioned can in principle be translated into other sentences in which only sense-data are mentioned, the relation between the original sentence and the translation being such that if the former is true (or false), the latter is true (or false), and conversely. The question whether this claim has been made good need not detain us here.[2] The point is that, as far as Mill himself is concerned, he speaks in such a way that the subject-matter of physical science is human sensations.

This, however, is a very difficult position to maintain. Let us suppose that sensations are to be understood as subjective states. This would make great difficulties in regard to Mill's account of the genesis of our belief in an external world, as outlined above. For instance, Mill says that we 'find' that there are possibilities of sensation which are common to other people as well as to ourselves. But other people will be for me simply permanent possibilities of sensation. And if the word 'sensation' is understood in terms of a subjective state, it seems to follow that other people, and indeed everything else, are reduced to my subjective states. As for science, this would become a study of the relations between my sensations. But is it credible that if an anatomist looks at a human brain, the object of his examination is simply a set of his own subjective states, actual and possible? In short, the logical result of defining physical objects in terms of sensations, when sensation is understood as a subjective state, is solipsism. And nobody really believes that solipsism is true.

It may be objected that Mill never intended to say that science is simply concerned with subjective states in any ordinary sense of the term. And the objection is obviously valid. It is perfectly clear that Mill had no intention of maintaining that the whole physical world consisted of his, Mill's, sensations in a subjective sense. But then we must either reify sensations, turning them into public physical objects, or we must assume that to say that a physical object is a permanent possibility of sensations is to say that a physical object is that which is capable of causing sensations in a sentient subject. The first alternative would be a very peculiar thesis, while the second would tend to reintroduce the concept of things-in-themselves and the rift between the world of science and physical reality to which allusion has already been made.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 85.

[2] It is widely recognized that the only sufficient proof of the possibility of such a translation would be to perform it, and that no adequate translation has in fact been made.

The fact of the matter is that after showing, to his own satisfaction at least, how our belief in the external world can be explained genetically in terms of the association of ideas, Mill slides into ontological assertions without really considering their implications in regard to the nature of physical science. And it seems clear to the present writer at any rate that Mill's empiricist analysis of the physical object is not really compatible with the realist conception of science which underlies his doctrine about causal laws.

10. Mill was obviously predisposed by the empiricist tradition to give an analogous analysis of the concept of the mind. 'We have no conception of Mind itself, as distinguished from its conscious manifestations. We neither know nor can imagine it, except as represented by the succession of manifold feelings which metaphysicians call by the name of States or Modifications of Mind.'[1] It is quite true, of course, that we tend to speak of the mind as something permanent in comparison with changing mental states. But if there were no special factor in the situation to be considered, we could perfectly well define the mind as a permanent possibility of mental states.

In point of fact, however, the phenomenalistic analysis of the mind presents special difficulties. For 'if we speak of the Mind as a series of feelings, we are obliged to complete the statement by calling it a series of feelings which is aware of itself as past and future'.[1] And how can the series be aware of itself as a series? We have no reason to suppose that the material thing enjoys self-consciousness. But the mind certainly does.

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[1] *Examination*, p. 205. According to Mill's use of the term, metaphysics is 'that portion of mental philosophy which attempts to determine what part of the furniture of the mind belongs to it originally, and what part is constructed out of materials furnished to it from without'. *Logic*, I, p. 7 (I, *Introduction*, 4). For the use of the term 'feeling' see reference on p. 21 to James Mill's use of the word.

But though he draws attention to this difficulty and admits that language suggests the irreducibility of the mind to the series of mental phenomena, Mill is unwilling to sacrifice phenomenalism. Hence he is compelled to hold that the series of feelings, as he puts it, can be aware of itself as a series, even though he is admittedly unable to explain how this is possible. 'I think, by far the wisest thing we can do, is to accept the inexplicable fact, without any theory of how it takes place; and when we are obliged to speak of it in terms which assume a theory, to use them with a reservation as to their meaning.'[2]

In connection with the analysis of the concept of mind Mill raises the question of solipsism. According to Reid, he remarks, I have no evidence at all of the existence of other selves if I am but a series of feelings or a thread of consciousness. My so-called awareness of other selves is simply an awareness of my own private feelings. But this line of argument, Mill contends, is 'one of Reid's most palpable mistakes'.[3] For one thing, even if I believe that my own mind is a series of feelings, there is nothing to prevent my conceiving other minds as similar series of feelings. For another thing, I have inferential evidence of the existence of minds other than my own, as the following line of reflection shows.

Modifications in the permanent possibility of sensations which I call my body evoke in me actual sensations and mental states which form part of the series which I call my mind. But I am aware of the existence of other permanent possibilities of sensations which are not related to my mental life in this way. And at the same time I am aware of actions and other external signs in these permanent possibilities of sensation or bodies, which I am warranted in interpreting as signs or expressions of inner mental states analogous to my own.

The view that we know the existence of other minds by inference from overt bodily behaviour is common enough. The trouble is, however, that Mill has already analysed bodies in terms of sensations. Obviously, he never intended to say or to imply that another person's body is simply and solely a group of *my* sensations, actual and possible. But he has at any rate to meet the objection that I am aware of another person's body only through my sensations, and that if the body is defined in terms of sensations, he must admit either that these sensations are mine or that sensations can exist on their own or that a body is a ground of possible sensations. In the first case solipsism is the logical conclusion. In the second case we are presented with a very peculiar thesis. In the third case, as has already been noted, the phenomenalistic analysis of the material thing collapses. And as, on Mill's own explicit admission, there is a special difficulty in the phenomenalistic analysis of mind, this is *a fortiori* subject to doubt.

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[1] *Examination*, p. 212.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 213.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 207.

Solipsism has proved the haunting spectre of phenomenalism. It is not that phenomenalists have actually embraced solipsism. For they have done nothing of the kind. The difficulty has been rather that of stating phenomenalism in such a way that it leads neither to a solipsistic conclusion on the one hand nor to an implicit abandonment of phenomenalism on the other. Perhaps the most successful attempt to state the phenomenalist position has been the modern linguistic version, to which reference was made in the previous section. But this can easily appear as an evasion of critical problems. At the same time, if we once start looking for hidden substrates, we shall find ourselves in other difficulties. And one can sympathize with the down-to-earth common-sense approach of some recent devotees of the cult of ordinary language. The trouble is, however, that once we have brought things back to ordinary language, the familiar philosophical problems tend to start up all over again.

11. Mill, as was mentioned in the sketch of his life, was brought up by his father without any religious beliefs. But he did not share James Mill's marked hostility to religion as inherently detrimental to morality. Hence he was more open to considering evidence for the existence of God. Of the ontological argument in its Cartesian form he remarks that it 'is not likely to satisfy anyone in the present day'.[1] And as he regarded the causal relation as being essentially a relation between phenomena, it is not surprising that he argues with Hume and Kant that 'the First Cause argument is in itself of no value for the establishment of Theism'.[2] But he is prepared to give serious consideration to the argument from design in Nature, as this is 'an argument of a really scientific character, which does not shrink from scientific tests, but claims

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[1] *Three Essays on Religion*, p. 70. This work will be referred to as *Three Essays*.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

to be judged by the established canons of Induction. The design argument is wholly grounded on experience.'[1] Whether any argument to a metaphenomenal reality can properly be called a 'scientific' argument is open to question. But Mill's main point is that even if the argument from design in Nature concludes with affirming the existence of a divine being which in itself transcends the reach of scientific inquiry, it bases itself on empirical facts in a manner which is easily understood and makes an inference, the validity of which is open to reasonable discussion.

Paley's form of the argument will not do. It is true that if we found a watch on a desert island, we should indeed infer that it had been left there by a human being. But we should do so simply because we already know by experience that watches are made and carried by human beings. We do not, however, have previous experience of natural objects being made by God. We argue by analogy. That is to say, we argue from resemblances between phenomena which we already know to be products of human design and other phenomena which we then attribute to the productive work of a supramundane intelligence.

It must be added, however, that the argument from design in Nature rests on a special resemblance, namely the working together of various factors to one common end. For instance, the argument infers the operation of a supramundane intelligence from the arrangement and structure of the various parts of the visual apparatus which together produce sight. We cannot indeed exclude all other explanations of such phenomena. Hence the argument cannot lead to a conclusion which possesses more than some degree of probability. But the argument is none the less a reasonable inductive inference.[2] 'I think it must be allowed that, in the present state of our knowledge, the adaptations in Nature afford a large balance of probability in favour of creation by intelligence.'[3]

In Mill's opinion, however, we cannot accept the existence of God as a probable truth and at the same time affirm the divine omnipotence. For design implies the adaptation of means to an end, and the need to employ means reveals a limitation of power. 'Every indication of Design in the Kosmos is so much evidence against the omnipotence of the designer.'[4]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

[2] Mill does not think that an account of the matter simply in terms of the survival of the fittest is at all conclusive.

[3] *Three Essays*, p. 75.

[4] *Ibid.*

This does not seem to me a very telling argument. For though the argument from design, taken by itself, concludes simply with assertion of the existence of a designer, not a creator, this does not show that the designer is not the creator. And it is difficult to see how the mere fact of using means to an end is any argument against omnipotence. But Mill's chief interest lies elsewhere, namely in arguing that there is an evident incompatibility between asserting at the same time that God is omnipotent and infinitely good. And this is a much more impressive line of argument.

Mill's point is that if God is omnipotent, he can prevent evil, and that if he does not do so, he cannot be infinitely good. It is no use saying with Dean Mansel that the term 'good' is predicated of God analogically and not in the same sense in which it is used of human beings. For this is really equivalent to saying that God is not good in any sense which we can give to the term. In fine, if we wish to maintain that God is good, we must also say that his power is limited or finite.

Mill is prepared to admit the reasonableness of believing that God desires the happiness of man. For this is suggested by the fact that pleasure seems to result from the normal functioning of the human organism and pain from some interference with this functioning. At the same time we can hardly suppose that God created the universe for the sole purpose of making men happy. Appearances suggest that if there is an intelligent creator, he has other motives besides the happiness of mankind, or of sentient beings in general, and that these other motives, whatever they may be, are of greater importance to him.

In other words, natural theology does not carry us very far. It is not indeed unreasonable, at least in the present state of the evidence, to believe in an intelligent divine being of limited power. But the proper attitude to adopt is what Mill calls a rational scepticism, which is more than sheer agnosticism but less than firm assent.

This might be all very well if those who are really interested in the question of the existence of God were concerned simply and solely with finding an explanatory hypothesis. But it is quite evident that they are not. For a religious person belief in the existence of God is not quite like belief that the architect of St. Paul's Cathedral was Sir Christopher Wren. And Mill sees this to the limited extent of raising the question of the pragmatic value or utility of religion. While recognizing that much evil has been done in the name of religion and that some religious beliefs can be detrimental to human conduct, he is not prepared to subscribe to his father's view that religion is 'the greatest enemy of morality'.[1] For religion, like poetry, can supply man with ideals beyond those which we actually find realized in human life. 'The value, therefore, of religion to the individual, both in the past and present, as a source of personal satisfaction and of elevated feelings, is not to be disputed.'[2] And in Christianity we find a conception of ideal goodness embodied in the figure of Christ.

To be sure, some people look on any suggestion that the pragmatic value of religion provides a reason for believing in God as an immoral suggestion, a betrayal of our duty to pay attention simply to the weight of the empirical evidence. But though this point of view is understandable, Mill does at any rate see that the function of religion in human history is something more than the solving of an intellectual puzzle in terms of an inductive hypothesis.

At the same time Mill raises the question whether the moral uplift of the higher religions cannot be preserved without belief in a supernatural Being. And as far as the provision of an ideal object of emotion and desire is concerned, he suggests that the 'need is fulfilled by the Religion of Humanity in as eminent a degree, and in as high a sense, as by the supernatural religions even in their best manifestations, and far more so than in any of the others'.[3] True, some religions have the advantage of holding out the prospect of immortality. But as the conditions of this life improve and men grow happier and more capable of deriving happiness from unselfish action, human beings, Mill thinks, 'will care less and less for this flattering expectation'.[4] However, if we include in the religion of humanity that belief in the existence of a God of limited power which natural theology justifies as a probable truth, it superadds to other inducements for working for the welfare of our fellow men the conviction that 'we may be co-operating with the unseen Being to whom we owe all that is enjoyable in life'.[5] Hence even if the religion of humanity is destined to be the religion of the future, this does not necessarily exclude belief in God.

Mill is thus in agreement with Auguste Comte that the so-called religion of humanity is the religion of the future, though he has no sympathy with Comte's fantastic proposals for the organization of this religion. At the same time he does not rule out belief in a finite God with whom man can co-operate. And though his idea of religion is clearly not such as to satisfy Kierkegaard or indeed anyone who understands religion as involving absolute self-commitment to the personal Absolute, he does not think, like some empiricists before him, that religion can be disposed of either by a psychological account of the way in which religious belief could have arisen or by drawing attention to the evils which have been done in the name of religion. Though his empiricist premisses actually determine his evaluation of the force of the arguments for God's existence, he endeavours to keep an open mind. And though he regarded the evidence as amounting 'only to one of the lower degrees of probability',[1] when the *Three Essays on Religion* were published posthumously in 1874 some surprise was felt in positivist circles at the extent to which Mill made concessions to theism. He had travelled at any rate a modest distance beyond the point at which his father had stopped.

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[1] *Autobiography*, p. 40. [2] *Three Essays*, p. 48. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 54. Mill maintains that while science does not provide any cogent evidence against immortality, there is no positive evidence in favour of it.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

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[1] *Three Essays*, p. 102.

CHAPTER IV

EMPIRICISTS, AGNOSTICS, POSITIVISTS

Alexander Bain and the associationist psychology—Bain on utilitarianism—Henry Sidgwick's combination of utilitarianism and intuitionism—Charles Darwin and the philosophy of evolution—T. H. Huxley; evolution, ethics and agnosticism—Scientific materialism and agnosticism; John Tyndall and Leslie Stephen—G. J. Romanes and religion—Positivism; the Comtist groups, G. H. Lewes, W. K. Clifford, K. Pearson—B. Kidd; concluding remarks.

1. THE associationist psychology was further developed by Alexander Bain (1818–1903), who occupied the chair of logic in the University of Aberdeen from 1860 until 1880. He was of some help to J. S. Mill in the preparation of his *System of Logic*,[1] and prepared some of the psychological notes for Mill's edition of his father's *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*. But though he is sometimes described as a disciple of Mill, Mill himself remarks that the younger man did not really stand in need of any predecessor except the common precursors of them both.

Bain was primarily interested in developing empirical psychology as a separate science, rather than in employing the principle of the association of ideas to solve specifically philosophical problems. Further, he was particularly concerned with correlating psychical processes with their physiological bases, and in this respect he continued the interests of Hartley rather than of the two Mills.[2] While, however, his thought remained within the general framework of the associationist psychology,[3] the titles of his chief works, *The Senses and the Intellect* (1855) and *The Emotions and the Will* (1859), show that he extended his field of study from sensation and intellectual activity to the emotive and volitional aspects of human nature.[4] And this shift of emphasis enabled him to surmount, to some extent at least, the tendency of associationist psychologists to depict man's mental life as the result of a purely mechanical process.

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[1] See J. S. Mill's *Autobiography*, p. 245, note.

[2] Though certainly not blind to the relevance of physiological investigations, J. S. Mill, like his father, was chiefly interested in the psychology of consciousness and in its philosophical relevance.

[3] Bain introduced, however, a good many modifications into the associationist psychology as received from his predecessors.

[4] Mind is thus described from the start. 'It has Feeling, in which term I include what is commonly called Sensation and Emotion. It can Act according to Feeling. It can Think.' *The Senses and the Intellect*, p. 1 (1st edition).

Bain's emphasis on human activity shows itself, for example, in his account of the genesis of our belief in an external, material world. If we were simply subjects of purely passive sensations, of sensations or impressions, that is to say, considered apart from any activity or putting forth of energy on our part, our waking state of consciousness would resemble the dream-state. In point of fact, however, 'in us sensation is never wholly passive, and in general is much the reverse. Moreover, the tendency to movement exists before the stimulus of sensation; and movement gives a new character to our whole percipient existence'.[1] Impressions received from without arouse movement, activity, the display of energy or force; and 'it is in this exercise of force that we must look for the peculiar feeling of externality of objects'.[2] For instance, in the case of touch, the sense which is the first to make us clearly aware of an external world, 'it is hard contact that suggests externality; and the reason is that in this contact we put forth force of our own'.[3] Reacting to a sensation of touch by muscular exertion, we have a sense of resistance, 'a feeling which is the principal foundation of our notion of externality'.[4] In fine, 'the sense of the external is the consciousness of particular energies and activities of our own';[5] and our external world, the external world as it is presented to our minds, can be described as 'the sum total of all the occasions for putting forth active energy, or for conceiving this as possible to be put forth'.[6] Bain thus defines the external world, as it exists for our consciousness,[7] in terms of possible active responses to sensations rather than, as Mill defined it, of possible sensations.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Bain emphasizes the intimate connection between belief in general and action. 'Belief has no meaning, except in reference to our actions.'[8] Whenever a man, or an animal for the matter of that, performs an action as a means to an end, the action is sustained by a primitive belief or credulity which can be described 'as expectation of some contingent future about to follow on an action'.[9] It is this primitive credulity which leads a sentient being to repeat its successful experiment, say of running to a brook to quench its thirst. It does not follow, however, that the force of belief rises gradually from zero to a state of full development in proportion to the length and uniformity of experience. For there is a primitive impulse or tendency to belief, which is derived from the natural activity of the organic system, and the strength of which is proportionate to the strength of the 'will'. 'The creature that wills strongly believes strongly at the origin of its career.'[1] What experience does is to determine the particular forms taken by a primitive impulse which it does not itself generate. And the factor which is of most importance in establishing sound belief is absence of contradiction or factual invariability of sequence, between, that is, expectation and its fulfilment.

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[1] *The Senses and the Intellect*, p. 371. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*, p. 372.
[4] *Ibid.* [5] *Ibid.*, p. 371. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 372.
[7] According to Bain, we cannot even discuss the existence of a material world entirely apart from consciousness.
[8] *The Emotions and the Will*, p. 524 (2nd edition). [9] *Ibid.*, p. 525.

If we assume, therefore, our instinctive responses in action to pleasure and pain, we can say that experience, with the inferences which follow on it, is the cardinal factor in stabilizing beliefs. But it is certainly not the only factor which is influential in shaping particular beliefs. For though feeling and emotion do not alter the objective facts, they may, and often do, affect our way of seeing and interpreting the facts. Evidence and feeling: 'the nature of the subject, and the character of the individual mind, determine which is to predominate; but in this life of ours, neither is the exclusive master'.[2]

If one wished to draw general conclusions about Bain's philosophical position, one could draw different conclusions from different groups of statements. On the one hand the emphasis which he lays on the physiological correlates of psychical processes might suggest a materialistic position. On the other hand a position of subjective idealism is suggested when he speaks, for example, of 'the supposed perception of an external and independent material world'[3] and adds that 'what is here said to be perceived is a convenient fiction, which by the very nature of the case transcends all possible experience'.[4] In point of fact, however, Bain tries to steer clear of metaphysics and to devote himself to empirical and genetic psychology, even if some of his statements have philosophical implications.

Bain's psychological investigations were continued by James Sully (1842–1923), who occupied the chair of philosophy at University College, London, from 1892 until 1903. In his *Outlines of Psychology* (1884) and in his two-volume work *The Human*

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 538.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 548.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 585.

[4] *Ibid.*

Mind (1892) he followed Bain in emphasizing the physiological correlates of psychical processes and in employing the principle of the association of ideas. Further, he extended his reflections into the field of the theory of education and applied himself to child-psychology in his *Studies of Childhood* (1895).

Already in Bain's lifetime, however, the associationist psychology was subjected to attack by James Ward and others. It is doubtless true that the emphasis laid by Bain on the emotive and volitional aspects of man gave to his thought a rather more modern tone than one finds in his predecessors. But it can also be argued that his introduction of fresh ideas into the old psychology helped to prepare the way for the lines of thought which supplanted it. Obviously, association continued to be recognized as a factor in mental life. But it could no longer be taken as a key to unlock all doors to the understanding of psychical processes, and the old atomistic associationist psychology had had its day.

2. In the ethical field Bain introduced into utilitarianism important modifications or supplementary considerations. These modifications doubtless impaired the simple unity of the utilitarian ethics. But Bain considered them necessary if an adequate account was to be given of the moral consciousness as it actually exists, that is, as Bain saw it in himself and in the members of the society or culture to which he belonged.

Utilitarianism, Bain remarks, has this great advantage over the moral sense theory, that it provides an external standard of morality, substituting 'a regard to consequences for a mere unreasoning sentiment, or feeling'.[1] It is also opposed to the theory that all human actions are the result of selfish impulses, a theory which is committed to misinterpreting affection and sympathy, 'the main foundations of disinterestedness'.[2] To be sure, these impulses belong to the self. But it does not follow that they can properly be described as 'selfish' impulses. In point of fact selfishness has never been the sole foundation of men's ideas of what is right. And it certainly is not the present sole foundation of men's moral convictions. This is recognized by the utilitarians, who connect the notion of utility with that of the common good.

At the same time utilitarianism cannot constitute the whole truth about morality. For one thing, we must find room for a distinction between 'utility made compulsory and what is left free'.[1] After all, there are many actions which are useful to the community but which are not regarded as obligatory. For another thing, it is clear that the moral rules which prevail in most communities are grounded partly on sentiment, and not only on the idea of utility. Hence, even though the principle of utility is an essential feature of ethics, we must add sentiment and also tradition, 'which is the continuing influence of some former Utility or Sentiment'.[2] That is to say, we must add them if we wish to give a comprehensive account of existing moral practices.

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[1] *The Emotions and the Will*, p. 272.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 258. Bain also notes that we can have disinterested antipathies and aversions.

Bain is not concerned, therefore, with working out an *a priori* theory of ethics. He is concerned with exhibiting the empirical foundations of morality as it exists. He approaches morality very much from the point of view of a psychologist. And if we bear this approach in mind, we can understand his genetic treatment of conscience and the feeling of obligation. In contrast to the view of Dugald Stewart that conscience is 'a primitive and independent faculty of the mind, which would be developed in us although we never had any experience of external authority',[3] Bain holds that 'conscience is an imitation within us of the government without us'.[4] In other words, conscience is an interior reflection of the voices of parents, educators and external authority in general. And the sense of obligation and duty arises out of the association established in the infant mind between the performance of actions forbidden by external authority and the sanctions imposed by this authority.

Now, if we interpret J. S. Mill as offering utilitarianism as an adequate description of the existing moral consciousness, Bain is doubtless right in saying that for an adequate description other factors have to be taken into account besides the principle of utility. But if we interpret Mill as recommending a particular system of ethics and as preferring this system to the moral sense theory on the ground that the principle of utility provides a criterion of moral conduct which is lacking in any pure moral sense theory, it is arguable that Bain is really more of a positivist than Mill. For though, as we have seen, he recognizes the advantage which utilitarianism possesses in having an external standard, he tends to emphasize the relativity of moral convictions. If someone asks, what is the moral standard? the proper answer would be that it is 'the enactments of the existing society, as derived from some one clothed in his day with a moral legislative authority'.[1] Instead of treating morality as if it were one indivisible whole, we ought to consider particular codes and moral rules separately. And then we shall see that behind the phenomena of conscience and obligation there lies authority. Bain allows for the influence of outstanding individuals; but the assent of the community at large, whatever it may be, is required to complete the legislative process. And once it is completed, the external authority is present which shapes conscience and the sense of duty in the individual.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 274.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 277.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 283.

[4] *Ibid.*

Bain would have done well to reflect on his own admission that outstanding individuals are capable of moulding afresh the moral outlook of a society. That is to say, he might well have asked himself whether this admission was really consistent with an ethics of social pressure. Some have concluded that there is a field of objective values into which different degrees of insight are possible, while Bergson thought it necessary to make a distinction between what he called 'closed' and 'open' morality. But the problem does not seem to have troubled Bain, even though the data for the raising of the problem were present in his account of morality.

3. A much more radical change in the utilitarian ethics was made by Henry Sidgwick (1838–1900), Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, who was elected to the chair of moral philosophy in that university in 1883. His reputation rests principally on *The Methods of Ethics* (1874). Other writings include his *Outlines of the History of Ethics for English Readers* (1886) and his posthumously published *Lectures on the Ethics of Green, Spencer and Martineau* (1902).

In Sidgwick's account of the development of his ethical views, which was printed in the sixth edition (1901) of *The Methods of Ethics*, he remarked that 'my first adhesion to a definite Ethical system was to the Utilitarianism of Mill'.[2] But he soon came to see a discrepancy between psychological hedonism, the thesis that every man seeks his own pleasure, and ethical hedonism, the thesis that every man ought to seek the general happiness. If psychological hedonism is taken to mean that as a matter of fact every man seeks exclusively his own pleasure, the thesis is questionable, or, rather, false. But in any case a purely psychological thesis cannot establish an ethical thesis. As Hume maintained, we cannot deduce an 'ought' from an 'is', an ought-statement from a purely factual descriptive statement. James Mill may have tried to show how it is psychologically possible for a person who by nature pursues his own pleasure or happiness to act altruistically. But even if his account of the matter were valid from a psychological point of view, this would not show that we *ought* to act altruistically. If, therefore, ethical or universalistic hedonism is to have a philosophical basis, we must look elsewhere for it than in psychology.

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[1] *The Emotions and the Will*, p. 281.

[2] *The Methods of Ethics*, p. XV (6th edition.)

Sidgwick came to the conclusion that this philosophical basis could be found only in the intuition of some fundamental moral principle or principles. He was thus drawn away from the utilitarianism of Bentham and J. S. Mill to intuitionism. But further reflection convinced him that the principles which were implicit in the morality of common sense, as distinct from philosophical theories about morality, were either utilitarian in character or at any rate compatible with utilitarianism. 'I was then a Utilitarian again, but on an Intuitional basis.'[1]

In Sidgwick's view, therefore, there are certain moral principles which are self-evidently true. Thus it is evident that one should prefer a future greater good to a present lesser one.[2] This is the principle of prudence. It is also self-evident that as rational beings we ought to treat others in the way in which we think that we ought to be treated, unless there is some difference 'which can be stated as a reasonable ground for difference of treatment'.[3] This is the principle of justice. It is also self-evident both that from the point of view of the Universe the good of any one individual is of no more importance than the good of any other individual, and that as a rational being I ought to aim at the general good, so far as it is attainable by my efforts. From these two propositions we can deduce the principle of benevolence, namely that 'each one is morally bound to regard the good of any other individual as much as his own, except in so far as he judges it to be less, when impartially viewed, or less certainly knowable or attainable by him'.[4]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. XX.

[2] This does not mean that we ought to prefer a future uncertain good to a lesser but certain present one. As self-evident, the principle simply states that priority in time, considered simply by itself, is not a reasonable ground for preferring one good to another. Cf. *The Methods of Ethics*, p. 381.

[3] *The Methods of Ethics*, p. 380. The difference might be one of circumstances or between the persons considered. We would not necessarily think it right to treat a child in the way that we consider we ought to be treated.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 382.

The principle of prudence or of 'rational egoism', as mentioned above, implies that a man ought to seek his own good. And Sidgwick is in fact convinced, with Butler, that this is a manifest obligation. The principle of rational benevolence, however, states that we ought to seek for the good of others, under certain conditions at any rate. If therefore we combine them, we have the command to seek the good of all, including one's own, or to seek one's own good as a constituent part of the general good. For the general good is made up of individual goods. Now, the general good can be equated with universal happiness, provided that we do not understand by happiness simply the pleasures of sense, and provided that we do not intend to imply that happiness is always best attained by aiming at it directly. Hence 'I am finally led to the conclusion that the Intuitional method rigorously applied yields as its final result the doctrine of pure Universalistic Hedonism—which it is convenient to denote by the single word, Utilitarianism'.[1]

If we look at Sidgwick's moral philosophy in the light of the utilitarian tradition, we naturally tend to focus our attention on his rejection of the claims of genetic psychology to provide an adequate basis for our moral convictions, especially of the consciousness of obligation, and on his use of the idea of intuitively perceived moral axioms, a use which was encouraged by his reading of Samuel Clarke and other writers.[2] He can be described as an intuitionist utilitarian or as an utilitarian intuitionist, if such descriptions do not involve a contradiction in terms. Sidgwick, indeed, maintained that there is no real incompatibility between utilitarianism and intuitionism. At the same time he was too honest a thinker to assert that he had given a definitive solution to the problem of reconciling the claims of interest and duty, of prudence or rational egoism and of benevolence, a benevolence capable of expressing itself not only in altruistic conduct but also in complete self-sacrifice in the service of others or in the pursuit of some ideal end.

If, however, we look at Sidgwick's moral philosophy in relation to what was to come later instead of in relation to what went before, we shall probably lay more stress on his method. He laid emphasis on the need for examining what he called the morality of common sense; and he attempted to discover the principles which are implicit in the ordinary moral consciousness, to state them precisely and to determine their mutual relations. His method was analytic. He selected a problem, considered it from various angles, proposed a solution and raised objections and counter-objections. He may have tended to lose himself in details and to suspend final judgment because he was unable to see his way clearly through all difficulties. To say this, however, is in a sense to commend his thoroughness and careful honesty. And though his appeal to self-evident truths may not appear very convincing, his devotion to the analysis and clarification of the ordinary moral consciousness puts one in mind of the later analytic movement in British philosophy.

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[1] *The Methods of Ethics*, pp. 406–7.

[2] For Samuel Clarke see Vol. V of this *History*, pp. 160–1.

4. The associationist psychology, the phenomenalism of J. S. Mill and the utilitarian ethics, all had their roots in the eighteenth century. Soon after the middle of the nineteenth century, however, a new idea began to colour the empiricist current of thought. This was the idea of evolution. We cannot indeed fix on a certain date and say that after this date empiricism became a philosophy of evolution. Herbert Spencer, the great philosopher of evolution in nineteenth-century England, had started publishing his *System of Philosophy* before J. S. Mill published his work on Hamilton, and Bain, who died in the same year as Spencer, continued the tradition represented by the two Mills. Moreover, it is less a question of the empiricist movement as a whole coming under the domination of the idea of evolution than of the idea becoming prominent in certain representatives of the movement. We can, however, say that in the second half of the century the theory of evolution invaded and occupied not only the relevant parts of the scientific field but also a considerable part of the field of empiricist philosophy.

The idea of biological evolution was not, of course, an invention of the middle of the nineteenth century. As a purely speculative idea it had appeared even in ancient Greece. In the eighteenth century the way had been prepared for it by Georges-Louis de Buffon (1707–88), while Jean-Baptiste Pierre Lamarck (1744–1829) had proposed his theories that in response to new needs brought about by changes in the environment changes take place in the organic structure of animals, some organs falling into disuse and others being evolved and developed, and that acquired habits are transmitted by heredity. Moreover, when the idea of evolution was first publicized in Britain, the publicist was a philosopher, Spencer, rather than a scientist. At the same time this does not affect the importance of Darwin's writings in setting the theory of evolution on its feet and in giving an enormously powerful impetus to its propagation.

Charles Robert Darwin (1809–82) was a naturalist, not a philosopher. During his famous voyage on the 'Beagle' (1831–6), observation of variations between differently situated animals of the same species and reflection on the differences between living and fossilized animals led him to question the theory of the fixity of species. In 1838 study of Malthus's *Essay on the Principle of Population* helped to lead him to the conclusions that in the struggle for existence favourable variations tend to be preserved and unfavourable variations to be destroyed, and that the result of this process is the formation of new species, acquired characteristics being transmitted by heredity.

Similar conclusions were reached independently by another naturalist, Alfred Russel Wallace (1823–1913), who, like Darwin, was influenced by a reading of Malthus in arriving at the idea of the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence. And on July 1st, 1858, a joint communication by Wallace and Darwin was presented at a meeting of the Linnean Society in London. Wallace's contribution was a paper *On the Tendency of Varieties to Depart Indefinitely from the Original Type,* while Darwin contributed an abridgment of his own ideas.

Darwin's famous work on the *Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* was published in November 1859, all copies being sold out on the day of publication. This was followed in 1868 by *The Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication.* And the year 1871 saw the publication of *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex.* Darwin published a number of further works, but he is chiefly known for *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man.*

Being a naturalist, Darwin was sparing of philosophical speculation and devoted himself primarily to working out a theory of evolution based on the available empirical evidence. He did indeed interpret morality as evolving out of the purposiveness of animal instinct and as developing through changes in social standards which confer survival value on societies. And he was obviously well aware of the flutter in theological dovecotes which was caused by his theory of evolution, particularly in its application to man. In 1870 he wrote that while he could not look on the universe as the product of blind chance, he could see no evidence of design, still less of beneficent design, when he came to consider the details of natural history. And though he was originally a Christian, he arrived in the course of time at an agnostic suspension of judgment. He tended, however, to avoid personal involvement in theological controversy.

Unless perhaps we happen to live in one of the few surviving pockets of fundamentalism, it is difficult for us now to appreciate the ferment which was caused in the last century by the hypothesis of organic evolution, particularly in its application to man. For one thing, the idea of evolution is now common coin and is taken for granted by very many people who would be quite unable either to mention or to weigh the evidence adduced in its favour. For another thing, the hypothesis is no longer an occasion for bitter theological controversy. Even those who question the sufficiency of the evidence to prove the evolution of the human body from some other species commonly recognize that the first chapters of *Genesis* were not intended to solve scientific problems, and that the matter is one which has to be settled according to the available empirical evidence. Again, if we except the Marxists, who are in any case committed to materialism, reflective unbelievers do not generally maintain that the hypothesis of organic evolution, taken by itself, disproves Christian theism or is incompatible with religious belief. After all, the presence of evil and suffering in the world, which constitutes one of the main objections to Christian theism, remains an indubitable fact whether the hypothesis is accepted or rejected. Further, we have seen philosophers such as Bergson developing a spiritualistic philosophy within the framework of the general idea of creative evolution, and, more recently, a scientist such as Teilhard de Chardin making an enthusiastic use of the same idea in the service of a religious world-view. Hence the controversies of the last century naturally seem to many people to have accumulated a great deal of dust and cobwebs in the interval.

We have to remember, however, that in the middle of the last century the idea of the evolution of species, especially as applied to man himself, was for the general educated public a complete novelty. Moreover, the impression was commonly given, not only by exponents of the idea but also by some of its critics, that the Darwinian theory rendered superfluous or, rather, positively excluded any teleological interpretation of the cosmic process. For example, T. H. Huxley wrote as follows. 'That which struck the present writer most forcibly on his first perusal of the *Origin of Species* was the conviction that Teleology, as commonly understood, had received its deathblow at Mr. Darwin's hands.'[1] Those species survive which are the best fitted for the struggle for existence; but the variations which make them the best fitted are fortuitous.

Our concern here is with the impact of the theory of evolution on philosophy rather than with the theological controversies to which it gave rise. Herbert Spencer, the foremost philosopher of evolution in the nineteenth century, merits a chapter to himself. Meanwhile we can consider briefly two or three writers who contributed to publicizing the idea of evolution and to developing some philosophical theories based on or connected with this idea. It is to be noted, however, that they were scientists who made excursions into philosophy, rather than professional philosophers. Generally speaking, the academic or university philosophers held aloof from the topic and maintained a reserved attitude. As for Spencer, he never occupied an academic post.

5. The name which immediately suggests itself in this context is that of Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–95). As a naval surgeon aboard the 'Rattlesnake' Huxley had opportunity for studying the marine life of the tropical seas, and as a result of his researches he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1851. In 1854 he was appointed lecturer in natural history at the School of Mines. In the course of time he became more and more involved in public life, serving on some ten royal commissions and taking an active part in educational organization. From 1883 to 1885 he was president of the Royal Society.

In Huxley's opinion Darwin had placed the theory of evolution on a sound footing by following a method in accordance with the rules of procedure laid down by J. S. Mill. 'He has endeavoured to determine great facts inductively, by observation and experiment; he has then reasoned from the data thus furnished; and lastly, he has tested the validity of his ratiocination by comparing his deductions with the observed facts of Nature.'[2] It is true that the origin of species by natural selection has not been proved with certainty. The theory remains an hypothesis which enjoys only a high degree of probability. But it is 'the only extant hypothesis which is worth anything in a scientific point of view'.[1] And it is a marked improvement on Lamarck's theory.[2]

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[1] *Lectures and Essays* (The People's Library edition), pp. 178–9. Huxley was commenting on an essay by a certain Professor Kolliker of Würzburg who had interpreted Darwin as a teleologist and had criticized him on this score.

[2] *Lay Sermons, Addresses and Reviews*, p. 294 (6th edition). The quotation is taken from an 1860 article on *The Origin of Species*.

But though Huxley accepted the view that organic evolution proceeds by natural selection or the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence, he made a sharp distinction between the evolutionary process and man's moral life. Those who expound an ethics of evolution, according to which man's moral life is a continuation of the evolutionary process, are probably right in maintaining that what we call the moral sentiments have evolved like other natural phenomena. But they forget that the immoral sentiments are also the result of evolution. 'The thief and the murderer follow nature just as much as the philanthropist.'[3]

In fine, morality involves going against the evolutionary process. In the struggle for existence the strongest and most self-assertive tend to trample down the weaker, whereas 'social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step and the substitution for it of another, which may be called the ethical process'.[4] Originally, human society was probably just as much a product of organic necessity as the societies of bees and ants. But in the case of man social progress involves strengthening the bonds of mutual sympathy, consideration and benevolence, and self-imposed restrictions on anti-social tendencies. True, in so far as this process renders a society more fitted for survival in relation to Nature or to other societies, it is in harmony with the cosmic progress. But in so far as law and moral rules restrict the struggle for existence between members of a given society, the ethical process is plainly at variance with the cosmic process. For it aims at producing quite different qualities. Hence we can say that 'the ethical progress of society depends, not on imitating the cosmic process, still less in running away from it, but in combating it'.[5]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 295.

[2] In regard to Lamarck's theory that environmental changes produce new needs in animals, that new needs produce new desires, and that new desires result in organic modifications which are transmitted by heredity, Huxley remarks that it does not seem to have occurred to Lamarck to inquire 'whether there is any reason to believe that there are any limits to the amount of modifications producible, or to ask how long an animal is likely to endeavour to gratify an impossible desire;' *Lectures and Essays*, p. 124. The quotation is taken from an 1850 essay on 'The Darwinian Hypothesis'.

[3] *Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays*, p. 80. The discourse on *Evolution and Ethics* was originally given at Oxford as the second Romanes lecture.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

There is thus a marked difference between the views of T. H. Huxley and his grandson, Sir Julian Huxley, on the relation between evolution and ethics. I do not mean to imply, of course, that Sir Julian Huxley rejects the moral qualities and ideals which his grandfather considered desirable. The point is that whereas Sir Julian Huxley emphasizes the element of continuity between the general movement of evolution and moral progress, T. H. Huxley emphasized the element of discontinuity, maintaining that 'the cosmic process has no sort of relation to moral ends'.[1] T. H. Huxley might, of course, have called for a new type of ethics, involving a Nietzschean exaltation of Nature's strong men, which could have been interpreted as a continuation of what he called the cosmic process. But he did not aim at any such transvaluation of values. Rather did he accept the values of sympathy, benevolence, consideration for others, and so on; and in the cosmic process he found no respect for such values.

Though, however, man's moral life formed for Huxley a world of its own within the world of Nature, it does not follow that he looked on man as possessing a spiritual soul which cannot be accounted for in terms of evolution. He maintained that 'consciousness is a function of the brain'.[2] That is to say, consciousness is an epiphenomenon which arises when matter has developed a special form of organization. And this theory, together with his defence of determinism, led to his being described as a materialist.

Huxley, however, stoutly denied the applicability to himself of this description. One reason which he gave for this denial is perhaps not very impressive, because it involved a very narrow interpretation of materialism. Materialism, according to Huxley, maintains that there is nothing in the universe but matter and force, whereas the theory of the epiphenomenal nature of consciousness neither denies the reality of consciousness nor identifies it with the physical processes on which it depends.[3] But Huxley went on to remark, with a rather charming unexpectedness, that 'the arguments used by Descartes and Berkeley to show that our certain knowledge does not extend beyond our states of consciousness, appear to me to be as impregnable now as they did when I first became acquainted with them some half-century ago. . . . Our one certainty is the existence of the mental world, and that of

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[1] *Evolution and Ethics, and Other Essays*, p. 83. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

[3] The Marxist, for example, does not deny the reality of mind. Nor does he identify psychical with physical processes. But he looks on himself none the less as a materialist. And so he is in a metaphysical sense.

Kraft und Stoff falls into the rank of, at best, a highly probable hypothesis.'[1] Further, if material things are resolved into centres of force, one might just as well speak of immaterialism as of materialism.

It is not perhaps very easy to understand how the doctrine that we can never really know anything with certainty but our states of consciousness can be harmonized with the doctrine that consciousness is a function of the brain. But the first doctrine enables Huxley to say that 'if I were forced to choose between Materialism and Idealism, I should elect for the latter'.[2]

It must be added, however, that Huxley has no intention of letting himself be forced to choose between materialism and idealism. And the same applies to the issue between atheism and theism. Huxley proclaims himself an agnostic, and in his work on David Hume he expresses agreement with the Scottish philosopher's suspension of judgment about metaphysical problems. We have our scientific knowledge, and 'the man of science has learned to believe in justification, not by faith, but by verification'.[3] In regard to that which lies beyond the scope of verification we must remain agnostic, suspending judgment.

As one might expect in the case of a naturalist who makes excursions into philosophy, Huxley's philosophical theories are not well worked out. Nor is their mutual consistency clearly exhibited, to put it mildly. At the same time they manifest the not uncommon English attitude which shows itself in a dislike of extremes and a reluctance to submit to the imposition of restrictive labels. Huxley was quite prepared to defend evolution against attack, as he did in his famous encounter with Bishop Samuel Wilberforce in 1860. And he was prepared to criticize orthodox theology. But though he clearly did not believe in the Christian doctrine of God, he refused to commit himself either to atheism or to materialism. Behind the veil of phenomena lies the unknowable. And in regard to the unknowable agnosticism is, by definition, the appropriate attitude.

6. (i) The label 'materialist', repudiated by Huxley, was accepted by John Tyndall (1820–93), who in 1853 was appointed professor of natural philosophy in the Royal Institution, where he

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[1] *Evolution and Ethics, and Other Essays*, p. 130. *Kraft und Stoff* is the title of a well-known book by the German materialist, Ludwig Büchner. See Vol. VII of this *History*, pp. 352–3.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 133.

[3] *Lay Sermons, Addresses and Reviews*, p. 18.

was a colleague of Faraday.[1] Tyndall was chiefly concerned with inorganic physics, particularly with the subject of radiant heat; and he was much less inclined than Huxley to make prolonged excursions into the field of philosophy. But he did not hesitate to profess openly what he called 'scientific materialism'.

The scientific materialism accepted by Tyndall was not, however, the same thing as the materialism which was rejected by Huxley. For it meant in large part the hypothesis that every state of consciousness is correlated with a physical process in the brain. Thus in his address to the British Association in 1868 on the *Scope and Limit of Scientific Materialism* Tyndall explained that 'in affirming that the growth of the body is mechanical, and that thought, as exercised by us, has its correlative in the physics of the brain, I think that the position of the "Materialist" is stated, as far as that position is a tenable one'.[2] In other words, the materialist asserts that two sets of phenomena, mental processes and physical processes in the brain, are associated, though he is 'in absolute ignorance'[3] of the real bond of union between them. Indeed, in his so-called Belfast Address, delivered before the British Association in 1874, Tyndall asserted roundly that 'man the *object* is separated by an impassible gulf from man the *subject*. There is no motor energy in the human intellect to carry it, without logical rupture, from the one to the other.'[4]

Tyndall did indeed understand scientific materialism as involving 'a provisional assent'[5] to the hypothesis that the mind and all its phenomena 'were once latent in a fiery cloud'[6] and that they are 'a result of the play between organism and environment through cosmic ranges of time'.[7] But the conclusion which he drew from the theory of evolution was that matter could not properly be looked on as mere 'brute' matter. It had to be regarded as potentially containing within itself life and mental phenomena. In other words, scientific materialism demanded a revision of the concept of matter as something essentially dead and opposed to biological and mental life.

Beyond the phenomena of matter and force, which form the object of scientific inquiry, 'the real mystery of the universe lies unsolved, and, as far as we are concerned, is incapable of solution'.[1] But this acknowledgment of mystery in the universe was not intended by Tyndall as a support for belief in God as conceived by Christians. In his *Apology for the Belfast Address* (1874), he spoke of the idea of creative activity by 'a Being standing outside the nebula'[2] not only as based on no empirical evidence but also as 'opposed to the very spirit of science'.[3] Further, when answering a Catholic critic he remarked, in the same *Apology*, that he would not disavow the charge of atheism, as far as any concept of the Supreme Being was concerned which his critics would be likely to accept.

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[1] On Faraday's death in 1867 Tyndall succeeded him as Superintendent of the Institution.

[2] *Fragments of Science for Unscientific People*, pp. 121–2 (2nd edition).

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

[4] *Lectures and Essays*, p. 40 (Rationalist Press Association edition, 1903).

[5] *Fragments of Science*, p. 166.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 163.

[7] *Lectures and Essays*, p. 40.

Tyndall's scientific materialism was not confined, therefore, to a methodological point of view presupposed by scientific inquiry. He was not simply saying, for example, that the scientific psychologist should pursue his inquiries into the relation between mind and body on the assumption that we shall find a correlation between any given mental phenomenon and a physical process. He was saying that as far as knowledge is concerned, science is omnicompetent. Problems which cannot be answered by science are unanswerable in principle. Religion, for example, is immune from disproof as long as it is regarded simply as a subjective experience.[4] But if it is regarded as claiming to extend our knowledge, its claim is bogus. In a general sense of the term, therefore, Tyndall was a positivist. By admitting a sphere for agnosticism, mysteries or enigmas, that is to say, which cannot be solved, he stopped short of the position to be adopted later by the neo-positivists or logical positivists. But this does not alter the fact that scientific materialism involved for him a positivist view of the omnicompetence of science in the field of knowledge.

(ii) The view that agnosticism is the only attitude which is really in harmony with the genuinely scientific spirit was also maintained by Sir Leslie Stephen (1832–1904), author of a two-volume *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (1876) and of a three-volume work on *The English Utilitarians* (1900). At first a clergyman, he came successively under the influence of J. S. Mill, Darwin and Spencer, and in 1875 he finally abandoned his clerical status.

In a discussion of the nature of materialism Stephen maintains that it 'represents the point of view of the physical inquirer. A man is a materialist for the time being so long as he has only to do with that which may be touched, handled, seen or otherwise perceived through the senses'.[1] In other words, scientific inquiry demands a methodical materialism. It does not demand acceptance of the doctrine that matter is the ultimate reality.

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[1] *Fragments of Science*, p. 93. [2] *Lectures and Essays*, p. 47. [3] *Ibid.*

[4] 'No atheistic reasoning can, I hold, dislodge religion from the human heart. Logic cannot deprive us of life, and religion is life to the religious. As an experience of consciousness it is beyond the assaults of logic', *ibid.*, p. 45.

It by no means follows, however, that we are entitled to assert spiritualism, the doctrine that mind is the ultimate reality. The truth of the matter is that 'we cannot get behind the curtain, which is reality'.[2] If we try to do so, we are at once plunged into 'the transcendental region of antinomies and cobwebs of the brain'.[3] The unknowable which lies beyond 'reality' is 'a mere blank':[4] it is not itself converted into a reality by being spelt with a capital letter. 'The ancient secret is a secret still; man knows nothing of the Infinite and Absolute.'[5]

One would have thought that if the phenomenal world is once equated with 'reality', there is no good reason for supposing that there is any unknowable beyond it. What is the reason for supposing that there *is* a secret which always remains a secret? Conversely, if there is good reason for supposing that there is an unknowable Absolute, there is no good reason for equating the phenomenal world with reality. But Stephen's agnosticism represents less a carefully thought out position than a general attitude. Science alone provides us with definite knowledge. Science knows nothing of any meta-empirical Absolute. But we feel that even if all scientific problems were answered, the universe would still be mysterious, enigmatic. The enigma, however, is insoluble.

Needless to say, scientific materialism and agnosticism were by no means regarded as entailing the rejection of moral values. Tyndall insisted that moral values are independent of religious creeds, and that scientific materialism must not be understood as involving or implying a belittlement of man's highest ideals. As for Sir Leslie Stephen, in his work *The Science of Ethics* (1882) he tried to continue and develop Spencer's attempt to ground morals on evolution. Abstractly considered, the function of morality is to further the health and vitality of the social organism. Historically considered, moral principles undergo a process of natural selection, and those which are most effective in furthering the good of the social organism prevail over the less effective. That is to say, they are approved by the society in question. Thus even morality is brought under the law of the survival of the fittest. Obviously, Stephen's point of view was different from that of T. H. Huxley.

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[1] *An Agnostic's Apology and Other Essays*, p. 52 (Rationalist Press Association edition, 1904). The quotation is taken from an 1886 essay. *What is Materialism?*

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 57.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

7. Agnosticism was not, of course, the only attitude adopted by those who embraced the theory of evolution. Henry Drummond (1851–97), for example, a writer whose books once enjoyed great popularity, tried to bring together science and religion, Darwinism and Christianity, in terms of the operation of one law of continuing evolution. More interesting, however, is the case of George John Romanes (1848–94), biologist and author of a number of works on evolution, who passed from early religious belief to agnosticism and from agnosticism by way of pantheism back in the direction of Christian theism.

The agnostic phase in Romanes's thought found expression in *A Candid Examination of Theism*, which he published in 1878 under the pseudonym of *Physicus*. There is, he maintained, no real evidence for the existence of God, though it may possibly be true, for all we know, that there would be no universe unless there were a God. Some years later, however, in a lecture entitled *Mind, Motion and Monism* (1885), Romanes proposed a form of pantheism, while his adoption of a more sympathetic attitude towards Christian theism was represented by *Thoughts on Religion* (1895), edited by Charles Gore, later Bishop of Oxford. This work comprises some articles which Romanes wrote for the *Nineteenth Century* but did not publish, together with notes for a second *Candid Examination of Theism* which was to have been signed *Metaphysicus*.

In the articles on the influence of science on religion, which form part of *Thoughts on Religion*, Romanes argues that this influence has been destructive in the sense that it has progressively revealed the invalidity of appeals to direct intervention in Nature or to alleged evidence of special cases of design. At the same time science necessarily presupposes the idea of Nature as a system, as exemplifying universal order; and theism provides a reasonable explanation of this universal order. If, however, we wish to speak of the postulated creator of universal order as a divine Mind, we must remember that none of the qualities which characterize the minds with which we are acquainted can be properly attributed to God. Hence 'the word

Mind, as applied to the supposed agency, stands for a blank'.[1] In this sense, therefore, the argument for theism leads to agnosticism.

In his notes for the proposed second version of his *Candid Examination of Theism* Romanes adopts a somewhat different point of view by arguing that the advance of science, 'far from having weakened religion, has immeasurably strengthened it. For it has proved the uniformity of natural causation'.[2] But the question whether one is to look on the universal causal order as a continuing expression of the divine will or simply as a natural fact, is not one which can be settled by the human understanding alone. Science provides an empirical basis, as it were, for a religious vision of the world, but the transition to this vision requires an act of faith. True, 'no one is entitled to deny the possibility of what may be termed an organ of spiritual discernment',[3] manifested in the religious consciousness; and 'reason itself tells me it is not unreasonable to expect that the heart and will should be required to join with reason in seeking God'.[4] The way to become a Christian is to act as one, 'and if Christianity be true, the verification will come, not indeed immediately through any course of speculative reason, but immediately by spiritual intuition'.[5] At the same time faith, definite self-commitment to a religious view of the world, demands 'a severe effort of the will',[6] an effort which Romanes himself is not prepared to make.

It is thus a mistake to say that Romanes came to commit himself definitely to a theistic position. In a sense he not only begins but also ends with agnosticism. At the same time there is a considerable difference between the initial and the terminal agnosticism. For whereas in one period of his life Romanes was evidently convinced that his scientific conscience demanded of him an agnostic position, in later years he came to insist that the religious view of the world may be justified, though it would be justified by something of the nature of spiritual intuition. The agnostic has no right to rule out this possibility or to say that the venture of faith is a fool's venture. For the experiment of faith may well have its own peculiar mode of verification, about which science cannot pronounce judgment. In other words, Romanes was neither satisfied with agnosticism nor fully prepared to reject it. He developed a sympathy with religious belief which Tyndall did not share. But he did not feel able to commit himself to it by that effort of the will which he considered necessary before the internal validation of the religious consciousness could manifest itself.

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[1] *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 87.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 124.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 140.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 132.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 168.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 131.

8. (i) As we have seen, J. S. Mill admired Auguste Comte and was prepared to talk in a general way about the religion of humanity. But he had no use for Comte's proposals for organizing a cult for the new religion or for his dreams of a spiritual and intellectual domination to be exercised by the positivist philosophers. Again, Spencer, who also derived stimulus from Comte, adopted a critical attitude towards some of the Frenchman's theories,[1] while T. H. Huxley described the philosophy of Comte as Catholicism minus Christianity. For real disciples of Comte we have to turn to Richard Congreve (1818–99), Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford, who translated Comte's positivist catechism into English and to his circle. This included John Henry Bridges (1832–1906), Frederic Harrison (1831–1923) and Edward Spencer Beesley (1831–1915).

The London Positivist Society was founded in 1867, and in 1870 it opened a positivist temple in Chapel Street. But after some years a split occurred in the ranks of the Comtists, and those who accepted the leadership of Pierre Laffitte (1823–1903), friend and successor of Comte as high priest of positivism, formed the London Positivist Committee which opened a centre of its own in 1881. Bridges was the first president of the new Committee (1878–80), and he was succeeded by Harrison. The original group was led by Congreve. In 1916 the two groups were reunited.[2]

(ii) The independent thinkers are obviously of more interest than those who were primarily engaged in spreading the pure word of Comtism. One of these independent thinkers was George Henry Lewes (1817–78), author of the once popular but long superseded two-volume *Biographical History of Philosophy* (1845–6). In his earlier years Lewes was an enthusiastic follower of Comte, and in 1853 he published *Comte's Philosophy of the Positive Sciences*. But though he remained a positivist in the sense of holding that philosophy consists in the widest generalizations from the results of the particular sciences and should abstain from any treatment of the meta-empirical, he moved away from Comte and came more under the influence of Spencer. In 1874–9 he published five volumes of *Problems of Life and Mind*.

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[1] In 1864 Spencer wrote his *Reasons for Dissenting from the Philosophy of Comte*.

[2] In 1893 the London Positivist Committee founded *The Positivist Review*. But the periodical ceased publication in 1925, after having been called *Humanity* during the last two years of its life.

Lewes made a distinction between the phenomenon which is understandable simply in terms of its constituent factors and the phenomenon which emerges from its constituent factors as something new, a novelty. The former he called a 'resultant', the latter an 'emergent'. The idea of this distinction was not Lewes's invention, but he appears to have coined the term 'emergent', which was later to play a conspicuous role in the philosophy of evolution.

(iii) A more interesting figure was William Kingdon Clifford (1845–79), who from 1871 was professor of applied mathematics in University College, London. An eminent mathematician, he was also extremely interested in philosophical topics. And he was a fervent preacher of the religion of humanity.

Clifford's best known philosophical idea is probably that of 'mind-stuff', which he proposed as a means of solving the problem of the relation between the psychical and the physical and of avoiding the necessity of postulating the emergence of mind from a completely heterogeneous matter. Like other defenders of the ancient theory of panpsychism, Clifford did not mean to imply that all matter enjoys consciousness. His thesis was that the relation between the psychical and the physical is comparable to that between a read sentence and the same sentence as written or printed. There is a complete correspondence, and every atom, for example, has a psychical aspect. Emergence is not indeed excluded. For consciousness arises when a certain organization of mind-stuff has developed. But any leap from the physical to the psychical, which might seem to imply the causal activity of a creative agent, is avoided.[1]

In the field of ethics Clifford emphasized the idea of the tribal self. The individual has indeed his egoistic impulses and desires. But the concept of the human atom, the completely solitary and self-contained individual, is an abstraction. In actual fact every individual is by nature, in virtue of the tribal self, a member of the social organism, the tribe. And moral progress consists in subordinating the egoistic impulses to the interests or good of the tribe, to that which, in Darwinian language, makes the tribe most fit for survival. Conscience is the voice of the tribal self; and the ethical ideal is to become a public-spirited and efficient citizen. In other words, morality as described by Clifford corresponds pretty well to what Bergson was later to call 'closed morality'.

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[1] As Clifford presupposed something like the phenomenalism of Hume, he had to maintain that impressions or sensations, composed of mind-stuff, can exist antecedently to consciousness. When consciousness arises, they become, or can become, its objects; but to be objects of consciousness is not essential for their existence.

On the subject of religion Clifford was something of a fanatic. Not only did he speak of the clergy as enemies of humanity, and of Christianity as a plague, but he also attacked all belief in God. He was thus more akin to some of the writers of the French Enlightenment than to the nineteenth-century English agnostics, who were generally polite in what they said about religion and its official representatives. And he has been compared not inaptly with Nietzsche. At the same time he proclaimed a substitute religion, that of humanity, though he looked to the progress of science to establish the kingdom of man rather than to any organization on the lines proposed by Comte. Clifford did indeed speak of the 'cosmic emotion' which man can feel for the universe; but it was not his intention to replace theism by pantheism. He was concerned rather with substituting man for God, as he thought that belief in God was inimical to human progress and morality.

(iv) Clifford's successor in his chair of applied mathematics was Karl Pearson (1857–1936), who was later (1911–33) Galton professor of eugenics in the University of London.[1] In Pearson's writings we find a clear exposition of the positivist spirit. He was not indeed the man to look with a kindly eye on Comte's ideas about religious cult, but he was a firm believer in the omnicompetence of science. And his attitude towards metaphysics and theology was very similar to that advanced later by the neopositivists.

According to Pearson, the function of science is 'the classification of facts, the recognition of their sequence and relative significance',[2] while the scientific frame of mind is the habit of forming impersonal judgments upon the facts, judgments, that is to say, which are unbiased by personal feeling and by the idiosyncrasies of the individual temperament. This is not, however, a frame of mind which is characteristic of the metaphysician. Metaphysics, in fact, is poetry which masquerades as something else. 'The poet is a valued member of the community, for he is known to be a poet. . . . The metaphysician is a poet, often a very great one, but unfortunately he is not known to be a poet, because he strives to clothe his poetry in the language of reason, and hence it follows that he is liable to be a dangerous member of the community.'[1] Rudolf Carnap was to expound exactly the same point of view.

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[1] Sir Francis Galton (1822–1911), a cousin of Darwin, was the founder of the science of eugenics and envisaged the deliberate application in human society of the principle of selection which works automatically in Nature.

[2] *The Grammar of Science*, p. 6 (2nd edition, revised and enlarged, 1900).

What, then, are the facts which form the basis for scientific judgment? Ultimately they are simply sense-impressions or sensations. These are stored up in the brain, which acts as a kind of telephone exchange; and we project groups of impressions outside ourselves and speak of these as external objects. 'As such we call it [a group thus projected] a *phenomenon*, and in practical life term it *real*.'[2] What lies behind sense-impressions, we do not and cannot know. The claims of philosophers to have penetrated to things-in-themselves are completely bogus. Indeed, we cannot with propriety even raise the question what causes sense-impressions. For the causal relation is simply a relation of regular sequence between phenomena. Pearson therefore prefers the term 'sensations' to 'sense-impressions', as the latter term naturally suggests the causal activity of an unknown agent.

Obviously, Pearson does not intend to say that science consists simply of noting sensations or sense-impressions. Concepts are derived from sensations; and deductive inference is an essential feature of scientific method. But science is grounded in sensations and it also terminates in them, in the sense that we test the conclusions of an inference by the process of verification. As a body of propositions science is a mental construction, but it rests at either end, so to speak, on sense-impressions.

The statement that science is a mental construction is to be taken literally. On the level of pre-scientific thought the permanent physical object is, as we have seen, a mental construct. And on the level of scientific thought both laws and scientific entities are both mental constructs. The descriptive laws of science[3] are general formulas constructed for economy of thought, and 'the logic man finds in the universe is but the reflection of his own reasoning faculty'.[4] As for postulated entities such as atoms, the term 'atom' denotes neither an observed object nor a thing-in-itself. 'No physicist ever saw or felt an individual atom. Atom and molecule are intellectual conceptions by aid of which physicists classify phenomena, and formulate the relationships between their sequences.'[1] In other words, it is not sufficient to write off metaphysics as a possible source of knowledge about things-in-themselves. Science itself needs to be purified of its superstitions and of the tendency to think that its useful concepts refer to hidden entities or forces.

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[1] *The Grammar of Science*, p. 17.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

[3] Science, Pearson insists, is purely descriptive, and not explanatory. Scientific laws 'simply *describe*, they never explain the routine of our perceptions, the sense-impressions we project into an "outside world" ', *ibid.*, p. 99.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 91. No argument from 'design' to the existence of God, therefore, could ever be valid.

The beneficent social effects of science are strongly emphasized by Pearson. In addition to the technical application of scientific knowledge and its use in special departments such as that of eugenics, there is the general educative effect of scientific method. 'Modern science, as training the mind to an exact and impartial analysis of facts, is an education specially fitted to promote sound citizenship.'[2] Indeed, Pearson goes so far as to quote with approval a remark by Clifford to the effect that scientific thought is human progress itself, and not simply an accompaniment to or condition of such progress.

On the basis, therefore, of a phenomenalism which stood in the tradition of Hume and J. S. Mill Pearson developed a theory of science akin to that of Ernst Mach.[3] In fact, Mach dedicated to Pearson his *Beiträge zur Analyse der Empfindungen*. Common to both men is the idea of science as enabling us to predict and as practising, for this purpose, a policy of economy of thought by linking phenomena in terms of the fewest and simplest concepts possible. And both men interpret unobserved scientific entities as mental constructions. Further, as both Pearson and Mach resolve phenomena ultimately into sensations, we seem to arrive at the odd conclusion that though science is purely descriptive, there is really no world to be described, apart from the contents of consciousness. Thus empiricism, which began by stressing the experimental foundations of all knowledge, ends, through its phenomenalistic analysis of experience, in having no world left, outside the sphere of sensations. To put the matter in another way, empiricism started with the demand for respect for facts and then went on to resolve facts into sensations.

9. Generally speaking, the thinkers mentioned in this chapter can be said to have given expression to a vivid recognition of the part played by scientific method in the enormous increase in man's knowledge of the world. And it is understandable that this recognition was accompanied by the conviction that scientific

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 95.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[3] See Vol. VII of this *History*, p. 359.

method was the only means of acquiring anything that could properly be called knowledge. Science, they thought, continually extends the frontiers of human knowledge; and if there is anything which lies beyond the reach of science, it is unknowable. Metaphysics and theology claim to make true statements about the metaphenomenal; but their claims are bogus.

In other words, the growth of a genuinely scientific outlook is necessarily accompanied by a growth of agnosticism. Religious belief belongs to the childhood of the human race, not to a truly adult mentality. We cannot indeed prove that there is no reality beyond the phenomena, the relations between which are studied by the scientist. Science is concerned with description, not with ultimate explanations. And there may be, for all we know, such an explanation. Indeed, the more phenomena are reduced to sensations or sense-impressions, the more difficult it is to avoid the concept of a metaphenomenal reality. But in any case a reality of this kind could not be known. And the adult mind simply accepts this fact and embraces agnosticism.

With Romanes, it is true, agnosticism came to mean something much more than a mere formal acknowledgment of the impossibility of proving the non-existence of God. But with the more positivist-minded thinkers religion, as far as the adult man was concerned, was deprived of intellectual content. That is to say, it would not comprise belief in the truth of propositions about God. In so far as religion could be retained by the adult mind, it would be reduced to an emotive element. But the emotive attitude would be directed either to the cosmos, as the object of cosmic emotion or feeling, or to humanity, as in the so-called religion of humanity. In fine, the emotive element in religion would be detached from the concept of God and re-directed elsewhere, traditional religion being something that should be left behind in the onward march of scientific knowledge.

We can say, therefore, that a large number of thinkers considered in this chapter were forerunners of the so-called scientific humanists of today, who look on religious belief as lacking any rational support and tend to emphasize the alleged detrimental effect of religion on human progress and morality. Obviously, if one is convinced that man is essentially related to God as his last end, one will question the propriety of the use of the term 'humanism' for any atheistic philosophy of man. But if one regards the movement of evolution in human society as simply an advance in the scientific knowledge and control by man both of his environment and of himself, one can hardly keep any room for religion in so far as it directs man's attention to the transcendent. Scientism is necessarily opposed to traditional religion.

A rather different point of view was advanced by Benjamin Kidd (1858–1916), author of the once popular works *Social Evolution* (1894), *The Principles of Western Civilization* (1902), and *The Science of Power* (1918). In his opinion natural selection in human society tends to favour the growth of man's emotional and affective rather than of his intellectual qualities. And as religion is grounded on the emotive aspects of human nature, it is not surprising if we find that religious peoples tend to prevail over communities in the struggle for existence. For religion encourages, in a way that science can never do, altruism and devotion to the interests of the community. In its ethical aspects especially religion is the most potent of social forces. And the highest expression of the religious consciousness is Christianity, on which Western civilization is built.

In other words, Kidd belittled the reason as a constructive force in social evolution and laid the emphasis on feeling. And as he deprived religion of its intellectual content and interpreted it as the most powerful expression of the emotive aspect of man's nature, he depicted it as an essential factor in human progress. Hostile criticism of religion by the destructive reason was thus for him an attack on progress.

Kidd's recognition of the influence of religion in human history was obviously quite justified. But the emphasis which he placed on the emotive aspects of religion laid him open to the retort that religious beliefs belong to the class of emotively-sustained myths which have as a matter of fact exercised a great influence but the need of which should be outgrown by the adult mentality. Kidd would answer, of course, that such a retort presupposes that progress is secured by the exercise of the critical reason, whereas in his view progress is secured by the development of the emotional and affective aspects of man, not by the development of a reason which is destructive rather than constructive. It seems, however, to be obvious that though the emotive aspects of man are essential to his nature, reason should retain control. And if religion has no rational warrant at all, it is necessarily suspect. Further, though the influence exercised by religions on human societies is an undoubted fact, it by no means necessarily follows that this influence has been invariably beneficial. We need rational principles of discrimination.

There is, however, one main belief which is common to both Kidd and those whom he attacked, namely the belief that in the struggle for existence the principle of natural selection works automatically for progress.[1] And it is precisely this dogma of progress which has been called in question in the course of the twentieth century. In view of the cataclysmic events of this century we can hardly retain a serene confidence in the beneficent effects of collective emotion. But, equally, we find it difficult to suppose that the advance of science, taken by itself, is synonymous with social progress. There is the all-important question of the purposes to be realized by scientific knowledge. And consideration of this question takes us outside the sphere of descriptive science. Obviously, we should all agree that science should be used in the service of man. But the question arises, how are we to interpret man? And our answer to this question will involve metaphysics, either explicit or implicit. The attempt to by-pass or exclude metaphysics will often be found to involve a concealed metaphysical assumption, an unavowed theory of being. In other words, the idea that scientific advance pushes metaphysics out of the picture is mistaken. Metaphysics simply reappears in the form of concealed assumptions.

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[1] As we have seen, T. H. Huxley was an exception, inasmuch as he believed that moral progress runs counter to the process of evolution in Nature.

CHAPTER V

THE PHILOSOPHY OF HERBERT SPENCER

Life and writings—The nature of philosophy and its basic concepts and principles—The general law of evolution: the alternation of evolution and dissolution—Sociology and politics—Relative and absolute ethics—The Unknowable in religion and science—Final comments.

1. In 1858, the year preceding that of the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, Herbert Spencer mapped out a plan for a system which was to be based on the law of evolution or, as he expressed it, the law of progress. He is one of the few British thinkers who have deliberately attempted the construction of a comprehensive philosophical system. He is also one of the few British philosophers who have acquired a world-wide reputation during their lifetime. Seizing on an idea which was already in the air and to which Darwin gave an empirical basis in a restricted field, Spencer turned it into the key-idea of a synoptic vision of the world and of human life and conduct, an optimistic vision which appeared to justify nineteenth-century belief in human progress and which made of Spencer one of the major prophets of an era.

Though, however, Spencer remains one of the great figures of the Victorian age, he now gives the impression of being one of the most dated of philosophers. Unlike Mill, whose writings well repay study, whether one agrees or not with the views expressed. Spencer is little read nowadays. It is not merely that the idea of evolution has become common coin and no longer arouses much excitement. It is rather that after the brutal challenges of the twentieth century we find it difficult to see how the scientific hypothesis of evolution, taken by itself, can provide any adequate basis for that optimistic faith in human progress which was, generally speaking, a characteristic feature of Spencer's thought. On the one hand positivism has changed its character and fights shy of explicit and comprehensive world-visions. On the other hand those philosophers who believe that the trend of evolution is in some real sense beneficent to man generally appeal to metaphysical theories which were foreign to the mind of Spencer. Moreover, while Mill not only dealt with many problems which are still examined by British philosophers but also treated them in a way which is still considered relevant, Spencer is notable for his large-scale exploration of one leading idea rather than for any detailed analyses. However, though Spencer's thought is so closely wedded to the Victorian era that it can scarcely be described as a living influence today, the fact remains that he was one of the leading representative members of the nineteenth century. Hence he cannot be passed over in silence.

Herbert Spencer was born at Derby on April 27th, 1820. Whereas Mill began Greek at the age of three, Spencer admits that at the age of thirteen he knew nothing worth mentioning of either Latin or Greek. By the age of sixteen, however, he had at any rate acquired some knowledge of mathematics; and after a few months as a schoolmaster at Derby he became a civil engineer employed by the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway. When the line was completed in 1841, Spencer was discharged. 'Got the sack—very glad', as he noted in his diary. But though in 1843 he moved to London to take up a literary career, he returned for a short while to the service of the railways and also tried his hand at inventions.

In 1848 Spencer became sub-editor of the *Economist*, and he entered into relations of friendship with G. H. Lewes, Huxley, Tyndall and George Eliot. With Lewes in particular he discussed the theory of evolution; and among the articles which he wrote anonymously for Lewes's *Leader* there was one on 'The Development Hypothesis', in which the idea of evolution was expounded on Lamarckian lines. In 1851 he published *Social Statics* and in 1855, at his own expense, *The Principles of Psychology*. At this time the state of his health was causing him serious concern, and he made several excursions to France, where he met Auguste Comte. He was able, however, to publish a collection of his essays in 1857.

At the beginning of 1858 Spencer drew up a scheme for *A System of Synthetic Philosophy*; and the prospectus, distributed in 1860, envisaged ten volumes. *First Principles* appeared in one volume in 1862, and *The Principles of Biology* in two volumes in 1864–7. *The Principles of Psychology*, originally published in one volume in 1855, appeared in two volumes in 1870–2, while the three volumes of *The Principles of Sociology* were published in 1876–96. *The Data of Ethics* (1879) was subsequently included with two other parts to form the first volume of *The Principles of Ethics* (1892), while the second volume of this work (1893) utilized

Justice (1891). Spencer also published new editions of several volumes of the *System*. For example, the sixth edition of *First Principles* appeared in 1900, while a revised and enlarged edition of *The Principles of Biology* was published in 1898–9.

Spencer's *System of Synthetic Philosophy* constituted a remarkable achievement, carried through in spite of bad health and, at first at any rate, of serious financial difficulties. Intellectually, he was a self-made man; and the composition of his great work involved writing on a number of subjects which he had never really studied. He had to collect his data from various sources, and he then interpreted them in the light of the idea of evolution. As for the history of philosophy, he knew little about it, except from secondary sources. He did indeed make more than one attempt to read Kant's first *Critique*; but when he came to the doctrine of the subjectivity of space and time, he laid the book aside. He had little appreciation or understanding of points of view other than his own. However, if he had not practised what we might call a rigid economy of thought, it is unlikely he would ever have completed his self-imposed task.

Of Spencer's other publications we can mention *Education* (1861), a small but very successful book, *The Man Versus the State* (1884), a vigorous polemic against what the author regarded as the threatening slavery, and the posthumous *Autobiography* (1904). In 1885 Spencer published in America *The Nature and Reality of Religion*, comprising a controversy between himself and the positivist Frederic Harrison. But the work was suppressed, as Harrison protested against the re-publication of his articles without permission, especially as an introduction in support of Spencer's position by a Professor Yeomans had been included in the volume.

With the exception of membership of the Athenaeum Club (1868) Spencer consistently refused all honours. When invited to stand for the chair of mental philosophy and logic at University College, London, he refused; and he also declined membership of the Royal Society. He seems to have felt that when he had really had need of such offers they had not been made, and that when they were made, he no longer had need of them, his reputation being already established. As for honours offered by the government, his opposition to social distinctions of this kind militated against acceptance, quite apart from his annoyance at the lateness of the offers.

Spencer died on December 8th, 1903. At the time of his death he was extremely unpopular in his own country, mainly because of his opposition to the Boer War (1899–1902), which he regarded as an expression of the militaristic spirit that he so much hated.[1] Abroad, however, there was considerable criticism of English indifference to the passing of one of the country's outstanding figures. And in Italy the Chamber adjourned on receiving the news of Spencer's death.

2. Spencer's general account of the relation between philosophy and science bears a marked resemblance to that given by the classical positivists such as Auguste Comte. Both science and philosophy treat of phenomena, of, that is to say, the finite, conditioned and classifiable. True, in Spencer's opinion phenomena are manifestations to consciousness of infinite, unconditioned Being. But as knowledge involves relating and classification, whereas infinite, unconditional Being is by its very nature unique and unclassifiable, to say that such Being transcends the sphere of phenomena is to say that it transcends the sphere of the knowable.[2] Hence it cannot be investigated by the philosopher any more than by the scientist. Metaphenomenal or 'ultimate' causes lie outside the reach of both philosophy and science.

If, therefore, we are to distinguish between philosophy and science, we cannot do so simply in terms of the objects of which they treat. For both are concerned with phenomena. We have to introduce the idea of degrees of generalization. 'Science' is the name of the family of particular sciences. And though every science, as distinct from the unco-ordinated knowledge of particular facts, involves generalization, even the widest of such generalizations are partial in comparison with those universal truths of philosophy which serve to unify the sciences. 'The truths of Philosophy thus bear the same relation to the highest scientific truths, that each of these bears to lower scientific truths. . . . Knowledge of the lowest kind is un-unified knowledge; Science is *partially-unified* knowledge; Philosophy is *completely-unified* knowledge.'[3]

The universal truths or widest generalizations of philosophy can be considered in themselves, as 'products of exploration'.[4] And we are then concerned with general philosophy. Or the universal truths can be considered according to their active role as 'instruments of exploration'.[5] That is to say, they can be considered as truths in the light of which we investigate different specific areas of phenomena, such as the data of ethics and sociology. And we are then concerned with special philosophy. Spencer's *First Principles* is devoted to general philosophy, while subsequent volumes of the *System* deal with the parts of special philosophy.

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[1] Spencer's attitude to the Boer War prompted an attack on him by *The Times*.

[2] We shall return later to Spencer's doctrine of the 'unknowable'.

[3] *First Principles*, p. 119 (6th edition).

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 120.

[5] *Ibid.*

Taken by itself, Spencer's account of the relation between science and philosophy in terms of degrees of unification tends to suggest that in his view the basic concepts of philosophy are derived by generalization from the particular sciences. But this is not the case. For he insists that there are fundamental concepts and assumptions which are involved in all thinking. Let us suppose that a philosopher decides to take one particular datum as the point of departure for his reflections, and that he imagines that by acting in this way he is making no assumptions. In actual fact the choice of one particular datum implies that there are other data which the philosopher might have chosen. And this involves the concept of existence other than the existence actually asserted. Again, no particular thing can be known except as like some other things, as classifiable in virtue of a common attribute, and as different from or unlike other things. In fine, the choice of one particular datum involves a number of 'unacknowledged postulates',[1] which together provide the outlines of a general philosophical theory. 'The developed intelligence is framed upon certain organized and consolidated conceptions of which it cannot divest itself; and which it can no more stir without using than the body can stir without help of its limbs.'[2]

It can hardly be claimed that Spencer makes his position crystal clear. For he speaks of 'tacit assumptions',[3] 'unavowed data',[4] 'unacknowledged postulates',[5] 'certain organized and consolidated conceptions',[6] and 'fundamental intuitions',[7] as though the meanings of these phrases stood in no need of further elucidation and as though they all meant the same thing. It is indeed clear that he does not intend to assert a Kantian theory of the *a priori*. The fundamental concepts and assumptions have an experimental basis. And sometimes Spencer speaks as though it were a question of the individual experience or consciousness. He says, for example, that 'we cannot avoid accepting as true the verdict of consciousness that some manifestations are like one another and some are unlike one another'.[8] The situation is complicated, however, by the fact that Spencer accepts the idea of a relative *a priori*, that is, of concepts and assumptions which are, from the genetic point of view, the product of the accumulated experience of the race[1] but which are *a priori* in relation to a given individual mind, in the sense that they came to it with the force of 'intuitions'.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 123. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*, p. 122. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 123.
[5] *Ibid.* [6] *Ibid.* [7] *Ibid.* [8] *Ibid.*, p. 125.

The basic assumptions of the process of thought have to be taken provisionally as unquestionable. They can be justified or validated only by their results, that is, by showing the agreement or congruity between the experience which the assumptions logically lead us to expect and the experiences which we actually have. Indeed, 'the complete establishment of the congruity becomes the same thing as the complete unification of knowledge in which Philosophy reaches its goal'.[2] Thus general philosophy makes explicit the basic concepts and assumptions, while special philosophy shows their agreement with the actual phenomena in distinct fields or areas of experience.

Now, according to Spencer 'knowing is classifying, or grasping the like and separating the unlike'.[3] And as likeness and unlikeness are relations, we can say that all thinking is relational, that '*relation* is the universal form of thought'.[4] We can distinguish, however, between two kinds of relations, those of sequence and those of co-existence.[5] And each gives rise to an abstract idea. 'The abstract of all sequences is Time. The abstract of all co-existences is Space.'[6] Time and Space are not indeed original forms of consciousness in an absolute sense. But as the generation of these ideas takes place through an organization of experiences which proceeds throughout the entire evolution of mind or intelligence, they can have a relatively *a priori* character, as far as a given individual mind is concerned.

Our concept of Space is fundamentally that of co-existent positions which offer no resistance. And it is derived by abstraction from the concept of Matter, which in its simplest form is that of co-existent positions which offer resistance. In turn, the concept of Matter is derived from an experience of force. For 'forces, standing in certain co-relations, form the whole content of our idea of Matter'.[1] Similarly, though the developed concepts of Motion involves the ideas of Space, Time and Matter, the rudimentary consciousness of Motion is simply that of 'serial impressions of force'.[2]

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[1] Some of these may have their remoter origin in animal experience.

[2] *First Principles*, p. 125. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 127. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 145.

[5] In Spencer's opinion the idea of co-existence is derived from that of sequence, inasmuch as we find that the terms of certain relations of sequence can be presented with equal facility in reverse order. Co-existence cannot be an original datum of a consciousness which consists in serial states.

[6] *First Principles*, p. 146.

Spencer argues, therefore, that psychological analysis of the concepts of Time, Space, Matter and Motion shows that they are all based on experiences of Force. And the conclusion is that 'we come down, then, finally to Force, as the ultimate of ultimates'.[3] The principle of the indestructibility of matter is really that of the indestructibility of force. Similarly, all proofs of the principle of the continuity of motion 'involve the postulate that the quantity of Energy is constant',[4] energy being the force possessed by matter in motion. And in the end we arrive at the principle of the persistence of Force, 'which, as being the basis of science, cannot be established by science',[5] but transcends demonstration, a principle which has as its corollary that of the uniformity of law, the persistence of relations between forces.

It may be objected that such principles as that of the indestructibility of matter belong to science rather than to philosophy. But Spencer answers that they are 'truths which unify concrete phenomena belonging to all divisions of Nature, and so must be components of that all-embracing conception of things which Philosophy seeks'.[6] Further, though the word 'force' ordinarily signifies 'the consciousness of muscular tension',[7] the feeling of effort which we have when we set something in motion or resist a pressure is a symbol of Absolute Force. And when we speak of the persistence of Force, 'we really mean the persistence of some Cause which transcends our knowledge and conception'.[8] How we can intelligibly predicate persistence of an unknowable reality is not perhaps immediately evident. But if the assertion of the persistence of Force really means what Spencer says that it means, it clearly becomes a philosophical principle, even apart from the fact that its character as a universal truth would in any case qualify it for inclusion among the truths of philosophy according to Spencer's account of the relation between philosophy and science.

3. Though, however, such general principles as the indestructibility of matter, the continuity of motion and the persistence of force are components of the synthesis which philosophy seeks to

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 149.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 151.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 167.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 175.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 249.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 175.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 176.

achieve, they do not, even when taken together, constitute this synthesis. For we require a formula or law which specifies the course of the transformations undergone by matter and motion, and which thus serves to unify all the processes of change which are examined in the several particular sciences. That is to say, if we assume that there is no such thing as absolute rest or permanence but that every object is constantly undergoing change, whether by receiving or losing motion or by changes in the relations between its parts, we need to ascertain the general law of the continuous redistribution of matter and motion.

Spencer finds what he is looking for in what he calls indiscriminately a 'formula', 'law' or 'definition' of evolution. 'Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion; during which the matter passes from a relatively indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a relatively definite, coherent heterogeneity; and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation.'[1] This law can be established deductively, by deduction from the persistence of force. It can also be established or confirmed inductively. For whether we contemplate the development of solar systems out of the nebular mass, or that of more highly organized and complex living bodies out of more primitive organisms, or that of man's psychological life, or the growth of language, or the evolution of social organization, we find everywhere a movement from relative indefiniteness to relative definiteness, from incoherence to coherence, together with a movement of progressive differentiation, the movement from relative homogeneity to relative heterogeneity. For example in the evolution of the living body we see a progressive structural and functional differentiation.

But this is only one side of the picture. For the integration of matter is accompanied by a dissipation of motion. And the process of evolution tends towards a state of equilibrium, of a balance of forces, which is succeeded by dissolution or disintegration. For example, the human body dissipates and loses its energies, dies and disintegrates; any given society loses its vigour and decays; and the heat of the sun is gradually dissipated.

Spencer is careful to avoid claiming that we can legitimately extrapolate what is true of a relatively closed system to the totality of things, the universe as a whole. We cannot, for example, argue with certainty from the running-down, so to speak, of our solar system to the running-down of the universe. And it is possible, for all we know, that when life has been extinguished on our planet through the dissipation of the sun's heat, it will be in process of development in some other part of the universe. In fine, we are not entitled to argue that what happens to a part *must* happen to the whole.

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[1] *First Principles*, p. 367. In a note Spencer remarks that the word 'relatively', omitted in the original text, needs to be inserted in two places as above.

'At the same time, if there is an alternation of evolution and dissolution in the totality of things, we must 'entertain the conception of Evolutions that have filled an immeasurable past and Evolutions that will fill an immeasurable future'.[1] And if this represents Spencer's personal opinion, we can say that he gives an up-to-date version of certain early Greek cosmologies, with their ideas of a cyclic process. In any case there is a rhythm of evolution and dissolution in the parts, even if we are not in a position to make dogmatic assertions about the whole. And though at first Spencer spoke about the law of evolution as the law of progress, his belief in alternations of evolution and dissolution evidently set limits to his optimism.

4. Spencer's ideal of a complete philosophical synthesis demands the inclusion of a systematic treatment of the inorganic world in the light of the idea of evolution. And he remarks that if this topic had been treated in the *System of Philosophy*, it 'would have occupied two volumes, one dealing with Astrogeny and the other with Geogeny'.[2] In point of fact, however, Spencer confines himself, in special philosophy, to biology, psychology, sociology and ethics. He alludes, of course, to astronomical, physical and chemical topics, but the *System* contains no systematic treatment of evolution in the inorganic sphere.

As limitations of space exclude a recapitulation of all the parts of Spencer's system, I propose to pass over biology and psychology and to make some remarks in this section about his sociological and political ideas, devoting the following section to the subject of ethics.

The sociologist is concerned with the growth, structures, functions and products of human societies.[3] The possibility of a science of sociology follows from the fact that we can find regular sequences among social phenomena, which permit prediction; and it is not excluded by the fact that social laws are statistical and predictions in this field approximate. 'Only a moiety of science is exact science.'[1] It is the possibility of generalization which is required, not quantitative exactitude. As for the utility of sociology, Spencer claims in a somewhat vague way that if we can discern an order in the structural and functional changes through which societies pass, 'knowledge of that order can scarcely fail to affect our judgments as to what is progressive and what retrograde—what is desirable, what is practicable, what is Utopian'.[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 506.

[2] *The Principles of Sociology*, I, p. 3.

[3] The study of what Spencer calls super-organic evolution, which presupposes organic or biological evolution, would include, if understood in the widest sense, the study of, for example, the societies of bees and ants.

When we consider the struggle for existence in the general process of evolution, we find obvious analogies between the inorganic, organic and super-organic (social) spheres. The behaviour of an inanimate object depends on the relations between its own forces and the external forces to which it is exposed. Similarly, the behaviour of an organic body is the product of the combined influences of its intrinsic nature and of its environment, both inorganic and organic. Again, every human society 'displays phenomena that are ascribable to the character of its units and to the conditions under which they exist'.[3]

It is indeed true that the two sets of factors, intrinsic and extrinsic, do not remain static. For example, man's powers, physical, emotional and intellectual, have developed in the course of history, while evolving society has produced remarkable changes in its organic and inorganic environment. Again, the products of evolving society, its institutions and cultural creations, bring fresh influences into being. Further, the more human societies develop, so much the more do they react on one another, so that the super-organic environment occupies a position of even greater importance. But in spite of the growing complexity of the situation an analogous interplay of forces, intrinsic and extrinsic, is discernible in all three spheres.

Though, however, there is continuity between the inorganic, organic and super-organic spheres, there is also discontinuity. If there is similarity, there is also dissimilarity. Consider, for example, the idea of a society as an organism. As in the case of an organic body in the proper sense, the growth of society is accompanied by a progressive differentiation of structures, which results in a progressive differentiation of functions. But this point of similarity between the organic body and human society is also a point of dissimilarity between them both and the inorganic body. For according to Spencer the actions of the different parts of an inorganic thing cannot properly be regarded as functions. Further, there is an important difference between the process of differentiation in an organic body and that in the social organism. For in the latter we do not find that kind of differentiation which in the former results in one part alone becoming the organ of intelligence and in some parts becoming sense-organs while others do not. In the organic body 'consciousness is concentrated in a small part of the aggregate', whereas in the social organism 'it is diffused throughout the aggregate: all the units possess the capacity for happiness and misery, if not in equal degrees, still in degrees that approximate'.[1]

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[1] *The Study of Sociology*, p. 44 (26th thousand, 1907).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

[3] *The Principles of Sociology*, I, pp. 9–10.

An enthusiast for the interpretation of political society as an organism might, of course, try to find detailed analogies between differentiation of functions in the organic body and in society. But this might easily lead him into speaking, for example, as though the government were analogous to the brain and as though the other parts of society should leave all thinking to the government and simply obey its decisions. And this is precisely the sort of conclusion which Spencer wishes to avoid. Hence he insists on the relative independence of the individual members of a political society and denies the contention that society is an organism in the sense that it is more than the sum of its members and possesses an end which is different from the ends of the members. 'As, then, there is no social sensorium, it results that the welfare of the aggregate, considered apart from that of the members, is not an end to be sought. The society exists for the benefit of its members; not its members for the benefit of society.'[2] In other words, we can say that the arms and the legs exist for the good of the whole body. But in the case of society we have to say that the whole exists for the parts. Spencer's conclusion at any rate is clear. And even if his arguments are sometimes obscure and perplexing, it is also clear that in his opinion the analogy of an organism, as applied to a political society, is not only misleading but also dangerous.

The situation is in fact this. Spencer's determination to use the idea of evolution throughout all fields of phenomena leads him to speak of political society, the State, as a super-organism. But as he is a resolute champion of individual liberty against the claims and encroachment of the State, he tries to deprive this analogy of its sting by pointing out essential differences between the organic body and the body political. And he does this by maintaining that while political development is a process of integration, in the sense that social groups become larger and individual wills are merged together, it is also a movement from homogeneity to heterogeneity, so that differentiation tends to increase. For example, with the advance of civilization towards the modern industrialized State the class-divisions of relatively more primitive societies tend, so Spencer believes, to become less rigid and even to break down. And this is a sign of progress.

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[1] *Ibid.*, 1, p. 479.

[2] *Ibid.*

Spencer's point depends in part on his thesis that 'the state of homogeneity is an unstable state; and where there is already some heterogeneity, the tendency is towards greater heterogeneity'.[1] Given this idea of the movement of evolution, it obviously follows that a society in which differentiation is relatively greater is more evolved than one in which there is relatively less differentiation. At the same time it is clear that Spencer's point of view also depends on a judgment of value, namely that a society in which individual liberty is highly developed is intrinsically more admirable and praiseworthy than a society in which there is less individual liberty. True, Spencer believes that a society which embodies the principle of individual liberty possesses a greater survival-value than societies which do not embody the principle. And this can be understood as a purely factual judgment. But it seems obvious to me at any rate that Spencer considers the first type of society to be more deserving of survival because of its greater intrinsic value.

If we pass over Spencer's account of primitive societies and their development, we can say that he concentrates most of his attention on the transition from the militaristic or militant type of society to the industrial type. The militant society is basically 'one in which the army is the nation mobilized while the nation is the quiescent army, and which, therefore, acquires a structure common to army and nation'.[2] There can indeed be development within this kind of society. For example, the military leader becomes the civil or political head, as in the case of the Roman emperor; and in the course of time the army becomes a specialized professional branch of the community instead of being coextensive with the adult male population. But in the militant

[1] *The Principles of Sociology*, II, p. 288.

[2] *Ibid.*, I, p. 577.

society in general integration and cohesion are dominant features. The primary aim is the preservation of the society, while the preservation of individual members is a matter for concern only as a means to the attainment of the primary aim. Again, in this kind of society there is constant regulation of conduct, and 'the individuality of each member has to be so subordinated in life, liberty, and property, that he is largely, or completely *owned* by the State'.[1] Further, as the militant type of society aims at self-sufficiency, political autonomy tends to be accompanied by economic autonomy.[2] The Germany of National Socialism would doubtless have represented for Spencer a good example of a revival of the militant type of society in the modern industrial era.

Spencer does not deny that the militant type of society had an essential role to play in the process of evolution considered as a struggle for existence in which the fittest survive. But he maintains that though inter-social conflict was necessary for the formation and growth of societies, the development of civilization renders war increasingly unnecessary. The militant type of society thus becomes an anachronism, and a transition is required to what Spencer calls the industrial type of society. This does not mean that the struggle for existence ceases. But it changes its form, becoming 'the industrial struggle for existence',[3] in which that society is best fitted to survive which produces 'the largest number of the best individuals—individuals best adapted for life in the industrial state'.[4] In this way Spencer tries to avoid the accusation that when he has arrived at the concept of the industrial type of society, he abandons the ideas of the struggle for existence and of the survival of the fittest.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that by the industrial type of society Spencer means simply a society in which the citizens are occupied, exclusively or predominantly, in the economic life of production and distribution. For an industrial society in this narrow sense would be compatible with a thoroughgoing regulation of labour by the State. And it is precisely this element of compulsion which Spencer is concerned to exclude. On the economic level, he is referring to a society dominated by the principle of *laissez-faire*. Hence in his view socialist and communist

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[1] *Ibid.*, II, p. 607.

[2] The militant type of society also tends to manifest itself in characteristic forms of law and judicial procedure.

[3] *The Principles of Sociology*, II, p. 610.

[4] *Ibid.*

States would be very far from exemplifying the essence of the industrial type of society. The function of the State is to maintain individual freedom and rights, and to adjudicate, when necessary, between conflicting claims. It is not the business of the State to interfere positively with the lives and conduct of the citizens, except when interference is required for the maintenance of internal peace.

In other words, in the ideal type of industrial society, as Spencer interprets the term, emphasis is shifted from the totality, the society as a whole, to its members considered as individuals. 'Under the industrial *régime* the citizen's individuality, instead of being sacrificed by the society, has to be defended by the society. Defence of his individuality becomes the society's essential duty.'[1] That is to say, the cardinal function of the State becomes that of equitably adjusting conflicting claims between individual citizens and preventing the infringement of one man's liberty by another.

Spencer's belief in the universal applicability of the law of evolution obviously committed him to maintaining that the movement of evolution tends to the development of the industrial type of State, which he regarded, rather over-optimistically, as an essentially peaceful society. But the tendencies to interference and regulation by the State which were showing themselves in the last decades of his life led him to express his fear of what he called 'the coming slavery'[2] and to attack violently any tendency on the part of the State or of one of its organs to regard itself as omnicompetent. 'The great political superstition of the past was the divine right of kings. The great political superstition of the present is the divine right of parliaments.'[3] Again, 'the function of Liberalism in the past was that of putting a limit to the powers of kings. The function of true Liberalism in the future will be that of putting a limit to the powers of Parliaments.'[4]

Obviously, in this resolute attack on 'the coming slavery' Spencer could not appeal simply to the automatic working-out of any law of evolution. His words are clearly inspired by a passionate conviction in the value of individual liberty and initiative, a conviction which reflected the character and temperament of a man who had never at any period of his life been inclined to bow before constituted authority simply because it was authority. And it is a notorious fact that Spencer carried his attack on what he regarded as encroachments by the State on private liberty to the extent of condemning factory legislation, sanitary inspection by government officials, State management of the Post Office, poor relief by the State and State education. Needless to say, he did not condemn reform as such or charitable relief work or the running of hospitals and schools. But his insistence was always on voluntary organization of such projects, as opposed to State action, management and control. In short, his ideal was that of a society in which, as he put it, the individual would be everything and the State nothing, in contrast with the militant type of society in which the State is everything and the individual nothing.

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[1] *The Principles of Sociology*, II, p. 607.

[2] This is the title of one of his essays.

[3] *The Man Versus the State*, p. 78 (19th thousand, 1910).

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

Spencer's equation of the industrial type of society with peace-loving and anti-militaristic society is likely to strike us as odd, unless we make the equation true by definition. And his extreme defence of the policy of *laissez-faire* is likely to appear to us as eccentric, or at least as a hangover from a bygone outlook. He does not seem to have understood, as Mill came to understand, at least in part, and as was understood more fully by an idealist such as T. H. Green, that social legislation and so-called interference by the State may very well be required to safeguard the legitimate claims of every individual citizen to lead a decent human life.

At the same time Spencer's hostility to social legislation which nowadays is taken for granted by the vast majority of citizens in Great Britain should not blind us to the fact that he, like Mill, saw the dangers of bureaucracy and of any exaltation of the power and functions of the State which tends to stifle individual liberty and originality. To the present writer at any rate it seems that concern with the common good leads to an approval of State action to a degree far beyond what Spencer was prepared to endorse. But it should never be forgotten that the common good is not something entirely different from the good of the individual. And Spencer was doubtless quite right in thinking that it is for the good both of individuals and of society in general that citizens should be able to develop themselves freely and show initiative. We may well think that it is the business of the State to create and maintain the conditions in which individuals can develop themselves, and that this demands, for example, that the State should provide for all the means of education according to the individual's capacity for profiting by it. But once we accept the principle that the State should concern itself with positively creating and maintaining the conditions which will make it possible for every individual to lead a decent human life in accordance with his or her capacities, we expose ourselves to the danger of subsequently forgetting that the common good is not an abstract entity to which the concrete interests of individuals have to be ruthlessly sacrificed. And Spencer's attitude, in spite of its eccentric exaggerations, can serve to remind us that the State exists for man and not man for the State. Further, the State is but one form of social organization: it is not the only legitimate form of society. And Spencer certainly understood this fact.

As has already been indicated, Spencer's political views were partly the expression of factual judgments, connected with his interpretation of the general movement of evolution, and partly an expression of judgments of value. For example, his assertion that what he calls the industrial type of society possesses a greater survival value than other types was partly equivalent to a prediction that it would in fact survive, in virtue of the trend of evolution. But it was also partly a judgment that the industrial type of society deserved to survive, because of its intrinsic value. Indeed, it is clear enough that with Spencer a positive evaluation of personal liberty was the really determining factor in his view of modern society. It is also clear that if a man is resolved that, as far as depends on him, the type of society which respects individual freedom and initiative *will* survive, this resolution is based primarily on a judgment of value rather than on any theory about the automatic working-out of a law of evolution.

5. Spencer regarded his ethical doctrine as the crown of his system. In the preface to *The Data of Ethics* he remarks that his first essay, on *The Proper Sphere of Government* (1842), vaguely indicated certain general principles of right and wrong in political conduct. And he adds that 'from that time onwards my ultimate purpose, lying behind all proximate purposes, has been that of finding for the principles of right and wrong in conduct at large, a scientific basis'.[1] Belief in supernatural authority as a basis for ethics has waned. It thus becomes all the more imperative to give morality a scientific foundation, independent of religious beliefs. And for Spencer this means establishing ethics on the theory of evolution.

Conduct in general, including that of animals, consists of acts adjusted to ends.[1] And the higher we proceed in the scale of evolution, the clearer evidence do we find of purposeful actions directed to the good either of the individual or of the species. But we also find that teleological activity of this kind forms part of the struggle for existence between different individuals of the same species and between different species. That is to say, one creature tries to preserve itself at the expense of another, and one species maintains itself by preying on another.

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[1] *The Data of Ethics*, p. V (1907 edition). This preface is reprinted in the first volume of *The Principles of Ethics*, the reference being to p. VII (1892 edition).

This type of purposeful conduct, in which the weaker goes to the wall, is for Spencer imperfectly evolved conduct. In perfectly evolved conduct, ethical conduct in the proper sense, antagonisms between rival groups and between individual members of one group will have been replaced by co-operation and mutual aid. Perfectly evolved conduct, however, can be achieved only in proportion as militant societies give place to permanently peaceful societies. In other words it cannot be achieved in a stable manner except in the perfectly evolved society, in which alone can the clash between egoism and altruism be overcome and transcended.

This distinction between imperfectly and perfectly evolved conduct provides the basis for a distinction between relative and absolute ethics. Absolute ethics is 'an ideal code of conduct formulating the behaviour of the completely adapted man in the completely evolved society',[2] while relative ethics is concerned with the conduct which is the nearest approximation to this ideal in the circumstances in which we find ourselves, that is, in more or less imperfectly evolved societies. According to Spencer, it is simply not true that in any set of circumstances which call for purposeful action on our part we are always faced with a choice between an action which is absolutely right and one which is absolutely wrong. For example, it may happen that circumstances are such that, however I act, I shall cause some pain to another person. And an action which causes pain to another cannot be absolutely right. In such circumstances, therefore, I have to try to estimate which possible course of action is relatively right, that is, which possible course of action will probably cause the greatest amount of good and the least amount of evil. I cannot expect to make an infallible judgment. I can only act as seems to me best, after devoting to the matter the amount of reflection which appears to be demanded by the relative importance of the issue.

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[1] Purposeless actions are excluded from 'conduct'.

[2] *The Data of Ethics*, p. 238.

I can indeed bear in mind the ideal code of conduct of absolute ethics; but I cannot legitimately assume that this standard will serve as a premiss from which I can infallibly deduce what action would be relatively best in the circumstances in which I find myself.

Spencer accepts the utilitarian ethics in the sense that he takes happiness to be the ultimate end of life and measures the rightness or wrongness of actions by their relation to this end. In his opinion the 'gradual rise of a utilitarian ethic has, indeed, been inevitable'.[1] True, there was from the start a nascent utilitarianism, in the sense that some actions were always felt to be beneficial and other injurious to man and society. But in past societies ethical codes were associated with authority of some sort or another, or with the idea of divine authority and divinely imposed sanctions, whereas in the course of time ethics has gradually become independent of non-ethical beliefs, and there has been growing up a moral outlook based simply on the ascertainable natural consequences of actions. In other words, the trend of evolution in the moral sphere has been towards the development of utilitarianism. It must be added, however, that utilitarianism must be understood in such a way that room is found for the distinction between relative and absolute ethics. Indeed, the very idea of evolution suggests progress towards an ideal limit. And in this progress advance in virtue cannot be separated from social advance. 'The co-existence of a perfect man and an imperfect society is impossible.'[2]

As Spencer regards utilitarianism as the scientifically-based ethics, it is understandable that he wishes to show that it is not simply one among many mutually exclusive systems, but that it can find room for the truths contained in other systems. Thus he maintains, for example, that utilitarianism, when rightly understood, finds room for the point of view which insists on the concepts of right, wrong and obligation rather than on the attainment of happiness. Bentham may have thought that happiness is to be aimed at directly, by applying the hedonistic calculus. But he was wrong. He would indeed have been right if the attainment of happiness did not depend on the fulfilment of conditions. But in this case any action would be moral if it produced pleasure. And this notion is incompatible with the moral consciousness. In point of fact the attainment of happiness depends on the fulfilment of certain conditions, that is, on the observance of certain moral precepts or rules.[1] And it is at the fulfilment of these conditions that we ought to aim directly. Bentham thought that everyone knows what happiness is, and that it is more intelligible than, say, the principles of justice. But this view is the reverse of the truth. The principles of justice are easily intelligible, whereas it is far from easy to say what happiness is. Spencer advocates, therefore, what he calls a 'rational' utilitarianism, one which 'takes for its immediate object of pursuit conformity to certain principles which, in the nature of things, causally determine welfare'.[2]

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[1] *The Principles of Ethics*, I, p. 318.

[2] *The Data of Ethics*, p. 241.

Again, the theory that moral rules can be inductively established by observing the natural consequences of actions does not entail the conclusion that there is no truth at all in the theory of moral intuitionism. For there are indeed what can be called moral intuitions, though they are not something mysterious and inexplicable but 'the slowly organized results of experiences received by the race'.[3] What was originally an induction from experience can come in later generations to have for the individual the force of an intuition. The individual may see or feel instinctively that a certain course of action is right or wrong, though this instinctive reaction is the result of the accumulated experience of the race.

Similarly, utilitarianism can perfectly well recognize truth in the contention that the perfection of our nature is the object for which we should seek. For the trend of evolution is towards the emergence of the highest form of life. And though happiness is the supreme end, it is 'the concomitant of that highest life which every theory of moral guidance has distinctly or vaguely in view'.[4] As for the theory that virtue is the end of human conduct, this is simply one way of expressing the doctrine that our direct aim should be that of fulfilling the conditions for the attainment of the highest form of life to which the process of evolution tends. If it were attained, happiness would result.

Needless to say, Spencer could not reasonably claim to ground his ethical theory on the theory of evolution without admitting a continuity between evolution in the biological sphere and that in the moral sphere. And he maintains, for example, that 'human justice must be a further development of sub-human justice'.[5]

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[1] Obviously, the idea of moral precepts must be understood in such a way as to admit the distinction between principles of conduct in an imperfectly evolved society and the ideal principles which would obtain in a perfectly evolved society.

[2] *The Data of Ethics*, p. 140. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 148. [4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Justice* (*The Principles of Ethics*, Part IV), p. 17.

At the same time, in a preface, subsequently withdrawn, to the fifth and sixth parts of *The Principles of Ethics* he admits that the doctrine of evolution has not furnished guidance to the hoped-for extent. He seems, however, never to have understood clearly that the process of evolution, considered as an historical fact, could not by itself establish the value-judgments which he brought to bear upon its interpretation. For example, even if we grant that evolution is moving towards the emergence of a certain type of human life in society and that this type is therefore shown to be the most fitted for survival, it does not necessarily follow that it is morally the most admirable type. As T. H. Huxley saw, factual fitness for survival in the struggle for existence and moral excellence are not necessarily the same thing.

Of course, if we assume that evolution is a teleological process directed towards the progressive establishment of a moral order, the situation is somewhat different. But though an assumption of this kind may have been implicit in Spencer's outlook, he did not profess to make any such metaphysical assumptions.

6. The explicit metaphysical element in Spencer's thought is, somewhat paradoxically, his philosophy of the Unknowable. This topic is introduced in the context of a discussion about the alleged conflict between religion and science. 'Of all antagonisms of belief the oldest, the widest, the most profound, and the most important is that between Religion and Science.'[1] Of course, if religion is understood simply as a subjective experience, the question of a conflict between it and science hardly arises. But if we bear in mind religious beliefs, the case is different. In regard to particular events supernatural explanations have been superseded by scientific or natural explanations. And religion has had to confine itself more or less to offering an explanation of the existence of the universe as a totality.[2] But the arguments are unacceptable to anyone who possesses a scientific outlook. In this sense, therefore, there is a conflict between the religious and scientific mentalities. And it can be resolved, according to Spencer, only through a philosophy of the Unknowable.

If we start from the side of religious belief, we can see that both pantheism and theism are untenable. By pantheism Spencer understands the theory of a universe which develops itself from potential to actual existence. And he contends that this idea is inconceivable. We do not really know what it means. Hence the question of its truth or falsity hardly arises. As for theism, understood as the doctrine that the world was created by an external agent, this too is untenable. Apart from the fact that the creation of space is inconceivable, because its non-existence cannot be conceived, the idea of a self-existent Creator is as inconceivable as that of a self-existent universe. The very idea of self-existence is inconceivable. 'It is not a question of probability, or credibility, but of conceivability.'[1]

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[1] *First Principles*, p. 9.

[2] It may occur to the reader that religion and the offering of explanations are not precisely the same thing. But in ordinary language 'religion' is generally understood as involving an element or elements of belief. And Spencer obviously understands the term in this way.

It is true, Spencer concedes, that if we inquire into the ultimate cause or causes of the effects produced on our senses, we are led inevitably to the hypothesis of a First Cause. And we shall find ourselves driven to describe it as both infinite and absolute. But Mansel[2] has shown that though the idea of a finite and dependent First Cause involves manifest contradictions, the idea of a First Cause which is infinite and absolute is no more free from contradictions, even if they are not so immediately evident. We are unable, therefore, to say anything intelligible about the nature of the First Cause. And we are left in the end with nothing more than the idea of an inscrutable Power.

If, however, we start from the side of science, we are again brought face to face with the Unknowable. For science cannot solve the mystery of the universe. For one thing, it cannot show that the universe is self-existent, for the idea of self-existence is, as we have seen, inconceivable or unintelligible. For another thing, the ultimate ideas of science itself 'are all representative of realities that cannot be comprehended'.[3] For example, we cannot understand what force is 'in itself'. And in the end 'ultimate religious ideas and ultimate scientific ideas alike turn out to be merely symbols of the actual, not cognitions of it'.[4]

This point of view is supported by an analysis of human thought. All thinking, as we have seen, is relational. And that which is not classifiable by being related to other things through relations of similarity and dissimilarity is not a possible object of knowledge. Hence we cannot know the unconditioned and absolute. And this applies not only to the Absolute of religion but also to ultimate scientific ideas if considered as representing metaphenomenal entities or things-in-themselves. At the same time to assert that all knowledge is 'relative' is to assert implicitly that there exists a non-relative reality. 'Unless a real Non-relative or Absolute be postulated, the Relative itself becomes absolute, and so brings the argument to a contradiction.'[1] In fact, we cannot eliminate from our consciousness the idea of an Absolute behind appearances.

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[1] *First Principles*, p. 29.

[2] Henry L. Mansel (1820–71), who became Dean of St. Paul's, developed Sir William Hamilton's doctrine about the unknowable unconditioned and gave the Bampton lectures on *The Limits of Religious Thought* (1858) from which Spencer quotes (*First Principles*, pp. 33–6) in support of his own agnosticism.

[3] *First Principles*, p. 55.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 57.

Thus whether we approach the matter through a critical examination of religious beliefs or through reflection on our ultimate scientific ideas or through an analysis of the nature of thought and knowledge, we arrive in the end at the concept of an unknowable reality. And a permanent state of peace between religion and science will be achieved 'when science becomes fully convinced that its explanations are proximate and relative, while Religion becomes fully convinced that the mystery it contemplates is ultimate and absolute'.[2]

Now, the doctrine of the Unknowable forms the first part of *First Principles* and thus comes at the beginning of Spencer's system of philosophy as formally arranged. And this fact may incline the unwary reader to attribute to the doctrine a fundamental importance. When, however, he discovers that the inscrutable Absolute or Power of religion is practically equiparated with Force, considered in itself, he may be led to conclude that the doctrine is not much more, if anything, than a sop politely offered to the religious-minded by a man who was not himself a believer in God and who was buried, or rather cremated, without any religious ceremony. It is thus easy to understand how some writers have dismissed the first part of *First Principles* as an unhappy excrescence. Spencer deals with the Unknowable at considerable length. But the total result is not impressive from the metaphysical point of view, as the arguments are not well thought out, while the scientist is likely to demur at the notion that his basic ideas pass all understanding.

The fact remains, however, that Spencer recognizes a certain mystery in the universe. His arguments for the existence of the Unknowable are indeed somewhat confused. Sometimes he gives the impression of accepting a Humian phenomenalism and of arguing that the modifications produced on our senses must be caused by something which transcends our knowledge. At other times he seems to have at the back of the mind a more or less Kantian line of thought, derived from Hamilton and Mansel. External things are phenomena in the sense that they can be known only in so far as they conform to the nature of human thought. Things-in-themselves or noumena cannot be known; but as the idea of the noumenon is correlative to that of the phenomenon, we cannot avoid postulating it.[1] Spencer also relies, however, on what he calls an all-important fact, namely that besides 'definite' consciousness 'there is also an *indefinite* consciousness which cannot be formulated'.[2] For example, we cannot have a definite consciousness of the finite without a concomitant indefinite consciousness of the infinite. And this line of argument leads to the assertion of the infinite Absolute as a positive reality of which we have a vague or indefinite consciousness. We cannot know *what* the Absolute is. But even though we deny each successive definite interpretation or picture of the Absolute which presents itself, 'there ever remains behind an element which passes into new shapes'.[3]

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[1] *First Principles*, pp. 82–3.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 92.

This line of argument appears to be intended seriously. And though it might be more convenient to turn Spencer into a complete positivist by dismissing the doctrine of the Unknowable as a patronizing concession to religious people, there does not seem to be any adequate justification for this summary dismissal. When Frederic Harrison, the positivist, exhorted Spencer to transform the philosophy of the Unknowable into the Comtist religion of humanity, Spencer turned a deaf ear. It is easy to poke fun at him for using a capital letter for the Unknowable, as though, as it has been said, he expected one to take off one's hat to it. But he seems to have been genuinely convinced that the world of science is the manifestation of a reality which transcends human knowledge. The doctrine of the Unknowable is unlikely to satisfy many religious people. But this is another question. As far as Spencer himself is concerned, he appears to have sincerely believed that the vague consciousness of an Absolute or Unconditioned is an uneliminable feature of human thought, and that it is, as it were, the heart of religion, the permanent element which survives the succession of different creeds and different metaphysical systems.

7. Needless to say, Spencer's philosophy contains a good deal

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[1] Spencer actually employs the Kantian terms.

[2] *First Principles*, p. 74.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

of metaphysics. Indeed, it is difficult to think of any philosophy which does not. Is not phenomenalism a form of metaphysics? And when Spencer says, for example, that 'by reality we mean *persistence* in consciousness',[1] it is arguable that this is a metaphysical assertion. We might, of course, try to interpret it as being simply a definition or as a declaration about the ordinary use of words. But when we are told that 'persistence is our ultimate test of the real whether as existing under its unknown form or under the form known to us',[2] it is reasonable to classify this as a metaphysical assertion.

Obviously, Spencer cannot be described as a metaphysician if we mean by this a philosopher who undertakes to disclose the nature of ultimate reality. For in his view it cannot be disclosed. And though he is a metaphysician, to the extent of asserting the existence of the Unknowable, he then devotes himself to constructing a unified overall interpretation of the knowable, that is, of phenomena. But if we like to call this general interpretation 'descriptive metaphysics', we are, of course, free to do so.

In developing this interpretation Spencer adheres to the empiricist tradition. It is true that he is anxious to reconcile conflicting points of view. But when he is concerned with showing that his own philosophy can recognize truth in non-empiricist theories, his method of procedure is to give an empiricist explanation of the data on which the theories are based. As has already been mentioned, he is quite prepared to admit that there are what can be called moral intuitions. For an individual may very well feel a quasi-instinctive approval or disapproval of certain types of action and may 'see', as though intuitively and without any process of reasoning, that such actions are right or wrong. But in Spencer's opinion moral intuitions in this sense are 'the results of accumulated experiences of Utility, gradually organized and inherited'.[3] Whether there are such things as inherited experiences of utility, is open to question. But in any case it is abundantly clear that Spencer's way of showing that there is truth in moral intuitionism is to give an empiricist explanation of the empirical data to which this theory appeals.

Similarly, Spencer is prepared to admit that there is something which can be called an intuition of space, in the sense that as far as the individual is concerned it is practically a form independent of experience. But it by no means follows that Spencer is trying to incorporate into his own philosophy the Kantian doctrine of the *a priori*. What he does is to argue that this theory is based on a real fact, but that this fact can be explained in terms of the 'organized and consolidated experiences of all antecedent individuals who bequeathed to him [a given subsequent individual] their slowly-developed nervous organizations'.[1]

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[1] *First Principles*, p. 143.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 143-4.

[3] *The Data of Ethics*, p. 106.

Though, however, we are not entitled to conclude from Spencer's concern with reconciling conflicting points of view that he throws empiricism overboard, he is, we can say, an empiricist with a difference. For he does not simply tackle individual problems separately, as many empiricists are apt to do. In his autobiography he speaks of his architectonic instinct, his love for system-building. And in point of fact his philosophy was designed as a system: it did not simply become a system in the sense that different lines of investigation and reflection happened to converge towards the formation of an overall picture. Spencer's general principle of interpretation, the so-called law of evolution, was conceived at an early stage and then used as an instrument for the unification of the sciences.

It can hardly be claimed that Spencer's architectonic instinct, his propensity for synthesis, was accompanied by an outstanding gift for careful analysis or for the exact statement of his meaning. But his weak health and the obstacles which he had to face in the fulfilment of his self-imposed mission did not in any case leave him the time or the energy for much more than he was able in fact to achieve. And though most readers probably find his writings extremely dull, his ambitions and pertinacious attempt to unify our knowlege of the world and of man, as well as our moral consciousness and social life, in the light of one all-pervading idea demands the tribute of our admiration. He has relapsed, as it were, into the Victorian era; and, as has already been remarked, in regard to living influence there is no comparison between Spencer and J. S. Mill. But though Spencer's philosophy may be covered with dust it deserves something better than the contemptuous attitude adopted by Nietzsche, who regarded it as a typical expression of the tame and limited mentality of the English middle class.

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[1] *Ibid.*

PART II

THE IDEALIST MOVEMENT IN GREAT BRITAIN

CHAPTER VI

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE MOVEMENT

Introductory historical remarks—Literary pioneers; Coleridge and Carlyle—Ferrier and the subject-object relation—John Grote's attack on phenomenalism and hedonism—The revival of interest in Greek philosophy and the rise of interest in Hegel; B. Jowett and J. H. Stirling.

1. In the second half of the nineteenth century idealism became the dominant philosophical movement in the British universities. It was not, of course, a question of subjective idealism. If this was anywhere to be found, it was a logical consequence of the phenomenalism associated with the names of Hume in the eighteenth century and J. S. Mill in the nineteenth century. For the empiricists who embraced phenomenalism tended to reduce both physical objects and minds to impressions or sensations, and then to reconstruct them with the aid of the principle of the association of ideas. They implied that, basically, we know only phenomena, in the sense of impressions, and that, if there are metaphenomenal realities, we cannot know them. The nineteenth-century idealists, however, were convinced that things-in-themselves, being expressions of the one spiritual reality which manifests itself in and through the human mind, are essentially intelligible, knowable. Subject and object are correlative because they are both rooted in one ultimate spiritual principle. It was thus a question of objective rather than subjective idealism.[1]

Nineteenth-century British idealism thus represented a revival of explicit metaphysics.[2] That which is the manifestation of Spirit can in principle be known by the human spirit. And the whole world is the manifestation of Spirit. Science is simply one level of knowledge, one aspect of the complete knowledge to which the mind tends, even if it cannot fully actualize its ideal. Metaphysical philosophy endeavours to complete the synthesis.

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[1] The foregoing remarks constitute a generalization which is open to criticism on a number of counts. But in such introductory observations one has to prescind from the differences between the various idealist systems.

[2] Empiricism, it is true, had its own implicit metaphysics. And the empiricists not infrequently used the term 'metaphysics' in regard to some of their tenets. But in so far as metaphysics involves an attempt to disclose the nature of ultimate reality, idealism can legitimately be said to represent a revival of metaphysics.

The idealist metaphysics was thus a spiritualist metaphysics, in the sense that for it ultimate reality was in some sense spiritual. And it follows that idealism was sharply opposed to materialism. In so far indeed as the phenomenalists tried to go beyond the dispute between materialism and spiritualism by reducing both minds and physical objects to phenomena which cannot properly be described either as spiritual or as material, we cannot legitimately call them materialists. But these phenomena were evidently something very different from the one spiritual reality of the idealists. And in any case we have seen that on the more positivistic side of the empiricist movement there appeared an at least methodological materialism, the so-called scientific materialism, a line of thought for which the idealists had no sympathy.

With its emphasis on the spiritual character of ultimate reality and on the relation between the finite spirit and infinite Spirit idealism stood for a religious outlook as against materialistic positivism and the tendency of empiricism in general to by-pass religious problems or to leave room, at best, for a somewhat vague agnosticism. Indeed, a good deal of the popularity of idealism was due to the conviction that it stood firmly on the side of religion. To be sure, with Bradley, the greatest of the British idealists, the concept of God passed into that of the Absolute, and religion was depicted as a level of consciousness which is surpassed in metaphysical philosophy, while McTaggart, the Cambridge idealist, was an atheist. But with the earlier idealists the religious motive was much in evidence, and idealism seemed to be the natural home of those who were concerned with preserving a religious outlook in face of the threatening incursions of agnostics, positivists and materialists.[1] Further, after Bradley and Bosanquet idealism turned from absolute to personal idealism and was once again favourable to Christian theism, though by that time the impetus of the movement was already spent.

It would, however, be a mistake to conclude that British idealism in the nineteenth century represented simply a retreat from the practical concerns of Bentham and Mill into the metaphysics of the Absolute. For it had a part to play in the development of social philosophy. Generally speaking, the ethical theory of the idealists emphasized the idea of self-realization, of the perfecting of the human personality as an organic whole, an idea which had more in common with Aristotelianism than with Benthamism. And they looked on the function of the State as that of creating the conditions under which individuals could develop their potentialities as persons. As the idealists tended to interpret the creation of such conditions as a removal of hindrances, they could, of course, agree with the utilitarians that the State should interfere as little as possible with the liberty of the individual. They had no wish to replace freedom by servitude. But as they interpreted freedom as freedom to actualize the potentialities of the human personality, and as the removal of hindrances to freedom in this sense involved in their opinion a good deal of social legislation, they were prepared to advocate a measure of State-activity which went beyond anything contemplated by the more enthusiastic adherents of the policy of *laissez faire*. We can say, therefore, that in the latter part of the nineteenth century idealist social and political theory was more in tune with the perceived needs of the time than the position defended by Herbert Spencer. Benthamism or philosophical radicalism doubtless performed a useful task in the first part of the century. But the revised liberalism expounded by the idealists later in the century was by no means 'reactionary'. It looked forward rather than backward.

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[1] In Catholic countries idealism, with its tendency to subordinate theology to speculative philosophy, was commonly regarded as a disintegrating influence, so far as the Christian religion was concerned. In England the situation was somewhat different. A good many of the British idealists were themselves religious men, who found in their philosophy both an expression of and a support for their religious view of the world and of human life.

The foregoing remarks may appear to suggest that nineteenth-century idealism in Great Britain was simply a native reaction to empiricism and positivism and to *laissez faire* economic and political theory. In point of fact, however, German thought, especially that of Kant and Hegel successively, exercised an important influence on the development of British idealism. Some writers, notably J. H. Muirhead,[1] have maintained that the British idealists of the nineteenth century were the inheritors of a Platonic tradition which had manifested itself in the thought of the Cambridge Platonists in the seventeenth century and in the philosophy of Berkeley in the eighteenth century. But though it is useful to draw attention to the fact that British philosophy has not been exclusively empiricist in character, it would be difficult to show that nineteenth-century idealism can legitimately be considered as an organic development of a native Platonic tradition. The influence of German thought, particularly of Kant and Hegel,[1] cannot be dismissed as a purely accidental factor. It is indeed true that no British idealist of note can be described as being in the ordinary sense a disciple of either Kant or Hegel. Bradley, for example, was an original thinker. But it by no means follows that the stimulative influence of German thought was a negligible factor in the development of British idealism.

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[1] In *The Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy* (1931).

A limited knowledge of Kant was provided for English readers even during the philosopher's lifetime. In 1795 a disciple of Kant, F. A. Nitzsch, gave some lectures on the critical philosophy at London, and in the following year he published a small work on the subject. In 1797 J. Richardson published his translation of *Principles of Critical Philosophy* by J. J. Beck, and in 1798 A. F. M. Willich published *Elements of Critical Philosophy*. Richardson's translation of Kant's *Metaphysic of Morals* appeared in 1799; but the first translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, by F. Haywood, did not appear until 1838. And the serious studies of Kant, such as E. Caird's great work, *A Critical Account of the Philosophy of Kant* (1877), did not appear until a considerably later date. Meanwhile the influence of the German philosopher, together with a host of other influences, was felt by the poet Coleridge, whose ideas will be discussed presently, and in a more obvious way by Sir William Hamilton, though the element of Kantianism in Hamilton's thought was most conspicuous in his doctrine about the limits of human knowledge and in his consequent agnosticism in regard to the nature of ultimate reality.

Among the British idealists proper, Kant's influence may be said to have been felt particularly by T. H. Green and E. Caird. But it was mixed with the influence of Hegel. More accurately, Kant was seen as looking forward to Hegel or was read, as it has been put, through Hegelian spectacles. Indeed, in J. H. Stirling's *The Secret of Hegel* (1865) the view was explicitly defended that the philosophy of Kant, if properly understood and evaluated, leads straight to Hegelianism. Hence, though we can say with truth that the influence of Hegel is more obvious in the absolute idealism of Bradley and Bosanquet than in the philosophy of Green, there is no question of suggesting that we can divide up the British idealists into Kantians and Hegelians. Some pioneers apart, the influence of Hegel was felt from the beginning of the movement. And it is thus not altogether unreasonable to describe British idealism, as is often done, as a Neo-Hegelian movement, provided at least that it is understood that it was a question of receiving stimulus from Hegel rather than of following him in the relation of pupil to master.

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[1] Fichte and Schelling exercised little influence, though the former had some stimulative effect on Carlyle, and the latter on Coleridge. There is one obvious reason for this. The classical German idealist movement was already over when the British began; and it was regarded as having culminated in Hegel, considered as the true successor of Kant.

In its earlier phases the British idealist movement was characterized by a marked concentration on the subject-object relationship. In this sense idealism can be said to have had an epistemological foundation, inasmuch as the subject-object relationship is basic in knowledge. The metaphysics of the Absolute was not indeed absent. For subject and object were regarded as grounded in and manifesting one ultimate spiritual reality. But the point of departure affected the metaphysics in an important way. For the emphasis placed in the first instance on the finite subject militated against any temptation to interpret the Absolute in such a manner as to entail the conclusion that the finite is no more than its 'unreal' appearance. In other words, the earlier idealists tended to interpret the Absolute in a more or less theistic, or at any rate in a panentheistic, sense, the monistic aspect of metaphysical idealism remaining in the background. And this, of course, made it easier to represent idealism as an intellectual support for traditional religion.

Gradually, however, the idea of the all-comprehensive organic totality came more and more into the foreground. Thus with Bradley the self was depicted as a mere 'appearance' of the Absolute, as something which is not fully real when regarded in its *prima facie* independence. And this explicit metaphysics of the Absolute was understandably accompanied by a greater emphasis on the State in the field of social philosophy. While Herbert Spencer on the one hand was engaged in asserting an opposition between the interests of the free individual and those of the State, the idealists were engaged in representing man as achieving true freedom through his participation in the life of the totality.

In other words, we can see in the idealist movement up to Bradley and Bosanquet the increasing influence of Hegelianism. As has already been indicated, the influence of Kant was never unmixed. For the critical philosophy was seen as looking forward to metaphysical idealism. But if we make allowances for this fact and also for the fact that there were very considerable differences between Bradley's theory of the Absolute and that of Hegel, we can say that the change from emphasis on the subject-object relationship to emphasis on the idea of the organic totality represented a growing predominance of the stimulative influence of Hegelianism over that of the critical philosophy of Kant.

In the final phase of the idealist movement emphasis on the finite self became once again prominent, though it was a question this time of the active self, the human person, rather than of the epistemological subject. And this personal idealism was accompanied by a reapproximation to theism, except in the notable case of McTaggart, who depicted the Absolute as the system of finite selves. But though this phase of personal idealism is of some interest, inasmuch as it represents the finite self's resistance to being swallowed up in some impersonal Absolute, it belongs to a period when idealism in Britain was giving way to a new current of thought, associated with the names of G. E. Moore, Bertrand Russell, and, subsequently, Ludwig Wittgenstein.

2. As far as the general educated public was concerned, the influence of German thought first made itself felt in Great Britain through the writings of poets and literary figures such as Coleridge and Carlyle.

(i) Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834) seems to have made his first acquaintance with philosophy through the writings of Neo-Platonists, when he was a schoolboy at Christ's Hospital. This early attraction for the mystical philosophy of Plotinus was succeeded, however, by a Voltairean phase, during which he was for a short time a sceptic in regard to religion. Then at Cambridge Coleridge developed a perhaps somewhat surprising enthusiasm for David Hartley and his associationist psychology.[1] Indeed, Coleridge claimed to be more consistent than Hartley had been. For whereas Hartley, while maintaining that psychical processes depend on and are correlated with vibrations in the brain, had not asserted the corporeality of thought, Coleridge wrote to Southey in 1794 that he believed thought to be corporeal, that is, motion. At the same time Coleridge combined his enthusiasm for Hartley with religious faith.[2] And he came to think that the scientific understanding is inadequate as a key to reality, and to speak of the role of intuition and the importance of moral experience. Later on he was to declare that Hartley's system, in so far as it differs from that of Aristotle, is untenable.[1]

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[1] That is to say, it is from one point of view somewhat surprising to find that the romantic poet was ever an enthusiast for Hartley of all people. But the associationist psychology was then regarded as 'advanced', and this doubtless helped to commend it to the intellectually alive undergraduate.

[2] For the matter of that, Hartley himself had been a religious believer.

Coleridge's distinction between the scientific understanding and the higher reason or, as the Germans would put it, between *Verstand* and *Vernunft* was one expression of his revolt against the spirit of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. He did not, of course, mean to imply that the scientific and critical understanding should be rejected in the name of a higher and intuitive reason. His point was rather that the former is not an omnicompetent instrument in the interpretation of reality, but that it needs to be supplemented and balanced by the latter, namely the intuitive reason. It can hardly be claimed that Coleridge made his distinction between understanding and reason crystal clear. But the general line of his thought is sufficiently plain. In *Aids to Reflection* (1825) he describes the understanding as the faculty which judges according to sense. Its appropriate sphere is the sensible world, and it reflects and generalizes on the basis of sense-experience. Reason, however, is the vehicle of ideas which are presupposed by all experience, and in this sense it predetermines and governs experience. It also perceives truths which are incapable of verification in sense-experience, and it intuitively apprehends spiritual realities. Further, Coleridge identifies it with the practical reason, which comprises the will and the moral aspect of the human personality. J. S. Mill is thus perfectly justified in saying in his famous essay on Coleridge that the poet dissents from the 'Lockian' view that all knowledge consists of generalizations from experience, and that he claims for the reason, as distinct from the understanding, the power to perceive by direct intuition realities and truths which transcend the reach of the senses.[2]

In his development of this distinction Coleridge received stimulus from the writings of Kant, which he began to study shortly after his visit to Germany in 1798–9.[3] But he tends to speak as though Kant not only limited the scope of the understanding to knowledge of phenomenal reality but also envisaged an intuitive apprehension of spiritual realities by means of the reason, whereas in point of fact in attributing this power to the reason, identified moreover with the practical reason, Coleridge obviously parts company with the German philosopher. He is on firmer ground when he claims an affinity with Jacobi[1] in maintaining that the relation between reason and spiritual realities is analogous to that between the eye and material objects.

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[1] See Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, ch. 6.

[2] See Mill's *Dissertations and Discussions*, 1, p. 405.

[3] 'The writings of the illustrious sage of Koenigsberg, the founder of the Critical Philosophy, more than any other works, at once invigorated and disciplined my understanding', *Biographia Literaria*, p. 76 (Everyman's Library edition).

Nobody, however, would wish to maintain that Coleridge was a Kantian. It was a question of stimulus, not of discipleship. And though he recognized his debt to German thinkers, especially to Kant, it is clear that he regarded his own philosophy as being fundamentally Platonic in inspiration. In *Aids to Reflection* he asserted that every man is born either a Platonist or an Aristotelian. Aristotle, the great master of understanding, was unduly earthbound. He 'began with the sensual, and never received that which was above the senses, but by necessity, but as the only remaining hypothesis. . . .'[2] That is to say, Aristotle postulated spiritual reality only as a last resort, when forced to do so by the need of explaining physical phenomena. Plato, however, sought the supersensible reality which is revealed to us through reason and our moral will. As for Kant, Coleridge sometimes describes him as belonging spiritually to the ranks of the Aristotelians, while at other times he emphasizes the metaphysical aspects of Kant's thought and finds in him an approach to Platonism. In other words, Coleridge welcomes Kant's restriction of the reach of understanding to phenomenal reality and then tends to interpret his doctrine of reason in the light of Platonism, which is itself interpreted in the light of the philosophy of Plotinus.

These remarks should not be understood as implying any contempt for Nature on Coleridge's part. On the contrary, he disliked Fichte's 'boastful and hyperstoic hostility to Nature, as lifeless, godless, and altogether unholy'.[3] And he expressed a warm sympathy with Schelling's philosophy of Nature, as also with his system of transcendental idealism, in which 'I first found a genial coincidence with much that I had toiled out for myself, and a powerful assistance in what I had yet to do'.[4] Coleridge is indeed at pains to reject the charge of plagiarism, and he maintains that both he and Schelling have drunk at the same springs, the writings of Kant, the philosophy of Giordano Bruno and the speculations of Jakob Boehme. However, the influence of Schelling seems to be sufficiently evident in the line of thought which we can now briefly outline.

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[1] See Vol. VI of this *History*, pp. 146–8.

[2] *Philosophical Lectures*, edited by K. Coburn, p. 186.

[3] *Biographia Literaria*, p. 78.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

'All knowledge rests on the coincidence of an object with a subject.'[1] But though subject and object are united in the act of knowledge, we can ask which has the priority. Are we to start with the object and try to add to it the subject? Or are we to start with the subject and try to find a passage to the object? In other words, are we to take Nature as prior and try to add to it thought or mind, or are we to take thought as prior and try to deduce Nature? Coleridge answers that we can do neither the one nor the other. The ultimate principle is to be sought in the identity of subject and object.

Where is this identity to be found? 'Only in the self-consciousness of a spirit is there the required identity of object and of representation.'[2] But if the spirit is originally the identity of subject and object, it must in some sense dissolve this identity in order to become conscious of itself as object. Self-consciousness, therefore, cannot arise except through an act of will, and 'freedom must be assumed as a *ground* of philosophy, and can never be deduced from it'.[3] The spirit becomes a subject knowing itself as object only through 'the act of constructing itself objectively to itself'.[4]

This sounds as though Coleridge begins by asking the sort of question which Schelling asks, then supplies Schelling's answer, namely that we must postulate an original identity of subject and object, and finally switches to Fichte's idea of the ego as constituting itself as subject and object by an original act. But Coleridge has no intention of stopping short with the ego as his ultimate principle, especially if we mean by this the finite ego. Indeed, he ridicules the 'egoism' of Fichte.[5] Instead, he insists that to arrive at the absolute identity of subject and object, of the ideal and the real, as the ultimate principle not only of human knowledge but also of all existence we must 'elevate our conception to the absolute self, the great eternal *I am*'.[6] Coleridge criticizes Descartes's *Cogito, ergo sum* and refers to Kant's distinction between the empirical and the transcendental ego. But he then tends to speak as though the transcendental ego were the absolute

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[1] *Biographia Literaria*, p. 136.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 145.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 144.

[5] Fichte did not, of course, make the finite ego or self his ultimate principle. And Coleridge tends to caricature his thought.

[6] *Biographia Literaria*, p. 144.

I am that I am of *Exodus*[1] and the God in whom the finite self is called to lose and find itself at the same time.

All this is obviously cloudy and imprecise. But it is at any rate clear that Coleridge opposes a spiritualistic interpretation of the human self to materialism and phenomenalism. And it is clearly this interpretation of the self which in his view provides the basis for the claim that reason can apprehend supersensible reality. Indeed, in his essay on faith Coleridge describes faith as fidelity to our own being in so far as our being is not and cannot become an object of sense-experience. Our moral vocation demands the subordination of appetite and will to reason; and it is reason which apprehends God as the identity of will and reason, as the ground of our existence, and as the infinite expression of the ideal which we are seeking as moral beings. In other words, Coleridge's outlook was essentially religious, and he tried to bring together philosophy and religion. He may have tended, as Mill notes, to turn Christian mysteries into philosophical truths. But an important element in the mission of idealism, as conceived by its more religious adherents, was precisely that of giving a metaphysical basis to a Christian tradition which seemed to be signally lacking in any philosophical backbone.

In the field of social and political theory Coleridge was conservative in the sense that he was opposed to the iconoclasm of the radicals and desired the preservation and actualization of the values inherent in traditional institutions. At one time he was indeed attracted, like Wordsworth and Southey, by the ideas which inspired the French Revolution. But he came to abandon the radicalism of his youth, though his subsequent conservatism arose not from any hatred of change as such but from a belief that the institutions created by the national spirit in the course of its history embodied real values which men should endeavour to realize. As Mill put it, Bentham demanded 'the extinction of the institutions and creeds which had hitherto existed', whereas Coleridge demanded 'that they be made a reality'.[2]

(ii) Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) belonged to a later generation than that of Coleridge; but he was considerably less systematic in the presentation of his philosophical ideas, and there are doubtless very many people today who find the turbulent prose of *Sartor Resartus* quite unreadable. However, he was one of the channels through which German thought and literature were brought to the attention of the British public.

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[1] *Exodus*, 3, 14.

[2] *Dissertations and Discussions*, I, p. 436.

Carlyle's first reaction to German philosophy was not exactly favourable, and he made fun both of Kant's obscurity and of the pretensions of Coleridge. But in his hatred of materialism, hedonism and utilitarianism he came to see in Kant the brilliant foe of the Enlightenment and of its derivative movements. Thus in his essay on the *State of German Literature* (1827) he praised Kant for starting from within and proceeding outwards instead of pursuing the Lockian path of starting with sense-experience and trying to build a philosophy on this basis. The Kantian, according to Carlyle, sees that fundamental truths are apprehended by intuition in man's inmost nature. In other words, Carlyle ranges himself with Coleridge in using Kant's restriction of the power and scope of the understanding as a foundation for asserting the power of reason to apprehend intuitively basic truths and spiritual realities.

Characteristic of Carlyle was his vivid sense of the mystery of the world and of its nature as an appearance of, or veil before, supersensible reality. In the *State of German Literature* he asserted that the ultimate aim of philosophy is to interpret phenomena or appearances, to proceed from the symbol to the reality symbolized. And this point of view found expression in *Sartor Resartus*,[1] under the label of the philosophy of clothes. It can be applied to man, the microcosm. 'To the eye of vulgar Logic what is man? An omnivorous Biped that wears Breeches. To the eye of Pure Reason what is he? A Soul, a Spirit, and divine Apparition. . . . Deep-hidden is he under that strange Garment.'[2] And the analogy is applicable also to the macrocosm, the world in general. For the world is, as Goethe divined, '*the living visible Garment of God*'.[3]

In the *State of German Literature* Carlyle explicitly connects his philosophy of symbolism with Fichte, who is regarded as having interpreted the visible universe as the symbol and sensible manifestation of an all-pervading divine Idea, the apprehension of which is the condition of all genuine virtue and freedom. And there is indeed no great difficulty in understanding Carlyle's predilection for Fichte. For seeing, as he does, human life and history as a constant struggle between light and darkness, God and the devil, a struggle in which every man is called to play a part and to make an all-important choice, he naturally feels an attraction for Fichte's moral earnestness and for his view of Nature as being simply the field in which man works out his moral vocation, the field of obstacles, so to speak, which man has to overcome in the process of attaining his ideal end.

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[1] As no publisher would accept this work, it first appeared in instalments in *Fraser's Magazine*, 1833–4. An American edition of the book appeared in 1836, and an English edition in 1838.

[2] *Sartor Resartus*, 1, 10, p. 57 (Scott Library edition). The 'Garment' is, of course, the body.

[3] *Ibid.*, 1, 8, p. 48.

This outlook helps to explain Carlyle's concern with the hero, as manifested in his 1840 lectures *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*. Over against materialism and what he calls profit-and-loss philosophy he sets the ideas of heroism, moral vocation and personal loyalty. Indeed, he is prepared to assert that 'the life-breath of all society [is] but an effluence of Hero-worship, submissive admiration for the truly great. Society is founded on Hero-worship.'[1] Again, 'Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in the world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here'.[2]

In his insistence on the role of history's 'great men' Carlyle resembles Hegel[3] and anticipates Nietzsche in some aspects, though hero-worship in the political field is an idea which we are likely to regard with mixed feelings nowadays. However, it is clear that what especially attracted Carlyle in his heroes was their earnestness and self-devotion and their freedom from a morality based on the hedonistic calculus. For example, while aware of Rousseau's shortcomings and faults of character, which made him 'a sadly *contracted* Hero',[4] Carlyle insists that this unlikely candidate for the title possessed 'the first and chief characteristic of a Hero: he is heartily *in earnest*. In earnest, if ever man was; as none of these French Philosophes were.'[5]

3. In spite of the fact that both men delivered lectures it would be idle to look either to Coleridge or Carlyle for a systematic development of idealism. For a pioneer in this field we have to turn rather to James Frederick Ferrier (1808–64), who occupied the chair of moral philosophy in the University of St. Andrews from 1845 until the year of his death, and who made a great point of systematic procedure in philosophy.

In 1838–9 Ferrier contributed a series of articles to *Blackwood's*

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[1] *On Heroes*, lecture I, p. 193 (London, Chapman and Hall).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 185.

[3] Hegel, however, regarded his 'word-historical individuals' as instruments of the World-Spirit.

[4] *On Heroes*, lecture V, p. 323.

[5] *Ibid.*

Magazine, which was published with the title *Introduction to the Philosophy of Consciousness*. In 1854 he published his main work, *The Institutes of Metaphysics*, which is remarkable for the way in which the author develops his doctrine in a series of propositions, each of which, with the exception of the first fundamental proposition, is supposed to follow with logical rigour from its predecessor. In 1856 he published *Scottish Philosophy*, while his *Lectures on Greek Philosophy and Other Philosophical Remains* appeared posthumously in 1866.

Ferrier claimed that his philosophy was Scottish to the core. But this does not mean that he regarded himself as an adherent of the Scottish philosophy of common sense. On the contrary, he vigorously attacked Reid and his followers. In the first place a philosopher should not appeal to a multitude of undemonstrated principles, but should employ the deductive method which is essential to metaphysics and not an optional expository device. In the second place the Scottish philosophers of common sense tended to confuse metaphysics with psychology, trying to solve philosophical problems by psychological reflections, instead of by rigorous logical reasoning.[1] As for Sir William Hamilton, his agnosticism about the Absolute was quite misplaced.

When Ferrier said that his philosophy was Scottish to the core, he meant that he had not borrowed it from the Germans. Though his system was not uncommonly regarded as Hegelian, he claimed that he had never been able to understand Hegel.[2] Indeed, he expressed a doubt whether the German philosopher had been able to understand himself. In any case Hegel starts with Being, whereas his own system took knowledge as its point of departure.[3]

Ferrier's first move is to look for the absolute starting-point of metaphysics in a proposition which states the one invariable and essential feature in all knowledge, and which cannot be denied without contradiction. This is that 'along with whatever any intelligence knows, it must, as the ground or condition of its knowledge, have some cognizance of itself'.[4] The object of knowledge is a variable factor. But I cannot know anything without knowing that I know. To deny this is to talk nonsense. To assert it is to admit that there is no knowledge without self-consciousness, without some awareness of the self.

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[1] According to Ferrier, if we wish to find the solution to a metaphysical problem, we might well inquire what the psychologists have said about the matter and then assert the exact opposite.

[2] This did not prevent Ferrier from writing articles on Schelling and Hegel for the *Imperial Dictionary of Universal Biography*.

[3] We can hardly exclude all influence of German thought on Ferrier's mind. But he was doubtless right in claiming that his system was his own creation, and not the result of borrowing.

[4] *Institutes of Metaphysics*, I, prop. I, p. 79 (Works, I, 3rd edition). This work will henceforth be referred to simply as *Institutes*.

It follows from this, Ferrier argues, that nothing can be known except in relation to a subject, a self. In other words, the object of knowledge is essentially object-for-a-subject. And Ferrier draws the conclusion that nothing is thinkable except in relation to a subject. From this it follows that the material universe is unthinkable as existing without any relation to subject.

The critic might be inclined to comment that Ferrier is really saying no more than that I cannot think of the universe without thinking of it, or know it without knowing it. If anything more is being said, if, in particular, a transition is being made from an epistemological point to the assertion of an ontological relation, a solipsistic conclusion seems to follow, namely that the existence of the material world is unthinkable except as dependent on myself as subject.

Ferrier, however, wishes to maintain two propositions. First, we cannot think of the universe as 'dissociated from *every* me. You cannot perform the abstraction.'[1] Secondly, each of us can dissociate the universe from himself in particular. And from these two propositions it follows that though 'each of us can unyoke the universe (so to speak) from himself, he can do this only by yoking it on, in thought, to some other self'.[2] This is an essential move for Ferrier to make, because he wishes to argue that the universe is unthinkable except as existing in synthesis with the divine mind.

The first section of the *Institutes of Metaphysics* thus purports to show that the absolute element in knowledge is the synthesis of subject and object. But Ferrier does not proceed at once to his final conclusion. Instead, he devotes the second section to 'agnoiology', the theory of 'ignorance'. We can be said to be in a state of nescience in regard to the contradictions of necessarily true propositions. But this is obviously no sign of imperfection in our minds. As for ignorance, we cannot properly be said to be ignorant except of what is in principle knowable. Hence we cannot be ignorant of, for example, matter 'in itself' (without relation to a subject). For this is unthinkable and unknowable. Further, if we assume that we are ignorant of the Absolute, it follows that the Absolute is knowable. Hence Hamilton's agnosticism is untenable.

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[1] *Ibid.*, I, prop. 13, observation 3, p. 312.

[2] *Ibid.*, observation 2, p. 311.

But what is the Absolute or, as Ferrier expresses it, Absolute Existence? It cannot be either matter *per se* or mind *per se*. For neither is thinkable. It must be, therefore, the synthesis of subject and object. There is, however, only one such synthesis which is necessary. For though the existence of a universe is not conceivable except as object-for-a-subject, we have already seen that the universe can be unyoked or dissociated from any given finite subject. Hence 'there is one, but only one, Absolute Existence which is strictly *necessary*; and that existence is a supreme, and infinite, and everlasting Mind in synthesis with all things'.[1]

By way of comment it is not inappropriate to draw attention to the rather obvious fact, that the statement 'there can be no subject without an object and no object without a subject' is analytically true, if the terms 'subject' and 'object' are understood in their epistemological senses. It is also true that no material thing can be conceived except as object-for-a-subject, if we mean by this that no material thing can be conceived except by constituting it ('intentionally', as the phenomenologists would say) as an object. But this does not seem to amount to much more than saying that a thing cannot be thought of unless it is thought of. And from this it does not follow that a thing cannot exist unless it is thought of. Ferrier could retort, of course, that we cannot intelligibly speak of a thing as existing independently of being conceived. For by the mere fact that we speak of it, we conceive it. If I try to think of material thing *X* as existing outside the subject-object relationship, my effort is defeated by the very fact that I am thinking of *X*. In this case, however, the thing seems to be irrevocably yoked, as Ferrier puts it, to me as subject. And how can I possibly unyoke it? If I try to unyoke it from myself and yoke it to some other subject, whether finite or infinite, does not this other subject, on Ferrier's premisses, become object-for-a-subject, the subject in question being myself?

It is not my intention to suggest that in point of fact the material universe could exist independently of God. The point is rather that the conclusion that it cannot so exist does not really follow from Ferrier's epistemological premisses. The conclusion which does seem to follow is solipsism. And Ferrier escapes from this conclusion only by an appeal to common sense and to our knowledge of historical facts. That is to say, as I cannot seriously suppose that the material universe is simply object for me as subject, I must postulate an eternal, infinite subject, God. But on Ferrier's premisses it appears to follow that God Himself, as thought by me, must be object-for-a-subject, the subject being myself.

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[1] *Institutes*, III, prop. 11, p. 522. It will be noted that for Ferrier the Absolute is not God alone but the synthesis of God and the world, of the infinite subject and its object in relation to one another.

4. Among Ferrier's contemporaries John Grote (1813–66), brother of the historian, deserves mention. Professor of moral philosophy at Cambridge from 1855 until 1866, he published the first part of *Exploratio philosophica* in 1865. The second part appeared posthumously in 1900. His *Examination of Utilitarian Philosophy* (1870) and *A Treatise on the Moral Ideals* (1876) were also published after his death. It is true that nowadays Grote is even less known than Ferrier; but his criticism of phenomenalism and of hedonistic utilitarianism is not without value.

Grote's critique of phenomenalism can be illustrated in this way. One of the main features of positivistic phenomenalism is that it first reduces the object of knowledge to a series of phenomena and then proceeds to apply a similar reductive analysis to the subject, the ego or self. In effect, therefore, the subject is reduced to its own object. Or, if preferred, subject and object are both reduced to phenomena which are assumed to be the basic reality, the ultimate entities out of which selves and physical objects can be reconstructed by thought. But this reduction of the self or subject can be shown to be untenable. In the first place talk about phenomena is not intelligible except in relation to consciousness. For that which appears, appears to a subject, within the ambit, so to speak, of consciousness. We cannot go behind consciousness; and analysis of it shows that it essentially involves the subject-object relationship. In primitive consciousness subject and object are virtually or confusedly present; and they are progressively distinguished in the development of consciousness until there arises an explicit awareness of a world of objects on the one hand and of a self or subject on the other, this awareness of the self being developed especially by the experience of effort. As, therefore, the subject is present from the start as one of the essential poles even in primitive consciousness, it cannot be legitimately reduced to the object, to phenomena. At the same time reflection on the essential structure of consciousness shows that we are not presented with a self-enclosed ego from which we have to find a bridge, as in the philosophy of Descartes, to the non-ego.

In the second place it is important to notice the way in which the phenomenalists overlook the active role of the subject in the construction of an articulated universe. The subject or self is characterized by teleological activity; it has ends. And in pursuit of its ends it constructs unities among phenomena, not in the sense that it imposes *a priori* forms on a mass of unrelated, chaotic data,[1] but rather in the sense that it builds up its world in an experimental way by a process of auto-correction. On this count too, therefore, namely the active role of the self in the construction of the world of objects, it is clear that it cannot be reduced to a series of phenomena, its own immediate objects.[2]

In the sphere of moral philosophy Grote was strongly opposed to both egoistic hedonism and utilitarianism. He did not object to them for taking into account man's sensibility and his search for happiness. On the contrary, Grote himself admitted the science of happiness, 'eudaemonics' as he called it, as a part of ethics. What he objected to was an exclusive concentration on the search for pleasure and a consequent neglect of other aspects of the human personality, especially man's capacity for conceiving and pursuing ideals which transcend the search for pleasure and may demand self-sacrifice. Hence to 'eudaemonics' he added 'aretaics', the science of virtue. And he insisted that the moral task is to achieve the union of the lower and higher elements of man's nature in the service of moral ideals. For our actions become moral when they pass from the sphere of the merely spontaneous, as in following the impulse to pleasure, into the sphere of the deliberate and voluntary, impulse supplying the dynamic element and intellectually-conceived principles and ideals the regulative element.

Obviously, Grote's attack on utilitarianism as neglecting the higher aspects of man through an exclusive concentration on the search for pleasure was more applicable to Benthamite hedonism than to J. S. Mill's revised version of utilitarianism. But in any case it was a question not so much of suggesting that a utilitarian philosopher could not have moral ideals as of maintaining that the utilitarian ethics could not provide an adequate theoretical framework for such ideals. Grote's main point was that this could be provided only by a radical revision of the concept of man which Bentham inherited from writers such as Helvétius. Hedonism, in Grote's opinion, could not account for the consciousness of obligation. For this arises when man, conceiving moral ideals, feels the need of subordinating his lower to his higher nature.

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[1] According to Grote, in its construction of an articulated world the self discovers or recognizes categories in Nature, which are the expression of the divine mind.

[2] In Grote's view, things-in-themselves are known intuitively, even if not distinctly, through knowledge by acquaintance, as contrasted with knowledge about.

5. We can reasonably see a connection between the idealists' perception of the inadequacy of the Benthamite view of human nature and the revival of interest in Greek philosophy which occurred in the universities, especially at Oxford, in the course of the nineteenth century. We have already seen that Coleridge regarded his philosophy as being fundamentally Platonic in inspiration and character. But the renewal of Platonic studies at Oxford can be associated in particular with the name of Benjamin Jowett (1817–93), who became a Fellow of Balliol College in 1838 and occupied the chair of Greek from 1855 to 1893. The defects in his famous translation of Plato's *Dialogues* are irrelevant here. The point is that in the course of his long teaching career he contributed powerfully to a revival of interest in Greek thought. And it is not without significance that T. H. Green and E. Caird, both prominent in the idealist movement, were at one time his pupils. Interest in Plato and Aristotle naturally tended to turn their minds away from hedonism and utilitarianism towards an ethics of self-perfection, based on a theory of human nature within a metaphysical framework.

The revival of interest in Greek thought was accompanied by a growing appreciation of German idealist philosophy. Jowett himself was interested in the latter, particularly in the thought of Hegel;[1] and he helped to stimulate the study of German idealism at Oxford. The first large-scale attempt, however, to elucidate what Ferrier had considered to be the scarcely intelligible profundities of Hegel was made by the Scotsman, James Hutchison Stirling (1820–1909), in his two-volume work *The Secret of Hegel*, which appeared in 1865.[2]

Stirling developed an enthusiasm for Hegel during a visit to Germany, especially during a stay at Heidelberg in 1856; and the result was *The Secret of Hegel*. In spite of the comment that if the author knew the secret of Hegel, he kept it successfully to himself, the book marked the beginning of the serious study of Hegelianism in Great Britain. In Stirling's view Hume's philosophy was the culmination of the Enlightenment, while Kant,[1] who took over what was valuable in Hume's thought and used it in the development of a new line of reflection, fulfilled and at the same time overcame and transcended the Enlightenment. While, however, Kant laid the foundations of idealism, it was Hegel who built and completed the edifice. And to understand the secret of Hegel is to understand how he made explicit the doctrine of the concrete universal, which was implicit in the critical philosophy of Kant.

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[1] While he explicitly acknowledged the stimulus which he had received from Hegel, Jowett gradually moved further away from rather than nearer to Hegelianism.

[2] A one-volume edition appeared in 1898. Stirling never held an academic post; but he gave the Gifford Lectures at Edinburgh in 1899–90. These were published in 1890 with the title *Philosophy and Theology*.

It is noteworthy that Stirling regarded Hegel not only as standing to modern philosophy in the relation in which Aristotle stood to preceding Greek thought but also as the great intellectual champion of the Christian religion. He doubtless attributed to Hegel too high a degree of theological orthodoxy; but his attitude serves to illustrate the religious interest which characterized the idealist movement before Bradley. According to Stirling, Hegel was concerned with proving, among other things, the immortality of the soul. And though there is little evidence that Hegel felt much interest in this matter, Stirling's interpretation can be seen as representing the emphasis placed by the earlier idealists on the finite spiritual self, an emphasis which harmonized with their tendency to retain a more or less theistic outlook.

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[1] Stirling published a *Text-Book to Kant* in 1881.

CHAPTER VII

THE DEVELOPMENT OF IDEALISM

T. H. Green's attitude to British empiricism and to German thought—Green's doctrine of the eternal subject, with some critical comments—The ethical and political theory of Green—E. Caird and the unity underlying the distinction between subject and object—J. Caird and the philosophy of religion—W. Wallace and D. G. Ritchie.

1. PHILOSOPHERS are not infrequently more convincing when they are engaged in criticizing the views of other philosophers than when they are expounding their own doctrines. And this perhaps somewhat cynical remark seems to be applicable to Thomas Hill Green (1836–82), Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, and Whyte professor of moral philosophy in that university from 1878 to the year of his death. In his *Introductions to Hume's Treatise of Human Nature,*[1] which he published in 1874 for the Green and Grose edition of Hume, he made an impressive broadside attack on British empiricism. But his own idealist system is no less open to criticism than the views against which he raised objections.

From Locke onwards, according to Green, empiricists have assumed that it is the philosopher's business to reduce our knowledge to its primitive elements, to the original data, and then to reconstruct the world of ordinary experience out of these atomic data. Apart, however, from the fact that no satisfactory explanation has ever been offered of the way in which the mind can go behind the subject-object relationship and discover the primitive data out of which both minds and physical objects are supposed to be constructed, the empiricist programme lands us in an impasse. On the one hand, to construct the world of minds and physical objects the mind has to relate the primitive atomic data, discrete phenomena. In other words, it has to exercise activity. On the other hand, the mind's activity is inexplicable on empiricist principles. For it is itself reduced to a series of phenomena. And how can it construct itself? Further, though empiricism professes to account for human knowledge, it does not in fact do anything of the kind. For the world of ordinary experience is interpreted as a mental construction out of discrete impressions; and we have no way of knowing that the construction represents objective reality at all. In other words, a consistent empiricism leads inevitably to scepticism.

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[1] This work will be referred to as *Introductions.*

Hume himself, as Green sees him, was an outstanding thinker who discarded compromise and carried the principles of empiricism to their logical conclusion. 'Adopting the premisses and method of Locke, he cleared them of all illogical adaptations to popular belief, and experimented with them on the basis of professed knowledge. . . . As the result of the experiment, the method, which began with professing to explain knowledge, showed knowledge to be impossible.'[1] 'Hume himself was perfectly cognizant of this result, but his successors in England and Scotland would seem so far to have been unable to look it in the face.'[2]

Some philosophers after Hume, and here Green is evidently referring to the Scottish philosophers of common sense, have thrust their heads back into the thicket of uncriticized belief. Others have gone on developing Hume's theory of the association of ideas, apparently oblivious of the fact that Hume himself had shown the insufficiency of the principle of association to account for anything more than natural or quasi-instinctive belief.[3] In other words, Hume represented both the culmination and the bankruptcy of empiricism. And the torch of inquiry 'was transferred to a more vigorous line in Germany'.[4]

Kant, that is to say, was the spiritual successor of Hume. 'Thus the *Treatise of Human Nature* and the *Critique of Pure Reason*, taken together, form the real bridge between the old world of philosophy and the new. They are the essential "Propaedeutik" without which no one is a qualified student of modern philosophy.'[5] It does not follow, however, that we can remain in the philosophy of Kant. For Kant looks forward to Hegel or at any rate to something resembling Hegelianism. Green agrees with Stirling that Hegel developed the philosophy of Kant in the right direction; but he is not prepared to say that Hegel's system as it stands is satisfactory. It is all very well for the Sundays of speculation, as Green puts it; but it is more difficult to accept on the weekdays of ordinary thought. There is need for reconciling the judgments of

[1] *Introductions*, 1, 2–3. Green and Grose edition of Hume's *Treatises*, 1, p. 2.

[2] *Ibid.*, 3.

[3] Green is clearly thinking of philosophers such as the two Mill's.

[4] *Introductions*, 1, 3. Green and Grose, 1, pp. 2–3.

[5] *Ibid.* Green and Grose, 1, p. 3.

speculative philosophy with our ordinary judgments about matters of fact and with the sciences. Hegelianism, however, if taken as it stands, cannot perform this task of synthesizing different tendencies and points of view in contemporary thought. The work has to be done over again.

In point of fact the name of Hegel does not loom large in the writings of Green. The name of Kant is far more prominent. But Green maintained that by reading Hume in the light of Leibniz and Leibniz in the light of Hume, Kant was able to free himself from their respective presuppositions. And we can justifiably say that though Green derived a great deal of stimulus from Kant, he read him in the light of his conviction that the critical philosophy needed some such development, though not precisely the same, as that which it actually received at the hands of the German metaphysical idealists, and of Hegel in particular.

2. In the introduction to his *Prolegomena to Ethics*, which was published posthumously in 1883, Green refers to the temptation to treat ethics as though it were a branch of natural science. This temptation is indeed understandable. For growth in historical knowledge and the development of theories of evolution suggest the possibility of giving a purely naturalistic and genetic explanation of the phenomena of the moral life. But what becomes then of ethics considered as a normative science? The answer is that the philosopher who 'has the courage of his principles, having reduced the speculative part of them [our ethical systems] to a natural science, must abolish the practical or preceptive part altogether'.[1] The fact, however, that the reduction of ethics to a branch of natural science involves the abolition of ethics as a normative science should make us reconsider the presuppositions or conditions of moral knowledge and activity. Is man merely a child of Nature? Or is there in him a spiritual principle which makes knowledge possible, whether it be knowledge of Nature or moral knowledge?

Green thus finds it necessary to start his inquiry into morals with a metaphysics of knowledge. And he argues in the first place that even if we were to decide in favour of the materialists all those questions about particular facts which have formed the subject of debate between them and the spiritualists, the possibility of our explaining the facts at all still remain to be accounted for. 'We shall still be logically bound to admit that in a man who can know a Nature—for whom there is a "cosmos of experience" —there is a principle which is not natural and which cannot without a *ὕστερον πρότερον* be explained as we explain the facts of nature.'[1]

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[1] *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 9 (first edition). This work will be referred to henceforth as *Prolegomena*.

According to Green, to say that a thing is real is to say that it is a member in a system of relations, the order of Nature. But awareness or knowledge of a series of related events cannot itself be a series of events. Nor can it be a natural development out of such a series. In other words, the mind as an active synthesizing principle is irreducible to the factors which it synthesizes. True, the empirical ego belongs to the order of Nature. But my awareness of myself as an empirical ego manifests the activity of a principle which transcends that order. In fine, 'an understanding—for that term seems as fit as any other to denote the principle of consciousness in question—irreducible to anything else, "makes nature" for us, in the sense of enabling us to conceive that there is such a thing'.[2]

We have just seen that for Green a thing is real in virtue of its membership in a system of related phenomena. At the same time he holds that 'related appearances are impossible apart from the action of an intelligence'.[3] Nature is thus made by the synthesizing activity of a mind. It is obvious, however, that we cannot seriously suppose that Nature, as the system of related phenomena, is simply the product of the synthesizing activity of any given finite mind. Though, therefore, it can be said that each finite mind constitutes Nature in so far as it conceives the system of relations, we must also assume that there is a single spiritual principle, an eternal consciousness, which ultimately constitutes or produces Nature.

From this it follows that we must conceive the finite mind as participating in the life of an eternal consciousness or intelligence which 'partially and gradually reproduces itself in us, communicating piece-meal, but in inseparable correlation, understanding and the facts understood, experience and the experienced world'.[4] This amounts to saying that God gradually reproduces his own knowledge in the finite mind. And, if this is the case, what are we to say about the empirical facts relating to the origin and growth of knowledge? For these hardly suggest that our knowledge is imposed by God. Green's answer is that God reproduces his own knowledge in the finite mind by making use, so to speak, of the sentient life of the human organism and of its response to stimuli. There are thus two aspects to human consciousness. There is the empirical aspect, under which our consciousness appears to consist 'in successive modifications of the animal organism'.[1] And there is the metaphysical aspect, under which this organism is seen as gradually becoming 'the vehicle of an eternally complete consciousness'.[2]

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[1] *Prolegomena*, p. 14. The phrase 'cosmos of experience' is taken from G. H. Lewes, one of Green's targets of attack.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 22. Clearly, Kant's transcendental ego is given an ontological status.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

Green thus shares with the earlier idealists the tendency to choose an epistemological point of departure, the subject-object relationship. Under the influence of Kant, however, he depicts the subject as actively synthesizing the manifold of phenomena, as constituting the order of Nature by relating appearances or phenomena. This process of synthesis is a gradual process which develops through the history of the human race towards an ideal term. And we can thus conceive the total process as an activity of one spiritual principle which lives and acts in and through finite minds. In other words, Kant's idea of the synthesizing activity of the mind leads us to the Hegelian concept of infinite Spirit.

At the same time Green's religious interests militate against any reduction of infinite Spirit to the lives of finite spirits considered simply collectively. It is true that he wishes to avoid what he regards as one of the main defects of traditional theism, namely the representation of God as a Being over against the world and the finite spirit. Hence he depicts the spiritual life of man as a participation in the divine life. But he also wishes to avoid using the word 'God' simply as a label either for the spiritual life of man considered universally, as something which develops in the course of the evolution of human culture, or for the ideal of complete knowledge, an ideal which does not yet exist but towards which human knowledge progressively approximates. He does indeed speak of the human spirit as 'identical' with God; but he adds, 'in the sense that He *is* all which the human spirit is capable of becoming'.[3] God is the infinite eternal subject; and His complete knowledge is reproduced progressively in the finite subject in dependence, from the empirical point of view, on the modifications of the human organism.

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 72–3.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 198.

If we ask why God acts in this way, Green implies that no answer can be given. 'The old question, why God made the world, has never been answered, nor will be. We know not why the world should be; we only know that there it is. In like manner we know not why the eternal subject of that world should reproduce itself, through certain processes of the world, as the spirit of mankind, or as the particular self of this or that man in whom the spirit of mankind operates. We can only say that, upon the best analysis we can make of our experience, it seems that so it does.'[1]

In Green's retention of the idea of an eternal subject which 'reproduces itself' in finite subjects and therefore cannot be simply identified with them it is not unreasonable to see the operation of a religious interest, a concern with the idea of a God in whom we live and move and have our being. But this is certainly not the explicit or formal reason for postulating an eternal subject. For it is explicitly postulated as the ultimate synthesizing agent in constituting the system of Nature. And in making this postulate Green seems to lay himself open to the same sort of objection that we brought against Ferrier. For if it is once assumed, at least for the sake of argument, that the order of Nature is constituted by the synthesizing or relating activity of intelligence, it is obvious that I cannot attribute this order to an eternal intelligence or subject unless I have myself first conceived, and so constituted, it. And it then becomes difficult to see how, in Ferrier's terminology, I can unyoke the conceived system of relations from the synthesizing activity of my own mind and yoke it on to any other subject, eternal or otherwise.

It may be objected that this line of criticism, though possibly valid in the case of Ferrier, is irrelevant in that of Green. For Green sees the individual finite subject as participating in a general spiritual life, the spiritual life of humanity, which progressively synthesizes phenomena in its advance towards the ideal goal of complete knowledge, a knowledge which would be itself the constituted order of Nature. Hence there is no question of unyoking my synthesis from myself and yoking it to any other spirit. My synthesizing activity is simply a moment in that of the human race as a whole or of the one spiritual principle which lives in and through the multiplicity of finite subjects.

In this case, however, what becomes of Green's eternal subject? If we wish to represent, say, the advancing scientific knowledge of mankind as a life in which all scientists participate and which moves towards an ideal goal, there is, of course, no question of 'unyoking' and 'yoking'. But a concept of this sort does not by itself call for the introduction of any eternal subject which reproduces its complete knowledge in a piecemeal manner in finite minds.

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[1] *Prolegomena*, pp. 103–4.

Further, how precisely, in Green's philosophy, are we to conceive the relation of Nature to the eternal subject or intelligence? Let us assume that the constitutive activity of intelligence consists in relating or synthesizing. Now if God can properly be said to create Nature, it seems to follow that Nature is reducible to a system of relations without terms. And this is a somewhat perplexing notion. If, however, the eternal subject only introduces relations, so to speak, between phenomena, we seem to be presented with a picture similar to that painted by Plato in the *Timaeus*, in the sense, that is to say, that the eternal subject or intelligence would bring order out of disorder rather than create the whole of Nature out of nothing. In any case, though it may be possible to conceive a divine intelligence as creating the world by thinking it, terms such as 'eternal subject' and 'eternal consciousness' necessarily suggest a correlative eternal object. And this would mean an absolutization of the subject-object relationship, similar to that of Ferrier.

Objections of this sort may appear to be niggling and to indicate an inability to appreciate Green's general vision of an eternal consciousness in the life of which we all participate. But the objections serve at any rate the useful purpose of drawing attention to the fact that Green's often acute criticism of other philosophers is combined with that rather vague and woolly speculation which has done so much to bring metaphysical idealism into disrepute.[1]

3. In his moral theory Green stands in the tradition of Plato and Aristotle, in the sense that for him the concept of good is primary, not that of obligation. In particular, his idea of the good for man as consisting in the full actualization of the potentialities of the human person in an harmonious and unified state of being recalls the ethics of Aristotle. Green does indeed speak of 'self-satisfaction' as the end of moral conduct, but he makes it clear

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[1] Obviously, metaphysical idealists are by no means the only philosophers whose criticism of their opponents has been more telling than their own positive contributions to philosophy. Indeed, the frequency with which this situation occurs raises general problems about philosophy. But they cannot be discussed here.

that self-satisfaction signifies for him self-realization rather than pleasure. We must distinguish between 'the quest for self-satisfaction which all moral activity is rightly held to be, and the quest for pleasure which morally *good* activity is not'.[1] This does not mean that pleasure is excluded from the good for man. But the harmonious and integrated actualization of the human person's potentialities cannot be identified with the search for pleasure. For the moral agent is a spiritual subject, not simply a sensitive organism. And in any case pleasure is a concomitant of the actualization of one's powers rather than this actualization itself.

Now it is certain that it is only through action that a man can realize himself, in the sense of actualizing his potentialities and developing his personality towards the ideal state of harmonious integration of his powers. And it is also obvious that every human act, in the proper sense of the term, is motivated. It is performed in view of some immediate end or goal. But it is arguable that a man's motives are determined by his existing character, in conjunction with other circumstances, and that character is itself the result of empirical causes. In this case are not a man's actions determined in such a way that what he will be depends on what he is, what he is depending in turn on circumstances other than his free choice? True, circumstances vary; but the ways in which men react to varying circumstances seem to be determined. And if all a man's acts are determined, is there any room for an ethical theory which sets up a certain ideal of human personality as that which we ought to strive to realize through our actions?

Green is quite prepared to concede to the determinists a good deal of the ground on which they base their case. But at the same time he tries to take the sting out of these concessions. 'The propositions, current among "determinists", that a man's action is the joint result of his character and circumstances, is true enough in a certain sense, and, in that sense, is quite compatible with an assertion of human freedom.'[2] In Green's view, it is not a necessary condition for the proper use of the word 'freedom' that a man should be able to do or to become anything whatsoever. To justify our describing a man's actions as free, it is sufficient that they should be his own, in the sense that he is truly the author of them. And if a man's action follows from his character, if, that is to say, he responds to a situation which calls for action in a certain way because he is a certain sort of man, the action is his own; he, and nobody else, is the responsible author of it.

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[1] *Prolegomena*, p. 169.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

In defending this interpretation of freedom Green lays emphasis on self-consciousness. In the history of any man there is a succession of natural empirical factors of one kind or another, natural impulses for example, which the determinist regards as exercising a decisive influence on the man's conduct. Green argues, however, that such factors become morally relevant only when they are assumed, as it were, by the self-conscious subject, that is, when they are taken up into the unity of self-consciousness and turned into motives. They then become internal principles of action; and, as such, they are principles of free action.

This theory, which is in some respects reminiscent of Schelling's theory of freedom, is perhaps hardly crystal clear. But it is clear at least that Green wishes to admit all the empirical data to which the determinist can reasonably appeal,[1] and at the same time to maintain that this admission is compatible with an assertion of human freedom. Perhaps we can say that the question which he asks is this. Given all the empirical facts about human conduct, have we still a use for words such as 'freedom' and 'free' in the sphere of morals? Green's answer is affirmative. The acts of a self-conscious subject, considered precisely as such, can properly be said to be free acts. Actions which are the result of physical compulsion, for example, do not proceed from the self-conscious subject as such. They are not really his own actions; he cannot be considered the true author of them. And we need to be able to distinguish between actions of this type and those which are the expression of the man himself, considered not merely as a physical agent but also as a self-conscious subject or, as some would say, a rational agent.

Mention of the fact that for Green self-realization is the end of moral conduct may suggest that his ethical theory is individualistic. But though he does indeed lay emphasis on the individual's realization of himself, he is at one with Plato and Aristotle in regarding the human person as essentially social in character. In other words, the self which has to be realized is not an atomic self, the potentialities of which can be fully actualized and harmonized without any reference to social relations. On the contrary, it is only in society that we can fully actualize our potentialities and really live as human persons. And this means in effect that the particular moral vocation of each individual has to be interpreted within a social context. Hence Green can use a phrase which Bradley was afterwards to render famous, by remarking that 'each has primarily to fulfil the duties of his station'.[1]

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[1] Obviously, if Green had lived at a later date, he would have had to cope with theories of the infra-conscious springs of human action.

Given this outlook, it is understandable that Green lays emphasis, again with Plato and Aristotle but also, of course, with Hegel, on the status and function of political society, the State, which is 'for its members the society of societies'.[2] It will be noted that this somewhat grandiloquent phrase itself indicates a recognition of the fact that there are other societies, such as the family, which are presupposed by the State. But Hegel himself recognized this fact, of course. And it is clear that among societies Green attributes a pre-eminent importance to the State.

Precisely for this reason, however, it is important to understand that Green is not recanting, either explicitly or implicitly, his ethical theory of self-realization. He continues to maintain his view that 'our ultimate standard of worth is an ideal of *personal* worth. All other values are relative to value for, of, or in a person.'[3] This ideal, however, can be fully realized only in and through a society of persons. Society is thus a moral necessity. And this applies to that larger form of social organization which we call political society or the State as well as to the family. But it by no means follows that the State is an end itself. On the contrary, its function is to create and maintain the conditions for the good life, that is, the conditions in which human beings can best develop themselves and live as persons, each recognizing the others as ends, not merely as means. In this sense the State is an instrument rather than an end in itself. It is indeed an error to say that a nation or a political society is *merely* an aggregate of individuals. For use of the word 'merely' shows that the speaker overlooks the fact that the individual's moral capacities are actualized only in concrete social relations. It implies that individuals could possess their moral and spiritual qualities and fulfil their moral vocation quite apart from membership of society. At the same time the premiss that the nation or the State is not 'merely' a collection of individuals does not entail the conclusion that it is a kind of self-subsistent entity over and above the individuals who compose it.

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[1] *Prolegomena*, p. 192.

[2] *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*, p. 146 (1901 edition). This work will be referred to as *Political Obligation.*

[3] *Prolegomena*, p. 193.

'The life of the nation has no real existence except as the life of the individuals composing the nation.'[1]

Green is therefore quite prepared to admit that in a certain sense there are natural rights which are presupposed by the State. For if we consider what powers must be secured for the individual with a view to the attainment of his moral end, we find that the individual has certain claims which should be recognized by society. It is true that rights in the full sense of the term do not exist until they have been accorded social recognition. Indeed, the term 'right', in its full sense, has little or no meaning apart from society.[2] At the same time, if by saying that there are natural rights which are antecedent to political society we mean that a man, simply because he is a man, has certain claims which ought to be recognized by the State as rights, it is then perfectly true to say that 'the State presupposes rights, and rights of individuals. It is a form which society takes in order to maintain them.'[3]

It is sufficiently obvious from what has been said that in Green's view we cannot obtain a philosophical understanding of the function of the State simply by conducting an historical investigation into the ways in which actual political societies have in fact arisen. We have to consider the nature of man and his moral vocation. Similarly, to have a criterion for judging laws we have to understand the moral end of man, to which all rights are relative. 'A law is not good because it enforces "natural rights", but because it contributes to the realization of a certain end. We only discover what rights are natural by considering what powers must be secured to a man in order to the attainment of this end. These powers a perfect law will secure to their full extent.'[4]

From this close association of political society with the attainment of man's moral end it follows that 'morality and political subjection have a common source, "*political* subjection" being distinguished from that of a slave, as a subjection which secures rights to a subject. That common source is the rational recognition by certain human beings—it may be merely by children of the same parent—of a common well-being which is their well-being, and which they conceive as their well-being, whether at any moment any one of them is inclined to it or no, . . .'[1] Obviously, any given individual may be disinclined to pursue what promotes this common well-being or good. Hence there is need for moral rules or precepts and, in the political sphere, for laws. Moral obligation and political obligation are thus closely linked by Green. The real basis of an obligation to obey the law of the State is neither fear nor mere expediency but man's moral obligation to avoid those actions which are incompatible with the attainment of his moral end and to perform those actions which are required for its attainment.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 193. Hegel could, of course, say the same. For the universal, in his view, exists only in and through particulars. At the same time, in speaking of the State, Green does not employ the exalted epithets used by the German philosopher.

[2] Society in this context does not necessarily mean the State. The members of a family, for example, enjoy rights. The point is that 'right' is, so to speak, a social term.

[3] *Political Obligation*, p. 144. The State, of course, presupposes the family, a form of society in which the claims of individuals are already recognized. The State maintains these rights.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

It follows that there can be no right to disobey or rebel against the State as such. That is to say, 'so far as the laws anywhere or at any time in force fulfil the idea of a State, there can be no right to disobey them'.[2] But, as Hegel admitted, the actual State by no means always measures up to the idea or ideal of the State; and a given law may be incompatible with the real interest or good of society as a whole. Hence civil disobedience in the name of the common good or well-being can be justifiable. Obviously, men have to take into account the fact that it is in the public interest that laws should be obeyed. And the claim of this public interest will usually favour working for the repeal of the objectionable law rather than downright disobedience to it. Further, men ought to consider whether disobedience to an objectionable law might result in some worse evil, such as anarchy. But the moral foundation of political obligation does not entail the conclusion that civil disobedience is never justified. Green sets rather narrow limits to the scope of civil disobedience by saying that to justify our practising it we ought to be able 'to point to some public interest, generally recognized as such'.[3] But from what he subsequently says it does not seem that the proviso 'generally recognized as such' is intended to exclude entirely the possibility of a right to civil disobedience in the name of an ideal higher than that shared by the community in general. The reference is rather to an appeal to a generally recognized public interest against a law which is promulgated not for the public good but in the private interest of a special group or class.

[1] *Political Obligation*, p. 125. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 147. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 149.

Given Green's view that the State exists to promote the common good by creating and maintaining the conditions in which all its citizens can develop their potentialities as persons, it is understandable that he has no sympathy with attacks on social legislation as violating individual liberty, when liberty signifies the power to do as one likes without regard to others. Some people, he remarks, say that their rights are being violated if they are forbidden, for example, to build houses without any regard to sanitary requirements or to send their children out to work without having received any education. In point of fact, however, no rights are being violated. For a man's rights depend on social recognition in view of the welfare of society as a whole. And when society comes to see, as it has not seen before, that the common good requires a new law, such as a law enforcing elementary education, it withdraws recognition of what may formerly have been accounted a right.

Clearly, in certain circumstances the appeal from a less to a more adequate conception of the common good and its requirements might take the form of insisting on a greater measure of individual liberty. For human beings cannot develop themselves as persons unless they have scope for the exercise of such liberty. But Green is actually concerned with opposing *laissez-faire* dogmas. He does not advocate curtailment of individual liberty by the State for the sake of such curtailment. Indeed, he looks on the social legislation of which he approves as a removal of obstacles to liberty, that is, the liberty of all citizens to develop their potentialities as human beings. For example, a law determining the minimum age at which children can be sent to work removes an obstacle to their receiving education. It is true that the law curtails the liberty of parents and prospective employers to do what they like without regard to the common good. But Green will not allow any appeal from the common good to liberty in this sense. Private, sectional and class interests, however hard they may mask themselves under an appeal to private liberty, cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the creation by the State of conditions in which all its citizens have the opportunity to develop themselves as human beings and to live truly human lives.

With Green, therefore, we have a conspicuous example of the revision of liberalism in accordance with the felt need for an increase in social legislation. He tries to interpret, we can say, the operative ideal of a movement which was developing during the closing decades of the nineteenth century. His formulation of a theory may be open to some criticism. But it was certainly preferable not only to *laissez-faire* dogmatism but also to attempts to retain this dogmatism in principle while making concessions which were incompatible with it.

In conclusion it is worth remarking that Green is not blind to the fact that fulfilment of our moral vocation by performing the duties of our 'station' in society may seem to be a rather narrow and inadequate ideal. For 'there may be reason to hold that there are capacities of the human spirit not realizable in persons under the conditions of any society that we know, or can positively conceive, or that may be capable of existing on the earth'.[1] Hence, unless we judge that the problem presented by unfulfilled capacities is insoluble, we may believe that the personal life which is lived on earth in conditions which thwart its full development is continued in a society in which man can attain his full perfection. 'Or we may content ourselves with saying that the personal self-conscious being, which comes from God, is for ever continued in God.'[2] Green speaks in a rather non-committal fashion. But his personal attitude seems to be much more akin to that of Kant, who postulated continued life after death as an unceasing progress in perfection, than to that of Hegel, who does not appear to have been interested in the question of personal immortality, whether he believed in it or not.

4. The idea of a unity underlying the distinction between subject and object becomes prominent in the thought of Edward Caird (1835–1908), Fellow of Merton College, Oxford (1864–6), professor of moral philosophy in the University of Glasgow (1866–93) and Master of Balliol College, Oxford (1893–1907). His celebrated work, *A Critical Account of the Philosophy of Kant*, appeared in 1877, a revised edition in two volumes being published in 1889 under the title *The Critical Philosophy of Kant*. In 1883 Caird published a small work on Hegel,[3] which is still considered one of the best introductions to the study of this philosopher. Of Caird's other writings we may mention *The Social Philosophy and Religion of Comte* (1885), *Essays on Literature and Philosophy* (two volumes, 1892), *The Evolution of Religion* (two volumes, 1893) and *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers* (two volumes,

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[1] *Prolegomena*, p. 195.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Hegel*, published in Blackwood's Philosophical Classics series.

1904). The two last named works are the published versions of sets of Gifford Lectures.

Though Caird wrote on both Kant and Hegel, and though he used metaphysical idealism as an instrument in interpreting human experience and as a weapon for attacking materialism and agnosticism, he was not, and did not pretend to be, a disciple of Hegel or of any other German philosopher. Indeed, he considered that any attempt to import a philosophical system into a foreign country was misplaced.[1] It is idle to suppose that what satisfied a past generation in Germany will satisfy a later generation in Great Britain. For intellectual needs change with changing circumstances.

In the modern world, Caird maintains, we have seen the reflective mind questioning man's spontaneous certainties and breaking asunder factors which were formerly combined. For example, there is the divergence between the Cartesian point of departure, the self-conscious ego, and that of the empiricists, the object as given in experience. And the gulf between the two traditions has grown so wide that we are told that we must either reduce the physical to the psychical or the psychical to the physical. In other words, we are told that we must choose between idealism and materialism, as their conflicting claims cannot be reconciled. Again, there is the gulf which has developed between the religious consciousness and faith on the one hand and the scientific outlook on the other, a gulf which implies that we must choose between religion and science, as the two cannot be combined.

When oppositions and conflicts of this kind have once arisen in man's cultural life, we cannot simply return to the undivided but naïve consciousness of an earlier period. Nor is it sufficient to appeal with the Scottish School to the principles of common sense. For it is precisely these principles which have been called in question, as by Humian scepticism. Hence the reflective mind is forced to look for a synthesis in which opposed points of view can be reconciled at a higher level than that of the naïve consciousness.

Kant made an important contribution to the fulfilment of this task. But its significance has, in Caird's opinion, been misunderstood, the misunderstanding being due primarily to Kant himself.

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[1] On this subject see Caird's Preface to *Essays in Philosophical Criticism*, edited by A. Seth and R. B. Haldane (1883).

For instead of interpreting the distinction between appearance and reality as referring simply to different stages in the growth of knowledge, the German philosopher represented it as a distinction between phenomena and unknowable things-in-themselves. And it is precisely this notion of the unknowable thing-in-itself which has to be expelled from philosophy, as indeed Kant's successors have done. When we have got rid of this notion, we can see that the real significance of the critical philosophy lies in its insight into the fact that objectivity exists only for a self-conscious subject. In other words, Kant's real service was to show that the fundamental relationship is that between subject and object, which together form a unity-in-difference. Once we grasp this truth, we are freed from the temptation to reduce subject to object or object to subject. For this temptation has its origin in an unsatisfactory dualism which is overcome by the theory of an original synthesis. The distinction between subject and object emerges within the unity of consciousness, a unity which is fundamental.

According to Caird, science itself bears witness in its own way to this unity-in-difference. True, it concentrates on the object. At the same time it aims at the discovery of universal laws and at correlating these laws; and it thus tacitly presupposes the existence of an intelligible system which cannot be simply heterogeneous or alien to the thought which understands it. In other words, science bears witness to the correlativity of thought and its object.

Though, however, one of the tasks allotted to the philosopher by Caird is that of showing how science points to the basic principle of the synthesis of subject and object as a unity-in-difference, he himself gives his attention chiefly to the religious consciousness. And in this sphere he finds himself driven to go behind subject and object to an underlying unity and ground. Subject and object are distinct. Indeed, 'all our life moves between these two terms which are essentially distinct from, and even opposed to, each other'.[1] Yet they are at the same time related to each other in such a way that neither can be conceived without the other.[2] And 'we are forced to seek the secret of their being in a higher principle, of whose unity they in their action and reaction are the manifestations, which they presuppose as their beginning and to which they point as their end'.[3]

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[1] *The Evolution of Religion*, I, p. 65.

[2] This is obviously true in regard to the *terms* 'subject' and 'object'.

[3] *The Evolution of Religion*, I, p. 67.

This enveloping unity, which is described in Platonic phrases as being 'at once the source of being to all things that are, and of knowing to all beings that know',[1] is the presupposition of all consciousness. And it is what we call God. It does not follow, Caird insists, that all men possess an explicit awareness of God as the ultimate unity of being and knowing, of objectivity and subjectivity. An explicit awareness is in the nature of the case the product of a long process of development. And we can see in the history of religion the main stages of this development.[2]

The first stage, that of 'objective religion', is dominated by awareness of the object, not indeed as the object in the abstract technical sense of the term, but in the form of the external things by which man finds himself surrounded. At this stage man cannot form an idea of anything 'which he cannot body forth as an existence in space and time'.[3] We can assume that he has some dim awareness of a unity comprehending both himself and other things; but he cannot form an idea of the divine except by objectifying it in the gods.

The second stage in the development of religion is that of 'subjective religion'. Here man returns from absorption in Nature to consciousness of himself. And God is conceived as a spiritual being standing apart from both Nature and man, and as revealing Himself above all in the inner voice of conscience.

In the third stage, that of 'absolute religion', the self-conscious subject and its object, Nature, are seen as distinct yet essentially related, and at the same time as grounded in an ultimate unity. And God is conceived 'as the Being who is at once the source, the sustaining power, and the end of our spiritual lives'.[4] This does not mean, however, that the idea of God is completely indeterminate, so that we are forced to embrace the agnosticism of Herbert Spencer. For God manifests Himself in both subject and object; and the more we understand the spiritual life of humanity on the one hand and the world of Nature on the other, so much the more do we learn about God who is 'the ultimate unity of our life and of the life of the world'.[5]

Insofar as Caird goes behind the distinction between subject and object to an ultimate unity, we can say that he does not absolutize the subject-object relationship in the way that Ferrier does. At the same time his epistemological approach, namely by way of their relationship, seems to create a difficulty. For he explicitly recognizes that 'strictly speaking, there is but one object and one subject for each of us'.[1] That is to say, for me the subject-object relationship is, strictly, that between myself as subject and my world as object. And the object must include other people. Even if, therefore, it is granted that I have from the beginning a dim awareness of an underlying unity, it seems to follow that this unity is the unity of myself as subject and of my object, other persons being part of 'my object'. And it is difficult to see how it can then be shown that there are other subjects, and that there is one and only one common underlying unity. Common sense may suggest that these conclusions are correct. But it is a question not of common sense but rather of seeing how the conclusions can be established, once we have adopted Caird's approach. Taken by itself, the idea of an underlying unity may well be of value.[2] But arrival at the conclusion at which Caird wishes to arrive is not facilitated by his point of departure. And it is certainly arguable that Hegel showed wisdom in starting with the concept of Being rather than with that of the subject-object relationship.

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[1] *Ibid.*, I, p. 68.

[2] Caird's three stages correspond more or less to Hegel's stages; natural religion, the religion of spiritual individuality and absolute religion.

[3] *The Evolution of Religion*, I, p. 189.

[4] *Ibid.*, I, p. 195.

[5] *Ibid.*, I, p. 140.

5. It has been said of John Caird (1820–98), brother of Edward, that he preached Hegelianism from the pulpit. A Presbyterian theologian and preacher, he was appointed professor of divinity in the University of Glasgow in 1862, becoming Principal of the University in 1873. In 1880 he published *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, and in 1888 a volume on Spinoza in Blackwood's Philosophical Classics. Some other writings, including his Gifford Lectures on *The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity* (1899), appeared posthumously.

In arguing against materialism John Caird maintains not only that it is unable to explain the life of the organism and of consciousness,[3] but also that the materialists, though undertaking to reduce the mind to a function of matter, tacitly and inevitably presuppose from the outset that the mind is something different from matter. After all, it is the mind itself which has to perform the reduction. In an analogous manner he argues that the agnostic who says that God is unknowable betrays by his very statement the fact that he has an implicit awareness of God. 'Even in maintaining that the human mind is incapable of absolute knowledge the sceptic presupposes in his own mind an ideal of absolute knowledge in comparison with which human knowledge is pronounced defective. The very denial of an absolute intelligence in us could have no meaning but for a tacit appeal to its presence. An implicit knowledge of God in this sense is proved by the very attempt to deny it.'[1]

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[1] *Evolution of Religion*, I, p. 65.

[2] This idea appears, for example, though in a rather different setting, in the philosophy of Karl Jaspers, under the form of The Comprehensive.

[3] In the organism, John Caird argues, we find immanent teleology which shows itself in the way that an internal spontaneity or energy differentiates members and functions and at the same time reintegrates them into a common unity, realizing the immanent end of the whole organism. As for the life of reflective consciousness, the idea of mechanical causality loses all relevance in this sphere.

As expressed in this particular quotation, Caird's theory is obscure. But it can be elucidated in this way. Caird is applying to knowledge in particular Hegel's thesis that we cannot be aware of finitude without being implicitly aware of infinity. Experience teaches us that our minds are finite and imperfect. But we could not be aware of this except in the light of an implicit idea of complete or absolute knowledge, a knowledge which would be in effect the unity of thought and being. It is this implicit or virtual idea of absolute knowledge which constitutes a vaguely-conceived standard in comparison with which our limitations become clear to us. Further, this idea draws the mind as an ideal goal. It thus operates in us as a reality. And it is in fact an absolute intelligence, in the light of which we participate.

Obviously, it is essential for Caird to maintain the view expressed in the last two sentences. For if he said simply that we strive after complete or absolute knowledge as an ideal goal, we should probably conclude that absolute knowledge does not yet exist, whereas Caird wishes to arrive at the conclusion that in affirming the limitations of our knowledge we are implicitly affirming a living reality. Hence he has to argue that in asserting the limitations of my intelligence I am implicitly asserting the existence of an absolute intelligence which operates in me and in whose life I participate. He thus utilizes the Hegelian principle that the finite cannot be understood except as a moment in the life of the infinite. Whether the employment of these Hegelian principles can really serve the purpose for which Caird employed them, namely to support Christian theism, is open to dispute. But he at any rate is convinced that they can.

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[1] *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 112.

John Caird also argues, in the same way as his brother, that the interrelation of subject and object reveals an ultimate unity underlying the distinction. As for the traditional proofs of God's existence, they are exposed to the customary objections, if they are taken as claiming to be strictly logical arguments. If, however, they are interpreted more as phenomenological analyses of ways 'by which the human spirit rises to the knowledge of God, and finds therein the fulfilment of its own highest nature, these proofs possess great value'.[1] It is not quite clear perhaps where this great value is supposed to lie. Caird can hardly mean that logically invalid arguments possess great value if they exhibit ways in which the human mind has as a matter of fact reached a conclusion by faulty reasoning. So presumably he means that the traditional arguments possess value as illustrating ways in which the human mind can become explicitly conscious of an awareness which they already possess in an implicit and obscure manner. This point of view would allow him to say both that the arguments beg the question by presupposing the conclusion from the start and that this does not really matter, inasmuch as they are really ways of making the implicit explicit.[2]

Like Hegel, John Caird insists on the need for advancing from the level of ordinary religious thought to a speculative idea of religion, in which 'contradictions' are overcome. For example, the opposed and equally one-sided positions of pantheism and deism are both overcome in a truly philosophical conception of the relation between the finite and the infinite, a conception which is characteristic of Christianity when rightly understood. As for specifically Christian doctrines, such as that of the Incarnation, Caird's treatment of them is more orthodox than Hegel's. He is, however, too convinced of the value of the Hegelian philosophy as an ally in the fight against materialism and agnosticism to consider seriously whether, as McTaggart was later to put it, the ally may not turn out in the long run to be an enemy in disguise, inasmuch as the use of Hegelianism in the interpretation of Christianity tends, by the very nature of the Hegelian system, to involve the subordination of the content of the Christian faith to speculative philosophy and, indeed, a tie-up with a particular system.

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[1] *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 125.

[2] In more recent times, it has sometimes been said that the traditional proofs of God's existence, while logically invalid, possess value as 'pointers' to God. But unless we know what is meant by saying this, it is difficult to discuss the thesis. We need to be told something more than that the traditional proofs are 'pointers to God' or, as by Caird, that they possess great value as phenomenological analyses. This is the point that I have been trying to make.

In point of fact, however, John Caird does not adopt the Hegelian system lock, stock and barrel. What he does is rather to adopt from it those general lines of thought which seem to him to possess intrinsic validity and to be of service in supporting a religious outlook in the face of contemporary materialist and positivist tendencies. He thus provides a good example of the religious interest which characterized a large part of the idealist movement in Great Britain.

6. Among those who contributed to spreading a knowledge of Hegelianism in Great Britain William Wallace (1844–97), Green's successor as Whyte professor of moral philosophy at Oxford, deserves a mention. In 1874 he published a translation, furnished with prolegomena or introductory material, of Hegel's *Logic* as contained in the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences.*[1] He later published a revised and enlarged edition in two volumes, the translation appearing in 1892 and the greatly augmented *Prolegomena*[2] in 1894. Wallace also published in 1894 a translation, with five introductory chapters, of Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*, again from the *Encyclopaedia*. In addition he wrote the volume on Kant (1882) for Blackwood's Philosophical Classics series and a *Life of Schopenhauer* (1890). His *Lectures and Essays on Natural Theology and Ethics*, which appeared posthumously in 1898, show clearly the affinity between his thought and John Caird's speculative interpretation of religion in general and of Christianity in particular.

Though we must refrain from multiplying brief references to philosophers who stood within the ambit of the idealist movement, there is a special reason for mentioning David George Ritchie (1853–1903), who was converted to idealism by Green at Oxford and who in 1894 became professor of logic and metaphysics in the University of St. Andrews. For while the idealists in general were unsympathetic to systems of philosophy based on Darwinism, Ritchie undertook to show that the Hegelian philosophy was perfectly capable of assimilating the Darwinian theory of evolution.[3] After all, he argued, does not Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest harmonize very well with Hegel's doctrine that the real is the rational and the rational the real, and that the rational, representing a value, triumphs over the irrational? And does not the disappearance of the weaker and less fitted for survival correspond with the overcoming of the negative factor in the Hegelian dialectic?

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[1] This is, of course, the so-called shorter or lesser *Logic*, of Hegel.

[2] *Prolegomena to the Study of Hegel, and especially of his Logic.*

[3] Cf. for example, *Darwin and Hegel, with Other Philosophical Studies* (1893).

It is true, Ritchie admitted, that the Darwinians were so concerned with the origin of species that they failed to understand the significance of the movement of evolution as a whole. We must recognize the facts that in human society the struggle for existence takes forms which cannot be properly described in biological categories, and that social progress depends on co-operation. But it is precisely at this point that Hegelianism can shed a light which is shed neither by the biological theory of evolution taken purely by itself nor by the empiricist and positivist systems of philosophy which are professedly based on this theory.

Though, however, Ritchie made a valiant attempt to reconcile Darwinism and Hegelianism, the construction of 'idealist' philosophies of evolution, in the sense of philosophies which endeavoured to show that the total movement of evolution is towards an ideal term or goal, was actually to take place outside rather than inside the Neo-Hegelian current of thought.

CHAPTER VIII

ABSOLUTE IDEALISM: BRADLEY

Introductory remarks—The Presuppositions of Critical History—*Morality and its self-transcending in religion—The relevance of logic to metaphysics—The basic presupposition of metaphysics—Appearance: the thing and its qualities, relations and their terms, space and time, the self—Reality: the nature of the Absolute—Degrees of truth and reality—Error and evil—The Absolute, God and religion—Some critical discussion of Bradley's metaphysics.*

1. It was in the philosophy of Francis Herbert Bradley (1846–1924) that emphasis on the subject-object relationship was decisively supplanted by the idea of the supra-relational One, the all-embracing Absolute. Of Bradley's life there is little which needs to be said. In 1870 he was elected a Fellow of Merton College, Oxford, and he retained this post until his death. He did not lecture. And the quantity of his literary output, though substantial, was not exceptional. But as a thinker he is of considerable interest, especially perhaps for the way in which he combines a radical criticism of the categories of human thought, when considered as instruments for apprehending ultimate reality, with a firm faith in the existence of an Absolute in which all contradictions and antinomies are overcome.

In 1874 Bradley published an essay on *The Presuppositions of Critical History*, to which reference will be made in the next section. *Ethical Studies* appeared in 1876, *The Principles of Logic* in 1883,[1] *Appearance and Reality* in 1893,[2] and *Essays on Truth and Reality* in 1914. Other essays and articles were collected and published posthumously in two volumes in 1935 under the title *Collected Essays*.[3] A small book of *Aphorisms* appeared in 1930.

Bradley's enemies were those of the idealists in general, namely empiricists, positivists and materialists, though in his case we have to add the pragmatists. As a polemical writer he did not always represent his opponents' views in a manner which they considered

[1] The second edition appeared in two volumes in 1922.

[2] A second edition, with an added Appendix, appeared in 1897.

[3] *The Presuppositions of Critical History* is reprinted in the first volume.

fair; but he could be devastating, and on occasion none too polite. His own philosophy has often been described as Neo-Hegelian. But though he was undoubtedly influenced by Hegelianism, the description is not altogether appropriate. It is true that both Hegel and Bradley were concerned with the totality, the Absolute. But the two men held markedly different views about the capacity of the human reason to grasp the Absolute. Hegel was a rationalist, in the sense, that is to say, that he regarded reason (*Vernunft*), as distinct from understanding (*Verstand*), as capable of penetrating the inner life of the Absolute. He endeavoured to lay bare the essential structure of the self-developing universe, the totality of Being; and he showed an overwhelming confidence in the power of dialectical thought to reveal the nature of the Absolute both in itself and in its concrete manifestations in Nature and Spirit. Bradley's dialectic, however, largely took the form of a systematic self-criticism by discursive thought, a criticism which, in his opinion at least, made clear the incapacity of human thought to attain any adequate grasp of ultimate reality, of what is really real. The world of discursive thought was for him the world of appearance; and metaphysical reflection showed that it was precisely this, by revealing the antinomies and contradictions engendered by such thought. Bradley was indeed convinced that the reality which is distorted by discursive thought is in itself free from all contradictions, a seamless whole, an all-comprehensive and perfectly harmonious act of experience. The point is, however, that he did not pretend to be able to show dialectically precisely how antinomies are overcome and contradictions solved in the Absolute. To be sure, he did in fact say a good deal about the Absolute. And in view of his thesis that ultimate reality transcends human thought, it is arguable that in doing so he showed a certain inconsistency. But the point which is relevant here is that Bradley gave expression not so much to Hegelian rationalism as to a peculiar combination of scepticism and fideism; of scepticism through his depreciation of human thought as an instrument of grasping reality as it really is, and of fideism by his explicit assertion that belief in a One which satisfies all the demands of ideal intelligibility rests on an initial act of faith that is presupposed by all genuinely metaphysical philosophy.

In reaching this characteristic position Bradley was influenced to a certain extent by Herbart's view that contradictions do not belong to reality itself but emerge only through our inadequate ways of conceiving reality.[1] This is not to suggest that Bradley was an Herbartian. He was a monist, whereas the German philosopher was a pluralist. But the late Professor A. E. Taylor relates that when he was at Merton College, he was recommended by Bradley to study Herbart as a wholesome correction to undue absorption in Hegelian ways of thinking.[2] And an understanding of Herbart's influence on Bradley helps to correct any over-emphasis on Hegelian elements in the latter's philosophy.

Bradley's philosophy, however, cannot be adequately described in terms of influence exercised by other thinkers. It was in fact an original creation, in spite of the stimulus derived from such different German philosophers as Hegel and Herbart. In some respects, for instance in the way in which the concept of 'God' is represented as transcended in that of the suprapersonal Absolute, Bradley's thought shows clear signs of the influence of German absolute idealism. And the way in which the tendency of earlier British idealists to absolutize the subject-object relationship gives way before the idea of the totality, the One, can be said to represent the triumph of the absolute idealism which is associated above all with the name of Hegel. But British absolute idealism, especially in the case of Bradley, was a native version of the movement. It may not be as impressive as the Hegelian system; but this is no good reason for depicting it as no more than a minor replica of Hegelianism.

2. In his essay on *The Presuppositions of Critical History* Bradley writes that the critical mind must provisionally suspect the reality of everything before it. At the same time 'critical history must have a presupposition, and this presupposition is the uniformity of law'.[3] That is to say, 'critical history assumes that its world is one',[4] this unity being that of the universality of law and of 'what loosely may be termed causal connection'.[5] History does not start by proving this unity; it presupposes it as the condition of its own possibility, though developed history confirms the truth of the presupposition.

There is no mention here of the Absolute. Indeed, the world of causal connections is relegated by Bradley in his metaphysics to the sphere of appearance. But in the light of the later development of his thought we can see in the idea of the unity of the world of history as a presupposition of historiography a hint of the idea of a total organic unity as the presupposition of metaphysics. And this suggestion seems to be supported by Bradley's assertion in a note that 'the universe seems to be one system; it is an organism (it would appear) and more. It bears the character of the self, the personality to which it is relative, and without which it is as good as nothing. Hence any portion of the universe by itself cannot be a consistent system; for it refers to the whole, and has the whole present in it. Potentially the whole (since embodying that which is actually the whole), in trying to fix itself on itself, it succeeds only in laying stress on its character of relativity; it is carried beyond and contradicts itself'.[1] To be sure, this is not precisely a statement of the doctrine of the Absolute as we find it in *Appearance and Reality*, where the Absolute is certainly not depicted as a self. At the same time the passage serves to show how Bradley's mind was dominated by the idea of the universe as an organic whole.

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[1] See Vol. VII of this *History*, p. 251.

[2] See *Contemporary British Philosophy, Second Series*, p. 271, edited by J. H. Muirhead (1925).

[3] *Collected Essays*, I, p. 24. [4] *Ibid.*, I, p. 20. [5] *Ibid.*, I, p. 21.

3. Bradley's *Ethical Studies* is not a metaphysical work. Indeed, on reading the first essay one may receive the impression that the writer's line of thought has more affinity with the modern analytic movement than with what would naturally be expected from a metaphysical idealist. For Bradley concerns himself with examining what the ordinary man understands by responsibility and imputability, and he then shows how two theories of human action are incompatible with the conditions of moral responsibility which are implicitly presupposed by 'the vulgar'.

On the one hand, the ordinary man implicitly assumes that he cannot legitimately be held morally responsible for an action unless he is the same man who performed the action. And if this assumption is taken to be correct, it excludes that form of determination which is based on the associationist psychology and to all intents and purposes does away with any permanent self-identity. 'Without personal identity responsibility is sheer nonsense; and to the psychology of our Determinists personal identity (with identity in general) is a word without a vestige of meaning.'[2] On the other hand, the ordinary man assumes that he cannot legitimately be held morally responsible for an action unless he is truly the author of it, unless it proceeds from him as effect from cause. And this assumption rules out any theory of indeterminism which implies that human free actions are uncaused and does away with the relation between a man's action and his self or character. For the agent as described by this sort of theory is 'a person who is *not* responsible, who (if he is anything) is idiotic'.[1]

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[1] *Collected Essays*, I, pp. 69–70.

[2] *Ethical Studies*, p. 36 (2nd edition). It is in this context that Bradley makes his famous comment: 'Mr Bain collects that the mind is a collection. Has he ever thought who collects Mr Bain?' (p. 39, note 1).

Bradley is, of course, the last man to suggest that we should take the beliefs of the ordinary man as a final court of appeal. But for the moment he is concerned not with expounding a metaphysical theory of the self but with arguing that both determinism and indeterminism, when understood in the senses mentioned above, are incompatible with the presuppositions of the moral consciousness. And the positive conclusion to be drawn is that the moral consciousness of the ordinary man implies a close relation between actions for which one can legitimately be held responsible and one's self in the sense of character.

Though, however, *Ethical Studies* is not a metaphysical work, either in the sense that Bradley sets out to derive ethical conclusions from metaphysical premisses or in the sense that he explicitly introduces his metaphysical system,[2] it certainly has a metaphysical bearing or significance. For the upshot of the work is that morality gives rise to contradictions which cannot be resolved on the purely ethical level, and that it points beyond itself. True, in this work morality is depicted as leading on to religion. But elsewhere religion is depicted as leading on to the philosophy of the Absolute.

For Bradley the end of morality, of moral action, is self-realization. And it follows that the good for man cannot be identified with 'the feeling of self-realizedness',[3] or indeed with any feeling. Hedonism therefore, which looks on the feeling of pleasure as the good for man, is ruled out. In Bradley's view, as in that of Plato, the hedonist should logically assert that any action is moral which produces greater pleasure in the agent. For consistent hedonism admits only of a quantitative standard of discrimination. Once we introduce, with J. S. Mill, a qualitative distinction between pleasures, we require a standard other than the feeling of pleasure and have thus in effect abandoned hedonism. The truth of the matter is that Mill's utilitarianism expresses a groping after the ethical idea of self-realization, and that it is hindered from arriving fully at this idea by its illogical attempt to retain hedonism at the same time. 'May we suggest, in conclusion, that of all our utilitarians there is perhaps not one who has not still a great deal to learn from Aristotle's *Ethics*?'[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[2] The book includes indeed some metaphysical excursions; but Bradley does not explicitly introduce his metaphysics of the Absolute.

[3] *Ethical Studies*, p. 125.

In making pleasure the sole good hedonism is a hopelessly one-sided theory. Another one-sided theory is the Kantian ethics of duty for duty's sake. But here the trouble is the formalism of the theory. We are told to realize the good will, 'but as to that which the good will is, it [the ethics of duty for duty's sake] tells us nothing, and leaves us with an idle abstraction'.[2] Bradley safeguards himself from the charge of caricaturing the Kantian ethics by saying that he does not intend to give an exegesis of Kant's moral theory. At the same time he states his belief that the Kantian ethical system 'has been annihilated by Hegel's criticism'.[3] And Hegel's main criticism was precisely that the Kantian ethics was involved in an empty formalism.

Bradley does not disagree, any more than Hegel did, with the view that the end of morality is the realization of a good will. His point is that content must be given to this idea. And to do this we must understand that the good will is the universal will, the will of a social organism. For this means that one's duties are specified by one's membership of the social organism, and that 'to be moral, I must will my station and its duties'.[4]

At first sight this Hegelian point of view, with its reminiscences of Rousseau, may seem to be at variance with Bradley's doctrine that the end of morality is self-realization. But all depends, of course, on how the term 'self' is understood. For Bradley, as for Hegel, the universal will, which is a concrete universal existing in and through its particulars, represents the individual's 'true' self. Apart from his social relations, his membership of a social organism, the individual man is an abstraction. 'And individual man is what he is because of and by virtue of community.'[5] Hence to identify one's private will with the universal will is to realize one's true self.

What does this mean in less abstract terms? The universal will is obviously the will of a society. And as the family, the basic society, is at the same time preserved and taken up in political society, the State, the emphasis is placed by Bradley, as by Hegel, on the latter. To realize oneself morally, therefore, is to

[1] *Ethical Studies*, pp. 125–6.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 159.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 148, note 1.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 180.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 166.

act in accordance with social morality, that is, with 'the morality already existing ready to hand in laws, institutions, social usages, moral opinions and feelings'.[1]

This view obviously gives content to the moral law, to the command of reason to realize the good will. But, equally obviously, morality becomes relative to this or that human society. Bradley does indeed try to maintain a distinction between lower and higher moral codes. It is true that the essence of man is realized, however imperfectly, at any and every stage of moral evolution. But 'from the point of view of a higher stage, we can see that lower stages failed to realize the truth completely enough, and also, mixed and one with their realization, did present features contrary to the true nature of man as we now see it'.[2] At the same time Bradley's view that one's duties are specified by one's station, by one's place and function in the social organism, leads him to assert that morality not only is but ought to be relative. That is to say, it is not simply a question of noting the empirical fact that moral convictions have differed in certain respects in different societies. Bradley maintains in addition that moral codes would be of no use unless they were relative to given societies. In fine, 'the morality of every stage is justified for that stage; and the demand for a code of right in itself, apart from any stage, is seen to be the asking for an impossibility'.[3]

It scarcely needs saying that the very idea of a moral code involves the idea of a relation to possible conduct, and that a code which has no relation at all to a man's historical and social situation would be useless to him. But it does not necessarily follow that I must identify morality with the existing moral standards and outlook of the society to which I happen to belong. Indeed if, as Bradley admits, a member of an existing society can see the defects in the moral code of a past society, there does not seem to be any adequate reason why an enlightened member of the past society should not have seen these defects for himself and have rejected social conformism in the name of higher moral standards and ideals. This is, after all, precisely what has happened in history.

In point of fact, however, Bradley does not reduce morality simply to social morality. For in his view it is a duty to realize the ideal self; and the content of this ideal self is not exclusively social. For example, 'it is a moral duty for the artist or the inquirer to lead the life of one, and a moral offence when he fails to do so'.[1] True, the activities of an artist or of a scientist can, and generally do, benefit society. But 'their social bearing is indirect, and does not lie in their very essence'.[2] This idea is doubtless in tune with Hegel's attribution of art to the sphere of absolute spirit, rather than that of objective spirit, where morality belongs. But the point is that Bradley's assertion that 'man is not man at all unless social, but man is not much above the beasts unless more than social'[3] might well have led him to revise such statements as that 'there is nothing better than my station and its duties, nor anything higher or more truly beautiful'.[4] If morality is self-realization, and if the self cannot be adequately described in purely social categories, morality can hardly be identified with conformity to the standards of the society to which one belongs.

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 199–200.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 192.

[3] *Ibid.*

Yet in a sense all this is simply grist to Bradley's mill. For, as has already been mentioned, he wishes to show that morality gives rise to antinomies or contradictions which cannot be overcome on the purely ethical level. For example, and this is the principal contradiction, the moral law demands the perfect identification of the individual will with the ideally good and universal will, though at the same time morality cannot exist except in the form of an overcoming of the lower self, a striving which presupposes that the individual will is not identified with the ideally good will. In other words, morality is essentially an endless process; but by its very nature it demands that the process should no longer exist but should be supplanted by moral perfection.

Obviously, if we deny either that overcoming of the lower or bad self is an essential feature of the moral life or that the moral law demands the cessation of this overcoming, the antinomy disappears. If, however, we admit both theses, the conclusion to be drawn is that morality seeks its own extinction. That is to say, it seeks to transcend itself. 'Morality is an endless process and therefore a self-contradiction; and, being such, it does not remain standing in itself, but feels the impulse to transcend its existing reality.'[5] If the moral law demands the attainment of an ideal which cannot be attained as long as there is a bad self to be overcome, and if the existence in some degree of a bad self is a necessary presupposition of morality, the moral law, we must conclude, demands the attainment of an ideal or end which can be attained only in a supra-ethical sphere.

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[1] *Ethical Studies*, p. 223.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 201.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 313.

As far as *Ethical Studies* is concerned, this sphere is that of religion. The moral ideal is 'not realized in the objective world of the State';[1] but it can be realized for the religious consciousness. It is true that 'for religion the world is alienated from God, and the self is sunk in sin'.[2] At the same time for the religious consciousness the two poles, God and the self, the infinite and the finite, are united in faith. For religious faith the sinner is reconciled with God and justified, and he is united with other selves in the community of the faithful. Thus in the sphere of religion man reaches the term of his striving and he fulfils the demand of morality that he should realize himself as 'an infinite whole',[3] a demand which can be only imperfectly fulfilled on the ethical level through membership in political society.

Morality, therefore, consists in the realization of the true self. The true self, however, is 'infinite'. This means that morality demands the realization of the self as a member of an infinite whole. But the demand cannot be fully met on the level of the ethics of my station and its duties. Ultimately, indeed, it can be met only by the transformation of the self in the Absolute. And in this sense Bradley's account of morality is pregnant with metaphysics, the metaphysics of the Absolute. But in *Ethical Studies* he is content to take the matter as far as the self-transcending of morality in religion. The self-transcending of religion is left to the explicit metaphysics of *Appearance and Reality.*

4. Turning to Bradley's logical studies, we must note in the first place his concern with separating logic from psychology. Needless to say, he does not question the legitimacy of inquiries into the origin of ideas and into the association between ideas, inquiries which had occupied so prominent a place in empiricist philosophy from Locke to J. S. Mill. But he insists that they belong to the province of psychology, and that if we confuse logical and psychological inquiries, we shall find ourselves giving psychological answers to logical questions, as the empiricists were inclined to do. 'In England at all events we have lived too long in the psychological attitude.'[4]

Bradley starts his logical studies with an examination of the judgment, considered not as a combination of ideas, which have to be previously treated, but as an act of judging that something is or is not the case. It is true, of course, that we can distinguish various elements within the judgment. But the logician is concerned not with the psychological origin of ideas or concepts nor with the influence of mental associations but with the symbolic function, the reference, which concepts acquire in the judgment. 'For logical purposes ideas are symbols, and they are nothing but symbols.'[1] Terms acquire a definite meaning or reference in the proposition; and the proposition says something which is either true or false. The logician should concern himself with these aspects of the matter, leaving psychological questions to the psychologist.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 316. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 322. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 74.
[4] *The Principles of Logic*, I, p. 2 (2nd edition).

Bradley's anti-psychologizing attitude in logic has won him a good mark from modern logicians including those whose general philosophical outlook is more or less empiricist. But the connection between his logic and his metaphysics is generally regarded much less benevolently. On this point, however, we have to be careful. On the one hand Bradley does not identify logic with metaphysics. And he regards his inquiries into the forms, quantity and modality of judgments and into the characteristics and types of inference as pertaining to logic, not to metaphysics. On the other hand in the preface to the first edition of *The Principles of Logic* he implicitly admits that 'I am not sure where logic begins or ends'.[2] And some of his logical theories have an obvious connection with his metaphysics, a connection which I wish to illustrate briefly by one or two examples.

As every judgment is either true or false, we are naturally inclined to assume that it asserts or denies a fact, its truth or falsity depending on its correspondence or lack of correspondence with some factual state of affairs. But while a singular judgment such as 'I have a toothache' or 'This leaf is green' seems at first sight to mirror a particular fact, reflection shows that the universal judgment is the result of inference and that it is hypothetical in character. For example, if I say that all mammals are warm-blooded, I infer from a limited number of instances a universal conclusion; and what I am actually asserting is that if at any time there is something which possesses the other attributes of being a mammal, it also possesses that of warm-bloodedness.[3] The judgment is thus hypothetical; and a gap is introduced between ideal content and actual fact. For the judgment is asserted as being true even if at any given time there are no actually existing mammals.

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[1] *The Principles of Logic*, I, pp. 2–3.

[2] *Ibid.*, I, p. ix.

[3] It is presupposed that the judgment is not what Bradley calls a 'collective' judgment, a mere summation of observed cases, but a genuine abstract universal judgment.

According to Bradley, however, it is a mistake to assume that though the universal judgment is hypothetical, the singular affirmative judgment enjoys the privilege of being tied to a particular fact or experience, which it mirrors. If I say that I have a toothache, I am referring, of course, to a particular pain of my own; but the judgment which I enunciate could perfectly well be enunciated by someone else, who would obviously be referring to a different toothache, his own and not mine. True, we can try to pin down the reference of singular judgments by the use of words, such as 'this', 'that', 'here' and 'now'. But though this device serves very well for practical purposes, it is not possible to eliminate every element of generality from the meaning of these particularizing expressions.[1] If someone holds an apple in his hand and says 'This apple is unripe', I am obviously perfectly well aware what apple is being referred to. But the judgment 'This apple is unripe' is not tied to this particular apple: it could be uttered by someone else, or indeed by the same man, with reference to some other apple. The singular affirmative judgment, therefore, does not enjoy any special privilege of being a mirror of existent fact.

The conclusion which Bradley wishes to draw is that if the judgment is regarded as a synthesis or union of ideas, every judgment is general, and that a gap is thus introduced between ideal content and reality. 'Ideas are universal, and, no matter what it is that we try to say and dimly mean, what we really express and succeed in asserting is nothing individual.'[2] If, therefore, an abstract universal judgment is hypothetical and so divorced to some extent from actual reality, it is no use thinking that in the singular judgment we can find an unequivocal reference to a particular fact. All judgments are tarred with the same brush.

In point of fact, however, 'judgment is not the synthesis of ideas, but the reference of ideal content to reality'.[3] And it is Bradley's contention that the latent and ultimate subject of any judgment is reality as a whole, reality, we may say, with a capital letter. 'Not only (this is our doctrine) does all judgment affirm of Reality, but in every judgment we have the assertion that

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[1] Hegel had already drawn attention to this point. See Vol. VII of this *History*, p. 182.

[2] *The Principles of Logic*, 1, p. 49.

[3] *Ibid.*, 1, p. 56.

"Reality is such that *S* is *P*".'[1] If, for example, I assert that this leaf is green, I am asserting that reality as a whole, the universe, is such that this leaf is green. There is no such thing as an isolated particular fact. So-called particular facts are what they are only because reality as a whole is what it is.

This point of view has an evident bearing on the relative adequacy of different types of judgment. For if reality as a whole is the latent ultimate subject of every judgment, it follows that the more particular a judgment is, the less adequate is it as a description of its ultimate subject. Further, an analytic judgment, in the sense of one which analyses a particular given sense-experience, distorts reality by arbitrarily selecting elements from a complex whole and treating them as though they constituted a self-sufficient particular fact, whereas there are no such facts. The only self-sufficient fact is reality as a whole.

Bradley thus turns his back on the empiricist belief that the more we analyse, the closer we approach to truth.[2] It has been assumed that 'analysis is no alteration, and that, whenever we distinguish, we have to do with divisible existence'.[3] This assumption, however, is a 'cardinal principle of error and delusion'.[4] In reality truth, as Hegel saw, is the whole.

This may suggest that we shall come nearer to an apprehension of reality if we turn away from the immediate judgments of sense to the general hypotheses of the sciences. But though in this sphere there is less fragmentation, there is also a much higher degree of abstraction and of mental construction. If reality consists of what is presented to the senses, the abstractions of the sciences seem to be further removed from reality than the immediate judgments of sense. And if reality does not consist of the wealth of sensuous phenomena, can we really suppose that it consists of logical constructions and scientific abstractions? 'It may come from a failure in my metaphysics, or from a weakness of the flesh which continues to blind me, but the notion that existence could be the same as understanding strikes as cold and ghost-like as the dreariest materialism. That the glory of this world in the end is appearance leaves the world more glorious, if we feel it is a show of some fuller splendour; but the sensuous curtain is a deception and a cheat, if it hides some colourless movement of atoms, some spectral woof of impalpable abstractions, or unearthly ballet of bloodless categories.'[1]

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[1] *The Principles of Logic*, II, p. 623 (terminal essays, 2).

[2] As Bradley turned his back on Hume, so have modern logical atomists turned their back on Bradley. Thus for Bertrand Russell analysis is the path to truth, to a knowledge of reality, rather than a distortion or mutilation of reality. In actual fact, however, we need both analysis and synthesis.

[3] *The Principles of Logic*, I, p. 95.

[4] *Ibid.*

This oft-quoted passage is directed not only against the reduction of reality to scientific generalizations which form a web through whose meshes there slips the whole wealth of sensible particulars, but also against the Hegelian idea that logical categories reveal to us the essence of reality and that the movement of dialectical logic represents the movement of reality.[2] And Bradley's general point of view is that the process of judgment and inference, or, better, the process of discursive thought, is unable to grasp and represent reality. To be sure, for the purposes of practical life and of the sciences discursive thought is a perfectly adequate instrument. This is shown by its success. But it does not necessarily follow that it is a fit instrument for grasping ultimate reality as it is in itself.

When Bradley was writing *The Principles of Logic*, he tried to avoid metaphysics as much as he felt possible. In the second edition, published twenty-nine years after the publication of *Appearance and Reality*, there is naturally more reference to metaphysics, together with modifications or corrections of some of the logical views advanced in the first edition. In other words, Bradley's explicit metaphysics reacted on his logic. In any case, however, it is quite clear that his logical theories have from the start a metaphysical relevance, even if the main conclusion is perhaps a negative one, namely that discursive thought cannot comprehend reality. At the same time, as Bradley remarks in his additional notes, if reality is the whole, the totality, it must somehow include thought within itself.

5. In his introduction to *Appearance and Reality* Bradley remarks that 'we may agree, perhaps, to understand by metaphysics an attempt to know reality as against mere appearance, or the study of first principles or ultimate truths, or again the effort to comprehend the universe, not simply piecemeal or by fragments, but somehow as a whole'.[3] Most of us would probably accept his contention that a dogmatic and *a priori* assertion of the impossibility of metaphysics should be ruled out of court. And it is obviously reasonable to say that if we are going to make the

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[1] *Ibid.*, II, p. 591.

[2] In Bradley's developed metaphysics movement, becoming, belongs to the sphere of appearance.

[3] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 1 (2nd edition, 1897).

attempt to understand reality as a whole, it should be made 'as thoroughly as our nature permits'.[1] But in view of what has been said in the last section about the shortcomings of discursive thought it may seem odd that Bradley is prepared to make the attempt at all. He insists, however, that it is natural for the reflective mind to desire to comprehend reality, and that even if comprehension in the full sense turns out to be unattainable, a limited knowledge of the Absolute is none the less possible.

Now, if we describe metaphysics from the start as an attempt to know reality as contrasted with appearance, we presuppose that this distinction is meaningful and valid. And if we say that metaphysics is an attempt to understand reality as a whole, we assume, at least by way of hypothesis, that reality is a whole, that there is in the same sense a One. But Bradley is perfectly prepared to admit that metaphysics rests on an initial presupposition. 'Philosophy demands, and in the end it rests on, what may fairly be termed faith. It has, we may say, to presuppose its conclusion in order to prove it.'[2]

What precisely is the content of this assumption or presupposition or initial act of faith? In the appendix which he added to the second edition of *Appearance and Reality* Bradley tells us that 'the actual starting-point and basis of this work is an assumption about truth and reality. I have assumed that the object of metaphysics is to find a general view which will satisfy the intellect, and I have assumed that whatever succeeds in doing this is real and true, and that whatever fails is neither. This is a doctrine which, so far as I can see, can neither be proved nor questioned.'[3]

The natural way of interpreting this passage, if it is taken simply by itself, seems to be this. The scientist assumes that there are uniformities to be discovered within his field of investigation. Otherwise he would never look for them. And he has to assume that the generalizations which satisfy his intellect are true. Further investigations may lead him to modify or change his conclusions. But he cannot proceed at all without making some presupposition. Similarly, we are free to pursue metaphysics or to leave it alone; but if we pursue it at all, we inevitably assume that a 'general view' of reality is possible, and therefore that reality as a whole is intelligible in principle. We further inevitably assume that we can recognize the truth when we find it. We assume, that is to say, that the general view which satisfies the intellect is true and valid. For our only way of discriminating between rival general views is by choosing the one which most adequately satisfies the demands of the intellect.

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[1] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 4.
[2] *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 15.
[3] *Appearance and Reality*, pp. 553–4.

Considered in itself this point of view is reasonable enough. But difficulties arise when we bear in mind Bradley's doctrine about the shortcomings of discursive thought. And it is perhaps not surprising to find expression being given to a somewhat different view. Thus in a supplementary note to the sixth chapter of his *Essays on Truth and Reality* Bradley maintains that the One which is sought in metaphysics is not reached simply by a process of inference but is given in a basic feeling-experience. 'The subject, the object, and their relation, are experienced as elements or aspects in a One which is there from the start.'[1] That is to say, on the pre-reflective level there is an experience 'in which there is no distinction between my awareness and that of which it is aware. There is an immediate feeling, a knowing and being in one, with which knowledge begins.'[2] Indeed, 'at no stage of mental development is the mere correlation of subject and object actually given'.[3] Even when distinctions and relations emerge in consciousness, there is always the background of 'a felt totality'.[4]

This point of view is possibly compatible with that previously mentioned, though one would not normally describe a basic immediate experience as an 'assumption'. In any case Bradley's thesis that there is such an experience enables him to give some content to the idea of the Absolute, in spite of the shortcomings of discursive thought. Metaphysics is really an attempt to think the One which is given in the alleged primitive feeling-experience. In a sense this attempt is foredoomed to failure. For thought is inevitably relational. But inasmuch as thought can recognize the 'contradictions' which emerge when reality is conceived as a Many, as a multiplicity of related things, it can see that the world of common sense and of science is appearance. And if we ask, 'Appearance of what?', reference to the basic experience of a felt totality enables us to have some inkling at any rate of what the Absolute, ultimate reality, must be. We cannot attain a clear vision of it. To do so, we should have to be the comprehensive unified experience which constitutes the Absolute. We should have to get outside our own skins, so to speak. But we can have a limited knowledge of the Absolute by conceiving it on an analogy with the basic sentient experience which underlies the emergence of distinctions between subject and object and between different objects. In this sense the experience in question can be regarded as an obscure, virtual knowledge of reality which is the 'presupposition' of metaphysics and which the metaphysician tries to recapture at a higher level.

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[1] *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 200.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 200.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 159.

[4] *Ibid.*

In other words, Bradley admits the truth of the objection that metaphysics presupposes its own conclusion, but he regards it not as an objection but rather as a clarification of the nature of metaphysics. In view, however, of the importance of the theme it is regrettable that he does not develop his thesis more at length. As it is, he speaks in a variety of ways, employing terms such as presupposition, assumption, faith and immediate experience. And though these different ways of speaking may be compatible, we are left in some doubt about his precise meaning. However, we are probably justified in laying emphasis on Bradley's thesis that there is an immediate experience of 'a many felt in one',[1] and that this experience gives us an inkling of the nature of the Absolute.

6. By the nature of the case there is not much that can be said by way of positive description either about the alleged prereflective experience of a felt totality or about the infinite act of experience which constitutes the Absolute. And it is hardly surprising if Bradley concentrates his attention on showing that our ordinary ways of conceiving reality give rise to contradictions and cannot yield a 'general view' capable of satisfying the intellect. But it is not possible to enter here into all the details of his dialectic. We must confine ourselves to indicating some of the phases of his line of thought.

(i) We are accustomed to group the world's contents into things and their qualities, in Scholastic language into substances and accidents, or, as Bradley puts it, into the substantive and adjectival. But though this way of regarding reality is embedded in language and undoubtedly has a practical utility, it gives rise, Bradley maintains, to insoluble puzzles.

Consider, for example, a lump of sugar which is said to have the qualities of whiteness, hardness and sweetness. If we say that the sugar is white, we obviously do not mean that it is identical with the quality of whiteness. For if this were what we meant, we could not then say that the lump of sugar is hard, unless indeed we were prepared to identify whiteness and hardness. It is natural, therefore, to conceive the sugar as a centre of unity, a substance which possesses different qualities.

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[1] *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 174. Bradley argued against James Ward that there is in fact such an experience.

If, however, we try to explain what this centre of unity is in itself, we are entirely at a loss. And in our perplexity we are driven to say that the sugar is not an entity which possesses qualities, a substance in which accidents inhere, but simply the qualities themselves as related to one another. Yet what does it mean to say, for example, that the quality of whiteness is related to the quality of sweetness? If, on the one hand, being related to sweetness is identical with being white, to say that whiteness is related to sweetness is to say no more than that whiteness is whiteness. If, on the other hand, being related to sweetness is something different from being white, to say that whiteness is related to sweetness is to predicate of it something different from itself, that is, something which it is not.

Obviously, Bradley is not suggesting that we should cease to speak about things and their qualities. His contention is that once we try to explain the theory implied by this admittedly useful language, we find the thing dissolving into its qualities, while at the same time we are unable to give any satisfactory explanation of the way in which the qualities form the thing. In brief, no coherent account can be given either of the substance-accident theory or of phenomenalism.

(ii) Now let us rule out the substance-accident theory and confine our attention to qualities and relations. In the first place we can say that qualities without relations are unintelligible. For one thing, we cannot think of a quality without conceiving it as possessing a distinct character and so as different from other qualities. And this difference is itself a relation.

In the second place, however, qualities taken together with their relations are equally unintelligible. On the one hand qualities cannot be wholly reduced to their relations. For relations require terms. The qualities must support their relations; and in this sense qualities can be said to make their relations. On the other hand a relation makes a difference to what is related. Hence we can also say that qualities are made by their relations. A quality must be 'at once condition and result'.[1] But no satisfactory account of this paradoxical situation can be given.

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[1] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 31.

Approaching the matter from the side of relations we can say at once that without qualities they are unintelligible. For relations must relate terms. But we are also driven to say that relations are unintelligible even when they are taken together with their terms, namely qualities. For a relation must be either nothing or something. If it is nothing, it cannot do any relating. But if it is something, it must be related to each of its terms by another relation. And we are then involved in an endless series of relations.

A Scholastic reader of this ingenious piece of dialectic would probably be inclined to remark that a relation is not an 'entity' of the same logical category as its terms, and that it makes no sense to say that it requires to be related to its terms by other relations. But Bradley does not, of course, intend to say that it is sensible to talk about relations being related to their terms. His point is that they must either be so related or be nothing at all, and that both theses are unacceptable.[1] And his conclusion is that 'a relational way of thought—any one that moves by the machinery of terms and relations—must give appearance, and not truth. It is a makeshift, a device, a mere practical compromise, most necessary, but in the end most indefensible.'[2]

To say roundly that thinking which employs the categories of terms and relations does not give us truth, seems to be an exaggeration even on Bradley's premisses. For, as will be seen later, he expounds a theory of degrees of truth, a theory which does not admit any simple distinction between truth and error. It is clear, however, that what he means is that relational thinking cannot give us Truth with a capital letter. That is to say, it cannot disclose the nature of reality as contrasted with appearance. For if the concept of relations and their terms gives rise to insoluble puzzles, it cannot be an instrument for attaining the 'general view' which will satisfy the intellect.

Bradley's position can be clarified in this way. It has sometimes been said that he denied external relations and accepted only internal relations. But this statement can be misleading. It is true that in Bradley's view all relations make a difference to their terms. In this sense they are internal. At the same time they cannot be simply identified with the terms which they relate. And in this sense there not only can but also must be external relations, though there cannot indeed be a relation which exists entirely on its own, and to which it is purely accidental whether it happens to connect terms or not. Hence Bradley can say: 'External relations, if they are to be absolute, I in short cannot understand except as the supposed necessary alternative when internal relations are denied. But the whole "Either-Or", between external and internal relations, to me seems unsound.'[1]

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[1] Obviously, if we wish to avoid Bradley's conclusion, we must refuse to be compelled to choose between these bald theses. For example, we can distinguish two possible meanings of the statement 'a relation is nothing'.

[2] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 33.

At the same time it is precisely the rejection of 'Either-Or' and the assertion of 'Both-And' which gives rise to Bradley's critique of relational thought. Relations cannot be external in an absolute sense. But neither can they be wholly internal, completely merged with their terms. And it is the difficulty in combining these two points of view which leads Bradley to conclude that relational thought is concerned with the sphere of appearance, and that ultimate reality, the Absolute, must be supra-relational.

(iii) Bradley remarks that anyone who has understood the chapter in *Appearance and Reality* on relation and quality 'will have seen that our experience, where relational, is not true; and he will have condemned, almost without a hearing, the great mass of phenomena'.[2] We need not, therefore, say much about his critique of space, time, motion and causality. It is sufficient to illustrate his line of thought by reference to his critique of space and time.

On the one hand space cannot be simply a relation. For any space must consist of parts which are themselves spaces. And if space were merely a relation, we should thus be compelled to make the absurd statement that space is nothing but the relation which connects spaces. On the other hand, however, space inevitably dissolves into relations and cannot be anything else. For space is infinitely differentiated internally, consisting of parts which themselves consist of parts, and so on indefinitely. And these differentiations are clearly relations. Yet when we look for the terms, we cannot find them. Hence the concept of space, as giving rise to a contradiction, must be relegated to the sphere of appearance.

A similar critique is applied to the concept of time. On the one hand time must be a relation, namely that between 'before' and 'after'. On the other hand it cannot be a relation. If it is a relation between units which have no duration, 'then the whole time has no duration, and is not time at all'.[3] If, however, time is a relation between units which themselves possess duration, the alleged units cannot be really units but dissolve into relations. And there are no terms. It may be said that time consists of 'now's'. But as the concept of time involves the ideas of before and after, diversity is inevitably introduced into the 'now'; and the game starts once more.

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[1] *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 238.

[2] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 34.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 37.

(iv) Some people, Bradley remarks, are quite prepared to see the external spatio-temporal world relegated to the sphere of appearance, but will assure us that the self at least is real. For his own part, however, he is convinced that the idea of the self, no less than the ideas of space and time, gives rise to insoluble puzzles. Obviously, the self exists in some sense. But once we start to ask questions about the nature of the self, we soon see how little value is to be attached to people's spontaneous conviction that they know perfectly well what the term means.

On the one hand a phenomenalistic analysis of the self cannot be adequate. If we try to equate a man's self with the present contents of his experience, our thesis is quite incompatible with our ordinary use of the word 'self'. For we obviously think and speak of the self as having a past and a future, and so as enduring beyond the present moment. If, however, we try to find a relatively enduring self by distinguishing between the relatively constant average mass of a man's psychical states and those states which are clearly transitory, we shall find that it is impossible to say where the essential self ends and the accidental self begins. We are faced with 'a riddle without an answer'.[1]

On the other hand, if we abandon phenomenalism and locate the self in a permanent unit or monad, we are again faced with insoluble difficulties. If all the changing states of consciousness are to be attributed to this unit, in what sense can it be called a unit? And how is personal identity to be defined? If, however, the unit or monad is depicted as underlying all these changing states, 'it is a mere mockery to call it the self of a man'.[2] It would be absurd to identify a man's self with a kind of metaphysical point.

Bradley's conclusion is that 'the self is no doubt the highest form of experience which we have, but, for all that, is not a true form'.[3] The earlier idealists may have thought that the subject-object relationship was a firm rock on which to build a philosophy of reality, but in Bradley's opinion the subject, no less than the object, must be relegated to the sphere of appearance.

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[1] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 80. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 87. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

7. Reality for Bradley is one. The splintering of reality into finite things connected by relations belongs to the sphere of appearance. But to say of something that it is appearance is not to deny that it exists. 'What appears, for that sole reason, most indubitably *is*; and there is no possibility of conjuring its being away from it.'[1] Further, inasmuch as they exist, appearances must be comprised within reality; they are real appearances. Indeed, 'reality, set on one side and apart from all appearance, would assuredly be nothing'.[2] In other words, the Absolute is the totality of its appearances: it is not an additional entity lying behind them.

At the same time appearances cannot exist in the Absolute precisely as appearances. That is to say, they cannot exist in the Absolute in such a way as to give rise to contradictions or antinomies. For the whole which we seek in metaphysics must be one which completely satisfies the intellect. In the Absolute, therefore, appearances must be transformed and harmonized in such a way that no contradictions remain.

What must the Absolute, or reality, be, for such a transformation of appearances to be possible? Bradley answers that it must be an infinite act of experience, and moreover, sentient experience. 'Being and reality are, in brief, one thing with sentience; they can neither be opposed to, nor even in the end distinguished from it.'[3] Again, 'the Absolute is one system, and its contents are nothing but sentient experience. It will hence be a single and all-inclusive experience, which embraces every partial diversity in concord.'[4]

Use of the term 'sentient experience' should not, of course, be taken to imply that according to Bradley the Absolute can be identified with the visible universe as animated by some kind of world-soul. The Absolute is spirit. 'We may fairly close this work then by insisting that Reality is spiritual. . . . Outside of spirit there is not, and there cannot be, any reality, and, the more that anything is spiritual, so much the more is it veritably real.'[5]

We may very well ask, however, what Bradley means by saying that reality is spiritual, and how this statement is compatible with describing reality as sentient experience. And to answer these questions we must recall his theory of an immediate basic feeling-experience or sentient experience in which the distinction between subject and object, with the consequent sundering of ideal content from that of which it is predicated, has not yet emerged. On the level of human reflection and thought this basic unity, a felt totality, breaks up and externality is introduced. The world of the manifold appears as external to the subject. But we can conceive as a possibility an experience in which the immediacy of feeling, of primitive sentient experience, is recovered, as it were, at a higher level, a level at which the externality of related terms such as subject and object ceases utterly. The Absolute is such an experience in the highest degree. In other words, the Absolute is not sentient experience in the sense of being below thought and infra-relational: it is above thought and supra-relational, including thought as transformed in such a way that the externality of thought to being is overcome.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 132.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 146.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 146–7.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 552.

When, therefore, the Absolute is described as sentient experience, this term is really being used analogically. 'Feeling, as we have seen, supplies us with a positive idea of non-relational unity. The idea is imperfect, but is sufficient to serve as a positive basis',[1] as a positive basis, that is to say, for conceiving ultimate reality. And reality or the Absolute can properly be described as spiritual inasmuch as spirit is definable as 'a unity of the manifold in which the externality of the manifold has utterly ceased'.[2] In the human mind we find a unification of the manifold; but the externality of the manifold has by no means utterly ceased. The human mind is thus only imperfectly spiritual. 'Pure spirit is not realized except in the Absolute.'[3]

It is important to understand that when Bradley describes the Absolute as spiritual, he does not mean to imply that it is a spirit, a self. Inasmuch as the Absolute *is* its appearances, as transformed, it must include within itself all the elements, so to speak, of selfhood. 'Every element of the universe, sensation, feeling, thought and will, must be included within one comprehensive sentience.'[4] But it would be extremely misleading to apply to the infinite universe a term such as 'self', which connotes finitude, limitation. The Absolute is supra-personal, not infra-personal; but it is not a person, and it should not be described as a personal being.

In other words, the Absolute is not a sentient life below consciousness. But consciousness involves externality; and though it must be comprised within the Absolute, it must be comprised within it as transformed in such a way that it is no longer what it appears to us to be. Hence we cannot properly speak of the Absolute as conscious. All that we can say is that it includes and at the same time transcends consciousness.

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[1] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 530.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 499

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 498.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 159.

As for personal immortality, Bradley admits that it is just possible. But he considers that a future life 'must be taken as decidedly improbable'.[1] And he evidently does not believe in it, though his main concern is with arguing that a belief in personal immortality is required neither for morality nor for religion. True, the finite self, as an appearance of the Absolute, must be included within it. But it is included only as somehow transformed. And it is clear that the transformation required is for Bradley of such a kind that an assertion of the personal immortality of the finite self would be quite inappropriate.

8. The Absolute, therefore, is all its appearances, every one of them; but 'it is not all equally, but one appearance is more real than another'.[2] That is to say, some appearances or phenomena are less far removed than others from all-inclusiveness and self-consistency. Hence the former require less alteration than the latter in order to fit into the harmonious, all-inclusive and self-consistent system which constitutes reality. 'And this is what we mean by degrees of truth and reality.'[3]

The criteria of truth are coherence and comprehensiveness. 'Truth is an ideal expression of the Universe, at once coherent and comprehensive. It must not conflict with itself, and there must be no suggestion which fails to fall inside it. Perfect truth in short must realize the idea of a systematic whole.'[4] Thought sunders, as Bradley puts it, the *what* from the *that*. We try to reconstitute the unity of ideal content and being by proceeding beyond singular judgments of perception to ever more comprehensive descriptions of the universe. Our goal is thus a complete apprehension of the universe in which every partial truth would be seen as internally, systematically and harmoniously related to every other partial truth in a self-coherent whole.

This goal is, however, unattainable. We cannot combine comprehensiveness with an understanding of all particular facts. For the wider and more comprehensive our relational scheme becomes, the more abstract it becomes: the meshes of the net become wider, and particular facts fall through. Further, our relational thinking, as we have already seen, is not in any case fitted to grasp reality as it is, as one fully coherent and comprehensive whole. 'There is no possible relational scheme which in my view in the end will be truth. . . . I had long ago made it clear (so I thought) that for me no truth in the end was quite true. . . .'[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 506. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 487. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 365.
[4] *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 223.

Now, if we take it that for Bradley the standard in reference to which we have to measure degrees of truth is the ideal truth which perpetually eludes our grasp, we seem to be left without any standard or criterion which can be of practical use. But Bradley's line of thought seems to be this. 'The criterion of truth, I should say, as of everything else, is in the end the satisfaction of a want of our nature.'[2] We do not know in advance what satisfies the intellect. But by using our intellect in the attempt to understand the world we discover that what satisfies us is coherence and comprehensiveness, as far as we are able to find them. This, then, is what we are aiming at, the ideal goal of perfect coherence and comprehensiveness. But to be able to distinguish between different degrees of truth it is not necessary to have attained this goal. For reflection on the degrees of satisfaction and dissatisfaction which we experience in our actual attempt to understand the world will enable us to make corresponding distinctions between degrees of truth.

9. If the Absolute is its appearances, it must in some sense be or contain error and evil. And though Bradley disclaims the ability to explain precisely how they are transformed in the Absolute, he at any rate feels that it is incumbent on him to show that they are not positively incompatible with his theory of ultimate reality.

The line which Bradley takes in regard to error follows from his theory of degrees of truth. If undiluted truth, so to speak, is identified with the complete truth, every partial truth must be infected with some degree of error. In other words, any sharp distinction between truth and error disappears. An erroneous judgment does not constitute a peculiar kind of judgment. All human judgments are appearance; and all are transformed in the Absolute, though some need a more radical transformation than others. The transformation of what we call erroneous judgments, therefore, does not demand special treatment. It is all a question of degree.

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[1] *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 239.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 219.

As for evil in the sense of pain and suffering, Bradley suggests that it does not exist, as such, in the infinite act of experience which constitutes the Absolute. The possibility of this can be verified to some extent within the field of our own experience, by the way in which a small pain can be swallowed up, as it were, or neutralized by an intense pleasure. This suggestion is hardly a source of much consolation to the finite sufferer; but Bradley is understandably unwilling to envisage the Absolute as undergoing pain.

In treating of moral evil Bradley makes use of the interpretation to which reference has already been made. Moral evil is in a sense a condition of morality, inasmuch as the moral life consists in an overcoming of the lower self. But morality tends, as we have seen, to transcend itself. And in the Absolute it no longer exists as morality. Absolute experience transcends the moral order, and moral evil has no meaning in this context.

10. Can Bradley's Absolute be properly described as God? Bradley's answer is plain enough: 'for me the Absolute is not God'.[1] Obviously, if we meant by God simply ultimate reality, without any further specification, the Absolute would be God. But Bradley is thinking of the concept of God as a personal being; and he will not allow that personality can be predicated of the Absolute. True, to speak of the Absolute as impersonal would be misleading. For this would suggest that the Absolute is infra-personal. In point of fact personality must be contained within reality, so that the Absolute cannot be less than personal. But, as so contained, personality is transformed to such an extent that we cannot speak of the Absolute as personal 'if the term "personal" is to bear anything like its ordinary sense'.[2] Reality 'is not personal, because it is personal and more. It is, in a word, suprapersonal.'[3]

Some theistic philosophers would obviously comment that they predicate personality of God in an analogical sense and not, as Bradley seems to suppose, in a univocal sense. As predicated of God, the term 'personal' does not imply finitude or limitation. This, however, is precisely the line of argument to which Bradley objects. In his view theistic philosophers begin by wishing to satisfy the demands of the religious consciousness.[4] That is to say, they desire to reach the conclusion that God is personal, a being to whom man can pray and who can hear man's prayers. But they then pursue a line of argument which progressively eliminates from the concept of personality all that gives it concrete content or meaning for us. And the proper conclusion of this line of argument is that God is not personal but super-personal, above personality. The conclusion, however, which these philosophers actually assert is the one which they wish to arrive at, not the one which follows from the line of argument which they actually employ. It is not that they are deliberately dishonest. It is rather that they take a word which has a definite range of meaning when applied to human beings, evacuate it of its content and then imagine that it can be meaningfully applied to God. In point of fact, if we once admit that terms such as 'personal' cannot be applied to God in the sense which they ordinarily bear in our language, we create a chasm between personality and God. 'Nor will you bridge the chasm by the sliding extension of a word. You will only make a fog, where you can cry out that you are on both sides at once. And towards increasing this fog I decline to contribute.'[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 335.

[2] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 531.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] When speaking of the religious consciousness, it is primarily Christianity which Bradley has in mind. It can hardly be claimed that in all forms of religion the divine, or ultimate reality, is conceived as personal.

The question, however, is not simply whether God should be called personal or super-personal. It must be remembered that Bradley's Absolute *is* its appearances. It is the universe as transformed. If therefore we understand by God a being who transcends the world in such a way that he cannot be identified with it, it is obvious that God and the Absolute cannot be equated. We *could* call the Absolute 'God'. But Bradley's contention is that the term already has in ordinary speech a meaning which is different from that of the term 'Absolute'. Hence confusion results if the two are identified. And in the interest of clarity, and of intellectual honesty, it is preferable to say that the Absolute is not 'God'.

This point of view affects what Bradley has to say of religion. If we assume that for the religious consciousness God is a being distinct from the external world and the finite self, we can only conclude that this consciousness is involved in a self-contradiction. On the one hand it looks on God as the one true reality. And in this case God must be infinite. On the other hand it conceives God as distinct from the multiplicity of creatures and so as one being, even if the greatest, among many. And in this case God must be limited, finite. If, therefore, when we speak of religion, we are thinking of its concept of ultimate reality, we are compelled to conclude that it belongs to the sphere of appearance, and that, just as morality passes into religion, so does religion pass into the metaphysics of the Absolute. 'If you identify the Absolute with God, that is not the God of religion. . . . Short of the Absolute God cannot rest, and having reached that goal, he is lost and religion with him.'[1]

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[1] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 533.

There is, however, another point of view to which Bradley gives expression. The essence of religion he maintains is not knowledge. Nor is it feeling. 'Religion is rather the attempt to express the complete reality of goodness through every aspect of our being. And, so far as this goes, it is at once something more, and something higher, than philosophy.'[2] The precise meaning of this definition of religion may not be immediately evident; but it is at any rate clear that there is no question of religion, as so defined, passing into metaphysics. Religion may still be appearance; but so is philosophy. And 'the completion of each is not to be found except in the Absolute'.[3] It is obvious from what has been said that Bradley by no means has the desire of some of the earlier British idealists to use metaphysics to support the Christian religion. But it is equally obvious that he does not share Hegel's sublime confidence in the power of speculative philosophy.

In conclusion we can mention Bradley's passing suggestion of the need for a new religion and religious creed. He obviously does not think that metaphysics can justify Christianity, as Hegel thought that it could. Indeed, Bradley would doubtless think it misleading to apply the name of Christianity to 'absolute religion' as interpreted by Hegel. At the same time it might be possible to have 'a religious belief founded otherwise than on metaphysics, and a metaphysics able in some sense to justify that creed. . . . Though this fulfilment is a thing which I cannot myself expect to see, and though the obstacles in the way are certainly great, on the other hand I cannot regard it as impossible.'[4]

11. In the preface to *Appearance and Reality* Bradley quotes from his note-book the celebrated aphorism, 'metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct, but to find these reasons is no less an instinct'.[5] This remark is clearly not intended as a flat denial of the view expressed in the same preface that 'the metaphysician cannot perhaps be too much in earnest

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 447. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 453. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 454.

[4] *Essays on Truth and Reality*, pp. 446–7.

[5] *Appearance and Reality*, p. XIV.

with metaphysics',[1] provided at any rate that he recognizes the limitations of metaphysics and does not exaggerate its importance. Bradley himself takes seriously his own contention that 'the chief need of English philosophy is, I think, a sceptical study of first principles . . . an attempt to become aware of and to doubt all preconceptions'.[2] This element of scepticism, 'the result of labour and education',[3] is represented by the dialectic of appearance, the critique of our ordinary ways of thought. At the same time the element of belief 'upon instinct' is represented by Bradley's explicit statement, to which reference has already been made, that metaphysics rests on a basic presupposition or assumption or initial act of faith,[4] and by the whole doctrine of the Absolute as a completely self-coherent and comprehensive totality.

This element of belief 'upon instinct' occupies a prominent position in the development of Bradley's metaphysics. Consider, for example, the theory of the transformation of appearances in the Absolute. The theory is not, of course, eschatological in character. That is to say, Bradley is not suggesting that at some future apocalyptic date the phenomena which give rise to contradictions or antinomies will undergo a transformation. He maintains that they exist here and now in the Absolute otherwise than they appear to us to exist. The completely harmonious and all-inclusive experience which constitutes the Absolute is a present reality, not simply something which will come into being in the future. But Bradley does not profess to be able to tell us precisely in what this transformation consists. What he does is to argue from possibility to actuality. We can show, for instance, that the transformation of error is not impossible. And if it is not impossible, it is possible. And if it is possible, it is an actual reality. 'For what is *possible*, and what a general principle compels us to say *must be*, that certainly *is*.'[5]

The same holds good of the transformation of pain. 'That which is both possible and necessary we are bound to think real.'[6] Similarly, of the transformation of moral evil Bradley remarks that 'if possible, then, as before, it is indubitably real'.[7] Again, 'the "this" and "mine" are now absorbed as elements within our Absolute. For their resolution must be, and it may be, and so certainly is *is*.'[8] And as a final example we can mention the transformation of finite centres of consciousness, which 'evidently is real, because on our principle it is necessary, and because again we have no reason to doubt that it is possible'.[1]

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[1] *Appearance and Reality*, p. XIV. [2] *Ibid.*, p. XII. [3] *Ibid.*

[4] As we have seen, this is also described by Bradley as a dim virtual knowledge.

[5] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 196.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 201. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 203. [8] *Ibid.*, p. 240.

An obvious objection to this line of argument is that we can hardly be said to know that the required transformation is possible, unless we are able to show how it can take place. How, for example, can we legitimately claim to know that finite centres of consciousness can exist as elements within one infinite absolute experience without any disharmony or 'contradiction', unless we are able to show how they can so exist? It is really not enough to say that nobody can prove the impossibility of our thesis. After all, there is very considerable difficulty, *prima facie* at least, in seeing how finite centres of consciousness can be said to exist as elements within one unified and harmonious experience. And the burden of proof lies on the shoulders of those who claim that it is possible rather than of those who say that it is not possible.

It may be said in reply that as Bradley believes both that reality is one infinite self-coherent and all-inclusive experience and that appearances are real, and not simply illusory, appearances, he must also believe that the required transformation of appearances is not only possible but also actual. This is quite true. The point is, however, that Bradley is forced to draw this conclusion only because of an initial assumption or presupposition or hypothesis about reality. The assumption is not proved by the dialectic of appearance. True, the elimination of substance, of the substantial, is skilfully used to suggest that all finite things are adjectival to one reality. But Bradley's criticism of substance is itself open to criticism. And in any case the fact, if it is a fact, that our ordinary ways of conceiving reality give rise to contradictions and antinomies does not of itself prove that reality is a self-coherent whole. For reality might be precisely what the dialectic reveals it as being, namely incoherent. If we go on to assert that reality, as contrasted with appearance, is a self-coherent totality, this is because we have already decided that reality *must* be of this nature. References to a primitive sentient experience of a 'felt totality' will not help us much. The idea of such an experience may indeed serve as an analogue for conceiving the Absolute, if we have already decided that there must be an Absolute. But it can hardly be said to prove that it is necessary to postulate the Absolute, as Bradley conceives it.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 227.

It is true that Bradley's line of thought can be presented in a plausible way. If we are going to try to understand reality at all, we must assume that reality is intelligible. Hence we must take it that the real is that which satisfies the demands of the intellect. An account of reality which is riddled with self-contradictions does not satisfy the intellect. We must therefore conclude that in reality, as contrasted with appearance, all contradictions are overcome. And in the end this means that we must accept the doctrine of a completely harmonious and all-inclusive totality, the Absolute.

Though, however, it is reasonable to claim that no account of reality which is riddled with contradictions can be accepted as true, it obviously does not follow that we have to accept Bradley's contention that all our ordinary and scientific ways of conceiving reality are in fact riddled with contradictions. True, concepts such as those of space, time and the self have for centuries provided philosophers with problems or puzzles. But we would probably not be inclined to acquiesce in the conclusion that the problems are insoluble on the ground that the concepts are inherently self-contradictory, unless we already believed that reality is different from what it appears to be.

Further, when Bradley makes statements about the Absolute, they are apt to cause no less difficulty than, say, the concept of an enduring self. For example, we are told that 'the Absolute has no history of its own, though it contains histories without number.... The Absolute has no seasons, but all at once it bears its leaves, fruit and blossoms.'[1] Now if Bradley's Absolute were transcendent, we could understand the statement that it has no history of its own. But, in his view, the appearances of the Absolute are internal to it: it is nothing apart from them. Hence history, change, development are internal to it. Yet at the same time it 'has no seasons'. The thesis is, of course, that change is 'transformed' in the Absolute. But if it is so transformed that it is no longer what we call change, it is difficult to see how the Absolute can be said to contain histories without number. And if change is not so transformed as to be no longer change, it is difficult to see how the Absolute can be said to have no history. For, to repeat, it *is* its appearances.

The obvious answer to this line of criticism is that it is illegitimate to expect perfect self-coherence from metaphysics. For, given Bradley's interpretation of the shortcomings of human thought, it follows necessarily that any concept of the Absolute which we are capable of forming belongs itself to the sphere of appearance. Indeed, the whole of metaphysics is appearance. Nor does Bradley hesitate to admit this. As we have seen, he declares that philosophy, no less than religion, reaches its completion in the Absolute. That is to say, philosophy is an appearance which, as transformed, is included in the infinite experience which constitutes the Absolute but which transcends our grasp. It is no matter for surprise, therefore, if metaphysical statements themselves fail to attain an ideal standard of self-coherence.

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[1] *Appearance and Reality*, pp. 499-500.

This is true enough. But it simply adds point to the contention that in the long run Bradley's assertion of the Absolute rests on an initial act of faith. In the long run it is the '*must* be' which is decisive. For Bradley's sceptical mind all constructions of human thought, including the metaphysics of the Absolute, must be relegated to the sphere of appearance. He allows indeed for degrees of truth. And he is convinced that the metaphysics of the Absolute in truer than, say, a concept of reality as consisting of many separate things linked by relations. But this does not alter the fact that speculative philosophy is appearance, and not identical with absolute experience. As has been already noted, Bradley does not share Hegel's confident 'rationalism'. Hence we can say that his scepticism extends even to metaphysics, as is indeed suggested by the aphorism quoted at the beginning of this section. This scepticism is combined, however, with a firm belief that reality in itself, transcending our powers of comprehension, is a comprehensive, completely harmonious totality, an all-embracing perfectly self-coherent eternal experience.

It is not altogether surprising if contemporary British philosophers, when writing on Bradley, have tended to concentrate on the puzzles which he raises in regard to our ordinary ways of thought and to pass over his doctrine of the Absolute in a rather cursory manner. One reason for this is that the logical puzzles raised by Bradley can often be treated on their own, without reference to any act of faith in the One, and that they are in principle capable of being definitely solved. For example, in order to decide whether it is true to say that space cannot be and at the same time must be a relation or set of relations, it is not necessary to discuss the transformation of space in the Absolute. What we need in the first place is to clarify the meaning or meanings of 'space'. Again, if we take Bradley's thesis that the concept of relation is self-contradictory, as on the one hand all relations make a difference to their terms and so must be internal to them, while on the other hand they must in some sense fall between and connect their terms and so be external to them, we have a problem which we can hope to solve, provided that we are prepared for the requisite clarificatory analysis. We can understand what is meant by Bradley's thesis and what questions have to be answered in order to decide whether or not it is true.

At the same time we obviously miss what one might call the essential Bradley, if we use *Appearance and Reality* simply as a quarry for detached logical puzzles. For the philosopher is clearly a man who is possessed by the idea of the Absolute, of a completely self-consistent and all-inclusive whole. And it is easy to understand how his philosophy has been able to arouse the interest of Indian thinkers who have not abandoned the native traditions of Hindu speculation, and of some Western philosophers who have an initial sympathy with this line of speculation. For there is at any rate some affinity between Bradley's theory of speculation and the Indian doctrine of Maya, the phenomenal world which veils the one true reality. Obviously, both Bradley and the Indian philosophers in question are faced with the same difficulty, namely that every concept which we can form of ultimate reality must itself belong to the sphere of appearance. But their initial 'visions' are similar, and it is a vision which can exercise a powerful attraction on some minds. Perhaps what we need is a serious inquiry into the bases of this vision or initial inspiration, an inquiry which is not dominated by the *a priori* assumption that what Bradley speaks of as a presupposition or act of faith must be devoid of objective value. It is an inquiry which possesses considerable importance in regard to the foundations of speculative metaphysics.

CHAPTER IX

ABSOLUTE IDEALISM: BOSANQUET

Life and writings—Logic; judgment and reality—The metaphysics of individuality—Bosanquet's philosophy of the State—Hobhouse's criticism of Bosanquet—R. B. Haldane; Hegelianism and relativity—H. H. Joachim and the coherence theory of truth.

1. BRADLEY was a recluse. The other leading absolute idealist in Great Britain, Bernard Bosanquet (1848–1923), was not. After studying at Balliol College, Oxford, where he came under the influence of T. H. Green and R. L. Nettleship, he was elected a Fellow of University College, Oxford, in 1871. But in 1881 he took up residence in London with a view to devoting himself not only to writing but also to lecturing for the adult education movement, which was just beginning, and to social work. From 1903 until 1908 he occupied the chair of moral philosophy in the University of St. Andrews.

Bosanquet was a prolific writer. In 1883 his essay on *Logic as the Science of Knowledge* appeared in *Essays in Philosophical Criticism*, edited by A. Seth and R. B. Haldane. *Knowledge and Reality* was published in 1885 and the two-volume *Logic or the Morphology of Knowledge* in 1888.[1] There followed in quick succession *Essays and Addresses* (1889), *A History of Aesthetic* (1892, 2nd edition 1904), *The Civilization of Christendom and Other Studies* (1893), *Companion to Plato's Republic* (1895), *Essentials of Logic* (1895), and *The Psychology of the Moral Self* (1897). In 1899 Bosanquet published what is probably his best known work, *The Philosophical Theory of the State.*[2] Two sets of Gifford lectures, *The Principle of Individuality and Value* and *The Value and Destiny of the Individual*, appeared respectively in 1912 and 1913. Among other publications we may mention *The Distinction between Mind and Its Objects* (1913), *Three Lectures on Aesthetic* (1915), *Social and International Ideals* (1917), *Some Suggestions in Ethics* (1918), *Implication and Linear Inference* (1920), *What Religion Is* (1920), *The Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy* (1921) and *Three chapters on the Nature of Mind* (1923).

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[1] A second edition appeared in 1911.

[2] A fourth edition appeared in 1923, the year of Bosanquet's death.

In spite of this extensive literary activity Bosanquet has tended to pass into oblivion and, in comparison with Bradley, is rarely mentioned nowadays, except perhaps in connection with a certain brand of political theory.[1] One reason is probably that Bosanquet is a duller and less paradoxical thinker than Bradley. A more important factor, however, seems to be the belief that, political and aesthetic theory apart, he has little to offer that is not to be found in the writings of his more famous contemporary. Indeed, in 1920 Bosanquet himself wrote to an Italian philosopher that from the publication of *Ethical Studies* in 1876 he had recognized Bradley as his master. But this modest remark hardly does justice to the facts. For example, Bosanquet strongly criticized Bradley's work *The Principles of Logic* on the ground that it created a gulf between thought and reality. And Bradley recognized his indebtedness to Bosanquet's ideas in connection with the material added to the second edition of *The Principles of Logic*. As for *Appearance and Reality*, Bosanquet was deeply influenced by it; but, though he was, like Bradley, a monist, he developed his own metaphysics which in some respects stood closer to Hegelianism. He was convinced of the truth of Hegel's principle that the rational is the real and the real the rational, and he did not share Bradley's marked sceptical tendencies.

2. In a certain sense, Bosanquet maintains, it is true to say that the world is for every individual *his* world, the course of his consciousness, built up out of his perceptions. 'The real world for every individual is emphatically *his* world; an extension and determination of his present perception, which perception is to him not indeed reality as such, but his point of contact with reality as such.'[2] That is to say, we must distinguish between the course of consciousness considered as a series of psychical phenomena and consciousness considered as 'intentional', as presenting a system of interrelated objects.[3] 'Consciousness is consciousness of a world only in so far as it *presents* a system, a whole of objects, acting on one another, and therefore independent of the presence or absence of the consciousness which presents them.'[4] We must also allow for a distinction between my objective world and the creations of

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[1] Bosanquet's history of aesthetic theory remains, however, a valuable contribution to the subject.

[2] *Logic*, I, p. 3.

[3] Bosanquet is concerned with phenomenology rather than with psychology. The individual's world is not built up out of his perceptions considered as psychological entities, but rather out of his perceptions considered as presenting objects.

[4] *Essentials of Logic*, p. 15.

my imagination. Hence we can say that 'the whole world, for each of us, *is* our course of consciousness, in so far as this is regarded as a system of objects which we are obliged to think'.[1]

Reflection on this factor of constraint shows us that the worlds of different individuals are constructed by definite processes common to intelligence as such. In a sense each of us begins with his or her private world. But the more the constructive process of building up a systematic world of objects is developed, so much the more do these several worlds correspond with one another and tend to merge into a common world.

This process of constructing a world is the same as knowledge, in the sense of coming to know. Thus knowledge is the mental construction of reality, the medium in which the world exists for us as a system of interrelated objects. And logic is the analysis of this constructive process. 'The work of intellectually constituting that totality which we call the real world is the work of knowledge. The work of analyzing the process of this constitution or determination is the work of logic, which might be described as the self-consciousness of knowledge, or the reflection of knowledge upon itself.'[2]

Now, knowledge exists in the judgment. And it follows, therefore, if logic is the self-consciousness of knowledge, that the study of the judgment is fundamental in logic. True, we can say that the proposition, the expression of the judgment, has 'parts'. And the enunciation of a proposition is a temporal process. But the judgment in itself is an identity-in-difference: it is 'not a relation between ideas, nor a transition from one idea to another, nor does it contain a third idea which indicates a particular kind of connection between two other ideal contents'.[3]

The ultimate subject of the judgment is reality as a whole, and 'the essence of Judgment is the reference of an ideal content to Reality'.[4] Hence every judgment could be introduced by some such phrase as 'Reality is such that . . .' or 'The real world is characterized by. . . .'[5]

As for inference, we can indeed make a *prima facie* distinction between judgment and inference by saying that the former is the immediate and the latter the mediate reference of an ideal content to reality. But on closer examination the distinction tends to break down. For, properly speaking, no judgment can be said to express knowledge unless it possesses the characteristics of necessity and 'precision', precision depending on the mediating conditions being made explicit. And in this case no absolute distinction between judgment and inference is possible. Instead we have the ideal of one ultimate judgment which would predicate the whole of reality, as an ideal content, of itself. This ultimate judgment would not, of course, be simple. For it would include within itself all partial truths as organically interrelated, as coherent. It would be the all-inclusive identity-in-difference in the form of knowledge. 'The whole is the truth.'[1] And particular truths are true in so far as they cohere with other truths in this whole.

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.

[2] *Logic*, I, p. 3.

[3] *Ibid.*, I, pp. 83–4. By 'a third idea' Bosanquet means the copula considered as a distinct element in the judgment.

[4] *Ibid.*, II, p. 1.

[5] *Ibid.*, I, p. 78.

Obviously, Bosanquet is in agreement with Bradley on many points: on the fundamental importance of the judgment in logic, on reality as the ultimate subject of every judgment, and on truth in the full sense as being the complete system of truth. But in spite of the many points of agreement there are important differences of attitude. Thus for Bosanquet reality or the universe is 'not only of such a nature that it can be known by intelligence, but further of such a nature that it can be known and handled by *our* intelligence'.[2] True, Bosanquet carefully refrains from claiming that the finite mind can fully comprehend reality. At the same time he is anxious to avoid what he regards as Bradley's marked tendency to drive a wedge between human thought on the one hand and reality on the other. Every finite mind approaches reality from a particular point of view and builds up its own conception of reality. But though there are degrees of truth, and so of error, no judgment is entirely out of touch with reality; and intelligence as such forces us to conceive the universe in certain ways, so that, despite private points of view, a common objective world is presented in consciousness. Further, human thought as a whole approximates more and more to a comprehension of reality, even though the ideal ultimate judgment is a goal which transcends the capacity of any given finite mind.[3]

3. With Bosanquet, as with Bradley, there is evidently a close connection between logic and metaphysics. For both hold that the

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[1] *The Principle of Individuality and Value*, p. 43.

[2] *Essentials of Logic*, p. 166.

[3] To a certain extent Bradley would be prepared to speak in much the same way. But it is true that he so emphasizes the deficiencies of human thought that Bosanquet is justified in seeing in Bradley's philosophy the creation of a gap between thought and reality.

ultimate subject of every judgment is reality as a whole. But it would be a mistake to think that because Bosanquet describes logic as the self-consciousness of knowledge, he intends to imply that logic can provide us with factual knowledge about the world. He does not maintain this any more than Bradley does. Logic is the morphology of knowledge: it does not provide us with the content of knowledge.

Indeed, it is a mistake to look to philosophy at all for a knowledge of hitherto unknown facts. 'Philosophy can tell you no new facts, and can make no discoveries. All that it can tell you is the significant connection of what you already know. And if you know little or nothing, philosophy has little or nothing to tell you.'[1] In other words, we acquire factual knowledge by ordinary experience and by the study of physics, chemistry, and so on. Philosophy neither deduces nor adds to this knowledge. What it does is to exhibit a pattern of connections between already known facts.

Obviously, the sciences do not present us with unrelated atomic facts; they exhibit relations, connections, bringing facts under what we call laws. Hence, if philosophy has any such function to perform, to exhibit the 'significant connection' of what we already know must mean showing how the facts which are known otherwise than through philosophy are members of an overall system in which each member contributes to the total unity in virtue of the very characteristics which distinguish it from other members. In other words, the philosopher is not primarily concerned with class-concepts formed by abstraction from differentiating characteristics but rather with the concrete universal, which is an identity-in-difference, the universal existing in and through its particulars.

The concrete universal is called by Bosanquet, following Hegel, the 'individual'. And it is clear that in the fullest sense of the term there can be only one individual, namely the Absolute. For this universal of universals is the all-embracing system which alone can fully satisfy the criteria proposed by Bosanquet, that is, non-contradiction and wholeness. These criteria are said to be really one. For it is only in the complete whole or totality that there is complete absence of contradiction.

Though, however, individuality belongs in a pre-eminent sense to the Absolute, it is also attributed to human beings, even if in a secondary sense. And when examining this use of the term

[1] *Essentials of Logic*, p. 166.

Bosanquet insists that individuality should not be understood in a predominantly negative fashion, as though it consisted chiefly in not being someone else. After all, in the case of the supreme individual, the Absolute, there is no other individual from which it can be distinguished. Rather should individuality be conceived positively, as consisting 'in the richness and completeness of a self'.[1] And it is in social morality, art, religion and philosophy that 'the finite mind begins to experience something of what individuality must ultimately mean'.[2] In social morality, for example, the human person transcends what Bosanquet calls the repellent self-consciousness, for the private will is united with other wills without being annulled in the process. Again, in religion the human being transcends the level of the narrow and poverty-stricken self and feels that he attains a higher level of richness and completeness in union with the divine. At the same time morality is subsumed within religion.

Reflection on the development of the individual self can thus give us some idea of how various levels of experience can be comprehended and transformed in the one unified and all-inclusive experience which constitutes the Absolute. And here Bosanquet has recourse to the analogy of Dante's mind as expressed in the *Divine Comedy*. The external world and the world of selves are both present in the poet's mind and find expression in the poem. The human selves are indeed presented as thinking and acting beings, as real selves existing in an external sphere. At the same time all these selves live only through their participation in the thoughts, emotions and acts which make up the poet's mind as expressed in the poem.

This analogy should not be interpreted as meaning that for Bosanquet the Absolute is a mind behind the universe, a mind which composes a divine poem. The Absolute is the totality. Hence it cannot be a mind. For mind is a perfection which depends on physical preconditions and constitutes a certain level of reality. Nor can the Absolute be simply equated with the God of the religious consciousness, who is a being distinct from the world and who does not contain evil. 'The whole, considered as a perfection in which the antagonism of good and evil is unnoted, is not what religion means by God, and must rather be taken as the Absolute.'[3] Here Bosanquet is at one with Bradley.

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[1] *The Principle of Individuality and Value*, p. 69.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

[3] *The Value and Destiny of the Individual*, p. 251.

Though, however, the Absolute cannot be a mind or a self, reflection on self-consciousness, the chief characteristic of mind, can furnish us with clues for deciphering the nature of reality. For example, the self attains satisfaction and richness of experience only by passing out of itself: it must die, as it were, to live. And this suggests that a perfect experience embodies the character of the self to this extent at least, that it passes out of itself to regain itself. In other words, Bosanquet, unlike Bradley, is attempting to offer some explanation of the existence of finite experience. 'Not of course that the infinite being can lose and regain its perfection, but that the burden of the finite is inherently a part or rather an instrument of the self-completion of the infinite. The view is familiar. I can only plead that it loses all point if it is not taken in bitter earnest.'[1] One objection against this Hegelian idea of a self-developing Absolute is that it seems to introduce temporal succession into the infinite being. But unless we are prepared to say that the concept of the Absolute is for us a vacuous concept, we cannot help ascribing to the Absolute a content which, from our point of view, is developed in time.

It may be objected that Bosanquet has done nothing to show that there is an Absolute. He simply assumes its existence and tells us what it must be. His reply, however, is that at all levels of experience and thought there is a movement from the contradictory and partial to the non-contradictory and complete, and that the movement can find no end save in the concept of the Absolute. 'I am aware of no point at which an arrest in the process can be justified.'[2] The idea of the Absolute, the totality, is in fact the motive-force, the final end, of all thought and reflection.

Now, individuality is the criterion of value, a concept on which much more emphasis is laid by Bosanquet than by Bradley. And as individuality is to be found in its complete form only in the Absolute, the Absolute must be the ultimate standard of value, as well as of truth and reality. It follows from this that we cannot attribute an ultimate or absolute value to the finite self. And as Bosanquet conceives self-perfection as involving an overcoming of self-enclosedness and a conscious entry into membership of a greater whole, we would hardly expect him to regard personal immortality as the destiny of the finite self. He claims indeed that the best in the finite self is preserved, in a transformed state, in the Absolute. But he also admits that that which persists of myself would not appear to my present consciousness to be a continuation of 'myself'. This, however, is not for Bosanquet any cause for regret. The self, as we know it, is a mixture, as it were, of the finite and the infinite; and it is only in shedding the restricting vesture of finite limited selfhood that it achieves its destiny.

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[1] *The Principle of Individuality and Value*, pp. 243–4. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 267–8.

As has already been noted, Bosanquet is much less concerned than Bradley with illustrating the defectiveness of human thought as an instrument for grasping reality, and much more concerned with understanding the universe as a whole and with determining degrees of perfection or value. Yet in the long run both maintain that the universe is something very different from what it appears to be. Bosanquet rather plays down this aspect of the matter. And for this reason his thought may appear less exciting than that of Bradley. But both men represent the universe as an infinite experience, as something, that is to say, which it certainly does not appear to be at first sight. Though, however, there is a fundamental affinity, Bosanquet is notable as making explicit the value-judgment which is basic in idealist monism, namely that the supreme value and the ultimate criterion of all value is the totality, the all-inclusive concrete universal in which all 'contradictions' are overcome.

4. Given Bosanquet's absolute idealism, one would not expect him to favour the type of political theory which regards the State as a device for enabling individuals (in the ordinary sense of the term) to pursue their private ends in peace and security. All such theories are condemned as superficial, as theories 'of the first look'. 'It is the first look of the man in the street or of the traveller, struggling at a railway station, to whom the compact self-containedness and self-direction of the swarming human beings before him seems an obvious fact, while the social logic and spiritual history which lie behind the scene fail to impress themselves on his perceptive imagination.'[1]

These theories assume that every man is a self-enclosed unit which undergoes the impact of other such units. And government tends to appear as the impact of others when systematized, regularized and reduced to a minimum. In other words, it appears as something alien to the individual, bearing upon him from without, and so as an evil, though admittedly a necessary evil.

A quite different point of view is represented by Rousseau's theory of the General Will. Here we have the idea of an 'identity between my particular will and the will of all my associates in the body politic which makes it possible to say that in all social co-operation, and in submitting even to forcible restraint, when imposed by society in the true common interest, I am obeying only myself, and am actually attaining my freedom'.[1] Yet in the process of expressing his enthusiasm for direct democracy and his hostility to representative government Rousseau really enthrones the Will of All in the place of the General Will, which becomes a nonentity.

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[1] *The Philosophical Theory of the State*, p. 80 (1st edition).

We must therefore go beyond Rousseau and give a real content to the idea of the General Will, without reducing it in effect to the Will of All. And this means identifying it with the State when considered not merely as a governmental structure but rather as 'a working conception of life . . . the conception by the guidance of which every living member of the commonwealth is enabled to perform his function, as Plato has taught us'.[2] If the State or political society is understood in this way, we can see that the relation of the individual mind and will to the mind of society and the General Will is comparable to the relation between the individual physical object and Nature as a whole. In both cases the self-enclosed individual is an abstraction. The individual man's real will, therefore, by which he wills his own nature as a rational being, is identical with the General Will. And in this identification 'we find the only true account of political obligation'.[3] In obeying the State the individual obeys his real will. And when he is constrained by the State to act in a certain manner, he is constrained to act in accordance with his real will, and so to act freely.

In other words, the alleged antithesis between the individual and the State is for Bosanquet a false antithesis. And it follows that the alleged problem of justifying interference by the State with private liberty is not a genuine problem. But this is not to say that no genuine problem can arise in regard to some particular concrete issue. For the ultimate end of the State, as of its members, is a moral end, the attainment of the best life, the life which most develops man's potentialities or capacities as a human being. Hence we can always ask, in regard to a proposed law for example, 'how far and in what way the use of force and the like by the State is a hindrance to the end for which the States exists',[4] and which is at the same time the end of each of its members. An appeal simply to private liberty against so-called State interference in general betrays a misunderstanding of the nature of the State and of its relations to its members. But it by no means follows that any and every use of compulsion contributes to the end for which the State exists.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 151.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 154.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 183.

Bosanquet's point of view can be clarified in this way. As the end of the State is a moral end, it cannot be attained unless the citizens act morally, which includes intention as well as external action. Morality in this full sense, however, cannot be enforced by law. Individuals can be compelled, for instance, to refrain from certain actions; but they cannot be compelled to refrain from them for high moral motives. It is indeed clearly conducive to the common good that people should refrain from murder, even if their motive is simply the avoidance of punishment. It remains true, however, that the employment of force, so far as it is the determining cause of an action, reduces the resultant actions to a lower level than they would occupy if they were the result of reason and free choice. Hence the employment of force and compulsion should be restricted as far as possible, not because it is thought to represent an interference by society with self-enclosed individuals (for this is a false antithesis), but because it interferes with the attainment of the end for which the State exists.

In other words, Bosanquet shares the view of T. H. Green that the primary function of legislation is to remove hindrances to the development of the good life. How far, for example, social legislation should extend is not a question which can be answered *a priori*. As far as general principles go, we can only say that to justify compulsion we ought to be able to show that 'a definite tendency to growth, or a definite reserve of capacity, . . . is frustrated by a known impediment, the removal of which is a small matter compared to the capacities to be set free'.[1] On this principle we can justify, for instance, compulsory education as the removal of a hindrance to the fuller and wider development of human capacities. Obviously, the legislation itself is positive. But the object of the law is primarily that of removing hindrances to the attainment of the end for which political society exists, an end which is 'really' willed by every member as a rational being.

If we assume that the moral end is the fullest possible development of man's capacities, and that it is attained or at any rate approached only in the context of society, it seems only natural to look beyond the national State to the ideal of a universal society, humanity in general. And Bosanquet does at least admit that the idea of humanity must have a place 'in any tolerably complete philosophical thinking'.[1] At the same time he claims that the ethical idea of humanity does not form an adequate basis for an effective community. For we cannot presuppose in mankind at large a sufficient unity of experience, such as exists in a national State, for the exercise of a General Will. Further, Bosanquet condemns proposals for a World-State with plans for substituting a universal language for national languages, a substitution which, in his opinion, would destroy literature and poetry and reduce intellectual life to a level of mediocrity. Like Hegel, therefore, Bosanquet is unable to transcend the idea of the national State, animated by a common spirit which expresses itself in objective institutions and submits these institutions to a critical evaluation in the light of experience and present needs.

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[1] *The Philosophical Theory of the State*, p. 192.

Again, like Hegel, Bosanquet is prepared to admit that no actual State is immune from criticism. It is possible in principle for the State to act 'in contravention of its main duty to sustain the conditions of as much good life as possible'.[2] But though this admission would appear to most people to be obviously justified, it creates a special difficulty for anyone who holds with Bosanquet that the State is in some sense identical with the General Will. For by definition the General Will wills only what is right. Hence Bosanquet tends to make a distinction between the State as such and its agents. The latter may act immorally, but the former, the State as such, cannot be saddled with responsibility for the misdeeds of its agents 'except under circumstances which are barely conceivable'.[3]

It can hardly be claimed that this is a logically satisfactory position. If the State as such means the General Will, and if the General Will always wills what is right, it seems to follow that there are no conceivable circumstances in which the State as such could be said to act immorally. And in the long run we are left with a tautology, namely that a will which always wills what is right, always wills what is right. Indeed, Bosanquet himself seems to feel this, for he suggests that on a strict definition of State action we ought to say that the State does not really will an immoral action which we would ordinarily attribute to 'the State'. At the same time he understandably feels bound to admit that there may be circumstances in which we can legitimately speak of the State acting immorally. But by speaking of 'barely conceivable' circumstances he inevitably gives the impression that for practical purposes the State is immune from criticism. For those who maintain that statements about action by the State are always reducible in principle to statements about individuals, there is obviously no difficulty in speaking about the State as acting immorally. But if we assume that we can make meaningful statements about 'the State as such' which are not reducible in principle to a set of statements about assignable individuals, the question certainly arises whether we can legitimately apply the criteria of personal morality when judging the actions of this somewhat mysterious entity.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 328.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 327.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 322.

5. It is understandable that when some British writers undertook to show that ultimate responsibility for the First World War rested fairly and squarely on the shoulders of German philosophers such as Hegel, Bosanquet's political philosophy came in for its share of criticism. For example, in *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* (1918) by L. T. Hobhouse,[1] the author, though principally concerned with Hegel, devoted a good deal of criticism to Bosanquet, in whom he rightly saw the British political philosopher who stood nearest to Hegel.

Hobhouse sums up what he calls the metaphysical theory of the State in the three following propositions. 'The individual attains his true self and freedom in conformity to his real will'; 'this real will is the general will'; and 'the general will is embodied in the State'.[2] The State is thus identified to all intents and purposes with the entire social fabric, with society in general; and it is regarded as the guardian and expression of morality, as the highest moral entity. But if the State is identified with society, the result is the absorption of the individual by the State. And why should the national State be regarded as the highest product of social development? If we assume for the sake of argument that there is such a thing as the General Will and that it is the real or true will of man,[3] it should find a much more adequate expression in a universal world-society than in the national State. True, a world-society is not yet in existence. But the creation of such a society should be held up as an ideal towards which we ought to strive effectively, whereas in point of fact Bosanquet, following Hegel, shows an unwarranted prejudice in favour of the national State. In this sense idealist political theory is unduly conservative. Further, if the State is regarded as the guardian and expression of morality and as the highest moral entity, the logical consequence is a disastrous moral conformism. In any case, if the State is really, as Bosanquet supposes it to be, a moral entity of a higher order than the individual moral agent, it is very odd that these sublime moral entities, namely different States, have not succeeded in regularizing their mutual relations according to moral standards.[1] In brief, 'to confuse the State with society and political with moral obligation is the central fallacy of the metaphysical theory of the State'.[2]

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[1] Leonard Trelawny Hobhouse (1864–1929), professor of sociology in the University of London from 1907 until the year of his death, was a philosopher of wide interests and the author of a number of books on philosophical and sociological topics. The work mentioned in the text represents a course of lectures given at the London School of Economics in 1917.

[2] *The Metaphysical Theory of the State*, pp. 117–18.

[3] As a matter of fact, Hobhouse denies all three propositions mentioned above.

Having summed up the metaphysical theory of the State in a number of theses, Hobhouse then finds himself driven to admit that Bosanquet sometimes speaks in ways which do not easily fit into this abstract scheme. But his way of coping with this difficulty is to argue that Bosanquet is guilty of inconsistency. He notes, for example, that in the introduction to the second edition of *The Philosophical Theory of the State* Bosanquet refers to a social co-operation which does not belong strictly either to the State or to private individuals simply as such. And he finds this inconsistent with the thesis that every man's true self finds its adequate embodiment in the State. Again, Hobhouse notes that in *Social and International Ideals* Bosanquet speaks of the State as an organ of the community, which has the function of maintaining the external conditions required for the development of the best life. And he finds this way of speaking inconsistent with the thesis that the State is identical with the whole social fabric. Hobhouse's conclusion, therefore, is that if such passages represent what Bosanquet really thinks about the State, he ought to undertake 'the reconstruction of his entire theory'.[3]

By and large, of course, Hobhouse is quite justified in finding in Bosanquet the so-called metaphysical theory of the State.[4] True, it is an exaggeration to say that according to Bosanquet a man's true self finds its adequate embodiment in the State, if we mean by this that man's potentialities are completely actualized in what would normally be regarded as his life as a citizen. Like Hegel, Bosanquet considers art, for instance, separately from the State, even if it presupposes society. At the same time it is undoubtedly true that he maintains an organic theory of the State, according to which statements about the State 'as such' are irreducible in principle to statements about assignable individuals. It is also true that Bosanquet ascribes to the national State a pre-eminent role as the embodiment of the General Will, and that he is comparatively insensitive to the ideal of a wider human society. As for the confusion of political with moral obligation, which Hobhouse mentions as a cardinal feature of the metaphysical theory of the State and to which he strongly objects, it seems to the present writer that a distinction must be made.

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[1] According to Bosanquet, 'moral relations presuppose an organized life; but such a life is only within the State, not in relations between the States and other communities'. *The Philosophical Theory of the State*, p. 325.

[2] *The Metaphysical Theory of the State*, p. 77.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 121, note 1.

[4] If one sums up a trend of thought common to several philosophers in a number of theses, it is not surprising if the resultant scheme is not fully applicable to all of them, or perhaps to any of them. And one can then find examples of 'inconsistency'. Still, the inconsistency may be with the main operative ideas of a given philosopher's thought.

If we hold a teleological interpretation of morality, in which obligation is regarded as falling on us in regard to those actions which are required for the attainment of a certain end (for example, the actualization and harmonious integration of one's potentialities as a human being), and if at the same time we regard life in organized society as one of the normally requisite means for attaining this end, we can hardly avoid looking on political obligation as one of the expressions of moral obligation. But it by no means follows that we are committed to confusing moral with political obligation, if by this is meant reducing the former to the latter. This confusion can arise only if the State is regarded as being itself the basis and interpreter of the moral law. If we do look on the State in this way, a disastrous conformism is, as Hobhouse notes, the result. But though Bosanquet's theory of the General Will as finding its adequate embodiment in the State undoubtedly favours this exalted view of the latter's moral function, we have seen that he allows, even if with reluctance, for moral criticism of any actual State. Hobhouse's comment, however, is that Bosanquet is here guilty of inconsistency, and that if he really wishes to allow for moral criticism of the State, he should revise his theory of the General Will. The comment seems to the present writer to be just.

6. We have noted that Bosanquet stood closer than Bradley to Hegel. But if we are looking for a British philosopher who openly shared Stirling's enthusiastic veneration for Hegel as the

great master of speculative thought, we must turn rather to Richard Burdon Haldane (1856–1928), the distinguished statesman who in 1911 was created Viscount Haldane of Cloan. In his two-volume work *The Pathway to Reality* (1903–4) Haldane declared that Hegel was the greatest master of speculative method since Aristotle, and that he himself was not only prepared but also desirous to be called an Hegelian.[1] Indeed, his undisguised admiration for German thought and culture led to a rather shameful attack on him at the beginning of the First World War.[2]

Haldane made an attempt to show that the theory of relativity is not only compatible with Hegelianism but also demanded by it. In *The Pathway to Reality* he proposed a philosophical theory of relativity; and when Einstein published his papers on the subject, Haldane regarded them as providing confirmation of his own theory, which he developed in *The Reign of Relativity* (1921). In brief, reality as a whole is one, but knowledge of this unity is approached from various points of view, such as those of the physicist, the biologist and the philosopher. And each point of view, together with the categories which it employs, represents a partial and relative view of the truth and should not be absolutized. This idea not only fits in with but is also demanded by a philosophical outlook for which reality is ultimately Spirit and for which truth is the whole system of truth, reality's complete self-reflection or self-knowledge, a goal which is approached through dialectical stages.

It can hardly be claimed that this general philosophical theory of relativity was, in itself, a novelty. And in any case it was rather late in the day for an attempt to infuse fresh life into Hegelianism by emphasizing the relativistic aspects of the system and by invoking the name of Einstein as a patron. However, it is worth mentioning Haldane as one of those prominent figures in British public life who have had a lasting interest in philosophical problems.

7. We have already had occasion to mention the coherence theory of truth, namely that any particular truth is true in virtue

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[1] In the biographical note which prefaces his contribution to the first volume of *Contemporary British Philosophy*, edited by J. H. Muirhead, Haldane remarks that he was influenced more by Hegel's method than by his detailed theory of the Absolute. But he adds that in his opinion Hegel came nearer to the ultimately true view than anyone since the ancient Greeks.

[2] Though he had become Lord Chancellor in 1912, after having done excellent work as Secretary of State for War, Haldane was omitted from the reconstituted ministry of 1915, not indeed because his colleagues had any doubt of his patriotism but rather as a measure of expediency in view of popular prejudice.

of its place in a total system of truth. This theory was discussed and defended in *The Nature of Truth* (1906) by Harold Henry Joachim (1868–1938), who occupied the Wykeham chair of logic at Oxford from 1919 until 1935. And it is not altogether superfluous to say something about the book, because the author showed his awareness of the difficulties to which the theory gives rise and did not attempt to slur them over.

Joachim approaches the coherence theory of truth by way of a critical examination of other theories. Consider, for example, the correspondence theory, according to which a factual statement is true if it corresponds with extra-linguistic reality. If somebody asks us to tell him what the reality is with which, say, a true scientific statement corresponds, our reply will necessarily be expressed in a judgment or set of judgments. When therefore we say that the scientific statement is true because it corresponds with reality, what we are really saying is that a certain judgment is true because it coheres systematically with other judgments. Hence the correspondence of truth is seen to pass into the coherence theory.

Or take the doctrine that truth is a quality of certain entities called 'propositions', a quality which is simply perceived immediately or intuitively. According to Joachim the claim of an immediate experience to be an experience of truth can be recognized only in so far as the intuition is shown to be the outcome of rational mediation, that is, in so far as the truth in question is seen to cohere with other truths. A proposition considered as an independent entity which possesses the quality of truth or of falsity, is a mere abstraction. Hence once more we are driven on to the interpretation of truth as coherence.

Joachim is thus convinced that the coherence theory of truth is superior to all rival theories. 'That the truth itself is one, and whole, and complete, and that all thinking and all experience moves within its recognition and subject to its manifest authority; this I have never doubted.'[1] Similarly, Joachim does not doubt that different judgments and partial systems of judgments are 'more or less true, i.e. as approximating more or less closely to the one standard'.[2] But once we begin to make the coherence theory explicit, really to think out its meaning and implications, difficulties arise which cannot be ignored.

In the first place coherence does not mean simply formal consistency. It refers in the long run to one all-inclusive significant whole in which form and matter, knowledge and its object, are inseparably united. In other words, truth as coherence means absolute experience. And an adequate theory of truth as coherence would have to provide an intelligible account of absolute experience, the all-inclusive totality, and to show how the various levels of incomplete experience form constitutive moments in it. But it is impossible in principle that these demands should be met by any philosophical theory. For every such theory is the result of finite and partial experience and can be at best only a partial manifestation of the truth.

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[1] *The Nature of Truth*, p. 178.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 178–9.

In the second place truth, as it is attained in human knowledge, involves two factors, thought and its object. And it is precisely this fact which gives rise to the correspondence theory of truth. An adequate theory of truth as coherence must therefore be able to explain how we are to conceive that self-diremption of the totality, absolute experience, which brings about the relative independence of subject and object, of ideal content and external reality, within human knowledge. But no such explanation, Joachim admits, has ever been given.

In the third place, as all human knowledge involves thought about an Other (that is, an other than itself), every theory of the nature of truth, including the coherence theory, must be a theory about truth as its Other, as something about which we think and pronounce judgment. And this is equivalent to saying that 'the coherence theory of truth *on its own admission* can never rise above the level of knowledge which at the best attains to the "truth" of correspondence'.[1]

With admirable candour Joachim is quite ready to speak of the 'shipwreck' of his endeavours to state an adequate theory of truth. In other words, he cannot meet the difficulties to which the coherence theory gives rise. At the same time he is still convinced that this theory carries us further than rival theories into the problem of truth, and that it can maintain itself against objections which are fatal to them, even if it itself gives rise to questions which cannot be answered. It is, however, clear enough that the ultimate reason why Joachim sticks to the coherence theory, in spite of the difficulties to which it admittedly gives rise, is a metaphysical reason, a belief about the nature of reality. Indeed, he explicitly says that he does not believe that 'the Metaphysician is entitled to acquiesce in logical theories, when their success demands that he should accept within the sphere of Logic assumptions which his own metaphysical theory condemns'.[1] In other words, absolute idealism in metaphysics demands the coherence theory of truth in logic. And in spite of the difficulties to which this theory gives rise we are justified in accepting it, if other theories of truth inevitably pass into the coherence theory when we try to state them precisely.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 175.

In judging whether other theories of truth do in fact pass into the coherence theory we have to bear in mind Joachim's own observation that coherence in this context does not mean simply formal consistency. An admission that two mutually incompatible propositions cannot both be true at the same time is not equivalent to embracing the coherence theory of truth. As Joachim presents the theory, when he is discussing the difficulties to which it gives rise, it is clearly a metaphysical theory, part and parcel of absolute idealism. Hence it is a question of whether all other theories of truth can be seen ultimately either to suffer complete collapse under critical examination or to imply the validity of absolute idealism. And nobody who is not already an absolute idealist is likely to admit that this is the case. It is not indeed the intention of the present writer to suggest that coherence has nothing to do with truth. In point of fact we often use coherence as a test, coherence with already established truths. And it is arguable that this implies a metaphysical belief about the nature of reality. But it does not necessarily follow that this is an implicit belief in absolute idealism. In any case, as Joachim himself frankly recognizes, if a true proposition is true only in so far as it is included as a moment in an absolute experience which transcends our grasp, it is very difficult to see how we can ever know that any proposition is true. And yet we are sure that we can have some knowledge. Perhaps an essential preliminary to any attempt to formulate 'the' theory of truth is a careful examination of the ways in which terms such as 'true' and 'truth' are used in ordinary discourse.

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[1] *The Nature of Truth*, p. 179.

CHAPTER X

THE TURN TOWARDS PERSONAL IDEALISM

Pringle-Pattison and the value of the human person—The pluralistic idealism of McTaggart—The pluralistic spiritualism of J. Ward—General comments.

1. The attitude adopted by Bradley and Bosanquet to finite personality not unnaturally led to a reaction even within the idealist movement. One of the chief representatives of this reaction was Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison (1856–1931).[1] In his first work, *The Development from Kant to Hegel* (1882), he described the transition from the critical philosophy of Kant to the metaphysical idealism of Hegel as an inevitable movement. And he always maintained that the mind cannot rest in a system which involves the doctrine of unknowable things-in-themselves. But in 1887 he published *Hegelianism and Personality* in which, somewhat to the surprise of his readers, he submitted absolute idealism to outspoken criticism.

At first sight, Pringle-Pattison admits, Hegelianism appears to magnify man. For, obscure though Hegel's utterances may be, his philosophy certainly suggests that God or the Absolute is identical with the whole historical process, considered as developing dialectically towards self-knowledge in and through the human mind. 'The philosopher's knowledge of God is God's knowledge of himself.'[2] The ground is thus prepared for the Left-wing Hegelian transformation of theology into anthropology.

Reflection, however, shows that in Hegelianism the individual person is of little account. For human beings become 'the foci in which the impersonal life of thought momentarily concentrates itself, in order to take stock of its own contents. These foci appear only to disappear in the perpetual process of this realization.'[3] The human person, in other words, is simply a means whereby impersonal Thought comes to a knowledge of itself. And from the point of view of anyone who attaches a real value to personality it is clear that 'Hegel's determination to have one process and one subject was the original fountain of error'.[1] The radical mistake both of Hegelianism itself and of its British derivatives is 'the identification of the human and the divine self-consciousness or, to put it more broadly, the unification of consciousness in a single self'.[2] This unification is ultimately destructive of the reality of both God and man.

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[1] Originally called Andrew Seth, he adopted the name Pringle-Pattison in 1898 in fulfilment of a condition for succeeding to an estate. He successively occupied chairs of philosophy at Cardiff (1883–7), St. Andrews (1887–91) and Edinburgh (1891–1919).

[2] *Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 196 (2nd edition).

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 199.

Pringle-Pattison insists, therefore, on two points. First, we should recognize a real self-consciousness in God, even though we have to avoid ascribing to it the features of finite self-consciousness considered precisely as finite. Secondly, we must assert the value and relative independence of the human person. For each person has a centre of its own, a will, which is 'impervious' to any other person, 'a centre which I maintain even in my dealings with God Himself'.[3] 'The two positions—the divine personality and human dignity and immortality—are two complementary sides of the same view of existence.'[4]

This sounds like an abandonment of absolute idealism in favour of theism. But in his later writings Pringle-Pattison reaffirms absolute idealism or, more accurately, attempts to revise it in such a way that it permits more value being attached to finite personality than in the philosophies of Bradley and Bosanquet. The result is an unsatisfactory amalgam of absolute idealism and theism.

In the first place we cannot prove, by the sort of arguments employed by the earlier British idealists, that the world of Nature can exist only as object for a subject. Ferrier's line of argument, for example, is quite unsound. It is indeed obviously true that we cannot conceive material things without conceiving them; but 'this method of approach cannot possibly prove that they do not exist out of that relation'.[5] As for Green's argument that relations cannot exist except through the synthesizing activity of a universal consciousness, this presupposes a defunct psychology, according to which experience begins with unrelated sensations. In point of fact relations are just as much given realities as the things related.

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[1] *Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 203.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 226. Strictly speaking, neither Bradley nor Bosanquet regarded the Absolute as a 'self'. But they did, of course, merge all finite experiences in the unity of a single absolute experience.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 217.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 238.

[5] *The Idea of God in the Light of Recent Philosophy* (1917), p. 192. This work will be referred to as *The Idea of God.*

It does not follow, however, that, as the 'lower naturalism' maintains, Nature exists apart from a total system which embodies value. On the contrary, we can see in Nature a continuity of process combined with the emergence of qualitatively distinct levels. Man appears as 'the organ through which the universe beholds and enjoys itself'.[1] And among the emergent qualities which characterize the universe we must recognize not only the so-called secondary qualities but also 'the aspects of beauty and sublimity which we recognize in nature and those finer insights which we owe to the poet and the artist'.[2] Moral values too must be taken as qualifying the universe. And the whole process of Nature, with the emergence of qualitatively different levels, is to be looked on as a progressive manifestation of the Absolute or God.

According to Pringle-Pattison, the idea of God as existing 'before' the world and as creating it out of nothing is philosophically untenable. 'The idea of creation tends to pass into that of manifestation';[3] and the infinite and the finite stand to one another in a relation of mutual implication. As for man, 'he exists as an organ of the universe or of the Absolute, the one Being',[4] which should be conceived in terms of its highest manifestation and so as one spiritual life or absolute experience.

Whatever *Hegelianism and Personality* may have seemed to imply, there is thus no radical rejection of absolute idealism in Pringle-Pattison's later work. On the contrary, there is a large measure of agreement with Bosanquet. At the same time Pringle-Pattison is not prepared to accept Bosanquet's view of the destiny of the human individual. In his view differentiation constitutes the very essence of absolute life, and 'every individual is a unique nature . . . an expression or focalization of the universe which is nowhere else repeated'.[5] The higher we ascend in the scale of life, the clearer becomes the uniqueness of the individual. And if value increases in proportion to unique individuality, we cannot suppose that distinct selves achieve their destiny by being merged without distinction in the One. Each must be preserved in its uniqueness.

Pringle-Pattison is thus not prepared to say with Bradley that the temporal world is appearance. And as he retains the doctrine of the Absolute, he seems to be committed to saying that the Absolute is subject to temporal succession. But he also wishes to maintain that there is a real sense in which the Absolute or God transcends time. Hence he has recourse to the analogies of the drama and the symphony. Where, for example, a symphony is played, the notes succeed one another; yet in a real sense the whole is there from the beginning, giving meaning to and unifying the successive units. 'Somewhat in this fashion we may perhaps conceive that the time-process is retained in the Absolute and yet transcended.'[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 211.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 212.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 308.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 259.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 267.

If such analogies were pressed, the natural conclusion would be that the Absolute is simply the Idea, or perhaps more properly the Value, of the entire cosmic and historical process. But Pringle-Pattison clearly wishes to maintain that God is an absolute personal experience, which could hardly be described as simply the meaning and value of the world. In other words, he tries to combine absolute idealism with elements of theism. And the ambiguous result suggests that he would have done better either to retain the Absolute and identify it with the historical process considered as moving towards the emergence of new values or to make a clear break with absolute idealism and embrace theism. However, it is at any rate clear that within the general framework of absolute idealism he tried to preserve and assert the value of the finite personality.

2. We can now turn to a Cambridge philosopher, John McTaggart Ellis McTaggart (1866–1925), for whom the problem of the relation between finite selves and the Absolute did not and could not arise, inasmuch for him there was no Absolute apart from the society or system of selves. In his philosophy the Absolute as understood by Bradley and Bosanquet simply disappeared from the scene.

McTaggart was elected a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1891. In his view Hegel had penetrated further than any other philosopher into the nature of reality. And he devoted himself to a prolonged study of Hegelianism, which bore fruit in *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic* (1896; second edition, 1922), *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology* (1901; second edition, 1918), and *A Commentary on Hegel's Logic* (1910). But McTaggart was by no means only a student of and commentator on Hegel: he was an original thinker. This fact shows itself indeed in the commentaries but much more in the two volumes of *The Nature of Existence,*[1] which together contain his system of philosophy.

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[1] *The Idea of God*, p. 363.

In the first part of his sytem McTaggart is concerned with determining the characteristics which belong to all that exists or, as he puts it, to existence as a whole.[2] More accurately, he is concerned with determining the characteristics which the existent *must* have. Hence the method to be employed will be that of *a priori* deduction. McTaggart is thus very far from being what is often described as an inductive metaphysician.

Even in the first part of the system, however, McTaggart admits two empirical premisses, namely that something exists and that what exists is differentiation. The truth of the first premiss is known by immediate experience. For everyone is aware that he at any rate exists. And he cannot deny this without implicitly affirming it. As for the second premiss, 'it would indeed be possible to reach this result *a priori*. For I shall argue later that it is certain *a priori* that no substance can be simple.'[3] But an appeal to perception 'seems more likely to command assent'.[4] What McTaggart really wishes to show is that existence as a whole is differentiated, that there is a plurality of substances. And this is shown by the very fact of perception. If, for example, perception is interpreted as a relation, there must be more than one term.

We can take it, therefore, that something exists. This cannot be existence itself.[5] For if we say that what exists is existence, we are left with an absolute blank. That which exists must possess some quality besides existence. And the compound quality, composed of all the qualities of a thing, can be called its nature. But we cannot resolve a thing without residue into its qualities. 'At the head of the series there will be something existent which has qualities without being itself a quality. The ordinary name for this, and I think the best name, is substance.'[1] It may be objected that substance apart from its qualities is an inconceivable nothing; but it does not follow that substance is 'not anything in conjunction with its qualities'.[2]

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[1] The first volume appeared in 1921. The second, edited by Professor C. D. Broad, was published posthumously in 1927. A summary of the system is presented by McTaggart himself in his contribution to the first volume of *Contemporary British Philosophy*, edited by J. H. Muirhead.

[2] Existence is said to be an indefinable quality which is such that everything which exists is real, though not everything which is real is necessarily existent. In other words, reality or being is for McTaggart a wider concept than that of existence.

[3] *The Nature of Existence*, 45. The work is divided into sections numbered successively from the beginning of the first to the end of the second volume. And references are given here according to these numbered sections.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Obviously, McTaggart, interpreting existence as an indefinable quality, could not accept the Thomist thesis that ultimate reality is precisely *ipsum esse subsistens*.

If therefore there is anything existing, and we know from experience that there is, there must be at least one substance. But we have already accepted the empirical premiss of pluralism, of the differentiation of existence as a whole. It follows therefore that there must be relations.[3] For if there is a plurality of substances, they must be similar and dissimilar, similar in being substances, dissimilar in being distinct.[4] And similarity and dissimilarity are relations.

Now, according to McTaggart every relation generates a derivative quality in each of its terms, namely the quality of being a term in this relationship. Further, a derivative relationship is generated between every relation and each of its terms. We therefore get infinite series. But 'these infinite series are not vicious, because it is not necessary to complete them to determine the meaning of the earlier terms'.[5] Hence Bradley's argument to show that qualities and relations cannot be truly real loses its force.

Substances, we have seen, must be dissimilar in some way. But there are similarities which permit their arrangement in collections and collections of collections. A collection is called a 'group', and the substances which compose it are its 'members'.[6] Taken by itself, this is a straightforward idea. But there are several points to notice. First, a group is for McTaggart a substance. Thus the group of all French citizens is a substance which possesses qualities of its own, such as being a nation. Secondly, as no substance is ever absolutely simple, a compound substance cannot have simple substances as its members. Thirdly, we cannot assume without more ado that two groups are necessarily two substances. If the contents are the same, the groups are one substance. For example, the counties of England and the parishes of England form two groups but only one substance.

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[1] *The Nature of Existence*, 65.

[2] *Ibid.*, 68.

[3] The term 'relation' is for McTaggart indefinable, though we can clarify the difference in meaning between words such as 'relation' and 'quality'. For instance, qualities are not said to exist 'between' terms, whereas relations are.

[4] According to McTaggart, following Leibniz, if two substances had precisely the same nature, they would be indistinguishable, and therefore one and the same substance.

[5] *The Nature of Existence*, 88.

[6] We must distinguish between members and parts. 'If we take the group of all the counties in Great Britain, neither England nor Whitechapel are members of the group, but they are parts, of which the group is the whole.' *Ibid.*, 123.

Now, there must be one compound substance which contains all existent content and of which every other substance is a part. 'This substance is to be called the Universe.'[1] It is an organic unity in which 'all that exists, both substances and characteristics, are bound together in one system of extrinsic determination'.[2] At the same time there seems to be a major objection against admitting this idea of an all-inclusive substance. On the one hand McTaggart takes it that a sufficient description of any substance must be possible in principle. On the other hand no sufficient description of the universe seems to be possible. For a sufficient description would have, it appears, to indicate the parts and also their relations to one another and to the whole. But how can this be possible if no substance is simple and is consequently infinitely divisible?[3]

The details of McTaggart's solution of this difficulty are too complicated for discussion here. His general principle, as stated in his summary of his system, is that to avoid a contradiction between the thesis that a sufficient description of any substance is possible and the thesis that no substance is simple 'there must be some description of any substance, *A*, which implies sufficient descriptions of the members of all its sets of parts which are sequent to some given sets of parts'.[4] Taken by itself, this statement does not indeed convey very much. But McTaggart's line of thought is this. A sufficient description of a substance is possible in principle, if certain conditions are fulfilled. Consider the all-inclusive substance, the universe. This consists of one or more primary wholes, which in turn consist of primary parts. These parts can be differentiated by, for example, distinct qualities. And a sufficient description of the universe is possible in principle, provided that descriptions of the primary parts *imply* sufficient descriptions of the secondary parts, the series of which is indefinitely prolonged. For this implication to be a reality, however, the secondary parts must be related to one another by what McTaggart calls the relation of determining correspondence. For example, let us suppose that *A* and *B* are primary parts of a given substance, and that *A* and *B* are sufficiently described in terms of the qualities of *x* and *y* respectively. The relation of determining correspondence demands that a secondary part of *A* should be sufficiently describable in terms of *y* and that a secondary part of *B* should be sufficiently describable in terms of *x*. Given such interlocking determining correspondences throughout the whole hierarchy of consequent sets of parts, sufficient descriptions of the primary parts will imply sufficient descriptions of the secondary parts. And a sufficient description of the substance is thus possible in principle, notwithstanding the fact that it is indefinitely divisible.

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[1] *Ibid.*, 135.

[2] *Ibid.*, 137. If, for instance, a substance *X* possesses qualities *a*, *b* and *c*, an alteration in one quality produces an alteration in the nature (composed of the qualities) and so in the substance which is manifested in the nature. The qualities are then said to stand to one another in a relation of extrinsic determination.

[3] As no substance is absolutely simple, the difficulty occurs in regard to every substance.

[4] *Contemporary British Philosophy*, First Series, p. 256.

As McTaggart maintains that a sufficient description of every substance must be possible, it follows that the relation of determining correspondence must hold between the parts of a substance. And if we look on determining correspondence as a label for types of causal relations, we can then say that McTaggart attempts to prove *a priori* the necessity of a certain pattern of causal relations within the universe. That is to say, if, as he assumes, the universe is an intelligible organic unity, there must exist in the hierarchy of its parts a certain pattern of determining correspondence.

Now, we have referred, for instance, to the counties of England, and we have been speaking of the universe. But though in the first part of the system some empirical illustrations are given to facilitate understanding, the conclusions reached are intended to be purely abstract. For example, though it is argued *a priori* that, if anything exists, there must be an all-inclusive substance which we can call the universe, it is a mistake to suppose that this term necessarily refers to the whole complex of entities which we are ordinarily accustomed to think of as the universe. The first part of the system established simply that there must be a universe. It does not tell us which, if any, empirical entities are members of the all-inclusive group which is called the universe. It is only in the second part of the system that McTaggart applies the conclusions of the first part, asking, for instance, whether the characteristics of substance which have been determined *a priori* can belong to those kinds of things which at first sight appear to be substances, or, rather, whether the characteristics which are encountered in or suggested by experience really belong to the existent.

In this field of inquiry, however, McTaggart insists, we cannot obtain absolute certainty. We may indeed be able to show that certain characteristics presented in or suggested by experience cannot belong to the existent, and that they must therefore be assigned to the sphere of appearance. But we cannot show with absolute certainty that characteristics suggested by experience *must* belong to the existent. For there might be characteristics never experienced or imagined by us which would equally well or better satisfy the *a priori* requirements of the first part of the system. However, if it can be shown that characteristics suggested by experience do in fact satisfy these *a priori* demands, and that no others which we know of or can imagine will do so, we have reasonable, though not absolute, certainty. In other words, McTaggart ascribes absolute certainty only to the results of *a priori* demonstration.

'The universe appears, *prima facie*, to contain substances of two very different kinds—Matter and Spirit.'[1] But McTaggart refuses to admit the reality of matter, mainly on the ground that nothing which has the quality of being material can have between its parts that relation of determining correspondence which must exist between the secondary parts of a substance. Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that a given material thing has two primary parts, one of which can be sufficiently described as blue, while the other can be sufficiently described as red. According to the requirements of the principle of determining correspondence there would have to be a secondary part of the primary part described as blue which would correspond with the primary part described as red. That is to say, this secondary part would be red. But this is not logically possible. For a primary part could not be sufficiently described as blue, if one of its secondary parts were red. And analogous conclusions can be drawn if we consider qualities such as size and shape. Hence matter cannot belong to the existent: it cannot qualify the universe.[2]

We are left therefore with spirit. There is indeed no demonstrative proof that nothing exists save spirit. For there might possibly be a form of substance, which we had never experienced or imagined, which would satisfy the requirements for being a substance and yet not be spiritual. But we have no positive ground for claiming that there is such a substance. Hence it is reasonable to conclude that all substance is spiritual.

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[1] *The Nature of Existence*, 352.

[2] According to McTaggart, it is no good saying that the existence of matter can be proved inferentially from sense-data. For what we call sense-data might be caused by spiritual causes. And if we claim that sense-data are themselves material substances, we shall have to meet the arguments which show, in general, that substance cannot be material.

As for the nature of spirit, 'I propose to define the quality of spirituality by saying that it is the quality of having content, all of which is the content of one or more selves'.[1] Thus selves are spiritual, and so are parts of selves and groups of selves, though in deference to common usage the term 'a spirit' can be reserved for a self.[2]

If spirit, therefore, is the only form of substance, the universe or Absolute will be the all-inclusive society or system of selves, selves being its primary parts. The secondary parts, of all grades, are perceptions, which form the contents of selves. In this case there must be relations of determining correspondence between these parts. True, this demands the fulfilment of certain conditions; that 'a self can perceive another self, and a part of another self',[3] that a perception is part of a percipient self, and that a perception of a part of a whole can be part of a perception of this whole. But the fulfilment of these conditions cannot be shown to be impossible; and there are reasons for thinking that they are in fact fulfilled. So we can take it that the Absolute is the system or society of selves.

Are selves immortal? The answer to this question depends on the point of view which we adopt. On the one hand McTaggart denies the reality of time, on the ground that an assertion of the reality of the temporal series of past, present and future compels us to attribute to any given event mutually incompatible determinations.[4] Hence if we adopt this point of view, we should describe selves as timeless or eternal rather than as immortal, a term which implies unending temporal duration. On the other hand time certainly belongs to the sphere of appearance. And the self will appear to persist through all future time. 'In consequence of this, I think we may properly say that the self is immortal',[5] though immortality must then be understood as including preexistence, before, that is, its union with the body.

Professor C. D. Broad has remarked[6] that he does not suppose that McTaggart made a single disciple, though he exercised a considerable influence on his pupils by his logical subtlety, his intellectual honesty and his striving after clarity. It is not indeed surprising if McTaggart failed to make disciples. For, apart from the fact that he does not explain, any more than Bradley did, how the sphere of appearance arises in the first place, his system provides a much clearer example than the philosophies of either Bradley or Bosanquet of the account of metaphysics which has sometimes been given by anti-metaphysicians, namely as an alleged science which professes to deduce the nature of reality in a purely *a priori* manner. For having worked out in the first part of his system what characteristics the existent must possess, McTaggart blithely proceeds in the second part to reject the reality of matter and time on the ground that they do not fulfil the requirements established in the first part. And though his conclusions certainly make his philosophy more interesting and exciting, their strangeness is apt to make most readers conclude without more ado that there must be something wrong with his arguments. Most people at any rate find it difficult to believe that reality consists of a system of selves, the contents of which are perceptions. 'Ingenious but unconvincing', is likely to be their verdict about McTaggart's arguments.

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[1] *The Nature of Existence*, 381.

[2] For McTaggart the self is indefinable and is known by acquaintance.

[3] *The Nature of Existence*, 408.

[4] Cf. *The Nature of Existence*, 332, and McTaggart's article on *The Unreality of Time* in *Mind*, 1908.

[5] *The Nature of Existence*, 503.

[6] In *British Philosophy in the Mid-Century*, edited by C. A. Mace, p. 45.

It may be objected that this is a very philistinian point of view. If McTaggart's arguments are good ones, the strangeness of his conclusions does not alter the fact. And this is true enough. But it is also a fact that few philosophers have been convinced by the arguments adduced to show that reality must be what McTaggart says it is.

3. McTaggart combined the doctrine that existing reality consists of spiritual selves with atheism.[1] But the personal idealists generally adopted some form of theism. We can take as an example James Ward (1843–1925), naturalist, psychologist and philosopher, who studied for a while in Germany, where he came under the influence of Lotze, and eventually occupied the chair of logic and mental philosophy at Cambridge (1897–1925).

In 1886 Ward contributed to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* a famous article on psychology, which later provided the basis for his *Psychological Principles* (1918), a work which clearly shows the influence of German philosophers such as Lotze, Wundt and Brentano. Ward was strongly opposed to the associationist psychology. In his view the content of consciousness consists of

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[1] McTaggart admitted the bare possibility of there being within the society of selves a self which from the standpoint of experience might appear to exercise some controlling, though not creative, function. But he added that we have no reason to suppose that there is in fact such a self. And even if there were, it would not be equivalent to God as customarily represented in theistic thought.

'presentations'; but these form a continuum. They are not discrete isolated events or impressions, into which the presentational continuum can be broken up. Obviously, a new presentation introduces fresh material; but it does not constitute simply an additional item in a series, for it modifies or partially changes the pre-existing field of consciousness. Further, every presentation is a presentation for a subject, being an experience of the subject. The idea of the 'soul' is not for Ward a concept of psychology; but we cannot dispense with the idea of the subject. For consciousness involves selective attention to this or that feature or aspect of the presentational continuum; and this is an activity of the subject under the influence of feelings of pleasure and pain. It is, however, a mistake to regard the subject of consciousness as merely a spectator, a purely cognitive subject. For the conative aspect of experience is fundamental, and the selective activity in question is teleological in character, the active subject selecting and attending to presentational data in view of an end or purpose.[1]

In the first series of his Gifford Lectures, published in 1899 as *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, Ward attacked what he called the naturalistic view of the world. We must distinguish between natural science on the one hand and philosophical naturalism on the other. For example, mechanics which deals simply 'with the quantitative aspects of physical phenomena'[2] should not be confused with the mechanical theory of Nature, 'which aspires to resolve the actual world into an actual mechanism'.[3] The philosopher who accepts this theory believes that the formulas and laws of mechanics are not simply abstract and selective devices for dealing with an environment under certain aspects, devices which possess a limited validity, but that they reveal to us the nature of concrete reality in an adequate manner. And in this belief he is mistaken. Spencer, for instance, attempts to deduce the movement of evolution from mechanical principles and is blind to the fact that in the process of evolution different levels emerge which require their own appropriate categories and concepts.[4]

Dualism, however, as a possible alternative to naturalism, is untenable. It is true that the fundamental structure of experience is the subject-object relationship. But this distinction is not equivalent to a dualism between mind and matter. For even when the object is what we call a material thing, the fact that it is comprised together with the subject within the unity of the subject-object relationship shows that it cannot be entirely heterogeneous to the subject. No ultimate dualism between mind and matter can stand up to criticism.

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[1] In the opinion of the present writer this approach to psychology was much superior to that of the associationists.

[2] *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, I, p. viii. [3] *Ibid.*

[4] Ward is not always careful to observe his own distinction between natural science and philosophical naturalism. And he tends to speak as though the science of mechanics does not treat of 'the actual'.

Having rejected, therefore, materialism, in the form of the mechanical theory of Nature, and dualism, Ward has recourse to what he calls spiritualistic monism. This term does not, however, express a belief that there is only one substance or being. Ward's view is that all entities are in some sense spiritual. That is to say, they all possess a psychical aspect. His theory is thus pluralistic; and in his second set of Gifford Lectures, which appeared in 1911 under the title *The Realm of Ends or Pluralism and Theism* he speaks of pluralistic spiritualism rather than of spiritualistic monism, though, if the latter term is properly understood, both names have the same meaning.

To some readers it may appear extraordinary that a Cambridge professor of comparatively recent date should embrace a theory of panpsychism. But Ward does not intend to imply, any more than Leibniz did,[1] that every entity or monad enjoys what we call consciousness. The idea is rather that there is no such thing as 'brute' matter, but that every centre of activity possesses some degree, often a very low degree, of 'mentality'. Moreover, Ward claims that pluralistic spiritualism is not a doctrine which has been deduced *a priori* but is based on experience.[2] 'The world is taken simply as we find it, as a plurality of active individuals unified only in and through their mutual interactions. These interactions again are interpreted throughout on the analogy of social transactions, as a mutuum commercium; that is to say, as based on cognition and conation.'[3]

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[1] Ward's pluralism resembles the monadology of Leibniz, except that Ward's monads are not 'windowless' but act on one another.

[2] According to Ward, the only *a priori* statements which are beyond challenge are 'purely formal statements' (*The Realm of Ends*, p. 227), those of logic and mathematics. These do not give factual information about the world. If, however, a philosopher professes to deduce the nature of reality from a table of categories and these are found to apply to the world, it will also be found that they were taken from experience in the first place.

[3] *The Realm of Ends*, p. 225. Obviously, the less fantastic panpsychism is made to appear, the more does it lie open to the comment that no new information is being given, but that it consists simply in interpreting the empirically observable behaviour of things according to certain selected analogies. The question whether it is true or not then appears as a question whether a certain description is appropriate, not whether certain behaviour takes place or not.

Now, Ward admits that it is possible to stop at this idea of a plurality of finite active centres of experience. For Kant has exposed the fallacies in the alleged demonstrative proofs of God's existence. At the same time theism supplies a unity which is missing in pluralism without God. Further, the concepts of creation and conservation throw light on the existence of the Many, though creation should be understood in terms of ground and consequent rather than of cause and effect. 'God is the ground of the world's being, its *ratio essendi*.'[1] In addition, Ward argues in a pragmatist-like way that acceptance of the idea of God has the benefit of increasing the pluralist's confidence in the significance of finite existence and in the eventual realization of the ideal of the kingdom of ends. Without God as both transcendent and immanently active in the universe, 'the world may well for ever remain that *rerum concordia discors*, which at present we find it'.[2]

4. We can safely venture the generalization that one of the basic factors in personal idealism is a judgment of value, namely that personality represents the highest value within the field of our experience. This statement may indeed appear inapplicable to the philosophy of McTaggart, who professes to demonstrate by *a priori* reasoning what characteristics must belong to the existent and then inquires which of the kinds of things that are *prima facie* substances actually possess these characteristics. But it does not necessarily follow, of course, that a judgment of value does not constitute an effective implicit factor even in his philosophy. In any case it is clear that Pringle-Pattison's revision of absolute idealism was prompted by a conviction of the ultimate value of personality, and that James Ward's pluralistic spiritualism was connected with a similar conviction.

Obviously, personal idealism does not consist simply of this judgment of value. It involves also the conviction that personality should be taken as the key to the nature of reality, and a sustained attempt to interpret reality in the light of this conviction. This means that personal idealism tends to pluralism rather than to monism. In the philosophies of McTaggart and Ward a pluralistic conception of the universe is clearly dominant. With Pringle-Pattison it is held in check by his retention of the idea of the Absolute as a single all-inclusive experience. At the same time the value which he attaches to finite personality drives him to endeavour to interpret the doctrine of the One in such a way as not to involve the submerging or obliteration of the Many in the One.

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[1] *The Realm of Ends*, p. 234.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 421.

The natural result in metaphysics of the turning from monism to pluralism in the light of a conviction of the value of personality is the assertion of some form of theism. In the exceptional case of McTaggart the Absolute is indeed interpreted as the society or system of finite spiritual selves. And with Pringle-Pattison the change to unequivocal theism is checked by the influence which the tradition of absolute idealism still exercises on his mind. But the inner dynamic, so to speak, of personal idealism is towards the interpretation of ultimate reality as being itself personal in character and of such a kind as to allow for the dependent reality of finite persons. According to the absolute idealists, as we have seen, the concept of God must be transformed into the concept of the Absolute. In personal idealism the concept of the Absolute tends to be re-transformed into the concept of God. True, McTaggart looks on his idea of the society or system of spiritual selves as the proper interpretation of the Hegelian Absolute. But with James Ward we find a clear transition to theism. And it is no matter for surprise that he explicitly asserts his affinity with Kant rather than with Hegel.

How far we extend the application of the term 'personal idealism' is, within limits, a matter of choice. Consider, for example, William Ritchie Sorley (1855–1935), who occupied the chair of moral philosophy at Cambridge from 1900 until 1932. He was mainly concerned with problems connected with the nature of values and the judgment of value, and it may be preferable to label him a philosopher of value. But he also inquired into the sort of general philosophical theory which we must embrace when we take values seriously into account as factors in reality. Thus he insisted that persons are 'the bearers of value',[1] and that metaphysics culminates in the idea of God, conceived not only as creator but also as 'the essence and source of all values, and as willing that these values should be shared by the free minds who owe their being to him'.[2] And the total result of his reflections is such that he can reasonably be labelled as a personal idealist.

We cannot, however, be expected to outline the ideas of all those British philosophers who can reasonably be described as personal idealists. Instead we can draw attention to the differences in attitude towards the sciences between the absolute idealists and the personal idealists. Bradley does not, of course, deny the validity of science at its own level. But inasmuch as he relegates all discursive thought to the sphere of appearance, he is involved in holding that the sciences are incapable of revealing to us the nature of reality as distinct from appearance. True we find much the same attitude in McTaggart, for whom the spatio-temporal world is appearance. And even James Ward, in his polemic against naturalism and the mechanical theory of the world, plays down the ability of science to disclose to us the nature of reality and emphasizes the man-made character of abstract scientific concepts, which have to be judged by their utility rather than by any claim to absolute truth. At the same time he is convinced that the concrete sciences, such as biology and psychology, suggest and confirm his pluralistic philosophy. And, in general, the personal idealists are concerned not so much with sitting in judgment on science and relegating it to the sphere of appearance as with challenging the claim of materialist and mechanist philosophies to be the logical outcome of the sciences. The general tendency at any rate of personal idealism is to appeal to the fact that different sciences require different categories to cope with different levels of experience or aspects of reality, and to regard metaphysics as a legitimate and indeed necessary enlargement of the field of interpretation rather than as the unique path to a knowledge of reality from which the empirical sciences, confined to the sphere of appearance, are necessarily debarred. This observation may not apply to McTaggart. But he is really *sui generis*. The general attitude of the personal idealists is to argue that experience and an empirical approach to philosophy support pluralism rather than the type of monism characteristic of absolute idealism, and that if we bear in mind the different types of science,[1] we can see that metaphysical philosophy is not a counterblast to science but a natural crown to that interpretation of reality in which the sciences have their own parts to play.

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[1] *Contemporary British Philosophy*, Second Series, p. 254.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 265.

A final point. If we except the system of McTaggart, personal idealism was calculated by its very nature to appeal to religiously minded philosophers, to the sort of philosophers who would be considered suitable persons to receive invitations to give series of Gifford Lectures. And what the personal idealists wrote was generally religiously edifying. Their style of philosophy was obviously much less destructive of Christian faith than the absolute idealism of Bradley.[1] But though the various philosophies which can reasonably be regarded as representative of personal idealism are edifying enough from the moral and religious points of view, they tend to give the impression, at least in their more metaphysical aspects, of being a series of personal statements of belief which owe less to rigorous argument than to a selective emphasis on certain aspects of reality.[2] And it is understandable that during the lifetime of Ward and Sorley other Cambridge philosophers were suggesting that instead of rushing to produce large-scale interpretations of reality we should do better to make our questions as clear and precise as possible and treat them one by one. However, though this sounds a very reasonable and practical suggestion, the trouble is that philosophical problems are apt to interlock. And the idea of breaking up philosophy into clearly defined questions which can be answered separately has not in practice proved to be as fruitful as some people hoped. Still, it is undeniable that the idealist systems appear, in the present climate of British philosophy, to belong to a past phase of thought. This makes them indeed apt material for the historian. But it also means that the historian cannot help wondering whether there is really much justification for devoting space to minor systems which do not strike the imagination in the way that the system of Hegel makes an impression. There is, however, this to be said, that personal idealism represents the recurrent protest of the finite personality to absorption in a One, however it is conceived. It is easy to say that personality is 'appearance'; but no monistic system has ever explained how the sphere of appearance arises in the first place.

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[1] When Ward writes as though science does not provide us with knowledge of the concretely real, he is thinking primarily of mechanics which he regards as a branch of mathematics. As already noted, he was himself a psychologist.

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[1] I do not mean to imply that Bradley can properly be described as an irreligious thinker. At the same time the concept of 'God' belongs for him to the sphere of appearance, and it would be absurd to claim him as a Christian thinker. He was not.

[2] McTaggart certainly professed to reach his conclusion by rigorous argument. But then his conclusions were not particularly edifying from the religious point of view, unless one is prepared to maintain that the existence or non-existence of God is a matter of indifference to religion.

PART III

IDEALISM IN AMERICA

CHAPTER XI

INTRODUCTORY

The beginnings of philosophy in America; S. Johnson and J. Edwards—The Enlightenment in America; B. Franklin and T. Jefferson—The influence of the Scottish philosophy—R. W. Emerson and Transcendentalism—W. T. Harris and his programme for speculative philosophy.

1. THE remote origins of philosophical reflection in America can be traced back to the Puritans of New England. Obviously, the primary aim of the Puritans was to organize their lives according to the religious and moral principles in which they believed. They were idealistic in the non-philosophical sense of the term. They were also Calvinists who allowed no dissent from what they regarded as the principles of orthodoxy. At the same time we can find among them an element of philosophical reflection, stimulated mainly by the thought of Petrus Ramus or Pierre de la Ramée (1515–72) and by the *Encyclopaedia* of Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588–1638). Petrus Ramus, the celebrated French humanist and logician, became a Calvinist in 1561, expounded a congregationalist theory of the Church, and eventually perished in the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve. He thus had special qualifications for being regarded as an intellectual patron by the Congregationalists of New England. Alsted, a follower of Melanchthon and also a disciple of Petrus Ramus, published an encyclopaedia of the arts and sciences in 1630. This work, which had a Platonic colouring, contained a section devoted to what Alsted called *archeologia*, the system of the principles of knowledge and being. And it became a popular textbook in New England.

The religious affiliations of the first phase of American philosophical thought are shown by the fact that the earliest philosophers were clerics. Samuel Johnson (1696–1772) is an example. At first a Congregationalist minister, he entered the Anglican Church in 1772 and subsequently received Anglican orders. In

1754 he was appointed first president of King's College, New York, which is now Columbia University.

In his autobiography Johnson remarks that when he was studying at Yale the standard of education was low. Indeed, it showed a decline in comparison with the standards of the original settlers who had been brought up in England. True, the names of Descartes, Boyle, Locke and Newton were not unknown, and the introduction of the writings of Locke and Newton were gradually opening up fresh lines of thought. But there was a strong tendency to equate secular learning with some of the works of Ramus and Alsted and to regard the new philosophical currents as a danger to the purity of religious faith. In other words, a 'scholasticism' which had served a useful purpose in the past was being used to check the spread of new ideas.

Johnson himself came under the influence of Berkeley. He made the acquaintance of the philosopher during the latter's sojourn on Rhode Island (1729–31) and it was to Berkeley that he dedicated his *Elementa Philosophica*, which appeared in 1752.[1]

But though deeply impressed by Berkeley's immaterialism, Johnson was not prepared to accept his view that space and time are particular relations between particular ideas, and that infinite space and time are simply abstract ideas. He wished to retain the Newton-Clarke theory of absolute and infinite space and time, on the ground that they are entailed by admission of the existence of a plurality of finite spirits. For example, unless there were absolute space, all finite spirits would coincide with one another. Further, Johnson tried to fit Berkeley's theory of ideas into a Platonic mould, by maintaining that all ideas are ectypes of archetypes existing in the divine mind. In other words, while welcoming Berkeley's immaterialism Johnson endeavoured to adapt it to the Platonic tradition already present in American thought.

A better-known representative of eighteenth-century American thought is Jonathan Edwards (1703–58), a noted Congregationalist theologian. Educated at Yale, in 1717 he made the acquaintance of Locke's *Essay* and in 1730 of Hutcheson's *Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*. Though primarily a Calvinist theologian who for most of his life occupied pastoral posts, he attempted to achieve a synthesis between the Calvinist theology and the new philosophy. Or, to put the matter in another way, he used ideas taken from contemporary philosophy in interpreting the Calvinist theology. In 1757 he became president of the college at Princeton, New Jersey, which is now Princeton University; but he died of smallpox in the following year.

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[1] Johnson's philosophical correspondence with Berkeley can be found in the second volume of the critical edition of the bishop's *Works* edited by Professor T. E. Jessop.

Edwards sees the universe as existing only within the divine mind or spirit. Space, necessary, infinite and eternal, is in fact an attribute of God. Further, it is only spirits which are, properly speaking, substances. There are no quasi-independent material substances which exercise real causal activity. To be sure, Nature exists as appearance; and from the point of view of the scientist, who is concerned with phenomena or appearances, there is uniformity in Nature, a constant order. The scientist as such can speak quite legitimately of natural laws. But from a profounder and philosophical point of view we can admit only one real causal activity, that of God. Not only is the divine conservation of finite things a constantly repeated creation, but it is also true that the uniformity of Nature is, from the philosophical standpoint, an arbitrary constitution, as Edwards puts it, of the divine will. There is really no such thing in Nature as a necessary relation or as efficient causality; all connections depend ultimately as the arbitrary *fiat* of God.

The fact that Edwards rejects, with Berkeley, the existence of material substance but admits the existence of spiritual substances must not, however, be taken to mean that in his view human volition constitutes an exception to the general truth that God is the only real cause. From one point of view, of course, we can say that he gives an empiricist analysis of relations, in particular of the causal relation. But this analysis is combined with the Calvinist idea of the divine omnipotence or causality to produce metaphysical idealism in which God appears as the sole genuine cause. In his work on the *Freedom of the Will* Edwards explicitly rejects the idea of the self-determining human will. In his view it is absurd, and also an expression of Arminianism, to maintain that the human will can choose against the prevailing motive or inclination.[1] Choice is always determined by the prevailing motive, and this in turn is determined by what appears to be the greatest good. Theologically speaking, a man's choice is predetermined by his Creator. But it is a mistake to suppose that this relieves man of all moral responsibility. For a moral judgment about an action depends simply on the nature of the action, not on its cause. A bad action remains a bad action, whatever its cause.

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[1] Obviously if by prevailing inclination or strongest motive we mean the motive which actually 'prevails', it *would* be absurd to claim that we can resist it. But then the statement that we always follow it becomes tautological.

An interesting feature of Edwards' thought is his theory of a sense of God or direct awareness of the divine excellence. In general, he was in sympathy with the revivalist 'Great Awakening' of 1740–1. And he considered that the religious affections, on which he wrote a treatise, manifest an apprehension of the divine excellence which is to be attributed to the heart rather than to the head. At the same time he tried to distinguish between the sense of God and the highly emotive states which are characteristic of revivalist meetings. In doing this he developed a theory of the sense of God in which it is reasonable to see the influence of Hutcheson's aesthetic and moral ideas.

According to Edwards, just as a sense of the sweetness of honey precedes and lies at the basis of our theoretical judgment that honey is sweet, so does a sentiment or sense of, say, the divine holiness lie at the basis of the judgment that God is holy. In general, just as a sense of the beauty of an object or of the moral excellence of a person is presupposed by judgments which give expression to this sense or feeling, so is a sense of the divine excellence presupposed by our 'cerebral' judgments about God. Perhaps the term 'just as' is open to criticism. For the sense of God is for Edwards a consent of our being to the divine being and is of supernatural origin. But the point is that man can be aware of God through a form of experience analogous to sense-experience and to the pleasure which we feel in beholding a beautiful object or an expression of moral excellence.

Perhaps we can see in this theory the influence of Lockian empiricism. I do not mean to imply, of course, that Locke himself based belief in God on feeling and intuition. In regard to this matter his approach was rationalistic; and his mistrust of 'enthusiasm' is notorious. But his general insistence on the primacy of sense-experience may well have been one of the foctors which influenced Edwards' mind, though the influence of Hutcheson's idea of the sense of moral beauty or excellence is certainly more obvious.

Edwards did not live long enough to carry out his project of writing a complete theology, developed systematically according to a new method. But he was extremely influential as a theologian; and his attempt to bring together Calvinist theology, idealism, Lockian empiricism and the world-view of Newton constituted the first major expression of American thought.

2. In Europe the eighteenth century was the age of the Enlightenment. And America too had what is customarily called its Enlightenment. In the field of philosophy it does not indeed bear comparison with its counterparts in England and France. But it is none the less of importance in the history of American life.

The first characteristic which we can notice is the attempt to separate the Puritan moral virtues from their theological setting, an attempt which is well exemplified by the reflections of Benjamin Franklin (1706–90). An admirer of William Wollaston, the English deist, he was certainly not the man to walk in the footsteps of Samuel Johnson or Jonathan Edwards. Revelation, as he declared, had for him no weight. And he was convinced that morals should be given a utilitarian in place of a theological basis. Some types of action are beneficial to man and society, while other types of action are detrimental. The former can be regarded as commanded, the latter as forbidden. Virtues such as temperance and diligence are justified by their utility. Their opposites are blameworthy because they are prejudicial to the interests of society and of personal success.

Famous as he is, Franklin can hardly be described as a profound philosopher, in spite of the fact that he was one of the founders of the American Philosophical Society. And it is a simple matter to caricature his ethical outlook. To be sure, Franklin exalted truthfulness, sincerity and integrity, virtues highly esteemed by the Puritans, as essential for human well-being. But once these virtues are extolled because, on balance, people who are truthful and sincere are more likely to be successful in life than the untruthful and insincere, a certain banal pragmatism takes the place of the religious idealism of the Puritan mind at its best. It is no longer a case of man becoming the image of God, as it was with the more Platonic-minded Puritan theologians. Rather is it a case of 'early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy and wealthy and wise'. A sensible maxim perhaps, but not particularly uplifting.

However, even if Franklin's reflections tended to assume a somewhat banal character, they represented the same movement to set ethics on its own feet and to separate it from theology which we find in more sophisticated forms in eighteenth-century

European philosophy. And the retention of Puritan virtues in a secularized dress was of considerable historical importance in the development of the American outlook.

Another important feature of the Enlightenment in America was the secularization of the idea of society. Calvinism was opposed from the start to control of the Church by the State. And though the general tendency of the Calvinists was to secure, when possible, widespread control over society, in principle at any rate they recognized a distinction between the body of true believers and political society. Moreover, Calvinism in New England took the form of Congregationalism. And though in practice the clergy, once appointed, exercised great power, the congregations were in theory simply voluntary unions of likeminded believers. When stripped, therefore, of its theological and religious associations, this idea of society lent itself to exploitation in the interest of democratic republicanism. And Locke's theory of the social contract or compact was at hand to serve as an instrument.

The process of secularizing the theory of religious society associated with the Congregationalists of New England was, however, only one factor in a complex situation. Another factor was the growth in the New World of pioneer societies which were not primarily associated, if at all, with particular religious bodies and movements. The new frontier societies[1] had to adapt the ideas of law and social organization which they carried with them to the situations in which they found themselves. And their main desire was clearly that of securing, as far as possible, such conditions of order as would prevent anarchy and enable individuals to pursue their several ends in comparative peace. Needless to say, the members of the pioneer societies were not much concerned with political philosophy, or with philosophy of any sort. At the same time they represented a growing society which tacitly implied a Lockian theory of a free union of human beings organizing themselves and submitting themselves to law with a view to preserving a social fabric and order which would permit the peaceful, though competitive, exercise of individual initiative. Further, the growth of these societies, with emphasis on temporal success, favoured the spread of the idea of toleration, which was scarcely a strong point of the Calvinist theologians and ministers.

The idea of political society as a voluntary union of human beings for the purpose of establishing social order as a framework for the peaceful exercise of private initiative was understandably associated with the idea of natural rights which are presupposed by organized society and should be protected by it. The theory of natural rights, sponsored by Locke and by other English and French writers, found expression in *The Rights of Man*[1] by Thomas Paine (1737–1809), a deist who insisted on the sovereignty of reason and on the equal rights of all men. It also found a powerful exponent in Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) who, as is well known, drafted the Declaration of Independence of 1776. This famous document asserts that it is self-evidently true that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, and that among these are the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The Declaration further asserts that governments are instituted to secure these rights, and that they derive their powers from the consent of the governed.

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[1] Benjamin Franklin, it may be noted, emphasized the virtues and values which proved to be of advantage in the frontier societies.

It is scarcely necessary to remark that the Declaration of Independence was a national act, not an exercise in political philosophy. And, quite apart from the fact that a good deal of it consists of animadversions on the British monarch and government, the philosophy behind its opening sentences was not fully developed in eighteenth-century America. Thus Jefferson himself simply assumed that the statement that all men are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights is a matter of common sense. That is to say, common reason sees that it must be true, without any need of proof, though, once its truth has been recognized, moral and social conclusions can be drawn from it. At the same time the philosophical portion of the Declaration admirably illustrates the spirit and fruit of the American Enlightenment. And there is, of course, no doubt about its historical importance.

3. Men such as Franklin and Jefferson were obviously not professional philosophers. But in the course of the nineteenth century academic philosophy underwent a very considerable development in the United States. And among the influences contributing to this development was the thought of Thomas Reid and his successors in the Scottish School. In religious quarters the Scottish philosophical tradition was regarded with favour as being at the same time realist in character and a much needed antidote

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[1] Part I, 1791; Part II, 1792. Paine was also the author of the *Age of Reason*, the two parts of which appeared respectively in 1794 and 1796.

to materialism and positivism. It thus became popular with those Protestant divines who were conscious of the lack of an adequate rational basis for the Christian faith.

One of the principal representatives of this tradition was James McCosh (1811–94), himself a Scottish Presbyterian, who occupied for sixteen years the chair of logic and metaphysics at Queen's College, Belfast, and then in 1868 accepted the presidency of Princeton and made the university a stronghold of the Scottish philosophy. Besides writing a number of other philosophical works, such as *An Examination of John Stuart Mill's Philosophy* (1866) and *Realistic Philosophy* (1887), he published a well-known study, *The Scottish Philosophy*, in 1875.

Among the effects of the popularization in America of the Scottish tradition was the widespread habit of dividing philosophy into mental and moral, the former, namely the science of the human mind or psychology, being looked on as providing the basis for the latter, namely ethics. This division is reflected in the titles of the much-used textbooks published by Noah Porter (1811–92), who in 1847 was nominated to the chair of moral philosophy and metaphysics at Yale, where he was also president for some years, For instance, in 1868 he published *The Human Intellect*, in 1871 *The Elements of Intellectual Science*, an abridgement of the first-named book, and in 1885 *The Elements of Moral Science*. Porter was not, however, simply an adherent of the Scottish School. He had made a serious study not only of British empiricists such as J. S. Mill and Bain but also of Kantian and post-Kantian German thought. And he attempted to effect a synthesis of the Scottish philosophy and German idealism. Thus he maintained that the world is to be regarded as a thought rather than as a thing, and that the existence of the Absolute is a necessary condition of the possibility of human thought and knowledge.

An attempt at combining themes from empiricism, the Scottish philosophy of common sense and German idealism had been made by the French philosopher, Victor Cousin (1792–1867). As rector of the *École normale*, rector of the University of Paris and finally minister of public instruction, Cousin had been in a position to impose his ideas as a kind of philosophical orthodoxy in the centre of French academic life. But an eclectic philosophy, formed from such heterogeneous elements, was obviously open to serious criticism on the ground of incoherence. However, the relevant point here is that his thought exercised a certain influence in America, especially in encouraging a combination of ideas inspired by the Scottish tradition with a transcendentalism inspired by German idealism.

As an example we can mention Caleb Sprague Henry (1804–84), a professor at the University of New York. To all intents and purposes Cousin had based metaphysics on psychology. Psychological observation, properly employed, reveals in man the presence of a spontaneous reason which acts as a bridge between consciousness and being and enables us to pass beyond the limits of subjective idealism, by apprehending, for example, finite substances as objectively existent. Philosophy, as the work of reflective reason, makes explicit and develops the objective truths apprehended immediately by spontaneous reason. This distinction between spontaneous and reflective reason was accepted by Henry who, as a devout Anglican, proceeded to use it in a theological setting and drew the conclusions that religious or spiritual experience precedes and grounds religious knowledge.[1] By religious or spiritual experience, however, he meant primarily the moral consciousness of good and obligation, a consciousness which manifests the power of God to raise man to a new life. Further, with Henry material civilization becomes the fruit of the 'understanding', whereas Christianity, considered historically as the redemptive work of God, aiming at the creation of an ideal society, is the response to the demands of 'reason' or spirit.

4. At the same time that the Scottish philosophy was penetrating into university circles, the famous American writer Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–82) was preaching his gospel of transcendentalism. In 1829 he became a Unitarian minister. But the man who found inspiration in Coleridge and Carlyle, who laid emphasis on moral self-development and tended to divest religion of its historical associations, who was more concerned with giving expression to his personal vision of the world than with transmitting a traditional message, was not really suited for the ministry. And in 1832 he abandoned it and gave himself to the task of developing and expounding a new idealist philosophy which, he was confident, was capable of renewing the world in a

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[1] In using the distinction in this way Henry was not simply following Cousin. For Cousin insisted that the existence of God is known by inductive reasoning from the existence of finite substances, though he tried to combine this thesis with an idea of God inspired by German metaphysical idealism, an idea which led to accusations of pantheism by clerical critics. Henry was interested chiefly in the redemptive power of Christianity in history, and while accepting Cousin's idea of reason, he transposed it into the setting of Christian theology.

way in which not only materialism but also traditional religion was incapable of renewing it.

In 1836 Emerson published anonymously a little work entitled *Nature*, which contained the essence of his message. His celebrated *Address*, delivered in 1838 in the divinity school of Harvard, aroused considerable opposition among those who considered it unorthodox. In 1841 and 1844 he published two series of *Essays*, while his *Poems* appeared in 1846. In 1849 he published *Representative Men*, a series of lectures which he had given in 1845–6 on selected famous men from Plato to Napoleon and Goethe. In later years he became a national institution, the Sage of Concord, a fate which sometimes overtakes those who are at first regarded as purveyors of dangerous new ideas.

In a lecture delivered in 1842 in the Masonic Temple at Boston Emerson declares that what are called the 'new views' are really very old thoughts cast into a mould suited to the contemporary world. 'What is popularly called Transcendentalism among us is Idealism; Idealism as it appears in 1842.'[1] The materialist takes his stand on sense-experience and on what he calls facts, whereas 'the idealist takes his departure from his consciousness, and reckons the world an appearance'.[2] Materialism and idealism thus appear to be sharply opposed. Yet once we begin to ask the materialist what the basic facts really are, his solid world tends to break up. And with phenomenalism all is ultimately reduced to the data of consciousness. Hence under criticism materialism tends to pass into idealism, for which 'mind is the only reality . . . [and] Nature, literature, history are only subjective phenomena'.[3]

It does not follow, however, that the external world is simply the creation of the individual mind. Rather is it the product of the one universal spirit or consciousness, 'that Unity, that Over-Soul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other'.[4] This Over-Soul or eternal One or God is the sole ultimate reality, and Nature is its projection. 'The world proceeds from the same spirit as the body of man. It is a remoter and inferior projection of God, a projection of God in the unconscious. But it differs from a body in one important respect. It is not, like that, now subjected to the human will. Its serene order is inviolable by us. It is, therefore, to us, the present expositor of the divine mind.'[5]

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[1] *Complete Works*, II, p. 279 (London, 1866). References are given according to volume and page of this edition.

[2] *Ibid.*, II, p. 280.

[3] *Ibid.*, II, pp. 280–1.

[4] *Ibid.*, I, p. 112.

[5] *Ibid.*, II, p. 167.

If we ask how Emerson knows all this, it is no good expecting any systematically developed proofs. He does indeed insist that the human reason presupposes and seeks an ultimate unity. But he also insists that 'we know truth when we see it, let sceptic and scoffer say what they choose'.[1] When foolish people hear what they do not wish to hear, they ask how one knows that what one says is true. But 'we know truth when we see it, from opinion, as we know when we are awake that we are awake'.[2] The announcements of the soul, as Emerson puts it, are 'an influx of the divine mind into our mind':[3] they are a revelation, accompanied by the emotion of the sublime.

We might expect that from this doctrine of the unity of the human soul with the Over-Soul or divine spirit Emerson would draw the conclusion that the individual as such is of little importance, and that moral or spiritual progress consists in submerging one's personality in the One. But this is not at all his point of view. The Over-Soul incarnates itself, as Emerson expresses it, in a particular way in each individual. Hence 'each man has his own vocation. The talent is the call.'[4] And the conclusion is drawn: 'Insist on yourself, never imitate'.[5] Conformism is a vice: self-reliance is a cardinal virtue. 'Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist.'[6] Emerson provides indeed a theoretical reason for this exaltation of self-reliance. The divine spirit is self-existent, and its embodiments are good in proportion as they share in this attribute. At the same time it is not unreasonable to see in Emerson's moral doctrine the expression of the spirit of a young, vigorous, developing and competitive society.

In Emerson's opinion this self-reliance, if universally practised, would bring about a regeneration of society. The State exists to educate the wise man, the man of character; and 'with the appearance of the wise man, the State expires. The appearance of character makes the State unnecessary.'[7] What is meant is doubtless that if individual character were fully developed, the State as an organ of force would be unnecessary, and that in its place there would be a society based on moral right and love.

It scarcely needs saying that Emerson, like Carlyle, was a seer rather than a systematic philosopher. Indeed, he went so far as to say that 'a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do.'[1] True his principal point is that a man should preserve his intellectual integrity and not be afraid to say what he really thinks today simply because it contradicts what he said yesterday. But he remarks, for example, that if in metaphysics we deny personality to God, this should not prevent us from thinking and speaking in a different way 'when the devout motions of the soul come'.[2] And though we can understand what Emerson means, a systematic philosopher who held this point of view would be more likely to follow Hegel in drawing an explicit distinction between the language of speculative philosophy and that of religious consciousness than to content himself with dismissing consistency as a hobgoblin of little minds. In other words, Emerson's philosophy was impressionistic and what is sometimes called 'intuitive'. It conveyed a personal vision of reality, but it was not presented in the customary dress of impersonal argument and precise statement. Some, of course, may consider this to be a point in its favour, but the fact remains that if we are looking for a systematic development of idealism in American thought, we have to look elsewhere.

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[1] *Works*, I, p. 117.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, I, p. 59.
[5] *Ibid.*, I, p. 35.
[6] *Ibid.*, I, p. 20.
[7] *Ibid.*, I, p. 244.

Emerson was the chief figure in the Transcendentalist Club which was founded at Boston in 1836. Another member, highly esteemed by Emerson, was Amos Bronson Alcott (1799–1888), a deeply spiritual man who, in addition to his attempts to introduce new methods into education, founded a utopian community in Massachusetts, though it did not last long. Given to vague and oracular utterances, he was later pushed by the St. Louis Hegelians into trying to clarify and define his idealism. Among others associated in some way with New England Transcendentalism we may mention Henry David Thoreau (1817–62) and Orestes Augustus Brownson (1803–76). Thoreau, a famous literary figure, was attracted to Emerson when the latter delivered his Phi Beta Kappa Society address on 'The American Scholar' at Harvard in 1857. As for Brownson, his spiritual pilgrimage led him by various stages from Presbyterianism to Catholicism.

5. In 1867 there appeared at St. Louis, Missouri, the first number of *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, edited by William Torrey Harris (1835–1909). Harris and his associates contributed powerfully to spreading in America a knowledge of German idealism, and the group are known as the St. Louis

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[1] *Ibid.*, 1, p. 24.

[2] *Ibid.*

Hegelians. Harris was also one of the founders of the Kant-Club (1874). The group had some relations with the Transcendentalists of New England; and Harris helped to start the Concord Summer School of Philosophy in 1880, with which Alcott collaborated. In 1889 he was appointed United States Commissioner of Education by President Harrison.

In the first number of *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* Harris spoke of the need for a speculative philosophy which would fulfil three main tasks. In the first place it should provide a philosophy of religion suitable for a time when traditional dogmas and ecclesiastical authority were losing their hold on men's minds. In the second place it should develop a social philosophy in accordance with the new demands of the national consciousness, which was turning away from sheer individualism. In the third place it should work out the deeper implications of the new ideas in the sciences, in which field, Harris maintained, the day of simple empiricism was definitely over. As speculative philosophy meant for Harris the tradition which started with Plato and attained its fullest expression in the system of Hegel, he was calling in effect for a development of idealism under the inspiration of post-Kantian German philosophy but in accordance with American needs.

There were various attempts to fulfil this sort of programme, ranging from the personal idealism of Howison and Bowne to the absolute idealism of Josiah Royce. And as both Howison and Bowne were born before Royce, they should perhaps be treated first. I propose, however, to devote the next chapter to Royce and in the following chapter to discuss briefly the personal idealists and some other philosophers who belonged to the idealist tradition, mentioning the names of some thinkers who were junior to Royce.

It may be as well, however, to point out at once that it is difficult to make any very sharp division between personal and absolute idealism in American thought. In a real sense Royce too was a personalist idealist. In other words, the form which absolute idealism took with Bradley, involving the relegation of personality to the sphere of appearances as contrasted with that of reality, was not congenial to the American mind. And, in general, it was felt that the proper fulfilment of Harris's programme required that human personality should not be sacrificed on the altar of the One, though there were, of course, differences in emphasis, some thinkers placing the emphasis on the Many, others more on the

One. Hence a distinction between personal and absolute idealism is legitimate, provided that we allow for the qualification which has just been made.

We may also remark that the term 'personal idealism' is somewhat ambiguous in the context of American thought. It was used, for example, by William James of his own philosophy. But though the use of the term was doubtless justified, James is best discussed under the heading of pragmatism.

CHAPTER XII

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ROYCE

Remarks on Royce's writings previous to his Gifford Lectures —The meaning of Being and the meaning of ideas—Three inadequate theories of Being—The fourth conception of Being— The finite self and the Absolute; moral freedom—The social aspect of morality—Immortality—Infinite series and the idea of a self-representative system—Some critical comments.

1. JOSIAH ROYCE (1855–1916) entered the University of California at the age of sixteen and received his baccalaureate in 1875. A paper which he wrote on the theology of the *Prometheus Bound* of Aeschylus won him a grant of money that enabled him to spend two years in Germany, where he read German philosophers such as Schelling and Schopenhauer, and studied under Lotze at Göttingen. After taking his doctorate in 1878 at Johns Hopkins University he taught for a few years in the University of California and then went to Harvard as a lecturer in philosophy. In 1885 he was nominated as assistant professor, and in 1892 professor. In 1914 he accepted the Alford chair of philosophy at Harvard.

In 1885 Royce published *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy.* In it he argues that the impossibility of proving the universal and absolute validity of the moral ideal embraced by any given individual tends to produce moral scepticism and pessimism. Reflection, however, shows that the very search for a universal and absolute ideal reveals in the seeker a moral will which wills the harmonization of all particular ideals and values. And there then arises in the mind of the individual the consciousness that he ought so to live that his life and the lives of other men may form a unity, converging towards a common ideal goal or end. With this idea Royce associates an exaltation of the social order, in particular of the State.[1]

Turning to the problem of God, Royce rejects the traditional proofs of God's existence and develops an argument for the Absolute from the recognition of error. We are accustomed to think that error arises when our thought fails to conform with its intended object. But we obviously cannot place ourselves in the position of an external spectator, outside the subject-object relationship, capable of seeing whether thought conforms with its object or not. And reflection on this fact may lead to scepticism. Yet it is clear that we are capable of recognizing error. We can not only make erroneous judgments but also know that we have made them. And further reflection shows that truth and falsity have meaning only in relation to a complete system of truth, which must be present to absolute thought. In other words, Royce accepts a coherence theory of truth and passes from it to the assertion of absolute thought. As he was later to express it, an individual's opinions are true or false in relation to a wider insight. And his argument is that we cannot stop until we arrive at the idea of an all-inclusive divine insight which embraces in a comprehensive unity our thinking and its objects and is the ultimate measure of truth and falsity.

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[1] The exaltation of the State, which is even described as 'divine', reappears in Royce's essay, *California: A Study of American Character* (1886).

In *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, therefore, the Absolute is described as thought. 'All reality must be present to the unity of the Infinite Thought.'[1] But Royce does not understand this term in a sense which would exclude descriptions of the Absolute in terms of will or of experience. And in *The Conception of God* (1897) he argues that there is an absolute experience which is related to ours as an organic whole is related to its constituent elements. Though, therefore, Royce frequently uses the term 'God', it is obvious that the divine being is for him the One, the totality.[2] At the same time God or the Absolute is conceived as self-conscious. And the natural conclusion to draw is that finite selves are thoughts of God in his own act of self-knowledge. It is thus perfectly understandable that Royce drew upon himself the criticism of the personal idealists.[3] In point of fact, however, he had no wish to submerge the Many in the One in such a way as to reduce finite self-consciousness to an inexplicable illusion. Hence he had to develop a theory of the relation between the One and the Many which would neither reduce the Many to illusory appearance nor make the term 'One' altogether inappropriate. And this was one of the main themes of Royce's Gifford Lectures, to which we shall turn in the next section.

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[1] *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, p. 433.

[2] In *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy* (1892), Royce speaks of the one infinite Self of which all finite selves are moments or organic parts.

[3] The sub-title of *The Conception of God* is *A Philosophical Discussion Concerning the Nature of the Divine Idea as a Demonstrable Reality*. Howison, the personal idealist, was one of the participants in the original discussion of 1895.

Royce's idea of God as the absolute and all-inclusive experience naturally compels him, like Bradley, to devote attention to the problem of evil. In *Studies in Good and Evil* (1898) he rejects any attempt to evade the issue by saying that suffering and moral evil are illusions. On the contrary, they are real. We cannot avoid the conclusion, therefore, that God suffers when we suffer. And we must suppose that suffering is necessary for the perfecting of the divine life. As for moral evil, this too is required for the perfection of the universe. For the good will presupposes the evil as something to be overcome. True, from the point of view of the Absolute the world, the object of infinite thought, is a perfect unity in which evil is already overcome and subordinated to the good. But it is none the less a constituent element in the whole.

If God is a name for the universe, and if suffering and evil are real, we must obviously locate them in God. If, however, there is an absolute point of view from which evil is eternally overcome and subordinated to the good, God can hardly be simply a name for the universe. In other words, the problem of the relation between God and the world becomes acute. But Royce's ideas on this subject are best discussed in connection with his main presentation of his philosophy.

2. The two volumes of *The World and the Individual*, representing series of Gifford Lectures, appeared respectively in 1900 and 1901. In them Royce sets out to determine the nature of Being. If it is asserted that God is, or that the world is, or that the finite self is, we can always ask for the meaning of 'is'. This term, which Royce calls 'the existential predicate',[1] is often assumed to be simple and indefinable. But in philosophy the simple and ultimate is as much a subject for reflection as the complex and derived. Royce is not, however, concerned with the verb 'to be' simply in the sense of exist. He is also concerned with determining 'the special sorts of Reality that we attribute to God, to the World, and to the Human Individual'.[2] In traditional language he is concerned with essence as well as with existence, in his own language with the *what* as well as with the *that*. For if we assert

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[1] *The World and the Individual*, I, p. 12 (1920 edition). This work will be referred to simply as *The World*.

[2] *Ibid.*, I, p. 12.

that *X* is or exists, we assert that there is an *X*, something possessing a certain nature.

In point of fact the problem of determining the meaning of what Royce calls the existential or ontological predicate immediately becomes for him the problem of determining the nature of reality. And the question arises, how are we to tackle this problem? It might perhaps appear that the best way to approach it would be to look at reality as presented in experience and try to understand it. But, Royce insists, we can understand reality only by means of ideas. And it thus becomes all-important to understand what an idea is and how it stands to reality. 'I am one of those who hold that when you ask the question: What is an Idea? and: How can Ideas stand in any true relation to Reality? you attack the world-knot in the way that promises most for the untying of its meshes.'[1]

After his initial announcement that he is going to deal with the problem of Being, Royce's shift of attention to the nature of ideas and their relation to reality is likely to appear both disappointing and exasperating to his readers. But his method of procedure is easily explicable. We have seen that in *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy* Royce described God as absolute thought. And his approach to the problem of Being by way of a theory of ideas is suggested by the metaphysical position which he has already adopted, namely the primacy of thought. Thus when he asserts 'the primacy of the World as Idea over the World as Fact',[2] he is speaking in terms of the idealist tradition as he sees it, the tradition according to which the world is the self-realization of the absolute Idea.

In the first place Royce draws a distinction between the external and internal meanings of an idea. Let us suppose that I have an idea of Mount Everest. It is natural to think of this idea as referring to and representing an external reality, namely the actual mountain. And this representative function is what Royce understands by the external meaning of an idea. But now let us suppose that I am an artist, and that I have in my mind an idea of the picture which I wish to paint. This idea can be described as 'the partial fulfilment of a purpose'.[3] And this aspect of an idea is what Royce calls its internal meaning.

Common sense would doubtless be prepared to admit that the idea in the mind of an artist can reasonably be described as the partial fulfilment of a purpose.[1] And to this extent it recognizes the existence of internal meaning. But, left to itself, common sense would probably regard the representative function of the idea as primary, even though it is a question of representing what does not yet exist, namely the projected work of art. And if we consider an idea such as that of the number of the inhabitants of London, common sense would certainly emphasize its representative character and ask whether or not it corresponds with external reality.

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[1] *Ibid.*, I, pp. 16–17.

[2] *Ibid.*, I, p. 19.

[3] *Ibid.*, I, p. 25.

Royce, however, maintains that it is the internal meaning of an idea which is primary, and that in the long run external meaning turns out to be only 'an aspect of the completely developed internal meaning'.[2] Suppose, for example, that I wish to ascertain the number of people, or of families, resident in a certain area. Obviously, I have a purpose in wishing to ascertain these facts. Perhaps I am in charge of a housing scheme and wish to ascertain the number of individuals and of families in order to be able to estimate the number of houses or flats required for the already resident population in a district which is to be reconstructed. It is clearly important that my idea of the population should be accurate. External meaning is thus of importance. At the same time I try to obtain an accurate idea with a view to the fulfilment of a purpose. And the idea can be regarded as a partial or incomplete fulfilment of this purpose. In this sense the internal meaning of the idea is primary. According to Royce, its external meaning, taken simply by itself, is an abstraction, an abstraction, that is to say, from its context, namely the fulfilment of a purpose. When it is replaced in its context, the internal meaning is seen to take precedence.

What, it may be asked, is the connection between this theory of the meaning of ideas and the solution of the problem of reality? The answer is obviously that Royce intends to represent the world as the embodiment of an absolute system of ideas which are, in themselves, the incomplete fulfilment of a purpose. 'We propose to answer the question: What is to be? by the assertion that: To be means simply to express, to embody the complete internal meaning of a certain absolute system of ideas—a system, moreover, which is genuinely implied in the true internal meaning or purpose of every finite idea, however fragmentary.'[1] Royce admits that this theory is not novel. For example, it is essentially the same as the line of thought which 'led Hegel to call the world the embodied Idea'.[2] But though the theory is not novel, 'I believe it to be of fundamental and of inexhaustible importance'.[3]

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[1] It is certainly not the intention of the present writer to suggest that the artist or poet necessarily first forms a clear idea of the work to be done and then gives concrete embodiment to this idea. If, for example, the poet had a clear idea of the poem, the poem would already have been composed. And all that remained would be to write down a poem already existing in the poet's mind. At the same time the poet would not start working without some sort of conceived purpose, some sort of 'idea' which could reasonably be regarded as the beginning of a total action.

[2] *The World*, I, p. 36.

In other words, Royce first interprets the function of human ideas in the light of an already existing idealist conviction about the primacy of thought. And he then uses this interpretation as the basis for an explicit metaphysics. At the same time he works dialectically towards the establishment of his own view of the meaning of 'to be' by examining in turn different types of philosophy with a view to exhibiting their inadequacy. And though we cannot enter into the details of this discussion, it is appropriate to indicate its general lines.

3. The first type of philosophy discussed by Royce is what he calls realism. By this he understands the doctrine that 'the mere knowledge of any Being by any one who is not himself the Being known, "makes no difference whatever" to that known Being'.[4] In other words, if all knowledge were to disappear from the world, the only difference that this would make to the world would be that the particular fact of knowledge would no longer exist. Truth and falsity consist in the correspondence or non-correspondence of ideas with things: and nothing exists simply in virtue of the fact that it is known. Hence we cannot tell by inspecting the relations between ideas whether the objects referred to exist or not. Hence the *what* is sundered from the *that*. And this, Royce remarks, is why the realist has to deny the validity of the ontological argument for God's existence.

Royce's criticism of 'realism' is not always very clear. But his general line of thought is as follows. By realism in this context he evidently means an extreme nominalistic empiricism, according to which the world consists of a plurality of entities that are mutually independent. The disappearance of one would not affect the existence of the rest. Any relations which are superadded to these entities must, therefore, be themselves independent entities. And in this case, Royce argues, the terms of the relations cannot really be related. If we start with entities which are sundered from one another, they remain sundered. Royce then argues that ideas must themselves be entities, and that on realist premisses an unbridgeable gulf yawns between them and the objects to which they are thought to refer. In other words, if ideas are entities which are completely independent of other entities, we can never know whether they correspond with objects external to themselves, nor indeed whether there are such objects at all. Hence we can never know whether realism, as an idea or set of ideas, is true or false. And in this sense realism, as a theory of reality, is self-defeating: it undermines its own foundations.[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, I, p. 36.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, I, p. 32.

[4] *Ibid.*, I, p. 93.

From realism Royce proceeds to a consideration of what he calls 'mysticism'. As the core of realism consists in defining as 'real' any being which is essentially independent of any idea which refers to it from without, the realist, Royce claims, is committed to dualism. For he must postulate the existence of at least one idea and one object which is external to it. Mysticism, however, rejects dualism and asserts the existence of a One in which the distinctions between subject and object, idea and the reality to which it refers, vanish.

Mysticism, as understood in this sense, is as self-defeating as realism. For if there is only one simple and indivisible Being, the finite subject and its ideas must be accounted illusory. And in this case the Absolute cannot be known. For it could be known only by ideas. In fact any assertion that there is a One must be illusory. It is true that our fragmentary ideas need completion in a unified system, and that the whole is the truth. But if a philosopher stresses unity to such an extent that ideas have to be accounted illusion, he cannot at the same time consistently maintain that there is a One or Absolute. For it is plain that the Absolute has meaning for us only in so far as it is conceived by means of ideas.

If therefore we wish to maintain that knowledge of reality is possible at all, we cannot take the path of mysticism. We must allow for plurality. At the same time we cannot return to realism as described above. Hence realism must be modified in such a way that it is no longer self-defeating. And one way of attempting such a modification is to take the path of what Royce calls 'critical rationalism'.

The critical rationalist undertakes to 'define Being in terms of validity, to conceive that whoever says, of any object, *It is*, means only that a certain idea . . . *is valid*, has truth, defines an experience that, at least as a mathematical ideal, and perhaps as an empirical event, is determinately *possible*'.[1] Suppose that I assert that there are human beings on the planet Mars. According to the critical rationalist, I am asserting that in the progress of possible experience a certain idea would be validated or verified. Royce gives as examples of critical rationalism Kant's theory of possible experience and J. S. Mill's definition of matter as a permanent possibility of sensations. We might add logical positivism, provided that we substitute for 'idea' 'empirical proposition'.

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[1] The argument might perhaps be summed up in this way. If things are completely independent of ideas, ideas are completely independent of things. And in this case truth, considered as a relation between idea and things, is unattainable.

In Royce's view critical rationalism has this advantage over realism that by defining Being in terms of possible experience, the validation of an idea (better, the verification of a proposition), it avoids the objections which arise from realism's complete sundering of ideas from the reality to which they are assumed to refer. At the same time critical rationalism has this great drawback that it is incapable of answering the question, '*what is a valid or a determinately possible experience at the moment when it is supposed to be only possible?* What is a valid truth at the moment when nobody verifies its validity?'[2] If I assert that there are men on Mars, this statement doubtless implies, in a definable sense of this term, that the presence of men on Mars is an object of possible experience. But if the statement happens to be true, their existence is not simply possible existence. Hence we can hardly define Being simply in terms of the possible validation or verification of an idea. And though critical rationalism does not make knowledge of reality impossible, as is done by both realism and mysticism, it is unable to provide an adequate account of reality. Hence we must turn to another and more adequate philosophical theory, which will subsume in itself the truths contained in the three theories already mentioned but which will at the same time be immune from the objections which can be brought against them.

4. It has already been indicated that by 'realism' Royce understands nominalism rather than realism as this term is used in the context of the controversy about universals. And if we bear this fact in mind, we shall not be so startled by his assertion that for the realist the only ultimate form of being is the individual. For the nominalist slogan was that only individuals exist. At the same time we must also bear in mind the fact that Hegel, who was no

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[1] *The World*, 1, pp. 226–7.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1, p. 260.

nominalist, used the term 'individual' to mean the concrete universal, and that in the Hegelian philosophy the ultimate form of being is the individual in this sense of the term, the Absolute being the supreme individual, the all-inclusive concrete universal. Hence when Royce asserts that the truth contained in realism is that the only ultimate form of being is the individual, it would be misleading to say simply that he is accepting the nominalist slogan. For he re-interprets the term 'individual' under the inspiration of the idealist tradition. According to his use of the term 'an individual being is a Life of Experience fulfilling Ideas, in an absolutely final form. . . . The essence of the Real is to be Individual, or permit no other of its own kind, and this character it possesses only as the unique fulfilment of purpose.'[1]

Now we have seen that an idea is the incomplete or partial fulfilment of a purpose, the expression of will. And the complete embodiment of the will is the world in its entirety. Hence any idea ultimately 'means'[2] the totality. And it follows that in the totality, the world as a whole, I can recognize myself. To this extent therefore we can find truth in 'mysticism' and agree with the oriental mystic who 'says of the self and the World: *That art Thou*'.[3]

It is evident, however, that as embodied in any particular phase of consciousness the will expresses itself in attention only to a part of the world or to certain facts in the world. The rest relapses into a vague background at the margin of consciousness. It becomes in fact the object of possible experience. In other words, it is necessary to introduce a concept from critical rationalism.

So far we have been thinking of the point of view of the individual finite subject. But though there is an obvious sense in which the world is 'my world' and nobody else's, it is also obvious that if I regard the world as being simply and solely the embodiment of my will, I am committed to solipsism. It is also clear that if I postulate the existence of other lives of experience besides my own but regard each life as completely self-enclosed, I fall back into the thesis of realism, namely that reality consists of completely separate and mutually independent entities. Hence to avoid solipsism without returning to the realist thesis which we have already rejected we must introduce a new dimension or plane, that of intersubjectivity.

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[1] *The World*, I, p. 348. For example, 'my world' is the embodiment of my will, the fulfilment of my purpose, the expression of my interests. And it is thus unique. But, as is explained in the following paragraphs, we cannot remain simply with the concept of 'my world'.

[2] We must remember that for Royce 'internal meaning' is primary.

[3] *The World*, I, p. 355.

It is commonly said, Royce remarks, that we come to know the existence of other persons by analogical reasoning. That is to say, observing certain patterns of external behaviour we attribute to them wills like our own. But if this means that we first have a clear knowledge of ourselves and then infer the existence of other persons, 'it is nearer the truth to say that we first learn about ourselves from and through our fellows, than that we learn about our fellows by using the analogy of ourselves'.[1] We have indeed ever-present evidence of the existence of others. For they are the source of new ideas. They answer our questions; they tell us things; they express opinions other than our own; and so on. Yet it is precisely through social intercourse or at least in the consciousness of the presence of others, that we form our own ideas and become aware of what we really will and aim at. As Royce puts it, our fellows 'help us to find out what our true meaning is'.[2]

If, however, Royce rejects the view that we first possess a clear consciousness of ourselves and then infer the existence of other persons, still less does he intend to imply that we first have a clear and definite idea of other persons and then infer that we too are persons. He says, indeed, that 'a vague belief in the existence of our fellows seems to antedate, to a considerable extent, the definite formation of any consciousness of ourselves'.[3] But his thesis is that the clear awareness of ourselves and of other persons arises out of a kind of primitive social consciousness, so that it is a question of differentiation rather than of inference. Empirical self-consciousness depends constantly upon a series of contrast-effects. 'The Ego is always known as in contrast to the Alter.'[4] Both emerge from the original social consciousness.

As experience develops, the individual comes more and more to regard the inner lives of others as something private, removed from his direct observation. At the same time he becomes progressively conscious of external objects as instruments of purposes which are common to himself and others as well as of his and their particular purposes or interests. There thus arises the consciousness of a triad, 'my fellow and Myself, with Nature between us'.[5]

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[1] *Ibid.*, II, pp. 170–1. [2] *Ibid.*, II, p. 172. [3] *Ibid.*, II, p. 170.

[4] *Ibid.*, II, p. 264. Royce expresses his general agreement with the theory of the origins of self-consciousness given in the second volume of *Mental Development in the Child and the Race* (1896), by James Mark Baldwin (1861–1934), of Princeton University.

[5] *The World*, II, p. 177.

The world of Nature is known by us only in part, a great deal remaining for us the realm of possible experience. But we have already noted the difficulty encountered by critical rationalism in explaining the ontological status of objects of possible experience; and in any case science makes it impossible for us to believe that Nature is simply and solely the embodiment of human will and purpose. The hypothesis of evolution, for example, leads us to conceive finite minds as products. In this case, however, the question arises, how can we save the idealist definition of Being in terms of the internal meaning of ideas considered as the partial fulfilment of a purpose?

Royce's answer to this question is easy to foresee. The world is ultimately the expression of an absolute system of ideas which is itself the partial fulfilment of the divine will. God, expressing himself in the world, is the ultimate Individual. Or, to put the matter in another way, the ultimate Individual is the life of absolute experience. Each finite self is a unique expression of the divine purpose; and each embodies or expresses itself in its world. But 'my world' and 'your world' are unique facets of 'the world', the embodiment of the infinite divine will and purpose. And what is for us simply the object of possible experience is for God the object of actual creative experience. 'The whole world of truth and being must exist only as present, in all its variety, its wealth, its relationships, its entire constitution, to the unity of a single consciousness, which includes both our own and all finite conscious meanings in one final eternally present insight.'[1] Royce is thus able to preserve his theory of Being, namely that 'whatever is, is consciously known as the fulfilment of some idea, and is so known either by ourselves at this moment, or by a consciousness inclusive of our own'.[2]

5. We have seen that for Royce the individual is a *life* of experience. And if we are looking for the nature of the self in a meta-empirical sense,[3] we have to conceive it in ethical terms, not in terms of a soul-substance. For it is through the possession of a unique ideal, a unique vocation, a unique life-task which is what my past has 'meant' and which my future is to fulfil that '*I am defined and created a Self*'.[4] Perhaps, therefore, we can say,

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[1] *The World*, I, p. 397. [2] *Ibid.*, I, p. 396.

[3] That is to say, if we are looking for a metaphysical concept of the self rather than for an empirical account of, say, the origins and development of self-consciousness.

[4] *The World*, II, p. 276.

speaking in a manner that puts us in mind of existentialism, that for Royce the finite individual continually creates himself as this unique self by realizing a unique ideal, by fulfilling a certain unique vocation.[1]

It is in terms of this idea of the self that Royce attempts to meet the objection that absolute idealism deprives the finite self of reality, value and freedom. He has, of course, no intention of denying any of the empirical data relating to the dependence of the psychical on the physical or to the influence on the self of social environment, education and such like factors. But he insists that each finite self has its own unique way of acknowledging and responding by its deeds to this dependence,[2] while from the metaphysical point of view the life of each finite self is a unique contribution to the fulfilment of the general purpose of God. Royce has indeed to admit that when I will, God wills in me, and that my act is part of the divine life. But this admission, he maintains, is quite compatible with the statement that the finite self can act freely. For by the very fact that I am a *unique* expression of the divine will, the will from which my acts proceed is *my* will. 'Your individuality in your act *is* your freedom.'[3] That is to say, my way of expressing the divine will is myself; and if my acts proceed from myself, they are free acts. There is indeed a sense in which it is true to say that the divine Spirit compels us, but 'in the sense that it compels you to be an individual, and to be free'.[4]

Now, Royce maintains that every finite will seeks the Absolute, so much so that 'to seek anything but the Absolute itself is, indeed, even for the most perverse Self, simply impossible'.[5] In other words, every finite self tends by its very nature, whether it is aware of the fact or not, to unite its will ever more closely with the divine will. Obligation bears on us in relation to conduct which would bring us nearer to this end. And a moral rule is a rule which, if followed, would bring us nearer to the end than if we acted in a manner contrary to the rule. It is thus clear enough that in Royce's ethics the concept of the good is paramount, and that obligation bears on us in relation to the means necessary to attain this good, namely the conscious union of our will with the divine will. But it is not so clear how any room can be left for rebellion against the divine will or against a known dictate of the moral law. For if we all inevitably seek the Absolute, it appears to follow that if a person acts in a manner which will not as a matter of fact bring him nearer to the final end which he is always seeking, he does so simply out of ignorance, out of defective knowledge. Hence the question arises, 'can a finite self, knowing the Ought, in any sense freely choose to rebel or to obey?'[1]

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[1] Needless to say, for the atheist existentialist, such as Sartre, the idea of a God-given vocation is devoid of validity.

[2] Here again one is put in mind of modern existentialism.

[3] *The World*, I, p. 469.

[4] *Ibid.*, II, p. 293.

[5] *Ibid.*, II, p. 347.

Royce answers in the first place that though a man who has clear knowledge of what he ought to do will act in accordance with this knowledge, he can voluntarily concentrate his attention elsewhere, so that here and now he no longer has clear knowledge of what he ought to do. 'To sin is *consciously to forget*, through a narrowing of the field of attention, an Ought that one already recognizes.'[2]

Given Royce's premisses, this answer is hardly adequate. We can, of course, easily give a cash-value to his idea of a shift of attention. Suppose, for example, that I am sincerely convinced that it would be wrong for me to act in a certain way which I regard as productive of sensual pleasure. The more I concentrate my attention on the pleasurable aspects of this way of acting, so much the more does my conviction of its wrongness tend to retreat to the margin of consciousness and become ineffective. We all know that this sort of situation occurs frequently enough. And the ordinary comment would be that the agent should be careful not to concentrate his attention on the pleasurable aspects of a way of acting which he sincerely believes to be wrong. If he concentrates his attention in this manner, he is ultimately responsible for what happens. But though this point of view is clearly reasonable, the question immediately arises, how can the agent be properly held responsible for choosing to concentrate his attention in a certain direction if he is in his entirety an expression of the divine will? Have we simply not pushed the difficulty a stage further back?

Royce rather tends to evade the issue by turning to the subject of the overcoming of evil in the totality. But his general line of answer seems to be that as a man's direction of his attention proceeds from his will, the man is himself responsible for it and thus for the outcome. The fact that the man's will is itself the expression of the divine will does not alter the situation. In the circumstances it does not appear that Royce can very well say anything else. For though he certainly wishes to maintain human freedom and responsibility in a real sense, his determination to maintain at the same time the doctrine of the all-comprehensive Absolute inevitably influences his account of freedom. Moral freedom becomes 'simply this freedom to hold by attention, or to forget by inattention, an Ought already present to one's finite consciousness'.[1] If it is asked whether the holding or forgetting is not itself determined by the Absolute, Royce can only answer that it proceeds from a man's own will, and that to act in accordance with one's will *is* to act freely, even if one's finite will is a particular embodiment of the divine will.

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[1] *The World*, II, p. 351.

[2] *Ibid.*, II, p. 359.

6. As Royce lays great emphasis, in a manner which reminds us of Fichte, on the uniqueness of the task which each finite self is called to perform, he can hardly be expected to devote much time to developing a theory of universal moral rules.[2] And it is perhaps not an exaggeration to say that the fundamental precept is for him, as for Emerson, 'Be an individual! That is, find and fulfil your unique task.' At the same time it would be quite wrong to depict him as belittling the idea of the community. On the contrary, his ethical theory can be regarded as a contribution to the demand made by Harris in his programme for speculative philosophy, that a social theory should be developed which would fulfil the needs of a national consciousness that was moving away from sheer individualism. For Royce all finite selves are mutually related precisely because they are unique expressions of one infinite will. And all individual vocations or life-tasks are elements in a common task, the fulfilment of the divine purpose. Hence Royce preaches loyalty to the ideal community, the Great Community as he calls it.[3]

In *The Problem of Christianity* (1913) Royce defines loyalty as 'the willing and thoroughgoing devotion of a self to a cause, when the cause is something which unites many selves in one, and which is therefore the interest of a community'.[4] And he sees in the Church, the community of the faithful, especially as represented in the Pauline Epistles, the embodiment of the spirit of loyalty, of devotion to a common ideal and of loyalty to the ideal community which should be loved as a person. It does not follow, however, that Royce intended to identify what he calls the Great Community with an historic Church, any more than with an historic State. The Great Community is more like Kant's kingdom of ends; it is the ideal human community. Yet though it is an ideal to be sought after rather than an actual historic society existing here and now, it none the less lies at the basis of the moral order, precisely because it is the goal or *telos* of moral action. It is true that the individual alone can work out his moral vocation; it cannot be done for him. But because of the very nature of the self genuine individuality can be realized only through loyalty to the Great Community, to an ideal cause which unites all men together.

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[1] *Ibid.*, II, p. 360.

[2] 'By the Ought you mean, at any temporal instant, a rule that, if followed, would guide you so to express, at that instant, your will, that you should be thereby made nearer to union with the divine, nearer to a consciousness of the oneness of your will and the Absolute Will, than you would if you acted counter to this Ought', *The World*, II, pp. 347–8. Here the emphasis is placed on 'the instant', not on the universal.

[3] In 1908 Royce published *The Philosophy of Loyalty* and in 1916 *The Hope of the Great Community*.

[4] *The Problem of Christianity*, I, p. 68.

Largely under the influence of C. S. Peirce, Royce came to emphasize the role of interpretation in human knowledge and life; and he applied this idea in his ethical theory. For example, the individual cannot realize himself and attain true selfhood or personality without a life-goal or life-plan, in relation to which concepts such as right and wrong, higher self and lower self, become concretely meaningful. But a man comes to apprehend his life-plan or ideal goal only through a process of interpreting himself to himself. Further, this self-interpretation is achieved only in a social context, through interaction with other people. Others inevitably help me to interpret myself to myself; and I help others to interpret themselves to themselves. In a sense this process tends to division rather than to union, inasmuch as each individual becomes thereby more aware of himself as possessing a unique life-task. But if we bear in mind the social structure of the self, we are led to form the idea of an unlimited community of interpretation, of humanity, that is to say, as engaged throughout time in the common task of interpreting both the physical world and its own purposes, ideals and values. All growth in scientific knowledge and moral insight involves a process of interpretation.

The supreme object of loyalty as a moral category is, Royce came to think, this ideal community of interpretation. But towards the close of his life he stressed the importance of limited communities both for moral development and for the achievement of social reform. If we consider, for instance, two individuals who are disputing about, say, the possession of some property, we can see that this potentially dangerous situation is transformed by the intervention of a third party, the judge. A tryadic relation is substituted for the potentially dangerous dyadic relation; and a small-scale community of interpretation is set up. Thus Royce tries to exhibit the mediating or interpretative and morally educative functions of such institutions as the judicial system, always in the light of the idea of interpretation. He applies this idea even to the institution of insurance and develops, as a safeguard against war, a scheme of insurance on an international scale.[1] Some of his commentators may have seen in such ideas a peculiarly American fusion of idealism with a rather down-to-earth practicality. But it does not follow, of course, that such a fusion is a bad thing. In any case Royce evidently felt that if substantive proposals were to be put forward in ethical theory, something more was required than exhorting men to be loyal to the ideal community of interpretation.

7. From what has been said hitherto it is clear that Royce attaches to the unique personality a value which could not be attributed to it in the philosophy of Bradley. It is not surprising, therefore, that he is far more interested than Bradley in the question of immortality, and that he maintains that the self is preserved in the Absolute.

In discussing this subject Royce dwells, among other aspects of the matter, on the Kantian theme that the moral task of the individual can have no temporal end. 'A consciously last moral task is a contradiction in terms. . . . The service of the eternal is an essentially endless service. There can be no last moral deed.'[2] Obviously, this line of argument could not by itself prove immortality. It is true that if we recognize a moral law at all, we have to regard it as bearing upon us as long as we live. But it does not follow from this premiss alone that the self survives bodily death and is able to continue fulfilling a moral vocation. But for Royce as a metaphysician the universe is of such a kind that the finite self, as a unique expression of the Absolute and as representing an irreplaceable value, must be supposed to continue in existence. The ethical self is always something in the making; and as the divine purpose must be fulfilled, we are justified in believing that after the death of the body the self attains genuine individuality in a higher form. But 'I know not in the least, I pretend not to guess, by what processes the individuality of our human life is further expressed. I wait until this mortal shall put on—Individuality.'[1] Evidently, in Royce's assertion of immortality what really counts is his general metaphysical vision of reality, coupled with his evaluation of personality.

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[1] Cf. *War and Insurance* (1914), and *The Hope of the Great Community* (1916).

[2] *The World*, I, pp. 444–5

8. At the end of the first volume of Royce's Gifford Lectures there is a Supplementary Essay in which he takes issue with Bradley on the subject of an infinite multitude. Bradley, it will be remembered, maintains that relational thought involves us in infinite series. If, for example, qualities *A* and *B* are related by relation *R*, we must choose between saying that *R* is reducible without residue to *A* and *B* or that it is not so reducible. In the first case we shall be compelled to conclude that *A* and *B* are not related at all. In the second case we shall have to postulate further relations to relate both *A* and *B* with *R*, and so on without end. We are then committed to postulating an actually infinite multitude. But this concept is self-contradictory. Hence we must conclude that relational thought is quite incapable of giving a coherent account of how the Many proceed from and are unified in the One, and that the world as presented in such thought belongs to the sphere of appearance as contrasted with that of reality. Royce, however, undertakes to show that the One can express itself in infinite series which are 'well-ordered' and involve no contradiction, and that thought is thus capable of giving a coherent account of the relation between the One and the Many. It is perhaps disputable whether Bradley's difficulties are really met by first ascribing to him the thesis that an actually infinite multitude is 'a self-contradictory conception'[2] and then arguing that an endless series in mathematics does not involve a contradiction. But though Royce develops his own conception of the relation between the One and the Many in the context of a controversy with Bradley, what he is really interested in is, of course, the explanation of his own ideas.

Royce's attention was directed by C. S. Peirce to the logic of mathematics;[3] and the Supplementary Essay shows the fruit of Royce's reflections on this subject. In an endless mathematical series, such as that of the whole numbers, the endlessness of the series is due to a recurrent operation of thought, a recurrent operation of thought being describable as 'one that, *if once finally expressed*, would involve, in the region where it had received expression, an infinite variety of serially arranged facts, corresponding to the purpose in question'.[1] In general, if we assume a purpose of such a kind that if we try to express it by means of a succession of acts, the ideal data which begin to express it demand as part of their own 'meaning' additional data which are themselves further expressions of the original meaning and at the same time demand still further expressions, we have an endless series produced by a recurrent operation of thought.

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[1] *The Conception of Immortality*, p. 80.

[2] *The World*, I, p. 475.

[3] Royce's interest in mathematical logic found expression in *The Relation of the Principles of Logic to the Foundation of Geometry* (1905).

A series of this kind can properly be regarded as a totality. To be sure, it is not a totality in the sense that we can count to the end and complete the series. For it is *ex hypothesi* infinite or endless. But if we take, for example, the series of whole numbers, 'the mathematician can view them all as *given* by means of their universal definition, and their consequent clear distinction from all other objects of thought'.[2] In other words, there is no intrinsic repugnance between the idea of a totality and that of an infinite series. And we can conceive the One as expressing itself in an infinite series or, rather, a plurality of co-ordinate infinite series, the plurality of lives of experience. This gives us, of course, a dynamic rather than a static concept of the One. And this is essential to Royce's metaphysics, with its emphasis on divine will and purpose and on the 'internal meaning' of ideas.

An infinite series of this kind is described by Royce as a self-representative system. And he finds examples in 'all continuous and discrete mathematical systems of any infinite type'.[3] But a simple illustration given by Royce himself will serve better to clarify what he means by a self-representative system. Suppose that we decide that on some portion of England a map is to be constructed which will represent the country down to the smallest detail, including every contour and marking, whether natural or artificial. As the map itself will be an artificial feature of England, another map will have to be constructed within the first map and representing it too, if, that is to say, our original purpose is to be carried out. And so on without end. True, this endless representation of England would not be physically possible. But we can conceive an endless series of maps within maps, a series which, though it cannot be completed in time, can be regarded as already given in our original purpose or 'meaning'. The observer who understood the situation and looked at the series of maps, would not see any last map. But he would know why there could be no

[1] *The World*, I, p. 507. [2] *Ibid.*, I, p. 515. [3] *Ibid.*, I, p. 513.

last map. Hence he would see no contradiction or irrationality in the endlessness of the series. And the series would constitute a self-representative system.

If we apply this idea in metaphysics, the universe appears as an infinite series, an endless whole, which expresses a single purpose or plan. There are, of course, subordinate and co-ordinate series, in particular the series which constitute the lives of finite selves. But they are all comprised within one unified infinite series which has no last member but which is 'given' as a totality in the internal meaning of the divine idea or absolute system of ideas. The One, according to Royce, must express itself in the endless series which constitutes its life of creative experience. In other words, it must express itself in the Many. And as the endless series is the progressive expression or fulfilment of a single purpose, the whole of reality is one self-representative system.

9. It is clear that Royce, with his emphasis on personality, has no intention of abandoning theism altogether and of using the term 'the Absolute' simply as a name for the world considered as an open totality, a series which has no assignable last member. The world is for him the embodiment of the internal meaning of a system of ideas which are themselves the partial fulfilment of a purpose. And the Absolute is a self; it is personal rather than impersonal; it is an eternal and infinite consciousness. Hence it can reasonably be described as God. And Royce depicts the infinite series which constitutes the temporal universe as present all at once, *tota simul*, to the divine consciousness. Indeed, he is quite prepared to commend St. Thomas Aquinas for his account of the divine knowledge; and he himself uses the analogy of our awareness of a symphony as a whole, an awareness which is obviously quite compatible with the knowledge that this part precedes that. So, according to Royce, God is aware of temporal succession, though the whole temporal series is none the less present to the eternal consciousness.

At the same time Royce rejects the dualistic sundering of the world from God which he regards as characteristic of theism, and he blames Aquinas for conceiving 'the temporal existence of the created world as sundered from the eternal life which belongs to God'.[1] The Many exist within the unity of the divine life. 'Simple unity is a mere impossibility. God cannot be One except by being Many. Nor can we various Selves be Many, unless in Him we are One.'[2]

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[1] *The World*, II, p. 143.

[2] *Ibid.*, II, p. 331.

In other words, Royce tries to re-interpret theism in the light of absolute idealism. He tries to preserve the idea of a personal God while combining it with the idea of the all-comprehensive Absolute represented as the Universal of universals.[1] And this is not an easy position to maintain. In fact its ambiguity is well illustrated by Royce's use of the term 'individual'. If we speak of God as the supreme or ultimate Individual, we naturally tend to think of him as a personal being and of the world as the 'external' expression of his creative will. But for Royce the term 'individual' means, as we have seen, a life of experience. And according to this meaning of the term God becomes the life of absolute and infinite experience, in which all finite things are immanent. Whereas the interpretation of the existence of finite things as the expression of purposeful will suggests creation in a theistic sense, the description of God as absolute experience suggests a rather different relation. No doubt Royce tries to bring the two concepts together through the conception of creative experience; but there seems to be in his philosophy a somewhat unstable marriage between theism and absolute idealism.

It is, of course, notoriously difficult to express the relation between the finite and the infinite without tending either to a monism in which the Many are relegated to the sphere of appearance or are submerged in the One or to a dualism which renders the use of the term 'infinite' quite inappropriate. And it is certainly not possible to avoid both positions without a clear theory of the analogy of being. But Royce's statements on the subject of being are somewhat perplexing.

On the one hand we are told that being is the expression or embodiment of the internal meaning of an idea, and so of purpose or will. But though the subordination of being to thought may be characteristic of metaphysical idealism, the question obviously arises whether thought itself is not a form of being. And the same question can be asked in regard to will. On the other hand we are told that the ultimately real, and so presumably the ultimate form of being, is the individual. And as God is the Individual of individuals, it appears to follow that he must be the supreme and absolute being. Yet we are also told to regard 'individuality, and consequently Being, as above all an expression of Will'.[2] To regard individuality as an expression of will is not so difficult, if, that is to say, we interpret individuality as a life of expression. But to regard being as an expression of will is not so easy. For the question again arises, is will not being? Of course, it would be possible to restrict the use of the term 'being' to material being. But then we could hardly regard individuality, in Royce's sense of the term, as being.

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[1] The term 'universal' is used here, needless to say, in the sense of the concrete universal.

[2] *The World*, I, p. 588.

In spite, however, of the ambiguity and lack of precision in his writing, Royce's philosophy impresses by its sincerity. It is evidently the expression of a deeply held faith, a faith in the reality of God, in the value of the human personality and in the unity of mankind in and through God, a unity which can be adequately realized only through individual contributions to a common moral task. Royce was indeed something of a preacher. But the philosophy which he preached certainly meant for him a great deal more than an intellectual exercise or game.

It should be added that in the opinion of some commentators[1] Royce came to abandon his theory of the Absolute Will and to substitute for it the idea of an unlimited community of interpretation, an unlimited community, that is to say, of finite individuals. And from the purely ethical point of view such a change would be understandable. For it would dispose of the objection, of which Royce himself was aware, that it is difficult, if indeed possible at all, to reconcile the theory of the Absolute Will with the view of human beings as genuine moral agents. At the same time the substitution of a community of finite individuals for the Absolute would be a pretty radical change. And it is by no means easy to see how such a community could take over, as it were, the cosmological function of the Absolute. Even if, therefore, the idea of the Absolute retreats into the background in Royce's latest writings, one hesitates to accept the view that he positively rejected the idea, unless, of course, one is driven to do so by strong empirical evidence. There is indeed some evidence. In his last years Royce himself referred to a change in his idealism. Hence we cannot say that the claim that he substituted the unlimited community of interpretation for his earlier concept of the Absolute is unfounded. Royce does not seem, however, to have been explicit as one could wish about the precise nature and extent of the change to which he refers.

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[1] Cf., the Appendix to *The Moral Philosophy of Josiah Royce* by Peter Fuss (Cambridge, Mass., 1965).

CHAPTER XIII

PERSONAL IDEALISM AND OTHER TENDENCIES

Howison's criticism of Royce in favour of his own ethical pluralism—The evolutionary idealism of Le Conte—The personal idealism of Bowne—The objective idealism of Creighton—Sylvester Morris and dynamic idealism—Notes on the prolongation of idealism into the twentieth century—An attempt at transcending the opposition between idealism and realism.

1. GEORGE HOLMES HOWISON (1834–1916), a member of the Philosophical Society of St. Louis and of W. T. Harris's Kant-Club, was at first a professor of mathematics. But in 1872 he accepted the chair of logic and philosophy in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology at Boston, a post which he occupied until 1878 when he went to Germany for two years. In Germany he came under the influence of the right-wing Hegelian Ludwig Michelet (1801–93), and, like Michelet himself, he interpreted Hegel's absolute Idea or cosmic Reason as a personal being, God. In 1884 Howison became a professor in the University of California. His work *The Limits of Evolution and Other Essays*, appeared in 1901.

It has already been mentioned that Howison participated in the discussion which formed the basis for *The Conception of God* (1897), a work to which reference was made in the chapter on Royce. In his introduction to the book Howison draws attention to the existence of a certain measure of basic agreement among the participants in the discussion, particularly in regard to the personality of God and about the close relation between the concepts of God, freedom and immortality. But though he recognizes certain family likenesses between different types of idealism, this does not prevent him from developing a sharp criticism of Royce's philosophy.

In the first place, if being is defined in terms of its relation to the internal meaning of an idea, how, Howison asks, are we to decide whether the idea in question is my idea or that of an infinite all-inclusive self? The factor which leads Royce and those who share his general outlook to reject solipsism in favour of absolute idealism is an instinctive response to the demands of common sense rather than any logical and compelling argument. In the second place, though Royce certainly intends to preserve individual freedom and responsibility, he can do so only at the cost of consistency. For absolute idealism logically involves the merging of finite selves in the Absolute.

Howison's own philosophy has been described as ethical pluralism. Existence takes the form of spirits and of the contents and order of their experience, the spatio-temporal world owing its being to the co-existence of spirits. Each spirit is a free and active efficient cause, having the origin of its activity within itself. At the same time each spirit is a member of a community of spirits, the City of God, the members being united in terms of final causality, that is, by their attraction to a common ideal, the full realization of the City of God. The human consciousness is not simply self-enclosed, but, when developed, it sees itself as a member of what Howison describes as Conscience or Complete Reason. And the movement towards a common ideal or end is what is called evolution.

This may sound remarkably like Royce's view, except perhaps for Howison's insistence that the spring of the activity of each spirit is to be sought within itself. But Howison tries to avoid what he regards as the logical and disastrous consequences of Royce's philosophy by emphasizing final causality. God is represented as the personified ideal of every spirit. By this Howison does not mean that God has no existence except as a human ideal. He means that the mode of divine action on the human spirit is that of final causality, rather than that of efficient causality. God draws the finite self as an ideal; but the self's response to God is its own activity rather than the action of God or the Absolute. In other words, God acts by illuminating the reason and attracting the will to the ideal of the unity of free spirits in himself rather than by determining the human will through efficient causality or the exercise of power.

2. Another participant in the discussion referred to above was Joseph Le Conte (1823–1901), professor in the University of California. Trained as a geologist, Le Conte interested himself in the philosophical aspects of the theory of evolution and expounded what can be described as evolutionary idealism.[1] As the ultimate source of evolution he saw a divine Energy which expresses itself

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[1] Le Conte's writings include *Religion and Science* (1874), and *Evolution: Its Nature, Its Evidence and Its Relation to Religious Thought* (1888).

immediately in the physical and chemical forces of Nature. But the efflux of this divine Energy becomes progressively individuated concomitantly with the advancing organization of matter. Le Conte's philosophy is thus pluralistic. For he maintains that in the process of evolution we find the emergence of successively higher forms of self-active individuals, until we reach the highest form of individual being yet attained, namely the human being. In man the efflux or spark of the divine life is able to recognize and to enter into conscious communion with its ultimate source. In fact we can look forward to a progressive elevation of man to the level of 'regenerated' man, enjoying a higher degree of spiritual and moral development.

Howison's approach to philosophy tended to be through the critical philosophy of Kant, when rethought in the light of metaphysical idealism. Le Conte's approach was rather by way of an attempt to show how the theory of evolution liberates science from all materialistic implications and points the way to a religious and ethical idealism. He exercised some influence on the mind of Royce.

3. Besides Howison, whose philosophy has been labelled as ethical idealism, one of the most influential representatives of personal idealism in America was Borden Parker Bowne (1847–1910). As a student at New York Bowne wrote a criticism of Spencer. During subsequent studies in Germany he came under the influence of Lotze, especially in regard to the latter's theory of the self.[1] In 1876 Bowne became Professor of Philosophy in the University of Boston. His writings include *Studies in Theism* (1879), *Metaphysics* (1882), *Philosophy of Theism* (1887), *Principles of Ethics* (1892), *The Theory of Thought and Knowledge* (1897), *The Immanence of God* (1905), and *Personalism* (1908). These titles show clearly enough the religious orientation of his thought.

Bowne at first described his philosophy as transcendental empiricism, in view of the conspicuous role played in his thought by a doctrine of categories inspired by Kant. These are not simply empirically derived, fortuitous results of adaptation to environment in the process of evolution. At the same time they are the expression of the nature of the self and of its self-experience. And this shows that the self is an active unity and not a mere logical postulate, as Kant thought. Indeed, the self or person, characterized by intelligence and will, is the only real efficient cause. For efficient causality is essentially volitional. In Nature we find indeed uniformities, but no causality in the proper sense.

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[1] See Vol. VII of this *History*, p. 378. For Lotze, to recognize the fact of the unity of consciousness is *eo ipso* to recognize the existence of the soul. He thus tries to avoid phenomenalism on the one hand and postulating an occult soul-substance on the other. For Bowne, the self is an immediate datum of consciousness, not a hidden entity which has to be inferred from the existence of faculties and their acts.

This idea of Nature forms the basis for a philosophy of God. Science describes how things happen. And it can be said to explain events, if we mean by this that it exhibits them as examples or cases of empirically discovered generalizations which are called 'laws'. 'But in the causal sense science explains nothing. Here the alternative is supernatural explanation or none.'[1] True, in science itself the idea of God is no more required than in shoemaking. For science is simply classificatory and descriptive. But once we turn to metaphysics, we see the order of Nature as the effect of the constant activity of a supreme rational will. In other words, as far as its causation is concerned, any event in Nature is as supernatural as a miracle would be. 'For in both alike God would be equally implicated.'[2]

We can now take a broad view of reality. If, as Bowne believes, to be real is to act, and if activity in the full sense can be attributed only to persons, it follows that it is only persons who are, so to speak, fully real. We thus have the picture of a system of persons standing to one another in various active relations through the instrumentality of the external world. And this system of persons must, according to Bowne, be the creation of a supreme Person, God. On the one hand a being which was less than personal could not be the sufficient cause of finite persons. On the other hand, if we can apply the category of causality to a world in which the infra-personal exercises no real efficient causality, this can only be because the world is the creation of a personal being who is immanently active in it. Ultimate reality thus appears as personal in character, as a system of persons with a supreme Person at their head.

Personalism, as Bowne came to call his philosophy, is 'the only metaphysics that does not dissolve away into self-cancelling abstractions'.[3] Auguste Comte, according to Bowne, was justified not only in confining science to the study of uniformities of coexistence and sequence among phenomena and in excluding from it all properly causal inquiry but also in rejecting metaphysics in so far as this is a study of abstract ideas and categories which are supposed to provide causal explanations. But personalism is immune from the objections which can be raised against metaphysics as Comte understood the term. For it does not seek the causal explanations which, on Comte's own showing, science cannot provide, in abstract categories. It sees in these categories simply the abstract forms of self-conscious life, and the ultimate causal explanation is found in a supreme rational will. True, personalist metaphysics may seem to involve a return to what Comte regarded as the first stage of human thought, namely the theological stage, in which explanations were sought in divine wills or in a divine will. But in personalism this stage is raised to a higher level, inasmuch as capricious wills are replaced by an infinite rational will.[1]

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[1] *The Immanence of God*, p. 19. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 18. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

4. Objective idealism, as it is commonly called, had as its principal representative James Edwin Creighton (1861–1924), who in 1892 succeeded J. G. Schurman[2] as head of the Sage School at Cornell University. In 1920 he became the first president of the American Philosophical Association. His principal articles were collected and published posthumously in 1925 with the title *Studies in Speculative Philosophy*.[3]

Creighton distinguishes two types of idealism. The first, which he calls mentalism, is simply the antithesis of materialism. While the materialist interprets the psychical as a function of the physical, the mentalist reduces material things to psychical phenomena, to states of consciousness or to ideas. And as the material world cannot without absurdity be reduced to any given finite individual's states of consciousness, the mentalist is inevitably driven to postulate an absolute mind. The clearest example of this type of idealism is the philosophy of Berkeley. But there are variants, such as panpsychism.

The other main type of idealism is objective or speculative idealism, which does not attempt to reduce the physical to the psychical but regards Nature, the self and other selves as three distinct but co-ordinate and complementary moments or factors within experience. In other words, experience presents us with the ego, other selves and Nature as distinct and irreducible factors which are at the same time comprised within the unity of experience. And objective idealism attempts to work out the implications of this basic structure of experience.

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[1] Obviously, what really needs to be shown is that metaphysical explanation is required at all. That empirical science cannot provide it is clear enough.

[2] Jack Gould Schurman (1854–1942), who became President of Cornell University in 1892, the same year in which he founded *The Philosophical Review*, believed that American culture was destined to prove the great mediator between East and West, and that idealism was peculiarly suited both to America and to the fulfilment of this task. Just as Kant mediated between rationalism and empiricism, so can speculative idealism mediate between the sciences and the arts. It has a synthesizing function in cultural life.

[3] Though not a prolific writer, Creighton's influence as a teacher was considerable. And he and his colleagues at Cornell were responsible for the philosophical education of a good many future American professors.

For example, though Nature is irreducible to mind, the two are mutually related. Nature, therefore, cannot be simply heterogeneous to mind; it must be intelligible. And this means that though philosophy cannot do the work of the empirical sciences it is not committed merely to accepting the scientific account of Nature, without adding anything. Science puts Nature in the centre of the picture: philosophy exhibits it as a co-ordinate of experience, in its relation to spirit. This does not mean that the philosopher is competent to contradict, or even to call in question scientific discoveries. It means that it is his business to show the significance of the world as represented by the sciences in reference to the totality of experience. In other words, there is room for a philosophy of Nature.

Again, objective idealism is careful to avoid placing the ego in the centre of the picture by taking it as an ultimate point of departure and then trying to prove, for example, the existence of other selves. The objective idealist, while recognizing the distinction between individuals, recognizes also that there are no isolated individual selves apart from society. And he will study, for instance, the significance of morality, political institutions and religion as activities or products, as the case may be, of a society of selves within the human environment, namely Nature.

In conformity with these ideas, which have an obvious affinity with Hegelianism, the Cornell School of idealism emphasized the social aspect of thought. Instead of being divided up into as many systems as there are philosophers, philosophy should be, like science, a work of co-operation. For it is the reflection of spirit, existing in and through a society of selves, rather than of the individual thinker considered precisely as such.

5. Objective idealism, represented chiefly by Creighton, was associated with Cornell University. Another form of idealism, so-called dynamic idealism, was associated with the University of Michigan, where it was expounded by George Sylvester Morris (1840–89).[1] After having studied at Dartmouth College and the

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[1] Another representative of this form of idealism at Michigan was the author of *Dynamic Idealism* (1898), Alfred Henry Lloyd.

Union Theological Seminary at New York, Morris passed some years in Germany, where he came under the influence of Trendelenburg[1] at Berlin. In 1870 he began to teach modern languages and literature at Michigan, and from 1878 he also lectured on ethics and the history of philosophy at Johns Hopkins University. Subsequently he became dean of the philosophical faculty at Michigan. His writings include *British Thought and Thinkers* (1880), *Philosophy and Christianity* (1883), and *Hegel's Philosophy of the State and of History: An Exposition* (1887). He also translated into English Ueberweg's *History of Philosophy* (1871–3), in the second volume of which he inserted an article on Trendelenburg.

Under the influence of Trendelenburg Morris placed in the forefront of his philosophy the Aristotelian idea of movement, that is, of the actualization of a potentiality, of the active expression of an entelechy. Life is obviously movement, energy; but thought too is a spontaneous activity, akin to other forms of natural energy. And it follows from this that the history of thought is not properly described as a dialectical development of abstract ideas or categories. Rather is it the expression of the activity of the spirit or mind. And philosophy is the science[2] of the mind as an active entelechy. That is to say, it is the science of experience in act or of lived experience.

To say that philosophy is the science of the activity of the spirit or mind, of experience in act, is not, however, to say that it has no connection with being. For the analysis of experience shows that subject and object, knowledge and being, are correlative terms. That which exists or has being is that which is known or knowable. It is that which falls within the potential field of active experience. And this is why we have to reject the Kantian Theory of the unknowable thing-in-itself, together with the phenomenalism which produces this theory.[3]

In his later years Morris moved closer to Hegel, whom he regarded as an 'objective empiricist', concerned with the integration of human experience by the reason. His most famous pupil was John Dewey, though Dewey came to abandon idealism for the instrumentalism associated with his name.

6. Idealism in America obviously owed much to the influence of

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[1] See Vol. VII of this *History*, pp. 386–7.

[2] For Morris philosophy is as much a science as other sciences.

[3] That is to say, if we regard the object of knowledge as phenomena, in the sense of appearances of what does not itself appear, we are led inevitably to postulate unknowable things-in-themselves.

European thought. But equally obviously, it proved congenial to many minds and received a native stamp, which is shown above all perhaps in the emphasis so often placed on personality. It is not surprising, therefore, that American idealism was by no means simply a nineteenth-century phenomenon, due to the discovery of German thought and to influence from British idealism. It has shown a vigorous life in the present century.

Among the representatives of personal idealism in the first half of the twentieth century we can mention the names of Ralph Tyler Flewelling (1871–), for many years a Professor of Philosophy in the University of South California and founder of *The Personalist* in 1920,[1] Albert Cornelius Knudson (1873–1953)[2] and Edgar Sheffield Brightman (1884–1953), Bowne Professor of Philosophy in the University of Boston.[3] The titles of their publications provide abundant evidence of the continuation of that religious orientation of personalism which we have already had occasion to notice. But apart from the fact that it is so often religiously minded people who are attracted in the first instance to personal idealism, there is, as has been mentioned above, an intrinsic reason for the religious orientation of this line of thought. The basic tenet of personalism has been stated as the principle that reality has no meaning except in relation to persons; that the real is only in, of or for persons. In other words, reality consists of persons and their creations. It follows, therefore, that unless the personal idealist equates ultimate reality with the system of finite selves, as McTaggart did, he must be a theist. There is room, of course, for somewhat different conceptions of God. Brightman, for example, maintained that God is finite.[4] But a concern not only with philosophical theism but also with religion as a form of experience is a universal feature of American personal idealism.

This is not to say, however, that the personal idealists have been concerned only with the defence of a religious outlook. For they have also devoted their attention to the subject of values, connecting them closely with the idea of the self-realization or development of personality. And this in turn has reacted on the theory of education, emphasis being laid on moral development and the cultivation of personal values. Finally, in political theory this type of idealism, with its insistence on freedom and on respect for the person as such, has been sharply opposed to totalitarianism and a strong advocate of democracy.

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[1] Among Flewelling's publications are *Personalism and The Problems of Philosophy* (1915), *The Reason in Faith* (1924), *Creative Personality* (1925) and *Personalism in Theology* (1943).

[2] Knudson is the author of *The Philosophy of Personalism* (1927), *The Doctrine of God* (1930), and *The Validity of Religious Experience* (1937).

[3] Brightman published among other writings, *Religious Values* (1925), *A Philosophy of Ideals* (1928), *The Problem of God* (1930), *Is God a Person?* (1932), *Moral Laws* (1933), *Personality and Religion* (1934), *A Philosophy of Religion* (1940), and *The Spiritual Life* (1942).

[4] Brightman argues, for instance, that the 'waste' involved in the process of evolution suggests the idea of a finite God who meets with opposition. Again, the divine reason sets limits to the divine will and power. Further, there is in God a 'given' element which he progressively masters. But where this 'given' element comes from is left obscure.

Evolutionary idealism has been represented in the first half of the present century by John Elof Boodin (1869–1950).[1] The main idea of this type of idealism is familiar enough, namely that in the evolutionary process we can see the emergence of successively higher levels of development through the creative activity of an immanent principle, the nature of which should be interpreted in the light of its higher rather than of its lower products.[2] In other words, evolutionary idealism substitutes for a purely mechanistic conception of evolution, based on laws relating to the redistribution of energy, a teleological conception according to which mechanical processes take place within a general creative movement tending towards an ideal goal.[3] Thus Boodin distinguishes between different interacting levels or fields in the evolutionary process or processes, in each of which there are interacting individual systems of energy. These levels or fields range from the primary physico-chemical level up to the ethical-social level. And the all-inclusive field is the divine creative spirit, 'the spiritual field in which everything lives and moves and has its being'.[4]

Evolutionary idealism does not indeed deny the value of human personality. For Boodin the human spirit participates in the divine creativity by the realization of values. At the same time, inasmuch as the evolutionary idealist fixes his attention chiefly on the total cosmic process rather than on the finite self,[1] he is more inclined than the personal idealist to a pantheistic conception of God. And this tendency is verified in the case of Boodin.

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[1] Author of *Time and Reality* (1904), *Truth and Reality* (1911), *A Realistic Universe* (1916), *Cosmic Evolution* (1925), *God and Creation* (2 volumes, 1934), and *Religion of Tomorrow* (1943).

[2] In distinguishing between 'lower' and 'higher' judgments of value obviously play an important part.

[3] It would, however, be a mistake to suppose that all philosophers who believe in creative evolution have postulated a fixed, preconceived goal or *telos* of the evolutionary process. Indeed, unless the creative agent is conceived in a recognizably theistic manner, such a postulate is inappropriate.

[4] *God and Creation*, II, p. 34. According to Boodin, God, as conceived according to his intrinsic essence, is eternal; but from another point of view, namely when he is considered as the creative activity comprising the whole history of the cosmos, he is temporal.

Absolute idealism has been continued in the present century by the well-known philosopher William Ernest Hocking (b. 1873), a pupil of Royce and William James at Harvard and later Alford Professor of Philosophy in that University.[2] At the level of common sense, Hocking argues, physical objects and other minds appear as entities which are purely external to myself. And it is at this level that the question arises how we come to know that there are other minds or other selves. But reflection shows us that there is an underlying social consciousness which is as real as self-consciousness. In fact they are interdependent. After all, the very attempt to prove that there are other minds presupposes an awareness of them. And further reflection, Hocking maintains, together with intuitive insight, reveals to us the presence of the enveloping divine reality which renders human consciousness possible. That is to say, our participation in social consciousness involves an implicit awareness of God and is in some sense an experience of the divine, of absolute mind. Hence the ontological argument can be stated in this way: 'I have an idea of God, therefore I have an experience of God'.[3]

We have noted that Hocking was a pupil of Royce. And like his former professor he insists that God is personal, a self. For 'there is nothing higher than selfhood and nothing more profound'.[4] At the same time he insists that we cannot abandon the concept of the Absolute. And this means that we must conceive God as in some sense including within himself the world of finite selves and the world of Nature. Indeed, just as the human self, taken apart from its life of experience, is empty, so is the concept of God an empty concept if he is considered apart from his life of absolute experience. 'The domain of religion in fact is a divine self, a Spirit which is as Subject to all finite things, persons and arts as Object, and presumably to much else that these categories do not include.'[1] The world is thus necessary to God, though at the same time we can conceive it as created. For Nature is in fact an expression of the divine mind, as well as the means by which finite selves communicate with one another and pursue common ideals. In addition to the scientific view of Nature, which treats Nature as a self-contained whole, we need the concept of it as a divine communication to the finite self. As for the divine essence in itself, it transcends the grasp of discursive thought, though mystical experience yields a valid insight.

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[1] The personal idealist is not, of course, committed to denying the hypothesis of evolution. But he takes the idea of personality as his point of departure and as the fixed point, as one might put it, in his reflections, whereas the evolutionary idealist emphasizes the aspect of the person as a product of a general creative activity immanent in the whole cosmos.

[2] Hocking's writings include *The Meaning of God in Human Experience* (1912), *Human Nature and Its Remaking* (1918), *Man and the State* (1926), *The Self, Its Body and Freedom* (1928), *Lasting Elements of Individualism* (1937), *Thoughts on Life and Death* (1937), *Living Religions and a World Faith* (1940), *Science and the Idea of God* (1944) and *Experiment in Education* (1954).

[3] *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, p. 314.

[4] *Types of Philosophy*, p. 441.

With Hocking, therefore, as with Royce, we find a form of personalistic absolute idealism. He tries to find a middle position between a theism which would reduce God to the level of being a self among selves, a person among persons, and an absolute idealism which would leave no room for the concept of God as personal. And this desire to find a middle position is shown in Hocking's treatment of religion. On the one hand he dislikes the tendency, shown by some philosophers, to offer as the alleged essence of religion a concept which abstracts from all historical religion. On the other hand he rejects the notion of one particular historical faith becoming the world-faith by displacing all others. And though he attributes to Christianity a unique contribution to the recognition of the ultimate personal structure of reality, he looks to a process of dialogue between the great historical religions to produce, by a convergent movement, the world-faith of the future.

We have already had occasion more than once to note the concern of American idealists with religious problems. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that with some of the personal idealists, such as Bowne, philosophy was practically used as an apologetic in defence of the Christian religion. In the case of personalistic absolute idealism,[2] however, as with Hocking, it is more a question of developing a religious view of the world and of suggesting a religious vision for the future than of defending a particular historical religion. And this is clearly more in line with W. T. Harris's programme for speculative philosophy. For Harris assumed that traditional doctrines and ecclesiastical organization were in process of losing their grip on men's minds, that a new religious outlook was needed, and that it was part of the business of speculative philosophy or metaphysical idealism to meet this need.

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[1] *Human Nature and Its Remaking*, p. 329.

[2] The line of thought of Royce and Hocking is sometimes described as absolutistic personalism in distinction from the pluralistic personalism of Bowne and other 'personal idealists'.

At the same time idealism does not necessarily involve either the defence of an already existing religion or positive preparation for a new one. It is, of course, natural to expect of the metaphysical idealist some interest in religion or at least an explicit recognition of its importance in human life. For he aims, in general, at a synthesis of human experience, and in particular, at doing justice to those forms of experience which the materialist and positivist tend either to belittle or to exclude from the scope of philosophy. But it would be a mistake to think that idealism is necessarily so connected either with Christian faith or with the mystical outlook of a philosopher such as Hocking that it is inseparable from profoundly held religious convictions. A preoccupation with religious problems was not a characteristic of the objective idealism of Creighton; nor is it a characteristic of the thought of Brand Blanshard (b. 1892), Sterling Professor of Philosophy at Yale, the twentieth-century American idealist who is best known in Great Britain.[1]

In his notable two-volume work, *The Nature of Thought* (1939–40), Blanshard devotes himself to critical analyses of interpretations of thought and knowledge which he considers false or inadequate and to a defence of reason conceived primarily as the discovery of necessary connections. He rejects the restriction of necessity to purely formal propositions and its reduction to convention, and he represents the movement of thought as being towards the logical ideal of an all-inclusive system of interdependent truths. In other words, he maintains a version of the coherence theory of truth. Similarly, in *Reason and Analysis* (1962) Blanshard devotes himself on the negative side to a sustained criticism of the analytic philosophy of the last forty years, including logical positivism, logical atomism and the so-called linguistic movement, and on the positive side to an exposition and defence of the function of reason as he conceives it. True, he has given two series of Gifford Lectures. But in *Reason and Goodness* (1961), which represents the first series, the emphasis is laid on vindicating the function of reason in ethics, as against, for example, the emotive theory of ethics, certainly not on edification, either moral or religious.[2]

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[1] Blanshard studied at Oxford, and he is regarded as carrying on the tradition of Oxford idealism.

[2] The second volume has not appeared at the time of writing.

These remarks are not intended either as commendation or as criticism of Blanshard's freedom from the preoccupation with religious problems and from the tone of uplift which have been conspicuous features of many of the publications of American idealists. The point is rather that the example of Blanshard shows that idealism is able to make out a good case for itself and to deal shrewd blows at its enemies without exhibiting the features which in the eyes of some of its critics rule it out of court from the start, as though by its very nature it served extra-philosophical interests. After all, Hegel himself deprecated any confusion between philosophy and uplift and rejected appeals to mystical insights.

7. In Marxist terminology idealism is commonly opposed to materialism, as involving respectively the assertion of the ultimate priority of mind or spirit to matter and the assertion of the ultimate priority of matter to mind or spirit. And if idealism is understood in this way, no synthesis of the opposites is possible. For the essential dispute is not about the reality of either mind or matter. It is about the question of ultimate priority. And both cannot be ultimately prior at the same time.

Generally, however, idealism is contrasted with realism. It is by no means always clear how these terms are being understood. And in any case their meanings can vary with different contexts. But an attempt has been made by an American philosopher, Wilbur Marshall Urban (b. 1873),[1] to show that idealism and realism are ultimately based on certain judgments of value about the conditions of genuine knowledge, and that these judgments can be dialectically harmonized. He does not mean, of course, that opposed philosophical systems can be conflated. He means that the basic judgments on which idealist and realist philosophies ultimately rest can be so interpreted that it is possible to transcend the opposition between idealism and realism.

The realist, Urban maintains, believes that there cannot be genuine knowledge unless things are in some sense independent of mind. In other words, he asserts the priority of being to knowledge. The idealist, however, believes that there can be no genuine knowledge unless things are in some sense dependent on mind. For their intelligibility is bound up with this dependence. At first sight, therefore, realism and idealism are incompatible, the first asserting the priority of being to thought and knowledge, the second asserting the priority of thought to being. But if we consider the basic judgments of value, we can see the possibility of overcoming the opposition between them. For example, the realist claim that knowledge cannot be described as genuine knowledge of reality unless things are in some sense independent of mind can be satisfied provided that we are willing to admit that things are not dependent simply on the human mind, while the idealist claim that knowledge cannot be described as genuine knowledge of reality unless things are in some sense mind-dependent can be satisfied if it is assumed that the reality on which on all finite things ultimately depend is spirit or mind.

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[1] Urban is the author of, among other writings, *Valuation: Its Nature and Laws* (1909), *The Intelligible World: Metaphysics and Value* (1929), *Language and Reality* (1939) and *Beyond Realism and Idealism* (1949). In the present context the relevant work is the last-named one.

It seems to the present writer that there is a great deal of truth in this point of view. Absolute idealism, by rejecting the claim of subjective idealism that the human mind can know only its own states of consciousness, goes a long way towards meeting the realist's claim that genuine knowledge of reality is not possible unless the object of knowledge is in some real sense independent of the subject. And a realism that is prepared to describe ultimate reality as spirit or mind goes a long way towards meeting the idealist claim that nothing is intelligible unless it is either spirit or the self-expression of spirit. At the same time the dialectical harmonization of opposed views, which Urban has in mind, seems to demand certain stipulations. We have to stipulate, for example, that the idealist should cease talking like Royce, who uses the word 'being' for the expression of will and purpose, for the embodiment of the internal meaning of an idea, and should recognize that will is itself a form of being. In fact, to reach agreement with the realist he must, it appears, recognize the priority of existence; *prius est esse quam esse tale.* If, however, he admits this, he has to all intents and purposes been converted to realism. We also have to stipulate, of course, that realism should not be understood as equivalent to materialism. But then many realists would insist that realism in no way entails materialism.

The ideal of transcending the traditional oppositions in philosophy is understandable, and doubtless laudable. But there is this point to consider. If we interpret realism in terms of basic judgments of value about the conditions of genuine knowledge, we have implicitly adopted a certain approach to philosophy. We are approaching philosophy by way of the theme of knowledge, by way of the subject-object relationship. And many philosophers who are customarily labelled realists doubtless do this. We speak, for example, of realist theories of knowledge. But some realists would claim that they take as their point of departure being, particularly in the sense of existence, and that their approach is recognizably different from that of the idealist, and that it is the different approaches to philosophy which determine the different views of knowledge.

PART IV

THE PRAGMATIST MOVEMENT

CHAPTER XIV

THE PHILOSOPHY OF C. S. PEIRCE

The life of Peirce—The objectivity of truth—Rejection of the method of universal doubt—Logic, ideas and the pragmatist analysis of meaning—Pragmatism and realism—The pragmatist analysis of meaning and positivism—Ethics, pure and practical —Peirce's metaphysics and world-view—Some comments on Peirce's thought.

1. ALTHOUGH it is possible to find pragmatist ideas in the writings of some other thinkers,[1] the originator of the pragmatist movement in America was to all intents and purposes Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914). To be sure, the term 'pragmatism' is associated chiefly with the name of William James. For James's style as lecturer and writer and his obvious concern with general problems of interest to reflective minds quickly brought him before the public eye and kept him there, whereas during his lifetime Peirce was little known or appreciated as a philosopher. But both James and Dewey recognized their indebtedness to Peirce. And after his death Peirce's reputation has steadily increased, even if, by the nature of his thought, he remains very much a philosopher's philosopher.

Peirce was the son of a Harvard mathematician and astronomer, Benjamin Peirce (1809–80), and his own formal education culminated in the chemistry degree which he received at Harvard in 1863. From 1861 until 1891 he was on the staff of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, though from 1869 he was also associated for some years with the Harvard Observatory. And the one book which he published, *Photometric Researches* (1878), embodied the results of a series of astronomical observations which he had made.

In the academic years of 1864–5 and 1869–70 Peirce lectured at

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[1] See, for example, *Chauncey Wright and the Foundations of Pragmatism* by E. H. Madden (Seattle, 1963).

Harvard on the early history of modern science, and in 1870–1 on logic.[1] From 1879 until 1884 he was a lecturer on logic at Johns Hopkins University; but for various reasons his appointment was not renewed.[2] And he never again held any regular academic post, in spite of William James's efforts on his behalf.

In 1887 Peirce settled with his second wife in Pennsylvania and tried to make ends meet by writing reviews and articles for dictionaries. He wrote indeed a great deal, but apart from a few articles his work remained unpublished until the posthumous publication of his *Collected Papers*, six volumes appearing in 1931–5 and two further volumes in 1958.

Peirce did not approve of the way in which William James was developing the theory of pragmatism, and in 1905 he changed the name of his own theory from pragmatism to pragmaticism, remarking that the term was ugly enough to render it secure from kidnappers. At the same time he appreciated the friendship of James, who did what he could to put remunerative work in the way of the neglected and poverty-stricken philosopher. Peirce died of cancer in 1914.

2. It is probably correct to say that in the minds of most people for whom the word 'pragmatism' has any definite meaning, it is associated primarily with a certain view of the nature of truth, namely with the doctrine that a theory is to be accounted true in so far as it 'works', in so far, for example, as it is socially useful or fruitful. It is therefore just as well to understand from the outset that the essence of Peirce's pragmatism or pragmaticism lies in a theory of meaning rather than in a theory of truth. This theory of meaning will be examined presently. Meanwhile we can consider briefly what Peirce has to say about truth. And it will be seen that whether or not the identification of truth with 'what works' represents the real view of William James, it certainly does not represent that of Peirce.

Peirce distinguishes different kinds of truth. There is, for example, what he calls transcendental truth, which belongs to things as things.[1] And if we say that science is looking for truth in this sense, we mean that it is inquiring into the real characters of things, the characters which they have whether we know that they have them or not. But here we are concerned with what Peirce calls complex truth, which is the truth of propositions. This again can be subdivided. There is, for example, ethical truth or veracity, which lies in the conformity of a proposition with the speaker's or writer's belief. And there is logical truth, the conformity of a proposition with reality in a sense which must now be defined.

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[1] In 1868 Peirce published some articles in *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* on certain alleged faculties of the human mind, such as that of recognizing intuitively, without the need of any previous knowledge, the premisses which constitute the absolute points of departure for reasoning.

[2] The fact that in 1883 Peirce divorced his first wife and subsequently remarried probably contributed to the termination of his appointment at Johns Hopkins. But there appear to have been other factors too, such as the offence which he sometimes gave by intemperate expressions of moral indignation and his lack of conformity on some points with the requirements of academic life.

'When we speak of truth and falsity, we refer to the possibility of the proposition being refuted.'[2] That is to say, if we could legitimately deduce from a proposition a conclusion which would conflict with an immediate perceptual judgment, the proposition would be false. In other words, a proposition would be false if experience would refute it. If experience would not refute a proposition, the proposition is true.

This may suggest that for Peirce truth and verification are the same thing. But reflection will show that he is perfectly justified in rejecting this identification. For he is saying, not that a proposition is true if it is empirically verified, but that it is true if it would not be empirically falsified, supposing that such a testing were possible. In point of fact it may not be possible. But we can still say that a proposition is false if, to put it crudely, it *would* conflict with reality as revealed in experience if a confrontation were possible, and that otherwise it is true. Peirce can therefore say without inconsistency that 'every proposition is either *true* or *false*'.[3]

Now, there are some propositions which could not conceivably be refuted. Such, for example, are the propositions of pure mathematics. Hence on the interpretation of truth mentioned above the truth of a proposition in pure mathematics lies in 'the impossibility of ever finding a case in which it fails'.[4] Peirce sometimes writes in a rather disconcerting way about mathematics. He says, for instance, that the pure mathematician deals exclusively with hypotheses which are the products of his own imagination, and that no proposition becomes a statement of pure mathematics 'until it is devoid of all definite meaning'.[5] But

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[1] Peirce refers in this context to the Scholastic maxim that every being is one, true and good.

[2] 5.569. References are given in the customary way to volume and numbered paragraph of the *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*.

[3] 2.327. [4] 5.567. [5] *Ibid.*

'meaning' has to be understood here in the sense of reference. A proposition of pure mathematics does not say anything about actual things:[1] the pure mathematician, as Peirce puts it, does not care whether or not there are real things corresponding to his signs. And this absence of 'meaning' is, of course, the reason why the propositions of pure mathematics cannot possibly be refuted and so are necessarily true.

There are other propositions, however, of which we do not know with absolute certainty whether they are true or false. These are what Leibniz calls truths of fact, in distinctions from truths of reason. And they include, for example, scientific hypotheses and metaphysical theories about reality. In the case of a proposition which cannot possibly be refuted we know that it is true.[2] But a scientific hypothesis can *be* true without our knowing that it is. And in point of fact we cannot know with certainty that it is true. For while empirical refutation shows that an hypothesis is false, what we call verification does not prove that an hypothesis is true, though it certainly provides a ground for accepting it provisionally. If from hypothesis x it is legitimately deduced that in certain circumstances event y should occur, and if in these circumstances y does not occur, we can conclude that x is false. But the occurrence of y does not prove with certainty that x is true. For it may be the case, for example, that the conclusion that in the same set of circumstances event y should occur, can be deduced from hypothesis z, which on other grounds is preferable to x. Scientific hypotheses can enjoy varying degrees of probability, but they are all subject to possible revision: In fact all formulations of what passes for human knowledge are uncertain, fallible.[3]

It should not be necessary to add that Peirce's principle of fallibilism does not entail a denial of objective truth. Scientific inquiry is inspired by a disinterested search for objective truth. Nobody would ask a theoretical question unless he believed that there was such a thing as truth. And 'truth consists in a conformity of something *independent of his thinking it to be so*, or of any man's opinion on that subject'.[1] But if we combine the idea of the disinterested search for objective truth, known as such, with the principle of fallibilism, according to which dogmatism is the enemy of the pursuit of truth, we must conceive absolute and final truth as the ideal goal of inquiry. This ideal stands eternally above our struggles to attain it, and we can only approximate to it.

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[1] The question whether it concerns a realm of possibility, as contrasted with actuality, is a question for the metaphysician.

[2] Peirce remarks that an entirely meaningless proposition is to be classed with true propositions, because it cannot be refuted. But he adds the saving provision, 'if it be called a proposition at all' (2.327).

[3] When asked whether his principle of fallibilism, as it is called, the assertion that all assertions are uncertain, is itself fallible or infallible, uncertain or certain, Peirce answers that he does not intend to claim that his assertion is absolutely certain. This may be logical, but it involves a certain weakening of his position.

Truth, therefore, can be defined from different points of view. From one point of view truth can be taken to mean 'the Universe of all Truth'.[2] 'All propositions refer to one and the same determinately singular subject . . . namely, to The Truth, which is the universe of all universes, and is assumed on all hands to be real.'[3] From an epistemological point of view, however, truth can be defined as 'that concordance of an abstract statement with the ideal limit towards which endless investigation would tend to bring scientific belief'.[4]

If such passages recall to our minds the idealist notion of truth as the whole, the total system of truth, rather than anything which would normally be associated with the term 'pragmatism', there is nothing to be surprised at in this. For Peirce openly acknowledged points of similarity between his own philosophy and that of Hegel.

3. In regard to the pursuit of truth Peirce rejects the Cartesian thesis that we should begin by doubting everything until we can find an indubitable and presuppositionless point of departure. In the first place we cannot doubt simply at will. Real or genuine doubt arises when some experience, external or internal, clashes or appears to clash with one of our beliefs. And when this occurs, we undertake further inquiry with a view to overcoming the state of doubt, either by re-establishing our former belief on a firmer basis or by substituting for it a better-grounded belief. Doubt is thus a stimulus to inquiry, and in this sense it has a positive value. But to doubt the truth of a proposition, we must have a reason for doubting the truth of *this* proposition or of a proposition on which it depends. Any attempt to apply the method of universal doubt simply leads to pretended or fictitious doubt. And this is not genuine doubt at all.

Peirce is obviously thinking in the first place of scientific inquiry. But he applies his ideas in a quite general way. We all start with certain beliefs, with what Hume called natural beliefs.

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[1] 5.211. [2] 5.153. [3] 5.506. [4] 5.565.

And the philosopher will indeed try to make explicit our uncriticized natural beliefs and subject them to critical scrutiny. But even he cannot doubt them at will: he requires a reason for doubting the truth of this or that particular belief. And if he has or thinks that he has such a reason, he will also find that his very doubt presupposes some other belief or beliefs. In other words, we cannot have, nor do we need, an absolutely presuppositionless point of departure. Cartesian universal doubt is not genuine doubt at all. 'For genuine doubt does not talk of beginning with doubting.'[1] The follower of Descartes would presumably reply that he is primarily concerned with 'methodic' rather than with 'real' or 'genuine' doubt. But Peirce's point is that methodic doubt, in so far as it is distinguishable from genuine doubt, is not really doubt at all. Either we have a reason for doubting or we do not. In the first case the doubt is genuine. In the second case we have only pretended or fictitious doubt.

If we bear in mind this point of view, we can understand Peirce's claim that 'the scientific spirit requires a man to be at all times ready to dump his whole cartload of beliefs, the moment experience is against them'.[2] He is obviously speaking of theoretical beliefs, which are characterized above all by expectation. If a man holds belief x, he believes, for example, that in certain circumstances event y should occur. And if it does not occur, he will, of course, doubt the truth of the belief. Antecedently to a clash between experience and belief, anyone who possesses the scientific spirit will be prepared to abandon any belief about the world if such a clash should occur. For, as we have already seen, he regards all such beliefs as subject to possible revision. But it by no means follows from this that he will begin or should begin with universal doubt.

4. Pragmatism, as Peirce conceives it, is 'not a *Weltanschauung* but is a method of reflection having for its purpose to render ideas clear'.[3] It belongs, therefore, to methodology, to what Peirce calls 'methodeutic'. And as he emphasizes the logical foundations and connections of pragmatism, it is appropriate to say something first about his account of logic.

Peirce divides logic into three main parts, the first of which is speculative grammar. This is concerned with the formal conditions of the meaningfulness of signs. A sign, called by Peirce a 'representamen', stands for an object to someone in whom it arouses a more developed sign, the 'interpretant'. A sign stands, of course, for an object in respect of certain 'characters', and this respect is called the 'ground'. But we can say that the relation of significance or the semiotic function of signs is for Peirce a triadic relation between representamen, object and interpretant.[1]

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[1] 6.498. [2] 1.55. [3] 5.13, note.

The second main division of logic, critical logic, is concerned with the formal conditions of the truth of symbols. Under this heading Peirce treats of the syllogism or argument, which can be divided into deductive, inductive and 'abductive' argument. Inductive argument, which is statistical in character, assumes that what is true of a number of members of a class is true of all members of the class. And it is in connection with induction that Peirce considers the theory of probability. Abductive argument is predictive in character. That is to say, it formulates an hypothesis from observed facts and deduces what should be the case if the hypothesis is true. And we can then test the prediction. When looked at from one point of view, Royce tells us, pragmatism can be described as the logic of abduction. The force of this remark will become clear presently.

The third main division of logic, speculative rhetoric, deals with what Peirce calls the formal conditions of the force of symbols or 'the general conditions of the reference of Symbols and other Signs to the Interpretants which they aim to determine'.[2] In communication a sign arouses another sign, the interpretant, in an interpreter. Peirce insists that the interpreter is not necessarily a human being. And as he wishes to avoid psychology as much as possible, he lays emphasis on the interpretant rather than on the interpreter. In any case it simplifies matters if we think of a sign arousing a sign in a person. We can then see that speculative rhetoric will be concerned in large measure with the theory of meaning. For meaning is 'the intended interpretant of a symbol'.[3] Whether we are speaking of a term, a proposition or an argument, its meaning is the entire intended interpretant. And as pragmatism is for Peirce a method or rule for determining meaning, it obviously belongs to or is closely connected with speculative rhetoric, which is also called 'methodeutic'.

More precisely, pragmatism is a method or rule for making ideas clear, for determining the meaning of ideas. But there are different types of ideas.[1] First, there is the idea of a percept or sense-datum considered in itself, without relation to anything else. Such would be the idea of blueness or of redness. In Peirce's terminology this is the idea of a 'firstness'. Secondly, there is the idea of acting which involves two objects, namely the agent and the patient or that which is acted upon. This is the idea of a 'secondness'.[2] Thirdly, there is the idea of a sign relation, of a sign signifying to an interpreter that a certain property belongs to a certain object or, rather, to a certain kind of object. This is an idea of a 'thirdness'. And such ideas, which can be thought of as universal ideas, are called by Peirce intellectual concepts or conceptions.[3] In practice pragmatism is a method or rule for determining their meaning.

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[1] Under the general heading of speculative grammar Peirce also considers terms, propositions and the fundamental principles of logic, those of identity, non-contradiction and excluded middle.

[2] 2.93.

[3] 5.175.

Peirce formulates the principle of pragmatism in several ways. One of the best known is as follows. '*In order to ascertain the meaning of an intellectual conception one should consider what practical consequences might conceivably result by necessity from the truth of that conception; and the sum of these consequences will constitute the entire meaning of the conception.*'[4] For example, suppose that someone tells me that a certain kind of object is hard, and suppose that I do not know what the word 'hard' means. It can be explained to me that to say that an object is hard means, among other things, that if one exerts moderate pressure on it, it does not give in the way that butter does; that if someone sits on it, he does not sink through; and so on. And the sum total of 'practical consequences' which necessarily follow if it is true to say that an object is hard, gives the entire meaning of the concept. If I do not believe this, I have only to exclude all such 'practical consequences' from the meaning of the term. I shall then see that it becomes impossible to distinguish between the meanings of 'hard' and 'soft'.

Now, if we understand Peirce as saying that the meaning of an intellectual concept is reducible to the ideas of certain sense-data, we shall have to conclude that he is contradicting his assertion that intellectual concepts are not reducible to ideas of 'firstness'. And if we understand him as saying that the meaning of an intellectual concept is reducible to the ideas of certain actions, we shall have to conclude that he is contradicting his assertion that such concepts are not reducible to ideas of 'secondness'. But he is saying neither the one nor the other. His view is that the meaning of an intellectual concept can be explicated in terms of the ideas of necessary relations between ideas of secondness and ideas of firstness, between, that is to say, ideas of volition or action and ideas of perception. As he explains, when he talks about 'consequences', he is referring to the relation (*consequentia*) between a consequent and an antecedent, not simply about the consequent (*consequens*).

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[1] Strictly speaking, the theory of ideas belongs to epistemology. But Peirce insists that it is grounded on the logic of relations. And he emphasizes the relevance of the theory to pragmatism.

[2] As in human experience acting involves an act of the will, Peirce tends to speak of this type of idea as the idea of a volition. In any case he insists that an idea of a 'secondness' cannot be simply reduced to ideas of 'firstness'. If, for example, we try to reduce the idea of the wind moving the blind to simpler ideas of sense-data, taken separately, the whole idea of acting disappears.

[3] In theory at least Peirce distinguishes between 'idea' and concept', a universal idea being subjectively apprehended in an intellectual concept.

[4] 5.9.

From this analysis it obviously follows that the meaning of an intellectual concept has a relation to conduct. For the conditional propositions in which the meaning is explicated are concerned with conduct. But, equally obviously, Peirce is not suggesting that in order to understand or to explain the meaning of an intellectual concept we have actually to do something, to perform certain actions mentioned in the explication of the meaning. I can explain to an interpreter the meaning of 'hard' by causing to arise in his mind the idea that if he were to perform a certain action in regard to the object which is described as hard, he *would* have a certain experience. It is not required that he should actually perform the action before he can understand what 'hard' means. It is not even necessary that the action should be practicable, provided that it is conceivable. In other words, the meaning of an intellectual concept is explicable in terms of conditional propositions; but, for the meaning to be understood, it is not necessary that the conditions should be actually fulfilled. It is only necessary that they should be conceived.

It is to be noted that this theory of meaning does not contradict Peirce's view, which has been mentioned above, that we must distinguish between truth and verification. If, for example, I say that a given object has weight, and if I explain that this means that in the absence of an opposing force it will fall, the fulfilment of the conditional proposition is said to verify my statement. But to verify means to show that a proposition is true, that is, that it is true antecedently to any verification, true independently of any action performed by me or by anyone else.

5. Although it involves touching on ontology, it is convenient at this point to draw attention to Peirce's conviction that the pragmatist theory of meaning demands the rejection of nominalism and the acceptance of realism. An intellectual concept is a universal concept; and its meaning is explicated in conditional propositions. These conditional propositions are in principle verifiable. And the possibility of verification shows that some at least of the propositions which explicate the meaning of intellectual concepts express something in reality which is so independently of its being expressed in a judgment. For example, a statement such as 'iron is hard' is a prediction: if x, then y. And regularly successful or verified prediction shows that there must be something real now, of a general nature, which accounts for a future actuality. This something real now is for Peirce a real possibility. He compares it to the essence or common nature in the philosophy of Duns Scotus;[1] but for him it has a relational structure, expressed in the conditional proposition which explicates the meaning of a universal concept. Hence he calls it a 'law'. Universal concepts, therefore, have an objective foundation or counterpart in reality, namely 'laws'.

We have been speaking of ideas of thirdness. But Peirce's realism can also be seen in his account of ideas of firstness. The idea of white, for example, has its objective counterpart in reality, namely, not simply white things but whiteness, an essence. Whiteness as such does not indeed exist as an actuality. Only white things exist in this way. But for Peirce whiteness is a real possibility. From the epistemological point of view it is the real possibility of an idea, an idea of a firstness.[2]

In general, human knowledge and science demand as a necessary condition the existence of a realm of real possibilities, 'essences', of a general nature. Hence we cannot accept the nominalist thesis that generality belongs only to words in their function as standing for a plurality of individual entities.[3]

6. When we read the formulation of the pragmatist principle

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[1] Peirce's realism was not derived from Scotus, but it was to a great extent developed through reflection on and a transformation of the doctrine of the mediaeval Franciscan, or of what Peirce believed to be his doctrine. Indeed, on occasion Peirce even called himself a 'Scotistic realist'. On this subject see *Charles Peirce and Scholastic Realism: A Study of Peirce's Relation to John Duns Scotus*, by John F. Boler (Seattle, 1963).

[2] The 'essence' of whiteness is embodied in an idea through the power of attention, which is said to 'abstract' it.

[3] What Peirce calls 'realism' is not what everyone would understand by the term. But we are concerned here with his use of the word.

which is quoted in the fourth section of this chapter,[1] we are naturally put in mind of the neopositivist criterion of meaning. But in order to be able to discuss the relation between Peirce's theory of meaning and positivism, we have first to make some distinctions with a view to clarifying the issue.

In the first place, when Peirce himself talks about positivism, he is speaking, needless to say, of classical positivism as represented, for example, by Auguste Comte and Karl Pearson. And while he allows that positivism in this sense has been of service to science, he also explicitly attacks some features which he finds in it or at any rate attributes to it. For instance, he attributes to Comte the view that a genuine hypothesis must be practically verifiable by direct observation; and he proceeds to reject this view, on the ground that for an hypothesis to be meaningful it is required only that we should be able to *conceive* its practical consequences, not that it should be practically verifiable. Again, Peirce refuses to allow that nothing except what is directly observable should be postulated in an hypothesis. For in an hypothesis we infer the future, a 'will be' or 'would be', and a 'would be' is certainly not directly observable.[2] Further, it is a mistake to regard hypotheses as being simply fictional devices for stimulating observation. An hypothesis can have, for example, an initial probability, as being the result of legitimate inference. In general, therefore, Peirce regards the positivists as too preoccupied with the process of practical verification and as being far too quick to say that this or that is inconceivable.

We cannot, however, infer without more ado from Peirce's criticism of Comte and Pearson that his theory of meaning has nothing in common with neopositivism (or logical positivism as it is generally called in England). For though the neopositivists were originally given to identifying the meaning of an empirical hypothesis with its mode of verification, they did not intend to imply that its meaning can be identified with the actual process of verification. They identified the meaning with the *idea* of the mode of verification, considered, in Peirce's terminology, as the practical consequences of the hypothesis. Further, they did not insist that an hypothesis should be directly verifiable, in order to be meaningful. It is not the intention of the present writer to express agreement with the neopositivist criterion of meaning. In point of fact he does not agree with it. But this is irrelevant. The relevant point is that the theory of meaning expounded by the neopositivists escapes at any rate some of the criticisms which Peirce levelled, whether fairly or unfairly, against positivism as he knew it.

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[1] P. 311.

[2] Obviously, when a prediction is fulfilled, the result may be directly observable. But Peirce's point is that a scientific hypothesis states what *would* be the case *if* a condition were fulfilled, and that a 'would be' is not, *as such*, directly observable.

It must also be emphasized that the question is not whether Peirce was or was not a positivist. For it is perfectly clear that he was not. As will be seen presently, he sketched a metaphysics which under some aspects at least bore a resemblance to Hegelian absolute idealism. The question is rather whether the neopositivists are justified in looking on Peirce as a predecessor, not only in the sense that his 'pragmaticist' analysis of meaning has a clear affinity to their own but also in the sense that genuine consistency with his theory of meaning would have ruled out the sort of metaphysics which he in fact developed. In other words, once given his theory of meaning, ought Peirce to have been a positivist? That is to say, ought he to have anticipated neopositivism to a much great extent than was in fact the case?

In his well-known paper on *How to make our ideas clear* Peirce asserts that 'the essence of belief is the establishment of a habit; and different beliefs are distinguished by the different modes of action to which they give rise'.[1] If there is no difference at all between the lines of conduct or action to which two *prima facie* different beliefs give rise, they are not two beliefs but one.

It is easy to think of a simple example. If one man says that he believes that there are other persons besides himself while another man says that he believes the opposite, and if we find them acting in precisely the same way by talking with others, questioning them, listening to them, writing them letters and so on, we naturally conclude that, whatever he may say, the second man really has exactly the same belief as the first man, namely that there are other persons besides himself.

Peirce applies this idea to the alleged difference in belief between Catholics and Protestants in regard to the Eucharist,[2] maintaining that as there is no difference in action or conduct

[1] 5.398.

[2] The term 'Protestant' in this context is ambiguous. For there is no one belief about the Eucharist which can be called *the* Protestant belief. But Peirce obviously has in mind those who deny the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament, and, more particularly, those who deny a change which justifies the statement that the consecrated bread and wine *are* the Body and Blood of Christ.

between the two parties, there cannot be any real difference in belief. At first sight at any rate this thesis appears to be in flat contradiction with the facts. For example, practising Catholics genuflect before the Blessed Sacrament, pray before the Tabernacle in which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, and so on, while the Protestants whom Peirce has in mind do not, for the very good reason that they do not believe in the 'real presence'. But closer inspection of what Peirce says on the subject shows that he is really arguing that Catholics and Protestants have the same expectations in regard to the sensible effects of the Sacrament. For, irrespective of their theological beliefs, both parties expect, for example, that consumption of the consecrated bread will have the same physical effects as consumption of unconsecrated bread. And this is, of course, quite true. The Catholic who believes in transubstantiation does not deny that after the consecration the 'species' of bread will have the same sensible effects as unconsecrated bread.

The relevance of Peirce's argument to the subject of his relation to positivism may not be immediately apparent. But in point of fact his line of argument is extremely relevant. For he explicitly says that he wishes to point out 'how impossible it is that we should have an idea in our minds which relates to anything but conceived sensible effects of things. Our idea of anything *is* our idea of its sensible effects; and if we fancy that we have any other we deceive ourselves, and mistake a mere sensation accompanying the thought for a part of the thought itself.'[1] In the immediate context this means that to agree that an object has all the sensible effects of bread and to claim at the same time that it is really the Body of Christ is to indulge in 'senseless jargon'.[2] In a wider context it seems to follow clearly from Peirce's thesis that all metaphysical talk about spiritual realities which cannot be construed as talk about 'sensible effects' is nonsense, or that it has no more than emotive significance.

Needless to say, we are not concerned here with theological controversy between Catholics and Protestants. The point of referring to the passage in which Peirce mentions the matter is simply that in it he explicitly states that our idea of anything *is* the idea of its sensible effects. If such a statement does not give good ground for the contention that certain aspects of Peirce's thought constitute an anticipation of neopositivism, it is difficult to think of statements which would do so. But this does not alter the fact that there are other aspects of his thought which differentiate it sharply enough from positivism. Nor, as far as I know, has anyone attempted to deny the fact.

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[1] 5.401.

[2] *Ibid.*

7. Turning to ethics, we can note that it is described by Peirce in various ways, as, for example, the science of right and wrong, the science of ideals, the philosophy of aims. But he also tells us that 'we are too apt to define ethics to ourselves as the science of right and wrong'.[1] To be sure, ethics is concerned with right and wrong; but the fundamental question is, 'What am I to aim at, what am I after?'[2] In other words, the fundamental problem of ethics is that of determining the end of ethical conduct, conduct meaning here deliberate or self-controlled action. The concept of the good is thus basic in Peirce's ethics.

For Peirce, therefore, ethics consists of two main divisions. Pure ethics inquires into the nature of the ideal, the *summum bonum* or ultimate aim of conduct. 'Life can have but one end. It is Ethics which defines that end.'[3] Practical ethics is concerned with the conformity of action to the ideal, to the end. The former, pure ethics, can be called a pre-normative science, while practical ethics is strictly normative in character. Both are required. On the one hand a system of practical ethics gives us a programme for future deliberate or controlled conduct. But all deliberate conduct has an aim; it is for the sake of an end. And as the ultimate end or aim is determined in pure ethics, this is presupposed by practical ethics. On the other hand pragmatism requires that the concept of the end should be explicated in terms of conceived practical consequences, in conditional propositions relating to deliberate or controlled conduct. It does not follow, however, that in ethics a pragmatist will be an advocate of action for the sake of action. For, as we have seen, deliberate or rational action, and it is with this that ethics is concerned, is directed to the realization of an end, an ideal.

'Pure ethics,' Peirce tells us, 'has been, and always must be, a theatre of discussion, for the reason that its study consists in the gradual development of a distinct recognition of a satisfactory aim.'[4] This satisfactory aim or end of conduct must be an infinite end, that is, one which can be pursued indefinitely. And this is to be found in what we may call the rationalization of the universe. For the rational or reasonable is the only end which is fully

[1] 2.198. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.* [4] 4.243.

satisfactory in itself. And this means in effect that the *summum bonum* or supreme good is really the evolutionary process itself considered as the progressive rationalization of reality, as the process whereby that which exists comes more and more to embody rationality. The ultimate end is thus a cosmic end. But 'in its higher stages evolution takes place more and more largely through self-control'.[1] And this is where specifically human action comes in. It is self-control which makes possible 'an ought-to-be of conduct'.[2]

Peirce thus has the vision of the cosmic process as moving towards the realization of reason or rationality, and of man as co-operating in the process. Further, as the ultimate end is a general end, a cosmic aim, so to speak, it follows that it must be a social end, common to all men. Conscience, created and modified by experience, is in a sense pre-ethical: it belongs to what Peirce calls a community-consciousness, existing at a level of the soul at which there are hardly distinct individuals. And in point of fact a great part of one's moral vocation is settled by one's place and function in the community to which one belongs. But our vision should rise above the limited social organism to 'a conceived identification of one's interests with those of an unlimited community'.[3] And universal love is the all-important moral ideal.

Inasmuch as Peirce's pragmatism is primarily a theory of meaning and a method of making our concepts clear, it is primarily a matter of logic. But it has, of course, an application in ethics. For ethical concepts are to be interpreted in terms of conceived modes of conduct, though, as we have seen, reflection or deliberate or controlled conduct leads inevitably to reflection on the end of conduct. If we interpret ethical concepts and propositions in terms of good and bad consequences, we cannot avoid asking the question, what is the good? In other words, pragmatism is not a doctrine simply of practice, of action for action's sake. Theory and practice, Peirce insists, go together. For the matter of that, pragmatism in its application to science is not a doctrine of action for action's sake. We have already noted how Peirce rejected what he regarded as the positivist worship of actual verification. True, the pragmatist analysis of scientific hypotheses can be said to look forward to conduct or action; but in itself the analysis is a theoretical inquiry. Similarly, ethics looks forward to moral conduct; it is a normative science. But it is none the less a science, a

[1] 5.433. [2] 4.540. [3] 2.654.

theoretical inquiry, though it would, of course, be barren if no conduct resulted.

Sometimes Peirce speaks as though ethics were fundamental and logic an application of it. For thinking or reasoning is itself a form of conduct, and it is 'impossible to be thoroughly and rationally logical except upon an ethical basis'.[1] Indeed, logic, as concerned with what we ought to think, 'must be an application of the doctrine of what we deliberately choose to do, which is ethics'.[2] At the same time Peirce does not really mean that logic can be derived from ethics, any more than ethics can be derived from logic. They are for him distinct normative sciences. But inasmuch as pragmatism teaches that 'what we think is to be interpreted in terms of what we are prepared to do',[3] there must be connections between logic and ethics.

One connection worth noting is this. We have seen that according to Peirce absolute certainty concerning the truth of an hypothesis cannot be attained at any given moment by any given individual. At the same time there can be an 'infinite' or unending approximation to it through the unlimited or continuing community of observers, by means of repeated verification which raises probability towards the ideal limit of certainty. So in the moral sphere the experiment of conduct, so to speak, tends to increase, through the unlimited community of mankind, clear recognition of the nature of the supreme end of life and of its 'meaning', its implications in regard to concrete action. And we can envisage, at any rate as an ideal limit, universal agreement.

Indeed, Peirce does not hesitate to say that 'in regard to morals we can see ground for hope that debate will ultimately cause one party or other to modify their sentiments up to complete accord'.[4] This obviously presupposes that the basis of morality is objective, that the supreme good or ultimate end is something to be discovered and about which agreement is possible in principle. And this point of view obviously differentiates Peirce's ethics from the emotive theory, especially in its older and cruder form, which is associated with the early phase of modern neopositivism. So does his idea of analyzing moral propositions on lines analogous to his analysis of scientific propositions,[5] not to speak of his general vision of evolution as moving towards the embodiment of reason in the unlimited community, a vision which has much more affinity with absolute idealism than with positivism.

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[1] 2.198. [2] 5.35. [3] *Ibid.* [4] 2.151.

[5] The upholder of the emotive theory of ethics would claim that this analysis fails to do justice to the peculiar character of moral utterances. But to say this is, of course, to recognize the difference between Peirce's theory of ethics and the emotive theory.

8. Sometimes Peirce speaks of metaphysics in a thoroughly positivist manner. For example, in a paper on pragmatism he states that pragmatism will serve to show that 'almost every proposition of ontological metaphysics is either meaningless gibberish—one word being defined by other words, and they by still others, without any real conception ever being reached—or else is downright absurd'.[1] When this rubbish has been swept away, philosophy will be reduced to problems capable of investigation by the observational methods of the genuine sciences. Pragmatism is thus 'a species of prope-positivism'.[2]

At the same time Peirce goes on to say that pragmatism does not simply jeer at metaphysics but 'extracts from it a precious essence, which will serve to give life and light to cosmology and physics'.[3] In any case he has no intention of rejecting metaphysics, provided that he himself is practising it. And while it is only right to mention the fact that Peirce sometimes derides metaphysics, this does not alter the fact that he has his own brand of it.

Peirce gives a number of different definitions or descriptions of metaphysics, when, that is to say, the term 'metaphysics' is not being used as a term of abuse. We are told, for example, that 'metaphysics consists in the results of the absolute acceptance of logical principles not merely as regulatively valid, but as truths of being'.[4] It is in accordance with this view that Peirce connects the fundamental ontological categories with the logical categories of firstness, secondness and thirdness. And he asserts that as metaphysics results from the acceptance of logical principles as principles of being, the universe must be regarded as having a unifying explanation. At other times Peirce emphasizes the observational basis of metaphysics. 'Metaphysics, even bad metaphysics, really rests on observations, whether consciously or not.'[5] And it is in accordance with this view that Peirce derives the fundamental ontological categories from phenomenology or 'phaneroscopy', by inquiring into the irreducible formal elements in any and every experience. We are also told that 'metaphysics is the science of Reality',[1] reality including for Peirce not only the actually existent but also the sphere of real possibility.

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[1] 5.423.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.* Elsewhere (6.3) Peirce says that the chief cause of the backwardness of metaphysics is that it has been so often in the hands of theologians, who have an axe to grind.

[4] 1.487.

[5] 6.2

To a certain extent at least these various ways of describing metaphysics can be harmonized. For example, to say that metaphysics is the science of reality is not incompatible with saying that it is based on experience or observation. It may even be possible to harmonize the view that metaphysics rests on observations with the view that it results from the acceptance of logical principles, providing at any rate that we do not interpret this second view as meaning that metaphysics can be deduced from logic without any recourse to experience. At the same time it does not seem to be possible to construct from Peirce's various utterances an absolutely consistent and unambiguous account of metaphysics. For one thing, he does not appear to have made up his mind definitely about the precise relation between ontology and logic. For present purposes, therefore, we had better confine ourselves to indicating briefly some of Peirce's metaphysical ideas. We cannot undertake here to create that consistent system which the philosopher himself did not achieve.

We can start with Peirce's three fundamental categories. The first, that of 'firstness', is 'the idea of that which is such as it is regardless of anything else'.[2] And Peirce calls it the category of quality, in the sense of 'suchness'. From the phenomenological point of view we can conceive a feeling, as of sadness, or a sensed quality, as of blueness, without reference to subject or object but simply as a unique something, 'a purely monadic state of feeling'.[3] To convert the psychological concept into a metaphysical one, Peirce tells us, we have to think of a monad as 'a pure nature, or quality, in itself without parts or features, and without embodiment'.[4] But the term 'monad', with its Leibnizian associations, can be misleading. For Peirce goes on to say that the meanings of the names of the so-called secondary qualities are as good examples of monads as can be given. It is understandable therefore that he speaks of the category of firstness as that of quality. In any case firstness is a pervasive feature of the universe, representing the element of uniqueness, freshness and originality which is everywhere present, in every phenomenon, every fact, every event. To obtain some idea of what is meant, Peirce suggests that we should imagine to ourselves the universe as it appeared to Adam when

[1] 5.21. [2] 5.66. [3] 1.303. [4] *Ibid.*

he looked on it for the first time, and before he had drawn distinctions and become reflectively aware of his own experience.

The second fundamental category, that of 'secondness', is dyadic, corresponding to the idea of secondness in logic. That is to say, secondness is 'the conception of being relative to, the conception of reaction with, something else'.[1] From one point of view secondness can be called 'fact', while from another point of view it is existence or actuality. For 'existence is that mode of being which lies in opposition to another'.[2] And this category too pervades the universe. Facts are facts, as we say; and this is why we sometimes speak of 'brute' facts. Actuality or existence involves everywhere effort and resistance. It is in this sense dyadic.

The third fundamental category, that of 'thirdness', is said to be the category of mediation, its logical prototype being the mediating function of a sign between object and interpretant. Ontologically, thirdness mediates between firstness, in the sense of quality, and secondness, in the sense of fact or of action and reaction. It thus introduces continuity and regularity, and it takes the form of laws of various types or grades. For instance, there can be laws of quality, determining 'systems of qualities, of which Sir Isaac Newton's law of colour-mixture, with Dr. Thomas Young's supplement thereto, is the most perfect known example'.[3] There can also be laws of fact. Thus if a spark falls into a barrel of gunpowder (treated as a first), it causes an explosion (treated as a second); and it does so according to an intelligible law, which thus has a mediating function.[4] Then again there are laws of regularity which enable us to predict that future facts of secondness will always take on a certain determinate character or quality. In its various forms, however, the category of thirdness, like those of firstness and secondness, pervades the universe; and we can say that everything stands in some relation to every other thing.[5]

Now, quality can be said, in Mill's language, to be a permanent possibility of sensation. It is, however, a real possibility, independent of subjective experience. And we can thus say that the first quality gives us the first mode of being, namely real possibility, though the concept of possibility is admittedly wider than that of quality. Similarly, the second category, being from one point of

[1] 6.32.
[2] 4.457.
[3] 1.482.
[4] According to Peirce laws of fact can be divided into logically necessary and logically contingent laws, while logically contingent laws can be subdivided into metaphysically necessary and metaphysically contingent laws (1.483).
[5] Cf. 4.319.

view that of actuality or existence, gives us the second mode of being, namely actuality as distinct from possibility. Again, by involving the concept of law the third category gives us the third mode of being, which Peirce calls 'destiny', as governing future facts. But it must be understood that in Peirce's use of the term the concept of 'destiny' is wider than the concept of law, if we mean by law the idea of it which is associated with determinism. For to be free from determining law is as much 'destiny' as to be subject to it.

We have, therefore, three fundamental ontological categories and three corresponding metaphysical modes of being. Peirce also distinguishes three modes or categories of existence or actuality. The first is what he calls 'chance', a term used 'to express with accuracy the characteristics of freedom or spontaneity'.[1] The second mode of existence is law, laws being of various types but all being the result of evolution. The third mode of existence is habit, or, rather, the tendency to habit-making. The word 'habit', however, must be understood in a wide sense. For, according to Peirce, all things possess a tendency to take habits,[2] whether they are human beings, animals, plants or chemical substances. And the laws which state uniformities or regularities are the results of long periods of such habit-taking.

We can now briefly consider the actual world or universe in the light of these modes or categories of actuality or existence.[3] 'Three elements are active in the world: first, chance; second, law; and third, habit-taking.'[4] We are invited to think of the universe as being originally in a state of pure indetermination, a state in which there were no distinct things, no habits, no laws, a state in which absolute chance reigned. From one point of view this absolute indetermination was 'nullity',[5] the negation of all determination, while from another point of view, considered, that is to say, as the real possibility of all determination, it was 'being'.[6] At the same time chance is spontaneity, freedom, creativity. It thus annuls itself as unlimited possibility or potentiality by taking the form of possibilities of this or that sort, that is to say, of some definite qualities or suchnesses, falling under the ontological category of firstness. And as the universe evolves and

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[1] 6.201.
[2] Cf. 1.409.
[3] The actual world, it will be remembered, is for Peirce part of the wider sphere of real possibility. It consists of actualized possibilities and of possibilities in the process of actualization.
[4] 1.409.
[5] 1.447.
[6] *Ibid.*

'monads' act and react in 'secondnesses', habits are formed and there are produced those regularities or laws which fall into the category of thirdness. The ideal limit of the process is the complete reign of law, the opposite of the reign of absolute chance.

The first stage is evidently, in a real sense, an abstraction. For if chance is spontaneity and creativity, we can hardly speak, as Peirce explicitly recognizes, of an assignable time or period during which there was absolutely no determination. Similarly, the complete reign of law, in which all chance or spontaneity is absent, is also in a sense an abstraction, an ideal limit. For according to Peirce's principle of 'tychism',[1] chance is always present in the universe. Hence we can say that the universe is a process of creative and continuous determination, moving from the ideal limit of absolute indetermination to the ideal limit of absolute determination, or, better, from the ideal limit of bare possibility to the ideal limit of the complete actualization of possibility. Another way of putting the matter is to say that evolution is a process of advance from absolute chance considered as 'a chaos of unpersonalized feeling'[2] to the reign of pure reason embodied in a perfectly rational system. We have already seen, in connection with his ethical doctrine, how Peirce regards the universe as moving towards an ever fuller embodiment of rationality.

It does not follow from Peirce's doctrine of absolute chance as the primitive state of the universe that chance is the sole explanation of evolution. On the contrary, 'evolution is nothing more nor less than the working out of a definite end',[3] a final cause. And this idea enables Peirce to adopt and adapt the old idea of the cosmic significance of love, an idea which goes back at any rate to the Greek philosopher Empedocles. A final end works by attraction, and the response is love. To the idea of 'tychism', therefore, we have to add that of 'agapism' as a cosmological category. And to these two we must add a third, namely 'synechism', which is 'the doctrine that all that exists is continuous'.[4]

Synechism, we may note, rules out any ultimate dualism between matter and mind. Indeed, 'what we call matter is not completely dead, but is merely mind hidebound with habits'[5] which make it act with a specially high degree of mechanical regularity. And Peirce remarks that 'tychism' must give rise to a 'Schelling-fashioned idealism which holds matter to be mere specialized and partially deadened mind'.[1] So convinced is he of this, that he does not hesitate to say that 'the one intelligible theory of the universe is that of objective idealism, that matter is effete mind, inveterate habits becoming physical laws'.[2]

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[1] 'Tychism' or 'chance-ism', coined by Peirce from the Greek word *tyche*.
[2] 6.33. [3] 1.204. [4] 1.172. [5] 6.158.

Now, if it is asked whether Peirce believed in God, the answer is affirmative. But if it is asked what part is played in his philosophy by the concept of God, the answer is more complex. His general principle is that philosophy and religion should not be mixed up. Not that this prevents him from writing about God. But when he talks about 'musement' as an activity of the mind which leads directly to God, he is not thinking of what would normally be called a systematic metaphysical argument. If, for example, I contemplate the starry heavens, as Kant did, and allow instinct and the heart to speak, I cannot help believing in God. Appeal to one's own 'instinct' is more effective than any argument.[3] Peirce does indeed make it clear that in his opinion contemplation of the 'three universes' of tychism, agapism and synechism 'gives birth to the hypothesis and ultimately to the belief that they, or at any rate two of the three, have a Creator independent of them'.[4] But he calls this the 'neglected argument', also the 'humble argument', and he brings it under the heading of 'musement'. The direction of Peirce's thought is, however, perfectly plain. A theory of evolution which enthroned mechanical law above the principle of creative growth or development would be hostile to religion; but 'a genuine evolutionary philosophy . . . is so far from being antagonistic to the idea of a personal creator that it is really inseparable from that idea'.[5] While, therefore, in his systematic metaphysics Peirce concentrates on the doctrine of categories, his general world-view is certainly theistic.

9. From the point of view of the history of pragmatism Peirce's chief contribution is, of course, his analysis of meaning, his rule for making concepts clear. And if this is considered in a general way, it has an obvious value. For it can serve as a useful goad or stimulus, making us give concrete content to our concepts, instead of letting words do duty for clear ideas. In other words, it stimulates

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[1] 6.102. Tychism is mentioned because Peirce connects mind with firstness, and so, rather surprisingly, with chance, while matter is connected with secondness, and with agapism, and evolution with thirdness, synechism (6.32).

[2] 6.25.

[3] Peirce believed that God's existence is from one point of view evident enough. 'Where would such an idea, say as that of God, come from if not from direct experience?' (6.493).

[4] 6.483.

[5] 6.157.

to conceptual analysis. It seems to me pretty obvious, for example, that if there were no assignable difference between what Peirce calls the 'practical consequences' or 'practical effects' of the words 'hard' and 'soft', there would in fact be no difference in meaning. True, as a general criterion of meaning Peirce's principle of pragmaticism lies open to the same sort of objections which have been brought against the neopositivist criterion of meaning. There is great difficulty in interpreting all factual statements as predictions or sets of predictions. But this does not alter the fact that the principle of pragmaticism brings out aspects of the semantic situation which have to be taken into account in developing a theory of meaning. In other words, Peirce made a valuable contribution to logic. And if he allowed what he saw clearly to obscure other aspects of the situation, there is nothing exceptional in this.

We have seen, however, that when applying the principle of pragmaticism in a particular context Peirce states roundly that our idea of anything *is* our idea of its sensible effects. If this statement is taken seriously in its universal form, it appears to undermine Peirce's own metaphysical world-view. He does indeed make an attempt to apply his principle to the concept of God without dissolving the concept.[1] And he suggests[2] that if the pragmaticist is asked what he means by 'God', he can reply that just as long acquaintance with the works of Aristotle makes us familiar with the philosopher's mind, so does study of the physico-psychical universe give us an acquaintance with what may be called in some analogous sense the divine 'mind'. But if his statement elsewhere about 'sensible effects' is taken seriously, it seems to follow either that we have no clear concept of God or that the idea of God is simply the idea of his sensible effects. And in point of fact Peirce himself suggests in one place[3] that the question whether there really is such a being as God is the question whether physical science is something objective or simply a fictional construction of the scientists' minds.

It may be objected that the last sentence involves taking a remark out of its general context, and that in any case too much emphasis has been placed on the statement that our idea of anything is the idea of its sensible effects. After all, when he made the statement Peirce was talking about the sensible effects of bread. Further, he gives various formulations of the principle of pragmatism, and in view of the way in which he often uses the principle we ought not to over-emphasize a statement made in a particular context.

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[1] 6.489–490.

[2] 6.502.

[3] 6.503.

This is doubtless true. But Peirce made the statement in question. And the point which we are trying to make here is that he did not construct a system in which all the elements of his thought were harmonized and rendered consistent. Peirce approached philosophy through mathematics and science, and his theory of meaning was doubtless largely suggested by reflection on scientific statements considered as fallible hypotheses, as verifiable or falsifiable predictions. But his interests were wide and his mind was original and fertile; and he developed a metaphysical world-view in which pragmatism was not forgotten but which demanded reconsideration of the nature and scope of the pragmatist principle. To claim that it is impossible to synthesize Peirce's logic and his metaphysics would be to claim too much, at least if synthesis is understood as permitting revision and modification of the elements to be synthesized. But two things at any rate are clear; first that Peirce did not himself work out such a synthesis, and, secondly, that no synthesis is possible if the pragmatic principle is understood in such a way that it leads straight to neopositivism.

To say, however, that Peirce did not achieve a fully coherent synthesis of the various elements in his thought is not to deny that he was in a real sense a systematic thinker. Indeed, from one point of view it is hardly an exaggeration to claim that he was possessed by a passion for system. We have only to think, for example, of the way in which he used the ideas of firstness, secondness and thirdness, employing them to link together logic, epistemology, ontology and cosmology. It is undeniable that out of his various papers there arise the general outlines of an imposing system.

We have said that Peirce approached philosophy by way of mathematics and science. And we would naturally expect his metaphysics to be a prolongation or extension of his reflections on the scientific view of the world. So it is to some extent. At the same time the general results have a marked affinity with metaphysical idealism. But Peirce was well aware of this; and he considered that if one constructs a world-view based on the scientific conception of the world, one is inevitably pushed in the direction of metaphysical idealism, an idealism which is able to accommodate the 'Scholastic realism' on which Peirce always insisted. In other words, he did not start with idealist premisses.

He started with realism and was determined to maintain it. But he recognized that though his approach was different from that of the idealists, his conclusions had a recognizable resemblance to theirs. We find much the same situation in the case of Whitehead in the present century.

We have already noted Peirce's commendation of Schelling's view of matter, and his explicit statement that objective idealism is the one intelligible theory of the universe. Here we can note his partial affinity with Hegel. Sometimes indeed Peirce speaks against Hegel, maintaining, for example, that he was too inclined to forget that there is a world of action and reaction, and that Hegel deprived 'firstness' and 'secondness' of all actuality. But when speaking of his own doctrine of categories, logical and metaphysical, Peirce notes the 'Hegelian sound'[1] of what he has to say and remarks that his statements are indeed akin to those of Hegel. 'I sometimes agree with the great idealist and sometimes diverge from his footsteps.'[2] While prepared to say on occasion that he entirely rejects the system of Hegel, Peirce is also prepared to say on occasion that he has resuscitated Hegelianism in a new form, and even to claim that, so far as a philosophical concept can be identified with the idea of God, God is the absolute Idea of Hegel, the Idea which manifests itself in the world and tends towards its complete self-revelation in the ideal limit or term of the evolutionary process.[3] It is not altogether surprising, therefore, if Peirce speaks of Hegel as 'in some respects the greatest philosopher that ever lived',[4] even if he also criticizes Hegel for a lamentable deficiency in 'critical severity and sense of fact'.[5]

We have mentioned the name of Whitehead. There does not seem to be any evidence that Whitehead was influenced by Peirce, or even that he had studied Peirce's writings. But this renders the resemblance between their thought all the more notable. It is, of course, a limited resemblance, but it is none the less real. For example, Whitehead's doctrine of eternal objects and actual entities was anticipated to some extent by Peirce's distinction between 'generals' and facts. Again, Whitehead's doctrine of novelty in the universe, in the cosmic process, recalls Peirce's doctrine of spontaneity and originality. Further, it is perhaps not altogether fanciful to see in Peirce's thought an anticipation of Whitehead's famous distinction between the primordial and consequent natures of God. For Peirce tells us that God as Creator is the 'Absolute First',[1] while as terminus of the universe, as God completely revealed, he is the 'Absolute Second'.[2] Perhaps one is put in mind more of Hegel than of Whitehead; but then the philosophy of Whitehead himself, anti-idealist though it was by original intention, bears some resemblance in its final form to absolute idealism.

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[1] 1.453.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] One can compare Peirce's different ways of alluding to Hegelianism with the different ways in which he speaks of metaphysics. Needless to say, the different statements must in both cases he interpreted in the light of their immediate contexts.

[4] 1.524.

[5] *Ibid.*

To return finally to Peirce in himself. He was an original philosopher and powerful thinker. Indeed, the claim that he is the greatest of all purely American philosophers is by no means unreasonable. He had a strong tendency to careful analysis and was far from being one of those philosophers whose chief concern appears to be that of providing uplift and edification. At the same time he had a speculative mind which sought for a general or overall interpretation of reality. And this combination is, we may well think, precisely what is required. At the same time the example of Peirce is a living illustration of the difficulty of effecting such a combination. For we find in his thought unresolved ambiguities. For instance, Peirce is a resolute realist. Reality is independent of human experience and thought. Indeed, the real is to be defined precisely in terms of this independence. And it is this account of the real which permits Peirce to attribute independent reality to the world of possibles and to depict God as the only absolute reality. At the same time his pragmatism or pragmaticism seems to demand what Royce called the 'critical rationalist' interpretation of reality, namely in terms of conceivable human experience. That which gives rise to actual experience is actually real. That which is conceived as giving rise to possible experience is potentially actual, a real possibility. On this interpretation of reality we could not claim that God is an actually existing being without claiming that he is the object of actual experience. Alternatively, we would have to analyze the concept of God in such a way as to reduce it to the idea of those effects which we do experience. So we are back once more with the latent tension in Peirce's philosophy as a whole between his metaphysics and a logical analysis of the meaning of concepts which appears to point in quite a different direction from that of his speculative metaphysics.

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[1] 1.362.

[2] *Ibid.* The 'third' would be every state of the universe at an assignable point of time, mediating between God as First and God as Second.

CHAPTER XV

THE PRAGMATISM OF JAMES AND SCHILLER

The life and writings of William James—James's conception of radical empiricism and pure experience—Pragmatism as theory of meaning and as theory of truth—The relations between radical empiricism, pragmatism and humanism in the philosophy of James—Pragmatism and belief in God—Pragmatism in America and England—The humanism of C. F. S. Schiller.

1. WILLIAM JAMES (1842–1910) was born at New York and received his school education partly in America and partly abroad, acquiring in the process a fluency in the French and German languages. In 1864 he entered the Harvard Medical School, receiving the degree of doctor of medicine in 1869. After a period of bad health and mental depression he became an instructor in anatomy and physiology at Harvard. But he was also interested in psychology, and in 1875 he began giving courses in the subject. In 1890 he published his *Principles of Psychology* in two volumes.

Apart from an early attempt to become a painter, James's higher education was thus mainly scientific and medical. But like his father, Henry James, senior,[1] he was a man of deep religious feeling, and he found himself involved in a mental conflict between the scientific view of the world, interpreted as a mechanistic view which excluded human freedom, and a religious view which would include belief not only in God but also in the freedom of man. As far as the legitimacy of belief in freedom was concerned, James found help in the writing of the French philosopher Charles Renouvier (1815–1903). And it was largely the desire to overcome the opposition between the outlook to which science seemed to him to point and the outlook suggested by his religious and humanistic inclinations which drove James to philosophy. In 1879 he started to lecture on the subject at Harvard, and in the following year he became an assistant professor of philosophy. In 1885 he was nominated professor of philosophy.

In 1897 James published *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy.*[2] His famous *Varieties of Religious*

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[1] Henry James, junior, the novelist, was a younger brother of William.

[2] The copyright date is 1896, but the volume appeared in 1897.

Experience,[1] appeared in 1902. This was followed by *Pragmatism* in 1907, *A Pluralistic Universe*[2] in 1909 and, in the same year, *The Meaning of Truth*. James's posthumously published writings include *Some Problems of Philosophy* (1911), *Memories and Studies* (1911), *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (1912), and *Collected Essays and Reviews* (1920). His *Letters*, edited by his son, Henry James, appeared in 1926.

2. In the preface to *The Will to Believe* James describes his philosophical attitude as that of radical empiricism. He explains that by empiricism he understands a position which is 'contented to regard its most assured conclusions concerning matters of fact as hypotheses liable to modification in the course of future experience'.[3] As for the word 'radical', this indicates that the doctrine of monism itself is treated as an hypothesis. At first hearing this sounds very odd. But in this context James understands by monism the view that the multiplicity of things forms an intelligible unity. He does not mean by monism the theory that the world is one single entity or one single fact. On the contrary, he excludes this theory in favour of pluralism. What he is saying is that radical empiricism postulates a unity which is not immediately given, but that this postulate, which stimulates us to discover unifying connections, is treated as itself an hypothesis which has to be verified, and not as an unquestionable dogma.[4]

In *Some Problems of Philosophy*, in the context of a discussion of types of metaphysics, empiricism is contrasted with rationalism. 'Rationalists are the men of principles, empiricists the men of facts.'[5] The rationalist philosopher, as James sees him, moves from the whole to its parts, from the universal to the particular, and he endeavours to deduce facts from principles. Further, he tends to claim final truth on behalf of his system of deduced conclusions. The empiricist, however, starts with particular facts; he moves from parts to wholes; and he prefers, if he can, to explain principles as inductions from facts. Further, the claim to final truth is foreign to his mind.

Obviously, there is nothing new here. Familiar lines of contrast between rationalism and empiricism are presented by James in a more or less popular manner. But in the preface to *The Meaning*

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[1] This work represents Gifford Lectures given at Edinburgh in 1901–2.

[2] This work represents the Hibbert Lectures given at Oxford in 1908–9.

[3] *The Will to Believe*, p. vii (1903 edition).

[4] We shall mention presently another sense of the word 'monism'.

[5] *Some Problems of Philosophy*, p. 35.

of Truth we can find a more clearly defined account of radical empiricism. It is there said to consist 'first of a postulate, next of a statement of fact, and finally of a generalized conclusion'.[1] The postulate is that only those matters which are definable in terms drawn from experience should be considered debatable by philosophers. Hence if there is any being which transcends all possible experience, it also transcends philosophical discussion. The statement of fact is that relations, conjunctive and disjunctive, are as much objects of experience as the things related. And the generalized conclusion from this statement of fact is that the knowable universe possesses a continuous structure, in the sense that it does not consist simply of entities which can be related only through categories imposed from without.

James is insistent on the reality of relations. 'Radical empiricism takes conjunctive relations at their face value, holding them to be as real as the terms united by them.'[2] And among conjunctive relations is the causal relation. Hence what James calls radical empiricism differs from the empiricism of Hume, according to whom 'the mind never perceives any real connection among distinctive existences'.[3] It is also opposed to Bradley's theory of relations. '"Mr. Bradley's understanding shows the most extraordinary power of perceiving separations and the most extraordinary impotence in comprehending conjunctions.'[4]

The meaning of the word 'experience' is notoriously imprecise. But according to James ordinary experience, in which we are aware of distinct things of various kinds and of relations of different types, grows out of pure experience, described as 'the immediate flux of life which furnishes the material to our later reflection with its conceptual categories'.[5] True, only new-born infants and people in a state of semi-coma can be said to enjoy in its purity a state of pure experience, which is 'but another name for feeling or sensation'.[6] But pure experience, the immediacy of feeling or sensation, is the embryo out of which articulated experience develops; and elements or portions of it remain even in our ordinary experience.

From this doctrine of pure experience we can draw two conclusions. First, in this basic flux of experience the distinctions of reflective thought, such as those between consciousness and content, subject and object, mind and matter, have not yet emerged in the forms in which we make them. In this sense pure experience is 'monistic'. And James can speak of it as the 'one primal stuff or material in the world, a stuff of which everything is composed'.[1] This is the doctrine of 'neutral monism', which James associates with radical empiricism. Pure experience cannot be called, for example, either physical or psychical: it logically precedes the distinction and is thus 'neutral'.

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[1] *The Meaning of Truth*, p. xii. [2] *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, p. 107.

[3] *Treatise of Human Nature*, Appendix, p. 636 (Selby-Bigge edition).

[4] *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, p. 117.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 93. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 94.

Secondly, however, the fact that radical empiricism is pluralistic rather than monistic in the ontological sense and asserts the reality of many things and of the relations between them, means that pure experience must be regarded as containing in itself potentially the distinctions of developed experience. It is shot through, as James expresses the matter, not only with nouns and adjectives but also with prepositions and conjunctions. The causal relation, for example, is present in the flux of sensation, inasmuch as all sensation is teleological in character.

Now, if pure monism is understood in a purely psychological sense, as simply stating, that is to say, that the primitive and basic form of experience is a state of 'feeling' in which distinctions, such as that between subject and object, are not as yet present, it is doubtless compatible with a realistic pluralism. But if it is understood in an ontological sense, as meaning that the flux of undifferentiated experience is the ontological 'stuff' out of which all emerges, it is difficult to see how it does not lead straight to some form of monistic idealism. However, James assumes that the doctrine of pure experience, which is obviously psychological in origin, is compatible with the pluralistic view of the universe that he associates with radical empiricism.

In so far as radical empiricism involves pluralism and belief in the reality of relations, it can be said to be a world-view. But if it is understood simply in terms of the three elements mentioned above, namely a postulate, a statement of fact, and a generalized conclusion, it is an embryonic rather than a full-grown world-view. The problem of God, for example, is left untouched. James does indeed maintain that there are specifically religious experiences which suggest the existence of a superhuman consciousness that is limited and not all-inclusive in a sense which would conflict with pluralism. And he remarks that if empiricism were to become 'associated with religion, as hitherto, through some strange misunderstanding, it has been associated with irreligion, I believe that a new era of religion as well as of philosophy will be ready to begin'.[1] But James's theism will be more conveniently treated after we have outlined the basic tenets of pragmatism and the relation between pragmatism and radical empiricism.

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[1] *Ibid.*

3. In origin and primarily pragmatism is, James tells us, 'a method only'.[2] For it is in the first place 'a method of settling metaphysical disputes that might otherwise be interminable'.[3] That is to say, if *A* proposes theory *x* while *B* proposes theory *y*, the pragmatist will examine the practical consequences of each theory. And if he can find no difference between the respective practical consequences of the two theories, he will conclude that they are to all intents and purposes one and the same theory, the difference being purely verbal. In this case further dispute between *A* and *B* will be seen to be pointless.

What we have here is obviously a method for determining the meanings of concepts and theories. In an address delivered in 1881 James remarked that if two apparently different definitions of something turn out to have identical consequences, they are really one and the same definition.[4] And this is the theory of meaning which finds expression in *Pragmatism*. 'To attain perfect clearness in our thoughts of an object, we need only consider what conceivable effects of a practical kind the object may involve—what sensations we are to expect from it, and what reactions we must prepare. Our conception of these effects, whether immediate or remote, is then for us the whole of our conception of the object, so far as that conception has positive significance at all.'[5]

As so described, the pragmatism of James evidently follows the main lines of the pragmatist method as conceived by Peirce. James was, indeed, influenced by some other thinkers as well, such as the scientists Louis Agassiz and Wilhelm Ostwald; but he made no secret of his indebtedness to Peirce. He refers to him in a footnote relating to the address of 1881.[6] He again admits his debt to Peirce in a public lecture given in 1898.[7] And after the passage quoted in the last paragraph he adds that 'this is the principle of Peirce, the principle of pragmatism',[8] and remarks that Peirce's doctrine remained unnoticed until he, James, brought it forward in the lecture of 1898 and applied it to religion.

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[1] *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 314.

[2] *Pragmatism*, p. 51.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

[4] *The Will to Believe*, p. 124.

[5] *Pragmatism*, p. 47.

[6] *The Will to Believe*, p. 124, note 1.

[7] *Collected Essays and Reviews*, p. 410.

[8] *Pragmatism*, p. 47.

There are, it is true, certain differences between the positions of Peirce and James. For example, when Peirce spoke about the practical consequences of a concept he emphasized the general idea of a habit of action, the idea of the general manner in which the concept could conceivably modify purposive action. James, however, tends to emphasize particular practical effects. As we have seen in the passage which is quoted above from *Pragmatism*, he there emphasizes particular sensations and reactions. Hence Peirce accused him of having been led away from the universal to the particular under the influence of an ultra-sensationalistic psychology, of being, as Dewey put it, more of a nominalist. In Peirce's terminology, James is concerned with antecedents and consequents more than with consequences, a consequence being the conceived relation between an antecedent and a consequent.

At the same time, if James's pragmatism were simply a method for making concepts clear, for determining their meanings, we could say that he adopts Peirce's principle, even if he gives it, as Dewey expresses it, a 'nominalistic' twist. In point of fact, however, pragmatism is not for James simply a method of determining the meanings of concepts. It is also a theory of truth. Indeed, James explicitly states that 'the pivotal part of my book named *Pragmatism* is its account of the relation called "truth" which may obtain between our idea (opinion, belief, statement, or what not) and its object'.[1] And it was largely James's development of pragmatism into a theory of truth which led Peirce to re-name his own theory 'pragmaticism'.

It is important to understand that James's theory of truth does not presuppose a denial of the correspondence theory. Truth is for him a property of certain of our beliefs, not of things. 'Realities are not *true*, they *are*; and beliefs are true *of* them.'[2] In modern language, logical truth and falsity are predicated of propositions, not of things or of facts. Strictly speaking at any rate, it is the proposition enunciating a fact which is true, not the fact itself. Julius Caesar's existence at a certain period of history cannot properly be called true; but the statement that he existed is true, while the statement that he did not exist is false. At the same time the statement that Julius Caesar existed is not true in virtue of the meanings of the symbols or words employed in the statement. Hence we can say that it is true in virtue of a relation of correspondence with reality or fact.

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[1] *The Meaning of Truth*, p. v.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 196.

In James's opinion, however, to say that a true belief (he also speaks of true ideas) is one which corresponds or agrees with reality raises rather than solves a problem. For what precisely is meant by correspondence in this context? Copying? An image of a sensible object might be called a copy of the object. But it is not so easy to see how a true idea of, say, justice can reasonably be described as a copy.

James's analysis of 'correspondence' is on these lines. Truth is a relation between one part of experience and another. The *terminus a quo* of the relation is an idea, which belongs to the subjective aspect of experience, while the *terminus ad quem* is an objective reality. What, then, is the relation between the terms? Here we have to employ the pragmatist interpretation of an idea as a plan or rule of action. If our following out this plan leads us to the *terminus ad quem*, the idea is true. More accurately, 'such mediating events *make* the idea true'.[1] In other words, the truth of an idea is the process of its verification or validation. If, for example, I am lost in a wood and then come upon a path which I think of as possibly or probably leading to an inhabited house where I can obtain directions or help, my idea is a plan of action. And if my following out this plan verifies or validates the idea, this process of verification constitutes the truth of the idea: it is the 'correspondence' to which the correspondence theory of truth really refers.

Now, it is noticeable that on the same page on which James tells us that an idea '*becomes* true, is *made* true by events',[2] he also tells us that 'true ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify'. In other words, he cannot help admitting that there are truths which can or could be verified, but which have not yet been verified. Indeed, he is prepared to state that unverified truths 'form the overwhelmingly large number of the truths we live by',[3] and that truth lives 'for the most part on a credit system'.[4]

If, however, truths are *made* true by verification or validation, it follows that unverified truths are potentially true, truths *in posse*. And this enables James to deal a blow at the philosophical rationalists or intellectualists who exalt static, timeless truths which are true prior to any verification. 'Intellectualist truth is only pragmatist truth *in posse*.'[5] And the total fabric of truth would collapse if it did not rest on some actually verified truths, that is, on some actual truths, just as a financial system would collapse if it possessed no solid basis in cash.

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[1] *The Meaning of Truth*, p. 202.
[2] *Pragmatism*, p. 201.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 206.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 207.
[5] *The Meaning of Truth*, p. 205.

In discussing James's theory of truth it is obviously important not to caricature it. James was inclined to write in a popular style and to use some rather down-to-earth phrases which gave rise to misunderstanding. For example, his expression of the view that an idea or belief is true if it 'works' was apt to suggest the conclusion that even a falsehood could be called 'true' if it were useful or expedient to believe it. But when James speaks about a theory 'working', he means that it 'must mediate between all previous truths and certain new experiences. It must derange common sense and previous belief as little as possible, and it must lead to some sensible terminus or other that can be verified exactly. To "work" means both these things.'[1]

Misunderstanding was also caused by the way in which James spoke of satisfaction as a basic element in truth. For his way of speaking suggested that in his view a belief could be accounted true if it caused a subjective feeling of satisfaction, and that he was thus opening the door to every kind of wishful thinking. But this was not at any rate his intention. 'Truth in science is what gives us the maximum possible sum of satisfaction, taste included, but consistency both with previous truth and with novel fact is always the most imperious claimant.'[2] The successful 'working' of an hypothesis, in the sense explained above, involves the satisfaction of an interest. But the hypothesis is not accepted simply because one wishes it to be true. If, however, there is no evidence which compels us to choose one rather than the other of two hypotheses which purport to explain the same set of phenomena, it is a matter of scientific 'taste' to choose the more economical or the more elegant hypothesis.

It is indeed true that in his famous essay on *The Will to Believe* James explicitly declares that 'our passional nature not only lawfully may, but must, decide our option between propositions, whenever it is a genuine option that cannot by its nature be decided on intellectual grounds'.[3] But he makes it clear that by a genuine option he means one 'of the forced, living, and momentous kind'.[4] That is to say, when it is a question of a living and important issue, one which influences conduct, when we cannot avoid choosing one of two beliefs, and when the issue cannot be decided on intellectual grounds, we are entitled to choose on 'passional' grounds, to exercise the will to believe, provided that we recognize our option for what it is. It is then a question of the right to believe in certain circumstances. And whether one agrees with James's thesis or not, one should not represent him as claiming that we are entitled to believe any proposition which affords us consolation or satisfaction, even if the balance of evidence goes to show that the proposition is false.[1] It is true, for instance, that according to James we are entitled, other things being equal, to embrace a view of reality which satisfies the moral side of our nature better than another view. And it is by no means everyone who would agree with him. But this is no reason for disregarding the qualification 'other things being equal', where 'other things' include, of course, already known truths and the conclusions deducible from them.

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[1] *Pragmatism*, pp. 216–17.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 217.

[3] *The Will to Believe*, p. 11.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Though, however, we should be careful not to caricature the pragmatist theory of truth, it by no means follows that it is immune from serious criticism. One obvious line of criticism, attributed by James to the 'rationalists', is that in so far as it identifies truth with verification the pragmatist theory confuses the truth of a proposition with the process of showing that it is true. This was one of Peirce's objections to turning pragmatism from a method of determining meaning into a theory of truth.

James's reply is to challenge his critic, the rationalist as he calls him, to explain 'what the *word* true *means*, as applied to a statement, without invoking the *concept of the statement's workings*'.[2] In James's opinion the rationalist cannot explain what he means by correspondence with reality without referring to the practical consequences of the proposition in question, to what would verify or validate it, if it were true. The rationalist thus implicitly commits himself to the pragmatist theory of truth, though he proposes to attack it in the name of a different theory.

In a discussion of this topic confusion is only too apt to arise. Suppose that I say that the statement that Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon is true in virtue of its correspondence with reality, with historical fact. And suppose that I am asked to explain what

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[1] One might, however, object against James's thesis that if a question is in principle unanswerable on intellectual grounds, it cannot, on the pragmatist analysis of meaning, be a meaningful question, and that in this case the issue of belief or unbelief does not arise.

[2] *The Meaning of Truth*, p. 221.

I mean by this relation of correspondence with reality. I can hardly do so without mentioning the state of affairs or, rather, the action or series of actions which are referred to in the statement. And it is perfectly true that the occurrence of this series of actions at an assignable date in history is ultimately what validates or 'verifies' the statement. In this sense I cannot explain what I mean by correspondence without referring to what would validate or verify the statement. At the same time the term 'verification' would normally be understood to refer to the measures which we might conceivably take to show that a statement is true, when we already know what the statement means. That is to say, verification would normally be understood as referring to conceivable means of showing that the state of affairs which must obtain or must have obtained if the statement is true actually does or did obtain. And if verification is understood in this sense, it seems perfectly correct to say with the 'rationalist' that it is a case of *showing* a statement to be true rather than of *making* it true.

We might, however, first define 'true' in such a way that it would follow logically that only an actually verified statement is true. A statement which could be verified but has not yet been verified would then be potentially true, a truth *in posse*. But it is evident that James does not regard the pragmatist theory of truth as being simply and solely the result of arbitrary definition. Hence it is not unreasonable to claim that the theory is acceptable or unacceptable according as it is reduced or not reduced to a thesis which, once understood, appears obvious. That is to say, if it is reduced to the thesis that an empirical statement is true or false according as the state of affairs asserted or denied is (was or will be) the case or not, the theory is acceptable, though what is stated is 'trivial'. If, however, the theory identifies the truth of a statement with the process which would show that the state of affairs asserted or denied is the case or not, it is very difficult to see how it does not stand wide open to the objections of the 'rationalists'.

It is not suggested that these remarks constitute an adequate answer to James's question about the nature of correspondence. From the point of view of a professional logician to say, for example, that a proposition is a copy or picture of reality simply will not do. Even apart from the fact that it will not fit the propositions of pure mathematics and formal logic,[1] it is far too imprecise a description of the relation between a true empirical proposition and the state of affairs asserted or denied. And it is to James's credit that he saw this. But it is worth noting that he also seems to have felt that his theory of truth ran the risk of being reduced to a triviality. For he says that one can expect the theory to be first attacked, then to be admitted as true but obvious and insignificant, and finally to be regarded as 'so important that its adversaries claim that they themselves discovered it'.[1] If, however, the theory contains something more than what is 'obvious', it is this something more which we may well be inclined to consider the questionable element in James's pragmatism.

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[1] For James such propositions are truths *in posse*, which are made (actually) true by successful application, by their 'working'. But this implies that they are empirical hypotheses, a view which is not favoured by most modern logicians.

4. How does pragmatism stand to radical empiricism? According to James, there is no logical connection between them. Radical empiricism 'stands on its own feet. One may entirely reject it and still be a pragmatist.'[2] And yet he also tells us that 'the establishment of the pragmatist theory of truth is a step of first rate importance in making radical empiricism prevail'.[3]

Up to a certain point James is doubtless justified in saying that radical empiricism and pragmatism are independent of one another. For instance, it is perfectly possible to hold that relations are as real as their terms and that the world has a continuous structure without accepting the pragmatist conceptions of meaning and truth. At the same time the postulate of radical empiricism is, as we have seen, that only those matters should be considered as subjects of philosophical debate which are definable in terms derived from experience. And the pragmatist is said to hold of the truth-relation that 'everything in it is experienceable. . . . The "workableness" which ideas must have, in order to be true, means particular workings, physical or intellectual, actual or possible, which they may set up from next to next inside of concrete experience.'[4] In other words, pragmatism will regard as possessing a claim to truth only those ideas which can be interpreted in terms of experienceable 'workings'. And acceptance of this view would obviously tend to make radical empiricism prevail, if by radical empiricism we mean the above-mentioned postulate.

We can put the matter in this way. Pragmatism, James remarks, has 'no doctrines save its method'.[5] Radical empiricism, however, which James develops into a metaphysics or world-view, has its doctrines. These doctrines, considered in themselves, can be held on other grounds than those provided by radical empiricism. This is true, for example, of belief in God. But in James's view the use of the pragmatist theory of truth or method of determining truth and falsity would contribute greatly to making the doctrines of radical empiricism prevail. He may have been over-optimistic in thinking this; but it is what he thought.

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[1] *Pragmatism*, p. 198.

[2] *The Meaning of Truth*, p. xii.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. ix.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

[5] *Pragmatism*, p. 54.

Now, James also makes use of the word 'humanism' to describe his philosophy. In a narrower sense of the term he uses it to refer to the pragmatist theory of truth when considered as emphasizing the 'human' element in belief and knowledge. For example, 'humanism says that satisfactoriness is what distinguishes the true from the false'.[1] It sees that truth is reached 'by ever substituting more satisfactory for less satisfactory opinions'.[2] We have already noted that James tries to avoid pure subjectivism by insisting that a belief cannot be accounted satisfactory and so true, if it is incompatible with previously verified beliefs or if the available evidence tells against it. But in his view no belief can be final, in the sense of being incapable of revision. And this is precisely what the 'humanist' sees. He sees, for example, that our categories of thought have been developed in the course of experience, and that even if we cannot help employing them, they might conceivably change in the future course of evolution.

To borrow a Nietzschean phrase, the humanist understands that our beliefs are human, all-too-human. And it is in this sense that we should understand James's definition of humanism as the doctrine that '*though one part of our experience may lean upon another part to make it what it is in any one of several aspects in which it may be considered, experience as a whole is self-containing and leans on nothing*'.[3] What he means is that while there are standards which grow up *within* experience, there is no absolute standard of truth *outside* all experience, to which all our truths must conform. The humanist regards truth as relative to changing experience, and so as relative to man; and he regards absolute truth as 'that ideal vanishing-point towards which we imagine that all our temporary truths will some day converge'.[4] And, to do him justice, James is prepared to apply this outlook to humanism itself.[5]

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[1] *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, p. 253.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 255

[3] *The Meaning of Truth*, p. 124.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 85.

[5] See, for example, *The Meaning of Truth*, p. 90.

The term 'humanism', however, is also used by James in a wider sense. Thus he tells us that the issue between pragmatism and rationalism, and so between humanism and rationalism, is not simply a logical or epistemological issue: *'it concerns the structure of the universe itself'*.[1] The pragmatist sees the universe as unfinished, changing, growing and plastic. The rationalist, however, maintains that there is one 'really real' universe, which is complete and changeless. James is thinking partly of 'Vivekanda's mystical One'.[2] But he is also thinking, of course, of Bradley's monism, according to which change is not fully real and degrees of truth are measured in relation to a unique absolute experience which transcends our apprehension.[3]

Now, James himself remarks that the definition of humanism which is quoted above in the last paragraph but one seems at first sight to exclude theism and pantheism. But he insists that this is not really the case. 'I myself read humanism theistically and pluralistically.'[4] Humanism thus becomes a pluralistic and theistic metaphysics or world-view, coinciding with developed radical empiricism. But James's theism can be considered separately in the next section.

5. When discussing the application of pragmatism as a method to substantial philosophical problems, James remarks that Berkeley's criticism of the idea of material substance was thoroughly pragmatist in character. For Berkeley gives the 'cash-value',[5] as James puts it, of the term 'material substance' in ideas or sensations. Similarly, when examining the concept of the soul Hume and his successors 'redescend into the stream of experience with it, and cash it into so much small-change value in the way of "ideas" and their peculiar connections with each other'.[6]

James himself applies the pragmatist method to a problem of intimate personal concern, namely to the issue between theism and materialism. In the first place we can consider theism and materialism retrospectively, as James puts it. That is to say, we can suppose that the theist and the materialist see the world itself and its history in the same way, and that the theist then adds the hypothesis of a God who set the world going, while the materialist excludes this hypothesis as unnecessary and invokes 'matter' instead. How are we to choose between these two positions? On pragmatist principles at any rate we cannot choose. For 'if no future detail of experience or conduct is to be deduced from our hypothesis, the debate between materialism and theism becomes quite idle and insignificant'.[1]

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[1] *Pragmatism*, p. 259.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 262.

[3] James relates rival theories of the universe to different types of temperament.

[4] *The Meaning of Truth*, p. 125.

[5] James's talk about cash-value is apt to create an unfortunate impression. But he is referring, of course, to analyzing ideas on beliefs in terms of their 'practical consequences'.

[6] *Pragmatism*, p. 92.

When, however, theism and materialism are considered 'prospectively', in relation to what they promise, to the expectations which they respectively lead us to entertain, the situation is quite different. For materialism leads us to expect a state of the universe in which human ideals, human achievements, consciousness and the products of thought will be as if they had never been,[2] whereas theism 'guarantees an ideal order that shall be permanently preserved'.[3] Somehow or other God will not allow the moral order to suffer shipwreck and destruction.

Looked at from this point of view, therefore, theism and materialism are very different. And on pragmatist principles we are entitled, other things being equal, to embrace that belief which corresponds best with the demands of our moral nature. But James does not mean to imply that there is no evidence at all in favour of theism, other than a desire that it should be true. 'I myself believe that the evidence for God lies primarily in inner personal experiences.'[4] In *A Pluralistic Universe* he resumes what he has already maintained in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* by arguing that 'the believer is continuous, to his own consciousness at any rate, with a wider self from which saving experiences flow in'.[5] Again, 'the drift of all the evidence we have seems to me to sweep us very strongly towards the belief in some form of superhuman life with which we may, unknown to ourselves, be co-conscious'.[6] At the same time the evil and suffering in the world suggest the conclusion that this superhuman consciousness is finite, in the sense that God is limited 'either in power, or in knowledge, or in both at once'.[7]

This idea of a finite God is used by James in his substitution of 'meliorism' for optimism on the one hand and pessimism on the other. According to the meliorist the world is not necessarily becoming better, nor is it necessarily becoming worse: it *can* become better, if, that is to say, man freely co-operates with the finite God in making it better.[1] In other words, the future is not inevitably determined, either for better or for worse, not even by God. There is room in the universe for novelty, and human effort has a positive contribution to make in the establishment of a moral order.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 99.

[2] James quotes a well-known passage from A. J. Balfour's *The Foundations of Belief* (p. 30).

[3] *Pragmatism*, p. 106.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

[5] *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 307.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 311.

James thus used pragmatism to support a religious world-view. But we have seen that when stating the pragmatist theory of meaning he declared that our whole conception of an object is reducible to our ideas of the 'conceivable effects of a practical kind the object may involve',[2] explicitly mentioning the sensations we may expect and the reactions we should prepare. And we may well doubt whether this is a promising foundation for a theistic world-view. But as was noted in the section on his life, the reconciliation of a scientific with a religious outlook constituted for him a personal problem. And taking a theory of truth which was built on to a theory of meaning that originated in an analysis of empirical hypotheses, he used it to support the only world-view which really satisfied him. In the process, of course, he extended the concept of experience far beyond sense-experience. Thus he maintained that religious empiricism is much more truly 'empirical' than irreligious empiricism, inasmuch as the former takes seriously the varieties of religious experience whereas the latter does not. In a sense his problem was the same as that of Kant, to reconcile the scientific outlook with man's moral and religious consciousness. His instrument of unification or harmonization was pragmatism. The result was presented as the development of radical empiricism. And the attitude adopted was described as humanism.

6. The pragmatist movement was above all an American phenomenon. True, one can find manifestations of the pragmatist attitude even in German philosophy. In the seventh volume of this *History* mention was made of the emphasis laid by F. A. Lange[3] on the value for life of metaphysical theories and religious doctrines at the expense of their cognitive value, and the way in which Hans Vaihinger[4] developed what we may call a pragmatist view of truth which had obvious affinities with Nietzsche's fiction-theory.[5] Attention was also drawn to the influence exercised on

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[1] James applied the pragmatist method to the issue between the theories of free will and determinism, as also to that between pluralism and monism.

[2] *Pragmatism*, p. 47.

[3] Vol. VII, p. 366.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 366–7.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 408–10.

William James by G. T. Fechner,[1] especially through his distinction between the 'day' and 'night' views of the universe and his claim that, other things being equal, we are entitled to give preference to the view which most contributes to human happiness and cultural development. As for French thought, mention was made in the first section of this chapter of the help derived by James from the writings of Charles Renouvier. And Renouvier, it may be noted, maintained that belief and even certitude are not exclusively intellectual affairs, but that affirmation involves also feeling and will. Though, however, we can certainly find affinities with pragmatism not only in German but also in French thought,[2] the pragmatist movement remains primarily associated with the names of three American philosophers, Peirce, James and Dewey.

This does not mean that England was without its pragmatist movement. But English pragmatism was neither so influential nor so impressive as its American counterpart. It would not be possible to give a reasonable account of American philosophy without including pragmatism. Peirce was an outstanding thinker on any count and nobody would question the influence exercised by James and Dewey on intellectual life in the United States. They brought philosophy to the fore, so to speak, to public notice; and Dewey especially applied it in the educational and social fields. But no great sin of omission would be committed if in an account of the development of modern British philosophy no mention were made of pragmatism, even though it caused a temporary flutter in the philosophical dovecotes. However, in an account of nineteenth-century British thought in which allusion has been made to a considerable number of minor philosophers some mention of pragmatism seems to be desirable.

In 1898 the Oxford Philosophical Society was founded, and an outcome of its discussions was the publication in 1902 of *Personal Idealism*, edited by Henry Sturt. In his preface to this collection of essays by eight members of the Society Sturt explained that the contributors were concerned with developing the theme of personality and with defending personality against naturalism on the one hand and absolute idealism on the other. The naturalist maintains that the human person is a transitory product of physical processes, while the absolute idealist holds that personality is an unreal appearance of the Absolute.[1] In fine, 'Naturalism and Absolutism, antagonistic as they seem to be, combine in assuring us that personality is an illusion'.[2] Oxford idealism, Sturt went on to say, had always been opposed to naturalism; and to this extent absolute and personal idealism maintained a common front. But for this very reason the personal idealists felt that absolute idealism was a more insidious adversary than naturalism. The absolute idealists adopted the impracticable course of trying to criticize human experience from the point of view of absolute experience. And it failed to give any adequate recognition to the volitional aspect of human nature. Absolute idealism, in brief, was insufficiently empirical. And Sturt suggested 'empirical idealism' as an appropriate name for personal idealism. For personal life is what is closest to us and best known by us.

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[1] Vol. VII, pp. 375–6. James refers frequently to Fechner in his writings.

[2] It is worth mentioning that Maurice Blondel once used the term *pragmatism* for his philosophy of action. But when he became acquainted with American pragmatism, he dropped the term, as he did not agree with the interpretation given to it by William James.

Needless to say, personal idealism and pragmatism are not interchangeable terms. Of the eight contributors to *Personal Idealism* some became well known outside the sphere of philosophy. R. R. Marett, the anthropologist, is an example. Others, such as G. F. Stout, were philosophers but not pragmatists. The volume contained, however, an essay by F. C. S. Schiller, who was the principal champion of pragmatism in England. And the point which we have been trying to make is that British pragmatism had a background of what we may call 'humanism'. It was to a considerable extent a protest on behalf of the human person not only against naturalism but also against the absolute idealism which was then the dominant factor in Oxford philosophy. It thus had more affinity with the pragmatism of William James than with the pragmatism of Peirce, which was essentially a method or rule for determining the meaning of concepts.

Ferdinand Canning Scott Schiller (1864–1937), came of German ancestry, though he was educated in England. In 1893 he became an instructor at Cornell University in America. In 1897 he was elected to a Tutorial Fellowship at Corpus Christi College, Oxford; and he remained a Fellow of the College until his death, though in 1929 he accepted a chair of philosophy in the University of Southern California at Los Angeles. In 1891 he published anonymously *Riddles of the Sphinx*,[1] and this was followed in 1902 by his essay, *Axioms as Postulates*, in *Personal Idealism*, the volume referred to above. *Humanism: Philosophical Essays* appeared in 1903, *Studies in Humanism* in 1907, *Plato or Protagoras?* in 1908, *Formal Logic* in 1912, *Problems of Belief* and *Tantalus, or The Future of Man* in 1924, *Eugenics and Politics* in 1926, *Logic for Use* in 1929 and *Must Philosophers Disagree? and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* in 1934. Schiller also contributed a paper entitled *Why Humanism?* to the first series of *Contemporary British Philosophy* (1924), edited by J. H. Muirhead, and wrote the article on pragmatism for the fourteenth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1929).

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[1] Strictly speaking, Bradley did not hold that personality is an 'unreal appearance' of the Absolute. It is a real appearance; but, being appearance, it cannot be fully real.

[2] *Personal Idealism*, p. vi.

7. As the titles of his writings suggest, Schiller's thought centres round man. In his essay *Plato or Protagoras?* he explicitly places himself on the side of Protagoras and makes his own the famous dictum that man is the measure of all things. *In Riddles of the Sphinx*, where he had attacked the absolute idealist theory of the One in the name of pluralistic personalism, he had declared that all our thinking must be anthropomorphic. But he did not at first use the term 'pragmatism' to describe his humanistic outlook. And in the preface to the first edition of *Humanism*, written after he had come under the influence of American pragmatism, especially that of William James, Schiller remarks that 'I was surprised to find that I had all along been a pragmatist myself without knowing it, and that little but the name was lacking to my own advocacy of an essentially cognate position in 1892'.[2] But though Schiller makes frequent use of the term 'pragmatism', once he has taken it over from William James, he insists that humanism is the basic concept. Humanism, which holds that man, and not the Absolute, is the measure of all experience and the maker of the sciences, is the fundamental and permanent attitude of thought of James and himself. Pragmatism 'is in reality only the application of Humanism to the theory of knowledge'.[3] The general need is to re-humanize the universe.

Re-humanization of the universe, humanism in other words, demands in the first place a humanization of logic. This demand is in part a protest against the arid subtleties and mental gymnastics of formal logicians who treat logic as a game to be played for its own sake, a protest which, Schiller notes, was expressed by Albert Sidgwick, himself a logician, whose first work bore the title *Fallacies: A View of Logic from the Practical Side* (1883). But Schiller's demand for a humanization of logic is much more than a protest against the aridities and hair-splitting of some logicians. For it rests on the conviction that logic does not represent a realm of absolute and timeless truth which is unaffected by human interest and purposes. In Schiller's view the idea of absolute truth is an '*ignis fatuus*',[1] in formal logic as well as in empirical science. The fundamental principles or axioms of logic are not *a priori* necessary truths; they are postulates, demands on experience,[2] which have shown themselves to possess a wider and more lasting value for the fulfilment of human purposes than is possessed by other postulates. And to bring out this aspect of the principles or axioms of logic is one of the tasks involved in the humanization of this science.

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[1] A second edition, with the author's name, appeared in 1894 and a new edition in 1910.

[2] *Humanism*, p. xiii (2nd edition, 1912). Schiller's reference is to an essay, *Reality and Idealism*, which he published in 1892. It is reprinted in *Humanism*, pp. 110–27.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. xxv.

But we can go considerably further than this. The pragmatist believes that the validity of any logical procedure is shown by its successful working. But it works only in concrete contexts. And it is therefore idle to suppose that complete abstraction from all subject-matter introduces us into a realm of changeless, absolute truth. Indeed, Schiller goes so far as to say that formal logic '*is in the strictest and completest sense meaningless*'.[3] If someone says, 'it is too light' and we do not know the context, his statement is for us meaningless. For we do not know whether he is referring to the weight of an object, to the colour of something or to the quality of a lecture or a book. Similarly, we cannot abstract completely from the use of logic, from its application, '*without incurring thereby a total loss, not only of truth but also of meaning*'.[4]

If, therefore, logical principles are postulates made in the light of human desires and purposes, and if their validity depends on their success in fulfilling these desires and purposes, it follows that we cannot divorce logic from psychology. 'Logical value must be found in psychological fact *or nowhere*. . . . Logical possibilities (or even "necessities") are nothing until they have somehow become psychologically actual and active.'[5] So much for all attempts to de-psychologize logic and to set it on its own feet.

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[1] *Contemporary British Philosophy*, First Series, p. 401.

[2] See *Axioms as Postulates* in *Personal Idealism*, p. 64.

[3] *Formal Logic*, p. 382.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. ix.

[5] *Axioms as Postulates* in *Personal Idealism*, p. 124.

What has been said of logical truth, namely that it is relative to human desires and aims, can be said of truth in general. Truths are in fact valuations. That is to say, to assert that a proposition is true is to say that it possesses practical value by fulfilling a certain purpose. 'Truth is the useful, efficient, workable, to which our practical experience tends to restrict our truth-valuations.'[1] Conversely, the false is the useless, what does not work. This is '*the great Pragmatist principle of selection*'.[2]

Schiller sees, of course, that ' "working" is clearly a vague generic term, and it is legitimate to ask what precisely is covered by it'.[3] But he finds this a difficult question to answer. It is comparatively easy to explain what is meant by the working of a scientific hypothesis. But it is not at all so easy to explain, for example, what forms of 'working' are to be accounted relevant to assessing the truth of an ethical theory. We have to admit that 'men take up different attitudes towards different workings because they themselves are temperamentally different'.[4] In other words, no clear and precise general answer can be given to the question.

As one would expect, Schiller is anxious to show that a distinction can be made on pragmatist principles between 'all truths are useful' and 'everything useful is true'. One of his arguments is that 'useful' means useful for a particular purpose, which is determined by the general context of a statement. For example, if I were threatened with torture if I did not say that the earth is flat, it would certainly be useful for me to say this. But the utility of my statement would not make it true. For statements about the shape of the earth pertain to empirical science; and it is certainly not useful for the advancement of science to assert that the earth is flat.

Another way of dealing with the matter is to insist on social recognition. But Schiller is alive to the fact that to recognize a truth is to recognize it as true. And on his principles to recognize it as true is to recognize it as useful. Hence social recognition cannot make a proposition useful, and so true. It is accorded to propositions which have already shown their utility. 'The use-criterion selects the individual truth-valuations, and constitutes thereby the objective truth which obtains social recognition.'[5]

Schiller tends to fall back on a biological interpretation of truth and to stress the idea of survival-value.[1] There is a process of natural selection among truths. Truths of inferior value are eliminated, while truths of superior value survive. And the belief which proves to have most survival-value shows itself to be the most useful, and so the most true. But what is survival-value? It can be described as 'a sort of working, which, while wholly devoid of any rational appeal, yet exercises a far-reaching influence on our beliefs, and is capable of determining this adoption and the elimination of their contraries'.[2] So we are back once more with the admittedly imprecise and vague idea of 'working'.

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[1] *Humanism*, p. 59.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

[3] *Contemporary British Philosophy*, First Series, p. 405.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 406.

[5] *Humanism*, p. 59.

As we have seen, Schiller maintains that from 'all truths are useful' it does not follow that 'any proposition which is useful is true'. This is perfectly correct, of course. But then one might quite well hold that all truths are 'useful' in some sense or other without holding that their utility constitutes their truth. If one *does* hold that truth is constituted by utility, one can hardly deny at the same time that every useful proposition is true in so far as it is useful. And if the doctrine of non-convertibility is to be maintained successfully one has to show that true propositions possess some property or properties which useful falsehoods do not. Human beings are organisms, but not all organisms are human beings. And this is so because human beings possess properties which are not possessed by all organisms. What are the properties which are peculiar to true propositions over and above a utility which can also be possessed by a proposition which is false? This is a question to which Schiller never really faces up. Mention has been made of Sturt's opinion that absolute idealism did not give sufficient recognition to the volitional side of human nature. One of the troubles with Schiller is that he accords it too much recognition.

Schiller was much less inclined than James to indulge in metaphysical speculation. He did indeed maintain that humanism, an anthropocentric outlook, demands that we should look on the world as 'wholly plastic',[3] as indefinitely modifiable, as what we can make of it. But though he allows that humanists or pragmatists will regard the efforts of metaphysicians with tolerance and will concede aesthetic value to their systems, at the same time 'metaphysics seem doomed to remain *personal guesses* at ultimate reality, and to remain inferior in objective value to the sciences, which are essentially "common" *methods* for dealing with phenomena'.[1] Here again we see the difficulty encountered by Schiller in explaining precisely what 'working' can mean outside the sphere of scientific hypotheses. So he attributes aesthetic value rather than truth-value to metaphysical theories. This is obviously because he regards scientific hypotheses as empirically verifiable whereas metaphysical systems are not. And we are back again with the question whether verification, a species of 'working', does not show an hypothesis to be true (or tend to show it) rather than constitute its truth.

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[1] See especially *Logic in Use*, also *Problems of Belief*, chapters XI–XII.

[2] *Contemporary British Philosophy*, First Series, p. 406.

[3] *Axioms as Postulates* in *Personal Idealism*, p. 61.

Schiller's main contribution to pragmatism lay in his treatment of logic, which was more professional and detailed than that of William James. But his overall interpretation of logic cannot be said to have demonstrated its 'survival-value'.

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[1] *Contemporary British Philosophy*, First Series, p. 409.

CHAPTER XVI

THE EXPERIMENTALISM OF JOHN DEWEY

Life and writings—Naturalistic empiricism: thought, experience and knowledge—The function of philosophy—Instrumentalism: logic and truth—Moral theory—Some implications in social and educational theory—Religion in a naturalistic philosophy—Some critical comments on Dewey's philosophy.

1. JOHN DEWEY (1859–1952) was born at Burlington, Vermont. After studying at the University of Vermont he became a high school teacher. But his interest in philosophy led him to submit to W. T. Harris an essay on the metaphysical assumptions of materialism with a view to publication in *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy,*[1] and the encouragement which he received resulted in his entering Johns Hopkins University in 1882. At the university Dewey attended courses on logic by C. S. Peirce, but the chief influence on his mind was exercised by G. S. Morris, the idealist, with whom Dewey entered into relations of personal friendship.

From 1884 until 1888 Dewey lectured at the University of Michigan, first as an instructor in philosophy and later as an assistant professor, after which he spent a year as professor at the University of Minnesota. In 1889 he returned to Michigan as head of the department of philosophy, and he occupied this post until 1894 when he went to Chicago. During this period Dewey occupied himself with logical, psychological and ethical questions, and his mind moved away from the idealism which he had learned from Morris.[2] In 1887 he published *Psychology,* in 1891 *Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics,* and in 1894 *The Study of Ethics: A Syllabus.*

From 1894 until 1904 Dewey was head of the department of philosophy in the University of Chicago, where he founded his Laboratory School[3] in 1896. The publications of this period include *My Pedagogic Creed* (1897), *The School and Society* (1900), *Studies in Logical Theory* (1903) and *Logical Conditions of a Scientific Treatment of Morality* (1903).

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[1] The article was published in the issue of April, 1882.

[2] In this connection Dewey notes the influence exercised on his mind by William James's *Principles of Psychology.*

[3] An experimental school, commonly known as The Dewey School.

In 1904 Dewey went as professor of philosophy to Columbia University, becoming professor emeritus in 1929.[1] In 1908 he published *Ethics*,[2] in 1910 *How We Think* and *The Influence of Darwin and Other Essays in Contemporary Thought*, in 1915 *Schools of Tomorrow*, in 1916 *Democracy and Education* and *Essays in Experimental Logic*, in 1920 *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, in 1922 *Human Nature and Conduct*, in 1925 *Experience and Nature*, and in 1929 *The Quest for Certainty*. As for later publications *Art as Experience* and *A Common Faith* appeared in 1934, *Experience and Education* and *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* in 1938, *Theory of Valuation* in 1939, *Education Today* in 1940, *Problems of Men* in 1946 and *Knowing and The Known* in 1949.

Outside the United States at least Dewey is probably best known for his instrumentalism, his version of pragmatism. But he was certainly not the man to concern himself simply with general theories about thought and truth. As the foregoing partial list of his publications indicates, he was deeply interested in problems of value and of human conduct, of society and of education. In the last-named field especially he exercised a great influence in America. Obviously, his ideas did not win universal acceptance. But they could not be ignored. And, in general, we can say that William James and John Dewey were the two thinkers who did most to bring philosophy to the attention of the educated public in the United States.

2. Dewey often describes his philosophy as empirical naturalism or naturalistic empiricism. And the meaning of these descriptions can perhaps best be illustrated by saying something about his account of the nature and function of thought. We can begin by considering the bearing in this context of the term 'naturalism'.

In the first place thought is not for Dewey an ultimate, an absolute, a process which creates objective reality in a metaphysical sense. Nor is it something in man which represents a non-natural element, in the sense that it sets man above or over against Nature. It is in the long run a highly developed form of the active relation between a living organism and its environment. To be sure, in spite of a tendency to use behaviourist language Dewey is well aware that the intellectual life of man has its own peculiar characteristics. The point is, however, that he refuses to start, for instance, from the distinction between subject and object as from an absolute and ultimate point of departure, but sees man's intellectual life as presupposing and developing out of antecedent relations, and thus as falling wholly within the sphere of Nature. Thought is one among other natural processes or activities.

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[1] During this period Dewey made several journeys abroad, to Europe, the Far East, Mexico and, in 1928, to Russia.

[2] Written in collaboration with J. H. Tufts.

All things react in some way to their environment. But they obviously do not all react in the same way. In a given set of circumstances an inanimate thing, for example, can be said simply to react or not to react. A situation does not pose any problem which the thing can recognize as a problem and to which it can react in a selective manner. When, however, we turn to the sphere of life, we find selective responses. As living organisms become more complex, their environment becomes more ambivalent. That is to say, it becomes more uncertain what responses or actions are called for in the interests of living, what actions will best fit into a series which will sustain the continuity of life. And 'in the degree that responses take place to the doubtful *as* the doubtful, they acquire *mental* quality'.[1] Further, when such responses possess a directed tendency to change the precarious into the secure and the problematic into the resolved, 'they are *intellectual* as well as mental'.[2]

We can say therefore that for Dewey thought is a highly developed form of the relation between stimulus and response on the purely biological level. True, in its interaction with its environment the human organism, like any other organism, acts primarily according to established habits. But situations arise which reflection recognizes as problematic situations, and thus as calling for inquiry or thought, the immediate response being thus in a sense interrupted. But in another sense the response is not interrupted. For the aim of thought, stimulated by a problematic situation, is to transform or reconstruct the set of antecedent conditions which gave rise to the problem or difficulty. In other words, it aims at a change in the environment. 'There is no inquiry that does not involve the making of *some* change in environing conditions.'[3] That is to say, the conclusion at which the process of inquiry arrives is a projected action or set of actions, a plan of possible action which will transform the problematic situation. Thought is thus instrumental and has a practical function. It is not, however, quite accurate to say that it subserves activity. For it is itself a form of activity. And it can be seen as part of a total process of activity whereby man seeks to resolve problematic

[1] *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 225. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Logic*, 1, p. 42.

situations by effecting changes in his environment, by changing an 'indeterminate' situation, one in which the elements clash or do not harmonize and so give rise to a problem for reflection, into a 'determinate' situation, a unified whole. In this sense, therefore, thought does not interrupt the process of response; for it is itself part of the total response. But the process of inquiry presupposes recognition of a problematic situation *as* problematic. It can thus be said to interrupt the response, if we mean by response one that is instinctive or follows simply in accordance with some established habit.

A man can, of course, react to a problematic situation in an unintelligent manner. To take a simple example, he may lose his temper and smash a tool or instrument which is not functioning properly. But this sort of reaction is clearly unhelpful. To solve his problem the man has to inquire into what is wrong with the instrument and consider how to put things right. And the conclusion at which he arrives is a plan of possible action calculated to transform the problematic situation.

This is an example taken from the level of common sense. But Dewey will not allow that there is any impassable gulf or rigid distinction between the level of common sense and that of, say, science. Scientific inquiry may involve prolonged operations which are not overt actions in the ordinary sense but operations with symbols. Yet the total process of hypothesis, deduction and controlled experiment simply reproduces in a much more sophisticated and complex form the process of inquiry which is stimulated by some practical problem in everyday life. Even the complicated operations with symbols aim at transforming the problematic situation which gave rise to the hypothesis. Thus thought is always practical in some way, whether it takes place at the level of common sense or at the level of scientific theory. In both cases it is a way of dealing with a problematic situation.

It is to be noted that when Dewey speaks of effecting a change in the environment, the last-mentioned term should not be understood as referring exclusively to man's physical environment, the world of physical Nature. 'The environment in which human beings live, act and inquire, is not simply physical. It is cultural as well.'[1] And a clash of values, for example, in a given society gives rise to a problematic situation, the resolution of which would effect a change in the cultural environment.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

This account of thought and its basic function corresponds with the fact that 'man who lives in a world of hazards is compelled to seek for security'.[1] And it is, of course, obvious that when man is faced with threatening and perilous situations, recognized as such, it is action which is called for, not simply thought. At the same time Dewey is, needless to say, well aware that inquiry and thought do not necessarily lead to action in the ordinary sense. For example, a scientist's inquiry may terminate in an idea or set of ideas, that is, in a scientific theory or hypothesis. Dewey's account of thought does indeed entail the view that 'ideas are anticipatory plans and designs which take effect in concrete reconstruction of antecedent conditions of existence'.[2] A scientific hypothesis is predictive, and it thus looks forward, so to speak, to verification. But the scientist may not be in a position to verify it here or now. Or he may not choose to do so. His inquiry then terminates in a set of ideas; and he does not possess warranted knowledge. But this does not alter the fact that the ideas are predictive, that they are plans for possible action.

Analogously, if a man is stimulated to inquiry or reflection by a morally problematic situation, the moral judgment which he finally makes is a plan or directive for possible action. When a man commits himself to a moral principle, he expresses his preparedness to act in certain ways in certain circumstances. But though his thought is thus directed to action, action does not necessarily follow. The judgment which he makes is a direction for possible action.

Now, there is a real sense in which each problematic situation is unique and unrepeatable. And when Dewey is thinking of this aspect of the matter, he tends to depreciate general theories. But it is obvious that the scientist works with general concepts and theories; and Dewey's recognition of the fact is shown in his insistence that a theory's connection with action is 'with *possible* ways of operation rather than with those found to be *actually* and immediately required'.[3] At the same time the tension between a tendency to depreciate general concepts and theories, in view of the fact that inquiry is stimulated by particular problematic situations and aims at transforming them, and a recognition of the fact that scientific thought operates with general ideas and constructs general theories, general solutions, shows itself in what

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[1] *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 3.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 166.

[3] *Logic*, p. 49.

Dewey has to say about the nature of philosophy. But this matter can be left to the next section.

We have seen that Dewey's account of thought is 'naturalistic' in the sense that it depicts thought as developing out of the relation between an organism and its environment. 'Intellectual operations are foreshadowed in behaviour of the biological kind, and the latter prepares the way for the former.'[1] Naturalism does not deny differences, of course, but it is committed to accounting for these differences without invoking any non-natural source or agent. In other words, thought must be represented as a product of evolution.

Further, Dewey's account of thought can be described as 'empiricist' in the sense that thought is depicted as starting from experiences and as leading back to experiences. The process of inquiry is set in motion when the subject encounters a problematic situation in its environment, and it terminates, whether actually or ideally, in some change in the environment, or indeed in man himself. At the same time Dewey asserts that the object of knowledge is made or constructed by thought. And as this statement seems at first sight to represent an idealist rather than an empiricist position, it stands in need of some explanation.

Experience in general is said to be a transaction, a process of doing and undergoing, an active relation between an organism and its environment. And according to Dewey primary or immediate experience is non-cognitive in character. It contains 'no division between act and material, subject and object, but contains them both in an unanalyzed totality'.[2] What is experienced is not objectified by a subject as a sign possessing significance or meaning. Distinctions such as that between subject and object arise only for reflection. And a thing assumes, or, rather, is clothed with significance only as the result of a process of inquiry or thought. A fountain pen, for example, takes on significance for me in terms of its function or functions. And it does so as the result of a process of inquiry or thought. Inasmuch, therefore, as Dewey reserves the term 'object of knowledge' for the term of this process, he can say that thought makes or constructs the object of knowledge.

On the one hand Dewey is at pains to point out that his account of the activity of knowing does not entail the conclusion that things do not exist antecedently to being experienced or to being thought about.[1] On the other hand by identifying the object of knowledge with the term of inquiry he is committed to saying that it is in some sense the product of thought. For the term of inquiry is the determinate situation which replaces an indeterminate or problematic situation. Dewey argues, however, that 'knowledge is not a distortion or perversion which confers upon *its* subject-matter traits which *do* not belong to it, but is an act which confers upon non-cognitive material traits which *did* not belong to it'.[2] The resolution of a problematic situation or the process of clothing with determinate significance is no more a distortion or perversion than is the act of the architect who confers upon stone and wood qualities and relations which they did not formerly possess.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

[2] *Experience and Nature*, p. 8 (Dover Publications edition 1958).

If it is asked why Dewey adopts this odd theory of knowledge, which identifies the object of knowledge with the term of the process of inquiry, one reason is that he wishes to get rid of what he calls 'the spectator theory of knowledge'.[3] According to this theory we have on the one hand the knower and on the other the object of knowledge, which is entirely unaffected by the process of knowing. We are then faced with the problem of finding a bridge between the process of knowing which takes place wholly within the spectator-subject and the object which is indifferent to being known. If, however, we understand that the object of knowledge as such comes into being through the process of knowing, this difficulty does not arise.

The statement that the object of knowledge comes into being through the process of knowing might, considered by itself, be a tautology. For it is tautological to say that nothing is constituted an object of knowledge except by being known. But Dewey obviously does not intend the statement to be a tautology: he intends to say something more. And what he intends is to depict the process of knowing as a highly developed form of the active relation between an organism and its environment, a relation whereby a change is effected in the environment. In other words, he is concerned with giving a naturalistic account of knowledge and with excluding any concept of it as a mysterious phenomenon which is entirely *sui generis*. He is also concerned with uniting theory and practice. Hence knowledge is represented as being itself a doing or making rather than, as in the so-called spectator theory, a 'seeing'.

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[1] Dewey remarks, for example, that 'I should think it fairly obvious that we experience most things *as* temporally prior to our experiencing of them', *The Influence of Darwin*, p. 240.

[2] *Experience and Nature*, p. 381.

[3] *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 23.

3. Dewey's account of thought and knowledge is obviously relevant to his concept of philosophy and to his judgments about other philosophers. For example, he is sharply opposed to the idea of philosophy as being concerned with a sphere of unchanging, timeless being and truth. We can indeed explain the genesis of this idea. 'The *world* is precarious and perilous.'[1] That is to say, the hazards to which men are exposed are objective situations. And when they are recognized as hazards, they become problematic situations which man seeks to resolve. But his means for doing so are limited. Further, in his search for security, and so for certainty, man becomes aware that the empirical world, which is a changing world, cannot provide him with absolute security and certainty. And we find Greek philosophers such as Plato making a sharp distinction between the changing, empirical world and the sphere of immutable being and truth. Theory thus becomes divorced from practice.[2] True, philosophy remains an activity. For thought is always an activity. But with Aristotle, for example, purely theoretical activity, the life of contemplation, is exalted above the practical life, the life of action in a changing world. And it becomes necessary to recall thought to its true function of being directed to resolving indeterminate or problematic situations by effecting changes in the environment and in man himself. Thought and practice have to be once more joined together.

This union of thought and practice is seen most strikingly in the rise of modern science. In the early stages of history man either tried to control the mysterious and threatening forces of Nature by magic or personified them and sought to appease them, though he also practised simple acts such as that of agriculture. Later, as we have seen, there arose that divorce between theory and practice which was effected by philosophy, the idea of man as spectator being substituted for that of man as actor. But with the rise of modern science a new attitude to change shows itself. For the scientist sees that it is only by correlating phenomena that we can understand the process of change and, within limits, control it, bringing about the changes which we desire and preventing those which we regard as undesirable. Thought is thus no longer directed to a celestial sphere of unchanging being and truth; it is redirected to the experienced environment, though on a surer basis than it was in the early stages of humanity. And with the constant growth and progress of the sciences the whole attitude of man towards thought and knowledge has been altered. And this new attitude or vision of the function of thought and knowledge needs to be reflected in our concept of philosophy.

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[1] *Experience and Nature*, p. 42.

[2] Dewey is, of course, aware of the practical aspects of the thought of Plato and Aristotle. But he is opposed to the whole idea of a sphere of immutable Being and Truth, and the dichotomy between the sphere of Being and the sphere of Becoming is the aspect of Plato's philosophy which he emphasizes.

Now, the particular sciences are not themselves philosophy. But science has been commonly conceived as presenting us with the picture of a world which is indifferent to moral values, as eliminating from Nature all qualities and values. And 'thus is created the standing problem of modern philosophy: the relation of science to the things we prize and love and which have authority in the direction of conduct'.[1] This problem, which occupied the mind of, for example, Immanuel Kant, became 'the philosophic version of the popular conflict of science and religion'.[2] And philosophers of the spiritualistic and idealistic traditions, from the time of Kant, or rather from that of Descartes, onwards have tried to solve the problem by saying that the world of science can safely be presented as the sphere of matter and mechanism, stripped of qualities and values, because 'matter and mechanism have their foundation in immaterial mind'.[3] In other words, philosophers have tried to reconcile the scientific view of the world, as they conceived it, with an assertion of the reality of values by developing their several versions of the same sort of dichotomy or dualism which was characteristic of Platonism.

Obviously, Dewey will have nothing to do with this way of solving the problem. For in his view it amounts simply to a resuscitation of an outmoded metaphysics. But though he rejects the notion that there are immutable values, transcending the changing world, he has not the slightest intention of belittling, much less of denying, values. Hence he is committed by his naturalism to maintaining that they are in some sense comprised within Nature, and that advance in scientific knowledge constitutes no threat whatever to the reality of value. 'Why should we not proceed to employ our gains in science to improve our judgments about values, and to regulate our actions so as to make values more secure and more widely shared in existence?'[4] It is not

[1] *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 103.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

[4] *Ibid.*

the business of the philosopher to prove in general that there are values. For beliefs about values and value-judgments are inevitable characteristics of man; and any genuine philosophy of experience is aware of this fact. 'What is inevitable needs no proof for its existence.'[1] But man's affections, desires, purposes and devices need direction; and this is possible only through knowledge. Here philosophy can give guidance. The philosopher can examine the accepted values and ideals of a given society in the light of their consequences, and he can at the same time attempt to resolve the conflicts between values and ideals which arise within a society by pointing the way to new possibilities, thus transforming indeterminate or problematic situations in the cultural environment into determinate situations.

The function of philosophy is thus both critical and constructive or, rather, reconstructive. And it is critical with a view to reconstruction. Hence we can say that philosophy is essentially practical. And inasmuch as there is no question of the philosopher competing with the scientist on his own ground, Dewey naturally lays emphasis on moral and social philosophy and on the philosophy of education. True, the philosopher is by no means confined to these topics. As Dewey maintains in *Studies in Logical Theory*, a philosophy of experience includes within its area of inquiry all modes of human experience, including the scientific as well as the moral, religious and aesthetic, and also the social-cultural world in its organized form. And it should investigate the interrelations between these different fields. But if we are thinking of the resolution of specific problematic situations, the philosopher is obviously not in a better position than the scientist to solve scientific problems. From this point of view, therefore, it is natural that Dewey should have come to say that 'the task of future philosophy is to clarify men's ideas as to the social and moral strifes of their own day. Its aim is to become so far as is humanly possible an organ for dealing with these conflicts.'[2]

Now, if the philosopher is conceived as being called upon to throw light on specific problematic situations, it is understandable that general notions and theories should be depreciated. We can understand, for example, Dewey's assertion that whereas philosophical discussion in the past has been carried on 'in terms of *the* state, *the* individual',[3] what is really required is light upon 'this or that group of individuals, this or that concrete human being, this or that special institution or social arrangement'.[1] In other words, when he is concerned with emphasizing the practical function of philosophy, Dewey tends to depreciate general concepts and theories as divorced from concrete life and experience and as associated with a view of philosophy as a purely contemplative activity. His attitude is an expression of his protest against the divorce of theory from practice.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 299.

[2] *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 26.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 188.

The reader will doubtless object that it is no more the business of the philosopher as such to solve, for instance, specific political problems than it is to solve specific scientific problems. But Dewey does not really intend to say that it is the philosopher's business to do this. What he claims is that 'the true impact of philosophical reconstruction'[2] is to be found in the development of *methods* for reconstructing specific problematic situations. In other words, Dewey is concerned with the 'transfer of experimental method from the technical field of physical experience to the wider field of human life'.[3] And this transfer obviously requires a general theory of experimental method, while the use of the method 'implies direction by ideas and knowledge'.[4] True, Dewey has not the slightest intention of encouraging the development of a method which is supposed to possess an *a priori*, absolute and universal validity. He insists that what is needed is an intelligent examination of the actual consequences of inherited and traditional customs and institutions with a view to intelligent examination of the ways in which their customs and institutions should be modified in order to produce the consequences which we consider desirable. But this does not alter the fact that a great part of his reflection is devoted to developing a general logic of experience and a general theory of experimental method.

It would thus be a gross caricature of Dewey's actual practice if one were to represent him as despising all general concepts and all general theories, still more if we were to represent him as actually doing without such concepts and theories. Without them one could not be a philosopher at all. It is true that in his contribution to a volume of essays entitled *Creative Intelligence* (1917) Dewey roundly asserts that because 'reality' is a denotative term, designating indifferently everything that happens, no general theory of reality 'is possible or needed',[5] a conclusion which does not appear to follow from the premisses. But in *Experience and Nature* (1925) he can fairly be said to have himself developed such a theory, though admittedly not a theory of any reality transcending Nature. Similarly, though in *Reconstruction in Philosophy* he rules out talk about 'the State', this does not prevent him from developing a theory of the State. Again, when he asserts that any philosophy which is not isolated from modern life must grapple with 'the problem of restoring integration and co-operation between man's beliefs about the world in which he lives and his beliefs about the values and purposes that should direct his conduct',[1] he is indicating a problem which cannot possibly be discussed without general ideas. It is not indeed a question of maintaining that Dewey is perpetually contradicting himself. For example, one might rule out talk about 'the State', meaning by this an eternal essence, and yet make generalizations based on reflection about actual States. Rather is it a question of maintaining that Dewey's insistence on practice, as the termination of inquiry in the reconstruction of a specific problematic situation, leads him at times to speak in a way which does not square with his actual practice.

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[1] *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 188.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 193.

[3] *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 273.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Creative Intelligence*, p. 55.

4. We have noted the stress which Dewey lays on inquiry, inquiry being defined as 'the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole'.[2] He calls, therefore, for a new logic of inquiry. If the Aristotelian logic is considered purely historically, in relation to Greek culture, 'it deserves the admiration it has received'.[3] For it is an admirable analysis of 'discourse in isolation from the operations in which discourse takes effect'.[4] At the same time the attempt to preserve the Aristotelian logic when the advance of science has undermined the ontological background of essences and species on which it rested is 'the main source of existing confusion in logical theory'.[5] Moreover, if this logic is retained when its ontological presuppositions have been repudiated, it inevitably becomes purely formal and quite inadequate as a logic of inquiry. True, Aristotle's logic remains a model in the sense that it combined in a unified scheme both the

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[1] *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 255.

[2] *Logic*, pp. 104–5. Bertrand Russell objects that this definition would apply to the activity of a drill sergeant in transforming a collection of new recruits into a regiment, though this activity could hardly be described as a process of inquiry. Cf. *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, edited by P. A. Schilpp, p. 143.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 94. [4] *Ibid.* [5] *Ibid.*

common sense and the science of his day. But his day is not our day. And what we need is a unified theory of inquiry which will make available for use in other fields 'the authentic pattern of experimental and operational inquiry in science'.[1] This is not to demand that all other fields of inquiry should be reduced to physical science. It is rather that the logic of inquiry has hitherto found its chief exemplification in physical science, and that it needs to be abstracted, so to speak, and turned into a general logic of inquiry which can be employed in all 'inquiries concerned with deliberate reconstruction of experience'.[2] We are thus reminded of Hume's demand that the experimental method of inquiry which had proved so fruitful in physical science or natural philosophy should be applied in the fields of aesthetics, ethics and politics. But Dewey, unlike Hume, develops an elaborate account of this logic of inquiry.

It would be impracticable to summarize this account here. But certain features can be mentioned. In general, logic is regarded, of course, as instrumental, that is, as a means of rendering intelligent, instead of blind, the action involved in reconstructing a problematic or indeterminate situation. Intelligent action presupposes a process of thought or inquiry, and this requires symbolization and propositional formulation. Propositions in general are the necessary logical instruments for reaching a final judgment which has existential import; and the final judgment is reached through a series of intermediate judgments. Hence judgment can be described as 'a continuous process of resolving an indeterminate, unsettled situation into a determinately unified one, through operations which transform subject-matter originally given'.[3] The whole process of judgment and ratiocination can thus be considered as a phase of intelligent actions, and at the same time as instrumental to actual reconstruction of a situation. Universal propositions, for instance, are formulations of possible ways of acting or operating.[4] They are all of the '*if/then*' type.

If logical thought is instrumental, its validity is shown by its success. Hence the standard of validity is 'precisely the degree in which the thinking actually disposes of the difficulty [the problematic situation] and allows us to proceed with more direct modes of experiencing that are forthwith possessed of more assured and deepened value'.[5] In accordance with this view Dewey rejects the idea of the basic principles of logic as being *a priori* truths which are fixed antecedently to all inquiry and represents them as generated in the process of inquiry itself. They represent conditions which have been found, during the continued process of inquiry, to be involved in or demanded by its success. Just as causal laws are functional in character, so are the so-called first principles of logic. Their validity is measured by their success. Instrumentalism in logic thus has a connection with Dewey's naturalism. The basic logical principles are not eternal truths, transcending the changing empirical world and to be apprehended instinctively; they are generated in the actual process of man's active relation with his environment.

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[1] *Logic*, p. 98.

[2] *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 138.

[3] *Logic*, p. 283.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 264.

[5] *Studies in Logical Theory*, p. 3. Dewey often depicts the term of inquiry as an enrichment and deepening of experience.

In an essay on the development of American pragmatism Dewey defines instrumentalism as 'an attempt to constitute a precise logical theory of concepts, of judgments and inferences in their various forms, by considering primarily how thought functions in the experimental determinations of future consequences'.[1] But there is also an instrumentalist theory of truth. And some brief remarks must be made about this topic.

In a footnote in his *Logic* Dewey remarks that 'the best definition of *truth* from the logical standpoint which is known to me is that of Peirce',[2] namely that the true is that opinion which is fated to be ultimately accepted by all investigators. He also quotes with approval Peirce's statement that truth is the concordance of an abstract statement with the ideal limit towards which endless inquiry would tend to bring scientific belief. Elsewhere, however, Dewey insists that if it is asked what truth is here and now, so to speak, without reference to an ideal limit of all inquiry, the answer is that a statement or an hypothesis is true or false in so far as it leads us to or away from the end which we have in view. In other words, 'the hypothesis that works is the *true* one'.[3] In Dewey's opinion this view of truth follows as a matter of course from the pragmatist concept of meaning.

Dewey is careful to point out that if it is said that truth is utility or the useful, this statement is not intended to identify truth with 'some purely personal end, some profit upon which a particular individual has set his heart'.[4] The idea of utility in this context must be interpreted in relation to the process of

[1] *Twentieth Century Philosophy*, edited by D. D. Runes, pp. 463–4 (New York, 1943).

[2] *Logic*, p. 345, note 6.

[3] *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 156.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 157.

transforming a problematic situation. And a problematic situation is something public and objective. A scientific problem, for example, is not a private neurotic worry but an objective difficulty which is resolved by appropriate objective methods. For this reason Dewey avoids speaking with James of truth as the satisfactory or that which satisfies. For this way of speaking suggests a private emotive satisfaction. And if the term 'the satisfactory' is employed, we must understand that the satisfaction in question is that of the demands of a public problematic situation, not the satisfaction of the emotive needs of any individual. For the matter of that, the solution of a scientific problem might occasion great unhappiness to the human race. Yet in so far as it worked or manifested its utility by transforming an objective problematic situation, it would be true and 'satisfactory'.

Though, however, he insists that instrumentalism does not deny the objectivity of truth by making it relative to the individual's whims, wishes and emotive needs, Dewey is, of course, well aware that his theory is opposed to that of eternal, unchanging truths. Indeed, he obviously intends this opposition. He regards the theory of eternal, unchanging truths as implying a certain metaphysics or view of reality, namely the distinction between the phenomenal sphere of becoming and the sphere of perfect and unchanging being, which is apprehended in the form of eternal truths. This metaphysics is, of course, at variance with Dewey's naturalism. Hence the so-called timeless truths have to be represented by him as being simply instruments for application in knowing the one world of becoming, instruments which constantly show their value in use. In other words, their significance is functional rather than ontological. No truth is absolutely sacrosanct, but some truths possess in practice a constant functional value.

This theory that there are no sacrosanct eternal truths, but that all statements which we believe to be true are revisible in principle or from the purely logical point of view, obviously has important implications in the fields of morals and politics. 'To generalize the recognition that the true means the verified and nothing else places upon men the responsibility for surrendering political and moral dogmas, and subjecting to the test of consequences their most cherished prejudices.'[1] In Dewey's opinion this is one of the main reasons why the instrumentalist theory of truth raises fear and hostility in many minds.

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[1] *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 160.

5. Passing over for the present any criticism of the instrumentalist theory of truth, we can turn to ethics which Dewey regards as concerned with intelligent conduct in view of an end, with consciously directed conduct. A moral agent is one who proposes to himself an end to be achieved by action.[1] But Dewey insists that activity, consciously directed to an end which is thought worth while by the agent, presupposes habits as acquired dispositions to respond in certain ways to certain classes of stimuli. 'The act must come before the thought, and a habit before an ability to evoke the thought at will.'[2] As Dewey puts it, it is only the man who already has certain habits of posture and who is capable of standing erect that can form for himself the idea of an erect stance as an end to be consciously pursued. Our ideas, like our sensations, depend on experience. 'And the experience upon which they both depend is the operation of habits—originally of instincts.'[3] Our purposes and aims in action come to us through the medium of habits.

Dewey's insistence on the relevance to ethics of the psychology of habit is partly due to his conviction that habits, as demands for certain kinds of action, 'constitute the self',[4] and that 'character is the interpenetration of habits'.[5] For if such interpenetration, in the sense of an harmonious and unified integration, is something to be achieved rather than an original datum, it obviously follows that moral theory must take habits into account, in so far as it is concerned with the development of human nature.

But Dewey's emphasis on the psychology of habit is also due to his determination to include ethics in his general naturalistic interpretation of experience. Naturalism cannot accommodate such ideas as those of eternal norms, subsistent absolute values or a supernatural moral legislator. The whole moral life, while admittedly involving the appearance of fresh elements, must be represented as a development of the interaction of the human organism with its environment. Hence a study of biological and social psychology is indispensable for the moral philosopher who is concerned with the moral life as it actually exists.

It has already been noted that for Dewey environment does not mean simply the physical, non-human environment. Indeed, from the moral point of view man's relations with his social environment are of primary importance. For it is a mistake to think that morality *ought* to be social: 'morals *are* social'.[1] This is simply an empirical fact. It is true that to a considerable extent customs, which are widespread uniformities of habit, exist because individuals are faced by similar situations to which they react in similar ways. 'But to a larger extent customs persist because individuals form their personal habits under conditions set by prior customs. An individual usually acquires the morality as he inherits the speech of his social group.'[2] This may indeed be more obvious in the case of earlier forms of society. For in modern society, at least of the Western democratic type, the individual is offered a wide range of custom-patterns. But in any case, customs, as demands for certain ways of acting and as forming certain outlooks, constitute moral standards. And we can say that 'for practical purposes morals mean customs, folk-ways, established collective habits'.[3]

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[1] Cf., for example, *Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics*, p. 3.

[2] *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 30.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

At the same time customs, as widespread uniformities of habit, tend to perpetuate themselves even when they no longer answer the needs of man in his relations with his environment. They tend to become matter of mechanical routine, a drag on human growth and development. And to say this is to imply that there is in man another factor, besides habit, which is relevant to morals. This factor is impulse. Indeed, habits, as acquired dispositions to act in certain ways, are secondary to unacquired or unlearned impulses.

This distinction, however, gives rise to a difficulty. On the one hand impulse represents the sphere of spontaneity and thus the possibility of reorganizing habits in accordance with the demands of new situations. On the other hand man's impulses are for the most part not definitely organized and adapted in the way in which animal instincts are organized and adapted. Hence they acquire the significance and definiteness which are required for human conduct only through being canalized into habits. Thus 'the direction of native activity depends upon acquired habits, and yet acquired habits can be modified only by redirection of impulses'.[4] How, then, can man be capable of changing his habits and customs to meet fresh situations and the new demands of a changing environment? How can he change himself?

This question can be answered only by introducing the idea of intelligence. When changing conditions in the environment render a habit useless or detrimental or when a conflict of habits occurs, impulse is liberated from the control of habit and seeks redirection. Left to itself, so to speak, it simply bursts the chains of habit asunder in a wild upsurge. In social life this means that if a society's customs have become outmoded or harmful, and if the situation is left to itself, revolution inevitably occurs, unless perhaps the society simply becomes lifeless and fossilized. The alternative is obviously the intelligent redirection of impulse into new customs and the intelligent creation of fresh institutions. In fine, a 'breach in the crust of the cake of custom releases impulses; but it is the work of intelligence to find the ways of using them'.[1]

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[1] *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 319.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 126.

In some sense, therefore, intelligence, when seeking to transform or reconstruct a problematic moral situation, has to deliberate about ends and means. But for Dewey there are no fixed ends which the mind can apprehend as something given from the start and perennially valid. Nor will he allow that an end is a value which lies beyond the activity which seeks to attain it. 'Ends are foreseen consequences which arise in the cause of activity and which are employed to give activity added meaning and to direct its further course.'[2] When we are dissatisfied with existing conditions, we can, of course, picture to ourselves a set of conditions which, if actualized, would afford satisfaction. But Dewey insists that an imaginary picture of this kind becomes a genuine aim or end-in-view only when it is worked out in terms of the concrete, possible process of actualizing it, that is, in terms of 'means'. We have to study the ways in which results similar to those which we desire are actually brought about by causal activity. And when we survey the proposed line of action, the distinction between means and ends arises within the series of contemplated acts.

It is obviously possible for intelligence to operate with existing moral standards. But we are considering problematic situations which demand something more than manipulating the current moral ideas and standards of a society. And in such situations it is the task of intelligence to grasp and actualize possibilities of growth, of the reconstruction of experience. Indeed, 'growth itself is the only moral "end" '.[3] Again, 'growing, or the continuous reconstruction of experience, is the only end'.[4]

A natural question to ask is, growth in what direction? Reconstruction for what purpose? But if such questions concern a final end other than growth itself, reconstruction itself, they can have no meaning in terms of Dewey's philosophy. He does indeed admit that happiness or the satisfaction of the forces of human nature is the moral end. But as happiness turns out to be living, while 'life means growth',[1] we seem to be back at the same point. The growth which is the moral end is one which makes possible further growth. In other words, growth itself is the end.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 170.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 225.

[3] *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 177.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 184.

We must remember, however, that for Dewey no genuine end is separable from the means, from the process of its actualization. And he tells us that 'good consists in the meaning that is experienced to belong to an activity when conflict and entanglement of various incompatible impulses and habits terminate in a unified orderly release in action'.[2] So we can say perhaps that for Dewey the moral end is growth in the sense of the dynamic development of harmoniously integrated human nature, provided that we do not envisage a fixed and determinate state of perfection as the final end. There is for Dewey no final end save growth itself. The attainment of a definite and limited end-in-view opens up new vistas, new tasks, fresh possibilities of action. And it is in grasping and realizing these opportunities and possibilities that moral growth consists.

Dewey tries, therefore, to get rid of the concept of a realm of values distinct from the world of fact. Values are not something given; they are constituted by the act of evaluating, by the value-judgment. This is not a judgment that something is 'satisfying'. For to say this is simply to make a statement of fact, like the statement that something is sweet or white. To make a value-judgment is to say that something is 'satisfactory' in the sense that it fulfils specifiable conditions.[3] For example, does a certain activity create conditions for further growth or does it prevent them? If I say that it does, I declare the activity to be valuable or a value.

It may be objected that to say that something fulfils certain specifiable conditions is no less a statement of fact than to say that an object is satisfying, in the sense that I myself or many people or all men find it satisfying. But Dewey is aware that to ask whether something is a value is to ask whether it is 'something to be prized and cherished, *to be* enjoyed',[4] and that to say that it is a value is to say that it is something *to be* desired and enjoyed.[5]

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[1] *Democracy and Education*, p. 61.

[2] *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 210.

[3] Cf. *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 260.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 260.

[5] 'A judgment about what is *to be* desired and enjoyed is therefore a claim on future action; it possesses *de jure* and not merely *de facto* quality', *Ibid.*, p. 263.

Hence the following definition. 'Judgments about values are judgments about the conditions and the results of experienced objects; judgments about that which should regulate the formation of our desires, affections and enjoyments.'[1]

The emphasis, however, is placed by Dewey on the judgment of value as the term of a process of inquiry, stimulated by a problematic situation. For this enables him to say that his theory of values does not do away with their objectivity. Something is a value if it is adapted 'to the needs and demands imposed by the situation',[2] that is to say, if it meets the demands of an objective problematic situation, in regard to its transformation or reconstruction. A judgment of value, like a scientific hypothesis, is predictive, and it is thus empirically or experimentally verifiable. 'Appraisals of courses of action as better and worse, more or less serviceable, are as experimentally justified as are non-valuative propositions about impersonal subject matter.'[3] The transfer of the experimental method from physics to ethics would mean, of course, that all judgments and beliefs about values would have to be regarded as hypotheses. But to interpret them in this way is to transfer them from the realm of the subjective into that of the objective, of the verifiable. And as much care should be devoted to their framing as is devoted to the framing of scientific hypotheses.

6. Dewey's insistence on growth obviously implies that personality is something to be achieved, something in the making. But the human person is not, of course, an isolated atom. It is not simply a question of the individual being under an obligation to consider his social environment: he *is* a social being, whether he likes it or not. And all his actions 'bear the stamp of his community as assuredly as does the language he speaks'.[4] This is true even of those courses of activity of which society in general disapproves. It is a man's relations with his fellow-men which provide him both with the opportunities for action and with the instruments for taking advantage of such opportunities. And this is verified in the case of the burglar or the dealer in the white slave traffic no less than in that of the philanthropist.

At the same time the social environment, with its institutions, has to be organized and modified in the manner best suited for promoting the fullest possible development in desirable ways of the capacities of individuals. And at first sight we are faced with a vicious circle. On the one hand the individual is conditioned by the existing social environment in regard to his habits of action and his aims. On the other hand, if the social environment is to be changed or modified, this can be accomplished only by individuals, even though by individuals working together and sharing common aims. How, then, is it possible for the individual, who is inevitably conditioned by his social environment, to devote himself to changing that environment in a deliberate and active manner?

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 265.

[2] *Theory of Valuation*, p. 17.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

[4] *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 317.

Dewey's answer is what one would expect, namely that when a problematic situation arises, such as a clash between man's developing needs on the one hand and existing social institutions on the other, impulse stimulates thought and inquiry directed to transforming or reconstructing the social environment. As in morals, the task-in-hand is always in the forefront of Dewey's mind. The function of political philosophy is to criticize existing institutions in the light of man's development and changing needs and to discern and point out practical possibilities for the future to meet the needs of the present. In other words, Dewey looks on political philosophy as an instrument for concrete action. This means that it is not the business of the political philosopher to construct Utopias. Nor should he allow himself to succumb to the temptation of delineating 'the State', the essential concept of a state, which is supposed to be perennially valid. For to do this is in effect to canonize, even though unconsciously, an existing state of affairs, probably one that has already been challenged and subjected to criticism. In any case inquiry is hindered rather than helped by solutions which purport to cover all situations. If, for example, we are concerned with determining the value of the institution of private property in a given society at a certain period, it is no help to be told either that private property is a sacred, inviolable and perennial right or that it is always theft.

Obviously, the process of criticizing existing social institutions and of pointing the way to fresh concrete possibilities requires some standard to which men can refer. And for Dewey the test for all such institutions, whether political, juridical or industrial, is 'the contributions they make to the all-around growth of every member of society'.[1] It is for this reason that he favours democracy, namely as founded on 'faith in the capacities of human nature, faith in human intelligence and in the power of pooled and

[1] *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 186.

co-operative experience'.[1] Yet 'the prime condition of a democratically organized public is a kind of knowledge and insight which does not yet exist',[2] though we can indicate some of the conditions which have to be fulfilled if it is to exist. Democracy as we know it is thus the settling for the free use of the experimental method in social inquiry and thought, which is required for the solution of concrete social, political and industrial problems.

We have seen that for Dewey the moral end is growth, and that the degree to which they facilitate growth provides a test for assessing the value of social and political institutions. The idea of growth is also the key to his educational theory. Indeed, 'the educative process is all one with the moral process'.[3] And education is 'getting from the present the degree and kind of growth there is in it'.[4] It follows that as the potentiality for growth or development does not cease with the close of adolescence, education should not be regarded as a preparation for life. It is itself a process of living.[5] In fact, 'the educational process has no end beyond itself; it is its own end'.[6] True, formal schooling comes to an end; but the educative influence of society, social relations and social institutions affects adults as well as the young. And if we take, as we should, a broad view of education, we can see the importance of effecting those social and political reforms which are judged most likely to foster the capacity for growth and to evoke those responses which facilitate further development. Morals, education and politics are closely interconnected.

Given this general view of education, Dewey naturally stresses the need of making the school as far as possible a real community, to reproduce social life in a simplified form and thus to promote the development of the child's capacity to participate in the life of society in general. Further, he emphasizes, as one would expect, the need for training children in intelligent inquiry. Struck by the contrast between the lack of interest shown by many children in their school instruction and their lively interest in those activities outside the school in which they are able to share personally and actively, he concludes that scholastic methods should be so changed as to allow the children to participate actively as much as possible in concrete processes of inquiry leading from problematic situations to the overt behaviour or actions needed to transform the situation. But we cannot enter into further details of Dewey's ideas about education in the ordinary sense. His main conviction is that education should not be simply instruction in various subjects but rather a coherent unified effort to foster the development of citizens capable of promoting the further growth of society by employing intelligence fruitfully in a social context.

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[1] *Problems of Men*, p. 59.

[2] *The Public and Its Problems*, p. 166. It is in this work that Dewey's most detailed discussion of the State is to be found.

[3] *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 183.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 184–5.

[5] This point of view is expanded in, for example, *My Pedagogic Creed*.

[6] *Democracy and Education*, p. 59.

7. For many years Dewey was comparatively reticent about religion. In *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922), he spoke of religion as 'a sense of the whole',[1] and remarked that 'the religious experience is a reality in so far as in the midst of effort to foresee and regulate future objects we are sustained and expanded in feebleness and failure by the sense of an enveloping whole'.[2] And in *The Quest for Certainty* (1929) we find him maintaining that Nature, including humanity, when it is considered as the source of ideals and possibilities of achievement and as the abode of all attained goods, is capable of evoking a religious attitude which can be described as a sense of the possibilities of existence and as devotion to the cause of their actualization.[3] But these were more or less incidental remarks, and it was not until 1934 that Dewey really tackled the subject of religion in *A Common Faith*, which was the published version of a series of Terry Foundation Lectures delivered at Yale University.

Although, however, Dewey had previously written little about religion, he made it clear that he himself rejected all definite creeds and religious practices. And it was indeed obvious that his empirical naturalism had no room for belief in or worship of a supernatural divine being. At the same time Dewey had also made it clear that he attached some value to what he called a religious attitude. And in *A Common Faith* we find him distinguishing between the noun 'religion' and the adjective 'religious'. The noun he rejects, in the sense of rejecting definite religious creeds, institutions and practices. The adjective he accepts, in the sense that he affirms the value of religion as a quality of experience.

It must be understood, however, that Dewey is not speaking of any specifically religious and mystical experience, such as might be used to support belief in a supernatural Deity. The quality which he has in mind is one which can belong to an experience that would not ordinarily be described as religious. For example, the experience or feeling of being at one with the universe, with Nature as a whole, possesses this quality. And in *A Common Faith* Dewey associates the quality of being 'religious' with faith in 'the unification of the self through allegiance to inclusive ideal ends, which imagination presents to us and to which the human will responds as worthy of controlling our desires and choices'.[1]

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[1] *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 331.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 264.

[3] Cf. *The Quest for Certainty*, pp. 288–91.

As for the word 'God', Dewey is prepared to retain it, provided that it is used to signify not an existent supernatural being but rather the unity of the ideal possibilities which man can actualize through intelligence and action. 'We are in the presence neither of ideals completely embodied in existence nor yet of ideals that are mere rootless ideals, fantasies, utopias. For there are forces in nature and society that generate and support the ideals. They are further unified by the action that gives them coherence and solidity. It is this *active* relation between ideal and actual to which I would give the name "God".'[2]

A naturalistic philosophy, in other words, can find no room for God as conceived in the Jewish, Christian and Mohammedan religions. But a philosophy of experience must find room for religion in some sense of the term. Hence the quality of being 'religious' must be detached, as it were, from specifically religious experiences, in the sense of experience which purports to have for its object a supernatural being, and reattached to other forms of experience. As Dewey notes in *A Common Faith* the adjective 'religious' can apply to attitudes which can be adopted towards any object or any ideal. It can apply to aesthetic, scientific or moral experience or to experience of friendship and love. In this sense religion can pervade the whole of life. But Dewey himself emphasizes the religious character of the experience of the unification of the self. As 'the self is always directed toward something beyond itself',[3] its ideal unification depends upon a harmonizing of the self with the universe, with Nature as a totality. And here Dewey stresses, as we have seen, the movement towards the realization of ideal possibilities. One might perhaps expect him to recognize an active divine principle operating in and through Nature for the realization and conservation of values. But even if much of what he says points in the direction of some such idea, his naturalism effectively prevents him from taking such a step.

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[1] *A Common Faith*, p. 33. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 50–1. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

8. Obviously, Dewey's philosophy is not a metaphysics if by this term we mean a study or doctrine of meta-empirical reality. But though, as has already been noted, he denies, in one place at least, that any general theory of reality is needed or even possible, it is clear enough that he develops a world-view. And world-views are generally classed under the heading of metaphysics. It would be ingenuous to say that Dewey simply takes the world as he finds it. For the plain fact is that he interprets it. For the matter of that, in spite of all that he has to say against general theories, he does not really prohibit all attempts to determine the generic traits, as he puts it, of existence of all kinds. What he does is to insist that 'the generic insight into existence which alone can define metaphysics in any empirically intelligible sense is itself an added fact of interaction, and is therefore subject to the same requirement of intelligence as any other natural occurrence: namely, inquiry into the bearings, leadings and consequences of what it discovers. The universe is no infinite self-representative series, if only because the addition within it of a representation makes it a different universe.'[1] So far as metaphysics in the sense of ontology is admitted,[2] its findings become working hypotheses, as much subject to revision as are the hypotheses of physical science. Presumably Dewey's own world-view is such a working hypothesis.

It is arguable that this world-view shows traces of its author's Hegelian past, in the sense at any rate that Nature is substituted for Hegel's Spirit and that Dewey tends to interpret the philosophical systems of the past in relation to the cultures which gave birth to them. This second point helps to explain the fact that when Dewey is treating of past systems, he bothers very little, if at all, about the arguments advanced on their behalf by their authors and dwells instead on the inability of these systems to deal with the problematic situations arising out of contemporary culture. This attitude is, of course, in accordance with his instrumentalist view of truth. But the result is that the attentive and critical reader of his books receives the impression that the naturalistic view of the world is assumed, not proved. And in the opinion of the present writer this impression is justified. Dewey simply assumes, for example, that the day of theological and metaphysical explanations is past, and that such explanations were bogus. And the observation that such explanations do not serve as instruments to solve, say, contemporary social problems is insufficient to show the validity of the assumption.

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[1] *Experience and Nature*, pp. 414–15. The reference to an infinite self-representative series is to the doctrine of Royce.

[2] Dewey himself deals, for example, with the category of causality.

The reply may be made that if Dewey's philosophy of experience, his general world-view, succeeds in giving a coherent and unified account of experiences as a whole, no further justification is required for excluding superfluous hypotheses which go beyond the limits of naturalism. But it is open to question whether Dewey's philosophy as a whole is really coherent. Consider, for example, his denial of absolute values and fixed ends. He asserts, as we have seen, the objectivity of values; but he regards them as relative to the problematic situations which give rise to the processes of inquiry that terminate in value-judgments. Yet it certainly appears that Dewey himself speaks of 'growth' as though it were an absolute value and an end in itself, an end fixed by the nature of man and ultimately by the nature of reality. Again, Dewey is careful to explain that he has no intention of denying the existence of a world antecedently to human experience; and he asserts that we experience many things *as* antecedently prior to our experiencing them. At the same time there is a strong tendency to interpret 'experience' in terms of the reconstruction of situations, a reconstruction which makes the world different from what it would have been without human operational thinking. And this points to a theory of creative experience which tends to turn the antecedently given into a kind of mysterious thing-in-itself.

Obviously, the presence of inconsistencies in Dewey's thought does not disprove naturalism. But it does at any rate render an assumption of a naturalistic point of view more open to criticism than it would have been if Dewey had succeeded in giving a perfectly unified and coherent world-view or interpretation of experience. It is clearly not sufficient to answer that on Dewey's own premisses his world-view is a working hypothesis which must be judged by its 'consequences' and not by the comparative absence of antecedent arguments in its favour. For the 'working' of a world-view is shown precisely in its ability to give us a coherent and unified conceptual mastery over the data.

If we turn to Dewey's logical theory, we again encounter difficulties of some moment. For instance, though he recognizes, of course, that there are basic logical principles which have constantly shown themselves to be objectively useful instruments in coping with problematic situations, he insists that from a purely logical point of view no principle is sacrosanct; all are revisible in principle. At the same time Dewey evidently assumes that intelligence cannot rest satisfied with a problematic situation, with an unresolved conflict or 'contradiction'. As in the philosophy of Hegel, the mind is forced on towards an overcoming of such contradictions.[1] And this seems to imply an absolute demand of the intellect, a demand which it is difficult to reconcile with the view that no logical principles are absolute.

Again, there seems to be some ambiguity in the use of the word 'consequences'. A scientific hypothesis is interpreted as predictive, and it is verified if the predicted consequences, which constitute the meaning of the hypothesis, are realized. Whether verification brings subjective satisfaction to people or not, is irrelevant. In this context Dewey is careful to avoid the objection, to which James exposes himself, that the 'satisfying' character of a proposition is the test of its truth. But when we come to the social and political spheres, we can see a tendency to slide into the interpretation of 'consequences' as desirable consequences. Dewey would probably reply that what he is talking about is 'intended' consequences. The solution to a social or political problematic situation 'intends', has as its meaning, certain consequences. And, as in the case of scientific hypotheses, verification validates the proposed solution. Whether people like the solution or not is beside the point. In both cases, in that of the social or political solution or plan as in that of the scientific hypothesis, the test of truth or validity is objective. Yet it seems fairly obvious that in practice Dewey discriminates between political plans and solutions and theories in terms of their contribution to 'growth', their promotion of an end which he considers desirable. One might, of course, apply the same criterion in an analogous sense to scientific hypotheses. For example, an hypothesis which tends to arrest further scientific inquiry and advance cannot be accepted as true. But then the test of truth is no longer simply the verification of the consequences which are said to form the meaning of the hypothesis, though it may indeed tend to coincide with Peirce's conception of truth as the ideal limit to which all inquiry converges.

The strength of Dewey's philosophy doubtless lies in the fact that its author always has his eye on empirical reality, or concrete situations and on the power of human intelligence and will to deal with these situations and to create possibilities of further development. Dewey brings philosophy down to earth and tries to show its relevance to concrete problems, moral, social and educational. And this helps to explain his great influence. He is a rather dull writer. And he is not a conspicuously precise and clear writer. His success in bringing his ideas to the attention of so many of his fellow-countrymen is not due to his literary gifts: it must be attributed in great part to the practical relevance of his ideas. Besides, his general world-view is undoubtedly capable of appealing to those who look on theological and metaphysical tenets as outmoded, and perhaps also as attempts to preserve vested interests, and who at the same time seek a forward-looking philosophy which does not appeal in any way to supernatural realities but in some sense justifies a faith in indefinite human progress.

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[1] There is, of course, a big difference between the attitudes of Hegel and Dewey. For Dewey is concerned with the active transformation of a situation, and not simply with the dialectical overcoming of a contradiction. But both men assume that contradiction *is* something to be overcome.

For these reasons the activity of finding inconsistencies and ambiguities in Dewey's thought may appear to some minds a poor sort of game to play, a futile sniping at a philosophy which, by and large, is firmly rooted in the soil of experience. To others, however, it may well appear that practical relevance is bought, so to speak, at the expense of a thorough explicitation, examination and justification of the foundations of the philosophy. It may also appear that in the long run Dewey's philosophy rests on a judgment of value, the value of action. One can, of course, base a philosophy on a judgment or on judgments of value. But it is desirable that in this case the judgments should be brought into the open. Otherwise one may think, for example, that the instrumentalist theory of truth is simply the result of a dispassionate analysis.

PART V

THE REVOLT AGAINST IDEALISM

CHAPTER XVII

REALISM IN BRITAIN AND AMERICA

An introductory remark—Some Oxford realists—Brief notes on an ethical discussion at Oxford—American neo-realism—Critical realism in America—The world-view of Samuel Alexander—A reference to A. N. Whitehead.

1. WHEN we think of the revolt against idealism in Great Britain, the names which immediately come to mind are those of two Cambridge men, G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell. Moore, however, is universally acknowledged to be one of the chief inspirers of the analytic movement, as it is commonly called, which has enjoyed a spectacular success in the first half of the twentieth century. And Russell, besides being another of the principal pioneers of this movement, is by far the most widely known British philosopher of this century. The present writer, therefore, has decided to postpone the brief treatment of them which is all that the scope of this volume allows and to treat first of a number of comparatively minor figures, even if this means neglecting the demands of chronological order.

2. Mention has already been made of the way in which idealism came to occupy a dominating position in the British universities, especially at Oxford, during the second half of the nineteenth century. But even at Oxford the triumph of idealism was not complete. For example, Thomas Case (1844–1925), who occupied the chair of metaphysics from 1899 until 1910 and was President of Corpus Christi College from 1904 until 1924, published *Realism in Morals* in 1877 and *Physical Realism* in 1888. It is indeed true that in itself Case's realism was opposed to subjective idealism and to phenomenalism rather than to objective or to absolute idealism. For it consisted basically in the thesis that there is a real and knowable world of things existing independently of sense-data.[1]

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[1] It must be noted, however, that though for Case independent physical things are knowable, their existence and nature is known mediately, being inferred from sense-data, which are caused modifications of the nervous system.

At the same time, while in the war against materialism Case was on the side of the idealists, he regarded himself as continuing or restoring the realism of Francis Bacon and of scientists such as Newton and as an opponent of the then fashionable idealist movement.[1]

A more notable opponent of idealism was John Cook Wilson (1849–1915), who occupied the chair of logic at Oxford from 1889 until the year of his death. He published very little, his main influence being exercised as a teacher. But a two-volume collection of lectures on logic, essays and letters, together with a memoir by the editor, A. S. L. Farquharson, appeared posthumously in 1926 with the title *Statement and Inference.*

As an undergraduate Cook Wilson had been influenced by T. H. Green, and later he went to Göttingen to hear Lotze. But he gradually became a sharp critic of idealism. He did not, however, oppose to it a rival world-view. His strength lay partly in attack and partly in the way in which he selected particular problems and tried to follow them through with meticulous care and thoroughness. In this sense his thought was analytic. Further, he had an Aristotelian respect for the distinctions expressed in or implied by ordinary language. And he was convinced that logicians would do well to pay both attention and defence to the natural logic of common linguistic usage.

One of Cook Wilson's grievances against the logic of Bradley and Bosanquet is their doctrine of judgment. In his view they assume that there is one mental act, namely judging, which finds expression in every statement. And to make this assumption is to confuse mental activities, such as knowing, opining and believing, which ought to be distinguished. Further, it is a serious mistake to suppose that there is an activity called judging which is distinct from inference. 'There is no such thing.'[2] If logicians paid more attention to the ways in which we ordinarily use such terms as 'judge', they would see that to judge that something is the case is to infer it. In logic we can get along quite well with statement and inference, without introducing a fictitious separate activity, namely judging.

A statement, therefore, can express various activities. But of these knowing is fundamental. For we cannot understand what is meant by, for example, having an opinion or wondering whether something is true except by way of a contrast with knowledge. It by no means follows, however, that knowledge can be analyzed and defined. We can indeed ask how we come to know or what we know, but the question, What is knowledge itself? is absurd. For to demand an answer is to presuppose that we can estimate its truth, and it is thus presupposed that we are already aware what knowledge is. Knowledge can be exemplified but not explained or defined. Nor does it stand in need of any further justification than pointing to examples of it.

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[1] It is significant that Case was the author of the article on Aristotle in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica.*

[2] *Statement and Inference,* I, p. 87.

We can indeed exclude false accounts of knowledge. These take two main forms. On the one hand there is the attempt to reduce the object to the act of apprehension by interpreting knowledge as a making, a construction of the object. On the other hand there is the tendency to describe the act of apprehension in terms of the object, by maintaining that what we know is a 'copy' or representation of the object. This thesis makes knowledge impossible. For if what we know immediately is always a copy or idea, we can never compare it with the original, to see whether it tallies or not.

Refutations of false accounts of knowledge presuppose, however, that we are already well aware of what knowledge is. And we are aware of it by actually knowing something. Hence to ask what is knowledge? as though we were ignorant, is just as much an improper question as Bradley's query, how is a relation related to its term? A relation is simply not the sort of thing which can be intelligibly said to be related. And knowledge is an indefinable and *sui generis* relation between a subject and an object. We can say what it is not, that it neither makes the object nor terminates in a copy of the object; but we cannot define what it is.

Cook Wilson's realism obviously assumes that we perceive physical objects which exist independently of the act of perception. In other words, he denies the thesis that *esse est percipi*, to be is to be perceived.[1] At the same time he finds it necessary to qualify his realism. Thus when dealing with the so-called secondary qualities he takes the example of heat and maintains that what we perceive is our own sensation of heat, while that which exists in the physical object is simply a power to cause or produce this sensation in a subject. This power 'is not perceived but inferred by a scientific theory'.[1] When, however, he is dealing with the so-called primary qualities, Cook Wilson maintains that we feel, for example, the extension of an actual body and not simply our tactual and muscular sensations. In other words, in his discussion of the relation of qualities to physical things he occupies a position close to that of Locke.

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[1] According to G. E. Moore, *esse est percipi* is the basic tenet of idealism. But he understands the thesis in a wide sense.

Indeed, we can say that Cook Wilson's realism involves the contention that the world which we know is simply the world as conceived by the classical Newtonian scientists. Thus he rejects the idea of non-Euclidean space or spaces. In his view mathematicians actually employ only the Euclidean concept of space, 'none other of course being possible for thought, while they imagine themselves to be talking of another kind of space'.[2]

The general outlook of Cook Wilson was shared by H. A. Prichard (1871–1947), who occupied the chair of moral philosophy at Oxford. In the first place 'it is simply *impossible* to think that any reality depends upon our knowledge of it, or upon any knowledge of it. If there is to be knowledge, there must first *be* something to be known.'[3] Obviously, the activities of Sherlock Holmes, as related by Conan Doyle, depend upon the mind in a sense in which stones and stars do not. But I could not claim to 'know' what Sherlock Holmes did unless there was first something to be known. In the second place 'knowledge is *sui generis*, and, as such, cannot be explained'.[4] For any alleged explanation necessarily presupposes that we are aware what knowledge is. In the third place secondary qualities cannot exist independently of a percipient subject, and consequently they 'cannot be qualities of things, since the qualities of a thing must exist independently of the perception of a thing'.[5]

In view of the last-mentioned point it is not surprising to find Prichard maintaining, in his posthumously published collection of essays *Knowledge and Perception* (1950), that we never actually see physical objects but only coloured and spatially related extensions, which we 'mistake' for physical bodies. If we ask how it comes about that we judge these sense-data to be physical objects, Prichard replies that it is not a case of judging at all.[1] We are naturally under the impression that what we see are physical bodies existing independently of perception. And it is only in the course of subsequent reflection that we come to infer or judge that this is not the case.

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[1] *Statement and Inference*, II, p. 777. Cook Wilson prefers the example of heat to that of colour. For people who are innocent of theory are accustomed to speak of themselves as 'feeling hot', whereas nobody speaks of 'feeling coloured'. To see the relation between colour and the subject, a greater degree of reflection is required.

[2] *Ibid.*, II, p. 567.

[3] *Kant's Theory of Knowledge* (1909), p. 118.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 124.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

If, therefore, we start with the position of common sense or naïve realism, we must say that both Cook Wilson and Prichard modified this position, making concessions to the other side. Further concessions were made by H. W. B. Joseph (1867–1943), Fellow of New College, Oxford, and an influential teacher. Thus in a paper on Berkeley and Kant which he read to the British Academy Joseph remarks that common sense realism is badly shaken by reflection, and he suggests that though the things outside us are certainly not private in the sense in which my pain is private, they may be bound up 'with the being of knowing and perceiving minds'.[2] Joseph also suggests that reflection on the philosophies of Berkeley and Kant points to the conclusion that the conditions of our knowledge of objects may depend 'upon a reality or intelligence which shows itself in nature to itself in minds'.[3]

The last remark is clearly a concession to metaphysical idealism rather than to any form of subjective idealism. But this simply illustrates the difficulty in maintaining that in our knowledge of physical objects knowing is a relation of compresence between a subject and an object which is entirely heterogeneous to mind. As for the discussion of sense-data, a discussion which received a powerful impetus at Oxford from Professor H. H. Price's *Perception*,[4] this illustrates the difficulty in maintaining successfully a position of naïve realism. That is to say, problems arise for reflection which suggest that the position has to be modified. One way of coping with this situation is to dismiss the problems as pseudo-problems. But this was not an expedient adopted by the older Oxford philosophers whom we have been considering.

3. H. A. Prichard, who was mentioned in the last section, is probably best known for his famous essay in *Mind* (1912) on the

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[1] According to Prichard, we could judge or infer that the direct objects of perception are physical bodies which are entirely independent of the perceiving subject, if we could be said to 'know' the former. But perception, for Prichard, is never knowledge.

[2] *Essays in Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, p. 231.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] This book, published in 1932, shows the influence of Cambridge thinkers, such as Moore and Russell, whereas Cook Wilson had shown little respect for Cambridge thought.

question, 'Does Moral Philosophy rest on a Mistake?'[1] Moral philosophy is conceived by Prichard as being largely concerned with trying to find arguments to prove that what seem to be our duties really are our duties. And his own thesis is that in point of fact we simply see or intuit our duties, so that the whole attempt to prove that they are duties is mistaken. True, there can be argument in some sense. But what is called argument is simply an attempt to get people to look more closely at actions in order that they may see for themselves the characteristic of being obligatory. There are, of course, situations which give rise to what we are accustomed to call a conflict of duties. But in the case of an apparent conflict of this kind it is a mistake to try to resolve it by arguing, as so many philosophers have done, that one of the alternative actions will produce a greater good of some sort, this good being external to and a consequence of the action. The question at issue is, which action has the greater degree of obligatoriness? And the question cannot be answered in any other way than by looking closely at the actions until we *see* which is the greater obligation. This is, after all, what we are accustomed to do in practice.

This ethical intuitionism obviously implies that the concepts of right and obligation are paramount in ethics and take precedence over the concept of good. In other words, teleological ethical systems, such as the Aristotelian and the Utilitarian, rest on a fundamental mistake. And in the period after the First World War a discussion took place at Oxford on the themes raised by Prichard. It was conducted more or less independently of, though not without some reference to, the views of G. E. Moore. But we can say that it expressed a strong reaction against the type of position represented by the Cambridge philosopher. For though Moore had maintained in *Principia Ethica* (1903) that goodness is an indefinable quality,[2] he made it quite clear that in his opinion a moral obligation is an obligation to perform that action which will produce the greater amount of goodness.

In 1922 Prichard devoted his inaugural lecture as professor of moral philosophy at Oxford to the theme 'Duty and Interest', developing therein his point of view. In 1928 E. F. Carritt published *The Theory of Morals* in which he maintained that the idea of a *summum bonum*, a supreme good, is the *ignis fatuus* of moral philosophy, and that any attempt to prove that certain actions are duties because they are means to the realization of some end considered as good is foredoomed to failure. The famous Aristotelian scholar, Sir W. D. Ross, then Provost of Oriel College, Oxford, contributed to the discussion by his book on *The Right and The Good* (1930). And this was followed in 1931 by Joseph's *Some Problems in Ethics*, in which the author characteristically tried to combine admission of the thesis that obligation is not derived from the goodness of the consequences of an action with the thesis that obligation is none the less not independent of any relation to goodness.

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[1] Reprinted in *Moral Obligation: Essays and Lectures* (1949).

[2] This does not mean that we cannot say what things possess this quality or have intrinsic value. Moore was convinced that we can.

In other words, Joseph attempted to compromise between Prichard's view and the Aristotelian tradition. And in his little work *Rule and End in Morals* (1932), which was intended as a summing-up of the Oxford discussions, Professor J. H. Muirhead of the University of Birmingham drew attention to signs of a return, welcomed by himself, towards an Aristotelian-idealist view of ethics. But in 1936 there appeared *Language, Truth and Logic*, the celebrated logical positivist manifesto by A. J. Ayer, in which a statement such as 'actions of type *X* are wrong' was interpreted, not as the expression of any intuition, but as an utterance expressing an emotive attitude towards actions of type *X* and as also calculated to arouse a similar emotive attitude in others. And though the emotive theory of ethics certainly cannot be said to have won the universal assent of British moral philosophers, it stimulated a new phase of discussion in ethical theory, a phase which lies outside the scope of this volume.[1] Hence when Sir David Ross published *The Foundations of Ethics* in 1939, his intuitionism seemed to some at any rate to belong to a past phase of thought. However, on looking back we can see how the discussion by Prichard, Ross, Joseph and others of concepts such as those of the right and the good represented an analytic approach to moral philosophy which was different from the idealist tendency to treat ethics as a subordinate theme dependent on a metaphysical world-view. Yet we can also see how in the subsequent phase of ethical discussion philosophers have at length been led to doubt whether ethics can profitably be confined in a watertight compartment as a study of the language of morals.[2]

4. To turn now to realism in the United States of America. In

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[1] See, for example, *Ethics Since 1900* by M. Warnock (London, 1960).

[2] Professor Stuart Hampshire's *Thought and Action* (London, 1959) is an example of this tendency.

March 1901 William Pepperell Montague (1873–1953) published in *The Philosophical Review* an article entitled 'Professor Royce's Refutation of Realism'. And in October of the same year Ralph Barton Perry (1876–1957) published in *The Monist* a paper on 'Professor Royce's Refutation of Realism and Pluralism'. Both articles, therefore, were answers to Royce's attack on realism as destructive of the possibility of knowledge. And in 1910 the two writers, together with E. B. Holt (1873–1946), W. T. Marvin (1872–1944), W. B. Pitkin (1878–1953), and E. G. Spaulding (1873–1940), published in the *Journal of Philosophy* 'The Program and First Platform of Six Realists'.[1] This was followed by the publication in 1912 of a volume of essays by these authors under the title, *The New Realism: Co-operative Studies in Philosophy*.

As was stated in the 1910 programme and as the sub-title of *The New Realism* indicates, this group of philosophers aimed at making philosophy a genuine co-operative pursuit, at least among those thinkers who were prepared to accept the basic tenets of realism. They insisted on a scrupulous care of language as the instrument of all philosophy, on analysis considered as 'the careful, systematic and exhaustive examination of any topic of discourse',[2] on separating vague complex problems into definite questions which should be dealt with separately, and on a close association with the special sciences. By this approach to philosophy the new realist hoped, therefore, to overcome the subjectivism, looseness of thought and language, and disregard of science which in their opinion had tended to bring philosophy into disrepute. In other words, a reform of philosophy in general was to go hand in hand with the development of a realist line of thought.

The new realists were at any rate agreed on the truth of a basic tenet, namely that, as Pitkin expressed it, 'things known are not products of the knowing relation nor essentially dependent for their existence or behaviour upon that relation'.[3] This tenet corresponds with our natural spontaneous belief, and it is demanded by the sciences. Hence the burden of proof rests fairly and squarely on the shoulders of those who deny it. But the disproofs offered by the idealists are fallacious. For instance, they slide from a truism, that it is only when objects are known that we know that they exist, or from the tautology 'no object without a subject', to a substantial but unproven conclusion, namely that we know that objects exist only as objects, that is, only when they are known, as terms of the knowing relation.

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[1] This programme was reprinted as an Appendix in *The New Realism*.

[2] *The New Realism*, p. 24. As far as care for language and breaking up vague and complex problems into manageable and quite definite questions were concerned, the new realists' idea of proper philosophical procedure was similar to that of G. E. Moore in England.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 477.

This obviously implies that knowledge is an external relation. As Spaulding puts it, knowledge is 'eliminable',[1] in the sense that a thing can exist when it is not known and that, when not known, it can be precisely what it is when it is known, with the obvious difference that it is then not the term of the external relation of knowing. There must thus be at least one kind of external relation. And we can say in general that the new realists accepted the theory of relations as external to their terms. This view obviously favoured pluralism rather than monism in metaphysics. And it also pointed to the impossibility of deducing the world-system *a priori*.

The ordinary man's spontaneous reaction to the basic tenet of realism would undoubtedly be one of unqualified acceptance. For he is obviously accustomed to think of physical objects as existing quite independently of the knowing relation and as being entirely unaffected by this relation in their natures or characteristics. But reflection shows us that some account has to be taken of illusions, hallucinations and such like phenomena. Are they to be described as objects of knowledge? If so, can they reasonably be said to be real independently of the subject? And what of apparently converging railway-lines, sticks which appear bent when half immersed in water, and so on? Can we say that such percepts exist independently of perception? Must we not at any rate modify realism in such a way as to be able to assert that some objects of consciousness exist independently while others do not?

Holt's way of dealing with the matter is to make a distinction between being and reality. Realism does not commit us to holding that all perceived things are real. 'While all perceived things are things, *not* all perceived things are *real* things.'[2] It does not follow, however, that 'unreal' objects of perception or of thought are to be described as 'subjective' in character. On the contrary, the unreal has being and 'subsists of its own right in the all-inclusive universe of being'.[3] In fine, 'the universe is not all real; but the universe all is'.[4]

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[1] *The New Realism*, p. 478.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 358.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 366. The unreal object must be distinguished from the unthinkable, such as a round square.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 360.

Obviously, some explanation of this use of terms is required. And in the first place what does Holt mean by reality? The answer, 'as to what reality is, I take no great interest',[1] is not very promising. But Holt goes on to say that, if challenged, he would 'hazard the guess that perhaps reality is some very comprehensive system of terms in relation. . . . This would make reality closely related to what logic knows as "existence" '.[2] This suggests that an hallucinatory object, for example, is unreal in the sense that it cannot be fitted, without contradiction, into the most universal system of related terms. But Holt remarks that 'I shall not call an hallucinatory object necessarily "unreal" '.[3] The point on which he insists, however, is that unreality does not exclude objectivity. If, for instance, I assume certain geometrical premisses at will and deduce a consistent system, the system is 'objective', even if it is described as 'unreal'. And to say that the unreal is objective, not subjective, is what Holt means by saying that it has being.

As for converging railway lines, sticks which appear bent in water and so on, Holt maintains that a physical object has innumerable projective properties, with which there correspond different specific responses in the nervous systems of different percipient organisms. Hence if we abstract from the particular purpose or purposes which lead us to select one appearance as a thing's 'real' appearance, we can say that all its appearances are on the same footing. They are all objective, and they subsist as projective properties. We are thus offered the picture of 'a general universe of being in which all things physical, mental, and logical, propositions and terms, existent and non-existent, false and true, good and evil, real and unreal *subsist*'.[4]

As Montague was afterwards to point out when discussing the differences between himself and some of his colleagues in the neo-realist group, there are considerable objections to putting all these things on the same footing. In the first place, the relations between objects of perception can be asymmetrical. For instance, on the assumption that the stick partly immersed in water is straight, we can easily explain why it appears bent. But if we assume that it is bent, we cannot explain why it appears straight in the circumstances in which it does appear to be straight. And this difficulty is certainly not overcome by saying that the stick is bent when it is partly immersed in water, while it is straight when it is out of the water. Again, some objects can produce effects only indirectly by means of the subject which conceives them, while other objects can also produce effects directly. For example, a dragon, as object of thought, might conceivably stimulate a man to make a voyage of exploration; but it could not produce the effects which can be produced by a lion. And we need to be able to make clear distinctions between the ontological statuses of these different classes of objects.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 366.

[2] *Ibid.*,

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 367.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 372.

The new realists also concerned themselves with discussing the nature of consciousness. Holt and Perry, partly under the influence of William James, accepted the doctrine of neutral monism, according to which there is no ultimate substantial difference between mind and matter. And they tried to eliminate consciousness as a peculiar entity by explaining awareness of an object as a specific response by an organism. Montague interpreted this as meaning that the response consists of a motion of particles. And he asked how this theory, which he described as behaviourism, could possibly explain, for example, our awareness of past events. He himself identified the specific response which constitutes consciousness with 'the relation of self-transcending implication, which the brain-states sustain to their extra-organic causes'.[1] But it is not at all clear how brain-states can exercise any such self-transcending function. Nor does it help very much to be told that the possibility of the cortical states transcending themselves and providing awareness of objects is 'a matter for psychology rather than epistemology'.[2]

However, it is at any rate clear that the new realists were intent on maintaining that, as Montague put it, 'cognition is a peculiar type of relation which may subsist between a living being and any entity . . . [that it] belongs to the same world as that of its objects . . . [and that] there is nothing transcendental or supernatural about it'.[3] They also rejected all forms of representationalism. In perception and knowledge the subject is related directly to the object, not indirectly by means of an image or some sort of mental copy which constitutes the immediate term of the relation.

5. This rejection by the neo-realists of all representationalism seemed to some other philosophers to be naïve and uncritical. It was this rejection which led to physical and hallucinatory objects

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[1] *The New Realism*, p. 482.

[2] *Ways of Knowing* (1925), p. 396.

[3] *The New Realism*, p. 475.

being placed on the same footing. And it made it impossible to explain, for instance, our perception of a distant star when the star has ceased to exist. Thus there soon arose a movement of critical realism, formed by philosophers who agreed with the neo-realists in rejecting idealism but who found themselves unable to accept their thoroughgoing rejection of representationalism.

Like neo-realism, critical realism found expression in a joint-volume, *Essays in Critical Realism: A Co-operative Study of the Problems of Knowledge*, which appeared in 1920. The contributors were D. Drake (1898–1933), A. O. Lovejoy (1873–1962), J. B. Pratt (1875–1944), A. K. Rogers (1868–1936), G. Santayana (1863–1952), R. W. Sellars (b. 1880), and C. A. Strong (1862–1940).

The strength of critical realism lay in attack. For example, in *The Revolt against Dualism* (1930), Lovejoy argued that while neo-realists originally appealed to common sense in their rejection of representationalism, they then proceeded to give an account of objects which was incompatible with the common sense point of view. For to maintain with Holt that all the appearances of a thing are on the same footing as its objective projective properties is to commit oneself to saying that railway lines are both parallel and convergent, and that the surface of, say, a penny is both circular and elliptical.

In expounding their own doctrine, however, the critical realists encountered considerable difficulties. We can say that they were agreed in maintaining that what we directly perceive is some character-complex or immediate datum which functions as a sign of or guide to an independently existing thing. But they were not in full agreement about the nature of the immediate datum. Some were prepared to speak about such data as mental states.[1] And in this case they would presumably be in the mind. Others, such as Santayana, believed that the immediate data of consciousness are essences, and ruled out any question as to their whereabouts on the ground that they exist only as exemplified. In any case, if representationalism is once admitted, it seems to follow that the existence of physical objects is inferred. And there then arises the problem of justifying this inference. What reason have I for supposing that what I actually perceive represents something other than itself? Further, if we never perceive physical objects directly, how can we discriminate between the representative values of different sense-data?

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[1] In an essay on the development of American realism Montague attributes to the critical realists in general the doctrine that we know directly only 'mental states or ideas'. Cf. *Twentieth Century Philosophy* (1943). edited by D. D. Runes, p. 441.

The critical realists tried to answer the first question by maintaining that from the very start and by their very nature the immediate data of perception point to physical objects beyond themselves. But they differed in their accounts of this external reference. Santayana, for instance, appealed to animal faith, to the force of instinctive belief in the external reference of our percepts, a belief which we share with the animals, while Sellars relied on psychology to explain how our awareness of externality develops and grows in definiteness.

As for the question, how can we discriminate between the representative values of sense-data if we never perceive physical objects directly? one may be tempted to answer, 'In the way that we actually do discriminate, namely by verification'. And this may be an excellent answer from the practical point of view. After all, travellers in the desert, interpreting a mirage as a prediction that they will find water ahead of them, find by bitter experience that the prediction is not verified. At the same time a theoretical difficulty still remains for the representationalist to solve. For on his premisses the process of verification terminates in sensory experience or the having of sense-data and is not a magic wand which, when waved, gives us direct access to what lies beyond sense-data. True, if what we are seeking is the sensory experience of a slaking of thirst, having this experience is all that is required from the practical point of view. But from the point of view of the theory of knowledge the representationalist seems to remain immersed in the world of 'representation'.

The fact of the matter is, of course, that on the level of common sense and practical life we can get along perfectly well. And in ordinary language we have developed distinctions which are quite sufficient to cope for all practical purposes with sticks partially immersed in water, converging railway lines, pink rats, and so on. But once we start to reflect on the epistemological problems to which such phenomena appear to give rise, there is the temptation to embrace some overall solution, either by saying that all the objects of awareness are objective and on the same footing or by saying that they are all subjective mental states or sense-data which are somehow neither subjective nor objective. In the first case we have neo-realism, in the second critical realism, provided, of course, that the immediate data are regarded as representative of or in some way related to independent physical objects. Both positions can be regarded as attempts to reform ordinary language. And though this enterprise cannot be ruled out *a priori*, the fact that both positions give rise to serious difficulties may well prompt us, with the late Professor J. L. Austin, to take another look at ordinary language.

The word 'realism' can have different shades of meaning. In this chapter it has as its basic meaning the view that knowledge is not a construction of the object, that knowing is a relation of compresence between a subject and an object, which makes no difference to the object. We have seen, however, that in the realist movement problems arose about the immediate objects of perception and knowledge. At the same time we do not wish to give the quite erroneous impression that the American philosophers who belonged to the two groups which have been mentioned were exclusively concerned with the problems to which attention has been drawn in this and the preceding sections. Among the neo-realists Perry, for example, became well known as a moral philosopher,[1] and also devoted himself to political and social themes. Among the critical realists Santayana developed a general philosophy,[2] while Strong and Drake expounded a panpsychistic ontology, taking introspection as a key to the nature of reality.[3] Sellars defended a naturalistic philosophy,[4] based on the idea of emergent evolution with irreducible levels and comprising a theory of perception as an interpretative operation. Lovejoy exercised a considerable influence by his studies in the history of ideas.[5]

6. A realist theory of knowledge, in the sense already described, obviously does not exclude the construction of a metaphysical system or world-view. All that is excluded is a metaphysics based on the theory that knowledge is a construction of the object or on

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[1] He published his *General Theory of Value* in 1926.

[2] Santayana's *Realms of Being* comprises four volumes: *The Realm of Essence* (1927), *The Realm of Matter* (1930), *The Realm of Truth* (1938), and *The Realm of Spirit* (1940).

[3] According to Strong, introspection is the one case in which we are directly aware of 'stuff' as distinct from structure. But neither Strong nor Drake meant to imply that stones, for instance, are conscious. Their panpsychism was linked with the idea of emergent evolution. Even those things which we call 'material' possess a potential energy which at a certain level of evolution manifests itself in consciousness.

[4] As in *The Philosophy of Physical Realism* (1932).

[5] Lovejoy published, for instance, *The Great Chain of Being* in 1936 and *Essays in the History of Ideas* in 1948.

the theory that creative thought or experience is the basic, primary reality. And in point of fact there have been a considerable number of world-views in modern philosophy, which presupposed a realist theory of knowledge. To mention them all is, however, out of the question. And I propose to confine myself to making some remarks about the world-view of Samuel Alexander.

Samuel Alexander (1859–1938) was born in Sydney, Australia, but went to Oxford in 1877, where he came under the influence of Green and Bradley. This influence, however, was supplanted by that of the idea of evolution, as well as by an interest in empirical psychology, which was scarcely a characteristic of Oxford at the time.[1] Later on Alexander received stimulus from the realism of Moore and Russell and came to approach, though he did not altogether accept, the position of American neo-realism. But he regarded the theory of knowledge as preparatory to metaphysical synthesis. And it may well be true that his impulse to metaphysical construction, though not the actual content of his system, was due in some measure to the early influence of idealism on his mind.

In 1882 Alexander was elected a Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. And the influence of evolutionary thought can be seen in the book which he published in 1889, *Moral Order and Progress: An Analysis of Ethical Conceptions*. As the title of the book indicates, Alexander considered ethics to be concerned with the analysis of moral concepts, such as good and evil, right and wrong. But he also regarded it as a normative science. In his interpretation of the moral life and of moral concepts he carried on the line of thought represented by Herbert Spencer and Sir Leslie Stephen. Thus in his view the struggle for survival in the biological sphere takes the form in the ethical sphere of a struggle between rival moral ideals. And the law of natural selection, as applying in the moral field, means that that set of moral ideals tends to prevail which most conduces to the production of a state of equilibrium or harmony between the various elements and forces in the individual, between the individual and society, and between man and his environment. There is thus an ultimate and overall ideal of harmony which in Alexander's view includes within itself the ideals upheld by other ethical systems, such as happiness and self-realization. At the same time the conditions of life, physical and social, are constantly changing, with the result that the concrete meaning of equilibrium or harmony assumes fresh forms. Hence, even though there is in a real sense an ultimate end of moral progress, it cannot be actually attained in a fixed and unalterable shape, and ethics cannot be expressed in the form of a set of static principles which are incapable of modification or change.

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[1] Bradley was interested in psychology. But it is notorious that for many years psychology was frowned on at Oxford and regarded as not qualifying for recognition as a science.

To turn to Alexander's realism.[1] His basic idea of knowledge is that it is simply a relation of compresence or togetherness between some object and a conscious being. The object, in the sense of the thing known, is what it is whether it is known or not. Further, Alexander rejects all forms of representationalism. We can, of course, direct our attention explicitly to our mental acts or states. But they do not serve as copies or signs of external things which are known only indirectly. Rather do we 'enjoy' our mental acts while knowing directly objects which are other than the acts by which we know them. Nor are sense-data intermediate objects between consciousness and physical things, they are perspectives of things. Even a so-called illusion is a perspective of the real world, though it is referred by the mind to a context to which it does not belong.[2] Further, in knowing the past by memory we really do know the past. That is to say, pastness is a direct object of experience.

In 1893 Alexander was appointed professor of philosophy in the University of Manchester. In the years 1916–18 he delivered the Gifford Lectures at Glasgow, and the published version appeared in 1920 under the title *Space, Time and Deity*. In this work we are told that metaphysics is concerned with the world as a whole, thus carrying comprehensiveness to its furthest limits. In Aristotelian language we can say that it is the science of being and its essential attributes, investigating 'the ultimate nature of existence if it has any, and those pervasive characters of things, or categories'.[3] But though metaphysics has a wider subject-matter than any special science, its method is empirical, in the sense that, like the sciences, it uses 'hypotheses by which to bring its data into verifiable connection'.[4] At the same time the pervasive and essential attributes of things can be described as non-empirical or

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[1] The best known of Alexander's articles illustrating his realist theory of knowledge is 'The Basis of Realism', which appeared in the *Proceedings of the British Academy* for 1914.

[2] In other words, the mind does not create the materials of an illusion but derives them from sensible experience. But it can be said to constitute the illusion *as* an illusion by an erroneous judgment in regard to context.

[3] *Space, Time and Deity*, I, p. 2.

[4] *Ibid.*, I, p. 4.

a priori provided that we understand that the distinction between the empirical and the non-empirical lies within the experienced and is not equivalent to a distinction between experience and what transcends all experience. Bearing this in mind, we can define metaphysics as 'the experiential or empirical study of the non-empirical or *a priori*, and of such questions as arise out of the relation of the empirical to the *a priori*'.[1]

According to Alexander, ultimate reality, the basic matrix of all things, is space-time. Precisely how he arrived at this notion, it is difficult to say. He mentions, for example, the idea of a world in space and time formulated by H. Minkowski in 1908. And he refers to Lorentz and Einstein. Further, he speaks with approval of Bergson's concept of real time, though with disapproval of the French philosopher's subordination of space to time. In any case Alexander's notion of space-time as the ultimate reality is obviously opposed to Bradley's relegation of space and time to the sphere of appearance and to McTaggart's theory of the unreality of time. Alexander is concerned with constructing a naturalistic metaphysics or world-view; and he begins with what is for him both the ultimate and, when considered purely in itself, the primitive phase of the evolutionary process.

The naïve way of conceiving space and time is as receptacles or containers. And a natural corrective to this crude image is to depict them as relations between individual entities, relations respectively of co-existence and succession. But this view clearly implies that individual entities are logically prior to space and time, whereas the hypothesis embraced by Alexander is that space and time constitute 'the stuff or matrix (or matrices) out of which things or events are made, the medium in which they are precipitated and crystallized'.[2] If we consider either space or time by itself, its elements or parts are indistinguishable. But 'each point of space is determined and distinguished by an instant in time, and each instant of time by its position in space'.[3] In other words, space and time together constitute one reality, 'an infinite continuum of pure events or point-instants'.[4] And empirical things are groupings or complexes of such events.

Alexander proceeds to discuss the pervasive categories or fundamental properties of space-time, such as identity, diversity and existence, universal and particular, relation, causality and so on. The stage is thus set for an examination of the emergence of qualities and of levels of empirical reality, from matter up to conscious mental activity. We cannot discuss all these themes here. But it is worth drawing attention to Alexander's doctrine of 'tertiary qualities'.

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[1] *Space, Time and Deity*, I, p. 4.

[2] *Ibid.*, I, p. 60.

[3] *Ibid.*, I, p. 38.

[4] *Ibid.*, I, p. 66.

The tertiary qualities are values, such as truth and goodness. They are called 'tertiary' to distinguish them from the primary and secondary qualities of traditional philosophy. But as applied to values the term 'qualities' should really be placed in inverted commas, to indicate that 'these values are not qualities of reality in the same sense as colour, or form, or life'.[1] To speak of them as objective qualities of reality can be misleading. For instance, reality is not, properly speaking, either true or false: it is simply reality. Truth and falsity are properly predicated of propositions as believed, that is, in relation to the mind which believes them, not of things, nor even of propositions when considered simply as mental facts. Similarly, a thing is good, according to Alexander, only in relation to a purpose, as when we speak of a good tool. Again, though a red rose is red whether anyone perceives it or not, it is beautiful only in relation to the mind which appreciates its 'coherence'. But it by no means follows that we are entitled to speak of the tertiary qualities or values as purely subjective or as unreal. They emerge as real features of the universe, though only in relation to minds or conscious subjects. They are, in fine, 'subject-object determinations',[2] which 'imply the amalgamation of the object with the human appreciation of it'.[3]

The relation between subject and object is not, however, invariable. In the case of truth, for example, appreciation by the subject is determined by the object. For in knowledge reality is discovered, not made. But in the case of goodness the quality of being good is determined primarily by the subject, that is, by purpose, by the will. There is, however, a common factor which must be noted, namely that the appreciation of values in general arises in a social context, out of the community of minds. For instance, it is in relation to the judgment of others that I become aware that a proposition is false; and in my judgments about truth or falsity I represent what we can call the collective mind. 'It is social intercourse, therefore, which makes us aware that there is a reality compounded of ourselves and the object, and that in that relation the object has a character which it would not have except for that relation.'[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, II, p. 237.

[2] *Ibid.*, II, p. 238.

[3] *Ibid.*

This doctrine of the emergence of tertiary qualities enables Alexander to insist that evolution is not indifferent to values. 'Darwinism is sometimes thought to be indifferent to value. It is in fact the history of how values come into existence in the world of life.'[2] We thus have the general picture of a process of evolution in which different levels of finite being emerge, each level possessing its own characteristic empirical quality. 'The highest of these empirical qualities known to us is mind or consciousness.'[3] And at this level the tertiary qualities or values emerge as real features of the universe, though this reality involves a relation to the subject, the human mind.

Now, Alexander's work is entitled *Space, Time and Deity*. Hence the question arises, how does Deity fit into this scheme or world-view? The philosopher's answer is that 'Deity is the next higher empirical quality to the highest we know'.[4] We obviously cannot say what this quality is. But we know that it is not any quality with which we are already acquainted. For that it should be any such quality is ruled out by definition.

Does it follow from this that God exists only in the future, so to speak, being identifiable with the next level of finite being to emerge in the process of evolution? To this question Alexander gives a negative answer. As an actually existent being, God is the universe, the whole space-time continuum. 'God is the whole world as possessing the quality of deity. . . . As an actual existent, God is the infinite world with its nisus towards deity, or, to adapt a phrase of Leibniz, as big or in travail with deity.'[5]

Alexander was of Jewish origin and it is not unreasonable to see in his view of God a dynamic version of Spinoza's pantheism, adapted to the theory of evolution. But there is an obvious difficulty in maintaining both that God is the whole world as possessing the quality of Deity and that this quality is a future emergent. Alexander is aware of this, of course. And he concludes that 'God as an actual existent is always becoming deity but never attains it. He is the ideal God in embryo.'[6] As for religion, it can be described as 'the sentiment in us that we are drawn towards Him [God], and caught in the movement of the world to a higher level of existence'.[7]

[1] *Space, Time and Deity*, II, p. 240.
[2] *Ibid.*, II, p. 309.
[3] *Ibid.*, II, p. 345.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*, II, p. 353.
[6] *Ibid.*, II, p. 365.
[7] *Ibid.*, II, p. 429.

Given his premisses, Alexander's position is understandable. On the one hand, if Deity is the quality of a future level of being, and if God were identifiable with the actual bearer of this quality, he would be finite. On the other hand, the religious consciousness, Alexander assumes, demands a God who is not only existent but also infinite. Hence God must be identified with the infinite universe as striving after the quality of Deity. But to say this is really to do no more than to apply a label, 'God', to the evolving universe, the space-time continuum. To be sure, there is some similarity between Alexander's view and that of Hegel. At the same time Hegel's Absolute is defined as Spirit, whereas Alexander's is defined as Space-Time. And this renders the label 'God' even more inappropriate. What is appropriate is the description of religion as a 'sentiment'. For in a naturalistic philosophy this is precisely what religion becomes, namely some kind of cosmic emotion.

7. Owing to the development and spread of a current of thought which has been accompanied by a marked distrust of all comprehensive world-views, little attention has been paid to Alexander's philosophy.[1] In any case, in the field of speculative philosophy his star has been completely eclipsed by that of Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947), the greatest English metaphysical philosopher since Bradley. True, it can hardly be claimed that the influence of Whitehead as a speculative philosopher on recent British philosophy has been extensive or profound. Given the prevailing climate of philosophical thought, one would hardly expect it to have been. Whitehead's influence has in fact been greater in America, where he worked from 1924 until his death, than in his native land. In the last few years, however, interest in his thought has shown itself in a considerable number of books and articles published in Great Britain.[2] And his name has become increasingly known in Europe. In other words, Whitehead is recognized as a major thinker, whereas Alexander tends to be forgotten.

From one point of view, Whitehead's philosophy certainly qualifies for inclusion in this chapter. True, he himself drew attention to the affinity between the results of his philosophizing and absolute idealism. Thus in his preface to *Process and Reality* he notes that 'though throughout the main body of the work I am in sharp disagreement with Bradley, the final outcome is after all not so greatly different'.[1] At the same time Whitehead, who came from mathematics to the philosophy of science and Nature, and thence to metaphysics, intended to return to a pre-idealist attitude and point of departure. That is to say, just as some of the pre-Kantian philosophers had philosophized in close association with the science of their time, Whitehead considered that the new physics demanded a fresh effort in speculative philosophy. He did not start from the subject-object relation or from the idea of creative thought, but rather from reflection on the world as presented in modern science. His categories are not simply imposed by the *a priori* constitution of the human mind; they belong to reality, as pervasive features of it, in much the same sense as Aristotle's categories belonged to reality. Again, Whitehead gives a naturalistic interpretation of consciousness, in the sense that it is depicted as a developed, emergent form of the relation of 'prehension' which is found between all actual entities. Hence when he notes the affinity between the results of his speculative philosophy and some features of absolute idealism he also suggests that his type of thought may be 'a transformation of some main doctrines of Absolute Idealism on to a realistic basis'.[2]

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[1] In Mr. G. J. Warnock's excellent little book, *English Philosophy Since 1900*, Alexander is passed over in silence.

[2] The increase not only in tolerance of but also in sympathy with 'descriptive metaphysics' has, of course, contributed to this revival of interest in Whitehead.

But though Whitehead's philosophy, as standing on what he calls a realistic basis, certainly qualifies for consideration in this chapter, it is far too complicated to summarize in a few paragraphs. And after some consideration the present writer has decided not to make the attempt. It is, however, worth noting that Whitehead was convinced of the inevitability of speculative or metaphysical philosophy. That is to say, unless a philosopher deliberately breaks off at a certain point the process of understanding the world and of generalization, he is inevitably led to 'the endeavour to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted'.[3] Moreover, it is not simply a question of synthesizing the sciences. For the analysis of any particular fact and the determination of the status of any entity require in the long run a view of the general principles and categories which the fact embodies and of the entity's status in the whole universe. Linguistically speaking, every proposition stating a particular fact requires for its complete analysis an exhibition of the general character of the universe as exemplified in this fact. Ontologically speaking, 'every definite entity requires a systematic universe to supply its requisite status'.[1] Wherever we start, therefore, we are led to metaphysics, provided that we do not break off the process of understanding on the way.

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[1] *Process and Reality*, p. vii (1959 edition). [2] *Ibid.*, p. viii. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

This point of view assumes, of course, that the universe is an organic system. And it is Whitehead's sustained attempt to show that the universe is in fact a unified dynamic process, a plurality-in-unity which is to be interpreted as a creative advance into novelty, that constitutes his philosophical system. As already noted, the total result of his speculation bears some resemblance to absolute idealism. But the world as presented by Whitehead is certainly not the dialectical working-out of an absolute Idea. The total universe, comprising both God and the world, is said to be caught 'in the grip of the ultimate metaphysical ground, the creative advance into novelty'.[2] It is 'creativity',[3] not thought, which is for him the ultimate factor.

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[1] *Ibid*, p. 17.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 529.

[3] 'Creativity', as described by Whitehead, is not an actual entity, like God, but 'the universal of universals' (*Process and Reality*, p. 31).

CHAPTER XVIII

G. E. MOORE AND ANALYSIS

Life and writings—Common sense realism—Some remarks on Moore's ethical ideas—Moore on analysis—The sense-datum theory as an illustration of Moore's practice of analysis.

1. In the last chapter we had occasion to consider briefly some Oxford realists. But when one thinks of the collapse of idealism in England and of the rise of a new dominating current of thought, one's mind naturally turns to the analytic movement which had its origins at Cambridge and which in the course of time established itself firmly at Oxford and in other universities. It is true that in its later phase it has become commonly known as 'Oxford philosophy'; but this does not alter the fact that the three great pioneers of and stimulative influences in the movement, Moore, Russell and Wittgenstein, were all Cambridge men.

George Edward Moore (1873–1958) went up to Cambridge in 1892, where he began by studying classics. He has remarked that he does not think that the world or the sciences would ever have suggested to him philosophical problems. In other words, left to himself he tended to take the world as he found it and as it was presented by the sciences. He appears to have been entirely free from Bradley's dissatisfaction with all our ordinary ways of conceiving the world, and he did not hanker after some superior way of viewing it. Still less was he tortured by the problems which beset Kierkegaard, Jaspers, Camus and such-like thinkers. At the same time Moore became interested in the queer things which philosophers have said about the world and the sciences; for example, that time is unreal or that scientific knowledge is not really knowledge. And he was diverted from classics to philosophy, partly under the influence of his younger contemporary, Bertrand Russell.

In 1898 Moore was awarded a Prize-Fellowship at Trinity College, Cambridge. And in 1903 he published *Principia Ethica.* After an absence from Cambridge he was appointed Lecturer in Moral Science in 1911; and in the following year he published his little work, *Ethics*, in the Home University Library Series. In 1921 he succeeded G. F. Stout as editor of *Mind*; and in 1922 he published *Philosophical Studies*, consisting for the most part of reprinted articles. In 1925 Moore was elected to the Chair of Philosophy at Cambridge on the retirement of James Ward. In 1951 he was awarded the *Order of Merit*; and in 1953 he published *Some Main Problems of Philosophy. Philosophical Papers*, a collection of essays prepared for publication by Moore himself, appeared posthumously in 1959, while his *Commonplace Book*, 1919–53, a selection from his notes and jottings, was published in 1962.

2. According to Bertrand Russell, it was Moore who led the rebellion against idealism. And Moore's early realism can be illustrated by reference to an article on the nature of judgment, which he published in *Mind* during the year 1899.

In this article Moore takes as his text Bradley's statement that truth and falsity depend on the relation between ideas and reality, and he refers with approval to Bradley's explanation that the term 'ideas' does not signify mental states but rather universal meanings.[1] Moore then proceeds to substitute 'concept' for 'idea' and 'proposition' for 'judgment', and to maintain that what is asserted in a proposition is a specific relation between concepts. In his view this holds good also of existential judgments. For 'existence is itself a concept'.[2] But Moore rejects the theory that a proposition is true or false in virtue of its correspondence or lack of correspondence with a reality or state of affairs other than itself. On the contrary, the truth of a proposition is an identifiable property of the proposition itself, belonging to it in virtue of the relation obtaining, within the proposition, between the concepts which compose it. 'What kind of relation makes a proposition true, what false, cannot be further defined, but must be immediately recognized.'[3] It is not, however, a relation between the proposition and something outside it.

Now, as Moore says that concepts are 'the only objects of knowledge',[4] and as propositions assert relations between concepts and are true or false simply in virtue of the relation asserted, it looks at first sight as though he were expounding a theory which is the reverse of anything which could reasonably be described as realism. That is to say, it looks as though Moore were creating an unbridgeable gulf between the world of propositions, which is the sphere of truth and falsity, and the world of non-propositional reality or fact.

[1] In other words, Moore approves of Bradley's protest against the psychologizing of logic.

[2] *Mind*, Vol. 8 (1899), p. 180.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

We have to understand, however, that for Moore concepts are not abstractions, mental constructs formed on the basis of the material provided by sense-data, but rather objective realities, as with Meinong. Further, we are invited 'to regard the world as formed of concepts'.[1] That is to say, an existent thing is a complex of concepts, of universals such as whiteness for example, 'standing in a unique relation to the concept of existence'.[2] To say this is not to reduce the world of existing things to mental states. On the contrary, it is to eliminate the opposition between concepts and things. And to say that concepts are the objects of knowledge is to say that we know reality directly. When, therefore, Moore says of concepts that they must *be* something before they can enter into a relation with a cognitive subject and that 'it is indifferent to their nature whether anybody thinks them or not',[3] we can see what he means. He is saying that knowledge makes no difference to the object. It doubtless has its causes and effects; but 'these are to be found only in the subject'.[4] Construction of the object is certainly not one of the effects of knowing.

If a proposition consists of concepts standing in a specific relation to one another, and if concepts are identical with the realities conceived, it obviously follows that a true proposition must be identical with the reality which it is commonly considered as representing and with which it is commonly said to correspond. And in an article on truth,[5] Moore did not hesitate to maintain that the proposition 'I exist' does not differ from the reality 'my existence'.

As Moore was well aware at the time of writing, this theory sounds extremely odd. But what is more serious than its oddity is the difficulty in seeing how it does not eliminate the distinction between true and false propositions. Suppose, for example, that I believe that the earth is flat. If what I believe is a proposition, it seems to follow from the account of propositions explained above, that the earth being flat is a reality. Moore, therefore, came to throw overboard the idea that what we believe is propositions. In fact he came to jettison the idea of propositions at all, at any rate in the sense in which he had formerly postulated them. At the same time he clung to a realist view of knowledge as a unique unanalyzable relation between a cognitive subject and an object, a relation which makes no difference to the nature of the object.

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[1] *Mind*, Vol. 8, p. 182. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 183. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 179. [4] *Ibid.*

[5] In Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology.*

As for the truth or falsity of beliefs, he came to admit that this must depend in some sense on correspondence or the lack of it, though he felt unable to give any clear account of the nature of this correspondence.

Now, if being the term of the unique and indefinable relation in which knowledge consists makes no difference to the nature of the object, there must be at any rate one external relation. And in point of fact Moore, having ascribed to the idealists the view that no relation is purely external, in the sense that there is no relation which does not affect the natures or essences of the terms, proceeds to reject it. Thus in an article on the concept of the relative[1] he distinguishes between the terms 'relative' and 'related' and asserts that the former term, when predicated of a thing, implies that the relation or relations referred to are essential to the subject of which the term is predicated. But this implies that the relation of something which is a whole to something else is identical with or a part of the whole. And this notion, Moore maintains, is self-contradictory. In other words, a thing is what it is, and it is not definable in terms of its relations to anything else. Hence a thing's nature cannot be constituted by the nature of the system to which it belongs; and idealist monism is thus deprived of one of its main foundations.

Moore's best-known criticism of idealism is, of course, his article entitled *The Refutation of Idealism.*[2] In it he maintains that if modern idealism makes any general assertion at all about the universe, it is that the universe is spiritual. But it is not at all clear what this statement means. And it is thus very difficult to discuss the question whether the universe is or is not spiritual. When we examine the matter, however, we find that there is a large number of different propositions which the idealist has to prove if he is to establish the truth of his general conclusion. And we can inquire into the weight of his arguments. Obviously, the statement that the universe is spiritual in character might still be true even if all the arguments advanced by idealists to prove its truth were fallacious. At the same time to show that the arguments were fallacious would be at any rate to show that the general conclusion was entirely unproved.

According to Moore, every argument used to prove that reality is spiritual has as one of its premisses the proposition *esse est*

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[1] Article 'Relative' in Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology.*

[2] *Mind,* Vol. 12 (1903), reprinted in *Philosophical Studies.*

percipi, to be is to be perceived. And one's natural reaction to this contention is to comment that belief in the truth of *esse est percipi* is characteristic of Berkeley's idealism, and that it should not be attributed to Hegel, for instance, or to Bradley. But Moore understands *percipi* as including 'that other type of mental fact, which is called "thought" ',[1] and as meaning, in general, to be experienced. And on this interpretation of *percipi* Bradley could be counted as subscribing to the thesis *esse est percipi*, inasmuch as everything is for him a constituent element in one all-comprehensive absolute experience.

As Moore understands *esse est percipi* in such a broad sense, it is not surprising that he finds the thesis ambiguous and capable of being interpreted in several ways. However, let us take it that acceptance of the thesis commits one to holding, among other things, that the object of a sensation cannot be distinguished from the sensation itself, or that, insofar as a distinction is made, it is the result of illegitimate abstraction from an organic unity. Moore undertakes to show that this view is false.

In the first place we are all aware, for example, that the sensation of blue differs from that of green. Yet if they are both sensations, they must have something in common. And Moore calls this common element 'consciousness', while the differentiating elements in the two sensations he calls their respective 'objects'. Thus 'blue is one object of sensation and green is another, and consciousness, which both sensations have in common, is different from either'.[2] On the one hand, as consciousness can co-exist with other objects of sensation besides blue, we obviously cannot legitimately claim that blue is the same thing as consciousness alone. On the other hand, we cannot legitimately claim that blue is the same thing as blue together with consciousness. For if we could, the statement that blue exists would have the same meaning as the statement that blue co-exists with consciousness. And this cannot be the case. For if, as has already been admitted, consciousness and blue are distinct elements in the sensation of blue, it makes sense to ask whether blue can exist without consciousness. And it would not make sense if the statement that blue exists and the statement that blue co-exists with consciousness had exactly the same meaning.

It may be objected that by using the term 'object' instead of 'content' this line of argument simply begs the question. In point of fact blue is the content, rather than the object, of the sensation of blue. And any distinction which we may make between the elements of content and consciousness or awareness is the result of an operation of abstraction performed on an organic unity.

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[1] *Philosophical Studies*, p. 7.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

For Moore, however, an appeal to the concept of organic unity is tantamount to an attempt to have things both ways. That is to say, a distinction is allowed and prohibited at the same time. In any case Moore is not prepared to admit that 'content' is a more appropriate term than 'object'. It is legitimate to speak of blue as part of the content of a blue flower. But a sensation of blue is not itself blue: it is awareness or consciousness of blue as an object. And 'this relation is just that which we mean in every case by "knowing" '.[1] To know or be aware of blue is not to have in the mind a representative image of which blue is the content or part of the content; it is to be directly aware of the object 'blue'.

According to Moore, therefore, the awareness which is included in sensation is the same unique relation which basically constitutes every kind of knowledge. And the problem of getting out of the subjective sphere or circle of our sensations, images and ideas is a pseudo-problem. For 'merely to have a sensation is already to *be* outside that circle. It is to know something which is as truly and really *not* a part of *my* experience, as anything which I can ever know.'[2]

It can be added, with reference to the idealist thesis that reality is spiritual, that according to Moore we possess precisely the same evidence for saying that there are material things as we possess for saying that we have sensations. Hence to doubt the existence of material things entails doubting the existence of our sensations, and of experience in general. To say this is not to say, or even to suggest, that nothing is spiritual. It is to say that if the statement that reality is spiritual entails denying the existence of material things, we have no possible reason for making the statement. For 'the only *reasonable* alternative to the admission that matter exists *as well as* spirit, is absolute scepticism—that, as likely as not, *nothing* exists at all'.[3] And this is not a position which we can consistently propose and maintain.

In his discussion of sensation and perception, a discussion to which we shall have to return presently, Moore can be said to be concerned with phenomenological analysis. But it is obvious that his general attitude is founded on a common sense realism. And this element in his thought comes out clearly in the famous essay entitled *A Defence of Common Sense,*[1] where he maintains that there are a number of propositions, the truth of which is known with certainty. Thus I know that there is at present a living human body which is my body. I know also that there are other living bodies besides my own. I know too that the earth has existed for many years. Further, I know that there are other people, each of whom knows that there is a living body which is his own body, that there are other living bodies besides his own, and that the earth has existed for many years. Again, I know not only that these people are aware of the truth of these propositions but also that each of them knows that there are other people who are aware of the same truths. Such propositions belong to the common sense view of the world. And it follows, according to Moore, that they are true. There may indeed be differences of opinion about whether a given proposition belongs or not to the common sense view of the world. But if it does, it is true. And if it is known to belong, it is known to be true. And it is known to be true because of the reasons which we actually have for stating that it is true, not for any supposedly better reasons which philosophers may claim to be able to provide. It is no more the philosopher's business to prove the truth of propositions which we already know to be true than it is his business to disprove them.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

Moore's defence of common sense has been referred to here simply as an illustration of one aspect of his realism. We shall have to return to the subject in connection with his conception of analysis. Meanwhile we can profitably take a glance at some of his ethical ideas, which, apart from their intrinsic interest, seem to illustrate the fact that his realism is not a 'naturalistic' realism.

3. Some moral philosophers, Moore remarks, have considered adequate the description of ethics as being concerned with what is good and what is bad in human conduct. In point of fact this description is too narrow. For other things besides human conduct can be good, and ethics can be described as 'the general inquiry into what is good'.[2] In any case, before we ask the question 'what is good?', meaning 'what things and which kinds of conduct possess the property of being good?', it seems logically proper to ask and answer the question, 'what is good?', meaning 'how is

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[1] *Contemporary British Philosophy,* Second Series, edited by J. H. Muirhead (1925) and reprinted in *Philosophical Papers* (1959).

[2] *Principia Ethica,* p. 2, s.2 (1959 reprint). In reference to this work the letter 's' signifies the section.

good to be defined?', 'what is goodness in itself?' For unless we know the answer to this question, it may be argued, how can we discriminate between good and bad conduct and say what things possess the property of goodness?

Moore insists that when he raises the question, 'how is good to be defined?', he is not looking for a purely verbal definition, the sort of definition which consists simply in substituting other words for the word to be defined. Nor is he concerned with establishing or with justifying the common usage of the word 'good'. 'My business is solely with that object or idea, which I hold, rightly or wrongly, that the word is generally used to stand for. What I want to discover is the nature of that object or idea.'[1] In other words, Moore is concerned with phenomenological rather than with linguistic analysis.

Having raised the question, Moore proceeds to assert that it cannot be answered, not because good is some mysterious, occult and unrecognizable quality but because the idea of good is a simple notion, like that of yellow. Definitions which describe the real nature of an object are only possible when the object is complex. When the object is simple, no such definition is possible. Hence good is indefinable. This does not entail the conclusion that the things which are good are indefinable. All that is being maintained is that the notion of good as such is a simple notion and hence 'incapable of any definition, in the most important sense of that word'.[2]

From this doctrine of good as an indefinable property or quality there follow some important conclusions. Suppose, for example, that someone says that pleasure is the good. Pleasure may be one of the things which possess the property of being good; but if, as is probably the case, the speaker imagines that he is giving a definition of good, what he says cannot possibly be true. If good is an indefinable property, we cannot substitute for it some other property, such as pleasurable. For even if we admitted, for the sake of argument, that all those things which possess the property of being good also possess the property of being pleasurable, pleasure would still not be, and could not be, the same as good. And anyone who imagines that it is or could be the same, is guilty of the 'naturalistic fallacy'.[3]

Now, the fallacy in question is basically 'the failure to distinguish clearly that unique and indefinable quality which we mean by good'.[1] Anyone who identifies goodness with some other quality or thing, whether it be pleasure or self-perception or virtue or love, saying that this is what 'good' *means*, is guilty of this fallacy. These things may perfectly well possess the quality of goodness in the sense, for example, that what is pleasurable also possesses the quality of being good. But it no more follows that to be pleasurable is the same thing as to be good than it would follow, on the supposition that all primroses are yellow, that to be a primrose and to be yellow are the same thing.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 6, s.6.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 9, s.10.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 10, s.10.

But, it may well be asked, why should this fallacy be described as 'naturalistic'? The only real reason for so describing it would obviously be the belief that goodness is a 'non-natural' quality. Given this belief, it would follow that those who identify goodness with a 'natural' quality are guilty of a naturalistic fallacy. But though in *Principia Ethica* Moore does indeed maintain that goodness is a non-natural quality, he greatly complicates matters by distinguishing between two groups of philosophers who are both said to be guilty of the naturalistic fallacy. The first group consists of those who uphold some form of naturalistic ethics by defining good in terms of 'some one property of things, which exists in time'.[2] Hedonism, which identifies pleasure and goodness, would be an example. The second group consists of those who base ethics on metaphysics and define good in metaphysical terms, in terms of or by reference to a supersensible reality which transcends Nature and does not exist in time. According to Moore, Spinoza is an example, when he tells us that we become perfect in proportion as we are united with Absolute Substance by what he calls the intellectual love of God. Another example is provided by those who say that our final end, the supreme good, is the realization of our 'true' selves, the 'true' self not being anything which exists here and now in Nature. What, then, is meant by saying that good is a 'non-natural' quality, if at the same time those who define good in terms of or with reference to a 'non-natural' reality or quality or experience are said to be guilty of the naturalistic fallacy?

The answer which immediately suggests itself is that there is no incompatibility between asserting that good is an indefinable non-natural quality and denying that it can be defined in terms of some other non-natural quality. Indeed, the assertion entails the denial. But this consideration by itself does not tell us in what sense good is a non-natural quality. In *Principia Ethica* Moore makes it clear that he has not the slightest intention of denying that good can be a property of natural objects. 'And yet I have said that "good" itself is not a natural property.'[1] What, then, is meant by saying that good can be, and indeed is, a non-natural property of at least some natural objects?

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[1] *Principia Ethica*, p. 59, s.36.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 41, s.27.

The answer provided in *Principia Ethica* is extremely odd. A natural property, or at any rate most natural properties, can exist by themselves in time, whereas good cannot. 'Can we imagine "good" as existing *by itself* in time, and not merely as a property of some natural object?'[2] No, we certainly cannot imagine this. But neither can we imagine a natural quality such as being brave existing *by itself* in time. And when Professor C. D. Broad, for example, pointed this out, Moore said that he completely agreed. It is not surprising, therefore, to find him eventually admitting roundly that 'in *Principia* I did not give any tenable explanation of what I meant by saying that "good" was not a natural property'.[3]

In his essay on the conception of intrinsic value in *Philosophical Studies* Moore gave another account of the distinction between natural and non-natural properties. He later admitted that this account was really two accounts; but he maintained that one of them might possibly be true. If one ascribes to a thing a natural intrinsic quality, one is always describing it to some extent. But if one ascribes to a thing a non-natural intrinsic quality, one is not describing the thing at all.

Obviously, if good is a non-natural intrinsic quality, and if to ascribe this quality to an object is not to describe the object in any way at all, the temptation immediately arises to conclude that the term 'good' expresses an evaluative attitude, so to speak, and that to call a thing good is to express this attitude and at the same time a desire that others should share this attitude. But if this conclusion is drawn, the view that goodness is an intrinsic quality of things has to be abandoned. And Moore was not prepared to abandon it. He believed that we can recognize what things possess the quality of being good, though we cannot define the quality. And when he wrote *Principia Ethica*, he was convinced that it is one of the main tasks of moral philosophy to determine values in this sense, namely to determine what things possess the quality of goodness and what things possess it in a higher degree than others.[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 41, s.26. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 41, s.26.

[3] In 'A Reply to my Critics' contained in *The Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, edited by P. A. Schilpp, p. 582 (New York, 1952, 2nd edition).

Obligation was defined by Moore in terms of the production of good. 'Our "duty", therefore, can be defined as that action which will cause more good to exist in the Universe than any possible alternative.'[2] Indeed, in *Principia Ethica* Moore went so far as to say that it is demonstrably certain that the assertion that one is morally bound to perform an action is identical with the assertion that this action will produce the greatest possible amount of good in the Universe. When, however, he came to write *Ethics*, he was no longer prepared to claim that the two statements were identical. And later on he recognized the necessity of distinguishing clearly between the statement that that action is morally obligatory which will produce the greatest amount of good as an effect *subsequent* to the action and the statement that that action is morally obligatory which, by reason of its being performed, by reason of its intrinsic nature, makes the Universe intrinsically better than it would be if some other action were performed. In any case the point to notice is that Moore does not regard his theory of good as an indefinable non-natural property as being in any way incompatible with a teleological view of ethics, which interprets obligation in terms of the production of good, that is, in terms of the production of things or experiences possessing the intrinsic quality of goodness. Nor in fact does there appear to be any incompatibility.

From this theory of obligation it does not follow, however, that in any set of circumstances whatsoever we are morally obliged to perform a certain action. For there might be two or more possible actions which, as far as we can see, would be equally productive of good. We can then describe these actions as right or morally permissible, but not as morally obligatory, even though we were obliged to perform either the one or the other.

Moore certainly assumed and implied that if a man passes a specifically moral judgment or an action, his statement, considered precisely as a moral judgment, is capable of being true or false. Take, for example, the assertion that it was right of Brutus to stab Julius Caesar. If this assertion is intended in a specifically ethical sense, it is reducible neither to the statement that the speaker has a subjective attitude of approval towards Brutus's action nor to the statement that as a matter of historical fact Brutus stabbed Caesar. And in its irreducible moral character it is either true or false. Hence the dispute between the man who says that Brutus's action was right and the man who says that it was wrong is a dispute about the truth or falsity of a moral proposition.

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[1] In *Principia Ethica* Moore laid most stress on the values of personal affection and aesthetic enjoyment, that is, the appreciation of the beautiful in art and Nature. And this attitude exercised a considerable influence at the time on what was known as the Bloomsbury Circle.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 148, s.89.

When, however, he was confronted with the so-called emotive theory of ethics, Moore began to feel doubt about the truth of the position which he had hitherto adopted. As can be seen from his 'A Reply to My Critics', he conceded that Professor C. L. Stevenson might be right in maintaining that the man who says that Brutus's action was right, when the word 'right' is being used in a specifically ethical sense, is not saying anything of which truth or falsity can be predicated, except perhaps that Brutus actually did stab Caesar, a statement which is clearly historical and not ethical. Further, Moore conceded that if one man says that Brutus's action was right while another says that it was wrong, 'I feel some inclination to think that their disagreement *is* merely a disagreement in attitude, like that between the man who says "Let's play poker" and the other who says, "No; let's listen to a record": and I do not know that I am not *as much* inclined to think this as to think that they are making incompatible assertions'.[1] At the same time Moore confessed that he was also inclined to think that his old view was true; and he maintained that in any case Stevenson had not shown that it was false. 'Right', 'wrong', 'ought', may have merely emotive meaning. And in this case the same must be said of 'good' too. 'I am *inclined* to think that this is so, but I am also inclined to think that it is not so; and I do not know which way I am inclined most strongly.'[2]

These hesitations can reasonably be described as typical of Moore. He was, as has often been remarked, a great questioner. He raised a problem, tried to define it precisely and offered a solution. But when he was faced with criticism, he never brushed it aside. When he thought that it was based on misunderstanding of what he had said, he tried to explain his meaning more clearly. When, however, the criticism was substantial and not simply the fruit of misunderstanding, it was his habit to give serious

[1] *The Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, edited by P. A. Schilpp, pp. 546–7.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 554.

consideration to the critic's remarks and to give due weight to his point of view. Moore never assumed that what he had said must be true and what the other fellow said must be false. And he did not hesitate to give a candid expression to his reflections and perplexities. We have to remember, therefore, that he is thinking aloud, so to speak, and that his hesitations are not necessarily to be taken as a definite retraction of his former views. He is engaged in weighing a new point of view, suggested to him by a critic, and in trying to estimate the amount of truth in it. Further, as we have seen, he is extremely frank about his subjective impressions, letting his readers know, without any attempt at concealment, that he is inclined to accept the new point of view, while at the same time he is inclined to stick to his own former view. Moore never felt that he was irretrievably committed to his own past, that is, to what he had said in the past. And when he became convinced that he had been wrong, he said so plainly.

In regard, however, to the question whether truth and falsity can legitimately be predicated of moral judgments, we are not entitled to say that Moore became *convinced* that his former view had been wrong. In any case the ethical theses which are for ever associated with his name are those of the indefinability of good, considered as a non-natural intrinsic quality, and of the need for avoiding any form of the so-called naturalistic fallacy. Moore's ethical position, especially as developed in *Principia Ethica*, can be said to be realist but not naturalistic; realist in the sense that good is regarded as an objective and recognizable intrinsic quality, not naturalistic in the sense that this quality is described as non-natural. But Moore never succeeded in explaining satisfactorily what was meant by saying, for example, that good is a non-natural quality of natural objects. And it is understandable that the emotive theory of ethics eventually came to the fore in philosophical discussion. After all, this theory can itself claim to be free from the 'naturalistic fallacy' and can use this claim as a weapon for dealing blows at rival theories. At the same time the theory is immune from the accusation of committing what Moore called the naturalistic fallacy only because 'good' is removed altogether from the sphere of objective intrinsic qualities.[1]

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[1] It is not, of course, my intention to suggest that Moore's ethics must pass into the emotive theory. What I suggest is simply that it is understandable if to some minds the emotive theory appears more intelligible and tenable. But this theory in its original form was very soon seen to constitute a gross over-simplification of complex issues, And subsequent ethical discussion became much more sophisticated and also, in a real sense, more ecumenical.

4. Mention has already been made of the fact that as an undergraduate at Cambridge Moore was struck by some of the odd things which philosophers have said about the world. McTaggart's denial of the reality of time was a case in point. What, Moore wondered, could McTaggart possibly mean by this? Was he using the term 'unreal' in some peculiar sense which would deprive the statement that time is unreal of its paradoxical character? Or was he seriously suggesting that it is untrue to say that we have our lunch after we have had our breakfast? If so, the statement that time is unreal would be exciting but at the same time preposterous: it could not possibly be true. In any case, how can we profitably discuss the question whether time is real or unreal unless we first know precisely what is being asked? Similarly, according to Bradley reality is spiritual. But it is not at all clear what it means to say that reality is spiritual. Perhaps several different propositions are involved. And before we start discussing whether reality is spiritual or not, we must not only clarify the question but make sure that it is not really several separate questions. For if it is, these questions will have to be treated in turn.

It is important to understand that Moore had no intention whatsoever of suggesting that all philosophical problems are pseudo-problems. He was suggesting that the reason why philosophical problems are often so difficult to answer is sometimes that it is not clear in the first place precisely what is being asked. Again, when, as so often happens, disputants find themselves at cross-purposes, the reason may sometimes be that the question under discussion is not really one question but several. Such suggestions have nothing at all to do with any general dogma about the meaninglessness of philosophical problems. They represent an appeal for clarity and accuracy from the start, an appeal prompted by enlightened common sense. They express, of course, the predominantly analytic turn of Moore's mind; but they do not make him a positivist, which he certainly was not.

When, however, we think of Moore's idea of philosophical analysis, we generally think of it in connection with his contention that there are common sense propositions which we all know to be true. If we know them to be true, it is absurd for the philosopher to try to show that they are not true. For he too knows that they are true. Nor is it the business of the philosopher, according to Moore, to attempt to prove, for example, that there are material things outside the mind. For there is no good reason to suppose that the philosopher can provide better reasons than those which we already have for saying that there are material things external to the mind. What, however, the philosopher can do is to analyze propositions, the truth or the falsity of which is established by other than specifically philosophical argument. The philosopher can, of course, try to make explicit the reasons which we already have for accepting some common sense propositions. But this does not turn the reasons into specifically philosophical reasons, in the sense that they have been added, as it were, by the philosopher to our stock of reasons.[1]

The question arises, therefore, what is meant by analyzing a proposition? It obviously cannot signify simply 'giving the meaning'. For if I know that a proposition is true, I must know what it means. Normally at any rate we would not be prepared to say that a man knew, or could know, that a proposition was true, if at the same time he had to admit that he did not know what the proposition meant.[2] And from this we can infer that analysis, as envisaged by Moore, does not consist simply in putting what has been said into other words. For instance, if an Italian asks me what it means to say 'John is the brother of James' and I reply that it means 'Giovanni è il fratello di Giacomo', I have explained to the Italian what the English sentence means, but I can hardly be said to have analyzed a proposition. I have not analyzed anything.

Analysis means for Moore conceptual analysis. He admitted later that he had sometimes spoken as though to give the analysis of a proposition was to give its 'meaning'. But he insisted that what he really had in mind was the analysis of concepts. The use of the word 'means' implies that analysis is concerned with verbal expression, with defining words, whereas it is really concerned with defining concepts. The *analyzandum*, that which is to be analyzed, is a concept, and the *analyzans*, the analysis, must also be a concept. The expression used for the *analyzans* must be different from the expression used for the *analyzandum*, and it must be different in that it explicitly means or expresses a concept or concepts not explicitly mentioned by the expression used for the *analyzandum*. For instance, to give an example employed by Moore himself, '*x* is a male sibling' would be an analysis of '*x* is a brother'. It is not a question of merely substituting one verbal expression for another in the sense in which 'fratello' can be substituted for 'brother'. 'Male sibling' is indeed a different verbal expression from 'brother', but at the same time it explicitly mentions a concept which is not explicitly mentioned in '*x* is a brother'.

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[1] In a well-known essay on 'Moore and Ordinary Language' (*The Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, edited by P. A. Schilpp, Chapter 13), Professor N. Malcolm maintained that Moore's way of proving the denials of common sense propositions to be false was to appeal to ordinary language. Moore himself (*ibid.*, pp. 668–9) admitted that he considered the sort of argument referred to by Malcolm as a good argument, and that he himself had said that this sort of argument amounted to a disproof of the proposition 'there are no material things'. He added, however, that in the case of such a proposition as 'we do not know for certain that there are material things', something more is required if the proposition is to be proved to be false. For in point of fact many more philosophers have held that we do not *know* that there are material things than have held that there are actually no material things.

[2] I say 'normally at any rate', because if a man was convinced that all statements made by a certain authority were necessarily true, he might wish to claim that he knew that any such statement was true, even if he was not at all sure of what it meant.

And yet, of course, as Moore admits, if the analysis is correct, the concepts in the *analyzandum* and the *analyzans*, in the proposition to be analyzed and in its analysis, must be in some sense the same. But in what sense? If they are the same in the sense that no distinction can be made between them except in terms of verbal expression, analysis seems to be concerned simply with the substitution of one verbal expression for another. But Moore has said that this is not the case. He is therefore faced with the task of explaining in what sense the concepts in *analyzandum* and *analyzans* must be the same if the analysis is to be correct, and in what sense they must be distinct if analysis is to be more than the mere substitution of an equivalent verbal expression for a given verbal expression. But Moore does not feel able to give a really clear explanation.

In a general way it is, of course, easy enough to give a cash-value to the idea of philosophical analysis. True, if we are told that '*x* is a male sibling' is an analysis of '*x* is a brother', we may be inclined to wonder what possible philosophical relevance analysis of this kind can possess. But consider the non-philosopher who knows perfectly well how to use causal expressions in concrete contexts. If someone tells him that the banging of the door was caused by a sudden gust of wind through the open window, he knows perfectly well what is meant. He can distinguish between cases of *post hoc* and cases of *propter hoc*, and he can recognize particular causal relations. In a sense, therefore, he is well aware what causality means. But if the non-philosopher were asked to give an abstract analysis of the concept of causality, he would find himself at a loss. Like Socrates's young friends in a similar situation, he would probably mention instances of the causal relation and be unable to do anything more. Yet philosophers from Plato and Aristotle onwards have tried to give abstract analyses of concepts such as causality. And we can call this sort of thing philosophical analysis.

Though, however, this idea of philosophical analysis seems at first sight to be plain sailing, it can be and has been challenged. Thus those who sympathize with the attitude expressed in certain remarks in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* would maintain that if one is asked what causality is, the proper answer is precisely to mention examples of the causal relation. It is a mistake to look for one single and profounder 'meaning' of the term. Either we already know what causality is (how the word is used) or we do not. And if we do not, we can be informed by having examples of the causal relation pointed out to us. Similarly, it is a mistake to suppose that because we describe a variety of things as beautiful, there must necessarily be one single 'real' meaning, one genuine analysis of a unitary concept, which the philosopher can, as it were, dig out. We can, of course, say that we are looking for a definition. But one can be found in the dictionary. And if this is not what we are looking for, then what we really need is to be reminded of the ways in which the word in question is actually used in human language. We shall then know what is 'means'. And this is the only 'analysis' which is really required.

It is not the intention of the present writer to defend this more 'linguistic' idea of analysis. His sympathies lie rather with the older idea of philosophical analysis, provided, of course, that we avoid the fallacy of 'one word, one meaning'. At the same time the notion of conceptual analysis is not at all so clear as it may seem to be at first sight. Difficulties arise which require to be considered and, if possible, met. But we cannot find any adequate answers to such difficulties in Moore's account of analysis.

This is not, however, surprising. For the fact of the matter is that Moore devoted himself for the most part to the *practice* of philosophical analysis. That is to say, he concerned himself with the analysis of particular propositions rather than with analyzing the concept of analysis. And when he was challenged to give an abstract account of his method and its aims, he felt able to remove some misunderstandings but unable to answer all questions to his own satisfaction. With his characteristic honesty, he did not hesitate to say so openly.

Obviously, therefore, to obtain some concrete idea of what Moore understood by analysis we have to look primarily at his actual practice. But before we turn to a line of analysis which occupied a great deal of his attention, there are two points which must be emphasized. In the first place Moore never said, and never intended to say, that philosophy and analysis are the same thing, and that the philosopher can do nothing more than analyze propositions or concepts. And when this view was attributed to him, he explicitly rejected it. The bent of his mind was indeed predominantly analytic; but he never laid down any dogma about the limits of philosophy. Other people may have done so, but not Moore. In the second place he never suggested that all concepts are analyzable. We have already seen, for example, that according to him the concept of good is simple and unanalyzable. And the same can be said of the concept of knowing.

5. In his well-known paper *Proof of an External World*, which he read to the British Academy in 1939,[1] Moore maintained that it is a good argument for, and indeed sufficient proof of, the existence of physical objects external to the mind if we can indicate one or more such objects. And he proceeded to claim that he could prove that two hands exist by the simple expedient of holding up his two hands, making a gesture with the right hand while saying 'here is one hand' and then making a gesture with the left hand while saying 'and here is the other'.

This may sound extremely naïve. But, as someone has said, Moore always had the courage to appear naïve. The trouble is, however, that while we may all come to believe that there is an external world by becoming aware of external objects, the only person who can possibly need a proof of the existence of an external world is the person who professes to doubt it. And if he professes to doubt, his doubt covers the existence of any extra-mental physical object. Hence he is not likely to be impressed when Moore, or anyone else, exhibits two hands. He will simply say that he doubts whether what he sees, when he is shown two hands, are really external physical objects.

And yet, of course, Moore's position is not really as naïve as it appears to be at first sight. For the determined sceptic is not going to be convinced by any proof. And what Moore is saying to the sceptic is more or less this: 'The only evidence which I can offer you is the evidence which we already have. And this is sufficient evidence. But you are looking for evidence or proof which we have not got, and which in my opinion we can never have. For I see no reason to believe that the philosopher can offer better evidence than the evidence we have. What you are really demanding is something which can never be provided, namely proof that the existence of an external world is a necessary truth. But it is not a necessary truth. Hence it is futile to look for the sort of evidence or proof which you insist on demanding.' This is clearly a reasonable point of view.

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[1] *Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol. 25, 1939.

Now, as we have already indicated, while thinking that it is not the philosopher's job to try to prove by some special means of his own the truth of such a proposition as 'there are material things' or 'there are extra-mental physical objects', Moore believes that analysis of such propositions does form part of the philosopher's job. For while the truth of a proposition may be certain, its correct analysis may not be at all certain. But the correct analysis of such general propositions such as those just mentioned 'depends on the question how propositions of another and simpler type are to be analyzed'.[1] And an example of a simpler proposition would be 'I am perceiving a human hand'.

This proposition, however, is itself a deduction from two simpler propositions which can be expressed as 'I am perceiving *this*' and '*this* is a human hand'. But what is '*this*'? In Moore's opinion it is a sense-datum. That is to say, what I directly apprehend when I perceive a human hand is a sense-datum. And a sense-datum, even if we assume it to be somehow part of a human hand, cannot be identified with the hand. For the hand is in any case much more than what I actually see at a given moment. Hence a correct analysis of 'I perceive a human hand' involves one in specifying the nature of a sense-datum and its relation to the relevant physical object.

In a paper entitled *The Nature and Reality of Objects of Perception* which he read to the Aristotelian Society in 1905 Moore maintained that if we look at a red book and a blue book standing side by side on a shelf, what we really see are red and blue patches of colour of certain sizes and shapes, 'having to one another the spatial relation which we express by saying they are side by side'.[2] Such objects of direct perception he called 'sense-contents'. In the lectures which he gave in the winter of 1910–11[1] Moore used the term 'sense-data'. True, in a paper entitled *The Status of Sense-Data,* which he read to the Aristotelian Society during the session 1913–14, Moore admitted that the term 'sense-datum' is ambiguous. For it suggests that the objects to which this term is applied can exist only when they are given, a view to which Moore did not wish to commit himself. Hence he proposed as 'more convenient'[2] the use of the term 'sensible'. But to all intents and purposes 'sense-data' is Moore's name for the immediate objects of direct perception. And in *A Defence of Common Sense* we find him saying that 'there is no doubt at all that there are sense-data, in the sense in which I am now using the term,'[3] that is, in a sense which makes it true to say that what we directly perceive when we look at a hand or at an envelope is a sense-datum but which leaves open the question whether this sense-datum is or is not part of the physical object which in ordinary language we are said to be seeing.

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[1] *Philosophical Papers*, p. 53.

[2] *Philosophical Studies*, p. 68.

Now, Moore was careful to distinguish between sensations and sense-data. When, for example, I see a colour, the *seeing* the colour is the sensation and *what* is seen, the object, is the sense-datum. It therefore makes sense, at any rate at first sight, to ask whether sense-data can exist when they are unperceived. It would hardly make sense to ask whether a 'seeing' can exist when no sentient subject is seeing. But it does make sense to ask whether a colour exists when it is not perceived. If, of course, sense-data were described as existing 'in the mind', it would hardly make sense to ask whether they can exist unperceived. But Moore was unwilling to describe sense-data in this way, namely as being 'in the mind'.

But if sense-data are not 'in the mind', *where* are they? Provided that sense-data exist, and do not exist in the mind, the question arises whether or not they exist when they are not objects of perception. Do they then exist in a public physical space? One difficulty in saying this is the following. When two men look at a white envelope, we commonly say that they are seeing the same object. But according to the sense-datum theory there must be two sense-data. Further, the shape and spatial relations of one man's sense-datum do not seem to be precisely the same as those of the other man's sense-datum. If, therefore, we take it that the shape and size and spatial relations of a physical object existing in public space are the same for all, must we not say that the one man's sense-datum exists in one private space and the other man's sense-datum in another private space?

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[1] These lectures form the text of *Some Main Problems of Philosophy,* which will be referred to in notes as *Main Problems.*

[2] *Philosophical Studies,* p. 171.

[3] *Philosophical Papers,* p. 54.

Further, what is the relation between a sense-datum and the relevant physical object? For example, if I look at a coin from such an angle of vision that its surface appears to me as elliptical, is my sense-datum a part of the coin as a physical object, the surface of which we take to be roughly circular? Ordinary language suggests that it is. For I should normally be said to be seeing the coin. But if I look at the coin at another moment from a different position, or if another man looks at the same coin at the same moment as I do, there are different sense-data. And they differ not merely numerically but also qualitatively or in content. Are all these sense-data parts of the physical object? If they are, this suggests that the surface of a coin can be both elliptical and circular at the same time. If they are not, how are we to describe the relations between the sense-data and the physical object? Indeed, how do we know that there is a physical object for the sense-data to be related to?

These are the sort of problems with which Moore grappled on and off throughout his life. But he did not succeed in solving them to his own satisfaction. For example, we have already seen that in his attack on idealism Moore denied the truth of 'to be is to be perceived'; and his natural inclination was to claim that sense-data can exist even when they are unperceived. But though this point of view may appear reasonable when it is a question of a visual sense-datum such as a colour, it by no means appears reasonable if a toothache, for instance, is admitted into the category of sense-data, nor perhaps if sweet and bitter are taken as examples of sense-data rather than colour, size and shape. And in 'A Reply to My Critics' we find Moore saying that while he had once certainly suggested that sense-data such as blue and bitter could exist unperceived, 'I am inclined to think that it is as impossible that anything which has the sensible quality "blue", and more generally, *anything whatever which is directly apprehended*, any *sense-datum*, that is, should exist unperceived, as it is that a headache should exist unfelt'.[1]

In this case, of course, as Moore notes, it follows that no sense-datum can possibly be identical with or part of the surface of a physical object. And to say this is to say that no physical surface can be directly perceived. The question, therefore, of how we know that there are physical objects distinct from sense-data becomes acute. Needless to say, Moore is well aware of the fact. But he is certainly not prepared to jettison his conviction that we do know the truth of the propositions which he regards as propositions of common sense. He is not prepared to throw overboard what, in *A Defence of Common Sense,* he called 'the Common Sense view of the world'.[1] And in a lecture entitled *Four Forms of Scepticism,* which Moore delivered on various occasions in the United States during the period 1940–4, we find a characteristic denial of Russell's contention that 'I do not know for certain that this is a pencil or that you are conscious'.[2] I call the denial 'characteristic' for this reason. Moore remarks that Russell's contention seems to rest on four distinct assumptions; that one does not know these things (that this is a pencil or that you are conscious) immediately; that they do not follow logically from anything which one does know immediately; that, in this case, one's knowledge of or belief in the propositions in question must be based on an analogical or inductive argument; and that no such argument can yield certain knowledge. Moore then proceeds to say that he agrees that the first three assumptions are true. At the same time 'of no one even of these three do I feel *as* certain as that I do know for certain that this is a pencil. Nay more: I do not think it is *rational* to be as certain of any one of these four propositions, as of the proposition that I do know that this is a pencil.'[3]

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[1] *The Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, edited by P. A. Schilpp, p. 658.

It is, of course, open to anyone to say that in his opinion the sense-datum theory as expounded by Moore leads logically to scepticism or at any rate to agnosticism in regard to the physical world as distinct from sense-data. But it is certainly not correct to speak of Moore as a sceptic. He was no such thing. He started, as we have seen, with the assumption that we know with certainty that there are external physical objects or material things; but he was doubtful of the correct analysis of such a proposition. And though his analysis may have led him into a position which was difficult to reconcile with his initial conviction, he did not abandon this conviction.

It has not been possible here to follow Moore through all his struggles with the theory of sense-data and its implications. The fulfilment of such a task would require a whole book. The theme has been discussed in brief primarily in order to illustrate Moore's practice of analysis. But what sort of analysis is it? In a sense, of course, it is concerned with language. For Moore is out to analyze propositions, such as 'I see a human hand' or 'I see a penny'. But to describe his analysis as being concerned 'simply with words', as though it were a case of choosing between two sets of linguistic conventions, would be grossly misleading. Part at any rate of what he does can best be described, I think, as phenomenological analysis. For example, he raises the question, what exactly is it that happens when, as would ordinarily be said, we see a material object? He then explains that he is in no way concerned with the physical processes 'which occur in the eye and the optic nerves and the brain'.[1] What he is concerned with is 'the mental occurrence—the act of consciousness—which occurs (as is supposed) as a consequence of or accompaniment—of these bodily processes'.[2] Sense-data are introduced as objects of this act of consciousness. Or, rather, they are 'discovered', as Moore believes, as its immediate objects. And the process by which they are discovered is phenomenological analysis. But sense-data are not, of course, confined to visual sense-data. Hence we can say that Moore is concerned with the phenomenological analysis of sense-perception in general.

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[1] *Philosophical Papers,* p. 45. [2] *Ibid.,* p. 226. [3] *Ibid.*

It is not my intention to suggest that this is all that Moore is concerned with, even within the restricted context of the sense-datum theory. For if we assume that sense-data can properly be said to exist, the question of their relation to physical objects can be described as an ontological question. Further, Moore concerns himself with epistemological questions; how do we know this or that? But part at any rate of his activity can better be described as phenomenological analysis than as linguistic analysis. And though the stock of the sense-datum theory has slumped greatly in recent years,[3] the judgment of Dr. Rudolf Metz was not entirely unreasonable, that in comparison with Moore's meticulous phenomenological analysis of perception 'all earlier studies of the problem seem to be coarse and rudimentary'.[4]

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[1] *Main Problems*, p. 29.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] We have only to think, for example, of the late J. L. Austin's attack on the theory.

[4] *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy*, p. 547 (London, 1938).

CHAPTER XIX

BERTRAND RUSSELL (1)

Introductory remarks—Life and writings up to the publication of Principia Mathematica*; Russell's idealist phase and his reaction against it, the theory of types, the theory of descriptions, the reduction of mathematics to logic—Ockham's razor and reductive analysis as applied to physical objects and to minds—Logical atomism and the influence of Wittgenstein—Neutral monism—The problem of solipsism.*

1. WE have already had occasion to remark that of all present-day British philosophers Bertrand Russell is by far the best known to the world at large. This is partly due to the fact that he has published a very considerable number of books and essays on moral, social and political topics which are salted with amusing and provocative remarks and are written at a level which can be understood by a public that is scarcely capable of appreciating his more technical contributions to philosophical thought. And it is largely this class of publications which has made of Russell a prophet of liberal humanism, a hero of those who regard themselves as rationalists, free from the shackles of religious and metaphysical dogma and yet at the same time devoted to the cause of human freedom, as against totalitarianism, and of social and political progress according to rational principles. We can also mention, as a contributing cause to Russell's fame, his active self-commitment at various periods of his life to a particular side, sometimes an unpopular side, in issues of general concern and importance. He has always had the courage of his convictions. And the combination of aristocrat, philosopher, Voltairean essayist and ardent campaigner has naturally made an impact on the imagination of the public.

It scarcely needs to be said that the fame of a philosopher during his lifetime is not an infallible indication of the value of his thought, especially if his general reputation is largely due to his more ephemeral writings. In any case the varied character of Russell's writing creates a special difficulty in estimating his status as a philosopher. On the one hand he is justly renowned for his work in the field of mathematical logic. But he himself regards this subject as belonging to mathematics rather than to philosophy. On the other hand it is not fair to Russell to estimate his status as a thinker in terms of his popular writings on concrete moral issues or on social and political topics. For though in view of the traditional and common view of the word 'philosophy' he recognizes that he has to resign himself to having his moral writings labelled as philosophical works, he has said that the only ethical topic which he regards as belonging properly to philosophy is the analysis of the ethical proposition as such. Concrete judgments of value should, strictly speaking, be excluded from philosophy. And if such judgments express, as Russell believes that they do, basic emotive attitudes, he is doubtless entitled to express his own emotive attitudes with a vehemence which would be out of place in discussing problems which, in principle at least, can be solved by logical argument.

If we exclude from philosophy mathematical logic on the one hand and concrete moral, valuational and political judgments on the other, we are left with what can perhaps be called Russell's general philosophy, consisting, for example, of discussions of epistemological and metaphysical questions. This general philosophy has passed through a series of phases and mutations, and it represents a strange mixture of acute analysis and of blindness to important relevant factors. But it is unified by his analytic method or methods. And the changes are hardly so great as to justify a literal interpretation of Professor C. D. Broad's humorous remark that, 'as we all know, Mr. Russell produces a different system of philosophy every few years.'[1] In any case Russell's general philosophy represents an interesting development of British empiricism in the light of later ways of thought, to which he himself made an important contribution.

In the following pages we shall be concerned mainly, though not exclusively, with Russell's idea and practice of analysis. But a thorough treatment, even of this limited theme, will not be possible. Nor indeed could it legitimately be expected in a general history of western philosophy.

2. (i) Bertrand Arthur William Russell was born in 1872. His parents, Lord and Lady Amberley, died when he was a small child,[2] and he was brought up in the house of his grandfather,

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[1] In *Contemporary British Philosophy*, First Series, edited by J. H. Muirhead, p.79.

[2] In 1937 Russell published, together with Patricia Russell, *The Amberley Papers* in two volumes, containing the letters and diaries of his parents.

Lord John Russell, afterwards Earl Russell.[1] At the age of eighteen he went up to Cambridge, where he at first concentrated on mathematics. But in his fourth year at the university he turned to philosophy, and McTaggart and Stout taught him to regard British empiricism as crude and to look instead to the Hegelian tradition. Indeed, Russell tells us of the admiration which he felt for Bradley. And from 1894, the year in which he went down from Cambridge, until 1898 he continued to think that metaphysics was capable of proving beliefs about the universe which 'religious' feeling led him to think important.[2]

For a short while in 1894 Russell acted as an honorary attaché at the British Embassy in Paris. In 1895 he devoted himself to the study of economics and German social democracy at Berlin. The outcome was the publication of *German Social Democracy* in 1896. Most of his early essays were indeed on mathematical and logical topics, but it is worth noting that his first book was concerned with social theory.

Russell tells us that at this period he was influenced by both Kant and Hegel but sided with the latter when the two were in conflict.[3] He has described as 'unadulterated Hegel'[4] a paper on the relations of number and quantity which he published in *Mind* in 1896. And of *An Essay on the Foundations of Geometry* (1897), an elaboration of his Fellowship dissertation for Trinity College, Cambridge, he has said that the theory of geometry which he presented was 'mainly Kantian',[5] though it was afterwards swept away by Einstein's theory of relativity.

In the course of the year 1898 Russell reacted strongly against idealism. For one thing, a reading of Hegel's *Logic* convinced him that what the author had to say on the subject of mathematics was nonsense. For another thing, while lecturing on Leibniz at Cambridge in place of McTaggart, who was abroad, he came to the conclusion that the arguments advanced by Bradley against the reality of relations were fallacious. But Russell has laid most emphasis on the influence of his friend G. E. Moore. Together with Moore he adhered to the belief that, whatever Bradley or

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[1] Bertrand Russell succeeded to the earldom in 1931.

[2] Russell abandoned belief in God at the age of eighteen. But he continued to believe for some years that metaphysics could provide a theoretical justification of emotive attitudes of awe and reverence towards the universe.

[3] Whether Russell ever had a profound knowledge of Hegel's general system is, of course, another question.

[4] *My Philosophical Development*, p. 40.

[5] *Ibid.*

McTaggart might say to the contrary, all that common sense takes to be real is real. Indeed, in the period in question Russell carried realism considerably further than he was later to do. It was not simply a question of embracing pluralism and the theory of external relations, nor even of believing in the reality of secondary qualities. Russell also believed that points of space and instants of time are existent entities, and that there is a timeless world of Platonic ideas or essences, including numbers. He thus had, as he has put it, a very full or luxuriant universe.

The lectures on Leibniz, to which reference has been made above, resulted in the publication in 1900 of Russell's notable work *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz*. In it he maintained that Leibniz's metaphysics was in part a reflection of his logical studies and in part a popular or exoteric doctrine expounded with a view to edification and at variance with the philosopher's real convictions.[1] From then on Russell remained convinced that the substance-attribute metaphysics is a reflection of the subject-predicate mode of expression.

(ii) Considerable importance is attached by Russell to his becoming acquainted at an international congress at Paris in 1900 with the work of Giuseppe Peano (1858–1932), the Italian mathematician. For many years, in fact since he began to study geometry, Russell had been perplexed by the problem of the foundations of mathematics. At this time he did not know the work of Frege, who had already attempted to reduce arithmetic to logic. But the writings of Peano provided him with the stimulus for tackling his problem afresh. And the immediate result of his reflections was *The Principles of Mathematics*, which appeared in 1903.

But there were weeds in the mathematical garden. Russell finished the first draft of *The Principles of Mathematics* at the end of 1900, and early in 1901 he came upon what seemed to him to be an antinomy or paradox in the logic of classes. As he defined number in terms of the logic of classes, a cardinal number being 'the class of all classes similar to the given class',[2] the antinomy evidently affected mathematics. And Russell had either to solve it or to admit an insoluble antinomy within the mathematical field.

The antinomy can be illustrated in this way. The class of pigs is evidently not itself a pig. That is to say, it is not a member of itself. But consider the notion of the class of all classes which are not members of themselves. Let us call this class *X* and ask whether *X* is a member of itself or not. On the one hand, it seems that it cannot be a member of itself. For if we assume that it is, it follows logically that *X* has the defining property of its members. And this defining property is that any class of which it is a property is not a member of itself. Hence *X* cannot be a member of itself. On the other hand, it seems that *X* must be a member of itself. For if we begin by assuming that it is not a member of itself, it follows logically that it is not a member of those classes which are not members of themselves. And to say this is to say that *X* is a member of itself. Hence whether we begin by assuming that *X* is a member of itself or that it is not a member of itself, we seem in either case to be involved in self-contradiction.

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[1] For some brief comments on Russell's view of Leibniz see Vol. IV of this *History*, pp. 270–2.

[2] *The Principles of Mathematics*, p. 115 (2nd edition, 1937). Two classes are said to be 'similar' when they 'have the same number' (*ibid.*, p. 113).

Russell communicated this antinomy or paradox to Frege, who replied that arithmetic was tottering. But after some struggles Russell hit upon what seemed to him to be a solution. This was the doctrine or theory of types, a preliminary version of which was presented in *Appendix B* in *The Principles of Mathematics*. Every propositional function, Russell maintained, 'has in addition to its range of truth, a range of significance.'[1] For example, in the propositional function '*X* is mortal', we can obviously substitute for the variable *X* a range of values such that the resultant propositions are true. Thus 'Socrates is mortal' is true. But there are also values which, if substituted for *X*, would make the resultant propositions neither true nor false but meaningless. For instance, 'the class of men is mortal' is meaningless. For the class of men is not a thing or object of which either mortality or immortality can be meaningfully predicated. From 'if *X* is a man, *X* is mortal' we can infer 'if Socrates is a man, Socrates is mortal'; but we cannot infer that the class of men is mortal. For the class of men neither is nor could be a man. In other words, the class of men cannot be a member of itself: in fact it is really nonsense to speak of its either being or not being a member of itself. For the very idea of a class being a member of itself is nonsensical. To take an example given by Russell,[2] a club is a class of individuals. And it can be a member of a class of another type, such as an association of clubs, which would be a class of classes. But neither the class nor the class of classes could possibly be a member of itself.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 523.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 524.

And if the distinctions between types are observed, the antinomy or paradox in the logic of classes does not arise.

To deal with further difficulties Russell produced a 'branching' or ramified theory of types. But we cannot discuss it here. Instead we can draw attention to the following point. Having made it clear that a class of things is not itself a thing, Russell goes on in *Principia Mathematica* to what he has called 'the abolition of classes'.[1] That is to say, he interprets classes as 'merely symbolic or linguistic conveniences"[2] as incomplete symbols. And it is not surprising to find him later on adopting a sympathetic attitude towards a linguistic interpretation of the theory of types and saying, for example, that 'difference of type means difference of syntactical function'.[3] Having once implied that differences between types are differences between types of entities, Russell came to recognize that the differences lie between different types of symbols, which 'acquire their type-status through the syntactical rules to which they are subject'.[4] In any case it is safe to say that one of the general effects of Russell's theory of types was to encourage belief in the relevance to philosophy of 'linguistic analysis'.

The theory of types has, of course, a variety of possible applications. Thus in his introduction to Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* Russell, writing in 1922, suggested that Wittgenstein's difficulty about not being able to say anything within a given language about the structure of this language could be met by the idea of a hierarchy of languages. Thus even if one were unable to say anything within language *A* about its structure, one might be able to do so within language *B*, when they belong to different types, *A* being a first-order language, so to speak, and *B* a second-order language. If Wittgenstein were to reply that his theory of the inexpressible in language applies to the totality of languages,[5] the retort could be made that there is not, and cannot be, such a thing as a totality of languages.[1] The hierarchy is without limit.

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[1] *The Principles of Mathematics*, p. x (Introduction to 2nd edition).

[2] *Principia Mathematica*, I, p. 72.

[3] *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, edited by P. A. Schilpp, p. 692. As Russell notes in the introduction to the second edition of *The Principles of Mathematics*, he had been convinced by F. P. Ramsey's *The Foundations of Mathematics* (1931), that there are two classes of paradoxes. Some are purely logical or mathematical and can be cleared up by the simple (original) theory of types. Others are linguistic or semantic, such as the paradox arising out of the statement 'I am lying'. These can be cleared up by linguistic considerations.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] It seems to the present writer that in the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein so defines the essence of the proposition that it follows logically that any proposition *about* propositions is a pseudo-proposition, devoid of 'sense' (*Sinn*). In this case to avoid the conclusion one has to reject the definition.

What Russell has to say in developing the theory of types also has its application in metaphysics. For example, if we once accept the definition of the world as the class of all finite entities, we are debarred from speaking of it as being itself a contingent entity or being, even if we regard contingency as belonging necessarily to every finite being. For to speak in this way would be to make a class a member of itself. It does not follow, however, that the world must be described as a 'necessary entity'. For if the world is to be defined as the class of entities, it cannot itself be an entity, whether contingent or necessary.

(iii) It has already been mentioned, by way of anticipation, that in *Principia Mathematica* Russell maintains that the symbols for classes are incomplete symbols. 'Their *uses* are defined, but they themselves are not assumed to mean anything at all.'[2] That is to say, the symbols for classes undoubtedly possess a definable use or function in sentences, but, taken by themselves, they do not denote entities. Rather are they ways of referring to other entities. In this respect the symbols for classes are 'like those of descriptions'.[3] And something must now be said about Russell's theory of descriptions, which he developed between the writing of *The Principles of Mathematics* and the publication of *Principia Mathematica*.[4]

Let us consider the sentence 'the golden mountain is very high'. The phrase 'the golden mountain' functions as the grammatical subject of the sentence. And it may appear that as we can say something about the golden mountain, namely that it is very high, the phrase must denote an entity of some sort. True, it does not denote any existing entity. For though it is not logically impossible for there to be a golden mountain, we have no evidence that there is one. Yet even if we say 'the golden mountain does not exist', we seem to be saying something intelligible *about* it, namely that it does not exist. And in this case it appears to follow that 'the golden mountain' must denote an entity, not indeed an actually existing entity, but none the less a reality of some sort.

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[1] That is, there can no more be a totality of languages than there can be a class of all classes. The latter notion was for Russell self-contradictory. A class of *all* classes would be additional to *all* classes. It would also be a member of itself which is ruled out by the theory of types.

[2] *Principia Mathematica*, 1, p. 71.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] The theory found a preliminary expression in Russell's article *On Denoting* in *Mind* for 1905.

This line of reasoning can be applied, of course, to the grammatical subjects in sentences such as 'the king of France is bald' (uttered or written when there is no king of France) or 'Sherlock Holmes wore a deerstalker's cap'. We thus get the sort of overpopulated, or at any rate very well populated, universe in which Russell originally believed in the first flush of his realist reaction against the way in which idealists such as Bradley and McTaggart described as unreal several factors in the universe which common sense spontaneously regards as real. It is understandable, therefore, that Russell devoted himself to the study of Meinong, who also accepted a luxuriant universe in which room was found for entities which do not actually exist but which are none the less realities in some sense. At the same time it was precisely his study of Meinong which raised serious doubts in Russell's mind about the validity of the principle that phrases such as 'the golden mountain', which can function as grammatical subjects in sentences, denote entities of some sort. Indeed, when taken by themselves, have such phrases as 'the golden mountain', 'the king of France' and so on any 'meaning'? It was one of the functions of the theory of descriptions to show that they have not.

According to this theory such phrases are not 'names', denoting entities, but 'descriptions'. In his *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* (1919) Russell distinguishes between two sorts of descriptions, indefinite and definite.[1] Phrases such as 'the golden mountain' and 'the king of France' are definite descriptions; and we can confine our attention here to this class. The theory of descriptions purports to show that they are incomplete symbols, and though they can function as grammatical subjects in sentences, these sentences can be restated according to their logical form in such a way that it becomes clear that the phrases in question are not the real logical subjects in the sentences in which they occur as grammatical subjects. When this has become clear, the temptation to think that they must denote entities should vanish. For it is then understood that, taken by themselves, the phrases in question have no denoting function. The phrase 'the golden mountain', for example, does not denote anything at all.

Let us take the sentence 'the golden mountain does not exist'. If this is translated as 'the propositional function "X is golden and a mountain" is false for all values of X', the meaning of the original sentence is revealed in such a way that the phrase 'the golden mountain' disappears and, with it, the temptation to postulate a subsisting non-actual entity. For we are no longer involved in the awkward situation which arises in view of the fact that the statement 'the golden mountain does not exist' can prompt the question '*what* does not exist?', implying that the golden mountain must have some sort of reality if we can say of it significantly that it does not exist.

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[1] 'An indefinite description is a phrase of the form "a so-and-so" and a definite description is a phrase of the form "the so-and-so" (in the singular)', *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, p. 167.

This is all very well, it may be said, but it is extremely odd to claim, in regard to descriptions in general, that they have no meaning when they are taken by themselves. It seems indeed to be true that 'the golden mountain' does not mean anything, provided that by meaning one understands denoting an entity. But what about a phrase such as 'the author of *Waverley*'? According to Russell, it is a description, not a proper name. But is it not evident that it means Scott?

If 'the author of *Waverley*' meant Scott, Russell replies, 'Scott is the author of *Waverley*' would be a tautology, declaring that Scott is Scott. But it is evidently not a tautology. If, however, 'the author of *Waverley*' meant anything else but Scott, 'Scott is the author of *Waverley*' would be false, which it is not. The only thing to say is, therefore, 'the author of *Waverley*' means nothing. That is to say, taken in isolation it does not denote anyone. And the statement 'Scott is the author of *Waverley*' can be restated in such a way that the phrase 'the author of *Waverley*' is eliminated. For example, 'for all values of X, "X wrote *Waverley*" is equivalent to "X is Scott" '.[1]

It seems indeed that we can very well say 'the author of *Waverley* is Scotch', and that in this case we are predicating an attribute, namely being Scotch, of an entity, namely the author of *Waverley*. Russell, however, maintained that 'the author of *Waverley* is Scotch' implies and is defined by three distinct propositions; 'at least one person wrote *Waverley*', 'at most one person wrote *Waverley*', and 'whosoever wrote *Waverley* was Scotch'.[2] And this can be stated formally as 'there is a term c such that "X wrote *Waverley*" is equivalent, for all values of X, to "X is c", and "c is Scotch" '.

Needless to say, Russell has no doubt that the author of *Waverley* was Scotch, in the sense that Sir Walter Scott wrote

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[1] *My Philosophical Development*, p. 84.

[2] *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, p. 177.

Waverley and was a Scotsman. The point is, however, that if the descriptive term 'the author of *Waverley*' is not a proper name and does not denote anyone, the same can be said of such a descriptive term as 'the king of France'. 'The author of *Waverley* was Scotch' can be restated in such a way that the translation is a true proposition but does not contain the descriptive phrase 'the author of *Waverley*', and 'the king of France is bald' can be restated in such a way that the translation does not contain the descriptive phrase 'the king of France' but is a false, though significant proposition. It is thus in no way necessary to postulate any non-actual entity denoted by 'the king of France'.

It is understandable that Russell's theory of descriptions has been subjected to criticism. For example, G. E. Moore has objected[1] that if in 1700 an Englishman had made the statement 'the king of France is wise', it would certainly have been correct to say that 'the king of France' denoted an entity, namely Louis XIV. In this case, therefore, 'the king of France' would not have been an incomplete symbol. But in other circumstances it might be. There can be sentences in which 'the king of France' does not denote anyone; but, equally, there can be sentences in which it does denote someone.

It seems to the present writer that in his criticism of Russell's theory of descriptions Moore is appealing to ordinary linguistic usage. This is, of course, the strength of his criticism. Russell himself, however, is concerned not so much with mapping-out ordinary language as with constructing a theory which will deprive of its linguistic basis the notion that it is necessary to postulate non-existent but real entities such as 'the golden mountain', 'the king of France' (when there is no king of France), and so on. It is perfectly legitimate criticism, it seems to me, to object that the theory involves an interpretation of such phrases which is too narrow to square with actual linguistic usage.[2] But in the present context it is more important to draw attention to Russell's aim, to what he thinks that he is accomplishing by means of his theory.

It would obviously be a great mistake to suppose that Russell imagines that translation of 'the golden mountain is very high' into a sentence in which the descriptive phrase 'the golden mountain' does not occur proves that there is no golden mountain. Whether there is or is not a golden mountain in the world is an empirical question; and Russell is perfectly well aware of the fact. Indeed, if the translation to which reference has just been made proved that there is in fact no golden mountain, then the fact that 'the author of *The Principles of Mathematics* is English' can be restated in such a way that the descriptive phrase 'the author of *The Principles of Mathematics*' disappears would prove that there is no Bertrand Russell.

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[1] *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, edited by P. A. Schilpp, ch. 5.

[2] Some analytic philosophers might wish to say that Russell was trying to 'reform' language, to create an ideal language. But he did not intend, of course, to prohibit people from saying what they are accustomed to say.

It would also be a mistake to suppose that according to Russell the ordinary man, the non-philosopher, is misled into thinking that there must be some sort of non-existing but real object corresponding to the phrase 'the golden mountain' because we can say 'the golden mountain does not exist'. Russell is not attributing any mistakes of this kind to the ordinary man. His point is that for philosophers, who reflect on the implications or apparent implications of linguistic expressions, descriptive phrases such as 'the golden mountain' may occasion, and in Russell's opinion have occasioned, the temptation to postulate entities with a queer status between actual existence and non-entity. And the function of the theory of descriptions is to remove this temptation by showing that descriptive phrases are incomplete symbols which, according to Russell, mean nothing, that is, do not denote any entity. The paradoxical aspect of the theory of descriptions is that, because of its generality, it applies equally both to phrases such as 'the golden mountain' or 'the king of France' and to phrases such as 'the author of *The Principles of Mathematics*', not to speak of the other class of phrases such as 'the round square'. But its function is to contribute to clearing away the fictitious entities with which certain philosophers, not the man in the street, have over-populated the universe. It thus serves the purpose of Ockham's razor and can be brought under the general heading of reductive analysis, a theme to which we shall have to return.

A final point. We have noted that when a phrase such as 'the golden mountain' or 'the author of *Waverley*' occurs as the grammatical subject of a sentence, Russell maintains that it is not the logical subject. The same line of reasoning can, of course, be applied to grammatical objects. In 'I saw nobody on the road' the grammatical object is 'nobody'. But 'nobody' is not a special kind of 'somebody'. And the sentence can be restated in such a way (for example, 'it is not the case that I saw any person on the road') that the word 'nobody' disappears. In general, therefore, Russell's contention is that the grammatical form of a sentence is by no means the same as its logical form, and that philosophers can be seriously misled if they do not understand this fact. But though Russell may have generalized this idea, it is historically inaccurate to suggest that he was the first man to make this discovery.[1] For example, in the twelfth century St. Anselm pointed out that to say that God created the world out of nothing is not to say that the world was created out of nothing as some kind of pre-existing material. It is to say that God did not create the world out of anything, that is, out of any pre-existing material.

(iv) The three volumes of *Principia Mathematica*, which were the fruit of the joint work of Russell and A. N. Whitehead, appeared in 1910–13. The point which aroused most interest was the attempt to show that pure mathematics is reducible to logic, in the sense that it can be shown to follow from purely logical premisses and employs only concepts which are capable of being defined in logical terms.[2] In practice, of course, we cannot simply take a complicated mathematical formula at random and express it without more ado in purely logical terms. But in principle the whole of pure mathematics is ultimately derivable from logical premisses, mathematics being, as Russell has put it, the manhood of logic.

As Russell believed that in *Principia Mathematica* he had demonstrated the truth of his thesis, he also believed that he had provided a decisive refutation of Kantian theories of mathematics. For example, if geometry is derivable from purely logical premisses, to postulate an *a priori* intuition of space is entirely superfluous.

Russell and Whitehead had, needless to say, their predecessors. George Boole (1815–64)[3] had attempted to 'algebraicize' logic and had developed a calculus of classes. But he regarded logic as subordinate to mathematics, whereas William Stanley Jevons (1835–82)[4] was convinced that logic is the fundamental science. John Venn

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[1] This is understood nowadays. But in the past statements have sometimes been made which said or implied that Russell was the discoverer of this distinction between grammatical and logical form.

[2] Russell has expressed his disappointment that comparatively little attention was paid to the mathematical techniques developed in the course of the work.

[3] Author of *The Mathematical Analysis of Logic* (1847), and *An Investigation of the Laws of Thought* (1854).

[4] Author of *Pure Logic* (1864) and other logical studies. Whereas Boole was a professor of mathematics, Jevons occupied a chair of political economy and did not possess Boole's 'mathematicizing' turn of mind, though he invented a calculating machine to carry out the processes of inference.

(1834–1923),[1] however, while attempting to remedy the defects in Boole's system and to overcome the contemporary chaos in symbolic notation, looked on logic and mathematics as separate branches of symbolic language, neither being subordinate to the other. In America C. S. Peirce modified and developed the logical algebra of Boole and showed how it could accommodate a revised version of the logic of relations formulated by Augustus De Morgan (1806–71).

In Germany Friedrich Wilhelm Schröder (1841–1902) gave a classical formulation to Boole's logical algebra as modified by Peirce. More important, Gottlob Frege (1848–1925) attempted to derive arithmetic from logic in his works *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik* (1884) and *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik* (1893–1903). As has been mentioned, Russell was not at first aware that he had rediscovered for himself ideas which had already been proposed by Frege. But when he became aware of Frege's work, he drew attention to it,[2] though it was not until a considerably later period that the German mathematician's studies obtained general recognition in England.

In Italy Peano and his collaborators tried to show, in their *Formulaires de mathématiques* (1895–1908), that arithmetic and algebra can be derived from certain logical ideas, such as those of a class and of membership of a class, three primitive mathematical concepts and six primitive propositions. As we have seen, Russell became acquainted with Peano's work in 1900. And he and Whitehead made use of Peano's logical symbolism or notation in the construction of *Principia Mathematica*, which carried further the work of both Peano and Frege.

The present writer is not competent to pass any judgment on the contents of *Principia Mathematica*. It must suffice to say that though the thesis of the reducibility of mathematics to logic has by no means won the consent of all mathematicians,[3] nobody would question the historic importance of the work in the development of mathematical logic. Indeed, it stands out above all other English contributions to the subject.[4] In any case, though Russell himself may understandably regret that more attention was not paid to the mathematical techniques evolved in the work, the present writer's principal aim in drawing attention here to *Principia Mathematica* is to illustrate the background to Russell's conception of reductive analysis. For example, to say that mathematics is reducible to logic obviously does not mean that there is no such thing as mathematics. Nor is it tantamount to a denial that there are any differences between logic and mathematics as they actually exist or have actually been developed. Rather does it mean that pure mathematics can in principle be derived from certain fundamental logical concepts and certain primitive indemonstrable propositions, and that, in principle, mathematical propositions could be translated into logical propositions with equivalent truth-values.

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[1] Author of *The Logic of Chance* (1866), *Symbolic Logic* (1881), and *The Principles of Empirical or Inductive Logic* (1889).

[2] *Appendix A* in *The Principles of Mathematics* is devoted to 'the logical and arithmetical doctrines of Frege'.

[3] It was rejected both by the 'Formalists', such as David Hilbert (1862–1943) and by the 'Intuitionists' who followed Luitzen Brouwer (b. 1881).

[4] It is a notorious fact that since the publication of *Principia Mathematica* comparatively little attention has been paid in England to symbolic logic. This is not to say that no good work has subsequently been done in England on logical theory. But, generally speaking, the attention of philosophers has been concentrated rather on 'ordinary language'. It is Polish and American logicians who have been most prominent in the field of symbolic logic.

Before we pass on to Russell's general idea of reductive analysis, it is worth noting that the reducibility of mathematics to logic does not mean that mathematics is based on laws of thought in the psychological sense of laws governing human thinking. In the earlier years of this century Russell believed that mathematics carries us beyond what is human 'into the region of absolute necessity, to which not only the actual world, but every possible world, must conform'.[1] In this ideal world mathematics forms an eternal edifice of truth; and in the contemplation of its serene beauty man can find refuge from a world full of evil and suffering. Gradually, however, though reluctantly, Russell came to accept Wittgenstein's view that pure mathematics consists of 'tautologies'. This change of mind he has described as 'a gradual retreat from Pythagoras'.[2] One effect of the First World War on Russell's mind was to turn it away from the idea of an eternal realm of abstract truth, where one can take refuge in the contemplation of timeless and non-human beauty, to concentration on the actual concrete world. And this meant, in part at least, a turning away from purely logical studies to the theory of knowledge and to the parts of psychology and linguistics which seemed to be relevant to epistemology.

3. We have seen Russell getting rid of superfluous entities such as 'the golden mountain'. And in the course of writing *Principia Mathematica* he found that the definition of cardinal numbers as

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[1] From *The Study of Mathematics*, written in 1902 and first published in the *New Quarterly* in 1907. See *Philosophical Essays*, p. 82, and *Mysticism and Logic*, p. 69.

[2] *My Philosophical Development*, p. 208.

classes of classes, together with the interpretation of class-symbols as incomplete symbols, rendered it unnecessary to regard cardinal numbers as entities of any kind. But there remained, for example, points, instants and particles as factors in the physical world. And these figured in *The Problems of Philosophy* (1912), which can be said to represent Russell's incursion into the general philosophical field, as distinct from the more restricted sphere of logical and mathematical theory. Whitehead, however, woke him from his 'dogmatic slumbers' by inventing a way of constructing points, instants and particles as sets of events, or as logical constructions out of sets of events.[1]

The technique of reductive analysis as illustrated in the case of points, instants and particles was regarded by Russell as an application of the method already employed in *Principia Mathematica*. In this work the task was to find for mathematics a minimum vocabulary in which no symbol would be definable in terms of the others. And the result of the inquiry was the conclusion that the minimum vocabulary for mathematics is the same as that for logic. In this sense mathematics was found to be reducible to logic. If a similar technique, Russell came to think, is applied to the language used to describe the physical world, it will be found that points, instants and particles do not appear in the minimum vocabulary.

Now, talk about finding a minimum vocabulary tends to suggest that the operation in question is purely linguistic, in the sense of being concerned only with words. But in the context of propositions about the physical world finding a minimum vocabulary means for Russell discovering by analysis the uneliminable entities in terms of which inferred entities can be defined. If, for example, we find that the inferred non-empirical entity, or putative entity, *X* can be defined in terms of a series of empirical entities *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*, *X* is said to be a logical construction out of *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*. This reductive analysis as applied to *X* has indeed a linguistic aspect. For it means that a proposition in which *X* is mentioned can be translated into a set of propositions in which there is no mention of *X* but only of *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*, the relation between the original proposition and the translation being such that if the former is true (or false) the latter is true (or false) and *vice versa*. But the reductive analysis has at the same time an ontological aspect. True, if *X* can be interpreted as a logical construction out of *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*, we are not necessarily committed to denying the existence of *X* as a non-empirical entity distinct from or over and above *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*. But it is unnecessary to postulate the existence of such an entity. Hence the principle of parsimony (or economy) or Ockham's razor forbids us to *assert* the existence of *X* as an inferred non-empirical entity. And the principle itself can be stated in this form: 'whenever possible logical constructions are to be substituted for inferred entities'.[1]

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[1] See *My Philosophical Development*, p. 103 and *The Principles of Mathematics*, p. xi (in the Introduction to the second edition).

This quotation is taken from a paper on the relation of sense-data to physics, which Russell wrote at the beginning of 1914. In this paper he maintains that physical objects can be defined as functions of sense-data, a sense-datum being a particular object, such as a particular patch of colour, of which a subject is directly aware. Sense-data, therefore, are not to be confused with sensations, that is, with the acts of awareness of which they are the object.[2] Nor are they mental entities, in the sense of being purely within the mind. We must thus admit, to speak paradoxically, sense-data which are not actual data, not objects of actual awareness on the part of a subject. But the paradox can be avoided by calling these unsensed sense-data *sensibilia*, potential sense-data. And the physical objects of common sense and of science are to be interpreted as functions of sense-data and *sensibilia* or, to put the matter in another way, as the classes of their appearances.

There is, however, a major difficulty in admitting *sensibilia* as being on the same level, so to speak, as actual sense-data. For Russell's programme demands that the physical objects of common sense and of science should be interpreted, if possible, as logical constructions out of purely empirical, non-inferred entities. But *sensibilia* are inferred entities. The only relevant non-inferred entities are *actual* sense-data. Hence it is not surprising to find Russell saying, in his paper on the relation of sense-data to physics, that 'a complete application of the method which substitutes constructions for inferences would exhibit matter wholly in terms of sense-data, and even, we may add, of the sense-data of a single person, since the sense-data of others cannot be known without some element of inference'.[3] But he goes on to add that the carrying out of this programme is extremely difficult, and that he proposes to allow himself two kinds of inferred entities, the sense-data of other people and *sensibilia.*

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[1] *Mysticism and Logic*, p. 155.

[2] It will be noted that Russell and Moore are at one on this matter.

[3] *Mysticism and Logic*, p. 157.

In *Our Knowledge of the External World* (1914) Russell depicts the physical objects of common sense and science as logical constructions out of actual sense-data, *sensibilia* or possible sense-data being defined with reference to them. At any rate 'I think it may be laid down quite generally that, *in so far* as physics or common sense is verifiable, it must be capable of interpretation in terms of actual sense-data alone'.[1] However, in a lecture on the ultimate constituents of matter which he delivered early in 1915, Russell remarks that while the particles of mathematical physics are logical constructions, useful symbolic fictions, 'the actual data in sensation, the immediate objects of sight or touch or hearing, are extra-mental, purely physical, and among the ultimate constituents of matter'.[2] Similarly, 'sense-data are merely those among the ultimate constituents of the physical world, of which we happen to be immediately aware'.[3] Whether the statement that sense-data are 'among' the ultimate constituents of the physical world is equivalent to the admission of *sensibilia* as members of this class, or whether it means simply that sense-data are the only ultimate constituents of which we are directly aware, is not quite clear. In any case, if the world of common sense and of science is to be regarded as a logical construction, or hierarchy of logical constructions, out of the actual sense-data of a single person, it is difficult to see how solipsism can be successfully avoided. However, it was not long before Russell abandoned the doctrine of sense-data as here presented. And his ideas on solipsism will be considered later.

So far we have been concerned only with analysis of the physical objects of common sense and science. But what of the subject or mind which is aware of objects? When Russell rejected monism and embraced pluralism, he made a sharp distinction between the act of awareness and its object. Originally indeed, as he himself tells us, he accepted the view of Brentano that in sensation there are three distinct elements, 'act, content and object'.[4] He then came to think that the distinction between content and object is superfluous; but he continued to believe in the relational character of sensation, that is to say, that in sensation a subject is aware of an object. And this belief found expression in, for example, *The Problems of Philosophy* (1912). In this work Russell admitted, even if tentatively, that the subject can be known by acquaintance. It does not follow, of course, that he accepted the idea of a permanent mental substance. But he held at any rate that we are acquainted with what one might perhaps call the momentary self, the self precisely as apprehending an object in a given act of awareness. In other words, it was a question of the phenomenological analysis of consciousness rather than of metaphysical theory.

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[1] *Our Knowledge of the External World,* pp. 88–9.

[2] *Mysticism and Logic,* p. 128.

[3] *Ibid.,* p. 143.

[4] *My Philosophical Development,* p. 134.

When, however, we turn to an essay on the nature of acquaintance, which Russell wrote in 1914, we find him expressing his agreement with Hume that the subject is not acquainted with itself. He does indeed define acquaintance as 'a dual relation between a subject and an object which need not have any community of nature'.[1] But the term 'subject', instead of denoting an entity with which we can be acquainted, becomes a description. In other words, the self or mind becomes a logical construction; and in his 1915 address on the ultimate constituents of matter Russell suggests that 'we might regard the mind as an assemblage of particulars, namely, what would be called "states of mind", which belong together in virtue of some specific common quality. The common quality of all states of mind would be the quality designated by the word "mental".'[2] This suggestion is indeed advanced only in the context of a discussion of the theory, rejected by Russell, that sense-data are 'in the mind'. But it is clear that the subject, considered as a single entity, has become a class of particulars. At the same time these particulars possess a quality which marks them off as mental. In other words, an element of dualism is still retained by Russell. He has not yet adopted the neutral monism, of which something will be said presently.

Needless to say, the theory of logical constructions is not intended to imply that we ought to give up talking about minds on the one hand and the physical objects of common sense and science on the other. To say, for example, that sentences in which a table is mentioned can in principle be translated into sentences in which only sense-data are referred to and the word 'table' does not occur is not equivalent to a denial of the utility of talking about tables. Indeed, within the context of ordinary language and its purposes it is perfectly true to say that there are tables, though from the point of view of the analytic philosopher a table is a logical construction out of sense-data. The language of atomic physics, for instance, does not render ordinary language illegitimate. For the purposes of ordinary life we are perfectly entitled to go on talking about trees and stones; we do not have to talk about atoms instead. And if philosophical analysis leads us to regard the entities of physical science, such as atoms, as logical constructions, this does not render illegitimate the language of physical science. The different levels of language can co-exist and are employed for different purposes, within different contexts. They should not, of course, be confused; but the one level does not exclude the other levels.

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[1] *Logic and Knowledge*, p. 127.

[2] *Mysticism and Logic*, pp. 131–2.

It is thus easy to understand the contention that the issue between the sense-datum theory and the common sense view of the world is a purely linguistic matter; that is, that it is simply a question of choosing between two alternative languages. But, as has already been indicated, this contention does not adequately represent Russell's point of view. Obviously, analysis as he practises it takes different forms.[1] Sometimes it is predominantly a logical analysis which has ontological implications only in the sense that it removes the ground for postulating superfluous entities. But in its application to the physical objects of common sense and science it professes to reveal the ultimate constituents of such objects. In other words it professes to increase our understanding not only of language but also of extra-linguistic reality. To be sure, Russell has at times expressed a very sceptical view about the knowledge which is actually attainable in philosophy. But his aim at any rate has been that of attaining impersonal truth. And the primary method of doing so is for him analysis. His point of view is thus opposed to that of Bradley, who thought that analysis, the breaking-up of a whole into its constituent elements, distorts reality and leads us away from the truth which is, as Hegel said, the whole. Later on, especially when treating of the relation of philosophy to the empirical sciences, Russell is ready to emphasize the role of synthesis, of bold and wide philosophical hypotheses about the universe. But at the period of which we have been writing the emphasis is placed on analysis.

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[1] So far as the present writer is aware, Russell has never given a systematic account of the methods of analysis practised by himself, comparing them with one another and noting both their common and their differentiating features. On this subject the reader can profitably consult *The Unity of Russell's Philosophy* by Morris Weitz in *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, edited by P. A. Schilpp.

And it would be extremely misleading to describe analysis, as practised by Russell, as being purely 'linguistic'.

This point can also be illustrated in the following way. In *The Problems of Philosophy* Russell accepted universals as ultimate conceptual constituents of reality, universals being said 'to *subsist* or *have being*, where "being" is opposed to "existence" as being timeless'.[1] And though he has progressively depopulated the world of universals, he has never entirely rejected his former view. For he has continued to believe not only that a minimum vocabulary for the description of the world requires some universal term or terms but also that this fact shows something about the world itself, even if he has ended by being uncertain about precisely what it shows.

4. In *My Philosophical Development*,[2] Russell tells us that from August 1914 until the end of 1917 he was wholly occupied with matters arising out of his opposition to the war. These matters presumably cover *Principles of Social Reconstruction* and *Justice in War-Time*, both of which appeared in 1916, in addition to a number of articles and addresses relating to the war. However, during the period 1914–19 Russell published an important series of philosophical articles in *The Monist*.[3] In 1918 he published *Mysticism and Logic and Other Essays* and *Roads to Freedom: Socialism, Anarchism and Syndicalism*. His *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, to which reference has already been made, was written in 1918, during his six months imprisonment,[4] and was published in 1919.

Shortly before the First World War Wittgenstein gave Russell some notes on various logical points. And these, together with the conversations which the two men had had during Wittgenstein's first sojourn at Cambridge, 1912–13, affected Russell's thought during the years when he was cut off from contact with his friend and former pupil.[5] In fact he prefaced his 1918 lectures on the philosophy of logical atomism with the remark that they were largely concerned with ideas which he had learned from Wittgenstein.

As for the term 'atomism' in 'logical atomism' Russell says that he wishes to arrive at the ultimate constituent elements of reality in a manner analogous to that in which in *Principia Mathematica* he worked back from 'result' to the uneliminable logical 'premisses'. But he is looking, of course, for logical and not physical atoms. Hence the use of the term 'logical'. 'The point is that the atom I wish to arrive at is the atom of logical analysis, not the atom of physical analysis.'[1] The atom of physical analysis (or, more accurately, whatever physical science at a given time takes to be ultimate physical constituents of matter) is itself subject to logical analysis. But though in his final lecture on logical atomism Russell makes what he calls an excursus into metaphysics and introduces the idea of logical constructions or, as he puts it, logical fictions, he is mainly concerned with discussing propositions and facts.

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[1] *The Problems of Philosophy*, p. 156.

[2] P. 128.

[3] The lectures on logical atomism which Russell delivered in 1918 and which were published in *The Monist*, 1918–19, have been reprinted in *Logic and Knowledge*, edited by R. Marsh (London, 1956).

[4] This was the result of a second prosecution, arising, like the first, out of Russell's outspoken opposition to the First World War.

[5] Wittgenstein, then still an Austrian citizen, joined the Austrian army and was subsequently a prisoner-of-war of the Italians.

We can, of course, understand the meaning of a proposition without knowing whether it is true or false. But a proposition which asserts or denies a fact is either true or false; and it is its relation to a fact which makes it true or false.[2] As we have seen, the grammatical form of a sentence may be different from its logical form. But in a logically perfect language 'the words in a proposition would correspond one by one with the components of the corresponding fact, with the exception of such words as "or", "not", "if', "then", which have a different function'.[3] In such a language therefore there would be an identity of structure between the fact asserted or denied and its symbolic representation, the proposition. Hence if there are atomic facts, there can be atomic propositions.

The simplest imaginable kind of fact, according to Russell, is that which consists in the possession of a quality by a particular, the quality being called a 'monadic relation'. This kind of fact is an atomic fact, though not the only kind. For it is not required, in order that a fact should be atomic, that it should comprise only one term and a monadic relation. There can be a hierarchy of atomic facts; facts which comprise two particulars and a (dyadic) relation, facts which comprise three particulars and a (triadic) relation, and so on. It must be understood, however, that 'particulars', defined by Russell as the terms of relations in atomic facts, are to be understood in the sense of what would be for him genuine particulars, such as actual sense-data, not in the sense of logical constructions. 'This is white' would thus be an atomic proposition, provided that 'this' functions as a proper name denoting a sense-datum. So would 'these are white', provided again that 'these' denotes genuine particulars.

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[1] *Logic and Knowledge*, p. 179.

[2] Russell notes that it was Wittgenstein who first drew his attention to the truth that propositions are not names for facts. For to every proposition there 'correspond' at least two propositions, one true, the other false. The false proposition 'corresponds with' the fact in the sense that it is its relation to the fact which makes it false.

[3] *Logic and Knowledge*, p. 197.

Now, an atomic proposition contains a single verb or verbal phrase. But by the use of words such as 'and', 'or' and 'if', we can construct complex or molecular propositions.[1] It would appear to follow, therefore, that there are molecular facts. But Russell shows hesitation on this point. Let us suppose, for example, that 'either today is Sunday or I made a mistake in coming here' is a molecular proposition. Does it make any sense to speak of a disjunctive fact? However, though Russell expresses some doubt about molecular facts, he admits 'general facts'. For instance, if we could enumerate all the atomic facts in the world, the proposition 'these are all the atomic facts there are' would express a general fact. Russell is also prepared to admit negative facts, even if with some hesitation. He suggests, for example, that 'Socrates is not alive' expresses an objective negative fact, an objective feature of the world.

We cannot refer to all the topics mentioned by Russell in his lectures on logical atomism. But there are two points to which attention can profitably be drawn. The first is the doctrine that every genuine particular is completely self-subsistent, in the sense that it is logically independent of every other particular. 'There is no reason why you should not have a universe consisting of one particular and nothing else.'[2] True, it is an empirical fact that there is a multitude of particulars. But it is not logically necessary that this should be the case. Hence it would not be possible, given knowledge of one particular, to deduce from it the whole system of the universe.

The second point is Russell's analysis of existence-propositions. I know, for example, that there are men in Canton; but I cannot mention any individual who lives there. Hence, Russell argues, the proposition 'there are men in Canton' cannot be about actual individuals. 'Existence is essentially a property of a propositional function.'[1] If we say 'there are men' or 'men exist', this means that there is at least one value of *X* for which it is true to say '*X* is a man'. At the same time Russell recognizes 'existence-facts', such as that corresponding to 'there are men', as distinct from atomic facts.

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[1] When the truth or falsity of a molecular proposition depends simply on the truth or falsity of its constituent propositions it is said to be a truth-function of these constituents.

[2] *Logic and Knowledge*, p. 202.

It has already been mentioned that according to Russell's own explicit declaration his 1918 lectures on logical atomism were partly concerned with explaining theories suggested to him by Wittgenstein. But at that time, of course, he was acquainted with Wittgenstein's ideas only in a preliminary or immature form. Shortly after the armistice, however, Russell received from Wittgenstein the typescript of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. And though he found himself in agreement with some of the ideas expressed in it, there were others which he was unable to accept. For example, at that time Russell accepted Wittgenstein's picture-theory of the proposition,[2] his view that atomic propositions are all logically independent of one another, and his doctrine that the propositions of logic and pure mathematics are 'tautologies' which, in themselves,[3] neither say anything about the actual existing world nor reveal to us another world of subsistent entities and timeless truths. But Russell did not accept, for instance, Wittgenstein's contention that the form which a true proposition has in common with the corresponding fact cannot be 'said' but can only be 'shown'. For Russell, as we have already noted, believed in a hierarchy of languages. Even if in language *a* nothing can be said *about* this language, there is nothing to prevent us employing language *b* to talk about *a*. Again, Wittgenstein's denial that anything can be said about the world as a whole, for example about 'all the things that there are in the world,' was more than Russell could stomach.[4]

Every student of recent British philosophy is aware that Russell has shown a marked lack of sympathy with Wittgenstein's later ideas, as expressed above all in *Philosophical Investigations*. But he admired the *Tractatus*; and in spite of the important points on which he disagreed with its author, his own logical atomism was, as we have seen, influenced by Wittgenstein's ideas. It does not follow, however, that the approaches of the two men were precisely the same. Wittgenstein thought of himself as writing simply as a logician. He thought that logical analysis demanded elementary propositions, atomic facts and the simple objects which enter into atomic facts and are named in elementary propositions.[1] But he did not think that it was his business as a logician to give any examples of simple objects, atomic facts or elementary propositions. Nor did he give any. Russell, however, while approaching analysis by way of mathematical logic rather than from the point of view of classical empiricism, very soon became interested in discovering the actual ultimate constituents of the world. And, as we have seen, he did not hesitate to give examples of atomic facts. 'This is white' would be an example, when 'this' denotes an actual sense-datum. Similarly, while in the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein described psychology as a natural science and so as having nothing to do with philosophy, Russell, in his lectures on logical atomism, applied reductive analysis not only to the physical objects of common sense and science but also to the human person. 'A person is a certain series of experiences',[2] the members of the series having a certain relation *R* between them, so that a person can be defined as the class of all those experiences which are serially related by *R*.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 232.

[2] Later on Russell came to doubt this theory and to believe that, even if it is true in some sense, Wittgenstein exaggerated its importance.

[3] Needless to say, neither Wittgenstein nor Russell questioned the fact that logic and mathematics can be applied.

[4] Russell discusses the impact of Wittgenstein on his thought in ch. X of *My Philosophical Development*.

It is true that while he had previously regarded the goal of analysis as a knowledge of simple particulars, Russell later came to think that while many things can be known to be complex, nothing can be *known* to be simple.[3] But the reason why he came to think this was because in science what was formerly thought to be simple has often turned out to be complex. And the conclusion which he drew was simply that the logical analyst should refrain from any dogmatic assertion that he has arrived at a knowledge of what is simple. In other words, though Russell undoubtedly approached logical atomism with a background of mathematical logic, his attitude was much more empirical than that of Wittgenstein as manifested in the *Tractatus*. And in the application of reductive analysis to physical objects and minds he carried on the tradition of British empiricism, a tradition which hardly figured in Wittgenstein's mental furniture.

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[1] In the opinion of the present writer the theory of the world which is found at the beginning of the *Tractatus* has nothing to do with inductive metaphysics. For Wittgenstein, the world exists for us only in so far as it is describable, in so far as we can speak meaningfully about states of affairs in the world. And the theory of atomic facts and simple objects is really an answer to the question, what *must* the world (any world) be like as a necessary condition for meaningful descriptive language? The approach, in other words, is *a priori*. The theory of the world is not an induction from observation of simple objects and atomic facts.

[2] *Logic and Knowledge*, p. 277.

[3] Cf. *My Philosophical Development*, pp. 165–6.

5. After the First World War Russell found his mind turning to the theory of knowledge and relevant topics, mathematical logic remaining more or less a past interest. This is not to say that his interest in social and political subjects abated. In 1920 he visited Russia, though his impressions were unfavourable, as is clear from *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism* (1920). A succeeding visit to China bore fruit in *The Problems of China* (1922). Meanwhile he had published in 1921 *The Analysis of Mind*,[1] one of his best known books in the field of philosophy as he understands the term.

When Russell embraced pluralism in 1898, he accepted a dualist position. And, as we have seen, this position was maintained for some time, even if in an attenuated form. Russell was indeed acquainted with William James's theory of neutral monism, according to which the mental and physical are composed of the same material, so to speak, and differ only in arrangement and context.[2] But in his 1914 essay on the nature of acquaintance he first quoted passages from Mach and James and then expressed his disagreement with neutral monism as being incapable of explaining the phenomenon of acquaintance, which involves a relation between subject and object.

In the 1918 lectures on logical atomism, however, the sharpness of Russell's rejection of neutral monism is greatly diminished. In fact he states roundly that 'I feel more and more inclined to think that it may be true'.[3] He is indeed conscious of difficulties in accepting a view which does not distinguish between a particular and experiencing it. At the same time he is no longer sure that the difficulties are insuperable. And it is clear that while he has not yet embraced neutral monism, he would like to be able to do so.

It is thus no matter for surprise if in *The Analysis of Mind* we find Russell announcing his conversion to neutral monism,[4] which is conceived as providing a harmonization of two conflicting tendencies in contemporary thought. On the one hand many psychologists emphasize more and more the dependence of mental on physical phenomena; and one can see a definite tendency, especially among the behaviourists, to a form of methodological materialism. Obviously psychologists of this kind really consider physics, which has made a much greater advance than psychology, as the basic science. On the other hand there is a tendency among the physicists, particularly with Einstein and other exponents of the theory of relativity, to regard the matter of old-fashioned materialism as a logical fiction, a construction out of events. These two apparently conflicting tendencies can be harmonized in neutral monism, that is, by recognizing that 'physics and psychology are not distinguished by their material'.[1] Both mind and matter are logical constructions out of particulars which are neither mental nor material but neutral.

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[1] This was followed by *The Analysis of Matter* in 1927, the same year in which *An Outline of Philosophy* appeared. Needless to say, the intervening period between 1921 and 1927 was punctuated not only by articles but also by books, such as *The Prospects of Industrial Civilization* (1923), *The ABC of Atoms* (1923), *The ABC of Relativity* (1925), and *On Education* (1926).

[2] As Russell notes, this was much the same view as that held by Ernst Mach. See Vol. VII of this *History*, p. 359.

[3] *Logic and Knowledge*, p. 279.

[4] It should hardly be necessary to point out that neutral monism is not the opposite of pluralism. It is 'monistic' in the sense that it admits no ultimate specific difference between the natures of mental and physical particulars or events. In themselves these particulars are neither specifically mental nor specifically physical or material. Hence the term 'neutral'.

Obviously, Russell has now to abandon his former sharp distinction between the sense-datum and awareness of it. He mentions Brentano's theory of the intentionality of consciousness,[2] the theory that all consciousness is consciousness 'of' (an object), and Meinong's distinction between act, content and object. And he then remarks that 'the *act* seems unnecessary and fictitious. . . . Empirically, I cannot discover anything corresponding to the supposed act; and theoretically I cannot see that it is indispensable.'[3] Russell also tries to get rid of the distinction between content and object, when the content is supposed to be something in the external physical world. In fine, 'my own belief is that James was right in rejecting consciousness as an entity'.[4] Russell admits, of course, that he formerly maintained that a sense-datum, a patch of colour for example, is something physical, not psychical or mental. But he now holds that 'the patch of colour may be both physical and psychical',[5] and that 'the patch of colour and our sensation in seeing it are identical'.[6]

How, then, are the spheres of physics and psychology to be distinguished? One way of doing so is by distinguishing between different methods of correlating particulars. On the one hand we can correlate or group together all those particulars which common sense would regard as the appearances of a physical thing in different places. This leads to the construction of physical objects as sets of such appearances. On the other hand we can correlate or group together all events in a given place, that is, events which common sense would regard as the appearances of different objects as viewed from a given place. This gives us a perspective. And it is correlation according to perspectives which is relevant to psychology. When the place concerned is the human brain, the perspective 'consists of all the perceptions of a certain man at a given time'.[1]

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[1] *The Analysis of Mind*, p. 307.

[2] For some brief remarks about Brentano see Vol. VII of this *History*, pp. 430–1.

[3] *The Analysis of Mind*, pp. 17–18.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 143.

[6] *Ibid.*

Now, we have spoken of Russell's 'conversion' to neutral monism. It must be added, however, that this conversion was not complete. For example, while accepting the idea that sensation can be described in terms of a neutral material which in itself is neither mental nor material, he adds that in his opinion 'images belong only to the mental world, while those occurrences (if any) which do not form part of any "experience" belong only to the physical world'.[2] Russell does indeed say that he would be 'glad to be convinced that images can be reduced to sensations of a peculiar kind';[3] but this does not alter the fact that in *The Analysis of Mind* he maintains, even if hesitantly, that images are purely mental. Again, when discussing differentiation between physics and psychology in terms of causal laws, Russell is prepared to admit that 'it is by no means certain that the peculiar causal laws which govern mental events are not really physiological';[4] but at the same time he expresses his belief that images are subject to peculiar psychological laws, which he calls 'mnemic' and that the unperceived entities of physics cannot be brought under psychological causal laws. Further, though, as we have seen, Russell expresses agreement with James in rejecting consciousness as an entity, he clearly feels some hesitation on the point, as well he might. Thus he remarks that whatever the term 'consciousness' may mean, consciousness is 'a complex and far from universal characteristic of mental phenomena'.[5] It thus cannot be used to distinguish the psychical from the physical. And we ought to try to exhibit its derivative character. But to say this is not quite the same thing as to deny the existence of consciousness.

In 1924 Russell published a well-known essay on logical atomism, his contribution to the First Series of *Contemporary British Philosophy*, edited by J. H. Muirhead. The ultimate constituents of the world are there said to be 'events',[1] each of which stands to a certain number of other events in a relation of compresence. The mind is defined as 'a track of sets of compresent events in a region of space-time where there is matter peculiarly liable to form habits'.[2] As this refers especially to the brain, the definition is more or less the same as the provisional definition offered in 1927 in *An Outline of Philosophy*.[3] But though both minds and physical objects are interpreted as logical constructions out of events, the former are constructed out of sensations and images, while the latter are constructions out of sensations and unperceived events.[4] And we have seen that Russell finds difficulty in regarding images as being anything else but purely mental, and unperceived events as anything else but purely physical.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 105.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 25.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 156.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 139.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 308.

Reviewing the course of his reflections in *My Philosophical Development* (1959) Russell remarks that 'in *The Analysis of Mind* (1921), I explicitly abandoned "sense-data" '.[5] That is to say, he abandoned the relational theory of sensation, according to which sensation is a cognitive act, sense-data being physical objects of psychical awareness. This meant that there was not the same need as before to regard physical and psychical occurrences as fundamentally different; and to this extent he was able to embrace neutral monism. He adds, however, that when dualism has been got rid of at one point, it is very difficult not to re-introduce it at another, and that it is necessary to re-interpret and re-define such terms as 'awareness', 'acquaintance' and 'experience'. An effort in this direction was made in *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* (1940);[6] but Russell does not pretend to have solved all his problems. It is thus not quite accurate to say that Russell embraced neutral monism only to reject it. It is rather that he has found himself unable in practice to carry through the requisite programme of re-interpretation, without, however, being prepared to assert that it could not be carried through.

6. Now, if the physical objects of common sense and science are first interpreted as logical constructions out of sense-data, and if sense-data, considered as extra-mental objects of awareness, are

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[1] In *An Outline of Philosophy* an event is said to be 'something occupying a small finite amount of space-time' (p. 287), and each minimal event is said to be a 'logically self-subsistent entity' (p. 293).

[2] *Contemporary British Philosophy*, First Series, p. 382.

[3] P. 300.

[4] On unperceived events see *The Analysis of Matter*, pp. 215–16.

[5] *My Philosophical Development*, p. 135.

[6] In this work 'acquaintance' is replaced by 'noticing'. Cf. pp. 49f.

then eliminated, it seems to follow that we have no direct knowledge or awareness of any external object. For example, when the occurrence takes place which would ordinarily be called seeing the sun, the direct object of my awareness seems to be an event or events, sensations, which are in some sense 'in me'.[1] And the same must be said about my awareness of other persons. We are then faced with the difficulty that the direct objects of experience or awareness are not the physical objects of common sense and of science, while at the same time it is only what we directly experience that gives us any real reason for believing that there are such objects.

Of the possible ways of dealing with this problem 'the simplest is that of solipsism',[2] which Russell is prepared to admit as a logically possible position. For example, after saying that in his opinion the universe in itself is without unity and continuity he remarks, 'indeed there is little but prejudice and habit to be said for the view that there is a world at all'.[3] Similarly, though as a matter of fact my experience leads me to believe in the existence of other minds, 'as a matter of pure logic, it would be possible for me to have these experiences even if other minds did not exist'.[4] One can, of course, appeal to causal inference. But even at best such inference cannot provide demonstrative certainty and thus cannot show that solipsism is utterly untenable.

Though, however, solipsism may be logically possible, it is hardly credible. If it is taken as involving the dogmatic assertion that 'I alone exist', nobody really believes it. If it is taken to mean simply that there is no valid reason either for asserting or denying anything except one's own experiences, consistency demands that one should doubt whether one has had a past and whether one will have a future. For we have no better reason for believing that we have had experiences in the past than we have for believing in external objects. Both beliefs depend on inference. And if we doubt the second, we should also doubt the first. But 'no solipsist has ever gone as far as this'.[5] In other words, no solipsist is ever consistent.

The alternative to what Russell calls 'solipsism of the moment',[6] the hypothesis that the whole of my knowledge is limited to what I am now noticing at this moment, is the hypothesis that there are principles of non-deductive inference which justify our belief in the existence of the external world and of other people. When these two alternatives are clearly presented, nobody, Russell argues, would honestly and sincerely choose solipsism. He is doubtless right. But in this case an examination of the relevant principles of inference becomes a matter of importance.[1]

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[1] Cf. *The Analysis of Matter*, p. 197, and *The Scientific Outlook* (1931), pp. 74–5.

[2] *My Philosophical Development*, p. 104. [3] *The Scientific Outlook*, p. 98.

[4] *My Philosophical Development*, p. 195. [5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Human Knowledge, Its Scope and Limits* (1948), p. 197.

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[1] Obviously, the problem of solipsism presupposes the epistemological theses which give rise to it. And one's natural comment is that these theses might well be re-examined. But this is not the path which Russell chooses.

CHAPTER XX

BERTRAND RUSSELL (2)

The postulates of non-demonstrative inference and the limits of empiricism—Language; the complexity of language and the idea of a hierarchy of languages, meaning and significance, truth and falsity—Language as a guide to the structure of the world.

1. RUSSELL has drawn attention to three books in particular as representing the outcome of his reflections in the years after the First World War on the theory of knowledge and relevant subjects.[1] These are *The Analysis of Mind* (1921), *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* (1940), and *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits* (1948). In this section, where we shall be considering Russell's ideas about non-demonstrative inference, we shall be referring mainly to the last-named book.[2]

If we assume with Russell that the physical objects of common sense and of science are logical constructions out of events and that each event is a logically self-sufficient entity, it follows that from one event or group of events we cannot infer with certainty the occurrence of any other event or group of events. Demonstrative inference belongs to logic and pure mathematics, not to the empirical sciences. Indeed, on the face of it it appears that we have no real ground for making any inferences at all in science. At the same time we are all convinced that valid inferences, leading to conclusions which possess varying degrees of probability, can be made both on the level of common sense and in science. To be sure, not all inferences are valid. Many scientific hypotheses have had to be discarded. But this does not alter the fact that no sane man doubts that by and large science has increased and is increasing human knowledge. On this assumption, therefore, the question arises, how can scientific inference be theoretically justified?

Some philosophers would say, and the plain man would probably be inclined to agree with them, that scientific inference stands in need of no other justification than a pragmatic one, namely its success. Scientists can and do make successful predictions.

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[1] Cf. *My Philosophical Development*, p. 128.

[2] It will be referred to simply as *Human Knowledge*.

Science works. And the philosopher who looks for a further justification is looking for what cannot be had and is in any case not required.

In Russell's opinion this attitude is equivalent to blocking inquiry from the outset. He is, needless to say, as well aware as anyone else that by and large science delivers the goods. But he is also acutely aware of the fact that purely empiricist premisses lead to the conclusion that the factual success of scientific inference is simply fortuitous. Yet nobody really believes that this is the case. Hence we must look for some justification of scientific inference other than its factual success. To attempt to block inquiry at the outset is unworthy of a genuine philosopher. And if inquiry leads us to the conclusion that pure empiricism is an inadequate theory of knowledge, we just have to accept the fact and not shut our eyes to it.

Russell regards his task as that of finding 'the minimum principles required to justify scientific inference'.[1] Such principles or premisses[2] must state something about the world. For inference from the observed to the unobserved or from one group of events to another can be justified only 'if the world has certain characteristics which are not logically necessary'.[3] It is not a question of logically necessary principles which are known to possess absolute validity independently of all experience. For scientific inference is non-demonstrative inference. Rather is it a question of reflecting on actual scientific inference and discovering the minimum number of principles, premisses or postulates which are required to justify them.

The matter has, however, to be expressed more precisely. There is obviously no question of justifying all inferences and generalizations. For, as we know by experience, some generalizations are false. What we are looking for is the minimum number of principles which will confer an antecedent finite probability on certain inferences and generalizations and not on others. In other words, we have to examine what are universally regarded as genuine instances of scientific inference and generalization and discover the principles which are required in order to justify these types of inference and generalization by conferring on them an antecedent finite probability that is not conferred on the types which experience has taught us to reject as inherently fallacious and unscientific.[1]

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[1] *Human Knowledge*, p. 11.
[2] Russell calls them 'postulates'. The reason for this will be discussed presently.
[3] *Human Knowledge*, p. 10.

To cut a long story short, Russell finds five principles or premisses of scientific inference. But he lays no particular emphasis upon the number five. He considers indeed that the principles which he enunciates are sufficient; but he allows for the possibility that the number might be reduced. Further, he does not insist on his actual formulation of the principles.[2] Greater precision might well be possible. It is to be noted, however, that all the principles state probabilities only, not certainties, and that they are conceived as conferring a finite antecedent probability on certain types of inductive inference.

The first principle, described by Russell as the postulate of quasi-permanence, states that, given any event *A*, it frequently happens that an event very similar to *A* occurs in a neighbouring place at a neighbouring time. This postulate enables us to operate, for instance, with the common sense concepts of person and thing without introducing the metaphysical notion of substance. For the 'very similar' event can be regarded as part of the history of the series of events which constitutes the person or thing.

The second principle, the postulate of separable causal lines, states that it is often possible to form a series of events such that from one or two members of the series we can infer something about the other members. This principle or postulate is clearly essential for scientific inference. For it is only on the basis of the idea of causal lines that we can infer distant from near events.

The third principle, the postulate of spatio-temporal continuity, which presupposes the second principle and refers to causal lines, denies action at a distance and states that when there is a causal connection between non-contiguous events, there will be found to be intermediate links in the chain.

The fourth principle, 'the structural postulate', states that when a number of structurally similar complex events occur around a centre from which they are not too widely separated, it is generally the case that all are members of causal lines which have their origin in an event of similar structure at the centre. Suppose, for example, that a number of persons are situated in different parts of a public square where an orator is holding forth or a radio is blaring, and that they have similar auditory experiences. This postulate confers antecedent probability on the inference that their similar experiences are causally related to the sounds made by the orator or radio.[1]

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[1] Russell thus presupposes that what is generally regarded as scientific knowledge really is knowledge. If we start with undiluted scepticism, we shall get nowhere. After all, the problem of justifying scientific inference only arises because we are convinced that there is such a thing but at the same time see no adequate basis for it in pure empiricism.

[2] For Russell's actual formulation of the five principles the reader is referred to *Human Knowledge*, pp. 506 ff.

The fifth principle, the postulate of analogy, states that if, when two classes of events, *A* and *B*, are observed, there is reason to believe that *A* causes *B*, then if, in a given case, *A* occurs but we cannot observe whether *B* occurs or not, it is probable that it does occur. Similarly, if the occurrence of *B* is observed while the occurrence of *A* cannot be observed, it is probable that *A* has occurred. According to Russell, an important function of this postulate is to justify belief in other minds.

This doctrine of the principles of non-demonstrative inference is partly intended to solve a problem raised by J. M. Keynes (1883–1946) in his *Treatise on Probability* (1921).[2] But the point to which we wish to draw attention here is the unprovability of the principles. They are not offered as eternal truths which can be intuited *a priori*. Nor are they supposed to be deducible from such truths. At the same time they cannot be proved nor even rendered probable by empirical arguments. For they are the very principles on which the validity of such arguments rests. If we tried to justify them by appealing to scientific inference, we should be involved in a vicious circle. Hence the principles must necessarily be described as 'postulates' of scientific inference.

In view of the fact that these postulates cannot be proved, nor even rendered probable, by empirical argument, Russell explicitly admits the failure of empiricism, in the sense that it is inadequate as a theory of knowledge and is unable to justify the presuppositions on which all inferred empirical knowledge depends for its validity. It has therefore sometimes been said that he approaches a Kantian position. But the similarity is limited to a common recognition of the limitations of pure empiricism. Russell is very far from developing a theory of the *a priori* on the lines of Kant's first *Critique*. Instead he proceeds to give a biological-psychological account of the origins of the postulates of non-demonstrative inference. If, for example, an animal has a habit of such a kind that in the presence of an instance of *A* it behaves in a manner in which, before acquiring the habit, it behaved in the presence of an instance of *B*, it can be said to have 'inferred' and to 'believe' that every instance of *A* is usually followed by an instance of *B*. This is, of course, an anthropomorphic way of speaking. The animal does not consciously make inferences. None the less there is such a thing as animal inference. It is a feature of the process of adaptation to environment, and there is continuity between it and inference in man. That is to say, our 'knowledge' of the principles or postulates of non-demonstrative inference 'exists at first solely in the form of a propensity to inferences of the kind that they justify'.[1] Man, unlike the animal, is capable of reflecting on examples of these inferences, of making the postulates explicit and of using logical technique to improve their foundations. But the relatively *a priori* character[2] of the principles is explicable in terms of a propensity to make inferences in accordance with them, a propensity which is continuous with that manifested in animal inference.

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[1] Obviously, the ordinary man would comment: 'I don't need any postulate to know this'. But it must be remembered that for Russell it is *logically* possible that the similarity of experiences should be causally independent, and that in pure empiricism there is nothing which makes it objectively more probable that the similar experiences have a common causal origin than that they do not.

[2] Cf. *My Philosophical Development*, pp. 200f.

Now, we have seen that Russell set out to discover a theoretical justification of scientific inference. But though he justifies scientific inference in terms of certain postulates, the postulates themselves are then explained through a biological-psychological account of their origin. And this account, which goes back ultimately to the process of adaptation to environment, appears to be quite compatible with the theory of what Nietzsche called biologically useful fictions. In other words, it is arguable that Russell does not in fact fulfil his programme of providing a theoretical justification of non-demonstrative inference, not at least if to justify this inference theoretically means to supply premisses which warrant the assertion that it is theoretically valid.

It may appear, therefore, that in the long run we are thrown back on a pragmatic justification, on an appeal to the fact that the postulates work, that 'their verifiable consequences are such as experience will confirm'.[3] Indeed, Russell explicitly says that the postulates 'are justified by the fact that they are implied in inferences which we all accept as valid, and that, although they cannot be proved in any formal sense, the whole system of science and everyday knowledge, out of which they have been distilled, is, within limits, self-confirmatory'.[1] The fact that the postulates or principles lead to results which are in conformity with experience 'does not logically suffice to make the principles even probable'.[2] At the same time the whole system of science, of probable knowledge, which rests on the postulates, is self-confirmatory, self-justifying in a pragmatic sense. Hence Russell can say that while he does not accept the idealist coherence theory of truth, there is, in an important sense, a valid coherence theory of probability.[3]

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[1] *Human Knowledge*, p. 526

[2] The postulates are *a priori* in the sense of being logically antecedent to the inferences made in accordance with them; but they exist first of all in the form of an empirical propensity and are recognized as postulates only through an examination of examples of non-demonstrative inferences. They are not absolutely *a priori* eternal truths.

[3] *Human Knowledge*, p. 527.

In this case we may be inclined to ask why Russell does not accept from the start the position of those who claim that scientific inference is sufficiently justified by its results, by the fact that it leads to verifiable predictions. But Russell would presumably answer that to content oneself with this position from the start is equivalent to suppressing a real problem, to shutting one's eyes to it. Consideration of the problem leads to a recognition of the indemonstrable postulates of scientific inference, and thus to a recognition of the limitations and inadequacy of pure empiricism as a theory of knowledge. Recognition of these facts is a real intellectual gain; and it cannot be obtained if the attempt to discover a theoretical justification of non-demonstrative inference is prohibited from the outset.

The comment might be made, of course, that though this attitude is reasonable enough when considered within the framework of Russell's general empiricist analysis of the world, the fact remains that while explicitly recognizing the limitations of pure empiricism as a theory of knowledge he does not really go beyond it. His biological explanation of the origin of a propensity to make inferences in accordance with certain implicit postulates or expectations can be seen as a continuation and development of Hume's doctrine of natural beliefs. But to go beyond empiricism, in the sense of substituting for it a genuinely non-empiricist theory of knowledge, would obviously have demanded a much more radical revision of his opinions than Russell was prepared either to undertake or to recognize as justified.

2. We have noted Russell's statement that after the First World

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[1] *My Philosophical Development*, p. 204.

[2] *Human Knowledge*, p. 526.

[3] Cf. *My Philosophical Development*, p. 204.

War his thoughts turned to the theory of knowledge and to the relevant parts of psychology and linguistics. It is appropriate, therefore, to say something about the last-mentioned theme, Russell's theory of language. Reference has already been made, however, to the theory of the relation between language and fact as expounded in the 1918 lectures on logical atomism. And we can confine ourselves here mainly to Russell's ideas as set out in *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* and as repeated or modified in *Human Knowledge.*[1]

(i) Philosophers, Russell remarks, have been chiefly interested in language as a means of making statements and conveying information. But 'what is the purpose of language to a sergeant-major?'[2] The purpose of commands is obviously to influence the behaviour of others rather than to state facts or convey information. Besides, the sergeant-major's language is also sometimes directed to expressing emotive attitudes. Language, in other words, has a variety of functions.

Though, however, Russell recognizes the complex and flexible character of language, he himself is chiefly interested, like the philosophers to whom he vaguely refers, in descriptive language. This is indeed only to be expected. For Russell regards philosophy as an attempt to understand the world. And his attention is thus naturally centred on language as an instrument in fulfilling this task.[3] This is indeed one reason for his marked lack of sympathy with any tendency to treat language as though it were an autonomous, self-sufficient entity, which can be profitably studied by the philosopher without reference to its relation to non-linguistic fact.[4]

Reference has already been made to Russell's idea of a hierarchy of languages, an idea which is connected with the theory of types. In *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* he assumes this idea and maintains that though the hierarchy extends indefinitely upwards, it cannot extend indefinitely downwards. In other words, there must be a basic or lowest-type language. And Russell proceeds to discuss one possible form of such a language, though he does not claim that it is the only possible form.

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[1] Some discussion of language can also be found in *The Analysis of Mind* and *The Outline of Philosophy.*

[2] *Human Knowledge*, p. 71.

[3] Russell refuses to commit himself to the general statement that there can be no thought without language. But in his opinion complicated, elaborate thought at any rate requires language.

[4] Russell's well-known reference to the type of linguistic analysis which 'is, at best, a slight help to lexicographers, and, at worst, an idle tea-table amusement' (*My Philosophical Development*, p. 217), is obviously polemical and constitutes an exaggeration if considered as a description of 'Oxford philosophy' as a whole; but at the same time it illustrates, by way of contrast, the direction of his own interest, namely in language as an instrument in understanding the world.

The basic or primary language suggested by Russell is an object-language, consisting, that is to say, of object-words. A word of this type can be defined in two ways. Logically, it is a word which has meaning in isolation. Hence the class of object-words would not include terms such as 'or'. Psychologically, an object-word is one the use of which can be learned without its being necessary to have previously learned the uses or meanings of other words. That is to say, it is a word the meaning of which can be learned by ostensive definition, as when one says to a child 'pig', while pointing to an example of this kind of animal.

It does not follow, however, that an object-language of this kind would be confined to nouns. For it would admit verbs such as 'run' and 'hit' and adjectives such as 'red' and 'hard'. And, according to Russell, 'theoretically, given sufficient capacity, we could express in the object-language every non-linguistic occurrence',[1] though this would admittedly involve translating complicated sentences into a kind of 'pidgin'.

Now, meaningful statements expressed in this primary language would *be* either true or false. But we should not be able to *say*, within the limits of the primary language, that any statement expressed in it was true or false. For these logical terms would not be available. It would be necessary to use a second-order language for this purpose. Actual language, of course, includes both object-words and logical words. But the artificial isolation of a possible object-language serves to illustrate the idea of a hierarchy of languages and shows how we can cope with any difficulty arising out of the contention that nothing can be said within a given language *about* this language.[2]

(ii) Truth and falsity obviously presuppose meaning. We could not properly say of a meaningless statement that it was either true or false. For there would be nothing to which these terms could apply. But it does not follow that every meaningful utterance is either true or false. 'Right turn!' and 'Are you feeling better?' are meaningful utterances, but we would not say of either that it is true or false. The range of meaning is thus wider than the range of logical truth and falsity.[1] And in the *Inquiry* Russell tells us that indicative sentences 'alone are true or false',[2] though subsequently we are told that 'truth and falsehood, in so far as they are public, are attributes of sentences, either in the indicative or in the subjective or conditional'.[3]

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[1] *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth*, p. 77. This work will be referred to henceforth as *Inquiry*.

[2] Reference has already been made to the special case of Wittgenstein's contention in the *Tractatus*.

Hitherto we have attributed 'meaning' both to object-words and to sentences. But Russell tends, though without uniform consistency, to restrict the term 'meaning' to object-words and to speak of sentences as having 'significance'. And we can say that 'although meanings must be derived from experience, significance need not'.[4] That is to say, we can understand the significance of a sentence which refers to something which we have never experienced, provided that we know the meanings of the words and that the sentence observes the rules of syntax.

Meaning, when attributed to object-words, signifies reference. And it is said to be fundamental. For it is through the meanings of object-words, learned by experience, that 'language is connected with non-linguistic occurrences in the way that makes it capable of expressing empirical truth or falsehood'.[5] But whereas we might expect a purely logical definition of meaning in this sense, Russell introduces psychological considerations based on what he believes to be the way in which a child, for example, comes to acquire the habit of using certain words correctly. Thus we are told that a word is said to mean an object 'if the sensible presence of the object causes the utterance of the word, and the hearing of the word has effects analogous, in certain respects, to the sensible presence of the object'.[6]

This methodological, though not dogmatic, behaviourism can be found also in, for instance, Russell's account of imperatives. An uttered imperative 'expresses' something in the speaker, a desire coupled with an idea of the intended effect, while it 'means' the external effect intended and commanded. And the heard imperative is understood 'when it causes a certain kind of bodily movement, or an impulse towards such a movement'.[7]

Imperative sentences, however, though significant, are not said to be true or false. So let us consider indicative sentences, which are said to indicate fact. Russell also calls them assertions, maintaining that 'an assertion has two sides, subjective and objective'.[1] Subjectively, an assertion expresses a state of the person who makes the assertion, a state which can be called a belief.[2] Objectively, the assertion is related to something which makes it true or false. An assertion is false if it intends to indicate a fact but fails to do so, true if it succeeds. But true and false assertions are equally meaningful. Hence the significance of an assertion cannot be equated with actual indication of a fact, but lies rather in what the assertion expresses, namely a certain belief or, more accurately, the object of this belief, what is believed. And a heard assertion is said to be significant, from a psychological point of view, if it can cause belief, disbelief or doubt in the hearer.

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[1] This follows in any case from Russell's view of object-words as meaningful in isolation. 'Hard' by itself, for example, is neither true nor false.

[2] *Inquiry*, p. 30.

[3] *Human Knowledge*, p. 127.

[4] *Inquiry*, p. 193.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

[6] *Human Knowledge*, p. 85.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

Russell's insistence on studying language in the context of human life is doubtless largely responsible for his introducing a number of perhaps somewhat confusing psychological considerations. But the main issue can be simplified in this way. The significance of a sentence is that which is common to a sentence in one language and its translation into another language. For example, 'I am hungry' and 'J'ai faim' have a common element which constitutes the significance of the sentence. This common element is the 'proposition'. We cannot ask, therefore, if a proposition is significant. For it *is* the significance. But in the case of indicative sentences at any rate we can properly ask whether the proposition is true or false. Significance is thus independent of truth.

Now, we have noted Russell's insistence that, given certain conditions, we can understand the significance of an assertion which refers to something which we have not personally experienced. It can now be added that he does not wish to tie down the significance of assertions or statements even to the experienceable. And this naturally leads him to adopt a critical attitude towards the logical positivist criterion of meaning. True, in some respects he regards logical positivism with a benevolent eye, chiefly perhaps because of its interpretation of logic and pure mathematics and its serious concern with empirical science. But though he agrees with the positivists in rejecting the idea of 'ineffable knowledge',[3] he has consistently refused to accept the criterion of meaning, according to which the meaning of a factual proposition is identical with the mode of its verification.

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[1] *Inquiry*, p. 171.

[2] Russell uses the term 'belief' in such a wide sense that even animals can be said to have beliefs. Cf. *Inquiry*, p. 171 and *Human Knowledge*, p. 329. But we are here concerned with language, and so with human beings.

[3] 'Ineffable knowledge' is not identical with knowledge of what goes beyond our experience.

In general, Russell argues, the logical positivist criterion of meaning implies two things. First, what cannot be verified or falsified is meaningless. Secondly, two propositions verified by the same occurrences have the same meaning or significance. 'I reject both.'[1] In regard to the first point, the propositions which are most nearly certain, namely judgments of perception, cannot be verified, 'since it is they that constitute the verification of all other empirical propositions that can be in any degree known. If Schlick were right, we should be committed to an endless regress.'[2] In regard to the second point, the hypothesis that the stars exist continuously and the hypothesis that they exist only when I see them are identical in their testable consequences. But they do not have the same significance. Of course, the principle of verifiability can be modified and interpreted as claiming that a factual statement is meaningful if we can imagine sensible experiences which would verify it, if it were true. But Russell comments that in his opinion this is a sufficient but not a necessary criterion of significance.[3]

(iii) In 1906–9 Russell wrote four essays dealing with the subject of truth, especially in relation to pragmatism, which were reprinted in *Philosophical Essays.* At a later date he took up the subject again, the results of this second phase of reflection being embodied in the *Inquiry.* The topic is also treated in *Human Knowledge.* And in *My Philosophical Development* Russell devotes the fifteenth chapter to a review of the course of his investigations.

A certain looseness in the use of terminology is characteristic of Russell. Thus in different places we are told that truth and falsity are predicated of indicative sentences, of sentences in the indicative or in the subjunctive or conditional, of assertions, of propositions and of beliefs. But it does not follow, of course, that all these ways of speaking are mutually incompatible. The significance of a sentence is a proposition; but propositions, according to Russell, express states of belief. Hence we can say that 'it is in fact primarily beliefs that are true or false; sentences only become so through the fact that they can express beliefs'.[4] In any case the main lines of Russell's theory of truth are clear enough.

In the first place Russell rejects the idealist interpretation of truth as coherence. In an early article he argued that if every particular true judgment, when isolated from the total system of truth, is only partially true, and if what would normally be called false judgments are partially true and have their place in the complete system of truth, it follows that the statement 'Bishop Stubbs was hanged for murder' is not completely false but forms part of the whole truth.[1] But this is incredible. And, in general, the coherence theory simply blurs the distinction between truth and falsehood.

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[1] *Human Knowledge*, p. 465.

[2] *Inquiry*, p. 308.

[3] Cf. *Inquiry*, pp. 175 and 309.

[4] *Human Knowledge*, p. 129.

In the second place Russell rejects the pragmatist theory of truth. When he paraphrased William James's statement that the true is only the expedient in our way of thinking as 'a truth is anything which it pays to believe', he was accused of gross misinterpretation. Russell retorted, however, that James's explanation of the real meaning of the statement was even sillier than what he, Russell, had taken the statement to mean. Russell did indeed owe a number of important ideas to James; but he had no sympathy with the American philosopher's account of truth.

In the third place Russell protests against any confusion between truth and knowledge. Obviously, if I can properly be said to know that something is the case, the statement which expresses my knowledge is true. But it by no means follows that a true proposition must be known to be true. Indeed, Russell is prepared to admit the possibility of propositions which are true, though we cannot know them to be true. And if it is objected that this admission is tantamount to an abandonment of pure empiricism, he replies that 'pure empiricism is believed by no one'.[2]

We are left, therefore, with the correspondence theory of truth, according to which 'when a sentence or belief is "true", it is so in virtue of some relation to one or more facts'.[3] These facts are called by Russell 'verifiers'. To know what an assertion or statements means, I must, of course, have some idea of the state of affairs which would make it true. But I need not know that it is true. For the relation between statement and verifier or verifiers is an objective one, independent of my knowledge of it. Indeed, in Russell's opinion I need not be able to mention any particular instance of a verifier in order to know that a statement is meaningful and that it is thus either true or false. And this thesis enables him to maintain that a statement such as 'there are facts which I cannot imagine' is meaningful and either true or false. In Russell's view at any rate I could not mention any particular instance of a fact which cannot be imagined. At the same time I can conceive 'general circumstances'[1] which would verify the belief that there are facts which I cannot imagine. And this is sufficient to render the statement intelligible and capable of being true or false. Whether it *is* true or false, however, depends on a relation which is independent of my knowledge of it. In popular language the statement either corresponds or does not correspond with the facts. And the relation which actually obtains is unaffected by my knowing or not knowing it.

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[1] Cf. *Philosophical Essays*, p. 156.

[2] *Inquiry*, p. 305.

[3] *My Philosophical Development*, p. 189. Cf. *Human Knowledge*, pp. 164–5.

The theory of truth as correspondence with fact does not apply, of course, to the analytic propositions of logic and pure mathematics. For in their case truth 'follows from the form of the sentence'.[2] But in its application to empirical statements or assertions the theory can be said to represent a common sense position. The ordinary man would certainly argue that an empirical factual statement is made true or false by its relation to a fact or facts.[3] Difficulty arises only when we try to give a precise and adequate account of the idea of correspondence in this context. What precisely is meant by it? Russell is conscious of this difficulty. But he tells us that 'every belief which is not merely an impulse to action is in the nature of a picture, combined with a yes-feeling or a no-feeling; in the case of a yes-feeling it is "true" if there is a fact having to the picture the kind of similarity that a prototype has to an image; in the case of a no-feeling it is "true" if there is no such fact. A belief which is not true is called "false". This is a definition of "truth" and "falsehood".'[4]

In the opinion of the present writer the introduction of terms such as 'yes-feeling' and 'no-feeling' into a definition of truth is hardly felicitous. This point apart, however, it is clear that correspondence is conceived by Russell according to the analogy of pictorial representation. But though we may perhaps speak of true and false pictures, that which is strictly speaking true or false is not the picture but the statement that it does or does not correspond with an object or set of objects. So presumably the relation of correspondence which makes a statement true must be, as in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, a structural correspondence between the proposition and the fact or facts which count as its verifier or verifiers. Russell notes, however, that the relation is by no means always simple or of one invariable type.

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[1] *Human Knowledge*, p. 169. Some further specification of these 'general circumstances' seems to be required.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 128.

[3] It is not necessary that the facts should be extra-linguistic. For we can, of course, make statements about *words*, which are made true or false by their relation to linguistic facts. Obviously, this would not apply, for example, to stipulative definitions. But these would in any case be excluded by Russell's custom of predicating truth or falsity of *beliefs*. For a mere declaration that one intends to use a given word in a certain sense cannot be described as a belief.

[4] *Human Knowledge*, p. 170.

3. It scarcely needs saying that no amount of inspection of a belief, as Russell puts it, or of an empirical statement will tell us whether it is true or false. To ascertain this we have to consider the factual evidence. But Russell has claimed that in some other sense or senses we can infer something about the world from the properties of language. Moreover, this is not a claim which he has put forward only once or in passing. For example, in *The Principles of Mathematics* he remarked that though grammatical distinctions cannot legitimately be assumed without more ado to indicate genuine philosophical distinctions, 'the study of grammar, in my opinion, is capable of throwing far more light on philosophical questions than is commonly supposed by philosophers'.[1] Again, even in *An Outline of Philosophy*, where he went as far as he could in a behaviourist interpretation of language, he suggested that 'quite important metaphysical conclusions, of a more or less sceptical kind',[2] can be derived from reflection on the relation between language and things. At a later date, in the *Inquiry*, he explicitly associated himself with those philosophers who 'infer properties of the world from properties of language'[3] and asserted his belief that 'partly by means of the study of syntax, we can arrive at considerable knowledge concerning the structure of the world'.[4] Moreover, in *My Philosophical Development* he quotes the paragraph in which this last assertion occurs with the endorsement 'I have nothing to add to what I said there'.[5]

Russell obviously does not mean that we can infer, without more ado, properties of the world from grammatical forms as they exist in ordinary language. If we could do this, we could infer the substance-accident metaphysics from the subject-predicate form of sentence, whereas we have seen that Russell eliminates the concept of substance by reductive analysis.[6] Nor does Russell mean that from the fact that a term can be eliminated, in the sense that sentences in which this term occurs can be translated into sentences of equivalent truth-value in which the term does not occur, we can infer that no entity exists corresponding to the term in question. As has already been noted, the fact that the term 'the golden mountain' can be eliminated does not prove that there is no golden mountain. It may show that we need not postulate such a mountain. But our grounds for thinking that there actually is no such mountain are empirical, not linguistic, grounds. Similarly, if 'similarity' can be eliminated, this does not by itself prove that there is no entity corresponding to 'similarity'. It may show that we cannot legitimately infer such an entity from language; but to show that language does not provide any adequate ground for inferring a subsistent entity 'similarity' is not the same thing as to prove that there is in fact no such entity. When referring to sentences in which the word 'similarity' cannot be replaced by 'similar' or some such word, Russell remarks that 'these latter need not be admitted'.[1] And it seems obvious that he has already decided, and rightly decided, but on grounds which were not purely linguistic, that it would be absurd to postulate an entity named 'similarity'. For this reason he says that if there are sentences in which 'similarity' cannot be replaced by 'similar', sentences of this class 'need not be admitted'.

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[1] P. 42. [2] P. 275. [3] P. 341. [4] P. 347. [5] P. 173.

[6] According to Russell, if Aristotle had thought and written in Chinese instead of in Greek, he would have evolved a somewhat different philosophy.

The question can thus be formulated in this way. Can we infer properties of the world from the indispensable properties of a logically purified and reformed language? And the answer to this question seems to depend very largely on the sense which is given to the term 'infer' in this context. If it is suggested that a logically purified language can serve as an ultimate premiss from which we can deduce properties of the world, the validity of this idea appears to me questionable. For one thing it would have to be shown that no ontological decisions, made on grounds which could not reasonably be described as purely linguistic, had influenced the construction of the logically purified language. In other words, it would have to be shown that assessment of the indispensable features of language had not been influenced and guided by empirically-based convictions about features of extra-linguistic reality.

If, however, the claim that we can infer properties of the world from properties of language simply means that if we find that it is necessary to speak of things in certain ways, there is at least a strong presumption that there is some reason in things themselves for this necessity, the claim seems to be reasonable. Language has developed through the centuries in response to man's experience and needs. And if we find, for example, that we cannot get along without being able to say of two or more things that they are similar or alike, it is probable that some things are indeed of such a kind that they can be appropriately described as similar or alike, and that the world does not consist simply of entirely heterogeneous and unrelated particulars. But in the long run the question whether there actually are things which can appropriately be described in this way, is a question which has to be decided empirically.

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[1] *Inquiry*, p. 347.

It might perhaps be objected that we cannot talk of 'things' at all without implying similarity. For if there are things, they are necessarily similar in being things or beings. This is doubtless true. And in this sense we can infer from language that similarity is a feature of the world. But this does not alter the fact that it is ultimately through experience, and not from language, that we know that there are things. Reflection on language can doubtless serve to sharpen our awareness of features of extra-linguistic reality and to make us notice what we possibly had not noticed before. But that language can serve as an ultimate premiss for inferring properties of the world seems to be highly questionable.

CHAPTER XXI

BERTRAND RUSSELL (3)

Introductory remarks—Russell's earlier moral philosophy and the influence of Moore—Instinct, mind and spirit—The relation of the judgment of value to desire—Social science and power—Russell's attitude towards religion—The nature of philosophy as conceived by Russell—Some brief critical comments.

1. We have been concerned so far with the more abstract aspects of Russell's philosophy. But we noted that his first book was on *German Social Democracy* (1896). And concomitantly with or in the intervals between his publications on mathematics, logic, the theory of knowledge, the philosophy of science and so on he has produced a spate of books and articles on ethical, social and political topics. At the 1948 International Philosophical Congress at Amsterdam a Communist professor from Prague took it upon himself to refer to Russell as an example of an ivory-tower philosopher. But whatever one's estimate may be of Russell's ideas in this or that field of inquiry and reflection, this particular judgment was patently absurd. For Russell has not only written on matters of practical concern but also actively campaigned in favour of his ideas. His imprisonment towards the close of the First World War has already been mentioned. During the Second World War he found himself in sympathy with the struggle against the Nazis, and after the war, when the Communists were staging take-overs in a number of countries, he vehemently criticized some of the more unpleasant aspects of Communist policy and conduct. In other words, his utterances were for once in tune with the official attitude in his own country. And in 1949 he received the Order of Merit from King George VI.[1] In more recent years he has not only campaigned for the introduction of a system of world-government but also sponsored the movement for nuclear disarmament. In fact he carried his sponsorship to the extent of taking a personal part in the movement of civil disobedience. And as he refused to pay the imposed fine, this activity earned him a week or so in gaol.[2] Thus

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[1] I do not mean to imply, of course, that this high honour was not a tribute to Russell's eminence as a philosopher.

[2] The short period was passed in the prison infirmary, it is only fair to add, not in the usual conditions of prison life.

even at a very advanced age Russell has continued to battle on behalf of the welfare of humanity, as he sees it. And the charge of 'ivory-tower philosopher' is obviously singularly inappropriate.

In the following section, however, we shall be concerned with the more theoretical aspects of Russell's ethical and political thought. To the general public he is, of course, best known for his writing on concrete issues. But it would be out of place in a history of philosophy to discuss Russell's opinions about, say, sex[1] or nuclear disarmament, especially as he himself does not regard discussion of such concrete issues as pertaining to philosophy in a strict sense.

2. The first chapter in *Philosophical Essays* (1910) is entitled 'The Elements of Ethics' and represents a conflation of an article on determinism and morals which appeared in the *Hibbert Journal* in 1908 and of two articles on ethics which appeared in 1910 in the February and May issues of the *New Quarterly*. At this period Russell maintained that ethics aims at discovering true propositions about virtuous and vicious conduct, and that it is a science. If we ask why we ought to perform certain actions, we eventually arrive at basic propositions which cannot themselves be proved. But this is not a feature peculiar to ethics, and it does not weaken its claim to be a science.

Now, if we ask for reasons why we ought to perform certain actions and not to perform others, the answer generally refers to consequences. And if we assume that an action is right because it produces good consequences or leads to the attainment of a good, it is clear that some things at any rate must be good in themselves. Not all things can be good. If they were, we could not distinguish between right and wrong actions. And some things may be considered good as means to something else. But we cannot do without the concept of things which are intrinsically good, possessing the property of goodness 'quite independently of our opinion on the subject, or of our wishes or other people's'.[2] True, people often have different opinions about what is good. And it may be difficult to decide between these opinions. But it does not follow from this that there is nothing which *is* good. Indeed, '*good* and *bad* are qualities which belong to objects independently of our opinions, just as much as *round* and *square* do'.[1]

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[1] We may remark in passing that in 1940 Russell's appointment to the College of the City of New York was cancelled because of his views on marriage and sexual conduct. True, he was given a chair at the Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia, but this appointment lasted only until 1943. The New York episode led to a good deal of acrid controversy, on which the present writer does not feel called upon to pass any comment.

[2] *Philosophical Essays*, p. 10.

Though goodness is an objective property of certain things, it is indefinable. It cannot therefore be identified with, say, the pleasant. That which gives pleasure may be good. But, if it is, this is because it possesses, over and above pleasantness, the indefinable quality of goodness. 'Good' no more means 'pleasant' than it means 'existent'.

Now if we assume that goodness is an intrinsic, indefinable property of certain things, it can be perceived only immediately. And the judgment in which this perception is expressed will be insusceptible of proof. The question arises, therefore, whether differences between such judgments do not weaken or even entirely undermine the thesis that there can be knowledge of what is good. Russell obviously does not deny that there have been and are different judgments about what things are good and bad. At the same time such differences, in his opinion, are neither so great nor so widespread as to compel us to relinquish the idea of moral knowledge. In fact, genuine differences between the judgments of different people in regard to intrinsic goodness and badness 'are, I believe, very rare indeed'.[2] Where they exist, the only remedy is to take a closer look.

In Russell's view genuine differences of opinion arise not so much in regard to intrinsic goodness and badness as in regard to the rightness and wrongness of actions. For an action is objectively right 'when, of all that are possible, it is the one which will probably have the best results'.[3] And it is obvious that people may come to different conclusions about means, even when they are in agreement about ends. In these circumstances the moral agent will act in accordance with the judgment at which he arrives after the amount of reflection which is appropriate in the given case.

The thesis that goodness is an intrinsic, indefinable property of certain things, together with the subordination of the concepts of right and obligation to the concept of the good, obviously show the influence of Russell's friend, G. E. Moore. And this influence persists, to some extent at least, in *Principles of Social Reconstruction* (1916). Russell is here mainly concerned with social and political themes; and he tells us that he did not write the book in his capacity as a philosopher. But when he says that 'I consider the best life that which is most built on creative impulses'[1] and explains that what he means by creative impulses are those which aim at bringing into existence good or valuable things such as knowledge, art and goodwill, his point of view is certainly in harmony with that of Moore.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 11. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 53. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

3. At the same time, though there is certainly no explicit recantation in *Principles of Social Reconstruction* of the views which Russell took over from Moore, we can perhaps see in certain aspects of what he says the manifestation of a tendency to make good and bad relative to desire. In any case there is a marked tendency to interpret morality in the light of anthropology, of a certain doctrine about human nature. I do not mean to imply that this is necessarily a bad thing. I mean rather that Russell is moving away from a purely Moorean point of view in ethics.

'All human activity', Russell agrees, 'springs from two sources: impulse and desire.'[2] As he goes on to say that the suppression of impulse by purposes, desires and will means the suppression of vitality, one's natural tendency is to think that he is talking about conscious desire. But the desire which lies at the basis of human activity is presumably in the first instance unconscious desire. And in *The Analysis of Mind* Russell insists, under the influence of psycho-analytic theory, that 'all primitive desire is unconscious'.[3]

The expression of natural impulse is in itself a good thing because men possess 'a central principle of growth, an instinctive urgency leading them in a certain direction, as trees seek the light'.[4] But this approval of natural impulse, which sometimes puts us in mind of Rousseau, stands in need of qualification. If we follow natural impulse alone, we remain in bondage to it, and we cannot control our environment in a constructive manner. It is mind, impersonal objective thought, which exercises a critical function in regard to impulse and instinct and enables us to decide what impulses need to be suppressed or diverted because they conflict with other impulses or because the environment makes it impossible or undesirable to satisfy them. It is also mind which enables us to control our environment to a certain extent in a constructive manner. So while he insists on the principles of 'vitality', Russell does not give a blanket approval to impulse.

We have seen that Russell attributes human activities to two sources, impulse and desire. Later on he attributes it to 'instinct, mind and spirit'.[1] Instinct is the source of vitality, while mind exercises a critical function in regard to instinct. Spirit is the principle of impersonal feelings and enables us to transcend the search for purely personal satisfaction by feeling the same interest in other people's joys and sorrows as in our own, by caring about the happiness of the human race as a whole and by serving ends which are in some sense supra-human, such as truth or beauty or, in the case of religious people, God.

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[1] *Principles of Social Reconstruction*, p. 5.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[3] P. 76.

[4] *Principles of Social Reconstruction*, p. 24.

Perhaps we can adopt the suggestion of Professor J. Buchler[2] that for Russell impulse and desire are the basic modes of initial stimulus, while instinct, mind and spirit are the categories under which human activities as we know them can be classified. In any case Russell obviously has in mind a progressive integration of desires and impulses under the control of mind, both in the individual and in society. At the same time he insists on the function of spirit, considered as the capacity for impersonal feeling. For 'if life is to be fully human it must serve some end which seems, in some sense, outside human life'.[3]

4. Even if in *Principles of Social Reconstruction* Russell retained, though with some misgiving, the Moorean idea that we can have intuitive knowledge of intrinsic goodness and badness, he did not retain the idea very long. For example, after having remarked in a popular essay, *What I Believe* (1925), that the good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge, he explains that he is not referring to ethical knowledge. For 'I do not think there is, strictly speaking, such a thing as ethical knowledge'.[4] Ethics is distinguished from science by desire rather than by any special form of knowledge. 'Certain ends are desired, and right conduct is what conduces to them.'[5] Similarly, in *An Outline of Philosophy* (1927) Russell explicitly says that he has abandoned Moore's theory of goodness as an indefinable intrinsic quality, and he refers to the influence on his mind in this respect of Santayana's *Winds of Doctrine* (1926). He now holds that good and bad are 'derivative from desire'.[6] Language is, of course, a social phenomenon, and, generally speaking, we learn to apply the word 'good' to the things desired by the social group to which we belong. But 'primarily, we call something "good" when we desire it, and "bad" when we have an aversion from it'.[7]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 205.

[2] In *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, edited by P. A. Schilpp, p. 524.

[3] *Principles of Social Reconstruction*, p. 245.

[4] P. 37.

[5] P. 40.

[6] *An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 238.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 242.

To say nothing more than this, however, would be to give an over-simplified account of Russell's ethical position. In the first place the utilitarian element in his earlier ethical ideas, an element common to him and to Moore, has remained unchanged. That is to say, he has continued to regard as right those actions which produce good consequences and as wrong those actions which produce bad consequences. And in this restricted field knowledge is possible. For example, if two men agree that a certain end *X* is desirable and so good, they can perfectly well argue about which possible action or series of actions is most likely to attain this end. And in principle they can come to an agreed conclusion representing probable knowledge.[1] But though the context would be ethical, the knowledge attained would not be in any way specifically different from knowledge of the appropriate means for attaining a certain end in a non-ethical context. In other words it would not be a case of a peculiar kind of knowledge called 'ethical' or 'moral'.

When we turn, however, from an examination of the appropriate means for attaining a certain end to value-judgments about ends themselves, the situation is different. We have seen that Russell once maintained that differences of opinion about values are not so great as to make it unreasonable to hold that we can and do have immediate knowledge of intrinsic goodness and badness, ethical intuition in other words. But he abandoned this view and came to the conclusion that a difference of opinion about values is basically 'one of tastes, not one as to any objective truth'.[2] If, for instance, a man tells me that cruelty is a good thing,[3] I can, of course, agree with him in the sense of pointing out the practical consequences of such a judgment. But if he still stands by his judgment, even when he realizes what it 'means', I can give him no theoretical proof that cruelty is wrong. Any 'argument' that I may employ is really a persuasive device designed to change the man's desires. And if it is unsuccessful there is no more to be said. Obviously, if someone professes to deduce a certain value-judgment from other value-judgments and one thinks that the alleged deduction is logically erroneous, one can point this out. And if a man meant by '*X* is good' no more than that *X* has certain empirical consequences, we could argue about whether *X* does or does not tend in practice to produce these effects. For this would be a purely empirical matter. But the man would not be likely to say, even in this case, '*X* is good' unless he approved of the consequences; and his approval would express a desire or taste. In the long run, therefore, we ultimately reach a point where theoretical proof and disproof no longer have a role to play.

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[1] It would not be certain or demonstrative knowledge. But neither is scientific knowledge certain knowledge.

[2] *Religion and Science* (1935), p. 238.

[3] The statement 'I think that cruelty is good' or 'I approve of cruelty' would be an ordinary empirical statement, relating to a psychological fact. 'Cruelty is good', however, is a value-judgment.

The matter can be clarified in this way. Russell may have sometimes expressed himself in such a way as to imply that in his opinion judgments of value are a matter of purely personal taste, without involving other people in any way. But this is certainly not his considered opinion. In his view judgments of value are really in the optative mood. To say '*X* is good' is to say 'would that everyone desired *X*', and to say '*y* is bad' is to say 'would that everyone felt an aversion from *y*'.[1] And if this analysis is accepted, it is obvious that 'cruelty is bad', when taken as meaning 'would that everyone had an aversion from cruelty', is no more describable as true or false than 'would that everyone appreciated good claret'. Hence there can be no question of proving that the judgment 'cruelty is bad' is true or false.

Obviously, Russell is perfectly aware that there is a sense in which it is true to say that it does not matter much if a man appreciates good wine or not, whereas it may matter very much whether people approve of cruelty or not. But he would regard these practical considerations as irrelevant to the purely philosophical question of the correct analysis of the value-judgment. If I say 'cruelty is bad', I shall obviously do anything which lies in my power to see that education, for example, is not so conducted as to encourage the belief that cruelty is admirable. But if I accept Russell's analysis of the value-judgment, I must admit that my own evaluation of cruelty is not theoretically provable.

Now, Russell has sometimes been criticized for giving vehement expression to his own moral convictions, as though this were inconsistent with his analysis of the value-judgment. But he can make, and has made, the obvious retort that as in his opinion judgments of value express desires, and as he himself has strong desires, there is no inconsistency in giving them vehement expression. And this reply seems to be quite valid, as far as it goes.

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[1] In his *Replies to Criticism* Russell says: 'I do not think that an ethical judgment *merely* expresses a desire; I agree with Kant that it must have an element of universality'. *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, edited by P. A. Schilpp, p. 722.

At the same time, when we remember that he is prepared to condemn certain lines of conduct, such as the treatment of the unfortunate prisoners at Ausschwitz, even if it could be shown that such conduct would ultimately benefit the human race and increase the general happiness, it is very difficult to avoid the impression that he really does think after all that some things are intrinsically bad, whether other people think they are bad or not.

Indeed, Russell himself seems to have a suspicion that this is the case. For after having remarked that he sees no logical inconsistency between his ethical theory and the expression of strong moral preferences, he adds that he is still not quite satisfied. His own theory of ethics does not satisfy him, but then other people's theories he finds even less satisfactory.[1] Hence we can perhaps say that while Russell would like to be able to return to the idea of intrinsic goodness and badness, he is at the same time convinced that a truly empirical and scientific philosophy can neither discover Moore's indefinable property of goodness nor admit self-evident moral principles.

One possible line of objection against Russell's analysis of the value-judgment is that it does not at all represent what ordinary people think that they are saying when they make such judgments. But Russell has never been the man to worry much about what the non-philosopher thinks. Nor has he ever been a devotee of 'ordinary language'. It is understandable, however, if some younger moral philosophers[2] have tried to give an account of the judgment of values, which pays more attention to ordinary language and its implications and yet refrains from re-introducing Moore's indefinable non-natural property.

5. There is at least one part of ethics which Russell regards as belonging to philosophy in a strict sense, namely the analysis of the judgment of value, the doctrine that to exhibit the logical form of such judgments one has to express them in the optative rather than in the indicative mood. But social and political theory is regarded by Russell as lying wholly outside the sphere of philosophy in the proper sense. Hence, though it might be considered odd to say nothing at all about them, no apology is needed for treating them in a very brief and sketchy manner.

In a famous essay which he wrote in 1902 Russell spoke of 'the tyranny of non-human power',[1] Nature's triumphant indifference to human ideals and values, and he also condemned the worship of naked power, of force, and the creed of militarism. He envisaged man turning his back on unthinking power and creating his own realm of ideal values, even if this realm is doomed in the end to utter extinction. It may therefore be somewhat surprising at first sight to find Russell saying in 1938 that those economists are mistaken who think that self-interest is the fundamental motive in social life, and that the basic concept in social science is that of power.[2] For if the word 'power' were interpreted in the same sense in which Russell condemned power in 1902, it would seem to follow that in 1938 he has either radically altered his opinions or is urging men to turn their backs on social and political life, something which is very far from being his intention.

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[1] Cf. *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, edited by P. A. Schilpp, p. 724.

[2] I am thinking, for example, of Mr. R. M. Hare of Oxford.

In point of fact, however, Russell has never altered his dislike of 'naked power' and his condemnation of the love of power for its own sake. When he says that power is the basic concept in social science and that the laws of social dynamics cannot be stated except in terms of it, he is using the term to mean 'the production of intended effects'.[3] And when he says that though the desire of commodities and material comfort certainly operates in human life, the love of power is more fundamental, he means by 'love of power' 'the desire to be able to produce intended effects upon the outer world, whether human or non-human'.[4] Whether the love of power in this sense is a good or a bad thing depends on the nature of the effects which a man or group desires to produce.

The matter can be put in this way. In *Power* Russell assumes that energy is the basic concept in physics. He then looks for a basic concept in social science and finds it in power. And as power, like energy, is constantly passing from one form to another, he assigns to social science the task of discovering the laws of the transformation of power. But though Russell rejects the economic theory of history as unrealistic, that is, as minimizing the role of the fundamental motive-force in social life, he does not attempt to classify all human activities in terms of power. For example, it is possible to pursue knowledge for the sake of power, that is, of control; and this impulse has become increasingly conspicuous in modern science. But it is also possible to pursue knowledge in a contemplative spirit, for love of the object itself. Indeed, 'the lover, the poet and the mystic find a fuller satisfaction than the seeker after power can ever know, since they can rest in the object of their love'.[1]

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[1] *Mysticism and Logic*, p. 49 (also *Philosophical Essays*, p. 62).

[2] Cf. *Power: A New Social Analysis* (1938), p. 10. This work will be referred to simply as *Power*.

[3] *Power*, p. 35.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 274

If power is defined as the production of intended effects and love of power as the desire to produce such effects, it obviously follows that power is not an end in itself but a means to the attainment of ends other than itself. And in Russell's opinion 'the ultimate aim of those who have power (and we all have some) should be to promote social co-operation, not in one group as against another, but in the whole human race'.[2] Democracy is upheld as a safeguard against the arbitrary exercise of power.[3] And the ideal of social co-operation in the whole human race is represented as leading to the concept of a world-government possessing the authority and power to prevent the outbreak of hostility between nations.[4] Science has helped to unify the world on the technological plane. But politics has lagged behind science; and we have not yet achieved an effective world-organization capable of utilizing the benefits conferred by science and at the same time of preventing the evils which science has made possible.

It does not follow, of course, that social organization is for Russell the one worthwhile aim of life. In fact it is itself a means rather than an end, a means to the promotion of the good life. Man has acquisitive and predatory impulses; and it is an essential function of the State to control the expression of these impulses in individuals and groups, just as it would be the function of a world-government to control their expression as manifested by States. But man also has his creative impulses, 'impulses to put something into the world which is not taken away from anybody else'.[5] And it is the function of government and law to facilitate the expression of such impulses rather than to control them. Applied to world-government, this idea implies that different nations should remain free to develop their own cultures and ways of life.

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[1] *The Scientific Outlook* (1931), p. 275.

[2] *Power*, p. 283.

[3] Russell can be called a socialist, but he has emphasized the dangers of socialism when divorced from effective democracy.

[4] If in recent years Russell has paid more attention to campaigning for nuclear disarmament than for a world-government, this is doubtless because the prospect of achieving effective world-government by agreement seems to be somewhat remote, whereas a suicidal world-war could break out at any time.

[5] *Authority and the Individual* (1949), p. 105. In this work Russell discusses the problem of combining social cohesion with individual liberty in the light of concrete possibilities.

Russell's analysis of social dynamics in terms of the idea of power is doubtless open to criticism on the ground of over-simplification. But the point to notice is that he has consistently subordinated fact to value, in the sense that he has always insisted on the primacy of ethical ends and on the need for organizing human society with a view to facilitating the harmonious development of the human personality. It scarcely needs to be added that Russell does not claim that his judgments about the ethical ends of social and political organization and about what constitutes a good life are exempt from his own analysis of the judgment of value. He would admit that they express personal desires, personal recommendations. And it is for this very reason, of course, that he does not regard them as pertaining to philosophy in a strict sense.

6. Except for noting that Russell abandoned belief in God at an early age, we have not yet said anything about his attitude to religion. To look for a profound philosophy of religion in his writings would be to look in vain. But as he has often referred to the subject, it seems appropriate to give a general indication of his views.

Though, like J. S. Mill before him, Russell evidently thinks that the evil and suffering in the world constitute an unanswerable objection to belief in a God who is described both as infinitely good and as omnipotent, he would not claim that the non-existence of a divine being transcending the world can be proved. Technically speaking, therefore, he is an agnostic. At the same time he does not believe that there is any real evidence for the existence of a God. And it is indeed clear from the whole character of his philosophy that the traditional arguments for God's existence are excluded. On a phenomenalistic analysis of causality no causal inference to a meta-phenomenal being can be valid. And if 'order, unity and continuity are human inventions just as truly as are catalogues and encyclopaedias',[1] we cannot get very far with an argument based on order and finality in the world. As for the arguments adduced by some modern scientists, there is, for example, nothing in evolution to warrant the hypothesis that it manifests a divine purpose. And even if a case can be made out for the thesis that the world had a beginning in time, we are not entitled to infer that it was created. For it might have begun spontaneously. It may seem odd that it should have done so;

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[1] *The Scientific Outlook*, p. 101.

'but there is no law of nature to the effect that things which seem odd to us must not happen'.[1]

Though, however, Russell does not think that there is any evidence for the existence of God, he has made it clear that belief in God, taken by itself, would no more arouse his hostility than belief in elves or fairies. It would simply be an example of a comforting but unsupported belief in a hypothetical entity, which does not necessarily make a man a worse citizen than he would otherwise be. Russell's attacks are directed primarily against the Christian religious bodies, which in his view have generally done more harm than good, and against theology only in so far as it has been invoked in support of persecution and religious wars and as a warrant for preventing the taking of means to certain ends which he considers desirable.

At the same time, though Russell often writes in a Voltairean manner, he is not simply a spiritual descendant of *les philosophes*. He attaches value to what we may call religious emotion and a religious attitude of serious concern about life. And in so far as he can be said to have a religion, it is the life of the 'spirit' as sketched in *Principles of Social Reconstruction*. True, this book appeared in 1916, but at a much later date he has remarked that the expression of his own personal religion which seems to him 'least unsatisfactory is the one in *Social Reconstruction*'.[2]

Russell's polemics against Christianity do not concern us here. It is sufficient to point out that though on occasion he pays tribute to, for example, the ideal of love and to the Christian idea of the value of the individual, attack is more prominent than commendation. And while Russell undoubtedly draws attention to some familiar black patches in Christian history, he tends to exaggerate and, sometimes, to sacrifice accuracy to wit and sarcasm. More relevant here, however, is the consideration that he has never tried systematically to dissociate what he regards as valuable in religion from theological belief. If he had, he might possibly have had second thoughts about his position, though it is probably too much to expect that he would ask himself seriously whether God is not in some sense an implicit presupposition of some of the problems which he himself has raised.

7. It is not possible to sum up Russell's view of the nature of philosophy in a concise statement. For he speaks in different ways

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[1] *The Scientific Outlook*, p. 122.

[2] *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, edited by P. A. Schilpp, p. 726.

at different times.[1] And he has never been a man for gathering together all the threads and showing in detail how they fit together, how they form an intelligible pattern. He has been too intent with getting on with the next matter in hand. At the same time it is not, I think, very difficult to understand how he came to express rather different views about the nature and scope of philosophy. Nor is it very difficult to discover persistent elements in his concept of philosophy.

As far as its basic motive is concerned, philosophy has always been for Russell a pursuit of knowledge, of objective truth. And he has expressed his conviction that one of the main tasks of philosophy is to understand and interpret the world, even to discover, as far as this is possible, the ultimate nature of reality. True, Russell believes that in practice philosophers have often set out to prove preconceived beliefs; and he has referred to Bradley's famous saying that metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what one believes by instinct. He is also convinced that in practice some philosophers have employed thought and argument to establish comforting beliefs which have seemed to them to possess pragmatic value. Further, when comparing the aims and ambitions of philosophy with the actual results achieved, he has sometimes spoken as though science were the only means of attaining anything which could properly be called knowledge. But all this does not alter the fact that in regard to what ought to be the attitude, motive and aims of the philosopher Russell has maintained what can reasonably be described as a traditional view. This is apparent in his earlier writings; and it is also apparent in his later attack on 'linguistic' philosophy, that is, on philosophy as concerned exclusively with mapping out so-called ordinary language, on the ground that the philosophers who represent this tendency have abandoned the important task of interpreting the world.[2]

As we have noted, however, the method on which Russell lays the chief emphasis is analysis. In general philosophy this means that the philosopher starts with a body of common knowledge or what is assumed to be knowledge. This constitutes his data. He then reduces this complex body of knowledge, expressed in propositions which are somewhat vague and often logically interdependent, to a number of propositions which he tries to make as simple and precise as possible. These are then arranged in deductive chains, depending logically on certain initial propositions which serve as premisses. 'The discovery of these premisses belongs to philosophy; but the work of deducing the body of common knowledge from them belongs to mathematics, if "mathematics" is interpreted in a somewhat liberal sense.'[1] In other words, philosophy proceeds by logical analysis from the complex and relatively concrete to what is simpler and more abstract. It thus differs from the special sciences, which proceed from the simpler to the more complex, and also from purely deductive mathematics.

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[1] Russell is, of course, as free as anybody else to change his mind. But, this fact apart, we have to remember, in regard to utterances which, abstractly considered, are scarcely compatible, that in a given context and for polemical reasons he sometimes exaggerates one particular aspect of a subject.

[2] Cf. *My Philosophical Development*, p. 230.

The philosopher may find, however, that some of the logically implied premisses of a common body of assumed knowledge are themselves open to doubt. And the degree of probability of any consequence will depend on the degree of probability of the premiss which is most open to doubt. Thus logical analysis does not simply serve the purpose of discovering implied initial propositions or premisses. It also serves the purpose of helping us to estimate the degree of probability attaching to what commonly passes for knowledge, the consequences of the premisses.

Now, there can be little doubt that the method of analysis was suggested to Russell by his work in mathematical logic. And it is thus understandable that he has spoken of logic as the essence of philosophy and has declared that every philosophical problem, when properly analyzed, is found to be either not really a philosophical problem at all or else a logical problem, in the sense of being a problem of logical analysis.[2] This analysis is inspired by the principle of economy or Ockham's razor and leads to logical atomism.

We have noted, however, how Russell was converted to Wittgenstein's theory of the propositions of formal logic and pure mathematics as systems of 'tautologies'. And if we look at the matter from this point of view, it is perfectly understandable that he has emphasized the difference between logic and philosophy. For example, 'logic, I maintain, is not part of philosophy'.[3] But to say that formal logic, as a system of tautologies, falls outside philosophy is not, of course, incompatible with an insistence on the importance in philosophy of logical analysis, the reductive analysis which has been characteristic of Russell's thought. True, in proportion as his early work in mathematical logic has receded into the distance, Russell has become less and less inclined to speak of logic as the essence of philosophy. And the more he has come to emphasize the tentative character of philosophical hypotheses, so much the wider has he made the gap between philosophy and logic in the strict sense. Thus there is no question of maintaining that there has been no change in Russell's attitude. After all, having once said that logic is the essence of philosophy, he has declared at a later date that logic is not part of philosophy at all. At the same time we have to remember that when Russell made the first of these statements he meant, in part at any rate, that the method of philosophy is or ought to be the method of logical analysis. And he has never abandoned belief in the value of this method.

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[1] *Our Knowledge of the External World*, p. 214.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

[3] *Human Knowledge*, p. 5.

Though, however, Russell has retained his belief in the value of the reductive analysis which is a characteristic feature of his thought and has defended this sort of analysis against recent criticism, it is undeniable that his general conception of philosophy underwent a considerable change. We have seen that there was a time when he sharply distinguished between philosophical method on the one hand and scientific method on the other. Later on, however, we find him saying that the philosopher should learn from science 'principles and methods and general conceptions'.[1] In other words, Russell's reflections on the relation between philosophy and science, reflections which were posterior to his work in mathematical logic and to the first conception and employment of reductive analysis, had a considerable influence on his general idea of philosophy. Thus whereas at the time when he was saying that logic is the essence of philosophy, he tended to give the impression that if philosophical problems were properly analyzed and reduced to precise manageable questions they could be solved one by one, he later came to emphasize the need for bold and sweeping provisional hypotheses in philosophy. At the same time he has shown a marked tendency on occasion to question the philosopher's ability to find any real solutions to his problems. Perhaps the following remarks on Russell's ideas about the relation between philosophy and the empirical sciences may serve to make his different utterances more intelligible.

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[1] *An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 2.

Philosophy, according to Russell, presupposes science, in the sense that it should be built upon a foundation of empirical knowledge.[1] It must therefore in some sense go beyond science. It is obvious that the philosopher is not in a better position than the scientist to solve problems which are recognized as pertaining to science. He must therefore have his own problems to solve, his own work to do. But what is this work?

Russell has said that the most important part of philosophy consists in criticism and clarification of notions which are apt to be regarded as ultimate and to be accepted in an uncritical manner.[2] This programme presumably covers the critical examination and 'justification' of scientific inference to which reference was made in the previous chapter. But it also includes criticism and clarification of supposedly basic concepts such as those of minds and physical objects. And the fulfilment of this task leads with Russell, as we have seen, to the interpretation of minds and physical objects as logical constructions out of events. But we have also seen that Russell does not consider reductive analysis in this context to be simply a linguistic affair, that is, simply a matter of finding an alternative language to that of minds and physical objects. In a real sense analysis is conceived as aiming at a knowledge of the ultimate constituents of the universe. And the entities of physical science, atoms, electrons and so on, are themselves interpreted as logical constructions. Philosophical analysis, therefore, does not go beyond science in the sense of trying to clarify confused concepts which science takes for granted. On the scientific level the concept of the atom is not confused. Or, if it is, it is hardly the philosopher's business to clarify it. Philosophy goes beyond science in the sense that it advances an ontological or metaphysical hypothesis.

It is in no way surprising, therefore, that Russell should have asserted that one of the jobs of philosophy is to suggest bold hypotheses about the universe. But a question at once arises. Are these hypotheses to be regarded exclusively as hypotheses which science is not yet in a position to confirm or refute, though it could in principle do so? Or is the philosopher entitled to propose hypotheses which are in principle unverifiable by science? In other words, has philosophy or has it not problems about the universe which are peculiarly its own?

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[1] Cf. for example, *My Philosophical Development*, p. 230, where Russell is criticizing linguistic philosophy, which he regards as trying to effect a divorce of philosophy from science.

[2] *Contemporary British Philosophy*, First Series, p. 379, and *Logic and Knowledge*, p. 341.

Russell does indeed speak of the problems of philosophy as problems which 'do not, at least at present, belong to any of the special sciences',[1] and which science is thus not yet in a position to solve. Moreover, if the hypotheses of science are provisional, the hypotheses which philosophy advances as solutions to its problems are much more provisional and tentative. In fact, 'science is what you more or less know and philosophy is what you do not know'.[2] True, Russell has admitted that this particular statement was a jocular remark; but he considers that it is a justifiable joke provided that we add that 'philosophical speculation as to what we do not yet know has shown itself a valuable preliminary to exact scientific knowledge'.[3] If philosophical hypotheses are verified, they then become part of science and cease to be philosophical.

This point of view represents what we may call the positivist side of Russell. I do not mean to suggest that he has ever been a 'logical positivist'. For, as we have seen, he has always rejected the logical positivist criterion of meaning. When he says that unverified philosophical hypotheses do not constitute knowledge, he is not saying that they are meaningless. At the same time the statement that 'all *definite* knowledge—so I should contend—belongs to science'[4] can be described as positivist, if we mean by positivism the doctrine that it is only science which provides positive knowledge about the world. It is, however, worth remarking that when Russell makes statements of this nature, he seems to forget that on his theory of the unprovable postulates of scientific inference it is difficult to see how science can be asserted with confidence to provide definite knowledge, though, admittedly, we all believe that it is capable of doing so.

This positivist attitude, however, represents only one aspect of Russell's conception of the problems of philosophy. For he has also depicted the philosopher as considering problems which are not in principle capable of receiving scientific solutions. True, he seems generally to be referring to philosophy in the popular or in the historical sense. But he certainly remarks that 'almost all the questions of most interest to speculative minds are such as science cannot answer'.[5] Further, it is in the business of philosophy to study such questions, for example the problem of the end or ends of life, even if it cannot answer them. Obviously, such problems would be essentially philosophical problems. And even if Russell is sceptical about philosophy's capacity to answer them, he certainly does not regard them as meaningless. On the contrary, 'it is one of the functions of philosophy to keep alive interest in such questions'.[1]

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[1] *An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 1.

[2] *Logic and Knowledge*, p. 281.

[3] *Unpopular Essays* (1950), p. 39.

[4] *History of Western Philosophy* (1945), p. 10.

[5] *Ibid.*

There are indeed some perplexing juxtapositions of conflicting statements in Russell's writings. For example, in the very paragraph in which he says that 'philosophy should make us know the ends of life'[2] he also states that 'philosophy cannot itself determine the ends of life'.[3] Again, having said, as already mentioned, that philosophy should keep alive an interest in such problems as whether the universe has a purpose, and that 'some kind of philosophy is a necessity to all but the more thoughtless',[4] he proceeds to say that 'philosophy is a stage in intellectual development, and is not compatible with mental maturity'.[5]

It is, of course, possible that such apparent inconsistencies can be made to disappear by suitable distinctions in meaning and context. But it is unnecessary to embark here upon detailed exegesis of this sort. It is more to the point to suggest that in Russell's view of philosophy there are two main attitudes. On the one hand he feels strongly that through its impersonal pursuit of truth and its indifference to preconceived beliefs and to what one would like to be true science provides a model for theoretical thinking, and that metaphysical philosophy has a bad record in this respect. He is convinced too that though scientific hypotheses are always provisional and subject to possible revision, science gives us the nearest approach to definite knowledge about the world which we are capable of attaining. Hence such statements as 'whatever can be known, can be known by means of science'.[6] From this point of view the ideal situation would be that philosophy should give way altogether to science. And if in practice it cannot, as there will always be problems which science is not yet in a position to solve, philosophy should become as 'scientific' as possible. That is to say, the philosopher should resist the temptation to use philosophy to prove preconceived or comforting beliefs or to serve as a way of salvation.[7] And concrete judgments of value, as well as reflections depending on such judgments, should be excluded from 'scientific' philosophy.

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[1] *Unpopular Essays*, p. 41.

[2] *An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 312.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Unpopular Essays*, p. 41.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[6] *History of Western Philosophy*, p. 863.

[7] 'In itself philosophy sets out neither to solve our troubles nor to save our souls', *Wisdom of the West* (1959), p. 6.

On the other hand not only is Russell well aware that 'philosophy' in the popular and historical senses of the term covers a great deal more than would be admitted by the concept of 'scientific' philosophy, but he also feels that there are significant and important questions which science cannot answer but awareness of which broadens our mental horizons. He refuses to rule out such questions as meaningless. And even if he thinks that 'what science cannot discover, mankind cannot know',[1] he is also convinced that if such problems were to be forgotten 'human life would be impoverished',[2] if only because they show the limitations of scientific knowledge. In other words, a certain sympathy with positivism in a general sense is balanced by a feeling that the world has enigmatic aspects, and that to refuse to recognize them is the expression either of an unwarranted dogmatism or of a narrow-minded philistinism.

The matter can be expressed in this way. On his own confession one of the sources of Russell's original interest in philosophy was the desire to discover whether philosophy could provide any defence for some sort of religious belief.[3] He also looked to philosophy to provide him with certain knowledge. On both counts he was disappointed. He came to the conclusion that philosophy could not provide him either with a rational foundation for religious belief or with certainty in any field. There was, of course, mathematics; but mathematics is not philosophy. Russell thus came to the conclusion that science, however provisional its hypotheses may be and to whatever extent scientific inference may rest on unprovable postulates, is the only source of what can reasonably be called definite knowledge. Hence philosophy in a strict sense cannot be much more than philosophy of science and general theory of knowledge, together with an examination of problems which science is not yet in a position to solve but the raising and discussion of which can have a positive stimulative value for science by supplying the required element of anticipatory vision. At the same time Russell has always been passionately interested in the welfare of humanity, as he sees it. Hence he has never hesitated to go beyond the limits of 'scientific' philosophy and to treat of those subjects which involve explicit judgments of value and which are certainly covered by 'philosophy' in the popular sense of the term. A good many at any rate of the apparent inconsistencies in his thought are explicable in terms of these considerations. Some of the rest may be partly due to his reluctance to go back over his writings and to exclude differences in the use of the same term or, alternatively, to explain on each occasion in what precise sense he is using the term. It is also perhaps a relevant point that while Russell has recommended the piecemeal tackling of philosophical problems by logical analysis, he has always shown himself appreciative of the grandeur and attraction of sweeping hypotheses and theories.

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[1] *Religion and Science*, p. 243. [2] *Unpopular Essays*, p. 41.
[3] Cf. *My Philosophical Development*, p. 11.

8. In 1950 Russell received the Nobel Prize for Literature. And there is no doubt but that he is an elegant and, if one prescinds from a certain looseness in the use of terminology, clear writer. Obviously, his early work in mathematical logic is not for the general public. But apart from this, he has brought philosophical reflection to a wide circle of readers who would be unlikely to embark on Kant's first *Critique* or Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit.* In literary style he thus stands in the tradition of Locke and Hume and J. S. Mill, though his more popular writings remind one more of the French philosophers of the Enlightenment. In fact with the general public Russell has become the patron of rationalism and non-religious humanism.

Among philosophers nobody questions, of course, Russell's influence on modern British philosophy and similar currents of thought elsewhere. There has doubtless been a tendency in some countries, notably Germany, to dismiss him as an 'empiricist' who did some good work in mathematics in his early days. But he has discussed philosophical problems of interest and importance, such as the foundations of scientific inference and the nature of the judgment of value. And though some of the devotees of the cult of ordinary language may have criticized Russell's reductive analysis, in the opinion of the present writer such criticism is quite inadequate if it is framed entirely in linguistic terms. For example, if reductive analysis is taken to imply that in principle 'Russia invaded Finland' could be translated into a number of sentences in which the term 'Russia' would not occur but individuals only would be mentioned,[1] the relation between the original sentence and the translation being such that if the former is true (or false) the latter is true (or false) and *vice versa*, the ontological implication is that the State is not in any way an entity over and above its members. And it seems a quite inadequate criticism if it is simply pointed out that we cannot get along in ordinary language without using such terms as 'Russia'. It is true enough. But then we want to know what is the ontological implication of this point of view. Are we to say that the State *is* something over and above its members? If not, how is the concept of the State to be clarified? In terms of individuals related in certain ways? In what ways? It may be said that these questions can be answered by looking at the ways in which terms such as 'State' are actually used. But it seems obvious that in the process of looking we shall find ourselves referring to extra-linguistic factors. Similarly, it is not sufficient to criticize the statement, say, that the world is the class of things on the ground that we cannot get along without being able to refer to 'the world'. This is true. But then we can quite sensibly ask, 'Do you mean that the world cannot properly be regarded as the class of things? If so, how do you conceive it? Your way may be better; but we want to know what it is.'

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[1] The individuals who ordered the invasion, who planned it, who contributed in any way by fighting, making munitions, acting as doctors, and so on.

These remarks are, however, not intended as a general apologia for Russell's use of reductive analysis. For it may very well be that on examining a particular case of such analysis we find that an essential feature is left out. And in the present writer's opinion this is verified, for example, in the case of Russell's analysis of the self. There was a time, as we have seen, when he thought that the phenomenology of consciousness or awareness implies that the I-subject is uneliminable. Later on, however, he depicted the self as a logical construction out of events, thus developing the phenomenalism of Hume. But it seems to me perfectly clear that when sentences beginning with the pronoun 'I' have been translated into sentences in which only 'events' are mentioned and the word 'I' does not appear, an essential feature of the original sentence has simply been omitted, with the result that the translation is inadequate. In a sense Wittgenstein saw this clearly when he spoke in the *Tractatus* about the metaphysical subject. True, he remarked that if I wrote a book about what I found in the world, I could not mention the metaphysical subject. But it could not be mentioned simply because it is subject and not object, not one of the objects which 'I' find in the world. Empirical psychology, therefore, can carry on without the concept of the metaphysical or transcendental ego or I-subject. But for the phenomenology of consciousness it is uneliminable, as Wittgenstein appears to have seen. Russell, however, attempted to eliminate it by eliminating consciousness. And the present writer does not consider his attempt to have been a success. This is not, of course, an argument against reductive analysis as such. What is genuinely superfluous should doubtless be dealt with by Ockham's razor. But it by no means follows that all that Russell thought superfluous *is* superfluous. The attempt, however, to eliminate the uneliminable may have a pragmatic value, in the sense that it can serve to show what cannot be eliminated by analysis.

This may perhaps sound as though the present writer looks on reductive analysis as *the* philosophical method but disagrees with some of Russell's applications of it. This would, however, be an erroneous impression. I think that reductive analysis has its uses. I do not see how exception can be taken to it as *a* possible method. But I certainly do not think that it is the only philosophical method. For one thing, we become aware of the I-subject, the transcendental ego, by the method of transcendental reflection, not by reductive analysis. True, I have suggested that the failure of reductive analysis to eliminate the I-subject may serve to draw attention to the subject. But in actual fact the failure serves this purpose only if it stimulates a transition to phenomenology, to transcendental reflection. The failure as such simply leaves us perplexed, as it did David Hume. For another thing, if reductive analysis is assumed to be *the* philosophical method, this seems to presuppose a metaphysics, an 'atomic' metaphysics opposed to the 'monistic' metaphysics of absolute idealism. And if one's choice of method presupposes a metaphysics, it is no good claiming that this metaphysics is the only 'scientific' one, unless it is uniformly successful in accounting for experience whereas other methods are not.

To turn to another point. We have seen that Russell set out to obtain certainty. And he has said that 'philosophy arises from an unusually obstinate attempt to arrive at real knowledge'.[1] This presupposes that reality, the universe, is intelligible.[2] But a few years later we are told that 'order, unity and continuity are human inventions'.[3] In other words, the intelligibility of the universe is imposed by man, by the human mind. And this enables Russell to dispose, for example, of the claim of Sir James Jeans, the astronomer, that the world should be conceived as the expressed thought of a divine mathematician. For the fact that the world can be interpreted in terms of mathematical physics is to be attributed to the skill of the physicist in imposing a network. It may be said, of course, that even if the original attempt to understand the world presupposes its intelligibility, this presupposition is simply an hypothesis, and that Russell afterwards comes to the conclusion that the hypothesis is not verified. But the refutation of the hypothesis is the result of an examination of the world, an analysis which itself presupposes the intelligibility of what is examined and analyzed. And in any case, if order, unity and continuity are human inventions, what becomes of the claim that science provides definite knowledge? It seems that what is provided is knowledge simply of the human mind and of its operations. And the very same thing might be said, of course, of the results of Russell's reductive analysis. But in any case can we really believe that science does not provide us with any objective knowledge of the extra-mental world? Nobody would deny that science 'works', that it has pragmatic value. In this case, however, the question immediately arises whether the world must not have certain intelligible characteristics for science to possess this pragmatic value. And if the intelligibility of reality is once admitted, the door is again opened to metaphysical questions which Russell is inclined to dismiss in a cavalier manner.

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[1] *An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 1.

[2] It is worth noting that inquiry also presupposes a value-judgment, about the value of truth as a goal for the human mind.

[3] *The Scientific Outlook*, p. 101.

To conclude. Russell's total literary achievements, ranging from abstract mathematical logic to fiction,[1] is extremely impressive. In the history of mathematical logic his place is obviously assured. In general philosophy his development of empiricism with the aid of logical analysis, together with his recognition of the limitations of empiricism as a theory of knowledge, constitutes an important phase in modern British philosophical thought. As for his popular writings in the fields of ethics, politics and social theory, these obviously cannot be put on the same level as, say, *Human Knowledge*, much less *Principia Mathematica*. Yet they reveal, of course, a personality of interest, a humanist who has said, for example, that his intellect leads him to the conclusion that there is nothing in the universe which is higher than man, though his emotions violently rebel. He admits that he has always desired to find in philosophy some justification for the 'impersonal emotions'. And even if he has failed to find it, 'those who attempt to make a religion of humanism, which recognizes nothing greater than man, do not satisfy my emotions'.[1] Russell may be the great patron of non-religious humanism in Great Britain in the present century; but he has his reservations, at least on the emotive level.

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[1] Russell published a book of short stories, *Satan in the Suburbs*, in 1953 and *Nightmares of Eminent Persons* in 1954.

It is thus difficult to classify Russell in an unambiguous manner, for example as an 'empiricist' or as a 'scientific humanist'. But why should we wish to do so? After all, he is Bertrand Russell, a distinct individual and not simply a member of a class. And if in his old age he has become, as it were, a national institution, this is due not simply to his philosophical writing but also to his complex and forceful personality, aristocrat, philosopher, democrat and campaigner for causes in one. It is indeed natural that those of us who hold firm beliefs which are very different from his and which he has attacked, should deplore certain aspects of his influence. But this should not blind one to the fact that Russell is one of the most remarkable Englishmen of the century.

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[1] *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, edited by P. A. Schilpp, p. 19.

EPILOGUE

We have seen that though Bertrand Russell has often expressed very sceptical views about the philosopher's ability to provide us with definite knowledge about the world and though he has certainly little sympathy with any philosopher who claims that his particular system represents final and definitive truth, he has always looked on philosophy as motivated by the desire to understand the world and man's relation to it. Even if in practice philosophy can provide only 'a way of looking at the results of empirical inquiry, a frame-work, as it were, to gather the findings of science into some sort of order',[1] this idea, as put forward by Russell, presupposes that science has given us new ways of seeing the world, new concepts which the philosopher has to take as a point of departure. The scope of his achievement may be limited, but it is the world with which he is ultimately concerned.

In an important sense G. E. Moore was much closer to being a revolutionary. He did not indeed lay down any restrictive dogmas about the nature and scope of philosophy. But, as we have seen, he devoted himself in practice exclusively to analysis as he understood it. And the effect of his example was to encourage the belief that philosophy is primarily concerned with analysis of meaning, that is, with language. True, Russell developed logical analysis and was often concerned with language; but he was concerned with much else besides. Both men, of course, directed attention, in their different ways, to analysis. But it was Moore rather than Russell who seems to us, on looking back, to be the herald, by force of example rather than by explicit theory, of the view that the primary task of the philosopher is the analysis of ordinary language.

For an explicit dogmatic statement about the nature and scope of philosophy we have, however, to turn to Ludwig Wittgenstein. We have noted that it was Wittgenstein who converted Russell to the view that the propositions of logic and pure mathematics are 'tautologies'. In the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*[2] Wittgenstein explained that what he meant by a tautology was a proposition which is true for all possible states of affairs and which therefore has as its opposite a contradiction, which is true for no possible state of affairs. A tautology, therefore, gives us no information about the world, in the sense of saying that things are one way when they could be another way. A 'proposition', however, as distinct from a tautology, is a picture or representation of a possible fact or state of affairs in the world. A proposition in this sense is either true or false; but we cannot know by inspecting its meaning (*Sinn*) whether it is true or false. To know this we have to compare it, as it were, with reality, with the empirical facts.[1] On the one hand therefore we have the tautologies of logic and pure mathematics which are necessarily true but give us no factual information about the world, while on the other hand there are propositions, empirical statements, which say something about how things are in the world but which are never necessarily true.

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[1] *Wisdom of the West*, p. 311.

[2] The original version of this work appeared in 1921 in Ostwald's *Annalen der Philosophie*. The work was published for the first time as a book, with facing German and English texts, in 1922 (reprint with a few corrections, 1923). An edition with a new translation by D. F. Pears and B. P. McGuiness was published in 1961.

Now, propositions, in Wittgenstein's technical use of the term in the *Tractatus*, are identified by him with the propositions of the natural sciences.[2] This identification seems to be unduly restrictive. For there is no good reason, on Wittgenstein's premisses that is to say, why an ordinary empirical statement, which would not normally be called a scientific statement, should be excluded from the class of propositions. But Wittgenstein would presumably admit this, in spite of the identification of the totality of propositions with the totality of the natural sciences. In any case the important point is that propositions are not philosophical. A scientific statement is not a philosophical proposition. Nor, of course, is a statement such as 'the dog is under the table'. Nor are tautologies philosophical propositions. Mathematics is no more philosophy than is natural science. It follows therefore that there is no room in Wittgenstein's scheme for philosophical propositions. In fact there are no such things.[3] And if there are no such things, it obviously cannot be the business of philosophy to enunciate them.[1]

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[1] A complex proposition is for Wittgenstein a truth-function of elementary propositions. For example, proposition *X*, let us suppose, is true if propositions *a*, *b* and *c* are true. In such a case it is not necessary to verify *X* directly in order to know whether it is true or false. But at some point there must be verification, a confrontation of a proposition or of propositions with empirical facts.

[2] *Tractatus*, 4.11. Empirical psychology is included among the natural sciences.

[3] If one were to say to Wittgenstein that 'the continuum has no actual parts' is a philosophical proposition, he would doubtless reply that it is in fact a tautology or a definition, giving the meaning, or part of it, of the word 'continuum'. If, however, it were understood as asserting that there are in the world actual examples of a continuum, it would be an ordinary empirical statement.

What, then, is the function of philosophy? It is said to consist in the clarification of propositions.[2] And the propositions to be clarified are obviously not philosophical ones. Indeed, if we take literally Wittgenstein's identification of propositions with those of the natural sciences, it follows logically that the business of philosophy is to clarify scientific propositions. But it is by no means immediately clear how and in what sense the philosopher can do this. Further, though the logical positivists of the Vienna Circle certainly attributed to philosophy a modest positive function as a kind of handmaid of science,[3] from what Wittgenstein says elsewhere in the *Tractatus*[4] he appears to be thinking primarily of a sort of linguistic therapeutic, designed to clear up logical confusion. For example, as Russell pointed out, in ordinary or colloquial language the grammatical form of a sentence often disguises the logical form. Hence there can arise for the philosopher the temptation to make 'metaphysical' statements (for instance, that 'the golden mountain' must have some peculiar kind of ontological status half-way between actual existence and nonentity) which are the result of not understanding the logic of our language. The philosopher who sees this can clear up the confusion in his colleague's mind by restating the misleading sentence so as to exhibit its logical form, on the lines of Russell's theory of descriptions. Again, if someone tries to say something 'metaphysical', it can be pointed out to him that he has failed to give any definite meaning (*Bedeutung*, reference) to one or more terms. An example actually given by Wittgenstein, who is extremely sparing of examples in the *Tractatus*, is 'Socrates is identical'. For the word 'identical' has no meaning when used in *this* way as an adjective. But what Wittgenstein has to say would doubtless apply, under certain conditions, to a question such as 'what is the cause of the world?' For if we assume that causality signifies a relation *between* phenomena, it makes no sense to ask for the cause of *all* phenomena. Further, on Wittgenstein's premisses, we cannot talk about the world as a totality.[1]

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[1] The *Tractatus* is, of course, a philosophical work and contains 'philosophical propositions'. But with admirable consistency Wittgenstein does not hesitate to embrace the paradoxical conclusion that the propositions which enable one to understand his theory are themselves nonsensical (*unsinning*, 6.54).

[2] *Tractatus*, 4.112.

[3] For example, the logical positivists of the Vienna Circle envisaged the philosopher as concerned with the language of science and as trying to construct a common language which would serve to unify the particular sciences, such as physics and psychology.

[4] Cf. 4.002–4.0031, 5.473, 5.4733 and 6.53.

Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* was one of the writings which exercised an influence on the Vienna Circle, the group of logical positivists who more or less recognized as their leader Moritz Schlick (1882–1936), professor of philosophy in the University of Vienna.[2] And there are certainly points of agreement between the doctrine of the *Tractatus* and logical positivism. Both are agreed, for example, about the logical status of the propositions of logic and pure mathematics and about the fact that no empirical statement is necessarily true.[3] Further, both the *Tractatus* and logical positivism exclude metaphysical propositions, that is, if considered as providing, or as capable or providing, information about the world, which is either true or false. But while in the *Tractatus* this exclusion follows from Wittgenstein's definition of the proposition and his identification of the totality of propositions with the totality of scientific propositions, in logical positivism it follows from a certain criterion of meaning, namely that the meaning of a 'proposition' or factually informative statement is identical with the mode of its verification, verification being understood in terms of possible sense-experiences. And it is at any rate disputable whether this criterion of meaning is necessarily implied by what Wittgenstein has to say in the *Tractatus*. To be sure, if a proposition asserts or denies a possible state of affairs, we cannot be said to know what it means unless we have sufficient knowledge of the state of affairs which would make it true to be able to distinguish between this state of affairs and the state of affairs which would make it false. In this sense we must know what would verify the proposition. But it by no means necessarily follows that the meaning of the proposition or factually informative statement is identical with the mode of its verification, if 'mode of verification' signifies what we or anyone else could *do* to verify the statement.

In any case, even if those are right who think that the logical positivist criterion of meaning is implicitly contained in the *Tractatus*, there seems to be a considerable difference of atmosphere between this work and the typical attitude of the logical positivists in the heyday of their early enthusiasm. The positivists admitted indeed that metaphysical statements could possess an emotive-evocative significance;[1] but some of them at least made it clear that in their opinion metaphysics was a pack of nonsense in the popular, and not simply in a technical, sense. If, however, we consider what Wittgenstein has to say about the metaphysical subject,[2] we can discern a certain seriousness and profundity of thought. To attempt to say something about the metaphysical subject, the I-subject as a pole of consciousness, is inevitably to reduce it to the status of an object. All statements about the metaphysical subject are thus attempts to say what cannot be said. At the same time in a real sense the metaphysical subject shows itself as the limit of 'my world', as the correlative of the object. Strictly speaking, not even this can be said. None the less attempts to do so can facilitate our in some sense 'seeing' what cannot be *said*. But the 'mysticism' which makes an occasional appearance in the *Tractatus* was not congenial to the logical positivists.

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[1] Such talk is obviously excluded if every proposition is a picture or representation of a possible state of affairs *in* the world. True, Wittgenstein himself speaks about the world as a whole. But he is perfectly ready to admit that to do so is to attempt to say what cannot be said.

[2] The Vienna Circle was not a group of 'disciples' of Schlick but rather a group of like-minded persons, some of them philosophers, others scientists or mathematicians, who agreed on a common general programme.

[3] These two points, if taken alone, do not constitute logical positivism. Taken alone, they would admit, for example, the possibility of an inductive metaphysics which proposed its theories as provisional hypotheses.

To all intents and purposes logical positivism was introduced into England by the publication in 1936 of *Language, Truth and Logic*[3] by A. J. Ayer (b. 1910). This book, with its drastic and lively attack on metaphysics and theology, enjoyed a *succès de scandale*; and it remains as probably the clearest exposition of dogmatic logical positivism. But though logical positivism, as mediated by this work, certainly attracted a great deal of attention, it can hardly be said to have won a notable degree of acceptance among professional philosophers in Great Britain.[4] For the matter of that, Professor Ayer himself has considerably modified his views, as can be seen from his later writings.[5] And it is now generally recognized that logical positivism constituted an interlude in the development of modern British philosophy.[1]

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[1] A statement is said to possess emotive-evocative significance if it expresses an emotive attitude and is designed, not so much by conscious intention as by its nature, to evoke a similar emotive attitude in others.

[2] Cf. *Tractatus*, 5.62–5.641. Cf. also *Notebooks, 1914–1916* (Oxford, 1961), pp. 79–80, where a certain influence by Schopenhauer is evident.

[3] Second edition, 1946.

[4] We can note in passing that Professor R. B. Braithwaite of Cambridge has made a much-discussed attempt to reconcile his logical positivism with his adherence to Christianity. See, for example, his lecture, *An Empiricist's View of the Nature of Religious Belief*, Cambridge, 1955.

[5] These include *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge* (1940), *Thinking and Meaning* (1947), *Philosophical Essays* (1954), *The Concept of a Person and Other Essays* (1963).

Meanwhile Wittgenstein was engaged in changing his views.[2] In the *Tractatus* he had tried to exhibit the 'essence' of the proposition. And the effect of his definition had been to place descriptive language in a privileged position. For it was only descriptive statements which were recognized as possessing meaning (*Sinn*). He came, however, to see more clearly the complexity of language, the fact that there are many kinds of propositions, descriptive statements forming only one class. In other words, Wittgenstein came to have a clearer view of actual language as a complex vital phenomenon, as something which in the context of human life has many functions or uses. And this understanding was accompanied by a radical change in Wittgenstein's conception of meaning. Meaning became use or function and was no longer identical with 'picturing'.

If we apply these ideas to logical positivism, the result is the dethronement of the language of science from the position of a uniquely privileged language. For logical positivism meant in effect the selection of the language of science as the model language. Its criterion of meaning, as applied to synthetic propositions in general, was the result of an extension or extrapolation of a certain analysis of the scientific statement, namely as a prediction of certain possible sensible experiences. And, apart from the question whether or not this analysis of the scientific statement is tenable, the dethronement of scientific language as the model language involved the abandonment of the logical positivist criterion of meaning, if considered as a general criterion. Hence, whatever one may think of the precise relation between the *Tractatus* and logical positivism, Wittgenstein's later ideas about language were certainly incompatible with dogmatic logical positivism.

At the same time Wittgenstein had no intention of resuscitating the idea of the philosopher which was excluded by the *Tractatus*, the idea, that is to say, of the philosopher as capable of extending our factual knowledge of the world by pure thought or philosophical reflection. The difference between the concept of the function of philosophy offered in the *Tractatus* and that offered in *Philosophical Investigations* is not one between a revolutionary concept and a traditional concept. Wittgenstein sees himself as having attempted in the *Tractatus* to reform language, to interfere with its actual use, by, for example, equating the proposition with the descriptive statement, and indeed, if we take literally his identification of the totality of propositions with the totality of the natural sciences, with the scientific statement. In *Philosophical Investigations*, however, we are told that 'philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it'.[1] Negatively, philosophy uncovers examples of nonsense resulting from our not understanding the limits of language;[2] positively, it has the function of describing the actual use of language.

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[1] This is not always recognized by continental philosophers, some of whom still seem to be under the impression that practically all British philosophers are logical positivists.

[2] These are represented by posthumously published writings. *The Blue and Brown Books* (Oxford, 1958), contains notes dictated to pupils in the period 1933–5. *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford, 1953) represents Wittgenstein's later ideas.

The sort of thing that Wittgenstein has in mind can be explained with the aid of his own analogy of games.[3] Suppose that someone asks me what a game is. And suppose that I reply in this way: 'Well, tennis, football, cricket, chess, bridge, golf, racquets, baseball are all games. And then there are others too, playing at Red Indians, for example, or hide-and-seek.' The other man might retort impatiently: 'I am perfectly well aware of all this. But I did not ask you what activities are customarily called "games": I asked you what a game is, that is to say, I wanted to know the definition of a game, what is the essence of "game". You are as bad as Socrates' young friends who, when asked what beauty is, started mentioning beautiful things or people.' To this I might reply: 'Oh, I see. You imagine that because we use one word "game", it must signify one meaning, one single essence. But this is a mistake. There are only games. There are indeed resemblances, of various sorts. Some games are played with a ball, for example. But chess is not. And even in the case of games which are played with a ball the balls are of different kinds. Consider football, cricket, golf, tennis. True games have some sort of rules, explicit or implicit. But the rules differ with different games. And in any case a definition of "game" in terms of rules would hardly be adequate. There are rules of conduct in criminal courts, but the processes of law are not generally recognized as games. In other words, the only proper answer to your original question is to remind you how the word "game" is used in actual language. You may not be satisfied. But in this case you are evidently still labouring under the mistaken idea that there must be a single meaning, a single essence, corresponding to each common word. If you insist that we must find such a meaning or essence, you are really insisting on a reform of or interference with language.'

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[1] I, s. 124.

[2] I, s. 119.

[3] Cf. *Philosophical Investigations*, I, ss. 66–9, 75.

In using this sort of analogy Wittgenstein is clearly thinking primarily of his own attempt in the *Tractatus* to give the essence of the proposition, whereas in point of fact there are many kinds of propositions, many kinds of sentences, descriptive statements, commands, prayers, and so on.[1] But his point of view possesses a wider field of application. Suppose, for example, that a philosopher identifies the 'I' or self with the pure subject or, alternatively, with the body in the sense in which we commonly use the term 'body'. Has he given the essence of 'I', of the self or ego? Wittgenstein might point out that neither interpretation of the pronoun 'I' is compatible with the actual use of language. For example, the identification of the 'I' with the metaphysical subject is not compatible with such a sentence as 'I go for a walk'. Nor is the identification of the 'I' with the body in the ordinary sense compatible with such a sentence as 'I consider Tolstoy a greater writer than Ethel M. Dell'.

This way of disposing of exaggerated philosophical theories, interpreted as attempts to 'reform' language, is described by Wittgenstein as bringing words 'back from their metaphysical to their everyday usage'.[2] And it obviously presupposes that actual language is all right as it is. Consequently, it is all the more necessary to understand that Wittgenstein is not excluding, for example, the technical language which has been developed in order to express man's growing scientific knowledge and new scientific concepts and hypotheses. What he is opposed to is the belief that the philosopher is capable of digging out, as it were, or revealing hidden meanings, hidden essences. And the only reform of language which he allows the philosopher is the restatement which may be required in order to clear up those confusions and misunderstandings which give rise to what Wittgenstein considers to be bogus philosophical problems and theories. Reform of this kind, however, is simply designed to bring out the real logic of actual language. Philosophy can thus be said to aim at the elimination of difficulties, perplexities, problems, which arise from our not understanding the actual use of language. In spite, therefore, of the change in Wittgenstein's view of language, his general idea of philosophy as a kind of linguistic therapeutic remains the same in broad outline.

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[1] Cf. *Philosophical Investigations*, 1, s. 23.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1, s. 116.

Though, however, Wittgenstein himself did not hesitate to dogmatize about the nature and function of philosophy, those philosophers who either have been influenced by his post-*Tractatus* line of reflection or have thought much the same thoughts for themselves, have, generally speaking, refrained from dogmatic pronouncements of this sort. For example, in his 1931 paper on 'Systematically Misleading Expressions'[1] Professor Gilbert Ryle of Oxford (b. 1900), while announcing that he had come to the conclusion that the business of philosophy was at least, and might be no more than, the detection in linguistic idioms of recurrent misconstructions and absurd theories, added that his conversion to this view was reluctant and that he would like to be able to think that philosophy had a more sublime task. In any case if one looks at the writings of those British philosophers who sympathize with Wittgenstein's later ideas, one can see that they have devoted themselves to the implementation of the positive programme of 'describing' the actual use of language rather than simply to the rather negative task of eliminating puzzles or difficulties.

The implementation of the positive programme can take various forms. That is to say, the emphasis can be differently placed. It is possible, for example, to concentrate on exhibiting the peculiar characteristics of different types of language in the sense in which the language of science, the language of morals, the language of the religious consciousness and aesthetic language constitute different types; and one can compare one type of language with another. When the logical positivists turned scientific language into a model language, they tended to lump together a number of other different kinds of propositions as possessing only emotive-evocative significance. The dethronement, however, of scientific language from the position of the model language, except, of course, for specific purposes, naturally encouraged a more careful examination of other types of language, taken separately. And a great deal of work has been done on the language of morals.[2] Again, there has been an appreciable amount of discussion of the language of religion. If, for instance, we wish to determine the range of meaning of the term 'God', it is not of much use to say that it is 'meaningless' because it is not a scientific term. We have to examine its uses and functions in the language which, as Wittgenstein puts it, is 'its native home'.[1] Further, one can compare the use of images and analogies in religious language with their use in, say, the language of poetry. It is indeed probably true to say that in the discussion of religious language in recent British philosophy the factor which has attracted the most public attention has been the contention of some philosophers that this or that religious statement really says nothing because it excludes nothing.[2] But it must be remembered that the discussion as a whole brought once more into prominence the subject of analogical language, a theme which was treated by a number of medieval thinkers but which, with some exceptions, was little treated by later philosophers.[3]

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[1] Originally published in the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, this paper was reprinted in *Logic and Language*, Vol. I (Oxford, 1951), edited by A. G. N. Flew.

[2] Cf., for example, *The Language of Morals* (Oxford, 1952) and *Freedom and Reason* (Oxford, 1963), by R. M. Hare.

It is also possible to concentrate not so much on different general types of language in the sense mentioned above as on the different kinds of sentences in ordinary colloquial language and on the distinctions made in or implied by such language. This kind of mapping-out of ordinary language was characteristic of the late Professor J. L. Austin (1911–60) of Oxford, who distinguished himself by his meticulous care in differentiating between types of 'speech-acts'[4] and showed by actual analysis how inadequate was the logical positivist classification of propositions, and how much more complex and subtle ordinary language is than one might think.

Not unnaturally a good deal of criticism has been levelled against this concentration on ordinary language. For at first sight it looks as though philosophy were being reduced to a trivial occupation or a practically useless game played for its own sake by a number of university professors and lecturers. But though the practitioners of the analysis of ordinary language, notably Austin, have deliberately chosen examples of sentences which make those who are accustomed to talk about Being raise their eyebrows, in the opinion of the present writer such analysis is by no means useless. For example, in the development of language in response to experience human beings have expressed in a concrete way a multitude of distinctions between varying degrees of responsibility. And the activity of reflecting on and mapping out these distinctions can be of considerable use. On the one hand it serves the purpose of drawing our attention to factors which have to be taken into account in any adequate discussion of moral responsibility. On the other hand it sets us on our guard when confronted with philosophical theories which ride roughshod, in one direction or another, over the distinctions which human experience has found it necessary to express. It may indeed be objected that ordinary language is not an infallible criterion by which to judge philosophical theories. But Austin did not say that it was. He may have tended to act as though he thought this. But in word at least he disclaimed any such dogmatism, simply observing that in a conflict between theory and ordinary language the latter was more likely to be right than the former, and that in any case philosophers, when constructing their theories, neglected ordinary language at their peril.[1] In any case, even if we consider that the importance of ordinary language has been exaggerated, it does not necessarily follow that we have to consider examination of such language useless or irrelevant to philosophy.

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[1] *Philosophical Investigations*, I, s. 116.

[2] See, for instance, the discussion on 'Theology and Falsification' which was reprinted in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, edited by A. G. N. Flew and A. MacIntyre (London, 1955).

[3] Berkeley has something to say on the matter. Kant refers to symbolic language in a theological context. And Hegel, of course, discusses the 'pictorial' language of religion in its relation to aesthetics on the one hand and philosophy on the other.

[4] See, for example, Austin's posthumously published *Philosophical Papers* (Oxford, 1961) and *How to do Things with Words* (Oxford, 1962).

The point can be made clearer perhaps by reference to Professor G. Ryle's celebrated book, *The Concept of Mind* (London, 1949). From one point of view it is a dissolution of the theory of 'the ghost in the machine', the dualistic theory attributed to Descartes, by means of an examination of what we are accustomed to say about man and his mental activities in ordinary language. But from another point of view it might be considered as an attempt to exhibit the concept of mind, and indeed of the nature of man, which finds concrete expression in the sentences of ordinary language. And such an attempt is undoubtedly useful and relevant to philosophy.[2] Obviously, if one works backwards, as it were, from a philosophical theory to a view implicit in ordinary language, one is returning to a point antecedent to the raising of philosophical problems. And the only valid reason for stopping there would be the belief that any real problems which then arise are not philosophical in character but psychological or physiological or both, belonging, that is to say, to science and not to philosophy. At the same time it is useful to remind oneself and obtain a clear view of what we ordinarily say about man. For ordinary language certainly favours a view of man as a unity; and in so far as this view can be considered as expressing man's experience of himself, it has to be taken into account.

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[1] In *Sense and Sensibilia* (Oxford, 1962), a posthumous work representing courses of lectures, Austin tries to dispose of a particular philosophical theory, namely the sense-datum theory.

[2] Whether Professor Ryle's attempt is successful or unsuccessful and how far it embodies the author's own theories, are not questions which need detain us here.

And yet, of course, it is a great mistake to oppose ordinary language to theory, as though the former were entirely free of the latter. Apart from the fact that theories and beliefs of one kind or another leave their deposits, as it were, in ordinary language, our language is not in any case a simple photograph of bare facts. It expresses interpretation. Hence it cannot be used as a touchstone of truth. And philosophy cannot be simply uncritical of so-called ordinary language. Nor can it be critical without indulging in theory.

Needless to say, this is not a discovery of the present writer. It is a matter of common recognition.[1] Hence it is only to be expected that in recent years the concept of philosophy should have tended to broaden, even within the analytic movement itself. One expression of this process, in certain circles at least, has been the displacement of the dogmatic restriction of the nature and scope of philosophy, which was characteristic of Wittgenstein, by an attitude of tolerance which is willing to give a hearing even to the avowed metaphysician, provided, of course, that he is prepared to explain why he says what he does. But it is not simply a matter of toleration, of the growth of a more 'ecumenical' spirit. There have also been signs of a developing conviction that analysis is not enough. For example, in *Thought and Action*,[2] Professor Stuart Hampshire observed that the language of ethics cannot be adequately treated unless it is examined in the light of the function of such language in human life. Hence the need for a philosophical anthropology.

The concentration on ordinary language, however, which is in harmony with the ideas expounded by Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Investigations*, represents only one tendency, even if a prominent one, in the analytic movement as a whole. For it has

[1] See, for instance, Professor A. J. Ayer's inaugural lecture at Oxford, which forms the first chapter in his book, *The Concept of a Person*.

[2] London, 1959.

long been recognized that a great deal of what was popularly called 'linguistic analysis' would be far better described as 'conceptual analysis'. And the idea of conceptual analysis can open up wide vistas. For instance, in his well-known book *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*[1] Mr. P. F. Strawson of Oxford spoke of descriptive metaphysics as exploring and describing the actual structure of our thought about the world, that is, as describing the most general features of our conceptual structure, whereas revisionary metaphysics is concerned with changing our conceptual structure, with making us see the world in a new light. Revisionary metaphysics was not condemned, but descriptive metaphysics, in the sense explained, was said to need no further justification than that of inquiry in general.

In so far as generalization in this matter is legitimate, it seems safe to say that the following remarks represent an attitude towards metaphysics which is not uncommonly adopted by contemporary British philosophers. To describe metaphysics as meaningless, as the logical positivists did, is to pass over the obvious fact that the great metaphysical systems of the past often expressed visions of the world which can be stimulating and, in their several ways, illuminating. Further, in the context of logical positivism to say that metaphysical propositions are meaningless is really to say that they are different from scientific propositions.[2] This is true enough; but it contributes little to an understanding of metaphysics as an historical phenomenon. To obtain this understanding we have to examine actual metaphysical systems with a view to sorting out the various types of metaphysics and the different kinds of arguments employed.[3] For it is a mistake to suppose that they all conform to one invariable pattern. Again, we cannot legitimately take it for granted that metaphysics is simply an attempt to answer questions which arise out of 'the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language'.[4] This is a matter for detailed examination. Moreover, it is clear that the impulse to develop a unified interpretation of the world in terms of a set of concepts and categories is not something intrinsically improper or blameworthy. True, since the time of Kant we cannot accept the idea that the philosopher is capable of deducing the existence of any entity in an *a priori* manner. Further, before attempting to construct large-scale syntheses it would be wiser to do more spade-work by tackling precise questions separately. At the same time philosophical problems tend to interlock; and in any case it would be absurd to attempt to ban metaphysical synthesis. The construction of a world-view or *Weltanschauung* is indeed a somewhat different activity from that of trying to answer particular questions to which, in principle, quite definite answers can be given. But while the demand that philosophers who are interested in pursuing the second sort of activity should devote themselves to synthesis instead is unjustified, a wholesale condemnation of metaphysical synthesis is also unreasonable.

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[1] London, 1959.

[2] That is to say, this is the essential factual content of the description. A judgment of value may also, of course, be included or implied.

[3] *The Nature of Metaphysics* (edited by D. F. Pears, London, 1957) represents a series of broadcast talks by different philosophers, including Professor Ryle. The general attitude to metaphysics is critical but comparatively sympathetic. A considerably more extensive examination of metaphysics is undertaken by Professor W. H. Walsh of Edinburgh University in *Metaphysics* (London, 1963).

[4] *Philosophical Investigations*, I, s. 109. The fact that some writers have appealed to psycho-analysis as perhaps capable of explaining the recurrence of a particular type of metaphysics, such as monism, shows at any rate that they consider metaphysics to have roots which go deeper than linguistic or logical confusion.

As far as it goes, this growth of a more tolerant attitude towards forms of philosophy other than the microscopic analysis which has been a conspicuous feature of recent British thought is something to be welcomed. Taken by itself, however, it leaves a good many questions unanswered. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that we accept the restriction of philosophy to the clarification of propositions which are not philosophical propositions, the restriction which is made in the *Tractatus*. The presupposition is clear enough, namely that philosophy is not a discipline with a special subject-matter of its own, alongside the particular sciences.[1] The philosopher cannot enunciate philosophical propositions which increase our knowledge of the world. If, however, we drop the dogmatic restriction of the nature and scope of philosophy and show ourselves prepared to regard metaphysics, at least in some recognizable form, as a legitimate philosophical activity, we can reasonably be expected to explain what change in the concept of philosophy is implied by this concession. It is really not sufficient to say that we do not undertake to reform language, and that the word 'philosophy', as actually used, certainly covers metaphysics, whereas it no longer covers physics or biology. For the following question can always be asked: 'When you say that you have no wish to prohibit metaphysics, do you mean simply that if some people feel the urge to develop theories which are akin to poetic and imaginative visions of reality, and which cannot legitimately lay claim to represent or increase knowledge, you have no desire to interfere with them? Or are you seriously prepared to admit the possibility that metaphysics is capable in some sense of increasing our knowledge? If so, in what sense? And what do you think that metaphysical knowledge is or could be about or of?'

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[1] This is explicitly stated in the *Tractatus*, 4.111.

The analytic philosophers might, of course, reply that it is simply a question of their being prepared to give the metaphysician a hearing instead of barring the way in advance to all dialogue and mutual understanding. It is the metaphysician's business to explain what he is about. When he has done so, his own account of his activities can be examined.

Though, however, this line of reply is reasonable up to a point, it seems to neglect two facts. First, if we repudiate a dogmatic restrictive definition of philosophy, this repudiation has implications. And it is not unreasonable if we are invited to make them explicit. Secondly, as the analytic philosophers like to point out, they do not constitute a completely 'homogeneous' school. On the contrary, several rather different tendencies are discernible; and it is obvious enough from an examination of their writings that a number of philosophers who would popularly be classed as 'analysts' are doing something very different from what could accurately be described as 'linguistic analysis'. It is all very well for them to say that they are doing 'philosophy'. No doubt they are. But what is philosophy in this wide sense? What precisely is its nature, function and scope? It is in regard to their British colleagues' view on such general issues that the continental philosopher of a different tradition is apt to find himself hopelessly at sea.

The conclusion to be drawn is perhaps that the so-called revolution in philosophy has lost any clearly defined shape, and that no clear concept of the nature of philosophy has yet taken the place of the various restrictive definitions proposed by the logical positivists, by the *Tractatus* and then again by *Philosophical Investigations*. This obviously does not prevent British philosophers from doing valuable work on particular themes. But it means that the external observer may well be left wondering what particular game is being played, and why. What is the relevance of philosophy to life? And why is it thought necessary to have chairs of philosophy in universities? Such questions may be naïve, but they require an answer.

APPENDIX A

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

Introductory remarks—Newman's approach to the problem of religious belief in his university sermons—The approach in The Grammar of Assent—*Conscience and God—The convergence of probabilities and the illative sense—Final remarks.*

1. To say that we are concerned here with John Henry Newman (1801–90) simply as a philosopher is perhaps somewhat misleading. For it might be understood as suggesting that in addition to his many other interests and activities Newman devoted himself to philosophical problems for their own sake, for their intrinsic interest as theoretical puzzles. And this would be far from the truth. Newman's approach to the philosophical topics which he discussed was that of a Christian apologist. That is to say, he wrote from the point of view of a Christian believer who asks himself to what extent, and in what way, his faith can be shown to be reasonable. Newman made no pretence of temporarily discarding his faith, as it were, in order to give the impression of starting all over again from scratch. He tried, of course, to understand other people's points of view. But his discussion of religious belief was conducted, as it might be expressed, within the area of faith. That is to say, it was a question of faith seeking understanding of itself rather than of an unbelieving mind wondering whether there was any rational justification for making an act of faith. At the same time the attempt to show that Christian belief is in fact reasonable led Newman to develop philosophical ideas. To put the matter in another way, his attempt to exhibit the insufficiency of contemporary rationalism and to convey a sense of the Christian vision of human existence led him to delineate lines of thought which, while certainly not intended to present the content of Christian belief as a set of conclusions logically deduced from self-evident principles, were meant to show to those who had eyes to see that religious faith was not the expression of an irrational attitude or a purely arbitrary assumption. And even if it involves a certain mutilation of his thought as a whole, we can pick out for brief consideration here some of the lines of thought which can reasonably be described as philosophical.

Now there have been apologists who concerned themselves not so much with the reasons people actually have for believing as with developing arguments which, in their opinion, should convince the minds of any unbelievers capable of understanding the terms used, though the ordinary believer may never have thought of these arguments at all and might even be incapable of understanding and appreciating them if they were presented to him. Newman, however, is more concerned with showing the reasonableness of faith as it actually exists in the great mass of believers, most of whom know nothing of abstract philosophical arguments. And he tries to make explicit what seems to him to be the chief ground which he himself and other people have for a living belief in God.[1] In other words, he tries to outline a phenomenological analysis of the spontaneous movement of the mind culminating in assent to the existence of God as a present reality. At the same time he obviously does not intend to write simply as a psychologist who may describe various reasons why people believe in God, even if some or all these reasons appear to him unable to justify assent to God's existence. On the contrary, Newman argues that the main empirical ground on which belief rests is a sufficient ground.

An analogy may clarify the point. We all have a practical belief in the objective existence of external objects independently of their being perceived by us. And there is clearly a difference between making explicit the grounds which people actually have for this belief and trying, as some philosophers have done, to justify the belief by excogitating philosophical arguments which are thought to provide better and sounder grounds for belief than those which people actually have, even if they are not reflectively aware of them. Indeed, it is arguable that the philosopher is not in a position to provide better grounds for the belief in question than those on which our belief actually, if implicitly, rests. Analogously, Newman is very conscious of the difference between showing that religious belief, as it actually exists, is reasonable and showing that it would be reasonable if people had other grounds for believing than those which they in fact have.

There is a further point which is worth noticing. When Newman talks about belief in God, he is thinking of what we might call a living belief, a belief which involves an element of personal commitment to a personal being apprehended as a present reality and which tends to influence conduct, not about a mere notional assent to an abstract proposition. Hence when he is reflecting on grounds for belief in God, he tends to neglect impersonal metaphysical arguments addressed simply to the intellect and to concentrate on the movement of the mind which, in his opinion, brings a man up against God as a present reality, as manifested in the voice of conscience. His line of thought is therefore addressed to the man who has a lively sense of moral obligation. Similarly, when dealing with the evidences for the truth of Christianity he is speaking primarily to the genuine and open-minded inquirer, particularly to the man who already believes in God, and who has, as Newman puts it, a presentiment of the possibility of revelation. In both cases he presupposes certain subjective conditions, including moral conditions, in his reader. He does not profess to provide demonstrations modelled on those of mathematics.

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[1] Newman does not, of course, exclude the role of grace. But he prescinds from it when he is trying to show that a sufficient ground for belief in God is available to all.

Given this approach, it is not surprising that the name of Newman has often been linked with that of Pascal. Both men were concerned with Christian apologetics, and both fixed their attention on effective belief and on the way in which people actually think and reason in concrete issues rather than on a mathematical model of demonstration. The 'spirit of geometry' was alien to both minds. And both emphasized the moral conditions for appreciating the force of arguments in favour of Christianity. If therefore someone excludes Pascal from the class of philosophers on the ground that he was a special pleader, he is likely to treat Newman in the same way. Conversely, if someone recognizes Pascal as a philosopher, he is likely to accord a similar recognition to Newman.[1]

Newman's philosophical background was, however, very different from that of Pascal. For it was constituted to a large extent by British philosophy. As a student Newman acquired some knowledge of Aristotle. And though nobody would call him an Aristotelian, the Greek philosopher certainly exercised some influence on his mind. As for Platonism, which in certain respects he found congenial, Newman's knowledge of it seems to have been obtained mainly from certain early Christian writers and the Fathers. Of British philosophers he certainly studied Francis Bacon, and he knew something of Hume, whom he considered acute but dangerous; but in the *Apologia* he states that he never studied Berkeley. For Locke, however, he felt a profound respect. He tells us explicitly that he felt this respect 'both for the character and the ability of Locke, for his manly simplicity of mind and his outspoken candour';[2] and he adds that 'there is so much in his remarks upon reasoning and proof in which I fully concur, that I feel no pleasure in considering him in the light of an opponent to views which I myself have ever cherished as true'.[3] Besides Locke we must mention Bishop Butler,[4] who exercised an obvious and admitted influence on Newman's mind.

Later on Newman studied the writings of Dean Mansel (1820–71), of some of the Scottish philosophers and the *Logic* of J. S. Mill. Further, in spite of a disclaimer on his part, it can be shown that he had some acquaintance with Coleridge. Of German thought, however, Newman appears to have known little, particularly at first-hand. If therefore we leave the early study of Aristotle out of account, we can say that his philosophical ideas were formed in the climate of British empiricism and of the influence of Butler. Newman's varied interests and activities left him indeed little time and energy for serious philosophical reading, even if he had had the inclination to read widely in this field. But in any case what he did read was simply a stimulus for forming his own ideas. He was never what would be called a disciple of any philosopher.

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[1] It is as well to remember that the constructors of original metaphysical systems have often employed argument to commend views of reality already present to their minds, at least in outline. Yet this fact does not by itself show that a given argument is devoid of force. Analogously, the fact that Newman writes as a Christian believer does not necessarily entail the conclusion that his philosophical reflections are valueless.

[2] *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (3rd edition, 1870), p. 155. This work will be referred to as *GA*.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] For Bishop Joseph Butler (1692–1752), see Vol. V of this *History*, pp. 165–70 and 184–91.

As for Scholastic philosophy, Newman knew little about it. In later years he at any rate possessed some writings by pioneers in the revival of Scholasticism. And when Leo XIII published his Encyclical *Aeterni Patris* in 1870, urging the study of St. Thomas, Newman composed, even if he did not send, an appreciative letter to the Pope. But it is fairly evident from the letter that what he had in mind was a revival of intellectual life in the Church, in continuity with the thought of the Fathers and Doctors, rather than of Thomism in particular. And in any case the old-fashioned textbook Thomism would hardly have been congenial to Newman's mind. It is true that since his death a number of Scholastic philosophers have adopted or adapted lines of thought suggested by his writings and have used them to supplement traditional arguments. But it scarcely needs saying that this fact provides no adequate reason for making out that Newman was 'really' a Scholastic. His approach was quite different, though he was quite willing to admit that other approaches might have their uses.

2. In a university sermon which he preached at Oxford in 1839 Newman insists that faith 'is certainly an exercise of Reason'[1]. For the exercise of reason lies 'in asserting one thing, because of some other thing.'[2] It can be seen in the extension of our knowledge beyond the immediate objects of sense-perception and of introspection;[3] and it can be seen also in religious belief or faith, inasmuch as this is 'an acceptance of things as real, which the senses do not convey, upon certain previous grounds'.[4] In other words, as Newman does not postulate any faculty of intuiting God (or indeed any external immaterial being), he must admit that in some sense at least the existence of God is inferred.

Reasoning, however, is not necessarily correct: there can be faulty reasoning. And Newman is well aware that for the rationalist any process of reasoning or inference presupposed by religious faith is invalid. According to the popular or common idea of reason and its exercise we should exclude the influence of all prejudices, preconceptions and temperamental differences and proceed simply according to 'certain scientific rules and fixed standards for weighing testimony and examining facts'[1], admitting only such conclusions 'as can produce their reasons'.[2] It is evident, however, that most believers are unable to produce reasons for their belief. And even when they are, it by no means follows that they began to believe for this reason or that they will cease believing if the reasons are challenged or placed in doubt. Further, 'faith is a principle of action, and action does not allow time for minute and finished investigations'.[3] Faith does not demand unquestionable demonstration; and it is influenced by antecedent probabilities and presumptions. True, this is frequently verified in the case of non-religious belief. For example, we frequently believe what we read in the newspapers, without any examination of the evidence. But though this behaviour is undoubtedly necessary for life, the fact remains that what appears probable or credible to one man may appear in quite a different light to someone else. 'It is scarcely necessary to point out how much our inclinations have to do with our belief.'[4] It is thus easy to understand the rationalist depreciation of faith as the expression of wishful thinking.

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[1] *Oxford University Sermons* (*Fifteen sermons preached before the University of Oxford*) (3rd edition, 1872), p. 207. This work will be referred to as *OUS*. Newman obviously means that faith presupposes an exercise of reason.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] We can see here a reflection of the empiricist point of view.

[4] *OUS*, p. 207.

In a real sense, of course, unbelief or scepticism is in the same boat as faith. For unbelief 'really goes upon presumptions and prejudices as much as Faith does, only presumptions of an opposite nature. . . . It considers a religious system so improbable, that it will not listen to the evidence of it; or, if it listens, it employs itself in doing what a believer could do, if he chose, quite as well . . .; viz., in showing that the evidence might be more complete and unexceptionable than it is.'[5] Sceptics do not really decide according to the evidence; for they make up their minds first and then admit or reject evidence according to their initial assumption. Hume provides a signal example of this when he suggests that the impossibility of miracles is sufficient refutation of the testimony of witnesses. 'That is, the antecedent improbability is a sufficient refutation of the evidence.'[6]

Newman seems to be quite justified in suggesting that unbelievers often proceed according to assumptions, and that they are as open as anyone else to the influence of inclination and temperament. But though this is a polemical point of some value, it obviously does not show that faith, considered as what Newman calls an exercise of reason, measures up to the standard demanded by the rationalist, if this standard is understood as that of strict logical demonstration from self-evident principles. Newman, however, has no intention of pretending that it does. He argues instead that the rationalist conception of reasoning is far too narrow and does not square with the way in which people actually, and legitimately, think and reason in concrete issues. It must be remembered that his contention is that faith is reasonable, not that its content is logically deducible according to the model of mathematical demonstration.

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[1] *OUS*, p. 229.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 230.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 188.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 189.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 230.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 231.

It is no valid argument against the reasonableness of religious faith to say that it assumes what are judged to be antecedent probabilities. For we all find ourselves under the necessity of making assumptions, if we are to live at all. We cannot live simply by what is logically demonstrable. For example, we cannot demonstrate that our senses are trustworthy, and that there is an objective external world with which they put us in contact. Nor can we demonstrate the validity of memory. Yet in spite of our being sometimes deceived, to express the matter in a popular way, we assume and cannot help assuming that our senses are fundamentally trustworthy, and that there is an objective external world. Indeed, nobody but the sceptic questions scientific inference as such, though the scientist does not prove the existence of a public physical world but assumes it. Again, we do not allow our mistakes and slips to destroy all belief in the validity of memory. Further, unless we try to adopt a position of complete scepticism, a position which we cannot maintain in practice, we necessarily assume the possibility of valid reasoning. We cannot demonstrate it *a priori*; for any attempt at demonstration presupposes what we are trying to demonstrate. In fine, 'whether we consider processes of Faith or other exercise of Reason, men advance forward on grounds which they do not, or cannot produce, or if they could, yet could not prove to be true, on latent or antecedent grounds which they take for granted'[1].

We can note in passing that in Newman's readiness to say that the existence of a public external world is an unprovable assumption we can perhaps discern an echo of his impression at an early age, an impression recorded in the first chapter of the *Apologia*, that there were only two luminously self-evident beings, himself and his Creator. But we are also reminded of Hume's contention that though we cannot prove the existence of bodies apart from our perceptions, Nature has placed us under the necessity of believing in it. A philosopher can indulge in sceptical reflections in his study; but in ordinary life he, like the rest of mankind, has a natural belief in the continued objective existence of bodies even when they are not perceived. Reason cannot demonstrate the truth of this belief. But the belief is none the less reasonable. The unreasonable man would be the one who tried to live as a sceptic and not to act on any assumption which could not be proved.

It is indeed obviously true that men cannot help believing in the existence of an external, public world,[1] and that it would be unreasonable to attempt to act on any other assumption. If we refused to act on anything but logically demonstrated conclusions, we could not live at all. As Locke aptly remarked, if we refused to eat until it had been demonstrated that the food would nourish us, we should not eat at all. But it can be objected that belief in God is not a natural belief comparable to that in the existence of an external world. We cannot help believing in practice that bodies exist independently of our perception; but there does not seem to be any such practical necessity to believe in God.

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 212–13.

Newman's line of argument is that there is something, namely conscience, which belongs to human nature as much as do the powers of perceiving and of reasoning, and which predisposes to belief in God, in the sense that it carries with it a 'presentiment' of the divine existence. A belief in God which is based on conscience is thus not grounded simply on the temperamental idiosyncrasy of certain individuals, but rather on a factor in human nature as such or at least on a factor in every human nature which is not morally stunted or maimed. The voice of conscience does not indeed carry with it any proof of its own credentials. In this sense it is an 'assumption'. But it manifests the presence of a transcendent God; and assent to the existence of the God so manifested is reasonable.

Before, however, we consider Newman's argument from conscience to the existence of God a little more closely, we can turn our attention to his approach to the problem of religious belief as outlined in his much later work, *The Grammar of Assent*, which was published in 1870.[2]

3. Assent, as Newman uses the term, is given to a proposition and is expressed by assertion. But I cannot properly be said to assent to a proposition unless I understand its meaning. This understanding is called by Newman apprehension. Hence we can say that assent presupposes apprehension.

There are, however, two types of apprehension, corresponding to two types of propositions. 'The terms of a proposition do or do not stand for things. If they do, then they are singular terms, for all things that are, are units. But if they do not stand for things they must stand for notions, and are common terms. Singular nouns come from experience, common from abstraction. The apprehension of the former I call real, and of the latter notional.'[1]

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[1] The present writer has no intention of committing himself to the view that we cannot properly be said to know that there is an external world. Of course, if we so define knowledge that only the propositions of logic and mathematics can be said to be known to be true, it follows that we do not know that things exist when we are not perceiving them. But as the word 'know' is used in ordinary language, we can perfectly well be said to know it.

[2] It would be misleading to describe *The Grammar of Assent* as a philosophical work, for in the long run it is concerned with 'the arguments adducible for Christianity' (*GA*, p. 484). But these arguments are placed in a general logical and epistemological context.

Exception might be taken to some of the expressions and statements in this quotation. But the general thesis seems to be reasonably clear. Apprehension or understanding of a term which stands for a thing or person is called real, while apprehension of an abstract idea or universal concept is called notional. If we apply this distinction to propositions, apprehension of, for example, a proposition in geometry would be notional, while the apprehension of the statement 'William is the father of James' would be real.

It follows from this that we must also distinguish between two types of assent. Assent given to a proposition apprehended as notional, as concerned with abstract ideas or universal terms, is notional assent, while that which is given to propositions apprehended as real, as concerned directly with things or persons, is real assent.

Now Newman takes it that things and persons, whether objects of actual experience or presented imaginatively in memory, strike the mind much more forcibly and vividly than do abstract notions. Real apprehension therefore is 'stronger than notional, because things, which are its objects, are confessedly more impressive and effective than notions, which are the object of notional [apprehension]. Experiences and their images strike and occupy the mind, as abstractions and their combinations do not.'[2] Similarly, although, according to Newman, all assent is alike in being unconditional,[3] acts of assent 'are elicited more heartily and forcibly, when they are made upon real apprehension which has things for its objects, than when they are made in favour of notions and with a notional apprehension'.[4] Further, real assent, though it does not necessarily affect conduct, tends to do so in a way in which purely notional assent does not.[5]

Real assent is also called belief by Newman. And it is obvious that the belief in God with which he is primarily concerned as a Christian apologist is a real assent to God as a present reality, and an assent which influences life or conduct, not simply a notional assent to a proposition about the idea of God. True, if assent is given to propositions, real assent will in this case be given to the proposition 'God exists' or 'there is a God'. But it will be given to the proposition apprehended as real, the term 'God' being understood as signifying a present reality, a present personal being. And from this it follows that Newman is not, and cannot be, primarily interested in a formal demonstrative inference to God's existence. For in his view, which recalls that of Hume, demonstration exhibits the logical relations between notions or ideas. That is to say, it derives conclusions from premisses, the terms of which stand for abstract or general ideas. Thus the assent given to the conclusion is notional and lacks that element of personal commitment which Newman associates with real assent to the existence of God.

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[1] *GA*, pp. 20–1.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 35.
[3] So-called doubtful assent is for Newman unconditional assent to the statement that the truth of a given proposition is doubtful.
[4] *GA*, p. 17.
[5] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 87.

As has already been mentioned, however, Newman does not postulate in man any power of intuiting God directly. Hence some sort of inference is required, some movement of the mind from what is given in experience to what transcends immediate experience or perception. At the same time it must not be the type of inference which leads to notional rather than to real assent. Thus the following questions arise: 'Can I attain to any more vivid assent to the Being of a God, than that which is given merely to notions of the intellect? . . . Can I believe as if I saw? Since such a high assent requires a present experience or memory of the fact, at first sight it would seem as if the answer must be in the negative; for how can I assent as if I saw, unless I have seen? But no one in this life can see God. Yet I conceive a real assent is possible, and I proceed to show how.'[1] Newman's attempt to show how this real assent is possible will be considered in the next section.

4. We have seen that according to Newman even our non-religious beliefs rest on at any rate latent assumptions.[2] Something is taken for granted, whether explicitly or implicitly. There is some point of departure which is taken as given, without proof. In the case of belief in God this point of departure, the given basis of the movement of the mind, is conscience. Conscience is as much a factor in human nature, in the complex of mental acts, 'as the action of memory, of reasoning, of imagination, or as the sense of the beautiful'.[3] And it is 'the essential principle and sanction of Religion in the mind'.[4]

Conscience, however, can be considered under two aspects which, though not separate in fact, are none the less distinguishable. In the first place we can consider it as a rule of right conduct, as judging about the rightness or wrongness of particular actions. And it is an empirical fact that different people have made different ethical judgments. Some societies, for example, have approved conduct which other societies have condemned. In the second place we can consider conscience simply as the voice of authority, that is, as imposing obligation. And the sense of obligation is essentially the same in all who possess a conscience. Even if *A* thinks that he ought to act in one way while *B* thinks that he ought to act in another way, the consciousness of obligation, considered in itself, is similar in both men.

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[1] *GA*, p. 99.

[2] As for formal demonstrative inference, this, Newman insists, is conditional. That is to say, the truth of the conclusion is asserted on the condition of the premisses being true. And though Newman himself does not deny that there are self-evident principles, he points out that what seems self-evident to one man does not necessarily seem self-evident to another. In any case the possibility of valid reasoning is assumed. If we try to prove everything and to make no assumptions whatsoever, we shall never get anywhere.

[3] *GA*, p. 102.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Considered under this second aspect, as the voice of internal authority, conscience 'vaguely reaches forward to something beyond self, and dimly discerns a sanction higher than self for its decisions, as evidenced in that keen sense of obligation and responsibility which informs them'.[1] The inward law of conscience does not indeed carry with it any proof of its own validity, but it 'commands attention to it on its own authority'.[2] The more this inward law is respected and followed, the clearer become its dictates, and at the same time the clearer becomes the presentiment or vague awareness of a transcendent God, 'a supreme Power, claiming our habitual obedience'.[3]

A lively sense of obligation thus carries the mind forward to the thought of something beyond the human self. Further, conscience possesses an emotive aspect, on which Newman lays considerable emphasis. Conscience produces 'reverence and awe, hope and fear, especially fear, a feeling which is foreign for the most part, not only to Taste, but even to the Moral Sense, except in consequence of accidental associations'.[4] And Newman argues that there is an intimate connection between affections and emotions on the one hand and persons on the other. 'Inanimate things cannot stir our affections; these are correlative with persons.'[5] Hence 'the phenomena of Conscience, as a dictate, avail to impress the imagination with the picture of a Supreme Governor, a Judge, holy, just, powerful, all-seeing, retributive'.[6] In other words, conscience can produce that 'imaginative' awareness of God which is required for the vivid assent to which reference has already been made.

What Newman says on this matter was doubtless verified in his own case. When he spoke of the mind of a child who recognizes obligation and who has been preserved from influences destructive of his 'religious instincts'[7] as reaching forward 'with a strong presentiment of the thought of a Moral Governor, sovereign over him, mindful and just',[8] we may well discern a generalization from his own experience. Further, if we consider what he has to say as a descriptive account of the basis of real assent to God, it is doubtless verified in many other cases. For it is certainly arguable that with many believers respect for the dictates of conscience is a powerful influence in keeping alive the consciousness of God as a present reality. True, it is possible to neglect and disobey the dictates of conscience and still believe in God. But it is also probably true that if one habitually turns a deaf ear to the voice of conscience, so that it becomes dim or obscured, belief in God, if retained, tends to degenerate into what Newman would call a purely notional assent. In other words, from the phenomenological point of view Newman's account of the relation between conscience and belief in or real assent to God has an indubitable value. There are indeed other factors which have to be considered in a phenomenological analysis of belief in God. But Newman certainly illustrates one aspect of the matter.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 104. [2] *OUS*, p. 19. [3] *Ibid.*

[4] *GA*, pp. 104–5. By Taste Newman means the aesthetic sense, considered as the sense of the beautiful, while by Moral Sense he means in this context a sense of the fittingness or deformity of actions, involving moral approval or disapproval.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 106. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 107. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

[8] *Ibid.*

At the same time Newman is not concerned simply with describing the way in which, in his opinion, people come to believe in God, as though the belief were or could be on the same level as a belief, say, in the existence of elves and fairies. He wishes to show that belief in God is reasonable, and in some sense or other he intends to indicate the outlines of a 'proof' of God's existence. For instance, he says explicitly that the argument from conscience is 'my own chosen proof of that fundamental doctrine [God's existence] for thirty years past'.[1] And elsewhere he remarks that while he does not intend to prove 'here' the existence of a God, 'yet I have found it impossible to avoid saying where I look for the proof of it'.[2]

But what sort of a proof is it? In a sermon preached in 1830 Newman says that 'Conscience implies a relation between the soul and a something exterior, and that, moreover, superior to itself; a relation to an excellence which it does not possess, and to a tribunal over which it has no power'.[3] In spite, however, of the use of the word 'imply', he can hardly mean that the idea of conscience implies the idea of God in such a way that to assert the existence of conscience and deny the existence of God constitutes a logical contradiction. Moreover, elsewhere Newman uses phrases which suggest a causal inference. For instance, he says of conscience that 'from the nature of the case, its very existence carries on our minds to a Being exterior to ourselves; for else whence did it come?'[4] And we have already noted his remark, when speaking of the emotive aspect of conscience, that 'inanimate things cannot stir our affections; these are correlative with persons'.[5] But Newman is, of course, aware that by no means all philosophers would agree that we can legitimately infer the existence of God from the sense of obligation. And if he skates lightly over views different from his own, it is fairly evident that he is really concerned not so much with a causal inference to an explanatory hypothesis, analogous to causal inference in science, as with inviting his hearers or readers to enter into themselves and to reflect on the question whether they are not in some sense aware of God as manifested in the voice of conscience.

In other words, Newman seems to be primarily concerned with personal insight into the 'significance' or 'implications' of the awareness of obligation in a sense of these terms which it is difficult to define. And his line of thought appears to bear more resemblance to the phenomenological analyses performed in our own day by Gabriel Marcel than to metaphysical arguments of the traditional type. Newman admits indeed that a generalized inductive argument is possible. Just as from sense-impressions 'we go on to draw the general conclusion that there is a vast external world',[1] so by induction from particular instances of awareness of an inner imperative, an awareness which opens the mind to the thought of God, we can conclude to 'the Ubiquitous Presence of One Supreme Master'.[2] But assent to the conclusion of a generalized inductive argument will be, for Newman, a notional assent. Hence an argument of this kind appears to fall into the same class as arguments from Nature to God, of which he says in one place that while he has no intention of questioning their beauty and cogency, he certainly does question 'whether in matter of fact they make or keep men Christians'.[3] For such an argument to be 'effective', yielding real assent, we have to 'apply our general knowledge to a particular instance of that knowledge'.[4] That is to say, for assent to the conclusion of a generalized moral argument to become a living belief and the basis of religion, I have to enter within myself and hear the voice of God manifesting itself in the voice of conscience.[5] It is the personal appropriation of the truth which counts for Newman, not a mere intellectual assent to an abstract proposition.

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[1] From the 'Proof of Theism', a paper published for the first time in Dr. A. J. Boekraad's *The Argument from Conscience to the Existence of God according to J. H. Newman* (Louvain, 1961), p. 121.

[2] *GA*, p. 101.

[3] *OUS*, p. 18.

[4] *Sermons Preached on Various Occasions* (2nd edition, 1858), p. 86.

[5] *GA*, p. 106.

In other words, Newman really wants to make us 'see' something for ourselves in the context of our personal experience rather than to argue that one proposition follows logically from another. After all, he says himself that he does not intend to deal 'with controversialists'.[6] In a real sense he wishes to make us see what we are. Without conscience a man is not really a man. And unless conscience leads us to belief in God by bringing us, so to speak, up against God as a present reality manifested in the sense of obligation, it remains stunted. Human nature expands, as it were, in faith. It is from the start open to God. And in Newman's view this potential openness is realized, basically, through personal insight into the 'phenomenon' of conscience. It is thus probably a mistake to interpret his argument from conscience to God as a public proof of the existence of God. True, the phenomenological analysis is public in the sense that it is a written explicitation of what Newman regards as the spontaneous movement of the unspoiled mind. But the public analysis cannot possibly do what Newman wishes it to do, to facilitate real assent, unless it is interiorized, applied, as he puts it, to the particular instance.

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 60–1.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 61.

[3] *Sermons Preached on Various Occasions*, p. 98.

[4] *GA*, p. 61.

[5] It should be noted that Newman did not hold that the moral law depends on the arbitrary *fiat* of God. He maintained that in recognizing our obligation to obey the moral law we implicitly recognize God as Father and Judge.

[6] *GA*, p. 420.

5. We cannot examine here Newman's discussion of the evidences for the truth of Christianity. But there is a logical point connected with the discussion which is worth mentioning.

Formal demonstrative inference can, of course, be employed within theology, to exhibit the implications of statements. But when we are considering the evidences for Christianity in the first place, we are largely concerned, Newman takes it, with historical matters, with matters of fact. And at once a difficulty arises. On the one hand in reasoning about matters of fact rather than about the relations between abstract ideas our conclusions enjoy some degree of probability, perhaps a very high degree, but still only probability. On the other hand all assent, Newman insists, is unconditional. How then can we be justified in giving unconditional assent, such as is demanded of the Christian, to a proposition which is only probably true?

To answer this objection Newman makes use of ideas found in Pascal, Locke and Butler and argues that an accumulation of independent probabilities, converging towards a common conclusion, can render this conclusion certain. In his own words, where there is a 'cumulation of probabilities, independent of each other, arising out of the nature and circumstances of the case which is under review; probabilities too fine to avail separately, too subtle and circuitous to be convertible into syllogisms, too numerous and various for such conversion, even were they convertible',[1] but which all, taken together, converge on a certain conclusion, this conclusion can be certain.

It can doubtless be admitted that we do in fact often take a convergence of probabilities as sufficient proof of the truth of a proposition. But it can still be objected against Newman that no definite rule can be given for determining when the truth of a certain conclusion is the only possible rational explanation of a given convergence. Hence though we may be perfectly justified in assuming the truth of the conclusion for all practical purposes, an unconditional or unqualified assent is unjustified. For any hypothesis remains revisible in principle. It is all very well for Newman to say that in the case of religious inquiry we are 'bound in conscience to seek truth and to look for certainty by modes of proof, which, when reduced to the shape of formal propositions, fail to satisfy the severe requisitions of science'.[2] The fact remains that if unconditional assent to a proposition is taken to exclude the possibility of the proposition turning out to be false, it cannot legitimately be given to a conclusion drawn from a convergence unless we are able to show that at some point probability is transferred into certainty.

Obviously, Newman can hardly mean by unconditional assent one which excludes all possibility of the relevant proposition turning out to be false. For if all assent is unconditional, it must include assent to propositions which we very well know might turn out to be false. In its most general form the statement that all assent is unconditional can hardly mean more than that assent is assent. However, in the case of adherence to Christianity Newman clearly has in mind an absolute self-commitment, an unqualified assent in the fullest sense. And though he would doubtless admit that there is no infallible abstract rule for determining when a convergence of possibilities is such that the conclusion is certain, he argues that man possesses a 'faculty' of the mind, analogous to the Aristotelian *phronesis*, which is susceptible of different degrees of development and which is in principle capable of discerning the point at which the convergence of probabilities amounts to conclusive proof. This is the illative sense. 'In no class of concrete reasonings, whether in experimental science, historical research, or theology, is there any ultimate test of truth and error in our inferences besides the trustworthiness of the Illative Sense that gives them its sanction.'[1] We either 'see' or we do not see that a given inference is valid. Similarly, we either see or we do not see that the only rational explanation of a given accumulation of converging independent probabilities is the truth of the conclusion on which they converge. By the nature of the case there can be no further criterion of judgment than the mind's estimate of the evidence in a particular case.

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[1] *GA*, p. 281.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 407.

It may seem that Newman places the emphasis on subjective or psychological states. He says, for example, that 'certitude is a mental state: certainty is a quality of propositions. Those propositions I call certain, which are such that I am certain of them.'[2] And this may give the impression that in his opinion any proposition is certainly true if it causes the feeling of being certain in a human being. But he goes on to say that in concrete questions certitude is not a 'passive impression made upon the mind from without . . . but . . . an active recognition of propositions as true. . . .'[3] And as 'everyone who reasons is his own centre',[4] there can be no further criterion of evidence or of the validity of inference in concrete matters of fact than seeing that the evidence is sufficient or that the inference is valid. Newman has no intention of denying the objectivity of truth. He means rather that if we think that a man's reasoning in questions of fact is faulty, we can only ask him to look again at the evidence and at his process of reasoning. If it is objected that there can be a 'logic of words',[5] the sort of deduction which can be performed by a machine, Newman does not deny this. But he insists that a distinction must be made between the logic of words and reasoning about matters of fact. The former leads to purely notional assent; and this does not interest him when he is writing as a

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 352. The illative sense is 'the power of judging about truth and error in concrete matters' (*ibid.*, p. 346).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 337. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*, p. 338. [5] *Ibid.*

Christian apologist who wishes to justify real assent. He does not set out to argue that reasoning about Christian evidences can be reduced to the logic of words, to formal demonstrative inference. What he wishes to show is rather that in all concrete issues of fact we have to employ inference which is not so reducible, and that the believer's assent to the conclusion of reasoning about the evidences for Christianity cannot therefore be justifiably described as a mere leap or as the result of wishful thinking because it does not conform to a pattern of demonstration which certainly has its uses but which is inappropriate outside a certain limited field.

6. We have already had occasion to refer to a certain affinity between Newman's reflections on conscience and Gabriel Marcel's phenomenological analyses. But the intellectual antecedents and formations of the two men were, needless to say, very different; and whereas Newman was out to prove something, to show that Christian belief is reasonable, the apologetic motive is much less obvious with Marcel. Indeed, Marcel's philosophical reflections helped to bring him to Christianity, whereas Newman's philosophical reflections presuppose the Christian faith, in the sense that it is a case of faith reflecting on itself. At the same time there are certain limited affinities.

Similarly, in spite of the great differences between the two men Newman's preoccupation with the personal appropriation of truth as a basis for life and with personal self-commitment may put us in mind of Kierkegaard,[1] whose span of life (1813–55) fell entirely within that of Newman. This is not to suggest, of course, that Newman knew anything at all about the Danish thinker, or even of his existence. But though Newman certainly did not go so far as Kierkegaard in describing truth as subjectivity, there is none the less a certain degree of spiritual affinity between the two men.

As for Newman's insistence on the moral conditions for the fruitful pursuit of truth in religious inquiry, this has become a commonplace of the newer apologetics, as has indeed Newman's approach from within the soul rather than from external Nature. In other words, there is at any rate some affinity between Newman's approach to apologetics and that associated in modern times with the name of Maurice Blondel (1861–1949).

The point of these remarks is this. If we take Newman simply as he stands, there are a good many questions which modern British logicians and philosophers would wish to ask, and objections which they would feel inclined to make. But it seems safe to say that Newman is not now regarded, except possibly by a few devotees, as a philosopher whose thought one either accepts or rejects, as the case may be. By saying that he is not 'now' regarded I do not mean to imply that he was ever looked on in this light. I mean rather that the growth of interest in his philosophical thought and in his style of apologetics has coincided with the spread of movements in philosophy and in apologetics which, on our looking back, are seen to have certain affinities with elements in Newman's reflections. Hence those who take an interest in his philosophical reflections tend to look on them as a source of stimulus and inspiration rather than as a rigid, systematic doctrine, which, of course, Newman himself never intended them to be. And in this case detailed criticism of particular points necessarily seems pedantic and appears, to those who value Newman's general approach, as more or less irrelevant.

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[1] For Kierkegaard see ch. 17 of Vol. VII of this *History*.

APPENDIX B

A SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Frederick Copleston, S.J.

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PREFACE

THE seventh and eighth volumes of this work were originally intended to cover nineteenth-century philosophy in Germany and in Great Britain respectively. The seventh volume conforms to this plan, inasmuch as it ends with a treatment of Nietzsche who died in 1900 and whose period of literary activity falls entirely within the nineteenth century. The eighth volume however includes treatments of G. E. Moore, Bertrand Russell and the American philosopher John Dewey. All three were born in the nineteenth century; and both Dewey and Russell had published before the turn of the century. But all were active well on into the twentieth century. Indeed, Russell was still alive when the volume was published and was able to make an appreciative comment in a letter to the author. The present ninth volume carries even further this tendency to go beyond the limits of nineteenth-century thought. It was originally intended to cover French philosophy between the revolution and the death of Henri Bergson. In point of fact it includes a fairly extensive treatment of Jean-Paul Sartre, a briefer outline of some of Merleau-Ponty's ideas and some remarks on the structuralism of Lévi-Strauss.

This extension of the account of French philosophy after the revolution to include a number of thinkers whose literary activity falls within the twentieth century and some of whom at any rate are still alive has meant that I have been unable to fulfil my original plan of including within the present volume treatments of nineteenth-century thought in Italy, Spain and Russia. Reference has been made to one or two Belgian thinkers, such as Joseph Maréchal; but otherwise I have restricted the area to France. Indeed, it is more accurate to say that I have treated of French philosophers than of philosophy in France as a geographical area. For example, Nikolai Berdyaev settled at Paris in 1924 and pursued a vigorous literary activity on French soil. But it seems to me improper to annex him for France. He belongs to the religious tradition in Russian thought. There may indeed be more reason for annexing Berdyaev for French philosophy than there would be for counting Karl Marx as a British philosopher on the ground that he spent his last years in London and worked in the British Museum. At the same time the Russian writers who lived and wrote in exile in France remained Russian thinkers.

If we leave foreign exiles out of account, France is in any case rich in philosophical writers, both professional philosophers and literary figures whose writings can be described as having philosophical significance. Unless however the historian proposes to write a complete comprehensive survey, which would amount to little more than a list of names or require several tomes, he cannot include them all. There are of course philosophers who obviously have to be included in any account of French philosophy since the revolution. Maine de Biran, Auguste Comte and Henri Bergson are examples. It is also clear that discussion of a given movement of thought entails reference to its leading representatives. Whatever may be one's estimate of Victor Cousin's merits as a thinker, it would be absurd to write about eclecticism in France without saying something about its chief representative, especially in view of the position which he occupied for a time in the academic life of his country. Similarly, an account of neo-criticism involves some discussion of Renouvier's thought. Though however there is a considerable number of philosophers whom the historian would rightly be expected to include, either because of their intrinsic interest and their reputation, contemporary or posthumous, or as representatives of a given movement of thought, there are plenty of others among whom he has to make a selection. And any selection is open to criticism on some ground or other. Thus in regard to the present volume some readers may be inclined to think that space has been allotted to cloudy metaphysicians and idealists which might have been more profitably devoted to philosophy of education or to aesthetics, or to a more extended treatment of social philosophy. Again, if a religious thinker such as Teilhard de Chardin is to be given prominence, why is there no mention of Simone Weil, a very different sort of writer, it is true, but one who has been widely read? Further, in view of the fact that the volume includes a treatment not only of nineteenth-century French political thinkers but also of Sartre's version of Marxism, why is nothing said, for example, about Bertrand de Jouvenel and Raymond Aron?

In the cases of some philosophers it may be relevant to point out that reputation and influence in their own country may very well justify their inclusion, in spite of the fact that in a country with a different philosophical tradition they are little known or read. The reader presumably wishes to hear something about thinkers who have enjoyed some prominence in France, even if they are pretty well unknown in England. Indeed, if their names are little known in England, this could be advanced as an excellent reason for including them. The thought of Louis Lavelle, for instance, would doubtless have left G. E. Moore in a state of mystification; and it would hardly have commended itself to J. L. Austin. But this is no more a reason for omitting Lavelle from an account of recent French philosophy than the lack of sympathy which many French philosophers would probably have with J. L. Austin's preoccupation with ordinary language would constitute a valid reason for omitting Austin's name from an account of recent philosophical thought in Great Britain.

At the same time it must be admitted that there are gaps in the present volume. This is partly due of course to considerations of space. But it is only honest to add that it is partly due to the circumstances in which this volume has been written. If one is Principal of a School of the University of London, one's time for reading and research is inevitably very limited. And one has to use for writing such intervals as may occur. I have doubtless tended to write about philosophers of whom I already knew something and have omitted thinkers who might well have been included. This might be considered a very sound reason for postponing completion of the work. As however I have already indicated, I wish to use the time which retirement may put at my disposal for a rather different sort of volume.

Even when one has decided, for good or ill, on the philosophers about whom one intends to write, there may well be problems of classification or labelling. For example, in the present work Jules Lachelier has been considered in the chapter devoted to what is customarily described as the spiritualist movement. Though however there is precedent for doing this, Lachelier's best-known work is a treatise on the foundations of induction; and it might thus be thought more appropriate to put his ideas under the heading of philosophy of science. At the same time he develops his ideas in such a way as to outline a philosophy which would qualify him for classification as an idealist. Again, while Meyerson has been considered in the text as a philosopher of science, his theory of identity might equally well be treated as a speculative philosophy of the idealist type.

Talk about problems of classification may appear to be the expression of a misguided desire to fit all philosophers into neatly labelled pigeon-holes or of a failure to appreciate the complexities of human life and thought. Or it may seem that one has fallen victim to the bewitching influence of language, imagining that one enjoys conceptual mastery over what one has named. The matter is not however quite so simple. For hesitation in regard to labelling may express not so much a passion for pigeon-holing as a real difficulty in deciding which aspect or aspects of a man's thought are to be regarded as the most significant. The question arises of course: significant in what respect? Consider the case of Berkeley in British philosophy. If an historian is intent on tracing the development of classical British empiricism, he is likely to emphasize those aspects of Berkeley's thought which make it plausible to regard it as a link between Locke and Hume. This has been a common enough procedure. If however the historian is more concerned with Berkeley's declared interests and with the bishop's own estimation of the significance of his philosophy, stress will be laid on the metaphysical aspects of Berkeley's thought and on its religious bearing. Similarly, if an historian is concerned with exhibiting a movement of thought leading up to the philosophy of Bergson, he is likely to label as a 'spiritualist' a writer such as Lachelier, whose thought, considered by itself, might well be given a different label. Again, in the present volume Brunschvicg's philosophy has been treated under the general heading of idealism. But if one thought that idealism was undeserving of attention, one might include Brunschvicg among philosophers of science. For he certainly had something to say on the subject.

Classificatory problems might indeed be avoided by treating the development of philosophical thought in terms of problems and themes, as Windelband did, rather than by taking philosophers in succession and treating the thought of each as one block. This procedure might seem to be especially appropriate in the case of French philosophers, who have frequently had wide-ranging interests and have written on a variety of topics. Though however this procedure has much to commend it, it also has disadvantages for the reader who wishes to devote his uninterrupted attention to a particular philosopher but is unable to find his thought considered as a whole. In any case, in this ninth volume I did not wish to change the procedure which has been followed, for good or ill, in the preceding volumes. There will be scope for a different approach in the projected tenth and final volume.

Reference has been made above to cloudy metaphysicians. This remark should not of course be understood as a judgment on French philosophy. The present writer is not indeed quite so impressed as some people seem to be by the common assertion that French thought is conspicuous for its logical structure and clarity. This may apply to Descartes, the foremost French philosopher; and the writers of the Enlightenment were doubtless clear. But some more recent thinkers seem to have done their best to rival the obscure language which we tend to associate with German philosophy since Kant. It is not that they are unable to write clearly. For they often do. But in their professional philosophical writings they seem to prefer to express their ideas in turgid jargon. Sartre is a case in point. And as for the metaphysicians, talk about *l'être* is not necessarily more illuminating than talk about *das Sein*. At the same time it would be quite wrong to imply that French philosophy is predominantly concerned with metaphysical obscurities. A concern with man is a much more conspicuous feature. The first notable philosopher to be treated in this volume, Maine de Biran, approached philosophy by way of psychology; and it was reflection on man's inner life which led him to metaphysics. The last philosopher to be discussed at some length, Jean-Paul Sartre, is a thinker who has concentrated on man as a free agent and whose personal commitment in the social and political area is well known.

Obviously, philosophers can be concerned with man in different ways. Some have focussed their attention on man's spontaneous activity and freedom, as with Maine de Biran and in what is commonly described at the spiritualist movement in French philosophy, while others, such as Le Senne, have emphasized man's recognition of values and his transcending of the empirically given. Other philosophers have dwelt more on the life of thought and on man's reflection on the mind's activity as manifested in history. Brunschvicg is a case in point. These various approaches have tended to broaden out into general interpretations of reality. Ravaisson, for example, started with reflection on habit and ended with a general view of the world, while Bergson reflected on man's experiences of duration and of voluntary activity and developed a religiously oriented philosophy of the universe. In the case of those who concentrated their attention on the mind's self-criticism and its reflection on its own activity, as manifested in various spheres, the resulting general view has tended to be of an idealist type.

With other thinkers the emphasis has been laid on man in society. This can of course take the form of objective and dispassionate inquiry, as in, for example, the sociology of Émile Durkheim or the structuralist anthropology of Lévi-Strauss. Reflection on man in society can also be pursued in a spirit of commitment, with a view to promoting action or change rather than simply with the aim of understanding. This was naturally the case in the aftermath of the revolution. In the first chapter of this volume attention is paid to a group of thinkers who were deeply concerned with the reconstruction of society and who believed that it could not be effected except through the reassertion of certain threatened traditions. In the fourth chapter another group of thinkers are briefly considered who were convinced that while the revolution had overthrown the old régime, its ideals had still to be realized in positive social construction and development. For the matter of that, Auguste Comte, the high priest of positivism, was profoundly concerned with the organization of society, even if he had a rather naïve faith in the perfecting of society through the development of scientific knowledge. At a later period we find a similar spirit of commitment, manifested in a desire to transform society either through Marxist-inspired revolution, as with Sartre, or through the development of a more personalist socialism, as with Emmanuel Mounier.

Such distinguishable lines of thought are not of course all mutually exclusive. They can be found in varying degrees of combination. The thought of Sartre is an obvious example. On the one hand he has laid great emphasis on human freedom and on the individual's choice of his own values and on the way in which the individual gives meaning to his life. On the other hand he has emphasized self-commitment in the social–political sphere and the need for the transformation of society. The effort to combine the two lines of thought, individualistic and social, has led to his attempt to present a version of Marxism which incorporates in itself an existentialist insistence on human freedom. It is no matter for surprise if he has found difficulty in combining his conviction that it is man who both makes history and gives it meaning with the Marxist tendency to depict history as a dialectical and teleological process, or in combining his existentialism, with its 'every man is an island' atmosphere, with a Marxist emphasis on the social group. The point is however that in the thought of Sartre the emphasis on human freedom which was characteristic of the line of thought stemming from Maine de Biran has met the line of thought which lays stress on man in society and regards the French revolution as simply one stage in an unfinished process of social transformation.

To claim that concern with man has been a conspicuous feature of French philosophy is not of course to assert that philosophy in France has been concerned simply with man. Such an assertion would be clearly untrue. If however we compare recent philosophical thought in France with recent British philosophy, it is evident that what Georges-André Malraux has described as 'the human condition' occupies a place in the former which it certainly does not occupy in the latter. And themes which have been treated by, for example, Gabriel Marcel and Vladimir Jankélévitch hardly appear at all in British philosophy. As for social and political thought, British philosophers are accustomed to follow a policy of neutrality which would be clearly unacceptable to a writer such as Sartre. In general, French philosophical thought gives an impression of relevance to man and society which is not given by the recently prevailing line of thought in Great Britain.

Such remarks do not necessarily imply a comparative judgment of value. How one evaluates the situation depends to a great extent on one's concept of the nature and functions of philosophy. Bertrand Russell did not hesitate to commit himself on moral and political issues; but he did not regard the writings in which he did so as belonging to philosophy in a strict sense. If one believes that the philosopher's function is to reflect on the language of morals and politics, and that if he commits himself on substantive issues he does so as a man and a citizen rather than as a philosopher, one will obviously not regard it as a failure or a fault on the part of philosophers if they maintain in their writings a predominantly detached and analytic approach. It is not the intention of the present author to follow Bertrand Russell in endorsing the sustained attack on leading British philosophers which was made by Professor Ernest Gellner in his provocative and amusing, even if exaggeratedly polemical book, *Words and Things*. This does not however alter the fact that there is a difference in philosophical atmosphere, so to speak, between the two countries. In England philosophy has become a highly specialized pursuit, with a great care for clarity and precision of expression and a marked distaste for emotively charged and ambiguous language and for slovenly argumentation. In France there are much closer interconnections between philosophy, literature and art. Obviously, one can find philosophical specialization and what some people regard as ivory-tower philosophy in France as elsewhere. But the area in which philosophy and literature are inter-related seems to be considerably more extended in France than in England. Perhaps the fact that in the French educational system students are introduced to philosophy while still at the lycée has something to do with this. As for political commitment, there are clearly historical and socio-political reasons why, for example, since the second world war there has been a preoccupation with Marxism which is not to be found in England, certainly not to the same extent.

The claim, advanced above, that man has been a conspicuous theme in French philosophy was made with a view to counterbalancing any impression which might be given by the passages in this volume on metaphysicians such as Lavelle and idealists such as Hamelin that philosophy has been predominantly concerned with 'metaphysical obscurities'. Though however man would commonly be considered a more concrete and relevant theme than *l'être* or *das Sein*, it must be admitted that talk about man is no guarantee of clarity and precision. In the opinion of the present writer it is much easier to understand Bergson's general view of the world than it is to grasp the meaning of certain more recent French writers on, say, the phenomenology of human consciousness. I am not thinking of Sartre. His jargon is simply irritating. If what he says sometimes seems to be extremely obscure, this is not because what he is saying is unintelligible, but because he has chosen to express in difficult language something which could have been said much more plainly. There are however certain other philosophers whose writing seems to be so impressionistic and vague that the author of this volume saw little prospect of being able to summarize their lines of thought in a manner suitable for presentation in a history of philosophy. One can of course retort, 'so much the worse for histories of philosophy'. This may be fair comment. But it is noticeable that in the case of some philosophers available expositions of their thought are even less illuminating than the original texts. Merleau-Ponty is of course quite right in saying that philosophers should not hesitate to pursue exploratory inquiries which require fresh concepts and expression. To demand that nothing should be said except what can be precisely handled with already available tools would be to demand an abandonment of creative thought and a petrification of philosophy. But this does not alter the fact that what is in process of coming to birth and has not yet acquired shape is hardly apt material for the historian of philosophy.

PART I

FROM THE REVOLUTION TO AUGUSTE COMTE

CHAPTER I

THE TRADITIONALIST REACTION TO THE REVOLUTION

Introductory remarks—De Maistre—De Bonald—Chateaubriand—Lamennais—Traditionalism and the Church.

1. To us the French revolution is an historical event, the causes and development and effects of which can be investigated in a dispassionate manner. At the time judgments were obviously accompanied and often affected by strong feelings. To many people the revolution naturally appeared not only as a national liberation and a regenerating force in French society but also as a movement destined to bring light and freedom to other nations as well. The Terror might of course be deplored, or perhaps excused; but the ideals of the revolution were approved and welcomed as an assertion of human freedom, and sometimes as a long-awaited extension of the religious Reformation into the political and social spheres. Equally naturally however there were others to whom the revolution appeared as a disastrous event which threatened the foundations of society, substituted an anarchic individualism for social stability, was wantonly destructive of the traditions of France and expressed a rejection of the religious basis of morals, education and social cohesion. Obviously, hostility to the revolution could be prompted to a large extent by selfish motives; but so could support of it. And just as idealism could be enlisted on the side of the revolution, so could there be an opposition to the revolutionary spirit which expressed a sincere conviction about its destructive and impious character.

A thought-out opposition to the revolution on the philosophical plane was expressed by the so-called Traditionalists. Both supporters and opponents of the revolution were inclined to regard it as the fruit of the Enlightenment, though they obviously differed sharply in their respective evaluations of and attitudes to the Enlightenment. It is of course easy to dismiss the Traditionalists as reactionaries filled with nostalgia for the past and blind to the movement of history.[1] But however myopic they may have been in certain respects, they were eminent and influential writers and cannot simply be passed over in an account of French thought in the early decades of the nineteenth century.

2. The first writer of whom mention must be made is the famous royalist and ultramontanist Count Joseph de Maistre (1753–1821). Born at Chambéry in Savoy, he studied law at Turin and became a senator of Savoy. When the French invaded his country, he took refuge first in Aosta and then at Lausanne, where he wrote his *Considerations on France* (*Considérations sur la France*, 1796). De Maistre had once had some liberal sympathies; but in this work he made clear his opposition to the revolution and his desire for a restoration of the French monarchy.

In 1802 de Maistre was appointed minister-plenipotentiary of the King of Sardinia to the Russian court at St. Petersburg. He remained in Russia for fourteen years, and it was there that he wrote his *Essay on the Generative Principle of Political Constitutions* (*Essai sur le principe générateur des constitutions politiques*, 1814). He also occupied himself with the composition of his work *On the Pope* (*Du Pape*), which was finished at Turin and published in 1819, and the *Evenings at St. Petersburg* (*Soirées de Saint-Pétersbourg*) which appeared in 1821. His *Examination of the Philosophy of Bacon* (*Examen de la philosophie de Bacon*) was published posthumously in 1836.

In his earlier years de Maistre had been associated with a masonic circle at Lyons which derived some inspiration from the ideas of Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin (1743–1803), who had himself been stimulated by the writings of Jakob Boehme.[2] The circle was opposed to the philosophy of the Enlightenment and turned to metaphysical and mystical doctrines representing a fusion of Christian and Neoplatonist beliefs. And Saint-Martin saw in history the unfolding of divine providence. History was for him a continuous process linked throughout to God, the One.

It is perhaps not unreasonable to discern some echoes at any rate of such ideas in de Maistre's *Considerations on France*. True, he is horrified by the revolution, the act of regicide, the attack on the Church and the Terror; but at the same time his concept of history stands in the way of an exclusively negative evaluation of the revolution. He regards Robespierre and the other leaders as scoundrels and criminals, but he also sees them as the unwitting instruments of divine providence. Men 'act at the same time voluntarily and necessarily'.[1] They act as they will to act, but in doing so they further the designs of providence. The leaders of the revolution thought that they were in control of it; but they were instruments to be used and thrown aside, while the revolution itself was God's instrument to punish sin: 'Never had the divinity shown itself so clearly in any human event. If it employs the vilest instruments, it is a case of punishing in order to regenerate.'[2] If the factions involved in the revolution sought to attain the destruction of Christianity and of the monarchy, 'it follows that all their efforts will result only in the exaltation of Christianity and of the monarchy.'[3] For there is a 'secret force'[4] which works in history.

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[1] This phrase is ambiguous. If the movement of history means the succession of events, the Traditionalists were obviously not blind to it. If the phrase implies that change and progress (in an evaluative sense) are synonymous terms, this identification presupposes a philosophy of history which cannot be simply taken for granted. It is however doubtless possible to fail to appreciate the fact that the emergence of new forces and ideas exclude the successful restoration and revivification of a previously existing structure.

[2] See Vol. III of this *History*, pp. 270–3.

De Maistre's idea of history as exhibiting the operation of divine providence and of individuals as instruments was not in itself a novelty, though he applied it to a very recent event or series of events. The idea is obviously open to objections. Apart from any difficulty in reconciling human freedom with the unfailing realization of the divine purpose, the concept of revolutions and wars as divine punishments gives rise to the reflection that it is by no means only the guilty (or those who may seem to human eyes to be guilty) who suffer from such cataclysms. De Maistre tries however to meet such objections by a theory of the solidarity of the nation, and indeed of the human race, as constituting an organic unity. It is this theory which he opposes to what he regards as the erroneous and pernicious individualism of the Enlightenment.

Political society, de Maistre insists, is certainly not a collection of individuals united through a social compact or contract. Nor can a viable constitution be thought out *a priori* by the human reason in abstraction from national traditions and the institutions which have developed through the centuries. 'One of the great errors of a century which professed all errors was to believe that a political constitution could be written and created *a priori*, whereas reason and experience are united in showing that a constitution is a divine work, and that it is precisely what is most fundamental and essentially constitutional in the laws of a nation which could not be written.'[1] If we look at the English constitution, we can see that it is the result of a vast number of contributing factors and circumstances which served as the instruments of providence. A constitution of this kind, which was certainly not constructed in an *a priori* manner, is always allied with religion and takes a monarchic form. It is not surprising therefore if revolutionaries, who wish to establish a constitution by decree, attack both religion and the monarchy.

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[1] *Considérations sur la France* (Brussels, 1838), p. 2.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 21. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 127. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 128.

In general terms de Maistre is violently opposed to the rationalism of the eighteenth century which he sees as treating of abstractions and as disregarding traditions which, in his opinion, exhibit the operation of divine providence. The abstract human being of *les philosophes*, who is not essentially a Frenchman or an Englishman or a member of some other organic unity, is a fiction. So is the State when interpreted as the product of a contract or convention. When de Maistre makes a complimentary remark about an Enlightenment thinker, it is because he regards him as transcending the spirit of *a priori* rationalism. For example, Hume is commended for his attack on the artificiality of the social contract theory. If de Maistre goes back beyond the Enlightenment and attacks Francis Bacon, the reason is that in his view 'modern philosophy is entirely the daughter of Bacon'.[2]

Another rationalist fiction, according to de Maistre, is natural religion, if the term is taken to mean a purely philosophical religion, a deliberate construction of the human reason. In reality belief in God is handed down from a primitive revelation to mankind, Christianity being a fuller revelation. In other words ,there is only one revealed religion; and man can no more construct a religion *a priori* than he can construct a constitution *a priori*. 'The philosophy of the last century, which will form in the eyes of posterity one of the most shameful epochs of the human spirit . . . was in fact nothing but a veritable system of practical atheism.'[3]

According to de Maistre the philosophy of the eighteenth century has found expression in the theory of the sovereignty of the people and in democracy. The theory of the sovereignty of the people is however groundless, and the fruits of democracy are disorder and anarchy. The remedy for these evils is a return to historically grounded and providentially constituted authority. In the political sphere this means the restoration of the Christian monarchy, while in the religious sphere it means acceptance of the supreme and unique sovereignty of the infallible pope. Human beings are such that government is necessary; and absolute power is the only real alternative to anarchy.[1] 'I have never said that absolute power, in whatever form it may exist in the world, does not involve great inconveniences. On the contrary, I expressly acknowledged the fact, and I have no thought of attenuating these inconveniences. I said only that we find ourselves placed between two abysses.'[2] In actual practice the exercise of absolute power is inevitably restricted by a variety of factors. And in any case political sovereigns are, or ought to be, subject to the jurisdiction of the pope, in the sense that he has the right to judge their actions from the religious and moral points of view.

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[1] *Essai sur le principe générateur des constitutions politiques*, p. IX. The page reference is to the essay as printed in the same volume as the *Considérations sur la France* (Brussels, 1838).

[2] *Examen de la philosophie de Bacon*, II, p. 231 (Paris, 1836).

[3] *Soirées de Saint-Pétersbourg*, p. 258 (Brussels, 1838).

De Maistre is best known for his ultramontanism and his insistence on papal infallibility a considerable time before this doctrine was defined at the first Vatican Council. This insistence however was by no means acceptable to all those who shared his hostility to the revolution and sympathized with his desire for the restoration of the monarchy. Some of his reflections on political constitutions and the values of tradition were similar to those of Edmund Burke (1729–97). But it is very much as the author of *Du Pape* that he is remembered.

3. A more impressive figure from the philosophical point of view was Louis Gabriel Ambroise, Vicomte de Bonald (1754–1840). A former officer of the royal guard, he was a member of the Constituent Assembly in 1790; but in 1791 he emigrated and lived in poverty. In 1796 he published at Constance his *Theory of Political and Religious Power in Civil Society* (*Théorie du pouvoir politique et religieux dans la société civile*). On his return to France he supported Napoleon, in whom he saw the instrument for the political and religious unification of Europe. But after the restoration he gave his support to the monarchy. In 1800 he published an *Analytical Essay on the Natural Laws of Social Order* (*Essai analytique sur les lois naturelles de l'ordre social*). This was followed

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[1] De Maistre makes an exception, though with reservations, for England.

[2] *Du Pape*, p. 172 (Brussels, 1838).

in 1802 by *Primitive Legislation* (*La législation primitive*). His other writings include *Philosophical Studies on the Primary Objects of the Moral Sciences* (*Recherches philosophiques sur les premiers objets des connaissances morales*, 1818) and a *Philosophical Demonstration of the Constitutive Principle of Society* (*Démonstration philosophique du principe constitutif de la société*, 1827).

It has sometimes been said that de Bonald rejects all philosophy. The statement however is inaccurate. It is true that he emphasizes the necessity for a religious basis of society, and that he contrasts this necessity with the insufficiency of philosophy as a social foundation. In his view a union between religious and political society is 'as necessary for constituting the civil or social body as simultaneity of *will* and *action* is necessary for constituting the human *ego*',[1] whereas philosophy lacks the authority to dictate laws and impose sanctions. It is also true that he dwells on the succession of conflicting systems and concludes that 'Europe ... is still awaiting a *philosophy*'.[2] At the same time he shows an evident admiration for some philosophers. He speaks, for instance, of Leibniz as 'perhaps the most comprehensive (*vaste*) genius who has appeared among men'.[3] Further, he distinguishes between the men of ideas or concepts, from Plato onwards, 'who have enlightened the world',[4] and the men of imagination, such as Bayle, Voltaire, Diderot, Condillac, Helvétius and Rousseau, who have led people astray. The description of writers such as Bayle and Diderot as men of imagination may seem odd; but de Bonald is not referring to poetically inclined thinkers. He is referring primarily to those who derive all ideas from sense-experience. When, for example, Condillac talks about 'transformed sensations', the phrase may appeal to the imagination which can picture to itself at will transformations and changes. 'But this transformation, when applied to the operations of the mind, is nothing but a word which is void of meaning; and Condillac himself would have been very embarrassed at having to give it a satisfactory application.'[5]

In general the men of imagination, as de Bonald understands the term, are sensationalists, empiricists and materialists. The men of ideas or concepts are primarily those who believe in innate ideas and ascribe them to their ultimate source. Thus Plato 'proclaimed *innate ideas* or universal ideas, imprinted in our minds by the supreme intelligence',[1] whereas Aristotle 'humiliated the human intelligence by rejecting innate ideas and by representing ideas as coming to the mind only by the mediation of the senses'.[2] 'The reformer of philosophy in France was Descartes.'[3]

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[1] *Essai analytique*, p. 23 (Paris, 1812). *Oeuvres*, v. p. 10 (Paris, 7 vols., 1854).

[2] *Recherches philosophiques*, I, p. 2, *Oeuvres*, iv, p. 1.

[3] *Essai analytique*, p. 36, *Oeuvres*, v, p. 16.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 20, *Oeuvres*, v, p. 9.

[5] *Recherches philosophiques*, I, pp. 33–4. *Oeuvres*, iv, p. 16.

It is indeed true that de Bonald refers to the absence of philosophy among the Jews of Old Testament times and among other vigorous nations, such as the early Romans and the Spartans, and that he concludes from the history of philosophy that philosophers have been unable to find any secure basis for their speculations. He refuses however to admit that we ought therefore to despair of philosophy and reject it altogether. On the contary, we must look for 'an absolutely primitive fact'[4] which can serve as a secure point of departure.

It hardly needs saying that de Bonald was not the first man to look for one secure basis for philosophy. Nor was he the last. It is interesting however to read that he finds his 'primitive fact' in language. Philosophy in general is 'the science of God, of man and of society'.[5] The primitive fact which is being sought must therefore lie at the foundation of man and society. And this is language. It may seem that language cannot be a primitive fact. But according to de Bonald man could not have invented language to express his thoughts, as thought itself, involving general concepts, presupposes language of some kind. In other words, to express his thoughts man must be already a language-using being. Language is required for man to be man. Again, human society presupposes language and could not exist without it.

In looking on symbolic expression as an essential characteristic of man de Bonald is not saying anything which is likely to cause astonishment nowadays, even if there are various puzzling questions which can be asked. He goes on however to argue that man received the gift of language at the same time that he received existence, and that consequently 'there must necessarily have existed, before the human species, a first cause of this marvellous effect (i.e. language), a being superior to man in intelligence, superior to anything that we can know or even imagine, from whom man has positively received the gift of thought, the gift of the word . . ..'[1] In other words, if, as noticed by Rousseau,[2] man needs speech in order to learn to think but could not have constructed speech unless he could think, he cannot have invented language; and this fact serves as the basis of a proof of God's existence.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 12. *Oeuvres*, iv, p. 6.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 13, *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 35. *Oeuvres*, p. 17.

[4] *Recherches philosophiques*, I, p. 85. *Oeuvres* iv, p. 40.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 80. *Oeuvres*, p. 37.

There is no need of course to accuse de Bonald of overlooking the multiplicity of languages, nor the fact that we can and do invent linguistic expressions. His contention is that we cannot reasonably depict man as first developing thought and then sitting down, as it were, to invent language to express this thought. For actual thinking already involves symbolic expression, even if no words are uttered aloud.[3] De Bonald certainly makes a good point by refusing to divide thought and language with a hatchet.[4] Whether his account of the relation between thought and language can serve as a basis for a proof of the existence of God is another question. He assumes that while our ideas of particular objects in the world depend on sense-experience, there are certain basic concepts (of God, for instance) and certain fundamental principles or truths which represent a primitive revelation by God to man. As this revelation could not be grasped or appropriated in the first instance without language, and as man cannot himself have invented language, it (language) must be a primitive gift of God to man at his creation. De Bonald is obviously thinking of man as having been directly created by God as a language-using being, whereas we probably think within the framework of an evolutionary theory.

The social philosophy of de Bonald is triadic in the sense that, according to him, 'there are three *persons* in every society.'[5] In the religious society there are God, his ministers and the people whose salvation is the aim of the relation between God and his ministers. In the domestic society or family we have father, mother and the child or children. In political society there are the head of the

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 98. *Oeuvres*, p. 46.

[2] Rousseau makes this remark in the first part of his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*.

[3] It is arguable that thinking 'to oneself' presupposes language as a social phenomenon.

[4] Some distinction must obviously be made. Otherwise it becomes very difficult to account for our ability to translate. But we might represent the distinction as analogous to Aristotle's distinction between 'form' and 'matter', thought being analogous to 'forms' which do not exist apart from all matter but can inform different matter.

[5] *Législation primitive*, I, p. 134 (Paris, 1817). *Oeuvres*, iii, p. 49.

State (representing power), his officers of various kinds and the people or general body of citizens.

Now if we ask whether in the family power belongs to the father as the result of an agreement or compact, the answer, for de Bonald, must be negative. The power belongs naturally to the father and is derived ultimately from God. Similarly, in political society sovereignty belongs to the monarch, not the people, and it belongs to him by nature. 'The establishment of the public power was neither voluntary nor forced; it was *necessary*, in conformity, that is to say, with the nature of beings in society. And its causes and origins were all natural.'[1] This idea can be applied even in the case of Napoleon. The revolution was both the culmination of a long sickness and an effort made by society to return to order. That someone capable of bringing order out of anarchy should assume power was necessary and therefore natural. Napoleon was the man.

Like de Maistre, de Bonald insists on the unity of power or sovereignty. Sovereignty must be one, independent and definitive or absolute.[2] It must also be lasting, from which premise de Bonald concludes to the need for hereditary monarchy. The peculiar characteristic of his thought however is his theory about the origin of language and of the transmission, by means of language, of a primitive divine revelation which lies at the basis of religious belief, morality and society. It is perhaps none too clear how this theory of the transmission of a primitive revelation squares with de Bonald's enthusiasm for the theory of innate ideas. But presumably he thinks of innate ideas as required for the appropriation of revelation.

4. Both de Maistre and de Bonald were obviously traditionalists in the sense that they upheld the old political and religious traditions of France against the revolutionary spirit. Further, de Bonald in particular was a traditionalist in the technical sense of one who defends the idea of the tradition or handing-on of a primitive revelation. Both men attacked the philosophy of the Enlightenment, though of the two de Maistre was the more sweeping and indiscriminate in his condemnation. In one sense of the word 'rationalism' they were both anti-rationalists. Neither however can properly be said to represent simply irrationalism. For both men offered reasoned defences of their positions and

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[1] *Démonstration philosophique*, p. 108 (Paris, 1830). *Oeuvres*, iv, p. 448.

[2] Absolute power is distinguished from the tyrannical or arbitrary use of power.

appealed to reason in their attacks on the thought of the eighteenth century.

When however we turn to François-René, Vicomte de Chateaubriand (1768–1848), we find a rather different emphasis. Educated in the philosophy of the Encyclopaedists, Chateaubriand went into exile at the revolution, and it was in London that he wrote his *Historical, Political and Moral Essay on Revolution* (*Essai historique, politique et moral sur les révolutions*, 1797). In this work he accepted the force of the objections brought by eighteenth-century philosophers against Christianity, with its doctrines of providence and immortality, and went on to maintain a cyclic theory of history. In the cycles of history events substantially repeat themselves, though the human beings involved and the circumstances are of course different. It is idle therefore to look on the French revolution as a completely fresh start which will bring permanent gains. It repeats substantially the revolutions of former times. The dogma of progress is an illusion.

Later on Chateaubriand was to say, doubtless rightly, that in spite of his onetime rejection of Christianity he still retained a religious nature. In any case he was drawn to the Christian religion, and in 1802 he published his famous work *The Genius of Christianity* (*Génie du Christianisme*). The subtitle of the work, 'Beauties of the Christian Religion' (*Beautés de la religion chrétienne*), expresses well the spirit of the work, in which the author appeals above all to the aesthetic qualities of Christianity. 'All the other kinds of apologies are exhausted, and perhaps they would even be useless today. Who would now read a theological work? Some pious men who have no need to be convinced, some true Christians who are already persuaded.'[1] In place of some old-style apologetics one ought to try to show that 'the Christian religion is the most poetic, the most human, the most favourable to liberty, to the arts and to letters, of all the religions which ever existed.'[2]

This sounds as though Chateaubriand intended to argue that the Christian religion must be true because it is beautiful, because its beliefs are consoling and because some of the greatest artists and poets have been Christians. And apart from the fact that some minds might not agree about the beauty of Christianity, this point of view lies open to the objection that the aesthetic and consoling qualities of Christianity do not prove its truth. If Dante and

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[1] *Génie du christianisme*, I, p. 13 (Paris, 1803).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Michelangelo were Christians, what does this show, except something about Dante and Michelangelo? If the doctrines of the resurrection and heaven are a source of consolation to many people, does it follow that they are true? It is understandable that Chateaubriand has been accused of irrationalism or of substituting appeals to aesthetic satisfaction for rational argument.

It is true that with Chateaubriand traditional philosophical arguments to show the credibility of the Christian religion are relegated to a completely subordinate position, and that appeal is made chiefly to aesthetic considerations, to sentiment and to reasons of the heart. At the same time we have to remember that he has in mind those opponents of Christianity who argue that Christian doctrine is repellent, that the Christian religion impedes the development of the moral consciousness, that it is inimical to human freedom and anti-cultural, and that, in general, it has a cramping and stifling effect on the human spirit. He makes it clear that he is not writing for 'sophists' who 'are never searching for the truth in good faith',[1] but for those who have been seduced by the sophists into believing that Christianity is, for instance, the enemy of art and literature, and that it is a barbarous and cruel religion, detrimental to human happiness. His work can be regarded as an *argumentum ad hominem* which aims at showing that Christianity is not what these people think that it is.

5. A more interesting figure is Félicité Robert de Lamennais (1782–1854). Born at St. Malo, Lamennais was in youth a follower of Rousseau, though he soon returned to Christian belief. When de Bonald's *Primitive Legislation* appeared in 1802, Lamennais was profoundly impressed by it. In 1809 he published *Reflections on the State of the Church in France during the Eighteenth Century and on its Actual Situation*, in which he made suggestions for the Church's renewal. Ordained a priest at Vannes in 1816, he published in the following year the first volume of his *Essay on Indifference in Matters of Religion* (*Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion*, 1817–23), a work which brought him immediate fame as an apologist for the Christian religion.

In the first volume of this work Lamennais insists that in religion, morals and politics, no doctrines are matters of indifference. 'Indifference, considered as a permanent state of soul, is opposed to the nature of man and destructive of his being.'[2] This thesis is based on the premises that man cannot develop himself as man without religion, that religion is necessary for society, inasmuch as it is in the basis of morals, and that without it society degenerates into a group of persons each of whom is intent on furthering his own particular interests. In other words, Lamennais insists on the social necessity of religion and rejects the belief which spread in the eighteenth century that ethics can stand on its own feet, apart from religion, and that there could be a satisfactory human society without religion. Given this point of view, Lamennais argues that indifference towards religion is disastrous for man. It might of course be maintained that even if indifference in general is undesirable, it does not necessarily follow that all points of traditional religious belief possess social importance and relevance. According to Lamennais however heresy prepares the way for deism, deism for atheism, and atheism for complete indifference. It is therefore a case of a package deal.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 11. The 'sophists' are presumably *les philosophes*.

[2] *Essai sur l'indifférence*, I, p. 37 (Paris, 1823).

It may appear that Lamennais is attaching an exclusively pragmatic value to religion, as though the only justification for religious belief was its social utility. This is not however an adequate account of his attitude. He explicitly rejects the point of view of those who see in religion nothing but a socially and politically useful institution and conclude that it is necessary for the common people. In his opinion the Christian doctrines are not only useful but true. Indeed, they are useful because they are true. This is the reason why, for Lamennais, there is no justification for picking and choosing, for heresy in other words.

The difficulty is to see how Lamennais proposes to show that Christian doctrines are true, in a sense of 'true' which goes beyond a purely pragmatist understanding of the term. For in his opinion our reasoning is so subject to a variety of influences which can operate even 'without our knowing it'[1] that it cannot yield certainty. It is all very well to claim that we can deduce conclusions from self-evidently true axioms or basic principles. The fact of the matter is that what seems self-evidently true to one man may not seem so to another man. In this case we can well understand Lamennais' rejection of any attempt to reduce religion to 'natural' or philosophical religion. But the question remains, how does he propose to exhibit the truth of revealed religion?

The remedy for scepticism, Lamennais maintains, is to trust not one's own private reasoning but the common consent of mankind.

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[1] *Ibid.*, II, p. 137.

For it is this common consent or *sentiment commun* which is the basis of certitude. Atheism is the fruit of false philosophy and of following one's private judgment. If we look at this history of mankind, we find a spontaneous belief in God, common to all nations.

Passing over the question whether the historical facts are as Lamennais claims them to be, we can note that he would be involved in inconsistency if he meant that most human beings, each by his own reasoning, conclude that there is a God. If, that is to say, the alleged common consent were equivalent to a collection of conclusions arrived at by individuals, Lamennais could be challenged to show that it possessed any greater degree of certainty than that attaching to the result of the individual's process of inference. In point of fact however Lamennais has recourse to a traditionalist theory. For example, we know the meaning of the word 'God' because it belongs to the language which we have learned; and this language is ultimately of divine origin. 'It must be then that the first man who has transmitted them (i.e. certain words or concepts) to us, received them himself from the mouth of the Creator. Thus we find in the infallible word of God the origin of religion and of the tradition which preserves it.'[1]

To say this is to say in effect that it is on authority that we know the truth of religious belief, and that there is in reality only revealed religion. What has been called natural religion is really revealed religion, and it has been commonly accepted because human beings, when unspoiled and not led astray by false reasoning, see that 'man is always obliged to obey the greatest authority which it is possible for him to know'.[2] The common consent of mankind about the existence of God expresses acceptance of a primitive revelation;[3] and belief in the teaching of the Catholic Church expresses acceptance of God's further revelation in and through Christ.

This theory gives rise to a number of awkward questions which cannot however be discussed here. We must pass instead to Lamennais' political attitude. Given his insistence on authority in the religious sphere, one might expect him to emphasize the role of monarchy in the manner of de Maistre and de Bonald. But this is not in fact the case. Lamennais is still a monarchist, but he shows a realistic attitude. Thus in his work *On Religion Considered in its Relations with the Political and Civil Order* (*De la religion considérée dans ses rapports avec l'ordre politique et civil,* 1825–6) he remarks that the restored monarchy is 'a venerable souvenir of the past'[1] while France is in reality a democracy. True, 'the democracy of our times . . . rests on the atheist dogma of the primitive and absolute sovereignty of the people.'[2] But Lamennais' reflections on this state of affairs led him in the direction of ultramontanism within the Church rather than to a hankering after absolute monarchy. In contemporary France the Church is tolerated and even supported financially; but this patronage by the State constitutes a great danger to the Church, as it tends to make of the Church a department of the State and to hamper the former's freedom to penetrate and christianize the life of the nation. It is only emphasis on the supreme authority of the pope which can prevent the subordination of the Church to the State and make it clear that the Church has a universal mission. As for the monarchy, Lamennais has misgivings. In his work *On the Progress of the Revolution and of the War against the Church* (*Du progrès de la révolution et de la guerre contre l'église,* 1829) he remarks that 'towards the end of the monarchy human power had become, thanks to Gallicanism, the object of a real idolatry'.[3] Lamennais still thinks of the revolution as dissolving the social order and as the enemy of Christianity; but he has come to believe that the trouble started with the rise of absolute monarchy. It was Louis XIV who 'made despotism the fundamental law of the State'.[4] The French monarchy sapped the life of the Church by subordinating it to the State. And it would be disastrous if in their desire for the apparent security of State patronage and protection the clergy were to acquiesce in a similar subordination to the post-revolutionary and post-Napoleonic State. A clear recognition of papal authority in the Church is required as a safeguard.

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[1] *Ibid.*, III, p. 14

[2] *Ibid.*, II, p. 382.

[3] Obviously, on this view it is necessary to interpret polytheism as representing a process of degeneration of an original monotheism.

In spite of his continued attack on political liberalism and individualism Lamennais had come to believe that liberalism contained a valuable element, 'the invincible desire of freedom which is inherent in the Christian nations which cannot put up with an arbitrary or purely human power'.[5] And the revolution of 1830 convinced him that no reliance could be placed on monarchs for the regeneration of society. It was necessary to accept the democratic State as it was, to secure a complete separation of the Church from the State, and, within the Church, to insist on the supreme authority of the infallible pope. In other words, Lamennais combined acceptance of the idea of a democratic and religously non-affiliated State with insistence on ultramontanism within the Church. He hoped of course that the Church would succeed in christianizing society; but he had come to believe that this end could not be attained unless the Church renounced all State patronage and any privileged status.

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[1] *De la religion,* p. 33 (Paris, 1826).

[2] *Ibid.,* p. 95.

[3] *Du progrès de la révolution,* p. 58 (Paris, 1829).

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 7.

[5] *Ibid.,* p. 256.

In 1830 Lamennais founded the newspaper *Avenir* which stood for the authority and infallibility of the pope, acceptance of the French political system of the time, and separation between Church and State. The paper enjoyed the support of some eminent men, such as the Comte de Montalembert (1810–70) and the famous Dominican preacher Henri-Dominique Lacordaire (1802–61); but the views propounded were by no means acceptable to all Catholics. Lamennais tried to secure the approval of Pope Gregory XVI; but in 1832 the pope issued an encyclical letter (*Mirari vos*) in which he censured indifferentism, liberty of conscience and the doctrine that Church and State should be separated. Lamennais was not named in the letter. While however the pope's condemnation of indifferentism could be taken as an endorsement of Lamennais' early *Essai sur l'indifférence*, the editor of *Avenir* was clearly affected by the encyclical.

In 1834 Lamennais published *Words of a Believer* (*Paroles d'un croyant*) in which he supported all oppressed and suffering peoples and groups and advocated complete freedom of conscience for all. In point of fact he endorsed the ideals of the revolution, liberty, equality and fraternity, as interpreted in a religious setting. The book was censured by Pope Gregory XVI in June 1834 in a letter addressed to the French bishops; but by then Lamennais was pretty well detached from the Church. And two years later, in *Affairs of Rome* (*Affaires de Rome*), he rejected the idea of achieving social order either through monarchs or through the pope. He had become a believer in the sovereignty of the people.

In later writings Lamennais argued that Christianity, in its organized forms, had outlived its usefulness; but he continued to maintain the validity of religion, considered as a development of a divine element in man which unites him with God and with his fellows. In 1840 he published a brochure directed against the government and police and underwent a year's imprisonment as a result. After the 1848 revolution he was elected a deputy for the department of the Seine. But when Napoleon III assumed power, Lamennais retired from politics. He died in 1854 without any formal reconciliation with the Church.

6. In a very general or broad sense of the term we can describe as traditionalists all those who saw the French revolution as a disastrous attack on the valuable political, social and religious traditions of their country and who advocated a return to these traditions. In the technical sense of the term however, the sense, that is to say, in which it is used in recounting the history of ideas in the decades following the revolution, traditionalism means the theory that certain basic beliefs, necessary for man's spiritual and cultural development and well-being, are not the result simply of human reasoning but have been derived from a primitive revelation by God and have been handed on from generation to generation through the medium of language. Obviously, traditionalism in the broad sense does not exclude traditionalism in the narrower sense. But it does not entail it. It hardly needs saying that a Frenchman could quite well support the restoration of the monarchy without the theory of a primitive revelation and without placing restrictions on the range of philosophical proof. Again, it was possible to adopt traditionalist theories in the technical sense and yet not to demand a restoration of the *ancien régime*. The two could go together; but they were not inseparable.

It may appear at first sight that traditionalism in the technical sense, with its attack on the philosophy of the Enlightenment, its insistence on divine revelation and its tendency to ultramontanism would be highly acceptable to ecclesiastical authority. But though ultramontanist tendencies were naturally pleasing to Rome, the traditionalist philosophy brought upon itself ecclesiastical censures. To attack this or that eighteenth-century philosophy on the ground that its premises were unwarranted or its arguments unsound was all very well. In fact it was a commendable activity. But to attack the thought of the Enlightenment on the ground that the human reason in unable to attain certain truth was quite another matter. If the existence of God could be known only on authority, how did one know that the authority was trustworthy? For the matter of that, how did the first man know that what he took to be revelation was revelation? And if the human reason was as powerless as the more extreme traditionalists made it out to be,[1] how could one show that the voice of Christ was the voice of God? It is understandable that ecclesiastical authority, while sympathizing with attacks on the Enlightenment and the revolution, was not enthusiastic about theories which left its claims without any rational support save questionable appeals to the consent of mankind.

To take one example. The second volume of Lamennais' *Essai sur l'indifférence* exercised a considerable influence on Augustin Bonnetty (1798–1879), founder of the *Annales de philosophie chrétienne*. In an article in this periodical Bonnetty wrote that people were beginning to understand that the whole of religion rested on tradition and not on reasoning. His general thesis was that revelation was the only source of religious truth, and he drew the conclusion that the scholasticism which prevailed in seminaries was an expression of a pagan rationalism which had corrupted Christian thought and had eventually born fruit in the destructive philosophy of the Enlightenment. In 1855 Bonnetty was required by the Congregation of the Index to subscribe to a number of theses, such as that the human reason can prove with certainty the existence of God, the spirituality of the soul and human freedom, that reasoning leads to faith, and that the method used by St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventure and the Scholastics does not lead to rationalism. A series of similar propositions had already been subscribed to in 1840 by Louis-Eugène-Marie Bautain (1796–1867).

It may very well occur to the reader that imposition by ecclesiastical authority of the thesis that the existence of God can be philosophically proved contributes little to showing how this is done. However it is clear that the Church came down on the side of what Bonnetty regarded as rationalism. And definitive pronouncements on this matter were made at the first Vatican Council in 1870, the Council which also marked the triumph of ultramontanism. As for the general idea that France could be regenerated only through a return to the monarchy in alliance with the Church, this idea was to find a fresh lease of life with the *Action française* movement, founded by Charles Maurras (1868–1952). But Maurras himself was, like some of his closer associates, an atheist,[1] not a believer such as de Maistre or de Bonald. And it is not altogether surprising if his cynical attempt to use Catholicism for political ends led eventually to a condemnation by Pope Pius XI. Incidentally, in his *Essai sur l'indifférence* Lamennais had included among 'systems of indifference' the view of religion as being simply a politically and socially useful instrument.

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[1] Some traditionalists maintained that while reason divorced from tradition (in effect, revelation) could not prove God's existence, once man had the concept of God as handed on in society he could discern reasons for belief. But others seemed to imply that metaphysics should be rejected altogether.

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[1] Maurras, condemned to life imprisonment in 1945 for collaboration with the Vichy régime, was reconciled with the Church shortly before his death. But for most of his life he was an admitted atheist. As for his philosophy, this was not of course traditionalism in the technical sense.

CHAPTER II

THE IDEOLOGISTS AND MAINE DE BIRAN

The ideologists—Maine de Biran: life and writings—Philosophical development—Psychology and knowledge—Levels of human life.

1. As we have seen, the Traditionalists attacked the spirit and thought of the Enlightenment, which they regarded as largely responsible for the revolution. Those who welcomed the revolution tended to take a similar view of the relation between eighteenth-century thought and the revolution. To attribute the revolution simply to the influence of *les philosophes* would be of course an obvious exaggeration and too flattering a compliment to the power of philosophy. Though however the philosophers of the eighteenth century aimed not at violence, bloodshed and terror but at the spread of knowledge and, through the diffusion of knowledge, at social reform, they helped to prepare the way for the overthrow of the *ancien régime*; and it hardly needs saying that the influence of the Enlightenment was prolonged beyond the revolution. Once conditions became sufficiently settled, the scientific work associated with a man such as d'Alembert (1717–83)[1] began to develop and flourish. The demands of a Condorcet (1743–94)[2] for an educational system based on a secular ethics and free from theological presuppositions and ecclesiastical influences were eventually fulfilled in the programme of public education in France. And though Condorcet was himself to become a victim of the revolution,[3] his vision of man's perfectibility and of history as a process of intellectual and moral advance, together with the interpretation of history expounded by Turgot (1727–81),[4] prepared the way for the philosophy of Auguste Comte, which will be considered in due course.

The immediate inheritors of the spirit of the Enlightenment, and in particular of the influence of Condillac (1715–80)[5] were the so-called ideologists (*les idéologues*). In 1801 Destutt de Tracy (1754–1836) published the first volume of his *Elements of Ideology*

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[1] On d'Alembert see Vol. VI of this *History*, pp. 43–7.

[2] See Vol. VI of this *History*, pp. 168–71.

[3] He committed suicide when under arrest.

[4] See Vol. VI of this *History*, pp. 56–8.

[5] See *ibid.*, pp. 28–35.

(*Éléments d'idéologie*); and it was from this work that the label 'ideologist' was taken. The members of the group included, besides de Tracy, the Comte de Volney (1757–1820), and Cabanis (1757–1808).[1] The group had two principal centres, the *École Normale* and the *Institut National*, both of which were established in 1795. It was not long however before the ideologists aroused the suspicions of Napoleon. Though for the most part they had been favourable to his rise, they soon came to the conclusion that he had failed to preserve and implement the ideals of the revolution. In particular they resented and opposed his restoration of religion. On his side the emperor came to attribute to what he regarded as the 'obscure metaphysics' of the ideologists all the evils from which France was suffering; and he held them responsible for a conspiracy against himself in 1812.

As used by Destutt de Tracy, the term 'ideology' should not be understood in the sense in which we are accustomed to speak of ideologies. It would be nearer the mark to think of the term as meaning a study of the origin of ideas, of their expression in language and of their combination in reasoning. In point of fact however de Tracy was more concerned with the study of human faculties and their operations. He regarded this as a basic study contributing the foundation of such sciences as logic, ethics and economics. We can say therefore that he was concerned with developing a science of human nature.

Mention has been made of the influence of Condillac. It is important however to understand that de Tracy rejected the reductive analysis expounded by Condillac. We can recall that the latter tried to show that all mental operations, such as judging and willing, could be exhibited as what he called transformed sensations. In other words, Condillac tried to improve on Locke by reducing all mental operations in the long run to elementary sensations and by arguing that the human faculties can be reconstructed, as it were, from sensation alone. In de Tracy's view however this was an artificial process of analysis and reconstruction, an ingenious account of how things might have been, without any attention being paid to what we might describe as the phenomenology of consciousness. In his view Condillac sometimes confused what ought to be distinguished and at other times separated what ought to be united. In any case de Tracy was more concerned with discovering the basic human faculties as revealed to immediate and concrete observation than with the genesis of ideas, with arguing that they were all derivable from sensations.

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[1] See *ibid.*, pp. 50–1.

The basic faculties for de Tracy are feeling, remembering, judging and willing. The operation of judging can be seen as the foundation of both grammar (considered as the study of signs as used in discourse) and logic, which is concerned with the ways of attaining certainty in judgment.[1] Reflection on the effects of the will grounds ethics, considered mainly as the study of the origins of our desires and of their conformity or lack of it with our nature, and economics which is looked on as an enquiry into the consequences of our actions in regard to meeting our needs.

Passing over the details of ideology we can notice the following two points. First, when laying down the fundamental notions of ideology de Tracy turned from the reductive analysis of Condillac to immediate self-observation, from hypothetical reconstruction of man's psychical life out of its basis in elementary sensation to reflection on what we actually perceive to take place when we think and speak and act voluntarily. Secondly, de Tracy maintained that if Condillac's psychology, which laid all the emphasis on receptivity, was true, we could never know that there was an external world. We should be left with the insoluble problem of Hume. In point of fact the real ground of our knowledge of the external world is our activity, our motion, our voluntary action which meets with resistance.

If we bear these points in mind, it is easier to understand how de Tracy could exercise an influence on Maine de Biran, the forerunner of what is called the spiritualist movement in nineteenth-century French philosophy. The ideologists helped to turn his mind away from the empiricism of Locke and Condillac and stimulated him to set out on a path of his own.

It is worth noticing that Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), who had a high opinion of the French ideologists, maintained a correspondence with Destutt de Tracy from 1806 until 1826. In 1811 Jefferson published a translation of de Tracy's commentary on Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des lois*. And he also published an edition of de Tracy's *Treatise on Political Economy* (1818).

2. François-Pierre Maine de Biran (1766–1824) was born at

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[1] In logic de Tracy lays emphasis on the relation by which one idea contains another. He therefore plays down the role of logical rules and stresses the need for direct examination of the ideas which one employs to see whether in point of fact *a* contains or implies *b*.

Bergerac and educated at Périgueux. At the age of eighteen he went to Paris and enrolled in the royal guard. He was wounded in 1789, and not long after the dissolution of the guard in 1791 he retired to the castle of Grateloup near Bergerac and devoted his time to study and reflection. In 1795 he was appointed administrator of the department of the Dordogne, and in 1797 he was elected a member of the Council of Five Hundred. In 1810, under Napoleon, he was nominated a member of the *Corps législatif*, but at the close of 1813 he was associated with a group which publicly expressed opposition to the emperor. After the restoration of the monarchy he was re-elected a deputy for the department of the Dordogne. In 1816 he acted as a councillor of State, and he served on various committees.

In 1802 Maine de Biran published an essay, though without the author's name, on the *Influence of Habit on the Faculty of Thinking* (*Influence de l'habitude sur la faculté de penser*) which won for him a prize from the Institute of France. This essay was a revised version of one which he had submitted to the Institute in 1800 and which, while not winning the prize, had aroused the attention of the ideologists Destutt de Tracy and Cabanis. In 1805 he won another prize from the Institute for an essay on the analysis of thought (*Mémoire sur la décomposition de la pensée*) and was elected a member of the Institute. In 1812 he won a prize from the Academy of Copenhagen for an *Essay on the Relations of Physics and Morals in Man* (*Mémoire sur les rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*). Neither of these essays was published by Maine de Biran himself; but in 1817 he published, again without giving his name, an *Examination of the Lectures on Philosophy of M. Laromiguière* (*Examen des leçons de philosophie de M. Laromiguière*). And in 1819 he wrote an article on Leibniz (*Exposition de la doctrine philosophique de Leibniz*) for the *Biographie universelle*.

It will be seen from what has been said above that Maine de Biran published very little himself, the essay of 1802, the *Examination* (both anonymously), and the article on Leibniz. In addition he published a number of papers, mainly on political topics. But he wrote copiously; and it appears that up to the end of his life he planned to produce one major work, a science of human nature or a philosophical anthropology, incorporating revised versions of early essays. This major work was never completed; but a good deal of the manuscript material[1] seems to represent various phases in the attempt to realize the project. For example, the *Essay on the Foundations of Psychology* (*Essai sur les fondements de la psychologie*), at which de Biran was working in the years 1811–12, represents one phase in the writing of the unfinished work.[1]

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[1] Some of the manuscript material was lost, but a great deal was preserved.

In 1841 Victor Cousin published an (incomplete) edition of Maine de Biran's writings in four volumes.[2] In 1859 E. Naville and M. Debrit brought out three volumes of the unpublished works (*Oeuvres inédites de Maine de Biran*). In 1920 P. Tisserand began publication of the *Works* in fourteen volumes (*Oeuvres de Maine de Biran accompagnées de notes et de d'appendices*). Tisserand actually published twelve volumes (1920–39). The last two volumes were brought out by Professor Henri Gouhier in 1949. Gouhier has also published an edition of Maine de Biran's journal in three volumes (*Journal intime*, 1954–7).

3. By temperament Maine de Biran was strongly inclined to introspection and self-communing. And in his youth, during the period of retirement at the castle of Grateloup, he was powerfully influenced by Rousseau, considered more as the author of the *Confessions*, the *Rêveries du promeneur solitaire* and the *Profession de foi du vicaire savoyard* than as the expounder of the social contract theory. 'Rousseau speaks to my heart, but sometimes his errors afflict me.'[3] For example, while Maine de Biran sympathized with Rousseau's idea of the inner sense or feeling as prompting belief in God and immortality, he rejcted decisively the modest natural theology proposed by the *vicaire savoyard*. As far as reasoning was concerned, agnosticism was the only proper attitude.[4]

Another point on which Maine de Biran finds fault with Rousseau is the latter's view of man as essentially good, good by nature. It does not follow that Maine de Biran looks on man as essentially bad or as having become prone to evil through a Fall. In his view man has a natural impulse to seek after happiness, and virtue is a condition of happiness. This by no means entails the conclusion however that man is naturally virtuous. He has the power to become either virtuous or vicious. And it is reason alone which can discover the nature of virtue and the principles of morals. In other words, the reason why Maine de Biran criticizes Rousseau's theory of man's natural goodness is that he looks on it as involving the doctrine of innate ideas. In point of fact 'all our ideas are acquisitions.'[1] There are no innate ideas of right and wrong, good and bad. Ethics can however be established by reason, by a process of reasoning or reflection, that is to say, based on observation or experience. This can be done without any dependence on religious belief.

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[1] This *Essay*, as published by E. Naville, was a compilation made from several manuscripts.

[2] The fourth volume was a reprint of a volume which Cousin had already published in 1834.

[3] *Oeuvres*, I, p. 63. References to *Oeuvres* are to the Tisserand–Gouhier edition mentioned above.

[4] At this time Maine de Biran was also strongly anti-clerical, and he had no use for theologians' claims to possess knowledge of God and his will.

Given his idea of reason, it was natural that when it was a question of developing a science of man Maine de Biran should turn to contemporary 'scientific' psychology, which professed to be based on the empirical facts. In addition to Locke, the natural writers to turn to were Condillac and Charles Bonnet (1720–93). But it required very little time for Maine de Biran to see the extreme artificiality of Condillac's reduction of men's psychical life to externally caused sensations and of his notion of reconstructing man's mental operations from this basis. For one thing, Condillac passed over the evident fact that externally caused sensation affects a subject endowed with appetite and instinct. In other words, Condillac was a theorist who constructed or invented a psychology according to a quasi-mathematical method and was quite prepared to ride roughshod over the evident fact that there is much in man which cannot be accounted for in terms of what comes from without.[2] As for Bonnet, de Biran at first thought highly of him; and a quotation from Bonnet was placed at the beginning of his essay on the *Influence of Habit.*[3] But, as in the case of Condillac, de Biran came to look on Bonnet as the constructor of a theory which was insufficiently based on empirical evidence. After all, Bonnet had never observed the movements of the brain and their connections with mental operations.

From Condillac and Bonnet, Maine de Biran turned to Cabanis and Destutt de Tracy. True, Cabanis was the author of some pretty crude materialist statements, such as his famous assertion that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile. But he saw that Condillac's picture of the statue gradually endowed with one sense-organ after another represented an extremely inadequate and one-sided theory of the genesis of man's mental life. For Cabanis the nervous system, interior or organic sensations, the inherited physiological constitution and other factors belonging to the 'statue' itself were of great importance. Cabanis was indeed a reductionist, in the sense that he tried to find physiological bases for all men's mental operations. But he studied carefully the available empirical data, and he tried to account for human activity, which could hardly be explained in terms of Condillac's statue model. As for de Tracy, Maine de Biran remarks in the introduction to his essay on the *Influence of Habit* that 'I distinguish all our impressions into *active* and *passive*',[1] and in a note he pays tribute to de Tracy for being the first writer to have seen clearly the importance of man's faculty of moving or 'motility' (*motilité*), as de Tracy called it. For example, de Tracy saw that the judgment about the real existence of a thing, or of our knowledge of external reality, could not be accounted for without experience of resistance, which itself presupposed 'motility'.

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[1] *Oeuvres*, I, p. 185.

[2] Condillac refused to admit any difference between philosophical and mathematical analysis.

[3] 'What are the movements of the soul except movements and repetitions of movements?' Bonnet emphasized the relation between mental operations and movements in the brain. But the quotation gives a very inadequate idea of Bonnet's anthropology. He believed, for instance, that the soul survives the death of the body.

In fine, Maine de Biran reacted against the psychology of Condillac by insisting on human activity. 'It is *I* who move or who *will* to move, and it is also *I* who am moved. Here are the two terms of the relation which are required to ground the first simple judgment of personality *I am*.'[2] In a real sense Maine de Biran is re-echoing the conviction of Rousseau who in the first part of his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* asserted roundly that man differs from the animals by being a free agent. But among the physiological psychologists de Biran has found his stimulus in the writings of the ideologists. And it was natural that when he submitted the revised version of his first prize-winning essay, Cabanis and de Tracy, who were among the judges, should have given both it and him a warm welcome.

Though however the ideologists regarded Maine de Biran as one of themselves, he soon came to the conclusion that Destutt de Tracy had failed to exploit his own addition to the psychology of Condillac, namely the idea of the active power in man. He may at first have regarded himself as correcting the ideas of the ideologists where they tended to fall back into the Condillacian psychology, but he was gradually moving away from the reductionist tradition to which the ideologists really belonged, in spite of the improvements which they introduced. In his *Mémoire sur la décomposition de la pensée*, which won a prize in 1805, he is still writing as an ideologist; but he asks whether a distinction should not be made between objective and subjective ideology. An objective ideology would be based chiefly 'on the relations which link the sensitive being to external things, in regard to which it finds itself placed in a relation of essential dependence, both in regard to the affective impressions which it receives from them and in regard to the images which it *forms* of them.'[1] Subjective ideology, 'enclosing itself in the consciousness of the *thinking* subject, would endeavour to penetrate the intimate relations which it has with itself in the free exercise of its intellectual acts.'[2] De Biran does not deny the importance of physiological psychology. He has no intention of rejecting Cabanis and all his works. But he is convinced that something more is required, something which we can describe as the phenomenology of consciousness. The self experiences itself in its operations; and we can envisage a reflection in which knower and known are one.

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[1] *Oeuvres*, II, (1954), p. 20. The reference to de Tracy is on p. 22, note 1.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

This may sound as though Maine de Biran were engaged in reintroducing the metaphysical concept of the self as a substance, the thinking substance of Descartes. He insists however that he is doing nothing of the kind. Muscular effort, willed effort that is to say, is a primitive fact. And the real existence of the ego or I is to be found 'in the apperception of the effort of which it feels itself subject or cause'.[3] To be sure, we can hardly think or speak about the ego or self without distinguishing it from the willed effort or action as cause from effect. But we should not allow ourselves to be misled with the metaphysician into postulating a self as a *thing*, a soul which 'exists before acting and which can act without knowing its acts, without knowing itself'.[4] With willed effort apperception or consciousness arises in the human being, and with consciousness *personal* existence as distinct from the existence of a merely sensing being. 'The fact of a power of action and of *will*, proper to the thinking being, is certainly as evident to him as the very fact of his own existence; the one does not differ from the other.'[5] Again, 'here is the sensitive being without *I*; there begins an identical *personality*, and with it all the faculties of the intelligent and moral being.'[6] In other words, consciousness cannot be explained simply in terms of 'transformed sensations' as understood by Condillac. It must be related to willed effort, to human activity meeting with resistance. If it is asked why in this case personality is not intermittent, present only at the moment when we are engaged in willed effort, de Biran's reply is that it is a mistake to suppose that such efforts occur only occasionally or now and again. In some form or another it continues during waking existence and lies at the basis of perception and knowledge.

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[1] *Oeuvres*, III, 1, p. 41.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 40–1.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 216.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 178.

[6] *Ibid.*

Perhaps we can say that through the process of reflection first on the psychology of Condillac and Bonnet, then on that of Cabanis and de Tracy, Maine de Biran arrives at a reassertion of Rousseau's statement that man differs from the animals by being a free agent. We must add however that the reflection on contemporary psychology is always carried out in the light of the facts, the phenomena, as de Biran sees them. In his view the ideologists have seen facts to which Condillac was blind, or at any rate the significance of which he did not understand properly. And he refers to Cabanis and de Tracy as agreeing that the ego or I resides exclusively in the will.[1] But it by no means follows that Maine de Biran feels himself at one with the ideologists. For while becoming reflectively aware of the distance which now separates him from Condillac, he has reluctantly arrived at the conclusion that de Tracy, so far from exploiting or developing his own insights, has been retreating backwards. Maine de Biran may look on himself as the heir of the ideologists. But his letters testify to his growing conviction that their paths are diverging.

4. The ideas which found expression in the *Essay on the Decomposition of Thought* were taken up again and reconsidered in the manuscript of the *Essay on the Foundations of Psychology* which Maine de Biran brought with him to Paris in 1812. In this essay metaphysics, in the sense in which it is acceptable to the author, is really the same as reflexive psychology. If we understand by metaphysics a study of things in themselves (of noumena, to use Kantian terminology), apart from their appearance in consciousness, it is excluded. This means that philosophy cannot provide knowledge of the soul as an 'absolute' substance, existing apart from consciousness. If however metaphysics is understood as the science of 'interior phenomena'[2] or as the science of the primitive data of the interior sense (*sens intime*), it is not only possible but also required. Metaphysics in this sense

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 180.

[2] *Oeuvres*, VIII, p. 270.

reveals the existence of the subject as the active ego or I in the relation of willed effort encountering resistance. Further, the subject perceives itself as one power or active force encountering a succession of resistances; and it perceives itself as self-identical inasmuch as it is one subject in relation to the same organism.

It may appear that Maine de Biran is in effect claiming that the ego intuitively perceives itself as a substance. His actual claim however is that the ego is aware of itself as cause. 'On the basis of the primitive fact of interior sense, one can assure oneself that every phenomenon relative to consciousness, every mode in which the *I* participates or unites itself in any manner, includes necessarily the idea of a *cause*. This cause is *I* if the mode is active and perceived as the actual result of a willed effort; It is *not-I* if it is a passive impression, felt as opposed to this effort or as independent of every exercise of the will.'[1] In other words, awareness of the ego or *I* as a causal agent is fundamental. The concept of the soul as an 'absolute' substance existing apart from self-consciousness is an abstraction. At the same time de Biran tries to include awareness of personal identity within the intuition of causal efficacy.

Part of the *Essay on the Foundations of Psychology* seems to have been ready for publication when Maine de Biran came to Paris in 1812. But conversation and correspondence with his friends such as Ampère,[2] Dégerando[3] and Royer-Collard,[4] convinced him that he ought to devote further attention to the development of his ideas. And the result was that he never completed and published the work.

If the existence of the ego or subject as active cause is given in intuition, it is natural to think of this cause as persisting, at any rate as a virtual cause, even when it is not actually conscious of its causal efficacy in willed effort. And in this case it is natural to think of it as a substance, provided at least that the concept of substance is interpreted in terms of active force or causality and not as the idea of an inert substratum. So it is not altogether surprising to find Maine de Biran writing to Dégerando that he 'believes' in the metaphenomenal subject or ego. 'If you ask me why and on what ground I *believe* it, I reply that I am made in this way, that it is impossible for me not to have this belief, and that it would be necessary to change my nature for me to cease to have it.'[1] In other words, we *perceive* or intuit the ego or I as an active cause or force in actual concrete relations, and we have a natural and irresistible tendency to *believe* in its metaphenomenal or noumenal existence as a permanent substantial force which exists apart from actual apperception. The phenomenal is the object of intuition, while the noumenal or 'absolute' is the object of belief. To put the matter in another way, the subject or I which reveals itself in willed effort is 'the phenomenal manner in which my soul manifests itself to the interior vision'.[2]

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[1] *Oeuvres*, IX, p. 335.

[2] André-Marie Ampère (1775–1836), physicist and mathematician, was the author of a *Mathematical Theory of Electromagnetic Phenomena, deduced solely from Experience* (1827) and of an *Essay on the Philosophy of the Sciences* (1834).

[3] Marie-Joseph Dégerando (1772–1842) was a member of the group of ideologists and author of a *Theory of Signs* (1800).

[4] Further reference to Pierre-Paul Royer-Collard, professor of the Sorbonne, will be made in the next chapter.

In the *Essay on the Foundations of Psychology* Maine de Biran conceived metaphysics as the science of principles, the principles being sought and found in the primitive facts or basic data of intuition. Now he is seeking principles outside the objects of intuition. For the ego or I of consciousness is regarded as the phenomenal manifestation of a noumenal and substantial soul, the 'absolute' which appears in the relation of consciousness as the active subject. The question arises therefore whether the existence of the noumenal self, which is the object of belief, not of knowledge, is inferred. In point of fact de Biran does sometimes speak of induction and also of deduction in this context. But what he seems to be claiming is that this belief is the result of a spontaneous movement of the mind rather than of a deliberately performed inferential operation. 'The spirit of man, which cannot know or conceive anything except under certain relations, always aspires to the absolute and the unconditional.'[3] This aspiration may appear to constitute a leap beyond the frontiers of knowledge into the sphere of the unknowable. But de Biran also asks himself whether 'from the fact that one cannot conceive an act or its phenomenal result without conceiving a being in itself by which the act is produced, it does not follow necessarily that the relation of causality comprises the notion of substance.'[4] In any case metaphysics seem to extend beyond a study of the primitive facts or data of intuition or the interior sense to include reflection on the metaphenomenal conditions of these facts.

In arriving at his new ideas Maine de Biran was stimulated not only by conversation and correspondence with his friends but also by reflection on eminent philosophers such as Descartes, Leibniz and Kant. As we have seen, his philosophizing was first situated for a time in the tradition of Francis Bacon, Locke, Condillac and Bonnet. And he had little use for the defenders of the theory of innate ideas or those who tried to prove the existence of meta-phenomenal realities. In the course of time however he came to believe that there was more in Descartes and Leibniz than he had imagined; and though he seems to have had no first-hand knowledge of Kant's writings, he obtained some acquaintance of the German philosopher's thought from secondary sources, and he was clearly influenced by his reading.

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[1] *Oeuvres*, X, p. 26.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 312–13.

[3] *Oeuvres*, X, p. 95, note 1.

[4] *Oeuvres*, XI, p. 272.

In so far as the *Cogito, ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am) of Descartes could be taken as expressing not an inferential operation but an intuitive apprehension of a primitive fact or datum of consciousness, Maine de Biran came to appreciate Descartes' insight. De Biran naturally preferred the formula *Volo, ergo sum* (I will, therefore I am), inasmuch as it was in the expression of willed effort encountering resistance that, in his opinion, the I of consciousness arose. But he certainly thought of the existence of the ego as given in its appearing to consciousness as a causal agent. The existence of the subject or ego which was given as a phenomenal reality was however precisely its existence 'for itself', as active subject, that is to say, within consciousness or apperception. Descartes' great mistake, in de Biran's opinion, was that he confused the phenomenal self with the noumenal or substantial self. For from the *Cogito, ergo sum* Descartes draws conclusions about the ego or I 'in itself', thus going beyond the sphere of objects of knowledge. Kant however avoids the confusion by his distinction between the I of apperception, the phenomenal ego or the ego appearing to itself and existing 'for itself', and the noumenal, substantial principle. Not that Maine de Biran's position is precisely the same as that of Kant. For instance, whereas for Kant the free agent presupposed by moral choice in the light of the concept of obligation was the noumenal self, for Maine de Biran freedom is, to use Bergsonian language, an immediate datum of consciousness, and the phenomenal ego is the free causal agent. This does not alter the fact however that de Biran sees some affinity between his idea of the permanent soul as the object of belief rather than of knowledge and Kant's idea of the noumenal self. He states, for example, that 'the relative supposes something which pre-exists absolutely, but as this absolute ceases to be such and necessarily assumes the character of the relative directly we come to know it, a contradiction is implied in saying that we have any positive knowledge or idea of the *absolute*, although we cannot prevent ourselves from believing that it exists or admitting it as a primary datum inseparable from our mind, pre-existing before all *knowledge*.'[1] To say this is to come down on the side of Kant rather than on that of Descartes.

Maine de Biran is not however content with postulating an 'absolute' as existing independently of actual consciousness and claiming that nothing further can be said about it than that it is or that we believe that it is. After all, how can we assert the existence of something when we are unable to say *what* is supposed to exist? Here Leibniz comes to de Biran's aid. Provided that the concept of substance is rethought in terms of force, it becomes easier to claim that the substantial soul manifests itself within consciousness, namely as the active subject in the relation of consciousness, and that the concept required for thinking the soul, the concept of substance that is to say, is included in the explicitation of the inner experience of causal activity or efficacy. The area of 'metaphysics' is thus extended, and Maine de Biran can state that 'Kant is wrong in refusing to the understanding the power of conceiving anything beyond *sensible* objects, outside, that is to say, the qualities which constitute these sensible objects, and in asserting that things in themselves are unknowable by the understanding.'[2]

5. The idea of seeing in the phenomenal ego the self-manifestation of an 'absolute' or substantial soul may suggest the idea of seeing all phenomena as manifesting the Absolute or God as their ultimate ground or as the cause of their existence. Though however Maine de Biran did come to regard all phenomena as related to God, it seems unlikely that he would have arrived at this position, had it not been for his meditative and religiously oriented nature and for a felt need for God. To *argue*, in the manner of traditional metaphysics, from internal phenomena to the noumenal self and from external phenomena, or from all phenomena, to the Absolute or Unconditional was really foreign to his mind.[3] It was much

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[1] *Oeuvres*, X, p. 124.

[2] *Oeuvres*, XI, p. 284.

[3] Maine de Biran did indeed say at an early date that he believed that the world was governed by a divine intelligence. But this was a matter of spontaneous conviction or of the interior sense (*sens intime*) rather than of any cosmological argument in the traditional style.

more a question of a broadening of de Biran's idea of man's inner life. Just as he came to see in the I (*moi*) of consciousness the substantial soul manifesting itself in a relation and thus to knowledge, so did he come to see in certain aspects of man's life a manifestation of the divine reality. As he grew older, Maine de Biran developed a deeply religious philosophy. But he remained a philosopher of man's inner life. And the change in his philosophical outlook expressed a change in his reflections on this life, not a sudden conversion to traditional metaphysics.

Reference has already been made to de Biran's insistence, while in retirement at Grateloup, that belief in God is not required to lead a moral life, but that man has it within his own power to live morally. An atheist can perfectly well recognise moral values and try to realize them through his actions. De Biran was influenced by Stoicism and admired the Stoic heroes, such as Marcus Aurelius; but he naturally brought his ethical ideas into connection with his psychology, so far as this was possible. The end or goal is happiness; and a condition of attaining it is that harmony and balance should be achieved in man's powers or faculties. This means in effect that the active thinking subject of consciousness should rule over or govern the appetites and impulses of the part of man's nature which is presupposed by the life of consciousness. In other words, reason should rule over the impulses of sense. To give content however to the ideas of virtue and vice we have to consider man in his social relations, man as acting on others and as being acted on by society. 'From the feeling of free and spontaneous action which, of itself, would not have any limits, there derive what we call *rights*. From the necessary social reaction which follows the individual's action and which does not exactly conform to it (seeing that men are not like material things which react without acting or originating action) and which often anticipate it, forcing the individual to coordinate his action with that of society, there arise duties. The feeling of obligation (duty) is the feeling of this social *coercion* from which every individual knows well that he cannot free himself.'[1]

Maine de Biran became however more and more conscious of the limitations of the human reason and will, when left to themselves. 'This Stoic morality, sublime as it is, is contrary to the nature of man inasmuch as it tends to bring under the dominion of the will affections, feelings or causes of excitation which do not depend on it in any way, and inasmuch as it annihilates a part of man from which he cannot become detached. Reason alone is powerless to provide the will with the motives or principles of action. It is necessary that these principles should come from a higher source.'[1] To the two levels of human life which he has already distinguished, the life of man as animal, as a sensitive being, and the life of man precisely as man, the life, that is to say, of consciousness, of the thinking and free subject, Maine de Biran is thus led to add a third level or dimension, the life of the spirit, characterized by love communicated by the divine Spirit.[2]

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[1] *Journal* (H. Gouhier), I, p. 87. The interpretation of the feeling of obligation in terms of social pressure reappears in Bergson's theory of the 'closed morality'.

The concept of the three levels of human life can be expressed in this way. It is possible for man to allow his personality and liberty to be submerged in abandonment 'to all the appetites, to all the impulses of the flesh'.[3] Man as man then becomes passive, yielding to his animal nature. It is possible for him to maintain, or at least try to maintain, the level on which 'he exercises all the faculties of his nature, where he develops his moral force, by fighting against the unruly appetites of his animal nature. . . .'[4] And it is possible for him to rise to the level of 'absorption in God',[5] the level at which God is for him all in all. 'The *I* (le *moi*) is between these two terms.'[6] That is to say, the level of personal and self-sufficient existence lies between the level of the passivity of self-abandonment to the impulse of sense and the level of the passivity involved in living in God and under his influence. The second level is however ordered to the third, the divinization of man.

If one considers first of all the psychology expounded in the *Essay on the Influence of Habit* and then the ideas presented in de Biran's *Journal* from 1815 onwards or in works such as *New Essays in Anthropology*, one is likely to receive the impression that a revolution has taken place in the author's outlook and that the ideologist, strongly influenced by the thought of the Enlightenment, has been transformed into a Platonist and religious mystic. To a certain extent the impression would be justified. A series of changes certainly occurred.[1] At the same time it is important to understand that when Maine de Biran conceived and developed the idea of the life of the spirit, he did not so much reject as add to his former psychological theories. For instance, he did not reject his theory of consciousness as relational, nor his view of the life of the free and active subject of consciousness as that which is peculiar to man and as the level on which personal existence arises. He came to believe that as there is a passivity which is presupposed by the life of consciousness, so is there a receptivity above the level of personal self-sufficient existence, a receptivity in relation to the divine influence which manifests itself, for example, both in mystical experience and in the attraction exercised by the great ideals of the good and the beautiful of which Plato speaks and which constitute ways in which the divine Absolute manifests itself.

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[1] *Journal*, II, p. 67.

[2] The three levels are discussed in the *Journal* (in for example, the entries for December 1818, II, p. 188, and for October 1823, II, pp. 389 f., and in the *New Essays in Anthropology* (*Oeuvres*, XIV) where the third part is devoted to the life of the spirit.

[3] *Oeuvres*, XIV, p. 369.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 370.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 369.

[6] *Journal*, II, p. 188.

To be sure, if we speak of an 'addition', we must recognize that the addition brings about a marked change in perspective. For the life of the autonomous subject, which for the eighteenth-century *philosophe* was the highest life for man, is now subordinated to the life of the spirit in which man is dependent on the divine action within him.[2] Obviously de Biran is quite aware of the change of perspective. Thus in a frequently quoted passage he remarks that he spent his youth in studying 'individual existence and the faculties of the *self* (*moi*) and the relations, grounded in pure *consciousness*, of this self to external or internal sensations, ideas and all that is *given* to the soul or to sensibility and received by the organs, the different senses etc.'[3] He then adds that he now accords 'the primacy of importance to man's relations with God and with the society of his fellows'.[4]

In the same entry in the *Journal* however Maine de Biran says that he still believes that a 'thorough knowledge of the relations between the *ego* (*moi*) or the soul of man with the entire human being (the concrete person) should precede in the order of *time* or of study all the theoretical or practical inquiries into the two first relations.'[1] Further, 'it is experimental *psychology* or a science at first purely reflexive which should lead us in due order to determine our moral relations to the beings like ourselves and our religious relations to the infinite superior being, whence our soul issues and to which it tends to return through the exercise of the sublimest faculties of our nature.'[2] In other words, the psychological study of the self constitutes the basis for reflection in the ethical and religious spheres, and the method to be employed throughout is that of what de Biran calls 'experimental psychology', though 'reflexive psychology' would be preferable. Throughout phenomena of man's inner life constitute the point of departure. Referring to the life of the spirit, de Biran asserts that 'the third division, the most important of all, is that which philosophy has hitherto felt obliged to leave to the speculations of mysticism, although it can also be reduced to facts of observation, drawn, it is true, from a nature lifted above the senses but not one which is at all alien to the *spirit* which knows God and itself. This division will therefore comprise the facts or the modes and acts of this spiritual life. . . .'[3] We can say perhaps that under the label 'experimental psychology' de Biran includes a psychological approach to the phenomenal effects or influence of what theologians have called divine grace.

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[1] The changes are admirably presented in *Les conversions de Maine de Biran* (Paris, 1948) by Professor H. Gouhier, who is also at pains to illustrate the elements of continuity in de Biran's thought.

[2] Maine de Biran writes of the self's absorption in God, of the ego's self-consciousness being swallowed up in the awareness of God or of the divine influence. But he makes it clear that he is referring to a mystical absorption in a *psychological* sense, and that he is not asserting an ontological identification of the substantial soul with God.

[3] *Journal*, II, p. 376.

[4] *Ibid.*

It has been claimed that de Biran turned from Stoicism to Platonism rather than to Christianity, and that though meditation on literature such as the *Imitation of Christ* and writings by Fénelon certainly brought him closer to Christianity, he was attracted by the idea of the Holy Spirit much more than by that of Christ as son of God in a unique sense. There seems to be a good deal of truth in this contention. However, de Biran's later writings express the conviction that the Christian religion 'alone reveals to man a third life, superior to that of the sensibility and to that of the reason or of the human will. No other system of philosophy has risen so high.'[4] In any case the onetime agnostic of Grateloup died as a Catholic, even if his religion had been a Platonizing Christianity.

Maine de Biran was not a systematic thinker in the sense of one who creates a developed philosophical system. But he exercised a very considerable seminal or stimulating influence in psychology and on the philosophical movement, passing through Ravaisson and Fouillée and culminating in Bergson, which is known as the spiritualist movement or current of thought.[1] In the religious sphere the type of apologetics 'from within' which was represented, for example, by Ollé-Laprune and afterwards by Blondel owed something to de Biran. His influence however, being more by way of stimulus to personal reflection in this or that field (such as psychology of volition, phenomenology of consciousness, the concept of causality and religious experience) than by the creation of disciples, is so widely diffused and so mixed with other influences that specialist studies are required to disentangle it.

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 376–7. The two first relations are those to our fellows and to God.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 377. [3] *Oeuvres*, XIV, p. 223. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 373.

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[1] Spiritualism in this sense has nothing to do with spiritualism in the ordinary English sense of the term.

CHAPTER III

ECLECTICISM

The label—Royer-Collard—Cousin—Jouffroy

1. MAINE de Biran derived stimulus from a variety of sources. He was well aware of the fact, and at one period at any rate he defended what he described as a policy of electicism. When however reference is made to the eclectics in French philosophy during the first half of the nineteenth century, it is primarily to Royer-Collard and Cousin, rather than to Maine de Biran. It is true that de Biran was a friend of Royer-Collard and that Cousin published an edition of his writings. It is also true that Royer-Collard and Cousin can be regarded as representatives of the spiritualist movement of which de Biran was the initiator in French philosophy after the revolution. But de Biran's influence was chiefly felt at a later date, in the fields of psychology and phenomenology, whereas Cousin developed an explicitly eclectic philosophy which constituted for a time a kind of official academic system and then suffered a demise. During his lifetime Cousin enjoyed an incomparably greater fame than de Biran had ever enjoyed; but his reputation had declined when de Biran's began to increase. And while Royer-Collard and Cousin are known specifically for their eclecticism, de Biran is known for his reflection on human consciousness.

To give a precise definition of eclecticism is not an easy task. The root-meaning is indeed clear enough. The term is derived from a Greek verb (*eklegein*) meaning to pick out or choose out; and, in general, the eclectic philosophers are those who select from different schools or systems the doctrines of which they approve and then combine them. The presupposition of this procedure is obviously that every philosophical system expresses or is likely to express some truth or truths or some aspect of reality or some perspective or way of looking at the world or human life which needs to be taken into account in any overall synthesis.[1] The implications however of this presupposition may or may not be fully grasped. At one extreme there are the philosophers who are lacking in the power of original thought and who pursue a policy of syncretism, combining or juxtaposing logically compatible (one hopes) doctrines from various schools or traditions but without having any very clear idea of the criteria which are being employed and without creating an organic unity. Such philosophers can be described appropriately as eclectics. At the other extreme are those philosophers, such as Aristotle and Hegel, who see the historical development of philosophy as the process whereby the most adequate philosophy up to date, namely their own systems, comes into being, subsuming in itself the insights of past thinkers. To describe such philosophers as eclectics would be to misdescribe them. If a thinker derives stimulus from a variety of sources, this does not, by itself, make him an eclectic. Or, if it does, the meaning of the term becomes too extended to be of much use. It is probably best reserved for those philosophers who combine or juxtapose doctrines taken from various sources without creating an organic unity. For if a philosopher does create an organic unity, through the consistent overall use of basic principles or fundamental pervasive ideas, he has created a recognizable system which is more than a collection of juxtaposed doctrines.

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[1] Leibniz expressed this idea by suggesting that every system was right in what it asserted but wrong in what it denied. In other words, original philosophers have seen something which was there to be seen, but what each saw was not all that there was to be seen.

Obviously, there can be borderline cases. For example, a man might select from various systems the elements which in his opinion possessed truth-value and think that he had welded them together into an organic unity, whereas his critics might be convinced that his claim was unjustified and that he was nothing but an eclectic. The critics would however be giving to the term 'eclecticism' the meaning which we have proposed above as the appropriate meaning. Cousin indeed proclaimed himself an eclectic and then tried to distinguish between eclecticism, as he understood it, and a mere juxtaposition of ideas taken from different systems. But even if he tried to create a unified system, his claims to have done so have met with persistent criticism.

It has often been said that French eclecticism represented or at any rate was closely connected with a political attitude. This statement is not simply the expression of a general tendency to interpret philosophical movements in terms of political categories. There is more to it than that. The leading eclectics were actively engaged in politics. And they believed in the desirability of a constitution which would combine in itself the valuable elements in monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. In other words, they supported constitutional monarchy. On the one hand they were opposed not only to any hankering after the return of absolute monarchy but also to the rule of Napoleon as emperor. On the other hand they were opposed to those who believed that the revolution had not gone far enough and needed to be renewed and extended. It has been said of them that they represented a spirit of bourgeois compromise. They themselves thought of their political theory as expressing a sane eclecticism, an ability to discern the valuable elements in conflicting systems and to combine them in a viable political and social structure.

We can find a similar attitude in the religious sphere. The eclectics were opponents of materialism and atheism and of the sensationalism of Condillac. At the same time, while believing in religious freedom and having no wish to see the Church subjected to persecution, they certainly did not admit the Church's claim to be the sole guardian of truth in the religious and moral spheres; nor had they any sympathy with the idea of an ecclesiastically inspired and controlled system of education. They aimed at promoting a philosophically-based religion, existing alongside official organized religion and working with it in important ways but not subject to ecclesiastical authority and destined perhaps to take the place of Catholicism as then known.

In fine, while Traditionalists such as de Maistre dreamed of a return to a strong monarchy and preached ultramontanism, and while the social theorists who will be mentioned later demanded the extension of the revolution,[1] the eclectics tried to steer a middle course between two extremes, claiming to effect a combination of the different valuable elements in conflicting positions. To what extent political attitudes influenced philosophical positions and to what extent philosophical ideas exercised an influence on political convictions is obviously open to discussion. It is not in any case a question which can be answered purely abstractly, without consideration of individual thinkers. What seems to be clear however is that what was described as eclecticism expressed an attitude which manifested itself outside the sphere of academic philosophy.

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[1] The reference is not of course to an extension of the Terror. Rather was it a case of believing that while the revolution had destroyed the old régime it had failed to implement its ideals in a genuine social reform. For one thing, its progress had been hampered by the rise to power of Napoleon and the arrest of any movement towards socialism.

2. Paul Royer-Collard (1763–1845) was born at Sompuis in the department of the Marne. In 1792 he was a member of the Commune of Paris and in 1797 of the Council of the Five Hundred. Though his philosophical training was meagre, he became a professor of philosophy at the Sorbonne in 1811 and retained the post until 1814. He had no liking for Napoleon; but the emperor highly approved of the inaugural lecture in which Royer-Collard attacked Condillac. In Napoleon's eyes Royer-Collard's thought would be an instrument for discomfiting and routing the ideologists. After the emperor's final overthrow Royer-Collard became a deputy for the department of the Marne and a leading figure among the so-called *doctrinaires*, who believed that their political theories could be deduced from purely rational principles.

Apart from a lecture delivered to inaugurate his course on the history of philosophy, we possess only the fragments of Royer-Collard's philosophizing which were collected by Jouffroy. He is best known for his introduction into France of the philosophy of common sense of Thomas Reid.[1] In 1768 a French translation of Reid's *Inquiry* had been published at Amsterdam; but it received little attention. Royer-Collard introduced his hearers to the work and then went on to develop some ideas of his own, though the main object of his criticism was Condillac, whereas Reid had been concerned with attacking the scepticism of Hume.

Reid's reply to Hume was not very well thought out. But one of the distinctions which he made was between Locke's simple ideas and Hume's impressions on the one hand and perception on the other. For Reid the former were not the positive data on which knowledge is grounded, but rather postulates arrived at through an analysis of what actually is given in experience, namely perception. Perception always carries with it a judgment or natural belief, about, for example, the existence of the thing perceived. If we insist on starting with subjective impressions, we remain shut up in the sphere of subjectivism. Perception however comprises within itself a judgment about external reality. This judgment stands in need of no proof[2] and is natural to all mankind, thus belonging to the principles of 'common sense'.

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[1] For Thomas Reid (1710–96) see Vol. 5 of this *History*, pp. 364–73.

[2] Besides tending to forget that Hume himself had insisted on the force of natural beliefs, Reid leaves his readers in some doubt about the precise logical status to be attributed to the judgment. He speaks of self-evidently true principles; but as the judgment that what we perceive really exists is said to be a contingent truth, it seems that its self-evidence can be interpreted in terms of a natural propensity to believe it.

Royer-Collard utilizes Reid's distinction in his attack on the sensationalism of Condillac. Descartes started the trouble by taking a self-enclosed ego as his point of departure and then trying to prove the real existence of physical objects and other persons. But Condillac completed the development of 'idealism' by reducing everything to fleeting sensations, which are of their nature subjective. On his premises he was unable to explain our ability to judge, an ability which shows clearly the activity of the mind. Judgment is involved in perception, inasmuch as the perceiver naturally judges both that there is a permanent and causally active self and that the object of externally directed perception really exists. By sensations Royer-Collard understands feelings of pleasure and pain. These are clearly subjective experiences. But perception gives us objects existing independently of sensation. The armchair sceptic may entertain doubts about the existence of a permanent self and of physical objects, reducing everything to sensation; but he, like everyone else, acts in accordance with the primitive and natural judgments that there is a causally active permanent self and that there are really existing physical objects. Such judgments belong to the sphere of common sense, and they constitute the basis for the further work of reason, which can develop inductive science and which can argue to the existence of God as ultimate cause. There is no need for any supernatural authority to reveal to man the basic principles of religion and morality. Common sense and reason are sufficient guides. In other words, rejection of the sensationalism of Condillac does not entail recours to Traditionalism or to an authoritarian Church. There is a middle way.

The thought of Royer-Collard has some interest as associating a middle way in philosophy with a middle way in politics. To judge however by the fragments of his philosophizing his theories stand in need of a clarification which they do not receive. For example, in his view the self and its causal activity are given immediately to consciousness or to internal perception. Thus in the phenomenon of deliberate attention I am immediately aware of myself as a causal agent. We might expect therefore that Royer-Collard would also claim that we enjoy intuitive knowledge of the existence of perceived objects and an immediate awareness of causal relations in the world. We are told however that each sensation is a 'natural sign'[1] which in some mysterious way suggests not only the idea of an external existent but also the irresistible persuasion of its reality. Royer-Collard also implies that we are led irresistibly by an awareness of the self as a causal agent to find (non-voluntary) causal activity in the external world. As critics have pointed out, Hume explicitly admitted that we have a natural and, in practice, irresistible belief in the real existence of bodies independently of our impressions or perceptions. He could therefore quite well have said that this belief was a matter of common sense. But though Hume thought that the validity of the belief could not be proved, he at any rate inquired into its genesis, whereas Royer-Collard finds such inquiries uncongenial and leaves his hearers in some doubt about precisely what he is claiming. It is indeed clear that he rejects the reduction of the self and the external world to sensations and the attempt to reconstruct them on this basis. It is also clear that he lays emphasis on the idea of perception as distinct from sensation and as a means of overcoming subjectivism. But his treatment of the way in which perception establishes the existence of the external world is ambiguous. He seems to wish to find room for an inductive inference which leads to a conclusion which is certainly, and not simply probably true. But the point is not developed.

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[1] *Les fragments philosophiques de Royer-Collard*, edited by A. Schimberg, p. 22 (Paris, 1913).

3. Victor Cousin (1792–1867) came of a family of poor artisans in Paris. It is related that in 1803, when playing in the gutter, he intervened to rescue a pupil of the Lycée Charlemagne from a gang of pursuing schoolmates, and that in gratitude the boy's mother undertook to provide for Cousin's education.[1] At the Lycée Charlemagne Cousin carried off the prizes, and on leaving the school he gained entry to the École Normale. As soon as he had finished his course of studies he was appointed assistant professor of Greek, being then twenty years old. In 1815 he lectured at the Sorbonne as a substitute for Royer-Collard on the Scottish philosophy of common sense. At the École Normale he had indeed attended lectures by Laromiguière[2] and Royer-Collard; but his knowledge of philosophy was at the time pretty limited. For the matter of that, so was Royer-Collard's.

Cousin then applied himself to learning something about Kant whose doctrine he soon mastered, in his own opinion at least if not in that of posterity. In 1817 he went to Germany to make the acquaintance of the post-Kantian philosophers. On this visit he met Hegel, while on a subsequent visit in 1818 he came to know Schelling and Jacobi. On a third visit to Germany in 1824 Cousin had an opportunity to widen his knowledge of German philosophy while in prison for six months, suspected by the Prussian police of being a conspirator.

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[1] For such details see *Victor Cousin* (London, 1888) by Jules Simon, who had been a pupil of Cousin.

[2] Pierre Laromiguière (1756–1837) accepted the general method of Condillac, but he adopted a twofold point of departure by adding the motive power of attention to the receptivity of sensation. It has been already noted that Maine de Biran wrote on Laromiguière's *Lectures* (*Leçons*).

In 1820 the École Normale was closed, and Cousin lost his chair. He then set about editing the works of Descartes and of Proclus and started translating Plato. In 1828 he was restored to his chair, and with the accession to the throne of Louis-Philippe his day had come at last. In 1830 he became a councillor of State, in 1832 a member of the Royal Council and director of the École Normale, in 1833 a peer of France and in 1840 minister of public instruction. In the years of his glory he was to all intents and purposes not only the official philosopher of France but also a philosophical dictator who described the French philosophers of philosophy as his 'regiment' and excluded from the teaching staff of the Sorbonne those of whom he disapproved, such as Comte and Renouvier. The revolution of 1848 however brought Cousin's philosophical dictatorship to an end, and he retired into private life. At the accession to power of Louis Napoleon he became a professor emeritus with a pension.

Cousin described the sensationalist theory of Condillac and his associates as 'sensualism'. Hence the title of his work *Sensualist Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century* (*Philosophie sensualiste au XVIIIe siècle*, 1819). Among other writings one can mention *Philosophical Fragments* (*Fragments philosophiques*, 1826). *On the True, Beautiful and the Good* (*Du vrai, du beau et du bien*, 1837), a *Course of the History of Modern Philosophy* (*Cours de l'histoire de la philosophie moderne*, 5 volumes, 1841) and *Studies on Pascal* (*Études sur Pascal*, 1842).

It was Cousin's conviction that the nineteenth century stood in need of eclecticism. It needed it in the political sphere, in the sense that monarchy, aristocracy and democracy should function as component elements in the constitution. In the philosophical sphere the time had arrived for a systematic policy of eclecticism, for a welding together of the valuable elements contained in different systems. Man himself is a composite being, and just as in man an harmonious integration of different powers and activities is a desirable goal, so in philosophy do we require an integration of different ideas, each of which is apt to be over-emphasized by one or other philosophical system.

According to Cousin, reflection on the history of philosophy reveals that there are four basic types of system, which are 'the fundamental elements of all philosophy'.[1] In the first place there is sensualism, the philosophy 'which relies exclusively on the senses'.[2] Then there is idealism, which finds reality in the realm of thought. Thirdly there is the philosophy of common sense. And in the fourth place there is mysticism, which turns its back on the senses and takes refuge in interiority. Each of these systems or types of system contains some truth, but no one of them contains the whole truth or is uniquely true. For example, the philosophy of sensation must obviously express some truth, as sensibility is a real aspect of man. It is not however the whole of man. In regard therefore to the basic kinds of system we have to be careful 'not to reject any one, and not to be the dupe of any of them'.[3] We have to combine the true elements. To do so is to practise eclecticism.

Eclecticism is presented by Cousin as the culmination of an historical process. 'The philosophy of a century arises from all the elements of which this century is composed.'[4] In other words, philosophy is the product of the complex factors which compose a civilization, even though, once arisen, it takes on a life of its own and can exercise an influence. At the close of the Middle Ages, according to Cousin, the new spirit which arose first took the form of an attack on the dominant medieval power, the Church, and so of a religious revolution. A political revolution came second. 'The English revolution is the great event of the end of the seventeenth century.'[5] Both revolutions expressed the spirit of freedom, which was then manifested in the science and philosophy of the eighteenth century. The spirit of freedom or liberty led indeed to the excesses of the French revolution; but subsequently it was given a balanced expression in a political system combining the elements of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, in constitutional monarchy that is to say. It follows that the philosophy required by the nineteenth century is an eclecticism which combines independence of the Church with a rejection of materialism and atheism. In fine, an eclectic spiritualism is required which transcends the philosophy of sensation of the eighteenth century but does not fall back into subservience to ecclesiastical dogma and tutelage.

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[1] *Cours de philosophie. Histoire de la philosophie*, I, p. 141 (Brussels, 1840).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 118.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 141.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

It would not be fair to Cousin to suggest that he is blind to the fact that this sort of interpretation of the history of development presupposes a philosophy, a definite stand in regard to criteria of truth and falsehood. He may speak on occasion as though he were an impartial observer, judging philosophy from outside; but he also admits explicitly that we cannot separate truth from error in philosophical systems without criteria which are the result of previous philosophical reflection, and that for this reason eclecticism 'assumes a system, starts from a system'.[1]

Cousin's rejection of the sensationalism of Condillac by no means entails a rejection of the method of observation and experiment in philosophy, nor indeed of starting with psychology. In his view Condillac's use of observation was deficient. As was seen by Laromiguière, observation gives us phenomena such as active attention which cannot be reduced to passively received impressions. And Maine de Biran threw light, by means of observation, on the active role of the self. If Condillac rightly asserted the existence and importance of human sensibility, de Biran rightly asserted the existence and importance of the human will, of voluntary activity. Observation however, Cousin insists, will take us further than this. For it reveals to us the faculty of reason, which is reducible neither to sensation nor to will and which sees the necessary truth of certain basic principles, such as the principle of causality, that are implicitly recognized by common sense. Psychology therefore reveals the presence of three faculties in man, namely sensibility, will and reason. And philosophical problems fall into three corresponding groups, concerned respectively with the beautiful, the good and the true.

To develop a philosophy of reality we have of course to go beyond the purely psychological sphere. It is the faculty of reason which enables us to do this. For with the aid of the principles of substance and causality it enables us to refer the interior phenomena of willed effort to the self or ego and passively received impressions to an external world or Nature. These two realities, the ego and the non-ego, limit one another, as Fichte held, and cannot constitute the ultimate reality. Both must be ascribed to the creative activity of God. It is thus reason which enables us to emerge from the subjective sphere and to develop an ontology in which the self and the not-self are seen as related to the causal activity of God.

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[1] *Fragments philosophiques* (1838 edition), I, p. 41.

The Traditionalists emphasized the impotence of the human reason in the metaphysical and religious spheres, when working independently of revelation. The Catholic Church eventually took a stand against this attitude; and it may thus appear that it should have been gratified by Cousin's metaphysics. But what Cousin was driving at was a middle way between Catholicism on the one hand and eighteenth-century atheism and agnosticism on the other. It is understandable therefore that his point of view was not altogether acceptable to those who believed that the bosom of the Church was the only viable and proper alternative to infidelity. Further, Cousin was accused of pantheism on the ground that he represented the world as a necessary actualization of the divine life. That is to say, he thought of God as necessarily manifesting himself in the physical world and in the sphere of finite selves. The world, in his opinion, was as necessary to God as God to the world; and he spoke of God as returning to himself in human consciousness.[1] Cousin denied that such ways of speaking entailed pantheism; but little weight was attached to his denial by critics who were convinced of the inherently irreligious tendencies of philosophy. To be sure, he advised philosophers to steer clear of talking about religion, by which he meant primarily Catholicism. But he certainly talked about God; and to his religious critics his way of speaking seemed to be at variance with what they believed to be true religion and to confirm their suspicions of philosophy.

As an exponent of a middle way, of a policy of compromise, Cousin was naturally faced with criticism from two sides. His metaphysics was acceptable neither to materialists and atheists nor to the Traditionalists. His political theories satisfied neither the republicans and the socialistically minded nor the authoritarian royalists. His more academic critics have objected that the transition which he makes from psychology to ontology is unjustified. In particular, Cousin gives no clear explanation how principles of universal and necessary validity, capable of grounding an ontology and a metaphysics, can be derived from inspection of the data of consciousness. He asserts that 'as is the method of a philosopher, so will be his system', and that 'the adoption of a method decides the destiny of a philosophy'.[1] Those critics who find Cousin's eclecticism incoherent may be inclined to agree, adding that in his case a clearly defined method was conspicuous by its absence.

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[1] Cousin's ideas on this subject obviously show the influence of German metaphysical idealism. It was however his general habit to minimize foreign influence in his thought. He even went so far as to represent electicism as a specifically French contribution to philosophical thought.

Though however Cousin's thought has been submitted to a good deal of patronizing or even contemptuous criticism, he made a considerable contribution to the development of academic philosophy in France, especially perhaps in the field of the history of philosophy. His view that there was truth in all systems naturally encouraged study of them; and he set an example by his historical writings. It is easy to write him off as a man who gave theoretical expression to the reign of Louis-Philippe. The fact remains that he left his mark on university philosophy in France.

4. Among the pupils of Cousin was Théodore Simon Jouffroy (1796–1842). He entered the École Normale in 1814 and after his studies became a lecturer there until his appointment in 1833 as professor of ancient philosophy at the Collège de France.[2] From 1833 he also served as a deputy in the Chamber. His writings include two sets of philosophical essays (*Mélanges philosophiques*, 1833, and *Nouveaux mélanges philosophiques*, 1842) and two courses, one on natural law (*Cours de droit naturel*, 2 volumes, 1834–42) and one on aesthetics (*Cours d'esthétique*, 1843). The second course, published posthumously, consists of notes of his lectures taken by a hearer.

In regard to philosophy, or at any rate to philosophical systems, Jouffroy shows a marked scepticism. In 1813 he realized that he had lost his Christian faith. That is to say, he found that the answers provided by Christian dogmas to problems about human life and destiny were no longer valid for him. In his view philosophy would or at least might one day take the place of Christian dogmas and solve the problems which could no longer be answered by the authoritative pronouncements of a religion claiming to embody divine revelation.[3] In this matter Jouffroy was more outspoken than Cousin who, whatever he may have thought, tended to emphasize the co-existence of philosophy and religion rather than the replacement of the latter by the former.[1] Though however Jouffroy remained convinced that each individual had in fact a vocation, a task in life, he did not believe that anyone could know with certainty what his vocation was, nor that philosophy as it existed could provide definite answers to problems of this kind. In his opinion philosophical systems reflected the outlook, ideas, historical and social circumstances and needs of their times. Systems, in other words, express relative, not absolute truth. Like religion, they can have pragmatic value; but a final philosophical system is a remote ideal, not an actuality.

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[1] *Elements of Psychology*, translated by C. S. Henry, p. 28 (London, 1851).

[2] Previously to his nomination to this chair Jouffroy had lectured at the Sorbonne as well as at the École Normale.

[3] In 1825 Jouffroy published an article on the end of dogmas and their eventual replacement by philosophy.

Jouffroy combined this partial scepticism in regard to philosophical systems with belief in principles of common sense which are prior to explicit philosophy and express the collective wisdom of the human race. Royer-Collard and Cousin aroused in him an interest in the Scottish philosophy of common sense, an interest which bore fruit in his translation into French of Dugald Stewart's[2] *Outlines of Moral Philosophy* and of Reid's works. Reflecting on the Scottish philosophy Jouffroy came to the conclusion that there are principles of common sense which possess a degree of truth and certainty which is not enjoyed by the philosophical theories of individuals.[3] To be sure, these theories cannot be simply the product of individuals, if philosophies express the spirit of their times. But the principles of common sense represent something more permanent, the collective wisdom of mankind or the human race, to which appeal can be made against the one-sidedness of a philosophical system. One philosopher, for example, may expound a materialist system, while another regards spirit as the sole reality. Common sense however recognizes the existence of both matter and spirit. Presumably therefore any adequate or universally true philosophy would be basically an explication of common sense, of the wisdom of mankind, rather than of the ideas, outlook, circumstances and needs of a particular society.

There are of course some pretty obvious objections to any sharp division between individual opinions and theories on the one hand

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[1] As a kind of philosophical dictator, the official mouthpiece of philosophy in France, Cousin was anxious not to antagonize potentially hostile groups but to harmonize different points of view. As we have noted, his policy of compromise was not particularly successful. The point is however that his position encouraged adoption of a policy which a man such as Jouffroy, who did not share Cousin's ambitions, had much less interest in pursuing.

[2] For Dugald Stewart see Vol. 5 of this *History*, pp. 375–83.

[3] On this subject see Jouffroy's essay on philosophy and common sense in *Mélanges philosophiques*.

and the collective wisdom of mankind on the other. For example, common sense is said to express itself in self-evidently true propositions which lie at the basis of logics and ethics. But the truth of such principles is grasped by individual minds. And in his psychological reflections, where he treats of human faculties, their development and cooperation, Jouffroy certainly depicts reason as capable of apprehending truth. To a certain extent perhaps the tension between individualism and what we may perhaps, for want of a better word, call collectivism can be overcome by representing the fully developed human being as participating in the common mind or wisdom. But the tension in Jouffroy's thought remains. For instance, his view of common sense as expressing human solidarity might be expected, as historians have pointed out, to influence his political ideas in the direction of socialism, whereas in fact he spoke on occasion of society as a collection of individuals. Perhaps however Jouffroy would maintain that the integration of the common and the individual is an ideal towards which mankind moves. In the case of philosophy at any rate he believed that the divergence between one-sided systems and common sense would one day be overcome. And he seems also to have thought that nationalism was in process of giving way to internationalism as an expression of human fraternity.

We have seen that Cousin tried to base ontology on psychology. Jouffroy did not follow him here. He insisted that psychology should be kept free from metaphysics and studied with the same scientific detachment that we find in the physicist. At the same time he emphasized the distinction between psychology and physical science.[1] When the physicist observes a series or set of phenomena, he is not simultaneously presented with their cause or causes. Further inquiry is required. In inner observation or perception however the cause, namely the self, is a datum. This may sound like an excursion into metaphysics; but Jouffroy seems to be referring, in a manner reminiscent of Maine de Biran, to the ego which is aware of itself in consciousness or apperception rather than to a substantial soul.

In his lectures on natural law Jouffroy devoted his attention very largely to ethical themes. In a sense good and evil are relative. For every man has his own particular vocation in life, his life-task; and good actions are those which contribute to the fulfilment of this vocation, while evil actions are those which are incompatible with its fulfilment. We can say therefore that good and evil are relative to the individual's self-realization. But this is not all that can be said. Underlying all ethical codes and systems of law are the basic principles which belong to common sense. Further Jouffroy seems to regard all individual vocations as contributing to the development of a common moral order. And if a unified moral ideal cannot be fully realized in this life, it may perhaps be the case that it will be realized in another.

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[1] See Jouffroy's essay on the legitimacy of the distinction between psychology and physiology in *Nouveaux mélanges philosophiques*.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY IN FRANCE

General remarks—The utopianism of Fourier—Saint-Simon and the development of society—Proudhon, anarchism and syndicalism—Marx on the French socialists.

1. THE Traditionalists, as we have seen, were concerned with what they regarded as the breakdown of social order exhibited in and consequent on the revolution, the revolution itself being attributed in large measure to the thought and influence of the eighteenth-century philosophers. To depict the Traditionalists as being reactionaries to such an extent as to envisage the restoration of the pre-revolutionary régime together with all the abuses which rendered change inevitable would be to do them an injustice. But they certainly believed that social reconstruction on a firm basis demanded a reassertion of traditional principles of religion and of monarchic government. In this sense they looked backwards, though a writer such as de Maistre was, as we have noted, a strong upholder of ultramontanism and no friend of the tradition of Gallicanism.

The ideologists, regarded by Napoleon as pestilential 'metaphysicians', were not much given to political pronouncements. But their methods had implications in the social field. For example, they insisted on careful analysis of empirical phenomena and on education through discussion. The emperor doubtless thought that the ideologists were concerned with trivialities and useless or unprofitable inquiries; but the fact of the matter is that they were opposed to the idea of moulding the youth to a pattern and to the educational system as envisaged by Napoleon, as well as to his restoration of the Catholic religion in France.

The eclectics favoured constitutional monarchy and a compromise policy, acceptable to the bourgeoisie. They were themselves active in political life; and they can be said to have represented a class which gained in status through the revolution and which did not desire further drastic experiments, whether imperialistic conquests or socialist programmes of change.

It is only to be expected however that there should have been other thinkers who were convinced that the revolution ought to be carried further, not indeed in the sense of a renewal of bloodshed but in the sense that the ideals of the revolution needed to be realized in a reformation of the structure of society. Liberty might have been achieved by the revolution; but the realization of equality and fraternity was by no means so conspicuous. These would-be social reformers who were convinced that the work of the revolution needed to be extended, were idealists,[1] and their positive proposals have often been described as utopian, especially by Marx and his followers. In some cases at any rate the description has an obvious foundation in fact. If the Traditionalists had their dreams, so had their opposite numbers. To admit this patent fact does not however entail the conclusion that Marxism is scientific as opposed to utopian socialism.[2] In any case a sharp distinction tends to conceal the fact that the ideas of the French social reformers in the first half of the nineteenth century contributed to the development of political theory on socialist lines.

2. It must be admitted that Karl Marx's view of François Marie Charles Fourier (1772–1837) as a well-meaning and myth-creating utopian socialist was not unjustified. For while Fourier certainly drew attention to a real problem, his solution contained elements which now and then bordered on the fantastic. His views were often eccentric; and some of his prophecies, as about the functions which animals might or would come to fulfil, amounted to highly imaginative science fiction. But he was a kindly man and was inspired by a genuine desire for the regeneration of society.

A native of Besançon, where he received his schooling from the Jesuits, Fourier was the son of a merchant and gained his livelihood in the world of trade. Apart from this occupation he devoted himself to the propagation of his views on human society. His writings include a *Theory of the Four Movements and of General Destinies* (*Théorie des quatres mouvements et des destinées générales*, 1808), a *Theory of Universal Unity* (*Théorie de l'unité universelle*, 1822) and a work entitled *The New Industrial and Social World*

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[1] There is of course no reference to idealism in any technical philosophical sense.

[2] It is arguable at any rate that a more helpful distinction can be made between pragmatic socialism, which is of course inspired by at least implicit socio-ethical ideals but is comparatively free from ideological dogmatism, and doctrinaire socialism in which the interests of individuals and groups here and now may very well be sacrificed in the name of the society of the future, the advent of which is regarded either as the inevitable result of an historical process or as so overwhelmingly desirable that the measures supposed to be required for its attainment must take precedence over the correction of present abuses and evils.

(*Le nouveau monde industriel et sociétaire*, 1829). Except for his secondary schooling at Besançon he was a self-taught man who possessed plenty of intelligence, a lively imagination and a smattering of knowledge on a variety of topics.

Fourier was an uncompromising and outspoken critic of established society as he knew it. More accurately, he followed Rousseau in blaming civilization for the ills of mankind. Everywhere in civilized society, according to Fourier, we can see selfishness and self-interest masquerading as service to humanity. For example, doctors thrive on the spread of ailments among their fellow citizens, and the clergy desire the deaths of their wealthier parishioners in order to receive substantial fees for performing the funeral rites.[1] Moreover, civilized society is afflicted with hordes of parasites. Women and children, for instance, are domestic parasites, while soldiers and traders are social parasites. Obviously, not even Fourier's eccentricity goes so far as to suggest that women and children should be eliminated. What he means is that in civilized society women and children lead unproductive lives. In his opinion, women should be emancipated and free to take part in productive work, while children, he quaintly suggests, who love playing in the gutter, might well be employed in cleaning up the streets. As things are, only a comparatively small section of the population is engaged in productive work. Armies are engaged in destruction, not production; and in times of peace they are parasites on society. As for traders and merchants, 'commerce is the natural enemy of the producer.'[2] It by no means follows however that the producers are either happy or free from the prevailing selfishness. Their conditions of life are often deplorable, and 'each worker is at war with the mass and bears ill will towards it from personal interest'.[3] In fine, civilized society is infected thoughout with selfishness, discord and disharmony.

What is the origin of the evils of civilized society? According to Fourier it is the repression of the passions, for which civilization is responsible. The world was created by a good God who implanted in man certain passions which must therefore be good in themselves. Among the thirteen passions implanted by God Fourier includes, for example, the five senses, social passions such as love and family feeling, distributive passions such as that for variety (the 'butterfly' passion), and the crowning passion for harmony which unites or synthesizes the others.[1] Civilization has repressed these passions in such a way as to render harmony impossible. What is required therefore is a reorganization of society which will secure the release of the passions and, consequently, both the development of individuals and the attainment of concord or harmony between them.

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[1] Fourier evidently gives one-sided pictures or caricatures of the motives and outlooks of groups and classes. Caricature apart however, he is certainly quick to detect evidence of what he believes to be sham and humbug and to draw inferences from behaviour to motives of which the agents may not be consciously aware. In other words, his picture of society, though doubtless one-sided, exhibits some psychological insight. In the case of politicians, for example, claims to be concerned exclusively with the public welfare often arouse sceptical thoughts in minds which have never heard of Fourier.

[2] *Four Movements*, p. 332; *Universal Unity*, II, p. 217.

[3] *Four Movements*, p. 29.

The social organization to which Fourier pinned his hopes was what he called a 'phalanx', a group of men, women and children amounting in number to between one and a half and two thousand people.[2] The members of a phalanx would be persons of different temperaments, abilities and tastes. They would be grouped according to occupation or type of work; but no member would be given work for which he was unsuited or which he would find repugnant. If his tastes changed or he felt the need for other work, he could satisfy the 'butterfly' passion.[3] Thus each member of a phalanx would have full opportunity to develop his talents and passions to the full; and he would understand the significance of his particular work in the general scheme. There would be competition between sub-groups; but harmony would reign. Indeed, if only one phalanx was successfully established, the evident harmony, happiness and prosperity of its members would inevitably stimulate imitation. Relations between different phalanxes would be loose, though there would have to be provision for groups of workers to perform special temporary tasks in different phalanxes. There would not of course be any wars. Their place would be taken by gastronomic contests or competitions.[4]

Some of Fourier's ideas strike most readers as odd or bizarre. Thus he believed that human social regeneration would have remarkable effects not only in the animal kingdom but even among the heavenly bodies. But the oddity of some of his ideas does not alter the fact that he saw a real problem which is acute enough today, namely that of humanizing industrial society and labour and overcoming what is described as alienation. His solution obviously suffers from the defects of utopianism, such as the notion that there is only one ideal form of social organization. At the same time it had its points. To a certain extent it was a socialist solution; but Fourier did not envisage the abolition of private property, which he believed to be necessary for the development of the human personality. What he was suggesting was an experimental cooperative society with shareholders, the shares being allotted in stated proportion to labour, capital and talent, and the highest interest going to those who held the least stock.

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[1] It is hardly necessary to say that by passion Fourier does not mean something excessive and disordered, as when we say of someone that he flew into a passion or that he was carried away by ungovernable passion.

[2] The ideal number, according to Fourier, would be 1620, as this would facilitate all combinations of the thirteen basic passions.

[3] The family would be retained in the phalanx. But release of the 'butterfly' passion would mean abolition of tabus in regard to conjugal fidelity.

[4] Fourier laid stress on 'gastrosophy'.

Fourier himself never succeeded in realizing his project. But after his death a disciple called Godin founded a 'phalanstery' in France, while another disciple, Victor Considérant, experimented on Fourierist lines in Texas. Fourier's doctrines, trimmed of their more bizarre features, attracted a number of adherents both in France and America; but their effect was understandably limited and passing. He regarded himself as the Newton of social thought, the discoverer of the laws of social development and, in particular, of the transition from 'civilization' to the harmonious and perfect society which would realize the divine plan. His own estimate of himself has not been accepted. But while it is understandable that his ideas should be regarded as being to a large extent an historical curiosity, he was by no means devoid of perspicacity. Such problems as how to organize social and industrial structures in the service of man and how to harmonize individual and collective needs are obviously still with us.

3. A more influential precursor of socialism was Claude-Henri de Rouvroy, Comte de Saint-Simon (1760–1825). Scion of a noble though by no means wealthy family Saint-Simon received his education from private tutors, one of whom was the philosopher and scientist d'Alembert.[1] It was doubtless d'Alembert who stimulated in Saint-Simon's mind his faith in science as the source of enlightenment. At the age of seventeen Saint-Simon became an officer in the army and took part in the American war of independence. When the revolution broke out, he supported it up to a point, though his cooperation seems to have consisted mainly in buying confiscated property cheaply. In 1793 he was arrested,

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[1] For d'Alembert see vol. 6 of this *History*, pp. 39–47.

under the name which he had adopted for his profitable enterprises, but was subsequently released. He was politically active under the Directory but eventually gave himself entirely to the development and publicization of his social ideas, at times in a position of very considerable hardship.[1] In 1807–8 he published his *Introduction to the Scientific Works of the Nineteenth Century* (*Introduction aux travaux scientifiques de XIXe siècle*), and in 1813 his *Essay on the Science of Man* and *Work on Universal Gravitation* (*Mémoire sur la science de l'homme* and *Travail sur la gravitation universelle*). From 1814 until 1817 he worked in collaboration with Augustin Thierry; and the work entitled *Reorganisation of European Society* (*Réorganisation de la société européenne*, 1814) appeared under both names. From 1818 Auguste Comte acted as his secretary and collaborator until the two men quarrelled in 1824, the year before Saint-Simon's death. Comte owed a considerable debt to Saint-Simon and he could on occasion acknowledge the fact; but, in general, he preferred not to.

Saint-Simon described the philosophy of the eighteenth century as critical and revolutionary, whereas the philosophy of the nineteenth century was destined to be inventive and organizational. 'The philosophers of the eighteenth century made an Encyclopaedia to overthrow the theological and feudal system. The philosophers of the nineteenth century should also make an Encyclopaedia to bring into being the industrial and scientific system.'[2] That is to say, the thinkers of the eighteenth century subjected the old régime and the beliefs on which it rested to destructive criticism. If, in Saint-Simon's opinion, the last kings of France had had the good sense to ally themselves with the rising industrial class instead of with the nobility, the transition to a new system could have been affected peaceably. In point of fact however the old régime was swept away in a violent revolution. At the same time a political system cannot disappear entirely, unless a new system, capable of taking its place, is waiting, so to speak, in the wings. In the case of the French revolution the new system, destined to take the place of the old, was not ready. It is no matter for surprise therefore if after a time the monarchy was restored. The nineteenth century however was destined to be a period of new social construction and organization. And in the fulfilment of this task the nineteenth-century thinkers had an important role to play, the thinkers, that is to say, who, like Saint-Simon himself, could point out the lines which the process of constructive organization should take.

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[1] In 1823 Saint-Simon attempted suicide.

[2] *Oeuvres complètes de Saint-Simon et Enfantin* (Paris, 1865–76), X, pp. 104–5.

Though however Saint-Simon emphasized the critical and destructive aspects of the philosophy of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, there was another aspect of it which he regarded as providing the basis for later construction. This was its exaltation of the rational and scientific spirit. In Saint-Simon's opinion, it was science which had undermined the authority of the Church and the credibility of theological dogmas. At the same time it was the extension of the scientific approach from physics and astronomy to man himself which provided the basis for social reorganization. 'Knowledge of man is the one thing which can lead to the discovery of the ways of reconciling the interests of people.'[1] And knowledge of man can be attained only by treating man as a part of nature and by developing the idea, already prepared by certain writers of the Enlightenment and by Cabanis, of psychology as a department of physiology. Psychology however must also include study of the social organism. In other words, a new science is needed, described by Saint-Simon as social physiology.[2] Society and politics or, more generally, man in society can then be studied no less scientifically than the movements of the heavenly bodies. In fine, the application of Newtonian science to man himself, his psychology, his moral behaviour and his politics, is an indispensable basis for solving the social problems of Europe.

The sciences of astronomy, physics and chemistry have already been placed on a 'positive basis',[3] that is to say on observation and experiment.[4] The time has now come to place the science of man on a similar basis.[5] This will bring about the unification of the sciences and the realization of the ideal which inspired the *Encyclopaedia*. It is true that a completely unified and final scientific knowledge of the world remains an ideal towards which the human mind can approximate but which it cannot fully attain, inasmuch as advance in scientific knowledge is always possible.

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[1] *Ibid.*, XI, p. 40.

[2] The term 'sociology' derives from Comte rather than from Saint-Simon.

[3] *Oeuvres*, XI, p. 17.

[4] Saint-Simon emphasizes the role of observation and experiment. Obviously, experimentation, in the sense in which we speak of experiments in chemistry, is hardly possible in astronomy. But the term can be understood in a wide sense. And nowadays the situation has altered from what it was in Saint-Simon's time.

[5] We are reminded of the famous passage in Hume's introduction to the *Treatise*, in which he envisages placing the science of man on a solid foundation of experience and observation.

At the same time Saint-Simon thinks in terms of the extension of the approach and method of classical physics, considered as definitive in its main lines, to the study of man. And he believes that this extension will complete the transition from the stage of human thought in which theology and metaphysics passed as knowledge to the stage of positive or scientific knowledge.

Some writers have seen a discrepancy between Saint-Simon's ideal of the unification of the sciences and his later insistence on the superior dignity of the science of man. It has been argued, that is to say, that the ideal in question implies that all sciences are on the same level, whereas to ascribe a higher dignity to the science of man is to assume that there is a qualitative difference between man and other beings and to fall back on the medieval notion that the dignity of a science depends on its subject-matter or 'formal object'.[1]

This may be the case. But it does not seem necessary to postulate any radical change in Saint-Simon's position. He does indeed come to hold that social physiology has a special subject-matter, namely the social organism, which is more than a collection of individuals. But he demands that society should be studied by means of the same sort of method which is employed in other sciences. And if he adds a value-judgment, this does not necessarily involve him in a radical shift of position, not at any rate if we interpret him as referring to the importance of the science of man rather than as implying that man is qualitatively different from other things to an extent which precludes scientific study of human society. This implication was obviously not intended.

Saint-Simon does not of course treat society in a purely abstract manner. Social and political institutions develop and change; and Saint-Simon assumes that there must be a law which governs such changes. To study human society scientifically involves therefore discovery of the law or laws of social evolution. If we take it that any such law can be discovered only inductively, by investigating and reflecting on the historical phenomena, it is obvious that a survey of the widest possible field is desirable. Or, if a preliminary statement of the law of social change is based on an inquiry into a limited field, inquiry into other fields is required in order to see whether the hypothesis is confirmed or falsified. Though however

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[1] See, for example, what is said by E. Bréhier in the sixth volume of his *History of Philosophy* (*The Nineteenth Century: Period of Systems, 1800–1850*. translated by Wade Baskin, Chicago and London, 1968, p. 267).

Saint-Simon does make general remarks about historical stages in the process of social evolution, what really interests him is the transition from medieval to modern civilization, apart from what he has to say about the future.

In his general views of the transition from theological beliefs and metaphysical speculation to the era of positive or scientific knowledge, of the need for a science of human society, and of historical changes as law-governed, Saint-Simon obviously anticipates the positivism of Auguste Comte. The latter's disciples were inclined to belittle the former's influence; and some even tried to make out that it was Saint-Simon who was influenced by Comte rather than the other way round. But this contention cannot be defended successfully. To be sure, both men had their precursors in the eighteenth century, writers such as Turgot and Condorcet.[1] And during their period of collaboration Saint-Simon doubtless derived stimulus from Comte. The point is however that Saint-Simon arrived at his basic ideas well before the period of his association with Comte. And whatever some of his disciples may have said, Comte could bring himself on occasion, at any rate in correspondence, to recognize his debt to Saint-Simon. True, Comte worked out his ideas in his own way. But it is a question of deriving stimulus from Saint-Simon and being influenced by him in important respects rather than of slavish appropriation of ideas. In view of Comte's reputation as the founder of classical positivism it is as well to draw attention to the important role played by Saint-Simon.

In his account of social change Saint-Simon lays great emphasis on the basic importance of ideas. For example, the beliefs and ideas of the Middle Ages exercised a determining influence on the social and political institutions of the time,[2] while the development of the sciences and the transition to the stage of positive knowledge demands and leads to the creation of new social and political structures. In thus emphasizing the basic role played by ideas he is linked with Comte rather than with Marx. At the same time Saint-Simon also stresses the importance of man's economic life by what he has to say about the rise of the class of merchants and artisans. In his opinion the feudal society of the Middle Ages reached its culminating point in the eleventh century. After this time there emerged within it two factors which were the remote augurs of its dissolution. One was the introduction of scientific ideas from the Islamic world, while the other was the emergence of the communes, representing a class of producers in a sense in which the Church and the feudal nobility were not producers.[1] Within the medieval period itself neither factor became strong enough to constitute a real threat to existing authority. In the sixteenth century however the power of the Church was weakened by the challenge of the reformers; and it allied itself with, or subordinated itself to the monarchy instead of being, as in the Middle Ages, a rival to the temporal power. Scientific knowledge grew and threatened theological beliefs, eventually leading intellectuals at any rate to question all established authority and ideas. Further, as the French monarchs foolishly associated themselves with the nobility, once it had been reduced to a condition of submission, rather with the interests of the rising class of producers, violent revolution became in the end inevitable. The French revolution was simply the outcome of a process which had been going on 'for more than six centuries'.[2] It set the rising class free and rendered possible the transition to industrial society.

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[1] For Turgot and Condorcet, see Vol. 6 of this *History*, pp. 56–8 and pp. 168–71.

[2] Saint-Simon regards the medieval period as a necessary stage in historical development and has thus little sympathy with the eighteenth-century tendency to dismiss the Middle Ages as a period of darkness.

Saint-Simon looked on contemporary society as being in an intermediary phase, intermediate, that is to say, between the old régime and the establishment of a new society based on scientific knowledge and on industry. The conditions for a new society were already there. It would not matter if France were to lose the monarchy, the bishops and the landowners; but it would certainly matter if it lost the only really useful class, the producers or workmen. (The scientists must also be included of course as an indispensable element in society.) It by no means follows however that Saint-Simon demanded the development of social democracy or concerned himself with extension of the franchise to all citizens or with their participation in government. What he does look forward to is the rule of scientists and of captains of industry. In *L'Organisation* (1819) he envisaged three chambers of experts.

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[1] It does not follow that Saint-Simon regarded the Church and the feudal nobility as parasites on medieval society. For him medieval society was 'organic', and he looked on the feudal nobility and the Church as performing useful functions within this society. He did not, for instance, regard religion simply as harmful superstition, but rather as an historical necessity, even though religious beliefs were destined to be supplanted by scientific knowledge.

[2] *Oeuvres*, V. p. 78.

The first, the chamber of invention, consisting of engineers and artists, would draw up plans or projects which would then be examined by the second chamber, consisting of mathematicians, physicists and physiologists.[1] The third chamber would be responsible for putting into execution projects proposed by the first chamber and examined and approved by the second. Saint-Simon called the third body the chamber of deputies. It would consist of elected representatives of agriculture and industry; but the electorate would consist only of producers.

There is no need to lay a great deal of emphasis on these proposals. In his work *On the Industrial System* (*Du système industriel*, 1821–22) Saint-Simon more or less contented himself with demanding that finances should be put into the hands of a chamber of industry and that the Institute of France should take over the role in education which had once been played by the Church. In any case, the concrete proposals express a number of general presuppositions. For example, it is presupposed that the scientists have become the intellectual élite and that they can be trusted to make and approve plans beneficial to society. Again, it is presupposed that in contemporary society the interests which bind men together and which call for common deliberation and action are no longer theological or military but economic. Government, when understood as coercive and as associated with military adventures is on its way to being transformed into a managerial administration concerned with promoting the real interests of society.

Industrial society, according to Saint-Simon, would be a peaceful society, at any rate when fully developed and given the appropriate form of government or administration. What he calls the industrial class includes not only captains of industry but also the workmen. And Saint-Simon assumes that their interests coincide or harmonize with one another. Further, the industrial class in, say, France has much more in common with the parallel class in England than it has with the French nobility. The rise of the industrial class therefore provides the basis for human solidarity and for overcoming national enmities. True, governments as they actually exist represent a prolongation of the old régime, a hangover, as one might express it, from an outmoded social structure. The transition however to a form of adminstration appropriate to the new industrial society and devoted to its interests will justify confidence in international peace. This goal cannot be attained by alliance between or conferences between governments which do not properly represent the interests of the productive and naturally peaceful class. A fuller development of industrial society is first required.

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[1] The term 'physiologist' must obviously be understood in Saint-Simon's sense as referring to specialists in the science of man. This second chamber would have also the function of controlling education.

Karl Marx showed considerable respect for Saint-Simon. But he obviously disagreed with the latter's assumption that the real or true interests of the captains of industry coincided with those of the workmen. From Marx's point of view Saint-Simon, while seeing the importance of man's economic life, had failed to understand the clash of interests between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and the connection between bourgeois society and war. In brief, Saint-Simon was a utopian. We may indeed be inclined to think that in his own way Marx himself was a utopian, and that people living in glass houses would be well advised to refrain from throwing stones. But it can hardly be denied that Saint-Simon was over-optimistic in regard to the inherently peaceful nature of industrial society.

To do Saint-Simon justice however, he came to see that ignorance is not the only bar to progress, and that the spread of scientific knowledge and government by experts was not sufficient to secure realization of the ideal of human brotherhood, the ideal of *fraternité*. There was man's self-seeking and egoism to reckon with. And selfishness could not be overcome without an appropriate morality or ethics. In his *New Christianity* (*Nouveau Christianisme*, 1824) Saint-Simon found this morality in the Christian ethics of love. He was not recommending a return to the Christian system of dogmas which, in his view, had been superseded by positive scientific knowledge of the world. He was however convinced that the Christian ideal of fraternal love, which had been obscured by the Church's power-structure and by the policy of religious intolerance and persecution, possessed permanent value and relevance. The Catholic system was outmoded, while Lutheranism had emphasized an interiority divorced from political life. What was needed was the realization of the message of the Christian gospel in the social-political sphere.

As Saint-Simon's insistence on ethico-religious motivation was expressed in a work which appeared in the year preceding that of his death, it has sometimes been thought that it represented a radical change in his thought and pretty well a recantation of positivism. But this view is inaccurate. Saint-Simon does not appear to have ever been a complete positivist, if we understand the term as implying rejection of all belief in God. He seems to have believed in an impersonal immanent Deity, pantheistically conceived, and to have thought this belief quite compatible with his positivism. Further, he always regarded Christianity with respect. To be sure, he did not accept Christian dogmas. But he looked on the theological outlook of the Middle Ages not as deplorable superstition but as an historical necessity. And though the theological stage of thought had, in his opinion, been superseded by the scientific stage, he did not think of this transition as entailing abandonment of all Christian moral values. He did indeed become convinced that the new society needed a new religion, to overcome both individual and national egoism and to recreate in a new form the 'organic' society of the Middle Ages. But the new religion was for him the old religion, in regard, that is to say, to what he considered to be the essential and permanently valuable element in the old religion. We can say perhaps that Saint-Simon envisaged a 'secularized' Christianity. The 'new Christianity' was Christianity as relevant to the age of the industrial society and of positive science.

Saint-Simon was not a systematic thinker. He advanced numerous lines of thought but tended to leave them only partly developed and did not make any prolonged effort to combine them in a systematic manner. His ideas however aroused widespread interest; and after his death some of his disciples founded the journal *Le producteur* to propagate these ideas. In 1830 a newspaper entitled *Le globe* also became an organ of Saint-Simonianism. Saint-Amand Bazard (1791–1832), one of Saint-Simon's principal disciples, tried to present his master's doctrine in a systematic way, paying special attention to its religious aspects. His lectures on Saint-Simon attracted a good deal of attention. Shortly before his death however he quarrelled with the other founding father, Barthélemy Prosper Enfantin (1796–1864), who pretty well turned Saint-Simonianism into a religious sect, though not an austere one, as Enfantin advocated generous ideas in regard to love between men and women. Bazard had been much more of a logical thinker; Enfantin was both an impassioned publicist and inclined to take up one particular project or cause after another. In spite however of his activity the Saint-Simonian school started to decline after the split between himself and Bazard.

The influence of Saint-Simon was not confined to those who can be classified as disciples. Outside their ranks the two most important thinkers who derived stimulus from his thought were doubtless Auguste Comte and Karl Marx. Both Marx and Engels admired Saint-Simon. It is true that Marx criticized him, as we have already noted, for failing to understand the class antagonism between capitalists and workers and for concentrating, in Marx's opinion, on glorifying bourgeois society in comparison with feudalism. At the same time Marx thought that in *The New Christianity* Saint-Simon had spoken up for the emancipation of the proletariat. We know from Engels that Marx was generally accustomed to express his esteem for Saint-Simon, whereas he regarded Comte as a reactionary and a thinker of little value.

4. Fourier and Saint-Simon were at one with the Traditionalists in believing that after the overthrow of the old régime at the revolution a reorganization of society was required. Obviously the two groups had different ideas about the form which such reorganization should take. The Traditionalists looked back, in the sense that they insisted on the permanent validity and value of certain traditional beliefs and institutions, whereas Fourier and Saint-Simon looked forward to the creation of those new forms of social organization which they believed to be demanded by the march of history. Both groups however emphasized the need for social reorganization. It may appear therefore that Proudhon, as a professed anarchist, should be sharply differentiated from both Traditionalists and socialists, inasmuch as the term anarchy suggests an absence, or rather a rejection, of social organization. Though however Proudhon accepted the label 'anarchist' in 1840, he did not understand by anarchism a general social chaos, anarchy in the popular sense of the term, but rather the absence of centralized authoritarian government. What he desired was social organization without government. In Marxist terminology, he envisaged the withering away of the State. Up to a point therefore there was an affinity between Proudhon and Saint-Simon, inasmuch as the latter looked for the transformation of 'government' into 'administration'. At the same time Proudhon went further than Saint-Simon. For he hoped that the form of social organization which he considered desirable would render centralized administration unnecessary.

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865) was born at Besançon. After a short period of school education he became an apprentice in the local diocesan printing press[1] and later a partner in a firm of printers. Though however he had to leave school for work, he continued to educate himself, and in 1838 he obtained a scholarship which enabled him to go to Paris. In 1840 he published his essay *What is Property?* (*Qu'est-ce que la propriété?*), in which he made his famous statement that property is theft. This was followed by two further essays on the subject (1841 and 1842), the second of which was regarded as inflammatory propaganda by the civil authorities.[2]

In 1843 Proudhon published a work *On the Creation of Order in Humanity* (*De la création de l'ordre dans l'humanité*). In it he maintained that the human mind progresses through the two successive stages of religion and philosophy to the scientific stage. At this third stage it becomes possible for man to discover the serial laws operating in the world, both infra-human and human. The science which shows how man should apply his knowledge of these laws in society is called by Proudhon 'serial dialectic'. In maintaining that there are ascertainable laws governing social development Proudhon is obviously at one with Saint-Simon and, for the matter of that, with Montesquieu.[3]

For a time Proudhon worked at Lyons, with visits to Paris. At Lyons he consorted with socialists, while at Paris he made the acquaintance of Marx, Bakunin and Herzen. Introduced to the ideas of Hegel, he undertook to apply the Hegelian dialectic in the sphere of economics.[4] The result was his *System of Economic Contradictions or the Philosophy of Poverty* (*Système des contradictions économiques ou Philosophie de la misère*, 1846). The contradiction or antithesis between the system of equality-destroying property on the one hand and independence-destroying socialism (communism) on the other is resolved in 'mutualism' (or 'anarchy'), a society of producers united by means of free contracts. Marx, who had hailed Proudhon's first essay on poverty as representing 'scientific socialism',[5] hastened to attack this new work in his

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[1] At this time Proudhon read widely in theology and learned Greek and Hebrew. Later he was to say that it is a duty of the thinking and free man to expel the idea of God from his mind.

[2] Proudhon's ideas were found difficult to follow, and he was acquitted.

[3] For Montesquieu see Vol. 6 of this *History*, pp. 9–15.

[4] Proudhon's knowledge of Hegel was never profound. And there is little point in discussing his degree of fidelity to Hegel's thought. Proudhon simply derived some stimulus from what he had read and from what he had been told by left-wing Hegelians.

[5] It is possible that Marx took over this phrase from Proudhon himself.

Poverty of Philosophy (*Misère de la philosophie*, 1847). The split between the two men is in no way surprising. For Proudhon was never a communist, and in Marx's eyes he expressed the interests of the *petite bourgeoisie*.

When the monarchy was overthrown in February of 1848 Proudhon gave only a very qualified support to the revolution.[1] However he showed activity in a variety of ways, by campaigning for the establishment of a People's Bank, by making popular speeches, and by founding an anarchist paper *The Representative of the People* (*Le représentant de peuple*). In June of 1848 he was elected to the National Assembly. But an attack in his paper on Louis Napoleon, then president, led to his being sentenced to imprisonment for three years.[2] In 1849 he wrote *Confessions of a Revolutionary* (*Les confessions d'un révolutionnaire*), and in 1851 he published his *General Idea of Revolution in the Nineteenth Century* (*Idée générale de la révolution au XIXe siècle*), in which he expounded his vision of the ideal free society.

At the end of 1851 Louis Napoleon made himself emperor; and when Proudhon was released from prison in 1852, he was subjected to police supervision. In 1853 he published his *Philosophy of Progress* (*Philosophie du progrès*) in which he denied the existence of any absolutes and of any permanence and asserted a theory of universal movement or change both in the universe at large and in particular spheres such as morals, politics and religion. When however he published *Justice in the Revolution and the Church* (*De la justice dans la révolution et dans l'église*, 1858), he got into trouble. This was not of course because Proudhon now rejected the idea of the resolution of thesis and antithesis in a synthesis and substituted an expression of belief in continuing antinomies which produce a dynamic, though unstable, equilibrium of forces or factors. He was charged with attacking religion, morality and the law. To escape further imprisonment he went to Belgium, remaining there even after he had been pardoned in 1860. While in Brussels he wrote several works, for example *War and Peace* (*La guerre et la paix*).

Returning to Paris in 1862, Proudhon published his work *On the Federal Principle* (*Du principe fédératif*, 1863) and wrote the *Theory of Property* (*Théorie de la propriété*), a revision of his thoughts on this subject. This revision was published posthumously, as was also *On the Political Capacity of the Working Classes* (*De la capacité politique des classes ouvrières*, 1865).

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[1] Proudhon was no great believer in political revolutions. He wanted economic changes.

[2] The imprisonment was not particularly stringent. Proudhon was sometimes allowed out on parole. And he was able to write.

Proudhon came of a family of peasant stock, and he remained always on the side of the small producer, whether peasant or artisan. When he said that property was theft,[1] he was not suggesting that a peasant who owned and worked a plot of land and lived by the fruit of his labours or that a man who lived by making and selling chairs and claimed ownership of the tools of his trade was a thief. By 'property' Proudhon really meant what he regarded as an abuse, what he called the right of escheat or *aubaine*. For example, the landowner who did not himself work the land but none the less took the profits derived from the labours of others was a thief. In Proudhon's language there could be a right of 'possession', of exclusive *use*; but there was no right of 'property' as this would mean a right to exploit other people. 'Possession' means a right to make use of an object, whether it be land or tools. As 'property' means the *misuse* of objects (as means to exploitation), there can be no right to it. It involves theft.

It is important to understand that when Proudhon denounced property, he was not simply denouncing exploitation by individual landowners and capitalists. He believed that for the maintenance of human independence and dignity peasants and artisans should 'possess' the land which they worked on or the tools which they used and that they should receive the fruit of their labours. And he was therefore opposed to any system of collective ownership which meant that the State would take the place of the non-productive landowner or capitalist. When referring later to his rejection of property in the essay of 1840 he remarks that 'I rejected it for both the group and the individual, the nation and the citizen, and thus I am not advocating either communism or State ownership.'[2]

If we bear this point in mind, it becomes easier to understand how in his *System of Economic Contradictions* Proudhon could retain the idea of property as theft and at the same time offer a new definition of it as liberty. There is the constant possibility of abuse, of exploitation, which spells theft. At the same time property is a spontaneous creation of society and a bulwark against the ever-encroaching power of the State. Proudhon came to doubt whether his previous distinction between property and possession

[1] *What is Property?*, p. 131.

[2] *Theory of Property*, p. 16.

was as useful as he had once thought it. He came to the conclusion that 'property is the only power which can act as a counterweight to the State.'[1] It is understandable that Marx, who in his analysis of capitalism made use of Proudhon's idea of theft, later attacked the French writer as an upholder of the interests of the *petite bourgeoisie*. But though Proudhon may have changed his terminology, he had always been on the side of the small producer; and he was a consistent enemy of communist theories.

Revolution, the product of the conflict between opposed forces or factors, obviously has a negative side, in the sense that a revolution negates or destroys or overthrows something. This however is only one aspect of revolution. If revolution negates, it must also affirm. The French revolution asserted the ideals of liberty, fraternity and equality; but on the positive side it was incomplete, a partial failure. It produced a measure of political liberty and equality, but it failed to produce liberty and equality in the economic sphere. 'Society should afterwards have been organized in terms of labour and not in those of politics and war';[2] but this is not what happened. The task of the revolution, to establish 'an egalitarian industrial régime',[3] was not fulfilled. And Proudhon's social and economic theorizing is designed to contribute to this fulfilment. For Marx, needless to say, he is a utopian. And one can see why Marx says this. It is however relevant to notice that Proudhon does not believe in permanent solutions to social problems. Industrial democracy, as he puts it, must succeed industrial feudalism.[4] But no blueprint for the organization of society can be absolute and definitive truth. For oppositions of some sort are always latent in human society, and their emergence involves further change.

Property (or 'possession'), duly distributed, safeguards independence and equality. But human society obviously cannot exist without some form or forms of organization. Such organization may be imposed from above, by the authority of the State as represented by the government. But what Proudhon envisages is a transition from political to economic organization, when the economic organization or forms of association are not dictated from above but are produced by agreements or contracts freely made by producers. This is what he calls 'anarchy'. The centralized government State will, he hopes, wither away, its place being taken by a social order arising out of associations freely entered into for economic reasons, such as the demands of production, the needs of consumption and the security of the producers. 'The notion of *anarchy* in politics is just as rational and positive as any other. It means that once industrial functions have taken over from political functions, then business transactions and exchange alone produce the social order.'[1] Writing towards the end of his life Proudhon remarks that he has always had 'a particular horror of regimentation'.[2] In his opinion, freedom can flourish only when associations and federations of associations are based on free contracts, contract being 'the dominant idea in politics'.[3] As he puts it, commutative justice or rule by contract must take the place of the old systems of distributive justice, associated with the rule of law and a centralized governmental régime.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 144.

[2] *General Idea of the Revolution*, p. 125.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Manuel du spéculateur à la Bourse*, 1857, p. 499.

In so far as Proudhon envisages the existence and self-maintenance of a coherent and stable industrial society in the form of a loosely knit system of producers' associations, with contracts instead of laws and industrial companies instead of armies, he can not unfairly be described as a Utopian. For he sees all citizens as cooperating harmoniously, inasmuch as private and collective interests will be identical, and as behaving in the manner which he considers rational. It must be remembered however that Proudhon's great slogan is progress, continual change. He does not claim that any form of social organization is free from all antimonies or tensions and can be considered as the final goal, one which will be fully attained and, when attained, will represent perfection. He is quite ready to admit that 'what we call anarchy and others fraternity'[4] is a more or less mythical symbol, a spur to stimulate men to realize the revolutionary ideal of fraternity which, in Proudhon's opinion, can be realized only through transformation of the intermediary régime consequent on the revolution into an industrial society of the kind which he envisages. He desires a more just society; but just as humanity itself changes and develops, so is the ideal of justice 'changing all the time'.[5] 'We cannot see beyond the antithesis which is suggested to us by the present.'[6] Proudhon's utopianism and his idea of laws of social change are balanced by a conviction that there are no absolutes and that we cannot make infallible judgments about the future.

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[1] *The Federal Principle*, p. 278.

[2] *Theory of Property*, p. 28.

[3] *The Federal Principle*, p. 315.

[4] *Correspondence*, IV, p. 157.

[5] *Justice*, I, p. 233.

[6] *Correspondence*, IV, p. 158.

Whatever we may think about the viability of the kind of industrial society envisaged by Proudhon, some of his ideas are clearly sensible enough. For example, his proposals about the education of workers, to overcome the sharp division between the literate and illiterate classes and to facilitate the profitable use of leisure, and about apprentices being taught a variety of skills in order to diminish the monotony of the slavish repetition of one particular task were not without point. Nor indeed were his ideas about a credit system and a People's Bank. As for influence, during his last years at Paris he had a considerable following among the workers; and in 1871 a large section of the Paris Commune consisted of Proudhonians. Subsequently Marxist communism came to the fore; but Proudhon's ideas, or some of them at any rate, continued to exercise an influence on the minds of a number of French socialists and syndicalists. Further, through Michael Bakunin (1814–1876) Proudhon can be said to have influenced the anarchist movement.

5. Obviously, if we were to take Proudhon's plans for a People's Bank and Fourier's proposals about the establishment of phalanxes by themselves, they would not justify our describing these two thinkers as philosophers. Both men however had general theories about history and historical progress, even if Proudhon's ideas were vaguer than Fourier's.[1] It may well be true that it is possible to consider Fourier's concrete proposals without reference to his theory of the stages through which mankind must pass. But the theory is there; and if we interpret the word 'philosophy' in a broad sense, Fourier can be said to have outlined a philosophical anthropology and a philosophy of history. As for Proudhon, his denial of any absolutes presumably counts as a philosophical theory. To be sure, both fall short of the standards of preciseness and close argument which philosophers might be expected to aim at. The point is however that to classify them simply as sociologists or as political scientists or as economists would be somewhat misleading. In other words, it does not seem altogether unreasonable to include mention of them in a history of philosophy,

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[1] If we consider Proudhon's writings as a whole, it seems that he sometimes implies the inevitability of historical progress, while at other times he says pretty clearly that it is not inevitable. But it is arguable that it is a case not so much of inconsistency as of his changing his mind and of coming to emphasize man's freedom to solve his social problems when he understands them.

not at any rate if we are prepared to include political and social theory as part of philosophy.

It must be admitted however that Saint-Simon's theory of historical and social change is more impressive than Fourier's, not to speak of Proudhon's. Further, as writers on early French socialism have noted,[1] his view of the way in which society should be changed is connected with his conception of the law-governed movement of history. In other words, of the three writers Saint-Simon gives the most coherent and developed general view of the pattern of historical and social change. And we naturally think of him as a predecessor of Auguste Comte and Karl Marx.

Mention has been made more than once of the fact that Marx and Engels describe the early French socialists as utopians. The word 'utopian' naturally suggests the idea of an unrealistic or unpractical reformer, someone who proposes as a solution for man's social and political problems some ideal state of affairs which seems to us an impracticable and perhaps fantastic solution. In this sense the word may well apply to Fourier and Proudhon, but it might obviously be applied also to Marx himself, even if Marx was much less inclined than Fourier to provide any detailed account of the future utopia. Though however this sort of meaning may have been part of the meaning which Marx and Engels attached to the word, it was not the element on which they laid the most emphasis. When they described the French socialists as utopians, what they had primarily in mind was the French writers' failure to understand the nature of class-antagonism and the irreconcilable nature of class-interests. Though the early socialists certainly believed that the ideals which had found expression in the French revolution had only been partially and very imperfectly realized and that a further transformation of society was required, they tended to think that this transformation could be brought about in a peaceful manner, by men coming to understand the problems and needs of society and the appropriate way of solving the problems and meeting the needs. Marx and Engels however were convinced that the desired transformation of society could be achieved only by revolution, by, that is to say, a class-war in which the proletariat, led by the enlightened, would seize power. In their view it was simply an expression of 'utopianism' if anyone thought that the interests of the ruling class or classes and those of the exploited could be peacefully reconciled through a spread of knowledge or understanding. For the interest of the dominant class was precisely the preservation of the actual state of affairs, whereas it was in the interest of the exploited class that the actual state of affairs should be radically changed. To call for a transformation of society while failing to see that it could be achieved only through a proletarian revolution was unrealistic and utopian.

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[1] See, for example J. Plamenatz's *Man and Society*, Vol. 2, p. 42.

For the proletarian revolution envisaged by Marx and Engels to take place it was a pre-requisite that there should be men who understood the movement of history and who could turn the exploited class into a self-conscious united whole, a class not only 'in itself' but also 'for itself'. They thus had a considerable respect for Saint-Simon, not only because he conceived of history as law-governed (Fourier too had this concept) but also because in his case there was a much closer connection than in the case of Fourier between his theory of history and his idea of the desirable transformation of society. Moreover Saint-Simon, with his notion of social physiology, could be said to have expounded a 'materialist' interpretation of man. At the same time, if we bear in mind the role attributed by Saint-Simon to captains of industry in the transformation of society, it is clear that he too would be guilty of utopianism in the eyes of Marx and Engels. For though captains of industry might agree to changes within the existing social framework, it would not be in their interest to contribute to the radical transformation which was required.

In view of the great historical importance of Marxism it is natural enough to think of the early French socialists in terms of their relations to Marx and Engels. But though this approach is easily understandable, it is a rather one-sided approach if we insist on looking at them simply as predecessors of Marx. In any case they realized clearly enough that while the revolution had destroyed the old régime, it had failed to bring peace and harmony between individuals, groups and nations. So of course did the Traditionalists. But whereas the Traditionalists adopted a negative attitude towards the Enlightenment and the revolution, the socialists looked for a prolongation and more satisfactory application of the ideals which inspired these movements. Obviously, if we assume with Saint-Simon that the course of history is governed by laws, in a sense at any rate which makes historical progress inevitable and social changes predictable in principle, even if in fact only very wide or vague predictions are feasible, there arises the problem of harmonizing this view of history with the emphasis on the role of human initiative and action which we would expect to find in the writings of any social reformer. But this is a problem which arises in the case of Marx and Engels as well. If we consider simply the French socialists' ideas of desirable changes, it is clear that they disliked the idea of the centralized bureaucratic State. It is true that Saint-Simon saw the need for economic planning; but he envisaged the transformation of 'government' into managerial 'administration' and in this sense can be said to have anticipated the doctrine of the withering away of the State. As for Fourier and Proudhon, it is clear that they both mistrusted and disliked the increasing power of the State, the centralized political authority. In actual fact of course control by State bureaucracy has vastly increased in modern society. And it is ironic that it should be such a conspicuous feature of Soviet communism. In spite however of the rather fantastic ideas of Fourier and Proudhon, we can see in the French socialists a respect for the individual and a marked dislike of violence. Marx of course thought that they were over-optimistic in their conviction that radical changes could be brought about without revolutionary violence. But it is an optimism with which many people would sympathize, irrespective of the concrete proposals made by the French writers.

CHAPTER V

AUGUSTE COMTE

Life and writings—The three stages in human development—The classification and methodology of the sciences—Tasks of the philosopher in the positive area—The science of man; social statics and social dynamics—The Great Being and the religion of humanity.

1. THE impact of the development of natural science on philosophy was felt in the seventeenth century and became more marked in the eighteenth. As we have seen, in the eighteenth century the call was raised, as by Hume in England and by some of the French philosophers, for an extension of the 'experimental' method to the study of man, his conduct and his social life, while in the last decades of the century Kant maintained that reflection on the contrast between the solid and increasing knowledge achieved in the scientific area on the one hand and the conflicting systems of metaphysics on the other led inevitably to a radical questioning of the claim of traditional metaphysics to provide anything which could properly be described as knowledge of reality. It was of course possible for science to coexist with theological beliefs and with metaphysical speculation, as it did in the mind of Newton. But with the growth of a stronger sense of historical development it was natural enough that the idea of successive stages in human thought should be proposed, the idea, that is to say, of a progressive development in which theological beliefs and metaphysical speculation are succeeded by scientific explanation and positive knowledge. This sort of idea had been proposed by Turgot and Condorcet in the eighteenth century; and in the last chapter attention was drawn to Saint-Simon's theory of historical stages or epochs. It is however with the name of Auguste Comte (1798–1857), the foremost exponent and representative of classical positivism[1] that the theory of the human mind's development from a theological through a metaphysical phase to that of positive scientific knowledge has become traditionally associated.

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[1] 'Classical' in distinction from the neo-positivism or logical positivism of the twentieth century.

Born at Montpellier, Comte was brought up as a Catholic and a royalist. At the age of fourteen however he declared that he was no longer a Catholic, and it seems that at the same age he became a republican. From 1814 until 1816 he was a pupil at the École Polytechnique, where he studied under the guidance of leading scientists. It was doubtless during this period that he formed the conviction that society should be organized by a scientific élite.

In 1816 Comte was expelled from the École Polytechnique which had been given a royalist reorientation. He remained in Paris however and continued his studies, which included the thought of the ideologists, such as Destutt de Tracy and Cabanis, and the writings both of political economists and of historians such as Hume and Condorcet. Then in the summer of 1817 he became secretary to Saint-Simon. The association between the two men lasted for seven years; and while the extent of Comte's debt to Saint-Simon is a matter of dispute, there can be no doubt of the important part played by their collaboration in the formation and development of Comte's thought. It is clear that Saint-Simon was the first to propose certain ideas which reappeared in Comte's philosophy. At the same time Comte developed these ideas in his own way. For example, while Saint-Simon tended to think in terms of one overall scientific method and of the application of this method in the development of a new science of man, Comte regarded each science as developing its own method in the historical process of its emergence and advance.[1] Both men however looked for a reorganization of society with the aid of a new science of human behaviour and of man's social relations.

An acrimonious quarrel, leading to the severance of relations, arose between the two men, when Comte came to the conclusion that he had good reasons for believing that Saint-Simon intended to publish a paper by Comte as the concluding part of a work of his own and without proper acknowledgement on the title-page. In 1826 Comte began lecturing on his positivist philosophy to a private audience. The course of lectures was however interrupted by a breakdown induced by overwork and by the strain consequent on an unfortunate marriage. Indeed, Comte made an unsuccessful attempt at suicide. In 1829 Comte was able to resume the course, and the lectures formed the basis of his *Course of Positive Philosophy* (*Cours de philosophie positive*, six volumes, 1830–42). The basis had already been provided by a *Plan of the Scientific*

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[1] For the necessary qualifications to this statement see pp. 85–6.

Researches Necessary for Reorganizing Society,[1] which he wrote in 1822. The title of this sketch or outline of the positive philosophy gives clear expression to Comte's basic social concern.

In the *Discourse on the Positivist Outlook* (*Discours sur l'esprit positif*, 1844) and the *Discourse on Postitivism as a Whole* (*Discours sur l'ensemble du positivisme*, 1848) Comte's idea of the religion of humanity made its appearance. Some biographers see in this development the influence of Comte's religious upbringing, with the difference that Humanity is substituted for God as the object of devotion. Others however have seen it, perhaps rather fancifully, as an extension to the human race of the philosopher's attachment to Madame Clothilde de Vaux, whose husband had disappeared to avoid a prosecution for embezzlement and with whom Comte fell in love in 1844.[2]

Comte never occupied a university chair, and for some time he had to support himself by doing tutorial work for students of the École Polytechnique. In 1851–4 he published his four-volume *System of Positive Policy* (*Système de politique positive*) and in 1852 his *Positivist Catechism* (*Catéchisme positiviste*). In this period he was trying to bring together the scientific and religious aspects of his thought. In 1856 he produced the first volume of a *Synthesis or Universal System of Concepts Proper to the Normal State of Humanity* (*Synthèse subjective ou système universal des conceptions propres à l'état normal de l'humanité*). But this attempt at a synthesis of all the sciences in terms of their relations to normal human needs was brought to an end by Comte's death in 1867. He had been living mainly on funds provided by his own devoted followers.

2. In a preface to his *Course of Positive Philosophy* Comte remarks that the expression 'positive philosophy' is constantly used in his lectures 'in a rigorously invariable sense',[3] and that it is therefore superfluous to give a definition other than that contained in his uniform use of the term. He goes on however to explain that by 'philosophy' he understands what the ancients, and in particular Aristotle, understood by the word, namely 'the general system

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[1] This *Plan des travaux scientifiques nécessaires pour réorganiser la société* is included in *Opuscules de philosophie sociale*, 1819–28, published in 1883.

[2] It is clear enough from what Comte himself says that his love for Madame de Vaux influenced his idea of the religion of humanity. But it does not necessarily follow that Humanity, as an object of devotion, is simply Madame de Vaux writ large. Though rejecting traditional theological beliefs, Comte admired the so-called Age of Faith, and he wished to give humanism a religious dimension.

[3] *Cours de philosophie positive* (second edition, Paris, 1864), 1, p. 5. This edition will be referred to in footnotes as C.P.P.

of human concepts',[1] while by 'positive' he understands the idea of theories as having for their aim 'the coordination of observed facts'.[2] Comte's statement, however, if taken by itself, is somewhat misleading. For in his view it is the sciences which subsume phenomena or observed facts under general laws which are descriptive and not explanatory, while philosophy examines the nature of scientific methods and effects a systematic synthesis of the various particular sciences. But his statement can stand if we take it as meaning that philosophy coordinates observed facts indirectly, inasmuch as it aims at a general synthesis of the partial coordinations achieved in the sciences.

Positive knowledge is restricted by Comte to knowledge of observed facts or phenomena and to the coordinating and descriptive laws of phenomena. Use of the word 'phenomena' does indeed express Comte's conviction that we know reality only as appearing to us, but it should not be taken to imply that for him the human mind knows only subjective impressions. On occasion he refers to Hume with respect; but Humean scepticism is really foreign to Comte's mind, except in regard to theological beliefs and to the claims of metaphysics to provide us with knowledge of what transcends the phenomenal level. He stands closer to his eighteenth-century French predecessors than to Humean empiricism. That is to say, Comte insists that genuine philosophy takes the form of a systematic extension of the use of what d'Holbach described as 'good sense' or 'natural ideas'.[3] And for him this means that only what can stand up to empirical testing can count as knowledge. The formulation of general laws enables us to predict, and so to test. That this is the way to attain real knowledge is for Comte a matter of common sense or 'popular good sense'.[4] It is this good sense which dismisses 'absurd metaphysical doubts'[5] about ,say, the existence of physical objects external to the mind. Comte has little patience with speculations of this kind. His 'positive philosophy' is not a sceptical philosophy in the sense of suggesting that our knowledge is confined to sense-data.

The positive spirit or outlook presupposes of course the birth and advance of the natural sciences and is the result of an historical development of the human mind. In Comte's view this process depends on man's nature and is thus necessary. In its historical development through the centuries the human mind passes through three main stages or phases, the theological, the metaphysical and the positive. These three stages in the intellectual development of mankind have their analogues however in the life of the individual man as he passes from infancy through adolescence to manhood. 'When contemplating his own history does not each of us recollect that he has been successively . . . *theologian* in his infancy, *metaphysician* in his youth, and *physicist* in his maturity?'[1] Unless he dies prematurely, the individual normally passes from infancy to maturity by way of adolescence. And these three phases are reflected in the intellectual development of mankind as a whole. If the race continues to exist, the phases or stages of mental growth succeed one another in a certain pattern because man is what he is. In this sense it is necessary, hypothetically necessary, we might say.

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[1] *Ibid.*, [2] *Ibid.*,

[3] D'Holbach's work *Le bon sens, ou idées naturelles opposées aux idées surnaturelles* appeared in 1772 at Amsterdam.

[4] See Comte's *Discours sur l'esprit positif*, section 34. [5] *Ibid.*, section 10.

It is indeed obvious enough that unless a person dies or unless some factor intervenes to prevent the natural course of development, the individual passes from infancy through adolescence to adulthood. But though Comte may have seen himself as a theologian in infancy and a metaphysician in adolescence, it is by no means everyone who would interpret his or her mental development in this way. Comte's theory of stages becomes much more plausible when applied to the general intellectual development of mankind. Indeed, it is clear that reflection on human history is the chief influence which leads Comte to formulate his theory,[2] even if he goes on to connect the stages with phases in the life of the individual and to see these phases writ large in history. In any case consideration of Comte's account of the three main stages in the history of mankind is a simple way of approaching his positivist philosophy.

The first stage, the theological, is understood by Comte as being that phase of man's mental development in which he seeks the ultimate causes of events and finds them in the wills of personal, superhuman beings or in the will of one such being. It is, in general, the age of the gods or of God. Subdivision is however required. In the infancy of the race man instinctively tried to explain phenomena, the real causes of which were unknown, by ascribing to objects passions and affects analogous to those of human beings. In other words, man endowed physical objects with life, passions and will, in a vague manner. This animistic mentality represented what Comte describes as the stage of fetishism. In the course of time however the animating forces immanent in objects were projected externally in the form of the gods and goddesses of polytheism. Later on the deities of polytheistic religion were fused in the concept of the one God of monotheism. These three successive sub-stages of fetishism, polytheism and monotheism constitute together the theological stage.

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[1] *CPP*, I, p. 11.

[2] It is not intended to imply that the theory was brand new. Attention has already been drawn to Comte's predecessors.

The second general stage is described by Comte as the metaphysical stage. The description however is apt to give rise to misunderstanding. For what Comte has in mind is the transformation of personal deities or of God into metaphysical abstractions, not, for instance, the theistic metaphysics of medieval thinkers such as Aquinas or, later, of Bishop Berkeley. In the metaphysical stage, that is to say, instead of explaining phenomena in terms of the activity of a divine will the mind has recourse to such fictional ideas as ether, vital principles, and so on. The transition from the theological to the metaphysical stage takes place when the concept of a supernatural and personal Deity is succeeded by the concept of all-inclusive Nature and when explanations are sought in terms of abstract entities of one kind or another, such as force, attraction and repulsion.[1]

The third stage is the positive stage, namely that of the mature scientific outlook or mentality. Here there is no attempt to find ultimate explanatory causes or to discuss the 'real' but unobservable inner essence of things. The mind concerns itself with phenomena or observed facts, which it subsumes under general descriptive laws, such as the law of gravitation. These coordinating descriptive laws make prediction possible. Indeed, the mark of real positive knowledge is precisely the ability to predict and so, within limits, to control. Positive knowledge is real, certain and useful.

Though however Comte describes positive knowledge as certain, he also insists that it is in a sense relative. For we do not know the whole universe. We know it only as appearing to us. Positive knowledge is knowledge of our world, and the extent of our world, the world as appearing to us, is not something fixed and determined once and for all. Positive knowledge is also relative in the sense that the search for absolutes is abandoned. Even if there are ultimate causes, we cannot know them. What we know are phenomena. Hence the mind which appreciates the nature and function of positive knowledge will not waste time in profitless theological and metaphysical speculation.

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[1] In his *De Motu* Berkeley attacked the idea that there are realities or entities corresponding to abstract terms such as 'attraction', 'force' or 'gravity'. The terms, Berkeley maintained, had their uses as 'mathematical hypotheses'; but it was a mistake to think that they stood for corresponding abstract entities. The view which Berkeley attacked is a good example of what Comte meant by metaphysics, when he spoke of the metaphysical stage in the development of human thought.

The theory of the three stages as just summarized may seem to have little connection with a concern for the reorganization of society. In point of fact however each stage is associated by Comte with a distinct form of social organization. The theological stage is associated with belief in absolute authority and the divine right of kings and with a militaristic social order. That is to say, social order is maintained by the imposition of authority from above, and the warrior class is pre-eminent. In the metaphysical stage the former régime is subjected to radical criticism; belief in abstract rights and in popular sovereignty comes to the fore; and royal and priestly authority is replaced by the reign of law. Finally, the positive stage is associated with the development of industrial society. Man's economic life becomes the centre of attention; and there arises a scientific élite, whose vocation it is to organize and regulate industrial society in a rational manner. This type of society is regarded by Comte, as by some contemporaries, as naturally peaceful.[1] But for its proper development a new science is required, namely sociology. Natural science enables man to control, within limits, his physical environment. The science of man will enable him to organize a peaceful industrial society. The emergence of the positive spirit or mentality will thus be accompanied by a reorganization of society.

For Comte the ancient world and the Middle Ages represented the theological outlook or mentality, while the Enlightenment represented the metaphysical stage. In his own world he saw the beginning of the positive stage. Further, just as he regarded adolescence as a period of transition between childhood and maturity, so did he look on the metaphysical stage as a period of transition in which the beliefs and institutions of the theological stage were subjected to criticism and the way was being prepared for the development of the positive mentality.

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[1] The idea that industrial society would be a peace-loving society was not confirmed to French socialists. In the second half of the nineteenth century Herbert Spencer defended the same point of view.

If we confine ourselves to sweeping impressions, Comte's theory of the three stages can obviously appear plausible. That is to say, if we consider simply the dominant position of theology among the subjects studied in the Middle Ages, certain aspects of thought in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and the subsequent development of a conviction that science is the only reliable way of increasing our knowledge of the world, it may seem perfectly reasonable to divide up European history into the theological, metaphysical and positive stages. When however we begin to look at European history in more detail, it at once becomes clear that if Comte's divisions are pressed in a rigid way, they cannot accommodate the facts. For instance, philosophy flourished in ancient Greece; and mathematics too underwent development. Again, natural science had made striking progress long before the end of what Comte describes as the metaphysical period.

It is hardly necessary to say that Comte is aware of such facts. And he does his best to accommodate them within his general scheme. For example, he recognizes that in the Middle Ages theology was accompanied by metaphysics, but he regards this metaphysics as tailored to the theological mentality and as really forming part of it. Again, Comte does not claim that science began only with the positive stage. He is perfectly well aware that mathematics was cultivated by the Greeks. But he maintains that in the development of science there was a progression from the most abstract science, mathematics, to the most concrete science, sociology, which is the peculiar contribution of the positive stage. As for physics, it certainly started to develop well before the positive stage; but at one time it expressed the metaphysical mentality by postulating abstract entities as explanatory causes. It is only with the beginning of the positive stage that the real nature of physical science and of its concepts and laws comes to be understood.

Comte is therefore quite prepared to recognize a measure of overlapping between the stages. 'Thus we shall have to regard, for example, the theological epoch as still existing to the extent in which moral and political ideas have retained an essentially theological character, despite the transition of other intellectual categories to the purely metaphysical stage, and even when the genuinely positive stage has already begun in regard to the simplest of such categories. Similarly, it will be necessary to prolong the metaphysical epoch, properly speaking, into the beginning of positivism. . . . By this manner of procedure, the essential aspect of each epoch will remain as pronounced as possible, while the spontaneous preparation of the following epoch is clearly brought out.'[1] In the case of a given individual, psychological features belonging to an earlier stage of growth may persist in the grown man and co-exist with features characteristic of maturity. Analogously, expressions of the mentality of a previous historical epoch may be discernible at a later stage. 'Even in our days what in reality, for a positive mind, is this cloudy pantheism in which so many profound metaphysicians, especially in Germany, take such pride but fetishism generalized and systematized?'[2]

Some of Comte's remarks, taken by themselves, are sensible enough. But the overall impression is that of a man intent on fitting facts into a general interpretative scheme, based on a certain initial vision of European history. Comte is of course perfectly entitled to approach European history with a general framework of interpretation and see how the facts fit it. But the more the adjustments which he has to make, so much the more fluid does the division into stages or epochs become. Further, if the succession of stages is understood as representing progress, in the intellectual and social spheres, a judgment of value or a set of value-judgments is clearly presupposed. In other words, Comte reads European history from the point of a view of a convinced positivist. This is not indeed a crime. But the result is not simply a neutral description, but rather a reconstruction from a certain point of view. In other words, the truth of positivism seems to be a presupposition of Comte's interpretation of history. He was not prepared to consider the possibility of a post-positivist stage of intellectual development. To be sure, Comte tried to support his theory of historical stages by a psychological account of the unfolding of man's mental life in the process of growth towards maturity. But it seems pretty clear that this account too presupposes the truth of positivism, in the sense that it is governed by the assumption that the mature mind and the scientific mentality as Comte understands it are one and the same thing.

Before we turn to Comte's classification of the sciences, we can note two points. The first relates to religious belief. The natural way of understanding Comte is to interpret him as maintaining that just as man sheds belief in elves and fairies when he understands that there is no good reason for thinking that there are such beings, so does he progressively shed belief in a transcendent God, not because God's non-existence has been demonstrated, but because there is no positive reason for believing that there is a transcendent God. In other words, the spread of atheism is a feature of the mind's advance into maturity, not the result of a philosophical proof of God's non-existence. Though however this is a natural way of interpreting Comte's theory of the three stages, what he actually insists on as being progressively shed by the wayside is recourse to God as an hypothesis to explain phenomena. That is to say, the more man comes to look for scientific 'explanations' of events, the less does he seek a supernatural explanation. And when the mature mind is ignorant of the scientific explanation of an event, it expects one and looks for it, instead of having recourse to God to fill a gap. At the same time Comte does not assert atheism. In his opinion, theism and atheism are concerned with problems which cannot be solved. For no empirical test is possible. There may be an ultimate cause or ultimate causes. But whether this is the case or not, we do not and cannot know.

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[1] *CPP*, V, p. 24.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

The second point relates to the way in which Comte correlates three main types of social organization with the three main stages of man's intellectual development. He is perfectly ready to admit that man's intellectual advance can outrun his social progress, and that the positivist spirit, for example, can make its appearance before the corresponding form of social organization has developed. Apart from any other consideration, Comte's insistence on the need for social planning by a scientific élite compels him to recognize the fact that mental advance can outrun social progress. At the same time he wishes to preserve the idea of the correlation of two aspects, cognitive and social, of one historical movement. He therefore insists that even when man's intellectual progress outruns his social progress, we can none the less discern the preparatory stages of the emergence of a new form of social organization. Further, once the transition to a properly organized industrial society has taken place, this will strengthen and consolidate the positivist outlook.

3. Progress in knowledge is for Comte progress in scientific knowledge. Science however takes the form of the particular

sciences. They are all concerned with the coordination of phenomena, but they treat either of different classes of phenomena or of different aspects of things, having, as the Scholastics would say, different 'formal objects'. Further, they have their 'characteristic procedures'[1] or methods. There is thus a certain fragmentation of science. And it is one of the philosopher's main tasks to achieve a synthesis, not by obliterating differences by means of a systematic classification.

If such a classification is to be made, the first requirement is to ascertain the basic or fundamental sciences. To do so, we ought to consider 'only scientific theories and in no way their application'[2]. That is to say, the use made of scientific theory in the field of technology should be left out of account. Further, attention should be paid to the more general or abstract sciences rather than to those which really constitute branches or particular applications of the former. For example, the general laws of physics belong to abstract physics, whereas study of the earth in particular is a concrete science and involves consideration of factors other than the abstract laws of physics. Similarly, it pertains to abstract science to formulate the general laws of life, whereas a science such as botany is concerned with a particular kind or level of life.

In his *Course of Positive Philosophy* Comte discovers six basic sciences, namely mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, physiology and biology, and social physics or sociology. It will be noted that psychology does not appear in the list. The explanation is that on the one hand Comte rejects introspective psychology, while on the other he is writing before the period in which empirical psychology underwent real development. Psychology as he understands it is therefore divided between physiology and sociology. In assigning to physiology, or biology, the study of man as an individual Comte is walking in the footsteps of Condillac and Cabanis. The study of human nature and behaviour as social phenomena is assigned to social physiology, as Saint-Simon called it, or sociology.

In later writings Comte found room for ethics as an additional science. Ethics however meant for him not a normative science concerned with determining values and moral rules but rather social psychology, a study of man's overt social behaviour with a view to the formulation of laws enabling us to predict and to pursue social planning.

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[1] *CPP*, I, p. 83. For example, chemistry lays stress on experiment, whereas astronomy relies more on observation. It is not possible to remove a heavenly body in order to discover the effect of this action.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

For the purpose of systematic classification, Comte insists, we should start with what is simplest and most general or abstract and proceed according to the logical order of dependence to the more complex and less general. Mathematics, for example, is more abstract than astronomy; and astronomy depends on mathematics in the sense that the former presupposes the latter. Similarly, physiology or biology, dealing with the general laws of life, is more abstract than sociology which treats specifically of man in society. If we proceed on these lines, we end with the hierarchy of basic sciences mentioned above, arranged in an order in which the mind starts with what is most abstract and most removed from specifically human phenomena, with mathematics that is to say, and ends with sociology, which is concerned with such phenomena to a greater degree than any of the other sciences.

Mention has already been made of the fact that whereas Saint-Simon tended to think in terms of one overall scientific method, Comte regarded each science as developing its own method. This statement however stands in need of qualification. If we have in mind Comte's use of the word 'method', he recognizes only one scientific method. 'For every *science* consists in the coordination of facts; if the different observations were entirely isolated, there would be no science.'[1] If therefore we mean by method the observation of facts or phenomena and their coordination through the formulation of laws, there is one method common to all the sciences. If however we have in mind what Comte calls 'procedures', it is true to say, in his view, that in the process of its development each science perfects its own procedure or technique, its own way of coping with the data. There are indeed procedures which are not restricted to any one particular science. The use of hypothesis, deduction and testing is a case in point. At the same time experiment plays a role in, say, chemistry which it cannot play in astronomy, while in sociology use has to be made of an historical approach.

A further qualification is required to the statement that Comte recognizes a plurality of methods. When classifying the basic sciences, Comte insists on a logical order being followed, each successive science in the hierarchy logically presupposing its predecessor. At the same time he is convinced that 'one does not know a science completely as long as one does not know its history'.[1] A science, that is to say, reveals its real nature in proportion as it is developed or perfected rather than in its origins[2]. For example, mathematics has as its original data phenomena considered under their quantitative aspects, and it sets out to determine the relations between given quantities. But in its development mathematics becomes progressively more abstract until it is 'completely independent of the nature of the objects examined and bears only on the numerical relations which they present'.[3] As it becomes 'purely logical, rational',[4] consisting of 'a more or less prolonged series of rational deductions',[5] it is transformed into what Comte describes as the science of the calculus. And in this form it constitutes 'the true rational basis of the entire system of our positive knowledge'.[6] In this purely abstract form mathematics enables us to coordinate phenomena in other sciences in a way which would not otherwise be possible. It is true of course that we cannot convert biology, for example, into pure mathematics. But biology becomes a real science in proportion as the relations between biological phenomena are mathematically determined.

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[1] *CPP*, I, p. 99.

Further, in its developed or perfected state mathematics is a purely deductive science and Comte regards it as the model of scientific method.[7] Physics, for instance, grows in perfection in proportion as the deductive method preponderates. If therefore we look at the sciences from this particular point of view, we might say that there is one model scientific method, exemplified at its purest in mathematics. Comte does not claim however that every basic science can be transformed into a purely deductive science. The further we move away from pure mathematics in the hierarchy of the sciences, the less possible does such a transformation become. For one thing, the phenomena become even more complex. In practice therefore each science, as it advances, develops its own 'procedure', though it makes use, when possible, of mathematics with a view to obtaining greater precision. Sociology cannot be simply converted into mathematics. Nor can it proceed purely deductively. But it will make use of mathematics when it can.

4. We have noted that for Comte one of the main functions of

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 65. [2] This is evidently an Aristotelian point of view.

[3] *CPP*, I, p. 103. Comte tries to combine his view that all science is concerned with phenomena with a recognition of the abstract nature of mathematics.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 104. [5] *Ibid.* [6] *Ibid.*, p. 109. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

philosophy is to achieve a unification or synthesis of the sciences. Part of this task is fulfilled in the systematic classification of the sciences treated of in the last section. But Comte also speaks of a doctrinal synthesis or of a unification of scientific knowledge. And the question arises, how is this doctrinal synthesis to be understood?

The aim of a science is to coordinate phenomena of a given type through the formulation of descriptive laws, such as the law of gravitation in Newtonian physics. At first sight therefore it may seem to follow that the aim of philosophy in the positive stage of its development must be to coordinate *all* phenomena in terms of one single law. That is to say, it may seem to follow that positive philosophy should aim at exhibiting the most general laws of the particular sciences as derivable from or as presupposing one all-embracing law. Comte however explicitly rejects this concept of the function of philosophy. 'According to my profound personal conviction I consider these attempts to achieve the universal explanation of all phenomena by one unique law as eminently chimerical, even when they are made by the most competent minds. I believe that the means at the disposal of the human mind are too feeble and the universe too complex for such a scientific perfection to be ever open to us. . . .'[1] We can unify the sciences in the sense that we can find a method which lies at the basis of their different procedures; but we cannot achieve a doctrinal unification in the sense just mentioned.

This means in effect that we cannot achieve a doctrinal synthesis by following an 'objective' method, by extending the process of coordinating phenomena, which is common to all the sciences, to the point of reducing all laws to one law. We can however achieve a doctrinal synthesis by means of a 'subjective' method, by viewing the sciences, that is to say, in their relations to humanity, to the needs of man as a social being. This means that the synthesizing principle must be looked for in sociology. Once the science of man has arisen, we can look back and see the development of science as a progress from consideration of non-human to consideration of human phenomena, as a movement from the external world to man himself. We can then unify the sciences from the point of view of the subject, when the subject is humanity in general rather than the individual subject of epistemology.

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[1] *CPP*, I, p. 44.

Comte is not of course suggesting that sociology should or could absorb all the other sciences. He is suggesting that sociology, having as its subject-matter man in society, offers the organizing principle for the unification of scientific knowledge, namely the idea of humanity and its needs. From the historical point of view sociology was the last science to appear on the scene. Once however sociological theory has been freed from theological beliefs and ethical assumptions and has reached the positive stage of its development, we are entitled to invert, as it were, the historical order and give supremacy to the human or 'subjective' point of view. If objective scientific knowledge was to be attained, the subjective point of view had to be disregarded. But when the basic sciences, sociology included, have been firmly established as scientific disciplines, we can follow the policy of unifying them in terms of their several relations to human needs without impairing their scientific objectivity, whereas at an earlier stage this policy would have been detrimental to the advance of the sciences.

The positive philosophy however does not aim simply at effecting a theoretical unification of the sciences. It has also a practical aim. Comte refers to 'the immense social revolution in the midst of which we are living and to which the totality of preceding revolutions has really contributed only a necessary preliminary.'[1] A reorganization of society is called for. This task cannot however be performed without a knowledge of the laws of society as formulated in sociology. Without knowledge of the laws which coordinate the phenomena of Nature man cannot effectively control or mould his external natural environment. Similarly, without knowledge of the laws relating to man in society we cannot effectively promote and achieve social renovation and progress. It is this social reorganization which is the practical goal of the 'subjective' synthesis of the sciences, their unification in terms of their relations to humanity and its needs.

5. Sociology or social physics is regarded by Comte as presupposing the other basic sciences, as the culmination of the development of science and as the special contribution of the positive stage to man's intellectual advance. It is divided by him into social statics and social dynamics. Social statics studies the general laws of existence common to human societies, the essential conditions, that is to say, of social solidarity. Social dynamics studies the laws of the movement or development of societies, the laws of social

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[1] *CPP*, IV, p. 37.

progress. In Comte's view social statics 'forms the direct link between the final science and the totality of the preliminary sciences, above all biology, from which it appears to be inseparable.'[1] It is itself presupposed by and looks forward to social dynamics, the laws of which are said to apply above all to politics, whereas those of social statics 'belong rather to morals'.[2] Sociology as a whole, comprising, that is to say, both social statics and social dynamics, conceives 'progress as the gradual development of order',[3] while it also 'represents order as manifested by progress'.[4]

Social statics finds the basis of society in man's nature as a social being and shows how in any society there must be both division of labour and coordination of human effort with a view to realizing a common purpose. It also exhibits the necessity and basic nature of government. Social statics is thus primarily concerned with the element of order which is essential to any society; and in this field Aristotle made a notable contribution to thought. Though however order is essential to any society, the result of canonizing a given form of social organization is petrifaction. It was the great fault of utopians such as Plato that they represented one possible form of social organization as the one ideal form of order. Indeed, even 'the most powerful mind of all antiquity, the great Aristotle, was so dominated by his century that he was unable even to conceive a society which was not necessarily founded on slavery. . . .'[5]

The idea of order is thus insufficient. The idea of progress is also required. And this is studied in social dynamics. Comte insists however on the intimate connection between social statics and social dynamics. Order without progress or development results in petrifaction or in decay; but change without order would spell anarchy. We have to see in progress the actualization of the inherent dynamic tendency of social order. 'Progress remains always the simple development of order';[6] and this means that social order assumes successively different forms. Progress is 'oscillatory',[7] in the sense that it covers cases of retardation or even of retrogression as moments in a general movement of advance.

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[1] *Système de politique positive* (1825), II, p. 1. This work will be referred to in footnotes as *Pol.*

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[5] *CPP*, IV, p. 37.

[6] *Pol.*, III, p. 72.

[7] *Ibid.*

We have noted that Comte praises Aristotle's contribution to social statics. In the field of social dynamics he pays tribute to Montesquieu. 'It is to Montesquieu that we must attribute the first great direct effort to treat politics as a science of facts and not of dogmas.'[1] But just as Aristotle had his shortcomings, so had Montesquieu. The latter did not succeed in freeing his thought from metaphysics; he did not properly understand the necessary succession of different political organizations; and he ascribed an exaggerated importance to forms of government. To find a real advance we must turn to Condorcet who was the first to see clearly that 'civilization is subject to a progressive advance, the stages of which are rigorously linked to one another by natural laws which philosophical observation of the past can reveal. . . .'[2] Not even Condorcet however understood properly the natures of the successive stages or epochs. It was Comte himself who contributed this understanding[3].

According to Comte, 'the fundamental characteristic of the positive philosophy is to regard all phenomena as subject to invariable natural *laws*.'[4] The phrase 'all phenomena' includes of course human phenomena. Comte does not claim that the coordination of human phenomena by the formulation of laws has reached the same degree of development in sociology which it has reached in some other sciences. None the less he maintains that the philosopher should regard human phenomena as capable of being subsumed under laws. This means in effect that the successive forms of social-political organization must be correlated with the successive stages of man's intellectual development. As we have seen, Comte's view is that in the theological epoch society was necessarily a military society, organized for conquest, industry being simply such as was required for the maintenance of human life. In the metaphysical stage, which was a period of transition, society was also in a state of transition, 'no longer frankly military, and not yet frankly industrial.'[5] In the positive stage society is organized with a view to production, and it is by nature a peaceful society, aiming at the common good. In fine, the three successive modes of human activity, 'conquest, defence and labour',[6] 'correspond exactly with the three states of intelligence, fiction, abstraction and demonstration. From this basic correlation there results at once the general explanation of the three natural ages of humanity.'[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, IV, p. 106 (of the General Appendix).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

[3] Obviously, Saint-Simon is not accorded due recognition.

[4] *CPP*, I, p. 16.

[5] *Pol.*, IV, p. 112 (of the General Appendix).

[6] *Ibid.*, III, p. 63.

Man is not however simply an intellectual and active being. He is also characterized by feeling. 'In every normal existence affection constantly dominates speculation and action, though their intervention is indispensable for it to be able to undergo and modify external impressions.'[2] Man has, for example, a social instinct or sentiment. In antiquity it was directed to the city (the *polis*), while in the Middle Ages it found expression in corporations of various kinds. In the positive or industrial epoch the social instinct tends, under the influence of the unifying factors of science and industry, to take the form of love of humanity in general. This idea provides Comte with a ground for claiming that the third basic form of social organization is inherently peaceful.

It is hardly necessary to say that just as Comte tries to reconcile his theory of the three stages of man's intellectual development with facts which seem to tell against the theory, so does he attempt to reconcile with his account of the correlated forms of social organization those historical facts which might be cited as evidence against the truth of this account. For example, if evidence is cited to show that even the more highly industrialized nations can indulge in aggressive military action, Comte replies that the process of industrialization begins and develops while ways of thought and feeling characteristic of earlier epochs are still influential. He does not claim that no society in which industrialization is developing ever manifests an aggressive spirit or goes to war. What he claims is that as industrial society grows to maturity, the unification of mankind, promoted by common scientific knowledge and by industrialization, will result, under the guidance of a scientic élite, in a peaceful society in which differences will be settled by rational discussion.

There is of course no reason why Comte should not try to accommodate facts within the framework of an hypothesis, provided that he is ready to revise or even abandon the hypothesis if it proves to be incompatible with the facts. But it is none too clear why an increase in scientific knowledge must lead to the moral improvement of mankind or why an industrial society must be more peaceful than a non-industrialized society. After all, Comte is not simply saying what, in his opinion, *ought* to happen, from an ethical point of view. He is saying what *will* happen, in virtue of the law or laws governing man's development. And it is difficult to avoid the impression that the law of the three stages tends to become for Comte not so much a falsifiable hypothesis as the expression of a faith or of a teleological philosophy of history in the light of which the historical data have to be interpreted.

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[1] *Ibid.*

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

If the historical process is governed by law and the future is predictable, at any rate in principle, the question arises whether any room is left for social planning. What, for example, can a scientific élite do to influence society and the course of history? From one point of view perhaps there is no particular problem. As we have seen, Comte insists that while all science coordinates phenomena by subsuming them under laws, these laws are purely descriptive. If we found that man could produce effects in the physical world which were incompatible with hitherto accepted physical laws, we would obviously revise the laws in question. The laws, as descriptive generalizations, are revisible in principle. Similarly, as far as his professed theory of scientific laws is concerned, Comte could perfectly well maintain that the laws of sociology are subject to falsification and so revisible in principle. A law might be falsified by human action. When however it is a question of the law of the three stages, Comte tends to speak as though it were inviolable, and as though society will develop in the way indicated by this law whatever man may do. The question therefore inevitably arises whether it makes any sense to call for social planning by a scientific élite.

Comte is quite well aware of the need to answer this question. And he argues that there is no incompatibility between the idea of all phenomena being subject to laws and the idea of human planning and control. On the contrary, man's power to modify phenomena of any sort can be exercised only if there is 'a real knowledge of their respective natural laws'.[1] To take an example from the modern world, a knowledge of the relevant physical laws is an essential condition of successful space-exploration. Similarly, a knowledge of the laws of human behaviour is an essential condition of intelligent and effective social planning. According to Comte, social phenomena are more complex than physical phenomena; and this means that the laws formulated in sociology are less precise than physical laws, less amenable than physical laws to mathematical formulation. None the less, the formulation of laws in sociology permits prediction. For social phenomena are 'as susceptible of prediction as all the other kinds of phenomena, within the limits of precision which are compatible with their greater complexity.'[1] And so far from being incompatible with social planning, this predictability is an essential condition of it.

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[1] *CPP*, IV, p. 220.

This may seem sensible enough. But it does not quite answer the question, to what extent can human action affect the course of history? Comte replies by making a distinction. Man cannot change the order of the successive stages of historical development. But human action or inaction can accelerate or retard this development. The emergence of the positive stage of thought and of the correlated form of society is necessary, man being what he is. But the development of industrial society can be accelerated by intelligent planning. For social phenomena are 'by their nature at the same time the most modifiable of all and the ones which have the most need of being usefully modified according to the rational indications of science.'[2] This modifiability of social phenomena permits effective planning; but what can be actually achieved is limited by what is evidently taken to be the working out of an unalterable law. Social development is modifiable 'in its speed, within certain limits, by a number of physical and moral causes. . . . Political combinations belong to the number of these causes. This is the sole sense in which it is given to man to influence the march of his own civilization.'[3] Comte certainly wishes to allow room for human initiative and action. But the space allowed is limited by his interpretation of human history as governed by a law which man can no more alter than he can alter physical laws. And Comte is quite sure that he knows the law governing the development of human history.[4]

6. It was Comte's firm conviction that society should be organized by those who possessed real knowledge. On this matter he agreed with Plato. Comte had little use for democracy, if this is taken to imply that the will of the people, whatever it may happen to be, should prevail. He favoured paternalist government for the common good. Just as in the Middle Ages men were expected

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 226. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 249.

[3] *Pol.*, IV, p. 93 (of the General Appendix).

[4] We find of course an analogous situation in Marxist philosophy. Room is left for revolutionary activity and social planning. But revolutionary activity can only accelerate the coming of what will come in any case.

to accept the teaching of the Church whether or not they understood the doctrines and the reasons for them, so would the citizens of the 'positive polity' be expected to accept the principles laid down by the positivist élite, namely the scientists and positivist philosophers. In Comte's society of the future this élite would control education and form public opinion. It would be in fact the modern equivalent of the medieval spiritual power, while the government, drawn from the managerial class, would be the modern equivalent of the medieval temporal power. In the exercise of its functions the government would (or rather 'will', given the law of the three stages) consult the positivist élite, the high priests of science. Though he thought of the medieval period as succeeded by the metaphysical and then the positivist eras, Comte was by no means a despiser of the Middle Ages. The scientists and positivist philosophers would take the place of the pope and bishops, while members of the managerial class would exercise the functions of medieval monarchs and nobles.

Comte saw of course the French revolution as dissolving an outdated régime which would have been quite unable to meet the needs of the nascent society. But he had scant sympathy with liberal insistence on the alleged natural rights of individuals. The notion that individuals had natural rights independently of, and even against society, was foreign to his mind. In his view this notion was based on a failure to understand the fact that the basic reality is humanity rather than the individual. Man as an individual is an abstraction. And the regeneration of society 'consists above all in substituting duties for rights, in order better to subordinate personality to sociability.'[1] 'The word *right* should be as much erased from the true language of politics as the word *cause* from the true language of philosophy. . . . In other words, nobody possesses any other right than that of always doing his duty. It is only in this way that politics can at last be subordinated to morals, in accordance with the admirable programme of the Middle Ages.'[2] In the positive epoch society will indeed guarantee certain 'rights' to the individual, as this is required for the common good. But these rights do not exist independently of society.

Comte is not of course suggesting that the positive society will be characterized by governmental oppression of individuals. His contention is that as the new society develops, the idea of performing one's duties to society and of serving the interests of humanity will prevail over the concept of society as existing to serve the interests of individuals. In other words, he is confident that the development of industrial society, when properly organized, will be accompanied by a moral regeneration involving the substitution of concern with the welfare of humanity for concern with the individual's private interests. We may well think that he is somewhat over-optimistic. But the trouble is not that he hopes for moral regeneration but rather his confidence that this regeneration will inevitably accompany the development of a society based on science and industry. It is difficult to see why this should be the case.

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[1] *Pol.*, I, p. 361.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 361.

However this may be, the highest form of the moral life consists for Comte in the love and service of humanity. In the positive phase of thought humanity takes the place occupied by God in theological thought; and the object of positivist worship is the 'Great Being' (*le Grand Être*), Humanity with a capital letter. To be sure, humanity does not possess all the attributes once predicated of God. Whereas, for example, the world was conceived as God's creation and as dependent on him, humanity is 'always subject to the totality of the natural order, of which it constitutes only the noblest element'.[1] The Great Being's 'necessary dependence' does not however affect its relative superiority. And Comte works out a religious system based on the Catholicism in which he was brought up. Positivism will have its saints (the great benefactors of mankind), its temples, its statues, its commination of the principal enemies of mankind, its commemoration of the dead, its social sacraments, and so on.

John Stuart Mill, who sympathized with Comte's general positivist attitude, criticized sharply the way in which Comte aspired to subject people to the straitjacket of a dogmatic religion expounded by positivist philosophers.[2] Mill also maintained that Comte's positivist religion had no organic connection with his genuinely philosophical thought but was a superfluous, and indeed repugnant, addition. These two contentions are of course separable. That is to say, we can quite well regard as repugnant what T. H. Huxley described as Comte's Catholicism without Christianity without necessarily subscribing to Mill's view that it had no organic connection with positivism. And this view has in fact been challenged. In spite of what Mill's critics say, there is an important sense in which his contention seems to be fully justified. For the idea that theology and metaphysics have been succeeded by science, which alone gives us genuine and useful knowledge, does not entail the elevation of humanity into an object of religious worship, nor the establishment of an elaborate religious cult. Comte's positivist religion, which influenced a number of his disciples and led to the establishment of a positivist Church,[1] is not a logical consequence of a positivist theory of knowledge. At the same time it is certainly arguable that there is a psychological connection between Comte's positivist philosophy and his religion of humanity. It seems true to say that Comte was at one with the Traditionalists in believing that a moral and religious regeneration of society was required. Believing however that God was a fiction, he had to look elsewhere for an object of devotion. And thinking, as he did, that the basic social reality was humanity rather than separate individuals and that individuals could transcend egoism only by devoting themselves to the service of humanity, it is understandable that in his 'Great Being' he found a substitute for the focus of devotion and worship in the Middle Ages. An emphasis on the service of humanity does not indeed entail the establishment of a religious cult. But Comte evidently thought that in modern society the unifying and elevating function once performed by belief in God could be fulfilled only by a religious devotion to humanity. While therefore Mill is undoubtedly right in maintaining that a positivist theory of knowledge does not entail the religion of humanity, it is relevant to remember that Comte was concerned not only with a theory of knowledge but also with social regeneration, and that his positivist religion, bizarre though it may seem, was for him an integral part of this regeneration.

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[1] *Ibid.*, II, p. 65.

[2] For Mill's views on Auguste Comte see his *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (1865). His own concept of the religion of humanity can be found in *Three Essays on Religion* (1874). Mill's correspondence with Comte has been edited.

A pertinent question however is whether in his talk about the Great Being Comte does not relapse into the metaphysical stage of thought as he conceived it. To be sure, he is ready to admit that the Great Being acts only through individuals. But it seems clear that to be considered as a proper object of worship by individuals humanity has to be hypostatized, to be conceived as a totality which is more than the succession of individual human beings. Indeed, Comte refers to 'one immense and eternal Being, Humanity'.[1] Perhaps such statements should not be taken too seriously. They might be understood as expressing a hope that humanity will not in fact be destroyed by the 'cosmological fatalities'[2] which might extinguish it. At the same time it is clear that humanity as an object of common worship becomes an hypostatized abstraction and thus an example of the metaphysical stage of thought as described by Comte. This aspect of the matter is illustrated by what Comte has to say about immortality. Sometimes he speaks of continued existence 'in the heart and mind of others'[3]; but when he speaks of our nature needing 'to be purified by death'[4] and of man becoming 'an organ of humanity'[5] in the second life, he seems to be regarding humanity as a persistent entity which is irreducible to the succession of human beings living in the world.

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[1] Reference will be made in the next chapter to Comte's followers in France. For a brief mention of his disciples in England see Volume VIII of this *History*, pp. 113 f.

The matter can be put in this way. In the classical positivism of Comte, as distinct from the logical positivism of the twentieth century, the notion of meaninglessness does not function prominently. As we have seen, Comte was anxious to defend positivism against the charge of atheism. He did not assert dogmatically that there was no God. The thesis which he generally adopted was that the idea of God has become more and more of an unverified hypothesis, in proportion, that is to say, as man has substituted scientific for theological explanations of phenomena. At the same time it might be inferred from some of the things which he says that an unverifiable hypothesis would lack any clear meaning. And occasionally this view is explicitly stated. Comte asserts, for example, that 'any proposition which is not ultimately reducible to the simple enunciation of a fact, whether particular or general, would not present (*ne saurait offrir*) any real intelligible sense.'[6] If such utterances were pressed, it would seem difficult to maintain that the concept of the 'Great Being' (Humanity), considered as an object of worship and religious devotion, had any clearly intelligible meaning. For if the Great Being is reducible to phenomena and the relations between them, the religion of humanity becomes an extremely odd affair. Comte's positivist religion requires that the Great Being should be regarded as a reality which is irreducible to a collection of individual men and women. Hence in proposing his religion he seems to slip back into the mentality of the metaphysical, if not the theological stage.[1]

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[1] *The Catechism of Positive Religion*, translated by R. Congreve (3rd edition, 1891), p. 45.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 45. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 55. [4] *Pol.*, IV, p. 35. [5] *Ibid.*, II, p. 60.

[6] *CPP*, VI, p. 600. Comte is here quoting himself from an earlier writing.

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[1] According to Comte, however, it is 'our metaphysicians' who reduce Humanity to individuals, considered in abstraction from the whole.

PART II

FROM AUGUSTE COMTE TO HENRI BERGSON

CHAPTER VI

POSITIVISM IN FRANCE

E. Littré and his criticism of Comte—C. Bernard and the experimental method—E. Renan; positivism and religion—H. Taine and the possibility of metaphysics—E. Durkheim and the development of sociology—L. Lévy-Bruhl and morals.

1. AUGUSTE Comte, the most famous French positivist of the nineteenth century, had his faithful disciples who accepted the master's thought as a whole, including his religion of humanity. Foremost among them was Pierre Lafitte (1825–1903) who became a professor of the Collège de France in 1892 and who was recognized as their leader by the London Positivist Committee which was founded in 1881 with J. H. Bridges (1832–1906) as its president.[1] There were however philosophers who accepted positivism as an epistemological theory but who had little use for it as a religious cult and who regarded Comte's political ideas and his teleological interpretation of human history as constituting a departure from the genuine spirit of positivism. An eminent representative of this line of thought was Émile Littré (1801–1881).

Littré studied medicine for a time[2]; but he is best known for his dictionary of the French language.[3] In 1863 his candidature for election to the French Academy was vehemently opposed by Bishop Dupanloup of Orléans, who was himself a member of the Academy; but in 1871 Littré was at last elected. In the same year he became a deputy, and in 1875 he was made a senator for life. It is with his philosophical thought that we are concerned here.

When Littré came to read Comte's *Course of Positive Philosophy* he had already shed theological beliefs and rejected metaphysics. The *Course* provided him with something positive and definite to hold on to. 'It was in 1840 that I came to know M. Comte. A common friend lent me his system of positive philosophy; M. Comte, on learning that I was reading the book, sent me a copy of it. . . . His book conquered me. . . . I became from then on a disciple of the positive philosophy, and such I have remained, without other changes than those imposed on me by the increasing effort to carry out, in the midst of other obligatory labours, the corrections and enlargements which it allows of.'[1] In 1845 Littré reprinted a number of articles as a book with the title *On the Positive Philosophy* (*De la philosophie positive*).

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[1] The London Committee broke away from the original group of English Comtists, led by Richard Congreve (1818–99). The two groups were later reunited.

[2] His *Dictionnaire de médecine* appeared in 1855.

[3] *Dictionnaire de la langue française* (4 volumes, 1863–72).

In 1852 Littré broke with Comte; but his disagreements with the high priest of positivism did not affect his adherence to the philosophical outlook expounded in the *Course*. And in 1863 he published *Auguste Comte and the Positive Philosophy* (*Auguste Comte et la philosophie positive*) in which he warmly defended what he regarded as the main and valuable ideas of Comte, while also expressing some criticism of points on which he disagreed. Further, in 1864 he wrote a preface[2] for the second edition of Comte's *Course*, while in 1866 he tried to defend Comte against J. S. Mill. In 1873 Littré published *Science from the Philosophical Point of View* (*La science au point de vue philosophique*), which included a number of articles which had appeared in the *Revue de philosophie positive*. In 1879 he brought out a second edition of his *Conservation, Revolution and Positivisme* (*Conservation, révolution et positivisme*) in which he revised some of the ideas expressed in the first edition of the work (1852).

In Littré's opinion, Comte filled a vacuum. On the one hand the mind seeks a general or overall view; and this was just what metaphysics provided. The trouble was however that the metaphysician developed his theories *a priori*, and that these theories lacked a solid empirical basis. On the other hand the particular sciences, while proposing empirically testable hypotheses, inevitably lacked the generality which was characteristic of metaphysics. In other words, the discrediting of metaphysics left a gap which could be filled only by the creation of a new philosophy. And it was Comte who met this need. 'M. Comte is the founder of the positive philosophy.'[3] Saint-Simon did not possess the necessary scientific knowledge. Further, by trying to reduce the forces of nature to one ultimate force, namely gravitation, he relapsed into the metaphysical mentality.[1] Comte however 'has constructed what nobody before him had constructed, the philosophy of the six fundamental sciences'[2] and has exhibited the relations between them. 'By discussing the interconnection of the sciences and their hierarchic system (Comte) discovered at the same time the positive philosophy.'[3] Comte also showed how and why the sciences developed historically in a certain order from mathematics to sociology. Metaphysicians may reproach other philosophers with neglecting consideration of man, the subject of knowledge; but this reproach does not affect Comte, who established the science of man, namely sociology, on a sound basis. Moreover by excluding all 'absolute' questions[4] and by giving philosophy a firm scientific basis, Comte at last made philosophy capable of directing 'minds in research, men in their conduct and societies in their development'[5]. Theology and metaphysics tried to do this; but as they treated of questions which transcended human knowledge, they were necessarily ineffective.

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[1] *Auguste Comte et la philosophie positive*, p. 1 (preface). This work will be referred to in footnotes as *AC*.

[2] It bore the title *Préface d'un disciple*.

[3] *AC*, p. 38.

The positive philosophy, Littré asserts, regards the world as consisting of matter and the forces immanent in matter. 'Beyond these two terms, matter and force, positive science knows nothing.'[6] We do not know either the origin of matter or its essence. The positive philosophy is not concerned with absolutes or with knowledge of things in themselves. It is concerned simply with reality as accessible to human knowledge. If therefore it is claimed that phenomena can be accounted for in terms of matter and its immanent forces, this is not equivalent to a dogmatic materialism, which professes, for example, to tell us what matter is in itself or to 'explain' the development of life or thought. The positive philosophy shows, for instance, how psychology presupposes biology, and biology other sciences; but it steers clear of questions about the ultimate cause of life or about what thought is in itself, apart from our scientific knowledge of it.

Though however Littré is keen on differentiating between positivism and materialism, it is not at all clear that he is successful in this attempt. As mentioned above, he maintains that the positive philosophy recognizes nothing beyond matter and the forces immanent in matter. It is true of course that this thesis is expressed in terms of an assertion about scientific knowledge, and not as an assertion about ultimate reality or about what is 'really real'. At the same time Littré finds fault with J. S. Mill for leaving the existence of a supernatural reality an open question; and he criticizes Herbert Spencer's attempt to reconcile science and religion by means of his doctrine of the Unknowable. Perhaps we can say that two lines of thought are discernible in Littré's mind. On the one hand there is the tendency to insist that the positive philosophy simply abstains from questions relating to realities the existence of which cannot be verified by sense-experience. In this case there is no reason why such questions should not be left open, even if they are considered unanswerable[1]. On the other hand there is a tendency to regard assertions about alleged realities which transcend the sphere of the scientifically verifiable as nonsensical. In this case of course it makes no sense to ask whether or not such realities exist. The questions cannot then be regarded as open questions, and Littré's criticism of Mill becomes understandable.

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[1] Littré minimized Saint-Simon's influence on Comte. And he denied that Comte was ever in a real sense Saint-Simon's disciple.

[2] *AC*, p. 105.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 106.

[4] *AC*, p. 107. Littré is referring to such questions as those about the ultimate origin and end or purpose of things.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

[6] *CPP*, I, p. ix (Préface d'un disciple).

Though however Littré was and remained in substantial agreement with the ideas expressed by Comte in his *Course of Positive Philosophy*, he believed that in later writings Comte had pretty well betrayed the positivist outlook. For example, Littré had no use for the 'subjective method', in which human needs constitute the synthesizing principle,[2] as advocated by Comte in his *System of Positive Polity* and the one completed volume of the *Subjective Synthesis*. By the subjective method Littré understood a process of reasoning which set out from premises asserted *a priori* and arrived at conclusions which were warranted only by their formal logical connections with the premises. In his opinion, this was the method followed in metaphysics; and it had no place in positive philosophy. What Comte did was to introduce a confusion between the subjective method as followed by metaphysicians and the deductive method as developed in the scientific era. The deductive method in the second sense 'is subject to the twofold condition of having experimentally acquired points of departure and experimentally verified conclusions'.[1] By reintroducing the subjective method, which deals with the logical connection between ideas or propositions without any real attention being paid to empirical verification, Comte 'let himself be conquered by the Middle Ages'.[2]

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[1] Bertrand Russell, we may note, maintained, on occasion at any rate, that it was one of the jobs of philosophy to keep alive an awareness of certain important problems which were yet, in his opinion, insoluble.

[2] The needs, that is to say, of social man or the human collectivity rather than of the individual as such.

Among the particular points criticized by Littré are Comte's identification of mathematics with logic and his subordination of the mind to the heart or to the affective aspect of man. It is one thing to emphasize the cooperating role of feeling in human activity, and it is quite another thing to suggest, as Comte does, that the heart should dominate the intelligence or dictate to it. This suggestion, Littré insists, is quite incompatible with the positivist mentality. As for the religion of humanity, to a very limited extent Littré is prepared to agree with Comte on the need for religion, as distinct from theology. 'In my opinion, M. Comte followed a legitimate deduction by investing the positive philosophy of which he is the author with a role equivalent to that of religions.'[3] That is to say, if we mean by religion a general world-view, the positivist conception of the world can be described as a religion. Comte however goes very much further than this. For he postulates a collective being, humanity, and proposes it as an object of cult. Love of humanity is indeed a noble and admirable sentiment; but 'there is no justification for selecting for adoration either humanity or any other fraction of the whole or the great whole itself'.[4] What Comte does in effect is to relapse into the theological mentality. And 'for all this the subjective method is responsible'.[5]

As for ethics or morals, Littré blames Comte for having added morals to the list of sciences as a seventh member. This was a mistake; for 'morals does not at all belong, as do the six sciences, to the objective order'.[6] Rather oddly, Littré goes on to say, practically immediately, that there is need of a science of morals.[7] The apparent contradiction would indeed be eliminated if we were justified in interpreting Littré as finding fault with Comte for thinking that a normative ethics could be a science or have an integral place in positive philosophy and as himself maintaining that a purely descriptive study of ethical phenomena or of man's moral behaviour was needed. And he does indeed speak elsewhere about 'the observation of the phenomena of the moral order as revealed whether by psychology or by history and political economy',[1] as serving as a foundation for the scientific knowledge of human nature. But he also refers to human progress, conceived in positivist terms, as 'the source of profound convictions, obligatory for conscience'.[2]

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[1] *AC*, p. 536.
[2] *AC*, p. 562.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 524.
[4] *Ibid.*, Littré had no use for pantheism.
[5] *AC*, p. 579.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 677.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 677.

We can reasonably conclude that Littré did not work out his ideas on ethics in a clear and consistent manner. It is however evident enough that his general quarrel with Comte's later writings is that they show serious departures from the positivist conviction that the only genuine knowledge of the world or of man is empirically verified knowledge. Or perhaps it might be better to say that in Littré's opinion Comte came to introduce into the positive philosophy ideas which had no legitimate place there and thus created a state of confusion. It was therefore necessary to return to the pure positivism of which Comte himself had been the great expounder.

3. The conviction that experimental science alone is the source of knowledge about the world was shared by the famous French physiologist, Claude Bernard (1813-78), professor of physiology at the Sorbonne and of medicine at the Collège de France. His best known work is his *Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine* (*Introduction à l'étude de la médecine expérimentale*), which he published in 1865. Three years later he was elected to the French Academy; and in 1869 he became a senator.

To include mention of Claude Bernard in a chapter devoted to positivism may seem to be quite inappropriate. For not only did he say that the best philosophical system is not to have one but he also explicitly condemned the positivist philosophy for being a system[3]. He wished to make medicine more scientific; and the better to promote this cause he undertook an investigation into the nature of scientific method. He was not concerned with creating a philosophical system, nor with defending an already existing one. At the same time Bernard insisted that the experimental method was the only one which could yield objective knowledge of reality. He did indeed speak of 'subjective truths' as absolute truths; but he was referring to mathematics, the truths of which are formal, independent, that is to say, of what is the case in the world.

[1] *CPP*, VI, ‘. xxxiv (Préface d'un disciple).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. xlviii.

[3] *Introduction*, p. 387.

By the experimental method Bernard meant the construction and empirical testing of verifiable hypotheses, an objective method which eliminated, as far as possible, the influence of subjective factors such as the desire that X rather than Y should be the case. Theologians and metaphysicians claimed that their unverified ideal constructions represented absolute or definitive truth. Unverifiable hypotheses however do not represent knowledge. Positive knowledge of the world, which is knowledge of the laws of phenomena, can be obtained only through the use of scientific method. And this yields results which are provisional, revisible in principle that is to say.

It is true that Bernard asserts that there is an 'absolute principle of science',[1] the principle of determinism, which states that a given set of conditions (together constituting a 'cause') infallibly produce a certain phenomenon or effect. Bernard's contention however is that this principle is 'absolute' simply in the sense that it is a necessary working assumption of science. The scientist necessarily assumes a regular causal order in the world. The principle is not 'absolute' in the sense of being an *a priori* metaphysical truth or a philosophical dogma. It is not equivalent, Bernard maintains, to fatalism. He does indeed sometimes write as though the principle of determinism were in fact an absolute truth which is known *a priori*. But though a measure of inconsistency may be discernible in his various utterances, his official position, so to speak, is that the determinism in question is methodological, involved, that is to say, in the scientific approach to the world, rather than a philosophical doctrine.

We have seen that Bernard refuses to recognize theology and metaphysics as sources of knowledge about reality. In this matter his attitude is clearly positivistic. At the same time he also refuses to rule out what are sometimes described as ultimate questions on the ground that they are meaningless or that they should not be asked. And though he was not himself a religious believer, he insisted on leaving a place for belief as well as knowledge. The two should not be confused; but belief of some sort is natural to man, and religious belief is quite compatible with scientific integrity, provided that it is recognized that articles of belief are not empirically verified hypotheses. Bernard is therefore critical of Comte's doctrine of the three stages. Theological beliefs and metaphysics cannot legitimately be regarded simply as *past* stages of human thought. There are questions of importance to man which transcend the scope of science, and so the field in which knowledge is possible; but belief in certain answers is legitimate, provided that they are not proposed as assured truths about reality, and that there is no attempt to impose them on others.

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[1] *Introduction*, p. 69.

If therefore the question is raised whether Bernard was or was not a positivist, we have to make a distinction. His idea of what constituted positive knowledge of reality was in line with the ideas of Comte. We can quite well speak of Bernard's positivist outlook. At the same time he rejected positivism as a dogmatic philosophical system, though he had no wish to substitute for it any other philosophical system. To be sure, anyone who writes, as Bernard did, on human knowledge, its scope and limits, is bound to make philosophical statements or statements which have philosophical implications. But Bernard tried to avoid the temptation to expound a philosophy in the name of science. Hence his insistence that his principle of determinism should not be regarded as a philosophical dogma. Again, while he was prepared to speak of the organism which functions in virtue of its physico-chemical elements, he also admitted that the physiologist must look on the living organism as an individual unity, the development of which is directed by a 'creative idea' or 'vital force'[1]. This may sound like a contradiction. But Bernard tried, whether successfully or not, to steer clear of any philosophical assertion either that there is or is not a vital principle in the organism. His point was that though physicists and chemists must describe the organism in physico-chemical terms, the physiologist cannot help recognising the fact that the organism functions as a living unity and not simply as a collection of distinct chemical elements. Bernard tried at any rate to distinguish between thinking of the organism in a certain way and making a metaphysical assertion about entelechies.

4. Joseph Ernest Renan (1823–92) is best known for his *Life of Jesus* (*La vie de Jésus*, 1863). In 1862 he was appointed professor of Hebrew at the Collège de France[2]; and his two main publications were his *History of the Origins of Christianity* (*Histoire des origines du christianisme*, 1863–83) and his *History of the People of*

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[1] *Introduction*, p. 151.

[2] Renan's lecturing activity at the Collège de France was soon suspended, as a consequence of his clear denial of the divinity of Christ. But he resumed his teaching after 1870, and in 1878 he was elected to the French Academy.

Israel (*Histoire du peuple d'Israël*, 1887–93). He also wrote on the Semitic languages and published French versions, with critical introductions, of certain books of the Old Testament. It may seem therefore that he is a most unsuitable person for mention in a history of philosophy. Though however he was not a professional philosopher and was far from being a consistent thinker,[1] he published some philosophical writings, such as *The Future of Science* (*L'avenir de la science*, written in 1848–49, though not published until 1890), *Essays on Morals and Criticism* (*Essais de morale et de critique*, 1859), and *Philosophical Dialogues and Fragments* (*Dialogues et fragments philosophiques*, 1876). His philosophical thought was a curious amalgam of positivism and religiosity, ending in scepticism. It is with his relation to positivism that we are concerned here.

When Renan left the seminary of Saint-Sulpice in 1845, he became a friend of Marcelin Pierre Eugène Berthelot (1827–1907), who was to become professor of organic chemistry at the Collège de France and subsequently minister of education. Like Comte, Berthelot believed in the triumph of scientific knowledge over theology and metaphysics. And Renan, who had lost his faith in the supernatural (in, that is to say, the existence of a transcendent and personal God), shared this belief up to a point. In his *Memoirs of Childhood and Youth* he remarked that from the first months of 1846 'the clear scientific vision of a universe in which there is no perceptible action of a free will superior to that of man'[2] became for Berthelot and himself an immovable anchor. Similarly, in the preface to the thirteenth edition (1866) of the *Life of Jesus* Renan asserted that he had rejected the supernatural for the very same reason for which he rejected belief in centaurs, namely that they had never been seen. In other words, knowledge of reality is obtained through observation and the verification of empirical hypotheses. This was the view expressed in *The Future of Science*. The scientific view of the world did not indeed mean for Renan simply the natural scientist's view. He emphasized (naturally enough, given his own intellectual interests) the importance and role of history and philology. But positive knowledge of reality, he insisted, must have an experimental basis. This is why the enlightened man cannot believe in God. 'A being who does not reveal himself by any act is for science a being which does not exist.'[1]

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[1] Renan tended to take pride in this lack of consistency, on the ground that it was only by trying out different hypotheses that one could hope to see the truth once in one's life.

[2] *Souvenirs d'enfance et de jeunesse* (2nd edition, 1883) p. 337.

If this were all, we would know where we were. But it is far from being all that Renan has to say. He rejects the idea of a personal God who intervenes in history. The occurrence of divine interventions has never been proved. And events which seemed to past generations to be divine acts have been explained in other ways. But to reject the personal transcendent Deity is not to embrace atheism. From one point of view God is the developing totality of existence, the divine being which becomes, God *in fieri*. From another point of view God, considered as perfect and eternal, exists only in the ideal order, as the ideal end of the whole process of development. 'What reveals the true God, is the moral sentiment. If humanity were simply intelligent, it would be atheist; but the great races have found in themselves a divine instinct. 'Duty, devotion, sacrifice, all of them things of which history is full, are inexplicable without God.'[2] True, all statements about God are simply symbolic. But the divine none the less reveals itself to the moral consciousness. 'To love God, to know God, is to love what is beautiful and good, to know what is true.'[3]

To give a precise account of Renan's concept of God is probably something which exceeds human capacity. We can discern the general influence, to a certain extent, of German idealism. More basic however is Renan's own religiosity or religious feeling which expresses itself in a variety of ways, not always mutually consistent, and which makes him quite incapable of being a positivist in the style of Littré. Obviously, there is no reason why a positivist should not have moral ideals. And if he wishes to interpret religion as a matter of sentiment or of the heart[4] and religious belief as the expression of feeling, not of knowledge, he can combine religion with a positivist theory of knowledge. But if he introduces the idea of the Absolute, as Renan does in his letter to Berthelot of August 1863,[5] he clearly goes beyond the limits of what can reasonably be described as positivism without the term being deprived of definite meaning.

In view of what has been said above it is hardly surprising to find that Renan's attitude to metaphysics is complex. In an essay on metaphysics and its future, which he wrote in reply to a work entitled *Metaphysics and Science* (*La métaphysique et la science*, 2 volumes, 1858) by Étienne Vacherot,[1] he insisted that man had both the power and the right 'to rise above facts'[2] and to pursue speculation about the universe. He also made it clear however that he regarded such speculation as akin to poetry or even to dreaming. What he denied was not the right to indulge in metaphysical speculation but the view of metaphysics as the first and fundamental science 'containing the principles of all the others, a science which can by itself alone, and by abstract reasonings, lead us to the truth about God, the world and man'.[3] For 'all that we know, we know by the study of nature or of history'.[4]

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[1] *Dialogues* (1876), p. 246. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 321–22. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 326.

[4] In a letter of August 1862, addressed to Adolphe Guéroult, Renan said that to believe in the living God he needs only 'to listen in silence to the imperative revelation of my heart' (*Dialogues*, p. 251), a statement reminiscent of Rousseau.

[5] This letter is included in *Dialogues*, pp. 153–91.

Provided that positivism is not understood as entailing the claim that all metaphysical questions are nonsensical or meaningless, this view of metaphysics is doubtless compatible with the positivist thesis that all knowledge of reality comes through the sciences. So perhaps is Renan's assertion that while he denies that metaphysics is a 'progressive' science, in the sense that it can increase our knowledge, he does not reject it if it is considered as a science 'of the eternal'.[5] For he is referring not to an eternal reality but rather to an analysis of concepts. In his view logic, pure mathematics and metaphysics do not tell us anything about reality (about what is the case) but analyse what one already knows. To be sure, an equation of metaphysics with conceptual analysis is not the same as an assimilation of it to poetry or dreams. For in the first case it can reasonably be described as scientific, while in the second it cannot be so described. But Renan might of course reply that the word 'metaphysics' can bear both senses, and that he rejects neither of them. In other words, metaphysics can be a science provided that it is regarded simply as conceptual analysis. But if it professes to treat of existing realities, such as God, which transcend the spheres of natural science and of history, it is not and cannot be a science. One is entitled to speculate, but such speculation no more increases our knowledge of reality than do poetry and dreaming.

Given these two views of metaphysics, it is rather disconcerting to find Renan saying that philosophy is 'the general result of all the sciences'.[1] Taken by itself, this statement might be understood in a Comtean sense. But Renan adds that 'to philosophize is to know the Universe,'[2] and that 'the study of nature and of humanity is then the whole of philosophy'.[3] It is true that he uses the word 'philosophy', not the word 'metaphysics'. But philosophy considered as 'the science of the whole'[4] is, one would have thought, one of the meanings not uncommonly ascribed to 'metaphysics'. In other words, philosophy as the general result of all the sciences tends to mean metaphysics, though the precise status attributed by Renan to philosophy in this sense is by no means clear.

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[1] Vacherot (1809–97) maintained the view that metaphysics could be made into a science. Renan's reply is reprinted in *Dialogues*.

[2] *Dialogues*, p. 282. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 283. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 284. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 175.

Renan was obviously a man who believed that positive knowledge about the world could be obtained only through the natural sciences and through historical and philological inquiries. In other words, science, in a broad sense of the word,[5] had taken the place of theology and metaphysics as a science of information about existing reality. In Renan's view, belief in the transcendent personal God of Jewish and Christian faith had been deprived of any rational ground by the development of science. That is to say, such belief was incapable of being confirmed experimentally. As for metaphysics, whether it was regarded as speculation about problems which were scientifically unanswerable or as some form of conceptual analysis, it could not increase man's knowledge of what is the case in the world. In one aspect of his thought therefore Renan was clearly on the side of the positivists. At the same time he was unable to rid himself of the conviction that through his moral consciousness and his recognition of ideals man entered, in some real sense, into a sphere transcending that of empirical science. Nor could he rid himself of the conviction that there was in fact a divine reality, even if all attempts at definite description were symbolic and open to criticism.[6] It is evident that he wished to combine a religious outlook with the positivist elements in his thought. But he was not enough of a systematic thinker to achieve a coherent and consistent synthesis. Further, it was hardly possible in any case to harmonize all his various beliefs, not at any rate in the forms in which he expressed them. How, for example, could one reconcile the view that experimental or empirical verification is required to justify the assertion that something exists with the following claim? 'Nature is only an appearance; man is only a phenomenon. There is the eternal ground (*fond*), there is the infinite substance, the absolute, the ideal ... there is ... *he who is*'.[1] Empirical verification, in any ordinary sense, of the existence of the Absolute seems to be excluded. It is therefore not altogether surprising if in the last years of his life Renan showed a marked tendency to scepticism in the religious sphere. We cannot *know* the infinite or even that there is an infinite, nor can we establish that there are absolute objective values. True, we can act as if there were objective values and as if there were a God. But such matters lie outside the range of any positive knowledge. To claim therefore that Renan abandoned positivism would be inaccurate, though it is evident that it did not satisfy him.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 290. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 292. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 292. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 304.

[5] Renan uses the word 'science' in several senses. Sometimes it just means knowledge, while sometimes it means natural sciences and sometimes it includes the historical sciences.

[6] For example, 'every phrase applied to an infinite object is a myth' (*Dialogues*, p. 323).

5. If Renan's thought contains different elements, so does that of Hippolyte-Adolphe Taine (1828–93). Neither of the two thinkers can be adequately described by labelling him as a positivist. But whereas with Renan the obvious feature of his thought as a whole is his attempt to revise religion in such a way that it can be combined with his positivist ideas, in the case of Taine the salient characteristic of his thought is his attempt to combine positivist convictions with a marked inclination to metaphysics, an inclination stimulated by study of Spinoza and Hegel. Further, while the interests of neither Renan nor Taine are confined to the area of philosophy, their main extra-philosophical activities are somewhat different. Renan, as we have noted, is well known for his works on the history of the people of Israel and on the origins of Christianity, whereas Taine is celebrated for his work in psychology. He also wrote on art, literary history and the development of modern French society. Both men however were influenced by the positivist outlook.

Taine was attracted to philosophy at an early age; but at the time when he was studying at the École Normale at Paris, philosophical studies were more or less dominated by the thought of Victor Cousin, with which Taine had little sympathy. For a time he turned to teaching in schools and to literature. In 1853 he published his *Essay on the Fables of La Fontaine* (*Essai sur les fables de La Fontaine*) and in 1856 an *Essay on Livy* (*Essai sur*

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[1] *Dialogues*, p. 252.

Tite-Live). These writings were followed by *Essays in Criticism and History* (*Essais de critique et d'histoire*, 1858) and the four-volume *History of English Literature* (*Histoire de la littérature anglaise*).[1] In the philosophical field Taine published *The French Philosophers of the Nineteenth Century* (*Les philosophes français du dix-neuvième siècle*) in 1857. But philosophical ideas also found expressions in the prefaces to Taine's other writings.

In 1864 Taine obtained a chair at the École des Beaux-Arts, and his *Philosophy of Art*[2] was the result of his lectures on aesthetics. In 1870 Taine published his *De l'intelligence* in two volumes.[3] He planned to write another work on the will; but he was too occupied with his five-volume work on *The Origins of Contemporary France* (*Les origines de la France contemporaine*, 1875–93), in which he treated of the old régime, the revolution and the later development of French society. Another volume of essays on criticism and history appeared in 1894. Taine also published some travel books.

Taine was brought up a Christian but lost his faith at the age of fifteen. Doubt and scepticism were not however to his taste. He looked for knowledge that was certain; and he hankered after comprehensive knowledge, knowledge of the totality. Science, developed through the empirical verification of hypotheses, seemed to be the only road to secure knowledge of the world. At the same time Taine believed that the continuation of a metaphysical world-view, a view of the totality as a necessary system, was not only a legitimate but also a necessary enterprise. And his persistent problem was that of combining his conviction that there was nothing in the world but events or phenomena and the relations between them with his conviction that a metaphysics was possible which would go beyond the results of the particular sciences and achieve a synthesis. From the chronological point of view the attraction which he felt for the philosophies of Spinoza and Hegel preceded the development of his positivist ideas. But it was not a case of positivism arriving on the scene and driving out metaphysics. Taine reasserted his belief in metaphysics and endeavoured to reconcile the two tendencies in his thought. Whether he was successful, and indeed whether he could have been successful,[1] is disputable. But there can be no doubt about what he was trying to do.

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[1] 1863–4. There is an English translation by H. van Laun (Edinburgh, 1873).

[2] *Philosophie de l'art* (1865) was published in New York in an English translation by J. Durand. An enlarged French edition appeared in 1880.

[3] In 1871 an English translation, *Intelligence*, by T. D. Hayes was published in London.

The general nature of this attempt is made clear by Taine himself in his work on the French philosophers of the nineteenth century,[2] in his study of John Stuart Mill (*Le positivisme anglais. Étude sur Stuart Mill*, 1864) and in his history of English literature. The English empiricists, in Taine's opinion, regard the world as a collection of facts. To be sure, they concern themselves with the relations between phenomena or facts; but these relations are for them purely contingent. For Mill, who represents the culmination of a line of thought starting with Francis Bacon, the causal relation is simply one of factually regular sequence. Indeed, 'the law which attributes a cause to every event has for him no other basis, no other value and no other bearing than an experience. . . . It simply gathers together a sum of observations'.[3] By confining himself simply to experience and its immediate data Mill 'has described the English mind while believing that he was describing the human mind'.[4] The German metaphysical idealists however have had the vision of the totality. They have seen the universe as the expression of ultimate causes and laws, as a necessary system, not as a collection of facts or of phenomena which are related in a purely contingent manner. At the same time, in their enthusiasm for the vision of the totality they have neglected the limitations of the human mind and have tried to proceed in a purely *a priori* manner. They have tried to reconstruct the world of experience by pure thought.[5] In point of fact they have constructed imposing edifices which presently collapse in ruins. There is thus room for a middle way, a combination of what is true and valuable in both English empiricism and German metaphysics. The achievement of this synthesis is reserved for the French mind. 'If there is a place between the two nations, it is ours'.[1] It is the French mind which is called to correct the faults of both English positivism and German metaphysics, to synthesize the corrected outlooks, 'to express them in a style which everyone understands and thus to make of them the universal mind'.[2] The English excel in the discovery of facts, the Germans in the construction of theories. Fact and theory need to be brought together by the French, if possible by Taine.

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[1] If we mean by positivism a philosophy which explicitly excludes metaphysics, it is evident that any attempt to combine positivism with metaphysics is excluded by definition, even if we think that positivism implies a metaphysics in the sense of a theory of being (say, *esse est percipi vel percipi posse*). But Taine himself did not of course look on the empiricist tendencies in his thought as excluding from the start the sort of metaphysics which he envisaged.

[2] This work was later entitled *The Classical Philosophers* (*Les philosophes classiques*).

[3] *Le positivisme anglais*, p. 102.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

[5] Taine apparently thinks of Hegel as trying to deduce even particulars, a task which the German philosopher in fact disclaimed, in spite of his remarks about the planets.

One's mind may well boggle at the thought of combining English empiricism with German idealism, Mill with Hegel. But Taine is not concerned simply with stating an ideal which doubtless seems to many minds unrealizable and perhaps even silly. He indicates what he considers to be the ground on which a synthesis can be constructed, namely man's power of abstraction. Taine's use of the word 'abstraction' stands however in need of some explanation.

In the first place Taine does not mean to imply that we are entitled to assume that abstract terms refer to corresponding abstract entities. On the contrary, he attacks not only Cousin and the eclectics but also Spinoza and Hegel for making precisely this assumption. Words such as 'substance', 'force' and 'power' are convenient ways of grouping similar phenomena, but to think, for example, that the word 'force' signifies an abstract entity is to be misled by language. 'We believe that there are no substances, but only systems of facts. We regard the idea of substance as a psychological illusion. We consider substances, force and all the metaphysical beings of the moderns as a relic of Scholastic entities. We think that there is nothing in the world but facts and laws, that is to say events and their relations; and like you we recognize that all knowledge consists in the first instance in linking or in adding facts.'[3] In his work on intelligence Taine insists that there are no entities corresponding to words such as 'faculty', 'power', 'self'. Psychology is the study of facts; and in the self or ego we find no facts except 'the series of events',[4] which are all reducible to sensations. Even positivists have been guilty of the reification of abstract terms. A signal example of this is provided by Herbert Spencer's theory of the Unknowable, considered as absolute Force.[5]

In this line of thought, considered by itself, Taine goes as far as any empiricist could wish. 'We think that there are neither minds nor bodies, but simply groups of movements present or possible, and groups of thoughts present or possible'.[1] And it is interesting to observe Taine's insistence on the bewitching power of language, which induces philosophers to postulate unreal entities that 'vanish when one scrupulously examines the meaning of the words'.[2] His empiricism also shows itself in his rejection of the *a priori* method of Spinoza, a method which can do more than reveal ideal possibilities. Any knowledge of existing reality must be based on and result from experience.

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[1] *Le positivisme anglais*, p. 147. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 148. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 114.
[4] *De l'intelligence*, I, p. 6. [5] *Derniers essais de critique et d'histoire*, p. 199.

By abstraction therefore Taine does not mean the formation of abstract terms or concepts which are then mistakenly thought to stand for abstract entities. But what does he mean by it? He describes it as 'the power of isolating the elements of facts and considering them separately'.[3] The assumption is that what is given in experience is complex and that it is analyzable into constituent elements which can be considered separately or in abstraction. The natural way of understanding this is in terms of reductive analysis as practised by Condillac in the eighteenth century or by Bertrand Russell in the twentieth. Analysis (*décomposition*) is said to give us the nature or essence of what is analyzed. But Taine takes it that among the constituent elements which form 'the interior of a being'[4] there can be found causes, forces and laws. 'They are not a new fact added to the first; they are a portion of it, an extract; they are contained in them, they are nothing else but the facts themselves.'[5] For example, proof of the statement that Tom is mortal does not consist in arguing from the premise that all men die (which, as Mill maintained, begs the question), nor in appealing to the fact that we do not know of any human being who has not eventually died, but rather by showing that 'mortality is joined to the quality of being a man',[6] inasmuch as the human body is an unstable chemical compound. To find out whether Tom will die or not, there is no need to multiply examples of men who have died. What is required is abstraction, which enables us to formulate a law. Every single example contains the cause of human mortality; but it has of course to be isolated by the mind, picked out or extracted from complex phenomena, and formulated in an abstract manner. To prove a fact, as Aristotle said, is to show its cause. This cause is comprised within the fact.

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[1] *Le positivisme anglais*, p. 114. Taine agrees with Mill on the need for introducing the idea of possible sensations.

[2] *De l'intelligence*, I, p. 339.

[3] *Le positivisme anglais*, p. 115.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 116.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 116.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 124.

And when we have abstracted it, we can argue 'from the abstract to the concrete, that is to say from cause to effect'.[1]

We can however go further than this. We can practise the operation of analysis on groups or sets of laws and, in principle at any rate, arrive at the most primitive and basic elements of the universe. There are 'simple elements from which derive the most general laws, and from these the particular laws, and from these laws the facts which we observe'.[2] If these simple or unanalyzable elements can be known, metaphysics is possible. For metaphysics is the search for first causes. And, according to Taine, the first causes are knowable, inasmuch as they are everywhere exemplified, in all facts. It is not as though we had to transcend the world in order to know its first cause or causes. They are everywhere present and operative; and all that the human mind has to do is to extract or abstract them.

Given his insistence that the ultimate causes of empirical facts are contained within the facts themselves and so within experience, Taine can think of himself as correcting and enlarging British empiricism, not as contradicting it flatly. As far as he is concerned, metaphysics is really continuous with science, though it has a higher degree of generality. It is however evident that he starts with the assumption that the universe is one rational or law-ordered system. The notion that laws are convenient or practically useful fictions of the mind is quite alien to his thought. He assumes that 'there is a reason for everything, that every fact has its law; that every composite is reducible to simple elements; that every product implies causes (*facteurs*); that every quality and every existence must be deducible from some superior and anterior term'.[3] Taine assumes too that cause and effect are really the same thing under two 'appearances'. These assumptions are obviously derived not from empiricism but from the influence on his mind of Spinoza and Hegel. When he envisages one ultimate cause, one 'eternal axiom' and 'creative formula',[4] he is clearly speaking under the influence of a metaphysical vision of the totality as a necessary system which exhibits in innumerable ways the creative activity of an ultimate (though purely immanent) cause.

As we have noted, Taine criticizes the German idealists for having tried to deduce *a priori* such 'particular cases' as the planetary system and the laws of physics and chemistry. But he appears to be objecting not to the idea of deducibility as such, deducibility in principle that is to say, but rather to the assumption that the human mind is able to perform the deduction, even when it has ascertained the primitive laws or ultimate causes. Between, so to speak, the primitive laws and a particular exemplification in the world as given in experience, there is an infinite series, criscrossed, so to speak, by innumerable cooperating or counterbalancing causal influences. And the human mind is too limited to be able to take in the whole pattern of the universe. But if Taine admits, as he seems to do, deducibility in principle, this admission obviously expresses a general vision of the universe which he has derived not from empiricism but from Spinoza and Hegel. This vision includes in its scope not only the physical universe but also human history. In his view history cannot become a science in the proper sense until causes and laws have been 'abstracted' from the facts or historical data.[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 125. [2] *Le positivisme anglais*, p. 137. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 138.

[4] *The French Philosophers of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 371.

Talk about a metaphysical 'vision' may seem to be simply a case of employing the philosophical jargon which was fashionable some years ago among those who rejected the claim of metaphysics to be able to increase our positive knowledge of reality but who were not prepared to write off metaphysical systems as sheer nonsense. The term 'vision' however has a special appositeness in Taine's case. For he never developed a metaphysical system. He is best known for his contribution to empirical psychology. In psychopathology he tried to show how the constituent elements of what is *prima facie* a simple state or phenomenon can be dissociated; and he also made use of neural physiology to exhibit the mechanism which underlies mental phenomena. In general, he gave a powerful impetus to that development of psychology in France which is associated with such names as Théodule Armand Ribot (1859–1916), Alfred Binet (1857–1911) and Pierre Janet (1859–1947). In the fields of literary, artistic and social-political history Taine is known for his hypothesis of the formative influence on human nature of the three factors of race, environment and time and for his insistence, when dealing with the origins of contemporary France, on the effects of excessive centralization as manifested in different ways in the old régime, in the republic and under the empire. Throughout his work however Taine had, as he put it, 'a certain idea of causes',[1] an idea which was not that of the empiricists. In his view the eclectic spiritualists, such as Cousin, located causes outside the effects, and the ultimate cause outside the world. But the positivists banished causality from science.[2] Taine's idea of causality was obviously inspired by a general view of the universe as a rational and deterministic system. This vision remained a vision, in the sense that while he looked on his idea of causality as demanding and making possible a metaphysics, he did not himself attempt to develop a metaphysical system which would exhibit the 'first causes' and their operation in the universe. What he insisted on was the possibility of and the need for such a system. And while he could and did speak in an empiricist way of the scientific method of 'abstraction, hypothesis, verification'[3] for the ascertaining of causes, it is pretty clear that he meant more by 'cause' than would be meant by the empiricist or positivist.

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[1] See, for example, *Essais de critique et d'histoire*, p. xxiv.

6. Auguste Comte gave a powerful impetus to the development of sociology, an impetus which bore fruit in the later decades of the nineteenth century. To say this is certainly not to claim that French sociologists such as Durkheim were devoted disciples of the high priest of positivism. But by insisting on the irreducibility of each of his basic sciences to the particular science or sciences which it presupposed in the hierarchy and by emphasizing the nature of sociology as the scientific study of social phenomena Comte put sociology on the map. To be sure, the beginnings of sociology can be traced back well beyond Comte to Montesquieu, for example, and to Condorcet, not to speak of Saint-Simon, Comte's immediate predecessor. But Comte's clear recognition of sociology as a particular science, with a character of its own, justified Durkheim in regarding him as the father or founder of this science,[4] in spite of the fact that Durkheim did not accept the law of the three stages and criticized Comte's approach to sociology.

Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) studied in Paris at the École

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[1] *Les philosophes français du dix-neuvième siècle*, p. x.

[2] The positivists would claim of course that it was a question of interpreting the causal relation rather than of banishing causality from science. Taine's view of the matter was obviously the expression of a non-empiricist view of the causal relation.

[3] *Les philosophes français*, p. 363.

[4] Durkheim regarded sociology as having been developed mainly in France. He had a low opinion of J. S. Mill's originality in this field, but he valued the contribution of Herbert Spencer, though with certain reservations, as will be indicated in the text.

Normale Supérieure and then taught philosophy in various schools. In 1887 he started to lecture in the University of Bordeaux, where he was appointed to the chair of social science in 1896. Two years later he founded *L'année sociologique*, a periodical of which he became editor. In 1902 he moved to Paris, where he was appointed professor of education in 1906 and then, in 1913, of education and sociology. In 1893 he published *De la division du travail social*[1] and in 1895 *Les règles de la méthode sociologique*.[2] Further writings included *Le suicide*[3] and *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*,[4] which appeared respectively in 1897 and 1912. Posthumously published writings, representing ideas expressed in lecture-courses, include *Sociologie et philosophie*,[5] *L'éducation morale*[6] and *Leçons de sociologie: physique des moeurs et du droit*.[7] These works appeared respectively in 1924, 1925 and 1950.

Sociology was for Durkheim the empirically based study of what he described as social phenomena or social facts. A social fact meant for him a general feature of a given society at a given stage of its development, a feature or general way of acting which could be regarded as exercising a constraint on individuals.[8] A condition of the possibility of sociology as a science is that there should be in any given society 'phenomena which would not exist if this society did not exist and which are what they are only because this society is constituted in the way it is'.[9] And it is the business of the sociologist to study these social phenomena in the same objective manner in which the physical scientist studies physical phenomena. Generalization must result from a clear perception of social phenomena or facts and their interrelations. It should not precede such perception or constitute an *a priori* framework of interpretation in such a way that the sociologist is studying not the social facts themselves but his ideas of them.

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[1] Translated as *The Division of Labour in Society* by G. Simpson (Glencoe, Illinois, 1952).

[2] Translated as *The Rules of Sociological Method* by S. A. Solovay and J. H. Mueller (Glencoe, Illinois, 1950).

[3] Translated as *Suicide* by J. A. Spaulding and G. Simpson (Glencoe, Illinois, 1951).

[4] Translated as *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* by J. W. Swain (London, 1915).

[5] Translated as *Sociology and Philosophy* by D. F. Pocock (London and Glencoe, Illinois, 1953).

[6] Translated as *Moral Education* by H. Schnurer and E. K. Wilson (Glencoe, Illinois, 1961).

[7] Translated as *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals* by C. Brookfield (London, 1957).

[8] See, for example, the first chapter (*What is a Social Fact?*) of *The Rules of Sociological Method*.

[9] From *La Sociologia ed il suo dominio scientifico* (1900). Quoted from the English translation by K. H. Wolff in *Essays on Sociology and Philosophy*, edited by K. H. Wolff (New York, 1960), p. 363.

From a philosophical point of view it is difficult to make a clear distinction between a fact and one's idea of it. For one cannot study anything at all without conceiving it. But there is no great difficulty in understanding the sort of procedure to which Durkheim objects. For example, while he gives credit to Auguste Comte for seeing that social phenomena are objective realities which fall within the natural world and can be studied scientifically, he finds fault with Comte for approaching sociology with a preconceived philosophical theory of history as a continual process of the perfecting of human nature. In his sociology Comte finds what he wants to find, namely what will fit into his philosophical theory. It is thus not so much the facts as his idea of the facts which Comte studies. Similarly, Herbert Spencer was concerned not so much with studying social facts in and for themselves as with showing how they verify his general evolutionary hypothesis. In Durkheim's opinion, Spencer pursued sociology as a philosopher, to prove a theory, rather than by letting the social facts speak for themselves.

We have seen above that Durkheim relates a social fact to a given society. And he laid great emphasis on the plurality of human societies, each of which has to be studied first of all in itself. On this matter he saw a difference between Comte and Spencer. Comte assumed that there was one human society which developed through successive stages, each of which was correlated with and in a sense dependent on the corresponding stage of man's intellectual advance. His philosophy of history made him myopic in regard to the particular questions which arise out of the careful study of given different societies. Further, by incorporating sociology into a philosophical system Comte really ensured that his sociology would make no progress in the hands of his disciples. For development to be possible the law of the three stages had to be jettisoned.[1] In the case of Herbert Spencer however the situation is rather different. For he recognized the plurality of societies and tried to classify them according to their types. Further, he discerned the operation of obscure forces beneath the level of thought and reason and avoided the exaggerated emphasis placed by Comte on man's scientific advance. At the same time in his *Principles of Sociology* Spencer started out with a definition of society which was an expression of his own *a priori* concept rather than the result of meticulous study of the relevant data or facts.[1]

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[1] In an article published in 1915, in *La science française*, Durkheim refers to Comte's law of the three stages as possessing 'only an historical interest'. See *Essays on Sociology and Philosophy* (cf. note 83), p. 378.

These social facts are for Durkheim *sui generis*. It is the business of the sociologist to study these facts as he finds them and not to reduce them to some other kind of fact. When a new science is beginning to develop, one has to take models from already existing developed sciences. But a new science becomes a science only in so far as it attains independence. And this involves having its own subject-matter and its own set of concepts formed through reflection on this subject-matter. Durkheim is thus no reductionist. At the same time he believes that for sociology to make real progress it must, like previously developed sciences, emancipate itself from philosophy. This does not mean simply liberating itself from subordination to a philosophical system such as that of Comte. It also means that the sociologist should not allow himself to become entangled in philosophical disputes, such as the dispute between determinists and upholders of free will. All that sociology requires is that the principle of causality should be applied to social phenomena, and then only as an empirical postulate, not as a necessary *a priori* truth.[2] Whether it is in fact possible to avoid all philosophical presuppositions, as Durkheim supposes, is debatable. But he is not of course saying that philosophers should not discuss such topics as freedom of the will, if they wish to do so. He is saying that there is no need for the sociologist to do so, and that the development of sociology requires that he should in fact abstain from such discussion.

The subject-matter of sociology is provided by what Durkheim calls social phenomena or social facts. And reference has been made above to his idea of social facts as exercising constraint on the individual. Social facts in this sense include, for example, the morality and the religion of a given society. Use of the term 'constraint' need not therefore imply coercion in the sense of the use of force. In the process of upbringing a child is initiated into a set of valuations which come from the society to which he belongs rather than from himself; and his mind can be said to be

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[1] In *The Rules of Sociological Method* (pp. 20 f.) Durkheim refers to Spencer's use of the idea of co-operation as a basis for classifying societies.

[2] See, for example, the conclusion to *The Rules of Sociological Method*.

'constrained' by his society's moral code. Even if he rebels against the code, it is there, so to speak, as that against which he rebels and so as governing his reaction. There is no great difficulty in understanding this sort of idea. But Durkheim speaks of social phenomena such as morality and religion as expressions of the social or collective consciousness or of the common spirit or mind. And something has to be said about this topic, as use of a term such as 'collective consciousness' can easily be misunderstood.

In his essay on 'Individual and Collective Representations' Durkheim blames individualistic sociology for trying to explain the whole by reducing it to its parts.[1] And elsewhere he says that 'It is the whole that, in a large measure, produces the part.'[2] If such passages were isolated and considered simply by themselves, it would be natural to conclude that according to Durkheim the collective consciousness was a kind of universal substance from which individualistic consciousnesses proceed in a manner analogous to that in which plurality was said to emanate from the Neoplatonist One. It would then be somewhat disconcerting to find Durkheim stating that the parts cannot be derived from the whole. 'For the whole is nothing without the parts which form it.'[3]

The term 'collective consciousness' is apt to mislead and is therefore unfortunate. What Durkheim is trying to say however is reasonably clear. When he speaks of a collective consciousness or of a common spirit or mind, he is not postulating a substance existing apart from individual minds. A society does not exist apart from the individuals which compose it; and the system of a society's beliefs and value-judgments is borne, as it were, by individual minds. But it is borne by them in so far as they have come to participate in something which is not confined to any given set of individuals but persists as a social reality. Individuals have their own sensory experiences, their own tastes, and so on. But when the individual learns to speak, he comes to participate, through language, in a whole system of categories, beliefs and value-judgments, in what Durkheim describes as a social consciousness. We can thus distinguish between individual and collective 'representations', between what is peculiar to an individual as such and what he owes to or derives from the society to which he belongs. In so far as these collective 'representations' affect the individual consciousness, we can speak of the parts as derived from or explained by the whole. That is to say, it makes sense to speak of the social 'mind' as causally affecting the individual mind, as affecting it, as it were, from without. According to Durkheim, it is by participating in civilization, the totality of 'intellectual and moral goods'[1] that man becomes specifically human. In this sense the part depends on the whole. At the same time civilization could not exist without individual human beings. And in this sense the whole is nothing without the parts which constitute it. The social facts or phenomena, which for Durkheim constitute the data of the sociologist's reflection, are social institutions of one kind or another which are the products of man in society and which, when once constituted, causally affect the individual consciousness. For instance, the outlook of a Hindu is formed not only by his private sensory experience but also by the religion of his society and by the institutions connected with it. The religion however could not exist as a social reality without any Hindus.

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[1] This essay, which was first published in the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* in 1898, is included in *Sociology and Philosophy*, pp. 1–34).

[2] *Essays on Sociology and Philosophy* (see note 83), p. 325.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

The constraint exercised by 'collective representations' or by the collective consciousness can be seen clearly, according to Durkheim, in the field of morals. There are indeed moral facts, but they exist only in a social context. 'Let all social life disappear, and moral life will disappear with it. . . . Morality, in all its forms, is never met with except in society. It never varies except in relation to social conditions.'[2] Morality, in other words, does not originate in the individual considered precisely as such. It originates in society and is a social phenomenon; and it bears upon the individual. In the sense of obligation, for example, it is the voice of society which speaks. It is society which imposes obligatory rules of conduct, their obligatory character being marked by the attachment of sanctions to the infringement of such rules. For the individual as such the voice of society, speaking through the sense of obligation, comes, as it were, from without. And it is this relationship of externality (of the whole functioning as a social reality in regard to the part) which makes it possible to regard the voice of conscience as the voice of God. For Durkheim however religion is basically the expression of a 'collective ideal';[3] and God is an hypostatization of the collective consciousness. It is quite true that in relation to the individual consciousness moral precepts and the sense of obligation to obey them possess an *a priori* character, imposing themselves, as it were, from without. But the religiously minded person's voice of God speaking through conscience and Kant's Practical Reason are really simply the voice of society; and the sense of obligation is due to the participation of the individual in the collective consciousness. If we are thinking simply of the individual consciousness considered purely as such, society speaks from without. But it also speaks from within, inasmuch as the individual is a member of society and participates in the common consciousness or spirit.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 325.

[2] *The Division of Labour in Society*, translated by G. Simpson, p. 399.

[3] *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, translated by J. W. Swain, p. 423.

It is obviously true that society is constantly exercising pressure on individuals in a variety of ways. But even if it is an incontestable rule of conduct, emanating from the social consciousness, that we should 'realize in ourselves the essential traits of the collective type',[1] many people are likely to think that there is a middle way between thoroughly anti-social behaviour and conformity to a common type, and that society is enriched by the development of the individual personality. Further, many people would be prepared to envisage cases in which the individual could justifiably protest against the voice of society in the name of a higher ideal. Indeed, how else can moral progress be realized?

While Durkheim insists that morality is a social phenomenon, he does not of course see this theory as entailing social conformism in a sense which would exclude the development of individual personality. His view is that with the development of civilization the collective type of ideal becomes more abstract and so admits of a much greater degree of variety within the framework of what is demanded by society. In a primitive society the essential traits of the collective type are defined in a very concrete manner. The man is expected to act according to a definite traditional pattern of behaviour; and so is the woman. In more advanced societies however the likenesses which are demanded between members of the society are less than in the more homogeneous primitive tribe or class. And if the collective type or ideal becomes that of humanity in general, it is so abstract and general that there is plenty of room for the development of the individual personality. The area of personal freedom thus tends to grow as society becomes more advanced. At the same time, if a modern industrial society does not impose all the obligations imposed by a primitive

[1] *The Division of Labour in Society*, p. 396.

tribe, this does not alter the fact that in every case it is society which imposes the obligation.

A point which needs to be mentioned is that 'society' for Durkheim does not necessarily mean simply the State or political society, at any rate not as a completely adequate source of an ethical code. For example, in modern society a large part of human life is passed in the industrial and commercial world where ethical rules are lacking. In economically advanced societies therefore, with their highly developed specialization or division of labour, there is need for what Durkheim calls occupational ethics. 'Functional diversity induces a moral diversity that nothing can prevent.'[1] In all cases however the individual as such is subject to social pressure to act or not to act in certain ways.

It is hardly necessary to say that Durkheim is trying to turn ethics into an empirical science, treating of social facts or phenomena of a particular kind. In his view both the utilitarians and the Kantians reconstruct morality as they think it ought to be or as they would wish it to be, instead of observing carefully what it is. According to Durkheim, if we look closely at the facts, we see that social pressure or constraint exercised by the collective consciousness in regard to the individual is the chief constituent of morality. Though however he insists that the approach of the utilitarians and the Kantians is wrong, the attempt, that is to say, to find a basic principle of morality and then to proceed deductively, he also makes an effort to show that his own ethical theory comprises in itself the elements of truth contained in the theories which he attacks. For example, morality does as a matter of fact serve useful purposes within the framework of society. And its utility can be examined and ascertained. At the same time the chief characteristic of the moral consciousness is the sense of obligation which is felt as a 'categorical imperative'. The rule, imposed by society, has to be obeyed simply because it is a rule.[2] We can thus find a place for Kant's idea of duty for duty's sake, though we can also find a place for the utilitarian's concept of usefulness to society. Morality exists because society needs it; but it takes the form of the voice of society demanding obedience because it is the voice of society.

One obvious comment is that whereas Kant's idea of the categorical imperative as issuing from the practical reason provides a basis for criticizing existing moral codes, Durkheim's theory provides no such basis. If moral rules are relative to given societies, expressing the collective consciousness of a particular society, and if moral obligation means that the individual is obliged to obey the voice of society, how can the individual ever be justified in questioning the moral code or the value-judgments of the society to which he belongs? Does it not follow that moral reformers must be condemned as subversive elements? If this is not the case, how can we reasonably equate morality with the moral codes of particular societies? For the reformer appeals against such a code to something which seems to him higher or more universal.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 361.

[2] See, for example, a review-article by Durkheim in *L'année sociologique* Vol. X (1905–6), in which he discusses works by Fouillée, Belot and Landry.

Durkheim is not of course blind to this line of objection. He sees that he can be accused of holding that the individual must accept passively the dictates of society, whatever they may be, without ever having the right to rebel.[1] And as he has no wish to push the demand for social conformism to this point, he looks to the idea of utility to provide him with a reply. 'No fact relating to life—and this applies to moral facts—can endure if it is not of some use, if it does not answer some need.'[2] A rule which once fulfilled a useful social function may lose its usefulness as society changes and develops. Individuals who are aware of this are justified in drawing general attention to the fact. Indeed, it may not be simply a question of a particular rule of conduct. Social changes may be taking place on such a scale that what amounts to a new morality is demanded by these changes and begins to make its appearance. If then society as a whole persists in clinging to the traditional and outmoded order of morality, those who understand the process of development and its needs are justified in challenging the old dictates of society. 'We are not therefore obliged to bow to the force of moral opinion. In certain cases we are justified even in rebelling against it. . . . The best way of doing so may appear to be to oppose these ideas not only theoretically but also in action.'[3]

This line of reply may be ingenious, but it is hardly adequate. If it is society which imposes obligation, obedience to the actual dictates of any given society is presumably obligatory. If however, as Durkheim allows, there can be situations in which individuals are justified in questioning, or even in rebelling against, the dictates of society, some moral criterion other than the voice of society is required. The moral reformer, it may be said, appeals from the actual voice of society, as embodied in traditional formulas, to the 'real' voice of society. But what is the criterion for assessing the 'real' voice of society, what society ought to demand as distinct from what it does demand? If it is utility, a society's real interests, one should presumably adopt utilitarianism. One is then faced however with the task of supplying a criterion for assessing a society's real interests. Referring to the possibility that a modern society might lose sight of the rights of the individual, Durkheim suggests that the society could be reminded that the denial of rights to the individual would be to deny 'the most essential interests of society itself'.[1] He might claim that this refers simply to the interests of modern European society as it has in fact developed, and not, for instance, to a closely-knit primitive clan. But even in this case one would be appealing from the actual voice of society to what one believed ought to be its voice. And it is difficult to see how normative judgments of this kind can be included in a purely descriptive study of moral phenomena.

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[1] See, for example *Sociology and Philosophy*, translated by D. F. Pocock, pp. 59f.

[2] *The Division of Labour*, p. 35.

[3] *Sociology and Philosophy*, p. 61.

Like morality, religion is for Durkheim essentially a social phenomenon. In one place he asserts that 'a religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community, called a Church, all those who adhere to them.'[2] When Durkheim insists that 'we do not find a single religion without a Church'[3] and that 'religion is inseparable from the idea of a Church',[4] he does not mean simply a Christian Church. He means a community of persons who represent the sacred and its relation to the profane in the same way, and who translate these beliefs and ideas into common practice. Obviously, there are different beliefs and different symbols in different religions. But 'one must know how to go underneath the symbol to the reality which it represents and which gives it its meaning'.[5] We then find that religion is 'the primary form of the *collective consciousness*'.[6] Indeed, 'I see in the divinity only society transfigured and symbolically expressed'.[7]

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 60.
[2] *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, p. 47.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 44.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 45.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 2.
[6] *The Division of Labour in Society*, p. 285.
[7] *Sociology and Philosophy*, p. 52.

In primitive or undeveloped societies, according to Durkheim, morality was essentially religious, in the sense that man's most important and numerous duties were those towards his gods.[1] In the course of time morality has become progressively separated from religious belief, partly through the influence of Christianity with its insistence on love between human beings. The area of the sacred has diminished, and the process of secularization has advanced. Religion 'tends to embrace a smaller and smaller sector of social life'.[2] At the same time there is a sense in which religion will always persist. For society always needs to represent to itself 'the collective sentiments and the collective ideas which make its unity and its personality'.[3] If however a new faith arises, we cannot foresee the symbols which will be used to express it.

It is of course in the light of his theory of the essential nature of religion that we have to understand Durkheim's assertion that 'in reality there are no religions which are false. All are true in their own fashion; all answer, though in different ways, to the given conditions of human existence'.[4] Obviously, Durkheim does not mean to imply that all religious beliefs, if considered as statements about reality, are equally true. He is thinking of different religions as all expressing, each in its own way, a social reality. One religion can be described as superior to another if, for example, it is 'richer in ideas and sentiments' and contains 'more concepts with fewer sensations and images'.[5] But no religion can properly be described as being simply false. For even the most barbarous rites and the most fantastic myths 'translate some human need, some aspect of life, either individual or social'.[6] This is not to say that a religion is true in so far as it proves useful. It is true in so far as it expresses or represents, in its own fashion, a social reality.

Durkheim obviously considers religion from a purely sociological and external point of view. Moreover, he assumes that if we wish to ascertain the essential features of religion, we have to examine primitive or elementary religion. And this assumption is open to criticism, quite apart from the fact that some of Durkheim's theories about the origins of religion are highly disputable. For unless we assume from the start that religion is essentially a primitive phenomenon, why should not its nature be better manifested in the course of its development than in its origins? Durkheim could of course argue that in primitive society religion played a much greater part in social life than it does today, and that as it is a receding phenomenon, it is only reasonable to look for its essential features at a period when it was most notably a living force. But this line of argument, though reasonable up to a point, seems to presuppose a certain idea of religion, Durkheim's idea, which represents it as the expression of the collective consciousness. Further, just as in his treatment of morality Durkheim concentrates on what Bergson describes as 'closed' morality, so in his treatment of religion does he concentrate on what Bergson describes as 'static' religion. But this is a theme which is best left to the relevant chapter on the philosophy of Bergson.

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[1] See *L'éducation morale*, p. 6.

[2] *On the Division of Labour in Society*, p. 143.

[3] *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, p. 427.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 3. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 3. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

7. Though Durkheim recognized successive distinguishable mentalities and outlooks, he did not make such a sharp dichotomy between the primitive and later mentalities as to exclude a theory of the development of the former into the latter. He saw the category of causality, for example, as being first developed and employed in an essentially religious context and outlook and then as being later detached from the framework. It was Lucien Lévy-Bruhl (1857–1939) who expounded the theory that the mentality of primitive peoples was pre-logical in character.[1] He maintained, for example, that the primitive mind did not recognize the principle of non-contradiction but operated according to an implicit idea of 'participation' which allowed a thing to be itself and at the same time something other than itself. 'Primitive mentality considers and at the same time feels all beings and objects to be homogeneous, that is, it regards them all as participating in the same essential nature, or in the same ensemble of qualities.'[2] Again, the primitive mind was indifferent to empirical verification. It credited things with qualities and powers when the presence in things of these qualities and powers was in no way verified by experience. In fine, Lévy-Bruhl found a sharp distinction between the primitive mentality, which for him was essentially

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[1] This view was expressed in *Les fonctions fondamentales dans les sociétés inférieures* (1910). Other writings in the anthropological field were *La mentalité primitive* (1921) and *L'âme primitive* (1927). Though best known as an anthropologist, Lévy-Bruhl was in fact a professor of philosophy at the Sorbonne from 1899 until 1927.

[2] *The 'Soul' of the Primitive* (*L'âme primitive*), translated by L. A. Clare (London, 1928), p. 19.

religious and even mystical, and the logical and scientific mentality. If considered in its pure state at any rate, in primitive man that is to say, and not as surviving in co-existence with a different emerging outlook, the former was different in kind from the latter.

Nowadays it would be generally agreed that Durkheim was justified in criticizing this dichotomy and Lévy-Bruhl's characterization of primitive mentality as 'pre-logical'. In many ways the world of primitive man was doubtless very different from ours, and he had many beliefs which we do not share. But it does not follow that his natural logic was entirely heterogeneous from ours, as Lévy-Bruhl at first asserted.

In 1903 Lévy-Bruhl published *La morale et la science des moeurs.*[1] Like Durkheim, he aimed at contributing to the development of a science of morals, something which had to be carefully distinguished from morals itself. Morality is a social fact and needs no philosopher to bring it into being. But the philosopher can examine this social fact. He then finds that it is a case of facts rather than of a fact. That is to say, in every society there is a set of moral rules, an ethical code, relative to that society. A theoretical and abstract system, elaborated by a philosopher, bears as little resemblance to the actual ethical phenomena as does an abstract philosophical religion to the historic religions of mankind. If a philosopher works out an abstract ethical system and describes it as 'natural ethics', the ethics of man as such, this is a misnomer. 'The idea of a "natural ethics", ought to give way to the idea that all existing ethics are natural.'[2] What we need to do first is to ascertain the historical data in the field of morals. It should then be possible, on the basis of positive knowledge so gained, to develop some guidelines for the future. But the result would be an empirically based art rather than an abstract or ideal system of ethics as conceived by some philosophers in the past.

The task of collecting historical data is hardly the business of the philosopher as such. And it is arguable that the task of seeing what practical use can be made of the knowledge obtained in this way can perfectly well be performed by the sociologist. It might therefore be suggested that if Lévy-Bruhl rejected, as he did, the idea of elaborating an abstract ethical system, he might have done well, if he wished to act as a philosopher, to concentrate on the analysis of ethical concepts and language. To a certain extent both he and Durkheim provided such analyses. But the analyses really consisted in giving a naturalistic interpretation of ethical terms. Lévy-Bruhl occupied a chair of philosophy; but he was primarily an anthropologist and a sociologist.

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[1] Translated as *Ethics and Moral Science* by E. Lee (London, 1905).

[2] *Ethics and Moral Science*, p. 160.

CHAPTER VII

NEO-CRITICISM AND IDEALISM

Cournot and inquiry into basic concepts—The neo-criticism and personalism of Renouvier—Hamelin and idealist metaphysics—Brunschvicg and the mind's reflection on its own activity.

1. IT would be misleading to refer to thinkers such as Cournot and Renouvier as representing a neo-Kantian movement in nineteenth-century philosophical thought in France. For this way of speaking would imply a closer connection with and a greater dependence on the thought of Kant than was actually present. Renouvier, it is true, liked to regard himself as Kant's true successor and described his own thought as neo-criticism. But he attacked some of Kant's cherished theories; and though there were indeed features of his thought which justified its description as neo-criticism, there were other features which would make personalism a more appropriate label. As for Cournot, he did indeed conduct a critical inquiry into the role of reason and into certain basic concepts and has been described as a critical rationalist; but he rejected Kant's Copernican revolution and has therefore been sometimes described as a critical realist. To perpetrate a tautology, Cournot was Cournot. He was neither a Kantian nor a Comtean.

Antoine Augustin Cournot (1801–77) was a distinguished mathematician and economist who was also a philosopher. After preliminary studies, partly at a school in his native town of Gray near Dijon and partly alone, he entered the École Normale Supérieure at Paris with a view to continuing his studies in mathematics. In 1823 he became secretary to Marshal Saint-Cyr and tutor to the latter's son. After the Marshal's death Cournot held a post at Paris until he was appointed professor of analysis and mechanics at Lyon. Shortly afterwards however he was appointed head of the Academy at Grenoble, a post which he combined with that of inspector general of public education, until confirmation in this second post led to his taking up his abode in Paris in 1838. His published writings were in the fields of mathematics, mechanics, economics, education and philosophy. He contributed to the application of mathematics to economics. In the philosophical area he published in 1843 an *Exposition de la théorie des chances et des probabilités* (*Exposition of the Theory of Chance and of Probability*). This was followed in 1851 by his *Essai sur les fondements de nos connaissances et sur les caractères de la critique philosophique.*[1] In 1861 Cournot published a *Traité de l'enchaînement des idées fondamentales dans les sciences et dans l'histoire* (*Treatise on the Connection between the Fundamental Ideas of the Sciences and of History*). In 1872 there appeared his *Considérations sur la marche des idées et des événements dans les temps modernes* (*Reflections on the Movement of Ideas and Events in Modern Times*) and in 1875 *Matérialisme, vitalisme, rationalisme: Études sur l'emploi des données de la science en philosophie* (*Materialism, Vitalism, Rationalism: Studies on the Use of the Data of Science in Philosophy*).

Cournot was not at all the man to think that philosophy could profitably pursue an isolated path of its own, without reference to the development of the sciences. 'Philosophy without science soon loses sight of our real relations with the Universe.'[2] Philosophy needs to feed, so to speak, on science. At the same time Cournot resolutely refused to regard philosophy either as a particular science or as a synthesis of the sciences. In his view science and philosophy were interrelated in a variety of ways; they were none the less distinguishable. And because they were distinct lines of inquiry, there was no good reason for thinking that the progress of science entailed the gradual disappearance of philosophy.

While recognizing that 'innumerable meanings'[3] have been given to the term 'philosophy' in popular usage and by philosophers themselves, Cournot regards philosophy as having two essential functions, 'on the one hand the study and investigation of the reason of things and, on the other hand, the study of the forms of thought and of the general laws and processes of the human mind'.[4] By the reason of things Cournot means, in general, rational or intelligible interconnection; and he makes a distinction between reason and cause. Consider, for example, the Russian revolution. Obviously, a multitude of causal actions were involved. But to understand the Russian revolution we have to find an intelligible structure connecting all these causes and events. And if we decide that the reason for the revolution was the unyielding autocratic constitution or régime, we are not talking about an efficient cause in the sense in which, for instance, a certain action by one man is the efficient cause of injury to another. The reason explains the series of causes. It answers the question 'why did these events take place'? The reason of things is thus akin to Leibniz's sufficient reason, though Cournot, who greatly admired Leibniz, remarks that the word 'sufficient' is superfluous. An insufficient reason would not be the reason of things.

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[1] Translated by M. M. Moore as *An Essay on the Foundations of Our Knowledge* (New York, 1956). As the work is divided into consecutively numbered sections, references will be given as *Essai* followed by the number of the relevant section.

[2] *Essai*, section 323.

[3] *Ibid.*, section 325.

[4] *Ibid.*, section 325.

When Cournot says that 'the search for the explanation and the reason of things is what characterizes philosophical curiosity, no matter what the order of facts to which it is applied',[1] he is thinking of an objective reason, of something which is there to be discovered. But it is of course the human reason, subjective reason, which seeks to grasp the objective reason. And subjective reason can reflect on its own activity. It can be concerned with 'the evaluation of certain regulative and fundamental ideas or with criticism of their representative value'.[2] Critical inquiry of this sort is the second function of philosophy. But the two functions are closely interrelated. For example, the human reason, according to Cournot, is regulated by the idea of order, in the sense that order is what reason seeks to find and what it can recognize when found. In fact, reason is guided by the idea of the perfection of order, inasmuch as it compares possible arrangements of phenomena and prefers that which best satisfies its idea of what constitutes order. At the same time the mind does not simply impose order on phenomena: it discovers it. And it is in the light of such discovery that reason can evaluate its own regulative idea. Cournot likes to quote Bossuet to the effect that only reason can introduce order into things, and that order can be understood only by reason. When the two sides, the subjective and the objective, are in accord, there is knowledge.

Cournot is therefore not prepared to accept the theory that the mind simply imposes order on what is in itself without order or that it simply projects into things their 'reasons'.[3] There is a marked element of realism in his thought. He insists, for example, that whatever Kant may have said Newtonian physics 'implies the existence of time, space and geometrical relations outside the mind'.[1] At the same time he maintains both that what we know are the relations between phenomena, and that our knowledge of these relations is never absolute but always revisible in principle. When the astronomer, for example, tries to determine the movements of the heavenly bodies, he is certainly concerned with objective knowledge; but the knowledge which he obtains is relative in several ways. For instance, the movements which he establishes are relative to a certain system; and he cannot determine absolute points of reference in space. The astronomer's knowledge is real and relative at the same time. It is subject to revision. Our hypotheses can possess varying degrees of probability; but they do not amount to absolute knowledge, even when they produce the subjective feeling of certainty.

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[1] *Ibid.*, section 26.

[2] *Ibid.*, section 325.

[3] The ideas of order and of the reason of things are for Cournot closely related. Indeed, the two ideas are 'the same idea under two different aspects'. *Essai*, section 396.

The concept of probability is, like that of order, one of the basic ideas discussed by Cournot. He makes a distinction between mathematical probability and probability in a general sense or what he calls philosophical probability. The former is concerned with objective possibility and is described as 'the limit of *physical possibility*',[2] whereas in the case of the latter the grounds of our preference are not amenable to precise mathematical formulation. Suppose that we are confronted with three *prima facie* explanations of a phenomenon or set of phenomena. It may be that we can rule out one of them as mathematically impossible. In deciding however between the other two we introduce criteria which are not amenable to exact mathematical treatment. Moreover, even if we succeed in falsifying empirically one of the hypotheses and therefore feel subjectively certain about the truth of the other, it may be that further developments in scientific knowledge will demand revision. Apart from matters of purely logical or mathematical demonstration, we have to rely on 'variable, subjective probability'.[3] In formulating a law of phenomena, for example, reason refers to certain criteria, such as simplicity, and the mind may feel certain that it has found the law. But this feeling of certainty does not alter the fact that what we judge to be more probable depends on the limited extent of our present knowledge and thus on a variable factor.

According to Cournot therefore reason seeks and finds order in the world, even if its knowledge of the order or reason of things is not absolute. Cournot's world however also contains fortuitous events, the result of the operation of chance. And this idea needs some explanation. By a chance event Cournot does not mean a rare or surprising event. It might of course be rare or surprising, but these characteristics are not included in the meaning of the term. Nor does Cournot mean a causeless event. 'Everything that we call an event must have a cause.'[1] A chance event is one which is brought about by the conjunction of other events which belong to independent series.[2] A simple example given by Cournot himself is that of a Parisian who takes a train to a destination in the country. There is a railway accident, and the Parisian is among the victims. The accident has of course its cause or causes; but the operation of these causes has nothing to do with the presence of the particular Parisian on the train. The accident would have occurred even if he had decided at the last moment to stay in the city instead of going to the country. In this sense his being killed or injured is a fortuitous event, resulting from the conjunction of two series of causes which were originally independent of each other.

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[1] *Ibid.*, section 142. [2] *Ibid.*, section 35. [3] *Ibid.*, section 51.

Chance in this sense is for Cournot an objective or real feature of the world. That is to say, it is not something which is simply dependent on and relative to the limitations of our knowledge.[3] 'It is not accurate to say, as Hume does, that "chance is only our ignorance of real causes".'[4] In principle the mind, by using the calculus of probabilities, could foretell possible conjunctions of independent series of causes. And a superhuman intelligence could do so to a greater extent than we can. This does not show however that chance events are law-governed, or that it would be possible to foretell with certainty actual events due to the conjunction of independent series of causes. In other words, for Cournot, as for Boutroux after him, contingency is a metaphysical reality, in the sense that there is in the universe an irreducible element of indeterminacy. Not even in principle could estimation of the probability of possible events in the future be converted into complete objective certitude.

Though Cournot argues that there are certain basic concepts, such as order, which are common to the sciences, he also insists that actual examination of and reflection on the sciences shows us that different sciences have to introduce different basic concepts. It is therefore impossible to reduce all sciences to one science, such as physics. For example, it is the behaviour of the living organism which excludes the possibility of accounting for it simply in terms of the physico-chemical elements of the constituent parts or elements, and which forces us to introduce the idea of a vital energy or plastic force. This concept and its implications are not indeed altogether clear. We cannot suppose that life precedes organic structure and produces it. But neither can we suppose that organic-structure precedes life. We have to assume that 'in organic and living beings organic structure and life play simultaneously the roles of cause and effect through a reciprocity of relations',[1] which is *sui generis*. And though a term such as vital or plastic force 'does not give the mind an idea which can be clearly defined',[2] it expresses a recognition of the irreducibility of the living to the non-living.

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[1] *Ibid.*, section 29.

[2] It is for Cournot a matter of common sense that there are independent or only externally related series of events. *Ibid.*, section 30.

[3] The idea of chance as an objective factor in the universe is found also in the philosophy of C. S. Peirce in America. See Vol. 8 of this *History*, pp. 323 f.

[4] *Essai*, section 36.

This irreducibility implies of course that in the process of evolution there is emergence of what is new, of what cannot be described simply in terms of that out of which it emerges. It does not follow however that evolution is for Cournot a continuous process, in the sense that it takes the form of a linear series of ascending levels of perfection. In Cournot's view evolution takes the form of distinct creative impulses or movements, in accordance with a kind of rhythm of relative activity and rest; and in his *Traité* he anticipates Bergson's idea of divergent paths or directions of development. As however he is sharply opposed, like Bergson after him, to any purely mechanistic interpretation of evolution, he regards it as legitimate for the philosopher to think in terms of finality and of a creative divine intelligence. This does not mean that after asserting the reality of chance as a factor in the Universe Cournot then goes on to reject this idea and to represent the universe as rational through and through. We have seen that for him the concept of order which regulates the mind's inquiries is not simply a subjective form of thought which reason imposes on phenomena but also represents what the mind discovers. Both order and chance are real factors in the universe. And reason is justified in extending the concept of order into the sphere of 'trans-rationalism', provided that it is not used in such a way as to be incompatible with the idea of chance. In Cournot's view the reality of chance 'is not in conflict with the generally accepted idea of a supreme and providential direction',[1] not at any rate if we avoid implying that all events are caused by God.

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[1] *Essai*, section 129.

[2] *Ibid.*, section 130.

Cournot's positive contribution to philosophical thought consists primarily in his critical inquiry into basic concepts, whether those which he regards as common to the sciences or those which particular sciences find it necessary to introduce if they are to develop and to handle their subject-matter satisfactorily. It is this aspect of his thought which justifies treatment of it under the general heading of critical philosophy or 'neo-criticism'. But though he approaches this theme through an inquiry into the sciences, we have seen that he insists on the distinction between science and philosophy. For one thing, 'the intuitions of the philosophers precede the organization of positive science.'[2] For another thing, the mind can let itself be guided by 'the presentiment of a perfection and harmony in the works of nature'[3] which is superior to anything discovered by the sciences. The mind can thus pass into the field of speculative philosophy, a field in which it crosses the boundaries of formal demonstration and of scientific testing and in which it has to rely on 'philosophical' probability which is not amenable to mathematical treatment. This field of transrationalism is not excluded by science; and though it goes beyond science, we have to remember that scientific hypotheses themselves cannot be more than probably true.

2. In comparison with his contribution in the field of economics Cournot's philosophical writing was at first largely neglected. He worked patiently at a number of problems, avoiding extreme positions and not allowing himself to be distracted by temporarily fashionable lines of thought. Moreover, though he rejected the positivist exclusion of metaphysics, he did not himself present any striking metaphysical vision of the universe. He hinted, it is true, at possible lines of thought; but it was left to other philosophers, such as Bergson, to develop them in a manner which aroused general interest. Nowadays Cournot is respected for his careful critical analysis; but it is easy to understand how Renouvier, who was influenced to a certain extent by Cournot, came to make a greater impression on his contemporaries.

Charles Bernard Renouvier (1815–1903) was born at Montpellier, the birthplace of Auguste Comte, and when he entered the Ecole Polytechnique at Paris he found Comte there acting as instructor in mathematics. Renouvier never occupied an academic position, but he was a prolific writer. He began by publishing several manuals, on modern and ancient philosophy in 1842 and 1844 respectively[1] and in 1848 a *Republican Handbook on Man and the Citizen.*[2] At this time Renouvier was strongly influenced by the ideas of Saint-Simon and other French socialists, and the last named work was intended for schoolteachers. His republican convictions suffered a severe blow when Napoleon III made himself emperor, and he gave himself to philosophical reflection and writing. In 1872 however Renouvier started a periodical entitled *Critique philosophique*, and in its first years it included a good many articles of a political nature, aimed at supporting the restored republic. Later this periodical became *L'année philosophique*, edited in collaboration with F. Pillon.

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[1] *Ibid.*, section 36.

[2] *Traité*, I, section 226.

[3] *Essai*, section 71.

Renouvier's first major philosophical publication was his four-volume *Essais de critique générale* (1854–64). This work impressed William James, who remained an admirer of Renouvier and contributed a number of philosophical articles to his periodical. In 1869 Renouvier wrote a two-volume work on the science of morals, *La science de la morale*, and in 1876 a sketch of what might have been, but was not, the historical development of European civilization, to which he gave the title *Uchronie.*[3] In 1866 there appeared a two-volume *Esquisse d'une classification systématique des doctrines philosophiques* (*Outline of a Systematic Classification of Philosophical Doctrines*), and in 1901 two works on metaphysics, *Les dilemmes de la métaphysique pure* and *Histoire et solution des problèmes métaphysiques.*[4] Renouvier's book on personalism[5] was published in 1903, and his well known work on Kant, *Critique de la doctrine de Kant*, was brought out in 1906 by his friend Louis Prat.

In the preface to his *Essais de critique générale* Renouvier announced his acceptance of one basic principle of positivism, namely the restriction of knowledge to the laws of phenomena. Though however he was prepared to assert his agreement with Comte on this point, the philosophy which he developed was certainly not positivism. As has already been mentioned, Renouvier liked to describe it as 'neo-criticism'. But while he clearly derived stimulus from Kant, in the introduction to his work on the German philosopher he roundly stated that he was concerned primarily not with exposition but with 'a critique of the Kantian *Critique*.'[1] The fact of the matter is that he used Kant's thought in developing his own personalist philosophy.

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[1] *Manuel de philosophie moderne* and *Manuel de philosophie ancienne.*

[2] *Manuel républicain de l'homme et du citoyen.*

[3] The full title is *Uchronie, l'utopie dans l'histoire. Esquisse historique du développement de la civilisation européenne, tel qu'il n'a pas été, tel qu'il aurait pu être.*

[4] *The Dilemmas of Pure Metaphysics* and *History and Solution of Metaphysical Problems.*

[5] *Le personnalisme, suivi d'une étude sur la perception externe et sur la force.*

In Renouvier's eyes one of the most objectionable features of Kant's philosophy was the theory of the thing-in-itself. Kant assumed that the phenomenon was the appearance of something other than itself. But as this something other was on Kant's own view unknowable, it was simply a superfluous fiction, like Locke's substance.[2] It does not follow however that because phenomena are not appearances of unknowable things-in-themselves, they are for Renouvier simply subjective impressions. They are all that we can perceive and all about which we can make judgments. In other words, the phenomenal and the real are the same.[3]

Another feature of the Kantian philosophy attacked by Renouvier is the theory of antimonies.[4] Kant believed, for example, that it could be both proved and disproved that the world had a beginning in time and that space is limited or finite. Renouvier saw in this thesis a flagrant disregard of the principle of non-contradiction. This verdict rather misses the point. For Kant was not concerned with denying the principle of non-contradiction. He was concerned with arguing that if the human mind pursued the path of 'dogmatic' metaphysics and claimed to know the world as a whole, it became involved in antimonies which showed that the claim was bogus and that metaphysics of the traditional kind was a pseudo-science. Renouvier however was not prepared to accept Kant's dismissal of metaphysics. And in regard to the particular points at issue he maintained that it could be proved that an infinite series of phenomena was impossible, on the ground that it involved the contradictory idea of an infinite number,[5] that space must be limited or finite, and that the contrary theses could be decisively disproved. In other words, no antimony arose, as only one of the opposed theses could be proved, not both as Kant thought.

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[1] *Doctrine de Kant*, p. 3.

[2] Renouvier collaborated with F. Pillon in translating Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* into French; and he thought that Hume was right in eliminating the concept of substance as expounded by Locke.

[3] The word 'phenomenon' tends to suggest, as Renouvier admits, the idea of the appearance of a reality which does not itself appear. But for Renouvier the phenomenon is simply the thing as appearing or as capable of appearing.

[4] See Vol. VI of this *History*, pp. 286 f.

[5] If we like to look back to medieval philosophy ,we can say that Renouvier was at one with St. Bonaventure, who maintained that the impossibility of an infinite series could be demonstrated. See Vol. II of this *History*, pp. 262–5 and 366–7.

Though however Renouvier criticizes Kant pretty sharply in regard to important features of the latter's philosophy, he associates his own doctrine of categories with Kant's, at any rate to the extent that he offers his own doctrine as an improvement on that of the German philosopher. For Renouvier the basic and most general or abstract of all categories is that of relation, inasmuch as nothing at all can be known except as related. Renouvier then proceeds to add the categories of number, position, succession, quality, becoming, causality, finality or purposiveness and personality, the movement being from the most abstract to the most concrete. It is evident that Renouvier's list of categories differs from Kant's. Further, no attempt is made to deduce the categories *a priori* by a transcendental method. As with Cournot, Renouvier's categories are based on or derived from experience. The connection with Kant is thus pretty loose. But this does not alter the fact that Renouvier derived some stimulus from Kant and liked to think of himself as Kant's true successor.

Similarly, we can see a connection between Kant's theory of faith as based on the practical reason or moral will and Renouvier's idea of the role played by the will in belief, an idea which appealed to William James. Here again however the connection is a loose one, being a matter of stimulus rather than of Renouvier actually adopting a Kantian doctrine. Kant made a sharp distinction between the sphere of theoretical knowledge and that of practical or moral faith; and this distinction presupposed that between the phenomenon and the noumenon. As Renouvier rejected this second distinction, it is not surprising that he refused to admit any sharp division between knowledge and belief. 'The Kantian separation between the speculative reason and the practical reason is an illusion.'[1] In the second *Essai* Renouvier insisted that certitude always involves an element of belief, and that belief involves the will to believe. This is applicable even to the *Cogito, ergo sum* of Descartes. For an act of the will is required to unite the I-subject and the me-object in the assertion of personal existence.

What Renouvier does is to extend the scope of Kant's account of practical faith beyond the sphere to which Kant confines it. The objection then arises that nothing much is being said. For example, suppose that I maintain that the will to believe enters even into science. And suppose that I then go on to explain that what I mean is that the scientist's activity rests on an act of choice, that he wills to embrace the hypothesis which seems to him most probable or most likely to prove fruitful in a scientific context, and that the actual decision to adopt an hypothesis which is in principle revisible involves an act of the will. The comment might be made that what I say is true, but that it has little to do with the will to believe in the sense in which this idea has given rise to objections. When however Renouvier rejects Kant's sharp division between the theoretical and practical uses of reason, he is claiming that in all knowledge there is a personal element, an intervention of the will. In other words, he is developing a theory of knowledge in the light of a personalist philosophy. We have seen that for him personality is the most concrete of the basic categories. And he insists that in the activity of the human person no absolute dichotomy between reason and will can legitimately be made, though in this or that sphere of activity there may be of course a predominance of reason or of will or of feeling. In the ethical field this personalist approach shows itself in Renouvier's disapproval of Kant's tendency to think that an action has moral worth in proportion as it is performed simply and solely out of a sense of obligation and without regard to inclination and feeling. As moral action is the expression of the whole person, duty and feeling, for Renouvier, should ideally accompany one another.

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[1] *Doctrine de Kant*, p. 164.

Sometimes Renouvier refers to phenomena in a quite general way, as when he maintains that phenomena and the relations between them constitute the objects of human knowledge. At the same time he insists that there are irreducible levels of reality, culminating in the level of personality. Man can of course try to interpret himself exclusively in terms of categories or concepts which are applicable at a non-human level. This attempt is possible because, while the mind cannot conceive any phenomenon except in terms of the basic category of relation, there is room for choice in the selection of more determinate categories. Though possible however, attempts at reductionism are bound to fail. For example, freedom is a datum of consciousness. While rejecting Kant's notion of man as noumenally free and phenomenally determined and insisting that man is free as a phenomenon,[1] Renouvier agrees with Kant in associating awareness of freedom with the moral consciousness. The possibilities of choice and action are of course limited in various ways. The moral agent, 'capable of contraries, does not cease from being circumscribed within a static or dynamic order of relations.'[2] But though the area of freedom should not be exaggerated, morality cannot be understood unless we conceive freedom as an attribute of the human person. Freedom is indeed a datum of the moral consciousness rather than something which can be demonstrated. For Renouvier however determinism cannot be held without the determinist involving himself in the absurdity of claiming that the man who asserts freedom is determined to assert that he sees himself to be free.

When Renouvier talks about the free moral agent, it is of course the individual person of whom he is speaking.[3] In the philosophical area he has no use for Spinozism or for theories of the Absolute as found in post-Kantian German idealism or, in general, for any philosophical theory which represents individuals as moments in the life of the One. His dislike for such theories extends to any form of positivism which represents history as a necessary process subject to a law or laws and, in the theological sphere, to beliefs which seem to him to make human beings puppets of a divine universal causality. In the political field Renouvier is vehemently opposed to any political theory which depicts the State as a subsistent entity over and above its members He is not indeed an anarchist. But the desirable society is for him one which is founded on respect for the individual person as a free moral agent. The State is not itself a person or a moral agent: it is a name for individuals organized in certain ways and acting collectively. In his work on the science of morals Renouvier lays emphasis on the fictional character of such concepts as 'the nation'[4] and he insists that if the State is regarded as a subsistent entity, the conclusion will be drawn either that there is one morality for the State and another for the individual or that the State stands above the ethical sphere. The moral order can be built up only by persons acting together or in concert; but it is by individual persons that it is constructed and maintained, not by a fictional super-person.

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[1] In Renouvier's opinion this attempt to have things both ways is another example of Kant's neglect of the principle of non-contradiction. As for Renouvier's insistence that man is free as a phenomenon, it must be remembered that by this he means that man as we experience him is free. He is not of course thinking in terms of the Kantian distinction between phenomenon and thing-in-itself, which, as we have seen, he rejects.

[2] *Essais,* II, p. 466.

[3] Like Leibniz, Renouvier had an acute sense of differentiation. And in 1899 he published, in collaboration with L. Prat, a work entitled *The New Monadology* (*La nouvelle monadologie*).

[4] *La science de la morale,* II, chapter 96.

As the title of his work *La science de la morale* clearly implies, Renouvier believes that there can be a science of ethics. For this to be possible there must of course be moral phenomena. And inasmuch as science is concerned with relations between phenomena, we might perhaps expect that he would confine the sphere of morality to relations between different persons. But this is not in fact the case. In Renouvier's opinion the concept of rights has meaning only within a social context. Rights as a moral phenomenon arise only in society. But though a man has rights only in relation to his fellows, and though in a social context rights and duties are correlative, the concept of duty is for Renouvier more fundamental than that of rights. It would be absurd to speak of an entirely isolated individual as possessing rights; but he would have moral duties. For in every individual there is a relation between what he is and his higher or ideal self, and he is under an obligation to realize this higher self in his character and conduct. Renouvier thus agrees with Kant that obligation is the basic moral phenomenon; but he distinguishes various aspects of obligation. There is obligation on the part of the will to be in conformity with the ideal (*devoir-être*); there is obligation on the part of persons to perform their duty (*devoir-faire*); and one can also say that certain things ought to be (*devoir-être*), through human agency that is to say.[1] In society the concept of justice arises and becomes effective; and justice demands respect for the value and rights of other persons who, as Kant maintained, should not be used simply as means to the attainment of one's own ends.

As Renouvier insisted on personality as the highest category and on the value of the human person, it is natural that he should be opposed not only to any exaltation of the State but also to dogmatism and authoritarianism in the religious sphere. He was a strong anti-clerical and a supporter of secular education;[2] and for a time he published an anti-Catholic supplement (*La critique*

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[1] *La science de la morale*, I, p. 10.

[2] In 1879 Renouvier published a *Little Treatise on Morals for the Secular Schools* (*Petit traité de morale pour les écoles laïques*).

religieuse) to his philosophical periodical. Renouvier was not however an atheist. He regarded reflection on the moral consciousness as opening the way to and as rendering legitimate, thought not as logically entailing, belief in God. And he insisted that God must be conceived in terms of man's highest category, and so as personal. At the same time Renouvier's conviction that recognition of the existence of evil was incompatible with belief in an infinitely good, omnipotent and omniscient Deity led him to conceive of God as finite or limited. It was only this concept, he believed, which could allow for man's creative freedom and responsibility.

It has been said of Renouvier that he was the philosopher of radicalism and that he combined the outlook of the Enlightenment and the revolution's ideal of liberty with themes which reappeared in the spiritualist movement in French thought, while employing the Kantian philosophy to sever the link between these themes and traditional metaphysics. And there is doubtless truth in this view. It is significant however that the last work which he himself published was entitled *Personalism*. As has already been noted, Renouvier described his philosophy as neo-criticism. And in the posthumously published *Last Conversations* he is recorded as referring to a study of the categories as being the key to everything. But it is arguable that what most attracted Renouvier in Kant's thought were its personalist elements. And it was his own personalism which determined his attitude to German metaphysical idealism,[1] to Comte's idea of history as governed by a law, to determinism, to traditional theology, to the Catholic Church as he saw it, to deification of the State on the one hand and to communist ideas and projects on the other.

3. It is customary to describe Octave Hamelin (1856–1907) as a disciple of Renouvier. Indeed, this was the way in which he described himself. He dedicated his main work, an *Essay on the Principal Elements of Representation* (*Essai sur les éléments principaux de la représentation*, 1907) to Renouvier; and in his posthumously published book *The System of Renouvier*[2] he asserted that this system had been for him 'the object of long meditations'.[3] Though however Renouvier's neo-criticism certainly exercised a considerable influence on Hamelin, the latter,

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[1] The reference is of course to doctrines of the Absolute.
[2] *Le système de Renouvier*, edited by P. Mouy (1927).
[3] *Le système de Renouvier*, p. 2.

who became a professor at the Sorbonne, used Renouvier's thought as a point of departure for his own thinking. He was not a disciple in the sense of someone who simply adopts, continues and defends the master's system. For the matter of that, Hamelin was influenced by other thinkers too, such as Jules Lachelier (1832–1918), whose philosophy will be considered in connection with the so-called spiritualist movement in French thought.

It would be untrue to say that in his theory of categories Renouvier simply juxtaposed a number of basic concepts without any serious attempt to exhibit their mutual relations. For he tried to show that the other categories, culminating in that of personality, were progressively more concrete specifications of the most abstract and universal category, namely relation. Further, he represented each category as a synthesis between a thesis and an antithesis. Number, for example, was said to be a synthesis of unity and plurality. In other words, Renouvier attempted a dialectical deduction of the categories. In Hamelin's opinion however Renouvier's procedure was insufficiently systematic. What was needed was to develop a systematic dialectical construction of the categories in such a way that they would together constitute a complete system. In this way 'M. Renouvier's table of categories would develop into a completely rational system'.[1] The more systematic thought becomes, the more complete it is.

Like Renouvier, Hamelin begins with the category of relation, which he tries to establish in this way. It is a primitive fact of thought that 'everything *posited* excludes an *opposited*, that every *thesis* leaves outside itself an *antithesis*, and that the two opposed factors have meaning only in so far as they are mutually exclusive.'[2] To this primitive fact however we must add another which completes it. As the opposed factors receive their meaning precisely through their mutual opposition, they form two parts of one whole. This synthesis is a relation. 'Thesis, antithesis and synthesis, here is the simplest law of things in its three phases. We shall call it by the single word *relation*.'[3]

Having established, to his satisfaction, the basic category of relation, Hamelin proceeds to deduce that of number. In what he describes as relation the two opposed factors, the thesis and antithesis, exist in mutual opposition. It can therefore be said that the one needs the other in order to exist. At the same time the inability of the one to exist without the other implies that in some way

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[1] *Système de Renouvier*, p. 114. [2] *Essai*, p. 1. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

(*en quelque façon*) the one must exist without the other, in the manner, that is to say, which is compatible with, or indeed necessitated by, their mutual opposition. And 'number is the relation in which one posits that the one is without the other'.[1]

We cannot follow Hamelin through his whole deduction of the categories. Nor indeed would it be very profitable to do so. The list or table differs somewhat from Renouvier's. For example, the category of time is deduced before that of space. Both men however begin with relation and end with personality. According to Hamelin the category of personality is the synthesis of causality (efficient causality that is to say) and of finality, the synthesis taking the form of being existing for itself. To exist for oneself is to be conscious. 'The for-itself or consciousness: such is the synthesis to which we aspired.'[2] Inasmuch as all the other categories are progressively more concrete specifications of the most abstract category of relation, the final category must be itself a relation. Further, as final it must be a relation which does not give rise to or demand any further category. These conditions are fulfilled in consciousness, which is 'the synthesis of the ego and the non-ego, the reality outside which the one and the other possess existence only in an abstract sense'.[3]

Hamelin's approach to the deduction of the categories is, as he intended, much more *a priori* and rationalistic than Renouvier's. And the influence of German idealism is clear. Hamelin presents us with a series of categories which are supposed to constitute a complete and self-contained system in which, in a real sense, beginning and end coincide. 'The two extremes of the hierarchy are doubtless demonstrated the one by the other, but not in the same manner. The more simple derives from the more complex by a series of analyses: the more complex superimposes itself necessarily on the more simple by a series of syntheses.'[4] In other words, it is possible to start with self-consciousness or personality and proceed backwards, so to speak, by a process of analysis from the more complex and concrete to the more simple and abstract. And it is also possible to start with the most abstract and simple category and let the system develop itself towards the more complex and concrete through the dialectical process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis.

The question arises whether Hamelin regards himself as concerned simply with the deduction of human forms of representation, with human ways of conceiving things-in-themselves which are independent of consciousness. The answer is in the negative. 'The thing-in-itself can only be a fiction, because the idea of it is self-contradictory.'[1] The non-ego exists only in relation to the ego, for consciousness that is to say. If it seems to follow from this view that the world consists of relations, this does not deter Hamelin. 'The world is a hierarchy of relations. . . .'[2] it is constituted 'not of things but of relations'.[3] Representation is not a mirror. It 'does not reflect an object and a subject which would exist without it; it is object and subject, it is reality itself. Representation is being, and being is representation.'[4] In other words, mind or spirit is the Absolute. This last term would indeed be inappropriate, if it were understood as referring to an ultimate reality beyond all relations. 'But if by absolute one understands that which contains in itself all relations, we must say that Mind is the absolute.'[5]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 31. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 266. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 267. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Hamelin does not of course intend to assert that the whole world is the content of my consciousness, in the sense that it exists solely in relation to myself as this particular subject. Some might wish to argue that from a logical point of view idealism of this kind cannot avoid solipsism. For him the subject-object relation falls within the Absolute. What he is claiming is that reality is the dialectical unfolding of thought or consciousness through a hierarchy of grades. And his insistence that the dialectical advance from the more simple and abstract to the more complex and concrete is 'synthetic' rather than purely 'analytic' leaves room for a theory of creative emergent evolution, provided that the process is interpreted in an idealist sense, as the development of consciousness. Hamelin therefore denies that consciousness must always mean clear consciousness, 'that of which the psychologists ordinarily speak.'[6] We must allow for 'an indefinite extension of consciousness'.[7] As Leibniz maintained, every being perceives or mirrors the whole; 'and this sort of consciousness suffices.'[8] Reflective consciousness represents a level which is reached only through the progressive development of mind or spirit.[9]

This may sound as though Hamelin is simply claiming that we can look on reality as a unified process whereby potential consciousness is progressively actualized. In point of fact however he tries to combine his idealism with theism. 'God, it goes without saying, is the spirit in which we have not hesitated to recognize the absolute.'[1] In other words, the Absolute is personal. In Leibnizian language, the existence of God, as absolute spirit, is a truth of reason; but the divine goodness, according to Hamelin, is a truth of fact. That is to say, 'it was not, it could not be necessary that the absolute spirit should become absolute goodness. . . . In the field of possibility there was offered to the spirit, besides absolute goodness, the vista (*perspective*) of some erroneous perversity such as that which pessimism torments itself by imagining.'[2] Like Schelling, Hamelin thinks of God as willing goodness freely, and of the divine freedom being reflected in man's capacity to choose good or evil.[3]

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[1] *Système de Renouvier*, p. 50.
[2] *Essai, p.* 15.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 272.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 279.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 363.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 269.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 269.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 269.
[9] Like the German term *Geist*, the French term *esprit* is difficult to translate. Both 'mind' and 'spirit' have their drawbacks.

In some respects Hamelin's idealism has an obvious affinity with that of Hegel. But he does not seem to have made any prolonged study of Hegel's philosophy; and he appears to have regarded the Hegelian Absolute in much the same way as Hegel himself had regarded Schelling's theory of the Absolute in his so-called 'system of identity'. That is to say, Hamelin interpreted Hegel as maintaining that no positive terms could be predicated of the Absolute, with the result that, as far as our knowledge was concerned, the Absolute would be a void, the night in which all cows are black as Hegel sarcastically remarked with reference to Schelling's theory of the Absolute as the vanishing-point of all differences. Hamelin's interpretation of Hegel is clearly disputable. But it is understandable that Hamelin insists on the personal character of the Absolute. For he follows Renouvier in regarding personality as the highest category and as the developed form of the abstract category of relation. On Hamelin's premises, if the Absolute is the totality, the all-embracing relation, it must be personal. At any rate this description is entailed by his premises even if it is difficult to see what precisely is meant by it. For one thing, if we start with the human subject or ego as standing to the non-ego in a reciprocal relationship, it is none too easy to see how we can detach the world, considered as object for a subject, from the human subject and attach it to a divine subject. Indeed, it is difficult to see how solipsism can be successfully evaded, except by recourse to the demands of common sense. For another thing, while identification of God with reality as a whole has the advantage of making unnecessary any proof of God's existence, it is none too clear that this identification can be properly described as theism. In other words, Hamelin's idealist metaphysics seems to stand in need of a good deal of rethinking. But the philosopher was only fifty-one years old when he died in an attempt to save two persons from drowning. And it is obviously impossible to know what modifications, if any, he would have made in his system, had he lived longer.

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[1] *Essai*, p. 269. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 370.

[3] Freedom is defined by Hamelin as 'the synthesis of necessity and contingency'; and a free action is said to be 'the same thing as a motivated action' *Ibid.*, p. 310.

4. To treat here of Léon Brunschvicg (1869–1944) is open to objection on the ground that reference should be made to him after discussion of Bergson and not before. But though the objection is doubtless valid on chronological grounds, it is convenient to include him in the chapter devoted to the critical philosophy in France. Brunschvicg was first and foremost a philosopher who reflected on the nature of mind or spirit as it reveals itself historically in its activity in various fields. And his reflections on mathematics and science have to be seen in this light.

Born at Paris, Brunschvicg studied first at the Lycée Condorcet and then at the École Normale where in 1891 he received the licentiate in both letters and science. In 1897 he published his doctoral thesis on *The Modality of Judgment*.[1] In 1909 he was appointed to a chair of philosophy at the Sorbonne. In 1940 he retired to the south of France. His publications included *Les étapes de la philosophie des mathématiques* (1912, *Stages in the Philosophy of Mathematics*), *L'expérience humaine et la causalité physique* (1922, *Human Experience and Physical Causality*), *Le progrès de la conscience dans la philosophie occidentale* (1927, *The Progress of Consciousness in Western Philosophy*) and *La philosophie de l'esprit* (1949, *The Philosophy of Mind*). Brunschvicg also wrote on Spinoza and Pascal, besides publishing a well known edition of the latter's *Pensées* in 1897.

In his work on the modality of judgment Brunschvicg asserts his idealist standpoint clearly enough. From the properly philosophical point of view 'knowledge is no longer an accident which is added from without to being, without altering it . . .; knowledge constitutes a world which is for us the world. Beyond it there is nothing. A thing which was beyond knowledge would be by definition inaccessible, non-determinable. That is to say, for us it would be equivalent to nothing.'[1] In philosophy the mind 'seeks to grasp itself in its movement, in its activity. . . . Intellectual activity coming to consciousness of itself, this is the integral study of integral knowledge, this is philosophy.'[2] In other words, from the point of view of naïve common sense the object of knowledge is something external and fixed, something which, in itself, lies outside knowledge but which comes to be known. We make the transition to the philosophical point of view when we see that the distinction between subject and object arises within the sphere of reason, of the mind's activity. According to Brunschvicg therefore his own (or contemporary) idealism should not be confused with a subjective idealism which is opposed to a metaphysical realism. Critical or 'rational idealism'[3] does not entail a denial of any distinction between subject and object or between man and his environment. What it entails is the assertion that this distinction arises within consciousness, and that something beyond consciousness and knowledge would be for us nothing at all.

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[1] The second edition of *La modalité du jugement* appeared in 1934. The third edition, amplified by a French translation of the Latin thesis on the metaphysical force of the syllogism according to Aristotle, was published at Paris in 1964.

Brunschvicg's idea of philosophy as the mind's activity in coming to reflective consciousness of itself naturally recalls the transcendental philosophy of Kant. Though however Brunschvicg is perfectly well aware of Kant's influence on the development of idealism, he insists that the philosophy which he has in mind does not consist in an *a priori* deduction of supposedly unchangeable categories. He sees the mind as coming to know itself through reflection on its activity as manifested historically in, for example, the development of science. And through this reflection the mind sees that its categories change: it sees its own inventiveness and creativity and is open to new categories and ways of thought. The Kantian attitude leads to a sterile idealism. Genuine idealism is 'a doctrine of the living mind. . . . All progress in the knowledge and determination of the mind is linked to the progress of science.'[4] It is not however simply a question of science. In the sphere of morals too genuine idealism remains open to a fresh understanding of moral principles in the light of social progress. As has been mentioned, Brunschvicg published a work on the progress of consciousness in western philosophy. The word *conscience* can mean conscience as well as consciousness. And just as Brunschvicg rejects an *a priori* deduction of categories which would exclude any radical changes in scientific theory, so does he reject any *a priori* deduction of moral principles which would exclude advances in moral insight. The mind or spirit comes to know itself in its activity, but its activity has not ceased at any given point at which it reflects on itself. Science is capable of change and progress; so is society; and so is man's moral life. The mind may aspire to a comprehensive and final synthesis; but it cannot attain it. For the mind or spirit remains inventive and creative. It creates new forms and comes to know itself in and through its own creations.

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[1] *La modalité du jugement* (1964 edition), p. 2.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[3] *L'idéalisme contemporain* (1905), p. 5.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 176.

Metaphysics, for Brunschvicg, is reducible to the theory of knowledge; the constitutive act of knowledge is the judgment; and judgment is characterized by the affirmation of being.[1] But what is affirmed or posited as being can be affirmed in two ways. In the first place it can be affirmed simply in the sphere of intelligibility, under the form of 'interiority'. That is to say, the being which is posited is constituted simply by an intelligible relation. An arithmetical judgment is of this type. The being of the copula is purely logical. In the second place the being affirmed can be that of existence, the judgment being the expression of the mind's recognition of a 'shock', of its being constrained or limited, as it were, by something external to itself and of its own activity in giving content to this experience of constraint.[2] We are not however faced with an irreducible dualism between purely formal judgments on the one hand and discrete judgments of perception on the other. For the mind or intellect seeks intelligibility, unity that is to say. The judgments which in the first instance belong to the purely intelligible sphere of interiority are applied, and the relations affirmed in the sphere of exteriority are subjected to the conditions or demands of intelligibility. In brief, the world of mathematical physics is constructed. This creation of the mind's activity cannot however be given the form of pure mathematics, an exclusively deductive form. There is a constant tension between 'interiority' and 'exteriority'. The scientist deduces; but he must also test empirically, having recourse to experience. In the area of pure mathematics necessity rules; in that of science probability holds sway. The world of science is the creation of the human spirit;[1] but it is a creation which never reaches a final and absolutely irreformable state.

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[1] *La modalité du jugement*, p. 40.

[2] It is intelligence, according to Brunschvicg, which determines the object. That which is given in the 'shock' is completely undetermined. Any judgment of perception involves both interiority and exteriority.

In his treatment of the moral sphere, that of the practical judgment, Brunschvicg again emphasizes the human spirit's movement towards unification. He sees human beings as moving towards assimilation through participation in the activity of consciousness as it creates values which transcend self-centredness. In the theoretical sphere reason creates a network of coherent relations, as it moves towards the ideal limit of an all-encompassing coherent system. In the sphere of the moral life too the human spirit moves towards the interrelations of justice and love. As for religion, there is no question with Brunschvicg of a personal God transcending the sphere of human consciousness. He uses the word 'God', it is true; but with him it signifies reason as transcending the individual as such, though immanent in him, and as moving towards unification. 'Man participates in the divinity inasmuch as he is *particeps rationis*.'[2] And human life has a religious dimension in so far as it overcomes the barriers between man and man.

Brunschvicg is better described as an idealist than as a philosopher of science. It would not however be fair to him, if one were to represent him simply as forcing science into an idealist framework of thought. He does indeed start with idealist presuppositions; and it is undeniable that they influence his interpretation of science. At the same time he insists that the nature of mind or spirit can be seen only by studying its activity. And though his idealism influences his interpretation of science, his reflection on science in its actual development influences his idealist philosophy. For example, he sees clearly enough that science militates against the idea that the process of arriving at knowledge can be represented as a purely deductive process. He also sees however that the scientist's inventiveness and creativity rules out pure empiricism. And it is perhaps worth noting that in Einstein's relativity theory he saw a confirmation of his view of science as revealing the mutual interdependence of reason and experience. He also saw in it of course a justification of his rejection of fixed categories and of space and time as realities which are antecedent to and independent of the activity of the mind. 'In all domains, from the analysis of Cauchy or of Georg Cantor to the physics of M. Planck or of M. Einstein the decisive discoveries have been made in the opposite direction to the schema which was predetermined by the doctrine of forms and categories. Instead of applying unchangeable principles to new matter, progress has consisted on the one hand in looking back to the classical principles in order to question their apodictic truth and on the other hand in bringing to birth novel and unforeseeable relations.'[1] Whatever we may think of the Fichtean elements in Brunschvicg's thought (his attempt, for example, to derive externality from the activity of reason), he certainly did not try to canonize certain scientific theories in the name of philosophy. For it was precisely changes in scientific theory which he saw as revealing the inventiveness and creativity of the mind, a creativity which he also saw in the ethical sphere.

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[1] So of course is the world of common sense or of the pre-scientific consciousness. Both are real.

[2] *Le progrès de la conscience*, p. 796. In 1939 Brunschvicg published *La raison et la religion* (*Reason and Religion*).

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 705.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SPIRITUALIST MOVEMENT

The term 'spiritualism'—The philosophy of Ravaisson—J. Lachelier and the bases of induction—Boutroux and contingency—A. Fouillée on idées-forces*—M. J. Guyau and the philosophy of life.*

1. It hardly needs saying that when the term 'spiritualism' is used as a philosophical label in the context of nineteenth-century thought in France, it has nothing to do with the belief that the living can communicate with departed spirits by means of practices which are thought appropriate for the purpose. To give to the term a precise positive definition is however none too easy. Victor Cousin used it to refer to his own eclecticism. And in his *Letter on Apologetics* Maurice Blondel remarked that the label should be relegated to the lumber-room, inasmuch as it shared the discredit into which eclecticism had fallen.[1] In spite of Blondel however Cousin's philosophy is still sometimes referred to as 'eclectic spiritualism' or 'spiritualist eclecticism'. And if by 'spiritualism' we mean a rejection of materialism and determinism and an assertion of the ontological priority of spirit to matter, this description of Cousin's philosophy is doubtless justified. But if the term is understood in this wide sense, it covers all theistic philosophies and the various forms of absolute idealism, such as the thought of Hamelin. It would then lack any specific reference to modern French philosophy and could be used to describe the philosophies of, say, Aquinas, Descartes, Berkeley, Schelling, Hegel, Rosmini and Berdyaev.

Perhaps the best policy is to abandon any attempt to give a precise abstract definition and to say simply that in the present context the word 'spiritualism' is used to signify the current of thought which recognizes Maine de Biran as a fountainhead and which runs from Ravaisson through Lachelier, Fouillée and others to Bergson. In other words, the term is used to signify a movement in which Maine de Biran's insistence on the spontaneity of the human will and his reflection on the human spirit's activity as a key to the nature of reality are seen as a counterblast to the materialism and determinism of some of the thinkers of the Enlightenment and as a return to what are regarded as the genuine traditions of French philosophy. Cousin's thought then qualifies for being described as spiritualist to the extent in which he derives stimulus from Maine de Biran or from ideas similar to those of de Biran. It must be added however that as the movement develops Maine de Biran's psychological approach and his emphasis on the spontaneity and freedom of the will come to take the form of a general philosophy of life. This is obvious enough in the case of Bergson. Indeed, though Bergson acknowledged an indebtedness to Maine de Biran and Ravaisson, it is arguable that in some respects Blondel stands closer than Bergson to de Biran, in spite of Blondel's recommendation that use of the term 'spiritualism' should be abandoned.

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[1] See the *Letter* as translated by A. Dru and I. Trethowan, p. 150 (London, 1964).

2. Jean Gaspard Félix Ravaisson-Mollien (1813–1900), commonly known simply as Ravaisson, was born at Namur and after studies at Paris attended Schelling's lectures at Munich. In 1835 he presented to the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences a prize essay on the metaphysics of Aristotle, which was published in a revised form in 1837 under the title *Essai sur la métaphysique d'Aristote.* A second volume was added in 1846. In 1838 Ravaisson presented two theses for the doctorate at Paris, a Latin thesis on Speusippus and a French thesis on habit, *De l'habitude.* He taught philosophy for a short while at Rennes; but differences with Victor Cousin, who was then pretty well dictator of philosophical studies in the universities, stood in the way of his pursuing an academic career at Paris. In 1840 he was appointed inspector general of libraries, and in 1859 he became inspector general of higher education. Ravaisson was interested not only in philosophy but also in art, especially painting, and in classical antiquities. He was elected to membership both of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences and of the Academy of Inscriptions and Fine Arts. In 1870 he was appointed curator of classical antiquities at the Louvre.

In 1867 Ravaisson published, at the request of the government, a Report on *Philosophy in France in the Nineteenth Century* (*Rapport sur la philosophie en France au XIXe siècle*) in which he provided both a source of information about a large number of philosophers and a programmatic defence of the metaphysical tradition of spiritualist realism, which he saw as going back beyond the nineteenth century and as having been reasserted by Maine de Biran. Ravaisson took the opportunity of attacking not only positivism but also the eclecticism of Cousin, of which he took a dim view, regarding it as a pitiable mixture of the Scottish philosophy of common sense with some misunderstood ideas derived from Maine de Biran. In effect it was made pretty clear that de Biran's true successor was Ravaisson himself. His *Philosophical Testament and Fragments* was published posthumously in 1901 in the *Revue des deux mondes.*[1]

As the title indicates, Ravaisson's *De l'habitude* is devoted to a special topic; but his treatment of the theme exhibits a general philosophical outlook. Reflection on our habit-forming, according to the author, shows that in habit voluntary movement, which encounters resistance and is accompanied by the feeling of effort, is transformed into instinctive movement, the conscious tending to become unconscious. In habit the spontaneous activity of life submits, as it were, to its material conditions, to the sphere of mechanism, and in so doing provides a basis for the further activity of will, of the voluntary movement and effort of which, as Maine de Biran argued, we are conscious in ourselves. This can be seen in the formation of physical habits, which form the foundation and background of purposeful action. To take a simple example, if I decide to walk to a friend's house to visit him, the carrying out of my purpose presupposes the formation of physical habits such as those of walking. And we can see an analogous situation in the ethical sphere, where, according to Ravaisson, virtuous activity is at first achieved only by deliberate effort but can become habitual, thus forming a 'second nature' and providing a basis for the further pursuit of ideals.

More generally, Ravaisson sees in the world two basic factors, space as the condition of permanence or stability, time as the condition of change. To these two factors there correspond respectively matter and life. The former is the sphere of necessity and mechanism, the latter of the spontaneous activity which is manifested in living organisms and which in man rises to the level of 'freedom of the understanding'.[2] The point of intersection between the two spheres is habit, which combines in itself the mechanism of matter and the dynamic finality of life. If however habit presupposes voluntary movement and effort[1] and is, so to speak, intelligence which has gone to sleep or has entered an infra-conscious state, and if it provides the basis for further activity by the will, this shows the priority, from the finalistic point of view, of the upward movement of life. Between the lowest limit of Nature and 'the highest point of reflective freedom there is an infinity of degrees which measure the development of one and the same power'.[2] Habit 'redescends' the line of descent and can be described as an intuition in which the real and the ideal are one.

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[1] There is a separate edition of the *Testament philosophique et fragments*, edited by C. Devivaise (Paris, 1932).

[2] *De l'habitude*, p. 28 (Revue de métaphysique et de morale, XII, 1894).

In the emphasis which Ravaisson places on voluntary movement and effort and in his tendency to look within man for the key to the secret of the world we see of course the inspiration of Maine de Biran. In his theory of habit we can also see evidence of the influence of Schelling, for example in talk about the unity of the ideal and the real.[3] Looking forward, we can see a clear anticipation of Bergsonian themes. In the commemorative discourse which Bergson delivered on succeeding Ravaisson as a member of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences he referred to *De l'habitude* and made the following comment. 'Thus habit gives us the living demonstration of this truth, that mechanism is not self-sufficient: it would be only, so to speak, the fossilized residue of a spiritual activity.'[4] In other words, Bergson sees in Ravaisson's thought an anticipation of his own theory of the *élan vital* and of Nature as obscured consciousness or dormant volition.

Ravaisson's theory of habit expresses his conviction that the lower has to be explained through reference to the higher. And this is indeed a basic element in his general philosophical outlook. Thus in his *Report* he finds fault with those philosophers who attempt to explain mental activity either in terms of physico-chemical processes or, as in phenomenalism, by reduction to impressions or in terms of abstract categories. The analytic intelligence or understanding tends by its very nature to explain phenomena by reduction to ultimate constituent elements. But though this procedure certainly has its legitimate role in natural science, Ravaisson insists that we cannot understand spiritual phenomena in this way. They have to be viewed in the light of their finality, of the goal-directed upward movement of life, both at the infra-conscious and conscious levels. This movement is grasped by a kind of intuition which apprehends it first of all in our inner experience of goal-directed effort. It is in inner experience that we can see the will as seeking the Good, which manifests itself in art as Beauty. The Good and Beauty, the ideal goals of the will, are God, or at any rate symbols of God. And in the light of this truth we can interpret the material world, considered as the sphere of necessity and mechanism, as the effect of the self-diffusion of the divine Good and as the setting for the upward movement of light.

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[1] In Ravaisson's view there can be no habits, properly speaking, in the inorganic sphere.

[2] *De l'habitude*, p. 34.

[3] On some points of course the influence of Aristotle can be discerned pretty clearly.

[4] *La pensée et le mouvant. Essais et conférences*, p. 296, (3rd edition, 1934).

It has been said of Ravaisson[1] that he combines the psychology of Maine de Biran with the metaphysics of Schelling, whereas in the discourse to which reference has been made above Bergson remarks that Schelling's influence on Ravaisson should not be exaggerated[2] and that the vision of the universe as the manifestation of an ultimate reality which gives of itself in liberality was to be found among the Greek philosophers.[3] Bergson prefers to emphasize the influence of the development of biological studies in nineteenth-century science.[4] Though however there is doubtless a good deal of truth in what Bergson says, the influence of Schelling cannot be discounted. Ravaisson's view of Nature clearly has some affinity with Schelling's picture of Nature as slumbering spirit, even if in his *Report* he refers more to contemporary psychological ideas and theories. Further, Ravaisson's tendency to regard creation as a kind of cosmic Fall and his emphasis on the idea of a return to God justifies reference to the influence of the German philosopher. In any case we can see in Ravaisson's distinction between the activity of the analytic intelligence on the one hand and, on the other, an intuitive grasp of the movement of life an anticipation of central themes in the philosophy of Bergson.

3. Though Ravaisson was never a professor at Paris, he none the less exercised a considerable influence. It was he who divined the philosophical capacity of Jules Lachelier (1832–1918), when the latter was a student of the École Normale, and who did his best to promote Lachelier's career. In his years as a professor at the École Normale (1864–1875) Lachelier was himself to have a powerful stimulative effect on the minds of students of philosophy. He was not however a prolific writer. In 1871 he published a work

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[1] By R. Berthelot.

[2] *La pensée et le mouvant*, p. 291.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 317.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 303.

on induction, *Du fondement de l'induction,* which was his French thesis for the doctorate, the Latin thesis being on the syllogism.[1] He also published a number of essays, the best known of which deal with psychology and metaphysics (*Psychologie et métaphysique,* 1885) and with Pascal's wager (*Notes sur le pari de Pascal,* 1901). But his *Works,* which include inverventions during discussions at the French Society of Philosophy and annotations on draft entries for Lalande's *Vocabulaire,* form only two modest volumes.[2] When Lachelier retired from the École Normale in 1875, he was appointed inspector of the Academy of Paris; and in 1879 he became inspector general of public education. In 1896 he was elected a member of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences.

There would be ample justification for considering the thought of Lachelier in the chapter on neo-criticism and idealism. For in his main work, that on induction, he approaches his theme in a Kantian manner, by inquiring into the necessary conditions of our experience of the world. And on this basis he outlines an idealist philosophy which makes him a predecessor of Hamelin. At the same time there are elements in his thought which exercised an influence on the spiritualist movement; and though Bergson was not actually a pupil of Lachelier, as a student he read the work on induction and regarded its author as his teacher. Further, Lachelier referred to his own thought as a form of spiritualism.

By induction Lachelier understands 'the operation by which we pass from the knowledge of facts to that of the laws which govern them'.[3] Nobody doubts that this process actually takes place in science. But it gives rise to a problem. On the one hand experience gives us only a certain number of observed cases of practical connections between phenomena; but it does not tell us that they must be always so connected. On the other hand in inductive reasoning we do not hesitate to draw a universal conclusion, applying to unobserved and future connections; and, according to Lachelier, this implies that we are confident of the reign of necessity in Nature. He does not intend to assert that induction is in practice always correct. 'In fact, induction is always subject to error.'[4] But the revisibility of scientific laws does not alter the fact that our attempts to formulate them rest on and express a confidence that there are necessary connections to be found. And the question arises, can this confidence be theoretically justified? Or, as Lachelier puts it, what is the principle in virtue of which we add to the data of experience the elements of universality and necessity?

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[1] *De natura syllogismi* (1871).

[2] *Oeuvres de Jules Lachelier* (Paris, 1933).

[3] *Oeuvres,* I, p. 21.

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 25.

In the first place induction implies that phenomena are organized in series of mechanically related members. To put the matter in another way, phenomena are intelligible only if they are subject to the law of efficient causality. But the principle of causality does not by itself provide a sufficient basis for induction. For inductive reasoning presupposes not only mechanically related series of phenomena but also complex and recurring groups of phenomena, functioning as wholes, each whole being of such a kind that it determines the existence of its parts. A whole of this kind is what we call a final cause. The concept of laws of nature, 'with the exception of a small number of elementary laws, seems therefore to be based on two distinct principles: the one in virtue of which phenomena form series in which the existence of the preceding (member) determines that of the following; the other in virtue of which these series form in their turn systems, in which the idea of the whole determines the existence of the parts.'[1] In a nutshell, 'the possibility of induction rests on the double principle of efficient causes and of final causes.'[2]

It is one thing however to claim that inductive reasoning rests on a certain principle (or, more accurately, on two principles), and it is another thing to validate or justify this principle. Lachelier is not prepared to follow the Scottish School and Royer-Collard in appealing to common sense. Nor does he wish to claim simply that the principle is a self-evident indemonstrable truth. But though he commends J. S. Mill for trying to justify induction, he does not believe that the attempt was, or indeed could be successful, given Mill's empiricist premises. Further, he sees that if a solution is offered simply in terms of the human mind's imposing its *a priori* categories or concepts, necessitated by its own nature or structure, on phenomena which are appearances of things-in-themselves, the question can be raised whether the result of this imposition can properly be described as knowledge. In other words, Lachelier wishes to show that the principles of efficient causality and of final causes are not *a priori* simply and solely in a subjective sense, but that they govern both thought and the object of thought. This involves showing not only that, in general,

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

'the conditions of the existence of phenomena are the very conditions of the possibility of thought.'[1] but also, in particular, that the two principles on which induction rests are conditions of the possibility of thought.

In regard to the first principle, that of efficient causality, Lachelier tries to show that the serial linking of phenomena through causal relations is necessarily involved by the unity of the world, which is itself a condition of the possibility of thought. His line of argument is somewhat difficult to follow; but it proceeds on these lines. Thought would not be possible without the existence of a subject which distinguishes itself from each sensation and which remains one despite the diversity of sensations, simultaneous and successive. Here however there arises a problem. On the one hand knowledge does not consist in the activity of a subject shut up in itself and cut off from or external to its sensations. Lachelier tries to solve this problem by seeking the required unity in relations between the sensations, the subject or self being regarded not as something over and above and cut off from its sensations but rather as the 'form' of diverse sensations. But natural relations between our sensations cannot be different from relations between the corresponding phenomena. 'The question of knowing how all our sensations are united in one single thought is then precisely the same as that of knowing how all phenomena compose one single universe.'[2] For Lachelier at any rate a condition of phenomena constituting one world is that they should be causally related. Mere succession would locate phenomena in space and time; but for a real link between phenomena the causal relation is necessary. As therefore things exist for us only in so far as they are objects of thought, the condition of phenomena forming one world and the condition of the unity of thought are one and the same, namely the principle of efficient causality.

This point of view gives us only what Lachelier describes as 'a sort of idealist materialism'.[3] The world which it presents is a world in relation to thought, but it is a world of mechanical causality, of the reign of necessity. To complete the picture we have to consider the second principle of induction, namely final causality. Induction, according to Lachelier, presupposes something more than mechanically related series of discrete phenomena. It also presupposes complex and recurring groups of phenomena,

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 48.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

functioning as wholes. And we cannot account for these wholes, existing at various levels, without introducing the regulative idea of immanent finality. The most obvious example of the sort of thing which Lachelier has in mind is obviously the living organism, in the case of which the 'reason' of the whole complex phenomenon is found in itself, in an immanent final cause which governs the behaviour of the parts. But it is not only of living organisms that Lachelier is thinking. He has in mind all complex groups of phenomena which function as unities. Indeed, he sees every phenomenon as the manifestation of a force which expresses a spontaneous tendency towards an end. Further, it is this idea of force which explains the varying intensity of our sensations and which lies at the basis of our conviction that the world is not reducible to our sensations considered as purely subjective. Final causality may be a regulative idea; but it is required for induction which presupposes an intelligible world, one that is penetrable by thought and so reveals in itself the functioning of unconscious thought as seen in the development of recurrent unities functioning as wholes. It is not a question of final causality simply replacing or annulling mechanical causality. The latter forms a basis for the former. But once we introduce the idea of final causality as penetrating the world of mechanical causality and subordinating the latter to itself, our concept of the world changes. Materialist idealism (or idealist materialism, as Lachelier also describes it) is transformed into 'a spiritualist realism, in the eyes of which every being is a force, and every force a thought which tends to a more and more complete consciousness of itself.'[1]

The concept of spiritualist realism is developed in the essay on psychology and metaphysics. Psychology is said to have as its demesne 'sensible consciousness' (*la conscience sensible*), whereas metaphysics is described as 'the science of thought in itself, of the light at its source'.[2] This statement may give the impression that for Lachelier metaphysics is really part of psychology. For how can we exclude from psychology the study of thought? Lachelier does not mean however that the psychologist's attention must be confined to the study of sensation and perception and feeling without any reference at all to thought or will.[3] What he insists on is that psychology is concerned with thought in so far as thought becomes a datum of consciousness, an objectifiable factor in, for example, perception. Similarly, psychology is concerned with will in so far as it is manifested in man's perceptive and affective life. Philosophy or metaphysics is concerned with thought itself, pure thought, which is also pure liberty or freedom, the thought which works unconsciously in Nature, at successive levels, and which comes to think itself in and through man. Metaphysics is thus equivalent to what Lachelier elsewhere describes as the profounder spiritual realism. In the comments which he makes on the entry 'spiritualism' for Lalande's *Vocabulary* he remarks that every doctrine that recognizes the independence and primacy of spirit, in the sense of conscious thought, or that regards spirit as above Nature and irreducible to physical pressures can be described as spiritualist. He then goes on to claim that there is a profounder spiritualism which consists in seeking in spirit the explanation of Nature and in believing that the thought which operates unconsciously in Nature is the same as the thought which becomes conscious in man. 'It is this second spiritualism which was, as it seems to me, that of M. Ravaisson.'[1] Evidently, this 'second spiritualism' is metaphysics as Lachelier understands the term.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 92. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 219.

[3] In the study of 'sensible consciousness' physiology has its own field, which, according to Lachelier, consists of the laws governing the succession of states.

The thought which Lachelier has in mind is clearly absolute thought, the thought which 'posits *a priori* the conditions of all existence'.[2] And we might well feel inclined to comment that 'idealism' would be a more appropriate word than 'realism'. But by 'idealism' Lachelier tends to mean subjective idealism, in the sense of the theory that the world consists of *my* representations, actual and possible. A philosophy which recognizes a plurality of subjects and for which '*my* world' has become '*the* world' can be described as realism. At the same time Lachelier insists that in so far as different subjects attain universal truth this thought is to be considered as one, as the manifestation of the thought which operates unconsciously in Nature and consciously in man. And this point of view is generally described as objective idealism. Lachelier does indeed assert that the object of thought is other than thought itself, and that 'thought could not produce it (the object) out of itself'.[3] But he adds that this is because thought is not what it ought to be, namely intuitive in a sense which would make the object immanent to thought, so that the two would be

[1] *Ibid.*, II, p. 221.
[2] *Ibid.*, I, p. 218.
[3] *Ibid.*, II, p. 210.

one. He is presumably saying that human thinking cannot coincide entirely with absolute thought and so retains a realist outlook, even if it recognizes that the whole world is the self-manifestation of absolute thought or spirit.

Lachelier does indeed endorse Aristotle's definition of first philosophy or metaphysics as the science of being as being; but he interprets this in the sense of the science of thought in itself and in things. As this thought is the one ultimate reality or being, which, as we have seen, operates unconsciously in Nature and comes to self-awareness in and through man, Lachelier is quite prepared to admit that 'pure philosophy is essentially pantheistic'.[1] He goes on however to say that one can *believe* in a divine reality transcending the world. And at the close of his notes on Pascal's wager he remarks that 'the sublimest question of philosophy, but perhaps more religious than philosophical, is the transition from the formal absolute to the real and living absolute, from the idea of God to God.'[2] This transition is the transition from philosophy to religion. At the end of the essay on induction Lachelier asserts that spiritual realism, so far as he has presented it, is 'independent of all religion',[3] though the subordination of mechanism to finality prepares the way for an act of moral faith which transcends the limits of Nature and of thought. By 'thought' in this context he doubtless means philosophy. Religion goes beyond not only science but also philosophy. And though Brunschvicg tells us that Lachelier was a practising Catholic,[4] the latter's discussion with Durkheim makes it clear that for him religion has no intrinsic relation to a group but is 'an interior effort and consequently solitary'.[5] From the historical point of view Durkheim is justified in protesting against this rather narrow concept of religion. But Lachelier is evidently convinced that religion is essentially the individual's act of faith by which the abstract Absolute of philosophy becomes the living God.

4. Among Lachelier's pupils at the École Normale was Émile Boutroux (1845–1921). After finishing his studies at Paris Boutroux taught for a while in a lycée at Caen; but after he had received the doctorate he was given a University post, first at Montpellier, then at Nancy. From 1877 until 1886 he lectured at the École Normale at Paris, and from 1886 until 1902 he occupied a chair of philosophy at the Sorbonne. His best known work is his

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 201.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 56.
[3] *Ibid.*, I, p. 92.
[4] *Ibid.*, I, p. xvi.
[5] *Ibid.*, II, p. 171.

doctorate thesis *La contingence des lois de la nature*[1] which appeared in 1874, three years after the publication of Lachelier's work on induction. The ideas which Boutroux had expressed in his thesis were developed in a work which he published in 1895, *De l'idée de loi naturelle dans la science et la philosophie contemporaines.*[2] Other writings include *La science et la religion dans la philosophie contemporaine,*[3] which appeared in 1908, and, in the historical field, *Études d'histoire de la philosophie.*[4] The posthumously published collection of essays *La nature et l'esprit* (1926) includes the programme for Boutroux's Gifford Lectures on *Nature and Spirit* which were delivered at Glasgow in 1903–04 and 1904–05.

In his preface to the English translation of *De la contingence de lois de la nature* Boutroux remarks that philosophical systems seem to him to belong to three main types, 'the idealist, the materialist and the dualist or parallelist types.'[5] All three have a common feature, namely that they represent the laws of nature as necessary. In rationalist systems of philosophy the mind tries to reconstruct reality by means of a logical deduction of its structure from what it takes to be self-evidently true propositions. When the mind abandons this dream and turns to phenomena known through sense-perception in order to ascertain their laws, it imports the idea of logical necessity into that of natural law and depicts the world as 'an endless variety of facts, linked together by necessary and immutable bonds'.[6] The question arises however whether the concept of a necessary relation is actually exemplified in the relations between phenomena; and Boutroux proposes to argue that natural laws are contingent and that they are 'bases which enable us constantly to rise towards a higher life'.[7]

Boutroux starts, very properly, by inquiring what is meant in this context by a necessary relation. Absolute necessity, the necessity, that is to say, which eliminates all conditions and is reducible to the principle of identity ($A = A$), can be left out of account. For the laws of nature are not simply tautologies. What we are concerned with is not absolute but relative necessity, 'the existence of a necessary relation between two things.'[1] In other words, when we inquire into the alleged necessity of the laws of nature, we are looking not for purely analytic truth, but for necessarily true synthetic propositions. But here again we must make a distinction. If the laws of nature are necessarily true synthetic propositions, they cannot be *a posteriori* propositions. For while experience can reveal to us constant relations, it does not by itself reveal necessity. Nor can it do so. Hence the aim of our inquiry is to discover whether the laws of nature can properly be described as *a priori* synthetic propositions. If they can, then they must assert necessary causal relations.[2] The question therefore comes down to this. Are there *a priori* causal syntheses?

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[1] Translated by F. Rothwell as *The Contingency of the Laws of Nature* (London, 1916).

[2] Translated by F. Rothwell as *Natural Law in Science and Philosophy* (London, 1914).

[3] Translated by J. Nield as *Science and Religion in Contemporary Philosophy,* (London, 1909).

[4] Originally published in 1897, this work was translated by F. Rothwell as *Historical Studies in Philosophy* (London, 1912).

[5] *The Contingency of the Laws of Nature,* p. vi.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. vii.

It will be noted that Boutroux's use of terminology is based on that of Kant. Moreover, he does not deny that the principle of causality can be stated in such a form that it is necessarily true. At the same time he maintains that this is not the sense in which the principle is actually used in the sciences. 'In reality, the word "cause", when used scientifically means "immediate condition".'[3] For scientific purposes it is quite sufficient, for the formulation of laws, that 'relatively invariable relations exist between the phenomena'.[4] The idea of necessity is not required. In other words, the principle of causality, as actually employed in science, is derived from experience, not imposed *a priori* by the mind. It is a very general and abstract expression of observed relations; and we do not observe necessity, though we can of course observe regular sequences. True, if we restrict our attention simply and solely to quantity, to the measurable aspects of phenomena, it may be in conformity with experience to assert an absolute equivalence between cause and effect. In point of fact however we find qualitative changes, a qualitative heterogeneity, which excludes the possibility of showing that the cause (immediate condition) must contain all that is required to produce the effect. And if the effect can be disproportionate to the cause from the qualitative point of view, it follows that 'nowhere in the real concrete world can the principle of causality be rigidly applied'.[5] To be sure, it can serve as a practical maxim for the scientist.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[2] Boutroux rejects the idea that any end must necessarily be realized or that, given an end, the means are determined necessarily. He therefore restricts the field of inquiry to relations of efficient causality.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 23. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 24. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

But the development of the sciences themselves suggest that the laws of nature do not express objectively *necessary* relations and that they are not irreformable or unrevisible in principle. Our scientific laws enable us to deal successfully with a changing reality. It would be absurd to question their utility. But they are not definitive.

In his later work, *De l'idée de loi naturelle,* Boutroux carried the matter further. In pure mathematics there are of course necessary relations, depending on certain postulates. But pure mathematics is a formal science. It is obviously true that a natural science such as astronomy makes use of mathematics and could not have advanced without it. Indeed in certain sciences we can see clearly enough the attempt to fit Nature, as it were, to mathematics and to formulate the relations between phenomena in a mathematical manner. But there always remains a gap between Nature as it exists and mathematics; and this gap becomes more manifest as we shift our attention from the inorganic sphere to that of life. The scientist is justified in emphasizing the connection between biological and even mental phenomena on the one hand and physico-chemical processes on the other. But if we assume the reducibility of the laws governing biological evolution to the more general laws of physics and chemistry, it becomes impossible to explain the appearance of novelty. Despite their admitted utility, all natural laws are of the nature of compromises, approximations to an equation between reality and mathematics; and the more we proceed from the very general laws of physics to the spheres of biology, psychology and sociology, the clearer does this characteristic of approximation become. For we have to allow for creativeness and the emergence of novelty. For the matter of that, it is not certain that even on the purely physical level there is no variability, no breach in determinism.

Nowadays the idea that the structure of reality can be deduced *a priori* from basic propositions which are indemonstrable but self-evidently true can hardly be described as fashionable. And while we could not reasonably claim that there is universal agreement about the proper use of the term 'law of nature' or about the logical status of scientific laws, it is at any rate a common enough view that scientific laws are descriptive generalizations with predictive force and that they are synthetic propositions and therefore contingent. Further, we are all aware of the claim, based on Heisenberg's principle of uncertainty, that universal determinism has been disproved on the sub-atomic level. To be sure, it is not everyone who would admit that all propositions which are informative about reality are contingent.[1] Nor would everyone agree that universal determinism has in fact been disproved. The relevant point however is that a good deal of what Boutroux says about the contingency of the laws of nature represents lines of thought which are common enough today. For the matter of that, his anti-reductionism and his claim that there are qualitatively different kinds or levels of being do not appear startling. Obviously, talk about lower and higher levels of being is likely to elicit the comment that judgments of value are being made. But when Boutroux maintains that science takes the form of the sciences and that we cannot reduce all the other sciences to mathematical physics, most people would agree with him.

Boutroux is not however concerned simply with philosophy of science for its own sake. When, for example, he insists on the contingent character of the laws of nature and maintains that they cannot be reduced to and derived from an absolutely necessary truth, he is not simply pursuing an inquiry into the logical status of scientific laws. He is doing this of course; but he is also illustrating what for him are the limitations of science, with a view to arguing that there is room for a religious metaphysics which satisfies reason's demand for a unified and harmonious world-outlook. In the programme for the Gifford Lectures he remarks that 'in a general manner, science is a system of symbols with the task of providing us with a convenient and usable representation of realities which we cannot know directly. Now the existence and properties of these symbols can be explained only in terms of the original activity of the spirit.'[2] Similarly, in *Science and Religion* Boutroux asserts that science, so far from being something stamped by things on a passive intelligence, is 'an *ensemble* of symbols imagined by the mind in order to interpret things by means of pre-existent notions . . .'.[3] Science in its developed state does not presuppose a metaphysics;[4] but it does presuppose the creative activity of the mind or spirit or reason. The life of the spirit takes the form of scientific reason; but this is not the only form which it takes. The life of the spirit is something much wider, including morality, art and religion. The development therefore of the scientific use of reason, which 'seeks to systematize things from an impersonal standpoint',[1] does not exclude a 'subjective systematization',[2] based on the concept of the value of the person and on reflection on the life of the spirit in its various forms, a reflection which produces its own symbolic expression.

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[1] It would be claimed by some that there can be and are what, in Kantian terminology, would be classified as synthetic *a priori* propositions.

[2] *La nature et l'esprit*, p. 27. The words 'destiné à nous procurer' have been translated as 'having the task of providing us'.

[3] *Science and Religion in Contemporary Philosophy*, translated by J. Nield (London, 1909), p. 249.

[4] Cf. *La nature et l'esprit*, p. 15.

As Boutroux was a pupil of Lachelier, it is not surprising if we can see in his ideas about the limitations of science a certain measure of Kantian influence. His view of metaphysics however seems to have some affinity with that of Maine de Biran. For example, while allowing of course for psychology as a science, he suggests that 'it is impossible to find real frontiers between psychology and metaphysics'.[3] Similarly, 'metaphysics, to be legitimate and fruitful, must proceed not from outside to the inside, but from within outwards.'[4] He does not mean that metaphysics, 'an original activity of spirit,'[5] is science, whether psychology or otherwise, transformed into metaphysics. For a science which tries to convert itself into metaphysics is unfaithful to its own nature and aims. Boutroux means that metaphysics is spirit's reflection on its own life, which is considered in psychology from a scientific point of view but which overflows, as it were, the limits placed by this point of view.

In his general view of the universe Boutroux sees the world as a series of levels of being. A higher level is not deducible from a lower level: there is the emergence of novelty, of qualitative difference. At the same time heterogeneity and discontinuity are not the only features of the world. There is also continuity. For we can see a creative teleological process at work, a striving upwards towards an ideal. Thus Boutroux does not assert a rigid distinction between the inanimate and animate levels. There is spontaneity even at the level of so-called 'dead matter'. Moreover, in a manner reminiscent of Ravaisson, Boutroux suggests that 'animal instinct, life, physical and mechanical forces are, as it were, habits that have penetrated more and more deeply into the spontaneity of being. Hence these habits have become almost unconquerable. Seen from without, they appear as necessary laws.'[6]

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[1] *Science and Religion*, p. 365.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 365.
[3] *La nature et l'esprit*, p. 15.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 37.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 37.
[6] *The Contingency of the Laws of Nature*, p. 192.

At the human level we find conscious love and pursuit of the ideal, a love which is at the same time a drawing or attracting by the divine ideal which in this way manifests its existence. Religion, 'a synthesis—or, rather, a close and spiritual union—of instinct and intellect,'[1] offers man 'a richer and deeper life'[2] than the life of mere instinct or routine or imitation or the life of the abstract intellect. It is not so much a case of reconciling science and religion, considered as sets of theories or doctrines, as of reconciling the scientific and the religious spirits. For even if we can show that religious doctrines do not contradict scientific laws or hypotheses, this may leave unaffected the impression of an irreconcilable conflict between the scientific and religious spirits and attitudes. Reason however can strive to bring them together and to fashion, from their union, a being richer and more harmonious than either of them taken apart.[3] This union remains an ideal goal; but we can see that the religious life which, in its intense form, is always mysticism, has a positive value inasmuch as it lies 'at the heart of all the great religious, moral, political and social movements of humanity'.[4]

Bergson was a student for a while at the Ecole Normale at Paris while Boutroux was teaching there. And the latter's *Contingency of the Laws of Nature* certainly exercised an influence on his mind, even if the degrèe of influence should not be exaggerated. In any case it is clear that Bergson carried on and developed some of Boutroux's ideas, though it does not necessarily follow of course that he actually derived them directly from this source.

5. Boutroux was clearly a resolute opponent not of course of science but of scientism and of positivist naturalism. When we turn to Alfred Fouillée (1838–1912), who lectured at the École Normale at Paris from 1872 to 1875,[5] we find him adopting a more eclectic attitude and envisaging a harmonization between the valuable and true ideas in the positivist and naturalist line of thought on the one hand and the idealist and spiritualist traditions on the other. The conclusions to which Fouillée came place him definitely within the spiritualist movement; but his intention was to effect a reconciliation between different currents of thought.

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[1] *Science and Religion*, p. 378. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 378. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 400.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 397. Boutroux is referring to active mysticism', not to what he describes as 'an abstract and barren form of mysticism' (*ibid.*).

[5] Before joining the staff of the École Normale Fouillée had been a professor in schools (*lycées*) at Douai and Montpellier and at the University of Bordeaux. He retired from the École Normale for reasons of health.

In spite of this ecumenical attitude, recalling Leibniz's notion that all systems were right in what they affirmed and wrong in what they denied, Fouillée was polemically inclined. In particular he attacked the philosophy of evolution as presented by Herbert Spencer and the epiphenomenalist theory of consciousness defended by T. H. Huxley.[1] Fouillée did not attack the idea of evolution as such. On the contrary, he accepted it. What he objected to was Spencer's attempt to account for the movement of evolution in purely mechanistic terms, which seemed to him a very limited and one-sided view of the matter. For the mechanistic conception of the world was, in Fouillée's opinion, a human construction; and the concept of force on which Spencer laid such emphasis was a projection of man's inner experience of effort and volitional activity. As for the epiphenomenalist theory of consciousness, this was irreconcilable with the active power of the mind and the evident fact of its ability to initiate movement and action. It was not necessary to follow the idealists in regarding thought as the one reality in order to see that in the process of evolution consciousness had to be taken into account as an effective contributing factor. It was *sui generis* and irreducible to physical processes.

In defence and explanation of his insistence on the effective causal activity of consciousness Fouillée proposed the theory which is especially associated with his name, namely the theory of what he called *idée-force* or thought-force. Every idea[2] is a tendency to action or the beginning of an action.[3] It tends to self-realization or self-actualization and is thus a cause. Even if it is itself caused, it is also a cause which can initiate movement and through physical action affect the external world. We are thus not faced with the problem of finding an additional link between the world of ideas and the world of physical objects. For an idea is itself a link, in the sense that it has the active tendency to self-realization. It is a mistake to regard ideas simply as representations or reflections of external things. They have a creative aspect. And as they are of course mental phenomena, to say that they exercise causal force is to say that the mind exercises causal activity. In this case it cannot be a mere epiphenomenon, passively dependent on physical organization and processes.

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[1] T. H. Huxley certainly proposed an epiphenomalist theory of consciousness. But he insisted that he had no intention of identifying mental activity with the physical processes on which it was dependent; and he rejected the label 'materialist'. Cf. Volume 8 of this *History*, pp. 104–7.

[2] For Fouillée an idea is a consciously conceived idea.

[3] We can compare this thesis with Josiah Royce's notion of the 'internal meaning' of an idea, described by him as 'the partial fulfilment of a purpose'. See Volume 8 of this *History*, pp. 270–3.

In his work on freedom and determinism (*La liberté et le déterminisme*, 1872) he uses the theory of *idées-forces* in an attempt to effect a reconciliation between the partisans of freedom and the determinists. At first he gives the impression of allying himself with the determinists, inasmuch as he subjects to criticism the views defended by such defenders of human liberty as Cournot, Renouvier and Lachelier. He rejects liberty of indifference as a misguided notion, refuses to associate freedom with the idea of chance, dismisses Renouvier's contention that determinism implies the human being's passivity, and expresses agreement with Taine's questioning of the theory that determinism deprives moral values of all significance. In Fouillée's opinion determinism does not necessarily imply that because something is all that it can be, it is 'thereby all that it should be'.[1]

Though however Fouillée is not prepared to make the sort of forthright attack on determinism which was characteristic of the spiritualist current of thought, he points out that even determinists have to find room for the idea of freedom. He then proceeds to argue that though a psychological explanation of the idea of freedom can be offered, this idea is an *idée-force* and thus tends to realize itself. The idea of freedom is certainly effective in life; and the stronger it becomes, the freer we are. In other words, even if the genesis of the *idée-force* can be explained on determinist lines, once it is formed it exercises a directive power or causal activity. It can obviously be objected that Fouillée reconciles determinism with libertarianism by the simple expedient of equating freedom with the idea or feeling of freedom. And he does indeed speak as though the two were the same. But he seems to mean that when we act in the consciousness of freedom, for example, in striving after the realization of moral ideals, our actions express our personalities as human beings, and that this is the real significance of freedom. With the idea of freedom we act in a specific way; and there can be no doubt that such action can be effective.

Fouillée developed his theory of *idées-forces* in works such as *The Evolution of Thought-Forces* (*L'évolutionisme des idées-forces*, 1890), *The Psychology of Thought-Forces* (*La psychologie des*

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[1] *La liberté et le déterminisme* (4th edition), p. 51.

idées-forces, 2 volumes, 1893) and *The Ethics of Thought-Forces* (*La morale des idées-forces*, 1908). This last-named book elicited praise from Bergson, not least because in it Fouillée argued that consciousness of one's own existence is inseparable from consciousness of the existence of others, and that the attribution of value to oneself implies the attribution of value to other persons. Fouillée's ethical theory was characterized by a conviction in the attractive power of ideals, especially those of love and fraternity or brotherhood, and by belief in the growth of an inter-personal consciousness with common ideals as a principle of action.

It is interesting to note that Fouillée claimed to have anticipated Bergson (and Nietzsche) in holding that movement is real. In his opinion the associationist psychologists, for example, were deceived by the artifice of language and broke up movement into successive discrete states, which might be compared to instantaneous photographs of waves.[1] In Fouillée's terminology, they retained the terms but omitted the relations and so failed to grasp the current of life, of which we have the feeling in, say, the experiences of enjoyment, suffering and wishing. Though however Fouillée was prepared to speak of the grasping or consciousness of duration, he was not prepared to accept Bergson's theory of an intuition of pure duration. In a letter to Augustin Guyau he remarked that in his opinion pure duration was a limiting concept and not an object of intuition.

6. Augustin Guyau was the son of Fouillée's stepson, Marie Jean Guyau (1854–88), who was a professor at the Lycée Condorcet for a short while during the period when Bergson was a pupil at the school. As his dates show, M. J. Guyau's life was a short one; but he made his mark by a series of publications. His first two works were *La morale d'Épicure et ses rapports avec les doctrines contemporaines* (*The Ethics of Epicurus and Its Relations to Contemporary Doctrines*) and *La morale anglaise contemporaine* (*Contemporary English Ethics*), which appeared respectively in 1878 and 1879. He also wrote on aesthetics in *Problèmes de l'esthétique contemporaine* (1884, *Problems of Contemporary Aesthetics*) and in the posthumously published (1889) *L'art au point de vue sociologique* (*Art from the Sociological Point of View*). He is best known however for his *Esquisse d'une morale sans obligation ni sanction*[2] and

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[1] *La psychologie des idées-forces*, II, p. 85.

[2] Translated by G. Kapteyn as *A Sketch of Morality Independent of Obligation or Sanction* (London, 1898).

L'irréligion de l'avenir.[1] Published respectively in 1885 and 1887 these books were known and esteemed by Nietzsche. *Education et hérédité*[2] was published posthumously in 1889, while *La genèse de l'idée de temps* (*The Origin of the Idea of Time*) appeared in 1890 and was reviewed by Bergson.[3]

To a certain extent M. J. Guyau agrees with his stepfather's theory of *idées-forces.* Thought is directed to action, and it is through action that 'those problems to which abstract thought gives rise'[4] are solved, in part even if not completely. But the relation of thought to action expresses something deeper and more universal, namely the creative movement of life. This idea should not indeed be understood in a theistic sense. The background of Guyau's philosophy was formed by the concept of an evolving universe, without any doctrine of a supernatural cause or creator of the universe. He looked on evolution however as the process by which life comes into being and in its creative activity brings forth successively higher forms. Consciousness is simply 'a luminous point in the great obscure sphere of life'.[5] It presupposes intuitive action, which expresses an infra-conscious will-to-live. If therefore we mean by 'ideas' ideas at the level of consciousness, their relation to action is the form taken at a particular level by the dynamism of life, its creative activity. 'Life is fecundity';[6] but it has no end save its own maintenance and intensification. The Bergsonian emphasis on becoming, life and the *élan vital* are already present in Guyau's thought, but without that belief in a creative God which was to become, eventually at any rate, a marked feature of Bergson's philosophy.

It is in terms of the concept of life that Guyau develops his ethical theory. In his opinion attempts to give morality a firm theoretical basis have been unsuccessful. We cannot find the required basis simply in the abstract concept of obligation. For this by itself provides us with little guidance. Further, people have felt under a moral obligation to pursue lines of conduct which we at any rate regard as immoral or as irrational. If however the Kantian type of morality will not do, neither will hedonism or utilitarianism. It is of course an empirical fact that human beings tend to pursue what they have found to be pleasurable activities and to avoid what they have experienced as painful. But a much more fundamental tendency or urge is that of life to expand and intensify itself, a tendency which operates not only at the conscious but also at the infra-conscious and instinctive level. 'The end which in fact determines all conscious action is also the cause which produces all unconscious action; it is life itself. . . .'[1] Life, which by its nature strives to maintain, intensify and expand itself, is both the cause and the end of all action, whether instinctive or conscious. And ethics should be concerned with the means to the intensification and self-expansion of life.

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[1] Translated as *The Non-Religion of the Future* (London, 1897) and reprinted at New York in 1962.

[2] Translated by W. J. Greenstreet as *Education and Heredity* (London, 1891).

[3] Guyau's essay on time first appeared in 1885 in the *Revue philosophique.* The posthumous republication (of an extended manuscript) by A. Fouillée was reviewed by Bergson in the *Revue philosophique* for 1891.

[4] *Esquisse*, p. 250. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 10. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

The expansion of life is interpreted by Guyau largely in social terms. That is to say, the moral ideal is to be found in human cooperation, altruism, love and brotherhood, not in self-isolation and egoism. To be as social as one can is the authentic moral imperative. It is true that the idea of the intensification and expansion of life, when taken by itself, may appear to authorize, and indeed does authorize, actions which according to conventional moral standards are regarded as immoral. But for Guyau an important factor in human progress is the pursuit of truth and intellectual advance, and in his opinion intellectual development tends to inhibit purely instinctive and animal-like behaviour. The pursuit of truth however should go hand in hand with pursuit both of the good, especially in the form of human brotherhood, and of the beautiful. It can be added that the pleasures accompanying man's higher activities are precisely those which can most be shared in common. My enjoyment, for example, of a work of art does not deprive anyone else of a similar enjoyment.

Not only morality but also religion is interpreted by Guyau in terms of the concept of life. Religion as an historical phenomenon was largely social in character; and the idea of God was a projection of man's social consciousness and life. As man's moral consciousness developed, his concept of God changed too, from that of a capricious despot to that of a loving Father. But religion was throughout clearly linked with man's social life, expressing it and contributing to maintain it. Though however Guyau regards the idea of God as mythical, the title of his book *L'irréligion de l'avenir* is somewhat misleading. By 'religion' he means primarily acceptance of unverifiable dogmas imposed by religious organizations. A religion means for him an organized religious system.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

In his view religion in this sense is disappearing and ought to disappear, inasmuch as it inhibits the intensification and expansion of life, intellectual life for example. But he does not envisage the disappearance of religious feeling, nor of the ethical idealism which was a feature of the higher religions. For the matter of that, Guyau does not call for the rooting out of all religious beliefs in the ordinary sense. The attempt to destroy all religious belief is for him as misguided and fanatical as the attempt to impose such beliefs. Even if ethical idealism is in itself sufficient, there are likely to be in the future as in the past people with definite religious beliefs. If such beliefs are the spontaneous expression, as it were, of the personalities of those who accept them and are embraced as hypotheses which seem reasonable to the believer, well and good, provided that no attempt is made to impose such beliefs on others. In other words, the religion of the future will be a purely personal matter, something distinct from the transformation of 'religion' into freely embraced and commonly recognized ethical values.

Guyau has been compared with Nietzsche. He has also been described as a positivist. As for the first point, there is obviously some affinity between the two philosophers, inasmuch as each expounds a philosophy of the intensification of life and of ascending life. Equally obviously however, there are important differences. Guyau's insistence on human solidarity and brotherhood is markedly different from Nietzsche's insistence on rank and diversification. As for positivism, there are certainly positivist and naturalistic features in Guyau's thought. But his ethical idealism comes to occupy the centre of the stage. In any case, even if it may seem odd, from some points of view, to include Guyau among representatives of the 'spiritualist' movement, he has in common with them a firm belief in human liberty and in the emergence of what is new in the process of evolution; and his philosophy of life clearly has a place in the line of thought of which Bergson is the best known exponent.[1]

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[1] The precise relationship between Guyau and Bergson is none too clear. For instance, though Guyau's treatment of time is psychological and less metaphysical than Bergson's, there are certain phrases which appear also in pretty well the same form in Bergson's writings. Bergson however maintained that when Fouillée prepared Guyau's work for posthumous publication, he introduced phrases taken from his own (Bergson's) *Time and Free Will.*

CHAPTER IX

HENRI BERGSON (1)

Life and works—Bergson's idea of philosophy—Time and freedom—Memory and perception: the relation between spirit and matter—Instinct, intelligence and intuition in the context of the theory of evolution.

1. HENRI Bergson (1859–1941) was born at Paris and studied at the Lycée Condorcet. He was attracted, as he himself relates, both to mathematics and to letters; and when he finally opted for the latter, his professor of mathematics visited his parents to expostulate. On leaving the lycée in 1878 Bergson became a student of the École Normale. During the period 1881–97 he taught successively in lycées at Angers, Clermont-Ferrand[1] and Paris. From 1897 until 1900 he was a professor at the École Normale, and from 1900 until 1924[2] at the Collège de France, where his lectures attracted hearers even from the non-academic and fashionable world of Paris.[3] Already a member of the Institute and of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences, he was elected to the French Academy in 1914 and received the Nobel prize for literature in 1928.

After the first world war Bergson was active in the work of promoting international understanding, and for a time he was chairman of the committee for intellectual cooperation established by the League of Nations, until bad health forced him to retire. In the final year of his life Bergson came very close to the Catholic Church, and in his testament he said that he would have become a Catholic, had it not been for his desire not to separate himself from his fellow-Jews during their persecution by the Nazis.[4]

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[1] At Clermont-Ferrand Bergson also lectured in the University.

[2] In 1921 reasons of health compelled Bergson to consign his lecturing work to Édouard Le Roy, who succeeded formally to Bergson's chair in 1924. In 1891 Bergson had married a cousin of Marcel Proust, Louise Neuberger.

[3] It is said that in order to attend Bergson's lectures hearers found themselves driven to sit through the preceding lecture.

[4] In point of fact Bergson's name appears to have been included in the list of eminent Frenchmen who were not to be molested on the German occupation of France.

Bergson's first well known work was his *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience,* which appeared in 1889. Its subject-matter is perhaps better indicated by the title given to the English translation, *Time and Free Will.*[1] This work was followed in 1896 by *Matière et mémoire*[2] which gave Bergson the occasion for a more general treatment of the relation between mind and body. In 1900 Bergson published *Le rire,*[3] and in 1903 his *Introduction à la métaphysique* appeared in the *Revue de la métaphysique et de morale.*[4] His most famous work *L'évolution créatrice*[5] appeared in 1907, and this was followed by *L'énergie spirituelle*[6] in 1910 and *Durée et simultanéité.*[7] In 1932 Bergson published his notable work on morals and religion, *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion.*[8] A collection of essays entitled *La pensée et le mouvant*[9] followed in 1934. Three volumes of *Écrits et paroles* were edited by R. M. Mossé-Bastide and published at Paris in 1957–59, with a preface by Édouard Le Roy. The centenary edition of Bergson's works appeared in 1959.

2. Although Bergson once had a great name, his use of imagery and metaphor, his sometimes rather high-flown or rhapsodic style, and a certain lack of precision in his thought have contributed to his being depreciated as a philosopher by those who equate philosophy with logical or conceptual analysis and who attach great value to precision of thought and language. Obviously, this is true in the first place of countries in which the analytic movement has prevailed, and where the tendency has been to look on Bergson as more of a poet or even a mystic than as a serious philosopher. In some other countries, including his own, he has fallen into neglect for another reason, namely the eclipse of the philosophy of life by existentialism and phenomenology.

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[1] Translated by F. L. Pogson (London and New York, 1910).

[2] Translated by N. M. Paul and W. S. Palmer as *Matter and Memory* (London and New York, 1911).

[3] Translated by G. C. Brereton and F. Rothwell as *Laughter, An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* (New York, 1910).

[4] Translated by T. E. Hulme as *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (London and New York, 1912).

[5] Translated by A. Mitchell as *Creative Evolution* (London and New York, 1911).

[6] Translated by H. Wildon Carr as *Mind-Energy* (London and New York, 1910).

[7] Second edition, with three appendices, 1923.

[8] Translated by R. A. Audra and C. Brereton, with the assistance of W. Horsfall-Carter, as *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (London and New York, 1935).

[9] Translated by M. L. Andison as *The Creative Mind* (New York, 1946).

It may be true to say that in recent years the stir caused by the writings of Teilhard de Chardin has led to some revival of interest in Bergson, in view of the affinities between the two thinkers. But though the vogue enjoyed by Teilhard de Chardin and recognition of the relationship between him and his predecessor Bergson may have tended to make the latter's thought seem more actual and relevant, they do little to mitigate the force of objections brought by logical or conceptual analysts against Bergson's style of philosophizing. For similar objections can obviously be levelled against Teilhard de Chardin.

The accusations brought against Bergson's way of philosophizing are certainly not groundless. At the same time it is only fair to him to emphasize the fact that he was not trying to accomplish the sort of task to which logical analysts devote themselves, but failing signally to do so. He had his own idea of the nature and function of philosophy; and his way of philosophizing, and even his style, were connected with this idea. It is thus appropriate to begin by giving a brief explanation of his concept of philosophy.

In an essay which he wrote specially for the collection entitled *La pensée et le mouvant* Bergson began by asserting, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, that 'what has been most wanting in philosophy, is precision'.[1] What he had in mind were the shortcomings, as he saw them, of philosophical systems, which are 'not tailored to the reality in which we live'[2] but which are so abstract and vast as to try to comprise everything, the actual, the possible 'and even the impossible'[3]. It seemed to him at first that the philosophy of Herbert Spencer was an exception, inasmuch as, in spite of some vague generalities, it bore the imprint of the actual world and was modelled on the facts. At the same time Spencer had not delved deeply enough into the basic ideas of mechanics; and Bergson resolved to complete this work. In the course however of trying to do so he found himself brought to consider the subject of time. He was impelled to distinguish between the mathematical time of the scientist, in which time is broken up into moments and conceived in a spatial manner, and 'real' time, pure duration, continuity, which we can grasp in inner experience but can conceptualize only with difficulty.

Bergson therefore comes to conceive of philosophy or metaphysics as based on intuition, which he contrasts with analysis.

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[1] *La pensée et le mouvant*, p. 7 (3rd edition, 1934).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

By analysis he means the reduction of the complex to its simple constituents, as when a physical object is reduced to molecules, to atoms and finally to sub-atomic 'particles' or as when a new idea is explained in terms of a new arrangement of ideas which we already possess. By intuition he means the 'immediate consciousness'[1] or direct awareness of a reality. Bergson also contrasts the symbolization which is required by analytic thought with intuitive freedom from symbolization.[2] Even if however the intuitive perception of a reality may, in itself, be unexpressed in linguistic symbols, there can obviously be no philosophy without conceptualization and language. Bergson is of course well aware of this fact. An effort of reflection[3] is required to grasp the content of an intuition and to appreciate its significance and illuminative bearing. The idea which expresses an intuition seemes at first to be obscure rather than clear; and though appropriate terms, such as 'real duration', can be employed, the linguistic expression will not really be understood unless one participates in the intuition. The philosopher should indeed strive after clarity; but he cannot achieve this unless intuition and expression go, as it were, hand in hand or unless symbolization is checked by a return to intuitive awareness of what the philosopher is speaking about. Further, images may have a useful role to play by suggesting the content of an intuition and facilitating a participation in it[4].

It is all very well to say that philosophy is based on intuition. What is the object of such intuition? A general answer might be that it is movement, becoming, duration, that which can be known only through immediate or intuitive awareness, and not through a reductive analysis which distorts it or destroys its continuity. To say this is to say (within the framework of Bergson's thought) that the object of intuition is reality. For in the second of his Oxford Conferences he makes the often quoted statement that 'there are changes, but there are not, under the change, things which change: change has no need of a support. There are movements, but there is no inert, invariable object which moves: movement does not imply a *mobile*.'[1] In the first instance however the object of intuition is, as with Maine de Biran, the inner life of the self, of the spirit. Bergson remarks, for example, that existence is only given in experience. He then goes on to say that 'this experience will be called sight or contact, exterior perception in general, if it is a question of a material object: it will have the name "intuition" when it bears on the spirit'.[2] It is true that according to Bergson his first concern is with real duration. But he finds this in the life of the self, in 'the direct vision of the spirit by the spirit',[3] in the interior life.

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[1] *La pensée et le mouvant*, p. 35. [2] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 206.

[3] When replying to critics who interpret intuition as consisting in hunches or feelings, Bergson says that 'our intuition is reflection' (*Ibid.*, p. 109). At first hearing at any rate this sounds like a contradiction in terms. But he may be thinking in part of the 'reflection' of Maine de Biran, the immediate awareness by the self of its inner life, reflexive psychology in other words. In any case, even if intuition itself is not reflection, Bergson certainly thinks of the philosopher's mind as appropriating the intuition, so to speak, through a process of reflection which tries to keep as close as possible to the intuition.

[4] In the case of exceptional intuitions, such as those enjoyed by the mystics, the use of imagery may be the most appropriate way of trying to convey some idea of the intuitions or experiences.

Bergson can thus maintain that while positive science is concerned with the material world, metaphysics 'reserves for itself the spirit'.[4] This may seem to be patently untrue, given the existence of psychology. For Bergson however psychology as a science treats the spirit or mind as if it were material. That is to say, it analyses the life of the mind in such a way as to represent it on an analogy with spatial and material objects. The empirical psychologist does not necessarily assert that mental phenomena are material. But he extends reductive analysis from physical objects to the mind and considers it as something over against himself. The metaphysician however takes as his point of departure an intuitive or immediate awareness of the inner life of the spirit as it is lived; and he tries to prolong this intuition in his reflection.

Science and metaphysics therefore have different objects or subject-matters according to Bergson. He assigns 'matter to science and spirit to metaphysics'.[5] It is thus clear enough that he does not regard philosophy as a synthesis of the particular sciences. There is no question of claiming that philosophy can 'go beyond science in the generalization of the same facts'.[6] Philosophy 'is not a synthesis of the particular sciences'.[7] The objects of science and philosophy are different. So too are their methods.

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[1] *La pensée et le mouvant*, p. 185. Bergson does not mean that there is no existing reality. His contention is that reality is a becoming, the past persisting in the present, and the present being carried into the future, the whole process being continuous throughout and divisible only through the artificial separation effected by the intelligence for its own purposes.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 61.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 50. Bergson's use of the word 'metaphysics' in this context recalls to mind the use made of the term by Maine de Biran.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 54.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 155.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 156.

For science is the work of the intelligence and works by analysis, whereas metaphysics is, or is based on and draws its life from, intuition.

To say however that science and metaphysics differ from one another in subject-matter and method is by no means the whole of the story. For in Bergson's view reality is change or becoming, real duration or the life of the spirit; and the material world of the physicist is regarded, by an extension of Ravaisson's theory of habit, as a kind of deposit made by the movement of life in its creative advance. If therefore we ask whether it is science or metaphysics which reveals reality to us, the answer must be that it is metaphysics. For it is only in intuition that the mind can have direct awareness of the actual movement of life.

Bergson endeavours to show that he is not concerned with depreciating science, nor with suggesting that the philosopher can profitably dismiss the findings of the scientist. He explains, for example, that when he insists on the difference between the positive sciences and philosophy he is concerned with the purification of science from 'scientism', from a metaphysics, that is to say, which masquerades as positive scientific knowledge, and with freeing philosophy from any misconception of itself as a super-science, capable of doing the scientist's work for him or of providing generalizations from the data of science which the scientist is unable to provide. Referring to accusations against him of being an opponent of science, Bergson remarks 'once again, we wanted a philosophy which would submit itself to the control of science and which could also contribute to its (science's) advance.'[1] The work of the intelligence is necessary for action; and science, the product of the intelligence, is required if man is to have conceptual and practical control of his environment. Moreover, science, Bergson suggests rather vaguely, can provide verification for metaphysics,[2] while metaphysics, as it is based on intuition of truth, can help science to correct its errors. While therefore they remain distinct, science and philosophy can cooperate; and neither of them should be depreciated. As they differ in subject-matter and method, disputes about relative dignity are otiose.

Obviously, Bergson is justified in emphasizing the need for the work of the intelligence, and so of science. To be sure, Bergson's ideas are by no means always clear and unambiguous. Sometimes, for example, he speaks as though the world of individual things, of substances which change, is a fiction or fabrication of the intelligence. At other times he implies that in its individualizing activity the intelligence makes objectively grounded distinctions. His precise meaning is left obscure. At the same time it is obvious that we could not possibly live, in any recognizable sense of 'live', simply with the consciousness of a continuous flow of becoming. We could not live and act without a world of distinct things. And we could not understand and control this world without science. Hence Bergson is quite justified in claiming that he has no intention of attacking science as a superfluity. When all this is said however, it remains true that for him it is intuition, not intelligence, and metaphysics rather than science, which reveals to us the nature of reality, underlying the constructed, even if necessarily constructed, world of the scientist. And when Bergson speaks about metaphysics submitting itself to the control of science, he really means that in his view modern science is developing in such a way as to confirm rather than to falsify his philosophical theories. In other words, if we assume the truth of Bergson's position, it seems to follow that in important respects metaphysics must be superior to science, however much Bergson may have tried to disclaim such judgments of value.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

Reference has already been made to Bergson's negative attitude to philosophical systems. It is hardly necessary to say that he has no liking for attempts to deduce the structure of reality *a priori* from allegedly self-evidently true propositions. A man who believes that 'philosophy has never frankly admitted this continuous creation of unforeseeable novelty'[1] is obviously not disposed to look with favour on any system of a Spinozistic type. Indeed, Bergson explicitly disclaims the intention of constructing any sort of comprehensive system. What he does is to consider distinct questions in succession, reflecting on the data in various areas.[2] Some of the questions which have seemed of great importance to metaphysical philosophers are dismissed by Bergson as pseudo-problems. 'Why is there something rather than nothing?' and 'Why is there order rather than disorder?' are given as examples of pseudo-problems or at any rate of badly formulated questions.[3] In view of his reputation for high-flown poetry or imaginative and imprecise language, it is only fair to Bergson to emphasize the fact that he intends to be as concrete and as faithful as possible to reality as experienced. It is true that a more or less unified world-outlook emerges from his successive writings. But this is due to a convergence of his various lines of thought rather than to any deliberate attempt to construct a comprehensive system. There are of course certain recurrent and pervasive key-ideas, such as intuition and duration; but they are not postulated in advance like the premises of a deductive system.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

[2] In an interview (*Mercure de France*, 1914, p. 397) Bergson asserted that he did not know in advance to what conclusions his premises would lead.

[3] *La pensée et le mouvant*, pp. 121 f.

When Bergson is treating of the mental life, there is no great difficulty in understanding what he means by intuition, even if one does not care for the term. It is equivalent to the immediate consciousness of Maine de Biran. When however Bergson turns to a general theory of evolution, as in *L'évolution créatrice*, it is not so easy to see how this theory can be said to be based on intuition. Even if we are immediately aware of a vital impetus or *élan vital* in ourselves, a good deal of extrapolation is required in order to make this intuition the basis for a general view of evolution. The philosophy of *l'esprit* becomes very much wider in its scope than any kind of reflexive psychology. However there is not much point in trying to discuss such matters in advance of a treatment of Bergson's successive lines of inquiry.

3. In the preface to *Time and Free Will* Bergson announces his intention of trying to establish that 'every discussion between determinists and their opponents implies a previous confusion of duration with extension, of succession with simultaneity, of quality with quantity.'[1] Once this confusion has been cleared up, one may perhaps find that objections against freedom vanish, together with the definitions which have been given to it, and, 'in a certain sense, the very problem of free will'.[2] In this case Bergson has of course to explain the nature of the alleged confusion before going on to show how its dissipation affects determinism.

We conceive of physical objects, according to Bergson, as existing and occupying positions in 'an empty homogeneous medium',[3] namely space. And it is the concept of space which determines our ordinary idea of time, the concept of time as employed in the natural sciences and for purposes of practical life. That is to say, we conceive time according to the analogy of an unbounded line composed of units or moments which are external to one another. This idea gives rise to the sort of puzzles raised centuries ago by Zeno.[1] But it enables us to measure time and to fix the occurrence of events, as simultaneous or as successive, within the time-medium, which is itself empty and homogeneous, like space. This concept of time is in fact the spatialized or mathematicized idea of duration. Pure duration, of which we can become intuitively or immediately aware in consciousness of our own inner mental life, when, that is to say, we enter into it in depth, is a series of qualitative changes melting into and permeating one another, so that each 'element' represents the whole, like a musical phrase, and is an isolated unit not in reality but only through intellectual abstraction. Pure duration is a continuity of movement, with qualitative but not quantitative differentiations. It can thus be described as heterogeneous, not as homogeneous. Language however 'demands that we should establish between our ideas the same clear and precise distinctions, the same discontinuity, as between material objects'.[2] Discursive thought and language require that we should break up the uninterrupted flow of consciousness[3] into distinct and numerable states, succeeding one another in time, represented as a homogeneous medium. This concept of time however is 'only the ghost of space haunting the reflective consciousness',[4] whereas pure duration is 'the form taken by the succession of our states of consciousness when our ego lets itself live, when it abstains from making a separation between its present and preceding states'.[5] We can say in effect that the idea of pure duration expresses the nature of the life of the deeper self, while the concept of the self as a succession of states represents the superficial self, created by the spatializing intelligence. Pure duration is grasped in intuition, in which the self is coincident with its own life, whereas the self of analytic psychology is the result of our looking at ourselves as external spectators, as though we were looking at physical objects outside us.

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[1] *Time and Free Will*, pp. xix–xx. References to this work are given to the English translation, for the convenience of the reader. But as I have myself translated from the French, there are slightly different wordings in places.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. xx.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 95.

Now suppose that we conceive the self as a succession of distinct states in spatialized time. It is then natural to think of a preceding state as causing the succeeding state. Further, feelings and motives will be regarded as distinct entities which cause or determine successive entities. This may sound far-fetched. But that this is not the case can be seen by reflecting on talk about motives determining choices. In such language motives are clearly hypostatized and given a substantial existence of their own. Bergson thus asserts a close link between determinism and the associationist psychology. And in his view no answer to determinism is possible, if the adequacy of this psychology is once assumed. For it makes little sense to picture one state of consciousness as oscillating between making two mutually exclusive choices and then opting for one choice when it might have opted for the other. If we once accept the associationist psychology as adequate, it is a waste of time to look for answers to determinism. We cannot refute the determinists on their own selected ground. What is needed is to challenge their whole concept of the self and its life. And, as Bergson sees things, this means setting the idea of pure duration against the spatialized or geometric concept of time. If time is assimilated to space and states of consciousness are conceived on an analogy with material objects, determinism is inevitable. If however the life of the self is seen in its continuity, its uninterrupted flow, it can also be seen that some acts spring from the totality, the whole personality; and these acts are free. 'We are free when our acts flow from our whole personality, when they express it, when they have with it that indefinable resemblance which one sometimes finds between the artist and his work.'[1]

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[1] As the individual units, which are conceived as constituting time in their succession, are 'virtual stoppages of time' (*La pensée et le mouvant*, p. 9).

[2] *Time and Free Will*, p. xix.

[3] To what extent Bergson was influenced by other writers, such as William James, is a matter of dispute.

[4] *Time and Freewill*, p. 99.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 100.

Bergson thus carries on that insistence on human freedom which we find among his predecessors in the spiritualist movement. A good deal of what he has to say, especially by way of criticism or attack, is sensible enough. It is pretty clear, for example, that talk about a man's choices being determined by his motives is misleading, inasmuch as it suggests that a motive is a substantial entity which pushes a man, as though from without, into a certain course of action. Again, while character-determinism, as portrayed by writers such as J. S. Mill, can be made extremely plausible, talk about a man's actions being determined by his character implies that to the noun 'character' there corresponds a block-entity which exercises a one-way causal activity on the will. In general, Bergson's contention that the determinists, especially those who presuppose the associationist psychology, are held captive by a spatial picture is well argued.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 172.

It does not follow of course that Bergson is an upholder of 'liberty of indifference'. For as he conceives this theory, it involves the same sort of misleading picture which can be found with the determinists.[1] In Bergson's view 'any definition of freedom will ensure the victory of determinism'.[2] For a definition is the result of analysis, and analysis involves the transformation of a process into a thing and of duration into extension. Freedom is the indefinable 'relation of the concrete self to the act which it performs'.[3] It is something of which we are immediately aware, but it is not something which can be proved. For the attempt to prove it involves taking the very point of view which leads to determinism, the point of view from which time is identified with space or at any rate is interpreted in spatial terms.

Bergson does not of course maintain that all the actions performed by a human being are free actions. He distinguishes between 'two different selves, one of which is, as it were, the external projection of the other, its spatial and, so to speak, social representation'.[4] We are reminded here of Kant's distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal self; but Kant is found fault with by Bergson for his account of time. For Bergson free acts are those which proceed from the self considered as pure duration. 'To act freely, is to regain possession of oneself, to get back into pure duration.'[5] But a great part of our lives is lived at the level of the superficial self, the level at which we are acted upon, by social pressure for instance, rather than act ourselves. And this is why we are rarely free.'[6] This theory may seem to enable Bergson to evade the awkward position of Kant, the notion, that is to say, that the same actions are determined from one point of view and free from another. Even for Bergson of course a free act, springing from the 'deeper' self or the whole personality, appears as determined if it is located, so to speak, in homogeneous and spatialized time. But he regards this point of view as erroneous, even if it is required for practical, social and scientific purposes.

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[1] It implies, according to Bergson, the picture of the ego as traversing a number of distinct states and then as oscillating between two ready-made paths lying before it.

[2] *Time and Free Will*, p. 220.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 219.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 231.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 231–2.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 231.

What Bergson has to say about the two levels of the self recalls to mind not only the Kantian philosophy but also the later existentialist distinction between authentic and inauthentic existence. There are of course considerable differences between the philosophy of Bergson and existentialism, as there are too between the various brands of existentialism. But it is not a question of representing existentialism as an historical development of the Bergsonian philosophy of life. Rather is it a matter of affinities. In the spiritualist movement and in existentialism too we can see an attack on 'scientism', showing itself in an insistence on human freedom and in an interpretation of freedom in terms of the idea of a deeper self of some kind. If we consider the philosophy of Karl Jaspers, we can see that his contention that if we adopt the position of external spectators, of the objectifying scientist, we cannot avoid an at any rate methodological determinism, whereas freedom is something of which the agent, as agent, is aware, is akin to the position of Bergson. The fact that the influences on Jaspers' thought were Kant, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche rather than Bergson does not alter the fact that there is some affinity between their lines of thought.

4. In *Matière et mémoire* Bergson tackles the problem of the relation between mind and body. In his introduction he says that the book asserts the reality of both spirit and matter, and that his position is thus frankly dualistic. It is true that he speaks of matter as an aggregate of images. But by using the word 'image' he does not mean to imply that a physical object exists only in the human mind. He means that an object is what we perceive it to be and not something entirely different. In the case of a red object, for instance, it is the object which is red. Redness is not something subjective. In fine, a physical object is 'an image, but an image which exists in itself'.[1] Among such physical objects there is one which I know not only by perception but also 'from within by affections. It is my body.'[2] What is the relation between my body and my mind? In particular, are mental processes identifiable with physical processes in the brain, so that talk about the former and talk about the latter are simply two languages or ways of

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[1] *Matter and Memory*, p. viii. Page-references are given to the English translation, even when my own translation differs slightly.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

speaking which refer to the same thing? Or is the mind an epiphenomenon of the cerebral organism, so that it is completely and throughout dependent on the brain? To put the matter in another way, is the relation between mind and the brain of such a kind that anyone who had a complete knowledge of what was going on in the brain would thereby have a detailed knowledge of what was proceeding in consciousness?

Bergson remarks that 'the truth is that there would be one way, and one only, of refuting materialism, that of establishing that matter is absolutely what it appears to be.'[1] For if matter is nothing but what it appears to be, there is no reason for ascribing it to occult capacities such as thought. This is one reason why Bergson dwells at some length on the nature of matter. However, though what Bergson takes to be the position of common sense should suffice, philosophical reflection requires something more. And Bergson tackles his problem by means of a study of memory, on the ground that memory, as representing 'precisely the point of interaction between mind and matter',[2] seems to provide the strongest support for materialism and epiphenomenalism. A study of memory however involves also a study of perception, as perception is 'wholly impregnated with memory-images which complete it while interpreting it'.[3]

To cut a long story short, Bergson makes a distinction between two kinds of memory. In the first place there is the kind of memory which consists in motor-mechanisms which resemble or are habits. Thus one can learn by heart, as we say, a certain series of words, a lesson or a poem. And when the appropriate stimulus is provided, the mechanism starts to function. There is 'a closed system of automatic movements which succeed one another in the same order and occupy the same time'.[4] Memory in this sense of mechanical repetition is a bodily habit, like walking; considered precisely as such, it does not include mental representation of the past but is rather a bodily aptitude, an organic disposition to respond in a certain way to a certain stimulus. Memory in this sense is not confined to human beings. A parrot, for example, can be trained to respond to a stimulus by uttering certain words in succession. This kind of memory is different from what Bergson calls 'pure memory', which is representation and records 'all the events of our daily life',[5] neglecting no detail.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 80.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. xii.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 170.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 90.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 92.

Memory in this sense is spiritual, and to admit its existence is obviously to admit that part of the mind is infra-conscious. If the whole of my past is stored, as it were, in my mind in the form of memory-images, it is clear that only a few of these images are even recalled to consciousness at a given time. They must then be stored in the infra-conscious area of the mind. Indeed, if the whole of my past, including every detail, were present to my consciousness at once, action would become impossible. And here we have the key to the relation between the brain and pure memory. That is to say, the function of the brain, according to Bergson, is to inhibit the invasion of consciousness by the pure memory and to admit only those recollections which are related in some way to contemplated or required action. In itself pure memory is spiritual; but its contents are filtered, as it were, by the brain. Pure memory and memory as habit come together of course in practice, as in, for example, the intelligent repetition of something learned. But they should not be confused. For it is this confusion which leads support to materialism.

The concept of pure memory is linked by Bergson with that of pure duration. And he argues, with the help of a study of pathological phenomena such as aphasia, that there is no cogent evidence of memories being spatially located in the brain. In his view the brain is not a storehouse of memories but plays a role analogous to that of a telephone-exchange. If one could penetrate into the brain and see clearly all the processes taking place in it, all that one would find would probably be 'sketched-out or prepared movements'.[1] That is to say, the cerebral state represents only a small part of the mental state, namely 'that part which is capable of translating itself into movements of locomotion'.[2] In other words, Bergson tries to refute psycho-physical or psycho-neural parallelism by arguing that the state of the brain indicates that of the mind only in so far as the psychic life is turned towards action and is the remote beginning of or at least the preparation for action.

Perception, Bergson insists, is different in kind from recollection. In perception the perceived object is present as object of an intuition of the real, whereas in recollection an absent object is remembered. Though however perception is an intuition of the real, it is a mistake to suppose that perception as such is directed towards pure knowledge. On the contrary, it is 'entirely oriented towards action'.[1] That is to say, perception is basically selective with a view to possible action or reaction. It is utilitarian in character. At root, it concentrates on what can answer to a need or tendency. And we can assume that with animals perception is generally just this.[2] As we ascend the stages of the evolution of organic life, moving into the sphere of consciousness and freedom, the area of possible action and of the subjectivity of perception grows. But perception in itself, 'pure perception', is oriented to action. And it is not the same thing as memory. If our perceptions were all 'pure', simple intuitions of objects, the function of consciousness would be to unite them by means of memory. But this would not convert them into memories or acts of recollection.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

In point of fact however pure perception is pretty well a limiting concept. 'Perception is never a simple contact of the mind with the present object. It is wholly impregnated with memory-images which complete it while interpreting it.'[3] Pure memory manifests itself in images; and these images enter into our perceptions. In theory we can distinguish between pure memory and pure perception. And for Bergson it is important that the distinction should be made. Otherwise, for instance, recollection will be interpreted as a weakened form of perception, when it is in fact different in kind and not simply in intensity. In practice however recollection and perception interpenetrate each other. In other words, perception in its concrete or actual form is a synthesis of pure memory and pure perception, and so 'of mind (*esprit*) and matter'.[4] In concrete perception the mind contributes memory-images which confer on the object of perception a completed and meaningful form. In Bergson's view this theory helps to overcome the opposition between idealism and realism and also throws light on the relation between mind or spirit and body. 'Mind (or spirit) borrows from matter the perceptions from which it draws its nourishment and restores them to matter in the form of movement on which it has stamped its own freedom.'[5] Pure perception which, as a limiting concept, is the coincidence of subject and object, belongs to the side of matter. Pure memory, which exhibits real duration, belongs to the side of spirit. But memory, as a 'synthesis of the past and the present in view of the future',[1] brings together or unites the successive phases of matter to use them and to manifest itself by the actions which constitute the reason for the soul's union with the body. In Bergson's opinion spirit and matter, soul and body, are united for action; and this union is to be understood not in spatial terms[2] but in terms of duration.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[2] It may be objected that in the case of animals reference should be made to sensation rather than to perception. But Bergson is not prepared to regard sensation as more fundamental than perception. 'Our sensations are to our perceptions what the real action of our body is to its possible or virtual action' (*Ibid.*, p. 58). Virtual action precedes real action. A body's real action is manifested within itself in the form of affective sensations. A herbivorous animal, for instance, perceives grass. The nearer the grass is, the more does the virtual action prefigured in perception tend to become real action. Real action is of course accompanied by sensation.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 170.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 325.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 332.

As in the case of Bergson's other writings most readers of *Matière et mémoire* often find it difficult to make out his precise meaning. And they may well suspect that if they fail to find it, this is not their fault. However Bergson's general position can be summarized in this way. The body is 'an instrument of action, and of action only'.[3] Pure perception is virtual action, at any rate in the sense that it detaches from the field of objects the object which interests from the point of view of possible bodily action. 'The virtual action of things on our body and of our body on things is our perception itself.'[4] And the state of the brain corresponds exactly to the perception. Actual perception however is not 'pure perception' but is enriched and interpreted by memory which is in itself, as 'pure memory', 'something other than a function of the brain'.[5] Perception as we actually experience it therefore (impregnated, that is to say, with memory-images) is a point where spirit and matter, soul and body, intersect dynamically, in an orientation to action.[6] And while the 'pure perception' element corresponds exactly to the state of the brain or to processes in the brain, the 'pure memory' element does not. Spirit or mind is not in itself a function of the brain, nor an epiphenomenon; but as turned to action it depends on the body, the instrument of action, and virtual action, prefiguring or sketching out and preparing real action, is dependent on the brain. Damage to the brain may inhibit action; but it should not be thought of as destroying the mind or spirit in itself.[7]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 294.

[2] This is said to be the mistake of 'ordinary dualism' (*ibid.*).

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 299. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 309. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 315.

[6] As mentioned above, memory is stated by Bergson to be the point of intersection. But we are speaking here of concrete and conscious perception, in which memory-images are always present, not of the limiting concept of pure perception.

[7] Bergson looks on this view not so much as a proof of immortality as removing a major obstacle to belief in it.

5. In *Time and Free Will* and *Matter and Memory* Bergson introduces his readers, in the contexts of particular problems, to his ideas of mathematical or spatialized time on the one hand and of pure duration on the other, of the analytical intelligence, dominated by the concept of space, on the one hand and of intuition on the other, of matter as the sphere of mechanism and of spirit as the sphere of creative freedom, of man as an agent rather than as a spectator and of the intelligence as serving the needs of action, even if man, through intuition, is capable of grasping the nature of becoming as manifested in his own inner life. In *Creative Evolution* he exhibits such ideas in a wider context.

The year of Bergson's birth, 1859, was the year in which *The Origin of Species* was published. Though however the theory of evolution in general permeated Bergson's thought, he found himself unable to accept any mechanistic interpretation of it, including Darwinism. The theory of 'natural selection', for example, in virtue of chance or random variations which adapt the organism for survival seemed to him quite inadequate. In the process of evolution we can see a development of complexity. But a higher degree of complexity involves a greater degree of risk. If survival-value were the only factor, one might expect evolution to stop with the simplest types of organism. As for chance or random variations, if these occurred in a part of a whole (such as the eye), the functioning of the whole might well be impeded. For the effective functioning of the whole there must be coordination or coadaptation; and to attribute this simply to 'chance' is to make too great a demand on credulity. At the same time an explanation of evolution in terms of finality seemed to Bergson unacceptable, if the idea of finality were taken to mean that the process of evolution was simply the working out or realization of a predetermined end. For this sort of theory eliminated all novelty and creativity and in some important respects resembled mechanism. It added of course the idea of a preconceived or predetermined end; but neither in the case of a mechanistic acconunt or in that of a teleological account[1] was any room left for the emergence of novelty.

In Bergson's view we are justified in looking to man's inner life for the key to the evolution of life in general. In ourselves we are aware, or rather can be aware, of a vital impetus, an *élan vital,* manifested in the continuity of our own becoming or duration. As a speculative hypothesis at any rate we are justified in extrapolating this idea and postulating 'an *original impetus* of life, passing from one generation of germs to the following generation of germs by way of the developed organisms which form the uniting link between the generations of germs.'[1] This impetus is regarded by Bergson as the cause of variations, at any rate of those which are passed on, accumulate and produce new species.[2] Its mode of operation should not be regarded as analogous to that of the manufacturers who assemble ready-made parts to form a whole but rather as an organizing action[3] which proceeds from a centre outwards, effecting differentiation in the process. The *élan vital* encounters resistance from inert matter; and in its effort to overcome this resistance it tries fresh paths. In fact it is the meeting between the 'explosive' activity of the vital impetus and the resistance of matter which leads to the development of different lines and levels of evolution. In its creative energizing the vital impetus transcends the stage of organization which it has reached. Hence Bergson's comparison of the movement of evolution to the fragmentation of an exploding shell, provided that we imagine the fragments as being themselves shells which explode in turn.[4] When the vital impetus organizes matter successfully at a certain level, the impetus is continued at this level in the successions of individual members of the species in question. The creative energy of the *élan vital* is not however exhausted at a particular level but expresses itself anew.

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[1] The expression 'a teleological account' must be understood in the sense of an account of evolution which represents it as the progressive realization of a preconceived plan, the working out of a blueprint. Bergson is far from denying an immanent teleology in the organism. Nor does he exclude a general teleology which allows for the emergence of what is novel.

The movement of evolution is seen by Bergson as following three main directions, that of plant life, that of instinctive life and that of intelligent or rational life. He does not mean to deny that the different forms of life had a common origin in more primitive and hardly differentiated organisms. Nor does he intend to imply that they have nothing in common. But they have not simply succeeded one another. Plant life, for example has not been superseded by animal life. Bergson thinks therefore that it is more reasonable to regard the three levels as fulfilling three divergent tendencies of an activity which has split up in the course of its development than as three successive degrees of one and the same tendency. The world of plants is marked by the predominance of the features of fixity or stability and of insensibility, whereas in the world of animals we find mobility and consciousness (in some degree) as predominating characteristics. Further, in the animal world we can distinguish between those species in which intuitive life has become the dominant characteristic, as in the case of insects such as bees and ants, and the vertebrate species in which intelligent life has emerged and developed.

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[1] *Creative Evolution*, p. 92. Page-references are to the English edition, though I have, once again, translated from the French.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 92.

[3] Bergson admits that the term 'organization' suggests the assembling of parts to form a whole. But he insists that in philosophy the term must be given a sense other than that which it bears in the contest of manufacture and in a scientific context.

[4] Cf. *Creative Evolution*, p. 103.

Bergson is at pains to point out that his theory of the three divergent tendencies in evolution necessitates, for the purpose of discussion, the making of more clear-cut distinctions that can actually be found. 'There is scarcely any manifestation of life which does not contain in a rudimentary state, whether latent or virtual, the essential characteristics of the majority of other manifestations. The difference lies in the proportions.'[1] The group should thus be defined not by its simple possession of certain characteristics but rather by its tendency to accentuate them. For example, in actual fact intuitive life and intelligent life interpenetrate in varying degrees and proportions. But they are none the less different in kind, and it is important to consider them separately.

Both instinct and intelligence are defined by Bergson with reference to the making and using of instruments. Instinct is 'a faculty of using and constructing organized instruments',[2] instruments, that is to say, which are parts of the organism itself. Intelligence is 'the faculty of making and using unorganized instruments',[3] artificial instruments, that is to say, or tools. Psychical activity as such tends to act on the material world. And it can do so either directly or indirectly. If therefore we assume that a choice has to be made, we can say that 'instinct and intelligence represent two divergent solutions, equally elegant, of one and the same problem.'[4]

If therefore man is regarded historically, he should be described, according to Bergson, not as *homo sapiens* but as *homo faber*, man the worker, in terms of the construction of tools with a view to acting on the material environment. For man is intelligent, and 'intelligence, considered in what appears to be its original application, is the faculty of fabricating artificial objects, in particular of tools to make tools, and of varying their manufacture indefinitely.'[1] Whatever intelligence may have become in the course of human history and of man's scientific advance, its essential feature is its practical orientation. It is, like instinct, at the service of life.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 112.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 147.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 147.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 150.

Inasmuch as the human intellect is primarily oriented to construction, to acting on man's material environment by means of the instruments which it creates, it is concerned first and foremost with inorganic solids, with physical objects external to and distinct from other physical objects, and, in such objects, with parts considered as such, clearly and distinctly. In other words, the human intellect has as its chief object what is discontinuous and stable or immobile; and it has the power of reducing an object to its constituent elements and of reassembling them. It can of course concern itself with organic living beings, but it tends to treat them in the same way as inorganic objects. The scientist, for example, will reduce the living thing to its physical and chemical components and try to reconstitute it theoretically from these elements. To put the matter negatively 'the intellect is characterized by a natural inability to comprehend life'.[2] It cannot grasp becoming, continuity and pure duration as such. It tries to force the continuous into its own moulds or categories, introducing sharp and clear-cut conceptual distinctions which are inadequate to the object. It is unable to think pure duration without transforming it into a spatialized, geometric concept of time. It takes, as it were, a series of static photographs of a continuous creative movement which eludes its grasp. In fine, the intellect, though admirably adapted for action and for making possible control of the environment (and of man himself, in so far as he can be turned into a scientific object), is not fitted for grasping the movement of evolution, of life, 'the continuity of a change which is pure mobility'.[3] It breaks up the continuous becoming into a series of states, each of which is immobilized. Moreover, as the analytic understanding strives to reduce becoming to given elements and to reconstitute it from these elements, it cannot allow for the creation of what is novel and unforeseeable. The movement of evolution, the creative activity of the *élan vital*, is represented either as a mechanical process or as the progressive realization of a preconceived plan. In neither case is there room for creativity.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 146.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 174.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

If we assume with Bergson that evolution is the creative activity of a vital impulse which uses and, so to speak, lights up matter in its onward continuous movement,[1] and if, as Bergson claims, the human intellect or intelligence is unable to grasp this movement as it really is, it follows that the intellect is unable to understand reality, or at any rate that it can apprehend it only by distorting it and producing a caricature. Bergson is thus far from holding that the primary function of the intellect is to know Reality with a capital letter and that its functions of scientific analysis and of technological invention are secondary or even low-grade employments. On the contrary, the intellect has developed primarily for action and for purposes of practical control of the environment, and its logical and scientific uses are natural to it, whereas it is unfitted by nature to grasp Reality. Man, as already remarked, is *homo faber* rather than *homo sapiens*, as far at any rate as his original nature is concerned.

In this case the question obviously arises whether we can know the nature of reality at all, as it is in itself that is to say. For what other means have we of knowing but the intellect? Instinct may be closer to life. It may be, as Bergson claims, a prolongation of life. But it is not reflective. To return to instinct would be to leave the sphere of what would ordinarily be called knowledge. If therefore conceptual thought is incapable of grasping the true nature of the real, of creative becoming, it seems to follow that we can never know it but that we are condemned to live simply with our own fictional representations of reality.

It should hardly be necessary to say that Bergson raises this sort of question himself, and that he attempts to answer it. His main line of thought can indeed be inferred from what has already been said. But in *L'évolution créatrice* it is set in the wide context of evolutionary theory and linked with the idea of divergent directions or tendencies in the process of evolution. Intelligence is concerned with matter, and 'by means of science, which is its work, will reveal to us more and more completely the secret of physical operations.'[2] It can however grasp life only by translating it in terms of inertia. Instinct is turned towards life, but it is without reflective consciousness. If however instinct, which is a prolongation of life itself,[1] could extend its object and also reflect upon itself, 'it would give us the key to vital operations'.[2] And this idea is verified in intuition, which is 'instinct become disinterested, conscious of itself, capable of reflecting on its object and of enlarging it indefinitely'.[3] Intuition presupposes the development of intelligence. Without this development instinct would have remained riveted to objects of practical interest with a view to physical movements. In other words, intuition presupposes the emergence of reflective consciousness, which then splits up into intelligence and intuition, corresponding respectively to matter and life. 'This doubling of consciousness is thus related to the twofold form of the real, and the theory of knowledge must be dependent on metaphysics.'[4]

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[1] The vital impetus does not, for Bergson, actually create matter. It explodes creatively through matter and uses matter.

[2] *Creative Evolution*, p. 186.

Let us assume with Bergson that intelligence is oriented to matter, intuition to life. Let us also assume that developed intelligence creates the natural sciences. The obvious implication is that philosophy, treating of life, is based on intuition. Indeed, Bergson tells us that if intuition could be prolonged beyond a few instants, philosophers would be in agreement.[5] The trouble is however that intuition cannot be prolonged in such a way as to make rival systems of philosophy immediately disappear. In practice there has to be interchange between intuition and intelligence. Intelligence has to apply itself to the content of intuition; and what intelligence makes of this content has to be checked and corrected by reference to intuition. We have to make do, so to speak, with the instruments at hand; and philosophy can hardly attain the degree of purity which is attained by positive science in proportion as it frees itself from metaphysical assumptions and prejudices. Without intuition however philosophy is blind.

Bergson used the intuition of our own freedom, our own free creative activity, as a key to the nature of the Universe. 'The universe is not made, but is being made continually.'[6] More precisely, there is both making and unmaking. Bergson uses the metaphor of a jet of steam issuing at high pressure from a vessel, with drops condensing and falling back. 'So, from an immense reservoir of life jets must be leaping out without ceasing, each of which, falling back, is a world.'[7] Matter represents the falling back, the process of unmaking, while the movement of life in the world represents what remains of the direct upward movement in the inverted movement. The creation of living species is due to the creative activity of life; but from another point of view the self-perpetuating species represents a falling back. 'Matter or mind, reality has appeared to us as a perpetual becoming. It makes itself or it unmakes itself, but it is never something (simply) made.'[1]

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[1] Bergson describes instinct as 'sympathy' (cf. *ibid.*, 186).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 186.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 186.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 188.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 252.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 255.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 261.

What, we may ask, is Bergson's justification for this extrapolation of an experience of free creative activity in ourselves? Or does he claim that we can have an intuition of becoming in general, of the cosmic *élan vital*? In his *Introduction to Metaphysics* he asks the following question. 'If metaphysics should proceed by intuition, if intuition has for its object the mobility of duration, and if duration is psychological in essence, are we not going to shut up the philosopher in the exclusive contemplation of himself?'[2] Bergson replies that the coincidence, in intuition, with our own duration puts us in contact with a whole continuity of durations and so enables us to transcend ourselves. But it seems that this can be the case only if the experience of our own duration is an intuition of the creative activity of the cosmic vital impulse. And this is what Bergson appears to imply when he refers to a 'coincidence of the human consciousness with the living principle from which it emanates, a contact with the creative effort.'[3] Elsewhere he asserts that 'the matter and life which fill the world are also in us; the forces which work in all things, we feel them in ourselves; whatever the intimate essence of that which is and of that which makes itself may be, we participate in it.'[4] So presumably it is our participation in the *élan vital* or its operation in us which enables Bergson to base a general philosophical theory on an intuition which, in the first instance, is of duration in man himself.

The concept of the *élan vital* bears some resemblance at any rate to that of the soul of the world as found in ancient philosophy and in some modern philosophers such as Schelling. Bergson also speaks of the vital impulse as 'supra-consciousness'[5] and likens it to a rocket, the extinguished fragments of which fall back as matter. In addition he uses the word 'God', God being described as 'a continuity of leaping out'[1] or, more conventionally, as 'unceasing life, action, freedom'.[2] In *Creative Evolution* therefore the concept of God is introduced simply in the context of evolutionary theory, as signifying an immanent cosmic vital impulse which is not creator in the Judaeo-Christian traditional sense but uses matter as the instrument of the creation of fresh forms of life. However Bergson's ideas of God and religion are much better left to the next chapter, where his work on the subject will be considered.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 287.

[2] *La pensée et le mouvant*, p. 233.

[3] *Creative Evolution*, p. 391. Bergson is speaking of the intuition which, he claims, is the basis of philosophy and enables the philosopher to treat of becoming in general.

[4] *La pensée et le mouvant*, p. 157.

[5] *Creative Evolution*, p. 275.

Reference has already been made to Bergson's lack of linguistic precision. But if conceptual thought cannot grasp reality as it is in itself, we can hardly expect a high degree of precision. 'Comparisons and metaphors will suggest here what one does not succeed in expressing. . . . As soon as we begin to treat of the spiritual world, the image, even if it aims only at suggesting, can give us the direct vision, while the abstract term, which is of spatial origin and which claims to express, leaves us on most occasions with metaphor.'[3] As there does not seem much that can usefully be said on this matter, in view, that is to say, of Bergson's premises, we can go on to remark that in this chapter we have made no attempt to assess the influences on Bergson's thought. There can be little doubt, for example, that he was influenced by Ravaisson's idea of the inverse movement of matter and of mechanism as a kind of relapse of freedom into habit. But though Bergson refers to some eminent philosophers of the past, such as Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, Leibniz and Kant, and, among the moderns, to Herbert Spencer and to a number of scientists and psychologists, he makes very little reference to his immediate predecessors. He acknowledged some debt to Plotinus, to Maine de Biran and to Ravaisson; but even if it can be shown, despite his disclaimers, that he had probably read some essay or book by an immediate predecessor or a contemporary,[4] it does not necessarily follow that he simply borrowed the idea in question. Disputes about his originality or lack of it are apt to be inconclusive. Nor is the matter of any great importance. Wherever they may have originated, the ideas appropriated by Bergson are part of his philosophy.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 262. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 262. [3] *La pensée et le mouvant*, p. 52.

[4] Though Bergson was not actually a pupil of Lachelier, he read the latter's book on induction while he was a student, and he liked to regard Lachelier as one of his teachers.

CHAPTER X

HENRI BERGSON (2)

Introductory remarks—Closed morality—Open morality: the interpretation of the two types—Static religion as a defence against the dissolvent power of intelligence—Dynamic religion and mysticism—Comments.

1. BERGSON'S general procedure or way of going about things has been illustrated in the last chapter by reference to *Time and Free Will, Matter and Memory* and *Creative Evolution*. He selects certain sets of empirical data which interest him and arrest his attention and tries to interpret them in terms of some coordinating hypothesis or basic concept. For example, if the immediate data of consciousness suggest the mind's transcendence of matter while scientific research seems to point in the direction of epiphenomenalism, the question of the relation between mind and body (or between soul and body) presents itself once more and calls for the development of a theory which will accommodate both sets of data. While however Bergson is often certain that a given theory is inadequate or erroneous, he is not given to the dogmatic proclamation of his own theories as the definitive and finally proved truth. He shows us a picture which in his opinion is a better portrayal of the landscape than other pictures and provides persuasive arguments to show that this is the case; but he often shows himself conscious of the tentative and speculative character of his explanatory hypotheses.

In his last main work *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* Bergson follows his customary procedure by taking as his point of departure sets of empirical data relevant to man's moral and religious life. In the field of morals, for example, he sees that there are facts exhibiting connections between codes of conduct and particular societies. At the same time he sees the part played in the development of ethical ideas and convictions by individuals who have risen above the standards of their societies. Similarly, in the area of religion Bergson sees the sociological aspects of religion and its social functions in history, while he is also aware of the personal and deeper levels of the religious consciousness. True, for information about the empirical data he relies to a considerable extent on the writings of the sociologists such as Durkheim and Lévy-Bruhl and, in regard to the mystical aspects of religion, on writers such as Henri Delacroix and Evelyn Underhill. The point is however that his theory of *two* sources of morality and religion is based on his conviction that there are distinguishable sets of empirical data which cannot be accounted for without a complex theory or explanation of this kind.

Bergson does not begin his treatment of morals by formulating explicitly certain problems or questions. But the nature of his questions emerges more or less clearly from his reflection on the data. One way of formulating his question would be to ask, what is the part played by reason in morality? He has of course to assign some role to reason; but it is not that of being a source. In his view there are two sources of morality, one infra-rational, the other supra-rational. Given his treatment of instinct, intelligence and intuition in *Creative Evolution*, this position is what might have been expected. In other words, the convictions which Bergson has already formed certainly (and naturally) influence his reflections on the data relevant to man's moral and religious life. At the same time his religious ideas are developed in the *Two Sources* well beyond anything that was said in *Creative Evolution*. In fine, the Bergsonian general world-outlook, as has already been stated, emerges from or is built up by a series of particular inquiries or lines of thought which are linked together through the pervasive presence of certain key-concepts, such as duration, becoming, creativity and intuition.

2. Bergson begins his treatment of morals with reflection on man's sense of obligation. He is far from agreeing with Kant's derivation of morality from the practical reason. Nor is he prepared to give to the concept of obligation the pre-eminent position which it occupies in Kantian ethics. At the same time Bergson recognizes of course that the sense of obligation is a prominent feature of the moral consciousness. Further, he agrees with Kant that obligation presupposes freedom. 'A being does not feel itself obliged unless it is free, and every obligation, taken separately, implies freedom.'[1] It is not possible to disobey laws of nature. For they are statements of the way in which things actually behave; and if we find that some things act in a manner contrary to an alleged law we reformulate the law in such a way as to cover the

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[1] *The Two Sources*, p. 19. Page-references are to the English translation, though the wording of my translation from the French sometimes differs slightly.

exceptions. But it is quite possible to disobey a moral law or rule. It is thus a case not of necessity but of obligation. Talk about obeying the laws of nature should not be taken literally. For such laws are not prescriptive but descriptive.[1] Obedience and disobedience to moral prescriptions however are familiar phenomena.

The question which Bergson raises concerns the cause or source of obligation. And the answer which he gives is that society is the source. That is to say, the sense of obligation is a sense of social pressure. The voice of duty is not something mysterious, coming from another world; it is the voice of society. The social imperative bears on the individual as such. This is why he feels obliged. But the individual human being is also a member of society. Hence for a great part of the time we observe social rules without reflection and without experiencing any resistance in ourselves. It is only when we do experience such resistance that we are actually aware of a sense of obligation. And as such cases are infrequent in comparison with the number of times in which we obey pretty well automatically, it is a mistake to interpret the moral life in terms of doing violence to oneself, of overcoming inclination, and so on. As man has his 'social self', his social aspect, he is generally inclined to conform to social pressure. 'Each of us belongs to society as much as to himself.'[2] The further we delve into the personality, the more incommensurable it becomes. But the plain fact of the matter is that on the surface of life, where we mainly dwell, there is a social solidarity which inclines us to conform to social pressure without resistance.

Bergson is at pains to argue that this sort of view does not imply that an individual living alone would be aware of no duties, no sense of obligation. For wherever he goes, even to a desert island, he carries with him his 'social ego'. He is still joined in spirit to society which continues to speak to him in his thinking and language, which have been formed by society. 'Generally, the verdict of conscience is that which would be given by the social self.'[3]

We can now ask two questions. First, what does Bergson mean by 'society'? Secondly, what does he mean by 'obligation'? The first question is answered fairly easily. By society Bergson means in the context any 'closed society', as he expresses it. This may be a primitive tribe or a modern State. Provided that it is a particular society which is conscious of itself as *this* society, distinct from other social groups, it is, in Bergson's language, a closed society. It is from society in this sense that obligation emanates; and the function of the social pressure which gives rise to the sense of obligation in individual members of the society is to maintain the society's cohesion and life.

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[1] Bergson did not think of the laws of nature as necessary in the absolute sense. But the scientist would not speak of a law of nature unless he conceived it as exemplified in every member of a class of phenomena.

[2] *The Two Sources*, p. 6.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

The second question is more difficult to answer. Sometimes he seems to mean by obligation the feeling or sense of obligation. We can then say that, for him, an empirical fact, namely social pressure, is the cause of a specifically ethical feeling. Sometimes however Bergson speaks as though the awareness of obligation were the awareness of social pressure as such. In this case obligation seems to be identified with a non-moral empirical fact. To complicate matters, Bergson introduces the idea of the essence of social pressure, which he also describes as the totality of obligation and defines as the 'concentrated extract, the quintessence of the thousand special habits which we have contracted of obeying the thousand particular demands of social life.'[1] It is perhaps natural to understand this as referring to a generalization from particular obligations, so that 'the totality of obligation' would be logically posterior to particular obligations. But this interpretation can hardly be accepted. For the totality of obligation is also described as 'the habit of contracting habits';[2] and though this is said to be the aggregate of habits, it is also the necessity or need for contracting habits and a necessary condition for the existence of societies. In this case it is presumably logically prior to social rules.

Though however Bergson uses the word 'obligation' in a lamentably loose manner, in several senses that is to say, it is at any rate clear that for him the efficient cause of obligation is the pressure exercised on its members by a closed society, and that its final cause is the maintenance of the society's cohesion and life. Obligation is thus relative to the closed society and has a social function. Further, its origin is infra-intellectual. In a society such as those of bees and ants instinct takes care of social cohesion and service of the community. If however we imagine a bee or an ant becoming self-conscious and capable of intellectual reflection, we can picture it asking why it should continue to act as it has been hitherto acting by instinct. At this point we can see social pressure making itself felt through the insect's social self, the awareness of this pressure being a sense of obligation. If therefore we personify Nature, as Bergson is inclined to do, we can say that social pressure and obligation are the means used by Nature to secure society's cohesion and preservation when man emerges in the process of creative evolution. The morality of obligation is thus of infra-intellectual origin in the sense that it is the form taken in human society by the instinctive activity of members of infra-human societies.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Preservation of a society's cohesion is obviously not secured simply by pressure to observe rules which would be classified as moral rules by members of an advanced society, accustomed to differentiate between social conventions and ethical norms. A primitive society, when looked at from one point of view, extends the coverage of moral obligation to rules of conduct which we would be unlikely to classify as moral norms. As experience widens and civilization progresses, the human reason starts to discriminate between rules of conduct which are still necessary or genuinely useful to society and those which are no longer necessary or useful. It also begins to discriminate between rules which are seen to be required for the cohesion and maintenance of any tolerable society and conventions which differ from society to society. Further, when a traditional code of conduct has once been subjected to radical questioning by human intelligence, the mind will look for reasons to support the code. There is thus plenty of scope for reason in the ethical field. But this does not alter the fact that the ethics of obligation as such as of infra-intellectual origin. Reason does not originate it. It gets to work on what is already there, clarifying, discriminating, tidying up and defending.

3. The morality of obligation, relative to the closed society, is not regarded by Bergson as coterminous with the whole field of morality. He is well aware that the moral idealism of those individuals who have embodied in their own lives values and standards higher and more universal in their effect than the current ethical codes of the societies to which they belonged cannot be easily explained in terms of the social pressure of a closed group. He therefore asserts the existence of a second type of morality which is different in kind from the morality of obligation, which is characterized by appeal and aspiration, and which relates to man as man or to the ideal society of all human beings rather than to the closed group in any of its forms. Consider, for example, an

historical figure who not only proclaims the ideal of universal love but also embodies it in his own personality and life. The ideal, so embodied, acts by way of attraction and appeal rather than by way of social pressure; and those who respond to the ideal are drawn by example rather than impelled by the sense of obligation which expresses the pressure of a closed group.

This open and dynamic morality[1] is, for Bergson, of supra-rational origin. The morality of obligation is, as we have seen, of infra-intellectual origin, being the analogue at the human level of the constant and never failing pressure of instinct in infra-human societies. The open morality however originates in a contact between the great moral idealists and prophets and the creative source of life itself. It is, in effect, the result of a mystical union with God, which expresses itself in universal love. 'It is the mystical souls which have drawn and continue to draw civilized societies in their wake.'[2]

There is a natural inclination to think that it is all a question of degree, and that love of the tribe can become love of the nation and love of the nation love of all men. Bergson however rejects this view. The closed and open moralities are for him different in kind and not simply in degree. Though the open morality does in fact involve the ideal of universal love, it is essentially characterised not so much by its content (which, taken in itself, could logically be an extension of the content of closed morality) as by a vital impetus in the will which is quite different from social pressure or obligation. This vital impetus, also described by Bergson as 'emotion', is of supra-rational origin. In terms of the theory of evolution it expresses the creative movement of ascending life, whereas the closed morality represents rather a certain fixed deposit of this movement.

As Bergson insists on the difference between the two types of morality, he naturally treats them successively. Though however he thinks of primitive human society as dominated by the closed mentality, he recognizes of course that in society as we know it the two types not only coexist but interpenetrate. In a Christian nation, for example, we can find both types showing themselves. Just as we can consider pure memory and pure perception separately though they interpenetrate in concrete perception, so we can and ought to distinguish and consider separately the closed and open moralities, though in our actual world they coexist and mingle.

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[1] 'Open' in the sense that it is essentially universal, aspiring to union between all human beings; 'dynamic' in the sense that it strives to change society, not simply to preserve it as it is.

[2] *The Two Sources*, p. 68.

An important factor in the bringing together of the two types of morality is the human reason or intelligence. Both the infra-intellectual drive of social pressure and the supra-intellectual appeal are projected, as it were, onto the plane of reason in the form of representations or ideas. Reason, acting as an intermediary, tends to introduce universality into the closed morality and obligation into the open morality. The ideals presented by the open morality become effective in society only in so far as they are interpreted by the reason and harmonized with the morality of obligation, while the closed morality receives an influx of life from the open morality. In its actual concrete form therefore morality includes both 'a system of *orders* dictated by *impersonal* social demands and a group of *appeals* made to the conscience of each one of us by *persons* who represent the best that there is in humanity.'[1]

Though the closed and open moralities intermingle with one another, there remains a tension between them. The open morality tries to infuse fresh life and new vistas into the closed morality, but the latter tends to bring down, as it were, the latter by turning what is essentially appeal and aspiration into a fixed code and by minimizing or whittling away ideals. We can however envisage the possibility of man's moral advance. In the final chapter of *The Two Sources* Bergson remarks that modern technology has made possible the unification of man in one society. This might of course be brought about by the triumph of an imperialism which would simply represent the closed mentality writ large. But we can also imagine a truly human society in which man's free response to the highest ideals would be the uniting factor rather than the tyrannical force and power of a world-imperialism. In such a society obligation would not disappear, but it would be transformed by man's response to ideals which are ultimately the expression of an influx of divine life as mediated to society by persons who have opened themselves to the divine life.

4. We have already had occasion to refer to a religious theme, mysticism, in connection with open morality. Bergson however distinguishes, as one might expect, between two types of religion,

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

described respectively as static and dynamic. They correspond of course to the two types of morality, static religion being infra-intellectual in origin and dynamic supra-intellectual.

Let us once more imagine a bee or an ant suddenly endowed with intelligence and self-consciousness. The insect will naturally tend to pursue its private interests instead of serving the community. In other words, intelligence, when it emerges in the course of evolution, is a potentially dissolving power in regard to the maintenance of social cohesion. Reason is critical and questioning; it enables man to use his initiative and so endangers social unity and discipline.[1] Nature however is not at a loss what to do. What Bergson calls the myth-making faculty gets to work; and the protective deity of the tribe or the city appears 'to forbid, threaten, punish'.[2] In primitive society morality and custom are the same; and the sphere of religion is coterminous with that of social custom. The god protects the structure of custom by ordering the observance of the customs and punishing disobedience, even if the infringement is not known by a man's fellows.

Again, though the vital impulse turns animals away from the image of death and though there is no reason for supposing that any animal can argue to the inevitability of its own death, man is certainly able to conceive the fact that he will inevitably die. What does Nature do? 'To the idea that death is inevitable she opposes the image of continuation of life after death; this image, thrown by her into the field of intelligence, puts things in order again.'[3] Nature thus attains two ends. She protects the individual against the depressing thought of the inevitability of death; and she protects society. For a primitive society requires the presence and continuing authority of the ancestors.

Once more, as primitive man is extremely limited in his power to influence and control his environment, and as he is being constantly confronted with and reminded of the gap between the actions which he takes and the results for which he hopes, Nature or the vital impulse conjures up in him the image of and belief in friendly powers interested in his success, to whom he can pray and who will help him.[1]

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[1] Bergson remarks that though reason can convince a person that by promoting the happiness of others he promotes his own, it took centuries of culture to produce J. S. Mill, and he 'has not convinced all philosophers, let alone the mass of mankind' (*ibid.*, p. 101).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 101. Bergson also discusses tabu and magic; but we cannot follow him into this discussion. We confine our remarks to polytheism.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 109. Bergson explains that he is not denying immortality as such but maintaining that primitive man's image of life after death is 'hallucinatory'.

In general therefore static religion can be defined as 'a defensive reaction of nature against what could be depressing for the individual and dissolvent for society in the exercise of intelligence'.[2] It attaches man to life and the individual to society by means of myths. In the first instance it is found with primitive man, in some form or other; but it does not follow of course that it ceased with primitive man. On the contrary, it continued to flourish. But to say this is to say that the primitive mentality survived in civilization. Indeed it still survives, though the development of natural science has of course contributed powerfully to discrediting the religious myths. In Bergson's view, if in a modern war both parties express confidence that God is on their side, the mentality of static religion is showing itself. For though both sides may profess to be invoking the same God, the God of all mankind, each tends to treat him in practice as a national deity. Again, religious persecution was an expression of the primitive mentality and of static religion. For universal belief by a society was a criterion of its truth. Hence unbelief could not be regarded with equanimity. Common belief was considered a necessary ingredient of social solidarity or cohesion.

5. As for dynamic religion, its essence is mysticism, the ultimate end of which is 'a contact, and consequently a partial coincidence, with the creative effort of which life is the manifestation. The effort is of God, if it is not God himself. The great mystic is an individual who transcends the limits assigned to the species by its material nature and who thus continues and prolongs the divine action. Such is our definition.'[3] For Bergson therefore complete mysticism means not only a movement upwards and inwards which culminates in a contact with the divine life but also a complementary movement downwards or outwards by which a fresh impulse from the divine life is communicated through the mystic to mankind. In other words, Bergson thinks of what he describes as complete mysticism as issuing in activity in the world. He therefore regards a mysticism which concentrates simply on turning away from this world to the divine centre or which results in an intellectual grasp of the unity of all things, coloured by

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[1] Bergson adds that a logical consequence of belief in friendly powers is a belief in unfriendly or antagonistic powers. But this second belief is, he maintains, derivative and even degenerate, as the vital impulse is optimistic (*ibid.*, p. 117).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 175.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 188.

sympathy or compassion but not by dynamic activity, as incomplete. And he finds a mysticism of this sort represented especially, though not exclusively, in the East, whereas 'complete mysticism is in effect that of the great Christian mystics'.[1]

We cannot undertake to discuss here Bergson's views on oriental and western mysticism. But there are one or two points worth noticing. In the first place Bergson raises the question whether mysticism provides us with an experimental approach to problems about the existence and nature of God. 'Generally speaking, we judge that an existing object is one which is perceived or which could be perceived. It is therefore given in a real or possible experience.'[2] Bergson is aware of the difficulties, or at any rate some of them, involved in proving that a given experience is an experience of *God*. But he suggests that reflection on mysticism can serve as confirmation of a position already reached. If, that is to say, the truth of creative evolution has been established, and if we can envisage the possibility of an intuitive experience of the principle of all life, reflection on the data of mysticism can add probability to the thesis that there is a transcendent creative activity. In any case mysticism, according to Bergson, can throw light on the divine nature. 'God is love, and he is object of love: this is the whole contribution of mysticism.'[3] Bergson writes, as usual, in an impressionistic manner; and he is far from tackling the logical difficulties in a professional way. His general position however is clearly that while reflection on evolution can bring us to the conviction that there is an immanent creative energy operative in the world, reflection on 'dynamic religion' or mysticism sheds further light on the nature of this principle of life, revealing it as love.[4]

In the second place, if 'the creative energy must be defined as love',[5] we are entitled to conclude that creation is the process whereby God brings into being 'creators, in order to have, beside himself, beings worthy of his love.'[6] In other words, creation appears as having an end or goal, the coming into being of man and his transformation through love. In the final chapter of *The Two Sources* Bergson sees the advance of technology as the progressive construction of what one might describe as one body (the unification of mankind on the levels of material civilization and of science), and the function of mystical religion as that of infusing a soul into this body. The universe thus appears as 'a machine for the making of gods',[1] a deified humanity, as transformed through an influx of divine love. Objections based on man's physical insignificance are rejected. The existence of man presupposes conditions, and these conditions other conditions. The world is the condition for man's existence. This teleological conception of creation may seem to contradict Bergson's previous attack on any interpretation of evolution in finalistic terms. But he was then thinking of course of the sort of finalistic scheme which would entail determinism.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 194. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 206. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 216.

[4] Needless to say, it was largely Bergson's reflections on mysticism which brought him to the point of contemplating formal adherence to Catholicism.

[5] *The Two Sources*, p. 220. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 218.

In the third place Bergson sees mysticism as shedding light on the problem of survival. For in mystical experience we can see a participation in a life which is capable of indefinite progress. If it has already been established that the life of the mind cannot in any case be properly described in purely epiphenomenalistic terms, the occurrence of mysticism, which 'is presumably a participation in the divine essence',[2] adds probability to belief in the soul's survival after bodily death.

Just as Bergson sees the closed and open types of morality interpenetrating one another in man's moral life as it actually exists, so does he see actual religion as a mingling of various degrees of static and dynamic religions. For example, in historical Christianity we can see the impulse of dynamic religion recurrently manifesting itself; but we can also discern plenty of evidence of the mentality characteristic of static religion. The ideal is that static religion should be transformed by dynamic religion; but, apart from limiting cases, the two intermingle in practice.

6. If anyone asks what Bergson means by closed and open morality, static and dynamic reality, there is no great difficulty in mentioning examples of the sets of phenomena to which these terms refer. It does not necessarily follow that Bergson's interpretation of the historical or empirical data has to be accepted. It is clear that he interprets the data within the framework of the conclusions to which he has already come about evolution in general and about the roles of instinct, intelligence and intuition in particular. The picture which he already has in his mind predisposes him to split up morality and religion into distinct types, different in kind. Obviously, his reflections on ethical and religious

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 275.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 227.

data seem to him to confirm his previously embraced conclusions; and the picture which he forms of man's moral and religious life reacts on the concept of the world which he already has in his mind. At the same time it is possible to admit the facts which Bergson mentions (facts, for example, about the relation between different codes of conduct and different societies) but to accommodate them in a different interpretative scheme or overall picture. It is not of course a question of blaming Bergson for painting an overall picture. It is simply a question of pointing out that other pictures are possible, which do not involve the Bergsonian dualism.

How far are however we to press this theme of dualism? That Bergson asserts a psychological dualism of soul and body is clear enough. It is also clear that in his theory of morals and religion there is a dualism of origin. That is to say, closed morality and static religion are said to be of infra-intellectual origin, while open morality and dynamic religion are said to be of supra-intellectual origin.[1] But Bergson attempts to bring together soul and body by means of the concept of human action. And in his theory of morals and religion the different types of morality and religion are all ultimately explained in terms of the divine creative activity and purpose. In spite therefore of the dualistic features of his philosophy Bergson provides the material for a line of thought, such as that of Teilhard de Chardin, which is more 'monistic' in character.

In any case it is really the overall picture, the painting as a whole, which counts. It is possible of course to take particular points for consideration, such as Bergson's account of moral obligation. And then it is easy to criticize his sometimes inconsistent and often imprecise use of language and his failure to carry through a sustained and careful analysis. It is also possible to dwell on the influence exerted by particular views, such as the vital or biological primary function of intelligence. But it is probably true to say that Bergson's widest influence was exercised by his general picture,[2] which offered an alternative to mechanistic and positivist pictures.

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[1] In theological terms one might perhaps say that they are, for Bergson, of natural and supernatural origin respectively.

[2] By the general picture, that is to say, conveyed by his writings up to and including *Creative Evolution*. Between 1907, when this work was published, and 1932, when *The Two Sources* appeared, there was a considerable gap. The climate of thought had changed a good deal in the meantime. Further, *The Two Sources* showed how Bergson's mind had been moving closer to Christianity than anyone might have expected from *Creative Evolution*.

In other words, this picture exercised a liberating influence on many minds. For it offered a positive and to many people appealing interpretation of the world, an interpretation which was neither confined to criticism of and attack on other views nor a return to past ways of thought. It did not seem to be a philosophy thought out by someone fighting a rearguard action but rather the expression of an outlook for the future. It was capable of arousing excitement and enthusiasm, as something new and inspiring,[1] and as putting the theory of evolution in a fresh light.

Bergson had some disciples, such as Édouard Le Roy (1870–1954), who succeeded him in his chair at the Collège de France.[2] But there was no Bergsonian school in any strict sense. Rather was it a question of a diffused influence, which it is often difficult to pin down. For example, William James hailed the appearance of *Creative Evolution* as marking a new era in thought; and he was doubtless influenced to some extent by Bergson. At the same time Bergson has been accused of basing his idea of real duration on James's theory of the stream of consciousness. (Bergson denied this, while paying tribute to James and recognizing similarities in thought.) Again, there are ideas, such as the originally biological or practical function of intelligence, which were certainly features of Bergson's philosophy but which could also have been derived from German philosophy, the writings of Schopenhauer for example.[3] If we pass over learned research into the particular ways in which Bergson influenced or may have influenced other philosophers in France and in other countries, it is sufficient to say that in his heyday Bergson appeared as the spearhead of the vitalist current of thought or philosophy of life and that, as such, he exercised a wide but not easily definable influence. It is worth adding however that this influence was felt outside the ranks of professional philosophers, as by the well known French writer Charles Pierre Péguy (1873–1914) and the revolutionary social and political theorist Georges Sorel (1847–1922). Before he became a Thomist, Jacques Maritain was a disciple of Bergson; and though he criticized the Bergsonian philosophy, he retained a profound respect for his onetime master. Finally, as has already been mentioned, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955) had obvious affinities with Bergson and can be regarded as having continued his way of thinking into the contemporary world, provided at any rate that one does not give the erroneous impression that Teilhard simply borrowed his ideas from Bergson or Le Roy.

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[1] One can of course find anticipations of a large number of Bergson's ideas in previous French philosophers. And some writers have challenged Bergson's originality. But this is really a matter for historians. As far as the general public are concerned, Bergson's thought was novel.

[2] Le Roy interpreted scientific theories and laws as useful fictions, making possible effective action to meet human needs. In *Dogma and Criticism* (*Dogme et critique*, 1906) he gave a pragmatist interpretation of religious dogmas, interpreting them as directives for moral action.

[3] How far Bergson himself was influenced by nineteenth-century German philosophers, such as Schopenhauer and Eduard von Hartmann, has been matter for dispute. It seems probable however that any influence was indirect, by way of French thought, rather than direct.

PART III

FROM BERGSON TO SARTRE

CHAPTER XI

PHILOSOPHY AND CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

Ollé-Laprune on moral certitude—Blondel and the way of immanence—Laberthonnière and Christian philosophy—Some remarks on modernism.

1. DURING the eighteenth-century Enlightenment Christian apologetics tended to follow a rationalistic pattern. The arguments of atheists were countered by philosophical proofs of the existence of God as cause of the world and as responsible for order in the universe, while the deists' attacks on revealed religion were met by arguments to prove the trustworthiness of the New Testament accounts of the life of Christ, including the accounts of miracles, and the fact of revelation. In the Age of Reason, that is to say, the arguments of rationalists, whether atheists or deists, had as their counterpart a kind of Christian rationalism.

After the revolution apologetics in France underwent a change. The general influence of the romantic movement showed itself in a turning away from rationalistic philosophy of the Cartesian type and in an emphasis on the way in which the Christian religion fulfilled the needs of man and society. As we have seen, Chateaubriand explicitly stated the need for a new type of apologetics and appealed to the beauty or aesthetic qualities of Christianity, maintaining that it is the intrinsic excellence of Christianity which shows that it comes from God rather than that it must be judged excellent because it has been proved to have come from God. The Traditionalists, such as de Maistre and de Bonald, appealed to the transmission of a primitive divine revelation rather than to metaphysical arguments for the existence of God. Lamennais, while making some use of traditional apologetics, insisted that religious faith requires a free consent of the will and is far from being simply an intellectual assent to the conclusion of a deductive inference. He also laid emphasis on the benefits conferred by religion on individuals and societies as evidence for its truth. The Dominican preacher Henri-Dominique Lacordaire (1802–61), who was for a time associated with Lamennais, tried to show the truth of Christianity by exhibiting the content and implications of the Christian faith itself and showing how it fulfils man's needs and the legitimate demands of human society.

It was obviously a strong point in the new line of apologetics in France in the first half of the nineteenth century that it tried to show the relevance of Christian faith by relating it to man's needs and aspirations both as an individual and as a member of society, rather than by proceeding simply on the plane of abstract metaphysical proofs and historical arguments. At the same time appeals to aesthetic considerations, as with Chateaubriand, or to the actual or possible beneficial social effects of Christianity could easily give the impression of attempts to stimulate the will to believe. That is to say, in so far as persuasive arguments were substituted for the traditional proofs, the substitution might be seen as expressing a tacit admission that religious faith rested on the will rather than on the reason.

Unless however Christian faith was to be regarded as being of the same nature as intellectual assent to the conclusion of a mathematical demonstration, some role had to be attributed to the will. After all, even those who were convinced of the demonstrative character of traditional metaphysical and apologetic arguments could hardly maintain that the unbeliever's withholding of his assent was always and exclusively due to his failure to understand them. It was natural therefore that the role of the will in religious belief should be explored, and that an attempt should be made to combine recognition of this role with avoidance of a purely pragmatic or voluntarist interpretation of Christian faith. Thus the question was raised, can there be a legitimate certitude, legitimate from the rational point of view, in which the will plays an effective role?

The name which first comes to mind in connection with this question is that of Léon Ollé-Laprune (1839–98). After completing his studies at the École Normale at Paris, Ollé-Laprune taught philosophy in lycées until he was given a post at the École Normale in 1875. In 1870 he published a work on Malebranche, *La Philosophie de Malebranche*, and in 1880 a book on moral certitude, *De la certitude morale*. An essay on the ethics of Aristotle, *Essai sur la morale d'Aristote*, appeared in 1881,[1] while *La philosophie*

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[1] A Latin version had already been presented as one of the dissertations for the doctorate.

et le temps présent and a work on the value of life, *Le prix de la vie*, were published respectively in 1890 and 1894. Among other writings are two posthumously published works, *La raison et le rationalisme* (1906) and *Croyance religieuse et croyance intellectuelle* (1908, *Religious Belief and Intellectual Belief*).

It was a firm conviction of Ollé-Laprune that the will had a role to play in all intellectual activity. And there is of course a sense in which this is obviously true. Even in mathematical reasoning attention is required; and intention implies a decision to attend. It is also clear that there are areas of inquiry where there is room for the influence of prejudice of one sort or another and where the effort to be open-minded is required. Though however Ollé-Laprune liked to lay emphasis, in a general way, on thinking as a form of life, of action, he was particularly concerned with the search for truth in the religious and moral spheres. Here above all there was need for thinking 'with the whole soul, with the whole of oneself'.[1] In arriving at this conviction Ollé-Laprune was influenced by the thought of Pascal[2] and by Newman's *Grammar of Assent*,[3] as well as by Ravaisson and by Alphonse Gratry (1805–72). Gratry was a priest who maintained in his writings that though Christian faith could not be attained simply by human effort, it none the less satisfied man's deepest aspirations and that the way to it could be prepared if a man sought truth with his whole being and if he tried to live in accordance with moral ideals.

In his work on moral certitude Ollé-Laprune begins by examining the nature of assent and of certitude in general. As one would expect in the case of a French philosopher, there are frequent references to Descartes. A prominent feature however of Ollé-Laprune's reflections is the stimulus derived from Newman's *Grammar of Assent*. For example, he agrees with Newman that assent itself is always unconditional;[4] and he also accepts Newman's distinction between real and notional assent, though he expresses it as a distinction between two types of certitude. 'There is then a certitude which one can call *real* and another which one can call *abstract*. The latter is related to *notions*, the former to *things*.'[5] Ollé-Laprune also distinguishes between implicit certitude, preceding reflection, and actual or explicit certitude, which arises as a result of a reflective appropriation of implicit knowledge. As for the role played by the will, no truth can be perceived without attention; and attention is a voluntary act. Further, when it is not a question of assent to self-evidently true 'first principles' but a matter of reasoning, of the discursive activity of the mind, an effort of the will is obviously required to sustain this activity. But Ollé-Laprune is not prepared to accept the view of Descartes that judgment, in the form of affirmation or of denial, is in itself an act of the will. In the case of legitimate certitude it is the light of the evidence which determines assent, not an arbitrary choice by the will between affirmation and denial. At the same time truth may, for example, be displeasing, as when I hear a critical statement about myself, the truth of which I do not want to accept. An act of the will is then required to 'consent' to what I really perceive to be the truth. Consent (*consentement*) must however be distinguished from assent (*assentiment*), even if the two are often intermingled. '*Assent* is involuntary, but the *consent* which is added to it, or rather which is present as by way of implication, is voluntary.'[1] It is true that the intervention of the will may be required to overcome hesitation in giving assent; but this intervention is legitimate only when the hesitation is judged to be unreasonable. In other words, Ollé-Laprune wishes to avoid any implication that truth and falsity depend on the will and at the same time to attribute to the will an effective role in man's intellectual life.

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[1] *La philosophie et le temps présent*, p. 264.

[2] See Volume 4 of this *History*, pp. 153–173.

[3] For Newman see Appendix A to Volume 8 of this *History*.

[4] *De la certitude morale* (3rd edition, 1898), p. 22.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

This general treatment of assent and certitude constitutes a basis for reflection on man's assent to moral truths. A moral truth in the strict sense is an ethical truth. But Ollé-Laprune extends the range of meaning of the term to include metaphysical truths which, in his view, are closely connected with ethical truth. The moral life is defined as any exercise of human activity which implies the idea of obligation; and a truth of the moral order is 'any truth which appears as a *law* or a *condition* of the moral life'.[2] Thus 'all together, moral truths in the proper sense and metaphysical truths, form what one may call the order of moral things (*choses*), the moral order. One can also say that it is the religious order, if we abstract from positive religion.'[3] Moral truths can be summed up under four main headings: the moral law, liberty, the existence of God, and the future life.[4]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 3. Ollé-Laprune means that he is abstracting from revelation.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 98.

The influence of Kant can be seen not only in the close connection which Ollé-Laprune makes between man's moral life and his religious belief, but also in particular lines of thought. For example, Ollé-Laprune agrees with Kant that moral obligation implies freedom; and he approaches belief in the future life by arguing that recognition of the moral law and of a moral order warrants conviction that this order will triumph, and that its triumph demands human immortality. Though however Ollé-Laprune often refers appreciatively to Kant, he has no intention of accepting that Kantian position that religious beliefs are objects not of theoretical knowledge but solely of practical faith. And he criticizes at length the views of philosophers, such as Kant, Pascal, Maine de Biran, Cournot, Hamilton, Mansel and Spencer, who either deny or severely restrict the mind's power to prove moral truths. To put the matter in another way, the title of the work, *On Moral Certitude*, can be misleading. The word 'moral' refers to the moral dispositions which, according to Ollé-Laprune, are required for the full recognition of truths in the moral order. But it is not intended to indicate that in the case of moral truths a firm assent is given to a more or less probable hypothesis, still less that it is given simply because one wants the relevant propositions to be true. Ollé-Laprune can therefore claim of his book that it establishes, as against the fideists, that truth is 'independent of our will and of our thought, and that we have to recognize it, not create it.'[1]

The fact of the matter is that Ollé-Laprune was a devout Catholic whose sense of orthodoxy prevented any substitution of the will to believe for the perception of adequate rational grounds for assent. When therefore he undertakes to show, as against the '*dry rationalists* who admit only a kind of logical mechanism',[2] that in regard to the recognition of moral truths the will has a particular role to play, he has to stop short of any view which would entail the conclusion that these truths cannot be known to be true. At one end, so to speak, he can maintain that effective recognition of such truths requires personal dispositions of a moral nature which are not required for recognition of the truth of, say, mathematical propositions. For example, a man may refuse to recognize a moral obligation which entails consequences that, for lack of the requisite dispositions, he is reluctant or unwilling to accept. And an effort of will is required to overcome this aversion to the truth. At the other end Ollé-Laprune can maintain that a purely intellectual assent to the conclusion of a proof of God's existence cannot become 'consent' and be transformed into a living faith without a personal commitment of the whole man, including the will. 'Complete certitude is *personal*: it is the total act of the soul itself embracing by a free choice, no less than by a firm judgment, the truth which is present to it. . . .'[1] Ollé-Laprune can also admit that in the case of moral truths an effort of the will may be required to overcome the hesitation occasioned by 'obscurities' which are not present in the case of purely formal truths, such as mathematical propositions. If, for instance, a man contemplates only 'the ordinary course of nature',[2] appearances seem to tell against immortality; and the man may therefore hesitate to assent to any argument in favour of human survival. Ollé-Laprune insists however that though an intervention of the will is required to overcome such hesitation, this intervention derives its justification not simply from the desire to believe but rather from recognition of the fact that hesitation to give assent is unreasonable and therefore ought to be overcome.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. vii.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. vii.

It is understandable that to some minds Ollé-Laprune should have appeared as a pragmatist or as a pioneer of modernism, in spite of his efforts to safeguard the objective truth of religious beliefs. But even the most orthodox theologian could hardly object to the claim that it is not simply by a process of reasoning that philosophy passes into religion, and that for a living faith what Ollé-Laprune describes as *consentement* is required. Moreover, from the theological point of view it is considerably easier to see how room is left for the activity of divine grace in Ollé-Laprune's account of religious belief than it is in the case of the purely rationalist apologetics which he criticizes. To be sure, Ollé-Laprune writes from the standpoint of a convinced believer; and what appear to some people as adequate grounds for not believing are presented by him as occasions for doubts and hesitations which the genuine seeker after truth can see that he is morally obliged to overcome. But though the arguments which he presents to establish the truth of the beliefs which he judges of importance for human life may appear unconvincing to many minds, he himself regards them as possessing a force which, for the man of good will, should outweigh the force of contrary appearances. In other words, he has no intention of expounding a pragmatist theory of truth.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

2. Mention has been made of the fact that Ollé-Laprune regarded thought as a form of action. But this theme is best considered in connection with his pupil Maurice Blondel (1861–1949), author of *L'action*.

Blondel was born at Dijon; and after studying at the local lycée he entered the École Normale at Paris, where he had Ollé-Laprune and Boutroux as his teachers and Victor Delbos as his fellow-student.[1] Blondel experienced considerable difficulty in getting action accepted as the subject for a thesis, though he eventually succeeded.[2] After two failures he obtained the *agrégation* in 1886 and was appointed to teach philosophy in the lycée at Montauban. In the same year he was transferred to Aix-en-Provence. In 1893 his thesis, *L'Action*, was submitted to the Sorbonne. His application for a university post was at first refused, on the ground that his thought was not properly philosophical. He was then offered a chair of history. But in 1894 the then minister of education, Raymond Poincaré, appointed him professor of philosophy in the University of Aix-en-Provence. Blondel held this post until 1927, when he retired because of failing eyesight.

The original edition of *L'Action* appeared in 1893.[3] This was also the date of Blondel's Latin thesis on Leibniz.[4] What is generally known as Blondel's *Trilogy* appeared in 1934–7. It consisted of *Thought* (*La Pensée*, 2 vols., 1934), *Being and Beings* (*L'être et les êtres*, 1935) and *Action* (2 vols., 1936–7). This last-mentioned work should not be confused with the original *L'Action*, which was reprinted in 1950 as the first volume of Blondel's *Premiers écrits* (*First Writings*). *La philosophie et l'esprit chrétien* (*Philosophy and the Christian Spirit*) was published in two volumes in 1944–6, and *Exigences philosophiques du christianisme* (*Philosophical Requirements of Christianity*) appeared posthumously in 1950.

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[1] Victor Delbos (1862–1916) became a professor of the Sorbonne and published studies on Spinoza, Kant and German idealism. He was a friend and correspondent of Blondel.

[2] Blondel's preliminary reflections can be found in *Carnets intimes*.

[3] *L'Action. Essai d'une critique de la vie et d'une science de la pratique*. There were three versions, the thesis itself, a printed version and a version revised and added to by Blondel.

[4] *De vinculo substantiali et de substantia composita apud Leibnitium*. A French version, *Une ènigme historique: le 'Vinculum substantiale' d'après Leibniz*, appeared in 1930.

In addition Blondel published a considerable number of essays, such as his Letter on the *Requirements of Contemporary Thought in the Matter of Apologetics* and *History and Dogma.*[1] The correspondence between Blondel and the Jesuit philosopher Auguste Valensin (1879–1953) was published in three volumes at Paris in 1957–65, while Blondel's *Philosophical Correspondence* with Laberthonnière, edited by C. Tresmontant, appeared in 1962. There is also a collection of philosophical letters written by Blondel to Boutroux, Delbos, Brunschvicg and others (Paris, 1961).

Blondel has often been described as a Catholic apologist. So indeed he was, and so he saw himself. In the project for his thesis *L'Action*, he referred to the work as philosophical apologetics. In a letter to Delbos he stated that for him philosophy and apologetics were basically one.[2] From the start he was convinced of the need for a Christian philosophy. But in his opinion 'there has never yet been, strictly speaking, any Christian philosophy.'[3] Blondel aspired to meet this need, or at any rate to point out the way to do so. Further, he spoke of trying to do 'for the Catholic form of thought what Germany has long since done, and continues to do for the Protestant form'.[4] But there is no need to multiply references to justify the description of Blondel as a Catholic apologist.

Though however the description is justifiable, it can be extremely misleading. For it suggests the idea of a heteronomous philosophy, a philosophy, that is to say, which is used to support certain theological positions or to prove certain preconceived conclusions which are considered to be both philosophically demonstrable and an essential propaedeutic to or theoretical basis for Christian belief. In other words, the description of a philosophy as Christian apologetics suggests the idea of philosophy as a handmaid or servant of theology. And in so far as the business of Christian philosophy is conceived to be that of proving certain theses dictated by theology or by ecclesiastical authority, the conclusion is likely to be drawn that Christian philosophy is not philosophy at all but theology in disguise.

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[1] These two long essays, published respectively in 1896 and 1904, have appeared in English translation, with an introduction, by Alexander Dru and Illtyd Trethowan (London, 1964).

[2] *Lettres philosophiques*, p. 71.

[3] *Lettre sur les exigences* (1956), p. 54. (*Letter on Apologetics*, English translation, p. 171).

[4] *Lettres philosophiques*, p. 34. Blondel's interest in German thought was stimulated by the lectures of Boutroux and by the studies of his friend Delbos, as well as by his own reading.

Blondel recognized of course that philosophical concepts could be used in the explicitation of the content of Christian faith. But he insisted, rightly, that this process was internal to theology.[1] Philosophy itself, he was convinced, should be autonomous, in fact and not simply in theory. Christian philosophy too should therefore be autonomous. But an autonomous Christian philosophy did not, in his opinion, exist. It was something to be created. It would be Christian in the sense that it would exhibit man's lack of self-sufficiency and his opening to the Transcendent. In the process it would exhibit its own limitations as human thought and its lack of omnicompetence. Blondel was convinced that autonomous philosophical reflection, consistently and rigorously pursued, would in fact reveal in man an exigency for the supernatural, for that which is inaccessible to human effort alone. It would open the horizon of the human spirit to the free self-communication of the divine, which answers indeed to a profound need in man but which cannot be given through philosophy.[2] In brief, Blondel envisaged a philosophy which would be autonomous in its reflection but, through this reflection, self-limiting, in the sense that it pointed to what lay beyond itself. He was considerably influenced by Pascal, but he had a greater confidence in systematic philosophy. Perhaps we can say that Blondel aimed at creating the philosophy which was demanded by the thought of Pascal. But it must be philosophy. Thus in one place Blondel asserts that 'apologetical philosophy ought not to become a philosophical apologetics'.[3] That is to say, philosophy ought to be a process of autonomous rational reflection, not simply a means to an extra-philosophical end.

Blondel therefore wished to create something new or at any rate to make a substantial contribution to its creation. But he was not of course thinking of creation out of nothing, of bringing into existence, that is to say, a novelty without relation to past thought. We cannot enter here into any detailed discussion of the influence exercised upon his mind by particular movements and individual thinkers.[1] But a general, even if very sketchy account of the sort of way in which he interpreted the development of western philosophy seems to be required for the elucidation of his aims.

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[1] Mathematics, for example, is an autonomous discipline. But mathematical concepts might be used by a theologian. And if he uses such concepts, this does not convert theology into mathematics.

[2] Blondel was of course concerned, as was Augustine, with man in the concrete, who, from the point of view of Christian faith, is called to a supernatural end. For Blondel man as he is exhibits the need for the supernatural, for what transcends his own powers but towards which he reaches out.

[3] From the letter to Charles Denis, editor of *Annales de philosophie chrétienne* (*Lettre sur les exigences*, p. 3).

In Aristotelianism Blondel saw a remarkable expression of rationalism, of the tendency of reasion, that is to say, to assert its omnicompetence and to absorb religion into itself. With Aristotle thought was divinized, and theoretical speculation was represented as man's highest activity and end. In the Middle Ages Aristotelianism was of course harmonized with Christian theology in a way which limited the scope of philosophy. But the harmonization was a conjunction of two factors, one of which, left to itself, would aspire to absorb the other; and the limitation of philosophy was imposed from outside. Philosophy may have been autonomous in theory; but in practice it was heteronomous. When the external control weakened or was lifted, rationalistic philosophy once more asserted its omnicompetence.[2] At the same time new lines of thought came into being. For example, whereas medieval realism had concentrated on objects of knowledge, Spinoza, though one of the great rationalists, started with the active subject and the problems of human existence and man's destiny. To this extent he pursued the way of 'immanence'; but he also understood that man can find his true fulfilment only in the Absolute which transcends himself.[3]

A step forward was made by Kant, with whom we see philosophy becoming self-critical and self-limiting. It is not, as in the Middle Ages, a question of limitations imposed from outside. The limitations are self-imposed as the result of self-criticism. The act of limiting is therefore compatible with the autonomous character of philosophy. At the same time Kant drove a wedge between thought and being and between theory and practice or action, whereas Spinoza had aimed at overcoming the gulf between thought and being. Syntheses were attempted by the great German idealists, from whom the philosopher has much to learn.[1] But with Hegel especially we see a tendency to divinize reason, to identify human and absolute thought, and to absorb religion into philosophy. As a counterweight we can turn to the tradition from Pascal through Maine de Biran up to Ollé-Laprune and others which starts with the concrete active subject and reflects on the exigencies of its activity. What is wanting in this tradition however is a method which will make possible the construction of a philosophy of immanence which at the same time leads or points to transcendence.

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[1] There are several books on aspects of this subject. For example, *The Blondelian Synthesis* by J. J. McNeil (Leiden, 1966) deals with Blondel's relation to Spinoza, Kant and the great German idealists, while *Hegel and Blondel* by P. Henrici (Munich, 1958) deals with his relation to Hegel in particular. For remarks by Blondel himself see *L'itinéraire philosophique de Maurice Blondel*, edited by F. Lefèvre (Paris, 1928).

[2] Blondel saw Luther's hostility to rationalism and his separation between philosophy and theology as having the practical effect of encouraging philosophy to assert its independence and to invade the sphere of theology.

[3] Blondel was fully conscious of course of Spinoza's pantheism and of his intellectualist interpretation of love and union with God. But when referring to past philosophers Blondel is more concerned with their significance for him than with exegesis.

From what has been said it should be clear that Blondel was no supporter of the 'Back to Aquinas' movement.[2] In his opinion the Christian thinker, concerned with the development of philosophy of religion, should not attempt to go back but rather to enter into the development of modern philosophy and to go beyond it from within. One great contribution of modern thought, he was convinced, was the concept of autonomous but self-limiting philosophy. This rendered possible for the first time a philosophy which would both point to the Transcendent and refrain, through its own critical self-limitation, from trying to capture the Transcendent in a rationalistic network. It would thus leave room for the divine self-revelation. Another contribution of modern philosophy (though foreshadowed in earlier thought) was the approach to being by way of the active subject's reflection on its own dynamism of thought and will, the method of immanence in other words. In Blondel's opinion it was only by means of this approach that a philosophy of religion could be developed which would mean something to modern man. For God to become a reality for him and not simply an object of thought or of speculation, man must rediscover God from within, not indeed as an object which can be found by introspection but by coming to see that the Transcendent is the goal of his thought and will.

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[1] For example, Blondel had considerable sympathy with Schelling's later philosophy of religion, though he regarded the division between negative and positive philosophy (or between philosophy of essence and philosophy of existence) as something which needed to be overcome.

[2] In earlier writings, such as the *Letter on Apologetics*, Blondel made some pretty sharp comments about Thomists and Scholasticism. As several writers have pointed out, what he had in mind was a form of Thomism which held aloof from modern thought or mentioned it only to criticize it, often caricaturing it in the process, and which suspected heresy in any Catholic philosopher who did not follow the party-line. Blondel's remarks about pseudo-philosophizing would not apply, for example, to Maréchal who tried to do one of the very things which Blondel thought necessary, to develop a Kantian line of thought beyond the position reached by Kant himself. Later Blondel devoted some more study to Aquinas himself and became more sympathetic. The Thomists whom Blondel castigated obviously paid little attention to the *spirit* of Aquinas.

If however Blondel was convinced that Catholic philosophers should throw themselves into the stream of modern thought, he did not mean to imply that modern philosophers had solved all the major problems which they raised. For example, whereas Aristotle in the ancient world had exalted thought to the detriment of practice or action, Kant in the modern world had emphasized the moral will at the expense of the theoretical reason, doing away with reason, as he put it, to make way for faith. The problem remained of uniting thought and will, thought and action or practice. Again, the *method* of immanence, the approach to being through critical reflection on the subject, could easily be converted and had in fact been converted, into a *doctrine* of immanence, asserting that nothing exists outside human consciousness or that the statement that anything so exists is devoid of meaning. There remained therefore the problem of pursuing the method of immanence while avoiding the doctrine or principle of immanence.

To be sure, some of Blondel's critics accused him of immanentism, in the sense that they attributed to him the principle or doctrine of immanence and concluded that on his premises man could never emerge from the prison-house of subjective impressions and ideas and assert the existence of any reality except as a content of human consciousness. Though however they were able to select certain passages in support of this interpretation, it is evident that he had no intention of proposing any doctrine which would entail subjective idealism. It is indeed true that he derived stimulus from a number of philosophers who enclosed all reality within the realm of thought.[1] But one of his aims was to close the gap between thought and being (considered as object of thought) without reducing being to thought. And though he was obviously aware of the fact that God cannot be conceived except through consciousness, he had no intention of suggesting that God is identifiable with man's idea of him. He wished to pursue a method of immanence which would lead to an affirmation of the Transcendent as an objective reality, in the sense of a reality which was not dependent on human consciousness.

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[1] In the case of a philosopher such as Hegel it was not of course a question of enclosing all reality within the realm of human thought as such. Hegel was not a subjective idealist. Reality was for him the self-expression of absolute thought, in which the human mind participates, at any rate at certain levels. In Blondel's opinion however Hegelianism was in fact an apotheosis of the human reason. And Blondel wished to open man's mind to the Transcendent, not to divinize the human reason.

For the solution of his problems Blondel looked to a philosophy of action. The term 'action' naturally suggests the idea of something which may be preceded by thought or accompanied by it but is not itself thought. But as Blondel uses the term, thought itself is a form of action. There are of course thoughts, ideas and representations which we tend to conceive as contents of consciousness and possible objects of thought. More fundamental however is the act of thinking which produces and sustains thought. And thought as activity or action is itself the expression of the movement of life, the dynamism of the subject or of the whole person. 'There is nothing in the properly subjective life which is not act. That which is properly subjective is not only what is conscious and known from within . . .; it is what causes the fact of consciousness to be.'[1] Action might perhaps be described as the dynamism of the subject, the aspiration and movement of the person seeking self-fulfilment. It is the life of the subject considered as integrating or synthesizing pre-conscious potentialities and tendencies, as expressing itself in thought and knowledge, and as reaching out towards further goals.

Blondel makes a distinction between what he calls 'the will-willing' (*la volonté voulante*) and 'the will-willed' (*la volonté voulue*). The latter consists of distinct acts of volition. One wills first this, then that. The former, the will-willing, is 'the movement which is common to every will'.[2] Blondel does not of course mean to imply that there are in man two wills. His contention is that there is in man a basic aspiration or movement (*la volonté voulante*) which expresses itself in willing distinct finite objects or ends but which can never be satisfied with any of them but reaches out beyond them. It is not itself the object of psychological introspection but rather the condition of all volitions or acts of will and at the same time that which lives and expresses itself in them and passes beyond them, as they are inadequate to it. Moreover, it is the operation of the basic will which leads to thought and knowledge. 'Knowledge is nothing more than the middle term, the fruit of

[1] *L'Action*, p. 99.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. xxi.

action and the seed of action.'[1] Thus even mathematics can be seen as 'a form of the development of the will'.[2] It does not follow that truth is simply what we decide that it is to be. What Blondel means is that man's life of thought and knowledge, whether in the sciences or in philosophy, is rooted in man's basic activity and must be seen in relation to it. In his view the genesis and the meaning or end of science and philosophy can be properly understood only in terms of the subject's fundamental and dynamic orientation.

It hardly needs saying that in his insistence on the basically dynamic character of the subject or ego Blondel stands within the general current of thought to which Maine de Biran gave such a powerful stimulus. But he also derived inspiration from his reflection on the thought of the German philosophers, as he understood it. Though, for example, he wished to overcome the Kantian dichotomies between theoretical and practical reason, the noumenal and phenomenal selves, and the spheres of freedom and necessity, he was certainly influenced by Kant's emphasis on the primacy of the practical reason or moral will. Again, we can find links between Blondel's concept of *la volonté voulante*, Fichte's idea of the pure ego as activity and Schelling's theory of a basic act of will or primitive choice which expresses itself in particular choices. But it is a question not of Blondel's taking or borrowing this idea from one philosopher and that idea from another philosopher but rather of his developing his own ideas in dialogue with the ideas of other thinkers either as expressed directly in their writings or as conveyed to him through the works of his friend Delbos. And we cannot discuss this process of dialogue here.

The philosophy of action can be described as a systematic inquiry into the conditions and dialectic of the dynamism of the subject, or as critical reflection on the *a priori* structure of the will-willing, seen as determining or expressing itself in man's thought and action, or perhaps as critical reflection on the basic orientation of the active subject as manifested in the genesis of morality, science and philosophy. The word 'subject' should not be understood in the narrow sense of the Cartesian ego or of the transcendental ego of German idealism. For action is the life of the 'human composite, the synthesis "of body and soul".'[3] But it is the basic orientation of the person as aiming at a goal with which Blondel

[1] *Lettres philosophiques*, p. 84.

[2] *L'Action*, p. 55, *n*. 1.

[3] *Lettres philosophiques*, p. 82.

is concerned. In other words, he is using the method of immanence to solve what he sees as the problem of human destiny.

To take an example, Blondel tries to show that the idea of liberty or freedom arises on the basis of the determinism of nature. The will is subject to desires and tendencies, but in its potential infinity it transcends the factual order and reaches out towards ideal ends. On the basis of a determinism of nature the subject becomes aware of its freedom. But at the same time it substitutes for the determinism of nature that of reason and obligation. Obligation is 'a necessary postulate of the will'[1] and a synthesis of the ideal and the real. Morality or the moral order does not represent therefore an imposition from without: it arises in the dialectical self-unfolding of the dynamism of the subject. But the feeling of obligation, the awareness of a moral imperative, can arise only through the subject transcending the factual, in the sense that it learns to find the motive of its behaviour in the ideal. In other words, the moral consciousness involves an implicit metaphysics, an implicit recognition of the natural or factual order as related to a metaphysical or ideal sphere of reality.

As one might expect, Blondel proceeds to argue that the total activity of the human subject cannot be understood except in terms of an orientation to a transcendent Absolute, to the infinite as final end of the will. This does not mean of course that the Transcendent can be discovered as an object, whether internal or external. Rather is it a question of the subject becoming aware of its dynamic orientation to the Transcendent and of being faced with an option, the choice between asserting and denying the reality of God. Philosophical reflection, that is to say, gives rise to the idea of God; but precisely because God is transcendent, man can either affirm or deny the reality of God. Blondel sees man as beset by what an existentialist might call 'anxiety', as seeking an adequation between the will-willed and the will-willing. In his view the adequation cannot be attained except through God. But the method of immanence can lead only to the necessity of an option. As Sartre was to say after him, Blondel tells us that 'man aspires to be God'.[2] This means however that he is faced with the choice between substituting his own will for the divine will, thus choosing against God with the idea of God,[3] and becoming God (united with God) only through God. Ultimately, what a man

[1] *L'Action*, p. 302.

[2] *L'Action*, p. 356.

[3] As Nietzsche may be said to have done.

becomes depends on his will. Is his will to live sufficient, to speak paradoxically, to die 'by consenting to be supplanted by God',[1] his will being united with the divine will? Or will he seek to be self-sufficient and autonomous without God? The choice is man's. At a point in the dialectic of man's basic movement or aspiration the idea of God as a reality necessarily arises. But it still remains open to man to affirm or to deny God as a reality.

Blondel's theory of the option was understood by some critics as implying that in his view the existence of God was incapable of proof, and that assertion of it was simply the result of an act of the will, of the will to believe that is to say. In point of fact however Blondel did not reject all proofs of God's existence. He regarded the philosophy of action as itself constituting a proof, inasmuch as the way of immanence showed the necessity of the idea of God. It was not a question of rejecting, for example, the argument from contingency as worthless but rather of interiorizing it and trying to show how the idea of the necessary being arises through the subject's reflection on its own orientation or movement and aspiration. As for the option, Blondel regards this as necessary if God is to be a reality 'for us'.[2] Speculative knowledge may precede the option; but without the option, without the subject's free self-relating to God, there can be no *effective* knowledge. 'The living thought which we have of him (God) is and remains living only if it turns towards practice, if one lives by it and if one's action is nourished by it.'[3] This however demands a voluntary act of self-relating not to the idea of God but to God as being.

Catholic critics also understood Blondel as claiming that supernatural revelation and life were not gratuitous but necessary, fulfilling, that is to say, a demand in the nature of man, a demand which man's creator had to satisfy. Though however Blondel's statements sometimes provided ground for this interpretation, it is clear that 'the supernatural' which is demanded by the method of immanence is simply the 'undetermined supernatural', in the sense that the philosophy of action shows, for Blondel, that man should accept and surrender himself to the Transcendent. Christian revelation is the positively determined form of the supernatural; and man should accept it, if it is true. But the method of immanence cannot prove that it is true. At the same time nobody could accept the positively determined supernatural, unless there were something in him to which it answered and responded.

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[1] *L'Action*, p. 354.

[2] *L'Action*, p. 426.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 354.

Otherwise it would be irrelevant. And the method of immanence shows that this something, a dynamic orientation to the Transcendent, is really there.[1]

Of course, if we say, as we have said above, that the philosophy of action reveals the necessity of the idea of 'God', the impression can easily be given that Blondel regards the method of immanence as leading to the specifically Christian belief in God. Looking back however on modern philosophy Blondel sees some systems as resolutely trying to exclude the Transcendent and others as trying to take the Transcendent by storm, as it were, and producing only an idol or caricature. In his view the method of immanence, as pursued in the philosophy of action, opens man's mind and will to the Transcendent, while leaving room for God's self-revelation. In this sense a truly critical philosophy is a Christian philosophy and a Christian apologetics, not in the sense that it tries to prove the truth of Christian doctrines but rather in the sense that it leads man to the point at which he is open to God's self-revelation and to the divine action. 'Philosophy cannot directly demonstrate or procure (for us) the supernatural'.[2] But it can proceed indirectly by eliminating incomplete solutions to the problem of human destiny and showing us 'what we inevitably have and what is necessarily lacking to us.'[3] Philosophy can show the insufficiency of the natural order for providing the goal of the dynamic orientation of the human spirit. At the same time philosophy's self-criticism reveals its own incompetence to provide man with the beatitude to which he aspires. It thus points beyond itself.

Though Blondel made it clear enough that he had no intention of identifying God with the immanent idea of God, and though he was opposed to the historicism of the modernists, to anyone who is aware of the situation in the Catholic Church during the modernist crisis it is not surprising that Blondel came under suspicion and was thought by some to have been involved in the condemnation of 'religious immanentism' in the encyclical *Pascendi* which Pope Pius X issued in 1907. Matters were not improved by Blondel's opposition to the *Action Française* movement, which he regarded as an unholy alliance between positivist sociology and a reactionary Catholicism. For though Charles

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[1] For a discussion of Blondel's position in regard to the supernatural see *Blondel et le christianisme* by Henri Bouillard (Paris, 1961).

[2] *Lettre sur les exigences*, p. 85 (*Letter on Apologetics*, p. 198).

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 85.

Maurras was an atheist who endeavoured to make use of the Church for his own ends, the movement was supported by a number of distinguished but very traditional theologians and Thomists who disliked Blondel's originality and independence, considered him corrupted by German thought, and did not hesitate to accuse him of modernism. In point of fact Blondel's ideas were never condemned by Rome, in spite of efforts in this direction. But it is probably fortunate for him that he had not become a priest, as he had once thought of doing. It must be added however that he did not indulge in the kind of ardent polemics carried on by his friend Laberthonnière. And the obscurity of his style or, if preferred, the fact that he was a highly professional philosopher and not a popularizer may well have contributed some protection.

In any case Blondel weathered the years of controversy and criticism and, as has already been mentioned, he at length produced his trilogy (*La Pensée*, *L'Être et les êtres* and the second *L'Action*), followed by *Philosophy and The Christian Spirit*. Some writers on Blondel have pretty well neglected the later works, perhaps regarding them as an expression of second thoughts under the pressure of criticism and as being tamer and more traditional than the original *L'Action*. Other writers have insisted that the trilogy represents the philosopher's mature thought, sometimes adding that the emphasis placed in it on ontological and metaphysical themes shows that it is a mistake to describe him as an apologist on the basis of the first *L'Action* and the *Letter on Apologetics*. In some instances they have been glad of the opportunity to assimilate his thought to the metaphysical tradition passing through St. Thomas Aquinas.[1] Though however the trilogy obviously does represent Blondel's mature thought and though he did indeed come to have a greater respect for Aquinas, Blondel continued to be concerned with developing an autonomous philosophy which would be at the same time open to Christianity. In this sense he remained an apologist, even if in his later writings he emphasized the ontological implications and presuppositions of his thought as previously presented.

In *La Pensée* Blondel inquires into the antecedent conditions of human thought and defends the theory of 'cosmic thought' (*la pensée cosmique*). In his view we cannot justifiably make a sharp dichotomy between human beings as thinking subjects on the one hand and Nature as mindless matter on the other. On the contrary, Leibniz was right in maintaining that the material always has its psychical aspect. Indeed, the intelligible organic universe can be described as 'a subsistent thought',[1] not of course conscious thought but thought 'in search of itself'.[2] In the process of the world's development conscious thought arises on the basis of a hierarchy of levels, each successive level prerequiring the antecedent levels, introducing something new and creating problems, as it were, the solution of which demands a higher level. In man the spontaneous, concrete thought present in Nature persists; but there also arises abstract analytic thought which deals with symbols.[3] The tension between them had been noted by some previous philosophers. The Scholastics spoke of 'reason' (*ratio*) and 'intellect' (*intellectus*), Spinoza of degrees of knowledge, Newman of notional and real assent. Together with advertence to the distinction between different types of thought there has gone the vision of a synthesis at a higher level, as with the Scholastics and Spinoza in their several ways. The condition of any such synthesis, of the self-perfecting of thought, is participation in the life of absolute thought, in a union with God in which vision and love are one. But the attainment of this goal of the dialectic of thought lies beyond the competence of philosophy and of human effort in general.

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[1] See, for example, *Introduction à la métaphysique de Maurice Blondel* by Claude Tresmontant (Paris, 1963).

In *L'Être et les êtres* Blondel turns from thought to being and interrogates, as it were, different kinds of things to discover whether they merit being described as beings. Matter fails to pass the test. It is not a being. It is 'less a thing than the common condition of the resistances, which all things oppose to us and which we oppose to ourselves.'[4] It is indeed, to use the language of Aristotelianism, the principle of individuation and multiplicity, and it thus provides a good ground for the rejection of monism, but it is not itself substantial being. The living organism, with its specific unity, its spontaneity and relative autonomy, presents a better claim; but though it transmits an *élan vital*, its activity is counterbalanced by passivity, and it lacks both real autonomy and immortality. As for human persons, they present a still better claim. At the same time their lack of self-sufficiency can be shown in many ways. It may seem therefore that it is the universe in its totality which alone merits the name of being. But the universe is becoming rather than being. It participates in being; but it is not being itself.

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[1] *La Pensée*, I, p. 4.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[3] Blondel adds to his distinction between will-willing and will-willed a distinction between *cogitatio ut natura* (*La Pensée*, I, p. 495) and thought-thought.
[4] *L'Être*, p. 80.

In these reflections Blondel obviously takes it that there is in man an implicit and real idea of 'Being in itself',[1] which is found not to be fully instantiated in matter, organisms, persons or even in the universe considered as a developing totality. But he does not claim that this implicit idea is able to provide a basis for the ontological argument of St. Anselm. Hence he is bound to ask whether there is justification for asserting that the idea refers to a reality. While not rejecting arguments of a traditional nature from the world to God, Blondel maintains that 'our idea of God has its source, not in a light which belongs to us, but in the illuminating action of God in us.'[2] 'The fundamental and congenital aptitude of the spirit for knowing and desiring God is the initial and supreme cause of the whole movement of nature and thought, so that our certainty of being is thus grounded on Being itself.'[3]

In the second *Action* Blondel says that in the original work of this name he had deliberately left on one side 'the redoubtable metaphysical difficulties of the problem of secondary causes'[4] and had considered action only in man and with a view to a study of human destiny. In the second *Action* however he widens his horizon to include action in general, and he includes themes which had been passed over in the first version. He argues, for example, that the pure and complete concept of action is verified only in God, who is absolute activity (*l'Agir absolu*) and who is the productive course of all finite things. At the same time there are graded approximations, so to speak, to the absolute divine activity; and the question arises, how is it possible for God to create finite beings as free and responsible moral agents? Blondel tries to combine recognition of man's creative activity and moral responsibility with the belief in divine creation and with his theory of the basic orientation of the human spirit to the Transcendent and of the perfecting of human nature through the union of the human will with the divine.

This broadening of horizons to cover wide-ranging ontological and metaphysical themes undoubtedly gives to the trilogy a different flavour, as it were, from that of the original *L'Action* and the *Letter on Apologetics*. But though the trilogy widens the scope of reflection, it does not constitute a repudation of the first *L'Action*. Blondel remains profoundly convinced of the basic dynamic orientation of the human spirit to God; and the widening of horizons can be seen as a covering of problems implicit in his original line of thought. The change in Blondel's ways of expressing his thought and the respectful attitude which he often shows to Aquinas can be misleading. For instance, though in *La Pensée* Blondel is careful to allow for the role of traditional-type proofs of God's existence, he makes it clear that if they are taken in isolation and as exercises in theoretical metaphysics, they lead to an *idea* of God, and that for God to be a living reality for man, the God of the religious consciousness, something more is required. He may avoid use of the word 'option'; but the fundamental idea remains. Blondel will not allow that there is a final and unbridgeable dichotomy between 'the God of the philosophers' and 'the God of religion'. The difference arises because there are different types of thought in man; but the ideal is an integration of conflicting tendencies within man. And this ideal was obviously present in the original *L'Action*.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 156. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 163. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 167.
[4] *L'Action* (trilogy), I, p. 298.

It is difficult to see how Blondel can ever be a popular writer. He writes for philosophers rather than for the general public. Moreover, a good many readers, even if they are philosophers, are probably often left wondering precisely what he means. But he is notable as a Catholic thinker who developed his ideas in dialogue with modern philosophy in its spiritualist, idealist and positivist movements. He did not call simply for a return to the medieval past, when brought into line with modern science. Nor did he adopt an attitude of discipleship in regard to any given thinker. We can of course discern lines of thought which link him with Augustine and Bonaventure, just as we can see affinities with Leibniz, Kant, Maine de Biran and others. But he was throughout an original thinker. And the general idea of a philosophy which should be intrinsically autonomous but at the same time self-critical and self-limiting and open to Christian revelation is presumably acceptable in principle to all Catholic thinkers who have any use for metaphysical philosophy.[1] Some may of course believe that the approach to metaphysics 'from within', by way of reflection on the active subject, which was characteristic of

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[1] How far Blondel's philosophy really is 'autonomous' is of course open to discussion.

Maine de Biran and which is especially noticeable in the first *Action*, smacks of subjectivism. In this case they will welcome the widening of horizons in the trilogy as equivalent to an acknowledgement of the inadequacy of the way of immanence. But Blondel's approach does at any rate have the merit of trying to exhibit the relevance of religion. And he recognized the fact, also seen by the so-called transcendental Thomists, that the traditional proofs of God's existence, based on the external world, rest on presuppositions which can be justified only by systematic reflection on the activity of the subject in thought and volition.

3. Among Blondel's correspondents was Lucien Laberthonnière (1860–1932).[1] After studying in a seminary at Bourges Laberthonnière became an Oratorian in 1886 and taught philosophy in the Oratorian school at Juilly and then at a school in Paris. In 1900 he returned to Juilly as rector of the College; but when the Combes government had passed its legislation against religious orders and congregations in 1902, he went to live in Paris. In 1903 he published *Essays in Religious Philosophy* (*Essais de philosophie religieuse*) and in 1904 *Christian Realism and Greek Idealism* (*Le réalisme chrétien et l'idéalisme grec*). In 1905 Blondel made him editor of the *Annales de philosophie chrétienne*. In the following year however two of his writings were placed on the Index. In 1911 he published *Positivism and Catholicism* (*Positivisme et catholicisme*); but in 1913 he was prohibited by the ecclesiastical authorities from further publication. In this period of enforced silence one or two writings of Laberthonnière were published under the name of friends.[2] But the bulk had to await posthumous publication. In 1935 Louis Canet started to publish these works at Paris under the general title *Oeuvres de Laberthonnière*.

In spite of the treatment which he received Laberthonnière never broke with the Church. Still less did he abandon his deep Christian faith. It is indeed both probable and natural that the placing of two of his books on the Index and the later veto on further publication increased his hostility not only to authoritarianism but also to Aristotelianism and Thomism.[3] But this hostility certainly did not originate in reaction to the measures taken by ecclesiastical authority. It was a reasoned attitude, based on his view of human life, of the nature of philosophy and of the Christian religion. If it had not been for his reduction to silence, his ideas might have made a much greater impression. As it was, other philosophers were coming to the fore by the time when his works were at length published. One must add however that whereas Blondel concentrated on expounding his own thought, Laberthonnière tended to work out and exhibit his ideas while discussing those of other thinkers, sometimes in a markedly polemical manner. Thus the first volumes of the *Works* as published by Louis Canet contain Laberthonnière's *Studies on Descartes* (*Études sur Descartes*, 1935) and his *Studies in Cartesian Philosophy* (*Études de philosophie cartésienne*, 1938) while the *Outline of a Personalist Philosophy* (*Esquisse d'une philosophie personnaliste*, 1942) presents a philosophical outlook which is developed, in large measure, by way of critical discussion of the ideas of other philosophers, such as Renouvier, Bergson and Brunschvicg. One part, for example, is entitled 'the pseudo-personalism of Charles Renouvier'. It does not follow of course that Laberthonnière's ideas are not of value. Moreover, Blondel too developed his thought through a process of dialogue with other philosophers. At the same time in the original *L'Action* and in the trilogy the reader is much less distracted from the author's own line of thought by polemical and historical excursions than in the case of Laberthonnière's main works.

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[1] This correspondence has been edited by C. Tresmontant, *Correspondance philosophique, Maurice Blondel–Lucien Laberthonnière* (Paris, 1961).

[2] For example, P. Sanson's *L'inquiétude humaine* was really written by Laberthonnière.

[3] Laberthonnière was much more polemically inclined than Blondel.

In the notes which form the preface to his *Studies on Descartes* Laberthonnière asserts that 'every philosophical doctrine has as its end to give a meaning to life, to human existence'.[1] Every philosophy has a moral motivation, even if the philosopher gives to his thought a quasi-mathematical form. This can be seen even in the case of Spinoza, in whose thought the geometrical structure is really subordinate to the underlying aim and motivation. Further, the test of a philosophy's truth is its viability, its capacity for being lived. Laberthonnière is actually referring to the need for detecting the animating principle, the underlying and pervasive moral motivation, in any philosophy studied. But what he has to say expresses of course his own idea of what philosophy should be. 'There is only one problem, the problem of ourselves, from which all the others derive.'[2] What are we? And what ought we to be?

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[1] *Études sur Descartes*, I, p. 1.

[2] *Études de philosophie cartésienne* (1938), p. 1.

The animal, Laberthonnière asserts, is certainly not a machine; but it does not enjoy the self-consciousness which is required for raising problems in regard to the world and itself. For the matter of that, the human will-to-live is in origin akin to that of the animal. That is to say, the human will-to-live is oriented first of all to 'the things of time and space'.[1] The living organism, impelled by the will-to-live, learns empirically to seek for some things as satisfying desires and needs and to shun other things as causing suffering or menacing its existence. With the awakening of self-consciousness however the situation changes. Man becomes conscious of himself not as something already made and complete but rather as something which is to be and ought to be. In fact, according to Laberthonnière we are carried, as it were out of or beyond ourselves by the aspiration to possess the plenitude of being. Here however several paths lie open to man.

In the first place man finds himself in a world of things, which self-consciousness sets over against him. On the one hand he can make of this world of things a spectacle, an object of theoretical or aesthetic contemplation, possessing things, so to speak, without being possessed by them. This is the attitude exemplified in Aristotle's idea of contemplation. On the other hand man can strive to discover the properties of things and the laws governing the succession of phenomena in order to obtain mastery over things, to use them and to produce or destroy phenomena as he wills. Both attitudes can be described as pertaining to physics. But in the first case we have a physics of contemplation, while in the second case we have a physics of exploitation, such as has been practised from the time of Descartes onwards.

In the second place however man does not find himself simply in a world of things. He is not simply an isolated individual face to face with a material and non-self-conscious environment. He finds himself also in a world of persons who, like him, can say 'I' or 'I am'. This world of persons forms already a certain unity. We live and feel and thnk and will in a social world. Within however this material unity human beings can obviously experience hostility to one another. Beyond the basic natural unity there is a moral unity which is something to be achieved rather than something given. In this field the aspiration to possess the plenitude of being takes the form of the sense of obligation to become one with others, to achieve a moral unity of persons. Laberthonnière distinguishes between 'things' and 'beings', reserving the word 'being' for the self-conscious subject, who is characterized by an interiority which the 'thing' does not possess. This self-conscious subject aspires to possess the plenitude of being through union with other subjects.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

How is this unity to be achieved? It is of course possible to attempt to achieve it by means of an authority, of whatever kind, which dictates what men should think and say and do, treating human beings as animals which have to be trained. But this procedure can produce no more than an external unity which, according to Laberthonnière, simply transfers conflict from the external to the internal spheres. The only efficacious way of achieving unity between beings which exist in and for themselves is by each person overcoming his egoism and giving himself by setting himself at the service of others, so that the unification is the fruit of an expansion from within, so to speak, and not imposed from without. There is of course a place for authority, but for an authority which maintains a common ideal and tries to help persons to develop themselves as persons rather than to mould them by coercion or to reduce them to the level of sheep.

What Laberthonnière has to say on this matter obviously has its implications both in the political and in the ecclesiastical sphere. For example, when referring in one place to what he regards as the wrong use of authority, he mentions 'Caesarist or Fascist'[1] domination. It does not follow however that emphasis on Fascist totalitarianism is accompanied by a blindness to the possible shortcomings of democracy. For instance, in a note he speaks of democracy which 'instead of being a dynamic movement (*élan*) towards the ideal through the spiritualization of human life has become a stampede towards the goods of the earth through a systematic materialization of life'.[2] In other words, modern western democracy, though animated originally by an impulse directed to ideal goals, has become materialistic and cannot therefore simply be contrasted with political authoritarianism as the good is contrasted with the bad. As for the ecclesiastical sphere, it is obvious that Laberthonnière was opposed to the policy of trying to impose uniformity from above and to the sort of methods from which he personally was to suffer. He had, as it were, a post-Vatican II mentality long before the second Vatican Council. The same kind of ideas about the development of persons as

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 5. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 5*n*.

persons and of their union through personally willed acceptance of common ideals came out in his theory of education.

According to Laberthonnière therefore there is a natural unity. 'All men constitute one humanity by nature.'[1] There is also a unity which remains to be achieved, as a willed ideal. This shows that we have a common origin and a common goal. Beings (self-conscious subjects, that is to say) proceed from God and can attain their end only through union with the divine will. God is not so much a problem as 'the solution of the problem which we are for ourselves'.[2] Without reference to God we cannot answer such questions as 'what are we?' and 'what ought we to be?'. Or, rather, in attempting to answer these questions we are inevitably led into the sphere of religious belief.

Laberthonnière was influenced by Maine de Biran and Boutroux, and also by Blondel. Philosophy was for him the science of life, human life; and its point of departure was '*ourselves* as interior and spiritual realities having consciousness of ourselves'.[3] The word 'science' however must not be misunderstood. Science in the ordinary sense is a science of things, a physics of some kind, even if it takes human beings in their phenomenal reality into consideration. But metaphysics, to have a meaning for us, must illuminate the problems of life; and it must be livable. Biology deals with life and psychology with mind; and they have of course their value. But metaphysics is concerned with the self-conscious active subject as oriented to an ideal and a goal; and it is a science of life in the sense that it illuminates the nature and goal of the life of this subject (or of the person) considered as such.

There is no great difficulty in understanding Laberthonnière's hostility to Aristotelianism and traditional Thomism, an hostility which led him to take a dim view of what he regarded as the weak concessions made by Blondel to Aquinas and the Thomists. In Laberthonnière's opinion Aristotelianism was a physics rather than a metaphysics, even if part of it was labelled 'metaphysics'. And the God of Aristotle, wrapped up in himself, bore little resemblance to the living and active God of religion. As for Spinoza and other monists, they denied to all intents and purposes the irreducible distinctness of persons, while the positivists cut off the goal of unity-in-distinction from its ultimate transcendent and at the same time immanent foundation.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[3] *Esquisse d'une philosophie personnaliste* (1942), p. 7.

The reader is likely to conclude that Laberthonnière's idea of philosophy and his critical discussions of other philosophers, such as Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza and Bergson, were influenced by his Christian belief. This conclusion would be obviously correct. But in the case of Laberthonnière all was out in the open; there was no attempt at concealment. In his view it was wrong to suppose that Christianity could be superimposed on a philosophy which had already been constructed or which was developed independently of Christian faith. For Christianity is 'itself *the* philosophy in the etymological sense of the word, that is to say wisdom, the science of life which explains what we are and, on the basis of what we are, what we ought to be.'[1] The question whether or not there can be a Christian philosophy rests on a false assumption if one is thinking of a philosophy worked out independently of Christian belief and which would serve as a 'natural' basis on which Christianity could be superimposed as a 'supernatural' superstructure. This is the sort of idea which followed in the wake of the invasion of Aristotelianism in the Middle Ages. Christianity is itself the true philosophy. And by the very fact that it is the true philosophy it excludes every other system. For 'every philosophy which deserves this name . . . presents itself, if not as exhaustive, at least as exclusive of what is not itself.'[2]

Laberthonnière obviously does not mean to imply that a man who is not a Christian is unable to raise and reflect on metaphysical problems. For it is clear that human life or existence can give rise to problems in anyone's mind, whether he is a Christian or not. Laberthonnière's thesis is rather that it is Christianity which provides the most adequate solution available to man. Or, better, Christianity is for him the saving wisdom, the true 'science of life', by which man can live. As he explicitly recognizes, Laberthonnière thus returns to the point of view of St. Augustine and other early Christian writers who looked on Christianity as being itself the true and genuine philosophy which fulfilled and supplanted the philosophies of the ancient world. The separation and subsequent conflict between philosophy and theology was a disaster. St. Thomas Aquinas did not baptize Aristotle; he aristotelianized Christianity, introducing into it 'the pagan conception of the world and of life'.[3] To be sure, if we once make a sharp separation between philosophy and theology, it appears inappropriate to describe Christianity as a philosophy, even as the true philosophy. But there is no compelling reason to make the separation. It may seem that philosophy is the work of 'pure reason' and belongs to the natural level, whereas theology is the fruit of revelation proceeding from the supernatural sphere. But according to Laberthonnière it is a mistake to look on the natural and the supernatural as two worlds, of which the latter is superimposed on the former. The terms 'natural' and 'supernatural' should be understood not in terms of a metaphysical dualism but as referring to 'two opposed manners of being and acting, of which one corresponds to what we are, to what we think and to what we do in virtue of our innate egocentricism, while the other corresponds to what we have the obligation of being, of thinking and of doing through willed generosity.'[1] If therefore metaphysical philosophy is regarded as dealing with the problems of what we are and what we ought to be, it is in no way derogatory to Christianity to describe it as the true philosophy. For it is precisely on these problems that it throws light, with a view to enabling man to become what he ought to be.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 643.

Given this point of view, it is natural enough that Laberthonnière should emphasize the close connection between truth and life. 'One does not demonstrate that God exists, no more than one demonstrates any existence. One finds him in seeking him. But one seeks only because one has already found him, only because he is present and active in the consciousness which we have of ourselves.'[2] In regard to Christian dogmas too Laberthonnière thoroughly dislikes the idea of them as pieces of information, so to speak, which come from a supernatural world and which we simply have to accept on authority. He certainly rejects a purely relativistic view of Christian dogmas, but he looks on them from the point of view of their capacity to illuminate human problems and to be guides for life. Without relevance for human life they would have no real meaning for us. It is not, Laberthonnière insists, a case of making man the measure of all truth, including revealed truth. For by considering truth in relation to ourselves and our lives we thereby measure ourselves by the truth rather than the other way round. If we understand the term 'pragmatism' as covering the view that truth in the religious sphere becomes '*our* truth' when we see its relevance to our lives, we can of course describe Laberthonnière as a pragmatist. But if we understand pragmatism as implying, for example, that the assertion of God's existence is true only in the sense that it is useful for man to make this assertion, he was certainly not a pragmatist. For he believed that we cannot know ourselves properly without recognizing the *reality* of God.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 15. The distinction, Laberthonnière remarks, is really the same as that between St. Paul's carnal and spiritual man.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 19. This is basically Augustinian doctrine.

From one point of view Laberthonnière's view of the nature of philosophy and metaphysics is a matter of terminology. That is to say, if we decide to mean by 'metaphysics' the saving wisdom, it is clear that for the Christian Christianity itself must be '*the* metaphysics'.[1] And if Laberthonnière were accused of reducing the Christian religion to the level of a philosophy, he could reply that the accusation rested on a misunderstanding of his use of the word 'philosophy'. At the same time, when he says that metaphysics, identified with Christian doctrine as 'the science of our life',[2] has *ourselves* as its point of departure, one can understand theologians suspecting him of pure immanentism, especially if they take such propositions out of the context in which he is distinguishing between what he means by metaphysics and what Aristotle meant.

It may seem that Laberthonnière has really no place in a history of philosophy. But this judgment obviously presupposes a concept of philosophy which he rejects. In any case his thought is of some interest. It continues the approach to metaphysics from within which was characteristic of Maine de Biran, but in its concept of the relation between metaphysics and Christianity it goes back to St. Augustine. By his attitude to Aquinas's attempt to incorporate Aristotelianism into a comprehensive theological-philosophical world-vision Laberthonnière recalls to our minds the reaction which produced and followed on the condemnations of 1277. But his hostility to Aristotle and Aquinas is motivated not so much by veneration for the *sancti* and for tradition as such as by his own personalist and, to a certain extent, existentialist approach. For instance, his attack on the Aristotelian theory of matter as the principle of individuation is made in the name of a spiritualist personalism. He is in a real sense a modern Augustinian who develops his thought through dialogue with other philosophers such as Descartes, Bergson and Brunschvicg. His insistence on Christian doctrines becoming truths for us, *our* truths, in proportion as we discern and appropriate their relevance to human life may assimilate him to the modernists. But he combines this insistence with a genuine attempt to avoid a relativism which would exclude the claim that there are objective and abiding Christian truths.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

4. The term 'modernism' was first used in the early years of the twentieth century and seems to have been coined by opponents of the movement, though it was also used by writers such as Buonaiuti, who published *The Programme of the Modernists* (*Il programma dei modernisti*) in 1907. It is easy enough to mention names of persons who are universally classified as modernists. In France there is Alfred Loisy (1857–1940), in Italy Ernesto Buonaiuti (1881–1946) and in Great Britain George Tyrrell (1861–1909). But it is a great deal more difficult to give a clear account of the content of modernism, and still more difficult to define it. Perhaps the easiest way of coping with the matter is to give an historical account, as proper attention can then be paid to differences in interests and lines of thought.[1] One can of course attempt to delineate modernism as a system, in an abstract manner; but one then exposes oneself to the pertinent objection that modernism as a clearly defined system was created not by the modernists themselves but by the ecclesiastical documents condemning them, such as the decree *Lamentabili* and, much more, the encyclical *Pascendi*, both of which appeared in 1907.[2] It would however be quite out of place to attempt to give a history of the modernist movement in this chapter. And the primary purpose of the following remarks is to show why thinkers such as Blondel and Laberthonnière were suspected of modernism, and how the thought of Blondel at any rate differed from modernism in the sense in which modernism was condemned by Rome.

The term 'modernism', taken by itself, might be understood in terms of modernization, in the sense of an attempt to bring Roman Catholic thought into line with contemporary scholarship and intellectual developments. In view of his positive attitude towards the greatly increased knowledge of Aristotelianism which was creating a stir in the thirteenth century, St. Thomas Aquinas has been spoken of as a modernist.[1] Again, Catholic scholars such as Louis Duchesne (1843–1922), who were concerned with applying to the origins of Christianity the methods of historical criticism which had developed in liberal Protestantism, especially in Germany, can be described as modernist in this general sense of the term. So of course can writers such as Blondel who insisted on the need for a more positive appreciation of modern philosophy.

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[1] Among general works on the subject mention can be made of *Le modernisme dans l'église* by J. Rivière (Paris, 1929), *The Modernist Movement in the Roman Church* by A. R. Vidler (London, 1934) and *Histoire, dogme et critique dans la crise moderniste* by E. Poulat (Paris, 1962).

[2] In the papal encyclical *Pascendi* it is explicitly stated that the document gathers together views which are expressed separately in the writings of the modernists and arranges them in a systematic manner, so that their presuppositions and implications can be clearly seen. In other words, the document undertakes to make explicit what is regarded as an implicit system.

As used however with reference to a current of thought in the Catholic Church at the end of the nineteenth century and in the first decade of the present century, the term 'modernism' is obviously more specific than modernization or *aggiornamento* in a general sense. In the case of Loisy, for example, it refers to his conclusions about what was required or implied by the updating of historical and biblical studies. For instance, Loisy believed that Jesus as the Son of God was the creation of Christian faith reflecting on and transforming the man Jesus of Nazareth. This transformation involved also a deformation inasmuch as, for example, it involved attributing to the man Jesus miraculous actions the acceptance of which as historical events was ruled out by modern thought and knowledge. The task of historical criticism was to rediscover the historical figure hidden beneath the veils which faith had woven about it. In brief, Loisy maintained in effect that the historian of Christianity must approach his subject as he would approach any other historical theme, and that this approach demanded a purely naturalistic account of Christ himself and of the origins and rise of the Christian Church. We may of course wish to distinguish between historical inquiry in itself and 'higher criticism' as it developed in liberal Protestantism and then influenced some Catholic thinkers, but it is understandable that Loisy's ideas did not commend themselves to the authorities of the Church. For these ideas pretty well undermined the Church's claims.

Loisy was not a professional philosopher and was quite prepared to admit that philosophy was not his speciality.[2] At the same time in his remarks about belief in God he can be said to assume that the human mind cannot attain knowledge of the Transcendent. God is really the Unknowable of Spencer, that which transcends the reach of what Kant described as theoretical knowledge. We think of God in terms of symbols, and from a practical point of view we are warranted in acting as though there were a personal divine will having a claim on the human will. But in the moral and religious sphere we cannot prove the absolute truth of any belief. In this sphere truth, as related to man's good, is as subject to change as man himself. There are no absolutely true and immutable revealed truths. What is called revelation is man's interpretation of his experience; and both experience and interpretation are subject to change.

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[1] Étienne Gilson suggested that St. Thomas's 'modernism' was the only one which had proved successful. Laberthonnière retorted, 'successful in what?'. In Laberthonnière's view the success consisted in Aristotelian Thomism eventually receiving an official blessing from ecclesiastical authority, a result which was a matter for regret rather than for rejoicing.

[2] Loisy makes this admission in his *Simple Reflections* on *Lamentabili* and *Pascendi* (*Simples réflexions sur le décret du Saint-Office 'Lamentabili sane exitu' et sur l'encyclique 'Pascendi dominici gregis', Paris*, 1908, p. 198). Buonaiuti was more given to philosophy than was Loisy.

Later on Loisy approached the position of Auguste Comte. That is to say, he saw in the history of religion an expression of the experience not of the individual but of the community. Christianity had promoted the ideal of a united humanity and was passing into the religion of humanity. Finally, Loisy seems to have returned to the idea of a transcendent God, not however to any belief in revelation or in the Church as custodian of revelation. For present purposes however we can emphasize simply his relativistic and pragmatist view of truth in the ethico-religious sphere.

In general, the modernists tended to assume that modern philosophy had shown that the human mind cannot transcend the sphere of consciousness. In one sense of course this is a truism, in so far, that is to say, as it means that we cannot be conscious of anything without being conscious of it or think of anything without thinking of it. But immanentism was understood as excluding any proof of God's existence by, for example, a causal argument. What is given in man is a need for the divine which, rising into consciousness, takes the form of a religious feeling or sense which is equivalent to faith. Revelation is man's interpretation of his religious experience. This interpretation is expressed of course in conceptual or intellectual forms. But these can become antiquated and stifling, so that new forms of expression have to be sought. Revelation in a general sense can be considered as the work of God, even if from another point of view it is man's work. But the idea of God revealing absolute truths from outside, as it were, truths which are promulgated by the Church in the form of unchangeable statements of unchanging truths is incompatible with the concept of evolution, when applied to man's cultural and religious life, and with the accompanying relativistic view of religious truth.

The foregoing remarks are of course a partial summary of views expressed in writings by different authors.[1] But they may suffice to show how Catholic philosophers such as Blondel and Édouard Le Roy could be accused of modernism or of modernist leanings. For Blondel, as we have seen, pursued what he called the method of immanence and approached God in terms of the human spirit's basic orientation as manifested in its activity, while Le Roy, through his acceptance and application of the Bergsonian views of intelligence and intuition, appeared to attribute to religious dogmas a purely pragmatic value. Blondel however never accepted immanentism as a doctrine. Nor could he, as he tried, by means of the method of immanence, to open the mind to the transcendent divine reality and lead it to the stage at which there was a point of insertion, so to speak, for God's self-revelation. As for Le Roy, he certainly expounded a pragmatic interpretation of scientific truth and applied it also to religious dogmas. But he defended his position and was never separated from the Church, either by his own action or by that of ecclesiastical authority. According to Laberthonnière, who was given to such remarks, what Le Roy did was to reduce not Christianity to Bergsonism but Bergsonism to Christianity.

The main theme of this chapter has been philosophy as apologetics. The new approach in apologetics was represented by Ollé-Laprune, Blondel and Laberthonnière. Their thought had indeed some points in common with views expressed by the modernists. But they were primarily concerned with philosophical approaches to Christianity, whereas the modernists were primarily concerned with reconciling Catholic faith and beliefs with freedom in historical, biblical and scientific research. While therefore Blondel, as a professional philosopher, was careful not only to stop short of pronouncements about revelation but also to justify this stopping short in terms of his own concept of the nature and scope of philosophy, the modernists were naturally compelled to reconsider the nature of revelation and of Catholic dogma. In other words, they occupied themselves with theological topics in a way in which Blondel did not. And as their idea of what was demanded by modern historical and biblical research was a radical one, they naturally fell foul of ecclesiastical authorities who were convinced that the modernists were undermining the Christian faith. Looking back, we may think that the authorities were so much concerned with the conclusions at which the modernists arrived that they failed to consider whether or not the modernistic movement expressed recognition of genuine problems. But we have to see things in their historical perspective. Given the actual situation, including the attitude of the authorities on the one hand and the concept of 'modern' scholarship and knowledge on the other hand, one could hardly expect events to be other than what they were. Moreover, from the philosophical point of view the thought of Blondel is of considerably more value than the ideas of the modernists.

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[1] Tyrrell spoke of revelation as being man's statements about his spiritual experiences rather than God's statements to man. But he did not deny that in and through these experiences man encounters God. According to Tyrrell God is known only in and through his effects. These effects are divine impulses in man, which man interprets in his own categories and language. And the test of the interpretations is their spiritual fruitfulness. Tyrrell certainly felt at times a strong inclination or temptation to agnosticism. But he tried to hold on to belief in God as a reality.

CHAPTER XII

THOMISM IN FRANCE

Introductory remarks; D. J. Mercier — Garrigou-Lagrange and Sertillanges — J. Maritain — E. Gilson — P. Rousselot and A. Forest—J. Maréchal.

1. It would be incorrect to say that the Thomist revival in the nineteenth century originated with the publication in 1879 of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical letter *Aeterni Patris*. But papal assertion of the permanent value of Thomism and the encyclical's exhortation to Catholic philosophers to draw their inspiration from Aquinas while developing his thought to meet modern intellectual needs certainly gave a powerful impetus to an already existing movement. Papal endorsement of Thomism had of course several effects. On the one hand it encouraged the formation, especially in clerical circles and in ecclesiastical seminaries and academic institutions, of what one might describe as a party-line, a kind of philosophical orthodoxy. In other words, it could be used in support of the subordination of philosophy to theological interests and of the activities of the rigid and narrow-minded Thomists who were suspicious of and hostile to the more original and independent-minded Catholic thinkers, such as Maurice Blondel. On the other hand the call to look back to the thought of an outstanding thinker of the Middle Ages and to apply the principles of his thought to problems arising in the modern cultural situation undoubtedly helped to promote a great deal of serious philosophical reflection. Whatever one may think about the perennial value of Aquinas's thought, there was a lot to be said in favour of approaching philosophy by way of the system of an outstanding thinker and of thinking on systematic lines, in terms, that is to say, of certain basic philosophical principles and of their application instead of following the rather wishy-washy eclecticism which had tended to prevail in ecclesiastical academic institutions.

Exaggeration should be avoided. Official approval of a certain line of thought could and did produce a party-spirit which was narrow and polemical. At no time indeed was Thomism as such imposed on Catholic philosophers in a way which would imply that it was part of the Catholic faith. In theory the autonomy of philosophy was upheld. It is however undeniable that in some circles there was a marked tendency to depict Thomism as the only line of philosophical thought which really fitted in with Catholic theology. The theory was of course that it fitted in because it was true rather than it must be thought of as true because it fitted in. But one can hardly shut one's eyes to the fact that in many ecclesiastical institutions Thomism, or what was considered such, came to be taught in a dogmatic manner analogous to that in which Marxism-Leninism is taught in Communist-dominated education. At the same time the 'back to Aquinas' movement could obviously stimulate more able minds to endeavour to recapture the spirit of Aquinas and to create a synthesis in the light of the contemporary cultural situation. And there certainly have been Thomist philosophers who have embraced Thomist principles not because they were taught to do so but because they came to believe in their validity, and who have tried to apply these principles in a constructive way to modern problems. To this positive development of Thomist thought France has made a signal contribution; and it is with this contribution that we are concerned here.

In its earlier days the Thomist revival owed a great deal to Désiré Joseph Mercier (1851–1926) and to his collaborators at Louvain. After having taught philosophy in the seminary at Malines Mercier was appointed professor of Thomist philosophy in the University of Louvain in 1882. In 1888 he founded the Philosophical Society of Louvain, and in 1889 he became the first president of the newly established Institute of Philosophy of the University. The *Revue néo-scolastique* (now the *Revue philosophique de Louvain*) was started by the Philosophical Society under Mercier's editorship. In his years as a professor Mercier laboured strenuously to develop Thomism in the light of modern problems and of modern philosophy. Among his writings are two volumes on psychology (1892), a work on logic (1894), a book on general metaphysics or ontology (1894) and a work on the theory of knowledge, *Critériologie générale* (1899). In general, Mercier concerned himself with developing a realist metaphysics in critical dialogue with empiricism, positivism and the philosophy of Kant. But he was also particularly insistent on the need for a first-hand knowledge of science and for a positive relation between philosophy and the sciences. He himself wrote on experimental psychology, and through the Institute of Philosophy he encouraged the formation of a band not only of philosophers but also of scientists, such as the experimental psychologist Albert-Édouard Michotte (1881–1965) who had studied in Germany with Wundt and Külpe. Nowadays Mercier's philosophical writings may seem rather old-fashioned; but there can be no doubt of his real contribution to bringing Thomism into closer touch with contemporary philosophical and scientific thought and with making it intellectually respectable. In 1906 he was appointed archbishop of Malines, and in the following year he was made a Cardinal.

Though Mercier admired Kant in some respects, he criticized at length what seemed to him to be Kant's subjectivism and his restriction of the scope of metaphysics. For a considerable time Kant was one of the principal bogeymen of the Scholastics. At a later date however another Belgian, Joseph Maréchal, of whom more will be said later, adopted a much more positive approach, trying to appropriate Kant, as it were, and then to go beyond him. Some people doubt whether the so-called transcendental Thomism which stems from Maréchal can properly be described as Thomism. But at any rate its development is one expression of the marked change in the attitude of Thomists to other currents of thought in modern philosophy. Nowadays the orthodox Thomist of the type of Jacques Maritain has become comparatively rare.

The relaxing of polemical attitudes on the part of Thomist philosophers through a genuine effort to enter into, understand and evaluate other currents of thought has been accompanied in recent years by a notable diminution in the Church's attempt to encourage and promote a philosophical party-line. For example, the second Vatican Council was careful not to make pronouncements in the philosophical area. Besides, a number of Catholic theologians are understandably anxious to emphasize the independence of faith from any philosophical system, including Thomism, while others prefer to look for a philosophical basis in, say, the anthropology of Martin Heidegger. Again, certain developments in theological thought have tended to weaken the idea that Christian beliefs need to be expressed in categories borrowed from a particular philosophical tradition. It is indeed questionable whether theologians can get along without philosophy quite as easily as some of them seem to assume. The point is however that the 'handmaid of theology' situation, to which reference was made above, has greatly changed.

Given the changed situation, it is arguable that the impetus of the Thomist revival is spent. With diminished official backing and with the development of tendencies in theology which are hostile to the use of metaphysics for apologetic purposes, if not to metaphysics as such, it is natural that there should be a marked reaction against Thomism. There may of course be a renewal of interest in the spirit and ways of thought of Aquinas. The present writer is however happily not called upon to indulge in hazardous prophecies. His task is to make some remarks about Thomism in France.

2. France has made a signal contribution to the development of Thomism in the modern world. Among the pioneers Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange (1877–1964), a well known Dominican philosopher and theologian, has indeed appeared to a good many people as a rather narrow representative of neo-Thomism, intent on maintaining and promoting an orthodox party line. But despite his rather limited outlook[1] he contributed by his writings to raising the standard of thought in Thomist circles. An opponent of modernism, in 1909 he published *Le sens commun, la philosophie de l'être et les formules dogmatiques* (*Common Sense, the Philosophy of Being and Dogmatic Formulas*). His well known book on natural theology, *Dieu, son existence et sa nature*, appeared in 1915.[2] In 1932 he published *Le réalisme du principe de finalité* (*The Realism of the Principle of Finality*), and in 1946 *La synthèse thomiste*.[3] He also published theological works and books on Christian spirituality and mysticism, a number of which have been translated into English.

Another name which should be mentioned is that of Antonin-Dalmace Sertillanges (1863–1948), also a Dominican. Sertillanges was a prolific writer, who tried to exhibit the applicability and fruitfulness of Thomist principles in a variety of spheres and who devoted special attention to the relation between philosophy and Christianity. His best known work is probably his two-volume study of St. Thomas, *S. Thomas d'Aquin*, the first edition of which appeared in 1910.[4] Other publications on Aquinas include a study of his ethics, *La philosophie morale de S. Thomas*

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[1] Garrigou-Lagrange would claim of course that if his outlook was limited, it was limited by a perception of the truth of perennial philosophical principles on the one hand and by divine revelation on the other.

[2] An English translation by B. Rose appeared in two volumes in 1934, *God, His Existence and His Nature*.

[3] There is an English translation by P. Cummings, *Reality. A Synthesis of Thomist Thought* (London, 1950).

[4] It was later entitled *La philosophie de S. Thomas d'Aquin*.

d'Aquin (1914, later edition 1942) and *Les grandes thèses de la philosophie thomiste*[1] which appeared in 1928. A two-volume work on the relation between philosophy and Christianity, *Le christianisme et les philosophies* appeared in 1939–41, and another two-volume work on the problem of evil, *Le problème du mal*, in 1949–51. Among other writings we can mention a book on socialism and Christianity, *Socialisme et christianisme* (1905), and one on the thought of Claude Bernard, *La philosophie de Claude Bernard* (1944).

3. The two names however which are most associated with putting Thomism on the map, with, that is to say, bringing it out of a rather narrow and predominantly ecclesiastical circle and making it respectable in the eyes of the academic world, are Jacques Maritain and Étienne Gilson. Professor Gilson of course is widely known for his historical studies which have won him respect even among those who are not particularly sympathetic to Thomism. Maritain is first and foremost a theoretical philosopher. Gilson, as befits an historian, has concerned himself with exhibiting the thought of Aquinas in its historical setting and therefore in its theological context. Maritain has been more concerned with exhibiting Thomism as an autonomous philosophy which can enter into dialogue with other philosophies without appealing to revelation and the principles of which are relevant to the solution of modern problems. Given the suspicion of metaphysics which is not infrequently encountered among theologians, including Catholic theologians, and given the natural reaction in Catholic colleges and seminaries to past indoctrination in what amounted to a Thomist party line, it is understandable if Maritain in particular is commonly regarded as old-fashioned and if his writings no longer have the vogue which they once enjoyed.[2] But this does not alter the fact that his was probably the greatest single contribution to the Thomist revival to which impetus was given by the encyclical letter *Aeterni Patris* in 1879.

Jacques Maritain was born at Paris in 1882. When he went to the Sorbonne as a student, he looked to science to solve all problems; but he was liberated from scientism by the influence of the lectures of Henri Bergson. In 1904 Maritain married Raissa

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[1] There is an English translation by G. Anstruther under the title *The Foundations of Thomistic Philosophy* (London, 1931).

[2] This is applicable more to Maritain than to Gilson, as the value of Gilson's historical studies does not depend on one's attitude to Thomism as a philosophy for today.

Oumansoff, a fellow student, and in 1906 they were converted to Catholicism under the influence of Léon Bloy (1846–1917), the famous French Catholic writer and vigorous opponent of bourgeois society and religion. In 1907–08 Maritain studied biology at Heidelberg with Hans Driesch, the neovitalist.[1] He then devoted himself to studying the works of Aquinas and became an ardent disciple. In 1913 he delivered a series of conferences on the philosophy of Bergson;[2] and in 1914 he was appointed to lecture on modern philosophy at the Institut Catholique at Paris. He has also taught at the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies at Toronto, at Columbia University and at Notre Dame, where a centre was set up in 1958 to encourage studies on the lines of his thought. After the second world war Maritain was French ambassador to the Holy See from 1945 until 1948 and then taught at Princeton University. Later he lived in retirement in France. He died in 1973.

It has sometimes been said that whereas Gilson rules out the so-called critical problem as a pseudo-problem, Maritain admits it. This statement is however misleading, if taken by itself, for it suggests that Maritain starts his philosophizing either with trying to prove, abstractly, that we can have knowledge or with following Descartes in taking self-consciousness as undeniable and then attempting to justify our natural belief that we have knowledge of objects external to the self or that there are things corresponding to our ideas of them. If the critical problem is understood in this sort of way, Maritain excludes it just as much as Gilson does. He does not try to prove *a priori* that knowledge is possible. And he sees clearly that if we once shut ourselves up in the circle of our ideas, there we remain. He is a realist, and he has always insisted that when I know Tom, it is Tom that I know, not my idea of Tom.[3] At the same time Maritain certainly admits the critical problem, if by this is meant reflection by the mind on its pre-reflexive knowledge with a view to answering the question, what is knowledge? To ask in an abstract manner whether there can be knowledge and to attempt to answer this question in a purely *a priori* manner is to enter a blind alley. The only way out is the way we came in. But there can perfectly well be an inquiry leading to knowledge of knowledge, the result of the mind's reflecting on its own activity in knowing something.

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[1] See Vol. 6 of this *History*, pp. 383–4.

[2] Published as *La philosophie bergsonienne* (1914). English translation, *Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism*, by M. L. Andison and J. G. Andison (N.Y., 1955).

[3] Obviously, objections can be raised. But Maritain has clung tenaciously to the view that though from a psychological point of view ideas are mental modifications, the intentional object, considered precisely as such, is not different from the object referred to. In scholastic language, he has always refused to transform the *medium quo* into a *medium quod*.

The question, 'what is knowledge'? suggests however that there is only one kind of knowledge, whereas Maritain's concern has been with inquiring into distinguishable ways of knowing reality. He has written a good deal in the field of theory of knowledge; but his best known work on the topic is probably *Distinguer pour unir, ou Les degrés du savoir*, the first edition of which appeared in 1932.[1] One of his preoccupations, here and elsewhere, is to interpret knowledge in such a way that it does count as knowledge of the world but yet not only leaves room for but also demands philosophy of Nature in particular and metaphysics in general. In *The Degrees of Knowledge* Maritain expresses his agreement with Meyerson that a concern with ontology, with causal explanation that is to say, is not foreign to science as it actually exists (as distinct from what may be said about it); but he argues that the mathematical nature of modern physics has resulted in the continuation of a world which is so remote from the world of ordinary experience as to be practically unimaginable. He is not of course objecting to the mathematicization of physics. 'To be experimental (in its matter) and deductive (in its form, but above all in regard to the laws of the variations of the quantities involved), such is the ideal proper to modern science.'[2] But in Maritain's view 'the encounter of the law of causality, which is immanent in our reason, and of the mathematical conception of Nature has as a result the construction in theoretical physics of more and more geometrized universes in which fictional causal entities with a basis in reality (*entia rationis cum fundamento in re*), the function of which is to serve as support for mathematical deduction, come to include a very detailed account of empirically determined real causes or conditions.'[3] Theoretical physics certainly provides scientific knowledge, in the sense that it enables us to predict and to master Nature. But the functions of its hypotheses are pragmatic. They do not provide certain knowledge of the *being* of things, their ontological structure. And in *The Range of Reason* Maritain commends the views on science advanced by the Vienna Circle. As one would expect, he rejects the thesis that 'whatever has no meaning *for the scientist* has no meaning *at all*'.[1] But in regard to the logical structure of science itself and in regard to what has meaning for the scientist as such, 'the analysis of the School of Vienna is, I believe, generally accurate and well-founded'.[2] Maritain is still convinced however that though science constructs *entia rationis* possessing pragmatic value, it is inspired by a desire for a knowledge of reality, and that science itself gives rise to 'problems which go beyond the mathematical analysis of sensory phenomena'.[3]

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[1] English translation, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, by G. B. Phelan (N.Y., 1959).

[2] *Les degrés du savoir* (1932 edition), p. 90.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

Theoretical physics for Maritain is therefore a cross, as it were, between purely observational or empirical science on the one hand and pure mathematics on the other. It is 'a mathematicization of the sensible'.[4] Philosophy of Nature however is concerned with the essence of 'mobile being as such and the ontological principles which account for its mutability'.[5] It deals with the nature of the continuum, of quantity, of space, motion, time, corporal substance, vegetative and sensitive life, and so on. Metaphysics is concerned not with mobile being as such but simply with being as being. It therefore has a wider range and, according to Maritain, goes deeper. All this is set in the framework of a theory of degrees of abstraction based on Aristotle and Aquinas. The philosophy of Nature, just like science, abstracts from matter as the individuating principle (that is to say, it is not concerned with particular things as such); but it is still concerned with the material thing as that which can neither exist without matter nor be conceived without it. Mathematics is largely concerned with quantity and quantitative relations *conceived* in abstraction from matter, though quantity cannot *exist* without matter. Finally, metaphysics includes knowledge of that which not only can be conceived without matter but can also exist without it. It is 'at the purest degree of abstraction because it is furthest removed from the senses: it opens up on the immaterial, on a world of realities which exist or can exist in separation from matter.'[6]

It is hardly necessary to say that Maritain is reasserting the concept of the hierarchy of the sciences derived from Aristotle and Aquinas. He has of course to fit modern science into this scheme;

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[1] *The Range of Reason*, p. 6.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[4] *Les degrés du savoir*, pp. 269–70.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 346.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12. Maritain does not mean to imply that metaphysics (the 'first philosophy' of Aristotle) treats solely of what transcends sensible reality. Its subject-matter is being as being. But as it abstracts from materiality, it can proceed to the sphere of spiritual reality.

for physical science as it has developed since the Renaissance is not the same as what Aristotle called 'physics'.[1] Basically however the scheme is the same, though, like Aquinas, Maritain leaves room at the apex of the sciences for Christian theology, based on revealed premises. Theology apart, metaphysics is the highest of the sciences, science being conceived in Aristotelian fashion as knowledge of things through their causes. Nobody could accuse Maritain of lacking the courage to express his convictions. He admits of course that metaphysics is 'useless', in the sense that it is contemplative, not experimental, and that from the point of view of one who wishes to make empirical discoveries or to increase our mastery of Nature metaphysics cuts a very poor figure in comparison with the particular sciences. But he insists that metaphysics is an end, not a means, that it reveals to man 'authentic values and their hierarchy',[2] that it provides a centre for ethics, and that it introduces us to the eternal and absolute.

Maritain insists that if he adopts the principles of Aristotle and Aquinas, this is because the principles are true, not because they come from these venerable figures. As however his metaphysics is substantially that of Aquinas, at any rate when separated from Christian theology, it would be inappropriate to outline the content here.[3] It is sufficient to say that Aquinas, with his emphasis on *esse* (being in the sense of existence) is represented as the genuine 'existentialist', though Maritain is not the man to despise 'essences', which he thinks of as grasped within the existent, though the mind considers them in abstraction. Rather than attempting to recapitulate Thomist metaphysics it is preferable to draw attention to the two following points.

In the first place, though Maritain is the last man to despise the activity of the discursive reason and though he criticizes what he regards as Bergson's exaggerated depreciation of the intelligence and of the cognitive value of concepts, he has always been ready to recognize other ways of knowing than those exemplified in the 'sciences'. For example, he claims that there can be a non-conceptual, pre-reflective knowledge. Thus there can be an implicit knowledge of God which is not recognized by the person who has it as knowledge of God. In virtue of the internal dynamism of the will choice of the good, as against evil, involves an implicit affirmation of God, the Good itself, as the ultimate goal of human existence. This is 'a purely practical, non-conceptual and non-conscious knowledge of God which can co-exist with a theoretical ignorance of God.'[1] Again, Maritain has written about what he calls 'knowledge by connaturality'. This is found, for example, in religious mysticism. But it also plays a part in our knowledge of persons. And another form of it, distinct from mysticism, is 'poetic knowledge', arising 'through the instrumentality of emotion, which, received in the preconscious life of the intellect, becomes intentional and intuitive',[2] and tends by its nature to expression and creation. Knowledge by connaturality is also prominent in moral experience. For though moral philosophy[3] belongs to the conceptual, discursive, rational use of reason, it by no means follows that a man actually arrives at his moral convictions in this way. On the contrary, moral philosophy presupposes moral judgments which express a knowledge by connaturality, a conformity between the practical reason and the essential inclinations of human nature.

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[1] What Aristotle called physics corresponds more with Maritain's philosophy of Nature.

[2] *Les degrés du savoir*, p. 10.

[3] See, for example, *Sept leçons sur l'être* (1934) (translated as *A Preface to Metaphysics: Seven Lectures on Being*, London and N.Y., 1939) and *Court Traité de l'existence et de l'existent*, (1947) (translated as *Existence and the Existent* by L. Galantière and G. B. Phelan, N.Y., 1948). But Maritain's books on knowledge, such as *The Degrees of Knowledge*, also treat of metaphysics. For knowledge and metaphysics are for him closely related.

In the second place Maritain has tried to develop Thomist social and political philosophy, applying its principles to modern problems. If Aquinas had lived in the time of Galileo and Descartes, he would, according to Maritain, have freed Christian philosophy from the mechanics and astronomy of Aristotle, while remaining faithful to the principles of Aristotelian metaphysics. If he were living in the modern world, he would free Christian thought from 'the images and fantasies of the *sacrum imperium*'[4] and from worn-out temporal systems. In outlining a philosophical basis for the fulfilment of such a task Maritain has recourse to the distinction, also encountered in the personalism of Mounier, between 'individual' and 'person'. Accepting the Aristotelian-Thomist theory of matter as the principle of individuation, he describes individuality as 'that which excludes from oneself all other men' and as 'the narrowness of the ego, foreover threatened and forever eager to grasp for itself'.[1] Personality is the subsistence of the spiritual soul as communicated to the composite human being and as characterized by self-giving in freedom and love. In the concrete human being individuality and personality are of course combined, as man is a unity. But there can be societies which disregard man as a person and consider him simply as an individual. They emphasize individuals precisely as distinct particulars, neglecting the universal, as in bourgeois individualism, which corresponds, philosophically, to nominalism. Or they may emphasize the universal to such an extent that the particulars are completely subordinated to it. This happens in totalitarian societies of various kinds, which correspond, philosophically, to ultra-realism, for which the universal is a subsistent reality. The 'moderate realism' of St. Thomas would be expressed, in the social-political sphere, in a society of persons, which would indeed satisfy the needs of human beings as biological individuals but would at the same time be grounded on respect for the human person as transcending the biological level and, indeed, any temporal society. 'Man is by no means for the State. The State is for man.'[2] It may be added that during the Spanish Civil War Maritain supported the Republic and thus incurred a good deal of opprobrium in certain circles. Politically speaking, he has been on the left rather than on the right.

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[1] *The Range of Reason*, p. 70. Obviously, this view is relevant to Maritain's assessment of atheism. In addition to 'practical atheists' (who believe that they believe in God but deny him by their conduct) and 'absolute atheists' he admits a class of 'pseudo-atheists' (who believe that they do *not* believe in God but who in fact believe in him unconsciously). Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 103 ff.

[2] See also *Art et scolastique*, first published in 1920. *Art and Scholasticism and The Frontiers of Poetry*, translated by J. W. Evans (N.Y., 1962) contains also an English version of *Frontières de la poésie* (1935). See also *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* (N.Y., 1953).

[3] Maritain's writings on this subject include *Neuf leçons sur les notions premières de la philosophie morale* (*Nine lectures on the First Notions of Moral Philosophy*) published in 1951, and *La philosophie morale*, vol. 1, which appeared in 1960 (English translation, *Moral Philosophy*, by M. Suther and others, 1964).

[4] *Humanisme intégral* (1936), p. 224. There is an English translation, *True Humanism*, by M. R. Adamson (London, 1938).

4. Étienne Henri Gilson was born at Paris in 1884 and did his university studies at the Sorbonne. After the first world war, in which he served as an officer, he was appointed professor of philosophy at Strasbourg. In 1921 however he accepted the chair of history of medieval philosophy at the Sorbonne, a post which he held until he was appointed to a similar chair at the Collège de France in 1932. He founded and directed the *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* and also the series *Études de*

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[1] *The Person and the Common Good*, p. 27 (English translation, 1947, of *La Personne et le bien commun*).

[2] *Man and the State* (Chicago, 1951), p. 13.

philosophie médiévale. In 1929 he cooperated in founding the Institute of Medieval Studies at Toronto, and after the second world war he acted as its director. In 1947 he was elected a member of the French Academy.

On the advice of Lévy-Bruhl Gilson studied the relations between Descartes and Scholasticism. His main doctorate thesis was on freedom in Descartes (*La liberté chez Descartes et la théologie*, 1913) while the minor thesis was entitled *Index scolastico-cartesien* (1913). But the main fruit of the research suggested by Lévy-Bruhl was Gilson's *Études sur le rôle de la pensée médiévale dans la formation du système cartésien* (*Studies on the Role of Medieval Thought in the Formation of the Cartesian System*), which appeared in 1930. Meanwhile Gilson had studied Aquinas, and in 1919 he published the first edition of *Le thomisme. Introduction à l'étude de S. Thomas d'Aquin.*[1] The first edition of *La philosophie au moyen âge* was published in 1922.[2] Works followed on St. Bonaventure,[3] St. Augustine,[4] St. Bernard,[5] Dante[6] and Duns Scotus.[7] Gilson has also collaborated in the production of volumes on modern philosophy.

Despite his astonishing productivity in the historical field, which is not confined to the writings mentioned above, Gilson has also published works in which he presents personal philosophical positions, even if his views are often developed in an historical setting or context.[8] One of the features of his philosophical outlook is his rejection of the primacy of the so-called critical problem. If we cancel out, as it were, all our actual knowledge and then try to decide *a priori* whether knowledge is possible, we create for ourselves a pseudo-problem. For we could not even raise the question unless we knew what knowledge is. And we know this through actually knowing something. In other words, it is in and through the act of knowing something that the mind becomes aware of its capacity to know. In Gilson's opinion Aquinas's attitude on this matter was far superior to that of those modern philosophers who have believed that the proper way of starting philosophy was to wrestle with the question whether we can know anything at all outside the subjective contents of our own minds.

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[1] There have been a number of editions. There is a version in English, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (N.Y., 1951).

[2] The 1944 edition was practically a new work. And the English *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (London, 1955) is also a work on its own.

[3] *La philosophie de S. Bonaventure* (1924). The English translation, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, appeared in 1938. There was a second French edition in 1943.

[4] *Introduction à l'étude de S. Augustin* (1929 and subsequent editions). There is an English translation, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, by L. E. M. Lynch (London, 1961).

[5] *La Théologie mystique de S. Bernard* (1934, 2nd edition 1947).

[6] *Dante et la philosophie* (1939; 2nd edition 1953).

[7] *Jean Duns Scotus. Introduction à ses positions fondamentales* (*1952*).

[8] We can mention, for example, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (N.Y., 1937; London, 1938), *Being and Some Philosophers* (Toronto 1949, an English version of *L'être et l'essence*, 1948 and 1962), *Painting and Reality* (N.Y., 1958), *Elements of Christian Philosophy* (N.Y., 1960), *Le philosophe et la théologie* (Paris, 1960; English version, *The Philosopher and Theology*, N.Y., 1962), and *Introduction aux arts du beau* (Paris, 1963).

Gilson's realism is also evident in his criticism of what he describes as 'essentialist' philosophy. If we try to reduce reality to clear and distinct concepts, universal by their nature, we omit the act of existence which is an act of singular or individual things. According to Gilson, this act is not conceptualizable, as existence is not an essence but the act by which an essence exists. It can be grasped only in and through essence, as its act, and it is affirmed in the existential judgment, which must be distinguished from the descriptive judgment. Thomism, as concerned with existing reality, is the authentic 'existentialism'. It does not, like the philosophies which are nowadays described as existentialist, interpret 'existence' narrowly, in the sense of something peculiar to man. Nor does it exclude essence. But it is primarily concerned with reality as existing and with the relation between received or participated existence and the infinite act in which essence and existence are indentical. One of the chief representatives of essentialist philosophy, in Gilson's eyes, was Christian Wolff; but he traces the origin of this line of thought back into the Middle Ages, where Aquinas is for him the chief exponent of existential philosophy.

Another feature of Gilson's thought is his refusal to extract a purely self-contained Thomist philosophy from the total thought of Aquinas. He does not indeed deny that the distinction made by St. Thomas between philosophy and theology is a valid distinction. But he insists on the artificiality of tearing from its theological setting a philosophy in which the selection and ordering of themes is determined by theological ends or by their theological context. Further, it seems clear to Gilson that theological beliefs, in free divine creation for example, have had a great influence on philosophical speculation, and that whatever some Thomists may say, they do in fact philosophize in the light of their Christian beliefs, though it by no means follows that their philosophical reasoning must be invalid or that they have to appeal to theological premises. In other words, Gilson has maintained that there can be a Christian philosophy which is genuinely philosophical. Its Christian character would not indeed be ascertainable simply by inspecting its logical arguments. For if this were the case, it would be theology rather than philosophy. But comparison between philosophies shows that there can be a philosophy which, while remaining genuinely philosophical, does not deprive itself of the light afforded by revelation. This point of view has given rise to a good deal of discussion and controversy. Some writers have maintained that to speak of a Christian philosophy is as inappropriate as to speak of a Christian mathematics. But Gilson has persisted in maintaining his thesis. In so far as this is the historical judgment of a scholar who sees clearly the influence exercised on philosophy by Christian belief, especially in the patristic and medieval periods, there is no difficulty in accepting it. For it can hardly be denied that under the influence of Christian belief concepts derived from Greek thought were often given a new stamp or character, fresh themes were suggested, and philosophy, pursued for the most part by theologians, was used to extend a general Christian world-vision. Whereas however many people would claim that philosophy became adult only through separation from Christian theology and the attainment of complete autonomy, Gilson insists that there is still room for genuine philosophy pursued not simply by Christians but by philosophers *as Christians*. He is doubtless justified in rejecting the claim that Christians who develop natural theology, for example, are in no way influenced by their antecedent beliefs. But some would conclude that it is then a case of apologetics, not of authentic philosophy. The retort might be made that the complete autonomy of philosophy is a myth, and that if it is not the handmaid of theology, it is the handmaid of something else, being always 'parasitic'. However, the question whether philosophizing pursued in the interests of the development of a comprehensive Christian world-view is genuine philosophizing or not, is probably best answered by inspecting examples.

From the titles of books mentioned above it will be seen that Gilson, like Maritain, has written on aesthetics. In a general sense his point of view is Thomist. Art is regarded as a making or production of beautiful objects which cause contemplative enjoyment or pleasure. Gilson however derives from this view of art as creative the conclusion that it is a great mistake to think that imitation belongs to its essence or nature. Abstract art as such needs no special justification. Whether a given picture, for example, is or is not a genuine work of art is clearly not a question which can be settled by philosophical reasoning. But if art is creative, there can be no good reason for regarding non-representational works as deficient, still less as disqualified from counting as works of art.

5. Mention has been made of Garrigou-Lagrange, Sertillanges, Maritain and Gilson. It is neither possible nor desirable to list all French Thomists here. In view of his influence however mention should be made of Pierre Rousselot (1878–1915), a Jesuit theologian and philosopher who was killed on service in the first world war. In theological circles he is known for his views on the analysis of faith; but his main publication is *L'intellectualisme de S. Thomas d'Aquin*[1] in which he argues that the movement of the intellect to Being is the expression of a dynamism of the will, of love that is to say, which can find its goal only in God. In other words, he tries to dispose of the view that Aquinas was an arid intellectualist by revealing the dynamic orientation of the human spirit which underlies and gives rise to the movement of the mind in philosophical reflection.

Sime similar ideas can be found in the writings of Aimé Forest (b. 1898), who was appointed professor of philosophy at Montpellier in 1943. Author of works on Aquinas,[2] he is best known for his development of the idea of 'consent' to being,[3] in which he shows the influence of modern French philosophers. In the first place consent to being means consent to a movement of the human spirit whereby it does not stop short at empirical reality but transcends it towards the ultimate ground of all finite being. As the mind can stop short, or attempt to stop short, at the empirically given, consent or option is required to recognize the realm of values and to pass beyond to God, who alone makes empirical reality intelligible. In the second place consent to being involves regarding finite existence as a gift, arousing a response in the human spirit. In other words, with Forest the metaphysics of being assumes a religious and also ethical character.

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[1] This work, published in 1908, was translated into English by F. James as *The Intellectualism of St. Thomas* (London, 1935).

[2] *S. Thomas d'Aquin* (1933) and *La structure métaphysique du concret selon S. Thomas d'Aquin* (1931, 2nd edition, 1956).

[3] *Du consentement à l'être* (1936, *On Consent to Being*) and *Consentement et création* (1943, *Consent and Creation*).

6. Garrigou-Lagrange obviously looked on most modern philosophers as 'adversaries', as defending positions which were to a greater or lesser degree opposed to the truth as represented by St. Thomas Aquinas. With Maritain and Gilson we find indeed intelligent discussions of the development and currents of modern philosophical thought; but their realism was such that they could not but regard the procedures of, say, Descartes and Kant as aberrations. It by no means follows, for example, that Gilson is unable to appreciate the achievement of Kant, given the latter's premises. But it is clear that for Gilson the premises should be avoided in the first place. An outstanding thinker doubtless shows his talent in the way in which he develops the implications of his premises and steers clear of any patchwork eclecticism which tries to combine elements which do not really fit together. But constructive talent of this kind does not entail the validity of the premises.

A much more positive attitude to modern philosophy, especially in regard to Kant, was shown by Joseph Maréchal (1878–1944), a Belgian Jesuit who was a professor of philosophy in the Jesuit house of studies at Louvain from 1919 until 1935. A doctor of science of the University of Louvain, he had also studied experimental psychology and psychotherapy in Germany; and his interest in the psychology of religion found expression in the two volumes of his *Études sur la psychologie des mystiques*[1] which appeared respectively in 1924 and 1937. He is best known however for his *Point de départ de la métaphysique*,[2] particularly for the fifth Cahier or volume on Thomism in confrontation with the critical philosophy of Kant (*Le Thomisme devant la philosophie critique*). Maréchal is not of course so foolish as to claim that St. Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century provided in advance all the solutions to problems raised centuries later by Immanuel Kant in a different historical context. He does however claim that the Kantian antimony between understanding and pure reason, with its implications for metaphysics, can be overcome by developing a synthesis in terms of an idea of intellectual dynamism which is virtually present, in his opinion, in the thought of St. Thomas and to which Kant, given his view of the mind's activity, should have devoted greater attention. In other words, Maréchal does not simply confront the Kantian philosophy as it stands with traditional Thomism and then argue that the latter is superior. He uses an idea which he believes to be basic in the thought of St. Thomas to develop the critical philosophy in such a way that the antimony between understanding and pure reason is overcome and the Kantian agnosticism is transcended.

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[1] There is a partial translation, *Studies in the Psychology of the Mystics*, by A. Thorold (London, 1927).

[2] The first, second, third and fifth Cahiers were published in 1922–6. The fourth Cahier, on idealism in Kant and the post-Kantians, was published posthumously (from notes) in 1947. There was to have been a sixth Cahier which, Maréchal remarked, would have clarified his personal position.

The fifth Cahier contains two complementary parts. Both have as their point of departure the immanent object, immanent, that is to say, in consciousness. The first part is devoted to what Maréchal describes as a metaphysical critique of the object, and the second to a transcendental critique. In the first critique the object is regarded as strictly intentional and so as having ontological reference, while in the second the object is taken as a phenomenon. But we cannot enter into details. To cut a long story short, Maréchal enters by Kant's door and inquires into the *a priori* conditions of knowledge or of the possibility of objectification. It his view the most important *a priori* condition, overlooked by Kant, is the intellectual dynamism of the subject as oriented to absolute Being. No more than Kant does Maréchal postulate an intellectual intuition of the Absolute or of God in himself. But he sees the act of judgment, which sets the subject over against the object, as a partial realization of the intellect's dynamic orientation and as pointing beyond itself. In other words, every judgment implicitly affirms the Absolute, which reveals itself not as the direct object of an intellectual intuition but as the *a priori* condition of all objectification and the ultimate goal of the movement of the intellect. Affirmation of the existence of God is thus a speculative necessity, and not simply a practical postulate.

It has been objected against Maréchal that he assumes illegitimately that the Kantian method of transcendental reflection is 'neutral', in the sense that it can be used to enable us to reach conclusions which go beyond anything contemplated by Kant, in particular to establish the existence of God. If, it is contended, we once adopt the Kantian point of departure and method, we shall try in vain to overcome the Kantian agnosticism. It has also been objected that Maréchal confuses the intellect with a natural appetite or pre-reflexive volitional tendency. Maréchal's thesis however is that we cannot justifiably make a dichotomy between the formally cognitive function of the intellect and its dynamic tendency. The former has to be interpreted in the light of the latter. Further, the fact that Kant recognized the activity of the mind shows that he ought to have reflected on the intellect's dynamism as an *a priori* condition of knowledge. For Maréchal at any rate his development of Kant does not contradict the exigencies of the critical approach.

We are entitled to regard Maréchal as initiating the movement of thought which is customarily described as transcendental Thomism. To say this is not to deny that there were other antecedent influences, the thought of Blondel for example. But Maréchal regarded Blondel as inclining too much to voluntarism; and he himself emphasized an intellectual dynamism which he believed to be implicit in the philosophy of Aquinas and which, if developed, would enable Thomism to satisfy the demand of modern philosophy, as represented by Kant and Fichte, for the 'transcendental turn', as it is sometimes described, and at the same time to overcome the agnosticism which had made Kant the bogeyman of the neo-Scholastics. For, as we have seen, he was convinced that use of the method whereby thought reflects on its own object-oriented activity would show that absolute Being is an *a priori* condition of the possibility of this activity. Instead of rejecting the critical philosophy as a pernicious influence, he thought that it was necessary to adopt the transcendental method and at the same time to bring to light a condition of the possibility of the mind's intentional acts to which Kant himself had failed to do justice. As however Maréchal believed that use of the transcendental method was a justifiable development of what was virtually present in the thought of Aquinas and that it could show the legitimacy of a metaphysics which Kant rejected, he regarded himself as a Thomist. He thus prepared the way for the development of transcendental Thomism.[1] But it would be misleading to describe the transcendental Thomists as Maréchal's 'disciples'. In the case of writers in German, such as J. B. Lotz and

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[1] The objection has been raised that transcendental Thomism is Thomist only in the sense that a method derived from Kant and German idealism, supported in some cases by strong doses of phenomenology and of Heidegger's existentialist philosophy, is used to reach Thomist conclusions or at any rate conclusions which are in agreement with Thomism. (See, for example, the second Appendix to Leslie Dewart's *The Foundations of Belief*, London 1969). The retort can be made however that whatever traditional Thomists may say, the philosophy of Aquinas makes presuppositions which the transcendental Thomists try to make explicit and to justify in a systematic manner.

E. Coreth (an Austrian), the contributory influence of other factors, notably the thought of Martin Heidegger,[1] is clear enough. And in France the influence of other French philosophers, such as Blondel, has to be taken into account. Still, Maréchal is the patron saint, so to speak, of the movement.

Maréchal, as we have seen, was concerned in a special way with Kant. That is to say, it was the critical philosophy of Kant, at any rate when regarded in the light of subsequent idealist developments, which provided the setting or context for Maréchal's approach to transcendental philosophy. And in his fifth Cahier Maréchal was particularly concerned with the problem set by Kant's antimony between the understanding and pure reason and his rejection of traditional metaphysics. Some of the transcendental Thomists however have used the transcendental method to outline at any rate a general system of thought without noticeable emphasis on or preoccupation with Immanuel Kant. It would be inappropriate here to speak of non-French representatives of the movement. But a very brief mention can be made of André Marc (1892–1961), a French Jesuit who was a professor of philosophy first at Jesuit houses of study and then at the Institut Catholique at Paris. In his *Psychologie réflexive*[2] he used the method whereby thought takes itself in act as object of reflection to start with language as revelatory of the nature of man and then to develop a philosophical anthropology. In doing so he also deduced 'from our act of knowledge and its structure, as well as from the structure of its object, the diversification of the sciences, at any rate in outline.'[3] In a subsequent volume, *Dialectique de l'affirmation*, which has as its subtitle *Essai de métaphysique réflexive*, Marc developed a metaphysics, employing the 'reflexive method', thought's reflections on its own acts, to study 'the laws of being as such'.[4] In another volume, *Dialectique de l'agir* (Paris-Lyon, 1954) Marc devoted his attention to the development of an ethics, defining the moral destiny or vocation of man in the light of his theories of man's metaphysical nature and of the structure of being. Other writings dealt with the possibility and conditions of an acceptance of Christian revelation.[1]

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[1] The writings of B. Lonergan, the Canadian Thomist, seem to be free of Heideggerian influence. As for Coreth, the influence of Heidegger is clear enough. But so is that of Fichte, by whom Maréchal himself was influenced.

[2] Two volumes, Paris, 1948–9.

[3] *Dialectique de l'affirmation* (Paris, 1952), p. 17.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 43. The method involves reductive analysis, to get back to the proper point of departure, followed by a deductive and dialectical process of reflection.

There are of course other French thinkers who have been influenced to some extent by Maréchal, such as Jacques Édouard Joseph de Finance (b. 1904), a professor of philosophy at the Gregorian University in Rome, who has given special attention to freedom and man's moral vision and action. But instead of making further brief and inadequate remarks about individuals we can conclude this section by suggesting one or two general features of transcendental Thomism. In the first place the transcendental Thomists seem intent on developing a presuppositionless philosophy or at any rate going back to an unquestionable point of departure. This can be seen in the first moment or phase of the transcendental method, the reductive or analytic phase. In the second place they seem intent on developing metaphysics as a deductive science, systematically deduced, that is to say, from the point of departure.[2] And in the third place they try to develop philosophy as the conscious subject's reflection on its own activity. It can hardly be claimed that this procedure is in accordance with the traditional presentation of Thomism. This does not of course show that the procedure is misguided. But it provides some ground for the critics' claim that 'Thomism' as a misnomer, and for the suggestion that harmony between the results or conclusions of transcendental Thomism and traditional Thomism is due as much to common religious beliefs and preoccupations as to any factor intrinsic to purely philosophical argumentation. This is not however a question which can be settled by dogmatic *a priori* pronouncements on either side. Instead we can remark that several philosophers have tried to make philosophy properly scientific by taking as a point of departure an unquestionable datum or proposition. Descartes was one of them, Husserl another. And the transcendental Thomists join the company. Even if however it is allowed that the attempt to develop a presuppositionless philosophy is legitimate, the question arises whether idealism does not result if the subject is taken as the basis of all philosophical reflection. Needless to say, the transcendental Thomists do not believe that this is the case. Indeed, they would claim to have demonstrated that it is not the case. The more old-fashioned Thomists however remain unconvinced. What Aquinas himself would have said about the matter, whether he would have approved of Maritain or preferred Maréchal, we obviously cannot know.

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[1] For example, *L'être et l'esprit* (Paris-Louvain, 1958) and *Raison et conversion chrétienne* (Paris, 1961).

[2] The transcendental Thomists are not all in agreement about the proper point of departure. For example, whereas Lotz starts with analysis of the judgment as an act of absolute affirmation, Coreth thinks that the philosopher must go further back, to what he calls the question.

CHAPTER XIII

PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

H. Poincaré — P. Duhem — G. Milhaud — E. Meyerson — A. Lalande — G. Bachelard.

1. Mention has already been made of a number of philosophers who concerned themselves with reflection on the natural sciences. Reference has been made for example, to Comte and to writers belonging more or less to the positivist line of thought, such as Bernard and Taine, to the neo-critical philosophers Cournot and Renouvier, and to thinkers such as Ravaisson, Lachelier and Boutroux, who belong to the spiritualist movement. We can now take a brief glance at the ideas of a few writers who can more easily be described as philosophers of science.

A well known name in this group is that of Jules Henri Poincaré (1854–1912)[1]. Born at Nancy, he studied mining engineering; but from an early age he was interested in mathematics, and in 1879 he started to teach mathematical analysis at Caen. In 1881 he went to the University of Paris where he lectured on mathematics, physics and astronomy. In 1887 he was elected a member of the Académie des Sciences and in 1908 of the Académie Française. In 1902 he published *La science et l'hypothèse*,[2] in 1905 *La valeur* de *la science*[3] and in 1908 *Science et méthode*.[4] His *Dernières Pensées* appeared in 1912.[5]

The best known feature of Poincaré's philosophy of mathematics and science is probably the element of conventionalism which it contains. When referring, for example, to geometry, he remarks that geometrical axioms are neither synthetic *a priori* intuitions nor experimental facts. 'They are conventions.'[6] And this means that they are definitions in disguise'.[7] It does not follow, Poincaré insists, that the axioms are decided purely arbitrarily. For though our choice is free and limited only by the need to avoid any contradiction, by the demands of logical consistency that is to say, it is also guided by the experimental facts. One system of geometry is not in itself truer than any other system. But it can be more convenient than another system or more suitable for a specific purpose. We cannot justifiably claim that Euclidean geometry is truer than the non-Euclidean geometries. We might just as well claim that a decimal coinage is truer than a non-decimal coinage. But a decimal coinage may be the more convenient. And for most purposes, though not for all, Euclidean geometry is the most convenient system.

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[1] Raymond Poincaré, who became President of the Republic, was a cousin.

[2] Translated by W. J. Greenstreet as *Science and Hypothesis* (London, 1905; New York, Dover Publications, 1952).

[3] Translated by G. B. Halsted as *The Value of Science* (London, 1907).

[4] Translated by F. Maitland as *Science and Method* (London, 1914).

[5] Translated by J. W. Bolduc as *Mathematics and Science: Last Essays* (New York, 1963).

[6] *Science and Hypothesis*, p. 50.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

Such conventions or disguised definitions play a role in physical science too. A proposition can start as an empirical generalization or hypothesis and end as a convention, inasmuch as this is what the physicist makes it to be. For example, 'it is *by definition* that force is equal to the product of the mass and the acceleration; this is a principle which is henceforth beyond the reach of any future experiment. Thus it is by definition that action and reaction are equal and opposite.'[1] Science begins with observation and experiment; but with the development of mathematical physics the role played by conventions grows too.

It would however be a great mistake to think that according to Poincaré science consists entirely of conventions in the sense of disguised definitions. This is a view which he describes as nominalism, attributes to Édouard Le Roy and attacks. For Le Roy 'science consists only of conventions and it is solely to this circumstance that it owes its apparent certainty. . . . Science cannot teach us the truth, it can serve us only as a rule for action.'[2] To this theory Poincaré objects that scientific laws are not simply like the rules of a game which can be altered by common agreement in such a way that the new rules serve as well as the old ones. One might of course construct a set of rules which would not serve their purpose because they were mutually incompatible. But, this point apart, we cannot properly speak of the rules of a game as being verified or falsified, whereas the empirical laws of science are rules of action in so far as they predict, and the predictions are open to falsification. In other words, empirical hypotheses are not simply conventions or disguised definitions: they have a cognitive value. And even though absolute certainty is not attainable, inasmuch as an empirical generalization is always revisable in principle, in some cases at any rate science attains a high degree of probability. In mathematical physics conventions have a part to play; and, as we have seen, what was originally an empirical generalization may be so interpreted that it is transformed into a disguised definition which is not open to falsification, as it is not allowed, so to speak, to be falsifiable. But this does not alter the fact that science aims at knowledge of the relations between things, that it predicts, and that some predictions are verified, even if not conclusively, while others are falsified. It cannot therefore be legitimately claimed that science consists entirely of conventions, and that, given internal consistency, any scientific system would serve as well as any other.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

[2] *La valeur de la science*, p. 214.

Poincaré's use of language is sometimes open to question. For example, when distinguishing between different kinds of hypotheses he includes the disguised definitions which, he tells us, are to be found especially in mathematics and mathematical physics.[1] And it is obviously arguable that he ought to reserve the name 'hypotheses' for empirical hypotheses which are open to falsification. However this may be, it is perfectly clear that for Poincaré the natural sciences can increase our knowledge, and that this increase is attained by testing empirical generalizations which permit prediction. It is true that he regards some empirical statements of natural science as resoluble into a principle or convention and a provisional law, an empirical hypothesis, that is to say, which is revisible in principle. But the mere fact that he makes this distinction shows that he does not regard science as consisting simply of principles in the sense of conventions or disguised definitions. Conventionalism therefore is only one element in his philosophy of science.

Science, for Poincaré, aims at attaining truth about the world. It rests indeed on presuppositions or assumptions, the basic ones being the unity and the simplicity of Nature. That is to say, it is presupposed that the parts of the Universe are interrelated in a manner analogous to that in which the organs of the living body are interrelated. And the simplicity of Nature is presupposed in the sense at any rate that if two or more generalizations are possible, so that we have to choose between them, 'the choice can only be guided by considerations of simplicity.'[2] Though however science rests on presuppositions, it none the less aims at truth.

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[1] *Science and Hypothesis*, pp. xxii–xxiii.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 146. Poincaré also talks about 'simple facts'. Cf. *Science et méthode*, pp. 10 f.

'In my eyes it is knowledge which is the end, and action which is the means.'[1]

What however is it that science enables us to know? It is certainly not the essences of things. 'When a scientific theory claims to tell us what heat is, or what electricity is, or what life is, it is condemned in advance: all that it can give us is a rough image.'[2] The knowledge which we obtain through science is knowledge of the relations between things. Poincaré sometimes uses a sensationalist language and maintains that what we can know are the relations between sensations.[3] But he does not wish to assert that there is nothing of which our sensations are the reflection. And it is simpler to say that for him science tells us the relations between things rather than the inner natures of things. For example, a theory of light tells us the relations between the sensible phenomena of light rather than what light is in itself. Indeed, Poincaré is prepared to claim that 'the only objective reality is the relations between things, from which the universal harmony derives. Without doubt these relations, this harmony, could not be conceived apart from a mind which conceives or perceives them. But they are none the less objective inasmuch as they are, will be or will remain common to all thinking beings.'[4]

The impression may perhaps have been given that while Poincaré certainly did not regard all scientific laws as conventional, he looked on pure mathematics as dependent entirely on conventions. This is not however the case. For while he was quite ready to see certain axioms as disguised definitions, he believed that mathematics also comprised certain synthetic *a priori* propositions, the truth of which was discerned intuitively. He was thus not prepared to accept the view that Kant's view of mathematics had been simply exploded. Nor was Poincaré favourably disposed to the thesis, as maintained, for example, by Bertrand Russell, that mathematics is reducible to formal logic. On the contrary, he criticized the 'new logics', 'of which the most interesting is that of M. Russell.'[5]

In his sensationalism Poincaré was influenced by the thought of Ernst Mach,[6] while his view of mechanics seems to have been influenced by Heinrich Rudolf Hertz (1857–94).

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[1] *La valeur de la science*, p. 220.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 267.

[3] Sensations, Poincaré says, are non-transmissible. 'But it is not the same with relations between sensations'. *Ibid.*, p. 263.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 271.
[5] *Science et méthode*, p. 172. See also *Dernières pensées*.

[6] For some brief remarks on Mach see Volume VII of this *History*, p. 359.

2. We have seen that according to Poincaré science is concerned not with the nature of things in themselves but with the relations between things as appearing to us or between sensations. The same sort of view was advanced by Pierre Maurice Marie Duhem (1861–1916), who was both a theoretical physicist and a philosopher and distinguished historian of science. In 1886 Duhem published at Paris a work on thermodynamics,[1] and in the following year he began to lecture in the Faculty of Science at Lille. In 1893 he went to Rennes, and in 1895 he was appointed to a chair in the University of Bordeaux. His most important theoretical publication was *La Théorie physique, son objet et sa structure,* the first edition of which appeared at Paris in 1906.[2] Duhem also published several works on the history of science,[3] the best known being *Le système du monde. Histoire des doctrines cosmologiques de Platon à Copernic* (*The System of the World. A History of Cosmological Doctrines from Plato to Copernicus*), consisting of eight volumes (Paris, 1913–1958). In Duhem's opinion study of the history of science was not simply a learned luxury, so to speak, which could be neglected without any detriment to one's study of actual scientific problems. As he saw the matter, one could not fully understand a scientific theory or concept without knowledge of its origins and development and of the problems which it was designed to solve.

One of Duhem's principal aims is to make a clear theoretical separation between physics and metaphysics. The metaphysician, in Duhem's view, is concerned with explanation, to explain being, 'to strip reality of the appearances covering it like a veil, in order to see the bare reality itself.'[4] But it is only metaphysics which raises the question whether there is a reality underlying or distinct from sensible appearances. As far as physics is concerned, phenomena or sensible appearances are all that there is. Hence it cannot aim at explanation in the sense mentioned. 'A physical theory is not an explanation. It is a system of mathematical propositions, deduced from a small number of principles, which aim at representing as simply, as completely and as exactly as possible a set of experimental laws.'[1] A theory however is not exclusively a representation of experimental laws: it is also a classification of them. That is to say, by deductive reasoning it exhibits these laws as consequences of certain basic hypotheses or 'principles'. And the test of a theory, a theory of light for example, is its agreement or disagreement with the experimental laws which themselves represent relations between phenomena or sensible appearances. 'Agreement with experiment is the sole criterion of truth for a physical theory.'[2] A physical theory does not explain the laws, though it coordinates them systematically. Nor do the laws explain reality. Duhem is at one with Poincaré in insisting that what we know are the relations between sensible phenomena. He adds indeed that we cannot avoid the feeling or conviction that observed relations correspond to something in things apart from their sensible appearances to us. But he insists that this is a matter of natural faith or belief and not something which can be proved in physics.

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[1] *Le potentiel thermodynamique et ses applications à la mécanique chimique et à la théorie des phénomènes électriques.*

[2] The second edition has been translated by P. P. Wiener as *The Aim and Structure of Physical Theory* (Princeton, 1954). This work will be referred to as *Physical Theory.*

[3] These include *L'évolution de la mécanique* (Paris, 1903), *Les origines de la statique* (Paris, 1905–6) and studies on Leonardo da Vinci (*Études sur Léonard da Vinci,* Paris, 1906–13).

[4] *Physical Theory,* p. 7.

Duhem is aware of course that scientific theories permit prediction. We can 'draw some consequences which do not correspond to any of the experimental laws previously known and which simply represent possible experimental laws'.[3] Some of these consequences are empirically testable. And if they are verified, the value of the theory is increased. If however a prediction which represents a legitimate conclusion from a theory is falsified, this shows that the theory must be modified, if not abandoned altogether. In other words, if we assume the truth of a given hypothesis and then deduce that on this assumption a certain event should occur in certain circumstances, the actual occurrence of the event in these circumstances does not prove the truth of the hypothesis. For the same conclusion, namely that in certain circumstances a certain event should occur, might also be deducible from a different hypothesis. If however the event which ought to occur does not occur, this shows that the hypothesis is false or that it stands in need of revision. If therefore we leave out of account other reasons for changing or modifying theories, such as considerations of greater simplicity or economy, we can say that science advances through the elimination of hypotheses rather than through verification in a strong sense. A scientific hypothesis can be conclusively falsified and so eliminated, but

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

it cannot be conclusively proved. There is not and cannot be a 'crucial experiment' in Francis Bacon's sense of the phrase. For the physicist can never be sure that there is not another conceivable hypothesis which would cover the phenomena in question.[1] 'The truth of a physical theory is not decided by heads or tails.'[2]

Though Duhem agrees with Poincaré on a number of issues, he refuses to admit that there are scientific hypotheses which are beyond the reach of experimental refutation and must be regarded as definitions which remain unaffected by empirical testing. There are indeed hypotheses which, if taken in isolation, have no 'experimental meaning'[3] and which cannot therefore be directly confirmed or falsified by experiment. But these hypotheses do not in fact exist in isolation. They constitute foundations of wide-ranging theories or physical systems; and it always remains possible that the consequences of the system taken as a whole will be subjected to experimental refutation on such a scale that the whole system will crumble, together with those basic hypotheses which, if considered in isolation, cannot be directly refuted.

According to Duhem his interpretation of physics is 'positivist in its conclusions as well as in its origins'.[4] Physical theories, as he sees them, have nothing to do with metaphysical doctrines or with religious dogmas; and it is a mistake to attempt to use them for apologetic purposes. For example, the attempt to prove the creation of the world from thermodynamics (the law of entropy) is misguided. But it by no means follows that Duhem is a positivist in the sense that he rejects metaphysics. He is concerned with making a sharp distinction between physics and metaphysics, not with condemning the latter. Whether we can in fact make such a rigid distinction as Duhem has in mind is doubtless open to dispute. But it is obviously true that science has progressively developed its autonomy; and it is also arguable that those writers who have tried to base metaphysical or religious doctrines on revisible physical theories have been misguided. In any case Duhem is not an anti-metaphysician. As for religion, 'I believe with all my soul in the truths which God has revealed to us and which he has taught us through his Church.'[1]

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[1] Duhem makes his point clear by considering two different hypotheses. But he insists that what a physicist actually subjects to experimental testing is a group of hypotheses, not an isolated one. (We have seen that for him a physical theory combines and coordinates a set of hypotheses.) Falsification of a prediction therefore indicates that some member of the group must be modified or changed. But if the prediction is the result of a deduction based on the set or group, its non-fulfilment does not by itself indicate which member of the group should be revised.

[2] *Physical Theory*, p. 190. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 215. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 275.

3. A certain measure of affinity with the ideas of Poincaré and Duhem is evident in the philosophy of science of Gaston Milhaud (1858–1918), who after having been professor of philosophy at Montpellier[2] went to Paris in 1909 to occupy a newly created chair in the history of philosophy in its relationship to the sciences.[3] For example, in his *Essay on the Conditions and Limits of Logical Certitude* (*Essai sur les conditions et les limites de la certitude logique*, 1894, second edition 1897), Milhaud asserts that what we know of things are the sensations which they arouse in us.[4] At the same time he is at one with Poincaré and Duhem in emphasizing the mind's activity in reflection on experience and in the development of scientific hypotheses. Milhaud is less inclined to talk about 'conventions'; but he insists, as in his work *The Rational* (*Le rationnel*, 1898) on the spontaneity of the human reason.

While however Duhem was anxious to claim that his idea of science was positivistic, with the aim of making a sharp distinction between natural science and metaphysics, Milhaud draws attention to the shortcomings of positivism, by which he meant the ideas of Auguste Comte in particular. For example, in the introduction to his work on *The Geometer-Philosophers of Greece* (*Les philosophes géomètres de la Grèce*, 1900) he alludes to the naïvely confident way in which Comte undertook to assign the precise limits at which knowledge could arrive and in which he rejected in advance any attempt to effect a radical change in accepted scientific theories. Comte wanted 'to attribute to the system of already acquired scientific knowledge the power of immediately organizing society on unshakable foundations, or, once society was organized, to prescribe the submission of all to him or to those who would have in their hands the rational direction of mankind.'[5] The dogmatism of Comte was thus in opposition not simply to scepticism but even 'to the spirit of free inquiry'.[6] It is true that Comte believed in progress; but he thought of progress as an advance towards a determinate goal or limit, the point at which science could constitute the basis for the sort of society which he considered desirable. Comte therefore had no use for the dreams of never-ending progress indulged in by eighteenth-century thinkers. In his view science had already arrived 'if not at the final term of its advance, at any rate at the state of consolidation in which no further radical transformations were to be foreseen, in which the fundamental concepts were definitely fixed, and in which new concepts could not differ much from the old ones.'[1] We cannot however set bounds in this way to the creativity of the human mind.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 273.

[2] Before becoming a professor in the University of Montpellier, Milhaud taught mathematics at a school in the same town.

[3] Milhaud published several works on the history of Greek and modern science in its relationship to philosophy.

[4] *Essai*, p. 2.

[5] *Les philosophes géomètres*, p. 4 (second edition, 1934).

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

At first Milhaud made a sharp distinction between pure mathematics, which rests on the principle of non-contradiction, and empirical science. But he soon came to emphasize the element of rational decision which is present in all branches of science. He had indeed no intention of suggesting that scientific hypotheses are purely arbitrary constructions. He saw them as based on or suggested by experience and as constructed in such a way as to satisfy logical demands of consistency and also practical and aesthetic requirements. But he refused to admit that scientific theories were necessitated either by logic or by experience. They express the creativity of the human mind, though this creative activity is guided in science by rational decision and not by caprice. Further, we can never say that scientific knowledge has attained its final form. We cannot exclude radical transformations in advance. There is indeed an ideal goal, but it is an ever-receding goal, even though progress is real. If we think of Comtean positivism are representing the third stage of human thought, we must add that this stage has to be transcended, as it constitutes an obstacle to the mind's creative activity.[2]

4. We have seen that Duhem made a sharp distinction between science on the one hand and metaphysics or ontology on the other. A rather different view of the nature of science was taken by Émile Meyerson (1859–1933). Born at Lublin of Jewish parentage, he studied classics and then chemistry in Germany.[3] In 1882 he took up his abode at Paris, and later, after the 1914–18 war, he became a naturalized French citizen. He never occupied any official academic post, but he was an influential thinker. In 1908 he published at Paris his well known book *Identité et réalité*[4] and in

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[1] *Études sur la pensée scientifiques chez les grecs et chez les modernes* (1906), p. 230.

[2] See *Le positivisme et le progrès de l'esprit* (1902).

[3] Meyerson's chemical studies were pursued under R. W. Bunsen.

[4] Translated by K. Loewenberg as *Identity and Reality* (London and New York, 1930).

1921 a two-volume work on explanation in the sciences (*De l'explication dans les sciences*). These publications were followed by a book on relativity theory (*La déduction relativiste*, 1925), a three-volume work on the ways of thought (*Du cheminement de la pensée*, 1931) and a small book on quantum theory (*Réel et déterminisme dans la physique quantique*, 1933). A collection of essays (*Essais*) appeared posthumously in 1936.

In the first place Meyerson is strongly opposed to a positivist view of science as concerned simply with prediction and control or action. According to the positivist science formulates laws which represent the relations between phenomena or sensible appearances, laws which enable us to predict and so serve action and our control of phenomena. Though however Meyerson has no wish to deny that science does in fact enable us to predict and extend the area of control, he refuses to admit that this is the primary goal or operative ideal of science. 'It is not accurate to say that science has action as its sole end, nor that it is governed solely by the desire of economy in this action. Science seeks also to make us *understand* Nature. It tends in fact, as M. Le Roy expresses it, to the 'progressive rationalization of the real'.[1] Science rests on the presupposition that reality is intelligible; and it hopes that this intelligibility will become ever more manifest. The mind's drive towards understanding lies at the basis of all scientific inquiry and research. It is therefore a mistake to follow Francis Bacon, Hobbes and Comte in defining the goal of science simply in terms of prediction with a view to action. 'The positivist theory rests at bottom on a palpable error in psychology.'[2]

If science rests on the presupposition that Nature is intelligible and seeks to discover its intelligible character, we cannot legitimately maintain that scientific hypotheses and theories are simply intellectual constructions which are devoid of ontological import. 'Ontology is joined to science itself and cannot be separated from it.'[3] It is all very well to claim that science should be stripped of all ontology and metaphysics. The fact of the matter is that this very claim involves a metaphysics or theory about being. In particular, science cannot get away from the concept of things or substances. A positivist may claim that science is concerned simply with formulating laws and that the concept of things or substances which are independent of the mind can be thrown overboard; but the idea of law as expressing relations presupposes the idea of related things. If it is objected that the concept of things, existing independently of consciousness, belongs to the sphere of naïve common sense and must be abandoned at the level of science, the reply can be made that 'the hypothetical beings of science are really more *things* than the things of common sense'.[1] That is to say, atoms or electrons, for example, are not direct objects of sense or sense-data; and they thus exemplify the concept of a thing (as existing independently of sensation) more clearly than the sensible objects of the level of common sense. Science has its point of departure in the world of common sense; and when it transforms or abandons common sense concepts, 'what it adopts is as ontological as what it abandons.'[2] According to Meyerson, those who think otherwise fail to grasp the nature of science at work, in its actual reality; and they themselves produce theories about science which have ontological implications of which they seem to be blissfully unaware. The positivist idea of separating science from all ontology 'corresponds neither with science today nor with that which humanity has known in any epoch of its development'.[3]

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[1] *Identité et realité*, p. 438 (my translation); English version, p. 384.

[2] *De l'explication dans les sciences* (1927), p. 45. This work will be referred to as *Explication*.

[3] *Identité et realité*, p. 439; English version, p. 384.

Reference has been made to common sense. One of Meyerson's strongest convictions is that science is 'only a prolongation of common sense'.[4] We ordinarily assume that our perception of objects is something simple and primitive. If we analyze perception, we arrive in the long run at states of consciousness or sensations. To build up perception out of primitive subjective data, we have to introduce memory. Otherwise we could not account for our belief in permanent possibilities of sensation. But in the construction of the world of common sense we go further than this. We use, though not of course explicitly or with conscious reflection, the principle of causality to construct the concept of permanent physical objects. Common sense is thus shot through with ontology or metaphysics. We explain our sensations in terms of physical objects as causes of our sensations. On the level of common sense we hypostatize our sensations as far as we can, attributing, for example, colour and other qualities to objects, whereas science transforms the objects. But science has its point of departure in common sense, and it prolongs our use of the causal principle. The entities postulated by the scientist may differ from those of common sense; but physics can no more get along without the concept of things or substances or without causal explanation than common sense can. The concept of law, establishing relations between phenomena, is not enough by itself.

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[1] *Explication*, pp. 39–40.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

[3] *Identité et realité*, p. 439; English version, p. 384.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 402; English version, p. 354.

Given this point of view, it is understandable that Meyerson insists that science is explanatory and not simply descriptive. Comte and others may have tried to expel explanation and explanatory theories from science; but 'the existence of explanatory science is a *fact*',[1] a fact which cannot be got over by ingenious accounts of what the scientist is about. A phenomenon is explained in so far as it is deduced from antecedents which can be described as the cause of the phenomenon or, to use Leibnizian terminology, as its sufficient reason, sufficient, that is to say, to produce the phenomenon in question. 'The cause can be defined as the point of departure of a deduction of which the phenomenon is the point of arrival.'[2] It is true, according to Meyerson, that in science we do not actually find deductions corresponding fully with an abstract concept of what deductive explanation should be. But though this shows that in science, as elsewhere, man pursues a goal which transcends his grasp, it does not show that the pursuit does not exist. The drive to explain phenomena involves the presupposition that reality is intelligible or rational. The attempt to understand reality meets with resistance, in the form of the irrational, of that which cannot be rendered fully intelligible. But this does not affect the fact that science aims at explanation.

It is clear that Meyerson assimilates the causal relation to that of logical implication. Indeed, he regards causal explanation as a process of identification. In so far as a phenomenon is explained by deducing it from its antecedents, it is identified with these antecedents. 'The principle of causality is simply the principle of identity applied to the existence of objects in time.'[3] That the mind seeks persistence through motion and time can be seen, for example, in its formulation of principles such as those of inertia, of conservation of matter and conservation of energy. When pushed however to the limit the demand for causal explanation is a demand for an identification of cause and effect such that the two would coincide, time would be eliminated and nothing would happen. In other words, the reason aspires after an Eleatic world, 'a universe eternally immutable,'[1] a universe in which, paradoxically, there is no causality and nothing ever happens. As a limiting concept, the world which would fully satisfy the will to identification would be one in which distinct bodies had been eliminated by their reduction to space, and so to nonentity. For that which does not act and is not the cause of anything is as if it were not.

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[1] *Explication*, p. 57.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

[3] *Identité et realité*, p. 38; English version, p. 43.

Meyerson has not of course taken complete leave of his senses. He does not in fact believe that science will ever arrive at acosmism as a final conclusion. He is known indeed as a philosopher of science; but in the first instance he is an epistemologist, in the sense that he is interested in developing a critique of reason. He wishes, that is to say, to discover the principles governing human thought.[2] To achieve this task he turns neither to introspection nor to *a priori* reflection but to an '*a posteriori* analysis of expressed thought'.[3] In other words, he examines the products of thought. And his attention is focussed for the most part, though not exclusively, on physical science. In this area he finds that the mind aims at understanding phenomena through causal explanation, that the principle of causality, in its pure form so to speak, is the principle of identity applied to objects in time, and that the *a priori* drive of the reason is thus to identification. The mind in its activity is governed by the principle of identity. He proceeds to show what sort of universe, in his opinion, would satisfy this will to identification, if it were able to proceed unchecked and without encountering any resistance. In point of fact however it does not proceed unchecked; and it does encounter resistance. We cannot get over the irreversibility of time and the reality of becoming or change. 'Identity is the eternal framework of our mind';[4] but science has come to be increasingly dominated by empirical elements which militate against the will to identification. The universe as presented to us by science is thus not a Parmenidean universe. This remains a limiting concept, a projected goal of the mind's inborn or *a priori* drive to identification, if we suppose that it encounters no resistance.

Perhaps the matter can be expressed in this way. Whatever the positivists may have asserted, science is explanatory. It exemplifies a drive to understanding by means of causal explanation, a drive which belongs to the human mind as such and is already present and operative on the level of common sense. This approach presupposes that reality is intelligible or rational. And as, according to Meyerson, the search for causal explanation is governed by the principle of identity, reality, if completely rational, would be one self-identical being, the cause of itself, or *causa sui*. But the completely self-identical being would be equivalent to not-being. Science cannot arrive at a *causa sui*. Further, reality is in any case not fully rational in the sense mentioned. In modern science we have become more and more aware of the irreversibility of time and of the emergence of novelty. Reality, as constructed by science, will not fit into the schema of rationalism. It does not follow from this that science is not explanatory. That is to say, it always embodies the drive to understanding by means of causal explanation. But science can never find a final resting-place. The 'irrational', in the sense of what is unforseen and unforeseeable, breaks in, as in quantum physics. The behaviour of living things cannot be simply deduced from what we know of the behaviour of inorganic bodies. And even if some apparently irrational phenomena come to be explained, there is no guarantee whatever that the scientist will not be faced with new ones, or that new theories will not supplant or profoundly modify their predecessors. We have had an Einstein. There may be others. 'We shall never be able really to *deduce* Nature, . . . We shall always have need of new experiences and these will always give rise to new problems, will cause new contradictions to break out (*éclater*), according to Duhem's term, between our theories and our observations.'[1] The drive or impulse of reason remains the same. 'Everyone, always and in every circumstance, has reasoned and reasons still in an essentially invariable way.'[2] But reason cannot attain its ideal goal. It has to adapt itself to empirical reality. And science as it exists exemplifies the dialectic between the drive of reason, which postulates the completely rational character of reality, and the obstacles which it constantly encounters.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 256; English version, p. 230.

[2] As Meyerson puts it, using a Leibnizian term, he seeks to know the nature of 'the intellect itself' (*intellectus ipse*). Needless to say, he is aware of the affinity between his inquiry and Kant's; but his approach and method are different.

[3] *Essais*, p. 107.

[4] *Identité et realité*, p. 322; English version, p. 284.

Meyerson was interested in philosophical systems and applied his ideas to, for example, Hegel's philosophy of Nature. Hegel tried to subject what he regarded as the irrational to the dominion of reason. And we cannot legitimately object to the attempt to understand and explain. For 'reason must tend to subject to

[1] *Explication*, p. 230.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 703.

itself all that does not come from it; it is its proper function, for it is this which we call *reasoning*. We have seen moreover, in our previous book, that explanatory science is nothing but an operation pursued entirely according to this pattern.'[1] But the fact of the matter is that reality cannot be taken by storm in the manner envisaged by those who construct comprehensive deductive systems. They are sure to meet with a check. And this check constitutes precisely a demonstration of the fact that the 'irrational' cannot be totally mastered by the deductive reason.

Evidently, in a certain sense Meyerson sympathizes fully with the mathematical deductive ideal of knowledge. This is what, in his view, reason strives after and will always strive after. But Nature exists independently of us, even though it becomes known only through our sensations, through the sensible appearances of things. We cannot simply reconstruct Nature deductively. We have to have recourse to experience. The ways of Nature can be different from those of pure reason. And this fact sets limits to our power of conceptual mastery. The philosopher who produces a comprehensive deductive system tries to subject Nature completely to the demands of reason. But Nature is refractory; it takes its revenge. Hence science as it exists must be both deductive and empirical. It advances in the process of understanding; but it must always be ready for shocks and for the revision of its theories. Reason seeks an ideal goal, which is set by the essence or nature of reason; but the attainment of the goal is an ever-receding limit of aspiration. In one sense reason suffers frustration. But in another sense it does not. For if the goal were completely attained, there would be no science.

5. According to Meyerson, as we have just seen, reason, governed in its operation by the principle of identity, seeks a Parmenidean One, a *causa sui* in which diversity is overcome and complete self-identity is realized. To be sure, this limiting goal can never be attained. For novelty and the unforeseeable break in and prevent reason coming to any final rest. But the ideal limit remains, that of a complete explanation of all events or phenomena through identification with their ultimate cause. In Kantian language this ideal limit is a regulative idea of the reason.

We can perhaps see some affinity at any rate between Meyerson's idea of reason and that of André Lalande (1867–1964), the editor of the well known *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la*

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[1] *Explication*, p. 402.

philosophie.[1] With Lalande the Eleatic overtones are missing, but he lays emphasis on a movement towards homogeneity and unification and of the role played by reason in this movement as found in human life. In 1899 he published a thesis in which he opposed Herbert Spencer's contention that the movement in evolution is one of differentiation, a movement from homogeneity to heterogeneity.[2] Lalande did not of course deny that there is a process of differentiation; but in his view the movement of what he called 'dissolution' or 'involution'[3] was of wider significance. In Nature this movement can be seen in entropy, in the increasing unavailability of thermal energy and the tendency towards an equilibrium which would result in a kind of thermal death.[4] In the organic sphere we do indeed find a process of differentiation, a movement from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous; but the movement of life can be likened to that of an object thrown into the air. The vital energy or impetus is finally spent, and living things relapse in the end into inanimate matter. In the long run it is homogeneity which prevails over heterogeneity, assimilation over differentiation.

In point of fact Herbert Spencer, in his general theory of èvolution, allowed for an alternation of differentiation and dissolution or, as Lalande would say, involution.[5] But as a resolute champion of individual liberty and a strong opponent of the organic theory of the State,[6] Spencer clearly regarded increasing differentiation, increasing heterogeneity, as the desirable goal in the development of human society and as the mark of progress. Here Lalande parts company with him. He does not regard processes in Nature as proper objects of moral judgments. But in the sphere of human life he looks on the movement towards homogeneity as desirable and as constituting progress. In other words, Lalande sees man's biological nature and tendencies as impelling him to self-centredness and egoism, as separating human beings. The desirable movement is the one which tends to make men not more unlike but more like one another, not indeed through an imposed uniformity or one which would eliminate our human freedom, but rather through a common participation in the realm of reason, morality and art. The movement of biological life is differentiating, divisive. Reason tends to unify and to assimilate.

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[1] Lalande began publishing his *Technical and Critical Vocabulary of Philosophy* in 1902. In 1904 he was appointed to a philosophical chair at Paris.

[2] *L'idée directrice de la dissolution opposée à celle de l'évolution*. A revised edition appeared in 1930 with the title *Les illusions évolutionistes* (*Evolutionist Illusions*).

[3] The word 'involution' was substituted for 'dissolution' in the revised version of the thesis

[4] Extension of the second law of thermodynamics from a closed thermal system to the universe is now commonly regarded as illegitimate.

[5] For Herbert Spencer see Vol. 8 of this *History*, chapter V.

[6] By the organic theory of the State I mean the theory of the State as an organism which is more than the sum of its members.

In science the unifying function of reason is obvious. Particulars are grouped under universals, in classes that is to say; and the tendency is towards the coordination of phenomena under ever fewer and more general laws. In the spheres of logical thought and of scientific inquiry reason assimilates in the sense that it tends to make people think alike, even if they feel differently. Obviously, feeling can influence thought; but the point is that in so far as reason triumphs, it unites men rather than divides them. It may seem that the more science is given a technological application, the more individuals are identified with their functions, becoming simply members of a social organism. But according to Lalande the growth of technology serves to liberate the individual. It is true that in modern society men and women tend to become more alike, and that a certain uniformity is produced; but in this very process they are liberated from ancient tyrannies, such as that of the patriarchal family, and increasing specialization sets people free to enjoy common cultural values, such as aesthetic values. The assimilating tendency of modern society, with the breakdown of old hierarchies, is at the same time a process of liberation for the individual. Man becomes free to enter more fully into his common cultural heritage.

As we are all aware, some writers have seen in the development of modern society a process of levelling-out which tends to produce a uniform mediocrity prejudicial to the individual personality, while others have emphasized the identification, as they interpret it, of the individual with his social function. The growth of homogeneity can be interpreted as equivalent to the growth of what Nietzsche described as the 'Cold Monster' or as leading in the direction of a totalitarian society. Lalande proposes a different point of view, seeing modern society as potentially liberating the individual for his self-enrichment by entering into the common cultural world of reason and art. Biological urges are divisive; reason and morals and aesthetics are unifying factors. It is therefore not surprising that in a work on *Reason and Norms* (*La raison et les normes*), which appeared in 1948, he criticized phenomenologists and existentialists. For example, while phenomenologists emphasized the origins of the concepts of space and time in the experience of the individual as a being in the world, Lalande emphasized the common space and time of mathematicians and physicists, in which he saw the unifying work of reason.

Lalande did indeed write specifically about the philosophy of science. Thus in 1893 he published the first of the numerous editions of *Lectures sur la philosophie des sciences* (*Readings in the Philosophy of the Sciences*) and in 1929 *Les théories de l'induction et de l'expérimentation* (*Theories of Induction and Experimentation*). But his thought was much wider than what could usefully be described as philosophy of science. For his concern was with emphasizing the movement of 'involution' and the role played in it by what he called 'constituting reason'. Science is one field in which reason unifies. But morals is another, where reason is capable of promoting agreement and producing a lay or secular ethics. In general, reason fosters mutual understanding and cooperation between human beings. The effort devoted by Lalande to editing and re-editing his *Vocabulary* was based on this assumption.

6. Meyerson and Brunschvicg both emphasized the impulse to unification which is manifested in science. This was natural enough, not only because this emphasis fitted into or was demanded by their general philosophies but also because unification of phenomena clearly constitutes a real aspect of science. It is not necessary to talk about identification or to follow Meyerson in introducing Parmenidean themes in order to see that when the mind is faced with a plurality of phenomena conceptual unification forms a real aspect of understanding. Conceptual mastery cannot be obtained without unification. Or, rather, it is a process of unification. At the same time it is possible to emphasize the pluralism in science, the elements of discontinuity and the plurality of theories. Brunschvicg, as we have seen, allowed for this aspect. But there is a difference between finding room for the facts within the framework of an idealist philosophy which emphasizes the nature of mind or spirit as a unity and singling out and laying emphasis on aspects of the history of science which it is not so easy to harmonize with the general idea of reason as progressively imposing its own unity and homogeneity on phenomena.

Emphasis on plurality and discontinuity was characteristic of the philosophy of science of Gaston Bachelard (1884–1962). After having been employed in the postal service he obtained a degree in mathematics and science and then taught physics and chemistry in his home town, Bar-sur-Aube. In 1930 he was appointed professor of philosophy in the university of Dijon,[1] and after ten years he went to Paris as professor of the history and philosophy of science. He published a considerable number of works, in 1928 an *Essai sur la connaissance approchée* (*Essay on Approximative Knowledge*), in 1932 *Le pluralisme cohérent de la chimie moderne* (*The Coherent Pluralism of Modern Chemistry*), in 1933 *Les intuitions atomistiques* (*Atomistic Intuitions*), in 1937 *La continuité et la multiplicité temporelles* (*Temporal Continuity and Multiplicity*) and *L'expérience de l'espace dans la physique contemporaine* (*The Experience of Space in Contemporary Physics*), in 1938 *La formation de l'esprit scientifique* (*The Formation of the Scientific Mind*), in 1940 *La philosophie du non* (*The Philosophy of No*), in 1949 *La rationalisme appliqué* (*Applied Rationalism*), in 1951 *L'activité rationaliste de la physique contemporaine* (*The Rationalist Activity of Contemporary Physics*), and in 1953 *Le matérialisme rationnel* (*Rational Materialism*). Bachelard was also interested in the relation between the activity of the mind in science and its activity in poetic imagination. In this field he published a number of works, such as *La psychoanalyse du feu* (1938, *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*), *L'eau et les rêves* (1942, *Water and Dreams*), *L'air et les songes* (1943, *Air and Dreams*), *La terre et les rêveries de la volonté* (1948, *Earth and the Reveries of the Will*), *La poétique de l'espace* (1957, *The Poetics of Space*) and *La flamme d'une chandelle* (1961, *The Flame of a Candle*).

In Bachelard's view existentialist talk about the absurdity or meaninglessness of the world is an illegitimate exaggeration. It is indeed true that scientific hypotheses and theories are the creation of mind; but experiment or empirical testing is necessary to science, and the interplay of reason and experience in the development of scientific knowledge does not support the view that the world is completely unintelligible in itself and that intelligibility is nothing but a mental imposition. When however we consider the nature and course of this interplay of reason and experience, we find that scientific progress cannot properly be regarded as a continuous advance in which reason simply adds to the coherent system of knowledge already attained. It is all very well for some philosophers to lay down first principles and then to interpret reality as exemplifying them and as filling in the preconceived outline of a picture. They can always regard refractory material as of little significance or as illustrating the contingent or even irrational nature of the given. Their philosophy remains 'a philosopher's philosophy'[1] and has little to do with science. In the growth of scientific knowledge discontinuity is an essential feature. That is to say, new experiences force us to say 'no' to old theories; and for an old model of interpretation we may have to substitute a new one. Indeed, we may have to change concepts or principles which have seemed basic. The genuinely scientific mind is open. It will not do, for example, to reject quantum mechanics, with its recognition of a measure of indeterminism, simply because it will not fit into a sacrosanct framework. Conceptual frameworks may have to be negated in favour of new ones, though these too of course are themselves open to negation in the future. The philosophy of science must itself be pluralistic, open to a variety of perspectives. The old rationalistic deductive ideal of Descartes and others is untenable and discredited. Reason has to follow science. That is to say, it must learn the various forms of reasoning from seeing them at work in the sciences.[2] 'The traditional doctrine of an absolute and changeless reason is only a philosophy. It is a philosophy which has perished.'[3]

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[1] Bachelard received the doctorate in 1927.

In his *Philosophie du non* Bachelard does not of course understand by 'no' a mere negation. The new physics, for example, does not simply deny or cancel out the classical physics. Classical concepts are given fresh meanings in a new framework. The negation is dialectical rather than pure rejection. At the same time the emphasis is laid by Bachelard on discontinuity, on rupture in thought and on 'transcendence' of previous levels. For instance, the world as represented in science transcends the pre-scientific world. There is a rupture between the naïve consciousness and the scientific consciousness. But within science itself there are ruptures. Science, for example, was once a kind of organized common sense, treating either of concrete objects or of objects which sufficiently resembled the concrete things of common sense for them to be imaginable. With the advent however of non-Euclidean geometries, of theories of the world which can be expressed only mathematically and of concepts of 'objects' which are not imaginable things like those of common sense, science has become concerned, according to Bachelard, with relationships rather than with things. It looks beyond things and immediate objects to mathematically formulable relationships. And there has thus taken place a 'dematerialization of materialism'.[1] Thought tends to become fossilized in a realistic outlook; but the crisis of discovery forces it forward into the process of abstraction which is made possible by mathematics. There arises therefore a scientific world which is not communicable to the non-scientific mind and which is far removed not only from the world of naïve consciousness but also from that of the imaginable world of earlier science.

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[1] *La philosophie du non*, p. 8 (5th edition, 1970).

[2] Here Bachelard says much the same as Brunschvicg.

[3] *La philosophie du non*, p. 145.

The creative activity of the mind is exemplified, Bachelard insists, both in the work of scientific reason and in the poetic imagination, their roots being, in his view, discoverable by psychoanalysis. Though however both science and poetry (or art in general) manifest the creative activity of the mind, they take different directions. In art man projects his dream, the product of the imagination, on things, while in modern science the mind transcends both subject and object towards mathematically formulable relationships. In regard to this sphere of the scientific reason Bachelard obviously agrees with Brunschvicg both in the rejection of fixed categories and models and in the view that reason comes to know its nature through reflection on its actual work, on its historical development. For Bachelard the nature of reason is thus revealed as pluriform and as plastic or changing. But if we ask why reason in its creative activity constructs the world of science, the answer, even if it is not clearly given by Bachelard, must presumably be similar to that given by Brunschvicg, namely that the mind pursues unification. Emphasis on discontinuity, on revisibility and on the non-final character of scientific concepts, models and theories does not really affect the issue. For Brunschvicg himself did not envisage a complete and final unification or assimilation as actually attainable. To be sure, the obviously idealist presuppositions and ideas of Brunschvicg are absent from Bachelard's thought. But the latter's view of modern man as projecting or creating an extremely abstract world of relationships, in which materialism is left behind or at any rate transformed, might perhaps be given an idealist setting, if one wished to do so.

We have noted the lively interest shown by recent French philosophers of science in epistemological themes. In this field the philosophers mentioned above manifested a strong reaction to positivism on the one hand and to the Cartesian ideal of knowledge on the other. They emphasized the inventiveness and creativity of the mind and the approximating and revisible character of its interpretation of reality. Duhem was something of an exception. For though he agreed, in large measure, with the conventionalism of Poincaré, he was concerned with separating science from ontology and metaphysics. Generally speaking however the sciences were looked on as embodying the mind's urge to understand the world through the unification of phenomena. And the ideas of the inventiveness and creativity of the mind and of the essentially revisible character of scientific hypotheses and theories were obviously grounded in reflection on the history of science. In other words, it was science in its actuality which prompted the conclusion that both the purely rationalistic and deductive picture of the mind's operation and Comte's rather naïve conception of positive knowledge were alike discredited. Again, philosophers such as Brunschvicg and Bachelard saw clearly that neither pure rationalism nor pure empiricism could provide a satisfactory account of science as it existed. We may of course be inclined to think that the French philosophers of science were too 'philosophical'. But at any rate they tried to make their philosophical positions clear and explicit, even if their success was not always conspicuous.

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[1] *Le nouvel esprit scientifique*, p. 67.

CHAPTER XIV

PHILOSOPHY OF VALUES, METAPHYSICS, PERSONALISM

General remarks — R. Polin — Metaphysics of values: R. Le Senne and the philosophy of spirit — R. Ruyer and J. Pucelle — L. Lavelle and the philosophy of act — The personalism of E. Mounier.

1. It hardly needs saying that moral philosophy in one form or another has been a prominent feature of French thought from the time of the Renaissance. Even Descartes, whose name is primarily associated with methodology, metaphysics and the view of the world as a machine, emphasized the practical value of philosophy and envisaged a science of ethics as its crown. The philosophers of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment were concerned with setting ethics on its own feet, separating it, that is to say, from theology and metaphysics. In the nineteenth century ethical themes were prominent in the writings of positivists such as Durkheim, of spiritualists such as Guyau and Bergson[1] and of thinkers such as Renouvier who belonged to the neo-critical movement. In spite however of this tradition of ethical thought the philosophy of values was a comparative latecomer on the French scene, in comparison with Germany that is to say; and it met at first with some suspicion and resistance. Obviously the concept of the good and of desirable ends had been familiar enough, and philosophers had discussed moral ideals as well as truth and beauty. In a sense ethical discussion had always included discussion of values. At the same time the French moral philosophers had tended to focus their attention on ethical phenomena as an empirical or given point of departure for reflection; and there was some doubt about the utility of the abstract analysis of values, especially as this sort of language suggested the idea of subsistent essences 'out there'. Besides, the explicit philosophy of values as practised by Max Scheler and Nicolai Hartmann was connected with phenomenology, which developed in Germany and

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[1] Bergson's ethical writing belongs of course to the twentieth century. But his philosophy was the culmination of a movement which began and developed in the nineteenth century.

at first had little impact in France.[1] There was of course Nietzsche's discussion of values. But for a considerable time Nietzsche was regarded in France more as a poet than a philosopher.

From a phenomenological point of view it can reasonably be argued that values are recognized or discovered. Consider, for example, the case of someone who judges that love is a value, something to be valued, whereas hatred is not. It is clearly arguable that his attitude is one of recognizing or seeing love as a value and hatred as a disvalue. Whatever his theory of values may be, it can be argued that as far as his immediate consciousness is concerned, love imposes itself on his mind as a value. Similarly, from the phenomenological point of view it is reasonable to use the language of recognition or discovery in regard to truth and beauty considered as values. In other words, our experience of values provides a ground or basis for the idea of values as objective and as transcendent, in the sense that they do not depend simply on one's own choice of them. To be sure, one has to find room for different and even incompatible value-judgments. But we can always refer, as some phenomenologists have done, to the possibility of a blindness to values and of varying degrees of insight into the field of values. And these ideas can be applied both to societies and to individuals.

From an ontological or metaphysical point of view however it seems absurd, to most people at any rate, to conceive values as existing in some ethereal world of their own. We can of course substitute the word 'subsist' for the word 'exist'; but it is doubtful if this verbal change really improves the situation. If therefore we wish to assert the objectivity of values, and if at the same time we wish to avoid committing ourselves to the view that universals such as love or truth or beauty can exist or 'subsist' in a Platonic world of their own, we can either regard values as objective qualities of things and actions in addition to other qualities, or we can try to work out some general metaphysics which will permit us to talk about the objectivity of values without committing ourselves to the concept of a realm of subsistent universal essences.

If may of course seem very much simpler to deny the objectivity of values, if this is taken to imply that values have an ontological status of their own, whether as ethereal substances or as objective qualities of things, persons and actions. That is to say, it may seem much simpler, and also more sensible, to throw all the weight on the value-judgment or on the act of valuation and to maintain, for example, that to assert that beauty is a value is to express the act of attributing value to beautiful things or persons. We can maintain, in other words, that it is through the act of attributing value that human beings create values. Values depend on and are relative to the human will and choice.

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[1] In Germany there was also of course the Neo-Kantian School of Baden. See Vol. 7 of this *History*, pp. 364–6.

If we adopt this line of thought, we have of course to account in some way for the feeling of recognizing or discovering values. For this seems to be a datum of consciousness. We can try to explain this feeling by referring it to the bearing of the collective consciousness, as conceived by Durkheim, on the individual consciousness. Or, if we wish to speak only in terms of individuals, we might adopt a line of thought represented by Sartre and see the individuals' particular value-judgments as determined by an original *projet* or a basic operative ideal.

Leaving aside for the moment not only the existentialism of Sartre, which will be discussed later, but also those who have tried to give a metaphysical foundation to values, we can turn first to a philosopher, Raymond Polin, who has discussed a variety of axiological theories and attitudes and who himself comes down on the anti-objectivist side.

2. Raymond Polin was born in 1910. After studying at the École Normale and obtaining the doctorate in letters, he taught philosophy first in several lycées, such as the Lycée Condorcet at Paris, and then as professor of ethics in the university of Lille. In 1961 he became a professor at the Sorbonne. His publications include *La création des valeurs* (1944, *The Creation of Values*), *La compréhension des valeurs* (1945, *The Understanding of Values*), *Du laid, du mal, du faux* (1948, *On the Ugly, the Evil and the False*) and *Éthique et politique* (1968, *Ethics and Politics*). Polin has also published works on Hobbes and Locke.[1]

Phenomenology, Polin asserts, seems to offer 'the most adequate method for the study of values',[2] inasmuch as for the consciousness which thinks or conceives them values coincide with their meaning (*signification*). He envisages two steps, first a phenomenological reduction giving access to the pure axiological consciousness (the consciousness of value) with a view to defining the essence of values, and secondly a movement of liberation, freeing the mind, that is to say, both from the pressure exercised by received values and from the influence of all existing theories of value. In other words, he wishes to take a fresh and unprejudiced view of the matter. The mind should place itself in a position of neutrality in regard to any determinate hierarchy of values and in regard to all existing theories. It should prescind from all authority, including that of society.

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[1] *Philosophie et politique chez Thomas Hobbes* (1953) and *La politique morale de John Locke* (1960).

[2] *La création des valeurs*, p. 1.

As Polin refers frequently to 'values', using the noun that is to say, one may be tempted to conclude that for him there is a realm of essences which have some sort of existence of their own or which have to be given an ontological or metaphysical foundation. Indeed, the subtitle of his work on the creation of values is *Recherches sur le fondement de l'objectivité axiologique* (*Inquiries into the Foundation of Axiological Objectivity*). We have already noted however that for him a value coincides with its meaning for the consciousness which thinks it. It thus has intentional objectivity, in the sense that the act of thinking or conceiving a value-meaning is a reality. But a value does not exist as an object 'out there', independently of the subject which thinks it. As for finding a foundation for values, other than the act of evaluating, this would have to be different from the values themselves (if it were to serve as a foundation) and at the same time to stand in an intelligible and necessary relation to the values which it founded. But how can there be a necessary relation between what is not a value and a value? Or to express the matter in a different and more familiar way, how can a factual statement entail a value-judgment?

In point of fact Polin's talk about values is somewhat misleading. He is really concerned with the act of evaluation, by which values are constituted. In his view evaluation cannot be understood apart from the concept of human action. 'Phenomenological inquiry into the essence of values is vain and futile unless it constitutes the introduction to a philosophy of action.'[1] Human action presupposes and expresses evaluation, which is an act of the free subject. The free subject outruns or transcends the empirically given, creating its own values with a view to action. The values created have of course a certain exteriority, in the sense that they are the objects of an intentional and teleological consciousness. But it is a mistake to think that there is an axiological reality or

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

realm of values apart from the consciousness which creates them. The only given reality is empirical reality; but this is evaluated in relation to action. Values are grounded in the self-transcending creative subject. And this is the only foundation which they have or require.

According to Polin therefore values are not real objects 'out there' waiting to be known. On the contrary, there is an irreducible distinction between knowledge of things, in which the 'noetic' consciousness is absorbed in the object, and the axiological consciousness which transcends what is given and creates the 'unreal'. In other words, we must not confuse truth and value. 'Truth is not a value,'[1] and we ought not to speak of the truth of values. But there is a truth of action. That is to say, while theoretical truth is attained through the conformity of thought with reality, truth in action is attained through the conformity produced in the reality (work) created by action 'with the axiological project and intention'.[2] We know a fact when our thought is conformed to an objective state of affairs. In the sphere of action however truth consists in the conformity between what we achieve or bring about and our value-laden intention. But this is not all there is to be said. For through his action a man creates not simply his work but also himself. 'This is why the truth of action embraces the totality of the work and its creator. It is at the same time the work and the man who accomplishes the work.'[3]

In his insistence that it is man who feely creates values Polin stands in the Nietzschean line of thought. And in this and some other respects, such as his view that through the process of evaluation and action man creates himself, he obviously stands close to Sartre. But what, we may ask, does Polin make of the social aspect of morality? In his view, 'action is social by its essence, by its object, by its conditions; it is inconceivable without the presence of the other.'[4] This means that vlaues, as the expression of a creative will, tend to become norms; and norms, as universalizable, are essentially social. Moreover, whereas values (valuations) are personal and cannot be imposed, norms can be imposed by others. A society or group, for example, can accept certain norms and try to enforce or impose acceptance on its individual members or on another group. Norms then become values rendered static; and they can be accepted servilely or because people are looking for a secure foothold or a refuge from personal decision which is always a venture, as it means going beyond or transcending the given. At the same time values can also present themselves not as constraining norms or rules or commandments but as attracting or exercising an appeal. To their creator values can appear as attracting ideals and ends; and they can appear in the same way to others. 'The commandment is replaced by an appeal.'[1] The creator then 'owes his domination over others simply to the influence of the values which he creates'.[2] In this line of thought we can see perhaps a resumption of Bergson's theme of the closed and open moralities.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 296. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 296. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 297. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 259.

In his analysis of 'axiological attitudes' Polin begins by examining what he describes as the contemplative attitude. Here the subject conceives transcendence not in the form of creative human action but in that of 'a static and given being: the transcendent'.[3] Values are conceived not as 'unreal' entities which are realized only through human action but as realities existing independently of man. Polin admits that values, as so conceived, can provide a 'model of a perfect human activity';[4] but, as objects of contemplation, they do not, in his view, 'give rise to any efficacious *action*'.[5] A value is not, as it were, a moment in the total process or cycle of human action, but rather a detached object of contemplation which exists, or if preferred, subsists, independently of human consciousness.

Polin does not of course share this axiological attitude. And most of us would probably find it difficult to accept a theory which postulated a world of subsistent value-essences, which would really be subsistent universals, in addition to particular individual things. At the same time it is arguable, as has already been noted, that from the phenomenological point of view there is such an experience as recognizing or discovering values. That is to say, there is an experience which seems to demand the use of such terms. And even if one is determined to avoid the literal implication of a term such as 'discovery', namely the implication that there is a pre-existing reality waiting to be discovered, any adequate theory of values must at any rate allow for the type of experience which prompts the use of terms which are potentially misleading. Hence it is perfectly understandable that some philosophers are not content with any theory which interprets values simply as free creations of the individual subject. And even if in some cases it involves retracing our steps from the chronological point of view we can consider briefly two or three French philosophers who have tried to link up a theory of values with a general metaphysics.

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[1] *La compréhension des valeurs*, p. 134.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 134.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

3. A name which comes at once to mind in this connection is that of René Le Senne (1882–1954). A pupil of Hamelin at the École Normale, Le Senne taught in lycées at Chambéry, Marseilles and then Paris, becoming a professor of moral philosophy at the Sorbonne in 1942. Together with his friend Louis Lavelle he founded and edited the series entitled *Philosophie de l'esprit* (*Philosophy of Spirit*), published by Aubier at Paris. Among his works we can mention his *Introduction to Philosophy* (*Introduction à la philosophie*, 1925, revised and enlarged edition 1939), his doctorate thesis entitled *Duty* (*Le Devoir*, 1930, second edition 1950), *Obstacle and Value* (*Obstacle et valeur*, 1934), a general treatise on ethics (*Traité de morale générale*, 1942), a work on characterology (*Traité de caractérologie*, 1945), *Personal Destiny* (*La destinée personnelle*, 1951), and the posthumously published work *The Discovery of God* (*La découverte de Dieu*, 1955).

In an essay entitled *La philosophie de l'esprit*[1] Le Senne remarks that to follow the development of French philosophy from Descartes to Hamelin, or even to Bergson, is to understand the fecundity of Cartesianism.[2] From one point of view this may seem to be an odd assertion. Is there not, we may ask, a very great difference between the rationalism of Descartes, with his mathematical model of reasoning, and his appeal to clear and distinct concepts, and Bergson's appeal to intuition and his philosophy of duration and of the movement of life? It hardly needs saying however that Le Senne is perfectly well aware of the differences. When he refers to the continuity between the thought of Descartes on the one hand and the spiritualist and idealist movements in nineteenth-century French philosophy on the other, he is thinking not of Descartes' mathematical model nor of his view of the material world as a machine but of the emphasis placed by Descartes on the thinking and active self or ego and of the relation which is asserted between the self and God. Le Senne is thinking, in other words, of elements in Cartesianism which were preserved and developed in the movement of thought from Maine de Biran onwards, but which were menaced by positivism in its various forms and by certain aspects of technological civilization. Obviously, Le Senne makes a judgment of value about what constitutes authentic philosophy. And one characteristic of authentic philosophy, in his view, is that it transcends the initial empiricist attitude of common sense, which 'leads to *realism* and even to *materialism*',[1] and discovers the self as that which thinks the objective world and is conscious of itself. In this movement of thought however there is a dialectic or dialogue between intellectualism or idealist rationalism on the one hand and, on the other, opposition to the reduction of existence to thought. 'As against Descartes, Pascal, Malebranche combines in his philosophy the demands of Cartesianism with the Augustinian inspiration. From Condillac comes Biran, but the latter reacts against the former. At the beginning of this century the dialogue is continued between Hamelin and Bergson.'[2] These two philosophers 'have maintained with the same fidelity the ideal of a knowledge which seeks the reason or the one and indivisible source of all that is and is thought'.[3] As for French existentialism, Le Senne sees, as one would expect, a great difference between the religiously oriented and 'optimistic' philosophy of thinkers such as Marcel and the 'negative' and 'pessimistic' existentialism of Sartre.[4]

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[1] *Philosophic Thought in France and the United States*, edited by Marvin Farber (Buffalo, N.Y., 1950), pp. 103–20. The fact that in the American version of the work the title of Le Senne's essay is given in French is perhaps significant. The word *esprit* can indeed be translated as 'mind'. But though mind is included in its range of meaning, *esprit* has, in the context, metaphysical and religious connotations which favour use of the word 'spirit'.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 103.

As one would expect of a philosopher influenced by Hamelin, there are evident idealist elements in Le Senne's thought. He asserts, for example, that 'the celebrated formula of Berkeley *Esse est percipi vel percipere* (to be is to be perceived or to perceive) is false only inasmuch as it is too narrow. To perceive, to think abstractly, to feel, to will, to love, to have a presentiment of, to regret, and so on indefinitely, so that no experience of the spirit is omitted, this is reality and the whole of reality.'[5] Le Senne adds however a note to explain that while he denies that matter is a thing in itself, in the sense that it exists independently of any spirit, he does not intend to imply that matter has no reality at all. It exists only in relation to spirit, but in this relation it is real and functions 'sometimes as obstacle, sometimes as a support, in regard both to action and to contemplation.'[1] In other words, matter exists only in relation to spirit; and in regard to the human spirit it can function either as an obstacle or a help in spirit's fufillment of its vocation.

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[1] *Introduction à la philosophie* (2nd edition, 1947), p. 7.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 134.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

[4] We cannot discuss here the use of the words 'existentialism' and 'existentialist'. This must be left until we come to treat explicitly of Marcel and Sartre.

[5] *Introduction à la philosophie*, p. 250.

The question arises of course, what does Le Senne mean by spirit? Let us begin with the human spirit. 'When I affirm that I am a spirit, I mean that I distinguish myself from things by the consciousness which I have correlatively of them and of myself, that the multiplicity of determinations and qualities with which I furnish space and time are accessible to me only by reason of an envelopment of which I am the centre.'[2] This enveloping is however an active synthesis. 'I will say therefore of spirit, as I grasp it in myself, that it is a dynamic unity of linking together (*liaison*), in the widest sense of the last term, according to which to distinguish and to exclude is still to link together.'[3] But what I grasp in myself, according to Le Senne, is simply a finite reflection of spirit in itself, which can be defined as 'the operative unity of an active relation (*une relation en exercice*), interior to itself, between itself as infinite Spirit and the multitude of finite spirits.'[4] In other words, absolute Spirit is one and many. One can conceive it as 'the relation between itself as one and therefore as unlimited and itself as many, in short as the union of God . . . and of finite consciousnesses.'[5] By distinguishing itself from the non-self and from other selves the finite spirit experiences limits and obstacles. It cannot achieve an all-embracing synthesis. This is realized only in and through infinite Spirit, which is at the same time other than and immanent in and inseparable from the finite spirit. Spirit in the most general sense is the relation between the two terms, God and the finite self.

In Le Senne's philosophy of spirit there seems to be a certain tension between absolute idealism and the theism which he certainly accepts. However this may be, his spiritualist metaphysics forms the setting for his theory of values. He sees the human spirit as oriented to value. '*That which is worthy of being sought after* is what everyone calls value.'[6] The statement that value is that which *is* worthy of being sought after indicates that for Le Senne value is not simply the creation of the human will. At the same time a value which was not a value for anyone would not be a value. '*If it does not exist through the subject, it is for the*

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 252. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 254. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 254. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 257.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 258. [6] *Traité de morale générale* (3rd edition, 1949), p. 693.

subject.'[1] Recognition of value unites persons, and value 'can have meaning only for them'.[2] It does not follow of course that everyone makes the same value-judgments, nor that all human beings give precedence to the same value or values. One man may regard the aesthetic value of beauty as taking precedence, when another man gives the precedence to truth or to moral value. But the search for value plays a central role in the constitution of personality; and human beings are united by a common recognition of values. This is obvious, for example, in regard to both truth and love. Such recognition implies the transcendence of values, in the sense that they do not depend simply on man's arbitrary decree; but they are for man, in the sense that they are not values unless they can be appropriated, so to speak, in experience and realized in life.

Le Senne admits therefore that there is a plurality of values. Moral value, which he links with the idea of acting in accordance with duty or moral obligation, is not the only value. Truth, beauty and love are also values. Consider, for example, a mother who performed those actions in regard to her child which love would prompt but who did so simply and solely out of a sense of moral obligation. She 'would be a moral mother; but it would be false to say that she loved her child.'[3] For love involves the heart. No value can be identified with a particular thing. The aesthetic value of beauty, for example, cannot be identified with this or that empirical reality of which we say that it is beautiful. But this does not alter the fact that there are distinct values, irreducible to one another or to one particular 'cardinal' value, such as moral value or truth or beauty.

Though positive, values have also a negative aspect. A particular value exists only in opposition to a correlative non-value. Thus love is opposed to hatred; courage has meaning only in opposition to cowardice; truth is correlative to falsity; and so on. Further, one particular value can exclude another, so that precedence has to be given to one or the other. Le Senne does not however try to unify values in terms of a systematically graded hierarchy of particular values.[4] He seeks the principle of unity in absolute value, 'one and infinite'.[1] All particular values are for him relative and phenomenal. They are the ways in which pure or absolute value appears to the human consciousness or mediates itself to us. Absolute value is not the highest member of a hierarchy. It transcends and at the same time grounds all particular values. These constitute for us the phenomena or appearances of the Absolute, which is their source and is yet immanent in them.[2] Man's destiny or vocation is '*an exploration* oriented to value, which is identical with the absolute'.[3] He experiences value 'in a given historical situation';[4] but he can transcend the determinate situation and conceive the value abstractly. He can also transcend particular values towards absolute value; but he discovers it only in and through its appearances, so that value is essentially 'a relational unification between its source, which is independent of the self, and the self.'[5] By realizing particular values, such as truth or love, in his life man attains authentic personality and participates in absolute value, inasmuch as the latter is at the heart of every relative value.

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[1] *Introduction à la philosophie*, p. 365. The original text is *si elle n'est pas par lui, elle est pour lui. Lui* refers to *le sujet.*

[2] *Obstacle et valeur*, p. 192.

[3] *Introduction à la philosophie*, p. 381.

[4] For some summary lines of objection to this procedure see *Traité de moral générale*, p. 698.

In one place Le Senne asserts that 'value is the knowledge of the Absolute'.[6] Elsewhere he speaks of the Absolute as being itself pure and infinite value. And as infinite value must comprise, in an eminent way, the value of personality, the Absolute 'must be called God'.[7] Hence Le Senne can give to the eighth chapter of his *Introduction to Philosophy* the heading 'Value or God', which implies that the two terms are synonymous. Whether these various ways of speaking can be harmonized is open to discussion. We have indeed noted Le Senne's statement that a value which was completely self-enclosed and incapable of being a value *for* anyone would not be a value. So it is understandable if he speaks of value, even of absolute value, in terms of a relation. But this way of speaking seems to fit in better with the view of the Absolute itself as relational, as comprising the two related terms of infinite spirit and finite spirit, than with the theory of the divine transcendence which is also defended by Le Senne.

Le Senne's theory of value calls Platonism to mind, at any rate if we are prepared to identify the absolute Good of the *Republic* with the Beauty in itself of the *Symposium* and the *One* of the

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[1] *Obstacle et valeur*, p. 180.

[2] Le Senne refers to Bradley's theory of the Absolute.

[3] *Introduction à la philosophie*, p. 265.

[4] *Traité de moral générale*, p. 694.

[5] *La destinée personelle*, p. 210.

[6] *Obstacle et valeur*, p. 181.

[7] *Traité de morale générale*, p. 693.

Parmenides, the difference being that Le Senne's absolute value is identified with the personal God of the Christian religion. And unless we are inclined to write off all metaphysics as so much nonsense, we can presumably form some idea of what he means. For example, he claims that there is a transcendent divine reality which reveals itself not simply in the physical world as experienced by man but also in the axiological world or world of values, which constitutes a constituent element in experience. Though however Le Senne's theory of values is doubtless religiously edifying, and though we can have a general impression of its meaning, there are a good many questions to which no very clear answers are provided. For example, how would Le Senne analyze the value-judgment? It is indeed clear that he would not accept an analysis which interpreted it simply as expressing man's feelings or emotive attitudes or desires. For in his view value is neither simply psychological nor simply metaphysical but psycho-metaphysical.[1] Perhaps he would claim, for instance, that to say of something that it is beautiful is to say that it participates in beauty and, by implication, that it reflects the Absolute in a limited and finite way. But the metaphysics of participation itself gives rise to questions, as Plato was well aware.

4. There are of course other attempts in recent French philosophy to integrate a theory of values into a general world-view. We can just mention, for instance, Raymond Ruyer,[2] whose work *La conscience et le corps* (1937, *Consciousness and Body*) expressed an abandonment of his former mechanistic outlook and the development of a theory according to which every being manifests a teleological activity. That is to say, subjectivity or consciousness is present in all beings, though it is only at a certain level that the distinction between subject and object emerges. In the case of every being therefore its activity in the spatio-temporal sphere[3] is directed to an end, though it is only at the level of man that there is actual awareness of values belonging to an axiological realm which transcends space and time. The meaning of the activity of any being cannot be understood without reference to the realm of

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 697.

[2] Born in 1902, Ruyer was appointed a professor of the university of Nancy in 1945. In 1946 he published *Élements de psycho-biologie* (*Elements of Psychobiology*), in 1952 *Néo-finalisme* (*Neo-finalism*) and in 1958 *La genèse de formes vivantes* (*The Genesis of Living Forms*).

[3] Objectivity, the spatio-temporal sphere, is conceived by Ruyer as phenomenal. All genuine activity is rooted in and proceeds from subjectivity.

values; but it is only at the level of man that such reflective understanding arises.

Ruyer has devoted special studies to the theory of values, *Le monde des valeurs* (1948, *The World of Values*) and *Philosophie de la valeur* (1952, *Philosophy of Value*). The unification of the phenomenal world of space and time and the world of subjectivity and of values is sought in the idea of God, conceived both as the ultimate source of all activity in the world and as the perfect qualitative unity of all values, their point of convergence.

The philosophy of Ruyer is to some extent a revival of lines of thought expounded by Leibniz. When we turn to Jean Pucelle, who is a professor in the University of Poitiers,[1] we find an approach to the subject of values which seems to represent both a reaction to the existentialist theory of values as the creation of the individual[2] and a desire to avoid any objectivist theory which postulates values as entities existing out there, independently of consciousness. Further, Pucelle is concerned with integrating the concepts of value and norm, instead of separating them sharply in the manner of those who tend to regard norms as static hindrances to liberty. It is true that norms belong to the juridical sphere, and that if human behaviour were dictated simply by norms and rules, it would degenerate into legalism. At the same time norms arise out of the recognition of values and serve as a condition or matrix for the exercise of creative liberty.

Pucelle allows that we can distinguish between the judgment of fact and the judgment of value. But he insists that 'it is only by abstraction that one distinguishes them'.[3] In his view, that is to say, no concrete factual judgment is entirely free of valuational elements. He traces back the value-judgment to the subject-object relation, in the sense that it presupposes both desire of an object and a distantiation (*détachement*) of the self from the object, whereby one transforms the actually desired into the desirable. At the same time the transition from felt desire to the value-judgment, by detaching, as it were, the self from the object, opens up the field of evaluation. And ideal values arise on the plane of intersubjectivity. Recognition of the value of love, for example, presupposes actual love between persons. The ideal value is clearly not a thing out there; but it is objectified for consciousness in the value-judgment. We have to avoid the extremes of pure subjectivism on the one hand and a reifying objectivism on the other and recognize that values are relational. 'Truth is a privileged relation *between* terms *for* at least one mind,'[1] though we can go on to argue that truth has meaning only in the context of intersubjectivity.

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[1] Pucelle's publications include *La source des valeurs* (1957, *The Source of Values*) and *Le règne des fins* (1959, *The Kingdom of Ends*).

[2] The reference is of course to the Sartrian type of existentialism.

[3] *La source des valeurs*, p. 34.

In Pucelle's opinion 'intersubjective relations are the source of all values'.[2] He extends this idea to cover 'the appeal of God and man's response'[3] in the Judaeo-Christian ethical tradition. He also insists that axiology has to be set within an ontology and introduces the idea of the presence of Being and of man's consent to Being. Here he seems to come close to Le Senne by seeing the ultimate foundation of values in a 'theandric' relation. For example, it is because value is a relation between Being and beings that every existence has value. And it is because the presence of Being can be sought or unknown or ignored by man that the field of one's valuational vision can be very restricted.

When the word 'Being' with a capital letter is introduced and there is talk of the presence of Being and of consent to Being, some philosophers are inclined to give up.[4] This point apart however, it might perhaps be asked whether, given Pucelle's initial interpretation of the value-judgment, it is really necessary to look for a metaphysical foundation of values. Or is it a case not so much of being compelled to look for a foundation outside the world of human persons in their relationship to one another and their environment as of fitting the recognition of values into a pre-existing religious world-outlook? One might perhaps reply that reflection on an experience of values naturally suggests a religiously metaphysical complement or framework, unless one rejects such a framework on other grounds. But we cannot prolong discussion of such issues.

The work by Pucelle from which we have quoted above is dedicated to the memory of Louis Lavelle and René Le Senne, the co-founders and editors of the series *The Philosophy of Spirit*. Something has already been said about Le Senne as a philosopher of values. We can now turn briefly to a consideration of the metaphysics of Lavelle.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 155.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 164. Though Pucelle begins by considering the subject-object relation in the individual, he does not intend to imply that we can make a complete distinction between private and inter-subjective consciousness.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 165.

[4] It might be simpler to use the word 'God', if this is what is meant. Being of course sounds more metaphysical or ontological; but a religious person at any rate can more easily find meaning in talk about the presence of God and response to God than about the presence of and consent to Being. The reply might be made however that the concept of God (as personal) is a determination of the concept of Being.

5. Louis Lavelle (1883–1951) was a pupil at Lyons of Arthur Hannequin (1856–1905), author of a well known thesis on the atomic hypothesis[1] in which he maintained that science knows only what it creates and in which he looked to metaphysics to overcome the agnosticism implied by this Kantian-inspired view and to reveal the nature of reality. Later Lavelle came under the influence of Hamelin's writings. Indeed, he combined in his own thought a considerable variety of influences. That of the French spiritualist tradition was prominent; but Lavelle was also open to the problems raised by existentialists, though he tried to solve them in a different manner from philosophers such as Sartre. In 1932 Lavelle was appointed to a chair of philosophy at the Sorbonne. From 1941 he was a professor at the Collège de France. He was a prolific writer.[2]

In a sense Lavelle goes back to Descartes and builds his metaphysics on the foundation of the *Cogito, ergo sum*, on consciousness of the self. Consciousness is an act, and by this act I give myself being. That is to say, the act of consciousness is the genesis of the self. It is not a question of my coming through consciousness to contemplate a self which is already there. Rather is it a question of bringing the I to birth in and through consciousness, by opposing it to the non-self. In other words, the ego grasps itself as activity, an activity which first creates itself. This may seem to be absurd. How, we may ask, can the ego bring itself into being? Lavelle however insists that we cannot distinguish between an ego which confers consciousness and an ego on whom consciousness is conferred. Being and act are identical. This identity, revealing the nature of being, is thus discovered in self-consciousness. And it follows that the proper approach to metaphysics is through subjectivity, through, that is to say, reflection on the self as activity rather than through reflection on the multiplicity of phenomena which the ego opposes to itself under the form of externality. We have to retreat inwards, so to speak, rather than outwards, when 'outwards' refers to the external world. 'Metaphysics rests on a privileged experience which is that of the act which makes me be.'[1]

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[1] *Essai Critique sur l'hypothèse des atomes dans la science contemporaine* (1895).
[2] For Lavelle's works see the Bibliography.

It is in the act of consciousness that I become aware of being. But I am certainly not the plenitude of being. 'Being overflows the self and at the same time sustains it.'[2] There is not and cannot be anything outside Being, whether selves or external objects. Being is the whole in which I participate. The word Being with a capital letter, taken by itself, suggests the idea of a Parmenidean One; and Lavelle's insistence in *De l'être* on the universal and univocal character of Being tends to support this idea. But we have seen that in *De l'acte* he argues that in self-consciousness I grasp being as act, which is the 'interiority' of being. Being with a capital letter therefore, the Whole from which I derive my existence and in which I participate, must be pure and infinite Act. 'Being does not exist in front of me as a motionless object which I seek to attain. It is in me by the operation which makes me give being to myself.'[3] Being is infinite Act, infinite Spirit; but it is at the same time the *immanent* cause of all finite selves, giving them the act by which they constitute themselves. As for the non-self, external reality or the world, this must ultimately be correlative to pure Act as the infinite self. But the world comes to be for me, my world arises, only in correlation with myself as active subject. To be sure, I find myself in a world, which is for me something given. Indeed, it is the condition of there being a plurality of selves. The self comes into being only in correlation with a world, to which it gives meaning in terms of its ideas, its evaluations, its activity. But to say this is to say that in giving me the act by which I came to be a self pure Act also gives me the world as a datum. In other words, the world, for Lavelle, must be correlative to an active self. There is no world which is independent of all consciousness whatsoever. It does not follow however that the world is a mere phantom. It is at the same time the condition for the plurality of finite selves, the field of their activity, and the instrument of mediation between consciousnesses, and thus the basis of human society. It is also the 'interval' between pure Act and participated act. It is by transcending the limits and obstacles posited by the world that the human person fulfils its destiny or vocation and tends to realize on the level of consciousness its oneness with infinite Act.

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[1] *De l'acte* (*On Act*), p. 11. This work is the second volume of Lavelle's *La dialectique de l'éternel présent*, the first being *De l'être* (*On Being*).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 59. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

Any reader who is well acquainted with German idealism is likely to be struck by the resemblances between much of what Lavelle has to say and the philosophy of Fichte. For example, Fichte's theories of the pure or absolute ego as activity, of the positing of the limited ego and non-ego, of the world as the field for and instrument of man's moral vocation and of the world as the appearance to us of absolute Being, are all present in some form in Lavelle's thought. It does not follow however that Lavelle borrowed his ideas from German idealism. It is a question of noting certain similarities rather than of asserting direct influence.

Mention has already been made of Lavelle's insistence in *De l'être* on the universal and univocal character of Being. This view is repeated in *De l'acte*. 'To say that Being is universal and univocal is to say that we all form part of the same Whole and that it is the same Whole which gives us the same being which belongs to it and outside which there is nothing.'[1] This combination of the theory of Being as univocal, whether considered in itself or in its creations, with the whole-and-part language obviously suggests a monistic pantheism. But Lavelle uses the doctrine of the univocal character of the concept of Being to support the conclusion that the Absolute is not only the source of personal existence but also itself personal, indeed a person 'which must be distinguished from all other persons'.[2] In other words, he has no intention of simply throwing theism overboard. He wishes to maintain that God, considered in himself, is not in any way diminished through creation of finite selves and the world. and he has recourse to a theory of participation. 'Participation obliges me therefore to admit that there are at the same time homogeneity and heterogeneity not only between the participant and the participated, but also between the participated and the participable.'[3] And this theory of participation is regarded as implying a distinction between Act and Being, between, that is to say, the divine Act and the totality of Being. 'The totality is the very unity of Act considered as being the unique and indivisible source of all the particular modes, which seem to be always contained eminently, and, so to speak, by way of excess, in the very impulse (*élan*) which produces them and in which all beings participate according to their power.'[4] The totality of Being, in other words, is not something achieved, accomplished, static. There is a creative process of totalization, which is the expression of pure Act, the source and immanent cause of all finite beings but at the same time distinguishable from them.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 78. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 140. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 72. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

Lavelle's philosophy is of course an example of the tendency in religiously oriented metaphysics to get away from pictorial or imaginative theism, with its concept of a God 'out there' or 'up there', without however relapsing into Spinozism or into a monism which would exclude the concept of a personal God. This tendency to a panentheism designed to avoid two extremes is perfectly understandable. But it is very difficult to state this sort of theory in any satisfactorily consistent and coherent manner. Ferdinand Alquié,[1] a redoubtable opponent of monism in all its forms and of the objectivation of Being, may be unfair in interpreting Lavelle in a monistic sense. But the latter certainly speaks of Being as the totality, even if the whole is conceived in an Hegelian rather than in a Parmenidean way. And though Lavelle tries to save the situation, from a theistic point of view, by making a distinction between pure Act and the totality of Being, regarding the former as the creative inwardness or interiority of the latter, it is obviously open to dispute whether his various assertions are in fact compatible. It can be claimed of course that language is bound to reveal its inadequacy when we try to talk about the Absolute and the relation of particulars to the Absolute. But the retort might be made that in this case silence would be the best policy. Indeed, according to Alquié Being as such remains inaccessible to us. For though it grounds all that is given in experience, it cannot itself be a datum.

6. Although in the philosophy of spirit as represented by Le Senne and Lavelle there is a strong dose of metaphysics, there is also a prominent emphasis on the idea of the destiny or vocation of the human person. Indeed Le Senne published a book with the title *La destinée personelle* and Lavelle one entitled *Le moi et son destin*. Further, Lavelle, as we have seen, starts with the act which in his view brings the human person into being. Again, it is clear that those philosophers who have been generally labelled existentialists have also been concerned with the person. Marcel, for example, talks a great deal about personal relationships, while Sartre has laid emphasis on man's creative freedom. Thomists

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[1] Ferdinand Alquié, born in 1906, was a professor in the university of Montpellier from 1947 until 1952 and was appointed to a chair in the Sorbonne. Among his works are *La nostalgie de l'être* (1950, *The Nostalgia of Being*), *Philosophie du surréalisme* (1955, *Philosophy of Surrealism*), *Descartes, l'homme et l'oeuvre* (1956, *Descartes, the Man and his Work*) and *L'expérience* (1957, *Experience*).

too, such as Jacques Maritain, have stressed the personalist elements in their own thought. To go further back in time, Renouvier, who influenced William James, entitled his last work *Le personnalisme*. In other words, emphasis on the nature and value of the human person and on the idea of the human person as relevant to our general interpretation of reality has not been confined to any one School or group in recent French philosophy. One can find the roots of personalism in the spiritualist tradition in French philosophy; and one can connect the fairly widespread emphasis on the person in recent French thought with a shared reaction to both intellectual and social-political tendencies which appear to treat man simply as an object of scientific study or to reduce him to his function in the economic sphere or in the social-political totality. In some cases of course, as with Le Senne and Lavelle as also with such different thinkers as Marcel and Maritain, there is also a strong religious motivation. The human person is seen as oriented by nature to a super-empirical end or goal.

When however reference is made to personalism in recent French philosophy, it may be primarily to the thought of Emmanuel Mounier (1905–50), editor of *Esprit*, and of certain other writers such as Denis de Rougemont, a Swiss Protestant, and Maurice Nédoncelle, a French priest. It is in this restricted use of the term that personalism will be understood in this section. And it is therefore important to emphasize the fact that the restriction should not be interpreted as implying that the writers mentioned here are the only French philosophers who have expressed characteristically personalist ideas. The point is rather that Mounier conducted a specific campaign in support of personalism as such, whereas with other thinkers personalist ideas have often formed part, even if an important part, of a philosophy to which another label has been attached, such as philosophy of spirit or existentialism or Thomism.

Emmanuel Mounier was born at Grenoble and studied philosophy first in his home town and then at Paris. He was influenced by the writings of Charles Péguy (1873–1914), and in 1931 he published, in collaboration, a book on Péguy's thought.[1] He was also influenced by the famous Russian philosopher, Nikolai Berdyaev (1874–1948), who had settled in Paris in 1924. Mounier taught philosophy in schools for some years; and in 1932 he undertook the editorship of the newly founded periodical *Esprit*, which continued publication until 1941 when it was banned by the Vichy government.[1] After the war he revived *Esprit* as an organ of personalism.

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[1] *La pensée de Charles Péguy* (*The Thought of Charles Péguy*).

In 1935 Mounier published *Révolution personnaliste et communautaire* (*Personalist and Communal Revolution*), in 1936 a work entitled *De la propriété capitaliste à la propriété humaine* (*From Capitalist Property to Human Property*) and a personalist manifesto, *Manifesto au service du personnalisme*. In some Catholic circles his writings won him the reputation of being pretty well a Marxist. In 1946 he published an introduction to the existentialist philosophies, *Introduction aux existentialismes*,[2] and a work on character, *Traité du caractère*. Among other post-war publications we can mention *Qu'est-ce que le personalisme?* (1947, *What is Personalism?*) and *Le personnalisme* (1950, Personalism).

At the beginning of his work on the existentialist philosophies Mounier remarks that in very general terms the existentialist movement might be described as 'a reaction of the philosophy of man against the excesses of the philosophy of ideas and the philosophy of things'.[2] By the philosophy of ideas in this context he means the type of philosophizing which concentrates on abstract universal concepts and devotes itself to classification in terms of ever more comprehensive categories to such an extent that particulars are given a subordinate place and are regarded as objects of philosophical reflection only in so far as they can be subsumed under universal ideas and deprived of their singularity and, in the case of man, of freedom. This line of thought, starting in ancient Greece, is looked on as reaching its culmination in the absolute idealism of Hegel, at any rate as interpreted by Kierkegaard. The philosophy of things means the kind of philosophical thought which assimilates itself to natural science and regards man purely 'objectively', as an object among other objects in the physical universe. Mounier recognizes that rationalism on the one hand and positivism on the other have involved 'excesses'. But in his opinion the existentialist reaction, especially in its atheistic form, has also been guilty of exaggeration. In a general way personalism is for him akin to existentialism, as expressing a reaction against systems such as those of Spinoza and Hegel on the one hand and positivism, materialism and beheaviourism on the other. But he also sees in existentialism 'a dual tendency to solipsism and pessimism, which separates it radically from personalism as we understand it'.[1]

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[1] Mounier himself was arrested in 1942 and spent some months in prison before being released. He was an active member of the Resistance.

[2] *Existentialist Philosophies*, translated by E. Blow (London, 1948), p. 2.

Personalism, Mounier insists, is 'not a system'.[2] For its central assertion is the existence of free and creative persons, and it thus introduces 'a principle of unpredictability'[3] which resists definitive systematization. By a 'system' Mounier evidently understands a philosophy which tries to understand all events, including human actions, as necessary implications of certain first principles or as necessary effects of ultimate causes. A 'system' excludes all creative freedom in human persons. To say however that personalism is not a system is not the same thing as saying that it is not a philosophy and cannot be expressed in terms of ideas, or that it is simply an attitude of mind. There is such a thing as a personalist universe, seen from the perspective of man as a free and creative person; and there is such a thing as a personalist philosophy. More accurately, there can be different personalist philosophies. For there can be an agnostic personalism, whereas Mounier's personalism is religious and Christian. But they could not be appropriately described as personalist philosophies, unless they had some basic idea in common. This idea however is also a call to action. And Mounier himself was always a campaigner, a fighter. In the foreword to his *Traité de caractère* he states explicitly that his science is 'a fighting science'.[4] In being a campaigner Mounier resembles Bertrand Russell. But while Russell made a sharp distinction between his activity as a campaigner and his role as a professional philosopher, Mounier regarded his philosophical convictions as expressing themselves by their very nature in the sphere of action.

In its view of man the personalism of Mounier is of course opposed to materialism and the reduction of the human being simply to a complicated material object. But it is also opposed both to any form of idealism which reduces matter, including the human body, to a mere reflection of spirit or to appearance and to psycho-physical parallelism. Man is not simply a material object; but it does not follow either that he is pure spirit or that he can be neatly divided into two substances or two sets of experiences. Man is 'wholly body and wholly spirit',[1] and subjective existence and bodily existence belong to the same experience. Man's existence is embodied existence; he belongs to Nature. But he can also transcend Nature in the sense that he can progressively master it or subdue it. This mastery of Nature can of course be understood simply in terms of exploitation. But for the personalist Nature presents man with the opportunity of fulfilling his own moral and spiritual vocation and of humanizing or personalizing the world. 'The relation of the person to Nature is not purely exterior but a dialectic of exchange and of ascension.'[2]

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[1] *Be Not Afraid*, translated by C. Rowland (London, 1951), p. 184. This volume contains two of Mounier's publications; and the quotation comes from the second part, which is a translation of *Qu'est-ce que le personalisme?*

[2] *Personalism*, translated by P. Mairet (London, 1952), p. vii.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. viii.

[4] *Une science combattante; Traité de caractère*, p. 7.

Personalism can thus be seen as man's reassertion of himself against the tyranny of Nature, represented on the intellectual plane by materialism. And it can also be seen as a reassertion by the person of his own creative freedom against any totalitarianism which would reduce the human being to a mere cell in the social organism or would identify him with his economic function. But it by no means follows that personalism and individualism are the same thing. The individual, in the pejorative sense in which personalists are inclined to use the term, is the egocentric man, the atomistic individual in abstraction from society. The term also signifies man as devoid of a sense of moral vocation. Thus Denis de Rougemont describes the individual as 'a man without destiny, a man without vocation or reason for existing, a man from whom the world demands nothing.'[3] The individual is man centralized in himself. For Mounier this egocentricism represents a degeneration of or a falling away from the idea of the person. 'The first condition of personalism is his (man's) decentralization,'[4] that he may give himself to others and be available for them in communication or communion. The person exists only in a social relationship, as a member of the 'we'. It is only as a member of a community of persons that man has a moral vocation. De Rougemont interprets the idea of vocation in a frankly Christian manner. Person and vocation are possible 'only in their unique act of obedience to the order of God which is called the love of the neighbour . . . Act, presence and commitment, these three words define the person, but also what Jesus Christ commands us to be: the neighbour.'[5] Mounier is no less Christian in his outlook.[6] But

[1] *Personalism*, p. 3

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[3] *Politique de la personne*, p. 56.

[4] *Personalism*, p. 19.

[5] *Politique de la personne*, pp. 52–3.

[6] See, for example, *Personnalisme et Christianisme* (*Personalism and Christianity*), reprinted in *Liberté sans conditions* (1946).

he gives a more general and 'sufficient' statement of the personalist point of view, 'that the significance of every person is such that he is irreplaceable in the position which he occupies in the world of persons'.[1] In other words, every human being has his or her vocation in life, in response to recognized values; but this vocation presupposes the world of persons and of interpersonal relations. If we prescind from the religious aspect of vocation (the response to the divine appeal), man's vocation, the exercise of his creative freedom in the realization of values, is his unique contribution, as it were, to the building-up of the world of persons and the humanization or personalization of the world.

In his personalist *Manifesto*, which appeared in *Esprit* in October 1936, Mounier, while maintaining that no strict definition of the concept of person could be given, offered the following definition or description as passing muster. 'A person is a spiritual being constituted as such by a manner of subsistence and of independence in being; it maintains this subsistence by its adhesion to a hierarchy of values, freely adopted, assimilated and lived, by a responsible self-commitment and by a constant conversion; it thus unifies all its activity in liberty and develops, moreover, by means of creative acts, its own unique vocation.' The concept of constant conversion is presumably more or less equivalent to Kierkegaard's idea of repetition and Marcel's idea of fidelity or faithfulness. As for self-commitment, Mounier regarded personalism as having implications in the social and political spheres; and it has already been noted that he looked on it not simply as an exercise in theoretical understanding but also as a call to action.

We have remarked above that personalism can be regarded as a reaction against collectivism or totalitarianism. This description is however one-sided and inadequate, as Mounier himself is not slow to point out. To be sure, personalism is opposed to the reduction of the human person to a mere cell in the social organism and to the complete subordination of man to the State. 'The State is meant for man, not man for the State.'[2] In totalitarianism the value of the person is overlooked. Indeed, the 'person' is reduced to the 'individual', even if the individual is regarded on an analogy with the cell in an organic whole. But it by no means follows that Mounier is prepared to defend bourgeois capitalist democracy. It is not simply a question of flagrant abuses which can be and to a certain extent have been overcome within the capitalist system. Mounier sees the developing capitalist system as containing within itself factors which point to and demand the transition to socialism. It is all very well to propose idealistic schemes according to which political authority and all constraint would be suppressed in favour of personal relations. Anarchism may be idealistic, but it is also unrealistic. It does not understand that the links which bind together persons as persons must find expression in political structures and authority. Personalism aims at a social reorganization which will meet the requirements of economic life as it has developed but which will at the same time be grounded on recognition of the nature and rights of the human person. In important respects capitalism is inhuman. But so is totalitarianism. And anarchism is no solution. In brief, personalism demands the rethinking of our social and political structures with a view to the development of a personalized socialism.

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[1] *Personalism*, p. 41.

[2] *Personalism*, p. 112.

Mounier does not of course confine himself simply to generalities. But we cannot discuss his more concrete suggestions here. It must suffice to point out that he is well aware of attempts to exploit personalism (the defence of the person) in the interests of 'the narrowest form of social conservation'[1] or in the service of bourgeois democracy. He emphasizes the inadequacy of simply using words such as 'person' and 'community'. To preserve the revolutionary edge of personalism we must also say, 'the end of western bourgeois society, the introduction of socialist structures, the proletarian role of initiative.'[2] At the same time Mounier is very conscious of the tendency of all societies, political or religious, to become closed societies or groups and so to stand in the way of advance towards the unification of mankind which is demanded by the nature which, despite Sartre, human beings have in common. Moreover, although in his analysis of capitalism Mounier tends to think in a manner similar to that of Marx, he does not of course regard man's vocation or destiny as realizable simply in a terrestrial society, even an ideal one. His Christian faith is always there. But he refuses to use it as an excuse for passivity or for neglect of tasks in the social-political sphere. And if he had lived longer, he would most probably have sympathized with attempts to develop dialogue between Christians and Marxists on the themes of man and humanism.

With Maurice Nédoncelle we find a much more contemplative attitude. Personalism takes the form of a phenomenology and metaphysics of the person, special attention being paid to the basic structure of human consciousness as expressed in the I–thou relationship (consciousness of the I or self is inseparable from consciousness of the other) and in its religious bearing and significance.[1] Though however Nédoncelle's view of man is in basic agreement with that of Mounier, he has expressed his hesitation in speaking of the political and social implications of personalism. He admits that in a general sense personalism has social implications. For example, any form of social organization which denies the rights of the person as person or devalues the person is to this extent incompatible with the personalist outlook. But he will not allow that personalism can legitimately be used in support of 'any party';[2] and he shows a measure of pessimism, doubtless often justified, in regard to hopes of solving social and political problems by revolution or by the hasty realization of some ideal scheme. It is wise 'not to expect too much from collective life'.[3] In Nédoncelle's view 'it is perhaps in *religious philosophy* that the repercussions of personalism are the most considerable'.[4] Obviously, his attitude differs somewhat from that of Mounier.[5]

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[1] *Personalism*, p. 187.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 186.

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[1] See especially *La réciprocité des consciences. Essai sur la nature de la personne.* (*The Reciprocity of Consciousness. An Essay on the Nature of the Person*), 1942.

[2] *Vers une philosophie de l'amour et de la personne* (*Towards a Philosophy of Love and of the Person*), 1957, p. 267.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 266. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 259.

[5] I do not mean to imply that Mounier was a blind optimist. He was not. But he was definitely committed in the social–political field.

CHAPTER XV

TWO RELIGIOUS THINKERS

Teilhard de Chardin — G. Marcel — Differences in outlook.

1. ONE of the more surprising phenomena of recent years has been the very widespread interest in the thought of a Jesuit priest, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955). The interest is surprising in the sense that though there have been distinguished Jesuit astronomers and scholars, one does not normally expect from this source a world-view of a sufficiently original and striking nature as to win attention not only from readers belonging to different Christian traditions but also from people who profess no religious beliefs in the ordinary sense of the term. It is true that Teilhard de Chardin was unable to obtain permission from his ecclesiastical superiors to publish the writings with which his name is chiefly associated. But it would be absurd to attribute his fame to the difficulties which he experienced in the matter of publication. The interest taken in the writings which have appeared after his death has been due to the content of his world-vision. This assumes an evolutionary view of the world and of man, not grudgingly or apologetically but enthusiastically, and extends this view in the form of a world-vision which is not only metaphysical but also Christological. This mingling of scientific theory with philosophical speculation and Christian themes is understandably uncongenial, if for different reasons, to a number of scientists, philosophers and theologians, especially perhaps as the whole is presented as a persuasive world-vision rather than in the form of conclusions to closely reasoned arguments. But a world-vision of this kind, which synthesizes in itself science, a metaphysics of the universe and Christian belief and is at the same time markedly optimistic, is just the sort of thing which many people have looked and hoped for and have not found elsewhere. And it has been able to appeal even to some, such as Sir Julian Huxley, who feel themselves unable to go all the way with Teilhard de Chardin. Teilhard's new-style apologetics may not fare as well when the prolonged attention of the coldly analytic reason is directed to it; but there can be no doubt of its meeting a felt need.

Teilhard de Chardin was born in the Auvergne, not far from

Clermont-Ferrand. Educated at a Jesuit school, he entered the Society of Jesus as a novice in 1898. Ordained priest in 1911, he served in the first world war in the medical corps of the French army. Interested in geology from an early age, he had developed an enthusiasm for palaeontology during a period when he was teaching in a Jesuit school in Cairo before beginning his theological studies at Ore Place near Hastings;[1] and in 1908 he published an article on the eocene strata of the region of Minieh (*L'éocène des environs de Minieh*). After the war Teilhard studied natural science at the Sorbonne, and in 1922 he successfully defended his doctorate thesis on the mammals of the Lower Eocene period in France and their strata. In 1923–4 Teilhard was a member of a palaeontological team in China. By this time he had already formed his idea of cosmogenesis, his view, that is to say of the world as a dynamic evolutionary movement in which any dualism between matter and spirit is dissolved.[2] Matter is not simply the opposite of spirit; but spirit emerges from matter, and the movement of the world is towards the further development of spirit.[3] For Teilhard man naturally came to occupy a central place in the evolutionary movement; and the profound Christian faith which he possessed from youth led him to the notion of the cosmic Christ, evolution being placed in a Christocentric setting.

In 1920 Teilhard started teaching in the Institut Catholique at Paris, and he returned there after his first visit to China. But as a result of excursions outside the field of science, such as attempts to harmonize the doctrine of original sin with his evolutionary outlook, he was asked by his religious superiors to leave Paris and to confine his writing to scientific topics. From 1926 until 1927 he was in China, and then, after a brief interlude in France, he went to Ethiopia and thence back again to China, where he continued geological and palaeontological research. Apart from visits to France, America, England, India and some other eastern countries, he remained in China until 1946. In 1926 he wrote *Le milieu divin*,[4] a religious meditation in which the Christocentric character of his world-vision comes out clearly, while *Le phénomène humain*[1] was begun in 1938 and completed in 1940; but he was not permitted to publish his major works in the non-scientific field. Indeed, in 1947 he was told to keep off philosophy.

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[1] In 1902 the French Jesuits left France for English territory, as the result of the laws passed under the anticlerical government of Combes; and Teilhard did his earlier studies as a Jesuit on the island of Jersey.

[2] Teilhard read and was influenced by Bergson. But he did not accept Bergson's idea of divergent paths of evolution. He opted for the idea of convergence.

[3] It seems that it was in about 1925 that Teilhard conveived the idea of the 'noosphere', a term which was adopted by his friend Édouard Le Roy, then a professor at the Collège de France.

[4] An English translation by Bernard Wall appeared in 1957 with the title *Le Milieu Divin. An Essay on the Interior Life.*

From 1946 until 1951 Teilhard was in Paris. In 1948 he was offered a chair at the Collège de France, as successor to the Abbé Breuil; but he was directed by his religious superiors to decline the offer. However, in 1947 he had been elected a member of the Académie des Sciences, and in 1950 he was elected a member of the Institut de France. In 1951 Teilhard left France for a visit to South Africa, after which he went to New York where he remained until his death, apart from a second visit to Africa, under the auspices of the Wenner Gren Foundation, various trips in the United States and a visit to France in 1954. He died of a heart attack on Easter Sunday, 1955. He had taken the advice of a French Jesuit friend to leave the manuscripts of his unpublished works in safe hands, and publication began in the year of his death.

The statement that Teilhard de Chardin starts with the world as represented in scientific theory and that he extends what he considers to be the scientific view of the world into the spheres of metaphysical speculation and religious belief is doubtless true; but it is a partial truth and can be misleading. For from the beginning the world presents itself to him as the totality of which we are members and as having value. We can of course ask precisely what is meant by claiming that the world has value; and it is difficult to find an answer which would satisfy an analytic philosopher. But there is no doubt that for Teilhard the world is not simply a complex system of interrelated phenomena, a system which just happens to be there, but rather the totality which has value and significance. In the first instance the world presents itself in experience as a complex of phenomena of varied types. From one point of view science breaks up the things of experience into smaller centres of energy, as in the atomic theory; but at the same time it exhibits their interrelations and shows them as unified through the transformation of energy and as constituting one complex network or system. The world thus forms not simply a collection but a totality, one whole. Further, this totality is not static but developing. For Teilhard evolution is not simply a theory about the origin of living species, a biological theory; it is a concept which applies to the world or universe as a whole. Natural science obviously presupposes consciousness. For without consciousness there could be no science. But science has tended to discount consciousness as much as possible and to concentrate on the quantitative and measurable, so that the sphere of mind, consciousness, spirit, appears as something over against the material world or as an epiphenomenon. For Teilhard life and consciousness are potentially there, in matter, from the beginning. As Leibniz saw, there is nothing which does not possess a psychic aspect, an inner force, so to speak. The world thus appears as a totality, a whole, which is developing towards an end, an increasing actualization of spirit. Human beings are members of an evolving organic whole, the universe, which possesses spiritual value and appears as a manifestation of the divine. According to Teilhard, humanity has been spontaneously converted 'to a kind of religion of the world'.[1] And he can say that he believes in matter or that he believes in the world, when belief obviously means much more than belief in the existence of matter or of the world.

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[1] This work has been published in an English translation by Bernard Wall, with an introduction by Sir Julian Huxley, under the title *The Phenomenon of Man* (London, 1959).

Teilhard does not of course present us simply with this very general sketchy vision of the world. He distinguishes, for example, two components in energy, tangential energy, linking one element or particle with others of the same degree of complexity in the universe, and radial energy, drawing the element or particle towards increasing complexity and 'continuity' or consciousness.' Again, he argues that if we resolve what he describes as 'the stuff of the universe' into a dust of particles, in this 'pre-vital' stage the 'within' of things corresponded point by point with their 'without', with their external aspect or force, so that a mechanistic science of matter is not excluded by the view that all elements of the universe have their internal or vital aspect. From the outside point of view it is only with the emergence of the cell that the biosphere or sphere of life begins. And Teilhard opts for the hypothesis that the genesis of life on earth was a unique and, once it had happened, unrepeatable event. In other words, it is a moment in a process of evolution which is moving towards a goal. Teilhard is of course perfectly well aware that many or most scientists would deny, or would see no reason for asserting, that the process of evolution in general, or of life in particular, is directed to any goal. But he is convinced that he can trace within the natural history of living things a movement towards the emergence of consciousness and thought. With the appearance of consciousness and thought there is born the noosphere, in embryo indeed but moving through personalization towards a hyperpersonal focus of union which Teilhard calls 'Omega Point', the union of the personal and the collective on the planes of thought and love. Indications of this convergence towards Omega Point are to be seen, for example, in the increasing intellectual unification of mankind, as in science, and in the pressures which make for social unification.

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[1] *Science et Christ*, p. 151. The quotation comes originally from a paper published in 1933.

[2] See *The Phenomenon of Man* (English translation), pp. 63–6, where Teilhard offers a line of solution in regard to the problem of reconciling his view of increasing energy (especially 'radial' energy) in the universe with the laws of thermodynamics.

A good many writers have noted the affinity between the thought of Teilhard de Chardin and the philosophy of Hegel. When Teilhard says, for example, that man is evolution becoming conscious of itself[1] and proposes the concept of the noosphere, the sphere of universal thought and knowledge which exists not as a separate entity but in and through individual consciousnesses, unifying them and forming a one-in-many, we are reminded of Hegel's doctrine of the self-development of Spirit. To be sure, Hegel himself lived before Darwin and did not regard the evolutionary hypothesis, with its idea of temporal succession, as relevant to the logical dialectic of his philosophy of Nature. As far as biological evolution is concerned, Teilhard obviously stands much closer to Bergson than to Hegel. Moreover, Teilhard thought of Hegel as expounding an *a priori* logical dialectic which was very different from his own scientifically-based concept of evolution. But this does not alter the fact that Teilhard's general idea of the developing world or universe as coming to self-consciousness in and through the human mind, of the noosphere as presupposing the biosphere and the biosphere as presupposing a stage which makes mechanistic physics a possibility bears a striking resemblance to Hegel's vision of self-actualizing Spirit. The historical contexts of the two philosophers are of course different. Hegelianism has to be seen in the context of the development of post-Kantian German idealism, a context which is evidently not that of the thought of Teilhard de Chardin. But the degree of difference which we find between the two lines of thought depends to a certain extent on our interpretation of Hegel. If we interpret Hegel as postulating the pre-existence, so to speak, of a logical Idea which actualizes itself with dialectical necessity in cosmic and human history, we are likely to emphasize the difference between Hegel's approach and that of Teilhard, with his point of departure in empirical science. If however we believe that Hegel has been unjustly represented as a despiser of empirical science, and if we bear in mind the fact that for both men the process of 'cosmogenesis' is a teleological or goal-directed process, we are likely to emphasize the resemblances between them. For if Teilhard seriously thinks of evolution as directed towards a goal, Omega Point, the process must presumably be in some sense the working-out of an Idea. There is no question of course of claiming that Teilhard borrowed the framework of his thought from Hegel. He seems to have known little of Hegel and, in regard to what little he did know, to have emphasized differences rather than resemblances. But similarity can exist between the general lines of thought of two thinkers without any borrowing having taken place. One can perfectly well deny that *X* borrowed from *Y* and at the same time assert the existence of similarities between their lines of thought.

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[1] *The Phenomenon of Man*, p. 221.

Even if however there are some similarities between the thought of Teilhard de Chardin and the philosophy of Hegel, it is essential to add that Teilhard is not really concerned with developing a metaphysical system.[1] As a Christian believer he is anxious to show that Christianity has not become too small and too dated to be able to meet the needs of modern man's world-consciousness. He wishes to integrate his interpretation of cosmic evolution with his Christian beliefs or, better, to show how Christian belief is able to subsume in itself and enrich a view of the world attained by what he describes as 'phenomenology', a reflective interpretation of the significance of man as appearing to himself in his experience and science.[2] To some admirers of Teilhard the specifically Christian themes in his thought naturally tend to appear as an extra, the expression of a personal faith which they feel themselves unable to share. Though however Teilhard is aware that in introducing belief in the incarnation and in the cosmic role of Christ he is going 'beyond the plane of phenomenology',[1] his Christocentricism is for him an integral feature of his total world-vision, the vision which he tries to communicate in his writings taken as a whole.

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[1] Referring to Plato, Spinoza and Hegel, Teilhard says that while they developed views which compete in breadth with the perspectives opened up by belief in the incarnation, 'none of these metaphysical systems advanced beyond the limits of an ideology' (*The Phenomenon of Man*, p. 295).

[2] Obviously, Teilhard uses the term 'phenomenology' in a different sense from that in which it was used by Husserl.

Teilhard's way of thinking was of course opposed not only to any sharp dualism between matter and mind or spirit but also to any bifurcation of reality into natural and supernatural spheres cut off from one another or so related that the supernatural is simply superimposed on the natural. And his mind was so filled with the idea of the organic unity of the developing universe, of its convergence on man and of human consciousness and knowledge of the world as the world's self-reflection in and through man as part of the totality that some of the lyrical passages in which he praised or exalted the universe gave to some readers the impression that for him the universe was itself divine and that he denied the divine transcendence. In spite however of his reverential feeling for the material world as pregnant with spirit and as evolving creatively towards a goal he insisted that the source of the whole process and the centre of unification 'must be conceived as pre-existing and transcendent'.[2] Further, as a Christian he believed that God had become incarnate in Christ, and he thought of the risen Christ as the centre and consummation of the movement towards Omega Point. He saw Christ as progressively uniting all men in love, and in the light of his Christian belief he interpreted Omega Point as the point at which, in St. Paul's words, God becomes 'all in all'.[3] For Teilhard, 'evolution has come to infuse new blood, so to speak, into the perspectives and aspirations of Christianity. In return, is not the Christian faith predestined, is it not preparing, to save and even to take the place of evolution?'[4] Evolution in the widest sense of the term becomes a process not simply of 'hominization' but also of divinization in and through the risen Christ.

This optimistic vision of the cosmic process constitutes a form of apologetics, not indeed in the old sense of apologetic arguments designed to serve as external buttresses or supports to an act of faith in revealed truths but rather in the sense that Teilhard hopes to make people *see* what he sees, the relevance of

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[1] *The Phenomenon of Man*, p. 308, *n* 2.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 309.
[3] 1 *Corinthians*, xv, 28.
[4] *The Phenomenon of Man*, p. 297.

Christianity to an evolutionary view of the world and the significance conferred on the process of evolution when the process is conceived in the context of Christian belief. In a sense Teilhard's world-vision renews the ancient idea of the 'emanation' from God and the return to God. But with him the return does not take the form of the individual turning his back on an alien world and seeking an ecstatic union with the One, Plotinus's 'flight of the alone to the Alone'. The evolutionary process is itself the process of return, and individuals are envisaged as becoming a one-in-many in and through Christ. Nietzsche refused to admit that man as he existed was the peak-point of evolution and proclaimed the idea of Superman, a higher form of man.[1] Teilhard sees man as attaining a higher form of existence through following the lines of evolution converging to the point at which the person, while remaining a person, is united with all other persons in a whole which is greater than himself. And this point turns out to be what we might perhaps describe as the 'Christosphere'. From one point of view the universe is seen as interiorizing itself, as taking more and more the form of self-reflection (through man) in the noosphere. From the point of view of Christian faith this process of cosmogenesis is seen as a process of Christogenesis, the total Christ that is to say, Christ in his mystical body.

It is of course easy enough to find objections against Teilhard's world-vision. It can be objected, for example, that though the theory of evolution is accepted by practically all scientists, it remains an hypothesis, and that in any case the scientific hypothesis is insufficient to bear the weight of the edifice which Teilhard builds on it. Again, it can be objected that a distinction must be made between the scientific hypothesis of evolution and the optimistic idea of progress for which Teilhard opts and which is clearly connected with his religious beliefs. Further, the objection can be made that in outlining his optimistic world-vision Teilhard devotes too little attention to the negative side, to the facts of evil and suffering and to the possibility of shipwreck and failure. Some have complained that Teilhard mixes up science, metaphysics and Christian faith, and that he sometimes presents as conclusions of a scientist ideas which are due rather to free metaphysical speculation or to personal religious convictions. In general it can be, and often has been objected that he presents us with vague impressions and concepts which are not clearly defined. The whole thing, it may be said, is a mixture of science, poetry and religious faith, which impresses only those who are unable or unwilling to respect ideals of preciseness of thought and clarity of language. The Teilhardian world-vision may thus appear as at best elevating and hope-inspiring poetry and at worst as a large-scale confidence-trick which tries to put across under the guise of science a world-view which has really little to do with science.

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[1] By saying this I do not intend to imply that Nietzsche believed that Superman would necessarily emerge as a product of inevitable evolution. He does indeed talk about evolution; but it seems evident to me that the concept of Superman is intended much more as a spur and goal to the human will than as a prediction of something which will come to pass through an inevitable process of evolution.

It would take an ardent disciple to claim that such objections are completely groundless. But as the expression of the outlook of a man who was both a scientist and a convinced Christian and who tried not simply to reconcile but rather to integrate what he regarded as a scientific world-view with a Christocentric faith, Teilhard's vision of reality has an indubitable sweep and grandeur which tend to make the objections appear as pedantic or irrelevant. It may be said that he was a visionary or seer who presented in broad and sometimes vague and ambiguous outlines a prophetic programme, so to speak, which others are called upon to investigate in detail, to clarify, render more precise and justify with sustained argument. There is indeed the possibility that an original world-vision will be drained of its life and power when it is submitted to this sort of treatment.[1] Hegel towers above Hegelians, Nietzsche above Nietzscheans. But Teilhard's bold extension of the concept of evolution into a profoundly religious world-view, not by way of mere additions or superimpositions but rather through a process of broadening out so as to include distinguishable dimensions in an integrated and comprehensive vision, can of course provide an inspiring programme for further reflection. Some have thought the scientific hypothesis of evolution irreconcilable with Christian orthodoxy. Others have found it reconcilable but with certain reservations. Teilhard is not really bothered with 'reconciling', except when criticism by others drives him to it. The concept of evolution is taken as the perspective from which modern man must see the world, if he is to see it rightly. And Teilhard tries to show how this way of seeing the world broadens out, or can broaden out, to take the form of a Christocentric vision of the world and of human existence. In so doing he gives hostages to fortune, in the sense that the scientific theories on which he bases his world-vision are, from the logical point of view, revisable in principle. But it would be a mistake to think of him as claiming that religious faith is logically dependent on the truth of certain scientific hypotheses. He is concerned with showing that a marriage, so to speak, between the evolutionary view of man and Christian belief bears fruit in a general world-vision in which Christianity is seen neither as something parochial and outdated nor as despising this world and concentrating on another but as a world-affirming faith and as the religion for present and future man. It is sometimes said that the idea that science and religion are incompatible is dead. For with some exceptions Christians do not now interpret Biblical texts in a manner which produces a clash with science. But even if there is no logical incompatibility between religion and science, there can obviously be divergent mentalities or outlooks. For example, belief in God can appear not as logically incompatible with science but as superfluous and irrelevant. Teilhard, with his firm belief in the value of scientific knowledge and theory and his deep religious faith, tries to display their interrelations in one unified outlook.

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[1] I am not referring of course to Teilhardian scholarship. Like Aristotelian or Kantian scholarship, this can command respect, even when it is not particularly exciting. I am referring to devoted disciples who are concerned with propagating the master's views but who lack his power of vision and who 'scholastize' his theories. What they say may of course be reasonable enough; but it is apt to be much more pedestrian than the original, at any rate if the disciples are not really caught in the grip of the problems which stimulated the master's intellectual activity.

2. When we turn to Gabriel Marcel, we are turning to a very different kind of thinker. Teilhard de Chardin did indeed lay great emphasis on man; but he did so in the context of the general process of cosmogenesis. His eyes were fixed on the universe, the world. Gabriel Marcel explores a different kind of world. To say that he is concerned with an inner world would be misleading. For it suggests the notion of self-concentration or introspection, whereas interpersonal relationships constitute a central datum for Marcel's reflection. Science hardly figures in his thought. Whereas Teilhard asserts enthusiastically his belief in science,[1] Marcel is much more likely to assert his belief in the value and significance of personal relationships. A comparison between Teilhard and thinkers such as Hegel, Bergson and Whitehead makes sense at any rate. But in

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[1] It might of course be questioned whether to say 'I believe in science' is a sensible way of speaking. But Teilhard obviously means in particular that he believes firmly in the truth and the wider significance of the theory of evolution, and, in general, that he accepts the scientific view of the world as a point of departure.

the case of Marcel it would be a matter of pointing out radical differences rather than of drawing attention to similarities.[1] Further, even if Teilhard is often vague and impressionistic in his utterances, it is possible to say, in outline, 'what he holds', whereas Marcel's thought is so elusive that to ask what his 'doctrines' are would be pretty well tantamount to inviting either silence or the reply that the question should not be put, as it rests on a false assumption.

Gabriel Marcel has often been classified (by Sartre among many others) as a Catholic existentialist. But as he himself has repudiated the label, it is best abandoned.[2] It is doubtless natural enough to look for a label of some sort, but there is no general label which really fits. Marcel has sometimes been described as an empiricist. But though he certainly bases his reflections on experience and does not try to deduce a system of ideas *a priori*, the word 'empiricism' is too much associated with the reductive analysis of Hume and others for it to be anything but thoroughly misleading if applied to the thought of Marcel. Again, though Marcel certainly develops what can be described as phenomenological analyses, he is no disciple of Husserl, or indeed of anyone else. He has gone his own way and cannot be treated as a member of any definite school. He tells us however that a pupil once suggested that his philosophy was a kind of neo-Socratism. And on reflection Marcel concluded that the term might be the least inexact which could be applied, provided that his questioning or interrogating attitude was not understood as implying scepticism.[3]

Marcel was born at Paris in 1889. His father, a Catholic turned agnostic, was for a time French minister to Sweden and later director of the Bibliothèque Nationale and of the Musées Nationaux. His mother, who came of a Jewish family, died while he was a small child; and he was brought up by his aunt, a convert to Protestantism[1] and a woman of strong ethical convictions. When he was eight, Marcel spent a year with his father at Stockholm; and not long after his return to Paris he was sent to the Lycée Carnot. He was a brilliant pupil, but he loathed the educational system to which he was subjected and took refuge in the world of music and of the imagination. Thus he started writing plays at an early age. After his studies at the lycée he went to the Sorbonne, and in 1910 he obtained the Agrégation in philosophy. Attracted for a time by idealism, especially by the thought of Schelling, he soon turned against it. Fichte irritated him, and he mistrusted Hegel, while admiring him. For F. H. Bradley he had a profound regard; and much later he was to publish a book on Josiah Royce. But idealism did not seem to him to come to terms with concrete existence; and the first part of his *Metaphysical Journal* expresses his criticism of idealist ways of thought from a point of view which was still influenced by idealism. His experience with the French Red Cross in the first world war[2] confirmed him in his conviction of the remoteness of abstract philosophy from concrete human existence. For a few years Marcel taught philosophy in various lycées; but for most of his life he was a freelance writer, publishing philosophical works and plays and acting as a literary, dramatic and musical critic. In 1948 he received the Grand Prix de Littérature of the French Academy, in 1956 the Goethe Prize and in 1958 the Grand Prix National des Lettres. In 1949–50 Marcel gave the Gifford lectures at Aberdeen. He was elected a member of the Institut de France. He died in 1973.

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[1] One might perhaps compare some of Marcel's reflections with parts of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. But Marcel's philosophy in general bears little resemblance to absolute idealism.

[2] There was a time when Marcel at any rate tolerated the label 'existentialist', even if he did not care for the addition of 'Christian', on the ground that people who did not regard themselves as Christians could adhere to existentialism as he understood it. Indeed, in an autobiographical essay he referred to 'my first existentialist statements' (*The Philosophy of Existence*, translated by Manya Harari, London, 1948, p. 89). However, Marcel has indeed definitely repudiated the label 'existentialist', probably largely to avoid confusion with the philosophy of Sartre. And in this case it is better not to use it.

[3] See Marcel's preface to the English translation of his *Metaphysical Journal* (translated by B. Wall, London, 1952).

If we understand by a philosophical system a philosophy which is developed by a process of deduction from a point of departure which is taken as certain, there is no such thing as Gabriel Marcel's system. He has no use for systems in this sense. What he does is to develop a series of 'concrete approaches'. These approaches are of course convergent, in the sense that they are not incompatible and that they can be regarded as contributing towards a general interpretation of human experience. But it would be a great mistake to think that Marcel regards these 'concrete approaches' as providing a series of results or conclusions or solutions to problems, which can be put together to constitute a set of proved theses. To use one of his analogies,[1] if a chemist invents a certain product, it can then, let us suppose, be bought by anyone in a shop. Once made, the product can be sold and bought without reference to the means by which it was first discovered. In this sense the result is separable from the means whereby the result was obtained. But for Marcel this is certainly not the case in philosophy. The result, if one may use the word, is inseparable from the process of research or inquiry leading to it. Inquiry must of course start somewhere, with some dis-ease or exigence or situation which gives rise to the inquiry. But a philosophical exploration is for Marcel something intensely personal; and we cannot simply separate the result from the exploration and pass it on as an impersonal truth. Communication is possible. But this is really a matter of participation in the actual process of philosophizing. And if it is objected that in this case philosophy involves a repeated starting again and that there can be no set of proved or verified results which can serve as a foundation for further reflection, Marcel's reply is 'this perpetual beginning again ... is an inevitable part of all genuinely philosophical work'.[2]

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[1] Marcel's aunt does not appear to have had much more belief in Protestant doctrines than his father had in Catholic ones.

[2] Marcel's state of health disqualified him from serving as a soldier. He was employed in obtaining news for families of wounded soldiers and in trying to locate the missing.

There are of course pervasive themes in Marcel's philosophizing. And we can try to indicate one or two of them. If however it is the actual process of reflection which counts, rather than results or conclusions, any attempt at summarizing Marcel's thought in a brief review of it is bound to be inadequate and unsatisfactory. When referring to someone who asked him to express the essence of his philosophy in a couple of sentences, Marcel remarked that the question was silly and could really only be answered by a shrug of the shoulders.[3] If however an historian is writing about recent French philosophy, he can hardly omit the thought of one of the best known thinkers. So he just has to reconcile himself to his remarks being inadequate.

There is however one point which should be clarified in advance. Reference has already been made to the description of Marcel as a 'Christian existentialist'. And he is well known as a devout Catholic. The conclusion may therefore be drawn that his philosophy is dependent on his Catholic faith. But it would be mistaken.

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[1] *The Mystery of Being. I, Reflection and Mystery*, translated by G. S. Fraser, London, 1950, pp. 4 f.

[2] *The Philosophy of Existence*, p. 93.

[3] *Reflection and Mystery*, p. 2.

Marcel's *Journal Métaphysique* was published in 1927, and its entries date from the beginning of 1914 until the spring of 1923. He became a Catholic in 1929; and it is much truer to say that his conversion was part of the general development of his thought than that his philosophy was the result of his conversion. Indeed the second statement is patently false. His adherence to Catholicism has doubtless confirmed his conviction that the philosopher should pay attention to certain themes, but reflection on religious faith is a prominent feature of the first part of his *Journal.*

In 1933 Marcel published a play with the title *The Broken World* (*Le Monde cassé*). As a philosophical postscript he wrote an essay on 'the ontological mystery'[1], in which the broken world is described as the functionalized world. 'The individual tends to appear both to himself and to others as an agglomeration of functions.'[2] There are the vital functions, and there are the social functions, such as those of the consumer, the producer, the citizen, the ticket-collector, the commuter, the retired civil servant, and so on. Man is, as it were, fragmented, now a churchgoer, now a clerk, now a family man. The individual is medically overhauled from time to time, as though he were a machine; and death is written off as a total loss. This world of functionalization is, for Marcel, an empty or devitalized world; and in it 'the two processes of atomization and collectivization, far from excluding each other as a superficial logic might be led to suppose, go hand in hand and are two essentially inseparable aspects of the same process of devitalization.'[3] In such a world there is of course room for problems, technological problems for example. But there is a blindness to what Marcel describes as 'mysteries'. For they are correlative to the person; and in a broken world the person becomes the fragmented individual.

This brings us to Marcel's distinction, which he regards as very important, between problem and mystery. He admits that no clear line of demarcation can be drawn, as reflection on a mystery and the attempt to state it inevitably tend to transform it into a problem. But it would obviously be futile to use the two terms unless it were possible to give some indication of the difference in meaning. And we must try to give such an indication. Happily, Marcel supplies some examples.

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[1] *Positions et approches concrètes du mystère ontologique*, an English translation is included in *Philosophy and Existence.*

[2] *Philosophy and Existence*, p. 1.

[3] *Reflection and Mystery*, p. 27.

A problem, in Marcel's use of the term, is a question which can be answered purely objectively, without the questioner himself being involved. Consider a problem in mathematics. I may of course be interested in the problem, perhaps intensely so. Solving it may be for me a matter of importance, as it would be, for instance, if I were tackling an examination and success was essential to my career. But in my attempt to solve the problem I hold it over against me, as it were, considering it purely objectively and leaving myself out of the picture. I am the subject, the problem the object. And I do not enter into the object. It is true of course that the solving is done by me. But it could be done in principle not only by anyone else but also by a machine. And the solution, once attained, can be handed on. The problem moves, so to speak, purely on the plane of objectivity. If it is a question of solving problems relevant to putting a man into space and bringing him back again safely, it is clear that the more the people concerned tackle the problems purely objectively and leave themselves outside, so much the better will it be for everybody.

The term 'mystery' can be misleading. It does not refer to mysteries in the sense in which theologians have used the word, namely truths revealed by God which cannot be proved by reason alone and which transcend the comprehension of the human mind. Nor does the term mean the unknowable. In the essay referred to above Marcel describes a mystery as 'a problem which encroaches upon its own data, invading them, as it were, and thereby transcending itself as a simple problem.'[1] Elsewhere, in *Être et avoir*, he gives the same description and adds that 'a mystery is something in which I am myself involved, and which is therefore thinkable only as a sphere where the distinction between what is in me and what is before me loses its significance and its initial validity.'[2] Suppose, for example, that I ask 'what am I?' and that I answer that I am a soul or a mind which has a body. To answer in this way is to objectify my body as something over against me, something which I can have or possess, as I might have an umbrella. It is then quite impossible to reconstitute the unity of the human person. I *am* my body. But I am obviously not identifiable with the body in the sense which the term 'body' bears when it has been distinguished from 'soul' and objectified as a thing which I can consider, as it were, from outside. To grasp the unity of the human person I have to return to the lived experience of unity which precedes the mental separation into two data or factors. If, in other words, I separate myself into soul and body, objectify them as data for the solution of a problem and try to link them together, I shall never be able to do so. I can grasp the unity of myself only from within. One has to try to explore on the level of second reflection 'that massive, indistinct sense of one's total existence'[1] which is presupposed by the dualism produced by primary reflection.

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[1] *Philosophy of Existence*, p. 8.

[2] *Être et avoir*, p. 169 (*Being and Having*, translated by K. Farrer, London, 1949, p. 117).

We have just alluded to primary and secondary reflection. The distinction can perhaps be elucidated in this way. John and Mary love one another. They think of one another, but they do not, let us suppose, think of love in an abstract way and raise problems about it. There is simply the concrete unity or communion of mutual loving in which both John and Mary are involved. Let us then suppose that John stands back, as it were, from the actual experience or activity of loving, objectifies it as an object or phenomenon before him and asks, 'what is love?'. Perhaps he tries to analyse love into constituent elements; or he interprets it as something else, in terms, for instance, of the will to power. This analytic process is an example of first reflection, and love is considered as setting a problem to be solved, the problem of the nature of love, which is solved by means of reductive analysis of some kind. Let us further suppose that John comes to see the remoteness of this analysis from the actual experience of loving or from love as a lived communion between persons. He returns to the actual togetherness of love, the communion or unity which was presupposed by primary reflection, and he tries to grasp it in reflection but as from within, as a lived personal relationship. This is an example of second reflection.

Bradley, it may be remembered, postulated an original experience of the unity of reality, of the One, on the level of feeling or immediacy, a unity which analytic reflection breaks up or fragments but which metaphysics tries to restore, to recapture on the level of thought. Marcel is not of course an absolute idealist; but the project of grasping in reflection what is first present in feeling, on the level of immediacy, and is then distorted or broken up by analytic thought is a basic feature of his philosophy as it is of Bradley's. For example, my relation to my body, a relation

[1] *Reflection and Mystery*, p. 93.

which is *sui generis* and irreducible, is experienced on the level of 'feeling'. On the level of first reflection the unity of this feeling-experience is broken up by analytic thought. That which is in itself irreducible is subjected to reductive analysis and thus distorted. It by no means follows that first reflection is devoid of value. It can serve practical ends.[1] But in order to grasp the *sui generis* relation between myself and my body it is necessary to return to the original feeling-experience at the level of second reflection.

The general idea of recuperating a lost unity at a higher level is understandable. It is rather like the idea of recovering a primitive innocence at a higher level which presupposes its loss and recovery.[2] Implementation of the project however presents some difficulty. For it may well appear that reflection or mediation cannot be combined with immediacy, but that the latter is necessarily transformed by the former. In other words, is not second reflection a dream? John, it may be said, is either involved in the immediacy of loving or committed to playing the part of a spectator and objectifying love as an object of reflection. He cannot combine the two at a higher level, however much he may dream of doing so.

Marcel is aware of the difficulty. He admits that second reflection can easily degenerate into first reflection. At the same time he envisages second reflection as an exploration of the metaphysical significance of experience. For example, he sees love as an act of transcendence on the part of the human person and as a participation in Being. And he asks, what does this experience reveal to me of myself as a human person and of Being? Marcel's use of the term 'Being' is somewhat perplexing. He insists that Being is not and cannot be made into an object, a direct object of intuition for instance. It can only be alluded to indirectly. However, it is clear that he sees in personal relationships such as love and in experiences such as hope keys to the nature of reality which are not available on the level of objectifying scientific thought. John loves Mary, but Mary has died, and science offers no assurance of her continued existence or of her reunion with

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[1] Bradley recognized of course that science was not possible without analytic thought, though he regarded science as manifesting a drive towards unification which could not fully attain its goal on the level of science.

[2] We can note that at the end of *Être et avoir* Marcel includes an essay on Peter Wust (1884–1940), the German philosopher who wrote about the second 'naïvety' or piety which is a recuperation of the first religious faith subsequent to the work of the critical intelligence.

John.[1] For love and hope in union however there remains a communion, a 'we', which enables John to transcend the level of empirical evidence and to be confident in Mary's continued existence and of their future reunion. From the point of view of common sense this act of transcendence is simply an instance of wishful thinking. For Marcel it is grounded in a mysterious presence which is a participation in Being. On the level of first reflection an object cannot be described as present to me, unless it is locatable, according to specifiable criteria, in space and time. On the level of intersubjectivity and personal communion another person can be present to me, even after his or her bodily death, as a 'thou'. The bond is broken on the physical plane. But on the metaphysical plane it persists for 'creative fidelity', which is 'the active perpetuation of presence'.[2]

It hardly needs saying that Marcel is not prepared to regard God as an object, the existence of which is asserted as a conclusion that solves a problem. Faith is a matter not of believing *that* but of believing *in*; and God is for Marcel, as for Kierkegaard,[3] the absolute thou.[4] He is thus encountered rather than proved. The human being, according to Marcel, has an exigence of Being, which in religious language is an orientation to the absolute Thou. But there are various ways in which the orientation to God can be appropriated. That is to say, there are various concrete approaches to God. God is 'absolute presence', and he can be approached through the intersubjective relationships, such as love and creative fidelity, which are sustained by and point to him. Or a man can encounter God in worship and prayer, in invocation and response. The various ways are not of course mutually exclusive. They are ways of coming to experience the divine presence. But man can shut his eyes to this presence. In discussing personal relationships Marcel makes much of the concept of availability (*disponibilité*). If I am available to another, I thereby transcend my egoism; and the other is present to me on the plane of intersubjectivity. If I am not available for or open to a person, I shut the person out, so to speak, and he or she is not present to me except perhaps in a purely physical sense. It is also possible for me to shut out God and deny him, refusing invocation. This is, for Marcel, an option, an act of the will.

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[1] It should be added perhaps that Marcel has had a continuing interest in meta-psychical experiences; but his metaphysic of hope does not rest on parapsychology. For a definition of hope see the end of Marcel's essay on a metaphysic of hope, which is included in *Homo Viator* (translated by E. Craufurd, London, 1951).

[2] *The Philosophy of Existence*, p. 22.

[3] Marcel's ideas on this subject were formed before he read Kierkegaard. On reading him he recognized of course certain points of similarity. We can also draw attention to the affinity between Marcel and Martin Buber, in regard to the I–Thou relationship.

[4] In his *Metaphysical Journal* (p. 281) Marcel raises the question, how is it possible to conceive a *thou* which is not also a *he* (in the sense of an object)?

For some readers Marcel is undoubtedly a disconcerting writer. When looked at under certain aspects his thought gives the impression of being thoroughly realistic and down to earth. For example, with him there is no question of starting with a self-enclosed ego and then trying to prove the existence of an external world and of other people. Man is essentially 'incarnate', embodied, in the world. He finds himself in a situation, in the world; and his self-consciousness grows correlatively to his awareness of others. But for many readers Marcel becomes progressively elusive. We find him taking familiar terms, such as 'have', 'presence', 'love', 'hope', 'testimony', and proceeding to inquire into their meaning. And we are prepared, if not for exercises in linguistic analysis, at any rate for phenomenological analyses. The analyses however open up into what seems to be a peculiarly elusive form of metaphysics, in regard to which we may be left wondering not only whether we have really grasped what has been said but also whether in fact anything intelligible has been said. And it is understandable if some readers are tempted to regard Marcel's philosophizing as a kind of poetry or as highly personal meditations, rather than as public-property philosophy.

That Marcel's thought is elusive and also highly personal can hardly be denied. His own value-judgments reveal themselves clearly enough. It is important however to realize that he is not trying to explore what transcends all human experience. He is concerned throughout with human experience. What he tries to do is to reveal or to draw attention to the metaphysical significance hidden in the familiar, to the pointers to eternity which are present, as he sees it, in the personal relationships to which he attaches great positive value and to an all-pervading and unifying presence. His philosophy centres round personal relationships and the relationship to God. This doubtless tells us a good deal about Marcel. But if his philosophizing has no further significance for us than an indication of what he himself most values in life, he might comment that our outlook has obviously been so conditioned by this 'broken world' that we are unable, or at least find it extremely difficult, to discern the metaphysical dimensions of experience. Heidegger has written about Hölderlin. Marcel has written about Rilke as a witness to the spiritual.[1] He is aware of course of Rilke's increasing opposition to Christianity and refers to it. But he sees the poet as open to and perceptive of dimensions of our being and world which are hidden from many eyes. And we can look on Marcel's essays in 'second reflection' as attempts to facilitate our perception of these dimensions.

3. Teilhard de Chardin and Gabriel Marcel are both Christian thinkers. But there are obvious differences between them. Teilhard's attention is focussed on the evolving universe. Nothing is for him completely lifeless. Matter is pregnant with life and with spirit, the spirit which comes to birth in man and which develops towards a hyper-personal consciousness. The whole process is teleological, oriented to Omega Point when the world reaches its fulfilment in the union of all men in the cosmic Christ. Modern science and our modern technological civilization are preparing the way for a higher consciousness in which man as we know him will be surpassed. In brief, Teilhard's world-vision is thoroughly optimistic. With Gabriel Marcel however we hear little about the universe in Teilhard's sense of the word. To be sure, Marcel insists, like Teilhard, on man's situation as a being in the world. But it is not the material changing world on which he focusses his intention. When speaking of man as a traveller, he remarks that anything connected with evolution must be eliminated from the discussion.[2] Evolution, that is to say, is quite irrelevant to his 'second reflection', and to his exploration of 'mysteries'. The act of transcendence is for him an entering into communion with other people and with God, not the movement from the biosphere to the noosphere and so to Omega Point. Attention is directed, to speak paradoxically, to the beyond within, to the revelatory significance and metaphysical dimensions of the relationships which are possible for actual persons at any time. Marcel shows a great sensitivity to uniting relations between human beings; but we can hardly imagine him hymning the world or the universe in the way that Teilhard did. And while some readers of Teilhard have found difficulty in distinguishing between the world and God, such an impression would scarcely be possible in the case of Marcel, for whom God is the absolute Thou. Moreover, though it

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[1] The two lectures on Rilke are included in *Homo Viator*.

[2] *Homo Viator*, p. 7.

would be wrong to describe Marcel as a pessimist, he is very conscious of the precariousness of what he values and of the ease with which depersonalization can take place. To regard the other person as an object and to treat him as such is common enough both in private relationships and in wider social contexts. For Marcel our world is '*essentially* broken';[1] and he seems to see in our modern civilization an increasing depersonalization. In any case the idea that the world is inevitably proceeding from good to better is certainly not his. In 1947 he discussed with Teilhard the question, to what degree does the material organization of humanity lead man to spiritual maturity? While Teilhard of course maintained an optimistic view, Marcel was sceptical. He saw in collectivization and in our technological society a Promethean spirit expressing itself in a refusal of God. Marcel believes indeed in the eschatological triumph of goodness; and he admits that an optimistic view can be maintained on religious grounds, in the light of faith, that is to say. But for him invocation and refusal have always been two possibilities for men and always will be. And the dogma of progress is 'a completely arbitrary postulate'.[2] In other words, while Teilhard can reasonably be regarded as trying to capture the Hegelian and Marxist views of history for Christianity (or to interpret Christianity in such a way as to assimilate and transcend them), Marcel will have nothing to do with a point of view which, in his opinion, obscures human freedom, is oblivious, in theological language, of the effects of the Fall, and fails to take real account of evil and suffering.

The differences in outlook between the two men should not of course be exaggerated. For example, Marcel's position does not entail rejection of the scientific hypothesis of evolution, an hypothesis which stands or falls according to the strength or weakness of the empirical evidence. He regards the scientific theory as irrelevant to philosophy as he conceives it; and what he objects to is the inflation of a scientific hypothesis into a metaphysical world-view which incorporates a doctrine of progress which he regards as unwarranted. Again, there is no question of suggesting that Teilhard attached no value to those personal relationships in which Marcel sees the expression of genuine human personality. In his private life he set great store by such relationships; and in a real sense the movement of cosmogenesis was for him a movement from exteriority to interiority, to the full actualization of spirit.

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[1] *Reflection and Mystery*, p. 34.

[2] *Faith and Reality*, p. 183.

At the same time the perspectives of the two men are clearly different, despite their common religious allegiance. And they appeal to different types of mind. One can see this in their respective attitudes to notable thinkers such as Marx and Bergson. Neither Teilhard nor Marcel is a Marxist; but their respective evaluations of Marxism are understandably different. As for Bergson, it is natural to think of Teilhard as continuing his general line of thought. Though however Marcel pays tribute to Bergson's distinction between the 'closed' and the 'open', he then gives to the idea of 'openness' an application which fits in with his own perspective and interests. If we mentally associate Teilhard with Bergson, we associate Marcel with thinkers such as Kierkegaard and Jaspers, though Marcel did not derive his ideas from the former and though he had considerable reservations in regard to the latter's philosophy. What unites Teilhard and Marcel is their Christian faith and their regard for man. But whereas Teilhard takes an optimistic view of man's future,[1] seeing it in the light of his philosophy of evolution, Marcel is much more conscious, as Pascal was, of ambiguity, fragility and precariousness.

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[1] Teilhard was prepared to say that he had no intention of stating dogmatically that the future *must* be rosy. At the same time he obviously came down decisively on the side of optimism.

CHAPTER XVI

THE EXISTENTIALISM OF SARTRE (1)

Life and writings — Pre-reflexive and reflexive consciousness: the imagining and the emotive consciousness — Phenomenal being and being in itself — Being for itself — The freedom of being for itself—Awareness of others—Atheism and values.

1. In his popular lecture *Existentialism and Humanism* Sartre informs his audience that there are two kinds of existentialists, Christian and atheist. As representatives of Christian existentialism he mentions 'Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel, of the Catholic confession',[1] while as representatives of atheist existentialism he mentions Heidegger and himself. In point of fact Karl Jaspers was not a Catholic and, moreover, came to prefer a descriptive label for his philosophy other than 'philosophy of existence' (*Existenzphilosophie*). Gabriel Marcel is indeed a Catholic; but, as we have noted, he eventually repudiated the label 'existentialist'. As for Heidegger, he has explicitly dissociated himself from Sartre; and, though he is certainly not a Christian, he does not like being described as an atheist. Though therefore books on existentialism generally include treatments of all the philosophers named by Sartre, and often of others as well, as far as definite acceptance of the label 'existentialist' is concerned we seem to be left with Sartre, who has described himself in this way and has expounded what he considers to be the essential tenet of existentialism.

It may thus appear somewhat disconcerting when we find Sartre telling us in recent years that Marxism is the one living philosophy of our time. It does not follow however that Sartre has definitely turned his back on existentialism and adopted Marxism instead. As will be explained in the next chapter, he looks for a fusion of the two, a rejuvenation of ossified Marxism through an injection of existentialism. The present chapter will be devoted to an exposition of Sartrian existentialism as such, as developed in *Being and Nothingness* and other writings before he turned his hand to the task of a systematic fusion of existentialism and Marxism.

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[1] *L'existentialisme est un humanisme*, p. 17 (Paris, 1946). English translation by P. Mairet, *Existentialism and Humanism*, p. 26 (London, 1948).

There are fashions in the world of philosophy as elsewhere; and the vogue of existentialism has declined. Further, as Sartre has published a considerable number of novels and plays which have made his name well known by many people who would be disinclined to tackle his philosophical works, there is a not unnatural tendency to regard him as a literary figure rather than as a serious philosopher. Indeed, it has sometimes been said, though unfairly, that he derives all his philosophical ideas from other thinkers, especially German ones. And his long-standing flirtation with Marxism, culminating in his attempt to combine it with existentialism, has perhaps encouraged this impression. But while Sartre as a philosopher may have been overvalued by his fervent admirers in the past, he can also be undervalued. The fact that he is a novelist, a dramatist and a campaigner for social and political causes does not entail the conclusion that he is not an able and serious thinker. He may have written in Parisian cafés; but he is an extremely intelligent man, and his philosophy is certainly not without significance, even if it is no longer as fashionable in France as it once was. We are concerned here with Sartre as a philosopher, not as a dramatist or novelist.

Jean-Paul Sartre was born at Paris in 1905.[1] His higher studies were done at the École Normale from 1924 until 1928. After obtaining the *agrégation* in philosophy he taught philosophy at lycées in Le Havre, Laon and then Paris. From 1933 until 1935 he was a research student first at Berlin and then at the University of Freiburg, after which he taught in the Lycée Condorcet at Paris. In 1939 he joined the French army and was captured in 1940. Released in 1941, he returned to teaching philosophy and was also an active participant in the Resistance movement. Sartre has never occupied a University chair.

Sartre started writing before the war. In 1936 he published an essay on the ego or self[2] and a work on the imagination, *L'imagination. Étude critique*,[3] while in 1938 he published his famous novel *La nausée*.[4] In 1939 there appeared a work on the emotions,

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[1] Sartre's reminiscences of his childhood, *Les mots*, appeared in 1964. There is an English translation, *Words*, by I. Clephane (London, 1965). Simone de Beauvoir's memoirs contain other biographical material.

[2] *La transcendance de l'égo: esquisse d'une description phénoménologique*, translated into English by F. Williams and R. Kirkpatrick as *The Transcendence of the Ego* (New York, 1957).

[3] There is an English translation by F. Williams, *Imagination: A Psychological Critique* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1962).

[4] Translated by Robert Baldick as *Nausea* (Harmondsworth, 1965).

Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions[1] and several stories under the title *Le Mur.*[2] During the war, in 1940, Sartre published a second book on the imagination, *L'imaginaire: psychologie phénoménologique de l'imagination,*[3] and his main philosophical tome, *L'être et le néant: essai d'une ontologie phénoménologique* appeared in 1943.[4] His play *Les mouches*[5] was performed in the same year. The first two volumes of the novel *Les chemins de la liberté* appeared in 1945,[6] and also the well known play *Huis clos.*[7] Two other plays appeared in 1946, the year of publication of the lecture to which reference has been made above[8] and also of *Réflexions sur la question juive.*[9]

In subsequent years Sartre has published a considerable number of plays, while collections of essays under the title *Situations* have appeared in 1947, 1948, 1949 and 1964.[10] Sartre was one of the founders in 1945 of the review *Les temps modernes*, and some of his writings have appeared in it, such as the 1952 articles on Communism. His attempt to combine existentialism and Marxism has led to the production in 1960 of the first volume of the *Critique de la raison dialectique.*[11] Sartre has also published an introduction to the works of Jean Genet, *Saint Genet: comédien et martyr.*[12]

2. In one of his essays Sartre remarks that for three centuries Frenchmen have been living by 'Cartesian freedom', with, that is to say, a Cartesian intellectualist idea of the nature of freedom.[13]

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[1] There are two English translations, one by P. Mairet under the title *Sketch for a Theory of Emotions* (London, 1962).

[2] An English translation by Lloyd Alexander, *Intimacy*, is available in paperback in Panther Books. It appeared originally at London in 1949.

[3] *The Psychology of the Imagination*, translated by B. Frechtman (London, 1949).

[4] *Being and Nothingness*, translated by H. Barnes (New York, 1956; London, 1957).

[5] *The Flies*, translated by S. Gilbert, is contained in *Two Plays* (London, 1946).

[6] The first two volumes, *L'âge de la raison* and *Le sursis*, have been translated by E. Sutton as *The Age of Reason* and *The Reprieve* (London, 1947). The third volume, *La mort dans l'âme* (1949) has been translated by G. Hopkins as *Iron in the Soul* (London, 1950).

[7] Translated by S. Gilbert as *In Camera* and included in *Two Plays* (London, 1946).

[8] See note 1.

[9] There are two translations, one by E. de Mauny, *Portrait of an Anti-Semite* (London, 1948).

[10] Some of these essays have been translated by A. Michelson as *Literary and Philosophical Essays* (London, 1955).

[11] The first section of this volume has been translated by H. Barnes as *Search for a Method* (New York, 1963; London, 1964).

[12] Translated by B. Frechtman as *Saint Genet* (New York, 1963).

[13] *Literary and Philosophical Essays*, p. 169.

However this may be, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that the shadow of Descartes lies across French philosophy, not of course in the sense that all French philosophers are Cartesians but in the sense that in many cases personal philosophizing begins through a process of reflection in which positions are adopted for or against the ideas of the foremost French philosopher. We can see this sort of influence at work in the case of Sartre. But he has also been strongly influenced by Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger. Here again he is no more a disciple of any German philosopher than he is of Descartes or his successors. The influence of Heidegger, for example, is shown clearly enough in *Being and Nothingness*, even if the German philosopher is often criticized by Sartre and has himself repudiated association with Sartrian existentialism. From an academic point of view[1] Sartre's thought has developed partly though reflection on the methods and ideas of Descartes, Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger, whereas British empiricism hardly enters his field of vision,[2] and materialism, in its non-Marxist forms at any rate, is not a philosophy for which he seems to have much use.

The influence of the background formed by Cartesianism and phenomenology shows itself not only in Sartre's essay of 1936 on the ego but also in his works on imagination and emotion and in the attention given to consciousness in the introduction to *Being and Nothingness*. At the same time Sartre makes clear the differences between his position and those of Descartes and Husserl. For Sartre the basic datum is what he calls the pre-reflexive consciousness, awareness, for example, of this table, this book or that tree. What Descartes starts with however in his *Cogito, ergo sum* is not the pre-reflexive but the reflexive consciousness, which expresses an act whereby the self is constituted as object. He thus involves himself in the problem of passing from the self-enclosed ego, as object of consciousness, to a warranted assertion of the existence of external objects and of other persons. This problem does not arise if we go behind the reflexive consciousness to the pre-reflexive consciousness, which is 'transcendent', in the sense that it posits its object as transcending itself, as that towards which it reaches.[1] 'All consciousness, as Husserl has shown, is consciousness *of* something. This means that there is no consciousness which is not the *positing* of a transcendent object, or, if one prefers, that consciousness has no "content".'[2] Suppose, for example, that I am aware of this table. The table is not *in* my consciousness as a content. It is in space, near a window or near the door or wherever it may be. And when I 'intend' it, I posit it as transcending, and not as immanent in consciousness. In this case of course Husserl's policy of bracketing existence, of treating all the objects of consciousness as purely immanent and suspending judgment, as a matter of principle, about their objective reference, is misguided. As far as perception is concerned, the object of consciousness is posited as transcendent and as existent. When I perceive this table, the table itself, and not a mental representation of it, is the object of the intentional act; and it is posited as existing. Sartre therefore follows Heidegger in rejecting Husserl's claim that the bracketing of existence is essential to phenomenology.[3]

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[1] As distinct, that is to say, from his own experience of and reflections on life and the world.

[2] In *Being and Nothingness* there is some discussion of Berkeley's *esse est percipi*, and Hume is mentioned twice. The philosophers whose names appear most frequently are Descartes, Hegel, Heidegger, Husserl, Kant and Spinoza. In *L'imaginaire* Sartre does however quote from Hume on ideas as images, but only to dismiss his theory as illusion. See *L'imaginaire*, p. 17 (English translation, pp. 12–13).

Sartre is not of course claiming that we never make mistakes about the nature of the object. Suppose, for example, that in the twilight I think that I see a man in the wood, and that it turns out to be the stump of a tree. I have obviously made a mistake. But the mistake does not consist in my having confused a real thing, namely the stump of a tree, with a mental content, the representation of a man, which was the object of consciousness. I perceived an object, positing it as transcendent; but I misread or misinterpreted its nature. That is to say, I made an erroneous judgment about a real object.

What then of images and imagination? Imagination, as a form of consciousness, is intentional. It has its own characteristics. 'Every consciousness posits its object, but each does so in its own way.[4] Perception posits its object as existent; but the imagining consciousness, which manifests the mind's freedom, can do so in several ways. For example, it can posit its object as non-existent.

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[1] In this context words such as 'transcendence' and 'transcend' should obviously not be understood as referring to what transcends the world or the limits of human experience. To say that consciousness is transcendent is to say that it is not confined to purely immanent objects, subjective ideas or images or copies of external things.

[2] *L'être et le néant*, p. 17 (English translation, p. 11).

[3] Husserl's approach led him eventually into the development of an idealist philosophy.

[4] *L'imaginaire*, p. 24 (English translation, p. 20).

Sartre is more concerned however with arguing that just as perception intends an object posited as transcendent and not a mental content which stands in place of the extramental object, so does the imagining consciousness intend an object other than the image as image. One can of course reflect on the first-order imagining consciousness and say, whether felicitously or not, 'I have an image'. But in the first-order imagining consciousness itself the image is not the intended object but a relation between consciousness and its object. What Sartre means is seen most easily in a case such as my imagining Peter as present, when Peter is a real but absent friend. The object of consciousness is Peter himself, the real Peter; but I imagine him as present, the image or picture being simply a way in which I relate myself to Peter or make him present to me. Reflection of course can distinguish between image and reality; but the actual first-order imagining consciousness intends or has as its object Peter himself. It is 'the imaginative consciousness of Peter.'[1] It may be objected that though this line of interpretation holds good in cases such as the one just mentioned, it is hardly applicable to cases in which the imagining consciousness freely creates an unreal anti-world, as Sartre puts it, of phantom objects, which represents an escape from the real world, a negation of it.[2] In such cases does not consciousness intend the image or images? For Sartre at any rate it is the reflexive consciousness which, through reflection, constitutes the image as such. For the actual imagining consciousness the image is the way in which consciousness posits an unreal object as non-existing. It does not posit the image as an image (this is what reflection does); it posits unreal objects. Sartre is prepared to say that this unreal 'world' exists 'as unreal, as inactive';[3] but that which is posited as non-existent obviously 'exists' only as posited. If we consider a work of fiction, we can see that its unreal world 'exists' only through and in the act of positing; but in first-order consciousness attention is directed to this world, to the saying and doings of imagined persons, not to images as images, as, that is to say, psychical entities in the mind.[4]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 17 (English, p. 14).

[2] For Sartre negation is involved in imagination. When, for instance, I imagine the absent Peter as present, I do not deny that he is absent (for I posit him as real but absent); but I try to overcome or negate the absence by imagining him as present.

[3] *L'imaginaire*, p. 180 (English, p. 157). Elsewhere (p. 17, *n* 1; English, p. 15, *n* 1), Sartre remarks that the chimera exists neither as an image nor otherwise.

[4] In *L'imaginaire* Sartre writes at some length about the pathology of the imagination and about dreams. But we cannot pursue these themes here.

In his book on the emotions Sartre insists on the intentionality of the emotive or emotional consciousness. 'Emotional consciousness is at first consciousness *of* the world.'[1] Like the imagining consciousness, it has its own characteristics. For example, the emotive way of apprehending the world is 'a transformation of the world',[2] the substitution, though not of course an effective substitution, of a magical world for the world of deterministic causality. But it is always intentional. A man who is afraid is afraid *of* something or someone. Other people may think that there is no real objective ground for his fear. And the man himself may say in subsequent reflection, 'there was nothing to be afraid of after all.' But if he genuinely felt fear, his first-order emotive or affective consciousness certainly intended something or someone, even if vaguely conceived. 'Emotion is a certain way of apprehending the world';[3] and the fact that one may clothe objects or persons with qualities which they do not possess or read a malign significance into a person's expression or words or actions does not alter this fact. The projection of emotive significance on a thing or person clearly involves intending the thing or person as object of consciousness. In *L'imaginaire* Sartre repeats the same basic point. To feel hate towards Paul is 'the consciousness *of* Paul as hateful';[4] it is not consciousness of hatred, which pertains to the reflexive consciousness. The theme of emotion is also pursued in several sections of *Being and Nothingness.*

We have seen that Sartre insists on the distinction between the pre-reflexive and the reflexive consciousness. To love Peter, for example, is not the same act as to think of myself as loving Peter. In the first case Peter himself is the intentional object, whereas in the second case myself-loving-Peter is the intentional object. The question arises therefore whether or not Sartre confines self-consciousness to the level of reflection, so that first-order or pre-reflexive consciousness is regarded as unaccompanied by self-consciousness. To answer this question we can turn to the 1936 essay on the transcendence of the ego.

In this essay Sartre asserts that 'the mode of existence of consciousness is to be conscious of itself'.[5] And if we take this statement by itself, it may seem to follow that self-consciousness belongs to the pre-reflexive consciousness. But Sartre adds immediately that consciousness is consciousness of itself insofar as it is consciousness of a transcendent object. In the case of pre-reflexive consciousness this means that consciousness of, say, a table is indeed inseparably accompanied by consciousness of itself (it is and must be, so to speak, conscious consciousness); but the 'self-consciousness' which is an essential feature of pre-reflexive consciousness is, in Sartre's jargon, non-positional or non-thetic in regard to the ego. An example may clarify the matter. Let us suppose that I am absorbed in contemplating a particularly splendid sunset. Consciousness is directed wholly to the intentional object; there is no place in this consciousness for the ego. In the ordinary sense of the term therefore there is no self-consciousness, inasmuch as the ego is not posited as an object. Only the sunset is posited as an object. The positing of the ego arises on the level of reflection. When I turn consciousness of the sunset into an intentional object, the ego is posited. That is to say, the 'me' arises as an object for (reflexive) consciousness.

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[1] *Esquisse d'une théorie des emotions*, p. 29 (Frechtman's translation, p. 51).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 33 (English, p. 58).

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 30 (English, p. 52).

[4] *L'imaginaire*, p. 93 (English, p. 82).

[5] *The Transcendence of the Ego*, p. 40.

For phenomenology therefore the basic datum for Sartre is the pre-reflexive consciousness, in which the ego of reflexive consciousness does not appear. But we cannot of course think or talk about pre-reflexive consciousness without objectifying it, turning it into an intentional obect. And in this reflexive consciousness the ego and the world are posited as correlative to one another. The ego is the 'me', posited as the unity to which all my states of consciousness, experience and actions are ascribed, and posited also as the subject of consciousness, as in 'myself imagining Peter' or 'myself loving Mary'. The world is posited as the ideal unity of all objects of consciousness. Husserl's transcendental ego is excluded or suppressed; and Sartre thinks that in this way he can avoid following Husserl into idealism.[1] His line of thought also enables him to avoid Descartes's problem of proving the existence of the external world. For reflexive consciousness the ego and the world arise in correlation, as the subject in relation to its transcendent object. To isolate the subject and treat it as though it were a datum given in isolation is a mistake. We have not got to infer the world from the self, nor the self from the world: they arise together in correlation.

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[1] Sartre distinguishes between the 'I' and the 'me' as two aspects or functions of the ego. But in *The Transcendence of the Ego* he represents the ego and the world as objects of 'absolute consciousness' which, according to him, is impersonal and without a subject. It is rather as though one adopted Fichte's theory of the constitution of the limited or finite subject and its object while omitting the transcendental ego.

All this may seem very remote from anything that we ordinarily associate with existentialism. But it provides Sartre with a realist basis, the self in relation to its transcendent object. Further, though the self is not created by its object, any more than the object is created by the self (for they are posited together in correlation), the self is derivative, appearing only for reflexive consciousness, for consciousness, that is to say, which reflects on pre-reflexive consciousness. The self emerges or is made to appear from the background of first-order consciousness, as one pole of consciousness. The way thus lies open for Sartre's analysis of the self as derivative and fugitive. Further, as the ego is posited as the point of unity and the source of all one's experiences, states and actions, it is possible for man to try to conceal from himself the boundless freedom or spontaneity of consciousness and to take refuge in the idea of a stable self which ensures regular patterns of conduct. Afraid of boundless freedom, man can attempt to avoid his responsibility by attributing his actions to the determining causality of the past as precipitated, so to speak, in the self or ego. He is then in 'bad faith', a theme on which Sartre likes to dwell.

These ideas however are best considered in the context of Sartre's analysis of the self-conscious subject and of Being in *Being and Nothingness*. The analysis is indeed involved. But given the fact that Sartre is well known as a dramatist and novelist, it is desirable to make it clear that he is a serious and systematic philosopher and not simply a dilettante. He is not of course the creator of a system such as that of Spinoza, a system formed on a mathematical model. At the same time his existentialist philosophy can be seen as the systematic development of certain basic ideas. It is certainly not a mere juxtaposition of impressionistic views.

3. Consciousness, as we have seen, is for Sartre consciousness *of* something, something other than itself and in this sense transcendent. The transcendent object appears to or for consciousness, and it can thus be described as a phenomenon. It would however be a mistake to interpret this description as meaning that the phenomenal object is the appearance of an underlying reality or essence which does not appear. The table of which I am now aware as I sit before it is not the appearance of a hidden noumenon or of a

reality distinct from itself. 'The phenomenal being manifests itself, it manifests its essence as well as its existence.'[1] At the same time the table is obviously more than what appears to me here and now in a given act of awareness or consciousness. If there is no hidden and non-appearing reality of which the phenomenal table is the appearance, and if at the same time the table cannot be simply equated with one individual appearance or manifestation, it must be identified with the series of its manifestations. But we can assign no finite number to the series of possible appearances. In other words, even if we reject the dualism between appearance and reality and identify a thing with the totality of its appearances, we cannot simply say with Berkeley that to be is to be perceived. 'The being of that which *appears* does not exist *only* in so far as it appears.'[2] It surpasses the knowledge which we have of it and is thus transphenomenal. And according to Sartre the way thus lies open for inquiry into the transphenomenal being of the phenomenon.

If we ask what being in itself is, as revealing itself to consciousness, Sartre's answer recalls to our minds the philosophy of Parmenides: 'Being is. Being is in itself. Being is what it is.'[3] Being is opaque, massive: it simply is. As the foundation of the existent, it cannot be denied. Such remarks, taken by themselves, are perhaps somewhat baffling. Consider however a table. It stands out from other things as being a table and not something else, as being suitable for this purpose and not for that, and so on. But it appears for consciousness as a table precisely because human beings give it a certain meaning. That is to say, consciousness makes it appear as a table. If I wish to spread out my books and papers on it or to set a meal, it obviously appears primarily as a table, an instrument for the fulfilment of certain purposes. In other circumstances it might appear for consciousness (be made by consciousness to appear) as primarily firewood or a battering-ram or a solid object to hide under or an obstacle in my flight from an attacker or as a beautiful or an ugly object. It has a certain meaning or significance in its relation to consciousness. It does not follow however that consciousness creates the object. It indubitably is or exists. And it is what it is. But it acquires an instrumentalist meaning, standing out from its background as this sort of thing and not another, only in relation to consciousness.

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[1] *L'être et le néant*, p. 12 (English, p. xlvi).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 29 (English, p. lxii).

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 34 (English, p. lxvi).

In general, the world considered as a system of interrelated things with instrumental significance is made to appear for consciousness. In his theory of the conferring of meaning on things in terms of perspectives and purposes Sartre derives stimulus from Martin Heidegger. And in developing his theory of the way in which this is done he discusses Hegel's dialectic of being and not-being. For Sartre being in itself is logically prior to not-being and cannot be identified with it; but the table, for example, is constituted as a table through a negation. It is a table and not something else. All differentiation within being is due to consciousness, which makes something to appear by differentiating it from its background and in this sense negating the background. The same sort of thing can be said about spatial and temporal relations. A thing appears as 'near' or as 'far away' in relation to a consciousness which compares and relates. Similarly, it is for consciousness that this event appears as happening 'after' that event. Again, the Aristotelian distinction between potency and act arises only through and for consciousness. It is in relation to consciousness, for example, that the table is potentially firewood. Apart from consciousness, it simply is what it is.

In fine, it is for consciousness that the world appears as an intelligible system of distinct and interrelated things. If we think away all that is due to the activity of consciousness in making the world appear, we are left with being in itself (*l'en-soi*, the in-itself), opaque, massive, undifferentiated, the nebulous background, as it were, out of which the world is made to appear. This being in itself, Sartre tells us, is ultimate, simply there. It is 'without reason, without cause and without necessity'.[1] It does not follow that being is its own cause (*causa sui*). For this is a meaningless notion. Being simply is. In this sense being is gratuitous or *de trop*, as Sartre puts it in his novel *Nausea*.[2] In this work Roquentin, sitting in the municipal garden at Bounville, has an impression of the gratuitous or superfluous character of the being of the things about him and of himself. That is to say, there is no reason for their being. 'To exist is simply *to be there*.'[3] Being in itself is contingent, and this contingency is not an 'outward show', in the sense that it can be overcome by explaining it with reference to a necessary being. Being is not derivable or reducible. It simply is. Contingency is 'the absolute itself and consequently perfectly gratuitous'.[1] 'Uncreated, without reason for being, without any relation to another being, being-in-itself is gratuitous for all eternity.'[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 713 (English, p. 619).

[2] *Being and Nothingness* presents in systematic form the point of view expressed in *Nausea*.

[3] *La nausée*, p. 171 (English, Penguin edition, p. 188).

It is clear enough that there are different perspectives and that things can appear differently to different people. And we can make sense of the statement that it is consciousness which makes things to appear in certain ways or under certain aspects. To the climber or would-be climber a mountain appears as possessing certain characteristics, while to someone else who has no intention of trying to climb it but who is contemplating it aesthetically from a distance other characteristics stand out. And if one wishes to speak of each consciousness as making the object appear in a certain way or under certain aspects by negating other aspects or relegating them to a foggy background, this way of speaking is understandable, even if it is somewhat pretentious. Again, in so far as human beings have common interests and purposes, things appear to them in similar ways. It is not unreasonable to speak of human beings as conferring meanings on things, especially when it is a case of instrumental meaning. But Sartre carries this line of thought beyond the limit to which many people would be prepared to accompany him. For example, we have noted that in his view distinctions between things are due to consciousness, inasmuch as they are due to the act of distinguishing (of negation, in Sartrian terminology, or of denying that this is that). This is obviously true in a sense. Without consciousness there can be no distinguishing. At the same time most people would probably wish to claim that the mind is not confined to designating distinctions in what is in itself without distinction, but that it can recognize objective distinctions. And if Sartre disagrees, it is difficult to avoid the impression that he is carrying his line of thought as far as he can, without falling into what he would recognize as idealism, in order to be able to present being in itself in the way that he does. To be sure, there is no need to deny that the sort of impression or experience which Roquentin is represented as having in the gardens of Bouville can occur. But it by no means follows that Sartre is justified in drawing from this sort of impression the ontological conclusions which he in fact draws. He does indeed argue in *Being and Nothingness* that to ask why there is being is to ask a question devoid of meaning, as it presupposes being.[1] But when making this statement he obviously cannot be referring to beings. For he has already said that it is consciousness which makes beings appear as such, as distinct that is to say. He is presumably arguing that it is meaningless to ask why there is being, inasmuch as being is what he has declared it to be, *de trop*, 'just there'. He might of course have raised difficulties in regard to the presuppositions involved in the use of the word 'why'. But what he actually does is to disallow the question 'why is there being'? on the ground that it presupposes being. And it is difficult to see how the question can be excluded on this ground, unless the being referred to is understood in the sense of transphenomenal and ultimate being, the Absolute. Sartre does indeed argue against other views. Something will be said later about his criticism of theism. But his own view seems to be the result of thinking away or abstracting from all in the object that he considers to be due to consciousness and then declaring the residue to be the Absolute, *l'en-soi* opaque and, in itself, unintelligible.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

[2] *L'être et le néant*, p. 34 (English, p. lxvi).

4. The concept of 'the in-itself' (*l'en-soi*) is one of the two key concepts of *Being and Nothingness*. The other key concept is that of consciousness, 'the for-itself' (*le pour-soi*). And it is hardly surprising if most of the work is devoted to this second theme. For if being in itself is opaque, massive, self-identical, there is obviously little that can be said about it. Besides, as an existentialist Sartre is primarily interested in man or, as he likes to put it, the human reality. He insists on human freedom, which is essential to his philosophy; and his theory of freedom is based on his analysis of 'the for-itself'.

Once more, all consciousness is consciousness *of* something. Of what? Of being as it appears. In this case it seems to follow that consciousness must be other than being, not-being that is to say, and that it must arise through a negation or nihilation of being in itself. Sartre is explicit about this. Being in itself is dense, massive, full. The in-itself harbours no nothingness. Consciousness is that whereby negation or nihilation is introduced. By its very nature consciousness involves or is distantiation or separation from being, though if it is asked what separates it from being, the answer can only be 'nothing'. For there is no intervening or separating entity. Consciousness is itself not-being, and its activity, according to Sartre, is a process of nihilation. When I am aware of this piece of paper, I distantiate myself from it, deny that I am the paper; and I make the paper appear, stand out from its background, by denying that it is anything else, by nihilating other phenomena. 'The being by which nothingness comes into the world is a being in which, in its own being, there is question of the nothingness of its being: *the being by which nothingness comes into the world must be its own nothingness*.'[1] 'Man is the being through whom nothingness comes into the world.'[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 713 (English, p. 619).

The language employed by Sartre is clearly objectionable. Consciousness is said to be its own nothingness; but it is also referred to as a being, as indeed it must be if it is to be described as exercising the activity attributed to it. Of course, one can see easily enough what Sartre means by ascribing to consciousness a process of nihilation. If I fix my attention on a particular picture in a gallery, I relegate the others to an indeterminate background. But one might emphasize equally well, or perhaps better, the positive activity involved in the intentional act.[3] Still, if we assume that being in itself is what Sartre says that it is, and if being is made to appear as the object of consciousness, consciousness of being must presumably involve the distantiation or separation of which he speaks, and in this sense not-being. If we object to the language, as well we may, we had better examine the premises which lead to its employment.

How does consciousness arise? It is difficult to see how being in itself, if it is as Sartre describes it, could give rise to anything at all, even to its own negation. It is equally difficult, if not more so, to see how consciousness could originate itself, as *causa sui*. As for the ego-subject, this arises, as we have seen, not on the level of pre-reflexive consciousness but on that of reflexive consciousness. It comes into being through the reflection of consciousness on itself; and it is thus made to appear as object. In this case there is no transcendental ego which could originate consciousness. However, that consciousness has arisen is an indubitable fact. And Sarte depicts it as rising through the occurrence of a fissure or rupture in being, resulting in the distantiation which is essential to consciousness.

It does not seem to the present writer that Sartre offers any really clear account of the origin of consciousness. However, as it arises through the occurrence of a fissure or gap in being in itself, it must presumably come in some way or other out of being, even if by a process of negation, and so be derivative. As we have seen, Sartre excludes the question 'why is there being'? But he allows the question 'why is there consciousness'? True, he relegates explanatory hypotheses to the sphere of 'metaphysics' and says that phenomenological 'ontology' cannot answer the question. But he ventures the suggestion that '*everything takes place as if* the in-itself, in a project to ground itself, gave itself the modification of the for-itself'.[1] How the in-itself could have such a project is none too clear. But the picture is that of the Absolute, being in itself, undergoing a process or performing an act of self-diremption whereby consciousness arises. It is as though being in itself tries to take the form of consciousness while remaining being. But this goal cannot be achieved. For consciousness exists only through a continuous separation or distantiation from being, a continuous secretion of the nothing which separates it from its object. Being in itself and consciousness cannot be united in one. They can be united only by the for-itself relapsing into the in-itself and ceasing to be for-itself. Consciousness exists only through a process of negation or nihilation. It is a relation to being, but it is other than being. Arising out of being in itself through a process of self-diremption in being it makes beings (a world) to appear.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 59 (English, p. 23).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 60 (English, p. 24).

[3] So-called nihilation is itself a positive activity of course. But I am referring to the actual focussing of attention.

5. Being in itself, massive, opaque and without consciousness, is obviously not free. The for-itself however, as separated from being (even if by nothing), cannot be determined by being. It escapes the determination of being in itself and is essentially free. Freedom, according to Sartre, is not a property of human nature or essence. It belongs to the structure of the conscious being. 'What we call freedom is thus impossible to distinguish from the *being* of the 'human reality.'[2] Indeed, in contrast with other things man first exists and then makes his essence. 'Human freedom precedes the essence of man and makes it possible.'[3] Here we have the belief which, Sartre tells us, is common to all existentialists, namely that 'existence precedes essence'.[4] Man is the not-already-made. He makes himself. His course is not predetermined: he does not proceed, as it were, along a pair of rails from which he cannot diverge. He makes himself, not of course in the

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[1] *L'être et le néant*, p. 715 (English, p. 621).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 61 (English, p. 25).

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 61 (English, p. 25).

[4] *L'existentialisme est un humanisme*, p. 17 (English, Mairet, p. 26).

sense that he creates himself out of nothing but in the sense that what he becomes depends on himself, on his own choice.

It is not necessary to hold a theory of occult essences, hidden away inside things, in order to find difficulty in the notion of man's existence preceding his essence. In his lecture on existentialism and humanism Sartre explains that in his view there is no God who creates man according to some idea of human nature, so that each human being exemplifies human essence. Well and good, all atheists would obviously agree. But we are concerned here with man himself, not with the question whether or not he was created by God. Quite irrespective of man's relation to God, Sartre maintains that in man existence precedes essence. What then exists in the first instance? The answer is presumably a reality capable of making itself, of defining its own essence. But has this reality no characteristics other than freedom? Whether there is a human nature or essence which is fixed, immutable, static, non-plastic, is another question. The point is that it is very difficult to suppose that there is no human nature in any sense, distinguishable from the natures of lions or roses. Indeed, even if we take literally what Sartre says, it is clear that human beings have a certain common essence or nature, namely that they are the beings which make themselves to be what they become. After all, Sartre can talk about the 'human reality' or about human beings with the conviction that people will recognize what he is talking about. However, we need not really worry very much about Sartre's pronouncements taken in a literal sense. His main contention is clearly that man is wholly free, that whatever he does is the result of free choice, and that what he becomes depends entirely on himself.

At first sight this appears highly implausible. Sartre is not of course talking about reflex acts, which cannot be counted as human actions in the proper sense. But even if we confine our attention to acts which can be ascribed to the for-itself, to consciousness, the contention that we are totally or absolutely free may seem to be quite incompatible with facts. Quite apart from determinist theory, it may be said, our freedom is surely limited by all sorts of internal and external factors. What about the limiting, if not determining influence of physiological and psychological factors, of environment, upbringing, education, of a social pressure which is exercised continuously and generally without our being reflectively aware of it? Again, even if we reject determinism and admit freedom, must we not recognize the fact that people tend to act in accordance with their characters, and that we often believe that we can predict how they will act or react in a given set of circumstances? True, people sometimes act in unexpected ways. But do we not then tend to conclude that we did not know them as well as we thought, and that if we had known them better, we would have made more accurate predictions? The thesis that the human being is totally or absolutely free is surely at variance with the empirical facts and with our ordinary ways of thinking and speaking.

It is hardly necessary to say that Sartre is well aware of such lines of objection and has his answer ready. He sees the for-itself as projecting its own ideal goal and striving to attain it. In the light of this project certain things appear as obstacles. But it depends entirely on my choice whether they appear as obstacles to be overcome, as stepping-stones, so to speak, on the path of my exercise of freedom or whether they appear as insurmountable obstacles in the way. To take a simple example of a kind used by Sartre himself. I desire to take a holiday in Japan. But I lack the money to do so, and consequently cannot go. My lack of money appears to me an insurmountable obstacle only because I have freely formed the project of taking my holiday in Japan. If I freely choose to go to Brighton instead, for which I have the money, my financial situation no longer appears as an obstacle at all, let alone an insurmountable one. Or suppose that I have strong inclinations to act in ways which are incompatible with the ideal which I have projected for myself and my conduct. It is I myself who make these inclinations appear in this or that way. In themselves they constitute a kind of in-itself, a datum, the meaning or bearing of which is constituted by myself. If I give way to them completely, this is because I have chosen to regard them as insurmountable obstacles. And this choice shows in turn that my real project, my actually operative ideal, is not what I told myself that it was, deceiving myself. A man's actually operative ideal is revealed in his actions. It is all very well for Garcin in the play *Huis Clos* (*In Camera*) to claim that he was not actually a coward. As Inez says, it is what one does that reveals what one is, what one has chosen to be. In Sartre's opinion, to be 'overcome' by a passion or emotion, such as fear, is simply a way of choosing, though it is obviously a comparatively unreflective way of reacting to a given situation. Similar remarks can be made about, say, the influence of environment. It is consciousness itself which gives meaning to the environment. To one man it appears as an opportunity, to another as something which, as it were, sucks him down and absorbs him. In both cases it is the man himself who makes his environment appear in a certain way.

Sartre is not of course blind to the fact that we are often unable to alter external factors, in the sense of physically removing them or of removing oneself from them. Practically speaking, I may not be able to alter my place and environmental situation. And even though I can do so in theory and perhaps also in practice, I must be in some place and in some environmental situation. Sartre's contention is that the meaning which such factors have for me is chosen by myself, even if I fail or decline to recognize the fact. Similarly, I cannot alter the past in the sense of bringing it about that what I have done should not have been done. If I betrayed my country, this fact has become frozen, as it were, unalterable. It belongs to myself as *facticité*, as something already made. But, as we have seen, being in itself is not, for Sartre, temporal. It makes no sense to speak of being in itself as comprising succession. Temporality is '*the mode of being* peculiar to being-for-itself'.[1] That is to say, the for-itself is a perpetual flight from what it was towards what it will be, from itself as something made towards itself as something to be made. In reflection this flight grounds the concepts of past, present (as present to being) and future. In other words, the self is beyond its past, what it has made of itself, surpassing it. If it is asked what separates the self in its flight from itself as already made, as its past, the answer is 'nothing'. To say this however is to say that the self negates itself as made and so surpasses it and is beyond it. The self as already made relapses into the condition of the in-itself. And one day, at death, the for-itself becomes wholly something already made and can be regarded purely objectively, as by the psychologist or the historian. But as long as it is the for-itself, it is ahead of itself as past and so cannot be determined by itself as past, as essence.[2] As has been noted, the self cannot alter its past, in the sense of bringing it about that what happened did not happen or that actions performed were not performed; but it depends on its own choice what meaning the self gives to its past. And it follows that any influence exercised by the past is exercised because one chooses that it should. One cannot be determined by one's past, by oneself as already made.

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[1] *L'être et le néant*, p. 188 (English, p. 142). Temporality is discussed at length in chapter two of the second part of the work. See also the following chapter, on transcendence. Sartre is strongly influenced by Heidegger; but he dismisses and criticizes the views of some other philosophers too.

[2] Sartre makes play with Hegel's saying *Wesen ist, was gewesen ist* (Essence is what has been).

According to Sartre therefore freedom belongs to the very structure of the for-itself. In this sense one is 'condemned' to be free. We cannot choose to be free or not: we simply are free by the fact that we are consciousnesses. We can however choose to try to deceive ourselves. Man is totally free; he cannot but choose and commit himself in some way; and in whatever way he commits himself, he ideally commits everyone else.[1] The responsibility is entirely his. Awareness of this total freedom and responsibility is accompanied by 'anguish' (*angoisse*), akin to the state of mind experienced by a man standing on a precipice who feels both attracted and repelled by the abyss. Man may therefore try to deceive himself by embracing some form of determinism, by throwing the responsibility on to something apart from his own choice, God or heredity or his upbringing and environment or what not. If however he does so, he is in bad faith. That is to say, the structure of the for-itself is such that a man can be, as it were, in a state of knowing and not-knowing at the same time. Radically, he is aware of his freedom; but he can see himself, for example, as being what he is not (his past), and he then draws a veil over, or masks for himself, the total freedom which gives rise to *angoisse* as a kind of vertigo.[2]

This may sound as though for Sartre all human actions are absolutely unpredictable, as though no intelligible pattern can be found in a man's life. That this is not at all what he means can be seen by recalling what he says in his lecture on existentialism and humanism about the young man who during the second world war asked for advice whether he should remain in France to look after his mother, who was estranged from his collaborating father and whose other son had been killed in 1940, or whether he should attempt to get to England in order to join the Free French forces. Sartre refused to give an answer. And when, in the discussion after the lecture, M. Naville said that advice should have been given, Sartre replied not only that the decision was up to the young man and could not be made for him but also that 'I knew moreover what he was going to do, and that is what he did'.[1] In Sartre's opinion the for-itself makes an original or primitive choice, projecting its ideal self, a projection implying a set of values; and particular choices are informed, as it were, by this basic free projection. A man's operative ideal way of course may be different from his professed ideal, from what he says is his ideal. But it is revealed in his actions. The original project *can* be changed, though this demands a radical conversion or change. Apart however from this radical change a man's particular actions implement and reveal his original choice or *projet*. A man's actions are thus free, inasmuch as they are contained in his original free choice; but the more clearly the external observer sees a man's basic *projet* revealed in his actions, so much the more can the observer predict how the man will act in a given situation. Besides, if someone asks advice from a particular man, whose ideas and attitudes are known to him, he has in effect already decided. For he has chosen to hear what he wants to hear.

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[1] If I commit myself to Communism, for example, I choose ideally for others too.

[2] Bad faith is not, for Sartre, the same thing as lying. One can lie to other people, telling them what one knows perfectly well to be untrue. In bad faith or self-deception there is a mixture of knowing and not-knowing, the possibility of which is based on the fact that the for-itself is not what it is (its past) and is what it is not (its possibilities or future).

What we have said about the possibility of conversion obviously implies that different people can have different projects, which reveal themselves in their actions. Underlying all such projects however, there is, according to Sartre, a basic project which belongs to the very structure of *le pour-soi*. The for-itself is, as we have seen, a flight from the past into the future, from itself as something already made towards its possibilities, towards the being which it will be. It is thus a flight from being to being. But the being which it seeks and strives after is not simply *l'en-soi*, devoid of consciousness. For it seeks to preserve itself, the for-itself that is to say. In fine, man reaches out to the ideal project of becoming the in-itself-for-itself, being and consciousness in one. This ideal however corresponds with the concept of God, self-grounded conscious being. We can say therefore that 'to be man is to strive towards being God; or, if one prefers, man is fundamentally the desire to be God.'[2] 'Thus my freedom is the choice of being God, and all my acts, all my projects, translate this choice and reflect it in a thousand and one ways, for there is an infinity of ways of being and of having.'[3] Unfortunately, the idea of God is contradictory. For consciousness is precisely the negation of being. Sartre therefore draws the somewhat pessimistic conclusion that 'man is a useless striving'.[1] The for-itself aspires after Deity; but it inevitably relapses into the opacity of *l'en-soi*. Its flight is terminated not in realization of its basic project but in death.

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[1] *L'existentialisme est un humanisme*, p. 141 (English, Mairet, p. 70).

[2] *L'être et le néant*, pp. 653–4 (English, p. 566). [3] *Ibid.*, p. 689 (English, p. 599).

6. So far we have paid little attention to the plurality of consciousnesses. We cannot follow Sartre into his discussion of the theories of other philosophers, such as Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger,[2] about our knowledge of the existence of other persons. But something at any rate should be said about his own line of thought. And we can draw attention at once to his rejection of the idea that the existence of other minds or consciousnesses is simply inferred from observation of bodies and their movements. If I see a body walking in the street and infer that there is in it a consciousness similar to my own, this is simply conjecture on my part.[3] If the other self lies right outside my experience, I can never prove that what I take to be a human being is not in fact a robot. At best I might claim that whereas my own existence is certain (*Cogito, ergo sum*), the existence of the Other is probable. And this is not a position which Sartre considers tenable. He wishes to show that there is a real sense in which the *Cogito* reveals to me 'the concrete and indubitable presence of this or that concrete Other'.[4] He is not looking for reasons for believing that there are other selves but for the revelation of the Other as a subject. He wishes to show that I encounter the Other directly as a subject which is not myself. And this involves exhibiting a relation between my consciousness and that of the Other, a relation in which the Other is given to me not as an object but as a subject.

It is therefore not a question of deducing the existence of other selves in an *a priori* manner, but of giving a phenomenological analysis of the sort of experience in which the Other is revealed to me as subject. And Sartre's line of thought is perhaps best illustrated by summarizing one of the examples which he actually gives. Complaints are sometimes made that Sartre does not offer proofs of what he asserts. Even if however such complaints are sometimes justified, it should be remembered that in a context such as the present one it is in his view sufficient 'proof' if attention is drawn to situations in which the Other is clearly revealed as a subject to one's consciousness, within one's experience. If it is said that other people are always objects for oneself and never subjects, Sartre tries to refute the statement by giving examples of situations in which it is falsified. Whether he is successful or not, there does not seem to be anything disreputable in this procedure, except perhaps in the eyes of those who think that philosophers should assert only what they have deduced *a priori* from some unquestionable point of departure.

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[1] *Une passion inutile. Ibid.*, p. 708 (English, p. 615).

[2] In Sartre's opinion Husserl cannot escape solipsism, and Hegel's theory, though chronologically prior, is much superior. Heidegger made further progress.

[3] There is indeed the possibility of embracing behaviourism. But this is not a solution to whch Sartre is prepared to give favourable consideration.

[4] *L'être et le néant*, p. 308 (English, p. 251).

Let us imagine that I am squatting down in the corridor of a hotel looking through a keyhole. I am not thinking of myself at all; my attention is absorbed in what is going on inside a room. I am in a state of pre-reflexive consciousness. Suddenly I become aware that an employee or a fellow guest of the hotel is standing and watching me. I am at once ashamed. The *cogito* arises, in the sense that I become reflexively aware of myself as object, as object, that is to say, of another consciousness as subject. The other's field of consciousness, so to speak, invades mine, reducing me to an object. I experience the Other as a free conscious subject through his look (*regard*), whereby he makes me an object for another. The reason why common sense opposes an unshakable resistance to solipsism is that the Other is given to me as an evident presence which I cannot derive from myself and which cannot seriously be doubted. The consciousness of the Other is not of course given to me in the sense that it is mine; but the fact of the Other is given in an incontestable manner in the reduction of myself to an object for a transcendence which is not mine.

In view of the way in which Sartre tackles the subject of one's encounter with the Other it is not surprising to find him saying that 'conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others'.[1] If the Other's look reduces me to an object, I can try either to absorb the Other's freedom while leaving it intact or to reduce the Other to an object. The first project can be seen in love, which expresses a desire 'to possess a freedom as freedom',[2] whereas the second can be seen in, for example, indifference, sexual desire and, in an extreme form, sadism. Both projects are however doomed to failure. I cannot absorb another person's freedom while leaving it intact; he or she always eludes me, as the other self necessarily transcends myself, and the look which reduces me to objectivity is always reborn.[1] As for the reduction of the Other to an object, this can be completely achieved through destruction, killing; but this is a frustration of the project of reducing a subject as such to the condition of an object. As long as there is another for-itself, the reduction cannot be carried through; and if it is carried through, there is no longer a for-itself.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 431 (English, p. 364).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 434 (English, p. 367).

Sartre's preoccupation with the existential analysis of phenomena such as masochism and sadism naturally gives the impression that he regards love as doomed to frustration and that he is not prepared to recognize genuine community, the we-consciousness. He does not however intend to deny that there is such a thing as an experience of 'we'. For example, during a theatrical performance or a football match there is or can be what Sartre describes as a non-thetic we-consciousness. That is to say, though each consciousness is absorbed in the object (the spectacle), the spectators at a cup final, for instance, are certainly co-spectators, even though they are not reflecting on the we-subject. The non-thetic we-consciousness shows itself clearly enough in a spontaneous outburst of applause.

On the level of the reflexive consciousness however the emphasis is laid by Sartre on the we-subject as arising in confrontation with Others. Consider, for example, the situation of an oppressed class. It experiences itself or can come to experience itself as an Us-object for the oppressors, as an object of the look of a They. If subsequently the oppressed class becomes a self conscious revolutionary class, the We-subject arises, which turns the tables on the oppressors by transforming them into an object. There can therefore perfectly well be a we-consciousness in which one group confronts another.

What however about humanity as a whole? According to Sartre, as one would indeed expect, the human race as a whole cannot become conscious of itself as an Us-object without postulating the existence of a being which is the subject of a look comprising all members of the race. Humanity can become an Us-object only in the posited presence of the being who looks at but can never be looked at. 'Thus the limiting concept of humanity (as the totality of the Us-object) and the limiting concept of God imply one another and are correlative.'[2] As for the experience of a universal We-subject, Sartre insists that this is a purely psychological or subjective event in a single consciousness. One can indeed conceive the ideal of a We-subject representing all humanity; but this ideal is conceived by a single consciousness or by a plurality of consciousnesses which remain separate. The actual constitution of a self-conscious intersubjective totality remains a dream. Sartre can therefore conclude that 'The essence of the relations between consciousnesses is not the *Mitsein*; it is conflict.'[1] The for-itself cannot do away with the basic dilemma. It must attempt to turn the Other into an object or allow itself to be objectified by the Other. As neither of these projects can be really successful, it can hardly be claimed that *Being and Nothingness* provides a promising basis for any such concept as Teilhard de Chardin's theory of a hyper-personal consciousness.

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[1] In connection with this project Sartre examines devious ways, such as masochism, of wooing, as it were, another's freedom.

[2] *L'être et le néant*, p. 495 (English, p. 423).

7. We have noted that according to Sartre humanity as a whole can become for itself an Us-object only if the existence of an omnipotent and all-seeing God is posited. And if there were a God, humanity could become a we-subject, in striving, for instance, to master the world in defiance of God. But Sartre does not believe that there is a God. In fact he is convinced that there cannot be a God, if by 'God' we mean an infinite self-conscious Being.[2] He does indeed represent belief in God as the result of an hypostatizing of 'the look' (*le regard*), a point of view which finds expression in *Les mots*[3] and in the account in *The Reprieve* of Daniel's conversion, as well as in *Being and Nothingness*, where Sartre refers to Kafka's *The Trial* and remarks that 'God is here only the concept of the Other pushed to the limit'.[4] This account of the origin of man's idea of God, if taken simply by itself, would leave open the possibility of there being a God. For all we know, there might be an all-embracing 'look'. But Sartre also argues, as we have already noted, that the concept of God is self-contradictory, inasmuch as it tries to unite two mutually exclusive concepts, that of being in itself (*l'en-soi*) and that of the for-itself

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 502 (English, p. 429). *Mitsein*, to be with or being with. Sartre's contention is that Heidegger's *Mitsein* is a psychological experience which does not reveal a basic ontological relation between consciousnesses.

[2] It is sometimes said that Sartre denies the existence of God only as conceived by theists. But such remarks are not so important as the people who make them seem to think that they are. If, for example, we care to call *l'en-soi* God, then of course Sartre does not deny the existence of God. But given the ordinary use of terms in the West, it would be extremely misleading or confusing to say that Sartre believes in God because he postulates the existence of *l'en-soi*.

[3] *Words* (Penguin edition), p. 65.

[4] *L'être et le néant*, p. 324 (English, p. 266). Cf. *ibid.*, p. 341 (p. 281).

(*le pour-soi*). It is indeed pretty obvious that if consciousness is the negation of being in itself, there cannot be a self-grounded and non-derived consciousness, and that the concept *l'en-soi-pour-soi* is self-contradictory.

It is hardly necessary to say that the validity of this logical demonstration of atheism depends on the validity of Sartre's analysis of his two basic concepts. And here there is a formidable difficulty. For the more he assigns to consciousness the active role of conferring meanings on things and constituting an intelligible world, so much the less plausible does it become to represent consciousness as a negation of being. It is true of course that being in itself is depicted as self-identical in a sense which excludes consciousness, so that the rise of consciousness can be represented as a negation of being. But the contention that being as so depicted is the Absolute, in so far as there is an Absolute, depends for its validity on the further contention that *le pour-soi* not only involves a negation or 'nihilation' of being as depicted by Sartre but is also in itself a negation, not-being. And it is very difficult to see how this position can be maintained, if consciousness is as active as Sartre says that it is. In other words, the force of his demonstration of the self-contradictory nature of theism seems to depend on the assumption that being in itself must be without consciousness, an assumption which requires, if it is to be justified, a proof that consciousness is not-being. And this cannot be proved in terms of the assumption which it is used to justify. In the long run Sartre appears simply to assume or to assert that infra-conscious being, when stripped of all the intelligibility conferred on it by consciousness, is absolute being.

However this may be, what role does atheism play in the philosophy of Sartre? Sometimes he says that it does not make any difference whether God exists or not. But what he seems to mean by this is that in either case man is free, inasmuch as he *is* his freedom. For freedom belongs to the very structure of the for-itself. In *The Flies* (*Les mouches*) therefore, when Zeus says that he created Orestes free in order that he might serve him (Zeus), Orestes replies that once he had been created free, he ceased to belong to Zeus and becme independent, able to defy the god if he so wished. In this sense it makes no difference, according to Sartre, whether God does or does not exist. But it by no means follows that atheism plays no important role in Sartrian existentialism. Indeed, Sartre himself has explicitly stated that it does.

In his lecture on existentialism and humanism he asserts that 'existentialism is nothing else but an attempt to draw all the conclusions from a coherent atheist position'.[1] A conclusion which he mentions is that if God does not exist, values depend entirely on man and are his creation. 'Dostoievsky wrote, "if God did not exist, everything would be permitted". This is the point of departure of existentialism.'[2] Sartre could of course refer also to Nietzsche, who had no use for the idea that one could reject belief in God and still maintain belief in absolute values or in a universally obligatory moral law.

Sartre's position can be expressed in this way. Man is free; and this means that it depends on man what he makes of himself. He cannot however avoid making something of himself.[3] And what he makes of himself implies an operative ideal, a basic project, which he has freely chosen or projected for himself. It is not therefore a question of man being under an *a priori* moral obligation to choose his values. For he does so in any case. Even if he endorses, so to speak, a set of values or of ethical norms which he receives from society, this endorsement is an act of choice. The values become *his* values only through his own act. This would apply to acceptance of commands and prohibitions which the religious believer conceived as emanating from God. God could indeed punish a man for disobedience; but if man is free, it depends on him whether or not he accepts the divine commands as his ethical norms. From this point of view therefore we can say that it makes no difference whether there is a God or not. Even if God existed, man would still have to pursue goals which he had chosen. At the same time, if there is no God, there can obviously be no foreordained divine plan. There can be no one common ideal of human nature which man has been created to realize through his actions. He is thrown back entirely on himself, and he cannot justify his choice of an ideal by appealing to a divine plan for the human race. In this sense the existence or non-existence of God does make a difference. It is true that if a man accepts the ethical norms which he believes to have been promulgated by God, this implies that he has freely projected his ideal as that of a God-fearing man. The point is however that if in fact there is no God who has created man for a purpose, to attain a determinate end or goal, there is no given moral order to which man can appeal to justify his choice. The notion that there are absolute values subsisting in some celestial realm of their own, apart from a divine mind, is quite unacceptable to Sartre. It may indeed be the case that he could have approached the matter in a simpler way by interpreting 'values' simply in terms of the act of evaluation. But he would still insist of course that if there is no God, there is no possibility of justifying man's act of evaluation, say as 'rational', by appealing to a divinely determined ideal of human nature which is the measure of self-fulfilment or self-realization. To be sure, Sartre himself sees man as striving after the realization of a basic project, that of becoming *l'en-soi-pour-soi* or God. But he adds that the project is doomed to frustration, inasmuch as the concept of the unity of being in itself and consciousness is a self-contradictory concept. And in this sense the (necessary) non-existence of God makes a difference.

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[1] *L'existentialisme est un humanisme*, p. 94 (English, Mairet, p. 56).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 36 (English, p. 33).

[3] Even if a man commits suicide, he has made something of himself.

Sartre is anxious to dissipate the impression that he is concerned with promoting moral anarchy or encouraging a purely capricious choice of values and ethical norms. He argues therefore that to choose between x and y is to assert the value of what we choose (that x, for example, is better than y), and that 'nothing can be good for us without being good for all'.[1] That is to say, in choosing a value one chooses ideally for all. If I project a certain image of myself as I choose to be, I am projecting an ideal image of man as such. If I will my own freedom, I must will the freedom of all other men. In other words, the judgment of value is intrinsically universal, not of course in the sense that other people necessarily accept my judgment but in the sense that to assert a value is to assert it ideally as a value for everyone. Sartre can therefore claim that he is not encouraging irresponsible choice. For in choosing values and deciding on ethical norms 'I am responsible for myself and for all'.[2]

The validity of the contention that in choosing a value one chooses ideally for all men is perhaps not so clear as Sartre seems to think that it is. Is it logically inadmissible for me to commit myself to a course of action without claiming that anyone else in the same situation ought to commit himself in the same way? It may be so; but further discussion would be appropriate. Indeed, a philosophical ethics would have to consist, on Sartre's premises, in an analysis of the judgment of value and of the moral judgment as such. It is true of course that within the frame of reference of his personally chosen values Sartre could develop a moral philosophy with concrete content. And within this frame of reference he can pass judgment on other people's attitudes and actions. But his personally chosen system of ethics could not legitimately be presented as entailed by existentialism, not, that is to say, if existentialism illuminates possibilities of choice while leaving the actual choice entirely to the individual. It has indeed appeared to some readers that Sartre really regards freedom as an absolute value, and that the outline of an ethical system could be deduced from existentialist premises. In this case however existentialism would stand in need of some revision. The idea of there being a common human nature would reappear.[1] And it is perhaps not surprising that Sartre denies that he looks on freedom as an absolute value. Freedom makes possible the creation or choice of values; but it is not itself a value. It can hardly be claimed however that Sartre successfully avoids making statements which imply that recognition by the for-itself of its total freedom and realization of this freedom in action are intrinsically valuable.

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[1] *L'existentialisme est un humanisme*, pp. 25–6 (English, p. 29).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 27 (English, p. 30).

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[1] It appears in any case of course, given Sartre's analysis of the common basic structure of the for-itself. His attempt to admit a universality of condition (such as being-in-the-world) while denying a universal human nature is not conspicuously successful.

CHAPTER XVII

THE EXISTENTIALISM OF SARTRE (2)

Sartre and Marxism — The aims of the Critique *— Individual praxis — The anti-dialectic and the domination of the practico-inert — The group and its fate — Critical comments.*

1. SARTRIAN existentialism as outlined in the last chapter by no means excludes personal self-commitment in a given historical situation. Provided therefore that Sartre did not claim that the values which he was defending were absolute in a metaphysical sense, there was no incompatibility between his existentialist philosophy and his support of the Resistance in the second world war. In regard however to his support of Marxism the situation is more complex. If it were simply a question of collaborating with a political Party with a view to realizing certain social ends which were considered desirable, such collaboration would hardly be incompatible with existentialism from a logical point of view, even if we felt inclined to question the wisdom of a champion of human freedom making common cause with a Party whose dictatorial ways are notorious. Marxism however is a philosophy with doctrines, not to say dogmas, which cannot be reconciled with Sartrian existentialism. For example, whereas Sartre represents the for-itself as the source of all meaning, Marxism depicts history as being in itself an intelligible process, a process which can be discerned by the human mind and which, when stated in the form of dialectical materialism, represents scientific knowledge rather than metaphysical speculation. The question arises therefore to what extent Sartre has come to accept Marxism as a philosophy, and, if he accepts it, whether he has abandoned existentialism or tries to combine it with Marxism.

In 1946 Sartre published in *Les temps modernes* a long article on materialism and revolution.[1] In it he accepts Marx's view of man as self-alienated and of the need for revolution if this alienation is to be overcome. He objects however to Marxist materialism. He is indeed prepared to admit that, historically speaking, materialism has been 'bound up with the revolutionary attitude',[1] and that from the short-term view of the politician or the political activist it is 'the *only myth* which suits revolutionary requirements'.[2] At the same time Sartre insists that this is precisely what materialism is, namely a myth and not the expression of scientific knowledge or of absolute truth. Further, dogmatic materialism makes it impossible to understand man as the free self-transcending subject. To be sure, the Marxists protest that their materialism is dialectical and different from old-fashioned materialism. And in practice they obviously call for and rely on man's free activity. This simply shows however that even if materialism has a temporary pragmatic value, a genuine philosophy of revolution must discard this myth. For such a philosophy must be able to accommodate and explain the movement of transcendence, in the sense of the human subject transcending the present social order towards a society which does not yet exist, which is therefore not clearly perceived, and which man seeks to create but which will not come about automatically or inevitably. This possibility of transcending a given situation and grasping it in a perspective which unites understanding and action 'is precisely what we call freedom'.[3] And it is this which materialism is incapable of explaining.

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[1] Reprinted in *Situations III* (1949). An English translation is included in *Literary and Philosophical Essays.*

The article to which we have been referring certainly reads like a sustained attack on Marxism and, by implication at any rate, as a defence of existentialism. Sartre asserts however that 'the Communist Party is the only revolutionary party',[4] and in a subsequently added note he explains that his criticism was directed not so much against Marx himself as against 'the Marxist scholasticism of 1949'.[5] In other words, Sartre looks on the Communist Party as the spearhead of social revolution and as the organ of man's transcendence in a given situation. And in his articles on the Communists and peace in *Les temps modernes* (1952 f.) he defends the Party and exhorts workers to join it. He has not himself joined it however, and he has continued to believe that Marxism has become a dogmatism which stands in need of rejuvenation through a rediscovery of man as the free active subject. As long as dialectical materialism retains its present form, existentialism must continue to exist as a distinct line of thought. If however

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[1] *Literary and Philosophical Essays*, p. 207. The implication is that theism, for example, is linked with a conservative outlook.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 208. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 220. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 238. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 185, *n* 1.

Marxism were rejuvenated by basing itself on man rather than on Nature, existentialism would cease to exist as a distinct philosophy.

This point of view finds expression in Sartre's *Question de méthode*,[1] which is prefaced to the first volume of his *Critique de la raison dialectique*.[2] In no age, according to Sartre, is there more than one living philosophy, a living philosophy being the means by which the ascending class comes to consciousness of itself in an historical situation, whether clearly or obscurely, directly or indirectly.[3] Between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries Sartre finds only three epochs of real philosophical creation. 'There is the "moment" of Descartes and of Locke, that of Kant and of Hegel, finally that of Marx.'[4] The philosophy of Marx is thus the living philosophy of our time; and it cannot be surpassed as long as the situation out of which it arose remains unsurpassed.[5] Unfortunately, the philosophy of Marx has ceased to grow and is affected with sclerosis. 'The open concepts of Marxism have become closed; they are no more *keys*, interpretative schemata; they are asserted in themselves, as already achieved knowledge.'[6] In Kantian terminology, regulative ideas have been transformed into constitutive ideas; and heuristic schemes have become dogmas imposed by authority. This has meant that the Marxists have misrepresented historical events, such as the Hungarian revolution of 1956, by forcing them into a rigid theoretical framework,[7] while the heuristic principle of seeking the universal in its particulars has been converted into the terrorist principle 'liquidate particularity',[8] a liquidation which under Stalin at any rate assumed an obviously physical form.

A living philosophy is for Sartre a process of 'totalization'. That is to say, it is not a totality or finished whole, like a fully constructed machine, but rather a unifying or synthesizing process, bringing together past and present and oriented to a future which is not determined in advance. The philosopher is within an ongoing process, and he cannot take the place of God and see all history as a totality. This is however precisely what the Marxists try to do when they speak of the future as assured and of the inevitable march of history towards a certain goal. Moreover, they thus make nonsense of human freedom and creativity, even though their political activism demands and presupposes human freedom.

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[1] Translated by H. Barnes as *Search for a Method* (New York, 1963).

[2] Paris, 1960. This work will be referred to in footnotes as *C.R.D.*

[3] For example, the consciousness of the bourgeoisie is said to have been expressed obscurely 'in the image of universal man proposed by Kantianism' (*C.R.D.*, p. 15).

[4] *C.R.D.*, p. 17.

[5] According to Sartre, any attempt to go beyond Marxism is in effect a return to a pre-Marxist position.

[6] *C.R.D.*, p. 28.

[7] It is of course true that events such as the Hungarian revolution and the liberalization of the régime in Czechoslovakia under Dubcek were misrepresented by theoreticians and publicists of the Soviet Union. But it is also pretty obvious that the actions of the Soviet authorities were influenced by other factors besides ideological blinkers.

[8] *C.R.D.*, p. 28.

A natural conclusion to draw from Sartre's criticism is that Marxism is certainly not the living philosophy of our time, even if it is the official ideology of a powerful social-political movement. Sartre however will not allow that the sclerosis of Marxism is the result of senility. 'Marxism is still young, almost in infancy; it has hardly begun to develop. It remains therefore the philosophy of our time.'[1] The original inspiration of Marxism has indeed been forgotten by theoreticians of the Communist Party. And if the Marxist follows Engels in finding the dialectic at work in Nature itself, quite independently of man, and regards human history as the prolongation of natural processes which develop inevitably, man is reduced to the condition of a passive instrument of an hypostatized dialectic. Though however Marxism has been distorted, it is capable of rediscovering its original inspiration and its basic humanism. Sartre quotes the well known statement by Engels in a letter to Marx that it is human beings themselves who make their history, though they do so in a situation which conditions their activity.[2] He uses texts of this kind to support his contention that Marxism can rediscover within itself the idea of man as defined by his project, by his movement of transcendence towards his possibilities, towards a future which, though conditioned by the present, can be realized only through man's free action.

If Marxism returns to its original inspiration and rediscovers the human dimension within itself, 'existentialism will no longer have any reason to exist.'[3] That is to say, it will cease to be a distinct line of thought and will be absorbed, preserved and surpassed in 'the totalizing movement of philosophy',[4] in the one living and developing philosophy of our time. Marxism is the only philosophy which really expresses the consciousness of man living in a world of 'scarcity' (*rareté*), in a world in which there is an unequal distribution of material goods and which is therefore characterized by conflict and class antagonism. And a humanized Marxism (an existentialized Marxism, one might say) would be the only genuine philosophy of revolution. If however the social revolution were to be realized and a society were to come into being from which scarcity and class antagonism were absent, Marxism would have fulfilled its destiny and would be succeeded by another 'totalizing' philosophy, a philosophy of freedom.[1] In other words, to say that Marxism is the one living philosophy of our time is not to say that it is the final philosophy for all future time.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 29. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 60. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 111. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

2. We have been referring to the essay on method (*Question de méthode*), which was originally entitled *Existentialism and Marxism*. Sartre tells us[2] that though this essay was written before the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* and has been used as an introduction to it, the *Critique* is prior from the logical point of view, inasmuch as it provides the critical foundations of the essay on method. This does not alter the fact that the essay is considerably easier to read than the *Critique* itself, which is long, rambling and turgid.

In the *Critique* Sartre is concerned with dialectical thinking as the only way of understanding history. He makes a distinction between analytical and dialectical rationalism. The analytical reason, represented by eighteenth-century rationalism and by positivism, adopts the position of a spectator, of an external judge. Further, it tries to explain new facts by reducing them to old facts; and it is thus incapable of understanding the emergence of novelty. The dialectical reason however, which moves through thesis, antithesis or negation, and the negation of the negation, does not reduce the new to the old; nor does it attempt to explain the whole by reducing it to its constituent parts. It expresses an irreversible movement, oriented to the emergence of novelty. It can be described, Sartre tells us, as 'the absolute intelligibility of an irreducible novelty *in so far* as it is an irreducible novelty'.[3] It understands the 'parts', such as particular historical situations and social groups, not in the light of a totality, in the sense of a finished or complete whole, but in terms of an ongoing process of totalization, oriented to the new.

Sartre agrees therefore with the Marxists that the movement of history can be understood only by dialectical thinking. He finds fault with them however for not grounding the dialectical method in an *a priori* manner. He himself proposes to establish *a priori* 'the heuristic value of the dialectical method, when it is applied to the sciences of man, and the necessity, whatever may be the fact envisaged, provided that it is *human*, of setting it in the ongoing totalization (*dans la totalisation en cours*) and of understanding it in this context.'[1] For example, Sartre wishes to grasp, in and through the real alienations of concrete history, alienation as an '*a priori* possibility of human *praxis*'.[2] In the first volume of the *Critique* he is not concerned with adding to our knowledge of historical facts, nor with playing the part of a sociologist by studying the development of particular societies or groups. Rather is he concerned with asking 'on what conditions is the knowledge of *a history* possible? Within what limits can the connections which are brought to light be *necessary*? What is dialectical rationality, what are its limits and its foundations'?[3] Sartre therefore entitles his work a *Critique* of the dialectical reason, the term being obviously suggested by Kant's use of the term *Kritik*. Indeed, in one place Sartre remarks that, to 'parody' Kant, his aim might be described as that of laying the foundations of a 'Prolegomena for every future anthropology'.[4]

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[1] Sartre is referring of course to freedom from the slavery of material production as hitherto experienced, not to freedom as the structure of *le pour-soi*. For the latter is an ever-present reality.

[2] *C.R.D.*, p. 9.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 147.

Mention of Kant can however be misleading. For though Sartre is concerned with the conditions of possibility for history being an intelligible but not determined process, he does not regard his inquiry as purely formal, as a reflection by the mind on a pattern of thought which it imposes on a process which is not itself dialectical in structure. The word 'dialectic', he remarks, can be used in two ways, as meaning either a method, a movement of thought, or a movement in the object of thought. He claims however that the two meanings are simply two aspects of one process. The dialectical reason has indeed to reflect on itself. For it 'can be criticized, in the sense in which Kant understood the term',[5] only by itself. But to grasp the basic structures of dialectical thought is also to grasp the basic structures of the movement of history. The dialectical reason's reflection on itself can thus be seen as history becoming conscious of itself.

What Sartre tries to do in the first volume of the *Critique* is to reconcile the thesis that it is man who makes history, and so the dialectic, with recognition of the fact that human activity is subject to and limited by antecedent conditions to such an extent that he can appear to be 'undergoing' the dialectic rather than making it. To put the matter in another way, Sartre is determined to preserve his existentialist view of man as a free agent, defined by his project, while he is also determined to adopt and justify the Marxist interpretation of history as a dialectical process. His determination to make human freedom the basic factor in history means that he cannot accept any mechanistic interpretation of history which would imply that human beings are simply puppets or instruments of a dialectical law which operates in Nature apart from man and continues to govern human history. In the *Critique* he does not seem prepared to state roundly that talk about a dialectical process in Nature in itself, apart from man, is nonsensical. But he makes it clear that the claim that there is such a process is for him no more than an unverified hypothesis which should be disregarded. And he confines his attention to human history, insisting that it is made by man, whereas Nature 'in itself' is obviously not man's creation. At the same time Sartre's determination to do justice to the contention of Marx and Engels that human activity is subject to antecedent conditions means that he has to place a greater emphasis than in *Being and Nothingness* on the influence of man's situation. Man exists, for example, in a material environment; and though he works on the environment, the environment (or Nature not 'in itself' but in relation to man) acts on him and conditions his activity. Within limits man can change his environment; but then the changed environment constitutes a new objectivity, a new set of antecedent conditions which influence and limit human activity. In other words, the relationship between man and Nature is a changing dialectical relationship. And analogous remarks can be made about the relationship between man and his social environment. Societies and groups are created by man; but every human being is born into a social environment, and the fact of social pressure is undeniable, even though man is capable of transcending a given social situation in view of a projected goal which, if realized, constitutes a new objectivity or set of antecedent conditions.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 153.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 154. By *praxis* Sartre means human action. Philosophy as oriented to the future, is itself a form of action and can thus be subsumed under *praxis*.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 153.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 120.

The reconciliation of the two theses, that man makes history and that his activity is subject to and limited by antecedent conditions, can be found, according to Sartre, only by discovering the roots of the whole dialectical process of history in human *praxis* or action. Sartre tells us that in the first volume of the *Critique* he looks 'exclusively for the intelligible foundations of a structural anthropology, in so far, it is understood, as these synthetic structures constitute the very condition of an ongoing totalization which is perpetually oriented.'[1] He treats first of what he calls the constituting dialectic. This is grasped in and through reflection on the individual's *praxis*, on his productive work; and it is in fact the dialectic of the worker, considered as an individual. Sartre then tries to show how the constituting dialectic gives rise to its negation, the anti-dialectic, in which man becomes a prisoner of his own product, of the 'practico-inert'. This is of course the sphere of alienation, the sphere in which human beings are united in 'collections', like the individuals who are brought together by being concerned with the maintenance and running of a certain machine. Thirdly, the transition from the negation to the negation of the negation is effected by the constitution of the 'group', in which human beings are united by sharing a common end or project and transcend their given situation towards possibilities to be realized through concerted free action. The third phase therefore, described as the constituted dialectic, is in effect the dialectic of the group. The whole process, in all its phases, is rooted in human *praxis*, in man's productive action. And if we can say that in the dialectical reason's self-reflection history becomes conscious of itself, this means that human *praxis* becomes conscious of itself and of its dialectical developments as free activity which presupposes antecedent conditions.

In the first volume of the *Critique* therefore Sartre pursues what he describes as a regressive method, working back to the underlying dialectical structure of the relations between man and Nature and between human beings. He inquires into the fundamental structures which make it possible to claim with truth that it is men who make history but that they do so as the basis of antecedent conditions. It is clear however that human action can have results which are different from those envisaged by the agents. A group may carry out concerted action which appears as successful to the members of the group, though the long-term result, the 'diachronic' effect as Sartre puts it, may be different from what the group intended or extended. To take a simple example, 'the victory of 1918 creates in the common field of

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 156.

Europe the possibility of the defeat of 1940.'[1] It may thus appear that in the long run it is not so much a question of men freely making history as of their suffering or undergoing a necessity which is beyond their control. There is need therefore for use of the method of 'synthetic progression' to unify the multiplicity of human actions or, rather, to show how they ceaselessly 'totalize' themselves in an intelligible but open-ended historical process. And Sartre informs us that in the promised second volume of the *Critique* he 'will try to establish that there is *one* human history, with *one* truth and *one* intelligibility'.[2]

The development of an overall philosophy of history is not quite what one would expect from the author of *Being and Nothingness*. But critical comment is best left until we have outlined, in an inevitably brief and sketchy manner, some of the lines of thought contained in the one published volume of the *Critique*. For the moment it is sufficient to note that Sartre is determined to prove a thesis, to justify the view that Marxism is the one living philosophy of our time, even if it needs rejuvenation through an injection of existentialism.

3. As we have already indicated, Sartre begins by considering the action or *praxis* of the individual. For if it is men who make history, and if history is a dialectical totalization of the actions of individuals, it is essential to show that human action possesses an inherently dialectical structure. '*The whole of the historical dialectic rests on individual praxis which is already dialectical*, that is to say in the measure in which action is in itself a negating transcendence of a contradiction, a determination of a present totalization in the name of a future totality, a real and efficacious working of matter.'[3]

This tiresome jargon is used to refer to quite ordinary situations. Sartre assumes the existence of man as a living organism. That is to say, the organic negates the inorganic. Man however experiences need (*besoin*). He needs food, for example. And this need is said to be a negation of the negation, in the sense that the organism transcends itself towards its material environment. By doing so it totalizes its environment as the field of possibilities, as the field, that is to say, in which it seeks to find satisfaction of its needs and so to conserve itself as an organic totality in the future. The action proceeding from the need is a working of matter.

By totalizing his environment in this way man constitutes it as a passive totality. 'Matter revealed as a passive totality by an organic being which endeavours to find therein its being, here is Nature in its first form.'[1] Nature however, as so constituted, reacts on man by revealing itself as a menace to the life of the human organism, as an obstacle and threat of possible death. In this sense Nature negates man. Sartre preserves the point of view maintained in *Being and Nothingness* that it is consciousness which confers meaning on being-in-itself. For it is the organism's transcending towards its natural environment which reveals this environment as threatening or menacing. Nature's negating of man is thus due to man himself. This does not however alter the fact that Nature does appear as a menace or a threat of destruction. And to protect himself man has, according to Sartre, to make himself 'inert matter'. That is to say he has to act on matter by means of a tool, whether it is a tool in the ordinary sense or his own body treated as a tool. This action however is inspired by a *projet* and thus has a mediating function between present and future, in the sense that man's acting on his material environment is directed to his own conservation, as a present totality, in the future. 'Praxis is at first nothing else but the relation of the organism as an exterior future to the present organism as a threatened totality.'[2] It is therefore through his productive labour, and so through the mediation of Nature, that man totalizes himself, linking himself as a present totality to himself as a future possibility, as the goal of his movement of transcendence. According to Sartre the relations between man and his material environment thus take the form of 'dialectical circularity',[3] man being 'mediated' by things to the extent in which things are 'mediated' by man.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 635. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 635. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 165–6.

Even on the level of individual praxis however there are obviously relations between individuals, though the genuine group does not belong to this phase of the dialectic. Consider, for example, two workers who agree on an exchange of products. Each voluntarily becomes a means for the other, in and through his product. And we can say that each recognizes the other's *praxis* and project. But unity does not go further than this. In a world of scarcity of course one man represents a menace or threat to the other. But this situation leads to conflict rather than to genuine unity, even if one man succeeds in compelling another to serve as an instrument for the attainment of his own end. In Sartre's view

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 167.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 165.

'unity comes from outside',[1] a theme already familiar from *Being and Nothingness*. In some cases unification is affected simply in the consciousness of the third party. One of the examples given by Sartre is that of a bourgeois on holiday, who watches from a window two workers, one working on a road, the other in a garden. The watcher negates them by differentiating himself, as a bourgeois on holiday, from the two workers, but by doing so he unites them in terms of their praxis. This unification has of course a foundation in fact, inasmuch as the two men are actually workers; but the unification takes place in the mind of the watcher, not in the minds of the labourers who are *ex hypothesi* unaware of one another. In other cases however the unification (or totalization) is effected in a plurality of consciousnesses through the mediation of a third party. For example, in the presence of the exploiting boss a we-consciousness, that of the exploited, can arise in the minds of the workmen.

As has been noted, explicit treatment of such themes as exploitation does not really belong to consideration of the first phase of the dialectic. For individual praxis as such does not involve either exploitation or the formation of a group. At the same time the possibility of such developments is prefigured in individual praxis. And this is the point which Sartre wishes to make. He is arguing that the conditions of possibility of the dialectic of history, interpreted of course on Marxian lines, are present from the start in individual praxis, so that human action is the foundation of the whole dialectic. To put the matter in another way, he wishes to maintain the position of *le pour-soi* in *Being and Nothingness* as the giver of meaning. For example, Sartre argues that in Nature in itself there is no scarcity. Scarcity is present in Nature only through the mediation of man, in relation, that is to say, to human needs. Once present in the material environment, making Nature appear as a threat to man's life, scarcity then rebounds, so to speak, onto man himself, making his fellow men appear to the individual as a threat. This situation in turn makes possible not only conflict, violence[2] and exploitation but also the forming of genuine groups. Thus while he finds room for Marx's concept of man as standing in a dialectical relationship to his environment before the development of conflict and class antagonism, at any rate in a logical sense of 'before', Sartre can also assert that the conditions of possibility of the whole dialectic of history are precontained in man's free action, and that history is thus made by man.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 197.

[2] For Sartre violence is interiorized scarcity.

4. When speaking of scarcity Sartre refers to scarcity of products, scarcity of tools, scarcity of workers, scarcity of consumers. The basic reference however is to shortage of the goods required for the maintenance of human life. Scarcity in this sense grounds the possibility of social division into haves and have-nots or at any rate into consumers and sub-consumers, and so of class division. Such division can of course take place as the result of war, when one population is compelled to work for another. But what is inevitable is that in a world of scarcity there should be class divisions of some kind. As for determinate social relations and structures, Sartre accepts the Marxian doctrine that they depend on the mode of production. 'The essential discovery of Marxism is that work as an historical reality and as the utilization of determinate tools in an already determinate social and material milieu is the real basis of the organization of social relations. This discovery *can no more* be questioned. . . . In the milieu of scarcity all the structures of a determinate society rests on its mode of production.'[1] At the same time Sartre tries to go back behind social division and struggle, the negation of man by man, 'the negation of man by matter considered as the organization of his being outside himself in Nature.'[2]

The point of view which finds expression in this typical spcimen of Sartrian jargon can be illustrated in the following way. To overcome scarcity man acts on his material environment and invents tools to do so. But then matter worked on by man (*matière œuvrée*) turns against man, becoming 'counter-man'. Thus the Chinese peasants won arable soil 'against Nature'[3] by pursuing a policy of deforestation. The result of this was a series of inundations against which there was no protection. Nature exhibited a 'contra-finality' and affected human praxis and social relations. Again, the invention of machines and the development of industrialization was intended to overcome scarcity but in fact produced a further negation of man by making human beings the slaves of machines. Man thus falls under the domination of the 'practico-inert' which he himself has created. Man makes the machine; but the machine then reacts on man, reducing him to the level of the practico-inert, to what can be manipulated. To be sure, man remains the *for-itself*, and so free. At the same time hs becomes subject to the domination of the worked matter (*matière œuvrée*) which he himself has made and which represents man as outside himself, as objectified in matter. Man is thus alienated or estranged from himself.

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 224–5, notes.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 223.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 232.

Sartre lays great emphasis on the power of worked matter to affect social relations. 'It is the object and the object alone which *combines* human efforts in its inhuman unity.'[1] For example, it is the demands of the machine which differentiate workers into skilled and unskilled. It is also the practico-inert which determines the stratification of classes, a class being for Sartre a collective or collection. In the collection human beings are united by something outside themselves in the way that a number of people waiting for an already crowded bus are united. They constitute a 'series', not in the sense that they are all standing in a line but in the sense that each member is a unit, interested in his getting a place in the bus, a unit for which other members of the series are potential rivals or enemies. Similarly, each worker in a factory is intent on gaining his livelihood; and what brings the workers together in this particular collection is the machine or set of machines. Again, it is worked matter or the practico-inert which lies at the basis of class-division. To use an Hegelian term, Sartre is speaking of the class 'in itself', not of the class 'for itself'. And he accepts the Marxist view that the mode of production determines the nature of class division.

This domination of man by matter represents the sphere of what Sartre describes as the anti-dialectic.[2] And he lays such emphasis on it that some writers have seen in his attitude an almost Manichaean view of matter as evil or at any rate as the source of evil. However this may be, it should be remembered that worked matter is for Sartre man exteriorized and that man's subjection to the practico-inert is in a sense subjection to himself, though in a form which involves self-estrangement or self-alienation. Though enslaved to his creation, man remains free. And just as the constituting dialectic contains within itself the possibility of an anti-dialectic, so does the anti-dialectic contain within itself the possibility of the constituted dialectic. Thus the class in itself can become the class for itself, and the series can be transformed into the group.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 350.

[2] The sphere or phase of the anti-dialectic is associated by Sartre with the analytical reason, the mode of thought characteristic of the bourgeoisie. This is one reason why Sartre describes the bourgeois intellectuals who discovered the dialectical reason as 'traitors' to their class. Obviously, the word 'traitor' is used descriptively, and not in a condemnatory sense.

5. This transition is not for Sartre inevitable or automatic but depends on human freedom, on individuals negating the domination of the practico-inert and transcending the social situation created by this domination towards a new social form, with a view to constituting or making it 'on the basis of the anti-dialectic'.[1] The unification of the workers as a genuine group, taking concerted action in view of a common end, must come from within. The transformation of the series into a group or of the class in itself into the class in and for itself comes about through a synthesis, a marriage as it were, of the original freedom which expresses itself in individual praxis, in the constituting dialectic, with the externally produced totalization in a series which pertains to the phase of the anti-dialectic.

The original constitution of the group expresses an upsurge of freedom. But Sartre is under no illusion about the group's stability. Once its immediate aim is attained, the storming of the Bastille for example, it tends to fragment or fall apart. The threat of atomization is met, if it is met, by 'the oath' (*le serment*), a term which should be understood not in the sense of a formal oath or of a social contract but rather in that of the will to preserve the group. This will however is inevitably accompanied by the exercise of constraint on members of the group whose actions tend to disintegrate it. In other words, the preservation of a group is accompanied by the development of authority and institutionalism. There then arises the temptation on the part of the leader or leaders of the group to represent his or their will as the 'real' will of all, considered as constituting an organic totality. But Sartre refuses to admit that the group is or can be an organic entity over and above its interrelated members. It is true that the leader may succeed not only in imposing his will but also in getting it accepted by the other members as their will. But the individual member is then reduced to the status of a quasi-inorganic entity, while 'the group is the machine which the sovereign makes to function *perinde ac cadaver*'.[2] The group can thus come to resemble an inorganic entity, a machine; but when constraint is removed, its members tend to break apart, thus manifesting the fact that while they are individual organic entities, the group is not.

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[1] *C.R.D.*, p. 376.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 601. *Perinde ac cadaver*, like a corpse.

The State is for Sartre the group of organizers and administrators to which the other groups composing a given society have conceded authority, probably more out of impotence than because they positively willed to do so. It is true that the organized State is required for the protection of groups; but it is not an organic entity with some sacred status. And its legitimacy consists in its ability to combine and manipulate other collections and groups. 'The idea of a diffused popular sovereignty which embodies itself in the sovereign is a mystification. There is no diffused sovereignty. The legitimacy of the sovereign is simply one of empirical fact, the ability to govern. 'I obey because I *cannot* do otherwise.'[2]

Sartre rejects therefore any deification of the State. And, as one would expect, he accepts the Marxist view that in the class struggle the State acts as 'the organ of the exploiting class (or classes)'.[3] At the same time he recognizes that even if the State acts as the organ of a dominant class, it none the less claims to represent the national interest and that it may conceive a 'totalizing' view of the common good and impose its mediating policy even on the dominant class. To say this however is to say that the group which constitutes the State tries to maintain itself as the accepted legitimate sovereign 'by serving the interests of the class from which it proceeds, and, *if needed, against its interests*.'[4] In plain English, a government composed of people from a particular class may take a wider view than that which would be suggested by the *prima facie* interests or advantage of the class in question. If so, this is to be interpreted in Marxist terms as a subtle way of preserving the position of the dominant class, which might otherwise be threatened.

To do him justice, Sartre is quite prepared to extend his rather cynical view of the State to the Communist State. In his opinion it is in the interest of the dominant group in the State to reduce other groups to collections or series and at the same time to condition the members of these series in such a way that they have the illusion of belonging to a genuine totality. This was what the Nazi government tried to do. And it can also be seen in the case of the so-called dictatorship of the proletariat. Talk about the proletariat exercising a dictatorship is for Sartre 'mystification'. The plain fact is that the dominant group takes good care to see that no other genuine groups arise and combines coercion with

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 609. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 609. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 610. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 612.

conditioning to preserve the illusion that its own interest is that of the totality.

6. There is an obvious difference in atmosphere between *Being and Nothingness* on the one hand and the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* on the other. In the earlier work it is the totally free individual who stands in the centre of the picture, the individual who chooses his own values and is constantly transcending himself towards his future possibilities in the light of his freely chosen basic operative ideal, until at death he relapses into the facticity of *l'en-soi*, the in-itself. In spite of topical examples, the work can be looked on as an abstract analysis of the two fundamental concepts of the for-itself and the in-itself and as applying to man at all times. In the later work, the *Critique*, the general movement of history comes to the fore, and a much greater emphasis is laid on the group and concerted action by a group as it transcends a given social situation towards the realization of a new society. Again, though in the earlier work Sartre certainly recognizes the fact that every human being exists and acts in a given historical situation, and the fact that the exercise of human freedom is influenced by a variety of factors, environmental, physiological, and psychological, he is chiefly intent on arguing that limitations on human freedom are limitations only because the individual confers on them this significance. In the *Critique* this point of view does indeed reappear; but there is clearly a much greater emphasis on the constraining pressure of antecedent conditions on human activity. 'Above all, let no one proceed to interpret us as saying that man is free in all situations, as the Stoics claimed. We want to say exactly the contrary, namely that all men are slaves in so far as their experience of life develops in the field of the practico-inert and in the precise measure in which this field is originally conditioned by scarcity.'[1]

To draw attention to differences between *Being and Nothingness* and the *Critique of the Dialectical Reason* is not however to deny that there is any discernible continuity. In the earlier work, we can say, there is a dialectical relationship between the for-itself and the in-itself, between consciousness and being. The former arises through a negation of the latter; and it thus presupposes and depends on being in itself. At the same time being in itself requires consciousness in order to possess meaning and to be revealed as a world. In the *Critique* this dialectical relationship takes the form of that between man and his material environment. Man presupposes a material environment and acts on it; but the environment is revealed as Nature only through the mediation of man. Again, in *Being and Nothingness* there is a dialectical relationship between distinct consciousnesses, inasmuch as the for-itself is said to negate and yet to require the Other. The Other's 'look' both threatens the self and reveals it to itself. In the *Critique* the threat represented by the Other is described in terms of the concept of scarcity rather than in that of the look; but the basic dialectical relationship remains. Moreover, in spite of the prominence which Sartre gives to the idea of the group, his account of the genesis, nature and disintegration of the group shows clearly enough that for him the individual free agent is still the basic factor. And even though in the *Critique* a much greater emphasis is placed on the constraining influence of antecedent conditions, the domination of man by matter is represented as man's subjection to himself as exteriorized, as a self-estrangement which can be freely transcended.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 369.

As Sartre has not simply abandoned existentialism for Marxism but has tried to combine the two by re-interpreting Marxism in the light of an existentialist anthropology, it is only to be expected that we should find in his thought elements both of continuity and of discontinuity. It does not necessarily follow however that his existentialized Marxism is free of all ambiguity. As we have seen, he tries to combine two positions. On the one hand there is the thesis that it is man himself who makes history, and that he does so in a sense which excludes the claim that a certain social situation in the future is assured, as, that is to say, the inevitable result of the working out of a dialectical law which governs the historical process. On the other hand there is the thesis that the dialectical pattern is not simply imposed on history by the human mind but that history possesses a dialectical structure of such a kind that it makes sense to speak of man undergoing or suffering the dialectic. Sartre wishes to retain the concept of man as the free agent and at the same time to make room for the idea of man as the slave of the practico-inert. He wishes to say on the one hand that it is man who freely makes the dialectical movement of history, while on the other hand he proposes the view that history is one intelligible open-ended process. If by claiming that history is intelligible Sartre meant simply that historians can write intelligible accounts of historical events and movements, there would be no difficulty, other than the puzzles which the philosopher can propose about the relation between, for instance, an historian's reconstruction in the present and a past which no longer exists. But when Sartre claims that history is intelligible, he obviously does not mean simply that historiography is possible. He is claiming that history as a whole, though an unfinished whole, a process of 'totalization', embodies one intelligible movement. And the more this claim is pressed, the closer does Sartre come to a teleological view of history which implies the very conclusion which he wishes to avoid, namely that history is governed by a dialectical law of which man is the instrument.

Sartre can reply, for example, that the statement that it is man who makes history and thus its dialectical pattern is not incompatible with the statement that man does not simply impose the pattern but finds or recognizes it. For man finds what he has made. If he finds in history his own self-alienation and his enslavement to the practico-inert, he is recognizing in reflection what he himself has brought about. It does not follow that man deliberately caused his enslavement. The fact of the matter is that man's activity is conditioned from the start by an antecedent or given situation. He acts freely, but not in a vacuum. His action has results which constitute antecedent conditions for the actions of others. And so on. Given man's basic situation, the course of his history is what one might expect. But it is none the less the story of the activity of free agents. History should not be represented as an entity over and above human action and as determining it. It is human action, as subject to the constraining pressure of antecedent conditions. And this pressure can amount to enslavement, though it does not destroy man's basic freedom and his ability to transcend his enslavement.

Though however Sartre can make a good job of reconciling positions which may appear at first sight to be incompatible, it is difficult to feel satisfied. As we have noted, Sartre looks in man himself for the conditions of possibility of the dialectic of history. This enables him to claim that it is man himself who makes history and its dialectical pattern and that there is no impersonal dialectical law working independently and using man as an instrument. As however man acts in a situation, we may well be inclined to draw the conclusion that the movement of history is simply the unfolding or development of the original or basic dialectical relationship between man and his environment. In other words, Sartre's grounding of the dialectic in man himself is not free from ambiguity. It might imply that man happens to have chosen to act in a certain way, when he could have acted in another way. Or it might imply that the dialectical movement of history is the development of a basic situation, a development which is predictable in principle. In this second case it would seem reasonable to speak of the operation of a law, even if the law were a law of man's nature as existing in a certain environment. As the second volume of the *Critique* has not yet appeared, it is obviously difficult to know how precisely Sartre proposes to develop his view of human history as possessing '*one* truth and *one* intelligibility'[1] without implying that the historical process is necessary. It would not be surprising however if he found the task rather difficult and was driven to talk about the analytical reason's inability to grasp the movement of dialectical thought.

The foregoing remarks relate of course simply to certain difficulties which arise if a philosopher tries to fuse Sartrian existentialism with Marxism. But we can very well go on to ask why Sartre or anyone else should make this attempt. It is not sufficient to answer that Marxism has become fossilized and that it needs an injection of humanism. This may very well be the case. But why choose Marxism in particular for rejuvenation? As we have seen, Sartre's reply is that Marxism is the one living philosophy of our time. Why however does he think this? He assumes of course that history can be divided up into epochs, and that in each epoch there is only one living philosophy. And even if we are prepared to grant the first assumption or at any rate to pass over it in silence, the second assumption is clearly questionable. There are other philosophies besides Marxism which are alive today. What makes Marxism more living than the others? It can hardly be because Marxism has practical implications, whereas so-called linguistic analysis, for example, is not practically oriented. For Sartre tells us that 'every philosophy is practical, even that which appears at first to be the most contemplative'.[2]

The answer is of course simple enough. Sartre assumes that in every epoch there is one ascending class. And the living philosophy of an epoch is for him the philosophy which brings to explicit expression the needs, interests, aspirations and goal of this class. It need not be thought out by members of the class in question. Marx and Engels were members of the bourgeoisie. But they developed the philosophy which turned the proletariat from a class in itself into a class in and for itself and transformed it, or part of it, from a series of collections into a group. Marxism brings to explicit expression the consciousness of the ascending class and enables it to transcend the existing social situation towards a future to be realized by concerted revolutionary action. It is the one genuine revolutionary philosophy of our time, and it is therefore the one living philosophy of our time.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 635.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

It is true that Sartre sometimes speaks of philosophy in what appears at first sight to be a different way. For example, he tells his readers that philosophy 'must present itself as the totalization of contemporary knowledge. The philosopher achieves the unification of all branches of knowledge.'[1] Taken by itself, this statement of the function of philosophy sounds like a reintroduction of the concept of a synthesis of the sciences as found in classical positivism. Sartre goes on however to say that the philosopher unifies contemporary knowledge by means of directive schemata which express 'the attitudes and the techniques of the ascending class in relation to its epoch and to the world'.[2] So the living philosophy is still the philosophy of the ascending class, in spite of talk about unification of the sciences.

It may well be true to say that every statement of the nature of philosophy expresses a philosophical stance, unless perhaps it is a case of a statement simply about linguistic usage. However this may be, it seems pretty clear that Sartre's concept of living philosophy expresses a previous acceptance of Marxism. For the matter of that, it is a previous acceptance of a Marxist point of view which governs his selection of historical examples and even his definition or description of man as 'a practical organism living with a multiplicity of organisms in a field of scarcity'.[3] Man is doubtless what Sartre says that he is, even if this is not all that he is. But the selection of certain aspects of man and his situation for particular emphasis is clearly governed by a previous conviction that Marxism is the one living philosophy of our time. In the long run we can hardly avoid the conclusion that it is Sartre's personal social and political commitment which is basically responsible for his choice of Marxism as the philosophy which he proposes to rejuvenate.

If the living philosophy of an epoch represents the self-consciousness and aspirations of the ascending class, the natural conclusion to draw is that it is true only in a relative sense. For

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 15.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 15.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 688.

there have been other epochs, with other ascending classes and other living philosophies. Sartre however does not wish to tie Marxism in an exclusive manner to the rising class. In the *Critique* he insists that Marxism is the philosophy of alienated man, not simply of the alienated worker. And, as we have seen, he tries to give Marxism a foundation in an anthropology or doctrine of man which exhibits the possibility of man's enslavement but is none the less logically prior to the emergence of the class struggle, inasmuch as it goes back to the basic situation of man as such. When looked at under this aspect, Marxism seems to be presented not simply as the philosophy of a particular class but rather as the true philosophy of man and of his history. To a certain extent a harmonization of the two points of view is perhaps possible. For it may be claimed, as the Marxist would doubtless claim, that the triumph of the proletariat will bring with it, sooner or later, the liberation of man in general. The salvation of man will be achieved through the proletarian revolution. But in this case Marxism would seem to be not simply the living philosophy of our time, in the sense mentioned above, but the one true philosophy, which would have been true at any time. Perhaps in the second volume of the *Critique* Sartre will devote some careful reflection to the question of precisely what truth-claims he wishes to make on behalf of his rejuvenated Marxism. As things stand, he does not seem to have made the matter very clear.

To many people however criticism of this kind has little value. Those who can swallow the contention that Marxism is the living philosophy of our time will regard such criticism as just the sort of tiresome exhibition which one might expect from an obscurantist bourgeois philosopher. Those however who believe that Marxism has life and power only because it has become the official ideology of a powerful, self-perpetuating and authoritarian Party and that, left to itself, it would go the way of other notable systems, may be impatient for another reason. They may think that Sartre has devoted his very considerable talents to pouring new wine into old skins, and that there are more valuable occupations than pointing out inconsistencies or ambiguities in his attempt to rejuvenate a philosophy which belongs to the nineteenth century rather than to the second half of the twentieth century. Perhaps so. But Marxism still has a powerful appeal. It possesses an obvious importance, even today. This however is compatible with its being a powerful myth, powerful, that is to say, when it is believed. It is arguable that Sartre has become fascinated by this myth because he sees in it the expression and instrument of a cause to which he has committed himself. At the same time it is a myth which can be misused and turned into the instrument of an oppressive group intent on the preservation of its power. Hence the attempt to rejuvenate the myth and to give it fresh life as a revolutionary call to the creation of a new society.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF MERLEAU-PONTY

A. Camus; the absurd and the philosophy of revolt — Merleau-Ponty; the body-subject and its world — Merleau-Ponty and Marxism — Lévi-Strauss and man.

1. IF a philosopher wishes to discuss such themes as human freedom, authenticity, self-commitment and personal relationships, his treatment is inevitably abstract and expressed in terms of general or universal concepts. Karl Jaspers, for instance, made a sharp distinction between the scientific objectification of man and the philosopher's endeavour to illuminate man's inner awareness of his freedom with a view to clarifying for man his basic possibilities of self-transcendence.[1] But even Jaspers had to write *about* man, employing universal concepts, even if he insisted on the need for special categories for this purpose. It is therefore understandable if in addition to their more professional philosophical writings certain thinkers, such as Sartre and Marcel, have published plays and, in Sartre's case, novels too, in which they have been able to exhibit 'problems of life' in terms of the actions, predicaments, options and relationships of individuals. Such works may give concrete and dramatic expression to themes which have already been treated in a more abstract way, or, as in Marcel's case, they may precede the more abstract and philosophical expression. In both cases however the two kinds of works have a recognizable relationship to one another which is lacking in cases in which a writer sets his philosophy aside and produces popular detective stories to augment his income.

If however the thought of Sartre is discussed in accounts of French philosophy, it is because of the writings which profess to be and are philosophical works, not on account of plays such as *The Flies* or *In Camera*, even if the latter stand in a recognizable relationship to the former. And the question arises whether one is justified in including mention of literary figures who are commonly thought of as having philosophical significance but who not only did not publish philosophical works in the academic sense but also refrained from making any claim to be philosophers. It is difficult to determine rules to which no exception can reasonably be taken. If we think of philosophy as a science which is concerned with proving that certain propositions are true, we shall be unlikely, for example, to include a treatment of Dostoievsky in a history of Russian philosophy. And though mention of his name occurs fairly frequently in, for instance, the work by N. O. Lossky,[1] he is mentioned incidentally and not listed among Russian philosophers. At the same time it is possible to take a wider view of philosophically significant writing; and no great surprise would have been caused if aspects of Dostoievsky's thought had been considered. In fact, the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* edited by Paul Edwards contains an article devoted to the great Russian novelist.

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[1] Jaspers' point of view might be expressed in this manner. Considered as an object of scientific study, man is something already made, and individuals are classifiable in various ways by physiologists, psychologists and so on. For the philosophers of 'existence' (*Existenz*) man is the free agent who makes himself: he is always 'possible existence'. And each individual is unique, a unique possibility of self-transcendence.

In regard to recent French thought similar questions can be raised in regard to A. Camus.[2] He was not indeed a professional philosopher, nor did he ever claim to be. But in view of the themes of which he wrote he has been commonly mentioned in accounts of existentialism in France, even though he denied that he was an existentialist. And the insertion of some remarks about him seems defensible, though not obligatory.

Albert Camus (1913–60) was born and educated in Algeria. In 1940 he went to Paris, where he participated actively in the Resistance. In 1942 he published his novel *L'étranger*[3] and a well known essay entitled *Le mythe de Sisyphe.*[4] After the war he continued to be involved in political activity, and a number of his political essays, which originally appeared in the newspaper *Combat* and elsewhere, have been reprinted in the three volumes of *Actuelles.*[5] Camus' famous novel *La Peste* appeared in 1947,[6]

[1] *History of Russian Philosophy* (New York, 1951).

[2] There are of course a good many French literary figures whose writings possess philosophical significance but who cannot be all discussed in a history of philosophy. Georges Bataille, author of *L'expérience intérieure* (1943), *Sur Nietzsche* (1945) and other works is a case in point.

[3] Translated by S. Gilbert as *The Outsider* (London, 1946) and *The Stranger* (New York, 1946).

[4] Translated as *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays* by J. O'Brien (New York and London, 1955).

[5] Paris, 1950–8. A selection of these articles have been published in an English translation by J. O'Brien entitled *Resistance, Rebellion and Death* (New York and London, 1961).

[6] Translated as *The Plague*, by S. Gilbert (London and New York, 1948).

and in 1951 he published *L'homme revolté*,[1] an essay which led to a breach in relations between himself and Sartre. The novel entitled *La chute*[2] appeared in 1956. In the following year Camus received the Nobel prize for literature. But in 1960 he was killed in a motor accident. His *Notebooks* (*Carnets*) have been translated into English[3] and also some of his plays.[4]

Camus is well known for his statement that 'there is only one really serious philosophical problem, that of suicide. To judge that life is or is not worth the trouble of being lived, this is to reply to the fundamental question of philosophy.'[5] On the face of it this may seem a very eccentric view of philosophy. The presupposition however is that man seeks a meaning in the world and in human life and history which would ground and support his ideals and values. Man wants to be assured that reality is an intelligible teleological process, comprising an objective moral order. To put the matter in another way, man desires metaphysical assurance that his life is part of an intelligible process directed to an ideal goal, and that in striving after his personal ideals he has the backing and support, so to speak, of the universe or of reality as a whole. The great religious leaders and creators of metaphysical systems and world-views have tried to supply this need. But their interpretations of the world cannot stand up to criticism. In the end the world is revealed, to the clear-sighted man, as without any determinate purpose or meaning. The world is not rational. Hence arises the feeling of the absurd (*le sentiment de l'absurde*). Strictly speaking, the world is not absurd in itself: it simply is. 'The absurd arises from this confrontation between man's appeal and the irrational silence of the world. . . . The irrational, human nostalgia and the absurd which arises from their confrontation, those are the three personages of the drama . . .'[6] The feeling of the absurd can arise in a variety of ways, through, for example, the perception of Nature's indifference to man's values and ideals, through recognition of the finality of death, or through the shock caused by the sudden perception of the pointlessness of life's routine. Some thinkers understand the absurd but then pursue a policy of escapism. Thus Karl Jaspers leaps from the 'shipwreck' of human longings to the Transcendent, while Leo Chestov makes a similar leap to a God who is beyond reason. But the man who, like Nietzsche, is able to look the absurdity of human existence in the face sees the meaning of the world disappear. Hence the problem of suicide. For 'to see the meaning of this life dissipated, to see our reason for existing disappear, that is what is unbearable. One cannot live without meaning.'[1]

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[1] Translated as *The Rebel* by A. Bower (London, 1953; revised version, New York, 1956).

[2] Translated as *The Fall* by J. O'Brien (London and New York, 1957).

[3] *Notebooks 1935–42*, translated by P. Thody (New York and London, 1963). *Notebooks 1942–51*, translated by J. O'Brien (New York, 1965).

[4] *Caligula and Three Other Plays*, translated by S. Gilbert (London and New York, 1958).

[5] *Le mythe de Sisyphe* (new French edition, Paris, 1942), p. 15.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 45. Camus distinguishes between the feeling of the absurd and the idea or conviction (the clear consciousness) of the absurd.

Suicide is not however the action recommended by Camus. In his opinion suicide means surrender to the absurd, capitulation. Human pride and greatness are shown neither in surrender nor in the sort of escapism indulged in by the existential philosophers (*les philosophes existentiels*, such as Jaspers) but in living in the consciousness of the absurd and yet revolting against it by man's committing himself and living in the fullest manner possible. There are indeed no absolute standards which permit us to dictate to a man how he should live. As Ivan Karamazov says, all is permitted. But it does not follow that the absurd 'recommends crime. This would be puerile. . . . If all experiences are indifferent, that of duty is as legitimate as any other. One can be virtuous by caprice.'[2] The man of the absurd (*l'homme absurde*) can take various forms. The Don Juan who enjoys to the full, as long as he is able, experiences of a certain type, while conscious that none of them possesses any ultimate significance, is one form. So is the man who recognizes the meaninglessness of history and the ultimate futility of human action but who none the less commits himself to a social or political cause in his historical situation. So is the creative artist who sees clearly enough that both he and his works are doomed to extinction but who none the less devotes his life to artistic production. And in *La peste* Camus raises the question whether there can be an atheist saint. The man of the absurd lives without God. But it by no means follows that he cannot devote himself in a self-sacrificing manner to the welfare of his fellow men. Indeed, if he does so without hope of reward and conscious that in the long run it makes no difference how he acts, he exhibits the greatness of man precisely by this combination of recognition of ultimate futility with a life of self-sacrificing love. It is possible to be a saint without illusion.

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[1] From the play *Caligula*.

[2] *Le mythe de Sisyphe*, p. 94.

In maintaining the meaninglessness of the world and of human history (in the sense that they have no goal or purpose which is given independently of man) Camus is substantially at one with Sartre, though the latter does not dwell so much as the former on the theme of 'the absurd'. Sartre is not however the source of Camus' assumption. We should not of course speak as though an original writer such as Camus simply borrowed his ideas from a predecessor. But it is clear that it was Nietzsche who provided a stimulating influence. Camus believed that Nietzsche had rightly seen the advent and rise of nihilism; and, like the German philosopher, he looked to man as the only being capable of overcoming nihilism. At the same time it does not follow that Camus can be properly described as a Nietzschean. For one thing, Camus came to be more and more concerned with injustice and oppression in human society in a manner in which Nietzsche was not. Camus did not indeed renounce his belief 'that this world has no ultimate meaning';[1] but he came to lay more and more stress on revolt against injustice, oppression and cruelty rather than on revolt against the human condition as such. Indeed, he became convinced that the feeling of the absurd, taken by itself, can be used to justify anything, murder included. 'If one believes in nothing, if nothing makes sense, if we can assert no value whatsoever, everything is permissible and nothing is important. . . . One is free to stoke the crematory fires or to give one's life to the care of lepers.'[2] In point of fact revolt presupposes the assertion of values. True, they are man's creation. But this does not alter the fact that if I revolt against oppression or injustice, I assert the values of freedom and justice. With Camus, in other words, cosmic absurdity, so to speak, tends to retreat into the background; and a moral idealism comes to the fore, a moral idealism which did not call for the production of an élite, an aristocracy of higher men, at the expense of the herd, but which insisted on freedom and justice for all, real freedom and justice moreover, not oppression or enslavement masquerading under these honoured names.

Camus was no admirer of bourgeois society. But he became acutely aware of the way in which revolt against the existing order can end with the imposition of slavery. 'The great event of the twentieth century was the forsaking of the values of freedom by the revolutionary movement, the progressive retreat of socialism based on freedom before the attacks of a Caesarian and military socialism.'[1] Man cannot play the part of a spectator of history as a whole; and no historical enterprise can be more than a risk or adventure for which some degree of rational justification can be offered. It follows that no historical enterprise can rightly be used to justify 'any excess or any ruthless and absolutist position'.[2] For example, killing and oppression in the name of the movement of history or of a terrestrial paradise to be attained at some indefinite future date are unjustified. If absolute nihilism can be used to justify anything, so can absolute rationalism, in which God is replaced by history. In regard to their consequences, 'there is no difference between the two attitudes. From the moment that they are accepted, the earth becomes a desert.'[3] We have to get away from absolutes and turn to moderation and limitation. 'Absolute freedom is the right of the strongest to dominate'[4] and thus prolongs injustice. 'Absolute justice is achieved by the suppression of all contradiction: therefore it destroys freedom.'[5] It is on behalf of living human beings not on behalf of history or of man in some future age that we are called upon to rebel against existing injustice and oppression, wherever it may be found. 'Real generosity towards the future lies in giving all to the present.'[6]

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[1] *Resistance, Rebellion and Death*, p. 21.

[2] *The Rebel*, p. 13.

As has already been noted, the publication of *The Rebel* (*L'homme revolté*) led to a breach of relations between Camus and Sartre.[7] The latter had been coming closer to Communism, though without joining the Party, and he was already engaged in the project of combining existentialism and Marxism. Camus, while disclaiming the label 'existentialist', was convinced that the two were incompatible, and that Marxism, with its secularization of Christianity and substitution of the movement of history for God, led straight to the death of freedom and the horrors of Stalinism. As for bourgeois democracy, which replaced eternal divine truths by abstract principles of reason, the trouble has been, according to Camus, that the principles have not been applied. In the name of freedom bourgeois society has condoned exploitation and social injustice; and it has sanctioned violence. What then does Camus wish to put in the place of Communism, Fascism, Nazism and bourgeois democracy? Apart from some remarks about the benefits to man which have been obtained through trade unionism, he gives no clear picture. And Sartre of course sees him as criticizing various movements but offering only vague and abstract ideas. Camus however has no intention of offering a blueprint. His philosophy of revolt is mainly concerned with moral values and the development of moral responsibility; and he insists that though the rebel must act because he believes that it is right to do so, he must also act with the recognition that he might be wrong. The Communist will not entertain the idea that he might be wrong. Hence his ruthlessness. The only hope for the future is an open society, in which the passion of revolt and the spirit of moderation are in constant tension.[1]

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[1] *Resistance, Rebellion and Death*, p. 67.

[2] *The Rebel*, p. 253.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 253.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 251.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 252.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 268.

[7] A critical review of the work was published by Francis Jeanson. Camus replied in the form of a letter addressed to the editor, Sartre himself. And this elicited a combative counterblast from Sartre.

It does not follow however that Camus is an optimist with unbounded faith in man, provided that unjust institutions can be overthrown. In *The Fall* he makes his central character, Clamence, refer to 'the basic duplicity of the human being',[2] as though he located the root of evil in man himself. This is not indeed incompatible with what he has to say about social institutions. For they are made by man. At the same time there seems to be a shift of emphasis in his thought from the absurdity which arises in the confrontation between man and the world to social evils, and from social evils to the evil in the heart of man. How his thought would have developed if it had not been for his untimely death, it is obviously impossible to say.

Camus was a man who found himself unable to accept Christian belief but who not only had high moral ideals but was also passionately concerned with human freedom, social justice, peace and the elimination of violence. He was not anti-Christian in the sense in which this term would be ordinarily understood. What he objected to was not so much Christianity as such (he had Christian friends whom he admired) but the compromise and ambiguous attitude in regard to social and political evils which he regarded as a betrayal of the original Christian inspiration. 'When man submits God to moral judgment, he kills him in his own heart.'[3] The question then arises, what is the basis of morality? If we deny God in the name of justice, 'can the idea of justice be understood without the idea of God?'[4] Camus was not sufficiently interested in professional philosophy to devote time and energy to prolonged reflection on such problems. He was convinced however that man cannot live without values. If he chooses to live, by that very fact he asserts a value, that life is good or worth living or should be made worth living. Man as man can revolt against exploitation, oppression, injustice and violence, and by the very fact that he revolts he asserts the values in the name of which he revolts. A philosophy of revolt has therefore a moral basis; and if this basis is denied, whether explicitly or in the name of some abstraction such as the movement of history or through a policy of expediency, what began with revolt, with the expression of freedom, turns into tyranny and the suppression of freedom. Camus tended to leave his assertions without any developed theoretical support; but he undoubtedly threw light, as the citation asserted when he was awarded the Nobel Prize, on the problems of human conscience in our times. He was genuinely and deeply concerned with these problems, and in treating of them he displayed, as writers on him have noticed, a combination of commitment and detachment. He was certainly committed; but at the same time he preserved the measure of detachment which enabled him to avoid the lamentable but not uncommon tendency to fulminate against the evils of one political system while excusing similar or even worse evils in another system or country. In other words, Camus' commitment was basically moral rather than political in character.

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[1] Camus laid great emphasis on the reduction of violence. This included for him the elimination of capital punishment. See his 'Reflections on the Guillotine' in *Resistance, Rebellion and Death*.

[2] *The Collected Fiction of Albert Camus* (London, 1960), p. 282.

[3] *The Rebel*, p. 57.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 57.

2. In turning from Albert Camus to Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–61) we turn from a socially and politically committed essayist, novelist and dramatist to a professional philosopher. Not that Merleau-Ponty can be described as uncommitted. For he believed that ethics cannot be divorced from political action; and up to a point he supported the Marxists, even if he had little use for Marxist dogmatism. Whereas however we cannot consider Camus' thought apart from his social and political commitment, there are large areas of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy which can be treated on a purely theoretical level.

After studying at the École Normale in Paris and taking his agrégation in philosophy, Merleau-Ponty taught in a lycée and then at the École Normale. After the war, during which he served as an officer, he became a professor first at the University of Lyon and then at the Sorbonne. In 1952 he was appointed to the chair of philosophy at the Collège de France. Merleau-Ponty was one of the founders of *Les temps modernes* and a co-editor, along with

Sartre. He has sometimes been described as an existentialist;[1] but though there is indeed ground for associating him with atheist existentialism, he is better described as a phenomenologist. This label helps at any rate to differentiate him from Sartre. It is true of course that Sartre has developed phenomenological analyses. The point is however that the label 'existentialist', together with the fact that Merleau-Ponty was for a time associated with Sartre, tends to give the impression that the former was a junior partner or even disciple of the latter, whereas he was really an independent and original thinker.

Merleau-Ponty's first main publication was *La structure du comportement*,[2] which appeared at Paris in 1942. This was followed in 1945 by *Phénoménologie de la perception*.[3] In 1947 Merleau-Ponty published *Humanisme et terreur, essai sur le problème communiste*, in which he examined the problem of the use of terror by the Communists. A collection of essays, entitled *Sens et non-sens*, appeared in 1948.[4] The inaugural lecture given by Merleau-Ponty at the Collège de France was published in 1953 under the title *L'éloge de la philosophie*.[5] In 1955 he published *Les aventures de la dialectique*, which includes a criticism of Sartre, and this was followed in 1960 by *Signes*.[6] Before his death Merleau-Ponty had started on a new work, *Le visible et l'invisible*, intended as a fresh statement of his philosophy. The part of the work which he had written was published in 1964, together with notes for the projected parts.

In a lecture which he gave at Geneva in 1951 Merleau-Ponty asserts that the twentieth century has erased the dividing line between body and mind and 'sees human life as through and through mental and corporeal, always based upon the body and always (even in its most carnal modes) interested in relationships between persons'.[1] This statement refers of course to the overcoming of dualism on the one hand and of a reductive materialism on the other. And the reader may wonder whether it is not perhaps too sweeping. Sartre, for example, is certainly a twentieth-century writer; but as far as his analysis of the concepts of 'the in-itself' and 'the for-itself' is concerned, the distinction between the two seems to be sharpened into an antithesis, a pretty obvious dualism. Merleau-Ponty is however quite well aware of this fact. When he refers to twentieth-century thought, he is clearly referring to what he considers its most significant and valid trend, a more adequate self-awareness by man, an awareness which is expressed in, though not confined to, Merleau-Ponty's own philosophy. He sees the line of thought which he sums up in his concept of the 'body-subject' as triumphing over dualism on the one hand and materialism and behaviourism on the other and, to put the matter in another way, as going beyond the antithesis between idealism and materialism. In existentialism man is indeed conceived as essentially a being in the world, dialectically related to it in the sense that man cannot be understood apart from the world, apart from his situation, while what we call 'the world' cannot be understood apart from the meanings conferred on it by man. This sort of idea is of course present in Sartre and expresses the trend of thought to which Merleau-Ponty refers. But Sartre also presses the distinction between consciousness and its object in such a way as to give new life to a version of the Cartesian dualism against which Merleau-Ponty vigorously reacts.

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[1] For example, there is one excellent work on his thought by A. de Waehlens entitled *Une philosophie de l'ambiguité: l'existentialisme de Maurice Merleau-Ponty* (Louvain, 1951).

[2] Translated by A. L. Fisher as *The Structure of Behaviour* (Boston, 1963).

[3] Translated by C. Smith as *Phenomenology of Perception* (London and New York, 1962).

[4] Translated by H. L. and P. A. Dreyfus as *Sense and Nonsense* (Evanston, Ill., 1964).

[5] Translated by J. Wild and J. M. Edie as *In Praise of Philosophy* (Evanston, Ill., 1963).

[6] Translated by R. C. McCleary as *Signs* (Evanston, Ill., 1964).

By dualism Merleau-Ponty understands the view of man as a composite of body and spirit or mind, the former being considered as a thing among things, subject to the same causal relations which are found between other material objects, while the latter is looked on as the source of all knowledge, freedom and openness to others or, to use Merleau-Ponty's term, as 'existence'. Obviously, Merleau-Ponty does not deny that the body can be treated as an object and considered as such in scientific inquiry and research. But in his view this possibility presupposes the human body as being itself a subject, in dialogue with the world and with other persons. It is not a question of maintaining that there is in the body a distinct soul or spirit, in virtue of which the composite being can be described as a subject. It is the body which is subject. This view obviously entails understanding body in a sense rather different from that in which it would be understood within a dualistic framework of thought, namely as opposed to mind or spirit. It is precisely this opposition which Merleau-Ponty wishes

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[1] *Signs*, pp. 226–7.

to overcome and thinks that he has overcome through his concept of body-subject. If we start with dualism and then try to overcome it by making the one or other factor primary, we either reduce mind to body or identify the real man with an incorporeal soul or spirit. Merleau-Ponty however rejects such reductionism and insists that the human body is one reality which is at the same time material and spiritual. He is of course aware that there are factors in the situation which provide an at any rate *prima facie* ground for dualism; and he is aware of the very great difficulty which we encounter if we try to avoid language which implies dualism. In other words, he admits that the concept of the body-subject is difficult to express, and that one has to look for a new language to express it. He is convinced however that this is precisely what philosophers ought to try to do, and that they should not tamely let themselves remain imprisoned in old linguistic and conceptual fetters.

It may seem that Merleau-Ponty's project bears a marked similarity to that of Gilbert Ryle in his work *The Concept of Mind*. So it does in some respects. Both philosophers are opponents of dualism, but neither wishes to reduce man to a machine. For each of them the human being is one single 'incarnate' reality which lives, desires, thinks, acts, and so on. At the same time there is also a clear dissimilarity. One of Ryle's contentions is that all mental operations should be understood in terms of public or witnessable activities.[1] It is natural therefore that he should devote his attention to the mental phenomena of which we are easily aware; and as a counterblast to dualism he constantly cites examples of what we are accustomed to say in ordinary language, to expressions which militate against the idea of purely private and occult mental activities, and so against the notion of 'the ghost in the machine'. Merleau-Ponty however is intent on showing that mental activities, in the sense of activities at the level of more or less clear consciousness, do not constitute a mental life which accrues to a body that is itself without subjectivity, but that they presuppose the body-subject. He is not trying to reduce psychical to physical processes. He argues that already at a preconscious level the body is subject. In other words, he wishes to explore a territory which underlies and is presupposed by the various activities that give rise to the dualistic expressions of ordinary language. It is understandable therefore that he insists on the need for fresh concepts and modes of expression.

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[1] It is this aspect of his thought which has given rise to the accusation of behaviourism, the validity of which Ryle rejects.

The field specially chosen for investigation by Merleau-Ponty is perception. In a paper which he wrote in connection with his candidacy for a chair at the Collège de France he says that his 'first two works sought to restore the world of perception'.[1] If we simply state however that Merleau-Ponty develops a phenomenology of perception, the statement is apt to mislead. For the word 'perception' may suggest the activity of describing the essential structure of this conscious activity when it has been turned into an object of reflection. Merleau-Ponty however is concerned with perception as the mode of existence of the body-subject at a pre-conscious level, with, that is to say, the dialogue between the body, as subject, and its world at a level which is presupposed by consciousness. In this case of course the phenomenological method, as employed by him in this context, cannot take the form of a faithful description of an immediate datum of reflective awareness or consciousness. It is a case of delving into the region of obscurity; and Merleau-Ponty admits that any complete illumination of this obscure field is unattainable. One can only feel one's way, grope, and try to let in as much light as one can. He believes however that it is important to make the effort. For 'the perceived world is the always presupposed foundation of all rationality, all value and all existence'.[2] It is not a case of maintaining that thought, for example, consists of transformed sensations. It is a case of trying to penetrate to the presupposed foundation of thought and of all conscious activity and trying to elucidate its structure. The philosopher, as Merleau-Ponty conceives him, is very much an explorer.

In his first main work, *La structure du comportement* (*The Structure of Behaviour*) Merleau-Ponty approaches the theme of the relations between man and his environment through an examination of certain modern physiological and psychological theories, such as behaviourism and the *Gestalt* psychology. In other words, he places himself on the level of scientific theories and confronts these theories with what he believes to be the facts of man's perceptual behaviour. He argues, for example, that we cannot account for the facts by interpreting the relation between the human body and its environment in terms which imply that the body is a machine with pre-established mechanisms which are set in motion simply by reaction to external stimuluses. 'The true stimulus is not the one defined by physics and chemistry; the reaction is not this or that particular series of movements; and the connection between the two is not the simple coincidence of two successive events'.[1] Science, for its own purposes, can legitimately consider the body as a thing among things; but the scientific point of view is formed through a process of abstraction from a level of real behaviour at which the organism exhibits a kind of prospective activity, behaving as though it were oriented towards certain meanings or goals. The organism's capacity for meaningful response can be exercised of course only within limits and in dependence on conditions in its environment. It is not however a question simply of a 'blind' response. The organism exhibits 'subjectivity', though at a pre-conscious level.

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[1] *The Primacy of Perception and Other Essays*, edited by J. M. Edie (Northwestern University Press, 1964), p. 3.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

Merleau-Ponty's line of thought can be expressed in this way. The relation between the human organism and its environment cannot be expressed simply in terms of mechanistic reciprocal causality. That is to say, we cannot reduce the reciprocal action between the terms of the relation 'to a series of uni-directional determinations'.[2] There is indeed causal interaction. For example, food acts on the organism, and the organism acts on the food by assimilating it. But the food is *food* only in virtue of the structure, needs and activity of the organism. The effect produced by *x* cannot be understood simply in terms of *x*. There is a complex dialectical relationship. And subjectivity is present when for one of the factors in the relationship all other factors constitute a world. Merleau-Ponty does not mean to imply that the perceived world (at the level of experience under consideration) is consciously perceived by the body-subject as a world. But he insists that on the level of perceptual behaviour there is already a global environment or milieu as a term in a dialectical relationship, correlative to the aptitudes (the 'can' or ability) of the subject. As we ascend the levels of experience and consciousness, the environment takes on new forms or shapes, in correlation with the meaning-conferring activity of the subject. But these presuppose a pre-conscious level on which the human organism unconsciously confers meaning and constitutes a milieu or environment. It does not of course confer meaning on nothing; nor does it create the things about it.

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[1] *The Structure of Behaviour*, p. 99.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 161.

But if we can talk about the ego and its world at the level of consciousness, we can also talk about the body-subject and its world or milieu at the pre-conscious level. The epistemological distinction between subject and object is not yet there. But there is none the less a *lived* dialectical relationship, which forms the constantly presupposed basis for higher levels of experience, though a higher level differs qualitatively from a lower level.

To assert that there is a dialectical relationship between man and his environment is to assert that man is from the beginning a being in the world, and that both terms of the relationship are real. In this sense Merleau-Ponty is a realist. At the level of reflective consciousness it becomes possible for philosophers to advance theories which subordinate the object to the subject, idealist theories that is to say; but this sort of theory distorts the original and basic relationship between man and his environment which is presupposed by every level of behaviour and experience. At the same time to say that this relationship is dialectical or that it is a continual dialogue between man and his environment is to say, among other things, that the meanings of things are determined not only by the object but also by the subject. To take a simple example, if that tree appears as far away, it is for me, in relation to myself, that it appears as far off. I am the centre in relation to which one tree appears as near, another as far. On the scientific level of course one can freely adopt the frame of reference which suits one's purpose; but on the level of perceptual behaviour spatial relations 'appear' within the dialogue between the human organism and its environment. Similarly, colours are neither purely objective nor purely subjective; they appear in the lived dialogue between the body-subject and the world. Obviously, the environment or situation changes. So does the subject, not simply as an effect of external stimuli but also through its own active responses which contribute to determining the meanings of the stimuli. The dialectical relationship is not static; the active dialogue is perpetual, as long as the subject exists. But it is within the dialogue between the body-subject and its environment that 'the world' comes to appear, though its appearances change.

In *La structure du comportement* Merleau-Ponty considers, as we have already mentioned, certain modern psychological theories. He tries to show that the facts discovered by these psychologists are at variance with and do not fit their presuppositions and implied ontological perspectives. On the contrary, the facts demand neither the reduction of the subject to a thing or object nor an idealist theory of a consciousness which creates the object but rather a recognition of the basic situation of an 'incarnate' subject involved in the world and in constant dialogue with it. In other words, Merleau-Ponty takes certain theories and tries to delve into the obscure region which is presupposed by all thought and knowledge. In his subsequent work *Phénoménologie de la perception* (*Phenomenology of Perception*) he instals himself from the first in perceptual behaviour 'in order to pursue the analysis of this exceptional relation between the subject and its body and its world'.[1] We cannot however reproduce the contents of this remarkable work. It must suffice to draw attention to a few points.

It may well have occurred to the reader that inasmuch as the passage just quoted makes a distinction between subject and body, it is hardly compatible with what we have been saying about Merleau-Ponty's concept of the body-subject as one single reality. But it is necessary to make some distinctions. We can of course consider the body purely objectively, and then we naturally distinguish between the body as object and the subject. However, 'the objective body is not the truth of the phenomenal body, the truth, that is to say, of the body as we live it. It is only an impoverished image thereof, and the problem of the relations between soul and body do not concern the objective body, which has only a conceptual existence, but the phenomenal body.'[2] The body considered as a purely physical object distinct from the subject is an abstraction, legitimate enough for a variety of purposes but not an expression of the body as lived or experienced. The latter is the body-subject. At the same time the body-subject is temporal: it transcends itself, and there are distinguishable levels. For example, the body considered as a group of habits can be considered as 'my body' by the subject or 'I' as it transcends the already given. 'We do not say that . . . the subject *thinks itself* as inseparable from the idea of the body.'[3] Indeed, Merleau-Ponty sometimes speaks of 'the soul', as a higher level of the subject's self-organization. But he insists that such distinctions refer to distinguishable aspects of one reality, and that they should not be understood in a dualistic sense. All such distinctions are made within a unity, the body-subject.

Merleau-Ponty's rejection of any dualistic interpretation of the human being is naturally accompanied, or followed, by a rejection of any real distinction between language and thought. It is true of course that when linguistic expressions have once been created and have become the common possession of a given society, with meanings determined by convention, they can be repeated and handed on from generation to generation. The 'spoken word',[1] language as already constituted, thus forms a datum which human beings appropriate in the course of education. And as, given this datum, it is possible for writers to invent new expressions to express new concepts, thus adding 'the speaking word'[2] to the 'spoken word', there is a natural inclination to regard thought as an inner activity which is distinct from language. One thinks and then gives verbal expression to the thought. Merleau-Ponty however regards this as a mistaken interpretation of the situation. In the case of the 'speaking word' the meaning is indeed in a state of coming to be; but it by no means follows that it comes to be *before* its symbolic or linguistic expression. We may talk, for example, of the poet seeking words to express his thoughts but the thought takes shape in and through its expression. He does not first have his poem 'in his mind' in an unexpressed state and then express it. For if he has it in his mind, he has already expressed it. Whether he has written it down or spoken it aloud is irrelevant. If the poem can be said to be present in his mind, it is present as expressed. It is precisely in the case of the 'speaking word' that the relation between thought and language becomes most clearly apparent. They are two aspects of one reality. If we separate them, words become mere physical occurrences, *flatus vocis*, to use a medieval term.

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[1] *The Primacy of Perception*, pp. 4–5.

[2] *Phénomenologie de la perception*, p. 493.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 467.

The general view maintained by Merleau-Ponty of the relation between thought and language is of course in harmony with that of the so-called 'linguistic analysts', who are opposed to the idea of a separation or real distinction between an occult activity, thought, on the one hand and the public phenomenon of language on the other. Like Gilbert Ryle, Merleau-Ponty recognizes the absurdity of complaining that we have only the words of a philosopher of the past, such as Plato or Hegel, and do not enjoy access to his thoughts or to his mind. For the philosopher's thoughts are expressed in his writings; and access to his words is access to his mind. The philosophers of ordinary language however are principally concerned with what Merleau-Ponty calls

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 229, *La parole parlée.*

[2] *Ibid.*, *La parole parlante.*

'the spoken word'. Inasmuch as they do not exclude in principle either the revision of ordinary language or the invention of fresh terms, they leave room for the 'speaking word'. At the same time the emphasis is laid on the 'spoken word', whereas Merleau-Ponty lays emphasis rather on 'the speaking word'. For he is intent on exhibiting the connections between his theory of language and his theory of the body-subject. He recognizes a kind of pre-linguistic understanding by the body of its world, a 'practognosis' as he calls it,[1] which is not distinct from the bodily behaviour in question. But thought in any proper sense of the word comes to exist in and through linguistic expression. The social aspects of the subject are of course manifested in the 'spoken word'. The human subject however is capable of transcending the already given or acquired; and this aspect is exhibited in the 'speaking word', in the creativity of scientists, poets and philosophers. But even with them thought and expression go together; and this shows that thought is anchored, so to speak, in the body-subject. There are successive levels of subjectivity; but the subject is always the 'incarnate' subject which, as it develops its potentialities, gives new meanings to the world. Thought represents one aspect of the body-subject, its subjectivity, while language represents another aspect, its corporeality. But just as the body-subject is one single reality, even if there are distinguishable aspects, so are thought and language one reality.

We have spoken of man's dialogue with his environment. This environment is not however simply the physical world of things or objects. Man is born into an historical and cultural situation. 'I do not have only a physical world, I do not live only in the milieu of the earth, air and water, I have around me roads, plantations, villages, streets, churches, utensils, a bell, a spoon, a pipe. Each of these objects bears stamped on it the mark of the human action for which it serves.'[2] Though however the human being is born into a world of cultural objects, it is obviously not a question of inferring the existence of other persons from such objects. This would give us at best an anonymous One. 'In the cultural object I experience the near presence of the Other under a veil of anonymity.'[3] Must we then say that we infer the existence of other persons from their overt behaviour, from their bodily movements? It is difficult to see what else one could say, if the body were understood in the sense required by dualism. But if the subject is not something hidden away in a body but the body itself, the body-subject, we can see that the existence of other subjects is experienced in man's pre-reflective dialogue with the world. The small child does not *infer* the existence of its mother from the smile which it sees on her face or from the movements of her hands. It has a pre-reflective perception of its mother in the dialogue of their behaviours. We have indeed to admit that a conflict can arise between different subjects, and that one subject can try to reduce another to the level of an object. But such conflicts obviously presuppose awareness of the existence of other persons. It may be objected that it is only as appearing for me or to me that other persons come to exist in my world. But it does not follow that they do not appear for me as other subjects. Certainly, I cannot *be* the other subject. Communication cannot be total and complete: the self is always involved in a certain solitude. But the solitude of real life is not that of solipsism. 'Solitude and communication ought not to be regarded as the two terms of an alternative, but as two moments of a single phenomenon, since, in fact, other people exist for me.'[1] To exist is to exist in a world which includes a social dimension; and the theoretical puzzles which can be raised on the level of reflection in regard to our knowledge of others presuppose an experienced or lived dialogue with other subjects.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 164. *Praktognosie* is the word coined by Merleau-Ponty.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 399.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 400.

In the *Phenomenology of Perception* Merleau-Ponty has some sensible remarks to make on the subject of freedom. He begins by recapitulating briefly the theory of Sartre in *Being and Nothingness*. For Sartre freedom is absolute. Our decisions are not determined by motives. For 'the alleged motive does not exercise weight on my decision; on the contrary, it is my decision which gives the motive its force.'[2] Again, it depends on me whether I see human being as things or as human beings, as objects or as free subjects; and it depends on my will to climb it that a rock appears to me as unclimbable or as a difficult obstacle. Merleau-Ponty objects that if freedom is said to be absolute and without limits, the word 'freedom' is deprived of all definite meaning. 'If, in effect, freedom is equal in all our actions and even in our passions . . . one cannot say that there is any *free action*. . . . It (freedom) is everywhere, if you like, but it is also nowhere.'[3] It is obviously true that it is I who give to this precipice the meaning of being an 'obstacle' to the ascent of the mountain which I envisage; but my dialogue with the world, in which this meaning arises, *is* a dialogue, not a monologue. The relation between the precipice and my body does not depend simply on me. When I give the precipice the significance of being an obstacle, I am already in a situation. Similarly, my past behaviour and the habits which I have formed constitute a situation. It does not follow that my present choice is determined. What follows is that freedom is never absolute but always 'situated'. This does not mean that a free action is divisible, as it were, into a part which is free and a part which is determined. It means that man is not a pure consciousness, but that the level of consciousness and freedom is conditioned by a pre-conscious level. To take an example given by Merleau-Ponty,[1] the bourgeois intellectual who breaks with his class and identifies himself with the proletarian revolutionary movement does so freely; but he reaches his decision not as a pure consciousness, existing apart from all social classes, but as one who is already situated by birth and upbringing. His decision, though free, is the decision of a bourgeois intellectual; he chooses precisely as such, and though in the end he may succeed in closing the gap between bourgeois intellectual and member of the proletarian class, he cannot do so through one initial decision to break with his own class and espouse the cause of another. His exercise of freedom is conditioned by a pre-existing situation.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 412.

[2] *Phénoménologie de la perception*, p. 497.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 499.

Merleau-Ponty did not claim to have provided definitive solutions of the problems which he considered. His thought was exploratory; and he regarded himself as making a contribution which opened the way to further reflection. In general, he was faced with the problem of harmonizing belief that man, the existing subject, confers meanings on his world with the evident fact that, as conscious beings, we find ourselves in a world already clothed with meaning. His treatment of perception and perceptual behaviour at a pre-conscious level was a contribution to the solution of this problem. But Merleau-Ponty never intended to imply that all levels of experience could be reduced to pre-conscious experience, or that the structures characteristic of higher levels could be described or analyzed simply in terms of the structures characteristic of the level of perception. The realm of perception, the 'life-world', constituted for him the basis of other levels. We all continue to live in the realm of perception. At the same time the higher levels require individual treatment; and Merleau-Ponty planned to follow up *The Structure of Behaviour* and the *Phenomenology of Perception* with works on such subjects as the origin of truth and the sociological significance of prose literature. In point of fact the planned volumes were not written; but he developed ideas on a number of subjects in important essays. An example is his paper on the phenomenology of language (1951) in which he maintains that 'when I speak or understand, I experience that presence of others in myself or of myself in others which is the stumbling-block of the theory of intersubjectivity.'[1] Another example is the notable essay *L'oeil et l'esprit* (*Eye and Mind*), which appeared in 1961.[2] This was the last piece of writing which Merleau-Ponty himself published. In it he expressed his view of operational science as having lost touch with the 'real world' and of art as drawing on the fabric of meaning which modern science 'would prefer to ignore'.[3] Reflection on art is used to support the basic idea of the body-subject as a perceiving and perceptible reality, the reality in the world through which Being becomes partially visible or is revealed. The author refers to music as representing 'certain outlines of Being—its ebb and flow, its growth, its upheavals, its turbulence';[4] but he concentrates his attention on painting as giving direct expression to concrete realities. Merleau-Ponty is not of course suggesting that science is useless or that it should be done away with. He is suggesting that it cuts itself off from the real world to which the artist has direct access.

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 509–10.

What does Merleau-Ponty mean by Being? In his last writings, particularly in the part of *The Visible and the Invisible* which he was able to finish before his death, his phenomenology takes a more metaphysical turn, and the theme of an ultimate or basic reality comes to the fore. Man is a perceptible reality, and as such he belongs to Nature or the world. He is also a perceiving reality, in dialogue with the world. But it does not follow that as subject man is a consciousness apart from or outside the world. What follows is that in his act of vision the world becomes visible to itself, in and through man. To put the matter in another way, man's awareness of Nature is Nature's awareness of itself, inasmuch as man belongs to Nature and is rooted in it. This is the metaphysical significance, so to speak, of the statement that man is both a perceiving and a perceptible reality. Though however man as perceiving constitutes his world (not in the sense that he creates it but in the sense that he makes structures appear), reality is more than becomes visible or perceptible. And that which becomes visible and which underlies the distinction between subject and object is Being. Being in itself is invisible. To speak paradoxically, it manifests itself as the non-appearing foundation of that which appears in the dialogue between the body-subject and its environment. It is not itself a perceptible structure but the field of all structures. Being becomes visible to itself in and through man, but only in the form of perceptible structures. What Merleau-Ponty calls 'the flesh of the world' grounds both subject and object and thus logically precedes them. It manifests itself both in perceptible structures and to thought (in the sense that man can become intellectually aware of its reality); but, considered in itself, it remains hidden.

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[1] *Signs*, p. 97.

[2] An English translation is included in *The Primacy of Perception*.

[3] *The Primacy of Perception*, p. 161.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 161.

It is perfectly reasonable to see in this theory of Being a significant development in Merleau-Ponty's thought. And it is understandable if some of those who admire him as a philosopher but who are distressed by his earlier exclusion of such concepts as the Absolute and God like to dwell on a metaphysical development which recalls Schelling's idea of Nature coming to know itself in and through man and of Being as hidden in itself but as grounding both subject and object. At the same time we should not read too much into Merleau-Ponty's concept of Being. Being is for him the invisible dimension of the visible. It is indeed the ultimate reality, in the sense that it becomes visible in the structures of the world; but it is not the God of theism. And even if this metaphysical turn in his thought would make it easier for him to find an opening to religious belief, there is no real justification for trying to annex Merleau-Ponty for Christianity.

3. What we have said hitherto may have given the impression that Merleau-Ponty stood aloof from social and political issues and confined himself to abstract philosophy. In point of fact he was strongly attracted by Marxism. One reason for this was obviously the emphasis laid by Marx on the basic situation of man as a being in the world and on man's dialogue with his environment. Merleau-Ponty may have tended to interpret Marx in terms of his own philosophy; but he was genuinely impressed by the

close connection made by Marxism between ideals and social realities and between ethics and politics. He was never the man to accept an ideology on authority or to submit his mind to the requirements of a Party line, and he had little use for a deterministic view of history. But in *Humanisme et terreur* he asserted that Marxism was 'the simple statement of those conditions without which there would be neither any humanism . . . nor any rationality in history',[1] and that as a criticism of existing society and of other humanist theories it could not be surpassed. Though however in this work Merleau-Ponty did his best to understand sympathetically the use of terror in the Soviet Union and the purges instituted by Stalin, he later became not only highly critical of Soviet policy and of Communist orthodoxy but also prepared to admit that Communist practice was the logical consequence of Marx's adoption of a theory of history which enabled the Communist leaders to lay claim to scientific knowledge of the movement and demands of history and to justify their actions and dictatorial and repressive behaviour in a manner analogous to that in which the Inquisitors would have justified their actions in the name of their knowledge of divine truth and of the divine will.[2] Merleau-Ponty never lost his admiration for Marx as a thinker; but he had little use for the idea of a philosophy which had become science and could be used to justify dictatorship. He was certainly not an upholder of capitalism. But neither was he a Communist. And it seems reasonable to claim that at no time was he really a Marxist. What attracted him to the thought of Marx were the elements which fitted in with his own philosophy. And whereas he at first tried to dissociate Marx himself from the developments in Communism which he disliked, he later came to think that the origins of these developments could be found in Marx's later ideas.

In an essay Merleau-Ponty remarks that ever since Nietzsche the humblest student would flatly reject a philosophy which did not teach him to live fully.[3] The context of the remark is provided by the statement that we do not accuse painters of escapism, whereas philosophers are liable to be reproached in this way. Context apart however, would Merleau-Ponty's philosophy serve as a guide to life? It is difficult to say, when it remained incomplete. As it stands, it can be seen as demanding reciprocal recognition among human beings, a respect for human freedom and a self-commitment to the cause of social liberation without the claim to absolute knowledge and to the right to coerce human beings in the name of this alleged knowledge. In other words, Merleau-Ponty's philosophy can be regarded as a form of humanism. But if he is remembered, it will presumably be for his phenomenological inquiries. And these, we may suppose, will be considered not as definitive treatments (which Merleau-Ponty never claimed that they were) but as stimulating explorations, as points of departure.

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[1] *Humanisme et terreur*, p. 165.

[2] See *Les aventures de la dialectique*.

[3] *The Primacy of Perception*, p. 161 (in the essay, *The Eye and the Mind*).

4. One of Merleau-Ponty's essays is entitled *From Mauss to Claude Lévi-Strauss*,[1] and Lévi-Strauss dedicated his work *La pensée sauvage*[2] to the memory of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, his colleague at the Collège de France. Lévi-Strauss was born in the same year (1908) as Merleau-Ponty, and after his studies he taught philosophy for a time in secondary schools (*lycées*). But in 1935 he accepted the chair of sociology at the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil, where he remained until 1939. After the war he acted as cultural attaché to the French ambassador in Washington; but in 1947 he returned to France, He became Director of Studies at the École des Hautes Études at Paris, and in 1959 he was appointed to the chair of social anthropology at the Collège de France. He is first and foremost an anthropologist;[3] but his ideas have, or have been given, philosophical implications. Structuralism has been presented as embodying or implying a view of man rather different from the existentialist view. Indeed, it has been represented by Michel Foucault[4] as completing Nietzsche's 'death of God' by the 'death of man'. Though therefore the present writer would not be competent to discuss anthropological themes, even if considerations of space permitted such discussion, we can hardly leave French philosophy without some remarks, however inadequate, about the structuralist movement in recent French thought.

In the first and last chapters of his *Structural Anthropology* Lévi-Strauss discusses the use of such terms as ethnography, ethnology, physical anthropology, social anthropology and cultural anthropology. In his view ethnography, ethnology and anthropology do not constitute three different disciplines but rather 'three stages, or three moments of time, in the same line of investigation'.[1] Ethnography, for example, 'aims at recording as accurately as possible the respective modes of life of various groups';[2] it is concerned with observation and description. The movement of the mind is then one of synthesis, in which ethnology forms a stage. Synthesis however is concerned primarily with the relations between social phenomena; and anthropology aims at establishing basic structural relations underlying man's whole social life and organization. The sociologist, as Lévi-Strauss sees him, is concerned with the observer's own society or with societies of the same type, whereas the anthropologist seeks to formulate theories which are applicable 'not only to his own fellow countrymen and contemporaries, but to the most distant native population'.[3] Further, the anthropologist, while not of course neglecting man's conscious processes, should include also his unconscious processes, with a view to bringing to formulation the basic structures of which all social and cultural institutions are projections or manifestations. In other words, anthropology is concerned with what Marcel Mauss described as the total social phenomenon. While however it is not indifferent to highly developed societies which express man's conscious endeavour or to the historical processes which led to their development, its aim is to go behind the sphere of conscious ideas and purposes and that of historical processes to 'the complete range of unconscious possibilities'.[4] These possibilities, according to Lévi-Strauss, are limited in number. If therefore the anthropologist can determine the relations of compatibility and incompatibility between these different possibilities or potentials, he can formulate a logical framework for all historical-social developments. Lévi-Strauss quotes the statement of Marx that while men make their own history, they do not know that they are making it; and he comments that while the first part of the statement justifies history, the second part justifies anthropology.

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[1] *Signs*, pp. 114–125.

[2] Translated as *The Savage Mind* (London, 1962).

[3] Lévi-Strauss discusses the use of terms such as ethnology, social and cultural anthropology, and sociology in chapter XVII of his *Anthropologie structurale* (1958; English translation by C. Jacobson and B. G. Schoerf, *Structural Anthropology*, New York and London, 1963).

[4] Author of *Les mots et les choses* (Paris, 1966).

In coming to his idea of structural analysis in anthropology Lévi-Strauss was influenced by linguistics which, in his view, was the social science which had made the most notable progress.

[1] *Structural Anthropology*, p. 356.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 363.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

This progress was achieved through the development of structural linguistics by N. Troubetzkoy and others. In his *Psychologie du langage*[1] Troubetzkoy assigned four basic operations to structural linguistics: the study of the unconscious infrastructure of linguistic phenomena, concentration on the relations between terms, exhibition of the structures of phonemic systems (systems of vocal sounds), and the discovery of general laws which would formulate basic necessary relationships. Lévi-Strauss does not claim that the method of structural linguistics can be simply abstracted and then applied literally in anthropology. For the anthropologist concerns himself with human behaviour and attitudes which cannot be reduced to systems of terminology or shown to be nothing but expressions of language. While he interprets society in terms of a theory of communication, Lévi-Strauss does not restrict communication to language. Nor does he regard all other forms of communication as derivatives of language. At the same time he insists on collaboration between linguistics and anthropology and on their mutual relations, and the method of structural linguistics has served him as a model in formulating a method of anthropology. He looks on the relations between social phenomena as providing the material for the construction of abstract models[2] which should make the observed facts intelligible. The anthropologist will endeavour to go behind (or beneath) conscious models to unconscious models and, by studying the relations between types of models, to bring to light the necessary relationships which govern man's mental, affective, artistic and social life. Further, while not claiming that all social phenomena must be susceptible of numerical measurement, Lévi-Strauss envisages the possibility of the use of mathematics as a tool in anthropological analysis.

The matter can be clarified somewhat in this way. In *La pensée sauvage* Lévi-Strauss rejects the distinction, made, for example, by Lévy-Bruhl, between the logical mentality of civilized man and the prelogical mentality of primitive man. 'The savage mind is logical in the same sense and the same fashion as ours, though as ours is only when it is applied to knowledge of a universe in which it recognizes physical and semantic properties simultaneously.'[1] In this case of course there must be a logic in myths. And when writing about mythology in *Le cru et le cuit* (1964) Lévi-Strauss argues that there is no arbitrary disorder or mere fantasy in the choice of images or in the ways in which they are associated, opposed or limited. The reason is that the myths express unconscious mental structures which are the same for all. These structures however are purely formal in character. That is to say, they do not provide content, like the archetypes of Jung, but rather the formal structures or patterns which condition all forms of mental life. In spite of the obvious differences between myths and science, the same formal structures are expressed in both. In a sense the basic structures correspond to the *a priori* categories of Kant. But they are not referred to any transcendental subject or ego. They belong to the sphere of the unconscious, and Lévi-Strauss evidently thinks of them as having their origin behind man, not in a metaphysical but in a naturalistic sense.

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[1] Paris, 1933.

[2] A structural model, we are told, must have the characteristics of a system, in the sense that none of its elements should be able to undergo a change without changes being effected in other elements. Further, it should be possible, in the case of any given model, to state a series of transformations which result in a group of models of the same type.

Lévi-Strauss has written on a number of particular themes, such as kinship structures (*Les structures élémentaires de la parenté*, 1949), totemism (*Le totémisme aujourd'hui*, 1962, and *La pensée sauvage*, 1962) and, as we have seen, on mythology. He has utilized both the relevant anthropological literature and his own field work; and he naturally, and rightly, regards himself as an anthropologist, not as a philosopher. Moreover, philosophies seem to be for him phenomena which, like myths, provide material for the anthropologist's inquiry and research, inasmuch as they embody the formal structures which express themselves in the whole of human life and culture. At the same time the scope of anthropology, as dealing with the total social phenomenon and as concerned with discovering the formal bases of man's mental life, becomes so wide that it is difficult to draw any clear line of demarcation between anthropology as a social science[2] and philosophical anthropology. Further, the fact that Lévi-Strauss does not claim to be a philosopher does not necessarily prove that he has no personal philosophical point of view which is implied by and sometimes finds more or less explicit expression in his anthropological writings.

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[1] *The Savage Mind*, p. 268.

[2] Lévi-Strauss allows that anthropology can be described as a social science. But he rejects any tendency to consider it as an isolated discipline. Through physical anthropology it is linked with the natural sciences, and it is also linked to humanistic studies through, for example, linguistics and archaeology.

A philosophy of man is clearly implied by some remarks made by Lévi-Strauss in the ninth chapter of *La pensée sauvage*. When discussing Sartre's concept of the dialectical reason, he admits that in Sartre's terminology he can be described as 'a transcendental materialist and aesthete'.[1] He is a 'transcendental materialist' inasmuch as he regards dialectical reason not as something other than analytical reason but as something additional within analytical reason. 'Sartre calls analytical reason reason in repose; I call the same reason dialectical when it is raised to action, tensed by its efforts to transcend itself.'[2] Reason's effort to transcend itself is not however an effort to grasp the Transcendent but the effort to find the ultimate bases of language, society and thought or, to express the matter more provocatively, 'to undertake the resolution of the human into the non-human'.[3] As for the term 'aesthete', Lévi-Strauss says that it applies to himself inasmuch as Sartre uses it to describe anyone who studies men as if they were ants. Indeed, the ultimate goal of the human sciences is 'not to constitute, but to dissolve man'.[4]

It is hardly necessary to say that Lévi-Strauss has no intention of denying that there are human beings. Man is the subject of his study. The word 'dissolve' is to be understood in terms of reduction. But Lévi-Strauss insists that he does not mean by this the reduction of a 'higher' to a 'lower' level. The level which is to be reduced must be conceived in all its distinctive characteristics and qualities; and if it is reduced to another level, some of its richness will be communicated retroactively to this other level. For example, if we were to succeed in understanding life as a function of inert matter, we would find that 'the latter has properties very different from those previously attributed to it'.[5] It is not a question of reducing the complex to the simple, but of replacing a less intelligible complexity by one which is more intelligible. Thus to reduce man's mental, social and affective life to unconscious formal structures or patterns is not to deny that the former is what it is: it is to make the complexity of the forms of social and cultural phenomena intelligible in the light of a complex structure which is expressed in and unifies the phenomena but from which the phenomena cannot simply be deduced *a priori*. For we have also to take into account the dialectic between man and his environment and between man and man.

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[1] *The Savage Mind*, p. 246.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 246.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 246.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 247.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 248.

Lévi-Strauss doubtless believes that these ideas fall within the scope of anthropology, and that it is a mistake to represent them as philosophical theories. While however he does not develop them as a philosophy, it seems clear enough that they imply a naturalism which is different from the crude reductionism of some eighteenth-century *philosophes*. If Lévi-Strauss is prepared to accept the Sartrian label 'transcendental materialist', his materialism is of the somewhat ambiguous type represented by dialectical materialism, which has indeed exercised a certain influence on his thought. In any case he opposes a view which reintegrates man into Nature to the Sartrian dichotomy between the for-itself and the in-itself, and a conditioning of man's thought and activity by formal structures which underlie consciousness to the absolute freedom proclaimed by the author of *Being and Nothingness*.

Structuralism has its antecedents in, for example, structural psychology and, more recently, structural linguistics, as well of course as in the theories of Durkheim and Mauss. Its principal field of application is the human sciences, where it concentrates on the relations and supposedly invariant laws of combination between the relevant phenomena. It does not neglect historical development, the 'diachronic' element; but it concentrates on the 'synchronic' element, the basic formal structures which are believed to be independent of historical change. This approach has been applied in a variety of fields, such as literary criticism, art, psychology and the interpretation of Marxism; and in so far as it is a question of a heuristic method, there can obviously be no cogent objection to experimenting with it and evaluating the results. The method however is connected with hypotheses which can reasonably be seen as implying a naturalistic philosophy which differs from both existentialism and Marxism, even if elements from both sources are incorporated. Given the emphasis on heuristic method, it is doubtless an exaggeration to speak of a system of structuralist philosophy. Equally, given the wide area of application of the method in the human sciences, one can justifiably speak of a current of thought which differs from both existentialism and Marxism and which can perhaps be described as a new naturalism, based on reflection in the field of social and cultural anthropology.

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Lu, S. V. *The Political Theories of P.-J. Proudhon.* New York, 1922.

Prion, G. *Proudhon et syndicalisme révolutionnaire.* Paris, 1910.

Saint-Beuve, C. A. *Proudhon, sa vie et sa correspondance.* Paris, 1870.

Woodcock, G. *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: A Biography*. London, 1956. (Highly recommended.)

Chapters on Proudhon can be found in, for example, *The Anarchists* by J. Joll (London, 1964), *A History of Socialist Thought*, Vol. 1 by G. D. H. Cole (London, 1953) and *Anarchism* by G. Woodcock (London, 1963).

Chapter V

Comte

Texts

Cours de philosophie positive. 6 vols. Paris, 1830–42. There is a loose English version (approved by Comte) by H. Martineau, *Cours, The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*. 2 vols, London 1853.

Discours sur l'esprit positif. Paris, 1849. (This was originally prefixed to the *Traité philosophique d'astronomie populaire*.) Translated by Fr. S. Beesly as *A Discourse on the Positive Spirit*. London, 1903.

Discours sur l'ensemble du positivisme. Paris, 1848.

Calendrier positiviste. Paris, 1849.

Système de politique positive. 4 vols. 1851–54. Translated by J. H. Bridges and F. Harrison as *The System of Positive Polity*, 4 vols., London, 1857–77.

Catéchisme positiviste. Paris, 1852. Translated by R. Congreve as *The Catechism of Positive Religion*. London, 1858.

Appel aux conservateurs. Paris, 1855.

Synthèse subjective, ou Système universel des conceptions propres à l'état normal de l'humanité. Vol. 1, Paris, 1856.

Rather oddly, there is no complete and critical selection of Comte's works. H. Gouhier however has published *Oeuvres choisies d'Auguste Comte*, Paris, 1943, while C. Le Verrier has published in two volumes the first two lectures of the *Cours de philosophie positive* and the *Discours sur l'esprit positif*, Paris, 1943.

There are several collections of letters. *Lettres d'Auguste Comte à John Stuart Mill*, 1841–6 (Paris 1877), *Lettres à des positivistes anglais* (Paris, 1889), *Correspondance inédite d'Auguste Comte* (4 vols., Paris, 1903–04), *Nouvelles lettres inédites* (Paris, 1939).

Studies

Arbousse-Bastide, P. *La doctrine de l'éducation universelle dans la philosophie d'Auguste Comte*. 2 vols. Paris, 1957.

Auguste Comte. Paris, 1968.

Caird, E. *The Social Philosophy and Religion of Comte*. Glasgow, 1885.

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Devolvé, J. *Réflexions sur la pensée comtienne.* Paris, 1932.

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Gould, F. J. *Auguste Comte.* London, 1920.

Gruber, H. *Comte, der Begründer des Positivismus.* Freiburg i/B., 1889.

Hawkins, R. L. *Auguste Comte and the United States (1816–53).* Cambridge (Mass.), 1936.

Lacroix, J. *La sociologie d'Auguste Comte.* Paris, 1956.

Lévy-Bruhl, L. *La philosophie d'Auguste Comte.* Paris, 1900. Translated by K. de Beaumont-Klein as *The Philosophy of Auguste Comte.* New York, 1903.

Littré, E. *Auguste Comte et la philosophie positive.* Paris, 1863.

Auguste Comte et Stuart Mill. Paris, 1867.

Marvin, F. S. *Comte: The Founder of Sociology.* London, 1936.

Mill, J. S. *Auguste Comte and Positivism.* London, 1865.

Moschetti, A. M. *Auguste Comte e la pedagogia positiva.* Milan, 1953.

Negt, O. *Strukturbeziehungen zwischen den Gesellschaftslehren Comtes und Hegels.* Frankfort, 1964.

Peter, J. *Auguste Comte. Bild vom Menschen.* Stuttgart, 1936.

Whittaker, T. *Comte and Mill.* London, 1908.

Part II: Chapter VI

1. *Littré*

Texts

De la philosophie positive. Paris, 1845.

Application de la philosophie positive au gouvernement des sociétés. Paris, 1849.

Conservation, révolution et positivisme. Paris, 1852 (2nd edition, 1879).

Paroles de philosophie positive. Paris, 1859 (2nd edition, 1863).

Auguste Comte et la philosophie positive. Paris, 1863.

Auguste Comte et Stuart Mill. Paris, 1867.

Principes de philosophie positive. Paris, 1868.

La science au point de vue philosophique. Paris, 1873.

Fragments de philosophie positive et de sociologie contemporaine. Paris 1876. (The articles published in *De la philosophie positive* are reprinted in this work.)

Studies

Aquarone, S. *The Life and Works of Emile Littré.* Leyden, 1958.
Caro, E. *Littré et le positivisme.* Paris, 1883.
Charlton, D. G. See under General Works.
Six, L. *Littré devant Dieu.* Paris, 1962.

2. *Bernard*

Texts

Introduction à la médecine expérimentale. Paris, 1865. Translated by N. C. Green as *An Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine.* New York, 1927.
La science expérimentale. Paris, 1878.
Pensées. Notes détachées, edited by L. Delhoume. Paris, 1937.
Philosophie, edited by J. Chevalier. Paris, 1938.
Leçons sur les phénomènes de la vie communs aux animaux et aux végétaux. Paris, 1966.

Studies

Clarke, R. *Claude Bernard et la médecine expérimentale.* Paris, 1961.
Cotard, H. *La pensée de Claude Bernard.* Grenoble, 1945.
Foulquié, P. *Claude Bernard.* Paris (undated).
Lamy, P. *Claude Bernard et le matérialisme.* Paris, 1939.
Mauriac, P. *Claude Bernard.* Paris, 1941 (2nd edition 1954).
Olmsted, J. M. D. and E. H. *Claude Bernard and the Experimental Method in Medicine.* New York, 1952.
Sertillanges, A. D. *La philosophie de Claude Bernard.* Paris, 1944.
Virtanen, R. *Claude Bernard and his Place in the History of Ideas.* Lincoln (Nebraska), 1960.
Various Authors. *Philosophie et méthodologie scientifique de Claude Bernard.* Paris, 1966.

3. *Taine*

Texts

Les philosophes français du dix-neuvième siècle. Paris, 1857.
Essais de critique et d'histoire. Paris, 1858.
Histoire de la littérature anglaise. 4 vols. Paris, 1863–4. Translated by H. van Laun as *History of English Literature,* 2 vols, Edinburgh, 1873.
Nouveaux essais de critique et d'histoire. Paris, 1865.
Philosophie de l'art. Paris, 1865. Translated by J. Durand as *The Philosophy of Art.* New York, 1865. (Second French edition 1880.)
De l'intelligence. 2 vols. Paris, 1870. Translated by T. D. Hayes as *Intelligence.* London 1871.

Les origines de la France contemporaine. 5 vols. Paris, 1875–93.

Derniers essais de critique et d'histoire. Paris, 1894.

Studies

Aulard, A. *Taine, historien de la révolution française*. Paris, 1907.

Barzelotti, G. *Ippolito Taine*. Rome, 1896.

Boosten, J. P. *Taine et Renan et l'idée de Dieu*. Maastricht, 1936.

Castiglioni, G. *Taine*. Brescia. 1945.

Cresson, A. *Hippolyte Taine*. Paris, 1951.

Giraud, V. *Essai sur Taine: son œuvre et son influence*. Paris, 1901.

Hippolyte Taine: Études et documents. Paris, 1928.

Ippolito, F. G. *Taine e la filosofia dell'arte*. Roma, 1911.

Kahn, S. J. *Science and Aesthetic Judgment: A Study in Taine's Critical Method*. New York, 1953.

Lacombe, P. *La Psychologie des individus et des sociétés chez Taine*. Paris, 1906.

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Mongardini, C. *Storia e sociologia nell'opera di Hippolyte Taine*. Milan, 1965.

Relevant aspects of Taine's thought are discussed in such works as Benedetto Croce's *Estetica* and *Teoria e storia della storiografia* and H. Sée's *Science et philosophie de l'histoire* (2nd edition, Paris, 1933).

4. *Durkheim*

Texts

De la division du travail social. Paris, 1893. Translated by G. Simpson as *The Division of Labour in Society*, New York, 1952.

Les règles de la méthode sociologique. Paris, 1895. Translated by S. A. Solovay and J. H. Mueller as *The Rules of Sociological Method*, Chicago, 1938 (republished at Glencoe, Illinois, 1950).

Le suicide. Étude de sociologie. Paris, 1897. Translated by J. A. Spaulding and G. Simpson as *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, Glencoe, Illinois, 1951).

Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse: le système totémique en Australie. Paris, 1912. Translated by J. W. Swain as *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life: A Study in Religious Sociology*, London and New York, 1915.

Éducation et sociologie. Paris, 1922. Translated by J. D. Fox as *Education and Sociology*, Glencoe, Illinois, 1956.

Sociologie et philosophie. Paris, 1924. Translated by D. F. Pocock as *Sociology and Philosophy*, London and Glencoe, Illinois, 1953.

L'éducation morale. Paris, 1925, Translated by E. K. Wilson and H. Schnurer as *Moral Education: A Study in the Theory and Application of the Sociology of Education*, New York, 1961.

Le socialisme. Paris, 1928.

L'évolution pédagogique en France. France, 1938.

Leçons de sociologie: physique des mœurs et du droit. Paris, 1950. Translated by C. Brookfield as *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals*, London, 1957.

Montesquieu et Rousseau, précurseurs de la sociologie. Paris, 1953.

La science sociale et l'action. Introduction et présentation de J. C. Filloux. Paris, 1970.

There are various collections of articles by Durkheim, such as *Journal sociologique*, edited by J. Duvignaud, Paris, 1969. In English there is *Émile Durkheim, 1858–1917: A Collection of Essays, with Translations and a Bibliography*, edited by K. H. Wolff, Columbus, Ohio, 1960. This work also contains essays on Durkheim by various authors.

Studies

Aimard, G. *Durkheim et la science économique*. Paris, 1962.

Alpert, H. *Émile Durkheim and His Sociology*. New York, 1939.

Bierstedt, R. *Émile Durkheim*. New York and London, 1966.

Coser, L. A. *Masters of Sociological Thought*. New York, 1971. (Contains a chapter on Durkheim.)

Davy, G. *Durkheim, choix de textes avec étude du système sociologique*. Paris, 1911.

Duvignard, J. *Durkheim: sa vie, son œuvre, avec un exposé de sa philosophie*. Paris, 1965.

Fletcher, R. *The Making of Sociology*, Vol. 2. London, 1971.

Gehlke, C. E. *Émile Durkheim's Contributions to Sociological Theory*. New York, 1915.

La Capra, D. *Émile Durkheim: Sociologist and Philosopher*. Ithaca and London, 1972.

Lukes, S. *Émile Durkheim. His Life and Work. A Historical and Critical Study*. London, 1973. (Highly recommended. Includes a comprehensive bibliography.)

Nisbet, R. A. *Émile Durkheim*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1965.

Parsons, T. *The Structure of Social Action*. New York, 1937, and Glencoe, Illinois, 1949.

Seger, I. *Durkheim and his Critics on the Sociology of Religion*. New York, 1957.

Vialatoux, J. *De Durkheim á Bergson*. Paris, 1939.

Wolff, K. H. (editor). See above under Texts.

5. *Lévy-Bruhl*

Texts

Histoire de la philosophie moderne en France. Paris. Translated by G. Coblence, London and Chicago, 1899.

La Philosophie de Jacobi. Paris, 1894.

La philosophie d' Auguste Comte. Paris, 1900. Translated by K. de Beaumont-Klein as *The Philosophy of Auguste Comte,* London, 1903.

Les fonctions fondamentales dans les sociétés inférieures. Paris, 1910. Translated by L. A. Clare as *How Natives Think,* London and New York, 1923.

La mentalité primitive. Paris, 1921. Translated by L. A. Clare as *Primitive Mentality,* London, 1928.

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Le surnaturel et la nature dans la mentalité primitive. Paris, 1931. Translated by L. A. Clare as *Primitives and the Supernatural,* London, 1936.

La mythologie primitive. Le monde mythique des Australiens et des Papous. Paris, 1935.

L'expérience mystique et les symboles chez les primitifs. Paris, 1938.

Les carnets de Lucien Lévy-Bruhl. Paris, 1949.

Studies

Cailliet, E. *Mysticisme et 'mentalité mystique'. Étude d'un problème posé par les travaux de M. Lévy-Bruhl sur la mentalité primitive.* Paris, 1938.

Cazeneuve, J. *Lévy-Bruhl. Sa vie, son œuvre, avec un exposé de sa philosophie.* Paris, 1963.

Evans-Pritchard, E. *Lévy-Bruhl's Theory of Primitive Mentality.* Oxford, 1934.

Leroy, O. *La raison primitive. Essai de réfutation de la théorie du prélogisme.* Paris, 1927.

Chapter VII

1. *Cournot*

Texts

Recherches sur les principes mathématiques de la théorie des richesses. Paris, 1938. Translated by N. I. Bacon as *Researches into the Mathematical Principles of the Theory of Wealth,* London, 1877.

Exposition de la théorie des chances et des probabilités, Paris, 1843.

Essai sur les fondements de nos connaissances et sur les caractères de la critique philosophique. 2 vols. Paris, 1851. Translated by M. H. Moore as *An Essay on the Foundations of all Knowledge,* New York, 1956.

Traité de l'enchaînement dans les idées fondamentales dans les sciences et dans l'histoire. 2 vols. Paris, 1861. (The 2nd and 3rd editions, 1911 and 1922, are each comprised in one volume.)

Principes de la théorie des richesses. Paris, 1863.

Des institutions d'instruction publique en France. Paris, 1864.

Considérations sur la marche des idées et des événements dans les temps modernes. 2 vols. Paris, 1872. (Reissued Paris, 1934).

Matérialisme, vitalisme, nationalisme: Études sur l'emploi des données de la science en philosophie. Paris, 1875.

Souvenirs: 1760 à 1860, edited by E. P. Bottinelli. Paris, 1913.

There are some other writings in the fields of mathematics and economics which are not mentioned above.

Studies

Bottinelli, E. P. *A. Cournot, métaphysicien de la connaissance.* Paris, 1913.

Caizzi, B. *La filosofia di A. Cournot.* Bari, 1942.

Callot, E. *La philosophie biologique de Cournot.* Paris, 1959.

Darbon, A. *Le concept du hasard dans la philosophie de Cournot.* Paris, 1911.

De la Harpe, J. *De l'ordre et du hasard. Le réalisme critique d'Antoine Augustin Cournot.* Neuchatel, 1936.

Mentré, F. *Cournot et la renaissance du probabilisme au XIX^e siècle.* Paris, 1908.

Milhaud, G. *Études sur Cournot.* Paris, 1927.

Ruyer, R. *L'humanité de l'avenir d'après Cournot.* Paris, 1930.

Segond, J. *Cournot et la psychologie vitaliste.* Paris, 1911.

An issue of the *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* (1905, vol. 13, is devoted to articles on Cournot by various authors.

2. *Renouvier*

Texts

Manuel de philosophie moderne. Paris, 1842.

Manuel de philosophie ancienne. Paris, 1844.

Manuel républicain de l'homme et du citoyen. Paris, 1848.

Essais de critique générale. 4 vols. Paris, 1854–64. (The four volumes treat respectively of logic, national psychology, the principles of Nature, and philosophy of history.)

La science de la morale. 2 vols. Paris, 1869.

Uchronie, l'utopie dans l'histoire. Esquisse historique du développement de la civilisation européenne, tel qu'il n'a pas été, tel qu'il aurait pu être. Paris, 1876.

Esquisse d'une classification systématique des systèmes philosophiques. 2 vols. Paris, 1885–6.

La philosophie analytique de l'histoire,. 4 vols. Paris, 1896–7.

Les dilemmes de la métaphysique pure. Paris, 1901.
Histoire et solution des problèmes métaphysiques. Paris, 1901.
Le personnalisme. Paris, 1903.
Les derniers entretiens, edited by L. Prat. Paris, 1904.
La critique de la doctrine de Kant, edited by L. Prat. Paris, 1906.

Studies

Foucher, L. *La jeunesse de Renouvier et sa première philosophie.* Paris, 1927.
Galli, G. *Prime linee di un idealismo critico e due studi sul Renouvier.* Turin, 1943.
Hamelin, O. *Le système de Renouvier.* Paris, 1927.
Lombardi, V. *Lo sviluppo del pensiero di Charles Renouvier.* Naples, 1932.
Méry, M. *La critique du christianisme chez Renouvier.* 2 vols. Paris, 1953.
Milhaud, G. *La philosophie de Charles Renouvier.* Paris, 1972.
Mouy, P. *L'idée de progrès dans la philosophie de Renouvier.* Paris, 1972.
Prat, L. *Charles Renouvier, philosophe.* Ariège, 1973.
Séailles, G. *La philosophie de Charles Renouvier.* Paris, 1905.
Verneaux, R. *L'idéalisme de Renouvier.* Paris, 1945. *Esquisse d'une théorie de la connaissance. Critique du néocriticisme.* Paris, 1954.

3. *Hamelin*

Texts

Essai sur les éléments principaux de la représentation. Paris, 1907.
Le système de Descartes, edited by L. Robin. Paris, 1910.
Le système d'Aristote, edited by L. Robin. Paris, 1920.
Le système de Renouvier, edited by P. Mary. Paris, 1927.
La théorie de l'intellect d'après Aristote et ses commentateurs, edited by E. Barbotin. Paris, 1953.
Le système du savoir, selections edited by L. Millet. Paris, 1956.

Studies

Beck, L. J. *La méthode synthétique de Hamelin.* Paris, 1935.
Carbonara, C. *L'idealismo di Octave Hamelin.* Naples, 1927.
Deregibus, A. *La metafisica critica di Octave Hamelin.* Turin, 1968.
Sesmat, A. *Dialectique. Hamelin et la philosophie chrétienne.* Paris, 1955.

4. *Brunschvicg*

Texts

Spinoza. Paris, 1894. (Later edition, with additional material, *Spinoza et ses contemporains,* Paris, 1923.)

La modalité du jugement. Paris, 1897. (Third edition, with a French translation of Brunschvicg's 1897 Latin thesis, Paris, 1964.)
L'idéalisme contemporain. Paris, 1905.
Les étapes de la philosophie des mathématiques. Paris, 1912.
Introduction à la vie de l'esprit. Paris, 1920.
L'expérience humaine et la causalité physique. Paris, 1922.
Le progrès de la conscience dans la philosophie occidentale. 2 vols. Paris, 1927.
La raison et la religion. Paris, 1939.
Descartes et Pascal, lecteurs de Montaigne. Neuchâtel, 1942.
Héritage de mots, héritage d'idées. Paris, 1945.
Écrits philosophiques, edited by A. R. Weill-Brunschvicg and C. Lehec. 3 vols. Paris, 1951–8.

Studies

Boriel, R. *Brunschvicg*. Paris, 1964.
Carbonara, C. *Léon Brunschvicg*. Naples, 1931.
Centineo, E. *La filosofia dello spirito di Léon Brunschvicg*. Palermo, 1950.
Cochet, M. A. *Commentaire sur la conversion spirituelle dans la philosophie de Léon Brunschvicg*. Brussels, 1937.
Deschoux, M. *La philosophie de Léon Brunschvicg*. Paris, 1949. (includes a full bibliography.)
Mersaut, J. *La philosophie de Léon Brunschvicg*. Paris, 1938.

Chapter VIII

1. *Ravaisson*

Texts

Essai sur la métaphysique d'Aristote. 2 vols. Paris, 1837–46.
L'habitude. Paris, 1839. (With an introduction by J. Baruzi, Paris, 1957.)
Rapport sur la philosophie en France au XIX^e siècle. Paris, 1867.
Testament philosophique et fragments, edited by C. Devivaise, Paris, 1932.

Studies

Bergson, H. *Notice sur la vie et les œuvres de M. Félix Ravisson-Mollien*. Reprinted in Bergson's *La pensée et le mouvant* (Paris, 1934) from *Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des sciences morales et politiques* (Paris, 1904). Also contained in *Testament philosophique et fragments*.
Dopp, J. *Félix Ravaisson, la formation de sa pensée d'après des documents inédits*. Louvain, 1933.

Valerio, C. *Ravaisson et l'idealismo romantico in Francia.* Naples, 1936.

2. *Lachelier*

Texts

Oeuvres. 2 vols. Paris, 1933.
De nature syllogismi. Paris, 1871.
Du fondement de l'induction. Paris, 1871. (The second edition, 1896, includes *Psychologie et métaphysique,* while the 1901 *Notes sur le pari de Pascal* are added in the fifth edition.)
Études sur le syllogisme. Paris, 1907.
Lachelier, la nature, l'esprit, Dieu, edited by L. Millet. Paris, 1955.
The Philosophy of Jules Lachelier, edited by E. G. Ballard. The Hague, 1960. This work contains translations of *Du fondement de l'induction, Psychologie et métaphysique* and *Pari de Pascal,* with an introduction by the editor.

Studies

Agosti, V. *La filosofia di Jules Lachelier.* Turin 1952.
Giglio, P. *L'ideale della libertà nella filosofia di Lachelier.* Rome, 1946.
Jolivet, R. *De Rosmini à Lachelier.* Paris, 1953.
Mauchassat, G. *L'idéalisme de Lachelier.* Paris, 1961.
Millet, L. *Le symbolisme dans la philosophie de Jules Lachelier.* Paris, 1959.
Séailles, G. *La philosophie de Jules Lachelier.* Paris, 1921.
Mention can also be made of G. Devivaise's article *La philosophie religieuse de Jules Lachelier* in the *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* (139, pp. 435-64).

3. *Boutroux*

Texts

De la contingence des lois de la nature. Paris, 1874. Translated by F. Rothwell as *The Contingency of the Laws of Nature,* London and Chicago, 1916.
De l'idée de loi naturelle dans la science et la philosophie contemporaines. Paris, 1895. Translated by F. Rothwell as *Natural Law in Science and Philosophy,* London, 1914.
Études d'histoire de la philosophie. Paris, 1897. Translated by F. Rothwell as *Historical Studies in Philosophy,* London, 1912.
La science et la religion dans la philosophie contemporaine. Paris, 1908. Translated by J. Nield as *Science and Religion in Contemporary Philosophy, London,* 1909.
La nature et l'esprit. Paris, 1926. (This posthumous publication includes the programme for Boutroux's Gifford Lectures.)

Studies

Baillot, A. *Émile Boutroux et la pensée religieuse.* Paris, 1958.
Crawford, L. S. *The Philosophy of Émile Boutroux.* New York, 1929.
La Fontaine, A. P. *La philosophie d'Émile Boutroux.* Paris, 1921.
Ranzoli, C. *Boutroux. La vita, il pensiero filosofico.* Milan, 1924.
Schyns, M. *La philosophie d'Émile Boutroux.* Paris, 1924.

4. *Fouillée*

Texts

La philosophie de Platon. Paris, 1869.
La liberté et le déterminisme. Paris, 1872.
La philosophie de Socrate. Paris, 1874.
La science sociale contemporaine. Paris, 1880.
Critique des systèmes de morale contemporains. Paris, 1883.
L'avenir de la métaphysique. Paris, 1889
L'évolutionnisme des idées-forces. Paris, 1890.
Psychologie des idées-forces. 2 vols. Paris, 1893.
Le mouvement idéaliste et la réaction contre la science positive. Paris, 1896.
Les éléments sociologiques de la morale. Paris, 1905.
Morale des idées-forces. Paris, 1908.
La pensée et les nouvelles écoles anti-intellectualistes. Paris, 1911.
Esquisse d'une interprétation du monde. Paris, 1913.

Studies

Ganne de Beaucoudrey, E. *La psychologie et la métaphysique des idées-forces chez Alfred Fouillée.* Paris, 1936.
Guyau, A. *La philosophie et la sociologie d'Alfred Fouillée.* Paris, 1913.
Moretti Costanzi, T. *Il pensiero di Alfred Fouillée.* Naples, 1936.
Pawlicky, A. *Alfred Fouillée's neue Theorie der Ideenkräfte.* Vienna, 1893.

5. *Guyau*

Texts

La morale d'Épicure et ses rapports avec les doctrines contemporaines. Paris, 1878.
La morale anglaise contemporaine. Paris, 1879.
Les problèmes de l'esthétique contemporaine. Paris, 1884.
Esquisse d'une morale sans obligation ni sanction. Paris, 1885. Translated by G. Kapteyn as *A Sketch of Morality Independent of Obligation or Sanction*, London, 1898.
L'irréligion de l'avenir. Paris, 1887. Translated at *The Non-Religion of the Future*, London, 1897 (reprinted at New York, 1962).

L'art au point de vue sociologique. Paris, 1889.
Éducation et hérédité. Paris, 1889. Translated by W. J. Greenstreet as *Education and Heredity*, London, 1891.
La genèse de l'idée de temps. Paris, 1890.

Studies

Aslan, G. *La morale selon Guyau.* Paris, 1906.
Fouillée, A. *La morale, l'art et la religion d'après Guyau.* Paris, 1889 (new edition 1901).
Royce, J. 'J. M. Guyau' in *Studies of Good and Evil.* New York, 1925.
Tisbe, A. *L'arte, la morale, la religione nel J.-M. Guyau.* Rome, 1938.

Chapters IX–X

Bergson

Texts

Oeuvres. Édition du centenaire. Paris, 1959. Introduction by H. Gouhier, with notes by A. Robinet.
Quid Aristoteles de loco senserit. Paris, 1889. (Doctorate thesis, translated by R. Mossé-Bastide as *L'Idée de lieu chez Aristote* and published in *Les études Bergsoniennes*, Vol. 2, Paris, 1949.)
Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience. Paris, 1889. Translated by F. L. Pogson as *Time and Free Will: an Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, London and New York, 1910.
Matière et mémoire. Paris, 1896. Translated by N. M. Paul and W. S Palmer as *Matter and Memory*, London and New York, 1911.
Le rire. Paris, 1900. Translated by G. C. Brereton and F. Rothwell as *Laughter, An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, New York, 1910.
Introduction à la métaphysique. Paris, 1903 (in the *Revue de la métaphysique. et de morale*, Vol. 11). Translated by T. E. Hulme as *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, London and New York, 1912.
L'évolution créatrice. Paris, 1907. Translated by A. Mitchell as *Creative Evolution*, London and New York, 1911.
L'énergie spirituelle. Paris, 1919. Translated by H. Wildon Carr as *Mind-Energy*, London and New York, 1935.
Durée et simultanéité. Paris, 1922. (Second edition, with three appendices, Paris, 1923.)
Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion. Paris, 1932. Translated by R. A. Audra and C. Brereton, with the assistance of W. Horsfall-Carter, as *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, London and New York, 1935.

La pensée et le mouvant. Paris, 1934. Translated by M. L. Andison as *The Creative Mind,* New York, 1946.

Écrits et paroles, edited by R. M. Mossé-Bastide. 3 vols. Paris, 1957–9.

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La dialectique des images chez Bergson. Paris, 1951.
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Sur le succès du bergsonisme. Paris, 1914.
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Entretiens avec Bergson. Paris, 1959.
Copleston, F. C. *Bergson and Morality.* London, 1955. (Proceedings of the British Academy, vol. 41.)
Cresson, A. *Bergson.* Paris, 1955.
Cunningham, G. W. *A Study in the Philosophy of Bergson.* New York, 1916.
Delhomme, J. *Vie et conscience de la vie: Essai sur Bergson.* Paris, 1954.
Fabris, M. *La filosofia sociale di Henri Bergson.* Bari, 1966.
Fressin, A. *La perception chez Bergson et chez Merleau-Ponty.* Paris, 1967.
Giusso, L. *Bergson.* Milan, 1949.
Gouhier, H. *Bergson et le Christ des évangiles.* Paris, 1961.
Guitton, J. *La vocation de Bergson.* Paris, 1960.
Hanna, T. (editor). *The Bergsonian Heritage.* New York and London, 1962. (Articles by various authors.)
Heidsieck, F. *Henri Bergson et la notion d'espace.* Paris, 1961.
Husson, L. *L'intellectualisme de Bergson.* Paris, 1947.
Jankélévitch, V. *Henri Bergson.* Paris, 1959.
Lacombe, R. E. *La psychologie Bergsonienne.* Paris, 1933.
Le Roy, E. *Une philosophie nouvelle: Henri Bergson.* Paris, 1912. Translated by V. Benson as *The New Philosophy of Henri Bergson.* New York, 1913.
Lindsay, A. D. *The Philosophy of Henri Bergson.* London, 1911.
McKellan Stewart, J. *A Critical Exposition of Bergson's Philosophy.* London, 1911.
Marietti, A. *Les formes du mouvement chez Bergson.* Paris, 1953.
Maritain, J. *La philosophie bergsonienne.* Paris, 1930.
Mathieu, V. *Bergson: 'Il profondo e la sua espressione.'* Turin, 1954.

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Mossé-Bastide, R. M. *Bergson, éducateur.* Paris, 1955.

Moore, J. M. *Theories of Religious Experience, with special reference to James, Otto and Bergson.* New York, 1938.

Mousélos, G. *Bergson et les niveaux de réalité.* Paris, 1964.

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Pflug, G. *Henri Bergson. Quellen und Konsequenzen einer induktiven Metaphysik.* Berlin, 1959.

Rideau, E. *Les rapports de la matière et de l'esprit dans le bergsonisme.* Paris, 1932.

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Stephen, K. *The Misuse of Mind. A Study of Bergson's Attack on Intellectualism. London, 1922.*

Sundin, H. *La théorie bergsonienne de la religion.* Paris, 1948.

Thibaudet, A. *Le bergsonisme.* 2 vols. Paris, 1924.

Trotignon, P. *L'idée de vie chez Bergson et la critique de la métaphysique.* Paris, 1968.

There are several collections of articles by various authors. Mention should be made of *Etudes bergsoniennes,* 6 vols., Paris, 1948–61, which also contain some writings of Bergson himself. Another collection is *Pour le centenaire de Bergson,* Paris, 1959. Also *Bergson et nous,* 2 vols., Paris, 1959–60, and *Hommage à Henri Bergson,* Brussels, 1959.

Chapter XI

1. *Ollé-Laprune*

Texts

La philosophie de Malebranche. Paris, 1870.

De la certitude morale. Paris, 1880.

Essai sur la morale d'Aristote. Paris, 1881.

La philosophie et le temps présent. Paris, 1890.

Les sources de la paix intellectuelle. Paris, 1892.

Le Prix de la vie. Paris, 1894.

La vitalité chrétienne. Paris, 1901.

La raison et le rationalisme. Paris, 1906.

Croyance religieuse et croyance intellectuelle. Paris, 1908.

Studies

Acutis, G. *Un grande maestro: Ollé-Laprune.* Turin, 1947.

Blondel, M. *Ollé-Laprune.* Paris, 1925.

Crippa, R. *Il pensiero di Léon Ollé-Laprune.* Brescia, 1947.

Fonsegrive, G. *Léon Ollé-Laprune. L'homme et le penseur.* Paris, 1912.

There is an article on Ollé-Laprune by E. Boutroux in the *Revue philosophique* for 1903. See also G. Goyau's introduction (*Un philosophe chrétien*) to *La vitalité chrétienne.*

2. *Blondel*

Texts

L'Action. Essai d'une critique de la vie et d'une science de la pratique. Paris, 1893. (Revised edition, Paris, 1950, in *Premiers écrits.*)

De vinculo substantiali et de substantia composita apud Leibnitium. Paris, 1893. (A French version, *Une énigme historique: le 'Vinculum substantiale' d'après Leibniz,* was published at Paris in 1930.)

La pensée. 2 vols. Paris, 1934.

L'être et les êtres. Paris, 1935.

Action. 2 vols. Paris, 1936–7. (Not to be confused with the original *L'Action.*)

La philosophie et l'esprit chrétien. 2 vols. Paris, 1944–6.

Exigences philosophiques du christianisme. Paris, 1950.

Premiers écrits. Paris, 1956.

Carnets intimes. 2 vols. Paris, 1901–66.

Blondel published a considerable number of essays. His *Lettre sur les exigences de la pensée contemporaine en matière d'apologétique* (1896, and included in *Premiers écrits*) and his *Histoire et dogme* (1904, also in *Premiers écrits*) have been translated into English, with an introduction, by A. Dru and I. Trethowan as *Maurice Blondel: The Letter on Apologetics and History and Dogma.* London, 1914.

As for letters, *Lettres philosophiques* appeared at Paris in 1961, while Blondel's correspondence with Auguste Valensin was published in three volumes at Paris, 1957–65, and his *Correspondance philosophique avec Laberthonnière* appeared at Paris in 1962.

Études blondéliennes has been published from time to time, from 1951, by the *Société des amis de Maurice Blondel.*

Studies

Archambault, P. *Vers un réalisme intégral. L'œuvre philosophique de Maurice Blondel.* Paris, 1928.

Initiation à la philosophie blondélienne, en forme de court traité de métaphysique. Paris, 1946.

(Archambault and Others). *Hommage à Maurice Blondel.* Paris, 1946.

Bouillard, H. *Bergson et le christianisme.* Paris, 1961.

Buonaiuti, E. *Blondel.* Milan, 1926.

Cartier, A. *Existence et vérité. Philosophie blondélienne de l'action et problématique existentielle.* Paris, 1955.

Cramer, T. *Le problème religieux dans la philosophie de l'Action.* Paris, 1912.

Crippa, R. *Il realismo integrale di Maurice Blondel.* Milan, 1954.

Duméry, H. *La philosophie de l'action. Essai sur l'intellectualisme blondélien.* Paris, 1948.

Raison et religion dans la philosophie de l'action. Paris, 1963.

École, J. *La métaphysique dans la philosophie de Blondel.* Paris and Louvain, 1959.

Giordano, V. *La scienza della practica in Maurice Blondel.* Palermo, 1955.

Hayen, A. *Bibliographie blondélienne (1888–1951).* Paris and Louvain, 1953.

Henrici, P. *Hegel und Blondel. Eine Untersuchung über Form und Sinn der Dialektik in der 'Phänomenologie des Geistes' und der ersten 'Action'* Pullach (Munich), 1958.

Lacroix, J. *Maurice Blondel. Sa vie, son oeuvre.* Paris, 1963.

La Via, V. *Blondel e la logica dell'azione.* Catania, 1964.

Lefèvre, F. *L'itinéraire philosophique de Maurice Blondel.* Paris, 1928.

McNeill, J. J. *The Blondelian Synthesis. A Study of the Influence of German Philosophical Sources on the Formation of Blondel's Method and Thought.* Leiden, 1966.

Paliard, J. *Maurice Blondel, ou le dépassement chrétien.* Paris, 1950.

Polato, F. *Blondel e il problema della filosofia come scienza.* Bologna, 1965.

Renault, M. *Déterminisme et liberté dans 'l'Action' de Maurice Blondel.* Lyons, 1965.

Romeyer, B. *La philosophie religieuse de Maurice Blondel. Origine, évolution, maturité et son achèvement.* Paris, 1943.

Saint-Jean, R. *Genèse de l'Action, 1882–93.* Paris, 1965.

Sartori, L. *Blondel e il cristianesimo.* Padua, 1953.

Sciacca, M. F. *Dialogo con Maurice Blondel.* Milan, 1962.

Somerville, J. M. *Total Commitment. Blondel's L'Action.* Washington, D.C., 1968.

Tayman's d'Eypermon, F. *Le blondélisme.* Louvain, 1935.

Tresmontant, C. *Introduction à la métaphysique de Maurice Blondel.* Paris, 1963.

Valensin, A. (with Y. de Montcheuil). *Maurice Blondel.* Paris, 1934.

Valori, P. *Maurice Blondel e il problema d'una filosofia cattolica.* Rome, 1950.

3. *Laberthonnière*

Texts

Oeuvres. 2 vols. Paris, 1948–55.
Essais de philosophie religieuse. Paris, 1903.
Le réalisme chrétien et l'idéalisme grec. Paris, 1904.
Positivisme et catholicisme. Paris, 1911.
Le témoignage des martyrs. Paris, 1912.
Sur le chemin du catholicisme. Paris, 1913.

As stated in the text, in 1913 Laberthonnière was prohibited from publishing. One or two works, pretty well written by him, were published by friends. But the bulk of his writings had to await posthumous publication, edited by L. Canet. Among these are:

Études sur Descartes. 2 vols. Paris, 1935.
Études de philosophie cartésienne et premiers écrits philosophiques. Paris, 1938.
Esquisse d'une philosophie personnaliste. Paris, 1942.

A volume of philosophical correspondence between Blondel and Laberthonnière appeared at Paris in 1961, edited by C. Tresmontant.

Studies

Abauzit, F. *La pensée du père Laberthonnière.* Paris, 1934.
Ballarò, R. *La filosofia di Lucien Laberthonnière.* Rome, 1927.
Bonafede, G. *Lucien Laberthonnière, studio critico con pagine scelte.* Palermo, 1958.
Castelli, F. *Laberthonnière.* Milan, 1927.
D'Hendercourt, M. M. *Essai sur la philosophie du père Laberthonnière.* Paris, 1948.
Golinas, J. P. *La restauration du Thomisme sous Léon XIII et les philosophies nouvelles. Études de la pensée de M. Blondel et du père Laberthonnière.* Washington, D.C., 1959.

Chapter XII

1. *Maritain*

Texts

La philosophie bergsonienne. Paris, 1914 (3rd edition 1948). Translated by M. L. and J. G. Andison as *Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism*, New York, 1955.
Art et scolastique. Paris, 1920 (and subsequent editions). Translated by J. F. Scanlan as *Art and Scholasticism*, with Other Essays, London, 1930.
Éléments de philosophie. I, *Introduction générale à la philosophie.* Paris, 1920. II, *L'ordre des concepts.* Paris, 1923.

Théonas. Paris, 1921. Translated by F. J. Sheed as *Theonas: Conversations of a Sage,* London and New York, 1933.

Introduction à la philosophie. Paris, 1925. Translated as *Introduction to Philosophy,* London, 1930.

Trois réformateurs. Paris, 1925. Translated as *Three Reformers: Luther, Descartes, Rousseau,* London, 1928.

Réflexions sur l'intelligence et sur sa vie propre. Paris, 1924.

La primauté du spirituel. Paris, 1927. Translated by J. F. Scanlan as *The Things That are not Caesar's,* London, 1930.

Le Docteur angélique. Paris, 1929. Translated by J. F. Scanlan as *St Thomas Aquinas, Angel of the Schools,* London, 1942.

Distinguer pour unir, ou les degrés du savoir. Paris, 1932 (4th edition, Paris, 1946). Translated by G. B. Phelan as *The Degrees of Knowledge,* New York and London, 1959.

Le songe de Descartes. Paris, 1932. Translated by M. L. Andison as *The Dream of Descartes,* New York, 1944, and London, 1946.

De la philosophie chrétienne. Paris, 1933. Translated by E. H. Flannery as *An Essay on Christian Philosophy,* New York, 1955.

Du régime temporel et de la liberté. Paris, 1933. Translated by R. O'Sullivan as *Freedom in the Modern World,* London, 1935.

Sept leçons sur l'être et les premiers principes de la raison spéculative. Paris, 1934. Translated as *A Preface to Metaphysics: Seven Lectures on Being,* London and New York, 1939.

Frontières de la poésie et autres essais. Paris, 1935. Translated by J. W. Evans as *Art and Scholasticism and the Frontiers of Poetry,* New York, 1962. (The earlier translation, mentioned above, of *Art et scolastique* also contains a translation of the essay on the frontiers of poetry.)

Science et sagesse. Paris, 1935. Translated by B. Wall as *Science and Wisdom,* London and New York, 1940.

Humanisme intégral. Paris, 1936. Translated by M. R. Adamson as *True Humanism,* London and New York, 1938.

Situation de la poésie. Paris, 1938. Translated by M. Suther as *The Situation of Poetry,* New York, 1955.

Scholasticism and Politics, edited by M. J. Adler. London, 1940.

Les droits de l'homme et la loi naturelle. New York, 1942.

Christianisme et démocratie. New York, 1943.

Redeeming the Time. Various essays translated by H. L. Binsse. London, 1943.

Education at the Crossroads. New Haven, 1943.

De Bergson à Thomas d'Aquin. New York, 1944, and Paris, 1947.

Court traité de l'existence et de l'existant. Paris, 1947. Translated by L. Galantière and G. B. Phelan as *Existence and the Existent,* New York, 1948.

La personne et le bien commun. Paris, 1947. Translated by J. J. Fitzgerald as *The Person and the Common Good,* London, 1948.

Neuf leçons sur les notions premières de la philosophie morale. Paris, 1951.

Man and The State. Chicago, 1951.

The Range of Reason. New York, 1952.

Approches de Dieu. Paris, 1953. Translated by P. O'Reilly as *Approaches to God,* New York, 1954.

Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry. New York, 1953.

On the Philosophy of History. New York, 1957, London, 1959.

La philosophie morale: Vol. 1, Examen historique et critique des grands systèmes. Paris, 1960. Translated by M. Suther and Others as *Moral Philosophy: An Historical and Critical Survey of the Great Systems,* London, 1964.

The Responsibility of the Artist. New York, 1960.

Dieu et la permission du mal. Paris, 1963. Translated by J. W. Evans as *God and the Permission of Evil,* Milwaukee, 1966.

Carnet de Notes. Paris, 1964.

For a fuller bibliography see *The Achievement of Jacques and Raïssa Maritain: A Bibliography, 1906–61* by D. and I. Gallagher. New York, 1962.

Studies

Bars, H. *Maritain en notre temps.* Paris, 1959.

La politique selon Jacques Maritain. Paris, 1961.

Cassata, M. L. *La pedagogia di Jacques Maritain.* Palermo, 1953.

Croteau, J. *Les fondements thomistes du personnalisme de Maritain.* Ottawa, 1955.

Evans, J. W. (editor). *Jacques Maritain: The Man and his Achievement.* New York, 1965.

Fecher, C. A. *The Philosophy of Jacques Maritain.* Westminster, Maryland, 1953.

Forni, G. *La filosofia della storia nel pensiero politico di Jacques Maritain.* Bologna, 1965.

Lundgaard Simonsen, V. *L'esthétique de Jacques Maritain.* Paris, 1956.

Maritain, Raïssa. *Les grandes amitiés.* 2 vols. New York 1941. Translated by J. Kernan as (Vol. 1) *We have been Friends Together* and (Vol. 2) *Adventures in Grace,* New York, 1942 and 1945.

Michener, N. W. *Maritain on the Nature of Man in a Christian Democracy.* Hull (Canada), 1955.

Pavan, A. *La formazione del pensiero di Jacques Maritain*. Padua, 1967.

Phelan, G. B. *Jacques Maritain*. New York, 1937.

Timosaitis, A. *Church and State in Maritain's Thought*. Chicago, 1959.

Volume V of *The Thomist* (1943), devoted to the thought of Maritain, has been published separately as *The Maritain Volume of the Thomist*, New York, 1943.

2. *Gilson*

Texts

Index scolastico-cartésien. Paris, 1913.

La liberté chez Descartes et la théologie. Paris, 1913.

Le Thomisme. Introduction à l'étude de S. Thomas d'Aquin. Strasbourg, 1919. There have been a number of revised and enlarged editions. The English version, *The Christian Philosophy of St Thomas Aquinas* (New York, 1956) is really a work on its own.

La philosophie au moyen-âge. Paris, 1922. A revised and enlarged edition appeared at Paris in 1944.

La philosophie de S. Bonaventure. Paris, 1924. Translated by I. Trethowan as *The Philosophy of St Bonaventure*, London, 1938. Second French edition, Paris, 1943.

Introduction à l'étude de S. Augustin. Paris, 1929. Second edition, Paris, 1943. Translated by L. E. M. Lynch as *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustin*, New York, 1960; London, 1961.

Études sur le rôle de la pensée médiévale dans la formation du système cartésien. Paris, 1930.

L'esprit de la philosophie médiévale. 2 vols. Paris, 1932. Second edition, Paris, 1944: in one volume, 1948. Translated by A. H. C. Downes as *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*, London, 1950.

La théologie mystique de S. Bernard. Paris, 1934. Translated by A. H. C. Downes as *The Mystical Theology of St Bernard*, London, 1940. Second French edition, Paris, 1947.

Héloise et Abélard. Paris, 1938 (new edition, 1964). Translated by L. K. Shook as *Heloïse and Abelard*, London, 1953.

Dante et la philosophie. Paris, 1939. Translated by D. Moore as *Dante the Philosopher*, New York, 1949. Second French edition, Paris, 1953.

The Unity of Philosophical Experience. New York, 1937; London, 1955.

Réalisme thomiste et critique de la connaissance. Paris, 1939.

L'être et l'essence. Paris, 1948. English revision, *Being and Some Philosophers*, Toronto, 1949. Second French edition, Paris, 1962.

Les métamorphoses de la Cité de Dieu. Louvain, 1952.

Jean Duns Scot. Introduction à ses positions fondamentales. Paris, 1952.

Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages. London, 1955.

Peinture et réalité. Paris, 1958. English version, *Painting and Reality*, New York, 1958.

Éléments de philosophie chrétienne. Paris, 1960. English version, *Elements of Christian Philosophy*, New York, 1960.

Le philosophe et la théologie. Paris, 1960. Translated by E. Gilson as *The Philosopher and Theology*, New York, 1962.

Modern Philosophy, Descartes to Kant. New York, 1962. (In collaboration with T. Langan.)

Introduction aux arts de beau. Paris, 1963.

The Spirit of Thomism. New York, 1964.

Recent Philosophy, Hegel to the Present. New York, 1966. (In collaboration with A. Maurer.)

Studies

Edie, C. J. (editor). *Mélanges offerts à Étienne Gilson.* Paris and Toronto, 1959. (This volume includes a bibliography of books and articles by Gilson up to the date of printing.)

Quinn, J. M. *The Thomism of Étienne Gilson: A Critical Study*, Villanova, Pa., 1971.

3. *Maréchal*

Texts

Le point de départ de la métaphysique. Leçons sur le développement historique et théorique du problème de la connaissance. 5 vols. Vols. 1, 2 and 3, Bruges and Paris, 1922–3; Vol. 4, Brussels, 1947; Vol. 5, Louvain and Paris, 1926.

Études sur la psychologie des mystiques. 2 vols. Vol. 1, Bruges and Paris, 1924; Vol. 2, Brussels, 1937. Translated (in part) by A. Thorold as *Studies in the Psychology of the Mystics*, London, 1927.

Précis d'histoire de la philosophie moderne. Vol. 1, *De la Renaissance à Kant.* Louvain, 1933. (This is the only volume.)

Mélanges Maréchal. Vol. 1, Oeuvres. Brussels, 1950. (A collection of articles, with a bibliography.)

Studies

Casula, M. *Maréchal e Kant.* Rome, 1955.

Mélanges Maréchal, Vol. 2. Paris, 1950.

Muck, O. *Die transzendentale Methode in der scholastischen Philosophie der Gegenwart.* Innsbruck, 1964. Translated by W. J. Seidensticker as *The Transcendental Method*, New York, 1968.

Chapter XIII

1. *Poincaré*

Texts

Oeuvres de Jules Henri Poincaré. 11 vols. Paris, 1928–56. (Vol. 2 contains a biography by G. Darboux, while Vol. 11 contains centenary lectures on Poincaré.)

La science et l'hypothèse. Paris, 1902. Translated by W. J. Greenstreet as *Science and Hypothesis*, London, 1905; New York, Dover Publications, 1952.

La valeur de la science. Paris, 1905. Translated by G. B. Halsted as *The Value of Science*, London, 1907.

Science et méthode. Paris, 1908. Translated by F. Maitland as *Science and Method*, London, 1914.

Dernières Pensées. Paris, 1912. Translated by J. W. Bolduc as *Mathematics and Science: Last Essays*, New York, 1963.

Studies

Bellivier, A. *Henri Poincaré, ou la vocation souveraine.* Paris, 1956.

Frank, P. *Modern Science and Its Philosophy.* Cambridge, Mass., 1949.

Hadamard, J. S. *The Early Scientific Work of Henri Poincaré.* Houston, Texas, 1922.

The Later Scientific Work of Henri Poincaré. Houston, Texas, 1933.

(Both of the above are Rice Institute Pamphlets.)

Popper, K. R. *The Logic of Scientific Discovery.* London, 1959.

Revue de métaphysique et de morale. Vol. 211 (1913), pp. 585–718.

2. *Duhem*

Texts

Le potentiel thermodynamique et ses applications à la mécanique chimique et à la théorie des phénomènes électriques. Paris, 1886.

Le mixte et la combination chimique. Essai sur l'évolution d'une idée. Paris, 1902.

Les théories électriques de J. Clerk Maxwell. Étude historique et critique. Paris, 1902.

L'évolution de la mécanique. Paris, 1903.

Les origines de la statique. 2 vols. Paris, 1905–06.

La théorie physique, son objet et sa structure. Paris, 1906. The second edition (1914) has been translated by P. P. Wiener as *The Aim and Structure of Physical Theory*, Princeton, 1954.

Études sur Léonard de Vinci; ceux qu'il a lus et ceux qui l'ont lu. 3 vols. Paris, 1906–13.

Essai sur la notion de théorie physique de Platon à Galilée. Paris, 1908.

Le système du monde. Histoire des doctrines cosmologiques de Platon à Copernic. 8 vols. Paris, 1913–58.

Studies

Duhem, H. P. *Un savant français: P. Duhem.* Paris, 1936.

Frank, P. *Modern Science and its Philosophy.* Cambridge, Mass., 1949.

Humbert, P. *Pierre Duhem.* Paris, 1923.

Mieli, A. *L'opera di Pierre Duhem come storico della scienza.* Grottaferrata, 1917.

Picard, E. *La vie et l'œuvre de Pierre Duhem.* Paris, 1922.

Popper, K. R. *The Logic of Scientific Discovery.* London, 1959.

There are several notable articles on Duhem, such as "La philosophie-scientifiquede M. Duhem" by A. Rey in the *Revue de métaphysiquede et morale* (vol. 12, 1904, pp. 699–744) and 'Duhem versus Galilée" in *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* (1957, pp. 237–248).

3. *Milhaud*

Texts

Leçons sur l'origine de la science grecque. Paris, 1893.

Essai sur les conditions et les limites de la certitude logique. Paris, 1894.

Le rationnel. Paris, 1898.

Les philosophes-géomètres de la Grèce. Platon et ses prédécesseurs. Paris, 1900.

Le positivisme et le progrès de l'esprit. Etude critique sur Auguste Comte. Paris, 1902.

Études sur la pensée scientifique chez les Grecs et chez les modernes. Paris, 1906.

Nouvelles études sur l'histoire de la pensée scientifique. Paris, 1911.

Descartes, savant. Paris, 1923.

Études sur Carnot. Paris, 1927.

La philosophie de Charles Renouvier. Paris, 1927.

(The last three works were published posthumously.)

Studies

Nadal, A. *Gaston Milhaud* in *Revue d'histoire des sciences* (Vol. 12, 1959, pp. 1–14).

See also the *Bulletin de la société française de philosophie* of 1961 for articles by various authors on *Emile Meyerson and Gaston Milhaud.*

4. *Meyerson*

Texts

Identité et réalité. Paris, 1908. Translated by K. Loewenberg as *Identity and Reality*, London and New York, 1930.

De l'explication dans les sciences. 2 vols. Paris, 1921.

La déduction relativiste. Paris, 1925.

Du cheminement de la pensée. 3 vols. Paris, 1931.

Réel et déterminisme dans la physique quantique. Paris, 1933.

Essais. (posthumous.) Paris, 1936.

Studies

Abbagnano, N. *La filosofia di Émile Meyerson e la logica dell'identità.* Naples, 1929.

Boas, G. *A Critical Analysis of the Philosophy of Émile Meyerson.* Baltimore, 1930.

Kelly, T. R. *Explanation and Reality in the Philosophy of Émile Meyerson.* Princeton, N.J., 1937.

La Lumia, J. *The Ways of Reason: A Critical Study of the Ideas of Émile Meyerson.* London, 1967.

Metz, A. *Meyerson, une nouvelle philosophie de la connaissance.* Paris, 1932; 2nd edition, 1934.

Stumpfer, S. *L'explication scientifique selon Émile Meyerson.* Luxembourg, 1929.

See also the essays by various authors under the general title *Émile Meyerson et Gaston Milhaud* in the *Bulletin de la société française de philosophie* for 1961.

5. *Lalande*

Texts

Lectures sur la philosophie des sciences. Paris ,1893.

L'idée directrice de la dissolution opposée à celle de l'évolution dans la méthode des sciences physiques et morales. Paris, 1898. A revised edition appeared in 1930 with the title *Les illusions évolutionistes.*

Quid de mathematica vel rationali vel naturali senserit Baconus Verulamius. Paris, 1899. (Lalande's Latin thesis.)

Précis raisonné de morale pratique. Paris, 1907.

Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie. 2 vols. Paris, 1926. Publication of this work was begun in 1902 in the *Bulletin de la société française de la philosophie.* The work was published in one volume.

Précis raisonné de morale pratique. Paris, 1907.

Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie. 2 vols. Paris, 1926. (This work, which originally appeared in fascicules of the *Bulletin de la société française de philosophie,* from 1902 onwards, was later published in one volume, as in the 8th edition, 1962.)
Les théories de l'induction et de l'expérimentation. Paris, 1929.
La psychologie des jugements de valeur. Cairo, 1929.
La raison et les normes. Essai sur le principe et sur la logique des jugements de valeur. Paris, 1948.

Studies

Bertoni, I. *Il neo-illuminismo etico di André Lalande.* Milan, 1965.
Lacroix, J. *L'épistémologie de l'identité d'André Lalande.* In *Panorama de la philosophie française contemporaine,* pp. 185–191. Paris, 1966.
Lalande, W. (editor). *André Lalande par lui-même.* Paris, 1967. (With a bibliography.)

6. *Bachelard*

Texts

Essai sur la connaissance approchée. Paris, 1928.
L'intuition de l'instant. Paris, 1932.
Le pluralisme cohérent de la chimie moderne. Paris, 1932.
Les intuitions atomistiques. Paris, 1933.
Le nouvel esprit scientifique. Paris, 1934.
La continuité et la multiplicité temporelles. Paris, 1937.
L'expérience de l'espace dans la physique contemporaine. Paris, 1973.
La formation de l'esprit scientifique. Paris, 1938.
Le psychanalyse du feu. Paris, 1938.
La philosophie du non. Essai d'une philosophie du nouvel esprit scientifique. Paris, 1940.
L'eau et les rêves. Essai sur l'imagination de la matière. Paris, 1942.
L'air et les songes. Paris, 1943.
La terre et les rêveries de la volonté. Paris, 1945.
La terre et les rêveries du repos. Paris, 1945.
Le rationalisme appliqué. Paris, 1949.
L'activité rationaliste de la physique contemporaine. Paris, 1951.
Le matérialisme rationnel. Paris, 1953.
La poétique de l'espace. Paris, 1957.
La poétique de la rêverie. Paris, 1960.
La flamme d'une chandelle. Paris, 1961.

Studies

Hommage à Gaston Bachelard. Paris, 1957.
Dagognet, F. *Gaston Bachelard. Sa vie, son œuvre, avec un exposé de sa philosophie.* Paris, 1965.

Quillet, P. *Gaston Bachelard*. Paris, 1964.
The *Revue internationale de philosophie* (Vol. 19, 1964) contains a bibliography of Bachelard's works and of articles on him.

Chapter XIV

1. *Polin*

Texts

La création des valeurs. Paris, 1944.
La compréhension des valeurs. Paris, 1945.
Du laid, du mal, du faux. Paris, 1948.
Philosophie et politique chez Thomas Hobbes. Paris, 1953.
La politique morale de John Locke. Paris, 1960.
Le bonheur considéré comme l'un des beaux-arts. Paris, 1965.
Éthique et politique. Paris, 1968.

2. *Le Senne*

Texts

Introduction à la philosophie. Paris, 1925 (revised editions, 1939 and 1947.)
Le devoir. Paris, 1930.
Le mensonge et le caractère. Paris, 1930.
Obstacle et valeur. Paris, 1934.
Traité de morale générale. Paris, 1942.
Traité de caractérologie. Paris, 1945.
La destinée personnelle. Paris, 1951.
La découverte de Dieu. Paris, 1955.

Studies

Berger, G. *Notice sur la vie et les travaux de René Le Senne*. Paris, 1956.
Centineo, E. *René Le Senne*. Palermo, 1953.
Caratterologia e vita morale. La caratterologia del Le Senne. Bologna, 1955.
Gutierrez, M. *Estudio del carácter según Le Senne*. Madrid, 1964.
Guzzo, A. and Others. *René Le Senne*. Turin, 1951.
Paumen, J. *Le spiritualisme existentiel de René Le Senne*. Paris, 1949.
Pirlot, J. *Destinée et valeur. La philosophie de René Le Senne*. Namur, 1953.
The third numbers of *Études philosophiques* and of the *Giornale di metafisica* for 1955 contain articles on Le Senne by various authors.

3. *Ruyer*

Texts

Esquisse d'une philosophie de la structure. Paris, 1930.

La conscience et le corps. Paris, 1937.
Éléments de psycho-biologie. Paris, 1946.
Le monde de valeurs. Paris, 1948.
Néo-finalisme. Paris, 1952.
Philosophie de la valeur. Paris, 1952.
La cybernétique et l'origine de l'information. Paris, 1954.
La genèse des formes vivantes. Paris, 1958.

4. *Pucelle*

Texts

L'idéalisme en Angleterre. Neuchâtel, 1955.
Le Temps. Paris, 1955.
La source des valeurs. Paris, 1957.
Le règne des fins. Paris, 1959.
La nature et l'esprit dans la philosophie de T. H. Green. I, Métaphysique-Morale. Louvain, 1961.

5. *Lavelle*

Texts

La dialectique du monde sensible. Strasbourg, 1921.
La perception visuelle de la profondeur. Strasbourg, 1921.
La dialectique de l'éternel présent. 3 vols, Paris. Vol. 1, *De l'être*, 1928; Vol. 2, *De l'acte*, 1937; Vol. 3, *Du temps et de l'éternité*, 1945.
La conscience de soi. Paris, 1933.
La présence totale. Paris, 1934.
Le moi et son destin. Paris, 1936.
L'erreur de Narcisse. Paris, 1939. Translated by William Gairdner as *The Dilemma of Narcissus*. London, 1973.
Les puissances du moi. Paris, 1939.
Le mal et la souffrance. Paris, 1940.
La philosophie française entre les deux guerres. Paris, 1942.
La parole et l'écriture.
Introduction à l'ontologie. Paris, 1947.
Traité des valeurs. 2 vols., Paris. Vol. 1, *Théorie générale de la valeur*, 1951; Vol. 2, *Le système de différentes valeurs*, 1955.
L'intimité spirituelle. Paris, 1955.
Conduite à l'égard d'autrui. Paris, 1957.
Manuel de méthodologie dialectique. Paris, 1962.

Studies

Andrés, M. *El problema del assoluto-relativo en la filosofia de Louis Lavelle*. Buenos Aires, 1957.
Beschin, G. *Il tempo e la libertà in Louis Lavelle*. Milan, 1964.

Centineo, E. *Il. problema della persona nella filosofia di Lavelle.* Palermo, 1944.

D'Ainval, C. *Une doctrine de la présence spirituelle. La philosophie de Louis Lavelle.* Louvain and Paris, 1967.

Delfgaauw, B. M. I. *Het spiritualistiche Existentialisme van Louis Lavelle.* Amsterdam, 1947.

École, J. *La métaphysique de l'être dans la philosophie de Louis Lavelle.* Louvain and Paris, 1957.

Grasso, P. G. *Louis Lavelle.* Brescia. 1948.

Nobile, O. M. *La filosofia di Louis Lavelle.* Florence, 1943.

Sargi, B. *La participation à l'être dans la philosophie de Louis Lavelle.* Paris, 1957.

Truc, G. *De Jean-Paul Sartre à Louis Lavelle, ou désagrégation et réintégration.* Paris, 1946.

6. *Mounier*

Texts

Oeuvres, edited by P. Mounier, 4 vols. Paris, 1961–3.

La pensée de Charles Péguy. Paris, 1931. (Written in collaboration with M. Péguy and G. Izard.)

Révolution personnaliste et communautaire. Paris, 1935.

De la propriété capitaliste à la propriété humaine. Paris, 1936.

Manifesto au service du personnalisme. Paris, 1936.

L'affrontement chrétien. Paris, 1944.

Liberté sous conditions. Paris, 1946.

Traité du caractère. Paris, 1946. Translated by C. Rowland as *The Character of Man.* London, 1956.

Introduction aux existentialismes. Paris, 1946. Translated by E. Blow as *Existentalist Philosophies,* London, 1948.

Qu'est-ce que le personnalisme? Paris, 1947. Translated by C. Rowland in *Be Not Afraid,* London, 1951.

La petite peur du XX^e siècle. Paris and Neuchâtel, 1948. Translated by C. Rowland in *Be Not Afraid,* London, 1951.

Le personnalisme. Paris, 1949. Translated by C. Mairet as *Personalism,* London, 1952.

Carnets de route. 3 vols. Paris, 1950–3.

Les certitudes difficiles. Paris, 1951.

Communisme, anarchie et personnalisme. Paris, 1966. (Published by the *Bulletin des amis d'Emmanuel Mounier.*)

Studies

Amato, C. *Il personalismo rivoluzionario di E. Mounier.* Messina, 1966.

Campanini, G. *La rivoluzione cristiana. Il pensiero politico di Emmanuel Mounier.* Brescia, 1967.

Carpentreau, J. and L. Rocher. *L'esthétique personnaliste d'Emmanuel Mounier.* Paris, 1966.

Conihl, J. *Emmanuel Mounier: sa vie, son œuvre, avec un exposé de sa philosophie.* Paris, 1966.

Guissard, L. *Mounier.* Paris, 1962.

Moix, C. *La pensée d'Emmanuel Mounier.* Paris, 1960.

Rigobello, A. *Il contributo filosofico di Emmanuel Mounier.* Rome, 1955.

Esprit for December 1950 is devoted to Mounier. See also the Bulletin published by the Association des amis d'Emmanuel Mounier.

Chapter XV

1. *Teilhard de Chardin*

Texts

Oeuvres, edited by C. Cuénot. 10 vols. (to date). Paris, 1955– .

Le phénomène humain. Paris, 1955. Translated by B. Wall, with a preface by Sir Julian Huxley, as *The Phenomenon of Man,* London and New York, 1959.

L'apparition de l'homme. Paris, 1956. Translated by J. M. Cohen as *The Appearance of Man,* London, 1965.

Le groupe zoologique humain. Paris, 1956. Later editions entitled *La place de l'homme dans la nature.* Translated by R. Hague as *Man's Place in Nature. The Human Zoological Group,* London and New York, 1966.

Le milieu divin. Paris, 1957. Translated by B. Wall and Others as *Le Milieu Divin: An Essay on the Interior Life,* London, 1960.

La vision du passé. Paris, 1957. Translated by J. M. Cohen as *The Vision of the Past,* London, 1966.

L'avenir de l'homme. Paris, 1959. Translated by N. Denny as *The Future of Man,* London, 1964.

Hymne de l'univers. Paris, 1961. Translated by G. Vann as *Hymn of the Universe,* London, 1965.

L'énergie humaine. Paris, 1962. Translated by J. M. Cohen as *Human Energy,* London, 1969.

L'activation de l'énergie. Paris, 1963.

Science et Christ. Paris, 1965. Translated by R. Hague as *Science and Christ,* London, 1968.

Comment je crois. Paris, 1969. The essay with the title translated by R. Hague as *How I believe,* London and New York, 1969. The other essays translated as *Christianity and Evolution,* London, 1971.

Of the various volumes of correspondence which have been published some are available in English translations. For example, *Lettres de voyages* (Paris, 1956) has been translated by R. Hague and Others as *Letters from a Traveller* (London, 1962), while the correspondence with Blondel, with commentary by H. de Lubac (Paris, 1965) has been translated by W. Whitman (New York, 1967).

From 1958 the Fondation Teilhard de Chardin has published at Paris a number of Cahiers containing hitherto unpublished material.

For futher bibliographical material see C. Cuénot's *Teilhard de Chardin* (as mentioned below) and the *Internationale Teilhard-Bibliographie, 1955–1965* edited by L. Polgar (Munich, 1965). For an annual list of publications of more recent date see the *Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu*, published at Rome.

Studies

Barjon, L. and Leroy, P. *La carrière scientifique de Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*. Monaco, 1964.

Barral, L. *Eléments du bâti scientifique teilhardien*. Monaco, 1964.

Barthélemy-Madaule, M. *Bergson et Teilhard de Chardin*. Paris, 1963.

La personne et le drame humain chez Teilhard de Chardin. Paris, 1967.

Blanchard, J. P. *Méthode et principes du père Teilhard de Chardin*. Paris, 1961.

Chauchard, P. *Man and Cosmos. Scientific Phenomenology in Teilhard de Chardin*. New York, 1965.

Cognet, L. *Le père Teilhard de Chardin et la pensée contemporaine*. Paris, 1952.

Corbishley, T. *The Spirituality of Teilhard de Chardin*. London, 1971.

Corte, N. *La vie et l'âme de Teilhard de Chardin*. Paris, 1957. Translated by M. Jarrett-Kerr as *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: his Life and Spirit*, London, 1960.

Crespy, C. *La pensée théologique de Teilhard de Chardin*. Paris, 1961.

Cuénot, C. *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: les grandes étapes de son évolution*. Paris, 1958 (second edition, 1962). Translated by V. Colimore and edited by R. Hague as *Teilhard de Chardin: A Biographical Study*, Baltimore and London, 1965. (This work includes a complete bibliography of Teilhard's writings.)

Delfgaauw, B. *Teilhard de Chardin*, Baarn, 1961. Translated by H. Hoskins as *Evolution: The Theory of Teilhard de Chardin*, London and New York, 1969.

De Lubac, H. *La pensée religeuse du père Teilhard de Chardin*. Paris, 1962. Translated by R. Hague as *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin*, London, 1967.

La prière du père Teilhard de Chardin. Paris, 1964. Translated by R. Hague as *The Faith of Teilhard de Chardin*, London, 1965.

Teilhard, missionnaire et apologiste. Toulouse, 1966. Translated by A. Buono as *Teilhard Explained*, New York, 1968.

L'éternel féminin. Paris, 1968. Translated by R. Hague as *The Eternal Feminine*, London, 1971.

De Terra, H. *Mein Weg mit Teilhard de Chardin*. Munich, 1962. Translated by J. Maxwell Brownjohn as *Memories of Teilhard de Chardin*, London and New York, 1969.

D'Ouince, R. *Un prophète en procès: Teilhard de Chardin dans l'église de son temps*. Paris, 1970.

Francoeur, R. T. (editor). *The World of Teilhard*. Baltimore, 1961.

Frenaud, G. and Others. *Gli errori di Teilhard de Chardin*. Turin, 1963.

Grenet, P. B. *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, ou le philosophe malgré lui*. Paris, 1960.

Haguette, A. *Panthéisme, action, Oméga chez Teilhard de Chardin*. Paris, 1967.

Hanson, A. (editor). *Teilhard Reassessed*. London, 1970.

Monestier, A. *Teilhard ou Marx?* Paris, 1965.

Müller, A. *Das Naturphilosophische Werk Teilhard de Chardins. Seine naturwissenschaftlichen Grundlagen und seine Bedeutung für eine natürliche Offenbarung*. Munich, 1964.

North, R. *Teilhard de Chardin and the Creation of the Soul*. Milwaukee, 1967.

Philippe de la Trinité. *Teilhard et teilhardisme*. Rome, 1962.

Rabut, O. *Dialogue avec Teilhard de Chardin*. Translated as *Dialogue with Teilhard de Chardin*. London and New York, 1961.

Raven, C. E. *Teilhard de Chardin: Scientist and Seer*. London, 1962.

Rideau, E. *La pensée du père Teilhard de Chardin*. Paris, 1965. Translated by R. Hague as *Teilhard de Chardin: A Guide to His Thought*, London, 1967.

Smulders, P. *La vision de Teilhard de Chardin. Essai de réflexion théologique*. Paris, 1964.

Soucy, C. *Pensée logique et pensée politique chez Teilhard de Chardin*. Paris, 1967.

Speaight, R. *Teilhard de Chardin. A Biography*. London, 1967.

Thys, A. *Conscience, réflexion, collectivisation chez Teilhard*. Paris, 1964.

Towers, B. *Teilhard de Chardin*. London, 1966.

Tresmontant, C. *Introduction à la pensée de Teilhard de Chardin*. Paris, 1956.

Vernet, M. *La grande illusion de Teilhard de Chardin*. Paris, 1964.

Vigorelli, G. *Il gesuita proibito. Vita e opere del Padre Teilhard de Chardin.* Milan, 1963.

Wildiers, N. M. *Teilhard de Chardin.* Paris, 1960 (revised edition, 1964). Translated by H. Hoskins as *An Introduction to Teilhard de Chardin*, London and New York, 1968.

Zaehner, R. C. *Evolution in Religion. A Study in Sri Aurobindo and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.* Oxford, 1971.

Of the books listed above some are concerned with showing the religious orthodoxy of Teilhard de Chardin, while a few (such as those listed under Frenaud, Philippe and Vernet) are frankly polemical. For a much more extensive bibliography of writing on Teilhard see the work by J. E. Jarque: *Bibliographie générale des œuvres et articles sur le père Teilhard de Chardin, parus jusqu'à fin décembre 1969.* Fribourg (Switzerland), 1970.

2. *Marcel*

Texts

Journal métaphysique. Paris, 1927. Translated by B. Wall as *Metaphysical Journal*, London and Chicago, 1952.

Être et avoir. Paris, 1935. Translated by K. Farrer as *Being and Having*, London, 1949.

Du refus à l'invocation. Paris, 1940. Translated by R. Rosthal as *Creative Fidelity*, New York, 1964.

Homo Viator. Paris, 1945. Translated by E. Craufurd, London and Chicago, 1951.

La métaphysique de Royce. Paris, 1945. Translated by V. and G. Ringer as *Royce's Metaphysics*, Chicago, 1956.

Positions et approches concrètes du mystère ontologique. Louvain and Paris, 1949 (with an introduction by M. De Corte). This essay was originally published with the play *Le Monde cassé* (Paris, 1933). An English translation by M. Harari is included in *Philosophy of Existence*, London, 1948; New York, 1949. This collection of essays was republished at New York in 1961 under the title *Philosophy of Existentialism.*

The Mystery of Being. 2 vols. I, *Reflection and Mystery*, translated by G. S. Fraser, London and Chicago, 1950; II, *Faith and Reality*, translated by R. Hague, London and Chicago, 1951. This work consists of Marcel's Gifford Lectures. The French version, *Le mystère de l'être*, was published in two volumes at Paris in 1951.

Les hommes contre l'humain. Paris, 1951. Translated by G. S. Fraser as *Man against Humanity*, London, 1952, and *Man against Mass Society*, Chicago, 1952. (This work consists of articles and lectures, 1945–50.)

Le déclin de la sagesse. Paris, 1954. Translated by M. Harari as *The Decline of Wisdom*, London, 1954; Chicago, 1955.

L'homme problématique. Paris, 1955. Translated by B. Thompson as *Problematic Man*, New York, 1967.

Présence et immortalité. Paris, 1959. Translated by M. A. Machado (and revised by A. J. Koren) as *Presence and Immortality*, Pittsburgh, 1967.

Fragments philosophiques, 1909–14. Louvain, 1962.

The Existential Background of Human Dignity. Cambridge, Mass., 1963. This volume contains Marcel's Williams James Lectures for 1961. The French version, *La dignité humaine et ses assises existentielles*, was published at Paris in 1964.

(Marcel's plays have not been listed above, exept for the incidental reference to *Le monde cassé*.)

Studies

Ariotti, A. M. *L''homo viator' nel pensiero di Gabriel Marcel*. Turin, 1966.

Bagot, J. P. *Connaissance et amour: Essai sur la philosophie de Gabriel Marcel*. Paris, 1958.

Bernard, M. *La philosophie religieuse de Gabriel Marcel* (with an appendix by Marcel). Paris, 1952.

Cain, *Gabriel Marcel*. London and New York, 1963.

Chaigne, L. *Vies et œuvres d'écrivains. Tome 4*. Paris, 1954.

Chenu, J. *Le théâtre de Gabriel Marcel et sa signification métaphysique*. Paris, 1948.

Davy, M. M. *Un philosophie itinérant; Gabriel Marcel*. Paris, 1959.

De Corte, M. *La philosophie de Gabriel Marcel*. Paris, 1938. (Compare De Corte's introduction to *Positions et approches*, as mentioned above.)

Fessard, G. *Théâtre et mystère*. (Introduction to Marcel's play *La soif*, Paris, 1938.)

Gallagher, K. T. *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel* (with a Foreword by Marcel). New York, 1962.

Hoefeld, F. *Der christliche Existenzialismus Gabriel Marcels*. Zürich, 1956.

O'Malley, J. B. *The Fellowship of Being. An Essay on the Concept of Person in the Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel*. The Hague, 1966.

Parainvial, J. *Gabriel Marcel*. Paris, 1966.

Prini, P. *Gabriel Marcel et la méthodologie de l'invérifiable*. Paris, 1953.

Ralston, Z. T. *Gabriel Marcel's Paradoxical Expression of Mystery*. Washington, 1961.

Rebollo Pena, A. *Crítica de la objectividad en el existencialismo de Gabriel Marcel*. Burgos, 1954.

Ricoeur, P. *Gabriel Marcel et Karl Jaspers.* Paris, 1947.

Schaldenbrand, M. A. *Phenomenologies of Freedom. An Essay on the Philosophies of J. P. Sartre and Gabriel Marcel.* Washington, 1960.

Scivoletto, A. *L'esistenzialismo di Marcel.* Bologna, 1951.

Sottiaux, E. *Gabriel Marcel, philosophe et dramaturge.* Louvain, 1956.

Troisfontaines, R. *De l'existence à l'être.* 2 vols. Paris, 1953. (With a preface by Marcel. Contains a bibliography up to 1953.)

Widmer, C. *Gabriel Marcel et le théisme existentiel.* Paris, 1971.

Chapters XVI–XVII

Sartre

Texts

La transcendance de l'égo. Esquisse d'une description phénoménologique. Paris, *Recherches philosophiques,* (6, pp. 85–123), 1936–37. Translated by F. Williams and R. Kirkpatrick as *The Transcendence of the Ego,* New York, 1957.

L'imagination. Étude critique. Paris, 1936. Translated by F. Williams as *Imagination: A Psychological Critique,* Ann Arbor, Mich., 1962.

La Nausée. Paris, 1938. Translated by L. Alexander as *The Diary of Antoine Roquentin,* London, 1949, and as *Nausea,* New York, 1949. Translated by R. Baldick as *Nausea,* Harmondsworth, 1965.

Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions. Paris, 1939. Translated by B. Frechtman as *Outline of a theory of the Emotions,* New York, 1948, and by P. Mairet as *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions,* London, 1962.

Le Mur. Paris, 1939. Translated by L. Alexander as *Intimacy,* London, 1949; New York, 1952. (Panther Books edition, London, 1960.)

L'imaginaire. Psychologie phénoménologique de l'imagination. Paris, 1940. Translated by B. Frechtman as *The Psychology of the Imagination,* London, 1949.

L'Être et le néant. Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique. Paris, 1943. Translated by H. Barnes as *Being and Nothingness,* New York, 1956; London, 1957.

Les Mouches. Paris, 1943. Translated by S. Gilbert as *The Flies* in *Two Plays,* London, 1946.

Les chemins de la liberté; I. L'Âge de raison. Paris, 1945. Translated by E. Sutton as *The Age of Reason,* London, 1947. The second volume, *Le Sursis* (Paris, 1945), was translated by E. Sutton as *The Reprieve,* London, 1947. And the third volume, *La mort dans l'âme* (Paris, 1949), was translated by G. Hopkins as *Iron in the Soul,* London, 1950.

Huis Clos. Paris, 1945. Translated by S. Gilbert as *In Camera* in *Two Plays*, London, 1946.

L'existentialisme est un humanisme. Paris, 1946. Translated by B. Frechtman as *Existentialism*, New York, 1947 and by P. Mairet as *Existentialism and Humanism*, London, 1948.

Réflexions sur la question juive. Paris, 1946 (reissued, Paris, 1954). Translated by E. de Mauny as *Portrait of the Anti-Semite*, London, 1948; and by J. Becker as *Anti-Semite and Jew*, New York, 1948.

Baudelaire. Paris, 1947. Translated by M. Turnell as *Baudelaire*, London, 1949.

Situations: 1, Paris, 1947; 2, Paris, 1948; 3, Paris, 1949; 4–5, Paris, 1964. These are collections of essays. Some of the essays contained in *Situations* 1–3 have been translated by A. Michelson as *Literary and Philosophical Essays*, London, 1955. An essay from *Situations* 2 has been translated by B. Frechtman as *What is Literature?* New York, 1949, and London, 1951.

Entretiens sur la politique (with D. Rousset and G. Rosenthal). Paris, 1949.

Saint Genet: comédien et martyr. (Vol. 1 of the *Oeuvres complètes* of Jean Genet.) Translated by B. Frechtman as *Saint Genet*, New York, 1963.

Critique de la raison dialectique. Tome 1: Théorie des ensembles pratiques. Paris, 1960. The *Question de méthode*, which forms the first part of this volume, has been translated by H. Barnes as *Search for a Method*, New York, 1963.

Les Mots. Paris, 1964. Translated by I. Clephane as *Words. Reminiscences* of Jean-Paul Sartre, London, 1964, and by B. Frechtman as *The Words: The Autobiography of Jean-Paul Sartre*, New York, 1964.

The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre, edited by R. D. Cumming (London, 1968), contains extensive selections in English from Sartre's writings.

Only those plays and stories by Sartre which are mentioned in the text of this volume have been listed above. And no attempt has been made to list the multitudinous essays which Sartre has published, especially in *Les Temps Modernes*. For details of Sartre's life during the period not covered by *Words* see the three volumes of Simone de Beauvoir's memoirs which have been published at London in English translations in 1959, 1960 and 1965 (Deutsch, Weidenfeld and Nicolson).

Studies

Albérès, R. M. *Jean-Paul Sartre*. Paris, 1953.

Ayer, A. J. 'Novelist-Philosophers: J.P. Sartre' in *Horizon*, vol. 12 (1945).

Campbell, R. *Jean-Paul Sartre, ou une Littérature philosophique,* Paris, 1945.

Cera, G. *Sartre tra ideologia e storia.* Brescia, 1972.

Champigny, R. *Stages on Sartre's Way.* Bloomington, Indiana, 1959.

Chiodi, P. *Sartre e il marxismo.* Milan, 1965.

Contat, M. and Rybalka, M. *Les écrits de Sartre.* Paris, 1970.

Cranston, M. *Sartre.* London, 1962.

Dempsey, P. J. R. *The Psychology of Sartre.* Cork and Oxford, 1950.

Desan, W. *The Tragic Finale. An Essay on the Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre.* Cambridge, Mass., 1954.

The Marxism of Jean-Paul Sartre. New York, 1965.

(Both these books are careful and critical expositions.)

Fell, J. P. III. *Emotion in the Thought of Sartre.* New York and London, 1965.

Greene, N. N. *Jean-Paul Sartre: The Existentialist Ethic.* Ann Arbor, Mich., 1960.

Green, M. *Dreadful Freedom.* London and Chicago, 1948.

Hartman, K. *Grundzüge der Ontologie Sartre's.* Berlin, 1963.

Haug, W. F. *Jean-Paul Sartre und die Konstruktion des Absurden.* Frankfurt, 1967.

Sartre's Sozialphilosophie. Eine Untersuchung zur 'Critique de la raison dialectique'. Berlin, 1966.

Holz, H. H. *Jean-Paul Sartre: Darstellung und Kritik seiner Philosophie.* Meisenheim, 1951.

Jameson, F. R. Sartre. *The Origins of a Style.* New Haven, 1961.

Jeanson, F. *Le problème morale et la pensée de Sartre.* Paris, 1947. (With a preface by Sartre.)

Sartre par lui-même. Paris, 1958.

Jolivet, R. *Sartre ou la théologie de l'absurde.* Paris, 1965.

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